

One-off residence pathway provides certainty to migrants and business

- One-off resident visa for up to 165,000 migrants currently in New Zealand provides certainty for New Zealand businesses so they can plan into the future
- Visa creates residence pathway for over 5,000 health and aged care workers, around 9,000 primary industry workers, and more than 800 teachers
- Streamlined application process requiring health, police and security criteria to be met
- Majority of applications to be granted within a year of the category opening.

The Minister of Immigration, Kris Faafoi, has [announced](#) the 2021 Resident Visa, a one-off, simplified pathway to residence.

“We are providing a way forward for our migrant families who have been long disrupted by COVID-19, while ensuring businesses have the certainty they need to plan into the future and continue driving the economic recovery,” Kris Faafoi said.

“The changes give migrants certainty about their future here, allowing them to continue putting down roots, and will help reunite many families who were separated by the border restrictions that prevent COVID-19 entering the community.

“The 2021 Resident Visa will also help us attract and retain the skills that our businesses need to help relieve labour pressures caused by COVID-19.

“Immigration New Zealand estimate the eligible visa holders will include over 5,000 health and aged care workers, around 9,000 primary industry workers, and more than 800 teachers. There are also around 15,000 construction and 12,000 manufacturing workers on relevant visa types, some of whom will be eligible for the one-off pathway.

The 2021 Resident Visa will be available to most work-related visa holders, including Essential Skills, Work to Residence, and Post Study Work visas and their immediate family members.

Eligibility

To be eligible, the principal applicant must have been in New Zealand on 29 September 2021 and must hold or have applied for (and subsequently be granted) one of the eligible work visas. They must also meet one of the following criteria:

- lived in New Zealand for three or more years, or
- earn above the median wage (\$27 per hour or more), or
- work in a role on the Long Term Skill Shortage List, or
- hold occupational registration and work in the health or education sector, or
- work in personal care or other critical health worker roles, or
- work in a specified role in the primary industries.

The visa will also be available for those who enter New Zealand as critical workers, and their families, for roles six months or longer until 31 July 2022.

Visa holders can also include their partners and dependents in their application.

The application process for the 2021 Resident Visa is simplified to deal with applications as quickly as possible. Applicants will still need to meet health requirements and pass police and security checks, as is required under the current residence application process.

The one-off arrangement for the new 2021 Resident Visa would see the majority of applications granted within a year of the category opening.

Applications for the 2021 Resident Visa will open in two phases; on 1 December 2021 and 1 March 2022.

Immigration New Zealand will contact visa holders who are eligible to apply from 1 December by the end of October with more information about the application process.

Notes

The 2021 Resident Visa covers most work-related visas, including Essential Skills, Work to Residence, and Post Study Work visas. People will need to hold, or have already applied for, and are subsequently granted, one of the eligible work visas.

Workers entering New Zealand through the critical worker border exceptions before 31 July 2022 for roles longer than six months will also be eligible for this one-off residence pathway.

- Visa holders must be in New Zealand to apply for the 2021 Resident Visa.
- The pathway does not include visas which are intended for a shorter stay, such as visitors, students, working holiday makers, and Recognised Seasonal Employer workers.
- There is a large number of temporary migrants on relevant visas working across a range of sectors who may be eligible for the 2021 Resident Visa, including around 10,000 in the healthcare and social assistance sector, 9,000 in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 15,000 in construction, 9,000 in professional, scientific and technical services, 17,000 in the accommodation and food sectors, 12,000 in manufacturing, 10,000 in administration and support services, and 10,000 in retail. While not all of these visa holders will be eligible for this one-off pathway to residence, a large number may qualify by meeting the three year or median wage criteria.
- Applications for the 2021 Resident Visa will be accepted from 1 December 2021 to 31 July 2022 in two phases:
- From 1 December 2021, people who have submitted a Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) or Residence from Work (RfW) application can apply, as well as those with dependent children 17 years or older who currently have an SMC Expression of Interest (EOI) submitted.
- From 1 March 2022, all other eligible applicants, including any others in the SMC Expression of Interest pool, can apply.
- To prioritise processing of the 2021 Resident Visa, selections from the Skilled Migrant Category Expressions of Interest pool will remain closed until the 2021 Resident Visa closes on 31 July

2022, but applicants who meet the criteria in the EOI pool will be able to apply for this visa from 1 December 2021 or from 1 March 2022, depending on which category they fall into.

- An [eligibility checker](#) is available on INZ's website. Note that the checker is a guide and not a confirmation of eligibility.

[Source](#)

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