Work & Income

Many refugees want to start working as quickly as possible. Work is an important step in building up a new life in the Netherlands. You feel useful and you earn your own living. For many refugees, however, it is difficult to find work as long as they have no command of Dutch. Until you have work, you get financial assistance from the government in the Netherlands. On this page, we explain about this assistance, finding work, and income tax.

Working with a residence permit

With an asylum residence permit, you have the same rights and obligations in the labour market as any other Dutch person. Your alien's document (ID card) then states ‘Arbeid vrij toegestaan; TWV niet vereist’. With some residence permits you are not permitted to work, this will then be indicated on your alien's document.

Who can help me find work?

[ Wie kan me helpen werk te vinden? ]
Ask your municipality which possibilities there are in your town and its surrounding area. Employment agencies place people with employers, usually for temporary work. NGOs like the Dutch Council for Refugees, UAF (Foundation for Refugee Students), and Refugee Talent Hub can sometimes also help you find work.

**Tips to find work independently**

[ Tips om zelf werk te vinden ]

- Write a good and clear CV listing your education and work experience.
- Make a good profile at [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) with a representative photo. This manual "[LinkedIn for newcomers](http://www.linkedin.com)" (pdf) might help you.
- Make a profile at [www.refugeetalenthub.com](http://www.refugeetalenthub.com).
- Search for vacancies on the Internet on websites like [www.indeed.nl](http://www.indeed.nl), [www.nationalevacaturebank.nl](http://www.nationalevacaturebank.nl) and [www.werk.nl](http://www.werk.nl).
- Ask within your network whether someone knows where to find suitable work.
- If you decide to register with employment agencies, immediately put your best foot forward. The people of the employment agency must believe in you before they introduce you to an employer.
- Become a volunteer. This way you will gain work experience, build up a network, feel useful, and show potential employers that you are a hands-on person. [The Dutch Council for Refugees also seeks volunteers frequently](http://www.refugeetalenthub.com).

Voor vluchtelingen: werken in Nederland (Engelse versie)

[Video of Voor vluchtelingen: werken in Nederland (Engelse versie)](http://www.refugeetalenthub.com)

**Income tax**

[ Inkomstenbelasting ]

If you work, but also if you receive a benefit, you must pay income tax. Usually, the employer – or the municipality if you receive a social assistance benefit – pays this for you. Once a year, the Tax and Customs Administration (in Dutch: Belastingdienst) may ask you to pass on all details about your income digitally. This is called the ‘tax return’. If you have received a letter about the tax return from the Tax and Customs Administration, you are obliged to do this. The Tax and Customs Administration will then calculate if you have paid enough tax or if you must make an additional payment or if – on the contrary – you will get money back. To know for sure that you complete the tax return correctly, you can get help from the Tax and Customs Administration. You can make an appointment for this through the Tax Information Line: +31 (0)800-0543.

Voor vluchtelingen: financiën in Nederland (Engelse versie)

[Video of Voor vluchtelingen: financiën in Nederland (Engelse versie)](http://www.refugeetalenthub.com)
Attention!

[ Let op! ]

Tax refund

[ Belastingteruggaaf ]

If too much income tax has been paid for you, for example if you lived in a reception centre for part of the year, you can get money back by means of the M form. But please note that your municipality may regard that refund as income. In that case, the municipality will deduct this amount from your benefit. So ask the municipality in advance how it deals with tax refunds before you complete the M form.

Work and income during the asylum procedure

[ Inkomen en werk tijdens de asielprocedure ]

While staying at the reception centre, you will get a living allowance for clothes and food from the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) every week. If your procedure lasts longer than six months, you will be permitted to do paid work or to work as an independent entrepreneur. This is permitted for a maximum period of 24 weeks a year. Your employer must apply for a work permit for this purpose: a Tewerkstellingsvergunning (TWV). Once you receive an income, all or part of your living allowance will be withheld. You are, of course, also permitted to do voluntary work (unpaid work) during the asylum procedure.

Income and social security

[ Inkomen en sociale zekerheid ]

If you have not got any work yet, or if your income is low, you can make use of a number of benefits. To be able to apply for these benefits, you usually need a citizen service number (in Dutch: BSN) and a DigiD. For more information about DigiD, see the page about Housing.

1. Social assistance benefit

[ 1. Bijstandsuitkering ]

If you leave the reception centre and go and live in a municipality and you have not got any work yet, you can apply for a social assistance benefit at the municipality. The Dutch Council for Refugees
will usually help you with this application before your move to the municipality. The social assistance benefit is a monthly amount that you receive from the Dutch government. It is a low income on which you will have to manage financially. If you have received a credit from the municipality to furnish your house, money will be deducted from your social assistance benefit for some time. Some municipalities furthermore require that you do something in return for the social assistance benefit you get, for example by doing voluntary work and/or by proving that you are taking Dutch lessons.

2. Rent benefit and healthcare benefit

[ 2. Huur- en zorgtoeslag ]

When your income is low, you are often entitled to benefits. This means that the Dutch government contributes towards your costs for the rent and the health insurance. The amount of the housing benefit and healthcare benefit depends on your personal situation and the level of your income. Before you move from a reception centre to a house, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) will apply for the rent benefit and healthcare benefit for you. The COA will need a copy of the signed tenancy contract. So make sure that your contact person at the COA receives this copy.
The Tax and Customs Administration will pay the benefits every month as an advance payment. At the beginning of each new year, it calculates whether the benefits received were correct. If you got a paid job or a better-paid job halfway through the year, for example, you may need to pay back the benefits. So always pass on any changes in your income to the Tax and Customs Administration in time. More information about benefits in the Netherlands.

3. Child benefit

[ 3. Kinderbijslag ]

Child benefit is a contribution from the Dutch government towards the costs for raising your children up to 18 years old. The amount of this benefit depends on your child's age and whether your child lives with you. The child benefit is paid out every three months by the Social Insurance Bank (SVB). Once you have received a residence permit, you can apply for child benefit. Sometimes the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) will do this for you. The living allowance you get for the children during your stay at the reception centre will stop three months after you have received a residence permit. More information about applying for child benefit in different languages.

4. Supplementary child benefit

[ 4. Kindgebonden budget ]

The supplementary child benefit is a monthly contribution for families in addition to the child benefit. It is meant for families with lower to middle incomes and is paid out by the Tax and Customs Administration. If you get child benefit – and you also get rent benefit and healthcare benefit – you will automatically also get the supplementary child benefit. Is your partner still abroad? Problems with the supplementary child benefit may arise once your partner has arrived in the Netherlands. Ask the Dutch Council for Refugees what to do to prevent these problems. More information about supplementary child benefit in the Netherlands.

5. Childcare benefit
If you work or if you are taking an integration course and your children do not yet go to secondary school, they can go to childcare or out-of-school childcare. You can receive a contribution from the Dutch government to pay all or part of these costs. This contribution is called childcare benefit. Please note that if your partner does not, or does not yet, live in the Netherlands, you are usually not entitled to childcare benefit. Make enquiries with the Dutch Council for Refugees or the Tax and Customs Administration to prevent you from having to pay back a large amount. More information about childcare benefit.

6. Food bank and other facilities

In a large number of municipalities, organisations are active that distribute food products to families with low incomes. This is called a food bank: voedselbank. Your counsellor of the Dutch Council for Refugees will assess whether you qualify for this facility and help you with registering.

The facilities for persons and families with low incomes may differ by municipality. Examples are an emergency fund for unexpected high costs or a fund that pays the contribution for a sports club of your child. Make enquiries about these facilities with your municipality or your counsellor of the Dutch Council for Refugees.

More information

1. Work

The Refugee Start Force

Via the Refugee Start Force you can find interesting events and employers on Facebook and LinkedIn.

- To the website of Refugee Start Force

Refugee Talent Hub
The Refugee Talent Hub makes it possible for employers and refugees to meet, especially at Meet and Greet events.

- To the website of Refugee Talent Hub

Werkclub

The Werkclub trains and guides newcomers to work and education in Eindhoven, Rotterdam and Utrecht, among others.

- To the website of Werkclub

New Dutch connections

New Dutch Connections organises training courses, workshops and excursions to companies in various cities in the Netherlands and provides personal coaching.

- To the website of New Dutch connections

Project VIP2 - Vluchtelingen Investeren in Participeren

At the The Council for Refugees you can follow training courses in many places in the Netherlands and get a coach to increase your chance of work.

- To the information of Project VIP2 (pdf)
- To the website of Project VIP2
I-MPOWER helps refugee youth to find a job in Amsterdam or Rotterdam through training and coaching.

- To the website of I-MPOWER Amsterdam
- To the website of I-MPOWER Rotterdam

UWV

The UWV offers an overview of professions that are in high demand in the Netherlands.

- To the website of UWV

Werkwijzer Vluchtelingen (van de Sociaal-Economische Raad - SER)

On this website, you will find information about projects for (volunteer) work, training and language. And you will find information about laws and regulations regarding work.

- To the website of Werkwijzer Vluchtelingen

New Bees
At New Bees, you will find opportunities to gain work experience with guidance in your area. NewBees works in several of cities in the Netherlands (Zaandam, Amsterdam, Amersfoort).

- To the website of New Bees

**Refugees Forward**

If you want to set up your own business in the Netherlands, you can follow training courses in Amsterdam or Rotterdam.

- To the website of Refugees Forward

**Working Future**

Working Future offers training and vacancies via email.

- To the website of Working Future

**Delitelabs**
You can learn more about doing business in the Netherlands at Delitelabs in Amsterdam.

- [To the website of Delitelabs](#)

**Qredits**

Qredits helps migrant entrepreneurs with a business plan, loon and coaching!

- [To the website of Qredits](#)

**ROC**

ROC Nederland offers information in the field of education, career and available vacancies.

- [To the website of ROC](#)

**Welcome App**
Welcome App, an interactive platform that activates locals and newcomers to get in touch with each other, both socially and professionally, online and offline.

- To the website of Welcome App

2. Income

Bijstandsuitkering

On Rijksoverheid.nl, ministries inform you about the national laws and regulations, for example, about social assistance benefits (bijstandsuitkering).

- To the website of Rijksoverheid.nl

Project Euro-Wijzer

With the project Euro-Wijzer, the Dutch Council for Refugees supports refugees to become financially self-reliant and to prevent (further) debts.

- To the website of Euro-Wijzer

Schuldhulpmaatje

Are you no longer able to pay your bills? Do you have debts? SchuldHulpMaatje helps! We do not give money, but help you to solve the problems. Then you get peace again. Help is free for charge.
To the website of Schuldhulpmaatje

Humanitas

You can go to Humanitas if you need help with loneliness, loss, education, growing up, home administration & detention.

To the website of Humanitas

Nationaal Instituut voor Budgetvoorlichting- NIBUD

Nibud is an independent foundation and helps people with their household wallet. They provide information and explanation about how to get by, about saving, costs of living and borrowing money. In short: money matters in practice.

To the website of NIBUD