

# Family reunification procedure for asylum residence permit holders

## **You have an asylum residence permit and wish to apply for family reunification**

You have received a temporary asylum residence permit and wish to bring your family members to the Netherlands. You are the sponsor, which means that you are applying for a residence permit on behalf of your family members. The application is free.

The family reunification procedure consists of two parts:

- Part 1 concerns the application for a provisional residence permit for family reunification. A provisional residence permit is a long-term residence visa which allows your family members to travel to the Netherlands.
- Part 2 concerns the short asylum procedure after your family members arrive in the Netherlands. Your family members will receive a contingent asylum residence permit; their stay will depend on your asylum residence permit.

This leaflet explains step by step how your family member can obtain a contingent asylum residence permit.

## Which organisations will you encounter?



You are under the age of 18 and have no parents or other people to take care of you officially in the Netherlands. According to Dutch law, someone has to take care of you officially. This is called guardianship. The organisation that deals with this in the Netherlands is called **Stichting Nidos**. Nidos applies for guardianship over you. Nidos appoints one of its employees as your guardian. They can help you make important decisions, for example. The guardian also ensures that you have a safe place to live and can go to school. After you obtain an asylum residence permit, your guardian can also help you with the family reunification process. Nidos has no influence on the decision about your application for family reunification [www.nidos.nl](http://www.nidos.nl)



The **Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA)** is responsible for the reception and support of asylum seekers in the Netherlands during the asylum procedure, and any family members who are permitted to travel to the Netherlands afterwards. The COA arranges accommodation, food and temporary health insurance, if necessary. The COA can also help if you need a doctor while staying at the reception centre. The COA is an independent organisation and does not decide on your asylum application. [www.coa.nl](http://www.coa.nl)



**VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (VWN)** is an independent human rights organisation that protects the interests of asylum seekers and refugees. VWN employees can offer you information about the family reunification procedure. They can help you fill in the application form for family reunification and support you and your family members throughout the family reunification procedure. They can also help with problems with other organisations. VWN does not decide on applications for family reunification. [www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl](http://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl)  
[www.refugeehelp.nl](http://www.refugeehelp.nl)



**GezondheidsZorg Asielzoekers (GZA)** is the organisation your family members must go to if they are ill or have medical questions while at the reception centre. There is a GZA health centre at or near every COA reception location. GZA can arrange appointments with a doctor's assistant, nurse, GGZ senior practice nurse or general practitioner. [www.gzasielzoekers.nl](http://www.gzasielzoekers.nl)



Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst  
Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid

The **Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst (IND)** is a division of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. The IND investigates whether your family members meet the conditions for family reunification. They will also examine whether your documents are genuine. They may start a follow-up investigation abroad, which includes DNA testing and interviews with your family members. The IND can also ask you questions in the Netherlands before deciding whether to allow your family members to travel to the Netherlands.

[www.ind.nl](http://www.ind.nl)



The **Internationale Organisatie voor Migratie (IOM)** assists migrants worldwide from offices in over 100 countries. The IOM can assist with the reunification of asylum residence permit holders and their family members. The IOM charges a fee for its services as a consultant or full travel assistance. You must request a quote through the website for both services. The IOM cannot provide financial support for family reunification.

[www.iom-nederland.nl](http://www.iom-nederland.nl)



Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

The **Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (BZ)** represents the Dutch government abroad. BZ has diplomatic missions (embassies and consulates) in various countries around the world. The Dutch missions can assist your family members with their application for family reunification. The missions can take DNA samples and conduct interviews with your family members by appointment. This is always done at the IND's request. If the IND approves your family members for a provisional residence permit, they must make an appointment to visit the mission to arrange the issuance of the provisional residence permit.

[www.rijksoverheid.nl](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl)

## **A contingent asylum residence permit: family members and conditions**

A contingent asylum residence permit is a permit intended for your family to live with you in the Netherlands. Both you and your family members must comply with the conditions of the Dutch Aliens Act.

### **Family members eligible for a contingent asylum residence permit**

You can apply for family reunification for the following family members:

- Your spouse.
- Your partner.
- Your child or foster child.
- Your parents, if you were single and under the age of 18 when you applied for asylum.

### **Conditions for a contingent asylum residence permit**

- Your family members must apply for a provisional residence permit through you within three months after you receive your asylum residence permit. The three-month period is called the family reunification period.
- Your family members were already part of your family abroad. This is called the family relationship. The family relationship must still exist when your family members enter the Netherlands.
- Your family members must provide documents that prove their identity and their family relationship with you, or be able to explain it.
- Family members aged 12 years and over must sign a statement that they have no criminal history at the time of application. This is called an antecedents certificate.
- Children aged 15 years and above must sign a certificate of non-impediment at the time of application.
- You hold an independent asylum residence permit.
- You must sign a statement that you are the sponsor of your family members.
- You mentioned your family members during the asylum procedure.
- You and your partner are both at least 18-years-old.
- If you are applying on behalf of your minor child and the other biological parent will remain abroad, the parent staying behind must consent for your child to travel to the Netherlands.

### **Failure to satisfy the conditions for a contingent asylum residence permit.**

You and your family members do not meet the conditions in the following cases:

- You did not apply on time. The family reunification period is over. The IND will assess whether the late submission can be accepted.
- You wish to bring over other family members than those mentioned here.
- You have been granted a contingent asylum residence permit as a minor and then apply for family reunification for your parents.

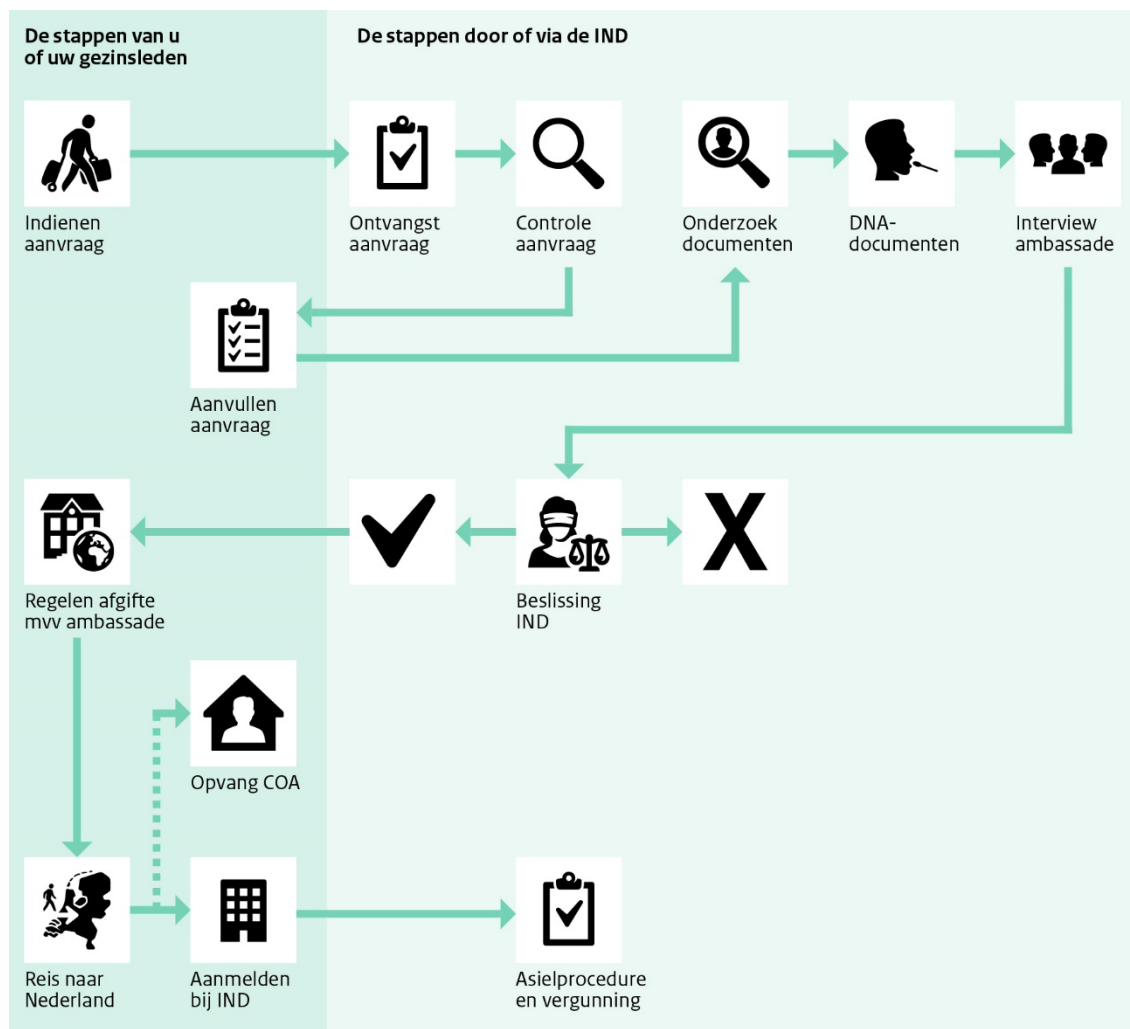
If you still wish to apply for family reunification in these situations, you must follow the normal application procedure for residence permits for family members or relatives. The regular application costs money and is subject to stricter rules. Use the application form "Application for the purpose of residence of family members and relatives 7018 (sponsor)". You can find the form at [www.ind.nl/en/family](http://www.ind.nl/en/family).

## At the time of the asylum application, you were single and under the age of 18

You can only apply for family reunification for your biological parents. If you want to bring over minor or adult brothers or sisters, you must follow the normal application procedure for residence permits for family members or relatives. The regular application costs money.

If you have more than one spouse, you may only bring over one of them, together with any children you may have with that spouse. Under Dutch law, citizens may only have one spouse.

## Family reunification procedure for asylum residence permit holders



## Part 1. Applying for a provisional residence permit application for family members in 8 steps



### **Step 1: Submit application**

You must fill in an application form, which can be found on the IND website: [www.ind.nl/nareis](http://www.ind.nl/nareis). You must complete a separate form for each family member. The IND website also has an English version of the form available.

VluchtelingenWerk Nederland's employees provide information about the family reunification procedure. They can help you complete the family reunification application form and guide you through the entire family reunification procedure. If you are a minor, your Nidos guardian can also help you with the application.

Read and follow all instructions on the application form. Please make sure you include all necessary documents and complete the annexes.

The IND expects your family members to prove their identity and family relationship with you with documents or clear explanations if there are not enough documents. This concerns documents issued by the authorities in the country of origin, as well as other evidence. Your family members usually have to send original documents to you in the Netherlands. The IND will specify which original documents are required. All requested documents must be written in or translated into Dutch, English, French or German. The translator must be sworn in by a Dutch court.

Gather all the documents needed for the application as soon as possible to speed up the procedure.

You must send the IND the completed application form and copies of all documents for each family member. Keep the original documents; these may be needed later. You must send the completed application form with annexes and a passport photo to the IND. The IND address is listed on the application form.



### **Step 2: Receipt of the application**

You will receive a letter from the IND once they have received your application. The letter specifies the name of the family member for whom you applied, and the numbers under which your family member is registered with the IND. The letter will also include the date on which the IND received your application and when it will make a decision. The letter will ask you to send original documents.

If you are moving, notify the IND of your change of address as soon as possible to prevent delays in the procedure. Also notify the IND if you are assigned a different counsellor by VVN. Submit changes using the digital IND form or by letter.

### **Step 3: Checking the application**

When the application is processed, the IND will check whether you have filled in all the required information and included the correct attachments and documents or copies thereof. If the application is complete, the IND will assess whether your family members meet the conditions for a contingent asylum residence permit. The application will be rejected if it is immediately clear that your family members do not meet the requirements. The procedure will take longer if the IND is missing any information or still needs original documents. In that case, the procedure will take longer and you will receive a letter from the IND.

### **Step 4: Supplementing the application**

The letter specifies which information and documents the IND still needs and by when you must send them. It also states whether the IND wishes to examine any

documents. Take the letter to your contact at VluchtelingenWerk to help you send the requested documents as soon as possible. If you need more time, call the IND official who is handling your application or have VluchtelingenWerk call them. The IND official's telephone number is stated in the letter.



### **Step 5: Document examination**

All members of your family must provide documents to prove of their identity and their relationship (family relationship) with you in the Netherlands. The IND will usually examine these documents to ensure they are genuine. Document examination usually takes a few weeks.

If your family members have no documents, they and you must clearly explain why.



### **Step 6: DNA testing**

The IND may decide to conduct further investigation, such as DNA testing. If your family member is your biological child or your biological parent if you are a minor, the IND will send you an invitation for DNA testing. DNA testing helps your family members prove that you are their parent or child. The IND collaborates with the Dutch missions (embassies or consulates) for DNA testing. In some cases, the IND may also collaborate with IOM and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The letter explains what you and your family members need to do.

First, your family members must make an appointment with the nearest Dutch mission. A doctor, nurse or someone else will take a cheek swab from your family members at the embassy on the appointment day. The swab is taken with a special stick. Cheek swabs do not hurt and are not harmful to your health. The DNA material is sent to the IND in the Netherlands. Your family members must inform you immediately when their cheek swab is taken at the Dutch mission, as the IND also needs to take a sample of your DNA. In some cases, they may also need samples from your biological family members in the Netherlands. This is done by appointment at an IND desk. You will receive a letter from the IND explaining the appointment.

The IND will have the saliva samples taken from you and your family members tested. DNA testing can take a few months. The IND will contact you with further information when the results are available.

Your family members must go to the nearest Dutch mission for a follow-up examination and to arrange the issuance of the provisional residence permit. In some cases, your family members may have to cross a national border to do so. This may complicate their return to their country of origin. Your family members are responsible for this themselves. Discuss the possibility of crossing the border with your family members in time. Also, discuss the applicable rules for entering, staying in and exiting the country where the Dutch mission is located. Arrange these matters before you make an appointment at the Dutch mission.



### **Step 7: Interview at the Dutch mission**

If DNA testing is not possible or the IND has questions, the IND may invite your family members to an interview at a Dutch mission abroad. The interview allows your family members to explain who they are and their relationship with you. The IND may also invite you to an interview in the Netherlands. Arranging an interview at the mission can take several months.





### Step 8: Decision

The IND await the results of all investigations. When the results are in, the IND will check whether your family members meet all the requirements. You will receive a decision on the application for your family members. By law, you must receive the decision within three to six months of submitting the application. A decision can take longer

when more investigation is needed and when it is busy.

- Positive decision: Your family members will receive a provisional residence permit. The decision will tell you when your family members can collect their provisional residence permit and explain anything you still need to do. The IND will send the decisions to you. You must inform your family members about the IND's decision. If your family members are being granted a provisional residence permit, the IND will send the decision to the Dutch mission.
- Negative decision: Your family members will not receive a provisional residence permit. Your family members may appeal the decision through you. You or your VluchtelingenWerk counsellor can find a lawyer to help you file an appeal.



### Step 9: Provisional residence permit collection after positive decision

#### *Appointment*

Your family members must collect the provisional residence permit within three months after the positive decision. To do so, they must make an appointment with the Dutch mission (embassy or consulate). This is the mission that was filled in on the application form or where your family members have been before for further investigation. If there is no Dutch mission in the country of origin, your family members can travel to a neighbouring country. In that case, they will then have an additional three months to collect the provisional residence permit.

#### *Dutch mission: Provisional residence permit form, fingerprints, signature and surrender of passport*

Your family members must bring their own passport photo. The passport photo must meet the requirements listed at [www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl](http://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl) or [www.netherlandsworldwide.nl](http://www.netherlandsworldwide.nl). To obtain the provisional residence permit, your family members must complete a provisional residence permit issue form. An official will take your family members' fingerprints. Your family members must also provide their signatures. The Dutch embassy will take your family members' passports. This is necessary to issue the provisional residence permit. The passport must be valid for six months or more at that time.

If your family members do not have a passport, they can usually obtain a Dutch laissez-passer (LP). An LP is a one-way travel document. Each family member must submit two additional passport photos for an LP. The IND will inform the mission if your family members are eligible for an LP.

Only Dutch missions outside your family members' country of origin can issue an LP.

#### *Provisional residence permit preparation and placement in passport*

The mission will prepare the provisional residence permit. This usually takes a few weeks. When everything is ready, the provisional residence permit (sticker) is placed

in the passport. The mission will invite your family members to collect their passports with provisional residence permits.

*Dutch mission: Provisional residence permit collection and information*

Your family members will return to the mission. Their passports will be returned to them with the provisional residence permit. Alternatively, they will receive an LP with the provisional residence permit. They will also receive written information on what to do after entering the Netherlands.



**Step 10: Travel to the Netherlands**

Once your family members have collected their provisional residence permits, they can travel to the Netherlands. In some cases, there may be special exit regulations for your family members abroad.

VluchtelingenWerk can provide information about this. The provisional residence permit is valid for 90 days. The validity is stated on the provisional residence permit sticker.

There are two dates:

- Effective date (the provisional residence permit is valid from this date)
- Expiry date (the provisional residence permit is no longer valid from this date)

Your family members must purchase their own plane tickets to travel to the Netherlands. The IND advises not to purchase tickets until after collecting the provisional residence permit. If you are receiving support from VluchtelingenWerk, some of the travel costs may be reimbursed in certain cases. Ask your counsellor about the possibilities. Make an appointment with the IND for your family members before they leave for the Netherlands. You may also need to request a place in a reception centre for them from the COA right away. You can read more in Part 2.

Your family members may withdraw the application at any time. In that case, you should inform the IND through your VluchtelingenWerk counsellor. If your family members withdraw the application, the family reunification period will lapse and you will no longer be able to apply for family reunification via this route.

## **Part 2. The Dutch asylum procedure for your family members in 2 steps**



**Step 1: Registration and appointment with the COA and IND in Zevenaar**

Your family members must travel to the Netherlands within 90 days. They must register in person at the IND's family reunification desk in Zevenaar within three days after arriving in the Netherlands.

Registration in Zevenaar is by appointment only. If your home is not suitable for all your family members to live with you or if you are being housed by the COA or Nidos, contact the COA to apply for a place in a reception centre for your family members. You can also make an appointment for their application in Zevenaar at the same time. If you have a suitable home, you only need to make an appointment with the IND.

### *No suitable housing*

If you live in a COA reception centre or if your home has not been approved by the landlord or housing association for all your family members to live with you, you must send an email to the COA to request a place in a reception centre for them. This place in a reception centre is free. If you are unable to request a place in a reception centre, ask your contact at VWN for help. Ask for a place in a reception centre after your family members have booked their trip, but before their departure to the Netherlands.

### *Requesting a place in a reception centre from the COA by email*

You must request a place in a reception centre from the COA as follows:

1. Send an email to the COA requesting a place in a reception centre for your family members. The email should be sent to the following email address:  
ZevenaarDuiven@COA.nl
2. Include the following information in the email:
  - Date of arrival of your family members in the Netherlands. This is also the day when your family members first need a place in a reception centre.
  - Your family members' V numbers.
  - The first and last names of each of your family members.
  - Your first and last name, phone number and email address (or VWN's email address).
3. You will receive an email confirmation from the COA within two business days as to where your family members can receive a place in a reception centre.

### *Making an appointment with the IND*

Once you have emailed the COA about a place in a reception centre, make an appointment with the IND to register at the family reunification desk in Zevenaar. Do this before your family members leave for the Netherlands. You can make an appointment online at [www.ind.nl/nareis-zevenaar](http://www.ind.nl/nareis-zevenaar) or [www.ind.nl/en/family-member-of-refugee-zevenaar](http://www.ind.nl/en/family-member-of-refugee-zevenaar).

The IND's address in Zevenaar is:

Ringbaan-Zuid 2A  
6905 DB Zevenaar

Overnight stay is not possible in Zevenaar.



### **Step 2: Short asylum procedure and residence permit for your family members**

Your family members' short asylum procedure usually takes one day.

If there are any doubts or ambiguities, the IND will transfer your family members to the general asylum procedure. The general asylum procedure takes longer.

Your family members' asylum procedure includes the following:

- VWN staff explain the procedure.
- The IND checks your family members' identity, provisional residence permit and the information on the passport or laissez-passer.
- Your family members provided a photo, signature and fingerprints at the Dutch mission. The IND checks whether the required information is correct. In some cases, the IND may re-take this data.

- Your family members will receive the decision from the IND. They will also receive their residence permit, if it is already available. If not, your family members will receive a letter when their residence permit is ready at the IND desk. Collection of residence permits is by appointment only.
- Your family members can be tested for tuberculosis (TB) at the COA reception centre, if necessary. If that is not possible, your family members must make their own appointment for TB testing at the Municipal Health Service (GGD). A TB test may be necessary depending on your family members' country of origin.
- Your family members will receive an appointment confirmation. This allows them to register with the municipality in the Key Register of Persons (BRP). The BRP is the population register.
- Once the procedure is complete, your family members can live with you. If that is not possible, your family members will receive a temporary place in a reception centre from the COA.

## **Independent asylum application**

Your family members will receive a contingent asylum residence permit in the Netherlands. A contingent permit is a temporary permit that is dependent on your asylum residence permit. If your children or parents are coming to the Netherlands for family reunification with you, they must live with you for at least one year. If the IND revokes or does not extend your asylum permit, your family members' residence permits will also be revoked. The IND will assess whether they are eligible for an independent asylum permit. The IND can also revoke their residence permit if their family relationship with you ceases. This is the case if your family members no longer have a relationship with you, or if the family member in question is a child who will be living independently within a year.

If your family members want to submit an independent application for asylum for their own reasons, they can state this during the interview with the IND at the reception location. The IND official will provide further information. If your family members submit an independent asylum application, it will be processed in the general asylum procedure, which takes longer. Your family members will live with you while their asylum application is being processed. They will not receive their own place in a reception centre or housing. The IND will investigate whether your family members need the protection of the Dutch government. If they do, they will receive an independent temporary asylum residence permit. Your family members may also choose to submit an independent asylum application at a later date.

## **Personal data processing**

Personal data is any kind of information about you. The organisations that collaborated on this leaflet are listed below. They process personal data while processing your application, notification or request. They will ask you for your details and will also ask other organisations or individuals if necessary. These organisations use and store your data and share it with other organisations if required to do so by law. Privacy legislation sets out obligations for organisations that process your data. For example, they must handle your data accurately and securely. Privacy legislation also establishes your rights. For example, you have the right to the following, on request:

- The right to access your data stored by organisations.
- The right to know what organisations are doing with your data and why.

- The right to know with which organisations your details have been shared.
- To find out more about your rights and how your personal data is processed, visit the respective organisation's website.

## Frequently asked questions

### **Can you file this application if your family members are lost?**

Yes, make sure you apply within three months, even if you have no contact with your family members. If you do not, you will not satisfy the family reunification period condition. In some cases, the Red Cross can help you find your family members. This is called tracing. VluchtelingenWerk can refer you to the Red Cross.

### **Can your family members sign the antecedents certificate at the Dutch mission?**

No, that is not possible. If there are problems sending the signed antecedents certificate to the Netherlands, consult the IND about the best way to proceed.

### **Where will you and your family members live if you are still staying at a COA facility?**

The COA will try to keep you and your family members living in the same reception centre until suitable housing is available.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the contents of this leaflet, please talk to your VluchtelingenWerk counsellor.

### **Complaints**

All organisations involved in the family reunification procedure are professional and meticulous. If you are dissatisfied with the treatment of your family members by an organisation you can file a complaint. Your VluchtelingenWerk counsellor can help you with this.

This leaflet is a joint publication by:  
Afdeling Vreemdelingenpolitie, Identificatie  
en Mensenhandel (AVIM)  
Nidos  
Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA)  
Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst (IND)  
Koninklijke Marechaussee (KMar)  
Raad voor Rechtsbijstand (RvR)  
VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (VWN)  
Internationale Organisatie voor Migratie  
(IOM)  
Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek (DT&V)

Commissioned by:  
Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid,  
directie Migratiebeleid  
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