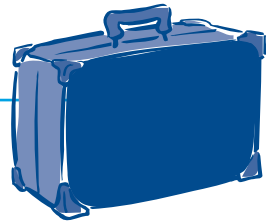


# Immigration Issues



Immigrants are people who move from another country to Ireland to live or work. The term is very broad and includes Irish nationals returning home, EU nationals, other nationals moving to live or work in Ireland, people seeking asylum, programme refugees, etc. The term “non-national” is often used when referring to immigrants.

## Visas

An Irish visa is a stamp needed on your passport while you are travelling from your country to Ireland. EU nationals and nationals from certain countries such as USA, Australia and a few African countries do not need visas to enter the State. A list of countries whose passport holders require visas to enter Ireland is available from the Department of Foreign Affairs (see contact details, page 34). When applying for a visa some documentation will be required such as passport, green card, a letter from your employer or college, marriage certificate etc. It’s advisable to call first to find out what documents will be needed.

There are two types of visas – single-entry (which allows holders to enter the State once through the validity period of the visa) and multiple-entry visas (which allows holders to leave and enter the State several times through the validity period of the visa). There is a stamp on the visa, which defines your purpose of stay in Ireland such as study, work, tourist etc. A Transit Visa allows the holder to transit through the country’s airports.

The decision on whether or not to grant a visa is made by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Reasons for refusal are not given. In general, visitors’ visas are for a maximum of 3 months and are difficult to extend. Extensions to visitors’ visas are not granted if a change of status is involved. If the person wants to change status from a visitor to a student or a worker, s/he has to return to the country from which s/he came and make the application to the Irish Embassy or Consulate there. You should always keep in mind that laws regarding immigration issues may change.

## GNIB Registration Cards (Green Cards)

Anyone from outside the EU who intends to stay in Ireland for more than 3 months must register with the Garda Síochána and obtain a GNIB (Garda National Immigration Bureau) card – commonly known as a “green card”. In order to apply for a green card you must have permission to remain in the country, e.g. as a student, with a work permit, or being married to an Irish or EU citizen. You may be asked for a green card by a Garda in the street or in the airport when you are entering the country (apart from first time entry). Asylum applicants get a temporary residence card, known as a RAC card, from the Refugee Applications Commissioner. For further information contact the Immigration section at Anglesea St Garda Station, tel 021 4522086 between 12 noon and 1pm, or 4-5pm Monday to Friday.

A green card may have one of four types of stamp. Each has a different meaning:

**Stamp 1** shows the person has a work permit (either through a specific employer or holiday work permit)

**Stamp 2** indicates that the person is a student.

**Stamp 3** is a restricted stamp, which shows that you are not entitled to work or study in Ireland.

**Stamp 4** is a very broad one, which

for instance is given to spouses married to an Irish citizen and people granted refugee status.

## Asylum Seekers & Refugees

**Asylum Seekers** are people who have applied for refugee status. Some people who do not succeed in being declared refugees are given what is described as “humanitarian leave to remain” or just “leave to remain”. Asylum seekers who do not succeed in getting either refugee status or humanitarian leave to remain are deemed illegal immigrants and may be deported. Free legal advice is available to all those applying for asylum via the Refugee Legal Service (see page 23).

In general asylum seekers are provided with accommodation in hostels or accommodation centres. This is referred to as “direct provision”. Meals are provided on site and each person receives a small weekly payment.

This guide can only give a brief overview of the asylum seeking process – for detailed information contact the Irish Refugee Council (see below for contact details). The main steps involved in applying for refugee status are as follows:

- You are advised to apply for asylum at the point of entry to Ireland and

from there the application will be dealt with by the Refugee Applications Commissioner.

- The application must be accompanied by the original travel documents such as passports, originals of identity documents, birth and marriage certificates if needed.
- You must attend for an interview when requested. This interview may take a couple of hours. You should bring additional information or documentation, which supports your case to the interview.
- You must also inform the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform each time you change your address. If you move from one area of the country to another, you have to notify the Department and your local Health Board.
- You cannot leave the State without permission and cannot enter employment while your application is under consideration.

**Refugees** are people who have succeeded in their application for asylum. Refugees are entitled to broadly the same rights as Irish citizens. They are entitled to take up work or self-employment and get social welfare payments. People who are given leave to remain may get that status subject to certain conditions but most have the same rights as refugees.

## Support for Immigrants

There are a number of organisations in Cork, which provide support to refugees, asylum seekers and other immigrants. (See also English language classes page 45). These include:

**Cois Tine**, Convent Place, Proby's Quay, Cork and 21 Victoria Avenue, Cork. Tel 021 4316593, e-mail [coistinecork@eircom.net](mailto:coistinecork@eircom.net)  
Cois Tine is a multicultural interfaith organisation which addresses the pastoral, spiritual and social needs of the immigrant community. It provides a free drop in centre for immigrants open Monday – Friday, 10.30am – 4.30pm, as well as information and referral for counselling.

**Irish Immigrant Voice**,  
e-mail: [immigrantsvoice@iolfree.ie](mailto:immigrantsvoice@iolfree.ie)  
[www.guybeni.com/html/iiv.html](http://www.guybeni.com/html/iiv.html)  
Empowers immigrants' solidarity and provides a platform for their voices to be heard.

**NASC**, The Irish Immigrant Support Centre, Sharman Crawford St, Cork. Tel 021 4317411,  
e-mail: [nascork@eircom.net](mailto:nascork@eircom.net)  
NASC provides general information clinics, legal clinics and runs a number of sub groups.

Open Monday – Friday, 10am – 6pm (closed 1.15pm – 2.15pm)

**SONAS DP Ireland Ltd** (Support Organisation for the Needs of Asylum Seekers), c/o Cork City Partnership, Sunbeam Industrial Estate, Millfield, Mallow Rd, Cork. Tel 021 4302310, e-mail: [sorinasonasireland@eircom.net](mailto:sorinasonasireland@eircom.net)

**St. Vincent de Paul**, Tuckey St., Cork.  
Tel 021 4270444

Provides free legal advice (Wed & Thurs pm). Drop-in centre on Sunday afternoons in Christian Brothers School, Sullivan's Quay, Cork.

**Cork City Partnership.**

Sunbeam Industrial Estate, Mallow Road, Cork. Tel 021 4302310,  
e-mail: [info@partnershipcork.ie](mailto:info@partnershipcork.ie)  
Supports immigrant representative groups.

Dublin-based organisations which provide detailed information on the official procedures, rules and regulations regarding refugees and asylum seekers, include:

- Irish Refugee Council, 35/36 Arran Quay, Dublin 7. Tel 01 8724424.  
[www.refugeecouncil.ie](http://www.refugeecouncil.ie)
- Amnesty International, Seán McBride House, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2. Tel 01 6776361.  
[www.amnesty.ie](http://www.amnesty.ie)
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Asylum Division, 72-76 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. Tel 01 6028202, [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie).
- Refugee Information Service, 27 Annamoe Terrace, Dublin 7. Tel 01 8382740. [www.ris.ie](http://www.ris.ie)

General information for all immigrants is available from:

- Immigrant Council of Ireland, 42 Upper Dorset Street, Dublin 1. Tel 01 8656525,  
[www.immigrantcouncil.ie](http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie)

- Migrant Rights Centre, 3 Beresford Place, Dublin 1. Tel 01 8881355

## Irish Citizenship

There are a number of grounds on which immigrants can apply for Irish citizenship. In 2004 those eligible to apply for citizenship included:

- People married to an Irish citizen for at least 3 years.
- People with at least one parent or grandparent born in Ireland.
- People resident in Ireland for 5 years or over.

To find out more about applying for citizenship see contacts below.

### Further Information

Visa contact:  
Department of Foreign Affairs,  
Burgh Quay, Dublin 2.  
Tel 01 633 1001 (2.30-4pm)

Citizenship on grounds of marriage or ancestry contact:  
Department of Foreign Affairs,  
80 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.  
Tel 01 4780822.

Citizenship on grounds of residency contact:  
Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,  
13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2.  
Tel 01 6167700 (9.30am-12.30pm)