

WINZ Home Help Programme



What is it?

Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) has a Home Help programme in place that can assist with the cost of home help to complete household tasks normally performed in the home, such as cleaning, cooking and doing the laundry. There are specific criteria that apply to Multiple Birth families.

Who can benefit from Home Help?

For families who qualify through the Multiple Birth criteria, this benefit is not means tested. You are most likely eligible if:

- You (or your partner) have given birth to twins or adopted two children from the same pregnancy and have another child in your care under the age of five years-old
- OR
- You (or your partner) have given birth to or have adopted triplets, or higher order multiples (you do not have to have another child in your care to qualify).

You (or your partner) must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, *AND* you must normally live in New Zealand and intend to stay here.

How much help is available?

Parents who have given birth to, or have adopted, twins can get 240 hours to be used within 12 months. Those who have given birth to, or adopted, triplets or more, are entitled to 1560 hours, to be used within 24 months. Home Help is granted from the date that the babies are born if they are born at home, or from the date that they are discharged from the hospital.

You may use your allotted hours in any way that suits your family needs, i.e. short term full-time help, or longer term part-time help. However, there is no further entitlement once the hours are used up or once the maximum period has ended

Who can perform the home help?

The home helper can be:

- Self-employed
- Employed by the client
- Employed by a home help agency
- Employed by the District Health Board.

The home helper can be, but is not limited to, the partner, an

immediate family member or an occupant of the same home as the woman who has given birth to or adopted multiples.

What funding are you entitled to?

There is a Maximum gross rate per hour (including 8% holiday pay). The rate changes annually. Payment can be made to the home helper, the organisation providing the help, or in exceptional circumstances, to the parent themselves. WINZ will need to view timesheets to validate payments. The payment is gross and subject to income tax.

If the home help is provided by an agency that is GST registered, GST will need to be added to the total payment amount. The home helper is responsible for paying his/her own taxes and ACC levies to IRD. In some circumstances, the home helper may also receive financial assistance towards his/her travel costs.

What are some of the ways you can use the payments?

- Someone to watch the babies during school/preschool drop off. Partner, parents, grandparents and friends can all be home helpers.
- Nanny/In Home Childcare companies (who can work with WINZ to complete paperwork so you don't have to worry). Childcare companies may also be able to easily access other subsidies on your behalf.

Remember, you do need to supply a timesheet to validate payments and home helpers are responsible for paying their tax.

What are the requirements?

You will need to provide proof of birth (birth certificates or hospital discharge papers) of the multiples. You will also need to provide proof of your own identity (and your partner, if applicable). The home helper will be required to complete a portion of the form, provide identification of who they are and a confirmed bank account number.

How can you find out more information?

Contact your nearest WINZ office (give them a call on 0800 559 009), go online or check out their website at www.ird.govt.nz

Information about financial assistance for families with multiples

IMPORTANT NOTE

The Home Help Programme is not specifically for multiple births. It has three distinct criteria under which you could qualify:

1. You are struggling to manage the home (Domestic Support) *OR*
2. There's an emergency and you need some short-term help in the home, and there's no-one else who can help out (Domestic Emergency) *OR*
3. You've had a multiple birth (two or more surviving babies from one pregnancy)—if you have twins, you can only get Home Help assistance if you have other children under five years old.

If you do not have a preschooler or your twins are older than 12 months, you may still be able to apply under the first two criteria (but these two criteria are asset tested).

Frequently Asked Questions

In many cases your questions can be answered by reviewing the WINZ website (search Home Help), the specific legislation, or the Home Help Payments Application form.

Do the Home Help payments cease when the oldest child turns 5, or when the 12 month period ends?

- Payment can continue if either the 240 hours care, or the 12 month period have not been met, and the older dependent child has turned five during this time.
- Home Help for multiple births may be paid to up to 240 hours (it stops once the hours have been used), or for a maximum period of 12 months after the children were born, or entered the applicant's home, whichever is the earlier date.
- Where the Home Help for multiple births is paid for either a maximum 240 hours or 12 months, this implies that the older dependent child aged under 5 years will have a birthday during this time.
- Applicants must meet the entry eligibility criteria regarding the age of the older dependent child when they initially apply.

Can the home helper receive a travel allowance?

Yes, Home-helpers may be reimbursed for their actual and reasonable travel expenses from their home to the clients' home. This reimbursement is up to 40 cents per km (maximum 12 km) or actual public transport costs (as at March 2020).

When do you apply through WINZ for the Home Help payments? Once they are born, or before?

Contact your local WINZ office, as you may be able to submit all the paperwork in advance of the birth, and then supply the birth certificates/hospital discharge papers after the fact.

My twins are one-year-old. Have I missed out on applying for the Home Help payments?

Yes. However, you can apply under the other Home Help payment criteria, as applicable.

Can you extend your home help payments under special circumstances?

No, but you can reapply under the other Home Help payment criteria, as applicable.

How does the holiday pay and income tax process work?

- The Home Help payments are paid 'before tax' and the payment itself is subject to income tax. The hourly rate for Home Help payments also includes holiday pay. The home helper is responsible for paying their own taxes and ACC levies to IRD.
- Unlike most WINZ payments, the Home Help payment is generally going to a third-party contractor, not the applicant. So WINZ don't deduct the tax on behalf of the IRD as they do with other benefits. Instead, it becomes the responsibility of the third-party contractor. How much tax is payable on the income from the Home Help payment, is obviously dependent on individual circumstances.

Does WINZ require a Birth Certificates AND hospital discharge papers?

The current application form states that full birth certificates for your children or hospital discharge papers for the babies from a multiple birth are required.

Does WINZ specify when the Home Help is to be provided, e.g Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm?

There appears to be no such requirement set out in the legislation or the application form.

My partner is a New Zealand citizen and I am not. Can my partner apply for the Home Help payments even though it will be me giving birth?

Yes. As the New Zealand citizen, your partner is able to apply for the Home Help payments.

How do you manage timesheets for payment if not using an agency?

- You can design your own timesheets: there is nothing prescribed by WINZ. But do keep a running record of the hours you have submitted to WINZ for payment.
- Make sure that you copy the timesheets before submitting them to your local WINZ office for payment.

Useful Links

Home Help Web Page (also contains Application form and Timesheet template):

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/home-help.html#null>

Home Help Rates:

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/home-help-tables/home-help-rates-current.html>

Home Help Travel Costs:

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/home-help/travel-costs-01.html>