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Living in the Netherlands

Guide for Ukrainians





Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	5
I. LEGALIZATION AND DOCUMENTS	6
Temporary Protection Directive (Tijdelijke Bescherming)	6
1. Who qualifies for protection	6
Frequently asked questions about temporary protection status	7
2. If you do not qualify for temporary protection status	7
Registration and legalization	8
1. Registration at the municipality (gemeente)	8
2. Residence document	8
Rights of Ukrainian refugees	9
1. Work	9
2. Accommodation	9
3 Education	9
4. Medical care	9
Entry and exit	9
Expiration of temporary protection	10
Additional legal aspects	10
Taxes: what you need to know	11
II. ACCOMMODATION AND LODGING	13
Types of accommodation	13
Rental housing	13
Purchasing an accomodation	15
Tips for finding an apartment	16
III. HEALTHCARE	17
General Information	17



🛡 Medical insurance for Ukrainians with temporary protection (RMO)	17
Getting health care	19
1. General practitioner (Huisarts)	19
2. Emergency medical care	20
3. medicines and pharmacies (Apotheek)	20
4. Specialized medical care	21
5. Dental care (tandarts).	21
6. Psychological help	21
7. Pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care in the Netherlands	22
8. Vaccination and prevention	24
9. Useful resources	25
10. Tips when going to the doctor	26
 IV. WORK, FINANCES	 27
 Allowance (leefgeld)	 27
 Getting a job	 29
👤💼 Employment resources	29
Employment for Ukrainian medical workers	30
Employment for Ukrainian teachers	31
Labor rights	31
Minimum wage	32
Taxes withheld on wages	32
Additional payments and benefits	32
❓ Do I need to open a Dutch bank account to receive my salary?	33
❓ Can I receive a salary and a municipal living allowance (leefgeld) at the same time?	33
 Entrepreneurship	 33
To start your own business in the Netherlands:	33
 V. DAILY LIFE	 35
 🚗 Personal and public transportation	 35
🚆 Public transportation	35
🚲 Bicycles	35
🚗 Car in the Netherlands	36
 🛒 Grocery stores (supermarkets)	 37
 👕 Clothing and shoes	 37
 🧴 Household chemicals and household goods	 38
 💊 Pharmacies and health	 38



Online services and resources	38
Free and social resources	39
Useful applications	39
VI. EDUCATION AND SOCIALIZATION	40
Education in the Netherlands	40
Pre-school education	40
Primary school (Basisonderwijs)	41
Secondary school (Voortgezet onderwijs)	41
Transitions between levels	41
Higher education: three levels	41
Confirmation of education obtained in Ukraine or abroad	42
NL Dutch language courses	43
Frequently asked questions about education in the Netherlands	44
Social support and volunteering	46
Social initiatives	46
Other events in different regions of the Netherlands	47

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Introduction

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the European Union has activated the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) for the first time since its adoption in 2001. This measure has given Ukrainians immediate access to residence rights, employment, basic healthcare, and education in all EU countries without the need to go through the lengthy asylum process.

However, the trauma and uncertainty that displaced people face require more than basic assistance. Ukrainian citizens in the EU need targeted support to regain their footing, rebuild their lives, and feel part of their new communities. Our project aims to provide that support by helping Ukrainians gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to integrate and thrive.

This manual is designed to be a practical and reliable guide for Ukrainians navigating life in the Netherlands. It covers essential topics such as residence permits, housing, employment, education, and access to healthcare and social services. More than just information, we hope it offers a sense of orientation, encouragement, and empowerment for those starting over in a new country.



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I. Legalization and documents

Temporary Protection Directive (Tijdelijke Bescherming)

As of March 4, 2022, the EU activated the **Temporary Protection Directive**, which also applies to the Netherlands. It grants Ukrainian refugees:

- The right to residence and work;
- the right to housing;
- access to medical care;
- access to education;
- the right to social assistance;
- the right to free Dutch language courses.

The proof of temporary protection status is an **O-document** or a **sticker**: both are issued by the IND - the Netherlands Migration Board.

1. Who qualifies for protection

Eligible for temporary protection are:

- Ukrainian citizens who resided in Ukraine until February 24, 2022;
- persons with refugee or humanitarian status in Ukraine;
- family members of the above categories;
- **non-citizens of Ukraine**, if they had a **long-term residence permit in Ukraine** and cannot safely return to their country of origin (provided that the application is submitted before March 4, 2023). For example, one of the following conditions:
 - On February 23, 2022, you had international protection in Ukraine, for example, as a recognized refugee. Or you had another form of temporary (national) protection because you are not safe in your country of origin.
 - You had a valid permanent residence permit in Ukraine on February 23, 2022. You left Ukraine after November 26, 2021 and went to another EU country. And you did not return to your country of origin after February 23, 2022.
- More information on the [IND \(Netherlands Migration Board\) website](https://ind.nl)



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Frequently asked questions about temporary protection status

✓ Until how long can I stay in the Netherlands under TPD?

According to the latest extension, you are entitled to stay in the Netherlands under TPD until **March 4, 2027**. This extension was adopted by the Council of the European Union in June 2024. [Government.nl](https://www.government.nl).

✓ What happens after March 2027?

There is no final decision yet on the future after the TPD ends. The Netherlands and other EU countries are considering options, including extending protection, returning or switching to other forms of residence permits.

✓ Can I apply for permanent residence or asylum?

Yes, you can apply for **asylum** or a **regular residence permit** (e.g. for work or study). However, applying for asylum may affect your current status under TPD. It is recommended that you get legal advice before submitting your application. [RefugeeHelp.nl](https://www.refugeehelp.nl)

✓ Can I bring family members from Ukraine?

Yes, you can apply for **family reunification**. This applies to immediate family members such as your spouse and minor children. The procedure requires submitting the appropriate application and providing the necessary documents.

✓ What if my legal documents expire?

If your **sticker** or **O-Document** expires but you have received a renewal letter from the IND, your document remains valid until March 4, 2026. If you have not received such a letter, it is recommended that you contact the IND for clarification. [IND.nl](https://ind.nl).

✓ Where can I get free legal aid?

You can seek free legal aid from the following organizations:

- **VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (VWN)** - provides advice on asylum, family reunification and other legal matters.
- **Het Juridisch Loket** - offers free legal advice for low-income people. Read more: [Free legal advice](https://www.hetjuridischloket.nl)

2. If you do not qualify for temporary protection status

For example, you do not have a valid Ukrainian passport, valid Ukrainian residence permit or refugee status as of February 23, 2022.

- You can apply for asylum. Read more (in English): [IND - Asylum procedure](https://ind.nl/asylum-procedure).



Registration and legalization

1. Registration at the municipality (gemeente)

A. Register with the municipality

You must register with the municipality where you actually reside. Your data will be entered into the **Basisregistratie Personen (BRP)** - the Population Database. This is necessary so that the Dutch authorities are aware of your residence in the country.

You are entitled to register in the BRP:

- citizens of Ukraine;
- persons with an **indefinite residence permit in Ukraine** valid as of February 23, 2022.

An identity card or a copy thereof will be required for registration.

B. Obtaining a BSN (personalized number)

Once you have registered with BRP, you will automatically receive a BSN (**Burgerservicenummer**) - a personal citizen identification number. It is usually issued within 4 weeks of submitting your application at the municipality.

The BSN is required for:

- employment;
- applying for health insurance;
- applying for subsidies and other public services.

!! Important: check that the data in the BRP is up to date. For example, marital status (marriage, children, etc.) may affect your eligibility for benefits or entitlements.

C. Issue DigiD (digital identification)

Once you receive your BSN, you can create a **DigiD** account - this is your digital "passport" for online access to government services.

You can create a DigiD at: www.digid.nl

Information from the government:

[Government.nl - Registration in the Netherlands](https://www.government.nl/topics/migration-and-asylum/registration-in-the-netherlands)

2. Residence document

IND issues:

- **O-document** (temporary residence permit) or a sticker in your passport;
- If you do not have evidence of legal stay in Ukraine as of February 23, 2022 and you do not fall under the Temporary Protection Directive, you can obtain a W-document.



- Details (in English): [IND - Temporary Protection Documents](#)

Rights of Ukrainian refugees

1. Work

- Right to work without authorization (twv).
- The employer must notify the UWV (in Dutch):
[UWV - Employment Ukrainian refugees](#)

2. Accommodation

- Accommodation is provided through **COA**, municipalities or private initiatives.

3 Education

- Children are obliged to attend school. Read more (in English): [Education for Ukrainians](#)
- Adults are entitled to integration and language courses.

4. Medical care

- Medical care is covered through the Regeling Medische zorg Ontheemden (RMO).

Entry and exit

1. Travel

- If you have a valid Ukrainian biometric passport, you can travel to the EU under visa-free travel rules (up to 90 days within a 180-day period), including travel to and from Ukraine, but travel outside the EU cannot be longer than 28 days.
- In case of violation of these terms, the temporary protection status may be revoked and you will need to register again. This is not relevant if you have additional documents proving residency in the Netherlands.
- In the absence of a valid Ukrainian biometric passport, you can return to the Netherlands only under the following conditions:
 - you have not travelled outside the Schengen area or have been in Ukraine for less than 28 days.
 - you have not been deported from the Netherlands.

2. Return after traveling to Ukraine

- Return is possible if the status of temporary protection is not lost or there are additional documents confirming residence in the Netherlands. Otherwise - re-registration (first in the municipality, then in IND). Specify: [IND - Temporary protection reapplication](#)



Expiration of temporary protection

1. Expiration date

- Current protection is extended until **March 4, 2026**.
Source: [IND - Extension of Temporary Protection](#)

2. In case of expiration.

- Opportunity to apply for:
 - Asylum (Asylum procedure);
 - work permit (Work and residence);
 - Family reunification.

Additional legal aspects

1. Social assistance

- Monthly payments:
 - For food;
 - clothing and personal expenses;
 - additional payments for private housing.

Read more: Rijksoverheid - Leefgeldregeling Oekraïne

If a refugee aged 18 or over starts working, the family living allowance stops. This also happens if someone aged 18 or over receives benefits from the Dutch government. For example, unemployment benefit or disability benefit. More information: in **section IV**.

2. Bank accounts

In order to open a current account, a Ukrainian refugee must be of legal age, have a valid ID card and, in many cases, have obtained a citizens' service number from a Dutch municipality.

If a Ukrainian refugee does not have a valid identity document, there are additional types of documents that can be used to apply for a Dutch current account:

- A national Ukrainian passport combined with a so-called "certificate of identity";
- An expired English-language Ukrainian passport renewed by the Ukrainian Embassy;
- A Ukrainian permanent residence permit valid until February 24, 2022, combined with a valid passport from another non-EU country;
- A valid so-called Document O, which can be issued by the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) from June for Ukrainian refugees without recognized identity documents.
- Read more (in Ukrainian): [Betaalvereniging Nederland - Ukrainian refugees and banking](#)



Taxes: what you need to know

◆ 1. If you do not work and live in public housing (opvang)

- **Income tax (inkomstenbelasting):**

Does not apply if you have **no income** (you do not work and do not receive income from abroad).

✓ *You do not have to file a tax return if you only receive an allowance (leefgeld).*

- **Municipal taxes (gemeentelijke belastingen):**

As a rule, **no municipal taxes are charged** for housing in opvangs, such as:

- waste tax (afvalstoffenheffing),
- water and sewerage tax (rioolheffing),
- home ownership tax (onroerendezaakbelasting).

- These costs are covered by the municipality or COA organization.

◆ *You may receive a letter with information about taxes - in this case it is recommended that you apply for an exemption (kijtschelding).*

- **Health insurance (zorgverzekering):**

When living in opvang you are **not obliged to take out regular insurance** - medical care is covered through a separate RMO scheme - Regeling Medische zorg Ontheemden. More information: **in Section III.**

◆ 2. If you start working

Then the following tax obligations are activated for you:

- **Income tax:**

Withheld automatically from your paycheck. Rates vary, but start at ~36.93% (including social contributions).

👉 The employer submits the data to the tax office (Belastingdienst).

- **Compulsory health insurance:**

You **must take out insurance on your own**. This is a requirement for everyone who earns an income in the Netherlands.

👉 You can apply for **zorgtoeslag** - a subsidy for insurance.

◆ 3. Do I have to file a tax return?

- **Not necessarily if:**

- you do not have a job;
- you live in opvang and have no income;
- you have not received payments from the tax office (e.g. toeslagen).

- **Recommended:**



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- if you have worked for at least part of the year;
- if you have received payments or payments from abroad;
- if you want a tax refund (e.g. for a recalculation when you change jobs).

◆ 4. Tax exemption (Kwijtschelding)

If you have received a tax letter but cannot pay - you can apply for an **exemption**.
The application is made via the website of your **municipality (gemeente)**.

Example for Amsterdam:

👉 [Amsterdam - Kwijtschelding aanvragen](#)

📌 Tax summary:

Situation	Taxes	Insurance	Comment
Not working, living in opvang	No	Through RMO	Almost everything is covered
Working	Yes	Mandatory	Must file a return
You live in private housing	Possibly	Mandatory	Targeted subsidies (toeslagen) can be obtained.



II. Accommodation and lodging

Types of accommodation

Ukrainian refugees can live in three types of accommodation:

3. **Municipal shelters (opvanglocaties)** - provided by local authorities, includes food and basic services. About **60% of** Ukrainians live there.
4. **Accommodation with host families** - about **35% of** Ukrainians in private accommodation stayed with Dutch or Ukrainian families (data from Opora, 2023).
5. **Rented accommodation** - about **42% of** Ukrainians in Amsterdam rented accommodation on their own. These are most often families with a high level of education and work in IT, education or management.

Rental housing

1. Where to look for housing

 Online platforms:

- [Funda.nl](https://www.funda.nl) - one of the most popular sites (often agencies)
- [Pararius.com](https://www.pararius.com) - aggregator of listings from agencies
- [Kamernet.nl](https://www.kamernet.nl) - for students and singles (rooms, studios)
- [Huurwoningen.nl](https://www.huurwoningen.nl) - aggregator of ads from agencies
- **[Facebook groups]**: "Ukrainians in the Netherlands", "Rooms/Housing in Amsterdam", etc.

2. Types of rentals

 Private rentals (*vrije sector*)

- No income restrictions
- Higher price
- No housing subsidies



- Usually quicker to find but more expensive

✓ Social housing (*sociale huurwoning*)

- For people with low income
- Rental price $\leq$ €879.66 (for 2025)
- Long waiting lists (months to years)
- Requires registration on websites like:
 - [WoningNet](#)
 - [Woonnet Haaglanden](#)
 - [Thuis in Limburg](#)

3. What documents are required

To rent accommodation, you will usually need:

- Passport or residence permit
- BSN (citizen number)
- BRP statement (address registration)
- Certificate of income or employment (contract / salary statements)
- Sometimes a reference from a previous landlord

If there is no job or income - a **guarantor (letter of guarantee)** from someone with an official income in the Netherlands will be required.

4. How much does it cost to rent

City	Room	Studio	Apartment (1 bedroom)
Amsterdam	€700-1200	€1000-1600	€1300-2200+
Rotterdam / The Hague	€500-900	€850-1400	€1100-1800
Small cities	€350-700	€700-1100	€900-1500

Extras:

- **Security deposit:** usually 1-2 months rent
- **Administration fee:** sometimes taken by agencies (maximum one month's payment).

5. What to look out for



- ✓ Check to see if the landlord or agency is registered
- ✓ Never pay in advance unless you have seen the property and signed a contract.
- ✓ Make sure it is possible to **register (inschrijven)** - important for benefits and insurance.
- ✓ Sign a **lease (huurcontract)** - even for short periods of time

💡 6. Useful tips

- 📄 **Request an interpreter** if you are unsure of the terms of the contract
- 👤 **Team up with other tenants** - it is cheaper for two or three people to rent a place together.
- 📄 Check if you can apply for **housing benefit (huurtoeslag)** - if your rent is ≤ €879 and your income is below the threshold.

? What factors affect the chances of renting?

- **Working adults in the family:** the more **working adults in the family**, the better the chance of renting.
- **Occupation:** the best chances are for people working in IT, education, management.
- **Having children:** reduces chances due to restrictions on the number of tenants.
- **Type of employment:** preference is given to people with a working contract of 12 months or more.

Purchasing an accommodation

Ukrainian displaced persons under temporary protection have the right to purchase real estate in the Netherlands, however, but in practice with temporary status **is very difficult, as banks are reluctant to grant mortgages** to Ukrainians with temporary status:

- No residence permit or long-term visa.
- No permanent contract.
- No credit history in the Netherlands.
- No capital for a down payment (usually 10-20%).
-

Mortgage approval is possible in exceptional cases, e.g. if:

- One of the family members is an EU citizen.
- There is long-term income and savings.
- A bank willing to take the risk has been found.

It is recommended to use the websites mentioned above in the section on renting to find a home, but there are others: [Jaap.nl](https://www.jaap.nl) and [Huislijn.nl](https://www.huislijn.nl) often publish real estate listings that are



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not featured on popular sites, so browsing several sites increases your chances of finding unique offers.

Tips for finding an apartment

- Use multiple platforms to maximize your search and find properties that may not be featured everywhere.
- If possible, set up alerts or notifications to quickly learn about new listings, as the market changes quickly. You can use services that send suitable options from a very large number of companies at once to your e-mail, for example, rentslam.com.
- Prepare documents in advance (proof of income, ID, mortgage loan approval in principle), as competition can be high.
- Be wary of scammers; always check the legitimacy of listings and never pay before you have personally inspected the property.



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III. Healthcare

General Information

The healthcare system in the Netherlands is highly developed, organized and based on the principles of insurance medicine. Every person living in the country must have health insurance.

Since 2022 Ukrainians staying in the Netherlands under **temporary protection (tijdelijke bescherming)** have **special access to medical care** provided at the expense of the state or through special programs.

Medical insurance for Ukrainians with temporary protection (RMO)

You are insured automatically

If you have a Ukrainian passport/ID and **BSN (personal number in the Netherlands)**, you are **automatically insured under the state program RMO** (Regeling Medische zorg Ontheemden). You do not need to take out separate insurance.

What RMO covers

- Appointments with a family doctor (huisarts)
- Hospital treatment (emergency and planned)
- Prescription drugs
- Help with pregnancy and childbirth
- Psychological and psychiatric care (partly)
- Dentistry: up to 18 years of age or in case of emergency

Medical care abroad



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Travel outside the Netherlands?

➡ You need **authorization from your insurance (RMO)**.

In emergency cases, care can be reimbursed, but **usually treatment abroad is not covered**.

How to find out your RMO number

You may only need your RMO number if your doctor asks for it.

To find it out:

 Call the number: **085 - 0501 420**

Specify:

- BSN
- Date of birth
- Surname

If you do not have a BSN

Are you not registered with the municipality (BRP)?

➡ You are still **entitled to free medical care**.

The costs are covered by the budget for the uninsured - you don't have to do anything.

If you are not a citizen of Ukraine

If you are applying for asylum, a different system applies - **RMA** (for asylum seekers). You also **do not pay for medical services**.

 Full information and contacts in Ukrainian:

 rmoekraine.nl

Basic package (Basispakket)

- Compulsory for all residents of the country.
- Includes basic medical services: doctor's visit, hospitalization, childbirth, emergency care, etc.
- The cost and contents are the same for all insurance companies.
- The companies are obliged to accept every applicant without surcharges for age or health.
- The principle of the system is social solidarity: everyone participates in covering the total cost of health care.

Supplementary insurance

- Covers services not included in the basic package (e.g. glasses, physiotherapy).
- Not required, can be waived.
- Terms and prices vary from insurer to insurer.
- The insurer has the right to refuse admission or request medical data.
- RMO regulations **no longer apply** when you take out your own insurance.



Cost

- Basic premium (nominale premie): €120-150 per month.
- Income contribution (ZVW): a percentage of your income, paid by your employer.
- Children under 18: free of charge for the basic package (registration required within 4 months of birth).

Financial assistance

- People with a low income can get a **health allowance (zorgtoeslag)**:
▶ Read more: [government.nl - healthcare benefit](https://www.government.nl/topics/healthcare/healthcare-benefits/healthcare-benefits-for-low-income-households)

Getting health care

1. General practitioner (Huisarts)

A key figure in the health care system

All medical appointments start with a **huisarts** - a family doctor (analogous to a general practitioner) who:

- provides primary care,
- writes prescriptions,
- referrals to specialized specialists (e.g. cardiologist, dermatologist, etc.),
- provides long-term care (as "your" personal physician).

What to do:

1. Find huisarts in your area and register.
2. In emergency situations you can also go without registering, but this is not recommended.
3. You must make an appointment in advance (online or by phone).

In the Netherlands, you should always contact your local general practitioner (huisarts) first for non-urgent health complaints. For example, if you are pregnant, need medical advice or have psychological problems such as sleep problems, anxiety and depressive thoughts.

If you have a cold, for example, you do not have to go straight to your general practitioner. You can buy cold remedies at a pharmacy or drugstore (Kruidvat, Etos and others). If the cold persists, you can make an appointment with your general practitioner.

Arene app

Is your GP far from your home or do you not have a GP yet? You can use the Arene mobile app to quickly get in touch with a GP. You can use the app to ask your GP questions, check test results or request a repeat prescription. You can also book a video call with your GP. You need to register to use the app



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Link: <https://www.arene.nl/samenwerken/registratie-oeukraiense-vluchtelingen>

Uwzorgonline app

Have you already registered with your local GP? Then you can use the 'Uwzorgonline' mobile app. You can use the app to ask your GP questions, book an appointment, view test results or request a repeat prescription.

Link: <https://uwzorgonline.nl/consumenten/>

2. Emergency medical care

The family physicians' emergency care clinic is on duty

The family doctor's clinic is closed, but you need urgent medical care and can't wait until tomorrow or Monday? You can call the family physicians' duty station in your neighborhood. On-call family physicians are available during evenings and weekends.

A member of staff will ask you whether you can come to the duty post or whether you should make a regular appointment with a family doctor. The duty officer can also refer you to the emergency room at the hospital.

Note: Always call the family physicians' duty station before going to the emergency room at the hospital. The only exception is in life-threatening situations. In this case, call 112 for an ambulance.

- **Ambulance phone number: 112** - only for life-threatening situations.
- **Emergency phone number (not life-threatening):** can be found at your huisarts or on the internet by entering your town + "huisartsenpost".

3. medicines and pharmacies (Apotheek)

- Prescription medicines are dispensed with a prescription from huisarts or a specialized doctor.
- You can get the medication at a pharmacy (apothek) near your home. You must first register at a pharmacy (often online on the pharmacy's website). When prescribing medication, you tell your doctor which pharmacy you are registered with; you then receive a message or call from the pharmacy when the medication is ready to be dispensed. An ID card is enough to get it; a paper prescription is not required.
- Over-the-counter medications such as painkillers, antipyretics, heartburn medications, etc., are available at supermarkets and convenience stores: Etos, Kruidvat, and others.
- Pharmacies are usually open from 8:00 to 17:30, emergency pharmacies are open in the evening and at weekends.
-



4. Specialized medical care

- You cannot see a specialist (cardiologist, neurologist, surgeon, etc.) directly.
- You must first get a referral from huisarts.
- The appointment may be a few weeks later, depending on the urgency.

5. Dental care (tandarts).

- You can find a dentist (tandarts) in your neighborhood and make an appointment through the website or by phone.
- Dental care for adults: Dental care is not covered by RMO except in an emergency. The RMO only reimburses oral treatment in the case of acute pain, and up to a maximum of 350 euros per year. It is important that the clinic or doctor participates in the RMO program, otherwise RMO will not reimburse the costs.
- RMO does not reimburse orthodontists. But there are 16 TopOrtho orthodontic practices in the Netherlands that offer refugees emergency orthodontic care for up to €350. TopOrtho is an independent clinic not affiliated with the RMO.
- Assistance for children under 18 years of age: basic dental services (check-ups, fillings) - covered by the RMO.

6. Psychological help

- Contact huisarts, they can:
 - refer you to a psychologist (GGZ),
 - prescribe medication,
 - offer counseling as part of basic psychological care.
- If you get a referral from **your** family doctor, **some treatments are covered by your health insurance**. Ask your doctor which treatments are provided free of charge for you.
- Psychological **counseling in Ukrainian**
 - "Empatia" is a program of psychological help for Ukrainians in the Netherlands in the Ukrainian language. You can contact Empatia if you need psychological support. Empatia services are reimbursed by RMO health insurance.
 - Do you need psychological support? Call the helpline: 0031 10 200 5088 (Mon-Fri 9.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m.) or visit the website: <https://www.empatiaprogram.nl/>.

Diagnoses and specialized advice (RAS, ADHD, PTSD and others)

- If your child has an autism spectrum disorder, a referral to Jeugd-GGZ Pediatric Psychological Services is necessary. You can get a referral to the Jeugd-GGZ



through your family physician, school doctor or pediatric counseling office. There is also a special Facebook group with information to help Ukrainian children with ASD in the Netherlands: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/669421607608625/>.

- In addition to autism spectrum disorders, there are often other conditions in children that are worth looking out for. One of them is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In the Netherlands, this diagnosis is made by a psychiatrist or pediatrician, after which behavioral therapy and, if necessary, medication may be prescribed. It is important for parents to inform the school in advance: an individualized support plan (ondersteuningsplan) can be drawn up on the basis of the diagnosis.
- If dyslexia (reading disorder) is suspected, Dutch schools are obliged to carry out an initial diagnosis and, if necessary, refer for an in-depth examination. If the diagnosis is confirmed, the state can partially reimburse the costs. Additional help is available through the school support system or insurance.
- Problems with writing (dysgraphia) and counting (dyscalculia) are also common. Although these conditions are not always formally diagnosed, schools can provide educational support depending on the child's individual needs.
- For speech and language development disorders and delays in language development, speech therapy is available with a referral from the family doctor (huisarts). Sometimes speech therapists work in schools. The insurance company usually covers such services if there is a medical certificate.
- Given the war events and the forced relocation, children may exhibit anxiety disorders or post-traumatic stress disorder. In such cases, help is available through the child psychiatric service (jeugd GGZ), but be aware that there may be a waiting list. You can also contact the school psychologist or social work specialist, if the school has one.
- If a child has been diagnosed with epilepsy, it is important to inform the school and make a special medical report. Treatment and follow-up is done through huisarts and pediatrician, the costs are covered by insurance.

7. Pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care in the Netherlands

If you suspect pregnancy

- Take a test and see your **family doctor (huisarts)** or **midwife (verloskundige)** - even if you have doubts.
- The doctor will confirm the pregnancy and tell you the next steps.
- You have two choices:
- **You want to keep the pregnancy.**
- **You want to terminate it.**

If you're not sure

- Contact huisarts for a consultation.
- You can also make **an anonymous** appointment at a special clinic.
- All information remains **confidential**.

If you want to terminate the pregnancy



- Discuss your plan of action with your doctor.
- In the Netherlands, abortion is legal up to the **24th week**.
- The procedure **is safe and legal**. It does not affect your ability to have children in the future.

✅ If you want to keep the pregnancy.

- Find a **midwife** as early as possible. The huisarts or the reception center manager can help.
- Check-ups are carried out:
 - Every 4 weeks (at the beginning),
 - Every 2 to 3 weeks (in the second trimester),
 - Every week (at the end of pregnancy).
- The appointments check the baby's development and heartbeat, blood pressure, fetal position.

ULTRASOUND

- There are usually **3 ultrasounds**. They are covered by the RMO program.
- Additional ultrasounds are at your own expense, unless there is a medical reason.

Postpartum care (kraamzorg)

- You are entitled to **24 hours of help for 8 days** after the birth (sometimes more).
- The helper helps:
 - Take care of the baby and yourself,
 - Keep the house clean,
 - Take care of other children.
- Apply for help by **the 20th week of pregnancy**.

Preparing for childbirth

- Gather a bag of items for childbirth in advance.
- Things like clothes, documents, snacks, hygiene items.

Where to give birth

- You can give birth **at home, in a hospital or in a maternity hotel**.
- If you live in the COA center, you will give birth in a **hospital or birthing center**.

After delivery

- A doctor checks your condition and may stitch you up.
- A postpartum aide helps with the care of your newborn.
- **Additional help** is available if needed.
- See your gynecologist or huisarts to monitor your recovery.



Register the baby

- Register the child with the **municipality within 3 days** after birth.
- If you are not married, make an official acknowledgement of paternity.
- Report the birth of the child to the **IND** (form M35-J).

Benefits and allowances

- When you give birth to a child, you can receive:
 - **Child allowance (kinderbijslag)** - through the SVB.
 - **Kindgebonden budget** - if you have a low income.
 - **Kinderopvangtoeslag** - if the child attends nursery school.

Pregnancy course

- You can take a course on pregnancy, childbirth and childcare.
- You can ask your midwife for course options.
- **RMO does not cover the** cost of the course.

Children's consultation

- Up to the age of 4, children are seen at the **consultation office (consultatiebureau)**.
- Regular check-ups and vaccinations are carried out there.

Making a will

- You can make a **will** to determine a guardian for your child.
- Contact a notary office or the **Juridisch Loket**.

8. Vaccination and prevention

- Children are vaccinated free of charge according to the national vaccination calendar; this is done through the **consultation office (consultatiebureau)**.
- Adults may be offered vaccinations against COVID-19, influenza, etc.
- You can request a vaccination through **huisarts** or the **GGD** (Gemeentelijke Gezondheidsdienst).

The Netherlands has a National Vaccination Program, which aims to protect children from infectious diseases. This program is a recommendation, but it is not mandatory. As a parent, you can choose whether your child should be vaccinated. In the Netherlands, the vast majority of parents immunize their children.

For any vaccination that is not part of the National Vaccination Program, contact your local general practitioner (huisarts).

National vaccination program



Age	Vaccination	Protects against
6-9 weeks	1. Rota 2. DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV*	Rotavirus Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type B, hepatitis B
3 months	1. Rota 2. DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV. 3. Pneumo	Rotavirus Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type B, hepatitis B Pneumococci
5 months	1. DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV 2. Pneumo	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type B, hepatitis B Pneumococci
12 months	1. DTaP-IPV-Hib-HBV 2. Pneumo	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type B, hepatitis B Pneumococci
14 months	1. MMR 2. MenACWY	Mumps, measles, rubella Meningococcal infection type ACWY
3 years	MMR	Mumps, measles, rubella
5 years	DT-IPV	Diphtheria, tetanus and polio
10 years	HPV (2 doses, 2nd after 6 months)	Human papillomavirus
14 years	1. DT-IPV 2. MenACWY	Diphtheria, tetanus and poliomyelitis Meningococcal ACWY.

* Only if the mother was not immunized against pertussis during pregnancy (maternal pertussis vaccination) and in special cases. This will be discussed with you by the doctor at the newborn clinic.

** Children born between January 1, 2016 and the end of 2021 will receive a 2nd MMR vaccination between the ages of 5 and 9.

It is recommended that you have a list of vaccinations given so that you can adapt the calendar to reflect the vaccinations already given.

9. Useful resources

- **Zorgverzekeringslijn** - free medical and insurance advice: www.zorgverzekeringslijn.nl
- **Rijksoverheid** - government website: www.rijksoverheid.nl.



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- **Pharos** - medical information in simple language (also in Ukrainian): www.pharos.nl.
- **GGD** - information about prevention, vaccination, sexual health: www.ggd.nl.

10. Tips when going to the doctor

1. Always have with you:
 - a. BSN (personal number),
 - b. your temporary protection document,
 - c. the details of your huisarts.
2. If you need an interpreter, say so in advance. Sometimes the municipality or volunteers can help.
3. Do not be afraid to see a doctor - the RMO covers the necessary expenses and doctors in the Netherlands are obliged to help everyone in need, regardless of language or status.



IV. Work, finances

Allowance (leefgeld)

Ukrainian refugees staying in the Netherlands under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) can receive a **living allowance (leefgeld)**. The amount and conditions of this allowance depend on several factors, including type of accommodation, family composition and income.

The allowance is available to Ukrainian refugees who:

- Are registered in a municipality and have a **BSN (civil number)**.
- Live in a **municipal shelter** or with **private persons** (guest families).
- **Have no income of their own** (from work, unemployment or disability benefits). [RefugeeHelp](#)

If an **adult (18+)** member of the family starts working or receiving allowance, the allowance will stop for the whole family from the first day of the following month.



Amount of the allowance from January 1, 2025

The allowance consists of three components and depends on the composition and size of the family:

Refugee's age and family composition	Money for clothing	Money for food	Supplementary allowance
Any age, single refugee without a family	€62,66	€252,18	€77,16



Refugee 18 years and over, family of 2 persons	€62,66	€252,18	€77,16
Refugee 18 years and over, family of 3 persons	€62,66	€214,29	€77,16
Refugee 18 years and over, family of 4 persons or more	€62,66	€189,13	€77,16
Refugee under 18 years of age, family of 2 persons	€62,66	€210,05	€77,16
Refugee under 18 years of age, family of 3 persons	€62,66	€178,53	€77,16
Refugee under 18 years of age, family of 4 persons or more	€62,66	€157,61	€77,16

One family includes the following persons:

- spouses or partners equivalent to married couples;
- their unmarried children under 18 years of age;
- a guardian responsible for unmarried children under the age of 18.

Family members do not include:

- grandparents;
- uncles and aunts;
- married children under 18 years of age;
- children 18 years of age or older.

They are a separate person or separate family under the rules.



Read more: [Housing allowance \(in Dutch\)](#)

How does the type of accommodation affect the allowance?

- **Municipal shelter with food:** only a portion for clothing and personal expenses is paid (€62.66).
- **Municipal shelter without food:** the food and clothing portions are paid.
- **Accommodation with private persons:** all three parts of the allowance are paid.
- **Own accommodation (rented or bought):** no entitlement to the allowance.
[Utrecht.nl](https://utrecht.nl)

Obligation to report income

If you have an income (job, allowance), you are obliged to report it to the municipality. Otherwise, the benefit may be terminated and you may be assessed a debt.

Dependence on the province or municipality

Although the basic rules are set at the national level, some details (e.g., how to apply, timing of payments) may vary from municipality to municipality. It is recommended that you contact your local municipality for accurate information.

Getting a job

If you are in the Netherlands under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), you have the right to take up paid employment **without the need for** a work permit (tewerkstellingsvergunning). [Government.nl](https://government.nl)

Employment resources

Online job search platforms:

1. **Indeed Nederland** is one of the largest job search platforms in the Netherlands:
 <https://www.indeed.nl>
2. **Nationale Vacaturebank** is a popular Dutch job board with filters by education level and region:
 <https://www.nationalevacaturebank.nl>
3. **LinkedIn** - for finding qualified jobs, especially in international and English-speaking companies:
 <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs>
4. **Werk.nl** - the official website of the Workers' Insurance Agency (UWV), offering job vacancies and information on workers' rights:
 <https://www.werk.nl>
5. **Glassdoor Netherlands** - for job search with the ability to read reviews of employers:
 <https://www.glassdoor.nl>

 Employment agencies (Uitzendbureaus):

- **Randstad** - the largest recruitment agency in the Netherlands:
 <https://www.randstad.nl>



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- **Tempo-Team** - part of the Randstad Group, offers many jobs for starters and migrants:
👉 <https://www.tempo-team.nl>
- **Manpower Nederland** - international agency active in temporary employment:
👉 <https://www.manpower.nl>
- **YoungCapital** - specializes in vacancies for students, young professionals and English-speaking candidates:
👉 <https://www.youngcapital.nl>
- **Start People** - one of the leaders in the temporary employment market:
👉 <https://www.startpeople.nl>
- **OTTO Work Force** - works with migrants, including Ukrainians and Poles; offers jobs in logistics, agriculture and manufacturing:
👉 <https://www.ottoworkforce.com/nl>

Read more (in English): [RefugeeHelp - Employment Agencies](#)

For employment you must have:

- a valid passport;
- a sticker or O-document from the IND proving your Temporary Protected Status;
- BSN (civil service number).
- Read more: [Government.nl](#); [RefugeeHelp](#)

Read more: [RefugeeHelp - Working Conditions](#)

Employment for Ukrainian medical workers

In order to work in medical institutions of the Netherlands it is necessary to fulfill a number of requirements, especially when it comes to highly qualified medical professions: senior medical personnel (doctor, dentist, pharmacist), middle medical personnel (nurse, paramedic, etc.).

The exception is assistants in dental and orthodontic clinics. Below are the basic steps and required documents:



1. Recognition of medical degree

If you want to work in a regulated medical profession (e.g. doctor, nurse, pharmacist), you need to go through a diploma recognition procedure and pass a Dutch language exam. This pathway usually takes between 3 and 7 years and involves passing expensive exams.

To start the procedure you will need:

- A copy of your passport or other ID card
- A copy of your diploma and grade appendices
- A certified translation of the documents if they are not in English, German, French or Dutch



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Further information can be found on the website (in English): [BIG-register](#)



2. Knowledge of the Dutch language

Most medical professions require a Dutch language proficiency of at least B2. This is confirmed by a certificate, e.g. Staatsexamen NT2. You can find out more about the language requirements on the website (in English): [KNMG](#)



3. Registration in the BIG register

After the diploma has been recognized, it is necessary to register with the BIG-register, which confirms the right to practice in regulated health professions. Registration is mandatory for professions such as doctor, nurse, pharmacist and others. Information on the registration process is available on the website (in English): [BIG-register](#)



4. Specialized programs for psychologists

If you are a psychologist, Empatia can help you to recognize your diploma and find a job in the Netherlands. Read more (in Ukrainian): [Empatia](#)

Employment for Ukrainian teachers

Ukrainian teachers can be employed in Dutch schools in the following roles:

- **Teaching assistants:** assisting in teaching, especially in classes for Ukrainian children.
- **Teachers:** with appropriate qualifications and diploma recognition.
- **English teachers:** with appropriate qualifications and experience.



Necessary documents and requirements

To work in educational institutions in the Netherlands, Ukrainian teachers may need:

- **Diploma in teacher education** and its recognition in the Netherlands.
- **Certificate of Dutch language proficiency** (level depends on the position).
- **BSN** number (civil service number).
- **A valid passport** and **documents proving temporary protection status**.



Recommendations for interested teachers

If you are a Ukrainian teacher and are interested in working in the Netherlands:

1. **Contact local educational institutions** or municipality for information about vacancies.
2. **Contact organizations** such as UAF that help refugees with employment in education.
Read more: [uaf.nl](#)
3. **Prepare and translate necessary documents**, including diplomas and certificates.

Labor rights

You have the same rights as Dutch workers, for example:



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- Your employer is **not allowed to pay you less than the** Dutch minimum wage.
- You are entitled to **vacation and rest days**. Vacation is at least 4 weeks (20 working days) when you are working full time. In addition to your salary for vacation days, you are entitled to vacation pay (about 8% of your annual salary).
- You have the right to **miss work due to illness**.
- Your employer is obliged to **transfer your salary** to your bank account on **time** each month.
- Your employer is obliged to provide a **safe and healthy working environment**.
- You can work a **maximum of 60 hours a week**, but not every week.
- Your employer must pay you **a wage that is in line with market wages**. This means that the pay is normal for the work you will be doing based on your knowledge and experience.
- Are you **under 18 years of age**? Then you are **not allowed to work at night or do dangerous work**.

Read more: [RefugeeHelp - Workers' rights](#)

Minimum wage

As of January 1, 2025, the minimum hourly wage for workers 21 years of age and over is **€14.06 gross**. This amount is reviewed every six months. Read more: [Minimum wage](#)

Taxes withheld on wages

Your salary is usually paid monthly into your bank account. Your employer withholds from it:

- income tax or payroll tax (loonbelasting)
- social security contributions (socialezekerheidspremies).
- Read more: [About taxes](#)

These withholdings are remitted to the tax office. [Government.nl](#).

If your employer has not paid your wages:

1. Contact him in writing (e.g. by e-mail).
2. If this does not help, send a **formal demand for payment** by registered mail.
3. Contact the **FNV** trade union or legal advice (in English) for help. [prd-online.fnv.nl](#).

The employer is obliged to pay at least the legal minimum wage. [business.gov.nl](#)

Additional payments and benefits

Ukrainians working in the Netherlands are entitled to:

- **child allowance (kinderbijslag)**;
- **additional child allowance (kindgebonden budget)** if the family income is below a certain level.
- In order to receive the benefits, you need to apply to the **SVB** or **Belastingdienst**.
[Government.nl](#)



? Do I need to open a Dutch bank account to receive my salary?

Yes, it is recommended to open a **Dutch bank account**. This will make it easier to receive your salary, pay your bills and carry out everyday financial transactions.

? Can I receive a salary and a municipal living allowance (leefgeld) at the same time?

No. If you start work and earn an income, the **leefgeld payment stops** for all adult members of your family.

What else to read: [Changes in labor law 2025](#)

Entrepreneurship

✗ Ukrainian refugees **do not have the automatic right to work as entrepreneurs (ZZP)**. They **need a tewerkstellingsvergunning (work permit)** if they want to be self-employed. The rationale behind this rule is that freelancers are considered vulnerable to exploitation.

📄 Source (in Dutch): [Rijksoverheid - Werk en inkomen voor vluchtelingen uit Oekraïne](#)

To start your own business in the Netherlands:

◆ Step 1: Check your legal status

To open a business, you must:

- Be officially registered in the **BRP** (Basisregistratie Personen) system.
- Have a **BSN (Citizenship Number)**.
- Have a document from the **IND** (O-document or sticker) confirming that you are under temporary protection.
- Important: **TPD does not automatically entitle you to work as an entrepreneur.**

◆ Step 2: Apply for a work permit to work as a ZZP

Officially, to become self-employed, you need to obtain a **tewerkstellingsvergunning (TWV)** or other authorization through the IND or UWV.

But ⚠️ : in practice it is **almost impossible to** get TWV for freelancing under TPD status - this path is actually closed (since 2022 the government has decided not to allow freelancing for refugees from Ukraine because of the risk of abuse and lack of labor protection). 📄

Permit information: [UWV](#)

◆ Step 3: Register with the KVK - only if you are *authorized to* work as an entrepreneur

If you do get a permit (e.g. you have another residence permit), then:

1. Make an appointment at the **KVK** via the website: www.kvk.nl
2. Prepare:
 - Passport



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- BSN
 - Proof of residential address
 - Business plan (sometimes asked)
3. Pay €51.95 for the registration fee

💡 **KVK doesn't check the right to work**, but the information is passed on to IND and Belastingdienst - if you don't have the right to work as a ZZP, this will come up later.

◆ Step 4: Opening a bank account and VAT number

After registration:

- Get a **BTW-nummer** (tax number) from Belastingdienst
- Open a bank account in the name of your business (or your name if you're a ZZP)

◆ Step 5: Find support

💡 Organizations that can help:

- **Qredits** - microcredit and entrepreneurial training (qredits.nl)
- **RefugeeHelp - Business and self-employment:**
<https://www.refugeehelp.nl>
- **UAF** - Support for educated refugees, including programs for teachers and doctors <https://www.uaf.nl>

⚠ Important to know:

- A self-employed person does not receive **leefgeld** (living allowance).
- You have tax obligations as an entrepreneur.
- If you work illegally (without the right to be an entrepreneur), you risk losing protection.



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V. Daily life



Personal and public transportation



Public transportation

In the Netherlands, this is primarily trains, buses, streetcars and subways. Highlights:

- **OV-chipkaart:** a universal card for paying fares on any public transportation. To order a personalized card, you need an IBAN - an account number from a European bank. [ov-chipkaart](#)
- Netherlands Railways (NS): the main mode of transportation between cities. NS provides a number of season tickets that allow you to travel at a discount. [NS.nl](#).
- **9292 app:** helps plan routes and find out timetables. [9292](#)



Bicycles

The most convenient and affordable transportation in the Netherlands is the bicycle. You can buy a bicycle either through [Marktplaats.nl](#), local Facebook groups or stores (fietswinkel). You can also try entering the name of the place where you live + tweedehands fiets (used bike).

New bicycles are often stolen, especially in big cities, so it's safer to have a used one.

Can I take my bicycle on public transportation?

Yes, but with restrictions:

- **Trains:** you must purchase a day ticket for a bicycle (Dagkaart Fiets); transportation is allowed outside of rush hours. Read more: [Information about transporting bicycles](#)
- **Subways and streetcars:** regulations vary depending on the operator; it is advisable to check before traveling.
- **Bicycle rental (OV-fiets):** available at stations for personal OV-chipkaart holders. [OV-fiets](#)



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Car in the Netherlands

How to register a car with Ukrainian license plates in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has a special rule for immigrants from Ukraine who come to the Netherlands with their cars: you get an exemption from paying tax for a car or motorcycle (the tax is called bpm). To apply for the tax exemption (bpm), you should [fill in and send the form 'Aanvraag vrijstelling bpm voor motorrijtuig uit Oekraïne'](#).

You will soon receive a letter from the IRS confirming your tax exemption.

Your vehicle must then be inspected by the state traffic office: the Dienst Wegverkeer (RDW). You can find the nearest RDW garage via Google Maps or by using the [tool on the website](#).

You need to get Dutch license plates: from March 4, 2025 all cars from Ukraine must switch to Dutch license plates. To get them, you need to fulfill the following conditions:

You can apply for a Dutch license plate for your car if you fulfill the following conditions:

- You are registered in one of the municipalities of the Netherlands.
- You have a valid passport, such as a Ukrainian passport. You do not have a valid passport? You can use an invalid passport with a sticker from the Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst (IND) and a suitable photo as proof of residence. Alternatively, you can present an O-document, a card issued by the IND that confirms your participation in the Temporary Protection Directive. Please note that identification by Ukrainian internal passport is not allowed.
- You are at least 18 years old.
- You have a document from the Tax Office confirming that you fall under the BPM exemption. This is the document **"Vrijstelling bpm bij verhuizing uit een ander land dan een lidstaat van de Europese Centrale Unie"**. This document will help you avoid additional taxes and increased technical requirements. To obtain the document, go to Belastingdienst.nl, fill in and return the BPM Exemption Application form for vehicles from Ukraine. The document **"Vrijstelling bpm en mrb ontheemden Oekraïne"** is not correct.

Detailed instructions on how to get Dutch license plates and what you need to do afterwards can be found [at rdw.nl](#).

Buying a car in the Netherlands

You can buy a car through websites like **Marktplaats.nl** or **Autoscout24.nl** - both car dealers and private individuals sell cars there.

- **From a car dealer:** More reliable, but more expensive. Often provided warranty, assistance with registration and insurance.
- **From a private person:** Cheaper, but riskier. No warranty, possible hidden defects. It is better to invite an expert to inspect the car before buying.

Additional costs

- **BPM** - new car tax.



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- **MRB** - road tax, depends on weight and fuel.
- **Insurance** - compulsory. Minimum: liability insurance (WA).
- **Maintenance** - mandatory annual vehicle inspection (APK) and regular service.

New car registration

After purchase, the car needs to be registered with **RDW** and the license plate reissued in your name:

- **At a dealer** - registration is often done on the spot.
- **At a private individual** - registration via **PostNL** or other **kentekenloket** outlets.

Documents for registration:

- Passport or other identification document.
- Municipal (BRP) statement with your **BSN**, not older than 3 months.

Grocery stores (supermarkets)

1. Aldi

- One of the cheapest supermarkets.
- German chain, offers a limited but affordable selection of goods.
- Good price/quality ratio.
- Many private label products.

2. Lidl

- Also from Germany, often slightly more expensive than Aldi but with a wider selection.
- Regular promotions and seasonal items.
- Quality products at low prices.
- There are non-food items: clothes, tools, electronics.

3. Jumbo

- More like a classic supermarket.
- Prices are higher than in Aldi/Lidl, but there are often promotions.
- There is its own brand with cheaper products.

4. Albert Heijn (AH)

- The most popular supermarket, but more expensive than the others.
- There is a "Bonuskaart" (loyalty card) - make sure you take it to get discounts.
- Look for items labeled **AH Basic** - it's their budget line.

Clothing and shoes

1. Zeeman



- Very cheap clothing, underwear, socks, towels, etc.
- Good for basic stuff.

2. Wibra

- Similar to Zeeman, but the range is wider: clothing, housewares, textiles, stationery.
- Especially cheap children's clothes.

3. H&M (SALE section).

- Not always cheap, but you can find things on sale.

4. Kringloops (Kringloopwinkels, thrift stores)

- These are second hand or "charity" stores.
- They sell second-hand but often quality items: clothes, furniture, appliances.
- Examples: **Het Goed**, **Rataplan**, **Emmaus**.



Household chemicals and household goods

1. Action

- Very cheap store. They sell everything: housewares, cosmetics, stationery, long term storage products, toys and more.
- Great place for budget shopping.

2. Kruidvat / Etos / Trekpleister

- Pharmacy + household goods store.
- Often promotions "1+1 free".
- Lots of own brand products (cheaper).



Pharmacies and health

1. Kruidvat / Etos / Trekpleister

- Sell basic medicines (without prescription), vitamins, hygiene products.

2. pharmacies (Apotheek)

- Prescription only.
- They prescribe to you after you register with a general practitioner (huisarts).



Online services and resources

1. marktplaats.nl.

- The Dutch equivalent of OLX.
- You can find cheap or free stuff (listed as *gratis ophalen* - pick up for free).



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2. Too Good To Go

- An app where supermarkets and restaurants give away expired food at very low prices.

3. Gratis Afhalen

- Search for the phrase "Gratis afhalen" on Marktplaats or Facebook Marketplace - that's how you find free stuff.



Free and social resources

1. Voedselbank (Food Bank)

- For people in a difficult situation.
- Registration required. Gives out bags of food once a week.
- <https://www.voedselbank.nl/>

2. Kledingbank (Clothing Bank)

- Free clothing for people in need.
- Contact your local social services (gemeente).

3 Libraries (Bibliotheek)

- You can often register for free.
- Computers, books, internet, activities for children.
- Sometimes give out children's books or things for free.



Useful applications

- **9292** - transportation route planner.
- **Albert Heijn / Lidl / Jumbo** - promotions and bonuses at supermarkets.



VI. Education and socialization

Education in the Netherlands

The Dutch education system gives every child the chance to choose a path - practical or academic - depending on their interests and abilities. The educational path is shaped step by step, starting at an early age.

Pre-school education

- Attendance at kindergartens is not mandatory, but is very common. Such institutions can be both private and municipal.
- To enroll a child in kindergarten, parents need to contact the chosen institution themselves - through the website or by phone.
- In some areas, especially in large cities, there may be a waiting list, so it is necessary to apply in advance.
- Children from vulnerable categories, including Ukrainian refugees, may receive priority enrollment.

The cost of kinderopvang in the Netherlands is quite high, but families under temporary protection can claim state compensation - a childcare allowance (kinderopvangtoeslag). This allowance is granted through the tax office (Belastingdienst), provided that one of the parents is working, studying or in an integration program.

The amount depends on the family income, the number of hours of care and the cost of the chosen institution. If the child attends a municipal playgroup (peuterspeelzaal), which is free of charge, no compensation is required.

Alternative pre-school education

In addition to formal kindergartens, there are small private home-based playgroups (gastouderopvang) or informal associations of parents who organize mutual help. These options are often more affordable, although they may lack government supervision. Nevertheless, many such groups are officially registered and licensed.



Primary school (Basisonderwijs)

- Compulsory schooling starts at age 5, but most children go to school at 4.
- Elementary school lasts 8 years (groups 1-8), covering both early development and basic academic preparation.
- School enrollment is done through the municipality of residence. If the family lives in a refugee accommodation center, the process is coordinated through a social worker or coordinator from the local authority.

Secondary school (Voortgezet onderwijs)

From the age of 12, one of three study tracks is determined for the child:

1. **VMBO** (4 years) - practical education preparing for professions. After that - enrollment in **MBO**.
2. **HAVO** (5 years) - general secondary education. Prepares for applied higher education (**HBO**).
3. **VWO** (6 years) - academic direction. Gives access to universities (**WO**).

Transitions between levels

Education is flexible - a student can move from one level to another if desired and successful:

- **From VMBO to HAVO** - after excellent studies at VMBO and passing exams. Often an additional year is required.
- **From HAVO to VWO** - possible with good results and school approval.
- **MBO to HBO** - after obtaining a level 4 diploma.
- **From HBO to WO** - after a bachelor's degree, sometimes with additional preparation or a transition year (schakeljaar).

These transitions are supported by the system and allow students to move up if they are ready and motivated.

Higher education: three levels

1. **MBO** - Secondary vocational education (1-4 years). Suitable for those who want to get into a profession quickly and start working.

Examples of professions:

- Medical assistant / caregiver (Verzorgende IG)
- Electrician
- Mechanic
- Cook
- Hairdresser



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- Truck driver
 - Carpenter
 - Nursery assistant
 - Administrative assistant
 - Hotel or restaurant service worker
2. **HBO** - applied higher education (4 years). Lots of practical training, internships. Suitable for those who want to work in a specific profession with a college degree.

Examples of professions:

- Nurse / nurse practitioner (with HBO diploma)
 - Primary or secondary school teacher
 - Engineer (construction, IT, mechanical engineering)
 - Social worker
 - Business analyst
 - Logistics Manager
 - Graphic designer
 - Financial Consultant
 - Counseling Psychologist (non-clinical)
 - Journalist
3. **WO** is an academic university degree. Suitable for those who aspire to a career in academia, research or analysis.

Examples of careers:

- Physician (after university and postgraduate specialization)
- Lawyer / advocate
- Scientific researcher
- University lecturer
- Architect
- Economist
- Political scientist
- Sociologist
- Clinical psychologist / psychotherapist
- Research engineer (e.g. in biotech, robotics, etc.)

Main difference from Ukraine

In the Netherlands, the educational trajectory is formed from the age of 12 on the basis of the teacher's recommendation (the most important criterion), test results (cito eindoets) and discussion with parents. When making a recommendation, the teacher evaluates academic performance, motivation, learning and communication skills. This makes it possible to create a personalized path - from profession to university. The system is flexible: there is always a chance to move up to the next level if desired.

Confirmation of education obtained in Ukraine or abroad



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- Your diploma can be evaluated at the [IDW](#). Unfortunately, as of January 1, 2025, the budget for free diploma evaluation for immigrants from Ukraine ended and now this service is paid.
- **IDW (Internationale Diplomawaardering)** deals with the recognition and comparative evaluation of foreign diplomas. However, they **do not evaluate all** types of educational documents.

✓ Which diplomas are subject to evaluation:

- **Diplomas from officially recognized educational institutions** in the country where they were issued.
- **Education of 1,000 hours of study or more.**

✗ What is not assessable:

- Certificates and diplomas **from short courses** and training.
- Diplomas issued by **unrecognized educational institutions**.
- **Diplomas issued in the Netherlands** - these are already automatically recognized.

Assessment of incomplete education:

If you have **not fully completed** your **study program**, but have completed **at least one year of study**, the IDW can also carry out a partial evaluation of your education.

NL Dutch language courses

There are many opportunities to learn Dutch:

- **ROC (Regional Training Centers)**: offer courses for adults in various cities.
- **Forum Groningen**: offers courses with certified teachers and conversation clubs. [Forum.nl](https://forum.nl).
- **Online Resources**: platforms with free self-study materials, such as the [Ukraine Unlimited Learning](#) app for iOS and Android.
- **Columbus Courses**: specialized courses for Ukrainians with Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking teachers. columbuscourses.com.

Children in the Netherlands can attend kindergartens and day care groups (kinderopvang) from about three months of age until the start of elementary school (at the age of four).



Frequently asked questions about education in the Netherlands

? How will my child learn if he/she does not speak Dutch?

Children who do not speak Dutch are first sent to a so-called 'reception class' (nieuwkomersklas or internationale schakelklas - ISK) where they learn the language and receive basic training. These classes are adapted for refugee and migrant children and after one or two years they can transfer to a regular school.

? Do I have to pay tuition fees?

Enrolling a child in school is free. Public and state-funded schools do not charge compulsory school fees. However, parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards school trips, clubs and extra materials. This contribution is optional and schools are obliged to accept all children regardless of whether parents pay.

? Can parents influence the choice of pathway in secondary school?

Although the school formally makes the final decision, parents have the right to discuss and challenge recommendations, especially if they believe a child has potential for a higher level. In some cases, a child may start at one level and then move to another if they perform well.

There is additional support for migrant children: they can study longer in reception classes (nieuwkomersklas), receive an adapted program, and move to the mainstream later when the language level allows. This gives them the opportunity to adapt without losing chances for the future.

Parents are advised to discuss with the coordinator or school counselor as early as possible the possible paths for the child's development, especially if a transition to higher education is being considered.

? Can Ukrainian children continue their studies in the Ukrainian program?

Yes, this possibility exists. Many children continue their studies at a Ukrainian school online, in parallel with attending a Dutch school. [The Ukrainian Ministry of Education](#) officially supports distance learning through state-run online platforms (e.g. All Ukrainian School Online) and specialized distance schools such as Optima or Atmospherna Shkola.

Reports from [OPORA Foundation](#) and other NGOs working with Ukrainian families in the Netherlands indicate that a significant number of students combine daytime attendance at a Dutch school with evening or weekend classes at a Ukrainian online school. This allows children to maintain a connection with their native language and educational environment and, if necessary, to return to the Ukrainian system, obtain a certificate and enroll in Ukrainian universities.



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At the same time, it is important for parents to consider the workload: dual enrollment can be tiring. Some Ukrainian schools offer more flexible schedules and reduced homework for children abroad.

Ukrainian School Online (USO)

All-Ukrainian School Online is a government platform developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine for students in grades 5-11. It provides free access to video lessons, notes, tests and other learning materials corresponding to the Ukrainian school program. The platform is available 24 hours a day and can be used both for independent learning and in combination with learning in local schools.

Optima Distance School

"Optima" is the first and largest licensed distance school in Ukraine, offering education for grades 1-11. The school provides official state-issued education documents, which allows students to continue their education or enter universities both in Ukraine and abroad. The learning process includes interactive materials, animations, 3D models and other modern educational tools.

Atmospheric School

Atmospheric School is a licensed distance school for students of grades 1-11, which offers training in the Ukrainian curriculum with the possibility of obtaining official educational documents. The school provides a flexible learning schedule, individualized approach and 24/7 access to learning materials. Special attention is paid to supporting students who are abroad, with the possibility of combining studies in local and Ukrainian schools.

Practical advice for parents

Sign up early. Places at popular schools and daycare centers are often limited. Start looking for information several months before you plan to start school.

Ask for support. Every Dutch community (gemeente) has an education coordinator. He or she can help you find a school, understand the registration process, and provide information about rights and opportunities.

Check reviews. Although all schools in the Netherlands meet high standards, each has its own atmosphere, pedagogical approach and specialization. Parents can study reports from the education inspectorate (Onderwijsinspectie) and talk to other parents.

[Inspectie van het Onderwijs](#) (**Netherlands Education Inspectorate**): On this site you can find inspection reports on the quality of education in various schools and educational institutions in the Netherlands.

[Scholen op de kaart](#) (**Schools on the map**): This platform provides detailed information about schools in the Netherlands, including performance data, feedback from parents and students, and the study programs offered.



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Support the native language and culture. If a child is studying in a Ukrainian school in parallel, it is important to take this into account when planning the workload. Many schools are loyal to this format, especially if parents inform teachers.

Be active participants. Parents in the Netherlands play an important role in school life. You can participate in parent committees, meetings and events, as well as directly discuss your child's successes and difficulties with teachers.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Even if you don't speak Dutch, most schools are willing to communicate in English and, if necessary, have an interpreter available. Your participation and interest is important.

Social support and volunteering

How to contact Ukrainian communities in the Netherlands?

Organizations supporting Ukrainians:

- **Stichting Oekraïners in Nederland:** organizes cultural events and provides information. Read more: ukrainians.nl
- **Netherlands For Ukraine Foundation:** Provides medical and psychological support. Read more: [Netherlands For Ukraine Foundation](https://netherlandsforukraine.nl)

Social initiatives

Ukrainians For Dinner - dinner at the Dutch home

Ukrainians For Dinner is an initiative of the Dutch organization **Eet Mee**, which helps Ukrainians temporarily living in the Netherlands to communicate with locals in a cozy home environment.

Why participate?

- To get acquainted with Dutch culture
- Practice the language
- Expand your social circle
- Have a delicious dinner and just have a good time.

How does it work?

Dutch families invite Ukrainians to their homes for dinner. Sometimes you can cook together, sometimes you can just be a guest. You choose which meetings you are interested in.

How to join?

1. Create a free account on the Eet Mee online platform: <https://www.eetmee.nl>.
2. Confirm your email
3. Fill in your profile (in English)



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4. Select the group **"Ukrainians For Dinner"**.
5. You can be either a guest or an invitee

The platform is available in Ukrainian - just change the language in the settings.

 **Need help in Ukrainian?**

Call: **+31 30 221 34 98**

Or write: **vluchteling@eetmee.nl**

Other events in different regions of the Netherlands

Updated list: <https://uatodo.github.io/ru/>

The Hague and surroundings:

- **For toddlers:** Meetings for children from 0 to 4 years old with parents on Mondays at the MOC.
- **For older children:** Bamboe Children's Center invites children 7-12 years old for Saturday group and kids 4-12 years old for summer camp (day camp).
- **Creativity:** Every Thursday Haags KunstAtelier hosts drawing and other creative classes for Ukrainian children and their moms.
- **Health:** Jeugd Tandzorg West Children's Dental Network provides free dental care for Ukrainian children.
- **Culture:** The Panorama Mesdag Museum is open free of charge upon presentation of a Ukrainian passport.
- **Sport:** Athletics clubs of The Hague are waiting for Ukrainians for free training. Every Friday there are yoga classes. Every Saturday there is a children's creative workshop for refugees.
- **Soccer:** Every Sunday Wessel van der Donk invites Ukrainians over 16 to play soccer.

Amsterdam and the surrounding area:

- **Transportation:** Free subscription to the Donkey Republic bike-share.
- **Culture:**
 - The Rijksmuseum hosts Sunday meetings and guided tours, and weekday admission is free with a Ukrainian passport.
 - Amsterdam Museum also offers free admission for Ukrainians.
 - "Public Libraries of Amsterdam" prepared a special program for Ukrainians and organized a photo exhibition (entrance is free). The public library also organizes free events for children and teenagers.
- **Education:** The Conservatory of Amsterdam is ready to accept refugee music students.
- **Wildlife:** Artis Zoo is open free of charge upon presentation of a Ukrainian passport.
- **Creativity for Children:** [Free classes](#) in drawing, theater, language and other arts for Ukrainian children.



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- **Support for women:** The DobroDiy project organizes meetings, seminars and workshops for Ukrainian women every Tuesday.
- **Sketching:** Free sketching [classes](#) for Ukrainian children from 12 years old.
- **Sports:**
 - Free tennis lessons for Ukrainian children in [Amsterdam](#); Sign up in English or Dutch . info@tennisopmaat.nl
 - Free rhythmic gymnastics classes in [Amsterdam](#). Entry via Viber +31639426605, Victoria Miroshnikova.
 - Free group sports classes for Ukrainian women in [Fight Beck Center](#). Address: Tweede Weteringdwarsstraat 41H Amsterdam. Registration +380978589807.
- **Help:** Free clothes for Ukrainians. [Volunteers with No Limits](#), address Rustenburgerstraat 236, 1073GK. Saturday 12:30-14:30.

Rotterdam and surroundings:

- **Dance:** The dance group "MRLIA" invites you to free folk dance classes.
- **Nature:** Botanical Garden Trompenburg offers a discount on admission on presentation of Ukrainian passport.
- **Transportation:** Free subscription to Donkey Republic bikeshare.
- **Language:** Leeszaal offers free Dutch language classes every Thursday.
- **Culture:** Het Nieuwe Instituut (museum of architecture, design and digital culture) is open to Ukrainians for free.
- **Theater:** Theater studio for children and teenagers. Address: Mathenesserdijk 293, Rotterdam. Record via telegram [@milena_act](#).

Other regions:

- **Health:** In Vinkeveen, the physiotherapy clinic Salbar Fysiotherapie treats children under 18 for free.
- **Transportation:** Free subscription to the Donkey Republic bike-share in Dordrecht.
- **Culture:**
 - Openluchtmuseum in and around Arnhem - free admission for locals.
 - Singer Laren Museum and De Fraeylemaborg Museum - free admission on presentation of Ukrainian passport.
 - The Zahn Museum and Peter the Great's house in Zandam are free of charge.
- **Wildlife:** The Ouwehand and Almere Jungel Zoos also offer free admission with a Ukrainian passport.
- **Creativity:** [Meetings](#) for Ukrainians over the age of 14 interested in creativity take place every Thursday in Haarlem. Recording artstart.haarlem@gmail.com
- **Entertainment:** The PLOPSA parks offer free admission for children under 14 and a discount for those older.