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A GUIDE TO WORKING IN  
NEW ZEALAND

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*PARRY FIELD LAWYERS*



ParryField  
Lawyers

To the heart of what matters.

## About Parry Field Lawyers

We are a New Zealand owned company that has been serving our clients since 1948. Our aim is not only to provide sound legal advice, but to also find solutions which deliver the best practical outcome for those we represent.

### Our History

In 2023 we celebrated 75 years in practice. Our founder, Glynn Parry, was joined in partnership by Brian Field in the early 1950s. Since the later 1970s, Peter van Rij, Ken Lord, and Grant Adams have each led the firm into a new period of growth. Today we have grown to 11 partners, around 100 staff and operate from five locations. Parry Field Lawyers incorporated as a company under the Companies Act 1993 on 1 July 2021.

### To The Heart Of What Matters

We see our clients in a rounded way and wanted to help them with 'what really matters', for legal services and beyond, where appropriate. With our growing team, we are excited by what the future holds and look forward to continuing to provide exceptional legal services to our valued clients.

Find out more at [parryfield.com](http://parryfield.com)

Compiled by the Parry Field Lawyers Immigration Team

[parryfield.com](http://parryfield.com)

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PARRY FIELD LAWYERS

## A GUIDE TO WORKING IN NEW ZEALAND

The Immigration team at Parry Field Lawyers have experience in all aspects of immigration law and offer professional, reliable, and comprehensive legal advice and assistance with your immigration needs.

We understand the confusion that can arise when faced with many different immigration categories and policies. Our goal is to serve you in a professional and efficient way by assessing your immigration status, giving you realistic options and preparing your application, in consultation with you.

New Zealand is renowned for its stunning landscapes and balanced work-life culture. Most people who wish to work in New Zealand will need a work visa, except for Australian citizens, who can work without one.

We are here to guide you through the process and offer tips to make your application as smooth as possible.

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## TYPES OF VISAS

The type of visa required depends on factors such as the nature of the work, the applicant's skills, and the length of stay. Common options include:

### **Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV)**

- This is the most common work visa for most applicants.
- It can be a pathway to a Work to Residence (WTR) Visa, Care Workforce WTR Visa, or Transport WTR Visa, if eligible.
- It also serves as a pathway to the Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) Resident Visa.

### **Working Holiday Visa (WHV)**

- Available to young people aged 18 to 30 (or up to 35 for select countries).
- Allows you to travel and work in New Zealand for up to 12 months (23 months for Canadian citizens and 36 months for UK citizens).
- Enables you to study in New Zealand for up to 6 months.
- Visa conditions vary based on your country of origin.

### **Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Limited Visa**

- Designed for horticulture and viticulture seasonal work only.
- Allows short-term work in New Zealand.
- Employers must be on the RSE-approved list.
- Applicants must come from eligible Pacific nations.

### **Supplementary Seasonal Employment (SSE) Work Visa**

- Available to applicants in New Zealand who hold a student visa or visitor visa and have not held an SSE work visa previously.

- Restricted to horticulture and viticulture seasonal work.
- Employers must be SSE-approved.
- The visa is valid for six months.

### **Religious Worker Work Visa (RWWV)**

- For applicants with at least two years of religious training and/or work experience.
- Allows work for a registered charity organisation.
- Supports sustainable religious work.
- Valid for two years, with a one-time renewal option.

### **Specific Purpose Work Visa (SPWV)**

- Issued for a specific purpose or event.
- The length of stay depends on the nature of the purpose or event.

### **China Special Work Visa (CPWV)**

- Exclusively for applicants from China.
- Available for specific occupations, including qualified chefs, traditional medicine practitioners, Mandarin teacher aides, Wushu martial arts coaches, or tourism specialists.
- New Zealand has quotas for this visa:
  - 200 Chinese chefs
  - 75 traditional Chinese medicine practitioners
  - 300 Mandarin teacher aides
  - 25 Wushu martial arts coaches
  - 200 Chinese tourism specialists
  - total quota: 800

### **Further Options**

If you want to bring your family with you, please refer to our *"A Guide To Reunite With Your Family"* for further information. Kindly note that not all work visa holders can support their family members.

If you have completed your study and want to work, please refer to our *"A Guide To Studying In New Zealand"* for further information. Kindly note that not all student visa holders may be eligible for a Post-Study work visa.

### **When to apply**

We recommend reaching out to us if you have an offer or would like to develop a strategy or plan. We can guide you on the type of work visa that is most suitable for your circumstances, considering your qualifications, work experience, and individual conditions.



## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PREPARE?

### Generic Documents:

- **Identity:** Ensure your passport is valid for at least three months after your planned departure date.
- **Health:** Must meet acceptable health standards, which are stricter than the criteria for a temporary visa.
- **Character:** Must be of good character and provide a police certificate from all countries you are a citizen of, as well as any other country you have stayed in for 12 months or more in the last 10 years.
- **Genuine Intentions:** Must genuinely intend to meet the conditions of your visa, meaning you are a bona fide applicant.
- **Certified English Translations:** All documents that are not in English must be accompanied by certified full English translations.

### AEWV

1. New Zealand job offer. This offer must be:
  - current at the time you apply for a visa;
  - full-time work;
  - fixed-term or permanent;
  - from an accredited employer;
  - with an approved job check/token for the role;
  - paid at or above the minimum wage and ensure that migrant workers receive the market rate aligned with their roles and work location.
2. The employment agreement must comply with New Zealand employment and immigration law.
3. Minimum skill requirement. You must have either:
  - two years or more of relevant work experience, or
  - a relevant qualification at Level 4 or higher on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF), unless you have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Exemption: you may be exempt from the minimum skill requirement, if:

- your role is on the Green List;
- you have occupational registration for your role;
- you are paid at or above twice the median wage (NZD \$70.00, as at 9 March 2026); or
- you have already provided the evidence of meeting the requirements in your previous visa application.

#### 4. Recognition of Higher ANZSCO Skill Levels

- The occupations can be recognised as ANZSCO skill Level 3, including cook, pet groomer, kennel hand, nanny, fitness instructor, scaffolder, slaughterer.
- If the employer specifies that the job needs either three years of work experience or a Level 4 qualification, the occupations will be recognised as ANZSCO skill Level 3, including: agricultural and horticultural mobile plant operator, excavator operator, forklift driver, mobile plant operators not elsewhere classified.

#### 5. Additional Requirements

- For a role at ANZSCO skill Level 4-5, you:
  - must meet the minimum standard of English; and
  - may have a shorter visa duration of three years.
- You must have spent the required time outside New Zealand if you reach your maximum continuous stay in New Zealand.
- Occupational registration, if required for your occupation.
- Any other requirements specified in the employer's job advertisement.

## WHV

1. All WHV applications must be submitted online during a specific period of time.
2. You can apply from any country, including New Zealand.
3. There is no job offer requirement for WHV. However, you cannot undertake permanent employment unless you apply for a suitable work visa.
4. The scheme and criteria will vary depending on the country. We can provide advice based on your specific scheme.
5. Ordinarily Resident: To qualify under a scheme with an "ordinarily resident" requirement, your permanent residence must be in the specified country, and you must not have been away from that country for more than two years before applying.

## RSE Limited Visa

1. You must:
  - be 18 years of age or older;
  - hold citizenship from an eligible Pacific nation;
  - have a job offer from an RSE that meets the wage and work hours requirements.
2. Changes: You are no longer required to undergo HIV screening.
3. Two pathways will be introduced in November 2025:
  - Three-year multi-entry visa.
  - Seven-month single entry visa.

## SSE Work Visa

1. You must:
  - be 18 years of age or older;
  - hold a valid student or Visitor visa;
  - provide evidence that you intend to work for an eligible employer in seasonal work;

- have a ticket to leave New Zealand or sufficient funds to buy one;
- not have been granted an SSE before.

## RWWV

1. Religious training and/or work experience. You must provide evidence of having at least two years of religious training and/or work experience.
2. Sponsorship. Your sponsor must:
  - be a registered charity with Charities Services;
  - not be on the list of non-compliant employer maintained by Labour Inspectorate;
  - provide you with accommodation, financial support and help to return home;
  - have a genuine need for you to do religious work.
3. Religious work:
  - the work must fall within the scope of INZ's definition;
  - your sponsor must provide an employment agreement or description of the work.

## SPWV

1. Specific purpose or event. You must provide evidence of a specific purpose or event.
2. Employer supplementary form (ESF). You may be required to provide an ESF depending on your specific purpose or event.
3. Qualification and/or work experience: You must provide evidence that you have the relevant qualifications or work experience necessary to complete your specific work.
4. Onward travel: You must have a travel ticket to leave New Zealand or sufficient funds to purchase one.

5. Funds: You must have sufficient funds for your maintenance and accommodation while in New Zealand.
6. Specific requirements: You must meet any specific requirements listed for the type of specific purpose or event.
7. Wage threshold: You must be paid at or above the minimum wage and ensure that migrant workers receive the market rate aligned with their roles and work location.

### **China Special Work Visa (CPWV)**

1. You must be a citizen of People's Republic of China.
2. You must have an offer of full-time work, which must be one of the following occupations:
  - Chinese chef;
  - Traditional Chinese medicine practitioner (including nurses);
  - Mandarin teacher's aide;
  - Wushu martial arts coach; and
  - Chinese tourism specialist.
3. You must be qualified to the offered work.



## HOW TO APPLY

- **Online:** The quickest and easiest way to apply is online via the Immigration New Zealand website. WHV applications can only be applied for online.
- **Paper Application:** You can also submit a paper application at a New Zealand Visa Application Centre. The details of receiving centres are based on the country you live.

Please ensure you upload or attach all necessary documents when submitting your application.

### TIPS

- For an AEWV application:
  - Your job offer cannot be for work planting, maintaining, harvesting, or packing crops in the horticulture or viticulture industries, for foreign crew of fishing vessels, or for self-employed work.
  - Your employment agreement must not include a trial provision.
  - Evidence of your work experience must come from a third party, not yourself.
- While holding an RSE Limited Visa, you cannot apply for any other type of visa and must leave New Zealand before your visa expires.
- For a RWWV application:
  - You can apply for a subsequent RWWV once. This means if you hold a RWWV for four years or more, you cannot apply for another RWWV. However, you may be eligible for a Religious Worker Resident Visa. Please contact us for a preliminary assessment.
- For a SPWV application:
  - The requirements for each specific purpose and event differ. Please reach out to us so we can assess the purpose and event, and then advise you on the specific requirements and visa duration.

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