



The [Asylum Seeker Program \(ASP\)](#) is one of a wide range of support services that the Society runs to assist these vulnerable groups such as migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum.

Contact by email: [AsylumSeekerProgram@vinnies.org.au](mailto:AsylumSeekerProgram@vinnies.org.au)

## ***What is the Asylum Seeker Program (ASP)?***

The Asylum Seeker Program (ASP) provides financial assistance, case management and wrap around support to people seeking asylum who are living in the community in New South Wales (NSW). The ASP is a two year program that is funded internally by the St Vincent de Paul Society. Casework is provided through the Inner City and Western Sydney Case Management Teams. Fortnightly payments are administered by the Project Officer and are calculated at 89 % of Newstart Allowance.

The key focus of the program is to support the vulnerable cohort of people seeking asylum referred to as 'double negatives.' These individuals and families are experiencing financial hardship, as they are at the end of the status determination process and therefore ineligible for the majority of support services. Clients accessing the ASP have no income, are unable to work, are not supported by the community and are do not receive payments from any other organisations. In many cases, clients are unable to meet their living expenses and are at risk of homelessness. The program supports these individuals and families as they wait for their refugee status to be resolved.

## ***What is the difference between an 'asylum seeker' and a refugee?***

Refugee:

Someone who's claim has been recognised and is seeking **protection** from **persecution** outside of their home country, for reasons of **race, nationality, political belief, religion** or membership to a particular **social group**.

Asylum seeker:

Someone who is seeking **protection** from persecution but who's claim is still being assessed i.e they are awaiting their outcome as they haven't yet been formally recognised as a refugee.

## ***Common issues facing people seeking asylum***

### ***Financial hardship***

Asylum seekers live an unstable existence in the Australian community. They are one of the most marginalised groups in our country today as they:

- Often arrive with a limited amount of money and personal possessions
- Have minimal support networks



- Cannot secure long-term employment
- May have suffered recent trauma
- Have strict legal requirements placed on them

### *Work rights*

Some asylum seekers are not eligible to work because of the conditions attached to their Bridging Visa. For those that do have the right to work, many are unable to secure employment.

Barriers to finding a job include:

- Learning English as a new language
- Qualifications (doctors, engineers etc.) not recognised
- Inability to guarantee length of stay in Australia
- Complex physical and mental health issues that make it difficult to work

### *Housing issues*

Barriers to housing include:

- Financial hardship
- Ineligibility for housing services
- Prejudice and discrimination
- High rental prices
- A competitive market
- Limited English

Associated problems:

- Overcrowding
- Vulnerable to exploitation
- Rough sleepers (Parramatta park)

### *Other key issues*

- Mental and physical health
- Experiences in home country
- Impact of detention (uncertainty and waiting)
- Some have no access to Medicare
- Trauma and associated emotional and behavioural symptoms
- Difficulty navigating complex legal system (funding and free legal aid removed in 2014)



*NB: Some of the information on common issues facing people seeking asylum was adapted from the online training for Enough Room, created by Claire Phillips from SPARK.*

### ***Where caseworkers and linkers can look to for support***

#### *Internal referrals*

- Conferences
- OLC
- Material support through Vinnies Community Support Centres
- SPARK
- Vinnies Van - Brekky Van Sydney and Night Patrols

#### *External referrals*

- Legal: RACS, Legal Aid, Salvos Legal, IOM, IARC
- Material: Asylum Seekers Centre, House of Welcome, Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS)
- Employment : Bright Hospitality, Refugee Talent, JRS Employment Program, Fairfield Multicultural Services etc.
- Housing: SSI, House of Welcome, JRS
- Health: STARTTS, Refugee Health

### ***Client entitlements***

#### *Education – Smart and Skilled*

People seeking asylum on bridging visas are now entitled to free education at TAFE for select certifications on the NSW Skills List up to Certificate IV. Please see <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-students/students-with-additional-needs/asylum-seekers-and-refugees> for more information.

#### *Transport – Opal Gold*

People seeking asylum on bridging visas who are receiving aid through St Vincent de Paul are entitled to concession travel at \$2.50 per day. Clients can apply for their Opal Gold and Transport Concession Entitlement Card online. All that is needed is a designated agency certification form which can be stamped and certified by the Project Officer of the ASP. Please contact the Project Officer before applying for your client online.



**Where to go for more information?**

Video clips:

<https://www.ted.com/about/programs-initiatives/ted-ed/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-refugee>

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/thefeed/article/2017/04/20/sydney-cafe-skilling-refugees>

[https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander\\_betts\\_our\\_refugee\\_system\\_is\\_failing\\_here\\_s\\_how\\_we\\_can\\_fix\\_it](https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_our_refugee_system_is_failing_here_s_how_we_can_fix_it)

Useful websites:

<http://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/factsheets>

[https://www.asrc.org.au/resources/fact-sheet/?gclid=COLx\\_Zewy9QCFRQFKgodtPUJAA](https://www.asrc.org.au/resources/fact-sheet/?gclid=COLx_Zewy9QCFRQFKgodtPUJAA)

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/asylum-seekers-and-refugees/asylum-seekers-and-refugees-guide>

For more information or any general inquiries please contact the Asylum Seeker Program (ASP) Project Officer, Erin Tandy.

Phone: (02) 8622 0419

Email: [erin.tandy@vinnies.org.au](mailto:erin.tandy@vinnies.org.au)

*\* Queries can be answered via email, telephone or by organising a meeting or client home visit. There are also a number of fact sheets and resources that may be useful, as listed below.*



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- I. ASP – Transport Entitlements
- II. ASP – Designated Agency Certification Form

### b) Education

- I. ASP – Education Entitlements

### c) Health

- I. ASP – Health Entitlements
- II. ASP – Health Letter Template

## 6. Referrals for existing clients

- I. [ASP – Internal and External Referral Pathways](#)
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- III. ASP – Legal Advice Referral Information
- IV. SSI - Emergency Housing Referral
- V. [ASP – Internal Referral Process \(Conferences and Hubs\)](#)

## 7. Client review

- I. ASP – Client Review Tool
- II. ASP – Client Review Tool (9D)

## 8. Exiting

- I. ASP – Exit Process
- II. ASP – Exit Categories
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## RESOURCES

### 1. General info

#### a) [Country profiles](#)

- I. ASP – Country Profile Nigeria

#### b) FAQs and tips

- I. Asylum Seekers – FAQs
- II. Good Practice Tips when Working with Refugees

#### c) Flow charts

- I. Refugees vs. Asylum Seekers – Flow Chart
- II. Status Determination Flow Chart
- III. ASP – Status Determination Process



- d) NSW
  - I. NSW Budget – Refugees Fact Sheet
- f) Human rights
  - I. Human Rights Commission – Pathways to Protection
  - II. 10 Point Plan in Action
- e) Childcare
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- 3. **Employment**
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    - II. RACS – Judicial Review Fact Sheet
    - III. RACS – Legislation Changes Fact Sheet
    - IV. RACS – Negative IAA
    - V. RACS – Briefing Kit on TPVs and SHEVs
  - b) RACS J4R
    - I. RACS – J4R Fact Sheet
    - II. RACS – J4R Referral Info
    - III. RACS – J4R Referral Form
    - IV. J4R Scope Presentation
  
- 6. **Housing**
  - I. SSI - Emergency Housing
  
- 7. Kaldor Centre
  - I. Kaldor Centre – Legal Aid Entitlements
  - II. Kaldor Centre – Status Determination Process



8. Salvos
  - I. Salvos – Services Fact Sheet
  - II. Salvos - Casserole Program
  - III. Salvos – English Conversation Classes
  - IV. Salvos Legal – Types of Legal Advice
  
9. STARTTS
  - I. STARTTS – Guide for Social Workers Working with Refugees

KEY: Purple = continuously built on

Green = Not yet created