

## Your personalised First Steps Checklist

The First Steps Checklist is a personalised list of the first steps you need to take, from registration to tasks associated with setting up your daily life.

Start by answering the questions below. You will be able to save the list as a PDF file when you are finished.



### More than 90 days

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Citizens of non-EU countries who plan to come to Finland for more than 90 days must first apply for a residence permit from the Finnish Immigration Service ([Migri.fi](#)). It is not possible to apply for a residence permit on another person's behalf.

The type of residence permit you need to apply for depends on your reason for coming to Finland. Residence permit applications are different if you plan to 1) work in Finland, 2) be with a family member in Finland, 3) study in Finland, 4) return migrate to Finland, or 5) come to Finland on other grounds.

You can apply for a residence permit online at [EnterFinland.fi](#), but within three months of submitting the application, you will need to visit a Finnish mission (embassy or consulate) in person to confirm your identity and present original copies of your application appendices. Check if your documents must be translated or legalised before your scheduled visit.

Applicants must wait for their residence permit decisions in the same country they submitted the application.

Once the Finnish Immigration Service has granted you a residence permit and you have moved to Finland, you must register your municipality of residence with the population register ([Dvv.fi](#)). You will then be assigned a Finnish personal identity code. This means you will be considered a Helsinki resident and be entitled to municipal services.



### I will work

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Citizens of non-EU countries who plan to come to Finland to work must first secure a job here and apply for a residence permit for employed persons before they enter the country. The employer in question must also complete a form and append it to the residence permit application.

If you already have a residence permit for Finland based on some other grounds, such as family ties, you may already have the right to work. A few special permits are granted for specialists, researchers and seasonal work. Consult the Finnish Immigration Service ([Migri.fi](#)) for more information.

If your stay in Finland will exceed three months, you must register your municipality of residence at the population register ([Dvv.fi](#)) after your arrival. Once you have registered in person with these two authorities, you will receive a personal identity code. This means you will be considered a Helsinki resident and be entitled to municipal services.

You will need a tax card from the Tax Administration ([Vero.fi](#)), if you plan on working. If you work in construction, you also need a tax number. In order to get a tax card, you will need an identity code.

If you have not received a personal identity code yet, you can apply for one at the tax office. You will be asked to show your employment contract, residence permit, and a valid passport or photo ID to receive this code.



### I'm not yet in Finland

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You can apply for a residence permit online at [EnterFinland.fi](#), but within three months of submitting the application, you will need to visit a Finnish mission (embassy or consulate) in person to confirm your identity and present original copies of your application appendices. Check if your documents must be translated or legalised before your scheduled visit.

## More steps to consider

## ☐ **Arrange to use an interpreter, if necessary**

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If you do not speak Finnish or Swedish, you have the right to use an interpreter when interacting with some public authorities. Interpreter services must be arranged in advance and often come at no cost. Find more information at [InfoFinland.fi](https://infofinland.fi).

## ☐ **Open a bank account**

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Book an in-person visit at your bank of choice to open an account. Ask beforehand about the documents you will need to show them. Remember to request access codes for online banking.

## ☐ **Set up a form of strong identification**

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You will need to acquire a form of strong identification, i.e., online banking codes, a mobile ID or a police-issued ID card, to use various e-services in Finland. Learn more at [Suomi.fi](https://suomi.fi).

## ☐ **Find a place to live and buy home insurance**

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Almost all rental agreements will require you to buy home insurance. Some banks in Finland offer bundled banking and insurance services at a discount, so ask around for different offers. See the [Housing in Helsinki](#) section of [welcome.helsinki.fi](https://welcome.helsinki.fi) for more information.

## ☐ **Buy a phone and internet service**

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You must have a [personal identity code](#) and Finnish address to buy a mobile service and/or broadband subscription. If you do not have a credit history in Finland, you will be asked to make an advance payment. If you do not yet have an ID code or address, you can purchase a pre-paid subscription. Check if your housing agreement includes broadband before you buy a subscription from an operator. Let your operator know if you want to use a [mobile ID](#).

## ☐ **Use your Kela card and learn about state benefits**

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If you are [eligible for national health insurance](#) in Finland, you will be issued a Kela card. You can also apply for it yourself from the state benefits agency ([Kela.fi](https://kela.fi)). You will need to show this card to receive state-supported healthcare and subsidies. Each Kela benefit must be applied for separately, and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Find a step-by-step guide to using Helsinki's health services in the [welcome.helsinki.fi](#) section [Healthcare and social services](#).

## ☐ **Make it a habit to use public transport**

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Public transport in Helsinki is convenient, reliable and eco-friendly. The handy [HSL app](#) allows you to buy tickets and access the [Journey Planner](#) on your mobile phone. Check the [Getting around the city](#) section of [welcome.helsinki.fi](https://welcome.helsinki.fi) for more information.

## ☐ **Exchange your driving license**

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Driving licenses issued in EU/EEA countries are valid in Finland indefinitely, but it is a good idea to exchange your license for a Finnish one if you plan to live here permanently. Owners of driving licenses issued by other countries will need to pass a Finnish driving exam if they do not exchange their license by the deadline. See more at [Ajokortti-info.fi](https://ajokortti-info.fi).

## ☐ **Sign up for Finnish or Swedish language lessons**

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While it is true that almost everyone in Helsinki speaks English, we suggest you start learning one or both of the national languages right away, as it will bring many advantages. Check [Finnishcourses.fi](https://finnishcourses.fi) for suitable courses near you.



## Explore your new home

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Once you have settled in, take some time to get to know Helsinki's different neighbourhoods. See the welcome.helsinki sections [About the city](#), [Nature](#), and [Free-time activities](#) and the [MyHelsinki website](#) for city info and fun things to see and do!



## Enjoy your new life in Helsinki!

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Congratulations! You have now finished all the steps and are ready to start your Helsinki adventure.

## Any questions?

### [International House Helsinki](#)

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Mon–Fri 9–16

### [Helsinki-info](#)

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