

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

EU citizens have the same rights as Finnish citizens to work, study and start a business in Finland. Therefore, they do not need a residence permit. If you plan to stay in Finland for more than three months, however, you must register your right of residence with the Finnish Immigration Service ([Migri.fi](#)).

The application must be submitted within three months of the day of your arrival, at the latest. To complete the registration, you must book an appointment and visit a service point of the Finnish Immigration Service. The immigration authorities will ask you at this time to prove that you can earn your own livelihood and meet the requirements for registration. See [Migri.fi](#) for more information.

After this, you need to register your municipality of residence with the population register ([Dvv.fi](#)). 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.

☐ I will work

You will need a tax card from the Tax Administration ([Vero.fi](#)), if you plan on working.

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, proof of completed EU registration (if you have been in Finland more than three months), and a valid passport or photo ID in order to receive this code.

☐ With family

Family members of citizens of EU countries have the right to move to Finland to be with their family. If your family members are also citizens of EU countries, they must register their right of residence with the Finnish Immigration Service ([Migri.fi](#)). The registration application must be submitted within three months of the day of arrival at the latest.

If your family members are citizens of non-EU countries and they meet the requirements set by the Finnish Immigration Service, they can apply for a Residence card for a family member of an EU citizen. See [Migri.fi](#) for more information.

Family members who are granted a right of residence by the immigration authorities must then register their municipality of residence with the population register ([Dvv.fi](#)). After this, they will receive a personal identity code. This means they will be considered Helsinki residents and be entitled to municipal services.

More steps to consider

☐ Arrange to use an interpreter, if necessary

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](#).

☐ Open a bank account

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

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

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 for more information.

☐ Buy a phone and internet service

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

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

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 for more information.

☐ Exchange your driving license

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

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

Once you have settled in, take some time to get to know Helsinki's different neighbourhoods. See the welcome.helsinki.fi 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!

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

Any questions?

[International House Helsinki](#)

Lintulahdenkuja 2 D, 00530 Helsinki

Mon–Fri 9–16

[Helsinki-info](#)

Tel. +358 9 31011 111 and [chat](#)

Mon–Thu 9–16, Fri 10–15

Service points: International House Helsinki and Central Library Oodi