

This is your personalised First Steps Checklist!

The First Steps Checklist is a personalised list of the first steps you need to take in association with your move to Finland.

Each list has about a dozen steps. The first few focus on the necessary permits and registration for your specific situation. The others contain information on important steps like opening a bank account, buying home insurance and using healthcare.

Start by answering the questions below. When you are finished, you will be able to save your personalised list as a PDF file or print it out.



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 study

If you have come to Helsinki to study as an EU citizen, you must show a certificate of attendance from a Finnish learning institution when registering your right of residence with the Finnish Immigration Service ([Migri.fi](#)).

Please note that if your only reason for moving to Finland is to study, you will likely not be eligible for state-supported social benefits, as you will be considered a temporary resident. See the state benefits agency [Kela.fi](#) for more information.



I'm planning to work while studying

If you are planning to work or start a business while you study, you will need to apply for a tax card from the Tax Administration ([Vero.fi](#)). If you work in construction, you will 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, proof of completed EU registration (if you have been in Finland more than three months), and a valid passport or photo ID 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](#).



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](#) 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](#)). 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.



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](#) 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](#).



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](#) for suitable courses near you.



Explore your new home

Once you have settled in, remember to take some time to get to know Helsinki's different neighbourhoods. [MyHelsinki](#) is great source of ideas for 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. Remember to visit the [welcome.helsinki](#) website, if you have any more questions.

Any questions? Contact one of Helsinki's helpful services listed below:

International House Helsinki

Lintulahdenkuja 2 D, 00530 Helsinki

Monday–Friday 9:00–16:00

Please note the following exceptions to regular service hours: TE office desk is closed daily between 12:00–13:00. The Finnish Centre for Pensions (ETK) is present at the service point from Monday to Wednesday, 9:00–12:00 and 13:00–16:00.

Helsinki-info

Tel 09 31011 111

Chat [neuvonta.hel.fi](#)

Service point IHH and Oodi