

Asylum in Finland: the path step by step

Information verified: 2026-07-18 · selkoraha.fi

This checklist describes the path of someone applying for international protection in Finland — from lodging the application to the decision and moving to a municipality. Order matters here: the application is made immediately on arrival, not later.

The rules changed noticeably in June 2026 and much of the guidance online is now out of date. Below is the situation as of the verification date.

Changes from 12 June 2026

The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum started to apply. Reception centre clients have new obligations: asylum seekers must identify themselves at their centre 2–4 times a month and people with temporary protection once a month (minors and those working are exempt). The Finnish society course is now compulsory for everyone over 18. Failing to identify yourself, keep your contact details current, complete the course, cooperate with the authorities or follow centre rules can cut your reception allowance by 20 percent. If you have income, client fees can be charged, including retrospectively for three months.

Key deadline: 1 September 2026

Reception services end three months after you were granted a residence permit and the right to apply for a municipality of residence. If you already hold a permit and that right, your reception services end on 1 September 2026. The time limits do not apply to unaccompanied minors. Plan your move to a municipality well in advance.

The path step by step

1 Police / border

Apply immediately on arrival

An application for international protection is made in person — at the border on entry, or to the police if you are already in the country. Do it as soon as possible.

Your fingerprints and photograph are taken and your details registered. Fingerprints are checked against the EU-wide Eurodac system: if you have already applied in another EU country, that country may be responsible for your case.

- ☐ Bring every document that proves your identity
- ☐ Keep any documents about why you left
- ☐ Say if you are travelling with minor children
- ☐ Say if you need medical care

[migri.fi](https://migri.fi/en/asylum-in-finland) — asylum in Finland: <https://migri.fi/en/asylum-in-finland>

2 Reception centre

Get accommodation and a client card

While your application is processed you can live in a reception centre (vastaanottokeskus) or in private accommodation. Private accommodation must be reported to the centre.

The reception centre is your point of contact: it explains the rules, issues your client card and tells you when to identify yourself for the first time.

- ☐ Give the centre up-to-date contact details
- ☐ Tell them if you are going to be away
- ☐ Learn the centre rules — they are now the same in every centre

3 Reception centre

Apply for reception allowance

Reception allowance (vastaanottoraha) is not granted automatically — you apply for it at your own centre using an application form. It is meant for immediate basic needs if you and your family lack sufficient means. You must report all income and funds to the centre. Not reporting them can affect the allowance and lead to client fees being charged.

- ☐ Get the application form from your centre
- ☐ Report changes in income and family circumstances
- ☐ Remember: breaching obligations cuts the allowance by 20 percent

migri.fi — reception allowance: <https://migri.fi/en/reception-allowance>

4 Reception centre

Meet the new obligations

Since 12 June 2026 these are not a formality: failing them leads directly to a reduced allowance or withdrawal of reception services.

Identification normally means visiting in person and showing your client card. It also counts when you come to the centre for something else or for a nurse appointment.

- ☐ Asylum seekers identify themselves 2–4 times a month
- ☐ People with temporary protection once a month
- ☐ Minors and people who are working are exempt
- ☐ Complete the compulsory Finnish society course
- ☐ Keep your contact details at the centre current

5 Legal aid

Get legal help before the interview

You have the right to a legal adviser. State legal aid (oikeusapu) is free or discounted depending on your income. Arrange it in advance, not on the day of the interview.

An adviser helps you prepare, explains which circumstances matter and checks the record.

- ☐ Find your nearest legal aid office (oikeusaputoimisto)
- ☐ Ask the reception centre for legal advice contacts
- ☐ Interpretation is provided at the interview

oikeus.fi — legal aid: <https://oikeus.fi/en/index/esitteet/oikeusapu.html>

6 Migri

Attend the asylum interview

The interview is the heart of your case. You explain why you cannot return to your country of origin. Be detailed and honest: this account forms the basis of the decision.

The interview is held in a language you understand, with an interpreter. The record is read back to you — if something is wrong, say so immediately.

- ☐ Bring all evidence and documents
- ☐ Describe every reason, even those you think are minor
- ☐ Say if you would rather speak to an official of your own gender
- ☐ Say if your health makes it hard to give an account

7 Migri

Wait for the decision

Processing time depends on the procedure. Applications lodged before and after 12 June 2026 follow different rules. You can check an estimate in the Migri processing time service.

While you wait you may have the right to work — this depends on whether you hold an identity document and how long it is since you applied.

- ☐ Report any change of address or contact details
- ☐ Ask the centre when your right to work begins
- ☐ School-age children attend school during the process too

8 Migri / DVV

Positive decision: moving to a municipality

After a positive decision you get a residence permit card and the right to apply for a municipality of residence (kotikunta). That starts the three-month clock before reception services end.

From there the path is the same as an ordinary move: DVV registration, banking codes, tax card, Kela and integration services in your municipality.

- ☐ Apply for a municipality of residence straight away
- ☐ Start looking for housing before the deadline
- ☐ Ask your municipality for an integration plan
- ☐ Apply to Kela for social security coverage

kotoutuminen.fi: <https://kotoutuminen.fi/en/front-page>

9 Court

Negative decision: appealing

A negative decision can be appealed to an administrative court. The appeal period is stated in the decision itself and it is short — start on the day you receive it.

You need a legal adviser to appeal. The right to legal aid continues at this stage.

- ☐ Contact a lawyer immediately
- ☐ Check the exact deadline in the decision
- ☐ Do not miss it — it is almost impossible to restore
- ☐ Ask how the decision affects your reception services

oikeus.fi — legal aid: <https://oikeus.fi/en/index/esitteet/oikeusapu.html>

Important

This material is orientation, not legal advice. Only Migri decides your case, and deadlines and procedures change. Do get legal aid (oikeusapu) — it is free or discounted depending on your income. Always check the current information on migri.fi. In an emergency call 112.