Compensation for Live Organ Donors: frequently asked questions

# What is live organ donor compensation?

Live organ donation can significantly improve the quality and duration of life for many people. Removing financial barriers to live organ donation is important to help people get the transplant they need.

Financial compensation from the Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora was established for living organ donors under two pieces of legislation:

* Compensation for Live Organ Donors Act 2016
* Organ Donation and Related Matters Act 2019

Under these Acts, employed people who take unpaid leave from work to donate a kidney, or part of their liver, may apply to be compensated for loss of earnings as they recover from surgery.

Live organ donors who are eligible for compensation will be paid 100 % of their loss of income for an initial six weeks, which can be further extended for a total period of up to twelve weeks with a medical certificate from their specialist. Twelve weeks compensation for loss of earnings may be especially important for people who work in very physical jobs, such as where heavy lifting is involved.

Donors need to complete an application form and provide evidence of earnings prior to donating.

Once approved, payments are made weekly to the donor’s nominated bank account, eligible from the date of their surgery.

For more information, please phone the Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora on 0800 855 066 (weekdays), or download the Compensation for Live Organ Donors: Information Pack available on their website:

# [compensation-for-live-organ-donor-information-pack-19-nov-19.pdf (health.govt.nz)](https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/compensation-for-live-organ-donor-information-pack-19-nov-19.pdf)

# Who can receive compensation?

Anyone who receives a salary or wages, and is planning to donate an organ, can apply for compensation if they are likely to lose earnings.

Donors should not be required to use up their annual or sick leave in order to donate an organ, therefore compensation for loss of income is paid to donors to support them to take unpaid leave, and retain their leave balances. If the donor chooses to use annual or sick leave, they will not be eligible to receive compensation as they have not lost income.

The donor does not have to be living in New Zealand. However, the donor’s surgery must take place in New Zealand and the person receiving the organ must be eligible for access to New Zealand health services.

For more information about eligibility for New Zealand health services: [Guide to eligibility for public health services – Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand](https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz/our-health-system/eligibility-for-publicly-funded-health-services/guide-to-eligibility-for-public-health-services/)

# What if I’m self-employed?

If you are self-employed, you are eligible for loss of earnings compensation. You will, however, need to provide evidence of earnings to determine your payment. Evidence may include audited accounts and bank statements.

# Can I get compensation if I am already on a benefit?

You will not be eligible for compensation for loss of income if you are already receiving a main benefit from the Ministry of Social Development/Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora.

For more information, talk to your case manager at Work and Income/Te Hiringa Tangata, who can tell you what your options are, or call the Work and Income contact centre on 0800 559 009, or visit their website: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/>

# Who makes the payments?

The Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora will manage the payments, and will liaise with hospitals and regional transplant coordinators regarding the date of operation and any extension to the initial six-week compensation payment.

# Do I need to pay tax on these earnings?

Like your wages, all compensation is subject to tax. The Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora will make all relevant tax deductions before payment of compensation into your bank account.

# Can I get child support and/or home help when I come home from surgery?

Unfortunately, donor compensation does not extend to childcare or home help. Most donors require family members or friends to support them through the recovery period after donating.

Prior to donating, talk with your family and friends, your transplant coordinator or social worker about what support you will need during your operation and recovery period.

# Are my travel and accommodation costs covered?

As a donor, you are entitled to have your surgery travel and accommodation costs paid under the National Travel Assistance (NTA) scheme from the Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora. NTA funding for travel and accommodation is paid via the hospital where the person receiving your organ lives.

Depending on where you are based, either the hospital transport office, social worker or transplant coordinator will arrange your travel and accommodation.

You are also entitled, and encouraged, to have a support person present with you during your hospital admission for donation. The support person is also covered under NTA for travel and accommodation.

If you are not currently registered for NTA, they will need to make an application under the NTA policy. You can find out more about NTA here:

[National Travel Assistance – Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand](https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz/our-health-system/hospitals-and-specialist-services/national-travel-assistance/)

# Why is there compensation for live organ donors and not deceased organ donors?

Live organ donation compensation covers the loss of earnings a working person may experience as they donate an organ, and the subsequent recovery process. Deceased donor organs are gifted by the donor and their whānau/family.

# How do I apply for donor compensation?

Potential donors should read the ‘Compensation for Live Organ Donors: Information Pack’, then complete the ‘Application for Loss of Earnings Form’ as well as the ‘Employee Earnings Certificate’ available on the Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora Ora website.

# [compensation-for-live-organ-donor-information-pack-19-nov-19.pdf (health.govt.nz)](https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/compensation-for-live-organ-donor-information-pack-19-nov-19.pdf)

[Application for Loss of Earnings Form - Live Organ Donor (health.govt.nz)](https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/application-for-loss-of-earning-form-live-organ-donor-fillable-mar21.pdf)

[employee-earnings-certificate-live-organ\_donor-fillable-mar21v2.pdf (health.govt.nz)](https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/employee-earnings-certificate-live-organ_donor-fillable-mar21v2.pdf)

It is advisable to complete and submit the required application forms as soon as you are offered a transplant date and, ideally, at least sixty days prior to planned surgery. However, on occasion a donor is not given sixty days advance warning of a surgery date. In this instance, the donor’s transplant coordinator can liaise with the Ministry of Health to let them know the planned surgery date, and the donor will need to complete and submit the forms as quickly as possible in order to ensure the weekly payments can be made in a timely manner.

Your transplant coordinator can help with completing certain information on the forms and with submitting them electronically, but potential donors will need their employer to complete the employment and earnings sections. If you are self-employed who will also need to provide verification of income such as audited accounts and bank statements.

A tax code declaration (IR330) is also required. If you contribute to the KiwiSaver scheme, you will also need to complete the KiwiSaver deduction form (KS2) and submit this along with your application for live donor compensation.

For links to these forms from Inland Revenue/Te Tari Taake, please go to:

[Complete my tax code declaration (ird.govt.nz)](https://www.ird.govt.nz/income-tax/income-tax-for-individuals/tax-codes-and-tax-rates-for-individuals/tax-codes-for-individuals/complete-my-tax-code-declaration)

# [ks2-09-2020.pdf (ird.govt.nz)](https://www.ird.govt.nz/-/media/project/ir/home/documents/forms-and-guides/ir1---ir99/ks2/ks2-09-2020.pdf?modified=20220330231405&modified=20220330231405)

# Where can I get more information?

The following websites provide information about organ donation in New Zealand, including contact details:

* Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora: [Organ donation and transplantation | Ministry of Health NZ](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/hospitals-and-specialist-care/organ-donation-and-transplantation)
* Live Kidney Donation Aotearoa: [Live Kidney Donation Aotearoa | Give a kidney – Change a life (kidneydonor.org.nz)](https://www.kidneydonor.org.nz/)
* Kidney Health New Zealand/ Tāhiki Hauora Aotearoa: [Kidney Health New Zealand Tākihi Hauoro Aotearoa](https://www.kidney.health.nz/)
* Organ Donation New Zealand: [Organ Donation New Zealand (donor.co.nz)](https://www.donor.co.nz/)
* National Renal Transplant Service:

[National Renal Transplant Service | Ministry of Health NZ](https://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/leadership-ministry/expert-groups/national-renal-transplant-service)