
<p>WARSAW</p>	<p>A GUIDE FOR MIGRANT WOMEN</p>		

WARSAW A GUIDE FOR MIGRANT WOMEN

Warsaw, 2022

The guide was commissioned by the City of Warsaw, as part of the project 'Connection – a cooperation of cities for integration activities', co-financed by the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund.



MIASTO
STOŁECZNE
WARSZAWA



UNIA EUROPEJSKA
FUNDUSZ AZYLU,
MIGRACJI I INTEGRACJI

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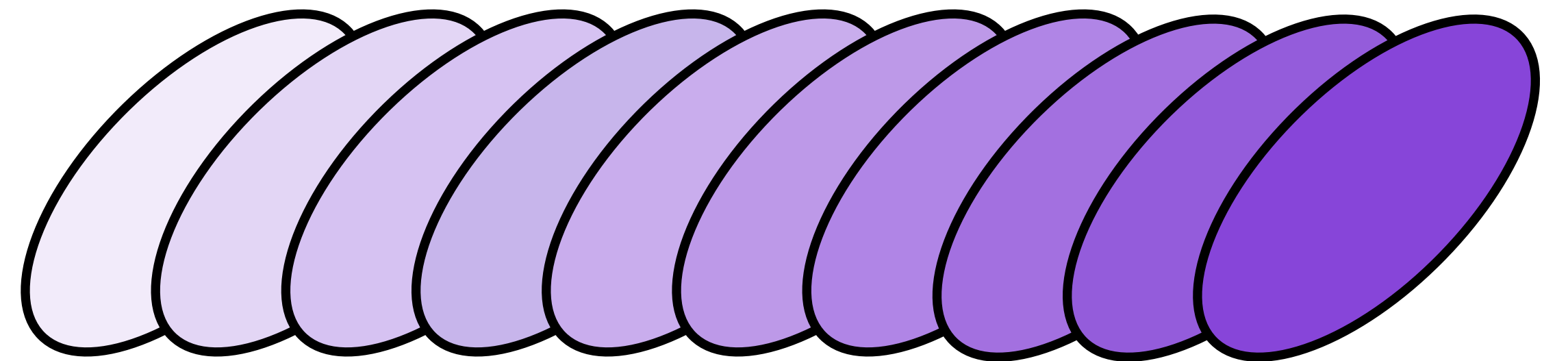
WHAT THIS GUIDE IS ABOUT

We have prepared this guide for you - a migrant woman coming to Warsaw. It will help you find your way in a new city and a new life. It will help you organise everyday matters that are important to you and your family, for example:

- how to find housing,**
- how to use the Warsaw transport system,**
- where to find a decent job and a good school for your children,**
- where to go to the doctor.**

It will also help you:

- understand the regulations connected to your arrival in Warsaw,**
- fulfil any other obligations needed to live in Warsaw,**
- know your rights and how you can use them.**



We also want to show you interesting ways that you can spend your free time in Warsaw, meet new people, develop yourself and make your dreams come true. We will show you that Warsaw is a green, safe, multicultural city, with an amazing energy, full of possibilities and that it is open to you.

We are waiting for you. This is where you will spread your wings.

HOW THE GUIDE WAS PRODUCED


This guide was commissioned by the City of Warsaw. The thematic scope of the guide was co-developed with migrant women and researchers, experts in the creation of public services, civil servants, and experts from organisations supporting foreigners.

Until now, there has been no guide created just for women. That is why we interviewed thirty migrant women. These are women who came to Warsaw some time ago and now they help others, work in organisations, in offices or help individually. We got to know their experiences, motivations, expectations, and challenges of being in Warsaw. We adapted their stories and experiences to form our guide to the actual needs and expectations of migrant women.

You will be guided through the services of Warsaw by three female guides - Maria, An and Yasmin.




YOUR GUIDES

 **I will tell you about the first steps in Warsaw, how to take care of your health and also what your rights are.**


She came to Poland more than 15 years ago. She works for a migrant aid organisation. She uses various guides herself, regularly uses the information in them, and recommends them to other migrants who come to or call her organisation. She also works on behalf of women who were the victims of violence or discrimination.

When she came to Warsaw, she worked a lot and had no time to take care of her own health. She did not take advantage of preventive care because she did not really know how. She visited doctors in her own country more often than in Poland

 **I will explain how to: find a job, learn Polish and how to spend your free time with your children actively.**

She came to Poland seven years ago to study. A friend from her country helped her get to know the city and the university. Then other people also helped - fellow students, the lady from the bookshop who hired her for part-time work, people from a Facebook group. After her studies, An found a job here in Warsaw.

In the beginning, when she arrived in Poland, she needed support in learning the Polish language. It was also a challenge to find cheap student housing. She did not know how things worked: transport, government offices, health services. She had no idea that there were aid organisations, so she did not seek support from them.

 **I will tell you how to find accommodation, about finding education for your children and how you can develop yourself. I will also tell you which social benefits you can use and how to get around Warsaw efficiently.**

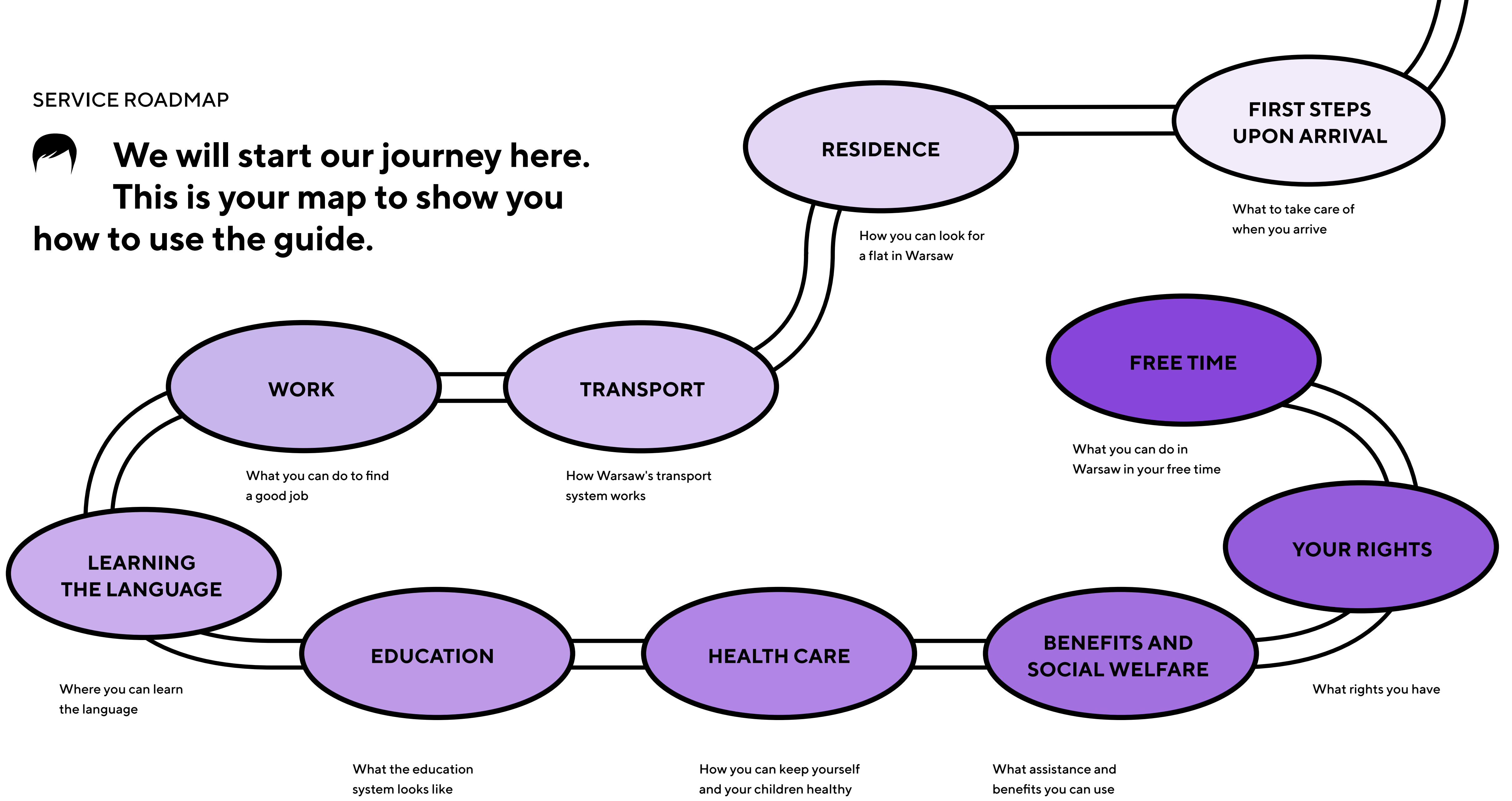
Yasmin is 45 years old and came to Poland nine years ago with her husband and two children. In Poland she gave birth to another son. However, she is now a single mother. Despite this, she is still developing her skills and wants to study law in order to support other foreign women in exercising their rights. Unfortunately, she herself still faces discrimination.

Yasmin had a lot of difficulties in arranging social housing. She did not know how parental benefits worked, how to enrol her children in school and how to support them - when they did not know Polish well.

SERVICE ROADMAP



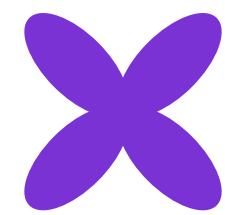
**We will start our journey here.
This is your map to show you
how to use the guide.**



HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

In the guide, we provide information and tips on services that you - as a foreigner - can use in Warsaw.

These services are offered by various institutions and organisations - public, non-governmental and private. The services offered and financed by the City of Warsaw (and for which the City of Warsaw is responsible) are marked with this symbol:



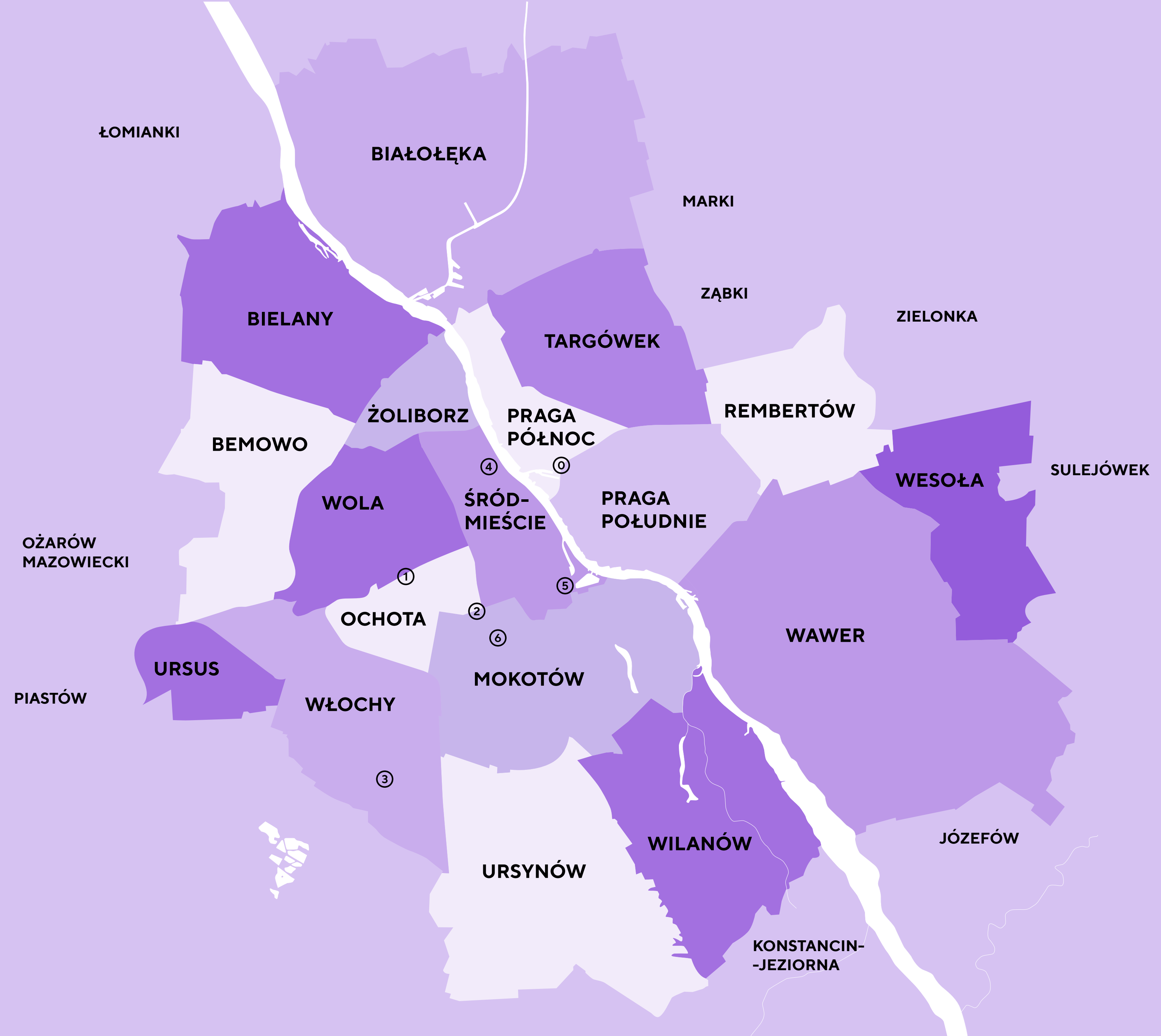
We have tried to keep the information in this guide up to date at the time of publication - which is December 2022. However, the situation and regulations

for foreigners, as well as the scope of services, change frequently. So, check every time that what we write about here is still up to date. To do so, look at the links in the individual chapters.

In addition, you can use more detailed information and guides on specific issues by checking the websites and publications of institutions and NGOs (non-government organisations).

Remember also that this guide is only to inform, or to suggest. What we write here is not legally binding.

MAP OF WARSAW



- ① Warsaw East Railway Station
- ② Warsaw West Railway Station
- ③ Central Railway Station
- ④ Okęcie Airport
- ⑤ Old Town Square
- ⑥ Royal Łazienki Park
- ⑦ Mokotów Field

FIRST STEPS AFTER ARRIVING





Remember that you can stay in Poland legally for a limited time only. That time is determined by the visa or visa-free residence permit. If you plan to stay in Poland for a longer period, make sure you legalise your stay well in advance.

You can arrange matters concerning the legalisation of your stay in Poland at the Department of Foreigners' Affairs in the Mazovian Voivodeship Office (pol. Wydział Spraw Cudzoziemców w Mazowieckim Urzędzie Wojewódzkim).

You can:

- submit the request in person at the office - by making an appointment via the online form,
- submit the request through the chancellery,

- send the request by post - however, this might lengthen the waiting time for the procedure to be initiated.

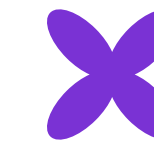
You will obtain information on the necessary formalities:

- on the website of the Office for Foreigners (pol. Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców): gov.pl/web/uw-mazowiecki/sprawy-cudzoziemcow,
- at the Migrant Contact Centre helpline: phone no. 22 695 67 73.

You will find the current telephone number and opening hours of the helpline on the Centre's website: gov.pl/web/uw-mazowiecki/kontakt-wsc.

Also make sure to check if you need a permit in order to be able to work in Poland. Information about this can be found, for example, on: the Green Line website (in the Employment of Foreigners Section): zielonalinia.gov.pl/web/zielona-linia/-/cudzoziemcy-uprawnieni-do-wykonywania-pracy-na-terytorium-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej-32233 the website is in Polish, English, Ukrainian and Russian, and it is also possible to use sign language). You can also call what is known as the Green Line of the Labour Office: 19524.

You will also find more information about this later in the guide, in the chapter **WORK**.



And remember to register

If you come from a country outside the European Union and plan to spend more than 30 days in Poland, you have to register. You must do this within 4 days of arriving in the place you will be staying.

You can register:

- online via the city's e-services portal "My Warsaw." warszawa19115.pl/web/guest/-/zameldowanie-na-pobyt-staly-cudzoziemcow-oraz-obywateli-panstw-czlonkowskich-unii-europejskiej-i-czlonkow-ich-rodzin (the website is in Polish, English, Russian and Ukrainian). To be able to do this, you need a trusted profile (pol. profil zaufany) (for this you need a PESEL number),
- at the Administration & Civil Affairs Department Delegation (pol.

Delegatura Biura Administracji i Spraw Obywatelskich) in any district office in Warsaw (you can book an appointment at the office through the appointment booking system): (rezerwacje.um.warszawa.pl).

Information on the documents you need to be able to register can be found at: warszawa19115.pl/-/zameldowanie-na-pobyt-czasowy-cudzoziemcow-oraz-obywateli-panstw-czlonkowskich-unii-europejskiej-i-czlonkow-ich-rodzin (website available in Polish and English).

PESEL number

When you register, you will automatically be assigned a PESEL number. This is your personal identification number in Poland. You will receive the certificate in the office together with your registration confirmation, make sure you keep the certificate of your PESEL number. Your PESEL number is important

because you often need it in order to deal with various official matters, such as taxes or healthcare matters.

You can read more here: gov.pl/web/gov/uzyskaj-numer-pesel-dla-cudzoziemcow (website in Polish, English and Ukrainian).

Trusted profile

It is also worth knowing that there is such a thing as a trusted profile (pol. profil zaufany). A trusted profile is a secure and validated online profile that contains your personal information. It makes it possible and easy to deal with various official matters online. It helps, for example:

- when applying for ZUS benefits and allowances,
- when registering a child for nursery or kindergarten,
- when gaining access to NFZ health insurance.

You can set up a trusted profile online (gov.pl/web/gov/zaloz-profil-zaufany website in Polish only) or at a confirmation point. If you set up the profile online, you will then need to confirm it in a place of your choice, e.g. at the Tax Office, the Social Insurance Institution or through your bank. More information can be found at: pz.gov.pl/pz/index (information in Polish and Ukrainian).

Telephone and internet

At the start of your stay in Poland, it is worth getting a local SIM card. It will

make it easier for you to deal with any official matters if you have a phone and internet. You can buy a SIM card at any newspaper outlet. When you buy a SIM card, you will need to register it. This means that the seller will ask you for your identity document/card. This is due to the law and has nothing to do with the status of your residence.

Warsaw has a city free Wi-Fi network. Hot spots are also available in many locations in the city – including government offices, libraries, and tourist sites.

NOTE! Do not give your passport or identity document to anyone. Offices will only ask you to show your identity document (for inspection).

Telephone and internet

Official website of the City of Warsaw

um.warszawa.pl

Municipal Contact Centre 19115


(pol. Miejskie Centrum Kontaktu Warszawa)

warszawa19115.pl or by phone at the number 19115

In the chapter **ESSENTIAL CONTACTS** at the end of this guide you will find a list of important contacts, including numbers for the police, ambulance, fire brigade and a list of institutions where you will receive more information and support. You will also find a list of organisations supporting migrants in Warsaw.

RESIDENCE



 **When I first arrived in Warsaw, it was most important to find a flat for me and my family. For a while, I lived with friends, however despite their hospitality, I wanted to stay at my own place as soon as possible. It was not easy though. Now we rent a flat and our dream is to buy our own flat in the future. In this chapter I want to tell you how you can approach looking for a flat, what your options are, and what your rights are.**



The city has a number of flats from the municipal resources - these are known as council flats or public housing (pol. mieszkania komunalne). You can ask the relevant officials about this.



You can turn to the Warsaw Family Assistance Centre (pol. Warszawskie Centrum Pomocy Rodzinie) for help in finding accommodation.

You can also rent a room or flat from private individuals - look for advertisements on verified websites or through social media groups for foreigners.

Sometimes notices about housing are posted directly on buildings and on notice boards at NGOs or universities.

Tell your friends that you are looking for a flat, place an ad on social networks, e.g. in groups that help migrant women.

You can also use the paid services of private estate agencies. Choose proven and well-recommended agencies, ask about the commission, and read the contract carefully.

Also make use of the help and expertise of NGOs in Warsaw. They will help you understand your tenancy agreement and take care of your rights. They will advise you on the location or the possibility of using council flats. You can also use the free legal aid offered by some organisations.

If you would like to buy a flat in the future, remember that foreigners are subject to special regulations.

What does the city offer?



The city has a number of flats from municipal resources – these are called council flats, or public housing. A council flat is usually available to those who cannot afford to buy or rent a flat on the market themselves. A social housing unit can be applied for by a person or family in an extremely difficult financial situation and is usually granted on a temporary basis. You will find all the information you need at the office in your district or on the website:

warszawa19115.pl/-/najem-lokalu-mieszkalnego-z-zasobu-miasta- (the website is in Polish or Ukrainian).

Assistance in finding accommodation for people with refugee status or subsidiary protection is also offered by the Warsaw Family Assistance Centre. You can read about the criteria and conditions that need to be fulfilled at: wcpr.pl/nasze-uslugi/cudzoziemcy/wspicie-mieszkaniaowe (information in Polish, English and Russian).

Other housing assistance

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also offer assistance to people with housing difficulties. If you need accommodation for a shorter period, you can ask about places in night shelters. You can find such information at the Multicultural Centre in Warsaw (pol. Warszawskie Centrum Wielokulturowe) or in NGOs. Check the list of institutions and organisations at the end of this guide.

Renting a flat

Another possibility is:

- renting a flat from a private individual,
- use of an estate agency.

When determining the terms of your lease, check:

- what the rental price includes. What additional bills will you have to pay? What the terms of payment for rent are and if there are any additional charges,
- does the landlord require a deposit? A deposit is a certain amount that the landlord may require from you to cover any damages or underpayments related to rent, or electricity and water bills. You can negotiate the amount of the deposit,
- does the landlord own the property, or does she or he have the right to sublet,
- how is the contract agreement structured? Agree on a notice period for termination of the contract and who is to carry out minor repairs to the flat and pay for them,
- does the contract include a handover report, i.e. a description of the condition of the flat, together with a list of the meters (for example the water meter). This will help you avoid disputes when returning the deposit for the flat.



Your rights

If a landlord is behaving in a dishonest way or you have doubts about their actions or the terms of their contract, you can take advantage of free legal assistance. This is also offered by the City Hall (pol. Urząd Miasta) for foreigners: um.warszawa.pl/nieodplatnapomocprawna (the website is available in Polish, English, Ukrainian and Russian). You can also seek legal assistance from some NGOs. Their list can be found at the end of this guide.



What else is worth bearing in mind?

Segregate your rubbish

If you live in Warsaw, you have to separate your waste. You can find out how to do this in the guide at: warszawa19115.pl/-/zasady-segregacji (information in Polish, English and Ukrainian). Remember that you have to take your electro-waste (old fridges, phones, batteries) to special collection points.

Warsaw tap water

Water in Warsaw is drinkable straight from the tap. Water is a precious resource. As part of the "Respect Water" campaign, Warsaw is encouraging people to save more water when possible.

TRANSPORT



Not sure how you can get around Warsaw? Where to buy a ticket and what discounts you are entitled to? I had similar questions myself when I came here.

How to get around the city by public transport?



Warsaw is divided into zones. Remember that a ticket is valid for a specific zone (1 or 2). There are also time-based tickets - valid for a certain number of minutes or days, monthly tickets, or special tickets for families with many children or seniors. In addition, in Warsaw, for example, children and students benefit from discounts. A detailed description of ticket types and fare discounts can be found at Passenger Service Points or on the website of Warsaw Public Transport: wtp.waw.pl/ulgi-znizki (website available in Polish and English).

Where can you buy a ticket?

You can buy your ticket:

- at Passenger Service Points (pol. Punkt Obsługi Pasażera), which can be found at major train and metro stations, as well as in some shopping centres,
- at ticket machines, which you will find in most buses, trams, metro stations and on SKM trains. You can pay there by card, and in a limited amount of them you can still pay in cash (coins),

In Warsaw, you have the following means of transport to choose from:

-  → metro, bus, tram, SKM trains (Rapid Urban Rail) - this is the transport offered by the Public Transport Authority (pol. ZTM - Zarząd Transportu Miejskiego),
-  → Veturilo city bikes,
- the Mazovia Railway (KM) and Warsaw Commuter Railway (WKD) - you must buy a separate ticket for these, unless you are commuting with them under the "Joint ZTM-KM-WKD ticket" fare,
- buses and trains to other cities that leave from several stations in Warsaw,
- private taxis, cars for hire, bicycles, and electric scooters,
- you can also drive in Warsaw in a car that meets certain requirements - e.g. has valid insurance.

- on the websites of other railways serving Warsaw (Mazovia Railways and Warsaw Commuter Rail - WKD). - you will find links to the websites at the end of this chapter),
- at ticket offices and ticket machines of Mazovia Railways and WKD,
- through various mobile applications, a list of which can be found here: wtp.waw.pl/gdzie-kupic-bilet (website available in Polish and English).

Other means of transport

From spring to autumn, you can ride a **Veturilo city bike** around Warsaw - 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The first 20 minutes are free. How to do it? Register on the website, pay the minimum amount (a fee for using the bike). A list of stations

and more information can be found on the website Veturilo: veturilo.waw.pl.

Also familiarise yourself with the various **apps** that offer to rent a car, scooter, or bicycle hourly.

You can also use **private taxis**. Taxis licensed by the City Hall are marked with the coat of arms of Warsaw.

Every Warsaw taxi should have:

- a yellow-red stripe on the front doors,
- a side number,
- the pricing information plate (right rear door window),
- the taxi drivers' badge (inside the car, in a place visible to the passenger).

ATTENTION! Before you start the ride, ask the expected price to avoid fraud or other misunderstandings.

Attention! Validate your ticket:

- as soon as you board a tram, bus or SKM train,
- in the metro - at the platform entrance gate or at the ticket counter next to the lift.

When travelling with a pram, use the space designated for this purpose; on buses and trams, enter through the second door - counting from the driver's cabin. If you are travelling with a child in a pram, you have priority in occupying this space over other passengers and bicycles.

To use the appropriate space for wheelchairs or prams you can enter through the first or last door of the train.

Safe travel for people with mobility impairments is ensured by a designated seat with a special backrest and safety belts.

There are also several stations in Warsaw that service intercity connections, including buses and long-distance trains. The most important stations are: Warsaw Central Station, Warsaw West Station, Warsaw East Station. You can find train information on the carriers' websites (e.g. PKP Intercity). This is not city transport, although some tickets give you the right to use transport in Warsaw as well. Ask about this possibility when buying your ticket.

Using a car in Warsaw

If you have come to Poland in your own car, that was bought abroad, you must:

- have valid third-party insurance - in Poland it is compulsory,
- register the car in Warsaw - if you are staying for a longer period of time.

If you are buying or selling a car in Poland, remember that you must:

- report the purchase or sale to the district office where you live,
- register or deregister the car,
- pay tax - if you have sold the car.



For more information, see: warszawa19115.pl/-/rejestracja-pojazdu-uzywanego-zakupionego-w-polsce (information in Polish, English and Ukrainian). You can also ask about everything at the office of the district where you live. Contacts and links can be found at the end of this chapter and at the end of the guide.



Driving licence

Remember also that if you come from a country outside the European Union, your driving licence is valid for 6

months from the date of the beginning of your permanent or temporary stay in Poland. Therefore, do not wait until the last day, but register well in advance at the district office and exchange your driving licence for a Polish one. The moment you obtain a Polish document, you will lose the driving licence issued in your country.



During holidays, Warsaw also offers things like rides on vintage trams or buses, which is a cool attraction for children and adults and an interesting way to spend your free time. You can also enjoy ferry crossings over the Vistula River and take a boat trip to Serock. We will tell you more about this in the section on how best to use your free time.

Important links



**The website of the main urban transport system
- Warsaw City Transport:**
wtp.waw.pl
(available in Polish, English and some in Ukrainian)

Other railways running in Warsaw

- **Mazovia Railways**
mazowieckie.com.pl
(information in Polish and English)
- **Warsaw Commuter Rail (WKD)**
wkd.com.pl/o-wkd
(website in Polish and English)

Long-distance trains

pkp.pl/pl/home
(website in Polish and English)

Apps Jak dojadę

jakdojade.pl/warszawa/trasa
(information in Polish and English)

WORK





When I arrived in Warsaw, I wanted to get back on my feet quickly. However, I could not find a job for a while, because of this, my self-esteem dropped. I sat at home and had no human interaction. I hope that my experiences will help you find your way in the Warsaw job market. Here is some advice.

Check if you can work in Poland

If you want to work in Poland, you need a work permit as a foreigner. This rule does not apply to citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area and Switzerland. In order for you to be able to obtain such a permit, your employer must apply to the relevant local authority for a permit for you to work in a specific position and under specific conditions.

Information about this can be found below:



→ On the website of the Employment Office of the City of Warsaw (pol. Urząd Pracy m.st. Warszawy): warszawa.praca.gov.pl/dla-bezrobotnych-i-poszukujacych-pracy/dla-cudzoziemcow (information available in Polish, English, Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainian),

→ on the Green Line website (in the Employment of Foreigners tab: zielonalinia.gov.pl/web/zielona-linia/-/cudzoziemcy-uprawnieni-do-wykonywania-pracy-na-terytorium-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej-32233 (information available in Polish, English, Russian and Ukrainian).

Prepare yourself to look for work

Before looking for or changing jobs, you should:

- understand the needs of the Warsaw labour market, e.g. what the market needs at the moment, what professions and skills are most needed,
- know your personal resources and competences,
- prepare your professional portfolio:

including e.g. a short CV (one page) and a long CV – accurate with all your work experience, wherever you have been.

→ you can also make a short video about your work experience and send it along with your CV.

Also find out or remind yourself what you are good at and highlight it in your CV. To help you do that, you may want some assistance, for example:



→ Career counselling coordinators from the Warsaw Multicultural Centre.

For career counselling, please sign up by phone at 22 648 11 11 or in person at the reception of the centre, more information at centrumwielokulturowe.waw.pl/doradztwo-zawodowe (the website is available in Polish, English, Ukrainian and Russian).



→ Experts from the Occupational Information Point for Foreigners (pol. Punkt Informacji Zawodowej dla Cudzoziemców), co-financed by the City of Warsaw and run by the Foundation of Social and Economic Initiatives (FISE) in partnership with the Polish Migration Forum. It offers, among others, occupational counselling, coaching, but also legal counselling, specialist counselling in the area of legalisation of work and in contacts with employers, support in carrying out formalities related to the validation of education and qualifications. For more information call (+48) 730 623 658 or (+48) 730 623 779 or visit: fise.org.pl/programy/punkt-informacji-zawodowej-dla-cudzoziemcow.

→ Employees and staff members of the district labour offices or

career information and planning centres operating in the regional labour offices. Links can be found at the end of the chapter.

→ Other careers counselling programmes offered by various migrant support organisations in Warsaw, their list of organisations can be found at the end of this guide.

→ My Migration website (pol. Portal Moja Migracja). It was created by female researchers from a Warsaw university. There you will receive feedback on your qualifications. You can use this information when creating your CV (description of your experience) and during job interviews. Link to the portal: mojamigracja.org (information available in Polish, English and Ukrainian).

Start looking for work

→ Activate your network of contacts, including on social media, tell your friends that you are looking for a job, specify your requirements and ask for referrals.



→ Apply at the Warsaw Labour Office (pol. Urząd Pracy m. st. Warszawy) - depending on your legal status, you may, for example:

- benefit from some support in finding or changing jobs,
- take part in certified occupational courses and training to develop new qualifications,
- benefit from funding to run your own business.

→ Use reliable databases or job portals, including the Central Job Database (pol.

Centralna Baza Ofert Pracy): oferty.praca.gov.pl (information available in Polish, English, Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian),

→ You can also find support from paid job searching agencies. Check the list of registered employment agencies: psz.praca.gov.pl/-/913737-krajowy-rejestr-agencji-zatrudnienia (website available in Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian).

→ Help with finding a job is also offered by migrant support organisations - a list of these can be found at the end of this guide.

→ If you are a student, apply to the career's office at your university. Usually, such offices and universities offer courses, training, counselling and help with finding a job.

→ Consider starting your own business.

- Think about having your diploma formally recognised from your country of origin. In Poland, this process is known as diploma nostrification. You can find more information on the website of the National Agency for Academic Exchange (pol. Narodowa Agencja Wymiany Akademickiej): nawa.gov.pl/uznawalnosc/informacje-dla-uczelninostryfikacja-dyplomow (website available in English and Ukrainian). Also use the guides offered by support organisations (available in various languages).
- Consider whether you can combine studying with work. Upgrading your qualifications, including language skills, will increase your chances of finding a job according to your abilities.
- Be patient: attend job interviews, develop yourself, keep improving, learn from every situation you are

in and get to know the Warsaw job market. You will gain experience and valuable information.

During the interview

Ask about the type of contract the employer is offering you and the salary.

ATTENTION! Remember that only legitimate, legal work gives you the opportunity to be insured and benefit from free health care in Poland. Do not accept any verbal contracts and always ask for a paper contract. Make sure to read the contract carefully. If you do not understand it, ask for more time to sign it, and ask for support, e.g. from NGOs or free legal advice centres.

Formalities and employer obligations

- Sign a contract with your employer.
- Your employer will then apply for your work permit.
- Your employer then registers you for health and social insurance and pays your Social Insurance Institution (pol. Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych - ZUS) fees. You can also register your children or other members of your immediate family for insurance.
- You can also check with the ZUS whether your employer is fulfilling their obligations (e.g. in the ZUS Electronic Services Platform (pol. Platforma Usług Elektronicznych ZUS), in your account).


Pay your taxes

As a person legally employed in Poland, you have to pay taxes. Once a year (until the end of April), it is necessary to settle the tax for the past year. This involves submitting what is called a PIT - a tax return.

Your accountant or someone at an organisation that helps foreigners will help you fill in the PIT. The tax system may also settle it automatically, or you may have to settle your PIT yourself at the tax office responsible for the district where you lived last year. Be sure to check what allowances and exemptions you are entitled to, such as single mothers' relief. Ask about such allowances:

- at the tax office,
- an accounting officer (bookkeeper),
- selected NGOs.

Your taxes paid in Warsaw help support other migrants and develop public spaces – new roads, transport, nurseries, and kindergartens. It is with the money of the citizens of Warsaw that the city itself develops.

 If you settle your taxes in Warsaw, you can benefit from many facilities under the Warsaw Citizen Card (pol. Karta Warszawiaka) programme:

- you will pay less for long-distance public transport tickets,
- you will receive extra points when enrolling your children in nurseries, kindergartens, or primary schools.

More information can be found here: um.warszawa.pl/-/place-podatki-w-warszawie-bo-tu-mieszkam (website available in Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, and English).

What should you do if you do not have a job or have lost one?


As a foreigner, you can register at the labour office to gain unemployment status. This allows you to be covered under health insurance. You can find out if and how you can register at the labour office, what documents you need to register, your rights and obligations as an unemployed person on the Green Line portal: zielonalinia.gov.pl/warunki-nabycia-statusu-osoby-bezrobotnej-przez-cudzoziemca-41537 (information in Polish, English, Russian and Ukrainian).

How to start your own business?

If you are a legal resident in Poland, you can set up and run a business, in other words you can register your own company.

Warsaw attaches great importance to the development of entrepreneurship. You can ask about how to set up your own business, what form of business

you should choose, for example, at the Centre of Entrepreneurship Smolna (pol. Warszawskie Centrum Przedsiębiorczości Smolna) or at your district office, e.g. at the Bielany Business Integrator (pol. Integrator Przedsiębiorczych na Bielanych). Business centres also offer office space or free legal and accounting advice. You can also use the help of NGOs offering such services, a list of which can be found at the end of this guide.

 **Centre of Entrepreneurship Smolna:** biznes.um.warszawa.pl/-/o-nas (website available in polish).

Your rights

Remember that you are entitled to:

- fair pay for your work (that means it must be appropriate to the work you do and fair),
- equal pay for equal work or work of equal value to other

workers in your company,

- to be treated with dignity.

In addition, there is a minimum wage in Poland. If you have a contract of employment, you are also entitled to:

- additional pay for overtime, working nights or public holidays (including Sundays),
- paid annual leave,
- sick pay,
- protection from termination if you are on sick leave, on holiday, at pre-retirement age or pregnant.

You can also check your employer at:

- REGON register: wyszukiwarkaregon.stat.gov.pl/appBIR/index.aspx
- National Court Register: ekrs.ms.gov.pl/web/wyszukiwarka-ekrs/strona-glowna/index.html.

If you feel that your employer is treating you unfairly, owing you wages or not paying your insurance contributions, seek help. You can find it at The National Labour Inspectorate (pol. Państwowa Inspekcja Pracy), the National Sanitary Inspectorate (pol. Państwowa Inspekcja Sanitarna), The Employment Services Centre for Information and Consultation “Green line” (pol. Centrum Informacyjno-Konsultacyjne Służb Zatrudnienia “Zielona Linia”), at your country’s embassy and consulate or you can take your case to the labour court.

Free legal aid is also offered by selected non-governmental organisations. You will find their addresses at the end of this guide. You can also read more in the chapter **MY RIGHTS**.

Who will take care of your children?

Usually, children go to nurseries, kindergartens, and schools while parents are working. If you want your child to go home from school on his/her own when you are at work, you must give a written permission slip to the school.

If you have not been able to get a place for your child in a nursery or kindergarten, ask NGOs for help. Some of them run clubs or playrooms for children whose parents’ work.

A group of migrant women can also set up a children's club themselves – as their own business.

Important links and addresses

Employment of a foreigner guidebook, prepared by employment services

zielonalinia.gov.pl/-/zatrudnianie-cudzoziemcow-32145

Public Employment Services Portal

(pol. Portal Publicznych Służb Zatrudnienia)

psz.praca.gov.pl

(website available in Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian)

Labour offices in Warsaw

warszawa.praca.gov.pl

(search for the office which handles your district; website available in Polish, Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian)

Regional Labour Inspectorate in Warsaw

(pol. Okręgowy Inspektorat Pracy)

ul. Płocka 11/13, 01-231 Warsaw

Tax offices in Warsaw

warszawa19115.pl/-/wykaz-urzedow-skarbowych

(search for the office which handles your district; websites available in Polish only)

Social Insurance Institution offices

(pol. Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych - ZUS)

zus.pl/o-zus/kontakt/oddzialy-inspektoraty-biura-terenowe

(search for the office which handles your district; website in Polish only)

National Register of Employment Agencies

(pol. Krajowy Rejestr Agencji Zatrudnienia)

psz.praca.gov.pl/-/913737-krajowy-rejestr-agencji-zatrudnienia

Central Register and Information on Economic Activity

(pol. Centralna Ewidencja i Informacja o Działalności Gospodarczej - CEIDG)

prod.ceidg.gov.pl/ceidg.cms.engine

(website in Polish)

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE





Immediately upon arrival I felt a huge language barrier. I had difficulties filling out official forms, I was unable to communicate at my child's school or with neighbours. Maybe you have felt this too? Let me show you where you can learn Polish and feel more confident in dealing with people.

Polish is the official language in Poland. In many places however you can also communicate in other languages, such as English or Ukrainian.

You can learn Polish through free courses organised by various organisations. You will find a list of these at the end of this guide (in the **ESSENTIAL CONTACTS** chapter). You can also join a private language school or take individual lessons with a language teacher.

You will also find a lot of material online that you can use yourself.

A good way to learn another language is to be among people who speak it. Learning a new language can be challenging, but be brave enough to try and speak it and you will not have to wait long for results.

Important links – Polish language learning materials

In Polish in Poland

(pol. Po polsku po Polsce)

popolskupopolsce.edu.pl

(website available in Polish and English)

Office for Foreigners


(pol. Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców)

www.gov.pl/web/udsc/materialy-dydaktyczne-do-nauki-jezyka-polskiego-dla-doroslych

(website in Polish, English, Russian)

EDUCATION



 **The way education is organised in your country is probably different from that in Poland. Would you like to know which school your children can go to and how to communicate with teachers? Or would you like to acquire knowledge and new skills yourself? I will show you how the different stages of education work in Poland and how they differ from each other.**

Early childhood care

Young children **up to** the age of **3** can attend a nursery, a children's club or use the services of a day-care provider. Public nurseries and day care centres in Warsaw recruit children through the city's recruitment system. Information on dates, addresses, and conditions for enrolling children can be found on the website of

the Warsaw Complex of Nursery Schools (pol. Zespół Żłobków m.st. Warszawy): zlobki.waw.pl (website available in Polish).

Children between the ages of **3** and **6** can go to kindergarten. You can find information about dates and recruitment rules on the official site: edukacja.um.warszawa.pl/przedszkola (website available only in Polish).

- State schools, kindergartens and nurseries are free of charge.
- Care for young children in nurseries, children's clubs, day care centres and kindergartens is not compulsory.
- In Poland, there is **compulsory schooling for children aged 7-15**. Education begins with compulsory pre-school preparation, known as Zero grade (pol. Zerówka).
- **Young people aged 15-18 are also subject to compulsory education**. This can be carried out at school or outside school (e.g. through occupational training with an employer).
- **Higher education institutions**, such as universities, polytechnics, and academies, offer a variety of interesting study programmes, some specifically made for foreigners.
- It is worth learning and acquiring new qualifications throughout your whole life!

In kindergartens and nurseries, the parents must pay for food for their children – subsidies can be obtained for this though.

Time to go to school

In Poland, children aged 6 are subject to compulsory yearlong preschool preparation (this is known as Zerówka). Education is compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 18.

- State schools are free of charge.
- In primary school, children study in grades from 1 to 8.
- Primary schools are district-based so there is a set area of the district that the school covers and can enrol students only living in that area.
- The school cannot refuse admission to a child living in the appropriate area.



You can find more information about school recruitment on the website about education in

Warsaw: edukacja.um.warszawa.pl/szkoly-podstawowe (website available in Polish).

- The school year starts on 1 September and ends on the last Friday in June of the following year.
- Lessons take place five days a week, Monday to Friday.
- The timetable may be organised in various ways, so it is not necessarily the case that your child starts and finishes school at the same time on each day of the week.
- During the school year there are Christmas breaks and the winter and summer holidays. There are no lessons during this time.

Schools in Warsaw provide care for younger children during school holidays – this is known as Winter in the City and Summer in the City. The exact dates for each school year are decided in

advance. You will receive information from the school your child attends.

Online communication between parents, teachers and the school takes place via an electronic school journal – Librus: portal.librus.pl (website available in Polish). There you will find information about your child's attendance in lessons, grades, planned meetings for parents, and you can also write a direct message to people working at the school.

In Warsaw, children can also attend private schools. Recruitment rules, conditions and fees vary in these establishments. Contact the school of your choice to find out more.



Wsparcie w szkole

Migrant children:

- are entitled to additional free Polish language tuition in the form of extra lessons,

- may attend additional subject-specific compensatory classes for 12 months.

Every public school has a psychologist and a school counsellor. They understand how to help children and young people in difficult situations and how to support their learning and development. You can contact the person working at your school if you or your child are having difficulties with relationships or finding their way in the new environment.

In some schools, preparation departments are established to prepare migrant children for education in a Polish school. In addition, in some establishments education is supported by cultural assistants.

You will find Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centres (pol. Poradnia Psychologiczno-Pedagogiczna) in Warsaw, which are dedicated to supporting the development of children and young people. You can

find the addresses of the counselling centres at: edukacja.um.warszawa.pl/-/wykaz-publicznych-poradni-psychologiczno-pedagogicznych-w-warszawie (website in Polish).

Summer in the City and Winter in the City

During the winter and summer holidays, children studying in state primary schools can take advantage of the care and activities on offer at their schools. You can read more about the Winter in the City and Summer in the City campaigns here: edukacja.um.warszawa.pl/lato-i-zima-w-miescie (website available in Polish).

Secondary schools

Post-primary schools have different profiles, students can choose from:

- secondary school or high-schools,

- technical schools,
- occupational schools.

Information on secondary schools in Warsaw can be found in the Guide "Choose a school for yourself" available at: edukacja.um.warszawa.pl/-/wybierz-szkole-dla-siebie-informator-o-warszawskich-szkolach-ponadpodstawowych-na-rok-szkolny-2021-2022 (website in Polish).

Universities and colleges

Warsaw is an academic city. It is home to a large number of universities and colleges - state and private - which provide education in the humanities, engineering, technology, medicine and health sciences, social sciences, natural sciences, pedagogy, physical education, art, or theology.


State universities include the University of Warsaw, the Warsaw University of Technology, the Warsaw University of

Life Sciences, the Warsaw University of Special Education, the Warsaw School of Economics, the Warsaw Medical University, the University of Physical Education, or the Academy of Fine Arts.

The universities have different educational offers and different recruitment rules. Many of them offer courses in English so it would be best to go to the website of the university of your choice to find out more.

HEALTH CARE



 **When busy with arriving and setting up your life in Warsaw, it can be easy to forget about your health. Take care of it. At first, you may not know how the healthcare system in Poland works, whether you can use it for free or what to do if your child gets sick.**

You will find the answers to these and other questions that I also asked myself in this chapter. However, you will still need to verify them on the websites of health centres or the National Health Fund (pol. Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia - NFZ). NGOs can also help you.

- The healthcare system in Poland is divided into public and private.
- Public health care is free and can be used by those insured with ZUS.
- Medical assistance is primarily provided by family doctors and paediatricians in Primary Health Care clinics (pol. Podstawowa Opieka Zdrowotna - POZ).
- Specialist outpatient clinics (within the framework of outpatient specialist care) offer consultations by specialist doctors (e.g. ophthalmologists, gastrologists, gynaecologists, surgeons).
- Hospitals are for people who require support that cannot be provided in clinics.
- In life-threatening situations call the general emergency telephone: 112 or directly for an ambulance: 999.

Public or private healthcare?

To begin with, you need to know that healthcare in Poland works in two formulas: public and private.

The public system is free of charge. However, you must be insured with ZUS (Social Insurance Institution) to benefit from them.

Private care is paid for. This means that you will pay for each service yourself – either out of your own pocket or from private insurance if you have it (often larger companies provide it for their employees).

You can also take out private insurance yourself. There are many insurance companies on the market. Before signing a contract, check what the insurance package covers (those that include hospital care can be expensive, and even they do not cover all procedures).

Clinics, doctor's offices, and hospitals have private owners (e.g. individuals, companies)

or state owners (e.g. municipalities, districts, provinces). However, the type of owner does not determine if an establishment operates as a public healthcare facility, but whether it has a contract with the National Health Fund (pol. Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia – NFZ). You can recognise such facilities by the blue "NFZ" logo places on the front of the buildings among other things. Sometimes, the contract with the National Health Fund (NFZ) covers only part of the services available at a particular facility. If the services you need are not free of charge, you can look for another place that has an appropriate contract with the NFZ (it is always best to ask at the registration desk).

How do you start using public healthcare?

When you take up legal employment in Poland, you will start paying mandatory healthcare fees (this will be done for you by your employer, or by you yourself if you start your own business). That will

- Psychiatrists and psychologists are available as part of public health care. It is also worth checking the offer of social welfare centres, the Warsaw Crisis Intervention Centre (pol. Warszawski Ośrodek Interwencji Kryzysowej) and non-governmental organisations.
- People with disabilities can come to the Information and Coordination Point for People with Disabilities (pol. Punkt Informacyjno-Koordynacyjny dla Osób z Niepełnosprawnościami) for information and support.

give you the full right to benefit from public health care. Importantly, you can also register other non-working family members, including children, for insurance.

If you do not have a job but are in Poland legally, you have other options. You can sign up for voluntary health insurance and pay the healthcare fees yourself every month. You can find out how to do this here:

nfz-warszawa.pl/dla-pacjenta/zalatw-sprawe-krok-po-kroku/jak-ubezpieczyc-sie-dobrowolnie (information in Polish).

You can also register yourself as unemployed at your local Job Centre (pol. powiatowy urząd pracy – PUP), where you will find out if you meet the criteria for being registered as unemployed. If you do, PUP will pay your healthcare fees for you.

You can read more about that here: warszawa.praca.gov.pl (information in Polish, English, Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian).

If your stay in Poland is not documented, you cannot, unfortunately, be insured in the public system. You will have to pay for health care with your own money. However, you will receive medical assistance in cases of emergency. If it involves hospitalisation, you should expect to be billed by the hospital.

In Warsaw, there is an organisation called Doctors of Hope (pol. Lekarze Nadziei), which provides free medical assistance to people in crisis of homelessness. The organisation will also support uninsured foreigners. Before visiting, it is advisable to call first and check the possibility of a consultation: lekarzenadziei.waw.pl (website in Polish).

Types of health care

As a patient, you will probably make most use of the health clinics belonging to the **Primary Health Care (PHC)** (pol. Podstawowa Opieka Zdrowotna - POZ). Whenever you fall ill or notice any worrying symptoms in yourself or your child, this is where you should go first. At the clinic, doctors, or primary care doctors (usually family doctors and paediatricians) will help you. If they are unable to do so, they will refer you to a specialist (e.g. a neurologist or gastrologist).

The PHC clinics operate on weekdays, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

If you need help at night, at the weekend or on a public holiday, you can go to any **night and holiday healthcare centre**. More information can be found at: warszawa19115.pl/-/nocna-i-swiateczna-opieka-zdrowotna (information in Polish).

Doctors and specialist doctors (e.g. gynaecologists, dermatologists) also

provide consultations at specialist clinics (this is known as outpatient specialist care). To see them free of charge, in most cases you need a referral from your doctor or GP. You do not need a referral to see a psychiatrist, oncologist, venereologist, dentist, and gynaecologist.

You need to know that you sometimes have to wait a long time to see a specialist in the public system. That is why Poles often use private care. But remember that you can go to any doctor or specialist. You can see how long the queues are, for Warsaw and more, on the website of the NFZ, at this address: terminyleczenia.nfz.gov.pl (website in Polish).

Hospitals (in-patient treatment) are for people whose care in outpatient clinics is not enough to improve their health. To be admitted to hospital (except in emergencies), you need a referral. You can get a referral from any doctor, even if they do not have a contract with the NFZ. There are many hospitals in Warsaw; you can find a list of them

at: warszawa19115.pl/-/wykaz-szpitali (website in Polish).

What to do in emergency situations?

In particularly worrying situations that could be life-threatening, call the emergency services. Dial one of the **emergency phone numbers: 112** (general) or **999** (ambulance).

When your health is at risk, go to the hospital **Emergency Room (ER)** (pol. Szpitalny Oddział Ratunkowego - SOR). But do think about whether this is necessary. It might be better to use the night and holiday healthcare centre (there are usually shorter queues there). A list of Hospital Emergency Rooms (SOR) can be found at: nfz-warszawa.pl/dla-pacjenta/na-ratunek/szpitalne-oddzialy-ratunkowe (website in Polish).

When you are pregnant

Take special care of yours and your baby's health. If you suspect you are pregnant, visit your doctor or midwife (pol. położna). Ideally, do this before the 10th week of pregnancy.

Remember that you have the right to choose your gynaecologist.

Such a specialist will manage your pregnancy – taking care of yours and your future baby's health. Follow-up appointments are important, and you will also undergo many tests.

In order to be well prepared for the birth and care of your baby, use the services offered by one of the birthing schools. Such schools are found close to hospitals.

You can get more information about pregnancy and parenthood from your doctor. You can also use the

publications of Polish NGOs – they offer detailed information about pregnancy, being a parent in Poland or preventive health care for migrants.

What to do if your child falls ill?

You should do the same things you would do with a sick adult.

First, see your family doctor or paediatrician at your clinic.

If you need help at night or on public holidays, refer to the night and holiday healthcare centre.

In urgent and very worrying situations, call for an ambulance or go to the Hospital Emergency Room (SOR), preferably at a children's hospital (but this is not necessary).

Who will help you when life's problems overwhelm you?

If you feel that a mental health crisis is getting to you, you must seek the help of a psychologist or psychiatrist.

You will probably have to wait for your first appointment under the National Health Service. However, remember that you can go to any specialist you choose. Also check the queues on the website (link in box below).

Psychological assistance is also provided by social welfare centres and the Warsaw Crisis Intervention Centre (pol. Warszawski Ośrodek Interwencji Kryzysowej) (see the **BENEFITS AND SOCIAL WELFARE** chapter for their contact details). It is also worth checking out NGOs that help both children and adults.

Children in particularly difficult situations, including victims of crime, are helped by the Warsaw Children's Aid Network (pol. Warszawska Sieć Pomocy Dzieciom): fdds.pl/placowki-wspd (information in Polish).

800 100 100 – is the telephone number for parents and teachers. You can talk to someone there about child safety,

116 111 – the helpline number for children and young people.

If you are a person with a disability

Remember that you are entitled to a variety of support, including:

- additional cash benefits or services,
- subsidising medical equipment,
- discounts on public transport.



However, in order to get them, you must get a disability certificate (pol. orzeczenie o niepełnosprawności). You can find out how to do this and what assistance you can get at the city's Information and Coordination Point for People with Disabilities (pol. Punkt Informacyjno-Koordynacyjny dla Osób z Niepełnosprawnościami – PIKON): wcpr.pl/pikon, (information in Polish).

Important links

The website of the **National Health Service (NFZ)**

nfz.gov.pl

and its **Mazovian branch**

nfz-warszawa.pl

(available in Polish)

Check **the queues to the doctor**

terminyleczenia.nfz.gov.pl

(Polish language)

Government information service for patients,

including access to the Internet Patient Account

(treatment information, e-referrals, and e-prescriptions)

pacjent.gov.pl

(Polish and Ukrainian language)

Doctors of Hope - free medical assistance

for people without health insurance:

lekarzenadziei.waw.pl

(website in Polish)


**Information and Coordination Point
for People with Disabilities**

wcpr.pl/pikon

(website in Polish)



BENEFITS AND SOCIAL WELFARE

 **Many of us migrant women have children in our care. We also support people close to us. We face many challenges on a daily basis – financial, emotional and organisational.**

If you are in a difficult situation, you deserve help. Under the Polish social welfare system, you can receive material aid and you can benefit from various services.



In every district of Warsaw, you will find a social assistance centre (pol. ośrodek pomocy społecznej - OPS) that helps people in need - including foreigners who are residing in Poland:

→ on the basis of a permanent residence permit/long-term

residence permit/ temporary residence permit or on the basis of having obtained refugee status or subsidiary protection in Poland,

→ because they have been granted a humanitarian residence permit or a tolerated stay permit - in the form of shelter, a meal, the necessary clothing, and a purpose benefit.

- Depending on your legal status, you may be able to count on material aid or assistance in the form of services to help you better cope with your challenges.
- If you are entitled to social welfare, you are entitled to the same benefits as Polish citizens. The condition is that you meet the support criteria that social welfare institutions apply.
- If your situation is very difficult, you can get help at crisis intervention centres. There, specialists will help you to cope with your problems.
- If your child or a family member is a person with a disability, you can apply for a disability certificate. This will give you access to many privileges, special services, and financial and material aid.

In any case, if you will be applying for assistance from the OPS, a social worker:

- will carry out an environmental interview with you, i.e. an interview in the place where you live/stay,
- will check whether you meet the criteria for support,
- will tell you what kind of assistance you can receive.

At the welfare centre you can ask for help in translating the conversation with the government official.

You can receive various benefits to help families, such as:

- **family welfare and bonuses to the family welfare** - this means financial aid. The amount of the aid depends on the age of the child. The application and information about the aid are available at the municipality office of the City of Warsaw or on the website: warszawa19115.pl/-/przyznanie-zasilku-rodzinnego,

- **a one-off childbirth grant** (also called “becikowe” in Polish). The aid is granted to the mother, the father of the child or the child's legal guardian. In order to obtain it, it is necessary to fulfil the income criteria and to present a certificate that the mother of the child was under medical care not later than from the 10th week of pregnancy until the day of delivery. This certificate can be issued by a doctor or midwife. You can submit the application to the district office responsible for the applicant's place of residence. You have 12 months from the date of birth of your child to do this. The application form and information about the benefit is available from the municipality (district office) or on the website: warszawa19115.pl/-/przyznanie-jednorazowej-zapomogi-z-tytulu-urodzenia-sie-dziecka,

- **nursing care support** for giving up employment or other paid work. You can find the application form and information about the benefit at your municipality (district office) or on the website: warszawa19115.pl/-/przyznanie-swiadczenia-pielegnacyjnego,
- **nursing care payment aid** is granted to partially cover expenses resulting from the need to provide care and assistance to a person who is incapable of leading an independent life. The aid is equal to PLN 215.84 per month. The application and information about the benefit are available at the municipal office (district office) or on the website: warszawa19115.pl/-/przyznanie-zasilku-pielegnacyjnego,
- **parental support**, an allowance granted in connection with the birth of a child. It can be received for a period of 52 to 71

weeks, regardless of income criterion. The support is granted to the child's mother or father, the child's guardian, or foster family. An application can be submitted via the Empathy portal: gov.pl/web/gov/uslugi-dla-obywatela/#rodzina-i-malzenstwo. You may also submit the application in person at the office of the district where you reside. You can find the application and the necessary information at the municipal office (district office) or on the website warszawa19115.pl/-/przyznanie-prawa-do-swiadczenia-rodzicielskiego,

- **upbringing support** (often referred to as the 500+ benefit) is used to partially cover the expenses related to raising a child. The benefit of PLN 500 per month is paid for each child - until the child reaches the age of 18.

NOTE! You can only submit a special application for a 500+ benefit in Ukrainian electronically using the ZUS Electronic Services Platform (pol. Platforma Usług Elektronicznych PUE). At the offices of the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) you will find out how to set up an account in this system.

- **"A good start" support** - once a year, an amount of PLN 300 is granted for each child (this is handled by ZUS).



Support from the Warsaw Family Assistance Centre (pol. Warszawskie Centrum Pomocy Rodzinie - WCPR)

Information about WCPR's activities can be found here: wcpr.pl/nasze-uslugi/cudzoziemcy (website available in Polish, Russian and English).

In order to receive support, you must apply for integration assistance. You have only 60 days from when you are granted international protection to submit your application.

The centre offers support for 12 months as part of an individual integration programme, for people who are in Poland and have obtained:

- refugee status,
- subsidiary protection,
- temporary residence permit granted for the purpose of family reunification.

The support offered consists of:

- granting livelihood financial aid,
- payment of health insurance fees,
- social and psychological support,
- assistance in dealing with government offices, on health and education matters.

In addition, WCPR specialists and professionals will help or refer you to the right place or specialist if you are in a difficult situation in life, e.g. you are living with chronic stress, you have parenting problems with your children, you have experienced violence. **The support is free of charge and is provided regardless of your income.**

What can be done to contact specialists urgently in a crisis situation?

You can go to the Intervention Point for help. Specialists provide psychological, psychiatric, and legal support for adults:

- who have experienced a state of psychological crisis,
- who experience violence or are violent.

You can make an appointment by telephone or come in person. The intervention point is located in the city centre, at 7 J. Dąbrowskiego Square.

Help can be continued at the Family Violence Counselling Centre (pol. Poradnia ds. Przeciwdziałania Przemocy w Rodzinie). There you can benefit from:

- individual or group psychotherapy,
- support groups,
- educational workshops,
- legal advice,
- psychiatric consultations.

See the next section **YOUR RIGHTS** for more information.

YOUR RIGHTS





**Do you feel lost in a new culture?
Do you sometimes feel like you are
being treated differently? Or do you worry
that your child is not finding his or her way
at school because the children are treating
him or her badly?**

**Like me, you probably came from
home believing that this is the way it
is, and you have to deal with it yourself.
It seemed that way to me too, until
I found out that it should not be like
that at all and that I can find support
and respect. So, I will tell you about your
rights and how you can exercise them.**



→ There is an information and advice centre (pol. punkt informacyjno-konsultacyjny) in every district of the city where you can go for support in a situation of violence or crisis.

- In the case of domestic violence, there is what is known as the Blue Card procedure (pol. procedura tzw. Niebieskiej Karty).
- In Warsaw, there is a network of points and NGOs that help people who are discriminated against, support women who experience domestic violence, or with violence against children.
- You can make an appointment for a legal or psychological consultation or take advantage of free development workshops.

Know your rights

The right to equal treatment

Unequal treatment on the basis of some specific feature, such as gender, age, religion, skin colour or origin, is called discrimination. In Poland, equal treatment and accessibility of public services is supervised by the Office of the Ombudsman (pol. Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich). The office operates a helpline: 800 676 676 (in Polish).

Equal treatment at work

According to the Polish Labour Code, an employer is not allowed to discriminate against employees on the basis of gender, appearance or ethnicity. If you are treated worse than the people you work with, you can take your case to court or to the National Labour Inspectorate (pol. Państwowa Inspekcja Pracy). If there is a trade union at your workplace, you can talk to its representatives and ask for support.

Equal treatment at school, the office or the doctor's

Respect, no matter who you are or what you look like, is also due in places of public or private service. Situations such as:

- making fun of your child at school,
- refusal to sell certain items in a shop because of prejudice based on skin colour or accent,
- refusal in hospital to follow a particular diet that is important to you for religious reasons

- are unacceptable and are grounds to report them to the court or relevant institutions.

Children's rights

Children also have the right to be treated equally by everyone, not discriminated against for any reason.

Children have the right to:

- have their dignity respected,
- express their views and to be informed.

Parents have a duty to provide their child with the right conditions for development.

NOTE! In Poland, physical violence against children, including 'spanking', is prohibited.

To find out more about how to support children or what child abuse is, see:

- the Children's Ombudsman website,
- the Empowering Children Foundation (pol. Fundacja Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę) offer,
- the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights.

When you or your child experiences unequal treatment or violence, you may think it is your problem alone. But it's not.

Remember that you are not alone, and many people are struggling with similar experiences. In Warsaw you will find institutions, organisations and people who know what to do in these situations and are there to support you. You will find information about them and their phone numbers at the end of this section.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence is when a family member inflicts harm or violates the personal dignity of another person in the family. Violence can be:

- physical (such as hitting, 'spanking'),
- sexual (forced sexual intercourse or rape),
- psychological (addiction to e.g. alcohol, shouting or humiliation, blackmailing),
- economic (controlling expenses, turning off electricity, taking money).

These are just a few examples. If you suspect that you may be experiencing domestic violence, above all remember one thing: **it is not your fault**. This should not be happening, and you have the right to live your life without violence and the stress that comes with it.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence is a particularly intimate form of violence. It can take the form of:

- sexual harassment, i.e. comments with sexual overtones,
- of exposing themselves in front of you when you do not want them to,
- coercion into sexual intercourse or rape.

If you have experienced such an incident, report it to the police. You have a right to justice. If you suspect that the situation involves human trafficking, inform the police, or call the national helpline:

(+48)22 628 01 20. More information can be found here: gov.pl/web/handel-ludzmi/telefon-zaufania-dla-ofiar-i-swiadkow-handlu-ludzmi (website in Polish only). You can also contact foundations like the La Strada Foundation.

What can you do if you are experiencing violence?

In order to support families where violence has occurred, there is a procedure known as the Blue Card procedure (pol. procedura Niebieskiej Karty) in Poland. It can be set up by a person who works at: the police station, a social assistance centre, a school, a healthcare service, or a commune committee for solving alcohol problems. They will do this if they suspect that they are dealing with a situation of domestic violence or if someone reports such a problem to them. You yourself can also report that you are experiencing violence and ask for a Blue Card. Remember, you are not powerless.

In this way, a team of specialists – e.g. a social worker, a schoolteacher, a police officer, a representative of a relevant NGO – will take care of you and your loved ones so as to ensure your safety and help you solve your problems. You can get legal and psychological help and social support. It is a good idea for you to have someone beside you to provide translation or accompaniment when dealing with the government officials.

Remember that physical punishment of children is prohibited in Poland. If you do not know what to do, or if you need psychological counselling for yourself or your children, use the support of the district information and counselling centre or of NGOs. **Remember that the most important thing is your safety and that of your children.** You can always, repeatedly, ask for help. You do not have to be afraid.

NGOs run many activities for people who are experiencing or have experienced violence. You can get help from

a psychologist, support groups or various workshops. Taking part in various local activities can also help you – some organisations, for example, offer groups for migrant women and mothers with children.

What can you do if you have nowhere to go?



The Warsaw Crisis Intervention Centre (pol. Warszawski Ośrodek Interwencji

Kryzysowej – WOIK) runs a 24-hour hostel for people experiencing domestic violence and other people in a crisis situation – if these people require a temporary stay away from home. You can come for help 24 hours a day and without a referral. The hostel is located in Ursynów at the WOIK headquarters, at 1/5 6-go Sierpnia St. For more information, visit: woik.waw.pl (website in Polish only).



In addition, if you are a resident of Warsaw, are bringing up children or are pregnant and, as a result of life difficulties, you cannot live in your current place, you can go to a temporary shelter and get specialist support at the 'Etezja' Support Centre for Women with Children and Pregnant Women (pol. Ośrodka Wsparcia dla Kobiet z Dziećmi i Kobiet w Cięży „Etezja”). You can apply at the social assistance centre in the district where you live. More information can be found at: owkid.waw.pl (website in Polish only).



For more information on where to seek help if you witness or experience violence, visit:

[wsparcie.um.warszawa.pl/
przeciwdzialanie-przemocy](http://wsparcie.um.warszawa.pl/przeciwdzialanie-przemocy).



Warsaw for women

Warsaw promotes the idea of equal opportunities for women. Since 2019, there has been a Warsaw Women's Council appointed for a temporary term. It is made up of local activists, artists, lawyers, and professors.

The capital also hosts the annual Warsaw Woman of the Year plebiscite. This honours women who, through their professional or social activities, influence the kind of city Warsaw is. Among the nominees are also migrant women who work on behalf of other migrant women, such as Myroslava Keryk and Leyla Elsanova.

Important links, addresses, telephone numbers



Municipal information and consultation points

warszawa19115.pl/-/punkty-informacyjno-konsultacyjne-w-dzielnicach
(website available in Polish)



Municipal website dedicated, among other things, to children and family, prevention of violence, people in crisis of homelessness or addiction

wsparcie.um.warszawa.pl/przeciwdzialanie-przemocy
(website available in Polish)



Warsaw Crisis Intervention Centre

24-hour helpline 22 855 44 32 (in Polish)

A set of tips for emergency situations for people experiencing domestic violence prepared by the office of the Ombudsman in cooperation with Warsaw community organisations:

bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/plan-awaryjny-przemoc-domowa-pomoc-w-epidemii
(website available in Polish)

Police Family Violence Prevention Hotline

800 120 226 (in Polish) - Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Institution and NGO hotlines

telephone number of the **Polish National Service**

for Victims of Family Violence Blue Line

800 120 002 - the call is free of charge, 24 hours

a day, 7 days a week, all year round (also on holidays),

email: niebieskalinia@niebieskalinia.info

**The Polish National Emergency Service for Victims of Family
Violence Blue Line's telephone counselling service (IPZ PTP 22)**

668 70 00 - open 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.,

email: poradnia@niebieskalinia.pl

Feminoteka

888 88 33 88 (in Polish and English) - you can call from Monday

to Friday, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. You can also talk in Ukrainian -

phone no. 888 88 79 88 - Monday to Friday, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Women's Rights Centre

22 622 25 17 (in Polish) - Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.,

hotline: 600 070 717 (in Polish) - open 24 hours a day

Empowering Children Foundation

22 826 88 62 (in Polish) - Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights

online contact with the expert/expert:

kupd.pl/kontakt/ekspert-on-line

Elderly Project Foundation:

537 375 505 - the foundation's phone number

for preventing elderly violence - Monday to Friday,

12 p.m. to 4 p.m., email: fundacja@projektstarsi.pl

FREE TIME





Would you like to meet new people and spend time with them actively?

Or maybe you would like to share your passion, your ideas, to give something to others? Do you sometimes worry that your children are not meeting their friends? Do you miss your family, your old home and are looking for a way to cope?

For me, the early days in Warsaw were also difficult. What helped me was being among others and taking time for myself.

Let me show you how many places and ways there are to have a good time in Warsaw.



Warsaw is full of life

Every day you can find many events to attend. There are concerts, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, meetings, fairs and much more. Take a look at the website of the city hall, where you will find the city events calendar: um.warszawa.pl/kalendarz (website available in Polish, English, Ukrainian and Russian).

Many attractions are free of charge. Admission to some cultural institutions (e.g. museums) is free on a selected day of the week - find out more by visiting the website of the selected institution.

The Multicultural Centre is open to all residents of Warsaw. It is a place for meetings, workshops, language learning and personal development. You will also find legal support and help from other migrant women who live in Warsaw. Information about the centrum: centrumwielokulturowe.waw.pl/o-nas (website available in Polish and English).

In Places of Local Activity (pol. Miejsca Aktywności Lokalnej - MAL), neighbours can spend time together and spend time on their ideas and passions. Take a look at the MAL in your neighbourhood to get to know your neighbours, talk to them or share your ideas.

Each district has a community centre that hosts cultural and social events. There are also regular activities for people of all ages. The offer of each community centre is different, so take a look at the website of the establishment in your area. You can also find out more here: nadajemykulture.pl (website available in Polish).

Many events, women's workshops and meetings are offered by local **organisations** - a list of them can be found at the end of the guide.

Each district also has a **library** where you can borrow or read books and magazines on site. In some libraries you will find

CDs, audio books, films, or a computer station with internet access. There are also **reading rooms** where you can use selected materials on site. Information about the city's libraries can be found at: bibliotekiwarszawy.pl (website in Polish).

Activities for children and young people

In Warsaw, there are also many extracurricular educational institutions that run activities for children to develop their interests and talents. You can read more on the website of the electronic recruitment system: warszawa-pozaszkolne.pzo.edu.pl (website available in Polish).

In the **EDUCATION** chapter you will find information about activities for school children as part of the Summer in the City and Winter in the City campaigns.


Warsaw for seniors


Warsaw's senior citizens do have lots to do. The city has something for them too. The Intergenerational Activity Centre (pol. Centrum Aktywności Międzypokoleniowej) is a space for people of all ages to develop and spend quality time. Details can be found here: wsparcie.um.warszawa.pl/seniorzy (website available in Polish).


Outdoors

Warsaw is a green city. In the centre, you will find parks and squares that are spaces for rest, recreation, and pleasant outdoor activities.


→ Come to the **Botanical Garden** of the University of Warsaw (located right next to the Royal Łazienki Gardens) and the PAN Botanical Garden - Centre for the Preservation of Biodiversity in Powsin. You can take a stroll

 **City events calendar** - there you will find information for each day: about concerts, films, workshops, and other events.

 **Parks, squares, Vistula boulevards and urban forests** are spaces for walking, relaxing, but also spending time actively. You will often meet other migrants there.

 **Places of Local Activity** (pol. Miejsca Aktywności Lokalnej - MAL) and **community centres** offer many opportunities to develop your passions and free events in your area.

 **The Multicultural Centre in Warsaw** (pol. Centrum Wielokulturowe m. st. Warszawy) is a space co-created by migrant women. Here you will meet people from other cultures, neighbours from Warsaw, and take part in interesting and important events. It is also good for children.

 **Sport and physical activity** in the city which can be many activities for residents, including children and teenagers.

Various cultural institutions and Warsaw NGOs offer free classes and events, including for women and children.

there in peace and quiet, surrounded by extraordinary plants. Information can be found on the websites of both gardens.

→ Families with children often visit **the Warsaw Zoological Garden**.

→ Both **banks of the Vistula River** are also spaces for walking and relaxing. The beautiful, urban Vistula Boulevards – also known as the Vistula District – and on the other side of the river, the "wild path" and beaches. In summer, free water trams run between the Vistula banks.

→ Not far from the city centre you will find **forests**, the Kampinos Forest and the Masovian Landscape Park. In the forests, infrastructure for walks, picnics, cycling and Nordic walking routes has been prepared. There are even spots for sleeping in the forest. Information can

be found at: lasymiejskie.waw.pl (website available in Polish).

→ You can spend your free time being **physically active**. There are fitness trails and outdoor gyms in numerous parks and squares. Many districts offer free sports activities for all ages and families. Also plan a visit to the Sports and Recreation Centre (pol. Ośrodek Sportu i Rekreacji – OSiR) of your choice. You can find out more here: sport.um.warszawa.pl (website available in Polish).

Museums, theatres, concerts

There are many cultural institutions in the city, e.g. museums, theatres, concert halls, philharmonic halls, opera houses. You can find a list of them at: kultura.um.warszawa.pl/miejsca-kultury (website available in Polish).

The website of the selected institution, e.g. a theatre, provides information on its current repertoire.

At the Museum of Warsaw in the Old Town you will learn about the history of this city and its inhabitants. Warsaw is now your city too.

Even more attractions in the summer

During the summer season, you can take advantage of the Warsaw Tourist Line (pol. Warszawskie Linie Turystyczne), ferry crossings on the Vistula or boat trips to Serock. Here you will find more wtp.waw.pl/warszawskie-linie-turystyczne (website available in Polish and English).

During the summer, there are free Chopin concerts at the Royal Lazienki Garden. They take place every Sunday, in the park, in front of the Fryderyk Chopin monument.

You can also take a ride on Warsaw's vintage trams and buses during the holidays.

What about volunteering?

You can also support important initiatives and share your skills, knowledge, and time with others. In Warsaw, there is a group called the Warsaw Volunteers (pol. Ochotnicy Warszawscy), where you can find projects to volunteer for. For details see: ochotnicy.waw.pl (site available in Polish).

ESSENTIAL CONTACTS



EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

112 – general emergency telephone number

997 – police

998 – fire brigade

999 – ambulance

986 – Municipal Police

19115 – Warsaw Contact Centre helpline 19115 (information about services, reporting a problem or an idea)



LINKI

Warsaw City Hall

um.warszawa.pl

Municipal Contact Centre

warszawa19115.pl

District offices

bip.warszawa.pl/Menu_podmiotowe/dzielnice/default.htm

Registry Office

um.warszawa.pl/waw/usc

Tax offices in Warsaw

warszawa19115.pl/-/wykaz-urzedow-skarbowych



INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING MIGRANT MEN AND WOMEN

Warsaw Family Assistance Centre

wcpr.pl

Welfare Centres

wsparcie.um.warszawa.pl/osrodki-pomocy-spoecznej3

Warsaw Crisis Intervention Centre

woik.waw.pl

ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING MIGRANT MEN AND WOMEN

Multicultural Centre

centrumwielokulturowe.waw.pl

Polish Migration Forum

forummigracyjne.org

Our Choice Foundation

naszwybor.org.pl

Rescue Foundation

ocalenie.org.pl

ADRA POLAND Foundation

adra.pl

GOOD START for Migrants Foundation

fds.org.pl

Humanosh Foundation

humanosh.org

Foundation Towards Dialogue

fundacjawstronedialogu.pl

FROG Foundation for Development Beyond Borders

facebook.com/fundacjafrog

Warsaw Children's Aid Network

fdds.pl/placowki-wspd

Doctors of Hope Association

lekarzenadziei.waw.pl

La Strada Foundation

strada.org.pl

Feminoteka Foundation

feminoteka.pl

Centre for Women's Rights

cpk.org.pl

Empowering Children Foundation

fdds.pl

Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights

kopd.pl

**Polish Society
of Anti-Discrimination Law**
ptpa.org.pl

**The Polish Nationwide Emergency
Service for Victims of Domestic Violence
"Blue Line"**
niebieskalinia.pl

Elderly Project Foundation
projektstarsi.pl

Foundation for Freedom
fundacjadlawolnosci.org

Other Space Foundation
innaprzestrzen.pl

Institute of Public Affairs
isp.org.pl

Foundation for Social Diversity
frs.org.pl

Po Nad To Foundation
ponad.org

Ukrainian Information Centre
facebook.com/FUCIpl

**Foundation for Supporting Vietnamese
Integration in Poland**
wiwpl.org

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
hfhr.pl

Centre for Muslim Culture in Warsaw
okmwarszawa.pl

**Polish European Community
Studies Association**
pecsa.edu.pl

Association for Legal Intervention
interwencjaprawna.pl

Belarusian Solidarity Centre
belaruscenter.eu

Open House Initiative
domotwarty.org

**European Foundation for Education,
Prevention and Upbringing NORMA**
fundacjanorma.org

**Association for Sustainable
Development PRO Ukraine**
proukraina.org

Travelling Women's Foundation
kobietywedrowne.org

**Foundation Educational Centre
Children of Ukraine**
facebook.com/childrenofukraine.edu

Ukrainian Education Centre Foundation
ukraska-shkola-materinka.mozello.com

**Foundation for Transcultural
and Intercultural Dialogue**

International Organisation for Migration
poland.iom.int

Information platform for migrants
migrant.info.pl

For more information about NGOs in
Warsaw, visit um.warszawa.pl/waw/ngo.

If you wish to contact other NGOs that
are part of the Sectoral Commissions for
Social Dialogue operating at the offices
of the City of Warsaw, you can find them
on the Office's website: [um.warszawa.
pl/waw/ngo/komisje-dialogu-
spolecznego](https://um.warszawa.pl/waw/ngo/komisje-dialogu-spolecznego) (information in Polish).

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