Government promotes a refugee integration policy to boost employment and reduce social benefit reliance

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion announced a restructuring of refugee integration policy, aiming to encourage employment and reduce reliance on social benefits. Refugees will no longer be entitled to social assistance or housing allowance for the first 5 years in Norway. Instead, a new integration benefit will merge three existing support schemes, offering lower overall payments for most but increasing financial rewards for working.

An activity obligation will be introduced for refugees who are not working or pursuing education after completing the integration programme, which will be renamed the integration programme. The new benefit will be individually calculated based on marital status, children, age and municipality, with supplements for children and single parents, and will gradually decrease as recipients earn income or receive other support.

The government aims to increase refugee employment (currently around 50%), strengthen integration, simplify administration for municipalities and free NAV resources to focus on employment support. The proposal was announced on 23 January 2026 and will undergo consultation until 23 April 2026.

Source(s)

- Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion | Arbeids- og inkluderingsdepartementet (19 January, 2026), Foreslår forenklinger i utlendingsregelverket [Proposes simplifications in the immigration regulations], https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/ap-regjeringen-varsler-full-omlegging-aktivitetsplikt-og-kutt-i-ytelser-for-a-fa-flere-flyktninger-i-jobb/id3146920/

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