



RIGA— MY HOME

Handbook for Returning to Live in Riga



Content

Introduction	3
Re-emigration coordinator	3
Riga City Council Visitor Reception Centre	3
First steps in planning the resettlement	4
Residence permits and the right to employment.....	6
Learning Latvian	7
Supporting children	7
First Steps in Riga	8
Identity documents	8
Driving licence	8
Other documents	9
Place of Residence and Housing.....	10
Recommendations for choosing apartments to rent	10
Support for purchasing housing	11
Declaring one’s place of residence	13
Immovable Property Tax.....	14
Finances, employment and entrepreneurship	15
Employment	15
Claiming the status of an unemployed person and social benefits	19
Opening bank accounts	20
Entrepreneurship	21
Education	23
Pre-school education.....	23
General education	26
Distance learning.....	28
Medical certificate.....	29
An assistant’s services in institutions of education	29
Referencing education obtained abroad	31

The Latvian language.....	32
Medicine and Health	33
Accessibility of health care	33
General practitioner	33
European health insurance card and form S1	34
Accessibility of health care in Riga	35
Health promotion and prevention measures in the municipality ..	36
Support and Benefits	36
Support for Large Families.....	38
Psychological Support.....	38
Leisure time	39
Culture opportunities	39
Children’s and adolescent’s free time	39
Sports	41
Opportunities for participation	41
Volunteering.....	42

This Handbook was prepared as part of the project “Local Government Services for Facilitating Re-emigration”. The project is implemented by the Education, Culture and Sports Department of the Riga City Council with the financial support provided by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia and Riga Planning Region. The Education, Culture and Sports Department of the Riga City Council assumes entire responsibility for the content of this document.

Introduction

Initially, taking the decision to return to live in Riga might seem complicated and time-consuming, therefore the handbook “**Riga – My Home**” summarises the most important information, providing assistance upon returning and starting to live in the city of Riga. A timely finding of information, planning and preparing while still being in the country of residence may alleviate significantly the process of moving.


The Handbook provides general insight into matters that are important upon returning to live in the capital of Latvia, for example, issues of residence and housing, employment, social support and assistance, education, health care services as well as the offer of possible leisure time activities – culture, sports, interest-based education and participation. This information is supplemented by the contact information of local government and state institutions, providing these services.

Re-emigration coordinator

The Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development has established a **network of five regional re-emigration coordinators**, aimed at helping those, who had left the country, to return.

All interested parties have the possibility to consult, free-of-charge, with the regional coordinator about relevant issues linked to re-settling in the particular region of Latvia. At the same time, the coordinator is a support person, who helps compatriots abroad to assess remotely the advantages in order to make a well-considered decision and also to prepare for a successful return to Latvia.

Each re-emigrant has individual needs and circumstances, which must be taken into account, therefore, in the course of communication, all issues are identified, to which the coordinator in Latvia helps to find answers, if necessary, by collaborating also with the local government and state institutions.¹

 Upon returning to live in Riga, we encourage you to get in touch with the coordinator of Riga Region (e-mail riga@paps.lv, phone +371 26614179) or visit the homepage www.paps.lv.

Riga City Council Visitor Reception Centre

Visitor Reception Centres operate in Riga, they:

- provide general information, advice and, according to the possibilities, look for solutions;
- accept and also draw up applications addressed to the Riga City Council and its institutions as well as requests of services provided by the municipality;
- grant the authorisation rights for using e-services in the municipal

1 PAPS. “ABOUT PAPS”. Available: <https://www.paps.lv/par-projektu/> (19.08.2020.)

portal www.eriga.lv;

- accept non-cash card payments for services for a charge, introduced by the local governments, as well as local government taxes and duties;
- register persons' declared place of residence and issue information on the address of a person's declared or registered place of residence, included in the Population Register.

Visitor Reception Centres

7/9 Kungu Street, 49/53 Brīvības Street, 31 Daugavpils Street,
28 Dzirciema Street, 46 E. Smiļģa Street

The working hours of the Visitor Reception Centres, as well as the time when legal advice is provided can be found on the webpage www.riga.lv, section "Contact"/"Contact the municipality"/"Contact information of the municipality"/"Central administration"/"Visitor Reception Centre", e-mail apc@riga.lv.



Toll-free hotline – 80000 800

Website – www.riga.lv

First steps in planning the resettlement

We encourage timely preparations for the process of resettling in Latvia – already in the country of residence. EURES consultants of the Latvian State Employment Agency (SEA) have prepared 12 steps that should be known upon returning to Latvia.²

1. You need all documents and certificates regarding employment and the social insurance services received as well as documents on employment periods and the taxes paid. If you want to apply for an unemployment benefit after the employment period ends the benefit must be claimed in the country where you were last employed. If you want to continue receiving this benefit in Latvia you must request from the social security or employment service of the foreign country **U2 document for the export of the unemployment benefit**.

After termination of labour relations, upon registering in the local state employment service and social security administration and acquiring the status of an unemployed person and an unemployment benefit, it is possible to continue receiving this benefit for 3–6 months, while seeking a job, also in another Member State of the EU, including Latvia.³

2. To continue receiving the unemployment benefit, granted in a foreign

² State Employment Agency. "Twelve steps that should be known upon returning to Latvia." Available: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/jaunums/divpadsmit-soli-kas-jazina-atgriezoties-latvija> (19.08.2020.)

³ State Employment Agency. "What should be known about allowances upon returning to Latvia?." Available: <http://www.nva.gov.lv/jaunums/kas-jazina-par-pabalstiem-atgriezoties-latvija> (19.08.2020.)

country, the person must register with SEA **within seven days** and present U2 document.

3. To prove one's employment/ insurance period in a foreign state, U1 document must be submitted to the **State Social Insurance Agency (SSIA)**. **Take into account that the employment/ social insurance periods do not disappear: they are accrued and, if necessary, are taken into consideration in determining the right to benefits and also the pension. U1 document also must be received from the state employment service and social security administration of the country of residence.**
4. **S1 form must be requested** from the national health system administration of the foreign country. It will allow receiving all types of guaranteed health care services in Latvia and the costs of these services will be covered from the budget resources of the foreign country. S1 form must be registered with the **National Health Service (NHS)** www.vmnvd.gov.lv. If unregistered, the form is not valid.
5. **The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** can be obtained from the national health system administration of the foreign country; the card gives the right to receive the state-guaranteed emergency and necessary medical assistance. EHIC might be useful in the period, while the labour relations have not been commenced in Latvia, because, during this period, the person remains socially insured in the country of their last employment.
6. If there are children in the family, before leaving the foreign country, all necessary documents should be prepared about the education, health care they have received as well all the social guarantees received.
7. All institutions, with which you have registered or to which you have provided your personal information must be informed about leaving the foreign country, for example, the Population Register, the local government, the employment service, the bank, the Road Safety Directorate, the post office, the provider of health services, providers of utilities, etc.
8. Upon arriving in Latvia, one's **place of residence must be declared**. This can be done at the institution for declaring the place of residence of the local government, where the person's or the family's new place of residence is located, or electronically www.latvija.lv.
9. To receive health care, registration with the general practitioner is needed. Information about the general practitioners in the city can be found on the webpage of NHS.
10. If there are children in the family, they must be registered on the local government's waiting list for a kindergarten or at school. *Information on registering a child on the waiting list for a kindergarten in Riga or at school can be found in the section "Education" of this Handbook.*

11. If the person continues to be the resident of Latvia for taxation purposes and has obtained income abroad, an annual tax return on the income gained abroad must be submitted to the State Revenue Service from 1 March to 1 June.
12. If you want to start your own business, inquire about the opportunities at **the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (IDAL)** www.liaa.gov.lv, where advice and assistance in developing a business plan can be received, at the finance institution ALTUM www.altum.lv and the Enterprise Register www.ur.gov.lv.

We encourage using the possibility to contact EURES advisers in Latvia to receive advice on employment opportunities, living conditions and the labour market situation in Latvia, SEA services and support in the job seeking, on the administrative procedures and documents needed upon resettling in Latvia, as well as the conditions for transferring the unemployment benefit or pension as well as on other relevant matters.



Website www.nva.gov.lv/eures

E-mail eures@nva.gov.lv

“Facebook”: www.facebook.com/eureslatvia/

“LinkedIn”: www.linkedin.com/company/eures-latvia

Every Friday, except for national holidays, from 13:00 to 15:00, EURES chat room – <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/lv/chat-with-eures-advisers>. A chance to ask questions online to EURES advisers and to receive answers.

EURES European job mobility portal provides useful information on the living and working conditions in Latvia. It is supplemented and updated regularly, giving reference information about the labour market, finding housing and school, general information about working conditions, including information on contracts, vacations, types of employment, etc. Timely familiarisation with the information will also create a more realistic perception of the situation in the state and will help to plan the resettlement better. More detailed information from the website <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?acro=living&lang=lv&parentId=0&countryId=LV>.

Residence permits and the right to employment

When planning your resettlement, research the website of the **Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA)** www.pmlp.gov.lv to find out about the need to have the residence permit with respect to all members of the family, the right to employment, issues of citizenship and arranging the necessary documents.



Portal latvija.lv provides useful information, arranged according to areas of life, and also provides

concrete webpages and contact information – <https://mana.latvija.lv/atgriesanas-un-parcelsanas-uz-dzivi-latvija/>



As regards residence permits and related procedures, contact OCMA Residence Permit Division. Info phones +371 67219663, +371 67219644, +371 67219664 or e-mail uan@pmlp.gov.lv.



As regards visas, work permits and other matters of migration, contact Migration Division. For general immigration-related questions, phone +371 67209400; issues of visas and invitations +371 67219648 or +371 67219652; issues of repatriation +371 67219259 or e-mail mn@pmlp.gov.lv.

Learning Latvian

When planning to return, there are various online possibilities for updating and improving the Latvian language proficiency. **The Latvian Language Agency (LLA)** has developed and collected study materials for learning the Latvian language for various age groups and levels of proficiency. Study materials are available from the website <https://maciunmacies.valoda.lv/> and <https://elaipa.lv/Home/A1>. More extensively on the possibilities to learn Latvian in the section “Education” of the Handbook.

Supporting children

The process of resettling and returning may be both exciting and also filled with various emotions at the same time. If you are resettling together with children consider their wellbeing and possible anxieties. To diminish stress caused by the resettlement inform the children about the plans timely, involve them in various processes of resettlement and decision-making, tell them about the environment and vicinity, where you plan to resettle. Pictures or videos about the city and culture might be helpful in this.

Think about learning the Latvian language in due time, use the resources available online or some of the Sunday language schools available abroad. More about support in learning Latvian from the website of LLA <https://valoda.lv/latviesu-valoda-arzemes/diaspora/>. You may turn for support to family support centres and other specialists (online consultations are offered) or to social networks, as well as the group “Re-emigrants’ Children in Latvia’s Schools – Support Group for Parents” <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1331744900262656/>.

First Steps in Riga

Upon returning to live in Riga, several matters need to be settled to ensure well-functioning daily life. The portal mana.latvija.lv provides an extensive range of services that are available online.

To use online services, electronic identification is needed.

The solutions of electronic identification are the Internet Banking, eID card or e-signature. The citizens of other EU Member States also can log into the system, by selecting in the section of authentication “Other EU countries” the state from the list and using the offered options. Information about e-signature and how to obtain it is available from https://www.eparaksts.lv/lv/sakt_lietot/Ka_klut_par_lietotaju.

Identity documents

All persons included in the Population Register may receive an identity document (eID card) and passport. An application for receiving an identity document may be submitted to any of the OCMA territorial divisions, irrespectively of the declared place of residence. It is possible to register in advance for arranging the paperwork and issuing of documents for a concrete visiting time, using the e-service of latvija.lv “Applying for personal identity documents “ or by phoning or e-mailing the OCMA territorial division of your choice: <https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/sakums/k/pmlp-nodalas/tr.html>.

If the identity document has to be received while the person is abroad, the document must be requested from the consular post or the diplomatic representation of the Republic of Latvia.

Driving licence

A driving licence, which has been issued at one of the Member States of the EU or the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), **is valid for driving a vehicle in Latvia until its term of validity expires**. Without special reason, the licence can be exchanged for the Latvian licence at the client service centres of the Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSSD). The licence can be replaced only if its holder resides permanently in Latvia.

If the licence has been issued in another country outside the EU, this licence may be used for driving a vehicle in Latvia **for 1 year from the moment of arriving in Latvia**. If a person resides in Latvia for longer than a year then the licence needs to be replaced by taking the driving test at CSSD. Before registering for taking the test, the person must apply to CSSD so that its employees could carry out the necessary verifications of the driving licence and, if necessary, request information from the issuing authority regarding the fact of issuing the driving licence.

The documents necessary for replacing the licence:

- an identity document – a passport, a personal identity card (ID) (the person must have the personal identity code granted in Latvia);
- the existing driving licence;
- a health check certificate. Its validity may be verified in e-CSSD or in person at CSSD. The health check can be taken at the general practitioner or doctors' commissions established at medical institutions.

If the licence is replaced the same category of vehicles as the one indicated in the foreign licence will be indicated in the Latvia one, or the ones that most accurately correspond to the categories indicated in the licence to be replaced (if the category indicated in the licence does not correspond to the categories defined in the Vienna Convention).

The fee for replacing the driving licence can be found on the website of CSSD (in 2020 – 22.05 EUR⁴).

Upon expiry of the licence's term of validity, it must be replaced in the country of your permanent place of residence. Licences issued in different countries may have different terms of validity and restrictions or different terms and conditions may apply. A driving licence issued in Latvia is valid for 10 years. If you have acquired a professional category, however, the term of validity of your driving licence is 5 years.

On using driving licences issued in the United Kingdom in Latvia

The situation keeps changing, and currently, in Latvia, rules that are applicable to third countries are applied to lengthy use of driving licences issued in the United Kingdom (the UK), i.e., if staying in Latvia for longer than one year the **UK driving licence must be replaced by a Latvian licence**, and the replacement is done after passing a driving test. To persons who return to live in Latvia from the UK and who previously had held a driving licence issued in Latvia, the aforementioned rule that the licence must be replaced after a year applies; they, however, are not required to take the driving test.



More detailed information on the use of foreign driving licences is available from the website of CSSD <https://www.csdd.lv/arvalstu-vaditaja-aplicibas-izmantosana/vispariga-informacija>.

Other documents

If, in arranging the formalities related to residence or change of residence, you need to receive a copy birth, marriage or death certificates or references, use the appropriate e-service in the portal latvija.lv.

- Requesting re-issuing of a birth certificate or reference from the register of births: *Atkārtotas dzimšanas apliecības vai izziņas no dzimšanas*

⁴ CSDD. "Exchange of driving licence". Available: <https://www.csdd.lv/aplicibas-maina/maksajumi> (19.08.2020.)

reģistra pieprasīšana - <https://www.latvija.lv/lv/Epakalpojumi/EP12/>
Apraksts

- Requesting re-issuing of a marriage certificate or reference from the register of marriages: Atkārtotas laulības apliecības vai izziņas no laulības reģistra pieprasīšana –<https://www.latvija.lv/lv/Epakalpojumi/EP14/>
Apraksts
- Requesting re-issuing of a death certificate or a reference from the register of deaths: Atkārtotas miršanas apliecības vai izziņas no miršanas reģistra pieprasīšana - <https://www.latvija.lv/lv/Epakalpojumi/EP13/>
Apraksts

Annual tax return

The residents of Latvia, who gained income from salaried work in any of the EU Member States, do not have to declare it in their annual tax return. Whereas those residents of Latvia, who gain income in a state, which is not an EU Member State, must submit to SRS tax return and declare all income gained abroad from **1 March to 1 June** of the successive year (with taxable annual income from 62 800 EUR – from 1 April to 1 June).

Detailed information on the annual tax return and the required documents can be found on the website of the State Revenue Service https://www.vid.gov.lv/lv/latvijas-rezidenti-arvalstis_



Consultative phone of the State Revenue Service +371 67120000,
e-mail vid@vid.gov.lv.

Place of Residence and Housing

Riga is the largest city in Latvia, covering the area of 304 km² and having a population of about 638 thousand. Administratively, Riga is divided into 58 neighbourhoods. When assessing the preferable place of residence, use the website of the City Development Department of the Riga City Council **www.apkaimes.lv**, where in the section “Statistics” you can find various indicators characterising neighbourhoods, e.g., population density, public transport, institutions of education, and also other useful information.

When choosing a place of residence to rent or to purchase, we suggest you do it in due time, if possible, making an on-site visit, asking your friends and relatives for assistance or using the services of a real estate agent.

Recommendations for choosing apartments to rent

When renting an apartment, it is important to assess all costs of the apartment, including the utilities, furniture and other equipment, which is included in the price of the apartment. Dedicate your time to studying various online portals that can provide support and suggestions regarding apartment rent. Rental ads can be found by using online resources, social networks, various forums or real estate agencies.

According to the data collected by EURES, in 2020, renting an apartment in Riga may cost approximately from 200 EUR up to even 780 EUR per month, depending on the location and the condition of the apartment. The cost of utilities should be added to this (payment for water, electricity, gas, heating, waste collection, maintenance, the Internet, etc.).⁵ The price depends on the dwelling space and the location of the apartment. The possibility that an advance payment of rent (for 1–3 months) will be demanded should be taken into account.

Definitely, conclude a rental agreement, which protects both the apartment's owner and the tenant. The matters that definitely should be included in the contract are the amount of rental payment, the possible increase of it (not more often than once annually), the procedure of making payments for utilities and the actions to be taken if the tenant does not pay the rent. The apartment's owner can include also other details, for example, the number of persons, and other matters that define the rental provisions.

Experts recommend concluding the rental agreement, initially, for no longer than one year and to pay attention to the terms for terminating contractual obligations, as this is the matter that most often causes disputes among the parties.

Take into account that renting of an apartment does not mean that the tenant's residence is automatically declared there. It is possible to declare one's place of residence in a rented apartment by filling out the declaration form and indicating that the grounds are the rental contract.

The municipal support of the Riga City for dealing with housing issues is available to persons with low income, orphans and children without parental care as well as to the residents of denationalised houses who are eligible to residential premises at a certain income level. Detailed information on municipal support is available from the website of the Riga City Council Housing and Environment Department <http://mvd.riga.lv> (section "Housing Matters").

Support for purchasing housing

Finance institution ALTUM offers support programmes "Housing guarantees for families with children" and "Housing guarantees for young professional", providing guarantees for a bank loan for purchasing or constructing housing to persons who have a regular income but without sufficient savings for making the first payment. By using the support programme, the sum of the first payment for a mortgage is decreased. To receive support, turn to one of the commercial banks, which cooperate with **ALTUM in the housing guarantee programme** – <https://www.altum.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/iedzivotajiem/majoklu-garantiju-programma/sadarbibbas-partneri/>.

⁵ EURES European Job Mobility Portal <https://ec.europa.eu/>. "Accommodation". Available: <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=8012&acro=living&lang=lv&parentId=7751&countryId=LV&living=19.08.2020.>

In the **family support programme**, ALTUM issues and administrates guarantees for a person, who co-habits and has the custody over at least one child (up to the age of 23) or who has become pregnant. The guarantee is issued if the loan for the purchase and/ or construction and repairs of housing:

- does not exceed 250 000 EUR;
- is arranged from a bank that has concluded a cooperation agreement with ALTUM;
- if the bank provides a written statement on granting a loan to the borrower who co-habits with and has custody over at least one child;
- if the borrower has not received in the programme any other guarantee/ sureties for purchasing or constructing housing.

The amount of the guarantee depends on the number of children in the family. The amount of the guarantee is calculated on the basis of the principal amount of the loan.

10 % (but not more than 10 000 EUR) if there is one minor child in the family (or the first pregnancy has set in)

10–15 % (but not more than 15 000 EUR) if there are two children in the family (or at least one child and pregnancy has set in)

10–20 % (but not more than 20 000 EUR) if there are three children in the family (or at least two children and pregnancy has set in)

10–30 % (but not more than 20 000 EUR) if there are four children in the family (or at least three children and pregnancy has set in)

The amount of the guarantee increases by 5 % if A class/ zero energy housing is purchased or constructed (the list of such buildings is available from the Register of the Certification of the Energy Performance of a Building of the Building Information System).

Costs: 2.5 % of the granted amount of the guarantee for examining the application for the housing guarantee.




Information about support to families is available here: <https://www.altum.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/iedzivotajiem/majoklu-garantiju-programma/par-programmu/>.

In the support programme to **young professionals**, the guarantee for the purchase or construction of housing is available in the amount of up to 20 % of the principal loan; however, not exceeding the amount of 50 000 EUR. The recipient of the loan must have a regular income, must have obtained higher or vocational education and be in the age group from 18 to 35 years. If education has been acquired abroad, a certificate must be obtained from the Academic Information Centre that this education can be referenced to the Latvian levels of education.

Costs: 4.8 % of the granted amount of guarantee for examining the application

for housing guarantee. Beginning with the second year, an annual payment in the amount of 4.8 of the remaining amount of the guarantee is applied; it is divided into several payments and must be paid before each subsequent quarter of the year.

Changes in the terms of the guarantee can lead to additional costs – in such cases payment in the amount of 1 % of the remaining amount of the guarantee is applied.

 Information about support to young professionals is available here: <https://www.altum.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/iedzivotajiem/majoklu-garantiju-programma-jaunajiem-speicalistiem/par-majoklu-garantiju-programmu/>.

Detailed information about mortgage loans is available from the educational portal of the Financial and Capital Market Commission <http://www.klientuskola.lv/lv/finansu-pakalpojumi/22-hipotekarais-kredits.html>.

The Consumer Rights Protection Centre has prepared recommendations on what should be paid attention to when concluding mortgage loan agreements: <http://www.ptac.gov.lv/ru/node/168>.

The section “Buying and Selling Immovable Property” of the portal latvija.lv provides a description of the available e-services as well as information on the land plot, the building, the title to property, the Land Register fees, etc. <https://mana.latvija.lv/nekustama-ipasuma-pirksana-un-pardosana/>.

Declaring one’s place of residence

Within a month after returning and changing one’s place of residence, (the citizens and non-citizens of Latvia, persons who have received residence permits or registration certificates) a person is obliged to declare their place of residence. In the municipality of Riga, there are two ways of declaring one’s place of residence: in person (at Visitor Reception Centres or at Riga City Civil Registry Offices) or online www.latvija.lv.

If the place of residence is declared in person a state duty in the amount of 4.27 EUR must be paid.

Riga City Civil Registry Office, 4B Aglonas Street, phone +37167181261, e-mail dzn@riga.lv,

Riga City Pārdaugava Civil Registry Office, 28 Dzirciema Street, phone +37167181321, e-mail dznp@riga.lv,

Riga City Vidzeme District Civil Registry Office, 1 Zemgaļu Street, Riga, tālrunis: 67181314, e-pasts dznv@riga.lv,

Riga City Northern Civil Registry Office, 21 Rūpniecības Street, phone +37167026670, e-mail dznz@riga.lv.

Declaring one’s place of residence in the particular local government is needed to receive the services offered by this local government, support, easements and

benefits. The kinds of support available to the inhabitants of Riga can be found at <https://www.vietagimenei.lv/pasvaldiba/rigas-pilseta/>, selecting the area of support or services from the list provided.

On 17 June 2020, the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia introduced amendments to Declaration of Place of Residence Law, which provide that a person, who has a declared place of residence in Latvia, will be able to indicate only one additional address of the place of residence, including abroad. In the context of Law on Diaspora, with respect to a person, whose basic address is abroad but the additional provided address is in Latvia, for the receipt of some services, the address indicated in Latvia will be deemed as being equal to the address of the declared place of residence. The law will enter into force on 1 July 2021. *In view of the fact that, at the moment when the Handbook was prepared, some services have not been defined yet, follow the changes and updates.*

Immovable Property Tax

Immovable property tax (hereafter – IPT) must be paid for your immovable property or part thereof. The calculation of the tax is regulated by the law of the Republic of Latvia On Immovable Property Tax, whereas local governments have the right to set the IPT rate in the amount of 0.2 %–3 % of the cadastre value and also provide support to definite categories of residents and have the discretion to grant immovable property tax exemptions. In the city of Riga, the Municipal Revenue Office of the Riga City Council (hereafter – MRORCC) calculates IPT, prepares and sends out notices of payment and collects payments, taking as the basis the cadastre values of immovable property, set by the State Land Service.

Likewise, the tax is calculated for land, including the land, on which multi-apartment buildings are constructed, in the amount of 1.5 % of the cadastre value.

The municipality of Riga applies **reduced tax rate** (rate of 0.2 %–0.4 %–0.6 %) to apartments, in which at least one resident is declared, meeting the following requirements:

- the person must have one of the following statuses – a citizen of Latvia, a non-citizen of Latvia, a citizen of another EU Member State, of a state of the European Economic Area or the Confederation of Switzerland or of a person, who has received a permanent residence permit in Latvia
- in the respective taxation year, the person must be declared in the particular address on 1 January at 00.00. Additional requirements for a foreigner – must be declared in Latvia 7 years prior to 1 January of the relevant taxation year. These requirements are not applicable to children below the age of 7.

Depending on the number of children in the family, reductions in the amount of 50 %, 70 % and 90 % are granted to families with children.

Comprehensive information about the immovable property tax and exemptions in the form of a table is available here: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/312246-nekustama-ipasuma-nodokla-atvieglajumu-pieskirsanas-kartiba-riga>.

Note – **if no residents are declared at the apartment then the standard rate in the amount of 1.5 % of the cadastre value is applied.** An increased IPT rate in the amount of 3 % may be applied to the immovable property.

MRORCC provides infographic on IPT, the procedure of calculation and paying thereof: <https://pip.riga.lv/par-nodokli/>.

The Municipal Revenue Office of the Riga City Council



5 Terēzes Street 5, Riga, LV-1012
Toll-free informative phone 80000850
Phone for calls from abroad +371 67105919
E-mail pip@riga.lv

The cadastre value of a particular object of immovable property may be found out free of charge in the portal www.kadastrs.lv.

Finances, employment and entrepreneurship

Upon returning and resettling in Riga, the financial matters are an important aspect in planning and ensuring daily life. In this section, issues will be examined from two perspectives – the area of employment of you intend to be an employee and the area of entrepreneurship if you want to create or continue your own business.

Employment

According to EURES data, the living standard in Latvia, compared to developed European countries, is lower. The average (gross) monthly remuneration for work in the 3rd quarter of 2019 was 1091 EUR. The average (gross) monthly remuneration of employees working in the public sector was 1124 EUR, whereas for those working in the private sector it was 1078 EUR (gross). Remuneration for work differs in the regions in Latvia, the highest being in Riga and Riga region. The average retail prices of some products and services can be found on the website of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia <https://www.csb.gov.lv/lv/statistika/statistikas-temas/ekonomika/pci/tabulas/pcg030/atsevisku-produktu-videjas-mazumtirdzniecibas-cenas-euro-par>.⁶

In Latvia, employment is regulated by **Labour Law**. The State determines the **minimum monthly salary**, which, in 2020, may not be below 430 EUR per month if working full-time (40 working hours per week). As regards work, the remuneration for which is set as an hourly rate, the minimum hourly rate is

⁶ State Employment Agency. "Living and Working Conditions - Latvia". Available: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/dzives-un-darba-apstakli-latvija> (19.08.2020.)

calculated in accordance with the working hours in the particular month. Information about the hourly rate is available here: <http://www.lm.gov.lv/text/2525>. The employer pays the salary to the employee at least twice per month, unless the parties have agreed otherwise.

The remuneration in the state and local government administration is defined in accordance with the law On Remuneration of Officials and Employees of State and Local Government Authorities and the Cabinet Regulation No. 66 “Regulation Regarding Work Remuneration of Officials and Employees of the State and Local Government Authorities, and Procedures for Determination Thereof”. Such guidelines are non-existent in the private sector; however, the Central Statistical Bureau has collected information on the average monthly remuneration for work according to occupations and quarters of the year: <https://www.csb.gov.lv/lv/statistika/statistikas-temas/socialie-procesi/darba-samaksa/tabulas/ds050c/stradajoso-menesa-videja-darba-samaksa-pa>. Labour Law also provides that in job ads **the range of salary for the vacancy must be indicated**, which helps in understanding the situation and in planning finances.

How to find a job

Sometimes finding a job seems complicated and questions arise – where to begin and where to look for support. Job ads are available on the website of SEA cvvp.nva.gov.lv, various sites of job ads, social networks and companies’ websites.

In job ads, the employers describe the specifics of the job, requirements and salary range as well as the necessary documents to be submitted when applying for the vacancy. In the majority of cases, an employer requires a CV and a letter of motivation or application. Depending on the specifics of the job, references or letters of recommendation and other documents may be required. The CV and the accompanying documents is the first opportunity for the employer to get to know the person, therefore it is important to consider and prepare one’s CV well, including work experience and skills. When writing your CV, pay attention to the accuracy of information, language and style as well as presentation, try not to exceed 2 pages. **EUROPASS** is a free-of-charge tool for preparing the CV and motivation letters, providing not only document templates but also information on how to fill them out and to assess one’s knowledge: <https://europa.eu/europass/> (the website is available in the languages of all EU Member States) or <http://europass.lv/> (in Latvia). Likewise, a **job seeker’s handbook** is also available online (in Latvian): <http://europass.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/52bcaaf265d237.51951269.pdf>.



Support in job seeking is provided by SEA, helping in looking for a job, providing advice, etc. nva.gov.lv, e-mail konsultacijas@nva.gov.lv, toll-free informative phone in Latvia 80200206.

Commencing labour relationship

Labour relationship can be commenced if the employee has reached the age of 15; the employee and the employer conclude an **employment contract in writing**. The employment contract is drawn up in two copies, the one being kept by the employee, the other – by the employer.

The Labour Law envisages two types of employment contracts:

- an employment contract for an indefinite term of duration – is concluded for an indefinite period;
- a fixed-term employment contract – is concluded for a definite period, usually, when performing substitute work, seasonal work or particular work that requires a definite period of time.

If the employment contract envisages a **probationary period** it may not exceed three months. If the setting of the probationary period is not referred to in the employment contract it is deemed to be concluded without probation. The probationary period is not applied to persons below the age of 18.⁷

The employee's rights

Information about the employee's safety and rights, upon commencing labour relationship, during the employment and upon terminating labour relations, as well as the right to vacations and breaks, obligations and responsibility at the place of work can be found in the publication prepared by the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia "Labour Law and Occupational Safety", which is available also online https://arodbiedribas.lv/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/gatavs_lbas_rokasgramata_30082017.pdf.



If you seek advice on legal labour relationships and occupational safety contact the State Labour Inspectorate vdi.gov.lv, consultative phones +371 67186522, +371 67186523 and +371 24777997 (BITE) or anonymous hotline +371 67312176.

Taxes and tax exemptions

Upon concluding an employment contract, usually, the gross salary or the salary before taxes is indicated, unless the employment contract provides otherwise. When the salary is disbursed, the employer deducts and pays the employee's part of the **social insurance contributions (SSIMCs)**, which in 2020 constitutes **11 %**, and the **personal income tax (PIT)**. In addition to the gross salary, the employer pays also the employer's part of the **social insurance contributions in the amount of 24.09 %**.

Starting with 2018, a **progressive personal income tax rate** is applied. The rate of 20 % is applied to the annual income up to 20 004 EUR, the rate of 23 % is applied to the part of income from 20 004 EUR to 55 000 EUR, whereas the tax

⁷ State Employment Agency. "Living and Working Conditions - Latvia". Available: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/dzives-un-darba-apstakli-latvija> (19.08.2020.)

rate for income above 55 000 EUR is 31.4 %. Thus, the personal income tax depends on the amount of salary.

In 2020, the maximum annual **non-taxable minimum** is 3600 EUR and income, to which the maximum non-taxable minimum is applicable, – up to 6000 EUR annually (500 EUR per month). Thus, since 2020, the maximum non-taxable minimum of 300 EUR per month is applicable to those residents, whose monthly income does not exceed 500 EUR. The amount of annual taxable income, above which the differential non-taxable minimum is not applied in 2020, – 14 400 EUR.⁸

If you have children or other dependent persons you may be applied exemptions for dependent persons. In 2020, this tax exemption is 250 EUR per month. **A more detailed description of the dependent persons can be found from the website of SRS** <https://vid.gov.lv/lv/par-apgādībā-esošām-personām>.

The status of a self-employed person

If you want to engage in **economic activities as a self-employed person** you must register with SRS as a taxpayer, indicating also the area, in which the business activities will be conducted.

Upon registering, the economic operator must choose the mode of paying taxes.

1. A tax on the income from economic activities;
2. Patent fee for engaging in some types of economic activities;
3. Reduced patent fee for engaging in some types of economic activities;
4. Microenterprise tax;
5. Declared economic activity (without registering the economic activity).

In addition to the chosen mode of paying taxes, a self-employed person, whose monthly income exceeds the amount of the minimum salary (430 EUR), must make SSIMCs in the amount of 32.15 % at least for 430 EUR for each month. Whereas from the difference between the actual income and 430 EUR, in addition, 5 % of SSIMCs must be paid as pension insurance.

More detailed information about economic operators and types of taxes is available from the website of SRS <https://www.vid.gov.lv/lv/saimnieciskas-darbibas-veiceji>.

Economic activity can be registered in the SRS Electronic declaration system eds.vid.gov.lv, section “Documents”, “From the form”, “Taxpayer registration and data change forms”, “Registration of a taxpayer (natural person)” or by visiting any of the client service centres, presenting the passport or the personal identity document (eID) and filling out the taxpayers registration form.

⁸ State Employment Agency. “Living and Working Conditions - Latvia”. Available: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/dzives-un-darba-apstakli-latvija> (19.08.2020.)

Recognition of professional qualification

If education and the right to work in the particular profession, which is **regulated** in Latvia, have been obtained in the country of residence and one wishes to work in this vocation following the return to Latvia, the **recognition of the professional qualification, acquired abroad**, must be obtained. The list of regulated professions is available from the website of the Academic Information Centre (AIC) <http://www.aic.lv/regdip/>.



Information about the documents needed for the recognition of qualification for working in Latvia is available from the website of AIC <http://www.aic.lv/portal/arvalstu-diplomu-atzisana/arvalstis-iegutas-profesionalas-kvalifikacijas-atzisana-latvija>, phone +371 67225155 or e-mail prof@aic.lv.

The recognition of professional qualification costs 240 EUR.

Claiming the status of an unemployed person and social benefits

As mentioned above, the unemployment benefit must be claimed in the country of last employment (provisions apply to the EU Member States, Norway, Lichtenstein, Island and Switzerland), by registering at the employment service of this country and submitting there an application, requesting granting the status of an unemployed person. In view of the fact that the unemployment benefit will be disbursed in the country of residence, the person applying for the benefit must meet all the requirements set by the employment services of the particular country.

Take into consideration that, upon receiving an unemployment benefit and planning to continue searching for a job in Latvia, **U2 document “Retention of Unemployment Benefit”** must be requested from the institution, which granted the unemployment benefit in the country of residence. Following arrival in Latvia, within 7 days after leaving the country of residence must be registered with SEA (including also holidays).



It is possible to register online for receiving the status of an unemployed person or a job seeker in Latvia on the SEA portal of vacancies <https://cvvp.nva.gov.lv> or [portal latvija.lv](http://portal.latvija.lv), using the e-service “Application to an institution”, or in person at any branch office of SEA. Additional information about registering to obtain the status in Latvia: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/bezdarbnieka-statusa-iegusana>




If, upon returning to Latvia, you register with SEA but the unemployment benefit has not been “taken along”, you will be able to receive SEA’s assistance in job seeking and other services; however, you will not have the right to the unemployment benefit granted abroad.⁹ Therefore, it is essential to pay attention

⁹ State Employment Agency. “What should be known about allowances upon returning to Latvia”. Available: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/kas-jazina-par-pabalstiem-atgriezoties-latvija> (19.08.2020.)

to getting the necessary documents for receiving the status and the benefit of an unemployed person.

From the same institution, which, in the country of residence, issues U2 document, also **U1** document should be requested, i.e., **“Periods to be taken into account for the granting of unemployment benefits”**, to combine the insurance periods in Latvia with the insurance periods in another EU member state.¹⁰ Since, when working in the country of residence, **the employment and social insurance periods are combined** and are taken into account, in determining the right to benefits, it is important to keep documents related to employment/ making of social insurance contributions (for example, the granted registration numbers of a taxpayer and / or person, employment contracts, agreements on performance of work, statements issued on taxes paid, print-outs of tax returns, etc.) in order to, if necessary, provide information on one’s employment/ social insurance periods.¹¹

Irrespective of whether you return from the countries of the EU and the European Economic Area or other countries, the same SEA’s services are available. For persons, who do not come from the EU/ EEA, to claim an unemployment benefit, SSIA provides services on the basis of mutual social security covenants, concluded by the states. Terms and conditions can be found here: <https://www.vsa.gov.lv/pakalpojumi/pakalpojumi-saskana-ar-starpvalstu-ligumiem/>.

-  Consult SSIA regarding the granting of an unemployment benefit (e-mail konsultacijas@vsa.gov.lv, phone +371 64507020).
-  Regarding services, which are granted in accordance with the legal acts of the European Union and international agreements on cooperation in the area of social security, contact **SSIA International Services Division** (e-mail spn@vsa.gov.lv, phone +371 67095100).
-  Regarding support in job seeking, turn to SEA (e-mail konsultacijas@nva.gov.lv, toll-free informative phone in Latvia 80200206). If the previous country of residence has been one of the EU Member States, contact EURES (e-mail eures@nva.gov.lv).

Opening bank accounts

Opening a bank account in Latvia is essential for conducting cashless transactions as well as for receiving and providing various services via latvija.lv. If you return to Riga from a country of the EU then, probably, it is not the most essential matter because payments can be made from and salary can be paid into

¹⁰ State Social Insurance Agency. “Unemployment benefit in the EU”. Available: <https://www.vsa.gov.lv/pakalpojumi/pakalpojumi-eiropas-savieniba/bezdarbnieka-pabalsts-es/> (19.08.2020.)

¹¹ State Employment Agency. “What should be known about allowances upon returning to Latvia”. Available: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/kas-jazina-par-pabalstiem-atgriezoties-latvija> (19.08.2020.)

any accounts of an EU state without paying a high transaction fee (according to the price lists of banks). To open a bank account in Latvia, a person must be of age and must go to the chosen bank, taking with them personal identity documents with them. Prior to opening a bank account, all banks in Latvia are obliged to perform an assessment of the potential client to prevent cooperation with persons who might be involved, for example, in utilising proceeds from crime. Therefore you will be required to fill out a questionnaire, indicating the basic data, contact information and the purpose of using the bank account. If necessary, the bank may conduct an in-depth client assessment, requesting additional information.¹² The service of opening a bank account remotely is gaining popularity. This service is not offered by all banks, and the conditions may differ, therefore study these offers individually.

Entrepreneurship

If, upon returning to live in Riga, you wish to start or continue your business, there are several matters that should be taken into consideration. The institution, which, on the territory of Latvia, registers companies, merchants, their branches and representative offices as well as all changes within these, – the **Register of Enterprises (RE)** – and the support site mana.latvija.lv have created a digital guide for the existing and emerging entrepreneurs. The guide comprises information about and references to services regarding the company's name, the forms and types of activities, registering a company, social entrepreneurship, employing employees, occupational safety, the required permits and licences, structural units of a company, registering a microenterprise, registering a payer of VAT tax, legislation regulating commercial activities, co-financing and support opportunities provided by IDAL and other tools.

The guide in Latvian is available online: <https://mana.latvija.lv/uznemejdarbibas-uzsaksana/>.

IDAL provides consultations on commencing business activities: <http://www.liaa.gov.lv/lv/biznesa-abc>.

Magnetic Latvia – Labs of Latvia makes available information about IDAL support programmes and possibilities appropriate for the company's stage of development:

- there is a business idea but no knowledge about how to act;
- business activities have been launched, searching for development possibilities or financing;
- a wish to export services or products abroad.

Information on the available support in Latvian and English can be found at: <https://labsflatvia.com/atbalsts>.

¹² The Client School of the Financial and Capital Market Commission. "How to become a bank's client?". Available: <http://www.klientuskola.lv/lv/abece/bazes-klients/58-ka-klut-par-bankas-klientu.html> (19.08.2020.)

Extensive information about all types of commercial activities and the documents required for the chosen type of commercial activity can be found on the RE's website: <https://www.ur.gov.lv/lv/registre/>. On the same site, using the tool "Compare types of commercial activities", it is possible to compare various types and choose the most appropriate. When the type is chosen, in the sub-section "Establishment", selecting "Registration in the Register of Enterprises", all necessary information is available about the documents to be submitted, the time of reviewing the documents, costs and ways of submitting the documents.

The costs of registering a company may differ significantly, depending on the type of commercial activity chosen; therefore the costs can be found in the information on registering each type of commercial activities with RE.

If you already have established a company in the EU, Island, Norway or Lichtenstein, the equity capital of which is not below 120 000 EUR, and you wish to transfer the legal address of this company to Latvia, without going into liquidation of the company and without establishing a new company, at RE you must select **European Company**. More detailed information is available here: <https://www.ur.gov.lv/lv/registre/uznemumu-vai-komersantu/eiropas-komerscabiedriba/>. However, if you wish to register a branch office of a foreign merchant in Latvia, choose to register a **branch of a foreign merchant**: <https://www.ur.gov.lv/lv/registre/uznemumu-vai-komersantu/arvalstu-komersanta-filiale/dibinasana/registracija-uznemumu-registra/>.

Simultaneously with registering a company with RE it is possible to apply to SRS for the status of the payer of the value-added tax and the microenterprise tax. More detailed information about types of taxes is available from the website of SRS <https://www.vid.gov.lv/lv/nodokli>.

- **Contact the Register of Enterprises**
Phone +371 67031703, E-mails Info@ur.gov.lv
- **Contact the State Revenue Service**
Phone +37167120000, E-mail vid@vid.gov.lv

Support for business activities

Re-emigration support measure for commencing business activities

The planning regions, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, implement **re-emigration support measure for commencing business activities**. The envisaged financing is available to micro, small and medium merchants, farms and fisheries, individual merchants, individual companies, registered with the RE, as well as economic operators, registered with the State Revenue Service.

The financing is allocated in the form of a grant, up to 10 000 EUR for one project.

To receive the support, personal investment into implementation or commencing of the business activities is required, attracting investment, as well as, within three years after starting the project, PIT and SSIMCs payments must be made. **The minimum amount of attracted investments is 50 %** of the support financing requested in the project application.

If 10 000 EUR are requested then the attracted investments should be ensured at least in the amount of 50 %, i.e., at least 5000 EUR.

Those re-emigrants and potential re-emigrants, who have lived abroad for at least three years and have entered their address abroad in the Population Register, qualify for support in this competition.

More detailed information about the competition, procedure of application and terms can be found here: <https://www.paps.lv/atbalsts/>.

Grant programme “Take-off”

Since 2009, the municipality of Riga is implementing a competition of grant programme “Take-off” with the purpose of providing support to new (registered no later than 5 years prior to submitting an application), innovative, creative, scalable and technologies- based companies, which develop and implement smart solutions that can be integrated into urban environment – companies with noteworthy groundwork and need “Take-off” for developing **their product/ service, entering new markets, consolidating their position in the market or increasing the volume of production/ sales.**

The maximum allowed support for one applicant for the grant is up to 25000 EUR, which may cover even up to 100 % of the eligible costs indicated in the competition application.



More detailed information about the procedure of the competition, documents to be filled out, the applicants' profile and terms can be found on the website <https://www.rdpad.lv/uznemejiem/atsperiens/>.

Information about the competition can be requested also by writing to e-mail atsperiens@riga.lv.

Education

Pre-school education

Registering a child at a municipal pre-school institution of Riga (kindergarten)

To register on the waiting list to receive the pre-school education service in one of 147 institutions of pre-school education of Riga or an institution, which implements a pre-school education programme (16 schools/institutions of general education and 1 institution of interest-based education), only one criterion must be met – the child must have a birth certificate and a personal identity code. It is possible to register on the waiting list also without

a declared address within the administrative territory of the municipality of Riga; however, at the time when you will want to receive the service, **it is important that the child and at least one of the parents were declared in Riga**, otherwise the chances of obtaining a place in a kindergarten will be scant.

It is possible to register on the waiting list immediately after the birth of the child. Institutions of pre-school education may have set different ages for admitting children. There are pre-schools that admit children from the **age of eighteen months and the age of 3 years**. The parents must indicate in the application for registering on the waiting list the preferable time for starting the pre-school and changes can be made to the application before the child has received the invitation.

The child can be registered with no more than 3 pre-school institutions. For children, who have reached the mandatory age of education, i.e., five years, the kindergarten must be ensured mandatorily. According to the rules, the priority is given to those children, whose siblings already attend the institution and are declared in the same address.

It is possible to register on the waiting list on the portal of electronic services of the municipality of Riga www.eriga.lv, choosing the service “Registering for pre-school”, or by visiting the Client Service Centre of the **Riga City Council Education, Culture and Sports Department (RD IKSD)** (5 K. Valdemāra Street) or any other Visitor Reception Centre of the Riga City Council, bringing one’s personal identity documents. After the child has been registered on the waiting list, it is possible to follow the progression of the waiting list on the website, referred to above.

If the family returns to Riga in the middle of the school-year it must turn to the Education Board of RD IKSD and the specialists will review the possibilities that can be offered and ensured. In particular, this applies to the mandatory age of education.

Information about the municipal institutions of pre-school education of Riga (kindergartens) and the services provided

In the institutions of pre-school education of Riga, the programmes are implemented both in Latvian and in a language of ethnic minorities. Information about the pre-school education service, location of institutions, contact phone number, number of groups, language of instruction and programmes of education can be found on the website of **RD IKSD iksd.riga.lv, section “Catalogue”, sub-section “Pre-schools”.**

The municipality of Riga covers the catering costs for the children of pre-school age and also grants co-financing for catering services in private institutions of education, in accordance with the amount of financing set in the decision by the Riga City Council (1.99 EUR per day, for large families and poor, low-income families 2.77 EUR per day), if these institutions provide the pre-school

education service within the administrative territory of the municipality of Riga. Parents of the children must cover those costs that are defined by the Education Law, i.e., study materials and tools for classes envisaged for the child's individual use.

The pre-school education service is ensured also to children with health disorders. Parents have the right to register the child on the waiting list for the general education programme and ensure mastering of the special programme in accordance with an individual learning plan if the child has minor health disorders or a place at the institution of special education is not ensured. Children can be enrolled in institutions of education or groups that implement programmes of special education only on the basis of an opinion of the general practitioner or the pedagogical medical commission, the competence of which includes psychological and medical examination of children to recommend a programme of education most appropriate for the child's development, abilities and health status.



Information about kindergartens can be obtained from RD IKSD (5 K. Valdemāra Street 5) as well as by phoning +371 67026816 or e-mailing iksd@riga.lv.

Private institutions of pre-school education

Children can attend a private institution of pre-school education if their parents have chosen it and also if they are still on the waiting list for a place at a municipal institution of education.

A list with those private institutions of pre-school education, with which the municipality of Riga has concluded cooperation agreements, is also available on the website iksd.riga.lv, sub-section "Pre-schools" of the section "Catalogue".

If a child attends a private institution of education and this institution has concluded an agreement on financing with the municipality of Riga then co-financing is paid for education services for children declared in Riga, in accordance with the methodology for calculating it, set in the regulatory enactments. In 2020, the amount of support for attending a private institution of education is 250.61 EUR. Parents cover the difference in the costs for education and catering services if the cost is higher.

Services of nannies

Children, starting from the age of eighteen months until the moment when a child is offered a place at a municipal institution education of Riga for attending a programme of pre-school education, co-financing for ensuring child-minding services is available – "Services of nannies". The co-financing is available if the child does not attend a municipal or a private kindergarten and the address, where the services are provided, is within the administrative territory of the municipality.

More detailed information about the co-financing, its amount and the procedure of granting it is available from the website izglitiba.riga.lv, sub-section “Services of nannies” of the section “Pre-school”. In 2020, the co-financing is 145.22 EUR per month for the services for one child.

General education

Within the city of Riga, RD IKSD is responsible for schools of general education, including elementary schools, basic schools, secondary schools and gymnasiums. Currently, 109 schools operate in Riga, including schools with Latvian as the language of instruction and the language of ethnic minority (Russian) as the language of instruction, as well as schools having classes both with Latvian and Russian as the language of instruction. Schools of larger ethnic minorities (Ukrainian, Belorussian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Polish, Jewish) also operate in Riga, the language of instruction there is either Latvian or Russian, but alongside also the language of the particular minority is mastered and its culture studied.

In accordance with the Education Law of the Republic of Latvia and the General Education Law, until the school year of 2021/2022, gradual transition to the official language as the language of instruction in local government and private institutions of general education, who implement education programmes of ethnic minorities, is taking place.

More detailed information about the proportion of languages in the delivery of education programmes of ethnic minorities can be found on the website of the **National Centre for Education (NCE)** and in the Informative Description, prepared by NCE Unit of General Education and Curriculum Development: https://visc.gov.lv/vispizglitiba/saturs/dokumenti/20191015_par_valodas_proporciju.pdf.

There are also special schools for children with health disorders. Children are admitted to these institutions on the basis of an opinion provided by the pedagogical medical commission, the competence of which includes psychological and medical examination of children to recommend a programme of education most appropriate for the child’s development, abilities and health status.

The list of schools is available from the website iksd.riga.lv, sub-section “Schools” of the section “Catalogue”, selecting the school by its address, programme of education, according to the language of instruction, the type of school – schools of general education or special schools.

Several private schools of general education operate in Riga, and parents have the right to choose also the education services provided by private schools.



Regarding matters of private schools contact NCE (2 Valņu Street), phoning +371 67216500 or e-mailing visc@visc.gov.lv.

Registering a child in a municipal school of Riga

A child can be registered in a municipal school of Riga either at the school or electronically. The application can be submitted throughout the year, starting with the date when the child reaches the age of five or the mandatory age of education set in the state. Applications may be submitted to several institutions of education. When Grades 1 are formed, priority will be given to children whose place of residence has been declared within the school's catchment area, because, in Riga, the principle of catchment areas is in force, ensuring to pupils of Grade 1 the possibility to attend the school in the vicinity of their place of residence or to those, whose siblings already attend this school. When registering the child for another grade, the catchment area principle no longer applies.

The children, who become seven years old in the calendar year when they start school, are given priority to be included on the list of the potential first-graders (in the priority order defined in binding regulations). If there are still vacancies, the children, whose parents want them to start school earlier – from the age of six, in accordance with the requirements set in the General Education Law, are included on the list. If the parents believe that the child is ready for school already at the age of six they must receive a written confirmation from the general practitioner. A doctor's certificate must be obtained also in the case if the parents want to send the child to school a year later – from the age of eight.

Additional opportunities at school

Education support staff work in the municipal schools of Riga – social pedagogues, psychologists and speech therapists who can provide free-of-charge advice to children and their parents.

Pupils of Riga have access to **free-of-charge public transport for all students, from Grade 1 to Grade 12**. Free-of-charge **swimming lessons** are ensured to pupils of Grade 2.

Free-of-charge **additional Latvian language classes** are ensured to pupils, who have moved to Latvia or returned to Latvia after longer residence abroad. On the basis of the school's request, the municipality of Riga provides the opportunity to each child like this to attend two individual tutorials per week during one school year.

In the municipal schools of Riga, **the catering costs are covered for all learners**, who are enrolled in the basic education and general secondary education programmes.

Interest-based education, including, music, dance, sports, visual arts, theatre, etc., is also ensured in all schools of Riga.


Special education programme

If the child has any health problems, **Pedagogical Medical Commission of**


the municipality of Riga should be approached; it provides for the children of pre-school age and pupils from Grade 1 to Grade 12, who are declared in Riga, an opinion on the most appropriate educational programme, assessing the child's abilities, level of development and health status.

Home learning can be organised for a child, who is ill for a long time if, due to the health condition, the child is unable to attend the institution of education more than a month. Home learning is organised by adapting it to the individual needs of each pupil; however, it is organised for a period that does not exceed six months. Home learning can be implemented by any school of the municipality of Riga.

To identify the education programme appropriate for the child the parents must register by phone for a visit to the commission's specialist, then must take the child for a check-up. A visit with a speech therapist, special pedagogue, psychologist, if necessary also with a psychiatrist and rehabilitation specialist is ensured, following it the parents must come to receive the opinion.

 The Pedagogical Medical Commission of the municipality of Riga is located at 15 Kaņiera Street, information about its working hours as well as advice can be received by phoning +371 67037322 or from the section "Pedagogical Medical Commission" of the website izglitiba.riga.lv.

General education is free of charge in Latvia; however, the Education Law defines the parents' participation in ensuring the learning process. This is payment for individual study aids – objects in the child's personal use and materials that are used as study aids or enablers of studies: stationery, clothes and footwear, the specific clothes required for mastering the mandatory curriculum in some subjects (sports, housekeeping and technologies, etc.), hygiene items, materials that the student uses in the study process to create an object or a product for their own needs. The State and the local government ensure text-books and teaching aids.

 Regarding matters related to the municipal schools of Riga turn to RD IKSD (5 K. Valdemāra Street), phoning +371 67026816 or e-mailing iksd@riga.lv.

Distance learning

Programmes of general education may be delivered also in the form of distance learning. The distance learning programme of general education is defined by the standard of general secondary education, aiming to provide to persons, who do not have the possibility to attend an institution of education regularly (due to work, place of residence, health condition, social or other reasons), who prefer individual pace of learning or who are ready for mastering the curriculum independently, the possibility to obtain education.¹³ The

13 Legal acts of the Republic of Latvia. "Regulations Regarding the State General Secondary Education Standard, Subject Standards and Sample Education Programmes". Available: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=257229#piel28> (19.08.2020.)

distance learning programmes of secondary education may be implemented in one of the 4 programmes.

1. General education orientation
2. Humanities and social studies orientation
3. Mathematics, natural sciences and technologies orientation
4. Vocational orientation

In the register of institutions of education of the National Database of Educational Opportunities (NIID.LV) of the State Education Development Agency, tick on the top of the page the section “Open, distance or e-studies”, all institutions of education that offer distance learning (e-studies) can be found https://ej.uz/niid_talmaciba. Clicking on the menu “View institutions”, a list of the institutions of education offering evening, open or distance programmes, in alphabetic order, can be viewed. For more accurate information about admission, costs and other information contact the chosen institution of education.

Medical certificate

To start attending the kindergarten or the school, children must undergo medical check-ups and submit to the institution of education the medical card or certificate No.026/U. To obtain this, one must turn to the **general practitioner**, who will assess the child’s health and refer the child for the necessary examinations. To prepare the medical certificate in due time and to undergo examinations, using the services paid for by the State, the examinations should be started timely. Following the visit to the general practitioner, having received the list of specialist that need to be visited, find on the website of the National Health Service www.rindapiearsta.lv information about the accessibility of medical services, paid for by the State, and the institutions where these can be received sooner. The waiting time may differ in different institutions of health care. If there is a waiting list for receiving the health care service, paid for by the State, in one health care institution, the patient has the right to turn to another health care institution, which has no or a shorter waiting list.¹⁴ It is also possible to visit specialists without using the services paid for by the State.

An assistant’s services in institutions of education

Children and adolescents, from 5 to 8 years, who have been diagnosed with severe functional disorders, as well as adults with I or II group of disability have access **to an assistant’ services in institutions of education and an assistant’s services in the municipality for disabled persons**. These two types of services differ substantially.

An assistant’s services in an institution of education is a service, in which an assistant helps the learner, up to 40 hours per week, to move around in the institution of education, in the learner’s contacts and communication with other

¹⁴ Website of the National Health Service “rindaspiearsta.lv”. Available: <http://www.vmnvd.gov.lv/lv/rindapiearstalv> (19.08.2020.)

learners, teachers and other persons, ensuring self-care. The service is available throughout the school year.¹⁵ To receive this assistant's service, the parents submit an application to the institution of education for the granting of an assistant's service, indicating the activities, for the performance of which an assistant's service is required. It is advisable to annex also the documents, substantiating the need for assistance, so that the institution of education would not have to request them additionally from the responsible institutions. The provider of the assistant's services (if such is known) may be indicated in the application.¹⁶

Take into account that the assistant's service will not be applicable to institutions of special education, which are maintained from the State budget. In these institutions of education, financing for ensuring technical staff (including care-givers and other specialists) is already allocated.¹⁷



To receive this service at an institution of education, turn to the Ministry of Education and Science:

- seek advice on receiving an assistant's service from the expert of the Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, phone +371 67047817;
- seek advice on financing an assistant's service from the accountant of the Department of Provision and Finance of the Ministry of Education and Science, phone +371 67047829.

An assistant's service in the municipality to disabled persons is a more extensive service. In providing this service, the assistant helps a person with group I or group II disability and a disabled person, aged from 5 to 18 years, to move around outside home, to reach work, an institution of education, a day-care centre, a day centre, an institution of social rehabilitation, various social and public events, a health care institutions, a general practitioner, to receive medical services, places for spending leisure times, various institutions, and for receiving other services.¹⁸ This service also may be granted for 40 hours per week, of which 20 hours may be ensured for moving to the institution of education and back.

To receive this service, the person or their legal representative must submit a written application to the territorial centre of Riga Social Service, according to

15 The Ministry of Education and Science. "Receiving an assistant's services at an institution of education". Available: <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/pedagogiem/asistentu-pakalpojumi-izglitiba-iestade> (19.08.2020.)


16 The Ministry of Education and Science. "Receiving an assistant's services at an institution of education". Available: <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/pedagogiem/asistentu-pakalpojumi-izglitiba-iestade> (19.08.2020.)

17 The Ministry of Welfare. "How to receive an assistant's service at school?". Available: http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=80078 (19.08.2020.)

18 The Riga City Council Department of Welfare. "State-finances assistant's service". Available: <https://ld.riga.lv/lv/paklautibas-iestades/rigas-domes-socialais-dienests/asistentu-pakalpojumu-administresanas-nodala.html> (19.08.2020.)

their place of residence, indicating the name, surname, personal identity code, the address of the declared place of residence, phone or e-mail, the data of the legal representative (if applicable), information on whether the person receives an allowance from the State budget to a person with visual disability for using an assistant, and the name and surname of the preferable assistant (if known). The municipal social service adopts the decision on granting the service and the monthly scope of service (number of hours per week) within a month. After the decision is adopted, the Riga Social Service concludes a contractor agreement with the assistant and the disabled person.¹⁹

For the inhabitants of Kurzeme district and Zemgale suburb

 **PĀRDAUGAVA DISTRICT DEPARTMENT**

Territorial centre
“Dzirciems”

2 Baldones Street, Room 411, phone +371 67012356

For the inhabitants of Latgale district

 **LATGALE DISTRICT DEPARTMENT**

8 Mazā Lubānas Street, Room 1, phone +371 67037968

For the inhabitants of Vidzeme suburb, Centra district and Ziemeļu District

 **ZIEMEĻU DISTRICT DEPARTMENT**

Territorial centre
“Vidzeme”

1A Vidrižu Street, Room 106, phone +371 67037899

 **RECEPTION HOURS**

Monday: 13.00–18.00 | Tuesday: 9.00–16.30
Wednesday: 13.00–16.30 | Thursday: 9.00–16.30
Friday: by previous appointment

Referencing education obtained abroad

If a diploma of education has been obtained abroad and one wishes to continue education in Latvia, the document of education must be academically recognised. This procedure is conducted by the **Academic Information Centre (AIC)**, on the basis of an application, a copy of a personal identity document, copies of the document of education and its supplements. The application can be submitted in person at the AIC or submitted electronically, signed with the secure electronic signature, to e-mail aic@aic.lv.

Following the recognition procedure, AIC issues a certificate, indicating the document of education, issued in Latvia, to which this foreign document of education may be (if it may be) referenced. The decision on the recognition of the document of education is adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science (for continuing education on the level of basic or secondary education) or the

¹⁹ The Riga City Council Department of Welfare. “State-finances assistant’s service”. Available: <https://ld.riga.lv/lv/paklautibas-iestades/rigas-domes-socialais-dienests/asistentu-pakalpojumu-administresanas-nodala.html> (19.08.2020.)

institution of higher education (for continuing education on the level of higher education).

The cost for expert assessment of a document of education obtained abroad is 41.00 EUR.

More detailed information about the academic recognition of documents is available from the website of AIC <http://www.aic.lv/portal/arvalstu-diplomu-atzisana/arvalstis-iegutu-izglitibas-dokumentu-akademiska-atzisana-latvija>.

The Latvian language

On-site possibilities of learning Latvian

Every year, the municipality of Riga ensures to the inhabitants of Riga, except pupils and unemployed persons, the possibility to take Latvian language courses free of charge. Every year, information is disseminated about the possibility to apply for Latvian language courses, which are provided by institutions of education that have won the tender, announced by the municipality. The courses are held in several neighbourhoods of Riga; thus, the inhabitants have the possibility to take the classes in a place that is convenient for them.

➤ Information about applying for courses is available from RD IKSD website www.integracija.riga.lv, selecting at the top of the page the section “Latvian language courses”. Information is available in Latvian, Russian and English.

Unemployed persons or job seekers, registered with SEA, can use the possibility to learn Latvian in groups, offered by SEA. More detailed information is available from website nva.gov.lv, sections “For clients”/“Unemployed persons” and “For job seekers”/“Training opportunities”.

Possibilities to learn the Latvian language online

LLA (www.valoda.lv) offers several online resources for learning Latvian.

E-learning resources for learning Latvian are available from the website

➤ <https://maciunmacies.valoda.lv/>.

Online study course for levels A1, A2, B1 (if English is chosen as the language of the site part of the study course is available with explanations in English):

➤ <https://elaipa.lv/Home/A1>.

Self-assessment materials for language proficiency levels A–C with the possibility of assessing listening and reading skills:

➤ <http://www.sazinastilts.lv/language-learning/language-portfolio/>.

Glossary of terms in six subjects – biology, physics, geography, chemistry, mathematics and history, which can be used as an aid both by teachers and children and their parents:

➤ <http://www.sazinastilts.lv/language-learning/vocabulary/>.

Medicine and Health

Accessibility of health care

The following have the right to receive health care services, paid for by the State: (1) a citizen of Latvia; (2) a non-citizen of Latvia; (3) a foreigner with a permanent residence permit in Latvia; (4) a stateless person, to whom the status of a stateless person has been granted in Latvia; (5) a refugee or a person, who has been granted an alternative status; (6) an asylum seeker; (7) a detained, arrested or sentenced person, who is serving a sentence in an institution for deprivation of liberty, and (8) children of the aforementioned persons, below the age of 18.

The spouse of a citizen or non-citizen of Latvia, having a temporary residence permit in Latvia, is also entitled to receive obstetric assistance, paid for by the State.

In addition to the aforementioned groups of inhabitants, the spouse of a socially insured (health insurance) person also is entitled to receiving health care services, paid for by the State:

- if the socially insured person is a citizen of another Member State of the European Union, a country of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Norway, Lichtenstein) or the Confederation of Switzerland;
- if the spouse has a temporary residence permit and is raising a child below the age of seven or at least three children below the age of 15.

Pursuant to the concluded international agreements, in addition, the following have the right to receive health care services, covered by the State budget resources: (1) military pensioners of the Russian Federation, whose place of residence is the Republic of Latvia, and (2) citizens of Ukraine, whose place of residence is the Republic of Latvia and who receive here the Ukrainian or Latvian pension or pension paid by the State of Ukraine (other citizens of Ukraine are entitled to emergency assistance only).

Information about health care in Latvia

Information about patients' rights, the procedure of organising and financing health care and providers of health care services, including general practitioners, is available from NHS.



More extensive information can be found on the website www.vmnvd.gov.lv, calling 80001234 (for residents of Latvia) or +371 67045005 (calling from foreign numbers as well as e-mailing nvd@vmnvd.gov.lv).

General practitioner

A patient's health care is organised by the general practitioner. Each resident has the right to choose a general practitioner, confirming the choice by registering with the chosen doctor and concluding an agreement. Each resident may

be registered only with one general practitioner. To receive out-patient health care services – consultations with specialists, diagnostic examinations, services of day clinics, paying only the patient's fee, a referral by the general practitioner or doctor-specialist is required.

A general practitioner registers all patients, whose declared place of residence is within the basic catchment area of the general practitioner, as defined within the agreement concluded with NHS. Within five business day following the agreement, the general practitioner enters into the management information system of NHS information about the agreement to register the person on the list of the general practitioner's patients. When visiting a doctor, a person must present a personal identity document.

- To find out the general practitioner, with whom a person may register in accordance with their declared place of residence, call NHS toll-free information phone 80001234 (from Monday to Thursday from no 8.30 to 17.00, on Friday from 8.30 to 15.00) or e-mail info@vmnvd.gov.lv.
- More information from NHS website www.vmnvd.gov.lv, section "Health care services" / "General practitioners".

If previously the place of residence has been declared outside the Republic of Latvia, the person's status in the register of the recipients of health care services will be blocked. This means that the person has the right to receive services, paid for by the State, but they do not have the possibility to register or re-register with a general practitioner. In order to do it, declare your primary place of residence in the Republic of Latvia.

NHS ensures to everyone free-of-charge phone consultations with general practitioners in Latvian, English and Russian for receiving medical advice and recommendations on how to act in the case of acute illnesses or exacerbation of chronic diseases. General practitioners and doctor's assistants provide medical advice to inhabitants in need of medical advice in the case of simple diseases. **The service is available on business days from 17.00 to 8.00, as well as at weekends and public holidays – 24 hours. The service is available by phoning +371 66016001. For correspondence over e-mail: medkonsultacija@gmail.com. Via "Skype" (medical advice): phone +371 66016001.**

- **For emergency medical assistance call 113!**

European health insurance card and form S1

If the re-emigrant or their spouse are socially insured in any of the EU Member States, a state of EEA (Island, Norway, Lichtenstein) or the Confederation of Switzerland they may request, in the respective Member State, form **S1 and the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)**. Form S1 is valid if, after returning to Latvia, it is registered with NHS. More about the conditions for receiving

form S1 from the website of NHS www.vmnvd.gov.lv, section “Health care in the EU”/”S forms”/”Form S1” (“Confirmation of the right to receive health care”).

EHIC card attests to the right to receive **the necessary or emergency health care** in the same scope as it is ensured to the residents of the respective country. This assistance will be provided by institutions and doctors that ensure the State guaranteed health care services in the respective country. The type and amount of services to be provided will be assessed by the doctor in charge on case-by-case basis. More information about EHIC from the website of NHS www.vmnvd.gov.lv, section “NHS services”/”EHIC card”.

Accessibility of health care in Riga

Health care institutions

Health care services, paid for by the State, and also services for a charge can be received at four municipal capital companies of Riga, more information about these services may be found from the websites of these medical institutions or by contacting the institutions by phone.

Municipal out-patient health care institutions (polyclinics)

1. Ltd. “**Rīgas Veselības centrs**” [The Health Centre of Riga] (www.rigasveseliba.lv), call centre +371 20028801, 8801, visiting hours: on week-days 8.00–20.00, e-mail pieraksts@rigasveseliba.lv. Branches of the centre available: “Iļģuciems”, “Ķengarags”, “Torņakalns”, “Imanta”, “Bolderāja” un “Ziepniekkalns”
2. Ltd. “**Rīgas 1. slimnīca**” [Riga 1st Hospital] (www.1slimnica.lv), phone+371 67366323

Municipal in-patient health care institutions (hospitals)

1. Ltd “**Rīgas 2. slimnīca**” [Riga 2nd Hospital] (www.slimnica.lv), phone +371 67614033 – specialises in providing traumatology services and providing prosthetic appliances, traumatology centre
2. Ltd. “**Rīgas Dzemdību nams**” [Riga Maternity Ward] (www.rdn.lv), phone +371 67011225 – obstetric assistance

Other health care institutions in Riga providing both out-patient and in-patient health care services

- Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital (www.stradini.lv)
- Riga Eastern Clinical University Hospital (www.aslimnica.lv)
- Hospital “Latvian Centre of Infectious Diseases” (www.aslimnica.lv/lv/content/stacionars-latvijas-infektologijas-centrs-0)
- Hospital of Traumatology and Orthopaedics (www.tos.lv)
- Riga Stradins University Institute of Stomatology (www.stomatologijasinstitutus.lv)

Most popular health care institutions among foreigners for receiving primary health care services and visiting doctor-specialists

- Health Centre 4 (www.vc4.lv)
- Medical Centre ARS (www.ars-med.lv)
- Diplomatic Service Medical Centre (www.dsmc.lv)

Paediatric health care institutions

The largest specialised multi-profile paediatric health care institution in Latvia – the Children’s Clinical University Hospital (www.bkus.lv) – is located in Riga. Phone of the call centre (toll-free) **80708866**.

Emergency medical assistance to children is provided at Torņakalns branch, 45 Vienības gatve. The department of emergency medical assistance and observation (DEMAO) is open 24/7.

Health promotion and prevention measures in the municipality

Various health promotion activities take place in the municipality of Riga: informative educational events, public lectures, training on the topics of public health, sports activities are held. The aim of these activities is to improve inhabitants’ knowledge about health and factors influencing it, as well as to promote active and healthy lifestyle. Various events are organised to improve senior’s knowledge and skills in health promotion. Likewise, activities for addiction prevention take place, and a harm reduction programme for drug addicts is implemented.

Residents are offered various activities to strengthen families and increase their functionality, to highlight the value of the family and child in society, training programmes are organised for parents on issues of raising children and child development.



Information about events as well as other issues of health promotion and prevention can be found from the website www.veseligsrizidzinieks.lv as well as profile “Healthy Riga” in the social network “Facebook”: <https://www.facebook.com/veseligsrizidzinieks.lv/>.

Support and Benefits

Addressing the topic of support and benefits, it is essential to differentiate between the support provided by the state and the support provided by municipalities. When working abroad, the employment/social security periods are not lost and add up, and this is taken into account when determining eligibility to benefits, including pension. Therefore it is important to keep the documents related to the employment/social contributions (the assigned taxpayer and/or personal registration numbers, employment agreements, work performance

arrangements, issued certificates on tax payment, tax declaration printouts, etc.).²⁰ Whereas an individual can only be socially insured in one country, until you have resumed the employment in Latvia and social contributions are made to the budget of Latvia, you are socially insured at your current country of residence. Therefore prior to returning to Latvia and Riga, it is important to meet your liabilities and claim the benefits at your country of residence.

Whereas the social insurance benefits add up, in some cases benefits may be claimed from several countries. For instance, information on receiving pension in the EU – www.lm.gov.lv/lv/senioriem/pensiju-eksports.

The SEA and EURES have compiled an informative description on family benefits – <http://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/eures-palidz-gimenem-atgriezties-latvija>. And the State Social Insurance Agency (SSIA), on its turn, has compiled case studies on social benefit availability for a family returning to Latvia – <https://www.vsaa.gov.lv/pakalpojumi/pakalpojumi-eiropas-savieniba/kas-jazina-par-pabalstiem-pec-darba-es-atgriezoties-latvija/>

The SSIA website under section *Services* provides information on all benefits available for working individuals for whom social contributions are made in Latvia, according to the target group – parents, employees, retired/seniors, and people with special needs.

In Latvia, the social services and social assistance are ensured by the municipality of the territory where the individual is declared. In Riga, these services are provided by **Riga City Council Welfare Department**. The individuals who are declared in Riga and are facing difficult situation and require help or support, are entitled both to social assistance (benefits) and social services. E.g., people can be entitled to a benefit for **ensuring the guaranteed minimum income level, housing benefit, benefit in crisis situation, healthcare benefit and other benefits. Social services are not cash payments** but different ways of support. **E.g., different social services are available to families with children, seniors, people with disabilities, social care services at the place of residence, crisis centre services, warm food serving points, day centres, etc.** In order to get help the Rigans should address Riga Social Service District Department Territorial Centres that are closest to their places residence. A conversation with a Social Worker is confidential and the consultations are free of charge.



You can find the information on social assistance (benefits) and social services in the capital, e.g., on types of benefits and services, procedure for granting thereof, on locations and visiting hours of Riga Social Service Territorial Centres, etc., by calling the free information line of Riga City Council Welfare Department 80005055 on workdays, but

²⁰ The State Employment Agency “Kas jāzina par pabalstiem, atgriežoties Latvijā?” (*What you should know about Benefits upon Returning to Latvia?*), 15-06-2020, <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/kas-jazina-par-pabalstiem-atgriezoties-latvija> (See 19-08-2020)

outside the working hours a voicemail is operating, as well as by visiting the website ld.riga.lv. You can follow Riga City Council Welfare Department social network Facebook account @labklajibasdepartaments for any news.

Support for Large Families

The state has elaborated a support programme for large families – **Latvian Family of Honour “3+ Family Card”**, that serves as a document acknowledging that the family has three and more children aged under 18 (also majors under the age of 24 if they are in general, vocational or higher education), as well as opportunities for receiving discounts, using the services offered by public and private companies in Latvia.

- More detailed information on receiving the card and available discounts – <https://www.godagimene.lv/>.

A Family Support Register is set up with Riga city municipality, and families with at least three children declared at the same **address in Riga City Administrative Territory** are invited to register with **it in order to receive transportation fee allowances** at Riga city public transport, **real estate tax allowances, etc. allowances**.

Psychological Support

Changes of environment can create additional stress and psycho-emotional overload. Therefore, the opportunity of addressing specialists in a difficult moment can give support both to the individual concerned and their family members. The Ministry of Education and Science has summarised the available services in the article *“Atbalsts nedrošā brīdī” (Support in Insecure Moment)* – <https://izm.gov.lv/lv/aktualitates/4025-atbalsts-nedrosa-bridī>.

Riga City Welfare Department offers psychological consulting, psycho-emotional support and psychological research services, as well as psychological support in emergency situations. The service is provided to parents/guardians in order to improve awareness of upbringing children, reduce the potential abuse risks and consequences in a family, provide psycho-emotional support to children and families if they have faced abuse, faced a crisis situation or find themselves in a complicated psycho-emotional situation. The psychological support in emergency situations is available for individuals and families finding themselves in emergency situations, affected by disaster or unforeseeable circumstances independent of the individual’s activity.

- Detailed information regarding the available support is available on the website <https://ld.riga.lv/lv/Psihologiska-palidz%C4%ABba.html>.

Leisure time

Culture opportunities

RD IKSD is responsible for matters of culture, sports, interest-based education, youth and participation issues in the city. **In the area of culture**, each year 300–400 events are implemented/organised, the majority of which are available to the residents and visitors of Riga free of charge.

Numerous festivals, concerts, exhibitions are ensured by cultural institutions, museums, exhibition halls and the extensive network of libraries. Culture and folk art centres **“Mazā gilde”** and **“Ritums”** (with a branch at 43 A Ieriķu Street), exhibition hall **“The Riga Art Space”**, the **Riga Porcelain Museum** are located in the Old Town. In the Art Nouveau part of the city, the municipality has established **the Riga Art Nouveau Museum**, but in the centre – **Aleksandrs Čaks’ Memorial Apartment -Museum**.

The residents of neighbourhoods have access to their own “islands of culture” – Riga Culture and Recreation Centre **“Imanta”**, Culture Centre **“Ilģuciems”**, Culture Palace **“Ziemeļblāzma”** and **VEF Culture Palace**. For three years already, mobile culture sites **“Stropi”** have been active in Riga, during this period they have been to Mežaparks, Ķengarags, Ziepniekkalns and Pļavnieki. In summer, more than 70 various events are held in these sites, and the islands of culture have gained popularity among inhabitants of all age groups.

Approximately 300 **amateur groups** in Riga receive municipal support for their activities, providing to the residents of Riga the possibility to join several studios of applied folk art, visual art studios, participate in choirs, sing in groups and vocal studios, dance, be active in groups of ethnic minorities, master photography and play theatre. Amateur groups operate in Riga centres of culture.




More extensive information about the cultural events, concerts, festivals, festivities, and other activities related to cultural life, supported by the municipality, can be found here: kultura.riga.lv. Information about amateur groups from RD IKSD (5 K. Valdemāra Street) as well as by phoning +371 67026816 or e-mailing iksd@riga.lv.

Children’s and adolescent’s free time


In the city of Riga, an **extensive range of interest-based education activities for children and adolescents** is offered and is available in all schools and eight children’s and youth centres.

The offer includes dance, music, singing, art, environment education, technical creative work, visual and visual plastic art, theatre and sports activities. Riga Ēbelmuiža Primary School, specialising in working with children with hearing impairments, has an extensive offer – contemporary dance, woodworking, crafts, drawing and painting, movement theatre, robotics, etc.


 The offer of activities, information about the location and time of group activities, age groups and co-financing by parents can be found out in person at schools and interest centres as well as in the catalogue that is available online on the website of RD IKSD www.izglitiba.riga.lv, section “Important”.

Children from large families, which are registered on the Register of Large Families of the municipality of Riga, do not have to pay for attending groups of interest-based activities.


If children want to undergo more advanced training in arts, music or sports they can attend after-school classes **in one of the nine art and music schools of Riga** or any of the **10 sports schools**. Upon completing a programme of these schools, children receive a certificate on the acquisition of vocationally oriented art, music or sports education.

 The whole offer of art and music schools can be found on the website of RD IKSD www.iksd.riga.lv, section “Music and art schools”. The offer of the sports schools, in turn, is found in the section “**Sports schools**”.


22 centres of leisure time activities operate in Riga, created on the basis of the municipality-founded institutions of education. The centres offer to the neighbourhood children creative workshops, thematic events and other opportunities for meaningful leisure time activities. The activities are held both during the school year and during holidays.

 Information about the addresses and working hours of these centres is available from the website of RD IKSD www.izglitiba.riga.lv, section “**Leisure time**”, with the reference “**Important**”.

Riga Youth Centre “Kanieris” offers various programmes of informal education, providing to adolescents the possibilities of participation and ensures support to non-governmental organisations, working with youth.

 Information about opportunities for adolescents and youth NGOs as well as activities organised by Youth Centre is available from the website www.kopnica.lv and social networks: <https://www.facebook.com/kanieris/>, <https://www.instagram.com/kaniera15/> and <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheRigaYoung/>.

Adolescents also have the possibility to become involved in the students’ self-government in their schools. On the municipal level, they have united in **Riga Pupils’ Council**. Every year, student self-governments create a plan of activities that would be of interest for school students (mobile seminars, training, discussions) for the acquisition of important skills. Financing for cooperation projects among school self-governments is ensured.

 Information about Riga Students’ Council is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/rsdlv/>.

In the municipality of Riga, **camp**s are considered to be a form of organising

children's and adolescents' leisure time that is most rich in traditions. Camps are organised during school holidays. Many of these are organised by the municipal institutions of education; however, non-government organisations and religious organisations also are among the organisers. Information about open camps is available from the website of RD IKSD <https://izglitiba.riga.lv/lv/izglitiba/brivais-laiks/nometnes>.



Currently, anyone can find out about the relevant developments in the youth work in Riga from the website of RD IKSD www.izglitiba.riga.lv, section "Leisure time"/"For adolescents".

Sports

Every year, an extensive range of sports events for various target audiences is held: both for professional athletes and amateurs and for supporters of grass-root sports. Sports competitions are organised for children and adolescents, adults and seniors and also for people with special needs.

Residents are welcome to engage in sports in **two municipal regional sports centres "Sarkandaugava" and "Kengarags"**. The most popular and modern venues for sports activities among children and adolescents are in **Imanta Sports Centre** (158 Kurzemes prospekts), **the complex for active recreation and sports** (116A Barona Street), **the complex of sports and active recreation** (141 Lielvārdes Street). Likewise, those wishing to go in for sports have access to **stadiums at 50 institutions of education**, for example, at Riga Classical Gymnasium, Riga Jugla Secondary School, Riga Secondary School No. 22.

➤ Additional information from: sports.riga.lv/katalogs.

In winters, infrastructure for winter sports is set up. It is possible to skate and ski in Riga winter sports and recreation parks. **Skiing equipment** is available for rent there (15 Uzvaras bulvāris, in Lucavsala, 141 Lielvārdes Street, 27 Dumbrāja Street). Updated information from: rigaslepo.lv. **Skaters**, in turn, have access to the skating ring with artificial ice at the House of Congresses, natural ice skating rings in the territories of schools, the addresses of which and the prices for hiring equipment are published at the beginning of the winter season.


➤ Information from: sports.riga.lv.

Grassroot sports activities, including beach volleyball, swimming, morning trainings sessions, orienteering as well as activities for children for several years have been included in the programme of Riga Festivities in Lucavsala. RD IKSD supports the organisation of free-of-charge outdoor training sessions "Sportive Riga".

Opportunities for participation


Involvement in the activities of non-governmental organisation, ethnic and neighbourhood associations


Non-governmental organisations unite diverse groups of socially active residents. Approximately 10 000 non-governmental organisations are active in Riga, including ethnic, social, neighbourhood etc. organisations. All those interested, wishing to become involved in the activities of non-governmental organisations, are invited to visit the **House of Non-governmental Organisations** (NGO House, 43 A Ieriķu Street). Here, anyone can find out about the range of Riga's NGOs and the main lines of their activities, find like-minded people, get to know about the issues relevant for non-governmental organisations, receive support for the development of the organisation, obtain information, including information about the possibility to participate in voluntary work and also participate in organising the most diverse events.

 Information about the NGO House is available from the website **integracija.riga.lv**, section **“About the NGO House”**. It includes news from the non-governmental organisations, information about recent developments in the House, calendar of events, information about the NGO House's premises and contact information.

If you are interested in becoming involved in an organisation of culture or of ethnic minorities, the list of organisations and their contact information can be found here: <https://kulturasdati.lv/lv/nevalstiskas-organizacijas> (selecting on the right-hand side of the page the region “Riga”).

The **activities of neighbourhood associations** are developed in the city of Riga, they wish to engage in the urban planning processes. Anyone, wishing to participate in the creation, improvement and development of their neighbourhood, is welcome to join the existing associations or establish new ones. Website **www.apkaimes.lv** provides updated information on the developments in neighbourhoods and possibilities of participation; it also has a section with contact information of neighbourhood associations.

 If you are interested in becoming involved in your neighbourhood activities get in touch with the association **“Alliance of Riga's Neighbourhoods”** on the social network “Facebook”: <https://www.facebook.com/apkaimjualiase/>.

 Information about recent developments in societal integration in the city of Riga, NGO activities and implemented projects is available from the website www.integracija.riga.lv.

Volunteering

The volunteer work in Riga is organised by associations, foundations and religious organisations as well as by municipal institutions and hospitals. This work is on-going in various fields – social, culture and arts, sports, youth, education and other areas as well as large-scale events of the city.

The most convenient way of looking for volunteer work offers is to visit websites:

- www.brivpratigais.lv – ads of organisations about newest offers of volunteer work can be found on it; it is possible to set up one's volunteer's profile and follow the "Facebook" account – <https://www.facebook.com/brivpratigie/>;
- <https://visasiespejas.lv/pasakumi/visi/brivpratigi> – offers most recent possibilities for joining the volunteer work for both adolescents and adults;
- www.deedin.com – possible to find an organisation, where to do volunteer work and to register the work one has done.