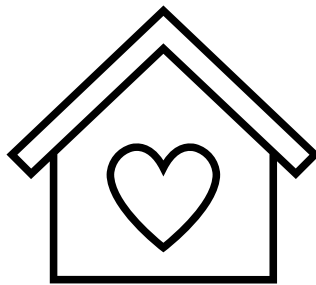




FJÖLMENNINGARSETUR
MULTICULTURAL AND INFORMATION CENTRE

2021



Housing

Renting a Flat

Information for people who have just been granted the status of
refugees in Iceland

1. Looking for somewhere to live

- a) After you have been granted refugee status in Iceland you may go on living in the accommodation (place) for people applying for international protection for only as long as two weeks more. Therefore it is important to look for somewhere to live.
- b) You can find accommodation (housing, apartments) to rent on the following websites:

<http://leigulistinn.is/>

<https://www.al.is/>

<https://www.leiga.is>

<http://fasteignir.visir.is/#rent>

<https://www.mbl.is/fasteignir/leiga/>

<https://www.heimavellir.is/>

<https://bland.is/solutorg/fasteignir/herbergi-ibudir-husnaedi-til-leigu/?categoryId=59&sub=1>

<https://leiguskjol.is/leiguvefur/ibudir/leit/>

Facebook – leiga/rent

2. Lease (rental agreement, rent contract, *húsaleigusamningur*)

- a) A lease gives you, as the tenant, certain rights.
- b) The lease is registered with the District Commissioner's Office (*sýslumaður*). You can find the District Commissioner's Office in your area here: <https://www.syslumenn.is/>
- c) You must show a lease to be able to apply for a loan for the deposit to guarantee the payment of rent, rent benefit (money you get back from the tax you pay) and special assistance to cover your housing costs.
- d) You will have to pay a deposit to your landlord to guarantee that you will pay your rent and to cover possible damage to the property. You can apply to the social services for a loan to cover this, or alternatively through <https://leiguvernd.is> or <https://leiguskjol.is>.
- e) Remember: it is important to treat the apartment well, to follow the rules and to pay your rent at the right time. If you do this, you will get a good reference from the landlord, which will help when you rent another apartment.

3. Notice period for terminating a lease

- a) The notice period for a lease for an indefinite period is:
 - 3 months – for both landlord and tenant – for the rent of a room.
 - 6 months for rent of an apartment (flat), but 3 months if you (the tenant) have not given proper information or do not meet the conditions stated in the lease.
- b) If the lease is for a definite period, then it will expire (come to an end) on the date agreed, and neither you nor the landlord has to give notice before this. If you, as the tenant, have not give all necessary information, or if you do not meet the conditions

stated in the lease, the landlord may terminate (end) a lease for a definite period with 3 months' notice.

4. Housing benefit

- a) Housing benefit is a monthly payment intended to help people with low incomes to pay their rent.
- b) Housing benefit depends on the amount of rent you have to pay, the number of people in your home and their combined income and liabilities of all those people.
- c) You must send in a registered lease.
- d) You must transfer your domicile (*lögheimili*; the place where you are registered as living) to your new address before you apply for housing benefit.
<https://www.skra.is/umsoknir/rafraen-skil/flutningstilkynning/>
- e) You apply for housing benefit here: <https://www.husbot.is>.
- f) For more information, see: <https://hms.is/husnaedisbaetur/housing-benefit/>.

5. Social assistance with housing

A social worker can help you to apply for financial help with the cost of renting and furnishing a place to live in. Remember that all applications are considered in terms of your circumstances and you must meet all the conditions set by the municipal authorities to qualify for assistance.

- a) Loans granted so that you can pay the deposit on rented housing are normally equal to 2-3 months' rent.
- b) Furniture grant: This is to help you buy necessary furniture (beds; tables; chairs) and equipment (a fridge, stove, washing machine, toaster, kettle, etc.). The amounts are:
 - a. Up to ISK 100,000 (maximum) for ordinary furniture.
 - b. Up to ISK 100,000 (maximum) for necessary equipment (electrical appliances).
 - c. ISK 50,000 additional grant for each child.
- c) Special housing assistance grants: Monthly payments on top of housing benefit. This special assistance varies from one municipality to another.

6. Deposits on rented flats

- a) It is common for the tenant to have to pay a deposit (surety) equal to 2 or 3 months' rent as a guarantee at the beginning of the rent period. You can apply for a loan to cover this; a social worker can help you with the application. You will have to pay some of this loan back each month.
- b) The deposit will be paid back into your bank account when you move out.

- c) When you move out, it is important **to give back the apartment in good condition, with everything as it was when you moved in** so as to have your deposit returned to you in full.
- d) Ordinary maintenance (small repairs) is your responsibility; if any problems arise (for example a leak in the roof) you must tell the landlord (owner) immediately.
- e) You, the tenant, will be responsible for any damage that you cause to the property. The cost of repairing any damage that you cause, for example to the floors, walls, fixtures, etc., will be deducted from your deposit. If the cost is more than your deposit, you may have to pay more.
- f) If you want to fix anything to a wall, or to the floor or ceiling, drill holes or paint, you must first ask the landlord for permission.
- g) When you first move into the apartment, it is a good idea to take photographs of anything unusual that you notice and to send copies to the landlord by e-mail to show the condition of the apartment when it was handed over to you. You cannot then be made responsible for any damage that was already there before you moved in.

6. Common damage to rented premises (flats, apartments)

Remember these rules to avoid damaging the premises:

- a) Moisture (damp) is often a problem in Iceland. Hot water is cheap so people tend to use a lot: in the shower, in the bath, washing dishes and washing clothes. Be sure to reduce indoor humidity (water in the air) by opening windows and airing all rooms out for 10-15 minutes a few times every day, and wipe up any water that forms on windowsills.
- b) Never pour water directly onto the floor when you are cleaning: use a cloth and squeeze extra water out of it before wiping the floor.
- c) It is the custom in Iceland not to wear shoes indoors. If you walk into the home in your shoes, moisture and dirt are brought in with them, which damages the flooring.
- d) Always use a chopping board (made of wood or plastic) for cutting and chopping food. Never cut direct onto tables and workbenches.

7. Common parts (*sameignir* – parts of the building you share with others)

- a) In most multi-owner dwellings (blocks of flats, apartment blocks) there is a residents' association (*húsfélag*). The *húsfélag* holds meetings to discuss problems, agree on rules for the building and decide how much people have to pay each month to a shared fund (*hússjóður*).
- b) Sometimes the *húsfélag* pays for a cleaning company to clean the parts of the building that everyone uses but nobody owns (the entrance lobby, the stairs, the laundry room, passageways, etc.); sometimes the owners or occupants share this work and take it in turns to do the cleaning.

- c) Bicycles, push-chairs, prams and sometimes snow-sleds may be kept in the *hjólageymsla* ('bicycle storeroom'). You should not keep other things in these shared places; each flat usually has its own storeroom (*geymsla*) for keeping your own things.
- d) You must find out the system for using the laundry (room for washing clothes), washing and drying machines and clothes-drying lines.
- e) Keep the rubbish-bin room clean and tidy and make sure you sort items for recycling (*endurvinnsla*) and put them in the right bins (for paper and plastic, bottles, etc.); there are signs on the top showing what each bin is for. Do not put plastic and paper into ordinary rubbish. Batteries, hazardous substances (*spilliefni*: acids, oil, paint, etc.) and rubbish that should not go into the ordinary rubbish bins must be taken to the local collection containers or recycling companies (Endurvinnslan, Sorpa).
- f) There must be peace and quiet at night, between 10 p.m. (22.00) and 7 a.m. (07.00): do not have loud music or make noise that will disturb other people.