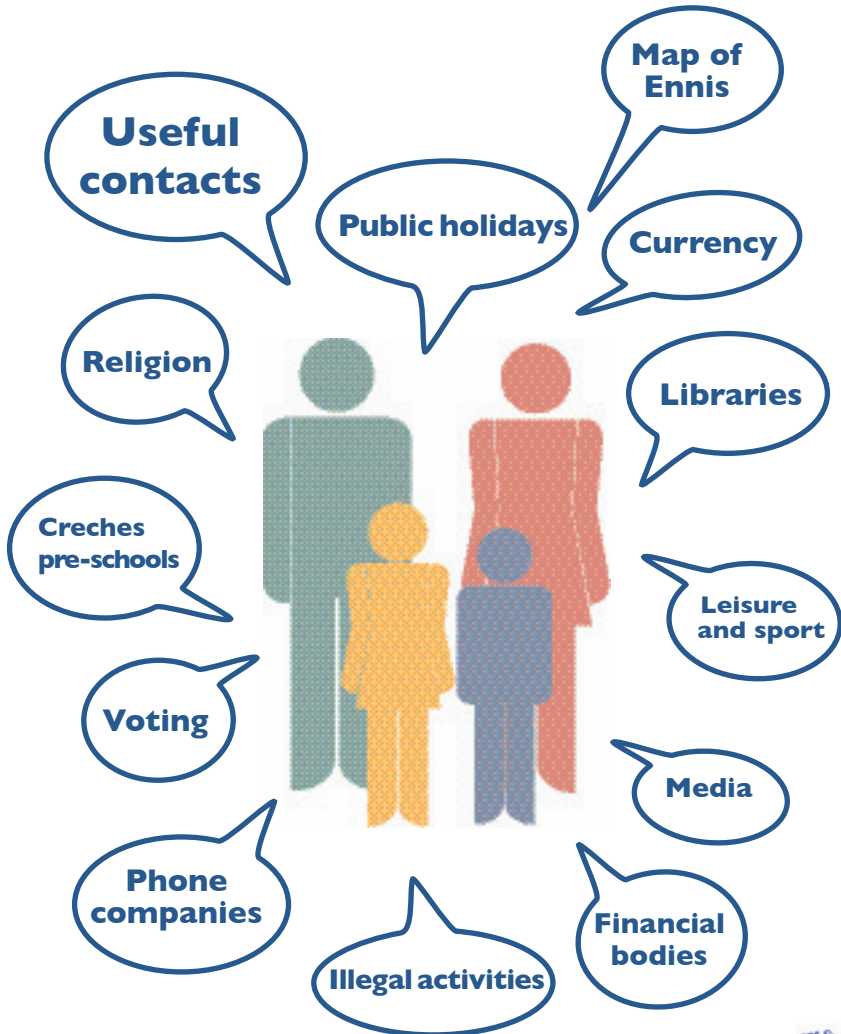


Welcome Pack for Immigrants in Clare

General



Compiled by Clare Immigrant Support Centre



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Introduction to County Clare

General

Clare, in the province of Munster, is one of the 32 counties of Ireland and has a population of 110,950. Ennis is the county town of Clare with a population of about 21,000. County Clare is a rural-based county on the Western seaboard of Ireland covering 320,000 hectares.

It is bounded to the west by the Atlantic Ocean; to the east by the lake called 'Lough Derg'; to the South by the Shannon river as it flows into the Atlantic; and to the North by the region called the Burren.

Ennis is built on the river Fergus, which is a tributary of the river Shannon.

Although Clare has an extremely diverse economy, agriculture and agricultural activities still form the most important element of the county's economic base.

Clare is a county of great natural beauty and wonderful landscapes with a rich heritage.

It also has many fine monuments, buildings and waterways. Clare offers the best in music, culture and scenery with year-round music festivals, traditional sessions, sporting and community events throughout the county.

Currency

The currency in Ireland is the euro which is made up of 100 cents.

Volunteering

Volunteering is common in Clare and many organisations, clubs and events are run with the help of volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering talk to local organisations and clubs. Contact Clare Volunteer Centre at (065) 686 6800; see www.volunteerclare.ie, or www.clarefocus.ie

Events, places, history

For information about places, history and events in Clare see these websites:

- www.clarelibrary.ie
- www.clarefocus.ie
- www.ShannonRegionTrails.ie
- www.discoverireland.ie/clare
- www.clare.ie
- www.clarecoco.ie

Media

Local news

To get news about political, social and cultural events and developments in Clare see the two weekly newspapers; the *Clare Champion* and *Clare People*; or the two free newspapers the *Clare Courier* and *County Express*. Some parishes produce free newsletters that are available in local churches and shops. You can register to receive a free weekly electronic newsletter see www.Clarefocus.ie

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Radio

Clare FM radio station broadcasts on frequencies 95-96FM see www.clarefm.ie

TV licence

It is against the law not to have a TV licence. If you don't have one you can be prosecuted and may have to pay a fine of up to €635. Television licences are sold in your local post office, they cost €160 a year. You can pay for it yearly by cash or cheque; monthly through direct debit or Mastercard; or with your credit card. You can also pay by phone at: 1890 228 528, 24 hours a day seven days a week; or online at www.tvlicence.ie.

If you are receiving Jobseeker's Allowance or Benefit you may be entitled to a free TV licence. You can apply online at www.citizensinformation.ie or contact the Department of Social Affairs, Social Welfare Services, College Road, Sligo. Phone: (071) 915 7100.

Financial bodies

Post offices

There are 48 post offices in villages and towns in Clare. Their opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am-1pm, 2pm-5pm; and Saturday 9am-1pm. They provide:

- postal services;
- Post Office Saving accounts;
- postal money orders;
- TV licences;

- dog licences;
- 'passport express' (when you are applying for an Irish passport); and
- bank card lodgements and withdrawals.

Banks

There are different branches of banks in Clare including Ulster Bank, Bank of Ireland and AIB. They are open from 10am-4pm (approximately) Monday-Friday. You can open a bank account in any of these banks. You will need two forms of photo ID and proof of address (like an electricity bill).

Banks can lend you money through loans, overdraft or mortgages. You can apply by going to the bank or online at:

- www.ulsterbank.ie
- www.boi.ie
- www.aib.ie

Banks also provide travel and house insurance. You can get consumer information and education about the costs, risks and benefits of financial products from your local Citizens Information Centre. You can also get information from the Financial Regulator at www.itsyourmoney.ie; phone, 1890 777 777.

Credit unions

Credit unions differ from banks in that they don't make a profit. They are formed by groups of people who save together and lend to each other. This makes it easier to get loans from a credit union than from banks. To join a credit union or take out a

loan, you need proof of address (like an electricity bill), photo ID and some savings.

There are credit unions in Clarecastle, Ennis, Ennistymon, Kilrush, Lissycasey, Scariff, Shannon and Sixmilebridge.

Leisure and sport

Youth clubs

Youth clubs throughout Clare offer a range of activities such as sports, music, DVD nights and trips away. They are generally free to join and designed for teenagers. For information on Clare youth clubs, training programmes, activities and events, see www.clareyouthservice.ie or www.teenspace.ie

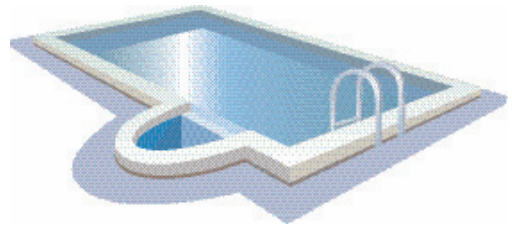
GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association)

The GAA is very prominent in Clare, with Gaelic games, hurling, camogie and football teams spread all over the county. Usually children start playing on GAA teams from the age of six years and upwards for boys and girls. You could visit the grounds of your local club at the weekend and ask somebody what teams are available for your child.

See www.clubgaa.ie for your local club.

Soccer

There are soccer teams in many villages



and towns in Clare. Find your local club at www.claresoccer.net

Swimming

There are many lovely beaches in Clare that are safe to swim in and have a life-guard service for a few months in the summer. They are the ones you should swim in. Some beaches have strong currents in the water and can be very dangerous. Do obey all the signs on the beach, never swim alone, be careful when fishing and ask local people about the tides and safety of the beach.

There are swimming pools in various hotels that are open to the general public to use casually or that operate a club membership scheme.

There are four public swimming pools at:

- Ennis Leisure Complex;
- Kilkee Waterworld;
- Lahinch Seaworld and Leisure Centre; and
- Shannon Swimming & Leisure Centre.

See also www.clarelibrary.ie ('Community information').

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Other sports facilities

For a list of sports facilities, events and clubs in Clare see www.claresportspartnership.ie

Irish traditional music and dance

Clare is home to some very good Irish traditional musicians and dancers. Many of them teach classes to children and adults throughout county Clare. Classical music is also taught countywide. Ask about music classes in the local music schools, community centres or see www.clarelibrary.ie (>education> community information).

Religion

Churches, religions, faith groups

In Ireland there is an acceptance of religious diversity and there are many different practising churches, religions and faith groups. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest of them.

If you cannot find a suitable place of worship in Clare there may be one in Galway or Limerick city. See:

- www.eircomphonebook.ie.

For a list of churches and faith groups in Clare see www.clarelibrary.ie ('community information') or www.irishchurches.org. There is a mosque in Ennis at Clonroad Business Park, Clonroad (near Dunnes Stores). See www.islamireland.ie for information from the Islamic Centre of Ireland.

Childcare

There is a range of child care services in Ireland. The types of services available include: childminders, crèches, part-time care, full time care, preschools, montessori and naonraí (Irish language playschools).

A list of HSE notified preschool services are available from Preschool Inspection and Information Service, River House, Gort Road, Ennis. (065) 686 3902; or see www.clarechildcare.ie

Phone companies

Mobile phones

There are five main competing mobile phone providers: Meteor, O2, Vodafone, 3 and tescomobile. They offer various packages. Some offer special rates to ring foreign countries. Visit www.call-costs.ie for an independent comparison of call costs. Or go to the individual websites:

- www.meteor.ie;
- www.o2.ie;
- www.vodafone.ie;
- www.3gmobile.ie;
- www.tescomobile.ie.

Visit www.irelands-directory.com, to find your local mobile phone shop, so you can purchase the phone and provider of your choice.

Landlines (fixed lines)

Eircom is the main landline provider, and



other companies offer some competition. See www.eircom.ie To install a landline in your house, phone eircom 1901.

Voting

You must be 18 years of age to vote. Irish citizens may vote in every election and referendum. British citizens may vote in General, European and local elections. Other EU citizens may vote at European and local elections. Non-EU citizens may vote at local elections only.

You must be registered on the Electoral Register in order to vote. You can register at your local authority, library or post office. You must have ID and proof of address. For more information contact:

- your local Citizens Information Centre – www.citizensinformation.ie; or
- www.clarecoco.ie.

Public holidays

On a public holiday, sometimes called a 'bank holiday' most businesses and schools close. Other services, for example, public transport still operate but often with restricted schedules. The list of nine public holidays in Ireland each year is as follows:

- New Year's Day (1 January)
- St. Patrick's Day (17 March)
- Easter Monday (date changes each year)
- First Monday in May, June and August
- Last Monday in October
- Christmas Day (25 December)
- St. Stephen's Day (26 December)

Banned activities

There are activities that are banned in public places. You must obey these bans or a penalty will be imposed. They include a ban in public places on:

- smoking;
- spitting;
- drinking alcohol;
- littering; and
- loitering in groups.

Libraries

Clare library services

Membership of Clare County Library is open to everyone normally living or working in the county. You must present a valid ID and proof of address when you register. There may be a small fee and rules that you must follow.

At your library you can borrow books and music CDs; use the internet; read in a quiet reading space; and read the daily newspapers – all for free.

Activities at the 16 Clare libraries vary and include events like book launches, exhibitions, storytelling, author visits and

USEFUL CONTACTS

Useful contacts

Emergency services and local hospitals

In an emergency phone 999 or 112 for ambulance, Gardaí or fire brigade		
Name	Address	Phone
Ennis Hospital (Mid-West Regional)	Gort Road, Ennis	(065) 686 3100
Regional Maternity Hospital	Saint Munchins, Ennis Road, Limerick	(061) 483 129.
Limerick Mid-West Regional Hospital	Dooradoyle, Limerick	(061) 301 111
Shannondoc, out of hours family doctor service		1850 212 999

Clare Immigrant Support Centre (CISC)

Name	Address	Phone
CISC	Unit 13, Carmody Street Business Park, Carmody Street, Ennis, Co Clare	(065) 682 2026

Citizen's Information Centre (CIC)

Name	Address	Phone
CIC	Bindon Lane, Bank Place, Ennis	(065) 6841221

Birth, death and marriage registration certificates

Name	Address	Phone
Registration Office	Sandfield Centre, Ennis.	(065) 686 8050

USEFUL CONTACTS

Employment, education and training

Name	Address	Phone
Adult Education Centre	Clonroad Business Park, Ennis	(065) 682 4819
Congress Information Opportunity Centre	Connolly House, Unit 7a Elevation Park, Clonroad, Ennis	(065) 684 1009
Ennis Community Development Project	Unit 1a Elevation Park, Clonroad, Ennis	(065) 686 9026
FAS Office	42, Parnell Street, Ennis	(065) 682 9213
Clare County Childcare Committee	Kilrush Road, Ennis	(065) 686 4862
Clare Youth Service	Kilrush Road, Ennis	(065) 684 5350

Clare Health Services

Name	Address	Phone
Central number for all hospitals and services		(065) 682 4464
Health Service Executive		
Community Health Services Dental Clinic Ophthalmic Clinic (eye tests) Public Health Nurses Audiology Services (hearing test)	County Clinic, Bindon Street, Ennis	(065) 682 8525
Clare Social Work Service		(065) 686 3909
Community Welfare Office	Sandfield Centre, Ennis	(065) 686 8090
Medical Cards	Sandfield Centre, Ennis	(065) 686 8039

USEFUL CONTACTS

Information and other services

Name	Address	Phone
Clare FRC	Ennis	(065) 682 3923
East Clare Community Support	Scariff	(061) 640 977
Clare Women's Network	Clonroad Bus Pk, Ennis	(065) 682 8731
Ennis Community Development Project (CDP)	Elevation Pk, Clonroad, Ennis	(065) 686 9026
Social Welfare Office	Kilrush Road, Ennis	(065) 686 7800
Ennis Garda Station	Abbey Street, Ennis	(065) 684 8100
Clare Haven Services (Support for women and children experiencing domestic abuse)	Clare Road, Ennis	(065) 684 2646
Clarecare Social Services	Harmony Row, Ennis.	(065) 6828178
Money Advice Budgeting Services (MABS)	Ennis	(065) 6841991
Disabled People of Clare (DPOC)	Clonroad Bus Pk, Ennis	(065) 684 3488
Clare Sports Partnership		(065) 686 5434
Saint Vincent de Paul		(065) 682 4188

Family Resource Centres (FRC)

Name	Address	Phone
Killaloe/Ballina Community and Family Resource Centre	Killaloe	(061) 374 741
North West Clare FRC	Ennistymon	(065) 707 1144
West Clare FRC	Kilrush	(065) 905 2173
Shannon FRC	Shannon	(061) 707 600

USEFUL CONTACTS

Legal contacts

Name	Address	Phone
Refugee Legal Service	Seville House, New Dock Street, Galway	(091) 562 480 Freephone 1800 238 343
Ennis Law Centre	Ennis	(065) 682 1929

Irish Government Department contacts

Name	Address	Phone/Website
Refugee Application Centre	Timberley House, 79-83 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2	(01) 602 8000
Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service (INIS)	13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2	(01) 616 7000 www.inis.gov.ie
Reception and Integration Agency	Dun Aímhirgin, 43-49 Mespil Road, Dublin 4	(01) 647 3000
Department of Trade and Enterprise	23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2.	(01) 631 2121 www.entemp.ie

National organisations

Name	Phone/Website
Migrant Rights Centre	(01) 889 7570 www.mrci.ie
Irish Refugee Council	(01) 764 5854 www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie
Integrating Ireland (Dublin)	(01) 475 9473
Immigrant Council Of Ireland	(01) 674 0200 www.immigrantcouncil.ie
United Nations High Commission for Refugees	(01) 631 4510
Citizens Information Service	Locall 1890 777 121 www.citizensinformation.ie

MAP OF ENNIS



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