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Living and Working in Poland

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A photograph of construction workers wearing orange safety vests and holding hard hats. One worker in the foreground is holding a white hard hat, while others behind him hold yellow and orange ones. The image is partially covered by a red rectangle on the left and a teal rectangle on the right.

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| Living and Working in Poland as a Refugee

Practical guide to community support, courses and everyday integration

Poland has, over the past decade, become one of Europe's main destinations for people seeking safety. Refugees arrive from a wide range of regions, each bringing different experiences, needs and skills. In response, Poland has developed a broad and varied support landscape that goes beyond formal government structures. Alongside national programmes and local council services, there is a strong network of NGOs, charities, cultural centres, faith organisations and informal community groups. These groups play a central role in helping newcomers navigate life in a new country — from dealing with paperwork and accessing healthcare to learning the language, finding work, and building social connections.

At the same time, everyday life in Poland can feel complicated for someone who has just arrived. The systems are unfamiliar, the language can be challenging, and there is a great deal of variation between cities and regions. Knowing where to look for help can make a significant difference, especially in the first few months. This guide aims to offer practical, clear information that supports real day-to-day living rather than repeating formal rights or legal entitlements. It highlights the places where refugees can find community, join courses, meet people, receive trusted support, and take steps towards independence and stability.

Whether someone is settling in Warsaw or Kraków, living in a smaller town, or still making decisions about long-term plans, this guide is designed to act as a starting point. It brings together the types of support that people most often need when trying to rebuild their lives — language learning, vocational training, community networks, social services, mental-health support and practical advice on navigating Polish systems. The aim is to help refugees feel more confident, more connected, and better equipped to live and work in Poland.

01

Community Groups and Integration Centres



| Community Groups and Integration Centres

Poland's support system for refugees is built around a combination of national NGOs, city-level organisations, cultural centres and neighbourhood hubs. These centres are often a refugee's first point of contact for practical help beyond paperwork — providing community, activities, language support, and safe places to ask questions.

National-level NGOs with physical centres

These organisations work across multiple cities and run established programmes. Many offer support in several languages.

1. Fundacja Ocalenie (The Ocalenie Foundation)

Website: <https://ocalenie.org.pl> (PL / EN)

Cities: Warsaw

Fundacja Ocalenie is one of the most experienced NGOs in Poland working directly with refugees and migrants. Its centres are well known for their supportive, non-judgemental approach and for providing guidance on nearly every aspect of integration.

What they offer

- **Help Centre for Foreigners** – legal advice, support with writing letters to government offices, form-filling, and guidance on accessing services.
- **Employment assistance** – help preparing for interviews, understanding Polish workplace culture, drafting CVs and finding realistic job opportunities.
- **Community activities** – cooking clubs, conversation groups, sports activities, parenting groups and social meetings.
- **Housing support** – including a long-running programme that helps refugees find rental housing, negotiate with landlords, and maintain stable accommodation.
- **Crisis support** – targeted help for survivors of violence, families in urgent need or people experiencing homelessness.

Why it's useful

Ocalenie is recognised for **long-term, hands-on support** that goes beyond one-off advice. They remain involved with families and individuals for months or years, helping people build real stability.

2. PCPM – Polish Centre for International Aid

Website: <https://pcpm.org.pl/en/poland>

Cities: Warsaw and other Polish cities (programmes and availability differ by location)

PCPM is one of the most active organisations in Poland supporting both adults and children. They work closely with municipalities and schools and are known for their practical approach to integration.

What they offer

- **Social support workers** – people who can guide you through healthcare, education, housing and everyday bureaucracy.
- **Support for children** – tutoring, psychological support, transition help when entering Polish schools, and extracurricular activities.
- **Vocational courses for adults** – IT basics, introductory office skills, construction-related training and other practical courses depending on local needs.
- **Community meetings** – events where newcomers can meet locals, practise Polish and receive guidance on daily life.

Practical example

PCPM has run **job-readiness programmes** in **Warsaw** and **Lublin**, combining workplace-focused Polish lessons with employability training — suitable for beginners trying to enter the Polish labour market.

3. HIAS Poland

Website: <https://hias.org/where/poland/>

Cities: Headquarters in **Warsaw**

HIAS focuses strongly on psychosocial support, legal aid and community-building. Their services are particularly helpful for those dealing with trauma, stress or major life transitions.

What they offer

- **Legal consultations** – support with residency, asylum, temporary protection, work rights and appeals.
- **Mental-health services** – free, confidential sessions with trained therapists; group workshops for stress management and emotional wellbeing.
- **Women’s Circles and peer groups** – safe spaces for women to build confidence, share experiences and receive peer support.
- **Orientation workshops** – guidance on accessing public services, healthcare, childcare, housing and education.

Good for

Refugees who need **structured, ongoing support** — not only for documents but also emotional stability, family wellbeing and long-term planning.

4. International Organisation for Migration (IOM) – Poland

Website: <https://poland.iom.int>

Cities: **Warsaw, Kraków**

IOM is part of the UN system and focuses on practical integration guidance for newcomers.

What they offer

- **Translation and interpreting** for key appointments (legal, medical, social-services related).
- **Orientation sessions** – workshops on life in Poland, understanding local systems and exercising your rights.
- **Document support** – help preparing or updating documents, understanding administrative processes and avoiding common bureaucratic mistakes.
- **Integration events** – public discussions, cultural exchanges and practical workshops.

Local community hubs (city-based)

While national organisations provide structured support, **local community hubs** offer everyday connection and a place to feel part of a neighbourhood. These centres are often more informal, and many refugees rely on them for social networks and language practice.

1. Ukrainian House in Warsaw (Ukraiński Dom)

Website: <https://ukrainskidom.pl>

City: **Warsaw**

Open to everyone, not only Ukrainian citizens.

This centre plays a major role in Warsaw’s multicultural scene. It is a friendly space where newcomers can attend classes, community events or drop in for advice.

What they offer

- **Free Polish language courses** – A1 to B1, including “Polish for Work” modules.
- **Conversation clubs** – small groups to practise speaking in a relaxed environment.
- **Women’s support groups** – safe spaces for women to meet and discuss challenges.
- **Cultural evenings and workshops** – arts, music, cooking, film screenings and lectures.
- **Social and legal consultations** – help with everyday issues, job search, and navigating public services.

Why it matters

This is one of the most active community spaces in Warsaw. Activities change often, so it’s worth checking their calendar for updates.

2. Multicultural Centres (Centrum Wielokulturowe)

Cities: Warsaw, Kraków

(Each centre has its own website, <https://centrumwielokulturowe.waw.pl/>, <https://otwarty.krakow.pl/250861,artykul,centrum-wielokulturowe-w-krakowie.html>)

These centres are created by local councils and NGOs to support residents from many cultural backgrounds. They combine integration services with creative activities.

What they offer

- **Coworking spaces** – free desks, internet and meeting rooms for those seeking work.
- **Practical workshops** – help with writing CVs, local labour-market information, basic IT workshops, small-business guidance.
- **Creative projects** – photography, art sessions, storytelling workshops, community media projects.
- **Events connecting newcomers and locals** – shared meals, neighbourhood meetings, discussion groups.
- **Legal advice and social assistance** – weekly drop-in sessions with professional counsellors (varies by city).

Example

The **Centrum Wielokulturowe Warszawa** runs:

- weekly integration meetings
- a free legal clinic
- Polish conversation classes
- parent–child groups
- local volunteer projects



02

Courses and Training Options for Refugees in Poland

| Courses and Training Options for Refugees in Poland

Refugees in Poland have access to a wide range of courses: from basic Polish-language classes to vocational training in fields such as IT, caregiving, office work, gastronomy and **construction**. Some programmes are free, while others offer scholarships or heavily discounted places. Many NGOs also provide childcare during classes, which makes participation much easier for parents.

A. Polish-language courses (free or low-cost)

Polish is essential for paperwork, employment and everyday life. The following organisations run structured, accessible courses from beginner to intermediate level.

1. Ukrainian House (Ukraiński Dom) – Warsaw

Website: <https://ukrainskidom.pl/szukasz-pomocy/kursy-jezyka-polskiego/>

What they offer

- A1, A2 and B1 classes
- “Polish for Work” (focused on vocabulary for shops, offices, construction sites, hospitals and logistics)
- Conversation clubs
- Saturday and evening classes
- Courses with childcare support (during certain cycles)

Why it’s useful

Very practical courses, with lots of speaking practice and real-life vocabulary.

2. Polskie Forum Migracyjne – Warsaw

Website: <https://forummigracyjne.org>

What they offer

- Free beginner and intermediate courses
- Child-friendly classes (parents can join with small children)
- Conversation cafés
- Practice groups for everyday speaking

Who it suits

Adults who want a relaxed, supportive environment without formal exams.

3. University-based Polish courses for refugees

Some universities offer free or subsidised Polish-language classes.

Examples:

- Uniwersytet Warszawski – Polonicum
<https://polonicum.uw.edu.pl>

- Uniwersytet Jagielloński – Szkoła Języka i Kultury Polskiej
<https://www.uj.edu.pl/studiuj-na-uj/szkola-jezyka-i-kultury-polskiej>
- Uniwersytet Gdański – Język polski dla obcokrajowców
<https://polski.ug.edu.pl/kursy/kursy-jezyka-polskiego-dla-cudzoziemcow-rejestracja/>

What they offer

- Academic-level Polish
- Survival Polish for everyday tasks
- Preparation for future study in Poland

B. Digital skills and employment preparation

Many refugees want to build skills for office work, remote work or IT roles. These courses start from the very basics.

1. PCPM – Digital and vocational courses

Website: <https://pcpm.org.pl>

Typical courses include:

- Assistance under the program for the Recognition of Teacher Diplomas from Ukraine,
- support for schools – organizing legal assistance, Polish language courses,
- support in enrolling in postgraduate studies and vocational training.

2. FRSI Foundation – Digital education for migrants

Website: <https://frsi.org.pl>

Courses include

- developing a compendium of knowledge on the use of ICT tools in learning, solving practical everyday problems, educational opportunities in Poland, and the integration of refugees into the community – for use by organizations and institutions directly supporting people arriving from Ukraine, in particular by libraries assisting people arriving from Ukraine;
- supporting public libraries in developing activities that integrate people arriving from Ukraine, as well as a wide range of cultural and educational activities for migrants;
- other educational activities, including those related to countering disinformation and anti-discrimination workshops. This will also include all library activities promoting knowledge about the countries of origin of people arriving (with particular emphasis on Ukraine) and their culture.

C. Vocational courses (construction, care work, logistics, hospitality)

This section includes **construction skills**, which are very important in the Polish labour market.

Construction Courses and Training Options

Poland has a **large construction sector** with a high demand for workers. Many refugees find stable work in this field, and training helps secure safer, better-paid jobs.

Below are **concrete routes** to free or subsidised construction training.

1. Local Labour Offices (Powiatowy Urząd Pracy)

Website finder: <https://szczecin.praca.gov.pl/dla-bezrobotnych-i-poszukujacych-pracy/podnoszenie-kwalifikacji/szkolenia>

This is the **main place** offering free construction training for foreigners with the right to work.

Common free courses:

- Forklift operation (UDT licence)
- Scaffolding assembly
- Electrical basics (up to SEP E1 certification)
- Tile-laying and flooring
- Plastering and painting
- Basic carpentry
- Health and Safety (BHP) for construction sites
- Excavator and heavy machinery training (depending on region)

Why it's useful

Once you register as **unemployed** or **seeking work**, many courses become free. Certificates are recognised Poland-wide.

2. OHP (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy)

Website: <https://ohp.pl>

OHP offers practical vocational training for young people and people up to 25 years of age.

Useful construction courses:

- General construction techniques
- Finishing work
- Plumbing basics
- Welding foundations

These are hands-on courses lasting several weeks.

3. Private training centres with refugee scholarships

These are paid but often have **discounts for refugees** or NGO-funded placements.

Examples include:

- **Akademia Operatora** – machinery and forklift training <https://akademiaoperatora.pl>
- **The Voivodeship Vocational Training Center in Szczecin** (<https://wzdz.pl>) is a training center offering training in a variety of construction professions. It is an accredited examination center, meaning it is authorized to conduct a wide range of examinations, both vocational and industry-specific.

D. Recognition and upgrading of qualifications

If someone has worked in a skilled profession before arriving in Poland, they may need their qualifications recognised.

Where to start:

- **NAWA (Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange)** <https://nawa.gov.pl/en>
- **Ministry of Education and Science – diploma recognition**
file:///C:/Users/US/Downloads/Wniosek_o_uznanie_kwalifikacji_zawodowych_do_wykonywania_zawodu_regulowanego.pdf

They offer:

- Assessment of diplomas
- Clarification of which professions require Polish certification
- Equivalence procedures for teachers, nurses, engineers, architects and others

In some sectors (e.g. construction), experience can be more important than formal recognition.

03

Mental-health and Wellbeing Support



| Mental Health Support and Wellbeing

Adjusting to life in a new country can be challenging. Refugees often face worry, uncertainty, loss, repeated bureaucracy, and isolation — all of which can make daily life more difficult. Poland has a growing network of organisations offering **free or low-cost mental-health support**, practical counselling, community groups and trauma-focused assistance.

This section covers **where to get help, what to expect, how to access support even without Polish, and specialised services for women, children and vulnerable persons.**

A. Main NGOs providing mental-health support

These organisations work across Poland and offer trained therapists, psychologists and group support in multiple languages.

1. HIAS Poland

Website: <https://hias.org/where/poland/>

Cities: Based in **Warsaw** with outreach in surrounding regions

HIAS is one of the leading providers of trauma-informed support for refugees. Services are delivered by trained psychologists who specialise in displacement and crisis recovery.

What they offer

- **Free, confidential psychological counselling** (individual sessions)
- **Group therapy sessions** on stress, trauma, coping strategies
- **Women's Circles** – safe, supportive groups focused on emotional wellbeing
- **Workshops on family communication, anxiety management and rebuilding confidence**
- **Support for parents** who need help assisting children through difficult transitions
- **Mental-health caseworkers**, who can link refugees to social services, legal aid or emergency support

Languages available

Often Polish, English, Ukrainian, Russian; other languages may be available depending on staff at the time.

Who it suits: People dealing with trauma, long-term stress, family pressures, or uncertainty about their status.

2. Polskie Forum Migracyjne (Polish Migration Forum)

Website: <https://forummigracyjne.org>

Cities: Mainly **Warsaw** but online sessions available

Polskie Forum Migracyjne has a strong reputation for accessible, friendly and non-judgemental psychological services.

What they offer

- **Short-term psychological and therapeutic support (3 months)** in Ukrainian, Belarusian, Russian, French, Arabic, English, Persian, and Dari,
- **Crisis intervention** in Ukrainian, Belarusian, Russian, French, Arabic, and English,
- **Diagnosis of children with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, PTSD, and cPTSD**

Why it's useful

Sessions often include practical advice on dealing with everyday stressors such as job-search pressure, housing uncertainty and cultural differences.

3. International Rescue Committee (IRC) – Poland

Website: <https://www.rescue.org/country/poland>

Cities: Programmes in **Warsaw, Poznań and Katowice**

The IRC focuses on both practical and emotional support for refugees, especially women, children and vulnerable groups.

- **Support for vulnerable individuals: 24/7 Polish Sign Language (PJM) translation, legal assistance for minors, support for people with disabilities, seniors, and victims of violence.**
- **Creating safe spaces for children and shelters for women experiencing violence, including psychological care and adaptation support.**
- **Supporting education through assistance for intercultural assistants and teachers working with refugee children.**
- **Providing financial assistance for the purchase of food, medicine, and basic supplies.**
- **Operating vocational integration centers in Poznań and Katowice, offering language courses, legal assistance, job placement, and other forms of support.**
- **Providing reliable information and legal assistance through partnerships, including the United for Ukraine platform and the global Signpost program; the "Know Your Rights" campaign raises awareness of workers' rights.**

Who it suits

Families, single women, survivors of violence, young people adjusting to new schools.

4. Fundacja Ocalenie – Psychological Support

Website: <https://ocalenie.org.pl>

Cities: Warsaw

In addition to general integration services, Ocalenie provides targeted mental-health support.

What they offer

- **Psychological, psychiatric, and psychotherapeutic support for adults and children, including those with trauma experiences.**
- Assistance with everyday matters, including contacting government offices, finding housing, enrolling children in educational institutions, and completing applications and preparing documents.
- Interpreter assistance during contacts with government offices, schools, and medical facilities.
- Assistance with CV preparation and job searches.
- Legal consultations on residence and work legalization, refugee proceedings, consular matters, obtaining social benefits, and matters related to civil, labor, and criminal law.
- Free Polish language courses for adults.
- Emergency support including accommodation, meals, clothing, and medications.
- Integration and cultural events organized for Polish and foreign residents of Warsaw.

Why it matters

Ocalenie works closely with social workers, housing officers and legal teams, which allows holistic support.

B. Mental-health support for children and young people

Children often struggle with school transitions, language barriers and separation from familiar environments. Several organisations focus specifically on their wellbeing.

1. PCPM – Support for children in schools

Website: <https://pcpm.org.pl/en/poland>

What they offer

- Providing psychological care at the PCPM Education Center, where students have access to a psychologist and, if necessary, a speech therapist.
- Support in adapting to the Polish education and healthcare system, including assistance with procedures and referrals to appropriate specialists.

- Psychological support in integration projects, including supportive conversations, consultations, and crisis intervention for refugee families.
- Involving children, adolescents, and adults in psychosocial support structures, such as counseling, community care, and life-situation stabilization activities, which contributes to improved mental well-being.

2. UNICEF-supported programmes (varies by city)

Activities include

- Ensuring access to education – support for schools, creating additional spaces, educational materials, and remedial classes.
- Psychological and psychosocial support – psychological support for children and caregivers, interventions, and well-being activities.
- Child protection – anti-violence measures, threat reporting systems, and support for safe internet use.
- Health support – assistance with access to basic healthcare, health and hygiene programs.
- Integration support – initiatives facilitating children and youth's adaptation to life and education in Poland.

4. Community Center

Community Center

– a public service center, usually operated on a volunteer basis, supporting the local community in raising children and youth. You can find community centers on the websites of individual cities, e.g.,

<https://www.swietlica.szczecin>

C. Crisis support and emergency assistance

For refugees facing severe stress, domestic violence, homelessness, or sudden trauma, specialist crisis services are available.

1. Niebieska Linia (Blue Line) – National crisis helpline

Website: <https://www.niebieskalinia.org>

Phone: 800 120 002 (free)

Supports people experiencing:

- Domestic violence
- Emotional crisis
- Fear, stress or urgent safety concerns

Interpretation is not always available, but social workers can still help you find local support.

2. Local Family Support Centres (Centrum Pomocy Rodzinie – CPR), example:

<https://cus.szczecin.eu/nasze-dzialy/rejonowy-osrodek-pomocy-rodzinie-srodmiescie/>

They provide:

- Social workers
- Crisis intervention
- Access to psychologists in the public system
- Emergency housing support

3. Municipal Crisis Intervention Centres (Ośrodek Interwencji Kryzysowej – OIK)

Available in most cities, e.g. <https://cus.szczecin.eu/projekty/regionalne-centrum-kryzysowe-w-szczecinie/>

Services

- Immediate psychological support
- Walk-in appointments
- Help for survivors of violence
- Mediation in family crises
- Referral to shelters or safe accommodation

D. Community-based wellbeing activities

These activities are not therapy, but they help reduce loneliness, build routine and improve emotional resilience.

1. Conversation groups

Provided by:

- Ukrainian House
- Multicultural Centres
- Local libraries
- Ocalenie Foundation events

Helpful for confidence-building and relieving social isolation.

2. Women's groups and parenting circles

Run by:

- HIAS
- Polskie Forum Migracyjne
- Multicultural Centres
- Community churches or cultural groups

These offer safe spaces to talk, learn skills and share experiences.

3. Art, sport and creative programmes

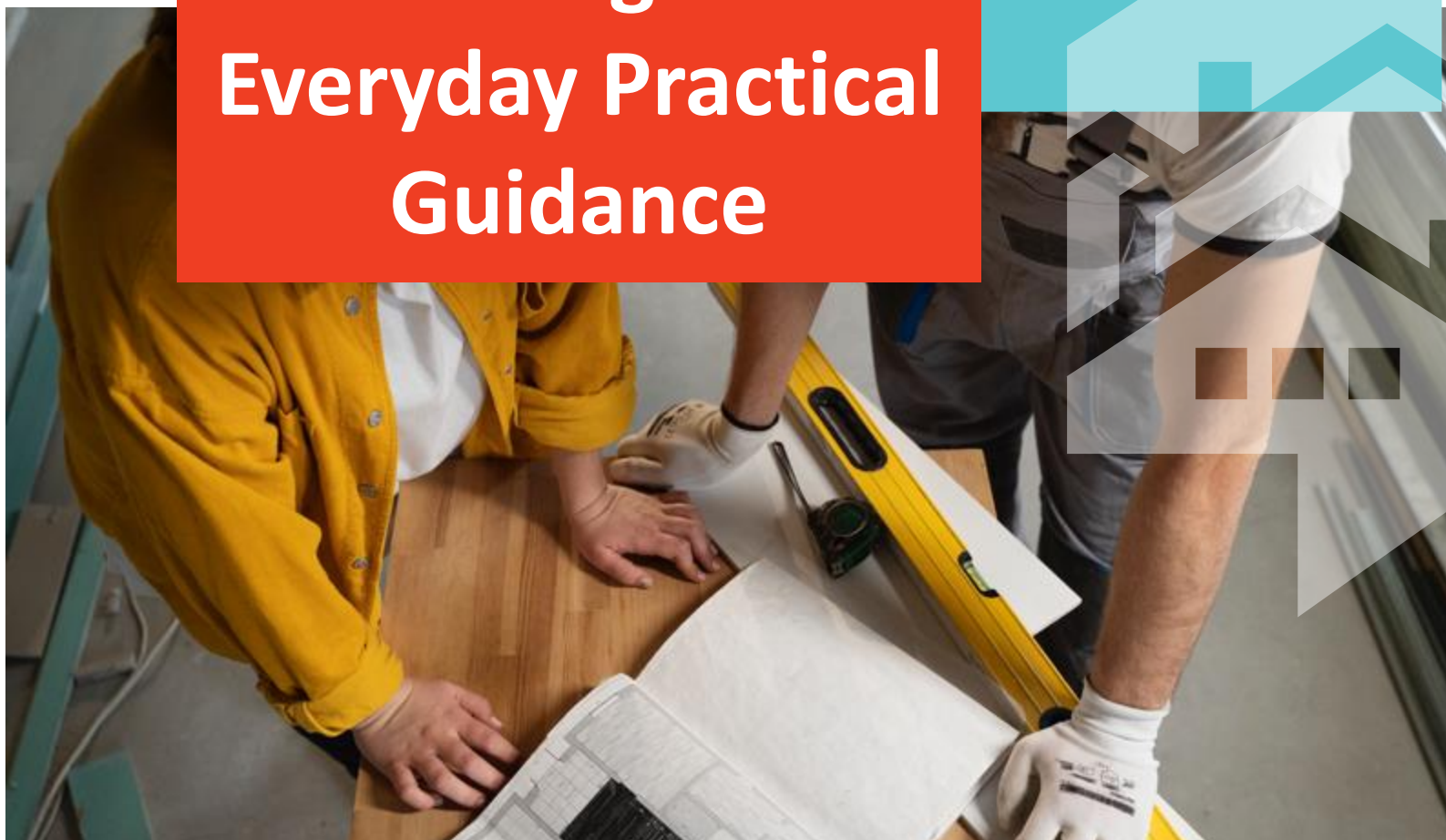
Common examples:

- Photography and art workshops in Multicultural Centres
- Yoga and walking groups in public parks
- Community cooking classes
- Music and storytelling workshops

These are particularly effective for people who find traditional therapy uncomfortable or unfamiliar.

04

Housing and Everyday Practical Guidance



| Housing and Everyday Practical Guidance

Finding stable housing and managing daily tasks are often the biggest challenges for refugees in Poland. The systems can feel complicated, the rules vary between cities, and landlords may be strict with documents. This section explains **where to get help, how to avoid common problems, and how to manage everyday essentials such as healthcare, transport, banks and shopping.**

Housing Support

Housing in Poland is mostly private rental. There is limited social housing, so most refugees rely on the open market. Several NGOs and city offices provide guidance or direct support.

1. Fundacja Ocalenie (The Ocalenie Foundation)

Website: <https://ocalenie.org.pl>

Cities: Warsaw, Łódź, Łomża

Ocalenie is known for strong, practical housing help.

What they offer

- Help searching for affordable rentals
- Mediation with landlords
- Assistance in signing rental agreements
- A long-term programme that supports refugees in keeping stable housing
- Crisis help for people at risk of homelessness
- Advice on rights and responsibilities when renting a flat

Why it's useful

Their team understands the rental market well and can support people who lack credit history or Polish guarantors.

2. PCPM – Housing Subsidies (when funded)

Website: <https://pcpm.org.pl>

Cities: Warsaw, Lublin, Rzeszów, Kraków

PCPM has run temporary programmes that help refugees pay rent or move into private flats. Availability changes depending on funding, but they often provide:

- Rent subsidies
- Support finding flats
- Help communicating with landlords
- Advice on budgeting

It is worth checking their website or social media for current programmes.

3. Local Municipal Social Welfare Centres (MOPS / MOPR)

Search: “MOPS + your city” or “MOPR + your city”

These centres manage:

- Emergency accommodation
- Applications for social support
- Referrals to crisis shelters or safe accommodation
- One-off financial support for people in severe need

They do not usually find rental housing, but they can support families in crisis.

4. Multicultural Centres (Centrum Wielokulturowe)

Examples:

- Warsaw: <https://cw.org.pl>
- Kraków: <https://open.krakow.pl>
- Gdańsk: <https://www.gdansk.pl/wielokulturowe>
- Wrocław: <https://www.wroclaw.pl/wielokulturowy>

These centres often maintain:

- Local housing noticeboards
- Lists of landlords open to renting to foreigners
- Practical workshops on renting laws and tenants’ rights
- Interpretation help for rental contracts

5. Online platforms and safe searching tips

Popular rental sites in Poland

- <https://www.olx.pl>
- <https://www.otodom.pl>
- <https://www.morizon.pl>

Important guidance to avoid scams

- Never send money before seeing the apartment
- Avoid offers with extremely low prices
- Always ask for a written rental agreement
- Ask whether utilities (bills) are included
- Check whether the deposit (kaucja) is refundable

If unsure, ask an NGO to check the agreement before signing.

Understanding Rental Agreements in Poland

A standard rental agreement (umowa najmu) should include:

- Full names and ID numbers of landlord and tenant
- Address of the flat
- Monthly rent and payment date
- Deposit amount (usually 1–2 months’ rent)
- Who pays for electricity, gas, internet and building fees
- Rules for ending the contract
- Permission or rules about registering your address (zameldowanie)

Zameldowanie

This is a registration of your living address.

It does not affect your legal status, but it helps with:

- Schools
- Public healthcare
- Some benefits

The landlord must allow it in writing if you need it.

Everyday Practical Guidance

1. Healthcare

Registering with a GP (family doctor)

Everyone living in Poland is entitled to have a **family doctor (lekarz rodzinny)** through the NFZ (National Health Fund).

Steps:

1. Choose a clinic near your home.
2. Ask for a “deklaracja wyboru lekarza rodzinnego”.
3. Bring your ID and PESEL if you have one.

Emergency care

- Emergency number: **112**
- Hospital emergency departments: **SOR (Szpitalny Oddział Ratunkowy)**

Dental care

NFZ covers basic dental services, but many people use private dentists.

Language support

NGOs like IOM, Ocalenie and HIAS can help arrange interpreting.

2. Public Transport

Each city has its own system. Most offer **discounts for students and sometimes for refugees** depending on status.

Examples of city transport websites:

- Warszawa: <https://www.wtp.waw.pl>
- Szczecin: <https://www.zditm.szczecin.pl/pl>
- Kraków: <https://ztp.krakow.pl>
- Wrocław: <https://www.wroclaw.pl/komunikacja>
- Gdańsk: <https://ztm.gda.pl>

Buying a monthly pass is cheaper than single tickets, and most cities offer travel cards (karta miejska).

3. Opening a Bank Account

Banks commonly used by foreigners:

- **Santander Bank Polska** – <https://www.santander.pl>
- **mBank** – <https://www.mbank.pl>
- **PKO BP** – <https://www.pkobp.pl>
- **ING Bank Śląski** – <https://www.ing.pl>

Most banks accept:

- Passport
- Residence card (if available)
- PESEL (helpful but not always required)

Online banking

Most accounts include mobile apps. They are usually available in English.

4. Mobile Phones and Internet

Popular mobile providers:

- **Orange** – <https://orange.pl>

- **Plus** – <https://plus.pl>
- **T-Mobile** – <https://www.t-mobile.pl>
- **Play** – <https://play.pl>

Prepaid SIM cards are easy to buy in kiosks and supermarkets.

5. Food, Shopping and Essentials

Affordable supermarkets

- **Biedronka**
- **Lidl**
- **Auchan**
- **Kaufland**
- **Carrefour**

Second-hand clothing and furniture

- **Vinted** (mobile app)
- **OLX** – <https://www.olx.pl>
- Local second-hand shops (lumpeks)

Food banks

- **Banki Żywności** – <https://bankizywnosci.pl>
Many NGOs distribute free food parcels for families in need.

6. Education and Schools

If you have children, they can attend Polish public schools for free.

How to enrol

1. Visit your local school with your child's passport and documents you have.
2. The school will place your child in an appropriate class.
3. If the child does not speak Polish, they may receive extra lessons.

Help available

- PCPM supports integration in schools.
- Polskie Forum Migracyjne offers workshops for parents.
- Multicultural Centres often run tutoring sessions.

7. Everyday administration (offices and official tasks)

Key offices

- **PESEL and registration:** Urząd Gminy / Urząd Dzielnicy
- **Work rights, employment, unemployment registration:** Powiatowy Urząd Pracy
- **Social welfare:** MOPS / MOPR

Getting help with forms

NGOs can assist with:

- Writing official letters
- Filling in online forms (ePUAP)
- Understanding deadlines
- Making appointments

Useful sites:

- **ePUAP (public services):** <https://www.gov.pl>
- **Tax information:** <https://podatki.gov.pl>
- **ZUS (social insurance):** <https://www.zus.pl>

Everyday life tips from common refugee experiences

- Always keep copies of your contracts, letters and receipts.

- Ask an NGO to check any document you do not understand.
- If you feel lost or overwhelmed, contact a support organisation early — waiting can make things harder.
- Try joining community events (conversation clubs, cultural evenings) — these often lead to practical support and friendships.
- Learn basic Polish phrases, even if you plan to take classes later. Simple greetings and requests make everyday life easier.