

Residential address

Everyone must have a residential address in order to receive the necessary administrative documents to have access to, for instance, the health insurance fund, local authorities, schooling and child benefits.

Usually, this is the address of the place where the person in question mainly resides. The address for service is listed in the municipal population register.

Some people live in Belgium but have no official place of residence, for example ship or caravan dwellers and homeless people. They are free to choose an address for service, irrespective of their actual place of residence. This address is indicated as their reference address in the municipal population register.

Reference address

This reference address shall be considered as the official address and enables official authorities to get in touch with citizens.

A reference address makes it possible to be in compliance with administration and to receive correspondence. Therefore, it is not only in the interest of the person concerned, but also in the interest of third parties including public services, creditors or bailiffs.

The reference address also enables the person concerned to apply for social benefits that require legal registration such as unemployment, child or sickness benefits.

Theoretically, people who reside in Belgium without an official place of residence, choose a reference address with another natural person. The latter person must give their consent and must have their principal residence at that address.

However, homeless people can use the address of the Public Centre for Social Welfare (PCSW, in Dutch: OCMW) as their reference address. In order to do so, they must meet the following conditions:

- ⊕ being homeless;
- ⊕ not registered in the population register;
- ⊕ insufficient resources to be able to afford accommodation;
- ⊕ appealing to the OCMW for assistance.



Homeless people who do find a permanent place of residence after a certain period of time are, under certain conditions, entitled to a one-off installation premium and a monthly rent subsidy.



Website www.vlaanderen.be, municipal and provincial services (*in Dutch*).
[Agentschap Integratie & Inburgering \(in Dutch\)](#)
[PPS Social Integration \(in Dutch\)](#)