



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Says More Than 20,000 Irish Emigrants Returning Home To Settle Each Year

Brennan Launches Detailed New Information Guide In New York For Returning Emigrants

The Minister for Social Affairs, Séamus Brennan T.D., disclosed today that Ireland's continuing economic success is attracting an average of 20,000 Irish people back to settle in their native country from abroad every year.

Minister Brennan said that according to the latest statistics almost 132,000 Irish people have returned to live in Ireland since 2001. For example, between 2002 and 2004, more than 61,000 Irish emigrants returned from locations around the world.

The Minister was speaking in the Emerald Isle Immigration Centre in New York when officially launching the comprehensive new edition of the "***Returning to Ireland***" guide published by Emigrant Advice. Latest statistics show that almost 14,000 immigrants came to Ireland from the US since 2000, with the majority being returning emigrants.

The guide includes information covering a wide range of topics such as social welfare, health, pensions, taxation, education and accommodation.

The information is presented in a way that is tailored to the needs of targeted groups of people, for instance, the elderly coming home to retire, single people returning to Ireland to find work, and the particular needs of families hoping to start a new life in Ireland.



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Emigrant Advice, a project of Crosscare, the Dublin Diocese Social Care Agency, has been working with migrants in vulnerable situations since 1987. In recent years, clients include intending emigrants, immigrants, returnees and intending returnees.

Minister Brennan said: "Many Irish emigrants naturally cherish a deep aspiration to return to the land of their birth to work or retire. However, the Ireland of today is often a very different country to the one they left, maybe decades ago. Ireland is now an attractive employment location, offering new opportunities and the prospect of a good quality of life for both returning emigrants and for others from all corners of the globe. Before our emigrants finally decide if this aspiration to return to Ireland is the right option for them they need to be in a position to make informed decisions. To do this it is essential that they have available to them good quality up-to-date information covering a wide range of topics such as social welfare, health, pensions, taxation, education and of course accommodation. It is important that people realise there are costs as well as benefits involved in deciding to come back to Ireland."

Minister Brennan said he was also acutely aware of the major concerns there are in New York and other areas of the US over the number of undocumented Irish and the problems they are currently encountering.

"While it is difficult to estimate the numbers of undocumented Irish people, the essential problem of the undocumented population is not its size but rather the burden of stress which their uncertain status causes them and their families in Ireland. I can assure all involved that this issue has the highest priority for the Irish Government and is also being constantly pursued at the highest diplomatic levels", Minister Brennan said.

The Minister said the comprehensive Guide would help smooth the pathway to a successful return to Ireland for our many returning emigrants and the others who decide to come to live in Ireland. The new edition is presented in a folder format that is tailored to the needs of targeted groups of people.

Another advantage of the innovative new format is to allow specific information to be easily up-dated while the general narrative can remain unchanged, an example being increases in Social Welfare benefits announced in the Budget.



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Brennan said the role of the Department of Social Affairs in supporting emigrant groups has been built around providing good quality, clear and comprehensive information to those who need it through supporting the various non-statutory agencies involved in this work. In this way the Department is delighted to continue to fund Emigrant Advice to produce such a user friendly publication.

Press Release ENDS