

WELCOME TO THE CIVILIAN SERVICE

05/2013

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CIVILIAN SERVICE

The civilian service is meant for those conscripts for whom conscientious objections rule out regular military service. The civilian service is managed by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and is regulated by the Civilian Service Act (*Siviilipalveluslaki*). Civilian servicemen are generally entitled to the same benefits and discounts (in sports facilities, museums for example) as those carrying out the military service.

The civilian service starts with a training period at the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre in Eastern Uusimaa. Following this training period the rest of the civilian service is carried out doing work of a civilian character that is beneficial to society in a place of the serviceman's own choosing. The point in time at which the civilian service is carried out can also be influenced.

Tickets from the serviceman's place of residence to the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre are generally sent out some 2-3 weeks prior to the start of the training period. If you haven't received any tickets or they need to be changed, please contact us at least a week before the training period starts so there's time to get the new tickets to you by mail. Do also hold on to any local commuter tickets you purchase during the trip for possible reimbursement.

LENGTH OF THE CIVILIAN SERVICE

The length of the civilian service is 347 days. Any previously completed days from the training period or at a civilian service position are deducted from this number. In case of transfer from military service, days are deducted using coefficients that depend on the designated length of your military service. If you were designated a 165-day military service length, the co-efficient is 2,10. If you were designated a 255-day military service length, the co-efficient is 1,36. If you were designated the full 347-day military service length, which is also the length of the civilian service, the co-efficient is 1,00.

You can check the length of your service as well as track the size of the daily allowance using the civilian service length calculator (only in Finnish, unfortunately) available on our website: www.sivarikeskus.fi.

Example: military service was carried out for 8 days, and a 165-day military service length was designated. $8 \times 2,10 = 16,80$, so the civilian service is shortened by 17 days. $347 - 17 = 330$ days.

BEFORE THE CIVILIAN SERVICE

FINDING A CIVILIAN SERVICE POSITION

It's generally worth starting to look for a civilian service position well before the beginning of the training period. The earlier you're active, the more likely it is that you'll get a position that you like and find interesting. The civilian service can't be carried out in a place that you've worked for up to half a year before the beginning of the training period, and the civilian service also isn't allowed to further your own studies directly.

The website of the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre has a constantly updated list of vacant service positions, as well as a directory of all already accepted places where the civilian service can be carried out. You can also look elsewhere for a place to carry out the service, but if said location hasn't previously been accepted as a place where the civilian service can be carried out it has to apply to become one well before you're planning to begin your service there. Almost any state or municipal entity, religious community or non-profit foundation or society will do as a civilian service position. The civilian service can't be carried out for a profit-seeking company, neither for a political party or labour union. Some common civilian service positions are daycare centres, libraries, universities, nursing homes, ministries, congregations, cultural centres, schools, hospitals and some organisations.

In case you're asked to come to an interview outside of your place of residence and use public transport: save the receipts. One return trip to an interview at a civilian service position is provided for and the travel costs will be reimbursed during the training period. Also remember to ask for some sort of document proving you were there, it has to be shown when presenting the travel receipts. You can also apply for permission and tickets for an interview during the training period.

In case you get a civilian service position you should fill out the civilian service contract (*sitoumuslomake*) on-site and return it to the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre either by mail, fax or bringing it to the training period and giving it directly to your own group instructor.

NEED FOR A DEFERMENT OF SERVICE?

You must begin your service on the day ordered. Lack of tickets, a deferment application or complaint currently being handled or any similar reason is not a ground for not appearing. Deferment can be granted for studies, health-related reasons, sorting out financial matters or other personal reasons (see the Civilian Service Act *Siviilipalveluslaki* §26 and §31). Deferment must be applied for in good time, preferably four full weeks prior to the start of the training period at the latest. A freely formulated deferment application including your name, date of birth, personal details and an address is sent to the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre, and with it the necessary documents supporting a need for deferment:

- deferment due to studies: an extract from the student register or proof of having accepted an offer to study
- deferment for reasons related to health: a B-attestation written by a doctor
- deferment due to pressing financial reasons: proof of loans or debts, a plan of payment and a salary certificate or a copy of a contract of employment.

You can also apply for deferment during the civilian service for the same reasons. In case you're unsure of your capability to carry out the service you can discuss the possible need for deferment with a doctor during the training period.

TRANSFERRING TO MILITARY SERVICE

In case you don't wish to carry out your national service in the civilian service but would rather do military service a written application must be sent to the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre. The application is freely formulated and must be sent well in time before the beginning of the training period, after which the Educational Centre will make a decision. In case of a positive decision the applicant is freed from the civilian service and all documents transferred to the military district office, who will determine a date for beginning military service. Please note that you can no longer transfer to military service after beginning the training period of the civilian service.

REFUSING TO CARRY OUT THE CIVILIAN SERVICE

A written refusal to carry out the civilian service must be sent to the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre. The Educational Centre will report the incident to the police, after which the matter is transferred to a public prosecutor. In accordance with §74 of the Civilian Service Act (*Siviilipalveluslaki*) anyone refusing to carry out the civilian service is imprisoned for a time that corresponds to half the time left of his civilian service.

THE TRAINING PERIOD

LAPINJÄRVI? WHAT'S THAT?

The Lapinjärvi Educational Centre has been the nationwide civilian service centre since 1998. The Centre arranges the four-week training period and attends to the administration of the civilian service together with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

Lapinjärvi is located in Eastern Uusimaa region right next to trunk road 6 some 95km east of Helsinki, between Porvoo and Kouvola. The bilingual municipality has about 3 000 inhabitants. The Educational Centre itself is located on a beautiful small peninsula by a lake, on the Sjökökulla estate area, relatively close to the Lapinjärvi village centre. In the 1930s an alcoholist institution was built on the estate with multiple buildings, after which among other things a refugee processing centre existed on the premises before the Educational Centre began its operations.

MAP OF THE LAPINJÄRVI EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

- 1 – House A (reception, lodging)
- 2 – House B (health clinic)
- 3 – House C (dining hall)
- 4 – Lampola
- 5 – Sikala
- 6 – The Canteen (Kanttiini)
- 7 – Pakkaamo
- 8 – Health clinic
- 9 – Kartano (administration)
- 10 – Gym
- 11 – Football field
- 12 – Sauna and laundry
- 13 – Campfire site
- 14 – Konehalli

- 15 – Putkinotko
- 16 – Navetta
- 17 – Lastentalo
- 18 – Residential buildings

HOW TO GET HERE?

Buses are the most convenient way to get to Lapinjärvi and the Educational Centre. Helsinki, Kouvola, Porvoo and Lappeenranta all have direct bus connections to Lapinjärvi. The bus leaving Helsinki at 9:00 am on the day the training period begins comes directly to the Educational Centre. If you're coming from the direction of Kouvola it's worth taking the bus leaving at 10:25, it stops about a kilometer from the Educational Centre. All other buses stop only at the Teboil service station, from where it's about a 2.5km walk to the Educational Centre itself.

It's not possible to get to Lapinjärvi by **train**. The closest railway stations are located in Kouvola and Helsinki. In Kouvola the railway and bus stations are right next to each other, so it's easy to change from train to bus or vice versa. In Helsinki it's a 5-10 minute walk from the Central Railway Station to the Kamppi bus terminus.

As the timetables change frequently it's worth checking beforehand how and at what time you can get from your place of residence to Lapinjärvi. You'll find the timetables at www.matkahuolto.fi (buses) and www.vr.fi (trains).

HOW TO GET FROM HELSINKI'S CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION TO THE KAMPPI BUS TERMINUS

Walk towards Mannerheimintie. Cross it, and you're at Lasipalatsi. Behind Lasipalatsi there's a semi-open space, behind of which is Kamppi (a large, modern shopping centre complex). The direct entrance to the bus terminus is at the lower right, from which an escalator leads to the basement of the shopping centre and terminus. The buses to Lapinjärvi mostly leave from platform 4. Remember: it's better to ask the way than to get lost!

If you're arriving by **car** from the direction of either Kouvola or Helsinki you'll want to turn where there's a Neste Oil petrol station and signs towards Porlammi (road 1771). Right after turning there's a black sign to the right pointing towards the Educational Centre (*Lapinjärven koulutuskeskus – Lappträsk utbildningscentral*, the road is called *Latokartanontie*).

If you're coming from the north it's worth setting course for Lahti. South of Lahti, at the connection to trunk road 4 there leaves road 167 towards Orimattila. The road is winding and there are a lot of turns, so it's worth following the signs towards Myrskylä, Porlammi and Lapinjärvi closely. Coming from Porlammi to Lapinjärvi (road 1771) the road to the Educational Centre (*Latokartanontie*) turns left after a reasonably large industrial facility. The previously mentioned Neste Oil petrol station is also visible ahead on the left side of the road. Do acquire better driving instructions for example from <http://maps.google.com/>.

Fuel costs for using a car to get to the Educational Centre are as a rule not reimbursed. If no public transport is available at all at your place of residence, reasonable fuel costs will be covered to the closest public transport station.

The parking spots are in front of Sikala and Lamppola, check the map of the Educational Centre.

Domestic travels by plane are only reimbursed for those living in Kuusamo, Ivalo or Kittilä. There are a few direct buses from the Helsinki-Vantaa airport to Lapinjärvi, although most of the time it'll be necessary to first travel by bus to the Helsinki city centre and then on from there. Travelling by plane domestically is only possible if the total cost of the air and bus fares are the cheapest alternative available to the state.

If your travel arrangements are especially difficult, it's possible to arrive at the Educational Centre already on the day prior to the start of the training period, usually a Sunday. Do note that the dining hall is closed on weekends!

THE PROGRAMME FOR THE FIRST DAY OF THE TRAINING PERIOD:

You have to arrive by noon! Sign in in the reception in house A. Please take out a valid ID and passport photograph already while queuing to speed up the process. In the reception you'll be registered as having begun your civilian service and will be given a civilian service certificate and a key to your room.

The welcome info is held in Sikala from 13:00-16:00. It's worth going to lunch prior to this in the dining hall.

NOTE: If you have second thoughts at the last minute and would rather carry out the military service: don't sign in in the reception but go straight to the administration (*Kartano* building, second floor). If you sign in first you're considered to have begun your civilian service and can no longer transfer to military service.

THE TRAINING

“I didn't expect the training period to be horrible in any way, but was surprised by how interesting it was. We discussed a lot during the lectures. ... I learned new things from a whole different perspective. In its entirety the training period was one of the best months of my life, especially considering that it's compulsory. I warmly recommend the civilian service to all my friends, in particular because of my experiences of the training period.”

GENERAL INFORMATION

The four-week training period at the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre is meant to support general citizenship skills, introduce the servicemen to amongst other things civil defence and rescue as well as to make carrying the rest of the civilian service out easier. The training period strives to be generally helpful and it's possible to gain skills and knowledge that'll come in handy later on in life and the workforce. In addition to lectures we discuss, do group projects, excursions and so forth.

Attending the programmes of the training period in accordance with the given schedule is compulsory for civilian servicemen. Your presence is checked at least twice a day. The lectures are held from 8:45-10:00, 10:15-11:45, 12:45-14:15, 14:30-16:00 and on average once a week there's an evening lecture from 17:00-19:00. On Fridays lectures end at 11:00.

On the first day of the training period you'll be assigned (with some exceptions) to one of four groups for the duration of the training period. In general it's possible to choose for oneself which group to join. They are:

- Protecting the Environmental and Cultural Heritage (YKS)
- Citizenship Skills (KAVA)
- Fire, Rescue and Civil Defence (PP)
- Prevention of Violence (VÄKE)

Lectures universal for all, regardless of the chosen group, are among others general information for the civilian servicemen, first aid 1, physical exercise, a history of conscientious objection, violence within families/friends and equality. The lectures are held in Sikala, Lampola, Kanttiini (the canteen), the computer class, Pakkaamo, Midgård and (weather permitting) outside. Most of the time is spent with the chosen group but some of the universal lectures are held to multiple groups simultaneously.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE (YKS)

The aim of this group is to train the servicemen in protecting cultural heritage as well as to assist in various tasks in case of environmental disasters. In addition to this various environmental problems and their solutions are discussed.

The interaction of humans and nature, especially with regard to problems caused by humans and how they can be solved are examined. A central point of discussion are actions taken by the individual, both as causes and solutions to environmental issues. Whether permitting you'll also get a chance to get acquainted with and learn about the surrounding nature.

We'll also be examining ways to influence society from multiple angles – from voting and political parties through to various organisations and all the way to demonstrations, civil disobedience and other types of activism.

You'll also learn the basics of cleaning up after an oil spill through both theory and practical exercises. Among other things we'll discuss the necessary equipment, how to deal with soiled birds as well as organising the clean-up. Occasionally it's also possible to visit the Porvoo Rescue Department and get acquainted with their equipment for rescuing birds caught in a spill. The Civilian Service Centre has the right to issue the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) voluntary oil spill response certificate for those that have completed the course.

The lectures on protecting the cultural heritage will introduce you to our common global cultural heritage, UNESCO world heritage sites at home and abroad, as well as the local culture of Lapinjärvi. The aim is not only to help recognise and value cultural heritage, but also to understand the importance of protecting it in various crisis situations.

CITIZENSHIP SKILLS (KAVA)

The goal of the citizenship skills group (KAVA) is to encourage the civilian servicemen to participate and play an active role as citizens. During the lectures we'll compare and contrast individual values to those of Finnish society as well as international reality.

When discussing political participation, citizen activism and consumer behaviour the focus is on examining problems in society important to yourself as well as finding solutions to them and contemplating your own preparedness to act. Active citizenship is approached from multiple angles – from voting and party political activism through organisations and all the way to demonstrations, civil disobedience and similar forms of activism. The interaction of humans and nature, especially with regard to problems caused by humans and how they can be solved are examined during the lectures on protecting the environment.

The international community is studied among other things from the perspective of human rights and the point-of-view of developing countries. During the lectures on non-violence, multiple pioneers in the field are introduced, among others Tolstoy and Gandhi. The lecture series on the anatomy of conflicts will examine the causes, effects, rules, possibilities of prevention and solutions to armed conflicts.

Those in the citizenship skills group will also have teaching that turns the gaze inward, where an understanding of oneself takes centre stage. The expectations of being a man are also mapped and considered during the *myths of manhood*-lectures. The life skills lectures consider ways to having a healthy self-esteem, among other things.

FIRE, RESCUE AND CIVIL DEFENCE (PP)

The aim of the fire, rescue and civil defence group (PP) is to train the civilian servicemen to assist in various tasks related to civil defence and rescue as well as to increase the readiness to pre-emptively reduce accidents. After the training the serviceman will understand the risks related to different situations, be able to prepare for them in advance and not panic in case of an accident taking place.

During the training period those in this group will carry out the security officer training course, and receive an official certificate of having done so. Once said certificate is received, it's possible to apply for a security officer card from the police, valid for five years. Security officers are needed for example in public gatherings, concerts and the like. Those doing the security officer training course will also get quite extensive knowledge of how a small (or bigger) public event is organised in a safe manner.

Another aim of the fire, rescue and civil defence training is to increase the participants' risk-assessment skills and knowledge of the various aspects of fire safety. The acquired skills will also be tested in practice through fire extinguishing exercises, and the participants will also get to know the voluntary rescue service (VAPEPA).

Quite often courses in for example emergency first aid or an exercise in locating a missing person are organised during the training period.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE (VÄKE)

The prevention of violence group strives to train the civilian servicemen to prevent violent behaviour by identifying the birth mechanisms of aggression, improving one's own and others' psychological well-being as well as human interaction

The focus is on practicing violence-preventing emotional and interactive skills as well as the creation and acknowledgement of one's self-esteem. The *myths of manhood*-lectures will be held from the perspective of upbringing, sexuality, relationships and being a father.

During the training period the servicemen will study the phenomenon of violence and its many forms, such as bullying, racism, corporal violence, violence within relationships and sexual harassment. The goal is to get to know various societal courses of action for preventing violence such as peer mediation and anti-bullying programmes in school.

The prevention of violence group gives the serviceman the skills necessary to act as an assistant to professionals especially in fields related to upbringing and social work; for example in daycare centres, schools and youth outreach work.

ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE

All lectures and programmes during the training period are compulsory unless otherwise stated. You're free to leave the area at other times, as long as you're back when the next lecture begins. Although accommodation is provided, those who live nearby can spend their nights at home if they so wish. All weekends are free. The bus to Helsinki leaves on Friday from the Educational Centre itself, those travelling in the direction of Kouvola have to walk to the Teboil petrol station. The necessary public transport tickets are ordered from the reception at the beginning of the week.

A doctor's or nurse's certificate must be presented for every day you've been absent on sick leave. Those that already have a civilian service position, as a rule, have leave on the Mondays of the second and fourth weeks of the training period (although this is subject to change in case holidays coincide with the training period). For those without a civilian service position these days are reserved for looking for one from the centre, and help with creating a CV etc. is provided.

Except for aforementioned Mondays, days off are generally not granted during the training period.

HEALTH CARE

The health clinic is located on the first floor of building B, the entrance being from the direction of building C. It's staffed by two nurses and a doctor.

During the first three weeks of the training periods a compulsory health check, comprising of first a visit to a nurse followed by a later appointment with a doctor, is carried out on all servicemen; the purpose being to establish whether they're fit for service. You should bring your national health insurance card (KELA-card), vaccination records, prescriptions for possible medications currently being taken, a record of vaccinations as well as any other documents relating to your health. If you lack a record of vaccinations contact your local healthcare centre or school health care. If necessary, a vaccination against diphtheria and tetanus (Tetanus-D shot) is given during the health check.

The clinic is open on weekdays from 08:00-09:00 and 12:00-12:30, other times require a reservation. The times when the doctor is present vary. Medication for basic illnesses, asthma for instance, is provided free of charge during the training period. Sick leave is granted when necessary.

In case you fall ill while on leave or during the weekend you should be in touch with your municipal health care centre. Remember to inform the lecturer with responsibility for your group of having fallen ill and the duration of any possible sick leave as soon as possible. Any expenses the illness and its treatment may have caused will be reimbursed; bring all receipts and prescriptions directly to the clinic together with your bank account number.

If necessary the Educational Centre's doctor can pen a referral to a specialist at a municipal hospital.

The health clinic should also be contacted when applying for deferment of or exemption from service on health grounds (E- or C-classification). The records of those under 25 years of age who are exempted or get a deferment are forwarded to the serviceman's home municipality's youth outreach programme.

The educational centre also has a welfare officer, who can be contacted in all kinds of problematic situations, whether they be financial or ones concerning social relations etc. Both the nurses and the curator co-operate with the country-wide *Time Out*-service, through which the serviceman can get help with difficult issues from experts in his own municipality.

TIME OFF

“There was no lack of things to do, so the free time passed quickly.”

ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD

“The arrangements worked quite well in all ways. The insulation around the windows in the rooms did suck though!”

All civilian servicemen live in rooms of 2-12 people during the training period. The doors can be locked. In case you want to keep your locker locked, remember to bring a padlock with you.

The shower facilities and WC:s are common, and can be found on every floor of the building. If you suffer from allergies there are allergy rooms available, provided you have a medical certificate. There are separate rooms, WC:s and shower facilities for females.

There's a large, wood-heated sauna that's yours to use on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:00-21:30.

Bed linens are provided by the Educational Centre. Other necessities have to be brought by oneself. A “light” silence starts at 22:00, and from 23:00-06:00 there has to be complete silence, no showering for example at this time, to allow those who wish to do so to sleep undisturbed.

There are common TV-rooms, as well as a kitchen with a microwave, stove and refrigerator. All servicemen take part in the cleaning of the sleeping quarters and common areas weekly.

Smoking areas are found outside the buildings. For fire safety reasons smoking on the balconies is strictly forbidden.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner and an evening snack are served on weekdays. There are always meat, vegetarian, vegan and lactose-free alternatives. We will also attempt to cater for other diets, as long as it doesn't result in excessive expenses and extra work. Very rare diets can only be accommodated if a less than three months old medical certificate stating the necessity of said diet is presented.

Meals:

Breakfast 07:00-08:30

Lunch 11:15-12:45

Dinner 16:00-17:00

Evening snack 19:00-20:00

THINGS TO DO

“Nowhere have I got this many new friends in such a short time!”

As the lectures usually end at 16:00, the evenings offer a nice amount of free time, that can be spent in numerous different ways.

THE CANTEEN

Next to Sikala there's the canteen, where time literally flies past with (new) friends. From the canteen you can buy (cash only) coffee, tea and various small snacks. There's also a library, ping-pong table, satellite TV, PlayStations and internet access. There are also many newspapers and magazines available, such as Hel singin Sanomat, Hufvudstadsbladet, Rumba, Inferno, Aku Ankka, Maailman kuvalehti, Image, Suomen Luonto, Tekniikan Maailma and Tiede.

Opening hours:

Monday-Thursday: 16:30-22:00

Friday (not always): 16:00-21:00

THE RECEPTION: ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE

The reception, located in building A, is open 24/7/365. From there, you can:

- order tickets for the weekends
- get painkillers when the need is dire
- borrow bicycles and row boats (helmets and lifejackets, too)
- return books you've borrowed from the Lapinjärvi municipal library
- borrow a guitar
- bring and pick up lost items
- get any personal mail addressed to you during the training period

INTERNET

You can pick up WI-FI passwords for your own computer from the IT-support office, located next to the reception. The wireless network is active Monday-Thursday from 16:00 to 23:00 and from 15:00 on Friday to 23:00 on Sunday.

There's a computer class in the cellar of building A, open Monday-Thursday from 11:30-13:00 and 16:30-22:00. The canteen also has Wi-Fi and a number of computers available.

LAPINJÄRVI VILLAGE CENTRE

The beautiful Lapinjärvi village centre has two food stores, a hardware store, a bank, a post office, a pizzeria, a library, and two churches. The village centre is located some 3.5km from the Educational Centre. The website of the Lapinjärvi municipality can be found at www.lapinjarvi.fi.

SPORT

You can use the gym of the Educational Centre free of charge. In the summer it's possible to play football, badminton, basketball and frisbeegolf. The adjacent lake offers swimming and rowing possibilities in the summer, and when winter comes there's a hole in the ice for those that feel like a refreshing dip in freezing waters. The paved and hilly roads and bike lanes surrounding the centre are good for skateboarding, rollerblading and cycling.

It's also possible to play floorball (during the school year) once a week in the sports hall of the Lapinjärvi municipality, transport and equipment is provided.

Some 3km from the Educational Centre there are athletics, grass and tennis fields, as well as a lit ski track (winter) or walking path (summer). There are nice jogging routes regardless of the season.

MUSIC

There's a cozy “music garage”, for lack of a better word, located under the dining hall. It's open Tuesday-Thursday from 16:00-21:00, and has all the basic ba nd instruments. You're also welcome to bring instruments of your own if you wish. There's also a piano in Sikala, and if you bring an i nstrument of your own we'll do ou r best to find you a location t o practice in.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

Do bring any games or sports equipment of your own with you – it's very possible that you'll find people with the same interests! D uring the four weeks you can also get starte d with a whole new sport or game.

If you find someone with a car willing to drive you you're free to explore the (admittedly sleepy) evening- and nightlife of the nearby towns. The beautiful and picturesque old city of Loviisa has a lovely old small-town feel, and it takes about half an hour to drive there. Porvoo, Kouvola and Kuusankoski all have a sligtly higher pace of (night)life, and it takes some 45 minutes to drive to all three. Lahti, a bit over an hour's drive away, already has a city-like feel.

TAKE WITH YOU

Pack enough that you'll survive at least a week in Lapinjärvi.

NECESSITIES:

- A valid ID
- Your national health insurance card (KELA-card)
- The document ordering you to begin your service
- A passport photograph for the civilian service ID
- The tickets you received
- The civilian service contract, if you already have a civilian service position
- A record of vaccinations
- Other health-related documents or medical certificates
- Your bank account number, for payment of the daily allowance

ALSO WORTH BRINGING:

- A padlock for your locker
- Personal hygiene articles
- A towel
- A sufficient amount of clothes
- Shower sandals
- Outdoor clothing
- Gym/fitness clothes
- Earplugs (for those sleeping lightly)
- Books, magazines

The whole of the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre grounds is an alcohol-free zone, and you're not allowed to be under the influence while carrying out the service.

It's **FORBIDDEN** to bring weapons, knives, pets, alcohol or drugs to the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre. Smoking is permitted only in the designated areas.

BENEFITS FOR CIVILIAN SERVICEMEN

SUBSISTENCE DURING THE CIVILIAN SERVICE

DAILY ALLOWANCE

Civilian servicemen are paid a daily allowance for the duration of the civilian service. The amount depends on how long the service man has been serving, and is at its highest toward the end of the civilian service. During the training period the daily allowance is paid by the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre, while your civilian service position pays it from the day you begin your work there. The daily allowance is paid retroactively every second week to your bank account; the civilian service positions may do this differently though. It's worth agreeing on the method and timetable of payment with the civilian service position at the very beginning.

Days Served	Daily Allowance
1-165 days	5.00€
166-255 days	8.35€
271-347 days	11.70€

Updated 01.02.2013. Check for possible changes on the website (only in Finnish, unfortunately) of the Civilian Service Centre, www.sivarikeskus.fi.

DINING AND FOOD ALLOWANCE

The civilian service position is responsible for providing meals during the civilian service. This covers not only workdays, but also days off and weekends that the serviceman spends at the accommodation assigned by the civilian service position. The meals provided for are breakfast, lunch, dinner and an evening snack.

Instead of arranging meals the civilian service position can choose to pay a food allowance to the serviceman, the amount depending on which meals are provided. In case no dining is provided at all, the food allowance is 13.50€/day. More information, as well as a chart displaying the amount of the food allowance depending on which meals are provided, can be found on our website www.sivarikeskus.fi (only in Finnish, unfortunately).

CONSCRIPT'S ALLOWANCE

If you live in an apartment you own or rent, or have a family entitled to conscript's allowance, contact the KELA-office where you live. It's worth making the conscript's allowance application about a month before the civilian service begins, to facilitate it being processed in time. Remember to sign the application and to include all requested attachments. The conscript's allowance is granted only from the beginning of the month during which the application has reached KELA, i.e. it's not provided retroactively. When deciding on an application for conscript's allowance, KELA will take into account any income the civilian serviceman may have during the service. During the first week of the training period the Civilian Service Centre will send a list to KELA of all individuals that have just begun their service.

For more information check KELA's website (www.kela.fi), KELA's conscript allowance leaflet as well as this guide's page on accommodation (p. 35).

INTEREST ON STUDENT LOANS

KELA can pay the interest on student loans as conscript's allowance, provided they fall due during the civilian service or the calendar month during which it ends.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Remember to inform the labour force bureau about beginning your civilian service. In case you're receiving unemployment benefits that are tied to income, inform your unemployment office about the civilian service.

LOANS AND DEBTS

In case you have debts it's worth discussing with your bank or lender in beforehand about moving payments forward to a time after civilian service. The payment of fines can generally be postponed until the civilian service ends. One can always attempt discuss with repossessors about moving payments to a time after the civilian service. The taking of SMS-loans and other forms of quick credit should be considered very carefully, as the income during the civilian service is very small and the interest and other fees for this type of loan are substantial in comparison to the amounts borrowed

ACQUIRING A PLACE TO STUDY OR WORK

If you don't have a place to work or study after the alternative service you might be in need of study- or work counselling. The civilian service positions have been issued with a recommendation that they let you have the chance to visit for example your local employment bureau without having to spend any personal leave.

FALLING ILL HEALTH CARE

The civilian servicemen have a right to free health and hospital care. The civilian service position will provide any treatment necessary for carrying out the service, and in case the serviceman needs other medical treatments on top of this it's possible to apply for compensation from KELA, the national health insurance bureau. Check with your service position where your health care is arranged if you need treatment during the service. In case you need urgent medical care, contact your municipal health centre or hospital.

SPECTACLES

Provided certain conditions are met (see our website www.sivariakeskus.fi, only in Finnish unfortunately) spectacles or contact lenses are to be provided by the service position. In case existing spectacles break during work hours through no fault of the serviceman, they will be replaced to a standard corresponding to the old ones. Before purchasing new spectacles the serviceman is to discuss with the service position about the terms and conditions involved.

DENTAL CARE

The main focus of the dental care of civilian servicemen is on preventative and preservative care. In practice the service position will pay for a yearly check-up with fluoridation as well as any aches, infections or other dental conditions endangering the general health of the serviceman. Prosthetics are usually not provided for.

AT THE CIVILIAN SERVICE POSITION

The length of the civilian service following the training period depends on the number of days previously carried out doing military or civilian service. Usually it's around 10.5 months. The working hours are 36-40h/week, and follows the general work schedule of the service position. For more information on finding a civilian service position check page 6 of this guide, "Finding a Civilian Service Position".

LACKING A CIVILIAN SERVICE POSITION

In case you haven't found a civilian service position at which to carry out your service by the end of the training period, there are two alternatives available. Firstly, you can apply for leave for personal reasons, so called *HSL*-leave, for a period of two weeks to six months. This essentially freezes your civilian service in its state, and you can keep looking for a position from home. The other alternative is that you stay at the Lapinjärvi Educational Centre and join the so-called "legion" doing various tasks: cleaning, yard work, working in the kitchen etc. The work generally takes place during the day, but evening shifts are also possible depending on the nature of the work you're assigned. You are expected to keep looking for a civilian service position while in the legion, as you're not supposed to carry out your entire service at the Educational Centre.

ACCOMMODATION

All servicemen have a right to accommodation free of charge during the civilian service. For the duration of the training period KELA will pay for any rent or other expenses for the serviceman's own flat, while it's either the responsibility of the civilian service position or KELA during the rest of the civilian service.

It should be clear from the very beginning to both the service position and the serviceman where he will live for the duration of the service. This must also be clearly evident from the civilian service contract. The service position can assign accommodation from a property they own, or rent an apartment for the serviceman. If agreed to by the serviceman, the service position can also assign the serviceman to live at home – if this results in costs for the serviceman it's the responsibility of the service position to stand for them.

If the serviceman refuses the offered accommodation and would rather live at home, for example, the service position does not have to cover any expenses. A refusal to accept accommodation must also be clearly evident from the civilian service contract.

WHO PAYS FOR THE ACCOMMODATION?

DOES YOUR SERVICE POSITION HAVE ACCOMODATION IN WHICH THEY DESIGNATE YOU TO LIVE?

YES

The apartment can for example be a single room in a dormitory, or a separate flat rented for use by civilian servicemen. It must be possible for you to move into the designated accommodation – it's not allowed to designate accommodation that isn't available in reality.

DO YOU ACCEPT THE DESIGNATED ACCOMODATION?

NO

You're free to live elsewhere even if the service position has designated you accommodation of their own, however they're not obligated to cover any living expenses in this case.

YES

The service position is responsible for the expenses of the accommodation provided. They can't force you make an official address change to the designated accommodation – you have every right to retain your own rented or owned flat.

Jatkuu NO:sta

When filling out the civilian service contract, the address of the designated accommodation is written and a check mark placed next to "does not accept the offered accommodation" (*ei ota vastaan em. majoitusta* in Finnish). The address of where the serviceman actually will live is then noted.

Jatkuu YES:sta

When filling out the civilian service contract, the address of the designated accommodation is written and a checkmark placed next to "accepts the offered accommodation" (*ottaa vastaan em. majoituksen* in Finnish).

In case you own or rent a flat that causes you expenses during the civilian service, you can apply for conscript's allowance from KELA. The allowance is decided on on a case-by-case basis. For more information see KELA's website **www.kela.fi**.

The civilian service position is under obligation to provide the serviceman with accommodation. If they are unable to do so, the serviceman is designated to live in his own home.

DOES YOUR SERVICE POSITION HAVE ACCOMODATION IN WHICH THEY DESIGNATE YOU TO LIVE?

NO

Will you live with your parents or independently, in your own rented or owned flat during the civilian service?

WITH MY PARENTS

IN MY OWN RENTED OR OWNED FLAT

The service position pays for your portion of the living costs of the flat. The Civilian Service Centre reimburses your service position for a portion of said costs (250€/month in the greater Helsinki area, 150€/month elsewhere in Finland).

Jatkuu WITH MY PARENTS:ISTÄ

When filling out the civilian service contract, the address of your parents is written and a checkmark placed next to “accepts the offered accommodation” (*ottaa vastaan em. majoituksen* in Finnish).

Jatkuu IN MY OWN OR RENTED FLAT:ISTÄ

When filling out the civilian service contract, the address of your own flat is written and a checkmark placed next to “accepts the offered accommodation” (*ottaa vastaan em. majoituksen* in Finnish).

You’ll get food allowance from your service position for the service days and days off during which you are at the designated accommodation. If you live more than 5km from your service position, the service position also pays for your commute.

TRAVEL

TRAVEL TO AND FROM YOUR PLACE OF WORK

In case your designated an apartment that's over 5km from your civilian service position and accept it, the service position is responsible for paying your trips to and from work. The service position can pay for them in other cases as well, but is not forced to.

TRAVEL DURING LEAVE AND TICKET DISCOUNTS

All civilian servicemen have a right to 39 re turn trips (within Finland) during leave free of charge. These are paid for by the Ministry for Employment and the Economy, and are applied for from the service position. The trips are granted provided certain conditions are met:

1. Travel must always be done in the least expensive way possible.
2. The trips paid for by the Ministry for Employment and the Economy are meant for travel between the civilian service position and the serviceman's home municipality.
3. Trips can not be granted for evening leave (less than 24h). This does not apply in the case of entrance exams, job interviews or the like.
4. In special cases the service position can also, at their own discretion, grant trips to:
 1. A location where the serviceman has a continual place of work or study.
 2. The home of the serviceman's wife or long-time partner.
 3. The home of the serviceman's parent(s), siblings or child(ren).
 4. A future home, place of work, or study; provided the serviceman has an entrance exam, job interview or similar need to be present.

In addition to this the trip to the training period and from there to the service position are free of charge, as well as granted *komennusmatkas* – i.e. trips to interviews at civilian service positions etc.

If you're travelling somewhere that doesn't fulfil the above criteria and use long-distance trains or buses, remember to show your yellow civilian service certificate when purchasing the ticket – you'll get a discount of about 50%. Do note that on buses the distance has to be at least 80km for the discount to be given.

Local tickets in the greater Helsinki region are unfortunately not discounted, but other cities' local transport might be – it's always worth asking.

LEAVES AND DAYS OFF

All workdays, weekends, holidays and leaves (with the exception of *HSL*-leave, leave for personal reasons) are counted as days carrying out the service. If you're unlawfully absent from work that day is not counted.

TYPES OF LEAVE

PERSONAL LEAVE (HL-LEAVE) – 18 DAYS

The personal leave days are to be held somewhat evenly over the duration of the civilian service. The wishes of the serviceman are to be taken into consideration when granting personal leave, and he does not need to present a reason for the leave. Daily allowance is paid for these days.

LEAVE FOR PERSONAL REASONS (HSL-LEAVE) – UP TO 180 DAYS

The civilian service position can grant up to 180 days of leave for pressing personal reasons, for example financial issues. Essentially this freezes the civilian service, as these leave days are not counted as part of the service, and no daily allowance is paid out. If more than 14 consecutive days of leave is granted KELA will automatically be notified.

LEAVE FOR EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE (KL-LEAVE) – UP TO 20 DAYS

Those servicemen that have shown exceptional performance and dedication can, at the behest of the service position, be granted leave for exceptional performance. These are counted as days carrying out the civilian service, and the daily allowance is paid. The service position does not need to grant any leave days of this kind if they feel the serviceman hasn't earned them.

PATERNITY LEAVE – 12 DAYS

In case a child is born to the serviceman during the civilian service 12 days of paternity leave are granted. The paternity leave is counted as part of the civilian service, and the daily allowance is paid. On top of this it's possible for the serviceman to apply for extra monetary support from KELA.

SICK LEAVE

The service position grants sick leave provided a medical certificate by a doctor or nurse is presented. The sick leave is considered part of the civilian service, and the daily allowance is paid. In case the serviceman is ill for over two weeks, be it consecutively or as a result of multiple shorter sick leaves, the service position may order him to be re-examined by a doctor to determine whether he is still fit for service. If the serviceman falls ill during some other type of leave, leave for personal reasons (HSL) notwithstanding, the sick leave takes priority and he can use his leave day(s) at another point in time.

FREE TIME

All time outside of the 36-40h/week of work is free time for the serviceman, to be spent as he pleases. It's possible to for example work or study during the civilian service, as long as it does not adversely affect the capability to carry out the service. There are, however, some restrictions. It's not possible to do paid work for the civilian service position itself during the service. In case you do work during the service, remember that any conscript's allowance KELA is paying to you depends on your income, and can be reduced or cut off completely as a result.

A civilian serviceman has a right to travel abroad during his service. When applying for a passport prior to starting the civilian service, the Civilian Service Centre grants permission for this. When applying for one during the service, said permission is granted by the service position. If the civilian service has not been completed the passport is only valid until the end of the year when the serviceman reaches 28 years of age.

CHANGING YOUR CIVILIAN SERVICE POSITION

In case you wish to change your civilian service position you have to apply for permission to do so from the Civilian Service Centre. This is done by sending us the following documents:

1. A filled-out and signed civilian service contract with the new position.
2. A document where the old position states it has nothing against you changing.
3. A freely formulated, signed application by you for switching.

4. An extract from the criminal register, in case the new service position requires it and the old one has expired (valid for six months).

You can not begin work at the new position before written permission has been obtained from the Civilian Service Centre.

TESTIMONIALS

A foot between the door of a future workplace

I chose Luontoloitto (an organisation working for the preservation of nature) as I knew people from there from before and had been on their summer camps. The choice was a brilliant one, I really enjoyed carrying out my service there. The work was diverse: I answered the phone, ordered materials, updated the website, carried mail, ran errands and took part in various nature-related events. I was treated as an equal and my colleagues were nice and relaxed in all ways. It was fun doing work with a purpose that I found interesting. The best part, though, was that on top of all else I earned more money than from anywhere prior. To top it all off they offered me a job when my service ended.

Tomi, 22

In a familiar high school

I was a serviceman in my own high school, called Jyväskylän Lyseon lukio. The people and practices were familiar from before, so it was easy to settle in. I taught, carried things to where they needed to be, acted as IT-support and updated records, among other things.

Jani, 20

A political choice

I chose to work in a refugee centre as I'm interested in social work, multicultural environments, global and ethical questions as well as the view asylum seekers have of Finland. In a way I also wanted my choice to signal that Finland can, and should, take responsibility for international social work. For the time we live in I consider international work of a civil nature more important to Finland's international relations than military defence or taking part in military operations overseas.

One reason for my choice was also to find out how the refugee process, hotly debated in the media, actually worked. Until now I've identified multiple problems with it, and feel it above all else needs a sense of global responsibility on the state and political level and continuous positive-minded development on the bureaucratic level.

Jussi, 28

Challenging work as a reporter

I was interested in becoming a reporter, so when a position as a reporter civilian service man at the developmental co-operation service centre KEPA opened up I applied. I didn't have any previous experience as a reporter, but had studied political science at university for about a year. The interview was thorough, but I was lucky and got the job.

I was part of a four-man team. The work was diverse, brainstorming, fact-finding, interviews, writing, editing and changing the layout for the Maaailman Kuvalehti magazine. I also worked as a receptionist when needed and festival organiser. There was no time to get bored, and the year passed by a bit too quickly. I learned a lot through the challenging work, and would like to work as a reporter in the future too. After the civilian service ended I've been employed for various jobs by KEPA every once in a while.

Joona, 23

The Swedish language as an added bonus

At first I started to laugh, having read about Solglimten on the notice board a few days before the training period ended. The thought of spending a year in a Swedish-language service home on a small island in the middle of nowhere sounded like a joke, but in the end I decided to, with a mixture of desperation and humour, grab the chance. I telephoned them, and with my very clumsy command of Swedish managed to agree an interview. I sat down in the bus, a very long trip ahead of me.

The first thing I noticed on the island was the very beautiful scenery. Having entered the house I was invited to a delicious meal, not a one-off occurrence as the meals have been of an excellent quality over the course of the year.

Having begun my service there it only took a few weeks of awkward stuttering and mumbling for my Swedish to actually come out rather fluently, and for the first time in my life I dared say I actually spoke the language. As a night guard I haven't come across anything more serious than a few confused grandmas, and have been able to spend my nights in peace. I've spent the time watching some 200 films. The staff and residents are nice and unforgettable people, and my ties to the outside world haven't been severed thanks to the fortnightly leaves and free internet. This has been a very good year.

Ville, 23

AFTER THE CIVILIAN SERVICE

A serviceman has a right to a doctor's check-up at the end of the service if he so wishes. The check-up, although not compulsory, is recommended. It carries weight for example when applying for compensation for any injury or illness incurred during the service. Even if no check-up is carried out the serviceman must fill out and sign the green health information form before the service ends.

It's also worth asking for a work certificate from the civilian service position, as it could come in handy when applying for a job in the future.

The service position will mark the service as having ended on the yellow civilian service certificate. It's worth holding on to it at least until the end of the year that you reach 30 years of age, as it acts as a proof of completed civilian service for example when applying for a passport.

The service position is responsible for returning all documentation about the serviceman to the Civilian Service Centre.

WHERE TO TURN FOR ADVICE?

The Civilian Service Centre can advise you in all matters related to the civilian service. You can contact us by email at kirjaamo@sivarikeskus.fi, or call us on +358 19 530 600 (Monday-Friday 09:00-11:00 and 12:00-14:00 Finnish time).

The Civilian Service Act can be read in its entirety (only in Finnish or Swedish, unfortunately) at www.finlex.fi – just search for “Siviilipalveluslaki”.

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