

# Social Assistance

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The purpose of social assistance is to provide material support to low-income households in order to ensure income at the level of the guaranteed minimum income threshold and to cover expenses related to the use of housing, as well as to provide support for the payment of certain expenses and in crisis situations.

Guaranteed minimum income threshold is EUR 109 for the first or only person in the household and EUR 76 for all other persons in the household.

Poor household income threshold is EUR 272 for the first or only person in the household and EUR 190 for all other persons in the household.

Each local government/municipality is entitled to set the income threshold of a low-income household not higher than EUR 436 for the first or only person in the household and EUR 305 for other persons in the household, but not lower than the income threshold of the poor household.

Types of social assistance benefits:

I Basic social assistance benefits are as follows:

- 1) guaranteed minimum income benefit – material support in monetary terms for the payment of minimum daily expenses;
- 2) housing benefit – material support for covering expenses related to the use of housing.

II Additional social assistance benefits are as follows:

- 1) allowance for payment or covering of certain expenses – material support for persons to ensure social functioning and independent life;
- 2) benefit in a crisis situation – promptly provided material support for preventing or mitigating the consequences of external events.

The amount of the housing benefit is calculated taking into account the following expenses:

- 1) expenses for the use of living space (rent, expenses for mandatory management activities);
- 2) expenses for services related to the use of living/residential spaces (heating/thermal energy for providing heating and hot water, electricity, water, natural gas, provision of sewerage or sanitation, household waste management), if they are not included in the rent or within the necessary expenses for mandatory management activities;
- 3) expenses related to telecommunication services and the Internet, as well as expenses for the installation and verification of water meters.

Amount of the housing benefit is calculated as the difference between the guaranteed minimum income thresholds for the household and the expenses for housing and the household's total income specified in the laws and regulations.

In order to receive social assistance, one must apply to the social service of the municipality according to the person's declared or registered place of residence. The social service of the local municipality evaluates the total material resources of the household before making a decision on granting poor or low-income household status or social assistance allowance to a household or an individual person in the household, using the data in the state and local government information systems and observing the criteria defined in the regulatory acts.

<https://www.lm.gov.lv/en/social-assistance>