

Social assistance in brief

What is social assistance?

Social assistance, or income support, is a last-resort form of financial assistance which may be available to individuals and families living in Finland permanently or temporarily and which covers some of the basic necessities of life. Basic social assistance is available by application only. Applications must be submitted to Kela. If you have specific expenses for which you cannot get basic social assistance, you can apply to your municipality's social services office for supplementary or preventive social assistance.

Who can get social assistance?

You may have a right to social assistance if your disposable income and assets do not cover your essential daily needs such as housing, food, health care and clothing. Before applying for social assistance you must first consider all other sources of income that could be available to you, and find out if you are entitled to social security benefits such as unemployment or housing allowances. First claim all benefits to which you are entitled.

How is basic social assistance calculated?

The amount of basic social assistance you can get is affected by all income and assets that you and your family have. You can use a calculator at kela.fi/laskurit to estimate if you or your family have a right to social assistance.

How to apply for social assistance

Apply for social assistance online at kela.fi/asiointi (Finnish) or fpa.fi/etjanst (Swedish). You can also fill in a paper application form. Application forms are available from Kela offices and at kela.fi/lomakkeet. You can drop your application in the mailbox at your local Kela office or send it to Kela by post. Remember to attach all necessary supporting documents. If you have bills that are due, they can be taken into account when calculating the amount of basic social assistance you can get. Kela can either provide you with the necessary funds to pay the bills yourself, or Kela can pay the bills for you directly, for example to the electric company or to an insurance provider. If you want Kela to pay a bill directly, write maksetaan laskuttajalle on each bill. If you need additional assistance, you can re-apply two weeks before the end of the month if your income and expenses are not expected to change before the turn of the month.

How your application is reviewed

You will get a decision within seven working days. This assumes that Kela has access to all documents needed to review your application.

When is social assistance paid out?

Basic social assistance is paid into your account on the first business day of the month. If it is too late to make the payment on the regular payment date, the payment will be deposited into your bank account within 2 business days. If you need medication, you get a voucher that you can present at the pharmacy.



www.kela.fi/social-assistance



Service number: 020 634 2550

Local offices and other customer service locations

