



Upcoming changes to social assistance



Are you going to apply for social assistance? Apply for other benefits first

Social assistance (toimeentulotuki) will change in February 2026.
After the change, you may get less social assistance if
you do not look for work or apply for other Kela benefits.

Social assistance is granted as a last alternative. This means that you must first apply for all other benefits that may be available to you. Examples of these benefits are unemployment benefits, housing allowance, student financial aid, sickness allowance, daily allowances for parents and pensions.

Social assistance will change on 1 February 2026. After the change, Kela may reduce, that is cut, the basic amount of social assistance by 50% in the following situations:

- You have not registered with the employment services as a jobseeker looking for full-time work.
- You do not apply for other benefits that you may have the right to.

Find out about other benefits

First find out which benefits are the right ones for your situation.
Read more at
www.kela.fi/primary-benefits.

Apply for the other benefits before February 2026. If you do, your social assistance will not be reduced.

If you have already applied for the other benefits, Kela will not reduce the basic amount of social assistance.

If we reduce your basic amount, you get less social assistance

The basic amount is part of the social assistance. The basic amount already includes normal everyday expenses, such as food and clothing. In 2025, the basic amount is EUR 539.55 per month if you live alone. Kela does not pay the basic amount to you as such.


Kela only reduces the basic amount of persons who have not looked for full-time work or applied for other benefits they qualify for. Kela does not reduce the basic amount of persons who are under 18.

The following example shows how the change in the law affects the amount of social assistance.

Example: How a reduction of the basic amount affects Janne's social assistance



- Janne is unemployed. He has no income.
- Janne lives alone in Helsinki. The rent for his home is EUR 700 per month.

Janne's situation	Effect	Janne will get
Janne has only applied for social assistance.	Kela tells Janne to apply for other benefits within one month.	Social assistance for one month EUR 1,300 per month
Janne does not apply for other benefits even though Kela tells him to do so.	The basic amount of social assistance (EUR 600 per month) is reduced by 50%.	Social assistance EUR 1,000 per month, which is EUR 300 less per month! 
Janne also applies for the other benefits he can get, which are unemployment benefit and housing allowance.	The basic amount is not reduced.	Benefits in total EUR 1,300 per month

How social assistance is calculated

Kela will add together all your income, assets and other benefits. Then Kela deducts your necessary expenses from this amount.

The basic amount is included in the expenses. Kela may grant you social assistance if you have more expenses than income.

You may get social assistance if you have more expenses than income

 Income, assets and other benefits – acceptable expenses (such as rent and the basic amount) = how much social assistance you can get

