



# Information sheet for means-tested minimum income

The means-tested minimum income (BMS) refers to benefits that secure the livelihood and living needs of people who are in a situation of financial emergency and who can no longer afford to live by their own means (income and assets).

## Eligibility requirements

- No income or income that is too low
- No assets
- Main residence in Lower Austria
- Entitled to permanent residency in Austria
- Willing to work, as long as there is no incapacity to work
- Willingness to integrate (e.g. attending German lessons and values and orientation courses)
- Presentation of the relevant documents (see Annex 1)

## Application to

- District administration or magistrate
- Local authority of residence

## Responsible for the decision

- District administration or magistrate

## Benefits

- Money or payment in kind in the form of estimated minimum requirements (see Annex 2)
- For persons who have been residing in Austria for less than five years within the last six years, minimum standards of integration apply (see Annex 3).
- The sum of the minimum standards of all persons who live in the same household or shared accommodation is generally limited to a total of €1500.
- Payment of contributions for statutory health insurance
- Bonus for people re-entering the workforce

## **Payment / application for health insurance**

- Payment to a national current account, without exception
- Benefits are transferred at the end of the month
- Only the applicant can be registered by the authorities for cover with the Social Insurances of Lower Austria directly
  - ➔ For the applicant's dependents, an application for coinsurance must be made to the Social Insurances of Lower Austria (contributions for this are still paid for within the framework of the means-tested minimum income).

## **Obligations**

- Any change to conditions of eligibility is to be communicated to the district administration or magistrate within two weeks

For example:

- Changes to income or assets
  - Changes to living or family arrangements
  - Changes to legal residency in Austria
  - Taking up gainful employment
  - A stay in a hospital or treatment institution
  - Other absences lasting for more than two weeks
- Assertion of claims by third parties (e.g. maintenance, sickness benefits)
  - Commitment to work
  - Attendance to German lessons in case of limited German knowledge or other methods to improve potential on the job market, the ability to work or social stabilisation (e.g. charitable community work).
  - Attendance of at least an 8-hour values and orientation course for people who have resided in Austria for less than 5 years within the last 6 years.
  - Acquisition of knowledge of the German language up to and including level A2 for persons who have been residing in Austria for less than 5 years within the last 6 years.
  - Completion of an Integration Agreement for persons who have been residing in Austria for less than 5 years within the last 6 years.

## **Rejection / reduction / termination**

For those refusing to work, for those not participating in integration methods (German lessons, values and orientation courses and community work), Public Employment Service courses or in cases of absence from such activities without a given explanation, the application to means-tested minimum income benefits will be rejected. Existing benefits will be reduced or cancelled.

### **Refunds, reimbursements and penalties**

In the following cases, benefits will have to be paid back and a penalty can apply:

- Violation of the duty to inform the authorities of changes
- False information or non-disclosure of relevant information
- Subsequent acquisition of exploitable assets (e.g. inheritance)
- Compensation by a beneficiary

### **Reinsertion to job market bonus for taking up gainful employment**

A reinsertion to the job market bonus can apply for those who have obtained means-tested minimum income benefits for at least 6 months without interruption and who have taken up employment (albeit marginally).

#### Application and deadlines:

The following two steps are necessary for application:

1. When taking up gainful employment, that is to say when the job starts, the relevant district administration or magistrate must be informed within two weeks.
2. At the latest, 4 weeks following taking up gainful employment, that is to say when the job starts, an application for a reinsertion into the job market bonus must be made either verbally or in writing to the relevant district administration or magistrate. It is also possible to make an application for the bonus when notifying that you are taking up gainful employment.

#### Amount:

The amount for the reinsertion to the job market bonus corresponds to a third of the net income (max.). If the net income and the bonus exceeds 140% of the minimum standard for single persons (€1182.24; 2017), the reinsertion to the job market bonus will be reduced accordingly.

The bonus is granted a maximum of 12 months. In the case of temporary employment, the bonus will be granted in accordance with the employment period.

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Documents to be provided:**

#### **1. Personal details:**

- o Official identity document
- o Birth certificate
- o Evidence of citizenship
- o For EEA citizens: foreign police registration certificate
- o For non-EEA citizens: residence permit, notification of asylum
- o Power of attorney (custodianship decision, procuration, etc.)
- o Divorce decree and copy of the settlement (each with notification of validity)

#### **2. Details of income and assets:**

##### 2.1. Income and care allowance details:

- o Wage certificates or income confirmation for the last 3 months  
(also for marginal employment)
- o Public Employment Service written confirmation
- o Written confirmation from PVA (pensions insurance), SVA (social insurance), ÖBB (Austrian railways), VAEB (Austrian railways insurance institution), BVA (public service Insurance Corporation), foreign pensions, etc.)
- o Confirmation of sickness benefit
- o Confirmation of maternity allowance / (supplement to) childcare allowance
- o Confirmation of advanced pension payment
- o Confirmation of accident benefit
- o Proof of maintenance claims / food subsidy claims
- o Rental and/or leasehold agreements
- o Other forms of income evidence (life annuity, etc.)
- o Care allowance notification
- o Detailed income and expenses statement for the last 3 months

##### 2.2. Information on assets

- o Bank statements (from the application date retrospectively for three months)
- o Insurance policies (funeral insurance plan, life insurance, etc.)
- o Savings books
- o Building loan agreements

- o Stocks and bonds
- o Funds
- o Vehicles (car, lorry, tractors, etc.)
- o Other assets (cash assets, etc.)
- o Land register extract

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

A person seeking support is obliged to make claims towards third parties (parents, spouses etc.) and to legally attempt to claim money from these third parties as long as this action is not obviously futile and unfeasible, assuming that if such demands for payment are fulfilled by the third parties, there is no need for means-tested minimum income benefits to be paid, or at least not to the usual extent.

**3. The following documents are also to be provided:**

**3.1. Further evidence:**

- o Confirmation of the registration as a job seeker
- o Supervision agreement from the Austrian Labour Market Board
- o Notice of benefits rejection from the Austrian Labour Market Board
- o Pension application documents
- o Maintenance application documents
- o Doctor's documents and working ability results
- o Proof of methods for social stabilisation (German lessons, etc.)
- o Written confirmation for school attendance

**3.2. Housing costs for rent**

- o Rental contract / cooperative association agreement
- o Provisions for current rent and running costs
- o Confirmation of payment for current rent
- o Details of housing benefits

**3.3. Proof of running costs in own home:**

- o Building insurance (policy)
- o Bill for chimney sweep
- o Bill for disposal of rubbish

o Community charges (water/sewage)

## Appendix 2:

### Minimum standards 2017:

<b>Means-tested minimum income benefits - Minimum Standards for Rent 2017</b>			
<b>Category of persons</b>	<b>Cost of living</b>	<b>Housing support</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Single person/single parent</b> 100%	€633.35	€211.11	€844.46
<b>Couple/cohabiting couple</b> in the same house 150%	€950.02	€316.68	€1266.70
<b>Legal age person</b> in common household 75%	€ 475.01	€158.34	€633.35
The <b>third oldest</b> or younger person of age living in the <b>common household</b> and <b>entitled to maintenance</b> by another person in the common household, 50%	€316.67	€105.56	€422.23
<b>Underage</b> person with a right to family allowance 23%	€145.67	€48.56	€194.23

<b>Means-tested minimum income benefits - Minimum standards - Property 2017</b>			
<b>Category of persons</b>	<b>Cost of living</b>	<b>Housing support</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Single person/single parent</b> 100%	€633.35	€105.56	€738.91
<b>Couple/cohabiting couple</b> in the <b>same</b> accomodation 150%	€950.02	€158.34	€1108.36
<b>Legal age person in common household</b> 75%	€475.01	€79.17	€554.18
The <b>third oldest</b> or younger person of age living in the <b>common household</b> and <b>entitled to maintenance</b> by another person in the common household, 50%	€316.67	€52.78	€369.45
<b>Underage</b> person with a right to family allowance 23%	€145.67	€24.28	€169.95

<b>Means-tested minimum income benefits base rate to cover personal requirements of persons seeking support in residential institutions (x 13)</b>	<b>€67.87</b>
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The total for the minimum standard of all persons who live together in a household or shared accommodation is **limited to the amount of €1500**.

**Exception:** The minimum standards for people who receive care allowance or raised family allowance or who are continually incapacitated for work, are not to be reduced.



### Appendix 3:

#### Minimum standards - Integration:

Minimum standards - integration			
Category of persons	Cost of living	Housing support	Total
Single parents, per person	€522.50	€300.00	€822.50
Legal age persons who live alone or with another legal age person in the same household or shared accommodation, per person	€422.50	€150.00	€572.50
The third and further persons of age living in the common household, per person	€422.50	-	€422.50
For the first three underage persons who live with a single parent who receives Minimum Standard - Integration, per person	€179.17	-	€179.17
For underage persons, per person	€129.17	-	€129.17

The total for the minimum standard of all persons who live together in a household or shared accommodation is **limited to the amount of €1500**.

**Exception:** The minimum standards for people who receive care allowance or raised family allowance or who are continually incapacitated for work, are not to be reduced.