

Changes to social assistance payments

Basic social assistance will be paid by Kela starting 2017

1 Throughout 2016, your point of contact for social assistance will still be the social services office of your municipality.

- You can apply to the social services office for social assistance or submit your application online if the option exists in your municipality.

2 Basic social assistance will be paid by Kela starting 1 January 2017.

- Kela's services are available online, by phone and locally through a network of customer service points.
- If your municipality sends you a decision on social assistance at the end of 2016, and the period of validity of the decision extends into 2017, you will receive social assistance as specified in the decision. You do not have to seek a new decision from Kela at the turn of the year.
- Keep the latest decision you receive from the municipality. You will need it when seeking basic social assistance from Kela for the first time.
- The municipality may continue to provide supplementary social assistance for particular expenses not covered by basic social assistance.

3 More information will be provided by Kela and your municipality.

- Telephone assistance on basic social assistance will become available from Kela towards the end of 2016.
- Also a website and a discussion forum will be launched in late 2016.
- Starting from the beginning of 2017 you can apply for assistance online at www.kela.fi/asiointi (in Finnish) or www.fpa.fi/etjanst (in Swedish). You can also use the online service to send documents required for your application. It is also possible to apply on a paper application form.

Application process is simplified

- The qualifying conditions of the assistance do not change.
- In most cases Kela will have information about the benefit status of individual applicants, which simplifies the application process. Any documents submitted with an application addressed to Kela may be made available to municipal authorities as needed.
- After receiving an application for basic social assistance, Kela gives a decision on it within 7 working days if the application includes all necessary information.

Basic social assistance is a last-resort form of financial assistance for individuals and families that covers the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing and health care as well as reasonable housing costs.