

2.1.2023

Criteria for granting supplementary and preventive social assistance in the Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County

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Criteria for granting supplementary and preventive social assistance

This annex details the criteria for granting supplementary and preventive social assistance as well as financial support within child welfare aftercare, with regard to standardised amounts. This guideline supplements the instructions on granting supplementary and preventive social assistance. Norms concerning financial support within aftercare and funds for promoting independence in accordance with the Child Welfare Act are defined separately.

1 The employee's decision-making power and the authority to make a negative decision

In parts of the Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County, decisionmaking authority regarding supplementary social assistance has been delegated to benefit processing officers or office secretaries. The benefit processing unit makes decisions independently according to what is outlined in this guide. Social welfare professionals are responsible for the client's overall social welfare and may specify the granting of supplementary social assistance in the client plan when necessary. Benefit processors exercise individual discretion, particularly with longterm social assistance clients.

A benefit processing officer can make a negative decision on a matter for which they have the right to grant social assistance. If the applicant's reasoning is not known, the benefit processing officer will:

- request additional information by calling the client and
- consult with a social welfare professional if necessary.

If the benefit processing officer's decision-making authority is insufficient to grant the requested assistance, they cannot reject the application either. In such cases, the benefit processing officer can prepare a negative decision on supplementary or preventive social assistance. This decision is then forwarded to a social welfare professional, who will make the final decision in accordance with their guidelines.

The decision-making powers of different professional groups and any related municipal-level differences are provided for in the delegation rule.

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2 Homeless individuals and the determination of client status in the Wellbeing Services County

The determination of client status for homeless individuals and applicable common guidelines within the Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County will be agreed upon during the year 2025.

3 Financial support provided as part of aftercare under the Child Welfare Act

Financial support provided as part of aftercare under the Child Welfare Act includes expenses that can be standardised and directed. A separate guidebook outlines the process for granting this financial support. Each case is individually assessed when drafting the aftercare client plan.

4 A Debt adjustment client as an applicant for social assistance

In special circumstances, Kela may grant social assistance to a person undergoing debt adjustment (see Kela's guidelines). The client is first instructed to apply for basic social assistance. Debt adjustment payments do not constitute expenses to be taken into account for basic social assistance.

If the client applies for supplementary or preventive social assistance, their financial situation is reviewed based on bank statements, the expenditures applied for, and the payment scheme calculation. If the client's expenses have increased since the payment scheme was confirmed by the District Court and the income is no longer sufficient for all the expenses included in the scheme, it is justified to grant preventive social assistance, for example, for health care expenses or an individual expense necessary for the client.

5 Reducing the basic amount

Kela is the only authority with the power to process any reduction of the basic amount. Before reducing the basic amount, Kela must refer the client, if necessary, to the social services of the wellbeing services county for a service needs assessment. Kela must inform the client of this in advance. The social worker/counsellor assesses the client's situation as part of the service needs assessment process. At the same time, a plan of action for promoting the client's independent coping is agreed upon. The client submits the service needs assessment or client plan to Kela, which may take it into account in its decision-making. The

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wellbeing services county's authorities cannot affect Kela's decisionmaking.

6 Child support and costs incurred from non-custodial parents meeting their children

The costs incurred from visiting a child are covered by basic social assistance when the visits are based on an agreement confirmed by a child welfare officer or a court decision (Act on Social Assistance, section 7b). If no visitation rights agreement has been made, the client is instructed to conclude one. Kela will not compensate expenses exceeding the scope of the agreement. In addition, Kela will not compensate for expenses arising from visiting a child abroad. These expenses are not covered by supplementary social assistance either.

If there is no valid agreement or court decision regarding visitations, it may be justified to grant supplementary social assistance for visitation expenses until an agreement has been made or the matter is pending. In this case, assistance may be granted for travel costs due to the visitation and for the child's food expenses. Travel expenses are recognised according to the cheapest mode of travel, and the child's food expenses are considered to be 49% of the basic amount per visitation day.

The applicant should be instructed to make a visitation rights agreement with a child welfare officer or, at the very least, request a clarification from the live-in parent about the visitations to be delivered to Kela.

Paying of child support is not considered as an expense in basic social assistance. If the client applies social assistance for child support, they should primarily be instructed to apply for an amendment to the child support agreement while the recipient of the payment applies for child maintenance allowance. Supplementary social assistance can be granted for a reasonable period of adjustment if the person liable for maintenance is entitled to basic social assistance.

7 Rental security deposits, storage expenses, and moving costs

Kela grants basic social assistance and allocates the costs to the municipality where the family or person is living when the assistance is granted. Kela is responsible for moving costs and rental security deposits.

Rental security deposits are primarily granted by Kela. Kela assesses the client's need for a rental security deposit according to its own guidelines (refer to Kela's guidelines). If the client has a surplus in their

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social assistance calculation, a Kela employee will determine whether the criteria for granting a rental security deposit are met and assesses whether the client can pay the deposit from their own income and assets. Kela may require the client to save money if the client is not under immediate threat of homelessness and would be able to save the security deposit within a reasonable timeframe. If the rental security deposit criteria are met, and the client cannot secure housing without the rental security deposit, Kela may consider granting the rental security deposit despite the surplus income. If a social services professional from the Wellbeing Services County is aware of social reasons why, in their opinion, the rental security deposit should be granted, they can provide a written statement to Kela with justifications (e.g., circumstances at the home of a young adult).

If the client applies for a rental security deposit as supplementary or preventive social assistance, it is first verified whether they have applied for it from Kela. If Kela does not grant the rental security deposit, it must be established if the client is able to arrange the rental security deposit themselves by, for example, means of a loan if they have a clean credit history or by saving if they have a sufficient monthly surplus. If the client is unable to arrange the rental security deposit themselves, it is assessed whether there is sufficient justification for granting the deposit as supplementary social assistance. Rental security deposit is not granted as money.

Reasons for granting the rental security deposit may include:

- Divorce or end of cohabitation
- Health reasons
- Change in the size of the family
- Homelessness or threat of homelessness
- Getting a job or place to study in another municipality
- Moving to a more affordable apartment due to considering whether the costs are of a reasonable amount.

Rental security deposit will not be granted for:

- convenience reasons (for example, access to a sauna or a yard, wanting to move to another neighbourhood)
- situations where the client requests move to a more expensive apartment than the norm
- moving for reasons not related to employment or studying

Realisation of a rental security deposit is the responsibility of the party that granted it. The landlord sends the invoice to the granting party, and the validity of the security deposit claim is examined. Any questions from landlords are answered in the operational unit of the granting party. Landlords are instructed to read the instructions related to the rental security deposit's realisation included in the payment commitment or attachments to it.

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Storage expenses are included in the benefits granted by Kela. Kela may cover storage expenses for a period of three months. Moving costs are covered by basic social assistance and fall under Kela's responsibility. Only in special circumstances, where Kela has rejected the client's application for moving costs but a social welfare professional of the wellbeing services county considers it justified to grant assistance for moving costs based on the client's special circumstances, can moving costs be granted as supplementary social assistance. The client negotiates moving costs with the wellbeing services county from which they are moving away from.

8 Rent arrear

Social assistance for rent arrears is granted only for special reasons. If a client has rent arrears, the right to retrospective social assistance must be determined by Kela. A rent arrear situation must always involve working with the client.

Before granting social assistance for rent arrears, it is necessary to ensure that the assistance will secure the client's housing. It is also necessary to evaluate the client's overall situation, the suitability of their current housing arrangement, and the possible need for special support in managing financial affairs. The threat of homelessness is always a reason for conducting systematic social work with the client. A plan is created, together with the client, that outlines further steps and aims to prevent the accumulation of further arrears. Additionally, it is essential to determine the measures the client can take to avoid homelessness and how the social services can support them in this. Possible measures may include financial guidance and counselling as well as making the client responsible for devising their own payment plan.

8.1 Household Statements from Social Welfare Services When Reasonable Rent Costs Exceed

Supplementary or preventive social assistance should not be granted for rent costs that exceed the reasonable rent cap. Clients are primarily responsible for ensuring that their rent is considered in basic social assistance by submitting all necessary documents to Kela. If needed, a social services professional will assist the client in presenting special reasons or write a statement to Kela to approve the rent costs. If social assistance is granted for costs exceeding the reasonable rent cap due to special circumstances, it should be temporary and based on a client plan. In cases involving families, particular attention should be given to the well-being of the children. The final decision will be made by a social welfare professional.

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9 Household purchases, furniture, and initial assistance

Supplementary social assistance for household purchases can be granted to persons who are basic social assistance clients and do not have movables and accessories or to persons who are not able to procure such movables or accessories in the near future. The need for furniture and other movables is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

In case of relocation, the wellbeing services county to which the client is moving is responsible for the essential purchases for the new home. However, if the purchases must be made before relocation, the wellbeing services county from which the client is moving is responsible for the purchases.

9.1 Furniture and other movables

Clients are guided to purchase recycled goods in line with the principles of sustainable development. Priority is given towards granting payment commitments. The prices listed in the instructions are maximum amounts; the payment commitment is granted based on the lowest price available.

9.2 Household appliances

In case of home appliances, clients are always required to examine whether their appliances can be repaired as well as the costs of repair in terms of the seller's warranty and home insurance compensation. Assistance for a home appliance is granted as a one-time occurrence. If the need recurs, assistance is generally provided no more than once every five years. Assistance is granted to long-term and recurrent clients of social assistance.

The principle of self-reliance is primarily followed in the transportation of purchases. A maximum of €50 can be granted for furniture transport.

A contract supplier is primarily used in the acquisition of home appliances. During the transition period, these contracts are specific to each municipality. For payment commitments concerning **contract suppliers**, the amount should be followed by VAT. For instance, *washing machine €300 plus VAT. (In other situations, VAT is included in the total price).*

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Need for support	The Wellbeing Services County policy from 1 January 2023 onwards
Furniture	Table: €60 Chairs: €30 each Bed and mattress or bed base (including legs and mattress pad) €200 (double-bed €300) Extendable child's bed and mattress €200 Bunk bed + mattresses €300 Mattress €75 Crib and mattress €100 School desk €50 (need assessed case by case) Bed linen and towels €75 Rugs €50 Lamps €50 Curtains €40 Dishes for one €60, for two €80 Furniture transport €50
Household appliances	Washing machine €300 (contract supplier price) if there is no laundry room in the housing company or there are other special reasons to grant assistance for a washing machine) // Other supplier €350 (includes cheapest delivery and installation) Refrigerator (only for homeowners) €135 (contract supplier price) // // Another supplier €200 Vacuum cleaner €80

9.3 Initial financial assistance

Initial financial assistance is granted for furnishing of the home and purchasing the necessary home accessories to persons who have been homeless for a long time and/or have received long-term basic social assistance and do not have movables nor accessories nor the possibility of acquiring movables in the near future. Initial financial support is meant to cover all necessary household equipment and furniture (except washing machine and vacuum cleaner) and transportation of furniture. For after-care clients of child welfare services, provisions on granting initial financial assistance (discretionary funds for promoting independence) are laid down in the Child Welfare Act (section 77, subsection 2).

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Need for support	The Wellbeing Services County policy from 1 January 2023 onwards
Initial financial assistance	For a person living alone €500 For a couple €750 For a single parent €650 Children €250 per child

10 Health care costs

A client's need for treatment is assessed in public healthcare, and Kela grants basic social assistance for public healthcare expenses. The costs of public healthcare, dental care, and the purchase of eyeglasses are covered by basic social assistance (including a private ophthalmologist if an optician is unable to prescribe the eyeglasses). In addition, Kela accepts client fees from the Finnish Student Healthcare Service (FSHS), healthcare fee contributions of the student councils' compulsory membership fees, and the out-of-pocket expenses for psychotherapy reimbursed by Kela as rehabilitation. Kela will assess reasonable healthcare expenses.

If the client has received a negative basic social assistance decision due to surplus income and faces significant healthcare costs, the client is instructed to apply for basic social assistance from Kela for these expenses. In this case, the client must fill in Kela's review application, TO1, stating the changed information. The client must provide Kela with a patient instruction sheet made by a doctor, which includes the name of the medication and dosage instructions. As a general rule, supplementary or preventive social assistance is not granted for healthcare expenses.

Kela grants social assistance for the client's share of the cost of Kelareimbursed taxi and ambulance journeys related to health care visits. Kela may also grant social assistance for public transportation costs if the client has a large number of health care appointments, e.g., in substitution treatment. Supplementary social assistance may be granted for travel costs for substance abuse rehabilitation on the basis of a client plan made by a social worker or social counsellor, if Kela does not compensate for these travel costs.

Kela does not take into account medication prescribed by an occupational health care doctor.

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10.1 Requesting a statement from a healthcare professional for further clarification

As a general rule, there are no grounds to request a statement from a healthcare professional for further clarification to decide on a supplementary or preventive social assistance. The decision on a discretionary social assistance application is primarily based on social factors, not health-related ones.

Healthcare expenditure is part of basic social assistance, not of discretionary social assistance (Social Assistance Act, section 7b), and basic social assistance is granted by Kela. In addition, according to section 29 of the Health Care Act (1326/2010), public health care must organise therapies aimed at promoting and maintaining one's ability to function as well as other necessary rehabilitation measures and assistive device services unless the organisation of rehabilitation is the responsibility of Kela. Exceptionally, it may be necessary to obtain an assessment from a healthcare professional in support of a discretionary social assistance application (e.g. a special diet).

10.2 Medication

Medication is only covered on a one-off basis in unexpected situations (for example, when clients are discharged from a hospital and Kela does not cover their medication and they have no means to pay for it themselves). Kela must decide on basic social assistance even in an urgent situation. When covering medication, the payment commitment voucher is limited in time or quantity or to apply only to essential medicinal products (e.g., heart, asthma, or diabetes medication). Medication is only granted as part of preventive social assistance.

Preventive social assistance is not granted for a medicinal product not approved by Kela. Kela assesses the necessity of the medication and is responsible for making the decision. Kela is also responsible for whether it takes into account the applicant's medicine costs during the adjustment time to provide the applicant with a substitute medication or treatment.

11 Travel costs

As a general rule, the use of local public transport is covered by the basic amount (Social Assistance Act, section 7a). Depending on the place of residence, the costs of essential short-term transportation exceeding the out-of-pocket costs of the basic amount can be granted on a discretionary basis. Work and study trips can be approved for the first month or until the first salary is paid if these are not covered by Kela. In case of school transport, eligibility for Kela's school transport subsidy must be first determined. Travel costs are primarily considered as the cost of a local bus card or other public transportation costs. Travel costs for using one's own car can be considered if there is no

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public transportation available or if there is another particularly compelling reason to use a private car. Travel costs that are taken into account for using a private car are 0,20€/km.

11.1 Activities promoting employment and travelling expenses allowances

Clients entitled to maintenance allowance must pay the travel expenses themselves. Clients may be entitled to maintenance allowance if they take part in a work trial, training trial, career and job search coaching or self-motivated immigrant studies approved by the TE Office. As the maintenance allowance is paid at the end of the month, supplementary social assistance can be granted for a travel ticket for the first month. If the person's activation measures are organised outside their area of residence, the adequacy of the maintenance allowance for the travel costs is assessed on a case-by-case basis. If the person participates in an activation activity promoting employment but is not entitled to a maintenance allowance, supplementary social assistance for a travel ticket shall be granted for the duration of the participation in the activity.

Clients participating in rehabilitative work activities are paid an activity or expense allowance. In addition, a travel allowance is paid for travel expenses incurred in connection with participation, according to the cheapest method of travel. There is no justification for granting social assistance for the travel expenses of a person participating in rehabilitative work activities.

An immigrant's integration can be supported by granting social assistance for travel expenses when the client participates in a course and/or other regular activity meaningful for integration and does not receive Kela's labour market subsidy's maintenance allowance. The course must be in line with the plan drawn up with the TE Office. It is also justified to grant assistance for travelling expenses for clients who are not clients of the TE Office (e.g., stay-at-home parents) if they participate in an integration-promoting activity organised several times a week.

Supplementary social assistance may be granted for expenses such as the completion of various licenses or certificates (e.g., hygiene passport, occupational safety card, hot work permit). In that case, the card or license must be necessary for the applicant and significantly enhance the client's employment opportunities (i.e., a job must be confirmed, and the card or license must be a prerequisite for obtaining the job). It also needs to be confirmed that the employer, TE Office, or some other party will not cover the cost of the card or license.

Consideration of these costs is based on promoting and improving the conditions for employment.

12 Client fees

According to section 11 of the Act on Client Charges in Healthcare and Social Welfare, a fee for social welfare services and an income-based fee for health care services must be waived or reduced in so far as charging the fee would endanger the livelihood of the person or the family or the person's statutory maintenance obligation. Reducing or waiving a client fee takes precedence over social assistance.

Until the client receives a decision on reducing the fee, and they lack the money for medicines, preventive social assistance is granted for healthcare costs, and, if necessary, also for food. However, clients are always guided to first apply for basic social assistance from Kela.

Kela may instruct the client to contact social work if the client applies for social assistance and is unable to apply for, for example, a reduction or elimination of the client fee or resides in long-term institutional care for more than 6 months and Kela assesses that the client due, for example, to age or state of health, is unable to arrange for moving or other management of their affairs and if the client does not have an appointed financial trustee to turn to.

As a rule, supplementary social assistance is not granted for home service fees. Instead, the client is advised to apply for a reduction of the client fee. Supplementary social assistance can be granted for home service fees if the client only needs social assistance occasionally.

13 Meal service and distribution of free diapers

The decision on the meal service is made by the home care services (in the future, centrally by Senior Info after the transition period). This service is not yet available in all municipalities. The meal service is granted if the client cannot prepare, procure, or heat meals themselves and there is a daily need for a warm meal delivered home.

In general, supplementary social assistance is not granted for the meal service fee. Instead, fee reduction takes precedence over the granting of social assistance. If fee reduction is not possible in accordance with the principles of the client fee decision (income is taken into account in a different way than in social assistance), supplementary social assistance may be granted for the fee.

The meal service can be considered to cover around a third of the daily meal requirement. Thus, the client's food expenses are the meal service fee and around 2/3 of the portion intended for food expenses in the basic amount (food expenses are 49% of the basic amount). Supplementary social assistance can be granted for food expenses that

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the basic amount does not cover if the client has not been exempted from meal service fees.

Decisions on receiving diapers are made based on a referral from the attending doctor. Free diapers are granted for certain illnesses. The free distribution covers 1 to 5 diapers per day. Supplementary or preventive social assistance is not granted for diapers, as the person's right to free diapers is assessed in health services. The client should be directed to contact the medical supply distribution unit of their health centre. If the client does not meet the criteria for being granted free diapers, Kela may, nevertheless, pay care allowance for pensioners for the diaper expenses.

14 Special diet expenses

Food expenses are covered by basic social assistance but higher than usual food expenses are not included in basic social assistance.

Clients can apply for supplementary social assistance for these expenses from the municipality. Granting supplementary social assistance for special dietary expenses requires a statement from a healthcare professional, stating that the applicant must adhere to a special diet due to multiple concurrent illnesses, and that adhering to this diet causes them significantly higher expenses than usual on a monthly basis. This is particularly so for long-term social assistance clients who, due to their chronic illnesses, must adhere to a special diet.

15 Cleaning services, assistive services, and special cleaning services

A client with a long-term illness or disability may be entitled to personal assistance under the Disability Services Act. If the client has a personal assistant, it will be determined if the assistant's tasks also include cleaning assistance. If not, Disability Services will be consulted together with the client.

The client is entitled to a service voucher for cleaning if they are over 65 years old, have functional limitations, and are financially disadvantaged. Going forward, service vouchers for cleaning services will be applied for from Senior Info (during the transition period, this applies only in Espoo). The client may be granted supplementary social assistance to cover the remaining client charges.

If the client has, due to their life situation, a temporary need for cleaning assistance or clearance cleaning, supplementary social assistance may be granted for a justified reason. In municipalities with tendered contracts, contractual service providers are used.

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16 Childcare products and children's hobby and recreational expenses

Childcare products are generally included in the basic parts for children. Assistance for childcare products can be granted to families who are long-term recipients of social assistance. Clients are always instructed to primarily acquire products and supplies second-hand.

Need for support	The Wellbeing Services County policy from 1 January 2023 onwards
Childcare products	Combination stroller €200, stroller €120, double stroller €300. Support for double strollers can be granted if the family includes two children aged under 3. Child car seat, safety seat, or booster seat, max €100, unless rented from organisations like MLL or borrowed from a maternity clinic.
Children's hobbies and vacations	Long-term client families of Kela's basic social assistance can be granted supplementary social assistance for course or seasonal fees for one hobby/child/year, up to the following amounts: • For 0–5-year-olds €200/year • For 6–17-year-olds €500/year • Hobby supplies €120 Additionally, up to €150/child/year can be granted to children's trips and camps (excluding school camps or school trips).
Children's hobby supplies	For children's and adolescents' bicycles and helmets, assistance can be granted up to the following amounts (at most, every three years): • For 3–11-year-olds, a bicycle and helmet €150 • For 12–17-year-olds, a bicycle and helmet €200 • For 3–11-year-olds, a ski package €50 • For 12–17-year-olds, a ski package €100 • For 3–11-year-olds Ice skates €30 • For 12–17-year-olds Ice skates €40

17 Adult's hobby expenses

Adults are not entitled to supplementary social assistance for hobby equipment. However, assistance of up to €100 can be discretionarily granted for a bicycle if it is deemed necessary for the applicant. In addition, adults who are long-term or recurrent recipients of social assistance can be discretionarily granted a payment commitment for visits to public swimming pools or city gyms (e.g., a 3-month pass or a 10-visit pass).

Financial support for client charges for a supported holiday can be granted to both families and individuals living alone, who are eligible for basic social assistance. Support for travel expenses of a supported holiday may be granted on discretion, based on the most economical option. The decision should consider if the applicant can realistically participate in the supported holiday without support for travel expenses.

Young clients of support services for the transition to adulthood of individuals who arrived alone in Finland may receive financial assistance for hobbies if they are motivated and the activity promotes their well-being and functional ability. Hobby-related expenses can be covered up to EUR 50 per month, with a maximum of EUR 600 per calendar year. This assistance can be granted for several months at a time. Primarily, the young person should be directed to the most cost-effective and suitable options available (e.g., municipal gyms).

18 Expenses related to studying

Compulsory education was extended until the age of 18 in August 2021. Simultaneously, upper secondary education became free of charge. This reform applies to those who completed their basic education after 1 January 2021, mainly impacting young people born in 2005 and later. Extended compulsory education and free upper secondary education are being implemented for one age group at a time. The new law does not apply to those whose compulsory education ended before 1 January 2021. The first age group included in the extended compulsory education consists of individuals who completed their basic education in 2021. Individuals who completed their basic education before this period are not subject to extended compulsory education.

Going forward, individuals entitled to free upper secondary education will no longer receive a supplementary allowance for study materials, as these materials will be provided for free. Students entitled to free education may receive financial aid for upper secondary education for adults. You can visit Kela's website for more information on free education and school transport subsidies. Supplementary allowance for the purchase of study materials can be granted under certain conditions for individuals not entitled to free education. For more information, visit <https://www.kela.fi/financial-aid-for-students-study-grant>.

If a student does not receive supplementary allowance for the purchase of study materials, or the allowance does not cover textbooks and other supplies, supplementary social assistance can be granted to students or families who are already receiving basic social assistance. This supplementary social assistance may also be granted to supplement the allowance for study materials. The amount of supplementary allowance for study materials granted to the student (for the month of application) is deducted from the assistance. Expenses related to studying include

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items such as upper secondary education textbooks/electronic licences, a calculator required for studies (up to a maximum of €150 for those completing advanced mathematics/physics), matriculation exam fees, student union membership fees, and any required work clothes or other necessary supplies according to a statement/list by the educational institution statement/list or the teacher's declaration, according to the cheapest option. The applicant is informed that the supplementary allowance for the purchase of study materials is only intended for the acquisition of study materials.

If the course books are used in the upper secondary school, it is recommended to buy them second-hand and for each period at a time so that the possible supplementary allowance for the purchase of study materials covers the cost of the books as effectively as possible. If a social assistance is granted for upper secondary school books in the form of a payment commitment, the books in question are listed in the payment commitment.

If the educational institution requires the student to purchase their own computer, a written statement from the institution should be submitted. Additionally, the possibility of purchasing a used computer must be examined. A student can receive €300 as supplementary social assistance for the purchase of a computer.

Commuting expenses for students are not taken into account as expenses because full-time students in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area receive a 45% discount for the zones they choose. Transport subsidy can be applied from Kela for longer commutes to study.

If the National Certificates of Language Proficiency (YKI) test is required to demonstrate language proficiency in applying for a job or a place of study, it is justified to grant assistance for it. However, if a client does not require the YKI course or test for anything other than a citizenship application, or if they realistically do not have a chance to pass the test, it is not justified to grant assistance for them. The assistance is granted on a one-off basis.

If the portion of the student loan considered in Kela's calculation is no longer actually available for the client, they are encouraged to clarify the situation with Kela.

18.1 Course fees, language learning, and translation costs

Finnish/Swedish language course fees can be supported up to €100 per month, but it is good to discuss paid courses with the client to avoid, for instance, enrolment at an inappropriate level and missing the value of the paid course.

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Assistance can be granted for Finnish/Swedish textbooks or a dictionary. The assistance is paid against a receipt.

Social assistance can be granted for translations in the case of a marriage certificate or birth certificate if the Digital and Population Data Services Agency requires such documents for the purpose of registering the person. Assistance can also be granted for study certificates (promotion of employment).

As a general rule, translation costs are not reimbursed for the purpose of applying for a name change, nor are any Digital and Population Data Services Agency costs reimbursed in cases of a name change.

If the client applies to the Finnish National Board of Education for recognition of a degree, assistance can be granted for the Finnish National Board of Education's application fee and the costs of translating the study certificates.

19 Roma skirt

Supplementary social assistance can be granted for a Roma skirt if the client is a long-term or recurrent recipient of basic social assistance and consistently wears the Roma skirt (skirts for occasional use, such as for celebrations, are funded less frequently than once a year). If the client has moved from another municipality, it may be necessary to verify with the previous municipality when social assistance was granted for the skirt last time. Social assistance can also be granted, at discretion, for the repair of a Roma skirt. In such cases, social assistance is primarily provided in the form of a payment commitment to a tailor. Other Roma clothing is included in the basic amount of social assistance.

Need for support	The Wellbeing Services County policy from 1 January 2023 onwards
Roma skirt	€420 once a year

20 Public guardianship fees

The Digital and Population Data Services Agency charges those under public guardianship a fee for guardianship services as well as an auditing fee. Essential guardianship fees and auditing charges are taken into account in the calculation for supplementary social assistance based on the guardian's notice or invoice. These fees are considered as expenses for the month they are due. The client must submit a bank statement for the past two months, and the funds in the accounts are

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taken into account in the calculation and the decision. If the client can afford it, the responsibility for paying the fees falls on the client.

If the client has regular income, such as a pension, and the client's basic social assistance calculation is surplus on a monthly basis, the guardian should set aside funds to the client's guardianship account for the payment of the guardianship fee. In this case, no supplementary social assistance is granted for this fee. Up-to-date public guardianship fee should be checked.

It should be noted if the client is also a client of the housing services, the guardianship fee should be considered as an expense for the client when making the decision on client fees. This way, there should be no need to apply for social assistance.

21 Social assistance during a prison sentence

The upkeep provided in prison functions as the primary system of subsistence for those serving a prison sentence. Social assistance can be granted to those serving a prison sentence or their family members only for travel expenses for family visits arranged by the prison. Travel expenses for family visits are taken into account if they concern meetings between a child and a parent in prison. Social assistance is not generally granted for travel expenses related to meetings between adults. However, travel expenses for events such as the funeral of a close relative may be a justified reason to grant supplementary social assistance.

22 Obtaining an identification document from abroad

As of 1 January 2022, travel expenses related to obtaining an ID from abroad are not covered by Kela's basic social assistance. This is because the expense is deemed to arise in a foreign country or from travelling there. Such expenses include travel costs, application fees, postage, translation fees, and other fees related to obtaining a foreign passport or identity document. Applications related to these costs are considered on a case-by-case basis as discretionary social assistance. If necessary, a decision is made based on the most cost-effective option (the client must investigate whether it is possible to conduct the matter at the embassy of the respective country, for example, in other Nordic countries).

22.1 Citizenship applications, residence permits, and other documents

Supplementary social assistance is not granted for citizenship applications or the costs of obtaining a residence permit. The costs of citizenship applications are always the client's responsibility.

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The costs of residence permits are included in basic social assistance, and thus fall under Kela's responsibility. The first residence permit is not covered by basic social assistance, but it may be granted for subsequent ones. An exception to this is a new-born child born in Finland. Kela may grant basic social assistance for obtaining a residence permit for the child if the child's family meets the criteria for permanent residence and applies for assistance within three months of the child's birth.

23 Social assistance for refugees

Refugees are granted supplementary and preventive social assistance based on the same principles as other applicants (Refer to the Instructions for granting supplementary and preventive social assistance in Western Uusimaa, 25 January 2023). The initial integration phase of a refugee involves special needs that must be taken into account when granting social assistance.

23.1 Initial financial support for refugees

The purpose of initial financial support is to cover all costs related to setting up a home, such as furnishing and essential household supplies, excluding a washing machine. Social assistance can be granted on a oneoff basis for the furnishing of an apartment and necessary household supplies as follows: 2 x Kela's basic amount for a person living alone/main client and €250/family member. In the case of family reunification, where the family reunification sponsor has already received a refugee's initial financial support, each family member is granted €250.

Need for support	The Wellbeing Services County policy from 1 January 2023 onwards
Initial financial support for refugees	2x Kela's basic amount for a person living alone and €250/family member. Separate assistance is granted for a washing machine.

When moving into a shared apartment, the initial support is divided equally among the residents moving in. For example, financial support for two people moving into a shared apartment: 2x the basic amount + €250 divided by two. For three people moving into a shared apartment: 2x the basic amount + €250 + €250 divided by three.

If a refugee already owns home appliances or furniture, Chapter 9.2. of the guidebook, which defines the allowances for household items, will apply.

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23.2 Winter clothing

A one-time grant €150 per person can be given for winter clothing if the client has arrived in the country as a quota refugee or through family reunification of refugees.

Clothing expenses are included in the basic amount of social assistance (Social Assistance Act, section 7a), and supplementary social assistance can be granted for other clothing (also for other social assistance clients) for special reasons and at the discretion of a social welfare professional.

23.3 Travel expenses

Local public transport fees are covered by the basic amount, but allowance can be granted for travel expenses if the client participates in a course and/or other regular activity meaningful for integration and does not receive Kela's labour market subsidy's maintenance allowance.

When a client arrives in Finland as a quota refugee or through family reunification, a two-zone ticket can be granted for the first month for taking care of necessary matters.

23.4 Return assistance for refugees

The wellbeing services county can provide refugees who are voluntarily returning to their home country or country of origin for reasons other than temporary stay with reasonable compensation for their travel and relocation costs. However, assistance is not granted to persons who have received Finnish citizenship. In addition, the wellbeing services county can provide a single person with return assistance corresponding to a maximum of two months' basic amount of social assistance and a family with return assistance corresponding to a maximum of four months' basic amount of social assistance.

A prerequisite for return assistance is that the person should move from the country for reasons other than temporary stay. Proof of this can be provided, for example, in the form of a notification of change of address submitted to the Digital and Population Data Services Agency indicating the permanent purpose of the stay abroad.

The compensation for travel and relocation costs and the return assistance are granted on application by the wellbeing services county where the person resides. There is no set period for reimbursing the costs incurred in granting return assistance to a wellbeing services county.

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The person moving must take care of matters related to the relocation themselves.

The wellbeing services county may reclaim the compensation it has granted for travel and relocation costs and the return assistance if it turns out that the compensation or assistance has been paid on false grounds or without grounds. The reclaim application is submitted to the administrative court of the judicial district of the municipality.

24 Burial

Necessary costs incurred by a burial can be covered by social assistance if the deceased's estate lacks the funds to cover funeral expenses. The funeral allowance is granted as a recoverable sum from the deceased's estate, and the estate administrator is requested to submit the estate inventory deed upon its completion. An exception is a deceased person who had been receiving basic social assistance. In such cases, assistance can be granted for reasonable funeral expenses without a recovery decision. In this case, the estate's lack of funds is known, and an estate inventory deed is not needed to establish the assets.

The deceased's unpaid hospital bills or other invoices (including invoices that arrive after the deceased's passing) are not considered as expenses but are left as debts of the estate.

If the deceased was not a recipient of basic social assistance and the relatives apply for funeral costs before the funeral, the applicant is asked about the deceased's assets. If the relative presents the deceased's bank statement and tax decision, it will be determined whether the account has enough funds for the burial. If the deceased had immovable assets but no funds on their bank account, a payment commitment for the funeral will be granted as supplementary social assistance. A decision on recovery is made of the decision. If the bank statement and tax decision show no assets or funds, the funeral allowance is granted without recovery.

If the relatives apply for supplementary social assistance for funeral expenses after the funeral, the family members are requested to present an estate inventory deed indicating the financial situation of the deceased at the time of death. In the case that the estate inventory deed shows a loss, i.e., the funds are not sufficient to cover both funeral expenses and debts, but the estate's funds are sufficient to cover funeral expenses, funeral expenses are not reimbursed. The individuals responsible for administering the estate must always pay the funeral and settlement costs before any debts of the deceased or the estate. In the case of an estate that does not have any deposited assets but has surplus assets consisting of immovable or movable assets,

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family members are responsible for the realisation and funeral expenses.

If the family members have arranged the funeral and the invoice is higher than the contract prices, the invoice is usually reimbursed according to the contract prices of the tendered funeral parlour. Granting of supplementary social assistance for funeral expenses exceeding the contract price is always decided at the discretion of the social worker or counsellor.

The decision will state to whom it will be sent. The decision on recovery will state who is the applicant for the funeral expenses and their contact details with a telephone number. The decision on social assistance for burial is always made in the name of the deceased. The income and assets of the surviving spouse are taken into account when making the decision on funeral costs.

The criteria for granting funeral allowance are uniform regardless of religious affiliation or membership in a parish.

24.1 Funeral expenses and practical arrangements

The contract prices include the funeral parlour expenses and the parish expenses, for which the parish sends an invoice to the funeral parlour. Social assistance does not cover the costs of a death notice/obituary, tombstone, engraving, or expenses resulting from the memorial service. Transport costs arising from burials in another municipality are also not taken into account.

If the person has died abroad, relatives are advised to contact the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Supplementary social assistance is not granted for the transportation costs of the deceased. Supplementary social assistance is also not granted for funerals abroad.

Supplementary social assistance is granted according to the cheapest option for travel expenses arising from attendance at the funeral of a close relative (parents, spouse, children, siblings, grandparents, parents-in-law) for a person entitled to basic social assistance. Up to €50 can be granted for funeral flowers. Allowance is not granted for funeral trips abroad.

24.2 Estate inventory of a deceased person with no assets

The responsibility and costs of making an estate inventory lie with the relatives of the deceased. The role of social services is to refer the relatives to services such as the Legal Aid Office.

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24.3 A deceased person with no relatives

According to section 23 of the Burial Act, the following persons are responsible for funeral arrangements in the following order: 1) the person whom the deceased wished to handle the funeral arrangements, 2) the surviving spouse or cohabiting partner and closest heirs of the deceased, 3) other close person of the deceased, 4) the municipality of residence. As of 1 January 2023, the responsible party within the municipality is not clear. This section will be clarified after the transition period.

The police or another party may send a report about a deceased person with no known relatives. If the police report a deceased person with no known relatives, the police are instructed to make a written notification to the District Court in order to appoint an estate administrator. In this case, it is possible that the funeral costs will be borne by the social services, in which case a recovery will be made from possible assets in the estate. The decision to recover costs is sent to the deceased's estate, unless the name of the estate administrator is known.

If the social services are notified of a deceased person with no known relatives through other channels, the social services will arrange the funeral. A social worker or counsellor will send a written notification about the deceased to the District Court in order to appoint an estate administrator. The notification must include all available information about the deceased person.