

# Applying for housing benefit for the first time or for a new application

If you have only a low income, you can apply for housing subsidies to relieve your housing costs.

## Competent Department

- [Die Senatorin für Bau, Mobilität und Stadtentwicklung | Referat Wohngeld](#)

## Basic information

Housing benefit is intended to enable you to live appropriately and in a way that is suitable for your family. You can receive housing benefit as

- rent subsidy for tenants or subtenants of living space or for residents of a home (residents of a home as defined by the respective state law, this also includes people with disabilities who are not only temporarily admitted to special forms of housing for the provision of integration assistance) or as
- burden allowance for owners of their own home or condominium

apply for this.

If the costs of accommodation are covered by another social benefit provider, you are not entitled to housing benefit. This is the case if you already receive

- citizen's allowance or
- basic income support in old age or
- in the event of reduced earning capacity or
- benefits for living expenses or
- receive another transfer benefit for which the costs of accommodation have been taken into account in the calculation.

## Requirements

You must be eligible for housing assistance as an applicant. You are eligible for a housing subsidy as:

- Tenant of housing,
- Subtenant of housing,
- Residents of a cooperative apartment or a congregate apartment,
- residents of a home,

- tenants with tenancy-like rights of use, in particular holders of a tenancy-like permanent right of residence,
- owners of an apartment building (three or more apartments), a commercial building or a business enterprise, if you live in this building,
- owners of a one- or two-family house in which you live, but which also contains business premises to such an extent that it can no longer be considered a home,
- owners of a full-time agricultural business whose residential part is not separated from the business part.
- women living in women's shelters, even if the remuneration is calculated on a daily basis.
- a person who is placed in homeless shelters or third party housing by the homelessness authority, even if the user fee (which is not, for example, calculated according to the number of days or graded according to adults and children) is paid to the homelessness authority,

You are eligible for a housing subsidy as:

- Owner of a home or condominium,
- Owners of a small housing estate,
- Owners of a part-time agricultural business,
- the owner of a full-time agricultural business, if the residential part and the business part are separated from each other and the residential part is eligible for a housing allowance,
- owners of a permanent right of residence similar to ownership
- holders of hereditary building rights and those who are entitled to transfer of ownership of the building or dwelling or to transfer or grant of hereditary building rights.
- The owner of the living space must occupy the living space and bear the burden for this.

## What documents do I need?

- Comment

It is best to contact the responsible office in advance to ask for the documents required for you. In principle, you must provide the following proof of housing costs or burden:

- Documents about transfer services

For example, assistance with living costs, social benefits, basic benefits for old age and reduced earning capacity, benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz)

- Certificate of merit

Increased income-related expenses are to be proven according to the tax assessment notice, current notices on pension payments of any kind, on benefits according to the

Third Book of the Social Code - Employment Promotion (for example, unemployment benefit I, short-time allowance, transitional allowance)

- Proof of sick pay and other wage replacement benefits
- for self-employed persons/traders: last tax assessment notice
- Income of all household members

To be on the safe side, please declare all income of all household members in money or money's worth, regardless of its source and regardless of whether the income is taxable or not. In this way, you will avoid unnecessary queries. The housing allowance office will then check which of the incomes are chargeable.

- Students: Certificate of enrollment
- If applicable: proof of health insurance
- If applicable: proof of pension or life insurance coverage
- If applicable: annex to the application for housing allowance in case of expenses for the fulfillment of legal maintenance obligations.
- If applicable: severely disabled person's certificate (if applicable, proof of care allowance payments)
- If applicable: proof of residence status

In the case of foreigners from third countries, proof of residence status and duration of stay must be submitted.

Other EU citizens must submit a certificate of right of residence/EU residence permit and registration with the registration office.

- You will also need the following documents to apply for a rent subsidy:

Landlord Certification Form (usually provided by housing assistance agencies).

- You will need the following documents to apply for an encumbrance subsidy:
  - Form for determining the burden from the debt service
  - Proof of the burden from the debt service (certificate of borrowed funds, last payment voucher, interest and redemption schedule, if applicable)
  - Proof of the amount of the purchase price or construction costs (also for modernizations)
  - Real estate tax assessment notice/proof of the amount of ground rents
  - If applicable, proof of income from the transfer of rooms and areas to third parties
  - Calculation of living space in accordance with DIN 277 or the Living Space Ordinance (WoFIV, building application)
  - If applicable, notice of the building subsidy
  - Proof of ownership, excerpt from land register, purchase contract

## Procedure

- It is best to contact the relevant office in advance to ask for the documents you need.

- You submit your application in writing using the form provided or by using the online service. You can send the form by mail to the housing allowance office responsible for you or hand it in personally.
- The authority will examine your application and send you a decision.
- If the housing allowance is approved, it is usually granted for 12 months.

## Legal bases

- [§ 26 Sozialgesetzbuch Erstes Buch \(SGB I\)](#)
- [§ 22 Absatz 1 Wohngeldgesetz \(WoGG\)](#)
- [Wohngeldverordnung \(WoGV\)](#)
- [Wohngeld-Verwaltungsvorschrift \(WoGVwV\)](#)
- [§ 1 Wohngeldgesetz \(WoGG\)](#)

## More information

There is the following information:

In order to prevent or detect the unlawful claiming of housing allowance, the housing allowance authority may regularly check the details of all household members by comparing data - also in automated form - in particular with the data office of the pension insurance.

For example, it is allowed to compare

- whether Bürgergeld (formerly Arbeitslosengeld II) is being paid during the period in which the housing allowance is being received,
- whether employment subject to compulsory insurance or marginal employment exists
- or the amount of investment income for which an exemption order has been issued.

It is also possible to compare the registration addresses, housing status and dates of change of address with the registration office. It is also possible to call up accounts at the Federal Central Tax Office. Suspected cases of fraud are always reported to the public prosecutor's office.

Through these checks, the housing allowance authority can determine, for example,

- whether housing benefit is being received more than once,
- whether transfer payments leading to exclusion from housing benefit are being received at the same time,
- whether the information provided in the housing benefit application is correct
  - income from gainful employment,
  - income from one or more pensions,
  - income from capital gains (interest or dividends),
- whether, in the case of original unemployment, the payment of unemployment benefits has been discontinued (for example, due to taking up a new gainful activity), and
- whether the original dwelling for which housing benefit was paid is still actually being used.

The review is permitted up to the expiry of ten years after notification of the associated housing allowance.

### **What deadlines must be paid attention to?**

You submit the application no later than the last day of the month from which you wish to apply for housing allowance. As a rule, you will receive the housing allowance from the first of the month in which your application was submitted to the housing allowance office.

### **How long does it take to process**

A decision on the application will be made immediately. The processing time depends, among other things, on the completeness of your information and the submission of the evidence required for processing the application.

Longer processing times are not at your expense: the entitlement to housing allowance is checked from the month in which the application is submitted. If you are already entitled to housing benefit, you will not lose any housing benefit.

### **What are the costs?**

None

## **Frequently asked Questions**

### **• Who is a household member?**

Household member is the person entitled to housing allowance.

Household members are also:

- the spouse or partner who is not permanently separated
- the person living in a community of responsibility and responsibility for others
- siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews
- parents-in-law, children-in-law, stepparents
- parents, children, siblings of the life partner
- Sister-in-law, brother-in-law and his children, niece/nephew of the spouse
- Foster children regardless of their age and foster parents

### **• What income should be taken into account?**

Annual income within the meaning of the Housing Benefit Act is the sum of the positive income (gross less income-related expenses) in accordance with Section 2 (1) and (2) of the Income Tax Act plus the income in accordance with Section 14 (2) of

the Housing Benefit Act less the deductions for taxes and social security contributions of each household member.

For the calculation of housing benefit, a forecast decision is made, i.e. what income is to be expected. The last 12 months prior to the application can serve as the basis for this forecast decision.

All taxable and tax-free income must always be carefully declared.

### Examples

- for employees: Wage/salary (certificate of earnings)
- for pensioners: pensions of all kinds (pension notices, pension notification)
- for income taxpayers (if proof cannot be provided by the certificate of earnings):  
all income, to be proven by  
Income tax prepayment notice  
Last income tax assessment notice  
Last income tax return
- for recipients of maintenance payments: Proof of the maintenance payer, the type, amount and recipient of the benefits
- for children: Proof of child benefit
- for unemployed persons: notice of approval from the employment office regarding unemployment benefit or unemployment benefit II / citizen's allowance
- for trainees or students: Proof of the type, amount and recipient of the training grant (e.g. BAföG, vocational training grant)
- for recipients of social assistance or war victims' welfare: proof of the type, amount and recipient of the benefits
- Proof of other benefits: (e.g. proof of interest income or other investment income, rental income, third-party benefits, including on a loan basis if applicable, benefits in kind, scholarships)

### • **What is a "negative certificate"?**

If you apply for housing allowance in another municipality or in another federal state, the responsible authority usually requires the submission of a negative certificate. This is then issued on request by the housing allowance office of the former place of residence. This is to check whether and until when housing benefit was paid.

The issuing of the negative certificate is free of charge. A personal appearance to get the certificate is not required. The application is made informally. It is also possible to apply for the negative certificate by telephone. An authorized person is entitled to take out the negative certificate at the housing allowance office on behalf of the applicant. The power of attorney must be presented.

### • **What do I need to communicate?**

Changes to be reported immediately include:

- Number of household members,
- Decrease in rent or burden,
- increase in income, and
- Change in living quarters, including within the home.