

# Statistics on Social Assistance 2018

**The number of social assistance recipients and assistance households decreased in 2018. Approximately 206,000 households received social assistance in 2018. This corresponds to nearly one of twenty households in Sweden. It was the fourth consecutive year that the number of social assistance recipients decreased. The amount of assistance per household increased because of a decrease in the number of assistance recipients while the total expenditure for assistance increased.**

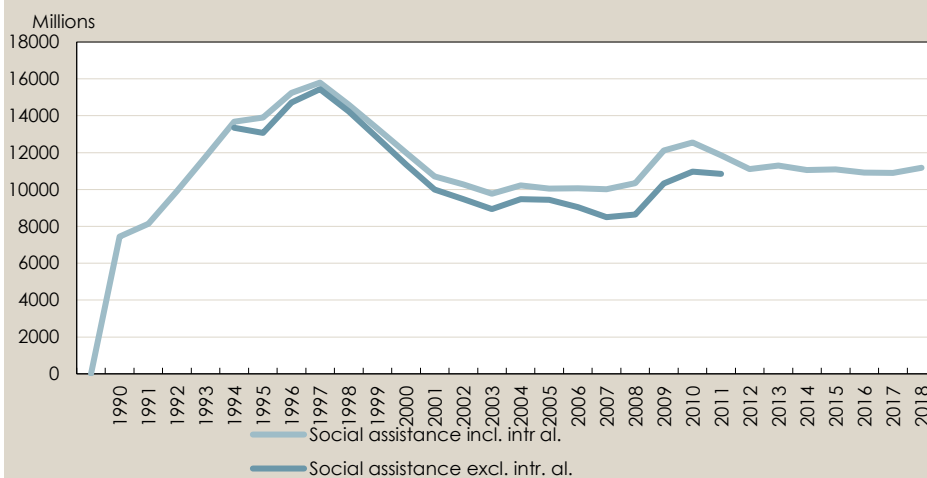
## Assistance over time

The number of assistance recipients and assistance households decreased in 2018. It was the fourth consecutive year that the number of assistance households decreased. The number of social assistance recipients was just over 394,000. Of these about 120,000 were women, 135,000 men and 139,000 children.

The amount of assistance per household increased because of a decrease in the number of assistance recipients while the total expenditure for assistance increased.

In 2018, the municipalities paid out SEK 11.2 billion in social assistance. Payments increased by 3 percent in fixed prices compared to 2017. This was the steepest increase since 2010. During the period 1994-1999, assistance expenditure was highest and has since declined. With the financial crisis in 2009-2010, the payment of social assistance increased but did not reach the levels during the period 1994-1999. In recent year's expenditure for assistance have leveled out, and is at a lower level compared to the years 2009-2010 (figure 1).

**Figure 1. Assistance (Including and excluding introductory allowance) 1990–2018, in million SEK (fixed prices) 2018**



Source: Register of Social Assistance National Board of Health and Welfare

## Age and type of municipality matters

The need for social assistance differs between different age groups. The most common age group in 2018 was 30-39 year olds. More than 40 percent of all the nation's adult beneficiaries were aged 30-49. Of these assistance recipients, 69 percent were foreign-born.

There are many reasons why women and men cannot support themselves and their families, but most often, it is related to unemployment, illness or social barriers of various kinds. About half of all adult beneficiaries were unemployed in 2018.

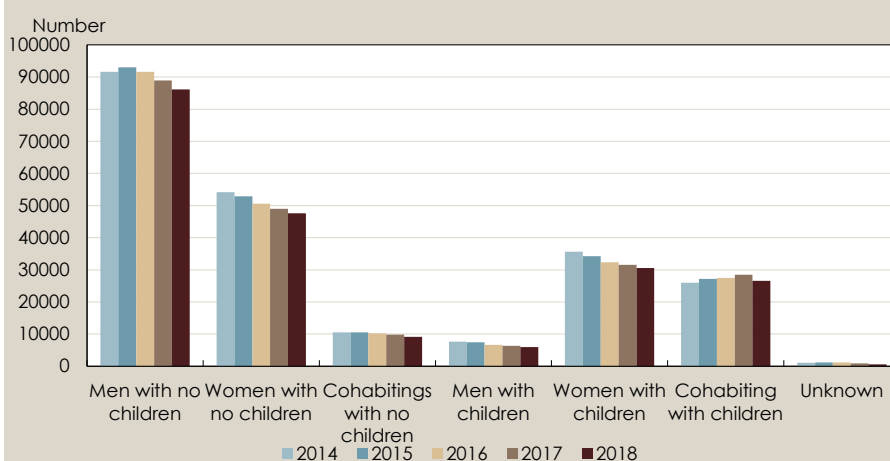
The proportion of residents with social assistance varies greatly between different types of municipalities. For example, the population composition, the labor market and the education level of the population affect the overall need for social assistance. In Malmö, Högsby and Filipstad, more than 9 percent of the population received social assistance. The municipalities Ale, Sundbyberg, Hofors and Örskelljunga had less than 1 percent received social assistance.

For Stockholm and Gothenburg, the statistics are reported at city district level and there are large differences between different districts.

## The most common assistance household

The most common assistance household is a man with no children (Figure 2). If, on the other hand, one takes into account the number of households by type of household in total in the population, then social assistance is most common among women with children.

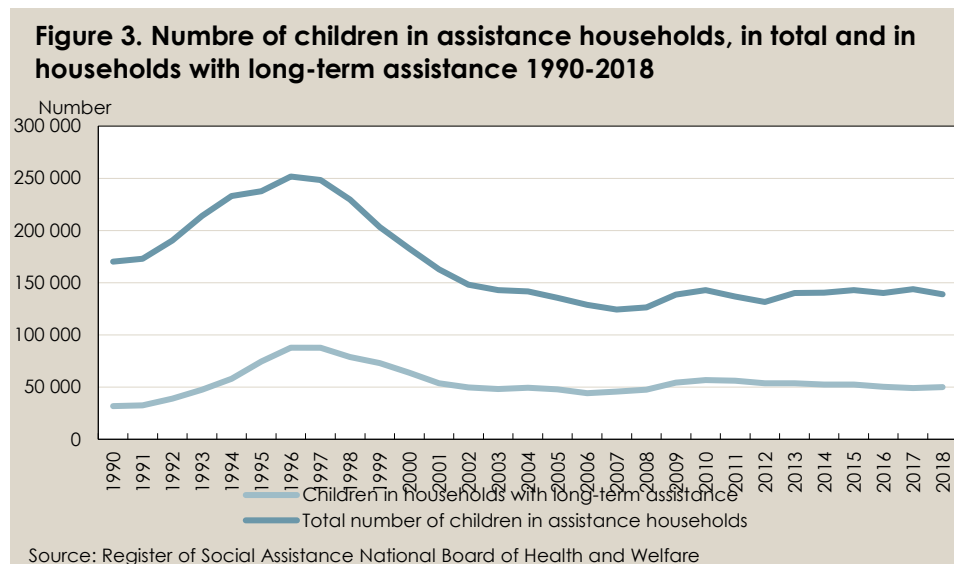
**Figure 2. Number of recipient households, by type of household 2014–2018**



## Children in assistance households

In 2018, the number of children in assistance households was 139,356, which is a decrease by 3 percent since 2017. The number of children in households with

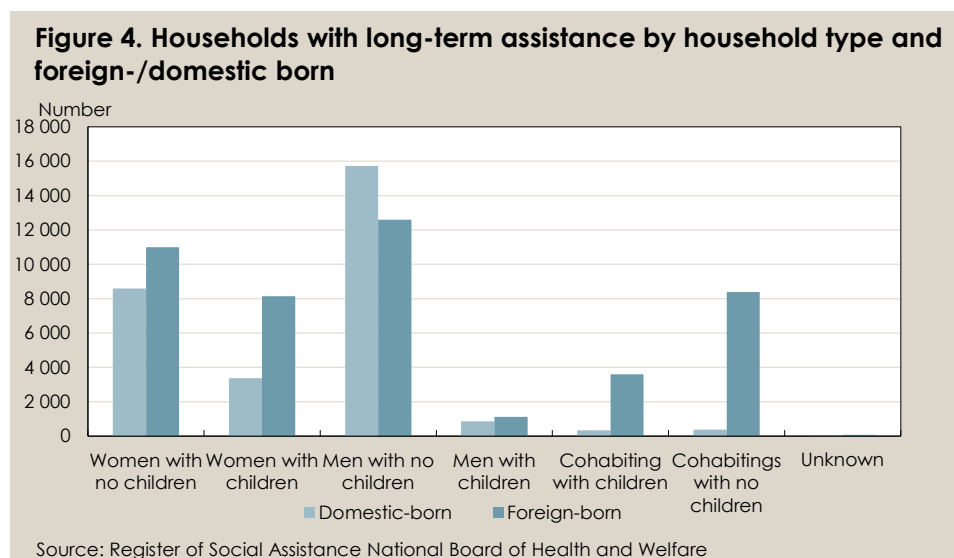
long-term assistance in 2018 has increased by 1 percent since 2017 to 50,031, and has been relatively constant over the past nine years (Figure 3).



## Long-term assistance

In 2018, 36 percent of the adult beneficiaries received long-term assistance, i.e. assistance for 10 months or more. Of these, about half were women, and two thirds were foreign-born. This corresponds to the same levels as in 2017.

The most common long-term assistance household are men without children, both for domestic and foreign-born households (Figure 4). Among foreign-born households, cohabiting couples with and without children are more common than for domestic-born households.



**Social assistance**

Social assistance is composed of two parts: direct assistance and general assistance. Direct assistance is supposed to help cover daily living expenses such as groceries, clothing, and rent payments, utility bills (electricity, telephone, Radio/TV license, gas etc.), travel expenses (for work), home insurance and union costs. General assistance covers other necessary expenses such as childcare costs, health related costs, medicine and costs for dental care.

For more information see

[www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik/statistikefteramne/ekonomisktbistand](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik/statistikefteramne/ekonomisktbistand)

**More information**

You can find more tables, graphs and information in the following Excel file (in Swedish, but with English list of terms):

<https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/statistics-and-data/statistics/>

If you want to use our statistical database (in Swedish):

[www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik-och-data/statistik/statistikdatabasen/](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik-och-data/statistik/statistikdatabasen/)

**Contact information:**

Heval Beydogan (questions regarding statistics)

Telephone: +46 (0)75-247 30 00

E-mail: [heval.beydogan@socialstyrelsen.se](mailto:heval.beydogan@socialstyrelsen.se)

Antonio Espinoza (questions regarding statistics)

Telephone: +46 (0)75-247 30 00

E-mail: [antonio.espinoza@socialstyrelsen.se](mailto:antonio.espinoza@socialstyrelsen.se)

Anette Agenmark (subject specialist)

Telephone: +46 (0)75-247 30 00

E-mail: [anette.agenmark@socialstyrelsen.se](mailto:anette.agenmark@socialstyrelsen.se)

Samira Aqil, (subject specialist)

Telephone: +46 (0)75-247 30 00

E-mail: [samira.aqil@socialstyrelsen.se](mailto:samira.aqil@socialstyrelsen.se)