

Statistics on Financial Assistance 2020

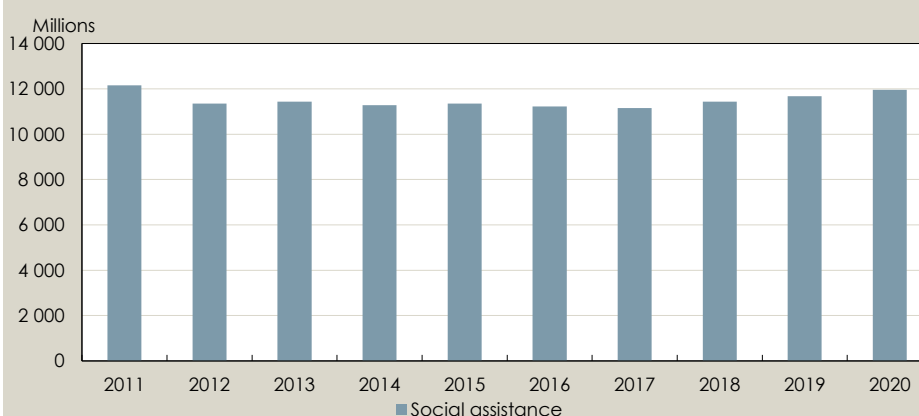
The number of social financial assistance recipients and assistance households decreased in 2020. Around 198.000 households received social assistance in 2020. This corresponds to one in twenty households in Sweden. It was the fifth consecutive year the number of social assistance recipients decreased. The amount of assistance per household increased slightly, as well as the average time period for which the assistance was granted.

Assistance over time

The number of assistance recipients and assistance households decreased in 2020. It was the fifth consecutive year the number of assistance households decreased. The number of assistance recipients was close to 382.000. About 115.000 were women, 129.000 were men, and 130.000 were children.

In 2020, the municipalities paid SEK 11.9 billion in financial assistance. The payments increased by 2.5 percent in fixed prices compared to 2019. One explanation for the increase is that the average period that a household received financial assistance increased slightly, from 6.9 to 7.1 months. The assistance has increased the past two years after being relatively even over the previous five to six years (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Assistance 2011–2020, in million SEK (fixed prices) 2020



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

Age and municipality matters

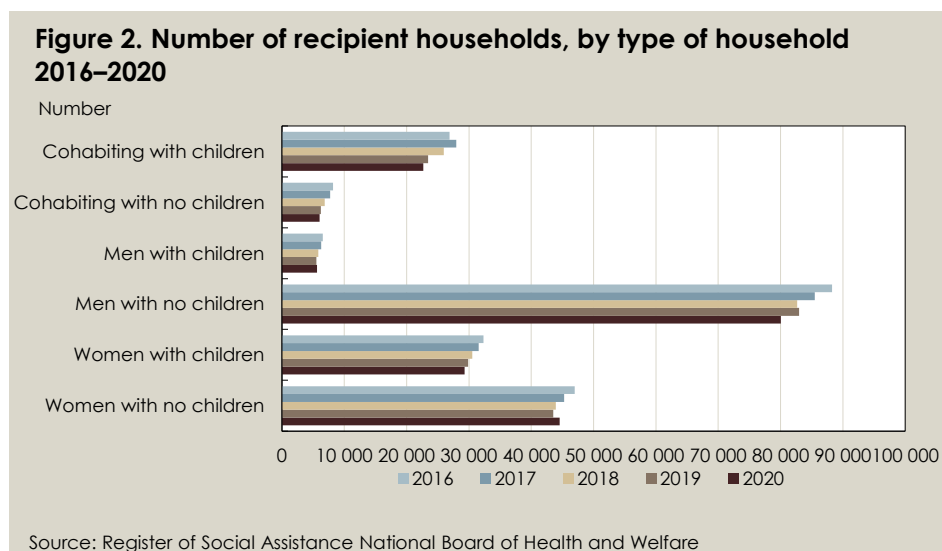
The need for social assistance differs between different age groups. The most common age group in the country in 2020 was 30–39 year olds. Of all adult recipients, just over a fifth were aged 30–39. Of the assistance recipients in total, 64 percent were foreign-born.

There are many reasons why women and men cannot support themselves and their families, but most often, the need for support was related to unemployment, illness or social barriers of various kinds. About half of all adult beneficiaries were unemployed in 2019 [1].

The proportion of people with assistance varies greatly between different municipalities. For example, the population composition, the labor market and the education level of the population affect the overall need for social assistance. In Filipstad and Hällefors more than 11 percent of the population received social assistance, whereas the corresponding figure in Olofström and Solna was less than 1 percent. The national average in 2020 was 3.6 percent. Stockholm and Gothenburg also report at city district level, and show a relatively large variance between different districts (see table 14 and 15 in the appendix).

The most common assistance household

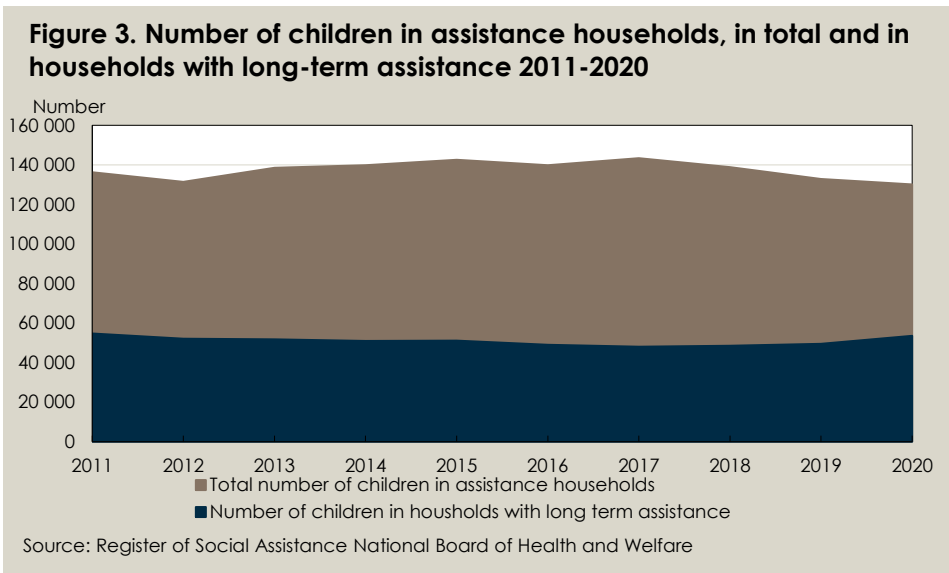
The most common assistance household is single men with no children (Figure 2). If, on the other hand, one takes into account the different types of household in total in the population, then social assistance is most common among women with children. Just over 15 percent of all single women with children received financial assistance in 2020.



Children in assistance households

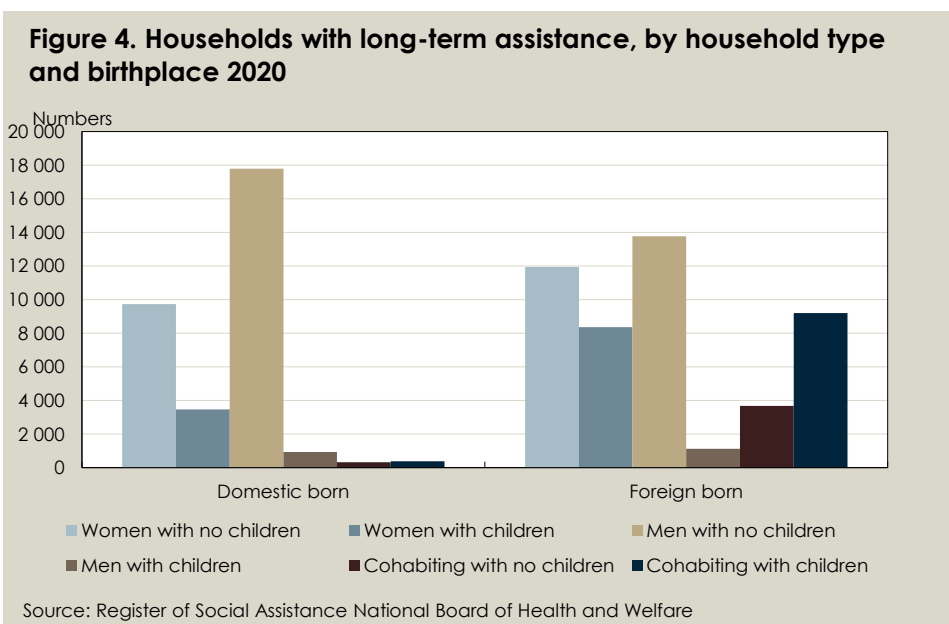
In 2020, the number of children in assistance households was just above 130,000, which is a decrease by just over 2 percent since 2019. The number of children in households with long-term assistance in 2020 increased by 13,600 to

just above 53.000 in 2020. The number of children in households with long-term assistance has been relatively constant for a number of years, however there was a small increase in 2020 (Figure 3).



Long-term assistance

In 2020, 40 percent of the adult beneficiaries received long-term assistance, i.e. assistance for 10 months or more. Approximately 60 percent of these households consisted of households where one of the applicants or co-applicants was foreign-born.



The most common household with long-term assistance was single men without children, both among domestic and foreign-born. Long-term assistance among married couples/cohabiting households is in nine out of ten cases paid to foreign-born recipients (Figure 4).

Social financial assistance

Social financial 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, rent, utility bills (electricity, telephone, gas etc.), travel expenses (for work), home insurance and union membership costs. General assistance covers other necessary expenses for childcare, health related, medicine and dental care.

For more information:

www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik/statistikefteramne/ekonomisktbistand

References

1. National Board of Health and Welfare. Downloaded 2021-06-07 from website: <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/statistik/2020-10-6965.pdf>

More information

You can find more tables, graphs and information in Swedish, but with English list of terms her (select *Tillhörande dokument och bilagor*): <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/

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