

Department of Registers and Statistics
Statistik 2
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Statistical register's production and quality

National Register of Social Assistance

The following is a description of the National Register of Social Assistance, which records information on persons and households that have received maintenance support and assistance for other living expenses under Chapter 4, Sections 1-2 of the Social Services Act (2001:453), or introduction compensation under *Lagen om introduktionsersättning för flyktingar och vissa andra utlänningar* (Act on introduction compensation for refugees and certain other foreigners) (1992:1068).

Reference period

The National Register of Social Assistance has existed since 1985 and is updated annually.

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Production of the statistical register

F1 Context of the statistical register

The National Board of Health and Welfare manages a number of personal ID number-based registers used as a basis for statistics and research on health and social services. The National Register of Social Assistance (EKB) is one of the National Board of Health and Welfare's social services registers. EKB is an individual register whose population consists of individuals who belong to households that have received financial assistance.

F2 Design

F2.1 Outline of register content

Register data refer to persons and households that received financial assistance in the form of:

- Maintenance support and assistance for other living expenses according to Chapter 4, Section 1 and, where applicable, Chapter 4, Section 2 of the Social Services Act (2001:453) (SoL).
- Introduction compensation under the Act on introduction compensation for refugees and certain other foreigners (1992:1068) between 1993 and 2011.

The municipalities report information such as personal ID number, sex, assistance municipality, amount of assistance, persons born in Sweden or abroad, and impediments to maintenance. Then certain data are collected from Statistics Sweden's (SCB) Total Population Register (RTB).

F2.2 Data sources

The primary data source is the individual municipalities' data on persons and households receiving financial assistance. Municipalities are required to extract this information from their administrative systems and report it to the National Board of Health and Welfare, where it is compiled into a national register.

F2.3 Time frame

Data are submitted from each municipality to the National Board of Health and Welfare by 15 May on the year following the calendar year, and this followed by quality-assurance work at the National Board of Health and Welfare. The Register is updated with data for each calendar year in June of the following year. Updates and corrections occur even after an annual constituency is first made available, but to such a limited extent that it should not affect register use.

F2.4 Collection procedure

F2.4.1 Data collection methods and providers

The obligation to report data to EKB is based on Section 2 of the Ordinance regarding the obligation of social welfare committees to provide statistical data (1981:1370) (*Förordningen om skyldighet för socialnämnderna att lämna statistiska uppgifter*). The National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations on the

obligation of social welfare committees to provide statistical information regarding financial assistance (HSLF-FS 2015:30) specify what must be reported and how.¹ The regulations have been drawn up after consultation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

Each social welfare committee must provide information on persons and households that have been granted financial assistance under SoL during a calendar year. Information on financial assistance, maintenance impediments and municipal labour-market measures must refer to the calendar month to which the assistance applies and must be submitted by the 15th of the following month. Information on the reasons why individuals and households are no longer receiving financial assistance must be provided per calendar month no later than the 15th of the following month. The data must be submitted to the National Board of Health and Welfare through its electronic file transfer services.²

The process of extracting data from their administrative systems is the responsibility of the municipalities and may therefore differ from one municipality to another. The data are collected directly from municipalities but also via municipal system suppliers.

F2.4.2 Measurement

Data are collected in accordance with applicable regulations.³ Clarification of what must be collected can be found on the National Board of Health and Welfare's website (reporting). The municipalities themselves control the administrative systems used to hold this information as well as the processes for extracting information from them.

F2.4.3 Defective deliveries

The municipalities report by submitting data in the form of text files via the *Filip* portal on the National Board of Health and Welfare's website. During reporting, automated feedback reports any irregularities in the form of an error/warning. If the feedback indicates errors, the reported file will not be accepted. Comparisons with previous years' reporting are also made and sent to the municipalities, which then have the opportunity to correct both new and old material. Reminders for non-deliveries or unresolved errors are mainly sent by e-mail, but telephone contact from the National Board of Health and Welfare's reporting function also occurs.

F2.5 Processing with review

F2.5.1 Coding

Not applicable.

F2.5.2 Duplicate check

Duplicate checks are carried out to prevent municipalities from submitting files containing several lines with identical content. Households and individuals receiving assistance are only reported once at county and national level. This requires individual and households receiving benefits to have correct personal ID numbers, otherwise there is a risk of double counting. The total number of individuals and households receiving assistance in the municipalities is therefore not

¹ The regulations are published at the web addresses listed in Annex 1.

² See Sections 2-4 HSLF-FS 2015:30 and Section 7 HSLF-FS 2018:12.

³ HSLF-FS 2015-30, last amended by HSLF-FS 2018:12.

the same as the number of units of data reported for the county and Sweden as a whole. A prerequisite for this is that residents of households and individuals receiving assistance have correct personal ID numbers, otherwise there is a risk of double counting.

F2.5.3 Reasonableness check

The reported material is processed by the National Board of Health and Welfare through various numerical checks, correction of incorrect values and calculations. During the audit, a number of contacts were made with informants and errors were corrected. The statistics are supplemented with data from the RTB at Statistics Sweden.

F2.5.4 Imputations

No imputations are made.

F2.5.5 Model-based calculations

No model-based calculations are made.

F2.5.6 Comparisons with other registers and data sources

No comparisons with other data sources are relevant.

F3 Implementation

F3.1 Quantitative information

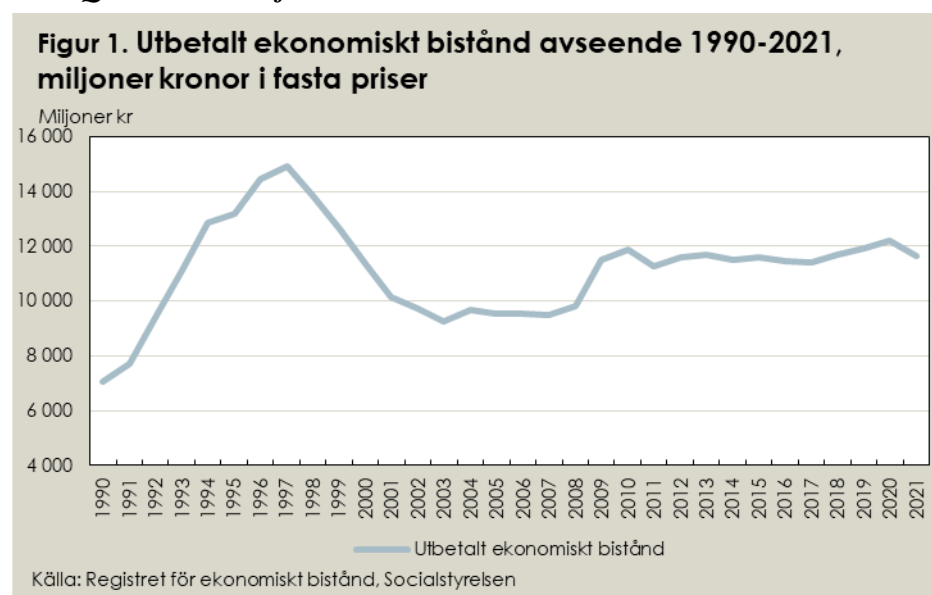


Figure 1 shows social assistance paid from 1990 onwards. In 2021, municipalities paid out SEK 11.6 billion in social assistance. Disbursements decreased by 4.5% in real terms compared to 2020. Assistance disbursements have increased over the last two years after remaining relatively stable over the previous five or six years.

F3.2 Deviations from the design

From January 2012, statistics on social assistance are also collected on a monthly basis. Some municipalities have incorrectly reported the month of disbursement instead of the month to which the assistance relates. Most of these errors are due to the fact that social assistance for January has been reported in December 2019. The single most important source of uncertainty is inadequate reporting of the month to which the assistance relates. This means that amounts and related data may be attributed to the wrong month. This applies mainly to the months of January and December.

Statistical register quality

K1 Relevance

K1.1 Objectives and information needs

K1.1.1 Register objective

The purpose of the Register is to provide a basis for statistics and research on social assistance in the form of maintenance support or other financial assistance under the Social Services Act.

K1.1.2 Information needs of register users

The Register is used as a basis for producing official statistics and other statistical products at the National Board of Health and Welfare. The Register is also used for analysis, investigation and evaluation by the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Government Offices and the media, and in research.

Data for official statistics are collected to ensure that the public and social actors are well informed about conditions and developments in health and health care so that an objective debate can take place and informed decisions can be made.

K1.2 Register content

K1.2.1 Object and population

The target objects are of two types, namely (i) households that received social assistance at some point during the year (assistance households) and (ii) household members of these households (assistance recipients). These form two populations consisting of all assistance households in the country and all assistance recipients in Sweden.

K1.2.2 Variables

The register contains information about the reporting and assistance recipient municipality, personal ID number or temporary ID number and gender. In addition, there is information on household status, maintenance support, maintenance impediments for applicants or any co-applicants, and information on reasons for termination and municipal labour market measures. There is also information on foreign-born, as well as the last year of immigration, from the Total Population Register (RTB). For a detailed description of the variables included, see list of variables.

K1.2.3 Reference times

The National Register of Social Assistance has existed since 1985. Over the years, the Register has been continuously developed to improve its quality and meet new needs. Data describing different forms of financial assistance have been collected for a long time. Historical statistics are available, for example, at the website of Statistics Sweden, on the webpage describing municipal poor relief and finances. The production of statistics has alternated between the National Board of Health and Welfare and Statistics Sweden. From 1949 to 1962, the National Board of Health and Welfare had responsibility, after which Statistics Sweden took over responsibility until 1993. Today, the National Board of

Health and Welfare is the responsible authority, and our publications and statistical database include data from 1990 onwards. SCB's statistical database contains data from 1983 onwards.

K2 Reliability

K2.1 Overall reliability

The reliability of the Register depends mainly on the reliability of the administrative systems from which the municipalities extract data, and their processes for extracting the relevant information. As of January 2012, statistics on social assistance are also collected on a monthly basis, which are not reported in the official statistics. In order to increase the reliability of the statistics, municipalities report data once again in April of the year following the statistical year. The new data, verified and possibly revised, form the register on which the annual official statistics are based.

K2.2 Sources of uncertainty

K2.2.1 Coverage

Municipalities failing to report, as well as the years with missing values between 2010 and 2021, can be found in Appendix 2. The non-response consists of a combination of large and small municipalities.

In the following years, all municipalities reported data:

1991-1992

2001-2003, although some municipalities had difficulties in accounting for social assistance and introduction allowance separately.

2005

2006

2007, however Hällefors municipality has not provided data on introduction allowance.

2008

2009, however Tomelilla municipality lacks any data on social assistance.

(Högsby municipality lacks data on introduction allowance Jan-July)

2010, however several municipalities have partial non-response (introduction allowance missing).

K2.2.2 Measurement

All information on recipients, amounts and timing of decisions/payments comes directly from the municipalities. The extent of any errors in these is unknown, as only directly unreasonable values can be identified as incorrect in the overall register. Respondents are given feedback on their reported data and are encouraged to correct any deviations identified.

A known error is that reporters sometimes confused the month of reference with the month of payment, which leads to measurement errors, as the data must refer to the month to which the amounts paid and the maintenance impediments relate. Factors that can affect the quality of the statistics are that households move between municipalities and that the composition of households changes during the year.

K2.2.3 Non-response

Non-response occurs when the value of one or more variables in a data collection cannot be reported. If all values are missing for a survey object (a municipality), it is a case of object non-response, while if only some values are missing, it is a case of partial non-response. The annual statistics on social assistance are subject to both object and partial non-response. For object non-response, values are imputed to increase comparability over time. This means that values from the previous year are retrieved to the current year at national and county level for municipalities that have had total non-response. This is done if the non-response municipalities had reported values up to two years before the current reporting year.

K2.2.4 Data processing

No significant errors can be assumed to have occurred during processing. The reported material is processed by the National Board of Health and Welfare through various numerical checks, correction of incorrect values and calculations. The statistics are supplemented with data from the RTB at Statistics Sweden. Households and individuals receiving assistance are only reported once at county and national level.

K2.2.5 Modelling assumptions

No modelling assumptions are applicable.

K2.3 Provisional register compared to final register

The Register is not made available in provisional form.

K3 Timeliness and punctuality

K3.1 Preparation time

As of 2017, the statistics are published six months after the end of the statistical year in accordance with the current regulations (HSLF FS 2015:30) and associated amending regulations (HSLF-FS 2018:12).

K3.2 Frequency

The Register is updated annually.

K3.3 Punctuality

The Register has been produced according to plan.

K4 Accessibility and clarity

K4.1 Access to the register

Data from the register may be disclosed for research and statistical purposes. Each request to the National Board of Health and Welfare for disclosure is subject to a confidentiality assessment. The National Board of Health and Welfare's statistical registers are subject to statistical confidentiality according to Chapter 24, Section 8 of the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (2009:400).

Aggregated data from the register are also available in the official statistics, in the National Board of Health and Welfare's statistics database, and through our commissioning activities.

K4.2 Dissemination of information

Information about the Register can be found at socialstyrelsen.se. The official statistics based on the Register are published annually. The publication date is indicated in the publication calendar of the National Board of Health and Welfare.

K4.3 Documentation

The Register is further documented on socialstyrelsen.se, including detailed descriptions of variables and values.

K5 Comparability and interoperability

K5.1 Comparability over time

The annual reports published by the National Board of Health and Welfare summarise the changes and measures implemented to continuously improve the quality of the Register. The latest report can be found on the social assistance statistics page on socialstyrelsen.se.

Over the years, the borders of counties and municipalities have changed, which may also affect comparison with data in previous reports. More information on the changes that have taken place can be found on Statistics Sweden's website on municipal and county borders.

K5.2 Interoperability with other registers

The data in the register can be used with other registers based on personal ID numbers.

General information

U1 Confidentiality and personal data processing

In the special activities of public agencies for the production of statistics, confidentiality applies in accordance with Chapter 24, Section 8 of the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (2009:400). However, information needed for research and statistical purposes, as well as information that is not directly attributable to an individual through his or her name, other identity code or similar relationship, may be disclosed if it is clear that the information can be disclosed without causing damage or harm to the individual or someone close to him or her.

When processing personal data, i.e., information that can be directly or indirectly attributed to a living person, the General Data Protection Regulation⁴ and the Regulation (2018:218) containing supplementary provisions to the EU General Data Protection Regulation apply.

In addition, the Act regarding official statistics (2001:99) (*Lagen om den officiella statistiken*), the Ordinance regarding official statistics (2001:100) (*Förordningen om den officiella statistiken*) and the Ordinance regarding the obligation of social welfare committees to provide statistical information (1981:1370) apply to the processing of personal data. In the field of social services, there are also supplementary rules in Chapter 12, Section 5 SoL, the Act regarding the processing of personal data in the social services (2001:454) (*Lagen om behandling av personuppgifter inom socialtjänsten*) and the Ordinance regarding the processing of personal data in the social services (2001:637) (*Förordningen om behandling av personuppgifter inom socialtjänsten*).

U2 Retention and data erasure

The Register of Social Assistance is a register where personal data must be exempt from data erasure. The register is covered by the Swedish National Archives' Regulations regarding exemptions from data erasure and data erasure at the National Board of Health and Welfare (RA-MS 2020:22) (*Föreskrifter om undantag från gallring och gallring hos Socialstyrelsen*). Primary data, i.e., the basis for the Register, may be erased five years after the basis has been received by the public agency.

The Register is a so-called living register, which means that continuous updates can change data even historically. Immediate erasure of incorrect data is permitted under RA-MS 2020:22, which means that earlier versions of the register are generally not saved by the National Board of Health and Welfare.

U3 Obligation to give information

In addition, the Act regarding official statistics (2001:99) (*Lagen om den officiella statistiken*), the Ordinance regarding official statistics (2001:100) (*Förordningen om den officiella statistiken*) and the Ordinance regarding the obligation of social welfare committees to provide statistical information (1981:1370) impose an obligation to give information.

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

U4 EU regulation and international reporting

Reports are submitted to the Nordic Social Statistical Committee (NOSOSCO) once per year.

U5 History

The National Register of Social Assistance has existed since 1985. Over the years, the Register has been continuously developed to improve its quality and meet new needs. Data describing different forms of financial assistance have been collected for a long time. Historical statistics are available, for example, at the website of Statistics Sweden, on the webpage describing municipal poor relief and finances.

The production of statistics has alternated between the National Board of Health and Welfare and Statistics Sweden. From 1949 to 1962, the National Board of Health and Welfare had responsibility, after which Statistics Sweden took over responsibility until 1993. Today, the National Board of Health and Welfare is the responsible authority, and our publications and statistical database include data from 1990 onwards. SCB's statistical database contains data from 1983 onwards.

Over the years, the National Board of Health and Welfare, in collaboration with municipalities, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and Statistics Sweden, has adjusted the content of variables, due to changes in data collection following legislative amendments or due to government assignments concerning the expansion of statistical data.

U6 Contact details

Questions about the register can be sent to the mailbox of the social services team:

Unit: Statistik 2

E-mail: SOSTAT@socialstyrelsen.se

Telephone: 075 247 3000

Version history

Version	Change	Date
1.0	The document is new	03/11/2022

Annex 1 Regulations HSLF-FS 2015:30 and amending regulations HSLF-FS 2018:12

<https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/foreskrifter-och-allmanna-rad/2016-1-26.pdf>

<https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/foreskrifter-och-allmanna-rad/2018-4-17.pdf>

Appendix 2. Non-response municipality

Coverage rate 2010– 2021

Year	Description
2010	Partial non-response: Norrtälje, Nynäshamn, Surahammar
2011	Total non-response: Grums, Färgelanda, Dals-Ed, Munkfors, Mönsterås
2012	Total non-response: Botkyrka, Solna, Nynäshamn, Högsby, Vindeln, Lycksele, Boden
2013	Total non-response: Botkyrka, Högsby, Lycksele, Upplands Väsby, Vallentuna Partial non-response: Solna
2014	Total non-response: Botkyrka, Högsby, Lycksele, Vindeln, Dorotea
2015	Total non-response: Högsby Partial non-response: Grums, Hällefors, Karlskoga, Lund, Malmö-innerstan, Nybro Olofström, Sjöbo, Töreboda, Uddevalla, Gävle
2016	Object non-response: Leksand, Storfors, Skinnskatteberg, Nynäshamn
2017	Object non-response: Burlöv, Falköping, Vellinge, Kungsör
2018	Object non-response: Oxelösund, Årjäng Partial non-response: Ockelbo
2019	Object non-response: Bjuv, Boden, Degerfors, Färgelanda, Linköping, Ljungby, Markaryd, Norsjö, Storuman, Torsby,
2020	Object non-response: Oxelösund, Vellinge, Sundsvall, Norsjö Partial non-response: Eslöv
2021	Object non-response: Heby, Hylte, Degerfors Partial non-response: Örkelljunga