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Bürgergeld — Social Welfare in Germany (formerly Hartz IV)

Bürgergeld is Germany's basic social security benefit for unemployed people or those with very low incomes. In 2025, it provides €563 monthly for single adults, plus housing costs, requiring active job search.

Deutsche Begriffe: Bürgergeld | Jobcenter | Arbeitslosengeld II | Hartz IV | Regelsatz

Bürgergeld — Social Welfare

What is it?

Bürgergeld (formerly Hartz IV / ALG II) is basic social security for unemployed people or those with very low incomes.

How much? (2025)

Who	Monthly amount
Adult (single)	€563
Couple (each)	€506
Youth 14-17 years	€471
Child 6-13 years	€390
Child 0-5 years	€357

PLUS: Housing costs (rent + heating) — in "reasonable" amount.

Who can receive it?

- You are 15-67 years old
- You can work (min. 3 hours daily)
- You live in Germany
- You have insufficient money to live on
- **Foreigners:** you must have residence permit allowing Bürgergeld

Who will NOT receive it?

- People with tourist visa
- First 3 months after arrival (EU citizens)
- Students (they have BAföG)
- Pensioners (they have Grundsicherung im Alter)

How to apply?

1. Where: Jobcenter in your city

2. Form: Hauptantrag + attachments

Documents:

- ID/passport
- Anmeldung
- Rental agreement + rent confirmation
- Bank statements (3 months)
- Employment termination letter (if applicable)
- Aufenthaltstitel (foreigners)

What you must do?

- Search for work (documented!)
- Attend Jobcenter appointments
- Participate in training/courses
- Accept "reasonable" job offers

Sanctions

For non-attendance or refusing work:

- 1st time: -10% for one month
- 2nd time: -20%
- 3rd time: -30%

Bürgergeld and work

You can earn extra:

- First €100 — no deductions
- €100-520 — you keep 20%
- €520-1000 — you keep 30%
- Above €1000 — you keep 10%

Warning for foreigners!

⚠ Receiving Bürgergeld may affect:

- Visa extension
- Application for Niederlassungserlaubnis
- Application for citizenship

Consult with Ausländerbehörde or a lawyer!