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Jobcenter — Bürgergeld, Benefits and Obligations

Bürgergeld 2025: €563 standard rate, housing costs, sanctions (max. 30%) and training opportunities.

Deutsche Begriffe: Jobcenter | Bürgergeld | Regelsatz | Kosten der Unterkunft | Eingliederungsvereinbarung | Sanktionen | Weiterbildung

What is the Jobcenter?

The **Jobcenter** is the authority that supports working-age people without sufficient income. It is responsible for **Bürgergeld** (formerly: Hartz IV / ALG II) and assists with job search, further training and applications.

Do not confuse: The **Agentur für Arbeit** pays Unemployment Benefit I (ALG I) for a maximum of 12–24 months after employment subject to social security contributions. The Jobcenter takes over afterwards or if there is no entitlement to ALG I.

Bürgergeld 2025/2026 — Standard Rates

Person Category	Monthly Standard Rate
Single / Single Parents	**€563**
Couples (per partner)	**€506**
Adults in other households	**€451**
Teenagers 14–17 years	**€471**
Children 6–13 years	**€390**

Person Category	Monthly Standard Rate
Children 0–5 years	**€357**

The standard rate covers: nutrition, clothing, personal hygiene, household energy (excluding heating), personal needs.

Housing Costs (KdU)

In addition to the standard rate, the Jobcenter covers **reasonable** costs for rent and heating. What is "reasonable" depends on the city and household size.

Example Hamburg 2025 (reference rates for cold rent):

• 1 person: up to approx. **€543**

• 2 persons: up to approx. **€659**

• 3 persons: up to approx. **€780**

If your rent exceeds the reference rate, the Jobcenter asks you to reduce costs within **6 months** (moving or subletting).

Submitting an Application

1. Online: jobcenter.digital or in person on-site

2. Documents: ID card, rental agreement, bank statements from the last 3 months, income statements, residence permit

3. Processing time: Usually 2–4 weeks

4. Retroactive: Benefits are paid from the month of application — not retroactively!

Sanctions — Maximum 30%

The Jobcenter can reduce the standard rate if you violate obligations:

• **First violation** (e.g. missing an appointment without reason): Reduction of **10%** for 1 month

• **Repeated violation:** Reduction of **20%** for 2 months

• **Maximum:** Reduction of at most **30%** of the standard rate — rent is **never** reduced

Before each sanction, you receive a **hearing** (opportunity to comment). You can lodge an **objection** against decisions within 1 month.

Further Training and Support

The Jobcenter offers free support:

• **Integration courses** (German + orientation course)

• **Vocational language courses** (B2, C1)

• **Retraining and further education** (up to 2 years, including training allowance: +€150/month)

• **Application costs** (coverage of travel costs, application photos)

• **Integration allowance** — subsidy upon taking up employment

Tip: Actively ask for a **Bildungsgutschein** — with it you can choose a certified further training course yourself.

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