

Public Assistance System

Public Assistance Division,
Social Welfare and War Victims' Relief Bureau,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Outline of the Public Assistance System

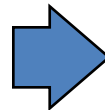
1. Purpose of the public assistance system

- Guarantee of the minimum standard of living
 - ⇒ Provide assistance for those who have trouble making a living despite utilizing all their assets and ability, depending on the level of necessity.
- Promotion of self-reliance

Guarantee of minimum standard of living

1) Public assistance is premised on utilization of all the assets and ability that each household has. Support from those responsible for dependent family members is set above the assistance.

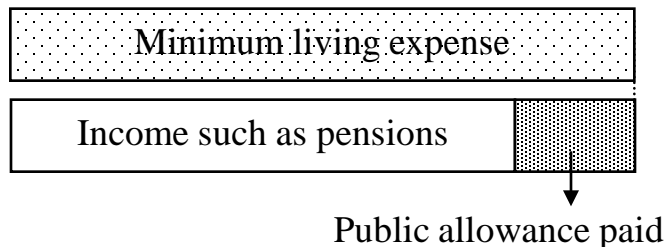
- Assets such as real property, cars, and bank deposits and postal savings
- Utilization of capacity to work
- Social security benefits such as pensions and allowances
- Support from those responsible for dependent family members, etc.



- ◇ Examinations at the start of allowance payment: (Bank deposits and postal savings, amount of pensions and other allowance, assessment of the possibility of finding employment in consideration of the state of illness or injuries, present status and carrying capacity of those responsible for dependent family members, etc.)
- ◇ Recipients are obligated to notify any change of income to the welfare office even after the application of the assistance system to them.

2) Amount of public assistance

- The difference calculated by subtracting income from the minimum living expense, which is calculated based on the standard prescribed by Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, is paid.



Employment income, social security benefits including pensions, and assistance from relatives are considered as income. Because bank deposits and postal savings, insurance refunds, and proceeds from sales of personal assets such as real property are also certified as income, the assistance system is not applied until they are consumed.

Promotion of self-reliance

- Conduct home visits several times a year according to the status of recipient households.
- Provide vocational guidance for recipients who can be employed.

2. Details of the standard amount for public assistance

The standard amount for public assistance, based on careful study of various circumstances such as the recipients' age, sex, household composition, inhabited area, and kinds of public assistance, shall be sufficient to ensure the minimum standard of living but shall not exceed it. (Second clause of Article 8 of Public Assistance Law)

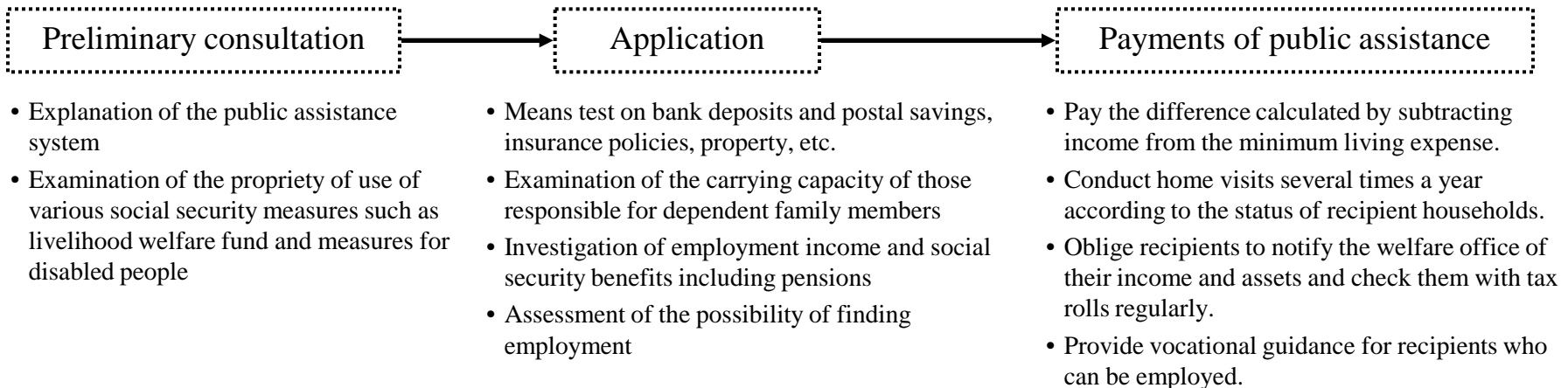
| Expenses resulting from daily life | Kinds of public assistance | Payment contents |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| Expenses needed for daily life (food, clothing, utilities, etc.) | Livelihood assistance | The base amount is calculated combining the following 1) and 2). 1) Personal expenses including food expense (calculated by age) 2) Household's joint expenses including utility charges (calculated by size of household) Extra payments are added for specific households (e.g. additional payments for disabled people, etc.) |
| Rent for apartment | Housing assistance | The actual expenses are paid within the specified limits. |
| Charges for school supplies needed until completing compulsory education | Education assistance | The specified base amount is paid. |
| Expenses for medical services | Medical assistance | The expenses are directly paid to medical institutions at no cost to recipients. |
| Expenses for nursing care services | Long-term care assistance | The expenses are directly paid to nursing care providers at no cost to recipients. |
| Expenses for delivery (of baby) | Maternity assistance | The actual expenses are paid within the specified limits. |
| Charges for vocational training necessary for getting employed (Including expenses to enter a secondary school, etc.) | Occupational assistance | The actual expenses are paid within the specified limits. |
| Expenses for funeral | Funeral assistance | The actual expenses are paid within the specified limits. |

3. Example of the livelihood assistance standard (Since April 2010)

| | Metropolitan district | Rural districts |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Typical household of three (33-year-old, 29-year-old, and 4-year-old) | 175,170 yen | 138,680 yen |
| Elderly-single-person household (68-year-old) | 80,820 yen | 62,640 yen |
| Elderly-couple household (68-year-old and 65-year-old) | 121,940 yen | 94,500 yen |
| Mother-children household (30-year-old, 4-year-old, and 2-year-old) | 193,900 yen | 158,300 yen |

*Includes the additional payments for the single-mother and raising school-age children

4. Application procedure



5. Responsible organization and burden of expense

- Prefectural governments (for towns and villages) and city governments (for cities) are responsible for public assistance.
- Prefectural and city governments set up welfare offices and assign a caseworker to each recipient household.
- 75% of the expenditures for public assistance are paid for by the government and 25% by the local governments.

Requirements for public assistance

Basic ideas

- Public assistance shall be provided based on a requirement that a person who is living in poverty shall utilize his/her assets, abilities, and every other thing available to him/her for maintaining a minimum standard of living.
(Article 4 of the Public Assistance Act)
- Any support given by a person responsible for support prescribed by the Civil Code and any assistance prescribed by any other Act shall be provided in precedence to public assistance under this Act.
(Article 4-(2) of the Public Assistance Act)

Utilization of assets

- Real properties shall be sold in principle.
 - However, it is acceptable to possess a property which is serving for habitation, except for a property that has an especially great disposal value.
- Cars shall be sold in principle.
 - However, it is acceptable for the disabled and those who live in an area where it is especially difficult to use public transportation to possess a necessary car for going to work, hospital, related office or facility, and school.
- Deposits and savings shall be considered income in principle.
 - However, it is acceptable to possess some household balance brought forward (up to 50% of the minimum living expense excluding medical assistance and long-term care assistance) out of the money possessed at the start of allowance payment.

Utilization of abilities

Whether or not a person is utilizing a capacity to work shall be judged by the following three factors:

- 1) Whether or not he/she has a capacity to work,
 - 2) Whether or not he/she has a will to utilize his/her capacity to work, and
 - 3) Whether or not he/she can get a job to utilize his/her capacity to work.
- A person who has no will to work while having a capacity to work and being able to find an adequate job by job hunting does not satisfy the requirement for payments of public assistance.
 - A person who cannot get a job while having both a capacity and will to work and seeking a job satisfies the requirement for payments of public assistance.

Precedence of support

- Welfare offices shall examine the carrying capacity of those responsible for dependent family members, prescribed by the Civil Code (stem family within the third degree of kinship, brothers and sisters, etc.).
- Money sent by a person who is responsible for dependent family members to a person requiring public assistance shall be appropriated for the minimum living expense and shall be considered income.

Minimum living expense

[Structure of minimum living expense]

The standard amount for public assistance, based on which the minimum living expense is calculated, is prescribed by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, according to eight types of assistance, in light of the recipients' circumstances, such as age, household composition, and inhabited area.

