

WORK ACTIVITY ALLOWANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Being involved in the volunteer activities of local organisations allows one to gain new knowledge, gain experience from different areas of work, meet people and expand one's network. On the other hand, by volunteering, one contributes to the realisation of the mission of the organisation they help and enriches them with knowledge and experience.

Volunteering while receiving social assistance also opens additional employment opportunities. In Slovenia, the government offers incentives for recipients of social assistance to become active as volunteers. Volunteers who receive social assistance are entitled to additional benefits – an allowance for work activity.

What is work activity allowance?

Work activity allowance is defined by the Act on Social Security Benefits. The Act regulates the right to financial social assistance, its beneficiaries, the conditions for entitlement to financial social assistance, the amount, the allocation period and the payment method, assessment procedure, repayment, financing, monitoring and data collection.

The Act on Social Security Benefits provides that persons who have concluded a contract on performing voluntary internships and those who have signed a written agreement on voluntary work under the law governing volunteering are entitled to work activity allowance.

Work activity allowance is a supplement to the minimum income of a working single person or an adult family member, intended to encourage work or to maintain the motivation to work. Under the law individuals with a signed agreement on voluntary work are considered to be working for 60 to 128 hours per month.

How does a volunteer obtain a work activity allowance?

First, an individual must join one of the non-governmental organisations classified as a volunteer organisation. Volunteer organisations are all registered as such in the Register of Volunteer Organisations at AJPES (Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services).

Once they choose an organisation where they wish to volunteer, they must enter into a written agreement on voluntary work for at least 24 hours per year.



WHO CAN OBTAIN A WORK ACTIVITY ALLOWANCE?

Work activity allowance can be obtained by first-time recipients as well as long-term recipients of social assistance if they meet the conditions for obtaining a work activity allowance.

First time applicants for social assistance

When registering for social assistance, people who apply for social assistance for the first time and are volunteers in the voluntary organisation(s) must attach a copy of the agreement on voluntary work.

For how long can one receive the work activity allowance?

Recipients of social benefits who are active volunteers are entitled to a work activity allowance every month for the validity of the decision on eligibility to receive social assistance. However, the work activity allowance is paid only for the months when voluntary work is performed.

To receive the work activity allowance each month, recipients must submit a monthly volunteer work report to their Social Services office to prove their activity. If the volunteer is granted social assistance for a period of up to 3 months, they can submit the report after the expiration of those months for the entire past period.

If the individual performed volunteer work but did not submit proof of work, they are not entitled to the work activity allowance. The same applies if the volunteer did not perform volunteer work in the month.

Recipients of social assistance who just started volunteering

Recipients of social assistance who did not have a signed agreement on voluntary work when applying for social assistance must submit a completed form for reporting changes regarding the exercise of rights from public funds at their Social Services Office along with a copy of the agreement on voluntary work.



The amount of the work activity allowance

The amount of work activity allowance for all recipients of social assistance, is determined by law based on the number of hours worked. Under the law, individuals with a written agreement on voluntary work are considered to be working for 60 to 128 hours per month, regardless of the actual number of volunteer hours performed. Thus, those individuals are entitled to the lowest amount of work activity allowance.