



# **SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

## INFORMATION FROM THE CITY OF THUN

## WHEN CAN I REGISTER FOR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE?

- **In the event of straitened financial circumstances**, making it impossible for me to provide financially for myself or my family.
- **If I live in Thun and I am registered at the residents' register office.**
- If all my **sources of finance are insufficient** (employer, unemployment insurance fund, assets, insurance, etc.).
- If I am a foreigner and **have the following permit**: a B, C or F permit (with a B permit I have been in Switzerland for 5 years / with an F permit I have been in Switzerland for 7 years).

## WHERE AND HOW CAN I REGISTER?

I can register with the Thun Department of Social Services by phone or e-mail. I will then receive a telephone appointment for an initial counselling session. The counselling sessions are free of charge.

- **Tel. 033 225 84 68** (opening hours see below)
- E-Mail: [empfangsoziales@thun.ch](mailto:empfangsoziales@thun.ch)



## WHERE CAN I FIND THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT?

### Thunerhof, 2nd floor (reception)

Abteilung Soziales der Stadt Thun  
Hofstettenstrasse 14  
Postfach 145  
3602 Thun

### Opening hours (for reception and telephone)

#### **Monday and Wednesday**

8.00 am – 11.45 am  
1.30 pm – 5.00 pm

#### **Tuesday and Thursday**

closed in the morning  
1.30 pm – 5.00 pm

#### **Friday**

8.00 am – 11.45 am  
1.30 pm – 4.00 pm



**Thunerhof**  
**Google Maps**



## HOW DOES SOCIAL ASSISTANCE WORK?

Social assistance is supplementary aid. It comes into play when all other sources of income, e.g. daily unemployment benefit, maintenance contributions or assets, have been exhausted or are insufficient.

Social assistance guarantees a legally defined subsistence level.



You can find detailed explanations on social assistance in this video.

## HOW DOES THE REGISTRATION PROCESS WORK?

1. If I want to make a new application for social assistance, I contact the Department of Social Affairs **via e-mail** (empfangsoziales@thun.ch) or by **telephone** (033 225 84 68).  
→ I will then be given an appointment for a free telephone consultation.
2. I receive a call from a social worker at the agreed time. Together we discuss my situation and determine the next steps.
3. If a claim for social assistance is examined, I receive a written application form. I have to submit documents along with the application. They are all listed on a checklist.
4. I send the application with all the requested documents to the Department of Social Affairs or hand them in personally.
5. As soon as the Department of Social Affairs has all the necessary documents, I am granted an appointment for an initial interview.
6. At the interview, my situation is discussed and the amount of support is calculated.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE?

- Social assistance secures financial stability and promotes integration as well as financial and personal independence. It provides the necessary support within the framework of the law.
- Social welfare benefits are calculated according to actual needs.





## WHAT DOES THE COOPERATION INVOLVE?

- The Thun Department of Social Affairs can only support me successfully if I truthfully provide all necessary information about my/our personal and financial circumstances. If I conceal facts or make untrue statements in order to receive social assistance, I will be liable to prosecution.
- If necessary, the Department of Social Affairs may seek information from various third-party agencies.
- The Department of Social Affairs reviews files on an ongoing basis. In the event of breaches of duty or self-inflicted indigence, social assistance may be reduced or discontinued. In addition, benefits that have been paid out can be reclaimed.
- The Department of Social Affairs actively takes action against abuses. As soon as there is a concrete suspicion of abuse, in-depth investigations are carried out.

## WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE?

- I am entitled to a **free personal consultation**.
- My details and documents will be treated **confidentially**.
- If I do not agree with a decision, I have the option of filing an **appeal**. The appeal authority is the Regierungs-Statthalteramt Thun.

## WHAT ARE MY DUTIES?

- I **must do everything possible** to eliminate or reduce my need for social assistance (for example, accept a reasonable job or participate in an integration programme).
- I must provide the Department of Social Affairs **with the information required and be truthful** about my/our personal and financial circumstances (incl. support from third parties).
- I must **disclose all documents** and work together with the Department of Social Affairs.
- I must keep the **agreed appointments**.
- If I am in a much better financial situation later on, I must **pay back the welfare benefits**.

