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Benefits – Activities and Trends

Income Support

The Income Support Law is intended to provide a last-ditch safety net for low-income families or families who have no income from work or other sources. The law, which came into effect in 1982, incorporated into a uniform framework the support payments previously paid by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and social security payments paid by the National Insurance Institute (NII) to the elderly and survivors. The payments are financed by the State Treasury.

In 2018, the substantial decline in the number of families receiving income support benefits continued and the number reached an average of about 76,000 per month – a decrease of 8.5% compared to 2017. Given the natural increase in the population (about 1.8% per year), the real decline is even higher.

Conditions of Eligibility

The income support benefit is intended to support residents of Israel aged 20 and over who have no means of subsistence or a low income, as defined by law. The income support benefit is paid to the family (individuals or couples, with or without children). The benefit claimant and spouse (if any) are required to pass an employment test unless the law exempts them from doing so.

The amount of the benefit is determined as a percentage of the basic amount¹ according to the family composition and the number of children. For one or two children and more, an increased income support benefit is paid, and for three or four children or more an increment is paid with the child allowance. Benefit levels rise from the age of 55 until retirement age. For those who reach retirement age and receive an old-age pension, survivors' pension or dependents' benefits under the National Insurance Law, the benefits are paid to them according to the age groups (see old-age and survivors chapter).

¹ See comment 18 in Chapter 1

Legislative Changes

- In January 2017, a less stringent means test was introduced for single-parent mothers² who receive income support benefits. The benefit offset rate of work income which is beyond the income disregard (the amount not taken into account) decreased from 60% to 25% for gross wages up to NIS 3,349 (as of 2018). Beyond this amount, the offset rate remained 60%. Single-parent mothers cannot receive a work grant unless the benefit increment following this change is lower than the work grant. The program was implemented as a two-year temporary order and extended, in January 2019, for two more years (see also the box in this chapter). The work grant is paid by the tax authority.
- From January 2018, single-parent mothers who dedicate most of their time to study, or to study and work (at least 30 hours per week, and from January 2019 – at least 36 hours) are exempt from employment test.
- From May 2018, a family with a child up to the age of two, including same-sex parents, can choose which of the parents will be exempted from the employment test (until the amendment – the exemption was only granted to mothers or single fathers).

Further legislative changes to the Income Support Law relating to recipients of old-age pensions are detailed in the old-age and survivors chapter.

Benefits Recipients – Trends and Characteristics

Number of Families

From June 2003 to December 2008, the number of families receiving income support benefits declined continuously. This trend began with the stricter legislation in June 2003³ and persisted due to the continuing impact of reducing the maximum income entitling to the benefit, and the improvement of employment in the economy in the years 2004 to 2007, and half 2008. The establishment of employment centers under the Wisconsin program in August 2005 and “Orot Letaasuka” (employment lights) in August 2007 accelerated the trend.

² Most single-parents are women; therefore we use the feminine form.

³ Changes are detailed in the **Annual Survey 2002-2003**.

Table 1: Families Receiving Income Support Benefits, By Seniority in Israel* (Monthly Average), 2008-2018

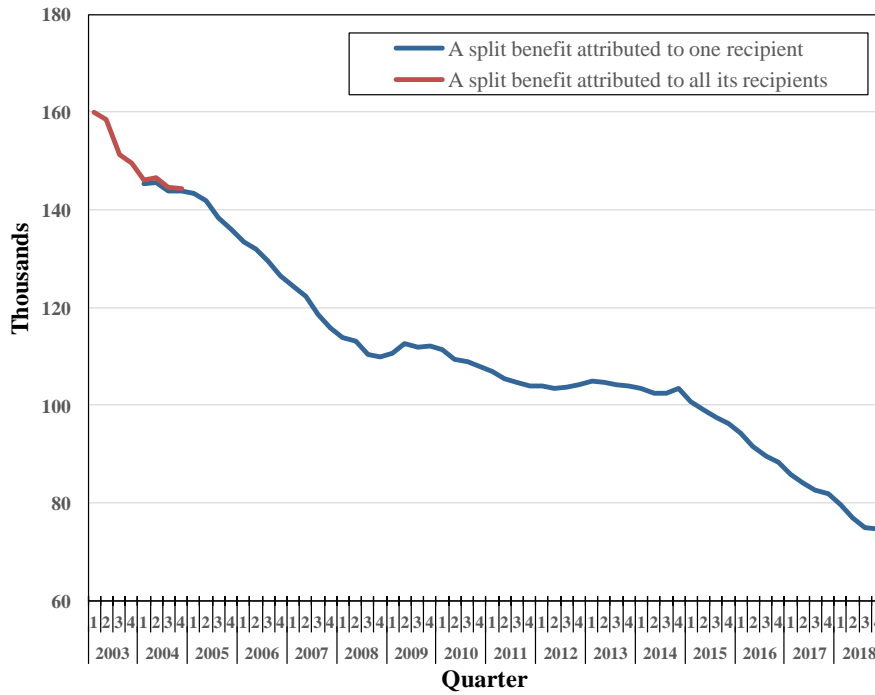
Year	Total		Seniors		New immigrants	
	Absolute numbers	Change (%)	Absolute numbers	Change (%)	Absolute numbers	Change (%)
2008	111,808	-7.0	78,011	-5.4	33,798	-10.4
2009	111,765	-0.04	79,461	1.9	32,304	-4.4
2010	109,407	-2.1	79,102	-0.5	30,304	-6.2
2011	105,292	-3.8	77,443	-2.1	27,849	-8.1
2012	103,766	-1.4	77,945	0.6	25,821	-7.3
2013	104,399	0.6	80,084	2.7	24,315	-5.8
2014	102,993	-1.3	80,262	0.2	22,731	-6.5
2015	98,347	-4.5	77,316	-3.7	20,982	-7.7
2016	90,934	-7.5	71,754	-7.2	19,181	-8.6
2017	83,626	-8.00	66,013	-8.0	17,614	-8.2
2018	76,533	-8.5	60,587	-8.2	15,946	-9.4

* The seniority is determined according to the benefit claimant's seniority.

In 2009, there was a turnaround – the number of beneficiary families rose in the first half of the year, probably due to the economic crisis and the rise in unemployment (Table 1). In 2010, the decline was resumed, and apart from a one-off increase in 2013, partly due to the expansion of benefit eligibility to car owners as well, the number of families continued to decline – even more so from 2015 onwards – which doesn't show in Table 1. In 2016 and beyond, the rate is higher than in 2015.

In 2018, the average number of families per month dropped, and was the lowest since 1996, partly because of the increase in employment rates in recent years, the decline in immigrant recipient rates (see below) and the erosion of benefit amount. The decline in the number of families continued throughout the quarters (Figure 1). The 8.5% drop rate in 2018 is the steepest since 2007. From 2013, the number of these families has dropped by an incremental rate of 27%.

Figure 1: Families Receiving Income Support in 2018, by Quarter (Thousands), 2003-2018



Seniority in Israel

In 2009, alongside the continuous but moderate decline in the number of immigrant families receiving benefits, the number of senior families rose for the first time since 2004 (Table 1). In 2010, the trend changed again, and the number of families in both groups declined, with an accelerated decline among immigrants. The continued decline in both groups in 2010 and 2011 was largely due to a decline in the number of immigrant families. In contrast, in 2012 and in 2014, the number of senior families increased (by 2.7% and 0.2%, respectively), so that the downward trend in the number of families was due to a decline among immigrants which became moderate due to the increase among seniors. In 2015 to 2018, the number of senior families continued to decline as well as the number of immigrant families – thereby accelerating the decrease in number of recipients. In 2018, the decline rate among seniors and immigrants was 8.2% and 9.4%, respectively.

Box 1: Single Mothers' Wage and Benefit Change Following Means Test Relaxation

In January 2017, a means test relaxation was established regarding the work income of single-parent mothers¹ who receive income support benefit under National Insurance Law, in which the method of income disregard calculation for purposes of benefit eligibility was modified. The relaxation, enacted by a two-year temporary order with an additional two-year extension in January 2019, applies to working women who are paid by the NII an income support benefit, maintenance benefit or survivors' pension with increment for income supplement. Until the change, 60% of the wage above the income disregard deducted from the benefit was taken into account, followed by two offset rates: up to 33.81% of the average wage (NIS 3,270 in 2017) – 25% offset, and above this amount 60% (unchanged) (Table 1).

Table 1: Amount of Unaccounted Work Income for Benefit Eligibility (Disregard) (NIS), 2017

Age	Unaccounted amount
Up to 55	677
55 and older	1,644

is; therefore we use the feminine form.

Table 2: Benefit Offset Rate, by Level of Work Income (Percentages)

Amount of Work Income	Offset rate before 2017	Offset rate from 2017
Up to the disregard	0	0
Above disregard and up to NIS 3,270 (2017 prices).	60	25.00
Above NIS 3,270 (2017 prices)	60	60

Table 3: Single-Parent Mothers Who Received a Benefit from the NII in 2017

	Benefit	Number of recipients
	Total	45,020
1	Income support (including alimony)	27,667
2	Alimony	16,604
	Among which: recipients of income support	2,497
3	Old-age and survivors	3,246

As part of its activities in the take-up of rights and updating the relevant population regarding the extension of its rights, the NII has initiated contact with single-parent mothers who were ineligible for a grant due to their income from work before the temporary order came into force, and with those who were income support or maintenance beneficiaries and didn't work at all or worked in low-wage jobs, to encourage them to start working or increase their wage.

The Work Grant Law was also amended in the framework of the change, to determine the level of the grant according to the amount in which the benefit was increased following the amendment, this amount being thereby deducted from the grant. Thus, the grant is paid to those entitled to a higher grant than the amount in which the benefit was raised.

The work grant is paid in June each year for the previous year, and therefore the 2017 grant was paid in 2018. The NII provides tax authorities with the data required to calculate it. The Institute have no data on the number of women eligible for the grant, the number of deferrals and the amount paid, so that the hereby analysis is based only on the data available to the NII.

Change in Employment and Income

In 2017, approximately 45,000 single-parent mothers received benefits from the NII, under the Income Support Law or Maintenance Law, for at least one month (Table 3). To understand the effect of the relaxation, the employment and income data of all recipients of income support or maintenance benefit from the Institute in the first year of the relaxation were examined – January compared to November 2017². Among income support recipients, employment rate increased from 50% to 53%, and among maintenance benefit recipients – from 54% to 55%. Wages of income support recipients and maintenance recipients increased by an average of NIS 266 (about 20%) and NIS 189 (about 12%), respectively.

The data also show that about 45% of the income support recipients worked on both of these dates and their wages increased by NIS 297 (11%), and among maintenance recipients, 48% worked and their wages increased by NIS 291 (10%) (Table 4). Nevertheless, the unemployment rate remained high (41% of income support recipients and 38% of maintenance recipients).

An examination of the change in income from both benefit and wages found that, in accordance with the purpose defined, both amounts increased (Table 5). For example, the income support benefit rose by NIS 601 on average, and total income from wages and benefits rose on average – from NIS 4,580 before the temporary order to NIS 5,181 after the introduction of the new offset rates.

In summary, the data indicates an improvement in both benefits and wages of single-parent mothers receiving benefits from the NII under Income Support Law or Maintenance Law, although the extent of this improvement depends on the type of benefit. It should be noted that those whose income has increased as a result of the offsetting change may receive a lower work grant or no work grant at all, and thus it appears that policy makers are giving these women contradictory messages regarding work incentive.

² Due to the increase of the minimum wage in December 2017, and its possible impact on wages, the comparison was done between January and November 2017.

Table 4: Average Wage of Single-Parent Mothers Receiving Income Support or Maintenance (NIS) – January 2017 vs. November 2017

Recipients of income support benefits				
Received the benefit in January and November	17,088	100.0	1,317	1,583
Worked in January and November	7,682	45.0	2,722	3,019
Started working (didn't work in January, and worked in November)	1,630	10.0	0	2,368
Stopped working (worked in January, and didn't work in November)	801	5.0	1,984	0
Didn't work in January and November	6,975	41.0	0	0
Recipients of maintenance benefits				
Received the benefit in January and November	10,745	100.0	1,596	1,785
Worked in January and November	5,154	48.0	3,007	3,298
Started working (didn't work in January, and worked in November)	814	8.0	0	2,686
Stopped working (worked in January, and didn't work in November)	608	6.0	2,716	0
Didn't work in January and November	4,169	38.0	0	0

Table 5: Single-Parent Mothers Receiving NII Benefits – Average Income from Benefit and Wage Before and After the Change in Offset Rate (December)

Benefit	Average rate (NIS)		Average income from wage and benefit (NIS)	
	Previous offset	New offset	Previous offset	New offset
Income support benefit	1,574	2,175	4,580	5,181
Alimony	1,415	1,849	4,670	5,104
Survivors' benefit	1,832	2,059	5,504	5,731

Family composition

The decline in benefit recipients seen since mid-2003, following the sharp cut in benefits and the worsening of eligibility conditions, was also accompanied by a change in the recipients' family composition: the number of families headed by single-parent mothers and couples with children declined, and the number of single individuals increased. In addition to the effect of the legislative changes from 2003 onwards, the evolution of family composition may also derive from the lack of equal employment opportunities for all, despite economic growth. The following data illustrates the changes that occurred in the composition of recipients' families, following the legislative changes⁴ (Table 2):

- The share of single-parent families has gradually decreased, from 33.2% in early 2003 to 24.3% in 2014, but has since increased slightly, reaching 28.4% in 2018.
- The share of couples with children decreased, from 24.4% in 2003 to 21% in 2010, and until 2016, their share ranged between 20.8% and 21.8%. Since 2017, this share has dropped further, reaching 17.9% in 2018.
- Parallel to the decline in the proportion of families with children between 2003 and 2012, the share of single individuals increased significantly – from 36.5% in 2003 to 46.7% in 2012, and has since then declined moderately to 44.8% in 2018.
- The fairly small share of couples without children grew gradually from 5.9% in 2003 to 8.9% in 2018.

The legislative changes, which mainly affected families with children, led to a sharp decline in their share among benefit recipients from 2003 to mid-2005, a moderate decline until 2012, stabilization until 2015, and another decline in 2016. In 2017, the share of families headed by single-parent mother increased, probably due to the change in the manner of deduction of work income from benefits (see **Legislative Changes**), and this trend continued in 2018. Among single individuals with children, few of them are not eligible for the benefit as single-parent. A review focusing on women receiving single-parent benefit shows an increase in their share between 2017 and 2018 – from 24.0% to 25.7%, respectively, compared to the continued decline in the share of couples with children and single individuals.

Seniority in Israel: As mentioned, in 2018 there was a decrease in the share of both senior families and immigrant families among all families. Among the seniors, the proportion of

⁴ Regarding the changes of benefit recipients' families in the years 2004 – 2007 see Annual Review 2008.

individuals with children increased and the share of individuals without children decreased; among immigrants, the share of individuals with children increased, while in the other groups there was a decrease.

Grounds of Eligibility

Further to the demographic changes of families that emerged since 2003, the following trends were observed in the grounds of eligibility (Table 3).

- The share of unemployed people among those who receive income support increased until 2013, but declined consistently between 2014 and 2018. In contrast, since 2013 the share of low-paid employees rose, an increase that became more prominent in 2016 and continued in 2018. These fluctuations mean that, in 2011-2013, the average share of people eligible on grounds subject to employment test (unemployment and low wages) declined only slightly; it stabilized in 2014 and declined again from 2015 onwards. The decline from 2015 on the grounds of unemployment is likely to be the result of increased efforts by Employment Service in job placement and the law amendment favorable to single-parents with respect to calculating the benefit based on wage from work. However, about 2/3 of benefit recipients are still subject to an employment test.
- The share of mothers of small children declined until 2012 and has remained fairly stable since.
- The share of permanently unplaceable individuals aged 55 and more dropped until 2014, and went down to zero since 2015.
- The rate of benefit recipients on the grounds of vocational training or professional diagnosis decreased – from 2.5% in the first half of 2005 to 0.9% in 2010. In 2013-2017, their share ranged between 0.4% and 0.5%, then increased to 0.9% in 2018.
- The number of benefit recipients for rehabilitation or addiction (drug or alcohol) is slowly rising, reaching 3.3% in 2018. The bulk of the increase was among addicts who were diagnosed as unable to participate in rehabilitation programs. However, the majority of addicts (75.2%) participate in a rehabilitation program.

Table 2: Families Receiving Income Support, by Family Composition – New Immigrants* vs. Veterans (Numbers and Percentages), 2003, 2015-2018

Family composition	Numbers			Percentages		
	Total	Veterans	Immigrants	Total	Veterans	Immigrants
January to March, 2003						
Total	160,006	102,194	57,812	100.0	100.0	100.0
Single	58,331	38,000	20,331	36.5	37.2	35.2
Single + children	53,191	25,662	27,529	33.2	25.1	47.6
Couple	9,468	5,070	4,398	5.9	4.7	7.6
Couple + children	39,016	33,462	5,554	24.4	32.7	9.6
Average 2015						
Total	98,298	77,316	20,982	100.0	100.0	100.0
Single	44,632	33,467	11,165	45.4	43.3	53.2
Single + children	24,265	17,045	7,221	24.7	22.0	34.4
Couple	7,992	6,357	1,636	8.1	8.2	7.8
Couple + children	21,408	20,448	961	21.8	26.4	4.6
Average 2016						
Total	90,934	71,754	19,180	100.0	100.0	100.0
Single	41,285	31,074	10,211	45.4	43.3	53.3
Single + children	22,862	16,197	6,665	25.1	22.6	34.7
Couple	7,868	6,413	1,456	8.7	8.9	7.6
Couple + children	18,919	18,070	849	20.8	25.2	4.4
Average 2017						
Total	83,627	66,013	17,614	100.0	100.0	100.0
Single	37,712	28,547	9,164	45.1	43.2	52.0
Single + children	22,330	15,837	6,493	26.7	24.0	36.9
Couple	7,523	6,264	1,259	9.0	9.5	7.1
Couple + children	16,063	15,366	697	19.2	23.3	4.0
Average 2018						
Total	76,533	60,587	15,946	100.0	100.0	100.0
Single	34,249	26,088	8,161	44.8	43.1	51.2
Single + children	21,749	15,576	6,173	28.4	25.7	38.7
Couple	6,841	5,813	1,028	8.9	9.6	6.5
Couple + children	13,693	13,110	583	17.9	21.6	3.6

* Those who immigrated to Israel from 1990.

Employment, Income and Vehicle Ownership

- Employment:** The decline in the number of families receiving benefits in the years 2004-2008 was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of working families in those years from 25.5% to 28.6%. In 2009, their share dropped and rose again until 2011; in 2012 their share once more declined and reached 26.8% in 2013 (Table 4). In 2014, the share of working families rose back, reaching 36.4% in 2018. This means that about a third of benefit recipient families have work income. The increase in the number of working families in recent years is also reflected in the grounds of benefit eligibility (higher rate of recipients due to low wages). It should be noted that the increase in the employment rate during this period occurred in the entire economy, not only among benefit recipients.

Table 3: Income Support Benefit Claimants and Their Spouses, by Ground of Eligibility, 2014-2018

The cause	Average 2014		2015 average		2016 average		2017 average		2018 average	
	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent
Total	133,618	100.0	127,699	100.0	117,723	100.0	107,211	100.0	97,068	100.0
Unemployed	88,294	66.1	80,477	63.0	69,827	59.3	58,904	54.9	49,874	51.4
In training or diagnosis	564	0.4	587	0.5	469	0.4	470	0.4	868	0.9
Low salary	17,524	13.1	19,041	14.9	20,367	17.3	21,235	19.8	20,977	21.6
Addicted	3,103	2.3	3,123	2.4	3,246	2.8	3,285	3.1	3,187	3.3
Permanently incapable of placement (aged 55+)	89	0.1								
Mother to little children	10,415	7.8	10,051	7.9	9,145	7.8	8,284	7.7	7,568	7.8
Other	13,629	10.2	14,419	11.3	14,669	12.5	15,034	14.0	14,594	15.0

An analysis of the employment rate by family composition shows that the share of employed people decreased in 2018 among all family compositions, except for individuals with children – in this group the share of employed people increased sharply in 2017 and to a lesser extent in 2018 (from 50.1% to 51.8 %). The share of families earning up to NIS 2,000 dropped, and of families earning NIS 2,000 and over – rose to 69.1% of all earning families (Table 5). In other words, the work income of many families improved slightly, as expected, given the rise in minimum and

average wages in the economy, although still low. Only 19.3% of all families had wages above NIS 3,500 per month. It should be noted that a significant portion of those entitled to benefits are excluded from this income support system at this level of income.

- **Car ownership:** As of August 2012, even owners of car worth up to NIS 40,760 (as of 2018) are eligible for income support benefits. In December 2018, approximately 13% of families owned a vehicle (10,054 families) (not including medical vehicles) – approximately 150 families less than December 2017. For most (about 66%, which is about 6,700 families), the amount of the benefit remains unchanged despite vehicle ownership. For the other families, the benefit was reduced by an average of NIS 230. An additional 1,400 families held a vehicle for medical purposes in December 2018 (compared with about 1,300 as of December 2017).
- **Income from benefits:** Benefits are also taken into account in the means test. 6.1% of families, on average, were eligible for additional NII benefits in 2018, compared to 7.1% in 2017, and their average monthly income from these benefits (other than salary replacement benefits considered as work income) was NIS 2,018 (compared with NIS 1,816 in 2017). Approximately 9,200 families (12%) had income from both work and NII benefits, in the average amount of NIS 3,800 per family. Compared to 2017, the number of families having both salary and benefits decreased, while their income increased – which is in line with the increase in the share of earning families and the salary levels.
- **Income from capital or real estate:** In December 2018, approximately 2,000 families (2.6% of benefit recipient families) had a capital for which their benefits were reduced, compared with 2.5% in December 2017. The average income attributed to such a family was NIS 89. Approximately 750 families had income from work and attributed income from financial assets: work income NIS 2,812 on average, and income from capital – NIS 57 on average (lower than the general average).

About 2,300 families (3%) owned real estate assets in December 2018 (compared with 3.3% in December 2017). The average income attributed to real estate was NIS 373. Only 15 of the families with work income had in addition an income from real estate or capital.

Table 4: Families with Work Income, by Family Composition (Absolute Numbers and Percentages), 2013-2018

Family composition	Absolute numbers	Percent of all families (%)
2013 average		
Total	27,957	26.8
Single	8,926	18.4
Single + children	9,919	39.3
Couple	1,984	24.4
Couple + children	7,128	31.7
2014 average		
Total	28,272	27.4
Single	8,895	18.8
Single + children	9,970	39.9
Couple	1,932	23.6
Couple + children	7,475	33.3
2015 average		
Total	28,445	28.9
Single	8,695	19.5
Single + children	9,933	40.9
Couple	1,801	22.5
Couple + children	8,015	37.4
2016 average		
Total	28,711	31.6
Single	8,534	20.7
Single + children	9,952	43.5
Couple	1,852	23.5
Couple + children	8,373	44.3
2017 average		
Total	29,562	35.3
Single	8,534	22.6
Single + children	11,188	50.1
Couple	1,880	25.0
Couple + children	7,959	49.5
2018 average		
Total	27,848	36.4
Single	7,542	20.0
Single + children	11,562	51.8
Couple	1,780	23.6
Couple + children	6,964	43.4

Table 5: Work Income of Families Receiving Income Support Benefit, by Family Composition, 2014-2018

Family composition	Income (NIS)					
	1-1000	1,000-1,500	1,500-2,000	2,000-3,000	3,000-3,500	3,500+
2014 average						
Total	11.7	21.6	18.6	31.0	6.4	10.7
Single	18.7	35.2	20.6	23.7	1.7	0.2
Single + children	9.2	14.1	15.4	33.9	9.4	18.1
Couple	11.9	24.6	20.8	28.4	6.0	8.2
Couple + children	6.7	14.6	19.9	36.6	8.1	14.1
2015 average						
Total	10.3	20.3	18.7	33.1	6.6	11.1
Single	16.7	33.0	21.9	26.3	2.0	0.2
Single + children	8.3	13.7	15.2	34.5	9.5	18.7
Couple	11.2	22.1	20.3	30.2	6.1	10.0
Couple + children	5.6	14.4	19.2	39.3	8.0	13.7
2016 average						
Total	9.0	15.8	20.0	36.5	6.9	11.8
Single	14.8	26.6	25.1	30.9	2.4	0.3
Single + children	7.3	11.0	16.0	36.4	9.7	19.6
Couple	9.1	17.2	21.4	34.0	7.0	11.3
Couple + children	4.9	10.2	19.4	43.1	8.1	14.4
2017 average						
Total	7.9	10.0	19.5	39.5	7.7	15.4
Single	14.0	18.8	26.3	37.1	3.1	0.7
Single + children	5.8	6.3	14.9	36.1	10.5	26.3
Couple	8.4	11.9	23.9	36.1	7.2	12.5
Couple + children	4.1	5.3	17.7	47.4	8.8	16.7
2018 average						
Total	6.1	7.8	16.9	41.2	8.7	19.3
Single	11.7	15.3	25.3	42.4	3.9	1.2
Single + children	4.1	4.5	11.8	35.8	11.7	32.1
Couple	6.2	9.7	22.5	38.5	8.1	14.7
Couple + children	3.2	4.7	15.1	49.2	8.9	18.8

Benefit level

The sharp cut in the benefits in 2002-2003 has left its impact to this day. As a result, the composition of families by benefit level changed considerably. The share of families receiving the benefits at the increased rate for those under 55 ("previously eligible"⁵) has dropped from 22% in 2008 to 2.2% in 2018, and rose among those aged 55 and older – from 21% in 2004 to 30.3% in 2011, and in 2012-2018 from 29.2% to 35% (Table 6).

Table 6: Families Receiving Income Support, by Family Composition and Benefit Level (Percentages), 2014-2018 (December)

Family composition	December 2014	December 2015	December 2016	December 2017	December 2018
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Single receiving regular rate	26.1	25.0	23.9	22.9	22.6
Single receiving increased rate (under 55, "previously eligible")	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.2
Single receiving increased rate (55+)	18.9	19.9	21.2	21.9	22.5
Single-parent mother** (less than 55)	21.1	21.4	21.7	23.8	25.1
Couple receiving increased rate (55+)	6.9	7.3	7.9	8.1	8.2
Couple + children receiving regular rate	15.7	15.3	14.2	12.8	11.9
Couple + children receiving increased rate (under 55, "previously eligible")	2.2	1.9	1.6	1.3	1.0
Couple + children receiving increased rate (55+)	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3
Other	2.9	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.2

* Those who started receiving this level of income support before June 2003

** Or father.

The share of families receiving the regular rate is decreasing since 2013, reaching 34.5% in 2018. Among them, the share of single individuals rose until 2012 and has been declining since then, but they still represent the vast majority in this group. The share of couples with children was on the rise until 2014 and has since dropped – from 15.7% to 11.9% in 2018. The share of single-parent families up to age 55 declined before 2012 and has since risen to 25.1% in 2018, probably due to the legislative changes outlined above.

⁵ Those who received this level of income support before June 2003.

Benefit Level and Scope of Payments

In 2018, benefit rates increased by 0.3% in line with the rise in the index according to which the benefits are updated. At real prices, the benefit fell by 0.5% and in terms of average wages it eroded by 3% (Table 7).

The child allowance increases the income level of families with children. Families with three or more children are eligible for the increment paid for the third and fourth child with the child allowance. For example, if a single-parent mother with three children who is under 55 and, according to the Income Support Law, receives 39% of the basic amount (i.e. 33.2% of the average wage in the economy) – received, with the child allowance and increment for three children, 39.3% of the average wage.

Table 7: Income Support Benefit in Fixed Prices and as a Percentage of Average Wage in the Economy, by Family Composition, 2013-2018

Year	Single				Independent mother with 2 children**		Couple with 2 children			
	Regular rate		Increased rate				Increased rate		שיעור מוגדל	
	2018 prices (NIS)	% of average wage	2018 prices (NIS)	% of average wage	2018 prices (NIS)	% of average wage	2018 prices (NIS)	% of average wage	2018 prices (NIS)	% of average wage
The eldest in the family is under 55										
2013	1,703	18.9	1,916	21.2	3,321	36.8	2,853	31.6	3,321	36.8
2014	1,728	18.9	1,943	21.2	3,368	36.8	2,893	31.6	3,368	36.8
2015	1,739	18.5	1,956	20.8	3,390	36.0	2,911	31.0	3,390	36.0
2016	1,748	18.1	1,966	20.3	3,408	35.3	2,927	30.3	3,408	35.3
2017	1,744	17.6	1,962	19.7	3,400	34.2	2,920	29.4	3,400	34.2
2018	1,735	17.0	1,952	19.2	3,383	33.2	2,906	28.5	3,383	33.2
At least one family member is older than 55										
2013	2,129	23.6	2,129	23.6	4,310	47.7	4,215	46.7	4,215	46.7
2014	2,159	23.6	2,159	23.6	4,394	48.0	4,275	46.7	4,275	46.7
2015	2,173	23.1	2,173	23.1	4,422	47.0	4,302	45.7	4,302	45.7
2016	2,185	22.6	2,185	22.6	4,446	46.0	4,326	44.8	4,326	44.8
2017	2,179	21.9	2,179	21.9	4,435	44.6	4,316	43.4	4,316	43.4
2018	2,169	21.3	2,169	21.3	4,414	43.3	4,294	42.1	4,294	42.1

* As measured by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)

** Or father.

Income Support

Income support benefit payments reached NIS 1.94 billion in 2018 – a real decrease of 8.7% compared to 2017 (Table 8) and a cumulative decrease of 25% since 2013 (Table 8). The decrease in 2018 is mainly the result of the sharp decline in the number of recipients (8.5%, Table 1) and due to a slight decrease in the average allowance rate – 0.3%.

Table 8: Income Support Benefit Payments (Without Administrative Expenses, Millions of NIS), 2013-2018

Year	Current prices	2018 prices
2013	2,583	2,592
2014	2,597	2,593
2015	2,496	2,509
2016	2,266	2,290
2017	2,110	2,127
2018	1,943	1,943