

Reference budgets

Reference budgets are priced baskets of goods and services that indicate the minimum income that Belgian households need to fully participate in society.

Reference budgets are determined by calculating the cost of baskets of goods and services that guarantee the fulfilment of two universal needs, 'health' and 'autonomy'. These have been divided in ten intermediate needs: nutritious food, protective housing, appropriate health care and personal care, suitable clothing, rest, leisure, security in childhood, security, significant primary relationships and mobility.



REMI-tool

CEBUD developed REMI (reference budget for a decent income), an online tool which allows the social workers of the Public Centre for Social Welfare (in Dutch: OCMW) to work with the reference budget tailored to all living conditions. REMI maps out the needs of the household by comparing the earnings of a household to the minimal necessary expenses to live decently. The tool can be used in different ways.

- 1 REMI is a useful standard when assessing living conditions in terms of human dignity. REMI supplies the social workers with a scientific framework to establish a diagnosis of the needs of every specific client situation with common criteria. By doing this, intolerable differences between and inside the OCMWs can be averted.
- 2 The detailed output of REMI gives members of the Special Committee of the Social Services (in Dutch: Bijzonder Comité voor de Sociale Dienst, BCSD) a structured survey of the minimum costs needed for a household to live a life in dignity. The survey demonstrates which efforts the client and the OCMW can make to be able to pay for these costs. These efforts may include raising incomes, lowering expenses and/or providing additional support.
- 3 Thanks to REMI there is more uniformity when a proper income research is conducted to obtain the right to social care. It is a guideline on drawing up a file on the financial situation of a client.
- 4 REMI can be used as an educational instrument. It helps the person seeking help to gain a greater understanding of the necessary expenses of their family, which is an important condition to properly manage the household budget.



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