



As they become older, teenagers and young adults face the challenge of managing their own spending.

For most of them, the costs of housing, mobility, and food have a size they have not had to deal with before. Additional costs, such as those resulting from buying a car, are also unknown territory for many.

To ensure that they do not slide into debt, it is important for young people to deal with their personal living situation and the associated living expenses.

Lack of budgeting as the most common cause of debt

Taking a closer look at the experiences and statistics of Austrian debt counseling services, it becomes all the more important to deal with income and expenses. In the study “Jugendverschuldung – Analyse und Präventionsansätze (2007)”, 51 % of the young adults surveyed stated that everyday consumption (often in connection with a lack of budget planning) was one of the main causes of their indebtedness or over-indebtedness. This is followed by unemployment, housing, car purchase/leasing, and the assumption of guarantees or liabilities.

The situation is similar for young people who asked for debt counseling from SCHULDNER-HILFE OÖ in 2024. The often careless handling of money is considered the most frequent cause of over-indebtedness among clients between the age of 18 to 25.

What is the reason for this?

Many young people at this age have little or no relationship to money and living costs. They lack proper learning situations because as long as they live at home, they pay nothing to their parents and all money is available for leisure.

For example, according to a study from 2013, young people between the age of 14 to 19 state that they regularly spend money on clothing, going out, and food, but that they don't participate in housing costs (Studie Jugend und Geld, Befragung oberösterreichischer Jugendlicher, FH OÖ Campus Linz, 2013).

Furthermore, young people often live according to the motto: “Anyone can afford that!” and thus have unrealistic ideas about their own standard of living.

Unfortunately, money is simply not an issue in many families and parents are often not role models in dealing with it. Around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the same young people felt that the wealth at home was only because of a strained financial situation.

To make young people deal with their own money behavior, they need appropriate offers to reflect on their current attitudes, to expand and strengthen their planning competences, and to build up specific knowledge.

Link to the study:

Jugend und Geld, Befragung oberösterreichischer Jugendlicher, Linz (2013) www.schuldner-hilfe.at/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/4fab7_Studie_Jugend_und_Geld_2013_Kurzfassung.pdf

Reference budgets

In Austria, so-called reference budgets have been developed. These provide benchmarks for necessary household expenditures that allow for a modest, humane, and healthy life and participation in society. With the help of these reference values, young people should learn to question, plan, and realistically assess their personal needs in the future.



Household costs and inflation

Prices for goods and services can always change in a market economy. According to the definition of the European Central Bank (ECB), if prices rise in general and not just those of individual products, this is called “inflation”. As a result of rising prices, money loses value, i.e., purchasing power decreases.

cf. www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/educational/explainers/tell-me-more/html/what_is_inflation.de.html

Since the second half of 2021, inflation in Austria has been rising faster than the long-term average of the past ten years. Note: Prices are always compared with the same month of the year before. In September 2025, inflation reached a value of 4.0 percent compared to the same period last year. This means that prices have risen more sharply in the past months than before. Rising prices are putting a strain on the household budgets of many people living in Austria. Also, because the monthly net income of some people has not yet increased in line with inflation. The expiration of the “electricity price brake” and the increase in grid charges already caused inflation to rise at the beginning of the year. The service sector and gastronomy also contributed significantly to the higher inflation. Food prices have risen again, but less than the general inflation rate.

www.statistik.at/medien/pressemitteilungen, Inflation im Jänner, Mai, September 2025

To determine inflation, an imaginary basket of goods representative of people’s spending behavior is used. This basket currently (2025) contains 763 goods and services consumed by an average Austrian household. In addition, the various products are weighted differently according to their share in total spending.

Products on which more is spent are assigned a higher cost share. This results in a national consumer price index (CPI). The exact composition of the 2025 shopping basket can be found at

www.statistik.at/fileadmin/pages/214/WK_VPI_HVPI_2025_kurz_DE.pdf

Since this is an average value of the whole Austrian population, personal inflation may be lower or higher than the CPI, depending on consumer habits. However, since the inflation rate is rather high and wide-ranging this year, it affects approximately everyone to different degrees.

www.konsumentenfragen.at/konsumentenfragen/Aktuelles/Konsumentenfragen/Inflation_-_Was_ist_das_eigentlich_genau_.html

When buying everyday goods such as food, inflation is especially noticeable for many people. The price increase of the so-called micro shopping basket, which predominantly contains food and reflects daily purchases, was around 4.5 percent between September 2024 and September 2025. The inflation of the micro shopping basket is therefore higher than general inflation.

<https://finanzrechner.at/statistik/inflation/mikrowarenkorb>

Further information on the level of inflation can be found at these links:

Inflation rates over the last ten years:

<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/217415/umfrage/inflationsrate-in-oesterreich>

Inflation rates over the last twelve months:

<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/288914/umfrage/inflationsrate-in-oesterreich-nach-monaten>

To stay informed of inflation trends and the associated current impact on household costs, some websites are listed below. They can be used to compare prices and make deliberate purchasing decisions to reduce costs.

Level of inflation/consumer price index (CPI):

www.statistik.at/statistiken/volkswirtschaft-und-oeffentliche-finanzen/preise-und-preisindizes/verbraucherpreisindex-vpi/hvpi



Personal inflation:

www.statistik.at/persoenlicher_inflationsrechner

Housing:

Rent: www.statistik.at/statistiken/bevoelkerung-und-soziales/wohnen/wohnenkosten

Residence and income: www.derstandard.at/story/3000000214427/wo-man-in-oesterreich-am-meisten-verdient

Living situation: www.statistik.at/statistiken/bevoelkerung-und-soziales/wohnen/wohnsituation

Electricity/Gas: www.e-control.at/konsumenten/service-und-beratung/toolbox/tarifkalkulator/#

Food:

www.marktguru.at, www.wogibtswas.at

Mobility:

Fuel costs: www.spritpreisrechner.at/#/fossil

Public transportation: <https://shop.oebbtickets.at/de/ticket>, www.klimaticket.at

Smartphone, Internet & TV:

Tariffs: www.tarife.at, <https://handy.arbeit-erkammer.at/tarifrechner/index.asp?rechner=handy>

Purchases: <https://geizhals.at>

Other:

Insurance: <https://durchblicker.at/versicherungvergleich>

Bank account: www.bankenrechner.at/girokonto

Cigarettes: www.mvg.at/services/zigarettenpreise

Notes

What is the price of the world? 11th/12th grade