



# Press release

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## ***Again fewer welfare benefits***

The number of welfare benefits fell again in the first quarter of 2006. On 31 March 2006 there were 326 thousand people on welfare benefits, well over 2 thousand less than in the previous quarter. According to the latest figures by Statistics Netherlands, the greatest drop in the number of welfare benefits, relatively speaking, in the last year occurred in Amersfoort and Breda.

### ***14 thousand fewer welfare benefits within one year***

On 31 March 2006 the number of welfare benefits was down by almost 14 thousand on 31 March 2005. This is a 4 percent decrease. Especially younger welfare recipients seem to be benefiting from the economic recovery. 80 percent of the decrease was among people aged under 35.

### ***Different rates among men and women***

Since 31 March 2005 the number of welfare benefits paid to men has fallen by 7 500 and to women by 6 000. In the first quarter of 2006 the decrease in payments to women was greater. 1 500 fewer benefits were paid to women, exceeding the decrease for men by 2.5 times. In the last quarter of 2005 the number of welfare benefits paid to women already fell slightly more than those paid to men.

### ***Large differences between municipalities***

There are large differences between municipalities in the degree in which welfare benefits have fallen. The municipalities with more than 100 thousand inhabitants saw the number of welfare benefits fall by almost 9 thousand, a 4.8 percent decrease in one year. Amersfoort and Breda saw their number of benefit payments fall most drastically, namely by 10.3 and 7.9 percent respectively. Ede saw an increase in the number of benefits paid.

The greatest decrease since March 2005 occurred among the benefits that had lasted less than one year. The decrease was 11.8 percent, over six times the decrease in benefits longer than one year. In Amersfoort and Nijmegen the decrease was actually more than 25 percent.

Four out of five welfare benefits last for more than one year. In Dordrecht and Amsterdam the number of long-term benefits fell by 7.6 percent in one year. In Amsterdam this referred to 2 700 long-term benefits.