

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE
WHO ARE NOT GERMAN
IF YOU WANT TO COME TO GERMANY
FOR A VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE
THIS TEXT HAS IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR
YOU.

January 2021

You can find more information about Voluntary Social Services online.

The web address is:

<http://www.freiwilligendienste-kultur-bildung.de>

The web-site is written in German,

But:

Parts of the web-site are in easy-to-read German.

Other parts of the web-site have been translated into:

- Arabic
- English
- French
- Polish
- Russian
- Spanish
- Turkish

This text contains difficult **words**.

Difficult words are coloured blue.

The words are explained on **page 22**

To understand this text you need to know that in Germany, people who are not from the European Union are called third country nationals.

In this text you will find:

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INFORMATION: HOW TO FIND A VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE

If you want to do a Voluntary Social Service in Germany
the first thing you need

is an acceptance from a [Voluntary Social Service place of assignment \(Einsatz-Stelle\)](#)

saying you can do your Voluntary Social Service there.

And a contract with that [place of assignment](#).

You have to speak German at [Level A1](#).

This means you can say and understand the most important things in German.

For example:

- Your name
- Your age
- Where you are from

This is important for your application

and for working at the [place of assignment](#).

Only a few [places of assignment](#) have a place to live for volunteers.

You have to find a place to live by yourself.

Or you can ask the [Voluntary Social Service agency](#) for help.

In the months January to May:

This is when most [places of assignment](#) are looking for volunteers.

In the months August to October:

This is when the Voluntary Social Service begins in most [places of assignment](#).

Here you can see which [places of assignment](#) exist in Germany
and where in Germany they are located.

You can apply online.

There is a film that explains how to apply. The film is in German.

When you apply

you have to answer questions about your motivation.

That is the reason why you want to do a voluntary social service.

Think carefully about what you reply.

The [place of assignment](#) will read your answers.

After your application there is a selection process.

This means: the [places of assignment](#) choose who can do a Voluntary Social
Service there.

Because they can't take everyone.

That is why there are meetings to get to know you.

The [place of assignment](#) organises the meetings.

The meetings happen in Germany.

Online video meetings are possible.

You can ask the place of assignment for a video meeting.

You find out if you have been accepted for a Voluntary Social Service after the meeting.

You receive an acceptance:

This means you can do a Voluntary Social Service at this [place of assignment](#).

You receive a contract.

Please keep reading further down.

Or

You receive a rejection:

This means you can't do a Voluntary Social Service at this [place of assignment](#).

But you can do more than one meeting.

If you receive a rejection from one [place of assignment](#)

ask for other [places of assignment](#) that are still looking for a volunteer.

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE FROM AUSTRALIA, ISRAEL, JAPAN, CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH KOREA, USA

If you have a passport from one of the following countries this section of the text contains important information for you:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, USA

You do not need a [visa](#).

You can come to Germany whenever you like,
but for a Voluntary Social Service you need a special permit.

The permit allows you to live and work in Germany.

The permit has a special name.

In English, it is called [residence permit](#).

In German it is called [Aufenthalts-Erlaubnis zum Zwecke der Erwerbs-Tätigkeit](#).

The short form is [Aufenthalts-Erlaubnis](#).

You can get the permit at the [Ausländer-Behörde](#).

The [Ausländer-Behörde](#) is a registration office for people who are not German.

In English, it is called the [foreigners' authority](#).

Every town in Germany has a [foreigners' authority](#),
or another office that does the same job.

Once you are in Germany, you have three months to apply for the permit.

You can not start with your Voluntary Social Service until you have a [residence permit](#).

THIS IS HOW YOU APPLY FOR A RESIDENCE PERMIT:

To get your [residence permit](#), you need a lot of documents.

You need to give all of the documents to someone who works at the [foreigners' authority](#).

You need these documents:

1. You need a valid passport
2. You need to write a CV.
A CV is a document that tells people where you went to school and where you have worked.
3. You need to sign this document
<https://india.diplo.de/blob/1862510/88808a71d4ff01c9c428a2329c3381a3/declaration-true-information-data.pdf>
When you click on the link you will find a document.

It says that you have read a specific part of the [residence act](#).

This part of the residence act is called [Section 54, 2, Nr.8 of the residence act](#).

[or Paragraf 54, Absatz 2, Nr.8 des Aufenthalts-Gesetz](#) in German.

When you sign the document you promise

that you are telling the truth

and that all the information about you on the other documents is correct.

4. You have to write a text.

The text is called a [letter of motivation](#).

In German it is called [Motivations-Schreiben mit Angaben zu beruflichen Perspektiven nach dem Freiwilligen-Dienst](#).

You need to write about why you want to do a Voluntary Social Service.

You need to write about

what you want to do when your Voluntary Social Service is complete.

This could be a job, an apprenticeship, going to university, or something different.

You have to promise to go back to your home country when your Voluntary Social Service is complete.

5. You have to sign a contract for your Voluntary Social Service

The contract is signed by:

- The people that work for the Voluntary [Social Service agency \(Träger\)](#)
- The people that work at the [Voluntary Social Service places of assignment \(Einsatz-Stelle\)](#)
- You

This contract is also called an [agreement](#),

or in German

[Vereinbarung über den Freiwilligen-Dienst](#).

You need a signed copy of this [agreement](#) to apply for a residence [permit](#).

You need to write down how much money you will have each month to pay your rent and to live on.

The money for rent and to live on is called a [basic provision](#) or [Grund-Sicherung](#) in German.

Some of this money will come from your voluntary social service.

How much you get for your voluntary social service is written in your [agreement](#).

You need to write down how much additional money you will have. And you need to prove, that everything you write down is true.

In German this is called

[Nachweise zur Lebens-Unterhalts-Sicherung](#).

If you need help,

ask somebody who works for the [Voluntary Social Service agency](#).

The people at the [foreigners' authority](#) might ask you why you want to do a Voluntary Social Service in Germany and if you will go back to your home country after finishing the Voluntary Social Service.

You might have to go back to the [foreigners' authority](#) after giving them your documents to answer these questions.

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

This section has important information for you if you are not from any of these countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

You need permission to come to Germany.

This permission is called a [visa](#).

You have to apply for a [visa](#).

You have to do this in your home country before you come to Germany.

There are two places where you can apply for a [visa](#).

- One of them is the [German embassy](#)
- The other is the [German consulate](#)

At least one of these places exists in almost every country.

You can find out where they are on the internet.

You need a special [visa](#) for a Voluntary Social Service.

You cannot use a [visa](#) you already have
for studying or being an au pair in Germany.

If you are already in Germany

You need to tell the people at the [foreigner's authority](#)
that you now want to do a Voluntary Social Service.

If the immigration office does not extend your [visa](#)
you need to go to your home country
and apply for a new [visa](#) there.

THIS IS HOW YOU APPLY FOR A VISA:

To get a visa you need a lot of documents.

You need to give all of these documents to someone who works at the [German embassy](#) or the [German consulate](#).

6. You need a valid passport

7. You need to write a CV.

A CV is a document that tells people where you went to school and where you have worked.

8. You need to sign this document

<https://india.diplo.de/blob/1862510/88808a71d4ff01c9c428a2329c3381a3/declaration-true-information-data.pdf>

When you click on the link you will find a document.

It says that you have read a specific part of the residence act.

This part of the residence act is called [Section 54, 2, Nr.8 of the residence act](#).

or [Paragraf 54, Absatz 2, Nr.8 des Aufenthalts-Gesetz](#) in German.

When you sign the document you promise

that you are telling the truth

and that all the information about you on the other documents is correct.

9. You have to write a text.

The text is called a [letter of motivation](#).

In German it is called [Motivations-Schreiben mit Angaben zu beruflichen Perspektiven nach dem Freiwilligen-Dienst](#).

You need to write about why you want to do a Voluntary Social Service.

You need to write about

what you want to do when your Voluntary Social Service is complete.

This could be a job, an apprenticeship, going to university, or something different.

You have to promise to go back to your home country when your Voluntary Social Service is complete.

10. You have to sign a contract for your Voluntary Social Service

The contract is signed by:

- The people that work for the [Voluntary Social Service agency \(Träger\)](#)
- The people that work at the [Voluntary Social Service places of assignment \(Einsatz-Stelle\)](#)
- You

This contract is also called an [agreement](#), or in German

[Vereinbarung über den Freiwilligen-Dienst](#).

You need a signed copy of this [agreement](#) to apply for a [residence permit](#).

You need to write down how much money you will have each month to pay your rent and to live on.

The money for rent and to live on is called a [basic provision](#) or [Grund-Sicherung](#) in German.

Some of this money will come from your voluntary social service.

How much you get for your voluntary social service is written in your [agreement](#).

You need to write down how much additional money you will have. And you need to prove, that everything you write down is true.

In German this is called

[Nachweise zur Lebens-Unterhalts-Sicherung](#).

If you need help, ask somebody who works for the Voluntary Social Service agency.

The people at the

[German embassy](#) or the [German consulate](#) might ask you why you want to do a Voluntary Social Service in Germany and if you will go back to your home country after finishing the Voluntary Social Service.

You might have to go back to the [German embassy](#) or the [German consulate](#) after giving them your documents to answer these questions.

DIFFICULTIES YOU MAY HAVE IF YOU ARE NOT AN EU CITIZEN

Sometimes [third country nationals](#) have difficulties getting a [visa](#) or [residence permit](#).

DIFFICULTY: NOT ENOUGH MONEY

One reason might be that you do not have enough money to live in Germany.

If you want a visa or residence permit

- You need to have at least 427 Euros to live on each month.
- You also need at least 325 Euros to pay your rent.

The money for rent and living is called a [basic provision](#) or [Grund-Sicherung](#) in German.

If you apply for a visa or residence permit you need to have this [basic provision](#).

This is important!

Otherwise you are not allowed to come to Germany.

The [agreement](#) for your Voluntary Social Service needs to say:

- How much money you get each month for your Voluntary Social Service
- How much additional money you get for food and rent.

It is helpful if people working for the [Voluntary Social Service agency](#)

write these numbers down

for the people working for the [foreigners' authority](#).

This helps you get a [visa](#) or [residence permit](#).

The people working for the [Voluntary Social Service agency](#) know this and can help you.

If the money you get for your voluntary social service is not enough

You need to have the rest of the money.

You need to prove that you have it.

Usually the money needs to be deposited on a [blocked account](#).

DIFFICULTY: COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Country of Origin is the country you are from.

If you are from a country in Africa, Asia or South America it can be especially difficult to get a [visa](#).

The people working for the [Voluntary Social Service agency](#) know this.

They can help you.

You can write an email

to people working for the [Voluntary Social Service agency](#).

The e-mail address is: info@freiwilligendienste-kultur-bildung.de

DIFFICULTY: THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

To get a [visa](#) or [residence permit](#)

you need to say and understand the most important things in German.

For example you need to know how to say:

- Your name
- Your age
- Where you are from

Another way of saying this is: you speak German at [Level A1](#).

If you cannot speak German at [Level A1](#)

people working for the [Voluntary Social Service agency](#) and

people working for the [place of assignment](#)

need to write down that you can still come to Germany.

This is important so you can get a [visa](#) or [residence permit](#).

When you are in Germany you can do a language course.

The [Voluntary Social Service agency](#) can pay for some of the language course.

INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The following section contains important information for you if you are from a country in the [European Union](#).

This means you have a passport from one of these countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom

You do not need a [visa](#) and you do not need a [residence permit](#) to come to Germany.

You can live in Germany, work in Germany, study in Germany or you can do a Voluntary Social Service in Germany.

When you come to Germany you need enough money for food and for rent.

You also need health insurance.

This is important!

If you do not have enough money to live in Germany

You can get money from the German government.

This money is called [social welfare benefits](#).

In German it is called: [Sozial-Leistungen](#).

To get [social welfare benefits](#) you need to live in Germany.

That is why Volunteers coming to Germany need to register in Germany.

To do this you go to the registration office.

You tell the people at the registration office your name
and your address in Germany.

There is a registration office in every German town.

You can ask your landlord
or someone at your [Voluntary Social Service place of assignment](#)
where the registration office in your town is.

You can get [social welfare benefits](#) three months after you have registered.

That is why you should register in Germany as soon as possible.

Everybody has to register.

Even if you do not need [social welfare benefits](#)
you have to register.

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

Some people come to Germany
because there is a war going on in their home country
or because they are in danger.

These people come to Germany for protection.

This is called [seeking asylum](#).

If you are in Germany and [seeking asylum](#)

You can do a Voluntary Social Service.

But you have to be in Germany for over three months.

After three months in Germany you can get a permit
to do a Voluntary Social Service.

This permit is called [work permit](#).

In German it is called [Beschäftigungs-Erlaubnis](#).

You can get this permit, but you do not have a right to it.

You get a [work permit](#) at the [foreigners' authority](#).

Ask somebody working for the [Voluntary Social Service agency](#).

They can help you.

EXPLANATIONS OF THE DIFFICULT, BLUE WORDS

This text contains difficult words.

Difficult words are coloured blue.

The blue words are explained here.

- **Basic provision**

This is a certain amount of money.

You need to have this amount of money each month

To live on and pay for things like food and clothes

To pay your rent

In German it is called Grund-Sicherung.

- **Blocked account**

This is a type of bank account

with restrictions.

That means:

You cannot use all the money all of the time.

In German it is called Sperrkonto.

- [European Union](#)

The European Union is a group of countries in Europe.

These countries are part of the European Union:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

- [Foreigners' authority](#)

The foreigners' authority is a registration office for people who are not from Germany.

In German it is called Ausländer-Behörde.

At the foreigners' authority you apply for a residence permit.

- [German consulate](#)

The German consulate is an authority where you can apply for a visa.

The office is in your home country.

- [German embassy](#)

The German embassy is an authority where you can apply for a visa.

The office is in your home country.

- [Letter of motivation](#)

This is a text you have to write.

You write down

Why you want to do a voluntary social service

What you want to do after your voluntary social service is over

In German it is called [Motivations-Schreiben mit Angaben zu beruflichen Perspektiven nach dem Freiwilligen-Dienst](#)

or just [Motivations-Schreiben](#).

- [Level A1](#)

When you are a beginner, learning a language [level A1](#) means you can say and understand simple sentences.

For Example you need to know how to say:

- Your name
- Your age
- Where you are from

- [Residence act](#)

The [residence act](#) has all the rules

about what you need to do to live and work in Germany

- [Residence permit](#)

A [residence permit](#) is a document

to say that you are allowed to come to Germany

and that you can do your voluntary social service in Germany.

In German it is called

[Aufenthalts-Erlaubnis zum Zwecke der Erwerbs-Tätigkeit](#)

or just [Aufenthalts-Erlaubnis](#).

- [Section 54, 2, Nr.8 of the residence act](#)

This is a specific section of the residence act.

You have to sign a document to say you have read it

to promise you are telling the truth

about who you are and where you are from.

In German it is called [Paragraf 54, Absatz 2, Nr. 8 des Aufenthalts-Gesetz](#).

- [Seeking asylum](#)

Some people come to Germany

because there is a war going on in their home country

or because they are in danger.

These people come to Germany for protection.

This is called [seeking asylum](#).

- [Signed agreement](#)

This is the contract you sign for your voluntary social service.

In German it is called

[unterschiedene Vereinbarung über den Freiwilligen-Dienst](#)

or just [Vereinbarung](#).

- [Social welfare benefits](#)

This is money you can get from the German government.

You can get this money if you do not have enough of your own money to live on and pay rent in Germany.

You can only get this money if you are from a country in the European Union.

- [Third country national](#)

People who are not from the [European Union](#) are called third country nationals in Germany.

- [Visa](#)

A [visa](#) is a document to say that you are allowed to come to Germany and that you can do your Voluntary Social Service in Germany.

You need this document if you are a [third country national](#).

- [Voluntary Social Service place of assignment](#)

This is the organisation or place where you will be doing your Voluntary Social Service

This could be:

- A theatre
- A museum
- A school

In German it is called [Einsatz-Stelle](#).

- [Voluntary Social Service agency](#)

This is the organisation that arranges Voluntary Social Services and that takes care of volunteers.

The [Voluntary Social Service](#) agency helps you if you have any questions or problems with your application or during your Voluntary Social Service.

In Germany there are lots of different [Voluntary Social Service agencies](#). In German they are called [Träger](#).

- [Work permit](#)

This is a document to say that you are allowed to work in Germany and that you are allowed to do your Voluntary Social Service in Germany. In German it is called [Beschäftigungs-Erlaubnis](#).