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## Welcome to the district of Soest

### Greetings from the District Administrator

Dear citizens,

In the globalised world in which we live, people of different origins are without doubt an enrichment for our circle. At the same time, this cultural diversity also presents us all with some challenges.

On the one hand, as a new immigrant you have certain rights, but also obligations that you must fulfil in order to integrate into German society. Finding one's way in a foreign country is often a question of coming to terms with one's own identity and with the norms and values that have been lived up to now. On the other hand, we as locals also have to overcome many inhibitions such as fear of the unknown and of change. This requires a lot of curiosity, tolerance and openness from both sides!

We offer you this app as an information and contact platform. It offers useful information and contact addresses in clearly structured subject areas.

We ask you to use the platform, look for contacts, give us feedback and up-to-date information so that the good cooperation that has been established can be further advanced.

I wish that the district of Soest becomes our common home for all of us, regardless of origin and nationality.

Eva Irrgang

District Administrator of the District of Soest

### Municipal Integration Centre

The Municipal Integration Centre (KI) is part of a network. The network promotes the integration of people with a migrant background. The KI was established in the district of Soest in 2012.

The basis for the work of the KI is the concept "At home in the district of Soest". This was developed in 2013.

The employees are committed to the participation of people with a migrant background in social life in a variety of ways. In the spirit of a culture of welcome and recognition, the KI promotes respectful interaction with one another.

The employees coordinate, advise and support. The services are accepted by local authorities and educational institutions as well as volunteers.

You can find contact details [here](#).



## District of Soest

### Interesting facts about the district of Soest

The district of Soest was created from the districts of Lippstadt and Soest and the Warstein office of the Arnsberg district with the municipal reorganisation in 1975. With over 300,000 inhabitants, its total area makes it the fourth largest district in North Rhine-Westphalia. Approximately 74,000 people in the district have a migration background, which corresponds to around 1/4 of the population. The district of Soest is one of the largest rural districts in the country with a considerable infrastructure. There are two official car licence plates. LP (stands for Lippstadt) and SO (Soest).

The traditional Hellweg runs through the centre of the district. In terms of landscape, the district is characterised by a great variety between the Münsterland parkland and the beginning Sauerland. The region also has a lot to offer tourists. Wonderful hiking trails, cycle paths and bridleways lead through unspoilt nature. Water sports of all kinds are possible on the lakes and rivers. The region can also be explored from the air.

The 14 towns and municipalities in the district offer a high quality of life for every generation. Culture and history can be found everywhere. The district of Soest has proven to be a dynamic growth region in terms of turnover, production and exports. A solid economic structure and good transport connections support this development.

The district of Soest is part of local self-government with the district council and the district administration. In addition to the direct responsibilities of the 14 towns and municipalities, it sees itself as their partner. The district administration is based in the town of Soest. The district administrator is the representative of the district of Soest. She is directly elected by the citizens. As a full-time district administrator, she heads the district administration and represents the district of Soest. She also heads the district police authority on behalf of the state of NRW.

### Cities and municipalities

Here you will find the contact addresses of the towns and municipalities in the district of Soest.

If you click on the names of the towns and municipalities, a map with all the contact information will open.

[Anröchte](#)

[Bad Sassendorf](#)

[Ense](#)

[Erwitte](#)

[Geseke](#)

[Lippetal](#)

[Lippstadt](#)

[Möhnesee](#)

[Rüthen](#)

[Soest](#)

[Warstein](#)

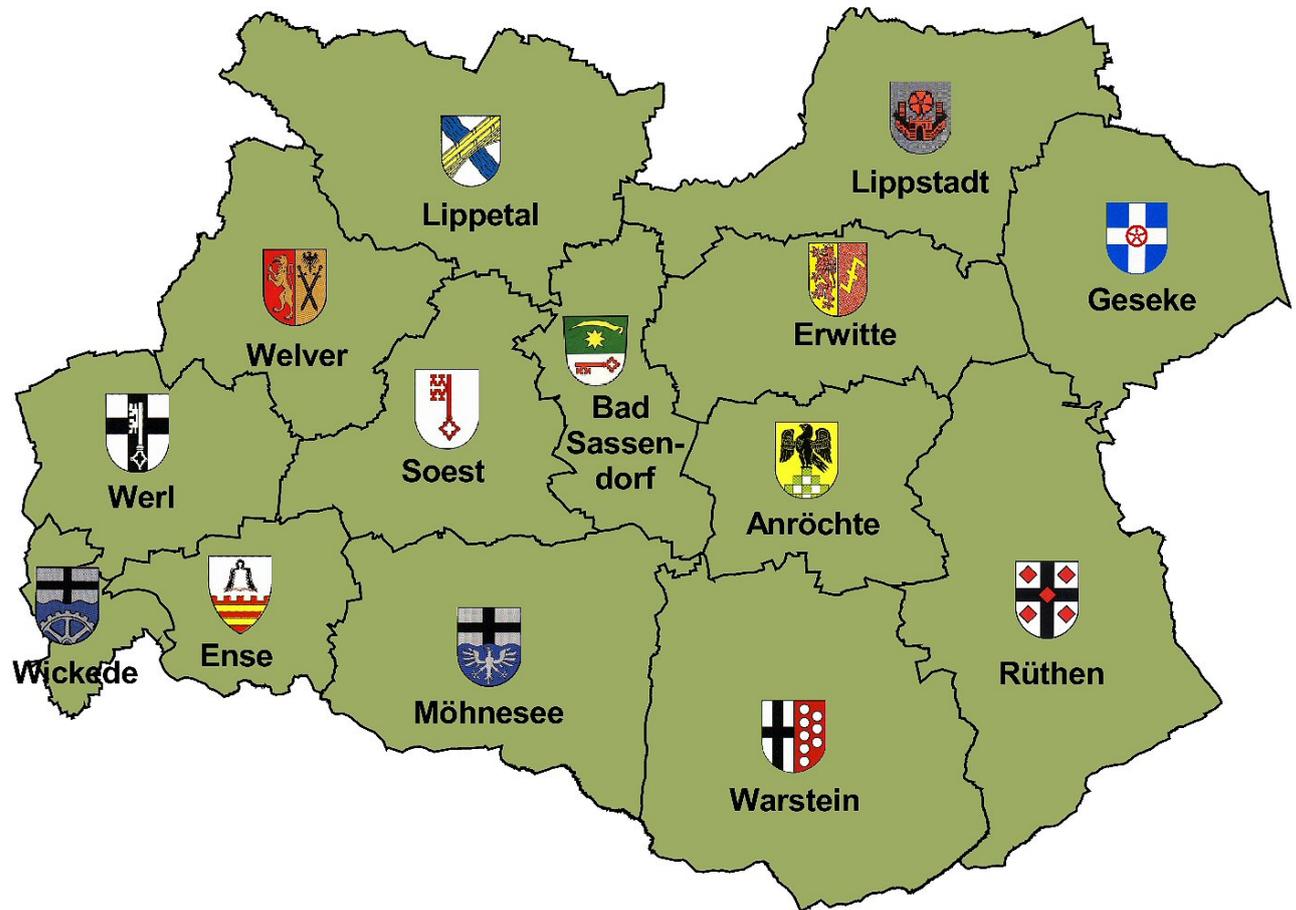
[Welper](#)

[Werl](#)

[Wickede \(Ruhr\)](#)

**District map**

Here you will find an overview of the 14 towns and municipalities in the district of Soest:



**Important offices**

**Job centre**

If you are unemployed and in need of help, you can contact the job centre.

They can help you both financially and in your search for a job or training opportunity. If, for example, you would like to take part in a language course or need career counselling or certificate recognition, the job centre can help you.

🗨️ Job Centre staff are not allowed to pass on any information about customers. A power of attorney is required as a voluntary accompanying person, which must be completed in full and signed by both parties.

**Contact**

**Jobcentre AHA Kreis Soest - Lippstadt location**

for customers from Lippstadt, Erwitte, Geseke and Anröchte

[📍 Am Siek 18-22, 59557 Lippstadt](#)  
[📞 02921106500](#) (InfoCentre)  
[@jobcenter-Soest.Lippstadt@jobcenter-ge.de](#)  
[🌐 www.jobcenter-soest.de](#)

### **Job Centre AHA District of Soest - Soest location**

for customers from Soest, Bad Sassendorf, Möhnesee, Welver and Lippetal

[📍 Paradieser Weg 2, 59494 Soest](#)  
[📞 02921106500](#) (InfoCentre)  
[@jobcenter-Soest@jobcenter-ge.de](#)  
[🌐 www.jobcenter-soest.de](#)

### **Job Centre AHA District of Soest - Warstein location**

for customers from Warstein and Rүthen

[📍 Bahnhofstraße 10, 59581 Warstein](#)  
[📞 02921106500](#) (InfoCentre)  
[@jobcenter-Soest.Warstein@jobcenter-ge.de](#)  
[🌐 www.jobcenter-soest.de](#)

### **Job Centre AHA Kreis Soest - Werl location**

for customers from Werl, Ense and Wickede (Ruhr)

[📍 Alter Markt 3, 59457 Werl](#)  
[📞 02921106500](#) (InfoCentre)  
[@jobcenter-Soest.Werl@jobcenter-ge.de](#)  
[🌐 www.jobcenter-soest.de](#)

### **Employment Agency**

The Federal Employment Agency is responsible for everything to do with employment. For example, if you are looking for a job, need help choosing a career in Germany or need your qualifications recognised, the Employment Agency is your point of contact.

### **Employment Agency Meschede - Soest - Lippstadt location**

[📍 Geiststraße 20, 59555 Lippstadt](#)  
[📞 08004555500](#)

[☎02921106200](tel:02921106200)  
[@Lippstadt@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:Lippstadt@arbeitsagentur.de)  
[🌐www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de)

### **Employment Agency Meschede - Soest - Soest location**

[📍Heinsbergplatz 6, 59494 Soest](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Heinsbergplatz+6,+59494+Soest)  
[☎08004555500](tel:08004555500)  
[☎02921106200](tel:02921106200)  
[@Meschede-Soest@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:Meschede-Soest@arbeitsagentur.de)  
[🌐www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de)

### **Employment Agency Meschede - Soest - Warstein location**

[📍Bahnhofstraße 18, 59581 Warstein](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Bahnhofstra%C3%9Fe+18,+59581+Warstein)  
[☎08004555500](tel:08004555500)  
[☎02921106200](tel:02921106200)  
[@Warstein@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:Warstein@arbeitsagentur.de)  
[🌐www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de)

### **Employment Agency Meschede - Soest - Werl location**

[📍Steinerstraße 5-7, 59457 Werl](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Steinerstra%C3%9Fe+5-7,+59457+Werl)  
[☎08004555500](tel:08004555500)  
[☎02921106200](tel:02921106200)  
[@Werl@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:Werl@arbeitsagentur.de)  
[🌐www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de)

### **Social welfare office**

The social welfare office is responsible for providing social assistance. This includes the following benefits:

- Basic security in old age and in the event of reduced earning capacity
- Care assistance
- Assistance with living expenses
- Integration assistance for disabled people
- Assistance to overcome particular social difficulties
- Assistance with health
- Assistance in other life situations

The Social Welfare Office will advise and support you in all matters relating to these topics.

The social welfare office will ask you about your financial circumstances. You will therefore have to show whether you have any valuables such as jewellery or money. You will sign some documents and declarations. Please bring all your papers with you. All persons who are registered on your residence permit must accompany you to the appointment.

You will also receive the cheque for your living expenses here. You can exchange the cheque for cash (euros) at the bank. Please note that this money must last until your next appointment with the social welfare office (approx. 1 month). You will not receive any money until your next appointment with the Social Welfare Office.

The Social Welfare Office is your contact for the following issues:

- Vouchers for initial baby equipment and for your child's school supplies
- Money for train tickets to interview appointments
- Sickness certificates, authorisation for operations and other medical measures
- Education and participation package (BUT)
- Activity and employment programme
- Applications for redistribution, exemption from compulsory housing

Here you will find the contact details of the social welfare office in your place of residence.

[District of Soest](#)

[Anröchte](#)

[Bad Sassendorf](#)

[Ense](#)

[Erwitte](#)

[Geseke](#)

[Lippetal](#)

[Lippstadt](#)

[Möhnesee](#)

[Rüthen](#)

[Soest](#)

[Warstein](#)

[Welver](#)

[Werl](#)

[Wickede \(Ruhr\)](#)

## Registry office

The registry office has many tasks. You will need to contact the registry office in many situations in your life. For example, after the birth of a child, for a marriage or in the event of a death.

## Here you can see other tasks:

- Notarisation of births and deaths
- Marriages and civil partnerships
- Acceptance of church resignations
- Name changes

- Issuing certificates (birth certificate, death certificate, marriage certificate)

Here you will find the contact details of the registry office in your place of residence:

[Anröchte](#)

[Bad Sassendorf](#)

[Ense](#)

[Erwitte](#)

[Geseke](#)

[Lippetal](#)

[Lippstadt](#)

[Möhnesee](#)

[Rüthen](#)

[Soest](#)

[Warstein](#)

[Welver](#)

[Werl](#)

[Wickede \(Ruhr\)](#)

## Residents' Registration Office

In principle, all people who come to Germany and wish to stay for longer than three months must register their residential address with the authorities after two weeks at the latest. Are you moving within Germany? Then you must inform the authorities of your new address.

💡 This registration has nothing to do with registering as an asylum seeker or registering with the [immigration authorities](#). You must do this in addition. You can find out how to register as a refugee in the chapter on [asylum and refugees](#).

### Who has to register and when?

All people who move to Germany or move within Germany must register or re-register at the Residents' Registration Office (often also called the Citizens' Registration Office or Citizens' Office). Registration within two weeks is mandatory. Are you registering too late or not at all? Then you may have to pay a fine.

When you register, you will receive an "official confirmation of registration". Keep this document in a safe place. You can use it to prove - even without your ID - that you are registered in a municipality or city in Germany. This means that you are resident there.

### What do I need to bring with me to register?

You must register in person at the Residents' Registration Office or Citizens' Registration Office. You can find the address of your residents' registration office or citizens' registration office at the bottom of this page.

You must bring your ID (identity card, residence permit, residence document, etc.) with you when registering. Do you have a passport? Or passport replacement documents? Then bring these with you too. You must also fill in a registration form. You can obtain the form directly from the residents' registration office.

In some cities / municipalities, you will also need a so-called "landlord's confirmation of moving in" for the registration. This is a document in which your landlord or landlady confirms that you are renting his or her flat. Sometimes your birth certificate or marriage certificate is

also required for registration. If you have these documents, bring them with you to the registration office as a precaution.

You can find the contact details of the residents' registration office in your place of residence here:

[Anröchte](#)

[Bad Sassendorf](#)

[Ense](#)

[Erwitte](#)

[Geseke](#)

[Lippetal](#)

[Lippstadt](#)

[Möhnesee](#)

[Rüthen](#)

[Soest](#)

[Warstein](#)

[Welper](#)

[Werl](#)

[Wickede \(Ruhr\)](#)

## Naturalisation office

You can obtain German citizenship through naturalisation. Foreign nationals who are registered in the district of Soest and wish to apply for naturalisation can find out about the requirements for naturalisation.

If you are registered in Lippstadt, please contact the naturalisation office of the city of Lippstadt.

### Naturalisation - City of Lippstadt

📍 Administration building Geiststraße 47 in 59555 Lippstadt

The naturalisation office of the district of Soest is responsible for all other municipalities in the district of Soest.

### Naturalisation - District of Soest

📍 Osthofen-Thomä-Wallstraße 2 in 59494 Soest

You can also find further information [here](#).

## Immigration office

Foreign nationals generally require a residence permit to stay in Germany. In Germany, the foreigners authority is responsible for issuing residence documents.

If you have registered with a local authority in the district of Soest, with the exception of the town of Lippstadt, the foreigners authority of the district of Soest is responsible for you. Please use the following link to obtain the necessary information.

[Migration and residence - Soest district immigration office](#)

📍 Osthofen-Thomä-Wallstraße 2, 59494 Soest

If you have registered in Lippstadt, please contact the Foreigners' Registration Office of the city of Lippstadt. Please use the following link to obtain the necessary information.

[Foreigners' Registration Office - City of Lippstadt](#)

📍 Administration building Geiststraße 47, 59555 Lippstadt

## Naturalisation offices in the district of Soest

Foreigners who are registered in the district of Soest and wish to apply for naturalisation can find out about the requirements for naturalisation. Please use the following link to obtain the necessary information.

[Naturalisation - District of Soest](#)

📍 Osthofen-Thomä-Wallstraße 2, 59494 Soest

If you are registered in Lippstadt, please use the following link to obtain information.

[Naturalisation - City of Lippstadt](#)

📍 Administration building Geiststraße 47, 59555 Lippstadt

## Youth welfare office

Children's rights are important. Every child deserves to be respected and loved. Do you have a child? Then bring it up in accordance with children's rights. This is important for the well-being of your child. You can find out more in the chapter on children's rights.

The Youth Welfare Office supports parents in bringing up children and young people. Anyone can contact the Youth Welfare Office free of charge. Are you a child or young person? Do you have problems? Then you can contact the Youth Welfare Office.

Responsibilities of the Youth Welfare Office:

- Supporting young people in their individual and social development
- Advise and support parents in their upbringing
- Protecting children and young people
- Creating positive conditions for young people and families
- Avoiding and breaking down barriers

Have you had a child? Then the youth welfare office contacts you after a few weeks. You would like a home visit. You can get to know the Youth Welfare Office. You will then receive a whole folder with information and offers. These are important for your child and your family.

Unaccompanied minor refugees are also subject to youth welfare law. This means that the case goes to the youth welfare office.

The towns of Lippstadt, Soest and Warstein have their own youth welfare office. The youth welfare office of the district of Soest is responsible for residents from the other municipalities.

[City of Lippstadt](#)  
[City of Soest](#)  
[Town of Warstein](#)  
[District of Soest](#)

## Community life in Germany

### Basic Law and human rights

#### The Basic Law

In every country, there are rules that everyone must abide by. The most important law for Germany is the Basic Law. It is a collection of 146 articles. Each article stands for a law, i.e. a rule. These rules determine how we live together in Germany. The basic rights protect the freedom of each individual. They are set out in Articles 1 to 19 of the Basic Law (catalogue of fundamental rights).

Here you can find the Basic Law in 12 languages: [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Italian](#), [Persian](#), [Polish](#), [Russian](#), [Serbian](#), [Spanish](#), [Turkish](#) and, of course, [German](#).

This film clearly shows how the German constitutional state works:  
[German](#), [Dari](#), [Arabic](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Pashto](#), [Urdu](#).

#### Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Human rights are important rights that always apply to all people all over the world. Human rights are rights that every person has by virtue of being human. They protect the dignity of every human being and are due to all human beings equally, without distinction of any kind, such as "(...) colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." (Article 2 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948)

There are 30 rights. The most important are:

All people are of equal value.  
Everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion.  
Everyone has the right to peace and security.

#### Germany is a constitutional state

##### Rule of law

Germany is a democratic constitutional state. The Basic Law guarantees human dignity, freedom and justice. There are laws to ensure that human rights are respected.

Political decisions are made by representatives of the people. The people's representatives are elected by the Germans in free elections.

The laws apply in the same way to everybody in Germany. The state has to abide by the law. Everyone living in Germany must also abide by German laws.

This means, for example, that:

- If someone believes that another person or the public administration has committed an injustice against them, they can take that person or institution to court. The courts are independent. This means The government is not allowed to tell the courts what to decide.
- State courts decide whether or not someone will be punished for their actions. This punishment could take the form of a fine, community service or prison. There is no death penalty in Germany.
- The police has the role of ensuring that everyone is able to live in freedom and safety.
- Religion must not violate laws. Laws always take priority over religion.

The following behaviour is not allowed in Germany:

- Inciting people to hatred or to do violent actions.
- Fighting against the democratic system and its values.

These offences can lead to imprisonment.

After serving their sentence, non-German nationals can lose their right to remain in Germany (under certain circumstances) and be deported.

## **Personal freedom**

All adults are allowed to make their own decisions and determine their own lives. No matter whether man or woman, young or old, with or without disabilities, no matter what skin colour or religious affiliation.

All people are allowed to do what they want as long as they abide by the law and do not restrict others in their freedom.

## **Equal rights for men and women**

Women and men have the same rights. This is reflected in the law and in everyday life.

This means, for example:

- Girls and boys go to school together and receive the same lessons. They take part in sports lessons together.
- Women are allowed to study or learn a trade. In principle, all professions are open to women.
- Women take on responsibility in society, for example as policewomen, doctors, teachers or in public offices and authorities. Their instructions must be followed.
- Women decide for themselves what work they want to do. They can dispose of the money they earn themselves.
- Women do not have to ask their husbands, parents or other family members for permission to work, open an account or conclude contracts.
- Women are allowed to dress as they wish.
- Women decide for themselves whether, when and whom they want to marry.

- Mothers are particularly protected. They must and may not work for six weeks before and eight weeks after giving birth. They may not be dismissed because of their maternity.
- The tasks and roles in the family are not prescribed.
- Women take part in public life. They attend cultural, political or sporting events, restaurants and bars.
- Women can vote and be elected to political office.
- Women and men are equal in inheritance rights, daughters as well as sons.
- Sexual touching, comments or requests are only permitted if everyone involved agrees. A "stop" or "no" must always be respected.

This is not permitted in Germany, for example:

- Any form of violence towards women, even in marriage.
- No one may be sexually harassed.
- Rape, even within marriage, is penalised.
- No one may be forced to marry. Coercion into marriage through violence or threats is punishable.

## Children's rights

Children need extra protection, which is why they also have special rights. The individual children's rights are stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and subsequently ratified by 196 countries. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child includes 54 articles.

This means, for example, that:

- All children have the same rights. No matter where they live, where they come from, the colour of their skin, their parents' jobs, which language they speak, their religion, their gender, the culture in which they live, whether they have any disabilities, whether they are rich or poor.
- Children have the right to a name, a birth certificate, a nationality and a family. If a child is missing any of these things, the state will help them as a general rule.
- Children should be able to live with their parents, unless this places them at risk. Parents can and must provide for their children, and protect and encourage their children's health and well-being.
- Children who are refugees have a right to special protection and help.
- Children need to be protected in order to grow up safely.
- Children can and must go to school. Education is compulsory. Parents must support their children in their schooling. In Germany, school education is free.
- Children are entitled to form their own opinions.
- By the age of 14 at the latest, children are allowed to decide for themselves whether they want to be part of a religion (and if so, which one).
- Children should be able to develop well. Parents are responsible for this. If they need help, the state must help them, for example by providing food, clothing and a place to live.
- Children whose parents are not married have the same rights as those who live with married parents.

The following behaviour is not allowed in Germany:

- Children must not be neglected or abused.
- Children must not be hit or abused physically or psychologically in any way.
- Children are allowed to stay in school until the age of 13. The following table shows the number of workers who can be employed in the labour force. If they are older, they are only allowed to work in a very limited capacity. If they work, it must not negatively affect their health and development.
- Children must not be abducted or used as commercial objects.
- Sexual activity with children is forbidden.

The 10 important children's rights are clearly explained here: [German/Arabic](#) and [German/Persian](#).

### **Freedom from violence / physical integrity**

Everyone has the right to a life without violence. This means that everyone has the right to life and physical integrity. This applies to both physical and mental health. It also applies to people's private lives.

This means, for example, that:

- Conflicts should be resolved without violence.
- If someone needs help because of danger or conflict, they can call the police.
- The instructions of the police must be followed.
- Taking the law into your own hands (vigilante justice) is not allowed. A state court will decide in the case of a person's own rights being violated.
- The state must act in a non-violent manner. It is only permitted to use violence in exceptional cases when all other methods have failed. There is no death penalty or corporal punishment. Torture is forbidden.

The following behaviour is not allowed in Germany:

- Abusing, injuring or killing another person.
- This also applies among families, in schools and on the streets.
- Taking part in a fight in which people are killed or seriously injured.
- Vendettas (blood revenge) or murder in the name of honour.
- Any kind of violence to women and children at any time, anywhere.
- Human trafficking (smuggling people), slavery or forcing people into prostitution.
- Sewing closed, cutting or removing female genitals.

### **Social justice**

The state must respect and protect human dignity. It therefore has a responsibility to promote social justice as much as possible. It takes legal, financial and material actions to do so. Everyone in Germany who is earning money pays part of their earnings to the state (tax). The higher your income, the more you have to pay. The more you earn, the more taxes you pay. The state is expected to spend this money for the benefit of everyone living in Germany.

This means, for example, that:

- Every person registered as living in Germany has the right to basic medical care. This includes medical treatment in the case of illness or accident.
- All people who have a job that is subject to social insurance pay contributions to health insurance, long-term care insurance and pension insurance.
- Every adult must make an effort to pay for their own living expenses. If a person is not able to do this, they can request support from the state.
- The state ensures that taxes are used to reduce social inequality and help people in crisis (refugees, for example).
- The state provides financial support to parents, for example through child benefits.

The following behaviour is not allowed in Germany:

- Tax fraud, for example paying fewer taxes than required.
- Receiving state benefits without being entitled to them.

## Police

### Responsibilities of the police

The police are there to protect us from harm. They also investigate and solve crimes. The police have nothing to do with the secret service or politicians. Is there an emergency? Then you can call the police on [110](#) at any time. The call is free. Read [here](#) about what you need to do in an emergency call.

There are laws which govern what the police can and can't do. For example, in order to search a house, they need a warrant from a judge. Unless the people in the house are in great danger. Read [here](#) about your rights in relation to the police.

👮 Don't try to bribe the police. Attempted bribery of police officers is a serious offence in Germany.

### When should I call the police?

Are you or another person in danger? Have you witnessed a crime? Then call the police. It may be an assault. Or a robbery. Or theft, arson or criminal damage. Sexual abuse, physical assault and threats are also the responsibility of the police. You should also call the police in the event of domestic violence.

Call the emergency number 110, and the police will be with you as quickly as possible.

Important: If you are a victim of right-wing, racist, antisemitic, Islamophobic, homophobic or transphobic violence, you can call the police at any time. You can find out more in our chapter on [discrimination](#).

You can also call the police in the event of a minor breach of the law. For example, if someone does not comply with quiet times and plays loud music at night.

And you can also tell the police if you notice political or religious radicalisation among young people you know. To report this, however, you can also contact the radicalisation advice

centre run by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge) on [09119434343](tel:09119434343) in multiple languages.

## Rights vis-à-vis the police

### What can the police do?

The police may ask you for your ID. If you are not suspected of any specific criminal offence or you have no evidence of another suspect, the police may not search you. This also applies to your home: your home may only be searched if you are suspected of a criminal offence or if the police suspect that a suspect is in your home. However, if the police announce that they want to search you or your home anyway, you must say that you do not consent to this. If you do not say anything, this is deemed to be consent. You have said no? The police search your home anyway? Then the police are committing a criminal offence. In this case, contact a counselling centre or a lawyer. You have the right to make a phone call during a search. You may also call someone else. This person can then also be a witness and help you. Normally, the police need a court order.

💡 Women may ask for a female police officer if they themselves are to be searched.

If you are travelling in a vehicle, the police may ask for your ID, driving licence and vehicle registration document. The police may also ask you to stop and leave the vehicle. The police may also check whether you have a warning triangle and a first-aid kit with you. However, they are not allowed to search your vehicle or test your fitness to drive by carrying out various tests (e.g. walking in a straight line) if there is no clear indication that you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If the police do or demand this anyway, you must refuse to give your consent. If the police force you, they are committing a criminal offence.

💡 If you do not say anything, this will be interpreted as consent.

The police may only carry out a blood test or urine test if you are accused of a criminal offence. As a rule, the police must have the consent of a judge. Only if it is necessary to react immediately (for example, because the drugs or alcohol can no longer be detected later) may the police act without the consent of a judge. However, it is important that there really are indications of alcohol or drug consumption. The police are not allowed to carry out these tests arbitrarily. If a police officer wants to carry out a blood test or urine test without an understandable reason, you can refuse your consent.

The police are also not allowed to take you to the police station without a reason. If a police officer asks you to come with them, you can also refuse to give your consent. If you are taken along anyway, the police are liable to prosecution. In this case, you should contact a lawyer. If you do not know a lawyer yourself, you can contact the "[Anwaltlicher Notdienst in Strafsachen](#)" (emergency lawyer service in criminal matters) of the Vereinigung Berliner Strafverteidiger e.V. at 📞 [+49 \(0\) 1723255553](tel:+49(0)1723255553) and ask for support there. The staff there are available day and night.

If you are questioned by the police, you may refuse to make a statement. This means that you do not have to answer their questions. You should not answer the questions without a lawyer. If you receive a written invitation from the police, you do not have to go there. You only have to accept invitations from the public prosecutor's office or a court. Be sure to contact a lawyer beforehand.

You have the right to ask for the police officer's identity card and to write down their details. This is important if you want to file a criminal complaint later. It is also always helpful to ask passers-by to observe the situation. Then you also have witnesses. Important: You must file a criminal complaint within three months of the incident. You can do this directly with the public prosecutor's office. You do not have to go to the police.

## Freedom of opinion

All people are allowed to form their own opinions, to express and disseminate them freely. People are also allowed to express those opinions in public. All media are also free, and everyone can obtain information from them. Anyone who expresses their opinion openly must be aware of respecting the personal honour and dignity of other people.

This means, for example, that:

- You are allowed to criticise the government.
- You are allowed to criticise religion.
- Artistic works are allowed to be provocative. Nobody is allowed to tell writers, musicians or visual artists what their work should be about.
- The government and religions can be the subjects of satire and critical art.
- If someone feels they have been slandered, insulted or defamed, or that their personal reputation or worth has been maligned, they can contact the police or a court.

The following behaviour is not allowed in Germany:

- The use of unconstitutional symbols and calls to overthrow democracy.
- Insulting statements of opinion that denigrate other people.
- Defamation of character or libel regarding other people.

## Religious freedom

Freedom of religion applies in Germany. This is guaranteed by the Basic Law. You can practise your faith as you see fit, as long as you do not violate the Basic Law. You may also not be discriminated against on the basis of your religion, for example when looking for work. Religious freedom also means accepting other people's beliefs. Germany does not have a state church. State and religion are separate.

This means, for example:

- All people are free to choose and practise their religion and beliefs.
- All people have the freedom not to be religious - anyone who does not believe in God is allowed to say so publicly.
- People of different religions and beliefs are allowed to marry each other.
- Marriage only counts as a legally binding marriage before the registry office. Marriages entered into exclusively within the framework of a religion are not legally binding in Germany.
- Religious laws do not determine the legal system in Germany.

## Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\* and inter\* (LGBTI)

Many people live together in Germany. They have different religions. They are of different genders. They come from different countries. They have different political views. All these people live together peacefully. They have the same rights.

The same applies to people of different sexual orientations or gender identities. These include lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender and intersex people. In short, they are called LSTBI. They have the same rights in Germany as all other people.

There are three genders in Germany. These are "male", "female" and "diverse". Transgender people can change their gender in Germany. They can also change their name. Women are allowed to love and marry other women in Germany. Men are allowed to love and marry other men in Germany.

 Many LGBTI people have fled to Germany. They were persecuted in their home country.

Are you a refugee and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex? Then you can contact one of the many LGBTI organisations in Germany. There you will find support, social contacts and information. You can find contact details at the LSVD project "Queer Refugees Deutschland". You can also find more information:

Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany (LSVD)

Queer Refugees Germany" project

 [www.queer-refugees.de](http://www.queer-refugees.de)

 [queer-refugees@lsvd.de](mailto:queer-refugees@lsvd.de)

## Asylum and migration

### Arriving in the Soest district

Current information and advice on entering Germany from Turkey, Syria and Ukraine can be found [here](#).

Every person must register with the [residents' registration office](#) in their place of residence after moving into a new home.

If you still need to apply for a [residence permit](#) or your residence permit has expired, you still need to register with the [Foreigners' Registration Office](#).

Would you like to apply for naturalisation? Then please contact the [naturalisation office](#) in your place of residence.

If you have fled to Germany because of persecution, war or other dangers in your home country, you can [apply for asylum](#).

 Further information on migration and residence can be found [here](#).

### Asylum and refugees

#### Residence permit

Foreign nationals need a residence permit to enter and stay in Germany.

This stores the person's personal data (e.g. name, date of birth, nationality and address) and helps to identify them.

There are different types of residence permits. The [Foreigners' Registration Office](#) will tell you which residence title you need and how to apply for it.

💡 You can find more information [here](#).

## Application for asylum

After registering with the [residents' registration office](#) in your place of residence, you can apply for asylum if you have fled persecution, war or other dangers in your home country.

The **Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)** will explain the [asylum procedure](#) in Germany and your rights and obligations. The application is also submitted there.

If you still have questions or need support with your application, you can contact the [migration advice centres](#).

You can also find further information [here](#).

## Family reunification

Sometimes only part of the family lives in Germany for the time being. In these cases, family reunification may be possible. Various requirements must be met for this.

### **Do you live in Germany yourself and have a residence permit or a settlement permit?**

Then your spouse can apply for a residence permit for family reunification.

You can find more information [here](#).

You can also apply for a residence permit for family reunification for your children.

You can find more information on reuniting children [here](#).

### **Is your minor child or spouse living alone in Germany?**

Then you can apply for a residence permit for family reunification yourself.

If you have a German spouse or a German child, you can find more information [here](#).

If your child has fled to Germany alone, you can find more information [here](#).

Further general information on family asylum and family reunification can also be found [here](#).

## Advice and Assistance

### Migration advice centres for adult immigrants (aged 27 and over)

Arriving in a new country is not easy. Language, housing, work and culture: all these issues are important for your future life in Germany. Are you or your family new to Germany? Are you older than 27? Then you can seek advice from organisations. To do so, you must be authorised to live in Germany. You need a residence permit. Counselling is free of charge. Help, support, information and clarification are available on the following topics:

- Where can I learn German?
- How do I apply for a German course?
- How do I find a flat?
- Where can I apply for financial aid?
- Who can help me find a job?
- Can my degree be recognised in Germany?
- Which doctor can I go to?
- Who will help me during my pregnancy?
- How can my family also come to Germany?
- If necessary, accompaniment to offices and authorities by volunteers
- Information on migration and integration measures

Counselling is available in German and many other languages. It is free of charge. And support is provided regardless of your origin, religion or nationality.

💡 Are you between 12 and 27 years old? Then there is a separate counselling service for you: [Youth Migration Services](#)

💡 The asylum counselling service supports you primarily in the local shared accommodation centres.

You can find migration counselling centres [here](#).

Information from **Diakonie Ruhr-Hellweg** can be found [here](#).

[Click here](#) for information from the **AWO**.

Click [here](#) for information from **Caritas**.

## Refugee counselling (Caritas, Diakonie)

Caritas and Diakonie advise refugees in the district of Soest.

They provide support in various areas, for example

- Counselling on social law issues
- School and kindergarten attendance
- Help and support in everyday life

You can find contact persons and opening hours by clicking on the links.

[Here](#) you will find information on the Caritas refugee counselling service.

[Here](#) you can find information on the refugee counselling service of the Diakonie.

## Youth Migration Service (Jugendmigrationsdienste)

Youth Migration Services (Jugendmigrationsdienst; JMD) support young immigrants from 12 to 27 years old. It helps them settle into life in Germany as quickly as possible and provides support for the following issues:

- Questions about general orientation.
- School, education, career.
- Personal questions.
- Financial and legal matters.

You can get more information [here](#).

**You can find local youth migration services at:**

<https://www.jugendmigrationsdienste.de/>

## Central Repatriation Advice Centre

You want to return to your home country before the BAMF has decided on your asylum application? Are you uncertain how to get your passport back or do you need financial help for the journey? The Central Return Counselling Service (ZRB) can advise you on your options on voluntarily returning to your home country. The counselling is open-ended. This means that after the counselling, you decide yourself whether you want to leave voluntarily or not.

You can find more information at:

<https://www.returningfromgermany.de>

## Online advice

### mbeon - Multilingual advice via chat

There are many local counselling centres in Germany. If the counselling centre is closed or far from where you live, then digital chat counselling can help.

Finding information online and getting advice via chat is easy with mbeon.

mbeon allows for counselling via chat. All counsellors are qualified professionals from Migration Counselling for Adult Immigrants (MBE; Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer). They guarantee a response within 48 hours and can help with any questions or problems that may arise when living in a new environment. The counselling is anonymous, secure and free of charge.

The app also contains extensive information on topics ranging from work and career to health, learning German, housing, family and residency. In addition, mbeon can help you get in touch with migration counselling centres and other important contact points.

The app is available in German, English, Russian and Arabic. You can get counselling in more than 19 different languages.

The app has many benefits:

- The app is flexible. You can use it anywhere and anytime.
- Counselling is provided in your mother tongue.
- The app is secure. Documents can be sent quickly and securely.
- The app and counselling are free of charge.
- The counselling is anonymous.

You can download the app for free from the Google Play Store and the AppStore.

 [mbeon in the Google Play Store](#)

 [mbeon in the AppStore](#)

More information is available on its [multilingual website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

## Language

### Information

In order to find a job and generally find your feet in Germany, you need to learn German. Here you will find opportunities and contact points for appropriate language courses. There are various ways to learn German. Your residence status has an influence on which option you can choose. As long as you cannot speak German well enough yourself, you will need help. You can also find contact persons for this here.

### Level of language ability and certificates

You can attend a German language class. There are six levels of language ability: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. You start at level A1. You speak your mother tongue at level C2. The six steps in detail are:

A1: Beginner

You can understand and use simple words and sentences.

You can introduce yourself and others.

You can ask personal questions.

You can answer questions.

Someone is speaking slowly and clearly. You can have a conversation with them.

A2: Basic knowledge

You can understand full sentences and frequently used words.

You can express yourself in simple, everyday situations. You can describe where you come from, what kind of education you have and your surroundings.

B1: Advanced language skills

You can understand a lot. You can speak about topics you are familiar with and your personal interests. You can talk about experiences and events, dreams, hopes and goals. You can provide brief reasons or explanations for your plans and opinions.

B2: Independent language skills

You can understand the most important parts of complex texts on both specific and abstract topics. You can even understand expert discussions in topics you know well.

You can express yourself orally in a spontaneous and fluent manner. You can justify a position on a current issue by giving the pros and cons.

C1: Expert language skills

You can understand much of longer, complex texts. You can also grasp implicit meaning in the text.

You can articulate your opinion on complex topics clearly, extensively and in a well-structured way.

C2: (Approaching) native speaker proficiency

You can understand practically everything you read or hear without effort.

You can summarise information from a variety of written and oral sources. You can reproduce reasoning and explanations in a cohesive way. You can express yourself in a spontaneous, very fluid, precise and nuanced manner.

## Language Courses

### Initial orientation courses

The German courses for initial language orientation are for language beginners. Here you will learn elementary German. You will discover life in Germany. The course is designed to make your life in Germany easier. You will learn how to orientate yourself in everyday life. A course comprises 300 units of 45 minutes each. Various topics are discussed in the course. You will learn about "health/medical care", "work", "kindergarten/school", "housing", "local orientation/transport/mobility". The focus is on oral communication: participants should learn to find their way around in everyday life as quickly as possible. The course also teaches German values.

Initial orientation courses are primarily intended for asylum seekers with unclear prospects of remaining in Germany. Are there still places available? Then recognised asylum seekers with good prospects of staying may also take part. Do you still have to go to school? Then the

initial orientation courses are not for you. Have you been offered a place on an integration course? Then you can switch to this course. The people on the courses have very different educational backgrounds. Illiterate people can attend the courses, as can university graduates. Initial orientation courses are free of charge. Further information can be found [here](#).

💡 German is spoken in the course - interpreters are not present in the course.

💡 Please contact a migration advice centre or your asylum social counselling service. They will help you to find a suitable course.

## Integration courses

In this course you will learn German. You will learn more than just the basics. At the end of the course, you will be able to speak German at level B1. You will also learn about the culture, politics and social customs in Germany. If you are still a minor, you can take part in a special course for young people. The integration courses are free of charge for refugees and other target groups who receive social benefits.

The integration course concludes with the examinations "Deutschtest für Zuwanderer" (DTZ) and "Leben in Deutschland" (LiD).

The job centre, the social welfare office or the immigration office can oblige you to take part in an integration course. You have not been obliged but would like to take part in a course? Then you can apply for an integration course at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). You can search for local integration courses [here](#). Do you need help with the application? Please contact your asylum social counselling service or a migration counselling service. They will also help you choose an integration course provider.

You can find more information here:

🌐 [Integration course for people from abroad, Soest district](#)

🌐 [Learn German, Federal Employment Agency](#)

## Vocational Language Courses (DeuFöV)

This course will improve your German language skills. The aim is to improve your vocabulary. You will learn words relevant for professional careers. Do you already have a job? Are you still doing training or an apprenticeship? Would you like to start working soon? Then you should attend this course. Ideally, you will have already taken an integration course.

At the end of the course, your level of spoken German will be C1. Each of these courses concludes with a certificate examination. In addition to the basic courses, there are also various special courses with different emphases.

In order to participate in a vocational German course, you need either a certificate of admission or a certificate of obligation. You can get this either from the Job Centre or the Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit), or by applying to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge – BAMF). You can find more information on the BAMF [homepage](#).

💡 You must have a German fluency level of at least B1 in order to attend the course.

## Online language courses and online study

### Online language courses

You can learn German on your smartphone or computer (also free of charge). Take advantage of the great offers to learn German quickly and make good use of the waiting time for a language course. These offers can also be useful during a language course. You can find more information about the language levels (A1-C2) [here](#).

🌐 [Lunes App](#): The app helps you at school, in training and at work. The app has lots of information about words from different professions. There is a picture for each word. This is how you learn the German words. There is also a read-aloud function. Various exercises make learning fun. You can learn and memorise the vocabulary.

🌐 [Serlo ABC](#): A free alphabetisation app for self-study or as a supplement to a language course. The app is approved as a textbook for integration courses.

🌐 [Mein Deutschbuch](#): Extensive range of resources for learning German. The website is aimed at learners and teachers, A1-B2.

🌐 [Deutsch-Uni Online \(DUO\)](#): Language learning programmes for A1 to C2.

🌐 [Basic language course from Deutsche Welle](#): Language courses for beginners, advanced and professionals. There is also a placement test.

🌐 ["The City of Words"](#): App and website for playful vocabulary learning without prior knowledge in German, English, French and other languages.

🌐 [VHS learning portal](#): Free German courses. You can also learn to read, write and do maths. There is also help for preparing for school-leaving exams in German, maths and English.

🌐 [Language placement test](#): onSET-online language placement test for refugees and for language categorisation for full-time and voluntary workers.

### Online study

Many refugees and asylum seekers want to go to university. But it is difficult for them because they have to pay a lot of money for university. They also often need good certificates and papers. Kiron Higher Education offers a good solution: Tuition fees are not important for the refugees and asylum seekers. They also do not need good certificates and papers. The university offers places for everyone. The first 2 years go to university online. You can watch the courses in English. You can also add subtitles in any language. In the third year you go to the university on site. You can learn German during your studies. You also get other help and counselling.

🌐 [Website Kiron](#)

## Interpreters

### Sworn interpreters

If you do not yet speak German very well and need to go to a public authority, you will need an interpreter. An interpreter is also helpful when you go to a doctor. At parents' evenings at school or kindergarten, an interpreter will also help you understand what people are trying to tell you.

💡 Some authorities and organisations have interpreters themselves. The authorities can use them in the discussions. You make an appointment. Please always ask whether an interpreter will be provided free of charge.

💡 Official documents such as certificates, marriage certificates or birth certificates may only be translated by state-certified translators in Germany. These translations can be very expensive. It is best to check in advance whether you need a certified translation and compare the translation prices.

You can find sworn interpreters [here](#).

### **Volunteer interpreter pool**

The volunteer interpreter pool is a support service. For example, if you have an appointment at an institution or organisation, an interpreter can be very helpful. This could be an appointment at kindergarten, school or the authorities, for example. The relevant institution or organisation can request an interpreter .

If you speak very good German and another language yourself, please get in touch. You can help other people with your translation.

#### **Municipal Integration Centre**

Laureen Schinke

☎ [02921302051](tel:02921302051)

@[integrationszentrum@kreis-soest.de](mailto:integrationszentrum@kreis-soest.de)

## **School**

### **School system**

In NRW, children generally start school at the age of 6. Parents are informed of the date of enrolment by the responsible school authority. Full-time school attendance is compulsory for 10 years. After that, there is compulsory vocational schooling for young people without a training contract until the end of the school year in which they turn 18.

Stufe des Schulsystems		
Klasse	Schulform	Stufe
Klasse 1 bis 4	Grundschule Förderschule	Primarbereich
Klasse 5 bis 12 max. 13	verschiedene weiterführende Schulen: Förderschule Hauptschule Realschule Gesamtschule Gemeinschaftsschule Sekundarschule Gymnasium berufsbildende Schulen (Berufskolleg)	Sekundarbereich Sekundarstufe I und II
	Fachschule Fachhochschule Hochschule / Universität	Tertiärbereich
	Weiterbildung	Quartärbereich

Children are enrolled as close as possible to their place of residence.

💡 Further information on the different types of school can be found [here](#). If you click [here](#), you can view the flyer in eleven different languages.

## Types of school at lower secondary level

### Primary school

Every child starts school at a primary school. It is open to all children, regardless of their personal strengths. All children learn the essential forms of learning, working and socialising. The children learn maths, reading and writing.

Parents can then choose a type of school for their children:

- Hauptschule
- Realschule
- Secondary school
- comprehensive school
- grammar schools

- Special school

💡 The school types are now explained in more detail.

### **Secondary school**

Pupils can attend grades 5 to 10. Basic general education and vocational skills are taught here. Lessons take place in different classes and courses. This depends on performance. All lower secondary level qualifications can be achieved. Many Hauptschulen are all-day schools.

### **Realschule**

Pupils can attend grades 5 to 10. Here they acquire an extended general education. Pupils also learn vocational skills. They learn both practical skills and theoretical contexts. After year 10, they can, for example

- complete a vocational training programme or
- switch to the [upper secondary level programmes](#).

### **Secondary school**

Here, pupils are prepared for vocational training and university entrance qualifications. They receive special individual support here.

### **Comprehensive school**

The comprehensive school is attended by children and young people of different abilities. Pupils with different strengths learn together for longer. These are usually all-day schools. All lower and upper secondary school qualifications can be achieved. These are therefore the qualifications that can also be obtained at Hauptschulen, Realschulen and Gymnasien.

### **Grammar school**

Children receive an in-depth general education. The aim is to achieve the general higher education entrance qualification. With this qualification, pupils can be admitted to a university.

### **Special school**

Some children require special educational support. The standard place of support for these children is the general school. Parents also have the right to choose a special school for their children.

There are 7 special educational needs schools:

- Learning

- language
- Emotional and social development
- Hearing and communication
- Vision
- Mental development
- Physical and motor development

## Types of school at upper secondary level

You can find the structure of the school system [here](#).

After the 10th grade, young people can continue their education at upper secondary level.

Secondary level II includes

- Upper secondary school
- Vocational college
- Further education college

The upper secondary level builds on the lower secondary level and expands knowledge. There are two branches. The general education branch and the vocational branch. The general education branch includes the upper secondary school. The vocational colleges cover the vocational branch.

## Gymnasiale Oberstufe

**Pupils continue their general education in the gymnasiale Oberstufe. The gymnasiale Oberstufe can be attended at a grammar school, a comprehensive school or a vocational grammar school. The Abitur examination takes place at the end. The Abitur is the general higher education entrance qualification. It is also possible to obtain the general higher education entrance qualification at a vocational grammar school in combination with a vocational qualification.**

With the Abitur, young people can study. This is possible at universities of applied sciences or universities.

## Vocational college

The vocational college offers various educational programmes. These include, for example, international support classes, training preparation and vocational school. It is possible to obtain a school-leaving qualification (from year 9 up to the Abitur) or to learn a trade. Each vocational college offers different courses. Information can be found on the school websites or in a counselling session.

## Further education college

The Weiterbildungskolleg is aimed at adults who are employed or have work experience. Here you can catch up on your lower and upper secondary school-leaving qualifications. This can be done in an evening class, for example. There is also the Abitur-Online programme, where you

spend less time at school.

## Grading system

In Germany, pupils receive grades. These grades show the current status of the learning process and can be relevant for further promotion. A grade is made up of the written work and other performance in class.

There are the following grades:

### very good (1)

The grade "very good" should be awarded if the performance fulfils the requirements to a particularly high degree.

### good (2)

The grade "good" should be awarded if the performance fully meets the requirements.

### satisfactory (3)

The grade "satisfactory" should be awarded if the performance generally fulfils the requirements.

### sufficient (4)

The grade "sufficient" should be awarded if the performance shows deficiencies but still fulfils the requirements overall.

### unsatisfactory (5)

The grade "unsatisfactory" should be awarded if the performance does not meet the requirements, but indicates that the necessary basic knowledge is present and the deficiencies can be remedied in the foreseeable future.

### unsatisfactory (6)

The grade "unsatisfactory" should be awarded if the performance does not meet the requirements and even the basic knowledge is so incomplete that the deficiencies cannot be rectified in the foreseeable future.

## Way to school

When children go to school, they become more independent. This is also important for road traffic. The route to school should be walked together with the parents before the child starts school. The child should be made aware of any particular danger spots on the way to school. Behaviour at traffic lights and zebra crossings should also be discussed. Depending on the child and the route to school, it may be necessary to accompany the child at the start of school. Parents are asked not to drive their child to school by car.

### School transport costs

Depending on the distance between home and school, you may be entitled to reimbursement of school travel costs. You can submit an application for reimbursement of travel costs to the school authorities.

💡 For further information, please contact the school you are attending.

## Compulsory schooling

Whether a child starts school depends on the child's date of birth. Children who turn six by 30 September are required to attend school. Children born on or after 1 October are required to attend school in the following year. Before school enrolment, an examination takes place at the public health department. You will be given an appointment for this.

Children of primary school age generally attend the nearest primary school. Registration for school must be completed by 15 November of the previous year. Parents are informed of the date of enrolment by the responsible school authority.

By the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 18 or successfully complete a full-time upper secondary school programme, young people must

- a vocational school or
- the upper secondary school

attend. Anyone who begins vocational training before the age of 21 is required to attend school until the end of the programme.

## Open all-day school (OGS)

Many primary schools are all-day schools. Here, the children are supervised with their homework and there are additional sports and games programmes. This could be dancing or swimming, for example. If you enrol your child in an all-day school, they must regularly attend afternoon supervision. Your child has the opportunity to eat lunch at school.

## Initial consultation

The KI of the district of Soest offers initial school counselling for children and young people in grades 5 to 10. This offer currently applies to children and young people living in the following municipalities:

- Soest
- Bad Sassendorf
- Rüthen
- Lippetal
- Möhneseesee
- Warstein
- Welper
- Wickede (Ruhr)
- Werl

These municipalities register the children and young people directly with the KI.

The KI invites the families to an interview in writing. If necessary, an interpreter will be organised to support communication. If you are unable to accept the invitation to the interview, please inform the KI in good time by e-mail or telephone. A new appointment will be arranged. Counselling is only possible by appointment.

The following documents are important for the interview:

- Identity documents
- Registration certificate
- School reports (if available)

In the interview with the children, young people and their legal guardians, for example, language and maths skills, school competences and interests are recorded. The parents/guardians also receive information about the German school system, general information about school, information about leisure activities and opportunities to learn German outside of school.

The evaluated results of the initial counselling are sent to the schools that accept the children and young people in order to facilitate their start at the new school and in the new environment. After around 2 weeks, the parents are informed which school their child will be attending in the future.

💡 Important: The Municipal Integration Centre provides advice and support. The local authority itself is responsible for allocating school places.

## Training, study and work

### Information on training, work and study

**Would you like to work in Germany? Then you need to know: How can I work in Germany? And where can I get help? You can find everything you need to know about work and jobs here: [Access to the labour market](#).**

Have you already gained a qualification abroad? For example, a school-leaving qualification or a professional qualification? Then you need to have the qualification recognised here in Germany. You can find out how to do this on the page [Recognising foreign qualifications](#).

There are over 400 different professions in Germany. Do you want to learn a profession? Then you can find information on [training](#) here. For example: How can I do an apprenticeship? What professions are there?

Children and young people have to go to school. They must be at least 6 years old for this. Children and young people go to [general school](#). There they learn for their future life. For example, so that they can learn a profession. Or: so that they can graduate from a university.

💡 Do you want to study? Then you can find information about [studying](#) here. And you can see which people you can contact.

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💡 No plan for the future yet? You can get support here: At the [Careers Information Centre](#) of the Federal Employment Agency.

### Vocational training (dual and full-time)

Would you like to go to work? Then it is very advantageous for you if you have a professional qualification. People with a vocational qualification earn more money on average over the course of their lives. They are less likely to be unemployed. They are less likely to have fixed-term employment contracts.

### **Dual training**

Dual vocational training is a speciality in Germany. You work in a company. At the same time, you go to school. This way you learn theory and practice. You spend two thirds of your time working. You spend one third of your time at [vocational school](#). An apprenticeship lasts 3 years. Depending on the profession, it may take a little longer. If you have an Abitur, you can complete the apprenticeship more quickly.

Depending on the type of occupation you would like to learn in a dual training programme, contact the appropriate office:

### **Chamber of Crafts (HWK)**

The Chamber of Crafts (HWK) is responsible for skilled trades. This covers professions such as baker, bricklayer or painter.

#### [Hellweg-Lippe District Crafts Association](#)

-Corporation under public law

#### [Am Handwerk 4, 59494 Soest](#)

Phone: [+49 \(0\) 29218920](tel:+49(0)29218920)

Fax: [+49 \(0\) 2921892212](tel:+49(0)2921892212)

E-mail: [info@kh-hl.de](mailto:info@kh-hl.de)

Mon - Thu: 07:30 to 16:45

Fri. : 07:30 am to 12:30 pm

### **Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK)**

The Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) is responsible for professions in industrial production, trade and services. This includes, for example, plant mechanics or wholesale and foreign trade clerks.

#### **IHK-Bildungsinstitut Hellweg-Sauerland**

##### [Opmünder Weg 73, 59494 Soest](#)

Internet: [www.ihk-bildungsinstitut.de](http://www.ihk-bildungsinstitut.de)

Mail: [weiterbildung@arnsberg.ihk.de](mailto:weiterbildung@arnsberg.ihk.de)

Tel: [+49 \(0\) 2931878414](tel:+49(0)2931878414)

Fax: [+49 \(0\) 29318788412](tel:+49(0)29318788412)

#### **IHK-Bildungsinstitut Hellweg-Sauerland**

##### [Lippertor 1, 59555 Lippstadt](#)

Internet: [www.ihk-bildungsinstitut.de](http://www.ihk-bildungsinstitut.de)

Mail: [weiterbildung@arnsberg.ihk.de](mailto:weiterbildung@arnsberg.ihk.de)

Tel: [+49 \(0\) 2941974740](tel:+4902941974740)

Fax: [+49 \(0\) 29419747599](tel:+49029419747599)

### **IHK Training Institute Hellweg-Sauerland**

[Königstr. 12, 59821 Arnsberg](#)

Internet: [www.ihk-bildungsinstitut.de](http://www.ihk-bildungsinstitut.de)

Mail: [weiterbildung@arnsberg.ihk.de](mailto:weiterbildung@arnsberg.ihk.de)

Tel: [+49 \(0\) 2931878170](tel:+4902931878170)

Fax: [+49 \(0\) 2931878200](tel:+4902931878200)

## **Pre-school training at a vocational school**

In Germany, there is also full-time school-based training at a vocational school. Vocational schools provide completed vocational training in theory and practice outside the dual training system (without an apprenticeship in a company). It usually lasts two to three and a half years. Lessons take place full-time. In addition to vocational subjects, it also includes general education subjects. The vocational schools differ greatly in terms of their training programmes, admission requirements, duration of training and further education options. You should therefore speak to the school you are interested in.

All [district-run vocational colleges](#) in the district of Soest

## **Vocational school**

### **Studies**

#### **Study at a university**

#### **Funding and scholarship**

Are you a student? You can't afford to live during your studies? Then you can get financial support in Germany.

#### **BAföG**

There is the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG for short). You must submit an application. Then you can get money. This money covers your daily expenses.

The money is paid monthly. At best, you will receive the money for the duration of your studies. The monthly amount of BAföG can be up to €935. Half of the money must be paid back after your studies. You will receive detailed information on this.

The information on BAföG changes regularly. You can view this information via the following link

 [Website BAföG for refugees and migrants](#)

 [BAföG website - all information at a glance](#)

## Scholarship

You can also apply for a scholarship. As a rule, you do not have to pay back a scholarship. There are certain requirements. You need good grades. And you must be involved in voluntary work. How much money do you receive as a scholarship? The amount is often calculated in the same way as the BAföG rate. In addition, there is a so-called "book allowance". This is a monthly payment of up to €300.

Certain organisations award the scholarships. They are often referred to as "Begabtenförderungswerke". The following organisations offer programmes specifically for refugees. Would you like to apply? The rules can be found on the websites. There you will also find information on what you need to be able to do.

 [Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung \(FES\) - Scholarships for Refugees](#)

 [Böckler-Aktion Bildung of the Hans Böckler Foundation](#)

 [Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung \(KAS\) - Scholarships for Refugees](#)

 [Villigst - Our scholarship for refugees](#)

 [Bread for the World - Programme for Refugees](#) (for women only)

The Otto Benecke Foundation offers the Guarantee Fund. All young, newly arrived migrants can apply here. You will be supported if you want to obtain a higher education entrance qualification in Germany, prepare for a university degree and pursue an academic career.

 [Otto Benecke Foundation in Bonn - University Guarantee Fund](#)

There is also the Germany Scholarship. This provides €300 per month. The Germany Scholarships are awarded by the respective universities.

 [Germany Scholarship: Become a scholarship holder](#)

Further information can be found on the website of the Higher Education Campaign for Refugees and in the database of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Some universities offer scholarships for international students. Have a look at the university's website. Or contact the university directly.

## Looking for work

### Labour market access

Are you from the EU? Do you now live in Germany? And you would like to work? Then you can do so without any problems. As an EU citizen, anyone can work in Germany. Without restrictions.

Have you fled to Germany? Then your residence status is important. It determines whether you are allowed to work. These are explained below.

**Asylum seeker with proof of arrival or authorisation to stay:**

As long as you live in the AnKER facility or initial reception centre (EAE) (maximum 18 months, extension up to 24 months possible, families with children maximum 6 months), you are not allowed to work for 9 months. After 9 months you are normally allowed to work. The [Foreigners' Registration Office](#) always decides whether you are allowed to work. You must therefore submit an application to the foreigners authority. There are certain rules that you must observe:

Asylum seekers with proof of arrival or permission to stay in AnKER / EAE

- 9 months work ban
- After 9 months, you are entitled to be allowed to work. However, you must not come from a safe country of origin. Or your asylum application must have been rejected by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) as manifestly unfounded.
- The priority check does not apply. However, your working conditions will be checked by the Federal Employment Agency.

Asylum seekers with proof of arrival or permission to stay outside AnKER/EAE

- 3 months work ban
- You do not come from a safe country of origin? Have you applied for asylum after 31 August 2015? Then the immigration authority will decide.
- You do not come from a safe country of origin? Did you apply for asylum after 31 August 2015? Or your application for asylum was rejected without grounds? Then you have the right to work after 9 months.
- The priority check does not apply. However, your working conditions will be checked by the Federal Employment Agency.

Tolerated persons

The [foreigners authority](#) always decides whether you are allowed to work. You must therefore submit an application to the foreigners authority. The foreigners authority can impose a general work ban on you. There are certain rules that you must observe.

Tolerated persons in AnKER

- You do not come from a safe country of origin? Did you apply for asylum after 31 August 2015? Your tolerated stay has already lasted 6 months? Then the foreigners authority will decide whether you are allowed to work.
- Persons with a tolerated stay due to unclear identity (§ 60b AufenthG) are always prohibited from working
- The priority check does not apply. However, the working conditions will be checked by the Federal Employment Agency.

Tolerated persons outside AnKER

- 3 months work ban

- You do not come from a safe country of origin? Did you apply for asylum after 31 August 2015? Your tolerated stay has already lasted 3 months? Then the foreigners authority will decide whether you are allowed to work.
- Persons with a tolerated stay due to unclear identity (§ 60b AufenthG) are always prohibited from working.
- The priority check does not apply. However, the working conditions are checked by the Federal Employment Agency.

### Refugees with a residence permit

If you have been recognised by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) as a person entitled to asylum, refugee status or subsidiary protection, the [immigration authority](#) will issue you with a residence permit. This entitles you to pursue any gainful employment and thus grants you full access to the labour market.

- 💡 The prerequisite for the above-mentioned applications is **always** a concrete job offer.
- 💡 Different rules apply to [self-employment!](#)

### **Employment contract**

Anyone who starts a job gets an employment contract. It governs the most important conditions of your work. It explains when you work, how much holiday you get, and how much you are paid. Both sides – workers and employers – must abide by these agreements. When you sign the contract, it becomes legally binding. So you should only sign it once you fully understand its content.

### **Types of contracts:**

#### Permanent job contract (Unbefristeter Arbeitsvertrag)

Usually, there is a probationary period of three or six months. During this period, employment can be terminated within two weeks. The employer can terminate the employment. Or you as the employee can terminate the employment. At the end of the probationary period, permanent employment begins. This gives you longer protection against dismissal. Working hours are usually up to 40 hours a week.

#### Fixed-term employment contract (Befristeter Arbeitsvertrag)

The employment ends at the agreed time, without the need for notice of resignation.

#### Minijob

The maximum monthly salary is €556 and is not taxed.

### **Labour law:**

There are numerous laws that govern and safeguard the rights of employees in Germany. These include:

- Regulation of working time
- Minimum wage
- Leave claim

- Protection against dismissal
- Representation of interests in the workplace (Works council)
- Trade union labour regulations
- and a few more

## **Taxes and social security payments:**

All employees in Germany pay part of their wages as taxes. These fund federal, state and local government spending. Employers, in turn, are required to pay social security contributions for their employees. These social security contributions fund the German social system. This system guarantees that you receive money from the state if you are unemployed.

## **Tax ID number:**

Your tax ID is an 11-digit number and is used for income tax purposes. The number applies throughout your life. The number allows the authorities to identify you at all times. Your employer needs this number. Do you not have this number in any of your documents? Then you can get it in person from the registration office (Meldebehörde). Or you can fill out a form and send it to the Federal Tax Office ([Bundesamt für Steuern](#)).

## **Social security number:**

For a job, you need a social security number. This can be obtained from your health insurer (for example AOK, DAK).

## **Illegal work:**

You have paid work. But this work is not registered with the Tax Office (Finanzamt) or a health insurance provider. So you do not pay any taxes or social security contributions. This is **illegal**. It can be punished with fines and prison! Do you receive social benefits or unemployment benefit? Despite this, are you working? And have you not told the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt), the Employment Agency (Arbeitsagentur) or the Job Centre about it? This is **illegal** too. It means you are wrongly receiving state benefits, even though you are in paid employment.

## **Job applications and interviews**

Would you like to start professional training or get a job in Germany? Then you need to make a written application.

Many companies place job advertisements. Either in newspapers or online. It means they are looking for new staff. The job advertisement describes what type of work or professional training it involves. It also explains what the company expects from the employee. It includes information about where and how to apply.

Have you been invited to a job interview? Then the company is interested in you. The job interview is a chance for you to get to know each other. Please give yourself enough time to get to the interview. It's crucial that you arrive on time. It's best to prepare for the interview in detail beforehand. This might include finding out important information about the company. Visit the website and read through the company's history. Find out about their products or

services. Do you want to show that you're interested in the job? Then you should ask questions during the interview. This will show that you are familiar with the company. And it will show that you are motivated.

### **An application usually consists of three parts:**

**Cover letter:** Your personal cover letter briefly introduces yourself. You should say why you're suitable for the vacant position. For example, describe what previous experience you have gained in your home country. Find out about the company and explain why you want to work there. Your covering letter should fit on one page. Sign your covering letter. There are many templates and guides online. It is important not simply to copy something you find. Your cover letter needs to be unique to you and suitable for the position.

**Curriculum vitae (CV):** The CV lists all your experience. It is structured in the form of a large table. Write when you started and stopped working at each company. Include where you undertook training or a course of studies. Specify where you went to school and what type of qualification you left with. You do not have to include a photo in your CV, but many companies prefer it if you do. The [Europass website](#) can help you create a CV. The website is available in lots of languages. You enter your details. You add your experience. Then it will create a CV for you. CVs look different in each country. It's important to use the format used in Germany. You can choose this in Europass.

**Credentials and references:** It is very important that you include copies of your credentials and references in the application (do not send the original documents!). They include your school-leaving certificate, your university degree and any job references from the past. They should be in German or English – if they are not, you should have them translated. You should also send certificates from any internships, work-relevant professional development courses, or German courses you have taken.

💡 The job advert provides information about how to apply. Please read it carefully.

**Written (hard copy) applications:** Buy a nice application folder and insert your cover letter, CV, and credentials and references. Then mail the application to the address mentioned in the job advertisement.

**E-mail:** These days, many applications are sent by email. Bring your covering letter, your CV and your certificates and references together into a single PDF file. Add the PDF file as an attachment to the email. Write a short text in the email to the person who will receive your application.

**Online:** Large companies have their own website through which you have to apply. You need to register with your email address before you can send your application through the website.

🌐 You can find some more helpful tips for your application at [Planet Beruf \("Planet Career"\)](#).

🌐 [Europass](#) is a multilingual (more than 20 languages) online platform that helps migrants make their skills and expertise obvious to others. It offers a free online tool for creating a "language passport" or CV (see above). You can also find important tips on writing good applications on Europass.

🌐 You can generate a free CV and cover letter at [Bewerbung.net](#), [StepStone](#) or [Lebenslauf2go](#). You may also be able to import your data from Xing or LinkedIn. It is also possible to write your own text within the template or import files.

🌐 You can find more information and templates for cover letters and CVs here:

[Bewerbung2go](#), [BewerbungsWissen](#), [Karrierebibel](#)

## Language practice

🌐 You can find exercises for practising job applications and general aspects of starting a career on the [VHS learning portal "I want to learn German"](#) and on the [Goethe-Institut's website "German for you"](#). You can learn more about the professional world and improve your German language skills.

## Finding work - advice and help

Finding a job is not always easy. There are contact points in the district of Soest to help you. They will support you in all aspects of your job search.

The **"Agentur für Arbeit"** has four locations in the district of Soest:

### Meschede-Soest

🌐 [www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest)

### Lippstadt

🌐 [www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest/lipp...](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest/lipp...)

### Warstein

🌐 [www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest/wars...](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest/wars...)

### Werl

🌐 [www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest/werl](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest/werl)

The Careers Information Center = **Berufsinformationszentrum (BiZ)** offers a lot of information, for example about:

- Training and studying
- Different professions and the requirements
- Vocational qualifications, further education and training
- Application and job search
- employment opportunities

The Careers Information Center = **Berufsinformationszentrum Soest (BiZ)**

🌐 [www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest/biz-...](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/meschede-soest/biz-...)

## Immigration of Skilled Workers

### The basics of skilled labour immigration

There is a law in Germany. The law is intended to make it easier for skilled workers to come to Germany. The skilled workers either have a vocational qualification or a university degree. The law is called § 18a+b AufenthG. This allows skilled workers to obtain a residence permit for Germany. With this residence permit, they can work in Germany in any qualified

occupation.

💡 Would you like to obtain an [EU Blue Card](#)? Then your new profession must match your qualifications. This means that you can only work in a profession that you have learnt.

🌐 You can also find this and further information on the [Make it in Germany](#) page

🌐 You can also take a [quick test](#) of your options here!

## For employers

**Accelerated skilled labour procedure:** If someone from another country wants to work in Germany, as an employer you first need authorisation from this person. This is called an "authorisation". With this authorisation, you can start a faster process at the foreigners authority. The Immigration Office is an organisation that looks after people who come to Germany from other countries.

Your company then makes an agreement with this authority. This agreement sets out exactly what you, the new worker and the authorities are allowed to do and must do. It also specifies how long everything may take and who does what and when.

💡 The **fees** amount to 411 euros. There is also a visa fee of 75 euros. There are also all other fees (certified copies, translations).

**The foreigners authority advises employers.** It provides support to ensure that the foreign qualifications of the skilled worker are recognised. The Foreigners' Registration Office obtains the approval of the Federal Employment Agency. It checks what is required for the visa to be issued. The recognition centres only have a certain amount of time before they have to make a decision. So does the Federal Employment Agency.

💡 Have all the **requirements** been met? Then the foreigners authority will issue a so-called preliminary approval. The employer can forward this to the skilled worker. The skilled worker then books an appointment with the diplomatic mission abroad. The visa is applied for at this appointment. At this appointment, the skilled worker must present the original of the prior authorisation. The skilled worker must also bring the other documents required for the visa application.

Have you submitted the complete **visa application** from the skilled worker? Then a decision will be made within three weeks.

💡 The **family of** the skilled worker can also be considered. The application must be submitted at the same time. The family must fulfil the requirements for family reunification.

You can find templates and samples [here](#) and a detailed explanation of the procedure [here](#).

## For professionals

💡 **Definition of specialist:** Do you have a university degree? Or have you completed vocational training? Did your training last at least two years? Does it qualify you for a profession? Then you are a skilled worker. Do you want to be officially recognised as a skilled worker? Then you must apply for this. Your qualifications must be recognised by the competent authority in Germany.

## Job search

### Entering the labour market:

Entering the labour market is made easier: As a skilled worker, you must provide three things. You need an employment contract. You must have a concrete job offer. And you need a qualification that is recognised in Germany. It is no longer checked whether there is a German person for the job. The Federal Employment Agency will continue to check the working conditions.

### Skilled workers with a university degree:

Skilled workers with a university degree can work in any qualified profession. This means that skilled workers must work in a profession that requires training/studies. For the EU Blue Card, you need a job that corresponds to your qualifications.

### Skilled workers with vocational training:

Skilled workers with vocational training can work in any qualified profession. This means that skilled workers must work in an occupation that requires training/studies.

## Rules for entry

### Entry to seek employment:

Skilled workers with vocational training can enter Germany. You can enter the country to find a job here. You will receive a residence permit for up to six months. Their qualifications must be recognised in Germany. You must be able to support yourself during your stay. You must already speak German well enough to be able to work in your profession. German language skills at level B1 or better are normally required. Would you like to try out a job first? Then you can work up to 10 hours a week. This way you can find out whether you like the job. Your employer can get to know you. Skilled workers with a recognised academic qualification can also do trial work. You can find more information at [Make-It-In-Germany](#).

### Stay for qualification measures:

You will be given more opportunities so that you can gain qualifications in Germany. Have you tried to have your qualifications recognised? The authorities have identified problems? Your qualifications do not match the German ones? Then you need sufficient knowledge of German. This is knowledge at level A2. Then you can apply for a visa. With this visa you can come to Germany for 18 months. During this time you can gain qualifications. The authorities can extend the visa once for 6 months. After that, you can apply for another visa. For example, for an apprenticeship. Or for studying. Or for work. You can find more information at [Make-It-In-Germany](#).

### Settlement permit for skilled workers from abroad:

Foreign skilled workers can obtain a settlement permit in Germany after just four years. You can find more information [here](#). There are sometimes different conditions for skilled workers and EU Blue Card holders.

## For training and studies

Entering the country **to look for an apprenticeship:** Would you like to do an apprenticeship? Then you can enter the country to look for a training place. You need German language skills at level B2. You also need a school-leaving certificate that entitles you to enter higher education. You must be no more than 25 years old. You must be able to pay for your own

living costs in Germany.

**Extended transfer options for international students** in Germany: International students can obtain a new residence permit before they have completed their studies. For example: You want to learn a profession after your studies. You will then receive a residence permit for this. The new law for skilled workers makes this change easier: Are you studying? And you want to have a job? Then you can take a job. To do so, you must fulfil special conditions. The Federal Employment Agency sets these conditions. Once everything has been checked, you will receive a new residence permit.

**Settlement permit for graduates** of a vocational training programme in Germany: Under the new law, foreign graduates of a vocational training programme in Germany, just like university graduates, can obtain a settlement permit after just two years.

**💡 German language course** to prepare for training: Do you have the right visa? Then you can attend a German course. This German course will prepare you for your training.

## EU Blue Card

The EU Blue Card is a residence permit for people with a university degree who do not come from the EU and wish to work in Germany. This requires a university degree and an employment contract with a certain minimum salary.

- For bottleneck professions and career starters: at least €43,759.80 per year (2025).
- For all other professions: at least €48,300 per year (2025).

## Who can get the EU Blue Card?

### Do you have a recognised university degree?

If you studied abroad, the degree must be recognised in Germany or be equivalent.

**Tip:** You can check whether your degree is recognised on the "[anabin](#)" website.

### You don't have a university degree?

Then you need to have completed at least three years of training after leaving school. This must correspond to at least level 6 of the German or European education system - for example as a master craftsman/master craftswoman or educator.

### Employment contract or binding job offer in Germany:

- The job must last at least six months.
- The work must match your degree.
- The salary must be at least €48,300 per year (2025).

For shortage occupations, a salary of € 43,759.80 (2025) is also sufficient if the Federal Employment Agency agrees. You can find a list of these professions [here](#).

## Special case for career starters

If your degree is less than three years old, you can obtain the EU Blue Card with a salary of €43,759.80 (2025) - regardless of the profession. Here, too, you need the approval of the

Federal Employment Agency.

## Special case of IT specialists without training

Are you an IT specialist or IT manager without an official qualification? Then you can still get the EU Blue Card if:

- You have a concrete job offer in IT in Germany (at least 6 months).
- You earn at least € 43,759.80 per year (2025).
- you have had at least 3 years of high-level professional experience in IT in the last 7 years.

## Prospects with the EU Blue Card

The EU Blue Card is valid for as long as your employment contract plus three months - up to a maximum of four years. It can be extended. After 27 months of working in Germany, you can apply for a permanent residence permit. If you speak German at level B1, this is possible after just 21 months. You can leave Germany with your family members for up to 12 months without your EU Blue Card becoming invalid. After one year with the EU Blue Card, you can also move to another EU country (except Ireland and Denmark) and apply for a new EU Blue Card there within one month.

## Do you have an EU Blue Card and want to change jobs?

That is possible. You can work for a new employer with your valid Blue Card. Important: If you change jobs in the first year, you must inform the Immigration Office. The authority will then check whether you still fulfil all the conditions for the new job. If not, you may receive a different residence permit.

## Recognition of certificates

### Recognition of foreign educational qualifications

**School reports** are very important in Germany. You get them at school. Or at university. Or at work. At work, they are called job references. Certificates are proof of what you have already learnt and achieved. Certificates are the decisive prerequisite for getting a job. You also need a certificate to be admitted to a school or university. Have you already obtained certificates abroad? Have these certificates **recognised** in Germany. A check will be made to see what your certificates qualify you for in Germany. Your achievements will be translated, so to speak. It may be that you no longer have your certificates. In this case, you can try to have your work experience and professional skills recognised through tests.

### Specialist advice centre for recognition

 [https:// www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/index.php](https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/index.php)

 [https:// www.netzwerk-iq.de/foerderprogramm-iq/fachstellen/fachstelle-anerkennung-und-qualifizierung](https://www.netzwerk-iq.de/foerderprogramm-iq/fachstellen/fachstelle-anerkennung-und-qualifizierung)

💡 If you are planning to study or work as a scientist, please contact the university contact persons to have your certificates recognised.

### Official certification of certificates

You have a document, such as a certificate. The authorities want to know whether the document is genuine. To do this, you must have it officially notarised. This is also important for enrolment at a university. All copies of certificates must be officially notarised. The original must be presented for legalisation.

Please contact the [residents' registration office where you live](#). For example, if you live in the city of Soest, please contact the citizens' office of the city of Soest. If you live in Warstein, please contact the citizens' registration office of the town of Warstein, etc.

## Self-employment

### Who can start their own business in Germany?

Is your asylum process still ongoing? Has your application been rejected? Do you have exceptional leave to remain (Duldung)? Then you are **forbidden** from being self-employed. In principle, everyone else has the option to set up their own business in Germany.

### More information

- ["GründerZeiten" online guide](#) (German and Arabic)
- [Business start-up portal](#) (German, French, Italian, Russian and Turkish)
- [Website of the IQ Competence Centre for Migrant Entrepreneurship](#) (German, English, French, Polish, Spanish, Pashto, Bosnian, Russian, Chinese, Ukrainian, Turkish, Tigrinya, Vietnamese, Arabic)

## Everyday life and leisure

### Information

Are you new to Germany? Moving to a foreign country brings with it many questions and a lot of work. Everyday life and some German ways of life seem strange to many refugees and migrants. To make it a little easier for you to find your way in everyday life, we have summarised a few practical everyday tips here.

### Mobility

Many places in your home town and the surrounding area can be easily reached by public transport. A healthy, inexpensive and environmentally friendly alternative for getting from A to B is a bicycle.

### Public transport

You can use public transport to get to your destination. These are buses and trains.

💡 Travelling without a ticket, so-called Schwarzfahren, will be penalised! You must have a valid ticket for every journey. Otherwise you will pay a heavy fine.

You can find bus connections [here](#) and train connections [here](#).

## **Bicycle**

If you know that you will be living in a city for a longer period of time, it is worth buying a bicycle. It's cheaper and more flexible than travelling by public transport.

💡 Important traffic rules for cyclists:

- Always ride on the right-hand side of the carriageway.
- Do not ride next to each other, but behind each other.
- If there is a cycle path, you must ride on the cycle path (always on the right-hand side of the road in the direction of travel).
- Only children up to the age of 11 are allowed to cycle on footpaths.
- It is forbidden to use a mobile phone on a bicycle.

💡 Purchase and repairs: When buying a bike, make sure that it is equipped as follows and is therefore roadworthy. Otherwise you will have to pay a fine if you are stopped by the police.

- Front and rear lights.
- Reflector front and rear.
- Reflectors in the spokes (2 per wheel).
- Reflectors on the pedals.
- Bell.
- Two independent brakes.

## **Liability insurance**

If you cause damage to a person in Germany without intention, you must pay compensation according to the law. This applies to personal injury, property damage and financial loss in the private sphere. For example, if you cause a traffic accident or if your child breaks a window pane with a ball.

In Germany, you can take out private liability insurance that pays for this damage for you and your family. You can decide for yourself whether you want to take out this insurance. However, we strongly recommend it.

💡 Your Helferkreis can help you find a good offer for private liability insurance.

## **Broadcasting fees**

Germany has independent radio, television and online programmes from ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. They report free from economic and political influences. Everyone pays money for this. This is called Rundfunkbeitrag.

The law stipulates that a licence fee must be paid for every home in Germany. However, only one person per home has to pay the licence fee. This costs €18.36 per month and must be paid to the ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio contribution service. Further information can be found on the broadcasting licence fee [website](#).

Some people can be exempt from paying the licence fee. For example, if you receive benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act or other social benefits. An application must be submitted for exemption from the licence fee.

You can find the application for exemption [here](#).

## Internet and Free WIFI

### Public, free WLAN hotspots in the district of Soest

Free WLAN is available at several locations (hotspots) in the district of Soest. You can surf the internet there with your own device.

👤 Unfortunately, as an asylum seeker in Germany, you are not legally entitled to Internet access (WIFI) in your accommodation. Therefore, there is usually no WIFI (WLAN) in the accommodation. If there is a telephone connection in the accommodation, it is possible for you to conclude a contract for WLAN yourself. Ask your helper group to help you choose a good contract. Talk to the people living in the accommodation about payment beforehand. Consider whether a contract that you can cancel at any time is better than a contract that is valid for a long time (e.g. 2 years). Before signing the contract, ask your accommodation provider whether Wi-Fi is technically possible at all and how you can give the technician access.

## Contracts and mobile phones

### Contracts

Particularly important: Never sign anything that you do not understand or cannot read. Otherwise you may end up signing a contract or agreement under which you have to pay something. It is sometimes very difficult to undo this. Always check and compare several offers and take your time to decide. Don't let anyone pressure you into signing anything.

### Mobile phone

There are two different mobile phone contracts in Germany: Prepaid **contract** and **fixed-term contract**. The prepaid contract has no fixed contract term. A fixed-term contract has a minimum contract period. This contract is automatically renewed if you do not cancel it. If you do not want the contract to be renewed automatically, you must cancel in writing. Pay attention to the deadline.

### 10 important questions when concluding a contract:

- How high is the basic fee? Does the fee increase after a certain period of time?
- Is there a minimum monthly turnover (minimum costs per month)?
- How long is the contract for (e.g. 12 or 24 months)?
- If I do not cancel the contract, will it be automatically renewed?
- When do I have to cancel if I don't want to extend the contract?
- How much does it cost to set up, switch and deactivate?
- What is the billing cycle? Do I have to pay for every minute or part thereof?

- How much does a minute cost (external/own network)?
- How much does a mobile phone with a contract cost and how much does a mobile phone without a contract cost?
- How much does Internet cost?
- How much do international calls cost?

💡 Ask your circle of helpers for help in choosing and concluding a good contract.

## Current account

A current account is an account for people who want to make payments via the bank. Your money is available in your current account at all times. Make sure that you have enough money in your account for all withdrawals and payments.

With a current account you can:

- Make transfers.
- Receive cashless payments (payments from public offices and authorities, for example social benefits, are often made cashless, i.e. transferred to a personal current account).
- Set up standing orders.
- Participate in direct debit schemes.
- Cashing cheques, making cashless payments with an EC/Maestro card.
- Withdraw cash at bank counters or ATMs.
- Print out your account statements.

## Opening an account

Decide which bank you would like to have an account with. Make an appointment to open an account. Please bring one of your identification documents (proof of arrival, residence permit, identity card) with you. If no current address is noted on the legitimisation document, please also bring a registration certificate or a comparable document.

- Once the account has been opened, you will receive an EC card with a four-digit PIN code. Sign the back of the EC card and memorise the PIN code. You will need the PIN code for cashless payments and for withdrawing money from ATMs. **Be sure to keep your card and PIN code separate!**
- If you want to withdraw cash, it is best to use an ATM at the bank where you have your account. Then the withdrawal costs nothing. If the PIN code is entered incorrectly three times at the ATM, the debit card will be cancelled and blocked. In this case, you must ask your bank.
- If your debit card is lost or stolen, have it blocked immediately. State your sort code and account number. Then ask your bank for a new EC card.

☎ 116116

🕒 Around the clock.

💡 Different banks offer current accounts with different conditions. Find out how much a current account costs each month and what services the bank offers in return.

💡 If you do not speak German or English, please bring an interpreter with you.

## Taxes and tax returns

You must pay tax on your income in Germany. If you are employed, you will receive the net amount of your salary from your employer, i.e. your taxes have already been deducted. If you are self-employed, you must pay tax on your income yourself.

### Tax identification number (tax ID)

The tax ID is an 11-digit number and is used for income tax purposes. The place of work requires this number. If you do not have this number in your documents, you can obtain it in person from the registration office or in writing from the Federal Tax Office.

💡 If you need help with your tax return, it is best to contact your local income tax association. The tax office can also help you with further questions.

## Living

### Housing benefit

If you and the people living in your household earn little money, you can get subsidised housing. You will need a certificate of eligibility for subsidised housing. Under certain conditions, you are also entitled to housing benefit. If you receive money from the state for yourself and your family, you do not usually need to apply for housing benefit.

💡 You can find more information on housing benefit [here](#).

## Libraries

A library or bookshop is a facility where you can borrow books, CDs, learning materials and learning aids to take home. It is also possible to study or read there in peace and quiet. Please ask about the costs before using a library.

💡 Your Helferkreis can help you find a library near your home.

## Leisure activities

There is plenty to do and experience in your free time in the district of Soest. For example, you can visit sports centres, swimming pools, climbing parks, wildlife parks or mini golf courses.

💡 You can find more information [here](#).

💡 You can also find out more directly from your local authority.

## Children and youth app

There are great activities and events for children and young people to discover in the 14 towns and municipalities in the district of Soest. For example, sports clubs or youth centres.

But how do you quickly find out what's happening when? There is a great app for this: the "Kreis Soest Jugendapp". It's free of charge.

What the app can do:

- You can see what's going on this week in a schedule - for example, when the youth centre is open or when your sports club is training.
- You can search for things that interest you.
- There's a chat so you can write.
- Important telephone numbers are included - for example, for help if you have any worries.
- There is also information for people who work with children and young people.

The app is for children, teenagers and young adults - so for everyone up to the age of 27.

You can find more information about the Soest district's children and youth app [here](#).

You can download the app for your smartphone here:



## Health

### Information

In Germany, you are entitled to basic medical care for acute illnesses and pain. You are also entitled to every officially recommended immunisation and check-up. In addition, you are entitled to free medical services that are essential to safeguard your health. You should consult a doctor if

- you are acutely ill or in pain.
- you are pregnant.
- you are chronically ill. For example, if you have diabetes, epilepsy or mental illness. If you still have medication or the package leaflet for your medication, bring this with you to the doctor's appointment. If you have already been to a doctor or hospital because of the illness, please also bring the results with you.

🐾 As soon as you have a residence permit, you must register with a regular health insurance company. There you will receive an insurance card and will be entitled to the same benefits as all citizens in Germany.

## Visit to the doctor

### General practitioners and specialists

If you are ill, go to your family doctor. You can choose this yourself. GPs set their own opening hours. You should therefore make an appointment if you need help from a GP.

GPs carry out important examinations and are your first point of contact in the event of illness. They also decide on necessary medication and whether a specialist examination is required.

If necessary, your GP will refer you to a specialist who can carry out specialised examinations.

**If the practice is closed, the medical on-call service can help (telephone 115 116).**

### Paediatricians

Children are usually examined by paediatricians. Regular check-ups and vaccinations at the paediatrician are important for the health of every child. The prescribed check-ups are called "U examinations" and are always free of charge and at a specific time. Please take your child to a paediatrician to find out about the regular, prescribed U-examinations.

### Dentists

If you have a toothache, go to a dentist.

### Gynaecologists (gynaecologists)

It is important that women are regularly examined by a gynaecologist. This allows diseases to be recognised in good time. This is called a check-up. You can also discuss the topic of contraception there.

💡 If you need help finding a suitable doctor, ask your helper group or your accommodation provider.

💡 You also have the option of seeing a doctor who speaks the relevant foreign language. You can find suitable doctors [here](#). Please enter the postcode, the speciality and the language you are looking for.

🐾 If you are an asylum seeker and need to see a doctor, you will receive a treatment voucher from the [social welfare office](#). With this, the doctor's visit is free of charge for you.

🐾 If an operation is necessary and it is **not** an emergency, the social welfare [office](#) must authorise the hospital stay in advance. Your doctor will issue you with a certificate to this effect. Only medically necessary operations can be covered.

## Medicines and pharmacies

If you need medication, you will receive a prescription from your doctor. You can obtain your medication with this prescription from any pharmacy. Even with a prescription, not all medicines are usually free of charge. Some medicines, such as antibiotics, require a prescription. This means that you cannot buy them without a prescription.

Pharmacies are usually open from Monday to Saturday. Opening hours vary depending on the pharmacy. If you need urgent medication at night or at the weekend, you will find a sign at every pharmacy with the name and address of the pharmacy that is open for emergency service. You can also find this information on the Internet.

Search for pharmacy emergency services

 [www.aponet.de](http://www.aponet.de)

 As an asylum seeker, you will receive many medications without a co-payment. You should therefore ask your doctor about this. If you do not have a prescription, you will always have to pay for the medication.

## Emergency numbers - SOS

An emergency is an acute threat to health. You only contact an emergency doctor or ambulance service in the event of an emergency or an acute health threat.

## Emergency contacts

**Police**  [110](tel:110)

**Fire brigade, rescue service**  [112](tel:112)

**Ambulance, emergency doctor**  [112](tel:112)

 The emergency numbers on mobile phones always work, even if you have a prepaid card without credit/money!

## Important information for an emergency call

- **Who** is calling (your name)?
- **Where** has something happened (address)?
- **What** has happened?
- **How many** injured or sick people are there?
- **What kind** of illnesses or injuries are there?
- **Wait** for further questions!

Remain calm. Speak slowly and clearly so that you can be better understood. Do not end the call. The emergency call centre / police will end the call when all important information has been transmitted.

 Do not forget your identity card or proof of arrival when you go to hospital! If you are registered with a health insurance company, bring your insurance card with you.

👥 As an asylum seeker, you may only go to hospital without a treatment voucher in an emergency. At the hospital, you must show that you are an asylum seeker with your proof of arrival and the costs will be settled via the social welfare office.

## Health insurance

You are subject to compulsory insurance in Germany. This means that as soon as you have a residence permit, you must register with a health insurance fund. There you will receive an insurance card. This allows you to receive treatment in Germany.

You can choose a family doctor. If you need to be treated by a specialist, you will receive a referral from your family doctor.

If you are acutely ill, you will also receive basic treatment in many foreign doctors' surgeries and hospitals. You can get information about this from your health insurance company.

💡 Remember your insurance card when you are being treated by doctors, in hospitals or by recognised therapists.

## Insurance card

You can use your insurance card to access medical services throughout Germany. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is on the back of the card. With this card, you are also covered in all EU countries as well as many other European countries and even some non-European countries.

💡 If you are travelling outside the EU, we recommend that you take out health insurance for your trip abroad.

👥 If you are a refugee or asylum seeker and do not yet have health insurance, you will need health insurance vouchers to be able to go to the doctor. You can obtain these certificates from the [social welfare office](#).

## Electronic patient file (ePA)

From **15 January 2025**, a new digital patient file called the **electronic patient file (ePA)** will be introduced in Germany. This file will store all important health data, such as what the doctor has found out about your health, what medication you are taking or what examinations you have had.

Everyone with statutory health insurance automatically receives this ePA. If you do not want this, you can object.

Doctors and patients can access health data quickly and easily via the ePA. But only people who are authorised to do so are allowed to see the data. This keeps the data secure.

### How can insured persons refuse to set up an ePA? What deadlines apply?

If someone no longer wants to use the ePA at a later date, they can have it deleted. The aim is to enable doctors and patients to work together faster and better to improve health.

If someone wants to refuse the ePA, they must inform their health insurance company. If they do not do this, the EPR will be created automatically.

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## Important details about the EPC. What do you need to bear in mind?

### Contents of the ePA:

- All important information from your visits to the doctor is automatically included in the ePA if it is available in digital form. This means, for example, that findings or diagnoses that the doctor writes down are transferred to the ePA.
- You can also upload information such as vital signs (e.g. your height or weight) or older medical documents to the ePA yourself.
- From 2025, there will be an automatic overview of all the medication you are taking. This will later be supplemented by a special medication plan.

### Access rights:

- You can specify which doctors or hospitals are authorised to access your ePA. If you want to make changes, you can do this via the ePA app or contact the ombudsman's office of your health insurance company.
- If your health card is read at a doctor's surgery or hospital, they will have temporary access to your ePA for 90 days unless you object.

### Use and accessibility:

- You can manage the ePA via a special app on your smartphone. Each statutory health insurance fund offers its own ePA app, which you can download free of charge from the App Store (for iOS) or the Google Play Store (for Android).
- If you do not have a smartphone, you can get support from pharmacies or special centres to access your ePA.

### Legal regulations:

- The introduction of the ePA will initially begin in Hamburg and North Rhine-Westphalia. It will then be available throughout Germany from February 2025.
- Privately insured persons can also use an ePA, although this depends on the insurance company in question.

### Advantages:

- The ePA facilitates communication between doctors, hospitals and other medical facilities. It gives you a better overview of your health data.
- The ePA also increases the safety and accuracy of medication.

### Challenges:

- Not all documents, such as old paper medical reports, are automatically digitised. However, you can ask your health insurance provider whether they can take over digitisation.
- There may be technical difficulties at the beginning because some doctors have to adapt their practice software.
- Another problem is that there is no multilingual information, i.e. no translations into other languages.

The ePA is an important step towards digitalisation in the healthcare sector. It should improve medical care. It also provides a basis for research.

**Would you like to find out more? You can find more information here:**

 [FAQ of the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians](#)

 [Questions and answers on the electronic patient file \(ePA\) by the KBV](#)

 [Information from the consumer advice centre about the ePA](#)

## Counselling centres and offers of help

### Violence against women helpline

### Violence against women helpline

The violence against women helpline advises women affected throughout Germany. The counsellors on the helpline provide advice on all forms of violence against women. Online counselling is also possible via the website. The counselling sessions are confidential and can be conducted anonymously. No personal data is requested or stored. The counselling service is available in 18 foreign languages. Hearing-impaired or hearing-impaired people can obtain an interpreter free of charge via the website. The conversation with the help hotline staff is translated into German sign language or written language.

People of all nationalities, with and without disabilities, can receive advice around the clock, 365 days a year. Relatives, friends and professionals can also receive anonymous advice free of charge.

Here you can find the contact details for the helpline "Gewalt gegen Frauen":

 116016

 [www.hilfetelefon.de](http://www.hilfetelefon.de)

### The family guide

Aktion Mensch has published a guide for families. The guide is for people with disabilities and their families. It provides information and addresses. There is also a website. There you will find important information about living with a disability. The information is in simple and easy-to-understand language. It covers many areas of life:

- School and work
- Leisure activities and accessibility
- Rights and housing
- counselling
- Health and care insurance
- and much more

You will also find important general information and advice, for example

- People with disabilities have the right to freely choose where, how and with whom they live.
- There are various support services for parents with disabilities.
- People with disabilities have to pay less for a train ticket.
- There are many opportunities for people with disabilities to go on holiday.

[Here](#) you can find detailed information as well as local contacts and advice centres.

### **breastcare app**

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer worldwide. One in every eight women in Europe contracts breast cancer during the course of their lives. In Germany alone, around 70,000 women get breast cancer every year. The earlier the illness is detected, the higher the chance of recovery in most cases. About 25% of cases could be prevented through a healthy lifestyle. The breastcare app works on a scientific basis. It explains everything you need to know about breast cancer. It also covers early detection. And it will tell you how important it is to lead a healthy lifestyle. The app is currently available in seven languages: Arabic, German, English, Farsi, French, Spanish and Turkish.

### **The breastcare app**

- reminds you to feel your own breasts with a calendar reminder
- explains how to feel by yourself with illustrated step-by-step instructions
- clarifies risk factors and symptoms and provides specific tips on a healthy lifestyle
- answers questions on early detection medical examinations in Germany
- links to numerous points of contact, such as breast centres, integration officers or support services to which women can refer in the event of questions
- tells the stories of women affected that provide encouragement

You can download the app from the Apple and Google app stores. The app is free. You can use the app without providing any personal data. It is free of advertising and set up for the long term. More information is available in seven languages at: [www.breastcare.app](http://www.breastcare.app)

## **Children, youth and family**

### **Basic information about children, young people and families**

Children, youth and families are under special protection in Germany. This protection begins during pregnancy and continues until the child is 18 years old (of full age). In Germany, for example, it is forbidden to beat children. Children must be brought up in Germany without using violence. All children must attend school. Special authorities also make sure that children are not harmed by their environment (or even by their family).

Families are also legally protected in Germany. This applies whether the family consists of a mum and dad and their children, if there are two mums or two dads, or if the children are adopted. And single parents with their children are also considered a family.

### **Pregnancy and birth**

Pregnant women are under special protection in Germany. They are allowed to seek counselling. You will be cared for by a doctor. And the state will support you with new purchases for the child. If you are pregnant, you must first go to a gynaecologist (gynaecologist). Have the check-ups carried out there. You will then receive a maternity pass. The maternity pass is a document containing important information about your pregnancy. It also contains information about your health. And that of your child. Always take your maternity record with you in case of emergencies.

## **Delivery, aftercare and midwife**

### **Delivery and aftercare**

Your gynaecologist will refer you to a maternity clinic. After the birth, ask there for a midwife or a maternity nurse for aftercare. You will receive a birth certificate from the clinic.

### **Midwives**

Midwives support women and their families from the beginning of pregnancy to the end of the breastfeeding period. Midwives provide counselling during pregnancy. They can help with the birth. After the birth, they introduce breastfeeding. They also take care of the woman's physical and psychological recovery. Every woman can call on the help of a midwife. Most services are covered by health insurance.

💡 You can find more information in the [ElternStart! app](#) from the district of Soest.

## **Paediatricians**

There are ten early detection examinations (U1-U9 and J1). This means that the child is examined regularly up to the age of 6. The paediatrician monitors your child's development. The U1 (examination after birth) and U2 examinations usually take place in the clinic. For further examinations, you must make an appointment with your paediatrician.

💡 Further information can be found in the [ElternStart! app](#) of the district of Soest.

## **Notification to the registry office**

Newborn children must be registered at the registry office within one week. The registry office responsible depends on the child's place of birth. Do you live in accommodation? Then the birth must be reported to the management. The maternity clinic will register the birth with the registry office. You will receive the (provisional) birth certificate for your child there. Bring your identity card with you. You will also need the birth certificate from the clinic. Are you married? Bring your marriage certificate with you.

💡 Please only present original documents. If your documents are in a foreign language, an officially certified German translation is required.

💡 Do you live in shared accommodation? Give your accommodation manager a copy of your birth certificate. Your child will then be registered.

💡 Further information can be found in the [ElternStart! app](#) of the district of Soest.

## **Welcome to our website!**

The name WILLKOMMEN! (WELCOME!) stands for a positive welcome and early support for all families in the district of Soest. The primary goal is the well-being of the parents and the child. The members of the Welcome! team offer all families a personalised and individual welcome. The service is aimed at all parents with newborns in the area of responsibility of the Soest District Youth Welfare Office. The families are visited at home. Within the first 12 weeks after the birth, the families receive an announcement by post. The team consists of paediatric nurses and midwives.

### Recognition of paternity

The acknowledgement of paternity is a man's declaration that he wishes to become the legal father of a child. Acknowledging paternity is voluntary and is enshrined in §§ 1594 ff. BGB (German Civil Code). In order for it to be effective, certain requirements must be met.

💡 Further information can be found in the [ElternStart! app](#) of the district of Soest.

## Childcare

### Child day care centres

Child day care centres are the place that meaningfully complements the upbringing and education in the family and promotes the child's individual development. Children under the age of three are also cared for in day care centres. There are often centres that accept children as young as six months and care for them in a type of "crèche group".

Children from all over the world and from very different families and homes come together in daycare centres. Each child has its own strengths, language, special experiences and needs. They learn how to interact with each other, how to help others (and ask for help themselves), how to settle disputes and find solutions together.

### Family centres

A family centre takes care of the children. There are also counselling services for families.

### Childminders and childminders

Childminders are a good alternative childcare option for children under the age of three. Many parents appreciate the familiar environment in the small groups, the contact with children of the same age and the flexibility in terms of time. Childcare often takes place in the childminder's own home.

The cost of a childcare place depends on the parents' salary.

💡 Further information can be found in the [ElternStart! app](#) of the district of Soest.

## Family benefits

### Education and participation (But)

#### What is meant by benefits for education and participation?

This is money for children and young people from low-income families. The parents receive the money for certain services that help the children and young people. Especially for events at daycare centres and schools.

Benefits from the education package are usually cash benefits or benefits in kind (in the form of vouchers).

### **Who can receive benefits for education and participation?**

Parents can apply for benefits for education and participation. They can do this for all children living in the household. To qualify, parents must receive one of the following benefits:

- Housing benefit
- child supplement
- citizen's allowance
- social welfare
- Asylum seeker benefits

You do not receive any of the above benefits? Are you unable to cover your child's specific education and participation needs? Then you may be entitled to benefits from the education package in accordance with SGB II. You can enquire at the relevant job centre.

Pupils in need of assistance up to the age of 25 receive benefits for education. These pupils must attend a general school or vocational school. They should also not receive a training allowance.

Children in need of assistance in daycare centres and childminders also receive part of the educational benefits

Children and young people up to the age of 18 receive benefits for participation. Support for small children is also possible.

### **What benefits are involved?**

#### Benefits for education

- School trips and school excursions  
The actual costs of one-day excursions at school or daycare centres.  
It is possible to collect statements via schools for one-day trips. The actual costs of multi-day trips for classes and daycare centres.  
For school trips, the money can be paid directly to the children or their parents.
- Personal school supplies  
Personal school supplies are recognised.  
School supplies include, for example, a school bag, sports kit, materials for writing, maths and drawing.  
If you have several schoolchildren, you will receive the money for each child.
- School transport  
For pupils who are dependent on school transport to attend the nearest school, the necessary expenses are taken into account. However, this only applies if the costs are not covered by third parties (in particular in accordance with the School Transport Costs Ordinance).
- Learning support  
The actual costs of learning support, such as tutoring.  
However, you should first speak to your child's teacher. They must certify the need for support.

- Lunch for school, daycare centre and after-school care  
Lunch at all-day schools, after-school care centres or day nurseries at no extra cost to parents.

#### Benefits for participation

Parents can receive money for their children's participation in cultural, sports and leisure activities; for example, if the children take

- Take music lessons,
- are members of a sports club,
- attend courses at adult education centres,
- go to a museum, theatre or musical.

#### Which organisations are responsible in the district of Soest?

- Do you receive social welfare, child supplement or housing benefit? Then you must apply to the [municipal or local authority in your place of residence](#).
- Do you receive unemployment benefit II or social benefit? Citizen's allowance? Then contact your [local job centre](#).

#### **Child benefit**

All parents with a settlement or residence permit in Germany are entitled to child benefit. You must apply for child benefit yourself at the Federal Employment Agency. This agency pays child benefit for every child from birth until at least the age of 18. You can find more detailed information in German, English, Turkish and Russian [here](#).

💡 Further information can be found in the [ElternStart! app](#) of the district of Soest.

#### **Parental allowance**

Some parents work less after the birth of their child. Some no longer want to work as much. Others can no longer work as much. They can then receive money from the government. Parents who live separately can also claim parental allowance. They can apply for parental allowance if they have a settlement or residence permit in Germany. You can find more detailed information in German, English, Turkish and Russian [here](#).

Further information on parental allowance can be found [here](#) and in the [ElternStart! app](#) of the district of Soest.

#### **Parental allowance office of the district of Soest**

☎ [+49 \(0\) 2921300](tel:+4902921300)

@[eltern geld@kreis-soest.de](mailto:eltern geld@kreis-soest.de)

#### **School for children from 6 to 18 years**

School attendance is compulsory in Germany. The duration of compulsory schooling is twelve years. Children must attend school full-time for nine years. Afterwards, they can also attend school part-time for three years. Would your child like to attend school full-time for the whole time? Then they can do so for 12 years.

Your child is not doing any vocational training after 9 years? And does not attend another school? Then your child must attend a full-time school for another year. Compulsory schooling ends at the age of 18. Unless there is a training contract.

Your child must attend school regularly. It is your responsibility to ensure this. School attendance at state and municipal schools is free of charge.

There are different types of schools in Germany. Which school your child goes to depends, among other things, on how old they are, but also on their school performance.

💡 Parents often receive written information from the school that their children bring home with them. It is important that you read this information.

You can find more information about school [here](#).

## Unaccompanied refugee minors

The district youth welfare office looks after young refugees who have come to Germany from crisis regions around the world without their parents and have not yet reached the age of 18 when they arrive. In particular, the young people are given a home and their future lives are planned. A guardian stands up for their rights and exercises custody instead of the parents.

The young people can come to rest in Germany, come to terms with their history as refugees and make decisions about their future lives. For example, they work out together

- whether and how to apply for asylum,
- what developmental steps still need to be taken to become an adult,
- what their future life path should look like and
- where there is still a need for support.

If traumatic experiences lead to psychological and physical impairments, the young people are offered professional help.

Learning the German language takes centre stage right from the start. Other key areas of support include cultural learning, orientation in the social environment and finding a daily structure. Attending school plays an important role here.

## Family guide

The family guide contains many offers for expectant parents and their baby. You can find the family guide [here](#).

## App ElternStart!

What does a baby need to develop healthily? What equipment is needed? What about parental allowance and parental leave? Which visits to the authorities are necessary?

The app provides a lot of information that is important for parents-to-be.

💡 The app is available in German, English, French, Turkish, Russian and Arabic.

You can access the app here:

 [To the app for iOS in the Apple Store](#)

 [To the app for Android in the Google Playstore](#)

## Ukraine

### Information on the war in Ukraine

### Information from the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

Here you can find out what is important at the moment - for example, what the current [situation](#) is. You can also find rules here if you want to enter Germany or if you need a visa. We have already written down some important questions and answers for you:

#### I am in Germany without a visa - what can I do now?

If you come from Ukraine, you do not need a visa to come to Germany until **4 December 2025**. From the day you enter the country, you can stay here for up to 90 days without a special permit. You can even stay in Germany without a special residence permit until **4 March 2026**.

During the 90-day visa exemption period, you can consider whether you would like to stay in Germany for longer. There are various options for this:

1. You can apply for a residence permit under Section 24 of the Residence Act within 90 days of your first entry into Germany. This provision specifically regulates the situation for war refugees from Ukraine on the basis of the EU decision. You can find out who is eligible for a residence permit under Section 24 of the Residence Act [here](#). You can find answers to the procedure [here](#).
2. You can apply for a residence permit for another purpose within 90 days of your first arrival in Germany. For example, to study or for gainful employment. This may be more favourable for you. You can seek advice on this from the authorities if you have an appointment, or you can find out more in advance on the website: <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/>.
3. Alternatively, you can apply for asylum. However, this option is not recommended due to the less favourable legal consequences - such as the restriction on taking up employment and the obligation to live in an initial reception centre.

#### Do you have a valid residence permit in accordance with Section 24 of the Residence Act as of 1 February 2025?

Your residence permit will be automatically extended and will then be valid until 4 March 2026. You do NOT need to visit the immigration office for this. You can find more information on [Germany4Ukraine](#).

## What happens when you arrive in Germany?

When you come to Germany, there are a few important steps that you need to take one after the other. This is how it works:

- First, you register - this is called registration.
- If you need help from the state (for example money or food), you will be told where you can live.
- Then you register your new address, i.e. where exactly you now live.
- Finally, you apply for a permit so that you can stay in Germany for longer.

You can find more information on this [here](#).

## Can I work in Germany with a residence permit for temporary protection?

Yes, you can. However, before you can work, the immigration authority must authorise it. The immigration authority will often already enter in your residence permit that you are allowed to work - even if you do not yet have a job. This is good, because then you no longer need an extra permit from another authority.

The immigration authorities will issue so-called fictitious certificates as soon as you submit your application. These bridge the right of residence until the actual residence title can be issued and granted. The foreigners authority will also enter "Gainful employment permitted" in the fictitious certificate. This fictitious certificate therefore authorises you to work in Germany either as a self-employed person or as an employee. Special professional access requirements (such as a licence to practise medicine or a permit for a trade requiring a licence) naturally apply to persons with temporary protection in the same way as to all others. However, the procedures for recognising foreign professional qualifications are also open to those affected, just like everyone else.

Persons with a residence permit for temporary protection in Germany can also receive counselling and placement services from the employment agencies in accordance with SGB III.

## Should people from Ukraine apply for asylum?

No, that is not necessary. The necessary protection is granted in a different, faster procedure. It is therefore recommended that you do not apply for asylum. However, if you want to apply for asylum later, you can still do so.

As a result of the decision to admit war refugees in accordance with Article 5 (1) of Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection, a residence permit in accordance with Section 24 of the Residence Act (AufenthG - Residence Permit for Temporary Protection) will be granted to the group of persons covered by the decision upon application.

Registration upon entry does not constitute an application for asylum. An application for asylum must be submitted to the responsible branch office of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in order for an asylum procedure to be carried out.

For these reasons, it is not necessary to file an asylum application to secure a right of residence or to claim social benefits.

## Information portal of the German government

The Federal Ministry of the Interior and Homeland offers a digital information portal in German, English, Russian and Ukrainian. Here you will find all official information about residence and living in Germany.

[🌐 Germany4Ukraine](#)

## Embassy of Ukraine in Berlin

[☎ +493028887128](#)

[📍 Albrechtstraße 26, 10117 Berlin](#)

## Help for Ukrainians

## Integreat

### About Integreat

Integreat is a guide that supports you in your everyday life. You will find important addresses, contact persons as well as tips and tricks that can help you find your way around.

This guide has several chapters. Each chapter deals with a different topic. Among other things, you will find information on doctors, schools, German courses or other institutions. There is also a chapter with ideas on what you can do in your free time. The information and leisure activities change. Your municipality updates them regularly. That's why it's very good if you check your mobile app often. You will always be informed about current activities and events. You can rely on the information in Integreat.

Download Integreat from your [app store](#). You can also use this app offline if you don't have internet access. When you are back online, the app will update itself.

### Sharing information

You can download and share important information, for example, as a PDF in the web app. In the mobile app, you can share interesting content directly, for example via WhatsApp, Facebook or email.

### Latest news

With the Integreat smartphone app you can also receive push notifications. You can agree to receive them in the app's settings. Important or short-term information is sent to you via push notifications.

### Feedback

You can contribute to the development of the Integreat app in your municipality. You can give feedback using the smiley icons. This feedback ends up with the people who create the content. You can praise or criticise. If you have ideas or criticism, write down as many details as possible.

### Read aloud function

The content of the Integreat app can also be read aloud. To do this, the read aloud function must be switched on in the settings of the smartphone. This works in all languages.

We very much hope that we can simplify your life in Germany with this app.

### Integreat in sign language (Video)

This video explains how Integreat works in German sign language. You will learn what is possible. Click on the image to watch the video on YouTube.



### Do you have an offer for our app?

If you notice when using the Integreat app that an offer is missing or an important topic or contact person is not listed, please let us know.

Feel free to contact us via the feedback function (smileys from each page) of the app or contact the Municipal Integration Centre of the district of Soest directly:

### Municipal Integration Centre

Contact person:

Holger Schubert

Head of the centre

[02921302445](tel:02921302445)

[@holger.schubert@kreis-soest.de](mailto:@holger.schubert@kreis-soest.de)

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@i [ntegrat](mailto:integrationszentrum@kreis-soest.de) ionszentrum@kreis-soest.de

💡 You are also welcome to let us know if an event is taking place in your area that can be shared on the Integreat App of the district of Soest.

## At home in the Soest district

💡 [Click here](#) to visit the website of the Municipal Integration Centre of the District of Soest. You will find information on the topic of integration in the district of Soest.

