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## NEWS

### Welcome to our news on Integreat!

There is a lot of information in different languages on Integreat.  
In the "News" section you will find information and links to our latest news.  
Our newsletter is currently only available in German. You can find it [here](#).

There is new information on Integreat on the following topics:

- [Payment card "SocialCard"](#)
- [elina - app for \(expectant\) parents](#)
- [Current factual report on reception and accommodation](#)

Warm greetings from the Integration Officer and the Integration and Asylum Services Department of the Elbe-Elster district

PS: Do you always want to be the first to know?

💡 Activate the push notification for this app on your smartphone!

💡 Feel free to share this page so that your colleagues, friends and neighbors can also receive first-hand information!



### Payment card "SocialCard"

The payment card is a new form of benefit provision for those entitled to benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act.

The benefits are distributed directly to newly assigned persons and then gradually to benefit recipients who are already receiving benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act in the Elbe-Elster district.

#### What is a payment card?

- The payment card is like a bank card.
- [Benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act \(AsylbLG\)](#) are transferred to the payment card as a credit balance.
- You can use the payment card to pay in shops that offer VisaCard payment. **VISA**
- You can use the payment card to withdraw cash.

- You can only spend as much money as is on the card.

### **Who gets a payment card?**

All persons aged 18 and over who receive benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG) receive a payment card.

In benefit communities (such as families), each family member aged 18 and over receives their own payment card.


### **Where can I get my payment card?**

- If you receive benefits, you will have received a letter from Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt).
- If you are applying for benefits for the first time and these are approved, you will receive a payment card from the outset.
- The new payment cards are issued at Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt).

### **What benefits are on the payment card?**

- Benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG) are made available on the payment card.
- Benefits for education and participation or work opportunities are also made available on the payment card.
- Do you receive other benefits (such as child benefit) or wages from an employer? Then you will still need a bank account with Girocard.

### **How much money do I have on the card?**

- The monthly benefits in accordance with the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG) are made available on the payment card.
- You can check your balance online at  <https://portal.socialcard.de/> and in the payment card app "My SocialCard".

### **Can I withdraw cash from the payment card?**

- Yes, you can withdraw cash.
- You can withdraw up to €50 per month per adult person in your benefit community.
- You can withdraw up to €25 per month per child in your benefit community.
- You can withdraw from ATMs or at the till in many shops.




### **Can I transfer money with the payment card?**

- In certain cases, a bank transfer may be authorised.
- The recipient must first be authorised by the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt).
- This applies, for example, to transfers to your lawyer or school.

### **Can I pay by direct debit with the payment card?**

- Yes, direct debit is permitted in certain cases.
- The recipient must first be authorised by the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt).
- This applies, for example, to mobile phone contracts, public transport providers, gym contracts or sports club membership fees.

## **I have lost my payment card. What do I need to do?**

- You can block your payment card online at  [www.socialcard.de](https://www.socialcard.de).
- You can also block the card by telephone at  [116116](tel:116116). This is possible in German or English.
- If you find the card again, you can reactivate it online at  [www.socialcard.de](https://www.socialcard.de) to reactivate it.

## **Have you lost the payment card permanently?**

- You must first report the loss or theft to the police.
- You must then also report the loss or theft to the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt).
- The old card will be cancelled and you will receive a new one.
- The credit will be transferred to the new card.

## **Where can I get help?**

Select your language and card type at  [www.socialcard.de](https://www.socialcard.de). Click continue.

On the next page you will find a hotline, a chat and the most important questions and answers for download in the selected language.

## **Welcome**

### **Welcome to Elbe Elster County**

#### **Things to know about the Elbe-Elster district**

##### **In the middle.**

In the south of Brandenburg, in the immediate vicinity of Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, the Elbe-Elster district lies in the triangle formed by the major cities of Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig.

##### **On the Elbe and Elster.**

101,000 inhabitants live here on 1,900 square kilometres. The district got its name from two rivers: the Black Elster and the Elbe. In its south lies the Elbe-Elster Land, its east is formed by the western Lower Lusatia, and in the north it touches the Lower Fläming.

##### **Differently beautiful.**

Saxon traces mingle here with the Brandenburg trail. Tradition and change are what make the summer garden of Lusatia sprout. Where the potato thrives as a "Knulle" and tastes hearty, life is different and beautiful.

## **Full of stories.**

In Finsterwalde, people sing the famous popular song "We are the singers of Finsterwalde" and cultivate singing. The cradle of the Central German travelling marionette theatre stood 250 years ago on the Black Elster, and a battle near Mühlberg in 1547 determined the course of the Reformation. The Elbe-Elster Land is full of small and big stories that want to be discovered and experienced.


## **Room for ideas.**


Kind and open people who are curious about new things live here. The region offers them the space in which to realise their ideas and goals. The future is being thought through. As an energy and climate protection region, the Elbe-Elster district takes an innovative and forward-looking approach to the industrial heritage of lignite mining.

## **Community life in Germany**

### **The Basic Law (Grundgesetz)**

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

 Here you will find the Basic Law in 11 languages: \* [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Italian](#), [Persian](#), [Polish](#), [Russian](#), [Serbian](#), [Spanish](#), [Turkish](#) and of course in [German](#).

 How the German constitutional state functions is illustrated in this film: [German](#), [Dari](#), [Arabic](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Pashto](#), [Urdu](#).

### **Universal declaration of human rights**

Human rights are important rights that apply to everyone all over the world. Human rights are rights that every person has on the basis of their humanity. They protect the dignity of every human being and are equally due to all human beings without any distinction, for example according to '(...) race, 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 10/12/1948)

There are 30 rights. The most important are:

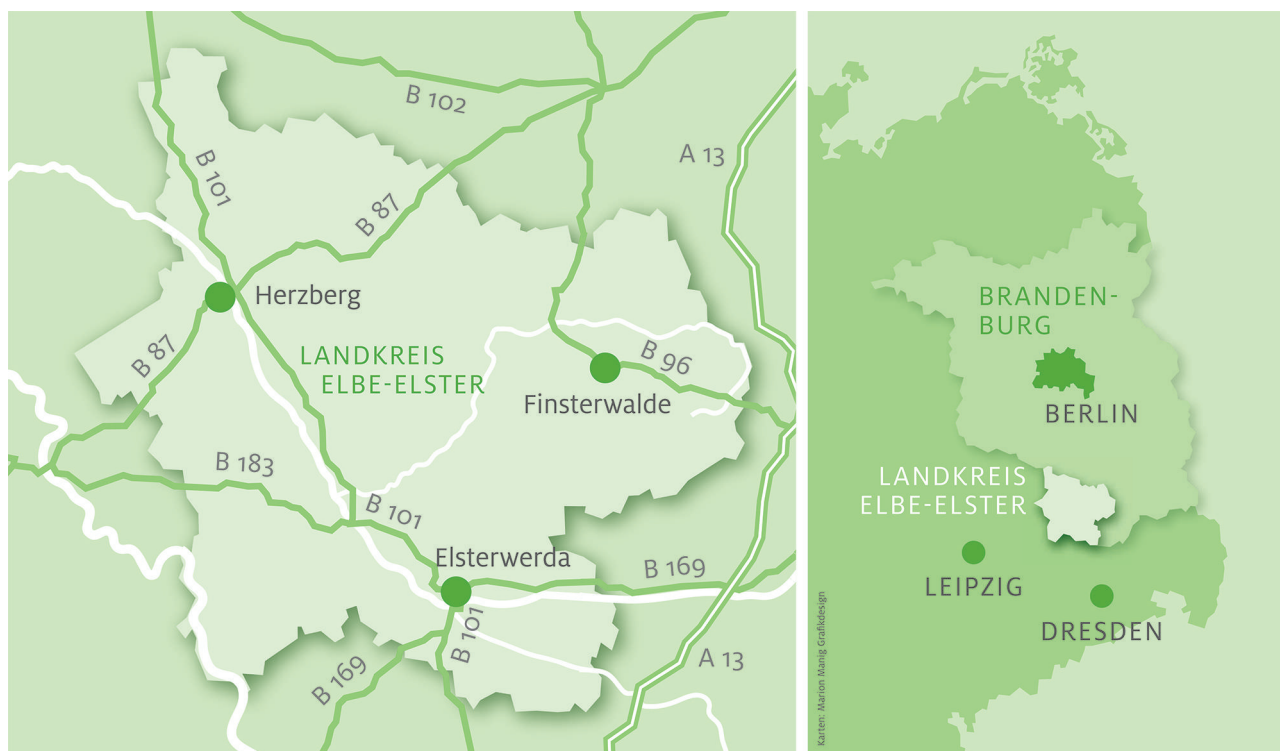
- All people are of equal value.
- Everyone is allowed to have their own opinion.
- All people have the right to live in peace and safety.

### **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.

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

### Cities, offices and municipalities in Elbe-Elster



When you arrive in the Elbe-Elster district and move into an apartment, you must register there at the Residents' Registration Office (Einwohnermeldeamt). For this you need the tenancy agreement or a certificate of accommodation. The registration certificate is important and must also be presented to the [Immigration Authority](#) and the [Social Welfare Office](#) or [Jobcenter](#).

Here is the overview of the offices in the district:

#### Amt Kleine Elster

📍 [Turmstraße 5, 03238 Massen](#)

☎ [03531/7820](#)

Fax: 03531/702227

✉ [info@amt-kleine-elster.de](mailto:info@amt-kleine-elster.de)

🌐 [www.amt-kleineelster.de](http://www.amt-kleineelster.de)

#### Elsterland

📍 [Kindergartenstraße 2a, 03253 Schönborn](#)  
☎ [035326/98110](tel:03532698110)  
Fax: 035326/98139  
✉ [@amt@elsterland.de](mailto:@amt@elsterland.de)  
🌐 [www.elsterland.de](http://www.elsterland.de)

## **Plessa**

📍 [Steinweg 6, 04928 Plessa](#)  
☎ [03533/48060](tel:0353348060)  
Fax: 03533/5213  
✉ [@amtplessa@t-online.de](mailto:@amtplessa@t-online.de)  
🌐 [www.plessa.de](http://www.plessa.de)

## **Schradenland**

📍 [Großenhainer Straße 25, 04932 Gardena](#)  
☎ [035343/7620](tel:0353437620)  
Fax: 035343/512  
✉ [@info@amt-schradenland.de](mailto:@info@amt-schradenland.de)  
🌐 [www.amt-schradenland.de](http://www.amt-schradenland.de)

## **Schlieben**

📍 [Herzberger Straße 7, 04936 Schlieben](#)  
☎ [035361/3560](tel:0353613560)  
Fax: 035361/35630  
✉ [@amt-schlieben@t-online.de](mailto:@amt-schlieben@t-online.de)  
🌐 [www.amt-schlieben.de](http://www.amt-schlieben.de)

## **Röderland**

📍 [Am Markt 1, 04932 Röderland](#)  
☎ [03533/48380](tel:0353348380)  
Fax: 03533/483834  
✉ [@info@gemeinde-roederland.de](mailto:@info@gemeinde-roederland.de)  
🌐 [www.gemeinde-roederland.de](http://www.gemeinde-roederland.de)

## **Verbandsgemeinde Liebenwerda**

📍 [Markt 1, 04924 Bad Liebenwerda](#)  
☎ [035341/1550](tel:0353411550)  
Fax: 035341/155500  
✉ [@zentrale@vg-liebenwerda.de](mailto:@zentrale@vg-liebenwerda.de)



 [www.verbandsgemeinde-liebenwerda.de](http://www.verbandsgemeinde-liebenwerda.de)

## Doberlug-Kirchhain

 [Am Markt 8, 03253 Doberlug-Kirchhain](#)


 [035322/390](tel:035322390)


Fax: 035322/2271

 [info@doberlug-kirchhain.de](mailto:info@doberlug-kirchhain.de)

 [www.doberlug-kirchhain.de](http://www.doberlug-kirchhain.de)

## Elsterwerda

 [Hauptstraße 12, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)


 [03533/650](tel:03533650)

Fax: 03533/65109

 [stadtelsterwerda@t-online.de](mailto:stadtelsterwerda@t-online.de)

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

## Sonnenwalde

 [Schulstraße 3, 03249 Sonnenwalde](#)


 [035323/6310](tel:0353236310)


Fax: 035323/63112

 [Stadt-Sonnenwalde@t-online.de](mailto:Stadt-Sonnenwalde@t-online.de)

 [www.stadt-sonnewalde.de](http://www.stadt-sonnewalde.de)

## Finsterwalde

 [Schloßstraße 7-8, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

 [03531/7830](tel:035317830)


Fax: 03531/2766

 [stadt-finsterwalde@t-online.de](mailto:stadt-finsterwalde@t-online.de)

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

## Herzberg/Elster

 [Markt 1, 04916 Herzberg \(Elster\)](#)

 [03535/482115](tel:03535482115)

Fax: 03535/482120

 [stadtverwaltung@stadt-herzberg.de](mailto:stadtverwaltung@stadt-herzberg.de)

 [www.herzberg-elster.de](http://www.herzberg-elster.de)

## Schönewalde

📍 [Markt 48, 04916 Schönewalde](#)

☎ [035362/74330](tel:03536274330)

Fax: 035362/743340

✉ [@sekretariat@schoenewalde.de](mailto:@sekretariat@schoenewalde.de)

🌐 [www.schoenewalde.de](http://www.schoenewalde.de)

## 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)



[Sign language \(video\)](#)

## Advice and Assistance

### Social work/ Advice and support for non-Germans and refugees

Do you need advice and support? You are not alone - We are there for you! We advise you on the following issues:

- Official matters (e.g. explaining official mail, filling out applications)
- Applying for various financial aids (for example at the job centre, child benefit, parental allowance)
- Questions about health concerns (for example health insurance companies, doctors)
- Housing matters
- Questions about educational opportunities
- Referral to associations, institutions and general social services
- Placement for job application assistance

**You can find us here:**

### Doberlug-Kirchhain

Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V.

👤 Frau Münnich

☎ [01736280469](tel:01736280469)

@[ina-maria.muennich@johanniter.de](mailto:ina-maria.muennich@johanniter.de)

Gemeinschaftsunterkunft Doberlug-Kirchhain

📍 [Torgauer Straße 89M, 03253 Doberlug-Kirchhain](#)

📍 [Kirchstraße 5, 03253 Doberlug-Kirchhain](#)

Monday: 9 - 12 am and 1 - 5 pm

Thursday: 9 - 12 am and 1 - 5 pm

## Finsterwalde

Diakonisches Werk Elbe-Elster e.V.

👤 Herr Wülknitz

☎ [0353130015](tel:0353130015)

@ [m.wuelkntz.dwee@gmail.com](mailto:m.wuelkntz.dwee@gmail.com)

Haus der Diakonie

📍 [Friedenstraße 23, 03238 Finsterwalde](#) Monday: 9 - 12 am and 1 - 3 pm

Thursday: 9 - 12 am and 1 - 5 pm Consultation point Sängerstadtregion

📍 [Tuchmacherstraße 22, 03238 Finsterwalde](#) Tuesday: 9 - 12 am and 1 - 4 pm

Thursday: 9 - 12 am and 1 - 5 pm

## Herzberg

👤 Frau Vinokurova

☎ [017674701080](tel:017674701080)

@ [i.vinokurova.dwee@gmail.com](mailto:i.vinokurova.dwee@gmail.com) Haus der Diakonie

📍 [Magisterstraße 4, 04916 Herzberg](#) Wednesday: 8 - 12 am and 1 - 3 pm Communal

Accommodation for refugees 📍 [Leipziger Straße 7, 04916 Herzberg](#) Monday: 8 - 12 am

Tuesday: 8 - 12 am

Thursday: 1 - 4:30 pm

## Elsterwerda

👤 Frau Sun

☎ [017647106207](tel:017647106207)

@ [x.sun.dwee@gmail.com](mailto:x.sun.dwee@gmail.com)

Consultation point Kurstadtregion/ Elbe-Elsteraue/ Schradenland

📍 [Packhofstraße 2, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)

Monday: 9 - 12 am and 1 - 4 pm

Wednesday: 9 - 12 am and 1 - 4 pm

### Housing association

📍 [August-Bebel-Straße 16, 04910 Elsterwerda](#) Wednesday: 1 - 4 pm  
Thursday: 8 - 12 am

## **Specialist counselling service**

Do you need special advice and support? You are not alone!

We advise you on all questions:

- on asylum procedure and aliens law
- Dublin Regulation
- Hardship Commission Brandenburg
- Family reunion
- Identification/ support of vulnerable persons
- Referral to lawyers, mediation in legal problems
- Return counselling

**You can find us here:** **Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V. Finsterwalde** 📍 [Salaspils iela 3, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

Tuesday: 09 am - 12 am  
Thursday: 01 pm - 5 pm  
and appointments by arrangement

### **Herzberg**

📍 [Lugstraße 3, 04916 Herzberg](#)  
appointments by arrangement

### **Elsterwerda**

📍 [Ludwig-Jahn-Str. 12, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)  
appointments by arrangement

### **Doberlug-Kirchhain**


📍 [Torgauer Straße 89M, 03253 Doberlug-Kirchhain](#)  
appointments by arrangement

## **Kontakt**

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@[Fbd.Ee@johanniter.de](mailto:Fbd.Ee@johanniter.de)

 Lilit Yepremian

 [01736160670](tel:01736160670)

@[Lilit.Yepremian@johanniter.de](mailto:Lilit.Yepremian@johanniter.de)

 Elke Henßchen


 [01736280466](tel:01736280466)

@[elke.hensschen@johanniter.de](mailto:elke.hensschen@johanniter.de)

### Migration counselling for adult immigrants (aged 27 and over) (MBE)

**Migration counselling** supports all people with a migration background from the age of 27 who are new immigrants or have a permanent residence title or are EU citizens or have prospects of staying in Germany. These centres provide free advice. There is help, support, information and education available on the following topics:

- residence law issues relating to residence titles, residence permits, subsequent immigration of children, spouses, families
- Integration courses and German courses
- Recognition of qualifications (initial counselling and orientation counselling)
- Livelihood, support services and social issues
- Job search and vocational training
- Family, education and partnership
- Health
- Living and working in Germany

 There is a separate counselling service for adolescents and young adults between the ages of 12 and 27:

 [Youth migration services](#).

#### Contact:

#### **Caritas Association of the Diocese of Görlitz e.V.**


Finsterwalde office

Mr Andreas Jahn

Ms Nadine Abdel-Baghy

Caritas House "St. Elisabeth

 [Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 3, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

 [03531/61362](tel:03531/61362)

☎ [0162/2123699](tel:0162/2123699)

@ [mbe.finsterwalde@caritas-goerlitz.de](mailto:mbe.finsterwalde@caritas-goerlitz.de)

## Youth Migration Service (Jugendmigrationsdienste)

The Youth Migration Service (JMD) supports young immigrants aged 12 to 27. 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 find contact details here!](#)

## Support networks

In many places, there are associations and projects that work for you without payment. The volunteers can help you with various things, orientate yourself in your surroundings, take part in leisure activities and sports and learn your first German.

Here you can find a list of refugees` support networks:

## Herzberg

### WELT in Elbe-Elster e.V.

📍 [Nixweg 1, 04916 Herzberg](#)

☎ [03535/4858085](tel:03535/4858085)

☎ [0176/14792976](tel:0176/14792976)

@ [info@welt-in-elbe-elster.de](mailto:info@welt-in-elbe-elster.de)

🌐 [www.welt-in-elbe-elster.de](http://www.welt-in-elbe-elster.de)

- Volleyball group (Tuesday and Saturday)
- "Strong together!": Networking and participation of people with a migration background
- Education partnerships

### Haus der Vielfalt

#### Diakonisches Werk Elbe-Elster e.V.

📍 [Lausitzer Str. 5, 04916 Herzberg](#)

☎ [03535/7029297](tel:03535/7029297)

@ [mailto:hausdervielfalt.dwee@gmail.com](mailto:mailto:hausdervielfalt.dwee@gmail.com)

🌐 <https://www.facebook.com/hausdervielfalt.dwee>

### 3 HORIZONTE

#### LandWerft e. V.


📍 [Kirchstraße 10, 04916 Herzberg](#)


@ <mailto:3horizonte@landwerft.org>

🌐 <https://3horizonte.landwerft.org/>


## Elsterwerda

**Freiraum Elsterwerda e.V.**


 [Lange Straße 12c, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)

 [0175/5214559](tel:0175/5214559)

 [k.schenkel@t-online.de](mailto:k.schenkel@t-online.de)

 [www.freiraum-elsterwerda.de](http://www.freiraum-elsterwerda.de)

**Café of Possibilities**

 [Hauptstraße 25, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)

Monday - Wednesday 10 am - 1 pm

Thursday - Friday 3pm - 6pm

- Socializing and participation

- Women's Café, Language Café, Democracy Café

- cinema (programme see homepage)

**Creative workshop**

Thursday 3-6pm


And upon prior agreement


- Workshop offers

**Central Repatriation/ Return 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.

**Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) Elbe-Elster**

 [An der Lanfter 5, 04916 Herzberg](#)

 [03535/464480](tel:03535/464480)

 [auslaenderbehoerde@lkee.de](mailto:auslaenderbehoerde@lkee.de)

Or contact the [specialist counselling service](#).

**Naturalisation - The path to a German passport**

If you have lived in Germany for a while and meet the requirements, naturalisation is a good idea.

- Wide-open career opportunities
- Planning a life in security in Germany
- EU citizenship
- Have your say: vote and run for election
- Freedom of travel



## Your way to naturalisation

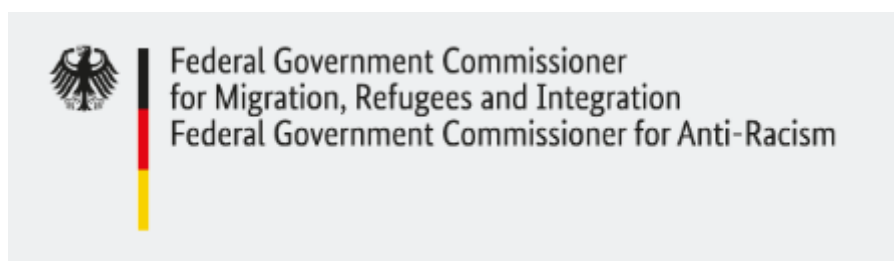
To get a German passport, you must meet certain requirements. Find out if you are eligible in just a few clicks – use our [Quick Check](#) before you apply.

Do you have any questions about how to get German citizenship? You can find answers and more information about naturalisation [here](#).

See [here](#) for a quick overview of the requirements for naturalisation, as well as answers to the most important questions about the German citizenship.

The brochure [My Path to a German Passport](#) provides comprehensive information on the requirements you must fulfil in order to become a German citizen, how to apply, and how the naturalisation procedure works.

Source: Paths to Naturalisation (einbuengerung.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 offers counselling via chat. All counsellors are qualified professionals of the [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](#)

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


## Important offices

### Jobcenter

The Jobcenter is where you go if you are unemployed and need support: it gives you financial support and can also help you to find a job or get qualifications, depending on what you need. It makes it possible, for example, to take part in a language course, to be placed in career counselling or to have certificates recognised. For more information about job advice and support, look here: [Access to the Job Market](#).

 Jobcenter staff are not allowed to pass on information about Jobcenter clients. As a voluntary accompanying person, a certificate of authority is required, which must be fully completed and signed by both parties.

 You can usually register with the Jobcenter if you have been granted a residence title.

 If you have a permission to reside (Aufenthaltsgestattung) (asylum procedure still ongoing) or a temporary suspension of deportation status (Duldung) (asylum procedure legally rejected), then the "[Agentur für Arbeit](#)" (Employment Agency) is responsible for questions of employment and employment promotion. In this case, the [social welfare office](#) is responsible for financial benefits.

### Registration with the Jobcenter

Here are the next steps you need to take:

#### 1. Personal visit

- You must go to the Jobcenter during opening hours
- There you will be registered as a customer
- Your background will be registered
- A counselling appointment is made with the benefits department and an appointment is made with the employment service
- You will be registered as a jobseeker

#### 2. Benefits department

**Important:** There is no consultation without an appointment.

- Benefits are applied for with an appointment with the responsible benefits officer

### 3. Employment service

- **Important:** There is no counselling without an appointment
- You must bring the integration course obligation or confirmation of participation in an integration course if you already have it
- If you have documents about school attendance, training, references, recognition of qualifications obtained abroad etc., please bring them with you
- Report on special skills (craftsmanship, language skills, etc.)
- Think about what kind of work you would like to do in advance

#### **Jobcenter Herzberg:**

📍 [Lugstraße 4, 04916 Herzberg](#)

#### **Jobcenter Finsterwalde:**

📍 [Friedrich-Engels-Straße 46, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

#### **Jobcenter Bad Liebenwerda:**

📍 [Berliner Straße 13a, 04924 Bad Liebenwerda](#)

#### **Contact:**

☎ [03535485200](tel:03535485200)

Please use our Online Service: [www.jobcenter.digital](http://www.jobcenter.digital)

Further information you can find here: <http://www.jobcenter-ee.de>

#### **Consultation hours:**

Monday	8 am - 1 pm
Tuesday	8 am - 1 pm and 2 pm - 6 pm
Wednesday	closed
Thursday	8 am - 1pm

And by appointment

#### **Agentur für Arbeit (Employment Agency)**

The Agentur für Arbeit (Employment Agency) is your most important contact regarding employment. If you are looking for a job or for help choosing a career in Germany, or need your qualifications recognised etc., you should contact the Agentur für Arbeit (Employment Agency).

Your asylum procedure is still ongoing (permission to reside (Aufenthaltsgestattung)) or if you have a temporary suspension of deportation status (Duldung), the Agentur für Arbeit (Employment Agency) is your point of contact for questions concerning the transition from school to work (career guidance), job placement, advice on continuing vocational training and employer advice (employer service).

👤 You have residence title? Then the [jobcenter](#) is your point of contact for counselling and job placements.

#### **Agentur für Arbeit Herzberg:**

📍 [Lugstraße 4, 04916 Herzberg](#)

☎ [0800/4555500](#)

@ [Herzberg@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:Herzberg@arbeitsagentur.de)

Monday	closed
Tuesday	8 am - 11 am and 2 pm - 4 pm
Wednesday	closed
Thursday	closed
Friday	closed

#### **Agentur für Arbeit Finsterwalde:**

📍 [An der Schraube 26, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

☎ [0800/4555500](#)

@ [Finsterwalde@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:Finsterwalde@arbeitsagentur.de)

Monday	8:30 am - 12:30 am and 2 pm - 4 pm
Tuesday	closed
Wednesday	closed
Thursday	8:30 am - 12:30 am and 2 pm - 4 pm
Friday	8:30 am - 11:30 am

#### **Agentur für Arbeit Bad Liebenwerda:**

📍 [Berliner Straße 13a, 04924 Bad Liebenwerda](#)

☎ [0800/4555500](#)

@ [BadLiebenwerda@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:BadLiebenwerda@arbeitsagentur.de)

Monday	closed
Tuesday	8 am - 12 pm and 2 pm to 4 pm
Wednesday	closed
Thursday	8 am - 12 am and 2 pm - 3 pm
Friday	8 am - 12 am

#### **Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt)**

The tasks of the 🌐 [Social Welfare Office](#) (Sozialamt) include the **provision of social assistance**. This includes the following services:

- [Benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act \(AsylbLG\)](#)
- Guaranteed minimum pension for the elderly or those with reduced earning capacity
- Help with care

- Help with living costs
- Integration assistance for disabled people
- Help in overcoming particular social difficulties
- Health support
- Help in other life situations

The services of the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt) also include relevant **advice** and **support**.


At the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt), you will be asked about your financial situation (for example, whether you have valuables such as jewellery or money). You will sign some documents and statements. Please bring all your papers with you to the interview. Benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG) are transferred to the payment card as a credit balance.

### **The Social Welfare Office is also your point of contact for the following topics:**

- Initial baby equipment and for your child's school supplies
- Money for train tickets to interview appointments
- Health care
- Education and Participation (BUT)
- [Integration course](#)
- Requests for moving to another city

#### **Contact:**

 [Grochwitzer Straße 20, 04916 Herzberg](#)

 [03535/463131](tel:03535/463131)

[@stab-asyl@lkee.de](mailto:@stab-asyl@lkee.de)

Tuesday 8 am - 12 am and 1 pm - 5 pm

Thursday 8 am - 12 am and 1 pm - 4 pm


### **Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde)**


The employees are the contact persons for foreign nationals living in the Elbe-Elster district, but also for German nationals who wish to have a foreign national enter the Federal Republic of Germany on the occasion of a visit or for family reunification.

#### **Other things you can do at the Immigration Office:**

- Issuing and extending permission to reside (Aufenthaltsgestattung) and temporary suspension of deportation status (Duldung)
- Applying for a work permit
- Issuance and extensions of residence permits (Aufenthaltstitel)
- Visa matters
- Issuance of declarations of commitment

**Contact:**

 [An der Lanfter 5, 04916 Herzberg](#)

 [03535/464480](tel:03535/464480)

 [@auslaenderbehoerde@lkee.de](mailto:@auslaenderbehoerde@lkee.de)

**Opening hours:**

Tuesday 8 am - 12 pm and 1 pm - 5 pm

Thursday 8 am - 12 am and 1 pm - 4 pm

Further consultations by appointment

**Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt)**

Children's rights (best interests of the child) must be observed when raising children and youth. You can find out more about this in the chapter [Community Life in Germany](#). The Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) supports parents in raising children and youth. Everyone can contact the Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) free of charge, including children and youths, if they have problems.


Responsibilities of the Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt):

- The support of young people in their individual development and social development
- The counselling and support of parents with questions regarding raising children
- The protection of children and youth
- The task, to contribute to positive living conditions for young people and families
- The elimination and reduction of disadvantages


Unaccompanied minor refugees are also subject to the Youth Welfare Act (SGB VIII) and are therefore the responsibility of the Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt).


**Contact:****Herzberg:**

 [Grochwitzter Straße 20, 04916 Herzberg](#)


 [035341/978733](tel:035341/978733)


**Bad Liebenwerda:**

 [Riesaer Str. 19, 04924 Bad Liebenwerda](#)

 [035341/978733](tel:035341/978733)

**Finsterwalde:**

 [Kirchhainer Str. 38 a, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

 [03531/5026333](tel:03531/5026333)

**Asylum and refugees****Residence status (Aufenthaltsstatus)**

Every person who seeks asylum in Germany needs to have an identification card (Ausweis). Your identification card provides details on your status and whether restrictions apply for any potential employment.

## There are 5 types of documents:

### 1. Proof of arrival

Status: Asylum seekers

Background: A proof of arrival (certificate of registration as an asylum seeker) is issued to a foreigner if they have requested asylum and have been processed by the registration authorities but have not yet filed an asylum application. Valid for the period between notification as an asylum seeker and official application for asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).



### 2. Permission to reside (Aufenthaltsgestattung)

Status: Asylum seekers

Background: Issued to foreigners who have officially applied for asylum until their application has been decided. The Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge – BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) makes the decision to accept or reject your application. If the application for asylum is rejected for being unfounded, it is possible to file an action with an administrative court. You are allowed to remain in Germany until the administrative court has reached its decision.

The ID card for asylum seekers includes conditions of employment, residence and possibly territorial limitations.

- If you require a special permit to take on employment, apply for this permit at the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) (employer or employee)
- Responsible for work placements: [Agentur für Arbeit \(Federal Employment Agency\)](#)
- Responsible for social services: [Social welfare office \(Sozialamt\)](#)



### 3. Fictional Certificate/ Probationary permit

Certificate confirming the existence of a temporary right of residence, which frequently accompanies the application for the granting or extension of a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) submitted to the Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde).



#### 4. Residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis)

The residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) grants temporary residence. It is issued in accordance with the Residence Act. There are different residence permits.

- This opens up the option for a future indefinite right of residence (settlement permit, "Niederlassungserlaubnis")
- Unrestricted access to the labour market
- Responsibility for placement in work and social benefits as a rule: [jobcenter](#)



#### 5. Temporary Suspension of Deportation Status (Duldung)

Background: Negative decision on the application for asylum

A "Duldung" is a temporary postponement of deportation. It is granted temporarily if deportation is currently not possible for legal, factual, humanitarian or personal reasons.

- General regulation for temporary legal suspension of deportation for certain groups by order of the highest state authority for a maximum duration of 3 months ("suspension of deportation")
- A work permit is always necessary and can be requested from the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) (employer or employee)
- Responsible for work placements: [Agentur für Arbeit \(Federal Employment Agency\)](#)
- Responsible for social services: [Social Welfare Office \(Sozialamt\)](#)





## Application for asylum

### 1. Personal application for asylum

- You apply for asylum at the **BundesAmt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF; Federal Office for Migration and Refugees)**.
- Asylum counselling can provide important information on the asylum process. Refugee and Integration Counselling is responsible for this
- **Important:** You can only submit your application in person. In other words, you cannot send this application by post
- You will receive the appointment and the responsible BAMF office with your proof of arrival. If you have not received an appointment, ask your social worker or staff at your residence

### 2. First interview appointment (asylum application)

After your first appointment, you must present yourself at the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#).

### 3. Personal hearing

The second interview appointment is the actual hearing. The BAMF decides on your asylum application and will send you their decision. This letter will contain a detailed description of the reasons for their decision.

#### a) The decision is negative

- If the decision is negative and you want to appeal against it (if you do not agree), go immediately to your [specialist counselling service](#). There they will discuss with you what you can do and you can be referred to specialised lawyers. One possible action for you is taking legal action to appeal the decision.
- If you decide to leave voluntarily, you can receive financial support for your new start in your country of origin. Then please report to the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#).

**b) The decision is positive, meaning that you are recognised as an asylum seeker. The next steps are:**

**Probationary permit (Fiktionsbescheinigung) or electronic residence permit (eAT):** If a positive BAMF decision has been given, it is necessary to arrange an identity document or equivalent immediately. You can obtain this from the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#).

**Jobcenter:** As a rule, you will no longer get your money from the [Social Welfare Office](#), but must apply to the [Jobcenter](#).

## Family asylum and international protection for family members

Family members of those with residence permit also receive asylum (by application) and the protection status of the person (right to asylum/status of refugee or subsidiary protection).

When it comes to family asylum, a family member is:

- Spouses, registered civil partners,
- any underage, unmarried children,
- the parents with custody (custody usually includes the rights of parents with respect to their children) of underage, unmarried children,
- other adult persons, who are the registered guardians of underage, unmarried children,
- the underage, unmarried siblings of minors.

The requirement for spouses is that a valid marriage had already taken place in the country of origin, the application for asylum was submitted before or at the same time as the spouse with a protection status, at the latest immediately after their arrival in the country, and as long as the protection status is incontestable and not to be withdrawn.

## Born in Germany:

If a child is born in Germany after the parents have applied for asylum, the legislator offers the possibility of a separate asylum procedure for the protection of children under certain conditions. For this, the parents (at least one must still be undergoing the asylum procedure) or the Ausländerbehörde (Immigration Office) must inform the Bundesamt (Federal Office) of the birth. In the interest of the new-born, the asylum application is automatically considered submitted. Parents can submit their own reasons for asylum for their child. If this is not done, the same reasons as those of the parents will apply. Legal action remains open in this case should an application be rejected by the Bundesamt (Federal Office). If you already have a residence title, you must submit a separate asylum application to the BAMF for the child born in Germany.

You can find more information on this at the BAMF.

🌐 [Family reunification website \(BAMF\)](#)

## Asylum Counselling Service

The Asylum Counselling Services advises asylum seekers and new arrivals to Germany who are entitled to permanent residency.

The counselling starts with the daily concerns of asylum seekers and refugees and covers the following subject areas:

- Information and questions about the asylum process
- General legal information and assistance with administrative matters
- Orientation guides and local services
- Information and counselling for everyday problems
- Counselling on integration services (such as language courses)
- Consultation with administrative affairs
- Advice on questions concerning family immigration, BAMF, etc.
- Referral to other specialist services
- Services for voluntarily returning to your home country or leaving Germany
- Contact person for volunteers (technical questions in connection with the asylum procedure)
- And much more

👤 You have a secure right of residence? Then the [Migration Counselling Service for Adult Immigrants \(Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer\)](#) can help. Adults aged 27 and over - including families, of course - are advised there.

👤 For young people and young adults aged between 12 and 27 years old, the [Youth Migration Service \(Jugendmigrationsdienst\)](#) is the right point of contact.

## Language

### Information

Learning German is important for finding work in Germany and for finding your way around in general. Here you will find options and people you can contact to help you find a German language course. There are different ways to learn German. Your residence status (Aufenthaltsstatus) determines which option you can choose. If you don't speak German very well yet, then you will need support. You can find contact details for the support you need here too.

### 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 this person.

#### 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 about 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 coherent way. You can express yourself in a spontaneous, very fluid, precise and nuanced manner.

**How can I participate in a language course?**

In general, anyone can take part in a language course. There are different types of language courses. Which language course is suitable for you depends on your current German language skills and your residence status.

If you would like to take part in a language course, please speak to the relevant office. Here, an appointment will be made with you for a grading test and all further steps will be discussed.

💡 Do you have a permission to reside (Aufenthaltsgestattung) or a temporary suspension of deportation status (Duldung)?

Please report to the [Social Welfare Office \(Sozialamt\)](#)

💡 Do you have a residence permit and receive benefits from the Jobcenter?

Please contact your responsible contact at the [Jobcenter](#), the [Migration Advice Service for Adults](#) or your responsible [social worker](#).

💡 You have a residence permit and do not receive social benefits?

Please contact the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#), the [Migration Counselling Service for Adults](#) or your responsible [social worker](#).

**Language Courses****Initial Orientation Courses**

The **German courses for initial language orientation** (also known as initial orientation courses) provide both elementary knowledge of German as well as information about life in

Germany. The content constitutes a practical first experience for participants in a new social environment and helps with their orientation in everyday life. A course consists of 300 teaching units of 45 minutes each. The modules of the course cover topics such as "health/medical care", "work", "kindergarten/school", "housing", "local information/transport/mobility". Spoken communication is the main focus: Participants should learn as quickly as possible how to find their way around in everyday life. Across all units values are taught as well.

Initial orientation courses are primarily intended for asylum seekers with an unclear prospect to remain in Germany. In case of free places on the course, recognised asylum seekers with good prospects of permanent residence may also participate. However, the initial orientation courses are not intended for persons who must attend school or vocational colleges. If you are given access to an [integration course](#) while participating in an initial orientation course, it is possible to switch. The people in the courses have very different backgrounds. Analphabets can attend the courses as well as graduates. Initial orientation courses are free of charge.

💡 The course language is German – interpreters are not present on the course.

### **Contact:**

#### **DRK Refugee Aid Brandenburg gGmbH**

☎ [0151/11468773](tel:015111468773)

You can call or text or use whatsapp in your mother tongue.

Please tell us your name, phone number and address.

As soon as we have availabilities we will contact you.

### **Integration Courses**

In the general **integration course** you will learn German up to language level B1 in 600 lessons. During an additional 100 class hours, you will gain insights into the culture, politics and social customs of Germany. There are also special forms of integration courses such as the literacy course with 900 lessons, some of which comprise more or fewer teaching units. The integration courses are free of charge for refugees and for other target groups who receive social benefits.

The integration course ends with the "Deutschtest für Zuwanderer" (language) (DTZ) and "Leben in Deutschland" (Information about Germany) (LiD) examinations.

You can be obliged/entitled to participate in an integration course by the [Jobcenter](#), the [Social Welfare Office \(Sozialamt\)](#) or the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#). If you are not obliged or entitled but would like to attend an integration course, you can apply for the integration course at the BAMF.

### **The following organizations offer integration courses in Elbe-Elster:**

#### **Kreisvolkshochschule**

##### **Herzberg regional office**

📍 [Anhalter Straße 7, 04916 Herzberg](#)

☎ [03535/463501](tel:03535463501)

@ [vhs.hz@lkee.de](mailto:vhs.hz@lkee.de)

**Elsterwerda regional office**

📍 [Am Schlossplatz 1a, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)

☎ [03533/6208520](tel:035336208520)

@ [vhs.eda@lkee.de](mailto:vhs.eda@lkee.de)

**FAW****Finsterwalde regional office**

📍 [Leipziger Straße 8-12, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

☎ [0355/48370235](tel:035548370235)

@ [angela.hanschke@faw.de](mailto:angela.hanschke@faw.de)

**WEQUA - Wirtschaftsentwicklungs- und Qualifizierungsgesellschaft mbH****Finsterwalde regional office**

📍 [Grenzstraße 62, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

☎ [03531/7190685](tel:035317190685)

@ [Mueller@wequa.de](mailto:Mueller@wequa.de)

**SBH Nordost GmbH****Herzberg regional office**

📍 [Ludwig-Jahn-Straße 24, 04916 Herzberg](#)

☎ [0355/866930](tel:0355866930)

@ [info@sbh-nord.de](mailto:info@sbh-nord.de)

**Vocational Language Courses (DeuFöV)**

Vocational German language courses ("DeuFöV") help to improve your own German language skills, for example after you have completed an integration course. You can take the so-called DeuFöV courses during your career, training or a vocational qualification measure or as preparation for starting a career in Germany

The basic modules of the DeuFöV courses are aimed at guiding you to speaking level C1 in two courses of 400 teaching units. Each of these courses ends 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 [jobcenter](#) or the [Employment Agency \(Agentur für Arbeit\)](#) or by applying to the BAMF.

The following organizations offer vocational language courses in Elbe-Elster:

## **Kreisvolkshochschule**

### **Herzberg Regional Office**

📍 [Anhalter Straße 7, 04916 Herzberg](#)

☎ [03535/463501](tel:03535463501)

@ [vhs.hz@lkee.de](mailto:vhs.hz@lkee.de)

### **Finsterwalde Regional Office**

📍 [Tuchmacher Straße 22, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

☎ [03531/7176105](tel:035317176105)

@ [vhs.fi@lkee.de](mailto:vhs.fi@lkee.de)

### **Elsterwerda Regional Office**

📍 [Am Schlossplatz 1a, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)

☎ [03533/6208520](tel:035336208520)

☎ [vhs.eda@lkee.de](mailto:vhs.eda@lkee.de)

## **WEQUA**

### **Finsterwalde Regional Office**

📍 [Grenzstraße 62, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

☎ [03531/7190685](tel:035317190685)

@ [Mueller@wequa.de](mailto:Mueller@wequa.de)

## **Learning lounge of the Kreisvolkshochschule**

The Lernstube (learning lounge) is a learning opportunity for all those who want to improve their reading and writing skills. Anyone can come to the learning lounge. You must be older than 16 years. Learning is free.

### **The Lernstube (learning lounge) is open:**

💡 Monday 10 am to 5 pm at the [Kreisvolkshochschule in Herzberg](#)

💡 Tuesday 10 am to 5 pm in the [gardener's house in the basic education centre in Elsterwerda](#)

💡 Wednesday 9 am to 4 pm at the [Kreisvolkshochschule in Finsterwalde](#)

💡 Thursday 10 am to 4 pm in the [gardener's house in the basic education centre in Elsterwerda](#)

## **Language learning offer GVFB**

The GVFB's offer is open to everyone. Here you can:

- gain first knowledge of the German language and receive basic information about life in Germany
- try out working with wood and painting
- learn how to use computers.

Just register any time - you can just call or drop by.

Or get in touch with your contact person at the [Social Welfare Office \(Sozialamt\)](#) or your [social](#)

[worker](#).

### **Here you can find the offer of the GVFB:**

📍 [Radelandweg 2, 04916 Herzberg](#)

📍 [Turmstraße 9, 03238 Massen](#)

📍 [Berliner Straße 48a, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)

## **Online Language Courses and Online Studies**

### **SPEAK**

SPEAK connects locals and new immigrants through language and cultural exchanges and cultural events organised by the community; these activities usually take place in person. SPEAK will be organising its language learning groups online using video conferencing. The groups consist of 4 to 6 people and meet for 90 minutes every day of the week for 2 weeks.

Anyone who wants to learn a language and interact with others can register for free with SPEAK. You can learn German, English or any other language you need. More information can also be found on the SPEAK website.

🌐 [www.speak.social](http://www.speak.social)

### **Online language courses**

You can learn German on your smartphone or on your computer (also free of charge). Take advantage of some great offers to learn German quickly and make the best use of the time you have to wait before your language course begins. These offers can also be helpful while you are taking your language course. More information on the language levels (A1-C2) can be found [here](#).

🌐 [Ankommen](#): In addition to information on life in Germany and on asylum, vocational training and work, the “Ankommen” app also includes a self-study course (starting at level A1) for your first few weeks in Germany.

🌐 [Serlo ABC](#): A free app for learning to read, either as self-study or additionally to a language course. This app has been approved for use in integration courses.

🌐 [Mein Deutschbuch](#) (My German Book): An extensive resource for learning the German language. This website is designed for learners and teachers, levels A1-B2.

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

🌐 [Basic language course from Deutsche Welle](#): This online language course contains modules covering literacy and job-related language skills. There is also a grading test.

🌐 [MyVocabulary](#): This app from HWK lets you create your own dictionary and vocabulary flash cards using photos.

🌐 [AsylPlus Learn German](#): An overview of various German-language learning options.



🌐 [“Die Stadt der Wörter”](#): An app and website for fun vocabulary learning for those without previous knowledge – in German, English, French and other languages.

🌐 [VHS-Lernportal](#): Free German language courses. You can also learn to read, write and calculate. There are also resources to help you prepare for graduation in German, maths and English.

🌐 [Einstufungstest Sprache \(Language Assessment Test\)](#): onSET-online language assessment test for refugees and for officials and volunteers to assess language ability.

## Online studies

Refugees and asylum seekers often face difficulties when trying to gain access to higher level education. Kiron Higher Education offers the possibility to study without tuition fees and without the other legal documents usually required to study. The problem of limited course places is also solved. The first two years of study are completed on the internet with online courses. All courses are offered in English. However, it is possible to add subtitles in any language. The third year of study takes place on campus at one of Kiron’s partner universities. There is also the possibility to learn German during the course of study. Additional forms of support and advice are also offered.

🌐 [Kiron website](#)

## Vocational Training, Work und University Studies

### Information

The conditions with which you may work in Germany depend on your residence status. For basic information and the relevant contact persons when looking for work, see [access to the job market](#).

If you have already acquired school or vocational qualifications abroad, you should make efforts to have these qualifications recognised. For more information, see the section on [recognition of foreign qualifications](#).

There are around 400 apprenticeship occupations in Germany. If you are looking for vocational training/ apprenticeship, please find further information and contact details in this section: [Vocational training/ Apprenticeship \(dual and full-time school-based\)](#).

Children and youngsters must go to school from the age of six years old. General schooling is attended before starting vocational training or university studies.

If you would like to study, you will find suitable information and contact persons under [Study](#).

### Looking for work

#### Access to the Job Market

#### Regulations on access to the job market

👤 If you are looking for work and have moved within the EU, you have full access to the job market, because of freedom of movement of labour.

👤 Refugees' rights to work vary according to their residence status. This is explained below. You will also find information on related advice centres below.

👤 Asylum seekers with proof of arrival or permission to reside:

As long as you live in the 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 at all for 9 months. After 9 months you usually have the right to a work permit. It is always the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) that decides whether you are allowed to work or not. You must therefore submit an application for a work permit to the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#). There are certain rules you must follow.

The following requirements are important for deciding whether you are allowed to work:

👤 Asylum seeker with proof of arrival or permission to reside in EAE:

- 9-month ban on working
- After 9 months, right to work permit if not from safe countries or asylum application rejected unfounded by the BAMF.
- The priority check is not applicable. However, the working conditions will be examined by the [Federal Employment Agency \(Bundesagentur für Arbeit\)](#).

👤 Asylum seeker with proof of arrival or permission to reside outside EAE:

- 3-month ban on working
- After 3 months, work permit at the discretion of the [Immigration authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) if not from safe countries with asylum application after August 31, 2015
- After 9 months, claim to work permit if not from safe countries with asylum application after August 31, 2015, or asylum application rejected unfounded.
- The priority check is not applicable. However, the working conditions will be examined by the [Federal Employment Agency \(Bundesagentur für Arbeit\)](#).

👤 Temporary suspension of deportation status:

It is always the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) that decides whether you are allowed to work or not. You must therefore submit an application for a work permit to the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#). The Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) can declare a general work ban on you. There are certain rules you must follow.

Temporary suspension of deportation status in EAE:

- After 6 months of an exceptional leave to remain period, work permit at the discretion of the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#), if not from safe countries with asylum application after August 31, 2015
- Persons with a temporary suspension of deportation status (Duldung) because of unclear identity (§ 60b AufenthG) are always prohibited from working.
- The priority check is not applicable. However, the working conditions will be examined by the [Federal Employment Agency \(Bundesagentur für Arbeit\)](#)

Temporary suspension of deportation status outside EAE:

- 3-month ban on working
- After 3 months, work permit at the discretion of the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#), if not from safe countries with asylum application after August 31, 2015
- Persons with a temporary suspension of deportation status (Duldung) because of unclear identity (§ 60b AufenthG) are always prohibited from working
- The priority check is not applicable. However, the working conditions will be examined by the [Federal Employment Agency \(Bundesagentur für Arbeit\)](#).

👤 Persons with residence permit:

If you have been recognised by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) as a person entitled to asylum, a refugee or a person entitled to subsidiary protection, or if you have been granted a ban on deportation, the [Immigration Authority \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) will grant you a residence permit. This entitles you to do any kind of job and therefore also gives you full access to the job market.

💡 There are different rules for [self-employment](#)! The prerequisite for the above applications is ALWAYS a concrete job offer.

## Employment contract

Anyone who starts a job gets an employment contract. This regulates the most important conditions of an employment relationship, such as working hours, holiday entitlement, salary and notice periods. Both sides – employees and employers – must keep with these agreements. Because a contract is legally binding once you have signed it, you should only sign it when you understand its content completely.

## Types of contracts:

### Permanent job contract (Unbefristeter Arbeitsvertrag)

As a general rule, there is a probationary period of three to six months. During this time, the employment relationship can be resigned at short notice within two weeks, both by the employer and by the employee. At the end of the probationary period, a permanent employment relationship begins with longer protection against resignation. 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 of resignation.

### Minijob

The maximum monthly salary is €520 and is not taxed.

## Labour Law:

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

- Regulation of working time

- Minimum wage
- Holiday entitlement
- Protection against resignation
- Employee representation (workers' council)
- Labour union regulations
- and a few more

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

Every employee in Germany pays part of their wages as taxes to finance federal, state and local government spendings. Employers, in turn, are required to pay social security contributions for their employees. In the German social system, this is intended to secure the financing of people's most necessary living costs if they cannot find work or can no longer work.

### **Tax ID number:**

The tax ID is a 11-digit number and is used for income tax. The workplace needs this number. If you do not have this number in your documents, you can ask for it personally at the registration office (Meldebehörde) or in writing 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 Jobcenter 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**

If you would like to start a vocational training programme (Ausbildung) or get a job in Germany, you need to submit a written application.

Most of the time, you apply to a company because it has placed a job advertisement on the internet or in the newspaper. Posting a vacancy means that the company is looking for new employees. The job advertisement describes what type of work or vocational training it involves and what the company's expectations of the employee are. It is also stated there where and how you have to apply.

If the company is interested in you, you will normally be invited to a job interview, which gives you a chance to introduce yourself in person. Please plan enough time for the interview and

always make sure to arrive on time for your appointment. Before the interview, you should prepare thoroughly and gather information about the company. Visit the website and read through the company's history, find out about the products or services. Arriving on time for your appointment and asking questions during the interview demonstrates your motivation for and interest in the vocational training programme or job.

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

**Cover letter:** In your personal cover letter you briefly introduce yourself and say why you are 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 cover 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.

**CV:** The CV (curriculum vitae) lists your entire professional experience and is set out in the form of a table. List from when to when you worked at which company. Include information about your vocational training or course of study. 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 if you do.

**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 (Arbeitszeugnisse). 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 on which you have to apply. You need to register with your email address before you can send your application.

🌐 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 you make your skills and expertise obvious to others. It offers a free possibility to create a language passport or a CV with an online tool. You can also find important tips on writing good applications.

🌐 You can have a free CV and cover letter created here: [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.

## Looking for Work - Advice and Help

There are several agencies that can help you find a job.

💡 If you are in the asylum procedure and have a permission to reside or a temporary suspension of deportation status, the [Employment Agency \(Arbeitsagentur\)](#) will help you.

💡 If you have a residence permit, the [Jobcenter](#) is usually responsible for you.

They help you with placement in work and qualification depending on individual needs. They also assist you with placement in vocational guidance/ career guidance or the recognition of certificates. For more information on job advice, support and placements look here: [Access to the Job Market](#).

There are many job portals on the internet where you can search for vacancies:

- [The Agentur für Arbeit's \(Federal Employment Agency\) Jobbörse \(job board\)](#)
- [StepStone](#)
- [Indeed](#)
- [Jobware](#)

## Immigration of Skilled Workers

### The Skilled Workers Immigration Act (Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz)

The Skilled Workers Immigration Act makes it easier for skilled workers with vocational, non-academic education to immigrate to Germany for work purposes. Existing regulations for skilled workers with university degrees will be kept up and in some cases made even easier.

#### 1. For companies:

- **Accelerated skilled worker procedure:** With a mandate of the skilled worker, employers can file an accelerated skilled worker procedure with the Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) in Germany. An agreement must be concluded between the company and the Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde). Among other things, the agreement must contain the powers of attorney and responsibilities of the employer, the skilled worker and the authorities involved (Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde), Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit), recognition offices, diplomatic representation abroad) as well as a description of the procedures including the parties involved and deadlines.

- The **fees for** the accelerated skilled worker procedure at the Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) are € 411. In addition, there is a visa fee of € 75 as well as any other applicable fees (certified copies, translations).
- **Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) advises the employer** and supports them in carrying out the procedure for the recognition of the foreign qualification of the skilled worker. Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) shall obtain the approval of the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) and check the conditions for granting the permit under aliens law. The recognition offices and the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) must decide within the specified deadlines.
- If all **requirements** are met, the Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) will issue a so-called advance approval, which will then be sent to the employer for forwarding it to the skilled worker. The skilled worker then books an appointment with the diplomatic representation abroad to apply for the visa, which will take place within three weeks. At this appointment, the original advance approval must be presented together with other documents required for the visa application.
- Once the completed **visa application** has been submitted by the skilled worker, a decision will normally be made within an additional three weeks.
- The **accelerated procedure** for skilled workers also includes the skilled worker's spouse and underage, unmarried children if they meet the legal requirements for family reunification.

## **2. For skilled workers**

- **Definition of skilled worker:** Skilled workers are defined as persons with a university degree or qualified vocational training of at least two years. A requirement for both groups is that their foreign qualifications have been recognised by the appropriate authority in Germany.
- **Labour market entry:** Entry into the labour market will be made easier: The qualified skilled worker must have an employment contract and a concrete job offer and a qualification recognised in Germany. The so-called priority review by the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) no longer applies. This means that it is no longer necessary to check whether an applicant from Germany or the EU is available for the specific job. The examination of working conditions by the BA remains.
- **Employment opportunities:** A skilled worker may be employed in an occupation that their qualification allows them to do. This means that it is possible to work in related professions. Additionally, skilled workers with an academic education are allowed to work outside of jobs that require a university degree. They may also be employed in other qualified occupations which fall within the professional context of the qualification and for which, in principle, vocational, non-academic training is required. Assistant professions and training professions are excluded, qualified employment is a must in all cases. The EU Blue Card always requires employment appropriate to the professional qualification, which usually requires an academic degree.
- **Skilled workers with vocational training:** The employment of skilled workers with vocational, non-academic training is no longer limited to bottleneck occupations. With a vocational training that has been recognised in Germany, residence permits (Aufenthaltstitel) for qualified employment will also allow these skilled workers access to all professions in which their qualifications allow them to work.
- **Entering the country to find a job:** Skilled workers with qualified vocational training are also able to enter the country to look for a job. You will receive a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) for up to six months. It is required that the foreign qualification has



been recognised by the appropriate authority in Germany, that your livelihood is secured for the duration of your stay and that you have the appropriate knowledge of German for the job you are seeking. As a rule, a minimum knowledge of German at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is required. During your stay while looking for a job, trial employment of up to ten hours a week is possible. This allows employers and foreign skilled workers to test whether they are suitable for each other. Trial employment is also possible for skilled workers with recognised academic qualifications, who are also allowed to enter the country for up to six months in order to look for work, as before.

- **Residence for qualification purposes:** The possibilities of staying in Germany for qualification purposes are being expanded. The requirement for this is generally that a recognition procedure from abroad has been carried out at the appropriate authority in Germany, in which deficits have been identified in the acquired foreign qualification in comparison to the German training (notice of recognition). An additional requirement for the issue of a visa for the purpose of undergoing qualification programmes is above all a knowledge of German corresponding to the qualification programme. These are usually at least sufficient German language skills (corresponding to language level A2). For example, the 18-month residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) can now be extended by six months to a maximum period of two years for this purpose. After expiry of the maximum period of the residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis), a residence permit may be issued for the purpose of training, study or employment.
- **Settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) for skilled workers from abroad:** Foreign skilled workers can obtain a settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) in Germany after only four years (previously five years).

### **3. For training and studies**

- **Entering the country to find a vocational training placement:** It is already possible for prospective students to enter the country in search of a university placement. Under the new regulation, people interested in vocational training can also enter the country to look for a vocational training placement. Requirements are a level B2 knowledge of German, a degree from a German school abroad or a graduation certificate that entitles the holder to enter university, a maximum age of 25 years and independent livelihood provisions.
- **German language course in preparation for training:** With a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) for a qualified vocational training course, a German language course or a job-related German language course may be attended in preparation.
- **Expanded changeover possibilities for international students in Germany:** International students already have the opportunity to change to other residence permits (Aufenthaltstitel) even before they have completed their studies. For example, instead of continuing their studies, they can start vocational training and receive a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) for vocational training. The Skilled Workers Immigration Act has expanded the possibilities for such changes: Under special conditions and after examination by the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit), a job offer as a skilled worker can be accepted even during a study visit or a stay for vocational training or further education. This is accompanied by a change to a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) for qualified employment.
- **Settlement permit for graduates of a training programme in Germany:** Under the new law, foreign graduates of vocational training in Germany can, just like university graduates, obtain a settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) after only two years.



③ This and more information can also be found on the page [Make it in Germany](#)

③ Here you can also perform a [quick check](#) to see your possibilities!

## Self-employment

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

If you are still in the asylum procedure, your application for asylum has been rejected or you have temporary suspension of deportation status (Duldung), self-employed work is prohibited. All others have 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)
- [Homepage of the IQ Competence Centre for Migrant Entrepreneurship](#) (six languages).

### Vocational training school (Berufsschule)

Vocational schools offer teenagers and young adults over the age of 15 a variety of opportunities after finishing a general-education school. Vocational schools train students for a specific profession and there is also the option of completing general-education school degrees. Children and adolescents in Germany are required to attend school until the age of 18 (compulsory education)!

### The following types of schooling exist at vocational schools:

#### **Vocational School Basic Education Plus (Berufsfachschule Grundbildung Plus - BFSG+):**

This is an offer for pupils without a school-leaving certificate who do not yet have sufficient knowledge of German and therefore cannot enter any of the subsequent schools. Knowledge of the German language is acquired as a priority and the basic education subjects are taught. A Certificate of Secondary Education can be acquired.

#### **Career-Entry year (Berufseinstiegsjahr - BEJ) or Vocational preparation year (Berufsvorbereitungsjahr - BVJ)**

These are programmes for students with or without a certain type of secondary-school diploma (Hauptschulabschluss) who are not yet sure what kind of career they are interested in and do not yet have a vocational training placement (apprenticeship). They are introduced to various professions and can either build on a secondary school degree (Hauptschulabschluss) or acquire a secondary school degree (Hauptschulabschluss).

#### **Vocational school (Berufsschule):**

At these schools vocational training is offered in a dual-track system. This means that part of the vocational training focuses on theory at the vocational school, while the other part involves getting practical experience at a company.

**Vocational schools for specific professions (Berufsfachschule):**

This type of vocational school offers 1 to 3 years of basic vocational education, preparation for a specific profession or professional qualification. Students can acquire the next higher school degree ranging from a secondary school degree to an intermediate secondary school degree. Vocational schools are usually split into the following professional fields:

- commercial/business professions
- home economics/socio-pedagogical professions or care and nursing
- business/technical professions

**Professional schools (Fachschule):**

This type of preparatory training school offers one-year or two-year programmes for professional development. This means that students are building on their previously completed vocational training programme and corresponding employment, and further developing the qualifications they have already acquired. These schools prepare students for mid-level management or self-employment. These schools are likewise split up into the following subject areas:

- Engineering
- Economics
- Social work
- Agricultural economics
- Design

**Vocational college (Berufskolleg):**

Vocational colleges, which offer programmes from one to three years, build on an intermediate secondary-school degree and students aim to achieve a more advanced professional qualification or qualification for higher education at a technical university (eligibility for study). There are vocational colleges for the following fields:

- Engineering
- Economics and administration
- Social education
- Health and nursing
- Home economics

**Secondary vocational school (Berufsoberschule):**

To attend a secondary vocational school, you need to have already completed a vocational training programme (apprenticeship) and, at minimum, an intermediate secondary school degree (mittlerer Schulabschluss). It usually lasts two years and prepares you for a subject-linked higher education entrance qualification or, with a second foreign language, for a general higher education entrance qualification. This makes them eligible for study. The following types of secondary vocational schools exist:

- Technical secondary school (Technische Oberschule)
- Economic secondary school (Wirtschaftsoberschule)
- Secondary school for social work (Oberschule für Sozialwesen)

## Vocational High School (Berufliches Gymnasium):

Students with an intermediate secondary-school degree and an average grade of 3.0 in the main subjects may attend a three-year vocational high school. The vocational high school ends with a general university entrance certificate (Abitur) and makes the student eligible to study at any university or university of applied sciences. This type of school is split up into the following subject areas:

- Technics
- Economics
- Social work and healthcare
- Agricultural sciences
- Biotechnological sciences
- Nutritional science

You can get advice on what might be suitable for you or your children from the [Youth Migration Service](#) and the relevant career advisers at the [Employment Agency \(Agentur für Arbeit\)](#).

## Education (dual vocational training and full-time school)

In Germany, it is a great advantage to have a **vocational training degree** before going to work. People with professional qualifications earn more money at an average over the years, are less likely to be unemployed and to have temporary contracts than those without professional qualifications.

## Dual vocational training

A special feature in Germany is the dual vocational training system. About one third of the time, dual vocational training takes place at the [vocational school](#) and about two thirds of the time at a company. You can simultaneously learn theory and practice while earning money at a company during your apprenticeship.

Depending on the type of profession you would like to learn in dual training, you should contact the right partner:

## Chamber of Crafts (HWK - Handwerkskammer)

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

Kreishandwerkerschaft Elster-Spree:

📍 [Gröbitzer Weg 106, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

☎ +49 (0) 35317186134

✉ [@info@kh-esp.de](mailto:info@kh-esp.de)

🌐 <https://www.dashandwerk.de/elster-spree/>

## Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK - Industrie- und Handelskammer)

The Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) is responsible for professions in industrial manufacturing, trade and services. Here, for example, we are talking about systems mechanics or wholesale and trade specialists.

IHK Regional Centre:

📍 [Burgplatz 1, 04924 Bad Liebenwerda](#)

🌐 <https://www.cottbus.ihk.de/regionalcenter-ee.html>

## **Full-time education at the vocational school**

In Germany, however, there's not only the option of dual training, but also full-time school-based training at a vocational school (Berufsfachschule). This type of training provides a complete vocational training in theory and practice outside of the dual training system (without an apprenticeship at a company). It usually lasts two to three and a half years. Classes are held full-time and include general education subjects as well as occupation-related subjects. Since the vocational schools differ greatly in terms of their training programmes, admission requirements, duration of training and further education options, it is advisable to check the respective school in each individual case.

Various sites and apps can help you find a training place:

- [Employment Agency \(Arbeitsagentur\)](#)
- App: [AzubiWelt](#)
- [Azubiyo](#)

## **Studies**

### **University-level study**

#### **General information**

In Germany, there are many different courses of study. There are also different types of universities:

- Universitäten = universities (more focus on academic research)
- (Fach-)Hochschulen = universities of applied sciences; polytechnics (more practically focused)
- Duale Hochschulen = “dual universities” (very practically focused)
- Kunst- Film und Musikhochschulen = universities for art, film and music (for the arts and performing arts)

There are public and private universities. Private universities are not necessarily better than public ones – however, students usually have to pay high tuition fees at private universities.

Helpful websites:

🌐 [Hochschulkompass \(Higher Education Compass\)](#) (list of all courses of study and universities in Germany)

🌐 [Study in Germany](#) (information for refugees)

🌐 [Employment Agency \(Agentur für Arbeit\)](#) - Studienorientierung (study programme orientation from the Federal Employment Agency)

🌐 [Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst \(German Academic Exchange Service\)](#) (DAAD - All study programmes in Germany)

## Requirements

If you want to study in Germany, you need a university entrance qualification. If you do not have an "Abitur" degree from a German school, you need to check whether the exams you passed in your home country are sufficient to enter a German university.

You can find more detailed information on the [Anabin](#) website, through the "Recognition in Germany" information portal and on the website of the [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#).

You also need to bring proof of your German language skills (level C1), such as a certificate from the TestDaF, DSH or telc Deutsch C1 Hochschule.

It is also possible to get support from the educational counselling organisation Garantiefonds Hochschule.

Some universities also offer preparatory semesters during which you can learn German.

You should get information directly from the university at which you would like to study. Most universities have counselling services available. Also make note of the deadlines by which you need to apply for a course of study!

## Fees

EU immigrants and most refugees do not have to pay tuition fees. People with German university entrance qualifications do not have to pay tuition fees either! International students who come to Germany to study have to pay fees at some universities. Fees are also sometimes charged for a second degree. This must be clarified individually with the respective university.

### Without a university entrance qualification

If you are eligible to study at university in your home country, but not in Germany, you may be able to get access to higher education through a preparatory college (Studienkolleg). There, foreign university applicants are given targeted preparation for future studies at a German university or university of applied sciences.

## Financing and Scholarships

## Work

Many people work in order to finance their studies. However, during term time (semesters), you must not work more than 20 hours a week. You can also try to get financial support from the government.

## **BAföG = Federal Law concerning the Promotion of Education or Training**

With BAföG, students receive money every month for a certain period of time. The amount of money you will receive depends on your individual circumstances. Not every student is eligible for BAföG. If you receive asylum seekers' benefits, you cannot receive BAföG. BAföG is only provided for full-time students.

**Half of the BAföG amount must be paid back after the studies.** The exact information on BAföG changes regularly and can therefore be found under the following link:

🌐 [Website about BAföG for refugees and migrants](#)

## **Scholarship**

As an alternative to the BAföG, it is also possible to get a scholarship. In contrast to BAföG, a scholarship usually does not have to be paid back. There are many scholarships for which you can apply. And not just for the first semester but for your whole course of studies. Some take account of social engagement, political orientation, degree programme, grades or personal circumstances. In some cases, organisations also work together with certain universities. The amount is often calculated in line with the BAföG. In addition, there is a so-called "book allowance", a monthly payment of up to 300 €.

Organisations that award scholarships are often described as foundations for the promotion of young talents. The following foundations offer programmes, among other things, especially for refugees. Please refer to the respective websites for application guidelines and requirements:

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

🌐 [Böckler-Aktion Bildung by the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung](#)

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

🌐 [Villigst - Our Scholarships for refugees](#)

🌐 [Brot für die Welt - Flüchtlingsstipendienprogramm \(Refugee Scholarship Program\)](#)

One exception is, for example, the guarantee fund by the Otto Benecke Stiftung. The programme is aimed at migrants who are new in the country and who would like to get the higher education entrance qualification, prepare to go to university and start their academic career. There is also the "Deutschland-Stipendium" that provides € 300 monthly as financial support. The Deutschland-Stipendium is awarded through the respective universities:

🌐 [University guarantee fund from Otto Benecke Stiftung in Bonn](#)

🌐 [Deutschlandstipendium: Become a scholarship holder](#)

## **Recognition of credentials**

### **Recognition of foreign educational qualifications**

**Certificates** are very important in Germany for school, studies or jobs. Certificates are used to demonstrate what people have learned and accomplished. Certificates are the decisive prerequisite for getting a job or being admitted to a school or university. So if you have already acquired certificates at school, in training or in a course of study abroad, you should make an effort to have these certificates **recognised** in Germany. This means that your credentials will be used to check what you are qualified for in Germany. Your skills are “translated”, so to speak. Maybe you no longer have your certificates with you. In this case, you can try to have your professional experience and professional abilities recognised by passing some tests.

### **Specialist counselling centre for the recognition of professional qualifications:**

#### **IQ Network Brandenburg**

Malwina Szmigiel

📍 [Genossenschaftsstraße 19, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

☎ [0355/7835146](#)

☎ [0160/99719873](#)

@ [szmigiel@hwk-cottbus.de](mailto:szmigiel@hwk-cottbus.de)

🌐 [IQ Network Brandenburg](#)

### **Specialist counselling centre for the recognition of school certificates/ school-leaving qualifications:**

Cottbus State Education Authority

📍 [Bleichenstraße 1, 03046 Cottbus](#)

@ [Zeugnisanerkennung.CB@schulaemter.brandenburg.de](mailto:Zeugnisanerkennung.CB@schulaemter.brandenburg.de)

🌐 [Recognition of foreign school-leaving qualifications Certificate Recognition Office for the State of Brandenburg](#)

💡 If you want to study or work as a scientist/ scholar, please contact a university to get your diploma recognised.

### **Official authentication of certificates/credentials**

An official legalisation or verification is a confirmation of the authenticity of a document. You need this, for example, to enrol at a university. For this purpose, all photocopies of the certificates must be **translated** and **officially certified**.

Official certifications can be carried out in the respective [offices](#).

### **EEasy Integreat**

The EEasy Integreat project helps with all your work-related questions.  
Do you need support?

Please contact us:

#### **Herzberg:**

GVFB e.V.

👤 Anna Korneluk-Essa  
☎ +49 (0) 1749768263  
✉ [a.essa@gvfb-ev.de](mailto:a.essa@gvfb-ev.de)

📍 [Radelandweg 2, 04916 Herzberg](#)

tuesdays and thursdays: 09 am– 2 pm

### **Finsterwalde:**

Diakonisches Werk Elbe-Elster e.V.

👤 Marco Wülknitz  
☎ +49 (0) 17646659075  
☎ +49 (0) 353130015  
✉ [m.wuelkntz.dwee@gmail.com](mailto:m.wuelkntz.dwee@gmail.com)

📍 [Friedensstraße 23, 03238 Finsterwalde](#)

mondays and wednesdays: 9 – 12 am and 1 – 3 pm

### **Doberlug-Kirchhain:**

Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V.

👤 Hannes Krenz-Köhlert  
☎ +49 (0) 1736160271  
✉ [hannes.krenz-koehlert@johanniter.de](mailto:hannes.krenz-koehlert@johanniter.de)

📍 [Torgauer Straße 89M \(Gemeinschaftsunterkunft\), 03253 Doberlug-Kirchhain](#)

tuesdays and thursdays: 10 – 12 am

### **Elsterwerda:**

Freiraum e.V.

👤 Lina Hajeer  
☎ +49 (0) 15221673168

✉ [lina.hajeer1973@gmail.com](mailto:lina.hajeer1973@gmail.com)

📍 [Lange Straße 12c, 04910 Elsterwerda](#)

mondays - fridays: 10 am – 6 pm

## **Children, young people and family**

### **Information**

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/ physically abuse children. Children must be educated 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).



## Pregnancy and childbirth

### Pregnancy and birth

Pregnant women in Germany enjoy special protection and are entitled to advice, special medical care and support with obtaining baby products. If you are pregnant, the first step is to visit a gynaecologist (women's doctor). The gynaecologist will carry out a medical check-up. You will then receive a maternity card (expectant mother's record of prenatal and natal care). The maternity card is a document with important information about your pregnancy, your health and your child's health. Always have your maternity card with you in case of emergencies.

### Midwife

Midwives are there to support women and their families from the beginning of pregnancy up until the end of breastfeeding. Midwives provide advice during pregnancy, can help during childbirth, can introduce women on how to breastfeed after giving birth and also ensure the physical and mental recovery of the woman. Every woman is able to get the help of a midwife. Most services are paid for by the health insurance provider.


 [Midwives Association Website](#)


### Childbirth and post-natal care

Your gynaecologist will refer you to a maternity hospital. After delivery, ask for a midwife for post-natal care. You will receive a birth confirmation certificate issued by the clinic.

### Registering the birth at the Registry Office


Newborn babies must be registered the Registry Office (Standesamt). The clinic reports the birth to the Registry Office. There, together with your ID, the birth confirmation certificate from the clinic and, if available, your marriage certificate, you will receive an extract from the birth register and, if possible, the birth certificate for your child.

 Please present only original documents. For documents in a foreign language, an officially certified German translation is required.

 Give a copy of the birth certificate/register extract to the Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) and the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt)/ Jobcenter so that your child can be registered.

### Paediatrician

There are ten screening tests (U1-U9 and J1). Until the age of 6, children are regularly examined and supported in their 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.

 Proof of complete screening examinations may be requested when registering for a day care centre.

## Childcare

### Day-care (Kita)

Kita is a German word for a children's day-care centre. Before your child starts school and between the ages of 1 and 12 years old, they can attend a day-care centre. Your child will be supervised by kindergarten teachers and will learn a lot of important things. Some schools also accept children under the age of one.

In many cases, the fees for the day care centre or day care are paid by the city or district. Please submit an application for that.

💡 Day-care (Kita) is a place for your child to learn German and discover new things. There, your child also makes contact with other children while learning to make friends and discovering German culture. Take advantage of this opportunity; it is important for your child's future. Attending a Kita is also good preparation for school.

💡 Unfortunately, there are not always enough places in the immediate vicinity of your flat or accommodation. To find a place, ask your contact at [Migrationssozialarbeit](#).

### “Krippe”

A Krippe is a day-care centre for children between the ages of 1 and 3. There, specially trained staff will encourage the children's development in small groups. It is particularly important for these employees to be attentive and caring.

### Kindergarten

A kindergarten is a day-care centre for children over the age of 3 before they reach school age. The kindergarten is a place for kids to play with others, paint, do crafts and learn. During the final year of kindergarten, children regularly attend pre-school lessons preparing them for their transition to primary school. There are both private and public kindergartens. Whether or not you need to pay for kindergarten depends on the specific kindergarten and your place of residence.

### Request a day care place

The contact person depends on the institute: in case of an independent institute, it is advisable to seek direct contact with the management of the day care centre of your choice. Municipal day care centres can also be contacted directly, but often there is also a central contact person at the municipality who has bundled information on all municipal day care centres available. The management of the day care centres has an overview of the current occupancy rate and can provide information on the pedagogical concept and the equipment of the facility. In addition, a viewing appointment can be arranged if necessary. Initial information on the daycare centres, capacities and age structure is often already available on the municipalities' websites.

In Doberlug-Kirchhain, Finsterwalde, Plessa, Röderland, Amt Kleine Elster and Sonnewalde, the allocation and registration is carried out directly by the [city/office](#).

### Schoolchildren up to 12 years

There are also after-school supervision options for school students between the ages of 6 and 12. There are many different care models, such as Hort/ after-school care. Here, the children are supported in completing their homework. In addition, leisure activities are not neglected.

## School for children aged 6 to 18

In Germany, attending school is compulsory by law. This period of school attendance totals twelve years; nine of those are “full-time compulsory education” (general compulsory education) and three are “part-time compulsory education” (compulsory vocational education). “Part-time compulsory education” does not apply if the person attends school full-time during that period. If not followed by [vocational training](#) or attendance at a continuing school, the period of full-time compulsory education totals ten years (including a “Berufsgrundbildungsjahr” – a year of basic vocational training). Compulsory education ends when your child reaches the age of 18 years, if there is no apprenticeship relationship. The parents or guardians have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Going to state and municipal schools is free of cost.

In Germany, there are different types of schools. The type of school your child should attend depends on many factors, including the child’s age and performance at school.

💡 The school often gives children written information to take home with them and give to their parents. It is important that you read this information.

💡 Your social worker will assist you with school registration.

## Family benefits

### Parental allowance (Elterngeld)

Parental allowance (Elterngeld) compensates limitations to parents’ income that result from working less or not at all after the birth of their child. Even parents who are separated and do not live together can receive parental allowance. The amount of parental allowance depends on the respective parent’s income before accessing the allowance. You can receive parental allowance if you have a specific kind of residence permit in Germany: a “Niederlassungserlaubnis” or an “Aufenthaltserlaubnis”. You can find more detailed information in German, English, Turkish and Russian [here](#).

### Child benefit (Kindergeld)

All parents who are authorised to settle or reside in Germany are entitled to child benefit. Child benefit is paid for each child from birth until at least the age of 18. You must apply for child benefit yourself at the Federal Employment Agency.

🌐 [Here you will find the most important forms and applications in several languages.](#)

🌐 [For further information, please visit the homepage of the Family Benefits Office.](#)

### Child supplement

If you receive child benefit and have a low income, you can receive child supplement. Please

inform yourself [here](#) about the most important aspects of this benefit.

💡 If you would like to know in advance whether you are entitled to the child supplement, you are welcome to try out our [KiZ-Lotsen](#).

## Unaccompanied Minor Refugees

Refugees under the age of 18 who **entered Germany completely unaccompanied** are called "**unbegleitete minderjährige Ausländer**" = **umA** (unaccompanied foreign minors). These young people are registered with the Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt). The Youth Welfare Office talks to the young people and determines their age. The age determination decides whether the Youth Welfare Office will take care of the minor (younger than 18 years) and place him or her in a shelter especially for young people ("Inobhutnahme"). If the Jugendamt says that the person is "full age" (18 years or older), the person receives a refusal notice and is treated as an adult. The Youth Welfare Office will bring an interpreter to the appointment.

💡 If you are not yet 18 years old on your proof of arrival, but the Youth Welfare Office gives you a rejection notice, the Youth Welfare Office must enter a new date of birth on the decision. Only then can you have your documents changed by the Immigration Authority (Ausländerbehörde) and the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt).

Some minors (persons under the age of 18) enter the country without their parents, but **with relatives** (for example with an uncle or aunt, cousins or older siblings). Your social worker will report this to the Youth Welfare Office after your arrival. The Youth Welfare Office talks to the minor and the adult relatives and checks whether the minors can stay there. In addition, the Youth Welfare Office decides whether a guardian is to be appointed. The Youth Welfare Office itself brings an interpreter to the interview.

💡 Adult relatives can also go to the Family Court to apply to be the child's official guardian. The relative(s) with the guardianship take full responsibility for the minor(s) in place of the parents.

## elina - app for (expectant) parents

The parent information app "elina" answers many questions about pregnancy, birth and family. The elina app tells you where you can get support in Elbe-Elster. There are also offers for small children and their parents.

You can download the app for free.

🌐 [Google Play Store](#)

🌐 [App Store](#)



## Health

### Information

In Germany you are entitled to basic medical care for acute illnesses and pain. You are also entitled to any officially recommended vaccination and preventive medical checkup. In addition, you will receive free medical services which are essential to the safeguarding of health. Seek medical advice 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 have any other medicines or the medicine leaflet, bring them to the doctor's appointment. If you have already been to the doctor or hospital because of the illness, please bring the results or findings with you.

💡 With us, you get an electronic health card that you have to take with you to every doctor's visit.

### Visiting a doctor

#### Family doctors and specialist doctors

If you are ill, see your family doctor. You can choose your own doctor. The opening hours are decided by the doctors themselves. So you need to make an appointment if you need to see a family doctor.

Your family doctor will conduct important physical examinations and is your first point of contact when you are ill. They also decide what medication you need and whether you need to see a specialist.

If necessary, your family doctor will refer you to a specialist who can carry out specific tests.

**If the doctor's practice is closed, the medical on-call service will help you (telephone [116117](tel:116117)).**

## Paediatricians

Children are usually examined by paediatricians. Regular check-ups and vaccinations by the paediatrician are important for the health of every child. The required preventative check-ups are called "U check-ups" and always take place at a certain time and date; they are free of charge. Please ask a paediatrician for information about the legally regulated and required U check-ups.

## Dentists

If you have toothache, you should go to the dentist.

## Gynaecologists (women's doctor)

It is important for women to be regularly examined by a gynaecologist. This helps detect illnesses early enough to treat them. This is called screening. You can also discuss contraception there.

💡 If you need help finding a suitable doctor, ask your counsellor at [Migrationssozialarbeit](#) or your contact person at your accommodation.

🐾 If an operation is necessary and it is **not** an emergency, authorisation is granted by the health insurance. Your doctor will provide you with a medical certificate. Only medically necessary interventions can be paid.

## Medication and pharmacies/chemists

If you need medicine, you will get a prescription from your doctor. You can get your medication with this prescription at any pharmacy. Even with a prescription, not all medication is free. Some medication, such as antibiotics, require a prescription. Which means you cannot buy them without a prescription.

Pharmacies are usually open from Monday to Saturday. The opening times vary according to each pharmacy. If you need medication urgently at night or on weekends, you will find a sign at every pharmacy with the name and address of the available emergency service. You can also find this information on the Internet.

Search for emergency pharmacies ("Apotheken-Notdiensten")

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

🐾 As an asylum seeker you can get lots of medication free of charge. Ask your doctor about it. 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)

💡 Emergency numbers always work on mobile phones, even with pre-paid cards without credit/money!

💡 If you have pain but it is not an acute emergency, please call the emergency medical service: 📞 [116117](tel:116117)

## Important information for an emergency call

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

Stay calm. Speak slowly and clearly so that people understand you better. Do not end the conversation. The emergency call centre / the police will end the call when all important information has been transmitted.

💡 Do not forget your arrival certificate/ID when you go to the hospital! Then bring your insurance card too.

## Health Insurance

In Germany, insurance is compulsory. That means that as soon as you have a residence permit (Aufenthaltstitel), you must register with a regular health insurance company. From the health insurer, you will get a health insurance card. With this card, you have the right to the same health services as all residents in Germany.


In the case of an acute illness, you will also receive basic care in many foreign physician' practices and hospitals (information on this can be obtained from your health insurance company).

You can choose a general practitioner (family doctor) of your choice. If you need treatment from a specialist, you will receive a referral from your general practitioner.


💡 Remember to take your insurance card with you if you are being treated by doctors, in hospitals or by recognised therapists.

## Insurance card

A health insurance card from an insurance provider allows you to receive medical treatment throughout Germany. On the rear side of card is also the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). With this, you are well protected in all EU countries as well as many other European countries and even some non-European states.

 For a trip abroad outside of the EU, we recommend travel health insurance as a supplement, as you will get even more services.

This [website](#) provides information in German and English on the basic aspects of the German healthcare system.

You can find all relevant information about health insurance in 40 languages  [here](#). It will have an explanation for different target groups in which it will explain who is covered by statutory and private health insurance, what needs to be considered and more.

### **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.

### **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 EPR if it is available in digital form. This means, for example, that findings or diagnoses that the doctor writes down are transferred to the EPR.
- 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 assistance services**

#### **Helpline for women experiencing violence/ physical abuse**

☎ [0800/0116016](tel:0800/0116016)

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

The "Gewalt gegen Frauen" (Violence against women) helpline provides counselling for affected women everywhere in Germany. It provides information and, if needed, can put you in contact with suitable support organisations in your area. The (female) counsellors on this helpline provide advice for all forms of violence against women. Online counselling is also available on the website. All conversations are confidential and can be anonymous if you wish. You will not be asked to provide any personal information and any information you share will not be recorded. This applies to both the telephone helpline and the website. Counselling is available in many languages with the help of interpreters. If you have a hearing impairment, you can request an interpreter (free of cost) through the website. The conversation with the help line staff is translated into German sign language or written language.

## **Der Familienratgeber (The Family Counsellor)**

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

The Familienratgeber (family counsellor) website of Aktion Mensch offers information and addresses for people with disabilities and their families. People with disabilities and their families can find important information about living with disabilities in simple and easy German on the website: From school, to work, leisure, accessibility, rights, housing, counselling, health and long-term care insurance and much more.

## **Help and support in difficult situations**

Do you need support and help? You have stress? You sleep badly? Are you homesick? You are afraid? Are you sad? You can't concentrate? You have experienced bad things? Are you in pain? You often get angry? Do you feel discriminated? Do you have many questions about life in Germany?

The Psychosocial Centre offers:

- Psychosocial counselling (also online supported)
- Psychological counselling and diagnostics
- Psychological crisis intervention
- Low-threshold psychoeducational groups
- Preparation of psychological statements
- If necessary, referral to psychotherapeutic treatment services

Please make an appointment for Finsterwalde, Herzberg or Elsterwerda:

 [0176/56619150](tel:017656619150)

[@psz-ee@kommmit.eu](mailto:@psz-ee@kommmit.eu)

## **Daily Life**

### **Information**

Are you new to Germany? Moving to a foreign country involves many questions and a lot of work. Everyday life (or some German ways of life) must seem unfamiliar to many refugees and immigrants. To make it a little easier for you to navigate through everyday life, here are a few practical tips.

### **Mobility**

All places in your new city/town and the surrounding areas can be easily reached by public transport. A healthy, inexpensive and environmentally friendly alternative to get from A to B is a bicycle.

## Public transport

To get where you want in Elbe-Elster, public transport is available. Information on train and bus timetables can be found here:

💡 [VBB Fahrinfo](#).

💡 Travelling without a ticket is an offence! A valid ticket is required for every trip. Otherwise you will pay a penalty.

💡 If you receive benefits from the Social Welfare Office or the Jobcenter, you can get a [Mobiticket](#) there. With the Mobiticket you get a discount on bus and train travel.

## Bicycles

If you know you will be living in a city for a long time, it is worth buying a bike. This is cheaper than travelling with public transport.

💡 Some important traffic rules for cyclists:

- Always drive on the right-hand side of the road
- Do not ride next to each other, but one behind the other
- If there is a bicycle lane, you must ride on it (always on the right side of the road in the direction of travel).
- Only children up to the age of 11 are allowed to cycle along the walkways
- Using a mobile phone on a bicycle is prohibited.

💡 Purchase and repairs: When purchasing, make sure that your bicycle 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
- Front and rear reflectors
- Reflectors in the spokes (2 per wheel)
- Reflectors on the pedals
- Bell
- Two independent brakes

## Personal liability insurance

If you do not intentionally cause damage to a person in Germany, you must pay compensation according to the law. This applies to personal injury, material damage and personal property damage. For example, if you cause a traffic accident or if your child breaks a window with a ball.

In Germany, you can take out a personal liability insurance policy that pays for these damages for you and your family/children. You can decide yourself whether you want to take out this insurance. But we strongly recommend it.

## Broadcast licence fees

Germany has independent radio, television and online services from ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. They report in a way that is free from economic and political influences. For this, all people pay money together. This is called “broadcasting fees”.

According to the law: In Germany, a broadcast licence fee must be paid for each apartment. However, only one person in each home has to pay the broadcast licence fee. It costs €17.50 per month and must be paid to the Fee Services department (Beitragsservice) of ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. See the following [information sheet](#) for more information. It is available in [simple language](#) here. Or visit the [broadcast licence fee website](#). This website is available in multiple languages.

Some people can be exempted from this payment. For example, if you receive benefits from the Social Welfare Office, the Jobcenter or other social benefits. An application must be submitted for exemption from the broadcast licence fee.

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

## Current Account (Girokonto)

A checking account (Girokonto) is a bank account for people who want to make payments via a bank. You can access the money in your current account at any time. Make sure you have enough money in your account for all withdrawals and payments.

A current account allows you to:

- Transfer money
- Receive cashless payments (payments from Social Welfare Office, Jobcenter are often cashless, meaning they are transferred directly to a personal checking account (Girokonto))
- Set up standing orders
- Use direct debit services
- Cash a cheque, make cashless payments with an EC/Maestro card
- withdraw money at the bank counter or an ATM
- print your bank statements

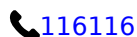
## Opening an account

Make an appointment to open the account. Please bring one of your identity documents with you: Proof of arrival, permission to reside, residence permit, identity card. If no current address is recorded on the identity document, please provide a registration certificate or similar 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 your PIN code. You will need the PIN code for cashless payments and to withdraw money from ATMs. **Make sure you keep your card and your PIN code separate!**
- If you wish to withdraw cash, it is best to use the ATM of the bank where you have your account. Withdrawals are then free of charge. If the PIN code is entered incorrectly three times at the ATM, the EC card is taken and blocked. If this happens, you must contact your

bank.

- If you lose your EC card or it is stolen, have it blocked immediately. Tell them your bank code and your account number. Then ask your bank for a new EC card.



Around the clock.

## Contracts and mobile phones

### Contracts

**Very important:** Never sign something that you have not understood or been able to read. Otherwise, you may sign a contract or agreement that requires you to pay something. It is sometimes very difficult to undo this. Always check and compare several offers and decide unhurriedly. Do not let anyone push you for a signature.

### Mobile phones

In Germany, there are two different types of mobile phone contracts: **pre-paid contract** and **fixed-term contract**. The prepaid contract does not have a fixed term. The fixed-term contract has a minimum contract period. This contract is automatically renewed if you do not cancel. If you do not want the contract to be automatically renewed, you must notice in writing. Pay attention to the notice period.

#### 10 important questions for the conclusion of a contract:

- What is the basic fee? Does the fee increase after a certain period?
- Is there a minimum monthly fee?
- How long is the contract period (e.g. 12 or 24 months)?
- If I don't terminate the contract, will it be renewed automatically?
- When do I have to cancel if I do not want to extend the contract?
- How much are the fees for setting up, changing or deactivating?
- What is the charging period? Do you have to pay each and every started minute?
- How much does a minute cost (different/own network)?
- What are the costs for buying a mobile phone with and without a contract?
- How much does Internet access cost?
- How much do phone calls abroad cost?

Ask people you know for help in choosing and concluding a good contract.

### Taxes and tax returns

Your income in Germany will be taxed. If you have an employer (i.e. are "angestellt"), you will receive the net sum of your salary from your employer – in other words, your taxes have already been deducted. If you are self-employed, you need to calculate your taxes yourself.

### Tax ID number

The tax ID is a 11-digit number and is used for income tax. The workplace/ your employer needs this number. If you do not have this number in your records, you can ask for it in person at the [registration office](#) or in writing at the Federal Tax Office.

💡 If you need help with your tax return, it is best to contact your local income tax association. If you have any further questions, the Tax Office (Finanzamt) can also help.

## Religion

Freedom of religion applies in Germany. It is guaranteed by the Basic Law. You can practise your faith as you want, as long as you do not violate the Basic Law. It is also prohibited to discriminate against people on the basis of their religion, for example when looking for a job. Religious freedom also includes accepting the faith of others. Germany does not have a state church. State and religion are separate.

This means, for example, that:

- All people are allowed to freely choose and practice their own religions and beliefs
- Everyone also has the freedom not to be religious - those who do not believe in God are allowed to say so publicly
- People of different religions and faiths may get married
- Marriage only counts as legally binding if it is entered into at the Registry Office (Standesamt). Marriages entered into exclusively within the framework of a religion are not legally binding in Germany.
- Religious laws do not govern the legal system in Germany

## Leisure and Sports

Having fun when exercising is one thing. But sport offers you another benefit, too: It is a great and proven way to settle into a new environment and make contact with new people. The rules of sport know no boundaries in terms of culture and countries and are usually understood even without a common language. Sport offers a good, informal possibility to make contact with locals and new friends.

## Associations in the Elbe-Elster district:

The website of the Kreissportbund Elbe-Elster e.V. offers a comprehensive overview of the sports clubs in the Elbe-Elster district:

 [Kreissportbund Elbe-Elster e.V. - Sports clubs \(ksb-ee.de\)](https://ksb-ee.de)

With the help of the link, sports clubs in the area can be found.

## Swimming pools in the district:

The Elbe-Elster district offers a large number of outdoor and indoor public pools.

Outdoor public pools:

- [Crinitz forest bath](#)

- [Finsterwalde open-air swimming pool](#)
- [Open-air swimming pool Herzberg](#)
- [Merzdorf open-air swimming pool](#)
- [Outdoor pool Tröbitz](#)

Indoor public pools:

- [Lausitztherme Wonnemar Bad Liebenwerda](#)
- [Indoor swimming pool fiwave Finsterwalde](#)
- [Indoor swimming pool Doberlug-Kirchhain](#)

## **Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, queer and intersex\* (LGBTQI\*) people**

People of different religions, different genders, different places of origin and different political views all live together peacefully in Germany and have the same rights. This also applies to sexual orientation and gender identity. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender\*, queer and intersex\* (LGBTQI\*) people have the same rights as anyone else in Germany.

For official documentation, Germany has recently added a third option, “divers”, to the traditional “female” and “male”. In Germany, transgender individuals can have their name and gender legally changed. Women are allowed to fall in love with and marry other women in Germany; the same for men.

🌈 Many LGBTQI+ people have fled their countries of origin due to discrimination and came to Germany. If you are a refugee who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender\*, queer or intersex\*, you can find support, community and social contact and information from the many LGBTQI\* organisations in Germany. The “Queer Refugees Deutschland” project from LSVD can provide contact details and other information:

Lesben- und Schwulenverband in Deutschland (LSVD) (Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany)  
“Queer Refugees Deutschland” project

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

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

## **Active against racism!**

Do you feel like you are being treated unfairly due to your skin color, background, and religion?  
Facing trouble finding work or housing in this context?  
Are your children experiencing disadvantages at school?  
Being mistreated, insulted, threatened, and marginalized?

Then come to us!

We listen, provide advice, and support you.

🌐 [AntiRaktiv \(damost.de\)](http://AntiRaktiv.damost.de)

There are multilingual information.

[Englisch Beratungsflyer Brandenburg Antiraktiv digital-1.pdf](#)

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[Mehrsprchflyer\\_Ar,De,En,Fa,Fr,Vi.pdf](#)