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

January 2021

You can find more information about Voluntary Social Services online.
The web address is:
http://www.freiwilligendienste-kultur-bildung.de
The web-site is written in German,
But:
Parts of the web-site are in easy-to-read German.
Other parts of the web-site have been translated into:

- Arabic
- English
- French
- Polish
- Russian
- Spanish
- Turkish
This text contains difficult words.

Difficult words are coloured blue.

The words are explained on page 22
To understand this text you need to know that in Germany, people who are not from the European Union are called third country nationals.

In this text you will find:

**Table of contents**

Information: How to find a Voluntary Social Service .............................................. 4

Information for people from Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea, USA.................................................................................................................. 7

This is how you apply for a residence permit: .......................................................... 8

Information for people from other countries .......................................................... 11

This is how you apply for a visa: ........................................................................... 13

Difficulties you may have if you are not an EU citizen ........................................... 16

Difficulty: Not enough money .............................................................................. 16

Difficulty: Country of origin .................................................................................. 17

Difficulty: The German language .......................................................................... 18

Information for residents of the European Union ................................................. 19

Information for people seeking asylum ............................................................... 21

Explanations of the difficult, blue words ............................................................... 22
INFORMATION: HOW TO FIND A VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE

If you want to do a Voluntary Social Service in Germany
the first thing you need
is an acceptance from a Voluntary Social Service place of assignment (Einsatz-Stelle)
saying you can do your Voluntary Social Service there.
And a contract with that place of assignment.

You have to speak German at Level A1.
This means you can say and understand the most important things in German.

For example:
- Your name
- Your age
- Where you are from

This is important for your application
and for working at the place of assignment.

Only a few places of assignment have a place to live for volunteers.
You have to find a place to live by yourself.
Or you can ask the Voluntary Social Service agency for help.

In the months January to May:
This is when most places of assignment are looking for volunteers.
In the months August to October:
This is when the Voluntary Social Service begins in most places of assignment.

Here you can see which places of assignment exist in Germany and where in Germany they are located.
You can apply online.
There is a film that explains how to apply. The film is in German.

When you apply you have to answer questions about your motivation. That is the reason why you want to do a voluntary social service. Think carefully about what you reply. The place of assignment will read your answers.

After your application there is a selection process. This means: the places of assignment choose who can do a Voluntary Social Service there. Because they can’t take everyone.

That is why there are meetings to get to know you. The place of assignment organises the meetings. The meetings happen in Germany. Online video meetings are possible. You can ask the place of assignment for a video meeting.
You find out if you have been accepted for a Voluntary Social Service after the meeting.

You receive an acceptance:
This means you can do a Voluntary Social Service at this place of assignment.
You receive a contract.
Please keep reading further down.

Or

You receive a rejection:
This means you can’t do a Voluntary Social Service at this place of assignment.

But you can do more than one meeting.
If you receive a rejection from one place of assignment
ask for other places of assignment that are still looking for a volunteer.
INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE FROM AUSTRALIA, ISRAEL, JAPAN, CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH KOREA, USA

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

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

You do not need a visa.
You can come to Germany whenever you like, but for a Voluntary Social Service you need a special permit. The permit allows you to live and work in Germany. The permit has a special name.
In English, it is called residence permit.
In German it is called Aufenthalts-Erlaubnis zum Zwecke der Erwerbs-Tätigkeit.
The short form is Aufenthalts-Erlaubnis.
You can get the permit at the Ausländer-Behörde.
The Ausländer-Behörde is a registration office for people who are not German.
In English, it is called the foreigners’ authority.
Every town in Germany has a foreigners’ authority, or another office that does the same job.
Once you are in Germany, you have three months to apply for the permit.
You can not start with your Voluntary Social Service until you have a residence permit.

THIS IS HOW YOU APPLY FOR A RESIDENCE PERMIT:

To get your residence permit, you need a lot of documents.

You need to give all of the documents to someone who works at the foreigners’ authority.

You need these documents:

1. You need a valid passport
2. You need to write a CV.
   A CV is a document that tells people where you went to school and where you have worked.
3. You need to sign this document
   https://india.diplo.de/blob/1862510/88808a71d4ff01c9c428a2329c3381a3/declaration-true-information-data.pdf
   When you click on the link you will find a document.
   It says that you have read a specific part of the residence act.
   This part of the residence act is called Section 54, 2, Nr.8 of the residence act.
   or Paragraf 54, Absatz 2, Nr.8 des Aufenthalts-Gesetz in German.
   When you sign the document you promise that you are telling the truth and that all the information about you on the other documents is correct.
4. You have to write a text.

The text is called a letter of motivation.

In German it is called Motivations-Schreiben mit Angaben zu beruflichen Perspektiven nach dem Freiwilligen-Dienst.

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

You need to write about what you want to do when your Voluntary Social Service is complete. This could be a job, an apprenticeship, going to university, or something different.

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

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

The contract is signed by:

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

This contract is also called an agreement, or in German Vereinbarung über den Freiwilligen-Dienst.

You need a signed copy of this agreement to apply for a residence permit.
You need to write down how much money you will have each month to pay your rent and to live on.

The money for rent and to live on is called a **basic provision** or **Grund-Sicherung** in German.

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

How much you get for your voluntary social service is written in your **agreement**.

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

In German this is called **Nachweise zur Lebens-Unterhalts-Sicherung**.

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

The people at the **foreigners’ authority** might ask you why you want to do a Voluntary Social Service in Germany and if you will go back to your home country after finishing the Voluntary Social Service.

You might have to go back to the **foreigners’ authority** after giving them your documents to answer these questions.
INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

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

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

You need permission to come to Germany.

This permission is called a visa.

You have to apply for a visa.

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

There are two places where you can apply for a visa.

- One of them is the German embassy
- The other is the German consulate

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

You can find out where they are on the internet.
You need a special visa for a Voluntary Social Service. You cannot use a visa you already have for studying or being an au pair in Germany.

If you are already in Germany you need to tell the people at the foreigner’s authority that you now want to do a Voluntary Social Service. If the immigration office does not extend your visa you need to go to your home country and apply for a new visa there.
THIS IS HOW YOU APPLY FOR A VISA:

To get a visa you need a lot of documents.
You need to give all of these documents to someone who works at the German embassy or the German consulate.

6. You need a valid passport
7. You need to write a CV.
   A CV is a document that tells people where you went to school and where you have worked.
8. You need to sign this document
    https://india.diplo.de/blob/1862510/88808a71d4ff01c9c428a2329c3381a3/declaration-true-information-data.pdf
    When you click on the link you will find a document.
    It says that you have read a specific part of the residence act.
    This part of the residence act is called Section 54, 2, Nr.8 of the residence act.
    or Paragraf 54, Absatz 2, Nr.8 des Aufenthalts-Gesetz in German.
    When you sign the document you promise that you are telling the truth
    and that all the information about you on the other documents is correct.
9. You have to write a text.
    The text is called a letter of motivation.
    In German it is called Motivations-Schreiben mit Angaben zu beruflichen Perspektiven nach dem Freiwilligen-Dienst.
You need to write about why you want to do a Voluntary Social Service.

You need to write about
what you want to do when your Voluntary Social Service is complete. This could be a job, an apprenticeship, going to university, or something different.

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

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

The contract is signed by:

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

This contract is also called an agreement,
or in German Vereinbarung über den Freiwilligen-Dienst.

You need a signed copy of this agreement to apply for a residence permit.

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

The money for rent and to live on is called a basic provision or Grund-Sicherung in German.
Some of this money will come from your voluntary social service. How much you get for your voluntary social service is written in your agreement. You need to write down how much additional money you will have. And you need to prove, that everything you write down is true. In German this is called Nachweise zur Lebens-Unterhalts-Sicherung.

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

The people at the German embassy or the German consulate might ask you why you want to do a Voluntary Social Service in Germany and if you will go back to your home country after finishing the Voluntary Social Service. You might have to go back to the German embassy or the German consulate after giving them your documents to answer these questions.
DIFFICULTIES YOU MAY HAVE IF YOU ARE NOT AN EU CITIZEN

Sometimes third country nationals have difficulties getting a visa or residence permit.

DIFFICULTY: NOT ENOUGH MONEY

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

If you want a visa or residence permit

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

The money for rent and living is called a basic provision or Grund-Sicherung in German.

If you apply for a visa or residence permit you need to have this basic provision. This is important!
Otherwise you are not allowed to come to Germany.

The agreement for your Voluntary Social Service needs to say:

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

It is helpful if people working for the Voluntary Social Service agency write these numbers down for the people working for the foreigners’ authority.
This helps you get a visa or residence permit.
The people working for the Voluntary Social Service agency know this and can help you.

If the money you get for your voluntary social service is not enough
You need to have the rest of the money.
You need to prove that you have it.
Usually the money needs to be deposited on a blocked account.

DIFFICULTY: COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Country of Origin is the country you are from.
If you are from a country in Africa, Asia or South America it can be especially difficult to get a visa.

The people working for the Voluntary Social Service agency know this.
They can help you.
You can write an email to people working for the Voluntary Social Service agency.
The e-mail address is: info@freiwilligendienste-kultur-bildung.de
DIFFICULTY: THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

To get a visa or residence permit you need to say and understand the most important things in German. For example you need to know how to say:

- Your name
- Your age
- Where you are from

Another way of saying this is: you speak German at Level A1.

If you cannot speak German at Level A1
people working for the Voluntary Social Service agency and
people working for the place of assignment
need to write down that you can still come to Germany.
This is important so you can get a visa or residence permit.

When you are in Germany you can do a language course.
The Voluntary Social Service agency can pay for some of the language course.
INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The following section contains important information for you if you are from a country in the European Union. This means you have a passport from one of these countries:

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

You do not need a visa and you do not need a residence permit to come to Germany.

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

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

You also need health insurance.

This is important!

If you do not have enough money to live in Germany

You can get money from the German government.

This money is called social welfare benefits.
In German it is called: Sozial-Leistungen.

To get social welfare benefits you need to live in Germany.
That is why Volunteers coming to Germany need to register in Germany.

To do this you go to the registration office.
You tell the people at the registration office your name
and your address in Germany.
There is a registration office in every German town.
You can ask your landlord
or someone at your Voluntary Social Service place of assignment
where the registration office in your town is.

You can get social welfare benefits three months after you have registered.
That is why you should register in Germany as soon as possible.

Everybody has to register.
Even if you do not need social welfare benefits
you have to register.
INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

Some people come to Germany because there is a war going on in their home country or because they are in danger. These people come to Germany for protection. This is called seeking asylum.

If you are in Germany and seeking asylum you can do a Voluntary Social Service. But you have to be in Germany for over three months. After three months in Germany you can get a permit to do a Voluntary Social Service. This permit is called work permit. In German it is called Beschäftigungs-Erlaubnis. You can get this permit, but you do not have a right to it.

You get a work permit at the foreigners’ authority. Ask somebody working for the Voluntary Social Service agency. They can help you.
EXPLANATIONS OF THE DIFFICULT, BLUE WORDS

This text contains difficult words.
Difficult words are coloured blue.
The blue words are explained here.

• Basic provision
This is a certain amount of money.
You need to have this amount of money each month
To live on and pay for things like food and clothes
To pay your rent
In German it is called Grund-Sicherung.

• Blocked account
This is a type of bank account
with restrictions.
That means:
You cannot use all the money all of the time.
In German it is called Sperrkonto.
• European Union

The European Union is a group of countries in Europe.

These countries are part of the European Union:

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

• Foreigners’ authority

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

In German it is called Ausländer-Behörde.

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

• German consulate

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

The office is in your home country.

• German embassy

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

The office is in your home country.
• Letter of motivation
This is a text you have to write.
You write down
Why you want to do a voluntary social service
What you want to do after your voluntary social service is over
In German it is called Motivations-Schreiben mit Angaben zu beruflichen Perspektiven nach dem Freiwilligen-Dienst
or just Motivations-Schreiben.

• Level A1
When you are a beginner, learning a language level A1 means you can say and understand simple sentences.
For Example you need to know how to say:
• Your name
• Your age
• Where you are from

• Residence act
The residence act has all the rules about what you need to do to live and work in Germany

• Residence permit
A residence permit is a document to say that you are allowed to come to Germany
and that you can do your voluntary social service in Germany.
In German it is called
Aufenthalts-Erlaubnis zum Zwecke der Erwerbs-Tätigkeit
or just Aufenthalts-Erlaubnis.

- Section 54, 2, Nr.8 of the residence act
This is a specific section of the residence act.
You have to sign a document to say you have read it
to promise you are telling the truth
about who you are and where you are from.
In German it is called Paragraf 54, Absatz 2, Nr. 8 des Aufenthalts-Gesetz.

- Seeking asylum
Some people come to Germany
because there is a war going on in their home country
or because they are in danger.
These people come to Germany for protection.
This is called seeking asylum.

- Signed agreement
This is the contract you sign for your voluntary social service.
In German it is called
unterschriebene Vereinbarung über den Freiwilligen-Dienst
or just Vereinbarung.
• **Social welfare benefits**
This is money you can get from the German government. You can get this money if you do not have enough of your own money to live on and pay rent in Germany. You can only get this money if you are from a country in the European Union.

• **Third country national**
People who are not from the European Union are called third country nationals in Germany.

• **Visa**
A visa is a document to say that you are allowed to come to Germany and that you can do your Voluntary Social Service in Germany. You need this document if you are a third country national.

• **Voluntary Social Service place of assignment**
This is the organisation or place where you will be doing your Voluntary Social Service. This could be:
• A theatre
• A museum
• A school
In German it is called Einsatz-Stelle.
• **Voluntary Social Service agency**

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

The Voluntary Social Service agency helps you if you have any questions or problems with your application or during your Voluntary Social Service.

In Germany there are lots of different Voluntary Social Service agencies. In German they are called **Träger**.

• **Work permit**

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