



## WHY SHOULD I THINK ABOUT A VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN GERMANY?

- You will meet new people.
- You will practice and improve your German language skills.
- You will get to know and participate in professional and daily routines in Germany.
- You will make experiences in a social facility or service – which could facilitate employment, an apprenticeship or be useful for your studies.
- You will be involved in a meaningful way and help other people.

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# VOLUNTEERING WITH THE AWO.

(WORKERS' WELFARE ASSOCIATION)

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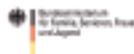


**REFUGEES WELCOME!**

[www.awo-freiwillich.de](http://www.awo-freiwillich.de)



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# VOLUNTARY SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

At the workers' welfare association, abbreviated AWO, everybody can get involved through a voluntary service. Refugees are welcome too!

## WHAT IS A VOLUNTARY SERVICE?

- A voluntary service lasts for **at least 6 months, at most 18 months**. During this time participants volunteer between 21 hours and 40 hours per week in a social facility or service.
- There are many different **areas of activity**. For instance, participants can help in a facility for refugees – e.g. translate for people who have just arrived, organise leisure time activities, help with food supply and many more activities. Participants can also get involved in a facility or service for senior citizens – e.g. accompaniment for shopping and doctor's visits, help in a nursing home or organise activities and events. There are opportunities for volunteers in all areas of social work! The place of your assignment is called Einsatzstelle. A voluntary service is no formal gainful employment; instead it is a legally regulated form of voluntary commitment for helping and assisting in the place of your assignment (Einsatzstelle).
- Integral parts of voluntary services in Germany are **seminars**. Volunteers from different places of assignment meet in seminars. They learn and make experiences together as a group. Volunteers also learn from each other and exchange ideas and experiences. Seminars are places for professional orientation and for discussing current political and societal affairs too. They last usually for 3 to 5 days. A number of seminars are offered during the course of a voluntary service.

- Volunteers receive an **allowance (pocket money)**. The amounts differ depending on the region and the committed amount of weekly hours. For refugees who receive benefits for asylum seekers or social welfare, parts of their allowance will go towards these benefits and replace them. A certain amount (25% – 30%) is protected though and remains with the volunteers (approx. 70 – 100€uro).
- There are two varieties of a voluntary service in Germany: First, the Voluntary Social Year (FSJ) for participants aged between 16 and 26 years. Second, the **Federal Voluntary Service (BFD)** for everyone who is older than 16 years (no maximum age). There is a special programme for refugees in the **Federal Voluntary Service (BFD)** in which participants can also benefit from e.g. language courses.
- Participants can register for a voluntary service depending on their residence permit status or refugee status. In principle, participants must be **in Germany for at least 3 months** and possess an occupation permit (Beschäftigungserlaubnis) – for at least the duration of the planned voluntary service. The **occupation permit (Beschäftigungserlaubnis)** is issued by the Foreigners' Office (Ausländerbehörde). AWO employees will gladly help to clarify questions regarding the residence status and eligibility for a voluntary service.

- Participants of a voluntary service are registered with **a public health insurance** and benefit from other aspects of the **German social welfare system** too.

## WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE DETAILS?

If you are interested, AWO is happy to provide advice on the options and possibilities! There are contact persons in the various regions of Germany. Find the one nearest to you on the AWO interactive map of Germany:

[www.awo-freiwillich.de/einsatzmoeglichkeiten/karte](http://www.awo-freiwillich.de/einsatzmoeglichkeiten/karte)

You can also write an e-mail with your questions to [info@awo-freiwillich.de](mailto:info@awo-freiwillich.de)

Or you can give us a call **030/26309-341**

Languages: German and English.