

Handbook Germany Artikel: Temporary Stay Permit ("Aufenthaltsgestattung")

What are my rights and obligations?

As soon as you have registered as an asylum seeker, you will be issued a proof of arrival or "Ankunftsnachweis". Then, after officially submitting your asylum application, you will be handed a temporary stay permit or "Aufenthaltsgestattung". The temporary stay permit is valid until the end of your [asylum procedure](#). There are several regulations that individuals with an "Ankunftsnachweis" or "Aufenthaltsgestattung" must follow, including various limitations and restrictions. Here you can find out what rights and obligations you have during your asylum procedure.

Asylum seekers' benefits

Asylum seekers can receive financial support from the state. These aids are called asylum seekers' benefits ("Asylbewerberleistungen"). You can receive food and drinks, clothes, shoes, toiletries and household items. You could also receive so-called "pocket money" ("Taschengeld"), which you can use to buy a SIM card, a bus ticket, or other small items you need. The state could also pay for your accommodation.

Whether you will be handed food and drinks, clothes, shoes, toiletries and household items directly, or receive money to buy them yourself depends on where you live. In the initial reception facilities, you could usually receive these items directly. If you live in another form of housing or a flat, you could often receive money. However, it is also possible that you will still receive part of the money directly and only receive part of the money for free disposal. Each federal state has its specific regulations.

The amount of cash you receive depends, among other things, on whether you are married and/or have children. Every month you receive a letter from the Social Welfare Office, in which the amount of payment you receive is specified. If you do not receive this letter, notify the staff member responsible for you. You can seek advice from a counselling centre regarding the amount of financial aid you receive. They can tell you if the amount you receive has been calculated correctly. You can find a counselling centre nearby on the [BAMF NAVI](#), [MBE](#) and [JMD websites](#).

Since **May 16, 2024**, a new "payment card" ("Bezahlkarte") has been introduced for refugees in Germany. The idea is for asylum seekers to receive part of their state benefits (basic benefits according to the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act) through this card. The card is similar to a regular bank card– it is equipped with a chip and PIN and offers the same security standard as other bank cards. Also, the data on the card is strictly protected.

Part of the monthly basic benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act is credited to this card, and the remaining amount is to be paid in cash. The card is issued by the local authorities in cooperation with banks and payment service providers – you do not need to have a bank account for it. Each federal state will decide independently whether and what share of the benefit is paid out in cash. Each federal state also determines what else you should be able to do with the card. In addition, the use of the card can be restricted in some regions.

Please note: The introduction of the card mentioned above is currently still in the trial phase. In some federal states, the card is already available, in others it is still being introduced. (as of June 2024)

Medical care

The type of medical care you receive differs depending on the duration of your stay in Germany. Asylum seekers who have been in Germany for less than 18 months could receive emergency treatments. Asylum seekers who have been residing in Germany for more than 18 months could receive regular medical care provided by a statutory health insurance company. You can learn more about the medical care available for refugees in our chapter "[Health Care for Refugees](#)".

Work, vocational training & study

As an asylum seeker, you are not allowed to work as self-employed. If you want to work as an employee, you need to apply for a work permit. Read our chapter "[Work Permit](#)" to learn how you can obtain a work permit.

You are allowed to study during your asylum procedure. To learn more about universities in Germany, see our chapter "[University system](#)". You may also start school-based vocational training. To take part in a dual vocational training, however, you need a work permit. You can learn more about the vocational training system in Germany in our chapters "[Dual Vocational Training](#)" and "[School-based Vocational Training](#)."

Kindergarten & School

In principle, your children are legally entitled to a slot in a childcare facility, but the federal states have different regulations as to when a refugee child has the right to daycare. On landkarte-kinderrechte.de, you can see a map which provides you with the laws and regulations concerning daycare rights in your federal state of residence. For more advice, seek help from a counselling centre. Read more about kindergartens in Germany in our chapter "[Child Care](#)".

In Germany, schooling is mandatory for children older than six years, but the federal states have different regulations as to when a refugee child must go to school. On landkarte-kinderrechte.de, you can find a map which shows the mandatory age of schooling in your federal state of residence. Alternatively, you can seek advice from a counselling centre. Find out more about the school system in Germany in our chapter "[School](#)".

Integration Course

In our chapter "[Integration Course](#)", you can learn more about the integration courses and find out whether you can take part in one.

Distribution & Housing

- When you register as an asylum seeker, the town in which you should live is also determined. This decision is not one made by the staff independently- it is an arrangement made by a computer system. This nation-wide computer system decides about your city of residence based on the available spots in different initial reception centres and the cities which are responsible for people from your home country. In principle, you cannot change this decision. If there is a solid reason why you need to live in a specific city (for example, because your ailing father lives there), you can seek help from a counselling centre. You can find one nearby on the [Pro Asyl website](#).
- In the first few weeks or months after applying for asylum, you are obliged to live in an initial reception centre, i.e. a specific housing for asylum seekers who have just arrived in Germany. After 18 months, you will usually be relocated, either to another refugee housing or a flat in the same city or another one nearby. You cannot easily oppose or reverse such relocations. If there is a solid reason why you need to live in a specific city (for example, because your ailing father lives there), you can contact a counselling centre for advice. You can find one nearby on the websites of [BAMF NAVI](#), [MBE](#) and [JMD](#).
- Asylum seekers receiving asylum seeker benefits are required to live in the city where they were initially sent in the distribution process, which means you cannot just move to another town while you still receive asylum seeker benefits. If there is a solid reason why you need to move to a specific city (for example, because your ailing father lives there), you can contact a counselling centre for advice - you can find one nearby on the websites of [BAMF NAVI](#), [MBE](#) and [JMD](#).

In some federal states, asylum seekers can, under certain circumstances (e.g. language skills, clear identification, work), leave the accommodation centre and look for a flat. Contact a counselling centre to learn if your federal state permits you to move to your own flat. Keep in mind that finding a flat is not easy in many cities in Germany. You can find out more about flat hunting in our chapter "[Searching for a flat](#)".

Travel

You are not allowed to travel within Germany in the first three months after applying for asylum and as long as you live in an initial reception centre, i.e. you are not permitted to leave your city during the mentioned period. This regulation is called "Residenzpflicht". You must seek approval if you need to leave your city for an important appointment. You can apply for the approval from the Immigration Office ("Ausländerbehörde"). The only exception is when you have an appointment with authorities or at a court: in such cases, you only need to inform the Immigration Office and the BAMF about your appointment in writing. If you leave your city without permission and get caught, you will have to pay a fine. If repeated, you may face a fine or imprisonment, and the incident can affect your future residence status negatively.

It is crucial to keep in mind that you must not travel abroad during your asylum procedure. You can learn more in our chapter "[Travelling Abroad for Refugees](#)".

Important

You must definitely notify the Immigration Office and the BAMF when you move to a new flat or are transferred to another accommodation centre during your asylum procedure. If you forget to inform them about your new address, you may miss essential letters and, and consequently, important appointments and information regarding your asylum case. You can use [this template to inform the BAMF](#) of your new address if you move during your asylum procedure.

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