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First steps after arrival in Germany

Information for refugees with disabilities
and their families from the project
Empowerment Now and the group
Now! Nicht Ohne das Wir



What are my rights in Germany?

Many refugees with disabilities and their families face significant challenges when they arrive in Germany: How can they get support and help? They have many questions about the support system in Germany. They also want to know what rights they have to support and assistance. But often they cannot find information in their own language.

That's why there are now six brochures with information in nine languages. We inform you about your rights to support and the different types of support available. And we answer questions about the support system in Germany. "What information would I have wanted when I arrived in Germany?" This question was important to us when we wrote up the information.

You are not alone!

There are many counselling centres in Germany. You can get advice there. Always seek support!

Why should I go to a counselling centre?

Counselling centres can help you apply for support services or if your application is refused. After receiving advice, you will better understand your needs and options, and get the right support services.

Counselling centres

[Supplementary Independent Participation Counselling Centre \(Ergänzende unabhängige Teilhabeberatung, EUTB\)](#)

[Migration Counselling Centres of Welfare Associations \(Migrationsberatungsstellen der Wohlfahrtsverbände\)](#)

For questions about health care, medical rehabilitation and care, you can contact the [Independent Patient Counselling Centre Germany \(Unabhängige Patientenberatung Deutschland, UPD\)](#).

You can also contact disability associations, the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt), the Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit) or the Integration Office (Integrationsamt). They are often close to you.

There are even more counselling services in many federal states. It's best to get information at your place of residence.

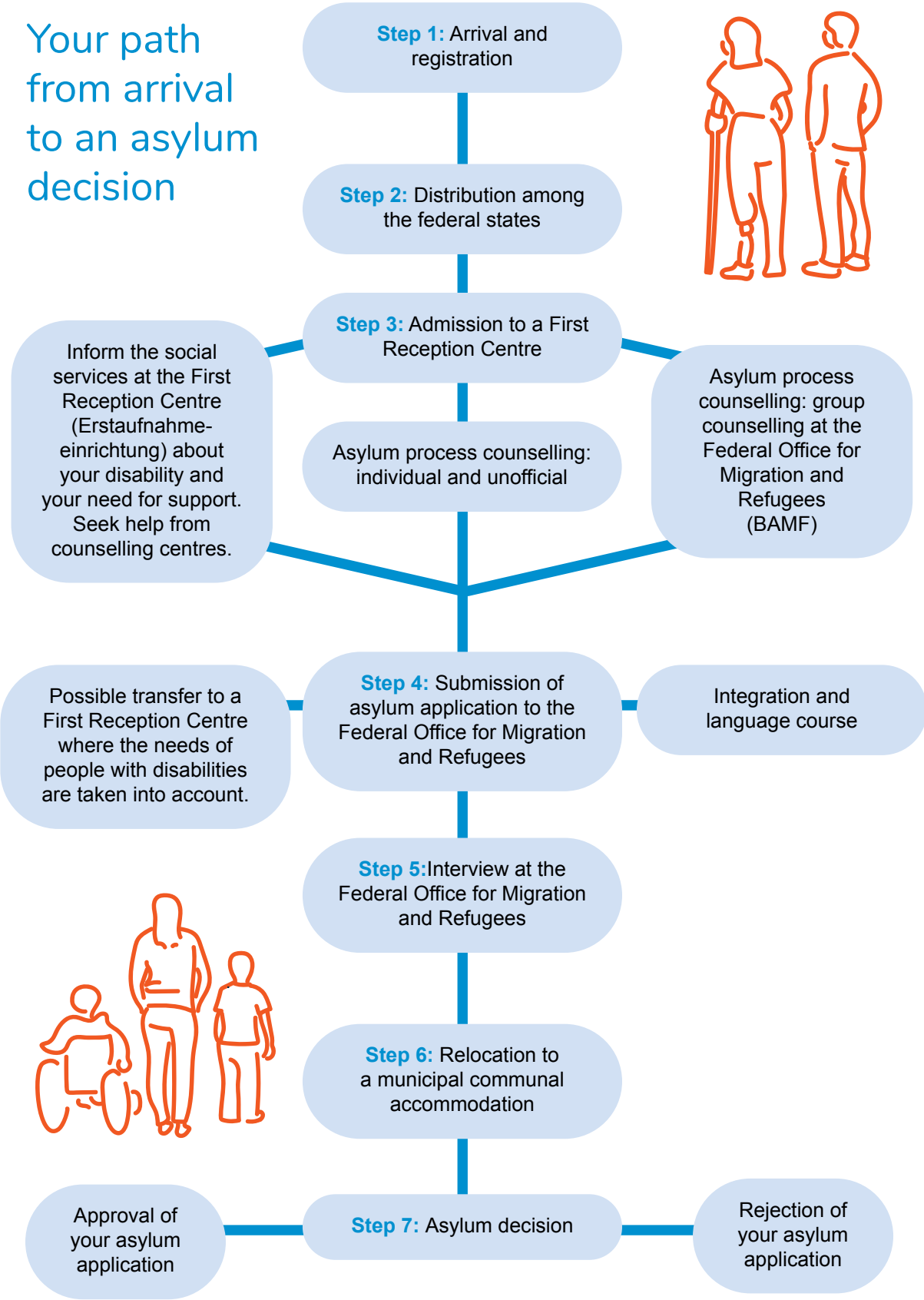
First steps after arrival in Germany

In this brochure, we provide information on the first steps and the most important points of contact after your arrival in Germany.

The path that refugees take after arriving in Germany is always the same. You can see this in the picture on the next page. It starts with the first step, registration, and ends with the decision on the asylum application. One thing is particularly important along the way: Always declare your disability. Always ask for help.

You have rights!

Your path from arrival to an asylum decision



Step 1: Arrival and registration

Arriving and registering in Germany as an asylum seeker with the border authorities, the police, **the Foreigners Authority (Ausländerbehörde)** or in a **First Reception Centre (Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung "EAE")**.

This step is called seeking asylum. You are not yet in the asylum process. You are now submitting an **asylum application**.

You will then receive your arrival certificate.

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Arrival certificate

The arrival certificate is your identity card for the initial period in Germany. It is not an asylum application. Once you have submitted an asylum application, you will receive residence permission (Aufenthaltsgestattung).

Foreigners Authority

The Foreigners Authority (Ausländerbehörde) is a state institution. It is responsible for matters relating to foreigners. It decides on applications for residence permits, issues residence documents, renews residence titles, issues work permits and accepts visa applications. You can find the locations of Foreigners Authorities on the [website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees](#).

First Reception Centre

The First Reception Centre (EAE) is responsible for the accommodation, care and medical assistance of asylum seekers. They will inform you about the next steps. This is the first place where you can register your disability. Inform the staff of the centre about your disability. This is important so that your disability-specific needs are taken into account by the German authorities from the outset: in terms of accommodation and mobility, aids, medical care and communication.

Application for asylum

If you want to apply for asylum, you have to register with an authority. You will say that you want to apply for asylum in Germany. You will be photographed and your fingerprints will be taken. You will be asked for your name, date of birth, country of origin. It is possible that you will be asked questions about your escape route. Your data will be stored centrally in the Central Register of Foreigners (Ausländerzentralregister - AZR). The Central Register of Foreigners is run by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Many public authorities have access to these data, for example the police and the Foreigners Authority. The German authorities will check whether you are applying for asylum in Germany for the first time and whether another European country could be responsible for processing your asylum application.

Step 2: Distribution among the federal states

The **Allocation Authority (Zuweisungsbehörde)** will check whether you will be sent to another federal state.

Indicate that you need a place where there is **counselling for people with disabilities**.

Allocation Authority

The Allocation Authority (Zuweisungsbehörde) assigns refugees to the federal states. It's important that you inform them of your disability. Only in this way can the authority ensure that you will be allocated to a place with appropriate services and support.

Counselling for people with disabilities

For example, Crossroads offers free initial and orientation counselling by phone for refugees with disabilities and their families. You can find the contact details on our [website](#).



Step 3: Admission in a First Reception Centre

You will be housed in a **First Reception Centre**.

If the First Reception Centre is unsuitable for people with disabilities, you can apply for release from the reception centre at the **Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt), District Office (Landratsamt)** or Foreigners Authority (Ausländerbehörde). The legal basis is Section 49 para. 2 of the Asylum Act (Asylgesetz).

Do you need help with your application? Then it is best to contact the social workers in the institution.

First, inform the social service in your First Reception Centre about your needs, and then go to a counselling centre near you.

There you will receive support, including help with **applying for social and support benefits**.

First Reception Centre:

The First Reception Centre is responsible for the accommodation, care and medical support of asylum seekers. You will also receive information about future processes and the next steps. This is where you can register and enter your disability. Inform the staff of the centre about your disability.

Social Welfare Office

During your asylum process, you should apply for all social and support benefits at the Social Welfare Office (Sozialamt). You will need a certificate of treatment or an electronic health card for medical treatment, interpretation and assistance services, and aids such as prostheses, wheelchairs, visual aids and hearing aids. The Social Welfare Office will issue you the certificate or card.

District Office

The District Office (Landratsamt) is responsible for housing asylum seekers. You can also apply for release from the reception centre.

Applying for social and support benefits

Social and support benefits include financial and material benefits provided by the state. They are designed to help people in difficult circumstances, for example, with health care for people with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

To receive social and support benefits, you must first submit a personal asylum application to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge "BAMF").

Step 4: Application for asylum at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

You must personally apply for asylum at the **Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)**. Once you have submitted your application, you will be given a date for a personal interview in which you will explain your reasons for fleeing. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees will then decide what kind of residence title you will receive. You must inform the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees about every change of address!

When submitting your application, please indicate a **special need for protection** and, if necessary, request special measures, so-called **procedural guarantees**.

The Foreigners Authority will now issue your **residence permission (Aufenthaltsgestattung)**. This is an ID card that is valid for as long as your application is pending. The residence permission (Aufenthaltsgestattung) is not a residence title (Aufenthaltstitel)!



Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

The personal asylum application is submitted to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Once you have submitted your application, you will be given a date for a personal interview in which you will explain your reasons for fleeing. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees will then decide whether and which residence title you will receive. It is very important to inform the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees of any change of address.

Particular need for protection and procedural guarantees

Make sure that you draw the attention of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees to your particular need for protection, for example during the personal interview or the group discussion. Emphasise that you have a special need for protection due to your disability and provide evidence. Ask the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees for procedural guarantees, e.g., interpreters or representatives of disability organisations to be present at your personal interview.

Residence permission (Aufenthaltsgestattung)

This document is issued by the Foreigners Authority (Ausländerbehörde) and is valid for the entire duration of the asylum process. The residence permission (Aufenthaltsgestattung) is not yet a residence title (Aufenthaltstitel).

Do I have the right to reside in Germany due to my disability?

No, disability alone is not a reason for granting asylum, refugee status or subsidiary protection in Germany.

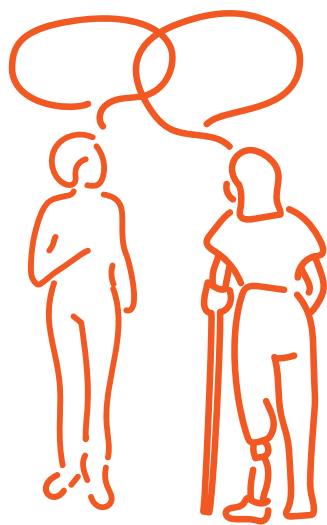
If you have been treated inhumanely in your country of origin because of your disability, you may be entitled to subsidiary protection. You can find more information in the [Handbook Germany](#).

You can receive **advice on the asylum process** from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Here you can discuss the upcoming asylum process in a group.

There is also the option of **independent asylum process counselling**.

This is individual, voluntary and independent of any authority.

Ask the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees which integration and language courses are suitable for you.



Asylum process counselling by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

In the group discussion, someone from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees will explain the asylum process to you. You discuss what you have to take into account, for example with regard to your disability. During the group discussion, it may already be possible to identify a need for protection that is important for your asylum process or for the decision on your asylum application. The recognition of your need for protection can be important for the course of your asylum process and enable you to receive state benefits.

Independent asylum process counselling

This advice is provided by charities and civil society organisations. They will inform you about your rights and explain the asylum process. During the interview, you should talk about your need for protection, which is important for your asylum process or the decision on your asylum application. During the interview, you will also be prepared for the interview at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

Step 5: Interview at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

You will have a **personal interview** about your reasons for fleeing at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

Personal interview

The personal interview involves questions about your reasons for fleeing. The interview is very important. On asylindeutschland.de, you can find a video with a short summary of the interview. The video is available in 14 languages. During the interview, a representative of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and an interpreter will be present. When you receive a date for the interview, you should request a sign language interpreter, if necessary. You also have the right to bring along a person of your choice to support you.

Step 6: Relocation to a municipal communal accommodation

After a maximum of 18 months, refugees move to a municipal communal accommodation. Some move to an apartment; that depends on the federal state. Families may move after six months. You should ask for suitable accommodations!



Step 7: Asylum decision

Either you will receive a positive decision from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, granting you a residence title (Aufenthaltstitel). Then this happens:

- You will be given a work permit.
- Register with the Job Centre
- Register with a health insurance company
- Apply for social benefits (Social Welfare Office or Job Centre)
- Apply for participation or care services
- Request approval for integration and language courses
- Register with the Local Registration Office
- Open a bank account

Or the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees rejects your asylum application. Consult a lawyer and a counselling centre. You will not always have to leave the country or be deported. Pro Asyl offers individual counselling. Here you can find [counselling centres](#) for refugees in the federal states.



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Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Anerkennungsverfahren

Datum: 2014 - Juli
Gesch.: Z

BESCHIED

In dem Asylverfahren des/der: [Name]
geb. am: [Geburtsdatum]

wohnt/hat: [Wohnort]

ergibt folgende Entscheidung:

- Die Flüchtlingseigenschaft wird **nicht** zuerkannt.
- Der Antrag auf Asylverfahren wird **abgelehnt**.
- Der subsidiäre Schutzstatus wird **nicht** zuerkannt.
- Abschiebungsverbote nach § 60 Abs. 5 und 7 Satz 1 des Aufenthaltsgesetzes **liegen** nicht vor.
- Der Antragsteller wird aufgefordert, die Bundesrepublik Deutschland innerhalb von 30 Tagen nach Bekanntgabe dieser Entscheidung zu verlassen; im Falle einer Klageerhebung endet die Ausreisefrist 30 Tage nach dem unanfechtbaren Abschluss des Asylverfahrens. Sollte der Antragsteller die Ausreisefrist nicht einhalten, wird er nach § 60 Abs. 5 Abs. 2 des Aufenthaltsgesetzes abgeschoben. Der Antragsteller kann auch in einen anderen Staat abgeschoben werden, in den er einreisen darf oder der zu seiner Rückübernahme verpflichtet ist.

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Information for refugees with disabilities and their relatives is a series that has published on:

1



The first steps after arrival in Germany – Information on the most important points of contact after arriving in Germany

The support system for people with disabilities – Information on participation benefits, social benefits versus participation benefits, application for aids, recognition of a disability

2



3



Health, rehabilitation and care – Interesting facts about entitlement to medical care, rehabilitation and nursing care and about the health insurance system

Support system for family members of children with disabilities – Information on the right to education, care and support

4



5



Social participation and language courses – Which services strengthen your participation in life in Germany? Information on integration courses, accessible accommodation and support

6



Applying for and getting benefits – Everything you need to know about the main state benefits and how to apply for them

Who are “we”?

We are the “Empowerment Now” project of the organisation Handicap International and the self-advocates of “NOW! Nicht Ohne das Wir”. We are committed to improving access to information for refugees with disabilities and their families. The members of the group “NOW! Nicht Ohne das Wir” have experienced how difficult it is to get support and help in Germany. That’s why they want to share their knowledge. Also with you.

About the group NOW! Nicht Ohne das Wir:



“NOW! Nicht Ohne das Wir” is the self-advocacy of refugees with disabilities. We are refugees ourselves and we have disabilities. Since our arrival in Germany, we have been confronted with barriers. But in our group we find understanding and solidarity. We support each other and work together for an inclusive society.

We work for a better life for refugees with disabilities and their families in Germany. The self-advocacy group “NOW! Nicht Ohne das Wir” is supported by Handicap International as part of the “Empowerment Now” project.



About the “Empowerment Now” project

With “Empowerment Now”, Handicap International supports the self-advocacy of refugees with disabilities and their families. Together with the group “NOW! Nicht Ohne das Wir”, we advocate for the rights and interests of refugees with disabilities. We are committed to systematically addressing the concerns of refugees with disabilities – from accommodation, to access to accessible language courses, to inclusion in the labour market.

The “Empowerment Now” project is funded by:



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration
Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Antirassismus