



Welcome to Wolfsburg & surroundings

WELCOME BOOK



DEVELOPED BY
Aquarela Frauengruppe e.V.





Warning!

This guide's content is informative and intended to provide a rough overview of local processes, laws and an approximate outline of regional strategies, rules, and organizations. However, those responsible for preparing this guide are not responsible for any errors, omissions, or changes that may have occurred before, during, or after its publication. They do not endorse or guarantee the quality of any organization or service mentioned. Nor are readers assured of any acceptance or approval by any organization cited in this document.



Source: Canva's image repository.

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Introduction

We welcome you to Wolfsburg & Region!

This handbook aims to share tips and information that can facilitate your adaptation process, which, as we know, is not easy.

All the content was written by people who, like you, have gone through this experience. Therefore, we have tried to list, simply and clearly, the topics we consider most relevant for those who will be living in Germany for the first time.

The topics are listed beforehand in the table of contents. If you prefer, you can read only the items that interest you. It is worth saying that the information is concentrated on the city of Wolfsburg. However, some tips also extend to Braunschweig and Gifhorn. Not all procedures are identical and unified in other cities, especially when belonging to other Bundesländer (states). If you live outside Wolfsburg, please be aware of the possible peculiarities of your region.

We intend to update this document frequently, so before you start reading, check to see if this is the latest edition available at www.aquarelafrauengruppe.org.

If you have any questions, you can count on our support network. The Aquarela Frauengruppe e.V. team will be glad to support you!

Moving to another country is a great challenge, but it brings a lot of personal development and numerous achievements for those who go through this process. Therefore, we wish you luck and success in this new stage!

Enjoy your reading!

Juliana Avila & Karla Bastos Bäcker

Emergency phones



POLICE	110
FIREFIGHTERS, AMBULANCE	112
DOCTORS ON DUTY	116 117
DEBIT CARD BLOCKING (EC-KARTE)	116 116
POISONING	+49 (0) 551 19240
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ¹	08000 116 016

¹Das Hilfetelefon - helpline for women in emergency situations. 24 hours a day, in 18 different languages.

Health

Hospital care

- **Extremely serious emergencies**

In Germany, **you should not go to an emergency room** unless it is an extremely serious or life-threatening situation. If you have an emergency and need an ambulance, call 112.

- **Non-life-threatening occurrences**

If you need medical care outside of regular business hours, but it is not an extremely serious or life-threatening situation, call 116-117 to find out which doctors and/or pediatricians are on call at that time (regardless of where you are).

Or, if you prefer, for pediatric cases, you can also call one of the city-specific numbers listed below.

- Hospitals' addresses

WOLFSBURG	BRAUNSCHWEIG	GIFHORN
 <p>Klinikum der Stadt Wolfsburg Sauerbruchstrasse 7 38440 Wolfsburg Tel.: +49 (0) 5361 800 www.klinikum.wolfsburg.de</p>	 <p>Städtische Klinikum Braunschweig Freisestrasse 9-10 38118 Braunschweig Tel.: +49 (0) 5315 950 www.klinikum-braunschweig.de</p> <p>Frauenheilkunde und Geburtsklinik (Obgyn & Maternity) Celler Strasse 38 38114 Braunschweig Tel. +49 (0) 5315 953377</p> <p>Kinder- und Jugendmedizin (Pediatrics) Holwedestraße 16 38118 Braunschweig Tel. +49 (0) 5315 951222</p>	 <p>Helios Klinikum Gifhorn Campus 6 38518 Gifhorn Tel.: +49 (0) 5371 870 www.helios-gesundheit.de/gifhorn</p>
<p>EMERGENCY CARE/ DOCTORS ON DUTY: 116 117</p>		

• Pharmacy & medicines - Apotheke

Medicine is sold exclusively in drugstores, and usually only with a prescription.

To find out if the medicine you want to buy is prescription-free, type the name of the active ingredient (or the medicine) into Google and see if the term "*Rezept frei*" (prescription free) appears in the search results.

Pharmacies do not operate on a 24-hour-a-day model. If you need medicine after hours, you should search for the nearest on-call pharmacy* on one of the sites below, enter your zip code (Postleitzahl - - PLZ (zip code)), to find out which on-call pharmacy is closest to you.

- www.apotheken-umschau.de/apotheken-notdienst
- www.apothekerkammer-niedersachsen.de
- www.aponet.de/apotheke/notdienstsuche
- www.apotheken.de/apotheken-und-notdienste-suchen



*If any link does not work, google Notdienstkalender Apotheke.

Hausarzt (Family doctor)

Everyone should have a *Hausarzt* (family doctor or general practitioner). Normally, you can only see a specialist with a referral from your *Hausarzt*.

It is advisable to choose a doctor who sees you within a radius of 20 km from where you live. However, many doctors do not accept new patients. Be persistent in your search, contact several offices, ask your acquaintances for referrals, and ask your health insurance company for help.

Krankenversicherung (Health Insurance)

In Germany, there is no public health insurance system and health insurance is compulsory for everyone who is permanently resident in Germany.

There are 2 categories of health insurance: *gesetzliche* (state) or *private* (private). There is also the option of taking out *Zusatzkrankenversicherung* (supplementary insurance), as described below:

- **Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung (state insurance)**

This type of insurance is not public! It is managed by funds, who administer public funds collected by the state. They are commonly called *Krankenkasse* or GKV.

The cost of health insurance is calculated according to the worker's annual income and the contribution costs, on average, 16% of the gross monthly salary. In the case of company employees, the employer pays half of the contribution. The other half is automatically deducted from the employee's payroll. However, it is not the employer company that contracts health insurance. Instead, the choice of provider, as well as hiring it, is made by the employee, and the most common are TK, DAK, AOK, BARMER, and Audi BKK, among others.

In some countries, there is a general perception that the quality of private care is much higher than that offered by the state system. In Germany, the difference is more related to the scheduling speed than to the quality itself. Thus, doctors get better remuneration with patients whose plan is private, so the chance of you getting an appointment is quicker if you have private insurance. Nonetheless, the quality of care itself is very similar to that of patients with ordinary state plans.

Advantages vs. Disadvantages of the State Plan

+ In old age, if there is a decrease in income, this is the most economical option;

- Difficult and slow service;

+ Covers dependents without their own remuneration free of charge;

- Alternative treatments are not covered (e.g. osteopathy, chiropractic, homeopathy, etc.).

+ No health questionnaire is required for acceptance.

- **Private Krankenversicherung (private insurance)**

Not everyone can opt for a private health insurance plan, also known by the acronym PKV.

Contracting this type of plan is possible only for:

- self-employed;
- public employees;
- university students (as long as they are released from the GKV and are over 30 years old);
- persons with gross income above approximately 65,000 euros/year (the exact amount is subject to periodic readjustments. Please check the current amount).

The cost of private health insurance depends on the age and state of health of the insured.

The older you are when you take out the insurance, the more expensive it is.



Source: Canva's image repository.



Important!

The age that determines the amount is the age at the date of contracting.
The amount of the insurance is not exponential as the person gets older.

When hiring the insurance, you must answer a health questionnaire. In case of certain pre-existing diseases, the amount may be increased or the insurance company may even reject the adhesion to the insurance.

The switch from private to public health insurance is mandatory when there is a reduction of the gross income to an amount below the limit (approximately 65,000€/year).

In other conditions, leaving the private plan and returning to the state one can be complicated and often impossible. An example is people over 55 years old whose annual income is more than the threshold value. They, therefore, cannot return to the state plan. Because of the restrictions on switching insurance types, you should do enough research before deciding to go private. In addition, consider long-term planning before signing up for this form of contract (i.e., you have sufficient savings to afford the costs of the personal plan after your retirement).

There is a long list of private health insurance companies, such as: Allianz, HanseMerkur, Deutscher Ring, DKV, Barmenia etc.

• **Zusatzkrankenversicherung (complementary insurance)**

Complementary plans serve to fill gaps in the coverage of the state health plan insurance. You can contract with a private insurance company for an extra one, regardless of income.

Examples of supplemental plans:

- nursing care;
- complementary dental insurance;
- complementary hospital insurance - which guarantees, for example, a single or double room, according to the choice, care in the hospital of your choice, as well as care by "*Chefärzte*" (more experienced doctors), etc.

The companies providing complementary insurance are equal to those listed above - *Krankenversicherung* (PKV).

Living in Germany

Renting Real State

- **About Renting**

Renting a property in Germany has its peculiarities.

The first is that most houses and apartments are not rented through a real estate agency but with the owners. Therefore it isn't easy to concentrate on visits to several properties on the same day because they are made directly with each owner. Germans (and Europeans generally) do not appreciate spontaneity when arranging appointments. Thus, organize yourself in advance because scheduling visits at short notice will be difficult.

Another peculiar aspect is that *Landlords* are usually demanding when choosing their renters. Behave as if you were going to a job interview. Be punctual. It is really important to make a good first impression.

About the ads, it is important to pay attention to the amounts described, since there are 4 types of them:

- ✓ **KALTMIETE**: the rent, properly speaking;
- ✓ **BETRIEBSKOSTEN** (also known as **Nebenkosten**): is a kind of "condominium" that includes costs such as cleaning the building, energy and water in common areas, elevator, garbage collection, etc.
- ✓ **NEBENKOSTEN**: water, electricity, and heating.
- ✓ **WARMMIETE** (hot rent): the amount that includes everything, even water, energy, and heating.

Despite the existence of the *Warmmiete*, in most cases, you will have to pay the owner the first two amounts (*Kaltmiete* + *Betriebskosten* = *Kaution*). The water, energy, and heating bills are settled directly with their respective suppliers.



An interesting curiosity is that the word *Zimmer* includes both bedrooms and living rooms. So if you would like a property with, for example, 2 bedrooms and a living room, you need to search for a property with 3 *Zimmer*.

- **About the furniture**

Many properties are rented without an equipped kitchen. Don't be fooled by the pictures, because frequently, all the kitchen appliances in the images belong to the current resident and will not remain on the property. The same advice applies to any other furniture that may occur. To find out if the kitchen is included, see if the ad says the word *Einbauküche* or its abbreviation EBK.

When the property already has any furniture, in some cases custom-designed, the renter may require or give preference to the candidate willing to buy items offered together with the rent.



Another fundamental detail: most properties are usually rented without chandeliers. Even lamp sockets are generally not available. So be careful not to spend your first nights in the dark!

- **How to find a rental property**

The best source for finding available properties is the Internet. There are several sites and (respective apps) for this purpose, such as:

- www.immobilienscout24.de
- www.immowelt.de
- www.immonet.de
- www.ebay-kleinanzeigen.de





Source: Canva's image repository.

***An-, Um- & Abmeldung* (Address registration, change of address and cancellation of registration)**

When you change your address in Germany, you must register it with the city office. A registration requirement applies to Germans and foreigners living in the country. After arriving, you have **two weeks** to make your **Anmeldung** (registration) at the Einwohnermeldeamt/Meldebehörde (registration office) in your town.

At Wolfsburg City Hall, you do not need to make an appointment or pick up a service ticket. Instead, you can go directly to the *Schnellschalter* (service counter) and tell them that you need an *Wohnsitzanmeldung* (address registration).

The documents required for the *Anmeldung* are:

- passport (or another European identity document);
- if married, original marriage certificate with a certified translation;
- if self-resident, property document;
- if rented or shared accommodation, the *Wohnungsgeberbestätigung* (a document completed and signed by the renter or roommate).

[Click here](#) to access the *Wohnungsgeberbestätigung* form template.

If you move within Germany, you do not have to cancel the registration at your old address. The cancellation of the previous registration takes place automatically with the **Ummeldung** (registration at the new address). If you leave Germany to live in another country, then yes, you must make the **Abmeldung** (cancellation of your old address). That is also done within **2 weeks** (after leaving the residence). You can also make your Abmeldung up to 7 days **before** your departure.



Important!

When registering, you will have to indicate your religion. See more information in the chapter regarding **Taxes and Fees**.

- **Meldebehörde Addresses (place of registration)**

WOLFSBURG	BRAUNSCHWEIG	GIFHORN
		
Bürgerdienste Stadt Wolfsburg Porschestraße 49 38440 Wolfsburg	Bürgerangelegenheiten Stadt Braunschweig Friedrich-Seele-Straße 7 38122 Braunschweig	Bürgerbüro Stadt Gifhorn Marktplatz 1 38518 Gifhorn

- **Documents received after the *Anmeldung* (registration)**

Upon your *Anmeldung*, the *Meldebehörde* (place of registration) itself will give you a *Meldebescheinigung* (confirmation of your registration). This document will be required in numerous situations, so please keep it carefully. If you lose it, you can request a replacement for a fee. A few days after you register for the first time in Germany, a letter is mailed to you with your Identifikationsnummer or Steuer-ID (tax identification number). You can also request a duplicate of this correspondence via the [official website](#).

This number is equivalent to the identification document from your country of origin and is a code you receive only once. If you have already lived in Germany on another occasion, your *Steuer-ID* will be the same as the last. Employees must inform this number to their employer. You will also need to tell your bank to open your account. After your registration with the city, you will also receive a letter from *Deutsche Rentenversicherung* containing your *Sozialversicherungsnummer* (social security number). If you do not receive this letter and need to find out what your *Sozialversicherungsnummer* is, you can request it from your health insurance provider.



Important

There is no concierge service in German buildings, only mailboxes for each apartment. The apartments don't have numbers; you should have your **full first and last name** and your **family members** (if different) **in your mailbox**. For example: Maria **da Silva Santos** and José **Santos**. Doing this, you ensure that you will receive your mail.

See the chapter [Post - Deutsche Post/DHL](#) for more information about sending and receiving mail.

Visa

Obtaining a residence permit in Germany

If you do not have citizenship of any member country of the European Union, it is necessary to do your *Anmeldung* (registration). Then exchange the visa received by the German consulate in your home country (whether for studies, work, or another type) for a residence permit in Germany. The competent office responsible for issuing this permit is the *Ausländerbehörde* in the city where you are registered. According to your visa, this permit will include the right to work or not in Germany.

Required documentation and procedures:

It is necessary to get in touch - by phone, email, or via the website (see box below) - to schedule an appointment. You will receive an email confirmation of your appointment with the list of required documents.

The required documents are generally:

- a 3x4 photo that fulfills the [biometrics rules](#) ;
- valid passport;
- proof of health insurance;
- work contract or proof of enrollment (for students or children of school age)

A few weeks after submitting the requested documents, you will receive a letter informing you that your permit, *Aufenthaltstitel*, is ready to be picked up. You must pick it up personally or sign a power of attorney authorizing someone else to get it for you.

- Ausländerbehörde's addresses

WOLFSBURG	BRAUNSCHWEIG	GIFHORN
 <p>Ausländerstelle Stadt Wolfsburg Rathaus A Porschestraße 49 38440 Wolfsburg Tel. +49 (0) 5361 281234 auslaenderstelle@stadt.wolfsburg.de</p>	 <p>Ausländergelegenheiten Stadt Braunschweig Friedrich-Seele-Straße 7 38122 Braunschweig auslaenderbehoerde@braunschweig.de</p> <p>Online appointment.</p>	 <p>Ausländerbehörde Stadt Gifhorn Schloßpl. 1 38518 Gifhorn E-mails & telefones.</p> <p>Online appointment.</p>

Führerschein (Driving license)

Validity of licenses from outside the European Union

Driver's licenses issued by countries that do not belong to the European Union are valid for six months from entry into the country. However, an extension of up to 6 months is possible if you prove that your stay in Germany will not exceed 12 months. To obtain the extension, applying to the Führerscheinstelle (authorities responsible) in your region is necessary.

If your residence time is more than one year, you will need to transfer your driver's license. Depending on the country that issued your driver's license, the process may require a translation of the original driver's license, approval of a theory test, and even a road test.

The requirement list (according to the country of origin) is available on the [ADAC website](#).

Next, there will be a description of the process in the most complex scenario: one in which all requirements are necessary to obtain a driving permit in Germany (required for foreigners from Latin American countries, among others).

The German term for transferring a driver's license is *Umschreibung*.

Umschreibung: transfer of driver's license

- **Fahrschule (driving school)**

The first step is to choose the *Fahrschule* (driving school) where the process will take place. Next, the driving school will provide information about the required documents and the steps to follow.

- **Driver's license translation**

The translation can be done by a certified translator or directly at ADAC (see addresses in Wolfsburg and Braunschweig below). This process can last up to 2 weeks and costs around EUR 60 (costs vary depending on the region).

WOLFSBURG	BRAUNSCHWEIG
ADAC Geschäftsstelle Wolfsburg Kleiststraße 3 38440 Wolfsburg Tel.: +49 (0) 5361 38496969	ADAC Geschäftsstelle Braunschweig Lange Str. 63 38100 Braunschweig Tel.: +49 (0) 5312 61530

- **Erste Hilfe Kurs (First Aid Course)**

The *Erste-Hilfe-Kurs* (first aid course) is mandatory for a driver's license in Germany. It is a very simple course that lasts approximately 6 hours. At your driving school you can find out where to take this course. One of the options is available at:

<https://shop.tronomed.de/1-2-104.html>

- **Sehtest für Führerschein (Eye examination)**

Any optician can do the *Sehtest für Führerschein* (Eye Examination for Driving Licenses). The cost varies from €5 to €10. The examination is often offered in conjunction with a first aid course. In some cases, however, a visit to an eye doctor can be necessary. Check prices before getting an appointment.

- **Applying with the Führerscheinstelle**

You must apply for a change of driver's license with the *Führerscheinstelle* in your region. Your driving school will probably do this for you. If not, please contact the *Führerscheinstelle* to make an appointment:



Source: Canva's image repository.

WOLFSBURG	BRAUNSCHWEIG	GIFHORN
 <p>Führerscheinstelle Stadt Wolfsburg Rathaus B - Zimmer 048 Porschestraße 49 38440 Wolfsburg</p> <p>Tel.: +49 (0) 5361 282424 e +49 (0) 5361 282147 fuehrerschein@stadt.wolfsburg.de</p>	 <p>Führerscheinstelle Stadt Braunschweig Porschestraße 5 38112 Braunschweig</p> <p>Tel.: +49 (0) 5314 707500 fuehrerscheinstelle@braunschweig.de online booking.</p>	 <p>Führerscheinstelle 3.4 Verkehrswesen Landkreis Gifhorn Im Heidland 39 38518 Gifhorn</p> <p>Tel.: +49 (0) 5371 820 verkehrsamt@gifhorn.de online booking.</p>

The documents required for applying are:

- Passport (or another European identity document);
- *Meldebescheinigung* (proof of registration) in the city of residence;
- a 3x4 photo that fulfills [biometrics rules](#) (same as used for the Aufenthaltstitel);
- An original version of the driver's license from the country of origin with a certified translation;
- proof of the eyesight test;
- certificate from the *Erste-Hilfe-Kurs* (first aid course).

3 to 4 weeks after submitting the documents, you will receive a letter per mail with authorization to continue the process.

• Theory Test

You can do the theory test in several languages. It is even advisable that you choose your native language. A study app with more than 1,000 questions in the desired language prepares you to take the test. When you register with the driving school, you will receive a login and password to train and prepare. You can schedule and take the theory test when you achieve a satisfactory result on the simulations. The theory test includes 30 multiple-choice questions. There may be

several correct answers to one question. If you receive more than ten minus points, you will fail the test.

- **Driving classes**

Driving lessons are not obligatory but advisable. Driving in Germany can be very different from driving in your home country, and this is an opportunity to practice unfamiliar traffic road signs and rules that are not known to you, as well as to hear tips from the instructor and possible pitfalls that may arise at the time of evaluation.

Also, consider that you can only do the driving test in German. Therefore, especially for those who do not master the language, training with an instructor in the language of the driving test can be an excellent opportunity to feel better prepared and less apprehensive.

Another advantage is that the instructor will be able to evaluate your performance and advise you when you are ready to take the test with a better chance of being approved.

- **Driving test**

As with everything in Germany, **schedule your test in advance**. The test duration is approximately 45 minutes. Your examiner and the instructor will accompany you; the examiner usually sits in the back seat to assess your driving skills.

- **Driver's license withdrawal**

In Wolfsburg, receiving the document from the assessor right after passing the driving test is expected. Otherwise, you can pick up your German driver's license at the *Führerscheinstelle*. At the time of withdrawal, your original driver's license (from your home country) will be retained and returned to you when/if you officially leave Germany.

If you are traveling, you can apply for an international driver's license from the *Führerscheinstelle*. Before doing so, please check whether you can use your German driver's license in the destination country. The rule for using the driver's license is usually reciprocal: your original driver's license is valid for up to 6 months in Germany. If you stay less than six months in another country, your German driver's license can most likely also be used at your destination without problems.

- **List of driving schools**

*Below there are listed some of the driving schools to start your process in Wolfsburg:



Source: Google Maps

*Updated list on October 01st, 2021.

- http://www.tomsfahrschule.net/?gclid=CjwKCAjw49qKBhAoEiwAHQVTowas3VlgQVJi5cM9iyYnb3_gQypImgRYCbv1CgcEDqTe4Sle-58kVxoCQVEQAvD_BwE
- <https://www.fahrschule-kinzel.de/>
- <https://www.fahrschule-wawra.de/>
- <https://fahrschule-holtmann.de/>
- <https://www.fahrschule-noorlander.de/>
- <https://www.fa-wob.de/>
- <https://www.fahrschule-klapperstueck.de/>
- <http://www.fahrschule-hoefs.de/>

Taxes & Fees

Taxes and fees may vary according to the person's employment status/employment in the work market: whether they are employed, self-employed, or an entrepreneur. Here we will focus on employed people since this is the most common category.

The tax authorities in Germany are called *Finanzamt*. Residents of Wolfsburg are accountable to the *Finanzamt* in Gifhorn. Braunschweig has its own *Finanzamt*.

Steuerklasse (Income tax classes)

The income tax system is divided into classes, as described below. The tax rate to be paid depends not only on your income but also on the number of children and the children's age.

The Tax classes are:

TAX CLASS 1	TAX CLASS 2	TAX CLASS 3 + 5	TAX CLASS 4	TAX CLASS 6
single people, widows, widowers, divorced or those who do not live with the partner (for example: you are in Germany and your partner is in another country).	single parents or in the process of divorce	Married people or partners who have declared a stable union. The combination of classes 3 and 5 works for couples that have different incomes. The one with the higher income opts for class 3 (lower rate), while the one with the lower income, for class 5 (higher rate). In the final amount, the couple benefits.	Married or partners who have declared stable union and who do not have a large difference between salaries or income. Both choose the same rate.	People who have more than one income, regardless of marital status.

To estimate your net salary, you can do a simulation by clicking [here](#).

Kirchensteuer (Church tax)

When registering in the city, you will be asked about your religion. The *Kirchensteuer* (church tax) will be deducted directly from your salary if you are Catholic or Protestant Lutheran. The rate is about 9%.

If you do not wish to pay this tax, you can declare that you have no religion.

Members of other religions are not subject to this tax.



Important

The Protestant Lutheran church is called, in German, the *Evangelische Kirche*. But the tax is only charged on Evangelicals belonging to that church specifically. Therefore, if you are Evangelical but belong to another religion other than Lutheran, you are not required to pay the tax.

Solidaritätszuschlag (Solidarity Tax for the East)

The *Solidaritätszuschlag*, created in 1991 (East German Solidarity Tax), intends to help with the costs of German reunification (East and West) to make the country economically homogeneous. The rate is usually 5.5%. For many years this tax has been under discussion, and from 2021 some people may be released from paying it.

Sozialabgaben (Social contribution)

The following taxes belong to social contribution:

- health insurance;
- care insurance;
- retirement;
- unemployment insurance;
- accident insurance.



Important

Payment of social taxes is shared between the company and the worker.

Radio and TV tax

Every household must pay the radio and TV license fee (ARD ZDF, also known as *Rundfunkbeitrag*).

It doesn't matter if you have it or not, whether you watch TV or listen to the radio. However, the fee is obligatory, and non-payment results in fines and an entry into the SCHUFA (German registry of debtor's register).



Important

This is not a per-person fee, but a per-household fee (regardless of the number of individuals living there).

After registering with the city hall, you will receive a letter informing you that you must pay this fee. If someone else in your household or the property owner already makes this payment, you do not have to pay additionally. However, **you cannot simply ignore and disregard it**. You must answer, stating the name and taxpayer number of the person who already pays for the fee at your residence.

The money from the *Rundfunkbeitrag* finances the programming of radio and some TV stations in Germany. That enables these stations to offer documentaries, reports, and other high-quality material on TV, radio, and their respective portals on the Internet, without dependence on the government and therefore free of information manipulation. In addition, the money improves data transmission and technology and creates material with sign language support.

School System and Academic Career

Early Childhood Education

- **Kita**

Kita = Krippe + Kindergarten

The term *Kindertagesstätte* (or its abbreviation "*Kita*") refers to *Krippe* (for children under 3 years old) and *Kindergarten* (for children 3 years old and older).

To apply for a place in either a *Krippe* or a *Kindergarten*, you must do a *Betreuungsanfragen* (application) via the [Wolles Welt](#) website. The sooner you do it, the better! You can choose up to 5 institutions at a time. The answers are sent to you by email. If you receive an *Absage* (negative response), it is possible to make a new request.

It is advisable, however, to directly contact the *Kitas* of your preference to schedule a visit, see the facilities and take the opportunity to show your interest in the opening spot.

There is a priority list in the distribution of vacancies. However, if your children's names are not on this list, there is no specific definition of how they distribute the places. Therefore, a visit can increase your child's chance during the distribution. But, of course, it doesn't hurt to try your luck!



Important

1. If one parent cannot provide proof of employment, the child may attend a *Kita* for 6 hours per day. Please consider this when making your applications so that you don't make mistakes and reduce your chances of getting a spot.
2. When applying through the website, don't forget to put "**Priorität 1 (Priority 1)**" for **your preferred Kita** because this is one of the criteria considered in the distribution of places;
3. When you receive a *Zusage* (confirmation), you need to log in again and bestätigen (confirm) that you take the position;
4. If the child attends a Krippe and will soon turn three years old, they are **not** automatically transferred to *Kindergarten*. It is necessary to apply on the website again.

→ [Here](#) , you can find the [map of Kitas in Wolfsburg](#) .

The vacancies are distributed in 4 periods during the year, 3 to 4 months before the date the child will attend the *Kita*:

✓ August 1 - starting on November 01, December 01, and January 01;

✓ November 1 - for February 2, March 1, and April 1 starts;

✓ February 1 - starting on May 01, June 01, and July 01;

✓ April 15 - starting on August 1, September 1, and October 1 (on this date, the chance of getting a place is better because this is when children who turn six years old leave *Kindergarten* to go to elementary school).

Priority in the distribution of vacancies

Extreme cases (children under guardianship, complicated family problems, etc.);
Single mother or father with an employment/student relationship;
Both parents are employed/students;
Either the father or the mother is taking a course for re-employment or the Integrationskurs* (integration course) ;
Currently siblings enrolled in this institution;
Priority informed by the parents at the time of the vacancy request.

*Course offered by the Ministry of Migration and Refugees (BAMF), where you learn the German language..

- ***Krippe***

Openings at *Krippe* are usually very competitive, as there are few options. The classes are composed of up to 15 children, and a monthly fee is charged. However, the values are proportional to the family income, and there are discounts if siblings attend a *Krippe* simultaneously. Prices can be found by [clicking here](#).

Children under three years old are eligible to attend a *Krippe*; however, the state has no obligation to provide a place for them. Spots are distributed according to the criteria described above. If you can't get a place for your children at this age, one option is to look for a *Tagesmutter* (see below).

- ***Kindergarten***

From the age of 3, the state must provide a place for every child in *Kindergarten*. It is important to note that **the kid has the right, but it is not mandatory to attend; this decision belongs to the parents**. The distribution of these places follows the same criteria as described above. Therefore, if your children are eligible, they will receive a place! However, if they are not on the priority list, it doesn't mean they will get a Kindergarten of your choice.

The main focus of *Kindergarten* is on playing, experimenting, and relating to each other. In the last year, the children have a few hours per week of activities to prepare them for elementary school.

However, don't expect your child to learn how to read, do homework, or anything like that. Everything has its moment.

- ***Tagesmutter***

Tagesmutter is a person (usually a woman) who takes care of up to 5 children between the ages of 1 and 3. Usually, the parents bring their children to the residence of the *Tagesmutter* - only in isolated cases does she perform this work in the child's home. A *Tagesmutter* is a trained and certified professional who performs this function. Likewise, the home must fulfill the minimum requirements to receive children (space, furniture, adaptations for small children, safety items, etc.). In addition, there is a safety inspection so the person can perform this function.

The fee paid to a *Tagesmutter* is the same as that paid to a Krippe. However, the payment is not made directly to the *Tagesmutter*, but to the city hall of Wolfsburg, which is responsible for making the transfer.

To get the contact list of *Tagesmutter*, you should request it from the *Familienservice* of Wolfsburg:

Familienservice Wolfsburg e.V.
Porschestraße 76, 38440 Wolfsburg
+49 (0) 5361-8969690
info@familienservice-wolfsburg.de

The *Familienservice* also assists families in their search for *Krippe*, *Kindergarten*, and, in some cases, babysitters. If you have any difficulties in this regard, you can contact them and request an appointment.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Children must generally start at a *Grundschule* at the age of 6. It lasts four years, and in the 4th year, according to the child's performance, it will be defined as what type of school they will attend next.

In Wolfsburg, parents are allowed to decide in which school they wish to enroll their children. *Grundschule* schools allocate the students by place of residence (Preferably a school in the neighborhood, but this is not obligatory).

Each school has its class schedule. However, most schools have compulsory classes only in the morning and offer the possibility for children to stay in the afternoon if desired. This model is called Offene *Ganztagsschule* (see more details below).

In Wolfsburg, there are a few elementary schools that also have compulsory classes in the afternoon. These are called Teilgebundene and among them are GS Regenbogenschule, GS Laagberg, GS Fallersleben, GS Wohltberg, GS Erich-Kästner and Waldorfschule.

Read official information on this subject by, [clicking here](#).

Important terms relating to the *Grundschule*:

- **Muss-Kind:** children who turn six years old between October 2 and July 1 are required to enter school this year. Enrollment must be made one year before the child's 6th birthday, by May 1.
- **Flexi-Kind:** from 2018, parents whose child turns six between July 1 and September 30 can decide whether or not the child is mature enough to enter the school that year. This decision does not require justification but must be made by May 1. In addition, a written statement of what has been decided must be sent to the school.
- **Kann-Kind:** Children who turn six after October 2 can also be enrolled at school. In this case, the parents feel that their kids are ready to study. First, however, the school management decides whether to accept the enrollment.
- **Schulkindergarten:** children who are at the mandatory school age but for some particular developmental reason (either social or learning) are not yet ready to have the option to attend a Schulkindergarten. These are not affiliated with a Kindergarten but rather with an elementary school. These children also can stay one more year in Kindergarten (a decision made between parents and the school's pedagogical team). In Wolfsburg there are 5 Schulkindergarten: GS Regenbogenschule, GS Fallersleben, GS Hasenwinkel-Neindorf, GS Friedrich-von-Schiller-Schule e GS Alt-Wolfsburg.
- **Offene Ganztagsschule:** Parents can decide if and on which days of the week their children should stay in school in the afternoon. It does not have to be every day; However, once registered, the schools ask to avoid fluctuations in the child's pickup times. When there is a reason for leaving earlier than the agreed time, you must justify it and give a notice in advance.

- At the *Ganztagsschule*, children eat lunch, do their homework under supervision, and can participate in extracurricular activities, projects, or play.



Important

It is the children (not the parents!) who choose the extracurricular activities, according to their interests.

When finishing the 4th grade, a change of educational institution is required. But, first, parents can decide which school their children will attend. The teacher made that decision some years ago, but this rule has changed. Now (2022), parents can request that teachers give their suggestions by filling out and signing the appropriate form. This form remains in the child's file, and the schools receive the new requested assignment.



Important

It is possible to change the type of school if the child's performance justifies this change!

Weiterführende Schulen (secondary schools) – the most common types are:

- **Förderschule:** schools for children with special pedagogical needs;
- **Hauptschule:** from 5th to 8th grade, offers its students a **general education**. There is the possibility of attending the 10th grade, which is optional.
- **Oberschule:** A combination of Haupt- and Realschule. It is possible to study up to the 10th year at an Oberschule
- **Realschule:** from 5th to 10th grade, offering an **intermediate quality education** between Hauptschule and Gymnasium.
- **Integrierte Gesamtschule:** Combination of Haupt-, Realschule, and Gymnasium in a single school.

What defines the Abschluss (diploma to be received) is the duration in years of completed studies:

- 9 completed years are equivalent to a Hauptschule diploma;
- Students who obtain an average grade of 3 or higher may continue their studies to get a diploma equivalent to the Gymnasium.
- **Gymnasium:** from 5th grade to 12th or 13th grade, offers the **best quality education** and allows the child to attend an institution of higher education - university.

Teenagers who chose to end the Gymnasium in the 12th grade are called Fachhochschulreife. They do not have the right to take the Abitur (university entrance exam), but they can do some higher education courses at a Fachhochschule or start a professional course (more information below and in [Higher Education](#)).

Only students who finish the 13th grade are eligible to take the Abitur and pursue higher education at a Universität as well.

Official information is available at [Schulen in Wolfsburg](#).

Ausbildung (Professional-Technical Education)

Regardless of the high school diploma received, students can apply for a professional apprenticeship that combines theoretical classes and practical training in a company or agency related to the chosen profession.

The website [Ausbildung.de](#) offers many opportunities and tips for students who want to follow this path.

Higher Education

- ***Fachhochschule* or *Hochschule***

Fachhochschule or *Hochschule* are synonyms. Also known as Universities of Applied Sciences, they offer less variety of courses and differ from a *Universität* (university) mainly by the focus on practice. Here one can take classes in technical higher education, practically oriented and studies with a practical or applied orientation, determined by concrete requirements of professional life. Many of these courses are also offered at the *Universität*, but the *Fachhochschule* focuses more on the job market.

- ***Universität***

When you finish the 13th grade, you can study at a *Universität* (university). The various universities offer scientific, academic, and theoretical study and have a more comprehensive range of options (medical school can only be done, for example, at a *Universität*).



Source: Canva image repository.



Source: Canva's image repository.

- **Diploma Recognition**

If you have studied at a foreign university and want to work in Germany, it is quite relevant that you know whether your diploma is recognized and how to get it recognized.

First, you can check if the university where you have studied is a recognized institution and whether or not your degree is equivalent to a German one. To do this, go to:

- [Anabin;](#)
- [Länderhinweise / uni-assist e.V.](#)

In a second step, if you need to go through the recognition process to adjust your course schedule, go to the [Anerkennung-in-deutschland](#) website for profession-specific information. There you can find out how to get your diploma recognized and the requirements. There is also an indication of the professional counseling office.

Another way to obtain information about the recognition of your diploma is to visit the website *Berufskammer* (Regional Council) for your profession. To perform this search, use the following word combination:

Name of your **profession** + word "**kammer**" + **State** where you want to do the recognition process.

For example:

Architektenkammer Berlin
Ärztekammer Niedersachsen
Rechtsanwaltskammer Bayern

Most portals also provide information in English.

It is always important to check with the responsible departments in the region where you will do the validation process of your diploma, as there may be slight bureaucratic differences between them. Another option is to schedule counseling in one of these two entities in your region:

- [IQ Netzwerk](#);
- [Welcome Center](#).

To learn more, we list below some other sites that offer information about the subject:

- [Agentur für Arbeit](#) (information in German or English);
- [Kultur Ministerium de cada Bundesland](#) (the following link is from Niedersachsen);
- [BAMF – Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge – Anerkennung ausländischer Berufsabschlüsse](#). — You can also contact the BAMF via hotline: +49 (30) 1815 1111
- The [Make it in Germany](#) Website also offers information about work permits and highly demanded professions in Germany.

Tip: Social Networks



Searching on social networks for groups of professionals in your field who live in Germany can also be of great help. You can talk to other people who have already done professional recognition in the country and they can give you valuable tips.



Source: Canva's image repository.



Source: Canva's image repository.

German schools

It is essential to learn German while living in Germany. Speaking, expressing, and communicating well will make you more confident in solving any day-to-day problems and enable new friendships and a support network in this place that is so different from your home country.

There are many ways to study German: in language schools, through various apps and videos on YouTube, or on the Internet. It is up to you to find the most appropriate way for your moment.

On the [Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge](#) site, you can find the schools and courses in your region that are financed by the BAMF.

Listed below are some schools in the city that you can look into:

- [Volkshochschule Wolfsburg;](#)
- [GB Línguas Sprachschule;](#)
- [Berlitz Sprachschule Wolfsburg;](#)
- [Eszett Language Training;](#)
- [Bildungsvereinigung ARBEIT und LEBEN Niedersachsen Ost gGmbH;](#)
- [Inlingua Braunschweig;](#)
- [Oskar Kämmer Schule.](#)

It is worth noting that not all schools offer BAMF-funded courses. There are options for private tutors to be recommended when necessary.

Garbage separation

Recycling waste in Germany is a law; waste disposal is regulated nationwide, and there are fines for those who do not dispose of their trash correctly. As a result, dealing with waste is a daily exercise, and frequently, even people who have lived in Germany for many years have questions about it.

So it's worth knowing that the municipality provides an annual calendar with the collection dates for each type of waste on [its website](#).

Some pointers

Pfand

The term Pfand means to deposit in German. It works like a deposit. When you buy a beverage (that has Pfand), you pay extra for the bottle, **whether it is made of glass or plastic, they have different values**. Keep the bottles that have Pfand stored in your house and create the habit of taking them to the market. At the market, you can exchange **the bottles for some money, at specific machines or in some small markets at the check out**.

After inserting all your bottles into this machine, you will receive a ticket with the total amount to be redeemed. You can use this amount to "deduct" the value of your purchase at the store check out. To know which packaging is returnable, check if it says "*Mehrwegflasche*" and contains this symbol on the label.



Pfand symbol

Source: Canva's image repository.

FLASCHE	BOTTLE 	PFAND
Mehrweg-Bierflasche aus Glas (alle Größen)	Reusable glass beer bottle (all sizes)	8 cents
Mehrweg-Bierflasche mit Bügelverschluss	Reusable Clip-lock beer bottle	15 cents
Mehrweg-Mineralwasserflasche (Glas oder PET)	Reusable mineral water bottle (glass or PET)	15 cents
Mehrwegflaschen für Saft oder Softdrinks	Returnable bottles for juice or soft drinks	15 cents
manche 1,0-Liter-Weinflaschen	some 1.0 liter wine bottles	2 or 3 cents
alle Einwegflaschen und –dosen	all disposable bottles and cans	25 cents

Adapted source: <https://www.mehrweg.org/einkaufen/pfand/>



Important

Several types of bottles do not have Pfand, and they must be disposed of in the glass containers, along with the other types of glass (detailed below).

Glass container or glass disposal container

There are several glass disposal containers around the city. You can search for the nearest one in [this PDF file](#) for the location closest to your home. You can use this container for disposal, for example, of tomato sauce packaging, wine bottles, condiment bottles, jelly bottles, jams, etc.

The glass should be thrown away according to the glass color. You will always find three containers for glass disposal in white, brown, and green colors. In packages with unique colors, such as red or blue glass, the discard always occurs in the same container of the green glass.

There is also a time regulation for this glass disposal so that it will not disturb the neighbors with the noise. Always be aware of this: it is only allowed to discard glass on **working days, from 7 am to 8 pm.**

Batteries

In general, at the entrance of supermarkets and construction materials stores, there are boxes for disposal of batteries.

More information at Was-Wolfsburg.de.



Source: Canva's image repository.



Source: Canva's image repository.

List of allowed vs. not allowed

What is not allowed

NON-RECYCLABLE RESTMÜLL



- Ashes (cold)
- Vacuum cleaner bag
- Trash from sweeping the floor
- Small objects that no longer have a function, worn out
- Paper and sanitary towels, as well as diapers and sanitary napkins
- Dirty paper
- Scraps of wallpaper
- Erasers
- Porcelain
- Ceramics
- Fabric and leather
- Lighter
- Pencil, Pen
- Incandescent Bulb (non-economical)
- Diapers

- Biodegradable Garbage
- Old paper/cardboard
- Packaging of industrialized products
- Toxic substance
- Electronic waste
- Tile, brick, tile

BIODEGRADABLE GARBAGE BIOABFALL



- Vegetables and fruit
- Food scraps (hard, vegetable only)
- Coffee grounds and filter
- Vegetable and tea filter waste
- Eggshells and citrus fruits
- Paper towels (small amounts only)
- Flowers, leaves, roots
- Grass and twigs, logs (without soil)
- Plant remains and untreated wood

- Meat, fish
- Bone, spine
- Plastic bag
- Glass, metal
- Tissue paper

YELLOW TRASH BAG GELBER SACK



- Packaging, for example:
- Styrofoam tray (fruit and vegetable packaging)
- Shampoo bottle
- Plastic sheets, aluminum foil
- Snack bags
- Canned food
- Beverage bottles (no return - Pfand)
- Spray can (empty)
- TetraPak® packaging

- Glass and paper packaging
- Packaging with content
- Non-recyclable waste
- Biodegradable waste
- Toxic substance

GLASS ALTGLASS



- Glass packaging:
- Beverage bottles and canning jars
- Separated into:
- Clear, green and brown glass

Other glass colors belong to the green glass container (e.g. blue glass)

- Window glass
- Car glass
- Mirror
- Ceramic
- Incandescent and fluorescent light bulb

PROBLEMABFALL



- Fluorescent bulb
- Laboratory and household chemicals
- Old medicine
- Batteries
- Car battery
- Wood varnish
- Insecticide/Pesticide
- Spray can still with contents
- Oil-soiled equipment
- Condenser

- non-recyclable waste
- Bulk waste
- Asbestos
- Fibers (generally used for thermal insulation)

ELECTRONICS ELEKTRONIKSCHROTT



- Mobile collection point (only for people, not for companies):
- only electronic equipment up to 50 cm long, including lamp and light fixture (remove the lamp), as well as vacuum cleaner
- Wolfsburg disposal center (Entsorgungszentrum Wolfsburg):

All large household electronic equipment, from coffee machine to washing machine
Bulky electronic waste (collection by appointment)
Large household appliances, computers, monitors, compact hi-fi equipment from 50 cm in length

- Monitor
- Computer

CLOTHING AND SHOES ALTTEXTILIEN



- Clothing and shoes in good condition:
- Women's, men's, children's clothing
- Leather and animal skin clothing
- Shoes (put pairs together)
- Bed and table clothes
- Towel, dishcloth, floorcloth
- Underwear and socks
- Belt and bag
- Pillow, comforter

- Torn and dirty clothes and shoes
- Rubber boots and ski shoes

FURNITURE SPERMÜLL



- Ladder, Floor Stand
- Shutter, Venetian blind
- Baby carriage, car seat and baby seat
- Pet Carrier
- Suitcase, Basket
- Platform, mattress
- Parasol (small)
- Surfboard
- Terrarium
- Tennis table
- Tent (small)

- Garbage in bags and boxes
- Paper, glass, and old clothes
- comforter, cage, wallpaper, lamp, light fixtures
- Remnants of construction material: tile, stone, brick, cement
- Objects that have been fixed to the house: bathtub, wooden board, ceiling and wall panels
- Box, window, plate glass, boiler, plywood, wall building plates, awning, oil tank, rain water container, steel fibre, toilet, door, sink
- Construction equipment and machinery, fences, palisade

Source: https://www.was-wolfsburg.de/pdf/kleines_abfall_abc.pdf

Aquarela

Frauengruppe e.V.

Welcome to Wolfsburg & Surroundings

Insurance

Germany is known by many as the country of insurance. Here we list some of them. It is relevant, however, to note that before signing a contract, it is crucial to be aware that the values depend on what is included in the policy and can vary a lot. Therefore, get quotes and ask all your questions before hiring your insurance.

Privatehaftpflichtversicherung (Civil liability insurance)

The insurance of civil liability is popularly called "clumsy insurance." It covers a loss caused by you (or a family member - if included in the policy) to a person or an entity, so it is highly recommended to have one. Here are some examples of coverage under this type of policy:

- You go to dinner at a friend's house and knock over a glass of wine on his Persian rug;
- You are riding your scooter, and suddenly you bump into an old lady. She falls, breaks her hip, becomes bedridden and dependent on care;
- Your son bumps into a shelf in a store and breaks several crockery sets.

There are several types of liability insurance, such as business insurance for professionals and automobile insurance, which insure against third-party damage in these areas.

Privatehaftpflichtversicherung does not cover damage caused during work. Therefore, you must have liability insurance if you are **self-employed** or work as a **freelancer** in Germany. However, if you are an employee of a company, this insurance is not necessary.

Rechtsschutzversicherung (Legal protection insurance)

The legal protection insurance covers your legal costs if you sue someone or if you are sued. This insurance will not cover any damages you may have to pay if you lose a case. It only covers lawyer's fees and court costs.

Hausratversicherung (Household Insurance)

This insurance covers damaged **furniture in your house** caused by external factors: fire, water damage, flood, theft. In general, It covers furniture, appliances, and computers. Some policies can even include the theft of bicycles outside the home.

This insurance does not cover damage caused by the residents, natural wear and tear, or manufacturing defects.

Kfz-Versicherung (car insurance) - mandatory

Automobile insurance is compulsory for all cars in Germany. It is divided into three categories:

- ✓ *Haftpflicht*: covers only damage to vehicles or property of third parties;
- ✓ *Teilkasko*: covers, in addition to the damage to third parties, some extra damage such as glass breakage, theft, natural phenomena, damage to cables caused by rodents or hit by wild animals, etc.;
- ✓ *Vollkasko*: it covers damage to vehicles or property of others, damage to your car, and damage caused by acts of vandalism.

Shopping

Curiosities about markets

In most markets, you need a coin (50 cents or 1 Euro) to release the shopping cart. As you return the cart to the appropriate spot, you can get your coin back.

Markets do not offer free bags. You can either bring your own or buy them at the cashier when you pay for your purchases. The cheapest versions usually cost 10 cents.



Important

Except for **convenience stores in some gas stations** and some kiosks, there is **no open commerce on Sundays**. Plan to buy everything you will need by Saturday.

Second-hand purchases

Buying and selling second-hand goods in Germany is very common. *Flohmärkte* (flea markets) are frequently organized around the cities. These fairs can also have sales of specific products such as children's items.

Advertising is usually done through posters around town or on social networks.

Another widely used way to buy and sell second-hand goods is the website (or app) [eBay](#) and eBay Kleinanzeigen where you can buy from small items up to cars and houses. There are even many ads with items that are being donated, which are marked with the term “zu verschenken”. It's worth keeping an eye out for!

Payment methods

Not all establishments accept payment in EC-Karte or Karte (debit or credit card). If you do not have cash in your wallet, it is always a good idea to ask if it is possible to pay with a card beforehand.

There are several alternatives for online purchases for those without a credit card: PayPal, AmazonPay, Klarna, GiroPay, PayDirekt, and Sofortüberweisung, among others.

Where to Buy Products from Other Cultures

When you move to Germany, your taste buds may miss the flavors of your home country. So below there is a short list of stores and websites that sell international culinary items:

Stores

Rohayhu Mateeland (south-american products)

Lange Strasse 52, 38448 Wolfsburg
E-mail: mateeland@gmail.com
Tel.: +49 (17) 6848 20018

Guto's Pão de Queijo (frozen cheese bread Brazilian style)

Instagram: [@lindy_pao_de_queijo](#)
Tel./WhatsApp: +49 (15) 9016 33836

Websites

- [Ponto Brasil & Latino](#): industrialized products and imported beverages;
- [Brazuskas](#): Brazilian frozen snacks and sweets, with deliveries to all Germany.
- [Amazon.de](#): you can find practically everything on Amazon, including imported products from various parts of the world. The prices, however, can vary a lot.

Research before buying

Turkish, African and Asian shops

Turkish and Asian markets also tend to have many products that appeal to the foreigner's palate. Frequently, there are similar products such as black beans, cassava, tapioca powder (in German, called Tapioca Stärke), cornmeal, cream cheese, custard cream, etc. Sometimes the items come actually from the country of origin.

There are plenty of these markets around the city. Some of them are at the following addresses:

- Asia Lebensmittel-Shop – Kleiststraße 3A, 38440 Wolfsburg;
- Bamboo – Kaufhofpassage 8, 38440 Wolfsburg Tel.: +49 (0) 5361 3869338;
- Wolf Markt – Poststraße 40, 38440 Wolfsburg Tel.: +49 (0) 5361 2752367;
- Istanbul Supermarkt – Rothenfelder Str. 3, 38440 Wolfsburg Tel.: +49 (0) 5361 2727966;
- Euro Bazar – Seilerstraße 12, 38440 Wolfsburg Tel.: +49 (0) 1763 1135613;
- Market Klass Wolfsburg – Schlesierweg 24, 38440 Wolfsburg Tel.: +49 (0) 5361 385156.

Post– Deutsche Post/DHL

Germans are still used to using everything on paper and sending letters through the post office. Always check your mailbox at home as you will receive some important correspondence.

This service is high-speed and efficient. You can find branches and their opening hours by visiting the [Deutsche Post website](#).

If you are not at home, when the post-service delivers a package to you, it is common to leave it with a neighbor. However, the opposite can also happen: the delivery person may ask if you accept to receive a package for your neighbor. In this case, receiving is not obligatory! It is up to you to decide whether you want to do this courtesy or not.

If not delivered, the package will be waiting to be picked up at the nearest post office. In either case, the delivery man will leave a notification in your mailbox with directions.



Important

When you pick up your package at an agency, don't forget to bring a document with a photo and your address. They might check it.

If it is your preference, you can create a profile [on this website](#) and predefine what you would like to do with your packages when you are not at home. (leave it with a particular neighbor, in the garage/yard/gateway, take it to the agency, etc.). Thus, this will become the standard.

There are other courier (package delivery) services in Germany. The biggest ones are DHL, Hermes, DPD, and UPS. They all work likewise as described above.

Benefits for families with children

The German government, to encourage the increase of the young and working population in the country, offers benefits to families with children. Among these are:

Mutterschutz

Maternity license for employed women, lasting six weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth. During this period, the woman has the right to receive her full salary.

Therefore, informing your employer as soon as possible about the probable delivery date is advisable.

Elternzeit

Parental license for legal guardians who are gainfully employed. This benefit is entitled to:

- People who reside in the same household as the baby;
- who is responsible for the baby's care;
- exercises a paid activity for less than 30 hours per week during the license.

The total duration of the Elternzeit can be up to 36 months, which does not need to be consecutive. This period can be divided into different models until the child is eight.

However, the paid period (in which the parents receive the money) does not have the same duration! That can be a maximum of 12 to 14 months (depending on whether only one or both parents take the license), and can only be taken until the child is three years old.

Elterngeld

The parents receive this remuneration after the birth of the baby.

If only one parent takes the license, they receive it for 12 months. However, if both parents share the Elterngeld months, they can divide the period in different ways totaling 14 months when added together.

It is not necessary to be employed to receive Elterngeld.

The amount received is calculated according to the salary 12 months before the baby's birth. Those unemployed at the time of the baby's birth receive 300 Euros/month. For multiple babies, 300 euros/month per baby is added.

How to request *Elterngeld*

To apply, follow the steps below:

- Fill out the [Elterngeld Application Form](#);
- For foreign parents, fill out the form and request the [Ausländerbehörde - responsible for your visa](#);
- Attach the Bescheinigung des Arbeitgebers (declaration of the employer, in case of employment).
- Attach the original German birth certificate - a specific copy for the Elterngeld application received at the registry of the child's birth;
- *Bescheinigung from the Krankenversicherung (health insurance) proving the non-payment of maternity pension*;
- Copy of the European ID or passport + Aufenthaltstitel (residence permit) of the parent.

It's advisable to go in person to the address below and ask the clerk to check if any corrections can be made before the documents are delivered.

Geschäftsbereich Jugend
Pestalozziallee 1^a
38440 Wolfsburg

Kindergeld

Germany offers financial support to all parents with children under 18. The allowance also applies to unemployed children between the ages of 21 and 25.

The amounts received each month are:

- for the first two children: 219 euros per child;
- for the third: 225 euros;
- for each additional child: 250 euros.

Applying for Kindergeld is simple, and the forms are at [Kindergeld.org](https://www.kindergeld.org).

To apply, please complete the following documents:

1. *Haushaltsbescheinigung: you should preferably complete this form in the mother's name. The mother's Steuer-ID number must be written on the top left-hand side. If the mother is not in Germany, the form should be filled out with the father's data. After completing the form, you must request a stamp from the city office where you registered your residence. You must send the original completed and stamped form.*
2. Arbeitgeberbescheinigung (declaration issued by the employer stating that the parent of the child works in the company) or a copy of the work contract;
3. Copy of the children's birth certificate with a certified translation;
4. Copy of the children's passport;
5. Completed Antrag Kindergeld form;
6. Completed Anlage Kind form (one for each child);
7. Completed Anlage Ausland form.

Documents should be mailed to:

Familienkasse Niedersachsen-Bremen
Magdeburger Tor 18
38350 Helmstedt

Job Market

Agentur für Arbeit (Office of Assistance for Job Search)

For people who are already in Germany and are looking for a job, the first place to search is the Agentur für Arbeit. In the past, it was known as the Arbeitsamt. This institution supports people looking for a job, and they often offer coach training, competency tests, and help with the motivation letter.

To find the Agentur für Arbeit in your region, use the following search terms:

Arbeitsagentur + state or Landkreis where you are registered

Remember that the Agentur für Arbeit is a support institution for the job search, not an agency that will find a job for you. Instead, they will help you overcome the labor market's obstacles. Don't expect them to look for vacancies; they will even suggest some options, but the intention is for the one looking for the job to be proactive and look for jobs using the tools and consulting offered. So they use the famous phrase "Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe," which means "help the person to help themselves" (equivalent to the saying "don't give the person a fish, but teach him how to fish").

Many people are reluctant to contact the Agentur für Arbeit because of myths and frustrated expectations reported by others. Therefore, it is worthwhile to register as an Arbeitsuchend (person looking for a job) and have your own experience.

The Agentur für Arbeit has a platform known as Jobbörse, with jobs all over Germany. German companies make extensive use of online job platforms to fill their vacancies.

Job search sites

Some of these platforms are:

- [Step Stone](#): it is one of the largest sites for job search;
- [Monster](#): this platform, in addition to job openings, also has valuable information on the subject Bewerbung;
- [Jobware](#): German platform, focused on specialists and management level positions;
- [Your Firm](#): website that focuses on vacancies in small and medium-sized companies. Large companies and temporary employment agencies are not listed;
- [meinestadt.de](#): It has a specific diversity in the search function - you can search by area/department, company, and even workload;
- [StudentJob](#): Specializes in young academics and professionals. It offers full-time positions in Germany and abroad. For this group, look for Nebenjob and Ferienjob;
- [WeAreDevelopers](#): Focuses on software developers;
- [GermanTechJobs.de](#): an employment platform that focuses on specialists in the field of IT (information technology) and software specialists;
- [Jobstairs.de](#): much more than just a job search platform, it has some beneficial functions on the topic of Bewerbung and career;
- [Unicum.de](#): focuses on vacancies for school students, universities, and young professionals;
- [stellenanzeigen.de](#): small but a well-structured platform;
- [NebenJob.de](#): as the name says, it is a portal for those who are looking for nebenjobs, mini-jobs or work during school vacations;
- [Indeed](#): one of the top 3 job search platforms.

Source: [Karrierebibel.de](#)

Places that support women in finding a job

Some places support, in particular, women interested in returning to the job market. Below there is a list of some of them and their respective contact persons.

Koordinierungsstelle Frau und Wirtschaft Wolfsburg-Gifhorn-Helmstedt

Ansprechpartner/in: Bettina Klim

Straße: Schillerstraße 6

Ort: 38440 Wolfsburg

Telefon: +49 (0) 5361 8972880

E-mail: frauundwirtschaft@wolfsburg-ag.com

Webseite: www.frauundwirtschaft.de

Sassenburg Unternehmerfrauen im Handwerk

Ansprechpartner/in: Erika Lüder

Straße: Triangeler Hauptstraße 73

Ort: 38524 Sassenburg

Telefon: +49 (0) 5371 6961

E-mail: karlolack@t-online.de

Webseite: www.ufh-niedersachsen.de

Frauenzentrum Frauen (T)räume

Ansprechpartner/in: Petra Döring

Straße: Braunschweiger Straße 15

Ort: 38518 Gifhorn

Telefon: +49 (0) 5371 14360

E-mail: info@frauenzentrum-gf.de

Webseite: www.frauenzentrum-gf.de

Braunschweig Lokales Bündnis für Familie Braunschweig

Ansprechpartner/in: Melanie Tiffert

Straße: Am Fallersleber Tore 3-4

Ort: 38100 Braunschweig

Telefon: +49 (0) 5313 896998

E-mail: lbff-bs@online.de

Webseite: www.lokales-buendnis-fuer-familie-bs.de

Braunschweig Beratungs- und Koordinierungsstelle Frau und Beruf

Ansprechpartner/in: Dietlinde Tartler

Straße: Heydenstraße 2

Ort: 38100 Braunschweig

Telefon: +49 (0) 5312 412324

Fax: +49 (0) 5312 412313

E-mail: dietlinde.tartler@vhs-braunschweig.de

Webseite: www.frau-beruf.de

VHS Braunschweig

Koordinierungsstelle Frau und Beruf

Ansprechpartner/in: Songuel Wojcikiewicz

Straße: Heydenstraße 2

Ort: 38100 Braunschweig

Telefon: +49 (0) 5312 412315

Fax: +49 (0) 5312 412313

E-mail: songuel.wojcikiewicz@vhs-braunschweig.de

Webseite: www.vhs-braunschweig.de

Churches

In Wolfsburg, there are churches of various religious affiliations: Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Adventist, and Baptist, among others. It is also possible to attend assemblies and services in several languages.

On the [city's official website](#), you can see the location and the names of the churches in your region.

Transportation

Here in Wolfsburg, you will find various means of transportation. We have listed below the main ones:

Bicycles/Bikes

The bicycle is a trendy means of transportation because there are routes throughout the city that make it easy for cyclists to drive safely. The [online bicycle](#) city map shows all the traffic signs, i.e., traffic lights, crosswalks, and islands/center corners. You can also see bicycle and sidewalk facilities, bicycle parking lots, as well as dealerships or repair shops, and of course, various leisure routes. Attention - Bicycles must respect the traffic rules and be in good driving condition, with bicycle Bell, working brakes and lights, if driving at night.

Bus

The company responsible for the bus fleet is WVG (Wolfsburger Verhkersbetriebe), with a fleet of 100 vehicles divided into 22 lines throughout the city.

You can buy tickets on the bus, at WVG stores, Fahrkartenautomaten and regional kiosks.

Children between the ages of 6 and 14 have a reduced fare. Children under six years of age do not pay if accompanied by a responsible adult. In Braunschweig dogs do not pay for the fare.

You can find the Fahrpläne (route) of each line via the [website](#). You can also consult the ways via mobile application (VRB-Fahrplan-App), which you can download in [Android](#) or [iOS](#).

It is also possible to make a more accurate search (with your route, which line you need to commute, the time of each bus, and the fare) by accessing the WVG website. Finally, it is worth saying that the standard ticket is generally valid for some time (about 90 minutes from the time you validate it inside the bus).

Train

It is possible to go by train from Wolfsburg to many places in Germany. Tickets can be purchased at the train station, at the Deutsche Bahn ticket office (DB-Reisezentren), or from the Fahrkartenautomaten (ticket vending machines). There is also the possibility of purchasing online at [Bahn.de](https://www.bahn.de).

The city's central station is called Hauptbahnhof (Hbf) and is located at the following address: Willy-Brandt-Platz 3, 38440. There is also another station located in the Fallersleben neighborhood at the address: Am Bahnhof 35 38442. You can plan your route with the Deutsche Bahn directions on the [Deutsche Bahn](https://www.bahn.de) website.

E-Scooter

Another popular way to get around the city is by scooter. You will find several on the streets, where people usually park them after use. To ride a scooter, have the company app on your cell phone and register yourself. You are typically charged an amount for each minute used. One of the leading scooter companies is [Lime](https://www.lime.com). Through the app, you can locate the available ones.



Source: Canva's image repository.



Source: Canva's image repository.

List of useful words

We have organized below a list of useful German words for people who are immigrating. All terms have been arranged in alphabetical order.

Absage: negative answer

Agentur für Arbeit: employment office

Altglas: glass waste

Altpapier: paper waste

Alttextilien: Old textiles

Anmeldung: registration

Arbeitgeberbescheinigung (= Bescheinigung des Arbeitgebers): Application issued by the employer, stating that the person is working for the company

Arbeitsuchend: person looking for a job

Ausbildung: Professional education

Aufenthaltstitel: Name of the document that entitles the person to a permanent residence permit in Germany

Ausländerbehörde: Responsible office for issuing a residence permit in Germany

Bescheinigung des Arbeitgebers: Declaration of the employer

Betreuungsanfrage: Request for care/support

Bioabfall: Biowaste

Bundesländer: federal states

EC-Karte: debit card

Elektronikschrott: electronics

Elterngeld: remuneration received by parents after the birth of their child

Elternzeit: parental license for legal guardians who are gainfully employed

Erste Hilfe Kurs: first aid course

Evangelische Kirche: Protestant Lutheran Church

Fahrkartenautomaten: ticket vending machines

Fahrschule: driving school

Fachhochschule or Hochschule: Higher education institution

Finanzamt: tax authorities

Flohmarkt: flea market

Führerschein: driver's license

Führerscheinstelle: responsible authorities for the driver's license

Gelber Sack: yellow bag

Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung (GKV): state insurance

Glascontainer: container for disposing of glass

Grundschule: equivalent to what would be elementary school (final years) and high school in Brazil

Hausarzt: family doctor or general practitioner

Hausratversicherung: Home contents insurance or household insurance

(Das) Hilfetelefon: helpline for women in emergency situations

Identifikationsnummer or Steuer-ID: tax identification number

Integrationskurs: Integration course offered by the Ministerie für Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

Kfz-Versicherung: Mandatory automobile insurance

Kindergarten: School for children from 3 years old

Kindergeld: financial support offered to all parents with children under the age of 18. The allowance also applies to unemployed children between the ages of 21 and 25.

Kirchensteuer: Church tax

Kita (short for Kindertagesstätte): Krippe + Kindergarten

Krankenversicherung: health insurance

Krippe: School for children under 3 years old

Mehrwegflasche: Returnable bottle

Meldebehörde: registration office

Meldebescheinigung: certificate of registration

Mutterschutz: Maternity leave for employed women

Pfand: bottle deposit/deposit

Postleitzahl - PLZ: postal address code (ZIP code)

Private Haftpflichtversicherung: private liability insurance, popularly called clumsy insurance

Private Krankenversicherung (PKV): private health insurance

Problemabfall: toxic waste

Rechtsschutzversicherung: legal protection insurance

Restmüll: non-recyclable waste

Rezeptfrei: free of prescription

Rundfunkbeitrag: radio and TV tax

Sehtest für Führerschein: eye examination for driver's license

Solidaritätszuschlag: solidarity tax for east Germany

Sozialabgaben: social security contributions

Sozialversicherungsnummer: social security number

Spermüll: bulky waste (e.g. furniture)

Steuerklasse: income tax class

Tagesmutter: person qualified to care for a small group of children between the ages of 1 and 3

Umschreibung: process of transferring a document

Universität: university

Zimmer: rooms (word used for living room and bedrooms)

Zusage: Confirmation

Zusatzkrankenversicherung: supplementary insurance

Final remarks

We recommend reading the guidebook ***Willkommen in Deutschland – Informationen für Zuwanderinnen und Zuwanderer*** produced by the [Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge](#).

If you have any questions, updates, or suggestions, don't hesitate to get in touch with us through the channels below.

Aquarela Frauengruppe e.V.

bei Haus der Kulturen Braunschweig e.V.
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We want to emphasize the importance of joining and making donations to continue this voluntary work that supports and welcomes newly arrived families in our region. To enter, become a volunteer, or make a donation, please visit : [AquarelaFrauenGruppe.org](https://www.aquarelafrauengruppe.org).



This Welcome Book was developed by Aquarela Frauengruppe e.V.

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