

Voluntary Social Year (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr – FSJ) and Federal Volunteers Service (Bundesfreiwilligen Dienst – BFD),

What are the FSJ and BFD?

The Voluntary Social Year (FSJ) offers young people between the ages of 16 and 26 the opportunity to do something good for themselves and for other people in their community while gaining work experience. The programme lasts at least 6 months, and most often 12 months.

The BFD is an option for people over the age of 27. Vocational training is not required.

Structure of the FSJ and BFD

Three “parties” are always involved in an FSJ:

the volunteer (Freiwillige/-r), the placement (Einsatzstelle – the place where you would like to work) and the supporting organisation (Träger) – such as a church, charitable organisation, the German Red Cross, sports club, refugee support group or hospital.

During the FSJ, each of these three parties has different responsibilities to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

Placements: The FSJ is a full-day, predominantly hands-on assistance, particularly in the following areas:

- Helping at institutions for the elderly,
- Helping disabled people,
- Helping children and young people,
- Helping at healthcare institutions
- Cultural institutions

Note: In exceptional cases, the BFD can also be done through half days (20-hour week).

The FSJ / BFD offer:

- a chance to explore careers and get to know different fields of social work
- a chance to see how well you are suited for social work
- a chance to develop and improve your language and professional skills
- a chance to get to know a different professional activity

Benefits

- Career and language-skills development
- A money allowance
- Room and board
- For recognised refugees receiving ALG II benefits, the earnings will be deducted up to 200 euros per month (tax-exempt money allowance)
- Tax-exempt public insurance for healthcare, pension benefits, accidents, unemployment and nursing care.

- Parents are also eligible for child benefits (Kindergeld)

Requirements for participation

- FSJ: Between the ages of 15 and 26 at the time of application
- BFD: Older than 26 years old
- Compulsory education fulfilled
- Identification document: "Permission to take up employment" ("Aufnahme einer Beschäftigung gestattet")

Discuss your plans with your respective Immigration Office before applying.

Applying

- You have several decisions to make:

Which field do you want to work in?

Which supporting organisation do you want to work for?

Where do you want your placement to be?

- The supporting organisations (BFD: placement) have different application processes – please see the links.
- Get in touch with the placement or supporting organisation as soon as possible (by email or telephone), at least 6-9 months before the planned start date in August/September of that year
- Applications with application forms can be submitted all year round

Looking for a placement/supporting organisation:

FSJ: www.fsj-baden-wuerttemberg.de

BFD: <http://www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de/>

Local counselling – FSJ

- City of Schwäbisch Hall
- Federal Employment Agency
- AWO
- Caritas
- Diakonie

BFD counselling for the SHA region:

Mr Rainer Paul

Ebertstr. 17a

76135 Karlsruhe

Telephone: 0721 8301202

Fax: 0721 8301203

Mobile: 0172 2431527

Email: rainer.paul@bafza.bund.de

BFD counselling for Germany as a whole:

Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben (Federal Office for Families and Civic Activities)

Sibille-Hartmann-Straße 2-8

50969 Köln

Telephone: 0221 3673-0

Fax: 0221 3673-4661

Email: service@bafza.bund.de

Internet FSJ:

www.fsj-baden-wuerttemberg.de

www.ev-freiwilligendienste.de

www.pro-fsj.de

Internet BFD

www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de