



Information Sheet for the Special Programme Federal Volunteer Service pertaining to Refugees

Section 5 of the Asylum Procedure Expedition Act has supplemented the German Federal Volunteer Service Act (*Bundesfreiwilligendienstgesetz*) with Section 18, Federal Volunteer Service pertaining to Refugees. The supplement is in force for a limited period up to 31 December 2018.

Up to 10,000 agreements pertaining to refugees are permitted per year. The first agreements may be concluded for assignments starting on 01.12.2015.

In deviation from the regular Federal Volunteer Service the following special provisions shall apply to this service:

Conclusion of an agreement

The Federal Agency may conclude an agreement from the special programme

- if the job description by the assignment location relates to the support of persons entitled to be granted asylum, persons under international protection pursuant to Directive 2011/95/EU, or asylum-seekers
or
- if persons entitled to be granted asylum, persons under international protection pursuant to Directive 2011/95/EU, or asylum-seekers who are expected to achieve lawful and long-term residence status join the Federal Volunteer Service. These groups of persons will hereinafter be referred to jointly as “refugees”.

In the case of asylum seekers from a safe country of origin pursuant to Section 29a of the German Asylum Procedure Act (*Asylgesetz*) lawful and long-term residence status is not to be expected; these persons may therefore not conclude a Federal Volunteer Service agreement.

Safe countries of origin are (as of 24.10.2015):

Albania	Macedonia (former Yugoslavia)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro
Ghana	Senegal
Kosovo	Serbia

Age and working times

Volunteers must be of full age.

Working a part-time assignment of more than 20 hours per week is permissible also for persons under 27 years of age.

Areas of assignment

Volunteers will be assigned tasks related to the support of refugees. Assignment areas related to refugees are, for example:

- Assistance and support for refugees in finding shelter and provisions (e.g. refugee camps, accommodation etc.),
- Immediate support and help for refugees to find their way in society and integrate into everyday life (e.g. as integration adviser, accompanying refugees to local authority offices and doctors' appointments, as translator and/or interpreter, etc.),
- Assistance and support for refugees in the area of education (e.g. childcare institutions, schools, adult education, etc.),

- Assistance and support for refugees in leisure time activities with a focus on integration (sports, culture, youth work, etc.),
- Coordination and organisation of civil society action for the benefit of refugees (e.g. sorting and distributing donations, distributing food, planning volunteer rotas, etc.).

Refugees may be assigned all permitted work in the approved assignment location.

Assignment locations (approval, increase in number of volunteers and assignment extension)

New assignment locations may be approved for the special programme. The appropriate applications must be submitted and approved in good time prior to the planned assignment; they will be processed as a matter of priority. Existing approved assignment locations may authorise new volunteer positions pertaining to refugees, or have their area of assignment extended. Approvals, increases in number of positions and assignment extensions will be time-limited to a period of three years.

Secondment of volunteers

Volunteers may be seconded by their approved assignment location to a different – including non-approved – reliable institution for the common good which pertains to refugees. Secondment to institutions without a focus on the common good – e.g. surveillance, catering or cleaning services – is not permitted.

Secondment is conditional upon giving volunteers extensive information in advance and obtaining their consent. The assignment location's obligations to the volunteers shall continue unchanged.

Payments from the Federal Volunteer Service

Payments from the Federal Volunteer Service (allowance and, where applicable, benefits in kind) may be deducted from other payments and/or claims.

In particular, payments from the Federal Volunteer Service will be deducted in accordance with Section 7 of the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*).

Recipients of such payments have to check with the competent authority/the responsible funding institution to what extent the payments from the Federal Volunteer Service will be deducted from other payments.

Pedagogical support

All volunteers in the special programme will have special pedagogical support. Each central office will organise its own special pedagogical support. In the Federal Volunteer Service pertaining to Refugees, the quality and scope of the pedagogical support must comply with the high standards of the educational days provided under the regular Federal Volunteer Service.

This support may take the form of seminars as well as other appropriate educational and supporting provisions.

The following must be ensured:

- Competent assignment instruction in the assignment location
- Assignment-oriented support
- An obligatory reflection seminar expected to be a five-day seminar for volunteers under 27 and two days' reflection for volunteers over 27
- Where applicable a one- to four-week German course for refugees, depending on language abilities This should take place at the start of the assignment but may where appropriate take place alongside the assignment.

The "Framework Directive for Pedagogical Support in the Federal Volunteer Service under Special Consideration of Seminar Work and the Personnel Used" ("*Rahmenrichtlinie für die pädagogische Begleitung im Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Seminararbeit und des dabei eingesetzten Personals*") and the Directive on Section 17 of the

Federal Volunteer Service Act (*Bundesfreiwilligendienstgesetz* – BFDG) (Reimbursement of Expenses) have been supplemented in accordance with Section 18 BDFG.

Supplement to the agreement

All Federal Volunteer Service agreements pertaining to refugees will include detail in the form of a supplement.

This will explain that special conditions are observed and that a work permit from the competent authority has been provided for refugees.

Besides, certain information will be required:

- about the volunteer
- about the assignment area's relevance to refugees
- on secondment.