



Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen
und Jugend



Youth Voluntary Services

Two ways to open up new perspectives

Voluntary Social Service Year

Voluntary Ecological Service Year

Voluntary Social Service Year (*Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, FSJ*)

Voluntary Ecological Service Year (*Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr, FÖJ*)

What's it about and what will I gain from Youth Voluntary Service?

Youth Voluntary Services offer young people and young adults the chance to develop new prospects for their own future and to do something good for others and for society.

During the FSJ or FÖJ, you can gather extensive practical experience in a work area of your choice. It will offer you an initial insight into everyday working life and give you the opportunity to discover and contribute your own personal strengths and interests.

A FSJ or FÖJ will upgrade your CV!

Volunteers can be given a skills certificate at the end of their year, if they wish. Potential employers value any voluntary commitment on the part of applicants very highly, not least because volunteers have already had a taste of working life. This thus improves your chances of finding a training position. Voluntary service can also have advantages when applying for university or college places.

Do I come within the target group?

The FSJ and the FÖJ are aimed at young people between the ages of 16 and 26, irrespective of gender, religion, type of school leaving exam or nationality. Both services are open to foreigners already living in Germany and to young people who come here specifically for this purpose ("incomers").





Service period

You will generally spend 12 months in the Youth Voluntary Services, or 18 months at most. Exceptionally, this period can be shortened to 6 months or extended to 24 months. Volunteers have a statutory right to holiday (at least 24 days holiday, for example, with a 12-month service period).

FSJ/FÖJ-volunteers essentially work full-time.

An overview of work areas

You can choose from the following areas of work:



Social Sector

e.g. after-school facility, youth club, facility for elderly or disabled people, emergency services, support for the homeless, hospital



Ecological sector

e.g. bird sanctuary, national park, environmental education centre



Culture

e.g. museum, theatre project, cultural association, archaeological dig, preservation of historic monuments



Education

e.g. homework supervision, tuition project, school, open all-day school



Sport

e.g. sports association, children's exercise group, sporting leisure facilities



Integration and inclusion

e.g. inclusion of people with disabilities, integration of people with

Where will I find the right place to work?

Every work place is assigned to a recognised provider who can provide overall information about the areas of work, the application process and additional formalities.

The contact details of providers are available at www.pro-fsj.de for the FSJ and www.foej.de for the FÖJ. You will find a general list of all the contact points on the web page of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth at www.bmfsfj.de/blob/96722/4a92c8ad6b30affc1f2c27cad5ded894/VSSY-foej-anlaufstellen-data.pdf.

Further information:

If you have any basic questions, you can also contact the "Youth Voluntary Services Centre" at the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions: jfd-servicestelle@bafza.bund.de. www.jugendfreiwilligendienste.de also offers further information about the FSJ and FÖJ. It is gradually being translated into English.

What is the difference from "normal" work?

The training days are an important element of the FSJ/FÖJ, and the number of training days depends on the length of service. If the service period is a year, you would have a total of 25 training days.

The training days are generally offered as week-long seminars. That means that the volunteers travel together for several days to a place where they learn, eat and even sleep together. The subject areas covered in these seminars vary considerably and are often chosen jointly with the volunteers or designed partly by the volunteers.

Training days are work time, so you do not need to use your holidays to attend. The place where you work as a volunteer will release you for the seminars. Travel costs, food and accommodation are paid for.

During your entire FSJ/FÖJ, an education expert will be on hand to support you.



Useful information



Who can take part?

Anyone who has completed full-time compulsory schooling and is under the age of 27.

People who have had to flee from their own countries and who do not have any proof of their school education can provide a credible written declaration of their school career instead.

A knowledge of German is not necessary in every case. Please find out beforehand from the workplace and provider what language skills are necessary.

Incomers: Volunteers who come to Germany to take part in a voluntary service must provide proof beforehand that they have the means to live in Germany.

In order to enter Germany, people from most third-party states will also need in addition a national visa in the form of a work visa and also a residence permit to stay in Germany.

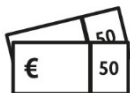
Access to FSJ/FÖJ for refugees

Recognised asylum seekers who have received a positive notification from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees may basically pursue employment without limitation and thus start a FSJ/FÖJ without special permission from the foreigners authorities.

For people who are in an ongoing asylum process (permission to remain) or who hold a temporary suspension of deportation, the determining factor is whether the permit from the foreigners authority to take up employment has been granted. Approval from the Employment Agency is not necessary.

How much money does a volunteer receive?

All volunteers receive pocket money during their service. Accommodation, food and work clothing may be provided or reimbursed financially.



Social security

You have social security insurance in the FSJ and FÖJ. This is particularly important if you become ill or have an accident.



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