

Guidelines for Refugees with Disabilities



LEGAL NOTICE

This pamphlet was created by the Brandenburg State Council for Integration (Landesintegrationsbeirat Brandenburg) as part of the temporary working group “Refugees with Disabilities” 2021–2023 based on research from a study group at the Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau.

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Guidelines for Refugees with Disabilities



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1. Are you a refugee?



Have you left your **home country** involuntarily?

↑

For example because there is a war there or you are unable to live freely because you have a different religion, language or political opinion.

Yes No



AND:

Do **you personally** or does a **member of your family** have a disability or impairment?



Yes No

If you answered “**YES**” to **both those questions**, this pamphlet can help you. As a **refugee with a disability**, you have special **rights** and **access to support** in Germany.

- ! **According to the German Constitution, nobody may suffer a**
- **disadvantage because of a disability.**

People with a disability have the same **right to full and effective inclusion and participation** in society as people without disabilities.

Participation

Participation means:
partaking und being included

Opposite:
to be excluded

We want to support you and help make your **first steps** here in Brandenburg easier.

Below, you will find helpful
» **information**,
» **tips** and
» **where to go for advice.**

2. What is a disability?

Disability

A person has a disability if their health has been impaired for longer than 6 months.

There are lots of different impairments:



» **Physical impairments:**

People are unable to move their arms or legs.



» **Learning impairments:**

This disability has to do with thinking, for example some people take longer to learn new things or to understand something.



» **Mental health impairments:**

This disability has to do with emotions, for example if people often feel down or very sad, are anxious about a lot of things or have trouble sleeping.



» **Sensory impairments:**

People are unable to see or hear well or cannot see or hear at all.



How can I find out if I have a disability?

Take a look at the **set of questions** below. If you answer “**YES**” to one or more of them, please talk to your doctor. **You may have a disability.**

Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?



- Yes
- No

Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?



- Yes
- No

Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid(s)?



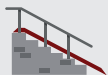
- Yes
- No

Using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?



- Yes
- No

Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?



- Yes
- No

Source: https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/fileadmin/uploads/wg/Washington_Group_Questionnaire__1_-_WG_Short_Set_on_Functioning__October_2022_.pdf



It does not matter whether you have had a disability from birth or whether it is the result of an accident or illness.

3. Where can I go for advice?

EUTB®s

The EUTB®s are counselling centres for people with disabilities and their families. They provide free advice on what support is available to you and can help you fill in the applications. To access these counselling services, please book an appointment.

If you need somebody to come and translate for you, you can indicate this when making your booking.

The EUTB® will help you with issues around inclusion and participation.

After your appointment, you will know things like:

Where do I have to submit applications?



Where can I apply to get an interpreter?



Where can I apply for a wheelchair?



Where can I live independently?



Where can I get special aids?



Where can I get money?





Short for:
Ergänzende unabhängige
Teilhabeberatung
(Complementary independent
participation counselling)



To find **suitable EUTB®** offers in your local area, visit the following website (in German only) and go to “Teilhabeberatung/Beratungsangebote der EUTB®”:



<https://www.teilhabeberatung.de/beratung/beratungsangebote-der-eutb>

There are two other organisations that can also provide advice:



Social Welfare Association (Sozialverband VdK)

https://www.vdk.de/berlin-brandenburg/pages/75250/was_macht_rechtsberatung



Social Welfare Association of Germany (Sozialverband Deutschland)

<https://www.sovd-bbg.de/beratung/alltags-und-sozialberatung>

4. Why should I have my disability assessed?

People with disabilities can't always do everything. They are limited in their participation in life.

In Germany, there are **additional benefits** available for people with disabilities in order to compensate for this disadvantage and to enable these people to participate in life.

In order to receive these benefits, a person must be officially recognised as actually having a disability. To do this, you will have to undergo a disability assessment at the **State Social and Welfare Office (Landesamt für Soziales und Versorgung (LASV))** (see Section 6).



Examples of benefits:

- » special medical aids
- » mobility aids
- » accommodation
- » finances

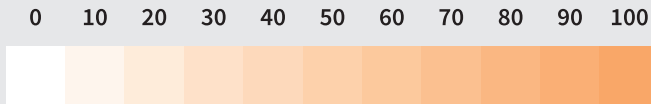
5. What is the degree of disability (Grad der Behinderung)?

The **degree of disability (Grad der Behinderung or GdB in German)** indicates how much a person is impaired in their daily living.



Degree of disability (Grad der Behinderung or GdB in German)

The GdB is scored in intervals of ten **up to a maximum of 100**. The higher the score, the greater the impairment.



6. How is a disability formally assessed?

1 Submit an application

The first thing you need to do is submit an application to the relevant agency. In Brandenburg, this is the **State Social and Welfare Office (Landesamt für Soziales und Versorgung (LASV))**.

To submit this application, you will need:

- » A copy of your German residence permit.
- » If possible, you should submit a note from your doctor – a so-called disability certificate, or ärztliches Attest in German – together with your initial application.

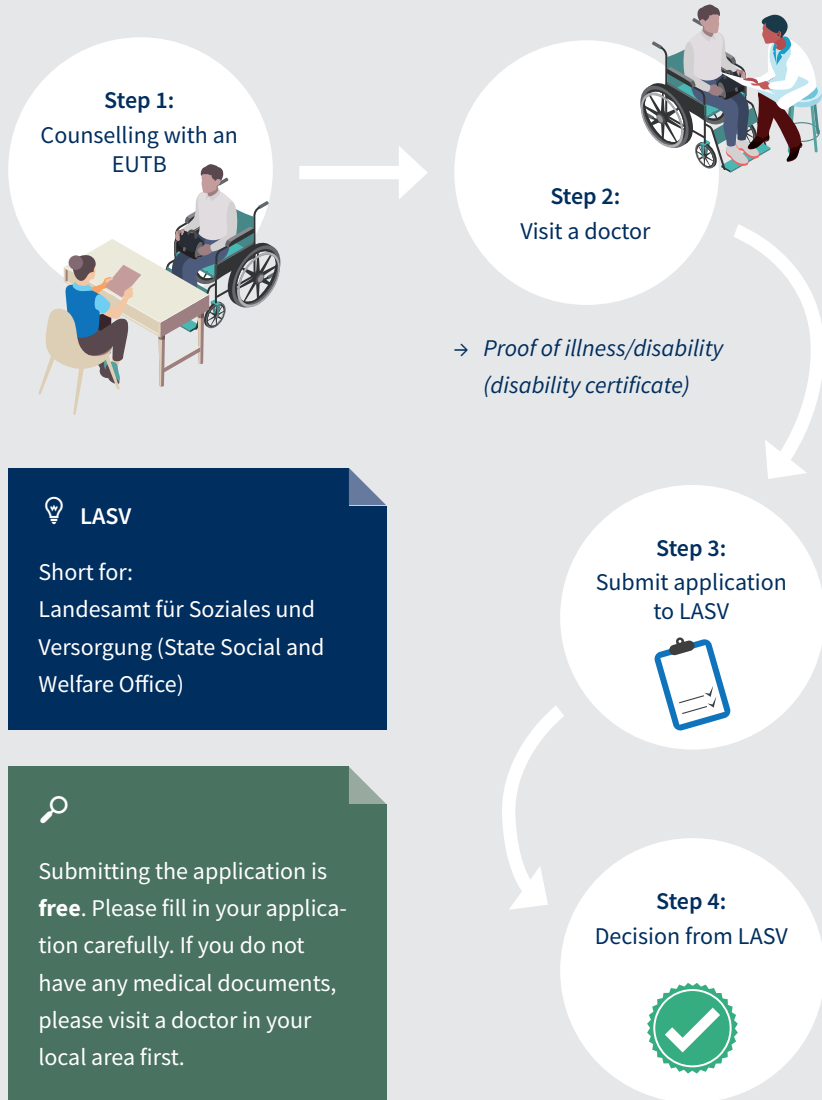
The application must be made in German. We advise getting somebody to help you fill it in.

You can submit your application online on the LASV website under “Behinderung/Schwerbehinderung” or via the following link:



[Start – Online-Antrag nach § 152 des Neunten Buches Sozialgesetzbuch \(SGB IX\) – Schwerbehindertenrecht \(brandenburg.de\)](#)

How do I submit an application for a disability assessment?



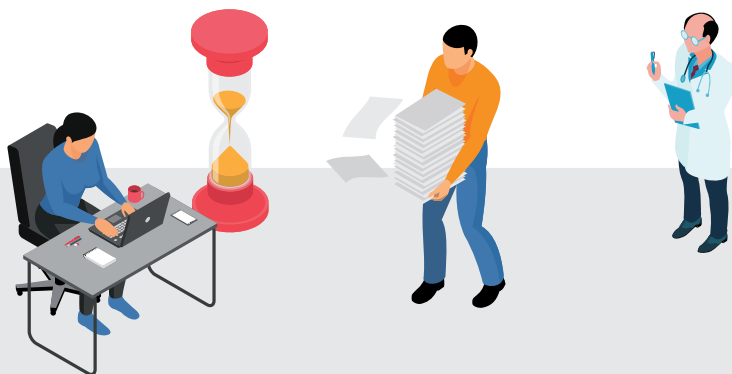
2. Wait until your application has been reviewed

Once you have submitted your application and all supporting documentation, the LASV will review your **application**. Assessors **review** your supporting documentation and assess your degree of disability (Grad der Behinderung/GdB) (see Section 5).

! This review can take several months.

 The time it takes to process an application depends on:

- » whether any information is missing from your documentation or application
- » the amount of time the doctors need to respond to any follow-up questions from the LASV



3. Receive your official documentation

The review of your application results in an official **decision** (a so-called assessment decision, or Feststellungsbescheid in German).

This decision is a paper document and contains information on:

- » the type of disability
- » the degree of disability (GdB)



Your application may also be denied. You can appeal against this decision in writing.

7. Severely disabled person's pass (Schwerbehindertenausweis)



A severely disabled person's pass (Schwerbehindertenausweis) can be issued if you are assessed a degree of disability (GdB) of at least 50.

If you are assessed a **severe disability**, you will receive a special pass (**severely disabled person's pass, or Schwerbehindertenausweis in German**).

What is the function of a severely disabled person's pass?

The severely disabled person's pass is evidence that you have a degree of disability (GdB) of **at least 50**. This evidence entitles you to **special benefits**.

How long is the severely disabled person's pass valid for?

A severely disabled person's pass is usually valid **for a limited period**. If you are not yet living permanently in Germany, your pass will be valid for as long as the residence document you have received from the immigration authorities (Ausländerbehörde).



The severely disabled person's pass (bank card format) must always be renewed and re-issued before it expires.

What do I need to do if my severely disabled person's pass is about to expire?

Don't forget to renew your severely disabled person's pass **before it expires**.

- ! You will need your extended permit from the immigration authorities to do this.

Send a letter or an e-mail to the LASV with a copy of your extended permit and your reference number (AktENZEICHEN/AZ in German). You will find the reference number on the decision from the LASV. You can then apply for a renewal of your severely disabled person's pass.



You should also inform the LASV any time there are **changes to your condition**. Your degree of disability will then be **reassessed** and a new severely disabled person's pass issued as applicable.



If you have a disability, you can apply for a range of different benefits. There are health insurance benefits, long-term care insurance benefits, integration benefits and reasonable adjustments.

The benefits you will receive and how much depends on what you need. Visit an EUTB centre (Ergänzende unabhängige Teilhabeberatung or Complementary independent participation counselling, see Section 3) for advice on what benefits you can receive.

8. Other sources of advice

Advice on the asylum process and right of residence

There are advice centres for people who do not have German citizenship in every district and in bigger cities in Brandenburg.

They can provide advice on questions like:

- » How does the asylum process work in Germany?
- » Is my illness or disability important for the asylum process?
- » What do I do if I get a negative decision in my asylum process?
- » What happens after a positive decision in my asylum process?



<https://www.fluechtlingsrat-brandenburg.de/adressen/>



This advice is **free**.

If you would like to know where your nearest advice centre is, ask the social workers at your accommodation. In many cities and districts, there are **Integration and Disability Officers (Integrations- und Behindertenbeauftragte)**. These are people who look after the interests of these people.

You can find addresses for advice centres from the Refugee Council of Brandenburg [here](#).

Handicap International, an organisation that advocates for people with disabilities, has made a video explaining how to apply for a severely disabled person's pass.



<https://www.hi-deutschland-projekte.de/crossroads/erkl%C3%A4rungsvideo-zum-thema-erkennung-einer-behinderung-in-deutschland/>



9. Support with worries, anxieties and nerves

It can happen that in some situations you will feel anxious or worried, without understanding why. Or you might be very nervous and having a lot of trouble sleeping. It can help to talk about these things. In Brandenburg, you can get in touch with people who speak your native language and are from the same country as you.

The organisations Albatros, Inter Homines and KommMit offer free support..



Albatros

<https://www.albatros-direkt.de/de/angebote/beratung-fuer-gefluechtete-1>



Inter Homines

<http://inter-homines.org/Inter-Homines-Flyer-deutsch.pdf>



KommMit

<https://www.kommmmit.eu/de>

finanziert durch:



www.raa-brandenburg.de