

## **Preface**

Welcome to federal voluntary service at the Landesverband Baden- Württemberg der Lebenshilfe für Menschen mit Behinderung e.V. (LVLH) (Baden- Württemberg state support organization for people with disabilities).

We are very glad you have chosen the Baden-Württemberg support organization as your deployment site. The state organization serves as the responsible body governing your volunteer service, and will provide you with customized, personal support. This support can be provided in a wide variety of different ways. First and foremost, we will be available to you as your direct contact at the introductory, intermediate and final seminar. Second, you have the option of receiving support from us in competence seminars. Furthermore, we will visit you at your deployment site so that we can familiarize ourselves with your direct work area.

You will enjoy an exciting and varied assignment at your deployment site and in the different seminars. We will deal with topics specifically related to assistance programs for disabled individuals, experience group dynamics, use our senses to perceive the world in different ways, and have personal experiences.

You will experience a wide variety of situations during your volunteer service. There may be moments that are wonderful, stressful, exciting, confusing, beautiful, nerve-wracking, amazing, or relaxing. With so many different experiences, it's not a bad idea to have someone you can ask for advice. This handbook is designed to help you find answers to questions, problems, or other concerns you may have during your volunteer service. It describes the rights and obligations of volunteers during their service period, explains what you should do if you are sick, where you can get a copy of your certificate for a university or school, and provides lots of other useful information. If you don't find the answers you are looking for in the handbook, you are welcome to contact the educational instructors at any time.

Two lists are provided in the Annex. The first is a list of learning and educational objectives designed to give you insight into which competencies you already possess, which you want to develop further, and which you want to gain. You will work with your instructor to complete the lists, and will work on them throughout your volunteer service, both during seminars and at your deployment site.

Second, the Annex contains an initial training list designed to help you get comfortable working at your deployment site more quickly. It helps you understand what you will need to pay attention to, and what information you should request. You will go through the list during your initial training.

We are very excited you are here, and we are looking forward to getting to know you soon at your introductory seminar!

The Volunteer Services department

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**A:**

**Accident insurance:**

→ Social insurance contributions.

**Advanced technical college certificate (Advanced technical college certificate regulation for secondary schools – FHSRGymVO)**

Baden-Württemberg offers the option of obtaining an advanced technical college certificate with a volunteer service year serving as the career-related component. This means that anyone who has attended a standard secondary school, upper secondary school at home, professional secondary school, college, state recognized night school or the German-French secondary school of Freiburg, and leaves after completing the second seminar of the first year level of the course system, class III, or class 11 at the German-French secondary school (Première) without a general higher education entrance qualification will receive a secondary school entrance qualification if:

- they have performed the required schooling according to Sec. 2 FHSRGymVO (coursework component of the advanced technical college certificate) and
- practical experience is verified in accordance with Sec. 3 FHSRGymVO (professional component of the advanced technical college certificate).

Practical experience can be completed at the deployment site. It is important to coordinate in advance with the schools covering the schooling component or with the management of the cooperating school that will be issuing the advanced technical college certificate (Sec. 4 FHSRGymVO). Generally, before the volunteer begins their voluntary service, they must develop a practical plan jointly with the deployment site, in order to sketch out and define the volunteer's different learning areas. This type of advanced technical college certificate is not recognized by all technical colleges in other German states; therefore please inquire in advance!

**Age limit:**

Anyone can complete volunteer service if they have completed their compulsory full-time schooling, regardless of what school-leaving qualification they have. There is no age limit at the BFD.

**Agreement:**

The Federal Office for Family and Civil Duties and the volunteer will conclude a written agreement before the start of the federal voluntary service. The parties' mutual rights and obligations are derived both from the German Federal Voluntary Service Act (BFDG) and from individual agreements. The agreement form is available at [www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de](http://www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de). In addition, annexes to the agreement for each specific responsible body will be requested.

**Allowance:**

Voluntary service is unpaid and is carried out on a volunteer basis. Volunteers receive a monthly allowance, which is treated as a salary or wages under tax law. There is a statutory maximum limit for the allowance. An allowance is considered reasonable if it does not exceed 6% of the low income threshold for general pension insurance (Sec. 159 SGB VI) (Sec. 2 clause 4a BFDG). The individual's exact allowance will be agreed with their deployment site.

**Ambassador training:**

Deployment sites and instructors jointly select volunteers to serve as ambassadors; these ambassadors then receive special training during a three-day seminar. These training days are counted as part of the overall training day requirement. The purpose of ambassador training is to allow ambassadors to serve as multipliers for voluntary service and for their deployment site. The training will involve furthering competencies in the areas of pedagogy, rhetoric and methodology. In addition, ambassador training will allow participants to develop new ideas and opportunities for PR work. Ambassadors will actively represent the volunteer service, their responsible bodies, or their deployment sites, for example at exhibitions, in their former schools, or at a variety of other events. Ambassadors will be released from their deployment site to take part in this outreach and for preparations; the time required will be recorded as work time, or they will be granted time off in compensation.

**B:**

**Business-related travel:**

Business travel includes all travel away from the deployment site for service-related purposes. Costs incurred for such travel will be paid by the institution. If the volunteer will travel for business-related reasons with their passenger car, then the deployment site must check to ensure they have a valid driver's license, that they are personally capable of driving safely, and that their vehicle is in good working order. Furthermore, they should clarify in advance whether volunteers are sufficiently insured through the deployment site. Volunteers should only use their private vehicles for service-related purposes in exceptional cases. Any trip taken by a volunteer to a seminar or event held by the responsible body is considered business-related travel.

**C:**

**Care insurance:**

Volunteers are generally subject to mandatory care insurance requirements (sec. 20 para. 1 clause 2 no. 1 SGB XI).

**Central office:**

The state organization as responsible body is the central office of the Paritätischer Gesamtverband Berlin (DPWV - General Equal Treatment Association of Berlin). The central office serves as the link between the federal government / Federal Ministry and the deployment sites and their responsible bodies. The central office ensures that the responsible bodies and deployment sites belonging to them collaborate properly to help carry out the federal voluntary service.

**Certificate of good conduct:**

Volunteer service participants are not required to pay the fee for issuing a certificate of good conduct for their voluntary service. They must submit a fee release application for this purpose to the registry office. The office will forward the request to the Federal Office of Justice, which will decide on the fee exemption. The application must be accompanied by a certificate from the deployment site. Voluntary service must be indicated on the application form as the reason for the special purpose. The responsible body recommends review-



ing and documenting an extended certificate of good conduct for the volunteer before they begin service. Any costs incurred must be paid by the deployment site.

#### **Certificate of inability to work:**

→ Illness

#### **Certification of voluntary service:**

After they finish their service, the responsible body (LVLH) will issue the volunteer a certificate indicating that they have completed federal voluntary service. If necessary, volunteers must request a preliminary certificate from the responsible body in order to apply to universities before they complete their voluntary service. Volunteers can be awarded points in the university application process with this preliminary certificate. Generally, certificates from the deployment site will not be recognized.

#### **Child allowance:**

Parents who carry out federal voluntary service and who have children under 25 years of age can receive a child allowance or tax-free allowance for their children.

#### **Competence seminar:**

The competence seminar is offered as part of the 25 training days, and takes place on three contiguous seminar days. It is part of personal development and career guidance, or teaches skills that are useful for voluntary service at the deployment site. Volunteers choose their own competence seminars. Volunteers receive a folder at the start of their voluntary service. The folder includes a form with the available competence seminars, among other information. After registration, the deployment sites will receive a date and time confirmation. In addition, the volunteers will receive a full invitation around four weeks before the competence seminar is held.

#### **Compulsory vocational school attendance:**

In Baden-Württemberg, volunteers are not subject to compulsory vocational school attendance while they are engaged in voluntary service, if the volunteer is still a minor. If necessary, the volunteer must submit a certificate to the vocational school indicating that

they are performing voluntary service. Certificates can be requested from the responsible body (LVLH).

### **Conflicts:**

If there are any conflicts between the deployment site and a volunteer, then the responsible body must be informed. The responsible instructor can then act as an intermediary to provide assistance in finding a solution if possible.

### **Continued wage payments in case of illness:**

In case of illness, the volunteer will continue to receive the allowance and benefits in kind for at least 6 weeks from the first day of the illness; however, payments will not last past the end of the service relationship. The regulations of the Continued Wage Payment Act do not apply.

### **Coronavirus:**

Hygiene and protective requirements apply at deployment sites and seminars due to the coronavirus pandemic; please review the current regulations promptly before you begin your deployment!

### **D:**

#### **Data protection:**

Deployment sites, central offices and responsible bodies may collect, process and use personal data as part of the agreement, and with the volunteer's consent, if this is necessary to carry out the voluntary service. Data protection is regulated in the volunteer service agreement. In general, the data protection guidelines of the LVLH and BAFzA apply.

Further details are provided in your youth voluntary service agreement.

#### **Deficit hours:**

The deployment site or guide are responsible for planning work hours for the volunteer year. If the volunteer has deficit hours, these must be compensated for in further months. If these are not compensated for by the end of the contract due to poor planning by the

deployment site, they will lapse. The volunteer, however, may not deny compensating for them!

### **Degree programs:**

Universities and colleges can treat an applicant's federal voluntary service as a sabbatical semester or internship before the applicant begins a degree program. Whether and to what extent they will recognize the voluntary service is determined based on the individual regulations of the training or degree program. Please contact your university for more information. Upon request, the responsible body will provide confirmation that an individual has completed voluntary service for the purpose of their university application.

### **Deployment time:**

Deployment time is determined based on work hours at the specific deployment site. In general, volunteer service is all-day service. Men and women over 27 years of age and single parents may also complete part-time service of over 20 hours per week. The protective regulations of the (Youth Employment Protection Act (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz) apply for young people under 18 years of age (such as: no night time work, longer vacation times, longer break times). Seminar time is considered work time. The guide is responsible for annual planning and for checking overtime hours or a deficit of hours.

### **Duration:**

The duration of your voluntary service is defined in the agreement. Generally, volunteer service is performed for 12 continuous months. The minimum duration is 6 months, and the maximum is 18 months. As part of the overall pedagogical concept, the responsible body can offer volunteer service in blocks at least 3 months in length (Sec. 5 para. 1 JFDG).

### **E:**

### **End:**

The volunteer year ends at the end of the contractual term, without requiring termination.

**Exchange:**

If the volunteer changes their deployment site or work location, the responsible body must be consulted and informed in advance. A dissolution agreement or termination of the old deployment site and valid agreement for the new deployment site must be available.

**Extension:**

→ Duration

**F:****Federal voluntary service over 27 years of age:**

Federal voluntary service is available to anyone looking for a meaningful way to use their free time who is 27 years of age or older on the first day their service begins. Such individuals include, for instance, those looking for work, retirees, and workers who want to take some time off. Volunteers over 27 years of age can complete part-time volunteer service in coordination with the deployment site of at least 20.1 hours per week. Training days should be completed by individual agreement between the responsible body and volunteers over 27 years of age. Only 12 training days will be completed for a 12-month service period. Federal voluntary service is regulated by law under the German Federal Voluntary Service Act (BFDG).

**Folders:**

Volunteers receive an overview folder at the start of their voluntary service. This is sent to the volunteers once the responsible body has assigned them to a group. The folder contains contact information for the responsible contact person, an overview of seminar dates, options for selecting competence days and this handbook, among other information. The cover letter for the folder explains what volunteers need to do with the different documents.

**G:****Guide:**

The deployment site is obligated to assign an expert who is responsible for providing volunteers with direct and indirect guidance. The expert is named in the agreement concluded before the volunteer service begins. The expert will work in the same group or same area. This guide is responsible for providing initial training to volunteer, based on an initial training plan (either an internal initial training check list, or one created by the responsible body – an initial training check list template is included in the Annex. The guide ensures that volunteers are integrated into the team environment. They serve as a trusted individual and point of contact in case of problems, for instance, with persons in care or with the volunteer's duties.

During a 12-month volunteering term, volunteers would have at least 4 guidance meetings. These should be documented. A variety of topics may be addressed in the meeting, such as situations the volunteer has faced, the volunteer's own health, problems, specialist topics, open questions, or how duties are distributed. In addition, providing one another with feedback is a key part of the meeting. The guide will check to ensure that the deployment site and duties assigned there conform to the individual abilities and interests of the volunteer. The guide will be provided by the responsible body with a preparation sheet for volunteers, a sheet for guides, and a meeting guideline for them to use. Furthermore, learning and educational targets are described and recorded alongside the volunteer in the introductory seminar. These are addressed by the guide. The guide supports volunteers in achieving these targets. The state organization as the responsible body collaborates closely with the guide.

**H:****Health insurance:**

Federal volunteers are generally covered by mandatory insurance as a member of the statutory health insurance companies. Contributions will be paid in full by the deployment site to the health insurance company. Any previously existing family insurance will be suspended during the term of their voluntary service, and may then be continued afterwards, for instance if the volunteer begins vocational training, returns to school, or begins a degree program.

In general, even persons who had private insurance before beginning federal voluntary service are covered by the requirement to be insured under statutory health insurance. They must inform the private insurance company that the insurance will be suspended for the duration of their service, so that they can enjoy the same conditions after their voluntary service as before.

The following also applies during federal voluntary service: Persons are free from the insurance obligation after 55 years of age if they were not insured under statutory insurance within the last five years, and if they were freed from insurance or the insurance obligation, or were self-employed as their primary source of income during this time (Sec. 6 para. 3A SGB V). Receiving a retirement pension will not free the individual from the health insurance requirement. A retired individual carrying out federal voluntary service who is insured by a statutory health insurance company, therefore, is subject to the insurance obligation under Sec. 5 para. 1 no. 1 SGB V.

Further information on insurance obligations for statutory health insurance are available from the Federal Health Ministry.

[www.bmg.bund.de/krankenversicherung/versicherte/freiwillige-im-bundesfreiwilligen-dienst.html](http://www.bmg.bund.de/krankenversicherung/versicherte/freiwillige-im-bundesfreiwilligen-dienst.html)).

### **Holidays:**

In exceptional cases, such as in the holiday seminar group, there may be a holiday during the seminar week. The seminar will take place as usual on the holiday. If this is the case, the deployment site must grant volunteers an additional free day at another time to compensate. This free day must be coordinated between the volunteer and deployment site.

### **Housing allowance:**

In general, volunteers engaged in federal voluntary service may apply for a housing allowance. Payment of the housing allowance depends on the individual's rent and available income, among other factors. Applications will be considered if the volunteer is required to move to the city where the deployment site is located to begin their voluntary service, and if the deployment site is not able to offer lodgings. The housing allowance office of their municipal, city, official or district administration at the new place of residence is responsible. The application must indicate that the new residence will be the applicant's domicile.

**I:****Identification:**

When volunteers begin their voluntary social year, they receive a volunteer service ID from the Federal Ministry (BMFSFJ). Generally, they receive discounts on local public transportation and when visiting federally-funded institutions.

**Illness:**

The volunteer must inform the deployment site promptly in case of illness. The agreement defines further specific regulations. If the illness falls on a training day, then the responsible body must also be informed. In addition, a sick note must be submitted from the first day of the illness. Generally, allowances and benefits in kind will continue to be paid in case of illness for six weeks, as long as this does not extend beyond the end of the service period.

If the volunteer becomes ill during their vacation, and if they submit a certificate of inability to work, then they will be granted vacation at a later time.

**Inclusion:**

Volunteer service is accessible to ALL interested individuals. We are actively working to appeal to people with physical, intellectual, and mental disabilities or restrictions, and want to motivate them to apply. We would be happy to provide support to any interested individual and clarify any open questions.

**Initial training:**

Volunteers will receive initial training at the deployment site from the guide and other experts. Initial training includes both a theoretical introduction and practical training for volunteers on the deployment site and on volunteer duties. A check list is enclosed listing key points of the initial training. This and the site's own internal check lists will be completed alongside the guide during the first few weeks after the volunteer begins service.

### **Internal training days:**

Internal training days are part of the pedagogical support provided to volunteers by the deployment site. They serve as part of the career guidance, training and education provided to volunteers, and last for at least 6 hours per recognized day. Introductory / final days and internal continued training sessions (on epilepsy, autism, etc.), for example, can be counted as internal training days. The volunteer and guide are responsible for planning internal training days at the start of their volunteer service. Work shadowing for the purpose of career guidance is another option. Work shadowing may be conducted in other areas of the deployment site or in external organizations. After the volunteer has completed their internal training days, it is important that they send the responsible body a confirmation that they are complete. This confirmation should include at least the date, duration, and area of the internal training days, with a signature. If volunteers want to carry out external work shadowing (outside of the aid organization), they can also do so. It is important to ask the company / organization in advance whether they are subject to business liability insurance for volunteers. Volunteers must be insured under business liability insurance during external work shadowing.

### **International volunteers:**

Volunteers coming from abroad can also take part in federal voluntary service. To do so, they must have a residence permit entitling them to work. International volunteers can also generally be granted a residence permit specifically for participating in federal voluntary service in accordance with Sec. 18 of the Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz). Refugees performing federal voluntary service must first be issued a work permit.

Individuals with nationality in a third state who want to perform federal voluntary service must submit a visa application to perform voluntary service from their home country. They can only be granted the residence permit necessary to reside in Germany if they arrived with a visa issued for this purpose.

### **Internship:**

Voluntary service is recognized as a pre-study internship by some social education programs. Further information is available from the individual educational entities.



**Invitations:**

Volunteers receive an official invitation before each seminar begins. For an introductory seminar, this is sent to volunteers at the private address they provide around 3-4 weeks before the seminar begins. The invitation includes information on the meeting venue, location and time of the seminar, as well as a list of what the volunteer must bring along and contact information for the responsible seminar leader. Invitations will be delivered via email for further seminars.

**L:****Labor market neutrality:**

Labor market neutrality is an important requirement for volunteer service. Volunteers may only take on auxiliary additional tasks, and may not replace any full-time employees. This type of work is known as aid activity. Volunteers are added to the schedule as auxiliary assistants, performing a helping function. The engagement of volunteers may not prevent hiring of new full-time employees, and use of volunteers may not result in the termination of any full-time employees. Labor market neutrality is ensured for federal voluntary service before each individual deployment is approved. Federal regional officers may review labor market neutrality on site during the term of the volunteer's deployment.

**Legal bases:**

The German Federal Voluntary Service Act serves as the legal basis for the volunteer service. The text of the law is available online at <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bfdg/>.

Further legal bases:

Youth Employment Protection Act (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz):

<http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/jarbschg/>

Working Conditions Act (Arbeitsschutzgesetz):

<https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/arbschg/>

Youth Protection Act:

<http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/juschg/>

**M:****Maternity leave:**

Just as with regular employers, volunteers are subject to the Maternity Protection Act if they become pregnant. They are granted special protection from termination, and special regulations on work station design. Likewise, volunteers are entitled to maternity benefits such as a maternity wages if they are prohibited from working before or after their maternity protection term, and receiving a grant in addition to their maternity wages during the maternity protection period.

**Medication administration:**

Only accredited specialists are permitted by law to administer treatment measures (such as administering medication, etc.). Federal volunteers may not provide treatment measures, and may be subject to criminal penalties if they do so!

**N:****Non-disclosure obligation:**

Just like all employees at similar institutions, volunteers are subject to non-disclosure obligations. It is not permitted to disclose any personal information on the persons receiving care, even after the end of the volunteer service period. The deployment site is obligated to inform volunteers of their non-disclosure obligation before they begin their voluntary service.

**O:****Occupational medical examination:**

The deployment site must initiate any necessary medical examinations and preventative measures, and must pay the costs for such exams and measures.

**Occupational safety:**

Although the relationship between the volunteer and deployment site is not considered an employment relationship, voluntary service is essentially considered equivalent to an employment relationship under public law protection regulations. Relevant occupational protection regulations apply accordingly, such as the Working Conditions Act (Arbeitsschutzgesetz), the Workplace Ordinance (Arbeitsstättenverordnung), the Youth Employment Protection Act (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz), the Maternity Protection Act (Mutterschutzgesetz) and the Disabilities Act (Schwerbehindertengesetz).

**Orphan's pension:**

In general, volunteers are entitled to an orphan's pension (full and half orphan's pension) during the time they perform federal voluntary service, if the requirements of Sec. 48 SGB VI are fulfilled.

**Overtime hours:**

Overtime hours cannot be compensated within federal voluntary service. Volunteers will receive time off in lieu of compensation for overtime hours worked.

**P:****Participation:**

Voluntary service is intended to promote involvement and responsibility among volunteers, and participation is an important part of training days. Therefore, at seminars volunteers are encouraged to contribute their chosen topics and help design and implement the selected content.

**Part-time:**

In general, individuals over 27 years of age can perform federal voluntary service on a part-time basis of over 20 hours per week.

In very special cases, volunteers under 27 years of age may also perform part-time service of over 20 hours per week in coordination with the deployment site and the responsible body LVLH. The deployment site and responsible body will provide information on the

grounds for doing so and verification obligations. There is no legal claim to part-time service. Allowances will be reduced on a pro rata temporis basis, and training days will remain unchanged. Whether the part-time service can be utilized for the purposes of a university entrance qualification or internship for a degree program must be clarified in advance with the university or training institution.

### **Pedagogical support:**

Pedagogical support by the responsible body includes advising, reflection, and seminar work, among other services (→ Training days). The primary purpose of pedagogical support is to prepare volunteers for their deployments, and to help them discuss their impressions and work through their experiences. In addition, pedagogical support helps teach social and intercultural competencies and increase a sense of responsibility for the overall well-being of society and sustainable action. Deployment site visits are an important part of the pedagogical support provided by the responsible body, and generally take place twice during the volunteer year.

### **Photos:**

At and during seminars, photos will be taken of and with volunteers (such as group photos and general photos). These serve to record memories and events for volunteers during their voluntary service. Volunteers may not publish or disseminate these photos on social networks (such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) or through chat programs (such as WhatsApp, etc.); instead, they are intended solely for personal use. The responsible body, in turn, may use the photos produced for advertising purposes if the volunteer has provided their declaration of consent for this purpose (see the declaration of consent in the agreement).

### **R:**

#### **Radio broadcasting contributions:**

Volunteers must pay radio broadcasting contributions (formerly known as the GEZ) during their service. However, if volunteers still live with their parents or in a housing cooperative, only one request must be placed / available per residence.

**Reference:**

At the end of their voluntary service, volunteers will receive a written reference indicating the type and duration of voluntary service they have performed from their deployment sites. The reference must include performance and management during the period of service. The reference must include elements of the federal voluntary service that would serve as professional qualifications. Furthermore, after they complete their service the responsible body will issue the volunteer a certificate (→ Certificate) indicating the service they have performed.

**Release as a youth leader:**

According to the Law to Encourage Volunteering in Youth Work (JArbEhrStärkG BW), volunteers are entitled to up to ten days of release during each calendar year. They can use this, for instance, to work at camps, youth hostels and community centers offering short-term services to children and youth. They will not be entitled to any compensation during their release. The deployment site can decide individually on this point. Requests should be submitted to the deployment site by the organization at least one month before the release begins. Social insurance contributions must continue to be paid.

**Release from service:**

Volunteers will be released from service for important personal and/or family-related reasons, and this time will not be deducted by the deployment site from their vacation time. In general, volunteers should take care of any personal matters outside of service time. However, the volunteer's direct supervisor may release them from work for legitimate reasons (such as doctor's visits, need to visit an official authority, work shadowing, etc.), with continued compensation for as long as the required absence lasts. Under Sec. 4 paragraph 3 BFDG, volunteers cannot be released from service during seminar time.

The volunteer must be released from the deployment site for at least three days with full compensation for the purpose of job interviews.

If the volunteer has already been released from service frequently, then unpaid vacation can be granted in exceptional cases, and in coordination with the responsible body and volunteer. Social insurance contributions must continue to be paid during the unpaid vacation. Under Sec. 4 paragraph 3 BFDG, unpaid vacation cannot be granted during seminar time.

**Reporting obligation:**

If volunteers change their residence in order to engage in voluntary service, they must register with the responsible residence registry office within one week. They must also report this to the responsible body and deployment site promptly.

**Responsibility:**

Volunteers can only be assigned responsibilities as assistants within their work areas. The volunteer's personal maturity level and suitability for the task must be taken into consideration.

**(Statutory) retirement pension insurance:**

In general, volunteers are subject to insurance obligations, and are required to contribute to pension insurance. They are entitled to a retirement pension on this basis. This applies to “young” volunteers, seniors who do not yet receive retirement pension, and to individuals who do receive a partial retirement pension or pension due to reduced capacity to work. Volunteers receiving full retirement pension are not obligated to make contributions, regardless of whether they have reached the standard age limit or not, because they are free from the insurance obligation.

Contributions to unemployment insurance must be paid for all volunteers. The deployment site must make the employer contribution for federal service volunteers over 27 years of age who have already reached the standard pension age.

**S:**

**Secondary occupations:**

During volunteer service, volunteers must provide at least half of their working capacity to the deployment site. Therefore, secondary occupations must be requested and approved. The deployment site can approve the secondary occupation. Both the deployment site and volunteer must inform the responsible body of the secondary occupation for this purpose.

**Seminar rules:**

Seminar rules will be discussed with volunteers before the start of each seminar. These will be developed jointly with the volunteers at the seminars, and supplemented by the respon-

sible body. Many meeting venues also have their own specifications, which should also be included in the rules.

Seminar units, including travel time to and from seminars, are considered work time. They are booked as a full work day by the deployment site. Overnight lodging is obligatory, and volunteers may not take vacation during this time. If volunteers are not able to take part in a seminar for health-related reasons, they must call the responsible body and responsible seminar instructor on the first day of their illness to report that they are sick. A doctor's note must be submitted on the first day of illness, and must be sent to the responsible body. A copy must be submitted to the deployment site as well. Volunteers may not drink any alcohol during the seminar units. Volunteers may drink alcohol in an appropriate manner during their free time after the seminar. In general, consuming high-proof alcohol or high-proof mixed drinks is not permitted.

Illegal drugs of all kinds are strictly prohibited!

The Youth Employment Protection Act (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz) continues to apply to volunteers under 18. If volunteers leave the conference facility, they must inform the instructor of this. This is important so that they know where their participants are, in case of any danger. Violations may exclude volunteers from the seminar or may result in their training days not being recognized, or even in a warning or termination.

### **Shift work:**

Volunteers may be employed on a shift work basis. The Youth Employment Protection Act (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz) applies to volunteers under 18 years of age. Voluntary service is unpaid and on a volunteer basis. Therefore, whenever possible volunteers should be granted requested days off, for instance so that they can take part in club activities or family celebrations. Volunteers may not work at night. They may only be on-call at night in exceptional cases and under certain circumstances, and by personal agreement with the responsible body.

### **Social insurance contributions:**

Volunteers are insured under statutory pension, care, health, unemployment, and accident insurance during their voluntary service. Social insurance contributions will be paid by the deployment site (both employer and employee portions). Allowances and grants for lodging and meals, as well as benefits in kind, are considered income. These serve as the basis for calculating social insurance contributions. The law regulates that volunteers are subject

to insurance obligations, although the benefits and funds that volunteers receive may be low enough to fall below the low income threshold for retirement, care, and health insurance obligations to apply.

If an individual engages in voluntary service following employment that is subject to social insurance contributions, then the individual's monthly income is used to determine the contribution to unemployment insurance. Employment subject to social insurance contributions, for instance, exists if an individual is employed temporarily between leaving school and beginning voluntary service. If there is a period of four weeks between the employment and voluntary service, then this is not considered to follow the employment. Minor employment between the time of leaving school and completing voluntary service is not subject to social insurance contributions.

**Important note:**

Please note that benefits received based on federal voluntary service may be offset against other benefits or entitlements. Persons receiving retirement pensions, therefore, should clarify with their responsible pension fund whether and to what extent benefits received based on their federal voluntary service will be offset against their pension.

**T:**

**Termination:**

To avoid termination, the responsible body should be informed early on if there are any problems or concerns. However, if the volunteer is to be terminated either through ordinary or extraordinary means, the contractual parties must hold a meeting to clarify the issue. The agreement on voluntary service regulates the notice periods that apply to voluntary service.

The first six weeks of federal voluntary service are considered a trial period. During this trial period, the agreement may be terminated by either contractual party with a notice period of 2 weeks. During voluntary service, the deployment site may request termination of the volunteer from the Federal Office for Family and Civil Duties (BAFzA) without providing grounds during the trial period.

Ordinary termination:



After the end of the trial period, the agreement may be terminated by the parties for good cause within four weeks to the fifteenth or to the end of the calendar month. Termination must be submitted in written form.

If the deployment site wants to review the option for ordinary termination at a certain date, they must inform the Federal Office of this promptly, in order to ensure the review is completed and termination letter is submitted promptly.

#### Extraordinary termination (without notice):

After the end of the trial period, the agreement may be terminated through extraordinary means by either contractual partner for good cause. The contractual relationship can be terminated either by the volunteer or the Federal Office during federal voluntary service. If it intends to terminate the volunteer without notice, the deployment site must contact the Federal Office by sending them a written notification with a precise description of the grounds for termination.

#### Dissolution of the agreement:

The agreement can be dissolved at any time by mutual agreement, or for good cause by the volunteer and deployment site (such as if the volunteer receives a study or training space).

#### **Training days / seminars:**

Federal volunteers are required by law to take part in seminars (training days). These are mandatory for participants, including the overnight stay. This time is considered service time, and each training day is recorded with the same number of hours as a full day of work. The purpose of training days is to reflect on experiences the volunteer has had at the deployment site, and to address social issues. **Due to the coronavirus pandemic, in 2021/2022 seminars may be offered as in-person seminars without overnight lodging, webinars, or a combination of the two depending on the current situation.**

As a responsible body, engaging only with support organizations and member organizations of the LVLH, the seminars can address specific topics reflected in the everyday work and guidelines for deployment sites and for the support organization in depth. Seminars may cover theoretical knowledge on different pathologies or types of disability, personal experience units, or inclusion, as well as political and social topics, and social critique. Furthermore, another key aspect of seminar training is career guidance and developing social

and personal competencies. Volunteers are encouraged to contribute their own ideas to the seminars, and to take an active role in shaping their content.

The time required to attend the training seminars is considered work time, and is excluded from vacation calculations. Volunteers may be released or change their training only in rare, exceptional cases, and only through prior approval and coordination with the responsible body. All volunteers and deployment sites will be informed of the exact seminar dates before the volunteer begins their service. These must be provided to the deployment site.

A total of 25 training days are required during a twelve month service period. If the service period is longer, then the number of training days will increase. If the service period is shorter, then the number of training days may be reduced. In both cases, coordination with the responsible body is required. Two of the 25 training days will be covered internally by the deployment site. They will do so either through initial training days, internal training sessions or work shadowing in other areas of the deployment site (→ work shadowing). Then, the responsible body will be informed of these internal training days in writing (→ internal training days). 5 seminar days will be held at a training center of the Federal Office for Family and Civil Duties as part of political training.

Volunteers older than 27 must take part in training days to a reasonable extent. The number of training days will be at least one per month of service, under the BAFzA. If the volunteer service period is 12 months, then 12 training days must be completed. Volunteers completing part-time federal voluntary service also take part in all training days.

### **Travel expenses:**

Deployment sites will pay volunteers' travel expenses for travel to seminars. They can do so either by paying a flat rate each month, or by repaying costs for each individual seminar. Tickets must be submitted to verify travel expenses. These should be turned into the deployment site after the seminar. In addition, deployment sites can issue part of the volunteer's allowance as a non-cash benefit such as a BahnCard (railway card) or ticket on local public transit, instead of paying it monthly in cash. Discounts for public transit and railway travel are also available to volunteers.

### **Trial period:**

→ Termination

**U:****Unemployment benefits:**

Anyone who has engaged in federal voluntary service for at least 12 months is entitled to unemployment benefits. During the federal voluntary service, the deployment site also pays into the volunteer's unemployment insurance with social contributions. Individuals drawing unemployment benefit II, see below.

Volunteers must register as seeking work at least 3 months before the end of their voluntary service, if they do not plan to begin another job or course of study. They must register in person with the Agentur für Arbeit (German Federal Employment Agency) according to Sec. 37b SGB III (Social Security Statute Book III).

**Unemployment benefit II:**

Recipients of unemployment benefit II can generally take part in federal voluntary service, since the receipt of a basic income for individuals seeking work, known as unemployment benefit II, does not exclude participation. If a volunteer is receiving unemployment benefit II, in accordance with Sec. 11 para. 1 SGB II, their allowance is generally considered income and must be offset against benefits. Generally, a total amount of 200 euros (Sec. 1 para. 7 Unemployment benefit II / Income Support Regulation) will be excepted from offsetting during federal voluntary service. Performing voluntary service is considered legitimate personal grounds which make it impossible to work (cf. Sec. 10 para. 1 no. 5 SGB II). Individuals receiving unemployment benefit II are not obligated to begin working during the time of their volunteer service.

**V:****Vacation:**

The regulations of the Federal Holiday Entitlement Act apply to vacation from federal voluntary service. For volunteers who are not minors, this means that they are entitled to 26 business days of vacation (all calendar days not falling on a Sunday or statutory holiday are considered business days) per twelve months of service.

Important note:

For minors under 18 years of age, the number of vacation days during their federal voluntary service will be based on the Youth Employment Protection Act (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz). (JArbSchG).

1. This is a min. of 30 business days, if the young person is not yet 16 at the start of the calendar year.
2. This is a min. of 27 business days, if the young person is not yet 17 at the start of the calendar year.
3. This is a min. of 25 business days, if the young person is not yet 18 at the start of the calendar year.

(See also: [http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/jarbschg/\\_19.html](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/jarbschg/_19.html))

If the vacation entitlement is stated in the employment agreement in work days (not business days), then it must be converted accordingly (30 business days = 25 work days, 27 business days = 23 work days). No vacation may be taken during seminar time.

#### **Visiting the deployment site:**

Most of the support provided to volunteers by the state organization as the responsible body is provided in the seminars and at deployment site visits. These generally take place twice during the volunteer year. The instructor responsible for the deployment site visits the volunteers at the site and talks to them and the guides about how things are going. They provide support, mediation and advising to both volunteers and guides.

#### **W:**

##### **Weekend service:**

In general, volunteers must receive a free weekend at least every 14 days. It is possible to deviate from this regulation for good cause and in coordination between the volunteer, responsible body and deployment site. The volunteer may not be put in a worse position than other employees. Weekend service can be performed as part of normal operational scheduling. The provisions of the Youth Employment Protection Act (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz) must be observed for minors under 18 years of age.

**Work areas:**

Work areas are defined based on the German Federal Voluntary Service Act. They are primarily practical aid activities focused on specific learning objectives and carried out in charitable organizations. In general, the aid activities are adjusted to the age and personal skills of the volunteer.

In the disability assistance field, there are a wide range of work areas in different institutions, like daytime care facilities, residential homes and group homes, work and support areas, public assistance, early support, kindergartens, and schools.

**Y:****Youth Employment Protection Act (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz):**

The JArbSchG must be complied with for persons under 18 years of age. According to the Youth Employment Protection Act, for example, young people may not work more than eight hours per day or 40 hours per week. In addition, they may be employed a maximum of five days per week. Furthermore, fixed breaks of a reasonable length must be planned in advance for young people. These should last 30 minutes if the youth works over four and a half hours, or 60 minutes if they work over six hours. In addition, a working time of ten hours (including breaks) may not be exceeded in shift work. In multi-shift operations, young people over 16 may be employed up to 11:00 PM. Young people may not be employed on 12/24 or 12/31 after 2:00 PM. The JArbSchG outlines further regulations.

**Initial training check list**

Deployment site:

Volunteer name:

Guide:

Duration of voluntary service:

	Guide	Volunteer
<b>Topic area</b>	✓	✓
<b>Deployment site</b>		
Hold an introductory meeting to share important information and define the initial training process.		
Inform the volunteer about the support organization, the deployment site and work area (mission, objectives and duties, members, clients, employees, groups, etc.). Provide informational materials, if available.		
Inform the volunteer about the organizational structure, management, employees, hierarchy and chains of command within the deployment site.		
Show the volunteer the facilities (different groups, cafeteria, kitchen, bathrooms, employee toilets, break rooms, outdoor facilities, offices, administration, ...)		
Other:		
<b>Labor law</b>		
Inform volunteers about the work schedule. Who makes the schedule, and when is it made? By when should time off requests be submitted?		
Work hours, time recording, break regulations, overtime regulations		
What should the volunteer do if they become ill? To whom should they report when they are sick?		
How many vacation days does the volunteer have, special vacation entitlement, where to request vacation time, how far in advance should it be requested? Are there any times during which the institution is closed?		
Responding to an emergency		
Occupational safety / protection		

Fire protection regulations		
House rules		
Supervisory duties		
Hygiene regulations, laundry services, waste disposal		
Youth protection for minors		
Confidentiality and data protection, recorded in writing if necessary		
When will allowance be available		
Administering medications		
Other:		
<b>Everyday work</b>		
Inform volunteers about the clients/residents/employees of the group and their special considerations, about pathologies and disabilities, and go through the daily and weekly schedule.		
Are there clients who require emergency medications?		
Jointly discuss the volunteer's regular duties and responsibilities.		
Clarify who the volunteer's direct supervisor is, and who is entitled to give the volunteer instructions.		
Documentation, handover logs, files		
Introduction to lifting techniques, wheelchair technologies		
If necessary, introduction to the care plan, individualized care, assistive devices		
Who is the contact person if the group leader/guide is sick or on vacation?		
How to handle family members/clients/third parties (visits, phone calls, letters, documentation)		
Instruction on telephone usage (how should you answer the telephone, private & business-related use)		
Other:		
<b>Dates</b>		
Agree to a regular date with the volunteer for guide meetings.		
Indicate the dates of team meetings, service meetings, company outings, Christmas party, internal training sessions, etc. and clarify partic-		

ipation		
Go through the list of seminar dates with the volunteer and ensure that they are not assigned to work on the schedule		
Plan internal training days What, where, who, when		
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Work clothing, if applicable		
Issue keys, if applicable		
Use of company car, fueling, maintenance, driver safety training, accidents		
Plan initial training by experts during the first few weeks		
Present a binding standard for guides. Present meeting guidelines, preparation sheets for volunteers and guides.		





I want to develop these competencies further

Description of the competence	
Assessment of my competence	
My objective	
What I can do to achieve this goal	
How my guide + others can help me do so	
How I know I have further developed this competence	
My competence after 1 month (development, status, reflection)	
My competence after 3 months (development, status, reflection)	
My competence after 6 months (development, status, reflection)	
I have not developed this competence further, because ...	
I have succeeded in developing this competence. Description of how this occurred. Examples of how this is evident + develops	
Reflection	

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