

Important Contact Points for African newcomers in Duisburg

When you are new to a city, it is not easy to find your way around. Especially for Africans, they mostly turn to their friends and relatives for this information. While they may receive useful information regarding some practical aspects of their daily life, it may be difficult to obtain information that will help them find social bearings and get along in their new environment.

The federal states and cities, especially the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the city of Duisburg, regularly provide information about such possibilities in their various information channels. Especially in times of Covid 19, much more information is being disseminated to the public today. Sometimes, this information does not reach newcomers or it can be difficult for them to understand as the information might not be available in a compact form and in a language they understand. Through this project, we would like to play our own role in providing useful information about some important contact points.

People come to Germany and subsequently to Duisburg for different reasons. It might be just to visit, to study or to work. It might as well be that you are running from difficult situations in your home country and are seeking refuge here. Do not worry, we have some important information for you, irrespective of your purpose of stay. Welcome to Duisburg.

GENERAL INFORMATION

In terms of registering in the town and getting or renewing your residence permit, the foreign office or Ausländerbehörde is your first stop. Duisburg has 4 foreign offices. A central one and 3 branch offices. These are:

- 1) Central: Königstraße 63-65
- 2) Nord: Duisburger Str. 213
- 3) Mitte/Süd: Sittardsberger Allee 14
- 4) West: Bismarckplatz 1

Depending on the area of town where you live, you would have to go to one of the branch offices. However, take note of the following:

For students, you can only go to the foreign office in Duisburg Süd. All matters relating to asylum seekers living in Duisburg are dealt with exclusively in the central office. The foreign office can be reached through the following email: auslaenderbehoerde@stadt-duisburg.de. Take note that in these Covid times, you can only be attended to on appointment (These could take very long). Do not forget to wear your FSP mask when you get there.

Check out the service portal of the town of Duisburg through this [link](#). Here you will find a wealth of information that can make your stay easy and enjoyable.

ARE YOU A STUDENT?

The university of Duisburg-Essen has over 40.000 students and it is amongst the 10 largest in the country. You can find out more about the university through the following [link](#). All contact points you would need in order to navigate yourself through university life in Duisburg can be found through this [link](#). Duisburg has a very large community of African students. They can be of great help to you. Let us list a few here:

- [International Office](#)
- [Academic Advisory Center \(General Student Advisory Service\)](#)
- [AStA - General Student Committee \(student interest representation\)](#)
- [ESG - Protestant Student Congregation](#)
- [KHG - Catholic University Community](#)

Do not hesitate to contact us if you need further information.

ARE YOU A WORKER?

For non EU persons, working in Germany has been made easier due to changes in law which came into force on 20th March 2020. Based on this law, you do not need a degree to be classified a professional in order to work in Germany. A vocational training of more than 2 years is enough. However you should also meet the following two conditions:

- Your certificate must be officially recognised by the relevant authority in Germany.
- You should have a job contract/offer in your professional field from an employer in Germany.

Find out an explanation of the new rules and more here :

<https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/working-in-germany-new-rules-for-non-eu-nationals/>

The most difficult part for most foreigners is getting these certificates recognized. The African Impulse e.V. did training to support those seeking such help. In addition, we can provide the following contact points and steps you would need in recognizing your certificate.

Check out the Arbeitsagentur at <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/en/recognition-of-qualifications>.

In case you need assistance in this process, do call the number +49 0800 4 5555 00.

ARE YOU A REFUGEE?

Duisburg in particular and Germany in general welcomes refugees. How best you enjoy your stay here depends on your readiness to understand the system and integrate yourself. We have much information for you here.

The [Federal office of Migration and Refugees \(BAMF\)](#) is responsible for handling asylum case.

Within the Framework of a previous “KOMM-AN NRW” project, the African Impulse e.V. developed a refugee guide in German, English and French. This guide is found at our dedicated website at [Afrodisburg.de](#). You can read the guide here [Afrodisburg.de Refugee guide](#) -. This guide describes the whole asylum process from application to what happens when your case is accepted or rejected.

In addition, the following contact points can be of very much importance to the refugee.

Ankommen App

The Ankommen app could be a good starting point for you to get first-hand information on important contact points and an understanding of life in Germany. The refugee app can be downloaded for Apple and Android devices from the following link <https://ankommenapp.de>. This app which is in several languages, including English and German, contains important information for refugees as it gives information about answers to everyday questions about living in Germany, information about seeking asylum and the asylum procedure, finding a job or apprenticeship, opportunities of learning the German language.

Mbeon App and platform

Mbeon is a counselling service for migrants and refugees. They provide advice and support in any of their over 1000 MBE advice centers nationwide. With Mbeon, you can get personal advice at their centers or at mbeon online, anonymously if you like. Migration advice for adult immigrants is independent of government agencies. The consultations are free and confidential. You can visit their website at <https://www.mbeon.de/> or download the app here <https://apps.apple.com/de/app/mbeon-messengerberatung/id1408795643>.

BAMF brochure

The BAMF has a brochure which describes the asylum procedure. You can download the brochure [here](#).

Studying in Germany as a refugee

In principle, a refugee is allowed to study at a German university, especially if their status is recognized. When it comes to access and admission to a course of study, they are handled in the same way as other international applicants.

On the website <https://www.study-in-germany.de/fluechtlinge/>

And, did you know that you can also get financial help through Bafög as a normal German. You can apply for Bafög if you meet any of the conditions here below:

- You are a recognized refugee (recognized asylum seeker, refugee with refugee status or subsidiary protection)
- You are tolerated (Duldung) or the holder of certain humanitarian residence permits. Then you can apply for assistance 15 months after you submitted your asylum application in Germany. This regulation came into force on January 1, 2016.
- Your asylum application has not yet been decided.

Find out more from any Studentenwerk near you.

INTEGRATION

Nearly every town in Germany has a municipal integration center (Kommunal Integrationszentren). The state-wide coordination office for the state of NRW can be reached through the following [link](#). This central office works in collaboration with those of towns to support issues relating to the wellbeing and integration of migrants in the state and towns.

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