

ARRIVING AND MORE.



INFO-GUIDE for Refugees in Federal State Reception Centers (Landes-Aufnahmeeinrichtungen - LAE) in Saxony-Anhalt

- Initial Reception Centers
- Application for Asylum
- Integration Services



ALL I NEED TO KNOW.

Imprint

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**WELTOFFEN
WILLKOMMEN**
Sachsen-Anhalt

Address of welcome

Welcome to Saxony-Anhalt!

You have reached a federal state reception center and you are at the beginning of the asylum procedure. We hope that you will find some rest here and the opportunity for new perspectives to open up. Saxony-Anhalt is an open-minded federal state. We aim at receiving you as refugee at best and offering guidance and integration services at an early stage. For this purpose, many people commit themselves voluntarily and provide assistance.

On the following pages we have compiled important information concerning the first phase of your residence in order to facilitate guidance in the reception center and the asylum procedure (as of 12/2015).

Staff as well as volunteers take care of best possible and humane living conditions with high commitment. We are here to help you. Due to the huge number of daily arriving asylum seekers, processes might be delayed or temporarily faulty. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

In the reception centers you can contribute to a successful cooperation of people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. There is absolute religious freedom in Germany - it is to be observed strictly not only by the state but also in interpersonal relations. This might not always be easy, however, experience has shown: Many problems can be solved with respect and mutual consideration. We hope that this info guide answers your questions and enables you to meet people who can assist you with further guidance.

We wish you the very best for your path and future.

1 Reception Facilities (LAE) in Saxony-Anhalt. Regulations - Supply - Offers

Initial Reception Centers (LAE)

If you have come to Germany seeking protection and wishing to apply for asylum, public authorities will allocate you by law and quota system to a temporary residence in a federal state, the so-called **reception centers (Aufnahme-einrichtung - LAE)**. In Saxony-Anhalt there are currently several reception centers: in **Halberstadt, Halle (Saale), Magdeburg (Biederitz-Heyrothsberge), Stendal (Klietz)** and further branch offices.

Your initial reception (registration) as asylum seeker takes place in the LAE. If Saxony-Anhalt does not handle applications for asylum from your country of origin, you will be transferred to the authorized federal state.

In the LAE you receive accommodation, food and other necessary requirements for living. You stay in a LAE until you are allocated to a municipality and transfer.

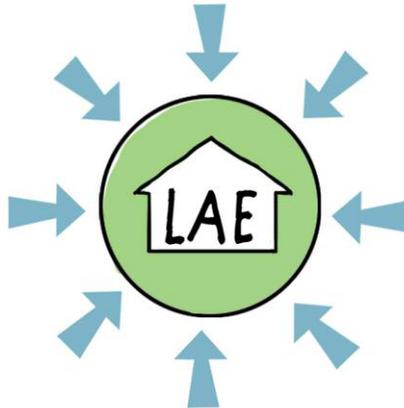
! Important information for guidance in your initial reception center can be found in the inlay of this booklet.



You have to remain on site

There is a **residential obligation (Aufenthaltsverpflichtung)** in the course of your initial reception. That means that your residence is restricted to a certain area (administrative or urban district). Residential obligation exists in order that public authorities are able to reach you anytime and that you receive important documents in time.

If you want to visit relatives or if you need to leave your initial reception area for other reasons, you must apply for permission (**leave pass - Urlaubsschein**) at the Federal Office. If you leave the area without permission, you will face a fine; in case of recurrence criminal proceeding is imminent.



Length of Residence

According to the law the length of residence in initial reception centers is a period of up to six months. The actual period depends on places available. In Saxony-Anhalt the length of residence in initial reception centers is currently up to four weeks.

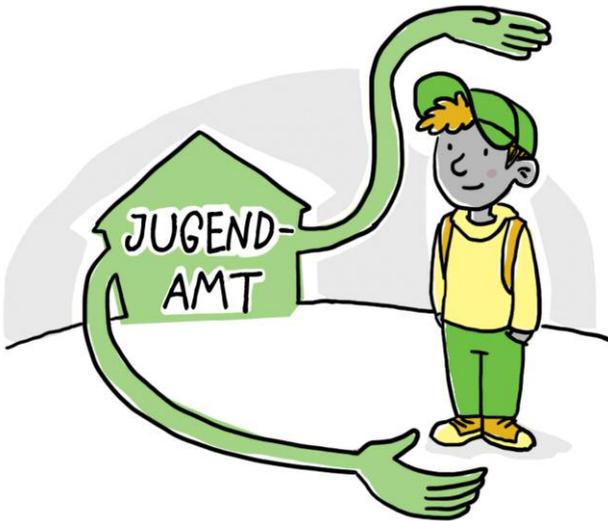
Usually, asylum seekers from Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania remain in the initial reception center until the asylum procedure has been concluded, since they have little prospect of recognition.

Accommodation

You will live in decent conditions in your first accommodation, mostly in rooms of collective accommodations. Depending on local capacities you might be accommodated temporarily in transition accommodations (barracks or tents in summertime). Anyway, your accommodation will be winterproof. Single women or women with children will be accommodated in separate areas.

Protection of Unaccompanied Minor Refugees

In Germany minors (children under the age of 18 years) **without any parent or custody holder** are in particular need of protection. Therefore, minors **are admitted into the authorized youth welfare office** after their arrival. They do not stay in the initial reception centers but will receive advice, care and accommodation by the youth welfare services.



Jugendamt = authorized youth welfare office



Distribution (transfer) to Rural Districts

The LAE staff will tell you which municipality will be responsible for you in the future. Currently, personal wishes regarding your residence in Saxony-Anhalt cannot be taken into account. Nevertheless, if you have first-degree relatives (children, parents, minor siblings, in the case of minors also siblings over 18 years) you are entitled to claim to move to your relatives' place of residence.

Action in Case of Conflict

Living together in a very confined space might lead to conflicts. Please keep calm in such cases. Try to settle disputes on site with the persons involved. Report dangerous situations immediately to the social workers. In case of emergency notify the security service or the police on site.

If you are victim of violence, you can turn to the **mobile victim consultation** for assistance and support.

Supply in the Initial Reception Centers

Benefits

In your initial reception center you receive statutory aids.

You receive as **non-cash benefits**:

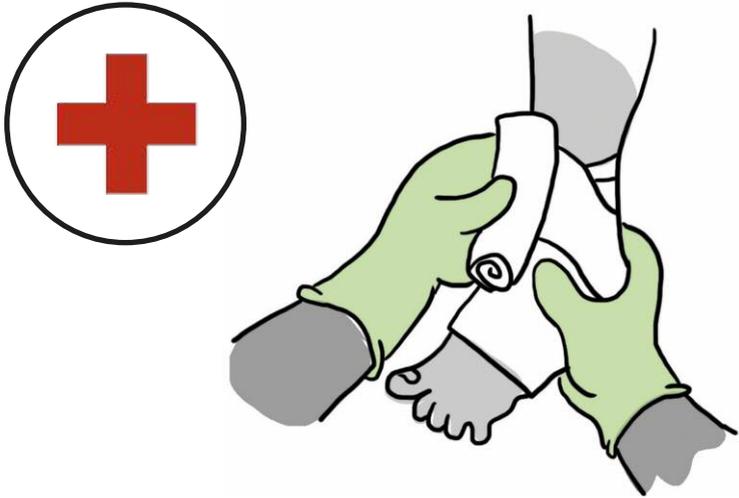
- Vouchers for breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Bed linen and hygiene products
- Clothes

Besides you receive **pocket money** for your individual demand. It is paid cash and it is calculated for one person of legal age (18 years). Only one member of a family receives the full sums, any other family members receive smaller sums.



Health Care

In case of acute disease proceed toward the medical supply point of your facility. There you will always find a doctor during the day.



In case of acute diseases the doctor in the LAE might prescribe further treatment by another doctor and issue a certificate of medical treatment. **If your disease is not acute, you need a certificate of medical treatment, which you must apply for at the social welfare office before visiting the doctor.**

The Psychosocial Office (Psychosozialer Dienst) and the Psychosocial Centers (Psychosoziale Zentren) of the Federal State in Halle and Magdeburg provide support with psychic traumata (if provided in the LAE). If necessary, arrange an appointment there.

Do you need support regarding **HIV** (or other sexually transmitted diseases), please contact the **HIV-supports (AIDS-Hilfen)** in Halle, Magdeburg or Halberstadt.

Offers in the Initial Reception Center

Organizing Leisure Time

Allow sufficient time for the **preparation of your asylum procedure/hearing**. Take advantage of the local counseling centers with their services.

Study German! In your facility there is usually the possibility to learn the German language.



Give your children the opportunities to play and to get to know other children. All initial reception centers provide offers for children.

Take advantage of **first orientation services**. Outside of the initial reception center (for example in the community colleges), you also have the possibility to attend German courses or courses on daily routine. Attention: Please ask beforehand if the courses are at cost.

Take part in **charitable work** (translation, support at events, cleaning work, repairs and other work). This way you can actively shape your immediate living environment and improve your pocket money.

Assessing Professional Qualification

In initial reception centers the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) already provides the assessment of your professional qualification. If your professional qualification is needed on the labor market, you will receive a **quick labor market consultation** as well as **consultations on recognition of degrees and qualifications**. In case your professional qualification meets the requirements of the local labor market, you might also be allocated to the respective municipality.

Especially if you already have completed vocational training or if you have a university degree, you should take advantage of the **assessment of your qualifications** in the initial reception center.



Ausbildung = education

2 Asylum Procedure

Fundamental Right of Asylum

The right of asylum is an international fundamental right. In the Federal Republic of Germany it is part of the constitution (article 16a: "Politically persecuted people enjoy the right of asylum"). You can reclaim the right of asylum if you provably experienced political persecution in your country of origin or if you were in life-threatening conditions there for other reasons.



Recht auf Asyl = right of asylum

Why do you have to apply for asylum?

The **Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF or 'Federal Office')** verifies the reasons for asylum. Verification is only possible on the basis of your personal asylum application. You have to file an asylum application as soon as possible at the Federal Office. The Federal Office will inform you about where and when to file the asylum application. This might take several months due to the large number of applications at the moment.

During the application you will be informed about your rights and duties regarding the asylum procedure. This information will be handed to you in writing in your national language. The Federal Office will invite an interpreter/translator to your personal appointment with the decision maker. You are allowed to bring along your lawyer or a trusted person to the appointment.



Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

In Germany an application for asylum can only be filed at the Federal Office. The Federal Office is not a court but an authority. BAMF verifies whether you have been persecuted in your home country and whether you will be threatened by persecution in case of return. If you have experienced persecution, it is essential whether you have obtained state protection in your home country. It is also verified, if you can obtain protection in another part of your country of origin. The Federal Office sets up a file on you and record your personal details. If you have turned 14, you will be photographed and fingerprinted.

What is requested with the asylum application?

If you file an asylum application, the reasons for humanitarian protection will be proved in detail. If international protection is not provided and if your application is rejected, the Federal Office will determine whether or not deportation bans are present in accordance with § 60 par. 5 or par. 7 of the Residence Act. As long as the asylum procedure is pending you are allowed to stay in Germany.

Preliminary Residence Permit (Aufenthaltsgestattung)

You will receive a certificate of registration as an asylum seeker ("Bescheinigung über die Meldung als Asylsuchender" - BÜMA) from the LAE staff if you have not received one at another point yet. The certificate provides personal data and a photograph. As soon as your BÜMA is issued your preliminary residence permit (Aufenthaltsgestattung) is being recorded. You have to carry it with you all the time and you have to show it to the police in case of identity checks. It is noted on the permit in which area you are allowed to stay. As soon as you might transfer to an adopting municipality, the change of address will be reported to the Federal Office.

Consultation on the Asylum Procedure Preparation of the Hearing



There are counseling centers regarding the asylum procedure in the initial reception center (Caritas). You can catch up on your rights and duties concerning all steps of the asylum procedure in the counseling centers. You might also get personal advice on the options of voluntary return to your home country or migration to a third country. These consultations are free of charge, anonymous and regardless of denomination.

BAMF's info video on the asylum procedure (in 10 languages) also prepares for the hearing. Ask in your initial reception center where it is screened.

The Hearing

The **hearing**, often called "interview", is the most important instance for applicants to explain why they have fled. On the basis of the hearing BAMF decides whether or not you will be granted asylum in Germany.

! Please note that the hearing is the first and only possibility for you to amply describe your personal motifs for the claim to asylum. Be aware of the significance of the interview and prepare well for the hearing.

Please note: Refugees from Syria can currently file and justify their application in writing. Usually, there is no hearing.

Depending on the capacities of the Federal Office the interview takes place some time after filing the application. You will receive a written invitation to the "Hearing according to § 25 of the Asylum Procedure Law" (Anhörung gemäß § 25 Asylverfahrensgesetz). An interpreter will be present. Inform the Federal Office early on in which language the hearing should be accomplished.



Antrag auf Asyl = apply for asylum

The hearing is composed of about 25 questions about your background, the reasons for fleeing and your journey to Germany. Provide true and full information. The decision maker will validate if your information is in accordance with the information you provided at registration. Verify that all the statements of your hearing in the translated report are correct and confirm with your signature.

! Caution:
Check if the names of all family members are spelled correctly!

The Federal Office's Decision

The Federal Office will notify you about the decision on your asylum application in writing (official decision – Bescheid). The official decision includes reasons for the decision as well as **rights of legal appeal**, which inform you about if and how you can reconsider the decision and file an appeal.

If your asylum application is recognized you will receive a **residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis)**. According to the reasons you will be granted residence for a period of one to three years. If your application is rejected, you will receive a **demand for departure** and a **threat of deportation** that obliges you to leave the country. If deportation is not possible, the foreigners' registration office might temporarily issue a **Duldung** (suspension of deportation)- Take advantage of counseling centers, which explain the Federal Office's decision and its consequences to you!



Calling in a Lawyer

You can file an appeal against the Federal Office's decision in court. The rights of legal appeal provide indications of possible legal means and deadlines for applicants. Please note that you have to answer quickly if you want to file an appeal.

Also in case you intend to engage a lawyer, you should take action early on. **Caritas' asylum procedure counseling center (Asylverfahrensberatung der Caritas)** as well as the **Refugee Council (Flüchtlingsrat)** provide independent consultation on lawyerly protection.



Voluntary Return

If you are obliged to leave the country or if you want to return to your home country, voluntary return is a conflict-free and safe alternative to compulsory repatriation.

The Federation's **REAG/GARP-program** is a subsidy program for voluntary return. There is no legal claim to financial or other support in case of voluntary return.

Address the staff of the asylum procedure counseling centers. They will support you regarding the application and organize your departure.

3

Arriving in the Municipalities - Integration Services



Accommodation

The municipality responsible for you will provide accommodation in dormitories or in an apartment. Families with children usually get an apartment quickly. Single refugees might be accommodated in small groups or share an apartment.

Contact persons

Your key contact persons are social workers in the municipality who supervise you in the dormitories or in the apartment. Local **welcoming initiatives** as well as voluntary guides and mentors support you regarding first orientation. **Migration counseling centers** usually provide consultation during fixed office hours. They provide competent support with regard to the asylum procedure, legal aspect for foreigners, social benefits as well as language training, education and labor. Besides, there are organizations and associations on site. These provide information, encounters, culture, sports and language courses.

In larger cities migrants have allied in migrant organizations. Many of them still remember how difficult it is to settle down. Therefore they assist newly arriving people in translations and orientation. Contact the regional network of **migrant organization of Saxony-Anhalt (Landesnetzwerk der Migrantenorganisationen - LAMSA)**. You can get information there and find out which migrant organizations are located nearby.

Study German

Studying the German language as quickly as possible enables you to participate in German social life. All immigrants and refugees with permanent residence permit are entitled **to attend integration courses of the Federation**. These courses cover 600 hours language course and 300 hours orientation course. They teach regulations, rights and duties as well as practical knowledge about life in Germany.

Asylum seekers from Syria, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq can attend an integration course while the asylum procedure is pending (as of 12/2015). To do so, they have to direct an application to BAMF. Please ask your social worker or consultant about it.

There are also plenty introductory offers: basic courses, language cafés, language mentoring or voluntary offers of associations. Your social worker will also inform you about on-site possibilities of language training. Language courses might be combined with job hunting and qualification. Therefore, also address the job center or the employment agency (Arbeitsagentur).



ICH - DU - WIR = I - YOU - WE

Recognition of Professional Qualifications

Pursuing a career in Germany requires recognized professional qualifications. If you hold a vocational training or an academic degree, take care that these qualifications are filed by authorities.

In case you have not been able to take advantage of professional recognition services in the initial reception center, address immediately after your arrival the social workers or consultants in the municipality responsible for you. They will inform you about the employment agency's **competence assessment** that assesses formal education, training, professional qualification and academic degree as well as work experience. By the time your qualification profile is gathered, you should take advice on your possibilities of recognition. Contact the respective counseling centers of **IQ network**. The consultants will support you step by step along the often arduous path of **foreign degree recognition**.

Integration into Labor

Recognized refugees with residence permit obtain an unrestricted employment permit. If your asylum procedure is still pending or if you are suspended from deportation (Duldung), employment permit can be granted at the earliest after three months residency. You can apply for the employment permit at the foreigners' registration office. The Federal employment agency conducts an examination and only agrees if there is no native applicant for the position in question (**priority review - Vorrangprüfung**) and if the position conforms with standards in terms of labor law.

Saxony-Anhalt aims at speedy competence assessment and integration into labor. Many partners collaborate in labor market counseling. Counseling is provided by migrant counseling centers, the Federal Employment Agency (BA), job centers, Chambers of Crafts and Chambers of Industry and Commerce.

Many associations as well assist by counseling, e.g. the project network **Jobbrücke PLUS**, **Network IQ**, the regional initiative "Fachkraft im Fokus" and the **Regional Network of Migrant Organizations** (LAMSA e.V.). Ask your guardian or consultant responsible specifically about the possibilities of labor market integration that come into consideration for you.

Caution: Missing or insufficient language skills are often the main obstacle to labor market integration. Therefore, take advantage of all possibilities to study German as quickly and intensively as possible.

Child Care

In Germany every child has the right to a place in a day care center (Kita) providing care and the possibility to learn and play with other children. The same is true for your child the moment it is allocated to a rural or urban district. Attending a day care center promotes the acquisition of the German language and communication with other children. Your social worker will assist you in filing the application for admission to the day care center.

Formal Education for Children

In Germany children have a right to education. They are required to attend school at the age of six by law. School attendance is compulsory for your children, too. In many cities of Saxony-Anhalt there are schools, which provide specific language support classes. Your child can acquire German in these classes in order to follow lessons with other children after that. Your social worker will inform you about the closest offers and assist you with the application.



Schule = school

Training and Studies

Provided that a high school diploma is on hand, take advice on existing training opportunities. In Germany qualification for many professions takes place in the "dual vocational training system" (duale Ausbildung). This training usually takes three years. It pairs hands-on learning in a company with theoretical knowledge in the vocational school. You can consult job centers or contact the Regional Network of Migrant Organizations. The regional network supports young migrants searching a trainee position and accompanies them in the course of the training.

You can study at the universities of Saxony-Anhalt if you obtain a university entrance certificate (Abitur) or if you already started studying. Depending on which university course you are interested in, please address the International Offices of the universities in Saxony-Anhalt.

Specific Protection of Women

In Halle there is an accommodation (**FlüchtlingsFrauenHaus**) for single women and their children who experienced violence or those with specific protection needs. Admission requires a residence permit or Duldung (suspension of deportation). This place provides shelter from assaults as well as assistance in building an autonomous life, in case of personal crisis intervention and coping with everyday life.



Schutz für Frauen = Protection of Women

Support in Case of Xenophobic Assaults

If you have experienced a racially motivated outrage or if you feel threatened by right-wing extremist violence, immediately contact a **victim consultation center** (Opferberatungsstelle). The staff will fully support you after an assault by accompanying you to the police to the doctor or to a lawyer for example. Anyway, be aware that: **You have the right to make perpetrators accountable!**



Problems due to Sexual Identity

If you are discriminated against due to your sexual identity, you can approach the social workers on site. If you rather remain anonymous, you can find support in Halle at the counseling center **Begegnungs- und Beratungszentrum "lebensart" e.V.** and in Magdeburg at **CSD Magdeburg e.V.** or at the lesbian and gay association **Lesben- und Schwulenverband Sachsen-Anhalt (LSVD)**. At these places you will receive further information about bisexuality, homosexuality, trans- and interidentity (LSBTI*). The **psychotherapeutic service (Psychotherapeutischer Dienst)** provides relief in case of emotionally demanding problems.



Democracy and Human Rights: Principles of our Coexistence

You are seeking protection as refugee in Germany. Our country guarantees asylum from political persecution and shelter from war and civil war.

This shelter is part of our democratic constitutional order. This order includes encompassing fundamental and human rights that constitute the foundation of our society. The rights of people in Germany are guaranteed in the German Constitution of 1949, in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and in the European Union's Charta of Fundamental Rights of 2000. The rights of children are protected by the United Nations' Convention on the Right of the Child of 1989.

- Germany is a democratic republic. Head of state, parliament as well as government are elected democratically, the same is true for the parliaments and governments of the 16 Federal States and the self-governments of the cities and municipalities. All elections are conducted by secret ballot.
- Every person has the right to express his or her opinion, to assemble and to demonstrate for his or her opinion. All persons have the right to form democratic parties, unions and other associations.
- Many people in Germany commit themselves to cultural, social or sporting interests in associations or initiatives that take over many duties for the community.
- All persons are equal before the law. Government and authorities are bound to the Constitution and to the laws. Those whose rights are infringed, may defend themselves by complaint or in court and are not to be disadvantaged. Those who try to bribe a civil servant have to face punishment.
- Men and women have equal rights. That extends to the decision on one's lifestyle, the right to labor and free choice of profession as well as disposition of one's income. In Germany women pursue all careers, even leading positions.

- Children have the right to non-violent parenting, to early childhood and formal education. Fathers and mothers are equal regarding their children's education. Parents can have a determining influence in day care centers and at schools in terms of parental representations.
- All persons have the right to respectful interaction. Use of physical violence is prohibited.
- Every person has the right to freely practice his or her religion. Most people in Germany are Protestants or Catholics and most of the holidays and many customs in Germany originate in Christianity. German culture is moreover crucially shaped by Jews. Nowadays, also many Muslims are living in Germany. Besides, there is a range of other faith communities and many people without religious affiliation. No person shall be discriminated against because of his or her faith or ideology. Freedom of expression includes as well the right to criticize religions and religious communities.
- No person shall be discriminated against because of his or her origin, skin color, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. Homosexuals do not have to hide in Germany and may recognize their long-term relationship like marriages by the state.

These fundamental rights also constitute the basis for respectful and tolerant interaction.

- The analysis of the German felonies at the time of National Socialism (1933 – 1945) is very important in Germany. Racism and anti-Semitism are socially proscribed. Denying the Holocaust is a crime.

Democracy thrives if people participate and commit themselves to their interests. This possibility is basically open to refugees. Associations, in particular, are delighted if you show interest. Many immigrants founded self-organizations that make a significant contribution to peaceful cooperation and solidarity in Germany.

Selected Addresses and Contacts

- **AIDS-Hilfe (Halle / Sachsen-Anhalt Süd e. V., Sachsen-Anhalt Nord e. V.)**
Halle / Magdeburg
Website: <http://halle.aidshilfe.de/> / www.aidshilfesachsenanhaltnord.de
Phone: +49 345 5821271 (HAL) / +49 391 5357690 (MD)

- **Beratungsdienste und Netzwerke zur Unterstützung
von Flüchtlingen / Ankommenden**
Website: www.integriert-in-sachsen-anhalt.de/netzwerke/

- **FlüchtlingsFrauenHaus Halle**
Halle
Website: www.migration-paritaet-lsa.de/ffh/
Phone: +49 345 5238115

- **Flüchtlingsrat Sachsen-Anhalt e. V.**
Magdeburg
Website: www.fluechtlingsrat-lsa.de
Phone: +49 391 5371281

- **Jobbrücke PLUS.**
Integration von Asylbewerbern und Flüchtlingen in Arbeit und Ausbildung
Magdeburg
Website: www.jobbruecke-chance.de
Phone: +49 391 7279882

- **Landesnetzwerk Migrantenorganisationen Sachsen-Anhalt (LAMSA) e. V.**
Halle
Website: www.lamsa.de
Phone: +49 345 17164890

- **Lesben- und Schwulenverband Sachsen-Anhalt (LSVD)**
Magdeburg
Website: www.sachsen-anhalt.lsvd.de
Phone: +49 391 5432569

- **Mobile Beratung für Opfer rechter Gewalt**
Halle / Magdeburg / Salzwedel
Website: www.mobile-opferberatung.de
Phone: +49 345 2267100 (HAL) / +49 391 5446710 (MD) /
+49 3901 306431 (SAW)

- **Netzwerk IQ - Anerkennungs- und Qualifizierungsberatung**
Halle / Magdeburg
Website: www.sachsen-anhalt.netzwerk-iq.de
Phone: +49 345 686948-23/-15/-21 (HAL) /
+49 391 40805-15/-10/-13 (MD)

- **Psychosoziales Zentrum für Migrantinnen und Migranten in Sachsen-Anhalt**
Halle / Magdeburg
Website: www.psz-sachsen-anhalt.de
Phone: +49 345 2125768 (HAL) / +49 391 63109807 (MD)

- **Verfahrensinformation der Caritas für Asylbewerber**
in Sachsen-Anhalt (Beratungsstelle zum Asylverfahren)
Halberstadt
Website: www.caritas.de
Phone: +49 3941 609300

- **Willkommensinitiativen Sachsen-Anhalt**
Website:
www.integriert-in-sachsen-anhalt.de/willkommen/willkommensinitiativen/



This booklet (with inlay) will also be published in Arabic, French, German, Pashto, Farsi, Russian and Serbian.

All versions are available online on the website of Integrationsportal Sachsen-Anhalt:
<http://www.integriert-in-sachsen-anhalt.de/willkommen/erstinformationen-fuer-fluechtlinge/>



Further Information

You will find further integration services with information about the German way of life - regarding living, working, education, health and other topics - in „Wegweiser für Neueingewanderte“ (guide for new immigrants) at:
<http://www.integriert-in-sachsen-anhalt.de/willkommen/wegweiser-fuer-neueingewanderte/>

