About us

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)
Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Federal German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Family is a diverse concept. Family is wherever people assume responsibility for one another as partners. For me, modern family policy means respecting the family constellations people choose for themselves. It also means providing families with support based on the three pillars of money, infrastructure and time to spend with one another. This is why the Ministry works to ensure that mothers and fathers have access to good childcare services, are better able to share their responsibilities equally and can reconcile family and work commitments in a family-friendly working world. My aim is to introduce family working time – an issue to which I am highly committed.

I want to ensure that women and men enjoy equal rights. Although Germany’s Basic Law (Grundgesetz) states that women and men are equal, the situation can be different in reality. This has to change – by ensuring equal pay for equal work and by affording women equal access to leadership positions. And talking of basic rights, children also have rights: rights to protection, to education and to furtherance of their personal development and welfare. I am working to ensure that all children in Germany enjoy the conditions they need for a safe and healthy childhood.

I believe that making policy for children and young people means making policy with them. The same applies to policymaking for senior citizens – they must be allowed to participate. Valuing their experience and life achievements, and giving them more scope and influence makes society stronger.

For every age group, it is important for people to become engaged.

I enjoy living in a society where people stand up for one another. With the Living Democracy! programme, which supports all those who stand up in support of democracy and diversity, I want to ensure that the conditions are in place to enable them to do so. As the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, I want to stand up for all in Germany – for the diverse people who shape German society today.

Manuela Schwesig
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
The Ministry

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) is headed by Federal Minister Manuela Schwesig. She is represented in matters of policy and before the German Bundestag (parliament) by Parliamentary State Secretaries Caren Marks and Elke Ferner. Permanent State Secretary Dr. Ralf Kleindiek is the highest-ranking civil servant in the Ministry and is responsible for all administrative affairs.

The Ministry is currently staffed by 695 employees. These are distributed across five divisions, the Minister’s Office, the Federal Antidiscrimination Office and the Independent Commissioner for Child Sex Abuse Issues, making for a total of 70 departments. Women make up some 70 percent of ministry staff and 58 percent of departmental management positions are held by women.

Headed by Christine Lüders, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, which operates nation-wide, serves as a point of contact for all people who believe they have been subjected to discrimination in a form listed in Germany’s General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG).

The Independent Commissioner for Child Sex Abuse Issues, Johannes-Wilhelm Rörig, is the Federal Government’s official point of contact for victims of sexual abuse, their relatives, professionals who work in this field and for people who witness sexual abuse in their personal or work-related environments or have related questions or issues.

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Federal Minister for Family Affairs Manuela Schwesig

“I want to promote modern social policy that sees the diverse biographies and lifestyles in German society, the diversity in people’s origins and cultures, as an opportunity to shape Germany’s future.”

Biography
Manuela Schwesig has been Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since December 2013.

Previously, she held ministerial positions in the State Government of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, serving as Minister for Social Affairs and Health from 2008 to 2011 and as Minister for Labour, Equality and Social Affairs from 2011 to 2013. A qualified tax administrator, she worked at the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Finance from 2002 to 2008. Minister Schwesig began her political career at municipal level as a member of the city council in Schwerin, where she now lives with her family. She became a member of the SPD Executive Committee for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in 2005.

Manuela Schwesig has been Deputy Chair of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) since 2009.

Born on 23 May 1975 in Frankfurt (Oder), Minister Schwesig is married and has a son.
Member of the German Bundestag since 1990 and Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since December 2013

“The provision of the right to equality between women and men must result in actual equality between women and men. The same pay for the same or equivalent work, a living wage, equal access for women to leadership positions and equal division of responsibilities for family life are far from being reality. The same applies to a life free from violence. I want to change this.”

“Demographic change brings challenge and opportunity. A society built on solidarity, where young and old lead self-determined lives and are able to care for and support one another, calls for collaboration and a sense of shared responsibility across the generations.”

„Be it through the Federal Volunteer Service or other forms of voluntary work, civic engagement is the glue that holds society together. It must be recognised as such and encouraged. While it can assist public service, it is not designed to replace it.“
I work to achieve child and youth welfare policy that promotes participation, equal opportunity and a safe and healthy childhood. This means policy that strengthens the rights of young people from the outset.”

„Families are both vibrant and diverse. Family policy should thus be designed to meet their various needs. That means the right mix of time, money and infrastructure. Women and men want to share responsibilities equally, especially when reconciling their work and family life. The provision of parental allowance plus and family care leave are two key steps towards helping them achieve that goal.“

„A vibrant democracy is essential to society, but not necessarily given. Measures to promote both democracy and diversity are tremendously important.“
“Policymaking for the 82 million people in Germany, to improve the situation for families, senior citizens, women and youth, is a key source of motivation for me as State Secretary.”

As the Permanent State Secretary, Dr. Ralf Kleindiek is responsible for ensuring that the Ministry operates and performs according to the Minister’s directives and instructions. As head of the Minister’s Office, he represents the Minister in all ministry matters, both internally and externally.

Biography
Dr. Ralf Kleindiek is a qualified lawyer and has worked in federal and state (Länder) government since 1999. He initially worked at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and then switched to the Federal Ministry of Justice, where he was head of the then Finance Minister Zypries’ office and also served as Deputy Director-General. In March 2011, Kleindiek was appointed State Secretary at the Hamburg State Ministry for Justice and Equality. He has been Permanent State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since January 2014.
“Many mothers and fathers want to share responsibility for work and family life. If employers create the conditions to enable them to do so, then families and businesses benefit alike. That is why I am working closely with industry associations and unions to install family-friendliness as a success factor for all.”

Manuela Schwesig, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

More than 60 percent of young parents see equal division of responsibility for work and family life as the realm of the ideal. Only 14 percent actually achieve it. Around 30 percent of mothers and fathers can imagine themselves both working 30 hours a week. A large number of mothers would like to work more than they do. Fathers, by way of contrast, want to become more involved with the family. One third of fathers would like to reduce their working hours. These are the reasons why modern family policy is based on the principle of equal division of responsibility.
families

Equal division of responsibility for work and family life. A first and important step comes in the form of Parental Allowance Plus (ElterngeldPlus) – a step that paves the way for family working time (Familienarbeitszeit).

To better meet the needs of modern families, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs works closely with strong, reliable partners from industry and business, the unions, municipal stakeholders and associations.

Equal division of responsibility for work and family life benefits parents, children and society as a whole

Everyone benefits from an equal division of responsibility for work and family life: parents can focus on their children and their careers, children can spend more time with their parents and society as a whole can reap the rewards. The availability of a reliable infrastructure and financial security are key prerequisites in all of this. Families in Germany are able to rely on a wide range of state benefits and provisions.

→ www.familien-wegweiser.de

Parental allowance, the new parental allowance plus and more flexible provisions for parental leave

Parental allowance
Parental allowance is designed to give parents the opportunity to take time for their child, especially in its first year, without suffering financial loss. Parental allowance thus compensates for the loss of income when a parent stops working or reduces their working hours to look after a new-born child. The allowance ranges from a minimum €300 to a maximum €1,800 per month and is paid for a maximum period of 14 months if the other parent also claims parental allowance for at least two months.

Parental Allowance Plus
The new parental allowance plus helps parents who want to work part-time soon after the birth of a child. Parental allowance plus provides financial support for longer – including beyond the child’s 14th month, as one month of parental allowance becomes two months of parental allowance plus.
Parental allowance plus is supplemented by a partnership bonus: if both parents work between 25 and 30 hours a week in parallel for a period of four months, they each receive four additional months of parental allowance plus.

www.elterngeld-plus.de

Parental Leave
In addition to parental allowance plus and the partnership bonus, the new rules on parental leave give parents more flexibility in returning to work and in reconciling work and family life. Mothers and fathers are now able to take up to 24 months of unclaimed parental leave between their child’s third and eighth years.

Example: Possible combinations of parental allowance, parental allowance plus and the partnership bonus

Mother  | Allowance Parental | Allowance Plus and Part-time | Partner-ship Bonus
---|---|---|---
Father  | Parental Allowance | Full-time | **
Child’s Age in Months | 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 |
* Partner Months  ** Parental Allowance Plus per parent: Part-time 25 to 30 hours

Facilitating a family-friendly working world

Family-friendly working conditions are a fundamental prerequisite for optimal reconciliation of family and working life. Employers have recognised and acknowledged that fathers also want opportunities to reconcile their work and family commitments.

Company programme Success Factor Family programme
Success Factor Family (Erfolgsfaktor Familie) is a centralised information platform which focuses on the subject of a family-friendly working world. As a programme for business and industry, it consolidates information on family-conscious human resources policy. The programme’s Success Factor Family Network comprises over 5,000 businesses and institutions.

www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de

Employer-provided daycare
The national funding programme, Betriebliche Kinderbetreuung (employer-provided daycare), is designed to promote the establishment of new employer-supported daycare places.

Local Alliances for Families
Across the country, more than 600 Local Alliances for Families provide strong, partnership-based networks of stakeholders from industry and business, government and civil society. The aim is to provide needs-based services to help local families better reconcile family and working life.

www.lokale-buendnisse-fuer-familie.de
Employment for migrant mothers
The Stark im Beruf programme targets migrant mothers in Germany who want to get back to work or start at career. The programme gives these women greater access to the working world at more than 80 locations nationwide.

Protection of working mothers
Statutorily prescribed maternity leave during what is known as the ‘protected period’ is designed to safeguard employed expectant mothers and their unborn child against health-related risks in their place of work, over-work and exploitation, financial loss, and dismissal during pregnancy or soon after the birth.

Creating family-friendly conditions
Families in Germany can rely on a wide range of state-provided benefits. These include child benefit and other family-related benefits – such as parental allowance, child supplement and the tax-free allowance for single parents – which are linked to specific circumstances or needs. There are also labour law provisions in place which, for example, give parents the right to take parental leave and place expectant mothers under a protected period during statutorily prescribed maternity leave.

Many families receive support in the form of marriage-related benefits. Including benefits for surviving dependants, family-related benefits amount to some €200 billion per year.

Between 2009 and 2014, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Finance conducted an overall evaluation and survey of marriage-related and family-related benefits and provisions in Germany – the first of its kind anywhere in terms of size and scope.

Families need the right kind of support at the right time
Families require both financial security and support services that are tailored to their needs.

Child Benefit
Child benefit is paid as a non-income-related benefit: for all children up to the age of 18, for children up to the age of 25 in education and training, and for unemployed children up to the age of 21. Child benefit amounts to €188 per month for the first and second child, €194 per month for the third child and €219 per month for the fourth and each subsequent child. From 1 January 2016, child benefit for the first and second child will rise to €190
per month, to €196 per month for the third child and to €221 per month for the fourth and each subsequent child.

Child Supplement
Child supplement is paid to parents who are able to meet their own needs from the money they earn, but do not have the financial means to cover the needs of their children. Child supplement amounts to a maximum of €140. From 1 July 2016, child supplement will rise by €20 to €160 per month per child. Parents wanting to apply for child supplement should contact their local family benefits office (Familienkasse).

Since 1 January 2011, parents have also benefited from additional provisions to promote their children’s education and social participation.

Provisions for single parents: Tax-free allowance and maintenance advance
A range of special financial provisions are available for single parents. The particular financial burden of being solely responsible for the family and home is recognised by the provision of a tax-free allowance, which effectively reduces a single parent’s taxable income.

Maintenance advance is provided as a special form of financial assistance to help single parents with children under twelve who receive no maintenance or no regular maintenance payments from the other parent. Maintenance advance is paid for a maximum 72 months and currently amounts to €144 for children under five and €192 for children aged six to 11. With effect from 1 January 2016, maintenance advance rises to €145 for children under five and €194 for children aged six to eleven.

Improved family-related benefits
With legislation to increase the basic tax-free allowance, the tax-free allowance for children, child benefit and child supplement, the Federal Government has introduced a package to improve family-related benefits. The package also includes an improvement in the tax-free allowance for single parents, which currently lies at €1,908 for the first child and allows a further €240 for each subsequent child.

Services and Benefits at a Glance: Familien-Wegweiser
Operated by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, the Familien-Wegweiser (Guide for Families) website provides parents with information on statutory benefits and provisions. The guide also lists key points of contact by region and offers advice on bringing up children.

www.familien-wegweiser.de
Support for parents and children

Education and childrearing are key issues for families. They influence both wellbeing and quality of life, especially for children. Some 4,000 parental advisers are available to families to advise them on matters of child-rearing and education. They serve as persons of trust in daycare centres, parent-child centres and other locations where family-related education takes place. The addresses of local advisory offices that parents can contact to seek advice are listed on websites of the Federal Conference for Child Guidance Counselling (bke ➔ www.bke.de) and the German Working Group for Youth and Marriage Counselling (DAJEB ➔ www.dajeb.de).

Family-friendly opening hours

Time is a scarce commodity for parents, and especially for those who work. It is thus important to align working hours with daycare opening hours, find solutions for emergency situations, off-peak hours and school holidays, and make the opening times for local authorities, medical practices and libraries more family-friendly. In many German cities and also in rural areas, local administrations have put family-friendly opening hours on their agenda. Many town mayors are now working with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs to develop local services that are specially tailored to families’ needs.

Publication: Kommunale Zeitpolitik für Familien (Family-friendly Opening Hours in Local Public Services)

Adoption and Child Welfare

Many people in Germany would like to adopt a child. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs is responsible for adoption placement law and is working to improve its provisions and processes to enable adoption to take place.


Respecting same-sex lifestyles and gender identity

Gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, transgender and intergender individuals are all equal members of society. The Federal Government is currently placing the spotlight on the situation regarding transsexuals, transgender and intersex individuals. The aim is to raise awareness to the fact that all people must be respected and accepted regardless of whom they love and how they perceive their sexual identity. Germany will not tolerate discrimination.
“The way we age largely depends on local conditions and our local environment. Affordable, needs-based services, easily accessible shops, robust support networks to support those in need, education, opportunities to engage in voluntary work and social exchange, barrier-free streets and housing – these are all needed to ensure that older people are able to organise their lives in the way they see fit and remain independent.”

Manuela Schwesig, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Demographic change is the order of the day. Society is ageing – mainly as a result of the low birth rate and the fact that people are living longer. Leading an independent life in old age and participating in society is important to almost everyone. Providing them with the support they need is one of the key objectives in policymaking for senior citizens and there are two priority goals. The first is to support older people in need of care, help or other forms of assistance. And second, to use the potential of older
women and men to foster cohesion between the generations and promote a society based on sharing and solidarity.

In many cases, responsibility for helping and caring for the elderly is assumed by family members, but also by professional carers and in some cases by friends. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth places importance on promoting a sense of caring and shared responsibility. The Ministry constantly works to modernise and develop nursing care professions in order to meet the growing need for nursing care staff. It would also like to see society give greater recognition to the care provided by family members. Making it easier to reconcile care with working life helps in this regard – for example with the right to take care leave.

With the Alliance for Persons with Dementia, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth provides national-level impetus – in some cases working with state (Länder) and welfare service associations – to help both those affected and their families find support networks that help make life with dementia easier to bear.

Older people want to remain active, take part in society and assume responsibility. Multi-generation community centres are just one way to provide meeting places for people of all generations and for them to engage in a wide range of activities.

Publication: Altern im Wandel. Zentrale Ergebnisse des Deutschen Alterssurveys (DEAS) (Ageing and Social Change: Findings of the German Ageing Survey (German Centre of Gerontology, GCG)).

Active Ageing and Social Cohesion

Demographic Strategy

Demographic change will alter society significantly, which is why the Federal Government’s Demographic Strategy Jedes Alter zählt (Every Age Counts) is to be continued. A key, ongoing component of this strategy is cross-sectoral, multi-level dialogue with state (Länder) governments, local administrations, associations, social partners and other stakeholders from civil society.

Federal Programme: Multi-Generation Community Centres

Operated under the Federal Programme Mehrgenerationenhäuser (multi-generation community centres), some 450 multi-generation community centres provide places for people of all ages to meet and engage in a wide range of activities. The centres link and supplement the social infrastructure through close cooperation with other local stakeholders and the local administration. The multi-generation approach is the unique selling point of each centre, where young and old can talk to one another, help each other and benefit from the exchange of knowledge. Interaction between the generations fosters everyday skills, promotes participation and inclusion, and strengthens social cohesion.
Housing in old age
Living an independent, self-determined life for as long as possible – that is the aim of the Federal Government’s Wohnen im Alter (Housing in Old Age) programme and its associated initiatives. The provision of social housing means not only making age-related alterations to homes and adapting existing housing, but also making changes to the immediate environment. Apart from government, the crafts and trades sector, local administrations and the housing industry, senior citizens’ organisations and society itself can contribute to providing older people with comfortable homes and helping them participate in social life.

Non-Statutory Welfare organisations/Promoting Senior Citizens’ Organisations
They are indispensable in promoting social cohesion in Germany: the associations of independent welfare organisations which operate under the umbrella of the Federal Association of Non-Statutory Welfare (Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Caritasverband, the German Red Cross, Diakonie Deutschland, Der Paritätische und die Zentralwohlfahrtstelle der Juden). The same applies to the senior citizens’ organisations which operate under the auspices of the Federal Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations. As critical partners, these support the Federal Government’s policies, helping to shape Germany as a social federal state and enabling social inclusion. Funding provided by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth makes it possible for these organisations to maintain the necessary structures at national level. They are thus in a position to play an active role in specific areas of social policy and to support the people whose interests they represent in a targeted way by conducting their own projects and programmes.
Senior citizens today are generally healthier, better educated and more vibrant and energetic than earlier generations. They also want to continue their engagement in the working world, in industry and in society as a whole. However, prevailing images of old age are still based on those of the generations that went before. These usually relate to illness and decay, rather than available skills, experience and potential.

Perceptions of age can strongly influence what young people expect for their own old age and what older people trust themselves to be able to do. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth thus wants to sensitize social stakeholders to this situation – and sensitize older people themselves. Working with other federal ministries, the states (Länder), top municipal associations, non-statutory welfare associations, civil society organisations and industry and business, the Ministry discusses and explores the kind of additional participation opportunities that can be offered to people aged 55 and above.

The Ministry is also active at EU level, exchanging ideas and views with other member states and helping to enhance the Active Ageing Index. → www.programm-altersbilder.de

Publication: Wo lässt es sich in der EU am besten aktiv altern? Ergebnisse des „Active Ageing Index“ 2014 (Active Ageing Index 2014 report findings)

Care and supervision – a shared responsibility

Better reconciliation of family, care and working life

With the amendments to the Care Leave Act and the Family Care Leave Act, which entered into force on 1 January 2015, employees are afforded more flexibility to enable them to care for dependent relatives over a longer period of time.

Close relatives have the option of taking up to ten working days away from work to give them time to organise needs-based care in an acute care situation or to secure nursing care during this period. An income replacement benefit (Pflegeunterstützungsgeld) is provided during this time for a maximum of ten days. The right to be absent from work applies to all employees regardless of their employer and the size of the company or business.

Employees also have the option to take up to six months en bloc or take time away from work to look after a close relative at home (Care Leave). And since 2015, they also have the option to apply for an interest-free loan from the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben) to cushion the effect of losing...
their income. The right to Care Leave does not apply to employees who work for an employer with a regular staff of 15 or less.

When close relatives need to be cared for over a longer period of time, families face the challenge of reconciling the provision of that care with their responsibilities in working life. Against this backdrop, effective from 2015 onwards, employees have the right to partial release from work for a period of up to 24 months and to take out an interest-free loan. The right to partial release does not apply where an employer has 25 or fewer regular employees (excluding employees in vocational education and training).

To accompany a close relative in their final phase of life, an employee may take up to three months away from work in one go or be released intermittently for shorter periods of time. When looking after an under-age relative in need of care, an employee may be released from work for up to six months in one go or intermittently for shorter periods of time for up to 24 months in total. The care or support given need not be provided in the home.

For more detailed information, see:

→ www.wege-zur-pflege.de

**Nursing care training reform (Nursing Professions Act)**
The quality of life of people in need of care is reliant on the nursing staff who care for them. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is working with the Federal Ministry of Health to reform vocational training and education for nursing care professionals. A first step comes with the introduction of training for geriatric nurses, general nurses and paediatric nurses which is aligned to a flexible initial vocational education and training and further education and training system. To secure the skilled staff needed in the geriatric care sector, at the end of 2012 and under the leadership of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Federal Government, the state (Länder) governments and the various nursing care associations launched an initiative to improve training for geriatric nurses (Ausbildungs- und Qualifizierungsoffensive Altenpflege). The idea was to
make the profession more attractive and to promote initial and further education and training opportunities.

**Alliance for Persons with Dementia**
Dealing with dementia is one of the biggest challenges faced by society today. In Germany, some 1.5 million people suffer from the illness. Without a breakthrough in dementia prevention and treatment, that figure is expected to rise to around three million in 2050. Thus, the task at hand is to improve circumstances both for people with dementia and for their families to ensure their protection and participation, and to secure their inclusion in society as a whole. As part of its National Demographic Strategy, which is jointly managed by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Health, the Federal Government has established the Alliance for Persons with Dementia. The Alliance brings together public authorities and civil society organisations who are responsible for the care and treatment of people with dementia at national, state (Länder) and local level. The Alliance members have drawn up a list of concrete measures which are to be implemented at various levels to help those affected. The Dementia Agenda was signed in September 2014 and the related implementation process is currently underway.

By 2016, as many as 500 Local Alliance Support Networks will have been created to help dementia patients.

- [www.wegweiser-demenz.de](http://www.wegweiser-demenz.de)
- [www.allianz-fuer-demenz.de](http://www.allianz-fuer-demenz.de)
- [www.lokale-allianzen.de](http://www.lokale-allianzen.de)

**Seventh German Government Report on the Elderly**
The local community and the local environment are especially important as people get older. In addition to municipal provision of services and support, caring communities are playing an ever-increasing role. Against this backdrop, the Seventh German Government Report on the Elderly focuses on care and responsibility in the community and addresses the following issues:

- What role can local authorities and local communities play in securing social, political and cultural participation for the elderly and in helping them lead as independent a life as possible as their lives progress?

The Commission for the Seventh Report on the Elderly will make concrete recommendations for action to be taken by relevant social stakeholders.

- [www.siebter-altenbericht.de](http://www.siebter-altenbericht.de)
Social advancement can only be achieved if statutorily prescribed equal opportunities for women and men actually result in equal opportunities for participation. This is why I am working to achieve fair pay, get more women into top management positions and combat violence against women.”

Manuela Schwesig,
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Equality between women and men is one of the biggest challenges to overcome in making Germany future-ready and fair. It means giving women and men the same chances in all areas of life – personal, professional and in the home and family. This is why the Federal Government places particular focus on central equality policy issues. In many cases, women still earn less than men for performing the same or equivalent work and, despite being equally or even better qualified than male candidates, only few women move into top management positions.
When it comes to domestic violence, the victims are almost always women.

**Focal Areas, Responsibilities and Aims**

Equality means that women and men not only have the same rights, but that those rights are actually equally enforced. Because women and men are still not afforded the same opportunities to live their lives in the way they would wish, the government has a responsibility to dismantle the disadvantages that stand in their way. This is the case regarding issues like jobs, wages and salaries, and in the provision of care for others. But true equality can only be achieved if women and men treat each other as equal partners – in their personal lives, in the work environment and in society as a whole. This is the only way to unlock the unused potential of both women and men, and the only way for them to be able to use the opportunities available to them. A key issue in treating one another as equals is the absence of violence. This is why domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking and the exploitation of people for the purposes of prostitution must be combated in a rigorous way.

**Current Measures**

- Employment: Equal access to top management positions – Equal pay for equal work – Promotion of a return to work in gainful, secure employment
- Doing away with stereotypes: Girls’ Day and Boys’ Day
- Protecting Women Against Violence: Hotline for women who suffer violence – Better protection for prostitutes – Protection and support for victims of human trafficking
- Pregnancy: Hotline for pregnant women in emergency situations – Support for unwanted childlessness

**Women in Top Management Positions**

The number of top women managers lags significantly behind that of men despite comparable career paths. This applies to all levels of hierarchy and is especially evident right at the top, on company boards. Only 5.4 percent of board positions in Germany’s Top 200 companies are held by women.

**Focus Areas, Responsibilities and Aims**

Although the glass ceiling has developed a few cracks over time, the job opportunities on offer for women lag far behind what women have to offer in return. Company structures need to change. They need to be made more competitive and more innovative. And they need to open the doors to give the vast number of highly qualified women access to top positions. Legislative and non-legislative measures are now in place to ensure that this occurs.
Current Measures
Statutory provisions aimed at increasing the number of women in leadership positions. Non-legislative measures in the form of regional alliances for equality: government and industry work together to put the measures in place to promote career development opportunities for women at regional level.

- The German Act on Equal Participation of Women and Men in Leadership Positions in the Private and Public Sectors
- Transparency: monitoring trends in the proportion of women in leadership positions and promoting platforms for exchange between industry, industry associations and government to foster discourse on current developments and trends.

Achieving equal income opportunities for women and men

The career biographies and job-related decisions of women and men differ greatly: women still tend to disrupt their careers more often and for longer than men, and they often work part-time in order to look after the children or care for close relatives. Also, most of the people in marginal employment in Germany are women. Women often work in lower income sectors and jobs. The employment market is thus a key focal area when it comes to equality policy.

Focal Areas, Responsibilities and Aims
Bearing the differing employment biographies of women and men in mind, the aim is to achieve equal income opportunities for women and men in all phases of life. Effective equality policy gives women and men equal rights at work.

Current measures

The Federal Government promotes equality between women and men in the working world and works to achieve equally fair and long-term income opportunities. This includes equal pay, upgrading typical women’s jobs such as nursing and the right to return to a job on a full-time basis after a period of working part-time. The aim of new legislation is to reduce the pay gap and place employers under obligation both to provide more transparency and to report on their women’s promotion policies and equal pay provisions.

→ www.equalpayday.de
Pregnancy, Birth, Family Planning

When it comes to starting a family, would-be parents seek guidance on a whole host of issues, ranging from childlessness to unwanted pregnancy to the provision of support in emergencies and times of need.

Focal Areas, Responsibilities and Aims

In addition to the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, both the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) and local pregnancy counselling centres provide information and services concerning pregnancy, pregnancy-related problems, childbirth and family planning. ➔ www.familienplanung.de

Current Measures

- Pregnancy counselling: all women and all men in Germany are entitled to seek advice on any and all matters concerning pregnancy, and they can attend any pregnancy counselling centre regardless of who operates them. ➔ www.schwanger-und-viele-fragen.de
- Confidentiality: secret births that take place without medical supervision must be prevented, as should the abandonment or killing of a newborn child. To avoid such situations, pregnant women in need or distress can call 0800 40 40 020 – a free hotline which ensures them a safe and anonymous birth. Alternatively, they can obtain information and help online at: ➔ www.geburt-vertraulich.de.

Protecting Women Against Violence

One in four women in Germany falls victim to physical or sexual violence or mental cruelty at some time in their life. This can occur in the home, in the form of a sexual attack, sexual harassment, violence in prostitution and trafficking in women. Violence against women can also make children into victims, as they often suffer violence themselves or are witness to it.

Focal Areas, Responsibilities and Aims

Everyone has the right to live a life free of violence. Exposure to violence impacts victims’ ability to develop free from worry and fear.

Current Measures

Nation-wide hotline: Violence Against Women The nation-wide hotline is available in several languages and can be called free of charge 24 hours a day at 08000 - 116 016. There is also a multilingual online service at: ➔ www.hilfetelefon.de

Better protection against human trafficking and forced prostitution. The Federal Government wants to afford women better protection against human trafficking and forced prostitution, and improve conditions for those who work in prostitution.
Help and support in dealing with childlessness: almost one in ten couples aged between 25 and 59 suffer unwanted childlessness and are reliant on medical help to fulfil their desire for a child. For many, the costs involved in this process can be both a financial and a psychological burden. To alleviate the situation, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has launched a nation-wide initiative to provide help and support for people desperate to have a child. 

www.informationsportal-kinderwunsch.de

New roles for boys and men

Equality between women and men can only be achieved if both receive equal attention. This means giving women and men greater choices in family and working life, and also in society as a whole. And it means enabling them to share their responsibilities equally as partners.

Focal Areas, Responsibilities and Aims

In society, there exist a large range of gender-specific roles. When it comes to equality, these become important where they result in an imbalance between the opportunities available to women and men. This becomes evident, for example, in choices concerning employment and academic study, in career opportunities, the gender pay gap and deciding who assumes responsibility for the family. The Federal Government thus aims to support the achievement of lifestyles that move away from the trodden gender role path.

Current Measures

Career choices and careers advice: gender-awareness should be one of the basic skills demonstrated by all those involved in providing careers advice. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth brings experts together from relevant institutions, administrations and science and research.

Annual Girls’ Day and Boys’ Day events support young girls and boys in finding their own way in the working and academic world. They encourage them to find their strengths, follow their interests and ignore ingrained stereotypes.

www.girls-day.de  www.boys-day.de
Equality

The network and information platform, Neue Wege für Jungs (New Paths for Boys) promotes and links projects, activities and initiatives that help boys plan their futures, broaden their employment choices and improve their social skills.

The www.meintestgelaende.de (my testing ground) portal is an online gender magazine that gives boys and girls interesting insights into gender equality, affords them a space to participate in dialogue and allows them to exchange their views on their lives and their visions for the future. The portal is operated by teenage editorial teams.

International Gender Equality Policy

Achieving equality between women and men in all parts of the world remains an important goal. The United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and numerous other international organisations all work with this in mind. Milestones achieved so far include the UN Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW, in force since 1981) and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, at which all UN member states adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The European Union has committed all its member states, by means of EU law and other measures, to stamp out gender-based discrimination and promote equality between women and men – especially in the jobs market. The most prominent example is Germany’s implementation of the relevant EU Directives into national law in the form of the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG).

Focal Areas, Responsibilities and Aims

The Federal Government is committed to gender equality, both in Germany and elsewhere. It works with international partners to maintain and, where necessary, enhance and implement international standards and norms. Agreements at EU and international level are supported and implemented by means of measures conducted under national gender equality law.

Current Measures

- Beijing+20: 20th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995
- Germany’s Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
- 15th Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Protecting the Rights of Women During Armed Conflict and Equal Participation of Women in Peace Negotiations, Conflict Settlement and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (also known as the Resolution on Women, Peace and Security)
- Cooperation activities in implementing the EU Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men 2010 – 2015, both at EU level and in Germany
Children and teenagers have the right to a good childhood. Right from the start, they should be afforded the same opportunities regardless of their origins, gender, religion or their parents’ social status.

The aim should be to allow children and teenagers to develop into confident, independent individuals. This involves ensuring that children know they have rights – and by including them in policymaking and by making policies with them in mind.

“Willy Brandt was once quoted as saying that the best way to predict the future is to create it. I want to use the powers invested in me to create modern social policy that provides people in Germany with the conditions they need. In doing so, I want to take a proactive approach to ensuring that people stand together, young and old, adults and children. I would be delighted if you would support me in this endeavour and play an active role.”

Manuela Schwesig,
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Support from External Experts

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth relies to an extent on external expertise. In the Ministry's reports on children and youth, independent experts regularly analyse the real-life situation for young girls and boys. These reports form an important foundation for national policy on children and youth.

The Federal Youth Board (Bundesjugendkuratorium) is an independent panel of experts who advise the Federal Government in matters of children's and youth welfare, and also on current policy issues concerning children and youth.

⇒ www.bundesjugendkuratorium.de

JUGEND STÄRKEN Initiative

The Ministry’s youth promotion initiative, JUGEND STÄRKEN, consolidates existing programmes for young people from disadvantaged families and for young adults with migrant backgrounds (ages 12 to 26) who experience difficulties in transitioning from school to the working world.

JUGEND STÄRKEN im Quartier

The model programme, JUGEND STÄRKEN im Quartier (supporting youth in deprived neighbourhoods) supports local authorities in efforts to help young people with special needs integrate better at school, in vocational education and training, in pre-vocational initiatives and at work. ⇒ www.jugend-staerken.de

With the help of German industry and business, work is underway to optimise existing structures for cooperation between public and independent youth welfare organisations, schools, employment agencies, job centres and community managers.

The programme provides young people with one-on-one counselling and support. Using social environment-focused micro-projects, the aim is to improve young people's quality of life and improve conditions in local communities.

JUGEND STÄRKEN is implemented in conjunction with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and is financed via the European Social Fund. The first pilot phase runs from 2015 to 2018.

Youth Migration Services

Throughout the country, some 430 youth migration service points advise young people with migrant backgrounds who are no longer subject to mandatory full-time schooling and need
help in the transition from school to vocational education and training or to full-time work. The youth migration services also offer socio-educational support to young people before, during and after they attend integration and language courses.

They also advise parents of young migrants on matters of education and vocational education and training. The youth migration services are part of a local network and cooperate with other services and organisations.

www.jugendmigrationsdienste.de

Youth Protection Act

Germany’s Youth Protection Act is primarily designed to protect children and youths in the public sphere. This involves selling and consuming tobacco and alcohol, and entry to disco-theques and bars. Age ratings for films and computer games and the process for the indexing of films, DVDs and online offerings by the Federal Review Board for Media Harmful to Minors are also governed by the Act.

The Youth Protection Act targets retailers, the hospitality and catering sector, and the organisers of public events, placing them under obligation to protect children and youths from potential risk. At the same time, it provides parents with valuable guidance on bringing up and protecting their children.

www.jugendschutz-aktiv.de

Safe use of online media in childhood

Digital media have become an integral part of life for children and youths today. Like no other generation before them, almost all young people regularly go online. Three-quarters of them who use the internet do so via a smartphone while on the go and even small children use apps and computer games. This trend poses a range of challenges, both in family-based media education and use, and in providing contemporary media-based protection for young people. With the following publications, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth aims to promote safe and healthy use of online media by children and youths:

The media guide SCHAU HIN! Was Dein Kind mit Media macht (WATCH! How Your Child Uses Online Media) provides parents with guidance in matters of media education and use. www.schau-hin.info (in German and Turkish – also available as an app).

The Ein Netz für Kinder (A Safety Net for Children) flyer provides parents and children with information about safe websites and offers guidance on issues such as data protection and cyber bullying.

Youth Protection Act
A flyer entitled Spiel- und Lernsoftware pädagogisch beurteilt (An Educational Assessment of Games and Learning Software) evaluates new releases for their educational value.


The KinderServer (Children’s Server) website offers families and teachers simple ways of switching home computers, computers used in schools and other education centres, and mobile devices to a safe and secure mode for children to use. The KinderServer can be downloaded free of charge from: ➔ www.kinderserver-info.de

At the German Centre for Child Protection on the Internet (I-KiZ), the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth works with experts from federal and state (Länder) government, Länder-level broadcasting companies, child and youth protection initiatives and organisations, law enforcement representatives, science and research, and media companies and their various associations and instances of self-monitoring and control to develop ways to provide modern online protection for children and youths. ➔ www.i-kiz.de

Federal Review Board for Media Harmful to Minors

The Federal Review Board for Media Harmful to Minors (BjM) has a legal mandate to protect children and youths from any kind of media content considered harmful to them. ➔ www.bundespruefstelle.de/bpjm/Service/english.html

EU and International Youth Policy

EU and international youth policy promotes cross-border encounters. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth uses youth policy to enable young people to encounter other countries and cultures with the aim of dismantling prejudice. Child and youth welfare practitioners are also able to familiarise themselves with youth-related topics and structures in other countries. Information about key youth initiatives, activities and measures is available online:

JiVE (Youth Work International – Experiencing Diversity): ➔ www.jive-international.de

Franco-German Youth Office: ➔ www.dfjw.org

German-Polish Youth Office: ➔ www.dpjw.org

German-Israeli Youth Exchange: ➔ www.conact-org.de

German-Czech Youth Exchange: ➔ www.tandem-org.de

German-Russian Youth Exchange: ➔ www.stiftung-drja.de

With the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and the EU Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme, the Ministry promotes mobility, mutual understanding and solidarity in Europe. ➔ www.jugend-in-aktion.de
Dedicated Youth Policy

Youth is a phase of life in which children become young adults and find their place in society. Dedicated youth policy guides and supports this process by taking young people seriously and giving them a voice. Their opinion counts and they should be encouraged to express their views and wishes, and to talk about their problems. The main focus of targeted youth policy is thus to ensure that young people feel they are a valuable part of society.

As part of the Federal Government’s Demographic Strategy, the Working Group Jugend gestaltet Zukunft (Youth Shaping the Future) ensures that young people in Germany have a voice. In conjunction with youth associations, a youth checklist is currently being developed which will be used to assess whether public measures actually take adequate account of young people’s interests.

Child and Youth Welfare – A Service for All

Equal Opportunities for Children and Youth
The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is responsible at national level for child and youth welfare. Child and youth welfare services reach almost all children in Germany: from the time they are three years old until they start school, almost every child is cared for and its development promoted, either in a daycare centre or by a childminder. The same applies to one in three children under the age of three. In 2013, over one million young people received educational support, be it from education counsellors, in social group work, in family guidance centres, in residential care or in foster care. Child and youth welfare services are thus an indispensable resource in the lives of young people. This is especially the case for a not inconsiderable number of children and youths who are at risk of being excluded both from society and from the opportunity to lead a self-determined, independent life. Securing equal opportunities for these young people is of utmost importance and poses a challenge in the provision of child and youth welfare services, both now and into the future.

Dialogue with Länder governments, local administrations and welfare associations
The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth places the child and the child’s needs at the forefront of all child and youth welfare policy reform. Such reform must take account of the current and future situations of children and youths. This is why the Federal Ministry...
for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth wants to look at the needs of all children and teenagers – those with disabilities and those with none. The central pillar in the reform of policy for children and youths involves improving their rights. In intensive dialogue with state (Länder) governments, local administrations and welfare organisations, the Ministry wants to ensure better integration of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into the legal framework for the provision of child and youth welfare services.

Focus on the Child – Secure the Future

The Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth aims to ensure that children and teenagers in Germany receive the support that they and their families need to enjoy better opportunities in life. This means providing an effective, needs-based child and youth welfare service.

The Federal Government is committed to ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, receive the same development opportunities and the same access to education. Quality, needs-based childcare also promotes better reconciliation of family and working life, and that in turn benefits German industry and business.

By the end of 2014, the Federal Government had invested some €5.4 billion in expanding daycare services for children under three. And with effect from 2015, it is allocating an annual €845 million to cover the operating costs involved in expanding and securing the availability of quality daycare.

In this current electoral term, the Federal Government has increased the funding allocation for its daycare expansion investment programme to €1 billion and will alleviate the financial burden on state (Länder) governments by allowing them some €100 million in VAT-related tax concessions in 2017 and 2018. Also, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is using the Third Investment Programme to focus on providing full-day childcare.

The Federal Government has allocated some €400 million to provide additional staff at 4,000 selected daycare centres to assist existing staff in the provision of speech and language tuition for children and in providing assistance to families.

With the Child Day Care Action Programme, the Federal Government promotes the expansion of flexible daycare services which are especially tailored to meet families’ needs.

www.fruehe-chancen.de

Protecting Girls and Boys Against Violence

Early Intervention

We want to enable girls and boys to grow up in a world free of neglect and violence. To provide the right kind of support, pressures on families must be detected at an early stage. The National Centre on Early Prevention assists the Federal Govern-
ment, state (Länder) governments and local administrations in this endeavour. The Federal Child Protection Act contains provisions to allow the use of early intervention and prevention networks and also the family midwife service.

Protection against Sexual Violence

Based on the recommendations of the Round Table on Sexual Child Abuse and in accordance with the National Action Plan, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has developed a protection policy model for use in protecting children and juveniles from sexual violence. Sexual violence occurs each and every day which is why young girls and boys must be given the right to protection, help and support. In implementing the policy, the Ministry works closely with the Independent Commissioner for Child Sex Abuse Issues.

Empowering Children

Children must be aware of their rights. This is the only way to protect them from sexual violence. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth wants to empower, motivate and enable girls and boys to seek help. People in their immediate environment, especially parents and teachers, are to be involved, sensitised and trained to act as part of a robust and reliable network. One fitting example comes in the form of the Federal Government’s Trau Dich (Speak Out, Get Help) programme.

Help for people in emergency situations

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth offers people in emergency situations fast, unburied help outside the regular statutory support system. The Sexual Abuse in the Family Fund provides adult survivors of child sexual abuse assistance in overcoming the lasting effects of their experience (such as covering the costs of therapy). The fund also accepts applications concerning non-family related cases, such as sexual abuse which occurred in sports clubs or Church organisations.

The German Contergan Foundation provides assistance for thalidomide victims and funds projects to improve their opportunities to participate in society.
The Directorate-General for Central Services provides a range of services to the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. These include management of human resources requirements, coordination and management of budgetary and finance matters, and assistance regarding all kinds of organisational and technical issues.

The Directorate-General for Central Services is also responsible for social engagement policy. In enhancing civic engagement on an ongoing basis, the Ministry sees itself as a partner in society – as an equal partner among the millions of engaged citizens, clubs, associations, businesses and private foundations.

“We need a strong civil society. The state cannot achieve this alone. I consider it important for people to show solidarity and commit to one another. Civic engagement must be recognised and valued.”

Manuela Schwesig,
Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Civic Engagement Policy

An example of the Ministry’s civic engagement policy comes with the new Demokratie leben! (Live Democracy!) programme, which provides local-level support for people who stand up in support of democracy and diversity. The programme focuses primarily on combating right-wing extremism and antisemitism, with projects and activities that reject all forms of prejudice-based, political and ideology-motivated violence and left-wing militancy.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth funds the Federal Association of Volunteer Agencies (bagfa) to provide opportunities for a wide range of civic engagement and voluntary work. Each year, around 100,000 people – young and old – sign up for general Voluntary Service (BFD), a Voluntary Social Service Year (FSJ), a Voluntary Environmental Service Year (FÖJ) or for International Youth Voluntary Service (IJFD). The Ministry governs the legal framework and provides funding to promote the voluntary services involved.

In conjunction with the National Network for Civic Engagement (BBE), the Ministry organises an annual Civic Engagement Week to inform the public about the many and varied services performed by over 23 million voluntary workers in Germany. And with the award of the annual German Prize for Civic Engagement, the Ministry recognises the outstanding achievements of voluntary workers from all around the country. Those who volunteer their services to society help promote social cohesion.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth places particular importance on collaborative civic engagement policy, working with the world of sports and with private foundations and businesses that provide a service to society.

In designing civic engagement policy, the Ministry works closely with scientists and researchers, as seen in the Second Civic Engagement Report: Demographic Change and Civic Engagement.

www.zweiterengagementbericht.de
Federal Government programme Demokratie leben! (Live Democracy!)

The Federal Government programme Demokratie leben! (Live Democracy!) is built on three pillars, the first of which takes up almost half the allocated budget of €23 million to promote sustainable structures. In the first instance, this money goes towards the further development of and improved funding for the tried and trusted concept of local action plans – the current 170 local action plans are to be replaced by 230 local partnerships for democracy. This will boost existing cooperation between all government and democratic non-government organisations and institutions, with the existing local-level, external liaison offices being turned into liaison offices and specialist units. The partnerships for democracy receive government funding for use in establishing a dedicated action and initiative fund and also a youth fund to promote youth participation opportunities.

In a second step, the current 16 Länder-level counselling and support networks will be transformed into democracy centres which will serve as liaison and networking units. The idea is to improve mobile counselling, victim counselling and exit counselling services by integrating them into national networks. And in the third step under the new Live Democracy! programme, non-government organisations of super-regional importance will for the first time receive funding for a fixed period of five years.

With funds allocated in an amount of approximately €6 million, the second pillar of Live Democracy! involves the promotion of model projects designed to target specific topics such as democracy promotion in rural areas, antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Romanism, homophobia and transphobia. This second pillar also includes projects aimed at preventing radicalisation – combating hostility, group-related hate (prejudice towards different social groups) and prejudice, political and ideology-motivated violence. These primarily involve right-wing extremism, ultra-nationalism, Islamist tendencies which oppose democracy and the rule of law, and left-wing militancy.

The third pillar ensures the implementation, management and evaluation of the Live Democracy! programme in its entirety.

Voluntary Service

Within the Federal Government, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth continues its fruitful cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and its successful programme Zusammenhalt durch Teilhabe (Cohesion through Participation) ➔ www.zusammenhalt-durch-teilhabe.de.

Germany’s diverse civic engagement landscape, which offers people of all ages the opportunity to volunteer for a wide range of services, represents an impressive common achievement which...
Civic Engagement Policy

Voluntary Services – BFD, FSJ, FÖJ, IJFD

the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth intends to promote and expand on in the coming years. Some 100,000 people currently volunteer their services (including unprecedentedly large numbers of older people), demonstrating day in, day out, their selfless commitment and untiring willingness to serve society without expecting anything in return.

The vast and growing opportunities for voluntary service enable a huge number of people to find voluntary work that suits their interests, skills and lifestyles. As the flood of volunteers continues unabated, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is working to improve financial and organisational planning security for the central coordination offices and for the operators and sponsors of the various voluntary services.

At the Federal Volunteer Service (BFD), people of all ages – girls and boys, women and men, senior citizens – who want to serve society can volunteer to perform social services or environmental services, or become involved in sports, integration, culture and education, civil protection and disaster management.

People can volunteer with the Federal Volunteer Service for periods of between six months and two years. Part-time volunteer placements are possible for people aged 27 and older. Volunteer work can be counted as an official work placement or can be used to fill time before starting university. Volunteers receive training and attend seminars on topics such as civic education.

Civic engagement with the Federal Volunteer Service is designed to promote social, environmental, cultural and intercultural skills and foster a sense of responsibility for the common good. In addition to joining the Federal Volunteer Service, would-be volunteers can also opt to do a Voluntary Social Service Year (FSJ) or a Voluntary Environmental Service Year (FÖJ).

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth also operates an International Youth Voluntary Service (IJFD) for young people wanting to volunteer abroad. Deployments usually involve social, environmental or peace and conflict resolution work.
The Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (BAFzA) is a modern service provider which operates within the mandate of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

With over 1,000 staff, the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions works to promote civil society functions, provide guidance and advice, and support and administer related Ministry activities. Its responsibilities include:

- The Federal Government programme Live Democracy! Action Against Right-Wing Extremism, Violence and Hostility
- The 24-hour hotline: Protect Women Against Violence
- The Heimkinder DDR and Heimkinder West funds
- The Federal Volunteer Service, with education and training, including civic education
- Confidential Birth, with the Schwangere in Not hotline for pregnant women in emergency situations
- EU Social Fund programmes, such as JUGEND STÄRKEN im Quartier (supporting youth in deprived neighbourhoods)
- Multi-generational Community Centres
- The Alliance for Persons with Dementia
- The German Contergan Foundation Office

The Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions can be contacted by telephone at 0049 (0)221 36730 or online: www.bafza.de.

The Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions
Sibille-Hartmann-Strasse 2–8, 50969 Cologne, Germany
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Publications

Interested in ordering a Ministry publication?
All publications can be ordered online at:
→ www.bmfsfj.de/publikationen

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Hotline

Do you have questions or require further information?
The hotline staff can answer questions concerning all policy areas in the remit of the Ministry.

Call: 0049 (0)30 20179130
Monday to Fridays from 9 am to 6 pm
Fax: 0049 (0)30 185554400
per E-Mail: info@bmfsfservice.bund.de

Internet

The Ministry Online
The Ministry website provides information on all policy areas in the remit of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.
→ www.bmfsfj.de

Information regarding all state-provided, family-related benefits – be it parental allowance, child supplement or childcare services – is available via a dedicated services website:
→ www.familienwegweiser.de
Social Media

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs on Twitter:

www.twitter.com/bmfsfj (in German)

Organigramm

Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

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Parliamentary State Secretary
Caren Marks

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Elke Ferner

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Central Services, Civic Engagement Policy

Directorate-General 2
Family Affairs

Directorate-General 3
Demographic Change, Senior Citizens, Non-Statutory Welfare Services

Directorate-General 4
Equality

Directorate-General 5
Children and Youth