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Familiennachzug — Bringing Your Family to Germany

How to bring your family to Germany: requirements, visa, language certificate and deadlines for Familiennachzug. Status: March 2026.

Deutsche Begriffe: Familiennachzug | Visum | Aufenthaltserlaubnis | A1-Sprachzertifikat | Familienzusammenführung

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> Status: March 2026. All information without guarantee.

What is Familiennachzug?

Familiennachzug (§§ 27-36a AufenthG) means that your family members (spouse, children) can move to Germany from abroad if you live here.

Requirements

You (in Germany) need:

- A **valid residence title** (Aufenthaltserlaubnis, Blaue Karte EU, Niederlassungserlaubnis)
- **Sufficient living space** (approx. 12 m² per person aged 6+, 10 m² per child under 6)
- **Secured livelihood** (income sufficient for the whole family, no benefits)
- **Health insurance** for the family members joining you

Your spouse needs:

- **A1 German language certificate** (Goethe-Institut, telc or ÖSD)
- Exceptions: EU citizens, Familiennachzug for Blaue Karte holders, recognized refugees (within 3 months), nationals of certain countries (USA, Canada, Japan, etc.)

Children:

- Under 18 years — no language proof required
- Over 16 years: C1 German language skills or positive integration prognosis

Procedure

1. Apply for visa (abroad)

Your family member applies for a **Familiennachzug visa** at the **German embassy/consulate** in their home country:

- Duration: 2-6 months (sometimes longer)
- Book an appointment early!

2. Entry to Germany

After visa issuance: enter Germany and **register** at the Bürgeramt.

3. Apply for residence permit

Within the visa validity period, apply for the residence title at the **Ausländerbehörde**.

Costs

- Visa: approx. **€75** (adults), reduced for children
- Aufenthaltserlaubnis: approx. **€100**
- A1 exam: approx. **€120-150** + course fees

Special rules

- **Recognized refugees:** Simplified Familiennachzug within **3 months** of recognition (no income proof, no housing requirement, no A1)
- **Subsidiary protection:** Since 2018 quota of **1,000 visas/month** (humanitarian grounds)

- **EU citizens:** No visa required — family members can enter directly and apply for residence card

Tips

- **Start A1 course** early — waiting times at Goethe-Institut can be long
- **Submit complete documents** — incomplete applications delay everything
- With **refugee status:** Strictly observe the 3-month deadline for simplified Familiennachzug!
- **Advice:** AWO, Caritas, Diakonie offer free counseling on Familiennachzug