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Familiennachzug — Visa, Language Proof and Income Requirements

A1 German test, sufficient living space and income — requirements for Familiennachzug to Germany.

Deutsche Begriffe: Familiennachzug | Visum | A1-Sprachnachweis | Einkommensnachweis | Wohnraumnachweis

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What is Familiennachzug?

Familiennachzug (family reunification) means that family members from abroad may come to Germany to live with a family member already living there. This is regulated in the **Residence Act (AufenthG), §§ 27–36**.

Who can join?

Spouses

• The spouse of a person with a **residence permit** or **settlement permit** can join.

• For spouses of **Blue Card holders**: relaxed conditions.

Minor children

• Children **under 18 years old** can join their parents.

• For children over 16: proof of C1 German language skills or positive integration forecast.

Parents of unaccompanied minor refugees

• Parents of an **unaccompanied minor refugee** with asylum status can join.

A1-Sprachnachweis — Required for spouses

The joining spouse must demonstrate **before entry** basic German language skills:

• **Level A1** of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

• Accepted certificates: **Goethe-Institut**, **telc**, **ÖSD**.

• Cost: approx. 80–150 € for the exam.

• The test must be taken in the **country of origin**.

Exceptions from language proof

• Spouses of **Blue Card holders** — A1 not required.

• Spouses of **recognized refugees** — A1 not required within the first 3 months after recognition.

• Documented **illness or disability** preventing learning.

• Nationals of certain countries (USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, South Korea, etc.).

Income proof

The family member living in Germany must demonstrate that **living expenses are covered**:

• Income must be able to support the family **without social benefits** (no Bürgergeld, no Wohngeld).

• Benchmark: at least as much as the **Bürgergeld rates** for all family members + warm rent.

• Example: married couple + 1 child ≈ approx. 1,800–2,200 € net (depending on rent).

Housing proof

The apartment must be **sufficiently large**:

• Benchmark: approx. **12 m² per person** (varies by state).

• Proof: **rental agreement** and possibly floor plan.

• The apartment must already be **rented** at the time of application.

Application — Step by step

1. Submit visa application at the **German embassy** in the country of origin.

2. Submit documents: passport, A1 certificate, marriage certificate (certified + translated), income and housing proof.

3. The embassy forwards the application to the **immigration office** in Germany.

4. Processing time: **2–6 months** (for refugees sometimes longer).

5. After approval: enter with the **Familiennachzug visa**, then apply for residence permit at the immigration office.

Costs

- Visa fee: **75 €** per person (children under 6: free).
- Residence permit in Germany: **100 €**.
- Translations and certifications: **50–200 €** depending on number of documents.

Common reasons for rejection

- A1 proof missing or invalid.
- Income insufficient.
- Apartment too small.
- Doubts about the authenticity of the marriage (so-called **sham marriage check**).
- Incomplete documents — **all documents** must be translated and certified.