Living In Rheinbach

On the way to your own flat
Housing guide for migrants
WIR – Wohnen In Rheinbach
(Living In Rheinbach)

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Preface

After many decades of peace and freedom, the private protection offered to us by our own four walls has become a matter of course in our everyday lives. We are particularly aware of this privilege when it is impaired by disturbing influences, e.g., neighborhood disputes, burglary or even by a fire. We wish to share this valuable commodity also with those of our fellow human beings who fled from war or persecution, and we want to provide them with a home of their own. Even if the housing market is getting increasingly difficult in the suburbs of the regional centers Cologne and Bonn, we must still face this challenge, because a home of your own is the basis for many further steps on your way to being fully integrated into our society.

First accommodation

In accordance with the Flüchtlingsaufnahmegesetz NRW (Refugee Reception Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia), the city of Rheinbach is obliged to receive and accommodate those refugees assigned to it. For this purpose, the city holds both own and rented collective living quarters. These premises are ready for occupation and equipped with the necessary household goods. The municipality's obligation to provide accommodation shall end with immediate effect upon the recognition of the person concerned as refugee. In this case, the City of Rheinbach will request the recognized refugees to look for their own apartments and to leave the municipal housing. Should a refugee fail to find an apartment, the city will continue the present accommodation arrangement in order to avoid homelessness.

Online portals


Finding a flat

Well, that is easier said than done. A successful integration into our society requires the capability of making one’s own living and staying in one’s own flat. Therefore, the recognized refugee should soon find a vacant apartment. The information provided below should help. The housing market in Rheinbach only holds few free apartments. Apartments are offered in the internet, the newspapers or directly at the accommodation broker, the bank or the housing association.
Further, the flat must fulfill certain qualities pertaining to the household size (number of persons). The size of the flat must be appropriate and the basic rent must not exceed a certain amount. Only when these conditions have been met, the Jobcenter will approve the costs for the flat within the framework of the social security benefits foreseen in the SGBII. Therefore, please contact the competent Jobcenter prior to renting an apartment and find out about the lodging expenses appropriate for your individual situation.

In addition, you can apply for a so-called ‘Wohnberechtigungsschein’ (WBS for short, i.e., an official document certifying a tenant’s financial hardship) providing you with access to social housing by submitting an application to the social security office. Provided you fulfill the related requirements for the granting of such certificate of eligibility for public housing (WBS), you can also apply for apartments of the social housing pool. These flats are often much cheaper than those on the free housing market. If you own a WBS, you can have your name placed on a waiting list for the allocation of social housing maintained at the social security office of the city of Rheinbach. The competent employee will contact you as soon as an apartment becomes available, enabling you to apply for it. However, this might take some time, as the number of social housing is presently quite limited in Rheinbach. To make such application, you must submit the following documents:

- Notification on the recognition by the Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees (Bundesamtes für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF).
- Notification on the requirement to reside in a certain area.
- Valid identity document.
- Confirmation of the Jobcenter pertaining to SGBII benefits.

**Flat viewing**

Should you be interested in an offered apartment, please contact the lessor concerned. For this purpose, the lessor indicated the way he wishes to be contacted in his advertisement: either by phone or by email. Please arrange an appointment to view the flat.

If you still find it difficult to communicate in German, please ask a friend or an assistant to provide support or to accompany you. Be prepared that the lessor will ask you questions pertaining to your personal circumstances and be also aware that he might expect you to supply evidence, i.e., supporting documents providing information on the size of the family, Leistungsbescheid (information on benefit payments), Aufenthaltstitel (residence permit), SCHUFA information (credit report), self-disclosure. However, do never submit the original versions of your documents.
If you are staying in Rheinbach with your family, take all members of your household with you to view the flat, so the lessor can get a proper understanding of who you are. When viewing the flat, pay attention to all possible damages or defects. Record everything you noticed and ask the lessor whether and how he intends to rectify such shortcomings.

**Assessment and verification by the Jobcenter**

If the lessor offers you the desired flat for rent, please ask him to fill in the Mietbescheinigung (*written confirmation on tenancy agreement*) issued by the Jobcenter.

Please hand out the completed confirmation on tenancy agreement personally to your official in charge at the Jobcenter, and make sure to do so as soon as possible – i.e., prior to the signing of the tenancy agreement. The Jobcenter will then check whether the apartment actually counts among the appropriate flats and whether the complete costs can be borne within the framework of the requirement calculation.

Please note that – in most cases - tenants must leave a deposit. This amount is intended to safeguard the lessor’s expenses in case of possible rent arrears or damages in the flat. The cost absorption for a rent deposit (as a loan) and – where appropriate - the expenses for a first renovation can also be applied for at the Jobcenter. For more information, please contact your official in charge at the Jobcenter.

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**Jobcenter Rhein-Sieg**

Römerkanal 56, 53359 Rheinbach

Opening hours:
- Monday: 2 pm – 6 pm
- Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8.30 am – 11 am

Source: [https://www.jobcenter-rhein-sieg.de/site/formulare/](https://www.jobcenter-rhein-sieg.de/site/formulare/)
Conclusion of the contract

Once the Jobcenter approved the rental terms, you can conclude a contract with the lessor. This contract should be available in written form. Please review the contract carefully and consider the following contract components:

- How much is the basic rent (without incidental costs)?
- How much is the amount you will have to pay in advance for the utility costs and incidental costs?
- Are you supposed to leave a deposit?
- Are there any rent increases planned?
- Is the duration of the tenancy limited?
- How well is the flat maintained?
- Which renovation works will be executed or paid for by the lessor?
- Does the tenant have to clean the staircase?
- Which are the obligations involved in the agreed winter service?
- Which are the obligations involved in the house rules?

Upon handover of the flat, the lessor will issue a protocol (handover report) listing all shortcomings, the meter readings for electricity and water, and the number of the keys supplied to you.

The lessor will also have to fill in a landlord’s confirmation of residence which you are supposed to submit at the citizens’ advice bureau of the city of Rheinbach in order to inform us about your relocation and to report the change of address.

Living in the flat

In order to move into the flat and furnish it as soon as possible, you should present the rental contract together with all further important documents at the Jobcenter.

There, you can also apply for the money you need for the basic equipment of your flat. The amount made available to you will depend on the number of persons included in your household. The following institutions offer affordable furniture (see adjacent box).
Please inform the competent authorities about your new address as soon as you have moved into the new apartment. These authorities include:

- The social security office.
- The citizen’s advice bureau.
- The Jobcenter.
- The immigration authority / foreigners’ registration office.
- The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.
- The courts, as far as you are involved in an ongoing legal proceeding.

### Basic energy supply

Having moved into your own apartment, you will definitely need electricity, water, and heating. Please ask your lessor whether he will arrange for the relevant supply of or application for water and heating.

However, as far as the electrical current is concerned, you will have to register with the electricity provider yourself. In doing so, please note the various prices and services offered by the different providers. You can simply compare related offers in the internet or request several proposals.

You will also be in charge of applying for your telephone and internet connection. Here too, please note the different offers and durations determined in the contracts.

In addition, you will be obliged to pay so-called Rundfunkgebühren (*broadcasting fees*) for the public broadcasting and radio programs and the related online services provided by the television and radio channels, even if you do not possess any of the relevant devices. Transfer / benefit recipients can be exempted from the license fees. The Jobcenter will provide you with an appropriate form which you will then have to forward to “ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio”.

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<th>Möbellager des Georgsring e.V.</th>
<th>Keramikerstraße 15, Rheinbach</th>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<th>Bedarfshilfe e.V. Meckenheim/Königswinter</th>
<th>Hauptstraße 367, Königswinter</th>
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<td>Monday – Friday</td>
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<th>Das Soziale Kaufhaus-Heimerzheim</th>
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<td>Monday – Friday</td>
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<td>10 am– 7 pm</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
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<td>10 am – 4 pm</td>
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<tr>
<th>ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio Beitragsservice</th>
<th>Freimersdorfer Weg 6, 50829 Köln</th>
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Situations of everyday life always involve the risks of having to pay for damage caused by oneself. In such event, the person having suffered such damage will expect you to pay compensation. It is therefore crucial that you take out a personal liability insurance that will settle the loss for you. You should also consider the conclusion of a household contents insurance contract covering, for instance, damage of your household goods caused by fire, storm, mains water, and burglary. To this end, you should first estimate the value of your furnishing.

You should categorically examine the contents and items included in a contract very accurately prior to taking any action. Should you have questions or feel unsure, please consult a friend or an assistant. Please check whether you are able to bear the costs involved in the contracts.

**House rules**

The rental contract concluded between the tenant and the lessor includes several rights but also responsibilities for both sides. To meet this fact, you will have to read and observe the house rules of the dwelling precisely. Mutual consideration of all neighbors forms the basis for a peaceful coexistence. Please make particularly sure to adhere to the rest periods, to separate your waste properly, and to dispose of it in the appropriate waste bins.

This saves waste costs!

For more information, please refer to the RSAG AôR website: [https://www.rsag.de/](https://www.rsag.de/)
Explanation of terms

Standing order
You can instruct your bank to automatically transfer the rent to the lessor’s account at the beginning of each month. The rent will then be debited from your own current account.

Energy certificate
This document provides information on the energy efficiency of the whole building, by either calculating the energy consumption or the energy demand. This enables you to compare different buildings to each other.

District heat
The hot water is centrally heated for the actual consumption or for the heating system and transported to the building via pipes.

Gas floor heating system
The gas floor heating system consists of individual heating units that are assigned to a specific apartment for heat supply. The tenant must settle the costs directly with the provider, not with the lessor.

Direct debiting
Instead of placing a standing order with your bank, you can also authorize your lessor to collect the rent from your current account every month. This authorization can be revoked at any time.

Brokerage or broker’s commission
If an agent offers the flat to the tenant on behalf of a lessor, he will request a brokerage which can amount to up to two basic rents plus VAT.

Night storage heating
This is an electric storage heater whose energy is obtained from the electricity supplier. This means that the electricity costs will accrue additionally. In many cases, the relevant providers offer specific tariffs.

Incidental rental and operating costs
Each month, these expenses have to be paid to the lessor in the form of an advance payment in addition to the rent. They include the costs for water, heating, waste collection, road cleaning charges, building insurance and the caretaker.

Wohnberechtigungsschein (official document certifying a tenant’s financial hardship)
Social housing is financed through advantageous loans from the land and is available for low-income households. The social welfare office checks the income levels and, provided that specified limits are met, grants a Wohnberechtigungsschein (official document certifying a tenant’s financial hardship) and thus the basic permission to move into a subsidized apartment.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Flüchtlingskoordination und Sozialarbeit der Stadt Rheinbach
(Refugees Coordination and Social Work of the City of Rheinbach)
Schweigelstraße 23, 53359 Rheinbach
Phone: 02226/ 917 450 or 02226/ 917 129
Telefax: 02226/ 917 215
Monday and Tuesday: 8 am to 12 pm
Thursday: 8 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 3.30 pm

Integration Point Bonn – Jobcenter Rhein-Sieg
Villemombler Straße 101, 53113 Bonn
Monday and Tuesday: 7.30 am– 3.30 pm
Wednesday and Friday: 7.30 am – 12.30 pm
Thursday: 7.30 am – 6 pm

CAFE-International – Flüchtlingshelferkreis Rheinbach
(Refugee Helpers Rheinbach)
”Live“ Bachstraße 2, 53359 Rheinbach
Monday 10 am to 12 pm
Email: info@fluechtlingshilfe-rheinbach.de