



FAQ for Counsellors

Who is LEOlingo?

LEOlingo offers day and overnight language camps to German kids from ages 7 to 17. The languages taught are English, French and Spanish. Sabine Goerner is the founder and owner of LEOlingo North. She organises camps in the northern and eastern part of Germany. She is situated in Werderstr. 35, 19055 Schwerin (goerner@leo-lingo.de), near Hamburg. Andrea Baer is the founder and owner of LEOlingo Bayern. She is responsible for the southern part of Germany (Bayern=Bavaria). She is situated in Seitzermuehle 1, 92369 Sengenthal, near Nuernberg (baer@leo-lingo.de).

How does the application process work?

Prospective counsellors will be sent a detailed application form. It should be filled out and sent back to either Sabine Goerner or Andrea Baer (depending on the period or place you would like to work) by e-mail, together with a photograph of yourself. Added reference letters of former employers are always helpful. Once you have been chosen as a counsellor, you will need to send us a copy of your valid student card (if you are still a student), a police check (not older than one year), a valid first aid certificate, a copy of your visa or work permits, if already existing, and a copy of your passport as soon as possible. Once we have all the necessary documents from you, we will send you a contract, which will need to be signed and sent back to either Andrea Baer or Sabine Goerner. In case you need to apply for a work permit (non EU citizens), you can take the contract with you to apply for it.

Do we need a work permit/visa?

If you are a non EU citizen you will need to apply for a work permit or a working holiday visa at a German consulate in your country. New Zealanders, Australians and Canadians should apply around 2 months in advance for a 'working holiday visa'. US citizens need to apply for a work permit or a residence permit with work permit ('Aufenthaltstitel') around 5 months in advance. We can send you some information on how to apply for the work permit or visa once you have been hired. Please note that some consulates in the US want you to get the work permit in Germany rather than in the US. Unfortunately this is not possible anymore (since 2012), but some of the consulates don't know this yet - they still try to make you apply when you are in Germany.

Please let us know when and how you are planning to obtain your visa or work permit. If you are a student and will go on studying after the camps and if your university break does not coincide with the LEOlingo work dates, please let us know. There is a different type of visa for students, which is easier to get with a certificate of enrolment from your university.

You also need to send us a valid police check, no older than one year, a copy of your passport and a valid first aid certificate.

What happens if I don't pass the training week?

Almost everybody passes the training week, you are there to learn our programme and how to deal with certain situations that may or may not arise. If you are willing to learn and to do the job and if we can see a development of your skills, you don't have to worry. Nevertheless, if you behave in an unacceptable way (hit a kid etc.) or you are not able to take appropriate responsibility for the kids (lose a kid, etc.) or if you confront us with a disruptive attitude, we cannot take the risk of

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Sitz D-19055 Schwerin
Amtsgericht Schwerin, HRA 4061
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LEOlingo Nord Verwaltungs-GmbH
Sitz D-19055 Schwerin
Amtsgericht Schwerin, HRB 13219
Geschäftsführerin: Sabine Görner

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employing you further. In this unlikely case, you would have to cover the board and lodging on your own for the rest of your time in Germany, as well as your trip home. We can however help you to organise a host family to stay with until your flight home. If we have to send you home right after training, you will receive one week's salary of a Day Camp.

Are we insured?

As most of the counsellors have their own health insurance, we don't have a general health insurance policy for all counsellors. If you need a work permit, you need to have proof of a health insurance plan for Germany. But we recommend a health insurance for abroad for everyone as your costs would not be covered in case you need to see a doctor or if you have to stay in a hospital. The costs for a stay in a hospital are very high. Here is a link to one which counsellors have used in the past and is relatively cheap (unfortunately the website is in German):

http://www.reiseversicherung.com/versicherungen_auslaendische_gaeste.html

LEOlingo has standard liability insurance for the campsites, which will cover things that get damaged - when nobody knows who has done it. When we know a child has broken something, the child's family normally has insurance for themselves and we use this insurance (as we have to pay a certain sum on our own).

What are the working hours?

The working hours for a day programme (at Day Camps and at Overnight Camps) are from 9am to 5pm, plus the time for preparation and clearing up etc.

If you are a night counsellor at an Overnight Camp, your working hours would be from 5pm to 9am. You have to do a 2 ½ hour evening programme (7 - 9:30pm). During the rest of your working hours you are responsible for general supervision of the kids, getting them ready for bed/breakfast, caring for them in case of illness or homesickness, etc. We will try to make every counsellor a night counsellor only once during each 6-week working period.

Preparation before and after the actual working hours will be necessary, as well as travel times to the next campsite. We also expect team members to help each other out when they are not working, especially at overnight camps.

Do we work every week?

In general you will get one or two weeks off during a working period of about six weeks. Many of the counsellors use this opportunity to travel. During this week off, you will not get paid and will have to organise your own accommodation and food. If you don't want to travel during that week and you have asked us in advance, it may be possible for you to stay with a host family.

The work can be very exhausting. At the start you may think that you don't need a week off but from our past experience, the counsellors are happy after 3 or 4 intensive weeks to have a break. As we can never anticipate all changes/illnesses of counsellors that can happen during our holiday programme, we cannot give a definite answer in advance as to exactly which week you will have free. Best is when you tell us well in advance which week you would like free and we will do our best to accommodate your wishes. You can also tell us if you definitely don't want to have a week off and again and we will see if that would be possible.

What information do I get before a camp starts?

Before you come to Germany, you will receive an arrival information pack (with all addresses, dates, telephone numbers, an organisational overview, etc) and a shortened version of our training handbook.

A few days before each camp you will receive information on your exact place of work, lodging, travel plans from camp to camp, children's names, ages, etc. and an explanation of some mandatory tasks that will need to be done during the week, such as filling out the feedback forms, etc.

Where do the other counsellors come from?

They mostly come from English speaking countries like USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, but also from South America, Spain, France etc.

I am a Spanish- or French-native speaker. Can I work for the whole period?

We only offer Spanish and French camps for one week in each region. Those camps take place at the same time and campsite as the English camps. Before and after these Spanish/French camp weeks, there will be only English camps. All Spanish and French counsellors will have to work as English counsellors beforehand or afterwards. Besides this, the training and the communication in the team will be in English.

This is why we can only hire English-Spanish or English-French bilinguals for the whole period.

Do we work at the weekend?

Normally you don't, although some Overnight Camps do start on Sunday afternoon/evening. But you will need time to travel to your next campsite and to prepare for the next camp. The campsites are 1-2 hours away from each other. Travel due to work will normally be arranged by Andrea and Sabine. This might be by car or by train, if there is public transport. If you have your own plans for the weekend you need to arrange your trip to the next campsite on your own. But be aware that to some overnight camps there is almost no public transport on weekends.

If you have to travel from the North to the South, it can take up to 8 hours. This is normally just the case, if you are working for Andrea *and* Sabine due to certain reasons. Normally you work for either one of them (and you apply only for one region).

During one weekend - generally after the first week - you may have to do a feedback training, this is mandatory. At the end of the season, a farewell evening will take place at the weekend (usually on the last camp Friday).

Where do we stay at the weekends?

In general you will be staying with the host family or at the campsite of the week before or of the following week. In this case bed and breakfast is covered by LEOlingo. You can also book your own accommodation if you prefer, for example when you are travelling somewhere at the weekend or if you want to meet up with the other counsellors. In the latter case, the costs are not covered by LEOlingo and you have to make sure, that you are back in time for the next camp.

What is there to do in our free time?

There are beautiful towns and areas around, such as the Baltic Sea, the lake area around Schwerin or big cities like Hamburg or Berlin (1 or 2 hours from Schwerin). Please be aware that some campsites are difficult to reach by public transport and it might be that you have to start or be there on Sunday already. Some counsellors spend the weekends with their previous host families. Others remain in the area where they are working, just 'hanging out' and others go to the beach, do windsurfing, canoeing or a bike trip over the weekend.

How old are the other counsellors?

The counsellors are generally between 20 and 29 years old.

Will I be working with the same people or do the teams change often?

Weekly changes between campsites as well as work partners can be expected. All counsellors, even those with no German abilities, are expected to be able to work completely alone if necessary (although we try to make sure there are at least 2 counsellors at each campsite).

Which airport should we arrive at?

This depends on which city you will be doing the training in and upon travel prices. The closest airport to Schwerin is Hamburg (1h from Schwerin) or Berlin (2h from Schwerin).

Will we be picked up at the airport?

As every counsellor is arriving at different times and places, we cannot pick everyone up. You will receive the address of the training location. We will send you directions describing how to arrive using public transportation from the nearest major airport(s) as well as the main train station.

Are the flight costs covered?

No. We suggest that you take out flight insurance. In the case of accident, illness or death in the family, as well as unforeseen changes in plans, we cannot cover any tickets that have to be cancelled. Most counsellors "shop" around for their tickets. Many travel before they start to work and come via various routes. It can often be much cheaper to book a flight to London and then use Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) or Easyjet (www.easyjet.com) to fly to Germany.

How is the train travel?

The German train system is generally pretty good and reliable but it can be expensive. If you are planning on buying a ticket for the fast ICE trains, you should book in advance because they are a lot more expensive on the day (the website is www.bahn.de). There are however also special offers that run constantly and can be bought on the day. For example, in Northern Germany the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Ticket can be used to travel in the North (Hamburg, Schwerin, Baltic Sea) on the regional trains and is valid for one day, any day of the week from 9am to 3am. It can be bought as a single ticket or for up to five people. A single ticket costs 22 Euros and then 4 Euros on top of that for each extra person.

If you are travelling between the different states of Germany, there are two options. Firstly, the “Schoenes-Wochenende-Ticket”, which is valid for all German states, on Saturday or Sunday for up to 5 people and costs 42 Euros. If you are travelling during the week, you can use the “Quer-Durchs-Land-Ticket”. This is valid for one day, Monday to Friday, for up to 5 people and can be used throughout Germany. It costs 44 Euros for a single and 6 Euros for each extra person.

Where and how does the training take place?

Training in summer will take place in Schwerin. We will be guests in a school. The first day will be spent getting to know one another and doing some theoretical training. Then for a few days, every counsellor will have a group of about 12 kids (from the local schools) in the morning. During breaks and in the afternoon we will have time to discuss the morning and do more theoretical training.

During the training week you will stay with host families organised by the training school. They host you voluntarily and don't get any financial reimbursement.

What other meetings are required?

You might have to do a feedback training. It takes place one Saturday after your first week of work and is mandatory. It is a general meeting of your training team, a good chance to clear up any problems that might have cropped up and a chance to keep in touch with each other.

How much will I get paid?

LEOlingo provides for you every week full board and lodging, valued around 250 - 350 Euro/week. At the weekends, if you do not choose to travel independently, you will also receive lodging and breakfast. In plus, you will receive:

If you are responsible for the *day* programme, you will get 220 Euro per week, plus full board and lodging (working hours at Day Camps and Overnight Camps: 9am to 5pm plus preparation and clearing up and helping out if necessary).

If you are responsible only for the *evening* programme at an Overnight Camp you will get 150 Euro, plus full board and lodging (general responsibility for the kids - from 5pm to 9am, evening programme from about 7pm to 9.30pm). We try to let every counsellor do the evening programme just once.

Training is not paid but board and lodging is free.

When will I get paid?

Payment will be made after every week of work in cash (you don't need a bank account).

Am I responsible for my own meals?

If you are not staying with a host family during a Day Camp (therefore, for example, in a guesthouse) and there is no possibility to order breakfast, you will get 25 Euro extra per working week. At all Day Camps you and the kids will get lunch. It might be that you have to prepare tables, hand out food to the kids or clean dishes with the kids.

When you are doing an Overnight Camp, you will have full board and you will eat your meals together with the kids. In case you have to follow a certain diet (e.g. vegetarian, etc.), please inform us in advance. Normally it is no problem for campsites/host families to prepare vegetarian or lactose free meals for example, but please be aware that this may not always be the case and you may have to prepare your own meal once in a while.

On the weekends you are responsible for your lunch and dinner (unless you are still with your host family and they invite you). If you travel on your own, you are responsible for your own meals (and lodging).

What happens if I cannot work for the whole duration of the German summer break?

It is possible to arrange an earlier departure date right from the beginning. But you should be aware that in general you are expected to be able to work until the end of the season. If suddenly 20% of the counsellors leave earlier than expected, the whole team would suffer. It is very difficult to find last minute replacements, expensive to cancel camps and it puts pressure on team members having to take over a double workload in the last week or work with an insufficient partner. In the case of a family emergency, illness etc. it is possible to leave earlier without any penalty.

Am I required to follow an exact programme?

LEOlingo has a set programme with certain core points/goals, which are mandatory: creative folder (like a set of worksheets), drama, songs, sports, language rally, etc. The content will be set in a carefully outlined programme. The specific activities used to reach these goals can be varied. This will all be discussed in detail during training.

Do I have a choice as to where or with whom I work?

LEOlingo will try to place counsellors together who prefer so. But it is important to create a team with different skills, for example, one should speak German, one should be male, one should be good with sports, etc. It takes a lot of time and thought to prepare the working schedules for the summer. We can't always put everyone with everyone. Some people are better with older, some with younger kids, some are better at sports, some at arts and crafts, some are better at overnight camps, some at day camps, some still have to work as a night counsellor, some don't etc. This is why it is not always possible to make last-minute changes or fulfil every counsellor's wish for every week. One change might lead to some others.

Can I choose between Day and Overnight Camps or between day and night programme?

You can tell us your preference. We will try to fulfil everybody's wishes as best we can but the skills of our whole team need to be taken into consideration to create optimal teams. Everyone will have to work at least once as a night counsellor.

Can I choose my accommodation?

No, LEOlingo organises this and generally we do this according to what is possible in the town where you will be working.

What if I can't speak German?

For the camp itself, you don't need to speak German. But LEOlingo will only accept counsellors who feel secure enough to 'survive' in a foreign country - alone and together with a group of children. In general, Germans speak some English.

What's different about Germans or Germany?

This is difficult to say as it depends on the person who is asking this question. There are some stereotypes that contain some truth. Examples:

- Germans are very punctual. For working conditions, German punctuality means at least 15-20 minutes in advance.
- For German host families and landlords, cleanliness is very important. They expect you to return rooms and things in the way they have given them to you. They won't understand if you don't and they would be very upset. The landlords might also check during the day how tidy you are. You should be sure to leave everything neat and tidy before you go outside or have a break.
- You will be expected to ask before using things of your host family family, eg. using their computer/phone or helping yourself to food and drink.
- Germans are very straightforward. Don't expect a German to swallow his criticism or to say it in a roundabout polite way. They will tell you straight and directly if they do not agree with something you are doing or saying. They will also tell you positive things when they really mean it.
- Germans are not used to and tend not to use extravagant compliments. They are at times more reserved and can appear cooler towards you, however you will also find that a German befriended is a friend for life and a very warm friendship can follow.
- Germans are not prudish. Open showers are normal. In schools, sports centres, swimming halls, there generally won't be a "view protection". Male and female sections are separated so that nobody of the other sex will see you naked.
- It is no problem to embrace a little kid and comfort them when they are hurt or crying. In Germany, people would be surprised if you did not comfort the kid in such a situation.
- Germans are very ecological and separate their garbage into many different categories. Please make sure you are respectful and do the same during your stay. If you are unsure, please ask either your host family or one of us to clarify how their rubbish system works. There are different rubbish bins; 1. for glass, 2. for paper, 3. for packaging and cartons with a certain sign (the "green point", almost every packing has this sign, so it is quite simple) 4. for organic rubbish, and 5. for materials that cannot be recycled (for example ashes, cigarettes).
- Germans are also energy conscious. Lights, heating and water are only turned on during use. Some examples: As soon as they exit the room or the house, lights, radios, TV etc. are turned off. They try to not leave the water running unnecessarily whilst they are showering or brushing their teeth, and they do not take long showers. In a traffic jam Germans often turn off the car motor. So please be aware and careful of what you are doing during your stay in Germany.