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Bundesagentur für Arbeit vs. Jobcenter: What is the difference?

The Bundesagentur für Arbeit is the Federal Employment Agency and it deals with Category I Unemployment Benefits (Arbeitslosengeld I):

- You go here to apply for Category I Unemployment Benefits, which you are entitled to if you have worked for at least one year, but recently lost your job. Statutory provisions apply here (Social Code III - (SGB III)).

The Jobcenter deals with Category II Unemployment Benefits (Arbeitslosengeld II), career advice and employment services:

- The Job Centre falls under the auspices of the Employment Agency, however it has a different work focus.
- You register with the Jobcenter if you want to apply for Category II Unemployment Benefit II (also known as Hartz IV).
- At the Jobcenter you will be assigned a placement officer (i.e. advisor) who will support you in finding a new job, getting the qualifications required for a new job and integrating you into the labour market.
- Along with your rights and obligations, there are also sanctions if you do not fulfil your obligations. These are stipulated in the Social Code (SGB II).

CAUTION! The statutory provisions in the SGB II (i.e. Job Centre - Hartz IV) & SGBG III (for Category I Unemployment Benefits) change on a regular basis! It is therefore essential to get comprehensive and current advice!

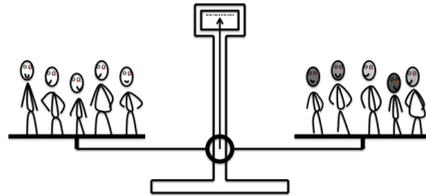
For support and filling out your work package you can contact the supporting advisory services:
<http://www.beratungsstellen.berlin/hartz-4.html>

If you require additional support during your job search: Visit the Job Cafe in your local area. Job Cafes are sponsored by the Jobcenter and offer free, professional advice.



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Since 1996 BDB e.V. has set itself the goal of overcoming the exclusion and discrimination of so-called "minorities" in society. The focus here is on working against racism and cultural discrimination, as well as the interaction with other forms of discrimination (intersectionality). Our work focuses are as follows:

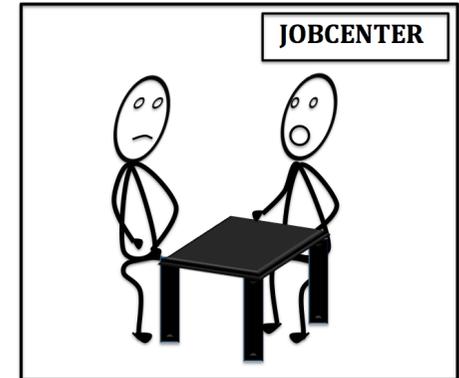
- Short- and long-term counselling of people who are affected by discrimination and racism
- Training and further education
- Political lobby and activism, as well networking

This flyer was made with financial support from:



Are you feeling discriminated against at the Jobcentre?

Do you want to better understand your rights and obligations?



In a difficult work, financial or family situation, people sometimes feel obliged to ask for support from the Employment Office (Bundesagentur für Arbeit or Jobcenter). The registration and support process is not always straightforward. For example, there could be language barriers and communication problems with placement officers. Lack of knowledge of your rights and obligations, combined with insecurity and stress, can lead many people who are applying for benefits to feel frustrated and helpless. This can make it difficult for the person in question to find a job. Some people feel discriminated against during this process. Is this feeling justifiable?

This brochure provides general information about your rights and obligations with regards to the Jobcenter or Federal Employment Agency. It does not replace the advice given by an advisory centre. However, by giving a general overview, this brochure could help avoid unnecessary confusion which may lead to feelings of insecurity and discrimination. It also gives you tips on how to avoid misunderstandings and difficulties. **However, sometimes discrimination does occur (even unintentionally). In this case, please feel free to contact us!**

BUNDESAGENTUR FÜR ARBEIT and Category I Unemployment Benefits:

YOUR RIGHTS



You have a right to receive Category I Unemployment Benefits if you have worked for at least a year but then lost your job.

- You will receive a percentage of your previous average salary. The duration of your unemployment benefits depends on how long you have worked for and your age. These calculations are done by the Bundesagentur für Arbeit.
- If this period expires and you have still not found a job, you will need to register at the Jobcenter and apply for Hartz IV.



YOUR OBLIGATIONS

- You must notify the Bundesagentur für Arbeit in good time if you know in advance that you are going to lose your job.
- You must notify in good time of any changes to your situation, e.g.
 - beginning a new training or studies or a new job,
 - changes to your residency status,
 - inability to work,
 - changes to the number of people living in your household.
- You must also receive approval for your plans to leave on holiday and notify them of any plans to move to new housing.

Most of these obligations also apply to people receiving Hartz IV.

JOBCENTER and Category II Unemployment Benefits (HARTZ IV):

YOUR RIGHTS

The following will happen during the initial consultation:

- **Application review (Antragsprüfung):** Once you have applied to the Jobcenter you will be invited to a meeting with a placement officer (Arbeitsvermittler/in), so that he/she can review your application. Your placement officer will explain to you whether you meet the requirements for Hartz IV.
- **Integration Agreement (Eingliederungsvereinbarung):** The Integration Agreement determines which allowances/support you can receive and what you must do to receive it. This Agreement is generally revised every 6 months. You will not receive any benefits from the Jobcentre as long as you do not sign this Integration Agreement.
- If you meet the necessary requirements, you have the right to proper advice, support (Hartz IV standard rate, accommodation, heating, additional needs, e.g. if you are pregnant or severely ill) and (if required) further training!

What do the follow-up meetings involve?

- The follow-up meetings will introduce additional support steps, for instance various measures to help integrate you into the labour market.
- In the follow-up meetings, the advisor will also check whether you have fulfilled your part of the Integration Agreement. If not, sanctions may be applied.

YOUR OBLIGATIONS

In order to receive support you must fulfil certain obligations, as listed in your Integration Agreement. Possible examples include:

- You must send the Jobcenter a copy of a certain number of job applications you have sent out each week.
- You must usually accept any reasonable job that the placement officer offers you.
- You must be contactable in person, by telephone and by post on working days.
- You must attend your Jobcenter appointments or give a valid reason why you had to miss one.
- You may not quit your job yourself or be dismissed due to your own personal irresponsibility.
- You must attend job interviews which are offered to you.
- You must give plenty of notice if you are unable to work.

Tips for when you go to the Bundesagentur für Arbeit or Jobcenter:



- **Get a confirmation of receipt.** It may sometimes take longer for your placement officer or authorities to receive your letter if you send it by post. It is therefore advisable to deliver your letter to the reception of the agency in person. There, you can ask for a confirmation of receipt that includes the date, stamp and signature.
- **Bring someone with you to the Jobcenter.** This can be helpful in overcoming language barriers or clearing up any misunderstandings. This person can also help remind you of everything that was discussed. Ideally, you should also take notes during the appointments.
- **If you receive a letter threatening sanctions** and you feel that this is not justified, you have 2-4 weeks to send a letter of objection (Widerspruchsbrief). You also have the option to assert your rights. You can contact a lawyer for advice.

PS: The above-mentioned rights and obligations at the Jobcenter also generally apply for those receiving Category I Unemployment Benefits from the Bundesagentur für Arbeit.

In the event of discrimination:

Your placement officer and advisor are, as all of us, part of a broader society and may (either intentionally or unintentionally) discriminate against people receiving support during the consultation process. Discrimination is when some people are treated badly due to characteristics associated with a group (for instance ethnic background, culture, religion, skin colour, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual identity, language, social background).

In what ways could that happen here? And how can you respond? Do you have the opportunity to prevent this or assert your rights via a lawyer at a social welfare court?

Please get in touch with us and we will answer any questions during a personal consultation! And also at our Empowerment workshop! Simply get in touch with us!

Sanctions and period of ineligibility: !

- **Sanctions (Sanktionen)** may include reductions to allowances/support as well as Category I Unemployment Benefits and Hartz IV.
- Your placement officer makes this decision.
- **The period of ineligibility (Sperrzeit)** is the time when your allowances are reduced.
- The Employment Agency or your placement officer may decide that your allowances are to be reduced for a certain period if you have not fulfilled your obligations