



# Caritas

## Au pair-senter

ENGLISH

Information brochure for au pairs



2018

## Content

---

Preface	3
Caritas au pair center	4
Contact us	6
The au pair program	7
Who can be an au pair	8
Duties of host families	10
Work and free time	13
Economy and holidays	17
Health	20
Returning home	21
Ending/change host family	22



## Preface

---

The world has changed significantly since the au pair program was founded in 1969. Today, people from across the world are migrating with limited resources. Perhaps cultural exchange is not the only reason that motivates people to participate in the au pair program. Host families have obligations which they must meet in accordance with UDI and the au pair program. The family must treat the au pair as part of the family unit, and help them learn about the Norwegian culture. If the au pair program is to be improved, then FAFO points to the importance of acknowledging that au pairs and host families can have differing understandings of the au-pair program. Caritas au pair center is forward-thinking. It takes into consideration the diversity of perspectives and expectations of participants. It builds upon the original and intended vision of the program, cultural exchange, while at the same time understanding that we live in a world where socioeconomic divisions are as significant as national borders.

Knut Andreas Lid  
Acting Secretary General Caritas Norge

## Caritas Au Pair-Center

---

Caritas Au Pair-Center is an office that supports au pairs and host families in Norway. You can contact us with questions related to the au pair program and your stay here. We assist you in small practical problems as well as challenging legal issues. We are also available to help resolve conflicts through dialogue between you and your host family. If we do not have the necessary expertise, we will guide you to the correct offices or others who can answer your question. Our center is run by support from the UDI, but we are not a part of the Immigration Authorities.



We organize information meetings for au pairs and host families. In these meetings you will learn about the au pair-program and the au pair-center. In addition, we arrange weekly network activities for au pairs in Oslo. This is meant for au pairs to get a social network, lower threshold to contact our center and cultural exchange.

One Sunday per month we arrange social activities in Oslo, Bergen and Stavanger. Please check out our website for updated information about these happenings.

Caritas au pair-center is a part of Caritas resource-center for migrants. You are welcome to use their services like free health counselling, internet access, Norwegian courses, computer courses and other.

## Contact us

---

You can find more information on the website: [www.caritas.no/aupair-en](http://www.caritas.no/aupair-en)



Visit us in Oslo, Storgata 38, entrance from Hausmannsgate. Opening hours are 10.00 until 16.00 Monday-Friday. Thursday evenings from 17.00 - 20.00. Find us in Bergen, Sigurdsgate 8.



Telephone 404 28 460. We are available in the opening hours mentioned above.



You can send us an email to [aupair@caritas.no](mailto:aupair@caritas.no)



We answer messages on Facebook. You can also find more information on our activities and announcements. [www.facebook.com/caritasaupair](http://www.facebook.com/caritasaupair)



## The au pair-program

---

The purpose of the program is cultural exchange. The origin of the program can be traced back to the European au pair-agreement of 1969. The terms have changed some, but the rules give specific rights and responsibilities to both au pairs and host families. These rights and duties are outlined by UDI in a circular called RS 2012-015. The information in this brochure is based on this circular. You can also read the full version on the UDI webpage.

Today, most au pairs come from Asia, Eastern-Europe and some from Latin-America, but the program was originally made for young Europeans. Some believe that the program facilitates exploitation of people in a potentially vulnerable situation. To prevent misuse of the au pair-program, Caritas au pair-center work to support au pairs and host families in Norway.

## Who can be an au pair

---

Not everyone can be an au pair in Norway. There are certain requirements that the au pair needs to fulfill, these requirements can be found in the UDI circular 2012-015.

- EU/EEA- citizens must have a residency permit to be in Norway for more than 3 months, and you must apply for an au pair-permit.
- If you come from a country outside of the EU/EEA, you must apply for an au pair-permit from your home country.
- Your host family can not be your fa-



mily member, and can normally not be from your home country because the au pair-program is about cultural exchange.

- You must be over 18 years old and not yet turned 30. Both men and women can be au pairs.
- You cannot have children. Still, if you become pregnant while in Norway, this is not a valid reason for terminating the contract from the host family's side.
- UDI makes a return assessment. This means that it must be probable that you will return to your home country when your period as an au pair is over. Conditions in your home country will be considered, as well as personal factors.

The last point about return is particularly relevant if you come from a country that is outside of the EU/EEA agreements. If you choose not to return to your home country after the au pair period has ended, you violate the Immigration Act and it can be difficult to get a permission in Norway later.

## Duties of Host Families

---

It is important to remember that host families have several duties towards you as an au pair. These duties are meant to protect you and ensure that the purpose of the program is met. It is important that you agree on the conditions of your stay in a written contract on the conditions. The contract is called “Contract for cultural exchange between au pair and host family,” and you can find it on UDI’s website. It is important to note that several of the terms in this contract cannot be changed or negotiated by the host family.

- Host families can only have one au pair at a time.
- You must live with your host family and they must provide a private room at no cost. The room should have a lock.
- You have the right to free meals and food, and to pay/pocket money of at least 5600 kroner before tax per month (February 2018). Your host family has a duty to increase the amount in accordance with any changes. UDI may increase the rates and you can find updated information online.



- Host families have to offer you free Norwegian courses at a cost of at least 8400 kroner per year (February 2018). Host families are responsible to find these courses and pay for them, but you are also welcome to find courses yourself. The rates for these courses may increase annually and you find updated information on the UDI webpage. In addition, the host family must pay for transport if necessary.
- The host family must pay for an insurance that covers your transport home in case of serious disease, injury or death.
- The host family is responsible that you

are being tested for tuberculosis when you arrive Norway if you come from a high incidence country. Which countries this is, you can find on the webpage of Folkehelseinstituttet.

An au pair has the right to holiday and holiday pay in accordance with the Holiday Act (Ferieloven). You can read more about this in the section “economy and holiday” in this brochure.

If you experience that that host family does not fulfill their duties towards you, you are welcome to contact Caritas au pair-center. Often problems are resolved in dialogue when we mediate between both parties and points to the legal framework.

If there are several or gross breaches of contract, you also have the possibility of reporting the situation directly to UDI. This you can do through their webpage where you can find an electronic form to fill out. UDI will evaluate the information, contact the family and consider giving them quarantine so that they cannot have an au pair for some time.

## Work and free time

---

The balance between the domestic work you do, and your free time can be a reason for disagreement between au pairs and host families. This is because the au pair and the host family can have different expectations to the au pair-scheme. UDI have made concrete rules for how much work you can do and how much free time you are entitled to.

- Your work hours should not be more than 5 hours per day – or max 30 hours per week.
- Au pairs have the right to one day off per week. At least one Sunday per month must be off. In addition, every week you must have at least one afternoon off.



- Babysitting in the evening is counted as working hours although the child is asleep.
- Au pairs cannot work for other employers or other families. This is illegal work and can be punishable.
- Au pairs have the right to participate in Norwegian language classes and recreational activities. Your work cannot stop you from practicing your religion.

Because the au pair program is about cultural exchange, the au pair's work is limited to light domestic tasks such as household chores and taking care of children and pets. It is important that your work load is specified in detail in your contract to avoid misunderstandings. Caritas au pair-center encourages you to partake in the decision of which domestic chores you complete.

Atlantis au pair-agency<sup>2</sup> published a list of domestic chores that an au pair can be expected to complete, to distinguish this from the work of professional domestic help:

<sup>2</sup> <http://atlantis.no/au-pair-i-norge/arbeidsoppgaver-for-au-pair/>

## **Childcare**

- Care and feeding of children in the mornings
- Taking children to kindergarten or school
- Taking care of children during the day
- Playing and taking children out for recreational activities
- Helping with homework
- Cooking for children
- Taking children to and from afterschool activities
- Evening care of children, bathing and putting to bed
- Childcare in the afternoon or evening (must be agreed upon in advance)

## **Light domestic tasks**

- Tidying up after the children
- Tidying up children's bed
- Vacuuming, mopping floors, dusting in children's rooms and in common areas
- Laundry, hanging clothes, using dryers
- Ironing clothes for children
- Dishwashing and using the dishwasher
- Cleaning up and keeping the kitchen clean, including mopping kitchen floor
- Grocery shopping (with exception to large grocery shopping trips)
- Feed and walk pets (must be agreed upon in advance)



- Participate in cooking of meals and cleaning up after meals for adults in the house
- Keeping your room and bathroom clean

#### **House work au pairs should not do**

- Gardening
- Car washing
- Window-washing
- Spring cleaning and any major cleaning
- Scrubbing ovens
- Cleaning up after pets
- Tidying host parents' bed
- Ironing host parents' clothes
- Cleaning host parents' private bathroom
- Caring for, or sitting pets during your free time or vacation (sitting pets is work)
- Polishing silverware
- Serving meals to host families' friends

## **Economy and Holidays**

---

It is important to know your rights related to payment of pocket money/pay, Holiday Pay and deduction of taxes. Even though it can be difficult to talk about economy, it is important to agree on this beforehand. UDI uses the term 'pocket money' or 'pay' interchangeably. We therefore use both words here.

- Au pairs have the right to pocket money/pay. Au pairs must receive at least 5600 kroner before tax per month (February 2018). If you are paid the minimum wage, the host family is required to increase your pocket money/pay in line with the changes made by UDI. The rates will normally be increased annually.

- Your pocket money/pay is taxable and although it is the host family who deduct the tax from you income, it is you who carry the overall responsibility that tax is paid. Remember to ask for a pay slip from your host family that says how much you are being deducted.

- You are entitled to free board and lodging and the value of this is also taxed. It is the

Skatteetaten that sets the value of this, and by February 2018, it is 124 NOK per day. You can find updated information on their webpage.



- If you have paid too much tax, you will be refunded by the tax office. If you pay too little tax, you would owe tax to the tax authorities. You can visit the Tax Office to check exactly how much tax you should pay.
- As a foreigner you may have the right to 10% reduction of tax (Standardfradrag for utenlandske arbeidstagere) after an application to the tax office.
- The money for Norwegian course (8400

NOK) is not taxable because it is considered as part of the cultural exchange.

- Au pairs have the right to 25 working days of holiday per calendar year. If you start after September 30th, you have the right to 6 working days of holiday. Three of your vacation weeks can be taken between June 1st and 30th September.
- Au pairs have the right to 25 working days of holiday even if they change host families. In the event of a change of host family, remember to get a written confirmation of how much holiday you have taken.
- When you take vacation, you will not get paid. However, you have the right to holiday pay. Holiday pay is 10,2 % of your income before taxes, including the value of free food. The value of free food is by February 2018 88 NOK and set by Skatteetaten.
- Your host family cannot just go on a vacation and decide that it is also your holiday. You should decide with your host family when to take vacation.

## Health

---

- As an au pair you are a member of Norway's National Insurance Scheme (Folkestrygden). This means that you have the right to free health services.
- When you have applied and received a residence card from the police, you can go to the Tax Office and apply for a personal number. You will also be assigned a personal doctor, to whom you may visit when you need health services.
- If you get sick you are entitled to a sick leave, this means you do not have to work. If you are sick for more than three days, you must go to the doctor to get at sick leave.

You are entitled to sick benefits if you have been with your host family for more than four weeks. It is your host family that should cover the first 16 days, then the responsibility is transferred to NAV. If you are sick for a longer period, you can decide whether to end the au pair relationship with your host family.

- Dental services in Norway are not covered by the National Insurance Scheme, and

it is very expensive. If you have the opportunity, it is most likely cheaper in your home country.

- The host family should help you getting tested for tuberculosis when you arrive in Norway if you come from a high incidence country.
- You also have the right to health care if you are pregnant in Norway, but if you have children in Norway you are no longer entitled to be an au pair and you must terminate the au pair contract.

## Returning Home

---

- When you are going home, it is a requirement that the host family pays for the whole journey, including bus to and from the airport.
- The host family should not pay for the journey if you choose to go to another country or stays on in Norway on different grounds (different type of permit). Even if you terminate the contract before its end, it is the host family's responsibility to pay for the return ticket as this is one of the basic requirements of the permission.

## Ending/New host family

---

It is not always that the au pair-scheme works for one or the other party. Because an au pair is seen as in a potentially more vulnerable situation, the threshold for terminating the contract for you is lower. Both you and your host family can terminate the contract with a notice period of at least one month. The termination must be in writing.

- The host family cannot let you go without reasonable grounds. The host family must give the reason for letting you go if you request this. However, you do not have to give a reason as to why you want to end the contract.
- The host family must pay you and you have the right to live with them during the notice period in the same way as before. If they owe you holiday pay, then you can receive it during the notice period.
- Both you and your host family can terminate the contract with immediate effect if there is serious breach of the contract. Notice period does not apply in such situations.
- You and your host family must report to



the police or UDI if your contract is terminated before your residence permit expires.

- The termination of your contract does not mean that you must immediately leave Norway. UDI or the police will alert you if they consider withdrawing your permit and giving you the opportunity to comment. You can also find a new host family and apply for a new au pair permit as long as you have a valid visa in Norway.
- You can apply for a change of host family at any time if you have a valid au pair permit. UDI treats this as an application for renewal and you must pay a fee.
- You can live and work with the new host family when you have submitted a complete application to the police. The processing time is counted in your total stay as an au pair. You can be an au pair in Norway for a maximum of 2 years.

# Contact us

---

You can find more information on the webiste: [www.caritas.no/aupair-en](http://www.caritas.no/aupair-en)



Visit us in Olso, Storgata 38, entrance from Hausmannsgate. Opening hours are 10.00 until 16.00 Monday-Friday. Thursday evenings from 17.00 - 20.00. Find us in Bergen, Sigurdsgate 8.



Telephone [404 28 460](tel:40428460). We are available in the opening hours mentioned above.



You can send us an email to [aupair@caritas.no](mailto:aupair@caritas.no)



We answer messages on Facebook. You can also find more information on our activities and announcements. [www.facebook.com/caritasaupair](http://www.facebook.com/caritasaupair)

