



Caritas

Au pair-senter

ENGLISH

Information brochure for host families



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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. We assist you in small practical problems as well as challenging legal issues. We are also available to help resolve conflicts through dialogue between au pairs and the 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 etc.

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 a host family?

There are certain requirements that the host family needs to fulfill, these requirements can be found in the UDI circular 2012-015.

- You can be a couple, married or cohabitant, with or without children.
- You can be a single parent but must have at least 50% of the daily care of the children
- If your children are over the age of 12, you must pay employers tax as according to the Tax Office.
- You cannot be a relative of the au pair.
- UDI can dismiss the application if one or both host parents come from the same country as the au pair, as the purpose of cultural exchange may not be met.
- To be an au pair in Norway, one needs a valid residence permit. EEA-citizens already have a residency permit for 3 months after arrival, but non-EEA-citizens must apply for a residency permit before entering the country. The requirements for being an au pair is described in the UDI circular 2012-015.

The duties of a host family

It is important for a host family to know and remember your duties towards the au pair. The rules are made to ensure that au pairs and the au pair-scheme is not being exploited. It is important that the au pair and the host family agree upon the conditions through the “Contract for cultural exchange between au pair and host family.” This you can find on UDIs webpage. If you want to talk more about the content of the rules and duties, you can contact Caritas au pair-center.

- A host family can only have one au pair at a time.
- The au pair has the right for free bed and lodging.
- You must pay the au pair a minimum salary/pocket money of at least 5900 NOK before tax per month. UDI can change the rate and you must increase accordingly.
- The au pair must attend a Norwegian course of the minimum value of 8850 NOK per year (from the starting date). You must assist in finding a course and you are re-

sponsible for the payment. In addition, you must cover necessary travel expenses related to the course.

- You must provide a private bedroom for the au pair that is not used by other family members.
- You must ensure that the au pair is being tested for tuberculosis straight after arrival if he/she comes from a high incidence country (see Folkehelseintituttet). It is the local health clinic of the municipality that oversees the facilitation of this.
- You must provide insurance for the au pair to cover the journey back to his/her home in case of serious disease, injury or death.
- The au pair has the right to vacation and holiday pay following the Holiday Act. Because the permission is for cultural exchange, the au pair should be able to decide when he or she wants vacation.
- It is required of the host family to make sure that the au pair is not harassed or exposed to other improper behaviour, and that his or her dignity is not violated.

Work and free time

Balancing work and free time can be a reason for disagreements between au pairs and host families. Although many host families invite an au pair to stay because they need some help in everyday life, it is important to remember that the purpose of the permit is cultural exchange and that the au pair is not a housemaid nor a nanny. UDI have made concrete rules for how much work an au pair can do and how much free time and vacation they have.

- The au pair should not work more than 5 hours per day and it must not exceed 30 hours per week.
- Babysitting in the evening/night-time is counted as working hours although the child is asleep.



- The au pair should have at least 24 hours free time during the week (1 day) and at least 1 day per month must be a Sunday. In addition, at least 1 evening per week must be off.
- The au pair cannot work for other families or employers. This is illegal work.
- The au pair has the right to participate in a Norwegian course. The work shall also not be hindering religious practice.
- The host family's intention to include the au pair in the family is important and should guide the relationship and the balance of work and free time.

The work should be limited to tasks defined as “light housework” and child minding. It is important that the specific work tasks are written in the contract together with an estimate of how much time should be spent.

Atlantis au pair-agency² 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:

² <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 vacation

It is important to know the rules connected to salary/pocket money, vacation and holiday pay. Even though it can be difficult to talk about, it is important to talk about this when the contract is being made.

- The au pair shall receive in salary/pocket money a minimum of 5900 NOK before tax per month. If the host family pay the minimum amount, it must be increased according to UDI rates which may change yearly.
- Salary/pocket money is taxable, and the host family should deduct tax from the payment and pay to the Tax Office. It is the au pair's responsibility that tax is paid.
- The tax deduction card is available electronically at Skatteetaten.no.
- The host family should give the au pair a pay slip and pay regularly.
- The au pair normally has the right of a 10% reduction of tax (standardfradrag for utenlandske arbeidstakere), but he/she needs to apply the Tax Office for this.

- If the au pair pays too much tax, this will be returned by the Tax Office and vice versa, in the same way as for Norwegian citizens.



- The set value of free bed and lodging is taxable income according to the Tax Office. In 2017 the value was 123 NOK, and in 2018 it was 124 NOK. In 2019 the value is 125 NOK per day.
- The Holiday Act is regulating the au pair

scheme and the au pair has the right for 25 working days of holiday per year. If the au pair starts after 30th September, he/she has the right for 6 working days of holiday. 3 weeks can be in June-September if the au pair wants.

- The same rules apply if the au pair changes host family.
- We recommend planning and having a written agreement of vacation beforehand.
- Holiday Pay is 10,2 % of income before tax, including the value of lodging. The value is set by the Tax Office to be 87 NOK in 2017, 88 NOK in 2018 and 89 NOK in 2019.
- When the au pair is on vacation, he/she will not be paid salary/pocket money but can be paid Holiday Pay. Keep written documentation of how much is being paid.
- When the au pair ends the stay, earned holiday pay should normally be paid together with the last salary.

Health

An au pair is a member of the National Insurance Scheme. That means that he/she is entitled to free health services like the rest of the population. To fully access this, the au pair should as soon as possible upon arrival visit the tax office to apply for a personal number and register with a doctor. The au pair needs to bring the residency card that is given by the police after a personal appointment at the police station.

- If the au pair gets sick, he/she can get a sick leave. If it lasts for more than 3 days, the doctor should be contacted for a sick note.
- The host family must cover for the salary/pocket money for the first 16 days of the sick leave, thereafter it is NAV which will cover the income.
- Dental services are not covered by the National Insurance Scheme.
- Contact the health clinic in the municipality if the au pair needs to be tested for tuberculosis.

- If the au pair gets pregnant, this is not a valid reason for terminating the contract. On the contrary, it is a reason of protection against termination of contract. UDI should still be informed if the purpose of cultural exchange is not being fulfilled.

Going home

- When an au pair is 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 the au pair chooses to go to another country or stays on in Norway on different grounds (different type of permit).
- Even if the au pair terminates 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.

Termination of the contract

It is not always that the au pair-scheme works for one or the other party. Because the au pair is seen as in a potentially more

vulnerable situation, the threshold for terminating the contract is lower.

- Both parties can terminate the contract by 1-month notice. The notice should be in writing.
- The host family must have reasonable grounds for terminating the contract. Serious breach of confidence or gross breach(es) of contractual obligation can be valid reasons.
- That the au pair is not effective in his/her work or does not fulfil certain expectations is not reasonable grounds.
- During the notice period, the au pair normally has the right to stay with the family on the same grounds as before.
- Both parties can terminate the contract with immediate effect if gross violation of the contract.
- Both parties must notify either the police or UDI if the contract is terminated before it expires.
- That the contract is terminated does not



imply that the au pair has to leave the country right away. An au pair can apply for renewal of the au pair-permit with another host family if she / he has a valid visa.

- Normally, UDI will send a warning letter of visa revocation if the au pair does not apply for a renewal quickly. After receiving this letter, the au pair normally has 3 weeks to give an answer before UDI will make any decision.
- An au pair can live and work with the new host family after he/she has had the personal appointment at the police and handed in the necessary documents of the application. The case handling time will be counted in the total time of residing in Norway.
- A person can have residency permit as an au pair in Norway for a maximum of 2 years in total.

Contact us

You can find more information on the webiste: www.caritas.no/aupair-en



Visit us

Oslo: Storgata 38 (entrance from Hausmannsgate). Opening hours are 10.00 until 16.00 Monday-Friday. Thursday evenings from 17.00 - 20.00.

Bergen: Sigurdsgate 8

Stavanger: St. Svithunsgate 8

Trondheim: Olav Tryggvasons gate 48

Drammen: Cappelens gate 5



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



We answer messages on Facebook. You can also find more information on our activities and announcements. www.facebook.com/caritasaupair