



Counselling Services

Some counselling services answer general questions, others specialize in specific topics or life situations. Different regions offer different services. In general, first consultations are free of charge. In some cases, follow-up consultations are also free of charge. Some services offer consultations in foreign languages.

General Counselling Services

The regional Integration Services (AI) (Ansprechstellen Integration | antennes d'intégration) are a central advisory service for immigrants. Staff will answer questions regarding everyday life in Switzerland and help find specialized advisory services. In addition, they help find suitable German or French classes and integration programs. Consultations in various languages (via telephone or in person) can be arranged on request. Unscheduled visitors can obtain basic information and if necessary, schedule an appointment. Information and consultations are free of charge. In addition, there are general advisory services for certain foreign languages or for certain regions. The community of residence or the regional Integration Services (AI) (Ansprechstellen Integration | antennes d'intégration) provides contact information for these services. Immigrant associations are a good source of primary information provided in one's own language.

Community Administration / Town Administration

In many situations the place of residence's administration (Gemeindeverwaltung | administration communale, Stadtverwaltung | administration municipale) is a good first source of information. The staff may have answers to questions or recommend a suitable advisory service. All communities in Canton Bern have their own website. These websites provide contact information, office hours, and other information, in some cases including lists of advisory and integration services in the region.



Specialized Counselling Services

Canton Bern offers a wide variety of counselling services which specialize in certain topics or life situations. These include: age, work, status of residence, education, marriage/divorce, parenting, family, finance (debt/budget), health, domestic violence, integration, mental health, infant care, pregnancy, sexuality, addiction, social questions. The offer varies according to region. Bern, Thun or Biel often have central services when a regional office is unavailable. Generally, first consultations are free of charge. Contact information for various services is listed according to topic on hallo-bern.ch, or is provided by the regional Ansprechstellen Integration (AI) (Ansprechstellen Integration | antennes d'intégration) or the community of residence. Persons who are not yet fluent in German can inquire about interpretation before visiting a counselling service. Consultations may be provided in other languages, interpreters may be available, or one may be asked to come accompanied by an interpreter.

Pro Bono Legal Services

On behalf of Canton Bern the Bern Bar Association (Bernischer Anwaltsverband / BAV | Association des avocats bernois / AAB) provides legal services. Residents of Bern are given free legal advice (short consultations). Consultations are held regularly or an appointment is made in advance. The dates and information are published online or provided by the community of residence. One must attend a meeting in person. Questions will not be answered over the phone or in writing. In addition, other services provide free legal advice on a variety of topics (work, housing, marriage/family), for example, unions. Generally, time-consuming consultations will not be free of charge. At Bern Legal Services for People in Need (RBS) and at the Centre Social Protestant (CSP, Bernese Jura region), there is also the possibility to receive independent, free and competent legal advice or representation. In contrast to the CSP, the RBS offers advice exclusively in the areas of asylum law, social security law and protection against discrimination. The regional Integration Services (AI) (Ansprechstellen Integration | antennes d'intégration) provides information on the various resources. Some of them are listed according to topic on hallo-bern.ch.

Racist Discrimination

On behalf of Canton Bern, two counseling centers offer free and confidential counseling for residents of Canton Bern. Victims of racist discrimination receive legal advice at the Bern Legal Advice Center for People in Need and individual social counseling with the possibility of conflict intervention, mediation and conciliation at gggfon (Together against Violence and Racism).



Women's Centers

There are several women centers in Canton Bern. They provide information on various topics and advise on personal or legal issues. Depending on the center, different topics are covered. The counseling centers provide information on marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, custody, budgeting, retirement planning, immigration law, maternity leave, labor law, tenancy law, general contract law and criminal law.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-bern.ch/en/emergencies-and-counselling-services/counselling-services