

# Volunteering

Volunteering and voluntary work have a long tradition in Austria, including among young people. According to the **8<sup>th</sup> Report on the Situation of Young People in Austria**, around **1.4 million adolescents and young adults** aged 15 to 29 volunteered in 2022. This equates to a participation rate of **49.3%**, which is almost on a par with the average for the population as a whole (49.5%).

The main distinction is between **formal** and **informal** engagement:

- **Formal volunteering** takes place within organisations or associations - e.g. in children's and youth organisations, in the fire brigade, in the rescue service or in environmental and cultural associations.
- **Informal engagement** takes place outside formal structures - for example through neighbourhood help or support from friends.

In 2022, 49.3% of 15- to 29-year-olds were involved in volunteering. Of these, 23.5% were active both formally, in organisations or clubs, and informally, in their private lives. 30.5% were active exclusively in formal settings, and 46% were active exclusively in informal settings.

## Opportunities and added value

Volunteering means more than just 'helping out'. It involves actively contributing to society, taking on responsibility, and developing personal skills. For young people in particular, volunteering offers valuable learning and experience opportunities that positively impact their choice of training and career, as well as their social interactions.

## The significance of youth work

Volunteering is integral to youth work in Austria. Without the many young volunteers, it would be difficult to deliver the wide range of activities on offer. Involvement in youth work can range from short-term project work (e.g. at events) to continuous support and long-term commitment in leadership roles. Youth work thrives on participation, and at the same time it creates spaces in which young people can take on responsibility, contribute their skills, and experience community life.

## Volunteering Act

The Volunteering Act, which came into force on 1 June 2012, established a legal framework for promoting voluntary work for the first time. It regulates the framework conditions for voluntary work, the Voluntary Social Year, the Voluntary Environmental Protection Year, as well as memorial, peace and social services abroad.

## Information platform and service centre

The central information platform for volunteering in Austria is the **Freiwilligenweb**, which is operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs. It provides an overview of the legal framework, volunteering opportunities, contact and counselling services, access to further training, and networking opportunities.

The **Service and Competence Centre for Volunteering in Austria** also supports the development of volunteering through innovative services, materials and events.

## Further information

- [8th Report on the Situation of Young People in Austria \(2023\) \(in German only\)](http://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/jugendpolitik/jugendforschung/jugendbericht.html)  
[www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/jugendpolitik/jugendforschung/jugendbericht.html](http://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/jugendpolitik/jugendforschung/jugendbericht.html)
- [Federal Act on the Promotion of Volunteering - Volunteering Act \(in German only\)](http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20007753)  
(FreiwG)[www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20007753](http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20007753)
- [Information platform for volunteering in Austria – Freiwilligenweb \(in German only\)](http://www.freiwilligenweb.at/)  
[www.freiwilligenweb.at/](http://www.freiwilligenweb.at/)
- [Austrian Youth Portal – Volunteering \(in German only\)](http://www.jugendportal.at/freiwilliges-engagement)  
[www.jugendportal.at/freiwilliges-engagement](http://www.jugendportal.at/freiwilliges-engagement)
- [Service and Competence Centre for Volunteering in Austria \(in German only\)](http://www.freiwillig-engagiert.at)  
[www.freiwillig-engagiert.at](http://www.freiwillig-engagiert.at)

### Imprint

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Youth Newsletter: [www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/newsletter/newsletter-anmeldung.html](http://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/newsletter/newsletter-anmeldung.html)

The task of the Youth Competence Centre is to implement and coordinate the Austrian Youth Strategy and provide data and facts on youth policy and youth work. If you have any suggestions, please contact [jugendstrategie@bka.gv.at](mailto:jugendstrategie@bka.gv.at)