



CLIENT SERVICES & POLICY DIVISION Legal Assistance Office



Getting Married in Germany

Can I obtain the Affidavit of Eligibility to Marry or Certificate of No Impediment to Marriage (Ehefähigkeitszeugnis) or Certificate of Single Status (Ledigkeitsbescheinigung) at the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulates? The US Embassy cannot provide you with such a letter or certificate. The U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulates are part of the Federal government and do not have access to U.S. marriage records which are handled on a local/county/state level in the United States. However, as of January 2021, U.S. citizens residing in Germany may take an oath swearing to their eligibility to marry directly at the Standesamt. If you are getting married outside Germany, consult the website of the U.S. Embassy in the country where you intend to marry to learn more on the marriage process and required documents.

Can I get married as soon as I enter Germany? Usually yes.

I don't have a German visa and am only allowed to stay in the country for 90 days, is it enough time to get married? If you only have 90 days to get married, it might be tight to gather all the documents required by the Standesamt. If your fiancé(e) resides in Germany, they can start the registration process before you arrive in country.

Are there any age restrictions for marriages in Germany? Yes, you have to be at least 18 years old.

Who may perform marriages in Germany? Only marriages performed at the local Office of Vital Statistics (Standesamt) are legally valid in Germany. A church ceremony may be held later, if desired. Consular officers cannot perform marriages.

Do I need to register my marriage with the embassy or consulate to be recognized in the United States? No. To know if your marriage will be recognized in the United States and what documentation may be needed, contact the office of the Attorney General of your state of residence in the United States. However, we advise to get an international marriage certificate from the Standesamt and get an apostille attached by German authorities where the marriage took place so that the document will be valid for use in the U.S., if needed in the future.

Does marriage affect my U.S. citizenship? No. If a U.S. citizen marries a German citizen, he or she does not acquire German citizenship, nor does the German citizen acquire U.S. citizenship. If you wish to live in the United States after marrying, the U.S. spouse will need to apply for an Immigrant Visa on behalf of the foreign spouse.

What documents do I need to get married in Germany? This depends on what the registrar's office (Standesamt) requires and may vary from case to case. The first step is to make an appointment with the Standesamt to give notice of the impending marriage (Antrag auf Eheschließung formerly known as Aufgebot, § 4 PStG). At that

time, you will receive a detailed list of all documents required in your specific case. The following standard requirements usually apply in almost all cases:

Your birth certificate. It is a German requirement that all documents must have been issued within the last six months; therefore you may have to obtain a new copy of your birth certificate. The embassy or consulates cannot obtain documents on your behalf nor provide translations of documents. Birth certificates for any children you may have had with your fiancé(e) prior to the marriage will also have to be presented

If your fiancé(e) cannot be present when you register for the upcoming marriage then you need to present a written statement indicating that he/she agrees to the initiation of the registry process (Beitrittserklärung). It is done very easily by simply having your fiancé(e) sign the power of attorney form on the marriage questionnaire provided by the Standesamt.

All foreigners marrying in Germany require an official Affidavit of Eligibility to Marry or Certificate of No Impediment to Marriage (Ehefähigkeitszeugnis) or Certificate of Single Status (Ledigkeitsbescheinigung) to obtain a marriage license at a Civil Registry Office (Standesamt). No such government-issued document exists in the United States. The U.S. embassy or consulates cannot attest to your marital status.

As of January 2021, U.S. residents in all 16 German states may now take an oath swearing to their eligibility to marry (eigene eidesstattliche Erklärung über den Familienstand) directly at their Standesamt. If you do not have legal resident status in Germany, you must obtain a notarized marriage affidavit from your home state in the United States. Neither the U.S. Embassy nor the U.S. Consulates General can request/obtain the marriage affidavit on your behalf.

Note: German authorities might also require that you provide an apostille for some of your documents (birth certificates, court orders, etc.) issued abroad. See next question. Once you have submitted all necessary documents to the Standesamt, the paperwork is then sent off to the Higher Regional Court (Oberlandesgericht), in order to obtain an exemption from having to produce a certificate of eligibility to marry (Befreiung vom Ehefähigkeitszeugnis).

Can the Embassy or Consulate provide me with an apostille? No. U.S. apostilles are issued by the Secretary of State in the state that issued the original document.

Who should I contact if I work for the U.S. military in Germany and want to get married? Contact your legal office on base.

If you have further questions, please make an appointment with the legal assistance office by emailing us at: USARMY.WIESBADEN.USAREUR.MBX.OJA-WLC-LEGAL-ASSISTANCE-CALENDAR@MAIL.MIL.