

Frequently asked questions about the IniForum - short and concise answers

The IniForum is a project that supports tenants and housing and rental policy initiatives in Berlin and forms an interface to the House of Representatives and the Senate. Here we give a quick overview of what it does and how it works.

What is the "Initiativenforum Stadtpolitik Berlin"?

The "Initiativenforum Stadtpolitik Berlin", short "IniForum", illuminates what affects rent and housing policy initiatives and contributes to the exchange among tenants, organized civil society, and politics and administration. It organizes regular hearings in the Berlin House of Representatives, where initiatives present their issues and demands to the governing coalition. It supports initiatives with a research service and helps to set up websites. At iniforum-berlin.de, the statewide editorial team of the IniForum publishes information and provides a platform where initiatives can independently disseminate their news and texts. In addition, initiatives can borrow useful technology from IniForum free of charge.

[More about the concept](#)

[More about the support services](#)

How can the IniForum support initiatives?

The IniForum helps initiatives that are newly founded in their start-up phase. It supports them in networking with existing initiatives in their district and in establishing contacts with authorities, administration, parliament, political parties, and non-governmental organizations. The IniForum also offers a template for websites based on WordPress and workshops, consultations, and web services for this purpose. In this way, new initiatives can quickly have a presence on the Internet.

[Websites for initiatives](#)

What technical tools and materials does IniForum use to support initiatives?

Through IniForum, initiatives and activists* can use a free, privacy-compliant system for video conferencing that is easy to use. In addition, a cloud storage system is planned for 2023.

For videoconferences that are simultaneously analog and digital, initiatives can borrow a 360-degree camera from IniForum free of charge. The device is compatible with most video conferencing platforms. It automatically recognizes and focuses on the person speaking in the room and can be used directly without installation.

A daylight projector for lectures, conferences and film screenings can also be borrowed.

Also available to borrow free of charge is the Ini-Bike, a cargo bike equipped with technology that can be used anywhere without an outside power supply. Equipped with mobile audio and video technology, it is suitable for smaller hybrid meetings, such as house meetings, as well as for larger events or rallies.

For rallies, IniForum also provides a rechargeable sound system with microphone. You can also connect a cell phone to it to play audio files or simply play music through it. The equipment can be

transported in a bicycle cargo trailer, which can also be used as a handcart. In addition, initiatives can borrow a gazebo and foldable tables.

Write to us at [mailto:plattform@iniforum-berlin.de] or [mailto:info@iniforum-berlin.de] if you would like to use the video conferencing system or borrow equipment. You can reach us by phone at 0178-8244664. Tenants and initiatives can also contact us with support questions of other kinds.

What is the research service for?

Rent and housing policy initiatives have to acquire a large body of knowledge - that takes time. On request, the research service provides help and prepares background knowledge for initiatives. Some initiatives also look for information that other initiatives have already found. The research service of the IniForum helps here with contacts to them and links to their publications. Important: The research service is not a source of individual legal advice. If you have questions about current legal problems, we will have to refer you to professionals. The research service can, however, help you to understand the legal background.

[More about the research service](#)

How does the IniForum platform work and how can initiatives publish their current texts on it?

On the platform of the IniForum, initiatives can place contributions that they have published on their own websites. The initiatives always decide for themselves which of their texts should appear on the platform. On the platform of the IniForum there is then a direct link to the contribution on the website of the initiative. For the connection between their websites and the platform of the IniForum there is a plug-in. At the moment, this only works for initiatives that run a WordPress website. We provide the plug-in and are happy to help install it.

[More about the platform](#)

How can initiatives set up their own website using IniForum?

IniForum provides an easy-to-use template that meets the typical needs of initiatives. It is based on Wordpress, a free software. Initiatives must first choose their own internet service provider. We then help them with how to manage Wordpress and show them how to design their website themselves. If desired, we can also provide training. After that, initiatives are able to continue designing and publishing everything else on their own.

[More about technical support](#)

Who can participate in the hearings?

Anyone can participate in the hearings. They are public and will be announced in advance through the IniForum channels (website, newsletter, social media) and by the participating initiatives. At the same time, all important information about registration and the time and place of the hearing will be communicated.

[More about the hearings](#)

How can initiatives bring their topic to a hearing?

If you would like to present a topic for one of the next hearings, you can contact us by e-mail at [mailto:hearing@iniforum-berlin.de].

[More about the hearings](#)

Who decides on the topic of a hearing?

The IniForum is supported by an advisory board. It discusses in public meetings which topics will be brought to the next hearings. The proposals are usually made by representatives of initiatives who present their topic at the advisory board meetings. The IniForum team then prepares the event together with them and other initiatives that would like to speak at the hearing.

[More about the hearings](#)

What is the role of the IniForum Advisory Board and how is it composed?

The advisory board currently (as of November 2022) consists of 18 activists from various tenant initiatives and other housing and rent policy organizations. The members do not attend the meetings on behalf of their initiatives, but privately. Interested people can attend the public advisory board meetings at any time. If, after attending several times, there is interest in becoming a permanent member, the advisory board may accept that person. In this way, the composition of the advisory board is constantly changing.

[More about the advisory board](#)

Who finances the IniForum?

The supporting organization of the IniForum is Stadtprojekte e.V. The funds for the IniForum currently come from the budget of Berlin for the budget years 2022/2023 in the area of "Urban Development and Housing". The financial allocation reaches the supporting association via the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing.

[More about the structure of the IniForum](#)

How long will the IniForum be financed?

In the last quarter of 2019, the supporting association Stadtprojekte e.V. received the so-called grant notice for the start-up phase. Subsequently, the IniForum was financed by the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing in 2020 and 2021. Since November 2022, it has received a renewed commitment to funding until the end of 2023.

[More about the sponsoring association](#)

Can the IniForum work independently, even though it is financed by the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing?

The content-related work of the IniForum results from the concerns of the initiatives and the cooperation with the advisory board. The board of the sponsoring association, as the employer of the IniForum team, is also represented on it. Even though the funding flows from the parliament via the senate administration to the association, there is no representation from the administration or politics that could intervene in the debates and actions of the IniForum. We think this is independent enough to be able to support initiatives as they wish.

[More about the structure of the IniForum](#)

Who works at the IniForum and how?

The team consists of two members who work part-time for the IniForum. Carola Rönneburg (30 hours/week) comes from the GloReiche Nachbarschaft, Fabian Steinecke (30 hours/week) is active at Bizim Kiez. The team was put together in 2020 through an application process.

[More about the team](#)

Does the IniForum also support initiatives outside the inner city?

The concept of the sponsor Stadtprojekte e.V. explicitly refers to the whole of Berlin. We call on every initiative in Berlin - whether on the periphery or in the middle - to participate in the IniForum and are happy to support all of them.

[More about the concept of the IniForum](#)

How can we reach the IniForum team?

Write us at [mailto:info@iniforum-berlin.de] or get in touch at 0178-8244664.

[All contact options of the IniForum](#)

How can I sign up for the IniForum newsletter?

Through the IniForum newsletter, we provide information about upcoming hearings and other news about the IniForum. Signing up is as easy as filling out a simple form.

[Register for the newsletter](#)