

Grants and benefits for children

Question:

I have heard that Cyprus government pays a number of benefits for the birth of a child. If this is true, what is needed to do to get these benefits? What documents are required and where they must be submitted? Does the visa status of parents (both foreigners) matters? 21/07/2015

Response:

Cyprus Government gives a Birth Grant and Child Benefit.

The Birth Grant is a one-off payment made to women who have given birth while living in Cyprus, provided they are registered residents and either themselves or their husbands are contributing to the Social Insurance. The application form for the grant should be submitted within twelve months from the day of the birth, along with the baby's birth certificate and marriage certificate if this applicable.

Child Benefit is paid to parents who have been residing in the Republic of Cyprus for the last three consecutive years and have at least one resident child under 15 years old and provided that they are living together. An additional allowance is paid to low income families.

The DOCUMENTS REQUIRED WHEN APPLYING FOR CHILD BENEFIT are:

If the application is submitted for the first time or new elements have occurred from the previous application (e.g. birth of a new child, child joining the National Guard etc) the following documents are required (only once):

- the birth certificate for every dependent child;
- a certificate from the National Guard, for children aged between 18 to 21 years serving the army;
- a certificate of attendance from a secondary education school, for pupils aged between 18 to 19 years old;
- a medical certificate, for children permanently disabled, regardless of their age;
- the court ruling or sworn statement before the registrar or a certificate from the Social Welfare Services regarding the person with whom the children live under the same roof, in case of divorced parents or children whose parents are both dead;
- the court order for divorce and / or alimony and/or child custody (if alimony or custody is changed, submit the new ruling);
- a certificate from the Bank or CCI or copy of the bank statement. The child benefit will be paid only by bank transfer to a personal or joint account of the beneficiary;
- a copy of the Alien Card (yellow slip), Certificate of Registration, Temporary Residence Permit or Immigration Permit from the Civil Register and Immigration Department for the applicant and their family members, in case of foreign citizens living in the Republic of Cyprus for at least three years. Note that a new permit shall be submitted in case the previous one has expired.

Foreign applicants are also required to submit a community council certificate for minor children who do not attend school or kindergarten that they reside under the same roof with their family

or, a certificate of school attendance for pupils (a new certificate must be submitted every September for each new school year).

Every year the applicants are required to submit the following documents which refer to the gross income during the previous year for each family member (where applicable) separately:

(a) Employees must submit one of the following documents:

- a certificate from the employer (which is in the last page of the application form);
- the salary certificate (IR 63).

(b) Shareholders of a private company must submit one of the following documents:

- a declaration of dividends which is in the last page of the application form;
- a statement of defense contribution from dividends;
- a copy of the dividends' certificate.

(c) Self-employed must submit one of the following documents:

- a copy of the tax return;
- the income certificate of accountant / auditor.

(d) In case of income gained abroad the application must include the relevant certificates from the competent bodies abroad that proves the amount of earnings in the previous year.

(e) a declaration or payment statement of Cyprus Agricultural Payments Organization.

The Grants and Benefits Service may, where it deems fit, request additional documents for all the income and property requirements under consideration.

To receive child benefit the family must submit to the Grants and Benefits Service of the Ministry of Finance (or to another relevant body) an application form together with the relevant documents no later than 31 December of that specific year for which the grant is requested. Applications must be re-submitted annually to ensure that the parent is still resident in Cyprus, along with proofs from the school that the child is attending. If the application and the relevant documents are not submitted within the deadline, it will be considered out of date and will result in loss of child benefit for that year. The beneficiaries must submit an application every calendar year, in order to receive child benefit.

The documents must be submitted either in Greek or in English, or accompanied by a certified translation in Greek by the Press and Information Office in Cyprus in case they are available in another language. Copies of the required documents may be accepted, unless the original certificates are requested by the Grants and Benefits Service.

The application must be submitted to any of the following institutions:

- Grants and Benefits Service of the Ministry of Finance
- The Ministry of Finance Headquarters
- Citizen Service Centres (CSC):

Or by post to the Executive Director of the Grants and Benefits Service of the Ministry of Finance at 1489 Nicosia. However we recommend the application to be submitted in person by the applicant.

After the first quarter of the year the child benefit is paid monthly to families with three or more children. For families with one or two children the payment is made annually (at the end of the year).

The child benefit is paid to the mother when the parents live together, the father or mother (depending on the case), when they are single, widowed or divorced, for the number of children who live with them under the same roof, the person (tutor) who is in charge of the child when both parents are dead.

Persons who receive child benefit have the obligation to notify the Grants and Benefits Service or the Permanent Secretary within one month of any change in their family situation, address, bank account, or of any circumstances that may affect their right to receive the benefit. Failure to provide timely information may result in loss of child benefit.

According to the Child Benefit Law, any person making a false statement or presenting false particulars with the aim of obtaining child benefit either for herself / himself or for any other person, is guilty of an offense and risks a fine of up to €40.000, or imprisonment up to 2 years, or both sentences.