

HOW TO HIRE A LIVE IN MAID

Courtesy of Doha Nanny

www.dohananny.com

Where expats find maids

Dear Everyone,

My family life is great. I know, so is yours. I mean, whose isn't? Some people are naturals at keeping a household functioning, and it's a noble thing. Like Grandma. She kept her house clean while looking after 8 kids (or was it 9?) Not me. I'm not a natural. And I couldn't care less... because I have a secret weapon.

Her name is Anna.

Everyone should have someone like Anna in their life. Some call her a maid, but to our family, she is the reason my kids are clean, healthy, and alive. She is the reason that I have no idea where the mop is and yet our floors are clean every day. People like Anna are difficult to find. But not nearly as difficult as navigating the process to hire a maid. I have a fond place in my heart for the lady in Gharafa, gate 4, desk 3. We probably would have become friends if it wasn't for my rapidly dissipating patience at discovering I was missing yet again another document. This needn't happen to you, and here is why: I'm gonna tell you everything you need to know. Because everyone deserves to have a secret weapon like Anna.

You want to hire a live-in maid in Qatar? First, you will need to apply for a maid visa from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) immigration department to hire a maid.

APPLY FOR A MAID VISA

Just as a heads up that there are some general conditions that usually (but not always) need to be met: you should have household income over 12,000QR/mo. Single males cannot hire a maid, and maids cannot be from the same nationality as the sponsor or their spouse.

Assuming you meet these conditions, to apply for a maid visa you will need to submit:

1. An NOC (no objection certificate) from your employer, allowing you to hire a maid.
2. A copy of your employment contract (with salary-both spouses if applicable)
3. Copies of Residence Permits for everyone in your family
4. Copies of Passports for everyone in your family
5. Copy of your marriage certificate (sometimes attested copies are required)
6. Copy of bank statements (typically 3-6months, but varies according to applicant)
7. Passport photos (print at least 6 of these as you seem to need them throughout the process)

You will submit these documents to the MOI (Passports and Expat Affairs, Gharafa office, Gate 4) to apply for your maid visa. The requirements can sometimes vary based on individual circumstances, (this explains why some expats have different experiences than others).

The approval process takes between 1-4 weeks pending on time of year and personal details. The visa is valid for several months, so it is advised that you apply before you actually require a maid (or as soon as you decide to hire a maid). You may be called in for an interview if the application is unusual, and in rare cases the application may be rejected by the assigned reviewer (size of family, employment situation, size of home, etc.).

You will also be asked which nationality of maid you wish to hire, and your visa will be valid for only this nationality (not to worry though, it is fairly easy to request a change of nationality on the maid visa at a later date). You will pay 1500QR for the maid visa upon approval plus 300QR for the processing fee.

Congrats, you are now ready to find a maid. You can choose between 3 different routes to find a maid to hire.

Option 1: an Agency

The most traditional way to hire a live in maid is through a local agency. Local agencies are familiar with all the logistics of hiring a maid and can provide assurances to families who are unwilling to find a maid on their own. It is advised that you visit several agencies to find one that meets your expectations before you commit. Most agencies will ask for confirmation of your maid visa and then recruit a maid from a select list of countries (Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Ethiopia, are the most common) for you on a two year contract, and offer a 3 month probationary 'return' policy if the maid is not a good fit.

The candidates have varying degrees of experience and language skills; it is wise that you review several CV's and thoroughly interview her (skype, etc.) before you agree to hiring. Upon agreeing to hire a maid, you will pay a deposit to cover processing fees (her medical, training, visa processing, flights, etc). The processing time will depend on what stage the candidates paperwork is already at. If she is fully ready, she could arrive in 2 weeks, and if she has not yet started her paperwork it is typically around 4-8weeks to process all documents.

The maids salary is often set to the minimum wage as determined by the maids home country labour ministry. As a general rule of thumb, nations that command a higher salary also provide greater language skills and training and verification of credentials.

Option 2: Direct Hire

A direct hire is when you have a specific maid you want to hire directly from another country. The process for this depends on the labour rules set by each country, and it cannot be easily generalized. Many local agencies can assist you with the paperwork for this for a somewhat lower fee than hiring an agency maid. However you carry additional risks as the maids visa status is less certain and agencies will not offer a probationary period if you are directly choosing a maid. This option is only recommended if you have an excellent candidate that has unique skills or experience or personality that is worth the additional paperwork.

Option 3: Local Transfer

Finding a local maid who is available to transfer sponsorship is the preferred choice for most expat families. The benefits are considerable, including very quick processing times, much lower fees, and not least of all the ability to personally interview the maid. If seeking a local transfer you will be arranging the paperwork yourself, (it's not too challenging). You should ensure that the candidate has a valid RP and is able to get her NOC (no objection certificate) from her current employer. The rules regarding transferring a local maid are currently in flux, and you should inquire about any recent changes. As of June 2017, the NOC condition is still required, despite much confusion or advice to the contrary (even if she has finished her contract).

You can find a maid for local transfer by asking your friend network or checking online listing services. Locally available maids command a premium due to their local experience, quick processing times and the savings you will get in visa processing. Over a 2 year contract you will often find that a local transfer even at a higher salary is still a more cost effective option than an agency maid at minimum wage.

SPONSORING A LOCAL TRANSFER MAID

If you agree to hire a maid on a local transfer, then you will need to complete a 'sponsorship transfer' application at the MOI. You will need to apply in person with:

1. Copies of all RP's (maids, current sponsor, and yours)
2. Copies of all passports (maids, current sponsor, and yours)
3. An NOC (translated into Arabic) from maids current employer
4. Your employment contract

The fee to transfer sponsorship of a local maid depends on how many employers she has held previously. If this is her first transfer, then the fee is 1000QR, if this is her second the fee is 1500QR, if its her 3rd it is 2000QR, and subsequent transfers are ±200QR for each additional.

Once you have hired a local transfer maid you will be required to complete some final documents within one month after the maid begins living and working with you. The final steps are:

1. Renew her RP (if this has not been done already). Cost is ±300QR/yr.
2. Provide her with Health Insurance (available from HMC). Cost is ±50 QR
3. Register her employment contract at the embassy of her nationality (±20QR)
4. Provide her with personal insurance. This is not required of all nationalities, but is a prudent investment in the event of an accident. This is available at most local insurers, for a fee of 100-300QR.

SPONSORING AN AGENCY MAID

The final paperwork for hiring an agency maid is somewhat different. You will not need to submit a 'transfer' form, but you will need to complete her residency papers (most agencies do not provide this service). Once the maid arrives at the airport, either you or the agency will pick her up. In effect you are responsible for her from the moment she arrives at your home for work. Then you will have 4 weeks to complete the following:

1. Get a blood type certificate for her (available from any health clinic). Cost ±100QR.
2. Get a medical exam (TB, HIV, pregnancy) involving a blood test and X-ray. This is done at HMC for ±100QR.
3. Register her fingerprints at the Civil Investigation Department (CID). This is free.
4. Renew her RP (if this has not been done already). Cost is ±300QR/yr.
5. Provide her with Health Insurance (available from HMC). Cost is ±50 QR
6. Register her employment contract at the embassy of her nationality (±20QR)
7. Provide her with personal insurance. This is not required of all nationalities, but is a prudent investment in the event of an accident. This is available at most local insurers for a fee of 100-300QR.

SETTLE THE MAID IN

Your maid may be unfamiliar with the region and your neighbourhood. Make sure she is aware of local laws, facilities, and services. Introduce her to other maids nearby and make sure she knows all emergency contacts. Provide her with a copy of her work contract and remind her to keep her passport and documents secure (*it is illegal for sponsors to keep a maids passport at any point herein). Set your family expectations and provide some training as to what you expect, scheduling, and how you like things done. What is obvious to you may not be obvious to her.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

You are responsible for ensuring the maid respects local laws, and also for respecting her personal rights. You must provide her with accommodation, food, and a budget for toiletries, communications, etc. Additionally she is entitled to annual vacation as well as routine scheduled time off where she is free to spend her time as she wishes. You will be responsible for all visa, passport and renewal fees while she is employed by you.

TERMINATION

You may terminate her employment at any time, but you will be required to repatriate her if she does not want to transfer to a local employer. You typically are not required to pay out her contract, but this can vary, and is best to inquire locally at the time this occurs. Best practices are to provide her one month end of service salary, a return flight home, and an NOC so that she is able to find a new employer with ease.

COSTS

1. Maid visa approval: 1500 + 300 processing fee = 1800QR total
2. Direct Hire: Approximately 10,000QR for all paperwork (performed by agency)
3. Agency hire: 10-14,000 depending on agency and scope of services
4. Local Transfer application: Approximately 1500QR
5. Residency papers (if hiring through an agency): 500QR
6. Insurance: Approximately 300QR

In summary, hiring a maid through an agency will take about 8 weeks and cost approximately 15,000QR all inclusive. Hiring a maid available as a local transfer will take approximately 5 weeks and cost approximately 4000QR all inclusive.

I hope this helps. A little knowledge goes a long way and information is power. Because everyone should have a secret weapon like Anna.

Our experience led us to establish Doha Nanny: Qatar's original online maid listing platform. As expats ourselves we get it. That's why we do our best to help our community out. If you have any other questions or want to search through agency maids or profiles of local transfer candidates, please check it out at www.dohananny.com.

Peace and love.

-The Doha Nanny team-

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