

What Is Segurança Social?

The Segurança Social is the Social Security system in Portugal. It includes unemployment benefits, pension and gives you access to the public healthcare. In order to get a Segurança Social, you will need a temporary or permanent residence permit. Students are also able to apply. European Citizens can obtain their Segurança Social if they present their Certificate of European Resident (CRUE).

It is not mandatory to get your NISS (Numero de Segurança Social) if you already have a contract of employment, although it can certainly make your life easier if you have one. If you have been offered a job in Portugal, your employer will most likely assist you in registering for the NISS. If you are a freelancer, it is your responsibility to get your NISS number and your responsibility to pay your contributions.

How To Get An NISS

In order to obtain an NISS, you need to be employed or self-employed. It's not impossible to get one without having a job already in place, but it is more complex. It is possible to obtain the number in one of the physical Segurança Social offices or to apply online. If you are a student, you will need to obtain a work- or study permit from the Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF).

Required Documents for Application

- A valid passport, with a legal entry stamp in Europe (if you are a non-European citizen), plus you may need a Schengen Area VISA.
- Your Portuguese taxpayer's number(NIF).
- Your residence permit
- A copy of your work contract signed by your employer (employed or self-employed)

After completing your paperwork and starting the application process, you should receive your NISS number by mail in 5 to 10 days.

How to benefit from the NISS?

As stated earlier, the Social Security payments include pension payments, unemployment benefits, maternity benefits and gives you access to the public health system. In this part we will dive deeper into that.

Pensions

Part of your Social Security payments will be directed to your public pension. As of 2023 the pension age in Portugal is 67, which can be lower under certain circumstances.

Besides the public pension it is also possible to built and extra pension PPR(Plano de Poupança e Reforma). This is comparable with the American 401K. Your bank should be able to consult you in this.

Unemployment benefits

There are four types of unemployment benefit in Portugal:

- Unemployment benefit (subsídio de desemprego): for workers who have lost their job, have come to the end of an employment contract, or have ceased work involuntarily.
- Social unemployment benefit (subsídio social de desemprego): for workers who do not meet the conditions for unemployment benefit or whose benefits have run out.
- Partial unemployment benefit (subsídio de desemprego parcial): for workers who were receiving unemployment benefit but have now started part-time or self-employed work.
- Allowances for cessation of work for self-employed workers (subsídios por cessação de atividade para trabalhadores independentes): for some self-employed workers who have lost their main income source or closed their business (subject to justifiable reasons).

Maternity benefits

Mothers are entitled to a maximum of 30 days' of voluntary leave before childbirth, followed by 42 days' of compulsory leave after the birth. Fathers qualify for a maximum of 20 days' leave, with five taken immediately after the birth and the other fifteen within the following six weeks.

Mothers qualify for initial parent benefit for 120–150 days. However, an extension of 30 days is provided if the parents take shared leave or in the case of multiple births. All in all, 100% of income is usually paid for the first 120 days, followed by 80% for the next 30 days.

Public health system

Any resident can use the Portuguese healthcare system, regardless of their country of origin. To summarize, the national healthcare system (Serviço Nacional de Saúde) covers a percentage of the costs of visiting the doctor, having treatment in hospital, and medical emergencies.

Once you've registered with the Portuguese Social Security system, you should be able to access services through the national healthcare system. You'll then need to visit your local health center with your social security card to be assigned a doctor. We also recommend you to update your vaccine passport as Portugal might have slightly different vaccination standards.