



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Acció Social i Ciutadania
Secretaria per a la Immigració

MATERIALS DE SUPORT A L'ACOLLIDA EN L'ÀMBIT DEL TREBALL

“Let’s get to work.”

The best way to get a job in Catalonia is to obtain an employment contract from a Catalan company, and the corresponding work and residency permit, whilst in your country of origin. Without a work permit, you will not be protected by the same rights as other workers in Catalonia.

“When I was in my country, I thought that all I needed to do to be able to work in Catalonia was to get there. But that’s not the case, it’s actually illegal. You need a residency and work permit to get a job in Catalonia.”

There are two types of residency and work permit: an initial temporary permit and a temporary permit for a fixed period.

“What’s the difference between them?”

“An initial temporary residency and work permit is valid for a year and can be renewed. A temporary residency and work permit for a fixed period is valid for less than a year and isn’t renewable. When the corresponding job ends, the holder has to return to their country.”

All Catalonia’s citizens have the right to work. Doing so not only provides them with money to live on, but is also the most direct way for them to participate in and be a part of society.

“Getting a job isn’t as easy as you might think. You have to search for and find work. If you have the proper permits, there are services and opportunities which can help you.”

“If there’s one thing that can help you to find a job, apart from documentation, it’s learning Catalan. It’s essential.”

“I thought that only men worked. But here, I discovered that women

work too, and earn a wage that allows them be independent.”

There are two ways of working. You can work for yourself or for somebody else. Working for somebody else means doing a job for an employer, who will contract you. Working for yourself means being self-employed.

“I have a shop and I like running it my way, but I’m the one who takes the financial risks. If business is bad one month, I have to carry on paying the wages and social security contributions of the people who work for me, as well as the rent, the electricity bill and all my monthly expenses.”

“I work in a company. I feel secure because I know that I’ll get paid every month. However, being an employee means working for a boss and following rules and strict timetables.”

If you lose your job and want to work for somebody else, the first thing to do is to register as a jobseeker at the Catalan government’s Employment Office, which, in Catalan, is called the *Oficina de Treball de la Generalitat* or OTG.

“Will I find a job if I do that?”

“It’s essential to register as a jobseeker, but it’s also a good idea to look at the job offers in the Sunday newspapers.”

“When I need a worker, I always use the SOC, which is short for the Servei d’Ocupació de Catalunya, or Catalan Occupation Service. In fact, I’ve contracted most of my employees through the SOC.”

In addition to looking at the newspapers, it is also advisable to visit the virtual SOC office at www.oficinatreball.net, which has job offers on its homepage. You can also consult other employment sites on the internet.

“If you find a job offer that interests you, you’ll need to send your CV or make a phone call. I always call if the offer includes a telephone number.”

“Just a minute. What’s a CV?”

“A CV is a summary of your personal data, your studies and the jobs you’ve done in the past. It’s supposed to show who you are and what you’re looking for.”

There are also firms who select workers for other companies, namely staff recruitment agencies and temporary employment agencies, which are also known as ETTs.

“You don’t have to pay staff recruitment agencies to find you a job. The service is paid for by the employer.”

“ETT’s establish contracts with workers, whom they then temporarily transfer to other companies. In other words, an ETT will contract somebody, but that person will provide services for another company.”

When you take your first steps in the world of employment, you must find out how Social Security works. Social Security is a public protection system that guarantees certain benefits to deal with situations involving social need, such as illness, unemployment, etc.

“How does Social Security help you?”

“Thanks to Social Security, you have access to public health care. You can go to doctors, hospitals and casualty without it costing you anything extra.”

Both employers and workers pay Social Security.

“When you get your first wage slip and see that part of your salary has been taken for Social Security, it can be hard to understand. But later, when you see what’s involved, you accept it willingly.”

While health care is available to everybody, there are other benefits for people who have made Social Security payments or contributions for the minimum time specified by law.

“What needs must I have to receive such benefits?”

“If you have a baby and are registered in the Social Security system, you’re entitled to stay off work to care for your child for the first 16

weeks of its life, whilst receiving part of your wage. This is called maternity leave, in the case of a mother, or paternity leave, in the case of a father.”

“So, if I decide to take this leave and my husband does too, are we entitled to 32 weeks?”

“No. You would have to share the 16 weeks between you. However, you must have been making Social Security contributions for at least 6 months to be entitled to such leave.”

“If I’m ill and can’t go to work, am I entitled to any benefits?”

“In the case of a common illness, such as a bad case of flu or having to stay at home following an operation, you have the right to receive sick pay if you’ve made contributions for 180 days over the last 5 years. You also have to see your doctor to ask for sick leave.”

“If you have an accident at work or an illness as a result of your job, previous contributions aren’t necessary. In such cases, you’re always entitled to sick pay.”

Social Security also enables you to receive part of your wage if you lose your job. This is called unemployment benefit and it makes the time spent between jobs as little of an ordeal as possible. To be entitled to this benefit, you normally have to have made Social Security contributions covering unemployment for 360 days over the last 6 years.

“If I’ve worked for 360 days and I lose my job, for how long will I have the right to receive unemployment benefit?”

“You’re entitled to receive unemployment benefit for approximately 120 days for every year you’ve worked.”

“And I’ll get money for doing nothing?”

“Not exactly. When you apply for unemployment benefit, you have to promise to actively look for a new job, to accept work if it’s offered to you and to take part in any activity that might improve your chances of finding employment. If you don’t do those things, you could lose

your benefit.”

“I clean houses for a living. Am I entitled to unemployment benefit too?”

“At present, people who provide domestic services don’t make contributions towards unemployment benefit and, therefore, aren’t entitled to it. However, the possibility of them receiving it in the future is being studied.”

When you first arrive in Catalonia, it is because you have obtained an employment contract whilst in your country of origin. An employment contract is a document through which a worker and a company promise to maintain a working relationship.

“How can I find out if I’ve been contracted properly?”

“By checking whether the person who has contracted you has registered you in the Social Security system. You must be registered before you start working.”

“Where can I check?”

“To check your Social Security registration, you need to request a working life report from the Social Security’s General Treasury or by calling 901 502 050.”

All workers have the right to join a union. Unions are organisations of workers who, voluntarily and for reasons of solidarity, unite to protect their rights. People who join a union have to pay a monthly fee.

“How do they protect me as a worker?”

“Unions are your spokespeople within your company. They make both specific and common requests with regard to wages and working times and conditions, along with other demands intended to achieve practical improvements from employers.”

Whether you have a job or are unemployed, you are entitled to subsidised occupational training. Such training provides a certain

level of knowledge for the purpose of doing a job or a specific task, or working in a certain trade. Workers registered as jobseekers can take part in the courses offered by the SOC. Information is available from your OTG or from the Catalan Occupation Service's website.

“Being unemployed is hard. It's easy to get depressed and waste time. The SOC programmes keep you active and teach you things that can then help you to find a job.”

Lifelong learning is available to workers who are currently employed. Lifelong learning courses can be organised within a company or in local offices of unions and employers' organisations.

“When I began working, it never occurred to me that I could carry on training. But if the contributions from your wages cover such training, you're entitled to it. What's more, if what you learn is related to your job, then you, your boss and your company all benefit from it.”

We work to make money and a living. Most importantly, however, working is the main way to participate in this host society.