

Employer service fees for Samoan workers: frequently asked questions

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is aware the Government of Samoa is intending to implement an employer service fee of A\$50 and agents fee for each Samoan Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme worker recruited into the PALM scheme, to be managed by the Samoan Labour Employment and Export Program (LEEP).

DEWR is working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Government of Samoa on the specifics relating to the fee structure and will continue to provide updated information to PALM scheme employers and stakeholders as details are confirmed.

When will the employer fees start?

LEEP has indicated it will seek feedback on the employer fee structure and will hold a virtual consultation with employers, timing is still being determined.

The Government of Samoa has confirmed that the fee structure will not be retrospectively applied for 2024-2025.

LEEP will commence invoicing PALM scheme employers in June 2025 for recruitments for 2025-2026.

It is anticipated that fees will be applicable for any workers mobilised from 1 July 2025.

Further information will be provided when it is available.

Who do employers contact if they have questions on the invoice amount?

PALM scheme employers should contact LEEP directly as they manage the calculation of fees and invoicing.

Email: (all@leep.gov.ws).

Phone number: (+685 34425)/(+685 34449).

Relevant contact details should also be included on your LEEP invoice.

What should employers do if they receive an invoice?

Under the PALM scheme, there is no legal requirement in the deed or guidelines for employers to pay service fees to participating countries. Any decision by a PALM scheme employer to pay an invoice for fees, such as one issued by the Samoan Government for PALM scheme-related service fees, is entirely a commercial matter for each employer and employers should seek their own legal advice relating to invoices received.

While it is not anticipated invoices will be issued immediately, if employers agree to pay invoices, they should follow the information provided by LEEP on the process.

As outlined in section 5.3 of the PALM scheme guidelines, employer fees must not be passed on to workers.

Can employers change approved recruitments if workers are not yet mobilised?

DEWR can assist PALM scheme employers to make alternative arrangements for impacted workers.

The options for a PALM scheme employer to make alternative arrangements will depend on the stage that the recruitment process is at for individual workers. This will need to be discussed on a case-by-case basis and PALM scheme employers should contact their DEWR relationship manager to discuss further.

What should employers do if Samoan PALM scheme workers ask about employers being charged fees?

DEWR is working with DFAT and the Government of Samoa on information for Samoan PALM scheme workers regarding the employer service fees and will provide this to PALM scheme employers to share with workers when more information becomes available.

In the meantime, PALM scheme workers can contact LEEP to obtain further information.

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