

Kuwait: Non-Kuwaiti population by migration status (2015-2024)

Migration status (Purpose of permit)	Reference number of permits	Type of permit	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
work	17	Government sector	107,710	109,714	110,245	107,657	105,970	100,189	96,803	97,880	96,592	96,868
	18	Private sector	1,293,578	1,373,378	1,442,608	1,531,234	1,547,205	1,384,336	1,248,735	1,414,443	1,500,776	1,592,968
	19	Business	383	369	359	360	354	358	601	773	972	1,439
	20	Domestic work	651,386	666,422	677,592	707,061	731,376	667,350	591,368	753,165	786,086	735,740
residence	22	Dependent	536,326	544,150	540,904	541,630	541,830	525,659	499,537	520,654	504,175	544,371
	23	Study	630	865	861	869	814	684	508	632	735	707
	24	Self-residence	2,263	2,297	2,386	2,444	2,440	2,456	2,572	2,352	1,980	2,001
Total residencies 1 year and more			2,592,276	2,697,195	2,774,955	2,891,255	2,929,989	2,681,032	2,440,124	2,789,899	2,891,316	2,974,094
Temporary	14	Temporary residence	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	70,624	65,407	80,177	48,714	47,538	50,694
Total residencies			n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3,000,613	2,746,439	2,520,301	2,838,613	2,938,854	3,024,788

Source: Central Statistical Bureau, Migration Statistics Bulletin, given years.

ANNEXED NOTE

1. Definitions

Data taken from Ministry of Interior's (Directorate of Migration's) annual records of residency permits granted to foreign residents by type/ purpose of permit, sex and regional origin of holder.

The data presented in the table are stock data: all the non-national residents holding a residence permit on December 31st, the given year.

The present figures include permits delivered for all purposes of stay in Kuwait:

- 1- Labour in all sectors: governmental sector (n°17); private sector (n°18); business (freelance) (n°19) and domestic sector (n°20)
- 2- Residence: as family dependent (permit n°22); studies (n°23) and self-residence (n°24).

Residency procedures do not apply to GCC nationals and to Bidouns (stateless residents of Kuwait).

The table thus excludes the Bidouns, the non-Kuwaiti GCC citizens and those in irregular situation.

The number of holders of permit n°14 (temporary residents) is not available before 2019.

Dependent permit: spouse, children or elderly dependent relatives can join visa holder (sponsor) in Kuwait, if the expatriate has obtained a residency and meets the salary requirements. A working wife cannot sponsor her husband as a dependent. Sons over the age of 21 years cannot be sponsored as dependents, though adult daughters and parents may be permitted. Dependent family members are not allowed to work on a Dependent Visa. Every foreign resident including new born babies must hold a residency permit.

Self residence permit: Expatriates may sponsor themselves under article 24 of the regulations and obtain a residence for two to five years under several conditions, among which: being aged 60 and more, having worked no less than 25 years in Kuwait, owning a capital of 10,000 KD at least; holding a certificate of good conduct, effectively reside in Kuwait, etc.

This form of residence can be renewed upon expiry. Self-sponsored expatriates may sponsor their wives and children.

Permits 17, 18, 19 and 20 are only granted after Ministry of Labour issues a work permit.

2. Institution which provides data

Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), Ministry of Planning.

3. Period of data coverage

December 31st, given years.

4. Data availability

The present data is taken from the "Migration Statistics" reports, published annually by the CSB.

The report (in Arabic and English, PDF format with Excel tables) is available on CSB's website

(Population Statistics, then Migration Statistics)

https://www.csb.gov.kw/Pages/Statistics_en?ID=56&ParentCatID=1

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Keywords: Kuwait, Foreign Population, Employment, Legal Document, Residence Conditions, Family Reunification