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The Roma Effect: IMSS Announces Test Program to Extend Benefits to Domestic Employees in Mexico

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There are about 2.4 million domestic employees in Mexico, 95 percent of whom are women and do not have social security benefits. The Mexican Supreme Court of Justice recently held that it is not legal to exclude domestic employees from the country's social security system, which is administered by the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS). The IMSS is launching a test program to guarantee access to social security benefits for domestic employees, their spouses, their children, and their parents under the same conditions as any other employee.

Domestic employees seeking to join this program must do the following:

- Obtain a social security number
- Report his or her monthly salary
- Report whether he or she works for one or more employers, and if the employee works for multiple employers, indicate dates and periods during which he or she works for each employer
 - Note that if the employee has more than one employer, the social security fees will be apportioned among employers.

Once the employee is registered for the program, IMSS will issue a payment code for fees to be paid. These fees must be paid within the first 20 days of each month, and the social security benefits will apply to the next month (e.g. payment within the first 20 days of February will cover social security benefits for March). The employee must then register with the IMSS medical center closest to his or her personal address

Please note that the fees will vary according to the employee's monthly salary, from \$904.22 Mexican pesos up to \$9,317.91 Mexican pesos (\$47.00-\$487.00 U.S. dollars approximately) per month.

IMSS Director Germán Martínez Cázares stated that the program will start on March 31, 2019, and provide domestic employees with social security benefits as of May 1, 2019. Note that this information has not yet been formalized and/or published in the *Official Gazette of the Federation*, so it is not currently enforceable or binding on employers. The IMSS further stated that the continuity of the program will rely on its financial viability.

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