

28 April 2020

COVID-19 SOCIAL RELIEF OF DISTRESS (SRD) GRANT – R350pm OVER 6 MONTHS

Background

- On 21 April the President announced that a special grant of R350 per month for 6 months, “will be paid to individuals who are currently unemployed and do not receive any other form of social grant or UIF payment”.
- On 24 April the Finance Minister further stated that SASSA and others were identifying easy payment systems, including cash transfer using cell phones, and other methods.
- On 27 April SASSA announced that over the weekend on 25 & 26 April they had tested a Whatsapp application system as one of the payment mechanisms.
- Between 6 and 8 million unemployed people are expected to benefit from the grant, at a cost of between R2 billion & R2.8 billion per month over the 6 months.

Proposed methods for registration and payment

Whatsapp

- The government’s current Covid-19 Whatsapp line 060 012 3456, currently linked to the Department of Health, was used for the recent trial run but the final Whatsapp number may differ
- People with smartphones would be able to register by sending a key word, such as “Sassa” to this Whatsapp number, to trigger the registration process and finally the payment process

People without a Whatsapp enabled smart phone

- USSD codes or “quick codes”, such as those used to purchase airtime, data, find balances etc. on a phone, could also be used for registration and ultimately for payment of the grants.

People with no access to mobile phones

- No mention has yet been made as to how this group of people might register and receive payment
- In 2019 it was reported by ICASA that in 2017, 88% of households used mobile phones for communication - in 2020 that figure would undoubtedly be much higher
- However, this might be the most vulnerable group of unemployed people, who cannot afford any type of mobile phone and a special effort would need to be made for them to access the grant

Payment methods

- Bank transfers to those with bank or Post Office savings accounts
- Where a person does not have a bank account, mobile money transfers would be used, where money can be drawn from an ATM, using a unique code sent to the person's cell phone
- Vouchers redeemable at retailers would be another method

Eligibility - checks & balances

- SASSA would need to check applicants ID numbers, against government databases (SASSA, UIF, SARS, etc.) to ensure that they are not already receiving grants, UIF payments, salaries, pensions, etc.

Commencement and payment dates

- SASSA is still to announce the commencement & final details of registration process
- It has been reported that the first payments are expected to be made in early May, after the initial registration and screening process

Inquiries about food parcels

- Dial SASSA on 0800 60 10 11 and select option 3
- This number receives about 150 000 calls a day so getting through may be a challenge...

STAY SAFE AND KEEP OTHERS SAFE