

**Acting Director General  
Department of Social Development  
Private Bag X 001  
Pretoria  
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**Attention: Mr Linton Mchunu**

**Dear Mr Mchunu**

### **REVIEW OF GRANT BENEFICIARIES FOUND ON YOUR DEPARTEMENT'S PAYROLL**

1. The purpose of this letter is to request the Acting Director General of the National Department of Social Development to assist the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) with engaging the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in respect of the matters below.
2. The Agency has written a letter informing DPSA of its intended engagements with Public Service departments and to elicit the support from DPSA to encourage public service departments (and their agencies) to cooperate with SASSA with regards to the social grants review process for grant beneficiaries found on their respective department's payroll.
3. SASSA was established in terms of the South African Social Security Agency Act, 2004 (Act No.9 of 2004). The aim of SASSA is to provide for the effective and efficient management, administration and payment of social assistance within a caring and dignified environment.
4. The Social Assistance legislation requires the Agency to review social assistance benefits from time to time to ensure that clients records are up to date and complete, that any changes in circumstances and any consequent change in benefits are corrected and, if needed, to recoup any overpayments of benefits. It is important to note, by law, it is the responsibility of the recipient to inform the Agency of any change to their circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

*"If any information supplied by a beneficiary to the Agency in an application for a grant materially changes after that beneficiary has submitted that application, he or she must as soon as is reasonably possible after that change occurs, inform the Agency thereof."*

5. Through a review process SASSA updates the personal, financial and medical information of a client. It also ensures that the record of the client is accurate, complete and current.



6. In terms of the social assistance legislation the Agency has the right to review a grant at any time where it has reason to believe that changes in the client's financial circumstances may have occurred.
7. Together with various findings from the AGSA on both the social grants as well as the Social Relief of Distress grant the Agency has found a number public servants that have benefited from social assistance, who may not have qualified. Where fraud was evident, these grants were suspended, however for the vast majority, the Agency has embarked on a review project for government officials who are in receipt of social assistance.
8. This is an ongoing project that will be conducted on an annual basis. The successful implementation of this project needs the support from government departments especially when it comes to:
  - 8.1. The review notification;
  - 8.2. Recovering of overpayments; and
  - 8.3. Management of consequences.

## 9. Assistance required from the government departments

Given the above situation, Departments will be requested to assist SASSA with the following:

- 9.1. SASSA sends out registered mail to all clients targeted for reviews to notify them of the review process, and the actions they need to take. However, in many instances, the client's records are not up to date. To this extent, SASSA would like to further strengthen this process by sending further notifications to clients through their employer. Hence assistance is needed with delivering letters to affected employees at their works stations.
- 9.2. Upon the completion of the review process the outcome of the review may be as follows and may require further action:
  - a) The client may still meet the qualifying requirements in which case the grant will remain in payment. No further action is required
  - b) The client may be found to be no longer eligible for a grant and may have been overpaid. In cases of overpayments, departments are requested to assist SASSA with:
    - 9.2.b.1. The signing of an acknowledgement of debt by the client;
    - 9.2.b.2. The institution of a payroll deduction, and payment of the agreed installments to SASSA; and
    - 9.2.b.3. Where it is deemed that the client has committed fraud, institute the necessary disciplinary action. In this case, **it would be prudent for DPSA to issue guidance to departments on how to deal with public servants who have potentially defrauded government.**
  - c) The client may not have come forward for the review process.
    - 9.2.c.1. This could be an attempt to "avoid" the review process and is a strong indicator of fraud;




- 9.2.c.2. By default, SASSA will treat these case as “fraudulent” and an investigation will be pursued;
- 9.2.c.3. Assistance from Departments’ are needed for:
  - 9.2.c.3.1. Locating/ tracing the client where they are still in their employ;
  - 9.2.c.3.2. Assisting with updated contact details of employees who may no longer be in their employment;
  - 9.2.c.3.3. Undertaking disciplinary process as per 10.2.b.3 above for employees still in their employment;
  - 9.2.c.3.4. The signing of an acknowledgement of debt by the clients still in their employment; and
  - 9.2.c.3.5. The institution of a payroll deduction, and payment of the agreed installments to SASSA.
- 9.3. Further, SASSA may request information that is necessary to process the review of a grant especially in relation to income and social contributions that is required in the calculation of means to determine eligibility for grants.
- 9.4. In addition, the AGSA has also issued a material irregularity finding against the agency with the following recommendation to be actioned within 6 months:
 

*“Appropriate action should be taken to recover payments made to ineligible beneficiaries that were working for the state at the time of applying for the grant. The recovery process should not be unduly delayed.”*
- 9.5. Thus, SASSA will also requires assistance from various departments with dealing with clients who have fraudulently applied for the COVID SRD grant of R350. **Note that no civil servant qualifies for this grant, and thus all applications are deemed as fraud.** The assistance required from departments in this regard will be similar to 9.2.c above.

The Acting Director General of the National Department of Social Development is requested to assist in engaging with DPSA to support SASSA in this project, and to pave the way for engagements with other provincial and national departments. Once obtaining the support of DPSA, it is further requested that the matter be tabled urgently before FOSAD to solicit the support of all Director Generals of National Departments to support this project.

Yours faithfully



**MS. B.J. MEMELA-KHAMBULA**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**DATE: 09/11/2022**



[ *paying the right social grant, to the right person,  
 at the right time and place. NJALO!*

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