

2023/24

# OFFICIAL GUIDE TO SOUTH AFRICA



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Social Development (DSD) provides social protection services and leads government's efforts to forge partnerships through which vulnerable individuals, groups and communities become capable and active participants in the development of themselves and society. The social development function facilitates access to social grants and welfare services to reduce poverty and inequality, protect children, and empower women, youth and people with disabilities.

Several pieces of legislation determine the department's mandate, several of which are under review, are the:

- Non-profit Organisations (NPOs) Act of 1997 establishes an administrative and regulatory framework within which NPOs can conduct their affairs, and provides for their registration by the department;
- 1997 *White Paper for Social Welfare* sets out the principles, guidelines, policies and programmes for developmental social welfare in South Africa;
- 1998 *White Paper on Population Policy for South Africa* is aimed at promoting the sustainable development of all South Africans by integrating population issues with development planning in all spheres of government and all sectors of society;
- Social Assistance Act of 2004 provides a legislative framework for the provision of social assistance. The Act and its regulations set out different types of grants payable, including those for social relief, and their qualifying criteria;
- Children's Act of 2005, as amended, gives effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, and sets out principles and processes relating to their care and protection;
- Older Persons Act of 2006 is aimed at maintaining and promoting the rights, status, well-being, safety and security of older people. It provides for older people to enjoy quality services while staying with their families and in their communities for as long as possible, and to live in residential care facilities;
- Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act of 2008 and associated regulations provide a legal framework for the establishment, registration and monitoring of in-patient treatment centres and halfway houses.

As part of the broader mix of government's social protection measures, the department provides social welfare services and social development programmes through local and regional services, and administers long-term social grants that benefit the elderly, people with disabilities, and children; and makes short-term cash transfers and in-kind support for households in distress or with insufficient means.

### **2023 Good Practice Award in Social Security for Africa**

In May 2023, the DSD won the prestigious International Social Security Association (ISSA) Good Practice Award in Social Security for Africa 2023, at the at the ISSA Regional Social Security Forum for Africa Awards Ceremony held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The Good Practice Award on the entry entitled: “Gradual extension of social security coverage to vulnerable children: The case of the Child Support Grant, South Africa”, recognises South Africa’s efforts in extending social security coverage to vulnerable children. DSD’s entry was chosen from 138 entries received from 48 member institutions in over 30 countries in Africa.

In addition, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) received two Certificates of Merit for the responsive implementation of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant for people affected by regional floods in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as the innovative implementation of the Special COVID-19 SRD in response to the advent of COVID-19.

Over the medium term, the department aimed to continue providing social welfare services and income support to the poor and most vulnerable through various social grants; reform social security and prevent fraud in the administration of social grants; minimise the impact of social ills on society; and assist in building sustainable communities to alleviate poverty.

### **Providing social welfare services and income support**

Social welfare services are provided through social service practitioners in partnership with community structures, including NPOs. Services include care and support for the elderly; child services, including the provision of places of safety, safe adoption and foster care services, and child and youth care centres; support services for people with disabilities; social behaviour change programmes; and psychosocial services, such as providing support for victims of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).

### **Reforming social security and preventing fraud**

The department aimed to complete an extensive review of social security policy. It planned to do this by ensuring that proposed reforms are implemented, given the department’s constrained resources. Accordingly, a *White Paper on Social Security* was expected to be finalised over the medium-term period.

The department aimed to strengthen its systems, including its records management system, to enhance its responsiveness in addressing social assistance appeals through the Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals. Fraud prevention is critical to ensuring the sustainable administration of social assistance. In seeking to address the debilitating effects of fraud in the administration of social grants, the department will continue to play a proactive role in helping the SASSA with its fraud prevention initiatives.

### **Mitigating social ills**

Over the medium-term period, the department aimed to continue monitoring the implementation of the intersectoral protocol on the prevention and management of violence against children, child abuse, neglect and exploitation; provide psychosocial services; and

implement social and behaviour change programmes, including life skills and awareness programmes on HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, GBVF, teenage pregnancy, gangsterism, violence against children and other forms of social crime.

The high rate of substance abuse in South Africa remains a critical concern. The department aimed to intensify education and awareness campaigns on substance abuse in collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as institutions of higher learning and civil-society organisations.

The department is a key role player in the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF, which is in place to combat GBVF. In carrying out its responsibilities as part of the strategy, over the medium term, the department intends to create capacity for stakeholders in identified hotspots to provide psychosocial services and implement an integrated sheltering policy. The purpose of these activities is to identify the different approaches required to cater for various victims, including uneducated or unemployed young women who will need to be linked to skills programmes or economic activities.

### **Building sustainable communities to alleviate poverty**

NPOs are critical partners in the delivery of social and other services. They are regulated by the NPO Act of 1997, which promotes the effective and fair regulation of NPOs. Over the medium-term period, the department planned to enhance the registration and oversight processes of NPOs by developing a policy framework, and improving the turnaround time for registrations and compliance monitoring.

The department supports the implementation of interventions that are geared towards empowering communities. This is done through strengthening capacity and creating structures that facilitate sustainable community development. Over the period ahead, the department plans to finalise a comprehensive policy for community development. As part of this, households and communities will be assisted to identify challenges as well as measures that could be put in place to strengthen capacity, solidarity and social capital in communities.

Through the programme, the department also intends to link 2% of all grant recipients to sustainable livelihood opportunities. The National Development Agency aimed to contribute towards poverty eradication by providing grants to civil-society projects that focus on the development needs of the poor.

### **Social security**

Social grants remain a vital safety net, particularly in the poorest provinces. According to Statistics South Africa's (Stats SA) General Household Survey (GHS) of 2023, the percentage of individuals that benefited from social grants steadily increased from 12,8% in 2003 to approximately 31% between 2017 and 2019 before increasing sharply to 39,4% in 2023.



This growth was tracked closely by that of households that received at least one social grant. By mid-2023, about 13,2 million recipients of the Child Support Grant and over four million of adults receiving the Old Age Grant.

The percentage of households that received at least one social grant increased relatively consistently from 30,8% in 2003 to 45,5% in 2019, before rising to 52,4% in 2020 due to the introduction of the Special SRD. The percentage of households that receive at least one grant has, since then, declined to 50,0% in 2023. The extension of the SRD Grant until March 2025 has given the DSD adequate time to finalise the Draft Policy on Basic Income Support. This formed part of its social security reforms towards establishing the comprehensive social security system envisioned in the National Development Plan.

Grant beneficiaries were most common in Eastern Cape (52,9%) and Limpopo (50,4%), and least widespread in Western Cape (24,4%) and Gauteng (26,9%). Households that received at least one type of social grant were most common in Eastern Cape (64,9%) and Free State (63,9%), and least common in Gauteng (36,6%) and Western Cape (38,6%).

The Special COVID-19 SRD Grant of R350 per month was introduced in 2020 in an attempt to offset the impact of COVID-19. Since then, the percentage of individuals in the age group 18–59 years who received the grant has increased from 5,3% in 2020 to 12,4% in 2023.

About 27,8% of all individuals and 38,9% of all households in metropolitan areas received some kind of social grant (compared to 39,4% of individuals and 50,0% of households nationally). Individual grant receipt was highest in Mangaung (41,4%), Buffalo City (38,0%) and Nelson Mandela Bay (37,0%) and lowest in Cape Town (21,7%), Tshwane (25,4%) and Ekurhuleni (26,4%).

A similar pattern is evident for households at metropolitan level. The receipt of one or more social grants was most common for households in Mangaung (59,4%) and Buffalo City (53,8%) and least common in Tshwane (33,6%), Johannesburg (35,4%), and Cape Town (36,2%).

### **National Drug Master Plan (NDMP) 2019-2024**

The NDMP (2019-2024) is a blueprint for combating the scourge of alcohol and substance abuse which has reached epidemic proportions in South Africa. The overarching goal of the NDMP is to prevent drug use before it starts, early intervention to ensure substance users receive treatment and rehabilitation services and reducing the demand for illicit drugs. Government is committed to tackling the scourge of alcohol and substance abuse in South Africa.

In this regard, the DSD has established the Central Drug Authority, a multisectoral forum to tackle the scourge of alcohol and substance abuse. It was established in terms of the Prevention for and Treatment of Substance Abuse Act of 2008 as an advisory authority with a mandate to plan, coordinate, oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NDMP.

### **Entities:**

#### **South African Social Security Agency**

The SASSA Act of 2004 provides for the establishment of the agency, whose broad objectives are to ensure the effective and efficient administration, management and payment of social assistance to qualifying beneficiaries. The agency provides social grants to eligible individuals who are unable to support themselves and their dependants.

It also provides temporary assistance to people in crisis situations such as declared and undeclared disasters, and relief for household distress such as loss of a breadwinner. Bank charges for the payment of social grants contribute to a significant portion of the agency's operational expenditure. The agency continues to make progress in increasing social grant uptake to eligible beneficiaries.

Over the MTEF period, the agency plans to automate most of its business processes. This entails streamlining its operations to ensure, among other things, that most applications for social grants are processed within five days from the current 10 days. The agency will continue to prioritise interventions such as improving its financial management system to address negative findings from internal and external audits; implementing measures to reduce the cost of administering social assistance; building management capacity to help fight fraud and corruption; and migrating to a web-based internal system.

#### **National Development Agency**

The NDA was established in terms of the NDA Act of 1998. Its primary mandate is to contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil society organisations to implement development projects in poor communities.

Over the period ahead, the agency plans to implement its turnaround strategy that was approved by its new board in July 2023. The new approach envisaged in the turnaround strategy seeks to empower impoverished communities by supporting the establishment and funding of sustainable enterprises and cooperatives to reduce poverty and reliance on social grants. The NDA planned to support and fund the establishment of 600 community-owned enterprises that will provide income to 6 000 community members over the medium-term period.

Over the next three years, the agency planned to partner with research and academic institutions to produce nine research publications and host 15 development policy dialogues to engage with relevant stakeholders.

### **Programmes and relevant bodies:**

#### **National Youth Policy (NYP)**

The NYP 2020-2030, also referred to as the NYP 2030, is a cross-sectoral policy aimed at affecting positive youth development outcomes for young people at local, provincial and national levels in South Africa. Developed by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with multiple stakeholders and young people, the policy was developed to redress the wrongs and injustices of the past and to deal decisively with the persistent as well as new and emerging challenges they are facing. The NYP 2030 defines young people as those aged between 14 and 35.

#### **Blind SA**

Blind SA is an organisation for the blind and is governed by the blind. Situated in Johannesburg, it is aligned with other member organisations throughout South Africa. The organisation provides, among other things, study bursaries for visually impaired students for further education, Braille publications in all of South Africa's official languages, Braille training that entails writing and reading, and orientation and mobility training. It equips blind people with the skills they need to fully and independently participate in society. This includes support in living without assistance, getting about, using technology, reading, working and socialising.

All this is made possible through advocacy, the Education Committee, Braille Services, orientation and mobility services and the employment programme. It is through this, and the support of donors, that Blind SA connects blind or visually impaired South Africans with the world they live in.

#### **South African Braille Authority (SABA)**

SABA is the standard setting body for and promotes and advocates for Braille and Braille-related matters in South Africa. The non-profit organisation advocates, promotes, monitors and evaluates for the ubiquitous use of Braille through literacy and the various facets and applications.

#### **South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB)**

The SANCB is a registered non-profit and public benefit organisation established in 1929 with the core objectives of advocacy and promoting the rights of persons with visual impairments, prevention, inclusion and support. As a South African national representative body for the blind, it offers a supportive, rights driven function to its nearly 80-member organisations.

The presence of its community work is felt throughout its nine provincial structures in South Africa. The SANCB also lays emphasis on the prevention of blindness and in 1944 the Bureau for the Prevention of Blindness was established.

### **Support for the hearing impaired**

The South African National Deaf Association (SANDA) provides quality services, ensuring public accessibility and increasing awareness of issues affecting Deaf people at all levels in South Africa. The mandate of SANDA is to:

- build capacity in the Deaf sector;
- influence public policies;
- set the agenda for meaningful inclusive development; and
- provide comprehensive human development services that benefit Deaf people at all levels of society.

### **Older people**

South Africa's Older Persons Act of 2006, which came into operation in 2010, recognises the importance of older persons in the country's democracy and development. Guided by the Older Persons Act of 2006 and the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing, the DSD in partnership with the departments of Health; Sport, Arts and Culture and the South African Older Persons Forum introduced the Active Ageing Programme to transform the ageing experience and empower senior citizens to stay active and engaged so that they can continue to enjoy healthy and purposeful lives.

Golden Games, which form part of the Active Ageing Programme, encourage senior citizens to be active and promote longer life for the aged. They participate in different sporting activities like soccer, athletics and a fun walk.