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SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES



A leader in the delivery of social security services.

Introduction

Social Assistance is income support in the form of grants provided by government. The grants are paid by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and include grants for older persons, disability grants, grants in aid, foster child grants, care dependency grants, child support grants and social relief of distress grants.

Documented refugees (that is refugees who have been granted formal refugee status by the Department of Home Affairs) are able to receive social assistance in the forms of social grants, provided that they meet the legislated criteria, as set in the Social Assistance Act, 2004 and the accompanying Regulations.

Qualifying Requirements

Grant for older persons

The applicant must:

- Be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee;
- Live in South Africa;
- Be older than 60 years of age;
- Together with his/her spouse, meet the requirements of the means test;
- Not be maintained or cared for in an institution wholly funded by the State; and
- Not be in receipt of another social grant for him/herself

Disability Grant

The applicant must:

- Be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee;
- Live in South Africa;
- Be aged between 18 and 59 years of age;
- Submit a medical report confirming the disability, which renders him/her unable to work;
- Together with his/her spouse, meet the requirements of the means test;
- Not be maintained or cared for in an institution wholly funded by the State; and
- Not be in receipt of another social grant for him/herself.

Grant in aid

In addition, to being in receipt of a grant for older persons or a disability grant, the applicant must be frail or disabled, to the extent that he/she required regular support and assistance by another person, to managed activities of daily living such as bathing, eating and dressing. The dependence on another must be confirmed by a medical report from a medical practitioner. A grant in aid is not paid to any social grant beneficiary who resides in an institution subsidised by the State.

Foster child grant

The applicant must:

- Be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee;
- Live in South Africa; and
- Have the child placed legally in his/her care through the Children's Court; and
- Remain the legally appointed foster parent of the child for the duration of the grant.

Care dependency Grant

The applicant must:

- Be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee;
- Live in South Africa;
- Together with his/her spouse, meet the requirements of the means test; and
- Be the primary care giver, parent or foster parent of the care dependent child.

The care dependent child must:

- Have a medical report which confirms that he/she requires and receives permanent care as a result of his/her severe disability;
- Be younger than 18 years of age; and
- Not be permanently cared for in an institution wholly funded by the State.

Child support grant

The applicant must:

- Be the primary care giver or parent of the child;
- Be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee;
- Live in South Africa;
- Together with his/her spouse, must meet the requirements of the means test;
- Not be remunerated for the care of the child;
- Ensure that the child, if aged between 7 and 18 years, attends school; and
- Remain the primary care giver of the child for the duration of the grant.

The child involved in the application must:

- Be younger than 18 years of age;
- Live with the primary care giver;
- Attend school, if aged between 7 and 18 years of age;

It should be noted that no primary care giver can receive a child support grant for more than 6 children, unless those children are his/her biological or adopted children.

Social Relief of Distress

Social relief of distress (SRD) is short term, material assistance provided to South African

citizens, permanent residents or refugees, who have experienced a crisis, which renders them unable to meet the immediate needs of themselves and their dependents. SRD is not a response to long term, chronic poverty.

In order to qualify for SRD, an applicant must:

- Be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee;
- Have insufficient means (a guideline for this is a family with a monthly income of less than R800); and
- **Meet one or more of the following criteria:**
 - o Be awaiting payment of an approved grant;
 - o Be declared medically unfit for employment for a period of less than 6 months;
 - o Not receive maintenance from a person legally obliged to pay such maintenance, and proof of efforts made to obtain the maintenance is provided;
 - o Be in a family where the breadwinner has died and application is made within 3 of the date of death;
 - o Be affected by a disaster; and
 - o Refusal to provide SRD may cause undue hardship.

No person may receive SRD and a social grant at the same time, unless the SRD is provided as a response to a disaster. Where

SRD and a grant are indeed paid for the same period, the amount received in SRD will have to be repaid (unless the SRD is issued as a response to a disaster).

SRD may be given for a maximum period of 3 months, and may, under certain circumstances, be extended for a further period of 3 month.

Means test

In order to ensure that social grants are targeted at the poorest and most vulnerable citizens, all social grants are subject to a means test. This means that every applicant must provide information related to his/her and his/her spouse's income and assets at the time of application and review.

The means test is applied to an applicant and his/her spouse regardless of the conditions under which they are married and all marriages are taken into account. This means that the means test is applied to both the applicant and his/her spouse where they are married in terms of a civil union, in or out of community of property, customary union or the tenets of any Asiatic religion.

The means test for the grant for older persons and disability grant takes both assets and income into consideration, while the means test for the care dependency and child support grants only considers income.

The means test thresholds change annually,

as the value of the grants increase. Specific information on the thresholds is available on the SASSA website, or from your nearest SASSA office.

Proof of identity

All refugees must have an official refugee identity book, issued by the Department of Home Affairs, or a valid Section 24 (3) permit confirming the refugee status.

A social grant for a refugee will be reviewed on expiry of the refugee status. No grant can continue to be paid if the refugee is no longer considered a refugee. Social grants are not paid to asylum seekers.

Where do you apply for social assistance?

Applications for social grants may be made at the SASSA office nearest to where the applicant lives. If the applicant is too old or too sick to travel to the office to apply, a family member or a friend can lodge the application on behalf of the applicant.

The application form must be completed in the presence of a SASSA official. Once the application form has been completed, and copies of all the supporting documents have been made, the applicant will be given a receipt. This receipt must be safeguarded, as it is the only proof of the application being lodged.

All applications for social grants are paid from the date of the application, if approved, with the exception of the foster child grant, which is paid from the date of the court placement.

If the application is rejected, the applicant must be informed in writing of the reasons for the rejection, and advised of the recourse available. Where an application is rejected, an applicant has the right to request SASSA to reconsider its decision. This must be done within 90 days. If the reconsidered decision is still unfavourable, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Minister of Social Development. This appeal must be done in writing within 90 days of having received the reconsidered decision, and must set out the reasons why the applicant feels the decision is incorrect.

Suspension of social grants

The following may result in the suspension of a social grant:

- Changes in the beneficiary's circumstances (financial or medical);
- Outcome of a review; or
- Failure to co-operate during a review process.

Restoration of grants

Application may be made for the restoration of a social grant, following the suspension, provided that this is done within 90 days of the last payment. Failure to apply for restora-

tion within this time frame will result in a new application having to be made, and payment will only be from the date of application.

Lapsing of social grant

A social grant will lapse under the following conditions:

- Death of the beneficiary
- Death of the child
- Where a beneficiary or child is admitted to a State institution
- If the grant is not claimed for 3 consecutive months
- If the beneficiary is no longer resident in South Africa
- If a refugee ceases to be a refugee
- Where the temporary period for which the grant was given expires
- When the child reaches the age of 18 years

Application for restoration is not applicable for lapsed grants, except where the grant is lapsed as a result of not being collected for 3 consecutive months. In this case, application for restoration must be made within 90 days of the date of last payment.

Reviews

SASSA has the right to determine the period for reviews to be conducted. This is informed by the medical condition, in the case of permanent disability grants or whether income was declared at the time of application.

Every beneficiary will be informed in writing of the date on which to review his/her grant.

Beneficiary responsibilities

Every beneficiary has the following responsibilities:

- To provide accurate and truthful information on application or review;
- To provide a current postable address on application;
- To ensure that SASSA is informed should the address or any other personal circumstances change;
- To respond to notices received from SASSA; and
- To report any fraud or corruption.

SASSA exercises a zero tolerance towards fraud and corruption. Should you wish to report any concerns, you may do so through our toll free line on the following numbers:

0800 60 10 11 or 0800 701 701



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