

To: All Media

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### **SASSA Plan Reduces SRD Grant Rejection Rates**

SASSA has experienced a rise in the number of rejection rates for the COVID-19 grant applications. This can be attributed to several factors such as a mismatch between details provided by beneficiaries and reliance on the information derived from data sets obtained from institutions such as UIF and SARS databases among others. In August there was a significant increase in the number of rejections, as SASSA implemented an additional step of means testing applications against banks. This was done to ensure that the requirement for applicants who have no income was met.

However, following an engagement with the Department of Social Development, it has been agreed to reconsider the use of the means test through the banks as a criteria to determine eligibility. This will affect the approximately 1,9 million people who have been receiving the grant to date, but who were declined in August.

The legal framework which supports the reconsideration of the use of bank means testing is being amended by the Department of Social Development and will be published within the next few days. These amendments will clarify the qualifying criteria and support SASSA in ensuring that deserving citizens do receive the support they are entitled to, for the duration of this grant.

Recently the Auditor General (AG) identified about 30 000 undeserving applicants who received the grant while not meeting the qualifying criteria as they were receiving financial support from government through other COVID-19 initiatives. In response to this finding, SASSA reviewed and strengthened its controls with regard to the evaluation of applications.

Applications are considered on their individual merits on a month to month basis, which means an application can be approved for one month and rejected the following month if, for instance, the financial situation changed. This has become more prevalent with the lockdown levels easing, allowing for some sectors of the economy to return to work, and thus reducing the number of severely distressed citizens.

Despite the reduced levels of lockdown, we are aware that the pandemic has taken its toll and many people are without an income. All applicants whose applications are declined thus have the right to appeal against the decision. Beneficiaries who have been rejected are reminded that they can send their appeals to [covid19srdappeals@sassa.gov.za](mailto:covid19srdappeals@sassa.gov.za). SASSA is currently in receipt of about 60 000 appeals which it is attending to.

Issued on behalf of the South African Social Security Agency