

Social Development recruits 1,809 social workers

The Social Development Department is boosting its capacity to assist families and communities affected by Covid-19 with the recruitment of 1,809 social workers.



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Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu made this announcement during a virtual briefing on Monday.

“As Covid-19 continues in this regard, we are recruiting an additional 1,809 social workers to reinforce the current workforce and to provide a range of social work services, including timely psychosocial interventions to support affected individuals and families,” said the Minister.

The allocation of additional social workers is as follows: Eastern Cape 171, Free State 92, Gauteng 676, KwaZulu-Natal 266, Limpopo 116, Mpumalanga 128, Northern Cape 33, North West 31, Western Cape 246.

These social workers will be employed for a period of three months, with priority given to social work graduates who registered on the department’s database of qualified unemployed social work graduates developed in 2019.

A further 1,210 unemployed social work graduates will be given a one-year internship opportunity in a joint venture between with the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), the South Africa Council for Social Service Practitioners, the Department of Social Development (DSD) and Wits Consortium.

Food distribution

To support the distribution of food to vulnerable people, the National Development Agency (NDA), has recruited and placed 580 volunteers.

In addition, 620 new volunteers will be added to increase the number of volunteers of the NDA, bringing the total number of volunteers to 1,200.

The volunteers will assist the department with food distribution, Covid-19 education and prevention, and verification of applicants for the Relief of Distress Grant.

To date, volunteers have distributed over 100,000 brochures on health and education.

Grants

With various services suspended during lockdown level 5, the DSD suspended temporary disability grants to curb the spread of Covid-19. These will now be reinstated and paid until the end of October.

The same applies to the care dependency and foster child grants that are due to lapse during the lockdown period. The payment of these reinstated grants will take place before the end of May.

“We have published regulations which give effect to the extension of temporary disability grants from the date they were suspended until the end of October this year,” said the Minister.

Movement of children

In the original plan by the department, only parents with relevant documentation signed off by the courts or empowered officials were allowed to move children between parent’s homes.

However, given the nature of co-parenting in the South Africa’s context where many families do not approach the court but rely on mutual agreements, the department amended regulations to allow parents without formal documentation to move children between co-holders of parental responsibility.

Under the new regulations, the movement of children between co-holders of parental responsibility who reside in different municipalities, or provinces is allowed provided the parent has a court order, parental responsibility and rights agreement of parenting registered with a family advocate or a permit issued by a magistrate.

“We developed this form on the basis that we realised that some of them will not be able to move if they don’t have the above documents,” said the Minister.

To obtain this permit, parents must furnish a magistrate with a birth certificate or certified copy to prove a legitimate relationship between the co-holders of the parental responsibility and written reasons on why the movement of the child is necessary.

“We have specifically made these amendments to allow any child who was not at the residence of the primary caregiver prior to the announcement of the lockdown to return to the caregiver. However, I must point out that this will be done in a once off basis which has already happened,” said Zulu.

The Minister appealed to parents who share joint custody to be reasonable and act in good faith and prioritise the health and safety of their children.

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