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EPWP participants caught off-guard by SASSA's move...

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More than 7 000 SASSA beneficiaries were temporarily suspended for failing to disclose to the agency their material and financial statuses

The North-West based South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) claim to have discovered thousands of people unduly receiving grant payments.

The bad news is, should investigation into this “anomaly” point to improper conduct on the part of beneficiaries for “non-disclosure”: SASSA warned of a recovery process of grant monies from those who “benefited unduly so”.

The first warning sign of what to expect, was the temporary suspension with effect from September 30 of 7 445 SASSA beneficiaries due to non-disclosure.

SASSA is empowered by law to recover monies that beneficiaries were not entitled to which may also lead to signing of acknowledgement of debt (AOD) with beneficiaries and respective departments and other entities.

As part on its wider investigation and verification of beneficiaries red-flagged on their systems, SASSA has also approached the department to provide:

List of interns, learnership, contract workers and Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) beneficiaries, their stipend and duration of contracts.

Also, information on the date of employment, position, salary level including notch among others.

SASSA North West said a total of 17 707 beneficiaries were found to be in receipt of four grant types and 7 445 beneficiaries “failed to disclose” as and when their material and financial circumstances changed to the better as required by legislation.

The grant types are: disability; old age; child support and care of which SASSA keeps an eye on status of beneficiaries in conducting a “means test” to determine whether they are still eligible or not.

The “means test” seeks information on asset and income thresholds of beneficiaries.

To assist those affected, a multi-disciplinary task team comprising of affected client departments was established to address the challenge.

The aim of the task team was to regularise the affected beneficiaries and assist them to comply with laws and regulations governing the disbursement of social grants and also stipends for EPWP participants.

*Meanwhile, the department has called upon on all its EPWP participants across the province, to approach their respective local districts offices to obtain letters that declare their earnings.

These letters must be submitted by all EPWP participants to their nearest SASSA offices soonest, for immediate assessments, as well as reinstatement of their suspended grants.

The majority of these EPWP participants (at over 11 000) work under the Itirele Roads Maintenance Programme of the department.

Their daily wage rate is R110.00; they work 12 days a month and earn on average a monthly wage of R1320.00.

EPWP participants, because of their wage rate- that is normal set below the national wage rate- can work whilst still eligible for SASSA Grants.

Ends

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