

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHES THE EMPLOYMENT STIMULUS RELIEF FUND FOR ECD SERVICES

Pretoria, 05 February 2021: As part of relief measures to cushion the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on the early childhood development (ECD) programmes and services, the Department of Social Development has received, from Treasury, R496 million to assist the sector.

This budget allocation is known as the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Stimulus Relief Fund (ECD-ESRF) and it is part of sustaining and creating employment opportunities in the sector in light of the high unemployment rate and job losses occasioned by the pandemic.

In response to the President's call, the National Department of Social Development developed and submitted a project proposal to National Treasury to access funding for the Presidential Employment Stimulus package for the ECD sector.

The proposal focused on four interrelated policy imperatives including:

- Employment protection in the ECD sector
- Employment creation
- Containing the spread of COVID-19
- Registration of the roll-out plan to ECD programmes

It is through this relief that ECDs will be better placed to survive the risk of facing permanent closure and be able to cover financial costs including payment of employees' salaries.

The DSD, supported by its Provincial Departments, SASSA, the NDA, DG Murray Trust, GOVchat, and the ECD Inter-Sectoral Forum together with other stakeholders, have been hard at work to develop a digital application platform and the roll out plan.

In line with the eligibility criteria, the ECD stimulus package is intended for all types of ECD programmes - including centre and non-centre-based programmes. Furthermore, organisations that run, manage or oversee multiple centre and non-centre based ECD services, may also apply.

While this funding is aimed at subsidising the cost of employment for ECD services, for ECD services that are applying, applications for support can only be made by the operator of the ECD service and not individual staff members. In other words, ECD services will be making the application on behalf of their staff, with qualifying staff including ECD practitioners, cooks, administrators and all other types of ECD employees. ECD services can only use the funds to subsidise the cost of employment for staff presently employed within the ECD service.

Only one application per ECD service can be made, as multiple applications may result in delays in processing applications. For ECD services that are applying and who are not currently operational (i.e. have not reopened owing to COVID-19), they will need to make a commitment to reopen within 60 days of receipts of funds. This is because part of the intention of this stimulus is to ensure the continuation of services in the ECD sector.

The value of the support provided through the Stimulus Package, will be a maximum of up to R4 470 per staff member, made as a once off payment given the allocation is R496 million. There

will be a limit of up to four staff members for ECD centres and up to one staff member for non-centre based ECD services that will be eligible for support. If the number of applications is more or fewer than the budget available, the Department of Social Development may review the payment amounts to the ECD services accordingly. The Department encourages all ECD services who have participated in the DSD-led Vangasali Campaign to apply for this programme.

Before making an application, applicants must ensure that they have the following in place:

- Banking account: All ECD services making an application will need to have a bank account in the name of the ECD service.
- Loaded on the Central Supplier Database (CSD): ECD services that do not currently receive funding from Provincial DSD will need to be registered on the CSD database, which can be done via this link: <https://secure.csd.gov.za/Account/Register>.
- The registration number generated from the CSD database will be required for the stimulus application.

For any enquiries and further information, ECD services may contact:

- Contact Centre: 0800 089 666
- Website: www.dsd.gov.za

The applications are opened as of 05 February 2021 and will close at 23h59 on the 19 February 2021.

The Department makes a solidarity call to the ECD sector to support this ECD-ESRF by assisting their constituents to complete the on-line application where such assistance is required. Let us stand together to “Leave no ECD Behind”

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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