

The Coronavirus CivActs Campaign captures rumours and perceptions among communities to eliminate information gaps between the government, the media, NGOs, businesses and the public. By providing the public with facts, these coronavirus bulletins aim to create a better understanding of the needs regarding coronavirus and to debunk rumours before they can do more harm.

Social Relief Measures

President Cyril Ramaphosa's reforms to support poor people over the next six months have included supplementing social grants, a new emergency grant and improved distribution of food parcels as part of the R500 billion economic and social stimulus package. In this issue, we look at the Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress grant.

The Black Sash and others have argued for the existing social net to be expanded for vulnerable families. With the hard hitting effects that Covid-19 has had on the economy, many are unable to work and have been applying for food parcels and social relief grants. Queues at food collection stations have been overwhelming, with many standing in lines overnight.



Pensioners queueing in KZN. Photo: The Witness



President Cyril Ramaphosa. Photo: GCIS

Questions & Answers

Arguments have been made that the Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress grant should be increased from R350 to R1000 for all those unemployed? What's the motivation?

It has been argued that a R350 grant is insufficient to cover food, energy sources, transport as well as the additional costs of complying with hygiene protocols during the pandemic. The monthly basket of staple foods has increased from R3,221 on 2 March to R3,474 on 23 April. The Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress grant is also lower than the food poverty line of R581 per person per month and also less than the value of the Social Relief of Distress food parcel of R1,200 per month distributed by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA).

How can distress grants be better administered?

The Black Sash and many other civil society organisations have fielded complaints from the general public who have tried without success to contact the Call Centre. SASSA and government departments delivering social security services must urgently open up their offices to respond to the social and economic relief measures as announced by President Ramaphosa, as well as to new applications for existing grants.

There are allegations of corruption in the delivery of food parcels by SASSA? What should be done to prevent this?

The South African food parcel distribution network has been plagued with allegations and reports of corruption, favouritism and patronage within the system. The transfer of cash is very likely to reduce incidents of corruption and patronage. The distribution of food parcels needs to be augmented with systemic social assistance programmes. Globally, cash transfers are being used as the preferred mechanism to remedy the economic outfall of Covid-19 nationwide lockdowns for vulnerable individuals and households. More importantly, a cash transfer system is used in comprehensive social protection programmes.

Designated Hospitals

Gauteng

Charlotte Maxeke Hospital, Parktown

Steve Biko Hospital, Pretoria

Tembisa Hospital, Tembisa

KwaZulu-Natal

Greys Hospital, Pietermaritzburg

Limpopo

Polokwane Hospital, Polokwane

Mpumalanga

Rob Ferreira Hospital, Nelspruit

Northern Cape

Kimberley Hospital, Kimberley

North West

Klerksdorp Hospital, Klerksdorp

Eastern Cape

Livingstone Hospital, Port Elizabeth

Free State

Pelonomi Hospital, Bloemfontein

Western

Cape

Tygerberg Hospital, Cape Town

Useful Numbers

- GBV Command Centre: 0800 428 428 / *120*7867#
- Persons with disabilities, SMS 'help' to 31531
- Women Abuse Helpline: 0800 150 150
- Child line: 0800 055 555SAPS
- Crime Stop: 0860 10111 / SMS Crime Line: 32211
- National AIDS Helpline: 0800 012 322
- Suicide Helpline: 0800 567 567
- National Department of Health:
[jhhttps://www.health.gov.za](https://www.health.gov.za)
- National Institute of Communicable Diseases:
<https://www.nicd.ac.za>
- Coronavirus Hotline: 0800 029 999
- No data no problem: <https://coronavirus.datafree.co>