

Reinstatement of R350 Covid-19 Grant Welcomed As A Start

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It has been a tough few months for the unemployed since the government ended the R350 COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant at the end of April 2021. Even though the R350 grant is very little it made a change in many people's lives and the food riots that rocked Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal more than two weeks ago (9-13 July) raised very clearly the poverty and starvation experienced by millions of citizens.

On the evening of 25 July, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the COVID-19 SRD grant would be reinstated until March 2022 and would be processed by the South African Social Services Agency (SASSA). He also stated that women who receive the Child Support Grant will now be able to receive the COVID-19 SRD grant as well.

Ernest (32), from Eldorado Park, is currently unemployed, and is one of the people who survived from the R350 grant. He said that he is very happy that the president has reinstated the R350 grant as he really depended on it. Ernest also mentioned that he managed to start a small takkie ('sneaker' shoe) cleaning business with the R350 that he got.

"I bought my cleaning detergents from that money in order to keep the business going but after the president stopped the R350 grant the business started going slow as I couldn't afford to buy the things that helped me to keep my business going," Ernest said.

"The R350's played a major role in our life as with the little I made from the business I could provide for myself and my family. I am very happy that it is going to be reinstated, now we can continue to make a living with the little that we get. The R350's are very little but some of us contend with it as it puts bread on the tables of our loved ones."

"I do pray that one day when government is honest and truthful they can increase the unemployment grant to at least a R1000 per family, as food and clothing is really expensive and survival is becoming every day hard and tougher," Ernest concluded.

Rene'e (not her real name) is an unemployed 39-year-old mother of two who is also really happy that the R350 has been reinstated; "[even] the little that it is, I'm grateful for it as it makes a difference in the house."

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