

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY (SASSA)**

10-12-2024

Update: SASSA National Bargaining Forum (SNBF)

SASSA Business Process Re-Engineering (BPR) Project

As previously reported, SASSA had initiated a re-engineering project aimed at streamlining operations by reducing the number of regions from nine to five, closing Records Management Centres (RMCs), and eliminating district offices. This project, implemented in four phases, would have resulted in significant migration of staff across offices and roles. The process was under consultation at the SNBF, where the new structure and migration principles were discussed. At a recent meeting, the employer reported a decision to discontinue the BPR project with immediate effect. Upon questioning by the PSA, the employer clarified that the discontinuation means the project has been suspended, following an instruction by the now-suspended Chief Executive Officer. The PSA welcomed this decision and further demanded that the employer must issue an internal memo to all staff, formally communicating the suspension of the BPR project. The employer has committed to circulating this memo to ensure clarity and transparency for employees. The PSA will continue to monitor developments closely and ensure that members remain informed of any updates regarding the BPR project.

Post-retirement medical benefits for SASSA employees

The PSA previously raised concerns regarding the exclusion of certain SASSA employees from the post-retirement medical benefit. The employer has since acknowledged that this exclusion was incorrect, affirming that all employees are entitled to this benefit. To address the issue, the employer engaged with relevant stakeholders, including the Department of Public Service and Administration, National Treasury, and the Government Employees Pension Fund. These engagements concluded that the benefit should indeed be extended to excluded employees. However, the employer emphasised that proper channels and processes must be followed, including compliance with budgetary allocations and legislative requirements governing public finance. As an interim measure, SASSA has allocated approximately R3 million to pay former employees who qualify for the benefit. The employer reported that a submission for approval has been routed to the Chief Financial Officer's office. It was also noted that 27 former employees have already been identified as eligible for this benefit. The PSA sought clarity on plans to ensure that all future retirees will receive the benefit. The employer committed to conducting analyses during each cycle to identify the number of qualifying employees. The PSA welcomed this progress and will continue monitoring the implementation to ensure all eligible employees benefit.

Increase: Agency Fee

An Agency Fee Agreement, concluded by the SNBF in 2017, allows for the deduction of an agency fee from all employees in the scope of the SNBF who are not members of any recognised trade union.

The agreement stipulates that the agency fee may be adjusted to a maximum amount equivalent to the highest subscription fee of the recognised trade unions. Following recent deliberations, parties resolved to increase the agency fee to R107, effective 1 January 2025, in compliance with the provisions of the agreement.

REQUEST FOR MANDATES: Draft agreement to vary BCEA overtime provisions

As previously reported, SASSA developed a draft agreement aimed at varying the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA)* provisions on overtime to address specific operational needs. The draft agreement applies to employees in the General Support Services Unit, those assisting with bereavement-related transport (as per the SASSA Bereavement Policy), and those monitoring weekend deep-cleaning activities. This adjustment will enable these employees to work overtime beyond the BCEA limits of three hours per day or ten hours per week, ensuring they are appropriately compensated for the additional hours worked. The agreement is designed to provide lawful and fair payment for extended overtime arising from operational demands. Whilst it will primarily apply to those involved in bereavement-related transport and deep-cleaning activities, all other SASSA employees will continue to be governed by the standard overtime provisions under the BCEA. Employees affected by the agreement stand to benefit from financial recognition for the additional hours they work in meeting operational requirements. The PSA previously requested members to provide input on this draft agreement, but no responses were received to date.

Members are therefore requested to study the *attached* draft agreement and provide their mandates on whether the PSA should sign or not sign the agreement. The deadline for submissions is 13 December 2024. Feedback should be sent to aubrey.mabotsa@psa.co.za. Your input is essential to ensure that the PSA effectively represents your interests. The PSA remains committed to advocating for fair labour practices and ensuring that members receive due recognition for their work.

Review: Full-Time Shop Stewards Agreement

Members will recall that the PSA initiated a review of the Full-Time Shop Stewards Collective Agreement and circulated the proposed amendments through an *Informus* to solicit input from members. Numerous contributions were received, which will be submitted through the PSA's mandating process. At a recent meeting, the employer indicated its willingness to accept the amendments proposed by the PSA and expressed readiness to proceed with signing the amended agreement. The PSA committed to consolidating all member inputs and will provide feedback after further engagement with the employer. To address the matter conclusively, parties agreed to convene a Special Strategic National Bargaining Forum (SNBF) meeting on 17 January 2025. The PSA remains committed to ensuring that the concerns and interests of members are adequately represented. Members will be informed of developments and outcomes from upcoming discussions.

Compliance with PSCBC Resolution 3/2009

As members are aware, the PSA is actively monitoring the employer's compliance with PSCBC Resolution 3/2009 through discussions at the SNBF. At a recent meeting, the employer reported that 39 employees currently qualify for grade progression and that payments for these employees are expected to be finalised by end of December 2024. The employer requested that this item be removed from the SNBF agenda, citing the planned completion of all payments to deserving employees.

Whilst the PSA acknowledged the progress, it insisted that the item should remain on the agenda until all eligible employees have received their payments in full. The PSA remains committed to ensuring that all employees entitled to grade progression are compensated and will continue to monitor this matter closely.

Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website, send an email to ask@psa.co.za, or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER