

## UIF reaches out to domestic workers, farm labourers

The Department of Employment and Labour has begun efforts to reach domestic workers and farm labourers to enable them to benefit from the Covid-19 relief scheme.



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The scheme is part of a basket of government-wide services aimed at ensuring that the worst effects of the coronavirus pandemic are mitigated. The Department's relief fund has already paid out billions of rands to workers who may not have received a salary as a result of the lockdown.

In a statement, Employment and Labour Minister, Thulas Nxesi, said: "Society is judged by how it tries to take care of the most vulnerable in its midst. This is why government in general and the Department of Employment and Labour in particular, are doing everything in their power to shield the most vulnerable from the worst of the pandemic.

Since the lockdown was announced, the Department, through the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), has handed out almost R11-billion in benefits to workers through employers.

"We have appealed to employers, especially those who employ domestic workers and farm labourers, to apply on their behalf so that they are not left wanting.

“We sincerely hope that employers, especially in these two sectors heed our call. We have also enlisted the help of a private company which is helping us trace these workers through their cell phones so that they are aware of the benefit and either get the employers to claim on their behalf or reach out to the UIF themselves,” said the Minister.

Private company, Interfile, has offered to run the SMS service to these sectors at no cost to UIF. The department is currently working on the database it has, to try and reach these workers.

According to Department records, at least 91,406 domestic workers are on the database - however, only 2,968 (3%) have their cell numbers listed and only 25,518 (28%) have emails.

“We appeal to employers of domestic workers, those who may have difficulties paying them, to ensure that they access these services as soon as possible. The disbursements from UIF could also act as top-up for reduced salaries and these are necessary for our mothers and sisters as they really need the break,” said Minister Nxesi.

So far, the Fund has disbursed just under R12 billion (R11,915,612,569.90) through 167,524 employers and benefitted 2,092,774 workers. A total of R155,481,810 has been paid to 56,641 workers through bargaining councils representing 909 employers.

The fund continues to pay ordinary benefits amounting to R1,664,959,589.24 for 184,207 recipients since 26 March 2020, broken down as follows:

- R1,331,967,671.39 for unemployment benefits for 147,366 individuals
- R249,743,938.38 maternity benefits for 27,631 recipients
- R49,948,948,787.67 for 5,526 dependants
- R33,299,191.78 for 3,684 recipients for illness and adoption

For further information, anyone can log on to [www.uifecc.labour.gov.za/covid19](http://www.uifecc.labour.gov.za/covid19) or reach the UIF on the toll-free number 0800 030 007.

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