

TO ALL MEDIA/ NEWS EDITORS
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NYDA AND NSFAS TO SIGN GROUNDBREAKING MOU TOWARDS 2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

Today, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) is proud to announce a new strategic partnership with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). This collaboration, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), marks a significant commitment to expanding educational and development opportunities for young people across South Africa, with a dedicated focus on those in rural areas, townships, and informal settlements.

This partnership is a direct response to the critical skills gap and persistent inequality that hinder youth advancement. Data from the NYDA's Jobs Programme highlight that the majority of young people reside in rural areas and many do not possess a matric qualification. In response, the NYDA has initiated this partnership with NSFAS to align efforts, combine resources, and redirect young people toward opportunities in institutions of higher learning.

Key Pillars of the Collaboration

The MOU establishes a framework for action built on several key pillars:

- **Decentralised Access:** To bring services closer to young people, NSFAS will leverage the NYDA's national footprint. NYDA offices, particularly those in rural, township, and informal settlement areas, will serve as walk-in support centres for NSFAS applications, ensuring vital funding services are accessible to all.
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Recognising that connectivity should not be a barrier to education, the NYDA and NSFAS are exploring partnerships with telecommunications providers. This initiative aims to ensure reliable online application processes, even in the most remote locations.
- **Expanding Educational Pathways:** To address the current imbalance in applications, the partnership will actively promote greater awareness and support for funding opportunities at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, creating a more diverse and skilled future workforce.
- **Solving Student Accommodation:** The organisations will collaborate on developing sustainable, innovative solutions to the student accommodation crisis, with the NYDA contributing directly to ongoing policy development in this critical area.

The partnership reflects the current NYDA Board's unwavering focus on inclusivity and equitable access to essential youth services. By working closely with NSFAS, the NYDA aims to ensure that financial aid, development support, and educational access extend beyond urban centres, reaching every young person, no matter where they live.

The NYDA Executive Chairperson, Dr Sunshine Myende, says this partnership marks a pivotal moment in building a more inclusive and prosperous future for all South African youth.

"This MOU is more than a formal agreement. It is a commitment to ensuring that no young person is left behind, regardless of their location. Through this collaboration, we are opening doors not just to funding, but to opportunity, development, and ultimately dignity," says Dr Myende.

The NYDA reaffirms its unwavering commitment to building a South Africa where every young person can thrive. This partnership with NSFAS is a cornerstone of our strategic mission to foster holistic youth development.

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