

## **Public Works dept allocates R5.2m in student bursaries**

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By: Anine Kilian (Contributing Editor Online)

The Department of Public Works (DPW) on Friday handed bursaries worth R5.2-million over to 40 learners who are going to pursue built environment studies at various universities across the country. Each bursary is valued at R130 000 and covers tuition, accommodation, meals, textbooks, academic resources and a monthly allowance.

The bursary programme forms part of the department's seven-year turnaround strategy to identify and harness scarce skills in the built environment. Speaking at the bursary handover ceremony on Friday, Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi noted that the programme highlighted the department's mandate and contribution to socioeconomic impact and change.

"Money spent on the education of our children is not simply another expenditure and a drain on the fiscus. Rather, it must be seen as an investment in the lives of the learners, in the economy and in the future wellbeing of society as a whole," he said. The department has been managing and cofunding the bursary programme in collaboration with the Construction, Education and Training Authority since 2014.

"The department's investment shows its deep commitment to the development of young people. It also emphasises the important role that it plays as one of the most critical government departments tasked with maintaining and managing the State's immovable assets and infrastructure," Nxesi noted.

Bursary holders will join the DPW's candidacy programme upon graduation from university and will work for the department for a period equivalent to the number of years for which they received a bursary. He added that this was mutually beneficial; the graduates move immediately into employment and the candidacy stage of their careers, while the department receives much-needed skills.

The aspiring university students will seek to pursue careers in civil, structural, transport, electrical, mechanical, chemical and hydrology engineering. Other bursary recipients will pursue training in construction management, quantity surveying, architecture, landscape architecture, urban and regional planning, water care, property studies, interior design and horticulture.

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