

ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF



DATE OF INITIATION: 27 APRIL 2020

ASSISTANCE BULLETIN NUMBER: 05-2020

NAME OF DISASTER: CORONAVIRUS (COVID -19)

SUBJECT: EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY TO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AND U.S. ARMY RESERVE SOLDIERS WHO ACTIVATED IN SUPPORT OF COVID-19 RELIEF EFFORTS

1. REFERENCES:

- a. Army Regulation 930-4, dated 5 May 2019
- b. Army Emergency Relief Section Reference Manual (SRM), Chapter 2, dated 15 October 2019

2. **APPLICABILITY:** These instructions apply to all Army AER Sections

3. PURPOSE:

This bulletin provides expanded eligibility for AER assistance to Title 32 Army National Guard (ARNG) and Title 10 U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Soldiers activated in support of COVID-19 relief efforts. The eligibility period is while activated and up to 30 days after the activation; thereby, suspending the requirement to be on Title 10 orders for 30 consecutive days.

4. ELIGIBILITY:

Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve on Title 10 or 32 orders in support of COVID-19 relief efforts.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. HQ AER Assistance Section.

- 1) Establish Special Event Code (STAT A) for assistance request and inform AER Sections.
- 2) Establish secure portal instructions for AER Officers to send and receive application information from ARNG and USAR Leaders, Soldiers and Families.
- 3) Upon notification by AER Section, review assistance requests and process EFT transactions in coordination with the HQ AER Accounting Section in a timely manner.
- 4) Provide weekly reports on the number of ARNG and USAR Soldiers and Families assisted under the established STAT A Code.
- 5) Receive feedback from AER Sections on any procedural improvements that are required.

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b. HQ AER Accounting Section.

- 1) Process EFT transactions in a timely manner upon receipt of signed AER Form 52 (AER check and Promissory Note) and completes AER Form 575, AER Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization Form.
- 2) Provide feedback to the Assistance Section of any rejected EFT transactions and reason.

c. HQ AER Loan Management Section.

- 1) Establish repayment schedule IAW AER Form 52 by allotment or EPAY using bank information provided on AER Form 575.
- 2) Ensure repayment ends 60-days prior to ETS (Active/AGR), Title 10/32 period of service (Guard/Reserve).
- 3) Contact applicant, chain of command and AER Officer for repayment issues (i.e. account closed, payment disputed, etc.).
- 4) Monitor and report delinquent loan payments by installation to Director, AER.
- 5) Execute collection actions on loans past due 30 plus days.

6. PROCEDURE:

a. Routing of assistance requests:

All **COVID and Non-COVID-19** assistance requests for ARNG and USAR Soldiers activated in support of COVID-19 relief efforts will be routed through the Company Commander, First Sergeant or Military Technician for review and concurrence.

b. ARNG or USAR Soldier or eligible Family Member with Special Power of Attorney (SPOA).

- 1) Inform Company Commander, First Sergeant or Military Technician of the basic living expense or personal transportation need.
- 2) Electronically forward AER application information and supporting documentation listed below in paragraph 6 c(9) below to the Unit COC or Military Technician for review, validation and signature.

c. Company Commander, First Sergeants or Military Technicians (ARNG /USAR) if required IAW paragraph 6 (a) above:

- 1) Verify a valid financial need exists by executing steps 2 and 3 below.
- 2) Review Soldier and Spouse (if applicable) income sources and complete AER Form 57, Budget Planning Sheet (BPS) to determine the overall financial situation.
- 3) If AER assistance is required, review billing statements for basic living expenses and/or personal transportation needs to verify amounts needed.
- 4) Ensure Soldier completes AER Form 770, Application for AER Assistance, Exception to Policy for eligibility, itemizing specific needs in block 24.
- 5) After Soldier complete AER Form 770, review, date and sign the application in blocks 29 (a-h).
- 6) Ensure Soldier complete AER 575, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization Form.

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- 7) **Certify the Soldier is in “good standing” and has at least 24 months remaining on his/her reserve component commitment. A certifying statement is required to be written in block 29b of AER Form 770.**
- 8) Contact the nearest Army AER Section, or other service Military Aid Society (Air Force, Navy/Marine Corps or Coast Guard) for application processing instructions based on social distancing guidelines, if within a 50-mile commuting radius.
- 9) Forward the AER application with supporting documentation to the nearest AER Section or Military Aid Society Office for evaluation and assistance consideration, if applicable:
 - Completed AER Form 770, Application for Financial Assistance, Exception to Policy for Eligibility
 - Completed AER Form 57, AER Budget Planning Sheet (BPS)
 - Completed AER Form 575, AER Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization
 - Leave and Earning Statement (LES) and other earning statements for the Soldier and Spouse, as applicable.
 - Billing statements / estimates for basic living expenses and/or personal transportation needs.
 - Orders for current period of service specifying activation for COVID-19 support.
 - Trustee approval letter (if under bankruptcy)
 - Special Power of Attorney (SPOA) or Allotment Authorization (AER Form 55) when a Spouse with SPOA is requesting assistance on the Soldiers behalf when unavailable.
- 10) If outside of a 50-mile commuting radius of any military installation Soldiers and Leaders should request a secure DoD Safe link to transmit application information by emailing covidrelief@aerhq.org. Upon receipt of the link, the AER application and all supporting documentation should be sent to covidrelief@aerhq.org for review, evaluation and assistance decision.

NOTE: a. Unit Leaders, Soldiers and Family members will ensure documents containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) are only transmitted electronically through a secure means i.e. encrypted email, DoD Safe secure portal or other secure means.

b. A secure link can be requested from the local AER Officer or HQ AER to securely transmit documents containing PII.

d. AER Officers.

- 1) Receive, evaluate and process ARNG and USAR Soldier assistance requests for basic living and transportation needs in accordance with these guidelines.
- 2) Ensure widest dissemination of these instructions to Company, Battery and Troop levels at respective Posts, Camps and Stations.
- 3) Provide instructions on how to process AER assistance request electronically in accordance with these guidelines when “face to face” interaction is restricted for AER Staff members.
- 4) Upon request from ARNG and USAR Soldiers and Leaders, send a secure link to **SEND** and **RECEIVE** application data securely via the DoD Safe portal.

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- 5) Assist ARNG and USAR Soldiers and Leaders as necessary to verify costs for valid basic living and transportation needs.
- 6) Input the following case information in netFORUM:
 - a. Enter the appropriate request category and sub-category.
 - b. Enter STAT A Code “**COVID-19 EFT**” when funds will be disbursed via EFT.
 - c. Enter STAT A Code “**COVID-19 Check**” when funds will be disbursed locally by check.
- 7) Verify that client banking information is correct on AER Form 575 when funds will be disbursed via EFT.
- 8) Upload signed AER Form 575 into the “Case documents” icon in the Assistance Case Profile.
- 9) When uploading multiple documents ensure AER Form 575 is titled in the following format: “**AER Form 575 - Case ID**”
- 10) Send EFT email notification for **ARNG and USAR** requests to covidrelief@aerhq.org and include the following:
 - a. CASE ID on the subject line and in the body of the email message.
 - b. The client’s preferred email address in the body of the email message.
 - c. Recommended repayment terms in the body of the email message.

7. GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- a. Assistance will be provided as Loan, Grant or combination of both (GROAN).
- b. Assistance will only be considered for the basic living expense and personal transportation needs listed below.

Basic Living Expenses

- Rent, initial deposit, mortgage
- Temporary lodging due to homelessness
- Utilities
- Food

Personal Transportation

- Maintenance and repair of a car
- Monthly car payment
- Insurance and deductible
- Rental vehicle (due to repair or emergency)
- Fuel

- c. Repayment can be deferred for 60 days to allow time for receipt of pay and allowances.
- d. Repayment of a loan will not exceed 24 months, except when approved by HQ AER. Loan must be repaid prior to the end of the reserve commitment or within 24 months after the first scheduled repayment, whichever comes first.
- e. AER Form 57, Budget Planning Sheet (BPS) is required for all requests.

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- f. Soldiers who finds themselves in a situation where repayment of a loan is causing a financial hardship should contact HQ AER for further guidance.

8. MANDATORY DOCUMENTS:

- a. AER Form 770, Application for AER Assistance, Exception to Policy for Eligibility
- b. AER Form 57, Budget Planning Sheet (BPS)
- c. AER Form 575, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization Form
- d. Leave and Earning Statement (LES) and other earning statements for the Soldier and Spouse as applicable
- e. Copies of billing statements and cost estimates
- f. **Orders for current period of service specifying activation for COVID-19 support**
- g. **ARNG and USAR Soldiers will require a certification statement on AER Form 770 (Block 29b) from the Unit Technician or Company Commander/First Sergeant validating the Soldier is in "good standing" and has at least 24 months remaining on his/her reserve component commitment.**
- h. Trustee approval letter (if under bankruptcy)
- i. Special Power of Attorney (AER Form 53 or civilian equivalent) or Allotment Authorization (AER Form 55) when Soldier is not available.

9. **This AER Bulletin remains in effect until 31 December 2020 unless rescinded earlier by HQ AER.**

10. The point of contact for the bulletin is Ms. Danna Butterfield at 1-866-878-6378 / email: danna.butterfield@aerhq.org or CSM(R) Charles Durr, (703) 601-2771 / email: charles.durr@aerhq.org.

11. If you require additional guidance or have specific questions during non-business hours please contact an HQ AER caseworker through the Army Operations Center at 703-697-0218.

C. Eldon Mullis

C. ELDON MULLIS

COL, USA, Retired

Deputy Director and Chief Operating
Officer

Enclosures:

AER Form 770, Application for Financial Assistance, Exception to Policy for Eligibility (Fillable)

AER Form 57R, AER Budget Planning Sheet (Fillable)

AER Form 575, AER Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization (Fillable)

DoD Safe Instructions