

ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF



REVISION DATE: 27 FEBRUARY 2021

ADDENDUM TO ASSISTANCE BULLETIN NUMBER: 14-2020

DATE OF ORIGINAL BULLETIN: 5 NOVEMBER 2020

SUBJECT: AER OFFICER GUIDANCE – COVID CHILD CARE RELIEF PROGRAM, UPDATE # 2

**CHANGE / MODIFICATION: REVISION OF INTENT, ELIGIBILITY AND GENERAL GUIDELINES.
EFFECTIVE 27 FEBRUARY 2021, THIS IS A GRANT ONLY CATEGORY OF ASSISTANCE**

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 Headquarters AER, Army AER Sections, American Red Cross (ARC) and Other Military Aid Society (OMAS) offices.

3. BACKGROUND

Refer to AER Assistance Bulletin 14-2020, dated 5 November 2020.

4. PURPOSE

ADDS.

CATEGORY INTENT

- The category is intended to assist eligible Army parents (**Single or Married**) with unforeseen childcare expenses where COVID reduced capacity of CDC's, Childcare providers, or changed school options. The intent for this program is to assist with these unbudgeted expenses caused by the COVID pandemic.
- This category is focused on dependent children 12 years of age and under.
- **DEPENDENT CHILD:** A dependent child is defined as a family member who is listed in DEERS.

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- This is a “**Needs Based**” category of assistance. “**Needs Based**” means an unbudgeted / unforeseen Childcare expense that is caused by the COVID pandemic and prevents the Soldier from being able to afford Childcare.

5. ELIGIBILITY

ADDS.

- a. Soldiers **Retired from Active Duty because of longevity** and their eligible Family Members;
- b. **Retired Army Reserve and National Guard** Soldiers receiving retired pay and their eligible Family Members;
- c. **Medically Retired** Soldiers and their eligible Family Members, including both those placed on the Permanent Disability Retired List (PDRL) or Temporary Disability Retirement List (TDRL);
- d. **Surviving Spouses** of Soldiers who died while on Active Duty (including those on Title 10 Orders) or in an eligible Retired status;
- e. Title 10, Title 32, and TPU Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers **activated in support of COVID relief efforts**.

6. REVISED GENERAL GUIDELINES

ADDS.

- a. Assistance will be provided as a **“Needs Based” Grant**.
- b. The Spouse of an Army Sponsor must be employed (minimum 16 hours per week / “In-Office” or “Remote”) or currently pursuing a college degree (minimum of 6 credit hours) or pursuing a professional licensure or certification (minimum of 16 hours per week).
- c. **Supporting documentation such as copies of pay stubs to verify work hours and a school schedule verifying enrollment is required.**
- d. The Spouse of an Army Sponsor who is re-joining the workforce following a COVID-induced period of unemployment may also be assisted while waiting for pay and entitlements to start. **Supporting documentation such as a Job Offer letter to verify employment and work hours is required.**
- e. Applicant must provide proof of the unforeseen childcare need i.e. proof of childcare center closure, reduction in capacity and hours as validated by the local military or civilian Childcare Center. **Supporting documentation examples are: Waitlist verification; Statement of Non-availability from on-post Childcare Center; Childcare Center notices of closure, reduced capacity or reduced hours; School closure notices and School option selection with projected receipt for unbudgeted childcare expenses as a result of COVID school closures and/or selected option.**

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- f. Childcare assistance **may be considered** for the following:
1. Before and After School Care
 2. Childcare at a Day/Child Care Facility, Nursery School or Private Licensed Sitter
 3. Private Licensed caregiver for an Exceptional Family Member

NOTE: It is the Parent's responsibility to verify that the civilian Child Care Center or Private Family Childcare Provider i.e. (In-home) is properly credentialed (State and/or National accreditation) to provide childcare.

- g. Childcare assistance **will not be considered** for the following:
1. Overnight Camps
 2. Childcare to attend private events
 3. Childcare to attend personal events
 4. Late payment fees
 5. Tuition for Kindergarten or Grade School
- h. This is a reimbursable category of assistance. Soldiers are required to provide receipts for Childcare expenses paid. AER will reimburse Soldiers for valid expenses.
- i. Soldiers may present receipts and be reimbursed retroactively from 6 November 2020.
- j. **By exception** Soldiers may be assisted “**up front**” for this category of assistance when they do not have the financial means to pay Childcare expenses in advance.
- k. Listed below are some unique circumstances that may be considered. These are only examples of some unique circumstances where Childcare assistance may be needed, however exceptions are not limited only to these circumstances.

The intent is to provide maximum flexibility for AER Officers consideration.

1. Any situation where it is impractical to leave a child or eligible dependent Unsupervised regardless of age i.e. Autism, Downs Syndrome, etc.
2. An immediate emergency medical situation involving the Soldier or Spouse that requires immediate short-term childcare and it is not feasible for either parent to provide care.
3. Spouses of Soldiers who are geographically unavailable (i.e. deployed, TDY, etc.) for short-term hourly childcare when seeking employment, i.e. a scheduled employment interview or testing, etc.
4. EFMP Respite Care up to 4 hours per months as verified by the EFMP Manager that Army Funds are unavailable.

NOTE: Although this is a Grant category a Budget Planning Sheet (BPS) is required to be completed. A review of the completed BPS provides the AER Officer a sense of whether additional assistance is required or if there are financial mismanagement indicators that would prompt a referral for financial counseling. Regardless of the budget surplus or deficit, assistance

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will be provided as a grant if the “Needs Based” criteria is met.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

No Change.

8. PROCEDURE

No Change.

9. MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

ADDS.

- a. Receipts for Childcare expenses
- b. Other supporting documentation to validate the need, as required

10. This bulletin will remain in effect until rescinded by HQ AER.

11. Points of contact for this bulletin are:

- Assistance Section - SGM(R) Glen Wellman or CSM(R) Charles Durr at (571) 389-7137/ Extension #1 or via email at assistance@aerhq.org.
- Loan Management Section - SGM(R) William Hagzan at (571) 389-7137/Extension #2 or via email at repayments-allotments@arehq.org.

12. If additional guidance is required during non-business hours, please contact an HQ AER caseworker through the Army Operations Center at (703) 697-0218.

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