

ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1 OCTOBER 2023

ASSISTANCE BULLETIN NUMBER: 02-2021-1, CHANGE #2

SUBJECT: CAREER SKILLS SUPPORT PROGRAM (CSSP) POLICY CHANGE



1. REFERENCES.

- a. Army Regulation 930-4, dated 5 May 2019
- b. Army Emergency Relief Section Reference Manual (SRM), Chapter 2, dated 1 January 2023

2. **BACKGROUND.** On 1 December 2021, HQ AER officially implemented the LTG (Retired) Nathaniel R. Thompson Career Skills Support Program (CSSP) Army-wide. Since implementation AER has disbursed \$4.8M to more than 6,100 transitioning Soldiers to assist in their successful preparation for life after the Army in the civilian workforce. The Program's flexibility and wide range of options allow Soldiers of all interests, ambitions, and background to develop the skills, credentials, and knowledge to successfully find employment and continue serving their country as private citizens.

3. **PURPOSE.** This AER Bulletin announces a change in policy guidance when providing AER assistance to eligible Soldiers who have been approved for participation in the Army Career Skills Program. HQ AER recently conducted a review of the CSSP, and an adjustment is required to re-balance major AER grant programs to be aligned with current revenue generation (Donations).

4. **APPLICABILITY.** The provisions of this policy change are applicable to all AER Sections and the American Red Cross (ARC).

5. **POLICY CHANGE.** Effective 1 October 2023, the AER Career Skills Support Program (CSSP) will change as follows:

- a. **Local CSP:** Soldiers stationed in CONUS who are participating in a CSP with an approved administrative absence on or near (within 50-miles) of their installation of assignment, may be provided a **Grant up to \$250** (*formerly \$500*).
- b. **Non-Local CSP:** Soldiers stationed in CONUS who are participating in a CSP with an approved administrative absence more than 50 miles away from their installation of assignment, may be provided a **Grant up to \$500** (*formerly \$1000*).
- c. **OCONUS CSP:** Soldiers stationed OCONUS with an approved administrative absence to participate in a CONUS CSP (United States) **OR** stationed CONUS (United States) and approved for OCONUS CSP may be provided a **Grant up to \$1,000** (*formerly \$2000*).

ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF

- d. **Field Grade Officers (O-4 and above) are no longer authorized AER CSP assistance.**

6. ELIGIBILITY.

Regular Army, Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers on Title 10 orders are eligible for AER CSP assistance when the criteria below are met:

- a. Must be transitioning from Active-Duty service with an honorable discharge.
- b. Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers must be on Title 10 orders throughout the CSP.
- c. Must be within 180 days of separation or retirement.
- d. Must have completed SFL TAP Career Readiness Standards requirements (**5 Day mandatory workshops**).
- e. Must complete CSP Soldier Participation Memorandum that includes Field Grade Officer approval for participation in the CSP; minimum Battalion / O5 level concurrence.
- f. Must have a CSP Program Coordinator Memorandum that identifies valid financial needs associated with the CSP. Lease Agreements and estimates should accompany this memorandum, if the request exceeds the dollar cap.

7. GENERAL GUIDELINES.

- a. Assistance will be provided not earlier than 180 days prior to the scheduled discharge date.
- b. Assistance may be considered for the following expenses:
 - (1) Travel costs to training location (i.e., airfare, fuel, rental car, train, taxi, etc.)
 - (2) Uniforms and business attire
 - (3) Tools and supplies (to include laptops / computers)
 - (4) Temporary lodging when barracks space is unavailable
 - (5) Initial Rent and Deposit at new job location
 - (6) Utility Deposits (Electricity, Gas, Internet, Water, Trash and Sewer) at new job location.
 - (7) Food
- c. No Budget Planning Sheet (BPS) is required when requesting assistance at or under the prescribed limits as stated in paragraph 5(a-c). A BPS is only required when the requested amounts exceed the prescribed dollar caps. A review of the completed BPS provides the AER Officer with a sense of whether there are

ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF

financial management indicators that would prompt referral for financial counseling.

8. **PROCEDURE.** No Change

9. **MANDATORY DOCUMENTS.**

- a. AER FORM 101, Application for AER Assistance
- b. AER Form 57, Budget Planning Sheet (BPS) (only if request exceeds dollar caps)
- c. AER Form 575, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization Form for Zelle/ACH transactions, as applicable
- d. Leave and Earning Statement (LES) and other earning statements for Soldier and/or Spouse, as applicable
- e. Soldier Participation Memorandum
- f. AER CSSP Memorandum
- g. Documentation to support and validate the financial need (only if request exceeds dollar caps)

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

11. Points of contacts for this bulletin are as follows:

- Assistance Section - CSM(R) Scott Wilder or CSM(R) Charles Durr at (571) 389-7137/ Extension #1 or via email at assistance@aerhq.org.

12. If additional guidance is required during non-business hours, please contact the HQ AER "After Hours" caseworker toll free at 1-866-878-6378 and enter extension 1942. When you enter extension 1942, the call will route directly to an HQ AER "After Hours" Caseworker.

Encls

CSSP Fact Sheet, effective:
1 October 2023

C. Eldon Mullis

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