

# ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF



DATE: 14 JANUARY 2025

DISASTER ASSISTANCE BULLETIN NUMBER: 01-2025

DISASTER EVENT: CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES (LOS ANGELES COUNTY)

## 1. REFERENCES:

- a. Army Regulation 930-4, dated 24 November 2024
- b. Army Emergency Relief Section Reference Manual (SRM), Chapter 2, dated 1 January 2023.

2. **APPLICABILITY:** This guidance applies to AER Headquarters, all Army AER Sections, American Red Cross and Other Military Society Offices in support of eligible personnel depicted in paragraph 4 below.

3. **PURPOSE:** This AER Bulletin provides disaster assistance guidelines to support eligible Soldiers and Families who may be impacted by the by California wildfires in Hurst, Kenneth, Palisades, Eaton and surrounding areas. Evacuation orders are in effect for 105,000 Los Angeles residents, and 87,000 are in evacuation warning zones, which means they may need to leave at a moment's notice. **Bottom-line, effective 14 January 2025, HQ AER is extending financial assistance to Soldiers, their families, Retired Soldiers, Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers. Eligible Army personnel may be provided financial assistance to assist with expenses associated with evacuation and basic essential needs to sustain oneself during and after the wildfires.**

## 4. ELIGIBILITY:

- a. Soldiers on **Active Duty** and their eligible Family members.
- b. Soldiers **Retired from Active Duty because of longevity** and their eligible Family members.
- c. **Retired Army Reserve and National Guard** Soldiers receiving retired pay and their Family members.

## ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF (DISASTER ASSISTANCE BULLETIN NUMBER: 01-2025)

- d. **Medically Retired** Soldiers and their dependents, including those placed on the Permanent Disability Retired List (PDRL) or Temporary Disability Retirement List (TDRL).
- e. **Surviving Spouses and Children** of Soldiers who died while on Active Duty (including those on Title 10 Orders) or in an eligible Retired status.
- f. **Members of the Reserve Component** of the Army (National Guard and Army Reserve **under Title 10** U.S.C) on continuous Active Duty **for more than 30 consecutive days** and their eligible Family members.

**Additionally, retroactively from 8 January through 31 January 2025, the individuals listed below have been extended disaster assistance eligibility for the California wildfires. These individuals are normally NOT eligible for AER assistance.**

- g. “Grey Area” Retired Soldiers of the Reserve Components (Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve).
- h. Title 10, Title 32, and TPU Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers who are NOT mobilized.
- i. Title 10, Title 32, and TPU Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers mobilized for LESS THAN thirty (30) consecutive days.
- j. Title 10, Title 32, and TPU Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers activated in support of California wildfire relief efforts.

**NOTE: Caseworkers must clarify the Duty Status of applicants:**

- a. Regular Army (Active Duty)
- b. Retired Soldiers
- c. Survivors
- d. Title 10 - Guard, Reserve, or AGR (Active Duty)
- e. Non-Title 10 – Guard and Reserve. **Non-Active-Duty as described in (g-j) above (Extended Eligibility).**
- f. “Grey Area” Retired Soldiers

5. **GENERAL GUIDELINES.**

**NOTE: Applicants who reside within a 50-mile commuting radius of an Army Installation should not be serviced by NMCRS or ARC partners but rather should be referred to the nearest Army AER Section for disaster assistance. Exceptions to this guidance will require approval from HQ AER.**

- a. Assistance may be provided up to **\$1,000 as a Grant under Blanket Authority** to eligible members listed in para 1 (a – j) above who have been impacted by the California wildfires.
- b. Assistance may be considered for basic essential needs (Temporary Lodging, Food and Fuel).
- c. For Soldiers, the Company Commander or First Sergeant will be the individuals who validate the need by signing the AER Assistance Application (as applicable) prior to the Soldier requesting assistance. **For Army Field Recruiters, the Battalion Commander, Executive Officer, Company Commander, or First Sergeant may validate the need by signing the AER Assistance Application.**
- d. Retired Soldiers and Survivors will sign their own AER Assistance Application validating the need.
- e. Applicants must provide proof of mandatory or voluntary evacuation order through the local municipality. Hard copy proof **is not** necessary; proof through local municipality websites, social media sites and local news stations are acceptable.
- f. **The budget requirement is waived; however, the request must be for a “valid need” associated with the disaster.**
- g. Assistance will be retroactive to **8 January 2025** and applicants may apply for reimbursement as a “one time” exception for basic essential needs, and departure / return needs. Applicants will be required to provide receipts for expenses i.e., food, fuel, and temporary lodging to be reimbursed by AER.

6. **MANDATORY DOCUMENTS.** The AER application forms are available on the AER website at [www.armyemergencyrelief.org](http://www.armyemergencyrelief.org) under the “Forms and Resources” tab:

- a. Military Identification Card.

## ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF (DISASTER ASSISTANCE BULLETIN NUMBER: 01-2025)

- b. AER Form 101, Application for AER Assistance with itemized list of basic essential needs - Temporary Lodging, Food and Fuel. (**Applicants in paragraph 1, a-f**).
  - c. AER Form 770, Application for AER Assistance (Exception to Policy for Eligibility) with itemized list of basic essential needs - Temporary Lodging, Food and Fuel. (**Applicants in paragraph 1, g-j**).
  - d. Leave and Earning Statement (LES) for Soldiers.
  - e. Title 10 orders for the current period of service (Guard, Reserve, or AGR) (if applicable).
  - f. Proof of residence in the affected area: Driver's license, utility bill, mortgage, or lease statement. Online verification is acceptable, and a hard copy is **NOT** required.
  - g. Proof of mandatory evacuation order.
  - h. Special Power of Attorney (AER Form 53 or civilian equivalent) or Allotment Authorization (AER Form 55) when Soldier is not available.
7. This guidance will remain in effect until **31 January 2025**, at which time the situation will be reevaluated to assess needs of Army personnel and their families in the impacted areas.
8. The points of contact for this guidance are:
- a. Assistance Section - SGM(R) Glen Wellman or CSM(R) Charles Durr at (571) 389-7137/ Extension #1 or via email at [assistance@aerhq.org](mailto:assistance@aerhq.org).
  - b. Loan Management Section - SGM(R) William Hagzan at (571) 389-7137/Extension #2 or via email at [repayments-allotments@arehq.org](mailto:repayments-allotments@arehq.org).
9. If additional guidance is required, please contact HQ AER toll-free at 1-866-878-6378.

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Army Emergency Relief

### **DISTRIBUTION:**

- 1 – All Army AER Sections
- 1 – HQ U.S. Army Reserve Command
- 1 – HQ Army National Guard Bureau
- 1 – American Red Cross
- 1 – Other Military Aid Societies