**Introduction**

**1-1. Authority**

This procedure is created pursuant the Arkansas National Guard Foundation’s, hereinafter, “The Foundation,” By-Laws and NGAR 2105-02 MILITARY FAMILY RELIEF TRUST FUND OPERATING GUIDE AND PROCEDURES and pursuant to authority granted to The Adjutant General by the Arkansas Legislature through the adoption of Act No. 1028 of 2005, Act No. 827 of 2007, and Act No. 402 of 2015 (codified at Ark. Code Ann. §§ 19-5-1127 and 26-51-2506, respectively).

**1-2. Purpose**

The Military Family Relief Trust Fund was established to provide short term emergency financial assistance in the form of grants to members of the Arkansas National Guard and Reserve Components of the Armed Forces and/or families of these members impacted by a crisis. This fund provides a valuable means to assist and improve the morale and welfare of members of the Arkansas National Guard and Reserve Components of the Armed Forces.

**1-3. Administrative Procedures**

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §26-51-2506(h), The Adjutant General of the Arkansas National Guard has designated the Arkansas National Guard Foundation as his agent for the operation of the grant program authorized by the act. The Foundation receives, processes and either approves or disapproves grant applications. The Foundation receives funds appropriated by the Arkansas General Assembly from the Miliary Family Relief Trust Fund through grants from the Department of the Military. Funds are administered through an interest-bearing bank account maintained by the Foundation. The Foundation will maintain all appropriate administrative files and information concerning the operation and processing of the business of the Fund and upon request, makes these records available for review by the Department of the Military. The Foundation provides copies of its annual audit to the Department of the.

**1-4. Eligibility**

Any current member, or family member, of the Arkansas National Guard or a Reserve Component of the Armed Forces who is a resident of Arkansas is eligible to request assistance. Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §26-51-2506(h), eligibility criteria for receiving grans shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. The need of the family:
2. The paygrade of the member of the National Guard and reserve components of the Armed Forces.
3. The difference between the member’s military and civilian pay; or
4. Any other factors that establish the family’s financial hardship.

The Foundation requests that the applicant explore all resources (family, other military focused non-profit assistance, community service organizations, churches, etc.) before making an application for emergency assistance. Also, the member is expected to receive free financial counseling from a Personal Financial Counselor (PFC). Members may also be referred to other resources based on the recommendation of the Foundation.

**1-5. Prioritization of Funding**

As mentioned above, the requested financial assistance must be to solve a crisis. A crisis is defined as “an event beyond the control of the member or family member that requires assistance that is not available from any other reasonable source.” Additionally, financial assistance should remedy a one-time problem, not an ongoing situation. The Foundation has developed the following priorities for assistance.

Category 1. Miliary Pay Issues at no fault of the servicemember.

Category 2. Financial Hardship affecting the dependents of a deployed service member.

Category 3. Catastrophic Events (Natural Disaster, Death of Dependent, Health Crisis)

Category 4. Financial Hardship unrelated to military service.

**1-6. Source of Funding:** The Foundation prioritizes fundraising for Emergency Relief for currently serving members of the Arkansas National Guard, their dependents, and Survivors. The Foundation is prohibited from comingling funds raised by the Foundation with funds that are granted to the Foundation from revenue generated by the Military Family Relief Program under Ark. Code Ann. §§ 19-5-1127. To provide the best financial stewardship of the state resources supplied the Foundation, the Foundation funds Category 1 and 2 requests with funding supplied by the State of Arkansas and funds Priority 3 and 4 requests with funds raise for Emergency Relief by the Foundation through its own fundraising activities.

**1-7. Authorized Expenditures.**

The Foundation may make payment directly to the servicemember or to their creditors as the Foundation determine best meets the intent of the program.

1. Examples of expenditure that are authorized:
2. Delay in receiving pay or reimbursement from the government.
3. Temporary shelter, lodging or rent.
4. Emergency utility assistance, i.e. gas, electric water.
5. Emergency transportation and vehicle repair.
6. Costs incurred for emergency travel due to death of immediate family member.
7. Emergency home repair.
8. Death of a dependent.
9. Any special circumstance that the Foundation believes meets the intent of the General Assembly in establishing Ark. Code Ann. §§ 19-5-1127 and 26-51-2506.
10. Examples of expenditures that would not typically qualify are:
11. Payment for nonessential items or services.
12. Payment for ordinary leave or vacation.
13. Payment of fines or legal expenses.
14. Liquidation or consolidation of debt.

 5. Assistance with down payment on a home purchase or home improvements.

6. Funds to purchase or make a long-term lease of a vehicle.

**1-8. Application Procedures**

The member or family member’s first step will normally be to contact the unit Chain of Command, such as the Unit Full Time Staff, First Sergeant, or Unit Commander. The unit will verify that the service member is in good standing, and then refer the service member to one of the Soldier and Family Readiness Specialist (SFRS) located at one of the Family Readiness Centers located around the state or one of the Military and Family Readiness Specialist located at Ebbing Air National Guard Base or at the 189th Air Wing on Little Rock Air Force Base. For a list of Family Readiness Centers, please visit: <https://arkansas.nationalguard.mil/Families/fac/>

Anyone who can act on behalf of the member may apply for assistance if they have a properly executed Power-of-Attorney and proof of identification. The SFRS/MFRS will assist the Servicemember, family member or unit representative in preparing and applying through the Arkansas National Guard Foundation Portal <https://www.angf.us/assistance> . Note, only the SFRS/MFRS have the necessary password to upload the application. Supporting documents will also be uploaded at the portal. Once the Application is received, it is forwarded to the appropriate service representative (usually the Senior Enlisted Leader in the State for the service component) who will verify eligibility. Each service will provide the POCs upon distribution of this information. The request should contain, as a minimum:

a. Description of the circumstances or events that caused the financial emergency.

b. The need of the family, if applicable.

c. Any other factors that establish the members family’s financial hardship.

d. The purpose or bills that the grant will be used for.

e. The amount requested.

f. The difference between the member’s military salary and civilian salary.

g. Any explanation or attempt to remedy the situation by the Servicemember or the lack of other options or resources (savings account, family assistance, other organizations).

h. Name of the member, names of the family member impacted if applicable, pay grade, unit of assignment, home address, and phone contact numbers.

When forwarding the Servicemember’s request, a unit representative should include information regarding the Servicemember’s standing in the unit/mobilization status, and any additional information reference the Servicemember’s situation, especially when a delay in military pay is the cause for financial crisis. Applicants may be required to provide verifiable proof of the need and other supporting documents. At a minimum, the following items should be needed:

a. Leave and Earnings statement and any proof of other family income to show the difference in military pay against civilian pay; and

b. Substantiating documents (car repair estimate, rental agreement, utility bill, etc.).

c. An IRS Form W9 signed by the applicant.

d. A letter of good standing to from the Service Member’s Unit of Assignment.

**1-9. Type of Assistance Available**

The amount of assistance will not exceed $2,500.00 in a 12-month period. Assistance is in the form of a grant. Upon approval, the funds may be paid to the applicant or may be made payable direct to a creditor.

**1-10. Application Processing**

Once the Foundation Executive Director receives the application, there are various levels of approval depending on the size of the grant requested and the criteria under which the grant is requested:

1. Immediate Impact Grants. The Foundation may make an immediate impact grant up to $500 in situations where the need for immediate payment, and eligibility is clear. Immediate impact grants may be appropriate in the case of a catastrophic event such as a fire or a tornado. Immediate Impact Grants do not affect the servicemembers eligibility for additional funds, but the Immediate impact grant will be deducted from the servicemembers total eligibility. Example, servicemember loose a home in a fire. The Foundation provided an Immediate impact grant of $500 with in 48 hours of the event to help with immediate needs. The servicemember can still apply for up to $2000 in additional assistance following the normal application process.
2. Grants of up to $750, which fall within the criteria stated in Paragraph 1-7 above may be approved by the Executive Director. The Executive Director can choose to fund all or part of a grant request. Applications for up to $750 can normally be processed in 1-3 Business Days
3. Grants of $750 to $2500, which fall within the criteria stated in Paragraph 1-7 above require review by the State Emergency Assistance Approval Committee (EAAC). The Committee can choose to fund all or part of a grant request up to $1,500. If the EAAC elects to recommend approval of a grant between $1,500 up to $2,500, the request will be forwarded to the Foundation Executive Committee for Approval. These votes will normally be conducted electronically. Voting will normally be initiated by an email from the Foundation Executive Director, who will track the votes. Applications of up to $1500 can normally be processed within 4-7 Business Days.
4. Grants from $1500-$2500, or those that are an exception to the criteria stated in Paragraph 1-7 require approval by a majority vote of the Foundation Executive committee. These votes will normally be conducted electronically. Voting will normally be initiated by an email from the Foundation Executive Director, who will track the votes. The Committee can choose to fund all or part of a grant request. Applicants should expect longer processing time for grants more than $1,500.

**1-11. Emergency Assistance Approval Committee**

The Adjutant General of the Arkansas National Guard will appoint members of the Emergency Assistance Approval Committee. The Committee is intended to be small to facilitate timely actions on requests for assistance. The Committee may conduct its proceedings in person, or electronically. Decisions will be made by a majority vote of the committee. Electronic voting is authorized. Recommended members of the committee include:

1. The State Senior Enlisted Advisor for the member’s Service or Component within the State.
2. The Lead Miliary Family Readiness Specialist.
3. The State Family Programs Director.
4. The State Full Time Support Chaplain.
5. The Executive Director of the National Guard Association of Arkansas.

**1-12. Appeals**

Membersmay appeal a final decision of the Foundation to deny a grant to the Deputy Adjutant General of the Arkansas National Guard. In the event of an appeal the Foundation will provide the Deputy Adjutant General with all documents relating to the grant request and a statement of reasons for their decision to deny the grant. The Deputy Adjutant General may confirm the decision of the Foundation to deny the grant or approve the grant in whole or in part.

**1-13. Contact Information**

Current members, or family members, of the Arkansas National Guard or a Reserve Component of the Armed Forces may contact the Executive Director of the Foundation at 501-758-6422 or through the Foundation Website at <https://www.angf.us/> to receive more information about the Military Family Relief Trust Fund.