

# MILITARY FAMILY RELIEF TRUST FUND

## Operating Guide and Procedures

**Purpose:** The Military Family Relief Trust Fund was established to provide short term, emergency financial assistance in the form of grants to Arkansas National Guard and Reserve members and /or families impacted by active duty service. All funding is received from the Treasury of the State. This Fund provides a valuable means to assist and improve the morale and welfare of Arkansas National Guard and Reserve members.

**Background:** This fund was established in 2005 by the state of Arkansas to assist the Arkansas National Guard and Reserve members and families in times of crisis caused by active duty service, when the situation can reasonably be expected to be remedied with a one-time grant. The Fund's Board of Director's is not a State Agency or Federal entity. The Arkansas Reserve Component Emergency Relief Fund's Board of Directors sets policy and has the responsibility to oversee the operation of the program and approve all grants. The Board consists of a member from the Arkansas Army National Guard, the Arkansas Air National Guard, the US Army Reserve in Arkansas, the US Air Force Reserve in Arkansas, the US Naval Reserve in Arkansas, the US Marine Corps Reserve in Arkansas, and a representative of the United Way of Arkansas. The lead representative is the Arkansas Army National Guard who has the responsibility to handle the day-to-day administrative requirements of the operation. Funds are administered through a separate account maintained by the Arkansas State Treasury.

**Governing Board:** Each Reserve Component listed in the paragraph above will provide a Service Representative and alternate to serve as members of the governing board. The board members are selected by the command of each component and will serve at the command's discretion. It is recommended that each service complete an appointment letter for the primary and alternate. The board will consist of seven members with the alternate members serving in the primary's absences.

**Administrative Procedures:** The board will meet on a regular basis. A majority vote of the board will determine changes and adjustments for regular board meetings. The Arkansas Army National Guard (AR ARNG) Representative will provide administrative support for the meetings to include recording of the minutes of the board. The AR ARNG Representative will also maintain all the appropriate administrative files and information concerning the operation and processing of the business of the Fund.

**Eligibility:** Any member or veteran of the Arkansas National Guard and Reserves who is a resident of Arkansas and who has been released from active duty within two years is eligible to request assistance. The requestor's unit/service must verify that the applicant is currently serving or has served thirty days of active duty. The Arkansas National Guard and Reserve request that the applicant explore all resources (family, community service organizations, churches, etc.) before making application for emergency assistance. The member may be referred to a financial counselor or representative from the State Family Readiness Program office for additional financial counseling based on the recommendations of the board reviewing the request.

**Funds Administration:** As mentioned above, the requested financial assistance must be to solve a crisis situation. 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, the financial assistance should remedy a one-time problem, not an ongoing situation. If an applicant’s monthly cost of living notably exceeds their income, no one-time infusion of financial assistance will solve the problem. A large percentage of available funds are designed to provide immediate cash to members/families who are waiting to receive military pay or reimbursements that have been delayed. All payments from the Funds are handled in accordance with Arkansas Code Annotated Section 26-35-1301 et seq. Examples of situations that could qualify are:

- Delay in receiving pay or reimbursement from the government.
- Temporary shelter, lodging or rent.
- Emergency utility assistance, i.e. electric, gas, water (not telephone, cable or Internet Service Provider)
- Emergency transportation and vehicle repair.
- Costs incurred for emergency travel due to death of immediate family member.
- Any special circumstance as deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors.

Examples of things that would not typically qualify are:

- Payment for nonessential items or services
- Finance ordinary leave or vacation
- Payment of fines or legal expenses
- Liquidation or consolidation of debt
- Assistance with down payment on a home purchase or home improvements
- Funds to purchase, rent or lease a vehicle
- Cover bad checks

**Application Procedures:** The member or family member’s first step will normally be to contact the unit First Sergeant or Unit Commander or Full-Time Staff at the unit. Personnel may also contact someone in the Rear Detachment or the Family Readiness Office or local Family Assistance Center to assist in the process. Anyone who can act on the behalf of the member may apply for assistance if they have a properly executed Power-of-Attorney and proof of identification.

The service member in need, family member or unit representative on the member’s behalf will prepare an application for and submit by electronic message to request assistance. It is preferred that the request be prepared and forwarded to the specific service representative who will verify and provide documentation verifying eligibility. Each service will provide the POCs upon distribution of this information. The service representative will provide the application electronically (by email) to the AR ARNG or Reserve representative so that the request can be emailed to all board members. This will help expedite the process. The request should contain, as a minimum:

- Description of the circumstances or events that caused the financial emergency

- The purpose or bills that the grant will be used for
- The amount requested
- Any explanation or attempt to remedy the situation by the soldier or the lack of other options or resources (savings account, family assistance, other organizations).
- Name, rank, social security number, unit of assignment, home address, and phone contact numbers.

When forwarding the service member's request, a unit representative should include information regarding the service member's standing in the unit/mobilization status, and any additional information reference the service member'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:

- Military ID Card
- Leave and Earnings Statement and any proof of other family income.
- Substantiating documents (car repair estimate, rental agreement, utility bill, etc.)

**Type of assistance available:** The amount of assistance will not exceed \$750.00 in a 12 month period. Assistance is in the form of a grant. Upon approval, the funds may be paid to the service member or applicant or may be made payable direct to a creditor, at the discretion of the Board.

**Application Processing and Response Time:** Once the application is received by the service representative, the service representative will forward to the AR ARNG representative, who in turn will forward to all board members. Once the AR ARNG representative receives the approval or disapproval from the majority (requires 4 of 7 approvals, etc.) of the governing board, then the AR ARNG representative will contact DSR to arrange for the disbursement of funds or provide the feedback to the service representative. The applicant can typically expect a decision within 24-48 hours once distribution to the board members is complete. If approved, funds are usually available within 48 hours. The AR ARNG Representative will maintain all appropriate records in the administration of this program.

**Fund Sources:** Funds are received via the Treasury of the State of Arkansas.

**Service Information Phone Numbers:**

AR Army National Guard: (501) 212-5011/(501) 212-5047/(501) 212-5032  
 AR Air National Guard: (501) 987-5952  
 AR Army Reserve Personnel: (501) 771-7855  
 AR Air Force Reserve Personnel: (501) 987-3313  
 AR Marine Corp Reserve Personnel: (501) 771-4323  
 AR Navy Reserve Personnel: (501) 771-1661

# MILITARY FAMILY RELIEF TRUST FUND

## Executive Summary

The Military Family Relief Trust Fund was established to provide short term, emergency financial assistance in the form of grants to Arkansas National Guard and Reserve members and /or families impacted by active duty service. All funding is received from the Treasury of the State. This Fund provides a valuable means to assist and improve the morale and welfare of Arkansas National Guard and Reserve members. The lead representative of the Board of director's is the Arkansas Army National Guard. Any current member of the Arkansas National Guard and Reserve is eligible to request assistance.

The requested financial assistance must be to solve a crisis situation. 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, the financial assistance should remedy a one-time problem, not an ongoing situation. Examples include:

- Temporary shelter, lodging or rent.
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- Emergency transportation and vehicle repair.
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The fund was created by Act 1038 of 2005. Once an application is received by the service representative, the service representative will forward to the AR ARNG representative, who in turn will forward to all board members. The AR ARNG Representative will maintain all appropriate records in the administration of this program. The service Information Phone Numbers are:

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