

ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF OFFICER'S

SECTION REFERENCE MANUAL



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	PAGE
• Introduction	5
• Purpose	5
• General Operations	5
• HQAER Caseworkers	6
ASSISTANCE	7
• Handling a AER Request For Assistance	7
• Clients Right to Privacy	8
• Need	8
• Loan vs Grant Considerations	8
• Powers of Attorney	9
• Eligibility	9
• Not Eligible	9
• Assistance Programs	9
• Spouses	9
Assistance For Active Duty, Retired Soldiers, And Family Members	10
Assistance For Surviving Family Members (Spouses and Orphans)	14
Assistance To Other Services	17
Assistance To Army Soldiers Through American Red Cross (ARC)	18
Categories Of Assistance	20
• Non-receipt Of Pay/Lost or Stolen Fund	20
• Medical, and Hospital expenses	20
• Funeral Expense	21

• Funeral Expenses for Dependent Family Members of Active Duty	22
• Funeral Expenses for Non-Dependent Members of Active Duty	23
• Funeral Expenses For Retirees/Widows	23
• Emergency Travel Expenses	24
• Emergency/Non-Emergency Leave	25
• Rent/Utilities/Food	26
• Clothing	26
• Essential POV	27
• Fire or other Disasters	28
• Commanders Referral	29
• Other Categories	31
Miscellaneous	33
• Privation	33
• Signature Authorization	33
• Restricted List	33
LOAN MANAGEMENT	34
General	
Issuing funds to Soldiers and transmitting case information to HQ AER	35
Allotments	40
• Active Duty and Retired Soldiers	41
• AER Online Loan Payment	43
Direct Billing and Cash Payments	44
Delinquent Accounts and Collection Process	46
Installation Clearance	46
Pay Adjustment Authorization (DD Form 139)	48
Uncollectible Loans	49

Overpayment Refunds	50
Bankruptcy	51
Stop Payment and Voided AER Form 52	52
MANCOR	53
• Active Loan List	53
• Allotments Requiring Signature	53
EDUCATION	54
• MG James Ursano Scholarship Fund	54
• Spouse Education Assistance Program	55
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN	57
• Solicitation	58
• Using DA Form 4908	59
• Cash or Check contributions	60
• Monitoring Receipt of Allotment contributions	60
• After-Action Report	60
• Processing Cash Contributions	62
• Sending Cash Contributions to Central Bank	63
SECURITY AND FISCAL INTEGRITY	66
AUDITS AND INTERNAL CONTROLS	68
• Audit Guide	69
INTERACTIVE WEB QUERY	75
• Request for PIN	77
DISASTER ACTIVITIES	78

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: Army Emergency Relief (AER) was incorporated as a private nonprofit organization on 5 February 1942 under the laws of the District of Columbia for the purpose of collecting and holding funds to relieve distress of members of the Army and their dependents. Upon merger of Army Relief Society (ARS) with AER on 2 July 1976, AER assumed the ARS mission of providing financial assistance to widows(ers) and orphans of deceased Regular Army Soldiers. Although AER is a private nonprofit organization, its sole mission is to help Soldiers and their eligible family members who are experiencing financial emergencies.

- AER is the Army's own emergency financial assistance organization and is dedicated to "Helping the Army Take Care of its Own."
- AER provides commanders a valuable asset in accomplishing their basic command responsibility for the morale and welfare of Soldiers.
- AER funds are made available to commanders having AER Sections to provide emergency financial assistance to Soldiers -- active and retired as well as their widows(ers) -- and their eligible family members when there is a valid financial emergency.

Purpose: This Reference Manual consolidates (and supersedes) the contents of two previous documents; it is electronically linked to the various forms and you need to complete the tasks outlined herein. We have designed and published this Reference Manual to be used in conjunction with Army Regulation 930-4. AR 930-4 is the policy document for Army Emergency Relief. The policies of AER must be adapted within the administrative framework of various settings. The regulation, which defines those policies, is subject to interpretation by individuals with dissimilar backgrounds, training, and experience. Therefore, the ASSISTANCE section of this document explains the procedures necessary to make the AER program work at AER sections. **THE ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS SECTION IS NOT DESIGNED TO ENSURE AN ENFORCED STANDARDIZATION BUT RATHER TO PROVIDE SOME CONSISTENCY TO ALL SOLDIERS, AND SHOULD BE FOLLOWED AS A GENERAL RULE WHEN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO SOLDIERS AND THEIR ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBERS.** The remaining portions of this Reference Manual are generally administrative in nature and are designed to provide you guidance and information to help you keep your AER Section running smoothly.

General Operations: AER is a private non-profit, tax exempt organization. It is not an Army or DOD organization, or an instrumentality of the US Government and its funds are not available for use by the Army or other government agencies. Its purpose is to collect and hold funds for use by Soldiers and their eligible family members to meet only a valid financial emergency need. These emergencies are conditions that arise suddenly, are unforeseen and urgent, and require

immediate attention. AER accomplishes its mission by giving access to its funds to local commanders for disbursement to Soldiers. The only stipulations for access to these funds are that Commanders must provide the necessary facilities, equipment and personnel to operate the program; and their decisions regarding financial assistance must be within the policies and guidelines established by HQAER. *Those AER sections determined to be inappropriately disbursing AER funds will be informed in writing by the Director, HQAER. If the local AER section continues to inappropriately disburse AER funds the Director will consider suspending or revoking the sections check writing privileges.*

HQAER Caseworkers: Guidance is available from caseworkers at Headquarters, AER for interpretation of policy and help in developing resources to assist Soldiers in meeting their needs.

Handling an AER Request for Assistance:

Each AER request is unique – just as no two individuals are the same, no two situations or requests for assistance are the same. The AER caseworker will need to assess each request for assistance to determine what course of action will provide a solution to the problems. The problems may be as simple as a request from a Soldier who finds themselves without funds a few days before payday and must go home for a family emergency or it may be as complex as a request for help from an individual who is so overwhelmed with debt that basic living expenses cannot be paid.

Many times, financial help is only a part of the solution to the problem. The Soldier may also need the help of a financial counselor or another professional to explore ways to provide a long-term solution to the problem. There will also be times when AER assistance is not appropriate and you will have to point the Soldier in another direction for help.

Remaining objective is fundamental to good casework. It is important that AER caseworkers be fair, consistent, professional, and objective when listening to a request and making decisions. Take time to make certain you clearly understand the problem. You may have to ask numerous questions to be certain you understand the entire picture.

There are situations when time is critical and you will not be able to get a complete budget or budget information may not be required. However, it is still important to get a “feel” for how the Soldier or family is doing financially.

It is necessary to have the ability to verify facts during the interview process. Therefore, the Soldier or retiree should bring their ID Card, LES, VA statement, leave papers, utility bills, lease agreement, car repair estimates, etc. to verify the emergency. If the Soldier does not have all the necessary documentation, their lack of verification, in itself, should not be a basis for disapproving a Soldier’s request for AER assistance. If the caseworker, after gathering all the facts, believes they have a clear understanding of the Soldier’s situation they may approve the request without verifying documentation.

Clients Right to Privacy: An applicant’s interview with AER does not share the same privileged legal status as an interview with a lawyer. However, an applicant has the right to expect that personal information will remain private. AER caseworkers will not discuss this information outside the office, nor divulge such matters to anyone, except on a need-to-know basis. Protecting applicant’s privacy does not prevent AER caseworkers from verifying information. Applicants may feel that questions asked of them are private, embarrassing, or intrusive but caseworkers have an obligation to verify that a financial need exists prior to disbursing AER funds. If the applicant refuses to answer questions or allow substantiation of the request, assistance may not be provided. AER is exempt from the requirements to release information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) since it is not a government agency but a private nonprofit organization. AER does not release case records without the Soldier’s permission except in response to a court order, subpoena, or formal official investigation by proper civilian or military authorities.

Need: The basis for AER financial assistance is only to meet a genuine financial emergency need. AER caseworkers sometimes must help the applicant distinguish wants from needs. AER funds are not to be provided to maintain a standard of living beyond the applicant's financial means.

Loan vs Grant Considerations: Historically, the majority of AER assistance, approximately 94%, is provided in the form of interest free loans with repayment of these loans helping to fund future assistance. When making the decision on a loan vs grant, the caseworker needs to look at the total situation. What is the request for, the financial situation of the Soldier, and the reason the individual does not have his/her own money to use for this purpose. AER financial assistance should be fair and equitable for all Soldiers.

A grant should not be provided simply because a Soldier has a monthly deficit and cannot repay a loan. It may be that the Soldier has been irresponsible or simply living beyond his/her means. AER funds will not be used to reward this type of behavior. It would be unfair to provide a grant because a Soldier has acquired so much debt that a loan could not be repaid, while at the same time asking a Soldier who has been living within a budget and doing without, to repay a loan. If assistance must be provided, it is more appropriate to provide a loan where repayment would be deferred to allow time to work with a counselor or find other solutions to the financial problem.

Grants are more appropriate to unique circumstances such as special medical problems that are of a bona fide emergency, not payment for routine expenses that suddenly become a problem. A grant is never to be given for expenses which will be reimbursed by other sources such as insurance companies, SGLI, or the government.

As indicated, the majority of assistance is provided as a no-interest loan. Repayment of the loan should be set with consideration being given to the financial situation of the individual, as well as the length of time remaining on the current enlistment. Repayment of loans should normally be completed within 12 months of the loan and before the Soldiers ETS. AER assistance is not to be given to express sympathy. In all cases, need is the requirement.

Powers of Attorney: AER will recognize a valid power of attorney (POA) which authorizes an individual, normally the spouse, to borrow money and to execute such documents as may be necessary to bind the service member to repay the loan. A valid POA may be either a General or a Special POA, so long as the authority includes the power to borrow money in the Soldier's name. The fact that the general POA is fully accepted as a legal document also means that AER will not allow the Soldier to disavow the assistance rendered to an eligible family member if the attorney-in-fact signed for the Soldier under the authority provided by the POA. If the POA is over a year old or the caseworker believes the POA may have been revoked then the Soldier should be contacted to obtain approval for the requested assistance. When assistance is provided using a POA, a copy should be attached to the AER Form 52. Allotments for repayment cannot be initiated based upon POA, unless the POA contains a specific clause that indicates the spouse can "demand, act to recover and receive all sums of money and to institute accounts on my behalf". When such assistance is given the Soldier should be notified of the assistance. The POA's signature is sufficient to start the allotment.

Eligibility:

- Soldiers on extended active duty and their dependents.
- Members of the Reserve Components of the Army (Army National Guard under title 10 and U.S. Army Reserve) on continuous active duty for more than 30 consecutive days and their eligible family members.
- Soldiers retired from active duty because of longevity or physical disability, or retired upon reaching age 60 (Reserve Components) and their eligible family members.
- Widows(ers) and orphans of Soldiers who died while on active duty or after retirement as cited above.

Not Eligible:

- Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Gray Area Retirees – Reserve component Soldiers not yet age 60 and not collecting retired pay.
- Reserve component Soldiers on weekend or annual training.

Assistance Programs:

AER provides two types of emergency financial assistance:

- Assistance to Soldiers and their eligible family members who are faced with a valid financial emergency need often involving basic essentials of everyday living.
- Assistance to widows (ers) and orphans of deceased Soldiers. This financial assistance usually occurs at the time of, or shortly after, death of the Soldier.

AER's scholarship program provides financial assistance to unmarried dependent children of Soldiers -- active, retired (includes gray area retirees) and deceased -- to pursue undergraduate study, and to spouses residing with active duty Soldiers assigned overseas. Education assistance is a secondary mission to the two types of financial assistance involving emergency need. The funds available for scholarships are limited and determined primarily by financial need.

Spouses:

Spouses of deployed or TDY Soldiers do not require approval of Soldiers' immediate Commander to receive AER assistance. They must have a valid power of attorney, or confirmation received by approval authority of verbal concurrence obtained from Soldier for spouse to obtain AER funds. Spouses are not in the Army and as such are not required to see anyone in their husband or wife chain of command to obtain AER assistance.

ASSISTANCE FOR ACTIVE DUTY,
RETIRED SOLDIERS,
And
FAMILY MEMBERS

AER's objective is to meet every valid emergency financial need of Soldiers and their dependents. In accomplishing this objective, each applicant must begin by completing AER Form 700, with signature in item 13a. The unit commander, or 1SG, then completes and signs item 14c. Commanders may not disapprove an AER application but only make a recommendation (an application submitted under the Commanders Referral, AER Form 600, may be disapproved by the immediate Commander since they are the approving authority). Next, AER personnel will confirm eligibility, evaluate the facts regarding the need for assistance and make a decision on the case. An AER Officer must base his/her decision on facts and circumstances established in the application, by interviewing the applicant, and from other sources applicable in each individual case. Although not conditional, part of the decision process is the assistance must solve the problem, not be ongoing, and there is a plan for the future.

Each case must be judged on its own merit. No two persons are alike and no two situations are identical. When the facts support a borderline need, an applicant will receive assistance.

In April 2006, AER reduced the three levels of authority to two levels and increased the dollar amount for each level by \$500. This change removed any intermediary from the process allowing cases to be transmitted directly from the AERO to the Level 2, generally the Garrison Commander. This results in an expedient process while ensuring only those familiar with AER's policies and procedures are involved in processing applications. This is not discretionary at the local level, there is no more intermediary between the AERO and the Level 2 approval authority.

You must accomplish the following when making your decision:

- Verify eligibility.
- Confirm Soldier's duty status.
- Determine if AR 930-4 authorizes the requested assistance.
- Decide if real financial emergency exists.
- Determine if financial help will solve the emergency.
- Gather and evaluate information on Soldier's income from all sources (including spouses).
- Obtain itemized statement of monthly and other expenses.
- Determine if amount of assistance requested will solve the problem.
- Find out whether the need is being, or can be, met with aid from another agency such as American Red Cross or local social services.
- Find out and consider Soldier's expiration of term of service (ETS) date.
- Find out if any personnel actions involving elimination from the Army are pending against active duty (AD) Soldier.

- Obtain recommendation and information from AD Soldier's unit commander. (For AD Soldier not assigned to your installation, make reasonable attempts to contact the Soldier's unit commander.)
- Find out the status of any previous AER assistance received by the Soldier.
- Examine Restricted List, or check the IWQ on line, to see if Soldier is restricted. (If so, process case through all installation approval authorities before calling HQ AER for final approval.)
- If the Soldier is under Chapter 13 bankruptcy proceedings ask the court appointed trustee for approval of assistance as a loan

After evaluating the case and determining that it meets the categories of authorized assistance, process through the following approval authority:

Level 1 - AERO/Assistant AERO up to \$2500.

Level 2 - Grade O5 or higher or DAC equivalent. Positions include but not limited to USAG Cdr; Dep Cdr; Cof S; Base Opns Mgr, etc (\$2500.01 to \$3500).

HQ AER - Over \$3500. Also, **all** Soldiers whose SSN appears on the Restricted List and **all survivors**, regardless of dollar amount.

Base approval authority level on the total amount of financial assistance, that includes current request, plus balance due on any outstanding loans, plus any grants within the past 12 months, plus any previous loans declared uncollectible. You can find this information either on the IWQ or in your Section Active Loan List

When the Soldier is on the Restricted List or the case requires HQ AER approval, process through your Level 1 through 2 approval authorities obtaining command recommendation before you refer to HQ AER. If the case is disapproved at installation level do not refer to HQ AER.

Exceptions to policy:

- Level 2 authority can make exceptions to policy for amounts up to \$3500 for the categories of unauthorized assistance, except abortions, (paragraph 2-12, AR 930-4), and eligibility. *The Level 2 may give their CSM approval authority in their absence.*
- AER does not permit exceptions to policy for a person's eligibility for AER assistance.
- Contact HQ AER (with favorable Level 2 recommendation) for approval of all exceptions to categories of unauthorized assistance over \$3500.

AER normally provides emergency financial assistance as an interest-free loan. However, if repayment of a loan will cause extreme hardship on the Soldier, you may consider issuing the assistance as a grant or combination loan and grant, depending upon the Soldier's financial situation.

After you approve a loan, you must:

- Ensure that the Soldier understands his/her personal responsibility and terms for repaying the loan.
- Agrees to keep AER advised of any change in duty assignment, mailing address, and military status.
- Acknowledges his/her responsibility to notify AER if future financial condition makes repayment of the loan a hardship.
- Understands that if he/she fails to repay the loan he/she will be placed on the AER Restricted List. This is an Army-wide list and Soldiers who appear on it cannot receive AER assistance without the specific prior approval of HQ AER.

Issue approved assistance **payable to the applicant**. If you believe the funds may not be used as intended, you may:

- Ask the recipient to endorse the check to the creditor in your presence.
- Prepare a two party check with the creditor **AND** the applicant as payees.
- Prepare multiple checks to creditors.
- Any combination of the above.

Assistance should be provided at the point of need, therefore, when you assist a dependent in the Soldier's absence, you must:

- Ensure the sponsor approves. Either a notarized general or special power of attorney, authorizing AER to provide needed financial assistance or contact the Soldier for approval if no POA exists.

Ensure the POA does not contain a termination date that has passed, or:

- Have terms that preclude the dependent from obtaining a loan.
- In the absence of a general or special power of attorney, a Soldier's authorization of the loan can be obtained through the American Red Cross when the dependent is in CONUS and the Soldier is assigned overseas. However, when both the Soldier and their dependents are in the same theatre (CONUS or in the same overseas area), the authorization should be accomplished directly between AER sections instead of involving the ARC. The AER Branch and Section Listing on HQAER web site enables AER sections to contact other sections and exchange information to facilitate AER case work or to obtain a signed allotment. Use this method for obtaining the Soldier's authorization for assistance. It will help to ensure that

dependents are provided prompt emergency financial assistance and will eliminate the need to involve an outside organization.

- Obtain loan repayment allotment from sponsor, regardless of his or her location of assignment.
- Prepare all documentation in the sponsor's name. Include the sponsor's SSN, expiration of term of service (ETS), duty organization, and mailing address.
- Make the check payable to the dependent, or vendor as appropriate.
- When you **do not** approve the assistance, **you must**:
 - Tell the applicant the reason(s) for disapproval.
 - Record reason(s) for disapproval in Block 14e.
 - Inform the unit commander of AD Soldiers of the disapproval and reason(s).
 - Ensure Soldier is aware that they may appeal disapproval to their Level 2.
- You should maintain a case file on each applicant for future reference. Include all documentation relating to the case. Dispose of the file IAW paragraph 2-15, AR 930-4.
- These procedures apply equally to all applicants, regardless of installation of assignment of the Soldier.
- AER's emergency financial assistance program depends on receipt of loan repayments for helping other Army Soldiers and their families who have emergency financial needs. The preferred repayment method is by allotment. Follow the instructions in this manual on Allotments, AER Form 52, Direct Billing and Cash Payments, and Installation Clearance and Use of DD Form 139

ASSISTANCE FOR SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS
(Spouses and Orphans)

Providing assistance to surviving family members of Soldiers, who died on active, or in retirement, is an important part of AER's mission. AER's approach to assisting survivors is to help them get through the initial period of adjustment following a spouse's death while waiting for their benefits such as SBP, DIC, social security, etc. to commence. Assistance is not intended to supplement monthly income on a continuing basis but rather to act as a cushion with routine monthly expenses such as rent/mortgage, utilities, car payments and food until government entitlements begin. Casualty Assistance Officers, AERO's, and installation family assistance personnel are all sources of information about needy survivors. In this regard, Casualty Area Commands distribute AER Information Sheets to survivors of deceased Soldiers informing them of available AER assistance and whom to contact.

AER sections and ARC chapters are the principal points of contact for survivors regarding AER assistance. Initial requests received at HQAER normally will be referred to the section best geographically located for helping the survivor. Survivors needing assistance must complete an application, AER Form 700. Each must have been a valid dependent at the time of death of the Soldier and must have a current dependent ID card. If you have any question concerning eligibility, call HQAER. You should assist the applicant in completing the form. All survivor assistance cases, regardless of dollar amount, must be approved by HQAER. You do not have to process cases through command designated approval authorities. Provide HQAER with the following information:

Soldier's:

Full name.
SSN (Army service number if no SSN).
Grade.
Status at time of death - active or retired.
If retired, date and basis for retirement.
Date of death, and cause of death, if known.
Number of children, including ages and dependent status.

Survivor's:

Full name.
SSN.
Date of birth.
Current and planned address, if different.

Also provide:

Narrative summary of the survivor's circumstances and financial situation.

The status of any insurance and benefits such as Survivors Benefit Plan, Retired Servicemen's Family Protection Plan, VA, or Social Security.

Completed AER Form 56 (AER Questionnaire) and AER Form 57 (AER Budget Planning Sheet) for initial assistance only.
(See Enclosures 3,4)

A recommendation on what assistance is needed and the amount of money required.

In extreme or exceptional circumstances when surviving spouses and orphans have a continuing situation of inadequate income to meet basic needs, a monthly allowance may be provided to supplement income. This type of assistance is authorized for only 12 months and is then subject to review of updated budget planning information. In monthly allowance cases, applicant must be interviewed in person and HQ AER given the following:

A detailed report of survivor's situation with caseworkers recommendation for AER monthly allowance.

Information regarding employment.

Medical condition, to include a statement from a doctor, if appropriate.

Completed AER Form 56 and AER Form 57.

A recommendation regarding need and amount of financial assistance.

Updated information any time an applicant's VA, Social Security benefits or other sources of income are changed.

NOTE: AER monthly allowances are approved for up to 12 months at a time. Before the end of this period, each case must be reviewed. Based on current interview with the applicant, a new BPS only must be prepared to include any changes in the financial situation and a recommendation made to HQ AER

In special need cases, give HQ AER -

A summation of circumstances regarding special need.
A medical and dental statement (when applicable).
Copies of bills (as applicable).

Evaluation of the ability to repay is not a factor in survivor cases. AER provides all assistance as a grant to survivors. In this regard, complete AER Form 52 as you would for a Soldier with particular emphasis on:

- Entering deceased Soldier's SSN in Block 5.
- Marking "S" in Block 7.
- Recording 3011 in Block 14.
- Entering name of the approval authority as HQ AER in Block 16.
- Having survivor sign in the Allotment Authorization/Promissory Note section acknowledging receipt of the check.
- Keep the original copy of case at your section. The file must include -
- A completed and signed AER Form 700, AER Forms 56 and 57 as appropriate.
- Other supporting documents you used in making your decision.

Widows(ers) All request for AER assistance for widows(ers) must be approved by HQAER. Widows may receive AER assistance on a limited basis. For AER purposes, widows are defined as a civilian spouse of a Soldier. The spouse of a dual army married couple is not a widow but rather a retired or active duty Soldier. It is anticipated that Soldiers or retirees had been responsible in providing for family members and had appropriate life insurance and/or SBP. It should not be expected that AER will provide support for widowed persons on an ongoing basis. When a Soldier dies, AER will declare uncollectible all outstanding loans in order to spare the survivor any further hardship or concern.

Those recently Widowed AER assistance to survivors is primarily intended to help in their transition while waiting for government entitlements to commence. Normally, this will be between 30-90 days. Assistance is normally provided for basic or routine maintenance which includes food, rent, utilities, etc. Assistance is not ongoing and is meant to provide a temporary solution until various entitlements such as SBP or SS start, or other arrangements are made.

Those widowed Long ago Most assistance to survivors occurs at the time of a Soldier death, or shortly after. However, widows remain eligible provided they do not remarry and may request AER assistance at any time to meet an unforeseen emergency.

Continuing Assistance In extreme or exceptional circumstances, when surviving spouses and orphans have a continuing situation of inadequate income to meet basic needs, a monthly allowance may be provided by HQAER to supplement income. This type of assistance is authorized for not more than 12 months and is then subject to review of updated budget planning information.

ASSISTANCE TO OTHER SERVICES

Under reciprocal agreements with the Aid Societies of the Navy and Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, we provide financial assistance to service members of those services.

Process applications the same as you do for an Army Soldier, except you must get approval of the case from the aid society of the sister service to which the applicant belongs. Respective application forms are to provide you an insight as to information normally required. Contact the respective aid society for approval of each case. Current telephone numbers for these organizations are listed in the latest AER Branch & Section Listing.

. Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society
4015 Wilson Boulevard
10th Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22203

. Air Force Aid Society
241 18th Street S.
Suite 202
Arlington, Virginia 22202

. Coast Guard Mutual Assistance
4200 Wilson Blvd, Suite 610
Arlington, VA 22203-1804

Once you obtain approval for assistance, complete the AER Form 52 as you would for an Army Soldier, making sure that you use the correct code in Block 10. Do not fill in the applicant screen in Samaritan for other society assistance.

IMPORTANT: If the respective aid society authorizes a **grant** for the applicant, you must complete the AER Form 52 as if it were a **loan** by recording **3010** in Block 14. The sister service aid society will be billed for reimbursement by HQ AER. They will adjust the administration of the case within their organization making the assistance a grant. Do not complete the allotment authorization portion of the AER Form 52 for grants. **However, make sure applicant signs and enters SSN on the form.**

The Allotment Authorization/Promissory Note portion of AER Form 52 must be signed by the applicant receiving the check.

After you issue the check, file the application and other substantiating documentation supporting the emergency for three years. These case files may be needed upon request from the other aid society.

When you do an assistance case under the blanket approval authority for another society, ensure that the assistance, or case, is called into the respective aid society the following work day.

ASSISTANCE TO ARMY SOLDIERS THROUGH AMERICAN RED CROSS (ARC)

ARC provides many valued services to Soldiers and their families. However, they no longer provide direct financial assistance. In February 1997, the ARC Board of Governors approved a plan to modernize Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES). The new plan included a decision by the ARC to discontinue direct funding of financial assistance for members of the Armed Forces and their eligible family members. This decision required that the American Red Cross and AER, along with the three other military relief societies, enter into an agreement whereby the aid societies fund the direct cost of financial assistance to members of the military and their eligible family members. The role of ARC will be that of providing access to this financial assistance.

AER reimburses the ARC for all funds they provide in financial assistance to Soldiers and their eligible family members. Soldiers are only able to receive loans when assistance is received through the ARC. If they believe their circumstances merit a grant rather than a loan, they must submit a request through their chain of command to the AER section upon returning from the emergency.

Reimbursement is provided to ARC by Headquarters, AER upon receipt of a bill from ARC National Headquarters. AER sections are not involved in the reimbursement process for assistance provided to Soldiers by ARC.

The agreement between ARC and AER requires ARC to process emergency financial assistance requests after normal duty hours and on weekends and holidays. Assistance will be provided by ARC on behalf of AER based upon following guidelines:

. BLANKET APPROVAL (Loans only)

ARC, through their Emergency Service Centers, will advance funds for emergency travel and related maintenance, on a loan only basis to active duty service members or their eligible family members under blanket approval terms if all of the following conditions exist:

- . When ARC verifies a need exists, or the Soldier has leave papers authorizing emergency, or if the remarks section of DA Form 31 has comment that approval of ordinary leave “is in accordance with parameters in para 6-1(f), AR 600-8-10”.
- . When the proper ID card (or appropriate documentation) is presented, and
- . When the member is not listed on AER restricted list, and
- . When the member or eligible family member is not affiliated with the Reserve Component or Army National Guard, and
- . When the assistance is \$2500 or less and

- . When the ETS is more than 90 days and
- . When the member is not a cadet of the military academy or a student in a college ROTC program, and
- . When the repayment is to be by an automatic deduction from the military pay.

. APPROVAL REQUIRED

For all assistance provided by ARC after hours, not covered under blanket approval authority, approval must be obtained from Headquarters, AER.

. INITIATION OF REPAYMENT ALLOTMENT

If the Soldier is unable to sign an allotment at the time of receiving the assistance from the ARC, they will be directed to initiate an allotment electronically on the AER web site (<http://www.aerhq.org>). If this process is not used, the Soldier must sign a repayment allotment at their AER section upon returning from their emergency travel.

CATEGORIES OF ASSISTANCE

Nonreceipt of Pay/Lost or Stolen Funds

No pay or partial pay

Soldiers will often receive partial or no pay resulting from DFAS errors. When this creates a financial emergency AER will provide only the minimum financial assistance to avoid privation. AER will not provide the Soldier with the amount of money they should have been paid. Assistance is not normally provided when pay is garnished for child support, DPP, IRS, etc. because these type garnishments are not usually unforeseen.

Not a pay problem

Sometimes Soldiers are overpaid and request assistance to replace money they have already received and spent. In most instances the Soldier was aware of the overpayment. AER considers this lack of funds to be mismanagement, not a pay problem. If assistance is provided, only minimum assistance to prevent privation should be given. These types of problems are usually not unforeseen.

Fines, forfeitures

AER will not reimburse Soldiers for forfeitures of pay and allowances as a result of UCMJ or non-judicial punishment. AER believes it is improper to use funds donated by Soldiers to negate official disciplinary action.

Government Benefits

Soldiers, retirees, or dependent family members, sometime request assistance from AER to replacement missing government entitlements such as VA checks, Social Security checks, survivors benefits checks, welfare funds, or education benefits. Normally AER does not provide assistance to supplement monthly income due to non receipt of other government or non government funds. Assistance given for these circumstances must be as an exception and provided to prevent a specific documented hardship.

Lost or Stolen money

Applicants may request AER assistance due to lost or stolen money. AER requires proof that the loss has been reported to local authorities i.e., copy of police report. Financial assistance will normally be provided only for the minimum amount to prevent privation and not the total amounts of money reported lost or stolen.

Medical and Hospital expenses

AER offers limited assistance for health care since all categories of eligible applicants have access to Military Treatment Facilities or are authorized care under TRICARE or MEDICARE. Additional supplemental insurance programs are available to enhance medical protection.

Soldiers should be encouraged to carry supplemental insurance, particularly those retirees living overseas, as large medical bills can have a disastrous effect on a family's finances. AER does not help finance medical care for chronic illness or pay for catastrophic medical expenses. Limited assistance is available to help solve short term problems such as paying a patient's reasonable share of covered expenses or assisting with the purchase of special equipment not covered by insurance.

Types of assistance Normally AER does not assist with routine medical bills. These bills are considered like any other unpaid bill or money owed. Most requests for assistance are for the patient's share after TRICARE payments have been made. AER may assist with prosthetic devices, such as orthopedic shoes, hearing aids, and spectacles. Assistance may be provided when emergency treatment is needed and partial payment or a down payment is required for treatment to be received.

Request where AER cannot assist AER does not provide assistance with financing major transplant surgeries, and does not normally assist with experimental or preventive procedures not covered by TRICARE. AER funds will not be provided for elective medical treatment. AER does not normally assist with yearly TRICARE enrollment fees, unless a documented hardship exists. AER funds will also not be used for abortions and no exceptions may be authorized.

Medical equipment not covered by TRICARE AER may assist with purchasing certain required medical equipment not covered by TRICARE such as wheel chairs, respirators, and lift modifications for transport vans if a documented requirement is provided from a doctor.

Funeral Expense

AER wants to be sensitive to assistance requests for funeral expenses submitted by active duty Soldiers who have lost an immediate member of their family, i.e., spouse, child, or dependent parent (ID Card Holder). The approach and assistance offered varies, depending on the eligibility status of the applicant and the unique circumstances. The challenge is to be responsive to the needs of the Soldier without extending assistance beyond basic, reasonable cost. Effective November 2001 DOD's SGLI policy covers spouses and children of active duty Soldiers. Dependent children of Soldiers are automatically covered for \$10K with premiums being paid by the government. Soldiers will pay a monthly premium for spouse's coverage up to maximum coverage of \$100K.

Funeral Expenses for Dependent Family Members of Active Duty

<i>Death of spouse, or dependent child</i>	AER will provide “bridge loans” for the cost of a funeral when there is a death of a spouse or dependent child. AER funeral loans will only be to provide reasonable funds for a modest but dignified funeral based upon current national average cost for funerals. Repayment for these loans should be deferred for approximately four months to allow receipt of SGLI insurance funds used to repay the AER bridge loan. Repayment allotment will be set up with repayment over a period of 12 months. Upon receipt of lump sum repayment existing allotment will be cancelled. Soldiers who are requesting funeral expenses for spouses who elected not to participate in SGLI will be processed on a case-by-case basis.
<i>Death of dependent Parent</i>	AER will provide a grant up to \$2500.00 for the cost of a funeral for a dependent parent (authorized dependent of Soldier as determined by AR 600-8-14) as these dependents are not provided coverage under SGLI. Normally, the total assistance in this category normally will not exceed \$4000.
<i>Stillborns</i>	Effective November 2009 Stillborns are covered under the DOD FSGLI policy, therefore, any AER assistance will be provided as a Bridge Loan. Stillborns of less than 20 weeks gestation are not covered under FSGLI so AER will provide a grant up to \$2500.00 for the cost of a funeral.
<i>When cost is unknown</i>	When a Soldier decides to have the funeral at a location other than the place of death, the total cost of the funeral may not be known. A local funeral home may be able to work with the other mortuary to determine the total cost. If this is not possible, assistance should be provided for the local cost and travel expense, and Soldier instructed to seek assistance for the remaining expenses through the ARC office in the community where the funeral will take place, or at a nearby relief society prior to the funeral.
<i>Travel cost associated with the death of dependent</i>	When burial is to be in another location, the travel expense for the family should not be included as part of the funeral grant, unless extreme hardship exists. In some cases, the Army may pay for shipment of the remains. In these situations the Soldier must claim reimbursement, after the event, and may request AER assistance for transportation of remains as part of a bridge loan.
<i>When a death Occurs overseas</i>	If a dependent dies overseas, the Soldier may be required to pay for the casket and other associated costs before departing the overseas location. Since it is difficult to make funeral arrangements and to verify costs from an overseas location, assistance should be

provided only for the known cost. Soldier should be told to seek assistance, **prior** to the funeral, at local ARC or the military relief society nearest where the funeral will be conducted.

When Soldier is not able to come into AER section

It is acceptable to work the details of a dependent funeral with the Soldiers' Commander, First Sergeant, or supervisor if this helps to minimize emotional stress for the Soldier.

Funeral Expenses for Non-Dependent Family Members of Active Duty

Death of non-dependent family members

Requests for funeral assistance for a non-dependent parent, sister, brother, or other extended family member is provided on a very limited basis. Requests for funeral expense of a non-dependent (non-eligible relative) may be considered on a case-by-case basis and if provided will be in the form of a loan. *A grant should not be given for funeral expense of non-dependent family members of active duty members since they are not eligible for AER assistance.*

Assistance provided for modest funeral

If a Soldier inquires about possible funeral assistance for a non-dependent family member before arrangements are made, it should be made clear that AER assistance, if provided, would be only to provide reasonable funds for a modest but dignified funeral. A Soldier should not commit to a high cost funeral with the expectation that AER will provide assistance for the expenses. Normally, assistance for funerals in this category will not exceed \$4000. AER assistance, in this category, will not be provided to assist in the transportation of remains for burial in another location.

Costs should be shared

If there are other family members, it is expected the Soldiers surviving family members will share in expenses. Assistance will be provided only for the Soldiers fair share.

Funeral Expenses For Retirees/Widows

Funeral policy

AER policy is that retired Soldiers, their dependents, or survivors should anticipate funeral expenses. There should be no expectation that AER will provide financial assistance for these burials. Personal or community resources as well as other family members should be expected to pay all cost.

Unique Circumstances

There may be unique situations where AER will assist in paying all or part of the funeral for a retiree. These cases must be referred to HQAER. Assistance may be provided for these unique cases only when it

has been documented that the retirees' estate or family members do not have sufficient funds to cover the cost of burial. If widow or next of kin is requesting the assistance of AER for funeral expenses, verification must be obtained (documented) to substantiate they do not have sufficient funds to cover the cost of part or all burial expense. Part of the stipulation for AER assistance under these circumstances should be that retiree is buried in a national or state cemetery if within reasonable commuting distance. This will result in minimal outlay of AER funds but still ensure a modest and dignified funeral.

Some widows often come to AER with unpaid funeral bills. AER does not assist with unpaid funeral bills. These bills are considered like any other unpaid bill or money owed.

Emergency Travel Expenses

AER provides funding for unforeseen required travel that is the result of emergencies or other unique circumstances. When authorizing assistance for travel, assistance normally will be provided for only those persons necessary to resolve the situation. Soldiers, who are granted emergency leave due to death of an immediate family member or serious illness which may result in death, generally will be attempting to depart the command as soon as possible, often the same day as notification is received. In time sensitive situations a budget is not required to be completed prior to travel. Assistance should be provided as a loan with the understanding that a complete budget review will be done upon Soldiers return to his/her duty station.

It is AER's desire, as specified, in AR 930-4, that "assistance be provided to meet unforeseen required travel and related maintenance expenses such as transportation, lodging or food" to meet these emergencies. Usually this results in assistance for travel, food, and lodging because of a death or serious illness in the Soldiers, or spouses, family. It is AER's intent to provide assistance for short periods (7-10 days) to resolve or meet the requirements of this emergency i.e. attend a funeral and return to duty station. It is not the intent of AER to provide financial assistance for extended periods after the emergency has been resolved. Example: Soldier returns home for a funeral and afterwards remains in a leave status for up to 30 days. AER assistance during this extended period for food, lodging, etc. should not be provided unless there are mitigating circumstances that warrant an extended stay.

It is AER policy not to reimburse Soldiers for expenses incurred resulting from emergency travel. Soldiers who obtain financial assistance from family members, friend, or other financial institutions to meet an emergency may not request AER assistance for the purpose of reimbursement. Once these funds were obtained, regardless of the funds source, the Soldier had the financial means in which to resolve the situation, therefore, from AER's perspective, the emergency no longer exists. However, Soldier's authorized emergency travel that procure a ticket via INTERNET may produce the confirmed purchased and request AER assistance to obtain the ticket. This procedure will allow Soldiers to receive AER assistance prior to their travel while obtaining the lowest possible fare.

Emergency/Non-Emergency Leave

<i>Emergency leave, ARC verification not a requirement to obtain assistance</i>	AER assistance is authorized for emergency travel when a Soldier is granted emergency leave IAW Para 6-1, AR 600-8-10. ARC verification of an emergency is not a requirement for AER assistance.
<i>Ordinary leave under Other situations</i>	There are many instances where, in the Soldiers opinion, an emergency exists but the situation does not meet the Army criteria for granting emergency leave. When a Commander recognizes such a situation exists and enters in the remarks section of DA Form 31 “That approval for ordinary leave is in accordance with parameters of Para 6-1(f), AR 600-8-10” then <u>AER assistance is authorized</u> . This could be a situation involving a grandparent (not in loco parentis) aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, or nephew.
<i>Death in immediate family of Soldier or spouse</i>	AER assistance may be provided for travel when a death occurs in the immediate family of either the Soldier or spouse. Immediate family is defined as spouse, child, mother, father, brother, sister, only living relative, or person standing “in loco Parentis”.
<i>Travel for Soldier and spouse for emergency in immediate family</i>	When an immediate family member dies, both the Soldier and spouse may wish to travel to the funeral. AER assistance for travel may be provided for person who has the emergency and spouse if necessary for emotional support.
<i>Assistance for entire family to travel</i>	Many requests for emergency travel are for the entire family to travel. If travel is to be by car, the additional expense of taking the whole family may not be significant. However, travel by air is often quite expensive, especially for an entire family. Requests should be evaluated based on the total family situation, including the financial impact of taking on this loan. If a determination is made that requested assistance will not result in financial hardship and will not be a financial burden, assistance may be provided for the Soldier and his/her spouse and children.
<i>AER Assistance Authorized In other situations</i>	Other situations for which AER assistance may be provided would include extraordinary costs involved in a PCS, convalescent leave, return of dependents to Soldiers household after short term absence to resolve problems at an emergency site, transporting dependents to a medical treatment facility, or to attend a court ordered appearance.

Paternity Leave Soldiers granted paternity leave may seek AER assistance for required travel and related maintenance expenses such as transportation, lodging, and food.

Rent/Utilities/Food

Establishing a household in a new area can be expensive. To offset this expense, various government entitlements are available such as BAH and dislocation allowance. However, there are times when Soldiers are not able to draw these allowances in time to use them. Therefore, financial assistance may be given for initial rent and deposit, utility deposits, phone, and other costs associated with obtaining housing.

Late rent or mortgage Large unexpected bills such as medical or funeral expenses will sometimes place a Soldier in the uncomfortable position of being unable to pay their rent or mortgage. AER may provide assistance in this situation. However, if the AERO believes the Soldier is unable to make the payment due to mismanagement or neglect the requested assistance may be denied and Soldier told to negotiate payment with rental agent or mortgage company unless Soldier is in receipt of eviction/foreclosure notice. This does not imply that AER approval is automatic simply because Soldier has an eviction/foreclosure notice.

Utilities Assistance for gas, electric, water, sewage, trash, or other utilities are within AER policy. Individuals having difficulty paying utility bills should receive advice on how to lower cost such as enrollment in local utility company budget plans, if available.

Phones Assistance to maintain basic phone service is authorized. Assistance for cell phones is also authorized since many Soldiers only have cell phones versus traditional landline phones.

Food AER may provide assistance for food for short periods, usually not past receipt of the next paycheck. Assistance may be a check to the commissary or food store, or food in kind from a food locker or local food programs.

CLOTHING

Uniforms Although Soldiers receive an annual allowance for uniform replacement, there are time when they need to purchase additional uniforms i.e., loss or damaged in a natural disaster.

Civilian clothing AER may assist with the purchase of necessary civilian clothing. Generally these requests are to replace items lost in natural disasters, or due to HHG not arriving and clothing is required because of a change in weather. Assistance should only be provided for basic essentials.

Essential POV

Motor vehicles are expensive to own, operate, insure, and maintain. AER will not finance the purchase of motor vehicles. However, AER recognizes that these expenses can have a serious impact on Soldiers' budget. Assistance for vehicle payment or repair is contingent on the Soldier having a valid driver's license, producing vehicle registration in the name of the Soldier or his/her spouse, and verification that insurance coverage is current.

Essential repairs AER may provide loans for essential repairs to allow a vehicle to operate safely. Assistance is provided to repair an essential vehicle to enable the Soldier or family member to commute to work or go to medical appointments, etc. Request for car repairs from single Soldiers should not be turned down just because they are single and live on post. These expenses may include reasonable towing charges

Routine Maintenance AER recognizes that failure to have sufficient funds to perform routine POV maintenance such as oil changes, tune-ups, replacement of brakes or tires can contribute to significantly greater expenses at a later date. Assistance for POV maintenance will contribute to the overall general safety of Soldiers and family members while extending the serviceable life of the vehicle. Replacement items will be standard equipment for the vehicle. Conditions for assistance under this category are that the Soldier must be eligible to repay the assistance by allotment (no cash bills), there will be no high tech upgrades such as custom tires etc. and AER assistance under this category will always be as a loan, no grants are authorized.

Estimates Soldiers should have a written estimate of proposed repairs from an established repair facility prior to authorizing any AER assistance. Once a Soldier has provided estimates from a qualified repair shop, the Soldier determines which repair facility to use. It is illegal to make the selection of any specific repair facility a condition to receive AER financial assistance. A check should not be written until the repair is completed and the final cost verified.

Own repairs If a Soldier is qualified to repair his/her own vehicle, or chooses to seek help from a qualified friend, AER may provide assistance for the necessary parts after the Soldier produces a list of parts and prices from a parts dealer. AER does not provide financial assistance for the Soldier's, or friends, time and work.

Cosmetic repairs and rental cars AER does not assist with cosmetic repairs to restore cars to their original condition. Assistance is provided to put vehicles in safe, running condition. Incidental body work and paint jobs are not emergencies. AER does not assist with rental cars while a vehicle is being repaired.

Second vehicles Assistance may be provided to repair a second vehicle if it is essential to the family for a spouse's employment, medical appointments, or because the family lives in separate geographic areas.

Older vehicles At times the cost of repairs may exceed the value of a car and it may not appear to be a good decision to support repairing the vehicle. However, this may be the only financial option available to the Soldier and assistance can be provided.

Vehicle Insurance AER does not normally provide assistance for insurance premiums or assisting with deductibles. However, under emergency situations a one-time assist may be provided.

Fire or other Disasters

Immediate needs AER assistance may be provided to help with immediate needs when a Soldier, or eligible family member, is affected by a disaster. The disaster may affect only a few individuals such as a house/apartment fire; or an entire community, such as a flood, tornado, or hurricane. AER cannot act as an insurance company, but can provide assistance for basic items such as clothing, beds, linens, eating table and chairs, temporary lodging etc. Assistance is not authorized for blanket group relief; it must be given only to individuals on a case-by-case basis. Each Soldier's financial circumstances are different and each Soldier must be assisted based on his/her needs. If items are covered by insurance, or government reimbursement, then assistance will only be provided as a loan.

Commanders Referral

AER programs have been a positive influence on Soldiers' morale by giving commanders an important asset in helping them accomplish their basic command responsibility for morale and welfare of their Soldiers and families. The Commanders Referral category affords immediate Commanders another tool to affect a positive impact on their Soldiers by giving them authority for an instant financial loan when a Soldier has a valid need.

AER has always given Commanders considerable flexibility in the implementation of local AER sections. The Commanders Referral category is just an extension of that flexibility. However, Installation Commanders are still required to operate AER sections within existing guidelines, while ensuring they, and immediate Commanders, distinguish between Soldiers WANTS and NEEDS, and to provide AER assistance to all Soldiers in a fair and equitable manner.

Commanders Referral: Active duty Soldiers lacking the funds to meet their monthly obligations may request AER funds up to \$1000 by submitting a completed AER Form 600 to their immediate Commander. This lack of funds could be for a myriad of complex reasons or as simple as overextending themselves the previous month. Whatever the basis, the immediate (Co/Btry) Commander, or 1SG, must be satisfied that the Soldier's request is reasonable, justifiable, and needed. *The Commander/1SG may require a Soldier to validate a request for AER assistance by producing bills or other documentation to substantiate their problem or to complete a budget. The Commander/1SG may also, after gathering all the facts and believing they have a clear understanding of the Soldiers situation, approve the request without any verifying documentation or a budget. In summary, the Commander/1SG has the discretion to require as much, or as little, information or documentation as they feel necessary to make a decision.* If the Commander/1SG approves the request, under this category, they will complete item 10, AER Form 600. The request is then taken to the local AER section, along with a current LES, where a check is issued and allotment for repayment prepared. The immediate Commander/1SG is the approving authority, not the AERO.

The following conditions apply:

- AERO will confirm eligibility for assistance under this category prior to issuing a check, if Soldier does not meet eligibility for assistance under the Commanders Referral a check will not be issued.
- Existing loan for Commanders Referral must be repaid before additional assistance in this category is authorized.
- There will be no more than two AER assist a year under this category.
- Requested amount and current balance cannot exceed \$2000.
- Repayment must be by allotment.
- Repayment must be prior to ETS but no more than 12 months (when repayment is delayed the 12 months is from the allotment starting date).
- Soldier cannot be on AER's restricted list.
- Assistance under this category will always be as a loan, no grants are authorized.
- AERO will inform the Commander of final disposition.

AERO review: The authority and flexibility given the immediate Commander in approving AER assistance up to \$1000 also brings the responsibility to be familiar with AER policies and procedures. Should the AERO determine the immediate Commander has approved a Soldiers request for a category of unauthorized assistance the Commander should be contacted for resolution. Example: The immediate Commander has approved a Soldiers request for a court ordered fine. The AERO knows this is not an authorized category of assistance and should contact the Commander/ISG to give the Commander the option of having the case returned or forwarded to level 2 as an exception to policy.

Rear Detachment Commanders: A rear detachment Commander must be in the grade of SFC or above to approve a Soldier's request for assistance under this category.

Existing AER categories: The Commanders Referral is not designed to replace existing categories or procedures for Soldiers seeking AER assistance. It is intended as a tool for immediate Commanders/ISG to have a mechanism in assisting their Soldiers with short-term problems or basic living expenses in an expedient manner. Commanders who do not desire to approve assistance under the Commanders Referral but believe the Soldier still has a valid need for AER assistance may recommend approval and forward request to the AERO for processing under normal operating procedures.

Other Categories

Dental for AD Soldiers Most active duty Soldiers have their dental care provided at no cost on military installations. However, there may be some recommended procedures that the military is not able to perform and the Soldier will be referred to a civilian dentist. AER will consider request for assistance in these cases for what TRICARE will not cover.

Dental for Dependents of AD & Retired Soldiers All Soldiers are encouraged to enroll family members in the government dental insurance plan. This plan does not fully cover costly treatment and other assistance may be needed. Assistance may be considered for emergency care when reasonable upfront costs are required for treatment to begin. Payment arrangements can then be made with the dentist for remainder of the treatment.

Soldiers in Confinement or Pending Separation Assistance for Soldiers in confinement, pending elimination from the Army, or disciplinary action that could result in elimination will be limited to only basic needs. Dependents of prisoners or deserters are only provided limited assistance. Assistance is provided to prevent immediate privation and normally done on a one time basis. Generally, these type cases are grants.

Legal Expenses AER does not normally assist with legal fees for civilian court, fines, judgments, liens, bail, divorces, child custody cases, domestic disputes, and income taxes. Assistance is not authorized to replace funds for overdrawn bank account or to cover bad checks.

Home Repairs The proper maintenance of a personal residence is an individual responsibility. However, emergency situations may arise which would cause AER to consider repairs essential to the well being of a family. This may involve emergency furnace or plumbing problems or a request for air conditioning repairs where extreme temperatures could cause significant medical problems and a payment plan cannot be worked out with the repair company or funds are unavailable from commercial sources. Special consideration should also be given if such a request is received from a spouse when a Soldier is deployed.

*Travel Expenses
Related to
“Welcome Home”*

Sometimes a Soldier cannot afford to maintain a household at his/her duty station for eligible family members. The only realistic solution may be sending the family to live with relative or friends. The term “ **Welcome Home**” comes from having the Red Cross verify that family members *or* friends are willing to provide shelter for the returning family. It is never pleasant to suggest that family members live apart. However, this is often a last resort, and AER should only provide assistance under these circumstances after receiving a welcome home letter.

*Soldier Hospitalized
and listed as VSI/SI*

The Army occasionally issues an Invitational Travel Order (ITO) to the next of kin of a Soldier who is listed as Very Seriously Ill or Seriously Ill (VSI/SI). Authorized dependents may receive AER assistance, in the Soldiers name, to meet expenses for food and lodging while visiting the Soldier. Normally, AER assistance will not be provided to the next of kin who are not authorized dependents of the Soldier because they are not eligible recipients of AER financial assistance. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by case basis only by HQ, AER. Level 2 approval authority cannot authorize an exception to this policy because it concerns eligibility. Caseworkers must verify that a need exists, that the next of kin have no financial means in which to meet the expenses for food and lodging, and the local command has done everything within their authority (waived eligibility & fees for guest housing and dining facility) and local ARC cannot assist.

Others

Countless situations, or scenarios, exist in which Soldiers may seek AER assistance for resolution. It is an unrealistic effort to attempt to identify all the various categories and situations in which AER funds may be utilized to help Soldiers meet their immediate needs. AERO’s approach to casework should be to look for ways in which to say “Yes” when a Soldiers request is reasonable, realistic, and passes the common sense test. An example would be a Soldier requesting AER assistance for immigration or passport fees. This situation is not covered in AR 930-4, or the AERO Section Reference Manual, but the circumstances and need for financial assistance is understandable. Should the Soldier not have the funds to obtain these items it could result in a family separation. This separation may contribute to additional financial burdens, or hardships, placed upon the Soldier resulting from maintaining two separate households.

PRIVATION

Assistance is authorized to prevent privation of a Soldier and their family members. Privation is normally temporary assistance, primarily for food and lodging or any other valid reason not listed in AR 930-4.

SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATION

Checks may only be signed by appointed AER Officers and Assistant AER Officers

Upon appointing an AERO and/or an Assistant, immediately send to HQ AER -

- . A copy of the appointing document.
- . Two signature cards (DD Form 577) for each appointed signatory. (Enclosure 9)
- . A letter of transmittal including **all** the names of persons currently authorized to sign checks for your section.

Upon release from duty of an AERO/Assistant, notify HQ AER so that we can make changes to the signature authority at the central bank

RESTRICTED LIST

Any Soldier who is on AER's Restricted List, is so annotated on the IWQ.

The fact that a Soldier's SSN appears on the *Restricted List* should not be interpreted as adverse information nor should this cause the Soldier's application for assistance to be rejected/denied. When the Soldier is on the *Restricted List*, process through your Level 1 - 2 approval authorities and obtains command recommendation before you refer to HQ AER. If any approval authority disapproves the case at the installation, do not refer it to HQ AER.

We update the Restricted Status on the IWQ at least daily. We update and distribute the *Restricted List* bimonthly. Destroy the previous edition upon receipt of a new list.

LOAN MANAGEMENT

GENERAL

Beginning in January 1991, we consolidated the loan management administrative functions of recording, accounting, collecting and closing actions for all AER loans at HQ AER. This consolidation has freed section personnel from these activities. Yet, there still exists certain activities best done through personal contact with the Soldier. This personal contact should be made by someone at the Soldier's duty installation. To help with these contacts and to give you correct information about Soldiers assigned to your installation, we administratively place each AER account with an AER section.

We base the placement on the zip code of the Soldier's address. This placement shifts between sections as the Soldier moves from one geographical area to another. We have found that this placement is responsive to the needs of both the Soldier and AER. The section closest to the Soldier's duty assignment/residence is in the best position to serve the Soldier's needs. If you determine that a Soldier whom we have placed at your installation is not there, please tell us.

We have programmed the AER data base to obtain and store addresses for Soldiers from a variety of sources. Each source has its unique advantages as well as limitations. We have found that, because Soldiers are very transient, no one source meets all requirements. For this reason, we base our placement with a section on the best information available at the time. We do not relate placement to where the Soldier obtained a particular loan.

This section of the manual gives you information about all loan management activities. We describe the roles and interactions of both HQ AER and AER Sections in completing these important functions. Your most important function, after you have issued assistance and forwarded the completed assistance file to HQ AER, is clearing any Soldier with an AER loan account who is departing your installation.

The practice of sections only being responsible for the assistance issued by that section is a relic of a former time. In today's AER, you serve all Soldiers assigned to your installation, despite where they obtained their prior assistance. When you get a Soldier's allotment signed or when you contact one who has recently become delinquent, you are serving the needs of the entire AER family.

Issuing Funds to Soldiers and Transmitting Case Information to Headquarters

Once you have approved an assistance case for a Soldier use the Samaritan web based program to issue funds to that Soldier. The details of operating Samaritan are contained in the help menu once you log into the program.

Manual Preparation of AER Form 52

AER Form 52 is designed for automated processing with the Samaritan program. The form features an allotment authorization that eliminates the need to complete a separate allotment authorization form (DD Form 2558).

Using Samaritan is the preferred method of completing this form. But, there may be an occasion when you must complete this form manually. If so, follow the preparation instructions listed in the help menu. You must prepare the form with a ball point pen or a typewriter. **Do not write the check in a typewriter with a one-time carbon ribbon.** You must input the manual prepared check/case into the Samaritan program so HQAER can retrieve the data.

Preparation -

. Check: complete all blanks as with a standard check; plus, include your five digit section number and section name in the space provided.

. Cautionary guidelines:

- Enter the date you issue the check - **never** pre-or post-date this check.
- Verify the payee's name, dollar amount in figures, and the dollar amount in words.
- Line through any remaining space between the last word of the amount and the word "Dollars".
- Approved assistance is provided by check **payable to the applicant**. However, if you believe that funds may not be used for their intended purpose, you can, as an **exception**, do the following -
 - * Ask the recipient to endorse the check to the creditor in your presence.
 - * Prepare the check with joint payees, the creditor and the recipient.
 - * Prepare multiple checks to creditors, covering the entire amount of the approved assistance.

* Any or all the above in combination.

•• In any event, **explain** the circumstances for the assistance in the remarks block (15).

. Check voucher (numbers in parentheses refer to blocks on the form):

(1) Date you issue check.

(2) Same as the payee of the check.

(3) Enter your five digit section number.

(4) Name of the Soldier upon whose eligibility AER assistance is provided.

(5) Enter complete social security number of the Soldier listed in (4) above. Accuracy and legibility are important. Vouchers cannot be processed without complete and accurate SSN.

(6) Enter alpha-numeric pay grade (E3 /02) of the Soldier in item (4).

(7) Enter letter code A,R, or S for Soldier's/applicant's status. "S" is only used for assistance to survivors of deceased Soldiers.

(8) Mark appropriate box with [X].

(9) Enter **complete** residential address of retiree or survivor. If Soldier resides in the barracks, enter his Unit of Assignment address.

(10) Enter last two digits of applicant's component service code. When 1501 or 1502 is coded, enter period of active duty and Reserve Component unit of assignment and home of record (civilian address) in Block 15.

(11) Enter applicant's name and relationship to Soldier if the applicant is **not** the Soldier. An [X] must be entered in the appropriate box. Do not hold the AER Form 52 pending receipt of the signed allotment from the Soldier. If Soldier cannot be reached for approval, state circumstances in remarks block (15) in addition to entering "P" on Line 17B. If the applicant is the Soldier who signs the AER Form 52, make no entry or [X] in this block.

(12) Enter only one category of assistance. If more than one category applies, enter the reason with the largest dollar amount. Breakdown other reasons for assistance with related dollar amounts in the remarks block (15).

(13) Enter repayment method [A] for government allotment, or [C] for all others including cash, check or cash billing. Repayment by allotment is the preferred method of repaying AER loans. When allotment repayment is **not** used, explain **why** in the remarks block (15). Enter the repayment start date that you decide in coordination with Soldier. Example: 05/2004 means first repayment will be deducted from Soldier's pay for the processing month of May 2004. Mark with [X] if Soldier has executed a DD Form 139. **Repayment start dates should be the month following the loan but can be within six months of loan for hardship cases.**

(14) Enter same dollar amount as written on the check. Enter last two digits of assistance code [10] for loans or [11] for grants. **Do not combine loan and grant on one AER Form 52; use separate forms for each type help.** For grant to Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard personnel, record as loan (3010). See section on Assistance to Other Services for additional details.

(15) Include appropriate information shown below. Information must be legible:

- **Home of Record, Next of Kin or Permanent Mailing Address.**
- Brief summary of **reasons** for assistance. Complete explanation **why** assistance was needed.
- When you use code 1403 (Medical/Dental), give detailed explanation of what assistance is provided and for whom. (e.g. "assisted in paying TRICARE co-payment medical bill for Soldier's wife's foot surgery.")
- When you approve a grant, give **specific reason** for grant. (e.g. "inability to repay the loan because....")
- If repayment of loan is not by allotment, **explain why**. (e.g. total compensation from VA)
- Use code 1410 only when no other relatable reason can be used and then give specifics of assistance. (e.g. "child care expenses")
- For Army Reserve or Army National Guard personnel on active duty, include the period of active duty and their Reserve Component unit of assignment **and** civilian address.
- See section on Overpayment Refunds for required entries.

- For Soldiers under Chapter 13 bankruptcy, record the name of the court appointed trustee who approved the assistance. Complete the entry in Block 17 Line A as indicated below. See section on bankruptcy for additional information.

(16) Enter **Highest** approval authority above AERO/Asst AERO. Current approval authority limits are:

- AERO/Designated Assistant AERO up to \$2500. (Entry in this block not required when approved at this level.)

- Grade O5 or higher and DAC equivalent from \$2500.01 to \$3500. (Enter name, grade, and title in this block.)

- HQ AER all cases more than \$3500, **all** individuals whose SSN appears on the *Restricted List*; and **all survivors** regardless of dollar amount. (Enter name, grade, and title in this block.)

- For approved assistance to other branch of service personnel, record the name, grade and title of person from the respective aid society who approved the assistance.

(17) We distribute temporary codes for specific requirements by electronic message or memorandum. Enter only codes currently authorized.

Permanent use codes are:

Code C:

- For Soldiers under Chapter 13 bankruptcy (after approval by the court appointed trustee and the appropriate approval authorities) enter "C" on Line A.

Code P:

- If Soldier does not sign this form as an allotment, enter "P" in line B.

(18) If you issue only one check, do not enter the check number in this block. For loans with multiple checks, complete only one allotment authorization/promissory note. Record the check number containing the completed allotment authorization/promissory note in Block 18 of **all** AER Forms 52 pertaining to the case.

When a voided check contains the signed allotment authorization/promissory note and is part of a multiple check loan, change the allotment authorization to the next AER Form 52 in sequence. Secure the Soldier's signature and ensure the correct check number is recorded in Block 18.

For grants with multiple checks, treat as separate check. Do not total the assistance on one AER Form 52 and do not enter check number in Block 18.

Allotment Authorization/Promissory Note

- Complete one allotment authorization/promissory note for each case.
- For loans, use Soldier's name and enter the total dollar amount of all loan checks issued and the monthly repayment amount agreed to by the Soldier.
- For grants, leave this section blank except for signature block which must be signed by the applicant of the assistance.
- If the Soldier does not personally sign the allotment authorization, place a "P" in Block 17B. Subsequently, obtain a signed DD Form 2558 from the Soldier for the allotment and forward a copy of the signed allotment to HQ AER. Retain original with the case file at the section.
- All applicants must sign the form regardless of whether assistance is a loan or a grant. The applicant's signature and SSN are part of the internal control program for fiscal integrity of AER funds and confirms receipt of the assistance check.
- AERO or Assistant AERO must date and countersign.

NOTE: Except for block 18, each AER Form 52 must be a completed document that stands alone, without reference to companion documents.

Disposition -

- Original - file in AER section, retain for **three years** following date of the document.

ALLOTMENTS

GENERAL

The preferred method of repaying AER loans is by allotment. Cash repayments are the exception to policy. You should limit cash payments only to those cases specified in the Direct Billing and Cash Payments portion of this manual.

Allotments are normally started for a minimum of three months. You may initiate an allotment for an active duty Soldier for one or two months if it is in the best interest of both the Soldier and the Army. For retired Soldiers you must initiate allotments for at least three months. Soldiers normally repay loans within twelve months of issue or before their ETS. In exceptional cases, you may extend the loan repayment period past twelve months.

The allotment should begin the month following the loan issue month. You may delay starting an allotment for up to five months if an earlier start will cause hardship for the Soldier; contact HQ AER for exceptions to these times. HQ AER will suspense all delayed allotments. Do not hold an assistance case file or DD Form 2558 at your section.

Since January 1992, HQ AER has centrally processed all allotments for active duty Soldiers to DFAS-Indianapolis. Beginning April 1993, we created a similar central process for retired Soldiers' allotments with DFAS - Cleveland.

Some special situations for your consideration:

- **Backup Allotments:** You must send us a backup allotment for those exceptional cases when you authorize repayment by cash. We will start that backup allotment if we do not receive the cash payment or if the Soldier's bank refuses to honor their repayment check. FAX a completed copy of DD Form 2558 together with the AER Form 52 it to HQ AER. Indicate on the form that it is a BACKUP Allotment
- **Allotments for Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers:** Some reserve component Soldiers on active duty for extended periods are paid under Defense Joint Military Pay System (DJMS) and can initiate an allotment. When you assist a reserve component Soldier, you must check with your servicing F&AO to find out if an allotment can be started. If so, the Soldier must repay by allotment.

ALLOTMENTS

ACTIVE DUTY AND RETIRED SOLDIERS

The viability of AER's assistance program depends on loan repayments. Therefore, it is a condition of loan approval that the Soldier agree to repay the loan by allotment from their pay, keep the allotment in effect for the duration of the loan, and agree to pay the entire debt before release from active duty.

HQ AER centrally processes all allotments for **active duty and retired Soldiers** directly to DFAS -Indianapolis and DFAS - Cleveland, respectively. The source data for the allotment is obtained from the Allotment Authorization/Promissory Note portion of the AER Form 52 or from a DD Form 2558, prepared by the section that issued the loan. Soldiers should initiate an allotment on the AER web site for those loans they receive that are issued by the American Red Cross.

- When the **applicant is the Soldier** who personally signs the AER Form 52, this form constitutes the allotment authorization. Therefore, the AER Form 52 should be checked for accuracy and completeness of these specific items:
 - Do not make any entry in block 11. This area, to include the GPA/Approval options must remain blank.
 - Block 13 must contain an "A" and the allotment start date, which is normally the month following the date of the loan. In exceptional cases the start date may be up to five months in the future. HQ AER must approve exceptions beyond five months.
 - If the check is part of a multi-check loan, complete only **one** Allotment Authorization for the case. All AER Forms 52 for this case must have the check number of the form containing the allotment authorization entered in block 18.
 - The one completed allotment authorization must equal the total dollar value of the loan. Enter the dollar amount of the monthly repayment the Soldier agrees to repay. The loan is normally repaid within one year from date of issuance but repayment may be longer. Contact HQ AER for approval of repayment periods exceeding two years,

The amount of monthly repayment **does not** have to be evenly divisible into the amount of the loan. Under DJMS allotment procedures, DFAS will calculate the number of repayments based on the total amount of the allotment and the dollar amount of the monthly repayment. The last payment will be automatically calculated for small adjustments necessary to pay off the loan balance completely.

- The Soldier must sign the form and enter their SSN. The AERO/AAERO must countersign the form.
- When the **applicant is someone other than the Soldier** and the Soldier does not personally sign the AER Form 52, you must check the following entries for accuracy and completeness:
 - Block 11 must contain the applicant's name and relationship to the Soldier. Also, **ONE** option, ("GPA", "SM Approves", or "SM Does Not Approve") must be selected.
 - Block 13 of the form should be completed as above.
 - Place a "P" in block 17B.
 - If the check is part of a multi-check loan, complete only **one** allotment Authorization/Promissory Note, and complete it as above.
 - Have the **applicant** sign the form and enter the **applicant's SSN**. Again, AERO/AAERO must countersign the form. Signature of applicant acknowledges receipt of money and must be included for both loans and grants.
 - Send AER Form 52 to HQ AER via the Samaritan program.

Each new loan requires a new allotment. **DO NOT** stop existing allotments, combine balances or start a consolidated allotment.

If you provide assistance to a spouse, it is your responsibility to obtain the signed allotment for repayment. You must get the Soldier sponsor to sign an Allotment Authorization (DD Form 2558) regardless of the Soldier's unit of assignment. When you receive the signed DD Form 2558, write the assistance check number in Block 16 of the form. Retain the original copy of the form in your section and send or FAX the duplicate copy to HQ AER.

- Spouse Authorization to Start Allotment.

Defense Finance and Accounting Service has published Interim Change 40-99 to the DoDFMR, Volume 7A, which reads in part:

“A properly executed form (e.g. DD2558, Authorization to Start, Stop or Change an Allotment) or a written request from a member (or from an agent acting under a specific power of attorney) or an automated data exchange (from specific organizations) may be used to establish,

discontinue, or change an allotment.”

This means that a spouse, acting under a **Special Power of Attorney**, may sign for AER assistance requiring an allotment repayment. Further telephonic clarification with Ms. McGriff, HQ DFAS about the intent of the Interim Change specifically excludes using a General Power of Attorney to sign an allotment for AER assistance. **In order to obligate the Soldier’s pay account, a spouse must have a Power of Attorney which specifically authorizes them to obligate the Soldier’s pay for that allotment**

In such cases, use Samaritan in the same manner you do for spouse applicant cases. Once you complete the case and print the check, please send by FAX or mail, a copy of your file AER Form 52, with the “P” in block 17B highlighted and a copy of the power of attorney attached, to AER HQ, Attn: Allotments.

AER ONLINE LOAN PAYMENT

Loan Repayment Procedures IAW AR 930-4: The primary means of loan repayments is through a payroll deduction allotment that the Soldier or authorized family member establish at the time of assistance.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) does not allow AER to process an allotment for activated Army National Guard and Reserve Soldiers current on Title 10 orders. Additionally this restriction may apply to Retirees whose VA disability is at least 40% or higher.

The National Headquarters now offers the option for Soldiers and Retirees unable to repay by allotment to establish payments on line. Once the Soldier/Retiree receives a loan they can go to AER’s Web-Site at **WWW.AERHQ.ORG** and under News and Update you will find the On-Line payment link. This link requires first time user to register their information in order to establish an account.

As an option and with the Soldier/ Retiree’s authorization the National Headquarters will register the account and set up the monthly payments based on the payment schedule the AER Officer establishes at the time the loan is issued.

Please Note: In order for the National Headquarters to assist in establishing the account a Supplemental Promissory Note Agreement must be signed and forward to AER HQS.

PRIVACY POLICY:

Army Emergency Relief will only share your information with the companies that provide these payment services. We require that these companies protect your information and use it only to provide the services we ask them to perform for us.

AER will create a User ID and a Generic Password that can be changed once a Soldier/Retiree logs in. We will select a Security Question and Answer that can also be changed during log in.

Confirmation of the account will be sent via E-mail, Personal Letter or by Phone Call.

DIRECT BILLING AND CASH PAYMENTS

AER has a direct billing and cash repayment program for those few cases where loan repayment via allotment is **not possible** (e.g. retirees who have 100% VA disability pay). **This program is not a substitute for repaying by allotment, but an alternative method for a Soldier who cannot have an allotment.**

Our direct billing program works much like other forms of periodic repayments used by commercial businesses. The loan recipient receives a monthly statement and a return envelope from HQ AER. We individualize the statement with the Soldier's SSN preprinted on both the statement and on the return envelope.

We prefer that the Soldier send a check or money order for the amount of the repayment directly to HQ AER. Some Soldiers may want to make their monthly payment at their local AER section. Although we **do not encourage** this method, you should be prepared to handle such a transaction using the following procedures:

- Repayment **WITHOUT** the Direct Billing Statement.
 - Complete AER Form 50, Loan Repayment Receipts.
 - Confirm the Soldier's SSN.
 - Accept the repayment by check or money order only. (Direct Soldiers with cash to purchase a money order.)
 - Mail the check or money order with part 1 of AER Form 50 to HQ AER in a standard business size window envelope.
 - Give the Soldier part 2 of the AER Form 50.
 - Retain part 3 of the AER Form 50 in your section files.
- Repayment **WITH** the Direct Billing Statement:
 - Follow above procedures.
 - Mail check or money order and part 1 or AER Form 50 to HQ AER in the preprinted envelope provided as part of the direct billing mailer.

NOTE: AER loan repayments must **NEVER** be sent to the central bank. **ALWAYS** mail them immediately to HQ AER.

We know that there can be exceptions to the cash payment policy. You must make a decision for exception based on your knowledge of the Soldier and his/her personal circumstances. In those **extremely rare** cases when you authorize cash repayment and the Soldier can have an allotment, the Soldier **must** execute a backup allotment. We will start the backup allotment if we do not receive the cash payment on time or if the Soldier's bank refuses to honor his repayment check.

Procedures:

- Complete a DD Form 2558 for the amount of the loan.
- Have Soldier sign the completed allotment.
- Attach a copy of a completed DD Form 2558 to the AER Form 52 and FAX to HQ AER.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS AND COLLECTION PROCESS

A loan account with an outstanding balance, in which a Soldier does not make a payment within 30 days of the last payment, becomes delinquent on the 31st day. Also, a loan account which has a scheduled allotment start date becomes delinquent 61 days from the date the scheduled allotment fails to start.

Timely resolution of the underlying cause is the key factor in delinquent cases. HQ AER will do all additional follow-up contact with delinquent Soldier. In certain exceptional cases we may ask for your assistance in contacting a Soldier.

The follow-up collection effort used by HQ AER consists of a series of direct mail letters to the Soldier. If these are not answered, we will request command intervention. As a last resort, we will use other collection practices for particularly flagrant delinquents.

INSTALLATION CLEARANCE

It is extremely important that you establish and actively supervise sound installation clearance procedures that insure all Soldiers process through your AER section before they receive final clearance at your installation.

As a part of a Soldier's installation clearance, you should check each Soldier against either AER's Interactive Web Query (IWQ) system to see if that Soldier owes AER money. If so, arrange for collection of the debt. (One method of debt collection involves using DD Form 139, Pay Adjustment Authorization.)

Clearance procedures -

- If the Soldier does not owe AER any money: clear the Soldier.
- If the Soldier owes AER, is under a valid repayment allotment and is on PCS orders: clear the Soldier.
- If the Soldier is retiring, is under a valid repayment allotment and is carrying the allotment forward into retirement: clear the Soldier.
- If the Soldier owes AER and is separating from the Army: collect the debt.
 - Have the Soldier pay the debt in full with check or money order. Direct Soldiers with cash to purchase a money order. Send the payment and copy 1 of the AER Form 50 to HQ AER. Ensure that the Soldier's name, SSN and amount of payment are accurate.

- If the Soldier cannot pay the account, complete and have the Soldier sign a DD Form 139 and turn into your servicing F&AO. They will collect the debt from the Soldier's final pay if enough money is remaining in the Soldier's account. If they do collect it, they will issue a U.S. Treasury check to AER.
- If the Soldier does not sign the DD Form 139, submit it to your servicing F&AO without his signature. It is still valid.

(Exercise caution in collecting terminal accounts that leave a Soldier and his family in desperate financial condition. In these extreme cases, recommend to your installation commander that the balance be declared uncollectible for reason of hardship. See Hardship Uncollectible Loans)

- If the Soldier cannot pay the balance at time of clearing (either in cash or by DD Form 139) arrange for monthly cash billing. E-mail the cash repayment plan and the Soldier's forwarding address to HQ AER.

DD FORM 139, PAY ADJUSTMENT AUTHORIZATION

Public Law 100-180 (Section 633) authorizes Finance and Accounting Offices to deduct amounts owed to AER from a Soldier's final pay. DFAS pays the money deducted to AER. You must submit a DD Form 139 to your servicing F&AO to start the process.

The public law permits this action only for separation pay. DD Form 139 adjustments **cannot** be used in place of regular repayment allotment deductions.

At the time of separation, all pay adjustment authorizations pending against a Soldier are ranked by a precedence table for payment. DFAS pays each claim in order until they pay them all or until they exhaust the Soldier's final pay. AER has precedence 10 out of 14 categories. Therefore, we may receive all, part, or none of the money owed to us.

When you clear Soldiers by processing a DD Form 139, explain to them that they remain fully responsible for the balance of their account until HQ AER receives final payment. Many Soldiers have the mistaken belief that they have paid their account simply because you submitted a DD Form 139.

When completing DD Form 139, make sure that you -

- Enter **Company Code D388245** in the Appropriation Data block.
- Coordinate the balance due with your servicing F&AO, based upon the last month of allotment deduction.
- Deliver the completed form to the processing F&AO in time to meet their cutoff before final separation of the Soldier.

UNCOLLECTIBLE LOANS

Only HQ AER will declare loans uncollectible. We will make this declaration based on all information available at the time, including your recommendations. Most frequently, we declare a loan uncollectible because the Soldier fails to respond to our collection efforts.

Sometimes, situations arise where you should immediately send an uncollectible recommendation (DA Form 1106R) to us. Your action will save valuable time and resources in our collection efforts. If you learn that the Soldier is:

- Dead . . .
- Dishonorably discharged from the Army . . .
- Discharged under less than honorable conditions . . .
- Dropped from the rolls as a deserter . . .

. . . immediately recommend that the loan be declared uncollectible. For these cases, complete parts I and II of DA Form 1106R and send to HQ AER. You do not have to have your installation commander sign these cases.

HARDSHIP CASES:

Active Duty Soldiers: Request must be initiated by the Soldier. Recommendations to “write-off” an AER loan because of hardship, must be approved by your level 2 approval authority on DA Form 1106R. Complete all parts of the form and have your level 2-approval authority sign the recommendation in part III. Send the completed form and any allied documents to HQ AER for final action. Those allied documents should include, but not limited to, a budget worksheet for the service member; a written statement from the service member stating the situation; recommendation from First Sergeant or Commander; copies of any outstanding bills-do not send originals. Installation commanders may delegate their authority to approve hardships "write offs" of loan balances of \$50.00 and less to level 1 (AERO) approval authorities.

Retirees and Separated Soldiers: Retirees and those Soldiers separated from the Army may submit a written request to HQ AER to have their balance “written off” for reasons of hardship. The request must be comprehensive and include documentation to substantiate their request, including a complete budget of all income and expenses.

BANKRUPTCY CASES: HQ AER will take action to declare a bankruptcy case uncollectible once we receive notification from the court of a final bankruptcy decision.

NOTE: For all uncollectible actions, the amount declared uncollectible is the total balance of the Soldier's account, not just one particular loan - unless specified otherwise.

AER processes uncollectible actions based on the Soldier's current installation of assignment, which may or may not be the Section that issued the loan. An uncollectible action is not an adverse reflection on any installation. HQ AER does not collect, maintain or publish any statistics relating uncollectible loans to specific installations.

OVERPAYMENT REFUNDS

Though allotments under the Defense Joint Military Pay System (DJMS) will pay out loan balances in full, there are other situations that can cause an accumulation of overpayments in a Soldier's account.

In our centralized accounting at HQ AER, we associate each loan with a specific Soldier's SSN. We also associate each payment with a specific loan held by that Soldier. We process each payment against the amount due on each loan in a Soldier's account before we identify or authorize refund of any overpayment.

- Sections **will not issue refund checks unless HQ AER approves.**

- HQ AER identifies all overpaid accounts monthly. We will either send a refund check directly to the Soldier or authorize a section to issue one.

- Chapter 13 Bankruptcy cases are unique and receive special handling. If you receive a request for refund in these cases, contact HQ AER for instructions.

- **EXCEPTIONS:**

If a Soldier has a duplicate deduction for an allotment or someone made a gross error in allotment processing (e.g. \$1000 deduction that should have been a \$100 deduction) you can give a refund to the Soldier without HQ AER approval.

Procedures:

- Make the refund only within 30 days of the EOM LES. You must personally verify the error with the Soldier's original EOM LES.
- Code the refund AER Form 52 as a 3012 and enter in block 15: "Allotment error verified by examination of (month/year) EOM LES". You need make no further explanation.
- Write the date, amount of refund, section number and your name on the Soldier's original EOM LES.

This policy exception does not include cases where a normal allotment deduction did not stop on time. Contact HQ AER for approval of these cases.

Under DJMS, DFAS codes all AER repayment allotments on the Soldier's LES as "Debt to U.S. Govt." However, not all such listings on a LES are AER allotments. Your servicing F&AO can tell you which allotments are AER loan repayments by following the procedures for class T allotments in their Automated Data Systems Manual.

BANKRUPTCY

AER has experienced substantial growth in the number of personal bankruptcies among Soldiers who use our services. These are our policy and procedures for handling assistance to Soldiers who are under bankruptcy.

Bankruptcy actions for Soldiers generally fall into two categories: Chapter 7, Liquidation; or Chapter 13, Adjustment of Debt of Individuals with Regular Income, (formerly known as the "Wage Earners Plan").

Our main concern in any bankruptcy proceeding is to protect the monetary interest of AER while helping the Soldier within the terms of AR 930-4 and the bankruptcy laws. Our policy remains that all Soldiers are eligible for emergency financial assistance IAW AR 930-4, despite whether they are or were in the past under bankruptcy action.

The fact that a Soldier is currently involved in a bankruptcy action is only an additional element of information that you must evaluate as part of the initial assistance application. You should ensure item 11, AER Form 700 is completed. If the Soldier is currently in bankruptcy, or intends to file bankruptcy then provide descriptive circumstances in item 14e.

If Soldier is currently under Chapter 13 action, you must obtain approval of the court trustee before you may issue new loan to the Soldier. Note receipt of that approval in the remarks block of both AER Form 700 and AER Form 52. If you decide to approve the assistance, place "C" on line A, block 17 of the AER Form 52. Prior approval is not required for assistance issued as a grant.

Procedures for processing court actions in bankruptcy cases:

- Chapter 7, Liquidations:
 - If Soldier has an outstanding AER loan balance, forward all court documents to HQ AER. Once the court approves the bankruptcy, HQ AER will refund any monies due to the court. Sections will not refund money in a bankruptcy case.

- Chapter 13, Adjustment of Debt of Individuals with Regular Income:
 - If you receive notice that a Soldier with an outstanding AER loan balance has filed for Chapter 13, complete the "Proof of Claim" form and return it to the court clerk. The amount to be claimed is the entire AER balance not just for loans issued by your section. Use the IWQ for the current balance. Send any allied documents to HQ AER. We will make any refunds to the court trustee. Sections will not refund money in Chapter 13 cases.

STOP PAYMENT AND VOID AER FORM 52

When using Samaritan you may void checks as follows:

- If a mistake is made on a check, you may delete the check **before it is printed**. To delete the check:

[Click] on the <Delete> button at the bottom of the screen.

- A check may be voided after it has been printed, **provided the case has not been submitted to AER Headquarters**. To void the check:

[Click] on the <Void> button at the bottom of the screen.

If a check must be voided **AFTER** the data has been submitted to HQ AER:

- Write "VOID" across the face of the check.
- Complete AER Form 30R.
- Mail voided check and completed AER Form 30R to HQ AER.

Stop Payment of Check:

- Stop payments should be initiated by notifying HQ AER when a condition exists that will result in financial loss to AER. (e.g. a lost or stolen AER Form 52.) Stop payments should not be used when a Soldier has a disagreement with the vendor about incomplete or unsatisfactory work. The performance of services and/or quality of purchases is not an AER responsibility. AER only provides the financial support for the Soldier to resolve his initial problem. The Soldier must resolve these type problems through established legal channels.
- When a stop payment is necessary, telephone HQ AER and follow-up by mailing AER Form 30R to HQ.

MANCOR

Each section has the ability to review and print their individual copy of the report on a daily basis. The report is updated as cases are transmitted to AER HQS. This report is found in the report section of Samaritan 4.0. Instructions on how to utilize the report are found in the (HELP TOOL) once you log into the program.

ACTIVE LOAN LIST

AER HQS no longer mails this report to AER sections; we require sections to use the IWQ to gather current loan information as it applies to each individual who may have obtained AER assistance.

ALLOTMENTS REQUIRING SIGNATURE

When a Soldier or Spouse receives assistance while in transit or in a TDY status it may result in allotment not being signed for repayment. However, in most cases the assistance is given with an approved POA or the Soldiers consent. This POA or consent does authorize AER Headquarters to initiate the start of an allotment. In most cases, we do ask that you contact the Soldier and have them to sign a DD Form 2558 for the assistance. If you are notified by this HQS to locate and have the soldier to sign the allotment please do not process the allotment through the Soldier's local PAC or the servicing F&AO. We require that a duplicate copy be sent to HQ AER for processing to DFAS and that you retain a copy for your file.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

The AER Education Program is designed to help Army Families with the cost of vocational training, preparation for service academies, and undergraduate college for dependent children and spouses. Our assistance is in the form of cash scholarships paid directly to the school.

The specific features and requirements associated with this program change annually. AER Sections do not have responsibility for administering the program. But, you may receive questions from Soldiers and their families about AER's scholarships. Therefore, this portion of the manual gives you the basics from which you can answer these questions.

MG James Ursano Scholarship Program for dependent Children

The MG James Ursano Scholarship Program is to assist Army families with undergraduate college expenses for their dependent children.

Definitive information, instructions and online application for the MG James Ursano Scholarship Program may be obtained from HQ, AER or the AER web page.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale
- Be a full time undergraduate student for the entire academic year at a school accredited by the U.S. Department of Education
- Be a dependent of a Soldier on federal active duty, a retiree, or a deceased active or retired Soldier
 - ▶ To be a dependent you must be:
 - Under the age of 23 for the entire academic year
 - Registered in DEERS
 - Unmarried for the entire academic year

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Financial assistance is awarded based on financial need, academics, leadership and achievement. The scholarship funds are split evenly between the fall and spring semesters, terms, or quarters. The funds are to be used for tuition, books, fees, supplies and school room and board either on or off campus as requested by the student.

Online applications are available from December 1 through March 1 – www.aerhq.org.

- Submit online application
- Mail supporting documents (refer to online instructions) to:
HQ, Army Emergency Relief
MG James Ursano Scholarship Program
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332-0600

- All applicants must file:
 - ▶ Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) not later than 1 March for the upcoming academic year online at www.fafsa.ed.gov
 - ▶ Mail a copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR) to AER postmarked no later than 1 May

OVERSEAS SPOUSE EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (OSEAP)

The Overseas Spouse Education Assistance Program (OSEAP) is a needs-based education assistance program designed to provide spouses, residing with active duty Soldiers in Overseas Commands, with financial assistance to pursue educational goals through college courses. Dependents assigned with their spouses to Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico should apply for the Stateside Spouse Education Assistance Program (SSEAP). Second undergraduate or graduate level courses are not covered by OSEAP.

Definitive information, instructions and online application for the OSEAP Program may be obtained from HQ, AER or the AER web page.

All Soldiers and their dependents must be registered in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale
- Reside with Soldier at a Overseas Command
- Be dependent of a Soldier on federal active duty
 - ▶ To be a dependent of Soldier you must be registered in DEERS

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Financial assistance is awarded up to half the cost of tuition per term based on financial need, as evidenced by income, assets, family size, special financial obligations and circumstances per academic year. Spouses who receive free tuition may apply for assistance for fees, supplies, or books for classes in which they are enrolled.

All new and continuing students must complete a new online application for the first term attended of each academic year. The online application is not complete until all supporting documents have been received at AER Headquarters. All required documents must be mailed to AER postmarked by the term deadline date. Students must complete an online renewal form to receive assistance for subsequent terms.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- **Student's Transcript(s)** verifying a minimum acceptable cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale. Transcript(s) of all post secondary grades to include the most recent quarter completed is required. If you did not attend post secondary classes,

transcripts are not required. Continuing students must send all grades of those terms completed upon receipt.

- **Soldier's PCS Orders** must be provided. Please send copies, not originals. Active duty Soldiers must send PCS Orders with assignment to AER Headquarters. AGR Soldiers activated under Title 10 must send most recent assignment orders to include the ETS and verifying period of active duty through the entire academic year.
- **Soldiers LES** must be provided to verify period covered, name, SSN, grade, years of service, ETS date and branch of service for the Soldier.
- **Student's DD214** must be provided if the student was previously in the USA, USN, USAF, USMC, RES or GRD.

MAIL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO:

HQ, Army Emergency Relief
ATTN: OSEAP Program
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332-0600

STATESIDE SPOUSE EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SSEAP)

The Stateside Spouse Education Assistance Program (SSEAP) is for spouses of active duty and retired Soldiers, and widow(ers) of Soldiers who died either on active duty or in a retired status, and are residing in the United States.

Definitive information, instructions and online application for the OSEAP Program may be obtained from HQ, AER or the AER web page.

All Soldiers and their dependents must be registered in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of a 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale
- Reside with Soldier at a Stateside Command
- Be a full time undergraduate student for the entire academic year at a school accredited by the U.S. Department of Education
- Be dependent of a Soldier on federal active duty, a retiree, or a deceased active or retired Soldier
 - ▶ To be a dependent of Soldier you must be registered in DEERS

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Financial assistance is awarded based on financial need. The SSEAP scholarships are awarded annually for up to four academic years to attend as a first undergraduate level student at a post secondary school, full time. Funds are to assist with academic expenses such as tuition, books, fees and supplies, and will be disbursed equally between fall and spring semesters or quarters.

Online applications are available from December 1 through March 1 – www.aerhq.org.

- Submit online application
- Mail supporting documents (refer to online instructions) to:
HQ, Army Emergency Relief
ATTN: SSEAP Program
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332-0600
- All applicants must file:
 - ▶ Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) not later than 1 March for the upcoming academic year online at www.fafsa.ed.gov
 - ▶ Mail a copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR) to AER postmarked no later than 1 May

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

The Army traditionally conducts an annual fund raising campaign for AER during the period 1 March through 15 May. The policies and requirements concerning this campaign are in Chapter 5, AR 930-4.

The Director, AER sends a campaign letter to each commander before the start of the annual fund drive. AER sends copies separately to the AER Officer for use by the Campaign Coordinator and the AERO during the campaign.

Monies received as contributions by sections during the period 1 March to 31 May will be categorized as campaign funds and will be included in your fund campaign after-action report. All unsolicited contributions, special gifts, memorials, and special fund raising events (which may or may not be designated as part of your local campaign) can also be included. **Do not include Bequests in this category;** send all bequests directly to HQ AER.

Because of the workload involved in orchestrating a fund raising campaign, we recommend that the Command appoint a campaign coordinator apart from the AER Officer to handle the daily details of the campaign. This action will insure that the AER Officer is available to handle the primary mission of emergency assistance to Soldiers.

Factors to use in selecting and appointing a campaign coordinator are: maturity, enthusiasm, belief in the AER program, and support of the Command Group.

Our recommendation for allocating campaign functions between the AERO and the Campaign Coordinator is enclosed.

We separately publish a campaign coordinators guide, entitled “Keys to Success.” This booklet is available on line and also from HQAER. It provides time tested techniques and practices that previous campaign coordinators have used with outstanding success.

Specific procedures that require AERO personal involvement and attention to detail are -

- Safeguarding cash and processing it into a deposit at the AER central bank.
- Promptly deposit all checks to the AER central bank. Deposits must be made at least weekly.
- Transmit all campaign allotments to HQ AER via Samaritan.
- Using the Samaritan software, at least weekly (preferably daily), send all data to HQ AER during the campaign. Please do not hold data until the end of the campaign.
- Send the campaign after-action report (prepared by the Campaign Coordinator) to HQ AER as early as possible following the close of the campaign.

Contributing to AER by allotment should be encouraged. The use of allotments enables contributors to budget their donations to AER while making a small impact upon their finances at campaign time. Also, the use of allotments helps prevent fraud and loss of funds during the campaign.

Solicitation

- All Soldiers, both active and retired, are eligible for AER assistance and should be contacted by a campaign keyperson.
- Active Duty Soldiers: All active duty Soldiers should be contacted, given information about AER and asked to contribute by allotment or by personal check.
- Retired Soldiers: Campaign Coordinators often overlook retired Soldiers as a potential source of contributions. Army retirees who are DOD employees may and should be contacted at their duty location. Retired Soldiers who reside within the installation service area, can be solicited either at on post activities such as a retiree open house or by mail. Solicitation can be by an individual letter or can be included as part of other routine mailings by the installation retired activity office, retiree council or other local retiree organization. Retirees should be encouraged to contribute by allotment from their Army retired pay or, alternatively, by personal check.
- Civilian Employees: Civilian employees, other than retired Soldiers, should not be directly solicited because they are not eligible for AER assistance. But, civilian employees who want to contribute to AER may do so by personal check. Allotment contributions cannot be processed from civilian employee pay unless your local F&AO specifically authorizes such allotments. Process any civilian pay allotments directly with your local F&AO.

Contributions of \$250 or more - The Internal Revenue Service requires that contributors of \$250 or more (lump sum) receive a written acknowledgement of their contribution. As a result, all contributors with a lump sum contribution of \$250 or more will be sent a letter of thanks by the AERO on behalf of the commander, specifically indicating amount of contribution. A sample letter is enclosed.

Using DA Form 4908 for contribution allotment -

- Minimum amount of allotment contribution is \$1 per month for three months.
- Allotments should be submitted to HQ AER via Samaritan software in sufficient time to be processed before the DFAS June cut off. Allotment contributions from civilian employees are not accepted by DFAS.
- All allotments will start in the June processing month.
- Contributors can have no more than one AER contribution allotment in effect at any given time.
- Contributors must complete and sign their DA Form 4908. Signed DA Forms 4908 are retained at installation for one year.
- DA Form 4908 has space for the Campaign Coordinator to pre-number forms for control purposes. Such control is a local option and is not mandatory.
- Company Codes are automatically entered at HQAER before we transmit the allotment to DFAS. Therefore, Sections are not responsible for this information.
- Disposition of DA Form 4908:
 - Give Copy 1 to the contributor as a receipt with the keyperson's signature.
 - Retain Copy 2 at installation. Do not send to HQ AER.
 - Use Copy 3 for control by the Campaign Coordinator.
 - Use Copy 4 for subsequent control by the AER officer, as needed.
- Allotment contribution authorizations which are received after cut off for June deduction from active or retired pay can still be processed. Submit them promptly to HQ AER via Samaritan using procedures outlined above.

When contributor makes cash or check contribution -

- Contributors should make checks payable to "AER".
- Give Copy 1 of DA Form 4908 to the contributor as a receipt; destroy Copy 2; use copies 3 and 4 as above.

- Cash must be safeguarded and frequently turned over to the Campaign Coordinator for conversion to check or money order.

- Campaign Key Persons give checks to the Campaign Coordinator at least weekly. Campaign Coordinator, in turn, transfers all checks to the AERO who deposits them in the AER central bank at least weekly, using an AER Form 51.

- All contributions must be safeguarded throughout the process from receipt to deposit in the AER central bank account. Deposits to the central bank must take place at least weekly.

Monitoring receipt of allotment contributions -

Each allotment that you submit to HQ AER on the Samaritan software will be tracked by HQ until the allotment is accepted by DFAS.

Allotments which are rejected by DFAS and cannot be resolved at HQ AER will be returned to the originating section with a request for resolution, correcting and resubmission, if possible.

Campaign After-Action Report -

Send the campaign After-Action Report through MACOM commander to Director, AER within 30 days of campaign completion. Format for the report is enclosed.

Recommended Assignment of AER Fund Campaign Responsibilities

AERO

1. Obtain command approval of inclusive campaign dates.
2. Obtain command designation of Campaign Coordinator.
3. Orient Campaign Coordinator.
4. Ensure availability of sufficient campaign materials.
5. Provide publicity before, during and after campaign.
6. Provide campaign materials to Campaign Coordinator.
7. Safeguard contributions.
8. Deposit checks in AER central bank.
9. Send campaign data to HQ AER via Samaritan.
10. Send letter of thanks to all contributors of \$250 or more.
11. Prepare and forward After-Action Report to HQ AER.
12. Correct and resubmit allotments that were rejected.

Campaign Coordinator

1. Get designated unit representatives and key personnel.
2. Orient unit representatives and key personnel.
3. Prepare for "kick off" ceremony.
4. Conduct "kick off" ceremony.
5. Issue campaign materials to unit representatives and key personnel.
6. Solicit contributions from active duty and retired Soldiers.
7. Safeguard contributions.
8. Convert cash contributions to check or money order.
9. Turn in contributions and campaign data to AERO.
10. Prepare After-Action Report.
11. Prepare campaign "Expression of Appreciation" certificates for organizations.
12. Prepare letters of appreciation to unit representatives and key personnel (awards to contributors are inappropriate).
13. Arrange presentation of certificates and letters.

PROCESSING CASH CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Cash contributions (actual Federal Reserve Note dollar bills and coins) require special handling because of the susceptibility and temptation to theft and the difficulty in transferring them between installation and the AER central bank.

The preferred method of handling such contributions is to **convert the cash to a check or money order.**

1. You may **purchase a money order** from the U.S. Post Office/APO or a commercial source (bank or convenience store, etc) and pay for it with part of the cash contribution. Enter the amount of the conversion fee in the Samaritan program using the cash conversion function. (However, please use your judgment in conducting these transactions such that you do not spend a dollar to send a dollar contribution to HQ.) If you use this option, retain the money order receipt with your campaign records, thereby permitting an audit to include the disposition on all cash you received.
2. You may **establish a local bank account** at an FDIC insured bank. These accounts should be at no cost to AER. Discuss this with your installation banking officer who most likely can make such arrangements for you. When a local bank account is used, it must be registered in the name of Army Emergency Relief (U.S. Federal Tax ID number: 53-0196552) and should have at least two authorized signatories. The account must be reconciled each statement cycle and records maintained in the AER office to support your periodic audit requirements. Notify HQ AER whenever you establish a local bank account. Tell us the name of the bank, the account number and the estimated duration of the account.

SENDING CASH CONTRIBUTIONS TO CENTRAL BANK

AER Form 51 is a three part form designed for recording and forwarding deposits from **contributions only**. Do not use this form for depositing loan repayments. (Any repayments that are deposited with this form will not be credited to the Soldier's loan account.)

Procedures for using this form are extremely simple -

- . Collect all monies.
- . Convert any cash to a check or money order, payable to AER.
- . Complete AER Form 51 using Samaritan campaign module:
 - For cash conversion icon: enter check/money order serial number and total dollars.
 - For check/money orders:
 - select items to be included
 - use print icon
 - verify next AER Form 51 serial number

. Mail part 1 of the form, **together with the checks**, to Army Emergency Relief, PO Box 791085, Baltimore, MD 21279-1085

. Mail part 2 of the form to HQ AER .

NOTE: We designed parts 1 and 2 of this form for use with a standard window envelope, thereby saving you time and increasing accuracy.

. File part 3 of the form in your section records for future use by you, the auditors and HQ AER.

. Retain copy 3 in your files for three calendar years following the end of the year in which it was prepared. Then you may destroy it.

**OUTLINE FOR AER CAMPAIGN
AFTER-ACTION REPORT
(AG-766(R-1))**

1. Indicate specific period of the campaign
2. Document campaign results
 - a. Total dollar amount by category of contributor

	<u>Allotments</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Total</u>
(1) Active duty			
(2) Retired			
(3) Civilians			

- b. Total dollar amount collected from

	<u>Totals</u>
(1) Organizations	
(2) Special events	
(3) Memorials	
(4) Unsolicited contributions	

(Note: Do Not include Bequests in campaign results.)

3. List all Organizational donations of \$300 and greater. Also, list all individuals or organizations who wish to remain anonymous. (Due to the fact that all contributions are entered through Samaritan, we can obtain the names of individuals from that file to be listed in the Annual Report.)
4. Describe special fund raising events and amount of money received from each.
5. Evaluate campaign; success, problems and recommendations for future campaigns.
6. Specify the amount of campaign materials (DA Forms 4908, AER Campaign Posters, AER Campaign Flyers, and Certificates of Appreciation) required for the next annual AER fund campaign.

For the Commander

Signature

Enclosures
as required

(Appropriate Letterhead)

(Date)

MAJ John J. Jones
3d Bn 47th Infantry
Fort Smith KS 11111

Dear Major Jones:

On behalf of the Commander and Army Emergency Relief, please accept our sincere appreciation for your support of AER through your contribution in the amount of \$

Interest and support such as yours have made it possible for AER at Fort Smith to serve Soldiers, active and retired, and their families when they are faced with financial emergencies. In over 65* years AER has helped more than 3* million Soldiers with over \$1* Billion. Your support ensures that this mission will continue.

The Revenue Reconciliation Act passed by Congress in August 1993 included a provision requiring taxpayers to have receipts substantiating charitable deductions for gifts of \$250 or more. A canceled check is no longer sufficient documentation. Please retain this letter as your receipt and as validation that you received no goods or services in return for your contribution.

Thank you again. AER is caring people like you reaching out to help other Army people.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

(* NOTE: Update these statistics each year with new data from the AER Form 1, Campaign Q & A Flyer)

SECURITY AND FISCAL INTEGRITY

The key ingredient in the security and integrity of our AER program is the quality of the people who administer it. Therefore, commanders should select, train, inspect, and audit the people who administer his AER program with great care.

Second, adequate and prudent safeguards must be in place to protect the financial soundness of the funds entrusted to your stewardship, without being so stringent that they hamper program administration. In this regard, we have designed the Samaritan software and the program procedures to provide this protection without being overly restrictive.

The area of greatest potential for abuse is handling currency. AEROs must -

- Not accept cash loan repayments. Direct the Soldier to pay with check or money order or preferably, have the Soldier mail payments directly to HQ AER.
- Convert currency received from contributions to a U.S. Treasury check or institutional money order, made payable to AER, secured for overnight storage, and mailed to the central bank (contributions) as soon as possible.
- Not establish local bank accounts unless absolutely necessary for the annual campaign.
- Immediately report any lost or stolen currency to your local military police and to HQ AER.

The second significant potential for theft is through abuse of the AER checks (Form 52s). To prevent abuse AEROs should -

- Inventory the forms upon receipt and return inventory acknowledgement to HQ AER.
- Always secure checks by keeping them locked in a safe unless actually writing one.
- Notify HQ AER by telephone of any discrepancy in shipment, loss of checks, or other condition which could cause loss of AER money.
- Notify and request that local banks, AAFES, and your club system refuse to honor lost or stolen checks.
- Prepare and issue checks in serial number sequence.
- Inventory checks in your working stock by serial number at the end of each day and at least every thirty days for the complete stock.
- Never sign a blank or incomplete AER Form 52.
- Clearly write and left justify the payees's name and the dollar amount of the check for

checks not written by the Samaritan program.

- Void a check by writing the word **VOID** across the face of the check in large bold letters; cut off and destroy the signature block from the check.
- Immediately call HQ AER with the check number, date, amount and payee of any voided check you do not have in your possession. Also, request that local banks, AAFES, and your club system not honor the check.

The third area for potential abuse of the AER program is fraudulent use/abuse of the assistance program and/or kiting an assistance check by a program recipient. Here, you must use your best judgment when deciding to issue assistance. Follow the procedures described in the assistance section of this manual and contact HQ AER for approval of any Soldier whose SSN is on the *Restricted List*. AER checks are designed and printed to deter kiting. Furthermore, HQ AER has established internal controls to detect check kiting.

Regrettably, sometimes AER section personnel succumb to the temptation to steal by conspiracy with program recipients and/or vendors. Kickback of money, goods, and services is a typical method used. Techniques you can use to deter this type of theft are: rotation of duties; spot checking of assistance case actions by a third party; look for patterns of activity involving approved assistance amounts, vendors/ merchants used and assistance reason codes. The award of grants provides the greatest opportunity for these types of program abuse. Therefore, we recommend that all grant cases be reviewed by a second assistance case worker before being issued to the Soldier.

The last (but not least) area for security awareness involves the Samaritan software program. Alone, the software has low potential for abuse. A more pressing danger is the accidental loss of program and data files by people unfamiliar with computer operation or untrained in the use of this particular program. Therefore, always -

- Safeguard your personal password.
- Make back-up copies of your working files daily.
- Ensure that only those individuals authorized by the commander are registered as Samaritan users and have the proper approval authority entered in the program.
- Lock your hard disk when not in use.

In any event, any loss of funds or negotiable instruments, fraudulent use of the AER program, or other impropriety involving AER must be reported immediately through your chain of command to the Director, AER. The installation commander must have the incident investigated IAW AR 15-6. The report of investigation/board proceedings and the command action taken regarding the results should be sent to the Director, AER within four months of the date of discovery.

AUDITS AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

Use these procedures and check list in conducting the audits prescribed in Chapter 4, AR 930-4. Beginning with financial activity conducted in calendar year 1991, AER replaced the former section financial audit with a **management compliance audit**. AR 36-75 provides general guidance for conducting audits and will be followed when applicable to AER activities.

Audits will be -

- Conducted annually by each commander with an AER section.
- Based on the policy requirements of AR 930-4 and these procedures.
- Completed as of 31 December for all regular audits and as of the end of the preceding month for all special audits.
- Conducted by either an internal review staff auditor or a disinterested officer appointed by the commander of the AER section. The basis of the appointment is the commander's assessment of the situation, including the reason for the audit and availability of resources.
- Accomplished using the attached guide. Explanatory notes will be included for all "NO" answers.

Send regular audit reports, with enclosures, through the major commander, to the Director, AER, by 15 April following the close of the annual audit cycle. Reports of special audits should reach the Director, AER, within 90 days following the ending date of the special audit.

All reports should include -

- A copy of the completed guide with explanatory notes.
- Any comments and recommendations deemed appropriate by the auditing officer.
- Commander's report of actions taken on all "NO" responses and on any recommendations of the audit officer.

AUDIT GUIDE FOR AER SECTIONS

(NOTE: Provide detailed supplementary explanation for any "NO" answers.)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
<u>GENERAL</u>		
1. Is AERO and all AAEROs appointed in writing by the commander?	_____	_____
2. Did AERO insure that an audit was completed upon assuming his/her duties?	_____	_____
3. Is the AERO knowledgeable regarding requirements, policies prescribed by AR 930-4 and the procedures in the Section Reference Manual?	_____	_____
4. Does AERO account for and safeguard all money and accountable forms?	_____	_____
5. Are AER records maintained and disposed of in accordance with AR 25-400-2, AR 930-4, and the Section Reference Manual?	_____	_____
6. Does AERO keep commanders informed by using AER provided reports and information?	_____	_____
7. Does AERO publicize AER and its programs on a continuing basis throughout the year?	_____	_____
8. Has AERO prepared and maintained Section SOP for operational requirements that comply with AR 930-4, Section Reference Manual, and the commander's instructions?	_____	_____
9. Has AERO established workable procedures with the American Red Cross, as needed, for after hours coverage of Soldiers at this installation?	_____	_____
10. Does AERO routinely notify supervisor and commander when additional personnel are needed for effective operation of AER section?	_____	_____

ASSISTANCE

YES

NO

11. Has commander designated specific individuals with approval authority for financial assistance?

12. Are signature cards, appointment orders and list of AERO and Assistant AERO(s) authorized to sign checks promptly sent to HQ AER as changes occur?

13. Does the AERO/Asst AERO verify the eligibility of all AER assistance applicants?

14. Is financial assistance approved only when there is a genuine emergency need?

15. Have requests for financial assistance been acted upon and authenticated by proper authority?

16. Are all assistance cases that are not within policy or not within authorized categories, processed as an exception to policy?

17. Are cases involving Soldiers on the AER Restricted List, referred to HQ AER for approval of assistance?

18. Is approval of HQ AER routinely obtained in cases involving individuals specified in paragraph 2-3d of AR 930-4?

19. Are grants only approved when the Soldier has a clear case of inability to repay?

20. Is each applicant who is not approved for financial assistance informed of the reasons for denial?

21. Are commanders of active duty applicants informed of the specific actions taken on each request?

22. Are proper component, disbursement and assistance codes used in preparing AER Forms 52?

23. Is Samaritan software used to prepare, record and transmit assistance case data?

24. Is required information routinely included in the remarks block (15) of AER Form 52?

LOAN MANAGEMENT

YES

NO

25. Are allotments (DD Form 2558) initiated and sent to HQ AER for all loans issued to both **active duty and retired Soldiers** who did not sign the AER Form 52 at the time of disbursement?

—

—

26. Have all active duty loan recipients acknowledged and signed the allotment authorization/promissory note on AER Form 52?

—

—

27. Has AERO established procedures and actively supervises execution of installation clearance as it pertains to AER?

—

—

28. Do all Soldiers having AER accounts at the installation clear through AER upon separation from the Army?

—

—

29. Does AERO actively investigate, resolve and report results to HQ AER for:

(a) Allotments pending Soldier's signature?

—

—

(b) Delinquent loan repayments?

—

—

30. Does AER Section refuse to accept cash loan repayments from Soldiers?

—

—

31. Does AERO issue a serial numbered receipt (AER Form 50) for cash/money order loan repayments received?

—

—

32. Are loan repayments mailed to HQ AER at least weekly?

—

—

33. Does AERO process uncollectible loan recommendations (DA Form 1106) in a timely manner?

—

—

34. Does AERO obtain HQ AER approval for overpayment refunds?

—

—

REPORTS

35. – 39. Not used.

CAMPAIGN

- 40. Is there a clear division of duties between AERO and Campaign Coordinator? _____
- 41. Did AERO provide receipt to Campaign Coordinator for cash/check contributions? _____
- 42. Did AERO provide a separate receipt to Campaign Coordinator for contributions by allotment? _____
- 43. Does AERO maintain a campaign file that includes After-Action Report, copy 4 of DA Form 4908 and AER Forms 51(deposit slips)? _____
- 44. Does agreement exist between After-Action Report, AER Forms 51 and DA Forms 4908 regarding dollar amount of contributions collected vs reported? _____
- 45. Does AER Section use Samaritan software to record and transmit AER Campaign activities to HQ AER? _____
- 46. (Not used) _____
- 47. Does AERO have a file copy of Campaign After-Action Report? Does format of report address all items? Was report sent to HQ AER on time? _____
- 48. If amounts of campaign materials require adjustment for next fund campaign, was correction included in After-Action Report? _____
- 49. Are contributions received in cash adequately safeguarded? Is same promptly deposited in AER central bank account using AER Form 51? _____

SECURITY

- 50. Have any loss of funds, improper use of funds, or loss of AER negotiable instruments been reported to the commander? If yes, include details of investigation and report as enclosures to the Audit Report. _____

51. Are AER Forms 52 inventoried immediately upon receipt in the section and is receipt and/or discrepancy acknowledged to HQ AER? ___ ___

52. Are AER Forms 52 being used and is stock inventoried as prescribed in the user manual? ___ ___

53. Does AERO maintain any cash fund to include local bank account, at installation? (NOTE: Explain "YES" answer in audit report and provide details of situation. Also, conduct financial audit of records to include reconciliation of monthly statements.) ___ ___

54. Does AERO safeguard funds and ensure deposits are made within 48 hours of receipt? ___ ___

55. Did Audit Officer conduct serial number inventory of:
(a) AER Form 51 ___ ___

(b) AER Form 52 ___ ___

56. Did any discrepancies exist? (Provide detailed explanation of "yes" answer.) ___ ___

AUDITS

57. Did audit officer review most recent prior audit report? ___ ___

58. Have all required actions from that audit been accomplished? ___ ___

IWQ

59. Do section personnel have IWQ PINs and do they use the IWQ system to retrieve information and to determine applicants outstanding balance to include total assistance receive within a 12 month period. ___ ___

60. Are PINs safeguarded? ___ ___

61. Do section personnel notify HQ when their AER duties are terminated? ___ ___

Army Emergency Relief Section (Nr)
(Installation Address)

(Office Symbol)

(Date)

MEMORANDUM THRU: (Major Commander)

MEMORANDUM FOR Director, Army Emergency Relief, 200 Stovall Street,
Alexandria, VA 22332-0600

SUBJECT: Annual Audit Report, Calendar year 20XX, AER Section (number)

1. References:

- a. AR 930-4, Army Emergency Relief, dated 30 August 1994, Chapter 4.
- b. AER Section Reference Manual
- c. (others)

2. The (CY xxxx) annual audit was completed (date) by the undersigned.

3. The audit check list is attached as Enclosure 1.

4. (Findings)

5. (Recommendations)

Encl

Signature Block

INTERACTIVE WEB QUERY

The Army Emergency Relief Interactive Web Query (IWQ) system is your electronic door to our loan ledger information data base. It allows you around-the-clock access to information you need to do your job. By following these steps, your entry into our electronic information retrieval will be painless, productive and pleasant.

You need certain simple prerequisites before you can take advantage of the IWQ system.

- You must have a personal identification number (PIN) issued by HQ AER. Request for PIN is at Enclosure 1.

- Follow these simple instructions.

The IWQ system gives you a standard package of information about each Soldier for whom you make an inquiry. We have selected the contents of this package to give you critical information necessary for:

- Clearing Soldiers as they transition from your installation.
- Processing and making decisions on new applicants.
- Answering Soldiers' questions about their loan balance and payment history with AER.

The IWQ system is a one way door into the AER database. You can only request information. You can neither input nor modify existing information. Further, we have pre-formatted the information you receive. If you need additional information or you need clarification of information, you must call HQ AER during our normal duty hours.

Because the IWQ system is available around-the-clock, you should use it when it is most advantageous to you for your duty hours and local calling conditions.

Using the IWQ:

Access the IWQ on the Internet from a link on the AER Home Page or directly at URL:
http://www.aerhq.org/login_ivr.asp

Following the "Warning Notice", you must login using your PIN and Section number.

Once you are correctly logged in, you have the option of obtaining data for an individual, using the space for a single SSN, or obtaining abbreviated information for more than one individual by entering multiple SSNs in the appropriate space.

A. Multiple SSN queries are used to obtain "triage" information when you are faced with the task of clearing individuals on PCS/ETS orders. You can enter the SSNs either manually or by cutting and pasting from other electronic documentation. When you press the "Get Details" button, the IWQ will process your request and return a printable report containing one of three entries for each SSN that you have entered:

“No current Assistance Information available for SSN 123-45-6789”
(This Soldier does not have an assistance account with AER.)

“ SSN 123-45-6789 Name Smith Yes, needs to clear with AER.”
(This Soldier has an account with AER and they have a balance payable.”

SSN 123-45-6789 Name Smith No, Does not need to clear with AER”
(This Soldier had an account with AER but he does not owe any money.)

B Single SSN entries are used to obtain more detailed information about a particular Soldier’s AER account:

The top portion of the display contains three columns that show administrative, summary, and current/last 12 month information about this Soldier. If a particular item is blank, it means that no transactions of that type have occurred for this Soldier. The “Totals” shown in the center column contain summary data about all assistance this Soldier has received from AER since inception of our centralized record keeping (approximately 1992). Any amount listed as “Uncollectible for Repayment” should be included in repayments for a new loan. The “Totals for 12 months” indicate how much assistance this Soldier has received during the most recent 12 month period and provide you with data to determine who can/should be the approval authority for any new assistance.

The Current Status of the Soldier is shown in the middle of the display. It will read either “Not Restricted” or “Restricted.” If the Soldier is “Restricted” any future assistance must be approved by HQAER.

The next section of the display shows the status of all open assistance this Soldier has. Of particular importance is the amount of the assistance, the balance owed, and the current status of this assistance. The most common status are: Current, Delinquent, Closed, Chapter 13, and At Collection.

The bottom portion of the display shows the repayment information for each open loan displayed immediately above. This shows whether the repayments are by cash or allotments and the status of each.

(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR HQ AER

SUBJECT: Request for Personal Identification Number (PIN)

1. Request that I be assigned a personal identification number (PIN) for use with the AER interactive web query (IWQ) system.
2. I understand and agree to keep my PIN confidential and not share it with anyone else.
3. I also agree to access the IWQ system and obtain information from it only in the performance of my official AER duties. I further agree not to provide any information so obtained to anyone not performing AER related duties. AER related duties include, but are not limited to, approval of assistance, clearing Soldiers who are transitioning from my installation, and completing loan repayment plans.
4. I will inform HQ AER immediately if I am reassigned from AER duties and/or if my PIN becomes compromised in any manner.

(Signature of Applicant)

Printed Name _____

SSN _____

AER Section Number _____

Signature of AER Officer _____

DISASTER ACTIVITIES

EXTERNAL TO YOUR INSTALLATION:

Occasionally, an installation or MACOM commander may direct an AERO/AAERO deployment to a disaster site in order to provide emergency financial assistance for military personnel in the disaster area.

The key element in effectively working a disaster situation is establishing communications with HQ AER, the American Red Cross and the other service aid societies as required. Some or all of these agencies may be present in the disaster area. In the absence of direct contact and/or reliable telephone links, you may have to relay messages through your installation's emergency communications facilities. If this happens your communications may be severely restricted.

Prior to deploying to a disaster site, you should assemble and take with you a supply of AER Form 700, AER Forms 52, and a copy of AR 930-4 along with the Army Emergency Relief Officer's Section Reference Manual. Do not plan on having computer support available. An additional supply of AER Forms 52 can be sent to you from HQ via overnight courier service.

WITHIN YOUR INSTALLATION:

If the disaster did not involve your office building, continue AER activities necessary to best meet the needs of your Soldiers.

If the disaster involved your office building, make an assessment of what resources you need to reconstitute AER functions for your installation. Contact HQ AER for resupply of those items furnished by HQ. The resupply will be accomplished via overnight courier service for CONUS installations and via two day service for overseas installations.

AT HEADQUARTERS AER:

If the disaster involves the physical offices of HQ AER, all AER sections will be informed of where continuity of operations will be established.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT:

AER has a Memorandum of Agreement with Air Force Aid Society, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance and Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. This agreement ensures that when there is no local Military Aid Society associated with a client's branch of service available, the local Military Aid Society Office assisting the client may provide funds without obtaining authorization pending a natural disaster. When an evacuation order has been issued the local Military Aid Society Office may issue a loan of up to \$500 for travel and basic living expenses.