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Guidelines for Military Family Relief Assistance Program (MFRAP)

Purpose: The Pennsylvania MFRAP provides emergency assistance to eligible service members and eligible relatives or eligible service members. The Program is established to provide emergency assistance grants to families of persons who are residents of Pennsylvania and members of the armed forces.

Eligible Recipients:

- a. Residence Requirement:** Members of the Armed Forces of the United States who are residents of Pennsylvania at the time of the application for assistance. A resident of Pennsylvania is defined as either of the following:
- i. An individual who is domiciled in this Commonwealth. The individual must either physically reside in Pennsylvania or be absent from the Commonwealth pursuant to military orders. An individual's spouse or dependent who is domiciled in this Commonwealth who is stationed in another state or country shall qualify under the program as a resident of Pennsylvania so long as the person does not become domiciled in another state.
 - ii. An individual who qualifies under the definition of the "Resident Individual" in Section 301 (P) of the Act of March 4, 1971 (P. L. 6, No. 2)
- b. Eligible Service Member.** Any of the following:
- . A member of the Armed Forces of the United States or its reserve components, including the Pennsylvania National Guard, who is serving in active duty authorized under Title 10 or Title 32, United States Code, (other than active duty for training) for a period of 30 or more consecutive days.
 - i. A member of the Pennsylvania National Guard serving a state active duty, authorized 51 Pa.C.S. 508, for a period of 30 or more consecutive days.
 - ii. A member in good standing of any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the Pennsylvania National Guard, for a period of **three years** after release from a tour of active duty, authorized under Title 10 or Title 32, United States Code, (other than active duty training) of 30 or more consecutive days duration when the need for assistance is directly related to the **circumstances under paragraph 8.**
 - iii. A member in good standing of the Pennsylvania National Guard for a period of **three years** after release from a tour of state active duty, authorized under 51 Pa.C.S 508, of 40 or more consecutive days duration when the need for assistance is directly related to the **circumstances under paragraph 8.**
 - iv. A former member of the Armed Forces of the United States or its reserve components, including the Pennsylvania National Guard for a period of four years after discharge if:
 1. The member was discharged for medical reasons arising out of the member's military service.

2. The medical disability that resulted in the member's discharge was incurred in the line of duty and was not the result of misconduct.
3. The medical condition giving rise to the discharge did not exist prior to the member entering military service.
4. The medical disability was incurred while the member was serving on active duty, other than active duty for training, or State active duty, for a period of 30 or more consecutive days.
5. The former member received an honorable discharge for medical reasons.
6. The need for assistance is directly related to the former member's military service, **to exigency circumstances beyond the eligible member's control** or the disability incurred **in the line of duty** of the military service.

c. Eligible Relative of an Eligible Service Member.

i. The dependent spouse or dependent child of the eligible service member or, in the case of applicants for financial assistance and to visit a hospitalized service member, the service member's spouse, parent, sibling, or child.

ii. An eligible relative must be a legal resident (domiciliary) of Pennsylvania at the time of application for assistance. An otherwise eligible relative may retain eligibility if absent from the Commonwealth accompanying the eligible service member to military duty in another state or country.

d. **Definitions.** In addition to the terms described in paragraph 4, the following definitions shall apply in these guidelines unless the context clearly indicates otherwise or unless the governing statute, as amended, used a different definition.

• "Qualifying period of military service" means active duty, other than active duty for training, of a duration of 30 or more consecutive days or State Active duty ordered under 51 Pa.C.S 508 or a duration of 30 or more consecutive days.

i. "Exigent circumstances" Emergency or extraordinary situations or conditions resulting in an eligible service member being unable to provide the necessities of living for the member or the member's dependents due to factors beyond the member's control. The term includes, but is not limited to, natural or manmade disasters, loss of home, loss of employment, disability or serious illness or injury.

Other Assistance.

a. Except as provided in paragraph 6c, in order to qualify for assistance under this program, applicants are encouraged to seek assistance from other available sources prior to award of MFRAP grants. Other available sources include, but are not limited to:

- i. Army Emergency Relief (AER) (www.aerhq.org).
- ii. Air Force Aid Society (AFAS) (www.afas.org).
- iii. Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) (www.nmcrs.org).
- iv. Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CMGA) (www.cgmahq.org).
- v. Salvation Army (www.salvationarmyusa.org)
- vi. American Red Cross (ARC) (www.paveterand.state.pa.us).

b. The application for MFRAP assistance should include copies of applications for other forms of assistance filed by the applicant.

c. The approval authorities described in paragraph 11 may waive any requirements to seek assistance from other sources when unusual or exigent circumstances makes such application impractical or unlikely to produce results in a timely manner or when the applicant shows that the circumstances are such that other potential sources of funds are applicable to the particular circumstances. The Level 1 approval authority may approve the waiver in cases involving applications for assistance in the amount of up to \$1,500 and the Level 2 approval authority may approve the waiver in cases seeking assistance of \$1,500 or more up to \$3,500.

Application Process:

- a. Eligible recipients may apply for funds by submitting a completed application packet containing the following: A completed application for Pennsylvania MFRAP (PA MFRAP Form 01), signed by the applicant.
 - i. Proof of residency (if applicable).
 - ii. Proof of military membership and member's active duty status.
 - iii. Proof of dependency (if applicable)
 - iv. Military member's most current Leave and Earning Statement (LES).
 - v. Supporting documentation (if applicable), such as car repairs estimates, rental agreements, utility bills, bank statements, employment records, and the like.
 - vi. Certification, under penalty of law, that the information is true and correct to the best of the knowledge, information and belief of the application.
 - vii. Verification, if applicable, from military commander/first sergeant (senior NCO) of information submitted.
- b. Applications, with support documents must be mailed to: Military Family Relief Assistance Program (MFRAP), Department of Military and Veteran Affairs, Bldg S-0-47, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annvill, PA 17003-500.
- c. To expedite the application process, applicants and supporting documents may be faxed to MFRAP (Fax: (717) 861-8124) or e-mail to ra-pa-mfrap@pa.gov. An application with the applicant's or authorized representative original signature must be submitted, along with the supporting documentation to the MFRAP office.
- d. If an application is submitted on behalf of an eligible service member, an eligible relative of an eligible service member, a copy of a fully-executed power of attorney authorizing the person submitting the application to act on the applicant's behalf must be submitted.
- e. Application forms are available online at www.paveterans.state.pa.us, from DMVA, (Military Family Relief Assistance Program, Building S-0-47, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003-5002) or from Pennsylvania National Guard Family Assistance Centers.

Grants:

- a. Applications for grants will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth in 51 Pa.C.S 7319 and in paragraph 9 of these guidelines subject to the availability of funds are not sufficient to satisfy all eligible requests.
- b. As required by 51 Pa.C.S 7319 applicants must demonstrate that they have a direct and immediate financial need for assistance as a result of **circumstances beyond the control of and not as a result of misconduct by the service member.**
- c. Grants may be made for purposes such as: food, rent, utilities, emergency transportation and vehicle repair, medical/dental expenses, short term personal needs when pay is delayed or stolen, emergency home repairs necessary to maintain habitability of essential areas, as well as other emergency needs at the discretion of the approval authority.
- d. Grants may also be made if it is demonstrated that financial need is caused by one or more of the following:
 - i. A sudden or unexpected loss of income, **real or personal property, assets or support** directly related to the military service of, **or exigent circumstances affecting** the service member.
 - ii. The need for travel, lodging and subsistence for which the applicant lacks financial resources as a result of:
 1. The death or critical illness of an eligible member's parent (or parent-in-law), spouse, sibling (or sibling-in-law), or child.
 2. The wounding of the service member in the line of duty sustained as a result of combat or attack resulting in an immediate need for funds for travel, lodging, subsistence or other activities directly related to the casualty. No more than two eligible relatives of an eligible service member may receive assistance for travel under paragraph 4c.

- e. A natural or manmade disaster **or other exigent circumstances** resulting in the deprivation of food, shelter or other necessities of life.
- f. Emergency need for child care for dependent children.
- g. It is recognized that neither 51 Pa.C.S 7319 nor these guidelines can describe every possible emergency scenario that might result in eligible service members or their families having an immediate and direct financial need as a result of **circumstances** beyond the control of and not as a result misconduct by the service member. Applicants may qualify for grants when they demonstrate the existence of financial need related to military service of, or exigent circumstances coupled with an emergency situation where the failure to obtain emergency assistance will substantially deter the service member from meeting his/her military obligations. The following situations are examples:
 - . Failure to receive pay and allowances in a timely manner because of errors in military pay systems where circumstances exist precluding casual payment or advance payment.
- i. Loss of income as a result of permanent change of station or extended TDY causing member and family to move.
- ii. Loss of employment of spouse due to member's service, extended TDY, or deployment.
- iii. Unusual medical care costs incurred by the eligible member or dependents are victim(s) of crimes that result in loss of income, property or credit (for example, identity theft, and the like).
- iv. The special needs for an eligible member or a dependent result in a need for assistance that cannot be met as a result of the eligible member's military service.
- v. The death of a relative of an eligible service member resulting in increased costs of sudden, unexpected loss of income or support.
- vi. The death of a relative of an eligible service member resulting in increased costs of sudden, unexpected loss of income or support.
 - h. Examples of situations where granting MFRAP assistance would be inappropriate include payments to:
 - . Pay for nonessential items or finance vacations.
 - i. Pay fines or legal expenses in criminal matters.
 - ii. Assist with home purchase down payment or financing or home improvements (unless directly related to qualifying military service or disability incurred in qualifying military service).
 - iii. Pay bills incurred in purchase of nonessential items.

Evaluation Criteria: The criteria that will be considered in determining whether to approve applications for financial assistance include:

- a. Nature of assistance requested.

Respectfully,

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