

# New Mexico National Guard and Family Assistance (NMNGFA) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

## 1. **Purpose:**

To provide guidance, establish policy and procedures, and delineate responsibility for the New Mexico National Guard and Family Assistance Program and support to members of the New Mexico National Guard and their families. This SOP is in effect as of 1 JULY 2018, and will be reviewed at a minimum annually for modification and/or improvement. The proponent for recommended changes is DMA, State Programs Director.

## 2. **Summary:**

The New Mexico National Guard and Family Assistance (NMNGFA) account was established under Section 7-2-30.3, NMSA 1978 to help Soldiers and Airmen of the New Mexico National Guard and their family members when they experience financial emergencies. NMNGFA provides funds to help Soldiers and Airmen with the type of immediate financial needs outlined in this SOP. NMNGFA allows Commanders access to funds at the state level to accomplish their moral obligation and basic command responsibility for the morale and welfare of Soldiers and Airmen and their families.

NMNGFA guidelines for giving Emergency Financial Assistance, to include approval limits, are intended to keep the support fair across the NMNG yet allow flexibility in covering a broad range of unique situations.

## 3. **Eligibility:**

New Mexico Army National Guard Soldiers, Air National Guard Airmen, and their dependents not on federal active duty (Title 10, United States Code) are eligible to receive NMNGFA funds. Soldiers and Airmen on active duty (Title 10, United States Code) are eligible to receive Army Emergency Relief (AER) or Air Force Aid Society (AFAS) funds as appropriate.

## 4. **Benefit Highlights:**

### a. **Emergency Financial Needs**

The primary mission of NMNGFA is to provide financial assistance to help Soldiers and Airmen meet emergency financial situations. This assistance is not intended to be a long-term solution when spending continues to exceed the budget. Emergencies are generally unexpected and urgent. Financial assistance will generally not exceed \$3,000 lump sum per validated need.

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Examples include:

- 1) Food, rent, or utilities (Cable TV or Satellite Service does not qualify);
- 2) Emergency home repair;
- 3) Emergency transportation and vehicle repair;
- 4) Funeral expenses and associated costs;
- 5) Medical/dental and unexpected hospital expenses;
- 6) Personal needs when pay is delayed or stolen;
- 7) Help needed due to natural disasters.

b. Because NMNGFA is only intended to meet a legitimate, valid financial emergency need and not to maintain a standard of living beyond the member's financial means, NMNGFA financial assistance is not authorized for:

- 1) Nonessentials;
- 2) Financing ordinary leave or vacation;
- 3) Paying fines or legal expenses;
- 4) Liquidating or consolidating debt;
- 5) Assisting with home purchase or improvements;
- 6) Assisting with the purchase, rent or lease of a vehicle;
- 7) Covering bad checks or paying credit card bills;
- 8) Business ventures or any similar investments;
- 9) Long-term assistance.

**5. Assistance:**

Soldiers and Airmen, regardless of rank, may request emergency financial assistance through their chain of command or directly through the NMNG Family

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Programs Coordinator. The purpose of the assistance is to help stabilize the member's financial situation so the member can focus on the NMNG mission.

**6. Application Process:** The process for an application request for NMNGFA by a service member and unit in order to ensure eligibility and disbursement of funds is as follows:

- a. Service Member requests emergency financial assistance at the unit level or directly from the NMNG Family Programs Director.
- b. The Flight/Company commander, First Sergeant, or NMNG Family Programs Director will conduct an initial interview to assess level of need and will assist the applicant in filling out the application (Enclosure 1) for financial assistance. They will jointly identify a financial counselor for the applicant and ensure at a minimum telephonic contact is made between the applicant and counselor.
- c. The Flight/Company commander, First Sergeant, or NMNG Family Programs Director will forward the application to the next level approver in the process.
- d. The first O-5 in the chain of command, if submitted through the Command, must approve the application, and forward to NMNG Family Programs Director.
- e. The NMNG Family Programs Director will screen applications for completeness. Incomplete packets will be returned without action. They will also notify the service member's designated financial counselor that the application has been forwarded to the NMNGFA Advisory Council for their review and recommendation to the Adjutant General for approval.
- f. The NMNGFA Advisory Council member that receives this application will prioritize this work above all other current daily tasks. He or she will review the entire application and will provide a recommendation for approval or disapproval to the Adjutant General.
- g. If approved by the Adjutant General or his designee, the NMNGFA will forward the application along with the checklist and supporting documentation to DMA, State Programs Office who will complete processing of the request. Typically, it will take 3-5 working days to process the payment for the applicant's emergency request.
- h. If not approved by the Adjutant General or his designee, the Soldier/Airman will be contacted personally to discuss the request.

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i. The applicant will work with his or her designated financial counselor for continued financial counseling and budget monitoring.

j. In emergent cases where utilities or the health and welfare of the applicant are compromised, the financial counselor will be notified to assist the applicant in temporarily resolving the immediate issue until payment can be acquired.

k. The financial counselor will maintain all documentation and follow up with the applicant periodically or as determined by the financial counselor to monitor their financial wellness and report to the NMNGFA Advisory Council.

l. In accordance with legal and statutory requirements, DMA, State Programs Office will collect and document all case information when providing emergency financial assistance. All documents must be retained for a period of not less than 2 years from the date of disbursement.

**7. Assistance Requirements:**

a. Member must be in good standing in the NMNG.

- o No pending personnel actions or UCMJ
- o Not flagged for investigation
- o No positive UAs
- o No AWOLs in last 12 months

b. Determination if request is authorized under the NMNGFA.

c. Documentation of the financial emergency.

d. Provide a statement of monthly income and expenditures on the application (Enclosure 1.)

e. Recommendation and information from a Soldier/Airmen's unit Commander or NMNG Family Programs Director.

f. Determine the status of any previous NMNGFA assistance received by the Soldier or Airman.

g. If the Soldier/Airman is currently under an OPEN Chapter 7 or 13 bankruptcy proceeding, legal advice from General Counsel is required.

**(NOTE: FINANCIAL COUNSELOR SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR FINAL DETERMINATION)**


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**8. Annual Audits/internal Controls:**

a. Proper management controls are an essential component to ensure NMNGFA assistance is operating in accordance with all applicable policies, laws, and regulations. The use of compliance audits and internal controls help provide reasonable assurance that NMNGFA funds are being properly safeguarded, and its policies are being correctly carried out. A regular audit of NMNGFA will be in accordance with the annual DMA, State Programs Office policy.

b. The Adjutant General will establish an NMNGFA Advisory Council, which will include key leaders from the Army/Air National Guard leadership and DMA, State Programs Office representation. The Council may, upon request, advise the Adjutant General regarding NMNGFA operations, internal controls, and distribution of NMNGFA funds. The Adjutant General is responsible for the final approval and prioritization of all requests for emergency financial support and for ensuring a responsive program.

c. The members of the Advisory Council will be determined by The Adjutant General.

  
KENNETH A. NAVA  
Major General, NMNG  
The Adjutant General