

Commanders Referral Information Sheet

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 & copy of ID card, 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.

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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 Soldier's request for a category of unauthorized assistance the Commander should be contacted for resolution. {Example: The immediate Commander has approved a Soldier's request for a court ordered fine. The AERO knows this is not an authorized category of assistance and should contact the Commander/1SG 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/1SG 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.