



# New bill expands financial assistance for military, Veteran families



On March 18, 2021, Governor Doug Ducey signed senate bill 1443, expanding the Arizona Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF). MFRF was established by the Arizona Legislature in 2007 to support families of Post 9/11 service members. The fund provides financial assistance to the families of service members, Military and Veteran Families for hardships caused by the Veteran or service member's military service. In April 2018, an amendment expanded the MFRF program to include Pre-9/11 applicants. Assistance from MFRF is determined by an Advisory Committee composed of twelve members appointed by the Governor, as well as the Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services.

Under the expanded eligibility criteria, service members and Veterans discharged under honorable conditions who meet ALL of the following criteria may be eligible for financial assistance:

| Deployment by the service member or Veteran   | Arizona Residency (one of the following must apply to the service member or Veteran)  | Financial Hardship (one of the following must apply)   |
|---|---|--|
| Deployment includes any movement from a military service member's home station to somewhere outside the continental U.S. and its territories. | 1. Claimed Arizona as home of record while in service <b>OR</b>   | <b>For Veterans, service members and family members:</b> must demonstrate that military service caused their current financial hardship<br><br><b>For surviving families:</b> service member or Veteran died or was wounded in the line of duty and family members need financial assistance with travel and living expenses |
|   | 2. Deployed with an Arizona National Guard or Reserve unit <b>OR</b>  |  |
|   | 3. Deployed from an Arizona military installation <b>OR</b>   |  |
|   | 4. Established residency in Arizona and is able to provide proof of continuous physical presence in Arizona for at least twelve months before submitting an application |  |

Funding for MFRF comes from private donations that qualify for an income tax credit. Tax-credit donation options are \$200 (single) and \$400 (married). Donors can elect to have their donations applied for Post 9/11, Pre 9/11, or both. Total MFRF donations cannot exceed a combined total of \$1 million in a calendar year. Tax-credit donations are processed on a first-come first-served basis.

The MFRF committee has awarded on average \$2.6 million in financial assistance to over 500 Arizona service members, Veterans and their families since 2018.

ADVS is currently still accepting and processing applications using the existing eligibility criteria. To see the current eligibility and application process, visit <https://bit.ly/AZMFRF>.

This bill will go into law 90 days after the current Arizona State Legislature (Fifty-fifth Legislature, First Regular Session) adjourns. MFRF staff will begin taking applications using the expanded eligibility criteria late Summer/early Fall 2021.

To see the full bill, visit <http://bit.ly/MFRFSB1443>.