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Assistance Fund Program - War Veterans Allowance Program

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This policy replaces the following VPPM 3 policies: 3. Assistance Fund Program; 3.1 General; 3.1.1 Definitions.

Table of Contents

Purpose
Policy
Definitions
Eligibility
Payment of Debts
Posthumous Awards
Adjudication
References

Purpose

This policy outlines the purpose, eligibility criteria, and decision-making considerations for the Assistance Fund (AF) Program.

Policy

1. The purpose of the AF Program is to provide financial assistance (up to $1,000.00 per calendar year) to War Veterans Allowance (WVA) recipients who require such assistance to meet emergencies or unexpected contingencies for which they do not have the resources available.

Definitions

2. The following definitions are applicable to this policy:
    a. **Act** means the *War Veterans Allowance Act* or the *Civilian War-related Benefits Act*, as applicable.
    b. **Assistance Fund** means the moneys appropriated by Parliament for the provision of assistance in accordance with the *Assistance Fund Regulations*.
    c. **Allowance** means an allowance paid under the *War Veterans Allowance Act* or Part XI of the *Civilian War-related Benefits Act*.
    d. **Dependent** means a spouse, common-law spouse, or dependent child on whose behalf an allowance is being paid.
    e. **Emergency** means a condition requiring immediate action and which is commonly characterized by a threat to the health or safety of the individual.

f. **Program** means the War Veterans Allowance Program, which includes recipients under both the *War Veterans Allowance Act* and Part XI of the *Civilian War-related Benefits Act*.
g. **Unexpected Contingency** means circumstances beyond which the applicant has control and requires prompt action; a situation which may lead to an emergency situation if corrective action is not taken.

Eligibility

3. To be eligible for an AF Grant, the applicant must:
    a. Be an allowance recipient (includes a recipient whose allowance payment is temporarily suspended);
    b. Reside in Canada; and
    c. Require financial assistance to meet an emergency or unexpected contingency.
4. Where both parties in a marriage or common-law relationship are Veterans in receipt of an allowance, each party is eligible to receive an AF Grant.
5. Where a Veteran and a spouse/common-law partner are separated and an allowance is being paid on behalf of the spouse/common-law partner, the Veteran and the spouse/common-law partner are each eligible to receive an AF Grant.
6. A person in receipt of an allowance as the Orphan of a Veteran is eligible to receive an AF grant.
7. AF payments (cash grants) may only be made in Canada. There are no loan provisions. Grants may only be made if the assistance, in conjunction with grants from other sources such as trust funds, etc., will provide a complete and immediate solution to the situation. AF cash grants are intended exclusively to meet genuine emergencies and unexpected contingencies which cannot otherwise be met.
8. Grants totalling up to $1,000.00 per calendar year may be paid to those eligible for the AF.
9. It is the responsibility of the District Director or his/her designate(s) to ensure that monies are used for the purpose for which they are awarded. It is recommended that, when at all possible, payment be made jointly to the applicant and supplier.
10. AF Grants are most commonly paid for the following needs:
    a. Shelter - this applies only to those home repairs at a principal residence, where the cause stems from sudden and unexpected conditions outside the control of the client such as fire, flood, wind damage, vandalism or accident. Exceptions should be considered where failure to provide the grant may result in the loss of shelter or threaten the health or safety of the applicant or dependant(s);
    b. Clothing - this applies to clothing lost, destroyed or necessary to avert an emergency situation;
    c. Health items - these include aids or services necessary for the health or safety of the applicant or dependant(s), for which payment is not available from other sources; and
    d. Essential appliances - these are household appliances essential for the health or safety of the applicant or dependant(s).

Payment of Debts

11. AF Grants for the payment of debts may only be provided if:
    a. The debt was incurred because of an emergency or unexpected contingency and met the criteria of the AF policy when it was incurred, placing the client in a debt situation;
    b. Non-payment of the debt will result in an emergency such as a loss of shelter or a situation which is a threat to the health or safety of the applicant or dependant(s).

Posthumous Awards

12. When an applicant without dependants dies after signing the AF application but before an adjudication and payment are made, no award may be approved.
13. When an applicant with dependants dies after signing the AF application but before an adjudication and payment are made, an AF Grant may be provided if the surviving dependant(s) is in receipt of an allowance.

Adjudication

14. Before an AF grant is approved, all other resources (personal, municipal or provincial) should be fully explored. Also, assistance may not be granted when such help would have the effect of circumventing or duplicating benefits paid under any statute or regulation of Canada.
15. It is recognized that in extreme emergency situations it may not be possible to secure cost estimates in writing; however, it is expected in those situations that verbal estimates be obtained from at least two suppliers prior to approving an AF grant.
16. If an applicant is a WVA recipient on the date of first contact with the Department concerning an AF application, but is not in receipt of the allowance at the time the AF application is adjudicated, the application should be approved if the client's situation at the date of first contact satisfied the eligibility criteria.
17. There may be other situations which conform to the *Assistance Fund Regulations*. In general, these must be judged in accordance with whether failure to provide assistance could result in a threat to the health or safety of the applicant or dependant(s).

References

War Veterans Allowance Act

Civilian War-related Benefits Act

Assistance Fund Regulations