

Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) Training

Lesson: Children & Youth

Subject: Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)

Objective: Ensure students understand the Temporary Financial Assistance program to assist eligible families in applying for assistance on behalf of eligible minor children.

Introduction

Since 1919, The American Legion has remained committed to the health and welfare of our nation's veterans and families. Born out of this desire to serve, the National Committee on Children & Youth established a form of direct aid to veterans' children in 1925-Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA). TFA is landmark program continues to be unique in the field of social work today.

A portion of the funds the operation of the TFA program are provided from a share of the earnings of The American Legion Endowment Fund. In 1925, World War I had been over for six years, but for veterans and their widows and children, the years had been a continuing struggle to adjust to the war's aftermath. The members of The American Legion, aware of the grave responsibility entrusted to them by those who had served, knew the time had come to take action. More than 900,000 Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion, Auxiliary members, and other American citizens joined the campaign, raising nearly \$5 million (nearly \$65 million dollars at today's value) and established The American Legion Endowment Fund, a tremendous legacy that carries on today and a tremendous example of the foresight of the founders of The American Legion and their dedication to assisting our comrades and their families. Through TFA, a Post can call upon the National Organization for cash assistance to help maintain the basic needs of eligible children. Non-repayable grants are awarded to eligible families when it is determined that child is in need and all other available resources have been exhausted.

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How TFA Helps Children

TFA is specifically designed to assist minor children of up-to-date American Legion members and active duty service members through cash grants. In order to maintain a stable home environment for the child or children, grants are awarded to help families meet the costs of shelter, utilities, food, clothing and medical expenses.

Grant Types

Maintenance Grants

Maintenance grants may be used to assist with the basic need expenses such as: shelter (mortgage or rent), utilities, food and clothing.

Maintenance grants cannot be awarded for previously incurred debt, except to:

1. Prevent disconnection of utilities
2. Prevent eviction or foreclosure.

Medical Grants

Medical grants for a child may be used to assist with healthcare expenses such as: medical care, dental care, surgery, hospitalization, medications and dietary needs.

Medical grants require a written statement from a physician outlining the problem, treatment, and estimated costs. This type of grant must be approved before services are rendered. Medical grants cannot be awarded for previous medical expenses or care.

Application Process

All TFA applications originate at the local or post level. A local investigator personally visits with the family to determine the needs of the children. A completed application, with supporting documents, is forwarded to the Department Children & Youth Chairman, Department Adjutant or the duly authorized department official.

The designated department representative reviews each case, makes a recommendation, and forwards the approved application to National Headquarters.

The Americanism Division reviews all approved cases immediately upon receipt and forwards a recommendation to the National Adjutant.

Upon approval by the National Adjutant, a check(s) is drawn and forwarded to the Department Adjutant for delivery to the post, investigator or family. In most cases, checks will be two-party checks payable to the veteran or parent and the creditor.

Example: "John Smith and Duke Energy".

Eligibility

The minor child must not be older than 17, or 20 if still enrolled in high school or is physically handicapped. The minor child must be the biological child, stepchild, or in the legal custody of, a qualifying veteran. A qualifying veteran is defined as a member of the United States Armed Forces serving on federal orders current under Title 10 of the United States Code, inclusive of all components, OR any veteran possessing an up-to-date membership in The American Legion. Active duty applicants can be considered without being a member of The American Legion. **A single onetime non-repayable Temporary Financial Assistance grant of up to \$1,500 will be permitted for the minor child(ren) of a qualifying veteran.**

HANDOUT: TFA APPLICATION

TFA Application and Procedures

The TFA application has been designed to allow any Legionnaire, regardless of previous experience with the TFA program, to successfully complete and submit a TFA application. A complete set of instructions are located on page 4 of the application.

PRIOR to completing an investigation and application, determine if the minor child is eligible for TFA.

If the parent is not on active duty or an up to date member of The American Legion, the child will not be eligible. Minor children of deceased veterans are the only exception

Once you have determined that the minor child(ren) is eligible, make an appointment with the family at their residence to complete the application if possible. Secure all requested documentation and provide all requested information. Your report must include a detailed description of the family's financial need, steps taken to alleviate the situation, and follow-up plans of the post and/or investigator.

TFA is strictly for the basic needs of minor children including shelter, utilities, food, clothing, and medical. Medical grants must be approved prior to treatment and must be accompanied by a physician's statement and estimated costs.

TFA will not pay for: Cable, Consumer Debt, Internet Services, Insurance, Taxes, Transportation, Previous Debt, or any expense that does not contribute to the active basic needs of minor children.

The following documents must accompany the TFA application:

- ✓ American Legion membership number or current military orders
- ✓ Birth certificates of children
- ✓ Marriage license
- ✓ Custody documentation, divorce decrees and legal name changes
- ✓ All **current** statements, bills, leases, foreclosures, eviction notices, disconnection notices to be considered.

Expenses not documented will not be considered.

Ensure all sections of the application are complete and the appropriate signatures are obtained. Incomplete applications may result in delays or denial.

Completed applications must be sent to your Department Children & Youth Chairman or Headquarters for approval. All applications sent directly to National Headquarters will be returned to the appropriate Department without review or action.

All communication about submitted applications should be directed to the Department Children & Youth Chairman or Department Headquarters. To protect the privacy of applicants, National Headquarters will not release any information other than to the appropriate department.

HANDOUT: TFA DO'S AND DON'T'S

TFA Do's and Don'ts

Do fax, mail or email completed applications and requested additional information to your department headquarters

Do clearly print or type when completing the application. Use black or blue ink for best results.

Do completely fill out the entire application. **"N/A" or incomplete sections will most likely result in denial or a delay of the application.**

Do completely document that all other resources have been exhausted as required AND PROVIDE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION AS PROOF.

Do attach all required documentation requested in the application.

Do submit completed applications in a timely manner.

Do submit requested additional information as soon as possible for consideration.

Don't expect payment for a bill that was not submitted with the application. Payment will not be authorized without accompanying documentation.

Don't expect approval for applications.

Don't include original supporting documents. Documents will not be returned.

Don't fax bad copies of the application and/or supporting documentation.

Don't refer the applicant to the National Headquarters to inquire about the status of their application. **NO** information is released to applicants. **No exceptions.** Instead, the investigator should check with the Department Headquarters.

Don't send applications directly to National HQ. All applications must be signed off at the department level (C&Y Chairman or Adjutant).

Don't promise the applicant or creditors **ANYTHING**. The National Adjutant is the final authority.

Don't be afraid to tell an applicant that they do not qualify.

Procedures for submittal and turnaround time vary from department; however, assistance can be delivered in less than 24 hours for the most extreme cases. Check with your department for additional information.

All applications are reviewed at the National Headquarters immediately. If the application is deemed incomplete an action form will be faxed to the department that details exactly what additional information is needed so the investigator can take immediate action.

HANDOUT: TFA ACTION FORM

(Review the TFA Action Form)

The same form is used for denials. **A denial can be reconsidered with 30 days with the submission of additional information that directly address the reason for denial.**

Additional information on the TFA program and question should be directed to your department headquarters.

Temporary Financial Assistance

Application Action Form

Veteran: _____ **Date:** _____

The attached letter indicates that the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) application submitted on behalf of the veteran indicated above has been denied or that additional information is required to process the application. Below you will find one or more items checked to help you understand why the application has been denied or not processed.

DENIAL

- The veteran is not eligible under the criteria set by the National Executive Committee.
- No minor children or the parent or guardian do not have **legal** custody or full-time custody of the minor children.
- The family has already received a substantial amount of assistance from TFA.
- The basic needs of the minor children are currently being met.
- Income indicated is sufficient to meet the basic needs of shelter, utilities, food, and clothing.
- Request contains expense for taxes, consumer debt, or miscellaneous expenses, which cannot be considered since it does not provide for basic needs.
- Based upon recommendation of the Department.
- A medical grant can only be considered prior to the necessary treatment.
- Veteran is not on active duty or an up to date member of The American Legion.
- All other forms of local assistance have not been exhausted as required.
- Investigation report is incomplete or missing information needed to thoroughly evaluate the situation.
- Debt is too large or too far in arrears for TFA to assist in maintaining the basic needs of the child(ren).
- TFA is not a supplemental income for education.
- No reasonable explanation as to why the spouse/significant other is not seeking employment.

Other: _____

INCOMPLETE INFORMATION

Requested information must be received within 30 days for application to be considered. In order to expedite the application process, requested information may be faxed to the attention of TFA (317) 630-1377.

- Verification of current Title 10 active duty service or American Legion membership.
- Incomplete or illegible application section: _____
- Custody confirmation. Please submit custody or adoption documentation.
- Please provide most recent statement or bill for the following expenses: _____
- Other: _____