

Joseph Early Emergency Financial Assistance Policy for Military-Connected Students

Purpose

The Emergency Financial Assistance Fund for Military-Connected Students (the “Joseph Early Emergency Fund”) is designed to provide temporary financial relief to military-connected students facing unexpected financial hardships that may disrupt their academic progress. This includes veterans, active-duty service members, reservists, and National Guard members who are enrolled at Grand Valley State University.

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for assistance, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. **Military Connection:** Applicants must be military-connected students, including veterans, active-duty members, reservists, National Guard, receiving military education benefits.
2. **Enrollment Status:** Applicants must be **enrolled in at least half-time credit hours** at Grand Valley State University.
3. **Financial Need:** Applicants must demonstrate an urgent financial need due to unforeseen circumstances, such as:
 - o Medical emergencies
 - o Housing insecurity or eviction notices
 - o Car repairs critical for transportation
 - o Unexpected loss of income
 - o Other emergencies impacting their ability to meet basic living or educational expenses.
4. **Good Academic Standing:** Applicants must maintain a minimum **GPA of 2.0** and be in good academic standing.

Eligible Expenses

The Fund may be used to cover the following expenses:

- Emergency medical expenses
- Rent or housing-related expenses (e.g., utilities)
- Essential car repairs
- Food and basic needs
- Childcare costs
- Academic supplies (books, materials, technology)
- Travel costs for family emergencies

Non-eligible expenses include:

- Tuition and fees
- Credit card bills
- Entertainment, non-essential travel, or luxury items
- Debt

Application Process

1. **Submission:** Applicants must complete an online application form, including:

- A description of the emergency and how it impacts their financial stability
 - Supporting documentation (e.g., medical bills, repair estimates, eviction notice).
2. **Review:** Applications will be reviewed by the Laker Vets E-Board within 5 business days. Applicants may be contacted for additional information if necessary.
 3. **Decision:** Once reviewed, a decision will be made, and applicants will be notified via email. Funds, if approved, will be disbursed directly to the students account by Financial Aid.

Award Amount

- Students may receive up to **a maximum of \$800** per academic year from the Fund.
- The specific amount awarded will depend on the nature of the financial emergency and the available resources within the Fund at the time of the request.
- The Laker Vets E-Board will make an award amount recommendation to the Director of the Military & Veterans Resource Center. **The Director will have the ability to increase or decrease the Laker Vet E-Board recommendation by up to \$300 per award granted based on the amount of available funds at his/her discretion:**

Fund Availability

The Fund operates on a limited budget, and awards are contingent upon the availability of resources. Not all requests may be approved, and students are encouraged to explore additional financial aid options if needed.

Confidentiality

All personal and financial information provided by applicants will remain confidential and will only be shared with staff involved in processing the application.

Amendment Procedure:

Any amendments to the Joseph Early Emergency Fund policy must be approved through a collaborative process between the Military & Veterans Resource Center (MVRC) and the Laker Vets Executive Board. This process includes:

1. **Proposal Submission:** Amendments can be proposed by any member of the MVRC or Laker Vets Executive Board. Proposals should be submitted in writing and include a clear explanation of the amendment and its intended impact.
2. **Collaboration:** The MVRC Director and the Laker Vets Executive Board must review and discuss the proposed amendment. Input from both entities is required before proceeding.
3. **Voting:** Once the collaboration phase is complete, the amendment will be put to a vote. A majority vote is required from both the MVRC and Laker Vets Executive Board to approve the amendment.

4. **Final Approval:** Upon receiving a majority vote, the amendment will be officially adopted and incorporated into the policy.

Review Period: All amendments should be reviewed at least once every two years to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

Contact Information

For more information or assistance with the application process, please contact the Military & Veterans Resource Center Director at 616-331-8447 or mvrcdirector@gvsu.edu.