

Assistance Policy Tips

General Information

Every week CGMA-HQ reviews all CGMA Form 52's (checks) issued by Representatives throughout the Coast Guard. The purpose of these reviews is to ensure that assistance is being provided consistently throughout the organization and to see that CGMA policies and procedures are being followed. When we note circumstances that may not be in keeping with the guidelines provided in the CGMA Manual, we contact the unit that issued the assistance to obtain additional information or to explain what appears to be a discrepancy. Discussed below are some areas or issues which appear to arise frequently:

Pay/Allotment Problems:

Members occasionally encounter financial difficulties when they are not paid on time, in the correct amount, or allotments are not properly paid. In such cases, assistance may be provided up to the amount of the error based on the financial needs up to the time when the problem is expected to be corrected. The item to note in these situations is that assistance for the total amount of the error is not automatic ... but the amount provided is based on financial need at the time. The loan is normally expected to be repaid by cash lump sum when the error is corrected. If the error is not corrected within reasonable time then an allotment should be started at the maximum amount possible.

Insurance Coverage:

CGMA strongly urges all of our members to obtain adequate health, life and property insurance. CGMA should not be used to replace primary insurance or as a supplement to inadequate insurance coverage, such as very high deductibles. CGMA assistance should be considered only when unexpected expenses exceed insurance coverage and cause a serious financial burden on the member.

Funeral Expenses:

Recent changes in the Service members Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program impact on how and when CGMA should consider providing assistance, particularly a grant, to help defray funeral expenses. Effective 01 November 2001 children of service members who are eligible for (and who have not declined) SGLI are automatically insured for \$10,000 at no cost to the member. Additionally the service member has the option of providing low cost coverage for their spouse. ALCOAST 446/01 provides additional information concerning this program. With the changes in SGLI coverage, CGMA policy changes were made effective immediately. These changes were originally noted in the August 2001 BOC Minutes and will be included in a future change to the CGMA Manual.

Rental Assistance and Moving Expense:

Be careful not to interchange the assistance code of these two categories in block #12. They are two separate and distinct categories for documenting the reason for assistance. Select the code that most nearly matches the reason for the assistance. In those situations where the loan involves both rental assistance and moving expense, select the code that best matches the largest portion of assistance being provided.

Debt Consolidation:

CGMA does not provide Debt Consolidation Loans. CGMA has a Debt Management Program in conjunction with Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS). CGMA is willing to consider extending to active duty members, with the recommendation of a CCCS counselor, a loan that will enable the member to qualify for the CCCS administered Debt Management Plan when other alternative resources are not available.

Reminder:

The following items are normally not appropriate for CGMA assistance - legal fees, civilian and military court fees, fines, judgments, liens and bails.

Exceptions to Guidelines:

It is not feasible to anticipate all possible situations that can occur. There will be times that exceptions to normal CGMA policy and guidelines may be justified. These situations need to be carefully analyzed and judicious judgment used in arriving at a decision. As a matter of routine, exceptions should be approved by the Regional Director. CGMA-HQ is always available to discuss unusual situations. In these unusual cases be sure to fully explain the circumstances in the Remarks (block #16) of CGMA Form 52 (checks), to assist the CGMA-HQ reviewer and minimize the need to contact you for amplifying information. Feel free to contact CGMA-HQ if you have any questions on the items discussed above.