

*"When I got the call that my dad was in the hospital, I was stationed across the country. I knew I had to get home, but couldn't afford the last-minute airfare," one Airman shared. "Thanks to Air Force Aid Society, I was on the next flight out – and got to say my final goodbye."*

Life doesn't stop for those in uniform. Whether it's a family emergency, an unexpected car repair, or paying for child care during deployment, unexpected challenges can create serious distraction at home and on the job. That's where readiness is truly tested.

# READINESS

## *Starts at Home*

### *Readiness begins with peace of mind.*

"For our Airmen and Guardians, readiness isn't just about equipment or physical fitness – it's the ability to perform their mission at a moment's notice. True mission readiness also requires family stability, mental clarity, and knowing that help is there when life takes an unexpected turn," said retired Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, who leads the AFAS team. "And in the long-term, ensuring a culture of caring and support promotes healthy recruiting, strong retention, and a positive attitude about who we are as a fighting force," he said.

That's where Air Force Aid Society (AFAS) stands ready to assist. As the official relief organization of

the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force, AFAS provides emergency financial assistance, scholarships & education support, community programs, and disaster relief to help ensure that our Airmen, Guardians, and their families stay strong – physically, emotionally, and financially. Our goal is simple: support those who serve with dignity, compassion, and speed.

### *Everyday Life Can Disrupt the Mission*

Military life is full of challenges – frequent moves, unpredictable schedules, and the unique pressures

## HOW THE AIR FORCE AID SOCIETY SUPPORTS OUR FORCES

that come with serving. But sometimes, even the strongest among us face challenges that are too big to manage alone and can push even the most resilient families to their limit.

"An unplanned or uncovered medical expense. A broken-down car. A spouse's job loss. A child care gap. These aren't just inconveniences – they're barriers to mission readiness," said retired CMSgt Kris McBride, the organization's number two leader.



When Airmen and Guardians are worried about bills, logistics, or how their family is holding up at home, their ability to fully engage with the mission is compromised. That's not just a personal challenge – it's a readiness issue that affects entire units.

That's why AFAS stands ready to help restore stability, focus, and readiness when life disrupts the mission.

## ***How AFAS Keeps Our Force Mission Ready***

Founded in 1942 by General Henry “Hap” and Mrs. “Bee” Arnold, AFAS's sole mission is to help Airmen, Guardians, and their families when they need it most! Each of the four key program areas is designed to address real-life challenges and reduce financial strain so our service members can remain focused on their mission.

In 2024, AFAS provided more than \$14 million in direct assistance to over 15,000 Airmen, Guardians, and their families across the globe. From everyday emergencies to large-scale disasters, our programs are built to respond quickly, compassionately, and effectively.

### ***Emergency Financial Assistance***

In 2024, \$4.9 million was provided to families facing urgent and unexpected financial needs. Whether funding emergency travel to be with a loved one, covering unexpected car repairs that could prevent reporting for duty, or stepping in to help with rent, utility bills or medical costs, AFAS was there. By helping during these difficult moments, we keep our service members focused on the mission, not the money.

### ***Scholarships & Education Support***

A strong future starts with access to education. Last year, AFAS awarded close to \$4 million in education assistance – including grants, interest-



free loans, and merit-based scholarships to help Air and Space Force spouses and dependents pursue their academic goals. This investment in long-term resilience relieves financial pressures and strengthens overall family stability.

### ***Community Programs***

AFAS invested \$625,000 in programs designed to strengthen military family well-being and reduce stressors that impact mission focus. Our two child care programs – *Give Parents a Break* and *Child Care for PCS* – provide essential relief during deployments, PCS moves, and other high-stress periods. AFAS is committed to doing more to support our military communities. In April 2025, both programs were enhanced to offer all service members the ability to use any child care option -

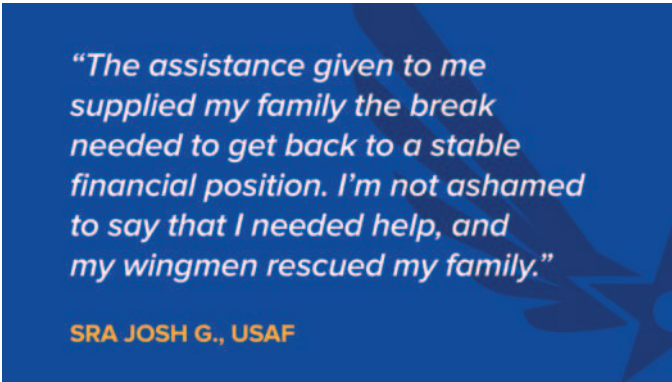
not just base providers – and to provide faster access to funds via Zelle or ACH.

### ***Disaster Relief***

When a catastrophic natural event happens, AFAS stands ready. In 2024, we provided \$4.5 million in direct aid to families impacted by hurricanes, wildfires, and other emergencies. In coordination with base leadership and Military & Family Readiness Center (M&FRC) teams, we responded swiftly to ensure families had monies for shelter, resources, and recovery support – keeping service members available to fulfill their duty during these uncertain times.

### ***Strength in Partnership – Working side-by-side with M&FRCs***

“AFAS can't come even close to being the organization we need to be on our own,” Thomas said. “Our success is tied entirely to the deep partnerships we share with M&FRCs, First Sergeants, Commanders, Chaplains, and others across every Air and Space Force installation.”



*“The assistance given to me supplied my family the break needed to get back to a stable financial position. I’m not ashamed to say that I needed help, and my wingmen rescued my family.”*

**SRA JOSH G., USAF**

M&FRC professionals, First Sergeants, and others in the local units are often the first line of support, and the first to recognize when a service member and their family are in distress or facing a difficult time. They serve as a critical link between our resources and the people who need them. These professionals play a vital role – often providing counsel and referring members for assistance.

During the devastating Hurricanes Helene and Milton in late 2024, AFAS worked closely with the teams at Moody AFB and MacDill AFB to ensure our Airmen and their families received the emergency funds they needed, and fast.

In cases where AFAS can't assist directly, we make sure the support doesn't end there. We routinely refer families to other trusted resources – including local nonprofits and military and veteran service organizations to expand our reach and impact. In addition, our sister organizations, Army Emergency Relief (AER), Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS), and Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) form a trusted network of support across all the branches of service.

This collaborative approach helps ensure no military family is left behind. It strengthens our community, one family at a time – and keeps the entire force mission ready.

### ***Building Long-Term Resilience – Relief today, strength for tomorrow***

“While many of our programs provide immediate financial relief, the greater goal is long-term resilience,” Thomas said.

Through budgeting tools, financial counseling referrals, and access to ongoing support, the goal is to empower service members and families to overcome adversity – and come out stronger. When that happens, the individual is more resilient, the family is more stable, and the mission is better supported.

McBride said that “Our hope is simple: the Airmen, Guardians, and families we help today may not need us next time, because they're stronger, wiser, and better prepared.”



## ***Ready Families = Ready Force***

The Department's focus on standards, lethality, accountability, meritocracy, and readiness is a clear call to strengthen every aspect of the force – including the families who serve alongside.

AFAS is proud to stand with our Airmen, Guardians, and their families with support that goes beyond slogans. Whether it's helping a young family afford a cranial helmet not covered by insurance, replacing storm-damaged essentials, or easing the financial burden of college tuition, we're here to ensure no one carries the burden alone.

“We need our partners,” McBride said. “We need First

Sergeants, Chaplains, M&FRC professionals, and military leadership to continue referring those in need. And to our retirees, donors, and supporters – your generosity fuels our mission and helps keep our forces mission ready.”

***Because at the end of the day,  
a ready family is a ready force!***

Together, we are making a difference.



Learn more  
at [afas.org](https://afas.org)

