

County Paid Burial, Cremation – Public Facing Process

- A. Applicant or a funeral home director contacts designated County-assisted burial contact prior to funeral services taking place.
 - 1. Contact is to be made during normal business hours of Monday-Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. The phone number to call is 763-682-7400
 - 2. The receipt of a completed County Burial Application is considered contacting the agency
- B. Any individual may apply for burial assistance on behalf of the decedent; applicants are not required to be next of kin. Relatives, friends, social workers, nursing home, hospital staff, and other concerned parties can submit applications. In cases that no other person is making burial arrangements, a funeral home director may be an applicant.
 - 1. Applications for burial assistance must be submitted before any funeral services are held unless it falls on a weekend, holiday, or extraordinary circumstances prevent a timely application being submitted.
 - 2. Application must be made in writing to WCHHS using the [Wright County Burial Application](#)
 - 3. Applicant for the decedent submits the completed application to the County for processing
- C. Eligibility for burial assistance cannot be determined until a completed application is received and reviewed by WCHHS. All required information must be received to make an eligibility determination. Required information includes:
 - 1. A completed and signed application form
 - 2. Resource verifications of the decedent and responsible relatives
 - a. A responsible relative is defined as a surviving spouse or parent(s) if the deceased is a minor child
- D. WCHHS determines eligibility.
 - 1. Resources owned by the deceased or responsible relative at the time of death or within 30 days prior to death are considered available to help defray burial costs
 - a. WCHHS requires verification of all resources owned by the decedent and their responsible relative(s) in order to make a determination
 - b. If burial is approved, the amount of assistance WCHHS pays towards the burial rate is reduced proportionally by the value of available resources owned by the decedent and the responsible relative(s), not to exceed the burial rate limit
 - i. The burial assistance applicant is responsible to ensure that counted resources of decedent and the responsible relative(s) are paid directly to the burial provider
 - ii. If other resources are discovered or become available to the deceased's estate, the county must be notified immediately by the applicant
 - 1. Available resources include but are not limited to: Pre-paid burial arrangements, bank accounts, cash, life insurance, trust accounts, nursing home trust funds, social welfare funds, vehicles, real estate, jointly owned assets, and death benefits (including Veteran's Administration, Social Security

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Administration, and Help for Victims of Violent Crimes) to which the deceased and/or responsible relative are entitled. The responsible relative must apply for all available death benefits.

2. Any crowdfunding sources, such as fundraisers or GoFundMe, solicited to pay for burial expenses are considered an available resource to the decedent. Any crowdfunding benefits raised to help pay for the medical expenses of a deceased Medical Assistance recipient are considered available if the Medical Assistance program covered all medical expenses. Any outstanding medical bills of the deceased that are not covered by Medical Assistance may be paid by a crowdfunding source as an allowable expense, however, any remaining balance in the crowdfunding source is considered an available resource to the decedent. Any funds raised via crowdfunding may be subject to recovery to reimburse county paid costs.
 - iii. Resources of the responsible relative that are excluded:
 1. One home that is the primary residence of the responsible relative
 2. One vehicle for the responsible relative or a minor child of driving age
 - iv. If the deceased does not have adequate liquid resources to pay for burial costs but does own non-liquid resources above the resource limit, a county burial will not be approved. It is the responsibility of the funeral director to submit a claim against the deceased person's estate, as reasonable funeral expenses are a priority claim pursuant to [Minnesota Statute § 524.3-805 \(a\)\(2\)](#)
 - v. Vehicles are assigned a countable value equal to the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) evaluation unless the applicant provides a dealer assessment of the vehicle's value. This provision does not apply to collector vehicles
- E. WCHHS determines the method of final disposition.
1. If prepaid funeral arrangements have been made, the final method of disposition is implemented in accord with the instructions of the deceased
 2. The method of final disposition will be cremation, unless cremation is contrary to the beliefs of the deceased, the deceased's spouse, or next of kin. If neither the wishes of the decedent or the practices of the decedent's faith tradition are known, and the county has no information about the existence or location of any next of kin, the county may authorize and provide for cremation of the person's remains and interment
 3. Burial of the body shall be the final disposition only if cremation is not in accordance with the decedent's personal preferences, the known practices of the decedent's faith, the personal preferences of the decedent's spouse or next of kin, or the

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medical examiner/coroner's requirement for burial pursuant to [Minnesota Statute § 390.21](#)

- F. Upon approval of a County-assisted burial, the funeral home bills the County for the difference between what the family has paid and the cost of the burial, not to exceed the maximum allowance as determined by agency policy.
 - 1. The funeral home submits a detailed/itemized invoice or claim for payment within thirty (30) days to WCHHS, Attention: County Burial
 - 2. If used, the [claim for payment](#) form must contain an original signature for payment processing
- G. In accordance with [Minnesota Statute § 261.04](#), WCHHS will have a claim against the estate of the deceased person who received Wright County burial assistance to recover county costs.

Burial Allowances/Authorized Services

- 1. Cremation, with or without a memorial service, includes funeral home and professional service fees. Should the spouse or next of kin not want to take possession of the remains, cemetery lot and cemetery open/close is included in authorized services. Cremation Allowances:
 - a. Cremation with professional services: \$1400
 - b. Cremation with professional and memorial services: \$1600
 - c. If a grave site is needed, the County will pay the actual cost, up to a maximum of \$400
- 2. Traditional Burial includes all professional services, transportation of the body, grave box, casket, cemetery lot, cemetery open/close, and funeral service. Burial Allowances:
 - a. \$1700 per adult burial including: embalming, preparation, casket, vault services
 - b. Opening/closing of grave: Actual cost, up to \$500
 - c. If a grave site is needed, the County will pay the actual cost, up to a maximum of \$400
- 3. Transportation at a rate of \$1.00 per loaded mile, up to a maximum of \$150, of the body from the place of death or medical examiner to the funeral home, and from the funeral home to the place of service or place of final disposition is included in the professional services. Special consideration for out-of-state travel is made, up to a maximum of \$400

Unauthorized Services

- 1. Enhancements to authorized services included in the county burial procedure, such as a more expensive casket. If enhancements, substitutions, or additions are made to the authorized services by the responsible relative, the burial application will be denied
- 2. Auxiliary services such as memorial cards, flowers, music, etc. Should individuals other than the responsible relative choose to pay for items not included as

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authorized services in the county burial procedure, verification of payment source is required

3. Expenses related to interment fees, winter burial costs (including snow removal and thawing of the ground), perpetual care, markers or headstones, additional transportation, tent and set-up fees, weekend or holiday charges, clothing, or obituaries. If any unauthorized services are provided by the funeral home, the funeral home will forfeit all payments authorized herein

Request for Reconsideration

An applicant may request reconsideration if they feel the denial of burial/cremation expenses should be overturned due to special and unusual circumstances.

1. The applicant who requests reconsideration must do so in writing, stating the reasons why they feel the denial should be overturned
2. Requests for reconsideration must be submitted in writing to the Financial Services Manager within thirty (30) days of the denial for services
3. The Financial Services Manager notifies the applicant with the date and time of the reconsideration. The applicant has the option of attending the review
4. A panel of three (3) WCHHS supervisors/managers review the request for reconsideration and make a recommendation based on the facts presented
5. If the applicant does not agree with the review hearing recommendations, they may appeal to the WCHHS Board to present their appeal for final determination