Onondaga County DSS-ES
Child Support | Childcare | Fair Hearings | Investigations |
HEAP | Medicaid | SNAP | Temporary Assistance

John H. Mulroy Civic Center
421 Montgomery St. Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 435-2700

J. Ryan McMahon, II *County Executive*
Sarah G. Merrick *Commissioner*

BURIAL ASSISTANCE

Information Regarding Indigent Burial Assistance

Applicant Rights

The Applicant has a right, under Social Services Law §141, to apply for indigent burial assistance for the decedent you name on this application.

The Applicant may choose any funeral home of his or her desire.

The Applicant may apply for this assistance using the below application, and forwarding it with the required documentation to the funeral home of choice, by mail, fax, e-mail, or in person to the Department of Social Services – Economic Security (DSS-ES) at the following address:

Yevette Mercer
Onondaga County DSS-ES
421 Montgomery Street, 12th Floor.
Syracuse, NY 13202

Additional Contact Information

(315) 435-2700
(315) 435-2113

Office Hours:
Monday – Friday 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM
Hours may vary during Holidays.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

In order to be eligible for indigent burial assistance, DSS-ES considers a number of factors including, but not limited to, the below:

1. A SIGNED APPLICATION IS REQUIRED

DSS-ES must be provided with a signed application before it is able to determine eligibility.

2. APPLY BEFORE FUNERAL SERVICES

An application will be denied if it is submitted after funeral services have already been performed.

3. COMPLETE APPLICATIONS ARE REQUIRED

Incomplete applications cannot be processed and you may be contacted for more information.

4. DOCUMENTS YOU MAY NEED

Documentation needed to complete the application may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Bank statements from the prior 30 days, or the most recent bank statement
- Most recent pay stubs
- Copies of any life insurance policies
- Copies of deeds to cemetery lots
- Copies of deeds to real property
- Funeral home itemization statements (outlining allocation of expenses) and/or
- Proof of payment to funeral home

5. THE DECEDENT'S AVAILABLE FUNDS

The application is generally denied if the decedent has more money than DSS-ES is being requested to pay for the funeral services.

6. LIFE INSURANCE MAY AFFECT ELIGIBILITY

The application is generally denied if the decedent has a life insurance policy, the beneficiary of that policy is a responsible party of the decedent, and the value of the policy is greater than DSS-ES is being requested to pay for the funeral services.

7. RECENTLY PURCHASED BURIAL PLOTS

An application is denied if a burial plot was purchased by the decedent, or a responsible party, within 6 months from the date of the decedent's death.

8. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNERAL EXPENSES?

The following are parties legally responsible for payment of funeral expenses:

- The decedent's estate
- The spouse of the decedent
- The parents of minors
- Parties who are fiscal agents (guardians, representative payees, or agents under a power of attorney) are responsible for applying the decedent's resources to the payment of funeral expenses.
- If the responsible parties do not have income or resources sufficient to cover funeral costs they may be eligible for an indigent burial grant.

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ANY FRAUDULENT AND/OR MATERIAL MISREPRESENTATION ON THIS APPLICATION WILL BE PURSUED AS A WELFARE FRAUD OFFENSE AND THE DEPARTMENT WILL SEEK CIVIL AND CRIMINAL REMEDIES TO OBTAIN REPAYMENT OF ANY FUNDS OBTAINED BY FALSE PRETENSES.

Other Policy Considerations

1. This application is not specific to, nor does it commit the services of, any funeral home. The choice of funeral home is that of the person authorized to dispose of the decedent's remains under Public Health Law.
2. When there is no person who is willing and authorized under Public Health Law to direct the funeral arrangements, the Public Administrator's Office directs and authorizes the procedures for burial or cremation.
3. DSS-ES is not responsible for the reimbursement of furnishing necessary professional services and equipment, including cemetery devices.
4. The funeral home sets aside 30 minutes for visitation.
5. DSS-ES reimburses $2.00 per mile, one way and only beyond a 10 mile radius from the funeral home, for removal or transfer of a body in preparation for a burial.
6. DSS-ES makes reimbursement payment for an indigent burial directly to the funeral homes. This is consistent with the Department's "indirect - third party vendor" payments.
7. If the decedent died as a result of a crime, the funeral costs may be covered by NY Crime Victim's Board, who can be reached at (315) 435-2470. If the decedent died as a result of a motor vehicle accident, please provide automobile insurance information for all parties involved in the motor vehicle accident. If the decedent died as a result of a work related accident, please provide Worker's Compensation information including, but not limited to, the Compensation Carrier's name.
8. DSS-ES evaluates each indigent burial application under NY Social Services Law § 141 and regulations under Title 18 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations pertaining to public assistance. Such law and regulations require this Department to consider whether relatives, friends, or personal representatives are liable or willing to become responsible for burial expenses of the decedent, among other factors.

Reimbursement Rates

Adult Burial	$2,220.00
Birth to 7 Years	$1,275.00
Stillborn Child	$500.00
Concrete Chest	Actual Cost, not to exceed $750
Adult Cremation (including crematory fee, with or without services)	$2,220.00
Anatomical Donations	$1,495.00
Oversize Caskets	Actual Cost, not to exceed $500
Clothing	Actual Cost, not to exceed $75

Reimbursement Rate Considerations

Under DSS-ES policy, the price reinbursement ratets are complete and understandable.

****IF A DEATH CERTIFICATE IS NEEDED, PLEASE CONTACT THE DSS BURIAL DESK IMMEDIATELY****

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