

19.5 INDIGENT BURIAL PROGRAM

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Indigent Burial Program is to provide a decent burial for persons who die and have no resources to pay for the interment costs at the time of death.

B. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

When making the decision regarding the eligibility for payment of the burial rates, the Worker must give consideration to the following criteria.

1. Residence

The deceased must have been a resident of West Virginia at the time of death in order to be eligible for a burial payment. (See exception below.) Individuals who have left West Virginia for the purpose of residing in other states, or who have become residents in other states, and later decess are ineligible for Burial Program benefits.

The Worker must verify **residency of the deceased**. Examples used to verify residency include, but are not limited to, current state issue Driver's License/ID card, current utility bill, current rent or mortgage receipts, current landlords statement, current written statement from neighbors and employment records.

Exception: One exception applies to the residence requirement. This occurs when a non-resident of West Virginia decesses while traveling or visiting in the state and has no family, friends, or institution in the state of his residence that will assume responsibility for the funeral arrangements or otherwise claim the body. The Worker must verify that this situation exists before the case may be found eligible for payment.

2. Need

Resources of the deceased shall consist of readily available liquid assets such as, but not limited to, life insurance policies, burial trust funds, cash, checking and/or savings accounts, certificates of deposits, etc.

The Worker must verify the **availability of these liquid assets prior to approval** of the burial application. If the information is not known by the responsible relative it must be explained to the responsible relative they are attesting there are not sufficient resources by signing the DFA-67-A and DFA-BU-1, and that a claim will be placed against the estate of the deceased.

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- The next of kin or any persons who may be chargeable with the burial expenses of the deceased, or the person taking responsibility for making the burial arrangements, and the Funeral Home Director must agree to this type of interment. The Funeral Home Director also must notify the Department prior to the burial that two or more bodies are placed in the same casket and state the reason given for this type of arrangement.

EXAMPLE: Two infants are buried in a casket. The Department will pay only the burial rate of \$1,250 and apply the maximum allowable payment of \$2,450.

d. Green Burial

The person who has made application for burial expenses may request that the deceased have a green burial. Green burials are allowed under the burial program policy. The applicant and Funeral Home Director must understand that the burial rate (\$1,250) and maximum allowable payment (\$2,450) will apply to green burials as well as any other interment plan.

Green Burials, sometimes also referred to as “natural burials”, are non-religious burials in which the body is prepared without chemical preservatives (or with non-toxic chemicals), buried in a biodegradable casket, and no outside container is used. This burial technique is an alternative to traditional burial with the focus being on less harm to the environment. It is likely green burials would occur on private property.

6. Application Submittal Deadline

Payment for burial expenses cannot be made unless the application form, DFA-BU-1, has been completed and the applicant found eligible for payment and the date of interment or cremation did not occur more than 30 days prior to the date of application. **The application form must be signed in blue ink.**

C. BURIAL RATE

The burial rate of \$1,250 is the maximum amount that will be paid by the Department. This rate applies to all burials. Under no circumstances is this rate negotiable regardless of the specific burial plan desired by the applicant.

NOTE: The Worker, his Supervisor, the Financial Clerk, and the Funeral Home Director or his designee, must sign their appropriate sections on the original DFA-67-A in blue ink only.

Red Ink on the original document is reserved for Auditors use only.

3. Responsibilities Of The Financial Clerk

The Financial Clerk will receive the DFA-67-A, Burial Billing Form, from the Funeral Home Director. Upon receipt of this invoice, the Financial Clerk will be responsible for pre-auditing and editing. Items to be reviewed before submittal for payment are:

- F.E.I.N. in the upper right-hand corner
- County number and mailing address
- Legible vendor name and mailing address
- Correct payment amount on Line Item 7 or Item 9
- Date of death
- Date of interment
- Proper signatures and dates entered (blue ink on original)

Upon completion of the audit, the Financial Clerk must stamp the DFA-67-A with a certification stamp and sign and date the spaces made by the stamp in blue ink. The original and two copies of the DFA-67-A will be submitted to the Division of Family Assistance **in the burial packet. The burial packet consists of the DFA-67-A (original and two copies), DFA-BU-1, DFA-BU-2 and DFA-BU-3. The completed packet must be submitted to the DFA Policy Unit no later than 3 business days after the receipt from the customer.** All back-up material pertaining to the burial will remain in the local office.

In order for the Financial Clerk to have a record of burials submitted for payment, a Log for Burial Payments must be maintained in each local office. On this log, the following items are suggested:

- Date the DFA-67-A was received for payment
- Name of vendor
- Name of deceased
- Date the DFA-67-A was submitted to the Division of Family Assistance