

Burials for Indigent/Needy People

Often a family member can pass without any financial provision for a funeral or burial. The state has an obligation to handle the disposition of those under the state's care either through welfare or mental hospitals, care homes, penitentiaries, or for a homeless person. This may extend to families on welfare. When a Champaign County person is found deceased, the Coroner's Office seeks family members and asks them to decide on funeral plans and to pay costs.

If the family refuses or is unable to pay costs, the Coroner's Office will ask them to sign a waiver, giving up any rights to decide on the disposition of the deceased body. If the family cannot be located or refuses to sign a waiver, the body is deemed "unclaimed," giving the Coroner's office full authority to dispose of the deceased's remains. With an eye on available funding (from the county's budget), the Coroner's office chooses from among 3 options for the deceased's remains: (1) cremation, (2) burial, (3) donation of the body for medical education and/or research.

Donation costs nothing. The County uses Lamplight, which will return the cremains to the family, if they wish. However, depending on its condition, the body may not be acceptable for donation. In such cases, the Coroner's office will choose cremation or burial.

The Illinois Department of Human Services (<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/Page.aspx?item=30367>) is another useful source. The link lists those Illinois people who may qualify for a program reimbursing funeral and burial expenses when a person's resources and all other sources of payment are less than the DHS standard payment rates. Those people include anyone who, at the time of their death, was receiving any of the following kinds of assistance: (a) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash; (b) Aid to the Aged, blind, or Disabled (AABD) Cash; **(c) All Kids Assist; (d) Parent/All Kids Assist; (e) All Kids Moms & Babies; (f) Family Assist; (g) AABD Medical; (h) General Assistance Foster Care/Adoption Care.** Those in **bold** are also given assistance if they were qualified for those forms of support.

To claim financial assistance for funeral expenses, submit an application to the Department of Human Services (Social Services/Welfare) and submit proof that you qualify due to your welfare or low-income status. A claim needs to be made within a certain time frame after the death of your family member.

The Illinois DHS uses two types of claims: (1) **IL444-029** – Funeral or Burial Claim, submitted by a funeral home or cemetery. Persons not legally responsible for the deceased may contribute to

the cost of the casket, urn, or vault; and the cost of additional expenses or merchandise not required to be provided with the Department's payment, with limits of \$2,000 funeral and \$2,000 burial **OR (2) IL 444-0094** – Funeral & Burial Claim, submitted by a person who isn't legally responsible for the deceased and who has paid an amount equal to or more than the amount of the claim.

The DHS pays a maximum amount of: \$1,370 for a funeral, \$686 for a cremation/burial.

Your local Family Community Resource Center has forms, or click on the claim forms found at the above link. Champaign County's resource center is at 206 W. Anthony Drive, Champaign, IL 61822. (217) 278-5605.

All questions and inquiries regarding the claims and or payments/denials for the offices listed above should be directed to: Funeral and Burial Unit at (217) 785-4216.

Additionally, individuals on Social Security may also be entitled to claim a fixed death benefit payment of \$255. This assistance is only payable if there is a surviving spouse or child under the age of 18. Veterans are entitled to certain federal benefits which are managed by the Veteran's Administration. Veterans (and certain dependents) are entitled to a free cemetery plot, grave marker, and a USA flag. In some cases, funeral service providers offer additional benefits for veterans, such as free copies of death certificates and discounts on funeral services.

Unfortunately, FCACC **does not** have the financial resources to assist needy families with funeral expenses.

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