

VOLUNTEERS OF LEGAL SERVICE
VOLLS

A Guide
to
Burial Assistance
and
Funeral Planning
for
New Yorkers in Need

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About This Guide

This Guide provides information on burial assistance and funeral planning for families and friends of poor persons who have died, and for social workers and others involved with making burial arrangements.

Inclusion of organizations and funeral homes in the Guide does not imply endorsement of these entities by Volunteers of Legal Service. Much of the information appearing in the Guide was provided by staff at senior centers with whom we work in our Elderly Project. We would be delighted to receive information about other agencies and funeral homes assisting poor persons for possible inclusion in a future edition of the Guide. Prices listed in this Guide are accurate as of July, 2010, but are subject to change.

You can download a copy of the Guide by going to the homepage of our website, www.volsprobono.org. Just click on “the elderly poor” and scroll down until the link, “A Guide to Burial Assistance and Funeral Planning for New Yorkers in Need” appears, and then click on the link. If you are reading this Guide in paper form, or on the Internet, other than on the VOLS website, you are advised to go to the VOLS website for the most up-to-date version of the Guide.

About VOLS

Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS) develops projects to provide *pro bono* civil legal services to New York City’s poor. We identify areas of legal need, develop projects to meet these needs, and recruit and train and mentor volunteer lawyers to provide the necessary legal services. You can learn more about VOLS by visiting our website at www.volsprobono.org.

About the VOLS Elderly Project

The VOLS Elderly Project provides free civil legal services to elderly poor persons living in Manhattan. VOLS conducts legal clinics at thirteen senior centers. We also provide legal services to seniors from an additional 80 community-based agencies serving the elderly poor. Over 150 lawyers serve on our Elderly Project volunteer attorney roster.

For more information on the VOLS Elderly Project, contact:

Elderly Project Director
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Phone: (212) 966-4400
Fax: (212) 219-8943
E-mail: info@volsprobono.org.

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Part I

General Information for Family, Friends, and Social Workers

Checklist of What Needs to be Done

- Notify family and friends of the deceased.
- If the deceased attended a place of worship, notify the clergy or office personnel.
- Check to see if the deceased left any funeral, burial or cremation instructions, or had made a Pre-Paid Funeral Arrangement.
- Check to see if the deceased left a Will.
- Contact a licensed funeral director to take custody of the body and make arrangements.
- Have an Arrangement Conference with the funeral director.
- Choose a cemetery/crematory and employ their services. The funeral director can assist you with this.
- Obtain death certificates. The funeral director can assist you with this.
- Contact Social Security concerning death benefits and to cancel payments being received by the deceased. The funeral director can assist you with this.
- If the deceased was a veteran, contact the US Veterans Administration for burial and benefit information. Have military discharge papers available.
- If the deceased was a crime victim, contact the New York State Crime Victims Board.
- If the deceased was a car accident victim, contact the cars' insurers to see if there are benefits which can be applied toward funeral and burial expenses.
- Notify decedent's employer, attorney, insurance companies, banks, stock brokerage firms, lenders, credit card companies, utility companies, accountant.

Who Provides Aid: An Overview

Contributions from Decedent's Place of Worship

The type of assistance provided varies among religious organization. Assistance may include a funeral and/or burial. If assistance is not directly available, your clergyman or place of worship might be able to direct you to another organization which can provide financial help.

In some instances, a monetary collection from the decedent's place of worship might be available to pay for funeral and burial expenses. Some organizations might provide such funds only if the decedent was an active member. The religious leader, or a member of the organization, might be able to negotiate with a funeral home and/or cemetery for discounted rates.

Unions or Trade Organizations

If the decedent was a member of a union or a trade organization, the decedent may be entitled to death and/or funeral benefits. The surviving spouse or minor children may also be entitled to survivors' benefits. Even if there are no financial benefits available from the union or organization, they may know of low cost service providers, or be able to negotiate for better prices. Contact the union or organization directly for assistance.

Veterans Administration Benefits

United States veterans (from all branches of the military) who received a discharge other than dishonorable are entitled to several benefits, including burials at a national cemetery, headstones and markers (even if not buried at a national cemetery), monetary assistance, presidential memorial certificates, burial flags, and bereavement counseling (if a loved one passes away).

Veteran's spouses, children below 21 or 23 if in a VA approved school (or children who became disabled before being disqualified) are entitled to burial plots (even if the veteran is not interred at a national cemetery) and may be entitled to survivors benefits or a death pension. A spouse does **not** lose his/her eligibility by remarriage (but does through annulment or by divorce.)

Veterans of foreign armies allied with the US are entitled to burial at a national cemetery at no cost *if* they were US citizens at the time they entered military service *and* at their time of death.

If you are unsure if the deceased was in the military, call the Veterans Benefits Administration and they will search their records to determine eligibility.

If the veteran died from combat related injuries, he/she may be entitled to additional financial assistance from New York State and from the United States Veterans' Administration.

Note: Some commercial cemeteries advertise "veterans' specials." They sometimes charge fees for other services or require spouses to be interred with the veteran. Ask these cemeteries about opening and closing fees, as well as charges for burial plots before committing to a purchase.

For more detailed information on these veteran's benefits see pages 8 and 9.

Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration offers a one time payment of \$255 for eligible persons. There are no financial requirements for this payment.

If the deceased worked long enough to qualify for Social Security benefits, members of the deceased's family may be entitled to receive Social Security benefits starting the month after death.

If the deceased was receiving Social Security and/or SSI benefits, the payment for the month of death and any subsequent months must be returned to the Social Security Administration. Social Security benefits are not payable for the month in which the beneficiary dies. For example, if the person dies at anytime during July, you must return the benefit paid in early August. If benefits were made by direct deposit to a bank account, contact the bank or other financial institution as well as the Social Security Administration. Request that any funds received for the month of death or later be returned to Social Security. If the Social Security benefits are paid directly, do not cash any checks received for the month in which the person dies or later. Return the checks to the Social Security Administration as soon as possible.

For more detailed information on these benefits see page 6.

The City of New York Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services

For eligible indigent New Yorkers, the Human Resources Administration will reimburse part of the expense of burials costing no more than \$1,700. The maximum reimbursement is \$900.

For more detailed information see page 7.

Consulate General

For foreign born individuals who die without finances for a funeral or burial, contact the deceased's Consulate in New York. The Consulate may be able to contact family in the country of origin, arrange for shipping the remains to the country of origin, and, in some cases, may assist with a local burial. For more detailed information about foreign assistance, see-stating at page 20.

Company Pension Plans and Life Insurance Policies

If the decedent was receiving a pension, it is possible that the plan will offer burial insurance for employees. You should contact the plan administrator and ask about burial coverage. It is also possible that the decedent had a life insurance policy through the employer or purchased privately that you are not aware of. To find the life insurance policy, contact the pension payers and look through the decedent's checkbooks and cancelled checks for the past few years to see if he/she paid any insurance premiums. Check his/her address book for names of insurance agents. Contact each insurance company decedent had a policy with. For a \$75 fee, the trade association group MIB Solutions will search its policyholder database for the decedent's policy. To get this information, you must provide proof that you are the appointed executor or administrator of the decedent's estate and you must have an original death certificate with an official seal.

Public Administrator (In Each Borough)

The Office of the Public Administrator administers estates of decedents where no person entitled to take or to share in the estate will accept the responsibility to act, or where the decedent leaves no Will or Personal Representative entitled by law to act.

Among other things, the Public Administrator investigates the affairs of the decedent. The Public Administrator's Office may authorize a funeral as well as the amount of money permitted for the funeral out of the estate of the decedent. Additionally, the Public Administrator's office may search for relatives, pay debts of the estate from the decedent's resources and perform other duties. When a relative is located, the Public Administrator determines whether that individual is prepared to accept responsibility for the estate of the decedent.

Go to the court in the Borough where the decedent resided:

Surrogate's Court New York County (Manhattan)

31 Chambers Street, Room 311
New York, New York 10007
(646) 386-5000

Surrogate's Court Bronx County

851 Grand Concourse
Bronx, New York 10451
(718) 618-2300

Surrogate's Court Kings County (Brooklyn)

2 Johnson Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201
(347) 404-9700

Surrogate's Court Queens County

88-11 Sutphin Boulevard
Jamaica, New York 11435
(718) 298-0500

Surrogate's Court Richmond County (Staten Island)

18 Richmond Terrace
Staten Island, New York 10301
(718) 675-8500

Part II

Organizations Providing Assistance

A: Government Agencies

Pages 6-14 contain information on agencies run by the United States government, the New York State government and municipal governments which provide aid for funerals and burials.

B: Religious Organizations

Pages 15-19 contain information on organizations run by religious organizations or religiously affiliated organizations which provide aid for funerals and burials

C: Organizations for Foreign Born Persons

Pages 20-24 contain information on organizations run by foreign governments, or non-profit organizations specifically for groups of foreigners, which provide aid for funerals and burials.

D: Non-Profit Organizations

Pages 25-27 contain information on organizations run by non-profit organizations which provide aid for funerals and burials.

E: Unions/Professional Organizations

Pages 28-29 contain information on trade organizations run by unions or other organizations which provide aid for funerals and burials.

A: Government Agencies

Social Security Administration

(see website or call to locate your local office)

(800) 772-1213/TTY (800) 325-0778 M-F 7a.m.-7p.m. (24hr. automated system)

www.ssa.gov

Note: Notify Social Security as soon as possible when a person dies. In most cases, a funeral director can report the person's death to Social Security if you furnish the funeral director with the deceased's Social Security number. Apply for survivors' benefits promptly as, in some cases, benefits will be paid from the time of application and not from the time when the worker died.

Assistance Provided:

A one-time payment of \$255 may be paid to one of the following:

1. The surviving spouse if he or she was living with the deceased.
2. The surviving spouse if he or she was eligible for the payment for the month of death based on the beneficiary's earning record, or
3. To a spouse, or child, who in the month of death, is eligible for a Social Security benefit based on the beneficiary's earning record.

If the deceased worked long enough to qualify for benefits, members of the deceased's family may be able to receive Social Security benefits starting the month after death. These include widows, widowers (and divorced widows and widowers), children and dependent parents.

Eligibility Requirements:

As you work and pay Social Security taxes, you earn credits toward your Social Security Benefits. The number of years you need to work for your family to be eligible for Social Security Survivors' Benefits depends on your age when you die. The younger a person is, the fewer credits he or she needs to have earned to be eligible. No one needs more than 10 years of work credits (40 credits) to be eligible for any Social Security benefit. If you have worked for only one and one-half years in the three years just before your death, benefits can be paid to children and to a spouse who is caring for the children.

How to Apply:

You can apply by telephone or at any Social Security office. The following documents, either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency, are needed. Do *not delay* applying if you do not have everything (the Social Security office may be able to help you get what you need):

1. Proof of death—either from a funeral home or death certificate.
2. Your and the deceased's Social Security numbers.
3. Your birth certificate.
4. Your marriage certificate (if you are a widow or widower).
5. Your divorce papers (if you are applying as a divorced widow or widower).
6. Dependent children's Social Security numbers and their birth certificates.
7. Deceased worker's W-2 forms or federal self-employment tax return for the most recent year.
8. The name of your bank and your account number so your benefits can be deposited directly into your account.

The City of New York
Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services
Office of Constituent & Community Affairs
Office of Burial Claims
25 Chapel St, 6th Floor
Brooklyn, New York 11201
Tel. (718) 473-8310
Fax. (718) 473-8292

Note: HRA requires applicants to apply *within 60 days* of the date of death. Applications must be made *in person* at the above address. A representative can be sent. If using a representative, the form *must* be notarized. Photo-identification of the applicant is required. There may be significant delays in receiving reimbursement. Occasionally, applicants seeking reimbursement are denied.

Assistance Provided:

When a person dies and does not leave enough money for burial expenses, HRA will reimburse a *portion* of the burial expense (up to a maximum of \$900) *for a funeral costing no more than \$1,700*. The price of the grave and grave opening or cremation will *not* be included when calculating burial costs. The price of burying cremains after cremation *will* be included. HRA also allows for organization sponsorship of burial claims for indigent veterans.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Decedent must have been a resident of the City of New York.
2. Friends or relatives of the deceased are not legally required or are unable to pay burial costs.
3. Decedent was eligible for NYS Medicaid benefits.
4. Funeral costs do not exceed \$1,700 in total.

How to Apply:

File an application form (form M-860w), with the Burial Claims Unit *within 60 days of death*. All necessary supporting documentation must then be filed within 60 days of the date of the initial application. If unable to file in person, an application from a relative, friend or "organizational friend" may be accepted. If unable to stop by the office in person, notarize the application. With the application, or subsequent to filing it, submit the following documentation:

1. An original certified death certificate.
2. Copy of the "Statement of Goods and Services Selected" (the Arrangement Sheet). The sequential number from the funeral director must appear on this sheet.
3. Copy of the cemetery or crematory bill. All bills must be itemized.
4. *Two (2)* itemized funeral bills, signed by the funeral director and notarized. If paid, they must be stamped "Paid-in-Full."
5. If money is still owed to the funeral establishment, *two (2)* notarized funeral director's Affidavit Forms.
6. Verification of income and assets of the deceased (or legally responsible relatives) as of the date of death.
7. Any additionally requested material.

In some instances, the fiduciary of the estate may be required to attend a personal interview.

Additionally, the HRA may provide Emergency Assistance to eligible New Yorkers to assist with burial costs. The applicant must complete Form W-137A and apply in person at the Office of Burial Claims, 151 Lawrence Street, 5th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

**United States
Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Benefits Administration**

245 W. Houston Street
New York, New York 10014
(800) 827-1000 (M-F 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.)
Fax (212) 807-4024

<http://www.vba.va.gov/vba> (New York Office: <http://www.vba.va.gov/ro/east/ny/default.htm>)

Assistance Provided:

United States' veterans (from all branches of the military) who received a discharge other than dishonorable are entitled to several benefits. Reservists who were entitled to retirement pay (or would have been if over age 60) are also entitled to these benefits. These include: burials at a national cemetery, headstones and markers (even if not buried at a national cemetery), monetary assistance, presidential memorial certificates, burial flags, and bereavement counseling (if a loved one passes away).

If the death is service-connected, the VA will reimburse up to \$2,000 of burial costs and pay some of the cost of transportation of the remains of the veteran to the nearest National Cemetery.

If it is a nonservice-related death, VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a \$300 plot-interment allowance for deaths on or after December 1, 2001. The plot-interment allowance is \$150 for deaths prior to December 1, 2001. If the death happened while the veteran was in a VA hospital or under VA contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the veteran's remains may be reimbursed.

Veteran's spouses, children below 21 or 23 if in a VA approved school (or children who became disabled before being disqualified) are entitled to burial plots (even if the veteran is not interred at a national cemetery) and may be entitled to survivors benefits or a death pension.

Documentation may be required to prove disability. A spouse does not lose his/her eligibility by remarriage, but does through annulment or by divorce.

Veterans of foreign armies allied with the US are entitled to burial at a national cemetery at no cost if they were US citizens at the time they entered military service and their time of death.

If being buried outside of a national cemetery, a \$300 burial expense may be reimbursed and a \$300 "plot-interment allowance" paid if one of the following conditions is met:

1. The veteran died due to a service-related disability.
2. The veteran died in a VA medical or VA nursing facility (or one approved by the VA).
3. The veteran had been receiving compensation from the VA, or was eligible to receive compensation.

Eligibility Requirements:

You may be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:

- you paid for a veteran's burial or funeral, **AND**
- you have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased veteran's employer, **and**
- the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- the veteran died because of a service-related disability, **OR**

- the veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death, **OR**
- the veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay, **OR**
- the veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility, **OR**
- the veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care, **OR**
- the veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death, **OR**
- the veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home.

How to Apply:

For burial, have the funeral home contact the national cemetery. The VA requires a full name and military rank, branch of service, social security number, service number, VA claim number (if applicable), date and place of both birth and death, date of separation from active duty, and copy of separation document (DD 214). If the veteran dies in NYC, the remains will often be buried in the Calverton National Cemetery on Long Island. The VA has 124 cemeteries in 39 states and in Puerto Rico.

For all benefits, submit VA Form 21-530 to the Veterans Benefits Administration within two years of death or of a corrected DD 214 being issued. Attach proof of military service (DD 214), a death certificate, and copies of funeral and burial bills already paid.

For a headstone or marker only, the VA suggests you complete an application in advance and place it with your discharge papers. Applications are available at:

<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf>.

**New York State
Division of Veterans' Affairs
Supplemental Burial Benefit**
In NYC: 423 East 23rd Street, Room 9144N
New York, NY 10010
(212) 686-7500 Ext 3828
Fax: (212) 951-5961

Assistance Provided:

New York State supplies a *supplemental* burial benefit for members of the armed forces who are killed in combat or duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger. This benefit to defray funeral and burial costs can be up to \$6,000.

Eligibility Requirements:

Funds are *only* for service members who die in combat or while on duty from hostile fire or other imminent danger. Federal funds must be first obtained and deducted from funeral costs before state funds will be available. Funds will only be paid to the family member responsible for the expenses.

How to Apply:

Contact the local veterans' service representatives at the local office for your county or city. They will assist you in apply for assistance.

In *New York City*, contact the state office listed above.

**United States Air Forces
Survivor Assistance Program
1-877-USAFA-HELP
USAFHELP@Pentagon.AF.Mil
<https://survivorassistance.agsv.af.mil>**

This program provides support to families who have lost a loved one. The program will marshal the available resources to meet family needs following the unexpected loss of life. They will give assistance for funeral and burial benefits and provide military funeral honors, which could consist of uniformed body bearers, a flag-folding detail, rifle salute, a butler playing taps and a chaplain.

Workers' Compensation Death Benefits

215 W. 125th Street
New York, New York 10027
Mail: PO Box 5205
Binghamton, NY 13902-5205
For NYC: (800) 877-1373
<http://www.wcb.state.ny.us/>

Assistance provided:

The NY Workers' Compensation Law provides funeral benefits up to a maximum of \$6,000 in the counties of Bronx, Kings, Nassau, New York, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester and up to \$5,000 in all other New York State counties.

Eligibility Requirements:

When there is a death caused due to an "on-the-job" mishap, the spouse, dependent children up to the age of 21 (up to age 23 if they attend an accredited educational institution full time or of any age if they are totally blind or totally and permanently disabled), brothers, sisters, dependent grandchildren, and dependent grandparents *may* be entitled to substantial weekly compensation benefits.

If there is neither a spouse nor children, then the estate of the worker may be eligible for a lump sum payment of \$50,000 plus the cost of funeral expenses.

How to Apply:

For information on obtaining and completing the necessary paperwork, call the Workers' Compensation Board. Call: (800) 877-1373.

An affidavit form will be sent and it must be filled out, signed in front of a notary public and returned to a central mailing center at:

Workers' Compensation Downstate Centralized Mailing Center
PO Box 5205
Binghamton, NY 13902-5205.

Along with the affidavit, it is best to include a medical report from the deceased's attending physician, a death certificate, proof of relationship (birth certificate, adoption papers or marriage certificate), and an itemized funeral bill. If this information is missing you may apply anyway.

There is a two-year time limit *after* the date of death for applying.

**New York State
Crime Victims Board**
55 Hanson Place
10th Floor
Brooklyn, New York 11217
(800) 247-8035
(718) 923-4325
cvbinfo@cvb.state.ny.us
<http://www.cvb.state.ny.us>

Note: Specialists are available to discuss the process of assistance and reimbursement. Also, workshops are available. See website for times. For Homicide victims, Safe Horizon (see page 25) can be of assistance.

Assistance Provided:

If the decedent was murdered (or otherwise died as the victim of a crime) and the family is determined by the Crime Victim Board to be indigent, the Crime Victims Board may contribute up to \$6,000 to offset individual and funeral expenses. \$500 may be provided initially. Additional funds may be authorized to the funeral home. In some infrequent instances, loss of wages may be considered. Applicants are considered on a "case-by-case" basis. Counseling is also available.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Decedent was murdered or otherwise died as a crime victim in the City of New York.
2. Family or estate is indigent (if seeking more than the \$500 emergency assistance).
3. Residency in the State of New York of both the victim *and* the applicant.

How to Apply:

Relatives or friends of a decedent can mail an application. Applications are available online at: http://cvb.state.ny.us/app_forms.htm.

Mail application to:
New York State Crime Victims Board
1 Columbia Circle
Suite 200
Albany, NY 12203-6383

With the formal application, send or bring the following documents:

1. Death affidavit.
2. Two pieces of identification from the applicant and two for the decedent.
3. Itemized funeral invoice, or funeral contract, in the name of the deceased.
4. Name of the agency the crime was reported to.
5. County where the crime took place.
6. Death Certificate (photocopy is good).
7. Most recent Federal Income Tax return of the decedent (for additional funeral assistance).
8. Any other bills for burial expenses.

Railroad Retirement Board

844 North Rush Street
Chicago Illinois, 60611-2092
(800) 808-0772
Telephone: (312) 751-7139
TTY: (312) 751-4701
<http://www.rrb.gov/>

Assistance Provided:

The Board provides a lump sum payment for burial expenses for qualifying railroad personnel.

There is also a survivors' benefit for a surviving spouse.

Benefits differ for those who worked over 120 months *prior* to January 1, 1975 and all others. Those who did are entitled to a lump sum payment of \$180-1,400.

Those who worked over 60 months *after* 1975 are entitled to a lump sum payment of \$255.

This payment can be paid to the next of kin or directly to the funeral home.

Eligibility Requirements:

The deceased must have been employed by a railroad for either:

1. 120 months before January 1, 1975, or
2. 60 months after 1995.

How to Apply:

Applicant must fill out form AA-21. Proof of past employment is necessary.

Contact the New York office at:

Railroad Retirement Board
26 Federal Plaza
Room 3404
New York, NY 10278
Phone: (877) 772-5772
Fax: (212) 264-1687

Social Services
Suffolk County Government
PO Box 18100
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(631) 854-9935
(for burials) (631) 854-9856
Fax: (631) 854-9996

Note: These services are for *outside* New York City. Social Services of Suffolk County requires that approval be obtained *prior* to finalizing plans with the funeral home.

Assistance Provided:

The Department of Social Services will cover the basic burial cost of certain indigent persons or those found dead in the county.

Eligibility Requirements:

Assistance is available to help those with no funds from private sources. The following people are eligible for burial assistance from the county:

1. Persons who were on Public Assistance.
2. Stillborn infants.
3. Decedents found dead in the county (if not under the jurisdiction of another social service agency).

How to Apply:

Call the Department of Social Services at (631) 854-9856 to apply. Approval *must* be obtained *prior* to finalizing arrangements with the funeral home.

**AMT Children of Hope Foundation
Infant Burial Foundation
Nassau County Police Department**
1490 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York 11501
(877) 796-HOPE (4673)
(516) 781-3511
tjaccard@amtchildrenofhope.com
<http://www.amtchildrenofhope.com/>

Assistance Provided:

Dignified funeral and burial services for abandoned and unclaimed deceased infants and children are provided.

Children of Hope will act alone or in conjunction with the appropriate governmental agencies or other charitable organization.

Services are applicable in Nassau County as well as in New York City (all boroughs), Westchester and Rockland counties.

The Foundation gives these children a first name, the last name being "Hope."

Their resting place and grave markers show that they are part of a family that is cared for by loved ones.

Eligibility Requirements:

Child or infant dies without having been claimed.

How to Apply:

The Nassau County Police Department, Ambulance Medical Technicians, through the Children of Hope Foundation, learns of the tragedy and takes appropriate steps to assure a dignified burial.

Call Tim Jaccard:

(877) 796-HOPE (877) 796-4673.

B: Religious Organizations

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
for the Archdiocese of New York**
(Manhattan, Bronx, Staten Island)
1011 First Avenue
New York, New York 10022
(212) 755-8615
<http://www.srdpusa.org/>

Note: These services are limited to Manhattan, Bronx, and Staten Island only.

Assistance Provided:

The Society provides many services for the bereaved on behalf of the Archdiocese of New York. These include *referral services* for indigent families to low cost funeral homes.

The Society will help families collect reimbursements from the HRA Burial Claims Unit.

In extraordinary instances, a “non-title” plot in Calvary Cemetery will be provided (no headstone permitted).

The Society also offers bereavement counseling.

Eligibility Requirements:

The deceased individual should be Catholic.

The family must be in financial need.

How to Apply:

Contact individual parish and clergy to ask for assistance.

For referral sources and general information, call the St. Vincent de Paul Society at (212) 755-8615.

The family must provide:

1. Medicaid number,
2. Cause of death,
3. Sources of income,
4. Social Security number of the deceased, and
5. Death certificate.

National Philoptochos Society

Greek Orthodox

7 West 55th St., 7th Floor
New York, New York 10019

(212) 977-7770

Fax: (212) 977-7784

Assistance Provided:

Monetary assistance is available for families in need. This includes a limited reimbursement for funeral and burial expenses. A lifetime maximum for a family may apply. Referrals to funeral homes sensitive to Greek Orthodox needs are made.

Emergency social service and crisis intervention assistance is provided to members of the Greek Orthodox community. Assistance is available in the City of New York and throughout the country.

Eligibility Requirements:

Must be Greek Orthodox or of Greek Orthodox heritage.

Decedent and family must experience financial hardship and have exhausted all other avenues of assistance.

How to Apply:

Call the Social Service Department of the National Philoptochos Society at (212) 744-4390.

Verification of income and expenses is required.

Referrals usually come from Greek Orthodox churches and clergy. However, the Society seeks to be flexible in meeting the needs of its constituents.

The Hebrew Free Burial Association
Chevra Agudath Achim Chesed Shel Emeth
224 West 35th Street, Room 300
New York, New York 10001
(212) 239-1662
Fax: (212) 239-1981
www.hebrewfreeburial.org
info@hebrewfreeburial.org

Note: Deceased must be buried at Mount Richmond Cemetery, Staten Island. Contact Amy Koplow, Executive Director or Rhonda Stein, Office Manager/ Funeral Services Coordinator for assistance.

Assistance Provided:

When someone who is Jewish (on his/her mother's side) in the tri-state area lacks family and/or available funds to pay for his/ her own funeral and burial privately, the HFBA will make arrangements for removal of the body, the funeral, plot, and burial arrangements in accordance with Jewish tradition and law.

The burial must be at Mount Richmond Cemetery, Staten Island.

A Rabbi will officiate at a graveside service.

The HFBA can provide a low cost funeral and burial for those with limited funds and pre-need agreements consistent with government Medicaid criteria for those who are outside the eligibility requirements for government assistance.

The HFBA will also provide assistance in seeking reimbursement from government agencies for burial of the indigent.

Kaddish for the deceased can be arranged. An HFBA donation of \$360 can be made for *Kaddish* to be said daily for the first year or a \$180 donation for yearly *Kaddish* on the *yahrzeit*.

Eligibility Requirements:

The decedent must be Jewish on his/her mother's side.

Prior synagogue affiliation is **not** necessary.

Neither the decedent's estate nor the family have funds sufficient for burial.

How to Apply:

To apply, call the Hebrew Free Burial Association office, 24/7. A multi-lingual (English, Russian, Hebrew, Spanish) staff member is available to take your call.

You must submit required income and estate documentation.

Send a referral from a Social Service agency or long term care facility, if applicable.

The Jewish Heritage for the Blind

1655 East 24th Street

Brooklyn, NY 11229

(718) 338-4999

(800) 995-1888

Mail to: PO Box 336

Brooklyn, NY 11229

<http://www.jhbinternational.org>

services@jhbinternational.org

Assistance Provided:

Free burial plots are available for the handicapped.

Burial plots are located throughout the United States and also abroad.

Eligibility Requirements:

Deceased must be handicapped.

How to apply:

Contact the Jewish Heritage for the Blind.

Call: (718) 338-4999.

Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance

Office of Tribal Services
Bureau of Indian Affairs
MS 4660 MIB
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240
(202) 513-7622

Assistance Provided:

BIA-GA burial assistance pays \$1,250 for basic burial services which include preparation and embalming, the casket and funeral home services. In limited circumstances, they will pay for transportation.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Decedent must have been an *enrolled member* of a federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native tribe
2. Prove the inability to meet the essential needs of food, clothing, shelter, and utilities
3. Reside in an approved service area or near designated service area; applicants can determine if they live in a service area by contacting the nearest BIA regional office or social service office
4. Apply concurrently for all other federal, state, tribal, county, local programs for which he/she may be eligible
5. Not be receiving any comparable assistance

How to apply:

Applicants can apply for assistance at the nearest BIA operated or tribal social service provider. Contact the Office of Tribal Services at Call us at: 202-513-7622, or visit the website at: <http://www.bia.gov/>.

C: Organizations for Foreign Born Persons

St. George's Society of New York

216 East 45th Street - Suite 901

New York, NY 10017

(212) 682-6110

Fax: (212) 682-3465

info@stgeorgessociety.org

<http://www.stgeorgessociety.org/>

Note: Contact John Shannon at (212) 682-6110 for assistance.

Assistance Provided:

Serving *exclusively* persons born in Great Britain or the British Commonwealth and living in the New York City area, the Society provides cremation and interment (no ceremony) as a last resort for those in financial need. The Society will help make the arrangements. All or part of the expense may be covered by the Society, depending on financial need. The Society will provide free cremation through its undertaker, Gannon Funeral Home. If cremation is not desired, the Society will contribute the cost of cremation toward the funeral (currently \$1,400).

Eligibility Requirements:

Must have been born in the United Kingdom or in a country of the British Commonwealth.

Must have been living and died in the New York City tri-state area (fifty miles from Columbus Circle).

Must have had insufficient income to meet basic expenses, including rent, utilities and food.

Burial can only be at plots owned by the Society.

Generally, this service is provided to individuals already receiving stipends from the St. George's Society; however, those individuals "in need" and meeting eligibility requirements may request assistance.

No religious affiliation is required.

How to Apply:

Contact the Executive Director of St. George's Society.

Submit proof of original citizenship from a Commonwealth Country. A copy of a birth certificate, passport, or military papers is preferred.

A death certificate is required.

Bring proof of income, expenses, and any special circumstances.

Also, notify the Society of where the body is located.

Swiss Benevolent Society of New York

500 Fifth Avenue
Room 1800
New York, NY 10110
(212) 246-0655
Fax (212) 246-1366
<http://www.sbsny.org>
agilman@sbsny.org

Assistance Provided:

The Society offers assistance with pre-planning funerals and burials. On rare occasions the Society will pay for the cremation and burial of the deceased.

Plots for burial are available at several cemeteries, but limited. Most cemeteries can only hold urns.

Eligibility Requirements:

The Society's services are limited to Swiss nationals in the United States.

Aid is granted on a case-by-case basis, not on specific criteria.

For a plot, the deceased must be indigent.

How to Apply:

There is no formal application requirement. Contact the Society.
Call: (212) 246-0655.

USA Edhi International Foundation

42-07 National Street
Corona, New York 11368
(718) 639-5120
Fax: (718) 505-8001

<http://www.edhifoundation.com/>

Assistance Provided:

For deceased Pakistani persons of the **Muslim** faith who have no next of kin or friend to claim the body, the Foundation provides free shrouding and burial rites in compliance with the Islamic tradition.

The Foundation can arrange for the body to be transported to Pakistan.

Eligibility Requirements:

Decedent is unclaimed by anyone else.

The decedent must be Muslim.

How to Apply:

Call the Edhi Foundation.

Call: (718) 639-5120.

Consulate General of Japan in New York

299 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10171
(212) 371-8222 (24hr)
<http://www.ny.us.emb-japan.go.jp/>
goikenbako@ny.cgj.org

Assistance Provided:

The Japanese Consulate will assume responsibility for indigent Japanese in New York who cannot afford burials and have no family. The Consulate will contact family in Japan to notify them of a death.

The Consulate does not provide financial assistance for indigents.

Eligibility Requirements:

The deceased must be a Japanese citizen.

For a funeral and burial, there must be no family to assume responsibility and no finances available to cover the funeral or burial.

How to Apply:

Call the Japanese Consulate in New York.

Call: (212) 371-8222.

South African Consulate General
333 East 38th Street
9th Floor
New York, NY 10016
(212) 213-4880
Fax: (212) 213-0102
[http://www.southafricanewyork.net/consulate/
sacg@southafrica-newyork.net](http://www.southafricanewyork.net/consulate/sacg@southafrica-newyork.net)

Note: The Consulate does not provide financial assistance for the exportation of remains to South Africa. The death cannot have been from an infectious disease. Body must be embalmed and sealed in an airtight non-transparent container. An import permit must be obtained by the receiver.

Assistance Provided:

The Consulate will contact the relevant authorities in Pretoria for permission to import the body to South Africa or for burial there. The consulate will inform you when permission has been granted.

The Consulate can obtain financial quotes from funeral homes, and help one comply with local law.

Eligibility Requirements:

Decedent must not have had an infectious disease.

The remains must be embalmed (or a religious objection must be stated).

How to Apply:

Contact the Consulate. Make sure to supply them with:

1. Copy of the passport.
2. Certified death certificate.
3. Embalment certificate (or raise your religious objection).
4. Notarized affidavit of the undertaker stating the remains are embalmed and conform with city regulations.
5. Letter from the attending physician stating that the deceased did not suffer from an infectious disease at the time of death.

D: Non-Profit Organizations

Safe Horizon
2 Lafayette St, 3rd Floor
2nd Floor
New York, New York 10007
(212) 577-7700
For Emergency Assistance: (866) 689-4357
help@safehorizon.org
http://www.safehorizon.org

Note: Contact Ms. Pierce.

Assistance Provided:

For the family of homicide victims, Safe Horizon provides an array of assistance, both emergency and ongoing, including advocacy for benefits, accompaniment to court appearances, emergency financial assistance, bereavement and therapeutic counseling, support groups, information and referral, pamphlets, and funeral and burial assistance.

Safe Horizon serves as liaison with and conduit for information to the New York State Crime Victims Board to expedite reimbursement for funeral and personal expenses of needy families.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Family member applicant must be a resident of New York State.
2. Homicide victim.
3. Income limitations for those seeking continuing financial assistance.

How to Apply:

Send a formal application to Safe Horizon along with:

1. Verification of income (for financial assistance).
2. Similar crime and personal identification documents are required as the NYS Crime Victims Board requires. (See page 11 for details.)
3. Listing of court appearances.

**Catholic Burial Society
(A Membership Society)**
Flagship Corporate Center
2 West Baltimore Pike
P.O. BOX 1833
Media, PA 19063
(610) 892-7506
info@catholicburialsociety.org
www.catholicburialsociety.com

Assistance Provided:

The Society provides aid in selecting a dignified and low cost funeral. They will negotiate a low price for you from a funeral home in the area where your funeral is to take place. Their experience and prior relationship with funeral homes allow the Society to arrange for much lower prices than private individuals usually receive.

Counselors are available to help you choose your funeral plans. The Society will help you contact funeral homes with discounted services especially for the Society.

The Society offers membership for its services which include free burial for children and grandchildren. Members are entitled to aid in getting veterans and other benefits.

Low price cremations, caskets and other items are available.

The Society will retain Wills and other burial instructions for future use.

Eligibility Requirements:

Anyone may join the Society.

How to Apply:

Membership is \$250. Contact the Society.

Call: (877) 227-2555.

National Volunteer Fire Council

7852 Walker Drive

Suite 450

Greenbelt, MD 20770

1-888-ASK-NVFC (275-6832)

nvfoffice@nvfc.org

Assistance Provided:

The NVFG provides a maximum of \$6700 aid for burial expenses. If the **firefighter** dies from injuries received in the line of duty as a direct result of firefighting, the maximum does not apply and reasonable expenses will be paid. Under the Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law, upon death of a volunteer firefighter, a lump sum of \$56,000 *may be* paid to the surviving spouse, or the estate if there is no surviving spouse. In the case of deaths occurring after July 1, 1992, the surviving spouse with no dependent children *may be* paid a weekly benefit of \$887. Memorial Scholarships for families of deceased volunteer firefighters *may* also awarded to full-time undergraduates at approved NY colleges/post-secondary institutions. To qualify for these, the firefighter must have died as the result of an injury sustained in the line-of-duty.

Eligibility Requirements:

Must have been a volunteer firefighter in New York State.

How to Apply:

Contact the National Volunteer Fire Council