

**HERKIMER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES INDIGENT
BURIAL POLICY 2025-2029**

It is necessary for a member of the family, or a friend/representative, to make a written application for the burial allowance prior to or during funeral arrangements. **No exceptions to this requirement will be honored.** (*When the deceased has no family, the funeral director must request pre-approval to initiate the application and burial will be paid at \$2,000).

Applicant must be over 21 years of age

After business hours, conditional approval must be obtained from the Commissioner or his representative. An On-Call Caseworker can be reached by calling (315) 866-0974.

Final approval of an application is contingent on verifying need and in no case will approval be made if the decedent or legally responsible party: surviving spouse, or parents (if decedent is under the age of 21), has resources at the time of death in excess of **Fifteen Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00)**.

*The funeral home will be expected to meet with the family (or friend) and contact our department **only** when financial need is determined and must provide the decedent’s date of death, date of birth, Social Security Number, and the person who will be completing the application (and their phone number) when the initial call is made to our Department.

BURIAL PAYMENTS SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE:

<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Stillborn– 2 Yrs. Old (20 weeks or more)</u>	<u>3 –5 Years Old</u>	<u>6 – Adult</u>
01/01/2025	\$550	\$1,000	\$3,009.00
01/01/2026	\$550	\$1,000	\$3,009.00
01/01/2027	\$550	\$1,000	\$3,009.00
01/01/2028	\$550	\$1,000	\$3,009.00
01/01/2029	\$550	\$1,000	\$3,009.00

COMPLETE FUNERAL:

A complete funeral shall include: preparation of the body, which includes embalming, use of the preparation room, limited use of facilities, arrangements, and supervision including personnel, minimum casket that funeral home provides, religious service at the funeral home, one death certificate and transportation to the cemetery or crematorium. In no event shall additional fees be incurred for cemetery "off hours" or weekends.

The complete service, including calling hours (*limited to 2 hours), service and committal must be completed in the same day. Additional calling hours will be at the expense of any interested friend, relative, or other non-legally responsible party. Under no circumstances will the upgrade of a casket be allowed.

Clothing, flowers, register book, prayer and acknowledgement cards will not be County expenses and shall be provided by family and/or friends. A death notice shall be provided at the expense of family or friends.

CREMATION:

Immediate cremation will be reimbursed at the rate of \$1,000.00 plus actual crematory charge.

Immediate cremation w/Funeral Home Services will be reimbursed at the rate of \$1,800.00 plus actual crematory charge.

When the family requests embalming, we will pay the cost of the embalming (*capped at \$800, but the funeral home must complete our attestation form confirming that the family has requested embalming).

ANATOMICAL DONATION:

NYS Department of Health considers body donation to an accredited institution an accepted form of final disposition. *Our dept. will pay \$800.00 if a service is requested by family. The Department will not pay for transportation of the body or crematory fee. The Hospital or Medical Center normally pays these fees.

ADDITIONAL CHARGES:

The Department will pay the cost of one grave (capped at \$550.00) and the cost of opening and closing of the grave (capped at \$750.00, stillborn capped at \$400.00) as long as the cemetery is located in Herkimer County (and is limited to the amount charged during regular operating hours of the cemetery). If a plot is already owned and is located outside Herkimer County, prior approval will be needed for opening/closing to be paid by our agency. ***Any additional cemetery charges above the allowed caps will be at the expense of any interested friend, relative, or other non-legally responsible party.**

*The Department will not pay for the plot or the opening and closing of a grave for cremation.

The Department will pay, when pre-authorized, for use of an over-sized casket. The funeral home must provide a copy of the receipt for the over-sized casket and DSS will pay the difference between the cost of the over-sized casket and the cost of the casket provided by the funeral home, which is already included in our full burial cost. This extra amount will be capped at \$300.00.

The Department will pay winter vault charges (capped at \$75.00), and concrete rough box (capped at \$600.00) when required by the cemetery

Transportation shall be reimbursed at the rate of \$1.50 per loaded mile, and shall be limited to the confines of Herkimer County (unless prior approval is granted).

CONDITIONS:

All resources of the decedent, surviving spouse, and parents (if decedent is under the age of 21) must be applied toward funeral expenses and deducted from the above rates. This includes any property currently owned, or transferred to a relative in less than three year's time. If there is a mortgage on any property, the applicant must provide the current assessed value and amount owed (the difference will be counted as a resource as home equity. This includes trailers).

A vehicle registered and titled to the decedent or spouse will be counted as a resource, regardless of its condition, unless it is the only vehicle in the household and the surviving spouse requires it for employment or daily living purposes.

Any request for monetary donations solicited by family, friends, or in any obituary will result in denial of burial assistance by our department. *This includes any social media website such as GoFundMe.

If any legally responsible party wishes to contribute funds in order to upgrade a casket or any other service provided under this policy, burial assistance will be denied.

PAYMENT:

Final eligibility determination and subsequent payment shall be made by the department within 60 days from the date of application provided all required documentation has been submitted. Any resources of the deceased (or legally responsible relative) uncovered after that time period will be recoverable by the department.

The Funeral Home must submit the following documentation within six months from the date of application or approval of burial assistance may be denied:

1. DSS voucher detailing each charge. Voucher must be signed by the Funeral Director or requesting party on the back.
2. Copy of Death Certificate or Transcript of Death for an infant.
3. Copies of receipts for any and all charges.
4. Statement from requesting Funeral Director that payment by Herkimer County DSS will be considered payment in full. (Disclaimer).
5. Copy of Obituary or Death Notice.
6. Attestation Form (if applicable)