

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline procedures and standards for County burials.

## Statutory Citations

- Minnesota Statutes § 261.035: Cremation, Burial, and Funerals at Expense of County
- Minnesota Statutes § 261.04: Liability of Estate
- Minnesota Statutes § 256.935: Funeral Expenses, Payment by County Agency

## Policy & Procedures

Mille Lacs County will pay the cremation or funeral expenses for recipients of Public Assistance and other indigent persons whose resources are insufficient to meet the cost, or the resources of a responsible relative (spouse or parents of a minor child) are insufficient to meet the cost of a burial. Furthermore, this policy will be followed for all persons who are the Financial Responsibility of Mille Lacs County.

County Burials will be reimbursed at rates established by the Mille Lacs County Board of Commissioners. Rates will be reviewed and approved annually; rates are posted on the Mille Lacs County website. The County's contribution shall not be available for enhancements such as flowers, a more costly casket, memorial products, or any other upgrades; however, the approval of smaller or larger caskets or vaults may be considered for approval. This guideline does not prohibit the responsible relative to make separate arrangements with the funeral home.

## Service Scope

Immediate Cremation includes: removal from place of death, private identification, transport to crematory, minimum cremation container, minimum urn, cremation, file death certificate.

Immediate Burial includes: removal from place of death, private identification, transport to cemetery, minimum casket, minimum grave liner, file death certificate. Embalming will be paid only when the 72-hour rule cannot be enforced, the cost for embalming shall not exceed \$200. Burial lots are provided at the County cemetery in Milo Township.

Transportation charges will be reimbursed at the rate of \$1.25 per loaded mile outside Mille Lacs County and within the state of Minnesota. County burial costs must not exceed \$4000.

## Administrative Procedures

An application for a County burial will be completed by a family member or other interested party prior to receipt of services. Application will be submitted to Financial Assistance Unit. Applications for a County Burial shall be completed and authorization given to the Funeral Director to render services prior to those services being given.

If resources available to the deceased or legally responsible relative (parent or spouse) are greater than the maximum amounts provided in this policy, County assistance will be denied. If available resources are less than the maximum amounts provided in this policy, the application will be approved. This guideline does not prohibit persons who are not legally responsible from making a gift contribution or memorial to supplement cremation or burial services.

If the deceased is entitled to death benefits from any source (burial/life insurance policies, VA death benefit, proceeds from bank accounts, stocks or bonds, vehicles, equity in real estate, etc.) these funds will be considered in determining if the deceased or legally responsible relative has sufficient funds to pay burial expenses. Relatives are responsible to assist with burial costs. Responsible relatives are surviving spouses and parents of minor descendants.

Any and all available income & resources of the deceased or a legally responsible relative will be asked to be turned over to the County. A claim will be filed against the estate of the deceased for any funds expended by the County. The Mille Lacs County Collections Unit will contact household to repay Mille Lacs County any assets or income of deceased up to the approved total cost. The legally responsible relative (parent or spouse) may request consideration from the Community & Veterans Services Director for waiver of collection if actions of the County would cause an undue hardship on the surviving spouse or parent.

By signing the repayment agreement, the decedent's representative assumes the responsibility of acquiring the decedent's assets and reimbursing the county for burial expenses. Repayment must be received within 90 days or a late fee may be applied to the claim, unless other arrangements have been made with the County.

To access funds in a deposit account for the deceased party the legally responsible representative can use an Affidavit for Collections of Personal Property along with a certified copy of the death certificate to present to the financial institution in order to gain access to these funds.

The Eligibility Worker assigned will give verbal approval by phone to be followed up by the County Letter of Authorization to the Funeral Director that the County will pay for the funeral, up to the guidelines for payment established. Funeral Director will need to provide an itemized statement of Goods and Services prior to payment. The Eligibility Worker assigned will refer to the Collection Officer for a claim against the estate.