



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BURIAL ALLOWANCE AVAILABLE FROM HRA

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## ■ BURIAL ALLOWANCE APPLICATION PROCESS

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### 1. How do I apply for a burial allowance?

A completed Application for Burial Allowance M-860w can be sent to the Office of Burial Services the following ways:

[View the Application for Burial Allowance and find out more about what HRA will cover.](#)

[View the instructions for the Burial Allowance Application form.](#)



**Mail:** HRA Office of Burial Services  
33-28 Northern Boulevard - 3rd Floor  
Long Island City, NY 11101



**Fax:** 917-639-0476



**E-Mail:** [BurialServices@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:BurialServices@hra.nyc.gov)



**In Person:** At the address above on Mondays through Fridays between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Call us at **718-557-1399** if you need a copy of the application and we will send it to you. You can also call us if you need help with completing the electronic version of the application from our website.

**2. What is the deadline to apply for a burial allowance?**

Applications must be received by HRA within 120 days after the date of death. The date of receipt is the date the application is received in person, or by mail, email, fax, or completed by telephone with a staff member.

**3. What information and documents do I need to provide?**

Visit our website, [www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/burial-assistance.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/burial-assistance.page), and see the “Supporting Documents” section at our website at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/burial-assistance.page>

There may be additional documents necessary to process the application.

**4. I already paid the funeral home. Can I apply to HRA for the HRA allowance? What do I need to submit?**

Yes. You will need to submit an application and some supporting documentation. Visit our website, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/burial-assistance.page>, and see the “Supporting Documents” section to see what other types of documents you might have to submit.

**5. Can I apply for the burial allowance before I pay for services?**

Yes, an application for burial allowance can be submitted as soon as there is an itemized bill or contract for services.

**6. I heard there is an interview in order to determine eligibility for the allowance. Is it still happening during COVID-19? If so, how?**

Yes, Office of Burial Services case workers are conducting telephone interviews and reviewing submitted documents. The Office of Burial Services is also communicating with applicants via phone and email.

**7. How long does it take to process an application?**

The application will be processed within 30 days after a completed application, including all supporting documents, is received by HRA.

**8. Who will receive the burial allowance?**

If the application is for funeral expenses already paid, the burial allowance will be issued to the applicant. If the funeral expenses have not already been paid, then the payment is issued to the funeral home or crematorium towards an outstanding balance. In either case, payment cannot be issued until a death certificate can be provided.

## ■ WHO CAN GET A BURIAL ALLOWANCE FROM HRA

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### **9. Can I get help paying for a burial or cremation of a loved one who passed away?**

Yes. Burial assistance is available to help pay for funeral expenses/burials/cremations of eligible low-income New Yorkers. Applications, along with other documents, will be reviewed to see if the eligibility criteria for a burial allowance are met.

### **10. What expenses does the burial allowance cover?**

The burial allowance covers up to \$1,700 towards funeral and burial related costs for which the applicant can provide an itemized invoice from a funeral home, crematorium, or cemetery, as long as the total costs are within the expense cap (see FAQ 17 below).

## ■ EXPENSES COVERED BY HRA BURIAL ALLOWANCE

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### **11. Are cremation services covered by the burial allowance?**

Yes, cremation services will be covered as long as all other criteria are met.

### **12. Do you give funds for a down payment while waiting for application to be reviewed and processed?**

No. For cases where final disposition of the decedent has not yet occurred, a pre-approval letter may be issued.

### **13. Does the HRA burial allowance cover situations where a decedent is buried out-of-state?**

If all eligibility criteria are met (including the \$3,400 cap), the fact that the decedent is buried out-of-state is not a bar to receiving an HRA burial allowance.

### **14. I want to send the remains of a loved one to a different country or state. Is that a covered expense?**

Yes. The burial allowance can be used to cover the eligible expenses of a New York City resident buried or cremated outside of NYC. The burial allowance can also be used towards funeral related transportation costs as long as the total expenses fall within the expense cap (see FAQ 17 below) and the specific expense is included on the itemized bill.

**15. Do I have to pay for the removal of the decedent from Hart Island? Can I apply for a burial allowance?**

No, the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) does not charge for locating and disintering remains of the decedent. Yes, a burial allowance application can be made for funeral costs related to the disinterment and reburial of the decedent.

**Disinterment:**

Upon confirming a loved one is buried at Hart Island, families/friends may request a licensed funeral home arrange for the disinterment of the remains, and their reburial or cremation elsewhere.

HRA, which is responsible for Hart Island, will not charge a fee to locate, disinter, and release remains to an authorized funeral home. However, disinterment is dependent on the recoverability of the remains.

Those wishing to relocate their loved one's remains for reburial or cremation elsewhere must contact a licensed funeral director, who, for a fee, will obtain a Disinterment Permit from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Office of Vital Records, and arrange for their transfer.

Once issued, the funeral director will submit the Disinterment Permit with a formal request for disinterment on their letterhead to:

NYC Human Resources Administration  
General Support Services (GSS) – Hart Island Division  
375 Pearl Street – 24th floor  
New York, NY 10038

GSS – Hart Island Division will schedule the disinterment, and work with the funeral home to transfer the remains.

For more information contact GSS – Hart Island Division at (929) 221-6860 or <https://www.nyc.gov/site/hartisland/hart-island/disinterment.page>.

**16. How do I make arrangements to transfer my family member from Hart Island to another location or for cremation?**

Please visit the Hart Island website at:  
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doc/about/hart-island.page>.

## ■ FUNERAL EXPENSES CAP

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### 17. What is the burial expense cap?

The burial allowance cannot be applied towards funerals//burials that cost more than \$3,400. However, certain costs do not count towards this cap. For additional information please contact our office at **718-557-1399**.

### 18. Who do I contact for low-cost funeral options? And what if funeral homes say they can't get the total cost under the \$3,400 cap?

Information about funeral resources may be available from the state and federal Veteran's Administrations, or the NYS Crime Victim's Fund (see the resources list below). Additionally, some religious entities offer free burial. We encourage individuals to work closely with the funeral services provider to see what options are available that may be less expensive. You can also consult the Office of Burial Services brochure available at <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/benefits/BRC-1048.pdf>.

## ■ MISCELLANEOUS

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### 19. How do I get a death certificate?

The Funeral Director generally orders the death certificate when you make funeral arrangements. You can also visit

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/services/death-certificates.page>.

If the decedent passed away outside of New York City, you should contact the local governmental authority in that jurisdiction.

### 20. How are you protecting my personal information?

Your privacy is important to us. Your personal information is protected by federal, state and local privacy laws. We will keep all information you submit confidential and secure.

### 21. I am worried about public charge. Will applying for a burial allowance negatively affect my green card application?

If you have questions about how the receipt of this allowance may impact your immigration status, you can call the free, confidential ActionNYC hotline at 1-800-354-0365 and say, "public charge". The hotline is available Monday to Friday, from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm.

### 22. Does the allowance have to be paid back?

Non legally responsible relatives do not have to pay back the allowance. If there is a legally responsible relative who can pay for the burial or cremation, as required by State law, HRA can seek to recover the amount from the legally responsible relative. Further, if the decedent has an estate with assets, as required by State law, HRA can make a claim against the estate.

### **23. I haven't filed taxes before. How do I prove my income?**

If you are a legally responsible relative (see definition below) you will have to provide your financial information and describe how you support yourself. During the application process you will be asked about your income, employment status, assets and number of family members in your household. Some information may have to be requested from another agency.

In accordance with State law, the Legally Responsible Relative (LRR) is a person who is legally married to the decedent or is the parent or legal guardian of a decedent who is under the age of twenty-one (21). An LRR is responsible for paying for the decedent's final disposition to the extent they are able to.

## **RESOURCES**

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1. Visit NYS Department of Health website for information on arranging a funeral at <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0704/>  
"A Consumer's Guide to Arranging a Funeral" - <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0704.pdf>
2. "Before Prepaying Your Funeral, Know Your Rights" <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0703.pdf>
3. NYC Department of Veteran's Services - <http://www.nysfda.org/images/COVID-19/cidD70B349D-C99A-4C62-BBFA-FCFD38C0BD99.pdf>
4. NYS Division of Veteran's Services – <https://veterans.ny.gov/indigent-burial-reimbursements>
5. U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs – <https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp>
6. NYS Office of Victim's Services - <https://ovs.ny.gov/>
7. NYC Well - <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/>
8. Visit the Social Security Administration website to learn more about Survivors Benefits for Decedents' Children and Other Dependents and how to apply: <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/survivors/#anchor1>
9. Burial Services Brochure – <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/benefits/BRC-1048.pdf>.