

**Public Comments Received Regarding HRA's  
Rule Extending the Increased Burial Allowance  
through June 30, 2021**

**Testimony Submitted to the  
New York City Human Resources Administration  
Regarding Section 13-02 of Title 68  
Extension of Augmented Burial Allowance**

Dear Human Resources Administration:

On behalf of Legal Services NYC, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment to the burial allowance program. The proposed change would benefit our clients and low income New Yorkers particularly as they deal with the effects of the pandemic.

Legal Services NYC (LSNYC) is the largest organization exclusively devoted to the provision of free civil legal services to the poor in the nation. For over fifty years, we have helped our clients meet basic human needs in order to protect and restore human dignity. Annually, LSNYC ensures that legal assistance to thousands of low-income NYC residents results in access to critical government benefits.

We submit this testimony because of the urgent and timely need for the extension of the increase in burial allowance for low-income New Yorkers.

**The amendment to Section 13-02 proposes to extend the temporary emergency increase to the burial allowance program from \$900 to \$1700 to New York City applicants.**

The proposed extension of the temporary emergency rule, Section 13-02, that increased funds for the burial allowance program would have an immediate positive impact on our clients. More than half a year after the pandemic began, the economic stress linked to the uncertainty of the labor market remains an overwhelming reality for our clients. New York's unemployment rate is still the worst of the nation<sup>1</sup> and is continuing to impact mostly low income families of color.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as of November 9, 2020, confirmed deaths in New York City from Covid-19 are on the increase as flu season approaches.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thecity.nyc/economy/2020/9/17/21444441/nyc-unemployment-pain-far-worse-than-nation>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.centernyc.org/reports-briefs/2020/6/29/the-covid-19-new-york-city-economy-three-months-in-reopening-and-a-continuing-low-wage-worker-recession>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data.page>

Thus, many New Yorkers continue to need the financial assistance of the burial allowance program.

Now more than ever, the city needs to provide additional support to families dealing with grief by ensuring they can provide their departed loved ones with a proper burial.

The extension of the amendment would protect the dignity of the many lives that have been lost due to the pandemic, regardless of economic status. The impact of additional burial funds for grieving families will be felt by many New Yorkers who have little to no income. Thousands of families in New York City will be positively impacted by the proposed extension of increase to burial funds. New York City is mourning so many lives; Covid-19 caused economic hardship and should not add more distress to devastated families. Something as fundamental to human dignity as a proper burial should not depend on economic status.

We thank the Human Resources Administration for addressing this timely issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD  
19<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

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November 18, 2020

HRA Rules  
c/o Office of Legal Affairs  
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To whom it may concern:

I write to offer my strong support of the proposed New York City Human Resources Administration rule that will extend the date by which applications for the augmented burial assistance must be received, to June 30, 2021. This rule will be of great benefit to my constituents and many other New Yorkers who have lost loved ones throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

This pandemic has wreaked havoc in communities across the City of New York. Brownsville and East New York, both of which partially fall within the 19<sup>th</sup> Senate District, had particularly elevated rates of COVID-19 related fatalities. With these two neighborhoods being among the poorest in New York State, the availability of burial assistance (and the temporary augmentation) is critical for the families and loved ones of those who suddenly passed away. The pandemic is leaving survivors increasingly likely to be unemployed, housing and food insecure, thus much less likely able to afford unanticipated burial expenses.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed rule. If you have any questions, please contact my office and speak with Dennis Weakley, Director of the Senate Social Services Committee. Dennis is reachable at (518) 455-2790 or via [weakley@nysenate.gov](mailto:weakley@nysenate.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Roxanne J. Persaud'.

Roxanne J. Persaud  
Chair, Social Services Committee  
19<sup>th</sup> Senate District