

FEMA Funeral Assistance



Phone lines open April 12. Call: 1-844-684-6333

Did You Lose A Loved One To COVID? And did you struggle to pay funeral and cemetery costs?

Eligible people will be able to apply for up to \$9,000 in reimbursement of funeral and cemetery costs starting April 12 thanks to law passed by Senator Schumer and Representative Ocasio-Cortez.

Following the shocking number of COVID deaths across the country, especially in poorer areas and communities of color, and the reality that many families could not afford proper burials, or were going into substantial debt to pay for them, Senator Chuck Schumer and Representative Ocasio-Cortez initiated a push to get the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to activate its Funeral Assistance program. In December, Senate Democrats succeeded in passing legislation to activate this vital program that provides reimbursement for COVID-caused funeral and cemetery expenses.

WHAT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE AND WHEN?

Senator Schumer, Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez, and Acting FEMA Administrator Fenton recently announced that the maximum financial assistance under this program will be \$9,000 per deceased individual's funeral.

FEMA will open its phone line at 844-684-6333 on April 12. Individuals who believe they may be eligible should work with others who incurred expenses for a loved one's funeral and cemetery expenses before applying.

“Too many families and friends across New York have paid the ultimate price with the tragic loss of their loved ones to the coronavirus.

The economic upheaval and added financial strain of this pandemic makes the added cost of funerals and burials unbearable for so many who have already lost so much. This historic use of FEMA's funeral assistance program is much needed aid to those who need it most, and that is why Rep. Ocasio-Cortez and I worked so hard to deliver this with FEMA—and we got it done. Now that the details are finalized, we are working to get the word out, to make sure eligible families know the application will open April 12, how to prepare their application, and that the phone number is 844-684-6333.”

—U.S. Senator Charles Schumer

BEFORE YOU APPLY:

Only one application will be accepted per deceased individual, so everyone who incurred funeral and cemetery expenses for a loved one must work together on a single application. It is also important that before submitting their application, everyone involved ensures that all expenses have been incurred, as FEMA will only approve the one application per deceased individual.

There is no requirement that you be related to the person who died, only that you incurred an eligible expense, many of which can be found listed below. Additionally, there is no citizenship requirement for the deceased individual, although the applicant must meet FEMA's eligibility requirements which can be found at [COVID-19 Funeral Assistance | FEMA.gov](#). Additionally, if an individual who does not qualify as an applicant incurred an expense for the deceased individual's funeral the applicant is applying for, the applicant can include the receipt when they submit their documents to FEMA.

Example scenario:

Aron is an undocumented individual who lost his mother, Cassie, to COVID-19. His uncle, Peter, helped pay for the funeral costs and is a qualifying applicant as he is a green card holder. Peter can apply through FEMA for this assistance and include Aron's receipts in his submission. Additionally, if Peter's sister, Julia, is a qualifying applicant and also helped cover the cost of Cassie's funeral, Julia could choose to submit her documents directly as a co-applicant or Peter could collect her receipts and include them in his documents. Importantly, Julia should not start her own application for Cassie's funeral costs because there is only one applicant per deceased individual.

ALL APPLICANT(S) MUST PROVIDE:

- 1. A copy of the death certificate.** The death certificate must indicate the death "may have been caused by" or "was likely a result of" COVID-19 or COVID-19-like symptoms. Similar phrases that indicate a high likelihood of COVID-19 are also considered sufficient attribution. If the death certificate does not include reference to COVID-19, the process to change or amend the death certificate starts with contacting the person who certified the death. This may be a treating doctor, or a coroner or medical examiner, and their name and address can be found on the death certificate.
- 2. Proof of funeral and cemetery expenses incurred.** Documentation (receipts, funeral home contract, etc.) must include the applicant's name as the responsible person for the expense, the deceased individual's name, the amount of funeral expenses, and that funeral expenses were incurred after January 20, 2020.

ELIGIBLE FUNERAL AND CEMETERY EXPENSES. INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- › Transportation for up to two individuals to identify the deceased individual
- › Transfer of remains
- › Casket or urn
- › Burial plot or cremation niche
- › Marker or headstone
- › Clergy or officiant services
- › Arrangement of the funeral ceremony
- › Use of funeral home equipment or staff
- › Cremation or interment costs
- › Costs associated with producing and certifying multiple death certificates
- › Additional expenses mandated by any applicable local or state government laws or ordinances.

If you received assistance for funeral or cemetery expenses from any other source, you must tell FEMA when you apply and include documentation of this assistance when submitting documents to FEMA.

Additional information can be found here: [COVID-19 Funeral Assistance | FEMA.gov](#), and will be updated as more details become available.