

## **Indigent Burials**

In 2015, the average cost for an indigent burial/cremation was \$1,896. Per Social Services Law §141, expenditures up to \$900 made on or after April 1, 1987 are subject to reimbursement by New York State; as of January 1, 2011 the reimbursement rate is 29% or \$261 (prior to this, the reimbursement rate was 50% or \$450). The remaining amount is 100% local dollars.

In 2015, Broome DSS approved 179 indigent burials. The average cost was \$1,896 for burials/cremations. Total cost was \$332,311. The state reimbursement was \$46,197. The Broome County Tax cost was \$286,114.

Eligibility for an indigent burial is determined by looking at the assets of the deceased. This includes cash in bank accounts, life insurance policies, and property owned. If an individual has more than \$2,000 in assets the request for indigent burial is denied. Eligibility must also be determined for legally responsible relatives (spouse or a parent of a child under 21).

From 2004 to 2009, indigent burial rates increased 2% each year. The current rate for a direct burial/cremation, \$969, has been in effect since 2010. This rate covers the following:

- meet with families to discuss arrangements and fill out application, contact Social Services
- transfer of remains and delivery to funeral home or crematory
- arrange burial with cemetery & vault company
- prepare body & casket for burial
- transfer loaded casket to cemetery for burial
- pick up cremains
- file death certificate

In addition to the \$969 allowance, Social Services reimburses the funeral homes for the following costs (costs are an average and can vary):

- plot \$550
- opening & closing \$400
- grave liner/vault \$595
- casket average cost \$470
- cremation & container cost \$430
- out of county funeral director \$150
- out of county transportation \$2.00 per load mile up to 100 miles
- winter storage or body bags when needed (rare)

Upgrades to funeral merchandise (casket, vault, plot, or services) are prohibited, but families are allowed to purchase the following items not covered by Social Services:

- obituary
- urns
- death certificates
- flowers
- prayer cards
- clergy
- grave marker not to exceed \$600

Last year we worked with 27 funeral homes.

- Aegis Cremations & Funeral Services did 45 cremations or burials (mostly cremations)
- 2 funeral homes did over 20 burials (22 & 26 respectively)
- 4 funeral homes did 11-12 burials each
- 5 funeral homes did 5-8 burials
- 15 funeral homes did less than 5 burials

Last year our department denied indigent burial funding for 19 burials. 17 were denied because the estate or family had resources. 2 were denied because we never got an application.

NYS Crime Victims can provide assistance with burials. Our local Crime Victims Assistance Center will assist families with the application. The state will pay up to \$6,000. It takes up to about two months to receive payment.

We use Broome Security to investigate any allegations of fraud either related to an applicant or a funeral home.

## Veterans' Burials

	<u># of VA Burials</u>	<u>Avg Cost/Burial/Cremations</u>	<u>Gross Cost</u>	<u>Local Share*</u>
<b>2013</b>	28	\$2,619	\$73,322	\$66,014
<b>2014</b>	25	\$2,207	\$55,183	\$48,658
<b>2015</b>	19	\$2,701	\$51,317	\$46,358

**\*Expenditures up to \$900 are subject to reimbursement by NYS. The reimbursement rate is 29% or \$261**

In 2011, administration of Veterans' burials was transferred from the VA to DSS. Eligibility is determined the same as indigent burials and all costs are the same except that we allow a full service burial/cremation for Veterans. The rate paid to funeral homes for a full service burial/cremation is \$1,985 and covers the following:

- Transfer of remains to the funeral home
- Embalming as required
- Hairdressing, cosmetology, dressing of body, and casketing
- Arrangements and supervision of minimum one hour calling or visitation at the funeral home
- Livery
- Acknowledgement cards and register book



# Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home

483 Chenango Street • Binghamton, NY 13901 • Tel: 607-722-4023

RECEIVED RESOURCE  
NOV 18 2015  
BROOME COUNTY D.S.S.

November 11, 2015

Services of [REDACTED] – Nov. 3, 2015

### Funeral home charges (adult direct burial)

Direct burial	\$ 969.00
Casket: cloth covered	\$ 523.80
Concrete grave liner	\$ <u>616.80</u>

Total funeral home charges: \$2,109.60

Cash advances:

Spring Forest Cemetery \$ 950.00

TOTAL FUNERAL CHARGES \$3,059.60

(cemetery, vault, and casket invoices included)

RECEIVED RESOURCE  
JAN 19 2016  
BROOME COUNTY D.S.S.

Thank you.

Kurt M. Eschbach