

Funeral assistance available for deaths due to COVID-19

March 25, 2021

Ministers seeking to comfort grieving families who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 also can let them know financial assistance is available to defray funeral expenses.

As part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Congress approved \$2 billion in FEMA funds to help reimburse families for the basic funeral costs of individuals who died due to COVID-19. The policy was finalized March 24.

The maximum available reimbursement is \$9,000 per funeral or \$35,000 per applicant in the case of multiple funerals.

[Applications](#) for reimbursement can be submitted effective April 1, but they are retroactive to Jan. 20, 2020. A death certificate is required indicating the death was attributed to COVID-19.

“At FEMA, our mission is to help people before, during and after disasters,” said Bob Fenton, acting FEMA administrator. “The COVID-19 pandemic has caused immense grief for so many people. Although we cannot change what has happened, we affirm our commitment to help with funeral and burial expenses that many families did not anticipate.”

Covered expenses include interment or cremation costs, a casket or urn, a burial plot or cremation niche, a marker or headstone, the transfer of remains, and the use of funeral home equipment or staff. Documentation proving actual costs is required.

The death must have occurred in the United States. The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or qualified alien, but there is no requirement that the deceased person was a citizen or registered national.

The [Texas Department of Health and Human Services](#) reported a cumulative total of 46,736 deaths due to COVID-19 as of March 24. Nationally, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reported more than 541,000 deaths from the virus.

FEMA announced it will establish a toll-free hotline and call center in the near future to respond to applicants.

In the meantime, the agency has encouraged individuals needing reimbursement to gather documents such as death certificates, receipts and documentation of funds from other sources, such as insurance, government programs, churches or nonprofit agencies.

For more information from FEMA, click [here](#).