

BECKER COUNTY DISPOSITION POLICY

Effective 01/01/2018

TOPIC: COUNTY DISPOSITION POLICY

I. PURPOSE:

In Accordance with MN Statute §261.035, Becker County will provide for the immediate disposition or direct cremation for residents of the county who are otherwise unable to pay the cost of disposition of their remains.

II. GENERAL POLICY:

When a person dies without apparent means to provide for final disposition, the Financial Assistance Supervisor or their designee shall investigate to determine if the deceased had contracted for any prepaid funeral arrangements. If it is determined that the person did not leave means to bare the necessary expenses of a final disposition, nor is there any responsible relative with means to procure the disposition, the County shall pay for immediate disposition or direct cremation. If neither the wishes of the decedent or the practices of his/her faith, tradition are known, or the county has information about the existence or location of any next of kin, the county may authorize and provide for cremation of the person's remains and interment.

If an application is approved, all resources of decedent shall be remitted to the funeral home to offset the expense of the disposition. Becker County will then pay the balance due (up to the approved limit) to the funeral home. After approximately thirty (30) days, the county will close out any accounts held by the decedent if the responsible relative is not able to access the funds. In addition, where applicable, any death benefit available must be applied for and shall be turned over to the county. If other resources become available to the deceased estate the county will be notified immediately.

III. AUTHORITY:

Minnesota Statute §261.035; 261.04; 256.935; 524.3-805
Becker County Board

A. Prior Authorization:

All County dispositions must be prior authorized. See procedure attached to this policy. A completed application for County Disposition and in person interview must be completed prior to the disposition by any person lawfully authorized to make arrangements for disposition of deceased. If arrangements must be made when the office is closed contact must be made the next working day.

B. County Disposition Costs:

1. Direct Cremation (within 72 hours of death) Professional Services \$1500.00
Refer to Becker County Funeral allowance for additional approved charges.

2. Immediate Earth Disposition (within 72 hours of death) Professional Services \$1500
Refer to Becker County Funeral allowance for additional approved charges.

3. Becker County will not pay for additional costs associated with the disposition above the approved amount. An invoice for services must be submitted to Becker County Human Services by the Funeral Home no later than 90 days after Services have been rendered.

4. County payment must be accepted as payment in full for a county funded disposition. County funded disposition is not intended to supplement other monies available for disposition services. The deceased funds and the funds of any responsible party such as a spouse or parent of a minor child, cannot be used to supplement the county burial. A family friend or relative may choose to pay for a memorial service, flowers, or food should they choose too, not included in this options is upgrades to the casket and embalming. All purchased items need to be fully itemized on the bill submitted to the county. Also this can not exceed 20% of the approved amount of the County burial.

Professional Services include:

- Removal and care of deceased
- Placement in casket of cremation container
- Transportation (to cemetery or crematory) within 50 mile radius
- Filing of all necessary legal papers

Not Included:

- Embalming
- Funeral or Memorial Service
- Visitation
- Register book/folders/thank you cards
- Honorariums
- Newspaper notices
- Food or lunch
- Flowers
- Permanent Markers
- Tent and Set up

C. Income Standards:

1. Eligibility for partial or total county payment of disposition expenses will be determined by first deducting all liquid resources of the deceased and those of any responsible relatives from the county allowance for disposition. The definition of responsible relative is a spouse or parents of minor children. Liquid resources are defined as cash, savings, checking, and certificate of deposits.
2. After determination of liquid resources, all other assets and income will be reviewed for availability and marketability. In the event assets exist which are not readily marketable, a preferred claim will be filed against the deceased's estate to reimburse for the cost of the county disposition. Request for County payment will be denied when there is real property, either homesteaded or non-homesteaded, with value and/or equity sufficient to cover cost of disposition.
3. Earned and unearned income will be reduced by allowable expenses prior to being applied to disposition cost. Allowable expenses are child support obligation, current rent due and current utilities owed.
4. The responsible relative must apply for any available death benefits including but not limited to Life Insurance, Social Security (available only to surviving spouse) and Veteran's Benefits. Any death benefits available shall be reimbursed to Becker County or paid directly to the funeral home. The County's payment will be reduced by any benefits paid to the funeral home.

D. Residence - Funerals at expense of County Minnesota Statute§ 261.035

The County where the person is residing at the time of death is responsible for the arrangements and eligible disposition allowance will be used to pay the funeral home. Reimbursement to said county by the financial responsible County is subject to any and all residency rules that exist governing counties responsibilities.

BECKER COUNTY DISPOSITION PROCEDURE

Effective 01/01/2018

IV. PROCEDURE

- A.** An applicant, responsible relative, or friend applying for county disposition funds must complete the following prior to disposition.
1. A written application must be completed, an in person interview, and verification of all assets must be completed at the County office.
 2. A release of information must be signed for any bank statements that are more than 30 days old or the applicant must submit a current statement.
 3. If circumstances out of the applicants control caused the funeral home to be contacted for arrangement prior to the county, all documents provided to and from the funeral home must be provided to the county. Example the descendant passes on a weekend or holiday.
- B.** The County will receive the completed application, all requested verifications, an in person interview and determine eligibility for disposition funds.
1. The County will determine available assets, resources, and death benefits of the decedent to pay for the disposition.
 2. The County will determine if available resources including cash, savings, checking, certificates of deposit, or resident account funds (if long term care) are immediately available to be paid to the funeral home. Death benefits can include Life Insurance, Social Security Death Benefit, Veterans Benefits, or Prepaid or prearranged Disposition Plans. Any benefits immediately available shall be paid to the funeral home
 3. The County will determine that if assets, resources, or death benefits are immediately available to be paid directly to the funeral home and the eligibility for County disposition funds is reduced by those dollar amounts. The application for County disposition will be denied if available assets, resources, and death benefits of the decedent exceed the allowable county disposition fund amount.
 4. The County will determine that earned and unearned income is considered available. The only allowable expenses include current child support obligations (not withheld from income), current rent (not mortgage payments) and current utilities.

5. County disposition funds will be denied if there is real property homesteaded or non-homesteaded with value and or equity sufficient to cover the cost of disposition unless it is determined by the County that accessing property funds would create a hardship for a surviving spouse.

6. Upon approval the County will contact the selected funeral home with the eligible County disposition fund amount and payment arrangements.

C. The County will refer the application information to the County Accounting department to pursue reimbursement for county disposition funds paid.

1. If the county disposition funds have already been paid, but the decedents assets, resources, or benefits were unavailable; the county would pursue reimbursement for the County funds expended.

2. The Account department will obtain a certified copy of the death certificate from the funeral home upon approval of disposition funds. At least 30 days after the decedent's death, an affidavit of collection will be filed by the Collections Officer to close out any accounts held by decedent but not accessible by the responsible relative.

Becker County Funeral Allowances

Immediate Earth Burial	Cremation	Child Services Still born to 6 years old
Professional Services - \$1500 Includes graveside service, Funeral Coach (50 miles)	Professional Services \$1500 Includes graveside service,	Professional Services \$800 Includes graveside service, casket and vault Funeral Coach (50 miles)
Embalming \$0 (May be preauthorized for special circumstances. ¹) Cost	Embalming \$0	Embalming \$0 (May be preauthorized for special circumstances) Cost
Visitation none	Visitation none	Visitation None
Casket – Cloth covered cost plus 10% (No upgrades) Concrete Grave liner Cost plus 10%	° Alternative Container: \$100.00 Crematory Fee \$300.00	
Transportation \$1.00 loaded mile (Preauthorization required)	Transportation \$1.00 per loaded mile	Transportation \$1.00 per loaded mile
Opening and Closing of grave \$250	Opening and closing of grave \$250	Opening and closing of grave \$250
Grave lot actual cost	Grave lot Actual cost	Grave lot Actual cost

Prior approval required from the county prior to disposition. The family member must make an application for a county disposition. A photocopy of the death certificate must be submitted with the billing to the county. The above allowances cannot be supplemented by the family members for the purchase of more expensive burial items, such as a walnut casket in place of the cloth covered.