

# **BECKER COUNTY DISPOSITION POLICY**

## **Effective 08/20/2024**

**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 nor the practices of his/her faith or tradition is known, and/or the County has no 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 the procedure attached to this policy. A completed application for County Disposition and an in-person interview must be completed prior to the disposition by any person lawfully authorized to plan for disposition of the 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 \$2,500  
Refer to Becker County Funeral allowance for additional approved charges.
2. Immediate Earth Disposition (within 72 hours of death) Professional Services \$2,500  
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 ninety (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's 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 ~~they~~ choose too, not included in this option is upgrades to the casket and embalming. All ~~All~~ purchased items need to be fully itemized on the bill submitted to the County and cannot exceed \$ 2,000.

### **Professional Services include:**

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

### **Not Included:**

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

## **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 a responsible relative is a spouse or parents of minor children. Liquid resources are defined as cash, savings, checking, and certificate of deposits.
2. After the 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 costs. Allowable expenses are child support obligations, 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 arrangement and eligible disposition allowance will be used to pay the funeral home. Reimbursement to said County by the financially responsible County is subject to any and all residency rules that exist governing county's responsibilities.

# **BECKER COUNTY DISPOSITION PROCEDURE**

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### **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 applicant's 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. For example, the decedent passes on a weekend or holiday.
- B. The County will receive the completed application and all requested verifications. Next an in-person interview will be held and eligibility determined 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 Benefits, Veterans Benefits, or Prepaid or prearranged disposition plans. Any benefits immediately available shall be paid to the funeral home.
  - 3. The County will determine if assets, resources, or death benefits are immediately available to be paid directly to the funeral home. 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 decedents 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 amount and explain payment details.
- 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 decedent's assets, resources, or benefits were unavailable; the County would pursue reimbursement for the County reimbursement for the County funds expended.
  2. The Accounting department will obtain a certified copy of the death certificate from the funeral home upon approval of disposition funds. At least thirty (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 the decedent but not accessible by the responsible relative.

## Becker County Funeral Allowances

	IMMEDIATE EARTH BURIAL	CREMATION	CHILD SERVICE Stillborn to 6 years old
<b>Professional Services</b>	\$ 2,500 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes graveside service</li> <li>Funeral Coach (50 miles)</li> </ul>	\$ 2,500 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes graveside service</li> </ul>	\$ 1,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes graveside service</li> <li>Casket and vault</li> <li>Funeral Coach (50 miles)</li> </ul>
<b>Embalming</b>	None <i>*May be preauthorized for special circumstances</i> - At Cost	None	None <i>*May be preauthorized for special circumstances</i> - At Cost
<b>Visitation</b>	None	None	None
<b>Casket</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cloth covered - cost plus 10%</li> <li><b>No upgrades</b></li> <li>Concrete Grave liner - Cost plus 10%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative Container: \$100.00</li> <li>Crematory Fee: \$300.00</li> </ul>	
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$1.00 loaded mile</li> <li>- *Preauthorization is required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$1.00 per loaded mile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$1.00 per loaded mile</li> </ul>
<b>Opening &amp; Closing of Grave</b>	\$ 700	\$ 350	\$ 350
<b>Grave Lot</b>	Actual Cost	Actual Cost	Actual Cost

Prior approval is 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 family members or friends for the purchase of more expensive burial items, such as a walnut casket in place of the cloth covered.