



WASHINGTON STATE BURIAL PROGRAM FOR INDIGENTS

1. The law of the State of Washington requires that family members of a deceased person be responsible for burial costs regardless of their own income.
2. Family members are defined as: spouse, adult children (18+), parents, or adult siblings.
3. If a person dies, and the body isn't immediately claimed, the Medical Examiner's office in the county where the person died takes it. They go through great efforts to find family of the deceased. If they find family, the family then becomes responsible for the body, regardless of their income.
4. When a family is made responsible for a deceased person, the funeral home makes payment arrangements with them. Some funeral homes are very cooperative and helpful, others may be quite firm about their rates.
5. If the Pierce County Medical Examiner can't find any family members to claim a body, the body is released to a funeral home and Pierce County will authorize a "direct burial." This means the body is buried without any type of service. Programs may vary by county.
6. **Veterans have a special burial program.**
Contact the Veteran's Administration for more information at 1-800-827-1000.

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