

FEMA program will pay up to \$9,000 for each COVID-19 funeral. Here's how you can apply.

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There have been more than 560,000 COVID-19 related deaths in the United States, including more than 5,800 in Iowa.

To help those left behind, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is paying a maximum of \$9,000 per funeral and a maximum of \$35,500 per application.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has caused immense grief for so many people," acting FEMA Administrator Bob Fenton said in a release announcing the federal program. "Although we cannot change what has happened, we affirm our commitment to help with funeral and burial expenses that many families did not anticipate."

The program launches Monday, April 12. The following information — along with other resources — can be on the FEMA website for the program.

More: What is safe to do once you've been fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for funeral assistance, you must meet these conditions, according to FEMA:

- The death must have occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.
- The death certificate must indicate the death was attributed to COVID-19.

- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after January 20, 2020.
- There is no requirement for the deceased person to have been a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or qualified alien.

How to apply for funeral reimbursement

FEMA encourages people who have had COVID-19 funeral expenses to keep and gather funeral documentation. According to FEMA, the following types of information should include:

- An official death certificate that attributes the death directly or indirectly to COVID-19 and shows that the death occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.
- Funeral expenses documents that include the applicant's name, the deceased person's name, the amount of funeral expenses, and the dates the funeral expenses happened.
- Proof of funds received from other sources specifically for use toward funeral costs. FEMA is not able to duplicate benefits received from burial or funeral insurance, financial assistance received from voluntary agencies, government agencies, or other sources.

The application process opens Monday, April 12.

For assistance, you can call FEMA at 844-684-6333 or 800-462-7585 (TTY). Assistance is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT.