



04 JUN 2021

Tēnā koe

On 11 May 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), requesting information about the funeral grant. For the sake of clarity, your questions will be answered in turn.

1. *What is the approximate or average processing time of the Funeral Grant Application Form?*

The Ministry has a target processing time of five working days from when they have received all information needed to process an application, to when a decision is made. In some cases, the Ministry may require further information from the applicant, which can extend the application process while waiting on the information to be received.

The Ministry does not centrally report the average processing time for Funeral Grants. The length of time from receipt of application to the grant or decline could be determined from individual client files, but determining the average would require individual review of these files. As such, this aspect of the request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as it would require substantial manual collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

2. *Are there any fees that need to be paid upon application, and if so, what are they?*

There are no fees that need to be paid upon application. Please find information regarding the qualification of Funeral Grants at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/qualifications.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/qualifications.html).

3. *What are the statistics on approved and declined applications?*

Please see **Table One** below, which shows the total number of Funeral Grants and declines for each quarter during the period 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2021.

**Table One: Total number of Funeral Grants and declines for each quarter during the period 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2021.**

Quarter end	Decline	Grant	Total Applications
March 2020	345	1,065	<b>1,410</b>
June 2020	327	1,212	<b>1,542</b>
September 2020	444	1,347	<b>1,788</b>
December 2020	381	1,119	<b>1,497</b>
March 2021	357	1,188	<b>1,548</b>

**Notes for Table One:**

- This is the number of grants and declines not the number of clients.
- Clients may have multiple grants or declines in a period.
- Total Applications are all applications granted or declined.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

4. *How long after someone's death does their loved one have to apply to receive assistance? Is there a time frame?*

There is no time limit to when an application for a Funeral Grant must be made following a person's death. Please find further information at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/commencement-date.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/commencement-date.html).

5. *Does someone have to be receiving assistance from WINZ in order to apply for the Funeral Grant?*

There is no requirement for applicants to have received assistance from WINZ prior to applying for the Funeral Grant. However, the Estate of the deceased must meet an asset and income test which determines eligibility for the grant. Further information regarding the Assessable estate and treatment of income and assets can be found at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/assessable-estate.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/assessable-estate.html).

The principles and purposes of the Act under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Funeral Grants, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bridget Saunders', written in a cursive style.

Bridget Saunders  
**Issue Resolution Manager**  
**Service Delivery**