



8 November 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email of 24 October 2024, requesting a copy of the Funeral Grant Procedure page.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision set out below.

I have attached a copy of the Funeral Grant Procedure page from the Ministry's internal intranet.

Please note, this page includes links that are not publicly accessible. If you would like to request copies of these, please reach out to the Ministry and we can process this as a new request for information.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, 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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

Funeral grant procedures

This page provides best practice for Funeral Grants. These processes should be read in conjunction with the relevant Processing Standards.

On this Page:

Introduction

A Funeral Grant helps towards a person's essential funeral expenses. What this means is help towards the actual and reasonable expenses needed to bury a person.

Funeral grant applications can be received through post; emailed or face-to-face to a Service Centre. When received, they should be checked to ensure we have all details to prevent unnecessary delays.

Qualifications for Funeral Grants

To start the [Qualifications \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/qualifications.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/qualifications.html) there are few main things to consider:

The deceased person must have been ordinarily resident in New Zealand at the time of death to be eligible for a Funeral Grant. [Deciding ordinarily resident \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/deciding-ordinarily-resident-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/deciding-ordinarily-resident-01.html)

[Deceased died overseas \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/deceased-died-overseas-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/deceased-died-overseas-01.html)

Income and asset (assessable estate)

[Funeral is not funded elsewhere \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/proof-the-funeral-is-not-funded-elsewhere-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/proof-the-funeral-is-not-funded-elsewhere-01.html)

Confirmation of death

We require confirmation of death which can be:

Death certificate

News paper notice

Online obituaries

Confirmation from Funeral Director

Income and Asset test

Income

Income test is required for the following:

Deceased person with a surviving partner

Deceased person with a surviving partner, with child(ren)

Deceased child

Deceased child, parent is married, civil union, or de facto relationship with or without other children

Assess the annual income for the surviving spouse, partner, or parents of a deceased child under the age of 18 years for the 52 weeks from the day after death. Where they are in receipt of ongoing financial assistance, we already hold this information.

Asset

Asset test may also be required against the deceased persons [Assessable estate \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/assessable-estate.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/assessable-estate.html), including a deceased child, terminal benefit paid (if applicable), and any money still in their bank account at the time of death.

Where the applicant cannot provide the deceaseds income and assets information, where required, you can complete:

[Income/Assets verification form \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/forms-templates/work-and-income/forms/work-income/income-assets-verification.pdf\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-clients/forms-templates/work-and-income/forms/work-income/income-assets-verification.pdf)

Send to the deceased bank(s)

This information can be found here [bank details for estate queries \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/documents/business-groups/helping-clients/senior-services/kordia-training/bank-details-for-estate-queries.pdf\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/documents/business-groups/helping-clients/senior-services/kordia-training/bank-details-for-estate-queries.pdf)

If not, you can search "deceased estates" in Google for the person bank(s)

Banks may request verification of the persons death certificate. This is not required as MSD requests this information under [Schedule 6 \[https://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2018/0032/latest/DLM6784897.html?search=ts_act%40bill%40regulation%40deemedreg_social+security+act_resel_25_a&p=1\]](https://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2018/0032/latest/DLM6784897.html?search=ts_act%40bill%40regulation%40deemedreg_social+security+act_resel_25_a&p=1) of the Social Security Act 2018

Note: Case managers have discretion to request proof if reasonably necessary or accept and process based on the details in the application form, this also applies for a deceased child.

More information can be found here:

[Income test for surviving partner - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/income-test-for-surviving-partner-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/income-test-for-surviving-partner-01.html)

[Income test for parents - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/income-test-for-parents-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/income-test-for-parents-01.html)

[Income limits \(current\) - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/funeral-grant-tables/income-limits-current.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/funeral-grant-tables/income-limits-current.html)

[Definition of assets - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/definition-of-assets-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/definition-of-assets-01.html)

[Non-assessable assets - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/non-assessable-assets.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/non-assessable-assets.html)

Deceased person was not receiving on-going financial assistance

Where the deceased person is not receiving [on-going assistance \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/processing-standards/processing-standards-glossary.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-clients/processing-standards/processing-standards-glossary.html), you must:

Register non-beneficiary in SWIFTT

If the deceased is a child under 18 years old

Process on the applying parent record

Verify if expenses can be funded elsewhere

We must make sure the deceased is not entitled to assistance elsewhere. Here are some questions to help determine:

What was the cause of death e.g. accident?

Did the deceased person serve in the NZ armed forces?

Did the deceased person receive any assistance from Veterans' Affairs?

Did the deceased person have prepaid funeral cover?

In these cases, the applicant must enquire through ACC, Armed Forces, or through Veterans' Affairs. Where applicable we may require confirmation.

You can find more information [Proof the funeral is not funded elsewhere \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/proof-the-funeral-is-not-funded-elsewhere-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/proof-the-funeral-is-not-funded-elsewhere-01.html) and if you are still unsure, talk with your Manager(s) or Capability Developer.

Allowable funeral expenses

A Funeral Grant can only be used towards [Essential funeral expenses \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/essential-funeral-expenses.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/essential-funeral-expenses.html), when processing we subtract these costs for the assessable estate. which are:

Professional services for preparing the body for cremation or burial (i.e. embalming)

The cost of a cask

Newspaper notice costs

Hearse fees

Compulsory fees for buying a burial plot

Cremation fees

Administration expenses

These are expenses in the managing or disposing of a deceased estate. Generally these are legal fees but could include other costs that may be considered reasonable.

*Remember where it is not **essential** to the disposal of a body, these costs cannot be included.*

An itemised confirmation of the funeral expenses must be provided.

Scan and save the information to the deceased person's record or

the applying parent's record in CMS if the deceased is a child under the age of 18 years.

Where you are unsure if an expense should be included, contact Helpline

You can find more information here:

[Assessable estate - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/assessable-estate.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/assessable-estate.html)

[Definition of assets - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/definition-of-assets-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/definition-of-assets-01.html)

Deceased single person

The entire estate is considered assessable for calculating eligibility (including net equity in their home) if there is no surviving dependent child.

If the deceased has a surviving dependent child or children, their home, and chattels or motor vehicles which are part of the household, are excluded from their estate. These items are not considered assessable assets when there is a surviving child.

More information can be found here:

[Deceased person with a surviving partner or children - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/deceased-person-with-a-surviving-partner-or-children.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/deceased-person-with-a-surviving-partner-or-children.html)

[Asset test - deceased child - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/asset-test-deceased-child.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/asset-test-deceased-child.html)

Deceased child

When the deceased is a child under the age of 18, assess the child's assessable estate and the combined assets of the parent's. The family home is exempt as this is the principal place of residence for the family.

For an adopted child, we need to assess the assets and income of the adoptive parents, not the birth parents.

More information can be found here:

[Deceased child - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/deceased-child.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/deceased-child.html)

Terminal benefit

Terminal benefit is paid for 28 days when a client dies and has a surviving partner or child which helps towards the ongoing costs, while dealing with the sudden change.

This payment is their:

Current rate, including any ongoing Extra Help

We must not include:

Family Tax Credit

Best Start Tax Credit

We must consider whether or not the surviving partner or child is better off

Receiving 28 days terminal benefit vs

Reviewed rate **or**

Appropriate benefit

This payment will continue to be paid to the deceased persons bank account, **and** will form part of their assessable estate.

More information can be found here:

[Terminal benefit - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/terminal-benefit.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/terminal-benefit.html)

[Deciding if surviving person would be better off getting terminal benefit or a new benefit - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/deciding-if-surviving-person-would-be-better-off-getting-terminal-benefit-or-a-new-benefit.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/changes-and-reviews-jobseeker-support/deciding-if-surviving-person-would-be-better-off-getting-terminal-benefit-or-a-new-benefit.html)

Funeral directors applying for Funeral Grant

Funeral Directors may provide funeral grant applications either:

In their role supporting a grieving family, **or**

When a deceased person has no family or friends

This means the funeral is arranged by a Funeral Director in consultation with social workers, community representatives or

other professionals who have been involved with the deceased person at the time of death.

An application can be accepted if they are acting in this role.

Where funeral directors provide applications on behalf of grieving families, we need to say:

MSD will require other information from the estate that the Director will not have

Such as income and assets

Delays may occur for the family if this is not provided with the application.

Sharing information with funeral directors

MSD can **only** provide information to a Funeral Director when they are the applicant on behalf of an unclaimed person.

If funeral directors are requesting information on:

The status

Amount of a Funeral Grant payment

Any other information

MSD can only provide information where consent has been provided by the applicant for the Funeral Grant.

Processing of a Funeral Grant

Payments are completed through the deceased person's record in CMS under Hardship.

When we receive an application, we must put this on the deceased persons record, and put in notes i.e. if checked and all information is received, documents linked and put in ready for processing queue for the site, or if we are requesting information and awaiting then this needs to be noted and put on the sites work on hold queue. Unless, a child under 18.

Remember: Funeral grant applications do not have an expiry date, we should continue to make contact where applicable.

Create a "new client event note

"Service Delivery"

"Hardship Assistance"

"Funeral Grant"

Add in applicable notes

Place into appropriate queue i.e. ready for processing, work on hold

Once all information has been received and payment is ready to be made:

Go to Hardship Assistance Homepage

Create Application

Need

Funeral Grant – Child

Funeral Grant – Person with surviving partner or child

Funeral Grant – Single Person with no dependents

Follow the same process where payment is being paid as reimbursement direct to an individual.

Bank account verification **must** be received

SWIFTT will show Funeral Grant payment codes in the SNLSH screen

| Lump Sum Type | Type | Reason for Payment |
|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 190 | Funeral Grant with dependents 61DB | 095 |
| 191 | Funeral Grant single 61DC | 096 |
| 192 | Funeral Grant child 61DD | 097 |

Making the payment

The Funeral Grant can be paid to the family of the deceased person, the estate, Funeral Director or the person who has paid the funeral expenses. You must:

Receive the funeral expenses account receipt
Scan, save and link to note either to
The deceased client's record **or**
The parent's record for a deceased child.

If the applicant is unable to provide final details of the deceased's estate as it has not been finalised, and if there is a possibility of entitlement, an advance may be considered.

The applicant must be made aware of the condition that once estate is finalised, if the funeral grant entitlement is nil or less than the advanced amount, they (or the estate) will need to pay back the difference between the entitlement amount and the advance amount.

A summary of the conversation **must** be recorded in the deceased client's CMS record

More information can be found here:

[Payment - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/payment.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/payment.html)

[Method of payment and reimbursements - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/method-of-payment-and-reimbursements.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/method-of-payment-and-reimbursements.html)

[Advance payments - Map \[https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/advance-payments-01.html\]](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/funeral-grant/advance-payments-01.html)

Funeral Grant letters

Once you have completed the hardship to the Funeral grant, you must issue a Funeral Grant letter

Once the Funeral Grant Application is approved or declined:

From the "Hardship Assistance Homepage" *select*

"View" the application *then*

"Hardship Assistance Letter" link *then*

Enter the information into the manual fields

Applicant's name

Applicant's address

Name of the deceased person

Check information is correct

Select "View draft"

"Overnight Print" or "Local Print"

Local print you will need to collect from the printer

Send the letter

Note: if an application for a Funeral Grant is declined using reason code "other", you must add a brief summary of why the application was declined.