



POLICY:

It is the policy of Indian River County to adhere to the requirements of Chapter 406 of the Florida Statutes and provide dignified cremation to Indian River County indigent residents or unclaimed bodies. Such service shall be through the use of cremation except where prohibited by law or regulation; or where a relative has expressed a preference for burial. The coordination of cremation services shall be handled through the Indian River County Human Services Division.

COMMENT:

1. Human Services Division shall make reasonable efforts to locate any of the decedent's relatives and a diligent search will be made to identify assets of the deceased to pay for costs associated with the final disposition of the body. Unless waived by the Human Services Manager or designee, only the bodies of persons who die in Indian River County shall be considered to be the responsibility of Indian River County.
2. Unless otherwise directed by the Medical Examiner's Office, all bodies, except for those unidentified, will be cremated. In the absence of a family member, relative or other designee of the deceased, the County Administrator or designee is authorized to sign the approval for cremation. Should relatives of the deceased oppose cremation, they will be allowed to pay the funeral home directly for the additional cost incurred. The County cost will be limited to the payment equivalent for cremation.
3. This policy shall limit the amount of financial support that Indian River County will contribute towards cremation. The amount shall not exceed \$750.00 for cremation. The liability to Indian River County to underwrite such expenses shall only be afforded to those individuals who were determined to be indigent with no funds available to cover the cremation. Indian River County Human Services Division will verify eligibility for such County contribution.
4. The Human Services Division will maintain internal operational procedures for implementation of this administrative policy and for working with funeral homes, the community, other Indian River County departments, state agencies, and other interested parties.
 - A. Medical Examiner's Office: The Medical Examiner's Office will refer unclaimed bodies to the designated funeral home according to the procedures established with the Human Services Manager.
 - B. Oversight and Records: The Human Services Manager will provide oversight for the fiscal management, operational activities, and program records.
 - C. State Anatomical Board: Unclaimed bodies meeting the requirements of the Anatomical Board of the State of Florida shall be offered to the Anatomical board as required by Chapter 406, Florida Statutes, and will become the responsibility of the State Anatomical Board for disposition.



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- D. Claiming a Body: Nothing in this policy or in the procedures promulgated hereunder shall prevent relatives or others from taking responsibility for a body at any time.
- E. Veteran of Armed Forces: The County shall determine if the deceased is eligible for burial in a national cemetery by contacting the County Veterans Services office or the Regional Office of the U.S. Office of Veteran Affairs and if found eligible, the County shall make arrangements for such burial services in accordance with the provisions of 38 C.F.R.
- F. Disinterment: Relatives requesting disinterment for a burial authorized by Indian River County will pay all fees to cover all costs associated with said removal.
- G. Verification of Requests for Services: Upon receipt of a request for assistance with indigent cremation expenses, the Human Services Division shall investigate the request and verify the information accompanying the request. An investigation of the request for payment may involve assessment of, but not limited to, the following:
- a. A completed Cremation Intake Form
 - b. Past employers
 - c. Past landlords
 - d. Schools
 - e. Department of Health and Human Services
 - f. Department of Veteran Affairs
 - g. Social Security Administration
 - h. Assets
 - i. Banking institutions
 - j. Nursing Homes
 - k. Insurance companies
 - l. Friends or acquaintances of the deceased

A request for assistance may be initiated by a relative, other individual, an undertaker, a nursing home or boarding home, a hospital, an institution, or a local law enforcement agency.

H. Indigent Person: A person whose family income does not exceed 100 percent of the current federal poverty guidelines prescribed for the family's household size by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

- I. Eligibility: A resident or non-resident, declared to be indigent, is eligible for an indigent cremation in the event of death in Indian River County. The Human Services Division shall request that all hospitals and nursing homes operating in Indian River County identify non-county residents admitted to the institution, and in the event of death of the non-county resident, notify the Human Services Division. The Human



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Services Division shall then transmit a request for assumption of indigent cremation payment to the county of residence.

- J. Inpatient Accounts: If death occurs while the deceased is a patient in a nursing home, the County shall request that the nursing home notify the Human Services Division of any funds which may have accumulated in the inpatient account. The County shall consider such funds in assessing the indigence of the deceased. If these funds exceed or are equal to County indigent cremation payments, the County will not accept the case. If the funds are less than or equal to the eligible costs, the County will pay the difference between the funds available and the eligible costs.
- K. Other Death Benefits: if the deceased is eligible for any other death benefits, including, but not limited to, social security, railroad retirement and/or union death benefits, which exceed or are equal to county indigent cremation payments, the county will not accept the case.
- L. Reimbursements: The County will file for reimbursement of cremation expenses from available sources including inpatient accounts, banking institutions and any other source.
- M. Participating Funeral Homes: Any licensed Indian River County funeral home may request to be placed on the rotation schedule for participation in the indigent cremation program. During its scheduled time on the rotation, a participating funeral home agrees to accept all County approved decedents for direct cremation, the minimal service option available that includes: removal of the decedent, transport to the crematory, the cremation, a basic urn, and no funeral service. Refusal of an approved indigent, during a rotation period, may result in exclusion from the program.
 - 1. Indian River County will provide a confirmation letter to the funeral home on the rotation for each approved indigent cremation. All funeral home arrangements or contracts agreed upon prior to county approval will disqualify indigent for county assistance.
 - 2. Funeral homes accepting indigent cremations shall not accept funds from family members and/or friends to upgrade services. No payments will be made to any party other than the funeral home.
 - 3. In order to receive payment from the County, the funeral home must receive authorization from the County prior to cremating the decedent.