

BURIAL ASSISTANCE

Policy

It is the policy and law of the Osage Nation to ease the financial burden and provide assistance to families upon the death of a member of the Osage Nation. This policy follows the intent and purpose of ONCA 11-121, as amended. The Act prioritizes payment by Constituent Services, through the Burial Assistance fund for members of the Osage Nation. Osage Nation law supersedes any conflicts or discrepancies found in this policy.

Eligible Criteria

To be eligible for Osage Nation Burial Assistance:

- The deceased must be enrolled with the Osage Nation at the time of death. Membership must be verified with the Membership Office or ON software, prior to approving assistance.
- The Constituent Services office must receive a completed application (Appendix A).

Allowable Expenses

Financial Assistance is available up to \$8,000 per deceased member for burial expenses to include:

- Payment for the actual cost of the burial or cremation;
- Payment of, or reimbursement for advance payment, costs for burial or cremation services;
- Payment of, or reimbursement for, headstones, cemetery monuments or markers, or cremation urns;
- Payment of, or reimbursement for, verified costs incurred for last rites, flowers, receptions, meals, and/or blankets not to exceed the amount remaining after payment of other items in this section have been paid for.
- Itemized receipts for advance payment of any of the following; Last rites, Flowers, Receptions, Funeral feast, Blankets

Unallowable Expenses

The purchase of illegal substances or alcoholic beverages are unallowable burial expenses to be paid or reimbursed. The amount will be deducted from the amount to be paid or reimbursed prior to processing payment from the Osage Nation Treasury. The Osage Nation Burial Assistance Service may not reimburse headright accounts and/or irrevocable trust account. We

may not reimburse a surviving relative whose name is not on the receipt/invoice nor process payment to a deceased Osage member. For the same reasons, the Osage Nation Burial Assistance Program may not reimburse burial/funeral expenses paid by an insurance policy of the deceased Osage member or any federal resource.

Application Procedure

A spouse, relative or other must submit a completed Burial Assistance Application and all supporting documentation within sixty (60) calendar days of the date of death. This timeframe maybe extended to ninety days (90) calendar days during a Declaration of Emergency, such as the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Supporting documentation includes:

- Osage membership number
- Copy of death certificate
- Itemized invoices for services or merchandise
- Completed W-9 for the individual or vendor/business
- Any/all other requested documentation

Applications are considered complete when all required and requested documentation has been received in the Constituent Services office. Only approved applications will be processed for payment.

Assistance Procedure

- Notice of approval/denial of benefit will be mailed or emailed to the applicant listed on Section III of application, within fifteen (15) business days of receiving a complete application.
- If necessary, written notice will be given to the business or vendor of the approved / allocated amount of assistance, to avoid an interruption of service or to expedite services.
- Eligible expenses approved for assistance or reimbursement will be processed to the Osage Nation Treasury Department, within fifteen (15) business days of receiving a complete application.
- Checks will be mailed directly to vendors or individuals to be reimbursed, within fifteen (15) business days.

Appeal Process

Applicants that are denied burial assistance for a deceased member of the Osage Nation have the right to appeal the determination and should adhere to the following process:

- Applicants will receive a denial letter via US mail or e-mail that states the reason for denied assistance and the appeal process.
- If the applicant appeals the determination, in written form, within 15 business days of the letter, to the Constituent Services office, the appeal will be forwarded to the Secretary or his/her designee for review.
- The Secretary or his/her designee will hear the applicant, review the appeal and make a determination of eligibility, then respond in written or electronic communication to the applicant.

Definitions

Advance payment: Prepaid payment made by the Osage member, spouse, parent, family member and/or friend for burial expenses.

Itemized Receipt: A detailed list of the individual items or services for funeral/burial services; and can be verified through the Constituent Services Office with name of vendor, telephone number or address.

Reimbursement: a payment made to another party that has incurred an expense on behalf of the paying entity.

Temporary ARPA Funding

ONCA 22-62 appropriated additional ARPA funding for emergency burial assistance. This supplemental funding is being used pursuant to the U.S. Treasury Department's Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule, which allows for emergency burial assistance for households and populations facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19. Applicants will be asked if they have been negatively impacted by COVID or not. If they declare a negative economic impact due to COVID, ARPA funds will be used. If the applicant has not been negatively impacted by COVID, tribal funds will be used. This temporary funding will be used until depleted or to the expiration of the ARPA program period. All other policies and procedures for burial assistance will be followed except for the designated funding source when ARPA eligibility is applicable for emergency burial assistance.