

Funeral Benefits Offered Through Community and Social Services

AFSRB:

September 27, 2022 Lunch and Learn
Presented by Community and Social Services

Agenda

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Funeral Benefits

- Funeral benefits are available on behalf of an eligible deceased person who was:
 - Receiving benefits from the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) or Income Support program, or
 - An Albertan with low income

Changes to Funeral Benefits

- Regulatory changes resulted in a new benefit process being implemented on April 1, 2022
- Fees are no longer negotiated based on a contract
- The person making funeral arrangements is now responsible for applying for funeral benefits, selecting a funeral service provider and negotiating services and fees

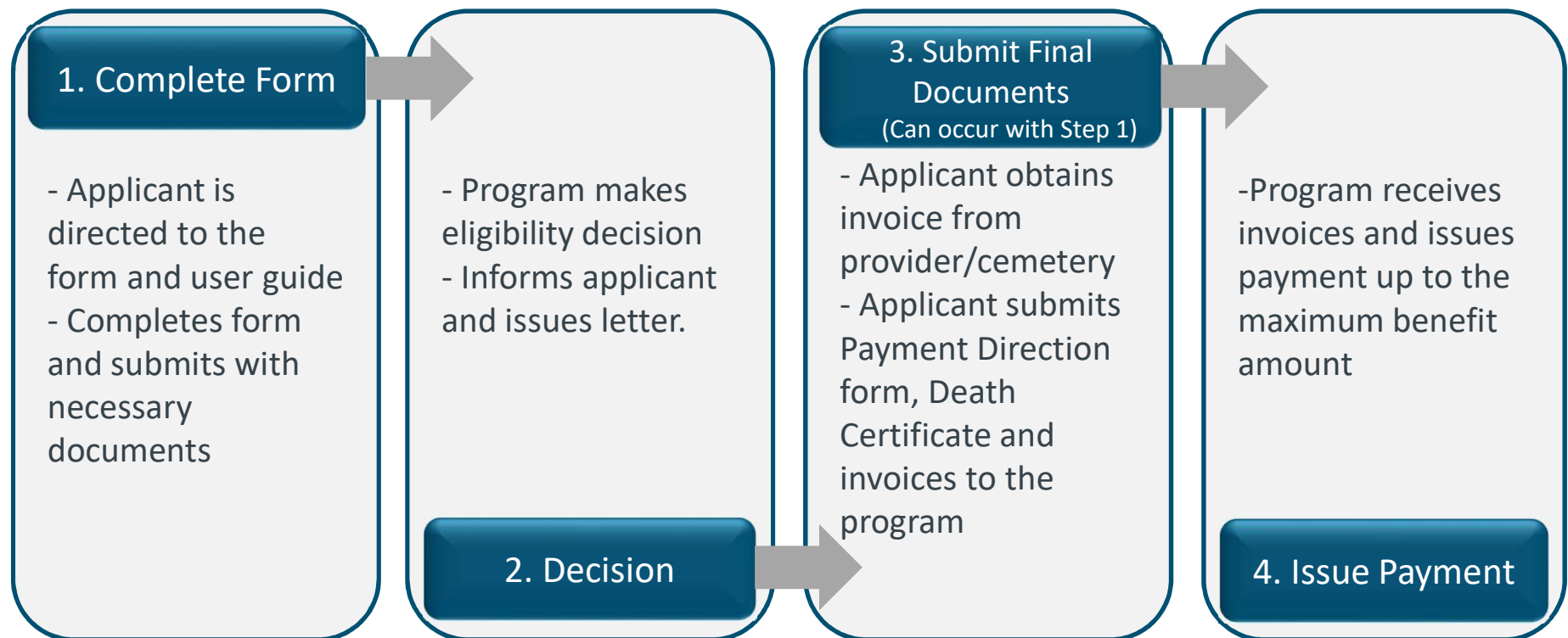
Funeral Benefit Rates

- The rates are set by Ministerial Order and are the actual cost of burial or cremation in Alberta up to:
 - \$4,000 for cremation and funeral when the remains are not placed in a cemetery; or
 - \$6,000 for cremation or burial when the remains are placed in a cemetery
- or
 - The actual cost for the transportation of remains to another province or territory

Exceptions to the Funeral Benefit Rates

- Cemetery costs above \$2,000 are automatically approved as an exception
- Other exception requests are considered on a case-by-case basis
- Exceptions are only provided for necessary and essential circumstances (e.g., advanced decomposition, religious requirements)
- “Funeral Benefits Request for an Exceptional Amount” form is used to request exceptions

Application Process



Application Process

Role of Applicant	Role of Provider	Role of Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete the application, including gathering required documents• Submit the application• Submit the Payment Direction form, Death Certificate and invoices(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct the applicant to the form• Provide the Funeral Directors Statement of Death• Assist with the application, if able and requested (including submission of documents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct the applicant to the form• Answer general questions• Make eligibility decision• Inform the applicant of outcome• Inform the provider of the application status• Pay the benefit

Reimbursements

- If the invoices have been paid prior to the application, this is considered a request for reimbursement:

AISH	IS (Including Low Income Albertans)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retroactive benefits may be provided up to six months after the services if all eligibility criteria were met at the time the services were provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retroactive benefits may be provided up to six months after the services if all of the eligibility criteria would have been met at the time, <u>and</u>• There was an emergency situation requiring the expenses before preapproval could be obtained

Program Resources/Website

- All necessary application forms, guides and links to policies are listed on the GOA website:
 - www.alberta.ca/funeral-benefits.aspx
- Application guides and resources on the website include:
 - Provider's Guide to the Funeral Benefits Application
 - Application Guides: AISH, Income Support, CSS Funeral Benefits for Albertans with Low Income
 - Cemeteries Fact Sheet

Contact Centre

- Health and Funeral Benefits Unit (HFBU) contact Centre phone number: 1-855-638-4443.
- Functions:
 - Provides answers to general questions;
 - Notifies applicants of the status of their application via email and mail;
 - By telephone, discusses application status, including any missing information required or reasons for a partial payment
 - Provides funeral service providers with general status updates on applications.

Recent and Upcoming Improvements

Recent improvements:

- Streamlining processes to allow the Payment Direction form to be submitted with the Application form, if all required information is available
- New Payment Direction and Exception Request forms – both now available on the Funeral Benefits website; and
- The approval letter for Low Income Albertans now includes the amount that will be deducted (if any) from the total benefit approved

Recent and Upcoming Improvements

Upcoming Improvements:

- Confirmation of who will be paid will be moved from the Payment Direction form to the Application form
- Adding a checklist of required documents to submit with each of the application forms
- Adding a consent to the application form to allow the applicant to give permission to release information on the status of the application to funeral service providers or other third parties.

Recent and Upcoming Improvements

Upcoming Improvements:

- A digital solution, including an online funeral benefits application, is in the early stages of development
 - This will further streamline the application process

Questions?

Alberta