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# Guide to Completing the AISH Funeral Benefits Application

The Assured Income for the Severely  
Handicapped Program

Superseded

Alberta

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# Introduction to funeral benefits for AISH

The Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) Funeral Benefits Guide assists the person submitting an application for AISH funeral benefits (funeral benefits) on behalf of a deceased individual who was a member of an AISH household.

The guide has three main parts:

## Part 1 Funeral benefits overview

- Provides background on what funeral benefits are provided and who may apply.

## Part 2 Completing the application form

- Provides the steps for completing the application form depending on the situation of the deceased.

## Part 3 Additional resources

- Provides contact information for questions and a checklist to ensure the application is complete.

## Part 1 Funeral benefits overview

### Funeral benefits

Funeral benefits are available to an eligible member of an AISH household for:

- expenses related to the burial or cremation and funeral of the deceased individual within Alberta; or
- expenses related to transporting the deceased individual to another province or territory of Canada for burial or cremation outside of Alberta.

This is in scenarios when the estate of the deceased individual and any responsible survivor(s) of the deceased individual are insufficient to cover the expenses.

### Benefit rates

If approved for funeral benefits for burial or cremation in Alberta, the rates are the actual costs based on final quotes or invoices up to a maximum rate, depending on the funeral.

When the remains of the deceased individual are being buried or cremated in Alberta, the rates for funeral goods and services and cemetery expenses are:

- the actual cost up to a maximum of \$4,240 for cremation and funeral when the remains are not placed in a cemetery; or
- the actual cost up to a maximum of \$6,360 for burial or cremation when the remains are placed in a cemetery.

**Note:** In Alberta, cemetery plots for the burial of certain low income individuals are provided at 50 per cent of the regular cost as per section 12 of the [Cemeteries Act](#). AISH clients, their cohabiting partners and dependent children who have died are eligible for these reduced rates.

When the remains of the deceased individual are being transported to another province or territory for burial or cremation outside of Alberta:

- the actual cost of preparing the remains prior to shipping and the actual reasonable cost of transportation by road and/or by airfreight.

The maximum benefit rates for burial or cremation in Alberta are set by the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services through a Ministerial Order. Typically, these rates cannot be exceeded.

In exceptional and necessary circumstances where the maximum benefit rate is insufficient, additional amounts may be provided based on the request and related substantiation:

#### **Exceptions for high cemetery costs**

If the required cemetery costs exceed \$2,120, and the total requested benefit amount exceeds the maximum of \$6,360, the additional cemetery costs will be paid as an exception. In these situations:

- the applicant will not need to request an exception;
- quotes/invoices will be sufficient to substantiate the need; and
- this exception applies to:
  - a single cemetery plot;
  - cemetery perpetual fees;
  - grave opening and closing fees (plus winter fee); and
  - a grave liner.

#### **All other exception requests**

All other requests to exceed the benefit maximums will be considered on a case by case basis by the appropriate delegated authority. Examples may include:

- additional costs due to health and/or safety reasons; or
- a reasonable amount for an honorarium for a religious, cultural or spiritual leader.

The applicant will need to request that an exemption be considered and provide information substantiating the need by submitting the [Funeral Benefits – Request for an Exceptional Amount](#) form.

The following criteria are considered for these requests:

- The burial or cremation and funeral expenses cannot be met by the maximum rate due to extraordinary circumstances;
- The expenses are considered necessary and essential for cremation or burial and funeral services;
- There are no other means to pay; and
- The least cost alternative is considered.

An exceptional amount may be requested at the time of application, if all the required documents are available, or after approval for a funeral benefit is obtained and arrangements are finalized.

## Funeral benefit expenses

### Burial or cremation and funeral expenses within Alberta

Burial or cremation and funeral expenses may include a variety of goods and services. If the remains are laid to rest in a cemetery, there are also cemetery expenses. Albertans can choose and structure the services in a way that suits their needs, up to the maximum allowable rate. They may also select a funeral provider of their choice.

The following are examples of potential expenses, but are not a complete list:

- cremation;
- embalming and other preparations;
- casket or urn;
- ceremonial farewell, including facility rental and refreshments;
- cemetery expenses, such as:
  - a cemetery plot;
  - cemetery perpetual fees;
  - grave opening and closing fees;
  - a grave liner; and
- transportation within Alberta.

### Transportation to another province/territory for burial or cremation

Transportation expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- preparing the human remains prior to shipping;
- hermetically sealed casket or other approved container; and
- transportation by road and/or by airfreight to another province/territory for burial or cremation.

## Definitions

**Applicant:** The individual submitting the funeral benefit application on behalf of the deceased individual. See the applicant for funeral benefits section of this guide for more information.

**Responsible survivor:** A responsible survivor is expected to financially contribute toward the cost of funeral services.

A responsible survivor is defined as the:

- cohabiting partner of the deceased;
- legal parents of a dependent child; or
- legal sponsor of a sponsored immigrant.

The definitions for cohabiting partner and dependent child can be found in section 1(2)(a) and 1(2)(b) of the [AISH General Regulation](#).

**Non-responsible survivor:** A non-responsible survivor is any other family member, friend, or organization, not considered a responsible survivor, who may assist with funeral service arrangements for the deceased individual.

Depending on who is available to make the arrangements for the deceased individual, the application for funeral benefits may be submitted by a non-responsible survivor.

A non-responsible survivor is not required to contribute financially toward funeral expenses.

**Other available program:** A resource provided from another program intended to cover funeral expenses.

If there are other available resources, the deceased individual is not eligible for funeral benefits. Other available resources include, but are not limited to:

- Victims of Crime Assistance Program, if the deceased is eligible under the [Victims of Crime and Public Safety Act](#);
- motor vehicle accident victim benefits for funeral expenses, if the deceased is eligible under the [Automobile Accident Insurance Benefits Regulation](#); or
- the [Last Post Fund](#), if the deceased was a Canadian Forces veteran.

## Eligibility - Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped

Funeral benefits may be available for a deceased individual who was an AISH client, cohabiting partner or dependent child at the time of the death, if eligibility criteria are met.

If the deceased individual was not a member of an AISH household at the time of death, please see the applicable guide:

- **Income Support Funeral Benefit Application Guide** for individuals who were part of an IS household at the time of the death.
- **Low income Albertan Funeral Benefit Application Guide** for individuals who were not part of an AISH or IS household at the time of the death.

Funeral Benefits are issued as a personal benefit by the AISH program. In order to be eligible for funeral benefits:

- the non-exempt assets of the client and the cohabiting partner must not exceed \$5,000;
- there must be a demonstrated need; and
- the same or a similar benefit must not be available from any other program.

You can find out more information on AISH and AISH eligibility on the [website](http://alberta.ca/aish.aspx) (alberta.ca/aish.aspx).

## Applicant for funeral benefits

The person completing the application for funeral benefits should be the individual who is able to make final arrangements for the deceased individual.

Section 36 of the [Funeral Services General Regulation](#) sets out who is able to make arrangements, based on their relationship to the deceased individual.

If the person who has the right to make arrangements is not available, or is unwilling, the right passes to the next person on the list.

The order of priority for who has the right to arrange for the remains of the deceased individual is as follows:

- (a) the personal representative designated in the will of the deceased;
- (b) the spouse or adult interdependent partner of the deceased if the spouse or adult interdependent partner was living with the deceased at the time of death;
- (c) an adult child of the deceased;
- (d) a parent of the deceased;
- (e) a guardian of the deceased under the [Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act](#) or, if the deceased is a minor, under the [Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act](#) or the [Family Law Act](#);
- (f) an adult grandchild of the deceased;
- (g) an adult brother or sister of the deceased;
- (h) an adult nephew or niece of the deceased;
- (i) an adult next of kin of the deceased determined on the basis provided by sections 67 and 68 of the [Wills and Succession Act](#);
- (j) the Public Trustee;
- (k) an adult person having some relationship with the deceased not based on blood ties or affinity;
- (l) the Minister of Human Services (Seniors, Community and Social Services).

**Note:** In some situations the spouse or adult interdependent partner may not have been living with the individual who passed away, such as if one person was in a care facility due to health reasons.

The person completing the application should be the available person with the highest priority on the above list. If there is a responsible survivor of the deceased, that person may or may not be the applicant.

The applicant will need to coordinate with any responsible survivor(s) (see definitions section) to gather the required information to complete the application.

### **Ability to submit the application**

If, to your knowledge, you are the person with the highest priority available, but you do not have access to all of the information about the deceased individual at the time of death, such as address or the availability of other resources, please include as much information on the application form as you can.

If there is another individual with a relationship to the deceased individual, please contact that person before submitting the application to determine who is the most appropriate person to complete the application and, if applicable, to identify if they have any information you are not aware of.

In some cases, if an applicant does not have sufficient information in the application, the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee may need to be contacted for assistance in locating information on the deceased.

### **Understanding the application process**

Submit the funeral benefits application as soon as possible following the death, so eligibility for benefits can be determined.

Applications are processed by the Health and Funeral Benefits Unit (HFBU). Once the application is received by the HFBU, they will review it to ensure the necessary information has been submitted.

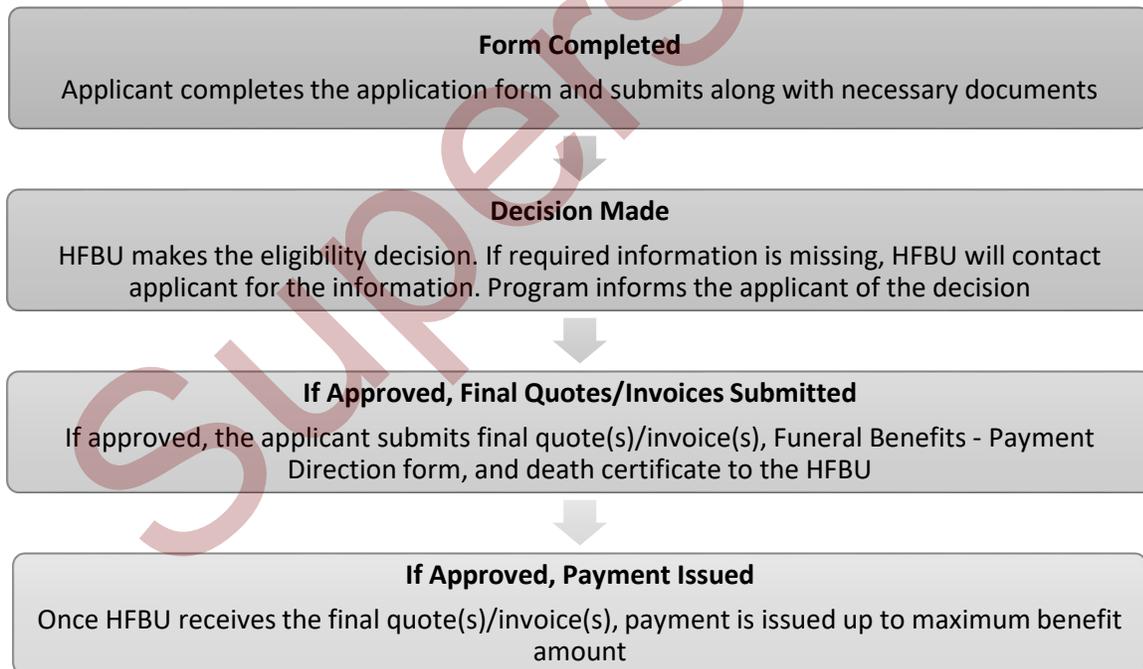
If necessary, the HFBU will work with the applicant to collect missing information required to make a decision, by contacting the applicant by email or letter.

Once the HFBU has reviewed the application and determined whether the application is approved or denied, they will contact the applicant and inform them:

If Approved	If Denied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the application has been approved;</li> <li>the maximum amount that may be claimed, depending on the type of funeral benefit;</li> <li>how to submit the quote(s)/invoice(s) and death certificate for payment; and</li> <li>who to contact for questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the application has been denied;</li> <li>the reason for the denial;</li> <li>who to contact for questions;</li> <li>the applicant's options, including their ability to appeal the decision; and</li> <li>how to provide additional information.</li> </ul>

Initial approval or denial notification will be made by email, if an email address is provided with the application. A written letter will also be sent including all of the relevant information regarding the approval or denial.

The following chart outlines the key steps in the application process, if the application is approved:



An applicant may expedite the application process by submitting a completed [Funeral Benefits – Payment Direction](#) form, along with a Funeral Director’s Statement of Death or an Official Death Certificate, and final quotes/ invoices. These documents may be submitted with the completed application form, if the additional documents are available at the time of application.

## Submitting the application

Follow these steps to submit the complete application and avoid delays in processing:

1. Use the checklist included at the end of this guide to ensure the requested documents you have access to are included.
2. Keep copies of the application and supporting documents for your records.
3. Submit your application as per the instructions on the form by email, fax or mail.

### Submitting by email:

- [CSS.FuneralBenefits@gov.ab.ca](mailto:CSS.FuneralBenefits@gov.ab.ca)
- Subject line: Include Funeral Benefits Application

### Submitting by fax:

- 780-643-9228 or toll-free 1-855-643-9228
- TO: Health and Funeral Benefits Unit
- SUBJECT: Funeral Benefits Application

### Submitting by mail:

- Health and Funeral Benefits Unit  
Seniors, Community and Social Services, Government of Alberta  
PO Box 805 STN MAIN  
Edmonton AB T5J 2L4

If you have not included enough information for the HFBU to make a decision, you will be contacted for more information.

It is recommended email or fax be used to submit the application, to support the timely review of the application.

If you are completing the fillable application form online and submitting the application by email, it is encouraged that you save your application using the print to PDF function, if you are able, to support timely processing. See the additional resources section at the end of this guide if you are unsure of how to save as a PDF.

## Application form

There are three different application forms depending on the situation of the deceased individual prior to death. Ensure you select the correct form depending on the situation.

Visit the [website](http://alberta.ca/funeral-benefits.aspx) at [alberta.ca/funeral-benefits.aspx](http://alberta.ca/funeral-benefits.aspx) and select the application form.

- **AISH Funeral Benefits Application** form;
  - When the deceased individual was an AISH client, cohabiting partner of an AISH client, or a client's dependent child at the time of death.

## Supporting documentation

In addition to the completed application form, certain pieces of supporting documentation will be used to substantiate the information provided. It is important to provide the requested information you have access to.

The application form will indicate where supporting documentation is required. Part 2 of this guide provides additional information on what types of documentation may be required to accompany the completed form.

## Part 2 Completing the application form

Completing the AISH funeral benefits application form:

### Section 1: Funeral benefits

Information is collected on the type of funeral benefit being applied for, to assist with determining if the request falls within the allowable expenses and to understand where payment should be directed, if approved.

Typically, benefits will be issued directly to the service providers. If the deceased individual was your cohabiting partner or dependent child, you may request payment be issued to you. If you make this request, you will be responsible for arranging payment to service providers.

#### How to complete

Select the type of funeral benefit and provide the requested information about the date of the services.

If you select the transportation funeral benefit, you will need to fill out the lines indicating the estimated cost and location the remains will be shipped to.

This section of the form includes three statements with check boxes. If you understand and agree with these statements, check the boxes. If you do not understand or do not agree with these statements and would like to discuss, see the contact information at the end of this guide:

- one statement advises you of the requirement to submit final quotes/invoices and a death certificate before payment will be issued, regardless of being preapproved;
- one statement informs you of how payment will be directed to the service providers; and
- one statement advises you that if services were paid for prior to submitting the application, you may not be eligible.

! **Please note:** In this situation, the invoice would be considered paid if it was paid in full, or an amount equal to or exceeding the benefit maximum has been paid, prior to the application being submitted.

! **Documentation required:** If applying for transportation expenses to another province or territory, please provide a quote/estimate of expenses from the service provider(s).

## Section 2: Applicant's information

We collect your information to confirm your identity, know how to contact you regarding the application, understand your relationship to the deceased individual, and if applicable, to direct payment.

It is important for us to understand your relationship to the deceased individual to ensure you are the appropriate person to be applying for funeral benefits.

- ! **Please note:** It is important the email address, mailing address and phone number you provide are accurate. Your address and email will be the form of contact for staff to communicate questions about the application and to notify you of the outcome. During the application process, please check your mail and email regularly.

### How to complete

Complete the first part of this section by providing your information. Please ensure you provide your primary phone number and email address.

- ! **Documentation Required:** Please provide copies of proof of identification. Acceptable forms include:
  - Driver's license
  - Passport
  - Birth, marriage, baptismal certificates
  - Personal health card
  - Social insurance card
  - Employee, student ID cards
  - Bank or credit card
  - Certificate of Indian Status Card
  - Firearms Acquisition Certificate
  - School, health, hospital records
  - Parole card
  - Vehicle registration/insurance
  - Non-driver ID card

On the checklist, check the relationship that best describes your relationship to the deceased individual. The list is provided in order of priority.

If there is another individual who has a relationship to the deceased that is higher on the list, please see the "Applicant for funeral benefits" section above.

If you are not the highest person available on the list, but there is a reason the other individual(s) is unable or unwilling to complete this application, explain in the space provided. If the HFBU is not able to proceed with you as the applicant, they will contact you to advise.

## Section 3: Details of the deceased information

Information is collected on the deceased individual to confirm identity and to verify Alberta residency.

### How to complete

Complete this section, including checking the appropriate marital status and status in Canada.

## Section 4: Other available resources

Determining if the deceased individual is potentially eligible for funeral benefits from another program may impact eligibility for funeral benefits. If a funeral and related expenses are provided by another program, the AISH program does not provide funeral benefits.

If any of the following situations apply to the deceased individual, there may be eligibility for funeral expenses from another program. If so, those resources must be applied for or used before eligibility for funeral benefits can be determined. Funeral benefits will not be provided if another program is responsible for providing a benefit for funeral expenses.

If the deceased individual:

- was a client of the Public Trustee prior to their death, funeral arrangements should be requested through the Public Trustee;
- was a veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, there may be benefits through the [Last Post Fund](#);
- died in a work-related accident or due to an occupational disease, there may be benefits through the [Workers' Compensation Board](#);
- died as a result of a motor vehicle accident, there may be benefits through the [Automobile Accident Insurance Benefits Regulation](#);
- died as a result of a violent crime, there may be benefits through the Alberta Victims of Crime program;
- a child in care under the [Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act](#), there may be benefits under that Act; or
- was potentially eligible for any other program that may provide benefits, funeral benefits should be requested from these programs first.

In addition, AISH does not provide a funeral benefit when there is a prepaid funeral where arrangements have been made and paid for prior to the individual passing away.

**Note:** contributions to enhance the funeral of the deceased provided by non-responsible survivors including family members who are not responsible survivors, friends, or other religious or community organizations or groups, and crowd sourcing accounts, are not considered when determining eligibility for a funeral benefit.

### How to complete

Complete all parts of the section indicating yes or no to whether the deceased individual may be eligible for benefits through another program.

- ! **Documentation required:** If you answer yes to the deceased being potentially eligible for any other program, include a copy of the denied benefit request from the appropriate program.

## Section 5: Reimbursement

In the event the invoice is paid in full prior to the application being submitted, the AISH program may provide personal benefits for up to six months after the expenses were incurred, if eligibility criteria would have been met at the time of the expense.

In this situation, the invoice is considered paid:

- if it was paid in full prior to the application being submitted, or
- if an amount equal to or exceeding the maximum benefit amount has been paid prior to the application being submitted.

#### How to complete

If requesting a reimbursement, complete this section, including providing the reason preapproval was not obtained.

If you are not requesting a reimbursement, just check “No” to the question about seeking reimbursement and leave the rest of the section blank.

- ! **Documentation required:** If submitting a request for reimbursement, include invoices of expenses.

### Section 6: Payment Direction

Payments are generally issued to funeral service providers and cemeteries, with the following exceptions:

- if the payment is for an approved reimbursement; or
- if the applicant is the spouse/partner of the deceased or the parent of a deceased dependent child and they choose to receive payment directly.

### Section 7: Consent to Disclose Personal Information

This section allows you to name people and organizations, such as a family member or a funeral service provider, to receive information about the status of your funeral benefits application, via a telephone inquiry.

The consent is valid for the period of time that the funeral benefits application is being processed and expires when a final decision on the application has been received or the application is withdrawn.

The consent can be revoked, at any time, in writing.

### Section 8: Declaration

It is important to read all of the sections of the declaration.

If you do not understand or have questions about any part of the declaration and would like to discuss with program staff, see the contact information at the end of this guide.

### Section 9: Signature

When signing the application form, you are agreeing that you have read and understand the consent, if applicable, and declaration.

Please date, print and sign on the signature line. Be sure to include a scanned copy or a photo of this signed page with your application.

The application cannot be processed if the signature section is not signed by you.

## Part 3 Additional resources

### Checklist

Documentation to be included with the completed application form:

Required documentation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 2: Proof of identification of the applicant
Documentation required depending on situation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 1: Estimate of preparation and shipping cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If requesting benefits for the transportation of the deceased individual's body to another province/territory</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 4: Proof of denial from applicable other program <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If the deceased individual may have been eligible for funding from another program, proof of denial or the value of benefit provided must be submitted to determine eligibility for funeral benefits</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 5: Invoices of funeral and burial or cremation expenses or transportation expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If applying for a reimbursement</li></ul>

If approved, the notification letter will advise of the documentation required in order for payment to be issued. This includes:

- Final quote(s)/ invoice(s) from the funeral service provider (i.e. funeral home), cemetery, or shipper, as applicable;
- the death certificate, either the Funeral Director's Statement of Death or Official Death Certificate; and
- the [Funeral Benefits – Payment Direction](#) form, which will be included along with the approval notification.

An applicant may streamline the application process by submitting a completed [Funeral Benefits – Payment Direction](#) form, along with the above documents, if they are available at the time of application.

### How to save as a PDF

In order to save your application form using the save to PDF function:

- once you complete your form, select 'file' in the top left;
- select 'Print' from the dropdown menu;
- change your printer to the 'Microsoft Print to PDF' option;
- a save print window will open, enter a file name and select a saving location like you would when saving any other document on your device;
- select 'save'; and
- a copy of your application form will now be saved in the location you selected.

### Contact

If you have questions about completing, submitting or a decision on an application, please contact:

### **Health and Funeral Benefits Unit**

Toll-free: 1-855-638-4443

Edmonton: 780-638-4443

Office hours: 8:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, closed statutory holidays

If you are an AISH client, or the cohabiting partner of an AISH client, and the deceased individual was a member of your household, you can contact your AISH worker for general questions on eligibility and the application process.

If you do not know how to reach your worker, contact your local AISH office at [Contact AISH | Alberta.ca](http://www.alberta.ca/contact-aish.aspx) (www.alberta.ca/contact-aish.aspx)

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