

FEMA Amends COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Policy

Release Date: June 29, 2021

WASHINGTON -- FEMA is amending the agency's COVID-19 funeral assistance policy to assist with COVID-19 related fatalities that occurred in the early months of the pandemic.

This policy change will allow applicants to submit a statement or letter from the death certificate's certifying official, medical examiner, or coroner that attributes the death to COVID-19 fatalities that occurred between Jan. 20 and May 16, 2020.

This policy change was made after consulting with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention officials and other health experts. The new policy provides applicants, as well as medical authorities, coroners and jurisdictions, flexibility to attribute a death to COVID-19 without amending the death certificate. The change also provides flexibility with documentation for the period before the CDC-published and implemented [COVID-19 death certificate guidance in the spring of 2020](#).

Since FEMA began taking COVID-19 funeral assistance applications, the agency has awarded more than \$447 million in assistance to over 66,800 applicants.

Applicants who incurred COVID-19-related funeral expenses between Jan. 20 and May 16, 2020, will be able to submit a death certificate that does not attribute the death to COVID-19 along with a signed statement from the certifying official listed on the death certificate, coroner, or medical examiner linking the death to COVID-19. The written statement must show causal pathway, or an explanation, linking the cause of death listed on the death certificate to the virus and should be submitted with the death certificate.

Applicants also retain the option of contacting the individual who certified the death to request a death certificate amendment if they can provide justification demonstrating the death should be attributed to COVID-19. The certifying individual's name and address should be on the death certificate.



FEMA

Page 1 of 2

For deaths occurring after May 16, 2020, COVID-19 funeral assistance documentation must include a copy of a death certificate that attributes the death to COVID-19.

Individuals who would like to apply for assistance should call the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Helpline tollfree, at 844-684-6333 | TTY: 800-462-7585 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET, Monday - Friday. Applicants who use a relay service, such as a videophone, InnoCaption or CapTel should provide FEMA with the specific number assigned to them for that service so agency representatives are able to contact them. Phone calls from FEMA may come from an unidentified number.

Additional information about [COVID-19 funeral assistance](#), including [frequently asked questions](#) can be found on FEMA.gov. This information is available online in 12 different languages and through FEMA-provided language services.

