

Indigent Protocol for Lincoln County

Budget of \$5,000 to cover indigent fees. This would be for Lincoln County residents only. If there is an indigent from another county that dies in one of our hospitals, we would refer the person back to their county. This would be a non-lapsing account.

To qualify for this the decedent must not have any family willing to take over care of final disposition. If there is family, we will call and speak to them. Some circumstances, like estrangement, may qualify the decedent for indigent status. The Coroner's Office will try and have the family member or friend signs the funeral home paperwork, but in cases there are no family, the Coroner's Office will sign the paperwork after placing a legal ad in the local paper inquiring the public for information on the decedent (must run for two consecutive days). The funeral home is able to invoice and charge Lincoln County Coroner's Office for \$800 for direct cremation. Our office will waive our cremation fee. This is after the funeral home has checked with the state to see if the decedent qualifies for WFCAP (Wisconsin Funeral and Cemeteries Aid Program), as that would cover the cremation.

If we have a decedent in our county that after posting a legal ad in the paper and no family or friends come forward the decedent will be transferred to a designated funeral home for cremation. This is after due diligence by the local police department and sheriff's office to attempt to find legal next of kin. A letter will be sent out to the local funeral homes of Lincoln County asking if they would like to be eligible to be the designated indigent funeral home for the year, this funeral home will be responsible for the cremation and checking WFCAP. If they are not eligible for this service then the funeral home will be reimbursed for their services up to \$800. If the decedent is eligible for WFCAP then those benefits will be reimbursed to the funeral home for expenses. The decedent will be held in the Lincoln County Coroner's Office morgue until arraignments are made for transfer. Lincoln County Coroner's Office will make this transfer to keep costs minimal.

After discussion with all our local funeral homes if the family inquires about expenses or has expressed any financial hardship the funeral homes do check WFCAP to see if the decedent is eligible for benefits. We have found that most are not eligible for benefits, I have personally witnessed some that I would have thought would be covered but were not eligible for any benefits.

Unclaimed cremated remains will be held by the funeral home and respectfully placed with other unclaimed cremation. If the decedent is a veteran, Veteran Services will be contacted to have their remains placed in the Veteran's Cemetery in Harshaw. This is a free service provided for their service to our Country.