

Arrangements After a Death

Services Provided by Funeral Homes

The following are areas where funeral homes can help you.

- **Assist with determining a plan for disposition of the body**

Decisions about the choice for earth burial, cremation or donation to medical science should reflect prior decisions or the best judgment of the survivors based on their understanding of the deceased. Natural (“green”) burial is available in Westchester at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Several medical schools in the New York area accept donations to medical science.

- **Assist with development of a funeral, memorial or burial service**

A service is common but not necessary. The choice of funeral or memorial services, and other rituals and traditions, such as wakes and sitting “shiva,” depend on the deceased’s wishes, religion, culture and social group. A meaningful service can be accomplished in many ways. Funeral homes have contact with local churches, temples and mosques that can help in the planning, and the funeral home can usually suggest different venues, if a reception or social gathering is part of the arrangements.

- **Assist in communicating about donations that can be made instead of sending flowers**

It is common to direct donations to a cause that was important to the deceased. Information about this is usually included in the obituary and in any program or announcement at the service. If the funeral home has a website and you choose to have a virtual memorial there, donation information can be included.

- **Assist in preparing the obituary**

There are websites that can be helpful in preparing an obituary – learn more [here](#) and [here](#). Westchester residents often place obituaries in [local media](#) or in [The New York Times](#).

- **Guide you** on how to proceed with notification to the deceased's employer, attorney, insurance company and banks.
- **Make arrangements** if your loved one died out of state or is being buried in another state or country.
- **Offer grief support** or direct you to other grief and bereavement resources.
- **Direct you** how to apply for financial assistance from Social Security, Veterans’ organizations and other resources to pay for the funeral.
- **Provide original copies** of the death certificate. [Original death certificates](#) can be obtained at a later time, if needed, but the price will be higher than if requested at the time of death.

An [example of services](#) provided by one Westchester funeral home.