

JEWISH FREE BURIAL

June 2021

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JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE LA



Jewish Family Service was originally established in 1854. Part of the initial mission was to offer Jewish Burials to those in need.

The following information can be found on our website www.jfsla.org:

In 1854, the tiny Jewish community of the pueblo of Los Angeles established the Hebrew Benevolent Society, the area's first charitable organization. The volunteer group's purpose was to collect funds from "those who have" and distribute them to "those who have not," Jew and non-Jew alike. The organization began by purchasing land for a cemetery to fulfill the Jewish religious commandment of burying the dead. Little did these pioneers know that they were launching the future Jewish Family Service, the first social service agency in Los Angeles.

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The Jewish Free Burial Project is a service:

- Administered by JFSLA through the Central Access program
- Funded by the Jewish Federation
- Made possible by the generosity of three Los Angeles cemeteries/mortuaries and one stand alone mortuary. They receive a nominal payment for this service.
- The stakeholders meet regularly as part of the Funeral Practices Committee. This committee is convened by the Jewish Federation with the head of the Board of Rabbis serving as the chair. This meeting that brings together Rabbis, Jewish cemetery and mortuary professionals and Jewish Family Service LA. The Jewish Free Burial service is a regular agenda item.

Mission of Jewish Free Burial

The Jewish Community Burial Program provides a free burial in the Jewish tradition to indigent members of the Los Angeles Jewish community whose families are also very low income. Cemeteries and mortuaries participate on a rotation basis. This program is to be used as a last resort after all family resources (including extended family) have been explored

Statistics for 2020

JFSLA responded approximately 140 inquiries and facilitated 58 Jewish Free Burials.

COMPREHENSIVE APPLICATION – REVISED IN 2018

- ❖ UC/MSW Intern worked together with Field Supervisor/Director to revise the application as part of her macro project
- ❖ One page introduction outlines mission, criteria and services.
- ❖ Application has been key in both training staff and providing clear guidance to the community.
- ❖ Application – review

Jewish Free Burial Inquiry

Initial response

- Each day there is a social worker “on duty” to receive JFS inquiries. Administrative staff also responds to inquiries.
- Explain the program – use the application. Sometimes e-mail the first page.
- If caller meets the screening criteria then e-mail the full application.

Application Review

- Social worker/administrative staff review application and back up documentation.
- Review with Supervisor or internal committee as needed.
- In rare situations, may consult with The Jewish Federation.

Approved Jewish Free Burials

- Rotation of cemeteries and mortuaries.
- Honor preferences when possible.
- JFSLA signs contract and arranges for payment.

Additional information

- ❑ Consultation is important throughout the process
- ❑ Prescreening is key– we try never to send an application until we “prequalify”
- ❑ Most inquiries come in once someone passes or days/weeks beforehand. Referrals often come through hospitals, hospice providers, cemetery/mortuary staff.
- ❑ Increased complexity if no family member/friend handling burial plans. At times, the Public Administrator’s office is involved.
- ❑ Supervisors involved in more complex cases.
- ❑ **Preneed approvals are limited in nature.** Because various stakeholders involved, long term burial planning is not available.
 - Can prequalify applicants, additional financial documentation may be required in future
 - When death is imminent, this is not considered longer term preneed and applications can be approved.

CONTACT INFO

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