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JUL 14 2026
BECKY LANDRUM County Clerk, Hunt County, Tex.

THE STATE OF TEXAS, COUNTY OF HUNT
ORDER OF THE HUNT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
ADOPTING AN INDIGENT CREMATION POLICY AND
INDIGENT CREMATION RELEASE FORM

WHEREAS, Section 694.002(a) of the Texas Health and Safety Code requires the commissioners court of each county to provide for the disposition of the body of a deceased pauper and authorizes the commissioners court to adopt rules to implement that section, Tex. Health & Safety Code § 694.002(a); and

WHEREAS, Section 694.002(b) of the Texas Health and Safety Code requires the commissioners court to consider any information, including the religious affiliation of the deceased pauper, provided by a person listed in Section 711.002(a) of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Tex. Health & Safety Code § 694.002(b); and

WHEREAS, Section 711.002(a) of the Texas Health and Safety Code identifies the persons who, in the priority listed, have the right to control the disposition, including cremation, of a decedent's remains, Tex. Health & Safety Code § 711.002(a); and

WHEREAS, Chapter 716 of the Texas Health and Safety Code governs the cremation of human remains, defines an "authorizing agent" as a person authorized to dispose of a decedent's remains under Section 711.002, and provides for the release and disposition of cremated remains, Tex. Health & Safety Code §§ 716.001(1), 716.156, 716.302; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners Court has received reports that cremated remains of deceased paupers for whom Hunt County has paid or has been asked to pay the costs of cremation have not, in some instances, been released to the decedents' next of kin; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners Court finds that requiring documentation of the release of cremated remains to a decedent's next of kin, or documentation that no next of kin is known after a diligent search, as a condition of finalizing County payment for indigent cremation services, is a reasonable rule to implement Section 694.002 of the Texas Health and Safety Code and to ensure the proper expenditure of County funds; and

WHEREAS, in a county that has the office of county auditor, a claim, bill, or account against the county may not be allowed or paid until it has been examined and approved by the county auditor, Tex. Loc. Gov't Code § 113.064;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED BY THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF HUNT COUNTY, TEXAS, THAT:

Section 1. Adoption of Policy. The Hunt County Indigent Cremation Policy set forth in this Order, together with the Hunt County Indigent Cremation Release Form attached to this Order as Exhibit A (the "Release Form"), is adopted as a rule of the Commissioners Court under Section

694.002(a) of the Texas Health and Safety Code and shall apply to all indigent cremation services for which Hunt County pays or agrees to pay any portion of the cost.

Section 2. Release of Cremated Remains. A funeral establishment or crematory establishment providing cremation services for a deceased pauper at County expense shall release the cremated remains, upon request and at no additional charge, to the decedent's next of kin or other person entitled to control the disposition of the decedent's remains under Section 711.002(a) of the Texas Health and Safety Code. The County's payment for indigent cremation services is intended to cover the disposition of the remains, and no separate fee may be charged to the next of kin as a condition of releasing the cremated remains.

Section 3. Release Form Required as Condition of Payment. A completed and executed Release Form is required to finalize County payment for indigent cremation services. The County Auditor shall not approve, and the County shall not finalize payment of, any claim, bill, or invoice for indigent cremation services unless the claim is accompanied by a completed Release Form in which the funeral establishment has documented one of the following: (a) that the cremated remains were released to the decedent's next of kin, evidenced by the acknowledgment described in Section 4 of this Order; (b) that no next of kin of the decedent is known to the funeral establishment after a diligent search, as certified under Section 5 of this Order; or (c) that a known next of kin was given written notice and failed or refused to claim the cremated remains, as certified under Section 6 of this Order.

Section 4. Acknowledgment of Receipt by Next of Kin. Where a next of kin of the decedent is known, the Release Form must include the printed name, signature, relationship to the decedent, mailing address, and telephone number of the next of kin who received the cremated remains, together with the date of receipt. The funeral establishment should release the cremated remains to the person with the highest priority under Section 711.002(a) of the Texas Health and Safety Code who is reasonably available and willing to accept them, and shall retain any receipt required by Section 716.156 of the Texas Health and Safety Code in its records.

Section 5. Certification of No Known Next of Kin. Where no next of kin is known, the Release Form must include a certification, signed by an authorized representative of the funeral establishment, that after a diligent search no next of kin of the decedent is known to the funeral establishment. The certification must briefly describe the search efforts undertaken, which may include review of information provided by the County, the justice of the peace or medical examiner, and any records available to the funeral establishment.

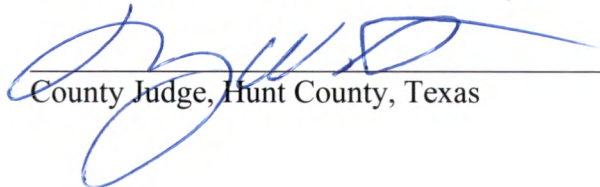
Section 6. Failure or Refusal of Next of Kin to Claim Remains. Where a next of kin is known but has failed or refused to claim the cremated remains, the Release Form must include a certification, signed by an authorized representative of the funeral establishment, identifying the next of kin, describing the written notice given, and stating that the next of kin failed or refused to claim the cremated remains within thirty (30) days after the date of the notice. Upon submission

of that certification, payment may be finalized, and the funeral establishment or crematory establishment shall thereafter retain or dispose of the cremated remains as provided by Section 716.302 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

Section 7. Administration. The County Judge, or the County Judge's designee, is authorized to administer this policy, to distribute the Release Form to funeral establishments providing indigent cremation services to the County, and to make non-substantive revisions to the format of the Release Form. The County Auditor is directed to withhold approval of claims for indigent cremation services that are not accompanied by a completed Release Form, consistent with Section 113.064 of the Texas Local Government Code.

Section 8. Effective Date; Severability. This Order takes effect immediately upon its adoption and applies to all indigent cremation services for which the County has not finalized payment as of the effective date. If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this Order that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Order are severable.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Commissioners Court of Hunt County, Texas, on this the 14th day of July, 2026.



County Judge, Hunt County, Texas

ATTEST:



County Clerk, Hunt County, Texas

EXHIBIT A
HUNT COUNTY INDIGENT CREMATION RELEASE FORM

This form is required by order of the Hunt County Commissioners Court to finalize Hunt County's payment for indigent cremation services. Complete the decedent and funeral establishment information below and complete Section A, Section B, or Section C, as applicable. Submit the completed form with the claim or invoice for payment.

DECEDENT INFORMATION

Name of Decedent: _____

Date of Death: _____ Date of Cremation: _____

FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENT INFORMATION

Name of Funeral Establishment: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ License Number: _____

**SECTION A — ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF CREMATED
REMAINS BY NEXT OF KIN**

I acknowledge that I have received the cremated remains of the decedent named above from the funeral establishment named above, and that no fee was charged to me for the release of the cremated remains. I represent that I am a next of kin of the decedent or a person entitled to control the disposition of the decedent's remains under Section 711.002(a) of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

Printed Name: _____

Relationship to Decedent: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**SECTION B — CERTIFICATION OF NO KNOWN NEXT OF KIN AFTER
DILIGENT SEARCH**

I certify on behalf of the funeral establishment named above that a diligent search has been made and that no next of kin of the decedent, and no other person entitled to control the disposition of the decedent's remains under Section 711.002(a) of the Texas Health and Safety Code, is known to the funeral establishment. The search efforts included the following:

**SECTION C — CERTIFICATION OF NOTICE TO NEXT OF KIN AND
FAILURE OR REFUSAL TO CLAIM**

I certify on behalf of the funeral establishment named above that written notice was given to the next of kin identified below advising that the cremated remains of the decedent were available to be claimed at no charge, and that the next of kin failed or refused to claim the cremated remains within thirty (30) days after the date of the notice.

Name of Next of Kin Notified: _____

Relationship to Decedent: _____

Date and Method of Notice: _____

CERTIFICATION OF FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENT

I am an authorized representative of the funeral establishment named above. I certify that the information provided on this form, including the section completed above, is true and correct. I understand that this form is submitted to Hunt County, Texas, to finalize County payment for indigent cremation services and that a false statement on this form may subject me and the funeral establishment to civil and criminal penalties under Texas law.

Printed Name of Representative: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____