

Transmittal Sheet

**Changes
 Included in
 This Revision**

The table below describes the changes included in this revision of Benefits Assistance Service Procedures M27-1, Part II, Chapter 11, “Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains.”

Notes:

- The term regional office (RO) also includes pension management center (PMC), where appropriate.
- Minor editorial changes have also been made to
 - update incorrect or obsolete hyperlink references
 - update obsolete terminology, where appropriate
 - reassign alphabetical designations to individual blocks and repaginate, where necessary, to account for new and/or deleted blocks within a topic
 - correct grammatical and spelling errors
 - clarify block labels and/or block text, and
 - bring the document into conformance with M27-1 standards.

Reason(s) for the Change	Citation	Page(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section “a” remove section title “Point of Contact for Inquiries on Unclaimed ” 	II.11.a	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section “a” add section title “Definition of Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains” 	II.11.a	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section “a” remove paragraph, “Each regional office Director will establish a point of contact (POC) at the regional office that will handle incoming inquiries on unclaimed remains for identification of a known deceased person alleged to be a Veteran.” 	II.11.a	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section “a” add paragraph, “Indigent refers to someone without assets sufficient to pay for the cost of funeral arrangements . Each state has an obligation to take care of the disposition of those who become the responsibility of the state as indigent Veterans, to include those who find themselves in state care such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hospitals (to include mental health facilities) • care homes • penitentiaries and local jails • homeless shelters Unclaimed Veteran remains are defined as Veterans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who have not been claimed by relatives and/or friends • who do not have sufficient resources available in their estate to cover the burial and funeral expenses • whose burial is not the responsibility of any other Federal, State, or local agency. 	II.11.a	1-2

<p>Reference: For information on the definition for unclaimed Veterans remains, see M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section A, 1, h.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For information on the general eligibility for unclaimed Veteran remains, see M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B, 7. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “b” remove section title “Definition of Unclaimed Veteran Remains” 	II.11.b	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “b” add section title “Regional Office Responsibilities 	II.11.b	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “b” remove paragraph, “The POC duties should include:” ensuring that coordination is established among regional offices, VA Medical Centers and National Cemeteries to improve the ways in which VA works together to identify and determine the Veteran status of unclaimed decedents of those who have served in uniform. re-establishing and maintaining liaison with funeral directors, Veteran’s services organizations, and involved local agencies of jurisdiction providing service for unclaimed remains. meeting or corresponding with local Medical Examiner’s offices or other involved local agencies to provide them with a description of the benefits available for the burial of these Veterans and to outline procedures to be followed.” 	II.11.b	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “b” add paragraph, “Each Regional Office (RO) Director will appoint at least one Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinator (IVURC) for the RO. The coordinator will be responsible for conducting outreach and processing requests for funeral arrangements of unclaimed remains to include validation of Veteran status for a deceased person alleged to be a Veteran. <p>ROs will ensure that coordinators listed on the Outreach Coordinators webpage are up to date and any change is immediately submitted by the station’s point of contact.”</p>	II.11.b	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “c” remove section title, “Claims by Funeral Directors.” 	II.11.c	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “c” add section title, “Training for Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinators” 	II.11.c	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “c” remove paragraph, M21-1MR, Part VII, Chapter 1, Section, Section B.6, (http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/BL/21/M21/content/contents.asp?address=M21-1MRVII) addresses claims by Funeral Directors for Basic Burial Allowance for Unclaimed Indigent Veterans.” 	II.11.c	1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “c” add paragraph, “Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinators (IVURCs) will have an annual requirement to complete courses in the Talent Management System (TMS). These course(s) will be assigned to IVURCs and must be completed within 90 days of assignment and annually thereafter. The mandated course(s) listed below must be completed by September 30th of every fiscal year. Coordinators will also participate in annual virtual and teleconference national training calls facilitated by Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED).” 	II.11.c	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “d” added section titled “Coordinator Duties for Handling Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains.” 	II.11.d	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “d” added paragraph, “The coordinator duties include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a local resource directory of custodians of unclaimed remains, advocacy groups, and community organizations Develop and maintain partnerships with local VAMCs and NCA facilities Develop and maintain partnerships with state and tribal cemeteries Provide Veteran benefit and survivor information to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local funeral directors Local medical examiner’s offices Veteran’s Service Organizations (VSOs) County VSOs Local medical facilities and nursing homes Local agencies of jurisdiction providing service for unclaimed remains Review if First Notice of Death (FNOD) action has taken place in accordance with the Veteran FNOD processing guidelines. For more information on FNOD guidelines, please refer to M21-1, Part XI, Subpart i, Chapter 1, Section A. Process requests for funeral arrangements of unclaimed remains, to include validation of Veteran status, per M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B, 7.” Coordinate with Custodians of Unclaimed Remains such as local funeral homes to provide burial services for unclaimed remains Conduct After Action Reviews (AAR) in ORT+ for the RO Director to finalize reports Complete outreach requirements outlined in M27-1 II.11.Section E ”Outreach to Custodians of Unclaimed Remains” Accept and timely complete referrals from the National Call Centers and Public Contact Teams 	II.11.d	3

<p>Note: State and Tribal Veterans Cemeteries may also have additional eligibility requirements.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “e” added section titled “Outreach to Custodians of Unclaimed Remains.” 	II.11.e	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “e” added paragraph, “Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinators at each RO will conduct no less than 3 hours of outreach per quarter during the fiscal year. The outreach efforts of coordinators will focus on disseminating information to the custodians of unclaimed remains. Examples of in-person and virtual outreach events include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conferences, expositions, and symposiums Briefings and presentations Town halls Lunch and learns 	II.11.e	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “f” added section titled, “Reporting Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Outreach.” 	II.11.f	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “f” added paragraph, “Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Outreach Coordinators will enter outreach events and activities in the Outreach Reporting Tool Plus (ORT+) Portal Coordinators will complete the ORT+ after-action report (AAR) and all required data fields no later than five business days after the event ends. Coordinators will follow the M27-1 Part II, Chapter 1, Outreach Services Programs, for entering unclaimed remains outreach in the ORT+. OTED’s IVUR Program Manager will review ORT+ monthly for compliance of outreach requirement. 	II.11.f	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “g” added section titled, “Claims by Funeral Homes or Other Third Parties.” 	II.11.f	4-5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “g” added paragraph, “If a funeral home or third party who handled the arrangements for a Veteran whose remains are unclaimed files a claim for NSC burial allowance based on unclaimed remains, VBA pays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the NSC burial allowance based on unclaimed remains, and reimbursement for transportation expenses if the Veteran is buried in a national cemetery. <p>The plot or interment allowance should not be paid to a funeral home or third party if the Veteran is buried in a State Veterans cemetery or other cemetery as listed in 38 CFR 3.1707; the plot or interment allowance is payable to the State or agency or political subdivision of a State.</p>	II.11.g	4-5

<p>VA Form 21P-530EZ Application for Burial Benefits is used for Non-service connected (NSC) burial allowances claims based on unclaimed remains.</p> <p>References: For more information on unclaimed Veteran remains, see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the plot or interment allowance, see <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B, 5. 38 CFR 3.1707(b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38 CFR 3.1708 transportation expenses for burial in national cemeteries, see 38 CFR 3.1709. 												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “h” added section titled, “Resources” 		II.11.h	5									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “h” added chart, “ <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Location</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>National Cemetery Administration (NCA)</td> <td>Provides the step-by-step process for determining eligibility and arranging burial for unclaimed Veterans.</td> <td>NCA Unclaimed Remains Factsheet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>National Cemetery Administration (NCA)</td> <td>Provides NCA Resource Guide.</td> <td>NCA Resource Guide</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	Description	Location	National Cemetery Administration (NCA)	Provides the step-by-step process for determining eligibility and arranging burial for unclaimed Veterans.	NCA Unclaimed Remains Factsheet	National Cemetery Administration (NCA)	Provides NCA Resource Guide.	NCA Resource Guide			
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National Cemetery Administration (NCA)	Provides the step-by-step process for determining eligibility and arranging burial for unclaimed Veterans.	NCA Unclaimed Remains Factsheet										
National Cemetery Administration (NCA)	Provides NCA Resource Guide.	NCA Resource Guide										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “g” added section titled, “Reference” 		II.11.i	5									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section “g” added, “M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section A. – General Information on Burial Benefits and Allowances M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B. – Burial Benefits M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section C. – Burial Authorization Payment Issues 		II.11.i	5									

Rescissions None

Authority By Direction of the Under Secretary for Benefits

Signature

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Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations,
Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

Distribution

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Chapter 11. Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains

This section contains information on the following topics:

Topic	Topic Name
	Introduction
a	Definition of Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains
b	Regional Office Responsibilities
c	Training for Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinators
d	Coordinator Duties for Handling Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains
e	Outreach to Custodians of Unclaimed Remains
f	Reporting Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Outreach
g	Claims by Funeral Homes or Other Third Parties
h	Resources
i	References

Introduction This topic provides information on the outreach program for indigent Veterans and unclaimed remains.

Change Date ~~xxxx~~ [March 15, 2022](#)

a. Definition of Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains

Indigent refers to someone [without assets sufficient to pay for the cost of funeral arrangements](#) ~~who is considered “poor”, “needy” or “poverty-stricken”~~. Each state has an obligation to take care of the disposition of those who become the responsibility of the state as indigents [Veterans](#), to include those who find themselves in state care such as:

- ~~mental~~ hospitals [\(to include mental health facilities\)](#)
- care homes
- penitentiaries [and local jails](#)
- [homeless shelters](#)~~homeless people~~

Unclaimed Veteran remains [are](#) defined as [Veterans](#):

- ~~Veterans~~ who have not been claimed by relatives and/or friends
- ~~Veterans~~ who do not have sufficient resources available in ~~the~~ [the Veteran’s](#)~~their~~ estate to cover the burial and funeral expenses
- ~~Veterans~~ whose burial is not the responsibility of any other Federal, State, or local agency.

~~Note: If a Veteran dies in a VA hospital or while under VA care and the remains are unclaimed, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is responsible for the burial. VBA does not pay burial benefits in this situation~~

~~**Reference:** For information on the definition for unclaimed Veterans remains, see M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section A, 1, h.~~

~~For information on the general eligibility for unclaimed Veteran remains, see M21-1, Part VII.1.A.1.h., Subpart B, 7 M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B, 7.~~

b. Regional Office Responsibilities

Each Regional Office (RO) Director will appoint ~~at least one~~ an Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinator (IVURC) ~~at for the RO.~~ The ~~The~~ coordinator will be responsible for conducting outreach and processing requests for funeral arrangements of unclaimed remains to include validation of Veteran status for a deceased person alleged to be a Veteran.

ROs will ensure that coordinators listed on the Outreach Coordinators webpage are up to date and any change is immediately submitted by the station's point of contact. ~~The Regional Office will also ensure that the current IVURC is included on the Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Outreach Program Coordinators webpage. If the IVURC is needed to be updated for the regional office, the necessary update can be rested on the same page.~~

~~**Reference:** For more information on processing requests for unclaimed Veteran remains, see M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B, 7. to custodians of unclaimed remains and processing incoming requests for funeral arrangements inquiries for unclaimed remains and/or provide validation of eligibility for a known deceased person alleged to be a Veteran.~~

~~The RO will also review and approved/deny submitted After Action Reviews (AARs) submitted by the appointed IVURC.~~

c. Training for Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinators

Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinators (IVURCs) will have an annual requirement to complete courses in the Talent Management System (TMS). These newly created course(s) will be assigned to employees IVURCs and must be completed within 90 days of assignment and annually thereafter.

~~Effective XXXX, all IVUCR coordinators will have an annual requirement to complete the curriculum. The specialized mandated course(s) listed below will be assigned to employees and must be completed by September 30th of every fiscal year.~~

Coordinators will also participate in annual virtual and teleconference national training calls facilitated by Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED).

d. Coordinator Duties for Handling Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains

The coordinator duties ~~should~~ include, but are not limited to:

Determine Eligibility

~~Review the unclaimed remains inquiry request submitted~~

~~Utilize the Veterans Benefit Management System (VBMS), a corporate database, to determine eligibility and/or Veteran status~~

~~If the remains are confirmed as a Veterans, IVUCs will:~~

~~• g. For more information on FNOD guidelines, please refer to M 21-~~

~~1, XI.i.1. Develop and maintain a local resource directory of custodians of unclaimed remains, advocacy groups, and community organizations~~

~~• Develop and maintain partnerships with local VAMCs and -NCA facilities~~

~~• Develop and maintain partnerships with state and tribal cemeteries~~

~~• Provide Veteran benefit and survivor information to:~~

~~• Local funeral directors~~

~~• Local medical examiner's offices~~

~~• Veteran's Service Organizations (VSO's)~~

~~• County VSOs~~

~~• Local medical facilities and nursing homes~~

~~• Local agencies of jurisdiction providing service for unclaimed remains~~

~~• Review if First Notice of Death (FNOD) action has taken place in accordance with the Veteran FNOD processing guidelines. For more information on FNOD guidelines, please refer to M21-1, Part XI, Subpart i, Chapter 1, Section A.~~

~~• Process requests for funeral arrangements of unclaimed remains, to include validation of Veteran status, per M21-1, Part XI, Subpart -iii, Chapter-1, Section -B, -7.~~

~~• Arrange Unclaimed Veteran's Burial~~

~~• Conduct After Action Reviews (AAR) for the RO Director to finalize reports~~

~~• Coordinate with Custodians of Unclaimed Remains such as local funeral homes to provide burial services for unclaimed remains~~

~~• Conduct After Action Reviews (AAR) in ORT+ for the RO Director to finalize reports~~

~~• Complete outreach requirements outlined in M27-1 II.11.e~~

- Accept and timely complete referrals from the National Call Centers and Public Contact Teams
- Serve as a liaison to and Conduct After Action Reviews (AAR) for the RO Director to finalize reports

Note: State and Tribal Veterans Cemeteries may also have additional eligibility requirements. offer burials options for eligible Veterans

Reference: For more information on processing requests for unclaimed Veteran remains, see M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii., 1,B,7.

e. Outreach to Custodians of Unclaimed Remains

Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinators at each RO will conduct no less than ~~xxxxx~~ 38 hours of outreach per quarter during the fiscal year. ~~When a national incident or crisis affects all in-person and virtual outreach operations~~

~~Coordinators will be allowed to reduce the required number of outreach hours to no less than xxxxx hours per quarter for the duration of the incident or crisis.~~

The outreach efforts of coordinators will focus on disseminating information to the custodians of unclaimed remains, ~~and the e~~ Examples of in-person and virtual outreach events include, but are not limited to:

- ~~Briefings and presentations~~
- Conferences, expositions, and symposiums
- Briefings and presentations
- Town halls
- Lunch and learns
- Individual contact with funeral homes, medical examiners etc.
- ~~Town halls~~

f. Reporting Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Outreach

Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Outreach Coordinators will enter outreach events and activities in the Outreach Reporting Tool Plus (ORT+) Portal. Coordinators will complete the ~~ORT+ORT+~~ after-action report (AAR) and all required data fields no later than five business days after the event ends. Coordinators will follow the M27-1 Part II, Chapter 1, Outreach Services Programs, for entering unclaimed remains outreach in the ~~ORT+ORT+~~. OTED's IVUR Program Manager will review ORT+ monthly for compliance of outreach requirement.

g. Claims by Funeral Homes or Other Third Parties

If a funeral home or third party who handled the arrangements for a Veteran whose remains are unclaimed files a claim for NSC burial allowance based on unclaimed remains, VBA pays:

- the NSC burial allowance based on unclaimed remains, and
- reimbursement for transportation expenses if the Veteran is buried in a national cemetery.

The plot or interment allowance should not be paid to a funeral home or third party if the Veteran is buried in a State Veterans cemetery or other cemetery as listed in [38 CFR 3.1707](#); the plot or interment allowance is payable to the State or agency or political subdivision of a State.

~~VA Form 21P-530~~ [VA Form 21P-530EZ](#) *Application for Burial Benefits* is used for Non-service connected (NSC) burial allowances claims based on unclaimed remains.

References: For more information on unclaimed Veteran remains, see

- the plot or interment allowance, see
 - [M21-1, Part VII, 1.B.5](#) [M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B, 5.](#)
 - [38 CFR 3.1707\(b\)](#)
 - [38 CFR 3.1708.](#)
- transportation expenses for burial in national cemeteries, see [38 CFR 3.1709.](#)

h. Payment Amount for Indigent and Unclaimed Veterans

~~Unless VA has evidence on the date of receipt of the notice of the Veteran's death that the burial expenses incurred were less, VBA will pay the maximum NSC burial allowance for the unclaimed remains of a Veteran.~~

~~**Note:** The SC burial allowance is *not* payable for the unclaimed remains of a Veteran.~~

i. Unclaimed Remains of a Veteran Who Died at a VA Hospital

~~If a Veteran dies in a VA hospital or while under VA care and the remains are unclaimed, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is responsible for the burial. VBA does not pay burial benefits in this situation.~~

~~The VAMC of jurisdiction is responsible for forwarding the following documents to the regional office (RO) for filing in the deceased Veteran's claims folder:~~

- ~~, and~~
- ~~the death certificate.~~

~~*Reference:* For more information on VHA burials, see section 213 of PL 114-223.~~



~~j. Processing Funeral and Burial Arrangements~~

~~unclaimed remains of a Veteran who dies at a VA hospital, see M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, 1.B.7. Do not make funeral arrangements before establishing positive verification of Veteran status for the unclaimed remains.~~

~~Follow the steps listed below after positive verification of the Veteran status has been completed.~~

- ~~— The Indigent Veteran and Unclaimed Remains coordinator will send a request to the Veterans Service Center (VSC) Manager or Pension Management Center (PMC) Manager of the claims file jurisdiction for a determination of basic entitlement to the burial allowance.~~

~~*Reference:* For more information on entitlement to burial benefits for unclaimed Veterans, see 38 CFR 3.1708.~~

- ~~• The claims processor attempts to locate the next of kin (or a responsible close friend, if no next of kin can be found) who will be
 - ~~• encouraged to assume burial responsibilities, and~~
 - ~~• counseled concerning any burial benefits known to be available in the individual case.~~~~
- ~~• If a next of kin or responsible close friend has accepted responsibility for the unclaimed remains, the remains are considered to be claimed.~~
- ~~• If remains remain unclaimed, the RO Director in the area in which the Veteran died should:
 - ~~○ initiate negotiations for a dignified burial with an appropriate funeral director in accordance with local procedures, and~~~~

~~consult the RO Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinator for assistance, if necessary.~~

VUR will attempt to locate the next of kin (or a responsible close friend, if no following in be fully) and final disposition of the remains, prepare a VA Form 27-0820, **Disposition of Remains** identifying all circumstances of the case in which responsibility was assumed by:

Reference: For more information on entitlement to burial benefits for unclaimed Veterans, see 38 CFR 3.1708. **Cooperating funeral director, for unclaimed remains**

hl. Resources

Name	Description	Location
National Cemetery Administration (NCA)VHA Unclaimed Remains Coordinator Directory	Provides the step-by-step process for determining eligibility and arranging burial for unclaimed Veterans. contact information at each VHA facility coordinator for Unclaimed Veterans	NCA Unclaimed Remains Factsheet
National Cemetery Administration (NCA)	Provides NCA Resource Guide. Central Scheduling Office	NCA Resource Guide

im. References

[M21-1 XI.iii.1.A](#)M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section A. – General Information on Burial Benefits and Allowances

[M21-1 XI.iii.1.B](#)M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B. – Burial Benefits

[M21-1 XI.iii.1.C](#)M21-1, Part XI, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section C. – Burial Authorization Payment Issues

l. Required Indigent

Coordinators will participate in virtual and teleconference national training calls facilitated by Outreach, Transition and Economic Development (OTED) conducts.

Questions & Issues:

Is there a format for size and type of text? Check in word document in Johns email

Check bullets for uniformed alignment

