



Dear 

On 17 January 2020, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

'Can you please provide the number of funeral grant applications received and granted by region, by average amount paid for the year 2019 and 2020 year to date?'

As agreed in a phone call on 5 February, you have narrowed the scope of your request to data for 2019 only.

The Ministry provides funeral grants to help those who have no other means to meet the costs of a funeral. A funeral grant assists people with actual and reasonable funeral costs and is not designed to cover all funeral expenses. It is income and asset tested and eligibility takes into consideration whether the deceased person has a surviving partner or dependent child or if the deceased is a child.

Expenses that can be met through a funeral grant:

- professional services with regard to preparing the body for cremation or burial (for example, embalming)
- cost of a casket
- newspaper notice costs
- hearse fees
- compulsory fees for the purchase of a burial plot
- cremation fees

Further information on the eligibility criteria for a funeral grant can be found on Work and Income's website:

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/funeral-grant.html>

Please find below table one, which shows the requested data.

Table 1: The number of funeral grant applications received in the calendar year 2019, broken down by region and the outcome of the application.

Calendar year	Work and Income region	Number of applications			Average amount granted	Total amount granted
		Granted	Declined	Total		
2019	Northland	268	36	304	\$1,929.05	\$516,985.92
	Auckland Metro	1,330	229	1,559	\$1,977.58	\$2,630,176.38
	Waikato	431	119	550	\$1,907.51	\$822,137.80
	Taranaki	271	79	350	\$1,924.92	\$521,652.10
	Bay of Plenty	482	151	633	\$1,906.97	\$919,158.61
	East Coast	239	54	293	\$1,936.81	\$462,897.62
	Central	375	135	510	\$1,924.23	\$721,585.69
	Wellington	366	71	437	\$1,971.41	\$721,535.61
	Nelson	159	66	225	\$1,840.38	\$292,620.33
	Canterbury	525	266	791	\$1,926.40	\$1,011,362.61
	Southern	336	163	499	\$1,824.49	\$613,028.06
	Other	454	213	667	\$1,886.10	\$856,288.92
Total		5,236	1,582	6,818	\$1,926.93	\$10,089,429.65

Notes:

- Applications processed include both applications granted, and applications declined.
- This is the number of funeral grant applications processed, not the number of clients.
- A client may have more than one application processed in the reported period.
- A funeral grant is generally processed through the deceased record or deceased children through the parents, guardian's or primary caregiver's record.
- You requested the data to be broken down by region. The Ministry collects data by the site that granted the payment, not by territorial authorities.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted

and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response regarding funeral grants with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bridget Saunders', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bridget Saunders
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery