

Assistance Organizations

Facing the death of a loved one is an exhausting and seemingly overwhelming experience. However, support does exist through the advocacy of various survivor assistance organizations.

Victim Witness Services

Provided by the Westmoreland County Office of the District Attorney, Victim Witness Services offers on scene assistance, victim compensation, crisis intervention, and court accompaniment.



Monday-Friday:
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
724-832-3272

<http://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us>

Loving and Losing

Loving and Losing is a free support group provided by Mental Health America of Southwestern PA for those who have lost a loved one to an overdose. In addition to providing support, the open group focuses on identifying strategies and skills for coping with this complex grief.

L.O.S.S. Support Group

L.O.S.S. Support Group is for those who have had a loved one pass away from suicide. Provided by Mental Health America of Southwestern PA, the group allows those who have experienced losing someone to suicide to share and receive support.

Ray of Hope

Mental Health America of Southwestern PA facilitates a task force with the mission being reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide. Ray of Hope also aims to increase awareness on suicide through educational conferences, annual suicide awareness walks, and survivor support groups.



409 Coulter Avenue, Suite 4
Greensburg PA, 15601
724-834-6351
www.mhawc.org

Highmark Caring Place

The Highmark Caring Place provides support to children and families who have experienced the death of a loved one. Highmark Caring Place is a community resource that provides encouragement and a safe place for children, adolescents, and their families heal and grow. Services are offered at no cost.



620 Stanwix Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
1-888-224-4673
www.highmarkcaringplace.com

Cribs for Kids

Cribs for Kids National Infant Sleep Imitative aims to prevent infant death by educating parents and caregivers on the importance of practicing safe sleep for their babies. Cribs for Kids also provides support and educational resources or parents and families who have experienced the loss of an infant.



5450 Second Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15207
1-888-721-CRIB
www.cribsforkids.org

Center for Victims

The Center for Victims offers support to all who have been affected by a crime from the moment the crime occurs, through duration of the legal process, and during the physical and emotional healing process. The 24-Hour Crisis Hotline provided by the Center for Victims can be contacted at 1-866-644-2882.



5916 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
412-482-3240
www.centerforvictims.org

Excelsa's Crisis Response Center

Located at the corner of Depot and West Pittsburgh Street on the Westmoreland Hospital campus, Greensburg, Excelsa's Crisis Response Center offers services to assist those in crisis. Walk in services are available and assistance is immediate. The 24-hours a day, 365 days a year Mental Health Crisis Intervention Hotline provided by the Crisis Response Center can be reached at 1-800-836-6010.



Walk-in: 7 a.m. – 11 p.m.
724-832-4465
www.excelsahealth.org

Cleaning Services

The following companies specialize in biohazard clean up

Aftermath Services, LLC: 1-877-872-4339
Crime Scene Clean-Up: 1-800-991-3645
D.A.S.H. Bio-Recovery, LLC: 1-888-972-0911
Bio Clean Services: 1-800-901-2988
After Trauma Clean-Up, Inc.: 412-795-7117
Trauma Response Team & Janitorial Services Inc.: 1-844-5-TRAUMA
Restorx: 1-815-235-9606
Advance Bio Treatment: 800-295-1684
Servpro: 724-837-8830

The Westmoreland County Office of the Coroner does not endorse or recommend any particular company.

SURVIVORS' GUIDE



Westmoreland County Office of the Coroner

2503 South Grande Boulevard
Greensburg, PA 15601

Phone: 724-830-3636
Fax: 724-830-3064

Coroner
Kenneth A. Bacha, B.S., D-ABMDI

The Westmoreland County Office of the Coroner extends its deepest sympathy during this difficult time. It is our hope that the information contained in this Survivors' Guide will assist your decision making and provide helpful solutions during this time of loss.

Coroner's Office Jurisdiction

The Coroner's Office is mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to investigate and determine the manner and cause of death. These include cases of homicide, suicide, accidental, and all natural deaths that are sudden, unexpected, or medically unattended. Accordingly, the manner and cause of death are determined by means of investigation, toxicology, and an extensive postmortem examination (autopsy), at which time a death certificate is generated in accordance with the medical findings.

The postmortem examination (autopsy) is vital in the determination of a definitive manner and cause of death. The final autopsy decision is made by the Forensic Pathologist. Autopsy objections from the next of kin are considered only after an autopsy waiver is signed. Please be advised that the autopsy waiver in itself does not preclude the autopsy. Without this critical and often necessary procedure, it is more difficult for the Coroner's Office to accurately determine a manner and cause of death.

Disposition of Remains

The Office of the Coroner is located at 2503 South Grande Boulevard in Greensburg, PA. If a positive identification is necessary, an investigator will notify the next of kin in conjunction with the police department, at which time the procedure will be explained regarding identification of the decedent. The Coroner's Office will provide viewing of the deceased only in cases where a positive identification is absolutely necessary. The office is not designed as a viewing facility.

Organ Donation

Although facing the death of a loved one is overwhelming, a decision regarding organ donation may present the opportunity to save lives. Once it is determined that your loved one has no medical condition that would medically preclude the organ donation, a representative from the Center of Organ Recovery and Education (C.O.R.E.) will advise and discuss your options. The organ donation procedure will not be performed without the authorization of both the next of kin and the Coroner's Office.

C.O.R.E.- Pittsburgh, PA 1-800-DONORS-7
(1-800-367-6777)

Release of Decedent & Personal Effects

At the earliest convenience, it is advised that the legal next of kin select a funeral home and inform the funeral director that the death is under the jurisdiction of the Coroner's Office. Generally, the release of the decedent should not take more than 24 hours. The funeral director will coordinate the release on your behalf.

The Office of the Coroner does not select, recommend, or make funeral arrangements. In the event someone is making funeral arrangements for the family, the Coroner must be provided with written authorization to release the deceased, which should be signed by the next of kin.

Personal possessions in the custody of the Coroner's Office may be claimed by the legal next of kin. To avoid any inconvenience, call the office and schedule an appointment. Photo identification is required prior to the release of personal effects.

Unless there is a need to hold clothing as evidence, it is released to the funeral director recovering the deceased. Clothing that presents a health hazard may be disposed of for the safety of all persons involved.

Death Certificates

Once the determination is made regarding the manner and cause of death, a certificate is generated to the responsible Funeral Home. The original certificate is filed with the Pennsylvania Division of Vital Records by the Funeral Director. Certified Copies of this certificate can be obtained from the Funeral Director or the Division of Vital Records at a minimal cost.

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Division of Vital Records
411 7th Avenue, Suite 360
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
1-866-712-8238
www.health.pa.gov/MyRecords/Certificates

Website for Death Certificates for all States:

www.vitalchek.com
Click on appropriate state for information.

Copies of Reports

Final autopsy, toxicology, and investigation reports are available for release ONLY to the legal next of kin. The Coroner's Office requires written permission from the next of kin prior to the release of all reports. There is no charge for the initial copy of the reports to the legal next of kin. The fees for all additional copies for legal, insurance, and other reasons are as follows:

Autopsy	\$500.00
Toxicology	\$100.00
Investigation	\$100.00

*Payment for all reports must be made in advance.

Non-Availability of Funds for Disposition

Westmoreland County does not provide an indigent burial program. In the event the deceased or the legal next of kin does not have sufficient funds for disposition, organizations such as various medical research organizations, may provide assistance, options, and recommendations regarding disposition if funding is not attainable.

Veterans Affairs

The Westmoreland County Office of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs are resources the next of kin of a deceased veteran may use to request military records for the purpose of determining if the decedent is eligible for a Veteran's burial.

Westmoreland County Office of Veterans Affairs
724-830-3530
www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/390/Veterans-Affairs



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
1-800-827-1000
www.va.gov

