

Our Mission

The National Home Funeral Alliance (NHFA) is a nonprofit membership organization committed to reconnecting to our heritage, educating individuals, families and communities, empowering families, and encouraging those who further the practice of home funerals.

The mission of the NHFA is to educate and empower families and communities to care for their own dead.



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Kline, Chattanooga, Tennessee, Caring for Our Own at Death

Lying in honor at home

Reviving a Family Tradition

Until the 19th century, funerals were family, church, and community affairs. The family washed and laid out the body, dressed or draped it, and ordered the coffin from the local carpenter or made it themselves. It was the family who carried the coffin from home to the graveyard, often digging the grave as well. Despite the rise in professional death care, it is and has always been legal in every state and province for families to care for loved ones at home from death until final disposition.

What is a Home Funeral?

Home funerals occur when a loved one is cared for at home after death, giving family time to gather and participate in:

- planning and carrying out after-death rituals or ceremonies
- preparing the body for burial or cremation by bathing, dressing and laying out for visitation
- keeping the body cool with noninvasive techniques, such as ice
- filing the death certificate and obtaining transport and burial permits
- transporting the deceased to the place of burial or cremation
- facilitating the final disposition, such as digging the grave in natural burial
- hiring professionals for specific services

The Value of Home Funerals

Home funerals invite family, friends, and community into an authentic and healing after-death care experience in a safe and familiar place, with care performed by loving hands. Families choosing home funerals express gratitude for the intimacy, connection, and sense of purpose that results from this organic and timeless practice.



Our biennial conferences offer opportunities to meet home funeral advocates from around the world and learn about related information and practices

The Role of Home Funeral Guides

Home funeral guides do not conduct after-death care as do licensed funeral directors. Guides teach, demonstrate, advise and support families and friends who then conduct their own care and make their own informed decisions.



Photo courtesy of Chloé Bonham, Sacred Crossings

Educators teach home funerals workshops to individuals, families, and spiritual and community care committees

NHFA Website Resources

Our website www.homefuneralalliance.org is rich in resources, including archived and recent articles, interviews, blogs, newsletters, how-to manuals, member education, and information gathered just for you. We welcome the opportunity to answer questions, present programs, and teach workshops and trainings. Our **Directories** webpage lists:

- speakers near you
- home funeral guides
- celebrants, chaplains, and clergy
- instructors and trainers
- home funeral-friendly funeral directors

National Home Funeral Alliance



Opa and Friends

supporting families and communities in caring for their own at death through education and advocacy

Become a Member

By becoming a lifetime member of the NHTFA, you are supporting home funeral education and home funeral guides, educators, and advocates. Members enjoy benefits such as monthly teleconferences, mentors, and programs, a bi-annual e-newsletter, and discounts on conferences and other NHTFA events.



The NHTFA is solely supported financially by public contributions. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation.



Contact Us

You can send us a note at our national address below, or contact any member of the Board by finding their information under **Board & Committees.**

National Home Funeral Alliance

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Funeral Costs

A full-service contemporary funeral in the US costs \$8,343*, not including the burial plot, crematory fees, or other goods and services. Even direct cremation or immediate burial is out of reach for many. By contrast, a family willing to care for their own will spend a fraction of that cost. Old-fashioned virtues of frugality, simplicity, self-reliance, and care for the earth guide us in demonstrating our love and esteem.

Environmental Considerations

From rainforest woods and imported steel to toxic chemicals and concrete, the negative impact on the environment associated with standard funerals is staggering. The NHTFA encourages environmentally friendly practices, such as natural cooling methods rather than embalming, green burial without vaults, and the use of locally made caskets and shrouds sourced from sustainable regional materials.



Photo courtesy of Donna Bell, Home Funeral Director

Tools of the trade

* National Funeral Directors Association, 2014