

# National Home Funeral Alliance



## 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.

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

## Reviving a Family Tradition

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.*

### **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.

### **NHFA Website Resources**

Our website [www.homefuneralalliance.org](http://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 **Get Assistance Directories** webpage lists:

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

### **Funeral Costs**

A full-service contemporary funeral in the US costs on average \$10-12K. 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 NHFA 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.

### **Become a Member**

By becoming a lifetime member of the NHFA, you are supporting home funeral education and home funeral guides, educators, and advocates. Members enjoy benefits such as monthly conference calls, mentorship programs, a monthly e-newsletter, and discounts on conferences and other NHFA events.

### **Donate**

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

### **National Home Funeral Alliance**

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