

**NFDA**

NATIONAL  
FUNERAL  
DIRECTORS  
ASSOCIATION

# 2026

## Pursuit of Excellence Program

### Registration & Application Instructions

**Celebrating more than 45 years** of recognizing funeral homes that provide exceptional service to grieving families and the community, while adhering to the highest ethical and professional standards.

NFDA.org/[PursuitOfExcellence](https://www.nfda.org/PursuitOfExcellence)



# 2026 Pursuit of Excellence

All entries must be submitted online by the July 15, 2026, deadline – please see page 4 for details.

## Recognition Categories

### Pursuit of Excellence Award

The program's principal recognition, the Pursuit of Excellence Award, is given to NFDA-member funeral homes that, in the opinion of the Pursuit of Excellence Work Group, have adequately fulfilled the required criteria in six categories of achievement.

### Hall of Excellence

Created to recognize long-term participation in the Pursuit of Excellence program and a consistent display of service excellence, NFDA-member funeral homes are inducted into the Hall of Excellence upon receiving their 10th Pursuit of Excellence Award.

### Richard Myers Pinnacle Award

In addition to qualifying for a Pursuit of Excellence Award, a funeral home is also eligible for the Richard Myers Pinnacle Award, which recognizes funeral homes that developed an extraordinary program or service that far surpasses the definition of funeral service excellence.

As part of the entry process, all program participants are required to submit an essay describing the development and execution of a program or service that had a positive impact on those served (see Category 1, Criterion H). These essays are used to determine the recipient of the Richard Myers Pinnacle Award.

The Richard Myers Pinnacle Award will be conferred at the discretion of the Pursuit of Excellence Work Group and only when it encounters a remarkable example of excellence in the profession.

### Best of the Best Award

In addition to qualifying for a Pursuit of Excellence Award, a funeral home is also eligible for the Best of the Best Award, which recognizes the profession's most novel and innovative programs and services. The Pursuit of Excellence Work Group may select up to five funeral homes annually to receive this award.

As part of the entry process, all program participants are required to submit an essay describing the development and execution of a program or service that had a positive impact on those served (see Category 1, Criterion H). These essays are used to determine recipients of the Best of the Best Award.

Essays are judged by the Pursuit of Excellence Work Group on the uniqueness of the idea on a national and international level; quality of implementation; benefit to those served; benefit to the funeral home; and how easily the idea could be replicated or modified by another funeral home.

### NEW IN 2026 – Remembering A Life Award

In addition to qualifying for a Pursuit of Excellence Award, a funeral home is also eligible for the Remembering A Life Award, which recognizes the profession's most personal and meaningful funerals and memorial services. The Pursuit of Excellence Work Group may select up to five funeral homes to receive this award annually.

As part of the entry process, all program participants are required to submit an essay describing a personal and meaningful funeral or memorial service (see Category 1, Criterion G). These essays are used to determine recipients of the Remembering A Life Award.

Essays will be judged by the Pursuit of Excellence Work Group based on the funeral home's ability to create a funeral or memorial service that goes beyond the expected to provide families with truly meaningful, healing experiences. The work group will consider factors such as how creatively the service honored the life of the deceased, incorporation of family wishes and cultural traditions, and how the service exceeded expectations. Strong documentation and impactful family feedback will help demonstrate the service's significance.

### Honorable Mention

As part of the entry process, all program participants are required to submit an essay describing the development and execution of a program or service that had a positive impact on those served (see Category 1, Criterion H). Funeral homes that develop a program or service that is well-executed and yielded positive results will receive a Certificate of Honorable Mention from the Pursuit of Excellence Work Group. The work group may select up to 10 funeral homes annually to receive this award.

## One Entry for All of Your Firm's Locations

Funeral businesses need only submit one entry representing the work and accomplishments of all locations that operationally share staff and resources.

For funeral businesses with locations in two or more states, an entry is limited to locations within a single state that, operationally, share staff and resources.

**Program Registration Fee:** Your registration fee is based on the number of locations in your business.

- Main Location: \$325 (U.S. Dollars)
- Each Additional Location: \$100 each (U.S. Dollars)

If a multi-location funeral business does not register all of its branch locations, it cannot rightfully claim the entire business has earned the award. Only those particular funeral home locations that have registered and received recognition in the Pursuit of Excellence program may hold themselves as Pursuit of Excellence honorees.

For some firms, registering and submitting a single entry for all locations doesn't make sense because of how their business operates. Some funeral homes may simply prefer registering and submitting an entry for each individual location. In that case, that business may register each location separately and submit an entry for each individual location. The registration fee will be \$325 per location.

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## Entry Deadline

**Entries are due July 15, 2026. No exceptions.**

See the Pursuit of Excellence page on NFDA's website (NFDA.org/PursuitOfExcellence, "Registration and Application Materials" page) for details on how to submit your entry to NFDA. Entries must be submitted online via our easy-to-use SurveyMonkey Apply application platform. **Entries will not be accepted by any other method (e.g., mail, email, fax, etc.).**

## Entry Requirements

All funeral businesses that wish to qualify for Pursuit of Excellence recognition must submit a registration form and entry that demonstrates their proficiency in six key areas of funeral service.

**First-time participants may describe programs and activities completed during the last three years (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026) in their entry.**

**Returning participants may only describe programs and activities completed during the past year (July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026) in their entry.**

Please **review each criterion carefully** and note the specific information required in your description and any documentation that must accompany your entry.

**All descriptions of how a funeral home has fulfilled a particular criterion must be specific.** Participants must provide names, dates, places, etc., indicating the "who, what, when, where," etc., as applicable.

**Most criteria do not require documentation;** however, criteria descriptions can be supported by documentation (e.g., pictures, certificates, badges, etc.) if the entrant chooses. If documentation is required, it is noted in the criterion description.

**An activity may only be described once** in a funeral home's entry (i.e., a single activity cannot be used to fulfill multiple criteria).

**Incomplete or unsatisfactory descriptions for any criterion from the "Basic Requirements" category, or more than three criteria from the remaining five categories of achievement, will result in immediate disqualification.** Three or fewer incomplete or unsatisfactory criteria descriptions from the last five categories of achievement will be brought to the attention of the participant. The participant may resubmit items for further review when requested by the Pursuit of Excellence Task Force; if the participant chooses not to do so, they will be disqualified.

**Entries must be submitted in English.**

**Please proofread your entry carefully.** Spelling and grammar errors are not a sign of excellence and can reflect poorly on a funeral home. Consider having a colleague review your entry before you submit it to NFDA.

**Firms that submit Pursuit of Excellence entries grant NFDA permission to use their firm's name and any materials submitted** as part of their entry to promote the Pursuit of Excellence program and in any other manner deemed appropriate by NFDA.

## Categories of Achievement

*Please review each criterion carefully and note the specific information required in your description and any documentation that must accompany your entry.*

### Category 1: Basic Requirements

All participants must meet certain basic requirements in order to be considered for the Pursuit of Excellence Award. Incomplete or unsatisfactory information in this section will lead to immediate disqualification.

#### Complete *all* of the following criteria:

- A. All licensed funeral directors and all full- and part-time staff must agree to adhere to the Pursuit of Excellence Pledge of Ethical Practices. Typing the names of all full-and part-time staff in the online entry form signifies their willingness to adhere to the Pursuit of Excellence Pledge of Ethical Practices.

#### **Pursuit of Excellence Pledge of Ethical Practices (Please read carefully)**

As a condition of application to NFDA's Pursuit of Excellence program, the persons named below agree to the following:

- All information provided in our Pursuit of Excellence entry is true and correct, and we will abide by the rules, procedures and decisions of NFDA, which will be considered final in the case of awards.
  - NFDA has permission to use any materials submitted as part of our entry for the Pursuit of Excellence Award in promotion of the program.
  - As current members of NFDA, we will continue to maintain strict adherence to the NFDA Code of Professional Conduct.
  - Our funeral home attests that it is in compliance with:
    - o All requirements of the FTC Funeral Rule and any other state/local laws and regulations governing funeral home licensing and operations. (Note: Funeral homes outside of the United States attest they fully comply with licensing or operational laws and regulations in their country or municipality.)
    - o All applicable OSHA standards. (Note: Funeral homes outside of the United States attest they fully comply with all applicable occupational health and safety regulations and laws.)
    - o All applicable federal, state and local environmental laws and regulations.
  - Our funeral home and its employees have not, within five (5) years of the date of application, been found by a government licensing or regulatory to have knowingly violated any statute or regulation whose purpose is to protect consumers and regulate ethical or business practices of funeral directors. (Participants can appeal to the Pursuit of Excellence Task Force, which has the authority to modify or waive this requirement as the particular facts may warrant.)
  - If our funeral home is found in violation of this Pledge of Ethical Practices, we forfeit all rights and benefits awarded by NFDA's Pursuit of Excellence program.
  - The Pursuit of Excellence program is built upon its participants' strict adherence to the highest ethical practices and professionalism. It is impossible to craft a written policy that can precisely define or list all of the acts of misconduct or impropriety that should disqualify a funeral home from participating in the program. In order to protect the integrity of the program, however, the Pursuit of Excellence Task Force needs the ability to reject an application, rescind an award and revoke a recipient's right to hold itself out as a Pursuit of Excellence Award recipient due to some act of misconduct or impropriety associated with that firm. Therefore, it is the policy of the Pursuit of Excellence program that the Pursuit of Excellence Task Force shall have the final authority to reject an application, rescind an award and revoke a recipient's right to hold itself out as a Pursuit of Excellence participant in the event the committee finds that the funeral home, its ownership, employees, operations or anything associated with it detracts from the integrity of NFDA's Pursuit of Excellence program and its commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards.
- B. A funeral home earns a Pursuit of Excellence Award through the hard work of its staff. Submit a color photo of the funeral home's staff – the men and women who, every day, work diligently to serve grieving families and the community. The photo will be included in a video scrapbook shown during the NFDA International Convention & Expo.

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- C. Describe Federal Trade Commission Funeral Rule training that all funeral home staff have participated in during the past year. Potential training sources include distance learning (teleconferences, webinars and online courses), convention workshops, and home study (books, DVDs and CDs). Include the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), and the training date(s) in your description.

*Note: Funeral homes outside of the United States should describe the steps taken during the past year to ensure staff are knowledgeable and compliant with national and local funeral home regulations and laws. Please be specific.*

- D. Describe OSHA-related training that all funeral home staff have participated in during the past year. Potential training sources include distance learning (teleconferences, webinars and online courses), convention workshops, and home study (books, DVDs and CDs). Include the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), and the training date(s) in your description.

*Note: Funeral homes outside of the United States should describe the steps taken during the past year to ensure all funeral home staff are knowledgeable and compliant with national and local occupational health and safety regulations and laws. Please be specific.*

- E. Describe the ways in which the funeral home gathers customer-satisfaction feedback (e.g., via surveys, comment cards, letters requesting family feedback, NFDA's Family Satisfaction Survey program, or an equivalent customer-satisfaction survey program) regarding the quality of services received. Include the method of gathering customer-satisfaction feedback and how the information is shared with staff.

- F. Describe the ways in which your funeral home promotes receipt of the Pursuit of Excellence Award/its recognition by NFDA within your community (e.g., via news releases, use of the Pursuit of Excellence logo on communication materials, displaying the award at community events, etc.). Be detailed in your description.

If this is your first year applying for the Pursuit of Excellence Award, please describe how you intend to promote the award in your community.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation showing how you have promoted your achievement in your community (e.g., news release(s), newspaper article(s), advertisement(s), etc.).

- G. Submit an essay describing the direction of a personalized funeral or memorial service. The service should go beyond any products purchased and demonstrate a unique, meaningful service orchestrated by the funeral home's staff. Include a detailed description (400 words minimum) of the service. In your essay, please address:

- How the service creatively honored the life of the deceased. What made it unique or special?
- How the family's wishes and ideas shaped the service. Did they request anything specific? How did your team respond?
- Ways your staff went above and beyond to exceed the family's expectations.
- How the service reflected or respected cultural, spiritual or religious traditions.
- How technology (if used) contributed to telling the story of the life lived.
- Any "wow" moments or details that made the service especially memorable.
- Feedback received from the family or others in attendance. How did the service impact them?

Please respect the privacy of the decedent and his or her family; please do not use names or details that may represent a breach of trust or cause embarrassment.

**Documentation required:** In addition to your essay, you must submit supporting documentation (e.g., photographs, service folders, thank you notes from the family, etc.).

The service described for this criterion will be used to determine recipients of the new Remembering A Life Award (see page 2).

- H. Submit an essay describing an innovative program, service or activity executed by your funeral home. You may not describe a personalized funeral or memorial service in this essay. The essay must be a minimum of 400 words and will be used to determine recipients of the Best of the Best Award, Richard Myers Pinnacle Award, and Certificate of Honorable Mention (see page 2).

**Documentation Required:** In addition to your essay, you must submit supporting documentation (e.g., photographs, advertisements, newspaper clippings, flyers, etc.).

Address the following in your essay:

- Rationale behind the idea. In describing the rationale for your idea, if you are using background material from a third-party – e.g., information, statistics, facts, etc. – to explain why your program was needed, please cite/give attribution to your sources.
- Detailed description of the program, service or activity.
- Benefits provided to funeral home and staff.
- Benefits provided to families and/or the community at large.
- If your organization partnered with a business or community organization(s) (e.g., church, hospice, etc.) to develop and/or implement the program described in the essay, clearly define the role of the funeral home and the role of the organization(s).
- If you are describing a program/activity that is conducted annually, is an on-going program, or has been used in a previous year's entry, clearly describe changes or improvements that have been made during the past year.

The idea described in this essay can also be used to fulfill one criterion in Categories 2-6.

Participant essays will be featured on the NFDA website and used in other idea-sharing activities.

## Category 2: Leadership and Staff Professional Development

Attaining and maintaining excellence requires a commitment to ongoing education and professional development. Training sources include Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice-approved organizations, such as NFDA or a state association; accredited schools, such as mortuary schools, community colleges or other institutions of higher learning; community adult-education programs; related government-sponsored training; or in-house training provided by qualified instructors with recognized credentials in the subject matter. Training mediums can include classroom, workshop, online, home study, teleconference, webinar, podcast, etc.

**Please note:** The staff person(s) listed as training participants in the criteria below must be regular full- or part-time staff members – this excludes students, apprentices, resident trainees, etc.

### Complete at least four (4) of the following criteria:

- A. Describe the training that at least one staff member has received involving a technical skill (e.g., cosmetology, embalming, caring for infectious-disease cases, restorative arts, handling special or difficult cases, preparing organ and tissue donors, etc.). In your description, provide the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), the training date(s), and a description of the course and the benefits provided to staff and/or the families you serve.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

- B. Describe the training that at least one staff member received involving a communication skill (e.g., community or public relations, interpersonal communication, customer service, public speaking, phone etiquette, social media, etc.). In your description, provide the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), the training date(s), and a description of the course and the benefits provided to staff and/or the families you serve.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

- C. Describe the training that at least one staff member received involving available forms of disposition other than traditional burial (e.g., cremation, green funeral and burial services, alkaline hydrolysis, natural organic reduction, etc.). In your description, provide the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), the training date(s), and a description of the course and the benefits provided to staff and/or the families you serve.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

- D. Describe the training that at least one staff member received involving cemetery ownership and/or operations (e.g., burial planning, cemetery profitability, cemetery marketing, cemetery management best practices, etc.). In your description, provide the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), the training date(s), and a description of the course and the benefits provided to staff and/or the families you serve.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

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- E. Describe the training that at least one staff member received involving business operations (e.g., strategic planning, accounting/financial reports and projections, human resources management, disaster planning, marketing, compliance and regulatory issues, eco-friendly business practices, or other topics related to business operations and performance excellence). In your description, provide the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), the training date(s), and a description of the course and the benefits provided to staff and/or the families you serve.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

- F. Describe the training that at least one staff member received involving bereavement and family support (e.g., aftercare, celebrant training, bereavement programs and services, etc.). In your description, provide the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), the training date(s), and a description of the course and the benefits provided to staff and/or the families you serve.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

- G. The funeral business has at least one licensee with a current Certified Funeral Service Practitioner (CFSP) designation from the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice (APFSP). In the description, please include the name of the currently certified staff person and the date on which they earned or renewed their certification.

**Documentation Required:** Include a copy of the current APFSP membership card or proof that the individual has earned his or her CFSP designation.

- H. The funeral business has at least one staff member with a current NFDA Certified Preplanning Consultant™ (CPC) designation or an equivalent preneed certification program designation. (*Note: NFDA CPC certification must be renewed every four years.*) In the description, please include the name of the currently certified staff person and the date on which they earned or renewed their certification.

**Documentation Required:** Provide proof of the current NFDA CPC designation or an equivalent preneed certification program designation.

- I. The funeral business has a current NFDA Green Funeral Practices™ Certificate or an equivalent green-funeral certification. (*Note: funeral homes must renew their NFDA Green Funeral Practices Certificate annually.*) In the description, please include the date on which the funeral home earned or renewed its certificate.

**Documentation Required:** Provide proof that your funeral home has earned the NFDA Green Funeral Practices Certificate or an equivalent green-funeral certification.

- J. The funeral business has at least one staff member who has earned the NFDA's Cremation Certification or other equivalent crematory operator certification. In the description, include the name of the currently certified staff person and the date on which certification was earned.

**Documentation Required:** Provide proof of successful completion of NFDA's Cremation Certification Program or other equivalent crematory operator certification program.

- K. The funeral business has at least one staff member who completed NFDA's Arranger Training™ Program or other equivalent arrangement conference training program. In the description, please include the name of the staff person who completed the program and the date on which the program was completed.

**Documentation Required:** Provide proof of successful completion of NFDA's Arranger Training Program or other equivalent arrangement conference training program.

- L. Describe a program or activity at your funeral home designed to promote teambuilding, enhance the team culture, or improve morale among your funeral home staff.

**Documentation Required:** Please provide documentation of the program or activity (e.g., photos, programs, staff newsletter, emails, etc.).

- M. Describe a staff member's participation in a professional development program that does not fit criteria A-K. Potential topics include funeral arranging, pet services, preneed, etc. In your description, provide the name of the course, the name(s) of the instructor(s), the training date(s), and a description of the course and the benefits provided to staff and/or the families you serve. (Refer to definition of Category 2 above when deciding what to include.)

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

### Category 3: Family Outreach, Support and Services

Distinction in funeral service includes excellence in service to the bereaved. Criteria in this section will describe programs implemented and resources provided to bereaved families that go above and beyond the standard level of service.

#### Complete at least four (4) of the following criteria:

- A. Provide a detailed description of the aftercare/grief-support services the funeral business provides to adults (e.g., newsletter, support groups, seminars, online aftercare resources, resource library, etc.).
- B. Provide a detailed description of the aftercare/grief-support services the funeral business provides to children and/or teenagers (e.g., support groups, grief camps, grief resources donated to local schools, etc.).
- C. Provide a detailed description of a memorial program for a major holiday, such as Memorial Day, Mother's/Father's Day or Christmas, that the funeral business has hosted.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of the event (e.g., an event invitation, program, photos, etc.).

- D. Provide a detailed description of how the funeral business supports or participates in programming with a local hospice or palliative care organization.
- E. Establish or maintain grief and bereavement resources in your firm or on your funeral home website. If you already have resources in your firm or on your website, add at least five new titles or links, which can include any combination of books, brochures/pamphlets, films, slide presentations, tapes, CDs, DVDs, videos, and/or links related to grief and bereavement or funeral service. Include the titles and a description of the new resources and/or website content.
- F. Provide a detailed description of online memorialization options (e.g., funeral webcasting, online video tributes, photo galleries, assistance with memorial websites, etc.) offered to families.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of these online memorialization options (e.g., website copy, description in General Price List, marketing materials, etc.).

- G. Provide a detailed description of green funeral/natural burial options offered to families.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of green funeral/natural burial services (e.g., General Price List showing a green-funeral package, website copy, marketing materials, etc.).

- H. Provide a detailed description of green business practices implemented in the funeral business (e.g., alternative-energy sources for energy efficiency and conservation, green construction and remodeling, water conservation, energy-saving transportation/fleet practices, and/or waste reduction and recycling). Participants should describe green business practices beyond merely recycling or transitioning to energy efficient light bulbs.

- I. Offer the services of a certified grief-therapy dog, or some other therapy animal, to families.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation that the dog, or some other therapy animal, has completed a recognized therapy animal certification program.

- J. Provide a detailed description of an innovative program executed by the funeral business that does not fit criteria A-J but exemplifies excellence in serving the bereaved. (Refer to the definition of Category 3 above when deciding what to include.)

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## Category 4: Community Service and Education

Service excellence should extend beyond the walls of the funeral home through the direct sponsorship of community events and educational programs, and through volunteerism with local clubs, nonprofit groups and service organizations. Criteria in this section will provide clear evidence that your funeral home maintains an active level of involvement in the community.

### Complete at least four (4) of the following criteria:

- A. Present a program on a funeral-related topic to an organized community group, such as a local school, civic or community club/organization, nursing home, hospice, or medical or healthcare group. Provide a detailed description that includes the name of the group, the date(s) of the presentation, the name(s) of the presenter(s) and the topic on which he or she spoke.
- B. Sponsor a visit to your funeral home for groups, such as youth, church, civic organization or school. Provide a detailed description that includes the name of the group, the date(s) of the visit(s), and what transpired during the visit(s).
- C. Volunteer at least 12 hours with community service organizations (e.g., Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, a soup kitchen, etc.). Provide a detailed description of your service that includes the name of the organization, the date(s) of service, and your duties as a volunteer.
- D. Participate in local government, service clubs or fraternal organizations through an elected position or volunteer activities. Provide a detailed description of your participation that includes the name of the organization, the date(s) of service, and your role.
- E. Support and/or participate in programming on a specific health issue (e.g., American Cancer Society, March of Dimes, American Heart Association, etc.). Provide a detailed description that includes the name of the organization and program you supported, the date(s) of the program, and the specific support you provided.
- F. Arrange to donate at least five resources (e.g., books, DVDs, etc.) related to funeral service to a school, college, or public or religious library in your area. Include the resource titles in your description.
- G. Create or participate in a program that honors, supports or celebrates veterans in your community. Examples could include a Veteran's day program, a luncheon at a local VFW post, collecting food and toiletries for unhoused veterans, etc. Provide a detailed description of the program, including date(s), location and your firm's involvement.
- H. Describe an innovative program that does not fit criteria A-F but highlights your funeral home's involvement in the community. (Refer to the definition of Category 4 above when deciding what to include.)

## Category 5: Professional Service and Participation

Professional excellence includes active development of professional relationships and the support of funeral service associations and/or related organizations. Criteria in this section will demonstrate active participation in the profession.

### Complete at least four (4) of the following criteria:

- A. Serve on a local, state, provincial or national funeral service association board, committee, task force, etc. Provide a detailed description of your involvement.
- B. Become actively involved with a local mortuary science education program (e.g., serve on a board, present a workshop to students, host a tour of your funeral home for students, serve as an instructor, etc.). Provide a detailed description of your involvement, including, as applicable, the name of the school, the dates of involvement, and the specific support you provided.
- C. Mentor or train an apprentice or student. Provide a detailed description of your mentorship including the name of the apprentice or student, the dates of mentorship, and how you supported his or her path toward full licensure.
- D. Present a one-hour workshop/presentation to a local, state, provincial or national funeral service organization. Provide the title of the workshop/presentation, the group to which it was presented, the date of the presentation, the name of the presenter(s), and a description of the presentation.

- E. Write an article published in *The Director* magazine, a state association publication or another funeral service magazine (print or electronic). Provide the name of the publication, the date on which the article was published, the title of the article, and a brief summary of the article's key point(s).
- F. Attend an in-person NFDA educational event (e.g., NFDA International Convention & Expo, NFDA Leadership Conference, NFDA Professional Women's Conference, NFDA Meet the Mentors, NFDA Embalming and Restorative Art Seminar, etc.). In your description, provide the name, date(s) and location of the event.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

- G. Attend the NFDA Advocacy Summit, a provincial or state government regulatory meeting, or send letters to your government representatives to advocate on issue(s) that impact funeral service, small business issues or grieving families. Provide detailed information about the issues on which you advocated, whether you attended an event or wrote a letter, and the date on which the activity took place.
- H. Participate in a local, state or provincial funeral directors association meeting, or attend a state association convention. In your description, provide the name, date(s) and location of the event.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

- I. Attend an in-person convention or regional conference of a nationally or internationally recognized funeral service organization (e.g., Asociacion Latinoamericana de Parques Cementerios y Servicios Exequiales; Association for Death Education and Counseling; Cremation Association of North America; Federated Funeral Directors of America; Fédération Internationale des Associations de Thanatologues – International Federation of Thanatologists Association; Funeral Service Association of Canada; International Cemetery, Cremation & Funeral Association; International Order of the Golden Rule; Jewish Funeral Directors of America; KAVOD Independent Jewish Funeral Chapels; National Funeral Directors & Morticians Association; Preferred Funeral Directors International; Selected Independent Funeral Homes, etc.). In your description, provide the name, date(s) and location of the event.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your attendance/participation (e.g., CE certificate, participation certificate, registration confirmation, badge, program, etc.).

- J. Make a monetary contribution to a funeral service-specific charitable organization, such as the Funeral Service Foundation (can include participation in the annual Funeral Service Foundation Golf Classic); The Heritage Club; a state or national association foundation; or a mortuary science school scholarship. Provide the name of the organization and the date of your contribution (it is not necessary to specify the amount donated).

- K. Participate in a state disaster team or DMORT unit. Provide a detailed description of your involvement and duties. If you were deployed to a disaster, provide a brief overview of your duties during the response.

- L. Offer to serve as a mentor to a prospective/new Pursuit of Excellence program participant. (Example: on your funeral home letterhead, share information about the program and offer to mentor your colleague.)

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your communication with the funeral home(s).

- M. Provide an example that does not fit criteria A-L but demonstrates support of, or participation in, professional funeral service associations. Your example should go beyond simply being a member of a local, state, national or international association for funeral service professionals. (Refer to the definition of Category 5 above when deciding what to include.)

# 2026 Pursuit of Excellence

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## Category 6: Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations

A funeral home that provides outstanding programs and services will not have much impact if people do not know it exists or for what it stands. Criteria in this category will identify and describe marketing, advertising and public relations programs used to promote your funeral home and funeral service in the community.

### Complete at least four (4) of the following criteria:

- A. Develop or update a section on your funeral home's website featuring information about death, dying, funeral planning or bereavement for consumers. Provide a detailed description.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation showing the change(s) made.

- B. Actively use social media and/or web-based tools (e.g., blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) to market your firm and educate your community about funeral service and grief/bereavement issues. Be detailed in your description of how your funeral business uses social media.

*Note: Your funeral home website does not fulfill this requirement; your firm must be engaged in activities beyond its website.*

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation of your firm's online presence.

- C. Implement a new, or improve an existing, public relations program aimed at media or community relations (e.g., hosting holiday programs or memorials for public figures; writing a column for a local newspaper about grief and bereavement issues; publishing news releases; making TV/radio appearances; etc.).

- D. Implement a new, or improve an existing, advertising and/or marketing program (e.g., create or update a brochure; develop new advertisements for print, radio or TV; develop a direct-mail campaign; sponsor a community event, etc.).

- E. Implement a new, or improve an existing, clergy-relations program (e.g., host a presentation; distribute a newsletter to local religious organizations; organize a clergy-appreciation event; host a breakfast for local clergy members; etc.).

- F. Create and/or provide a free newsletter (print or electronic) addressing grief and bereavement issues to allied groups in your community, such as hospice workers, clergy, social workers, nursing homes or other social organizations.

**Documentation Required:** Provide a copy of the newsletter.

- G. As part of your firm's marketing/advertising efforts, use NFDA's Remembering A Life community-outreach resources (e.g., public service announcements, brochures, films, etc.; see [NFDA.org/RememberingALife](http://NFDA.org/RememberingALife)), or the Funeral Service Foundation's "Youth & Funerals" or "Grieving Alone & Together" materials (e.g., e-book, printed booklet or video). Be detailed in your description of how your firm uses the materials.

**Documentation Required:** Provide documentation showing how your firm is using the outreach materials.

- H. Describe a marketing, advertising or public-relations program that does not fit criteria A-H that your firm has successfully implemented in your community. (Refer to the definition of Category 6 above when deciding what to include.)

## 2026 Pursuit of Excellence Registration Form – page 1 of 2

All Pursuit of Excellence program participants must complete and submit this registration form, along with payment, by July 15, 2025.

Firm name (main location): \_\_\_\_\_

NFDA member number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State/Province, Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Pursuit of Excellence Contact (funeral home staff member NFDA can contact regarding your entry): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone (include area code/international dialing codes): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to program by: \_\_\_\_\_

### Participation Fee – Required

**A. Main Location Fee:** \$325 (U.S. dollars)

**Save! Register during the 2025 NFDA Virtual International Convention & Expo (October 26-29, 2025) and the main location fee is \$300 (U.S. Dollars)**

**B. Branch Location Fee:** \$100 per location (list each branch's information on the next page)

Number of branch locations: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$100 (U.S. Dollars) = \$\_\_\_\_\_

*Reminder: Only registered branch locations are entitled to call themselves Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipients. If you do not register all branch locations in your business, you cannot rightfully claim that your entire business has earned the award. See page 3.*

**Total Due to NFDA (A+B):** \$\_\_\_\_\_ (U.S. dollars)

### Method of Payment

Check payable to NFDA (U.S. dollars drawn on U.S. bank only).

MasterCard    Visa    Discover    American Express

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# 2026 Pursuit of Excellence

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## 2026 Pursuit of Excellence Registration Form – page 2 of 2

### Branch Locations (use additional sheet(s) if necessary):

Branch name as it should appear in press release, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch name as it should appear in press release, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch name as it should appear in press release, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch name as it should appear in press release, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

### Submit this registration form to NFDA

- By mail: NFDA  
Attention: Pursuit of Excellence  
13625 Bishops Drive  
Brookfield, WI 53005  
USA
- Phone: Call your NFDA member services representative at 262-789-1880 to pay with a credit card by phone.





NFDA.org • 262-789-1880