

Our mission

Funeral Consumers Alliance (FCA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting a consumer's right to choose a meaningful, dignified, affordable funeral.

To accomplish that goal, FCA:

- Offers pamphlets and newsletters on funeral choices to increase public awareness of funeral options, including how to care for your own dead without using a funeral home
- Monitors funeral industry trends and practices nationally and exposes abuses
- Serves as a consumer advocate for legal and regulatory reform, giving advice on or lobbying for necessary changes locally, statewide, or nationally
- At no charge, mediates funeral complaints and refers aggrieved consumers to the appropriate regulatory agency
- Serves as a credible source of information for media covering death and dying
- Works with national organizations sharing similar concerns to expand families' choices and control over funeral options
- Gives advice and guidance to local memorial and funeral planning societies
- Helps local affiliates stay in touch with each other and exchange ideas

Consumer protection milestones

FCA has taken the lead in ensuring increased protection to funeral consumers for over 50 years.

- We worked with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) during the 70s to produce a comprehensive report on the failure of the funeral marketplace to provide consumers with transparent and affordable choices.
- The FTC's Funeral Rule, a comprehensive law protecting the rights of consumers, was passed in 1984.
- Our testimony helped support amendments to the Rule; they went into effect in 1994.
- We reached 50,000 families with funeral planning information after being featured in *Dear Abby* in 2000.
- We successfully partnered with local FCAs, policy makers, and citizen activists to restore the rights of families to direct their own funerals privately, when that right was taken away in states such as Nevada and Minnesota during the late 2000s.
- In October, 2015, we released the first national survey of how rarely funeral homes disclose prices online, shining a light on industry's secrecy and setting the stage for a modernized Funeral Rule.
- In 2016 we formally requested the FTC to amend the Rule to require online price disclosure for funeral homes.

Our resources for consumers

Well-informed funeral consumers get more for their funeral dollars and usually spend less. They are also prepared to educate their families about meaningful and personalized options. That's why the Funeral Consumers Alliance offers comprehensive resources for all things related to funeral planning, such as:

- Our easy-to-use **website**, funerals.org, has a directory of local affiliates across the country, funeral shopping tips, explanations of consumer rights, and other useful information.
- Over a dozen free, downloadable **pamphlets**, some in Spanish, explain a range of topics, such as cremation, green burial, saving funeral dollars, veterans burial benefits, paying for a funeral, etc.
- **Newsletters** cover industry trends, legal issues, consumer information, and how-to tips; sent to board members of local groups, individual subscribers, and to related organizations.
- **Biennial conference** offers nationally renowned speakers on important end-of-life topics, and valuable workshops for volunteers and consumers alike.
- **"Before I Go" Funeral Planner** has 30 pages to record detailed funeral wishes, leave instructions for pet care, tell survivors where to find assets, and much more.*
- The book **Final Rights** gives consumers a roadmap to find a funeral that fits their needs and budget, and includes a chapter on the laws in each state, with suggestions for needed reforms.*

* For sale on our website, funerals.org

We've helped thousands of families

We provide emotional support and concrete information to families trying to negotiate the difficult steps of making affordable final arrangements.

■ We instructed a man how to get his wife's body released from a hospital morgue and get a transportation permit to move her body to another state. He was expecting a bureaucratic nightmare but it only took a short time to get the paperwork processed and claim the body. "I am sure it would have a lot harder if we didn't have your wonderful instructions. So thanks for the great work you do." — *Francis E.*

■ We helped a terminally ill woman make urgent end-of-life plans. "Your organization provided me much needed support and guidance to find a very reasonably priced cremation... We all face the end of life, and I love that you educate and inform with care and a sense of humor." — *Linda H.*

■ We helped twice when a family was barred from getting their mother's body from a hospital and a nursing home. "I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that FCA will make sure policy is changed swiftly at both places and that consumers' rights will be protected in the future. I am so grateful for my FCA membership and proudly renewed my financial support because FCA "has my back"! — *Sara W.*

Contributions are welcome

Funeral Consumers Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations enable us to continue our mission of consumer advocacy and the promotion of transparency in funeral planning. All donations to the national organization are tax-deductible.

Support or start a local affiliate

There are more than 70 affiliates across the US, most run by volunteers. Many do an annual price survey of funeral homes and cemeteries. In some areas, the organization has negotiated a discount for its members at cooperating mortuaries. All provide educational materials on cost-effective funeral planning and advance directives for end-of-life decisions.

Find your affiliate

- Go to www.funerals.org/local-fca and check your state's listing, or call us at 802-865-8300.
- If you find an FCA in your area, you can contact them to become a member, or volunteer to help them expand their services.

Start an affiliate

We'd love to help you start a Funeral Consumers Alliance in your area. Follow these simple steps:

- Gather a small handful of friends who can share the work and form a steering committee.
- Download our free *Guidebook for Running a Funeral Consumers Alliance*.
- Take notes on any parts that leave you with unanswered questions. We can set up a phone call and talk about the next steps.
- If you're not ready to start a new group, you could work with us to do a local cost comparison survey of funeral prices to help your community.
- If you have any additional questions, reach out to us at volunteers@funerals.org.



Funeral Consumers Alliance

Protecting a consumer's right to choose a meaningful, dignified, and affordable funeral