

## Affiliates with Bigger Boundaries

Whether your state has one regional affiliate or several, consider thinking outside a small “territory.” Consider expanding boundaries for your affiliate because:

- Funeral law is State law. You need lots of members to write and call their Legislators when funeral related bills are on the move. Affiliate members across your state share your interest in funeral liberty and should coordinate efforts.

If someone from a neighboring state wants to join, that is great! They're interested because the funeral industry in your state is affecting them. Therefore it's beneficial to absorb members from neighboring states (FCA of Northern TX, and Tennessee's FCA of the midsouth do this). A specific example is seen in Salt Lake City which has the largest medical center in the region so that people from Idaho, Wyoming and Nevada are often transported there, and die in Utah. Dave and Marcia Racehorse-Robles of Idaho were absolute key in the passage of a bill that FCA of UT spearheaded in the Utah legislature to return the right to file a death certificate back to the people in 2009.

- The greatest value you offer members is empowerment. You educate consumers to plan ahead, communicate their wishes with their likely survivors, negotiate effectively, and purchase the meaningful, dignified, and affordable services they want. While contracts or prices you gather may not apply to other regions of your state, much of your advice does. So why limit who should be interested in your website or supporting you?
- Your price survey is primarily an educational tool and not a substitute for shopping around, so it's valuable to anyone, anywhere, who wants to compare the startling disparity of charges between different funeral homes, or between regions. Many are curious what a “normal” price even is. Your survey helps them.
- The person you help today has the potential to become a volunteer; answering calls in their neck of the woods, making donations, calling their law-makers when a Bill needs to be supported or fought, or collecting GPL's for your next funeral home price survey.
- Funeral directors often are willing to travel great distances to serve customers (or charge reasonable fees for distant pick up), so it may be that sometimes the discounts you negotiated could serve “out of area” members.
- Phones, email and the internet have made communication fast and easy and geographical distance less relevant. So board members and volunteers who

live far from one another are no longer a problem if you meet via zoom and collaborate with cloud-based documents.

Another example: Utah's affiliate covers 2 million people over an 8 hour stretch of highway, yet its website averages over 700 visits per month! This affiliate gets very few phone calls because all its information is on its website instead of on pamphlets that need to be mailed.

So if it's your mission to efficiently and effectively offer funeral information and advocacy then consider expanding your boundaries. All in your state may reap the benefits of your knowledge, news, organized topics, legislative action, price surveys, membership and more.

Joyce Mitchell, FCA of Utah and National Board member

#### An illustration

There is a state with two affiliates in your State. One is run by a little old lady all alone and thoroughly devoted to the cause of FCA. She is a very sweet lady who loves the FCA and mutes her tv every time she picks up the phone. She is not technical (even struggles with email). I thought, maybe making calls to update her member list would be a nice way for her to chat with others and make friends and clean out her member list. But she said, "I don't feel up to calling people."

When this valiant affiliate leader dies, who knows what will happen to those 5 members she continues to acquire every year? On the bright side she doesn't keep SS# and the contracting FH holds the info needed for her members to get services.

Imagine if she were part of the other affiliate in your state. It has 3,500 members. It would really boost her morale.

If the larger affiliate created an FCA serving all of the State (which only surveys and/or has contracted providers in two major metro areas) then anyone who ever wanted to serve an additional region of the State could just provide price surveys to the main affiliate....or anything else they wanted (help with legislative watch, writing articles about exercising the right to "walk-away" from being a funeral customer at all, or cemetery issues etc) ...and send you their dues. Bonus: if any Legislative issues come up, these distant members that also care about funeral liberty, can be contacted to persuade their Reps. After all, it takes influence state-wide to pass any legislative bill!

Now, in this scenario two sections of the state have contracted providers. Everywhere else in your State could offer comparison prices. So now you attract

more memberships and donors of people who love your expertise, and your legislative watch and your preplanning forms and how-to advice.

Btw, the more info your affiliate pushes onto its affiliate website the fewer phone calls you receive. Now your affiliate is easier to run than ever.

For example, my UtahFunerals.org website is so thorough I only get one call every month or two. Yet this year I've averaged 280 unique visitors/month to my website. So that is helping a lot of people effortlessly. I receive very touching stories of families exercising their rights.