



2025 NFDA CONVENTION PLANNING GUIDE

NFDA International Convention & Expo
October 26-29 • Chicago, Illinois

NFDA

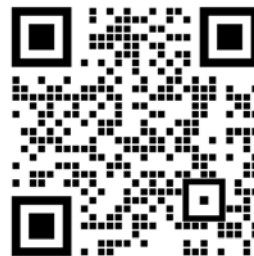
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2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo

OCTOBER 26-29 • CHICAGO, IL

McCormick Place Convention Center
2301 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60616

Join thousands of the world's top funeral professionals and suppliers to network and learn skills that will help you, your business and the families you serve.

The NFDA convention offers a great team-building opportunity, and group registration discounts are available. Contact us at 800.228.6332 or +1.262.789.1880 for details.

Registration Types

Full Convention: First Registrant

Register for your all-access, full-convention pass and take advantage of everything NFDA's International Convention & Expo has to offer, including the Welcome Party, all of the general sessions, every workshop, the Expo Hall, the Service of Remembrance, and the All-star Recognition Ceremony. Plus, you can earn up to 13 CE credits.

Full Convention: Additional Registrant

Invite colleagues from the same firm to join you and they will have the same full access to everything the convention has to offer, including up to 13 CE credits.

Expo Only

If you're on a mission to discover what's new in funeral service, NFDA's Expo Only pass is your ticket to see it all. Every year, more than 300 vendors gather to showcase the most innovative products and services in funeral service. Join us and find out what's new in 2025. Bonus: you'll receive 1 CE credit just for walking the Expo floor!

Expo Plus

Come for the largest funeral service exposition in the world and stay for the fun! Your Expo Plus registration includes the Welcome Party, Monday's Opening Session, the Service of Remembrance and, of course, the Expo Hall. Plus, earn up to 3 CE credits. (Does not include access to workshops.)

Student

NFDA's student registration is one of the most valuable (and inexpensive!) investments you can make as you pursue your mortuary science education. With it, you can access everything available to a full-convention registrant, including invaluable networking opportunities that will give you the edge when looking for your first job in funeral service.

Register Early and Save!

You know you don't want to miss this year's convention in Chicago, so register early (by August 14) for less.



**FUNERAL SERVICE
FOUNDATION**

Act Fast: Scholarships Available!

All funeral directors, interns and apprentices licensed (or working) in the U.S. or Canada are invited to apply for scholarships to attend the NFDA convention this October. The Funeral Service Foundation will award up to 20 scholarships, each valued at \$2,200, that cover registration fees, three night's lodging and up to \$500 in travel reimbursement. See the ad on page 33 for details; apply by July 24.

At a Glance

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24

1 – 6 p.m. Celebrant Training* (Day 1)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Registration
8 a.m. – 4 p.m. NFDA Cremation Certification Program*
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. NFDA Arranger Training*
8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Celebrant Training* (Day 2)
12 – 4 p.m. NFDA Central

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Celebrant Training* (Day 3)
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Funeral Service Foundation Golf Classic*
Top Golf Schaumburg
8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Registration
8 a.m. – 4 p.m. NFDA Central
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Enhancing Open Casket Viewings: Techniques for Severe Trauma Cases*
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Caring for Ourselves*
10 – 10:45 a.m. First Time Attendee Orientation**
11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Workshops
1 – 4 p.m. City Sightseeing Tour*
1 – 4 p.m. Secret Food Tour*
1 – 4 p.m. International Tour*
4:30 – 5:30 p.m. ReConnect**
6 – 8 p.m. Welcome Party

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27

7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. NFDA Central
7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Registration
8 – 9 a.m. Workshops
9 – 9:30 a.m. First Time Attendee Orientation**

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Opening Session
12 – 5 p.m. NFDA Expo
12:30 – 3:30 p.m. Chicago TV & Movie Tour*
4 – 5 p.m. All-Star Recognition Ceremony
5 – 6:30 p.m. Funeral Service Foundation Donor Appreciation Reception**
6 – 7:30 p.m. Architectural River Cruise

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. NFDA Central
7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Registration
8 – 10:15 a.m. Workshops
11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Service of Remembrance
12 – 5 p.m. NFDA Expo
12:30 – 2 p.m. Conversation Café
12:30 – 3:30 p.m. Graceland Cemetery Walking Tour*
1 – 4 p.m. Wrigley Field Tour*
4:30 – 5 p.m. Installation of 2025-26 NFDA President & Board of Directors
5 – 5:30 p.m. NFDA Board of Directors Installation Reception
5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Funeral Professionals – Young and New*
6 – 6:45 p.m. Heritage Club Reception**
6:30 – 8 p.m. International Reception**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29

7:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Registration
8 – 9 a.m. Workshops
9 a.m. – 12 p.m. NFDA Central
9 a.m. – 12 p.m. NFDA Expo
12:15 – 1:30 p.m. Closing Session

* Additional fee required

** By invitation only

National Funeral Directors Association

13625 Bishop's Drive
Brookfield, WI 53005

NFDA



Chicago: The Best Big City in the U.S.

There's a reason Chicago has been voted the Best Big City in the United States for eight years running by the readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* – there's something for everyone to do. Whether you're a foodie, music lover, museum or art connoisseur, or a sports fan, Chicago has it all.

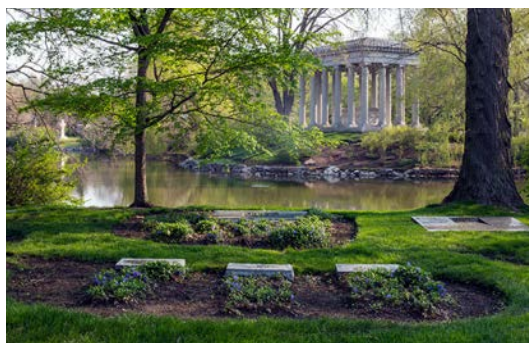
In addition, Chicago sits on the shores of beautiful Lake Michigan and offers many iconic locations, including Navy Pier, Millenium Park, Cloud Gate (aka "The Bean"), and Willis Tower, to name just a few.

We're excited to return to Chicago for the 2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo. If you've visited before, welcome back. If this is your first time, you're sure to be delighted! Enjoy your time in the Windy City and with your fellow funeral service professionals.



Convention Guest Tours

Please note, there is an additional fee for each event, and each requires separate registration.



City Sightseeing Tour

Sunday, October 26, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Experience the best of Chicago on our top-rated city sightseeing luxury-minibus tour! Tour through downtown, showcasing all the must-see sights and stunning skyline views from Lake Michigan, in comfort and style.

Secret Food Tour

Sunday, October 26, 12:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Stroll around the illustrious Chicago Loop District and enjoy world-famous deep-dish pizza, the incredible Italian beef sandwich, gourmet popcorn, and a mouthwatering mystery meal.

Chicago TV & Movie Tour

Monday, October 27, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Journey through the heart of movie-making magic as you step into the scenes of iconic productions, such as *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *The Untouchables*, *The Dark Knight*, *The Bear*, and others.

Graceland Cemetery Walking Tour

Tuesday, October 28, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Experience an unforgettable journey where history, architecture and the eternal peace of illustrious individuals – including architects Louis Sullivan, Mies Van der Rohe and Daniel Burnham – converge in a captivating exploration of Chicago's past.

Wrigley Field Tour***

Tuesday, October 28, 1 – 4 p.m.

*** This tour is contingent on the Chicago Cubs play-off schedule. You may indicate your interest in the tour on the guest tours registration website but will not be contacted for payment until the tour is confirmed.



WELCOME TO CHICAGO



- ★ 1. **FAIRMONT CHICAGO-MILLENNIUM PARK**
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- 2. **HAMPTON INN CHICAGO MCCORMICK PLACE**
123 E. CERMAK RD.
- 3. **HILTON GARDEN INN CHICAGO MCCORMICK PLACE**
123 E. CERMAK RD.
- 4. **HOME2 SUITES BY HILTON CHICAGO MCCORMICK PLACE**
123 E. CERMAK RD.
- ★ 5. **HYATT REGENCY CHICAGO**
151 E. WACKER DR.
- 6. **RADISSON BLU AQUA HOTEL**
221 N COLUMBUS DR
- 7. **SWISSOTEL CHICAGO**
323 W. WACKER DR.
- ★ **HOUSE OF BLUES CHICAGO**
329 N. DEARBORN ST.
- ★ Shuttles will be running to and from the convention center, the Fairmont Chicago – Millennium Park, and the Hyatt Regency Chicago.



CHICAGO
CHOOSE CHICAGO

CHICAGO CONCIERGE

Make the most of your time in Chicago with Chicago Concierge!

This complimentary service will guide you to the award-winning restaurants, bars, and retailers in town to help make your time in the city as eventful and seamless as possible.

Scan the QR code with your phone to explore our curated selection of restaurants, things to do, and special event venues!

Scan Here!



choosechicago.com/concierge

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Tips for Convention First Timers

Attending your first NFDA International Convention & Expo can prove both exciting and overwhelming. Here are some essential tips to help you make the most of your experience and alleviate any anxiety you might feel.

First Time Attendee Orientation

Meet at the Registration Desk in the North Hall, Grand Concourse Lobby, Level 3
Sunday, October 26, 10 – 10:45 a.m.
Monday, October 27, 9 – 9:30 a.m.

Get ready for the convention by attending one of these sessions specifically prepared for newcomers. Hear from NFDA convention pros, meet fellow funeral professionals attending their first convention, tour the McCormick Place Convention Center, and receive a small token of appreciation for attending. You'll leave this session prepared to enjoy your first NFDA convention with confidence.

Plan Ahead

Look for supplementary materials or pre-conference readings provided by NFDA. Prioritize sessions aligned with your interests and goals. Identify unique insights and networking opportunities. Check out our series of videos to better prepare you.

Download the Convention App

Download the official My NFDA app to access the schedule, session details, maps and attendee lists. You'll also need it to scan for CE credits after each session.

Networking

Participate in networking sessions, receptions and social gatherings. These are excellent opportunities to connect with like-minded professionals and chat informally with fellow convention attendees. Don't be afraid to strike up conversations after workshops and events. Approach speakers, other attendees, and exhibitors to exchange ideas and contact information.



Use the Buddy System

Find a colleague or fellow attendee to navigate the NFDA convention together. Having a buddy can help you stay accountable, share insights, and provide moral support. Your buddy can also introduce you to their contacts, expanding your network.

Ask for Help

NFDA staff members and fellow attendees know what it's like to be in your shoes, so don't be afraid to stop and ask for help. Every question you have is important. You'll be amongst peers who are happy to assist.

Preparation and collaboration will make your convention experience more enjoyable and productive. NFDA wants your experience to be a positive one, and we're sure you'll want to come back year after year!



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Stay Informed With the My NFDA App

Download the My NFDA app now and skip the hassle onsite. The app allows you to check the schedule and speaker bios, connect with attendees, and **scan for CE credits**. Download the app today!



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Wordly Translations Available in 60 Languages!

Get access to NFDA convention programming in 60 languages. The web-based software gives you access without needing to download an app or use special equipment. It's as easy as:

1. Scan the QR code at the table in each workshop.
2. Select your language.
3. Enjoy the workshops and keynote presentations.



ReConnect

Save the Date
Sunday, October 26th
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

A great way for PWC attendees to continue their networking. Join us as we reconnect at the NFDA International Convention & Expo in Chicago.

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competitor



LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR FUNERAL BUSINESS GOALS.

Teresa Carlson

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Keynote Speakers



OPENING SESSION

Monday, October 27

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Virtuoso: Living the Virtuoso Life

Felipe Gomez

With more than 25 years of entrepreneurial and senior management experience, Felipe Gomez has developed a solid narrative and portfolio of products and services that give leaders, teams and organizations reliable and proven tools to reach extraordinary performance. Leveraging his passion for music with a piano on stage, Gomez will inspire you and provide tools to help you consistently aim for operational excellence, create meaningful connections and build effective cultures of innovation.

Author of the bestselling book *Attitude-E: The Method for Being Entrepreneurial and Fulfilling Your Dreams*, his keynote presentation centers around the power of virtuosity: what it means to be a “virtuoso” and why it’s an important quality for organizations in today’s world; identifying the keys to becoming a virtuoso in everything you set out to do; the mindsets and behaviors that leaders and organizations should adopt to thrive in the #NewNormal; and the importance of perfecting your methods, being more aware of the attitudes you assume, and doing everything you do with love and passion.

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CLOSING SESSION

Wednesday, October 29

12:15 – 1:30 p.m.

Futureproof Yourself: Innovate and Thrive in Times of Uncertainty

Crystal Washington

The new normal of consistent change is leaving leaders concerned about being left behind. Instead of implementing half-baked, panic-driven ideas, it’s time to identify the Easter eggs the future has left for us. In this talk, technology futurist Crystal Washington will show you and your team how to innovate, thrive and enjoy the ride.

Key takeaways from this session include: learn how to understand the gifts the future really has to offer, allowing you to shape and manipulate your ultimate outcomes; identify the most underutilized Easter eggs of innovation (which you already have in your basket); and create a framework to future-proof your career and organization to avoid getting scrambled.

One of *Forbes*’ 50 Leading Female Futurists, Washington has worked in revenue management and corporate sales managing Fortune 500 accounts and repeatedly breaking company records. She founded her own social media consulting firm called Black-Market Exchange and authored two books: *One Tech Action* and *The Social Media Why*.

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Institutional Services





Preconvention Seminars

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 –
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26**



**Business Operations,
Customer Service,
Professional Skills
Certified Celebrant
Training**

*Glenda Stansbury and
Matt Bailey, InSight
Institute*



*Brought to you by InSight
Institute and hosted by
NFDA*

Registration: Friday, 12:30 p.m.
Seminar Day 1: Friday, 1 – 6 p.m.
Seminar Day 2: Saturday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Seminar Day 3: Sunday, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Set your firm apart from the competition and offer more to the families you serve! As families' wishes continue to evolve, it is more important than ever to offer a variety of services that meet their needs and exceed their expectations. Fewer families incorporate religious rites into memorial services now so how can you fill that gap? Many funeral homes look to celebrants and find it most economical to train their staff to accommodate this growing demand for customized services. A certified celebrant works with a funeral director to provide a funeral service, memorial service or tribute that is personalized to reflect the personality and life of the deceased. (17 CE hours through InSight Institute)

\$945 NFDA members or eligible non-funeral directors; \$1,100 nonmember funeral directors; fee includes light meals and refreshments.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25



**Professional Skills
NFDA Arranger Training**

Lanae Strovers, Trainer, NFDA

Registration: 7:30 – 8 a.m.

Seminar: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Learn how to make the most of the arrangement conference through a creative, five-step process only available from NFDA. This high-energy, interactive program provides you with the tools you need to convey the value of the funeral to families and partner with them to design memorable life-tribute events. Through a combination of small- and large-group discussions, problem-solving and creative collaboration, you'll leave with fresh approaches and new ideas to transform your arrangement conferences. (8 CE hours)

\$510 NFDA members and qualifying nonmembers; \$625 nonmember funeral directors; \$165 mortuary students; fee includes refreshments and lunch.



**Compliance and Legal, Cremation
NFDA Cremation Certification Program**

*Michael Nicodemus, Vice President, NFDA
Cremation Services, with support from Tim
Copeland, Trainer, NFDA*

Registration: 7:30 – 8 a.m.

Seminar: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Whether you currently own or operate a crematory, are thinking of opening one, or want to evaluate a third-party crematory, this training is essential for your success. NFDA's Cremation Certification Program™ covers best practices for safe, proper and ethical crematory operations; sets the standard for excellence, compliance and integrity in cremation services; and provides the information you require to address potential cremation liability issues. NFDA offers the only cremation certification program specifically created to protect funeral directors and the families they serve. The seminar and test are based on the NFDA *Cremation Standards for Funeral Service Professionals* manual. CE and certification require passing the online Cremation Certification Test. (7 CE hours)

\$525 NFDA members and qualifying nonmembers; \$695 nonmember funeral directors; \$160 mortuary students; fee includes refreshments, lunch and closing reception.

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A photograph of two men standing on a staircase. The man on the left is older, with glasses and a mustache, wearing a dark blue blazer over a light blue button-down shirt and khaki pants. The man on the right is younger, with a beard, wearing a dark blue blazer over a white button-down shirt and grey pants. They are both smiling at the camera. The background shows a modern building interior with a staircase and glass walls.

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We Are Invested in Your Legacy

Whether you're improving operations, planning for succession, or preparing for a transaction, expert guidance ensures you get the result you deserve. Step into a brighter future with Foresight.

Preconvention Seminars

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26



Embalming and Restorative Art Enhancing Open Casket Viewings: Techniques for Severe Trauma Cases

*Glyn Tallon, CFSP, Founder, Tallon
Mortuary Specialists*

Seminar: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Join us for a practical, informative opportunity to explore techniques used by the most extraordinary embalmers. Learn skills and discover resources and products that will help you prepare the best possible farewell for grieving families.
(4 CE hours)

\$225 NFDA members before August 14; \$245 after August 14; nonmember funeral directors \$285 by August 14; \$310 after August 14; \$100 mortuary students.



Professional Development Caring for Ourselves

*Sara Murphy, Ph.D., FT,
Death Educator, Certified
Thanatologist and
Suicidologist*

Seminar: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

In recent years, terms like “work-life balance,” “self-care,” “compassion fatigue” and “burnout” have become more common, both in public and within funeral service. Funeral service professionals, however, often neglect their own stress, mental health and grief while supporting others. Given the high-stress nature of their work and the growing focus on self-care, it’s crucial to address barriers to work-life balance and validate the grief experiences of these professionals. In this session, Murphy will help attendees explore the impact of their grief on their work-life balance, validate their grief experiences, develop research-supported strategies for self-care, and break silences around disenfranchised grief to promote well-being in funeral service. Ultimately, this workshop encourages attendees to better serve others by first taking care of themselves.

\$225 NFDA members before August 14; \$245 after August 14; nonmember funeral directors \$285 by August 14; \$310 after August 14; \$100 mortuary students.





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Workshops

Sunday, October 26



**11:30 A.M. –
12:30 P.M.**

Business Operations
Delivering Superhero Service

*Hank Ebeling, Owner,
Superhero Service*

Marketing
Stop Selling Sadness

*Angela Human, Director of
Technology, Director's Corner;
Autumn Rothermel, Director of
Project Operations, Director's
Corner*

Professional Development
**Navigating the First Solo
Embalming: Bridging the
Gap for Apprentices**

*Damon de la Cruz, Ph.D.,
Director of Education, Frigid
Fluid Company*

Innovation and Technology
**Secrets From an Event
Planner's Playbook**

*Christina Andreola, Owner,
Principal Event Planner*



1:15 – 2:15 P.M.

Consumer Care
**Cremation... Let's Have a
Conversation**

*Andrew Hogan, Celebrant/
Learning and Development
Consultant*

Business Operations
**Mapping a Customer
Experience From Greeting
to Goodbye**

*Damon Wenig, Director
of Partner Marketing,
Homesteaders Life Company*

Professional Development
**Customer Experience
in the Age of "Leave Me
Alone"**

*Mary Delia Allen, Mary Delia
Events*

**Embalming and
Restorative Art**
**Color Theory & Airbrush
Cosmetics**

*Michelle Johnston, Owner,
Johnston Embalming &
Reconstructive Institute*

Consumer Care
**Honoring Our Nation's
Service Members'
Sacrifice: Past, Present
and Future**

*Trevor Dean, Program Analyst,
Casualty, Mortuary Affairs
and Military Funeral Honors,
Department of Defense*

2:30 – 3:30 P.M.

Consumer Care
**Death Education: Elevate
and Educate**

*Allison Danger Kathy
Middlebrook, Funeral
Director, Embalmer, Educator,
Podcaster, Arbor Memorial,
Inc.*

Disposition
**What Can be Done With
Cremated Remains?**

*Howard Sankel, President,
Options for Ashes, P.B.C.*

Compliance and Legal
**Navigating Advocacy
in 2025: Staying Ahead
in a Rapidly Changing
Washington, D.C.**

*Lesley Witter, Senior Vice
President, NFDA Advocacy*

Professional Development
**The History of Human
Remains in Museums**

*Stacy Drake, Ph.D., Collections
Manager & Helen Robbins,
Ph.D., Provenance Research
Director, Field Museum of
Natural History*

Professional Development
**Building Trust and
Connection: Crafting
Authentic Personal Brands
for Funeral Directors**

*Camelia L. Clarke, Owner and
Licensed Funereal Director,
Paradise Memorial Funeral
and Cremation Services*



Jake Johnson



Karen McCurdy



Fred Lappin



David Adams

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Bob Horn



Bill Cutter



David Ring



Robert Murray



Bob Ekins



*Johnson
Consulting
Group*



Jim Price

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Workshops

Monday, October 27

8 – 9 A.M.

Professional Development

Attract, Retain and Empower Your Workforce

Chris Meredith, COO, Cyrus Works

Consumer Care

The Power of Human Connection

Sherrie Dunlevy, Author and Speaker

Embalming and Restorative Art

The Value of Viewing – Marketta's Legacy

Amanda King, CFSP, MBIT, Bailey Family Funeral Home & Frigid Fluid Co.

Professional Development

Navigating Psychological Injury in the Funeral Profession

Michelle Clarke, Program Coordinator and Professor – Funeral Service Education, Humber College (Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning)

Consumer Care

Customer Loyalty: It's in the Details

Douglas Gober Jr., Partner, The Foresight Companies



2025 INNOVATION AWARD
The top finalists will help keep savvy funeral pros stay ahead of the pack!

Every year, NFDA grants its Innovation Award to the supplier that introduced the best new product/service since last year's convention. During Monday's Opening Session, we'll announce this year's top three finalists and present the winner with NFDA's Innovation Award.

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Workshops

Tuesday, October 28

8 – 9 A.M.

Business Operations
Outshine the Competition:
Thriving in a Market of
Low-Cost Competitors
Glenn Gould, Marketing
Consultant/Founder, MKJ
Marketing

Professional Development
Trust Catalyst: The Formula
for Building a High-Trust,
High-Impact Culture
Vitale Buford Hardin, CEO,
Vitale & Company

8 – 10 A.M.

Embalming and
Restorative Art
Timely Preservation:
Preparing Delayed Cases &
Long-term Holds
John T. Hill, Funeral Director,
James Funeral Home

Consumer Care
Disenfranchised Grief and
Contemporary Deathcare
Sara Murphy, Ph.D., FT,
Death Educator, Certified
Thanatologist, and Suicidologist

Business Operations
Inside the Mind of the
Consumer
Georganne Bender, Principal,
KIZER & BENDER Speaking

9:15 – 10:15 A.M.

Business Operations
Boost Profits, Reduce
Stress & Build a Happier
Team
Jeff Smith, President, Smith
Family Funeral Homes

Marketing
Discovering and Living
Your Personal Leadership
Brand
Autumn Way, Founder and CEO,
People Possibility

Professional Development
Surviving the “Life or
Death Gap”
Joseph Hileman, Cofounder/
Executive Vice President, Blue U
Defense, LLC

Professional Development
Trust Catalyst: The Formula
for Building a High-Trust,
High-Impact Culture
Vitale Buford Hardin, CEO,
Vitale & Company

Compliance and Legal
Funeral Rule Update
Chris Farmer, NFDA General
Counsel

CONVERSATION
CAFÉ
12:30 – 2 P.M.

Disposition
Conversation Café: Return
to Earth – Embracing the
Power of Natural Organic
Reduction
Mandy Stafford, Preplanning &
Partnerships Manager, Return
Home; Katey Houston, Director
of Family Care, Return Home;
Seth Viddal, Chief Operating
Officer, The Natural Funeral;
Pablo Metz, CEO and
Cofounder, Meine Erde



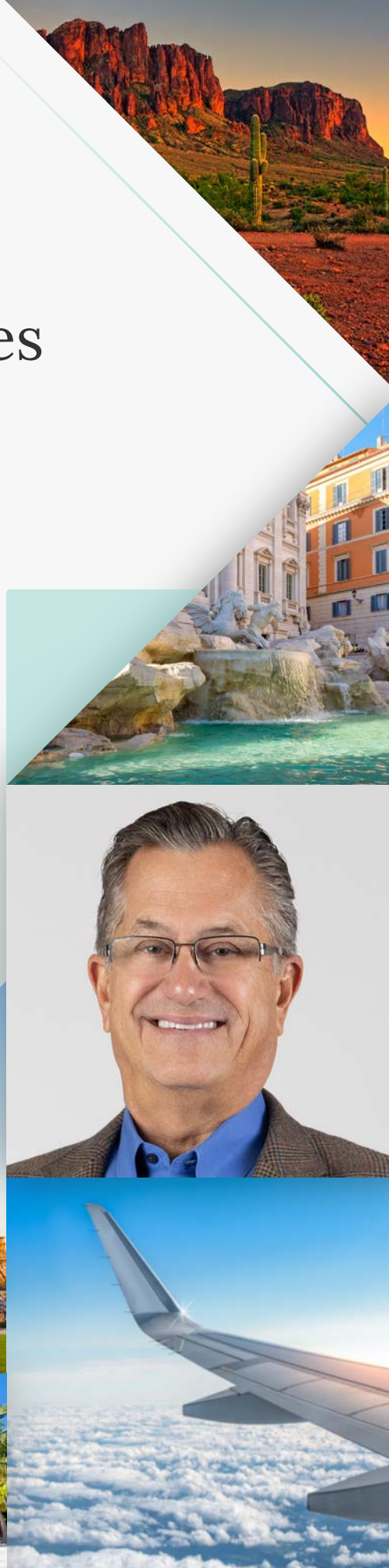
Do you offer your families *a travel protection plan?*

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families and answer with a resounding **YES!**

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Workshops

Wednesday, October 29

8 – 9 A.M.

Professional Development

Nurturing the New Licensee: The Importance of Mentoring

Anna F. Nesbit, CFSP, Owner, Soxman Funeral Homes, Ltd.

Consumer Care

Preserving Legacy: Why We Embalm

John T. Hill, Funeral Director, James Funeral Home

Innovation and Technology

Meeting Modern Expectations: Redefining the Consumer Experience

Devin Dardanes, Executive Vice President, Business Development, B+N Industries; Jenn Parvin, Chief Marketing Officer, Batesville; Sherri Hauer, Vice President, Products & Services, Forest Lawn

Marketing

When Words Matter Most: Effective Crisis Communication

Jessica Koth, Director of Public Relations, NFDA

Embalming and Restorative Art

Uncommon Injection Points

Alain Koninckx, Embalmer, Belgique Thanatopraxie



Special Events



25TH ANNUAL FUNERAL SERVICE FOUNDATION GOLF CLASSIC

Sunday, October 26
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Topgolf, Schaumburg, Illinois

Now in its 25th year, the Funeral Service Foundation's golf outing is on track to raise more than \$2 million (lifetime) in support of its mission of lifting up grieving communities by investing in people and programs that strengthen funeral service.

Help us celebrate the Golf Classic's milestone anniversary in a social, casual and exciting atmosphere at Topgolf! Little more than a half-hour ride from McCormick Place, you'll be able to take a swing and score points at Topgolf during our tournament-style golf games regardless of your skill level. You can also relax and enjoy great food and drinks while networking with your fellow funeral service professionals. And because each covered bay is climate controlled, you're guaranteed to play no matter what weather comes our way this October.

Cost per player is \$350. Registration includes transportation, tournament fees, food and beverages, golf clubs, four hours of play in reserved bays, and a golf pro and tournament ambassadors to help the day's play run smoothly.

Want to support the Foundation, but golf isn't your game? Simply join as a spectator! Your \$200 registration fee allows you to experience all of the networking, food and drinks, and excitement of the day without the pressure to step up to the bay and take a shot. Visit FuneralServiceFoundation.org/golf to register and learn more!



**FUNERAL SERVICE
FOUNDATION**

About the Funeral Service Foundation: The Foundation awards a variety of academic and professional-development scholarships, offers free professional and community resources, and makes grants to organizations that advance its mission of lifting up grieving communities by investing in people and programs that strengthen funeral service. Visit the Foundation's booth to learn about scholarships and resources that support every stage of your career, and how you can make a gift that will impact the profession.

National Funeral Directors Association

13625 Bishop's Drive
Brookfield, WI 53005

NFDA



Special Events

WELCOME PARTY

Sunday, October 26

6 – 8 p.m.

**House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn Street,
Chicago**

Get ready for an unforgettable night as NFDA kicks off its 2025 International Convention & Expo at the House of Blues Chicago! Upon stepping into the iconic venue, you will be greeted by its signature blend of Southern charm and rock 'n' roll spirit. Enjoy complimentary small bites and dynamic entertainment while you mix and mingle with other attendees from across the globe. Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to celebrate, connect and experience a night of music and camaraderie in one of Chicago's most iconic venues!

Sponsored by



ALL-STAR RECOGNITION CEREMONY

Monday, October 27

4 – 5 p.m.

Join the NFDA Board of Directors as the association honors the dedication, innovation and achievements of outstanding funeral service professionals. This special event shines a spotlight on individuals and firms who have demonstrated excellence in their field during the past year, including:

- 2025 NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award recipients
- NFDA Green Funeral Practice certificate holders
- NFDA Cremation Certification designees
- NFDA Certified Preplanning Consultant designees
- Funeral Service Foundation scholarship recipients
- 2024-25 NFDA National Emerging Leaders Program participants
- 2025 Meet the Mentors program participants
- 2025 NFDA Inspiration Award recipient
- NFDA International Professional Achievement certificate holders
- Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice Certified Funeral Service Practitioners

Celebrate the passion and commitment that elevates your profession – don't miss this inspiring event!



SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Tuesday, October 28

11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Chicago, widely celebrated as the birthplace of gospel music, has long been a beacon of spiritual and cultural expression. From the early 20th-century sounds of Thomas A. Dorsey to the vibrant choirs that still fill its churches today, the city's influence on the genre is both historic and enduring. Please join the Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Choir to rejoice and celebrate the lives of funeral professionals and their loved ones who have died this past year.

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Messenger



Thumbsies



FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS – YOUNG AND NEW*

Tuesday, October 28

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Lucky Strike Chicago, 322 E. Illinois Street,
Chicago**

Join us for an exclusive event geared toward young and new professionals at Lucky Strike Chicago, where networking meets next-level fun! Enjoy six private bowling lanes, arcade games, billiards, appetizers and cocktails in a vibrant, high-energy setting. Whether you're landing strikes on the lanes, dominating the arcade, or just enjoying great company, this is the ultimate way to mix business with pleasure.

* Ticketed event. Must be at least 21 to attend. Advanced registration is strongly advised.

The NFDA Expo

The world's largest funeral service exposition is an adventure in itself! Leading suppliers will offer the latest products and services – along with exclusive offers – in the NFDA Expo Hall.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 12 – 5 P.M.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 12 – 5 P.M.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 9 A.M. – 12 P.M.

NFDA-Endorsed Providers

How much time do you spend researching companies to get the best deal on products and services? How do you know which companies are worthy of your trust? NFDA takes the guesswork out of many of your decision-making challenges by vetting a select group of businesses that provide solid offers without unwanted surprises. See all that's available to you at the NFDA Expo.

NFDA Funeral Career Center

Whether you're a student preparing for the next step in your funeral service journey, or the owner/manager of a firm seeking to hire the best and the brightest, discover resources and get connected at NFDA's Funeral Career Center. The Center is conveniently located on the NFDA Expo Hall floor. It's so much more than a job board!

NFDA Publications

NFDA strives to keep you informed, so please help keep us informed, too. Chat with the staff of *The Director*, *Memorial Business Journal* and *The Director.edu* about topics important to you and your business; pick up free copies of *The Director*; or ask us about *The Director* app, available exclusively for NFDA members.

A Brush With Death

Listen in as Gabe Schauf, host of NFDA's "A Brush With Death" podcast, interviews guests about the future of the funeral service profession. Catch these episodes live in the NFDA Lounge! Who knows, he might even invite you to sit down for a conversation.

NEW!

Restorative Art Technical Showcase

Watch contestants battle it out in NFDA's first-ever, restorative arts competition. Each competitor will display their skills, knowledge and talent to restore form and natural appearance to model heads with simulated trauma. All work will be performed in front of a live audience and a panel of expert judges, who will discuss the restorative process and offer critiques and suggestions throughout. Acclaim and prizes are on the line.

Remembering A Life

NFDA is the only funeral service association with a comprehensive consumer-education initiative, and most Remembering A Life resources are free to NFDA members. If you're looking for new content about the value of a funeral to share with families, visit the Remembering A Life booth. While you're there, pick up our free idea guides!

NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Program

Stop by to celebrate the 2025 honorees and discover the innovative ways they're elevating funeral service. Get inspired by their commitment to serving families and communities, and start your own journey toward this prestigious recognition.

Register for the 2026 program year during the NFDA Convention and take advantage of an exclusive, attendee-only discount.



Funeral Face-off

It's the ultimate funeral service trivia challenge. Three-person teams will compete against each other during preliminary rounds this summer, but then the action heats up on the Expo Hall floor during the Wild Card and Championship rounds. Who will walk away as champions? Participate or cheer on the teams at this year's convention to find out!

Sponsored by



GET MORE FROM THE FLOOR

The Expo Hall will be packed with game-changing ideas, must-see innovations — and enough free swag to fill Wrigley Field.

Check out our amazing exhibitors at NFDA.org/MapMyShow.

And while you're there, create an account with My Show Planner to plan your route with the interactive floor plan.

**2025 NFDA International
Convention & Expo
Chicago • October 26-29**



NFDA

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NFDA.org/Convention • 800-228-6332



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**FUNERAL SERVICE
FOUNDATION**

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS:

VALUE: \$2,500-\$5,000

Applications accepted Feb. 15-April 1 & Sept. 15-Nov. 1

School's tough enough. Let us help you pay for it! Paid directly to your institution, scholarships cover costs associated with tuition, fees, books, and supplies.

Do you meet each of these eligibility requirements? Are you...

- ✓ Enrolled in an ABFSE- or Canadian accredited funeral service program?
- ✓ In good academic and financial standing with your institution?
- ✓ Currently attending classes in person or online?
- ✓ Able to accept a financial award?

APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS IS EASY!



Simply answer several short essay questions and upload a brief video. If you're applying for an academic scholarship, you must also submit transcripts and other supporting documents.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

VALUE: UP TO \$2,500

Application deadlines and eligibility criteria vary

Apply for a scholarship to attend some of the profession's leading educational opportunities! Scholarships cover registration fees, hotel stay, and up to \$500 in travel reimbursement.



**Certified Celebrant Training
Scholarships**



**CANA Cremation Innovation
Convention Scholarships**



**NFDMA National Convention
and Exposition Scholarships**



**David C. Baue
NFDA Professional Women's
Conference Scholarships**



**NFDA International
Convention & Expo
Scholarships**



The Foundation also supports NFDA's Meet the Mentors, Embalming & Restorative Arts Seminar, and National Emerging Leaders Programs. Learn more at NFDA.org.

LEARN MORE AND APPLY ONLINE AT FUNERALSERVICEFOUNDATION.ORG



877-402-5900



HELLO@FUNERALSERVICEFOUNDATION.ORG



NFDA Central

LOCATED IN THE NORTH HALL, GRAND CONCOURSE LOBBY, LEVEL 3

Visit NFDA Central to discover everything you need to achieve more in your business, community and life. And don't miss the mouthwatering cookies on Monday, October 27!

NFDA Membership

If you're not already an NFDA member, this is the perfect time to join the world's largest funeral service association. Discover how NFDA can provide you with the resources you need, when you need them, to help you and your firm adapt and grow in the future. And if you are an NFDA member, then stop by to renew your membership and/or your music/webcasting license. Plus, receive a free gift when you renew your NFDA firm membership.

NFDA Store

Looking for a perfect gift for the families you serve, or resources that will help you become more successful in work and life? The NFDA Store offers convenient, one-stop shopping for all the resources you need, including books, community-outreach materials, NFDA merchandise and Remembering A Life items.

Funeral Service Foundation

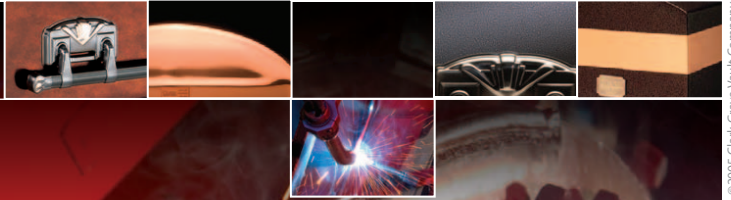
The Foundation awards a variety of academic and professional-development scholarships, offers free professional and community resources, and makes grants to organizations that advance its mission of investing in people and programs to strengthen funeral service and lift up grieving communities. Visit the Foundation's booth (just outside the Expo Hall) to learn about scholarships and resources that support every stage of your career, and how you can make a gift that will impact the profession.

NFDA Rejuvenation Station

Don't overlook burnout warning signs that can harm your health. NFDA has a free program that offers counseling, coaching and resources to help balance life's challenges. Visit NFDA Central on Sunday and Monday for more details and treat yourself to a complimentary massage as a part of your journey toward a healthier, more balanced you.



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HOUSING IS NOW OPEN!

The NFDA International Convention & Expo is an excellent opportunity to learn from colleagues across the country and the world to assist your business and community in serving families.

*Joshua J. Meyer,
NFDA convention attendee*

TOP 4 REASONS TO USE MARITZ GLOBAL TO BOOK YOUR CONVENTION HOTEL

- 1. Maritz lets you easily and reliably compare hotel prices/locations for Chicago hotels.**
Maritz Global Events is the official hotel provider for the 2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo. While reservations made elsewhere might seem like a good option, they might be illegitimate and not actually have the rooms to sell; impose unreasonable cancellation or change penalties; or be completely non-refundable. Get the best rate at the hotel of your choice through Maritz Global Events!
- 2. Stay in the heart of the city.** NFDA's room block lets you experience the culture and vibrancy of Chicago.
- 3. Stay where your friends and colleagues stay.**
When you book your hotel through Maritz Global Events, you'll know you're staying where your colleagues are staying because they're using Maritz, too! Connect in the morning for coffee as you plan your day before heading to the McCormick Place Convention Center.
- 4. Enjoy a simple, online booking process.** Rest assured that Maritz Global Events' friendly and knowledgeable staff are prepared to assist you with all your hotel needs. After all, you're here to do business, network, learn and relax, so the last thing you need is a hotel headache. Let Maritz take care of you.



2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo Registration Form

Chicago, IL • October 26-29, 2025

NFDA.org/Convention • 800-228-6332 or 262-789-1880

**Must be Received by
Oct. 16, 2025**

Firm _____ Address _____

City/State/Postal Code _____ Country _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Registrant Name _____ Badge Name _____ NFDA ID # _____

Email _____ ☐ Opt-out from vendor emails Cell (used for onsite updates) _____

Unique email required for confirmation, badge printing and event app

License #/State _____ License #/State _____ Academy # _____

Registrant Name _____ Badge Name _____ NFDA ID # _____

Email _____ ☐ Opt-out from vendor emails Cell (used for onsite updates) _____

Unique email required for confirmation, badge printing and event app

Please list any special accommodations needed _____

Is this your first NFDA Convention? ☐ Yes ☐ No

		Full Access 1st Registrant	Additional Registrant	Expo Plus	Student	Expo Only
Workshops		✓	✓	—	No CE	—
Monday Opening Session		✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Monday All-star Recognition Ceremony		✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Tuesday Service of Remembrance		✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Wednesday Closing Session		✓	✓	—	✓	—
Expo Hall (three days)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sunday Welcome Party		✓	✓	✓	✓	—
NFDA Member Fee Early Bird (On or Before 8/14/25)		\$695	\$365	\$310	\$75	\$225
Standard (After 8/14/25)		\$795	\$385	\$360	\$85	\$240
Nonmember Fee Early Bird (On or Before 8/14/25)		\$995	\$465	\$415	\$95	\$390
Standard (After 8/14/25)		\$1,095	\$485	\$465	\$105	\$405
Total for Your Selection		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Extras		Early (On/ Before 8/14)		Standard (After 8/14)	Quantity	Total
Sunday: Enhancing Open Casket Viewings: Techniques for Serving Trauma Cases*		Member	\$225	\$245		\$
		Nonmember	\$285	\$310		\$
Sunday: Caring for Ourselves*		Member	\$225	\$245		\$
		Nonmember	\$285	\$310		\$
Tuesday: Funeral Professionals - Young and New			\$75	\$125		\$
Total for Your Extras					\$	
Contributions						Total
Please accept my NFDA Political Action Committee Contribution (Voluntary)					\$	
Grand Total			\$			

Group Discounts:

Call 800-228-6332 or 262-789-1880 for groups of five or more from the same firm.

Preconvention Seminars:

Visit nfda.org/preconvention or call 800-228-6332 or 262-789-1880 for Certified Celebrant Training, Arranger Training and Cremation Certification.

Suppliers/ Distributors:

Contact Business Development at lkarlik@nfda.org or 800-228-6332.

*Mortuary students:
please call for pricing

Method of Payment: A 3% credit card fee may be assessed on all applicable credit card transactions, governed by the card brand rules.

☐ Check (U.S. dollars drawn on U.S. bank) payable to NFDA, 13625 Bishop's Drive, Brookfield, WI 53005-6607

☐ Credit Card: Fax to 262-789-6977 or call your personal NFDA member services representative at 800-228-6332 or 262-789-1880.

☐ Amex ☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ Discover Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____ CVV _____

Name on Card (please print) _____

Cardholder's Signature _____

Cancellations for the 2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo registration and/or special events must be received in writing and faxed or postmarked on or before October 16, 2025, to receive a full refund. Cancellations received after October 16, 2025, and before October 23, 2025, will be refunded the registration fee minus a \$100 cancellation fee; special event fees/tickets will not be refunded. Cancellations received on or after October 23, 2025, and no-shows will not receive a refund. Telephone requests must be followed up in writing.



2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo Registration Form

Chicago, IL • October 26-29, 2025

NFDA.org/Convention • 800-228-6332 or 262-789-1880

Ways to Register

- **Online:** [NFDA.org/Convention](https://nfda.org/Convention)
- **Email form to:** nfda@nfda.org
- **Fax form to:** 262-789-6977
- **Mail form to:** NFDA, 13625 Bishop's Dr., Brookfield, WI 53005-6607
- **Call:** 800-228-6332 or 262-789-1880

Filling Out the Form

- Print clearly.
- Include preferred name to be printed on badge (if desired).
- **Provide unique email address for each person (used for confirmation and event app).**
- Provide cell phone number (needed for onsite updates).

Convention Discounts for Groups of 5 or More

You must call to get discounts. First registrant pays full price. Discounts good for additional registrants. Students, apprentices and youth do not count as part of the group. Expo Only or Expo Plus registrations (paid or free) do not count as part of group.

Groups of 5-9 receive a \$25 discount on each additional registrant. Groups of 10 or more receive a \$50 discount on each additional registrant.

Offer valid until September 22, 2025.

What Happens Next?

- Registration confirmation: If you do not receive an email confirmation within two weeks of submitting your registration, call NFDA at 800-228-6332.
- Closer to the event, you will receive emails with additional information.
- When you arrive at the convention, print your badge at a self-serve kiosk at the NFDA Registration area.

Health Advisory

Please see [NFDA.org/Health-Advisory](https://nfda.org/Health-Advisory) for the current information.

Policies

NFDA Cancellation Policy: NFDA reserves the right to cancel the convention due to circumstances beyond its control. Should circumstances arise that result in the postponement of the convention, registrants will receive a full refund. NFDA's liability for any cancellation is limited to a refund of the registration fee and shall not extend to any other claims, including, but not limited to: travel expenses, cancellation fees, lost wages, inconvenience and other related costs.

Attendee Behavior: NFDA reserves the right to remove any attendee if their actions are deemed by NFDA, at its sole discretion, to be dangerous, inappropriate, violates NFDA's policies, or is disruptive to other attendees.

Replacement (Lost) Badges: NFDA convention badges must be worn at all times. If you lose or forget your badge, a replacement badge can be purchased for a \$70 USD fee at the NFDA Registration Desk. If you find a badge, please return it to the NFDA Registration Desk. An NFDA International Convention & Expo badge is required at all NFDA events.

Vendor Email Policy: Exhibitors receive pre- and post-convention lists. Those using lead-retrieval equipment receive a list of the attendees whose badges they scan in the Expo Hall. If you do not want your email address provided on these lists, please check the box labeled "Opt-out from vendor emails" on the registration form, or contact your member services representative at 800-228-6332.

Photography/Videography Policy: By registering for this event, you authorize and grant NFDA and its contractors the right to record your image, voice, and likeness, and your artwork or written work, on video, film, photograph, digital media, or in any other form of electronic or print medium, and to edit, use, and reproduce such media at its discretion.

You are not permitted to take photos/videos of any booths or products without permission from that exhibitor.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA): NFDA only uses facilities that are in compliance with the ADA. If you require special assistance while attending the convention, please visit the NFDA Registration Desk.

NFDA Political Action Committee (PAC) Contribution

(voluntary): Contributions or gifts to NFDA PAC are not tax deductible and are limited by federal law to \$5,000 per person, per year. In accordance with federal law, contributions are strictly voluntary and not a condition of NFDA membership. All personal contributions to NFDA PAC are used in support of candidates for federal office. Corporate contributions cannot be used in support of candidates for federal office and are attributed to NFDA's Political Education Fund (PEF).

Note: Companies scheduled to exhibit at the NFDA Expo and their booth assignments, all workshops/presenters, and all events are subject to change.

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