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NFDA Meet the Mentors Returns in 2026 to Inspire and Prepare the Profession's Rising Leaders

NFDA is now accepting entries for its transformational Meet the Mentors program.

Brookfield, Wis. – The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is pleased to announce that the [2026 Meet the Mentors](#) program will take place April 14-17, 2026, in Washington, D.C. This signature NFDA experience, which is held in conjunction with NFDA's annual Advocacy Summit, offers early-career funeral professionals an unparalleled opportunity to learn directly from celebrated leaders and engage in advocacy on behalf of the funeral service profession.

Since its debut in 2011, Meet the Mentors has been fully funded and supported by the Funeral Service Foundation, whose steadfast commitment has enabled more than a decade of transformative mentorship, learning and leadership development. The Funeral Service Foundation covers the registration fees for Meet the Mentors and the Advocacy Summit, three nights of lodging, and a \$500 travel reimbursement stipend for selected participants. This generous support ensures the program remains accessible to the profession's next generation of leaders.

"For 15 years, Meet the Mentors has offered emerging funeral service professionals a rare opportunity to learn directly from leaders who generously share their experience, wisdom and perspective," said Sara Moss, MS, FT, LFD, NFDA Associate Director of Education. "This program consistently helps participants build confidence, strengthen their skills and fosters a sense of purpose that supports them throughout their careers."

The 2026 Meet the Mentors program will bring together 25 NFDA-member participants – funeral directors and embalmers aged 40 and under, or within their first five years of licensure in the profession – to learn from a distinguished group of mentors who are recognized for their leadership, dedication and impact on the funeral service profession.

NFDA is finalizing this year's mentor panel and will announce the selected mentors very soon. As in past years, participants can expect to learn from accomplished professionals representing a range of backgrounds, specialties and experiences. These mentors will share candid insights about career development, leadership and the evolving landscape of funeral service, offering invaluable guidance to those at the beginning of their professional journeys.

Participants have high praise for NFDA's Meet the Mentors program. "NFDA's Meet the Mentors Program was an incredible experience," said one 2025 participant. "I gained valuable knowledge and insights that I will be able to use throughout my career. I would highly recommend the program to all newly licensed professionals."

In addition to presentations by the mentors, small-group roundtable discussions will enable participants to ask questions, explore career pathways and receive actionable advice they can take home immediately. Many mentees cite these conversations as some of the most meaningful moments of their professional lives.

One 2025 participant noted, “The roundtables were my favorite part of this experience. It was really great to sit down and ask questions [of] each presenter and be able to have them share their experience on a more personal level.”

Advocacy in Action

An exciting component of Meet the Mentors is the opportunity to participate in the [2026 NFDA Advocacy Summit](#). Participants will join experienced colleagues for a full day on Capitol Hill, meeting with members of Congress to discuss federal issues impacting funeral service. By sharing their stories during these meetings, mentees will help federal legislators understand how their decisions affect, not just funeral professionals, but also grieving families.

“I enjoyed the Congressional meetings so much and am looking forward to attending the Advocacy Summit again,” a 2025 mentee noted. “I was surprised how much I truly enjoyed doing this!”

How to Apply

Prospective participants can enter for their chance to participate in the 2026 Meet the Mentors through 11:59 p.m. CT on January 12, 2026.

Thanks to the exclusive support of the Funeral Service Foundation, the program award covers registration fees for the Meet the Mentors program and Advocacy Summit, three nights of lodging and a \$500 travel reimbursement stipend.

Eligible applicants must be licensed funeral directors or embalmers who are NFDA members and either 40 years old or younger, or within their first five years of licensure in the funeral service profession.

For complete details and to apply, visit [NFDA.org/Mentors](https://www.nfda.org/Mentors). For questions, call NFDA at 262-789-1880.

Selected participants will be announced in February 2026.

NFDA is the world’s leading and largest funeral service association, serving 20,000 individual members who represent nearly 11,000 funeral homes in the United States and 49 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. NFDA is the association of choice because it offers funeral professionals comprehensive educational resources, tools to manage successful businesses, guidance to become pillars in their communities and the expertise to foster future generations of funeral professionals. NFDA is headquartered in Brookfield, Wis., and has an office in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.nfda.org.

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