



Indiana Funeral Directors Association

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Award of Excellence

SUBMISSION DUE DATE APRIL 17, 2026

The **IFDA Award of Excellence** was established to recognize those firms that have not only adopted excellence as their standard of service, but that can document their efforts to prove that they are the best of the best.

It pays tribute to those who accept the challenge to do more than talk about excellence, but who can show that they are setting and maintaining the highest professional standards in the areas of compliance, community involvement, professional development, and family service.

The standards are high, as they should be, but they are designed to be achievable by any size firm with any size budget. The award can and should involve every member of the firm, not just the owner. In fact, firms are encouraged to show how their employees are involved in the various activities that contribute to the firm's pursuit of excellence.

Firms document their efforts by means of a scrap book or notebook that can be displayed at the IFDA convention. The completed entries will serve as encouragement to other firms to join the Award of Excellence Program. More importantly however, it will set your firm apart in your community. You will give families a tangible reason to select your firm.

The program consists of 5 categories of activities. Some items within these categories are required. Other categories allow the firm to choose a certain number of items to be completed from a list of options.

The award year runs from January 1 to December 31. Entries must be received by the IFDA office by April 17, 2026. An independent committee will judge all entries for compliance with the requirements and certify that the firm has earned the award. The Award of Excellence is *not* a competition. Any firm that completes and documents the requirements will receive the Award of Excellence. Awards will be presented at the annual IFDA convention.

As a recipient of the honor, the firm will be recognized at the IFDA convention and will receive a handsome sculpture commemorating their achievement. They may designate a person to receive the award or choose to accept it as a group. IFDA will provide a photograph of the presentation and also assist the firm in crafting a press release for local media.

Recipients of the award are challenged to recertify the next year through continued activities and the initiation of new activities. To continue to receive the recognition, funeral homes must re-enter and re-certify each year.

To begin, complete the short application form informing us of your intention to participate. This can be done any time during the year.

CRITERIA TO QUALIFY FOR THE IFDA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

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I. Basic Requirements- Both are required

- A. Firm must be a member of IFDA to apply for and to receive award
- B. Provide a written history of your firm

II. Compliance

- A. Management letter pledging compliance with all applicable state and federal laws governing the practice of funeral service. *Plus the following specifically:*
- B. FTC- Must include statement or proof of the following:¹
 - 1. Outside review of documents (NFDA, IFDA, private attorney, etc.)
- C. OSHA- Must include statement or proof of all of the following:
 - 1. Compliance documents are current
 - 2. MSDS maintained and current
 - 3. Staff has received required initial and annual training as applicable
 - 4. All covered staff offered required HBV immunization
- D. ADA- Must include statement or proof of at least 1 of the following
 - 1. Efforts to make building more accessible for the handicapped
 - 2. Efforts to accommodate handicapped employee or applicant
- E. Employee practices- Must include statement or proof of all of the following:²
 - 1. Compliance with wage and hour law addressing exempt/vs non-exempt employees, overtime, and on-call hours
 - 2. Implementation of non-discrimination policy and practices
 - 3. Implementation of sexual harassment policy and practices

III. Professional Development- Must include statement or proof of all of the following:

- A. All licensed staff participation in continuing education in excess of 10 hours every two years.³
- B. Staff or firm participation in at least 4 of the following:⁴
 - 1. All licensed staff attendance at least one IFDA or national professional organization program/event each year.⁵
 - 2. Maintain membership in a national funeral service association⁶
 - 3. Serve as a mentor to an intern
 - 4. Earn or maintain CFSP or CPC designation
 - 5. Earn or maintain coroner's certification or crematory operator certification
 - 6. Become an Isaac Ball Fellow or contribute to the Indiana Funeral Education Foundation
 - 7. Complete a college level course related to improving work skills⁷

¹ Proof, as used throughout this program, might include a receipt, a copy of a document, newspaper clippings, or photos. When this is not possible or applicable, a statement and explanation by management will suffice.

² One way to show compliance in this area would be to include the index page(s) from your employee handbook showing that it contains these items. Number 1 would require a narrative detailing compliance.

³ Excellence means exceeding the minimum requirements for licensure required by the state.

⁴ Complete A, then select any four from the B list. Four separate items must be accomplished. If all staff members accomplish #1, this counts as one item. Two college courses (#7) count as only one item.

⁵ IFDA Convention, Mid-Winter, District meetings, special seminars, Preneed 101, etc. Also see note #6

⁶ This would include NFDA, IOGR, CANA, ICCFA, etc.

⁷ This could include an accounting course, a business computer course, or a psychology course, among others.

8. Hold IFDA board/committee position or one in a professional organization ⁸
9. Financially support the IFDA legislative fund or contribute to a national professional organization's PAC fund.
10. Serve on the Indiana State Board of Funeral and Cemetery Service
11. Present a seminar at a professional meeting ⁹
12. Write an article for a trade publication or newsletter
13. Make a presentation to a funeral service school or donate to their library
14. Attend technical seminar (Fountain National Academy, Dodge seminar, etc.)
15. Describe some other professional development activity ¹⁰

IV. Community Involvement- Must include statement or proof of any 4 of the following

- A. Membership and active participation in a service club ¹¹
- B. Membership and active participation in a fraternal organization ¹²
- C. Serve as officer, board member, or committee member of community organization ¹³
- D. Actively participate in a community project ¹⁴
- E. Sponsor a youth sports team or other community activity
- F. Donate funeral related media materials to a local library
- G. Speak before a community or civic group on a funeral related topic
- H. Participate in a high school or college career day
- I. Participate in a job fair
- J. Speak to a high school or college class about funeral service
- K. Sponsor a tour of the funeral home for a community or civic group
- L. Describe an additional way you are involved in your community ¹⁵

V. Family Service and Grief Support- Must include statement or proof of any 4 of the following:

- A. Host a special event memorial service (Memorial Day, Christmas, etc.)
- B. Use a family follow-up survey to gauge family satisfaction and improve services
- C. Host a support group
- D. Provide an aftercare program
- E. Support or participate in a hospice care program
- F. Establish and maintain a lending library of grief support materials
- G. Sponsor a clergy seminar or grief caregiver seminar
- H. Sponsor a grief seminar for survivors
- I. Sponsor an outing or other social event for widows/widowers or similar group
- J. Describe an innovative family service or support program you provide ¹⁶

⁸ See note #6

⁹ See note #6

¹⁰ Anything to better yourself as a funeral director or a contribution to the betterment of funeral service qualifies.

¹¹ Service Clubs include Rotary, Kiwanis, etc. Active participation means proof of regular attendance and/or other activities.

¹² Fraternal organizations include the Masonic Orders, Elks, Moose, etc. Active participation means regular attendance at meetings and/or other activities.

¹³ Community organizations include city council, school board, library board, museum board, charities, etc.

¹⁴ A community project might include a community clean-up day, festival, feeding the homeless on Thanksgiving, or other activity with hands-on participation.

¹⁵ There are countless ways to give back to your community. Highlight one here.

¹⁶ Here's your chance to spotlight something unique and innovative you are doing in this area.

Additional information and tips:

Your book might be as simple as a three-ring binder or be a handcrafted scrapbook. If you have a scrapbooker on staff this might be an excellent project for them. One way to create colorful and illustrative pages for your book would be to do a PowerPoint presentation - complete with photos and then printing off the slides on a color printer. You can be creative and use color and pictures to tell your story. At the same time, the entry does not have to be a time-consuming masterpiece. You are also free to tell your story very simply and plainly.

Each page or entry should have a reference back to the item you are complying with. For instance, if you are showing that a staff member has earned their CFSP, that page or entry should refer to III-B-4. You might include a copy of their certificate and their photo—maybe when they were presented with their certification. Review your entry carefully before you submit it. If anything is missing or incomplete, you will not have an opportunity to correct it after it is submitted. You will have to submit an entry each year to receive the award annually.

This award is not just for owners. You are encouraged to document the activities of staff members as well. Show their participation in community and professional activities.

Your entry will be returned to you after display at the convention. You may want to display it, along with your award, in your funeral home.

Feel free to contact IFDA with any questions.

Award of Excellence

Application and Notification of Participation

SUBMISSION DUE DATE APRIL 17, 2026

Date _____

Name of Firm* _____

Name of Owner _____

Coordinator of award activities (contact person) _____

Address _____

City _____ IN Zip _____ Phone _____

* One award given per entry. Multiple location firms can receive award as a firm or apply as individual locations.



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