

Building Momentum: From Foundation to Future

2027 OFDA Convention & Exhibition | Speaker Planning Guide

THE 2027 THEME

Funeral service is built on a strong foundation of compassion, service and tradition. As family needs evolve, technology advances and expectations change, OFDA seeks presentations that help professionals learn from the past, strengthen what works today, and build momentum through collaboration, innovation and leadership.

We are looking for practical, forward-thinking ideas that strengthen service to families and move the profession confidently into the future.

OUR AUDIENCE

Apprentices • New licensees • Experienced practitioners • Managers • Owners • Industry leaders

WHAT OFDA MEMBERS WANT TO LEARN

1. Funeral Law, Ethics & Compliance The most consistently requested area across OFDA audiences. • Ohio laws, rules and vital records • FTC, OSHA, ethics and risk management • Prened, Medicaid, probate and estates • Right of disposition and family disputes	2. Embalming, Restorative Art & Technical Excellence Members value real, technical instruction—especially hands-on learning. • Advanced embalming and difficult cases • Restorative art and facial reconstruction • Cosmetics, color theory and chemicals • Demonstrations, labs and case studies
3. Leadership, Business & Workforce Development Attendees want stronger leaders, healthier teams and future-ready firms. • Leadership and communication • Recruitment, retention and culture • Operations, finance and strategy • Ownership and succession planning	4. Mental Health, Grief & Family Care Education should support both grieving families and funeral professionals. • Compassion fatigue and burnout • Trauma-informed care • Grief, suicide loss and difficult deaths • Community support resources
5. Cremation, Alternative Disposition & Trends Members seek practical preparation for changing consumer preferences. • Cremation arrangements and experiences • Green burial and alkaline hydrolysis • Pet cremation and personalization • Consumer trends and future practices	6. Technology & Innovation Funeral professionals want tools that improve service, communication and efficiency. • Artificial intelligence and automation • Digital and online arrangements • Technology for small funeral homes • Marketing, memorialization and outreach
7. Cultural Competency & Diverse Communities Ohio professionals increasingly serve families with varied traditions. • Religious customs and funeral traditions • Inclusive funeral practices • Cultural awareness and communication • Serving diverse communities confidently	8. Safety, Standards & Operational Excellence Practical operational education remains essential. • Employee safety and OSHA practices • Arrangement conference skills • Professional and phone communication • Risk reduction and daily operations

Additional interests include military and veteran services, affordable service options, creative personalization, funeral service history, and small-firm sustainability.

CURRENT OHIO CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

1 HOUR Ethics Professional integrity, conduct, family interactions and ethical decision-making.	1 HOUR Prened Ethics Principles Consumer protection, transparency and ethical principles related to preneed arrangements.	2 HOURS Laws & Rules Current laws, regulations and compliance issues affecting funeral directing, embalming and cremation.	14 HOURS General Content Maximum elective content within the 18-hour biennial requirement.
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Ohio licensees complete 18 CE hours every two years; at least six hours must be in-person, face-to-face and open to all licensees. OFDA especially welcomes proposals that clearly align with a mandatory topic. All programs must be educational, noncommercial and are subject to Board approval.



Build a Session That Moves the Profession Forward

Strong proposals connect funeral service’s established foundation with useful ideas, current relevance and a clear path forward.

MAKE IT PRACTICAL • Give attendees ideas they can use immediately. • Provide tools, resources, templates or clear next steps. • Connect concepts to funeral home realities.	MAKE IT RELEVANT • Use current, well-researched information. • Include Ohio-specific context when appropriate. • Address real challenges across career stages and firm sizes.	MAKE IT FORWARD-LOOKING • Connect established values with emerging needs. • Address innovation, collaboration or leadership. • Leave attendees ready to take the next practical step.
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CHOOSE THE RIGHT FORMAT

PROGRAM FORMAT NOTE: Convention sessions typically serve larger audiences and are best suited to engaging presentations, case studies, panels and audience Q&A. Highly interactive workshops, hands-on demonstrations, roundtables and skill-building labs are more likely to be considered as stand-alone programs hosted at the OFDA office.

Interactive workshops Practice skills and solve problems together.	Hands-on demonstrations Show a process, technique or technical application.	Case-study sessions Analyze realistic situations and decisions.	Panel discussions Bring multiple perspectives to a complex issue.
Roundtables Encourage peer learning and shared solutions.	Audience Q&A Create space for direct, practical guidance.	Skill-building exercises Let participants apply concepts during the session.	Collaborative learning Use discussion, scenarios or small-group work.

MEMBERS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

<i>“Laws, laws, laws.”</i>	<i>“Restorative arts—more hands-on labs.”</i>	<i>“Self care for the funeral director.”</i>
<i>“How to use technology in funeral service.”</i>	<i>“Current/upcoming green funeral options.”</i>	<i>“Navigating the first few years after apprenticeship.”</i>

A STRONG PROPOSAL SHOULD ANSWER

What will attendees learn? Define clear, specific learning outcomes. How does it build momentum? Connect a trusted foundation to a present or future professional need. Why does it matter now? Show the relevance to today’s families, firms or workforce.	Which setting fits best? Identify whether the idea suits a convention session or stand-alone office program. Does it meet a required CE topic? Clearly identify Ethics, Preneed Ethics Principles or Laws & Rules when applicable. What will attendees take home? Provide practical resources, actions or tools.
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HAVE AN IDEA THAT CAN BUILD MOMENTUM?

These priorities reflect members’ strongest interests, but they are not limits. OFDA welcomes fresh perspectives, emerging issues, research and new approaches that honor the profession’s foundation while helping funeral professionals serve families, strengthen their businesses and prepare for the future.

Build on the foundation. Create momentum. Strengthen the future.