

Funeral Director

Look after families on the worst week of their lives, and handle everything they cannot.

TYPICAL PAY

\$55,010

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$33k to \$89k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Funeral homes, crematories,
cemeteries, family-owned busine...**

How you get there

- 1 Finish high school** Grade 12
 Biology, chemistry and English. Any part-time work dealing with the public helps more than you would think.
- 2 Mortuary science degree** 2 years, sometimes 4
 An associate degree from a program accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Anatomy, embalming, restorative art, funeral law, grief counseling and small business. Several programs run at a distance with on-campus lab blocks.
- 3 Pass the National Board Examination** Near the end of school
 The national exam from the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, in two parts: arts and sciences. Nearly every state requires it.
- 4 Apprenticeship** 1 to 2 years
 One to two years working under a licensed director, with a set number of funerals and embalmings recorded and signed off.
- 5 State license** Year 3 to year 5
 Pass your state's law exam, file your paperwork and get licensed. Then keep up continuing education every renewal.

Pros and cons

- + Short, cheap training for a licensed profession
- + Work that is unmistakably needed and never automated away
- + Steady demand that does not follow the economy
- On call overnight, on weekends and on holidays
- You carry other people's grief, and some of it stays
- Physically hard: lifting, standing, chemical exposure in the preparation room

Good to know

Funeral homes must hand you a price list

The Federal Trade Commission's Funeral Rule says a funeral home has to give you an itemized price list before it sells you anything, and has to quote prices over the phone. It exists because families in shock us...

Cremation overtook burial

More than half of American families now choose cremation, and the share has climbed steadily for twenty years. That has changed the whole business: fewer caskets, more urns, more memorial services he...

Optional boosts

Embalmer license. Crematory operator certification. Certified Funeral Service Practitioner. Grief support training.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (39-4031.00)
 American Board of Funeral Service Education, the national accreditor
 International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, National Board Examination
 Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/funeral-director>



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