

Washington Funeral Resources & Education
Making Washington Home Funeral Information Easy to Find

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**New Public Information Website Launches to Educate Families & Professionals
About Washingtonians' Rights When Death Occurs**

Dedicated to [Heather](#) and [Mikaela](#) whose mothers share the stories of their deaths to help inform others about the benefits of family- and community-led funerals

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- Interviews available with families whose stories are featured on the site

[Washington Funeral Resources & Education](#), a new non-commercial, public interest website launches this month. Dedicated to providing Washingtonians with information about their legal rights and resources when death occurs, WashingtonFuneral.org helps Washington consumers care for their own dead with or without the assistance of a funeral director. The website is for anyone wishing to avoid unnecessary expenditures for funeral products and services they don't want or need, and for those wanting to explore the continuum of hands-on after-death care options, including home funerals and green burial. The site is being [lauded by medical and funeral industry professionals](#) as a much-needed resource for both families and professionals.

In Washington State, no one is required to purchase the services of a funeral director or funeral home when a death occurs. Under Washington law, families may conduct many or all tasks commonly performed by a funeral home. Many people don't know about the rights of families to care for their dead—even many first responders, care facilities, and funeral industry pros.

Dr. Allie Massaro describes the website as “a remarkable resource” and says, “I plan to share it with our social workers and my physician colleagues, as we often lack information as to how to guide families through non-traditional processes.”

Hospital nurse Rebecca Peace, who reviewed the site for accuracy, says: “As an Emergency Room Nurse, I too often see families shuffled into the process of funeral homes and traditional burial without being offered any alternatives. [Washington Funeral Resources and Education](#) offers families access to information about their full range of options. The website is an excellent resource for both staff and patients as they navigate the incredibly difficult decisions in a

vulnerable time after a loved one has died. I will be proud to offer families this information source, especially for those wishing to consider a home funeral or a green burial.”

The information site is modeled off of [Oregon Funeral Resources & Education](#), which has been conducting professional education in-service trainings since it launched in 2019. **Jenny McIntyre, MSW**, worked for a major hospital system in Oregon before relocating to Washington. She says: “As a hospice social worker, I was lucky to attend an in-service you presented at my last agency in Oregon. When I moved to Washington, I had zero luck finding anything online regarding family options for after-death care. I am grateful to see this new website launched to support families in their full range of choices.”

WASHINGTONIANS’ RIGHTS WHEN DEATH OCCURS

Under Washington law, families may conduct many or all tasks commonly performed by a funeral home. In Washington no one is required to purchase the services of a funeral director or funeral home when a death occurs.

In addition to detailing [death care law in Washington](#), [WashingtonFuneral.org](#) walks readers through the [practical “How Tos”](#) of whichever aspects of after-death care they want to handle, and provides guidance in [how consumers can get what they want from professionals they hire](#) or authorities they encounter when a death occurs. The site provides an overview of [what’s meant by the term “home funeral,”](#) a [glossary of terms](#), and [informative stories](#) of how others have cared for their dead and concise, [professionally-specific in-service training materials](#) along with resources for use in [community education](#).

[Washington Funeral Resources & Education](#) has already expanded access for Washingtonians wanting to handle death certificate filing without hiring a funeral director, as provided under Washington law. After outreach to the Washington Department of Health to highlight the discrepancy between Washingtonians’ rights under the law and the current practice of restricting filing to professionals with EDRS access, DOH published a clarification titled [Families Acting as Funeral Directors](#). (Details on the Washington Funeral Resources & Education [blog](#).) The sister website, [Oregon Funeral Resources & Education](#), has spurred changes in hospital [body release](#) and [family information](#) policies.

THE REAL PEOPLE’S STORIES BEHIND THE WEBSITE

The legal and practical information on the website is illustrated by a range of stories told by Washingtonians who handled all or part of the care for their dead:

- After [Heather's](#) near-death as a baby, her mother made preparing for her death a healthy part of their life.
- Faced with Mikaela's unexpected death, her family created a beautiful [vigil for her in the hospital](#). Choosing [green burial](#) honored her environmental values and the family’s Muslim heritage. Despite their right to transport Mikaela's body, her family encountered [costly and stressful obstacles](#).

- [Jake's](#) engagement with the details of his death was a powerful gift he gave those who performed his home funeral and burial.
- After her husband's hospital death, Sharon brought [Rich](#) home for a three-day vigil with their community.
- Alicia and Derek kept [Baby Burton](#) home after his death for "the most meaningful time" in their lives.
- [Briar](#), whose friends memorialized her with a joyous water ballet, donated her body to help legalize natural organic reduction.
- [Karen](#) served as funeral director for her father, who was buried at White Eagle in a casket built by a friend.
- [Lashanna's](#) story illustrates the dimensions of community death care, from education and advocacy to guidance and financial support.

MORE ABOUT THE SITE

Washington Funeral Resources and Education @ WashingtonFuneral.org is a non-commercial public interest website dedicated to helping Washington consumers care for their own dead with or without the assistance of a funeral director. The site is provided as a public service by White Eagle Memorial Preserve and Sacred Earth Foundation in Goldendale, which coordinates response to inquiries with other Washington-based organizations and practitioners that support the mission of the site. Like its Oregon predecessor, **Washington Funeral Resources and Education** is based on the New Hampshire Funeral Resources & Education website concept developed by Lee Webster and is expected to serve as a model for replication in other states.

See also:

- [Media Page](#) for Media Advisory, Public Service Announcement, "What People Are Saying"
- [Stories](#) of family- and community-directed funerals conducted by Washingtonians
- [Printable Informational Flyer](#)
- [Printable Home Funeral Facts Card](#)
- [Information for Professionals](#)

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