



## Indiana Funeral Directors Association

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## Indiana State Board of Funeral and Cemetery Service meets to discuss possible changes for entry to funeral director practice.

Indianapolis, December 2, 2022 -

At their December 2022 meeting, the Indiana State Board of Funeral and Cemetery Service, at the urging of IFDA, began the process of reviewing the path of entry into practice for Indiana funeral service. In August of 2022, after several years of workforce study, IFDA petitioned the State Board to review Indiana's nearly 40-year-old entry-to-practice model for 21st century relevancy and to seek opportunities to improve and make more efficient. This petition included reviewing the role/relevancy of the National Board Exam in developing the next generation of licensed funeral service practitioners.

Over the last decade, the declining number of aspiring funeral directors/mortuary program enrollees along with a record number of retirees has created an industry-wide labor crisis. IFDA's labor and state of industry study led to the conclusion that an opportunity currently existed to create a more streamlined and efficient path to licensure without sacrificing the greater standards of education and practitioner preparation.

The IFDA workforce study included reviewing possible changes in education, testing, internship, and licensing as well reviewing changes and models other states have utilized. Among the many revelations was an increasing number of aspiring practitioners completing education but struggling with passing the National Board Examination, thereby preventing the entry to licensed intern practice.

IFDA advocated a model that would eliminate the NBE as a stand-alone pre-internship test in favor of a test that combined relevant material from the NBE/American Board curriculum with Indiana's licensing law test. Conceptually, this test would be administered by the State of Indiana and be taken by the intern at the conclusion of the internship before full licensure rather than the current pre-intern practice requirement.

At the December 1, 2022 State Board meeting, IFDA along with association members offered comment and insight. Additional comments were shared by the American Board of Funeral Service Education, the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, Ivy Tech

Community College, Worsham College, and Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science; Mid America College and Vincennes University were also invited to this meeting but were not in attendance.

After nearly 3 hours of comment, and presentation of a large amount of information, the Board prudently elected to table a vote regarding a possible new licensure path until the February 2023 board meeting in an effort to thoroughly examine the information presented.

This is the first step in a long process if change is to happen. Because the requirement of the national test is a state board rule & regulation, any voted upon changes would still need further regulatory review, a time for public comment, and eventual gubernatorial approval. The timeline of that process is usually between 12-24 months.

IFDA is most grateful to all the members who have shared their stories and struggles in helping build the petition presented to the board. A special thanks to the Glick family, IFDA members from Columbus, who provided a real industry perspective to the Board of the modern-day challenges students and aspiring practitioners are experiencing. IFDA also offers thanks to our Indiana State Board for allowing this hearing to take place and exercising due diligence as they review this very important decision. Likewise, much gratitude to all stakeholders who offered comment and invested their time; the collaboration and communication is greatly appreciated.

As information becomes available, please follow IFDA communications for updates and progress.