



Tri-State Leadership Academy

Empowering Impactful Leaders

Tomorrow's funeral service leaders must be adaptable and open to change—responding to workforce pressures, evolving consumer expectations, and regulatory challenges—while fostering collaboration and investing in the future of compassionate care.

"Attending this leadership academy has created the opportunity to sharpen my vision, connect with inspiring minds, and ignite actionable growth." —

Kyle Eveland, 2024 Tri-State Leadership Academy Participant

OVERVIEW

Fees ✨

- Registration fee is \$1,500
- Fee includes group meals during each of the in-person sessions.

Format ✨

The six-month Leadership Academy will meet in person at each of the Tri-State association offices, with an every other month Zoom meeting. (schedule below)

Perks ✨

- Each academy graduate receives a complimentary registration to each of the association's conventions.
- **Optional:** Each academy participant will receive a complimentary registration to the NFDA Leadership Conference in Louisville, KY, August 2-5. This opportunity is made possible by the Ohio Funeral Education Foundation.

CONTENT

- Burnout
- Supplier Relations
- Work/Life Balance
- Recruitment & Retention
- Servant Leadership
- Celebrant Utilization
- Leadership
- Marketing
- Embalming
- Celebrant Utilization
- Self-Image
- Consumer Behavior
- Media
- Communication
- Emotional Intelligence
- Teamwork
- Cremation
- Succession
- Hospitality
- Business Operations
- Personality Assessment
- Crucial Conversations

Approximately 15 hours of CE included for the 2026 calendar year.

FORMAT



Virtual



In-Person

ACADEMY LEADER



Tom Sproles, CFSP
Funeral Director & Co-Owner,
Sproles Family Funeral Home

Tom is a graduate of the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science and holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Indiana Wesleyan University.

A speaker, trainer, and coach with the Maxwell Leadership Team, he presents nationwide on hospitality and leadership.

SCHEDULE

✨ = In-Person

July 15 & 16, 2026 ✨

In-Person Session

Ohio Funeral Directors Association (OFDA) Office

August 11, 2026

Virtual Session

September 16 & 17, 2026 ✨

In-Person Session

Funeral Directors Association of Kentucky (FDAK) Office

October 14 & 15, 2026 ✨

In-Person Session

Indiana Funeral Directors Association (IFDA) Office

November 19, 2026

Virtual Session

December 16 & 17, 2026 ✨

In-Person Session

CCMS

Apr 27 - 29, 2027 ✨

OFDA Convention

May 24 - 27, 2027 ✨

IFDA Convention

June 22-23, 2027 ✨

FDAK Convention



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"The Tri-State Leadership program has helped me understand the blind spots I have in my own leadership style, and through reflection and practice I hope to put into place what I have learned to become a better leader for our team, and association." —

Geoffrey Gompf, 2024 Tri-State Leadership Academy Participant

MEET SOME OF OUR SPEAKERS



John T. Hill

John is a licensed undertaker in seven states, serves as Clinical Coordinator for Pierce Mortuary Colleges—including Gupton-Jones, Dallas Institute, and Mid-America—and works with James Funeral Home and Northlake Memorial Gardens in North Carolina. As owner of Hill Mortuary Service & Seminars, he provides trade embalming and continuing education nationwide. In 2024, he founded the RESTORE Program to promote excellence in embalming, restorative art, and open casket viewing, and he contributes monthly to the Nomis Publications Funeral Home & Cemetery Newspaper, where he authors a featured column titled "Embalming in Today's World." Passionate about advancing funeral service, John mentors and inspires current and aspiring professionals to serve with skill, compassion, and purpose while keeping the art and practice of embalming relevant and meaningful.



Poul Lemasters, Esq

Poul has worked in the funeral profession for over 30 years and holds funeral director and embalmers licenses in several states. As an attorney, Poul is admitted to practice law in several states as well. His work focuses in deathcare advising on funeral home, cemetery, and crematory issues across the country. He is a renowned keynote speaker who has addressed audiences across North America. As an author, Poul has published hundreds of articles covering all aspects of deathcare and is also the author of the risk management book, "Cover Your Ass - The Ultimate Guide to Protecting Your Business." Poul works directly with practitioners, and also serves as counsel for several associations including the National Concrete Burial Association, the Catholic Cemeteries Conference, and General Counsel for the International Cemetery Cremation and Funeral Association.



Leili McMurrough

Leili McMurrough serves as president of Worsham College of Mortuary Science, one of the nation's largest mortuary science programs. A licensed funeral director/embalmer and attorney, she co-owns McMurrough Funeral Chapel, chairs the ABFSE Committee on Accreditation, and is a trustee of the Funeral Service Foundation. A national speaker on workforce development, licensure, and education, Leili is recognized for providing practical, field-tested tools that help funeral homes build strong, effective teams. In recognition of her leadership and innovation, she received the 2024 NFDA Inspiration Award.



Lacy Robinson

Lacy brings nearly 20 years of experience developing customer service training for funeral home professionals. She is an instructor at Worsham College of Mortuary Science, teaching Fundamentals of Customer Service, and provides training for Johnson Consulting Group clients. She also co-authored "Engaging the Heart of Hospice: Making Funeral and Memorial Services an Extension of Hospice Care" with Greg Grabowski. A licensed funeral director/embalmer and certified funeral celebrant, Lacy has served on the Selected Independent Funeral Homes Educational Trust and the APFSP Board of Trustees. She holds degrees from Georgetown College and Mid-America College of Funeral Service, as well as an MBA in Bourbon Tourism and Event Planning from Midway University. She volunteers with Hosparus Health in Louisville, Kentucky, and founded the Bourbon Legends Tour.



Ryan Thogmartin

Ryan is a driven entrepreneur who is passionate about creating positive change and making a difference. He is a forward-thinking leader who is constantly exploring new ways to innovate and break the status quo. As the founder of UnKommon Empire and CEO of DISRUPT Media, a two-time Inc. 5000 company, he's developed expertise in relationship marketing and lead generation, as well as cultivating change in stagnant fields. This work has helped businesses scale and create millions of dollars in revenue.

Full speaker lineup announced at a later date.



Tri-State Leadership Academy

Leadership Academy Application

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The Leadership Academy will select no more than 15 promising funeral professional leaders, five from each respective state. The participants will be chosen by the Leadership Academy state representatives.

Committed to the program, participants are expected to attend all sessions on the dates noted for graduation.

REQUIREMENTS/APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested participants need to complete the following short application process: ✨

- Currently employed with a member organization in the Tri-State area (IN, KY, OH).
- Aspiring leaders will discuss and confirm with the member employer and provide confirmation of the employer's support of their commitment to complete the Leadership Academy Program.
- Fully complete the application.
- Submit application on or before **May 22, 2026**.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:

Funeral Home:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone #:

Email Address:

APPLICANT COMMITMENT

I understand the requirements of the Leadership Academy. I have discussed the requirements of the program with my employer and how the time away will be handled.

Applicant's Signature

Date

EMPLOYER APPROVAL

I understand the requirements of the Leadership Academy and agree to support my employee's participation. I have been made aware of both the in-person meeting dates and the virtual meeting dates. We have discussed how the time away from work will be handled.

If my employee is selected to participate in the Leadership Academy, I am committing to supporting their efforts.

Employer's Name (Please print)

Date

Employer's Signature

Date



Tri-State Leadership Academy

Leadership Academy Application

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Please review all information on pages 1 and 2 of the application and ensure it is fully completed before submitting.

BILLING INFORMATION

Credit Card #:

Expiration Date: CVC #:

Cardholder Name:

Billing Address:

Signature:

Email for Receipt:

Billing information will only be utilized upon acceptance into the Leadership Academy program. If billing information is not provided, we will contact you for payment prior to the first meeting.

SUBMISSION

Submit your completed application to your state association:

FDAK

PO Box 4779

108 St. James Court
Frankfort, KY 40604

khouse@fdaofky.com | fax (502) 223-0628

IFDA

1305 W 96th Street, Suite A
Indianapolis, IN 46260

connie@infda.org | fax (317) 846-6534

OFDA

2501 North Star Road
Columbus, OH 13221

amyb@ofdaonline.org | fax (614) 486-5358

Thank you for submitting your application to the Tri-State Leadership Academy!

We appreciate your interest in this program and your commitment to professional growth. Our team will review all applications carefully, and you will be notified once selections have been made. We look forward to the possibility of welcoming you to this unique leadership experience.