

# MFDA Fall Fest 2025 Course Descriptions

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**Tuesday, October 14 – Hilton Garden Inn, Freeport, Maine – Old Town Hall**

## **Pre-Need Insurance Forum - 8:30–10:30am**

Explore how pre-need insurance can strengthen your firm’s financial stability while meeting the changing needs of today’s families. Learn practical tools and strategies to confidently offer pre-arranged services.

A panel of pre-need insurance experts including representatives from Funeral Directors Life, Homesteaders Insurance and Global Atlantic will be on site to educate participants about the benefits of pre-need Insurance, the differences between using insurance vs trusts and getting started with offering pre-need insurance.

Participants will be encouraged to engage with the panel during the forum as well as submit questions ahead of the event.

**Wednesday, October 15 – Hilton Garden Inn, Freeport, Maine – Event Center**

## **Advocacy & Legislation – 9:00 – 10:00am 1 CEU**

Funeral service is evolving, and so are the laws that shape it. Hear updates on recent legislative changes and MFDA’s advocacy efforts to help practitioners understand the statutes that affect their work.



Keith Herrick, MFDA Lobbyist and Partner at Dirigo Public Affairs will give an in-depth report of the association’s advocacy efforts and the legislative changes enacted during this past legislative session. His work has helped funeral service practitioners better understand the laws that affect them and the practice of funeral service.

In his private life, Keith serves in the Maine Air National Guard as the 101st Maintenance Group Senior Enlisted Leader, advising on career development and professional growth for nearly 280 group personnel. Keith holds the highest enlisted rank of Chief Master Sergeant (E-9). In addition, Keith is a National Academy of Sports Medicine Certified Personal Trainer and volunteers in his community as a coach and board member for various youth sports. Keith grew up in Windham, Maine, and lives in West Gardiner with his wife, Leslie, and his two sons, Maddox and Emmett.

## **Working with the OCME – 10:30 – 11:30am 1 CEU**



The Office of Chief Medical Examiner has received support from the 132<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session, and with it comes an expansion of capabilities. Dr. Biones, Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Maine and Lindsey Chasteen, OCME’s Director of Operations, will provide an update on the new facility, its expanded capabilities, and will also discuss mass fatality preparedness.

Dr. Alice Briones is a native of Hampden and a University of Maine graduate. She is a retired U.S. Air Force Colonel, recently completing a distinguished military career culminating as Director of the U.S. Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES).

## Cybersecurity for Funeral Professionals – 12:30 – 1:30pm 1 CEU



Representatives from Systems Engineering and Allen Insurance will educate Funeral Professionals on how to protect business operations from phishing, ransomware, and other threats. Participants will gain practical strategies, affordable tools, and compliance tips tailored to funeral service.



Serving clients nationwide from its offices in Maine and New Hampshire, Systems Engineering provide end-to-end planning and implementation services, including a full complement of managed IT, cybersecurity, and cloud services. The New England-based team of network engineers, managed security professionals, project managers, data management experts, and account managers are available 24x7, 365 days per year.

James Sanborn of Allen Insurance will join Systems Engineering in educating participants about the various types of insurance that will assist funeral professionals in securing their business transactions.

## AI in Funeral Service – 1:30 – 2:30pm 1 CEU



AI has to start somewhere. It needs input. It can't dream and it can't imagine on its own. It needs Human thought to begin to enable you and become useful. It's a tool to be used to improve your life and the lives of those around you. When used correctly it can enhance, optimize, grow and sustain your business.

Micah has served the Funeral Profession for 13 years. He is currently VP of Channel Development at Tukios. He has been with them since they started in Tribute Videos as employee number 11. Micah lives in Boise Idaho and has 6 children. He is a retired combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, has lived in Argentina, Germany, Iraq and UAE. He speaks Spanish fluently and enough German and Arabic to get himself into trouble.

## Natural Organic Reduction - 2:45 – 3:45pm 1 CEU



With human composting now legal in Maine, Brie Smith of Return Home and Barrett Cosgrove of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services will explain the process, regulatory framework, and key considerations for funeral professionals when offering Natural Organic Reduction as a means of disposition for their client families.

Brie Smith was the first funeral director hired at Return Home, paving the way for other funeral professionals to make the big jump into alternative disposition. Before starting at Return Home, Brie worked as a Funeral Director and Embalmer with a traditional funeral home and cemetery since 2014.

Barrett Cosgrove, Environmental Health Specialist with the Drinking Water Program in the Department of Health and Human Services monitors and acts as a resource for Maine residents regarding cemeteries and crematoria.

## Alternative Choices for Funeral Professionals - 7:30 - 8:00am, 10:00 -10:30am, 11:30 - 12:30pm, 2:30-2:45pm 1 CEU

Explore the newest products, services, and innovations shaping funeral service today. Vendors will showcase practical solutions and advancements designed to support funeral professionals in better serving families and strengthening their businesses. This is an opportunity to see what's available, ask questions, and expand your knowledge of emerging options in funeral care.