2015-2018

Strategic Plan

CFB

Cemetery & Funeral
Bureau

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Message from the Bureau Chief

On behalf of the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau (Bureau), I am excited to present the Bureau's 2015-2018 strategic plan. The strategic planning process has been a collaborative effort among licensees, consumers, and Bureau staff. This plan will help guide our work as we look to the future and continue to serve California consumers. I would like to thank everyone involved in the strategic planning development process who provided valuable input, clear vision, and commitment to help achieve a meaningful plan.

As a consumer protection program, I look forward to continuing our efforts in making the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau an efficient and effective part of state government. It is our mission to advocate consumer protection through licensee compliance, proactive education, and by consistently applying the laws and regulations governing the death care industry.

The Bureau continually strives to operate in an open and transparent environment while meeting its regulatory obligations. This plan will allow forums for consumers and licensees to provide input on funeral and cemetery-related issues.

I welcome input from all of our stakeholders and hope you will join in our success as we begin to work towards the objectives identified in this very ambitious, but achievable plan.

Lisa M. Moore, Chief
Cemetery and Funeral Bureau
Department of Consumer Affairs

About the California Cemetery and Funeral Bureau

The California Cemetery and Funeral Bureau (Bureau) licenses, regulates, and investigates complaints against approximately 12,200 licensees in thirteen different licensing categories. This includes funeral establishments, funeral directors, embalmers, apprentice embalmers, cemetery brokers, cemetery salespersons, cremated remains disposers, crematories, crematory managers, cemetery managers, and private, nonreligious cemeteries established after September 1939, that collect endowment care funds.

The Bureau regulates many aspects of the licensed cemetery and funeral profession, with oversight responsibility of both the operational and fiduciary activities of the industries. The Bureau oversees preneed funeral trust funds, cemetery endowment care trust funds, and cemetery special care trust funds. While the State Department of Insurance regulates the sale of insurance policies which can be used to fund preneed funeral arrangements, the seller must meet the price disclosure and contract requirements under the Bureau's jurisdiction. The Bureau has the examination authority to ensure compliance with the financial laws, while verifying accounting and investing practices, and identify funding shortages.

The Bureau employs twenty-two staff, consisting of nine full-time field staff located throughout the state and thirteen office staff members in Sacramento. The Bureau also has a seven-member Advisory Committee comprised of industry and public members. The Advisory Committee holds two annual public meetings which provide an opportunity for both consumers and licensees to contribute information and provide professional and technical information to the Bureau on industry-related matters.

The death of a loved one is one of the most traumatic experiences consumers will face. The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau has developed a booklet, *Consumer Guide to Funeral & Cemetery Purchases*, along with several pamphlets, to assist consumers in making the difficult end-of-life decisions for themselves or for a loved one. The information contained in the publications will help consumers ask the right questions, compare prices, and services, and make informed decisions. The publications can be found on the Bureau's website at **www.cfb.ca.gov**.[1]

[1] *The State of California does not license cemeteries operated by religious organizations, cities, counties, or cemetery districts, the military, Native American tribal organizations, or other groups.*

2011 Strategic Plan Accomplishments

The California Cemetery and Funeral Bureau accomplished the following goals since the adoption of the previous 2011 strategic plan.

1) **Advisory Committee** – The Bureau created a new committee composed of four industry and three public members who each serve a two-year term.
2) **Consumer Guide to Funeral & Cemetery Purchases** – A Bureau publication, which was revised and updated in June 2013 and provides information to help consumers make informed decisions about funeral and cemetery arrangements for themselves or loved ones.
3) **Peace of Mind: Funeral and Cemetery Arrangements** – A Bureau publication, developed in March 2012, which includes general information on planning ahead for cemetery and funeral arrangements.
4) **Preneed Q&A** – In May 2013, the Bureau updated the Q&A brochure, which provides consumers with general information on funeral preneed planning.
5) **Probation Monitoring Guidelines and Procedures** – The Bureau developed procedures to ensure licensees placed on probation comply with the terms and conditions of their probation, including cost recovery.
6) **Procedure Manuals** – The Bureau updated all manuals for field operations, licensing functions, and enforcement procedures.
7) **Cemetery Maintenance Standards** – The Bureau developed and implemented regulations effective January 1, 2012 for cemetery maintenance standards to prevent the offensive deterioration of an endowment care cemetery licensed by the Bureau.

8) **Funeral Citation and Fine Regulations –** The Bureau adopted regulations that amended the funeral citation and fine table. The adopted regulations, effective on October 1, 2014, allow for issuance of an administrative citation and/or monetary fine for any violation of the statutes or regulations applicable to funeral practice.

9) **Cemetery Citation and Fine Regulations –** The Bureau drafted proposed regulatory language to amend the cemetery citation and fine table. The proposed regulations will allow for issuance of an administrative citation and/or monetary fine for any violation of the statutes or regulations applicable to cemetery practice.

Mission

The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau advocates consumer protection and licensee compliance through proactive education and consistent interpretation and application of the laws governing the death care industry.

Vision

Empowering California consumers to make informed end-of-life decisions in a fair and ethical marketplace.

Values

Accountability

We accept personal responsibility for our actions, exemplifying high ethical standards, and always strive to improve our effectiveness.

Collaboration

We value partnerships. We foster the public's trust through open communication and work in a cooperative, respectful, and courteous manner.

Fairness

We treat people equally and make decisions without favoritism or prejudice.

Trust

We communicate with credibility and truthfulness. Our communications are open and authentic with all stakeholders.

Compassion

We employ empathy, integrity, respect, and understanding when serving consumers.

Strategic Goals

1) **Licensing**
The Bureau promotes licensing standards to protect consumers and allow reasonable access to the profession.

2) **Enforcement**
The Bureau protects the health and safety of consumers through the enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the profession.

3) **Legislation, Regulations, and Policy**
The Bureau pursues statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures that strengthen and support their mandate and mission.

4) **Outreach**
The Bureau informs consumers, licensees, and stakeholders about the practice and regulation of the profession.

5) **Organizational Effectiveness**
The Bureau builds an excellent organization through proper Bureau governance, effective leadership, and responsible management.

6) **Audit Process**
The Bureau strives to continuously improve the audit process.

Goal 1: Licensing

The Bureau promotes licensing standards to protect consumers and allow reasonable access to the profession.

1.1 Review, evaluate, and revise (as needed) licensing applications and forms for accuracy and consistency with statutes and regulations.

1.2 Prepare for Release 3 implementation of BreEZe by mapping existing licensing processes to facilitate an efficient transition to BreEZe.

1.3 Improve application review processes and procedures to ensure Bureau compliance with statutes and regulations.

Goal 2: Enforcement

The Bureau protects the health and safety of consumers through the enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the profession.

2.1 Develop methods to improve internal communication and collaboration between office and field staff to provide consistent interpretation and application of statutes and regulations.

2.2 Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the cemetery maintenance standards.

2.3 Create procedure(s) for addressing cemeteries that are no longer licensed, yet continue to be under the jurisdiction of the Bureau for preneed interments.

2.4 Research final disposition as it relates to body donation and cremation to ensure quarterly reports to the Bureau are accurate and final dispositions are recorded correctly on the disposition permit.

Goal 3: Legislation, Regulations, and Policy

The Bureau pursues statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures that strengthen and support their mandate and mission.

3.1 Explore merging the cemetery and funeral statutes to establish consistency within the profession.

3.2 Review and update the Bureau's disciplinary guidelines for enforcement actions.

3.3 Complete the rulemaking process for the remaining revised funeral regulations.

3.4 Review, evaluate, and revise the cemetery regulations for clarity and consistency.

Goal 4: Outreach

The Bureau informs consumers, licensees, and stakeholders about the practice and regulation of the profession.

4.1 Partner with DCA's Public Affairs Division to develop a consumer education and outreach plan utilizing appropriate media.

4.2 Partner with DCA's Public Affairs Division to develop a video to educate potential licensees about the application process.

4.3 Conduct annual review of website to provide up-to-date information.

4.4 Increase frequency of visits to mortuary science colleges to educate potential licensees about the laws and regulations that will govern them once licensed.

Goal 5: Organizational Effectiveness

The Bureau builds an excellent organization through proper Bureau governance, effective leadership, and responsible management.

5.1 Establish an annual comprehensive training plan for all managers to strengthen their leadership and managerial skills.

5.2 Review and update Bureau's succession plan to develop a framework to retain institutional knowledge.

5.3 Develop and implement a phone tree to enable stakeholders to contact appropriate staff in an efficient manner.

5.4 Establish an annual comprehensive training plan for all staff to develop or strengthen their skills to enhance job performance.

Goal 6: Audit Process

The Bureau strives to continuously improve the audit process.

6.1 Create a stakeholder task force to review, evaluate, and revise (as needed) audit report forms and acceptable accounting practices to ensure relevant information is collected and to recommend legislative changes.

6.2 Continue assessing the funding and position needs in the Bureau's Audit Unit.

6.3 Identify DCA business writing, analytical skills, and communication classes for audit staff to attend in order to effectively communicate to stakeholders.

6.4 Review and evaluate whether the current endowment care fund fee each cemetery collects is sufficient to maintain the cemetery.

Strategic Planning Process

To understand the environment in which the Bureau operates and identify factors that could impact the Bureau's success, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID unit conducted an environmental scan of the internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- An online survey sent to thirteen stakeholders, comprised of industry professionals, professional associations, California colleges, and others who expressed interest in the strategic direction of the Bureau. The online survey received thirty-four responses.
- An online survey sent to nine field staff.
- Telephone interviews with Executive team members in July, 2014.
- Focus group discussion with Bureau staff in July, 2014.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the Bureau executive team during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID on August 20, 2014. This information guided the Bureau in the development of its mission, vision, and values, while directing the strategic goals and objectives outlined in this 2015 – 2018 strategic plan.

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This strategic plan is based on stakeholder information and discussions facilitated by SOLID for the California Cemetery and Funeral Bureau in July and August 2014. Subsequent amendments may have been made after Bureau adoption of this plan.

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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