

Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington

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The members of the Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington (JFPCGW) are 40+ synagogues and other Jewish organizations that provides training and assistance for Chevra Kadisha groups and synagogue bereavement committees. The Committee provides education and resources, and negotiates and supervises contracts with two funeral homes - one serving Maryland-DC and one serving Northern Virginia and with a monument dealer.

JFPCGW came into existence in 1976 to take Jewish funerals out of ordinary commerce and restore them to a sacred and meaningful mitzvah performed by congregations and other religious communities. (See [The Jewish Approach](http://www.dc.jewish-funerals.org/jewish-approach) ([/web/20150906084145/http://www.dc.jewish-funerals.org/jewish-approach](http://www.dc.jewish-funerals.org/jewish-approach).) In the Washington Area, Tifereth Israel Congregation pioneered the concept and their committee began educating and training others.

JFPCGW's [members](#) ([jfpcgw-members-congregations](#)), include the entire spectrum of religious Jewry. The Committee promotes funeral practices which are considered Jewish law for Conservative and Orthodox Jews, and which reflect Jewish values regardless of denomination, for Reform, Reconstructionist, and independent communities. **The Committee also helps congregations protect the bereaved from commercial exploitation.**

JFPCGW operates entirely with volunteers. Expenses are defrayed by \$100 annual dues paid by member congregations. Committee members stand ready to help congregations organize hevrai kadishot or bereavement committees, supply materials that they can use such as information sheets and questionnaires, and help them to educate their congregations.

One of the important practices advocated by JFPCGW is the active participation of congregation members. **Synagogue funeral committees, by one name or another, may make themselves immediately available to visit and counsel the bereaved, obtain the needed information, and arrange and manage the funeral and burial. The bereaved family does not have to do business directly with a funeral director.** Many congregations have committees to provide *tahara* (ritual washing) and *shomrim* (watchers) before the funeral. Most congregations arrange a meal of condolence after the funeral, and many arrange *shiva* at the family home so that friends and relative can express their sympathy properly.

The JFPCGW contracts with [Hines Rinaldi Funeral Home](http://www.jewish-funerals.org/agreement-between-jewish-funeral-practices-committee-greater-washington-and-hines-rinaldi-funeral) ([https://web.archive.org/web/20150906084145/http://www.jewish-funerals.org/agreement-between-jewish-funeral-practices-committee-greater-washington-and-hines-rinaldi-funeral](http://www.jewish-funerals.org/agreement-between-jewish-funeral-practices-committee-greater-washington-and-hines-rinaldi-funeral)) in Silver Spring MD (301-622-2290) and with [Cunningham Turch Funeral Home](http://www.jewish-funerals.org/agreement-between-jewish-funeral-practices-committee-greater-washington-and-cunningham-turch-funeral) ([https://web.archive.org/web/20150906084145/http://www.jewish-funerals.org/agreement-between-jewish-funeral-practices-committee-greater-washington-and-cunningham-turch-funeral](http://www.jewish-funerals.org/agreement-between-jewish-funeral-practices-committee-greater-washington-and-cunningham-turch-funeral)) in Alexandria VA (703-549-1800). These funeral homes will provide the professional services for a complete funeral for \$1,849 (Hines-Rinaldi) and \$1,820 (Cunningham Turch), including a plain pine casket and, if desired, its funeral chapels. (Many congregations use their own sanctuaries.) Typically about 250 funerals are done under the terms of JFPCGW contracts each year. These contracts also have the effect of creating price competition, which lowers the prices charged to the Jewish community by other funeral homes in our area.

The committee's work is done by a 15 member working board of directors. Volunteers are always welcome.

[Previous JFPCGW contracts](#) ([jfpcgw-contract-history](#)) can be viewed.

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