



# The State of Women in Funeral and Deathcare

## 2026 Pulse Survey Report

Findings from 555 women across the profession.

# 555 voices. An unfiltered view of the profession.

# 555

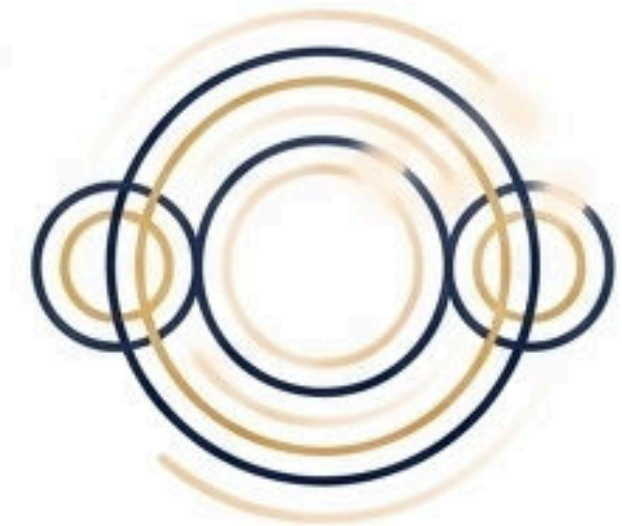
## The Scope

Women surveyed over 6 months (Jan-June 2026).  
95.5% US-based.



## Career Stage Balance

**39%** Leaders (16+ yrs)  
**31%** Early Career (0-5 yrs)  
**30%** Mid-Career (6-15 yrs)



## Generational Weight

Millennials (**43%**) and Gen X (**37%**) carry the heaviest burden, flanked by Boomers (**10%**) and Gen Z (**9%**).

# A Deeper Story Than Retention...



**“Women are staying in this profession out of genuine passion, and staying depleted by conditions the profession hasn’t yet fixed.”**

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It is *less* a retention crisis than a burnout, sponsorship, and pay crisis.

# Theme 1: Passion vs. Depletion



Feel emotionally depleted  
at least “sometimes.”

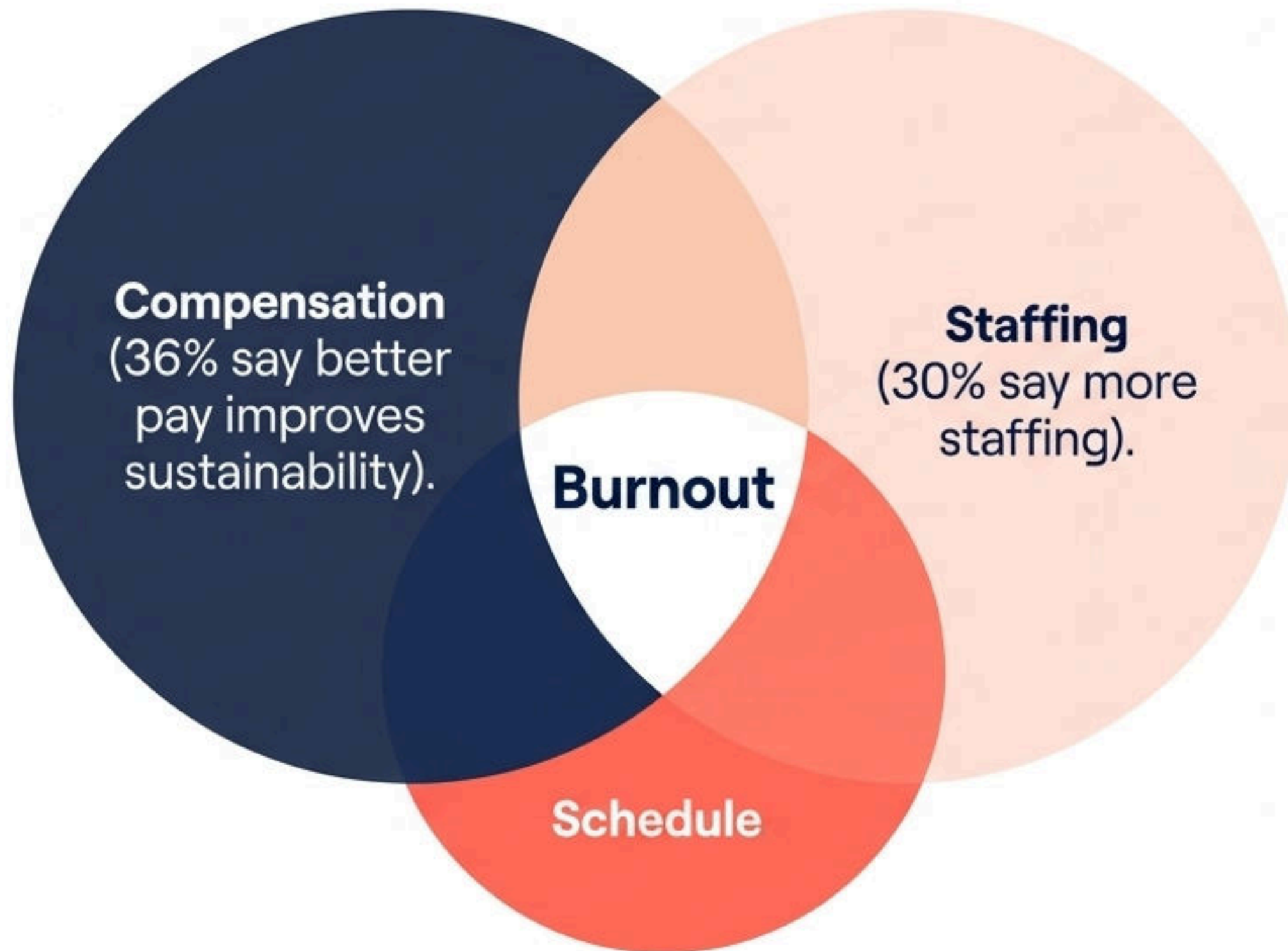


Likely or very likely to still be  
in the field in 12 months.

*“I was burned out at my previous job. I just couldn’t admit it.” — Pulse Survey Respondent*

# Theme 2: The Burnout Trio

Burnout isn't three separate problems. **It's one problem wearing three faces.**



"I work a second job to supplement my income because \$15 an hour does not meet my bills."

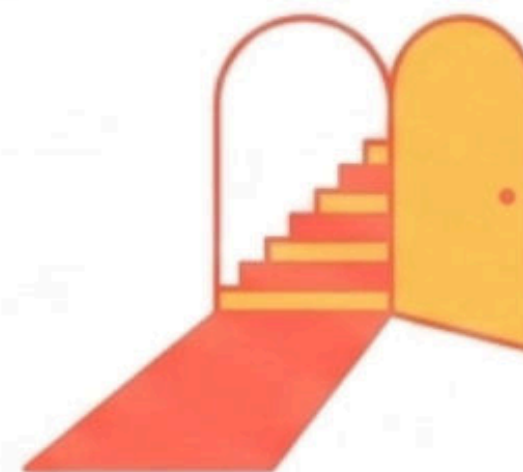
## Theme 3: Some Mentorship Exists. Sponsorship Is Rare.



**64%**

do not have a  
mentor.

Offering informal guidance  
and advice.



49% want a  
sponsor, but only

**14%**

actually have one.

Putting professional credibility  
behind a woman's next career move.

# Theme 4: Voice and Opportunity Aren't Evenly Distributed

# 1 in 5

Women with director/executive titles still actively seek leadership development. Only 39% of respondents feel “high” or “very high” influence at work.



"I did ask for a title promotion... but it was nerve-wracking, and I still fight my own imposter syndrome."

— Gen X, Director of Sales

**The ceiling is still moving for women who already have a seat.**

# One Set of Pressures. Four Different Expressions.



## Gen Z

**Lowest sense of voice**  
(4% high influence);  
**highest emotional**  
**depletion** (40%).

**Mentorship** and  
**peer connection.**



## Millennials

**Heaviest burnout**  
**squeeze.**

**Financial relief**  
(44% prioritize pay)  
and **sponsorship.**



## Gen X

**Capable but**  
**dismissed.**

**Real respect** and a  
**voice in decisions.**



## Baby Boomers

**Fewest stretch**  
**opportunities** (36%).

A **permanent seat**  
**at the table.**

# The Mid-Career Squeeze



**41% Emotional Depletion (Highest)  
OVERLAPPING with 55% Stretch Assignments (Highest).**



**The 6-15 year mark is the critical danger zone where women carry the most new responsibility while worn down by unsupportive management.**

# The Voices in the Shadows



"I really thought that family owned, owned by a woman, would mean I would be guided into the director I am meant to be. I don't feel supported...more thrown to the sharks..."

– Gen Z

"Too many responsibilities without proper pay or title...It is hard to survive in a male dominated industry **when the women who are in charge don't want you to win.**"

– Millennial

"It would be nice to see women more respected in the industry, and shown the same amount of respect that all of the men in the industry get on the daily."

– Gen X

# Additional Voices: Issues + Impact



"Due to higher demands with fewer staff and low pay I don't know if I can financially, emotionally, or mentally afford to stay in the business."

– Gen X, mid-career, Funeral Director

"To the best of my knowledge, [my employer] does not provide clear maternity benefits which has strongly influenced my family's decision to not start a family."

– Millennial, mid-career, Funeral Director

"It's not easy being a single mom with a little one in grade school, as well as my mother's caregiver after work but you know what, they are probably the reason I keep pushing through."

– Millennial, mid-career, Managing Partner

"I think conferences should be available to anyone in the workplace and not just the people at the top of the food chain. The people not in leadership positions are the ones doing most of the hands-on work with families."

– Millennial, mid-career, Office Manager

# **This report exists so the profession cannot say it didn't know.**

555 women told Funeral Women Lead exactly how they're doing.  
They described passion and depletion living in the same sentence.

*Our voices as women are getting louder, yet we are still moving quietly through the industry.*

**It is time for deathcare to systemically address the burnout and pay crisis facing its female workforce.**

# Funeral Women Lead is already closing these gaps.

## Women's Leadership Academy

Closing the mentorship and sponsorship gap with an 18-month targeted program.

## Community Membership

Providing the low-cost peer connection and support that Gen Z is starving for.

## Unleashed Summit

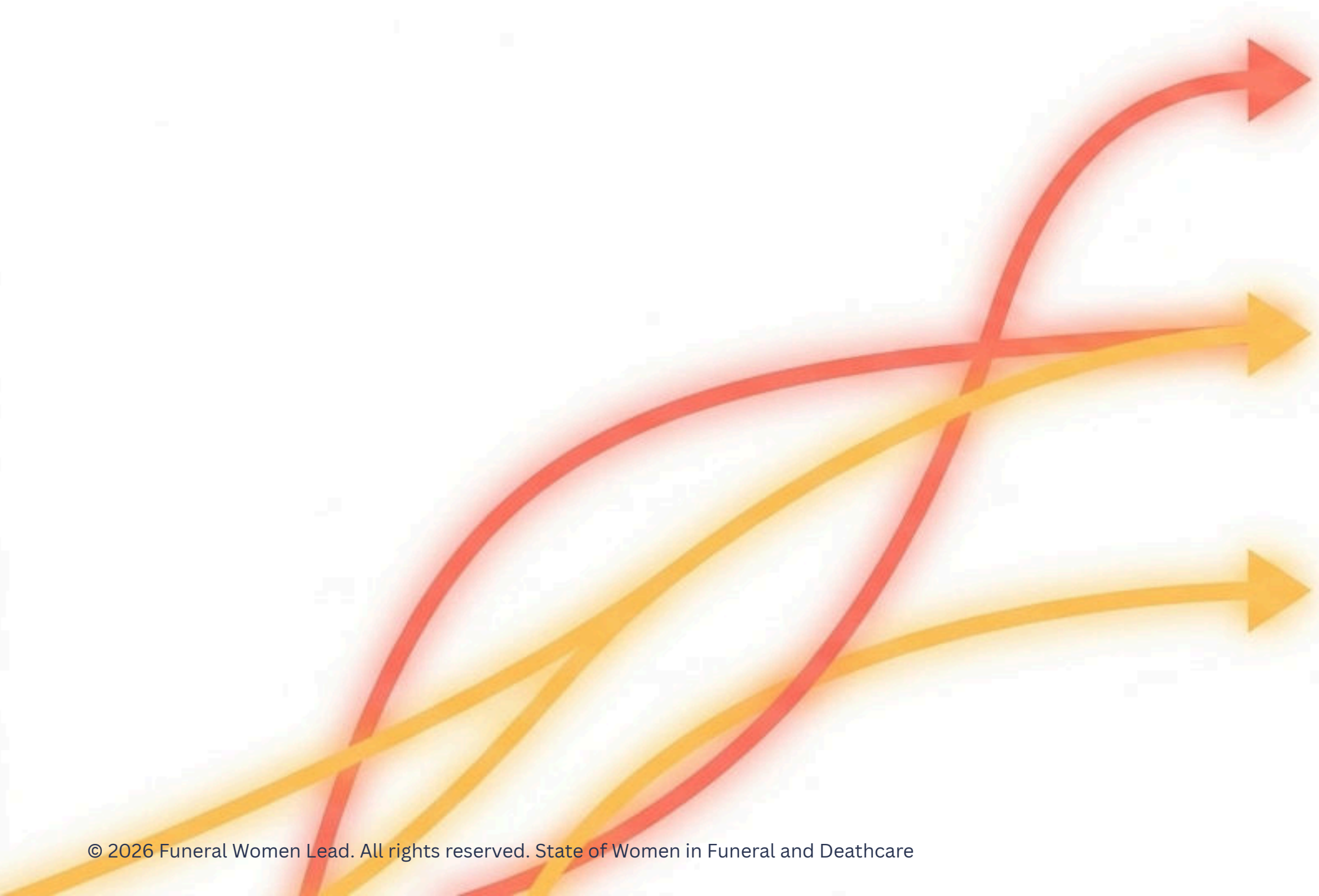
Putting burnout, resilience, and pay on the main stage.

## Education Partnerships

Building resilience and preparation before women enter the workforce.



# Join the Movement



## Become a Partner

Invest in the future of women in deathcare by donating to support FWL programs.

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## Every Year We Gather

Stay tuned to find out where we're going next!

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## Share the Mission

Share this data. Cite FWL. Help us reach the women who need this community.

# How Can You Help?



This research belongs to the women it represents. Here's how to share it responsibly.



## Share this data

Start conversations about this report. Share it with your teams. Discuss it with your leaders.

ASK

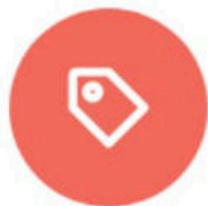
What resonates most for you from this report?

ASK

What action can I or our organization take based on what I learned in this report?

ASK

Who needs to know about this?



## Tagging us

If you're sharing on social media, tag [@funeralwomenlead](#) and use [#FuneralWomenLead](#) so we can see, celebrate and amplify how this data is being used.



## Using it well

- Cite Funeral Women Lead by name every time this data appears, in a post, talk, article or internal deck.
- Share stats and visuals freely, and keep our name attached wherever they travel.
- Don't alter or reframe the data to change its meaning or conclusions.



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