



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
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PROBATION

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NEBRASKA JUDICIAL BRANCH PROGRAM AND PROJECT QUICK LOOK

Office of Public Guardian

The Office of Public Guardian protects the well-being and assets of vulnerable adults and improves performance of all guardians and conservators in the state by providing support, information, and education; modeling the highest standard of practices; maximizing self-determination and personal autonomy; and promoting least restrictive alternatives.

Public Guardianship Act: Nebraska Revised Statutes §§ 30-4101 through 30-4118
Nebraska Court Rules §§ 6-1433.01 through 6-1433.02

The Office of Public Guardian (OPG) provides:

- Direct guardianship and conservatorship services when a court determines it is the last resort and least restrictive way to meet the vulnerable adult's needs and there is no other individual available or appropriate to serve;
- Court-ordered education classes for newly appointed private guardians and conservators;
- Support and information to all individuals serving as guardians or conservators; and
- Recruitment of volunteers to serve as guardians/conservators and volunteer court visitors.

» Court-Appointed Guardians and Conservators

- Provide direct guardianship/conservatorship for individuals when no one else is available to serve.
- Provide statewide public guardian and conservator system that models the highest standard of practices; maximizes self-determination and personal autonomy; promotes least restrictive alternatives.
- Work with courts to provide equal justice and improve court processes to protect vulnerable adults' well-being and assets when guardianship and conservatorship are being considered.

» Court Visitor Program

- Locate individuals with backgrounds in law, nursing, social work, mental health, gerontology, intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, drug abuse, or alcoholism, who will serve as Volunteer Court Visitors.
- Train Volunteer Court Visitors to provide independent screening and reports to the courts.
- Provide information when the OPG is nominated to comply with the Public Guardian Act regarding acting as guardian/conservator only when it is last resort and the OPG provides necessary services.

Origin & Authorization

Program Overview

Priorities

Priorities

» Education, Support & Information

- Support private guardians and conservators with resource information and skill development.
- Provide court-required education to all newly appointed guardians and conservators.

» Successor Guardians and Conservators

- Locate individual community members with a variety of backgrounds who are willing to serve as guardians and conservators to individuals initially served by the OPG.

Accomplishments

In 2015, the OPG implemented the Public Guardianship program in Nebraska. Activities included hiring and training staff; enacting court rules and court processes; developing court forms; initiating case management and financial software; developing policies, procedures, and financial protocols; establishing a Volunteer Court Visitor recruitment and training process; meeting with 600 different groups to provide guardian and conservator resource development statewide; piloting the Public Guardianship and Conservatorship appointment process; utilizing e-filing and centralized court processes for OPG; providing public guardianship and conservatorship services to vulnerable adults statewide; updating guardian and conservator curriculum for court-ordered education classes; scheduling monthly guardianship classes across Nebraska for 2016, including opportunities for Spanish interpretation; compiling data and completing the 2015 OPG Annual Report.

Looking Forward

- **Continue to implement the Public Guardianship program in Nebraska**, improving and adjusting processes and policies, as more information and experience is obtained, to attain a model public guardian/conservator program of excellence, efficiency, and effectiveness for vulnerable adults.
- **Work with the Legislature** to ensure appropriate caseload allocation and attain funding levels to meet the guardianship and conservatorship needs of vulnerable adults in Nebraska.
- **Expand information, support, and education for guardians and conservators and recruit additional individuals** to serve as guardians, conservators, and Volunteer Court Visitors.

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References

2015 Annual Report, Nebraska Office of Public Guardian: supremecourt.nebraska.gov > Publications and Reports