

Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS)

Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) is a project of the American Bar Association to support court-led partnerships in states to drive changes in guardianship policy and practice. WINGS are ongoing state court and community stakeholder partnerships that drive changes affecting guardianship policy and practice through planning and action.

WINGS in Alaska include representatives from these advocacy organizations and state partners who recommend legislation to pass the Uniform Guardianship, Conservatorship, and Other Protective Arrangements Act (UGCOPAA) to modernize Alaska's guardianship statute, providing for stronger, more effective forms of oversight and enforcement, while also promoting the autonomy, basic rights, and dignity of the individual under guardianship.

WINGS Alaska Statute Committee Members

AARP

Alaska Commission on Aging

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

Alaska State Association for Guardianship and Advocacy

Disability Law Center of Alaska

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education

Key Coalition of Alaska

Alaska Court System

Court Visitors

Adult Protective Services

Attorney General's Office

Office of Elder Fraud Abuse

Office of Public Advocacy

Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman

WINGS Alaska Overall Accomplishments 2017 to 2024

Court Improvement Committee (combined with initial Monitoring Committee)

- ✓ Began annual report review in guardianship cases pilot in the Anchorage court 2017 and expanded to Bethel, Kenai and Homer courts in March 2023. New monitoring program now expanding statewide due to legislative funding in 2024.
 - Began requesting 12 months of statements on financial accounting from guardians for annual reports
 - Expanded to three new courts January 2025 (Palmer, Nome and Seward)
- ✓ Development of a new three-part online series on guardianship July 2018
 - <https://courts.alaska.gov/shc/guardian-conservator/index.htm>
- ✓ Addition of Guardianship Compliance Officer position to facilitate statewide court system improvements July 2020
- ✓ Awarded Guardianship Improvement Grant from Administration on Community Living (ACL) Sept. 2021 to present (ends 8/31/25)
- ✓ Commissioned Probate Rules committee to streamline petitioning process; enacted October 2021
- ✓ Development of Income & Expense Tracker application for family guardians and conservators September 2021
 - <https://courts.alaska.gov/shc/guardian-conservator/index.htm>

- ✓ Began offering two live Zoom classes on fundamentals of guardianship and annual reports July 2022
- ✓ Implemented the statewide Guardianship Helpline for community support July 2022
- ✓ Improved processes on new cases with increased information sent to petitioners and potential guardians such as an introductory letter and flyer on resources. Began 2020 and ongoing
- ✓ Researched ability to collect additional data on cases to inform future decisions regarding improvements. Research concluded December 2024 and project being implemented for start of FY2026
 - Triggering event for new petitions
 - Who and why in petitioned reviews
 - If a case is changed or dismissed, what is the reason (improvement, wrongdoing etc)
 - Will implement a project to gather from FY23, FY24 and FY25 for comparison years
- ✓ Extensive review and updates of all forms related to guardianship and conservatorship (2022-2024)

Education Committee:

- ✓ Alaska State Association for Guardianship & Advocacy (ASAGA) began offering community helpline support on guardianship matters July 2016. Saw 625% growth in calls in one year.
- ✓ ASAGA was awarded a grant through American Bar Endowment to continue community services including classes and other educational content April 2017. Was awarded second year. April 2018
- ✓ ASAGA was awarded a three-year grant with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority July 2019
 - Partnered and worked with the Alaska Court System to help develop community programs for increased sustainability. (ACS took over in July 2022)
- ✓ Committee begin to look at a more advisory style model to ensure continued educational content with ASAGA 2023-present. ASAGA continues to offer annual conference and free statewide webinars.

Alternatives to Guardianship & Conservatorship & Alternatives for Court Appointments Committee:

- ✓ Committee members supported legislation regarding Supported Decision-Making Agreements (SDMA), enacted into law September 2018
- ✓ Committee members conducted several statewide trainings on SDMA between 2017 and 2020
- ✓ Alaska Court System (ACS) updated petition forms requesting information on SDMA and Powers of Attorney December 2023
- ✓ ACS offered classes on alternatives to guardianship, began January 2024
- ✓ ACS increased training for Court Visitors and Judicial Officers on alternatives, July 2022 to present
- ✓ Workgroup currently looking at options for volunteer supporters and sustainable pathway for future Supported Decision-Making Agreement. Began 2024 -present
- ✓ Workgroup currently looking at Volunteer Guardianship Programs to ease public guardianship appointments. Began 2024 -present

Statute Committee:

- ✓ Workgroups for guardianship and conservatorship reviewed the 2017 Uniform Guardianship & Conservatorship and Other Protective Arrangements Act (UGCOPAA) from the Uniform Law Commission for consideration in Alaska. 2020 - 2021
- ✓ Workgroups considered side by side comparison of UGCOPAA and Alaska Guardianship and Conservatorship Statutes and made recommendations for legislation to update Alaska Statutes. 2022-2023
- ✓ Legislation drafted by Legislative Legal and reviewed by committee members 2024-2025