Utah Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS)

Thursday, October 19, 2023, 12:00 pm | 2 hours |

AGENDA

	Торіс	Presenter	Materials		
12:00	Meeting begins				
	 Housekeeping, welcome guests, minutes 	Judge Kelly	– WINGS Minutes (August 2023 – draft)		
12:10	New Business				
	• Guardianship Bill of Rights (Utah Code 75-5-301.5)	Lisa Thornton Anneli Smith	– Guardianship Bill of Rights – Handout		
	 Supported Decision-Making legislation 	Andrew Riggle	– Revised HB 510		
	 Attorney requirement for minors turning 18 	Group Discussion	 Minors Turning 18 – Statute Clarification Guardianship of a Minor Webpage 		
1:30	Project Updates				
	CJA Rule 6-501Attorney Gap workgroup	Shonna Thomas			
1:45	Other Business				
	•				
2:00	Meeting adjourned				
Next meeting: December 21, 2023 (via WebEx)					

Lisa Thornton and Anneli Smith, attorneys, full guardians of adult individuals who have been incapacitated since birth.

A coalition of other members who are concerned about this statute including: Members of the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities Guardianship Associates Utah Parent Center Autism Council of Utah Utah Prader-Willi Syndrome Association Attorneys in the Elder law Section of the Bar Many Attorneys who practice in the area of guardianship Envision Supports: DSPD support coordinators

Summary of Concerns:

The Guardianship Bill of Rights Statute, Utah Code Ann. Section 75-5-301.5, causes deep concern to the guardians and families of adult individuals who have been incapacitated from birth and at no time had capacity. Well over 10,000 incapacitated adult individuals are affected by this statute, with hundreds more each year reaching the age of 18 and coming under the statute's reach.

The statute appears to have been drafted with a previously capacitated elderly or other person in mind who formerly had a productive life of earnings and decision making. It refers to times when an individual regains capacity, it refers to the property, bank accounts, and salary of the individual, the right to privacy of information, of making their own medical decisions, of deciding to drive, get a job, and cohabitate, among other choices.

Most of these rights are geared toward those who formerly had capacity or may go in and out of capacity. But they cause unintended harmful consequences for incapacitated adult individuals who have life-long conditions where they remain incapacitated throughout their lifespan. The provisions in this statute put these vulnerable adults at risk for exploitation and also cause their bests interests to be abrogated. They risk losing crucial benefits such as SSI, DSPD, and Medicaid that typically –and are intended to--support the adult incapacitated individual throughout their lifetime.

The Bill of Rights further creates internal inconsistencies in the guardianship statutory scheme.

The Bill of Rights creates confusion with court guardianship orders, including what should be included, and what guardianship orders need to be amended.

See the statute text below with comments.

Next Steps:

Approach the statute sponsors Representative Abott and Senator Weiler and request that they add a sentence to the statute to protect adult individuals with life-long disabilities who have been incapacitated from birth.

Our suggestion would be to add the bolded part into subsection1 as follows:

75-5-301.5 Rights of a person alleged to be incapacitated—Rights of incapacitated person.

(1) Except as otherwise provided by this chapter, any other law, or for a person under a court-ordered guardianship with a life-long disability who was incapacitated before the age of 18.

Specific Areas of concerns:

75-5-301.5. Rights of a person alleged to be incapacitated -- Rights of an incapacitated person.

(1) Except as otherwise provided by this chapter or any other law, a person alleged to be incapacitated has the right to:

(a) be represented by counsel before a guardianship is imposed and have counsel represent the person during the guardianship proceeding; (for the adult child who is incapacitated the court already requires counsel. An exception to this rule: 75-5-303 (5)(d), counsel for the adult child is not required if he is the child of the petitioners/guardians, the value of his estate does not exceed \$20,000 as established by affidavit of petitioners, the adult child will appear in court with the petitioners, and counsel is not necessary to protect his interests. Does 75-5-303(5)(d) not come into play because of the "any other law" exception in Subsection (1) or does it conflict with the Guardianship Bill of Rights?

(b) receive a copy of all documents filed in a guardianship proceeding;

(c) have a relative, a physician, or any interested person speak about or raise any issue of concern on behalf of the person during the guardianship proceeding;

- (d) receive information about guardianships from the court; and
- (e) be treated with respect and dignity.

(2) Except as otherwise provided by this chapter or any other law, an incapacitated person for whom a guardian is appointed has right to:

(a) have counsel represent the incapacitated person at any time after the guardian is appointed;

(b) have a relative, a physician, or any interested person speak about or raise any issue of concern on behalf of the person in any court hearing about the guardianship;

(c) receive a copy of all documents filed in court regarding the guardianship;

(d) receive information about guardianships from the court;

(e) ask questions and express concerns or complaints about a guardian and the actions of a guardian to the court;

(f) participate in developing an individualized plan for the incapacitated person's care, including:

(i) managing the incapacitated person's assets and property; (This may impair the guardian's ability to act for the incapacitated person in a reasonable and efficient manner.)

(ii) determining the incapacitated person's residence; and (How much power should an incapacitated adult individual have in deciding where they live versus a court-appointed parent/guardian's determination regarding an appropriate residence?

(iii) determining the services to be received by the incapacitated person;

(g) be given consideration in regards to the incapacitated person's current and previously stated desires, preferences for health care and medical treatment, and religious and moral beliefs; (The term "previously stated desires" suggests someone who once had capacity and the ability to communicate. Some adult individuals who are incapacitated say they will not participate in medical treatment such as taking necessary medication or having a procedure done that will save their life or make it better. If the adult child with a low IQ objects, should the parents/guardians give consideration to that preference and not do the procedure?)

(h) remain as independent as possible, including giving deference to the incapacitated person's preference for the incapacitated person's residence and standard of living: (This makes sense for the elderly that had capacity and assets, but this makes little to no sense for an adult child who has been incapacitated since birth and whose parents are the guardians. The adult child's income is 99% of the time below the poverty level. If the incapacitated person is allowed to determine the standard of living, where does the money come from? And does the guardian need to move if the ward wants to live somewhere else?)

(i) as expressed or demonstrated before a determination of capacity was made; or (Again, the reference to some declaration made when there was capacity)

(ii) as currently expressed or demonstrated by the incapacitated person if the preference is reasonable under the circumstances;

(i) be granted the greatest degree of freedom possible that is consistent with the reasons for the guardianship;

(j) be able to exercise control over all aspects of the incapacitated person's life that are not granted to the guardian in the order of appointment; (A full guardianship has always previously meant the guardian has the same powers and rights as a parent to an unemancipated minor. Utah Code Section 75-5-312(c)(i)). This creates inconsistency within the statute. Going forward, the court order in the guardianship process would need to list everything that could potentially come up in the incapacitated person's life.)

(k) engage in any activity that the court has not expressly reserved for the guardian, including marriage or domestic partnership, traveling, working, or having a driver license; (Again, a full guardianship has always meant the guardian has the same powers and rights as a parent to an unemancipated minor. 75-5-312(c)(i)). This provision appears to "flip" the previous and long-standing rule that everything not excluded was included to the opposite: anything not expressly included is excluded. This creates confusion as to existing guardianship orders. Since a parent needs to consent to marriage of a child before age 18, this right to marry without parental consent creates an internal inconsistency in the statute. Do court orders going forward need to say that the guardian can deny permission for the ward to marry, enter into a domestic partnership, travel, work, or have a driver license? That is in conflict with the provision discussed above which states that the guardian has the same powers and rights as a parent of an unemancipated minor.

Do attorneys need to go back and amend prior orders to include the language that parents can deny permission for these activities if they were just granted a "full guardianship?"

(I) be treated with respect and dignity;

(m) be treated fairly by the incapacitated person's guardian;

(n) maintain privacy and confidentiality in personal matters; (A guardian of an adult individual needs to have all information in order to property manage all of the needs and estate of the incapacitated person.

(o) receive telephone calls and personal mail and associate with relatives and acquaintances unless the guardian and the court determine that the association should be restricted or prohibited in accordance with Section 75-5-312.5; (Some adult children become obsessed with someone in their camps or day programs. We know of instances where adults stalk incapacitated adult individuals in order to take advantage of them. Do guardians have to let them have personal phone calls and associate with these individuals? Do guardians have to go to court to prevent this? Again, this seems more appropriate for someone who once had capacity.

(p) receive timely, effective, and appropriate health care and medical treatment that does not violate the incapacitated person's rights;

(q) have all services provided by a guardian at a reasonable rate of compensation;

(r) have a court review any request for payment by a guardian to avoid excessive or unnecessary fees or duplicative billing; (isn't this already included in the fact that a guardian who is not a parent is required to file a financial accounting? Further, these incapacitated individuals typically have no assets other than the approximately \$914 monthly they receive as Supplemental Security Income. Again this is something that seems more appropriate for individuals who have had capacity and have assets.)

(s) receive prudent financial management of the incapacitated person's property; (isn't this included in the fact that a guardian has fiduciary duties?)

(t) subject to Subsections 75-5-312(4)(h) and 75-5-417(4), receive a copy of an accounting report regarding the incapacitated person's estate that is submitted to the court by the guardian under Section 75-5-312 or the conservator under Section 75-5-417 if a conservator is appointed for the incapacitated person; (The statute exempts parents who are guardians of their adult incapacitated child

from this accounting. Again, this revision of the statute appears to address concerns relating to individuals who had capacity at one time or go in and out of capacity.)

(u) receive and control the incapacitated person's salary, if approved by the court; (First, most of these adult children have no salary. Second, most of these adult children who are incapacitated receive monies for expenses such as food and co-pays, etc. from Supplemental Security Income (approximately \$914 a month). They also have Medicaid that provides medical insurance. Many have funding from the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPSD) that provides respite care or allows them live in a group home. Federal regulations under Medicaid and Social Security render these adult children ineligible for the benefits if they have more than \$2,000 in assets in their name. If the adult child has control of their funds, they could easily go over the \$2,000 mark in any given month, get audited and lose these critical benefits.

(v) maintain a bank account and manage the incapacitated person's personal money, if approved ty the court; and (This could create a huge problem for the guardian. The adult child could easily overdraft the account or the debit card and the guardian/conservator would have to deal with the overdraft, or the bank charges. Further, all the concerns stated under (u), above, also apply here.

(w) ask the court to:

(i) review the management activity of a guardian if a dispute cannot be resolved regarding the guardian's management;

(ii) continue to review the need for a guardianship or to modify or terminate a guardianship; and

(iii) enter an order restoring the incapacitated person's capacity at the earliest possible time.

(Adult individuals who have been incapacitated from birth do not come back into capacity. This, once again, refers to the elderly or others who once had capacity and may possibly regain capacity.

(3) The rights of an incapacitated person under this section do not abrogate any remedy provided by law.

(4) Any right described in this section may be:

(a) addressed in a guardianship proceeding; or

(b) enforced through a private cause of action.

Section 1. Section 75-1-201 is amended to read:

Part 2. General Definitions

(19) "Governing instrument" means a deed, will, trust, insurance or annuity policy, account with POD designation, security registered in beneficiary form (TOD), pension, profit-sharing, retirement, or similar benefit plan, instrument creating or exercising a power of appointment or a power of attorney, a supported decision-making agreement, or a dispositive, appointive, or nominative instrument of any similar type.

(22): "Incapacitated" or "incapacity" is measured by functional limitations and means a judicial determination after proof by clear and convincing evidence that an adult's ability to do the following is impaired to the extent that the individual lacks the ability, even with appropriate technological assistance, to meet the essential requirements for financial protection or physical health, safety, or self-care:

(a) receive and evaluate information;

(b) make and communicate decisions; or

(c) provide for necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, or safety.

Section 2. Section 75-5-601 is enacted to read:

44 Part 6. Supported Decision-making Agreements

45 75-5-601. Definitions.

46 As used in this part:

47 (1) "Covered entity" means the same as that term is defined in 45 C.F.R. Sec. 160.103.

48 (2) "Good faith" means honesty in fact in the conduct or transaction concerned.

49 (3) "HIPAA" means the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996,

50 Pub. L. No. 104-191, 110 Stat. 1936, as amended.

51 (4) "Principal" means an individual who:

52 (a) is 18 years old or older;

53 (b) has a disability, as that term is defined in Section 62A-5b-102; and

55 (c) has sufficient capacity to seeks to enter or has entered into a supported decision-making

agreement with at

56 least one supporter; and-

(d) has permission of the principal's guardian or conservator to enter into a supported decisionmaking agreement, if the supported decision-making agreement includes an area in which a court has granted the guardian or conservator authority.

(5) "Protected health information" means the same as that term is defined in 45 C.F.R. Sec. 160.103.

(6) "Supported decision-making" means the process of supporting and accommodating an individual in the decision-making process to make, communicate, and effectuate life decisions, without impeding the self-determination of the individual.

(7) "Supported decision-making agreement" means an agreement between a principal and at least one supporter that meets the requirements of Section 75-5-6034.

(8) "Supporter" means an individual:

(a) is 18 years old or older; without:

(i) a substantiated allegation of abuse, neglect, or exploitation;

(ii) a protective or restraining order;

(iii) a conviction for:

(A) harm of another;

(B) theft; or

(C) financial crime; and

(b) has agreed to provide specified assistance to a principal by entering into a supported decision-making agreement with the principal.

Section 3: Section 75-5-602 is enacted to read:

75-5-602. Purpose of chapter.

(1) Provide a principal assistance in:

(a) gathering and assessing information;

(b) understanding options, responsibilities, and consequences of a decision; and

(c) communicating decisions for a principal... who does not need a guardian or other substitute decision-maker for such activities, but who if the principal wants decision-making assistance communicating the principal's decisions.

(2) Give supporters legal status, as specified in the agreement, to be with a principal, to access information on behalf of a principal, and participate in discussions with others when a principal is making decisions or attempting to obtain information.

(3) Enable supporters to assist in making and communicating decisions for a principal but not substitute as the decision-maker for a principal.

Section $\frac{24}{24}$. Section $75-5-60\frac{23}{23}$ is enacted to read:

75-5-6023. Interpretation of chapter.

This chapter shall be construed and applied in accordance with the following principles:

(1) a principal should be able to:

(a) live in the manner in which the principal wishes; and

(b) <u>make decisions about accepting</u> or refusinge support, assistance, or protection, as long as <u>doing so the principal</u> does not <u>cause serious bodily injury</u>, as <u>defined in 26B-5-301(22)</u> to the <u>principal or</u> harm others and has capacity to make decisions about such matters.;

(2) <u>A</u> principal should be able to be informed about and, to the best of the principal's abilities, participate in the management of the principal's affairs;

(3) An principal should receive the most effective, yet least restrictive and intrusive, form of support, assistance, or protection when the principal is unable to manage the principal's affairs alone, and

(4) <u>T</u>the values, beliefs, wishes, cultural norms, and traditions that a principal holds should be respected in managing supporting the principal's affairs.

Section 55. Section 75-5-6034 is enacted to read:

75-5-6034. Supported decision-making agreement.

(1) Subject to Subsection (6), a principal may enter into a supported decision-making agreement at any time if the principal:

(a) enters into the agreement voluntarily and without coercion or undue influence; and

(b) understands the nature and effect of the agreement.

(b) (2) A principal is presumed to understand the nature and effect of the agreement, unless the agreement involves an area in which a court has granted a guardian or conservator authority. 88 (32) A supported decision-making agreement shall:

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90 (b) state the date on which the agreement is effective;

91 (c) designate at least one supporter;

92 (d) describe:

93 (i) how the principal uses supported decision-making to make decisions;

94 (ii) the rights of the principal;

Commented [AR1]: An alternative from the proposed APS regs: immediate risk would be assessed via the likelihood of death, irreparable harm, or significant loss of income, assets, or resources

Commented [AR2]: This is the contracting standard, or we could use the power of attorney criteria of understanding the principal is appointing a supporter. Either way, I'm leaning toward putting it here rather than in the definition of principal. What do you think?

Commented [NC3R2]: This is what we came up with Alan to try to address the capacity question. We're open to suggestions on other options, if you have any. Thanks.

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95 (iii) the responsibilities of each supporter;

96 (iv) the decision-making supports and accommodations the principal chooses to

97 receive from each supporter; and

98 (v) the types of decisions, if any, with which a supporter is not authorized to assist the 99 principal;

100 (e) (e) include the ink or electronic signature of:

(i) the principal;

(ii) each supporter,

(iii) the guardian, if required under Subsection 75-5-601(4)(d); and

(A) two witnesses, at least eighteen years of age; or

(B) a notary public; and

102 (f) describe how any perceived or actual conflict of interest between a supporter and 103 the principal will be mitigated.

(43)(a) A supported decision-making agreement executed other than in this state is valid in this state if, when the supported decision-making was executed, the execution complied with the law of the jurisdiction that determines the meaning and effect of the supported decision-making agreement.

(b) The meaning and effect of a supported decision-making agreement is determined by the law of the jurisdiction indicated in the supported decision-making agreement and, in the absence of an indication of jurisdiction, by the law of the jurisdiction in which the supported decision-making agreement was executed.

104 (<u>543</u>)-(a) A supported decision-making agreement may include a release or other 105 document by which the principal authorizes a supporter to access the <u>principal'sprincipal's</u> confidential

106 information, subject to the terms of the supported decision-making agreement described in 107 Subsection (2)(d) and the supporter's duties described in Section 75-5-6045.

108 (b) Before a covered entity, as defined in 45 CFR 160.103, may share a principal's protected health information with a

109 supporter, the principal shall sign a HIPAA consent form authorizing release of the protected 110 health information to the supporter.

111 (c) Nothing in this part shall be construed to alter or preempt the requirements for

112 protecting health information under HIPAA.

113 (65) Each supporter shall include with the supporter's signature:

114 (a) a description of the supporter's relationship to the principal;

115 (b) a statement of the supporter's willingness to act as a supporter;

116 (c) an acknowledgment of the supporter's duties; and

117 (d) an attestation that the supporter:

118 (i) agrees to honor the right of the principal to make decisions; and

(ii) will not make decisions for the principal, including health care decisions; and

(iii) will respect and work to further the independence of the principal.

(<u>765</u>) A supported decision-making agreement may do one or more of the following:

(a) specify a time period for which the supported decision-making agreement is valid;

(b) designate more than one supporter;

(cb) designate an alternate individual to act in the place of a supporter under circumstances specified in the supported decision-making agreement; or

(de) authorize a supporter to share information with another supporter or other

individual named in the supported decision-making agreement.

(6)(a) A principal may not enter into a supported decision-making agreement if the agreement encroaches on the authority of a guardian or conservator of the principal, unless, in writing, the guardian or conservator approves of the principal entering into the supported decision-making agreement.

(b) A guardian or conservator may not, without good cause, prevent a principal from

entering into a supported decision making agreement that does not encroach on the authority of the guardian or conservator.

Section 46. Section 75-5-6045 is enacted to read:

75-5-6045. Supporter duties.

(1) A supporter shall:

(a) act with the care, competence, and diligence ordinarily exercised by individuals in

circumstances, and in accordance with the supporter's skills or expertise;

(b) act in good faith;

(c) comply with the terms of the supported decision-making agreement;

(d) maintain records, which the supporter shall make available to the principal upon request, concerning:

(i) the supporter's actions under the supported decision-making agreement; and

(ii) how the principal communicates and expresses opinions to the supporter; and

(e) ensure that all information collected on behalf of a principal pursuant to a supported

decision-making agreement and this section is:

(i) kept confidential, as appropriate;

(ii) not subject to unauthorized access, use, or disclosure; and

(iii) properly disposed of when appropriate.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in the supported decision-making agreement or

Subsection (3), a supporter may, as directed by the principal:

(a) assist the principal in understanding information, options, responsibilities, and

consequences of the principal's life decisions, including decisions relating to the principal's affairs or supportive services;

(b) help the principal access, obtain, and understand information that is relevant to a life decision, including medical, psychological, financial, or educational decisions, or any treatment records or records related to the management of the principal's affairs or supportive services; (c) assist the principal with finding, obtaining, and making appointments for supportive services,

and implement the principal's plans for supportive services;

(d) help the principal monitor information about the principal's affairs or supportive services, including tracking future necessary or recommended services;

(e) ascertain the wishes and decisions of the principal, assist in communicating those wishes and decisions to others, and advocate to ensure that the wishes and decisions of the principal are implemented; or

(f) assist the principal with obtaining information to which the principal is entitled.

(3) A supporter may not:

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(a) coerce, exploit, exert undue influence on, or make decisions on behalf of the principal;

(b) sign for the principal or provide an electronic signature of the principal to a third party; or

(c) make health care decisions for the principal; or

(d) without the principal's consent:

(i) obtain information that is not reasonably related to matters with which the supporter

is authorized to support or assist the principal pursuant to the supported decision-making agreement;-or

(ii) use information acquired in connection with the supported decision-making agreement for a purpose other than supporting or assisting the principal pursuant to the supported decision-making agreement; or

(iii) delegate the supporter's duties to a third party.

Section 57. Section 75-5-6056 is enacted to read:

75-5-6056. Revocation -- Withdrawal.

(1) A principal may revoke a supported decision-making agreement at any time by providing written notice to all other parties to the agreement.

(2) A supporter may withdraw from a supported decision-making agreement at any time by providing written notice to all other parties to the agreement.

(3) A written notice of revocation or withdrawal under this section may be provided by electronic means.

Section 68. Section 75-5-6067 is enacted to read:

75-5-6067. Termination.

Unless otherwise provided in the supported decision-making agreement, the supported decisionmaking agreement is terminated upon the occurrence of any of the following:

(1) death of the principal;

(2) revocation by the principal pursuant to Section 75-5-6056;-or

(3) with a specific supporter if the supporter is no longer qualified by reason of failure to meet the requirements of Subsection 75-5-601(8)(a)(i)-(iii)(C) during the term of a supported decision-making agreement;

(4) withdrawal by all of the supporters pursuant to Section 75-5-6056 without the designation of a successor supporter;

(5) the principal signs a valid power of attorney, healthcare directive, or declaration for mental health treatment, except to the extent the document expressly continues, in whole or in part, the supported decision-making agreement; or

(6) a court:

(a) determines the principal does not have capacity to execute or consent to a supported decisionmaking agreement; or

(b) appoints a temporary or permanent guardian or conservator, unless the court's order of appointment:

(i) modifies but continues the supported decision-making agreement; and

(ii) limits the powers and duties of the guardian.

Section 79. Section 75-5-6078 is enacted to read:

75-5-6078. Impact of supported decision-making agreement.

(1) A decision or request made or communicated by a principal with the assistance of a supporter in accordance with the terms of a supported decision-making agreement and this part shall, for the purposes of any provision of law, be recognized as the decision or request of the principal and may be enforced on the same basis as a decision or request of the principal without support.

(2) The availability of a supported decision-making agreement does not limit the informal use of supported decision making, or preclude judicial consideration of informal supported decision-making arrangements as a less restrictive alternative to a guardianship or conservatorship.

(3) Execution of a supported decision-making agreement may not be a condition of participating in any activity, service, or program.

(4) A court may not consider a principal's execution of a supported decision-making agreement as evidence of the principal's incapacity.

(5) The existence of a supported decision-making agreement does not preclude the principal from acting independently of the supported decision-making agreement.

Section \$10. Section 75-5-60\$9 is enacted to read:

75-5-6089. Liability.

(1) A person who is not a party to a supported decision-making agreement, including a provider of health care or financial services, that in good faith accepts or relies upon a supported decision-making agreement:

(a) may presume that the signatures on the supported decision-making agreement are genuine, unless the person has actual knowledge that any signature on the supported decision-making agreement is not genuine;

(b) may presume that a supported decision-making agreement is valid and that a purported supporter's authority is valid, unless the person has actual knowledge that the supported decision-making agreement or the purported supporter's authority has been revoked, terminated, or is otherwise void or invalid; and

(c) is not subject to civil or criminal liability, or discipline for unprofessional conduct, for giving effect to a provision contained in a supported decision-making agreement, or for following the direction of a supporter given in accordance with the supported decision-making agreement.
(2) If a person has reason to believe a principal is or has been the subject of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or observes a principal being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse, neglect, or exploitation, the person shall immediately report the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation to-Adult Protective Services.

(3) The provisions of this part may not be construed to affect mandatory reporting obligations related to abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

(4) A supporter who violates this part or the terms of a supported decision-making agreement is liable to the principal or the principal's successor in interest for the amount required to restore the value of the principal's property to what it would have been had the violation not occurred.
(5) A transaction between a supporter and a principal that occurs during the period of a supported decision-making agreement or while the trusteesupporter is in a position of trust with the principal retains significant influence over the beneficiary and from which the trusteesupporter obtains an advantage is voidable by the beneficiary principal unless the trusteesupporter

establishes that the transaction was fair to the beneficiaryprincipal.

Minors Turning 18 – Statute Clarification

A question has arisen regarding whether an attorney is required in guardianship proceedings for a minor becoming an incapacitated adult.

Summary

- The Utah Uniform Probate Code treats minors and adults differently regarding the appointment of an attorney:
 - For minors, statute allows a court to appoint an attorney at its discretion any time it "determines that the interests of the minor are or may be inadequately represented." (Utah Code 75-5-207)
 - For adults, statute gives the person alleged to be incapacitated the right to be represented by an attorney. (Utah Code 75-5-301.5) It also requires the court to appoint an attorney unless the person alleged to be incapacitated has counsel of their own choice, or it meets the requirements under Utah Code 75-5-303(5)(d).
- Utah Code 75-5-317 addresses guardianship proceedings for minors becoming incapacitated adults:
 - This section allows the petitioner to begin that process when the minor is 17 years, six months of age so the guardianship will be in effect when the person turns 18.
 - This part of the code does not discuss the requirement of an attorney for this population.

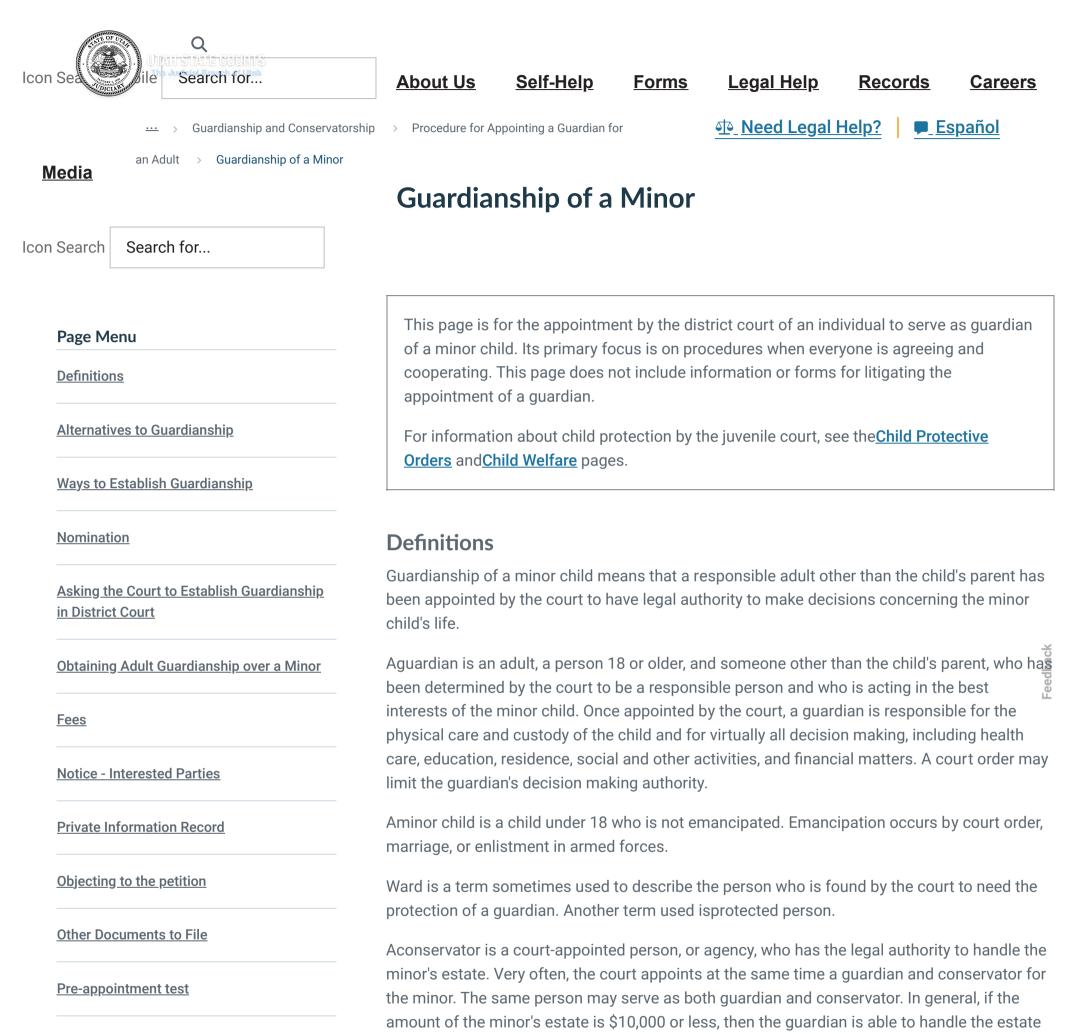
Concerns

- Some districts have determined that section 75-5-303 applies in guardianship proceedings for minors becoming incapacitated adults and subsequently require an attorney in these proceedings (unless subsection (5)(d) applies).
- It is unclear if all districts follow this same process.
- Many petitioners, when informed of this requirement express frustration and pushback, especially if they are represented by counsel.
- The court website is unclear on this matter. There is very little discussion of section 75-5-317 on the website and what little discussion exists is found on the "Guardianship of a Minor" page. (See handout "Guardianship of a Minor Webpage")

How do others interpret the statute, what determination does each district follow, and what can be done to add more clarity?

Notice: System maintenance will be performed on Tuesday, October 17, 2023, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. MST

Some or all areas of the website may be unavailable during this maintenance period.



<u>Hearing</u>

Attorney for the Minor

Order and Letter of Guardianship

Responsibilities of the Guardian

Reporting Requirements

without appointment as conservator. Sometimes the court appoints only a conservator for the minor child if the child needs someone to handle financial assets for the child. A child's parent can be appointed to serve as the child's conservator if the child has financial assets that need management.

Arepresentative payee is an adult appointed through an administrative process with the Social Security Administration. Some minors receive Social Security benefits. In most cases, a courtappointed guardian or conservator must also become the minor's representative payee to handle the minor's Social Security benefits.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents

Ending a Guardianship

Alternatives to Guardianship

There are other possible court orders or legal methods for caring for a minor child if the parents do not have custody of the child.

Request to Remove a Guardian

Forms

Related Information

Conservatorship of a minor	>
Fees	>
Fee Waiver	>
Filing Procedures	>
Finding Legal Help	>
Free Legal Clinics	>
Going to Court	>
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Power of Attorney

Sometimes, a child may need to be in the temporary custody of someone other than their parents. A parent, or even a court-appointed guardian, may delegate their legal decision-making authority to another adult for up to six months by executing a power of attorney. This type of power of attorney is described on the <u>Power of Attorney: Delegating a Parent's or</u> <u>Guardian's Powers to an Attorney-in-Fact page</u>.

Conservatorship of a Minor Child

<u>Utah Code section 75-5-401</u> permits the district court to appoint a conservator for a minor if:

- the minor owns property that requires management or protection which cannot otherwise be provided;
- the minor's business affairs may be jeopardized; or
- a conservator is needed to obtain or provide funds for the minor's support and education.

Often a conservator is needed if the minor is about to receive an inheritance, government benefits, insurance or annuity benefits or damages as a result of a civil lawsuit. Sometimes a parent may need to be appointed their child's conservator. For information and forms, see our web page on <u>conservatorship of a minor</u>.

Juvenile Court Orders

In a<u>child welfare proceeding</u>, the Juvenile Court has jurisdiction to enter orders of temporary or permanent custody, guardianship, and termination of parental rights. Otherwise, custody disputes between a child's parents are heard in divorce or parentage cases in district court. See our web page on <u>child custody</u>.

School-Based Guardianship

A local school board may adopt a policy permitting it to designate a responsible adult residing in the school district as legal guardian of a child whose custodial parent does not reside within the state as long, as it meets the requirements according to <u>Utah Code section 53G-6-303</u>. If you are interested in seeking guardianship through the local school board, contact your local school district for more information.

Adoption

Feedback

Sometimes the parental rights of a child's legal parents are terminated by the court or by the 'parents' consent to an adoption of the child. Adoption occurs only by court order and is a different proceeding than guardianship. Adoptions may occur in juvenile or district court. Sometimes a stepparent adopts a spouse's child if the child's other parent either consents to the adoption of that parent's rights are terminated. See our web page on stepparent adoption.

Ways to Establish Guardianship

There are several ways to establish guardianship of a minor under Utah law. These include:

- Acceptance by the guardian of atestamentary appointment. The child's parents can
 nominate a guardian in their will or other written document. The guardian must submit
 written acceptance with the probate court and provide notice to interested persons
 according to law.
- Appointment by alocal school board.
- Appointment of a guardian in a child welfare proceeding injuvenile court.
- District court appointment. This is the most common court proceeding to obtain a guardianship of a minor. The laws governing guardians of minors in the district court are<u>Utah Code sections 75-5-201 through 212</u>.

Nomination

The parent of a minor child can nominate a guardian or conservator for the child. To be effective, nomination of a guardian or conservator must be in a will or other signed writing. For further information and forms for this type of nomination, see the <u>Nominating a Guardian and</u> <u>Conservator</u> web page.

Asking the Court to Establish Guardianship in District Court

Any adult interested in the minor child's welfare may file a petition in the district court in the county in Utah where the minor child resides or is present.

Are you filing in Utah County?

If yes, you must file your papers with the Provo Courthouse. Deliver your papers to the courthouse or email them to ProvoFiling@utcourts.gov.

The petitioner is usually the person who wants to be the guardian, but the petitioner may request the appointment of some other qualified adult. The court may appoint as guardian any person (other than the child's parents) whose appointment would be in the best interests of the minor. In determining the minor's best interests, the court may consider the minor's physical, mental, moral, and emotional health needs.

A guardian submits personally to the jurisdiction of the court in any proceeding relating to the guardianship of the minor child. The guardian must provide the court with a current mailing address and contact information.

To create the petition and other required forms, use <u>OCAP</u> (the Online Court Assistance Program).

Obtaining Adult Guardianship over a Minor

The process for asking to be appointed guardian of an adult (or soon-to-be adult) child is generally the same as above, with a few exceptions.

Report Required by Physician or Psychologist

A petition for guardianship must include a written report of an evaluation of the minor by a physician or psychologist acting within her or his scope of practice. The report must include:

- a specific description of the physical, psychiatric, or psychological diagnosis of the respondent;
 a comprehensive assessment listing any functional impairments of the respondent and
- a comprehensive assessment listing any functional impairments of the respondent and an explanation of how and to what extent these functional impairments may prevent them from receiving or evaluating information in making decisions or in communicating informed decisions, with or without assistance;
- an analysis of the tasks of daily living the respondent is capable of performing independently or with assistance;
- a list of the medications the respondent is receiving, the dosage of the medications, and a description of the effects each medication has on their behavior;
- a prognosis for improvement in the respondent's condition and a recommendation for the most appropriate rehabilitation plan or care plan; and
- other information the physician or psychologist considers appropriate.

When to file

Anyone asking to be guardian of a respondent who will soon be an adult can do so if the respondent is at least 17 years and 6 months old. If the court grants the guardianship, it becomes effective on the day the respondent turns 18. <u>Utah Code 75-5-317(2)</u>.

Fees

The required documents are filed at the district court. At the time of filling, the petitioner must pay the filing fee. If they cannot pay the filing fees, they may file a motion asking the court to waive the fees.

- If the motion is granted, then they can proceed with the case.
- If the motion is denied, they must first pay the fees before the case can proceed.

See the **Fees and Fee Waiver page** for more information and forms.

Notice - Interested Parties

Once the documents are filed, the court will typically schedule a hearing. Notice of the time and place of hearing of a petition for the appointment of a guardian of a minor must be given to:

- The minor if they are 14 or older;
- The person who has had the principal care and custody of the minor during the 60 days before the petition was filed;
- Any living parent of the minor;
- Any guardian appointed by the will or written instrument of the parent of the minor who died last;
- The school district in which petitioner resides, if the child is of school age. A representative of the school district may participate in the hearing.

<u>Utah Code Section 75-1-401</u> governs notice in this type of court proceeding.

The court provides notice of the hearing to the parties, but the petitioner must provide the names and addresses of the interested parties to the court in the petition.

If a petitioner does not have the addresses for the interested parties who must receive notice, the petitioner may ask the court to allow for alternative service of the notice. For information and forms, see the <u>Motion for Alternative Service page</u>. In addition, the judge may make other orders about notice to interested parties.

Private Information Record

The guardian must file a Required Private Information Record form before the court enters an order of appointment. The form asks for contact and other information about the guardian and the minor, contact information for the guardian's next of kin, and school information for the minor.

The guardian must make sure the court always has the guardian's current contact information The guardian may call the court that handled the guardianship case to notify it about any changes, or may file an updated Private Information Record with the court.

The form is available in the Forms section

Objecting to the petition

Any person served with notice of a guardianship petition may object. This can be done by filing a written objection before the hearing, or raising the objection at the hearing orally. An oral objection must be followed up with a written objection within 7 days.

If an oral objection is made but there is no written objection within 7 days the petitioner can ask the court to proceed with the original petition by filing a Request to Submit for Decision.

If a party files an objection in a guardianship, conservatorship or other probate case, the

parties must attend mediation to try to resolve the issues before the case can move forward. <u>Code of Judicial Administration Rule 6-506</u>. See the <u>Alternative Dispute Resolution in</u> <u>Probate Cases web page</u> for more information.

If an objection is filed in a guardianship, conservatorship or other probate case, the parties must share certain information with each other. See the <u>Initial Disclosures web page</u> for more information about the requirements.

Other Documents to File

If any of the following are required in a specific guardianship proceeding, the petitioner should try to file the documents along with the petition. Otherwise, the documents should be filed before the scheduled hearing. If they are not filed before the hearing, the hearing may be rescheduled or the court may not be able to appoint the guardian.

- If the minor is 14 or older, the court shall appoint a person nominated by the minor, unless the court finds the appointment contrary to the minor's best interests. The petitioner should file the minor's written nomination or consent with the petition.
- If the minor child's legal parents are alive and consent to the guardianship, then the petitioner should try to get the written consents from both parents.
- If a legal parent is dead, then the petitioner should file a copy of that parent's death certificate.
- If a legal parent's parental rights have been terminated by court order, then the petitioner should file a copy of that court order.
- If there is some other court order that affects the custodial rights of the legal parent, then the petitioner should file a copy of that court order.
- If the legal parent's parental rights have otherwise been suspended and the petitioner is unable to get that parent's written consent to the guardianship, then the petitioner should file a written statement or affidavit explaining the parent's circumstances to the court and attach any written evidence about the parent's circumstances.
- If the minor is older than 11, the petitioner must obtain and file with the court a certificate from the local police authority in the jurisdiction where minor has lived during past 2 years stating that there have been no criminal charges filed against the minor and the minor is not the subject of a criminal investigation in that jurisdiction. A copy of the certificate should also be given to the superintendent of the school district in which the minor would attend school in Utah.
- If the minor is older than 11, the petitioner should provide a release by or on behalf of the minor to the superintendent of the school district in which the minor would attend school in Utah within a reasonable time prior to the hearing allowing the superintendent full access to all criminal records of the minor in those jurisdictions outside the state where minor has resided for past 2 years.

Pre-appointment test

Utah Rule of Judicial Administration 6-501 requires that, before a person can be appointed as Feedbac guardian, the person must take a test about their authority and responsibilities and file a **<u>Certificate of Completion</u>** with the court.

The test is not meant to screen anyone out of their role as guardian; it is meant to reinforce some of the responsibilities of the office. It is permitted to complete the test before appointment and file the form with the petition.

For more information and forms, see the Guardianship and Conservatorship Pre-appointment Tests page.

Hearing

Typically, the court will set a date for a hearing when the petition is filed. This hearing is not a trial with testimony by witnesses, although the judge may ask questions.

The petitioner, proposed guardian (if different from the petitioner), and the minor child should attend the scheduled hearing. At the hearing, the court determines whether:

- A qualified person seeks appointment as guardian;
- The person seeking guardianship has completed, if necessary, the test and filed certification of completion;
- Venue is proper because the case is in the county in Utah where the minor resides or is present;
- Required notices have been sent or waived;
- Parental rights of custody have been terminated or suspended by circumstances of prior court order;
- The appointment of a guardian is in the best interests of the minor child;
- If minor is 14 or older, the minor has consented to or nominated the guardian;
- The required school certifications (for children older than 11) have been filed; and

Whether there are any objections to the guardianship.

Unless someone objects to the petition, the judge will appoint the guardian at the hearing. If there is an objection, the case may be referred to mediation or set for trial at which the petitioner will have to prove the claims made in the petition.

The court also has the authority to:

- dismiss proceedings and make any other disposition of the matter that best serves the interests of the minor;
- appoint a temporary guardian whose authority may not last longer than 6 months; or
- appoint an attorney to represent the minor.

The court could deny the appointment of a guardian for a minor 11 or older if:

- after consideration of relevant evidence, the minor's behavior indicates an ongoing unwillingness to abide by applicable law or school rules; or
- the school district proves that the main reason for the request to appoint a guardian is to avoid paying the tuition the school district may assess against a non-resident. The court may award the petitioner's attorney fees and costs if the court finds that the school district's arguments lack a reasonable basis in law or fact.

For more information about how to represent yourself at the hearing, see our page on <u>Going to</u> <u>Court</u>.

Attorney for the Minor

The judge may appoint an attorney to represent the minor if at any time s/he determines that the interests of the minor child are, or may be, inadequately represented. In such proceedings, the court may give consideration to the preference of the minor if the minor is 14 or older.

Order and Letter of Guardianship

If the judge finds that the welfare and best interests of the minor will be served by the guardianship, s/he will sign a court order appointing a guardian. The court's order will describe the guardian's authority and any limitations.

The court will also issue a letter of guardianship, which shows the guardian's authority to make decisions for the minor. The guardian will need to provide a copy of the letter to third parties, such as the minor's school or healthcare provider. The guardian should have the court certify at least one copy of the letter. Additional certified copies are available upon request and payment of the required fee.

Responsibilities of the Guardian

A guardian has the following duties and responsibilities, unless they are limited by court order:

• All powers of a parent, including the authority to facilitate education, social, other

activities and authorize medical or other professional care, treatment, or advice;

- Provide for the care, comfort, and maintenance of the minor;
- Consent to marriage if court authorized to do so;
- Consent to adoption, but only if specifically authorized by the court to give this consent and the parents' rights have not been terminated. Otherwise, if a parent consents to the adoption of the minor child, the guardian must receive notice and has the ability to intervene in the adoption; and
- Handle financial and legal matters for the benefit of the minor.

A guardian is not liable for the minor's finances and may not use the minor's money for compensation unless the court approves.

The guardianship status continues until the guardianship is **terminated** or the guardian is **removed or resigns**.

Reporting Requirements

Inventory

A newly-appointed guardian must file with the court an inventory report with the court within 90 days of being appointed. This report must be served on all<u>interested parties</u>.

Annual Status Report and Financial Accounting Report

Each year on the anniversary of being appointed guardian, the guardian must file with the court an annual report on the condition of the minor (annual status report) and the minor's finances (financial accounting report). These reports must be filed within 60 days of the anniversary of appointment and must be served on all interested parties.

Final Accounting Report

If the guardianship is terminated, the guardian must file with the court a final accounting report.

Deadlines

The deadlines for the reports are:

Document	Due Date
Inventory	Within 90 days of the appointment.
Annual Status Report and Financial Accounting Report	Within 60 days of each anniversary of the appointment.
Objection to Annual Status Report and/or Financial Accounting Report	Within 30 days after reports and notice of right to object are served.
Final Accounting Report	Upon resignation or removal of the guardianship or upon termination of the guardianship.

The documents must be filed with the court that made the appointment unless there has been a change of venue. The guardian must serve a copy of the inventory and accounting, along with a notice of right to object, on:

- the minor (if s/he is of an appropriate age and mental capacity to understand the proceedings);
- the minor's conservator (if the court has appointed one other than the guardian);
- anyone requesting notice under Utah Code Section 75-5-406.
- all interested parties including the minor's parents.

Code of Judicial Administration Rule 6-501.

The guardian may serve the documents by mail, email or hand delivery. If anyone objects to the filing or if the judge has further questions, court staff will schedule a hearing and notify all parties. Code of Judicial Administration<u>Rule 6-501</u>.

Changing the content, or reporting period or the frequency of the annual reports

The guardian may ask the court to change the information included in the annual reports and/or the frequency of the reports, including changing reporting period, such as to a calendar year or any other 12-month period that is more convenient. If a request to change the reporting period is granted, the year in which the change is made the guardian will report for a she period of time. For example, if the guardian is appointed on August 17, and s/he has received the court's permission to report on a calendar year basis, the next report would cover the period from August 17 to the end of the calendar year. Subsequent reports would cover the calendar year.

Use the Motion to Change Accounting Report Requirements in the **Forms** section to ask to change the reporting requirements.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents

The appointment of a guardian does not terminate a parent's rights. The legal parents of the minor retain some rights and responsibilities even if the court has ordered someone else to be the child's guardian.

- Parents remain responsible for the support of their child
- Parents retain the right to consent to adoption
- · Parent retain the right to determine the child's religious affiliation
- Parents retain the right to reasonable parent-time unless restricted by the court.

"Residual parental rights and duties" as used in this context is defined in <u>Utah Code section</u> 78A-6-105.

Ending a Guardianship

A guardianship can be ended in several ways, including:

- The minor turns 18
- The minor is adopted
- The minor marries
- The minor has been emancipated by the court
- The minor dies
- The guardian resigns, with approval of the court
- The guardian dies

If the guardian dies while the child is still a minor, a new guardian must be appointed. The proposed new guardian should follow the procedure described in the

- Asking the Court to Establish Guardianship in District Court section of this page.
- A parent asks to terminate the guardianship as explained below

Regardless of the reason a guardianship has ended, the guardian (or someone else, if the guardian has died) must file the **required final report** with the court.

Forms are on the <u>Motion to Review or Terminate (End) the Guardianship or Conservatorship or</u> to Remove the Guardianship or Conservator page.

Request to Remove a Guardian

The court may remove a guardian upon a request by:

- a parent, unless parental rights were terminated or some other court order prohibits restoration of custody to parent.
 - The Utah Court of Appeals has found that a parent's consent to the appointment of

- a guardian for that parent's minor child is only a suspension of the parent's custody by circumstances.
- If the parent later petitions for termination of the guardianship, the court must grant the petition unless there has been a final factual determination depriving the parent of custody or termination of parental rights by a court with proper jurisdiction. In Re V.K.S., 63 P.3d 1284, 2003 UT App 13 (2003).
- A parent can use the Motion to Terminate forms below to ask the court to remove a guardian.
- · some other person interested in the minor child's welfare
 - Anyone interested in the child's welfare may file a motion asking the court to remove the guardian. The court may order the removal and appoint a successor guardian if it is in the child's best interests to do so. There are no approved forms

for this particular motion. Information and general motion forms are available on the Motions web page.

If a guardian has been removed by the court, the guardian must file the required final report with the court.

Forms are on the <u>Motion to Review or Terminate (End) the Guardianship or Conservatorship or</u> to Remove the Guardianship or Conservator page.

Forms

Asking to Appoint a Guardian for a Minor

- Guardianship of a Minor (OCAP interview and forms)
- Private Information Record in Guardianship and Conservatorship cases PDF Form |
 Fillable Form
- Request to Submit for Decision Probate Case PDF Form | Emilable Form

Forms to object to the petition

Objection to Petition to Appoint a Guardian or Conservator for a Minor PDF Form |
 Fillable Form

Going to trial

- Certification of Readiness for Trial Probate Case PDF Form | DF Form
- Trial Issues PDF Form | E Fillable Form

Inventory report

- <u>Inventory (using OCAP)</u> (select Prepare Annual Report underGuardian and Conservatorships)
- or
- Checklist for Inventory Forms PDF | Word
- Inventory of Minor's Estate PDF Form | Emilable Form
- Schedule A PDF | Word
- Schedule B PDF | Word
- Schedule C PDF | Word
- Schedule D PDF | Word
- Schedule E PDF | Word
- Schedule F PDF | Word
- Notice of Right to Object PDF Form | Example 1
- Guardian and Conservator Certificate of Mailing PDF Form | Fillable Form (Required if there are interested persons who must be served with a copy of the Inventory)
- Order on Review of Guardianship and Conservatorship Reports

Annual status report

• <u>Annual Status Report</u> (using OCAP) (select Prepare Annual Report underGuardian and Conservatorships)

or

- Report on the Status of the Protected Person PDF Form | Fillable Form
- Notice of Right to Object PDF Form | Fillable Form

(Required if there are interested persons who must be served with a copy of the Status Report)

 Guardian and Conservator Certificate of Mailing PDF Form | Fillable Form (Required if there are interested persons who must be served with a copy of the Status Report)

• Order on Review of Guardianship and Conservatorship Reports

Financial accounting report

- Checklist for Financial Accounting Forms PDF | Word
- Utah District Court Cover Sheet for Probate Actions PDF Form | District Court Cover Sheet for Probate Actions
- Accounting of Minor's Estate PDF Form | Estate Form
- Schedule A PDF | Word
- Schedule B PDF | Word
- Schedule C PDF | Word
- Schedule D PDF | Word
- Schedule E PDF | Word
- Schedule F PDF | Word
- Notice of Right to Object PDF Form | Fillable Form
- Order on Review of Guardianship and Conservatorship Reports

Motion to terminate the guardianship or remove guardian

Forms are on the Motion to Review or Terminate (End) the Guardianship or Conservatorship or to Remove the Guardianship or Conservator page.

Motion to change reporting period

- Motion to Change Accounting Report Requirements PDF | Word
- Notice of Right to Object to Motion to Change Accounting Report Requirements PDF | WWOrd
- Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order on Motion to Change Accounting Report Requirements - PDF | Word
- Notice of Order PDF Form | DFF Form |



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Annual Report

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Guardianship of a Minor

https://www.utcourts.gov/en/self-help/case-categories/gc/guardianship/minor.html