



Administrative Office of the Courts

Chief Justice Matthew B. Durrant
Utah Supreme Court
Chair, Utah Judicial Council

February 28, 2025

Ronald B. Gordon, Jr.
State Court Administrator
Neira Siaperas
Deputy State Court Administrator

MEMORANDUM

TO: Judicial Council
FROM: Judge Keith Kelly, WINGS Chair
Shonna Thomas, Court Program Administrator - GRAMP
RE: WINGS Annual Report

The Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) committee is a problem-solving body that relies on court-community partnerships to:

- Oversee guardianship practice in the Courts;
- Improve the handling of guardianship cases;
- Engage in outreach/education; and
- Enhance the quality of care and quality of life of vulnerable adults.

WINGS is effective through participation of key stakeholders who understand and are positioned to improve the Courts' guardianship processes.

WINGS 2024 Ongoing and Completed Projects:

- Addressed the shortage of volunteer attorneys needed to represent vulnerable adults in guardianship cases, as required by Utah Code § 75-5-303. WINGS provided input for a funding request to support two attorneys to give statutory legal representation to respondents in guardianship cases. The funding request was included on the list of priorities to the Legislature in the 2025 session.
- Recommended changes to Utah Code § 75-5-303 that were approved by the Court's Legislative Liaison Committee. Suggestions included updating the statutory criteria to conform with current medical standards and clarifying language on the requirements for attorneys and court visitors in guardianship proceedings. The recommended changes were introduced in the 2025 Legislative Session, as part of HB0334.
- Provided input on proposed amendments to Utah R. Civ. P. 87, related to manner of appearance in guardianship cases, to the Civil Procedure Advisory Committee.

Representatives of WINGS later participated in a meeting with the Utah Supreme Court Justices to further explain the concerns relayed in the WINGS comment.

- Provided suggestions on proposed amendments to proposed Utah R. Civ. P. 26.4, concerning disclosures in guardianship cases, that were adopted by the Civil Procedure Advisory Committee.
- Explored a proposal for requiring criminal background checks or disclosures as part of the initial petition for guardianship, to reduce the potential for abuse of vulnerable adults. The WINGS subcommittee will continue to pursue this project in 2025.
- Worked on revisions to the Basic Guidelines Manual and required test for proposed guardians, including changes based on updates to CJA Rule 6-501 and the adoption of Utah Code § 75-5-301.5. The subcommittee is pursuing plain language, accessibility, and improvements to the qualifying exam and other resources for guardians.
- Updated and revised the court forms related to guardianship and conservatorship cases, in partnership with the Forms Committee. The WINGS forms workgroup has completed work on one category (Adult Guardianship, pre-appointment) and anticipates the drafts going under review in spring 2025. The workgroup is addressing forms related to emergency and temporary guardianships, which do not currently exist.
- Made proposed revisions to the Order on Review of Guardianship and Conservatorship Reports form after stakeholders noted some confusion and inconsistency in use. The recommended changes were presented to the Forms Committee for approval. Representatives of WINGS also met with the Board of District Court Judges to discuss concerns with mixed messages on how the form was to be filed and completed across the court districts.
- Worked on developing further training for District Court Judges on guardianship issues. The training seeks to highlight the rights retained by a protected person, abuse of guardian powers, limited versus full guardianship and why it matters in adult guardianship petitions, and the option and value of temporary and emergency guardianship orders. The committee will continue to work on this in 2025.
- Additional items of note –
 - The WINGS committee bylaws denote a succession plan for the committee Chair, but do not offer much guidance on ensuring a smooth transition. In 2024, WINGS nominated and appointed a District Court Judge to serve as Vice Chair to the committee, who can potentially be appointed by the Judicial Council to succeed the current Chair.
 - WINGS received input from Community Voices, which is focused on increasing engagement in judicial administration committees from non-attorneys in the community who can provide insight to improve court access and education for self-represented parties. WINGS is an example of a court committee already engaging with the community through stakeholders.

WINGS Executive Committee:

Keith Kelly	Judge, WINGS Chair	3 rd District
Coral Sanchez	Judge, Vice Chair	3 rd District
Brant Christiansen	Attorney/Partner	Lewis Hansen Law Firm
Nels Holmgren	Director	Division of Adult and Aging Services
Nan Mendenhall	Director	Adult Protective Services
Andrew Riggle	Public Policy Analyst	Disability Law Center
Keri Sargent	Asst. District Court Administrator	Administrative Office of the Courts
Shonna Thomas	Program Administrator - GRAMP	Administrative Office of the Courts
Michelle Wilkes	Court Visitor Program	Administrative Office of the Courts

WINGS Steering Committee:

James Brady	Senior Judge	4 th District
Brian Cannell	Judge	1 st District
Shane Bahr	District Court Administrator	Administrative Office of the Courts
Sarah Box	Attorney	Utah Courts - Self Help Center
Deborah Brown	Retired Professional Guardian	Guardianship & Conservator Services
Natasha Burningham	Education Project Coordinator	Utah Parent Center
Megan Connelly	Access to Justice Director	Utah State Bar
Katie Cox	Attorney	Disability Law Center
Rob Denton	Attorney	Attorney at Law
Rob Ence	Director	Utah Commission on Aging
Wendy Fayles	Criminal Justice / Mentor	National Alliance on Mental Illness
Leslie Francis	Attorney	University of Utah Law School
Ann Humpherys	Lead LTC Ombudsman	Dept. of Health and Human Services
Rachelle Johnson	Probate Clerk	4 th District
Eve Larsen	Case Manager Senior Services	Davis County Health Department
Wendy Naylor	Director	Office of Public Guardian
Alan Ormsby	State Director	AARP
Katie Thomson	Judicial Case Manager	3 rd District
Holly Thorson	Court Visitor Program	Administrative Office of the Courts
James Toledo	Program Manager	Utah Division of Indian Affairs
Todd Weiler	Senator	8 th District
Kaye Lynn Wootton	Assistant Attorney General	Medicaid Fraud Control Unit