

WHO WE ARE

AGS is a non-profit organization that provides legal guardians to incompetent adults in Cuyahoga County.

WHAT AGS DOES

AGS guardians make major life decisions for people who have been deemed incompetent and thus are unable to make their own personal and financial decisions. The person deemed incompetent is called a ward.

WHO REFERS TO AGS

AGS accepts referrals from hospitals, nursing homes, Adult Protective Services, law firms, banks, and the community. AGS assesses the need for guardianship, recognizing that it infringes upon and severely restricts individual rights. Guardianship should be the legal intervention of last resort and only used when no less restrictive alternative exists. To make a referral call 216-696-1132, ext. 131 or go to the AGS website, www.agscleveland.org and download the application forms.

WHO FUNDS AGS

AGS is a non-profit organization. To serve indigent clients, funding is received from the Cuyahoga County Probate Court and Department of Senior and Adult Services, Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging, hospitals, nursing homes, and numerous foundations. Private pay wards are billed monthly on an hourly basis.

MISSION

*Adult Guardianship Services enhances
the quality of life of indigent,
incompetent adults in Cuyahoga County
by providing legal guardians
to serve as concerned, caring advocates
and surrogate decision-makers.*



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A PROGRAM OF LUTHERAN METROPOLITAN MINISTRY



GUARDIANSHIP FACTS *and* INFORMATION

ADVOCACY
VOLUNTEERISM
JUSTICE
INTEGRITY
DIGNITY
COMPASSION
COLLABORATION
SHALOM

GUARDIANSHIP

ADULT GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

AN OVERVIEW

What is Guardianship?

Guardianship is an involuntary trust relationship in which one party, called a **guardian**, acts for an individual called the ward. The law regards the ward as incapable of managing his or her own person and/or affairs.

What is a Guardian?

A guardian is any adult appointed by the Probate Court to assume responsibility for the care and management of the person, the estate, or both, of an incompetent person. The guardian makes major life decisions for the ward who is otherwise unable to make his or her own decisions.

What Makes Someone Incompetent?

An incompetent is any person who is so mentally impaired as a result of a mental or physical illness or disability, or mental retardation, or as a result of chronic substance abuse, that the person is incapable of taking proper care of himself or his property.

HOW IS A GUARDIAN APPOINTED?

An application is filed with the Cuyahoga County Probate Court and must include a statement of the guardian's willingness to perform the duties of a guardian, a bond as required by law, and a statement of the ward's mental and physical condition from a treating physician, psychiatrist, or licensed psychologist. The prospective ward, as well as the adult next of kin, is notified of the impending guardianship and date and time of the hearing. An investigation is conducted by the Court Investigator which includes an interview with the prospective ward in order to assist the Probate Court in determining the advisability of guardianship. A formal hearing is conducted by the Judge or Magistrate to determine if a guardianship is necessary, the prospective guardian is suitable, and the guardian understands his or her duties.

HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE BY GUARDIANS?

Substituted Judgment: Guardians make decisions that would, as closely as possible, reflect what their wards would have wanted if they were capable of making their own decisions, as long as those decisions will not cause substantial harm.

Best Interest: When a ward's desires are not known, the guardian determines what is best for the ward, considering that which is least intrusive, most normalizing, and least restrictive.

WHO DOES AGS SERVE?

Prospective wards referred to AGS are people who have no family or no appropriate family to become their guardian. They generally have dementia or a serious mental illness.

WHAT SERVICES DOES AGS PROVIDE?

- We determine suitable and appropriate living arrangements for the ward and arrange for successful relocation, if necessary.
- We visit monthly, or more often, if needed, to monitor the ward's health and well-being.
- We identify and coordinate the necessary and appropriate providers of direct services.
- We ensure that benefits are in place to ensure the best quality of life.
- We attend and participate in care conferences to ensure that proper care is provided in a timely manner.
- We approve or deny authorization for medical treatment, made on the basis of informed consent.
- We are on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for emergencies.
- We assist with pre-paid funeral planning.
- We communicate regularly with the ward's family, attorney or trust officer.

HOW DO I KNOW I CAN TRUST AGS?

AGS was established in 1989 and has served as Guardian of Person for over 900 wards.

AGS has the sole contract with the Cuyahoga County Probate Court to provide Guardian of Person services to indigent wards.

AGS has a Registered Guardian who supervises an experienced, trained staff of guardians and guardian assistants.

AGS operates under the Standards of Practice of the National Guardianship Association.

AGS has an Ethics Committee that meets quarterly. Our ethicist is also available for emergency consultations.

AGS is a member of the National Guardianship Association and the Ohio Guardianship Association.