



Volunteer Guardianship
One on One

General Overview of The Volunteer Guardian Program

Due to an increasing number of Ottawa County residents in need of a guardian without a suitable person to act in this capacity, former Ottawa County Probate Court Kathleen L. Giesler sought to develop a Volunteer Guardian Program to serve incompetent adults in need. In 2013, the court reached out to Ottawa County agencies, Wood County Probate Court and other facilities throughout the county and state to help facilitate its own court-based volunteer guardian program. With the assistance of a number of helpful and informed individuals, this program was formed.

Volunteer Guardians are recruited by court staff to act as guardians of the person only. Guardianship training will be provided with the assistance of local professionals and will give the guardian a thorough overview of the guardianship process and the role of guardian. An attorney will be assigned to complete the initial paperwork and answer any legal questions regarding the application. Ongoing guidance will be available throughout the individual's service as a guardian so he or she is comfortable in the role.

Volunteer guardians will be assigned to a case when one is available. Guardianships will be "person only" meaning the guardian will have no access, control or decisions relating to the ward's finances. A minimum of one monthly face-to-face visit with the ward will be required and an annual Guardian's Report is required by local court rules. Additionally, a quarterly status report outlining contacts and any relevant issues relating to the ward must be submitted to the Probate Court. Forms for these filings will be provided to the guardian.

The Volunteer Guardian Program is a collaborative effort balancing the needs of the ward, guardian, community service providers, and the Probate Court. It is the goal of the Ottawa County Probate Court to facilitate open communication and cooperation between these entities for the well-being of the ward and to provide a rewarding experience to the volunteer.