

What does a Volunteer Guardian do?

Who can be a guardian?

To be appointed as a guardian, you must be:

- * A resident of the State of Ohio
- * A law abiding citizen
- * At least 21 years of age

What is Guardianship?

There may come a time in the lives of some individuals in our community when, due to disease, mental illness, dementia, injury, or substance abuse, they are no longer capable of managing themselves (their "person"), their property or assets (their "estate"), or both. Under Ohio Law, such a person is said to be incompetent. A finding of incompetency by the Probate Court will result in the appointment of a guardian to assist the "ward", thus establishing a legal relationship called a Guardianship. A Volunteer Guardian treats the ward with dignity and respect while assisting in making basic life decisions.

The Volunteer Guardian Program is only involved in Guardian of Person cases for people who live in Long-Term Care Facilities and will not be responsible for or in control of any of the wards finances (the estate). Some responsibilities of a guardian of the person are as follows:

- Ensure that the basic needs of the ward are being met and that he or she is living and functioning in the least restrictive environment.
- Seek services that will help the ward reach or maintain the highest possible potential.
- Authorize or approve the provision of medical care, counseling, or other treatment.
- Execute documents on the ward's behalf.
- Respect any previous advance directives and make end of life decisions for the benefit of the ward.

Why is this program needed?

Usually a family member or close friend will be the first choice Of the Court to be appointed to serve as guardian. For a variety of reasons, however, there continue to be cases where no suitable person either exists or is willing and able to serve as guardian. In the past, the court has turned to local attorneys to serve as guardians in these cases. However, the number of such cases in Williams County has grown to the point that local attorneys no longer meet the demand. This program is designed to fill that void by providing a pool of screened and trained volunteers to serve in that capacity. Please consider giving of your time and talents to assist us in helping those who cannot help themselves.

Becoming a Volunteer Guardian

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer guardian, contact the Williams County Department of Aging and request an application. Upon returning the application, you will be scheduled for an interview with the Program Coordinator and a background check will be conducted. In addition, you will be required to complete volunteer training to participate. Volunteer training consists of two separate 2.5 hour group training sessions and an individual training based upon the assigned wards specific needs.

Our Mission

The Mission of the Volunteer Guardian Program of the Williams County Department of Aging is to enhance the quality of life for incompetent adults living in Williams County nursing homes by providing qualified legal guardians to serve as concerned, caring advocates and as surrogate decision makers.

Williams County Department of Aging

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*For more information about
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**Volunteer
Guardian Program**

*Williams County
Department of Aging*