



MINNESOTA

Guardian ad Litem Board

FY 2020-2021 Budget Overview House Judiciary Finance/Civil Law Committee

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Duties and Responsibilities: Administer a statewide, independent Guardian ad Litem Program to advocate for the best interests of children, minor parents, and incompetent adults in juvenile and Family Court.

- Established in 2010
- Board consists of seven appointed members
- Board has both mandated and permissive duties

Purpose: The Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Program exists so that all children with a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem have their primary needs met and that each judicial officer is equipped to make informed decisions for each child within the confines of available resources.

Statutorily Mandated Duties

- Conduct an independent investigation
- Advocate for the child's best interests
- Maintain confidentiality
- Monitor best interests throughout the proceeding
- Present written reports that include conclusions and recommendations and the facts upon which they are based

The Guardian ad Litem is the only independent voice representing the child's best interests during the court proceeding.



Our Federal Mandate

1974 - Congress Enacts Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

To receive federal foster care funds, a state must enact and enforce laws mandating the appointment of a guardian ad litem on every juvenile court case alleging that a child has been abused or neglected.

1975 - Legislature Enacts Guardian ad Litem statutes

Mandates appointment of a GAL on every juvenile and family court case alleging a child is abused or neglected (M.S. 260C.163; M.S. 518.165)

Compliance with federal and state mandates for appointment has been affected by increased child protection filings

- Abused and neglected children need best interest advocacy;
- GAL are mandated by state and federal law;
- The bench values GAL and needs independent information;
- The Office of The Legislative Auditor program evaluation has given us a roadmap to improve GAL accountability and advocacy;
- We have done all we can with the funds we have.

In Summary

FY 2018 Total = Actual Expenses

Personnel -	\$13,541,223	85%
<u>Operations -</u>	<u>\$ 2,411,855</u>	<u>15%</u>
Total -	\$15,953,078	100%

\$203,922 is still encumbered or will carryforward to FY2019.

FY 2019 Total = Projected Expenses

Personnel -	\$14,444,359	85%
<u>Operations -</u>	<u>\$ 2,508,563</u>	<u>15%</u>
Total -	\$16,952,922	100%

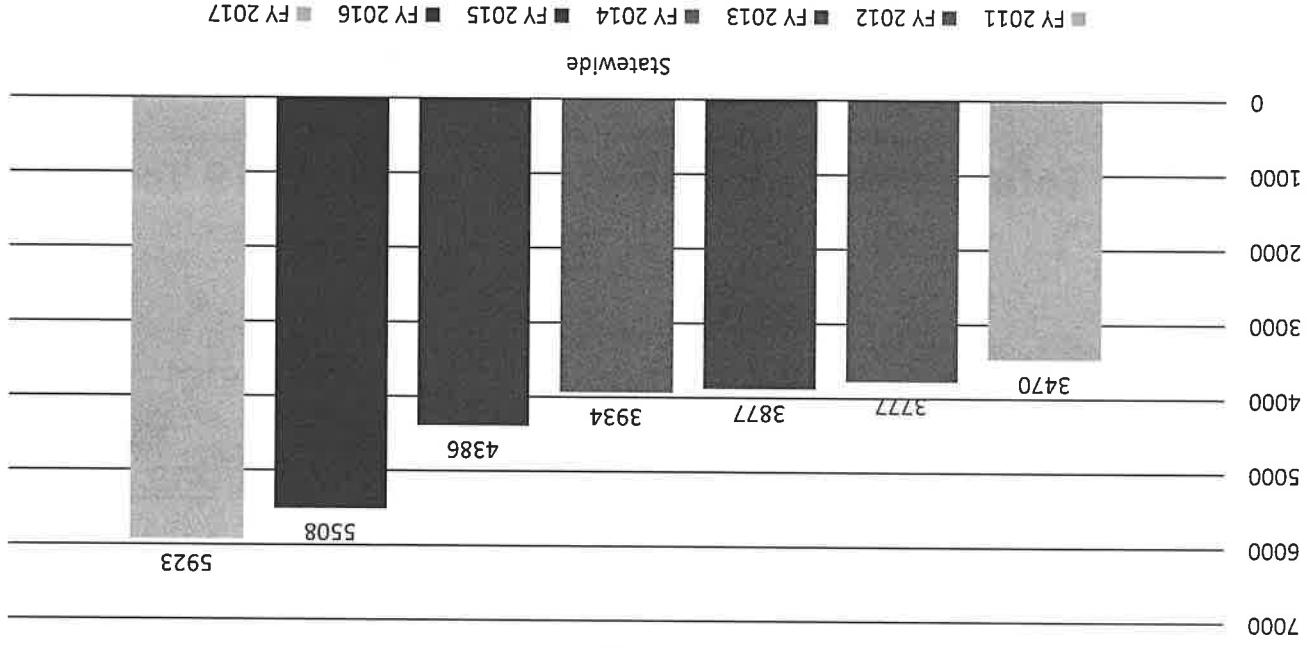
Total Projected Expense for FY2018/19 = \$32,906,000

Increased Juvenile Court Filings

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Juvenile Case Filings FY2011-2017



FY20-21 Budget Request

Budget Request Option: 3.5% Compensation Increases + Board Development/Training New Positions + Technology Upgrades					+
	FY2020	FY2021	Total FY2020/21	% Change from Base Budget ²	
Employee Compensation	\$ 418,000	\$ 850,000	\$ 1,268,000	3.78%	
Employee Insurance ¹	134,000	316,000	450,000	1.34%	
Subtotal Maintain Core Operations	552,000	1,166,000	1,718,000	5.12%	
Compliance with Federal and State Mandates	4,205,000	4,443,000	8,648,000	25.76%	
Board Development and Training	135,000	135,000	270,000	0.80%	
Technology Upgrades and Enhancements	200,000	50,000	250,000	0.74%	
Total	\$ 5,092,000	\$ 5,794,000	\$ 10,886,000	32.42%	

Employee Compensation Request

Request	FY 2020 Costs	FY2021 Costs	Total Costs
Compensation	418,000	850,000	1,268,000
Insurance	134,000	316,000	450,000
Subtotal	552,000	1,166,000	1,718,000

- Funds necessary to address increased retirement
- Funds necessary to enhance recruitment and retention of staff
- Unavoidable health care benefit increases

The Office of the Legislative Auditor recommended that the GALB develop a plan for complying with laws regarding GAL appointment.

Request	FY 2020 Costs	FY 2021 Costs	Total Costs
Compliance with federal and state mandates	4,205,000	4,443,000	8,648,000

- 46 staff positions will provide advocacy for unassigned children, equalize caseload levels, and provide staff to address increased monitoring requirements

Board Development and Training

The Office of the Legislative Auditor recommended that the GALB should provide greater financial oversight to the program, review the Program Administrator's performance, establish measurable goals, and monitor those goals.

Request	FY 2020 Costs	FY2021 Costs	Total Costs
Board Training and Development	135,000	135,000	270,000

- External auditing
- Board training on Policy Governance
- Further development of E-Logic, our learning management system

The Office of the Legislative Auditor recommended that Guardian ad Litem Managers should evaluate the collection of evidence.

Request	FY 2020	FY2021	Total Costs
Technology Upgrades and Enhancements	200,000	50,000	250,000

- Case management system enhancements
- Dashboard visualizations to assist in performance monitoring
- Technology tools for staff

Results of Increased Case Filings



- Program unable to comply with state and federal mandates
- Waiting lists for mandatory and permissive cases - currently there are over 477 children without a GAL
- Children of color impacted due to high levels of unassigned children in Hennepin County, furthering the effects of disparity on children
- Potential loss of CAPTA funding due to lack of compliance with federal mandate

The funding request would serve to:

- Protect children and reduce re-entry of children into the child protection system
- Ensure child receive appropriate services including trauma informed care
- Ensure physical and mental health, educational and cultural needs are met
- Ensure children are reunited with parents if it is in their best interest
- Ensure the GAL Board and Program are accountable to the citizens of the State of Minnesota

Questions?
Thank you!

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