

**GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROJECT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BY-LAWS**

ARTICLE I - OBJECTIVES

- A. To develop and maintain an organizational structure that will manage the personnel and formulate the policies, operating procedures, and budgeting functions of the Guardian ad Litem Project (hereinafter referred to as “Project”).
- B. To develop a financial program that will provide a means for continuity and future fiscal planning.
- C. To assume responsibility for establishing and implementing long-range plans which will aid in upgrading existing services, including but not limited to, the training and continuing education of lawyers as Guardians ad Litem.
- D. To develop and maintain a relationship with the Cuyahoga County Courts in order to resolve issues affecting the courts and the Project.
- E. To review, comment upon, and initiate state legislation appropriate to issues affecting children in the judicial system.
- F. To review relevant case law and to submit amicus curiae briefs appropriate to issues affecting children in the judicial system.

ARTICLE II – COMPOSITION

A. MEMBERS

- 1. The Guardian ad Litem Project Advisory Committee (hereinafter referred to as “Advisory Committee”) shall consist of not less than seventeen (17) individuals as hereinafter set forth.
- 2. The Administrative Judge of the Juvenile Court and a representative of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association shall serve as members of the organization without a set term. All other members shall serve three year terms, which are staggered such that one-third (1/3) of the Advisory Committee is elected each year.

3. There shall be no fewer than ten (10) Guardians ad Litem serving on the Advisory Committee. A member of the Advisory Committee who is a Guardian ad Litem must always be in compliance with the policies and procedures of the Guardian ad Litem Project. In the event an Advisory Committee member is suspended or removed from the GAL Master List, he/she shall lose his/her right to vote at Advisory Committee meetings.
4. Among the voting members of the Advisory Committee there shall be one member from each of the following groups; however, a failure to have a member from any one of said groups shall not void any action taken by the Advisory Committee:
 - a. social worker representing the Cuyahoga County Department of Children & Family Services (hereinafter CCDCFS);
 - b. one Prosecutor representing CCDCFS;
 - c. one Juvenile Court Public Defender;
 - d. one member representing the Juvenile Court, from the Court Services Department;
 - e. one mental health professional;
 - f. one Guardian ad Litem from a pro-bono program; and
 - g. at least ten (10) Guardians ad Litem from the GAL Master List.
5. In addition to the above, the Advisory Committee may consider a maximum of two (2) additional voting members, which may be from the following groups:
 - a. Foster parents;
 - b. educators;
 - c. community members;
 - d. doctors;
 - e. corporations;
 - f. foundations;
 - g. community service providers; and/or
 - h. CSEA prosecutors.
6. The GAL Project Advisory Committee may consist of as many members as the Advisory Committee believes is appropriate; however, in no event shall the voting non-GAL members equal or exceed the total number of GALs on the Advisory Committee.
7. The ex-officio non-voting members of the Advisory Committee shall be:
 - a. the Administrative Judge of the Juvenile Court or his/her designee;
 - b. the Director of Mediation or his/her designee;

- c. the Executive Director of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association or his/her designee; and
 - d. additional ex-officio non-voting members to serve at the Advisory Committee's request as it deems necessary.
- 8. Any members wishing to resign from the Advisory Committee shall submit their resignation in writing to the Chair, who shall present it to the Advisory Committee at the next Advisory Committee meeting. The resignation shall be effective as of the date the resignation is presented to the Advisory Committee.
 - 9. A vacancy in any member's position may be filled by majority vote of the Advisory Committee from names submitted by the Nominating Committee to serve until the end of the unexpired term.

B. OFFICERS

- 1. The Officers of the Advisory Committee, who shall also be members of the Advisory Committee, shall consist of a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, and Secretary.
- 2. The Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year by majority vote at the annual meeting held in January. The Chair and Vice-Chair are not eligible for election to the same office for more than three (3) consecutive terms. There is no limit on the number of terms the Treasurer and Secretary can serve.

C. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- 1. The election of new members shall become effective upon majority vote of a quorum of the Advisory Committee. The general election of new members shall be at the December Advisory Committee meeting. The members shall receive no compensation for serving on the Advisory Committee.
- 2. The Nominating Committee shall present to the Advisory Committee a slate of membership candidates at the Advisory Committee meeting immediately preceding the December Advisory Committee meeting. Until such time as the slate of candidates is submitted to the Advisory Committee and nominations are closed, nominations will be accepted from the floor. The membership candidates shall stand for election at the December Advisory Committee meeting.
- 3. The Nominating Committee shall present to the Advisory Committee a slate of officer candidates at the Advisory Committee meeting immediately preceding the annual Advisory Committee meeting. Nomination of officer candidates will be

accepted from the floor. The officer candidates shall stand for election at the annual Advisory Committee meeting.

ARTICLE III – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- A. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Advisory Committee and conduct all business. The Chair shall appoint a Nominating Committee each year, with the approval of the Advisory Committee. The Chair may establish any other ad hoc committees necessary to carry out the objectives of the Project, and the Chair may appoint members to subcommittees.
- B. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform duties otherwise performed by the Chair and such other duties delegated by the Chair. The Vice-Chair is the Project's representative to the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and shall attend its board and section meetings, including family law section, and any other appropriate meetings.
- C. The Secretary shall prepare and disseminate the minutes of the Advisory Committee meetings. The Secretary shall perform the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- D. The Treasurer shall have charge of all funds belonging to the organization and shall deposit the funds in a bank, or with a fiscal agent, as determined by the Advisory Committee, and shall submit a written quarterly financial statement at the meetings of the Advisory Committee. The Treasurer shall perform the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary, and such other duties as delegated by the Chair. The Treasurer shall present to the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association an annual financial report of annual CLE income and expenses on or before June 15th of each year.
- E. The Officers shall comprise the Executive Committee. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be:
 - 1. To oversee all functions of the Project and to supervise the Administrator;
 - 2. To fill vacant officer positions for the remainder of the unexpired term; and,
 - 3. To determine whether to prepare and file amicus curiae briefs.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

- A. The Advisory Committee shall hold regular monthly meetings at such time and

place as it may determine, but not fewer than eight (8) times each year, including the annual meeting and December meeting. Special meetings may be called by the Chair.

- B. The annual meeting shall be held in January. Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting.
- C. The expired terms of members shall be filled at the December meeting by election.
- D. Three (3) consecutive absences without notice to the Administrator shall be construed as a resignation from the Advisory Committee. This requirement does not apply to non-voting members.
- E. Nine (9) voting members present at an Advisory Committee meeting held pursuant to these By-Laws shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no proxy voting.
- F. The Administrator of the Guardian ad Litem Project shall attend and participate as a non-voting member in all Advisory Committee meetings, unless excused by one officer.
- G. Subcommittees shall meet at the discretion of the subcommittee chair.

ARTICLE V – JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The job descriptions of the Administrator and of the members of the Advisory Committee are set forth in Exhibits A and B to these By-Laws.

ARTICLE VI – FINANCES

- A. The Treasurer shall prepare and present to the Advisory Committee, a quarterly financial report. In addition, the proposed annual budget shall be presented, in writing, to the Advisory Committee for discussion and approval.
- B. The Administrator shall take the following steps before attending a seminar or traveling out of town on Project business:
 - 1. Whenever possible, the Administrator shall inform the Executive Committee in advance and obtain the Executive Committee's approval. A projected budget, including air fare, hotel expenses, per diem allowance, and conference fee, shall be included in the information presented to the Executive Committee, if necessary.

2. Should it not be possible to obtain advance approval from the Executive Committee, the Administrator shall provide the above information in writing to the Chair, and obtain the approval of the Chair. The details of expense and subject matter shall be provided to the Advisory Committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

C. Per Diem Allowance

1. The Administrator shall be reimbursed for mileage in accordance with the IRS Mileage Rate.
2. The Administrator shall be reimbursed for food expenses at a rate to be determined by the Executive Committee when traveling out of town on Project business.
3. The Administrator shall promptly be reimbursed for reasonable out of town expenses, upon presentation of itemized receipts.

ARTICLE VII – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for the Advisory Committee in all cases to which it is applicable and in which it is not inconsistent with these By-Laws.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended at any general meeting of the Advisory Committee as follows:

- A. These By-Laws may only be amended subsequent to submission of the amendment to the Advisory Committee. The amendment shall be placed on the agenda for discussion at two (2) consecutive regular monthly meetings.
- B. At any regular monthly meeting thereafter, the Advisory Committee may vote on the By-Law amendment.
- C. Any By-Law amendment must be accepted by two-thirds (2/3) of all voting members as identified by the Administrator.

Amended Effective April 1, 2009

EXHIBIT A TO BY-LAWS

GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Function

The Administrator of the Guardian ad Litem Project is a full-time employee, and is responsible for implementation and coordination of the Project's activities. The Administrator reports monthly to the Guardian ad Litem Project Advisory Committee.

Project's Activities

1. All duties set forth in the annual contract with the Juvenile Court;
2. Recruiting, advising, and training GALs and monitoring their performance;
3. Production of the Project's newsletter,
4. Overseeing the website;
5. Coordinating Project subcommittees;
6. Representing or coordinating the representation of the Project on outside committees and at community events;
7. Supervision of secretarial contractors and office volunteers;
8. Any additional duties and activities determined by the officers and/or Advisory Committee.

EXHIBIT B TO BY-LAWS

GUARDIAN AD LITEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER JOB DESCRIPTION

Function

Advisory Committee members are responsible for fulfilling the Guardian ad Litem Project's objectives, taking into consideration the Project's mission:

To promote proficient and skillful representation of the interests of children and others before the juvenile court: To protect their rights and promote their best interests as valued members of our community.

Committee Members' Duties

1. Follow and implement the GAL Project's policies and procedures;
2. Comply with the provisions of these By-Laws;
3. Regularly attend and participate in meetings in accordance with these By-Laws;
4. Accept appointment to a minimum of two subcommittees; and
5. Regularly attend and participate in subcommittee meetings.

Organization

1. Hire, monitor, advise, support, and if necessary or desirable, discharge the Administrator;
2. Regularly discuss with the Administrator matters that are of concern to the Committee and/or the Administrator;
3. Annually review performance of the Administrator and approve compensation and benefits;
4. Review and vote on new members and officers;

Operations

1. Assure that the financial structure of the Project is adequate for current needs and long-range plans;
2. Provide candid, specific and constructive criticism, advice, and comments;
3. Approve major actions of the Project, including capital expenditures over authorized limits and basic changes in the Project and its services.

Audits

1. Periodically review the performance and achievements of the Committee and take steps to improve its performance.
2. Assure that the Committee is adequately and currently informed of the status of the Project and its operations by means of regular reports of officers and subcommittee chairs;
3. Review compliance with laws, rules, and regulations that affect the Project.