

Strategic Plan 2008-2018

The Strategic Plan is the framework for decisions and actions toward continued development of the Office of Public Guardianship (OPG). It directs the work of the manager, the use of funding, and provides a means to monitor progress.

Mission Statement

To act as a conduit for the provision of qualified surrogate decision-makers for low income individuals.

Vision

Within 10 years, qualified surrogate decision-makers will be available statewide to meet the need of low income individuals with limited capacity, who require assistance making decisions related to individual's health, safety, and financial affairs.

Strategic Goals

GOAL 1: COMMITMENT TO CLIENT NEEDS

The OPG is committed to addressing the unique needs of persons with limited capacity. OPG understands that the services provided should encourage the independence and self reliance of the incapacitated person to the extent possible, while according the protection required by the individual as a result of his or her disabilities.

Objective 1.1: Thorough Assessments

The OPG will seek to obtain assessments that address the six pillars of capacity. The six pillars are: (1) medical condition, (2) cognitive functioning component, (3) everyday functioning, (4) values and preferences, (5) risk of harm and level of supervision needed, and (6) means to enhance capacity. These assessments will guide the development of a comprehensive care plan.

Strategy 1.1A: Obtain thorough investigator reports.

Strategy 1.1B: Obtain thorough clinical evaluations (physician and social worker assessments).

Strategy 1.1C: Update assessments regularly.

Activity 1.1A. Promote quality education for investigators.

- Activity 1.1B. Communicate the need for assessments to the judiciary.
- Activity 1.1C. Explore development of assessment teams.
- Activity 1.1D. Explore contracting with assessment professionals.
- Activity 1.1E. Train public guardians to perform assessments.
- Activity 1.1F. Periodically obtain independent assessments.
- Activity 1.1G. Develop assessment forms.

Objective 1.2: Quality Communication Between Guardians and Persons Served.

The OPG expects contracted public guardians to ensure communication with persons served is effective. Guardians shall consult with others who are experienced in communicating with the incapacitated person, and shall make use of recommended communication techniques and technology in order to identify the choices and preferences of the incapacitated person.

- Strategy 1.2A. Require completion of a value analysis and respect what is learned.
- Strategy 1.2B. Require regular visits.
- Strategy 1.2C. Stress shared decision-making to the extent possible.

- Activity 1.2A. Provide training.
- Activity 1.2B. Define an optimum caseload using a case weighting system that considers case acuity, placements and case diagnosis.
- Activity 1.2C. Develop forms.
- Activity 1.2D. Provide interpreters.

Objective 1.3: Quality Public Guardianship Services.

Quality public guardianship services can be defined as the degree to which guardianship services increase the likelihood of desired outcomes.

- Strategy 1.3A. Require adherence to high standards.
- Strategy 1.3B. Require thorough plan of care and regular reporting.
- Strategy 1.3C. Monitor public guardianship services.

- Activity 1.3A. Provide training.
- Activity 1.3B. Develop forms.
- Activity 1.3C. Perform performance reviews.
- Activity 1.3D. Get feedback - persons served, guardians, family, friends, and professionals.
- Activity 1.3E. Develop partnerships with potential reviewers.
- Activity 1.3F. Educate community.
- Activity 1.3G. Develop high standards.
- Activity 1.3H. Promote public policies and legislation advancing the ethical practice of guardianship.

Objective 1.4: Available Alternatives to Guardianships.

Every person with a disability or with reduced capacity does not need a guardian. There are many ways to assist individuals, but to be helpful, these alternatives must be accessible. Guardianship should be the last resort and should be used when no other solution will work.

Strategy 1.4A. Develop plans to provide alternatives – power of attorney, representative payee, case management, money management and/or healthcare agents.

Activity 1.4A. Determine needs.

Activity 1.4B. Review research.

Activity 1.4C. Facilitate discussions with SSA and VA.

Activity 1.4D. Promote public policies and legislation.

Activity 1.4E. Identify funding sources.

Objective 1.5: Free Legal Services for Petitioners.

Initiation of every guardianship case requires an individual and/or entity willing to serve as the petitioner. In instances of abuse, neglect or exploitation, the Attorney General (AG) will file a petition for guardianship on behalf of Adult Protective Services (APS), but rarely does so in other circumstances.

Petitioning is problematic when low income, at-risk, alleged incapacitated persons are involved and there is no abuse, neglect or exploitation. While there may be many potential petitioners, family members, friends, neighbors, or facilities, research informs us that few individuals actually petition when low income people are involved.

Strategy 1.5A. Establish a temporary process for pilots.

Strategy 1.5B. Develop a plan to provide free legal services to petitioners statewide.

Activity 1.5A. Facilitate discussions with the AG, civil legal service provides pro bono lawyer programs.

Activity 1.5B. Develop forms.

Activity 1.5C. Promote public policies and legislation.

Activity 1.5D. Educate potential petitioners.

GOAL 2: IMPROVED ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Ensuring program success requires continuous improvement. Success is remaining open to continuous feedback and subsequent program adjustments. Evaluation provides the feedback.

Objective 2.1: Uniform System of Data Collection.

Program evaluation requires carefully collecting information in an organized fashion in order to make necessary decisions.

Objective 2.2 Realistic Performance Measures.

Requires determining what information is needed to make decisions (customer needs, funding, complaints, etc).

Strategy 2.2A. Establish a data collection mechanism (who and how).

Strategy 2.2B. Develop a guardianship case management system.

Activity 2.2A. Facilitate discussions with the AG, civil legal service provides, pro bono

Activity 2.2B. Determine targets.

Activity 2.2C. Analyze and report.

GOAL 3: INFORMED PARTICIPANTS

With our elderly population increasing and persons with disabilities living longer, many individuals will need to address difficult questions about the care of individuals within these populations. Providing guidelines, standards, and reliable information about guardianship and other alternatives will result in better decisions for and about vulnerable adults.

Objective 3.1 Well-informed Guardians, Family, Investigators, Judicial Officers, Community Partners and the Public.

Informing families, guardians, investigators, judicial officers, community partners, practitioners and the general public will help drive the development of education, policy, practice, research, legislation, and funding to improve the quality of life of persons with diminished capacity.

Strategy 3.1A. Document standards.

Strategy 3.1B. Educate and train.

Activity 3.1A Establish and document minimum qualifications.

Activity 3.1B Establish best practices.

Activity 3.1C Establish standards of practice.

Activity 3.1D Provide continuing education.

Activity 3.1E Provide community education.

GOAL 4: ACCOUNTABILITY

To create a culture of accountability by demonstrating the ownership of positive and negative circumstances necessary for achieving desired results. The first step toward creating a culture of accountability is to define clear results and communicate goals to everyone.

Target clear results, holding everyone accountable for achieving the result and not just doing his or her job. Joint accountability demands that everyone become accountable for producing the desired results.

Get people to work beyond the boundaries of their jobs and cause them to ask, “What can I do to improve guardianship for everyone?” The real value and benefit of accountability stems from an ability to influence events and outcomes before they happen. This view of accountability can help heighten innovation, improve the quality of services produced, and increase responsiveness to the needs and wants of customers and stakeholders.

Objective 4.1 Achieve and Report Results.

Statistical information should be summarized and made available to stakeholders regularly.

Objective 4.2 Balance Confidentiality and Public Access.

Strike an appropriate balance between client and practitioner right to privacy, the protection of others, and the public’s right to know.

Strategy 4.2A Set Clearly Defined Results.
Strategy 4.2B Be Proactive, Not Reactive.

Activity 4.2A. Establish performance standards.
Activity 4.2B Develop grievance procedures.
Activity 4.2C Perform investigations and sanction.
Activity 4.2D Share information.
Activity 4.2E Post grievances and resolutions.
Activity 4.2F Require independent performance reviews.

GOAL 5: ADEQUATE FUNDING

The service plan will determine the funding level needed.

Objective 5.1 Develop Several Funding Streams

Multiple funding streams provide stability and reduce uncertainty resulting from budget shortfalls.

Strategy 5.1A Develop fundraising plan.

Activity 5.1A. Perform research.
Activity 5.1B. Submit legislative budget requests.
Activity 5.1C. Apply for grants.
Activity 5.1D. Explore Older Americans Act.
Activity 5.1E. Explore pooled special needs trusts.
Activity 5.1F. Consider filing fees, fines, surcharges.
Activity 5.1G. Explore escheat funds.