

(1) Summary of Decisions

The mission of the visitors will be to observe and report facts and not to advocate. Assisting the guardians will be limited, at least initially, to conducting classes for guardians and the public at large. Visitors must report abuse and neglect to the proper authorities just like any other person. Part of the visitors' training should be the concept that an investigation is successful when everything is OK.

The court visitor pilot districts will be Districts 3 and 7, assuming they are willing.

Cases to which a visitor will be assigned will be selected randomly, but a judge can assign a visitor in any case. Clerks and attorneys can request that the judge assign a visitor in any case, motivated by a perceived problem.

We will assume for the time being that visitor assignments will be made before a guardian is appointed to observe and report facts that will help the judge make a decision and after a guardian is appointed to observe and report facts that will tell the court whether the ward is being protected in accordance with the court's order. We may need to reconsider priorities as we develop more experience on how many hours visitors can be expected to volunteer. Interviewing the respondent or ward should include more than one visit, with an unannounced visit.

Since the judge appoints the visitors and the coordinator knows their skill sets, we need a process by which the judge communicates the need for a visitor and the nature of the visitor's investigation to the coordinator and the coordinator recommends a person to the judge. Develop an assignment order for the judge to sign. We need a process by which the visitor can identify and declare a conflict of interest. Develop checklist.

For visitor assignments made at the petitioning stage, we need a process to make sure that the visitor's report can be delivered to the parties and judge before the initial hearing, otherwise the hearing will not be as productive. There must be enough time between the visitor's assignment and the hearing to complete the investigation and write the report. The nature (and details) of the visitor's investigation must be communicated to the coordinator so the coordinator can recommend the right person.

Part of the visitors' training should be to observe another visitor.

(2) Summary of Assignments

Tim Shea will invite Jilene Guthrie and Alan Ormsby to a future meeting.

Mary Lucero and Mary Jane Ciccarello will join Tim Shea as a selection committee to hire the first coordinator.