

<b>SNOHOMISH COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>	
Superior Court Operations: Chapter 9	<b>Created Date:</b> 04/27/05
<b>Policy: SCO 9.05 Guardian Ad Litem Qualifications</b>	<b>Revised Date:</b> 11/27/2017
<b>Signature: <u>MARILYN J. FINSEN</u> Court Administrator</b>	Reformatted 01/01/2016

**POLICY**

Guardian Ad Litem Qualifications

**APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to the qualification and screening of Guardian ad Litem applicants for placement and/or annual updates on the Superior Court Guardian ad Litem Registry for Title 11 and Title 26. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Registries are maintained under separate Juvenile Court Policies.

**DEFINITIONS**

**DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES**

**A. SERVICE REQUIREMENT**

Persons approved for placement on each registry serve at the discretion of the Court.

Inclusion or maintenance of any person on any registry is within the sole discretion of the Guardian ad Litem committee and/or Snohomish County Superior Court Bench.

**B. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Each person requesting to be listed on any of the registries shall initially and/or annually submit an application on the approved form provided by the Court which shall include the following information;

1. Identification of the person, name of registry or registries applied for, and a listing of the professional credentials, with license or professional enrollment number;
2. Level of formal education, to include, but not limited to, degrees and major areas of concentration;
3. Training related to the Guardian ad Litem duties;
4. Number of years of experience as Guardian ad Litem;

5. Number of appointments as a Guardian ad Litem and in which counties the appointments were made;
6. Statement of criminal history, as defined in RCW 9.94A.030;
7. Description of fees charged by the applicant and a statement of the applicants willingness to accept cases on a reduced fee basis;
8. Agreement to advise the Court immediately in the event of any complaint, investigation, or action being commenced which could lead to:
  - a. Discipline of the applicant,
  - b. Suspension or revocation of the applicant's professional license,
  - c. Filing of criminal charges for a felony or a crime involving allegations of theft, dishonesty or moral turpitude.
9. Certification that the applicant:
  - a. Has met the education and experience requirements,
  - b. Has completed the training requirements,
  - c. Has read and agreed to be bound by the Court's policies in cases in which compensation is sought at a public expense, and
  - d. Has read and has agreed to be bound by SCLGALR 2.

#### C. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

1. Copy of the certificate from the training provider evidencing successful completion of the current training required for the area of Guardian ad Litem practice;
2. Curriculum vitae or resume showing work and professional or personal experience in or related to the field that would assist in the performance and completion of Guardian ad Litem duties;
3. Signed release of information directed to all professional regulatory bodies which have licensed or supervised the applicant within the last ten (10) years;
4. Sworn statement of the nature, status and outcome of any professional complaints, investigations or disciplinary actions, lawsuits or professional liability claims, and any order for removal of the Guardian ad Litem prior to completion of the Guardian ad Litem duties;
5. Sworn statement of any claims, or litigation that has been commenced, involving allegations of improper fee charges, charges of fraud, theft or other forms of dishonesty or professional malpractice or misconduct;
6. Completed forms for criminal records checks; and
7. Copy of recently completed Guardian ad Litem report (if available).

#### D. EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Guardians ad Litem for Title 11 Registry

1. Applicants for the Title 11 Registry shall meet the education and/or experience requirements mandated by RCW 11.88.090.
2. Nothing in RCW 11.88.090 prohibits the Snohomish County Superior Court from adopting additional requirements regarding education and/or experience, if necessary.

Guardians ad Litem for Title 26

#### **Attorneys for the Family Law Registry**

1. Member of the Washington state Bar Association in good standing; **AND**
2. Five (5) years of experience in the practice of law with substantial experience in Family Law or Dependency cases; **AND**
3. Proof of successful completion of Guardian ad Litem training as required by Title 26.

#### **Non-Attorneys for the Family Law Registry**

1. Proof of successful completion of Guardian ad Litem training as required by Title 26 and has sufficient training and experience in family law cases; **and either**
2. Bachelors Degree in any of the following fields: social work, psychology, counseling, nursing, education or equivalent field **and** five (5) years of relevant experience; **or**
3. Certified or licensed by the State of Washington as a social worker, mental health therapist or marriage and family counselor, psychologist, nurse or physician, in good standing **and** five (5) years of relevant experience; **or**
4. Graduate level degree in any of the following fields: social work, psychology, counseling, nursing, medicine, education or equivalent field; **or**
5. Five (5) years of experience as a Volunteer Guardian ad Litem (VGAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), presently in good standing.

#### **E. CHARACTER AND/OR BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The applicant should be of high moral character, and shall not have any of the following within the last twenty (20) years:

1. Conviction of a felony or of a crime involving theft, dishonesty or moral turpitude;
2. A professional certification or license suspension or revocation;
3. Pending investigations or actions for any of the above.

A person may be denied listing on, or may be temporarily suspended from, the registry for any other reason that places the suitability of the person to act as Guardian ad Litem in question.

A person requesting to be listed on a registry shall attend the training required by the Court.

#### **F. ON-GOING TRAINING**

The Court may periodically sponsor or approve training programs that applicants shall be required to attend to maintain and improve their level of proficiency.