

How Much Does It Cost to Have a Guardian?

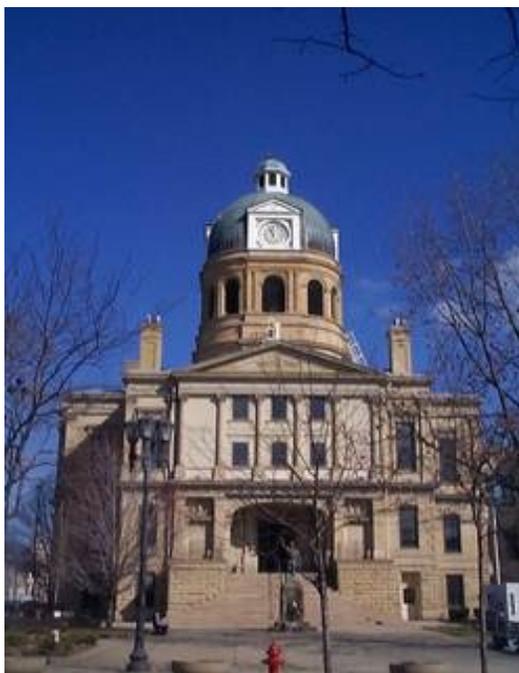
The Guardian Ad Litem will be paid \$75 per hour for their time. A deposit will be ordered by the Court in a judgment entry or Magistrate's Order. The deposit must be paid before the Guardian can begin their work. The fee is usually split equally between the parties.

What Happens When a Guardian is Appointed?

A magistrate or judge will issue an order with the Guardian's name, deposit amount, and the fee distribution. After the fees are paid, the Guardian will contact both parties and any relevant professionals. The Guardian will meet with each party individually and with the children; with the children alone, outside of the presence of either parent, and any other necessary party. The Guardian will then submit a written report to the Court. The Guardian will attend hearings and be available for testimony. Guardian reports are not released by the Court. If a party has an attorney, the attorney will review the report. If a party is representing themselves, they must meet with the GAL to review the report.

For additional information,
contact the Court
330-365-3272

www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/Courts



Tuscarawas County Court of Common Pleas, General Trial Division

What is a Guardian ad Litem?



Judge Edward Emmett O'Farrell
Judge Elizabeth Lehigh Thomakos
Magistrate Karen Zajkowski

Parents and the Court

Many of the cases that come before the Tuscarawas County Common Pleas Court, General Trial Division, involve parties with children. Custody and parenting time are major issues in these cases. The Court's approach to these issues is to assist parents in making those decisions in the best interest of the children. The Court can provide or refer parties to programs and to help parents understand their children's needs, before, during, and after the process ends. Most parents who come through the court benefit from the education and mediation services offered, and are able to make the decisions in a collaborative way, minimizing the conflict and stress on the family.

Some parents are unable to make those decisions and proceed with custody litigation.



Guardians Ad Litem

On occasion, some custody or parenting cases may be more complex and require an in-depth investigation. When a case requires evaluation of the home environment, consultation with relatives,

social service or counseling professionals and in-depth contact with parents and children, the court may appoint a Guardian ad Litem. Guardians ad Litem are degreed professionals who go into the home and community to assess the functioning of both homes, speak directly to significant people in the children's lives and review agency, criminal and legal records. Guardians have access to all professionals and records for parents and children involved in the case. Guardians conduct an investigation, write a report and make recommendations to the court regarding the best interests of the children.

What do Guardians Do?

Guardian responsibilities are spelled out in both Local Rule 34 and in Sup. Rule 48. See the following links:

<http://www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/Courts/legal-information>

<http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/LegalResources/Rules/superintendence/Superintendence.pdf>



What are the Guardian's Qualifications?

- Appropriate college degree in law, psychology, social work or related fields;
- Experience with domestic relations cases
- Completed mandatory 6 hour Supreme Court Guardian Ad Litem training;
- For non- attorney applicants, a completed BCI criminal background check and civil background check;
- Knowledge of child and family development, dynamics in parentage and divorce cases, issues surrounding family violence, mental health diagnosis and treatment and substance abuse;
- Knowledge in interviewing children and adults; and
- 3 hour guardian-specific continuing education annually.

