

PLEASE CONSIDER BEFORE YOU PROCEED:

• **GUARDIANSHIP IS A LEGAL MATTER. YOU MUST COMPLY WITH THE LAW. YOU WILL HAVE TO APPEAR IN COURT. IT TAKES TIME AND MAY REQUIRE PAYMENT OF COURT COSTS.**

• **STATEMENTS AND INFORMATION GIVEN TO AND IN COURT ARE MADE UNDER OATH AND SUBJECT TO PERJURY IF FALSE. PERJURY IS A CLASS 3 FELONY, PUNISHABLE BY 5 TO 9 YEARS IN THE PENITENTIARY.**

The Circuit Court of Cook County Guardianship Assistance Desk for Minors may be able to help you prepare court forms to file for the guardianship of a minor.

Call to make an appointment or drop in at one of our offices:

George W. Dunne Administration Building
69 West Washington Street
Room 1020
Chicago, IL 60602
Ph: 312.603.0135

or

Fifth Municipal District Courthouse
Family Court Office
10220 South 76th Avenue
Room LL062
Bridgeview, IL 60455
Ph: 708-974-6577

Circuit Court of Cook County
Guardianship Assistance Desk for Minors
69 West Washington Street
Suite 1020
Chicago, Illinois 60602

State of Illinois
Circuit Court of Cook County



**GUARDIANSHIP
FOR MINORS:**
What Prospective Guardians
Need to Know

Circuit Court of Cook County
Guardianship Assistance Desk
for Minors

Chicago office: 312.603.0135
Bridgeview office: 708.974.6577

Honorable Timothy C. Evans
Chief Judge

Honorable Mary Ellen Coghlan
Presiding Judge
Probate Division

WHAT IS A GUARDIAN?

A guardian is:

- Appointed by the court
- Is legally responsible for the child until discharged by the court, or the child turns 18.

WHO CAN BE A GUARDIAN?

A guardian must be:

- At least 18 years old.
- Of sound mind.
- A resident of the United States.
- Not adjudicated disabled.

WHO NEEDS A GUARDIAN?

- A child under 18 years of age who lives in Cook County and whose parents have either:
 - died
 - agree to guardianship
 - whose whereabouts are unknown or
 - who cannot or will not care for the child.
- If a parent does not agree to guardianship, a child must have been living with the possible guardian for a significant time.
- The child cannot be the subject of a current DCFS juvenile, divorce or parentage case.

A GUARDIAN'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Make day-to-day decisions for child.
- Take custody of child.
- Enroll child in school.
- Shelter, clothe and feed child.
- Make sure child attends school.
- Pay child's expenses.
- Obey court orders relating to child.
- Keep child safe.
- Consent to child's medical treatment.
- Apply and receive possible public benefits for the child

NOTE:

- Public benefits for child are NOT guaranteed.
- Child's immigration status will not change with guardianship.

ENDING GUARDIANSHIP

- Guardianship is always subject to court order.
- Parents have the right to ask the court to get child back.
- Guardians must ask the court to return child to parent or to change guardians.
- Court will end guardianship only if in child's best interests.
- Parents usually have right to visit with child.

TRAVEL & MOVING WITH CHILD

- Parents have the right to know where child resides.
- Guardian must tell court and parents when address changes.
- Guardian must tell parents when child is away from home for more than a few days.
- Guardian must ask court to move out of state with child.
- Guardian must ask court to take child out of state for more than 30 days.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

The Circuit Court of Cook County Guardianship Assistance Desk can help prepare forms to file for guardianship. Call 312.603.0135 in Chicago or 708.974.6577 in Bridgeview.

When you come for your appointment, bring:

- Valid State Identification.
- Child's birth certificate.
- Either notarized consent from parents or their last known addresses or death certificate.
- Filing fee and court costs if you do not meet court's low-income guidelines.

If you prefer to do the guardianship yourself, call the Chicago office for a "Do It Yourself" Guardianship Information Packet.