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# Myths and Facts about NGA and CGC

By Sally Balch Hurme, JD

NOTE: Ms. Hurme is a member of the National Guardianship Association (NGA), serves on the NGA Board of Directors, and is a former member of the Board of Trustees for the Center for Guardianship Certification (CGC). She is not eligible to be a National Certified Guardian or a National Master Guardian because she helped write the exams and isn't a guardian.

**Myth:** NGA and CGC are just the same organization with different names.

**Fact:** The National Guardianship Association (NGA) and the Center for Guardianship Certification (CGC) are very different organizations with different missions. While both share the common goal of enhancing the quality of guardianship services, NGA is a membership organization. You join NGA by paying annual dues. NGA provides leadership in advocating for guardianship reform; provides educational opportunities for professional advancement through the annual educational conference, the annual Colloquium, and online continuing education; makes available publications such as the Fundamentals of Guardianship and the annual Legal Review (summaries of guardianship cases); supports networking through a vibrant Listserv: provides an Ethics Forum, and lists many other benefits to serve its guardian members.

The CGC has no members. The sole mission of CGC is to provide certification of guardians as a means to enhance the level of competency provided by guardians. One of the reasons CGC changed its name from the National Guardianship Foundation was to eliminate some of the confusion due to the similarity of names. The new name more clearly describes what it does—it is the one and only national organization that certifies guardians.

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**Myth:** If you are a National Certified Guardian, you are automatically a member of NGA.

**Fact:** No, passing the NCG competency exam does not make you a member of NGA. In a few states, by state law, you must be certified by CGC to be eligible to be appointed. In all the other states, you can elect to take the exam. Whether you are required to be certified by CGC or you elect to demonstrate your proficiency, you can proudly claim to be a National Certified Guardian. You must renew your certification by CGC every two years. But you are not a member of CGC, and you are not a member of NGA. To be a member of NGA, you elect to pay membership dues on an annual basis.

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**Myth:** RG, MG, NCG, and NMG are all the same certification.

**Fact:** Originally the certifications provided by CGC were named Registered Guardian (RG) and Master Guardian (MG). Because CGC certifies the competency of guardians, rather than maintaining a registry of guardians, in 2008 CGC changed the title of the designation to reflect more accurately the quality of the certification. "National" was added to the designation to distinguish between those who are certified at the state level, and those who have passed the national qualifying exam. National Master Guardians have achieved a higher level of certification for more experienced guardians.

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**Myth:** Both organizations are managed by the same people and operate out of the same office.

**Fact:** While this was formerly true, NGA and CGC have had different management companies and separate professional staffing since 2005. The offices of the two organizations are located in entirely different parts of Pennsylvania.

Administrative support for NGA is provided by The Heuser Group and its business office is in Bellefonte, PA. Pat Heuser serves as the NGA business manager. Email her at info@guardianship.org

CGC is staffed by Calabrese Management in Harrisburg, PA, with Denise Calabrese as the CGC Executive Director. Her email is info@guardianshipcert.org.

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**Myth**: There is one phone number to call for information about guardianship.

**Fact:** Just as each organization has its own office, NGA and CGC also have different phone numbers. Depending on what information you need, you can reach the National Guardianship Association toll free at 877-326-5992 for details about member services and educational opportunities. Call the Center for Guardianship Certification at 717-238-4689 for information on certification or applying for the exam.

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**Myth**: There is one website you can go to for guardianship information.

**Fact:** Each organization has its own website. The address for NGA is www.guardianship.org where you will find a wide variety of resources for guardians, registration information for the annual conference and colloquium, and updates on guardianship issues. The CGC website has a similar, but different, address -- www.guardianshipcert.org. Here you will find applications to sit for exams, exam results, lists of NCGs and NMGs to network with, and the rules and regulations for the two certifications.

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**Myth**: Both organizations are run by the same volunteer boards.

**Fact:** Both organizations have their own boards. You can find a list of members of the NGA Board of Directors on the NGA website. The members of the CGC Board of Trustees are listed on the CGC website. While a few people sit on both boards, each board has its separate bylaws, articles of incorporation and method to select board members.

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**Myth**: You must be a National Certified Guardian to be on the board of NGA.

**Fact:** No, you need to be an NGA member to be eligible for election to the NGA board, but you do not need to be an NCG. And you do not need to be a member of NGA to be eligible for selection to the CGC board.

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**Myth:** Everyone understands the difference between NGA and CGC.

**Fact:** We hope that this article will help everyone have a better understanding of the differences between the organizations so you can direct your questions and get answers with the least cross reference. Both boards and staffs understand your confusion and try to be helpful. If you still have questions, let any of us know and we will do our best to help you.