NGA
NATIONAL
GUARDIANSHIP
ASSOCIATION

STANDARDS
FOR AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS PROVIDING GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES
Checklist

Adopted 2026

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Clear Form

Standards of Practice for Agencies and Programs Providing Guardianship Services Checklist

This Checklist is designed to allow you to perform a self-audit on your compliance with the *NGA Standards of Practice for Agencies and Programs Providing Guardianship Services*.

Completing this audit will enable you to validate your business entity's adherence to these standards.

Any explanations to questions should be attached to this document.

(The numbers and letters in the parentheses refer to the specific section of the Standard.)

NGA Standard I – NGA Ethics and Standards of Practice

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Does the agency/program have written policies that reflect the NGA Ethical Principles and Standards of Practice?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Do the policies provide for acquiring information about each the history, culture, and family background for each person served?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Do the policies provide for using person-centered planning and decision-making?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Do the policies detail the responsibilities and duties of the guardians?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Do the policies incorporate the state-specific provisions and requirements to carry out the guardian's responsibilities?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Do the policies detail how the agency/program seeks and applies alternatives to guardianship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Do the policies respect the appropriateness of supported decision making?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Are there funding restrictions, state laws, or other factors that require variance from the NGA Standards of Practice or NGA Agency/Program Standards of Practice?

NGA Standard II -- Operating Standards

A. Standards on the Governing Authority

What is the legal status of the program/agency? _____

What is the applicable state law that governs the legal status? _____

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Does the agency/program have an organizational chart with lines of authority and job descriptions?

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☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Does the agency/program have a mission statement?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Does the agency/program have organizational goals?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Does the agency/program have a board of directors or advisory board? If there is no governing board, go to II.C. If so,

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Does the agency/program ensure diversity of the board's membership?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Does the agency/program have policies that identify the relationship and division of responsibilities between the agency and the board?

B. Standards for a Governing Board

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.2) Does the agency/program provide orientation on its mission and policies to new board members?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.1) Does the orientation include the NGA Standards for Agency and Programs, the NGA Ethical Principals, NGA Standards of Practice and NGA Bill of Rights for Adults with a Guardian?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.3) Are there criteria for identifying and addressing any conflicts of interest by board members?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (IRS) If the agency/program is a not-for-profit entity, does it obtain an annual conflict of interest statement from all directors and officers in compliance with IRS regulations?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.4) Does the governing board oversee program outcomes?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.5) Does the governing board have authority to approve the agency budget?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.6) Does the governing board receive any independent financial review or audit results?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.7) Do members of the governing board receive compensation for their service on the board or for expenses incurred?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.8) Do members of the governing board have guidelines for participation in board activities and attendance at board meetings?

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C. Standards on Programs within a Larger Organization or Governmental Entity

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A Is the agency/program a unit or division within a larger entity? If so,

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.1) Are there policies and practices that establish an arm's length relationship between the agency/program and the larger entity?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.2 & C.3) Are there policies and practices that establish agency/program independence from other divisions within the larger entity that provide supports and services to agency/program clients?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.5 & 6) Are there policies and practices that enable the agency/program to examine and challenge any direct service costs charged by the larger entity to agency/program clients?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.7) Does the agency/program obtain court approval of any additional entity fees for direct services to agency/program clients?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.4) Does the larger entity have a process to resolve any conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest with the guardianship agency/program?

NGA Standard III – Personnel Standards

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A) Does the agency/program employ competent staff?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B) Does the agency/program have adequate staff to meet the needs of the program's mission?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (Intent) Does the agency/program have staff to client ratio objectives?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (Intent) Does the agency/program use case load weighing when assigning cases among staff?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (Intent) Does the agency/program use sufficient support staff?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.2.a & b) Does the agency/program require background and reference checks for all prospective hires?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (Intent) Does the agency/program have minimum education, training and experience requirements and verification for prospective hires?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.2.a & b) Does the agency/program require criminal and abuse registry checks for prospective hires?

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☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.2) Does the agency/program comply with all state and federal laws on non-discrimination in hiring, and any other state employment laws, such as credit check or drug testing?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.2.c) If the agency/program uses volunteers as guardians, does it require the same background screenings for those volunteers as are required for paid staff?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.3 & 5) Does the agency/program have a comprehensive training curriculum for all new staff, including administrative and support staff?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.4) Does the agency/program have a mandatory minimum of hours of continuing education for all staff?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.6) Are there job descriptions for all positions, including minimum qualifications for each position?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.6) Are all job descriptions periodically reviewed and revised?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.7) Does the agency/program conduct performance reviews for all personnel, including managing personnel, at least annually.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.7.b) Does the agency/program provide regular, periodic supervision of new staff who provide guardianship services for the first six months of employment?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.7.c) Do staff who hold certification either through the state or the Center for Guardianship Certification provide supervision of new staff who provide guardianship services?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (Intent) Do staff have individual performance or skill enhancement goals that are reviewed at least annually?

___ Yes ___ No ___ N/A (B.8.a) If the agency/program uses volunteers to support the person with a guardian, does the volunteer have written description of their job responsibilities?

___ Yes ___ No ___ N/A (B.8.b) Does the agency/program provide appropriate training, support, and technical assistance to all volunteers?

___ Yes ___ No ___ N/A (Intent) Does the volunteer training include fiduciary responsibilities, person-centered decision making, the NGA Ethical Principles, NGA Standards of Practice, and NGA Bill of Rights for Adults with a Guardian?

___ Yes ___ No ___ N/A (C.1) Is at least one member of the management team certified as a National Master Guardian or a National Certified Guardian with a minimum of five years' experience?

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☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.2) Do all staff who have direct responsibility for persons with a guardian hold current state licensing/certification or certification as a National Certified Guardian, or are required to obtain such certification within two years of employment?

NGA Standards IV – Fiscal Standards

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A&B) Does the agency/program have policies that ensure application of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.) Does the agency/program have a fee structure for all services provided to clients?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (D.2) Does the agency/program arrange for an independent review or audit of its financial records? If so, what was the date of the most recent review/audit?

_____

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (D.3) Does the agency/program share any review/audit with its governing board?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (Intent) Has the agency/program taken appropriate action to address any exceptions noted in the review/audit?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (E & F) Does the agency/program have comprehensive internal controls that ensure prudent management of client funds and business funds?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (E.5) Does the agency/program have adequate insurance coverage for business operations, including management, staff, volunteers, and governing board?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (E.6) Is the agency/program fully bonded as required by state law or court order?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (F.1) Does the agency/program maintain separate accounts or ledgers for each client served?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (F.3) Does the agency/program follow the principles of the Prudent Investor Rule when investing client funds?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (F.5) Does the agency/program ensure that client financial matters are confidential and accessible only to authorized individuals?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (F.6) Does the agency/program arrange for an independent external audit of client financial records at least every three years?

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☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (Intent) Does the agency/program use separate, designated staff to request, to authorize, and to complete disbursements of client funds?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (G.) Does the agency/program use a comprehensive calendaring system to ensure that all financial reports to the court are timely filed?

NGA Standard V -- Program Services Standards

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A.) Does the agency/program have written criteria for acceptance or denial of appointment as guardian?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A.1&2) Does the agency/program maintain a waiting list for the acceptance of new clients with written criteria for removing an individual from the list?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A.2) Does the agency/program have a triaging system to identify urgent referrals?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A.3) Does the agency/program have procedures in place for obtaining expert assistance if the agency/program is appointed as guardian for an adult whose needs are different in type and scope from its current expertise?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.) Does the agency/program have an intake process for new clients that includes a thorough assessment of the person's goals, needs, and preferences?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.a) Does the agency/program determine if an appointment of a guardian is appropriate and there is no less restrictive alternative or support?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (Intent) If a less restrictive alternative is or becomes available that meets the person's goals, needs, and preferences, does the agency/program petition the court to modify or terminate the guardianship?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.1) Does the agency/program utilize a caseload ratio or weighting system when assigning new cases to guardians on staff?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (C.2) Does the agency/program develop a service plan for each client that addresses the client's strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (D.4) Does the agency/program review each client's service plan and the ongoing need for a guardianship at least annually?

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☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (E.1) Does the agency/program perform a case review for each client at least quarterly?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (E.2) Does the agency/program have practices in place to review ethically complex or controversial decisions?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (F.2) Does the agency/program use effective systems and backups for documenting all case actions and decisions?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (F.3a) Does the agency/program maintain procedures that ensure confidentiality of client information?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (F.3c) Does the agency/program have a record retention/disposal policy?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (G.) Does the agency/program have practices in place for non-office hours emergency coverage?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (H.2) Does the agency/program include the client's participation in decisions regarding the client's financial affairs?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (H.3) Does the agency/program give priority to the client's goals, needs, and preferences while prudently managing funds?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (H.4) Does the agency/program establish a budget for each client?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (H.5) Does the agency/program keep accurate records that fully account for all assets, income, and expenditures?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (H.7) Does the agency/program provide for special purchases and amenities as funds permit?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (H.8) Does the agency/program determine if a client has a will, trust or other estate planning documents?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (I.) Does the agency/program have an effective calendaring system to ensure timely submission of all inventories, accountings, and financial reports to the court?

NGA Standard VI – Quality Improvement

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A.) Does the agency/program undertake an annual internal program review?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.) Does the agency/program undertake an external program audit on a biennial basis?

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NGA Standard VII – Grievance/Complaint Procedure

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A-F) Does the agency/program have a process for receiving and reviewing grievances from clients and concerns from interested parties?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B-E) Does the grievance process include time frames for responding to any grievance or concern, providing an advocate for the person with a guardian when needed, and requiring a written response?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (D.) Does the agency/program make reasonable accommodations for those with communication impairments or primary language preferences when addressing grievances or concerns?

NGA Standard VIII – Crisis Situations

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (A.) Does the agency/program have procedures in place for the reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a client?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A (B.) Does the agency/program have written policies for how it will respond to natural disasters or any other disruption of client services and threats to their safety?

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