



STATEWIDE GUARDIAN AD LITEM OFFICE

Long Range Program Plan

Fiscal Years 2010-2011 through 2014-2015

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Theresa A. Flury
Executive Director

600 South Calhoun Street, Suite 273
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Phone: (850) 922-7213
Fax: (850) 922-7211

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AGENCY MISSION

The Florida Guardian ad Litem Program is a partnership of community advocates and professional staff providing a powerful voice on behalf of Florida's abused, abandoned or neglected children.

AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PROJECTION TABLES

Goal 1: To provide effective advocacy for all of Florida’s abused, abandoned or neglected children.

Objective 1: Represent all children under Court supervision as reported by the Department of Children and Families.

Primary Service Outcome

Outcome: Average number of children represented.

<u>Baseline</u>						
FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15	
85%	86%	87%	88%	89%	90%	

Goal 2: Advocate for timely permanency for children.

Objective 1: Provide representation for children until permanency is achieved.

Primary Service Outcome

Outcome: Percent of cases discharged after DCF supervision is terminated.

<u>Baseline</u>						
FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15	
78%	79%	80%	81%	82%	83%	

Goal 3: Increase number of volunteer advocates for children.

Objective 1: Increase number of new volunteers.

Primary Service Outcome

Outcome: Number of new volunteers certified as a GAL.

<u>Baseline</u>						
FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15	
2,350	2,375	2,400	2,425	2,450	2,475	

Objective 2: Increase active volunteer base.

Primary Service Outcome

Outcome: Average number of active volunteers.

<u>Baseline</u>						
FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15	
6,900	7,000	7,100	7,200	7,300	7,400	

LINKAGE TO THE GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

Governor Charlie Crist has established priorities for his administration to better serve Floridians. As shown below, direct linkages exist between the priorities of Governor Crist and the goals set out in this plan.

PRIORITY #1 – PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

GAL Program Goal 1: To provide effective advocacy for all of Florida's abused, abandoned or neglected children.

GAL Program Goal 2: Advocate for timely permanency of children.

GAL Program Goal 3: Increase number of volunteer advocates for children.

PRIORITY #2 – STRENGTHENING FLORIDA'S FAMILIES

GAL Program Goal 1: To provide effective advocacy for all of Florida's abused, abandoned or neglected children.

GAL Program Goal 2: Advocate for timely permanency of children.

GAL Program Goal 3: Increase number of volunteer advocates for children.

PRIORITY #3 – KEEPING FLORIDA'S ECONOMY VIBRANT

PRIORITY #4 – SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

PRIORITY #5 – KEEPING FLORIDIANS HEALTHY

PRIORITY #6 – PROTECTING FLORIDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

The Guardian ad Litem Program was established in Florida in 1980 to represent the best interests of abused, abandoned or neglected children involved in court proceedings. There are 20 local Guardian ad Litem programs in the 20 judicial circuits in Florida. On January 1, 2004, the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office was created to provide the infrastructure to increase functionality and standardization among the existing programs. Since then, an annual report has been filed each year which describes the environment, issues and strategies employed to address our basic mission to represent all dependent children, as defined within Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes. Our next annual report will be filed on October 1, 2009. Reviewers are invited to read that report and contact the Statewide Office with any questions. Our vision is to provide effective advocacy for all of Florida's abused, abandoned or neglected children. In an effort to fulfill our vision, we are leveraging state, county and private funds to meet the needs of the children we represent.

Chapter 39, Florida Statutes, addresses proceedings relating to abused, abandoned or neglected children and requires the appointment of a guardian ad litem for every child. Section 39.8296, Florida Statutes, created the State Office as an independent entity within the Justice Administrative Commission.

The State Office has oversight responsibility for, and provides technical assistance to all guardian ad litem and attorney ad litem programs located within the judicial circuits. Responsibilities include collecting, reporting and tracking reliable case data, reviewing the programs in Florida and in other states, developing statewide performance measures and standards, forming a training committee and developing a training program, reviewing various funding sources, and developing methods to improve delivery of program services.

Our outcome measures will be affected by the following emerging trends and economic conditions:

- The Program's budget was reduced by approximately 7.5% during the 2009 Legislative Session. This resulted in the termination of a large number of staff and therefore a reduction in the number of children the Program is able to represent. The Program has adjusted Goal #1 to reflect the reduction in its resources to represent all children under Court supervision.
- The Program is anticipating a reduction in the resources provided by county governments, grants and our non-profits which will reduce the number of children the Program can represent. The counties while obligated by statute to provide facilities for the Program, have in some cases provided additional support to the Program including staff. Because of a reduction in county funding, several circuits have already lost county resources and it is unknown how many more counties will reduce their support to the Program and in what amounts. The Program's LRPP goals do not currently reflect any reduction in county resources.

EXHIBIT II: PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS

Department: Justice Administrative Commission	Department No.: 21
Program: Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program	Code: 21300000
Service/Budget Entity: PGM: Stw/Guardian ad Litem	Code: 21310000

Note: Approved primary service outcomes must be listed first.

Approved Performance Measures for FY2009-10 (Words)	Approved Prior Year Standard FY2008-09 (Numbers)	Prior Year Actual FY2008-09 (Numbers)	Approved Standards for FY2009-10 (Numbers)	Requested FY2010-11 Standard (Numbers)
Average number of children represented	26,500	26,419	26,500	27,000 or 86%
Percent of cases discharged after DCF supervision is terminated	45 %	82%	45%	79%
Number of new volunteers certified as a GAL	1,464	2,316	1,464	2,375
Average number of active volunteers*	5,057	6,959	5,057	7,000
* - volunteers who are certified as Guardians ad Litem				

EXHIBIT III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Justice Administrative Commission
Program: Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program
Service/Budget Entity: PRG: Stw/Guardian ad Litem
Measure:
Average number of children represented standard not met. All other standards exceeded.

Action:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Outcome</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Output</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards | |

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percent Difference
Average number of children represented	26,419	81	(.0031%)

Factors Accounting for the Difference

Internal Factors (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Factors | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Training |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Previous Estimate Incorrect | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Explanation:

External Factors (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resources Unavailable | <input type="checkbox"/> Technological Problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Legislative Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target Population Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This Program/Service Cannot Fix the Problem | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Laws are working against the Agency Mission | |

Explanation:

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Recommendations:

The Program historically included children appointed to the Program that were not actively assigned to a Guardian or Staff Advocate in the Average number of children represented standard. The current administration has stopped this practice. The Program instituted an aggressive campaign to attract new volunteers and a training program for the staff to represent more children in an effective manner.

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Justice Administrative Commission

Program: Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program

Service/Budget Entity: PRG: Stw/Guardian ad Litem

Measure: All performance measures.

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The data source for these measures are numbers tracked by each of the 20 Guardian ad Litem offices residing in the 20 judicial circuits. Each office records and reports, as of the last day of the month data needed to assess Program performance and to determine whether standards are met.

Validity:

The methodology for collecting and reporting the data supporting all performance measures is an accurate approach to data collection.

Reliability:

The methodology is sound and consistent. Although minor issues remain regarding data collection, the Program feels confident that the process is dependable and will result in consistent information from year to year.

EXHIBIT V: IDENTIFICATION OF ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTING TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure Number	Approved Performance Measures for FY 2009-10 (Words)		Associated Activities Title
1	Average number of children represented		Represent children
2	Percent of cases discharged after DCF supervision is terminated		Represent children
3	Number of new volunteers certified as a GAL		Represent children
4	Average number of active volunteers		Represent children

