



POLICY P: OFFICE SPACE & STIPENDS

Wyoming Guardians *Ad Litem* Program

Empowering youth & families through legal advocacy

SECTION ONE: PURPOSE AUTHORITY & SCOPE

- A. This policy was created pursuant to Wyoming Statute § 14-12-103(d) and the Wyoming Guardians Ad Litem (GAL) Program Rules and Regulations, Chapter 1, § 2(b). The purpose of this policy is to set forth the guidelines for a common structure for county responsibility of providing office space directs the GAL Program Administrator in negotiating with the counties for this space, and sets forth the expectations and responsibilities of use for this space.
- B. This policy encompasses all guardians *ad litem* attorneys contracted or employed with the State of Wyoming, Office of the State Public Defender, Guardians *Ad Litem* Program to provide GAL services in Wyoming and all Guardians *Ad Litem* Program Administrative Staff.
- C. Violations of these provisions may be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

SECTION ONE: COUNTY REQUIREMENTS

- A. Pursuant to Wyoming statute, counties participating with the GAL Program with a current Memorandum of Understanding on file shall be responsible for providing suitable office space or a monthly stipend for all contracted and employed GALs on a current GAL Program Panel within their county.
 - I. It is the preference of the GAL Program that all participating counties with a current signed memorandum of understanding on file with the GAL Program provide office space, rather than a stipend to a GAL practicing in their county, so long as the office space is available for the GAL Program. This practice allows for lower costs to counties, attorney collaboration within a field office of his peers, and presents a physical presence of the GAL Program to the county.
- B. Suitable office space is defined as:
 - I. private space separate and divided from the local public defender's office space;
 - II. private space that allows for confidential appointments to take place with no possibility of other individuals overhearing conversations;

- III. lockable space that allows for safe-keeping of confidential files without the possibility of other individuals accessing records and documents;
 - IV. space large enough for each attorney to have a private office, a reception area, a work area for supplies and office equipment, and a meeting area or conference room for larger meetings (or access to a shared meeting area or conference room);
 - V. access to public restrooms; and
 - VI. all utilities provided, excepting phone, internet, fax, and network.
- C. All participating counties with a current signed memorandum of understanding on file with the GAL Program with caseloads under a threshold of 40 open clients at any given time will not be expected to meet the suitable office requirement.
- I. These counties must provide a private meeting space, or access to a shared private meeting space, separate and divided from the local public defender's office space, that allows for confidential conversations to take place with, at minimum, a table and chairs for GALs in their county to work and meet with clients.
 - II. The current counties identified by this exception are as follows: Albany, Big Horn, Crook, Fremont, Goshen, Hot Springs, Johnson, Lincoln, Niobrara, Park, Sublette, Teton, Uinta, Washakie, and Weston Counties.
- D. All participating counties with a current signed memorandum of understanding on file with the GAL Program are responsible for notifying the GAL Program Administrator on or before June 30th of each year of the available office space within the county assigned for use by GAL Program attorneys practicing in their county.

SECTION TWO: STIPENDS

- A. Upon notification that a county is unable to provide suitable office space for the GAL Program a list will be provided to the county of all attorneys on a GAL Program Panel in their county. The county is required to enter into an individual agreement with the GAL for an office space stipend.
- B. The county is responsible for negotiating this stipend amount with the GAL.
 - I. The Program suggests a monthly stipend amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for each full time attorney, and a prorated amount based on caseload for each part-time attorney.

- a. Caseloads of each attorney will be provided to the county upon request.
- C. Should a GAL enter into an individual agreement with the county for an office space stipend, the GAL must use the stipend amount for office space reimbursement only.
 - I. Proof of use must be presented to the county upon request.

SECTION THREE: GUIDELINES FOR USE OF OFFICE SPACE & EQUIPMENT

- A. A GAL shall not use county-provided office space for personal business or business not related to the GAL Program or GAL Program assigned juvenile court actions.
- B. A GAL shall not use state-purchased equipment, furniture, supplies, or vehicles for personal business or business not related to the GAL Program or GAL Program assigned juvenile court actions.
- C. Contracted GALs are not to use state-purchased expendable supplies provided to GAL Program employees whom share their office space.
 - I. Exception: Contracted GALs may use materials required to print, scan, or fax.