

# **Guardian ad litem (GAL) guide**

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Learn what a guardian ad litem is, how to ask for one, what to do if you can't pay their fee, how to cooperate with their investigation, and what you can do if you disagree with the guardian ad litem report.

Much of the information in this guide also applies to parenting evaluators, and family court investigators.

## **1. Fast facts**

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### **What does a GAL do?**

In a family law court case where the judge must decide on a parenting plan, the judge may assign (appoint) a Guardian ad Litem (a GAL) to investigate your household and the other parent's household and then recommend a parenting plan in the children's best interest. The court can ask the GAL to recommend such important things as:

- Whom the children should live with.
- How much visitation time a parent should have.
- If a parent's visits with the children should be supervised.
- If a parent should meet certain requirements to be able to spend time with the children.
- Who gets to make decisions about the children.

Or the judge might limit the GAL's investigation and report to just specific issues, such as domestic violence or a parent's alcohol or drug abuse.

You or the other parent can ask the judge to appoint a GAL, or the judge can decide on their own to appoint one.

A GAL can be a lawyer, mental health professional, or volunteer. All GALs must have training on issues that affect a child's welfare. The GAL must meet standards set by law.

GALs are "mandated reporters." This means a GAL must report a family to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS) when the GAL has reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected.

## **Is the GAL a party to the case?**

Yes. Once appointed, the GAL becomes a party to the case. This means the GAL must get notice of when all court hearings are happening and copies of all papers you file with the court.

Even if you and the other parent can agree to a solution to your case without needing a court hearing or trial, **you must get the GAL's approval of any agreed court orders that affect the children.**

## How does a GAL investigate?

**The GAL can investigate** past criminal records, court records, and other important records. The GAL will interview you and the other parent. The GAL may talk to, or ask for written statements from, friends or other family. The GAL should interview any professionals (such as counselors) involved with the children or the parents.

**The GAL can observe you and the children** at your home and the other parent's home, in the GAL's office, or in another setting.

Most judges take the GAL's recommendations very seriously. Cooperate as best as you can with the GAL.

## 2. Ask for a GAL?

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Think carefully about whether you want or need a GAL. You might not agree with the GAL's ultimate recommendation to the court.

Some GALs don't understand how domestic violence can affect your children. GALs often don't have much training in domestic violence. A report by a GAL who doesn't understand domestic violence can often be damaging. The GAL might make recommendations that don't protect you or the children.

**If your court lets you choose your GAL, and you can afford to pay one,** look at different GALs before choosing. Ask if the superior court clerk has a list of possible GALs who have met the court's training requirements. Ask to review written information about the work experience and training (résumés) of the GALs on that list. If you have time, call a few of them. Find out how much they charge, if they're available, and if you like them.

You might have to pay a private GAL an initial (retainer) fee from \$500 - \$3,000. The final cost can be even more.

**If your court lets you choose your GAL, but you can't afford to pay one,** you may have other options. Some courts have Family Court Services or another county-funded agency that does parenting, custody, or domestic violence evaluations. Ask the clerk's office or family law facilitator (if there's one in your county) ([https://www.courts.wa.gov/court\\_dir/?fa=court\\_dir.facils](https://www.courts.wa.gov/court_dir/?fa=court_dir.facils)) if your county has these resources.

**In some counties, the judge appoints GALs off a list. You may not be able to choose one.** You'll get the next GAL on the list even if you haven't asked for that GAL. If the judge appoints an evaluator or GAL from a court agency (such as Family Court Services), the agency chooses the GAL.

If you decide you want the court to appoint a GAL, you must file a motion asking for this. You can include this request in a [motion for temporary orders](#) or make a separate motion asking only to appoint a GAL.

Answer a few questions on **Get Family and Safety Forms** to get the right forms for your situation.

### 3. Waive GAL fee

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GALs require payment for their services. You might have to pay a retainer to the GAL before they'll start working on your case. The final cost of a GAL can be anywhere from \$1,000 to \$3,000 or even higher.

Before requiring you to pay GAL fees, the judge should consider if you're able to pay. The judge will also ask the other party about their ability to pay the GAL fee. If you believe you can't afford the GAL fee, you can file a motion asking the court to order one of these:

- The other parent must pay the entire GAL fee.
- The county must pay the entire GAL fee.
- Each parent will pay the GAL fee based on your ability.
- You're excused from paying any of the GAL fee (the fee is waived for you).

You must prove you cannot pay this fee. You should qualify for a GAL fee waiver if at least one of these is true:

- The court waived your filing fee.
- You get any public assistance such as TANF, SSI, food stamps, or ABD benefits.

- Your household income is below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- You have exceptional financial circumstances.

You may need to file a Financial Declaration to tell the court about your income.

## 4. You didn't want a GAL

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If you didn't want or ask for a GAL, you might feel reluctant to take part in the investigation. That's understandable. You may feel the process is intrusive. Or you may feel that it's unfair for someone to judge your parenting skills when your family is going through separation or domestic violence. Or you may feel the GAL doesn't understand what it's like to be poor.

It's true that the GAL won't have time to get to know your family well. They must come to conclusions based on their own impression and the opinions of others.

**But you must still take part.** The GAL investigation is very important. This is especially true if you're representing yourself or can't afford to hire experts to give evidence in your case. The GAL report is a chance to get the judge to take seriously information that's important to you.

## 5. Practical tips

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Every GAL is different. We suggest here general things to help get a good evaluation. You may not be able to follow them all. Just being aware of these expectations can help you get ready for this experience.

**Try to be on time. Be quick to respond.** Keep appointments. If you must cancel, call the GAL as soon as possible. Explain why you must reschedule. Return calls and paperwork right away.

**Put on a calm front.** In the interview and in every call with the GAL, try to be polite and calm. Ask questions and disagree politely if you must. Try not to lose your temper, even if you think the GAL is rude to you. The GAL won't have much time to get to know you. They may form an opinion of you based on your conversations.

**Don't "attack" or badmouth the other parent or others.** Do tell the GAL about the other parent's problems, especially things that may cause or have caused the children harm, such as domestic violence against you, or abuse of the children. Simply state your concerns about the other parent. Give facts, not opinions.

**Focus on the children.** The GAL's job is to find out what's in the children's best interest – not what's best for you or the other parent.

**If you don't understand, ask.** If you don't understand something in the evaluation process, ask for help. If you must fill out a questionnaire and are having trouble, ask your community advocate, lawyer, friend or relative for help. If the GAL tells you to do something or asks a question you don't understand, ask them to explain.

**Have the right amount of contact with the GAL.** You can call with questions or new information. Don't call every day. Don't stop by their office without an appointment. The GAL takes every contact with you into consideration. Respect their time. Then they may also respect yours.

## 6. What's important to the GAL?

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**Accept responsibility for your problems. Admit your mistakes.** You should usually admit up front any problems you have. In most cases, the GAL will find out about them anyway. (The other parent probably knows what they are!)

**Take advantage of parenting resources. Get help for yourself.** Often, the GAL will recommend parenting classes for one or both parents. Get a head start. Sign up for classes on your own. Free or low-cost classes may be available. Ask the GAL for suggestions.

Getting counseling for yourself and your children could help during a stressful court case, especially if the children have witnessed domestic violence or been abused. Ask your GAL about organizations providing counseling.

**If you have a mental illness, work to stabilize your condition.** Your illness doesn't automatically mean the judge will take your children away. Try to keep it stable to show you can provide consistent, safe parenting for your children.

Take any prescriptions regularly. Go to any counseling an expert has recommended. If you have a doctor, counselor, or advocate who can explain your illness and say good things about your stability and parenting skills, have them contact the GAL.



**Try to keep stable housing.** If you move around a lot, it may look like you can't give the children a stable home. (**Note:** If you're moving to avoid domestic violence, tell the GAL that.) You might have to move due to financial or other problems. Do what you can to help the children cope with the move. **Examples:** Take them to counseling. Get their teachers to help ready them for a new school.

**Have your children up to date on medical care.** If you don't have health insurance, you may be able to get Apple Health for your children or subsidized health insurance (<https://wahealthplanfinder.org/>).

**Try to take part in the children's school.** Do what you can to get your children to school regularly and on time. Try to take part in school events. Try to go on field trips or other events. Go to parent-teacher conferences. You have the right to ask the school to provide an interpreter if you need one to effectively communicate.

**Be careful about new relationships.** Unfortunately, your life is under a microscope right now. Any problems your new partner has will be bad for you, especially if it could hurt the children.

## 7. Follow the rules

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**Be consistent in visiting the children.** If they don't live with you but you have visits, go consistently. Keep going even if they're supervised visits and you don't like that. Be on time to pick up and drop off. Don't miss a visit unless you really must.

Supervised visits can cost a lot. Try to find a way to pay for them.

**Examples:** Gather resources. Borrow money from family. Ask for a child support credit. Try to find someone neutral to supervise who won't charge you. This will show the GAL and judge your concern for your children.

**Don't deny the other parent's court-ordered visitation unless you have very good reason** that you haven't already told the judge about. If you must cancel a visit due to an emergency (for example, a child is too sick to go), tell the other parent as soon as possible. Offer a make-up visit.

If you cancel because you believe the children won't be safe (for example, the other parent shows up smelling like they've been drinking), try to change the visitation schedule or parenting plan legally. Make a motion in court or ask for an emergency order allowing the change, right away. **Don't** take matters into your own hands if you can avoid it.

The judge may have ordered you to get a drug or alcohol evaluation, go to parenting class, or get batterer's treatment. **Do what the court orders as soon as possible**, even if the other parent isn't obeying the order. Keep at it. It might take several weeks to get an appointment.

Even if you think you don't have the problem, **get any evaluations the court order recommends**. This can be frustrating. The judge may have ordered you to do many things. But if you have an issue, such as substance abuse, that the judge thinks interferes with your parenting, you must address it before the judge makes a final custody decision. If you don't have the issue the judge has

ordered evaluated, the information you get from the evaluation can prove it.

The judge and GAL expect you to obey court orders. They'll probably draw negative conclusions about you if you don't.

## 8. Give evidence

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**Be active.** Don't expect the GAL to gather information that helps you. Do what you can to get information to the GAL.

**Gather witnesses.** As soon as possible after you know who the GAL is, give them a written list of names, addresses and phone numbers of everyone with helpful information about you as a parent (or about the other parent's problems). These are your "witnesses."

The best witnesses are "professionals" or "neutral" people such as teachers, counselors, doctors, daycare providers, landlords, and so on. Friends, neighbors and family can also help. Some GALs won't contact witnesses who aren't professionally involved with you or your family.

Let your witnesses know the GAL might be contacting them. Make sure this is okay with them. Explain that they must return the GAL's phone calls right away. (The GAL may not try to call multiple times.)

If the GAL doesn't contact a witness who you think has important information, ask the witness to write a declaration, letter, or statement ()describing you as

a parent, the other parent's problems, or the children. Give the GAL and other parent (or their lawyer) each a copy. File the original with the court. Keep a copy with your records.

**The law allows both parents to look at the GAL's file.** If there's a reason the other parent shouldn't know a witness's name or address, blank out that information on their copy of anything you send the GAL. An GAL might overlook safety and confidentiality for you and others. You must bring these issues to the GAL's attention.

**Gather records.** Get as much written evidence as you can to show you're a good parent, or to prove the other parent's abusive conduct or other problems. **The other parent and their lawyer will have access to all or most information you give the GAL.**

Some documents that can help prove the other parent's abusive conduct, substance abuse, and/or violence:

- Criminal records
- Police reports
- Medical records (yours, even if you didn't tell the doctor that the other parent caused the injuries; the children's, if related to abuse)
- Sex offender treatment records for the other parent
- Protection orders, no-contact orders, including the petition for protection order and any declarations you used to get the order (even if the orders have ended)
- Protection orders or other family law records about the other parent abusing another spouse or partner or other children

- Photos of you or the children with bruises or injuries
- Apology or hate messages the other parent wrote you

Some documents that can help show your parenting is good:

- School attendance records and grades
- Daycare records showing you picked up or dropped off the children
- Medical records showing you took the children for medical care
- Certificates from parenting classes
- Declarations from teachers, counselors, daycare providers, babysitters, coworkers, doctors, neighbors, friends, or relatives about your parenting skills

**Help the GAL understand you.** Some GALs have little experience with people who are different from them. If you're a refugee or immigrant, a person of color, or you're culturally or religiously different from the average white American, the GAL may not understand your culture. Look for someone from your community or church to speak with the GAL and explain cultural dynamics the GAL may not understand.

**Example:** In your culture, it's common for parents to let children stay for long periods with grandparents and other relatives. You could ask someone from your community to talk with the GAL about that.

Professionals such as community advocates or teachers make the best witnesses, but even a neighbor or friend could help.

## 9. GAL interview

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**Ask for an interpreter for the interview, if needed.** You or a friend can contact the GAL several days before the interview to do this. **You shouldn't have to pay for an interpreter.** If the GAL won't provide an interpreter, you may need to make a motion for a free interpreter during the interviews. If the judge refuses to pay for this, contact a lawyer.

**Appearance is important.** The GAL may want to interview you and the children at your home. Make sure it's clean. If the GAL will see your car, clean it up. The GAL may check that the children have a bed to sleep in, toys and books, and clean clothes. This may feel invasive, but it's important.

**Watch your actions and words.** If the children are there, the GAL will watch you interact with them. GALs are frequently impressed by:

- Discipline focused on setting limits, withholding privileges, and not involving spanking
- Speaking in a calm manner with no harsh words or threats

Don't let the children run around wild while you talk with the GAL. If you need to, take time to discipline them. You need to be in charge. GALs also look to see if the children seem comfortable with you.

**Don't coach the children.** The GAL will probably interview your children alone, if they're old enough. Never tell the children what to say. Never give your children any detail about court proceedings or the parents' allegations against each other. Just tell them it's okay to speak with the GAL and that the

GAL might ask them some questions.

## 10. After the interview

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**Keep in touch with the GAL.** Check in every **2 weeks** or so. Ask if they've had trouble contacting your witnesses. Ask if they got the information you sent.

**Ask for a copy of the report.** The GAL must provide it at least **60 days** before trial. They might not finish the report early. You can ask to get a copy of it as far in advance of the hearing as possible. Offer to go pick it up. The earlier you get it, the more time you have to prepare your response to it for the hearing or trial and bring other evidence to court if needed.

For temporary family law orders hearings, the GAL sometimes submits a report the day of the hearing. Ask the judge for more time to read and respond to the report if needed.

If you disagree with a negative GAL report, you can respond to it. You should also try to talk to a lawyer.

## 11. Respond to the report

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Start right away if you want to respond to the GAL's report, including to explain or clarify anything in it. You may not have much time to do so. Have

blank Declaration forms ready for you and any witnesses to fill out as soon as you see the report.

**You may have a strong emotional response.** What you read might be upsetting.

Call the court clerk ahead of time to find out how many days before your hearing or trial you must file Declarations and any other related documents at the courthouse. Leave yourself time to deliver copies to the other parties and GAL.

If you got the report too late to respond to it, tell that to the judge at your hearing. Ask the judge to reschedule the hearing if you need more time to respond. **Don't just ignore** the GAL's report if you fear it isn't accurate and reflects unfairly on you.

The report is usually important. It can sway the judge. But the judge doesn't have to follow what it says. If you disagree with the report, you must respond and show why the judge shouldn't follow the GAL's recommendations.

If you have strong objections to the GAL's report when you get a copy, you should write a good declaration in response. Here are some tips for doing that.

**Try to meet with a lawyer before your response is due.** Bring as much information as you can to this meeting, including the GAL report and any evidence that disproves things in the report, or that the GAL ignored.

**Carefully review the report.** Make a copy to take notes on. Keep a clean copy too. Mark any major errors in the report, things that you feel are wrong, and recommendations you feel are inappropriate. Look for things you or



others told the GAL that got left out.

**Think about how to respond to what the report says.** It's best to use evidence from someone with no personal interest in your case, like testimony or declarations from professionals who work with you or your children.

**List important things you told the GAL that got left out of the report.** At your hearing or trial, you can ask the GAL why the GAL ignored or left out those items.

**Ask the GAL for a copy of their file on your case.** You should be able to see all non-confidential information, including information from and about the other party. The GAL must let you view the file, even if you don't have a lawyer. If the GAL refuses to let you see the file, talk to a lawyer.

The GAL might copy the file for you, or you may have to do it yourself. You may have to pay a fee for copying.

When you read the GAL report, look for:

- Information from the other parent
- Notes of conversations with witnesses
- Negatives about the other parent that aren't in the GAL's report
- Positives about yourself that aren't in the GAL's report
- Phone calls from witnesses the GAL didn't call back
- Declarations that are in the court file but not the GAL's
- Records from school, CPS, and/or treatment providers

**Take notes about any of the above** to remind you how to respond to any negatives in the report, and to question the GAL about what they left out of their report.

**Check with your witnesses who spoke with the GAL.** You **can't show** the report to your witnesses because it's confidential (sealed). Instead, explain to your witness how the report described their interview. Ask your witness if the report accurately summarizes what the witness told the GAL. If not, ask the witness to write a declaration or testify at hearing or trial.

**If the GAL report is for a trial, your witnesses must testify in person.** They shouldn't write declarations. If you plan to call witnesses at trial, you must disclose those witnesses to the other parent before trial. Your court might have a witness form you must use.

## 12. Address report issues

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**If you gave the GAL a list of witnesses or references to contact, but their names weren't in the GAL's notes or report:** Some GAL's won't contact witnesses who are not, for example, a social worker, counselor, teacher, or other type of professional involved with you or your family. If you think a witness is important, ask the witness to write a declaration. File the original of it with the court. Send the other parties and the GAL copies. Keep a copy for yourself.

Alternatively, if you're facing trial, ask the witness to testify at trial.

**If you feel the evaluation went poorly** because, for example, you were nervous or the children misbehaved more than usual, ask in writing for another meeting or explain to the GAL why things went poorly. If the GAL refuses another meeting, write down what the GAL said, when, and if the conversation took place by phone, letter, or in person.

You can also write a declaration explaining why the evaluation went poorly. It should focus on what happened during the meeting. Don't personally attack the GAL. You may also testify about the evaluation during the hearing or trial.

If you couldn't communicate with the GAL or the GAL misunderstood you because of disabilities or language barriers: Put that in a declaration. If you feel the GAL was influenced by stereotypes about your disability, race, ethnicity, or culture, try to find a witness with expertise about your disability, race, and so on, who can explain your behavior in relation to your background. Ask that person to make a declaration or be a court witness.

**Ask any professionals, counselors, or advocates who regularly spend time with you and your children** to submit declarations or testify at trial. Add up how much time these people have spent with you or your kids. Compare it to the time the GAL had to observe you or your kids. Someone who's spent time with you or your kids may have much more information about the situation, especially if they've known you a long time.

If your witnesses are trained psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, or otherwise trained in child development, you can compare their training and experience to the GAL's. If you ask your treatment providers or others to testify for you, the other parent and judge will question them, too. When you ask people for declarations, the other parent and judge will read the declarations.

**If the GAL made conclusions about your mental health that seem wrong,** try to get a psychological evaluation by someone else. Only tell the GAL you're having an evaluation if it goes well and you want the person to testify at trial. If you can't get a more positive evaluation, try to show how you're working to stabilize or improve your mental health. If you're in regular counseling or taking medication, ask your health care provider to write a declaration or testify about how the treatment is helping you.

**Read the GAL's report over very carefully for places where the GAL has overstated their position. Example:** The GAL made conclusions about you smoking marijuana to a point where it impacts your parenting.

The GAL had little supporting evidence from the file or in the report. All the evidence the GAL had was that you do sometimes smoke when you don't have the children, or when you're out at a party.

The GAL had no evidence showing you did this frequently, or that this limits your ability to parent your children. You should point this out to the court during your hearing or trial. Let the court know the GAL didn't back up their conclusions.

## 13. Get ready for hearing or trial

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You must file your Declarations and other documents the required number of days before your hearing and deliver them to the other parties and GAL. Ask the clerk if you must also submit "working copies."

If you can't meet the deadline, and you have good reason (**Example:** The GAL provided the report too late for you to respond), bring your originals and copies to the hearing. The judge might agree to read them. Hearings are usually short. Judges don't usually allow witnesses to testify at a hearing. For trial, be sure you've met your county's deadlines to give the judge and other parent the names, contact info, and summary of testimony about each witness you want to call.

- **Focus on your positives.** Try to find witnesses who will testify about why you're a good parent, especially if they're not friends or family. Put them on the witness list for trial. The deadline for disclosing witnesses you want to testify at trial is often before the date you'll get the GAL report. Try to guess what witnesses you should have testify, so you can disclose them by the deadline.

Your witnesses should know and be able to testify about these **parenting responsibilities:**

- Keeping a loving, stable, consistent, and nurturing relationship with the child
- Taking care of the children's daily needs, such as feeding, clothing, physical care and grooming, supervision, health care, and day care
- Getting the children to school
- Helping the children develop and keep appropriate relationships
- Using good judgment about the children's welfare
- Supporting the children financially

- **Look at what the GAL left out of the report.** If the GAL left out important information from witnesses related to parenting responsibilities, ask your witnesses to testify about your positives and about how well you perform those responsibilities.

If the GAL didn't speak to witnesses whom you believe are important, or left out information the witnesses provided, be ready to explain why that testimony or declaration is important.

**Example:** Andi spends a lot of time with you and your children, or has had a long, stable relationship with your children. You should explain to the court why the GAL's report might be different if the GAL had Andi's testimony.

- **Make sure the report doesn't leave out the other parent's behavior that matters to parenting plan restrictions.** The court would consider harmful to the children:
  - Abandoning the children or not seeing them for a long time
  - Substantial refusal to perform parenting responsibilities
  - Physical, sexual, or pattern of emotional abuse of any children
  - History of domestic violence, assault, or sexual assault, or conviction for a sex offense
  - Long-term emotional or physical problem that would interfere with the person's ability to be a good parent

- Long-term drug, alcohol, or other substance abuse problem affecting the person's parenting ability
- Lack of emotional ties between parent and children, or impairment or estrangement in their relationship
- Abusive use of conflict creating danger of damage to child's psychological development
- Keeping a child away from you for a long period without a good reason, such as a court order

If any of this information wasn't in the GAL report, try to get proof like police, medical, or counseling reports or declarations to prove the court should place limits on the other parent. File these things with the court. Send the other parties copies. Keep a copy for yourself. You must disclose these documents to the other parent and the court as potential trial exhibits before any discovery deadlines in your county.

Try not to make general statements about the other parent, such as "Jo is a bad parent," or "the children are much safer now living with me." Instead, you should describe specific things, and state when and where things happened.

**Example:** "I believe Jo has a drinking problem and has put the children at risk. About a year ago, Jo knocked over our mailbox while driving. I ran out to the street to see what had happened. Jo was standing next to his car. I smelled liquor on his breath. I have seen him weaving down the road toward our house in his car three other times this year. On all those occasions, the children were in

the car with him.”

- **Countering the negatives about you.** If the GAL has concerns about your ability to perform the parenting responsibilities listed above, or mentions there should be restrictions, show what you’ve been doing to address these concerns. Explain to the court how you’ve been working to fix your problems and are using any resources available to improve your position.

## 14. File a grievance

**You can file a complaint (called a grievance) against the GAL even if your case is still active.** Your court should have a Guardian ad Litem rule (<https://www.courts.wa.gov/courtrules/superiorCourtGuardianadLitemRules.cfm>) that should tell you how to file a grievance against the GAL with the court. There are no self-help forms for filing this motion.

Don’t do this lightly. Talk to a lawyer before filing a grievance. If the case is over, filing a grievance **won’t change the decision.**

You should address the written grievance to the GAL Program Manager ([https://www.courts.wa.gov/committee/?fa=committee.display&item\\_id=319&committee\\_id=10](https://www.courts.wa.gov/committee/?fa=committee.display&item_id=319&committee_id=10)) or Court Administrator ([https://www.courts.wa.gov/court\\_dir/?fa=court\\_dir.county](https://www.courts.wa.gov/court_dir/?fa=court_dir.county)). Grievance procedures vary. Ask the court clerk or GAL Program Manager how to file a



grievance in your county. If you can prove the GAL made a false statement under oath at a hearing or at trial or made a false statement elsewhere during your case such as in the report or to a party, the court won't use them as GAL again.

**To file your complaint with a professional organization where the GAL is a member**, contact the organization and ask them to investigate your claim that the GAL didn't perform the job properly.

- You should file a complaint about a **Family Court Services worker** with the court. You can make a complaint to the County Ombudsman or to the manager of Family Court Services, or the Family Law Department.
- To make a complaint about a registered **counselor or social worker (MSW)**, or to find out if your counselor is certified or registered with Washington State, contact the Department of Health, Health Professions Quality Assurance Division at (360) 236-4700 or [hsqa.csc@doh.wa.gov](mailto:hsqa.csc@doh.wa.gov) (<mailto:hsqa.csc@doh.wa.gov>). They can also provide written information, including a complaint form.
- For a complaint about a **psychologist (Masters or Ph.D. in psychology)**, send a detailed letter about the provider to Department of Health, Examining Board of Psychology, P.O. Box 47869, Olympia, WA 98504.
- To make a complaint about a **psychiatrist (M.D. Psychiatry)**, contact the Medical Quality Assurance Commission at (360) 236-2762 or [Medical.Complaints@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Medical.Complaints@doh.wa.gov) (<mailto:Medical.Complaints@doh.wa.gov>).
- You can make a complaint ([https://www.wsba.org/docs/default-source/licensing/discipline/2019-10-22-grievance-faq.pdf?sfvrsn=b3103ef1\\_71](https://www.wsba.org/docs/default-source/licensing/discipline/2019-10-22-grievance-faq.pdf?sfvrsn=b3103ef1_71)) about an **attorney GAL** electronically (<https://www.wsba.org/docs/default-source/licensing/discipline/2021-04->

[01-grievance-form-non-fillable.pdf?sfvrsn=ecd14f1\\_6](#)).

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