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mn.gov/guardian-ad-litem/

AT A GLANCE

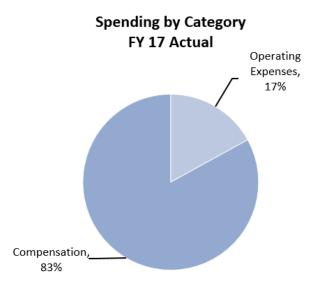
- 17,206 children served by the program in FY17
- 8085 active cases on July 1, 2017
- Two year budget of \$32,960,000
- 255 total employee/213.17 FTE's and 263 volunteers

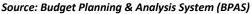
PURPOSE

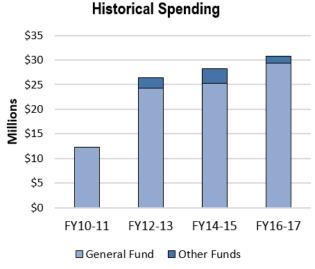
The State Guardian ad Litem Board (GALB) administers the Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Program which exists so that all children with a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem have their primary needs met and that each judicial officer is equipped to make informed decisions for each child within the confines of available resources. The GALB contributes to the statewide outcome of strong and stable families and communities by giving abused and neglected children a strong and consistent voice in which to be heard throughout child protection and family court proceedings.

- Children are safe
- Permanency planning begins on Day 1
- Children spend the least amount of time under court jurisdiction
- Children receive appropriate services including trauma informed care
- Parents participate in services that reflect the best interests of children
- Physical and mental health, educational and cultural needs of children are met
- Children are reunited with parents if it is in the best interests of the child
- Children do not re-enter the child protection system

BUDGET







Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

In 2010, the Legislature created the State Guardian ad Litem Board to move and transition the Guardian ad Litem Program out of the state court system and establish an independent guardian ad litem program. Historical spending begins in FY11. The State Guardian ad Litem Board has a total biennial budget of \$32,906,000 with

payroll consisting of 83% and operating expenses 17%. The budget is funded primarily by general fund appropriations.

STRATEGIES

In order to achieve the mission, the following strategies are utilized:

- The Board complies with mandated appointments for every child alleged to be abused or neglected.
- The Board accommodates as resources permit the unmet and critical need to assist the court with custody and parenting time cases.
- The guardian ad litem provides information to the court through investigation, report writing and testimony about the child's current situation and what has happened to the child.
- The guardian ad litem makes recommendations to the court about what the child needs to be safe, what permanent plans are in the best interest of the child and how the child's well-being should be addressed.
- The guardian ad litem advocates for the child so the child obtains a safe, nurturing and permanent home as quickly as possible.
- The Board and program staff utilize the case management system to measure outcomes for children and program performance.
- Program staff work as part of the Children's Justice Initiative Team in each of the judicial districts.

RESULTS

Type of Measure	Appointment of a Guardian ad Litem	Previous	Current	Dates
Quantity	Cases Assigned Per Fiscal Year	7,998	7,738	FY 16-18
Quality	Percentage of GAL assigned < 3 days of petition filing	40.25%	39.05%	FY16-18
Results	Compliance with federal and state mandates	90%	92%	FY16-18

Type of Measure	Reunification of Child with Parents	Previous	Current	Dates
Quality	Percentage of Children reunified within 12 months	83.9%	47.5%	FY15-17

^{*}Minnesota Department of Human Services Dashboard at Tableau Public

Type of Measure	Time to Permanency	Previous	Current	Dates
Quantity	Length of Time to Permanency at 18 mos.	4,617	2,528	FY16-18
Results	Length of Time to Permanency at 18 Mos.	87%	81%	FY16-18

^{*}Minnesota Judicial Analytical Database Report

M.S. 480.35 (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.35) established the State Guardian ad Litem Board; M.S. 260C.163 (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2015/cite/260C.163) provides for the appointment of a guardian ad litem in juvenile court proceedings and M.S. 518.165 (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/518.165) for family court.

Guardian ad Litem Board

Agency Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast E	Base	Governo Recommen	
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY20	FY21
Expenditures by Fund								
1000 - General	13,984	15,446	16,040	16,866	16,784	16,784	21,876	22,578
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue	706	640	203	1,244	820	817	820	817
2403 - Gift				5				
Total	14,690	16,086	16,242	18,115	17,604	17,601	22,696	23,395
Biennial Change				3,582		848		11,734
Biennial % Change				12		2		34
Governor's Change from Base								10,886
Governor's % Change from Base								31
Guardian ad Litem	14,690	16,086	16,242	18,115	17,604	17,601	22,696	23,39!
Total	14,690	16,086	16,242	18,115	17,604	17,601	22,696	23,395
Expenditures by Category Compensation	12,122	13,423	13,541	13,699	13,734	13,734	18,491	19,343
Operating Expenses	2,548	2,648	2,686	4,407	3,861	3,858	4,196	4,043
Capital Outlay-Real Property	4	9	12	7	7	7	7	7
Other Financial Transaction	15	6	4	2	2	2	2	2
Total	14,690	16,086	16,242	18,115	17,604	17,601	22,696	23,395
Full-Time Equivalents	180.11	197.87	195.91	198.91	195.81	191.71	244.91	244.91

Agency Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governo Recommend	
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY20	FY21
1000 - General								
Balance Forward In		158		117				
Direct Appropriation	14,063	15,289	16,157	16,749	16,784	16,784	21,876	22,578
Transfers In					600	600	600	600
Transfers Out					600	600	600	600
Cancellations		1						
Balance Forward Out	79		117					
Expenditures	13,984	15,446	16,040	16,866	16,784	16,784	21,876	22,578
Biennial Change in Expenditures				3,476		662		11,548
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				12		2		35
Governor's Change from Base								10,886
Governor's % Change from Base								32
Full-Time Equivalents	179.64	197.87	195.91	198.91	195.81	191.71	244.91	244.91

2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In	1,019	879	818	1,081	437	217	437	217
Receipts	565	567	466	600	600	600	600	600
Balance Forward Out	877	807	1,081	437	217		217	
Expenditures	706	640	203	1,244	820	817	820	817
Biennial Change in Expenditures				101		190		190
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				8		13		13
Governor's Change from Base								0
Governor's % Change from Base								0
Full-Time Equivalents	0.47							

2403 - Gift

Balance Forward In	2	4	5	5		
Receipts	2	1				
Balance Forward Out	4	5	5			
Expenditures				5		
Biennial Change in Expenditures				5	(5)	(5)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures						
Governor's Change from Base						0
Governor's % Change from Base						

Agency Change Summary

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY19	FY20	FY21	Biennium 2020-21
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2019 Appropriations	16,749	16,749	16,749	33,498
Base Adjustments				
Pension Allocation		35	35	70
Forecast Base	16,749	16,784	16,784	33,568
Change Items				
Maintain Core Guardian ad Litem Operations		552	1,166	1,718
Compliance with Federal and State Mandates		4,205	4,443	8,648
Board Development and Training		135	135	270
Technology Upgrades and Enhancements		200	50	250
Total Governor's Recommendations	16,749	21,876	22,578	44,454
Pund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Planned Spending	1,244	820	817	1,637
Forecast Base	1,244	820	817	1,637
Total Governor's Recommendations	1,244	820	817	1,637
Fund: 2403 - Gift				
Planned Spending	5			
Forecast Base	5			
Total Governor's Recommendations	5			
Revenue Change Summary				
Dedicated				
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Forecast Revenues	600	600	600	1,200
Total Governor's Recommendations	600	600	600	1,200

FY 2020-21 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Maintain Core Guardian ad Litem Operations

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
General Fund				
Expenditures	552	1,166	1,166	1,166
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact =	552	1,166	1,166	1,166
(Expenditures – Revenues)				
Maintain FTEs	3.1	7.2	7.2	7.2

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends funding for this request from the Guardian ad Litem Board.

The Guardian ad Litem Board seeks \$1,718,000 in the FY2020-2021 biennium to increase compensation for employees by 3.5% each year of the biennium and to fund unavoidable health insurance premium increases. The request represents a 5.12% increase in the Guardian ad Litem Boards biennial base budget. The request maintains the current complement of employees.

Rationale/Background:

The Guardian ad Litem Board needs to attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable employees who can ensure competent and effective advocacy will be provided for the children that we serve. The Guardian ad Litem Board is currently facing significant workforce challenges in accomplishing that goal.

The Guardian ad Litem Board is facing a significant retirement wave in the near future. Nearly 37% of current staff will be 65 years old or older in the next 10 years. The Guardian ad Litem Board will be losing a highly skilled workforce with an incredible knowledge base and we will need to increase the compensation structure to be competitive in today's market.

To ensure the salary structure supports a competent workforce, the Guardian ad Litem Board must strive to keep pace with county and public-sector market competitors. Retaining a skilled and knowledgeable workforce is important to ensure competent advocacy. Exit interviews report that staff are leaving our agency for better paying positions often in county or nonprofit agencies. Minimizing employee turnover will add consistency and reliability for the children we serve. When an employee resigns, all of the children on their case load must be reassigned to a new Guardian ad Litem and often times the transition can be difficult for those children.

The Guardian ad Litem Board is also requesting funding for unavoidable health insurance increases. Health insurance premiums are estimated to increase by 5.63% in 2020 and 5.62% in 2021. The Guardian ad Litem Board does not negotiate its own insurance agreements – it participates in the general plan negotiated by Minnesota Management and Budget. The Guardian ad Litem Board does not have the funds available to absorb this increase.

Proposal:

This change level request is not a new initiative. The Guardian ad Litem Boards FY2020-2021 biennial budget request seeks funding to increase employee salaries, which will help to ensure that the Guardian ad Litem Board is

able to retain a solid workforce. It will also allow the Guardian ad Litem Board to be in a position to respond to the upcoming retirement wave by improving the competitiveness of the current salary structure.

In addition, the request for funding unavoidable health insurance increases will minimize the impact of rising insurance costs for Guardian ad Litem employees on the program.

Equity and Inclusion:

- The change level request assists in ensuring a competent, and diverse workforce.
- It is imperative salaries remain competitive to ensure that the Guardian ad Litem Board can recruit and retain employees from minority, ethnic and racial groups.

Results:

This request is sought to support the Guardian ad Litem Board's core mission of providing effective advocacy for the children that we serve.

The children that our staff serve are the most vulnerable population served by the state. Guardians ad Litem are assigned when a finding has been made by the Court that a child has been abused or neglected. Guardians ad Litem work every day to ensure that these children have their primary needs met and that the Court has the information necessary to rule confidently. It is critically important to the Guardian ad Litem Board to be able to retain and attract a competent workforce.

FY 2020-21 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Compliance with Federal and State Mandates

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
General Fund	·			
Expenditures	4,205	4,443	4,443	4,443
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact =	4,205	4,443	4,443	4,443
(Expenditures – Revenues)				
Maintain FTEs	46	46	46	46

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends funding for this request from the Guardian ad Litem Board.

The Guardian ad Litem seeks funding to hire 46 staff positions to ensure compliance with federal and state mandates.

The Guardian ad Litem Board seeks \$4.205 million in FY20 and \$4.443 million in FY21 and ongoing to ensure staffing levels can meet the state and federal requirement of a Guardian ad Litem assigned to all mandatory cases. In addition, the request will allow for equalization of caseload sizes, appropriate supervision levels of staff and cases and the assignment of mandatory family court cases. The Guardian ad Litem Board currently has 255 employees and 263 volunteers. The request represents a 25.76% increase in the Guardian ad Litem biennial starting base budget.

Rationale/Background:

The Guardian ad Litem Board's compliance with federal and state mandate request is a direct response to the Office of the Legislative Auditor report in 2018 that recommended the Guardian ad Litem Board develop a plan for complying with laws regarding Guardian ad Litem appointments and determine the level of funding needed by the program.

Per federal and state statutes, a judge must appoint a guardian ad litem on every juvenile court case alleging that a child has been abused or neglected; M.S. 260C.163. Minnesota state statute mandates the appointment of a guardian ad litem on a family case alleging a child is abused or neglected; M.S. 518.165. A guardian ad litem performs duties outlined in statute and court rule in their role of advocating for the best interests of children.

Child protection case filings have increased 55 percent from FY13-FY17. This rise has directly impacted the program resources and ability to comply with court ordered appointments. This increase has caused the guardian ad litem program to have to deny a court order to appoint a guardian ad litem on mandatory cases due to lack of resources available to appoint, and place cases on a waiting list. Additionally, some guardians ad litem have increased their caseload size beyond acceptable limits and are not able to perform statutorily mandated duties. Acceptable case sizes are needed to ensure adequate child contacts, thorough investigations and timely reports.

The Guardian ad Litem Boards operating expenses are 17% of the total base budget. Efforts to minimize operating expenditures to ensure compliance with the mandates have included; closing offices, streamlining services, and combining district management.

The impact of not funding this request is that vulnerable children will continue to not receive a mandated guardian ad litem to advocate for their best interests in certain cases. The appointment of a guardian ad litem provides abused and neglected children with a strong voice in the court system and generates better outcomes for children.

Proposal:

The change request is to add staff to our existing program.

- The proposed request will fund all costs associated with establishing 31 new guardian ad litem positions throughout the state. This will ensure assignment of all mandated cases and the result will be that no cases/children will be put on a waiting list. Additionally, the program will be able to lower current case load sizes so all mandated duties are performed for every child.
- The additional 15 positions will be established to provide appropriate supervision levels for supervisory staff as well as staff positions to ensure additional performance monitoring as a response to the legislative audit recommendations.
- Funds are requested for July 1, 2019 with recruitment to begin immediately.

Equity and Inclusion:

- Funding for the additional positions could significantly increase the number of children of color who are promptly assigned a guardian ad litem and allow the program to expand its diversity recruitment.
- Employee guardians ad litem must receive 15 continuing education credits each year and volunteers must receive 12 continuing education credits. The guardian ad litem board mandated that of the required credits 3 must be related to cultural awareness topics so guardians can best serve the needs of diverse clients. Additionally, the revised guardian ad litem report has a specific section on the cultural needs of the child. More training and tools are continually being developed and implemented to provide guardian's ad litem additional guidance regarding what should be addressed in that section of the reports so the judge may factor those recommendations in court orders.
- Recruitment and selection of the new positions will reflect the diverse nature of the children served by the program.

Results:

Filings have increased drastically over the past six years resulting in lower percentages of guardians ad
litem assigned within 3 days of petition filing and less than 100% compliance with state and federal
mandates. The Guardian ad Litem Board is currently 92% in compliance with the federal and state
mandates. This number is likely lower as many Judicial Officers have reported not requesting the
assignment of a guardian ad item on mandatory family files due to the known limited ability to assign on
family cases due to the lack of resources.

Type of Measure	Appointment of a Guardian ad Litem	Previous	Current	Dates
Quantity	Cases Assigned Per Fiscal Year	6,486	7,738	FY 14-18
Quality	Percentage of GAL assigned < 3 days of petition filing	83.4%	39.05%	FY14-18
Results	Compliance with federal and state mandates	99.99%	92%	FY14-18

^{*}Data provided by Guardian ad Litem Case Management System

Type of Measure	Reunification of Child with Parents	Previous	Current	Dates
Quality	Percentage of Children reunified within 12 months	83.9%	47.5%	FY15-17

^{*}Minnesota Department of Human Services Dashboard at Tableau Public

Type of Measure	Time to Permanency	Previous	Current	Dates
Quantity	Length of Time to Permanency at 18 mos.	4,617	2,528	FY16-18
Results	Length of Time to Permanency at 18 Mos.	87%	81%	FY16-18

^{*}Minnesota Judicial Analytical Database Report

The number of children with a CHIPS or Permanency case filed in the past five fiscal years has increased 52%. The results for FY18 are likely impacted by the increasing number of children who have had CHIPS or Permanency cases filed in the past five years.

FY 2020-21 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Board Development and Training

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
General Fund	·	·		
Expenditures	135	135	135	135
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact =	135	135	135	135
(Expenditures – Revenues)				
Maintain FTEs	0	0	0	0

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends funding for this request from the Guardian ad Litem Board.

The Guardian ad Litem Board seeks \$135,000 per year in the FY2020-2021 biennium to permanently fund GAL Board development and training, employee development and learning management system. The request represents a .8% increase in the Guardian ad Litem Board biennial base budget.

Rationale/Background:

The Guardian ad Litem Board development and training change request is a direct response to the Office of the Legislative Auditor's report, completed in 2018, which recommended that the Guardian ad Litem Board should provide greater financial oversight to the program, review the Program Administrator's performance, establish measurable goals, and monitor performance of those goals.

In response to the recommendations provided by the Office of the Legislative Auditor, the Guardian ad Litem Board has been engaged in a board policy and governance realignment process and has implemented Policy Governance. Policy Governance integrates a number of unique principles designed to enable accountable board leadership. The board policies have been revised to ensure enhanced accountability, transparency and oversight of the program. The Guardian ad Litem Board has created a detailed monitoring calendar to ensure data is provided on a consistent basis to monitor organizational performance. The board also recognizes that to ensure continuity of the changes the board would need to invest in its governance capacity. The board is requesting funding for board training and development, an auditing budget for monitoring organizational performance and an information gathering budget for surveys, focus groups and analyses.

The Office of the Legislative Auditor's report specifically noted the Guardian ad Litem Board should ensure all Guardians ad Litem comply with the board's training policies. In response to this recommendation the Guardian ad Litem Board has purchased and implemented a learning management system which allows for the centralized tracking of continuing education requirements for all staff and volunteers. As a result of updated program standards and policies, there is an increased demand for training and employee development and the learning management system will allow for online training modules to assist in meeting this need. The learning management system will provide for a more efficient utilization of resources and ensure compliance with training requirements and timelines.

If the funding is not provided, the Guardian ad Litem Board will not be able to fully implement necessary changes to address the recommendations provided by the Office of the Legislative Auditor.

Proposal:

This is a new initiative.

Board Development:

- 1. Training: \$5,000 annually for training to include Policy Governance
- 2. Auditing: \$20,000 annually for auditing and third party monitoring of organizational performance
- 3. Informational/Data collection \$10,000 annually for surveys, focus groups and analyses

Training:

- 1. Education: \$85,000 annually for employee education and development
- 2. Learning Management System: \$15,000 annually for maintenance costs for the learning management system

The Guardian ad Litem Board has been engaged in the realignment process since March 2018, and has been improving the board's effectiveness and is prepared to implement the board development and educational changes upon receipt of funds.

Equity and Inclusion:

- All Minnesotans that are served by our program are impacted by the proposed change item as the change items will allow for additional monitoring, performance accountability and transparency.
- The learning management system will allow for increased access for staff to complete online learning modules in the area of diversity, inclusion and implicit bias.
- Employee guardians ad litem must receive 15 continuing education credits each year and volunteers must receive 12 continuing education credits. The Guardian ad Litem Board mandated that of the required credits three must be related to cultural awareness topics so guardians can best serve the needs of diverse clients. Additionally, the revised guardian ad litem report has a specific section on the cultural needs of the child. More training and tools are continually being developed and implemented to provide guardians ad litem additional guidance regarding what should be addressed in that section of the reports so the judge may factor those recommendations in court orders.

Results:

The Guardian ad Litem Board has established a monitoring calendar in which the board's policies and performance measures will be tracked and data regarding compliance with the policies will be provided for review and interpretation by the board. The learning management system will track compliance with education and training requirements.

FY 2020-21 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Technology Upgrades and Enhancements

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
General Fund				
Expenditures	200	50	50	50
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact =	200	50	50	50
(Expenditures – Revenues)				
Maintain FTEs	0	0	0	0

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends funding for this request from the Guardian ad Litem Board.

The Guardian ad Litem Board seeks \$200,000 in FY2020 and \$50,000 in FY2021 and ongoing to fund technology upgrades and enhancements to our current case management system. The Guardian ad Litem Board seeks funds to purchase tablets or similar devices for all Guardian ad Litem staff. The request represents a .74% increase in the Guardian ad Litem Board biennial base budget.

Rationale/Background:

The Guardian ad Litem Board technology change request is a direct response to the Office of the Legislative Auditor report in 2018 that recommended the Guardian ad Litem Board establish measurable goals and monitor the performance of those goals. The report specifically noted that Guardian ad Litem managers should evaluate the collection of evidence in Guardian ad Litem investigations and provide greater oversight of court reports, including the timeliness of court reports.

The Guardian ad Litem Board recognizes that to comply with the recommendations regarding the gathering of evidence, the program must deploy field-friendly devices that will allow GAL to document their work within the Case Management System while in the field. Guardian's ad litem gather much of their statutorily required information directly from interviews in the field. This work includes meetings with parents and children and observations of children. Tablets or small notebook devices will allow Guardians ad Litem to document information through a variety of methods, including handwriting, but ensure that such documentation is retained and stored either directly within the case management system or other secure server locations accessed by the case management system. The devices will thus help to eliminate redundant data entry and time spent searching paper documents for relevant information. The devices and integration will also enhance document security, confidentiality and accountability. Supervisory staff will have real time insight and access into the Guardian ad Litem investigation and evidence, enabling them to provide guidance or direction to staff prior to the completion of court reports.

If the funding is not provided, the Guardian ad Litem Board will not be able to fully implement necessary changes to address the recommendations provided by the Office of the Legislative Auditor.

Proposal:

The Guardian ad Litem Board transitioned from the utilization of an Access database to our current web-based case management system in 2015. The case management system is in need of additional development to allow for providing the reporting features and data collection to establish an improved data monitoring structure.

- 1. System Enhancements
 - a. The enhancement queue currently has over 30 items, most of which are enhancements to allow for increased productivity and accountability for the program.
- 2. Dashboard Research and Visualizations
 - a. The addition of a comprehensive dashboard with real-time visualizations of data to ensure that performance against key metrics are always visible to staff and available to ensure accountability and enhance performance. This would build on the programs efforts to dashboard child contracts, court hearings and other performance measurements.
- 3. Tablets or similar device
 - a. Provide for a tool to assist in prompt entry of case information and assist in ensuring that non-public data remains secure.
- 4. Training
 - a. Technical training for supervisory staff on utilization of data and enhancements to ensure quality and integrity of data.

Equity and Inclusion:

- All Minnesotans that are served by our program are impacted by the proposed change item as data security and document/data loss have a direct impact on our customers.
- All Minnesotans are impacted as the public's trust and confidence in our program is essential and of
 utmost importance to the Guardian ad Litem Board. The proposed change items will allow for additional
 monitoring, performance accountability and transparency.

Category	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Payroll						
Professional/Technical Contracts						
Infrastructure						
Hardware	\$200,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Software						
Training						
Enterprise Services						
Staff costs (MNIT or agency)						
Total						
MNIT FTEs						
Agency FTEs						

Results:

The Guardian ad Litem Board continues to develop specific performance measures and monitoring reports on data security and the treatment of children served. The enhancements will allow for monitoring the program performance measures.

In additional to the measurements above, the data collection due to the case management system enhancements will be leveraged and provided to the public in an annual report. The report will provide data on the treatment of children served and the program's ability to meet key program metrics.