

Table of Contents
State Guardian ad Litem Board

Agency Profile 1

Agency Expenditure Overview 4

Agency Financing by Fund 5

Agency Change Summary 6

Change Item(s) 7

Operating Adjustment 7

<https://mn.gov/guardian-ad-litem/>

AT A GLANCE

- 6,951 assigned children on July 1, 2024
- 3,750 active cases on July 1, 2024
- Two-year budget of \$51,240,000 for the fiscal year (FY) 2026-27 biennium
- 273 employees/264.95 Full-time Employees (FTEs) and 17 volunteers

PURPOSE

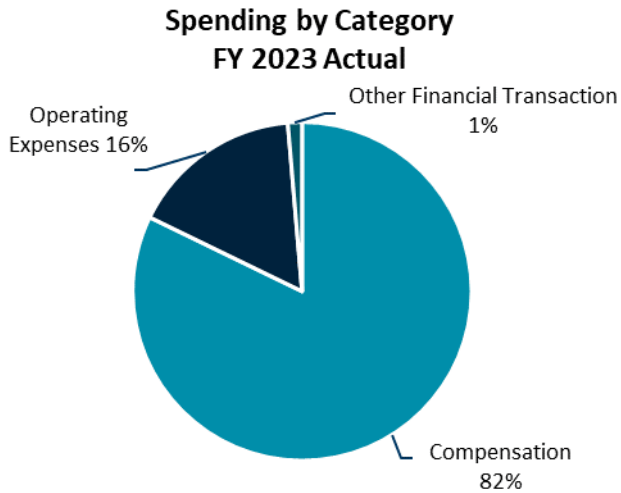
The State Guardian ad Litem Board (GALB) administers the Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Program, which exists so that all children with a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem have their primary needs met and that each judicial officer is equipped to make informed decisions for each child within the confines of available resources. The GALB represents the children's best interest throughout child protection and family court proceedings.

The GALB's purpose is to provide well trained, effective Guardians ad Litem to advocate for safe and permanent homes for the children the board represents. The GALB is committed to serving families with integrity, compassion, and a belief that community, equity, justice, and safety are paramount to a child's wellbeing. The GALB is further committed to building and sustaining a respectful and racially equitable program that promotes and advocates for the best interests of children and families through empowerment, engagement, and community.

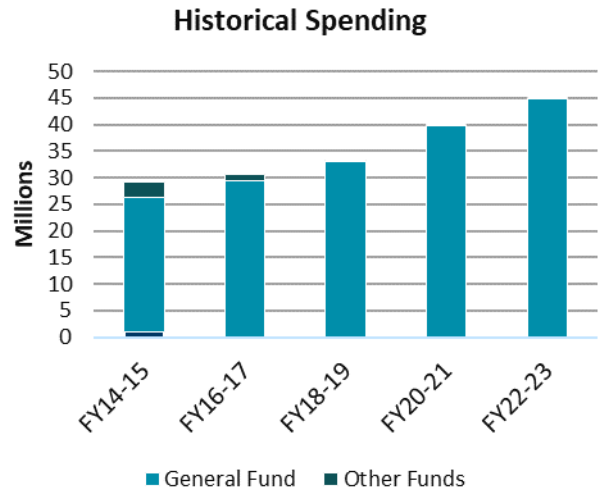
Guardians ad Litem are appointed to ensure:

- Children are safe
- Concurrent permanency planning with relative/kin begins on day one
- 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 their 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: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

In 2010, the Minnesota State 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 began in FY 2011. The State Guardian ad Litem Board has a total FY 2026-27 biennial base budget of \$51,240,000, consisting of 82 percent of appropriated funds for compensation, and operating expenses consisting of 18 percent of appropriated funds. The budget is funded primarily by general fund appropriations.

STRATEGIES

The GALB achieves the program mission by complying with mandated appointments for every child alleged to be abused or neglected. Further, the GALB accommodates (as resources permit) the unmet and critical need in family court.

Within their role, Guardians ad litem provide information to the court through an independent investigation, report writing and testimony. Guardians ad Litem make recommendations to the court regarding child safety and timely permanency planning that are in the best interest of the child. The GALB and program staff utilize the case management system to measure outcomes for children, as well as program performance. Lastly, program staff work as part of the Children’s Justice Initiative Team in each of the judicial districts to help ensure juvenile rule and statute compliance.

To obtain more equitable outcomes for children and families in Minnesota, the Guardian ad Litem program uses evidence-informed research to advance the GALB’s current advocacy practice to a healing practice. The GALB is shifting the lens of how children are viewed to ensure that each child is seen in the context of their family. The GALB is deepening its understanding of its own biases and how they are detrimental to children and their families. The GALB is redefining its role as healers to improve outcomes for children.

RESULTS

Measure name	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Cases assigned per fiscal year	Quantity	Cases assigned per fiscal year	The number declined from 3,141 in FY 2023 to 3,125 in FY 2024	3,125 in FY 2024
Court reports filed and on-time	Quality	Court reports filed and on-time	The percentage increased from 71 percent in FY 2023 to 79 percent in FY 2024	79 percent in FY 2024
Compliance with federal and state mandates	Result	Compliance with federal and state mandates	The percentage was 98 percent in both FY 2023 and FY 2024	98 percent in FY 2024

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/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.

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base FY26 FY27		Governor's Recommendation FY26 FY27	
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>								
1000 - General	20,909	23,968	24,130	25,848	25,620	25,620	26,169	26,732
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue	4		906	4,530	750	750	750	750
Total	20,913	23,968	25,037	30,378	26,370	26,370	26,919	27,482
Biennial Change				10,533		(2,675)		(1,014)
Biennial % Change				23		(5)		(2)
Governor's Change from Base								1,661
Governor's % Change from Base								3

Expenditures by Program

Guardian ad Litem	20,913	23,968	25,037	30,378	26,370	26,370	26,919	27,482
Total	20,913	23,968	25,037	30,378	26,370	26,370	26,919	27,482

Expenditures by Category

Compensation	17,932	19,702	21,013	23,026	23,026	23,026	23,575	24,138
Operating Expenses	2,982	3,941	3,990	5,923	3,163	3,153	3,163	3,153
Other Financial Transaction	0	325	34	1,429	181	191	181	191
Total	20,913	23,968	25,037	30,378	26,370	26,370	26,919	27,482

Full-Time Equivalents

	228.52	243.93	247.41	247.41	247.41	247.41	247.41	247.41
--	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base FY26 FY27		Governor's Recommendation FY26 FY27	
1000 - General								
Balance Forward In		1,901		228				
Direct Appropriation	22,576	22,815	24,358	25,620	25,620	25,620	26,169	26,732
Cancellations		748						
Balance Forward Out	1,667		228					
Expenditures	20,909	23,968	24,130	25,848	25,620	25,620	26,169	26,732
Biennial Change in Expenditures				5,101		1,262		2,923
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				11		3		6
Governor's Change from Base								1,661
Governor's % Change from Base								3
Full-Time Equivalents	228.52	243.93	247.41	247.41	247.41	247.41	247.41	247.41

2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In	2,299	3,066	3,949	3,780				
Receipts	723	806	737	750	750	750	750	750
Balance Forward Out	3,017	3,872	3,780					
Expenditures	4		906	4,530	750	750	750	750
Biennial Change in Expenditures				5,432		(3,936)		(3,936)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures						(72)		(72)
Governor's Change from Base								0
Governor's % Change from Base								0

2403 - Gift

Balance Forward In	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6
Balance Forward Out	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	Biennium 2026-27
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2025 Appropriations	25,620	25,620	25,620	51,240
Forecast Base	25,620	25,620	25,620	51,240
Change Items				
Operating Adjustment		549	1,112	1,661
Total Governor's Recommendations	25,620	26,169	26,732	52,901
Dedicated				
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Planned Spending	4,530	750	750	1,500
Forecast Base	4,530	750	750	1,500
Total Governor's Recommendations	4,530	750	750	1,500
Revenue Change Summary				
Dedicated				
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Forecast Revenues	750	750	750	1,500
Total Governor's Recommendations	750	750	750	1,500

Guardian ad Litem Board

FY 2026-27 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Operating Adjustment

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Fund				
Expenditures	549	1,112	1,112	1,112
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	549	1,112	1,112	1,112
FTEs	0	0	0	0

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends additional funding of \$549,000 in FY 2026 and \$1,112,000 in each subsequent year from the general fund to help address operating cost increases at the Guardian ad Litem Board.

Rationale/Background:

The cost of operations rises each year due to increases in employer-paid health care contributions, FICA and Medicare, along with other salary and compensation-related costs. Other operating costs, like rent and lease, fuel and utilities, and IT and legal services also grow. This cost growth puts pressure on operating budgets that remain flat year to year. The Guardian ad Litem Board faces challenging decisions to manage these rising costs within existing budgets, while maintaining the services Minnesotans expect. This recommendation provides additional resources to help address these cost pressures and pay for operations.

The Guardian ad Litem Board requests funding for salary increases and the employer share of health insurance increases. This request is sought to support the core mission and services of the Guardian ad Litem Board.

Proposal:

The Governor recommends increasing operating budgets to support current services. For the Guardian ad Litem Board, this funding will help cover expected growth in employee compensation and insurance, lease costs, and other operating costs.

Dollars in Thousands

Net Impact by Fund	FY 26	FY 27	FY 26-27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 28-29
General Fund	549	1,112	1,661	1,112	1,112	2,223

Results:

This recommendation is intended to help the Guardian ad Litem Board address rising cost pressures and mitigate impacts to current levels of service and information to the public.