



**Office of the
Public Administrator**



**725 Maple Street, 2nd Floor
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What is the role of the Public Administrator?

The Public Administrator, as directed by Probate Court, serves those Jefferson County residents who are unable to manage their own health decisions, life arrangements, and/or financial matters. The Public Administrator generally serves in two capacities:

- ◆ As Guardian, the Public Administrator is legally responsible for decisions regarding placement or living arrangements; medical treatment; education or rehabilitation plans; burial arrangements
- ◆ As Conservator, the Public Administrator is legally responsible for handling a Ward's assets and financial affairs

How are Guardianship and Conservatorship determined?

Guardianship is determined by the Probate Court. The Probate Judge makes the appointment based upon a physician's interrogatories, testimony of people in contact with the potential Ward, and a court-appointed attorney who has interviewed the potential Ward. The Public Administrator also may be called to testify on the need for the appointment of a Guardian.

The appointment of a Conservator is granted with the signed and notarized consent of the Ward. While strictly a voluntary arrangement, Conservatorship still must be ordered by a Probate Judge.

Who else may petition for Guardianship/Conservatorship?

Adult family members may petition the Court to become Guardian/Conservator for a potential Ward. Agencies, such as the Family Support Division; Department of Mental Health; Skilled Care and Residential Care Facilities; and the Division of Health and Senior Services also may petition the Court.

How long does it take?

Generally, the process of petitioning for Guardianship/Conservatorship takes approximately two months. Steps involved for Guardianship are:

- ⇒ Submission of the Case Filing Information sheet
- ⇒ Submission of physician's interrogatories
- ⇒ Interview by Public Administrator or Deputy
- ⇒ Work with attorney to file documentation
- ⇒ Payment of filing fee (currently \$235.00)
- ⇒ Notification of hearing date
- ⇒ Interview by Court-appointed attorney
- ⇒ Actual hearing and order by the Court

Conservatorship only status does not require physician's interrogatories, but does require notarized consent for Conservator.

How many people work with the Public Administrator?

At the present time, two full-time Deputy Public Administrators and four full-time office employees work with the Public Administrator. Together, they are responsible for managing the affairs of all Wards, visiting Wards, and submitting Court-required annual documentation on the status of Wards.

Does the Public Administrator make money based on a Ward's assets?

It makes no difference if a potential Ward is wealthy or indigent because neither the Public Administrator nor the staff earns fees as part of their salaries. All fees charged to Wards are earned by the County of Jefferson and the office attorneys, and those fees are reviewed and approved by the Probate Court.

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