

Guardian ad Litem Grant Program



Guardian ad Litem Grants

Guardians ad litem (GALs) are appointed by the court to represent the best interests of children and youths who come under the purview of the Child Protective Act (CPA).

FUNDING GAL PROGRAMS

Idaho's child protection GAL programs are funded in part by money from a guardian ad litem account, established by I.C. 16-1638.

State law directs the Idaho Supreme Court to serve as grant administrator for funds the Legislature appropriates to that account. The Court awards funding to organizations in each of the seven judicial districts to maintain GAL programs and train volunteers to serve as these advocates.

There are two separate appropriations: one for general use and one specifically for volunteer recruitment, training, and retention. GAL programs in each judicial district are eligible to receive a certain percentage of each allocation based on a formula that estimates the need for services in each judicial district.

ALIGNING WITH STATUTE

Historically, the grant application has only been available to Idaho's Court Appointed Special Advocate programs.

Beginning with the current fiscal year 2023 budget cycle, the Court is making some significant changes to the GAL Grant Program. These adjustments are being made to better align the Court's program with its statutory requirements as grant administrator and to

formalize and strengthen the grant program, maximizing the number of children served by a GAL.

- Any qualified person, organization, corporation, or agency can apply for the grant as permitted under Idaho Code 16-1639(1). The intent is to make the best use of grant funds by offering them to all qualified entities and individuals providing GAL services, potentially increasing the number of children and youth served. Qualified applicants must be prepared to operate a guardian ad litem program under the requirements of Idaho Code 16-1632, 16-1633 and Idaho Juvenile Rule 35a.
- An independent Grant Review Board will review grant applications and make funding recommendations to the Court. This will promote a thorough and objective review and award process. Though the Court appoints the board members, four are nominated by the Governor's Office and the Legislature. This provides the other two branches of state government input into the process, reflecting our collective interest in promoting effective GAL services for children and youth.
- Grant eligibility and Grant Review Board procedures have been formalized in Idaho Court Administrative Rule 91 to establish clarity and consistency in procedure.

