



Utah State Courts

Abstract from the Utah State Courts 2012 Annual Report To The Community
“A Decade of Progress”

PROTECTING VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Utah State Courts are building a program for guardianship cases modeled after the hugely successful Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program in Juvenile Court. Volunteer coordinators – hired with grant funds – will recruit, train, and monitor community volunteers, who will serve as court visitors. The program is being funded by a three-year grant awarded by the State Justice Institute.

During the guardianship process, the court visitor is able to provide the judge with more evidence than might be offered by the petitioner and respondent and report to the judge on the need for a guardian and the extent of the guardian’s authority. The court visitor can interview the proposed guardian, the respondent, family, clergy and friends, visit the proposed residence, and report on other investigations ordered by a judge.

After a guardian is appointed, the court visitor helps to ensure that the guardian is serving within the limits of the order and that the protected person is living as full a life as possible. A court visitor can interview the protected person, guardian and others, visit the residence, compare annual reports with real-life circumstances, and audit finances.

The program is one of many steps the Utah Judicial Council has endorsed to improve the protection of one of the most vulnerable segments of our society. The Judicial Council has appointed a committee of judges, lawyers, guardians, and others to develop and oversee the program. The committee will hire the coordinator, develop the programs to recruit and train volunteers, and evaluate how court visitors can best be used to help judges.

For more information please contact Court Visitor Program Coordinator, Karolina Abuzyarova at karolinaa@email.utcourts.gov or 801-578-3925.