



Utah State Courts

# **Court Visitor Volunteer Program**

Utah State Bar, Elder Law Section

February 23, 2012

## In the beginning

- In 2005, the Bar's Committee on Law and Aging reported that the District Court fell short in protecting incapacitated adults.
- The Council appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on Probate Law and Procedure to investigate.
- The committee recommended providing the judge more information on which to make decisions.
- The committee recommended more thorough court review of guardians' efforts to protect incapacitated adults.

# Volunteer Program

- The **Court Visitor Volunteer Program** is a district court program with the goal of improving the lives of incapacitated adults, assisting guardians and improving judges' decisions.
- Pilot program funded by a three-year grant from the State Justice Institute.
- Will operate in Third and Seventh Judicial Districts.
- Will provide a cadre of trained volunteers available for appointment by the judge.

# Volunteer Program

- Exists in other states.
- Supported by ABA Commission on Law and Aging.
- Advised by Court Visitor Steering Committee:

Kent Alderman, Parsons, Behle & Latimer

Margy Campbell, Guardian & Conservator Services

Mary Jane Ciccarello, Director of Self-Help Center

Judge George Harmond, Seventh District Court

Judge Keith Kelly, Third District Court

Rep. Kraig Powell, Powell, Potter & Poulsen

Julie Rigby, Judicial Team Manager, Third District Court

Donna Russell, Office of Public Guardian

# Timeline

**January - February 2012:** Developing training curriculum for volunteers, guardians, court employees; recruiting trainers; scheduling trainings

**March 2012:** Volunteer recruitment, launch of the PR campaign

**April-May 2012:** Volunteer training

**Summer 2012:** Case assignment to volunteers

**Fall 2012:** Continuous evaluation and recognition

# Volunteers

- People with experience working with vulnerable, disabled and incapacitated adults.
- Pass background check.
- Complete training.
- Appointed by the judge to inquire, observe and report, helping ensure that the protected person's needs are met, that their property is protected and used for their benefit, and that the court's orders are followed.



# Volunteer Roles

*The Visitor*

*The Auditor*

*The  
Records  
Researcher*

*The  
Educator*

# Visitor

*The Visitor* interviews protected persons and others who are important in that person's life and observes the care of the protected person in their residential environment. Also appointed if respondent's presence at the hearing needs to be excused.



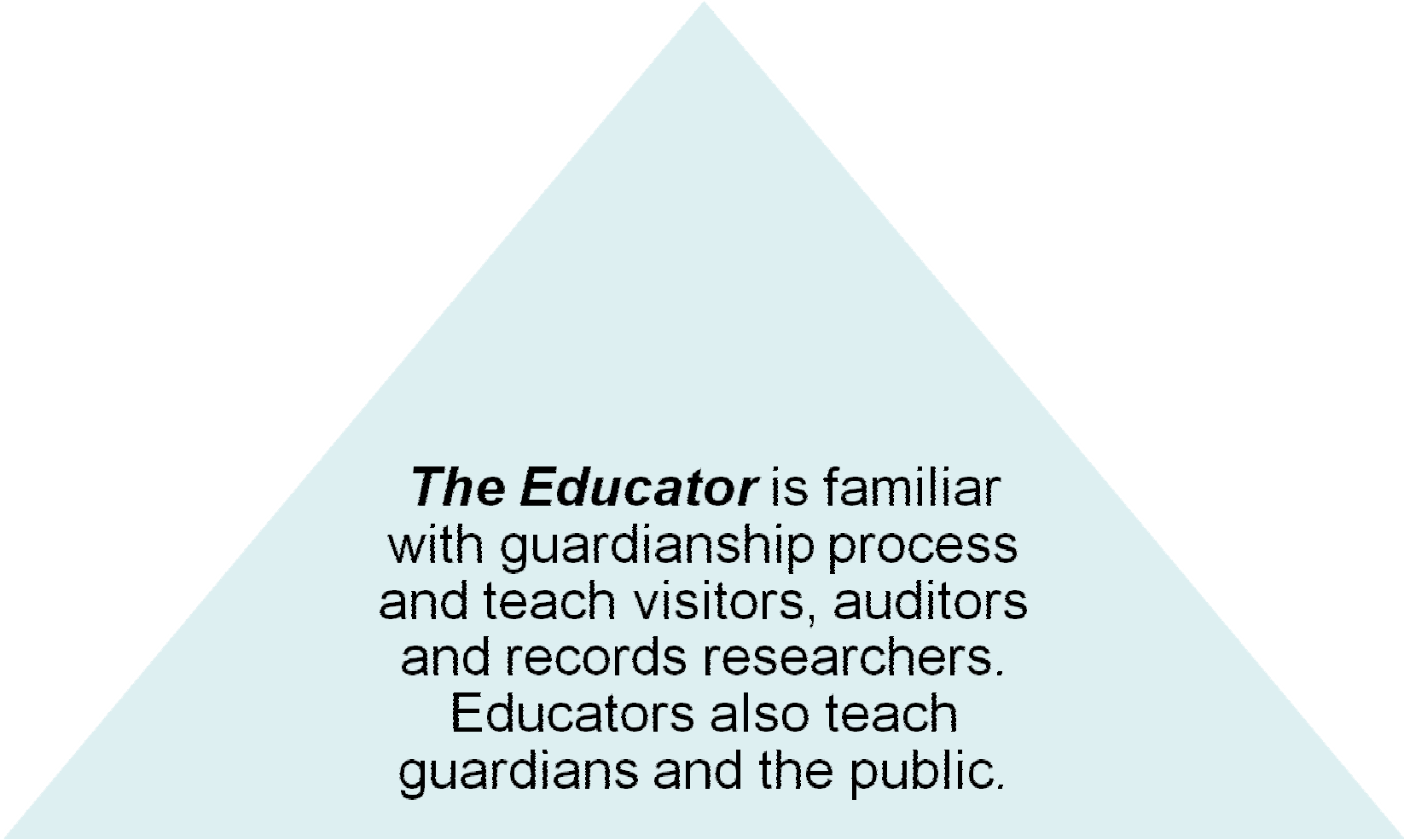
# Auditor

*The Auditor* reviews financial reports filed by guardians and reports any problems.

## Records Researcher

*The Records Researcher* helps the clerk prepare case files for hearings and monitor compliance of guardians' reports. Reviews reports for completeness. Finds guardians with whom the court has lost contact.

# Educator



***The Educator*** is familiar with guardianship process and teach visitors, auditors and records researchers. Educators also teach guardians and the public.



# Community Partnerships



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- College of Social Work, University of Utah
- College of Nursing, University of Utah
- Center on Aging, University of Utah
- Department of Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology, Utah State University
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program, SLCounty Aging Services
- Division of Aging and Adult Services (Area Agencies on Aging, Long-term Care Ombudsman, Adult Protective Services)
- Utah Volunteers Centers Association
- Active Re-entry Centers for Independent Living
- Jewish Family Service
- AARP

## Contact

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Steering Committee webpage:  
<http://www.utcourts.gov/committees/visitor>