

Rule 9.6 Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)

A. Appointment

1. A GAL shall be selected and appointed solely by the Court. Appointment of a GAL from the list of qualified candidates will not be on a rotating basis.

2. In appointing a GAL, the Court will consider the complexity of the issues, the parties (including geographic location), counsel or any person representing themselves, and any child involved as well as the experience and demeanor of qualified candidates.

B. Information Provided

1. Within fourteen (14) days of the GAL's appointment, counsel or a person representing themselves shall provide the GAL with a written statement which shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following: 1) the nature of the issues in the case; 2) names, addresses and telephone numbers of any individuals who may have relevant information relating to the issues in the case; and 3) a list of those tasks deemed practicable and advisable for the GAL to undertake in order to provide the Court with relevant information and an informed recommendation as to the child(ren)'s best interests.

C. Notice to GAL

1. Counsel and/or any person representing themselves shall serve the GAL with copies of all pleadings and documents filed with the Court. The Court shall provide notice of all hearings to the GAL.

D. Compensation

1. A GAL will be compensated at the rate of \$150.00 per hour for all services rendered. A GAL shall submit to the Court a written motion for payment of services rendered. The motion shall be served upon all parties or their counsel if they are represented. (As amended effective as of January 1, 2026).

E. GAL Responsibilities and Training

1. A GAL will be trained and fulfill the responsibilities set forth in Rule 48 of the Rules of Superintendence, which is fully incorporated by reference through this Rule.

F. Filing of Reports

1. A GAL shall prepare a written report, including recommendations to the Court, no later than seven (7) days before the final hearing. The report shall detail the activities performed, hearings attended, persons interviewed, documents reviewed, experts consulted and all other relevant information considered by the GAL in reaching the

GAL's recommendations and in accomplishing the duties required by statute, these Rules, and in the Court's Order of Appointment. The GAL's written report shall be considered confidential, shall be filed under seal with the Court but not the Clerk, and shall be retained in the Magistrate's Office and not filed with the Clerk.

G. Access to GAL Report

1. At the time a GAL report is filed, the GAL will also make their report available to counsel of record, and notify any person representing themselves that the report has been filed with the Magistrate's office. A person representing themselves may view the report by contacting the Magistrate's office during normal business hours and making the necessary arrangements.

2. Counsel may review the GAL report with their client, but are strictly prohibited from permitting a party to obtain a copy of a GAL report. No party will be permitted to obtain a copy of the report.

3. No one shall discuss the contents of a GAL's report with a child or within the child's presence and/or hearing, directly or indirectly, or permit another person to discuss the GAL's report with a child of a party or within the presence or hearing of a child.

H. Admission of GAL Report

1. The GAL report shall be accepted into evidence as the GAL's direct testimony, and the GAL may be subject to cross-examination by any party.

I. Comments or Complaints

1. Comments or complaints regarding the performance of a GAL shall be in writing and submitted to the Magistrate's Administrative Assistant.