

Summary of findings of GAL Systems (or Child Advocacy in systems without the GAL)

These systems vary in their complexity with key differences being:

- If they are stated interest or best interest standards for children with a preference for stated interest in the more built out child representation agencies
- If funding comes as a separate state agency or if they are contracted through state AOC
- If employees are full-time or contracted with the agencies, it appears to be a combination in many cases, but not all
- Public defender offices usually represent parents in DNA actions, and rarely also represent children with New Jersey being a notable exception with two fully built out divisions, one for children and one for parents
- Lawyers and non-lawyers fill roles in the DNA space, based on jurisdiction, ranging from court appointed counsel, to traditional GAL roles, to CASA (non-lawyer volunteer) roles. These roles vary based on the type of case and jurisdiction.
- What types of cases justify appointment of counsel, if any, varies greatly by jurisdiction

For the more organized systems, where offices are centralized with full-time employees or contract employees:

- Built in organizational structure that has some full-time employees to supervise, train, and manage contracts
- Physical space and organizational support to allow for the supervision/oversight wing, even if supervising contract attorneys
- Some system for handling payment to contract lawyers or full-time employees, usually from payment by the courts, parents, government fund, or a combination thereof

A similar model to what is being proposed in KY:

- Ohio – Hamilton County (GAL Unit); Butler County (contracts out GAL services); rest of the state is a combination of non-profits and court appointed

Improve Services: 5 identified states (or offices within states) where the public defender represents children in DNA actions

- New Jersey: separate unit, dedicated to stated interest of children, called Law Guardians not GALs
- New York – 3 PD offices represent children, dedicated to stated interest (Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem)
- Pennsylvania – 1 office (Philadelphia), represent children in DNA actions, stated interest

- Wisconsin – represent children in need of protective services, but they do not offer GAL services (assuming this is stated interest and not best interest from information provided)

This may be status quo with added overhead, and DPA would take on the role of separate agencies (similar to P&A under DPA) – but they seem to be under the umbrella of “Office of the Child Advocate” in most states:

- California – separate agency, which appears to be a non-profit organization
- Colorado – separate government agency (Office of the Child Advocate)
- Delaware – separate government agency (Office of the Child Advocate)
- Florida – Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office
- Kansas – separate government agency (Kansas Office of the Child Advocate)
- Louisiana – separate government agency created as a collaborative project between courts and other service providers (CINC Center)
- New Mexico – separate government agency (Office of Family Representation)
- Oklahoma – 3 counties with RFP to Legal Aid to run child representation (stated interest); rest are appointed through AOC
- Rhode Island – separate government agency (Office of the Child Advocate)
- Utah – separate government agency (Office of the Guardian Ad Litem)
- West Virginia – non-profit agency (Child Law Services)

This may also be status quo, Court Appointed GAL:

- Indiana
- Iowa
- Maine
- Maryland – PD office represents parents but not children in DNA actions
- Mississippi – contract (no right to counsel)
- Missouri
- New York – all but 3 offices, all in NYC
- North Dakota – court appointed / Youthworks
- Pennsylvania – all but Philadelphia
- South Dakota
- Vermont – court appointed
- Washington – court appointed
- Wyoming