

Date of Meeting: 1/3/25

Roll Call:

Members' Present

Judge Lori Morgan (Chair), Judge Thomas Felts, Kelly Lonnberg, Judge Catherine Stafford, Judge, Magistrate Ana Osan, Magistrate Roseanne Ang, Kelly Lonnberg, Katie Kelsey, Deb Dubovich, Magistrate Daun Weliever

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn and Rae Feller

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS), Payton Lester (IOCS), Joseph Fischer (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed the committee.

GAL Appointment Order for Benchbook

Joseph Fischer from IOCS joined and discussed the proposed GAL Appointment Order from the Domestic Relations Benchbook. The order is from the Family Law Task Force and can be shared with the committee. The Domestic Relations Benchbook Committee will now be reviewing the form since the GAL Guidelines are in effect. The next meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2025.

Statewide Training by Kids' Voice

Katie Kelsey updated the committee on the status of in-person trainings that Kids' Voice has scheduled to take place in different areas of the State, with the first being in Allen County. There are currently four scheduled with one additional training in the works. Jordan Burton from Kids' Voice is leading that project and scheduling those with help from local judges and GAL/CASA programs. Rae Feller thanked the judicial officers and members of the committee that were working with Jordan and had helped get those scheduled.

State Office LMS Modules

Leslie Dunn and Payton Lester updated the committee on the status of the State Office's online modules for the training that will be needed for applicants in addition to the training provided by Kids' Voice and for the applicants that already have some training but need a refresher. All modules are loaded in the learning management system. The State Office has been working closely with the Education Division to get that accomplished. Messages with instructions should be sent out to applicants soon to complete the training.

Complaint Process Finalization

Judge Morgan went over the complaint process that was circulated to the committee prior to the meeting. This is the complaint process that the sub-group of the committee drafted when the committee was formed many months previously. As the date of March 1, 2025, approaches, the process needs to be finalized and available online. Rae discussed the process internally to have the complaint form on the website. The State Office will be working with the communications team, like the application, to get the form completed to contain all the elements in the complaint process created by the committee. The complainant will then be able to submit the form online.

Update on Applications/Guidance from Committee

The State Office sought guidance from the committee for those applicants that need judicial references. It was discussed whether the committee wanted to review each of those applications individually. The consensus was that those applications would be treated the same as any other applicant unless there was something out of the ordinary that would warrant bringing the application before the committee for a decision.

The committee then discussed applicants that had only gone through the 30-hour GAL/CASA training. The committee agreed that while there are topics that are covered in both courses that would not need to be duplicated, the GAL/CASA training is not a substitute for the 12-hour GAL Family Training that is required under the Family Law GAL Guidelines.

Communication on Application Process

Leslie Dunn spoke to the group about misinformation the office continues to receive about the application process and the GAL Guidelines. The committee discussed different ways to get the word out in their individual communities. There are plans to continue to do trainings for judges on the guidelines. The GAL/CASA network has been asked to help as well by talking to the family law GALs in their communities.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes for the December meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Adjourn

Next meeting: 2/7/25 at 10 a.m.

Date of Meeting: 2/7/25

Roll Call:

Members' Present

Judge Lori Morgan (Chair), Judge Thomas Felts, Kelly Lonnberg, Judge Catherine Stafford, Judge, Magistrate Roseanne Ang, Magistrate Anan Osan, Kelly Lonnberg, Katie Kelsey

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn and Rae Feller

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS), Joseph Fischer (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed the committee.

Update on Statewide Trainings

Katie Kelsey informed the committee that seven people were trained in-person in Allen County and 20 more were trained virtually. The people participating are lively and engaged. It is a mix of attorneys and non-attorneys. There are trainings within the next couple of months scheduled, starting with Vanderburgh on March 7th. Next will be in Ripley County. The plan after that is to head to the northwest area of the state.

State Office LMS Modules

The online portion of the training is running and available to applicants. There have been applicants that have completed the training through the modules and been approved. The State Office has received some feedback that the modules are well done and contain good information. Approximately 220 GALs are approved and on the registry. There are 100+ that are in process.

Complaint Process Update

Rae Feller walked the committee through the proposed complaint process form as it will appear online. The committee went through some revisions it would like regarding the process. The State Office will work with the tech team internally to try to have those changes made to conform to the committee's requests and will have an update at the next meeting.

The Committee discussed the information that should be sent to complainants when they submit a complaint. The Committee would like the email notification to include a period to hear back.

The Committee discussed notification to GALs. Some Committee members felt GALs should be notified of every complaint. It was agreed that GALs should be notified after a determination of the substance of the complaint had been made.

Application Reviews

The Committee reviewed a number of individual applications. Moving forward it was agreed that applicants must submit judicial references from judges they have appeared in front of as a GAL for their applications to be considered. The State Office has changed the judicial reference form to reflect the same.

Communication on Application Process

Leslie Dunn spoke to the group about misinformation the office continues to receive about the application process and the GAL Guidelines. The committee discussed different ways to get the word out in their individual communities. There are plans to continue to do trainings for judges on the guidelines. The GAL/CASA network has been asked to help as well by talking to the family law GALs in their communities.

The Committee discussed applicants that do not have any license or expertise to qualify as a GAL and do not have judicial references. The State Office will be drafting a letter from the Committee to discuss at the next meeting that can be distributed to these applicants with instructions on their next steps if they wish to continue to pursue becoming a GAL. The Committee discussed the possibility of a GAL mentor or CASA cases.

Continued Outreach

Word still needs to be spread about the requirement that GALs complete the application process and be on the registry in order to be appointed to cases. The State Office plans to email GALs from past trainings as well as a list of GALs serving on cases from Odyssey. A message will be sent out in the Wednesday weekly that the registry is available and GALs must apply. The Committee would like to host a webinar for judges, preferably over lunch.

Other options would be to reach out to NCFCJ. Judge Graham is the Indiana representative. Judge Hanlon would be a good resource as well.

Adjourn

Next meeting: 3/7/25 at 10 a.m.

Date of Meeting: 3/7/25

Roll Call:

Members' Present

Judge Lori Morgan (Chair), Judge Thomas Felts, Judge Catherine Stafford, Judge, Magistrate Roseanne Ang, Magistrate Anan Osan, Kelly Lonnberg, Katie Kelsey, Magistrate Alexis Dedelow, Magistrate Daun Weliever, Debra Dubovich

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn and Rae Feller

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS), Joseph Fischer (IOCS) Payton Lester (IOCS) Lindsey Borschel (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed the committee.

Approval of the Minutes

Judge Stafford moved for the minutes from the February meeting to be approved and Katie Kelsey seconded. The meeting minutes for the February meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Complaint Process Demonstration

Lindsey Borschel from the Indiana Supreme Court, Office of Communication Education & Outreach, joined the meeting to provide the committee with a demonstration of the online complaint process. Persons wishing to file a complaint will be able to create an account and save their progress if they wish. Qualifying questions must be answered to proceed with the application. Once the correct person/party has met the requirements, they will be asked for name, address, case information, etc. They will also be asked for the same for the GAL. They will then choose the Guideline or Code of Ethics the GAL is alleged to have violated. The end of the form includes two affirmations. After the form is submitted the complainant will receive an email with a copy of the form. The email will go to Rae as well. Deb Dubovich and Judge Stafford discussed if it would be possible to link the GAL registry on the complaint form in case the complainant does not know the GAL's information and the committee agreed that it is a good idea. That update will be made to the form.

Complaint Process Discussion

Rae Feller and Leslie Dunn met with Adrienne Meiring to go over OJAR's complaint process. Suggested updates were made based on that discussion. Adrienne suggested that the website make clear the purpose of the complaint process is to protect the public from unqualified GALs, not to review recommendations of the GAL in a case. This language will be added to

the website. Based on the discussion, it is agreed that all complaints submitted will be provided to the GAL, regardless of the outcome. If a complaint is dismissed, the GAL does not have to be excluded from subsequent motions in the same case.

If a complaint is submitted that has probable cause for a violation of the Guidelines or Code of Ethics, the complaint will be provided to a 3-member panel (ideally 2 JOs, 1 GAL) to review. The panel can either dismiss or ask the GAL to provide a written response within 30 days. After reviewing the response, the panel may do its own investigation and consult other agencies. If the panel finds by clear and convincing evidence that there has been a violation of the guidelines or code of ethics, the complaint will be substantiated. The options will be to enter into an agreement with the GAL to remedy the conduct, including more training and/or requiring the GAL to work with a supervisor for a period of time. If the violation is particularly egregious or a repeat violation, the GAL may be deemed unqualified and removed from the registry and the judicial officer notified.

An appeal process to the full panel will be made available to the GAL should this arise. If a complaint is substantiated, the GAL should remove themselves from any future cases with the family.

The committee discussed the standard of review and agreed that clear and convincing was the appropriate standard for substantiating a complaint.

If a GAL is required to respond to a complaint, a letter will be sent giving 30 days to respond. If no response is received, a second letter will be sent notifying the GAL that a failure to respond within 30 days will result in the removal from the registry.

Training Updates

Judge Felts has agreed to help Magistrate Weliever with the training at the end of April on the complaint process. Rae and Leslie will send him some slides and information. Judge Morgan, Magistrate Dedelow, Leslie, and Rae will be doing training at the Spring Judicial Conference on the GAL Guidelines from start to finish. The committee still needs to nail down the details for the webinar that judges are going to do for JOs.

Letter to Category 4 Applicants

Rae shared her screen to go over the draft language for the letter the committee would send to category 4 applicants under the guidelines who do not have experience serving as a GAL and do not have any other qualifications. The committee approved the language. The committee agreed that applicants wanting to serve as GALs in smaller counties could potentially use attorneys as references if there were not enough JOs in the community. Those people could also work side-by-side with other GALs in the community to gain experience and use those GALs as references.

Ethics Review

A frequent question that has come before the State Office is whether GAL reports must be shared with the parties, particularly in high conflict cases where parties are sharing the

information with children.

Rule 3.8 states that a GAL must deliver the GAL report to parties 10 days prior to the hearing unless the parties have waived the requirement.

The committee discussed different ways to approach protecting children in these circumstances. Deb Dubovich stated that cases often have protective orders around sensitive financial information. Information about children can clearly be far more sensitive than finances. Courts or parties can ask to protect and keep confidential GAL reports in appropriate circumstances. At this point, there is concern that if a report is provided to attorneys only and kept from the parties, it could result in due process complaints and reversal on appeal. The committee discussed making the report available to parties only in the courthouse), as “read only,” with no copies being allowed to leave the courthouse so the report cannot be provided to children or others. There was a discussion about other options a GAL has to address these concerns, such as writing a report with factual information only and no recommendations, making only an oral report until the final hearing, writing a short report and letting the details get flushed out in testimony, and filing for protective orders. The consensus is that due process requires that GAL reports be available to parties.

Continued Outreach

Leslie prepared some FAQs for the judges to review and disseminate to other judges. The committee agreed the FAQs look good and will use those accordingly. The committee will continue to share information about the guidelines in their communities and the requirement for GALs to complete the application and be placed on the Registry to be qualified.

Adjourn

Next meeting: 4/4/25 at 10:00 a.m. The committee will skip the July 2025 meeting. Otherwise, will continue to meet monthly. At the end of 2025, the committee might move to meeting every other month.

Date of Meeting: 4/4/25

Roll Call:

Members' Present

Judge Lori Morgan (Chair), Judge Catherine Stafford, Magistrate Roseanne Ang, Magistrate Ana Patricia Osan, Judge Rhett Stuard, Magistrate Debra Dubovich, Judge Tom Felts, Magistrate Alexis Dedelow

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn and Rae Feller

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS), Joseph Fischer (IOCS) Payton Lester (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed the committee.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes are amended to remove the typo in Magistrate Asan's first name. Otherwise Judge Stafford moves for the minutes from the March meeting to be approved and Magistrate Osan seconded. The meeting minutes for the March meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Complaint Process Update

The complaint process should be up by the end of the day today or early next week at the latest. When a complaint is submitted, the GAL will be notified and will receive information describing the complaint process. Rae or Leslie will send out an email to the Committee as a follow up when the complaint process is live so the Committee can submit test complaints.

Outreach on GAL Guidelines

As was previously discussed by the Committee, the State Office set out an email to the list of GALs that IOCS has advising them to apply to the GAL Registry. Committee members continue to hear from the legal community that people think the GAL Registry is optional. The latest questions the State Office has received have been about GALs that are agreed upon by the parties. GALs that are agreed upon by the parties must be selected from the registry.

Suggested Amendments to Guidelines

The Committee agrees that future amendments need to clarify that the GAL Registry is mandatory and not optional. The GAL Guidelines do not specifically state that the Registry is mandatory, however it is clear that is the case. The Registry is the mechanism in which the

Committee carries out its purpose to monitor background checks, ensure GALS are properly trained, etc. The Guidelines also need clarity about when a GAL from a certified GAL/CASA program is appointed to a case. GALS supervised and appointed under a GAL/CASA program do not need to be on the Registry.

There was a discussion about further amendments to the Guidelines if there is a particular applicant that raises specific concerns for a Committee member and how that could be addressed in the future. The Committee agreed that at this time, applicants that meet the qualifications will be placed on the Registry if and until complaints arise.

The Committee discussed the format of the Registry that is available online. The judges would like the Registry itself to be searchable via county. Currently the registry lists applicants by city. In order to search by county, the PDF must be downloaded. IOCS plans to update the Registry in the future to look more like the mediator registry. The version that is available now is not the final version.

Code of Ethics Update

Leslie Dunn informed the Committee that the 2025 version of the Code of Ethics is now uploaded to the website. The 2024 version was uploaded prior to this most recent update. In the 2024 version, the introductory paragraph stated that GALS would be required to sign a copy of the Code of Ethics. The Committee previously agreed that the logistics of that would be time-consuming and complicated. Since every order appointing a GAL is required to order a GAL to follow the Code of Ethics, it was decided by the Committee that having GALS sign a copy of the Code of Ethics is unnecessary. Paragraph 25 of the Code of Ethics was updated as well. The Committee did not have anything to add.

Training Updates

Leslie will be attending a trauma training at noon. It is a free CLE that is available to GALS and CASAs.

Kids' Voice will be scheduling future statewide GAL trainings in the near future.

Ongoing Training

Ongoing training will need to be made available starting on 1/1/26. The State Office of GAL/CASA plans to offer at least 6 free CLE hours of ongoing training through the CASA Training Academy that will be applicable to both GAL/CASA in child welfare and family law GALS. The trainings can then be uploaded into ISC's LMS and be monitored. The Committee will need to come up with a plan for monitoring and reporting on trainings that are not in the LMS.

Adjourn

Next meeting: 5/2/25 at 10:00 a.m.

Date of Meeting: 5/2/25

Roll Call:

Members' Present

Judge Lori Morgan (Chair), Judge Catherine Stafford, Magistrate Roseanne Ang, Magistrate Ana Patricia Osan, Debra Dubovich, Judge Tom Felts, Katie Meger Kelsey, Kelly Lonnberg, Magistrate Daun Weliever

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn and Rae Feller

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS), Joseph Fischer (IOCS) Payton Lester (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed the committee.

Approval of the Minutes

Deborah Dubovich moved to approve the minutes from the April meeting and Judge Stafford seconded. The committee approved the minutes for the April meeting unanimously.

Tracking Ongoing Training

The committee discussed having approved providers for ongoing trainings similar to the CLE Commission. Any of the topics listed in the GAL Guidelines covered in a CLE, the State Office can pre-approve. If the CLE/training is an approved provider and the documents show that it is a GAL relevant topic, the State Office of GAL/CASA can administratively approve the CLE/training. The State Office could do an email statewide to GALs of pre-approved trainings. If there are any topics that seem less relevant or are questionable, the State Office can bring those before the full committee to discuss at a meeting.

GAL Heat Map

Payton Lester created a GAL Heat Map to give to the judges that demonstrate the number of GALs available by county. The hope is that the map will help answer questions about the registry since the current version of the online registry is not searchable by the county. The State Office intends to circulate the map and do a blurb about how to search the registry by county. The committee members can share the map in their communities with those that are interested. Payton shared that she is updating the registry every two weeks and will update the map at the same frequency.

Application Reviews

The committee reviewed the application of a category 4 applicant who only had 1 judicial reference. The applicant failed to provide the other 2 judicial references. The committee discussed the other types of references the applicant could obtain. The committee discussed that if the applicant is unable to obtain other references, the State Office would send the notification of denial to the registry. The committee also discussed the possibility of allowing applicants to appear on the registry with conditions, such as obtaining additional training or guidance from an experienced GAL.

Complaint Process Update

Deborah Dubovich submitted a complaint using the online form to assess the process. She found the form online easy to use and had no problems. The committee agreed that the online page to submit complaints looks good and that portion of the process is complete for the time being.

Other Discussions

There was a question raised about whether a judicial officer could appoint a parent evaluator or other type of provider that is not on the GAL Registry. The committee discussed and agreed that the GAL Registry does not limit services that are available to help families or judicial officers resolve custody/ parenting time issues. Other providers can be used in cases in roles other than that of a Guardian ad Litem, best interest advocate. The committee agreed this would be a good topic to clarify in future trainings and would be a good point of clarification in any amendments to the GAL Guidelines.

Next Steps

The committee will continue to meet monthly. The next meeting is scheduled for June 4th at 10:00 a.m., during the judicial conference. This will need to be rescheduled. The committee has cancelled the July 4th meeting for the holiday. The State Office will send a doodle poll to set a time that works for everyone.

The committee will continue to spread the word about the guidelines and continue with trainings. Leslie and Judge Morgan are doing a training on the Guidelines at the Juvenile Judges Conference.

Adjourn

Next meeting: TBD.

Date of Meeting: 7/12/25

Roll Call:

Members' Present

Judge Lori Morgan (Chair), Magistrate Patricia Ana Osan, Judge Catherine Stafford, Judge Thomas Felts, and Kelly Lonnberg

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn and Rae Feller

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS) and Payton Lester (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed the committee.

Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the June meeting minutes will have to be delayed until the next meeting. There is not a quorum

Statewide Training Update

Kids' Voice has several statewide trainings scheduled. Two are in October. Three are in-person and one is virtual. Katie will follow up at the next meeting with the exact dates. August there is a training in Bloomington and September will be held in Fort Wayne.

Ongoing Training Update

Leslie and Rae met with Kathy Wasson from the Education Division to discuss tracking ongoing trainings. The plan is to have courses pre-approved, if possible. It should be easy if it is a provider that has already been approved. Following completion of the course, the GAL can upload the certificate of completion into the LMS.

As far as using the LMS for ongoing training requirements, the addition of the family law GALs has not put us over our contracted number of trainees that can enter the LMS. GALs only count as a user if they log in. Once they do log in, they can do so an unlimited number of times within the month and still count as one user. The Education Division does not anticipate that having the family law GALs in the LMS will cause any issues.

Within the next month or so, the State Office can start looking at courses and determine what will be made available in the LMS for ongoing training. A list will then be included in the LMS.

The State Office has been getting inquiries from GALs about ongoing trainings. There seems to be a misunderstanding about when that begins. Information about ongoing training and

that those do not start until 1/1/2026 can be included in the Wednesday weekly, with follow-ups as we get closer to 1/1/26.

Based on a review of the current CASA catalog, the State Office expects to make more than 6 hours of ongoing training available. However, we do not want to make those available yet because courses taken in 2025 will not count toward 2026 requirements. GALs cannot retake courses and have those count for ongoing training credit.

The intent for counting which courses will count for ongoing credit is to be liberal if/until the committee directs the State Office otherwise. Courses related to supporting children and families will count.

Application Reviews

The committee reviewed an application from a person living outside of Indiana. The applicant would qualify under category 2 of the application, however, holds no licenses in Indiana, making it a category 4 application.

The committee discussed the effectiveness of a GAL conducting his/her work only on a virtual basis. It is advisable that applicants wait until they live within the State of Indiana (if they are moving) before applying.

Applicants that have never done GAL work in Indiana or been trained on Indiana law, should not be eligible for a full waiver.

All agree the applicant needs Indiana training, proof of licensing, and professional references or work with someone.

The second application reviewed was from a person that had judicial references, but those were not related to GAL work. This applicant is currently serving as a CASA and completed the training on 5/6/25. However, the applicant has no experience doing GAL family law work and does not have relevant judicial references to qualify. The committee determined the applicant needs to continue with CASA and gain more experience. The applicant can reapply in the future.

Next Steps

Judge Morgan and Leslie Dunn will present to the judges at the juvenile judges' conference. The committee has agreed to cancel the July 4th meeting due to the holiday.

Adjourn

Next meeting: August 1, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Date of Meeting: 8/1/25

Roll Call:

Members' Present

Judge Lori Morgan (Chair), Magistrate Patricia Ana Osan, Judge Catherine Stafford, Judge Thomas Felts, and Kelly Lonnberg

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn and Rae Feller

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS) and Payton Lester (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed the committee.

Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the June meeting minutes will have to be delayed until the next meeting. There is not a quorum

Statewide Training Update

Kids' Voice has several statewide trainings scheduled. Two are in October. Three are in-person and one is virtual. Katie will follow up at the next meeting with the exact dates. August there is a training in Bloomington and September will be held in Fort Wayne.

Ongoing Training Update

Leslie and Rae met with Kathy Wasson from the Education Division to discuss tracking ongoing trainings. The plan is to have courses pre-approved, if possible. It should be easy if it is a provider that has already been approved. Following completion of the course, the GAL can upload the certificate of completion into the LMS.

As far as using the LMS for ongoing training requirements, the addition of the family law GALs has not put us over our contracted number of trainees that can enter the LMS. GALs only count as a user if they log in. Once they do log in, they can do so an unlimited number of times within the month and still count as one user. The Education Division does not anticipate that having the family law GALs in the LMS will cause any issues.

Within the next month or so, the State Office can start looking at the courses and determine what will be made available in the LMS for ongoing training. A list will then be included in the LMS.

The State Office has been getting inquiries from GALs about ongoing trainings. There seems

to be a misunderstanding about when that begins. Information about ongoing training and that those do not start until 1/1/2026 can be included in the Wednesday weekly, with follow-ups as we get closer to 1/1/26.

Based on a review of the current CASA catalog, the State Office expects to make more than 6 hours of ongoing training available. However, we do not want to make those available yet because courses taken in 2025 will not count toward 2026 requirements. GALs cannot retake courses and have those count for ongoing training credit.

The intent for counting which courses will count for ongoing credit is to be liberal if/until the committee directs the State Office otherwise. Courses related to supporting children and families will count.

Application Reviews

The committee reviewed an application from a person living outside of Indiana. The applicant would qualify under category 2 of the application, however, holds no licenses in Indiana, making it a category 4 application.

The committee discussed the effectiveness of a GAL conducting his/her work only on a virtual basis. It is advisable that applicants wait until they live within the State of Indiana (if they are moving) before applying.

Applicants that have never done GAL work in Indiana or been trained on Indiana law, should not be eligible for a full waiver.

All agree the applicant needs Indiana training, proof of licensing, and professional references or work with someone.

The second application reviewed was from a person that had judicial references, but those were not related to GAL work. This applicant is currently serving as a CASA and completed the training on 5/6/25. However, the applicant has no experience doing GAL family law work and does not have relevant judicial references to qualify. The committee determined the applicant needs to continue with CASA and gain more experience. The applicant can reapply in the future.

Next Steps

Judge Morgan and Leslie Dunn will present to the judges at the juvenile judges' conference. The committee has agreed to cancel the July 4th meeting due to the holiday.

Adjourn

Next meeting: August 1, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

GAL Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes: 9/5/25

Roll Call:

Members Present

Magistrate Ana Patricia Osan, Deb Dubovich, Katie Kelsey, Judge Thomas Felts, Magistrate Alexis Dedelow, and Kelly Lonnberg

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn, Rae Feller, and Melissa Cunnyingham

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS), Payton Lester (IOCS), and Joseph Fischer (IOCS)

Welcome

Due to Judge Morgan's absence, Leslie Dunn welcomed the Committee to the meeting. The new Director of GAL/CASA, Melissa Cunnyingham was introduced and welcomed.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from June and August were put on hold to see if later in the meeting enough members would be in attendance to form a quorum.

Statewide Training Update

Katie Kelsey gave the update from Kids' Voice. There was a training two weeks ago and one going on currently. Another one scheduled for October that is virtual to be open to the state. Today there are around 18 people attending. Last week, they had 20. Numbers for October are hard to determine at this time.

Update on Continuing Training

Training will begin to be accepted on 1/1/26. Tracking system will be in place and ready to go on the first.

GAL Appointments of Persons not on GAL Registry

The IOCS technology team, Payton, and Tara ran a list of people appointed to cases who are not on the Registry after 1/2025. The first list had over 1,000 cases on it which had to be whittled down, sometimes by actually reading the CCS. After quite a bit of review, we were able to reduce the list to about 44 GALs appointed on cases that are not on the registry. Sixteen are guardianship cases out of Allen County from probate court. The remaining half of cases statewide are guardianship cases. Lake only had one case, Marion had 3. The vast majority are attorneys.

Leslie started reaching out to some of them over the last couple of days. She was trying to

find out why this is happening. She is getting all sorts of different answers. One person said they would get it resolved right away. One said they took an appointment for legal services pro bono and didn't realize they had to be on the Registry. One person was waiting on verification of training. Others do not have a good reason. Most are attorneys that would waive in. More of them on the list have not started the process. At this time, IOCS would like to give people the opportunity to remedy the problem. In the future, the Committee might need to consider a formal letter that contains the language "We are putting you on notice that you need to get on the Registry."

Leslie discussed this with the Judicial and Attorney Regulation Division; they try to remedy the situation before taking other action. We will continue to look at this and continue to monitor it. Deb is in agreement with this approach, but if we run it again next quarter and the same people have not remedied the situation, it is time for a letter that is more formal. The letter should state that judges and lawyers have to follow the law. Cases could be overturned on appeal. The Committee discussed the potential for harsher penalties down the road, similar to practicing law without a license.

The Committee discussed a specific individual that was advertising himself as a GAL after he was informed that the Committee did not approve him to be on the Registry. Rae contacted him and told him to stop and since that time we have not been told that it has continued. The Committee discussed possible remedies if a person is paid for doing this type of work.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from June and August were approved unanimously by the Committee as at this point in the meeting there were enough members in attendance to form a quorum.

Application Reviews

There are two Applications to discuss. One is an attorney with a disciplinary history which is easy to find with a quick review; it is a public reprimand from 2021. It involves poor judgment on her part and disregard of family dynamics. The GAL Code of Ethics states that a GAL shall maintain independence, objectivity, and the appearance of fairness, credibility, integrity, and reliability. This disciplinary case is recent and involves these virtues or lack thereof. More time may need to pass, and she may need additional education, but it should not be forever. Should we approve and ask to take training or reject and state she needs to wait more time and take training. How long and what training; we need to provide more details. Should she re-take the entire curriculum including ethics? Wait at least a year? It would be nice to have mentor in place for her to check in. A vote was taken and the vote was unanimous to decline this application now and ask her to take 3 hours of additional ethics, particularly about conflicts of interest and re-apply in a year. We should notify her by a formal letter signed by Judge Morgan. Deb suggests including a probationary period following her approval. We should consider looking at five years from the date of the discipline as the appropriate waiting period before becoming a GAL.

The second application is a superintendent of schools. He applied to be a GAL but also to be able to do the training to be a GAL. He has not served as a GAL. He would like to do the

training and then serve, but he does not have judicial references and he is not an attorney. He got two references from judges that know him, but not as a GAL. The two judges spoke highly of him and he also gave another personal reference. Three good references but none about him serving as a GAL. He did serve as a CASA previously. One of his references is the CASA director. Should he be allowed to take the training or tell him he has to go volunteer more under CASA? Magistrate Osan doesn't know this person but knows the three judicial references, as does Deb. Porter County needs good people to serve.

There needs to be a mechanism to allow people to be on the registry who are not in the legal world. Deb suggested that he take the training but when he completes it, he will have some sort of probationary period where he is mentored by an existing GAL. Leslie asks how we help him find that person. Katie noted that we do not mention mentoring in the guidelines, and she has concerns about the capacity to do this. We don't have guidelines as to what that looks like, what is sufficient mentoring. Deb noted that ISBA has always had a mentoring program. Judge Morgan is keeping a list of things that need to be revisited when we revise the guidelines, does mentoring need to be in the guidelines? We need to know what we are asking of a mentor. Our communication with the applicant can say he may need to have a mentor, but for now he can proceed with the training. Everyone agrees. Kelly stated that we need to be sure to tell him that this does not mean that he is qualified to be a GAL.

Next Steps

Today is Rae's last meeting. Leslie and Payton will be the contacts for the State Office until we have Rae's replacement.

Adjourn

Next meeting: October 3, 2025 at 10:00 a.m

GAL Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes: 10/3/2025

Roll Call:

Members Present

Chair, Judge Lori Morgan, Magistrate Ana Patricia Osan, Deb Dubovich, Magistrate Roseanne Ang, Katie Kelsey, Senior Judge Thomas Felts, Magistrate Alexis Dedelow, Judge Catherine Stafford, and Daun Weliever

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn, Rae Feller, and Melissa Cunnynggham

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS), Joseph Fischer, and Payton Lester (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

Approval of the Minutes

Senior Judge Tom Felts moved to approve the minutes from September 5, 2025; Deb Dubovich seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Application Reviews

Applicant 1. Rae Feller updated the committee on the response from applicant who sent in a lengthy response explaining the circumstances with references from well-respected members of the legal community, including a reference from the staff member she worked with at JLAP. She is now a JLAP volunteer as well. Applicant completed all that was asked of her in the disciplinary cases and has had no further issues since 2020. The committee voted and unanimously agreed to approve her GAL application without restrictions. Katie Kelsey abstained from voting due to working with applicant in the past.

Applicant 2. Rae Feller updated the committee on the response from applicant. Applicant was given a public reprimand in November 2021 on a case involving a conflict of interest and poor judgment. Leslie read applicant's response to the committee after the request for additional information. Members expressed concern about the lack of good judgment. Members decided that the committee should ask applicant for three references: from a judicial reference, an attorney, and a personal reference, who have worked with her since the discipline case. The committee will review the references and reconsider her application at that time. She has not

previously served as a GAL; the committee recommended that we let her know that if her application is approved, she will still need training and the committee will review whether any further restrictions should be imposed, such as requiring mentoring by an experienced GAL.

Applicant 3. The final applicant submitted to the committee by Rae Feller also has a disciplinary history from a family law case and for missing timelines for filing a complaint on a case. He was suspended by the disciplinary commission for sixty (60) days and put on probation; his probation ended in April 2021. Chair Judge Morgan recommended that we provide applicant with the same opportunity provided to the other applicants with disciplinary history to provide a response to the committee's concerns. The committee agreed and voted to have the State Office reach out to give him a chance to respond and to ask him for references. The committee discussed whether requiring an applicant to have a mentor for a period of time was appropriate and what the process might be; the committee recommended that this be decided on a case-by-case basis. Leslie suggested that these applicants (2 and 3) be required to take the live training with Kids' Voice since it is more hands-on; Katie Kelsey agrees. Senior Judge Felts noted that it is important that we follow a consistent process but be flexible enough to fashion a specific remedy based on the facts of the case. Katie Kelsey asked what a member should do if they know a person we are discussing. Judge Felts said, and the committee agreed, a member can provide input to the committee on an applicant that they know but should abstain from voting.

Update on from Kids' Voice on Training

Katie Kelsey provided the update on Kids' Voice training. Kids' Voice provided in-person training in Monroe County; eighteen (18) people attended. They also provided in-person training in Marion County on September 5 attended by fifteen (15) people and in-person training in Allen County on September 12 attended by eleven (11) people. There is also virtual training going on right now with twenty-four (24) participants. Since last year, they have trained approximately 190 people, including people trained as Kids' Voice volunteers.

Update on Ongoing Training in 2026

The Indy Bar asked Leslie about the process for getting a training program pre-approved for GAL CLE so that it can be advertised as being approved for GALs. IOCS is creating a process to add to the GAL website for CLE programs to complete ahead of time to be approved. The website needs to be updated so that the requirements are clear. IOCS will approve CLE if it is clear that it should be approved; if not, the course will be submitted to the committee for input. If it is a CLE that is outside of the LMS, the attendee will have to upload a certificate to confirm their attendance at the CLE. We need to add information to the website about how to upload the certificate of attendance. Deb asked what will happen if GALs do not complete the ongoing training hours. Leslie noted that there are many free courses on the LMS that qualify and the GALs are receiving invitations to CASA monthly training and other relevant opportunities. If a GAL does not obtain the required ongoing training, they may be deleted from the GAL Registry.

GAL Registry Update

There are 361 GALs on the Registry and seventy-eight (78) pending applications. The majority of pending applications were started when applications first became available but were never completed. Payton has reached out to applicants who need to complete the background check and/or training but she did not get many responses. Of the pending applications, thirty-two are pending a background check; ten of these are currently active. There are thirty-two (32) applicants pending completion of training and fourteen (14) who are pending references. IOCS is charged every time we send out the link for the background check and many people let the link expire even though they receive multiple reminder emails. Payton has done follow-up with these applicants and is confident we have done everything we can on our end. Magistrate Osan suggested that if we do not hear from an applicant within a set time period, the application should be dismissed. After discussion, the committee decided to give applicants ninety (90) days to complete the application process; after that time, if the applicant does not reach out and ask for an extension, the application will be dismissed. This language explaining the timeframe will be added to the website. Payton will review pending applications and notify applicants that their applications will be dismissed at the end of December if they do not take action.

GALs Not on Registry Taking Cases

There is an attorney in Pulaski County who took several cases and is not on the Registry. The attorney started a GAL application but never completed it. Leslie reached out to the attorney twice by phone and once by email but never received a response. Senior Judge Tom Felts offered to reach out to Judge Welker in Pulaski County about this to make sure she knows that this GAL is not on the Registry. Deb noted that if a GAL is taking cases in violation of the GAL Guidelines, this may become a disciplinary violation.

Next Steps

We are working on getting the website and tracking system ready to accept CLE certificates for ongoing training requirements. We should also start thinking about any changes that may be need to the Guidelines. Judge Morgan suggested that a subcommittee be formed to discuss proposed changes and keep a tally of issues that need to be fine-tuned in the GAL Guidelines. Leslie mentions reviewing the Court Interpreter Rules and their processes. The following members agreed to serve on the subcommittee: Judge Morgan, Katie Kelsey, Magistrate Daun Weliever, Senior Judge Tom Felts, and Magistrate Roseanne Ang. IOCS will put together a running list of potential issues to be addressed/revised when the Guidelines are reviewed.

Adjourn

Next meetings:

November 2, 2025 from 10:00am-12:00pm via Zoom.

The December meeting date has been changed to December 12 from 10:00am-12:00pm via

Zoom.

GAL Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes: 11/7/25

Roll Call:

Members Present

Chair, Judge Lori Morgan, Magistrate Ana Patricia Osan, Deb Dubovich, Magistrate Roseanne Ang, Senior Judge Thomas Felts, Judge Catherine Stafford, Judge Rhett Stuard, and Daun Weliever

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn, Rae Feller, and Melissa Cunnyngnam

Others Present

Tara Rochford, Joseph Fischer, Payton Lester and Kathy Wasson

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

Approval of the Minutes

Senior Judge Tom Felts moved to approve the minutes from October 3, 2025; Deb Dubovich seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Ongoing Training Update

Kathy Wasson from the IOCS Education Division is figuring out the administrative details to make sure courses are reported accurately. Leslie Dunn noted that an email link for pre-approval of a CLE course is now available. Kathy is also working on a process for attendees to upload proof of training, which will be available after January 1, 2026 for CLE completed in 2026. We will add the any CLE that is reported to the Learning Management System (LMS) so that all CLE credits can be tracked in one place. Judge Morgan asked what the process will be for GALs who are non-compliant with the GAL ongoing CLE training requirements. Do we give them a set amount of time, like 30 days, to comply? Where do we go from there? We will need to talk about this and develop a process for this as we move forward.

Application Reviews

Leslie Dunn said we have three applications to discuss; these are three non-attorneys who do not fit neatly into our categories but may have the qualifications to move forward.

Applicant 1. The first applicant works for a LCPA and is a domestic relations mediator and has a Masters in Legal Studies. She has not been a CASA but she has been a social worker but is not licensed. She is willing to do the training. She needs references but cannot provide judicial references. She will need to obtain other references. Deb Dubovich moves to allow her to move forward and take the training and get references. Magistrate Osan seconds; all approve.

Applicant 2. The second applicant a retired school social worker. Deb Dubovich noted that this candidate is similar to the school principal we allowed to move forward; these are people who care about kids and would likely make good GALs. Deb moved to allow her to move forward; Magistrate Ang seconds; approved by all.

Applicant 3. Final applicant does not have judicial references but approached all three of the judges in her county and asked them for their approval for her to move on. She has never served as a GAL. She has a few years as a social worker, a bachelor's degree and is a life skills coach at Bowen Center. She already has a mentor GAL set up to work with her- who is on the Registry. We will ask if the judges can serve as personal/professional references (versus a reference as to her GAL work). She will need references. Judge Stafford moved to allow her to move forward, Deb seconds, all agree she can move forward if she obtains the references.

We need a process for mentoring and requirements; what does this look like? Monthly meetings? What type of guidance and on how many cases? We need to work this out; Judge Felts agrees. Deb stated that the mentee should work as second chair under the mentor GAL on a case and should shadow them in interviews and in court. The mentor GAL should be co-counsel on the case. Magistrate Osan said it will not be a cookie cutter approach; it will depend on the proposed GALs experience and the level of supervision needed. Leslie noted that this will be hard to monitor; we may need to come up with a basic outline of the role and requirements and ask them to sign it. It should have some boilerplate language but also can be changed based on circumstances; we should be flexible depending on how much supervision the GAL needs.

Applicant 4. The final applicant submitted to the committee by Rae Feller also has a disciplinary history from a family law case and for missing timelines for filing a complaint on a case. He was suspended by the disciplinary commission for sixty (60) days and put on probation; his probation ended in April 2021. Chair Judge Morgan recommended that we provide him with the same opportunity provided to the other applicants with disciplinary history to provide a response to the committee's concerns. The committee agreed and voted to have the State Office reach out to applicant to give him a chance to respond and to ask him for references. The committee discussed whether requiring an applicant to have a mentor for a period of time was appropriate and what the process might be; the committee recommended that this be decided on a case-by-case basis. Leslie suggested that these applicants be required to take the live training with Kids' Voice since it is more hands-on; Katie Kelsey agrees. Senior Judge Felts noted that it is important that we follow a consistent process but be flexible enough to fashion a specific remedy based on the facts of the case. Katie Kelsey asked what a member should do if they know a person we are discussing. Judge Felts said, and the committee agreed, a member can provide input to the committee on an applicant that they know but should abstain from voting.

Update from Kids' Voice on Training

Katie Kelsey is not present but provided a written update on Kids' Voice training. On October 3, they hosted a virtual statewide GAL training. They had 24 registered to attend, but only 13 of

those registrants actually appeared for the training. They represented the counties of St. Joseph, Kosciusko, Franklin, Tippecanoe, Lake, Howard, Hamilton, Porter, Steuben, and LaGrange. They have an upcoming statewide GAL training on November 20, also virtual. There are currently 5 or 6 people registered from the counties of Marion, Scott, St. Joseph, Floyd, and Hancock.

Future statewide GAL training dates are as follows:

- February 23, 2026 -live and in-person at the Kids' Voice offices in Indianapolis. We are looking into feasibility of making it hybrid and adding a virtual option, but that is TBD.
- May 15, 2026 - live and in-person in Bloomington at the Monroe County Justice Building.
- August 28, 2026 - live and in-person at Kids' Voice Office in Indiana, with the same TBD on the hybrid/virtual option.
- November 2026 - TBD in Lake County - we are working out location and details.

Update from Senior Judge Tom Felts

Judge Felts spoke to Larry Neuman at the Office of Attorney and Judicial Regulation. They confirmed that it is an ethics violation for a judge not to follow the GAL Guidelines. Judge Felts drove to Pulaski County to meet with Judge Welker. Judge Welker was not aware that she appointed was not on the Registry; if she had known, she would not have appointed her. She said this would not happen again; she will have her staff check the Registry before appointing. Judge Felts was satisfied with the response.

Sub-committee on Revisions to the GAL Guidelines

People did not respond to the meeting poll. We will send out another one. No changes will be made or recommended without them being considered by the full Committee. This process will take time; the revisions will probably go through the same process as the Child Support Guidelines. We will submit our recommendations to the Justices; once they approve, we will post them for public comment. The committee will then review the comments and make changes, if needed. Once finalized, the revised Guidelines will go back to the Justices for final approval. It is a long process.

Next Steps

We need to start working on the proposed revisions to the Guidelines. We will delete GAL applicants that are inactive for 90 days and this will be stated on the website. Searching by county has been a challenge. You can search by city. Instructions on how to search have been added. Judge Stafford would like to outsource this project and likes an application she uses in Monroe County called Membership Works. She would like to be able to generate a random list of potential GALs. Kathy Wasson said she can look into the technical issues and see if there are other options. Judge Morgan asked if we could make a note on the website that we are working to improve the search functions. A new committee member, Christine Talley Haseman, was appointed by the Chief Justice. She is a former juvenile referee.

Adjourn

Next meetings: The December meeting date has been changed to December 12 from 10:00am-12:00pm via Zoom. Motion to adjourn made and seconded. Meeting adjourned.

GAL Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes: 12/12/25

Roll Call:

Members Present

Judge Lori Morgan, Kelly Lonnberg, Magistrate Ana Osan, r. Stuard, Katie Kelsey, JudgeTom Felts, Christine Talley Haseman

Ex Officio Members Present

Leslie Dunn, Rae Feller, and Melissa Cunnyingham

Others Present

Tara Rochford (IOCS), Payton Lester (IOCS)

Welcome

Judge Morgan welcomed the Committee to the meeting.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from November 7, 2025 approved.

Application Reviews

Three applications:

Applicant 1. attorney convicted of OWI in Kosciusko in 2025. 3-5 years as DCS attorney. Because OWI is recent we want to review with committee. Judge Morgan wondered if we should provide opportunity for more explanation of what she is doing to address. Felts would like revisit after probation is successfully completed. Osan wondered about provisional approval.

Leslie will reach out to applicant to see what she is willing to share.

Applicant 2. non-attorney from Illinois. Willing to serve counties at far north and far south of state, which seems odd. Former Sherriff deputy who has “dealt with cases” involving DCS and domestic violence. Discussion: fourth category type of applicant; not sure he meets all components. Would like to understand more about how much he’s really experienced working with children directly and this type of work specifically. Would also like to understand motivation to work in Indiana (beyond geography), his intent. Need references, training, background check before deciding. Leslie will reach out to explain what more we are looking for

Applicant 3. requested GAL mentor. Is anyone able to help with that in northern Indiana? Magistrate Osan believes she has several people she could ask if Deb is not available.

Mentorship Discussion

- Purpose of mentorship
- Selection
- Activity required
- Reporting

Why is mentor needed? Want to distinguish between inexperienced vs. 'conditional approval'

Leslie has done some research on various mentorship models. Legal (Carmen) will need to look at anything we put together.

Training

Recent virtual training with approximately 30 attorneys from 12 counties, several of which were rural. One more before year end.

Four or five 2026 training dates set so far are in February, April, and possibly June.

Registry Update

25 new since last meeting. 406 approved applicants altogether. 31 pending background, 10 pending (need this from Payton)

Most are not requesting training waiver, even if they are attorneys. Most new to GAL work.

Payton has reached out to applicants with "stalled" applications to inform that their application will be deleted by end of month unless addressed. Responses have been varied. Payton plans to reach out once more before end of month, at which point stalled applications will be deleted.

Elkhart County Update (Leslie Dunn)

Brittany (family court assessor). Elkhart would like to have her oversee a GAL program, but they do not want the GALs or Brittany to be on registry. Neither Brittany or others would be attorneys. They don't want to be on registry because they only want to work in Elkhart. Asks whether there could be additional notation about only working in Elkhart.

Brittany seems to already be acting as GAL per Leslie; judge did not agree. Doing assessment and making recommendations to court. Leslie spoke with judge and with Brittany about confusion and risk of current approach. Leslie recommended that they all be on registry but would take it to committee. Committee discussion reflected agreement with Leslie; anyone acting as a GAL in these cases must be on registry. Also, no extra annotation on registry is needed; GALs indicate Elkhart on registry and can decline any request that come in from other counties.

Katie Kelsey wondered if they might wind up doing things beyond what a GAL should be doing. Committee in general felt that Elkhart should not be held to standard different from rest of State, or any county could ask for different requirements.

Is the program they are talking about just for one magistrate's court or for the whole county?
Leslie can follow up with Elkhart when she is there later today.

Complaints

Leslie: We had 3, but 2 were CHINS and one involved a GAL that was appointed several years ago. None fall within the GAL Complaint Guidelines.

We do expect to see more complaints in 2026 as the timeline comes into play.

Next Steps

Rule 2.2 will need to have continuing ed hours. Will our continuing ed hours be included in attorney's CLE record? Yes, and Payton will double check with Kathy exactly how it will work. We are working on how to track for non-attorneys. We can track anything they take on the LMS and we will have a way for them to self-report any training outside of the LMS. There will be a Moodle form that they will need to complete. Details are currently being worked out with Kathy Wisson from Education department.

Amendments or revisions to consider for guidelines. Please look at November emails for list from Payton.

Leslie: We will probably be cancelling all 2026 meeting dates and resetting them, due to Rae's contract ending. Meetings will be reset for same (usual) time, 10 – Noon, Eastern on first Friday of month.

Acknowledgement

Judge Morgan recognized and thanked Rae Feller for her phenomenal service to the Committee and the State.

Adjourn

Next meeting: January 16 at 10:00 a.m. Please note that this is not our normal first Friday of the month due to schedule conflicts.