

2015 Indiana WINGS State Grant

Final Report

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Name: WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force

Steering Committee: List the stakeholder entities represented in your Steering Committee. Describe the role of the steering committee.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force (Task Force) is a voluntary work group that has as its focus the improvement of adult guardianship services across the state. The entire membership of the Task Force functions as the steering committee for all strategic planning, priority setting, and decision-making regarding actions or activities to be undertaken. It is currently led by a Volunteer Chair, Jim Leich, CEO of LeadingAge Indiana and staffed by a Volunteer Coordinator, Becky Pryor, President of Creative Approaches LTD. The Chair conducts the meetings and most often represents the group in public and legislative meetings and presentations. The Members of the Task Force set the meeting agendas and determine the meeting dates. This type of Collective Impact model works well in Indiana and has guided and has supported the direction the Task Force has taken since it began meeting regularly in 2008.

Priority Setting:

- Describe the process used to gather information about priority guardianship and decision-making issues in the state. Attach any survey form used.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force uses the Collective Impact model of information gathering through open meetings that function as public forums for discussion of issues and concerns regarding adult guardianship and other related issues. The meetings are well attended and anyone, member or not, can put an item on the agenda by contacting the Chair or just show up to speak. The Members are open to all views and encourage in depth discussions of both sides of a concern. This model has served well as an information gathering tool for the group. The contact information for the Chair and Volunteer Coordinator are listed on all posts and other information that is distributed by the Task Force so that the public can make contacts and be encouraged to participate and share concerns.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force uses a combination of large group and small work groups to gather information and data. Once a concern or need is identified to large group recruits, a small work group of Members and Nonmembers research and collect data about the issue. The small work group will use research methods that include reviewing state and national guardianship literature regarding recommended guardianship policies, standards, and best practices; collecting data and demographics on Indiana's needs; and conducting legal research on the policies, procedures, and practices. The work group will then present a report and recommendations to the full Task Force. The full Task Force then votes as to what action needs to be taken, including adopting the issue as a priority. Discussion of issues that may become

priorities are usually conducted at several full Task Force meetings, unless it is an emergency situation calling for immediate action. After vetting the issue at the meetings, the Members vote and, if approved, the recommended action is moved forward.

Strategic planning and priority setting is also carried at the biannual retreats. The group that meets for the retreat uses a consensus building model of education and discussion to make recommendations to the full Task Force.

- Summarize the resulting priorities identified for the WINGS meetings.

Please see the attached WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force meeting agendas for priority agenda items.

Objectives: List the short, medium and long-term goals of your WINGS group and/or the WINGS working groups.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force has as its long-term goals:

- The continued development and funding of the Indiana Supreme Court – Adult Guardianship Office, Adult Guardianship Registry, and Volunteer Advocates for Seniors and Incapacitated Adults Programs.
- The development of an Indiana system for certification of professional and attorney guardians and the required education of family guardians.
- Legislative approval of a comprehensive review and revision of the Indiana Probate Code as it relates to adult guardianship.

Stakeholders: List the stakeholder entities represented in your WINGS group.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force is a diverse group of public/private agencies and organizations—including leaders, judges, legal practitioners, and individual advocates—who meet to examine the needs, availability, and complex problems surrounding adult guardianship. Please see the Attachments for a current list of stakeholders.

WINGS Meetings: Give dates of your in-person full state WINGS meetings (not smaller working groups) and attach agendas.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force meets every 2 – 3 months, with smaller planning and focus groups meeting as needed. The full group meetings are hosted at the office of a large Indianapolis based law firm, Faegre Bake Daniels, who is also a member. The meeting dates during the WINGS Grant period were: January 31, 2015, April 24, 2016, June 26, 2015, August 28, 2015, October 19 – 20, 2015, February 16, 2016 (rescheduled from a December 2015 date). The work group also met informally at the June 12, 2015 Indiana Adult Guardianship Symposium. Attendance for the meetings averages 25 – 35 participants attending either in person or by conference call-in. Please see the Attachments for the meeting agendas.

Working Groups: List the more focused working groups resulting from the full state WINGS meetings, and summarize their activities to date.

The Members of the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force (Task Force) have worked on several committees and work groups resulting from their participation at state meetings, including:

1) The Indiana Conservatorship Accountability Project (CAP) Work Group

In January of 2016, the Indiana Adult Guardianship Office (AGO) was awarded a technical assistance grant through the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to develop a web-based conservatorship software application for use by guardians. Members of the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force, including Jim Leich, Becky Pryor, Judge Susan Henderson, and Judge Diane Kavadias Schneider, wrote letters in support of this grant and currently serve on Indiana's Conservatorship Accountability Project (CAP) Work Group. This group has been charged with integrating Minnesota's web-based conservatorship software application into the state's existing case management system and guardianship registry. With the assistance of Task Force Members, Indiana's CAP is expected to be developed and implemented in two counties by the end of 2016.

2) The WINGS-Social Security Administration (SSA) Work Group

Members of the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force, including Becky Pryor and Erica Costello, have also participated on quarterly phone calls with Kori Rabida, with the Social Security Administration, and Erica Wood, with the American Bar Association (ABA) Commission on Law and Aging. Participation on the WINGS-SSA work group has facilitated a better working relationship between the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force and Social Security Administration (SSA) as SSA representatives have presented at task force meetings and the 2015 Indiana Adult Guardianship Symposium. SSA representatives are also scheduled to present at the upcoming 2016 Indiana Adult Guardianship Symposium and provide information to attendees about public benefit updates and the role of representative payees.

3) The WINGS / Indiana Public Policy Committee

Members of the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force also review, provide information and testify on legislative policies and initiatives relating to adult guardianship services and needs. In 2015, Task Force Members contacted their state representatives to provide information in support of increasing the funding for the Volunteer Advocates for Seniors and Incapacitated Adults (VASIA) programs and the guardianship registry under the Adult Guardianship Office. As a result of these and other efforts, the Indiana legislature voted to significantly increase the funding for VASIA programs and the Registry from \$500,000 to \$1 million per year for fiscal year 2015-2017! Members of the WINGS / Indiana Public Policy Committee have also been involved in promoting legislation that assist both guardians and protected persons and continue to work with organizations, including Adult Protective Services and the Adult Guardianship Office, on identifying issues that need to be addressed through state and/or national legislation.

4) The WINGS / Indiana Guardianship Education Committee

Members of the Task Force have additionally been involved in promoting educational opportunities on adult guardianship issues through their involvement on the WINGS / Indiana Education Committee. In 2015, the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force, along with the Adult Guardianship Office (AGO), Indiana State Guardianship Association (ISGA), National Guardianship Association (NGA), and ARC of Indiana, co-sponsored the first annual Adult Guardianship Symposium in Indianapolis, Indiana. Task Force Members assisted in the conference planning and served as panel and workshop speakers for this event. The WINGS / Indiana Guardianship Education Committee is now involved in planning the second Indiana Adult Guardianship Symposium to be held on Friday, May 13, 2016, in Indianapolis.

5) The WINGS / Indiana Guardian Certification Committee

Task Force Members Becky Pryor and Holly Fuller currently provide staffing for the WINGS / Indiana Guardian Certification Committee. Becky is a Board Member with the National Center for Guardianship Certification (CGC) and Holly Fuller is the President of the Indiana State Guardianship Association (ISGA). This Committee is working with other Task Force Members on developing statewide guardianship certification standards for professional guardians and is looking to implement such standards within the next five years.

Results: (as of March 31, 2016)

From January 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016, the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force (Task Force) has contributed to the following accomplishments:

1) The 2015 Indiana Adult Guardianship Symposium

On June 12, 2015, the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force co-sponsored the first annual Indiana Adult Guardianship Symposium, along with the Adult Guardianship Office (AGO), the Indiana State Guardianship Association (ISGA), the National Guardianship Association (NGA), and the ARC of Indiana. A total of 102 people (or 91% of those registered) attended the conference, including judges, court staff, attorneys, volunteer and professional guardians, and other Members of the elder care industry. Many panels and workshops were held throughout the day on a variety of topics relating to adult guardianship, including: elder abuse, mental health services, determining an adult's decision-making capacity, client advocacy, estate management and financial accounting, and the ethics of representing an incapacitated person.

Overall, the conference received glowing evaluations, with many attendees commenting on the "excellent presentations", "outstanding speakers", and looking forward to another conference. Members of the Task Force are currently working with AGO on the next symposium, which is scheduled to be held on Friday, May 13, 2016, in downtown Indianapolis.

2) The 2015 Indiana Adult Guardianship Strategic Planning Retreat

On October 19-20, 2015, the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force and Adult Guardianship Office (AGO) co-sponsored a 2015 Indiana Adult Guardianship Strategic Planning Retreat for Members of the Task Force, VASIA programs, and volunteer advocates at the University of Notre Dame Law School in South Bend, Indiana. This purpose of this retreat was to

enhance and expand the strategic planning, research, problem-solving, education, and advocacy activities currently spearheaded by Members of the Task Force and AGO.

A total of 43 people attended the retreat and participated in several breakout planning sessions, including: improving VASIA programs, improving professional, attorney, and nonfamily guardian services, supporting and improving family guardian practices, and promoting a comprehensive review and revision of the Indiana probate laws and court practices. Educational sessions were also provided by Task Force Members on the Indiana Probate Courts, the Adult Guardianship Office, the Guardianship Registry, and adult guardianship and other probate laws. A national update on adult guardianship issues was further provided by Terry Hammond, with the NGN-WINGS Initiative, Erica Wood, with the American Bar Association Commission (ABA) on Law and Aging, Brenda Uekert, with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), and Sally Hurme, with the Center for Guardianship Certification (CGC). The Task Force is now working to implement many of the action items suggested by attendees during the breakout planning sessions at the retreat.

3) Expansion of the Volunteer Advocates for Seniors and Incapacitated Adults (VASIA) Programs

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force has been highly involved in the successful expansion of Volunteer Advocates for Seniors and Incapacitated Adults Programs (VASIA) throughout Indiana. Since January of 2015, more than \$600,000 in grant funding has been awarded to ten VASIA programs, which now cover 26 counties and currently serve more than 350 vulnerable and incapacitated adults in Indiana. As previously mentioned, the Task Force was also successful in their efforts to increase funding for such programs from \$500,000 to \$1 million dollars per year for fiscal year 2015-2017.

4) Development and Expansion of the Indiana Adult Guardianship Registry

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force has also been highly involved in the rollout and expansion of the Indiana's guardianship registry. The registry provides *non-confidential* information to the public, including: the name of the protected person, the name of the appointed guardian, the protected person's year of birth, whether the guardianship case is active or expired, when the letters of guardianship were issued, the county issuing the guardianship, and the guardianship cause number. The Registry also tracks important data for courts, including the number of adult guardianships, minor guardianships, guardianships of the person, guardianships of the estate, and plenary guardianships (or guardianship of the person and estate) filed in each jurisdiction and notifies courts if mandatory guardianship filings are not received.

After being successfully piloted in four counties, statewide rollout of the registry began in October of 2014. Currently, there are 38 counties participating in the registry, tracking over 2,660 active guardianship cases and supervising more than \$34.45 million in assets in these cases. The Task Force has greatly assisted in the development and expansion of the registry by providing presentations on the registry to Members of the judiciary and bar association, as well as encouraging judges and clerks to participate on the registry. The Task Force is currently working with Members of the Judicial Probate Committee on mandating participation in the registry by 2017.

5) Assistance with the Indiana Project on Abuse in Later Life (INPALL)

For the past year, the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force has also assisted the Adult Guardianship Office (AGO) with the Indiana Project on Abuse in Later Life (INPALL). In January of 2015, AGO was awarded over \$339,000 by the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, to administer a three-year federal demonstration grant (INPALL) in St. Joseph County, Indiana. Partnering with the St. Joseph County Prosecutor's Office, the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department, the South Bend and Mishawaka Police Departments, the Family Justice Center of St. Joseph County, and REAL Services, Inc., at the conclusion of this grant, AGO will have a model for a collaborative community response to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation that can be replicated elsewhere around the state.

Members of the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force have been very supportive of this grant and 5 Members from the Task Force participated in the grant kickoff event held on October 14, 2015 at the YWCA in South Bend, Indiana. Task Force Members are also expected to participate in upcoming INPALL events and activities, including trainings for law enforcement and victim services professionals and in the development of a community coordinated response to elder abuse.

6. Assistance with the Indiana Conservatorship and Accountability Project (CAP)

As previously discussed, Members of the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force, including Jim Leich, Becky Pryor, Judge Susan Henderson, and Judge Diane Kavadias Schneider, are currently assisting the Adult Guardianship Office (AGO) with the Indiana Conservatorship Accountability Project (CAP). In January of 2016, AGO was one of five states awarded a technical assistance grant through the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). With the assistance of Task Force Members, this project will develop and implement a web-based conservatorship software application for use by guardians. The Indiana CAP is expected to enhance the existing guardianship registry and will be implemented in two counties by the end of 2016.

Qualitative: Write a paragraph or two describing the impact of WINGS thus far on policies and practices, connections made, perceptions changed, new initiatives underway. _You may include quotes or key perceptions from active stakeholders as well.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force is impacting public policy and practices in Indiana through the provision of a public forum at the open meetings it hosts, the influence and support it has developed within the Indiana Judges Council, the Indiana Bar Trust and Probate Section, the Indiana General Assembly, and the Governor's Office, and through the partnerships it has formed with the wide range of state agencies who participate as Members. Examples of this impact can be seen in the increased attention and support the judges and attorneys are giving to the Task Force list of Recommendations and Priorities through the work of their own committees and work groups, i.e. the Indiana State Bar Trust and Probate Section and the Indiana Judges Council Guardianship Committee have taken up the Priority Recommendation calling for a comprehensive review and revision of the Indiana probate code and the Indiana Division of Aging has created a work group to examine how Indiana can work within the Elder Justice Act.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force has made connections across the board with the legislators at the Indiana General Assembly who have voted unanimously to support the creation and funding of the VASIA Programs, the Indiana Supreme Court - Adult Guardian Office and the Guardianship Registry and now regularly call upon Task Force Members to provide information and ideas about needed changes in guardianship laws and services. The Task Force has also made strong connections with two of the top university law schools and departments of social work in the state, Notre Dame University and Indiana University, and is working in partnership with both schools to develop and conduct new initiatives on guardianship needs assessments and data collection.

Public Participation: Describe any approaches your WINGS group has taken toward receiving public comments on the practice of adult guardianship in the state.

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force has provided several opportunities for the public to provide comments on the practice of adult guardianship in the state. As previously mentioned, the 2015 Adult Guardianship Symposium provided all attendees with an opportunity to provide comments during panel and workshop sessions. The Task Force also had a table at the conference that attendees could stop by to discuss any adult guardianship issues. WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force meetings are also open to the public (via in-person and conference call) and meeting participants are encouraged to provide comments and feedback on task force initiatives. Finally, Task Force Members have offered opportunities to receive public comments following state and community presentations on adult guardianship and other task force initiatives.

Technical Assistance: List the ways in which NGN technical assistance was helpful in developing your state WINGS group. What other assistance was needed?

The technical assistance provided by the National Guardianship Network has been very helpful in the successful development of the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force. Our technical assistance coordinator, Terry Hammond, has provided tremendous insight and support at the 2015 Indiana Adult Guardianship Retreat and at Task Force meetings via conference call. We were also very fortunate to have Terry, Erica Wood, Brenda Uekert, and Sally Hurme participate in a webinar presentation at the retreat and provide attendees with information on national guardianship updates and initiatives. Their assistance and guidance has significantly contributed to the overall growth and development of the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force.

Sustainability: The essence of WINGS is that it is an ongoing court-community partnership. This final report is the beginning, not the end.

- How is your state WINGS moving toward that goal of sustainability?

The primary sustainability goal for the WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force has already been met in that it currently serves as the Advisory Committee for the Adult Guardianship Office. In the future, the Task Force envisions that the Advisory Committee will be responsible for many of the group's activities, especially after the majority of the priorities it has set are accomplished.

- How do you envision WINGS functioning several years from now – both financially and structurally?

The WINGS / Indiana Adult Guardianship State Task Force currently plans to continue to function as a volunteer work group for the future and will continue to be structured as a Collective Impact model. “If it ain’t broke don’t fix it.”

- What percentage of an FTE position would you estimate your WINGS coordinator spent on WINGS activities?

The staff for the Adult Guardianship Office, Erica Costello, spent up to 25% of her time coordinating WINGS activities from January 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016.

State Replication: What advice do you have for other states launching WINGS groups? What barriers did you encounter and how did you address them?

We would recommend the following advice for other states launching WINGS groups:

1. Bring food to meetings. (*Especially cookies!!!*)
2. Find a “home” for your group. We have been very fortunate to have “found a home” at the law firm of Faegre, Baker, and Daniels in Indianapolis, which hosts all of the Task Force meetings at their organization without cost.
3. Produce a white paper study. This will help your group identify issues of concern and provide the group with an identity.
4. Conduct strategic planning retreats where participants can get away for 1 or 2 days so that they can talk directly with each other about guardianship issues and can do planning in person. It is amazing what kinds of great ideas and collaborative efforts are generated from these meetings.

Some of the barriers the Task Force has encountered include:

1. Lack of funding
2. Lack of data
3. Lack of communication between member organizations.

To address these issues, Task Force Members have been very active at the state level on public policy initiatives and have contacted their state legislators to provide information and support increased funding for Task Force priority initiatives, including the expansion of the VASIA programs, expansion of the guardianship registry, and the creation of the Adult Guardianship Office with the Indiana Supreme Court. The Task Force also has an email listserv that Members use to provide information about upcoming meetings and events related to adult guardianship.

Public Relations: Attach any articles about your state WINGS group, or produced as a result of your state WINGS group. Attach all brochures, website links, or other materials WINGS has produced.

Please see Attachments.