

Will the GAL keep my personal information confidential?

While a GAL is required to report his/her findings and recommendations to the court, the Court's rules prohibit a GAL from disclosing information about the case or investigation to any of the parties or persons being interviewed.

What is the cost to have a GAL appointed?

An initial deposit of \$1,500.00 is required within 14 days of the appointment. Fees are paid to the Clerk of Courts and can be divided equally between the parties or as otherwise determined by the Court on a case-by-case basis. A GAL may also request additional fees be deposited as needed by motioning the Court.

NOTICE

This pamphlet was created to help you understand your options for dispute resolution but NOT to advise you about the law.

Dedicated to serving the families and children of Medina County



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99 Public Square
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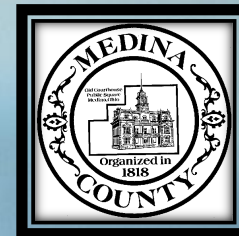
Guardian Ad Litem



Medina County Domestic

Relations Court

Family Court Resources



Medina County Domestic Relations Court handles divorce / dissolution & /or custody cases involving questions about the safety, well-being, and best interests of children, which may require the appointment of a ***Guardian ad litem*** (GAL).

What is a Guardian ad litem?

A Guardian ad litem (GAL) is a specially trained attorney or mental health professional, who is appointed as a neutral third party to gather information and make recommendations to the Court about the child(ren)'s best interests.

To determine what is in the best interest of a child, the GAL will:

- Review relevant court documents, educational / health records, police reports, child protective service reports, & criminal background information related to the family.
- Privately interview parents, children (if age appropriate), household members, significant others, and involved professionals.
- Observe children with each parent and visit both homes.
- Listen to and ascertain the children's wishes and concerns,
- Request medical, psychological, mental health evaluations, and/or drug & alcohol testing as needed.

What qualifications must a GAL have?

- Be an attorney that has practiced in Ohio, and for the last two years has spent 50% of his/her practice in Domestic / Juvenile law; or
- Be a licensed mental health professional with relevant experience working with children & families and knowledge of custody / divorce-related issues; and
- Be in good standing with the Ohio Bar or professional licensing board; and
- Have completed 12 hours of pre-service education approved by the Supreme Court of Ohio; and
- Annually complete 6 hours of continuing education approved by the Supreme Court of Ohio

How can I get a GAL appointed to my case?

The court may order that a GAL be appointed to your case on its own or upon request from either party.

What can I expect once a GAL is appointed?

Once the full deposit has been paid, the GAL will reach out to each parent to schedule an initial meeting, gather information, and arrange to meet your family / children.

The GAL is also expected to:

- Provide the court with his/her recommendations of the best interest of the child.
- Maintain independence, objectivity, and fairness.
- Act with respect and courtesy in the performance of his/her duties.
- Attend and be available to testify at any relevant hearings.
- Upon becoming aware that his/her recommendations differ from the wishes of the child, immediately notify the court in writing with notice to the parties or attorneys.
- If necessary, request timely court reviews and judicial intervention in writing with notice to the parties or attorneys.

