

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/guardianship-reform-takes-flight>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

This week, the New York State court system was selected by the [National Guardianship Network \(NGN\)](#) to receive one of four state court incentive and technical assistance grants to create innovative, consensus-driven Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS). Funding for the grants comes from the [State Justice Institute](#) and the [Albert and Elaine Borchard Foundation Center on Law and Aging](#). Working with Vera's Guardianship Project, the court system through its Office of Court Administration will design and launch this statewide group to assess needs and establish priority action areas in guardianship.

WINGS is a collaborative model for guardianship reform that aims to improve judicial processes, protect individual rights and meet needs, address insufficient funding, and ensure guardian accountability and fiduciary standards. NGN will use lessons learned from these four pilot WINGS groups to craft a template for building similar networks in other states. The goal of creating a national network of WINGS groups evolved from the Third National Guardianship Summit convened by NGN at the S.J. Quinney College of Law of the University of Utah in 2011.

With well-documented flaws in guardianship systems all too common across the country, establishing statewide interdisciplinary groups to improve practices in every state was among the key recommendations adopted by Summit delegates. The fact that the New York State court system has signed on to this important initiative to work with a broad spectrum of stakeholders on guardianship reform is truly momentous for our state. Through its Guardianship demonstration project, Vera has been working since 2005 to provide model guardianship services that address the gaps and deficiencies in New York State's current system.

The other states to receive incentive grants are Oregon, Texas, and Utah. Two states Ohio and Missouri already have such consensus and problem-solving groups.

Established in 2002, NGN comprises national organizations dedicated to effective adult guardianship law and practice, including AARP, the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging, the ABA Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law, the Alzheimers Association, the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, the Center for Guardianship Certification, the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, the National Center for State Courts, the National College of Probate Judges, and the National Guardianship Association.

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