

King County Superior Court Guardian Ad Litem Grievance Procedure

The registry manager shall maintain the records regarding each Guardian ad Litem. If the registry manager receives a written complaint alleging that a Guardian ad Litem has violated the Guardian ad Litem Code of Conduct, misrepresented his or her qualifications to be a Guardian ad Litem, failed to meet the annual update requirements, or becomes aware of any reason that would place the suitability of the person to act as Guardian ad Litem in question; the registry manager shall promptly forward the complaint to the Presiding Judge or his or her designee(s).

The registry manager shall notify the Guardian ad Litem of any decision to suspend or remove the Guardian ad Litem from a registry. At the discretion of the Presiding Judge or his or her designee(s), participation by the Guardian ad in the registry may be suspended pending resolution of the complaint. The Presiding Judge shall notify the Guardian ad Litem in writing of the final decision of the court. Any conduct of a Guardian ad Litem pertaining to the performance of his or her duties in a specific case shall be addressed at hearings within that case.

Grievance Process

1. Aggrieved party shall complete the mandatory complaint form and file it with the Guardian Ad Litem Registry Manager.
2. The Registry Manager shall immediately deliver the complaint to the presiding judge or to such person designated by the presiding judge to resolve such complaints. Such designee shall be a judge of the King County Superior Court.
 - a. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Presiding Judge may retain the matter for decision or assign it to a designee for decision.
3. The presiding judge or designee will make an initial determination as to whether the complaint has potential merit. If potential merit is found, a response to the complaint will be requested, and the complaining party will be given an opportunity to reply to the response. The Presiding Judge or designee may schedule a hearing, request additional materials, or enter a decision based upon a review of the record alone. The decision of the presiding judge or designee shall be the final resolution of the complaint. If the complaint relates to a pending case the complaint shall be resolved within 25 days of the receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is made subsequent to the conclusion of a case, the complaint shall be resolved within 60 days of receipt.
4. If the complaint is sustained, in whole or in part, the court may suspend or remove of the guardian ad litem from the Registry; or impose other appropriate sanctions. During the pendency of this process the Guardian ad Litem may continue to receive appointments and shall continue to serve in appointed cases, unless otherwise provided by order of the Presiding Judge or designee.

IMPORTANT: All notices, proceedings and other activities taken pursuant to the grievance process shall observe provisions for fair treatment, due process, notice, the right to be heard and the appearance of fairness. The complaint, investigation, report and all aspects of the grievance process shall remain confidential until merit is found.