



EXECUTIVE OFFICES & CRIMINAL JUSTICE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
STAFF: STEVEN ALLRED

COURTS – GUARDIAN AD LITEM

BUDGET BRIEF

SUMMARY

The mission of the GAL is to preserve and strengthen families whenever possible, and when it is not, to achieve permanency for children in a timely manner.

A guardian ad litem is a lawyer appointed by the court to look after the interests of an infant, child or incompetent during court proceedings. The guardian ad litem may represent children in custody actions where there are allegations of abuse or neglect, or in protective order proceedings. The guardian ad litem also represents children who are in foster care. Since legal representation for these children is only one aspect of assuring their well-being, the guardian ad litem must work closely with foster parents, therapists, caseworkers, teachers, pediatricians and other medical professionals to determine what action is in the best interest of a child

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Caseload

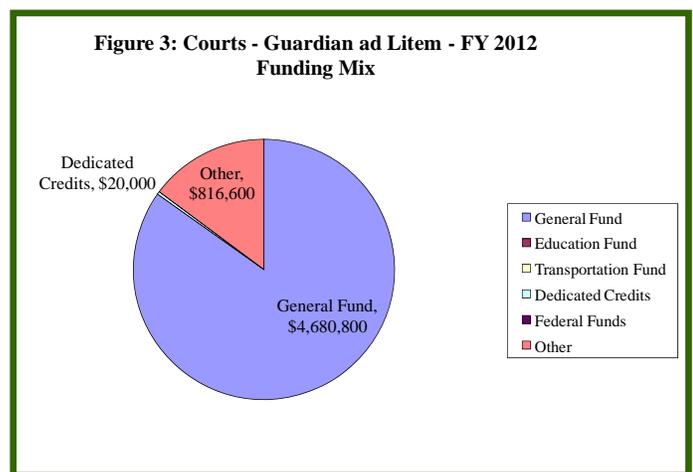
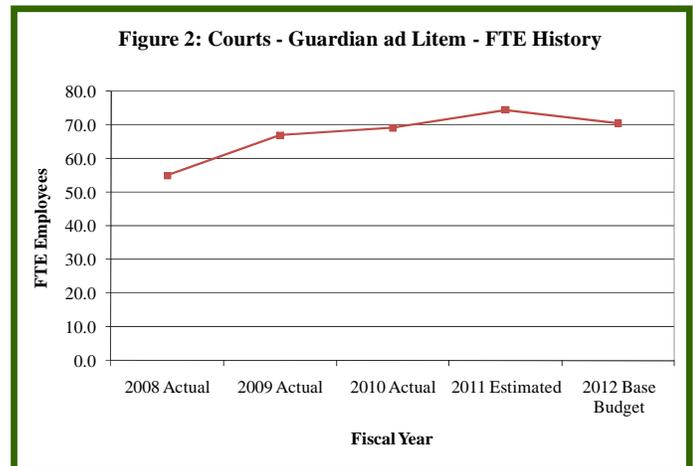
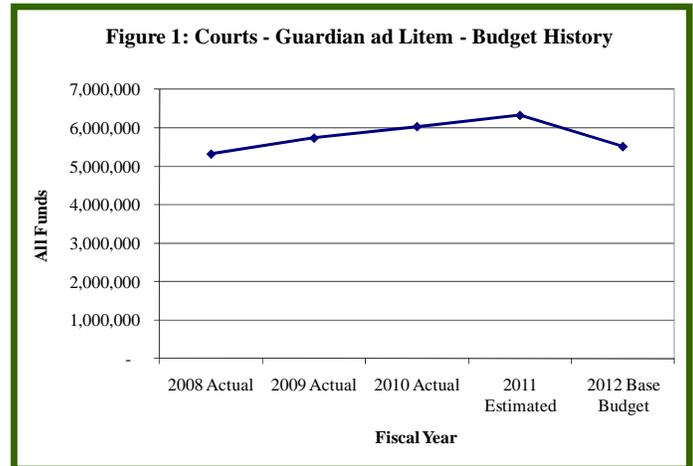
Last year the GAL provided legal representation to 14,412 children, a 12% increase in two years. Forty-two GAL attorneys are employed by the office, in 13 locations across the state.

Turnover

The GAL reports their attorneys are paid a lower rate than other state attorneys. This results in turnover, which leads to increased training demands, a shallower pool of experience, and decreased quality of representation.

Support Staff

GAL reports they have approximately one support staff for every two attorneys. This means attorneys must spend time performing tasks that could be completed by secretaries, paralegals, and investigators. Case loads are about double the standard set by the U.S. government and the National Association of Counsel for Children.



BUDGET DETAIL TABLE

The following table shows the budget history for this line item. To eliminate the structural imbalance and as directed by the Executive Appropriations Committee, the "FY 2012 Base Budget" column includes 93% of FY 2011 ongoing General and Education Fund appropriations across-the-board. Targeted budget changes, reflecting policymaker direction, will likely replace the pro-rata reductions shown here.

Courts - Guardian ad Litem						
Sources of Finance	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Appropriated	Changes	FY 2011 Revised	Changes	FY 2012* Base Budget
General Fund	5,011,100	5,033,100	0	5,033,100	(352,300)	4,680,800
General Fund, One-time	(156,100)	0	0	0	0	0
Dedicated Credits Revenue	98,600	20,000	0	20,000	0	20,000
GFR - Children's Legal Defense	449,300	451,300	0	451,300	0	451,300
GFR - Guardian Ad Litem Services	355,700	365,300	0	365,300	0	365,300
Transfers	494,500	0	0	0	0	0
Beginning Nonlapsing	248,000	0	462,800	462,800	(462,800)	0
Closing Nonlapsing	(462,800)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$6,038,300	\$5,869,700	\$462,800	\$6,332,500	(\$815,100)	\$5,517,400
Programs						
Guardian ad Litem	6,038,300	5,869,700	462,800	6,332,500	(815,100)	5,517,400
Total	\$6,038,300	\$5,869,700	\$462,800	\$6,332,500	(\$815,100)	\$5,517,400
Categories of Expenditure						
Personnel Services	5,093,800	5,347,200	59,500	5,406,700	(494,400)	4,912,300
In-state Travel	54,000	66,100	0	66,100	0	66,100
Out-of-state Travel	13,000	2,900	0	2,900	0	2,900
Current Expense	817,000	453,500	383,300	836,800	(320,800)	516,000
DP Current Expense	47,000	0	0	0	0	0
DP Capital Outlay	13,500	0	0	0	0	0
Other Charges/Pass Thru	0	0	20,000	20,000	100	20,100
Total	\$6,038,300	\$5,869,700	\$462,800	\$6,332,500	(\$815,100)	\$5,517,400
Other Data						
Budgeted FTE	69.2	67.8	6.7	74.5	(4.0)	70.5
Actual FTE	70.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Vehicles	7.0	7.0	0.0	7.0	0.0	7.0

*Does not include amounts in excess of subcommittee's state fund allocation that may be recommended by the Fiscal Analyst.