

Priority: Basic Needs
Program Offer Type: Existing Operating
Related Programs:

Lead Agency: County Human Services
Program Contact: Mary Shortall

Program Characteristics:

Executive Summary

The Public Guardian, under court authority, makes life decisions for 158 extremely mentally incapable impoverished adults who are current or recent victims of physical, sexual and financial abuse. Legal authority enables intervention when no other approach resolves abuse, and ensures access to housing, food, and medical care. Without this option, clients experience continuing hunger, homelessness, abuse and likely premature death. In addition, the program diverts at least 200 clients into less costly services and/or to family or private guardianships.

Program Description

New ADS Public Guardian/Conservator clients all have at least two of the following: treatment-resistant mental illness, IQ below 70, Alzheimer's/dementia, brain injury, very complex medical problems, no income source or no housing. Program staff work with adult protective services and law enforcement to educate professionals and families and to intervene early to resolve fraud and abuse of extremely vulnerable adults, diverting 200+ cases annually to other services and to family or private guardianships. Staff works with the County Attorney and Probate Court to obtain guardianship for selected cases when no other resource exists to resolve the issue. Satisfaction with the service has been consistently high, with comments that the program needs more client capacity, particularly for mentally ill clients. Public Guardian staff makes basic life decisions for 158 court-appointed clients, directing plans to resolve violence and victimization, address chronic and urgent basic care needs, obtain an income source and basic care, and move clients towards stability. Program staff use court authority to create and oversee extremely complex care plans designed to maintain clients in the least restrictive setting, avoid relapse, and prevent repeated crisis-related costs.

Program Justification

For less than 1% of substantiated adult abuse cases, involuntary, court-authorized decision-making is the only way to resolve complex abuse/exploitation without continued use of County resources, including hospital bed holds, involuntary commitment and protective services. Department systems and staff divert most guardianship requests to less costly options. Service requests are heavily screened to assure all other options have been considered, focusing public funds on the citizens at highest risk without other resources. After initial client stabilization, public guardian staff work with existing systems and resources to obtain/oversee permanent housing, income, medical care and medications. This legally mandated supervision prevents relapse into homelessness, unnecessary psychiatric or medical hospital use, and inappropriate use of jails. This offer links to County Basic Needs strategies to provide intervention and coordination to meet basic needs, ensure care for vulnerable community members and obtain permanent food and housing.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	Previous Year Actual (FY07-08)	Current Year Purchased (FY08-09)	Current Year Estimate (FY08-09)	Next Year Offer (FY09-10)
Output	Referrals appropriately diverted to less costly resources ¹	201	200	200	200
Outcome	Urgent client needs addressed within five days after court appointment ²	92.0%	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%

Performance Measure - Description

¹Successful diversions are cost-effective across multiple county services.

²Urgent safety issues are addressed immediately upon court appointment. Ongoing stabilization requires subsequent intense management over months or years.

Legal/Contractual Obligation

The decision to provide the service is in county ordinance. Under ORS, if the county chooses to reduce the service, it remains obligated to current clients, but can halt further intake if the Board of County Commissioners makes a finding that the program is no longer needed.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2009	2009	2010	2010
Personnel	\$880,230	\$0	\$938,970	\$0
Contracts	\$92,000	\$0	\$87,000	\$0
Materials & Supplies	\$25,217	\$0	\$16,706	\$0
Internal Services	\$125,411	\$0	\$125,714	\$0
Subtotal: Direct Exps:	\$1,122,858	\$0	\$1,168,390	\$0
Administration	\$38,276	\$0	\$36,750	\$0
Program Support	\$78,291	\$0	\$90,413	\$0
Subtotal: Other Exps:	\$116,567	\$0	\$127,163	\$0
Total GF/non-GF:	\$1,239,425	\$0	\$1,295,553	\$0
Program Total:	\$1,239,425		\$1,295,553	
Program FTE	9.90	0.00	9.90	0.00
Program Revenues				
Fees, Permits & Charges	\$120,000	\$0	\$130,000	\$0
Program Revenue for Admin	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue:	\$120,000	\$0	\$130,000	\$0

Explanation of Revenues

County General Fund Subsidy - \$1,038,390

Public Guardian Fee Revenue - \$130,000

Fee collections are small because clients are Medicaid eligible. The Public Guardian program may have a claim on any client funds that remain after death.

Significant Program Changes

Last year this program was: #25026, ADS Public Guardian/Conservator