

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION**Commission on Law and Aging**

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New Online Volunteer Handbook for Courts Boosts Guardianship Oversight

Advocates and court officials know that monitoring of adult guardianships is important to manage risks, prevent abuse, assist guardians and increase public confidence in the judicial system. But court budgets are stretched thin.

What if courts were to train and supervise volunteers who go out into the community, visit individuals under guardianship, determine whether guardians need assistance, and report back to the judge – in essence, serve as the “eyes and ears” of the court? It can be a “win-win” for courts, guardians and vulnerable individuals.

The ABA Commission on Law and Aging has a new online resource to help courts do exactly that! Updating a 20-year old groundbreaking manual by Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Inc. of AARP, the Commission has produced a concise, four-part readily accessible electronic Handbook. The manual guides court staff step by step in developing a volunteer guardianship monitoring and assistance program, recruiting and training volunteers, and compiling community information volunteers and guardians will need. Detailed forms and appendices are adaptable locally. By partnering with the National College of Probate Judges, the Commission has designed a Handbook directly targeting the needs of courts handling adult guardianship cases.

The Handbook includes three related online guides: *Handbook for Program Coordinators*; *Handbook for Trainers*; and *Handbook for Volunteers*.

Might this be a good model for your court? See the Handbook at <http://ambar.org/VolunteerGrdMonitor> . Contact the Commission staff for technical assistance in using the Handbook, erica.wood@americanbar.org.