



Agency Overview
Resident and Family Support Council

Guardianship and Advocacy Commission Overview

- **State Agency**
- **Board of Commissioners Appointed by the Governor with Human Services or Disability Related Experience, including Legislators**
- **All services focus on Persons with Disabilities**
- **Two Administrative Offices and Seven Regional Offices**
- **Every County has access to a Regional Office**
- **106 staff statewide**





Four Primary Programs:

- **Office of State Guardian** – Serves as Guardian of Last Resort for Adults with Disabilities
- **Legal Advocacy Service** – Provides Legal Advice and Representation for both Children and Adults with Disabilities Most Often Related to Mental Health Services
- **Human Rights Authority** – Investigates Disability Rights Violations Committed Against Persons With Disabilities
- **Special Education Advocacy** – Provides a resource for Illinois families with special education questions or issues.

More about the Office of State Guardian (OSG)

- Serves as Guardian of Last Resort as appointed by a Court for 5,000+ individuals
- Ways in which OSG might get appointed as guardian:
 - By a Hospital
 - By Adult Protective Services
 - By DCFS
 - As Successor Guardian
- Provides Guardian Training Module on GAC website for newly appointed guardians
- Intake Line answers questions about adult guardianship
- GAC website has informational materials about adult guardianship

How the Office of State Guardian Might Be A Resource for You:

- If you encounter a situation in which an adult age 18 or older might need a guardian due to decisional incapacity and there is no one willing, able or appropriate to serve as guardian, the court may consider Office of State Guardian (OSG) appointment if an entity petitions to have OSG appointed.
- If you have questions regarding adult guardianship, our intake line is a resource for questions. 1-866-274-8023
- If you are seeking information about adult guardianship, our website is a resource at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/gac/>
- If you are a legal guardian and need more information about your role and responsibilities, visit our guardianship training module on our website.



More About Legal Advocacy Services (LAS)

- Program attorneys mostly:
 - Represent individuals facing involuntary mental health admission
 - Represent individuals facing court-ordered treatment – usually psychotropic medication treatment
 - Assist with questions regarding mental health rights
 - Provide advocacy for both children and adults in mental health settings
 - Assist with Mental Health Treatment Declarations
 - Handle appeals of lower court decisions
 - Serve more than 7,000 individuals annually

How Legal Advocacy Services Can be a Resource for You:

You can contact the Legal Advocacy Service Program through our Commission Intake Line (1-866-274-80230):

- For questions regarding mental health rights
- If you have a family member receiving mental health services and you have questions regarding their rights or legal representation
- If you know of an individual seeking to establish an advanced directive on mental health care called a Mental Health Treatment Declaration.



More About the Human Rights Authority (HRA)

- Investigates rights violations in a wide variety of disability service settings (state-operated facilities, group homes, vocational programs, hospitals, special education programs, nursing homes, jails, etc.)
- Investigates a wide array of rights violations (medication, admission/discharge/transfer, restrictions, restraint/seclusion, confidentiality, communication, etc.)
- Seeks to work with providers for improved rights protections through systemic changes to policies, procedures, practices, staff training.
- Handles about 300 cases per year impacting 20,000+ individuals
- 9 Regional Panels of appointed Human Rights Authority Members

How the Human Rights Authority Can Be a Resource for You:

- If you have questions about disability rights associated with disability services, you can call a regional office or the Commission intake line.
- If you encounter a disability related rights complaint or issue, you can request an investigation by contacting a regional office or the Commission intake line. You can also file an on-line disability rights complaint through the Commission website.



Filing a Human Rights Authority Complaint:

- Anyone can file a complaint, including filing an anonymous complaint
- The identity of the complainant remains confidential
- The identity of involved person with a disability is protected
- Regional boards of appointed Human Rights Authority members, with the assistance of a Human Rights Authority Coordinator, decide to investigate the complaint and conduct the investigations.



Become an HRA Member!

One more thing about the Human Rights Authority:

If you or someone you know would be interested in serving on a Human Rights Authority panel, please contact us!

There is an application and appointment process.

Regional Boards are made up of service consumers, family members of consumers, concerned citizens and service provider representatives.

HRA involvement is a way to share your expertise and experience to improving disability rights protections in the area where you live.

Volunteer role with training and travel reimbursement.



Special Education Initiative

- Collaboration between GAC's Advocacy Programs (LAS and HRA)
- Staffed by an Advocate, Paralegal and an Attorney
- Resource for families who have special education questions and issues – Individualized assistance
- GAC website includes information about special education rights
- Training GAC staff and HRA Members regarding special education rights
- System of lay advocates
- Team reviews and provides feedback on special education related legislation

Commission Legislative Role

- Under its mandates, the Commission can recommend legislation
- Legislative recommendations typically arise from patterns of issues or macrosystem gaps experienced by clients of Commission programs
- Examples of Legislation the Commission has initiated:
 - Guardian Training Requirement
 - Sex Education for Adults with ID/DD in certain types of settings
 - Resident Access to the placement of cameras in Community Integrated Living Arrangements
 - Development of a Task Force to specifically examine how persons with disabilities interface with the criminal justice system.
 - Supported Decision Making for persons with ID/DD



Questions



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General Agency Contact Info:

- Toll-Free Intake.....866-274-8023
- Toll-Free TTY.....866-333-3362
- Website.....<http://gac.state.il.us>
- For HRA Newsletter contact: Gene.Seaman@Illinois.gov
- Also, Like our Facebook Page!
<https://m.facebook.com/IllinoisGuardianshipandAdvocacyCommission/>

HRA Contacts

- **Regional Contact Information:**

- Chicago HRA (Jeremy Polk) and South Suburban HRA (Geraldine Boatman) - 708-338-7500
- North Suburban HRA (Jon Burnet) - 847-294-4264
- Northwest HRA (Rockford) (Nicole Weathersby) - 815-987-7227
- Peoria HRA (Erin Nowlan) - 309-671-3030
- Springfield HRA (Jon Burnet) - 217-785-1540
- East Central HRA (Champaign) (Gene Seaman) – 309-671-3044
- Metro East HRA (Alton) (Jodi Russell-Baum) - 618-474-5503
- Egyptian HRA (Anna) (Kim Conway) - 618-833-4897
- Special Education Advocacy Initiative – (Laura Hart) – 309-671-3030 or 217-278-5577

