

**STATE OF MAINE  
SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER JB-25-01

**CHILD PROTECTION GUARDIAN AD LITEM MENTOR PROGRAM  
PILOT PROJECT**

Effective: May 16, 2025

**I. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

The Judicial Branch recognizes the critical work that guardians ad litem (GALs) perform for families and the courts. To better support the work of GALs, the Supreme Judicial Court hereby implements a GAL Mentor Program Pilot Project (Pilot Project) to provide mentoring services for GALs appointed in child protection proceedings pursuant to 22 M.R.S. § 4005.

Provided funding is available, this Pilot Project shall continue to the later of, one year from the effective date or September 30, 2026.

**II. APPLICATION AND REMOVAL PROCESS**

- A. A presently rostered GAL who is not a member of the GAL Review Board and is interested in serving as a mentor to other GALs (mentor) shall submit a written application using form OTH-132, which can be obtained from the Family Division within the Administrative Office of the Courts. The completed application shall be emailed to [galadministrative@courts.maine.gov](mailto:galadministrative@courts.maine.gov).
- B. The Chief Judge of the District Court (Chief Judge) will periodically accept applications to serve on a roster as a mentor based on the operational needs of the Pilot Project. These operational needs include demand for services, the availability of mentors, and budget constraints. The decision to roster an applicant as a mentor is within the sole discretion of the Chief Judge.
- C. A mentor may be required to participate in training offered by the Judicial Branch before accepting mentor referrals.

- D. A mentor seeking removal from the mentor roster may effectuate that removal by providing notice in writing sent to [galadministrative@courts.maine.gov](mailto:galadministrative@courts.maine.gov).
- E. A mentor may request a leave of absence from the mentor roster at any time in writing sent to [galadministrative@courts.maine.gov](mailto:galadministrative@courts.maine.gov). All requests for leaves of absence will be considered by the Chief Judge.
- F. The Chief Judge may remove a mentor from the mentor roster at any time, and without prior notice to the mentor. The Chief Judge's decision is final and not subject to appeal.

### **III. Case Assignment**

- A. A GAL interested in receiving mentoring services for a pending child protection case shall complete the Mentor Request Form available on the Maine Judicial Branch's forms database (OTH-133) and email it to [galadministrative@courts.maine.gov](mailto:galadministrative@courts.maine.gov). A GAL is eligible for mentoring services if:
  - 1. The Pilot Project has capacity, as determined by the Chief Judge;
  - 2. The GAL is presently appointed to a child protection case as a GAL; and
  - 3. The GAL provided the names of the parties to the case, the names of counsel, as well as any other GALs assigned to the case, to allow for potential mentors to perform conflict of interest checks.
- B. A mentor is eligible for assignment to provide mentoring services to a GAL assigned to a pending child protection case if:
  - 1. The mentor responds within two business days of an inquiry from the court to indicate availability, and

2. The mentor has determined that no conflicts of interest would arise from the mentorship assignment, including conflicts with the parties.
- C. If a mentor is secured, the court will send the GAL (mentee) and the mentor the Acceptance of Referral Form (OTH-134). The mentor and mentee shall coordinate with one another to schedule a time for the mentoring session. The mentoring services may not exceed one hour. If the mentee wants additional mentoring services beyond one hour, the mentee must submit a renewed mentoring request form.

#### **IV. Confidentiality**

- A. For purposes of receiving mentoring services, the mentee may disclose information and documents related to the child protection case that is the subject of the mentoring session to the mentor. *See* 22 M.R.S. § 4007(1) (allowing the court to order an exception to confidentiality of child protection records). The mentor must maintain all information learned and documents received as confidential and must not disclose them, except as allowed by paragraph IV(C) below.
- B. With the exception of paragraph (IV)(C) below, all correspondence between a mentor and mentee shall be confidential and not subject to discovery, to allow for the uninhibited exchange of information and guidance.
- C. If, during a mentoring session, a mentor learns of egregious conduct by a mentee that is likely to cause substantial harm to a child or family, that mentor must make a report to the GAL Review Board.

#### **V. Scope**

- A. A person acting as a mentor pursuant to this Administrative Order has been determined by the Chief Judge to be qualified to provide mentoring services based on the person's professional experience as a GAL and fitness to serve as a mentor for other GALs. While

engaged in mentoring services, the mentor is acting as an agent of the court with inherent quasi-judicial immunity.

- B. The mentor may provide mentoring services on any relevant topics related to the mentee's role in a pending child protection case. This may include, but is not limited to, report writing, recommendation development, trial practice, and billing.
- C. The mentor is not appointed as a GAL and is not serving as an attorney for the mentee seeking mentoring services.
- D. The mentor is not authorized to perform any GAL-related duties for cases in which the mentor is not appointed personally. A mentor may not, for example, attend court proceedings, attend family team meetings, or review discovery.
- E. The mentor is permitted to provide only one-on-one mentoring services (e.g., in-person meetings, phone calls, virtual meetings, and written correspondence) to a mentee.
- F. A mentor may review a mentee's court report during the time allotted for mentoring services.

## **VI. Fees**

- A. A mentor will be paid at the same hourly rate as a court-compensated GAL. A mentor shall be reimbursed only for referrals approved through the Acceptance of Referral Form (OTH-134).
- B. A mentor shall track all time spent engaged in mentoring services and submit form OTH-135 to seek payment from the Judicial Branch. A mentor may bill only once per month. The voucher must contain all services for one calendar month and must be submitted within one calendar month thereafter. For example, a mentor must submit form OTH-135 for the entire month of February's services no later than the last day of March.

## **VII. Data Collection**

- A. To enable the Judicial Branch to best evaluate the effectiveness of the Pilot Project, the mentee shall complete a brief survey administered by the Family Division within 7 days of completion of a mentoring session.
- B. At the discretion of the Chief Judge, additional data collection may be conducted by the Judicial Branch as it relates to this pilot project.

For the Court,

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Valerie Stanfill  
Chief Justice

Promulgation Date: May 15, 2025