

WINGS-SSA Collaboration

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WINGS

- Working
- Interdisciplinary
- Networks of
- Guardianship
- Stakeholders

WINGS =

- Ongoing
- Court-initiated
- Problem-solving entities
- Targets
 - pressing guardianship issues
 - enhancing use of less restrictive options
 - preventing abuse

WINGS =
Court +
Community

- Court-community partnerships
- Drive changes affecting the ways courts and guardians practice
- Improve the lives of people who need help in decision-making
- Better improve judicial processes
- Protect individual rights and meet needs
- Ensure guardian accountability and fiduciary standards

Stakeholders

- Judges and court staff
- Aging and disability networks
- Attorneys
- Mental health agencies
- Advocacy groups
- Medical and mental health professionals
- Service agencies (APS, social services, law enforcement)
- Family members and individuals affected by guardianship
- **Social Security Administration** and the Department of Veterans Affairs

Collective Impact

- Achieve social change through cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated intervention of individual organizations
- Permanent forum on how adult guardianship is working, where the pressure points are, and what solutions might work

Progress

- Started with 4 grant-funded pilots in 2013
- 17 current WINGS
- 10 more new WINGS coming
- Produced valuable resources
- Strengthened court oversight
- Explored less restrictive options
- Reduced overbroad, excessive guardianships
- **Forged communication paths among stakeholders**

Why SSA

- Many guardians and rep payees serve same individual
- State court can't authorize guardian to manage SS benefits
- Guardian must separately apply to SSA to be rep payee
- **If either guardian or rep payee mismanage respective assets, high risk mismanaging other asset**

- Gaps in information sharing may adversely affect incapacitated adults
- Recommendation: SSA take whatever measures necessary to allow it to disclose certain information about SSA beneficiaries and fiduciaries to state courts, upon request, including proposing legislative changes needed to allow it to do so.

Privacy

- Federal Privacy Act presents a challenge for SSA in sharing information
- Courts can share information with SSA
- Example: court removes a guardian for breach of fiduciary duties, guardian also serves as a representative payee, court informs SSA as step toward protection against abuse

SSA & WINGS

- Requirement that SSA and VA be involved
- SSA has regional staff representative with each WINGS
- Quarterly calls with SSA and WINGS reps
- Judicial training guide on rep payee process

WINGS Steps

- Through collaboration—if not yet information sharing--with WINGS further understanding and communication avenues will be opened with the guardianship community to mutually protect our most vulnerable citizens