



PROJECT GUARDIANSHIP

Changing the way we care for people.

**A Conversation on Public Guardianship, Individual Dignity,
and Self Determination**

August 10, 2023
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Our Mission

Project Guardianship's mission is to provide person-centered care for older adults and individuals living with disabilities and mental illness who need help making decisions, and to transform the systems that support them to ensure safety, promote independence, preserve dignity, and advance racial and social justice.



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Project Guardianship: A Brief History

- Systemic Injustices
- No Public Guardianship in NYS
- Limited Access to Good Guardianship



What is Guardianship?



- A court appoints a guardian to make decisions on behalf of a person who cannot meet their needs and is at risk of harm
- A judge must find the person incapacitated (also an option to consent)
- Powers of the guardian must be tailored to meet the person's needs
- Powers can be added/removed and rights can be restored
- Tool of last resort
- An expensive, lengthy and confusing process!
- Legal tool created by Article 81 of NY Mental Hygiene Law



Our Model

- Holistic model
- Multidisciplinary team
- Individualized care planning
- Maximize autonomy
- Move back home/stay home
- Support end of life process
- No money, no problem
- Excel at the hardest cases
- Serve as co-guardian with family/friends



Our Clients

57% reside in their homes or communities

43% reside in a nursing home or other long-term care facility

23% are under 60 years old

14% are 61-70 years old

21% are 71-80 years old

22% are 81-90 years old

21% are 91 or older

63% Female **37%** Male

54% White/Caucasian

41% Black/African-American

2% Asian

3% Multiracial

62% Latino/Hispanic **38%** non-Latino/Hispanic

95% live below the NYC median annual income (\$93,400)

75% live below the poverty threshold (\$25,142)

78% are on Medicaid

September 2022



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> 50%

More than half our clients are living with diagnosed mental illness or cognitive disorders; many more are undiagnosed.



Our Approach



DIRECT SERVICE MODEL

Person-centered guardianship using a comprehensive, multidisciplinary team approach

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Building local capacity for good guardianship and alternative arrangements

ADVOCACY & ALLIANCES

Influencing the public agenda and increasing resources and accountability



New Yorkers are Aging

51

Counties in New York where 25% of the population will be 60+ by 2030

5.3M

Projected number of New Yorkers 60+ by 2030

70%

Percent of New Yorkers over age 65 who are likely to need some form of long-term care

6M

Number of people living with Alzheimer's in the U.S. Projected to grow to 13M by 2050.

Improving the Guardianship System

Our goal is to **reduce reliance on guardianship** and - when all else fails - ensure that those need a guardian have access to a good one.

We leverage our expertise as practitioners to improve the broader guardianship system through education, training, and advocacy.

- ★ "Incapacitated, Indigent, and Alone"
- ★ Elder Justice Initiative (EJI) Guardianship Reform Project
- ★ Good Guardianship and Autonomy Preservation (G-GAP) Coalition
- ★ Policy Agenda



Recent Highlights

- \$1 Million appropriation in NYS Budget!
- Guardianship Prevention & Support Helpline Launched
- Webinars: "Planning for Mental Health Crises" & "A Conversation on Health Care Decision Making and Planning for the Future"
- Op/Ed Published in Albany Times Union
- NYS Multi Sector Plan for Aging Subcommittee
- Environmental Scan on Decision-Making Supports for Older Adults

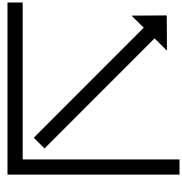


How We Got There



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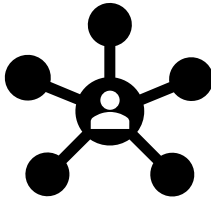
What's Next?



Advocate for Increased
Investment



Helpline



Build up the
Network



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Guardianship Prevention & Support Helpline

- Free information and referrals to anyone with questions about Article 81 Guardianship in New York
- Support for both members of the public and professionals
- Pilot launched June 2023
- Why this Helpline?
- We can help with:
 - Explaining court processes and papers
 - Brainstorming care resources
 - Discussed guardianship alternatives
 - Issues with guardians
 - Referrals, and more!



Guardianship Prevention & Support Helpline

HOW TO REACH US



718-750-8474 **PHONE**

helpline@projectguardianship.org **EMAIL**

projectguardianship.org/helpline **WEB**

**You can contact us by e-mail or phone at any time
and we will get back to you as soon as we can.**

We are taking live calls weekdays, 10 a.m. to noon

Let us know if you would like to communicate in writing or using a phone-based interpreter



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Thank You and Connect with Us!

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