

ANNUAL REPORT FY2023



Safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities

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Executive Director's Message

Dr. Mary L. Milano, Esq.

As the Executive Director of IGAC, I am pleased to submit the FY23 Agency Annual Report. The data summarized will show the amazing volume of output in terms of services for the fiscal year, as well as showing the cost to the State of providing those services, which is essentially without match.

But beyond the data reported are the stories of our clients and wards and the intense engagement by our staff with and on behalf of those individuals and the systems by which they are served. For IGAC staff at every level this is more than a job. It is an opportunity to make a difference, often one “life” at a time, working very often with resources often inadequate for serving clients whose needs exceed those resources.

Whether it is mental health court, a nursing home in an underserved area, a hospital wanting to shift costs elsewhere, State operated facility or a public school, our people respond. And they also discover – discover issues even before they are formally raised by those who might be affected even when they are not clients or wards. And they advocate – advocate for basic human and civil rights, becoming experts in areas beyond what one would imagine while reading their job descriptions. And they invest themselves, invest in their work and relationships. And they advocate – they advocate change that is ordered toward justice, equity, and growth and recognition of the personhood of all people in Illinois with disability and difference.

It is then, with pride and enthusiasm for the work that can be documented by facts and figure, and in particular the work that is not necessarily reportable but which drives all of us at IGAC I invite you to read on and if you see or think of a place in this orbit that you can fit with even greater precision than you do now – give us a call, and jump in. The water is indeed warm and welcomes your talents and your vision.

Agency Overview

The Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission safeguards the rights of persons with disabilities by providing public guardianship services, legal representation, and a process to investigate alleged disability rights violations. The Commission was established by the Guardianship and Advocacy Act of 1979 (20 ILCS 3955/1 et seq.) and is governed by eleven Commissioners appointed by the Governor for three-year terms of office. Each Commissioner's selection reflects representation of a particular expertise, consistent with the Commission's mission to serve persons with disabilities.

The Commission carries out its mandates through the work of three primary programs, which receive support from a team of staff with expertise in areas that encapsulate the mission and vision of work for the citizens of Illinois.

- **Human Rights Authority (HRA)**
- **Legal Advocacy Services (LAS)**
- **Office of State Guardian (OSG)**

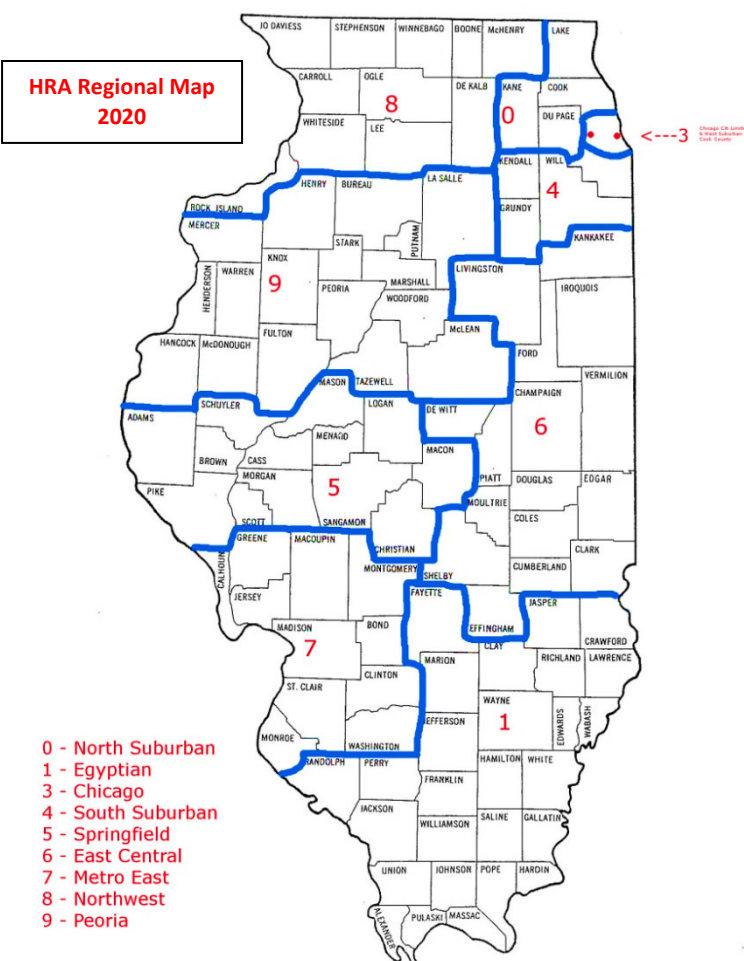
OUR VISION

Ensure access to necessary guardianship and advocacy services for Illinois' citizens with disabilities with commitment to quality service provision by way of well- trained professional staff, dedication to public awareness of disability issues, advocacy for legislation and processes that have positive impacts on the agency, its services and its clients.

OUR MISSION

To safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities by providing public guardianship services, legal representation, and processes to investigate alleged rights violations.

- 355 cases handled
- 183 intakes
- 1,521 volunteer hours
- 79,421 persons with disabilities impacted by HRA recommendations.
- 92% of recommendations implemented by service providers.
- \$15 Average cost per person with disabilities impacted.



The Human Rights Authority investigates allegations of rights violations committed by both public and private entities that serve children and adults with disabilities. Through its investigations and negotiated case outcomes, the Authority advocates for systemic changes to provider policies, procedures and practices that improve disability rights protections. Comprised of nine regional panels, located across the State, the Authority engages Illinois' citizens who serve, voluntarily, as members on the panels. Each region is staffed by a coordinator and nine volunteer members (81 total volunteers); each panel consists of three members who are service provider representatives and the remaining six members are consumers, family members or concerned citizens. The Authority provides a confidential and knowledgeable resource to refer complaints of disability rights protections and offers service providing agencies an objective means of resolving complaints without costly litigation. HRA findings are publicly released and can be accessed through the Commission website.



Legal Advocacy Service (LAS)

- 8,553 cases handled
- 9,373 clients served
- 790 hearings
- 836 petitions
- 16 new appeals
- 9 appeals based on merit
- 17 appeals handled at the trial level
- 836 requests for information, referrals, or assistance
- 636 Lee-Wesley Consent Decree referrals
- 595 requests for assistance with advanced directives
- 29 special education trainings attended

Cost per case handled	\$ 185.00
Cost per client served	\$ 169.00

Private sector cost for equivalent service hours (in thousands)	\$8,287.50
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Percentage the program costs the state when compared to private sector rates	19%
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The Legal Advocacy Service was created so that eligible children and adults could obtain legal advice and representation to protect and enforce their rights guaranteed by Illinois' mental health laws. LAS attorneys provide needed assistance to persons with disabilities in a variety of settings: mental health facilities, residential programs, community placements and nursing homes. Issues addressed include but are not limited to: involuntary admission to and treatment in hospitals, discharge from hospitalization, adequate treatment, refusal of unwanted services and confidentiality of mental health records. Illinois courts often appoint LAS to represent persons with disabilities. Many cases result in published opinions which educate other mental health law attorneys, shape the manner in which future hearings are conducted and create precedents for future court decisions. The Legal Advocacy Service provides assistance to thousands of individuals with disabilities each year. This assistance takes the form of information, referrals and legal representation in court hearings and administrative proceedings.



Office of State Guardian (OSG)

- 4,495 wards served
- 7,128 clients served
- 115 Average caseload per Person Representative
- 40 Average caseload per Estate Representative
- 65 Average Hybrid Caseload (person and estate)
- 146 Highest regional case load
- 3,580 intakes (information plus pending appointments)
- 25,757 medical and other consent activities
- 4,544 after-hours on-call consents, inquiries, and referrals

Cost per client served \$1,112.57

The Office of State Guardian is the largest public guardianship agency of its kind in the United States with cases located in 94 out of 102 Illinois Counties. The purpose of adult guardianship is to provide substitute decision making for medical treatment, medication, residential placement, money management and direct care planning. Appointed by the court, OSG is responsible for the affairs of nearly 5400 wards and serves over 10,000 clients annually who have a wide range of disabilities including chronic mental illness, developmental disabilities, age-related disabilities or profound illnesses. In addition, OSG manages over \$3 million of its wards' assets, ensuring appropriate expenditures and investments of their funds. Many wards live in community settings for persons with mental illness or developmental disabilities, others live in nursing homes or State operated institutions throughout the State. The expertise of OSG allows it to monitor and advocate for appropriated medical and rehabilitative services unique to each disability and each client.



Special Education Initiative

The Special Education Initiative is a collaboration of the Human Rights Authority and the Legal Advocacy Service created to help families navigate special education through training, advocacy and legal support. Primary goals include:

- 1. Provide training and information to Illinois students, families and community members about special education.*
- 2. Provide direct special education advocacy to Illinois students and their families.*

Fiscal 2023 Data

- 437 persons trained on special education laws and rights
- 252 individuals served
- 60 outreach events attended
- 100% case resolution



Cross Divisional Projects

Cross Divisional Projects pertain to overarching Commission efforts and projects that encompass all programmatic functions of the agency: the Office of State Guardian, the Legal Advocacy Service, the Human Rights Authority and the Special Education Initiative. Primary goals focused on staff development, outreach activities and publications, Office of State Guardian wards eligible for restoration and quantitative data on persons with disabilities in Illinois who may need Commission services.

Fiscal Year 2023 Data

- 613 internal trainings for Commission Staff
- 1,069 out reach activities and publications
- 30 individuals eligible for rights restoration
- 1,500,000 potential Commission Clients



2023 Fiscal Summary

FUND	Enacted Appropriations	Appropriations After Transfers	Expenditures	Lapse
GRF Fund	\$11,209,700	\$11,209,700	\$11,208,972	\$728
GAC Fund	\$2,997,900	\$2,997,900	\$2,008,341	\$989,559
TOTAL	\$14,207,600	\$14,207,600	\$13,217,313	\$990,287

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Details of the expenditures by category are as follows:

Category of Expenditure	GRF	GAC Fund
Payroll	\$11,074,770	\$134,328
Contractual	\$134,202	\$1,474,604
Travel		\$88,921
Printing		\$4,753
Commodities		\$6,335
Equipment		\$313
Telecom		\$301,457
Auto		\$7,630
Total Expenditure by Fund	\$11,208,972	\$2,008,341



Commissioners

Anthony E. Rothert, Esq., Chairman
Legal Director, ACLU of Eastern Missouri

Honorable Andrea M. Schleifer
Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County

Representative Thomas M. Bennett
Republican, 106th District

Representative Jonathan Carroll
Democrat, 57th District

Representative William Q. Davis
Democrat, 30th District

Donald J. Dew
President / CEO
Habilitative Systems, Inc. (HSI)

Kathryn E. Eisenhart, Esq.

Dr. Sharon Jenkins-Collins
Doctor of Chiropractic and Naprapathy

Mary Kennelly
Educator

Senator Julie Morrison
Democrat, 29th District

Sonni Choi Williams, Esq.



Organizational Structure

