



FISCAL YEAR 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

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ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT

IGAC — Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission

SEI — Special Education Initiative

OSG — Office of State Guardian

FY — Fiscal Year

LAS — Legal Advocacy Service

CDP — Cross-Divisional Projects

HRA — Human Rights Authority

ADA — Americans with Disabilities Act

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Tracey B. Fleming

Director, Illinois Guardianship
and Advocacy Commission

It is my privilege to present the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2025. This report reflects a year of continued and important work on behalf of Illinois' adults with disabilities, many of whom look to this agency to protect their rights, advocate for their needs, and ensure their voices are heard.

Before turning to the work of this past year, I want to acknowledge my predecessor, Dr. Mary L. Milano, who served as the agency's fifth Executive Director — a tenure of nearly two decades that encompassed the entirety of this reporting period. Under her leadership, IGAC grew in both staff and resources, and her commitment to the individuals we serve set a standard that continues to guide us. We are grateful for her service.

Our three divisions delivered results that reflect the dedication of this agency's staff and volunteers. The Office of State Guardian, the nation's largest public guardianship program, served as guardian for nearly 4,800 individuals while finding alternatives to guardianship for 72% of referrals — reflecting our deep commitment to autonomy and least-restrictive options. The Legal Advocacy Service delivered essential due-process protections to more than 11,800 clients across Illinois. And the Human Rights Authority, powered by more than 1,700 volunteer hours from dedicated citizen panelists, implemented recommendations that benefited more than 90,000 persons with disabilities.

None of this would have happened without the dedication of IGAC's staff, who show up every day for the individuals we serve. This report is a testament to their work.

Sincerely,

Tracey B. Fleming

Director, Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission

AGENCY OVERVIEW

OUR MISSION

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

Established by the Guardianship and Advocacy Act of 1979, the Commission is governed by eleven Commissioners — unpaid volunteers appointed by the Governor to three-year terms.

OFFICE OF STATE GUARDIAN

The nation's largest public guardianship program — court-appointed guardian of last resort for adults with disabilities.

LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICE

Provides legal advice and representation to individuals with disabilities in mental health proceedings.

HUMAN RIGHTS AUTHORITY

Nine regional panels made up of volunteer citizens investigate alleged rights violations by disability service providers across Illinois and make policy recommendations that safeguard the rights of those with disabilities.

OFFICE OF STATE GUARDIAN

The Office of State Guardian is the **largest public guardianship agency of its kind in the United States**, available to be appointed as guardian in all 102 Illinois counties. OSG serves as the court-appointed guardian of last resort — stepping in only when no family member, friend, or other suitable person is willing or able to serve. OSG does not choose its cases; every individual in its care has been placed there by a judge's order.



LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICE

27¢

on the dollar vs. private sector cost
for equivalent legal services

COST COMPARISON



LAS saves Illinois approximately \$7.8M annually

The Legal Advocacy Service provides legal advice and representation to adults — and, pursuant to specific court obligations, children — with disabilities to ensure due process and rights protections under the Illinois Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code (405 ILCS 5). LAS attorneys assist persons in mental health facilities, residential programs, community placements, and nursing homes.

10,333

CASES HANDLED

11,800

CLIENTS SERVED

879

HEARINGS & TRIALS

9,909

CASES IN WHICH LAS WAS
APPOINTED AS COUNSEL

778

ADVANCE DIRECTIVE REQUESTS

389

LEE-WESLEY CONSENT DECREE
REFERRALS

Note: The Lee-Wesley Consent Decree stems from a federal class-action lawsuit (Lee v. Wesley) that established a formal relationship between IGAC and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Under this agreement, the Legal Advocacy Service is called upon to provide legal representation for DCFS wards — youth in the care of the state — who are placed in mental health facilities or have developmental disabilities, ensuring their rights to appropriate treatment and discharge are upheld and that they are not confined in unnecessarily restrictive settings.

HUMAN RIGHTS AUTHORITY

The Human Rights Authority investigates allegations of rights violations committed by public and private entities serving children and adults with disabilities. Through its investigations, the Authority advocates for systemic changes that improve disability rights protections across Illinois. Comprised of nine regional panels with up to 81 members statewide, the Authority engages Illinois residents who serve voluntarily as panel members.

99%
OF RECOMMENDATIONS VOLUNTARILY ACCEPTED & IMPLEMENTED BY SERVICE PROVIDERS IN FY2025.

432
INTAKES & REFERRAL INQUIRIES

243
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS ISSUED

147
RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED

145
RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTED

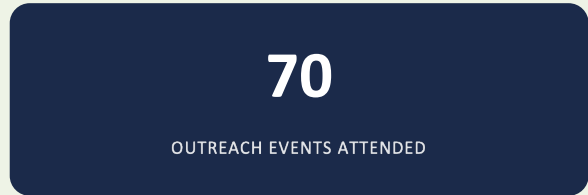
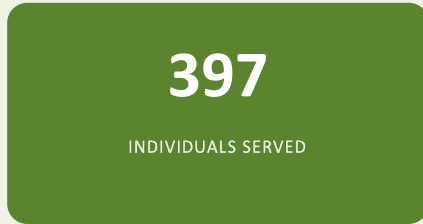
90,323
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BENEFITING FROM RECOMMENDATIONS

1,742
VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED BY HRA MEMBERS

\$18.47
AVERAGE COST PER PERSON IMPACTED

SPECIAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

A collaboration of the Human Rights Authority (HRA) and the Legal Advocacy Service (LAS), the Special Education Initiative helps families navigate special education through training, advocacy, and in limited cases legal support. Primary goals for this initiative include providing training and information to Illinois students, families, and community members about special education rights, and offering legal representation in, in limited cases, due process proceedings.



CROSS-DIVISIONAL PROJECTS

Cross-Divisional Projects encompass Commission-wide efforts across all programmatic functions. In Fiscal Year 2025, the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission (IGAC) continued investing in staff development, public outreach, and identifying individuals under guardianship who may be eligible for restoration of rights.

330

INTERNAL TRAININGS PROVIDED TO COMMISSION STAFF

956

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS

FISCAL SUMMARY — FY2025

\$15.2M
TOTAL AGENCY EXPENDITURES FY2025

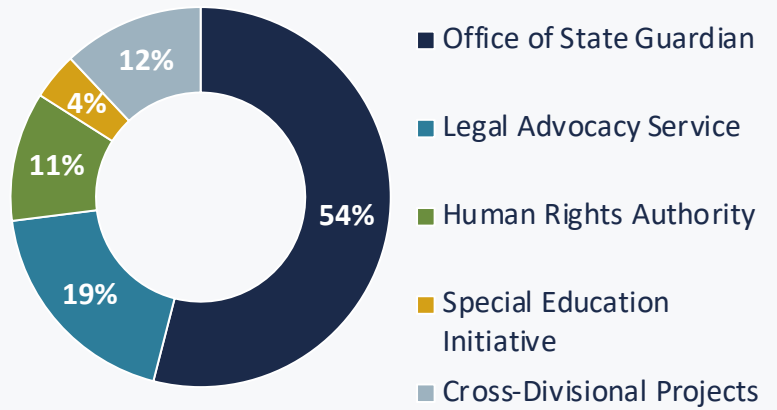
125
AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT (AS OF JUNE 30, 2025)

\$17.4M
TOTAL APPROPRIATION FY2025

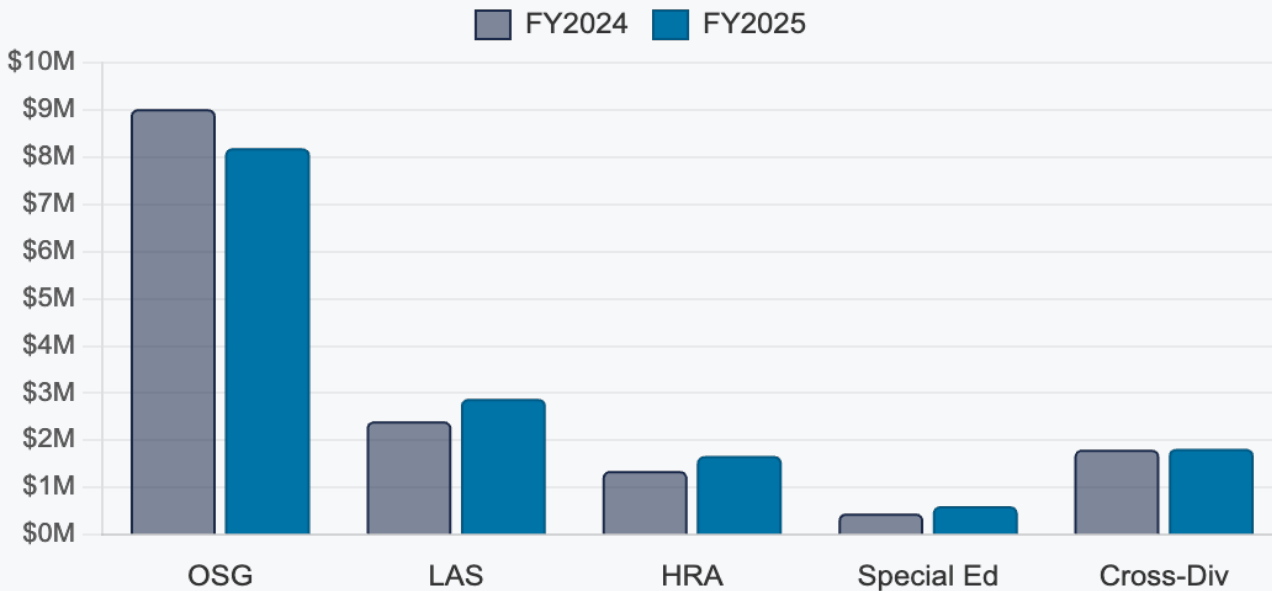
EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM

PROGRAM	FY2024	FY2025
Office of State Guardian	\$9,018	\$8,187.9
Legal Advocacy Service	\$2,405	\$2,880.9
Human Rights Authority	\$1,353	\$1,667.9
Special Education Initiative	\$451	\$606.5
Cross-Divisional Projects	\$1,803.6	\$1,819.6
AGENCY TOTAL	\$15,030.6	\$15,162.8

FY2025 BUDGET BY PROGRAM



FY2024 VS FY2025 — EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM



*All figures in thousands. Administrative staff prorated into programmatic lines.

HEADCOUNT

HEADCOUNT BY PROGRAM

PROGRAM	FY2024	FY2025
Office of State Guardian	87	77
Legal Advocacy Service	22	26
Human Rights Authority	13	13
Special Education Initiative	5	6
Cross-Divisional Projects	3	3
AGENCY TOTAL	130	125

Note: Administrative staff and expenses are prorated into programmatic headcount and expenditures. Figures reflect full-time equivalents (FTEs).

COMMISSIONERS

The Commission is governed by eleven unpaid, volunteer Commissioners appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for three-year terms. Each commissioner brings relevant expertise and interest in supporting persons with disabilities consistent and impactful to the mission of the agency.

Paula A. Basta, M. Div

Chairperson
Dir. of Strategic Planning and Program Dev.,
Illinois Assistive Technology Program

Ava George Stewart, Esq.

Vice Chairperson
Attorney

Garvin G. Ambrose, Esq.

Director of Legislative Affairs,
Cook County State's Attorney's Office

The Hon. William Q. Davis

Representative, 30th District,
Illinois House of Representatives

Donald J. Dew, MSW, ACSW

President/CEO, Habilitative Systems, Inc.

Kathryn E. Eisenhart, Esq.

Former Associate Professor Emerita,
University of Illinois Springfield

Mariel Hamer-Sinclair

Associate Director of Program and Policy,
Illinois Council on Developmental
Disabilities (ICDD)

Dean Cassandra L. Hill

Professor of Law, College of Law,
Northern Illinois University

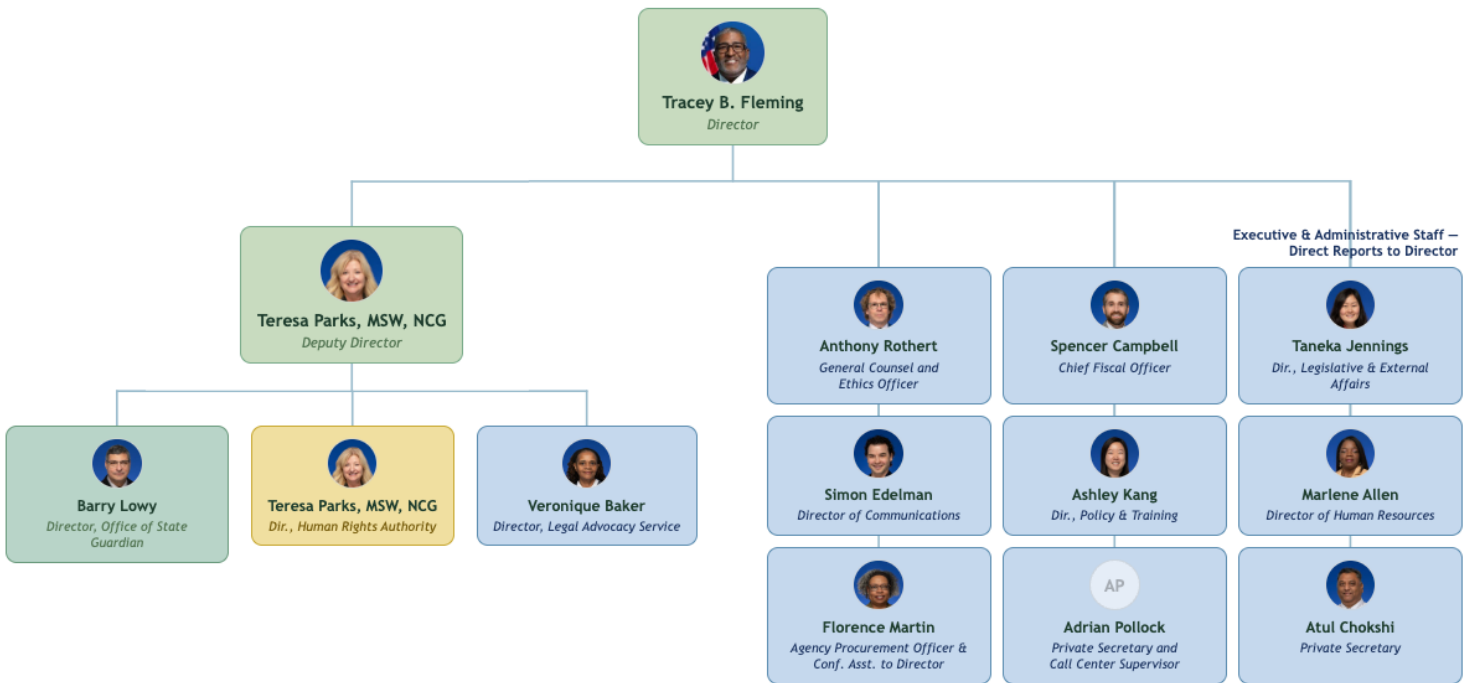
The Hon. Bob Morgan

Representative, 58th District,
Illinois House of Representatives

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Commission is led by a dedicated executive team providing statewide leadership on the agency’s mission. The Director and Deputy Director oversee three core program divisions and direct administrative staff.

Executive & Administrative Team



*Note: Org chart reflects current structure as of May 2026. Dr. Mary Milano served as Agency Director through the end of Fiscal Year 2025 (June 30, 2025).

REGIONAL OFFICES

IGAC maintains regional offices across Illinois to serve residents in every region of the state.

9
REGIONAL HRA PANELS

102
COUNTIES WHERE THE OFFICE OF STATE GUARDIAN IS AVAILABLE TO BE APPOINTED AS GUARDIAN

15
COUNTIES WHERE LAS IS APPOINTED IN LIEU OF PUBLIC DEFENDER

- OFFICE LOCATIONS
- Rockford
 - Des Plaines (North Suburban)
 - Chicago
 - Hines (West Suburban)
 - Peoria
 - Champaign (East Central)
 - Springfield
 - Edwardsville (Metro East)
 - Anna (Egyptian)

