



## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

### News for Immediate Release

Sept. 20, 2023

#### **Pa. Supreme Court Advisory Council Hosts First Guardianship Justice Summit**

**HARRISBURG** — Hosted by the Office of Elder Justice in the Courts (OEJC) and Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts, the first Pennsylvania Guardianship Justice Summit is being held on Sept. 20-22, 2023.

Featured speakers include Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Chief Justice Debra Todd, federal Administration for Community Living's (ACL) Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aging Edwin L. Walker, Pennsylvania Secretary of Aging Jason Kavulich, and Pennsylvania Senators Lisa Baker, Maria Collett and Art Haywood, along with several judges, attorneys and other elder justice experts.

"We are pleased to bring together an interdisciplinary group of speakers and stakeholders from across the Commonwealth to participate in the Summit," said Senior Judge Paula Francisco Ott, chair of the Education Committee for the Summit. "Each attendee was invited based on their professional involvement with guardianship and related topics as well as geographic diversity."

Summit topics include:

- Improving the fairness, effectiveness and assurance of due process in guardianship proceedings
- Advancing improvements in monitoring guardians
- Promoting alternatives to guardianship
- Increasing the development of collaborations between state and local agencies and organizations that work on issues affecting older Pennsylvanians.

Attendees will work within regional collaboration groups and will continue to work together to address the needs and challenges their regions face after the Summit concludes.

Portions of the Summit are being livestreamed with additional recorded sessions available at the [PA Courts](#) website after the Summit.

The Summit is funded through a grant awarded to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts by ACL.

The ACL's Elder Justice Innovation Grant program provides financial assistance to states working to assess and improve their handling of adult guardianship cases.

Pennsylvania is one of three states to receive funding through this three-year grant. The OEJC is overseeing the work of the grant, which runs from Sept. 1, 2022, through Aug. 31, 2025.

The Summit is one of several grant projects supporting three overarching goals:

- (1) Assuring due process for the alleged incapacitated person
- (2) Improving guardianship monitoring capabilities to prevent abuse and exploitation
- (3) Promoting alternatives to guardianship.

A second guardianship summit is being planned for 2025.

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**Editor's Note (livestreamed sessions):**

**Wed., Sept. 20**

- 1:30 p.m. – Keynote Speakers  
[https://youtube.com/live/\\_WUV6WQ9W38?feature=share](https://youtube.com/live/_WUV6WQ9W38?feature=share)
- 2:15 p.m. – What is Incapacity?  
<https://youtube.com/live/mR6-YQckzTM?feature=share>

**Thurs., Sept. 21**

- 9:30 -11 a.m. – Assuring Due Process in Guardianship  
<https://youtube.com/live/AuvLh6hE9ho?feature=share>
- 1:30-3 p.m. – Alternatives to Guardianship  
<https://youtube.com/live/rxVi2uTAWnU?feature=share>

**About the Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts:**

*The Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts was established in 2015 to advise the Office of Elder Justice in the Courts (OEJC) regarding the implementation of the Elder Law Task Force*

*Report and Recommendations which includes best practices, judicial rules and legislation to benefit older Pennsylvanians. The mission of the Council is to identify and address elder justice issues affecting older Pennsylvanians. Together, the Council and the OEJC work to identify areas of need and challenges faced by elders, and to improve the ability of Pennsylvania Courts to meet those needs.*

*About the Office of Elder Justice in the Courts:*

*The OEJC promotes best practices to address elder abuse and neglect, guardianship and access to justice in Pennsylvania Courts. The OEJC also educates judges, court staff, attorneys, guardians, the public and others about the warning signs of elder abuse, and how to respond to suspected abuse. In addition, the OEJC actively fosters collaboration with other elder justice entities and branches of government to enhance older Pennsylvanians' ability to fully participate in legal proceedings.*