

## TOP 10 FAQ'S – GUARDIAN AD LITEM FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM

### 1. What are the basic requirements to become qualified as a guardian ad litem for children?

- Be an active member in good standing of the Virginia State Bar.
- Complete the seven hour required course, “Representation of Children as a Guardian Ad Litem” offered by Virginia CLE, and submit the CLE certification of attendance form to the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia. *There are no substitutions for this course.*
- Have a nomination certificate signed by a juvenile court judge before whom you have appeared, or by a qualified guardian ad litem whom you have assisted. Submit the form to the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia.
- Send a letter to the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia requesting qualification, certifying your case experience, and including your social security number.

### 2. What constitutes the experience requirement?

Complete one of the following in the two-year period prior to seeking initial qualification as a guardian ad litem:

- Participate as an attorney, or as a third-year law student under Part 6, § IV, Para. 15, of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, in four cases in the juvenile and domestic relations district court involving children, excluding traffic cases; or
- Associate with a qualified GAL in two cases in the juvenile court involving children, excluding traffic cases.

### 3. What three things does the Supreme Court of Virginia need in order to complete my application?

- A **letter** requesting qualification, certifying your case experience as required by paragraph C of the *Qualification Standards to Govern the Appointment of Guardians Ad Litem for Children*, and including your social security number.
- If complying with the provision of participating in four cases in the juvenile and domestic relations district court involving children, excluding traffic cases, **a nomination certificate signed by a juvenile court judge.**
- If complying with the provision of associating with a qualified GAL on two cases involving children in the juvenile and domestic relations district court, **a nomination certificate signed by the qualified GAL who you assisted.**
- A **certification of attendance form** for the Virginia CLE course “Representation of Children as a Guardian Ad Litem.”

### 4. Where do I obtain the necessary qualification forms?

Forms are included in the notebook provided at the initial required course in the section directly behind the table of contents, and online at <http://www.courts.state.va.us/courtadmin/aoc/cip/programs/gal/children/home.html>, under the “Forms” section.

**5. For what period of time is my initial qualification valid?**

Initial qualification is valid for a period of two years.

**6. How do I maintain my qualification as a guardian ad litem for children?**

- Complete six hours of approved continuing education every two years on topics relating to the representation of children.
- File a certification of attendance form with the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia for each approved course.

**7. How will I know if a course has been approved for credit?**

A list of courses approved for GAL credit is available online at [http://www.courts.state.va.us/courtadmin/aoc/cip/programs/gal/children/gal\\_cont\\_ed\\_children.pdf](http://www.courts.state.va.us/courtadmin/aoc/cip/programs/gal/children/gal_cont_ed_children.pdf). If you are seeking information about a course not included on the list, please call 804-786-9543. If the course has not previously been submitted for credit approval you will be asked to submit a detailed agenda or summary of course contents to the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia for review.

**8. Can continuing education hours be carried over to the next qualification period?**

Yes, a maximum of six hours may be carried over from one two-year period to the next two-year period.

**9. May I take the initial course to become a GAL before I learn the results of my Bar Exam?**

Yes, but you may not complete your qualification as a GAL before you are licensed.

**10. How can I be reinstated if my name is removed from the list of qualified guardians ad litem?**

You may be removed from the list of qualified guardians ad litem if (i) you request to be removed, (ii) you fail to meet the biennial continuing education requirement, or (iii) your license to practice law in Virginia is suspended or revoked by the Virginia State Bar. You may again be included on the list of attorneys eligible for appointment as a guardian ad litem by submitting to the Office of the Executive Secretary:

1. **Within one year** of being removed from the list, certification of attendance indicating your completion of the required six (6) hours of continuing education.
2. **If more than one year passes** since removal from the list, certification of attendance indicating your completion of seven (7) hours of approved continuing education.
3. **If more than five years pass** since removal from the list, you must again complete the initial qualification process.