Florida Professional Guardianship Information: 2026

Report 26-05

October 2026

OPPAGA

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

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Florida Professional Guardianship Information: 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Guardianship is a legal process to protect and exercise the legal rights of individuals (known as wards) facing functional limitations that prevent them from being able to make their own decisions. Because adults placed under guardianship lose many of their basic civil rights—such as the ability to decide what medical care to receive, how to spend money, and where to live—guardianship is considered an option of last resort.

In Florida, a professional guardian is a guardian who has at any time rendered services to three or more wards. Professional guardians must be registered by the Office of Public and Professional Guardians, which oversees the registration and discipline of professional guardians and shares oversight responsibilities with clerks of court and judges.

REPORT SCOPE

Section 744.2112(5)(b), *Florida Statutes*, directs OPPAGA to analyze data compiled in the statewide database of guardian and guardianship case information established by the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation and the clerks of court. OPPAGA is to use data from the database to analyze trends in Florida in the use of guardianships and to conduct a comparative analysis of guardianship laws in other states. This is the third report in a series of four reports and includes analysis of database information as of July 1, 2026.

The 2022 Florida Legislature required a statewide guardianship database for judges and related staff and a public-facing searchable webpage with information about professional guardians. However, the guardianship database does not meet all statutory requirements and incomplete data limits its usefulness for judges, clerks, and the public. For example, many professional guardian cases cannot be linked to an individual professional guardian, limiting the ability to determine the number of wards a guardian serves (i.e., the guardian's caseload). OPPAGA was able to match only 57% of active professional guardianship cases to an individual guardian. Further, records demonstrating guardian compliance with statutory reporting requirements were missing for 45% of active professional guardianship cases. These required reports include initial and annual reports on the ward's medical, social, and financial condition.

Professional guardianship cases are increasing, with most concentrated in Southeast and Central Florida. Florida statutes and national standards encourage guardians to limit caseloads. OPPAGA analysis found that most professional guardians have 10 or fewer cases, but 31% of wards are represented by guardians with more than 40 cases. Some cases (5%) had multiple guardians assigned.

OPPAGA recommends that to fulfill statutory requirements for the Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System, the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation should work with the Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers Florida Comprehensive Case Information System staff, clerks, and the Office of Public and Professional Guardians to improve the completeness of the database and the public-facing webpage.

BACKGROUND

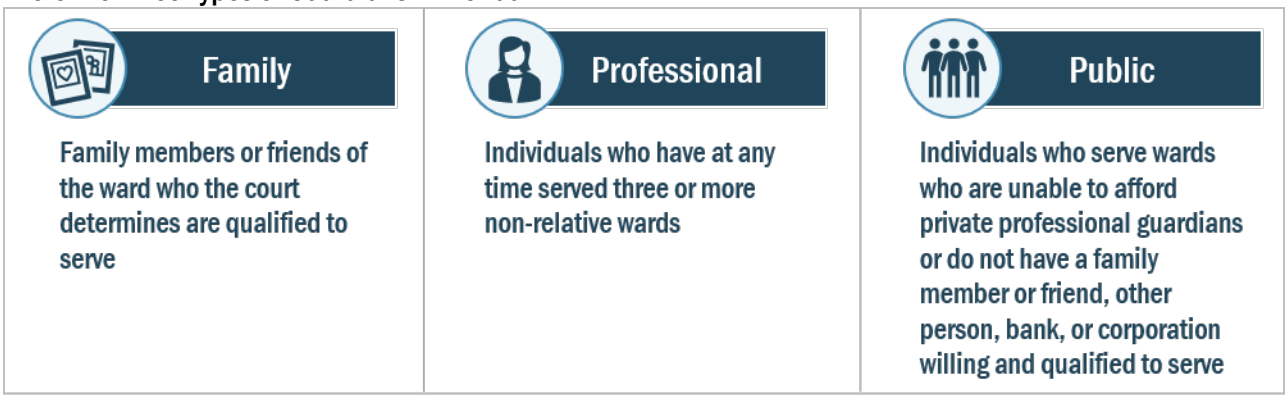
Guardianship is a legal process created to protect the rights of individuals determined by the courts to be incapacitated, at least to some degree. Individuals who may need guardianship include those with dementia, Alzheimer's disease, developmental disabilities, chronic illness, or any condition that limits the ability to make decisions. In Florida, any adult can file a petition with the court to determine if someone is incapacitated. If the court determines that someone is incapacitated, it will issue an order detailing the rights of the incapacitated person, who is now a ward, and the decision-making powers that will be held by the guardian. The court will appoint one or more people to serve as guardians. Because adults placed under guardianship lose many basic civil rights—such as the ability to decide what medical treatment to receive, how to spend money, and where to live—guardianship is considered an option of last resort.

Guardians can only exercise the powers granted by the court, and guardianships may be limited or plenary.[1] Typical guardian activities include health care monitoring and decision-making; paying living expenses for the ward out of the ward's assets; investing the ward's assets; and managing the ward's property interests. Some tasks performed by guardians, such as entering into contracts, selling the ward's house, or borrowing money, require prior court approval.

After a guardian is appointed, state courts monitor the performance of the guardian's duties. Florida law imposes multiple duties on guardians, including filing an initial report within 60 days after appointment and filing an annual report with the court.[2,3] Court monitoring includes reviewing statutorily required reports submitted by guardians, such as expenditure records and accountings of the ward's assets. Although most guardians perform their duties appropriately, there have been instances of unauthorized fees and filing reports late. To help prevent such abuses, many states have taken steps to improve the guardianship process.

Florida has three types of guardians: family, professional, and public. (See Exhibit 1.)

Exhibit 1
There Are Three Types of Guardians in Florida



Source: Office of Public and Professional Guardians.

[1] A limited guardianship is appropriate if the court finds that the ward lacks the capacity to do some but not all of the tasks necessary to care for themselves or their property or after the person has voluntarily petitioned for appointment of a limited guardian. A plenary guardian is a person appointed by the court to exercise all delegable legal rights and powers of the ward after the court has found that the ward lacks the capacity to perform all of the tasks necessary to care for themselves or their property.

[2] For a detailed description of the guardianship process, including requirements of guardians and guardianship oversight, see *Florida Professional Guardianship Information 2024*, OPPAGA Report 24-07, October 2024.

[3] The initial and annual reports consist of initial and annual plans that contain information about the needs of the ward, such as medical care and appropriate housing, and the guardian's plan to meet those needs.

The Office of Public and Professional Guardians shares oversight responsibilities with clerks of court and judges

The office oversees professional guardian registration and discipline

The Office of Public and Professional Guardians (OPPG), housed within the Department of Elder Affairs, oversees all public guardians who serve indigent wards. In consultation with the chief judge and other stakeholders within each judicial circuit, OPPG appoints and contracts with 15 Offices of Public Guardians to serve all 67 counties. These offices employ public guardians who are appointed for those unable to afford professional guardians or when there is no family member or friend, other person, bank, or corporation willing and qualified to serve as guardian.

In 2016, the Legislature expanded OPPG oversight to encompass all non-family guardians, both professional and public.[4] Non-family guardians must be registered by OPPG and meet multiple training and background check requirements, including completing a 40-hour initial training course; passing a state exam; and completing 30 hours of continuing education every two years. Professional guardians must provide a credit report at initial application and every two years; complete a Level II background screening initially and every five years; complete a Level I background screening every two years after registration; and maintain a blanket fiduciary bond of at least $50,000. Multiple guardians may work for and be registered under the same bondholder guardian. Professional guardians may have professional staff in their offices who are not registered guardians but who provide services to wards.

OPPG maintains a statewide toll-free hotline to receive complaints made against registered professional guardians.[5] Complaints may also be submitted by email or letter.[6] From 2021 through 2025, the number of complaints filed with OPPG ranged from 79 in 2022 to 208 in 2021. The number of filed complaints that OPPG deemed legally sufficient also varied, ranging from 54 in 2022 to 99 in 2025; legally sufficient complaints contain allegations that a violation of a standard of practice by a professional guardian has occurred. (See Exhibit 2.)

Exhibit 2
The Number of Complaints and Legally Sufficient Complaints Filed With the Office of Public and Professional Guardians Has Fluctuated Since 2021

Year	Complaints Filed	Legally Sufficient Complaints
2021	208	95
2022	79	54
2023	115	92
2024	136	85
2025	178	99
2026[1]	61	28

[1] Data for 2026 is as of June 30, 2026. Some complaints may have had a legally sufficient determination after that date.

Source: Office of Public and Professional Guardians.

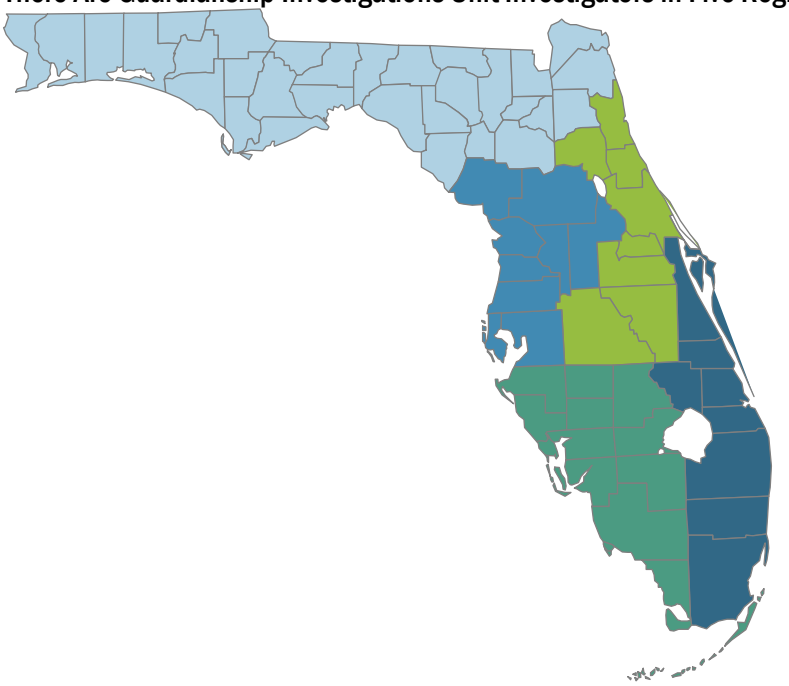
OPPG must review complaints against professional guardians and act on complaints substantiated by investigators within specified timeframes. For example, OPPG must notify the complainant no later than 10 business days after it determines that a complaint is not legally sufficient and must complete and provide initial investigative findings and recommendations to the professional guardian and the

[4] Chapter 58M-2, *F.A.C.*, covers topics such as professional guardian registration and standards of practice.
[5] The OPPG hotline number is 1-855-305-3030.
[6] Complaints to OPPG may be submitted via email at OPPGcomplaints@elderaffairs.org.

complainant within 45 days after the receipt of a complaint. A variety of acts by guardians constitute grounds for disciplinary action by OPPG.[7]

Once a complaint is deemed legally sufficient, OPPG initiates an investigation. Since 2024, professional guardianship investigations are conducted by the Guardianship Investigations Unit within OPPG's inspector general's office. The unit is staffed by the inspector general, a guardianship manager, and investigators in five regions of the state. (See Exhibit 3.)

Exhibit 3
There Are Guardianship Investigations Unit Investigators in Five Regions of the State



Source: Office of Public and Professional Guardians.

Within 10 business days after completing an investigation, OPPG is required to provide the complainant and the professional guardian a written statement specifying any finding of a violation of a standard of practice by the professional guardian and any actions taken or specifying that no such violation was found. The office may enter an order imposing any one or more of seven penalties when it finds a professional guardian committed an act listed in s. 744.20041, *Florida Statutes*. These penalties include the following.

1. Refusal to register an applicant as a professional guardian
2. Suspension or permanent revocation of a professional guardian's registration
3. Issuance of a reprimand or letter of concern
4. Requirement that the professional guardian undergo treatment, attend continuing education courses, submit to reexamination, or satisfy any terms that are reasonably tailored to the violations found

[7] Such acts include making misleading, deceptive, or fraudulent representations in or related to the practice of the guardianship; violating any rule governing guardians or guardianships adopted by OPPG; being convicted or found guilty of, or entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, a crime in any jurisdiction which relates to the practice of or the ability to practice as a professional guardian; having a registration, a license, or the authority to practice a regulated profession revoked, suspended, or otherwise acted against; and knowingly filing a false report or complaint with OPPG against another guardian.

5. Requirement that the professional guardian pay restitution of any funds obtained, disbursed, or obtained through a violation of any statute, rule, or other legal authority to a ward or the ward's estate, if applicable
6. Requirement that the professional guardian pay a fine, not to exceed $500 per violation
7. Requirement that the professional guardian undergo remedial education

OPPAGA identified 11 active guardians with a disciplinary history and selected three examples to highlight types guardian misconduct and OPPG's responses to such misconduct. (See Exhibit 4.)

Exhibit 4
The Office of Public and Professional Guardians Disciplined Guardians for Misconduct That Included Unauthorized Fees and Filing Reports Late

Guardian A

Services to the ward were provided by a case manager who was not formally identified as an employee or listed as having fiduciary responsibility. Guardian A billed the ward for $121,726.44 in services without authorization from the court. Neither Guardian A nor the case manager visited the ward for several months at a time. Guardian A also failed to file required reports on time. Guardian A was ordered to ***complete several remedial education courses****.*

Guardian B

Guardian B failed to file a required plan on time. Guardian B also failed to work with service providers to determine the ward's eligibility for Medicaid and Social Security. Guardian B was ***reprimanded****,* ***ordered to complete remedial education, and ordered to pay restitution****.*

Guardian C

Guardian C failed to file a required plan on time. In addition, Guardian C authorized a funeral home to make arrangements for cremation after the ward died but failed to pay the funeral home's fees, resulting in the ward's remains being kept at the funeral home for several weeks. Guardian C was ordered to ***complete several remedial education courses and was subjected to additional case monitoring by OPPG****.*

Source: Office of Public and Professional Guardians.

Clerks of court and judges monitor guardianship cases for compliance

The court retains jurisdiction over all guardianships, with circuit judges presiding over guardianship cases and ordering inventories of wards' personal property. Clerks of court serve as the custodians of guardianship files and routinely review statutorily required guardianship reports. Clerks may also audit guardianship records for compliance and report the findings to the court. Judges review the appropriateness and extent of guardianships annually.

The Legislature required a statewide guardianship database for judges and a public-facing searchable webpage with information about professional guardians

In 2022, the Legislature enacted Ch. 2022-218, *Laws of Florida*, to enhance court oversight of guardianship cases and increase public access to guardianship information. Specifically, the law directed the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC) to create an access-restricted

database and a public-facing webpage, both containing information about guardians and their wards. The Legislature also required the Office of Public and Professional Guardians to publish on its website a profile of each registered professional guardian including disciplinary information.

Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System. State law directed the CCOC and the clerks of court to establish a statewide database of guardian and guardianship information, known as the Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System (FLGDT), with two components—a statewide access-restricted database and a public-facing webpage.

Statewide database: The database of guardian and guardianship case information must include, at a minimum, the following information.

- Registration status of each professional guardian
- Substantiated disciplinary history of each professional guardian
- Status of each guardian's compliance with the qualifications for guardianship
- Status of statutorily required reports and submissions

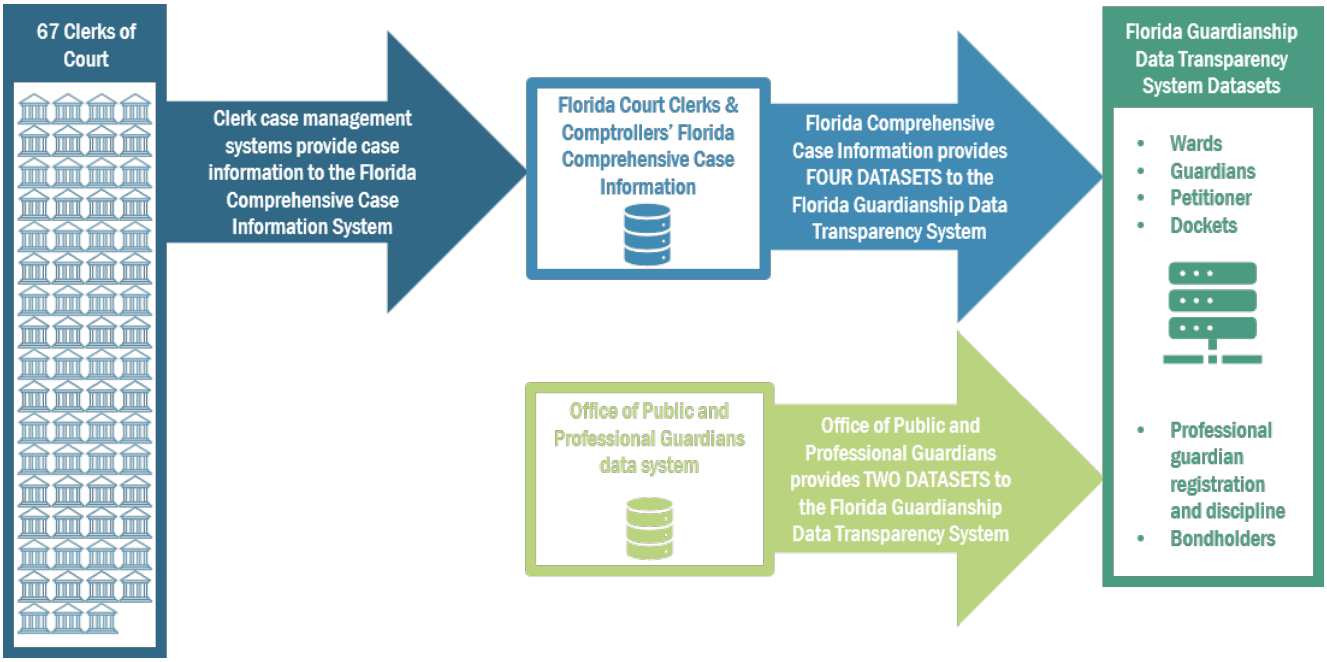
The database is only accessible to members of the judiciary and their direct staff and court personnel and clerks of court personnel authorized by a judge to assist with guardianship matters. At a minimum, FLGDT is required to be searchable by petitioner name, ward, guardian, legal counsel for all parties, ward demographic information, guardian office location, name of the judge and circuit, and number of wards served by each guardian by ward county of residence.

CCOC entered into a contract with Cloud Navigator, Inc., in January 2023 to create the database. The contract acknowledges the lack of a central system or location for guardianship information and identifies the data sources as the Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers' (FCCC) Florida Comprehensive Case Information System (CCIS), OPPG, and other sources including county-level case management systems that clerks maintain.[8,9] Statewide court case information is accessible through CCIS, which uses the local clerk case management systems as the data source. (See Exhibit 5.) The final product is not one database but six different integrated datasets that must be matched with one another to provide information through the FLGDT.

[8] CCIS is a secure, single point of search for court case information statewide. County clerks' offices report case information through individual case management systems, which transfer data to CCIS.

[9] Courts use both the term case management system and case maintenance system. For consistency in this report, OPPAGA uses the term case management system.

Exhibit 5
The Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System Database Consists of Six Datasets From the Clerks of Court and the Office of Public and Professional Guardians



Source: Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation.

Webpage: The Legislature also required CCOC to upload certain professional guardianship information from the database to a public-facing searchable webpage. Webpage information is to be limited to professional guardian names and current data regarding the number of wards served by each guardian; the counties of residence of such wards; the number of wards residing in each county; and whether the wards are under limited or plenary guardianships.

The Legislature initially appropriated $2.4 million from the General Revenue Fund to the Justice Administrative Commission for distribution to the CCOC in Fiscal Year 2022-23 to implement the FLGDT. The Legislature granted CCOC additional appropriations of $400,000 in both Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27.

Registered Professional Guardian Profiles. Section 744.2001, *Florida Statutes*, requires OPPG to publish on its website a profile of each registered professional guardian. At a minimum, the profiles must include guardian name and business address; whether the guardian meets education and bonding requirements; number and type of substantiated complaints against the guardian; and any disciplinary actions taken by the Department of Elder Affairs against the guardian.

FINDINGS

The guardianship database does not meet all statutory requirements; incomplete data limits its usefulness for judges, clerks, and the public

Many professional guardian cases cannot be linked to an individual professional guardian, limiting the ability to determine guardian caseloads

State law requires that the guardianship database include the number of wards served by each registered guardian (i.e., the guardian's caseload). However, many guardianship cases cannot be linked to an individual guardian. The database is populated with both Office of Public and Professional Guardians and Florida Comprehensive Case Information System data. CCIS data relies on local clerk case management systems, which inconsistently report guardianship information. Clerks record the bondholder's name in the guardian name field if the bondholder's name appears in the court's order. Because a bondholder may employ more than one professional guardian under the same bond, the bondholder's name alone does not clearly identify the specific guardian on the case. Consequently, clerks' and judges' ability to use the database to determine professional guardian caseloads is limited, likely resulting in undercounts of caseloads in the database. To the extent that a large caseload may limit a guardian's ability to effectively manage their wards, accurate caseload information may be important to judges when deciding whether to appoint a guardian to additional cases.

To link individual professional guardians to active cases, OPPAGA analyzed Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System data provided by the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation. The analysis resulted in a match of only 57% of active professional guardianship cases to an individual guardian. In other words, for 43% of guardianship cases in the FLGDT database, the professional guardian information is either missing or only lists the bondholder's name, which may include multiple guardians on the same bond.[10] Roughly two-thirds of cases not matched to a specific guardian were associated with bonds held by public guardian offices. (See Appendix A for more information about OPPAGA's data matching procedure.)

A unique identifier, such as a guardian ID number, could increase the number of cases in the database that are matched to a specific guardian. CCOC reported that it plans to use OPPG's guardian registration number as the unique identifier, but there are implementation challenges because local clerk case management systems do not all have the capability of including a unique identifier for each guardian.[11] Also, a professional guardian may have multiple OPPG guardian registration numbers throughout their career. As a result, additional data cleanup would be necessary to implement OPPG's registration numbers as unique identifiers.

[10] OPPAGA analysis yielded a slightly higher case count compared to the count provided in the FLGDT database. Cloud Navigator reported that it refreshes the database daily with updated information from CCIS but does not regularly update its method for matching guardians to cases.
[11] OPPG assigns each professional guardian a unique number at the time of registration.

The database also does not contain required information on the status of guardians' mandatory reporting

Statute requires guardians to regularly submit reports and documents to plan and track the ward's medical, social, and financial condition. These required reports include an initial report that must be filed within 60 days after the guardianship begins and an annual guardianship report. Statute also requires the database to include the status of this mandatory reporting by guardians.

However, information related to whether and when required reports have been filed is missing from many active professional guardianship cases in the database. As of July 2026, 45% (3,597) of 7,937 active professional guardianship cases had no records related to guardian compliance with required reporting. The absence of compliance status information in the database has increased since OPPAGA's 2025 review, where 35% (2,255) of 6,478 active professional guardianship cases did not include compliance status information.

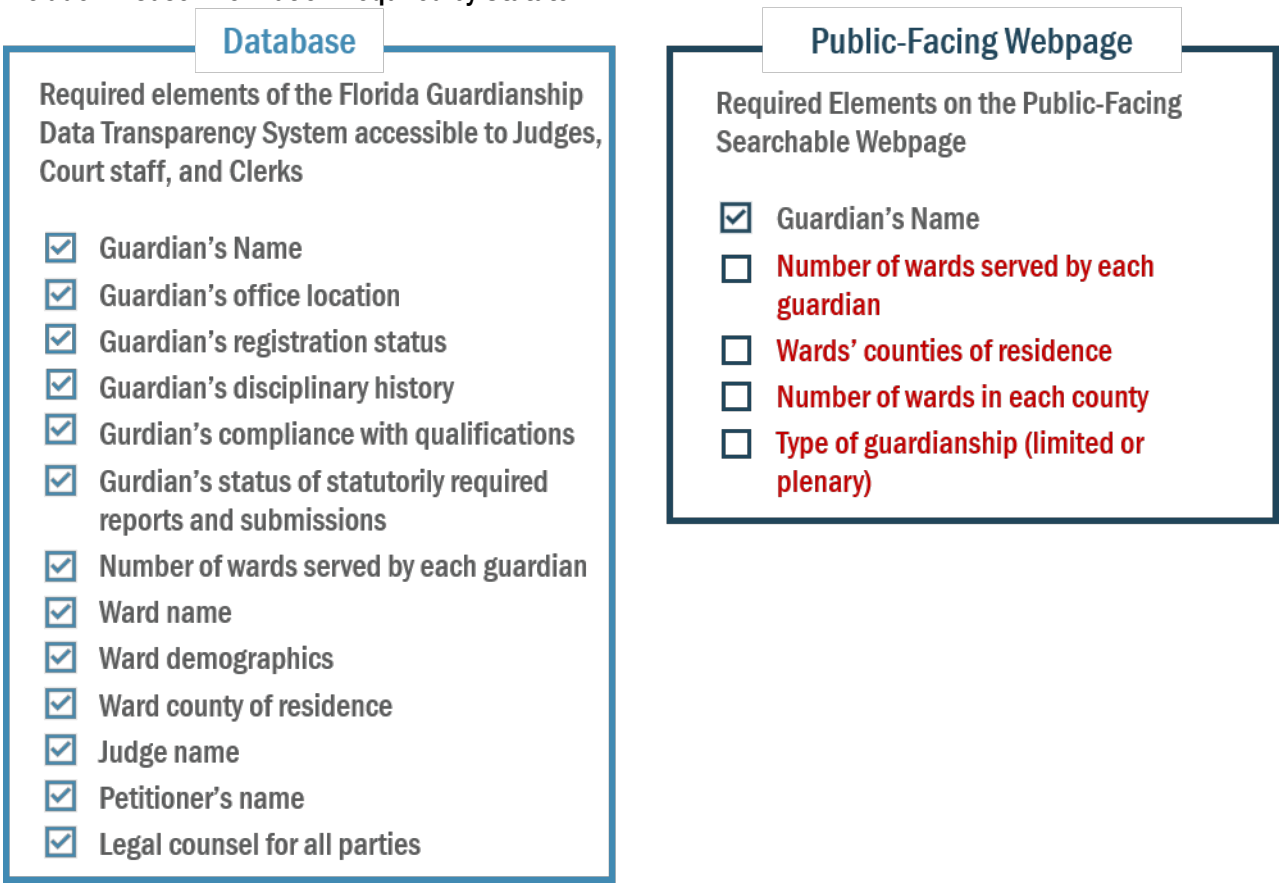
Further, the number of counties lacking information related to guardian compliance with required reporting has also increased. In 2025, OPPAGA identified 21 counties with no reporting information for any cases; this number increased to 23 in 2026.[12] The absence of records related to the status of required guardian reporting limits the ability of judges to determine from the database whether a guardian is fulfilling mandatory duties and ensuring the wellbeing of wards.

The public-facing searchable webpage does not include statutorily required information that would provide the public with information about guardian caseloads

Section 744.2112(3), *Florida Statutes*, states that the public-facing searchable webpage shall include the names of professional guardians and current data regarding the number of wards served by each guardian, the counties of residence of such wards and number of wards residing in each county, and whether the wards are under limited or plenary guardianships. However, the public-facing searchable webpage currently includes only a list of guardian and bondholder company names. (See Exhibit 6.) As a result, the public cannot use this webpage to gather information about a guardian, such as how many wards they serve (i.e., caseload), ward location, and type of guardianship wards are under. This information may allow concerned parties—such as wards, potential wards, and their family and friends—to find information about individual professional guardians and make more informed decisions about guardianships.

[12] This includes three counties, Hamilton, Okaloosa, and Okeechobee, that have no data in the database.

Exhibit 6
As of September 2026, the Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System's Public-Facing Webpage Did Not Include All Case Information Required by Statute



Note: Fields exist for all required elements in the database; however, data may be incomplete. Items in red are currently not available on the public-facing webpage (https://flgdt.org/).

Source: Section 744.2112, *F.S.,* Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation, and Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System database and webpage.

While most professional guardians serve 10 or fewer wards, OPPAGA analysis shows that several serve more than 40

National Guardianship Association standards recommend that guardians limit caseloads, with Florida statutes providing guidance on professional guardian visitation activities and public guardian caseload limits

Standards set by the National Guardianship Association recommend guardians limit caseloads to ensure that each ward receives proper care. Specifically, the association recommends that guardians limit caseloads to a size that allows them to accurately and adequately support and protect the person, including a minimum of one visit per month with each person and regular contact with all service providers. State law also provides guidance on visitation. Section 744.361(14), *Florida Statutes*, requires a professional guardian to ensure that each ward is visited by the guardian or one of the

guardian's professional staff at least once each calendar quarter.[13,14] During the personal visit, the guardian or the guardian's professional staff person shall assess the

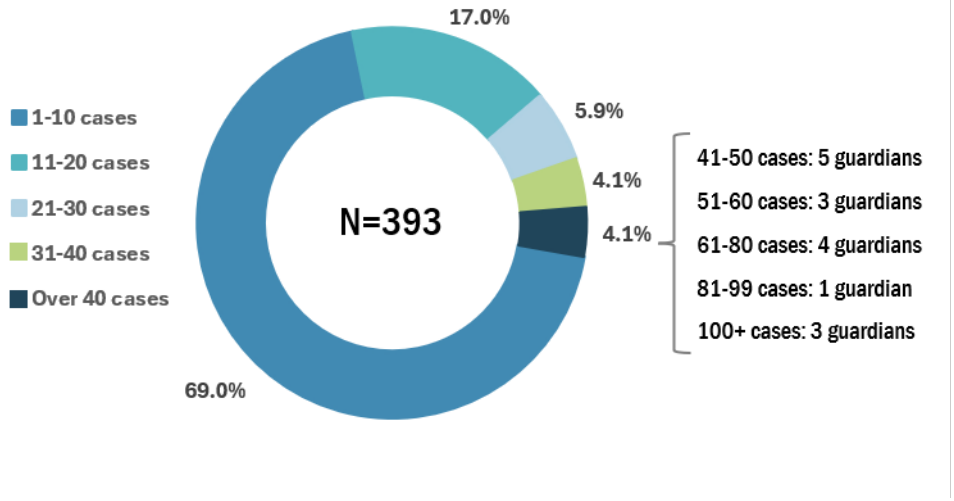
- ward's physical appearance and condition;
- appropriateness of the ward's current living situation;
- need for any additional services continuation of existing services, taking into consideration all aspects of social, psychological, educational, direct service, health, and personal care needs; and
- nature and extent of visitation and communication with the ward's family and friends.

In addition, s. 744.2103(7), *Florida Statutes,* specifies that the baseline ratio for OPPG's professional staff to wards shall be 1 professional to 40 wards. OPPG may increase or decrease this ratio, but only after consultation with the local public guardian and the chief judge of the circuit court.

OPPAGA analysis shows that most professional guardians have 10 or fewer cases, but almost one-third of wards are represented by guardians with more than 40 cases

OPPAGA analysis shows that as of July 2026, most professional guardians in Florida had between 1 and 10 active cases. (See Exhibit 7.) However, over 8% of professional guardians had over 30 cases. Using a subset of data that matched cases to individual professional guardians, OPPAGA found that caseloads ranged from 1 to 340, with 69% of guardians matched to active guardianship cases having 1 to 10 cases, 17% having 11 to 20 cases, 5.9% having 21 to 30 cases, 4.1% having 31 to 40 cases, and 4.1% having over 40 cases. As a result, 31% of wards are served by 4% of professional guardians.

Exhibit 7
As of July 2026, Most Professional Guardians Had Between 1 and 10 Active Cases



Note: Some cases (5%) had multiple guardians assigned.

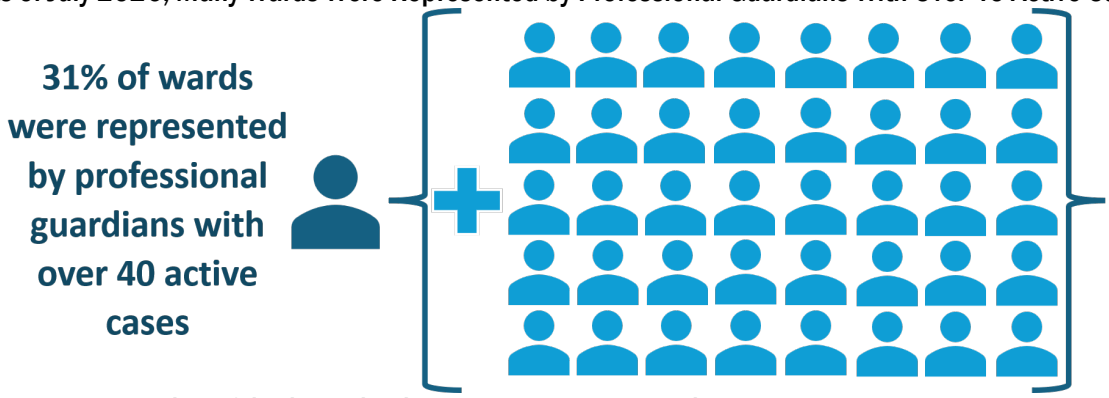
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System data.

The number of matched professional guardians with more than 40 active cases increased from 13 guardians from July 2025 to July 2026. Of these 16 professional guardians, 50% (8) had over 60 cases. As of July 2026, 31% of wards were represented by professional guardians with more than 40 active

[13] Section 744.361(14), *F.S.,* does not apply to professional guardians who are only guardians of the property and not the person.
[14] Public guardians are also required to visit all wards once each calendar quarter.

guardianship cases. (See Exhibit 8.) This percentage increased from 29% of wards being served by guardians with more than 40 active cases in Fiscal Year 2024-25.

Exhibit 8
As of July 2026, Many Wards Were Represented by Professional Guardians With Over 40 Active Cases



Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System data.

In addition, of the eight guardians with caseloads that exceeded 50 wards in July 2025, seven increased their caseloads by July 2026. These seven guardians had caseloads ranging from 61 to 340 wards. (See Exhibit 9.)

Exhibit 9
From July 2025 to July 2026, Guardians With High Caseloads Continued to Add Active Cases

Guardian	July 2025 Caseload	July 2026 Caseload	Net Change
Professional Guardian #1	275	340	65
Public Guardian #2	113	196	83
Public Guardian #3	158	190	32
Professional Guardian #4	78	88	10
Professional Guardian #5	65	80	15
Professional Guardian #6	70	67	-3
Professional Guardian #7	57	62	5
Professional Guardian #8	53	61	8

Note: The guardianship database does not include information regarding numbers of professional guardians' staff; thus, caseload data should be interpreted cautiously. Some cases (5%) had multiple guardians assigned.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System data.

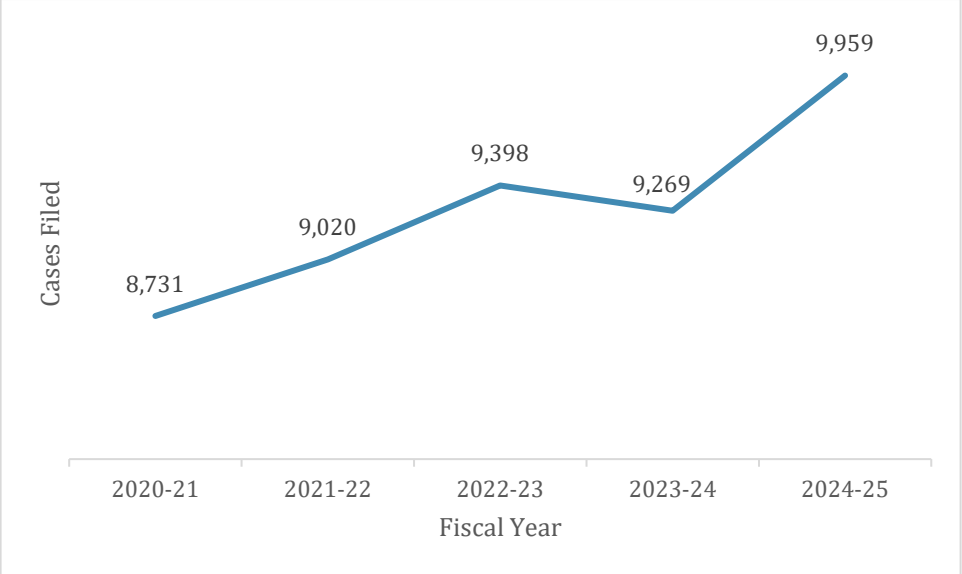
Some caution should be used when interpreting this caseload data. As discussed above, the prevalence of cases that cannot be matched to an individual professional guardian likely results in undercounts of caseloads for some guardians. Having a high caseload does not necessarily mean that wards are not receiving an appropriate amount of supervision from their guardian. For example, according to the most recent available information, the two public guardians in Exhibit 9 had 22 and 12 employees, respectively. Professional guardians with high numbers of cases may also employ professional staff to conduct quarterly visits to wards. However, the database does not include information regarding numbers of guardians' professional staff.

Guardianship case filings are increasing; most professional guardianship cases are concentrated in Southeast and Central Florida

Guardianship case filings and active professional guardianship cases are increasing

New guardianship filings in Florida continue to increase, with 9,959 guardianship cases filed in circuit courts throughout the state in Fiscal Year 2024-25. (See Exhibit 10.) This represents a 7.4% increase from Fiscal Year 2023-24, when 9,269 guardianship cases were filed. Filings include guardianship petitions for both adults and minors. Data also shows that the number of active guardianship cases is increasing. Using information that CCOC exported from the database on July 1, 2026, OPPAGA identified 7,937 active professional guardianship cases compared to 6,478 as of July 1, 2025.

Exhibit 10
Overall, Professional and Family Guardianship Filings in Florida Increased From Fiscal Year 2020-21 Through Fiscal Year 2024-25



Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida Office of the State Courts Administrator data.

Historically, local clerk case management systems did not include information to differentiate between guardianship case type (professional or family) or consistently denote if a case was active. To track this information, clerk staff began manually reviewing cases and creating case activity codes to determine which cases are active. When clerk staff enter information from the court order appointing the guardian in the local clerk case management system, they use a specific active party name/type code. Doing so identifies cases that have a professional guardian associated as a party to the case. These cases are then reported to FLGDT as professional guardian cases. Once the guardianship case has concluded and the guardian is discharged—due to the ward reaching the age of majority, being restored to full capacity, or dying—clerk staff update the professional guardian's party name/type to a specific inactive code. This removes the professional guardian's case from FLGDT, allowing for a count of only active professional guardianship cases in the database.

Most professional guardianship cases continue to be concentrated in populous Southeast and Central Florida counties

As of July 2026, Miami-Dade County had the highest number of active professional guardianship cases (1,081), followed by Pinellas (857) and Orange (739) counties. (See Exhibit 11.) These counties also had the highest number of cases as of July 2025: Miami-Dade (916), Pinellas (707), and Orange (692).

Exhibit 11
As of July 2026, Miami-Dade County Had the Highest Number of Active Professional Guardianship Cases

County	Number of Cases
Miami-Dade	1,081
Pinellas	857
Orange	739
Hillsborough	458
Sarasota	409
Lee	402
Duval	383
Polk	326
Palm Beach	324
Broward	228

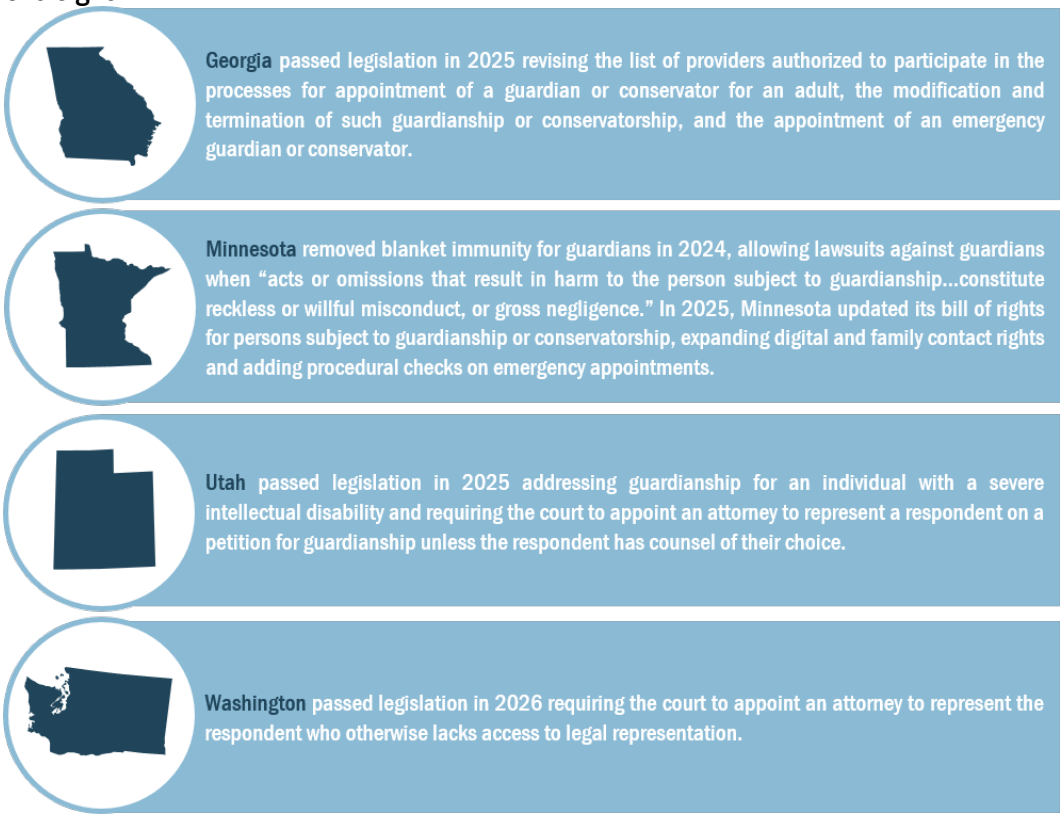
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System data.

Some states recently passed measures to enhance guardianship oversight

OPPAGA identified four states that passed legislation to improve guardianship oversight from 2024 through 2026. Those states are Georgia, Minnesota, Utah, and Washington. (See Exhibit 12.)

Exhibit 12

Since 2024, Some Other States Have Implemented Legislation to Improve Ward Protections and Guardian Oversight



Source: OPPAGA analysis of other states' laws.

Since 2024, two states have adopted guardianship model legislation. The Uniform Law Commission is a non-profit organization that develops legislation intended to improve the clarity and consistency of state guardianship laws. It has published two uniform acts related to guardianship: the Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act (UAGPPJA) and the Uniform Guardianship, Conservatorship, and Other Protective Arrangements Act (UGCOPAA).

The primary goals of UAGPPJA are to provide a priority system for resolving multi-state jurisdictional conflicts; provide a simplified transfer process for moving an active guardianship from an originating state to a new state of residence; and permit a guardian or conservator to register out-of-state guardianship orders with a local court to exercise authority across state lines. The state that most recently implemented the UAGPPJA is Kansas, which adopted the act in 2025.

The UGCOPAA has multiple aims, such as requiring that individuals subject to guardianship or conservatorship be given meaningful notice of their rights and how to assert those rights, ensuring that the least restrictive means are used to protect an individual alleged to need a guardianship, and offering model forms to facilitate petitioners seeking limited appointments rather than full appointments. Nine states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have adopted UGCOPAA, a substantially similar version, or its predecessor—the 1997 Uniform Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Act.[15] Most recently, Kansas and Idaho adopted UGCOPAA in 2025 and 2026, respectively.

[15] The nine states are Alabama, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Washington.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OPPAGA recommends that to fulfill statutory requirements for the Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System, the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation should work with the Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers Florida Comprehensive Case Information System staff, clerks, and the Office of Public and Professional Guardians to improve the completeness of the database and the public-facing webpage.

Assign unique identifiers to professional guardians. Without a unique identifier, active cases and professional guardians cannot be reliably linked, and accurate guardian caseloads cannot be reported. Only 57% of cases in the database could be matched to a guardian. A professional guardian's caseload is information courts may use to monitor a guardian's performance on current cases as well as to determine appointment to additional cases. Linking individual professional guardians to a ward's case even when a bondholder is listed could be accomplished by including a data element that records unique identifying information for professional guardians. This would require all 67 clerks to create a new data field and enter the guardian's unique identifier in their case management systems and FCCC to create a new field for the information in the statewide CCIS database. CCOC should collaborate with clerks to add a field for unique guardian identifiers in each local clerk case management system.

Improve completeness of data on required reporting in FLGDT. Forty-five percent of cases contain no information on a guardian's compliance with statutorily required reporting. This restricts the ability of judges and clerks to use the database to evaluate guardian caseloads and performance. County clerks should continue to add the status of required reporting to their local case management systems to improve the completeness of this data.

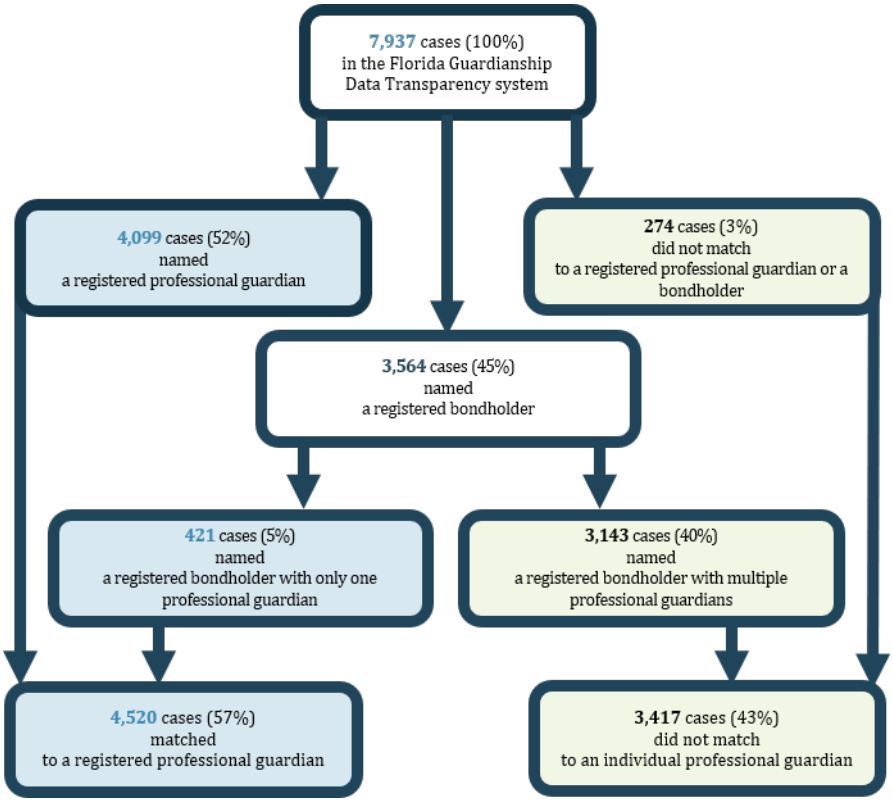
Add statutorily required data to the public-facing webpage. Despite Florida statutes requiring several pieces of information related to professional guardians, the public-facing webpage currently only includes guardian names. Consequently, the public cannot search for and obtain information about professional guardians related to the number of wards served by each guardian; the counties of residence of such wards; the number of wards residing in each county; and whether the wards are under limited or plenary guardianships. Adding this data to the public-facing webpage will allow concerned parties—including wards, potential wards, and their family and friends—to discover key information about individual professional guardians and allow Floridians to make more informed decisions about guardianships.

APPENDIX A

OPPAGA analyzed Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System (FLGDT) data provided by the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation. OPPAGA was able to identify the professional guardians for some cases by matching the names on case records to registered guardians in FLGDT data. OPPAGA began the match by comparing guardian first and last name from active professional guardianship case records from the Florida Comprehensive Case Information System to Office of Public and Professional Guardians (OPPG) records of registered professional guardians and bondholders. Of the 7,937 matched professional guardianship case records, 52% matched the guardian's name to an OPPG registered professional guardian and 45% matched to an OPPG registered bondholder; 3% of cases did not match to any registered guardian or bondholder.

Of the records that could not be matched to a professional guardian by first and last name, OPPAGA matched guardians to case records by identifying cases matched to a bondholder with only one guardian employee. This resulted in 421 additional case matches. In total, OPPAGA matched 393 individual professional guardians with 4,520 distinct guardianship cases across 61 counties. This subset of cases represents 57% of all active professional guardianship cases. (See Exhibit A-1.)

Exhibit A-1
OPPAGA Was Able to Match 57% of Cases in the Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System to a Registered Professional Guardian



Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida Guardianship Data Transparency System data.

OPPAGA

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

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