

NOTICE TO ALL PARTIES FILING FOR CUSTODY, PARENTING OR COMPANIONSHIP TIME

- (1) A **Guardian ad Litem** may be appointed to your case to assist the Court in determining what is in the child's best interest by investigating and making recommendations for **Legal Custody, Shared Parenting or Companionship Time**.
- (2) Parties are required to pay for the services of the **Guardian ad Litem** unless indigency is proven. If you believe you cannot afford the fees, you must file an "**Affidavit of Indigency**" and the affidavit shall be supported by documentation of household income, tax returns and/or pay stubs. A hearing may be held by the Court at the request of any Party or the Court to determine indigency and the accuracy of the financial records.
- (3) Parties must post a bond at the Juvenile Court Clerk's Office or directly with the **Guardian ad Litem**. Typically, the bond amount is between \$250-\$500 for each party. The bond shall be posted within fourteen (14) days of the Court's Order for the Guardian ad Litem to begin the investigation.

Guardian ad Litem fees are billed hourly and a Party may be required to make monthly payments to the Guardian ad Litem.
- (4) Failure to post a bond or make payment arrangements for the services of the **Guardian ad Litem** may result in a dismissal of the case, or judicial sanctions such as Contempt of Court, which may include fines and/or a jail sentence.
- (5) The **Guardian ad Litem** will bill for: home and school visits; all correspondence such as calls, emails, texts, letters; Court hearings, filing motions with the Court; and any other reasonable work that the GAL believes is necessary to prepare a custody report and recommendation for the Court. The Court may hold a hearing on the reasonableness of Guardian ad Litem fees.
- (6) Payment for the **Guardian ad Litem** bond and ongoing court costs may be made at Juvenile Court. The Cashier's Office accepts cash, money order, cashier's checks, Discover, MasterCard, or Visa. A processing fee shall apply.

For more information, visit the Guardian ad Litem Project's website at **www.galproject.org** or the Cashier's Office at 216.443.3414.