



Agenda Report

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

New Business - County Manager

J.1.

12/16/2025

Subject:

Lease Agreement for the Guardian Ad Litem Program

Fiscal Impact:

Not to exceed \$200,000 annually and nonrecurring start-up costs of up to \$35,000

Dept/Office:

County Manager's Office

Requested Action:

It is requested that the Board authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a Lease Agreement to provide office space for the Guardian Ad Litem program, upon County Attorney' Office, Risk Management and Central Services approvals and authorize the County Manager to execute all necessary budget amendments (BCRs).

Summary Explanation and Background:

Florida law requires the appointment of a guardian ad litem in any child abuse, abandonment, or neglect judicial proceeding. The Florida GAL Program is the state's mechanism for best-interest representation of children involved in dependency proceedings. It provides oversight and technical assistance to GAL programs in each of Florida's 20 judicial circuits and recruits, trains, and supervises volunteers to serve on dependency cases across the state. Pursuant to Section 29.008, Florida Statutes, counties are responsible for funding court-related functions, including providing space for Guardian Ad Litem Program (GAL) offices.

As part of the Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Justice Center renovation project, the Guardian Ad Litem Program vacated its previous courthouse space in August 2025 and is currently operating out of temporary space within the Clerk's Office. This temporary location can only accommodate eight employees. Although space has been offered at the Merritt Island Service Complex, it is not in close proximity to the Melbourne Courthouse, where dependency court proceedings are currently held.

The Guardian Ad Litem Program has requested a more permanent office location near the Melbourne Courthouse to support its staff of 35 employees. County staff has begun evaluating available office space for lease in the area. Initial estimates indicate the annual cost for approximately 4,200 square feet of commercial office space may be up to \$200,000, inclusive of rent, utilities (electricity, water, gas), phone and data, security, janitorial, and maintenance expenses, depending on the terms of the lease agreement. An initial non-recurring investment of approximately \$35,000 is also anticipated for I.T. connectivity, moving costs, and necessary alterations or improvements to make this space suitable for occupancy.

GAL expenses, including the lease and other related costs, will be funded through the Judicial Support (Article

V) Court Facilities program, which is supported by the General Fund and a \$30 surcharge on non-criminal traffic infractions

Clerk to the Board Instructions:



December 17, 2025

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Jim Liesenfelt, County Manager

RE: Item J.1., Lease Agreement for the Guardian Ad Litem Program

The Board of County Commissioners, in regular session on December 16, 2025, approved and authorized you to negotiate and execute a Lease Agreement to provide office space for the Guardian Ad Litem program, upon County Attorney's Office, Risk Management, and Central Services approval; and authorized you to execute all necessary budget amendments (BCRs).

Your continued cooperation is always appreciated.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RACHEL M. SADOFF, CLERK

Kimberly Powell, Clerk to the Board

cc: County Attorney
Finance
Budget