

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact:

Alexandra Bell, Manager of Communications

abell@projectguardianship.org

www.projectguardianship.org/news-and-views/press-releases

Date: June 3, 2024

Project Guardianship Releases Elder Abuse Resource Guide

NEW YORK – Today **Project Guardianship** in partnership with the **Weinberg Center for Elder Justice** released an elder abuse resource guide for legal practitioners involved in guardianship proceedings. The manual, titled *[Elder Abuse in Guardianship Cases: A Legal Resource Guide](#)*, is part of ongoing efforts to provide more user-friendly and organized tools in response to the growing needs of older adults subject to Article 81 Guardianship.

“Our shared goal is to provide resources and strategies so legal professionals can better identify, respond to, and remedy incidences of elder abuse that arise within the context of guardianship,” says Deena Schwartz, Director of NYS Guardianship Initiatives at Project Guardianship, an independent nonprofit agency providing court-appointed guardianship for a largely low-income population of aging adults and people with disabilities and mental illness.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 10 percent of people over 60 experience abuse. And in New York, where almost 1 in 5 adults are age 65 and older, that number is even higher. It’s estimated that for every elder abuse incident documented by government agencies, nearly 23 others remain unseen. This resource is intended to address a growing need by providing individuals involved in Article 81 Guardianship a comprehensive overview of the types of abuse experienced by elders as well as up-to-date statutory changes.

Over the last ten years the population of New Yorkers aged 65 and increased by more than 31 percent. In fact, older New Yorkers will soon surpass the number of school-aged children in the state. Unfortunately, as the older population increases, so do the number of societal risks. Inadequate health care, lack of affordable housing, poverty, mental health difficulties, and diminished cognitive capacity render many older adults the target of exploitative parties and practices.



The hidden nature of elder abuse and exploitation demands that guardians and other advocates remain alert and diligent in their investigation and ongoing monitoring of clients' financial circumstances and relationships.

“We are in a unique position,” says Kimberly George, President and CEO of Project Guardianship. “It’s important that we provide dignified care and work with our partners to develop resources to empower stakeholders and caregivers with the knowledge and skills required to provide the best possible support for those who need it.”

The elder abuse guide is one of many tools Project Guardianship has developed to improve guardianship services. Just last month, in partnership with the New York State Unified Court System, they unveiled a guardianship resource webpage which includes informational videos and a glossary. In addition, they created and run the Guardianship Prevention & Support Helpline which provides free information and referrals to anyone with questions about Article 81 Guardianship in New York. Since it launched in June 2023, the Helpline has served over 600 New Yorkers.

###