

Oneida Family Court  
Effective Date: October 1, 2019

**Guardian ad Litem Invoicing and Billing Policy**

**1. Purpose:**

- 1.1 To provide standards governing the invoicing and billing related to guardian ad litem (GAL) appointments.

**2. Appointment:**

- 2.1 In serving as GAL, the GAL is an independent contractor and not an employee of the Oneida Nation for any reason.
  - 2.1.1 A GAL is responsible for obtaining a vendor number by submitting a W-9 and Vendor Information Form to the Court Administrator for processing.
  - 2.1.2 The Court Administrator will provide the GAL with their vendor number once assigned.
- 2.2 Once a case is assigned to you by the Clerk of Family Court, you will receive an order appointing you as GAL.
  - 2.2.1 Review the court order for the task assigned and note whether the court has placed any limitations on the number of hours you are authorized to work on the case.

**3. Invoice Number:**

- 3.1 To bill for GAL services, you must assign each case an invoice number.
- 3.2 Invoice numbers shall be assigned as follows: (1) the last two digits of the year in which you received the case assignment and (2) the case number.<sup>1</sup> If you are submitting a partial and final bill, the partial bill will end with an “A” and the final bill will end with a “B.”
  - 3.2.1 Example #1 –In 2018, you were appointed as GAL in case number 15-PA-155. The invoice number on your bill will be 18-15-PA-155.
  - 3.2.2 Example #2 – You were working on invoice number 18-15-PA-155 and were notified by the Family Court that any outstanding invoices should be submitted on or before September 1, 2018, due to the end of the fiscal year. As you were not finished with your work on the case, your partial invoice will be identified as 18-15-PA-155A. The invoice number for your final bill, excluding what was already submitted, will be 18-15-PA-155B.
  - 3.2.3 Example #3 – In 2018, you were appointed as GAL in case number 15-PA-155. The parties reached an agreement before the contested hearing, so your invoice number will be 18-15-PA-155. In 2019, you were appointed again to investigate the issue of physical placement. After the contested hearing, the court entered a temporary order and scheduled a review hearing where you were authorized to perform a certain number of

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<sup>1</sup> In the rare situation where you are appointed on the same case number twice in the same calendar year, add a “B” to the last two digits of the year in which you were appointed. For example, if you are appointed for a second time in 2019 on case number 15-PA-155, then your second invoice number will be 19B-15-PA-155. Subsequent appointments in the same calendar year would lead to the use of “C”, “D”, etc., after the last two digits of the year in which you were appointed.

hours investigating the matter. The invoice number for this portion of your services will be 19-15-PA-155A. When you submit the final bill after the review hearing(s), the invoice number will be 19-15-PA-155B.

- 3.3 Bills sent to the Judiciary without a proper invoice number will be returned to you so that you can add the invoice number.

4. **Billing Procedures:**

- 4.1 The rate for GAL services shall be \$25.00 per hour.

- 4.2 Bill in tenth of an hour increments (see conversion table below).

01 – 06 Minutes	= .10 Hour
07 – 12 Minutes	= .20 Hour
13 – 18 Minutes	= .30 Hour
19 – 24 Minutes	= .40 Hour
25 – 30 Minutes	= .50 Hour
31 – 36 Minutes	= .60 Hour
37 – 42 Minutes	= .70 Hour
43 – 48 Minutes	= .80 Hour
49 – 54 Minutes	= .90 Hour
55 – 60 Minutes	= 1 Hour

The Family Court has seen an increase in the amount of time GALs are claiming for text messages. Text messaging provides an efficient means of communicating short bursts of information quickly and can be a useful tool in your GAL work. **The Family Court will reimburse GALs .01 hour (36 seconds) per text message received and/or sent.**

- 4.3 Invoices must contain sufficient information to allow the court to audit and review responsibilities. By submitting an invoice, a GAL is certifying that the entries are accurate. A short description of each activity must be provided. Each description shall include the date performed and should be detailed enough to allow the court to determine if the time is reimbursable.

4.3.1 Unacceptable entries: “administrative”, “phone calls”, “report”, and “research motion.” These do not adequately describe the work performed.

4.3.2. Acceptable entries: “reviewed case file”, “phone conversation with mother”, “meeting with child”, “text message exchange with father”, “researched physical placement schedules”, “drafted court report”, and “attended contested court hearing.”

- 4.4 Billable hours allowed:

4.4.1 Reviewing court documents and files related to case;

4.4.2 Case related letters, phone calls, emails, and text messages;

4.4.3 Interviewing children, families, caregivers, and/or collateral contacts;

4.4.4 Case related meetings and conferences;

4.4.5 Case related research;

4.4.6 Writing reports;

4.4.7 Court appearances; and

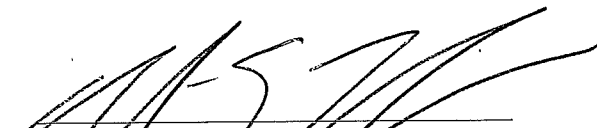
4.4.8 Qualified travel time (see GAL Travel Time Rule).

- 4.5 Billable hours not allowed:

4.5.1 Work deemed outside the GAL’s duties or responsibilities;

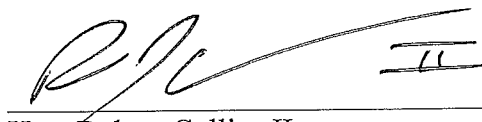
- 4.5.2 Time incurred obtaining ongoing education and training;
  - 4.5.3 Phone calls when no contact is made;
  - 4.5.4 Contact with the court on case appointment and other administrative issues;
  - 4.5.5 Work done prior to, or after the termination of, the appointment; and
  - 4.5.6 Completion of billing forms.
- 4.6 Except for postage, the Family Court will not reimburse GALs for office overhead.
  - 4.7 Unless directed otherwise, GALs should submit one invoice per case assigned.
  - 4.8 GALs may not double bill the court. For example, if a GAL is waiting for their case to be called, the GAL can bill for wait time, or the GAL can bill for other work done while waiting for the case to be called. GALs cannot bill for both.
  - 4.9 Prior to the end of each fiscal year, the Family Court will send a letter or email requesting that GALs submit by a specified deadline all final billings or partial billings for services provided during that fiscal year. These deadlines are necessary for the Judiciary to meet deadlines for year-end accounting purposes.
  - 4.10 Invoices submitted to the Judiciary are reviewed by a Family Court Judge for sufficiency of documentation and reasonableness of claims. If you fail to adequately detail your charges, or if the time claimed seems outside customary and usual limits, you may be asked to provide additional information. Please review invoices thoroughly prior to submitting them. The Judiciary does not reimburse for time spent responding to billing inquiries.
  - 4.11 The court may decline payment for activities and/or costs deemed frivolous, excessive, or duplicative.
  - 4.12 Approved invoices will be processed through Purchasing and Central Accounting for payment.
    - 4.12.1 The Family Court processes all invoices received as expeditiously as possible; however, internal processes call for net 30 days on all invoices. Questions or concerns about the status of an invoice may be directed to the Court Administrator. Central Accounting should not be contacted directly.

This policy is adopted pursuant to 8 O.C. 806.9-1.



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Hon. Marcus S. Zelenski  
Family Court Judge



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Hon. Robert Collins II  
Family Court Judge

Amended: 9/11/2019