

Guardian with Limited Powers

A **Guardian with Limited Powers** is a person chosen to make decisions *for* you. This type of guardianship is called “**limited powers**” because your guardian does not make *all* decisions for you. You do not have a say in who your guardian is or when your guardian makes decisions for you. The decision to have a guardian is first made by your doctor. Then a **judge in court** approves who your guardian will be. A judge also chooses when your guardian is allowed to make decisions for you. This means, a Guardianship with Limited Powers could look different from person to person.

Where can I use this support in my life?

The table below shows examples of how a Guardian with Limited Powers can make decisions for you.

Money

Your guardian may be able to:

- Manage a limited budget
- Pay your bills

Healthcare

Your guardian may be able to:

- Access your medical records
- Choose treatments and procedures you receive

School

Your guardian may be able to:

- Choose where you go to school
- Choose your supports and accommodations

Personal life

Your guardian may be able to:

- Choose social activities to participate in
- Make decisions about your dating life and relationships
- Make decisions about marriage

Housing

Your guardian may be able to:

- Decide where you live
- Choose an assisted living facility

Post-secondary life

Your guardian may be able to:

- Choose a college or vocational program
- Choose a specific major or college courses

Additional information and a full list of references are available at
<https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/resources/supported-decision-making/>

Steinbrecher, A., Ferrara, N., Mallory, S., & Legal Support Choices Project Advisory Group (2025).
Guardian with limited powers. University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies.

More information about Guardianship with Limited Powers

Who is the decision-maker?

Your guardian makes decisions *for* you. You do not choose your guardian or when they make decisions. A judge approves your guardian and what decisions they are allowed to make for you.

Does a Guardian with Limited Powers require a court hearing?

Yes, a court hearing is needed to appoint a guardian with limited powers. A judge in court will say if guardianship is needed or if there are less **restrictive** support choices available. Someone who wants to be a guardian must file a **petition** with the court. A petition is a type of written request that is given to the court. A judge then approves a guardian, or guardians, for you. A judge also decides which areas of life your guardian will have control over.

Can a Guardian with Limited Powers be changed? If yes, by who?

It is not likely that a Guardian with Limited Powers will be changed, but it is possible. To make a change to your guardianship, you or your guardian can file a petition with the court. A court hearing is needed after the petition is filed. If a change is needed, a judge may approve a new guardian for you.

Where can I go to learn more about Guardianship with Limited Powers?

You have choices when it comes to legal support when you turn 18. Guardianship with Limited Powers is a choice that is available in Delaware. Other states may have different rules or may not offer the same legal support choices as Delaware.

Visit <https://www.courts.delaware.gov/chancery/guardianship/> to learn more about Guardianship in Delaware.

This project is funded by the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council using federal funds. The opinions do not necessarily represent the views of the Council or the Administration.

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