

Petition for Visitation by a Minor's Grandparent(s) and/or Stepparent

If you are (1) the grandparent of a minor and your child (the parent of the minor) is deceased or (2) the stepparent (the surviving spouse of a deceased parent of a minor) and you want to Petition for Visitation, then **YOU MUST** complete the following forms. Always PRINT the required information in the blanks. Always use black ink, never use pencil.

1. Petition for Visitation by a Minor's Grandparent(s) and/or Stepparent
2. **Form GF-150** - Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act Affidavit

PLEASE NOTE: If both parents are living, you must petition for visitation in Family Court (downtown).

PLEASE NOTE: If you are planning to co-petition with your spouse, both petitioners need to either attend the review or have the documents notarized prior to the review.

Pro se litigants: When **ALL** of the forms are completed, **YOU MAY CALL 414-257-5422** to schedule to have the Staff Attorney review your paperwork and determine if it is legally sufficient. Please note that the Staff Attorney cannot help you complete the paperwork and can only answer procedural questions. If you need assistance completing the paperwork please contact Kids Matter at 414-344-1220.

The things you will need to bring when you file the Petition are:

1. A valid driver's license or valid State ID.
2. All the forms listed above, completed.
3. Current Addresses for:
 - a. Mother
 - b. Father of the Child
 - c. Child
 - d. Current guardian, if one has been appointed previously by the court

The Court will be cross-checking the names and addresses provided for each party to ensure that proper notice is provided to all who are entitled to notice of the proceedings.

PLEASE NOTE: This Packet is designed to help pro se litigants with juvenile guardianship procedures. While the information contained in this Packet is about legal issues, it is **not legal advice**, nor is it a substitute for legal advice from an attorney. If you choose **not** to hire an attorney, you will be representing yourself in court. It is always better to have an attorney help you if you have questions during your case. When using these forms, you are acting as your own lawyer and you have to do everything a lawyer would do: fill out the forms, file the forms with the Clerk of Courts, have a court date scheduled, arrange for service on the other persons, gather all necessary information, appear at the hearing and present any evidence.

Follow the sample that is provided with this Packet. Wisconsin law requires that the minor child (the proposed ward) for whom you are petitioning either be a resident of Milwaukee County or be present in Milwaukee County.

DO NOT sign the documents that need to be notarized (Petition for Visitation by a Minor's Grandparent(s) and/or Stepparent and Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act) unless in the presence of a Notary. Your signature must be done in the presence of the Notary. Unsigned documents can be notarized on the day of your appointment.

PLEASE READ BEFORE FILLING OUT THE DOCUMENTS

The Review

1. On your scheduled review date bring all the items listed 1-4 on Page 1 and the COMPLETED forms.
2. Report to the **window of Room 1601 (Court Administration)** to meet with the Staff Attorney:
Vel R. Philips Youth and Family Justice Center
10201 West Watertown Plank Road [between Hwy 100 (Mayfair Road) and Hwy 45]
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
3. If the Staff Attorney determines your petition is legally sufficient, you will sign any unsigned documents in the presence of a notary. You must bring two (2) copies of each document to the Clerk of Court's Office. The Clerk of Courts staff will file the documents and schedule a court date, typically in about 30 days. If you do not provide two (2) copies of the documents to the Clerk's Office, you will be charged \$1.25 per page, per form.
4. State law requires that a Guardian ad Litem (an attorney) be appointed to represent the best interest of the child. The Guardian ad Litem **is not** your attorney.
5. After the documents are filed, the Clerk of Courts office staff will give you one set of the file stamped documents and a printed Notice of Hearing (for each party), along with written instructions about Personal Service.

NOTE: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS FOR EACH PARTY THAT IS REQUIRED TO BE SERVED.

Personal Service

1. Personal Service means getting the Notice of Hearing and Petition, etc. into the other person's hand in a legally defined way to notify him or her of the court hearing.
2. You cannot be the process server.
3. You are responsible for finding someone (the server) to hand the documents to the person needing service.
4. The server must be over the age of 18, a resident of Wisconsin and they cannot be a party to the case.
5. The server must personally hand a copy of the Notice of Hearing, Petition and other documents to the person being served. The server should then fill out the "Affidavit of Service" (JD-1825) and have their signature notarized. Most banks have a designated Notary Public.
6. If, after diligently looking for a person, you are unable to serve them in person, then you must send the documents by certified mail with return receipt requested or registered mail to their last known address at least 10 days prior to the hearing. Bring proof of mailing to the first court hearing.
7. Service **MUST** be done within **10 DAYS** prior to the hearing.
8. If all of the interested parties are not properly notified, your case could be dismissed.
9. Persons that must be served:
 - a. Child, if 12 years of age or older
 - b. Child's Parents, including alleged fathers.
 - c. Any person that currently has legal or physical custody of the child
 - d. The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Service - if they are involved with the child
 - e. Anyone who has had custody of the child in the previous 60 days
 - f. Anyone who has been nominated to serve as the child's guardian through a will.
10. You must have the written "Affidavit(s) of Service" when you come to court. This will prove to the court that all parties were notified of the court hearing (time and place).

Attend the Hearing

On the date of your hearing, bring along the Affidavit(s) of Service. In addition, if applicable, please bring:

1. Any Certificate of Death of a parent.

If an emergency comes up and you cannot make it to court on time, call the court and the Guardian ad Litem ahead of time to explain the circumstances. If you are late or fail to appear in court, the Judge may dismiss your case. The Judge will decide whether or not to grant your Petition.