

VIRGINIA PUBLIC GUARDIAN & CONSERVATOR ADVISORY BOARD (PGCAB)
LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
FISCAL YEAR 2026

1. Increase the Rate for PGP Client Slots to \$7,000

The Virginia Public Guardian & Conservator Program (“PGP”) was established in 1998, to provide guardianship services for incapacitated, indigent adults who have no one else to serve as their legal decisionmaker. The 1,349 client slots funded by the General Assembly are apportioned among eleven providers that contract with DARS to operate a Local Public Guardian Program.

There are two levels of funding for PGP client slots: 1,251 are funded at \$5,000 per slot annually, and 98 are funded at \$7,000 per slot annually. While the acuity and intensity of client needs has steadily increased, the rates have not changed since SFY 2018. This has resulted in stagnant salaries for the staff responsible for client oversight, decision-making, and advocacy.

Local PGPs are responsible for ensuring coverage 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for their clients, who may be diagnosed with a serious mental illness, traumatic brain injury, dementia, developmental disability, or a combination. Many of these individuals are medically fragile and experience frequent illnesses. Psychiatric hospitalizations, homelessness, and incarceration are also common. It is increasingly difficult for PGP contractors to retain experienced staff or recruit new staff with the necessary skills and commitment.

In order to ensure the PGP’s ongoing viability, the PGCAB recommends funding all PGP client slots at a rate of \$7,000/slot annually (total \$2,502,000).

2. Funding for a Database Management Platform

The PGP is in need of specialized software to track program clients and analyze data. Although the number of clients has doubled over the last ten years, the PGP continues to store current and past client data in an Excel spreadsheet. Information about clients who have been added or removed from the program and changes in client demographic information are reported to the PGP by the eleven providers in the form of complex Excel-based quarterly reports. DARS PGP staff must manually transfer this information to the centralized client spreadsheet in Excel.

This process is inherently time consuming and error prone. The information perpetually lags behind real-time client information, which may hinder timely decision-making and reporting. As noted by DARS’ Internal Audit Division: “The longstanding reliance on Excel spreadsheets for contractor records and data introduces risks to data accuracy, security, and efficiency.”

A data management system allowing providers to remotely input client changes as they occur would enable the PGP to monitor the status of clients and provider performance in real time. Transitioning to a relational database would permit the PGP to analyze data with greater accuracy and generate system reports that support critical tasks. This would strengthen data integrity, facilitate real-time provider updates, and improve reporting capabilities. The PGCAB recommends that \$400,000 be allocated for the cost of building and implementing the system and \$60,000 be allocated annually to cover recurring costs.