



LESS RESTRICTIVE ALTERNATIVES WHEN CONSIDERING ADULT GUARDIANSHIP

A court will not appoint a guardian for an adult if their needs can be met using a less restrictive alternative.

Some less restrictive alternatives include:

1 SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING

If an adult is capable of making their own personal and financial decisions but needs help with obtaining relevant information, understanding options and consequences, and/or communicating their decisions, then supported decision making might be a good option. See [Alternatives to Guardianship: Supported Decision Making Agreements](#) on WashingtonLawHelp.org for more information.

2 DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

A durable power attorney allows an adult to choose a friend or relative to help with their finances or help manage their healthcare. It will stay in place even if the adult becomes incapacitated. See [Durable Power of Attorney Documents](#) on WashingtonLawHelp.org for more information.



3 HEALTHCARE DIRECTIVE (“LIVING WILL”)

A healthcare directive allows adults to write down what kinds of medical treatments they do/do not want if they become permanently ill or unconscious. See [Health Care Directive \(or Living Will\)](#) on WashingtonLawHelp.org for more information.



4 LIVING TRUST

A living trust is a document, usually written by a lawyer, that lets someone put their money into a trust that is then managed by a friend, relative, or professional trustee. See [Make a Living Trust in Washington](#) on Nolo.com for more information.



5 REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE

A representative payee receives and manages government benefits (like Social Security or VA payments) on behalf of someone else. Check with the government agency that issues the payments for information on becoming a representative payee.



6 JOINT BANKING

When two people are on a joint checking or savings account, they can both manage the money in the account even if one of them becomes incapacitated. For more information, contact your preferred bank to discuss options and potential risks.



7 CONSENT TO HEALTHCARE LAW

Washington’s informed consent law for adults lists specific people who can make health care decisions for a patient who doesn’t have the capacity to make decisions for themselves. See [RCW 7.70.065](#) for the full list of these authorized people.



8 JOINT PROPERTY ARRANGEMENTS

You can choose to own property with another person, so that if one person becomes incapacitated the other can manage the property. For more information, seek legal or financial advice from a professional (like a real estate attorney) about joint property arrangements.



9 PROTECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

A protective arrangement is a court order appointing a person to help the adult with specific tasks, such as approving medical treatments. You file for protective arrangements using the same initial forms as for guardianship. Note that if you file a petition for guardianship, the court may decide to order a protective arrangement instead. See [RCW 11.130.580](#), [RCW 11.130.585](#), and [RCW 11.130.590](#) for more information.