

Chapter 73.36 RCW
UNIFORM VETERANS' GUARDIANSHIP ACT

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RCW 73.36.010 Terms defined. As used in this chapter:

"Person" means an individual, a partnership, a corporation, or an association.

"Veterans administration" means the veterans administration, its predecessors or successors.

"Income" means moneys received from the veterans administration and revenue or profit from any property wholly or partially acquired therewith.

"Estate" means income on hand and assets acquired partially or wholly with "income."

"Benefits" means all moneys paid or payable by the United States through the veterans administration.

"Administrator" means the administrator of veterans affairs of the United States or his or her successor.

"Ward" means a beneficiary of the veterans administration.

"Guardian" means any fiduciary for the person or estate of a ward. [2012 c 117 § 508; 1951 c 53 § 1.]

RCW 73.36.020 Administrator party in interest in guardianship proceedings—Notice. The administrator shall be a party in interest in any proceeding for the appointment or removal of a guardian or for the removal of the disability of minority or mental incapacity of a ward, and in any suit or other proceeding affecting in any manner the administration by the guardian of the estate of any present or former ward whose estate includes assets derived in whole or in part from

benefits heretofore or hereafter paid by the veterans administration. Not less than fifteen days prior to hearing in such matter notice in writing of the time and place thereof shall be given by mail (unless waived in writing) to the office of the veterans administration having jurisdiction over the area in which any such suit or any such proceeding is pending. [1951 c 53 § 2.]

RCW 73.36.030 Appointment of guardian—Necessary when.

Whenever, pursuant to any law of the United States or regulation of the veterans administration, it is necessary, prior to payment of benefits, that a guardian be appointed, the appointment may be made in the manner hereinafter provided. [1951 c 53 § 3.]

RCW 73.36.040 Guardian—Number of wards permitted.

No person other than a bank or trust company shall be guardian of more than five wards at one time, unless all the wards are members of one family. Upon presentation of a petition by an attorney of the veterans administration or other interested person, alleging that a guardian is acting in a fiduciary capacity for more than five wards as herein provided and requesting his or her discharge for that reason, the court, upon proof substantiating the petition, shall require a final accounting forthwith from such guardian and shall discharge him or her from guardianships in excess of five and forthwith appoint a successor. [2012 c 117 § 509; 1951 c 53 § 4.]

RCW 73.36.050 Guardian—Appointment—Contents of petition.

(1) A petition for the appointment of a guardian may be filed by any relative or friend of the ward or by any person who is authorized by law to file such a petition. If there is no person so authorized or if the person so authorized refuses or fails to file such a petition within thirty days after mailing of notice by the veterans administration to the last known address of the person, if any, indicating the necessity for the same, a petition for appointment may be filed by any resident of this state.

(2) The petition for appointment shall set forth the name, age, place of residence of the ward, the name and place of residence of the nearest relative, if known, and the fact that the ward is entitled to receive benefits payable by or through the veterans administration and shall set forth the amount of moneys then due and the amount of probable future payments.

(3) The petition shall also set forth the name and address of the person or institution, if any, having actual custody of the ward and the name, age, relationship, if any, occupation and address of the proposed guardian and if the nominee is a natural person, the number of wards for whom the nominee is presently acting as guardian. Notwithstanding any law as to priority of persons entitled to appointment, or the nomination in the petition, the court may appoint some other individual or a bank or trust company as guardian, if the court determines it is for the best interest of the ward.

(4) In the case of a mentally incompetent ward the petition shall show that such ward has been rated incompetent by the veterans administration on examination in accordance with the laws and regulations governing the veterans administration.

(5) All proceedings under this chapter shall be governed by the provisions of chapter 11.130 RCW which shall prevail over any conflicting provisions of this chapter. [2020 c 312 § 734; 1994 c 147 § 4; 1951 c 53 § 5.]

Effective dates—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

Prohibitions: RCW 73.04.140.

RCW 73.36.060 Guardian for minor—Appointment—Prima facie evidence. Where a petition is filed for the appointment of a guardian for a minor, a certificate of the administrator or his or her authorized representative, setting forth the age of such minor as shown by the records of the veterans administration and the fact that the appointment of a guardian is a condition precedent to the payment of any moneys due the minor by the veterans administration shall be prima facie evidence of the necessity for such appointment. [2012 c 117 § 510; 1951 c 53 § 6.]

RCW 73.36.080 Notice of petition. Upon the filing of a petition for the appointment of a guardian under this chapter, notice shall be given to the ward, to such other persons, and in such manner as is provided by the general law of this state, and also to the veterans administration as provided by this chapter. [1951 c 53 § 8.]

RCW 73.36.090 Guardian's bond. (1) Upon the appointment of a guardian, he or she shall execute and file a bond to be approved by the court in an amount not less than the estimated value of the personal estate and anticipated income of the ward during the ensuing two years, except in cases where banks or trust companies are appointed as guardian and no bond is required by the general state law. The bond shall be in the form and be conditioned as required of guardians appointed under the general guardianship laws of this state. The court may from time to time require the guardian to file an additional bond.

(2) Where a bond is tendered by a guardian with personal sureties, there shall be at least two such sureties and they shall file with the court a certificate under oath which shall describe the property owned, both real and personal, and shall state that each is worth the sum named in the bond as the penalty thereof over and above all his or her debts and liabilities and the aggregate of other bonds in which he or she is principal or surety and exclusive of property exempt from execution. The court may require additional security or may require a corporate surety bond, the premium thereon to be paid from the ward's estate. [2012 c 117 § 511; 1951 c 53 § 9.]

RCW 73.36.100 Accounting by guardian—Copies of all proceedings to be furnished administration—Hearings. (1) Every guardian, who has received or shall receive on account of his or her ward any money or other thing of value from the veterans administration, at the expiration of two years from date of his or her appointment, and every two years thereafter on the anniversary date of his or her

appointment, or as much oftener as the court may require, shall file with the court a full, true and accurate account under oath of all moneys or other things of value received by him or her, all earnings, interest, or profits derived therefrom, and all property acquired therewith and of all disbursements therefrom, and showing the balance thereof in his or her hands at the date of the account and how invested. Each year when not required to file an account with the court, the guardian shall file an account with the proper office of the veterans administration. If the interim account be not filed with the veterans administration, or, if filed, shall be unsatisfactory, the court shall upon receipt of notice thereof from the veterans administration require the guardian forthwith to file an account which shall be subject in all respects to the next succeeding paragraphs. Any account filed with the veterans administration and approved by the chief attorney thereof may be filed with the court and be approved by the court without hearing, unless a hearing thereon be requested by some party in interest.

(2) The guardian, at the time of filing any account with the court or veterans administration shall exhibit all securities or investments held by him or her to an officer of the bank or other depository wherein said securities or investments are held for safekeeping or to an authorized representative of the corporation which is surety on his or her bond, or to the judge or clerk of a court of record in this state, or upon request of the guardian or other interested party, to any other reputable person designated by the court, who shall certify in writing that he or she has examined the securities or investments and identified them with those described in the account and shall note any omissions or discrepancies. If the depository is the guardian, the certifying officer shall not be the officer verifying the account. The guardian may exhibit the securities or investments to the judge of the court, who shall endorse on the account and copy thereof, a certificate that the securities or investments shown therein as held by the guardian were each in fact exhibited to him or her and that those exhibited to him or her were the same as those in the account and noting any omission or discrepancy. The certificate, and the certificate of an official of the bank in which are deposited any funds for which the guardian is accountable, showing the amount on deposit, shall be prepared and signed in duplicate and one of each shall be filed by the guardian with his or her account.

(3) At the time of filing in the court any account, a certified copy thereof and a signed duplicate of each certificate filed with the court shall be sent by the guardian to the office of the veterans administration having jurisdiction over the area in which such court is located. A duplicate signed copy or a certified copy of any petition, motion, or other pleading pertaining to an account, or to any matter other than an account, and which is filed in the guardianship proceedings or in any proceedings for the purpose of removing the disability of minority or mental incapacity, shall be furnished by the persons filing the same to the proper office of the veterans administration. Unless hearing be waived in writing by the attorney of the veterans administration and by all other persons, if any, entitled to notice, the court shall fix a time and place for the hearing on the account, petition, motion, or other pleading, not less than fifteen days nor more than sixty days from the date same is filed, unless a different available date be stipulated in writing. Unless waived in writing, written notice of the time and place of

hearing shall be given the veterans administration office concerned and to the guardian and any others entitled to notice, not less than fifteen days prior to the date fixed for the hearing. The notice may be given by mail, in which event it shall be deposited in the mails not less than fifteen days prior to said date. The court or clerk thereof, shall mail to said veterans administration office a copy of each order entered in any guardianship proceeding wherein the administrator is an interested party.

(4) If the guardian is accountable for property derived from sources other than the veterans administration, he or she shall be accountable as is or may be required under the applicable law of this state pertaining to the property of minors or persons of unsound mind who are not beneficiaries of the veterans administration, and as to such other property shall be entitled to the compensation provided by such law. The account for other property may be combined with the account filed in accordance with this section. [2012 c 117 § 512; 1951 c 53 § 10.]

RCW 73.36.110 Failure to account—Penalties. If any guardian shall fail to file with the court any account as required by this chapter, or by an order of the court, when any account is due or within thirty days after citation issues and provided by law, or shall fail to furnish the veterans administration a true copy of any account, petition, or pleading as required by this chapter, such failure may in the discretion of the court be ground for his or her removal, in addition to other penalties provided by law. [2012 c 117 § 513; 1951 c 53 § 11.]

RCW 73.36.120 Compensation of guardian. Compensation payable to guardians shall be based upon services rendered and shall not exceed five percent of the amount of moneys received during the period covered by the account, except that the court may allow a fee of not exceeding twenty-five dollars per year, as a minimum fee, upon the approval of the chief attorney for the veterans administration. In the event of extraordinary services by any guardian, the court, upon petition and hearing thereon may authorize reasonable additional compensation therefor. A copy of the petition and notice of hearing thereon shall be given the proper office of the veterans administration in the manner provided in the case of hearing on a guardian's account or other pleading. No commission or compensation shall be allowed on the moneys or other assets received from a prior guardian nor upon the amount received from liquidation of loans or other investments. [1951 c 53 § 12.]

RCW 73.36.130 Investment of funds—Procedure. Every guardian shall invest the surplus funds of his or her ward's estate in such securities or property as authorized under the laws of this state but only upon prior order of the court; except that the funds may be invested, without prior court authorization, in direct unconditional interest-bearing obligations of this state or of the United States and in obligations the interest and principal of which are unconditionally guaranteed by the United States. A signed duplicate or certified copy of the petition for authority to invest shall be furnished the proper

office of the veterans administration, and notice of hearing thereon shall be given said office as provided in the case of hearing on a guardian's account. [2012 c 117 § 514; 1951 c 53 § 13.]

RCW 73.36.140 Use of funds—Procedure. A guardian shall not apply any portion of the income or the estate for the support or maintenance of any person including the ward, the spouse or the domestic partner, and the minor children of the ward, except upon petition to and prior order of the court after a hearing. A signed duplicate or certified copy of said petition shall be furnished the proper office of the veterans administration and notice of hearing thereon shall be given said office as provided in the case of hearing on a guardian's account or other pleading. [2008 c 6 § 509; 1951 c 53 § 14.]

Part headings not law—Severability—2008 c 6: See RCW 26.60.900 and 26.60.901.

RCW 73.36.150 Purchase of real estate—Procedure. (1) The court may authorize the purchase of the entire fee simple title to real estate in this state in which the guardian has no interest, but only as a home for the ward, or to protect his or her interest, or (if he or she is not a minor) as a home for his or her dependent family. Such purchase of real estate shall not be made except upon the entry of an order of the court after hearing upon verified petition. A copy of the petition shall be furnished the proper office of the veterans administration and notice of hearing thereon shall be given said office as provided in the case of hearing on a guardian's account.

(2) Before authorizing such investment the court shall require written evidence of value and of title and of the advisability of acquiring such real estate. Title shall be taken in the ward's name. This section does not limit the right of the guardian on behalf of his or her ward to bid and to become the purchaser of real estate at a sale thereof pursuant to decree of foreclosure of lien held by or for the ward, or at a trustee's sale, to protect the ward's right in the property so foreclosed or sold; nor does it limit the right of the guardian, if such be necessary to protect the ward's interest and upon prior order of the court in which the guardianship is pending, to agree with cotenants of the ward for a partition in kind, or to purchase from cotenants the entire undivided interests held by them, or to bid and purchase the same at a sale under a partition decree, or to compromise adverse claims of title to the ward's realty. [2012 c 117 § 515; 1951 c 53 § 15.]

RCW 73.36.155 Public records—Free copies. When a copy of any public record is required by the veterans administration to be used in determining the eligibility of any person to participate in benefits made available by the veterans administration, the official custodian of such public record shall without charge provide the applicant for such benefits or any person acting on his or her behalf or the authorized representative of the veterans administration with a certified copy of such record. [2012 c 117 § 516; 1951 c 53 § 16. Formerly RCW 73.04.025.]

RCW 73.36.160 Discharge of guardian—Final account. In addition to any other provisions of law relating to judicial restoration and discharge of guardian, a certificate by the veterans administration showing that a minor ward has attained majority, or that an incompetent ward has been rated competent by the veterans administration upon examination in accordance with law shall be prima facie evidence that the ward has attained majority, or has recovered his or her competency. Upon hearing after notice as provided by this chapter and the determination by the court that the ward has attained majority or has recovered his or her competency, an order shall be entered to that effect, and the guardian shall file a final account. Upon hearing after notice to the former ward and to the veterans administration as in case of other accounts, upon approval of the final account, and upon delivery to the ward of the assets due him or her from the guardian, the guardian shall be discharged and his or her sureties released. [2012 c 117 § 517; 1951 c 53 § 17.]

RCW 73.36.165 Commitment to veterans administration or other federal agency. (1) Whenever, in any proceeding under the laws of this state for the commitment of a person alleged to be of unsound mind or otherwise in need of confinement in a hospital or other institution for his or her proper care, it is determined after such adjudication of the status of such person as may be required by law that commitment to a hospital for mental disease or other institution is necessary for safekeeping or treatment and it appears that such person is eligible for care or treatment by the veterans administration or other agency of the United States government, the court, upon receipt of a certificate from the veterans administration or such other agency showing that facilities are available and that such person is eligible for care or treatment therein, may commit such person to said veterans administration or other agency. The person whose commitment is sought shall be personally served with notice of the pending commitment proceeding in the manner as provided by the law of this state; and nothing in this chapter shall affect his or her right to appear and be heard in the proceedings. Upon commitment, such person, when admitted to any hospital operated by any such agency within or without this state shall be subject to the rules and regulations of the veterans administration or other agency. The chief officer of any hospital of the veterans administration or institution operated by any other agency of the United States to which the person is so committed shall with respect to such person be vested with the same powers as superintendents of state hospitals for mental diseases within this state with respect to retention of custody, transfer, parole, or discharge. Jurisdiction is retained in the committing or other appropriate court of this state at any time to inquire into the mental condition of the person so committed, and to determine the necessity for continuance of his or her restraint, and all commitments pursuant to this chapter are so conditioned.

(2) The judgment or order of commitment by a court of competent jurisdiction of another state or of the District of Columbia, committing a person to the veterans administration, or other agency of the United States government for care or treatment shall have the same force and effect as to the committed person while in this state as in the jurisdiction in which is situated the court entering the judgment or making the order; and the courts of the committing state, or of the

District of Columbia, shall be deemed to have retained jurisdiction of the person so committed for the purpose of inquiring into the mental condition of such person, and of determining the necessity for continuance of his or her restraint; as is provided in subsection (1) of this section with respect to persons committed by the courts of this state. Consent is hereby given to the application of the law of the committing state or district in respect to the authority of the chief officer of any hospital of the veterans administration, or of any institution operated in this state by any other agency of the United States to retain custody, or transfer, parole, or discharge the committed person.

(3) Upon receipt of a certificate of the veterans administration or such other agency of the United States that facilities are available for the care or treatment of any person heretofore committed to any hospital for the insane or other institution for the care or treatment of persons similarly afflicted and that such person is eligible for care or treatment, the superintendent of the institution may cause the transfer of such person to the veterans administration or other agency of the United States for care or treatment. Upon effecting any such transfer, the committing court or proper officer thereof shall be notified thereof by the transferring agency. No person shall be transferred to the veterans administration or other agency of the United States if he or she be confined pursuant to conviction of any felony or misdemeanor or if he or she has been acquitted of the charge solely on the ground of insanity, unless prior to transfer the court or other authority originally committing such person shall enter an order for such transfer after appropriate motion and hearing.

Any person transferred as provided in this section shall be deemed to be committed to the veterans administration or other agency of the United States pursuant to the original commitment. [2012 c 117 § 518; 1951 c 53 § 18. Formerly RCW 71.02.700 through 71.02.720.]

RCW 73.36.170 Application of chapter to other guardianships of veterans. The provisions of this chapter relating to surety bonds and the administration of estates of wards shall apply to all "income" and "estate" as defined in RCW 73.36.010 whether the guardian shall have been appointed under this chapter or under any other law of this state, special or general, prior or subsequent to the enactment hereof. [1951 c 53 § 21.]

RCW 73.36.180 Construction of chapter—Uniformity. This chapter shall be so construed to make uniform the law of those states which enact it. [1951 c 53 § 19.]

RCW 73.36.190 Short title. This chapter may be cited as the "uniform veterans' guardianship act". [1951 c 53 § 20.]