

## Conservatorship

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### What is a Conservatorship?

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A conservatorship is where a person is appointed for a client and is responsible for his or her living arrangements, financial and legal matters, as well as medical and mental health treatment. The conservator can be a relative, friend, or the Public Guardian's Office. **The Public Guardian is the last resort if no one else is able or willing to serve. The Superior Court will make this determination.**

For a client to be considered for conservatorship, he or she will have to meet the criteria for the legal standard for **&quot;grave disability&quot;**. This means that the person is unable to provide for their basic personal needs for food, clothing or shelter as a result of having a mental illness or the impairment as the result of chronic alcoholism.

The decision that a person meets these criteria is determined by several measurements--psychiatric history, behavioral functions and treatment compliance, family input, and treatment team recommendations.

If a person does meet the criteria and is in need of conservatorship, a referral by a mental health professional (designated by the OC Mental Health Services Director) submits a **&quot;Declaration in Support of Appointment of Temporary Conservatorship&quot;**. This referral is sent to the Public Guardian's office where it will be reviewed. If the referral is accepted, it is then assigned to an investigating deputy who will do a thorough investigation by looking into the person's medical, psychiatric, social and financial records, as well as talking with relatives and friends.

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