SUPREME COURT OF WISCONSIN

IN RE THE MATTER OF
GUARDIAN AD LITEM EDUCATION
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

JUL 21, 2020

Sheila T. Reiff
Clerk of Supreme Court
Madison, WI

You are hereby notified that the Wisconsin Supreme Court has issued the following order:

On July 20, 2020, this court issued an administrative rule order effective January 1, 2021, increasing the educational requirements for guardians ad litem appointed in family court cases and requiring education on the topic of the dynamics and impact of family violence. S. Ct. Order 19-13, 2020 WI 72 (issued July 20, 2020, eff. Jan. 1, 2021), (Rebecca Grassl Bradley, J., dissenting, joined by Daniel Kelly and Brian Hagedorn, J.J.).

However, the Court recognizes that the public health emergency relating to COVID-19 may impact lawyers' ability to complete the education required for a lawyer to be eligible to serve as a guardian ad litem under Supreme Court Rule chs. 35 and 36. Many continuing legal education (CLE) seminars have been cancelled or postponed and many lawyers may need to self-isolate or avoid public gatherings because of the risk of acquiring and/or transmitting the virus.[1] Accordingly, the court will temporarily permit lawyers, in their discretion, to fulfil guardian ad litem educational requirements from repeated on-demand programs through December 31, 2020.[2] Therefore,

IT IS ORDERED that effective immediately and until December 31, 2020, lawyers may use on-demand programs to satisfy educational requirements needed as a prerequisite to accept an appointment as a guardian ad litem under Supreme Court Rule (SCR) chs. 35 or 36, provided those guardian ad litem educational requirements are completed on or before December 31, 2020.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that because this temporary measure is effective immediately, there may be a delay before the board of bar examiner's electronic filing system can accept electronic reports documenting attendance of on-demand courses in satisfaction of guardian ad litem educational requirements. In this event, lawyers are directed to submit a statement of their request for continuing legal education credit in writing, together with documentation of the on-demand course(s) for which credit is claimed.

[1] By order dated March 17, 2020, the court, at the request of the State Bar of Wisconsin, elected to temporarily increase the number of credits from on-demand programs that lawyers may use to satisfy the requirements of SCR 31.02. See S. Ct. Order 20-01, 2020 WI 30 (issued March 17, 2020). See also In the Matter of Judicial Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic, S. Ct. Order (issued Apr. 3, 2020) (modifying judicial education requirements).

[2] "Repeated on-demand program" means an on-line program delivered over the Internet, consisting of a program previously approved by the board of bar examiners. SCR 31.01(6m).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the State Bar of Wisconsin shall take all reasonable steps to notify its members of the contents of this order.