



Are you worried about  
financial exploitation?

**There may be alternatives  
to guardianship.**



### **Why explore alternatives to guardianship?**

Guardianship should only be used as a last resort because it strips adults of the treasured right to make decisions for themselves. There may be services or options in the community that can meet the needs of the person you are concerned about. Guardianship may not be necessary.

### **What happened?**

Financial exploitation can take many forms from romance or contractor scams to a friend or family member using another person's money without their permission. Anyone—even people who function well—can be the victim of a crime or trust the wrong person. This does not necessarily mean the person needs a guardian or conservator.

### **What does the person you are concerned about think and want?**

- They may not want to believe or admit they have been scammed or that a loved one has taken advantage of them.
- They may resist help because they value their independence and pride themselves on being self-sufficient.
- They may want to make choices they have a right to make like being generous or not wanting to get a loved one who exploited them in trouble— even if others think those choices are unwise.

Have a supportive, candid conversation with the person you are concerned about. Let them know there are resources and services that may help.

## Who can help quickly?

Financial exploitation can have swift and devastating consequences.

### Adult Protective Services (APS)

If APS accepts the case for investigation, they will begin investigating within 24 hours. APS can also connect a person to appropriate community services.



**855-444-3911**

## What other help is available?

The following resources may assist in recovering lost money or property, managing finances going forward, or accessing benefits and resources to meet basic needs.

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### Grand Traverse County Department of Health and Human Services

Provides help like food assistance, Medicaid (medical insurance for low-income individuals), and State Emergency Relief (funds for overdue utilities, home repairs, and more).



**231-941-3900**

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### Counsel and Advocacy Law Line (CALL)

Provides free legal advice to the person you are concerned about on their legal rights and options after financial exploitation.



**888-783-8190**

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### Michigan Legal Help

Offers reliable, easy to understand information about Michigan law on a wide variety of topics, including After Identity Theft, Are You Collectable? and many others.



**www.michiganlegalhelp.org**

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### Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Michigan

Helps people over 60 understand what resources might be a good fit.



**231-947-8920**

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### Private Attorneys

Can review the options and develop a strategy that works best.

**The Michigan Guardianship Diversion Project (MGDP)** is funded by a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to the Michigan Elder Justice Initiative, a non-profit civil legal aid organization. In partnership with the probate court and many local organizations, the project seeks to connect people to options that could be a less restrictive alternative to guardianship or conservatorship and to ensure guardianship is used only when it is necessary and appropriate.

**For more information or further assistance, contact us at 517-827-8010, ext 7 or MGDP@meji.org.**