

Office of Substitute Decision Maker

The Office of Substitute Decision Maker (OSDM) was established to create a statewide network of substitute decision makers who provide substitute decision-making services as a last resort; only where no other substitute decision maker is available. The general assembly has recognized that many adults in Iowa are unable to maintain their physical health or manage essential aspects of their financial resources and are in need of substitute decision-making services.

Without a substitute decision maker, the adult is at risk of:

- Abuse, exploitation, and scams;
- Medical or financial crisis caused by the lack of a substitute decision maker;
- Loss of home or savings; and
- Being trapped at a costly and inappropriate level of care.

OSDM could assist by providing:

- An advocate to protect and ensure safety;
- Access to needed services to those who cannot consent;
- Alternatives to inappropriate or poor decision makers; and
- Assistance in planning for incapacity.

Who does OSDM serve?

Adults of all ages who might be in need of a decision maker, but do not have access to one.

When (in what circumstances) does OSDM provide services? OSDM is designed as an office of *last resort*. OSDM would intervene in the following circumstances:

- No willing and reasonable person is available to serve as a private substitute decision maker;
- The adult does not have adequate income or resources to compensate a private substitute decision maker;
- The appointed guardian or conservator is not fulfilling prescribed duties; or
- The appointed substitute decision-maker is financially exploiting or otherwise abusing the adult.

What services does OSDM provide?

In addition to serving as substitute decision maker (guardian/conservator/representative payee/attorney-in-fact/personal representative), OSDM also provides:

- Assistance to individuals in finding alternatives to substitute decision-making services and less-intrusive means of assistance;
- Assistance to public and private substitute decision makers throughout the state to secure necessary services for their wards, principals, clients, and decedents;
- Assistance to substitute decision makers, wards, principals, clients, courts, and attorneys to ensure orderly and expeditious handling of substitute decision-making proceedings.