Enhanced Abuse Intervention Model (AIM) Judicial Review:
Methodology for Development of the Judicial Guardianship Evaluation Worksheet

Phase I: Based on a review of the literature, an initial draft worksheet was devised that reflected categories of evidence that could inform a guardianship proceeding. Having received Institutional Review Board approval for Phase I, an interdisciplinary advisory panel of 12 guardianship experts was convened. A convenience sample of judges was recruited through the advisory panel. During year one (2020), the research team refined the worksheet based on feedback from the expert advisory panel and from three focus groups comprised of a total of 20 probate judges from 9 states.

Phase II: Having received Institutional Review Board approval for Phase II, the worksheet was pilot tested in year two (2021) in relevant courts from around the country. The Phase II convenience sample of judges was recruited primarily through the advisory panel. The sample consisted of 31 judges, including one tribal judge, from 22 states (see map below; note that some states listed in Phase II overlapped with states in Phase I). Judges varied in assignment, with the most common being probate, civil and general jurisdiction courtrooms. Approximately one third practiced within a rural community and two thirds reported having moderate or significant experience with elder abuse.

Judges who agreed to participate were provided a 30-minute training session by University of Southern California staff and then instructed to use the Worksheet in 5 guardianship cases (more if they chose to). No case-level information was collected.

Qualitative (exit interviews) and quantitative (pre- and post-survey) data were collected during Phase II to inform revisions and to assess feasibility, useability, and satisfaction with the worksheet.

Based on the pilot study, minor revisions to the worksheet were made. The worksheet, in its final form, is a 2-page fillable and printable PDF that provides judges with an organizational framework of the relevant factors to consider in adjudicating guardianship cases.