

ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR CASA VOLUNTEERS:

CASA volunteers are appointed by the Court to act as advocates in child protective proceedings. It is CASA's mandate to provide an **independent assessment** of all aspects of a child's life to the Court based on what is **best interest** for the child. All persons or things affecting the child's physical, mental, and emotional well being are to be part of the assessment. The volunteer meets with the child and other parties; presents facts and recommendations to the court through written and oral reports; consults with the attorney and social worker on different aspects of the case, including whether it should be brought back for a hearing if circumstances change; and advocates for the compliance with court orders. If the child is not in the home, the CASA is expected to view interaction between his or her parents (if possible). This will include observing supervised visitation (subject to the caseworker's approval). The volunteer should be involved in the case planning conferences, attend hearings, and may be called as a witness. On the child's behalf, CASA's seek provision of a permanent family environment that is both safe and nurturing.

In general, the **CASA is not to provide services**, but assemble and provide information that, based on findings, describes needed services. Recommendations to the Court are therefore requests for the proper person or agency to fulfill those needs.

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS AND TRAINING:

A CASA volunteer with this program shall be an individual who has been screened, trained, is supervised by program staff, and appointed by the court to advocate for children who come into the court system primarily as a result of abuse or neglect. A volunteer shall review records; facilitate a prompt thorough review of the case; and interview appropriate parties to make recommendations on what would be in the best interests of the child.

A CASA volunteer shall be at least 21 years of age and successfully pass screening requirements which include a written application, personal interview, reference and criminal records checks, successful completion of the required pre-service training, and the required on-going in-service training.

A CASA volunteer shall successfully complete a minimum of 30 hours of initial training that includes instruction on the court and child welfare systems; child abuse and neglect; relevant state and federal laws; permanency planning and family preservation; cultural awareness; and the role and responsibility of a CASA volunteer.

A CASA volunteer shall not engage in activities which jeopardize the safety of the child, the integrity of the program, or the objectivity of the volunteer; or activities which are likely to result in conflict of interest or expose the program or the volunteer to criminal or civil liability. A CASA volunteer shall also abide by the National CASA Code of Ethics.

A CASA volunteer shall respect the right to privacy by keeping information that would identify parties involved in CASA cases confidential.

SPECIFIC DUTIES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

Become familiar with the facts and circumstances underlying the allegation(s) that placed the child within the court's jurisdiction. This should include meetings with the child, the child's siblings, the parents, social workers, care providers, and any other person(s) necessary for a proper assessment. The CASA should also consult with child development professionals, the child's attorney, and other parties to determine what is in the child's best interest. To become familiar with the facts of the case, the CASA must read all reports submitted to the court.

Become familiar with the facts as well as the interests of the child in judicial or administrative proceedings outside of juvenile court.

Explain the CASA volunteer's role, duties, and responsibilities, to all parties associated with the case.

Maintain complete written records about the case: including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the case.

Be familiar and comply with the Child Protection Laws and Juvenile Code.

Identify potential resources that will facilitate family preservation, early family reunification, or alternative permanency planning.

Report incidents of child abuse and neglect to supervisor and to the appropriate authorities.

Meet with the child(ren) regularly

Act to promote cooperation among all parties

Participate in the formulation of the case plan by making recommendations with regard to appropriate services, programs and suggesting alternatives solutions.

Determine whether services for the family, specified in court approved case plans and court orders, are provided in a timely manner and are accomplishing their purposes.

Advocate and ensure that services are provided in a timely manner, inform the other parties and the Court of any barriers to the family's ability to take advantage of services, as approved by the court.

Appear at all court hearings and offer a written report of findings.

The CASA should be able to explain the court proceedings to the child

Urge the Court, through written reports, to enter specific and clear orders for evaluation, assessment, services, and treatment for the child and the child's family.

Advocate for the child's best interest in the mental health, educational, welfare, juvenile justice, and other community systems when related to the circumstances bringing the child within the courts jurisdiction.

Remain actively involved in the case until wardship is discharged and permanency is achieved.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Court Appointed Special Advocate Volunteer (Unpaid)

CASA volunteers recommend to the Court - **based on facts** and information gathering - the needs of a child who has found to have been abused and/or neglected. The CASA will monitor a case following the court's decision; and work to assure permanency planning, so that every child can fulfill his/her right to a safe and permanent home.

Responsibilities of the Position

Complete an intensive independent investigation

- a) Speak with the child and relevant adults
- b) Review appropriate records and reports
- c) Interview and observe the child and significant others

Report findings to the court

- a) Provide written reports containing factual information
- b) Testify at court hearings

Ensure representation of the child's best interest

- a) Attend all court proceedings to see that all relevant facts are presented
- b) Attend appropriate interagency meetings regarding the child
- c) Prod various systems into action

Monitor Cases

- a) Monitor court orders for compliance
- b) Monitor Child and Family plan
- c) Maintain contact with the child/children weekly

Attend Training

- a) Attend initial training sessions (30 hours)
- b) Attend monthly in-service meetings and/or applicable seminars/courses in the community.

Consult regularly with the Volunteer Coordinator or Executive Director concerning assigned case

- a) Develop a case investigation plan
- b) Discuss preliminary findings
- c) Review reports

Participate in evaluations of your performance

- a) Evaluate the quality of your work
- b) Assess your job satisfaction
- c) Evaluate quality of supervision

Strive to attain permanency for the child at the earliest possible time through

- a) Reunification with family or relatives, or through
- b) Termination of Parental Rights and adoption

Requirements of the Position

- a) Must be 21 years old or older.
- b) Must complete application, pre-screening interview, training and post-interview.
- c) Must appear at court hearings.
- d) Must attend a minimum of ten (12) hours on-going training sessions per year.
- e) Must commit to the program for approximately one year (training and one case completion).
- f) Must be able to maintain confidentiality.

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES MUST HAVE

- a) Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- b) Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds (economic, cultural, educational) in a variety of settings.
- c) Ability to transport self to a variety of locations.
- d) Ability to deal appropriately with hostility, anger, and other emotions.