



EVALUATION OF COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL
ADVOCATES/GUARDIANS AD LITEM VOLUNTEER IMPACT

JUDICIAL SURVEY

Prepared for

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association

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Prepared by

*Organizational Research Services
Seattle, Washington*

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INTRODUCTION

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association contracted with Organizational Research Services (ORS), an independent research and evaluation firm, to evaluate the impact of Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardians ad litem (CASA/GAL) volunteers and program activities on judicial decision-making, court processes and case outcomes. Data to inform this evaluation was collected by surveying active judges and Juvenile Court commissioners that hear juvenile dependency cases and are connected to a local CASA/GAL program and/or work with CASA/GAL volunteers.

ORS worked in conjunction with CASA staff in the identification of the survey target population and the development of a survey instrument. Survey questions addressed the following topics through a series of closed- and open-ended questions:

- ◆ Demographic factors of respondents and the jurisdictions they serve;
- ◆ Factors considered in assigning CASA/GAL advocacy to a case;
- ◆ Roles CASA/GAL volunteers play in supporting judicial decision-making and court processes; and
- ◆ Satisfaction with local CASA/GAL programs and volunteers.

Packets containing an explanatory letter and a survey were mailed to 2,288 judges in courts throughout the United States. Respondents were given the option to return completed surveys by mail, or to complete them online.

This report summarizes the survey results and provides National CASA with insights on:

- ◆ Factors used by judges to select cases to assign CASA/GAL advocacy;
- ◆ Impact of CASA/GAL volunteers on judicial decision-making, court processes and case outcomes; and
- ◆ Role and effectiveness of CASA/GAL volunteers within the court system.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE SELECTION

The sample of judicial names and addresses was compiled by National CASA staff using mailing lists received from state and local CASA/GAL programs, judicial websites, and an internal database. The extent to which the sample is comprehensive and inclusive is unclear.¹

An attempt was made to only include judges on the list that preside over juvenile dependency cases and work in an area served by a CASA/GAL program. However, these criteria could not always be determined, in which case all juvenile judges from a respective state were included. Those names and addresses collected from state CASA directors, local CASA/GAL programs and the National CASA database likely met our target criteria. Those names and addresses obtained from web links likely included all Juvenile Court judges regardless of whether they heard dependency cases or were in an area served by the program. This occurred in eight states.

Additionally, we believe that there is some skew to the geographic distribution. For example, there are 198 judges in the sample from Indiana, but only 63 from California.² (See **APPENDIX B** for a complete list of sources by state). Further focused qualitative data collection may provide additional insight into these issues.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Prior to administration the survey was reviewed the National CASA Judicial Liaison Committee and pilot tested by four judges selected by National CASA.

Survey administration was conducted through a mailing in early June 2005 that was successfully sent to 2,288 judges and commissioners in courts throughout the United States. The mailing included a cover letter explaining the project, a copy of the survey and a postage paid return envelope. (See **APPENDIX A** for a copy of the cover letter and survey.)

Judges and commissioners were asked to complete the survey if they 1) are currently (or have been during the past two years) connected to a local CASA/GAL program and/or work with CASA/GAL volunteers, and 2) hear juvenile dependency cases. All

¹ North Dakota and New Jersey are the only two states not represented in the sample; there are no CASA/GAL programs in North Dakota and the AOC in New Jersey requested not to participate.

² We have also not yet determined whether the response rate from judges included in the National CASA database is disproportionate with those of other sources, though it is possible to determine this with additional data collection.

respondents were given the option of completing and returning the paper survey or completing the survey online. Each judge was assigned a six-digit code to allow for tracking. This code was printed on the surveys and respondents were asked to input this code when completing the survey online.

In an attempt to boost the response rate three email reminders were sent to non-respondent contacts with email addresses and a reminder letter was sent to all non-respondent contacts without email addresses in June and July 2005.³ Data collection was closed on July 15, 2005.

The overall response rate was 24.6 percent, with 564 judges and commissioners completing the survey. Of these responses, 101 were received online and 463 were returned by mail. Response rates from geographic regions defined by National CASA ranged from 17.53 percent in the Northeast region to 30.28 percent in the Midwest. In regard to state response rates, Nevada, Arkansas and Minnesota all had response rates over sixty percent; Washington DC and Hawaii did not submit any responses. (See **TABLE 1** for a list of states by Region and Regional Response Rates, and **APPENDIX B** for a list of state response rates.)

TABLE 1: Regional Response Rates (n=563)⁴

Region	Total Contacts	Total Respondents	Response Rate
Midwest (MN, IA, MO, WI, MI, IN, OH, IL)	393	119	30.28%
Mountain Plains (MT, CO, KS, ND, SD, WY, NE, OK, NM)	263	74	28.14%
West (WA, OR, CA, NV, ID, AZ, AK, HI, UT)	295	76	25.76%
Mid-Atlantic (DC, MD, VA, WV, NC, SC, KY, TN)	455	117	25.71%
Southern Gulf (AR, LA, MS, AL, GA, FL, TX)	420	96	22.86%
Northeast (MA, VT, NH, ME, RI, NY, CT, PA, DE)	462	81	17.53%

We also examined response rates by the type of survey returned. Of those respondents that received email notification of the survey, a greater number responded by paper survey than by using the online tool (17.1% paper versus 12.9% online). It is important to note that the overall response rate is higher among those who received e-mail invitations to participate (30.0% versus 23.7%). (See **TABLE 2**)

³ We were provided with accurate email addresses for 333 judges and commissioners. Also, the State Director in North Carolina asked that reminders NOT be sent to judges in that state.

⁴ One survey was returned with the identification code removed so we were not able to determine the geographical location of the respondent.

TABLE 2: Response Rates by Survey Type

Survey Type	Email – YES (n=333)	Email – NO (n=1,955)	TOTAL (n=2,288)
Paper Response	17.1% (57)	20.7% (405)	20.2% (462)
Online Response	12.9% (43)	3.0% (58)	4.4% (101)
Overall Response	30.0% (100)	23.7% (463)	24.6% (563)

The survey included nineteen questions about the following topic areas: demographic factors, processes used to select cases to assign CASA/GAL advocacy, the role CASA/GAL volunteers play in supporting decision-making and court processes, and satisfaction with local CASA/GAL programs and volunteers.

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

We first examined the frequencies and means of all of the variables to determine the attitudes and behaviors of the full sample. We followed up by using a combination of independent samples t-tests, Analysis of Variance and Chi-Square analysis to explore differences between various respondent subgroups on the key measures of interest. We relied on a standard measure of $p < .05$ for tests of statistical significance.

The respondent subgroups utilized in the analysis are as follows:

- ♦ **Parties to Cases** (Yes versus No),
- ♦ **Communities Served** (Urban, Suburban, Rural, Tribal)⁵,
- ♦ **Years Involved with CASA** (< 2 years, 3-10 years, 11+ years),
- ♦ **CASA Geographic Region** (Western, Mountain Plains, Midwest, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southern Gulf), and
- ♦ **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases** ($\leq 25\%$, 26-75%, and $>76\%$).

In addition, we also computed three indices to aggregate rankings across questions related to various facets of the work of CASA/GAL volunteers. Creating an index is an effective way of reducing data for analysis and involves using a Reliability Analysis to assess the levels of inter-correlation between unique items to determine whether a single

⁵ Since the categories of Communities Served are not mutually exclusive it was not possible to use standard comparison methods and concurrent tests of significance in exploring differences between those who served different types of communities. We typically present the relevant measures across the subgroups in the tables, but make no conclusions about the levels of statistical significance for differences among the groups.

composite measure can be used as a proxy for each of the unique items. A highly coherent index is one with a high reliability coefficient (i.e., an alpha coefficient of .70 or greater). The alpha coefficients for each of the indices are presented below:

- ♦ **Input** provided by CASA/GAL volunteers to inform court decisions (average across eight items with alpha coefficient = .886),
- ♦ **Usefulness** of activities carried out by CASA/GAL volunteers to inform court decisions (average across eight items with alpha coefficient = .846), and
- ♦ **Effectiveness** of CASA/GAL volunteers in engaging in activities that support court processes (average across six items with alpha coefficient = .862).

We also summarized general themes from qualitative responses where appropriate. See **APPENDIX D** for a complete list of qualitative responses.

KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings reflect analysis of data gathered from survey respondents and are not meant to attribute higher or lower quality to any one program model or geographic region. Rather they illustrate patterns observed through analysis of the data. These findings are reported in the same order as that of the questions on the survey tool.

SURVEY RESULTS

- ♦ On average, 47.9 percent of the judges' dependency cases are *assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer*. About 29 percent report that over three-quarters of their cases are assigned to a volunteer. **Assignment Rates** are higher for those judges in jurisdictions where volunteers are "**Parties to Cases**" and that are situated in **Rural** areas, but considerably lower among **Northeastern** judges. (See **TABLES 8 and 15**)
- ♦ The judges consider a wide range of *factors in assigning CASA/GAL advocacy to cases*. Judges rated the extent to which they consider various factors on a five-point scale ranging from "not very much" to "a great deal".
 - ♦ They are more likely to consider: **Placement Factors** related to *instability of the current placement* (average=4.10), **Case Factors** related to *conflicting case information* (average=4.31), and *concerns about implementation of services* (average=4.10), and **Abuse/Neglect Factors** related to cases with *extreme neglect, physical or sexual abuse* (average ratings exceed 3.98). They are less likely to consider **Family Factors** such as *parental incarceration* (average=2.93) and *number of siblings* (average=2.53). (See **TABLE 11**)
 - ♦ We observe interesting patterns in assessments of these factors when looking at different subgroups defined by the **Percent Assignment Rates**. With respect to **Placement** and **Case Factors**, the extent to which these factors are considered remains high among judges in jurisdictions at 75 percent or less assignment rates, yet declines precipitously among those in jurisdictions with high volunteer assignment rates (i.e., +76%). Conversely, with the **Developmental/Medical** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors** we observe a reverse U-shaped pattern where the assessments of the factors are highest for those in jurisdictions with 26-75 percent assignment, yet lower among those with either low and high assignment rates (i.e., <= 25% or +76%). (See **TABLES 12-14**)

- ◆ **Northeastern** respondents are less likely than those in other regions to consider **Placement** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors** in their decisions about volunteer advocacy. As an example, the overall sample average for the item about *case involves sexual abuse* is 3.98; among **Northeastern** judges this average is 3.33. **Northeastern** judges are also among the most likely to consider **Case Factors** in the decision about assigning advocacy. (See **TABLES 12-14**)
- ◆ The judges clearly value the *input from CASA/GAL volunteers in informing court decisions*. All of the average rankings exceed 3.68 (on a five-point scale ranging from “not very much” to “a great deal”), and the average is 4.10 for the computed **Input Index**. The respondents most value input on issues related to *placement stability and permanence* (average=4.47) and *safety of children while in placement* (average=4.33). The assessments of volunteer input are somewhat higher for judges with **more experience with the CASA program** and those in jurisdictions with **Assignment Rates** over 75 percent. (See **TABLE 16**)
- ◆ The judges report that the *CASA/GAL volunteers’ activities have been “very useful” in making decisions about case outcomes*. The assessments of usefulness exceed an average of 3.96 for each of the items and the average for a computed **Usefulness Index** is 4.36. The assessments of the usefulness of volunteer activities are somewhat higher for judges with **more experience with the CASA program** and those in jurisdictions with **Assignment Rates** over 75 percent. (See **TABLE 17**)
- ◆ The judges report that the *CASA/GAL volunteers are “very effective” in engaging in a wide range of activities to support court processes*. The volunteers are most effective in *considering the best interests of children* (average=4.71) and *monitoring the case* (average=4.52). The average for a computed **Effectiveness Index** is 4.39. (See **TABLE 20**)
- ◆ Respondents frequently *incorporate volunteer recommendations into hearing’s court orders*. Over 70 percent responded to this item with a ‘4’ or ‘5’ on a five-point frequency scale. Those judges where volunteers are “**Parties to Cases**” are more likely to report that the recommendations are **incorporated into the court order**.⁶ (See **TABLES 18-19**)

⁶ In a jurisdiction where volunteers are “Parties to Cases,” judges appoint the program volunteers to serve as guardians ad litem, and it becomes the responsibility of the advocate to investigate the situation and present a report and recommendations to the judge. In contrast to a “Friend of the Court” model, volunteers conferred “Parties to Case” status have more formal standing in court.

- ♦ There is uncertainty whether there are *sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet caseloads* (average=2.55). This sentiment is further echoed in some of the open-ended comments of the respondents noting concerns about the availability of volunteers for cases. We find even lower agreement among judges in jurisdictions with low **Assignment Rates** and those from **Western** and **Southern Gulf Regions**. (See **TABLE 21**)
- ♦ In general the judges agree that the *work of the CASA/GAL volunteers has been of high quality, beneficial to their decision-making and beneficial to the children and families they serve*. (See **TABLE 21-22**)
 - ◆ Over 97 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that children and families are better served because of CASA/GAL volunteer involvement (average=4.66); almost 97 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that the type and quality of information the CASA/GAL volunteers provide to me is beneficial to my decision- making (average=4.52).
 - ◆ Over 85 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that CASA/GAL volunteers receive adequate training to prepare them for their advocacy role. (average=4.14).
 - ◆ Over 80 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that *I assign CASA/GAL volunteers to the most difficult cases* (average=4.32).
 - ◆ In addition, respondents are highly satisfied with the program and volunteers: 90 percent rated their level of satisfaction with local CASA/GAL programs and with CASA/GAL volunteers as a ‘4’ or ‘5’ on a five-point satisfaction.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

There are some questions about the overall representation and inclusiveness of the sample.

- ♦ The contact information for judges came from multiple sources, including local CASA/GAL programs, the CASA national database and judicial websites. In instances where the information was gathered from the judicial websites, it is possible that the overall population includes some Juvenile Court judges who either work in jurisdictions not served by a local CASA/GAL program or who do not hear dependency cases.
- ♦ Given the mixture of different sources, we observe instances where the sample distribution seems discordant with what would be expected across the states. For example, there are more judges in the population from states such as Indiana and Georgia than from California. Additionally, while there are twelve judges

in the overall population from Anchorage, Alaska, there is only one judge from San Francisco, California.

Several demographic characteristics of the sample are noted below:

- ♦ Overall, 24.6 percent of the judges responded to the survey. The response rates are highest among those in the Midwest (30.2%) and Mountain Plains (28.1%) regions, and considerably lower among Northeastern judges (17.5%).
- ♦ The response rate is higher among those judges with e-mail addresses (30.0%). We sent multiple mailings of the survey and several follow-up reminders to complete the survey on-line to this subset of the population.
- ♦ Over 54 percent of the respondents report serving Rural jurisdictions and 43 percent report serving an Urban jurisdiction.
- ♦ On average, the responding judges have been hearing Juvenile or Family Court dependency cases for 10.1 years. Over 22 percent of the respondents have heard cases for 15 years or more. On average, the judges have been involved with the CASA/GAL program for 8.9 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ♦ **Continue to work with local CASA/GAL programs in providing useful and relevant services to the local jurisdictions.** The findings suggest that most judges are highly satisfied with the work of the CASA/GAL programs and volunteers and believe that the input and recommendations the volunteers bring to the judicial process is very valuable. The National CASA can build upon this sentiment by working with the local programs in their efforts to improve services, expand their volunteer base, and collaborate effectively with the local jurisdictions.

- ♦ **Utilize the information about relevant factors for advocacy selection in helping local programs work more efficiently with the local jurisdictions.** The findings point to some variability in the extent to which particular factors are considered in the decisions about case advocacy, and to differences in relevant factors based on the assignment rates and region. Draw upon these findings to help local programs share information about what the volunteers can do for the local jurisdictions and in which situations these volunteers might of greatest assistance. This, in turn, might encourage greater assignment of dependency cases to the program when feasible. The findings consistently show that greater case assignment and more experience with the CASA/GAL program contribute to more positive support and sentiment for the program and its volunteers.

- ♦ **Use the study findings to tailor training, communication and coordination efforts in local jurisdictions.** The differences in various measures across the subgroups defined by geography and characteristics of the jurisdictions affirm that the local programs provide services under a complex set of factors and circumstances in different judicial systems. The results of this study may help local programs better understand the factors that judges in unique settings consider in their advocacy decisions and also better understand the relevant laws, procedures, processes, and statues that influence local judicial decision-making. It seems that for local programs to sustain the strong connections to the local jurisdiction it is necessary for volunteers and program staff to understand as much as possible about the local environment.

- ♦ **Continue with efforts to recruit and retain local CASA/GAL volunteers.** The findings clearly suggest that the only real area of dissatisfaction is that there are not “sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet the caseloads.” This sentiment is echoed in many open-ended comments by the respondents. It is clear that once the judges start to work with the local programs they understand and appreciate the benefits of what the volunteers can contribute to the judicial decision-making process. Perhaps there are ways that local programs and judicial representatives can work together to bring more interested individuals into local programs and provide them with support and motivation to stay with the program.
- ♦ **Examine differences in patterns among those judges working with the program using a “Parties to Cases” model versus a “Friend of the Court” model.** Volunteers working in the first model are conferred a more “formal” status in the court proceedings and this is demonstrated in the study by the fact that judges report that volunteers who are “Parties to Cases” provide greater input into the court decisions and are more likely to have recommendations incorporated into the hearing’s court order. The question is whether this distinction is important in helping local programs better serve the overall interests of the court.
- ♦ **Investigate what is different and/or unique about the judges and jurisdictions in the Northeastern region.** The findings show that Northeastern judges have the lowest assignment rates, are the least likely to consider the various factors for advocacy selection, and are the least likely to have volunteer recommendations incorporated into the court orders. In addition, judges in this region demonstrated the lowest survey response rates. It is worth some effort to try and understand what might be different about the local environments for the CASA/GAL programs situated in Northeastern states and work with the programs in this region to address any systematic challenges that have arisen.
- ♦ **Encourage the development of a comprehensive national database of juvenile court dependency judges for continuing education and advocacy purposes.** The difficulty in assembling a representative sampling frame for this study highlights the need for a full and accurate record of all judges involved in juvenile dependency hearings. Not only would this allow for ongoing data collection and research efforts, but it would also assist National CASA, as well as state and local CASA programs in providing ongoing education to judges about the uses and benefits of CASA/GAL programs and volunteers.
- ♦ **Expand National CASA’s knowledge of program impacts and efficacy through on-going research efforts.** The findings of this study point to many questions about the CASA/GAL program’s role and contributions to judicial decision-making processes and case outcomes. National CASA will continue to benefit from additional quantitative and qualitative data collection from local

program staff and representatives of the judicial systems. Some of these studies might include:

- ◆ Surveys including more detailed questions about the different decision-making processes targeted to court representatives in jurisdictions with different geographic and system characteristics.
- ◆ In-depth interviews with selected judges focusing on process and procedural issues related to how they work with the volunteers and the local programs.
- ◆ In-depth interviews with a sample of judges who may express more concerns or questions about CASA program operations. It is often the case that those individuals who are “less satisfied” actually offer the most insight about program operations and effectiveness.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following summary of findings reflects demographic frequencies of respondents, averages, and statistically significant patterns observed through analysis of data gathered from survey respondents. These findings are reported in the same order as that of the questions on the survey tool. A complete record of data tables can be found in **Appendix C**.

RESPONDENT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

The majority of respondents indicated that their *court serves* a Rural (54.3%) or Urban (43.0%) community. An additional 28.9 percent report that their court serves a Suburban community, while 2.1 percent indicated that the court serves a Tribal community. (See **TABLE 3**)

TABLE 3: Community Served by the Court

	n	Percent of Respondents*
Rural	306	54.3%
Urban	242	43.0%
Suburban	163	28.9%
Tribal	15	2.1%

* Responses are not mutually exclusive and total percentage sums to greater than 100% since the respondents could serve multiple types of communities in their jurisdiction

There is fairly even representation of respondents across the six *CASA geographic regions*. The greatest representation is from the Midwest (21.1%) and Mid-Atlantic (20.8%) regions; the smallest percentages reside in Western (13.7%) and Mountain Plains (13.0%) regions. (See **TABLE 4**)

TABLE 4: CASA Geographic Regions

	n	Percent of Respondents
Midwest	119	21.1%
Mid-Atlantic	117	20.8%
Southern Gulf	96	17.1%
Northeast	81	14.4%
Western	77	13.7%
Mountain Plains	73	13.0%

A high percentage of respondents have substantial *experience hearing Juvenile or Family Court dependency/abuse and neglect cases and working with CASA/GAL programs*. Almost 32 percent of the respondents have been involved with a CASA/GAL program for 11 years or more. The average number of years hearing Juvenile or Family Court

dependency/abuse and neglect cases is 10.1; the average number of years involved with a CASA/GAL program is 8.9.⁷ (See TABLE 5)

TABLE 5: Judges Involvement and Experience

	Years Hearing Juvenile/Family Court Dependency Cases		Years Involved with CASA/GAL Program	
	<i>Average = 10.1 years</i>		<i>Average = 8.9 years</i>	
YEARS	n	Percent of Respondents	n	Percent of Respondents
2 Years or Less	56	10.1%	55	10.0%
3-5	115	20.8%	138	25.2%
6-10	155	28.0%	181	33.0%
11-15	104	18.8%	92	16.8%
15+	123	22.2%	82	15.0%

Sixty percent of the respondents report that *CASA/GAL volunteers* are “Parties to Cases” in their court jurisdiction. We examined whether this measure varied across the **Communities Served** and **Regions**. We found the highest rates of volunteers serving as “Parties to Cases” in Midwestern (71.6%) and Western regions (67.5%) and the lowest among those in the Mountain Plains region (42.3%). (See TABLES 6-7)

TABLE 6: CASA/GAL Volunteers as “Parties to Cases”

	n	Percent of Respondents
Yes	327	60.0%
No	218	40.0%

TABLE 7: Volunteers as “Parties to Cases” by Geographic Region

	Percent with Volunteers as “Parties to Cases”
Midwest	71.6%
Western	67.5%
Northeast	62.3%
Southern Gulf	58.7%
Mid-Atlantic	53.2%
Mountain Plains	42.3%
OVERALL	60.0%

⁷ The averages are based on a computation using midpoints of the specified response categories. The midpoints are as follows: 2 Years or Less=1, 3-5=4, 6-10=8, 11-15=13, 15+=20.

SELECTION OF CASES FOR CASA/GAL ADVOCACY

The second section of the survey addressed questions relevant to the *selection of cases for CASA/GAL advocacy*. The respondents provided information on the processes supporting selection and assignment of cases and offered assessments of the role of different factors in this process.

Slightly more than 35 percent of the respondents report that less than 25 percent of their dependency cases are *assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer in their court jurisdiction*. In contrast, about 29 percent report that over 75 percent of their cases are assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer. Overall, 47.9 percent of the judges' dependency cases are assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer.⁸ (See **TABLE 8**)

TABLE 8: Percentage of Dependency Cases Assigned to a CASA/GAL Volunteer

	n	Percent of Respondents
None	10	1.8%
1-25 percent	191	34.5%
26-50 percent	91	16.5%
51-75 percent	75	13.6%
76-99 percent	96	17.4%
ALL	63	11.4%
I Don't Know	27	4.9%
OVERALL	526	47.9%

Over 80 percent of respondents indicate that *some form of written source is used to assign cases to CASA/GAL volunteers*. The most common sources are Court Protocols (41.0%) or State Statutes (39.1%). (See **TABLE 9**)

TABLE 9: Written Sources Used to Assign Cases to a CASA/GAL Volunteer

	n	Percent of Respondents*
Court Protocol	229	41.0%
State Statute	218	39.1%
Written Policy	103	18.4%
Grading Matrix	30	5.4%
Other	32	5.7%
<i>NO Written Sources</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>19.5%</i>

* Responses are not mutually exclusive and total percentage sums to greater than 100 percent.

⁸ The average percentage of dependency cases assigned is computed by using the midpoints of the specified response categories. The midpoints are as follows: None=0, 1-25=12.5, 26-50=37.5, 51-75=62.5, 76-99=87.5, ALL=100.

Over 79 percent of the respondents reported that they are *involved in the decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case*. (See **TABLE 10**)

TABLE 10: Judges Involved in Decision to Assign CASA/GAL Advocacy

	n	Percent of Respondents
Yes	436	79.4%
No	113	20.6%

These individuals then reported the extent to which they considered a variety of **Family, Placement, Developmental/Medical, Case** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors** in the decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case. (See **TABLE 11**)

- ♦ The most influential factor is whether there is *conflicting case information or highly adversarial parties* (average = 4.31, 63.8% consider this “a great deal”). Other factors related to *concerns about implementation, cases involving abuse or neglect, and instability of current placements* are also strongly considered in the decision-making process.
- ♦ The respondents are less inclined to consider **Family Factors** related to the *number of siblings* (average=2.53) and *parental incarceration* (average=2.93) or *status of the case in relation to ASFA* (average=3.20).
- ♦ The majority of the item averages range from three to four on a five-point scale. This suggests that there is room for change in these measures over time.

TABLE 11: Factors in Assigning CASA/GAL Advocacy to a Case

<i>To what extent do you consider these factors...</i>	n	Average*	Percent “A Great Deal”	Percent “Not Very Much”
<i>Family Factors</i>				
Parental incarceration	366	2.93	21.3%	27.3%
Number of siblings	362	2.53	10.5%	36.2%
<i>Placement Factors</i>				
Instability of current placement	376	4.10	52.1%	8.5%
Number and length of prior placements	373	3.94	48.0%	10.5%
Re-abuse while in out-of-home placement	368	3.72	44.3%	13.9%
<i>Developmental/Medical Factors</i>				
Child/Youth is medically vulnerable/fragile	376	3.89	41.8%	8.0%
Child/Youth has developmental delays	374	3.60	28.1%	8.6%
Child/Youth is possibly overmedicated on psychotropic drugs	363	3.50	32.0%	14.9%
<i>Case Factors</i>				
Conflicting case information, highly adversarial parties	381	4.31	63.8%	6.8%
Concerns about implementation of services	377	4.10	50.1%	6.1%
Issues related to reunification plans	376	3.98	41.5%	6.4%
Status of case in relation to ASFA	338	3.20	21.6%	17.5%
<i>Abuse/Neglect Factors</i>				
Current case involves extreme neglect	382	4.14	54.7%	7.9%
Current case involves severe physical abuse	382	4.07	51.6%	8.6%
Current Case involves sexual abuse	381	3.98	48.0%	8.9%

* Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal

We also reviewed qualitative responses from respondents regarding *other factors they consider a great deal in (their) decision-making to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case*. The majority of responses could be included within the previously noted assignment factors; however, a few additional factors listed below were also identified. (Select quotations illustrating these themes are italicized below; see **APPENDIX D** for a complete list of responses.)

- ◇ Age of the child.
 - ◆ *Age – most kids up to age 12 we assign a GAL.*
 - ◆ *Our CASA agency focuses on children ages birth to three years.*
- ◇ Need for additional representation or support for the child.
 - ◆ *If I sense that a child could use a friend who could advocate for them as a friend.*
 - ◆ *When I feel adults have their own agenda and no one is really listening to the needs/wants of the child.*
- ◇ Availability of CASA/GAL volunteers.
 - ◆ *All assignments are based on availability.*
 - ◆ *Availability of a CASA/GAL volunteer – we have too few for the caseload.*
- ◇ Recommendations or requests from involved parties.
 - ◆ *Recommendations of attorneys, particularly children’s attorneys, for whatever reason.*
 - ◆ *Request of a party of interest and/or social service agency.*
- ◇ Mental health, behavioral, educational, or general health issues of the child.
 - ◆ *Child has frequent runaway from home behavior or is incorrigible at home or school.*
 - ◆ *Child has history of mental health issues.*
- ◇ Mental health or addiction issues of the parent(s).
 - ◆ *If parent(s) are charged with drug charges.*
 - ◆ *Mental health of parents/ education or experience deficits of parents; criminal activity of parents.*
- ◇ Complex and difficult cases on which the court would like additional information (i.e., termination of parental rights).
 - ◆ *Any case where another set of eyes and ears may help; where children need more services than usual – vulnerable.*
 - ◆ *Potential for failure of reunification and termination of parental rights.*

We investigated whether there were any differences in the importance of factors in the decision-making process across different segments of the respondent sample defined by “**Parties to Cases**” status, **Years Involved with CASA**, **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases**, **Communities Served**, and **Region**. A full set of tables illustrating the averages for the individual factors across the different sample groups is presented in **APPENDIX C**. The following overall patterns emerged in the comparisons across groups. (See **TABLES 12-14**)

- ◊ In general there were few differences in the assessments of all factors when looking at subgroups defined by “**Parties to Cases**” status and **Years Involved with CASA**. We do observe that respondents in jurisdictions where volunteers are “**Parties to Cases**” are more likely to consider **Abuse/Neglect Factors**, especially with respect to *cases involving sexual abuse*.
- ◊ The **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases** in a jurisdiction seems to shape individuals assessments of the roles of different factors. The impact of this measure varies across different categories of decision-making factors.
 - ◆ With respect to **Placement** and **Case Factors** we typically observe a decline in the assessments of how likely these factors are considered among those in jurisdictions where assignment is over 75 percent. A particular example is *reunification plans* where the assessments decline to an average of 3.54 among those in that subgroup.
 - ◆ A reverse U-shaped pattern emerges in the assessments for the **Developmental/Medical** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors**. Judges in jurisdictions with 26-75 percent Assignment Rates are the most likely to consider these types of factors, while the assessments are considerably lower among with low or high assignment rates (i.e., <= 25% or +76%).
- ◊ We don’t observe consistent differences in assessments among those who serve different types of communities. The most noticeable disparities are with respect to the **Developmental/Medical Factors**; those respondents serving *Urban* communities are more likely to consider factors such as *developmental delays*, *medical vulnerability*, and *overmedication* in the decision-making process.
- ◊ It does appear that **Region** is an important variable in understanding some of the factors used in decision-making about CASA/GAL advocacy. In the case of **Placement Factors** we find that respondents from the *Northeast* are far less likely to consider factors related to the placement situation than those from other regions (specifically in contrast to those in the *Western* or *Southern Gulf Regions*). We observe a similar pattern in the assessments of **Developmental/Medical** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors**.

TABLE 12: Placement Factors in Advocacy Decision by Respondent Subgroups

	<i>Placement Factors</i>		
	Re-Abuse in Out-of Home Placement	Instability of Current Placement	Number/Length of Prior Placements
OVERALL	3.72	4.10	3.94
Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases			
<= 25 percent	3.71	4.17	3.99
26-75 percent	3.82	4.22	4.08
76+ percent	3.64	3.78	3.64
CASA Geographic Region			
Western	3.91	4.29	4.11
Mountain Plains	3.71	4.20	3.98
Midwest	3.59	4.08	3.92
Northeast	3.18	3.52	3.43
Mid-Atlantic	3.75	4.13	3.95
Southern Gulf	4.04	4.25	4.12

To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case...

Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: $p < .05$

TABLE 13: Developmental/Medical and Case Factors in Advocacy Decision by Respondent Subgroups

	<i>Developmental/Medical Factors</i>			<i>Case Factors</i>		
	Developmental Delays	Medically Vulnerable	Overmedicated on Drugs	Conflicting Case Information	Reunification Plans	Implementation of Services
OVERALL	3.60	3.89	3.50	4.31	3.98	4.10
Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases						
<= 25 percent	3.44	3.73	3.28	4.48	4.10	4.19
26-75 percent	3.82	4.15	3.79	4.46	4.15	4.23
76+ percent	3.53	3.71	3.44	3.81	3.54	3.74
Communities Served*						
Urban	3.72	4.05	3.66	4.37	4.10	4.21
Suburban	3.51	3.76	3.32	4.35	4.05	4.06
Rural	3.54	3.85	3.47	4.34	3.99	4.05
CASA Geographic Region						
Western	3.98	4.17	3.93	3.96	3.93	4.00
Mountain Plains	3.37	3.73	3.18	4.40	3.96	3.82
Midwest	3.41	3.75	3.32	4.30	3.82	4.05
Northeast	3.32	3.50	3.19	4.38	4.30	4.36
Mid-Atlantic	3.68	3.82	3.65	4.33	3.87	4.00
Southern Gulf	3.83	4.24	3.69	4.42	4.12	4.33

To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case...

Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: $p < .05$

** Unable to test for significant differences across the Communities Served since they are not mutually exclusive response categories*

TABLE 14: Abuse/Neglect Factors in Advocacy Decision by Respondent Subgroups

	<i>Abuse/Neglect Factors</i>		
	Case Involves Sexual Abuse	Case Involves Severe Physical Abuse	Case Involves Extreme Neglect
OVERALL	3.98	4.07	4.14
“Parties to Cases”			
No	3.82	3.94	4.01
Yes	4.10	4.16	4.24
Years Involved with CASA			
< 2	4.38	4.44	4.49
3-10	3.94	4.03	4.13
11+	3.96	4.03	4.06
Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases			
<= 25 percent	3.85	3.91	4.01
26-75 percent	4.24	4.36	4.41
76+ percent	3.84	3.88	3.90
CASA Geographic Region			
Western	4.05	4.04	4.04
Mountain Plains	3.68	3.76	3.90
Midwest	4.12	4.20	4.33
Northeast	3.33	3.51	3.56
Mid-Atlantic	4.18	4.19	4.27
Southern Gulf	4.18	4.32	4.33

To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case...

Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: $p < .05$

TABLE 15 presents the average percent of *dependency cases assigned to CASA/GAL volunteers* across various segments of the population. This average is higher among respondents in jurisdictions where volunteers are “**Parties to Cases,**” and where they serve more **Rural** or **Suburban** communities.

A telling finding is that percent assignment is substantially lower among respondents from the **Northeast Region** (average=32.4%). Coupled with our earlier findings that Northeast judges offer lower assessments of the importance of different selection factors, it raises the question of whether these judges interact with the local programs and volunteers to a sufficient extent to expect them to consider unique selection factors.

TABLE 15: Assignment of Dependency Cases by Respondent Subgroups

	Average Percent of Dependency Cases Assigned to CASA/GAL Volunteers
OVERALL SAMPLE	47.9%
“Parties to Cases”	
No	40.9%
Yes	52.8%
Years Involved with CASA	
< 2	43.4%
3-10	48.5%
11+	48.7%
Communities Served*	
Rural	52.5%
Suburban	47.2%
Urban	40.3%
CASA Geographic Region	
Western	53.2%
Mid-Atlantic	52.5%
Southern Gulf	49.9%
Midwest	48.9%
Mountain Plains	48.2%
Northeast	32.4%

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: $p < .05$

** Unable to test for significant differences across the Communities Served since they are not mutually exclusive response categories.*

ROLE CASA/GAL VOLUNTEERS PLAY IN SUPPORTING JUDICIAL DECISION-MAKING AND COURT PROCESSES

The third section of the survey examined the role that *CASA/GAL volunteers play in supporting judicial decision-making and court processes*. The questions focused on the types of input and activities the volunteers provide and their usefulness to courts in support of their judicial decision-making.

For the most part the respondents report that *input provided by volunteers has played an important role in informing court decisions*. The greatest input has been provided on issues related to *placement stability and permanence, safety of children while in placement, service provision, and placement with siblings*. We created an overall **Input Index**, aggregating the rankings across the issues. The sample average is 4.10 on a five-point scale ranging from “not very much” to “a great deal”. (See **TABLE 16**)

TABLE 16: Input from CASA/GAL Volunteers Informing Court Decisions

	n	Average*	Percent “A Great Deal”
Placement Stability and Permanence	540	4.47	60.0%
Safety of Children while in Placement and After Court Dismissal	520	4.33	59.0%
Service Provision	536	4.28	50.2%
Placement with Siblings	537	4.22	46.0%
Frequency of Visitation by Family of Origin	534	4.08	41.2%
Restrictiveness of Placement	536	3.96	35.1%
Location of Placement	536	3.82	34.1%
State’s Written Case Plans	529	3.68	28.7%
INDEX (average across all items)	543	4.10	

* Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal

We also reviewed qualitative responses from respondents regarding *other input from CASA/GAL volunteers (that) informs court decisions “a great deal”*. The vast majority of responses could be included within the previously noted categories; however, several respondents noted that they particularly value input from volunteers that address the issues listed below. (Select quotations illustrating these themes are also noted; see **APPENDIX D** for a complete list of responses).

- ♦ Promotes the child’s best interests, desires, or wishes.
 - ◆ *Needs of the child while in placement.*
 - ◆ *Relaying the wishes of the child.*
 - ◆ *Represent the child in determining what is in the best interest of the child, not necessarily the Department of Social Service or the parents.*
- ♦ In cases where conflict exists between involved parties (e.g., social worker and parent or the Bureau of Child Welfare).
 - ◆ *Dispute regarding facts between other parties to action or between parties and the Bureau of Child Welfare.*
 - ◆ *Conflict between social worker/other professionals and parent.*

- ◆ *How the parties and service providers are interacting or NOT to get the child moved forward. Red flags rise when CASA can't get people to talk to them.*

As expected, the respondents reported that the range of activities carried out by the *CASA/GAL volunteers have been “very useful” in helping make decisions about case outcomes.* The most useful activities have *involved interviews with the children/youth.* (average=4.70) and *written reports to the court* (average=4.56). The overall **Usefulness Index** average is 4.36 on a five-point scale ranging from “not useful” to “very useful.” (See **TABLE 17**)

TABLE 17: Usefulness of CASA/GAL Activities in Judicial Decision-Making

	n	Average*	Percent “Very Useful”
Contact/Interviews with child/youth	537	4.70	78.4%
Written Reports to the Court	537	4.56	67.4%
Contact/Interviews with Biological Parents	537	4.46	62.6%
Contact/Interviews with Foster Parents	536	4.39	56.0%
Contact/Interviews with Collaterals	536	4.39	57.5%
Verbal Testimony to the Court	521	4.21	51.1%
Contact/Interviews with Other Relatives	537	4.18	45.6%
Review of Records/Documents	533	3.96	42.8%
INDEX (average across all items)	545	4.36	

* Scale: 1-not useful, 3-somewhat useful, 5-very useful

Respondents frequently *incorporate volunteer recommendations into hearing’s court orders.* Over 70 percent responded with a ‘4’ or ‘5’ on a five-point scale ranging from “almost never” to “almost always” when asked how frequently they incorporate volunteer recommendations. The average rating for this item is 3.93. (See **TABLE 18**)

TABLE 18: Frequency with which CASA/GAL Volunteer Recommendations Become Incorporated into the Hearing’s Court Order

Average = 3.93	n	Percent of Respondents
Almost Always (5)	157	29.6%
4	227	42.8%
Sometimes (3)	116	21.9%
2	11	2.1%
Almost Never (1)	19	3.6%

We investigated whether there were any differences in the *input and usefulness measures across different segments of the respondent sample* defined by “**Parties to Cases**” status, **Years Involved with CASA**, **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases**, **Communities Served**, and **Region**. (A full set of tables illustrating the averages for the individual items across the different sample groups is presented in **APPENDIX C**.) The tables in the main report present the comparisons across the **Input** and **Usefulness Indices**. The following overall patterns emerged in the comparisons across groups. (See **TABLE 19**)

- ◇ We observe that respondents from jurisdictions where CASA/GAL volunteers are “**Parties to Cases**” are more likely to value volunteers input on issues and incorporate recommendations into the hearing’s court order. A further analysis of the **Input** items indicates significant differences between the “**Parties to Cases**” status groups on all measures with the exception of *placement stability*, *location of placement*, and *service provision*.
- ◇ Respondents with greater experience with CASA/GAL programs are more likely to rely on input from the volunteers on a range of issues. We see a significant increase in the **Input Index** across the three groups defined by **Years of Involvement with CASA**. For each of the individual issues the highest ranking of input is provided by those with *11 or more years of experience* with the program. In looking at the usefulness of specific activities, we observe the greatest disparity in rankings of less and more experienced judges with respect to the volunteers’ *review of records*.
- ◇ The assessments of *input*, *usefulness* and *incorporation of volunteer recommendations* are typically higher among judges with higher **Assignment Rates** of volunteers to cases. It seems clear that greater interaction and exposure to program volunteers contributes to more positive assessments of what the volunteers bring to the judicial decision-making process.

TABLE 19: Volunteer Input and Usefulness by Respondent Subgroups

	Input Index	Usefulness Index	Recommendations Incorporated into Order*
OVERALL SAMPLE	4.10	4.36	3.93
“Parties to Cases”			
No	3.99	4.32	3.82
Yes	4.18	4.38	4.02
Years Involved with CASA			
< 2	3.87	4.23	3.67
3-10	4.05	4.32	3.95
11+	4.26	4.45	3.99
Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases			
<= 25 percent	3.93	4.24	3.79
26-75 percent	4.09	4.33	3.94
76+ percent	4.35	4.57	4.22
Communities Served			
Urban	4.13	4.41	3.98
Suburban	4.11	4.35	3.94
Rural	4.10	4.34	3.94
CASA Geographic Region			
Western	4.17	4.30	3.99
Mountain Plains	4.14	4.42	3.94
Midwest	3.99	4.28	3.87
Northeast	4.15	4.26	3.78
Mid-Atlantic	4.09	4.42	3.98
Southern Gulf	4.15	4.44	4.00

* Scale: 1=almost never, 3=sometimes, 5=almost always

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: $p < .05$

SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL CASA/GAL PROGRAM AND VOLUNTEERS

The fourth section of the survey assessed the respondents *overall satisfaction with the CASA/GAL volunteers and local programs*. The judges were asked to consider volunteers’ effectiveness across different activities, and rate their agreement with different statements about the volunteers and the local programs.

The respondents report that the *CASA/GAL volunteers are “very effective” in engaging in a wide range of activities to support court processes*. The volunteers are most effective in *considering the best interests of children* (average=4.71) and *monitoring the case* (average=4.52), and slightly less effective in *assisting with permanent placement for the child/youth* (average=4.13). We created an overall **Effectiveness Index**, aggregating the rankings across the issues. The sample average is quite high: 4.39 on a five-point scale ranging from “not effective” to “very effective.” (See **TABLE 20**)

TABLE 20: Effectiveness of CASA/GAL Volunteers

<i>CASA/GAL Volunteers Activities</i>	N	Average*	Percent “Very Effective”
Considering the best interests of children	541	4.71	76.2%
Monitoring the case	544	4.52	60.1%
Preparing information for the court	544	4.43	53.9%
Working with others in the court system	546	4.34	51.1%
Researching case facts	541	4.25	48.2%
Assisting with permanent placement for the child/youth	536	4.13	44.0%
INDEX (average across all items)	548	4.39	

* Scale: 1-not effective, 3-somewhat effective, 5-very effective

There is a general consensus that judges tend to *assign the CASA/GAL volunteers to the most difficult cases*. Over 80 percent of the respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement, and the average level of agreement is 4.32 on a five-point scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” (See **TABLE 21**)

For the most part, the respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with statements about their *satisfaction with different activities and functions carried out by the CASA/GAL volunteers* (i.e., making appropriate recommendations, carrying out work appropriately, serving children and families). There is moderate agreement that *volunteers receive adequate training to prepare them for advocacy roles* (average=4.14) and over 97 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that *children and families are better served because of CASA/GAL volunteer involvement*.

There is some general concern about the *availability of volunteers for court caseloads*. Only 5.6 percent of judges “strongly agree” and an additional 24.4 percent “agree” with the statement that there are *sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet my caseload*. The average for this item is 2.55 on the five-point scale.

TABLE 21: Agreement Items – Volunteers/Program Functions and Quality

	N	Average*	Percent “Strongly Disagree, Disagree, or Neither”	Percent “Agree”	Percent “Strongly Agree”
Children and families are better served because of CASA/GAL volunteer involvement	545	4.66	2.8%	27.7%	69.5%
The personal knowledge that CASA/GAL volunteers about the children in their cases is beneficial to my decision-making	545	4.58	3.5%	34.7%	61.8%
The type and quality of information that CASA/GAL volunteers provide me is beneficial to my decision-making	547	4.52	3.3%	39.5%	57.2%
CASA/GAL volunteers make appropriate recommendations	544	4.37	5.0%	52.9%	42.1%
I assign CASA/GAL volunteers to the most difficult cases	496	4.32	19.3%	23.0%	57.7%
CASA/GAL volunteers carry out their work appropriately	543	4.20	12.6%	52.5%	35.0%
CASA/GAL volunteers receive adequate training to prepare them for their advocacy role	527	4.14	14.3%	54.5%	31.3%
There are sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet my caseload	536	2.55	70.0%	24.4%	5.6%

*Scale: 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4- agree, 5-strongly agree

The respondents are *highly satisfied with the CASA/GAL programs and volunteers*. On both items, over 90 percent rated their level of satisfaction with local CASA/GAL programs and with CASA/GAL volunteers as a ‘4’ or ‘5’ on a five-point scale ranging from “not satisfied” to “very satisfied”. The average satisfaction for both items is 4.52. (See **TABLE 22**)

TABLE 22: Satisfaction with local CASA/GAL Programs and Volunteers

	<i>Satisfaction with Local CASA/GAL Programs</i>		<i>Satisfaction with CASA/GAL Volunteers</i>	
	<i>Average = 4.52</i>		<i>Average = 4.52</i>	
	n	Percent of Respondents	n	Percent of Respondents
Very Satisfied	346	62.8%	339	61.7%
4	152	27.6%	165	30.1%
Somewhat Satisfied	48	8.7%	40	7.3%
2	2	0.4%	2	0.4%
Not Satisfied	3	0.5%	3	0.5%

We investigated whether there were any differences in the satisfaction measures across different segments of the respondent sample defined by “**Parties to Cases**” status, **Years Involved with CASA**, **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases**, **Communities Served**, and **Region**.

A full set of tables illustrating the averages for the individual items across the different sample groups is presented in **APPENDIX C**. The tables in the main report present the comparisons of the **Effectiveness Index** and some of the agreement statements. The following overall patterns emerged in the comparisons across groups.

In general, *perceived effectiveness and satisfaction is higher among those judges with a high percentage of cases assigned to volunteers*. For many of the items, we observe a precipitous jump in satisfaction ratings among those with 76 percent or more assignment of cases. This is even true for questions about *sufficient volunteers for the caseload*. (See **TABLES 23-25**)

The assessments of satisfaction are fairly consistent across different segments of the population defined by type of **Community Served** and **Region**, though we do find that judges from the Southern Gulf and Western regions are more likely to disagree that there are *sufficient volunteers for the caseload*. (See **TABLE 25**)

TABLE 23: Effectiveness of CASA/GAL Volunteers by Respondent Subgroups

	EFFECTIVENESS Index
OVERALL SAMPLE	4.39
“Parties to Cases”	
No	4.37
Yes	4.41
Years Involved with CASA	
< 2	4.35
3-10	4.38
11+	4.42
% Assignment of Dependency Cases	
<= 25 percent	4.30
26-75 percent	4.35
76+ percent	4.56
Communities Served	
Urban	4.44
Suburban	4.43
Rural	4.38

How effective are CASA/GAL volunteers in doing the following...Scale: 1-not effective, 3-somewhat effective, 5-very effective

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: $p < .05$

TABLE 24: Agreement Items by Respondent Subgroups

	Assign Volunteers to Most Difficult Cases	Sufficient Volunteers for Caseload	Make Appropriate Recom- mendations	Carry Out Work Objectively	Personal Knowledge Beneficial to Decision- Making	Information Provided Beneficial to Decision- Making	Receive Adequate Training	Children and Families Better Served
OVERALL SAMPLE	4.32	2.55	4.37	4.20	4.58	4.52	4.14	4.66
Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases								
<= 25 percent	4.15	2.38	4.32	4.15	4.54	4.45	4.11	4.59
26-75 percent	4.34	2.53	4.32	4.15	4.58	4.50	4.11	4.65
76+ percent	4.56	2.79	4.49	4.34	4.69	4.68	4.19	4.79
Communities Served								
Urban	4.39	2.46	4.38	4.23	4.65	4.56	4.21	4.69
Suburban	4.32	2.62	4.40	4.22	4.63	4.58	4.12	4.70
Rural	4.33	2.56	4.37	4.21	4.55	4.49	4.13	4.64
CASA Geographic Region								
Western	4.18	2.28	4.44	4.18	4.66	4.55	4.13	4.70
Mountain Plains	4.46	2.80	4.40	4.26	4.58	4.57	4.19	4.69
Midwest	4.36	2.57	4.32	4.18	4.50	4.47	4.26	4.60
Northeast	4.16	2.74	4.41	4.28	4.54	4.51	4.15	4.55
Mid-Atlantic	4.38	2.75	4.33	4.18	4.56	4.52	4.04	4.73
Southern Gulf	4.36	2.17	4.34	4.19	4.64	4.55	4.09	4.70

Scale: 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4- agree, 5-strongly agree

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: $p < .05$

TABLE 25: Program and Volunteer Satisfaction by Respondent Subgroups

	Satisfaction with Local Program	Satisfaction with Volunteers
OVERALL SAMPLE	4.52	4.52
“Parties to Cases”		
No	4.49	4.49
Yes	4.54	4.54
Years Involved with CASA		
< 2	4.30	4.49
3-10	4.57	4.56
11+	4.47	4.44
% Assignment of Dependency Cases		
<= 25 percent	4.32	4.39
26-75 percent	4.59	4.57
76+ percent	4.71	4.65
Communities Served		
Urban	4.54	4.53
Suburban	4.62	4.56
Rural	4.50	4.54
CASA Geographic Region		
Western	4.58	4.54
Mountain Plains	4.56	4.61
Midwest	4.58	4.54
Northeast	4.44	4.49
Mid-Atlantic	4.57	4.50
Southern Gulf	4.36	4.47

Scale: 1-not satisfied, 3-somewhat satisfied, 5-very satisfied

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: $p < .05$

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

We also reviewed additional, general qualitative comments provided by respondents for themes. Of these, the most frequently mentioned are detailed below. (Select quotations illustrating these themes are noted in italics; see **APPENDIX D** for a complete list of responses.)

- ♦ Need for increased program funding to increase the number of volunteers and improve recruitment and retention.
- ♦ *Funding for our program has been cut – budgets in all government departments have been cut. The CASA/GAL volunteers are of greater importance in an environment in which programs are reduced and caseloads are increased.*

- ◆ *CASA needs more financial support in order to recruit/monitor more CASAs and to sustain a larger program.*
- ◆ *We have been plagued with people who trained, get assigned, and disappear.*
- ◇ CASA serves an objective resource for the court (i.e., the eyes and ears of the court regarding the needs of the child).
 - ◆ *I rely heavily on the GAL to bring forth the child's position to the court – especially where a child is too scared to testify.*
 - ◆ *In a system where the real parties of interest, the children, are underrepresented, I find CASA's advocacy not only helpful but essential to a good outcome.*
- ◇ Volunteers need increased training particularly in regard to how their recommendations fit within the law.
 - ◆ *I would recommend that time permitting all volunteers spend as much time as possible observing court proceedings so that they have an idea as to how the court engages in its decision-making process and what role the other participants play in the process.*
 - ◆ *Additional training and support around parent engagement in case planning may be helpful.*
- ◇ Occasional conflicts between CASA/GAL volunteers and other “Parties to Cases”.
 - ◆ *Most problems for our CASA are related to reluctance/resistance for state caseworkers to include CASA and work with them as an equal party.*
 - ◆ *The largest difficulty is when there is disagreement with our child welfare agency as the caseworkers then say that the volunteer is not a social worker and cannot possibly know what is best.*
- ◇ Need for policies, procedures and managerial oversight regarding the assignment and specific roles of CASA/GAL volunteers, as well as more information on how courts can better use CASA.
 - ◆ *They do not work the cases I need – you need to let your local people work cases where I do not have a state social worker!*
 - ◆ *I have never been clear on the parameters of services that can be provided by CASA. I would like more input as to what kinds of issues CASA can handle. I would like to utilize them more frequently.*