

National CASA Association 2015 Grants Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Technical Assistance

I need help with my grant application. Who should I contact at National CASA Association?

National CASA encourages program staff to contact us for assistance in creating the best possible grant application and minimizing errors.

Questions about the grant application process, including uploading and downloading the form, application formatting, and membership eligibility, should be directed to MemberServices@casaforchildren.org.

Inquiries about grant application content, including grants criteria, project narrative, and the goals, objectives, and relevant activities of the proposed project, may be sent to Ashley Lantz at AshleyL@casaforchildren.org.

Will National CASA Association host a webinar to explain the grants process? If I cannot attend, where can I access materials from the webinar? Do I need to attend a webinar in order to apply for a National CASA grant?

For the 2015 grant cycle, National CASA Association has or will host four webinars in advance of the state grant application deadline of Friday, August 31 and the local grant application deadline of Friday, October 16. State organizations and local programs are invited to attend. Webinars will cover similar content, although webinars for state organizations will focus on state grant categories and the local program webinars will focus on local program grant categories.

Webinars were held on July 8 at 1 pm EST (state organizations), July 9 at 2 pm EST (local programs), and July 14 at 3 pm EST (local programs). Additionally, we will hold a local grant category technical assistance webinar on July 28 at Noon EST specifically to review the local grant application and answer questions.

Webinar attendance is optional and it is not a requirement to apply for a National CASA grant. We encourage programs to attend in order to have as much information as possible.

Webinar recordings and materials will be posted on the grants page of [CASAforChildren.org](http://www.casaforchildren.org):

http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.5332549/k.58F2/National_CASA_Grants.htm

Application Materials

I am having trouble downloading the application.

Applications must be completed using the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. A free download of this software is available from the Adobe website:
<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

If you are having trouble completing the form on your computer, check to make sure you are using the latest version of Acrobat. If you are using a Mac operating system, please open Adobe Acrobat first and then open the grant application.

We recommend that you allow additional time to download and familiarize yourself with the Acrobat program if you are a first-time user.

I am having trouble typing in the text boxes.

After downloading the grant application, save it as an Adobe Acrobat Reader file in order to complete text boxes.

How do I upload the completed grant application and attachment?

Log in to the [State and Local Programs](#) section of the National CASA Association web site (CASAforChildren.org) using your Program Number and password. On the National CASA Grants page, click on “Submit Your Grant Application”. Upload one document at a time. The Program Number will automatically populate as the application identifier once the materials are uploaded on National CASA Association’s web site.

How do I name the saved documents on my computer?

Name the documents as follows. Scan all the required attachments and save it as one PDF format document for upload.

- Grant application
- Attachments

How can I make corrections after I have uploaded the documents?

Once you have uploaded the file, up until the application deadline, you will be able to:

- Download and review the submitted Grant Application
- Delete the grant application and upload a corrected version of the file

Why am I being asked for information that appears similar to data I provided for the annual survey?

Data requested in this year's grant applications is specific to each grant category and to a particular project timeline, including budget data for a fiscal year that may or may not align with a regular calendar year. Additionally, if not all programs within a state have fully completed the annual survey, this provides an opportunity for state organizations to give a full accounting of program data when they apply for growth, development, or resource grants. Finally, there are times when we need more specific data than what has been provided for another purpose.

In response to feedback from local programs and state organizations, National CASA Association is exploring ways to align the collection of data across multiple sources including surveys and grant applications.

If a particular question in the application does not apply to our organization, what do we do?

Always write a "ZERO" or "Not Applicable" so that the reviewer does not have to make an assumption about your answer.

Some questions are repeats of the annual survey questions; can I attach the annual survey to the application?

No, we need applicants to fully complete the grant application.

Grant Awards, General Eligibility Requirements, and Timeline

What is the application timeline and the grant cycle?

- *Friday, July 17* – Grant Applications and Instructions available for download on the grants page of CASAforChildren.org
- *Tuesday, July 28 at Noon EST/9 am PST*– Additional Local Grants Category Technical Assistance (Q&A) Webinar
- *Monday, August 31 at 5 pm PST/8 pm EST* – Growth and Development Grants and Capacity Building Grant Renewals Due
- *Monday, September 14* – Growth and Development Grant Awards Announced
- *Thursday, September 24* – Growth and Development Grant Recipient Terms and Conditions due to National CASA
- *Thursday, October 1* – Grant Cycle begins for Growth and Development Grants

- *Friday, October 16* – Local Program Category and Resource Grant Applications Due
- *Tuesday, November 10* – Local Program and Resource Grant Awards announced
- *Tuesday, November 24* – Local Program and Resource Grant Recipient Terms and Conditions due to National CASA
- *Friday, January 1* – Grant Cycle begins for Local Program and Resource Grants
- *Friday, September 30, 2016* – Grant Cycle ends for Growth and Development Grants
- *Saturday, December 31, 2016* – Grant Cycle ends for Local Program and Resource Grants

What are the general eligibility requirements?

All applicants must be members in good standing with the National CASA Association. This includes current paid membership, completion of the 2014 Annual Survey and six-month reporting, and the program must be in compliance with the National CASA Standards as demonstrated through the self-assessment process.

Additionally, all applicants must commit to working in close partnership with the National CASA Association during the grant period and must complete monthly financial reporting, quarterly narrative reporting, and monthly calls with National CASA Association staff.

What are the grant categories and how many awards will you provide in each category?

This year, National CASA Association is pleased to award competitive grants in five categories that align with the enabling focus areas of our Strategic Framework.

<u><i>Grant Category</i></u>	<u><i>Maximum Award</i></u>	<u><i>Number of Awards</i></u>	<u><i>Funding Available</i></u>	<u><i>Eligible Applicants</i></u>
Growth Grant	\$250,000	3 – 5	\$710,000	State Organizations
Development Grant	\$75,000	up to 5	\$375,000	State Organizations or Informal State Networks
Resource Grant	In-kind	up to 8	\$0	State Orgs or Informal State Networks
Local Program Grant (sponsored by Jewelers for Children)	\$35,000	at least 14	\$500,000	Local Programs or state organizations that directly serve children with CASA/GAL advocates
Capacity Building Renewal Grant	\$40,000	4	\$139,000	2014 Capacity Building Grantees

Can my program apply for a National CASA Association grant if we are a prior awardee?

Can my program apply for a National CASA Association grant if we have never received an award before or if it has been several years since we last received a grant?

All CASA/GAL state organizations and local programs in good standing with the National CASA Association are encouraged to submit strong proposals in the category or categories for which they meet grants criteria.

Past grant performance, among other factors specified in grant application materials, will be taken into account during the review process, but it is not the sole determining factor. A number of requirements and criteria will be considered during the review process and these items can be found in the grant application materials for each funding category.

Can an Auxiliary apply for a National CASA Grant?

The Auxiliary can write or be the fiscal sponsor for the grant but the applicant must be the program that is implementing the grant-funded activity. Auxiliaries cannot apply for grants with their National CASA Program ID number.

Can a state organization/informal state network apply in all of the grant categories?

State organizations or informal state networks can apply in the development and resource categories. Existing state organizations are eligible to apply in the growth category in addition to the resource category. However, state organizations or informal state networks cannot apply in both the growth and development categories. Please refer to the application materials on CASAforChildren.org for more information about specific grant categories.

If a state organization is eligible to apply for a renewal of its 2014 Capacity Building Grant, can they also apply for other grant categories?

A state organization that is eligible for a renewal grant may also apply for a growth or a development grant and a resource grant. The state organization will only receive one grant award.

Grant Review Process

How will 2015 grants be reviewed? How will the panels be selected? Is the network panel of reviewers made up of current state and local CASA/GAL directors and if so, are they excluded from applying for the 2015 grants?

In preparation for the 2015 grants cycle, National CASA Association sought the input of local programs and state organizations on ways we could improve the grants process. In response to the feedback we received, we made a significant change to the grants review process for this year. Grant applications will be reviewed by two internal panels with knowledge of the CASA/GAL network – a National CASA Association staff panel and a network panel of current state and local CASA/GAL directors who do not have a conflict of interest in any grant category.

Both review panels will evaluate grant applications based upon criteria and requirements set forth in the application materials and instructions for each category. Any potential panelist with a conflict of interest in any grant category will be excluded from the review process.

National CASA welcomes volunteers to serve on the network review panel. If you already know that you will not apply for a 2015 grant, please contact us at GrantsPolicy@casaforchildren.org.

Will reviews be scored? Will high score determine the grant award?

Reviews will be scored by the National CASA Association staff panel and by the network panel with the overall score determining grant awards.

Grant Categories

Growth Grant Category

What does a significant increase in children served look like?

State Organizations need to provide a strong statewide plan to increase the number of children served above the previous average three-year growth rate. The average three-year growth rate refers to the past three years and growth rates will be determined by data submitted for the National CASA Association Annual Survey.

What if our three-year average growth rate is flat or minimal?

The state organization is still eligible to apply for a growth grant and should submit a statewide growth plan, including pass-through funding, to significantly increase growth above the three-year average, whatever the three-year average was.

How does the state demonstrate 100 percent local program support?

Applicants for the growth and development grant categories are required to show support from 100 percent of local programs in the state or provide an explanation otherwise. Application materials will provide template language for the support statement. State organizations can collect the support statement through any means they deem appropriate, such as a survey response, letter, signature page, or other options. National CASA is available to assist with the development of the local program response tool if needed.

There are state organizations where having a CASA/GAL assigned to every child in abuse and neglect cases is mandated. For those states the percentages of children served is close to 100 percent but that does not mean that the programs are sustainable or have enough volunteers to serve every child. Since the growth grant is focused on increasing the number of children served, are these programs eligible to apply for the Growth Grant?

Regardless of the situation, the state organization needs to have a plan for growth. State organizations are eligible to apply under the scenario above if the program has a grant proposal around sustainability and can describe and discuss the gap between children appointed to serve and actual children served. The organization could also apply for a resource grant if that grant category fits the organization's need.

If the state organization is only focusing on growth by targeting a number of key local programs in their state, should the state organization only ask those local programs for a support statement or should the state office ask all local programs for a support statement

National CASA is looking for strong statewide collaboration to increase the number of children served. This will require collaboration between local programs and state organizations as well as buy-in from all the local programs on a plan to grow advocacy across the entire state. Applicants for the growth and development grant categories are required to show support from 100 percent of local programs in the state or provide an explanation otherwise.

Can a portion of the Growth Grant funds be used to hire a consultant to work on a special initiative?

Yes, if the consulting work is integral to the project and directly supports statewide growth at a level above the previous average three-year growth rate

Why would a local program support a state organization application if the local program is intending to apply for a local grant and that grant will not be funded if the state organization is awarded a Growth Grant?

Our grant categories this year emphasize statewide collaboration to increase the number of abused and neglected children served by CASA/GAL advocates. The Growth Grant allows for pass-through funding from the state organizations to the local programs therefore all local programs should be looking at supporting the statewide growth effort. The state growth grants category does not preclude local programs from working on their own growth plan. Local programs can apply in the local grants category and be part of the statewide plan and pass-through funding opportunity for their state organization's application in the growth category.

When would pass-through funds for the growth grant be available? Will the pass-through funding criteria be provided to state organizations as part of the grant application instructions?

State organizations are required to administer pass-through funds to local programs in the growth grant category within the grant cycle of 10/1/15 through 9/30/16.

Growth grant criteria requires that states target pass-through funds to local programs. The state organization will need to show a strong plan for administering pass-through funds to local programs.

For the growth category, will annual reports be required to show increased impact and increased children being served?

Data from past annual reports will inform the average three-year growth rate criteria. Additionally, data from future annual surveys will inform whether the implementation of the statewide growth plan achieved the state organization's growth goal.

Will state growth grants factor in the state's population and square mileage?

No, state growth grants factor in a statewide plan, with local program support, to significantly increase the number of abused and neglected children served above the average three-year growth rate.

If a state organization has not had a close partnership with National CASA in the past, would they still be given consideration for the growth grant?

We will give every state organization strong consideration for a growth grant, regardless of their partnership with National CASA in the past. National CASA is committed through our strategic framework to work in close partnership with state organizations to better support local programs. This year's grant process places high value on collaboration and if that level of collaboration and partnership has not existed in the past, now is a good time for us to begin a stronger partnership.

Development Grant Category

What is considered limited capacity for existing state organizations? Does this include board governance?

State organizations with limited capacity, as defined by development grant criteria, are those organizations with an annual operating budget of \$125,000 or less and one or fewer full time equivalents (FTEs).

If the State Organization revenue includes grant funds that are not continuing, does that grant revenue count towards the \$125,000 annual revenue?

The operating budget (comprised of revenues and expenses) for the state organization must be \$125,000 or less to qualify for the Development Grant.

Can a local program apply for a Development Grant while the state organization applies for a Growth Grant?

No. The development grant category is for existing state organizations with limited capacity or informal state networks seeking to establish a new state organization.

Resource Grant Category

Will the Resource Grants have the same reporting requirements as the other grants?

All 2015 grantees will have the same rigorous reporting requirements, including quarterly narrative reports and monthly project calls with National CASA Association staff. Unlike the other grant categories, resource grant awardees will not be required to complete monthly financial reporting because the grants are in-kind awards.

Will National CASA be hiring additional staff or use existing staff to support the Resource Grant proposals that are selected?

National CASA will utilize existing staff and extensive cross-functional collaboration in working closely with Resource Grant awardees.

What are the six project areas and can the applicant select one or more project areas?

Applications for the resource grant category will only be accepted for one of the six project areas. These include:

- 1) Launch of I am for the Child® campaign
- 2) Strategic plan development
- 3) Statewide leadership development
- 4) Statewide in-person training for the *Fostering Futures* and *Knowing Who You Are* research-based curricula
- 5) Market, donor, and/or volunteer research and surveys
- 6) Policymaker education and awareness initiatives

What in-kind support would be given for the Fostering Futures and Knowing Who You Are trainings?

National CASA will provide in-person statewide training on this curricula if that is a need identified by the state organization or informal state network.

If the state organization requests support for market, donor, and/or volunteer research and surveys, what is the strategy in identifying which donors belong to that state organization or to National CASA?

As one example in this project area, National CASA could help the state organization identify and deploy a research tool and then help analyze the results. Any data or proprietary information will remain with the program.

Please explain further the project area of policymaking, education and awareness initiatives.

These are efforts that can increase policymaker awareness and education about the CASA/GAL mission and help lead to an increase in the number of abused and neglected children served. For example, awareness could focus on public funding avenues which could build capacity to increase advocacy for abused and neglected children. State Organizations should put forward a plan that identifies their statement of need, objectives, goals, timeline, and intended outcome for the project area.

Will National CASA assist with case management technology upgrades, training of facilitators, or performance measurement in this category?

National CASA will provide in-kind resource grant awards in the six project areas specified above. Awards will be made to state organizations or informal state networks in only one of the project areas. The six project areas do not include case management technology. Training of facilitators could be included in a state's plan under the project area of statewide in-person training.

Performance measurement is not included within the six resource grant project areas, but is an area of high priority for National CASA based upon recommendations from Child Trends, a leading research firm. National CASA will devote resources to the performance measurement process in 2015 and begin the planning process for becoming an evidence-based program. Information about our performance measurement work is available on the [State and Local Programs section](#) of CASAforChildren.org.

Capacity Building Renewal Category

Is the Capacity Building Grant from last year renewable this year and does that exclude the Capacity Building Grantees from applying for the other 2015 grant categories?

The 2014 Capacity Building Grants awarded to Alabama, New Mexico, New York and Texas state organizations are available by application for renewal in 2015. The grantees will be emailed a Capacity Building Renewal Grant Application and Instructions on July 17, 2015. This does not exclude the grantees from applying for other 2015 grant categories but only one award will be given among the growth, development, and capacity building renewal categories.

If we have a 2014 Capacity Building Grant, are we limited to the criteria for this year's development grant?

No. 2015 Capacity Building Grant renewal instructions and applications will be emailed directly to state organizations in Alabama, New Mexico, New York, and Texas. We are providing criteria specific to the capacity building grant renewal.

Local Grants Category

If there is a gap between the demographics of CASA/GAL volunteers and children served, does my program have to provide a diversity plan? If so, why? Does National CASA have examples of diversity plans that I can use?

The grant requirement for an explanation of any gap between the demographics of volunteers and children served is a reflection of our commitment to the national standard that CASA/GAL volunteers reflect the children served. It is also in support of the requirements from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) at the U.S. Department of Justice that call for our network to increase the number of volunteer advocates from diverse backgrounds recruited by CASA/GAL programs as well as to increase the number of children of color advocated for by a CASA/GAL volunteer.

Sample diversity plans that can be used as templates for developing a diversity plan specific to your program can be found on the standards page of the National CASA web site under the indicators of compliance tab.

http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.5420333/k.BB46/Standards__Quality_Assurance.htm

What percentage of the total funds available will be used for local grants?

This year, National CASA Association will award \$500,000 in grants directly to local programs, accounting for nearly 30 percent of total grant awards. However, our investment in local program support is much greater as the state growth grants include a requirement for pass through dollars to local grants. Additionally, each state grant reflects an emphasis on statewide impact.

If my state organization receives a Development Grant, does this mean that my local program will be excluded from receiving a grant in the local program category?

A local program would still be eligible to receive a local program grant if the state organization also receives a grant in the development category.

If my state organization receives a Growth Grant, does this mean that my local program will be excluded from receiving a grant in the local program category?

A local program would not receive a grant in the local category if the state organization receives a grant in the growth category. The local program would still be eligible to

receive the required pass-through funding from the state organization's successful growth grant award, provided that they have collaborated with the state in advance and fall into the statewide growth plan developed by the state organization.

Local programs are required to support the statewide growth plan, if applicable, in order to apply within the local program grants category.

Should a local program not submit a proposal if the state organization is submitting a growth proposal?

We encourage local programs to submit a proposal for the local program grant category and to let their state organization know of their proposal. The state organization may also want to incorporate the local program's plan into their statewide growth plan. The growth category, like all other grant categories, is competitive in nature, and local programs should seek every available opportunity to acquire grant funds.

Is there a specific percentage increase of children served required for the local program grant?

We encourage local programs to submit strong plans for increasing the number of children served at a level that the program can best support.