

CASA: A GUIDE TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

2002 EDITION

**A National CASA Association
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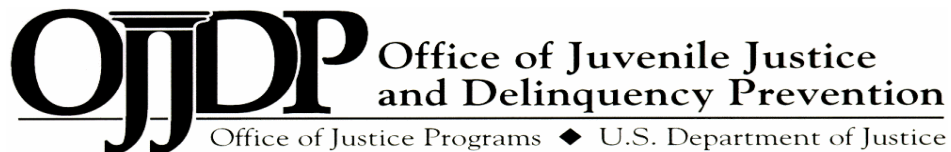
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Introduction

Developing a CASA program is a significant undertaking that requires the cooperation and commitment of many people. It also requires a great deal of research, planning, organizing, and plain hard work.

This manual is designed to help you through the initial steps and to assist you in the early phases of program operation. The material is based on the collective experience of over 900 local CASA organizations throughout the nation. Although each CASA program is truly a grassroots organization that must tailor its design to the unique needs and interests of the community it serves, all CASA programs do share common problems and challenges, particularly during their first few years of operation. This handbook offers the wisdom of those who have launched new programs. It is intended to be a general guide to program development, not a rigid program design.

As you begin your planning and development process, there are several resources available to assist you. Most states have a state CASA organization that can provide guidance and support, steer you to potential funding sources, and connect you to other programs in your state. Most state organizations have a director or designated representative who facilitates communication between the programs within the state, and acts as a liaison between the state and the National CASA Association. If a CASA network exists in your state, we highly recommend becoming involved with it. We also encourage you to seek out others in the CASA network. It is a network comprised of bright, dynamic volunteers and professional staff who are committed to the growth and concept of CASA.

Equally important is creating a strong relationship with the National CASA Association (NCASAA). National CASA was established to promote, assist, and support the development and growth of quality CASA programs. The Association provides training and technical assistance; an annual national conference for volunteers, staff, and board members; a quarterly newsletter, "The Connection"; grants for new and established CASA programs; and resource materials. Information kits, promotional items, and public service announcements are also available to programs, courts and community volunteers to increase public awareness of the CASA concept. The staff at National CASA is another resource. We are here for guidance, support and are willing to answer any questions.

For assistance or more information contact:

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Overview of CASA

What Is CASA?

Each year in this country, more than 500,000 children are placed in some form of foster care and thrust into the court system. They have committed no crime, but are simply child victims who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned. It is then up to a judge to decide their futures. The judge must consider the following: Did the conditions at home warrant removal? Is the home now safe enough to allow the child's return or should that child be permanently placed in another home?

In the past, judges have often had to base these decisions on incomplete information. Overburdened child welfare workers and attorneys have not had the time or resources to thoroughly monitor compliance with court orders or to find out firsthand what was really best for each individual child. As reports of abuse and neglect keep crowding court dockets, more and more children have become "lost" in the confusing maze of the foster care system.

Today, more than 50,000 people are speaking up for these children as volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and Guardians ad Litem (GAL). CASA volunteers are laypeople who are assigned by a judge to represent the best interests of children whose cases are before the dependency court. CASA/GAL volunteers serve as the eyes and ears of the judge, gathering relevant information about the child and the family. They interview anyone who might have information about the case - parents, foster parents, relatives, teachers, doctors and the child himself. The focus of this investigation is to identify the child(ren)'s needs, not to gather evidence for criminal prosecution. The volunteers then make recommendations to the judge regarding what, in their judgment, is in the *child's best interest*.

CASA/GAL volunteers currently advocate for children in over 900 program sites in 49 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It is estimated that they spoke up for the best interests of approximately 229,090 children in 2000. Though an impressive statistic, that is still only about a third of the abused and neglected children in the court system who need CASA volunteers.

The benefits of citizen volunteers in the court extend far beyond the courtroom to the community at large. CASA volunteers are speaking out for improved services for children. As they do so, they are also raising the public's awareness of the problems of abused children.

Conditions that led to CASA

Over the past 50 years, attitudes toward abused and neglected children have changed dramatically in the United States. In the first half of the century, neglected and abandoned children were most commonly placed in institutional settings such as orphanages and asylums.

Abuse was considered a family matter, and children were rarely removed from their homes for physical harm inflicted by their parents. It wasn't until the early 1960s that child advocates succeeded in raising the awareness of the public and the courts, and child abuse was recognized as a serious problem and a crime. During this period there was also growing recognition of the importance of a child's attachment to caregivers. Judges began placing children in families instead of in institutions, giving birth to the modern system of foster care.

By the 1970s, however, foster care had become permanent for many children. It was not uncommon for children to be placed in a series of foster homes with no efforts made to reunite them with their parents or to find other permanent families. For many children, becoming a part of the foster care system meant the loss of a family for the remainder of their childhood.

The Search for Solutions

In the 1970s, national attention focused on child abuse and neglect, leading Congress to pass two laws that were instrumental in restructuring child welfare services in this country. These laws also laid the groundwork for the development of CASA programs.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-247), was one of the first legislative measures to address the importance of representation for children in juvenile or family court proceedings. In order to receive certain federal funds, the act requires the states to provide a guardian ad litem for children who are the subject of judicial proceedings as a result of allegations of abuse or neglect. The guardian ad litem (guardian "for the proceedings") or GAL, is defined as a:

"Person appointed by the Court to promote and protect the interests of a child involved in a judicial proceeding, through assuring representation of those interests in the courts and throughout the social service and ancillary service systems."

Though some states had implemented guardian ad litem legislation prior to the passage of the federal law, most passed legislation requiring the appointment of a guardian ad litem for the child as a direct result of P.L. 93-247. However, despite the legal mandate to do so, a 1990 national study funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, found that only 50% of the states were actually appointing guardians ad litem for every abused and neglected child in the system. The law simply was not being followed and the federal government did not have a system for monitoring compliance. When guardians ad litem were appointed, the study also found they were usually attorneys who had little time or training in matters pertaining to children.

Although P.L. 93-247 did much to improve a child's position in court, there were still many children being placed in foster care unnecessarily and many others who were remaining in foster care placements longer than necessary. To remedy the heavy and extended reliance on foster care, child welfare professionals and advocates launched a movement known as permanency planning. Permanency planning requires that agencies provide services to preserve a child's

family, expeditious reunification of the child with his or her parents if removal is necessary and alternative permanent placement for the child when reunification is not possible.

Permanency planning efforts emerged out of the recognition that a safe and permanent home is essential for the healthy development of a child. Research indicates that the lack of such an environment is a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy and social and/or emotional problems that often linger into adulthood.

In 1980, Congress passed P.L. 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act. This legislation was designed to encourage permanency planning in state child welfare systems by requiring that states, in order to be eligible for federal child welfare funds, show evidence that "reasonable efforts" are made to keep a family together before a child is removed from the home.

This Act established a number of requirements of social services agencies designed to prevent a child from remaining in limbo. They included:

- ◆ Goal-oriented case planning;
- ◆ Time lines for parents to complete the service plan;
- ◆ Regular court reviews of the case plan; and
- ◆ Reasonable efforts to reunify families if a child can remain safe.

CASA Offers a Solution

The growing awareness of children's rights and subsequent changes in the law produced an environment of change in child welfare in which creative solutions to problems could be developed.

One such innovative program emerged in 1977 in Seattle, Washington, when King County Superior Court Judge David W. Soukup saw a recurring problem in his courtroom. He felt strongly that he was not getting all the facts needed to make well-informed decisions affecting the future of the children whose cases came before him. Such decisions included where the child would live, for how long, and under what conditions; what services and treatment should be ordered; and/or what steps should be taken to reunite the child with the birth parents or to place the child in a new family unit.

While attorney guardians ad litem were being appointed to abuse and neglect cases in Seattle, they generally lacked the time and the specialized training to conduct the in-depth investigation required in these cases. Social workers, responsible for many cases, had too little time to devote to each child. In court, there were attorneys to represent the interests of the parents and the state. Yet the child, whose future hinged on the outcome, was without a voice.

Judge Soukup believed that someone other than an attorney might be trained to speak effectively for children. He wondered if it might be feasible to recruit and train qualified individuals to step into the courtroom to advocate for children. In 1977, Judge Soukup's idea became reality when volunteers began representing the best interests of children as their appointed guardians ad litem. They later came to be known as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

In a short time, the judge's daring experiment proved to be an enormous success. Lay volunteers entered the court proceedings with enthusiasm, dedication, and professionalism. With proper training, they proved to be effective advocates for abused and neglected children. They conducted thorough investigations of each child's individual situation, made recommendations which reflected the best interests of the child, and monitored the case plan to ensure that the court's order was carried out in a timely manner.

CASA volunteers provided a fresh perspective to the juvenile court, one that questioned how families and children were being treated and what services were available to help them. Their presence on cases helped to ensure that children who were abused or neglected did not receive further abuse at the hands of an overburdened child welfare system.

In October of 1996, The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act was amended to include CASA volunteers as one of the court's options for guardian ad litem appointment:

"...in every case involving an abused and neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem, who may be an attorney or a court appointed special advocate (or both), shall be appointed to represent the child..."

This legislative amendment serves as an acknowledgment by political leaders of CASA's strong reputation as a quality method of child advocacy.

Growth of the CASA Idea

The CASA concept soon received the attention of the Children in Placement Committee of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ). In October 1977, that body voted to endorse the volunteer CASA program as a model for safeguarding a child's rights to a safe and permanent family.

In 1978, the National Center of State Courts selected the Seattle program as the "best National example of citizen participation in the juvenile justice system." This recognition, along with a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (one of CASA's earliest and strongest supporters), made it possible for courts in other communities to develop programs based on the CASA concept.

Other early supporters who were instrumental in the growth of CASA were the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) and the International Association of Junior Leagues.

As communities adopted the CASA concept, new programs were established under a variety of names -- Volunteer Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), ProKids, FOCAS, Child Advocates, Inc., and Voices for Children, Inc., to name a few.

Who Supports CASA?

The CASA/GAL concept has been widely accepted by judges, child advocates and policy makers since the Seattle program began in 1977. It has affected hundreds of courts and thousands of

children and has been supported by a number of professional and government organizations, including the following:

- ◆ National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)
- ◆ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
- ◆ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families
- ◆ The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
- ◆ National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)
- ◆ National Federation of Women's Clubs
- ◆ Kappa Alpha Theta Women's Fraternity
- ◆ Points of Light Foundation
- ◆ American Association of Retired Persons
- ◆ International Association of Junior Leagues
- ◆ The American Bar Association
- ◆ The National Bar Association

Through its Permanency Planning Project, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) has promoted CASA and helped to educate judges about the potential value of using volunteers in their courts. The support of NCJFCJ has helped to build CASA's credibility in legal, social service, and child welfare circles.

In 1988, CSR, Inc., under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, published the results of a study entitled *National Evaluation of Guardians Ad Litem in Child Abuse or Neglect Judicial Proceedings*. After analyzing five types of GAL models the study found that:

"CASA volunteers are excellent investigators and mediators, remain involved in the case and fight for what they think is best for the child." The study concluded, "We give the CASA models our highest recommendation."

In August 1989, the American Bar Association, the country's largest professional organization of attorneys, voted to officially endorse the use of CASA volunteers to work with attorneys to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in juvenile court. Their resolution reads:

"Be it resolved that the American Bar Association endorses the concept of utilizing carefully selected, well-trained lay volunteers - Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) - in addition to providing attorney representation, in dependency proceedings to assist the court in determining what is in the best interests of abused and neglected children. Be it further resolved that the American Bar Association encourages its members to support the development of CASA programs in their communities."

Also in 1989, the Kappa Alpha Theta women's fraternity selected CASA as its national philanthropy. As a result, chapters and alumni groups across the country have assisted local CASA programs and state organizations in many ways.

The National CASA Association

By 1982, it was clear that a national association was needed to provide networking opportunities and a unified image for CASA's emerging national presence. The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (“National CASA” or “the Association”) was formed that year.

Funding for the Association is provided through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the U.S. Department of Justice, corporations, individuals, and membership dues. This financial support allows the National CASA Association to promote the concept and growth of volunteer child advocates through ongoing services including training, technical assistance, resource development, continuing education and public awareness initiatives. The association has developed national Standards for CASA Programs and provides a national training curriculum.

The Association also hosts an annual national conference where volunteers, staff and others from throughout the child welfare and juvenile justice systems meet to exchange ideas and hear leaders in the field speak on various issues. National CASA also produces a quarterly newsletter, *The Connection*, to keep program staff and volunteers updated on the latest news from the child advocacy network.

National CASA produces *Feedback*, a bulletin of current news and important program information and conducts an annual program survey that provides valuable information about the organization of CASA programs, their services, and their needs.

In addition, the Association offers many services tailored to the new and/or growing program. It provides technical assistance both on-site and via telephone and internet communications, thereby assisting staff in programs across the country to share information and solve problems. It also provides public service announcements, brochures for the public and professionals, and a number of instructive guides on substantive topics such as program development, volunteer management, fund-raising and public relations.

National CASA Association Recognition and Awards

- 1985 The President's Volunteer Action Award.
- 1986 American Federation of Junior Women's Club President's Award of Merit.
- 1987 Kiwanis International selects CASA as a Major Emphasis Program.
- 1989 American Bar Association endorses CASA.
Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation adopts CASA as national philanthropy.
- 1990 U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect includes utilization of CASAs and volunteer GALs among critical first steps it recommends to bring the "national emergency" of child abuse and neglect in America under control.
U.S. Congress authorizes expansion of CASA with passage of "Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990" (P.L. 101-647), so that "a court appointed special advocate shall be available to every victim of child abuse or neglect in the United States that needs such an advocate."
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges names CASA "Outstanding Volunteer Program" in America's juvenile and family courts.
American Society of Association Executives Award of Excellence.
- 1991 President and founder David W. Soukup meets with President George Bush in Oval Office during National Volunteer Week.
Child Advocate of the Year, Sharon Lawrence, designated a "Point of Light."
Foundation for Improvement of Justice Award.
The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, names CASA an "Exemplary National Program in Juvenile Delinquency Prevention."
- 1992 David W. Soukup receives Caring Institute Award.
- 1996 Prevention for a Safer Society Award by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

***SECTION I: PLANNING A
QUALITY PROGRAM***

Initial Planning Steps

Become Educated About the Problems

The first step in planning for a CASA program is to educate yourself about the problems of child abuse and neglect and your community's response. How well are the child welfare and judicial systems working in your community? Are the needs of abused and neglected children being adequately met? Do children who are the subject of court action have a voice to speak for their best interests? The answers to these questions are not simple and learning them will involve doing research and talking to a number of people, but the knowledge will enable you to become a powerful spokesperson to sell the CASA concept to community leaders and organizations.

It is very helpful as you begin the planning process to have close contact with your state CASA organization, local CASA programs, and with National CASA. State representatives may already be aware of someone else in your community who is interested in collaborating on the project, thus eliminating duplication of efforts and increasing effectiveness. Local programs will be more than willing to share their knowledge and experience and can often help you avoid making common mistakes or reinventing something that already exists. National CASA has various materials to assist you, from written manuals on a variety of program development topics to volunteer recruitment materials. They also have staff available who can answer most of your questions, whether general or specific. Take advantage of all the resources available to you – your job will be easier and the results better.

Assess the Community's Response to Child Abuse

Some of the information you will need about your community include answers to the following questions:

- ◆ How many reports of abuse and neglect were made to child protective services last year?
- ◆ Of the reports received, how many were substantiated?
- ◆ How many new abuse and neglect cases were filed in court last year?
- ◆ What cultural and ethnic groups are represented in the child welfare population in your community?
- ◆ How does the percentage of minority children in foster care in your community compare to the percentage of the minority population as a whole?
- ◆ What is the average length of time children remain in foster care placement before a permanent plan is achieved?
- ◆ How many children were terminated from court involvement last year?
- ◆ Of that number, how many were returned home?
- ◆ How many were placed with relatives?
- ◆ How many were placed for adoption?
- ◆ How many children in your county are currently waiting for adoption?

- ◆ Is every child involved in an abuse or neglect proceeding appointed a guardian ad litem? If not, which cases do receive appointment? How many children were represented by a guardian ad litem last year?
- ◆ Who currently provides guardian ad litem services?
- ◆ How does the presiding juvenile court judge rate the current system of representation?
- ◆ Is the judge satisfied with the information being provided to assist his or her decision making?
- ◆ What was the total cost of the current system of guardian ad litem services last year?
- ◆ Does your state statute or court rules define the role of the guardian ad litem? If yes, what is it?
- ◆ Does your state statute specify who can serve as the guardian ad litem? If yes, who can serve?
- ◆ What is the average number of cases carried by a protective services social worker?
- ◆ What is the average number of foster care placements for each child in foster care?

Some of this information will be a matter of public record and can be obtained at the library. However, much of the data can be obtained only by interviewing child welfare and court personnel. Making contact with these individuals can provide other intangible information such as advice on the local political climate, community mood, and history of children's services leading to the current system. Unfortunately, solid data on these issues is not available in every community. If you are in this situation, you may need to make educated estimates based on what you can learn and advocate for better data collection as a starting point for better services to children. One key to success is to be well informed about the CASA program before you conduct the interviews. This will avoid misconceptions and enhance future relationships. Some key individuals to interview:

- ◆ Presiding judge of the juvenile or family court
- ◆ Director of the department of social services and other staff members
- ◆ Court administrator
- ◆ Representative from state attorney general's or county prosecutor's office
- ◆ State CASA office or state association president
- ◆ Other local CASA program staff
- ◆ Members of other child advocacy or civic/social organizations who are interested in child abuse issues (such as child abuse councils, Junior League, Urban League, National Council of Jewish Women, League of Women Voters, Kiwanis, etc.)
- ◆ Service providers who treat children referred by the court and social service agencies
- ◆ Members of the local bar association
- ◆ Business leaders with knowledge of the community and experience in volunteer programs

Make the Case for CASA

Once you have conducted your interviews and gathered the desired data, you will need to interpret and summarize how well your community is responding to abused and neglected children. Some issues to consider are:

- ◆ Does the juvenile judge feel that he/she has enough time and information to make appropriate decisions for children?
- ◆ Do child protective services workers carry more than the recommended 20 cases at a time?
- ◆ Does every child who is the subject of an abuse or neglect proceeding have a guardian ad litem appointed?

- ◆ If there is a guardian ad litem appointed, does that individual conduct a thorough investigation, including meeting and interviewing the child, prior to going to court?
- ◆ Does the average foster child in your community experience multiple foster home placements?
- ◆ Does every child in the court's jurisdiction have the opportunity for a frequent, thorough review of his or her case?

If the answers to these questions or others raise concern for the children in your community, then a CASA program may be one solution. Having a CASA program will not eliminate abuse and neglect, and it will not prevent the need for foster care for some children. It will, however, help to ensure that the court has more of the necessary information to make the most appropriate decisions for the children involved. Additional information provided by CASA volunteers facilitates more expedient permanency planning for the children and reinforces compliance with the conditions set forth by the judge, both of which help improve the quality of life for children who have been abused and/or neglected.

Determine if the Program Will Succeed

Need alone does not guarantee the success of a CASA program. The next step is to assess the feasibility of establishing a program. A number of factors are involved in making this decision, including:

- ◆ Is there judicial support for the program?
- ◆ Will the other child advocacy organizations in the community support the development of a CASA program?
- ◆ Will the bar association support the development of a CASA program?
- ◆ Is there a history of successful volunteer programs in the community?
- ◆ Is there potential for local funding?
- ◆ What are the strengths of the community that will facilitate the development of CASA?
- ◆ What are the barriers that will have to be overcome before CASA can be successful? What are the strategies for overcoming them?
- ◆ Has a CASA program existed in the community previously or did efforts to start a program fail? If so, find out what happened. Such information will provide insight into the challenges you may face.

If you conclude that there is a community need for CASA and that a program of this type has a realistic chance for success, you are ready to move to the next crucial steps in developing the program. These steps would consist of getting the court's support, involving people with the qualities and skills necessary to lead the program development effort, and obtaining the support and assistance of community leaders.

Obtain Judicial Support

No element of program development is more important than obtaining judicial support. If the judge does not support the program, it stands little chance of success. Most judges have heard about CASA and have at least some knowledge about how it works. However, some may have negative perceptions of the program based on an anecdote they have heard or a personal bad experience with a volunteer in some other setting. Whatever the reason, some initial reluctance on the judge's part is not unusual and should not discourage you. Sometimes, you can counter the judge's objections by providing information and answers to specific questions and by letting

the judge know that she will be very involved in establishing the practices and procedures the volunteers will follow. Creating the opportunity for your judge to talk to other judges who have experience with CASA programs may also help.

Other ways of overcoming resistance are suggesting that the program be tried on a pilot basis for a limited period of time, with a limited number of cases, or appointing volunteers to a specific type of case. If, after all of these strategies have been tried, the judge is still not supportive, you may have to conclude that the time is not right and put plans for the program on hold. It is likely that this will not be a permanent situation. There have been situations in which a judge has initiated the development of a CASA program after initially rejecting it. So, if this happens, don't give up hope permanently. Within a few years, or only a few months, circumstances may change that will create the right opportunity for CASA to succeed.

Enlist the Right People to Help

Enlisting the right people to provide leadership for the program's development is critical. They must be chosen carefully and sensitively. Because CASA will be a new program in the community, it will likely come under close scrutiny. The professionals who work with children and families will have many doubts and the public will have many questions. They will raise issues such as the prudence of involving volunteers in confidential child protection cases and about the qualifications of the staff and volunteers. Because at this point any misstep can derail the program, it is imperative that you engage individuals with strong credibility, commitment to the mission of the program and a healthy perspective about what the program can accomplish.

Some of the qualities that have been found to be essential in the leaders of CASA programs include:

- ◆ A commitment to working to improve the lives of children in need
- ◆ Tolerance for people with diverse lifestyles and values
- ◆ A belief that the best option for children is to be raised by their own families or in another permanent family if that is not possible
- ◆ A willingness to learn and an openness to new ideas
- ◆ A good reputation in the community
- ◆ The respect of the court
- ◆ Adequate time to commit to the planning and development of the program
- ◆ Good organizational skills
- ◆ Ability to lead and to motivate.

The experience of National CASA, and many programs across the country, has confirmed that individuals who serve other roles in the child welfare system have many attributes necessary to a successful program, but they have limited ability to lead the development of CASA in their communities.

Employees of child protection and other social services agencies may find that their involvement with CASA may create a perceived conflict between their commitment to CASA and their standing as a good employee. Consider, for example, a situation in which an individual's employer agency creates a policy that limits a CASA volunteer's access to children, a condition that severely limits the volunteers ability to be an effective advocate. Commitment to CASA would require being in opposition to the employer's policy, a conflict that would be difficult for anyone.

For these same reasons, foster parents, who in most communities are licensed by or contracted to the child protection agency, would have the same potential conflicts and blurring of roles as agency employees of the agency. Although their demonstrated commitment to children is laudable, it is best for all concerned if they are not involved as volunteers, staff, or board members of local CASA programs.

It is also wise to avoid engaging anyone who has current or past involvement with a case before the juvenile or family court. Court actions and decisions that impact our children or those to whom we have close connections are among the most emotional events a person can experience. Such events may affect our perspective of the court and our ability to be objective about similar issues for a lifetime. Although advocating for change in the system when one feels victimized is an understandable reaction, becoming involved in CASA is usually not the best action for someone in such a situation. The risk for negative consequences for the individual and lasting damage to the program is just too great.

Form a Steering Committee

Establishing a steering committee is the first institutional step in setting up the organization. Steering committee members serve as a group of people who have endorsed the concept of the program and are willing to lend their names and volunteer their time to moving the concept through the exploration and startup phases. The defined membership and purpose of the steering committee offers legitimacy, shows visible progress and marks the beginning of community support for the program.

The steering committee is understood to have an impermanent leadership role: usually less formal than a board of directors, but with a similar level of responsibility leading up to the creation of the program's governing board of directors if it is determined that the program will be a nonprofit organization. Some members of the committee may be appropriate for membership on the regular board, but the time-limited nature of a steering committee makes it appealing to some individuals who would not have the time or interest in serving on the board.

The size of the committee is not set in stone. It should be large enough to assure that there are an adequate number of people to do the work and small enough to allow members to feel that they are part of a unified team effort. The number of members can vary from eight to twenty. The important thing is to make sure the group possesses the right attributes.

Determining who should serve on the committee will be influenced by many factors, including local politics. In order to attract early funding and to gain support in the community, this committee must include enough credible leaders whose names are recognizable and whose organizations are respected. Keep in mind also that while it may be easier to start the program if only friends and supporters of CASA are invited to join, it will not serve the program well once it is operating and working with other agencies. Acceptance of a new program is more likely if those who must work with it have been involved in its planning and design and are therefore invested in the program's success.

It is a good idea to consult with the chief judge about the composition of the committee. She may wish to actively participate or to designate someone from the court. Whether she chooses to participate personally or not, it will be important to keep her informed and involved throughout the planning process. The judge is also likely to have suggestions of others who should be

invited to serve on the committee. In fact they may be willing to issue the letters inviting potential members to participate.

Some examples of people to be considered for membership on the steering committee because of positions they hold in the community include:

- ◆ Judge(s)
- ◆ Court administrator (or court clerk)
- ◆ Representative of the local Bar Association
- ◆ Representative of the Prosecuting Attorney/Attorney General's office
- ◆ Local director of the department of social services (or a representative)
- ◆ Leaders of local nonprofit agencies who would work with the program
- ◆ Member of the media/press
- ◆ Member of the city council or county commission
- ◆ Leaders of key civic groups (examples: Junior League, NCJW, women's or men's clubs, church organizations)
- ◆ Representative of Kappa Alpha Theta (if there is an alumni or collegiate chapter in your community)

In addition to involving people in key positions, it is also crucial to have individuals who have knowledge of the legal and financial requirements for developing an organization, people who are experienced in fundraising, and someone who has knowledge of public relations and marketing. All of those invited to serve must be aware of the amount of time and energy it will take and be committed to staying with the committee until the program is off the ground. The actual amount of time from initial planning to the first volunteer training class varies from community to community, but a year is about the average.

Plan the Committee's First Meeting

Regardless of the judge's role on the committee, her presence at the first meeting is important because it provides credibility and establishes the support of the court in the minds of those present. The agenda for this first meeting will set the tone for the program planning effort to follow.

If the participants have limited knowledge of the CASA concept, present an overview, allowing time for discussion. It is also effective to have materials on hand that can explain history, development and impact of CASA programs in other communities. These materials are available from the National CASA Association. A national overview can often help early planners understand CASA's purpose and affirm its credibility.

It is also very helpful to have a representative of your state CASA association or a director from another local program participate in the first meeting. They can provide valuable information about how CASA works throughout your state and will be invaluable in answering many of the questions that arise. Contacting someone as soon as you have a date for the meeting will help to assure that someone can be available.

Once the planning committee has been formed and has held their initial meeting, the real work begins. There are many questions to be answered, decisions to be made, and tasks to be accomplished. Program planning is like building a house. It requires many people and much hard

work, but if the foundation is built according to a well-conceived plan and the walls are constructed by a team with the right skills, in the end, everything will fit together and the house will be solid. Following the same rules in building a CASA program will assure that the program runs smoothly and the children served receive the best possible advocacy.

Next Steps

Once the planning committee has a plan and schedule in place, they will then be ready to begin establishing the building blocks that will become the structure and foundation of the program. This next phase is likely to take a number of months. Members of the committee will sometimes be working alone or in groups of two or three to accomplish their assigned tasks. During this period, it is easy to lose sight of what is happening and even to lose focus. People are busy with their own responsibilities and it is easy to put off those “CASA duties” until a more convenient time. It is essential, therefore, that the designated leader of the committee be aware of what each member is charged to do and that she maintains frequent contact with the whole group. Meetings of the whole group may not be as frequent during this time, but occasional meetings are important to maintain the group’s enthusiasm and to provide accountability, especially for the procrastinators.

The following chapters discuss in some detail the activities that will be undertaken by committee members as they work toward program implementation.

Creating the Organization

The Mission

Effective planning begins with the mission of the organization. Though this may seem like an unnecessary step, it is important to have the group discuss and come to consensus about what the mission is. Because the mission statement serves to inspire people to become involved with the organization and to stay committed to it, it is crucial that every member of the planning committee feel a sense of ownership for the mission and be able to connect his work on the committee to its achievement.

A mission statement should be short (no more than two or three sentences) and should state clearly the ultimate purpose of the organization. When this goal is attained, the CASA program would no longer need to exist. This is in contrast to the statements of many organizations which describe what the organization does, rather than what it intends to achieve. Key elements in a mission statement for CASA would include court-based volunteer advocacy, abused and neglected children, best interests, and permanency. Consider the mission statements of two CASA programs:

- ◆ “CASA advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children within the court system. Based on the belief that every child is entitled to a safe and permanent home, CASA works in the court system through trained volunteers in collaboration with key agencies, legal counsel and community resources to serve as the child’s advocate and represent the child in juvenile court.”
- ◆ “CASA advocates for the best interests of children who are under the protection of the juvenile court, seeking to assure safe, permanent families for them as quickly as possible.”

The process of developing the program’s mission statement can be an enjoyable, team building activity for the steering committee and should therefore be done early in the planning process. As the program develops, it should be reviewed on a regular basis and used as the guiding star for all planning steps. The mission will be useful to share with the individuals and groups whose support you will be seeking and with potential staff and volunteers (see additional examples of mission statements in the Tools Section).

Establish a Plan

Once the mission is established, the committee’s next task should be to develop a plan which details all the tasks required to achieve the goal of implementing a program. This is a very focused and time-limited plan. It is not a strategic plan that lays out the long-term goals for the program’s growth. That kind of plan is also important and should be developed early in the organization’s operation, but it should be developed by those who will guide the program after it

is operating. The initial plan is the blueprint for the organization's design and construction phases that should include:

- ◆ **Activities:** Identify the specific decisions that must be made and the tasks that must be completed.
- ◆ **Timelines:** Include dates when each task should be completed.
- ◆ **Responsible party:** Identify the individual(s) who will be held responsible for accomplishing the task.
- ◆ **Resource requirements:** Identify all resources required to accomplish each task, including funding for supplies, postage, telephone, travel, etc.

Organizational Structure

How your CASA program is to be structured may be a decision that has already been made for you. If the court has initiated the development of the program and has determined that public funds are available to fund its operations, many of the tasks related to setting up an independent corporation would not be necessary. Most CASA programs developing today, however, are established as independent nonprofit organizations or start out under the umbrella of an existing nonprofit agency, so it is likely that your program will be pursuing one of these avenues.

Whether to establish the program as an independent organization or to become part of another organization is a decision that the planning committee should consider very carefully. As you might expect, both structures have pros and cons. Each option is discussed in detail below.

Establishing CASA as a Nonprofit Organization

Establishing CASA as an independent corporation at the beginning of the program's existence provides the advantages of assuring that the volunteers can be truly independent without concern for possible negative consequences to the program; allowing the organization to create its own image in the community; and providing autonomy in planning, budgeting, hiring, fundraising and other aspects of program and volunteer management.

On the downside, establishing a nonprofit corporation requires a number of legal steps that can be time-consuming and require specific knowledge of the law and tax regulations. There are a number of excellent resources available that can provide step-by-step instructions on how to form a nonprofit corporation. One good publication available from National CASA is **How to Form a Nonprofit Corporation** by Anthony Mancuso, published by Nolo Press. It is wise to consult an attorney as you proceed, although the necessary documents can be prepared by a lay person. There are three fundamental documents that serve as the basis for a legal nonprofit corporation:

- ◆ Articles of Incorporation (or "Charter" in some states)
- ◆ Bylaws
- ◆ Tax Exemption Letter from the Internal Revenue Service

Articles of Incorporation

Corporations are created under the statutory authority of a state, and all states have specific statutory provisions relating to the formation of nonprofit corporations. Typical of the items required to be included in articles of incorporation are:

- ◆ Name of the corporation
- ◆ Duration of the corporation (usually perpetual)
- ◆ Purposes for which the corporation is formed

- ◆ Provisions for conducting the internal affairs of the organization
- ◆ Names and addresses of the incorporators
- ◆ Names and addresses of the initial board of directors
- ◆ Address of the initial registered office and name of the initial registered agent of the corporation
- ◆ Provisions for distribution of the assets of the corporation on dissolution

The statutes of each state are different, however, and your attorney should be consulted to assure that you conform to the requirements in your state. It is important that the articles qualify the organization as a nonprofit corporation by stating the organization's purpose appropriately.

Bylaws

The Articles of Incorporation provide only a broad outline of the organization's form, and the initial board of directors (can be the steering committee for the purposes of incorporation) should quickly develop and approve a set of bylaws which will supplement the articles by prescribing more detailed rules for governing the organization. Bylaws provide the discipline required for orderly operation of the organization, and they should be written with an emphasis on fair treatment.

Bylaws often begin with a restatement of the name and purposes of the organization consistent with the articles of incorporation, but they add basic rules for operating the organization:

- ◆ The frequency, notice, and quorum requirements for organizational meetings
- ◆ Voting qualifications, proxies, and procedures
- ◆ The number and term of the board of directors, scope of authority, method of nomination and election to the board, and provisions for filling vacancies
- ◆ List of officers, method of nomination and election, terms of office, powers, duties, and succession
- ◆ The composition and duties and powers of the executive committee
- ◆ Title and scope of authority of the staff executive
- ◆ Record keeping and financial reporting responsibilities
- ◆ Bylaw amendment procedures and provisions for dissolution of the organization

It is wise to stop short of having too much detail contained in the bylaws so that the organization can retain some flexibility to change its operations without bylaw amendments. Bylaw amendments, although simpler than amendments to the articles of incorporation since the laws of the state are not involved, nevertheless often require a vote of the full membership of the organization, which can hamstring an executive and the officers and board in creating new operating structures to meet changing needs.

An illustration of the type of operating flexibility, which should be preserved for board action at a later time, is committee structure. The bylaws should prescribe the membership and authority of only one standing committee: an executive committee which is made up of officers who need to make decisions between board meetings. Beyond that, the bylaws should only provide that the board has authority to establish any other committees with whatever jurisdiction it prescribes. By preserving such organizational flexibility, the board is able to form new committees, or perhaps more importantly, eliminate obsolete committees without amending the bylaws (see example of bylaws in the Tools Section).

IRS Tax Exemption Letter

Nonprofit organizations must take one more step in establishing their operations. In order for donations received to be tax-deductible and to qualify for reduced postal rates, they must establish their tax-exempt status with the IRS. Section 1.501(a) of IRS regulations provides that there shall be an exemption from income taxation for qualified organizations. Application for exempt status should be filed using IRS Form 1023. Copies of the organization's articles of incorporation and bylaws must be included with the application, and a full description of the purpose and activities of the organization must be provided. IRS Publication 557 provides detailed information on the filing process. Fees associated with the filing are usually several hundred dollars.

If the IRS determines that an organization has met the test for exemption, it will issue predetermination and final determination letters, which should be kept safely on file with the other fundamental organizational documents. Be aware that issuance by the IRS of tax-exempt status does not eliminate the need for the organization to file annual information returns with the IRS. Tax-exempt organizations other than private foundations must file Form 990, or Form 990 EZ, which is a shortened form designed for use by small organizations. An accountant or financial advisor should be consulted about the filing of this annual return.

There is also the possibility that you will need to obtain tax-exempt status from the state in which the organization is operating or is incorporated. Many states simply replicate the federal tax exemption regulations, and qualification under the Federal regulations automatically qualifies the organization in the state, but some jurisdictions require additional application and annual tax returns.

Establishing CASA Under Another Organization

The second organizational model that has been used with increasing frequency is the development of new CASA programs under the administrative structure of an established organization. There are a number of advantages to such an arrangement, which make this option appealing to many CASA steering committees. Though the exact nature of the relationship between CASA and the "parent" organization varies somewhat, the benefits of such a collaboration can include:

- ◆ The use of the umbrella organization's tax-exempt status to raise funds.
- ◆ The use of existing office space and equipment.
- ◆ Availability of services such as bookkeeping, accounting, telephone, clerical support, and grant writing.
- ◆ Reducing administrative time and cost.
- ◆ Reputation and name recognition.
- ◆ Access to funding sources.
- ◆ Guidance in program and policy development from the umbrella organization.

Starting a CASA program under another organization should not be chosen simply because it is a shortcut to getting a program started, because this option also has its downsides.

A number of programs established using this model have made the decision after a year or two to become independent for the purpose of gaining more control over their own operations. One

CASA program that began as part of another agency was dissolved when the board of that agency decided to guide their organization in another direction. Other programs have not been allowed to expand to the extent necessary to serve more children.

If CASA is part of another agency, its visibility in the community and to a large extent the public's perception of CASA will be as a "project" of the parent organization. This perception makes it difficult for CASA to develop its own identity and may be an obstacle to recruiting volunteers and raising funds. If the parent agency does not actively publicize and promote CASA, the program may have little exposure in the community and may simply become lost.

Some sponsoring organizations charge the program an administrative fee, usually a percentage of the CASA portion of the budget, for the services it provides to the program. This is certainly a justifiable action and often remains a cost-effective way of doing business. However, some programs under this type of administrative structure have reported that this can become a problem when the percentage of the fee charged by the administering agency is increased each year. Once the fee reaches a certain level, CASA must consider whether or not it could purchase or provide the same services independently at less cost.

Compatible Missions as a Starting Point

If the CASA program chooses to operate under an umbrella agency, it is vital that the parent agency's mission is compatible with the CASA mission and that the goals of each organization are compatible. It is not uncommon for an existing organization to initiate the development of a CASA program or to approach the planning committee about forming an alliance. Occasionally the committee will decide to approach potential sponsoring organizations directly. About 40% of CASA programs that were under umbrella agencies in 1998 were under nonprofit family and children's services agencies. Other common umbrella organizations include child abuse prevention councils, child advocacy centers, and agencies dealing with domestic violence.

Questions for Consideration

If an umbrella structure is being considered, there are some fundamental questions that should be carefully considered prior to any agreement:

- ◆ Is the mission of the proposed parent organization compatible with that of CASA?
- ◆ What is the community's perception of that organization?
- ◆ Is there a potential for conflict if the two organizations are serving the same population?
- ◆ Is the organization financially sound?
- ◆ Will it be able to carry the additional startup costs for CASA?
- ◆ Is the sponsoring agency's interest long-term or do they wish to spin off the program in the future?
- ◆ How actively will the sponsoring agency market CASA, pursue funding for the program, and utilize existing political contacts to support CASA?
- ◆ What will be the role of the umbrella agency's board with respect to CASA?
- ◆ Will CASA have its own board to establish policies and set goals?
- ◆ What will be the financial relationship between CASA and the umbrella agency? Are there limitations on fundraising?
- ◆ How will future planning for CASA be approached after the program's establishment?

The committee should examine the potential for conflicts of interest that may occur between CASA and the parent organization when both organizations may be serving the same families. When this occurs, the potential for disagreement about the proposed permanent plan for the child or the visitation schedule between the child and parents is likely at some point. Issues of confidentiality also arise when one party has confidential information that the other would find helpful. If CASA is to be under such an organization, it is important to create procedures for dealing with and resolving conflicts prior to implementing the joint organization.

There are some community agencies that should not administer the CASA program because of an inherent conflict. The agency responsible for child protection in the community is an obvious example. Though their mandate is to protect the child, their role is to balance the interests of the state and the parents with those of the child while CASA is focused solely on the child. The office of the public prosecutor and the attorney general's office are two other obviously inappropriate entities for administering CASA.

Factors Supporting Successful Umbrella Arrangements

The experience of many CASA organizations administered by umbrella organizations has demonstrated that there are a number of conditions that support the effectiveness of this type of structure:

- 1) **Independence of CASA.** In order to provide recommendations regarding the best interests of children to the court, CASA volunteers must be totally independent. There should be no possibility, or even the perception, that an umbrella organization could influence the volunteers or the program in any way.

This can be achieved, in part, by having a separate advisory board for the CASA program. The role of such a board would include:

- ◆ Developing and approving policies for CASA, including agreements with the court and social services when appropriate.
- ◆ Developing and recommending the program's budget.
- ◆ Promoting collaborative relationship with the umbrella organization and periodically reviewing the agreement that guides the relationship between the organizations.
- ◆ Promoting CASA through public relations activities.
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluating program operations.
- ◆ Developing and implementing fundraising activities for the benefit of CASA.

There should be members of the umbrella agency's governing board on the CASA advisory board and membership from the CASA board on the umbrella agency's governing board.

- 2) **Separate staff for CASA.** In the early stages of program development, an umbrella agency may be tempted to utilize existing staff to recruit, train, and supervise volunteers. Because of the nature of the work of CASA volunteers, access to expert supervision is critical to the volunteer's and the program's success. Volunteer supervision in a CASA program requires consistency and continuity. It can not easily

be assigned to staff who have other duties or divided up among several staff members. National CASA standards recommend that a full time supervisor should supervise no more than 30 volunteers. If the program expects to have that number of volunteers within the first year or two of operation, it is strongly recommended that there be separate staff for the CASA program.

- 3) **Written Agreement.** A formal written agreement between CASA and the umbrella organization outlining the responsibilities and rights of each should be developed. Such an agreement assures that both entities have carefully considered the implications of this arrangement in advance and that the unique needs of each organization will be balanced as implementation proceeds. The governing board of the parent organization should approve and sign this letter before the CASA program begins using the agency's tax-exempt status to raise funds.

The agreement should be for a limited time period, allowing adequate time to develop a solid working relationship and to work out any potential problems that arise. At least one year, but no more than two years is recommended. At the end of the agreed time, each party should complete an evaluation. The results should be shared jointly with both boards and appropriate action taken to resolve any problems or to modify the arrangement if either organization wishes to do so. This process should be completed annually thereafter.

The development of a CASA program within a sponsoring organization can be an effective method of combining community resources and creating a strong, sustainable program. Developing a plan that respects the uniqueness of each organization and realistically addresses the possibility of disagreements and conflicts will help to assure that the arrangement succeeds.

Establishing the Board

At this point in the development of the program, it is time for the steering committee to develop the organization's governing board of directors. Though there are still planning steps to be completed, the organization is entering what can be considered the implementation phase. The pace of the action will increase and several things will be happening at the same time. Funding must be found, staff should be hired, policies and operational systems developed, and volunteers recruited. The board members who will oversee the program's initial operations should be involved in these steps and committee members can use additional help at this point. In fact, it is not unusual for some members of the committee, especially those who made a time-limited commitment, to decide to step aside at this point.

Establishing the board is another very important step and the decisions made now regarding the composition of the board and its role will significantly impact the ultimate success of the organization. A strong board provides both the energy and stability needed to assure the life of the program.

A key aspect to the successful operation of a board is its size. There are several considerations in determining the optimum number of members: the skills needed to fulfill the program's mission; the need for various constituencies to be represented; the need for enough people to serve on committees; and the need to have enough members so that no one member feels overworked. An optimum working board generally has 12-20 members. The initial board may be smaller in number with a plan to add more members as the need arises. The by laws should establish a minimum and maximum number of members.

The by laws should also establish the length of a board member's tenure. It is usually advisable to stagger the terms of board members so that a half or a third are elected every one or two years, for terms of two to four years. This assures that the entire board does not retire at once. Most organizations limit board members to two consecutive terms, a good approach that encourages the board to identify and cultivate new board members in a thoughtful and effective process.

Board Recruitment

An effective board does not happen by accident. It must be carefully built and maintained by the collective efforts of every board member. When the executive director is hired, that person should also collaborate on identifying new board members. Two factors should serve as starting points. The first is the need for diversity: this includes diversity of demographics such as sex, age, and ethnic background; linkages to various sectors of the community; and the individual skills and interests which members bring. Strong boards have a composition that is representative of the larger world in which they operate.

The second factor is the need for commonality in board members. While acknowledging the need for diversity, the board must ensure that members have a shared belief in the mission and

essential values of the organization. Each member must be committed enough to give the time and resources needed.

The objective of the recruitment process is to identify and select people who can operate as a team in performing the board's duties. The first step is to identify those skills and characteristics that are needed on a well-rounded board. Common skills sought for newly forming CASA boards include human resources/personnel management, public relations/media experience, nonprofit management skills, accounting/financial management, office administration, fund development experience and volunteer management.

Potential board members should be interviewed personally by members of the committee to determine their interest and suitability and to explain the responsibilities and expectations of CASA board members. Friendship with a committee member should not assure a position on the board for anyone. Screening of potential members should be conducted using the same methods required for staff and volunteer applicants. This includes child protective services and criminal background checks. This sends the clear signal that CASA is a professional organization that is serious about finding quality board members. The board candidate should be informed in advance about the screening process and should be asked to sign a release authorizing committee members to obtain the necessary information.

Once board members have been selected, they should be given a thorough orientation regarding CASA, the planning process and progress to date, as well as what will be expected of each board member and the board as a collective body. Training for the new board on the roles and responsibilities of boards can be very helpful at this stage. In addition to the learning opportunity, it also offers a chance for new board members to get to know each other. Bringing in a consultant from United Way, the local community college or another nonprofit to provide the training is usually a good idea.

Considerations in Selecting Board Members

A major goal in selecting board members for the new CASA program is the development of a professional and credible image in the community, particularly among the many professionals that will come in contact with the program once volunteers are assigned to cases. It is crucial, therefore, to develop a board of individuals who are not only qualified and committed to CASA, but who are also free of potential bias or conflict resulting from their employment or other organizations with which they are affiliated. CASA planning committees often specifically recruit people with these connections, believing that the program will benefit from their other affiliations. While this can be very helpful in the planning stages, once a governing board is established, it is wise to avoid using individuals from organizations where real or perceived conflict of interest may develop. A CASA board member must be able to make a firm commitment to carry out the duties of membership. As long as a potential for conflict exists, that person faces the likelihood that at some future point, one or both of their roles may be compromised (see Board Selection Characteristics in the Tools Section).

The Judge

For example, consider the judge. If he initiated the development of the program and has been involved with the planning up to now, he may have a strong feeling of ownership and assume that he will be a member of the governing board. However, his membership on the board can

present a problem. The key issue is the necessity for program independence. A judge who will be appointing volunteers to cases and assuming a position on the board could compromise the program's independence. If the judge is perceived as being overly influenced by the CASA volunteer's recommendations or too closely involved with the program, other professionals may question the judge's ability to give equal consideration to the evidence of all parties in a case.

Most judges will not want to be a member of the board. They will generally want input on some policy matters and involvement in training of volunteers. These are important and appropriate roles for the court. However, some judges do not see any conflict in hearing cases and serving on the board. Obviously, this is a delicate issue that will take considerable diplomacy. Allowing the presiding judge to name a fellow judge, perhaps a retired judge or one who has left the bench, is sometimes a graceful out.

Social Services Personnel and Public Attorneys

Having an employee from the public social services agency on the board looks like a good idea at first glance. However, when the inevitable conflict occurs between CASA and the agency, that individual may be putting his or her employment on the line if the conflict concerns agency policy.

A similar barrier exists in the case of a county attorney, prosecutor, or district attorney. These public employees are frequently involved in the same cases that CASA volunteers are assigned to but they have different roles. They may or may not be in agreement with the position of a volunteer in any given case. For that reason it is best to avoid even the possibility of conflict by not utilizing them as board members.

Foster Parents

Foster parents are often the most vocal critics of the court and child welfare agencies. All too often, they have witnessed children being victimized by the system that is supposed to protect them. Often they are motivated to become involved with CASA because they see it as a possible remedy for the ills of the system. While their knowledge of the system would seem to make them suitable candidates for board membership, their roles may become blurred. Their ability to make objective decisions that will further the program's accomplishment of its mission may be compromised. It is better if they are encouraged to seek involvement with other organizations.

Relatives

Often, interest in the CASA mission extends beyond the planning committee member to their families. Family members may also have time available or specific skills that would be useful to the CASA board. However, involving relatives of planning committee members or staff often leads to serious conflicts of interest. Any action taken can be questioned within the context of the family relationship. These perceptions can be even harder to deal with than realities.

Board Responsibilities

Developing and clarifying the board's role at each stage of the program's development is essential because the board's involvement, commitment, sense of partnership, and strength can make a critical difference in an organization's ability to continue and to grow (see Board & Staff – Who Does What in the Tools Section). Staff and volunteers come and go, but a strong board

that brings in new members with new ideas on a regular basis is the foundation for the program's growth.

Most nonprofit leaders agree that it is the board's duty to do the following:

- ◆ Carry out the functions and obligations as designated by law or charter. The board should have a written description of the role and legal authority.
- ◆ Serve as a review body to counsel, advise, and deliberate with staff regarding program policy and operations. The board needs to take the pulse of the organization, to watch its spirit and to be sure it is progressing toward agreed upon goals.
- ◆ Set policy, authorize operational goals and objectives, and emphasize quality of overall corporate planning in the organization.
- ◆ Encourage the director to establish rules and procedures for the administration of the agency and see that they are followed.
- ◆ Serve as a public community relations organization. This means members need to have access to (or in some cases be a member of) the constituents and public of the organization - to hear from them and talk to them. This is necessary both to be able to interpret the organization to the public and the concerns and needs of the constituents to the organization. In other words, the organization must not operate in a vacuum.
- ◆ Monitor operations of the agency. This includes having access to necessary information regarding budget, program, problems and achievements so it can objectively evaluate the director and the agency itself.
- ◆ Support the agency with an annual contribution, and assist in securing additional funds. Appropriate board members should accompany and support the director in solicitation visits. In some cases they may want to make the presentation. Board members should engage in fundraising activities as necessary.
- ◆ Act as ambassadors, negotiators, and intermediaries between the agency and community members whenever problems arise. At times, this may mean taking a stand against some action that the program is being pressured to carry out. This task may sometimes require fighting a battle with politically influential people.
- ◆ In some programs, the board has primary responsibility for finances. The treasurer must keep financial records, prepare financial statements and reports, prepare budgets (together with staff), and safeguard the program's financial assets through bonding, insurance and internal controls.

The Power of Image

Developing Community Support

Although CASA programs have been around for over twenty years in some communities, it is still a relatively new concept to most people, so many community members will not be familiar with the role and purpose of a CASA volunteer. If the new program can successfully educate the public about who it is and what it does, it will likely meet less resistance. Public support is also a significant factor in building credibility and staying power. In other words, communities are less likely to discontinue support for a well-established program with a recognizable name.

Particularly in the initial stages of developing your CASA program, the ability to concisely state the program's purpose is essential when speaking to each agency and constituency within the community. You must also be equipped to respond to any objections which may be voiced. Because the needs and characteristics of each community are unique, the questions and responses in different areas will vary. However, history of growth and acceptance of CASA programs indicates that some issues and objections can be anticipated and resolved early.

Explaining the Benefits of CASA

Some of the commonly cited benefits of a CASA program include:

◆ **Quality Representation of Children**

A CASA volunteer is specially trained to conduct an independent investigation of the child's situation followed by a report to the court of all relevant information. The volunteer frequently has more time to devote to the case than the professionals involved and therefore can provide the court with more in-depth information. Social workers or attorney guardians ad litem can carry as many as 60 cases at a time while National CASA Standards recommend that a volunteer not be assigned to more than two children/sibling groups at a time.

◆ **Quality Decision-Making by the Court**

A CASA volunteer is specially trained to conduct interviews with children, parents, and professionals to obtain important facts and opinions regarding the child's needs. Using the materials gleaned from the investigative process, the CASA volunteer, the volunteer's supervisor, and the attorney can engage in a process of joint case discussion. Considering a child's situation from several perspectives leads to more carefully considered recommendations that can positively affect the decision of the court.

◆ **Community Awareness and Involvement**

Involvement of community volunteers in the court system provides the added benefit of educating citizens about the needs and interests of abused and neglected children. By engaging these citizens, we encourage the community to accept ownership of the problems of child abuse and neglect and to work at finding solutions and prevention measures.

Explaining How CASA Relates to Others in the System

Most professionals in the community are very supportive of CASA once they are provided information about the role of the volunteer and how they will be required to interact with the advocate. In fact, many professionals have asked to have CASA volunteers assigned to the children with whom they work. Initially, however, there is usually some resistance when the program is new and those who work in the system have not had experience with CASA volunteers. Every professional who works in this field considers him/herself a child's advocate and they naturally feel that having someone else assigned to a child to fill that role is not necessary. It is important to establish clear and open channels of communication at both the agency and individual level to assure effective collaboration and cooperation. Establishing a clear understanding about the role of the volunteer and how the volunteer will relate to each player in the child's arena is a key first step toward creating good relationships (see Memo of Understanding in the Tools Section).

CASA Volunteers and Attorneys

CASA volunteers and attorneys relate to each other in varied ways depending upon the model of representation that is established by the court and the CASA program. The most common models of interaction are:

- ◆ Attorney is guardian ad litem and the CASA volunteer is an independent "Friend of the Court" or is a party to the action, reporting directly to the court – no mandate to work together
- ◆ Guardian ad litem may be an attorney, a CASA volunteer or other non-attorney adult
- ◆ CASA is the guardian ad litem, teamed with attorney advocate
- ◆ CASA is the guardian ad litem, represented by attorney in court

Regardless of the model used in your program, the keys to successful collaboration with attorneys are a clear understanding of roles, commitment to teamwork, frequent two-way communication, and an established protocol for resolving differences when they occur.

It is also important to emphasize to your local legal community that the intent of the CASA program is *not* to provide legal representation for children. It is to make sure the best interests of children are heard in court, and this job is best performed in conjunction with an attorney. CASA programs must have either an attorney on staff or consult regularly with pro bono attorneys, contract attorneys, or attorneys appointed to serve jointly on a case for this purpose. In general, the legal profession has been quite supportive of CASA programs nationally.

Social Workers

CASA volunteers and social workers tend to be in close communication and share information on most cases. It is of critical importance, especially in jurisdictions that assign CASA volunteers early in the court process, that the roles of each are clear. CASA volunteers do not deliver services but may locate and recommend them for a child or family. They often have input regarding the development of a case plan or may recommend a revision, but they do not formulate the plan. Just as CASA volunteers do not practice law, they do not practice social work.

When approaching a social service agency in your community, it is especially important to emphasize that it is not the mission of CASA volunteers to look over the shoulder of other

agencies. Rather, the purpose of the CASA or volunteer guardian ad litem is to ensure that the court has all the information it needs to bring about the expeditious placement of children in a safe, permanent home environment. In the majority of cases, the CASA volunteer achieves that goal through close cooperation with the caseworker, supporting the case plan and the department's recommendations.

Sometimes, however, the volunteer makes recommendations that are different from the caseworker's. Any resulting complications can be minimized if every effort is made to keep the attention focused on the child and the facts surrounding his or her circumstances rather than on the disagreement. Building a positive working relationship with the department, as with any other entity, requires open communication on a regular and ongoing basis. Sometimes relationships must be built with one social worker at a time.

Citizen Review Panels

In many states and local communities, the federally mandated review of cases involving children in foster care is done by a panel of volunteers who are trained to consider information about how the child's case is progressing. CASA volunteers are excellent sources of information about the child's current needs and circumstances and are often asked to present this information to the review panel.

Foster Parents

CASA volunteers communicate often with a child's foster parents about how the child is doing and what needs the child currently has. Foster parents are the best experts on any changes in behavior, school performance, medical or social needs, and what services are currently being provided by social services. CASA volunteers and foster parents do not always agree, but they are both focused only on what is best for the child and therefore have a strong partnership.

School Personnel

CASA volunteers often contact schoolteachers, principals and counselors of school-aged children to see how they are progressing in school. If the child has special educational needs, the volunteer will check to ensure that those needs are met. In some states, they may serve in the capacity of educational surrogate in order to review a child's individual educational plan.

Mental Health/Substance Abuse Therapists and Counselors

Treatment professionals can communicate with CASA volunteers, provided appropriate releases have been signed and/or court orders allow the release of information. Parents' progress in treatment and compliance with court ordered treatment is an important area of information that the volunteer reports to the court.

Medical/Public Health Professionals

With appropriate releases or court orders, relevant medical records can be obtained and communication with medical professionals about the child's condition(s) can occur.

Responding to Common Objections to the Program

Here are some of the most common questions and objections CASA programs have faced when first introducing the concept to the professionals and citizens in their communities. The responses are drawn from real program experience, and can help you prepare for any opposition you may face. The responses provided are not guaranteed to resolve the concerns, but they will hopefully steer the dialogue in a positive, helpful direction.

Objection: *"Adding one more person to the process is unnecessary and will further complicate the handling of the case."*

Response: The child is already involved in the process and his or her interests must be considered by a number of persons under the present system. Yet when so many people and so many institutions are involved on the child's behalf, sometimes the focus on the child gets lost. The CASA can be the thread that pulls all of these resources and caring people together. Designating one specially-trained advocate to speak for the child is more efficient and may actually save time since programs train volunteers in negotiating skills that can sometimes facilitate the progress of difficult cases (cases otherwise stalemated or polarized).

Objection: *"The caseworker is a trained professional, and does not need an untrained lay person interfering in case planning and management. The volunteer would be practicing social work without the training."*

Response: The social worker is indeed a trained professional hired for his knowledge of child development, the dynamics of abuse and neglect, and skills in helping families problem solve. The CASA volunteer does not practice social work and has no decision-making authority. When they testify in court, they are not considered expert witnesses. However, the volunteer does receive extensive training and has been selected because of his or her ability to be thorough and objective. CASA can help social workers who have high caseloads by giving the kind of focused attention to children that social workers would if they had more time.

Objection: *"The system is working fine; we do not need anyone else checking on us."*

Response: The CASA concept is not limited to courts and social service systems that are experiencing problems. The child is entitled to representation of his or her best interests, as specified in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The use of trained volunteers in that role has proven a cost-effective model for meeting that requirement. The CASA volunteer serves as an adjunct to the system, ensuring that the system works well for the child.

Objection: *"If a new program is developed, funding will likely be cut from some other program to support this one, because there is no new money in this community to support new programs."*

Response: The impact of all permanency planning efforts is felt in the long term with a reduction in the costs of foster care, and reduced workload of court and social service personnel. By utilizing attorneys in an efficient manner, volunteers have actually saved money while offering greater representation for children. They can provide the background information necessary for the attorney's legal case.

Objection: *"CASA volunteers are practicing law without legal training or a license."*

Response: CASA volunteers receive extensive training in the substance of child welfare laws and local court rules in addition to the workings of the court system. However, CASA volunteers do not practice law; they have access to legal counsel to advise and represent them in legal matters and procedures beyond the scope of their training.

Objection: *"Volunteers cannot be trusted to work in the court system, carrying so much responsibility."*

Response: One of the foundations of the judicial system in the United States is the use of citizens as jurors. They are charged with the very serious responsibility to decide the outcome of cases, based on evidence presented. The CASA concept also assumes citizens are capable of responsible participation in the court process, and provides specialized training, clear role definition, and professional supervision to guide and support the volunteer.

Objection: *"What about the potential for liability when volunteers are used in the court?"*

Response: Some states have specific legislation addressing the issue of liability of volunteers in general, or specifically, CASA volunteers. Some nonprofit agencies have purchased liability insurance coverage for their volunteers. Whether or not a volunteer is covered under the state's liability protection or through a county risk maintenance plan will depend entirely upon the jurisdiction.

Objection: *"The information in cases of alleged child abuse and neglect is confidential and very sensitive. No one from the community should have access to that information about families and children in the community."*

Response: The CASA program emphasizes the importance of confidentiality when training its volunteers. The role as the child's representative makes the CASA volunteer a recognized part of the proceeding, with the need to know the information available to the other parties, and the same obligation to handle that information confidentially. The success of the existing CASA programs indicates that the confidentiality issue can be adequately addressed, and most programs state explicitly that violation of confidentiality is grounds for dismissal of a volunteer. In many programs, volunteers are required to sign an oath of confidentiality.

Gaining Visibility in the Community

CASA/GAL programs are different from most other programs serving the court because they depend on public visibility to survive and grow. Unlike caseworkers, attorneys, or court personnel, CASA/GAL volunteers are recruited by outreach in the community. If the public has not heard of the program, it will be more difficult to effectively serve the community's children.

As a result, CASA/GAL programs face a unique challenge: they must work within the confidential parameters of the court and social services system while simultaneously promoting the program to the public. National CASA member programs need public visibility:

- ◆ To recruit volunteers
- ◆ To generate community support and credibility for the program
- ◆ To raise funds

This presents an ongoing challenge for most programs. Cases never stop coming in, but volunteers sometimes do. While the program may rely on word-of-mouth recruiting for its first group of volunteers, it is unrealistic to think this kind of “grapevine” effort will maintain a sufficient volunteer pool in the months and years to come. Free time is a valuable commodity for most people and they are most likely to dedicate volunteer hours for a program with a recognizable name and solid reputation providing a much-needed service for children.

Getting Started: The Basics

New programs should reserve some money in their budgets for public relations materials. Don't perceive these items as a luxury; the dollars put into creating effective marketing tools now will pay off later in recruitment, fundraising and community awareness efforts.

- ◆ **General Information Brochure** - A professionally-designed and printed piece providing basic information about CASA: what the program does, how much time it requires, what skills are necessary, and where to volunteer or get additional information. Remember, this brochure will be many people's first impression of your program; it needs to reflect professionalism and credibility. A local adaptable brochure is available through National CASA to purchase or you can produce your own.
- ◆ **Business Cards** - For program director and/or any staff who deal with the general public.
- ◆ **Stationery** - Letterhead and envelopes using the CASA logo and following all graphic standards.

One benefit of your program membership in the National CASA Association is you may use NCASAA graphics and public relations materials available from the national office.

NCASAA materials have been designed so every program may use them, regardless of name. By using the materials developed by the National CASA Association, all network programs, including programs carrying other names (such as Guardian Ad Litem, ProKids and FOCAS) will have the means to graphically maintain a consistent national image.

To ensure we maintain quality in our visual image, members of the National CASA Association must adhere to the graphics standards when using these materials. Our purpose is to offer a means to achieve uniformity within the CASA/ GAL family, and to offer guidance to new members (see the Graphics Standard in the Tools Section).

The National CASA 's *Communications Manual for CASA/GAL Programs* specifically outlines ways to launch a successful public relations campaign for your program. It contains information on: designing printed materials; putting together an information/ press kit; working with the media; and getting a public service announcement on the air. Chapter 9, “Recruiting the Right Volunteers,” may also offer some helpful ideas to promote the program.

Funding the Program

One of the great challenges facing the steering committee is finding the money needed to get the program off the ground. The court and community leaders may embrace the concept wholeheartedly, but they will still ask, “Who is going to pay for it?” Regardless of the enthusiasm for CASA, the commitment of those involved or the careful planning that is done, if the funds are not available, the program can never train the first volunteer.

Finding funding for a new organization that does not have a local track record, has little visibility in the community and doesn't have a staff requires creativity, and the willingness to try multiple approaches. The first step in securing funds is to determine how much you need and what for. Creating a budget of expenses for the first year of operation is the best place to start.

Developing the First Budget

To determine what the actual costs of goods and services will be, take a look at other similar nonprofit organizations in your community. Members of the planning committee may be able to provide information based on their personal knowledge or experience in other organizations. The local United Way may be able to provide cost information from their member agencies. Your state CASA organization can share what other developing programs in your state have budgeted for necessary items (see examples of Startup Budgets in the Tools Section).

Although you might need to include other categories or distribute the items within these categories differently, the expenses of launching a CASA program usually fall into the categories below:

- ◆ **Personnel** – Includes federal and state taxes, the employer portion of social security, and employee benefits.
- ◆ **Equipment** – Includes a computer and printer, small duplicating machine, desk, chair, locking file cabinet for confidential records, a telephone and answering machine.
- ◆ **Volunteer Support** – Includes the purchase or printing of recruitment materials such as brochures and posters; training materials and other costs associated with training.
- ◆ **Facility** - Includes office space, maintenance, utilities, and cleaning.
- ◆ **Supplies** – Includes paper, pens, computer cartridges, business cards, letterhead, etc.
- ◆ **Travel** – Includes cost of mileage reimbursement for volunteers and staff, plus travel expenses such as meals and hotels associated with training and meetings for staff.
- ◆ **Telephone/Internet Service** – Includes the cost of installing the initial telephone line for the program, as well as funds for long-distance. Explore the need and cost effectiveness of installing a phone line for internet or fax access. It may be cheaper than adding one later.
- ◆ **Administrative costs** – Includes legal, accounting, and other costs of administering the program.

- ◆ **Insurance** – Includes professional and general liability, directors and officers coverage for the board, and liability coverage for volunteers (if you anticipate that you will have volunteers active on cases during the first year).
- ◆ **Staff Training** – Includes the registration cost for workshops or conferences, such as conferences sponsored by National CASA and your state organization.
- ◆ **Dues & Publications** – Includes program membership dues for National CASA and any dues for your state association. You might also include publications and training videos for the volunteers.

Developing the Right Approach to Fundraising

Once you have identified the kind and amount of financial resources you will need to start the CASA program, you are ready to begin developing your funding plan. If people on the planning committee have experience in fundraising, they will be helpful during this phase of planning. If not, you will need to identify successful fundraisers who are willing to assist or would agree to provide training to members of the planning committee.

Funding sources want assurance that they are being asked to support a carefully researched and well planned program that fills documented community needs. Funding for human service programs - especially children's programs - is limited, and competition is stiff. Funders want to know that they are not throwing money away on a program that will fail because of poor planning, lack of coordination with those who will be affected, or duplication of efforts. You must be able to show a solid plan to support your request.

Three fundamental rules of successful fundraising are:

- 1) Know who you are asking.
- 2) Know what you are asking for.
- 3) Ask and ask again.

The success of any fundraising project will hinge on how well you know the person/agency/corporation you are soliciting. It is essential to have a clear, precise understanding of who the potential funder is, what types of programs it likes to support, and its funding history. Your request might be a good one, but if it does not fall within the funder's philosophy or budget parameters, you probably will not get funded.

A good strategy is to narrow your request to specific needs. It is rarely effective to approach an institution or organization with a blanket request. Funders usually prefer to fund defined projects rather than general operating expenses. It is also helpful to have a list of items, such as office furniture or computers, that the program needs. Use the budget as a blueprint for determining what your specific requests should be.

At the same time, you must be flexible. A potential donor might decline your original request, but offer something else that is needed. It is a good idea to prepare two or three alternative requests, based on what the donor is able to offer. The key to successful solicitation of in-kind contributions is to be clear on what specific items you need, and to be willing to ask for them - again, and again, from several different sources.

Possible Funding Sources

In-Kind Contributions. Donated goods and services are a major source of support for CASA programs, especially programs in the early stages of development. Many organizations that would like to support the development of CASA do not have cash to donate, but would be more than willing to provide in-kind support. Any goods or services donated to the program should be included in the budget as revenue. The contributor should determine the value of the contribution and provide the program with a written letter stating its value. In turn, the program, if tax-exempt status is in place, should provide a letter documenting the contribution for tax purposes.

The following are common sources of in-kind support for CASA programs:

- ◆ **The Court** - Office space, telephone, clerical support, supplies
- ◆ **Community Service Organizations** - Office and meeting space, printing, training materials
- ◆ **Bar Association** - Pro bono legal services, office space
- ◆ **Corporations, Businesses, Law Firms** - Paper, printing, computers, graphic design, office space, volunteer recognition materials

The Court. If the program is court-initiated, funding may be available through the court or its funding agency - either the county or the state. If attorney guardians ad litem are currently being appointed at court expense and the statute in your state does not require that the GAL be an attorney, it may be possible to negotiate for a portion of that funding to be channeled into the CASA program. You should anticipate some resistance to this idea, and the support of the presiding judge would be essential to counter objections that will likely arise.

The State. A number of states have passed legislation requiring or enabling the development of CASA programs and with funding appropriated in the state budget. Your state organization can provide information about how to qualify for these funds if they are available.

Community Service Organizations. Other organizations committed to child welfare have supported the development of CASA programs in numerous sites around the country. Both the **National Council of Jewish Women** and the **International Association of Junior Leagues** have been instrumental in bringing CASA programs to many communities. If you have chapters or sections of these organizations in your community and have not already involved them in a planning committee, they should be contacted. Usually, these organizations set their funding priorities a year or two in advance, so contact them early in the planning process.

Churches, and service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis and Women's Clubs, can also be a great resource to help establish a CASA program.

Kappa Alpha Theta. This national women's fraternity has adopted CASA as its National philanthropy and both alumnae and collegiate chapters have been helpful in supporting CASA programs throughout the country. Local chapters have helped CASA programs with financial and volunteer support, and sponsor community awareness events. Call the Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation (1-800-KAO-1870) for the name of the nearest Kappa Alpha Theta chapter, or visit their website at www.KappaAlphaTheta.org.

Corporations and Private Businesses. Charitable contributions from corporations or businesses in your community may be available for new programs. The dollar amount and the application criteria will vary according to corporation or business philosophy, practice, and resources available. Investigate business sources on an individual basis. If planning committee members have had experience applying for contributions from local corporations, they may have valuable information on how to approach a company.

If you are unable to find anyone who has had experience with the particular company you want to approach, call and ask to speak to the person in charge of charitable contributions. Request information on their guidelines and priorities and be prepared to give a brief overview of the CASA program. If their stated purpose makes a cash contribution unlikely, you may consider a request for an in-kind contribution such as printing services or office equipment.

United Way. Some United Way agencies have venture grants to assist new programs with startup needs. These grants are separate from United Way agency membership, but may be available to member agencies starting new programs. If the CASA program is starting under the umbrella of an already established nonprofit agency in the community, startup support may be available from the umbrella agency.

Private Foundations. Private family, community and corporate foundations are sometimes open to funding new CASA programs, particularly if the foundation's field of interest includes family services or improvement of judicial responses to youth. Foundations generally prefer specific projects with clearly defined outcomes, time lines and indication of support from other sources. Some foundations will not fund operating expenses, but will consider requests for funds to produce or purchase the materials required to train CASA volunteers.

The reference departments of most local libraries have foundation directories available that provide contact information and funding priorities. There is also a wealth of information about foundations and other funding opportunities on the internet. Check with your state CASA organization for suggestions of foundations that are likely funding sources within the state.

A word of advice: well-known national foundations, such as Kellogg, Ronald McDonald Children's House, Annie E. Casey, and Edna McConnell Clark, prefer to fund national organizations or projects that have impact broader than one community or even one state. National CASA staff is regularly in touch with most of these funders and seeks grants that will benefit local programs when they are available. The best bet for local CASA programs is to focus on the many local foundations that are interested in funding programs at the community level.

- In 1991, National CASA, in agreement with state directors, established a protocol for approaching prospective funders who are not located within the immediate geographic area, and with whom they do not already have an established relationship. The program seeking funds should contact the CASA program located in the state or community of the funder, to learn if that program already receives financial support, or has a proposal pending with the prospective funder. Likewise, local and state programs should first check with National CASA before approaching a national funder. Please refer to the Resource Development Protocol at the end of this chapter to review the policy.

IOLTA. The “Interest on Lawyer’s Trust Accounts” program funds CASA programs in many states. The CASA/GAL State Director, or other local CASA/GAL program may be able to provide you information on how it is administered in your state. Through the IOLTA program, attorneys place nominal or short-term client trust funds in an interest-earning account. An administrative body, usually the State Bar foundation, awards and administers the interest earned on the lawyers trust accounts.

Federal Funding for CASA Programs

The National CASA Association Grants Program. This is federal funding authorized by Congress specifically for the expansion of CASA advocacy for abused and neglected children. It is contingent upon an annual appropriation from Congress to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and administered by the National CASA Association. An announcement is made by National CASA, typically at the beginning of each calendar year, of the grant opportunities and applications available for that year. In every year, grants are made to establish new CASA programs, expand existing programs, as well as fund some demonstration projects. Be sure to contact National CASA for details of upcoming grant cycles. Funding for the CASA Program has been authorized by Congress through fiscal year 2005.

Other sources of federal funding for CASA programs are typically awarded by the federal agency to state agencies or commissions, for disbursement within that state. Wide discretion is usually given to the state to determine which agencies will receive the federal funds in any given year. Your State CASA/GAL director is probably the best source of information on what federal funds are made available to CASA programs in your state.

The following are the primary federal programs applicable to CASA programs.

Children’s Justice Act. The Children’s Justice Act (CJA) provides grants to States to improve handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly sexual abuse and exploitation. A priority is programs which serve child victims and their families in order to minimize trauma. Up to \$20 million is available nationally for CJA state activities. Check with your State Director or National CASA Association for the name of the CJA Coordinator in your state.

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). VOCA funds support criminal justice advocacy, emergency legal assistance, information and referral services, personal advocacy, and assistance with filing crime victims compensation claims. VOCA grant funds can only support services to victims of crime, so that extensive documentation and reporting is required by grant recipients. The Office of Victims of Crime, the federal agency which administers the funding, gives states maximum discretion to set priorities and to determine which programs within the states are funded. For this reason, there is wide variance among states funding CASA programs. In the year 2000, 144 CASA programs in 19 states received VOCA funds. Your CASA/GAL State Director should have a good idea whether your state agency is amenable to funding CASA programs. To locate the VOCA contact in your state, and what activities were funded in the previous year, you can go to the following site: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/state>, (click your state).

Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provides formula block grants to all states and territories. States must submit their plan to OJJDP detailing how they will utilize the funds, which can be support for

programs to reduce or prevent delinquency or improve the juvenile justice system. A Juvenile Justice Specialist in each state is designated to coordinate the block grant, and State Advisory Groups (SAG) made recommendations on how the funds should be utilized. You should contact your CASA/GAL State Director to learn if federal juvenile justice funds support CASA programs in your state. It is best to work with your state organization to build a relationship with the state's Juvenile Justice Specialist and SAG, to pave the way for future funding of CASA if it is not already happening.

National CASA Resource Development Protocol

Introduction

Not-for-profit organizations must strive to obtain and sustain an optimal funding mix of public and private support to secure their future. However, we are experiencing escalating human service needs and costs, while the availability of government funds is being sharply curtailed. As a result, more organizations than ever before are appealing to the same foundations and corporations for private support.

Several funders across the country have acknowledged that they receive grant requests from multiple CASA programs. This is reasonable when the prospective funder's guidelines are appropriate for CASA program support, and the funder does not restrict giving to a specific geographic area. Even so, the best approach to a prospective funder should be made in coordination and cooperation with other CASA programs. That way the funder will not feel overwhelmed and disinclined because of numerous requests from CASA programs in a single grant-making period. Additionally, through a coordinated approach it is far less likely that one program's request could jeopardize the outcome of a pending request from another program.

Research

NCASAA routinely send inquiries to funders throughout the country, requesting information such as annual reports, giving guidelines, funding priorities and eligibility of national organizations to receive funding.

When NCASAA learns of a prospective funder whose priorities are appropriate for CASA program support, yet restricts giving to a specific geographic area, NCASAA should provide lead to the member CASA program in that area.

Likewise, when state or local programs discover a funder which is not appropriate for its own program support, but may be appropriate for national projects, the program should provide that lead to NCASAA.

When a prospective funder is identified which provides funding for national projects as well as specific community support, *through the same office or funding mechanism*, NCASAA will proceed with respect and consideration for the member CASA program located in the state or community of the funder, whichever is more appropriate as described in the next section. Written guidelines provided by a prospective funder generally define the tiers of support which the funder will provide (i.e. support for projects with a restricted geographic area, regional projects or national projects). When the guidelines clearly restrict support to just one tier (local, regional or national), there is little potential for conflict between National and local CASA program requests. The guidelines may also describe separate mechanisms to support giving at two tiers. That is, a national corporation may, through its regional office, provide support for

nonprofit agencies within that geographic region. At the same time, the national corporation, through its headquarters office or a corporate foundation, may provide support for national projects. When grant-making is provided for multiple tiers, through separate mechanisms (i.e. regional office and a national office), again there is little likelihood for conflict.

Submission of Funding Requests

1. Before submitting a request for funding, NCASAA will notify the appropriate CASA program located in the state or community of the funder. If the CASA program has a request pending, or is preparing a request for submission, and it is agreed that a request from NCASAA may affect the outcome of the CASA program's request, NCASAA may defer any action until the prospective funder acts upon the CASA program request. NCASAA and the CASA program should then come to agreement on the best timing of NCASAA's request. Certain circumstances may warrant notification after an initial contact.
2. A funder who provides ongoing support for a CASA program may also consider national projects. The state or local programs and NCASAA offices should discuss this, and may even inquire of the prospective funder if one tier of CASA program support excludes the other (if this is not evident in the written guidelines). If it is appropriate to the project, NCASAA/state/local programs may take the opportunity to team in their meeting with a prospective funder or collaborate on the grant proposal.
3. State and local CASA programs should notify NCASAA before approaching a national funder, most especially when NCASAA has an established relationship with that funder. NCASAA may have a request pending or ready to submit to the funder. NCASAA may also be able to provide information on the prospective funder or on previous approaches by CASA programs.
4. The fact that a prospective funder is located within a state or local CASA program's community is not, in itself, reasonable grounds for NCASAA to defer solicitation. Programs should coordinate their solicitations as described in #1 above.
5. NCASAA/state/local programs should make every effort to follow this protocol when there is a potential conflict with the development efforts of another program.

Staffing the Program

The steering committee is likely to realize very quickly that in order to get a program fully operational, it will be necessary to have staff. Initial staffing is often a catch-22 situation – hiring an employee requires funding, but to be successful obtaining funding you need staff to coordinate and oversee fundraising activities.

At this point someone usually wonders aloud if the development of the program can continue without paid staff. After all, members have volunteered their time to do everything needed and things are progressing well thus far. Perhaps, the group may speculate, they could find a volunteer to run the office for a while until they have the necessary funds.

While having a volunteer run the office is one option, it may not be the best choice. Though a volunteer may be well qualified, hiring a salaried employee guarantees a time commitment and a regular work schedule. It also allows the board to have control over the nature and priorities of the work to be done and provides overall continuity for the program development effort.

Having professional staff is also an important step in establishing the credibility of the program with other professionals in the community, and it is staff who will assure the quality of the program's day to day operations.

Where to Begin

The selection of the director is the most critical hiring decision for the startup program. Even the most dedicated volunteers can make only limited impact without adequate supervision and guidance. Since both program quality and viability are highly correlated with effective management, it is important the director be chosen wisely.

Initially, the board must decide whether to hire a full-time or part-time person. The decision should be based on the defined duties the person will be expected to perform; how involved board members intend to be in policy development and fundraising, and how many volunteers are projected for the first year or so. The experience of most directors in starting programs is that, even if the board is active and involved, the job requires at least 40 hours a week if it is to be done well. Most new directors find they spend full-time hours even if they are paid for part-time. If there is any way possible to generate enough funds, it is cost effective in the long run to employ a full-time director from the beginning.

Developing the Job Description & Qualifications

Finding and hiring the right staff starts with a clear, concise job description. There is no formula for the perfect one, but at a minimum, a good job description should include:

- ◆ Basic skills required, both technical and educational
- ◆ Desired qualities beyond skills and education
- ◆ Duties and responsibilities
- ◆ Hours required
- ◆ Who the person will report to

Initially, the director will most likely be performing duties that will later be shifted to other staff. This should be explained during the interview process. Caution should be exercised to avoid developing a job description containing such an extensive list of duties that no one could perform them all effectively. Such a job description is frustrating for a new director and is a good way to set someone up to fail. A realistic job description serves as a guide for the employee and a basis for performance appraisals and salary increases. Key duties of an executive director usually include:

- ◆ Hiring, training and supervising staff
- ◆ Conducting or overseeing recruitment, screening, training, and supervision of program volunteers
- ◆ Providing professional perspectives to staff and volunteers regarding services
- ◆ Developing and maintaining procedures for case record keeping and supervising staff and volunteers in completing record keeping tasks
- ◆ Developing and maintaining procedures for managing information systems
- ◆ Serving as a professional liaison to the court, agency personnel, and the board of directors
- ◆ Planning program growth and development, including special projects, budgets, annual work plans, and analysis of trends in program services
- ◆ Representing the program to networks of service providers, and coalitions dealing with child welfare
- ◆ Overseeing day-to-day operations

The specific experience and educational requirements should be developed by the planning committee, in keeping with the present standards for comparable positions in the community. Fundamental requirements for the executive director should include:

- ◆ Knowledge of the juvenile justice system
- ◆ Awareness of trends in child welfare and permanency planning
- ◆ Familiarity with community resources and leaders who can facilitate establishment and growth of the program
- ◆ Understanding of the dynamics of child abuse and neglect
- ◆ Ability to provide training for volunteers and staff
- ◆ Good communication skills
- ◆ Ability to plan, organize, supervise, delegate and evaluate the program operations
- ◆ Knowledge of budgeting methods
- ◆ Interviewing and assessment skills

The director should also be flexible, creative, possess leadership qualities, have a professional appearance and be able to develop good working relationships with a variety of people.

Remember that the executive director generally is the program's official spokesperson in the community.

Of course, finding an individual with all of these qualifications is possible, but not very likely for a starting program. Such people are rare and they usually command much higher salaries than the program can afford. One solution to this dilemma is to focus on the skills in one area and plan to offer training in the additional areas of responsibility. This allows for the scope of duties to broaden as the demands of the program change and for the director's salary to increase at a comparable rate.

Getting the Word Out

Recruiting the right person to fill the director's position may require sensitivity to the local political scene. In some communities in which there is strong resistance to the CASA program, hiring an attorney or a social worker known by the professionals in the area might be a wise move. A person who has credibility and long-established personal relationships may be a real asset in the early developmental stages of the program. On the other hand, there is the possibility that conflict will arise between new responsibilities and old allegiances. The board committee will need to assess this carefully.

Finding the right person usually requires a variety of strategies. Ads placed in the local newspaper's classified sections may bring a slew of responses, but many may be way off the mark in terms of qualifications. Sending a job announcement to your state organization, to court agencies and to other CASA programs may elicit more qualified candidates. Word of mouth is also effective, especially in small communities.

Reviewing Resumes

As resumes arrive, develop a fair and systematic process to review them, always keeping in mind what skills are required for the position. With experience, each reviewer will develop his or her own rating system. Obviously, the main points of the resume are all important – the education, experience, skill levels, and any demonstrable communication and interpersonal abilities. Interest in and commitment to an organization's mission should be paramount.

Start judging a candidate as soon as you open the envelope. Does the resume look like it is written with care? Are there typographical or spelling errors? Is it orderly and easy to read? Is the cover letter direct and cogent or rambling and ineffective?

To uncover more intangible qualities in a candidate, look for evidence of:

- ◆ Sustained interest in a job or cause
- ◆ Loyalty to an organization
- ◆ Ability to be a team player
- ◆ Communication skills
- ◆ Attention to detail

Interviewing

Conducting good interviews is a learned skill that requires careful preparation, execution and follow-up. It is perhaps hardest to master the techniques of putting applicants at ease. Proceed with the general understanding that applicants will be nervous, especially if several members of the committee are conducting the interview. During the interview, you should address administrative issues, such as salary and benefits, travel requirements and starting date, in addition to the job requirements.

All applicants should be asked a common set of questions that can help determine the candidate's job-related skills and experience, general intelligence and aptitude, attitudes and personality. Standardizing the questions from interview to interview helps to avoid discrimination. In addition to questions about background and experience, asking questions such as the following that have been recommended by experts in human resources can provide good insight into a candidate's suitability:

- ◆ What was your single most noteworthy achievement or contribution in your current job?
- ◆ What specific strengths do you bring to this job and this organization?
- ◆ How do you make important decisions?
- ◆ What risks did you take in previous jobs, and what was the result?

Obviously, the overall goal is to learn as much about each candidate as possible, as well as determine if that candidate's resume is accurate. Generally, an interviewer should try to determine the candidate's ability to do the following:

- ◆ Plan tasks
- ◆ Prioritize
- ◆ Solve problems
- ◆ Work on a team
- ◆ Apply knowledge
- ◆ Know limitations
- ◆ Take initiative
- ◆ Learn on the job
- ◆ Communicate with colleagues

Other Screening Requirements

All candidates should be required to submit a written application and references. As part of the application or as a separate document, be sure to obtain the person's signed consent to contact references and conduct criminal record and child abuse registry background checks.

Selection and Hiring

Once the most qualified candidate has been selected, the offer should be made in a letter accurately stating the job offer and employment conditions. Additional documents that should be contained in the employee's personnel record include:

- ◆ Employment application
- ◆ Copy of formal job offer and written acceptance

- ◆ Social security number
- ◆ Completed Form I-9 (to document immigration status)
- ◆ Federal, state, and local tax withholding forms as applicable

See National CASA's publication, [Achieving Our Mission](#) for additional discussion of the hiring process.

Employee vs. Independent Contractor

Federal law requires employers to withhold income taxes, withhold and pay Social Security and Medicare taxes, and pay an unemployment tax on wages paid to employees. These payments are not required for independent contractors.

The wages of some employees may be exempt from some of these taxes. Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, for example, do not have to pay the federal unemployment tax, but they do pay social security and must withhold income taxes.

Whether an individual is an employee or an independent contractor does not depend on whether there is a signed contract. It does not depend on how the job is labeled or whether the person is full or part time. In most cases, the determination depends on the organization's right to control and direct the individual. The Internal Revenue Service has a list of questions to be considered in making this determination. However, those questions are irrelevant for officers of corporations who are specifically included within the definition of an employee (officers are generally those responsible for the day to day running of the organization).

Improperly classifying an employee as an independent contractor can result in the organization being liable for the employee's share of FICA taxes and withholding amounts.

Information about the IRS requirements can be found in Publication 15-A, the Employer's Supplemental Tax Guide.

Additional Staff

Depending upon the level of initial funding for the program and the projected rate of growth in the initial phase of operation, the organization will want to consider how administrative support (including word processing, bookkeeping, record keeping, and receptionist duties) will be filled. Hiring a part-time person can be cost-effective in that it frees the director and board members to concentrate on fundraising and volunteer development. Some organizations have successfully filled these responsibilities using volunteers or consultants contracted for specific projects.

Again, depending upon the amount of growth projected for the program, a volunteer coordinator will most likely be needed in the early stages of the program's growth. The national standards for volunteer supervision recommend that a full-time supervisor be assigned to no more than 30 volunteers. It is obvious then, that if the director is filling the role of supervisor in addition to administrative and other duties, volunteer supervision will be inadequate if there are more than a handful of active volunteers.

As with the director's position, careful attention should be given to developing the job descriptions for these additional positions and to the recruiting and selecting of the individuals to fill them. The personnel committee should work closely with the director on these tasks (see examples of job descriptions in the Tools Section).

Establishing an Office

Office Space

Establishing an official office is an important milestone for the developing organization because it is a strong symbol that the dream is becoming reality. Having an office is an indication to the community that the program is becoming a viable organization and provides a location for people to associate with CASA. It also allows the printing of brochures, stationery, and business cards with an address and phone number - important steps as you begin to plan for volunteer recruitment.

Office rent can be a big chunk of the monthly bills. So, before signing a lease, it is worthwhile to investigate the availability of free or very inexpensive space. Many CASA programs have been able to negotiate in-kind space in the courthouse or a nearby county or city facility. Such an arrangement is ideal because of proximity to the court and because other in-kind services such as telephone and the use of copy machines are often part of the arrangement.

If court or other government space is not available, you might have luck finding space to share with another nonprofit agency or a local law firm. This can be extremely advantageous, especially if there are meeting or training rooms and equipment that can be shared as well.

Other factors to consider as you look for office space are:

- ◆ **Terms of the lease.** Sometimes landlords are willing to give potential tenants a break on the rent if they will sign a long-term lease. Be cautious about entering into such an arrangement as the needs of the program may demand more or different space before the lease expires. It is also possible that donated space might become available and if the program is locked into a long-term lease, you may not be able to take advantage of that benefit. Also be wary of lease arrangements that include automatic increases each year.
- ◆ **Location.** It is desirable that the program be located in proximity to the court. Some programs have made office location decisions based on cost alone, without considering that staff, as well as volunteers, must make frequent trips to the court. If the office is located a significant distance from the courthouse or if the trip is inconvenient because of poor access or excessive traffic, the savings in rent may in reality not be cost efficient.
- ◆ **Size.** Space planners say that, ideally, an office should provide at least 200 square feet of space per person, including common space. Don't forget to consider the need for private space to interview potential volunteers and to discuss confidential cases during supervision sessions, as well as space for board members or volunteers who may help with office duties.
- ◆ **Anticipated growth.** While you may not need much space in the earliest stage of operations, try to anticipate potential growth to the extent possible, since leases are usually offered on a multi year basis. It is often difficult to break a lease if it becomes necessary and it is always expensive to move to a new location.

- ◆ **Utilities.** If the cost of utilities is included in the lease, the landlord will handle the monthly payments directly, but be aware that those rates may automatically increase each year. If you will be doing volunteer training in the office or holding other meetings at night or on weekends, be sure that the building will be lit and heated during those hours and that you will not be billed an additional amount for the extra hours. If the program is to handle its own utility bills, the landlord should provide estimates of the average monthly bills you can expect. It is a good idea to confirm the estimates with the utility company or other tenants, if possible.
- ◆ **Cleaning service.** How the office gets cleaned can also be tied to the lease. In some larger office buildings, the landlord often adds janitorial services to all the leases. In other places, the program may need to hire a janitorial service separately.
- ◆ **Security and safety.** Some security and safety measures are the program's responsibility regardless of the type of lease. Before signing a lease, be sure to consider the relative safety of the surrounding neighborhood and the security of the parking facilities, especially in the evenings when staff and volunteers may be coming and going. Be sure that fire exits are accessible and that fire extinguishers are available and in working condition, especially if there is a kitchen that may be used for cooking purposes. While most CASA programs are not legally required to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (which applies to organizations with fifteen or more employees), accessibility for disabled persons will be a consideration in volunteer and staff recruitment.

Before signing any lease, it is a good idea to have it reviewed by an attorney.

Office Environment

In addition to the physical and legal considerations, it is important to assess how pleasant and functional the space is. Is it clean? Well lit? Is there adequate storage space for supplies and equipment? Is the workspace configured, or can it be arranged to provide staff the necessary environment in which to be productive and efficient? Will volunteers and potential volunteers feel welcome and comfortable? Does the environment project professionalism?

Much can be done to create a pleasant and professional office environment without spending a great deal of money. Freshly painted walls can work miracles if the landlord will agree to paint them or allow you to. It is usually possible to secure the donation of paint from local merchants and it is often not difficult to find volunteers who will give a Saturday to help with the painting.

Using posters, photographs, or framed children's art on the walls is also a creative way to make the office friendly and welcoming. Be sure also that you use art that depicts various cultures and ethnic backgrounds in order to make the office comfortable for everyone. Try to avoid clutter, which detracts from the professional image you want to project.

Furniture and Equipment

Nonprofit organizations can often find businesses willing to donate used furniture and equipment or sell it at a very low cost. The donor gets the benefit of a tax deduction and saves the cost of disposal of old furniture or equipment. Contact local businesses that may be planning to remodel or expand their current space and may therefore be replacing existing equipment. If this option does not prove fruitful, there are many sources of used office furniture and equipment in most communities.

Before purchasing furniture or equipment, compare the cost of leasing which may, in some cases, be a more cost effective approach. Equipment, such as copiers, which generally needs to be updated every few years may be better leased than purchased.

Computer System

In today's business environment, computer technology is a necessity. Besides word processing for volunteer reports and correspondence, programs utilize computers for accounting, data collection, publishing of program newsletters, and budget development. Access to the Internet is necessary for e-mail, access to many of National CASA's resources, financial grant reporting, and to conduct research on funding sources and child welfare issues.

In setting up the program's computer system, consideration should be given to the confidential nature of information that will be maintained. What kind of security will be provided, who will have access, and how long will information be retained are all issues that should be addressed in policy.

Many programs begin with one desktop PC and a good printer which will likely be adequate for a while. Though it is easy to obtain donated computers from businesses that are upgrading, the decreasing cost of computer hardware and rapid improvement of technology make purchasing a new PC with the latest pentium processor and sufficient memory to meet the program's future needs the best option.

The issue of training staff to utilize the necessary software applications and the maintenance of the equipment should also be considered. More discussion on these issues is contained in National CASA's Achieving Our Mission, Chapter 7, "Making the Most of Technology."

Telephone System

Purchasing a telephone system can be very expensive so most small programs find that leasing is more cost effective. Although a one-line system may adequately service the program at the time of initial operations, you should consider obtaining a second line in order to have a dedicated line for Internet access and fax capability. There is a wealth of programmatic and management information available on National CASA's website and periodic live topical forums are an excellent source of staff training. E-mail has become a main source of communication between programs and volunteers as well as among programs across the country. Having a dedicated phone line for computer use avoids the necessity of tying up the only line when the computer is online.

Every CASA program should have an answering machine or voice mail service, especially if staff will not be available to answer the phone during normal business hours. The message on the answering machine should always be up to date and messages should be retrieved and responded to on a daily basis. Nothing will lose a prospective volunteer faster than poor telephone response from an organization.

Copying

It is unrealistic to think that even the smallest office can do without a copier for its routine needs. Access to copying equipment is a must for court records, volunteer reports, and many other

things required daily. For the new program, you might begin by estimating the copying needs for a month. Then actually track a few months' volume and make adjustments to the budget if necessary. If copying is not provided by the court or umbrella agency, the program may want to consider leasing a machine or purchasing a used one. Large projects, such as volunteer training manuals or newsletters may be more economically sent out to a copy/printing company, especially if all or part of the project can be negotiated as an in-kind donation to the program.

Establishing a Relationship with the Court

Role of the Volunteer

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (P.L. 93-247), passed in 1974, for the first time required that children who are the subject of court proceedings, because of allegations of abuse or neglect, must have a court appointed representative to speak for their best interests. The legislation did not describe the guardian's duties, nor did it dictate whether the role had to be performed by a lawyer, although the tradition of appointing lawyers to perform this function continued in many courts. It was against this backdrop of lack of clarity that state and local communities developed systems of guardian ad litem representation. As a result, today children can be represented by an attorney, an attorney guardian ad litem, a paid non-attorney guardian ad litem, and/or a trained volunteer acting as the guardian ad litem or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). There remains a great deal of confusion over the roles of each of these forms of representation, whether their efforts are duplicative, and how the representatives relate to each other when more than one is appointed to represent the same child.

It is within this context that new CASA programs must develop a relationship with their court and establish the duties of the volunteer and policies and protocols for relating to the other players in the system. A number of states have statutory language that specifies whether an attorney or volunteer may be appointed the guardian ad litem; other state statutes detail the roles and responsibilities of the volunteer, what their qualifications and training must be, and what their rights and powers are.

There are still a number of states, however, that provide great discretion to the local courts. If your state is one of these, you will find variations in volunteer activities among your neighboring programs and sometimes even between different judges in the same court. The most common differences you will find involve the volunteer's role (including whether the volunteer is a full and independent party to the case), the formal status of the volunteer, the forms of attorney representation, the formal relationship between the volunteer and attorney for the child and the types of cases accepted.

You should become very familiar with what your state law says and how the law is implemented by local courts throughout the state. Your state organization should be able to provide you with a copy of the law and describe how local programs operate to comply.

There are five generally accepted activities associated with the guardian ad litem role:

- ◆ Fact finding information gathering
- ◆ Legal representation
- ◆ Negotiation/mediation

- ◆ Case monitoring
- ◆ Resource brokering

Fact finding or information gathering involves meeting with, interviewing and observing the child repeatedly over a period of time; visiting both the child's and the parents' homes; contacting caseworkers; reading the petition; reviewing the case record; and contacting other adults who might have pertinent information. These activities are those which help the advocate gain insight into what is best for a child, what kinds of services might be helpful, and what support is needed to move toward permanency.

Legal representation is the one function that must be performed by a licensed attorney. This includes appearance at hearings, filing of motions and other legal papers, and advising the child on legal issues. In this role the child's advocate may provide testimony, make recommendations to the court regarding the case plan, placement of the child, services to be provided, and visitation issues.

The third activity area is mediation and negotiation, including the development of agreements and stipulations. The fourth is case monitoring, including maintaining contact with the child and other parties, monitoring the child's special needs, and following up on court orders. The final activity area is resource brokering, including working in the community to help the child obtain needed services.

Guiding Principles

Because local practice, including the understanding and wishes of your local judge, will help to determine how your program operates, it is important to establish mutually agreeable goals and expectations at the very earliest stages of program development. Regardless of the parameters of the volunteer's activities within the court, there are some guiding principles that will support quality advocacy. It is important to keep them in mind as you plan the approach to representation to be taken in your community.

- ◆ **The volunteer must have access to legal support.** Regardless of the program model, lay volunteers do not participate in the case as legal counselors to the child, but as individuals appointed to represent the child's best interests. Nor does the volunteer provide legal services in fulfilling their role. Established programs obtain legal assistance for their volunteers in a number of ways. Some programs - usually those administered by state agencies - have an attorney on the CASA staff or assigned to their program by the state attorney general's office. A number of programs contract with a private attorney when the need arises and some request the court appoint an attorney to represent the volunteer when necessary. Most other programs rely on pro bono (volunteer) legal assistance. In some programs, one or several established law firms in the community provide pro bono services to CASA. In other areas, the local Bar Association or the young lawyers division of the Bar have agreed to donate their time.

Legal assistance should be accessible as soon as volunteers are assigned to cases, so it is essential to determine what resources will be available in advance. Whatever plan you devise, it is wise to develop a written understanding of time expectations and roles. Also, don't assume that all attorneys have knowledge or experience in juvenile law or an understanding of the problems of abuse and neglect. These subjects are not generally

required in law school, and most attorneys choose not to practice in this area. This does not mean, however, they are not committed and interested. Capitalize on their willingness to become involved and assume they are seeking opportunities for learning, growth, and service to others. Provide written materials about CASA as well as abuse and neglect. Offer training opportunities which include other attorneys as presenters as well as CASA volunteers. Don't forget to thank your volunteer attorneys and recognize them as you would any volunteer.

- ◆ **The volunteer must be independent.** This means that no one with ties to any of the parties should serve in this role. It also means the volunteer must be permitted to conduct a thorough fact-finding investigation. There should be no conflict or fear of retribution against the program that would make it difficult for this person to present recommendations consistent with the child's interests.

If the child is old enough and mature enough to state his or her own wishes and they differ from what the volunteer considers to be in the child's best interests, there should be a procedure that allows the volunteer to inform the court. This allows the judge to consider the necessity of appointing an attorney to represent the child's wishes.

- ◆ **The volunteer should be appointed to the case at the earliest possible time** and should remain involved until the child is in a legally sanctioned permanent placement and the case is dismissed from the court system. It is important to note that although the volunteer is appointed prior to adjudication, he or she does not investigate the allegations of abuse and neglect. His or her role during the initial stages of a case (prior to the court's ruling on the allegations) is to gather facts related to the child's past and current situation to determine what services have been previously provided to prevent foster care placement and to assess what services are necessary to meet the child's needs and to reunify the family.
- ◆ **The volunteer should receive notice of all hearings, staffings, and other case conferences related to the child.** In addition, the volunteer should receive copies of all requests for discovery and responses, copies of correspondence and other appropriate documents.
- ◆ **The CASA volunteer should have complete access to all information related to the child and his or her situation.** Such information may include: records of social service agencies, law enforcement, the court, schools, public health, medical providers, substance abuse treatment, and mental health history. The volunteer must also be allowed to interview: the child, parents, social services staff, law enforcement personnel, and any other individuals who have knowledge of the child.
- ◆ **The volunteer should have immunity from liability for performing their role in a responsible manner.** As an officer of the court, the volunteer usually has statutory immunity from liability when performing duties described in his or her job description unless an act, or failure to act, is willfully, wrongful or grossly negligent. If immunity is not prescribed in your state law, the court should address it in court rules or on the order of appointment for the volunteer.

Agreement with the Court

A written agreement with the court is an excellent way to define the goals and expectations of the relationship between the court and the CASA program. Once it is developed, it should be signed by all judges who will be appointing volunteers, the president of the CASA board, and the program's executive director. The agreement should be reviewed annually and modified or refined as the need arises. What is covered by the agreement will vary based on local wishes. The following are issues that might be included:

- ◆ Role and duties of the volunteer
- ◆ Criteria for cases to be referred for volunteer assignment
- ◆ Procedures for prioritizing cases when an adequate number of volunteers is not available
- ◆ Procedures for the court's referral of cases to the program and the program's selection of the appropriate volunteer to be assigned
- ◆ Procedures for the court's feedback on the performance of volunteers
- ◆ Expectations regarding volunteer reports submitted to the court (e.g. format, deadline, distribution, etc).

Frequent Communication

There will be many issues to emerge that will go beyond the scope of the written agreement. For this reason, it is important to build in frequent face-to-face opportunities for communication between the director and the presiding judge. It may be difficult because of the competing demands on the judge's time. The director should be flexible but persistent in pursuing regular meetings because they present the best opportunity for the court to be made aware of the ramifications of its directions and permit the airing of any court-related difficulties that have arisen within the program. Though it is inappropriate for a presiding judge to sit on the board of a program, his or her input and consideration is critical to the healthy functioning of the program. There must also be an arena for timely resolution when differences of opinion occur.

SECTION II: VOLUNTEERS

Recruiting the Right Volunteers

Where and How to Find Them

Recruiting, screening and selecting volunteers is an ongoing process for any CASA program. Since community volunteers are the backbone of CASA, program directors and CASA staff spend a great deal of time focusing on how to get the most qualified volunteers into the program, and keep them once they are screened and trained. Many new CASA programs fill their first training class primarily through word-of-mouth news about the program. Beyond the first class, however, it will likely be necessary to engage in community-wide marketing to keep a constant flow of applicants coming in.

No matter how you decide to handle volunteer recruitment, remember that it is one of the most important - and most visible - jobs in the program. The person responsible for recruiting volunteers helps to mold the program's image, and is your front line representative to prospective volunteers. The recruiter will determine the quality of the volunteers who join the program, and will be the person who screens for competency, responsibility and stability. As a "community ambassador" for the new program, the recruiter must be articulate, objective and approachable.

Getting Prepared

Volunteer recruitment is a marketing effort. You are trying to promote the program in a way that will:

- ◆ Attract males and females of all ages who represent the ethnic and cultural groups in your community.
- ◆ Attract them on an ongoing basis, to replace volunteers lost through natural attrition.
- ◆ Generate visibility for the program in the community.

To be most effective, your recruiting effort needs to be thoroughly researched and a written plan developed. The plan should clearly outline your goals, what you intend to do to reach those goals, and when you can realistically expect to accomplish them. Funding sources may request to see a copy of your recruiting plan and ask specifically if you target any minority populations.

The CASA program should produce a standardized packet of written information which clearly explains the purpose of CASA, defines the role and responsibilities of the CASA volunteer and explains the commitment of time required. Your recruitment plan should outline specific strategies to attract male and female volunteers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and from a variety of age and socioeconomic groups. It should be designed to also make the public aware of the problems faced by abused and neglected children who enter the courts.

STEP ONE: Determine the Type of Volunteers Needed

Since the CASA volunteers you recruit will be meeting the specific needs of your community, take a moment to think about the type of person you are looking for. What skills should he/she have gained in other employment or volunteer settings? What attitudes should the volunteer possess? What training? What interest do you want your volunteers to have in child welfare or child abuse/neglect?

Also keep in mind the demographics of the children you will be serving. Do they come from largely rural areas? Inner-city communities? Will your program be serving a large number of minority children? Children who do not speak English as a first language? Children with disabilities? Once you determine the needs of the children, then you can concentrate on recruiting volunteers who will be sensitive to the needs of those children and can communicate effectively with their families.

The CASA volunteer must also have certain qualities that are not tangible. He or she should be an emotionally mature and stable person, who has experienced satisfying relationships with children. He or she should be objective and receptive to individual lifestyle choices. The applicant should also possess a sense of self-worth, exhibit self-assurance, be able to deal with hostility and rejection, and be flexible enough to accommodate change.

Successful CASA volunteers commonly have some skills that enable them to perform their duties effectively and efficiently, and to apply the knowledge gained through the pre-service training and consultation with the program staff. These include the ability to:

- ◆ Interview, observe, listen and analyze written material
- ◆ Write clearly and concisely
- ◆ Investigate and do research
- ◆ Express themselves verbally
- ◆ Plan and set goals
- ◆ Make decisions
- ◆ Organize tasks
- ◆ Pay attention to detail and accuracy
- ◆ Be assertive
- ◆ Be a credible witness
- ◆ Negotiate
- ◆ Follow guidelines and policy
- ◆ Be tactful

These skills may have been gained in other volunteer settings, through employment, or through life experience. A professional background is not required in order to possess these skills, and persons with no previous work or volunteer experience can be successful in the CASA program if they have acquired these skills in some other way.

Some CASA programs use graduate or law students as CASA volunteers. However, it is sometimes difficult to secure a firm time commitment when you must work around class schedules, vacations, and the fact that many students tend to move from the area when they graduate.

Avoid an elitist attitude when recruiting volunteers. Keep in mind that a degree does not assure a good volunteer. Over the years, CASA program directors have found that successful volunteers come from all walks of life - business executives, teachers, factory workers, homemakers, nurses, senior citizens.

Many people who would like to give of their time and energy and who would make excellent CASA volunteers, cannot financially afford to do so. Volunteering can be expensive if you consider such expenses as gasoline, parking, long distance phone calls, and childcare. Many CASA programs find that to recruit and retain good volunteers, they must budget for reimbursement of at least some expenses.

STEP TWO: Determine how many volunteers you need

This information will be largely based on your budget, program model and the expectations of the court. Although your goal is to always recruit as many potential volunteers as possible, keep in mind the realities of your training and supervision capabilities. CASA programs generally start out modestly, taking a few cases at a time until the program is operating smoothly. Your first training class shouldn't include more people than you can comfortably handle. The time lapse between recruitment, screening and training is crucial. The kind of volunteer needed for a CASA program is the type of person who is heavily in demand. Many programs have found that unless they use volunteers within a short time, they are picked up by other organizations. If you do have an overflow of qualified applicants, then select your core group and try to put the others to work in other jobs until they can be assigned to cases.

Keep in mind that you need to have an adequate staff to volunteer ratio to ensure timely and thorough case management. The ratio specified in the National CASA Program Standards is one supervisor to 30 volunteers.

The needs assessment conducted in the planning stages should indicate how many dependency cases come through the court. Your judge can help you determine the number of cases that are likely to be referred to the CASA program. It will also be necessary for the planning committee and/or the court to decide how many cases each volunteer should optimally handle. Ideally, each volunteer should be limited to one case at a time.

STEP THREE: Create a Recruitment Plan.

Your CASA program may be ready to go, but it won't get far if no one has heard of it. Because the program relies heavily on lay volunteers, odds are you will have to go outside child welfare circles to do your recruiting. At this point in the planning process, you need to outline how and where you will seek volunteers.

Determine what your product is. Your product is what the program accomplishes - how CASA helps children - and what benefits it provides to those who want to volunteer. Use this information to develop your message and informational materials such as brochures, posters and/or public service announcements (see NCASAA's [Communications Manual for CASA/GAL Programs](#)).

Research has shown that the most frequent reason given by CASA volunteers regarding their motivation for being involved in the program is an overwhelming desire to help children. The other highest responses suggest that volunteers want to meet the needs of the community, to

effect positive change in the community, and to use and develop their knowledge and talents. Having this information will help you formulate an effective message that will attract potential volunteers with similar motivations. The CASA program offers volunteers some unique experiences including the following:

- ◆ Active participation in the court and child welfare system that produces significant and positive results in the life of a child.
- ◆ Experience that may apply toward career advancement.
- ◆ Increased knowledge of child welfare issues and the court process.
- ◆ Belonging to a group of individuals who are concerned with similar issues.
- ◆ Being active and involved in the community.
- ◆ Making professional contacts in the field of child welfare.
- ◆ The opportunity to help improve life for a child.

Decide how you are going to get that message across to the public. There are many methods that can be successful in promoting the program in the community and you will probably want to utilize several in order to appeal to a broad range of audiences. Some of the most frequently used are:

- ◆ General information brochure
- ◆ Newspaper articles
- ◆ Public service announcements (PSAs)
- ◆ Posters
- ◆ Speaking engagements
- ◆ Direct mail
- ◆ Newsletter
- ◆ Press releases
- ◆ Special events
- ◆ Display booths at fairs or malls
- ◆ Celebrity endorsements
- ◆ Audio visual materials (videos)
- ◆ Program Website
- ◆ Billboards

Determine what audiences you need to reach and place your message accordingly. Consider approaching the following:

- ◆ Community service groups (Junior League, National Council of Jewish Women, Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs, League of Women Voters, Kappa Alpha Theta chapters)
- ◆ Minority service organizations (the Urban League, the NAACP, etc)
- ◆ Professional organizations (teacher's union, nursing association, American Bar Association, medical auxiliary, Sigma Delta Chi Journalism Society, business round tables)
- ◆ Colleges and universities (school of social work, law school, criminal justice department)
- ◆ Community colleges and technical schools
- ◆ Churches, synagogues, mosques (bulletins, special project groups)
- ◆ Employers and employees (company newsletters as well as print and electronic bulletin boards)

- ◆ Television, newspapers and radio (through stories and public service announcements)
- ◆ State Bar Associations

A good way to reach your preferred audience is to consider your marketing approach early in the planning stages of the program. For example, some CASA programs have invited leaders of other community service organizations (from which they might like to recruit) to serve on the planning committee. Others ask media leaders, public officials, and/or CEOs of local businesses and corporations to serve on the advisory council or board of directors. These representatives can be valuable salespeople for the program. Their community contacts and influence can not only help you recruit volunteers, they can be extremely valuable in fundraising and legislative efforts as well.

Although volunteer recruitment, like fundraising, is an ongoing effort, it is generally helpful to schedule volunteer recruitment efforts in concentrated doses, three or four times a year. Response is generally low in the summer months and during holiday seasons, so those months could be used for planning and media promotion, not for general recruiting.

And remember, your recruiting and marketing efforts may not pay off immediately. Not every inquiry leads to a volunteer. Don't be discouraged. Keep in mind that a potential volunteer may need to hear the message several times before actually picking up the telephone and requesting an application.

STEP FOUR: Develop a Written Volunteer Job Description

The volunteer job description serves several purposes. First, it gives prospective volunteers a clear, concise idea of exactly what the program is and what it expects of them. Second, it gives the CASA program a chance to clearly outline the parameters of the job. This can help diffuse false expectations and/or inappropriate behavior before they have a chance to develop (see example of Volunteer Job Description in the Tools Section). Third, a written statement will add credibility to the program since it can also serve as "official" documentation to the court, the state, the media, or even potential funders on exactly what CASA volunteers do (see Statement of Commitment in the Tools Section).

The job description should be provided to all CASA volunteers before they are accepted into the program. Once they are assigned to cases, the job description should be used as a basis for guiding their activities and evaluating their performance.

STEP FIVE: Develop a Volunteer Application

One way to find out whether or not the potential volunteer would be suitable for the program, and has the necessary qualifications, is through the volunteer application. Most CASA programs use this as the primary way to gather the basic information necessary for screening.

Most programs develop application forms that are similar to job applications. They cover the basics: educational background, work experience, other volunteer or community service work, criminal record, and personal history. The application is also useful as a way to elicit other information about an applicant such as the applicant's motivations, expectations, and personal values regarding children, families and abuse/neglect. Questions on these issues can help you discover a person's past experience with children, and their previous involvement with other

child-related organizations. Questions requiring written responses also give you an idea of the applicant's writing ability.

Such questions might include:

- ◆ What motivates you to apply to volunteer with this program?
- ◆ What do you think of when you hear the words 'child abuse'?
- ◆ Why do you think parents would abuse their child?
- ◆ What's your personal history or experience with child abuse?

STEP SIX: Screening Volunteers

Not every applicant will be appropriate for a position as a CASA volunteer.

CASA volunteers carry a great responsibility because they work with children who have been abused or neglected. All of these children carry emotional scars from their ordeals. They need trust, respect, and the interest of a mature adult who can make objective, well-informed decisions about their future without becoming too personally involved. CASA volunteers do not serve the same purpose as a "Big Brother" or "Big Sister." If this is the type of role the applicant desires, then the CASA program is probably not the right choice.

The program should develop a written screening procedure that details the screening methods that will be employed. It is important to assure that every applicant is screened using the same procedures and that every staff member who conducts screening follows the procedure in every case. Remember that screening of applicants begins with the initial contact between the potential volunteer and the program and involves several steps. Many inappropriate volunteers will screen themselves out once they understand the role and the commitment required. The self-selection process is an important step in volunteer screening. Applicants should not feel like they have failed if they decide to drop out in the process. CASA is not for everyone, and programs may experience as much as a 50 percent attrition rate as applicants sort through the demands and responsibility of the position. Make it clear from the beginning: "It's OK to decide you do not want the job." Think of other ways to channel the applicant's interest - perhaps on the newsletter or a fundraising event.

The Initial Contact

Your phone rings. The caller has heard something about your new program and might be interested in volunteering. At this point, there are several pieces of information you should give potential volunteers:

- ◆ Go over the CASA job description, explaining exactly what a volunteer does and the job parameters.
- ◆ Explain the time commitment, making it clear to the potential volunteer that they can expect to spend 80 or more hours investigating and preparing a case for court.
- ◆ Make sure you convey a clear message about the appropriate volunteer/child relationship. The CASA role is very different from a job that encourages a personal relationship with the child - a common impression held by many when they first hear of CASA. CASA volunteers do not become an intrinsic part of the child's life, they do not replace parents, and are not encouraged to take the child on outings or to their homes.
- ◆ Pass on information about the basic requirements (i.e. age, background, criminal records check). Also make it clear that final acceptance as a volunteer will not be made until after the applicant successfully completes training.

- ◆ Offer to send the inquirer an application, a brochure, and a copy of the job description.
- ◆ If the individual is not interested in a CASA volunteer position, consider discussing other volunteer possibilities within the program.
- ◆ Record the inquirer's name, address, and telephone number. Even if nothing materializes out of the conversation, you know this person has an interest in your program. Their name could be added to your fundraising list for future solicitation or to your mailing list to receive your newsletter.

The Application

Once you have described the program to a potential volunteer, he or she should then complete the CASA application form (see example of Volunteer Application example in the Tools Section). The written application is a very important part of the volunteer screening process, and should be required of every applicant. Never waive this requirement; the information in the written application can prevent surprises or unexpected problems later on. If the applicant is unable to write in English, it is essential that you obtain the information contained in the application. The program will need to decide if the volunteer's other assets outweigh an inability to write a good report. The program could assign another volunteer, staff member, or translator to work with the volunteer on court reports. Your program could also explore a dictation system. Have the volunteer sign the application, pledging that the information is correct. Be sure to ask the applicant to list other names they may have used in the recent past. This is important for central registry and criminal record checks.

CASA programs handle completed applications in several different ways. The process largely depends upon the availability of staff and the program's philosophy. Many programs schedule an interview with the potential volunteer as soon as the completed application is returned, then do follow up on references and record checks. Others review the application and determine whether the person should be accepted into training based solely on the information contained in the application. They then use the training process to screen the applicant, with the interview being conducted after the training.

Reference checks

Some programs call references on the phone. Others ask the applicant to distribute a written reference questionnaire to be completed by three employment and/or personal references. Those who provide references should be assured that the information they provide will be held in confidence (see Reference Request example in the Tools Section).

Central Registry and Criminal Records Checks

Central Registry is the state-run information database that contains the names of convicted child abusers. It is important to see if potential volunteers have a past history of substantiated child abuse/neglect allegations or a past criminal history. Volunteers should be made aware of the policy on these checks at the outset. Let applicants know that everyone is checked routinely and that it is not done on a selective basis. National CASA Association Standards require that a CASA program does not accept applicants if they have been convicted of, or have charges pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related acts that would pose risks to children or to the CASA program's credibility.

Be sure to have the applicant fill out an information release form (see example of Authority to Release Information form in the Tools Section). If your program operates as a part of the juvenile court system, you may be able to access both the Central Registry and police records on an inter-agency basis. If your program operates outside the juvenile court, you can either obtain record checks on an informal basis or through a formal written agreement. Be aware that in some states there is a charge for obtaining these reports. Check with your state organization or other programs to determine if your state is one of these. There is also a chance you may be denied access altogether. Contact your local law enforcement agency for information on local protocol on conducting these checks.

Your program will need to establish a policy stipulating what will be allowed for volunteers accepted into the program and what will not be allowed. For instance, you may learn from the Central Registry report that the volunteer applicant was reported for child abuse but the incident was not substantiated. Though unsubstantiated reports are supposed to be deleted from the registry, they nevertheless sometimes show up.

Records of criminal incidents that took place when the individual was a juvenile also may show up. Though juvenile records can be expunged once the individual becomes an adult, few are aware that this is not automatic, but must be requested in writing of the juvenile authorities. You will probably want to eliminate from consideration anyone convicted of any violent crime. Before you set a policy that excludes applicants with any felony conviction, you may want to consider the nature of the crime, how long ago it was, and what the person's history has been since.

The Interview

The purpose of the volunteer screening interview is the same as a job interview: to choose a person who is appropriate for the position.

Although volunteer applicants may not have the kind or amount of experience which would be ideal, it is important to determine if they have the ability to learn about the work, the interest to pursue the position, the commitment to complete the required training, the maturity and ability to perform the duties of the position, and an attitude consistent with the philosophy of the program.

If you structure the interview carefully, you can help to ensure that the necessary information is gathered. Because different people will often have different impressions, consider using a team to conduct the interview (see Volunteer Interview Format and Questions example in the Tools Section). Other helpful suggestions for the interview include:

- ◆ Make sure the applicant understands what CASA is and what the volunteer does and does not do. The applicant must understand the requirements of the job, so a review of the position description is often an effective way to begin the interview. If the applicant seems confused about specific requirements, they should be clarified immediately.
- ◆ Have the applicant elaborate on previous experience. The applicant's philosophy will often emerge during this portion of the interview. By hearing about past experiences, you can often gain insight into the motivation and/or attitudes this individual holds. This does not mean you should automatically reject someone if he or she has been involved with a program whose philosophy is in conflict with CASA's, but it might indicate that this person needs further investigation to determine his or her ability to function successfully in the program.

- ◆ Ask structured questions that will elicit information about personal values and motivation. These are similar to questions you may have asked on the volunteer application, but a personal interview will give the applicant a chance to speak in depth about his or her feelings. The purpose of this portion of the interview is to screen for any biases or strongly held values that may hinder objectivity. You are looking for red flags.

Training as a Screening Tool

Some volunteers who have made it this far in the program will begin the training and determine that this is not the volunteer position they feel suited to or really want. They will screen themselves out. The hours of personal contact in training also give the CASA supervisors the chance to observe applicants closely, both in a group and individual context and spot characteristics that might be inappropriate. Some applicants may need to be screened out. For these reasons, it is strongly recommended that a program not make a final commitment to accept a volunteer into the program until after the pre-service training is completed. Because training is such an important part of screening, it is important that staff be involved. If an outside trainer or trainers are used exclusively, their observations should be shared with the staff.

Spotting Red Flags

Sometimes applicants are drawn to a CASA program because they were victimized as children, and want to prevent another child from going through the same thing. This is an attitude that you need to consider very carefully in your screening process. Most programs have found that volunteers who cite their own personal history as an abused child as their main reason for volunteering are unable to perform the duties of a CASA volunteer effectively. They are unable to remain objective for the child they represent. If a volunteer has an unresolved personal history of abuse, he or she sometimes experiences trauma and confusion as they attempt to serve the child. Their own need to understand their past history can be a stumbling block.

Some applicants with troubled childhoods will be comfortable describing their own experience, and have resolved the issues surrounding their own dilemmas through counseling, therapy, and/or self-help groups. These men and women can be empathic advocates for children, but only if they have dealt successfully with their own past.

Conflict of interest is also a consideration in screening for CASA volunteers. Some CASA programs allow foster parents to become volunteers while others do not. If you decide to accept foster parents as volunteers, they should never be assigned to children who are in their care. The assignment of board members of your CASA program as CASA volunteers represents another area for possible conflict of interest. For example, if a board member is unable to perform adequately as a CASA volunteer, the program director may find it difficult to tell the board member that they will be unable to continue serving in their capacity as a CASA volunteer. Another problematic situation arises when board members who also serve as CASA volunteers must make policy decisions regarding issues related to CASA staff and volunteers. (See Conflict of Interest statements in the Tools Section).

Ultimately, it will be up to the director or volunteer coordinator to use professional judgment to decide if an applicant would be an appropriate volunteer. If you are in doubt, it is best to favor the child. Although it may be hard to turn down a person whose intentions seem good, it is better than taking an unnecessary risk.

The CASA program may also attract applicants with a personal motive, such as searching for a child to adopt or to "save." This is also an inappropriate motivation that could lead to problems in the relationship between the child and the volunteer.

Sometimes applicants are motivated out of hostility or anger at the court over a decision that had an adverse effect in their lives. Others may meet all written criteria, but are unable to grasp the CASA concept or the intricacies of the court and child welfare system. You may encounter applicants who believe the rights and interests of the parents are primary; these individuals are not suited to the position because their interest is contrary to the philosophy of the program.

Saying "No"

One of the most important abilities the program director or volunteer coordinator must have is the ability to say "no." As hard as it may be, turning down an applicant is much better than risking harm to the children the CASA program is designed to serve. You must also consider your liability risks, and the reputation of your program in the community.

Although your planning committee has created very specific criteria for accepting volunteers, sometimes the determination may depend on your "gut feeling." An applicant might meet all written qualifications, and give appropriate answers in the interview. But if you do not feel right about accepting the person, it is best to go with your instincts.

When an applicant is evaluated as not being suitable for the program, it does not necessarily mean he or she cannot be involved in CASA. Many potential volunteers may find they are more suited for clerical or administrative functions in the office. Someone who is not an appropriate volunteer might be an excellent fundraiser. An applicant who may not be right for advocacy in court might be able to edit your newsletter. Think of alternatives for applicants who do not meet the program's volunteer criteria; support can come in many forms.

Don't fail to let the applicant know the results of his or her evaluation. If the person is turned down, notify the applicant by letter or phone. Although the applicant deserves the courtesy of follow-up, be careful when you explain the reasons he or she was turned down. You may not want to release any information regarding why the individual was not accepted, especially when the decision is based on confidential information provided by references. It is a good idea to inform the program's attorney and to seek legal advice about how to proceed.

It is also a good idea to avoid accepting volunteers into the program as a courtesy. As uncomfortable as it may be to "reject" someone, accepting the person - and then just letting him/her sit by awaiting assignments that will never come is rude. Give your applicants the respect of dealing with their situations in an above board and direct manner. To do otherwise may result in a negative impact on the program's image in the community.

Volunteer Training

Training is an important and ongoing function of the CASA program. If a volunteer understands his or her responsibilities and the CASA program's relationship to the system, he or she will become a more effective advocate. Giving volunteers knowledge, skills, cultural sensitivity, and self-confidence through thorough training empowers them to become highly skilled at their jobs.

When a volunteer is asked to begin training, he or she is required to make a commitment to attend all classes and complete the course. However, it is important the volunteer understands this does not ensure acceptance into the program. That commitment comes only after an applicant has successfully made it through all required training and screening and a post-training interview.

Designing Your Training Program

Schedules

In organizing and planning volunteer training, there are a number of things to consider. First, to appeal to a broad range of individuals, you will need to schedule training sessions at the time and place that is most convenient for the majority of people. Working people may have difficulty attending during working hours. Single parents may have trouble getting away in the evenings. Weekends may be inconvenient during vacation months. You will not be able to accommodate everyone's needs, but if you offer training more than once a year, you may want to offer one session at night and one during the day. Another variation that some programs have found successful is to hold training over several evenings and then a long session over a weekend.

History

The Comprehensive Training Program for the CASA/GAL began as a research project sponsored by the Permanent Families Task Force of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Through funding from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), the Task Force determined that one way to address the issue of permanence for children was to respond to concerns raised about effective training of CASA volunteers by developing a CASA/GAL training curriculum.

In January of 1990, the seminal Comprehensive Training Program for the CASA/GAL was officially unveiled at a training institute in Seattle, Washington. Since that time, developments in adult learning theory, changes in federal and state laws, new information about relevant subject matter, and especially the changing situations of the children we serve led to the need for a revision.

NCASAA staff, in collaboration with a Training Curriculum Advisory Committee and project consultants, began revising the curriculum in 1998.

The first phase included a comprehensive survey conducted in the fall of 1998 to insure the

curriculum revision would address the training needs of the CASA/GAL network. The Training Curriculum Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from a diverse group of state and local programs in the network, used this survey information to update the list of skills, knowledge and attitudes required of today's CASA/GAL volunteers. They determined the goal of the training to be "volunteers who are competent, reasonably autonomous, able to exercise good judgment, and focused on the best interests of the child in their role as CASA/GAL volunteers." They set a course for development of a skills-based, interactive, case-based and practical curriculum to meet this goal. Efforts to facilitate local adaptation were designated as a priority.

The revised Training Curriculum was rolled out to the CASA/GAL network throughout 2001. Intensive three day facilitator training sessions have been offered in conjunction with the national training conference and at state and regional training sessions in 2001 and 2002. The Volunteer Curriculum, Facilitator Manual and customization guidelines are available to member programs at www.casanet.org. National CASA standards require programs to provide a minimum of 30 hours training including instruction on the court and child welfare systems, child abuse and neglect, relevant state and federal laws, permanency planning and family preservation, and the roles and responsibilities of the CASA volunteer. While the new CASA/GAL Volunteer Training Curriculum meets these standards, some customization at the state and local level will include and reflect local laws and language.

Speakers

CASA programs often conduct training for their volunteers with help from a variety of trainers and/or experts from the community. Many agencies will provide quality training without cost to the program. For example, many programs have a representative from Child Protective Services present the training session on the role of CPS and the services they provide to families and children. A psychologist from a local agency or university might be willing to teach the unit on the dynamics of child abuse. It is recommended that the guest speaker provides a copy of the relevant units from the training manual for preparation purposes. Use your contacts and resources when planning your training, and do not be reluctant to ask for this support. It can be helpful, even comforting, for volunteers to meet some of the professionals with whom they will be working before becoming involved in cases. Sample letters to send to guest speakers are included in the facilitator manual that accompanies the draft Volunteer Training Curriculum, which is also available on www.casanet.org.

Frontline Experience: Courtroom Observation

After the classroom portion of the training is completed, NCASAA recommends each participant observe a court proceeding to see a CASA/GAL volunteer at work. This can be followed by a debriefing session to allow volunteers to ask questions.

Courtroom observation is an important part of training. It offers new volunteers a chance to compare what they have learned in the classroom to the realities of the courtroom. An experienced CASA volunteer can help your training group make that transition and provide invaluable advice.

Another training method used by CASA programs involves arranging an opportunity for the new volunteer to accompany an experienced volunteer on visits and to court. Such "shadowing" experiences can also be done with a social worker or attorney and can be a powerful learning opportunity.

A Question of Balance

This is a handbook available through National CASA which many people have found to be an especially valuable resource in helping CASA volunteers utilize what they learn in training most effectively. The book guides the volunteer through the considerations and decision-making processes necessary to arrive at recommendations for the court. Particularly helpful are the decision inventory questionnaires at the end of the book.

In-Service Training

Once accepted into the program, volunteers need continuing educational opportunities. A volunteer's education does not end when the first training class is over. The courts and child welfare system are subject to constant reorganization and scrutiny, and CASA volunteers must be made aware of statutory changes and new developments in child welfare. The National Standards require that a program offer at least 12 hours of in-service training opportunities each year.

Some programs conduct volunteer surveys to assess training needs. Often, directors acquire new information at conferences and want to pass it along to volunteers. The judge or court staff may suggest areas in which they feel CASA volunteers could benefit from further training. Perhaps because there is an increase in a certain type of case coming through the program (i.e. more children who are sexually assaulted, emotionally abused, or have problems with substance abuse); volunteers may need additional training on these issues.

In-service training sessions are important because they provide volunteers the opportunity to learn new skills, network with each other, and share ideas and resources. CASA staff come in contact with many people all day long, but the volunteers do their jobs in isolation. It is quite possible for two people to be active volunteers for the same program and never meet face-to-face. In-service training not only provides these volunteers with the opportunity to refine their skills, but it also gives them a chance to get to know one another, to feel part of the same "team," and to talk with people who share common concerns and experiences.

Volunteer Mentors

In addition to the volunteer supervisor, some CASA programs have incorporated a mentoring component to their program in which they match the new volunteer working on his or her first case with an experienced volunteer. This method of on-the-job training offers the new volunteer access to an experienced person who can answer questions and discuss the details of the case. For the first group of volunteers, you might consider assigning volunteers to cases in pairs (as "teams") so they may confer about procedure and case planning. Any disagreements over recommendations should be resolved in consultation with their program administrator.

As follow-up, the CASA volunteer supervisor needs to be available to volunteers for consultation and direction throughout the case. It is impossible to anticipate all problems or to wait for a regularly scheduled staff meeting to discuss them. Someone in the CASA office – be it the program director, volunteer coordinator or other staff person – needs to be available to answer and respond to any questions or concerns from volunteers.

Volunteer Management

Volunteer Supervision/Consultation

CASA volunteers do not get paid for their work, but that does not mean program managers should be reluctant to establish guidelines for their behavior. These are people who are handling sensitive, confidential information in sometimes volatile situations. They must adhere to strict regulations in their actions and be accountable for those actions if they are inappropriate.

When a program operates under a set of well-planned guidelines, the court is then assured of quality control. The judge knows the volunteer is guided by someone who has a thorough knowledge of children, families, statutory requirements and the social service delivery system. The professional staff defines the framework for the volunteer's conduct, and ensures that the recommendations reflect realistic expectations that are within the parameters of the court's jurisdiction.

A good CASA manager establishes guidelines to deal with problems before they arise. These guidelines should be spelled out to the volunteers throughout recruiting, screening and training, the job description, the policy manual, the confidentiality statement, and in the interview. Reiterate the guidelines in training, and when a volunteer is assigned a first case.

Volunteers should feel free to express their frustrations, ask for advice, or just vent their feelings. These consulting sessions can produce positive results by diffusing anger, preventing inappropriate actions, recommending alternatives, or heading off burnout. It is also a good idea to supply volunteers with an emergency number where someone from the program can be reached after office hours. While the staff should not make a habit of taking after-hours phone calls, someone does need to be available in the event of an emergency.

The CASA supervisor can also reinforce volunteers through non-crisis, positive feedback. If someone is a great fact-finder but writes poor reports, consider giving that volunteer special instruction on preparing written information. If a volunteer is meticulous and responsible but afraid to speak in court, consider visiting the courtroom during a case and giving that person honest feedback on his or her performance. Each volunteer will bring a unique set of skills and needs to the program. Some will need a great deal of guidance to complete a case, while others will acquire the information and skills they need. Individual differences in volunteers require individual attention.

Because the role of the CASA volunteer is unique and most easily understood by others doing the same work, volunteers can benefit enormously from peer group meetings. Regularly scheduled volunteer meetings can give volunteers the chance to raise questions, ask for advice, compare progress, and identify recurring problems. Regular meetings also are a chance for the supervisor to offer support and encouragement to the volunteers. This time can be used to relay program information to volunteers, such as the number of children served, number of volunteer

hours contributed, feedback from the judge, and suggestions on ways to improve the program's operations. Volunteers should also be kept up-to-date on federal and state legislation affecting the children they service and the volunteer's ability to serve them, research findings, and new community resources. Maintaining on going contact with the volunteers allows them to feel a part of the program and share in its successes.

Another effective supervision strategy is to hold regularly scheduled staff meetings for paid employees and volunteers. Having an established time set aside for "debriefing" keeps the lines of communication open.

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Either as a part of the program's policy manual or as a separate volunteer handbook, policies and procedures detailing all aspects of volunteer management should be documented and communicated. Every volunteer has the right to know what is expected and what he or she has the right to expect in return. The volunteer policies should include:

- ◆ Job description detailing duties, qualifications, and expectations
- ◆ Oath of Confidentiality
- ◆ Requirements for pre-service and in-service training
- ◆ Volunteer application
- ◆ Permission/release form for obtaining criminal and employment history
- ◆ Reference forms or letters
- ◆ National CASA's Program Standards
- ◆ Court order/appointment form
- ◆ Case procedures
- ◆ How assignments are made
- ◆ Flow of cases
- ◆ Record keeping expectations
- ◆ Court report format/outline
- ◆ What the volunteer can expect
- ◆ Supervision
- ◆ Evaluation
- ◆ Support
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Reimbursement of expenses, if applicable
- ◆ Procedures for handling complaints or grievances
- ◆ Requirements for keeping and reporting volunteer hours

Some CASA Programs make the decision to allow their volunteers to provide transportation to children. In this case, it is necessary that the program carry liability insurance. National CASA's program standards discourage programs from allowing volunteers to accept the responsibility of transporting children.

You may think of other issues that should be contained in your program's volunteer policies and procedures. Again, as in all aspects of program planning, the more preparation and attention to detail you expend in the early phases, the less likely you are to have problems in the future.

Retaining Volunteers

An organizational climate that attracts and retains volunteers does not happen accidentally. Here are some factors that organization researchers have identified as important to today's volunteer:

- ◆ **Structure** - Volunteers like to be a part of an organized group that has structure, but allows for flexibility.
- ◆ **Responsibility** - Volunteers like the feeling of being their own boss and not having to double check all decisions.
- ◆ **Reward** - Volunteers like to be rewarded appropriately for a job well done. A good program will emphasize positive rewards rather than punishment.
- ◆ **Risk** - Volunteers like a sense of challenge and permission to take calculated risks.
- ◆ **Warmth** - The feeling of good fellowship in the work group atmosphere is also important. It helps if a program has a prevailing mood that is friendly and informal, without cliques.
- ◆ **Support** - A good program fosters a sense of mutual support and helpfulness on the part of managers and others in the group.
- ◆ **Standards** - The emphasis should be on doing a good job.
- ◆ **Conflict** - A difference in opinion shouldn't be considered a liability. Problems should be aired and resolved, not ignored. Divergent opinions are heard and valued.
- ◆ **Identity** - A volunteer likes the feeling of belonging to a group and being a valuable member of a working team.
- ◆ **Evaluation** – Volunteers want to know where they stand and how they can improve. They deserve honest feedback.

Most programs require volunteers to make a commitment to remain with the program for at least one year. Many programs report that their volunteers on average, remain beyond that time period. Programs that conduct exit interviews with volunteers who are leaving the program have found the most common reasons volunteers leave are:

- ◆ Lack of adequate time to do the job well
- ◆ Insufficient supervision, resulting in feelings of isolation or poor preparation
- ◆ Changes in family or work situations

Performance Evaluations

Like paid staff, CASA volunteers' performances should be evaluated on a regular basis. Feedback and skill development are important since volunteers do not receive a monetary reward.

A volunteer is often evaluated after he or she has been with the program six months and yearly thereafter. If problems arise between the scheduled evaluations, an additional evaluation can be arranged.

The purpose of the evaluation is to give feedback and offer input to help the volunteer improve on the job. It is not a punitive process. Avoid using "performance evaluation" as jargon for criticism by the supervisor. The evaluation process should be a positive and helpful experience for the volunteer. Allow the volunteer to participate by offering an opportunity for self-evaluation. Ask what areas he or she would like to improve, or special topics he or she could learn more about. Include the volunteer's goals, along with the supervisor's goals, in the performance evaluation.

Performance evaluations can also serve a variety of other functions. They can be excellent opportunities to solicit feedback on supervision. They can also be:

- ◆ A natural time for volunteers to review whether or not they wish to remain with the program
- ◆ An opportunity for the supervisor to encourage alternative or additional program functions
- ◆ A time for soliciting general suggestions about the program.

To develop a volunteer performance evaluation form, begin with the position description and rate the volunteer's performance in each area. Then proceed to the volunteer's individual goals, and determine jointly with the volunteer whether those goals were met completely, in part, or not at all. If the volunteer falls short of the goals, explain why. Next, review the volunteer's self-evaluation, and discuss any areas of concern. Finally, the performance evaluation should include a plan of action to address any training needed or desired during the next year (see the sample Volunteer performance evaluation form in the Tools section).

Disciplinary Action

There are times when a supervisor must be very clear and firm in directing a volunteer. This can be difficult when supervising an unpaid worker because there is a tendency to worry about appearing "ungrateful" for the volunteer's contribution and commitment. However, it is important to remember that the volunteer has agreed to perform the duties of the position as outlined in the program policy manual. Anytime the volunteer violates these standards, he or she must be told what behavior was inappropriate and why.

Some violations of conduct may be so serious that a volunteer should be terminated immediately. Some of these include appearing in court or making contacts while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, offering drugs or alcohol to a child, any form of child abuse, breach of confidentiality, or an intentional violation of a court order. This is not an all-inclusive list, and it is up to each program to determine its own parameters. If termination becomes necessary, the supervisor should document the reason in a letter to the volunteer, keeping a copy for the volunteer's file. These files should be maintained permanently.

A separate file should be maintained on each volunteer. The file includes, but is not limited to:

- ◆ Completed application form and references
- ◆ Dates the volunteer completed pre-service training
- ◆ Signed agreement regarding confidentiality and adherence to program policy
- ◆ Record of any stated preference for types of cases or restrictions on case assignment
- ◆ Correspondence
- ◆ Learning and training goals
- ◆ Performance evaluations
- ◆ Record of any disciplinary action taken by staff regarding the individual's conduct
- ◆ Cases assigned

Volunteer Recognition

Never assume volunteers know they are appreciated. Recognition of volunteers' contributions should be part of the formal and informal operations of the program. Volunteers who do not receive frequent feedback and recognition begin to wonder if they are doing a good job and if

anyone cares about the work they do. This often creates a lack of motivation and can result in high volunteer attrition.

The CASA staff should always be aware of these factors and acknowledge when a volunteer has done a good job. Try to pass on praise from other parties, such as the judge, caseworker, child, parent, relatives, attorney, or others involved in the case. Mention accomplishments in the CASA newsletter or at staff meetings. Submit photographs or news items to National CASA to be included in the National newsletter, *The Connection*. A sincere and spontaneous thank you note to a volunteer for a job well done is also a welcome bit of positive feedback.

Many CASA programs hold special recognition events to formally thank volunteers for their work. Each year during National Volunteer Week (in April), many human service agencies hold dinners or parties for their volunteers. April is also Child Abuse Prevention Month, which offers the CASA program an opportunity to recognize volunteers and highlight the program's commitment to children, as well as to gain media attention. These events are also excellent opportunities to give volunteers some momento of service, such as a certificate, flower, or pin. Items bearing the CASA logo are available for purchase through National CASA.

***SECTION III: MANAGING
THE PROGRAM***

Financial Management

Regardless of its size or type of organization, every nonprofit, from a university hospital to a local CASA program, needs to maintain accurate financial books and records. In the initial stages of program development and operation, financial management can be very simple. As the organization grows and receives income from multiple sources and has more than one or two staff, accounting procedures and controls will necessarily become more complex. If you begin at the program's outset by establishing a financial management system that is in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), few changes will need to be made in the future. It is a good idea to seek the advice and services of an accountant or someone with extensive knowledge of financial management when you are developing your system. The information offered is intended to offer some basic guidance. It is not intended as a thorough discussion of all the issues that must be considered to assure adequate financial accountability (see Financial Policies & Procedures in the Tools Section).

What is the Accounting Process?

The accounting process encompasses the recording and reporting of transactions affecting the financial status of an organization. Processes and procedures must be implemented to generate useful financial statements and to secure the assets of the organization. Meaningful financial data cannot be produced without a mechanism to capture, record, review, summarize, and report information. This entire process is called accounting.

Bookkeeping is simply the recording of transactions. While accounting and bookkeeping are often used interchangeably, their differences are significant. Bookkeeping is just one facet of accounting and financial management. Accounting refers to the entire process of recording and reporting and requires that systems (automated or manual) be in place to facilitate bookkeeping and to produce accurate, meaningful financial statements and management reports.

The accounting process can be described as an ongoing, monthly cycle consisting of:

- ◆ Cash receipts and disbursements
- ◆ Journal entries
- ◆ Closing procedures
- ◆ Financial statement preparation
- ◆ Review and analysis

Establishing an Accounting System

Establishing an accounting system, while not directly fulfilling the program's mission, is nevertheless a critical administrative task. A well-designed system, even if it consists solely of manual ledgers, can mean the difference between timely financial information and incomplete, unsupported records.

Usually, the number of transactions (deposits, checks, and journal entries) will determine whether or not it is cost-effective to automate the accounting process. A new program that has only one or two funding sources and limited assets may simply “keep the books” in a checkbook supplied by the local bank or a check register accounting system in which checks are manually recorded in a ledger at the same time they are prepared. This combination of checkbook and expense distribution journal provides a simple way of recording receipts and disbursements while maintaining your checkbook balance.

It is strongly advised the organization move to an automated accounting system as soon as funds are available. An automated system does not have to be complicated. There are numerous software applications available that do not require any previous accounting or bookkeeping experience. Most accounting programs will run on the most basic computers and are easily installed and maintained. The factors to consider in determining which software will meet your program’s needs include:

- ◆ Does it do what you need it to?
- ◆ How easy is it to use?
- ◆ Is it easy to install?
- ◆ What reports can be produced?
- ◆ Can data be uploaded and downloaded to diskettes for use in other applications?
- ◆ Is the cost reasonable?
- ◆ Is training and support available?

Check with other CASA programs to see what programs they have found effective.

Establishing a Bank Account

If you have not already done so, you must open a bank account so funds can be deposited and vendors paid. Most new CASA programs have relatively simple banking needs. This does not mean the decision to use a particular bank should be taken lightly. First, you must decide the program’s basic service needs. They usually encompass deposits, withdrawals, and obtaining bank balances. More extensive banking services could include direct deposit for payroll, debit and credit transactions processed through the Automated Clearing House, lockbox services, credit card accounts, lines of credit, and online access to bank account information via your personal computer.

Most banks can provide all of these services. Assuming all banks appear to be the same, how can you find the bank that is right for the program? One good way to start is to contact other groups of a similar size that might have the same service needs as CASA. Using references from other nonprofits is an excellent way of identifying a bank that offers services to meet your needs. The bank you use personally or that serves for-profit firms may not be the best for serving nonprofits. Visit the bank and discuss your expected needs with the bank officer.

Internal Controls

The objectives of internal financial controls are to safeguard the organization’s assets, to ensure the reliability of financial records and reports, to promote operational efficiency, and to encourage adherence to policy. A good financial control system should have written policies which describe:

- ◆ Clear lines of authority and responsibility
- ◆ Separation of duties
- ◆ Procedures for authorization
- ◆ Procedures for record keeping
- ◆ Physical control over assets and records
- ◆ Accurate documentation and sufficient audit trail
- ◆ Independent review and audit of finances

Financial Statements

There are many possible kinds of financial statements that can be prepared, but the ones most commonly required include the following:

- ◆ **Balance Sheet.** The balance sheet summarizes the assets, liabilities, and fund balances of the organization. It is a snapshot taken at a specific point in time, presenting the financial position of an organization on a specific date.
- ◆ **Statement of Activity.** This report measures, in fiscal terms only, the effectiveness of your program's ability to carry out its mission. It reports the actual revenues and expenses and compares the results to the current budget.
- ◆ **Statement of Functional Expenses.** This report, reported for the same period as the statement of activity, shows expenses by category such as salaries, rent, postage, etc.
- ◆ **Statement of Cash Flow.** Also prepared for the same period, this report shows the cash receipts and cash payments during that time frame.

It is generally not necessary to provide the board with a full set of financial statements each month. At a minimum, however, they should receive a statement of activity each month which follows the same format as the approved budget, calculating variances, explaining the reason for the variances, and offering suggestions for corrective action if needed. Other reports may be requested by the board on a quarterly basis and a full set of financial statements must be prepared at the end of the program's fiscal year.

Financial information should be provided to the board as soon as possible after the designated reporting period ends so that necessary corrective action can be made in a timely manner. Of course, it takes some time to prepare the statement, but most programs should be able to produce a monthly report within two weeks after the end of the month. A full set of financial statements for the year should be available within five or six weeks after the end of the year. If your accounting system cannot meet these deadlines, something is wrong and should be corrected.

Audits

Although your organization may not be required to have an audit, it is generally recommended that an audit be performed, even if your funders do not require it. An audit opinion stating that the financial statements accurately present the balances and results of operations is critical in fundraising and receiving grants. Internally, an audit assures financial statements are accurate and complete.

An auditor will perform tests of your accounting system, review the internal accounting controls, examine your documentation, perform analytical review procedures, and confirm cash accounts and other balances in order to render an opinion on the financial statements taken as a whole. The audit will also include a review of the accounting principles being followed and the financial

statement format to determine whether or not they comply with generally accepted accounting principles.

There are several levels of audit and audit reports that can be done by an accountant. A full audit includes an opinion, a statement of financial position, a statement of activities, a statement of cash flows, and footnotes. The footnotes disclose the nature of the operations, a summary of significant accounting policies, a description of significant events, and detailed information on the organization's commitments and contingencies. For a full audit, the auditors will require a management representation letter addressed to them that acknowledges management's responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. Usually, the executive director and a member of the board are asked to sign the letter. In addition to the audited financial statements, the auditors should provide you with a management or internal control letter in which they discuss any suggestions they have for improving your financial policies and procedures.

A lower level of audit is a review of financial statements. The resulting review report indicates the testing performed is less than that of a full audit and that only analytical review procedures were applied. A review provides only limited assurances that the financial statements are complete. This type of audit may be appropriate when the program is new and cannot afford a full audit.

The lowest level of service auditors can perform is a compilation. This type of report states the account balances presented are those provided by management. The auditor takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the numbers. This type of audit is appropriate only for programs that have a CPA prepare their monthly financial statements.

The cost of a full audit can be several thousand dollars, a real burden on programs that have minimal funding. You may be able to negotiate for a lower than normal fee, particularly if you are able to have the work performed off-season. Another possibility for a lower fee is to obtain the services through the local chapter of the Association of Certified Public Accountants.

Tax Returns

There are various reporting requirements for nonprofit organizations at the local, state, and federal levels. Filing of IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, is required if the organization has gross revenue in excess of \$25,000 per year. Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations are also required to file the 990-Schedule A. The filing must be done by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of the year. A penalty of \$10 per day is assessed late filing or incomplete forms.

If the program has raised more than \$1000 from an unrelated business such as some types of product sales, Form 990-T must be filed. Some types of income derived from unrelated business are subject to federal tax (and possibly state tax). The filing and payment of any taxes due must be paid by the 15th day of the fifth month after year-end.

If an extension is needed, IRS Form 2758 may be used to request it. The program is required to maintain a copy of your Form 990 tax return on file and available for the public's inspection.

Once the program employs paid personnel, it is required to file federal payroll reports, including a W-4 for each employee to claim exemptions for federal withholding and a W-2 for each employee at the end of the year to report income and deductions.

The director may want to ask the auditors to complete the annual tax return and request an extension when necessary. They can also advise you on other state tax filings required.

Risk Management

Fear of Legal Liability

Fear of legal liability has become an increasing worry for volunteer programs in the past few years. Although there is very little hard data about the actual number of lawsuits, two things are clear:

- ◆ The possibility of a CASA program being involved in an incident that results in legal action is increasing.
- ◆ The fear of such involvement is affecting the behavior of those who manage volunteer programs.

It is important not to get carried away with concern about liability when managing volunteers. The risk of liability operating a volunteer program is not much different from that of operating one with paid employees.

The kinds of risk inherent in a CASA program generally fall into three categories: liability of the individual volunteer, liability of the organization to the volunteer, and liability of the program because of the actions of its volunteers.

Liability of the Individual Volunteer

In most states volunteers are somewhat protected by immunity clauses in state law. However, they can still be personally responsible if someone is harmed as the result of their willful failure to follow program rules, abuse of a child, misuse of an automobile, negligence, or exercising poor judgment.

Liability of the Organization to the Volunteer

When an individual joins an organization as an unpaid employee, the organization assumes certain obligations to that volunteer. These fall into two general categories: protection from harm, and personnel rules.

In protection from harm, an organization has an obligation to not recklessly endanger its volunteers. Basically this means either eliminating dangers or adequately alerting and preparing volunteers to deal with dangers. Volunteers, like paid staff, are owed this obligation to be adequately prepared and trained for their volunteer duties.

In personnel rules, volunteers are provided the right to fair treatment by the agency in hiring, firing, and other supervisory actions. Although this area of law is in rapid development at the present, current interpretation of the law prevents the organization from taking non-job related actions against volunteers. This does not mean that you can not turn down a volunteer applicant,

but it prohibits turning them down based on their membership in a certain class of individuals defined by age, sex, race, disability, or religion.

Liability of the Organization Because of the Actions of Volunteers

If a CASA volunteer injures someone while performing CASA related duties, the volunteer might be sued and the program might be sued as well. This could occur under one of two legal approaches:

- ◆ A volunteer acting within the scope of his or her duties can make the agency responsible because he/she is considered an agent of the organization, carrying out work on its behalf. The actions of the volunteer are, in essence, the actions of the program.
- ◆ Volunteers who commit actions clearly outside the scope of his or her work (such as theft or child abuse) may also open the organization to a suit. This is possible if the agency is itself guilty of negligent hiring, training, or supervision of the volunteer. In this case the agency may be held responsible because of its own failure to prevent the volunteer from injuring another party.

Minimizing the Risk

Developing management policies and procedures with an eye toward preventing or minimizing the potential risks, is a good way for a new program to reduce the chance of legal involvement. By taking the steps to identify potential risks associated with the CASA program and evaluating how they can be controlled, the board can develop appropriate protective measures early thus avoiding many of the small mistakes that can turn into big disasters.

Most risk can be controlled by carefully screening volunteer applicants, providing thorough training to both volunteers and staff, assuring there is adequate supervision of volunteers, and periodically reviewing the organization's policies and procedures to assure they are understood.

The next step is assuring that everyone involved adheres to the policies and procedures consistently. That means never skipping a criminal background check or allowing a volunteer to take a child home "just this once." If anyone in the program fails to adhere to the program standards and harm occurs as a result, the program's potential liability is increased.

Liability Insurance

The board will want to consider three types of insurance: liability for board members, liability for the program volunteers and staff, and theft and fire insurance for the office and its contents. The types and amounts of coverage will vary based on your program's unique characteristics. Consulting local insurance agents who are familiar with nonprofit organizations will provide helpful information. It is also a good idea to consult with your state organization and with other local programs about their coverage.

National CASA has worked with an insurance company that can offer advice and coverage anywhere in the country. Call the national office to obtain their material and contact information.

One final note: Many CASA programs have chosen not to purchase liability insurance because they assume the court will dismiss any suit filed against the program. While this may be true, the dismissal of a suit does not preclude the necessity of hiring legal counsel to prepare briefs to

present to the court regarding the action. It may be difficult to find pro bono legal assistance in such incidents and it is probably not possible for an attorney who sits on the board to also serve as the program's attorney since he or she is also a party to the action as a board member. An insurance policy that provides coverage of legal fees may be worth considering.

Program Operations

Policy Considerations

Good program management requires the creation of some formal rules and procedures. The development of overall policies can be done in phases corresponding to the developmental phase of the program. For example, you will want to have at least basic personnel policies before the director is hired and volunteer policies before the first class of volunteers is trained. It is impossible to develop policies to cover every potential issue and you may not want to restrict your options by having written rules for every situation. Sometimes the flexibility to use good judgment is the best way to handle a difficult situation. A good guide for the fundamental policies to establish initially is the National CASA standards for local programs. The process of developing policies should be a joint effort of the board and the executive director.

Because of the nature of the work done by CASA volunteers, their involvement in the courts, and the potential risk this work poses, there are some practice issues a program should carefully analyze from every perspective before committing to a policy. Some of them have been discussed in previous chapters. Others for consideration are discussed below.

Confidentiality

Preserving the privacy rights of citizens and maintaining the confidentiality of personal information is a major concern in many segments of society. Because of the sensitive nature of CASA work, these concerns are even more critical for CASA programs. A breach in confidentiality can cause irreparable harm to the child and family involved. It can poison working relationships between CASA and the professional community and cast doubt on the value of the program. In the worst cases, it could even result in litigation.

For these reasons, it is important that staff and volunteers are clear about what is meant by confidentiality in this context. Something as simple as discussing a case in the hall, the elevator, or the bathroom, or leaving information on the coffee table at home can have unforeseen consequences.

To minimize risk, most programs have a volunteer sign a confidentiality agreement at the time of acceptance to the program. Some reinforce its importance by executing a separate document each time a new case is assigned. How confidentiality is to be handled in staffing or team meetings of volunteers should also be specifically addressed (see the Confidentiality Policy in the Tools Section).

In virtually all programs, violation of confidentiality is cause for immediate dismissal of a volunteer. This is appropriate given the potentially devastating consequences to individuals and to the program.

Equal importance should be placed on the confidentiality of personal information about volunteer applicants, both those who are accepted to the program and those who are not. If information of a confidential nature is kept in files, it should be kept in locked files with limits on who has access.

Procedures for Handling Complaints and Grievances

CASA is involved in sensitive work that evokes a wide range of emotions. It is, therefore, to be expected that criticism will arise from many of the players involved, especially when the CASA volunteer makes recommendations that are not in agreement with the opinion of others. If volunteers are doing their jobs well, there will often be someone angry with them. Volunteers should be trained to expect this and given support in learning how to accept it. One supportive technique is having a written procedure in place for handling complaints, should they arise.

Complaints can come from many sources, including parents or other parties to a case, social workers, other agencies, attorneys, or people in the community. They can also be directed at various people, including a volunteer, staff person, or board member. The program's procedure should address the following:

- ◆ what constitutes a formal complaint (must it be in writing, etc)
- ◆ with whom the complaint must be filed
- ◆ when complaints shall be handled by staff vs. when they shall be handled by the board
- ◆ when the board is involved
- ◆ whether it should be the whole board, a committee, or one individual

The complaint procedure components listed above apply to both internal and external complaints. In other words, it applies to outside parties filing grievances against a CASA employee or volunteer, as well as to a CASA employee or volunteer filing a grievance against another person affiliated with CASA.

Knowing in advance how such problems will be addressed will help to alleviate the anxiety and discomfort that naturally accompanies these situations. Most complaints are not serious and should not be threatening to those involved. However, because of the sensitive nature of CASA's work, all complaints are cause for concern and should be given adequate consideration.

Personnel Policies

Perhaps no policies are more important than the policies governing the hiring and management of personnel. No matter how new or how small, organizations should have at least minimal policies in writing. No area exposes programs to greater potential for liability than the mishandling of personnel matters. Because the legal ramifications are significant, you should have personnel policies reviewed by an attorney knowledgeable about employment law before

they are adopted by the board and distributed to staff. At a minimum, policies should be developed that address the following:

- ◆ Hiring procedures
- ◆ Work Schedule
- ◆ Compensation
- ◆ Employee benefits
- ◆ Code of conduct
- ◆ Performance evaluations
- ◆ Workplace safety and security
- ◆ Termination policies

All personnel related policies should be developed with full knowledge of the implications of the following:

- ◆ Federal minimum wage
- ◆ Equal employment opportunity
- ◆ Job safety and health
- ◆ The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992

Keeping Records

One of the primary operational tasks is the maintenance of accurate records. In addition to financial records which were discussed in the previous chapter, the program must, at all times, be aware of the status of every case assigned by the court. The following discussion provides guidance on the types of records to maintain for this case management function.

Master File and Working File

When CASA is appointed to a child via court order, the program will obtain or receive a packet of information from the clerk or court administrator containing all pertinent legal documents and notices. This includes copies of all pleadings filed with the court, a copy of the court order appointing CASA, and the date and type of the next hearing scheduled.

These documents are the heart of your master and working case files. They should be placed in your master filing system under the child's name, or under the docket number, thereby helping to ensure confidentiality. Many programs, which use manual systems, keep these records filed in chronological order. Any subsequent information about the case will be added to this file resulting in a comprehensive record of the case throughout its lifetime. This is also a logical place to keep a record of communication between the CASA office and the volunteer.

The volunteer who is assigned to the case will also need a working case file. Make copies of your original documents, and give them to the volunteer at the time (s)he is assigned to the case. As the volunteer works on the case, (s)he can use this file as a place to also keep the dates and notes from interviews, information on how to contact various parties, and copies of reports provided by the caseworker or parents.

It is critical for volunteers to realize that the materials contained in these files are confidential in nature and that they take precautions to safeguard their working files when they are in their possession. A procedure for destroying or returning working files to the program should be established. A time frame for keeping office files and procedures for destroying them should be agreed upon by the program and the court. National CASA recommends establishing an agreement with the court in which the records no longer needed by the CASA office are returned to the court, where they will be disposed of in the manner in which the court is accustomed.

Schedule of Hearings (Docket)

It is also necessary to keep a complete record of court hearings for each case. Your docket form should include:

- ◆ Juvenile court case number
- ◆ Date and type of hearing
- ◆ Child's name
- ◆ CASA volunteer's name
- ◆ Caseworker
- ◆ Changes in dates (continuances)

This information can be gleaned from the court docket, court orders, or verbal orders from the attorney general's office or the administrative office of the court. When you develop a system for keeping track of the case's hearing schedule, keep in mind that information will change frequently. Parties often ask for continuances or the judge may determine additional information is needed before the hearing can be effectively concluded. The schedule of upcoming hearings should be a working document, able to accommodate change. It should also verify notification of the appropriate people regarding the change.

Sometimes the volunteer will be the first to know of a change in the schedule and will notify the CASA office. The staff should then try to confirm that information by contacting the juvenile court office or the attorney general's office.

The CASA Program must follow written policies and procedures regarding access to, use of, and release of information about the children it serves to ensure that children's confidentiality is maintained at all times. To help assure that records maintained in the CASA office are secure, physical security measures should include locked filing cabinets and access codes for office computers.

Gathering Statistical Data

There are several reasons why CASA programs should pay close attention to gathering accurate and timely statistics. One primary reason for record keeping is to facilitate efficient program management. It also demonstrates accountability: to the courts, children and families, the community, funders and the media. Additionally, the 1996 amendment to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act requires states to report on the number of children for whom advocates were appointed to represent their best interests, and on the number of court contacts

between the advocate and child. Most often, the states have only the data collected by CASA programs to report.

When choosing projects to fund, most foundations and/or community service organizations want evidence that a cause is worthy and that it effectively serves a community need. Testimonials alone are not enough to convince these potential funders to offer financial support. They need to see solid data that illustrate the program's accomplishments.

Likewise, statistics can help to solidify your public image and credibility. Funding sources look for facts that show why the program is needed (abuse and foster care statistics), what it is doing (numbers of volunteers, the hours they spend on the job), and the results/outcomes (number of children served, cost savings to the court).

This information is also a powerful motivator in other public awareness projects. If you can quote positive figures in speeches, informational materials, or for fundraising projects, your program will be perceived as valuable and effective.

One of the most effective statistics the CASA program can cite is the amount of volunteer time contributed to the program and the children it serves. By documenting the time contributed, you can make a credible argument for the value of volunteers. This information can help in your public relations efforts and in seeking support from funders.

It is recommended that programs require volunteers to track the number of hours spent on specific activities associated with their cases. These activities include attending hearings, foster care reviews and meetings; contacts in person and by phone with children, parents, supervisors, social workers, therapists, and others; travel to appointments and hearings; and writing and editing reports.

COMET

Keeping all of the statistics up to date can be a full time job in itself, leaving you with less time to dedicate to your volunteers and the children they represent. To remedy this situation while meeting the need for reporting, National CASA has provided an effective child-centered database to compile and update important program information on children and volunteers. COMET (**C**A**S**A **O**utcomes, **M**anagement and **E**valuation **T**ool) can help programs keep and manage vital case information, produce activity reports, evaluate their effectiveness, and measure outcomes for the children they serve. COMET can, and should, be modified to fit local program needs, terminology, and reporting requirements. This database is free to National CASA member programs (see sample reports with statistical information from the COMET database in the Tools Section).

In addition to tracking statistics, COMET can be used for:

- ◆ Reviewing the history of placements
- ◆ Tracking the changes in attorneys, case workers, and others involved in the case
- ◆ Compiling data needed to determine outcomes for each child

- ◆ Maintaining monthly and annual child and volunteer demographics and numbers, making it simple to complete the National CASA annual program survey
- ◆ Determining if volunteers have met training requirements and reporting on individual and group trainings
- ◆ Evaluating program effectiveness and performance

Each program must determine what information is necessary to serve its needs and purposes. Privately funded programs can use the data in grant applications and to justify spending to Funding sources. Up-to-date information can also improve the program's position with local media.

Other resources to assist in your data collection are the Achieving Our Mission manual and a technology guide, Computers and the Internet, both of which are available through National CASA.

SECTION IV: TOOLS

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Denver CASA (Denver, CO)

The mission of Denver CASA is to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in Denver Juvenile Court through the services of specially selected and trained community volunteers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

CASA of El Paso, Inc. (El Paso, TX)

C.A.S.A. (Court Appointed Special Advocate), a non-profit organization, trains and supports court approved Volunteers to advocate for children who need representation in the family court system, serving these children's best interests quickly and efficiently.

Capital Area CASA Association (Baton Rouge, LA)

The mission of Capital Area Court Appointed Special Advocate Association is to secure a safe and permanent home for every abused and neglected child.

BYLAWS OF
DENVER CASA
(A Nonprofit Corporation)
(As Revised and Consolidated)

ARTICLE 1. NAME

The name of this organization shall be: Denver CASA (hereinafter referred to as "the Corporation").

ARTICLE 11. OFFICES-AND AGENTS

Section 1. Principal Office. The principal office of the Corporation shall be located at 225 East 16th Avenue, Suite 640, Denver, Colorado 80203. The Corporation may have other offices and places of business at such places within the State of Colorado as shall be determined by the directors.

Section 2. Registered Office. The registered office of the Corporation required by the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act shall be maintained in the State of Colorado and it may be, but need not be, identical with the principal office if located in the State of Colorado. The address of the registered office of the Corporation may be changed from time to time as provided in the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 3. Registered Agent. The Corporation shall maintain a registered agent in the State of Colorado as required by the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act. Such registered agent may be changed from time to time as provided by the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act. The Corporation shall maintain a registered agent in such other states as may be required by applicable law.

ARTICLE 111. PURPOSE AND POWERS

Section 1. Purposes. The Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. The specific purpose and objectives of the Corporation shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. To promote advocacy for abused and neglected children;
- B. To recruit volunteer advocates;
- C. To provide training and education for such volunteers to assist them in

representing children in cases of abuse and neglect, actions with regard to juvenile delinquency and in such other court proceedings in which children are needy of representation, by providing appropriate investigative, advocacy, counseling and monitoring services.

Section 2. Powers. The Corporation shall have the following powers:

- A. To receive and maintain a fund or funds of real or personal property or both, and to use and apply the whole or any part of the income therefrom and the principal thereof for the purposes set forth in Article I 11, Section 1, above.
- B. To have one or more offices and to conduct and carry on any of its business at any place in the State of Colorado as may be determined by the Board of Directors.
- C. To buy or otherwise acquire, sell or otherwise dispose of, mortgage or otherwise encumber, exchange, lease, hold, use, operate, or otherwise deal in and with real, personal and mixed property of all kinds and any rights or interest therein for any purposes of this Corporation.
- D. To borrow money and secure the repayment of monies borrowed for any purposes of this Corporation.
- E. To have and exercise any and all of those powers specified in the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act. To do all and everything necessary, suitable and proper for the accomplishment of any of the purposes or in furtherance of any of the powers set forth in Article I 11, Section I above, either alone or in association with other corporations, firms, or individuals; and to do every other act or acts, thing or things incidental or appurtenant to and growing out of or connected with the aforesaid purposes or any part or parts thereof, provided the same be not inconsistent with the laws under which this Corporation is organized.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

The Corporation shall have no members and the Corporation shall have no capital stock.

ARTICLE V. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Number and Term of Office. The business affairs, activities, and property of the Corporation shall be managed, directed, governed, and controlled, and the powers of the Corporation shall be vested in and exercised by a Board of Directors composed of not less than five (5) nor more than twenty (20) members. The Board of Directors may change the number of directors from time to time by amending these Bylaws. No decrease in the number of directors shall shorten the term of office of any incumbent director. Members of the Board of Directors shall serve for two (2) years and shall be eligible for reappointment for a total of no more than six (6) consecutive years.

Section 2.. Qualifications. All directors shall be natural persons of the age of eighteen (18) years or older. Directors do not need to be residents of the State of Colorado. A director must demonstrate an interest in the purposes and activities of the Corporation and must be interested in donating his or her time,

advice, skill, energy, and support in furtherance of the Corporation and its purposes and activities.

Section 3.. Powers and Duties. The Board of Directors shall have all the powers and duties necessary, appropriate, or convenient for the administration of the affairs of the Corporation and for the management and operation of the Corporation's property and activities, and may do and perform all acts and things as are not prohibited by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws. These duties and power of the Corporation shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Establishing and reviewing board policies governing the Corporation and its operations;
- B. Ensuring adequate resources for operation of the Corporation; helping to identify, cultivate, solicit and acknowledge donors.
- C. Establishing and supervising adequate accounting and financial procedures;
- D. Promoting the goals and purposes of the Corporation and evaluating the Corporation against such goals and purposes; and
- E. Employing on behalf of the Corporation an executive director and defining the duties and responsibilities of the Executive Director in a written job description.

Anything in these Bylaws to the contrary notwithstanding, the Board of Directors is not empowered to perform any activity on behalf of the Corporation not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income taxation under Section 501 (c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

Section 4. Nomination and Election. At the annual Board of Directors meeting, individuals presented by the nominating committee shall be deemed nominated to serve on the Board of Directors. In addition to those individuals presented by the Nominating Committee, individuals may be nominated to serve on the Board of. **Directors in any number by any** member of the existing Board of Directors at any time. Existing members of the Board may continue to serve on the Board of Directors if nominated and elected, subject to a six-year limitation. Directors shall be elected from the persons nominated upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the entire Board. The term of office of any newly elected director shall commence immediately upon adjournment of the meeting of Board of Directors at which he or she was elected.

Section 5. Compensation. Directors shall serve without compensation except that they shall be allowed reasonable advancement or reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Nothing herein shall preclude any director from serving the Corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefor.

Section 6. Resignation-, Vacancies; Removal; Absences; Increases.

- A. Resignation. Any director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President of the Board of Directors, who shall announce the resignation to the full Board of Directors at the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein; and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.
- B. Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring on the Board of Directors by reason of resignation, removal, death, or otherwise shall be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining members of the Board of Directors, even if less than a quorum. A director elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor in office. The term of office of a director elected to fill a vacancy shall commence upon election.
- C. Removal of Elected Directors. When the notice indicates that the purpose of a meeting is to consider the removal of directors, at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation, any Director may be removed from office without assignment of cause by the vote of at least two-thirds of the entire Board of Directors.
- D. Absences. If a Director misses three (3) consecutive meetings without excuse, such absences shall be deemed to constitute such individual's tender of his or her resignation from the Board of Directors; provided, however, the Executive Committee shall have the authority to accept or reject such resignation.
- E. Increase in Directors. The Board of Directors may vote to increase the number of members on the Board of Directors as provided in Article V, Section I of these Bylaws. Any directorship to be filled by reason of an increase in the number of directors shall be filled by vote of the Board of Directors. Any such director elected shall hold office from the date of election until the next annual directors meeting and until his successor has been duly elected and qualified.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

Section 1. Place of Meetings. The annual, regular, or special meetings of the Board of Directors or any committee designated by the Board shall be held at the principal office of the Corporation or at any other place within the State of Colorado that the Board of Directors or any such committee, as the case may be, may designate from time to time.

Section 2.. Annual Meetings. The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held on the second Monday in September of each year unless the Directors by resolution designate a different time.

Section 3. Regular Meetings. In addition to the annual meeting, regular meetings of the Board of Directors or any committee designated by the Board shall be held at least seven (7) times annually and at such more frequent intervals as the Board of Directors or any such committee, as the case may be, may designate.

Section 4.. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors or any committee designated by the Board may be called at any time by the President of the Board of Directors, and shall be called by the President upon receipt of the written request of two (2) of the directors. In addition, the chairperson of any committee designated by the Board or the President may call a special meeting of such committee and a special meeting shall be called by the chairperson of such committee upon receipt of the written request of two of the members of such committees.

Section 5. Notice of Meetings. Notice of meetings may be given either personally, personally by telephone, by sending a copy of the notice through the United States mail or by facsimile or other electronically transmitted messaging, to the address of each director appearing on the books of the Corporation. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail so addressed, with postage prepaid thereon. If notice is given by mail, the individual calling the meeting shall also attempt to contact the Board members by phone to inform them of the meeting. The business to be transacted at or the purpose of, any annual, regular, or special meeting of the Board of Directors or any committee shall be specified in the notice of such meeting.

- A. Notice of each annual meeting of the Board of Directors, setting forth the time and place of the meeting, shall be given to each director not less than ten (10) days prior to the time fixed for the meeting.
- B. Notice of the regular meetings of the Board of Directors or any committee designated by the Board need not be given.
- C. Notice of each special meeting of the Board of Directors or any such committee, setting forth the time and the place of the meeting, shall be given to each director not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time fixed for the meeting.

Section 6. Waiver of Notice. A director may, in writing, waive notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors or any committee, either before, at, or after the meeting; and such waiver shall be deemed the equivalent of giving notice. Attendance of a director at a meeting of the Board or any committee shall constitute waiver of notice of that meeting unless he or she attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of business because the meeting has not been lawfully called or convened.

Section T. Quorum and Voting.

- A. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of the Board of Directors. Except as otherwise provided under the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, or provisions of law, no business shall be considered by the Board at any meeting at which the required quorum is not present, and the only motion which the Chair shall entertain at such meeting is a motion to adjourn; provided, however, that in the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors or any such committee by reason of resignation, removal, death or otherwise, pending the appointment of a replacement director, a majority of directors then serving on the Board of Directors or any such committee shall constitute a quorum.
- B. Each director shall have one (1) vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the Board or such committee.
- C. Voting by proxy shall be permitted for issues deemed appropriate by the Board. The absent voting member shall cast a written vote and deliver it to the chairperson in advance of the meeting. If the absent member can ultimately attend, or if the issues at the meeting differ from that voted upon by the written proxy, the proxy becomes ineffective. Board members may also grant authority to individuals whom they feel will represent their interests. Such proxies are revocable until they are voted, unless there is a specific contractual agreement to the contrary.

Section 8. Majority Action as Board Action. Every act or decision done or made by a majority of the directors present at a meeting duly held at which a quorum is present is the act of the Board of Directors, unless the Articles or Incorporation, these Bylaws, or provisions of law require a greater *or lesser* percentage or different voting rules for approval of a matter by the board.

Section 9. Conduct of Meetings. Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be presided over by the President *or a Co-President of* the Board, or *if* no such person has been so designated or, in his or her absence, by the Vice President of the Board or, in the absence of each of these persons, a Chairperson chosen by a majority of the directors present at the meeting. The Secretary of the Corporation shall act as secretary of all meetings of the Board, provided that, in his or her absence, the presiding officer shall appoint another person to act as Secretary of the Meeting.

Section 10. Informal Action by Directors. Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the directors or any committee may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by all of the directors or members of such committee, as the case may be, entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter thereof. Such consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote of the directors or the members of **such committee and may be stated as such in any articles or documents filed** with the Secretary of Colorado under the Colorado Nonprofit Corporations Act.

Section 11. Meetings. Members of the Board of Directors or any committee designated by the Board may participate in any annual, regular or special meeting of the Board or committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment by which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Such participation shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

Section 1. General. The officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, or such Co-Presidents as may be approved by a majority vote of the entire Board, Secretary and a Treasurer or a Secretary/Treasurer. In addition, one or more Vice-Presidents and such other officers, assistant officers, agents and employees that the Board of Directors may from time to time deem necessary may be elected or appointed by the Board of Directors in any manner prescribed by the Board consistent with these Bylaws. Two or more offices may be held by the same person except that one person shall not at the same time hold the offices of President and Secretary.

Section 2. Election and Term Office. The officers of the Corporation shall be elected for a term of one (1) year by the Board of Directors at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors. Officers shall hold office until their successors are chosen and have qualified unless they are sooner removed from office as provided in these Bylaws. Officers may serve for any number of successive terms.

Section 3..Resignation and Removal. Any officer of the Corporation may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors of the Corporation. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein; and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Any officer or agent of the Corporation may be removed from office without assignment of cause by the vote of at least two-thirds of the entire Board of Directors whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Corporation may be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed. Election or appointment of an officer or ail agent shall not of itself create contract rights.

Section 4. Vacancies. When a vacancy occurs in one of the offices of the Corporation by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, it shall be filled by the vote of a majority of the entire Board. The officer so selected shall hold office for the remaining term of office.

ARTICLE VIII. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. President. The President (or Co-Presidents together) shall be the chief officer(s) of the Corporation and shall have general supervision of the business activities of the Corporation. At each annual meeting of the Board of Directors, the President (or one of the Co-Presidents) shall give a report of the business and activities of the Corporation for the preceding fiscal year. He or she shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors. The President (or Co-Presidents) shall perform all the duties commonly incident to such office and such other duties as the Board shall designate.

Section 2.. Vice-President(s). Each Vice-President shall have such powers and perform such duties as the Board of Directors may from time to time prescribe or as the President or Co-Presidents may from time to time delegate to him or her. At the request of the President (or Co-Presidents), and in the case of his or her absence or inability to act, any VicePresident may temporarily act in his or her place. In the case of the death of the President (or any of the Co-Presidents), or in the case of his or her absence or inability to act without having designated a Co-President, a Vice-President or Vice-Presidents to act temporarily in his or her place, the Board of Directors, by the vote of a majority of the entire Board, may designate a Vice-President or Vice-Presidents, to perform the duties of the President or any of the CoPresidents. If no such designation shall be made, all the Vice-Presidents may exercise such powers and perform such duties.

Section 3. Secreta. The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept in books provided for that purpose the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and any committees; shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws and as required by law; shall be custodian of the records and of the seal of the Corporation if the Corporation should have a seal; and, in general, shall perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as may, from time to time, be assigned to him or her by the Board of Directors or by the President or the Co-Presidents. In the absence of the Secretary or in the case of his or her inability to act, the Assistant Secretaries, if any shall act with the same powers and shall be subject to the same restrictions as are applicable to the Secretary.

Section 4. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have custody of corporate funds and securities. He or she shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements and shall deposit all corporate monies and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the Corporation in the depository or depositories of the Corporation, and shall render an account of his or her transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Corporation to the President, the Co-Presidents, Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors upon request. Such power given to the Treasurer to deposit and disburse funds shall not, however, preclude any other officer or employee of the Corporation from also depositing and disbursing funds when authorized to do so by the Board of Directors.

The Treasurer shall, if required by the Board of Directors, give the Corporation a bond in such amount and with such surety or sureties as may be ordered by the Board of Directors for the faithful performance of the duties of his office. The premiums on such bond may be paid by the Corporation. The Treasurer shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or the President or Co-Presidents. In the absence of the Treasurer or in the case of his or her inability to act, the Assistant Treasurers, if any, shall act with the same authority and shall be subject to the same restrictions as are applicable to the Treasurer.

Section 5. Delegation of Duties. Whenever an officer is absent, or whenever, for any reason, the Board of Directors may deem it desirable, the Board may delegate the powers and duties of an officer to any other officer or officers or to any director or directors.

ARTICLE IX. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. Slating Officers. Sixty (60) days prior to the Annual meeting, the Executive Committee shall meet, or communicate by mail or telephone, for the purpose of preparing a slate of candidates for the director positions.

Section 2. Consent. Consent of any candidate must be secured before the name may be placed in nomination.

Section 3. Write-In Votes. There shall be a place on the ballot for write-in votes for those not included on the slate.

Section 4. Timing. Elections will take place at the annual meeting, and each director shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

ARTICLE X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Section 1. The Board of Directors may employ an Executive Director who shall:

- A. Implement the policies and procedures of the Corporation as prescribed by the Board of Directors in a written job description.
- B. Be responsible for the operation of the Corporate office.
- C. Employ, supervise and terminate such other staff as is deemed necessary by the Board of Directors to carry on the business of the Corporation.
- D. Assign a staff person to committees as requested by the President or CoPresidents.
- r- Provide Board of Directors with reports regarding current status of program and financial situations as requested, but not less frequently than quarterly.

ARTICLE XI. COMMITTEES

Section 1. General. The Board of Directors, by a majority vote of the entire Board, may designate and appoint one (1) or more committees of the Board of Directors, each of which shall consist of two (2) or more directors. Such committees, to the extent provided in the motion approved by the Board, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, shall have all the authority of the Board of Directors, except that no such committee or any officer of the Corporation may amend the Articles of Incorporation; restate the Articles of Incorporation; adopt a plan of merger or adopt a plan of consolidation with another corporation, authorize sale, lease, exchange, or mortgage of all or substantially all of the property and assets of the Corporation; or amend, alter, or repeal any resolution of the Board of Directors. All decisions and actions of a committee shall be subject to review by the Board of Directors. The designation and appointment of any such committee and the delegation thereto of authority shall not operate to relieve the Board of Directors or any individual director of any responsibility imposed upon him or her by law. If any such delegation of authority of the Board of Directors is made as provided herein, all references to the Board of Directors contained in these Bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation, the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act, or any other applicable law or regulation relating to the authority so delegated, shall be deemed to refer to such committee.

Section 2. Standing Committees. The standing committees of the Board shall be appointed by the President within a reasonable time after the annual meeting of the Board and shall consist of the following:

A. Executive Committees. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Co-Presidents, the immediate past President or Co-Presidents of the Board of Directors, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. By majority vote of the entire Board, the Board may appoint additional directors to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be chaired by the President or a Co-President. The Executive Committee shall meet to consider

matters of a nature which cannot wait for action until the next meeting of the Board, and shall have power to act in regard to such matters. The Executive Committee may meet at any time to discuss the prospective agenda for the Annual meeting or regular or special meetings of the Board or to discuss and subsequently make recommendations on any matter to the entire Board, Notice of formal action taken by the Executive Committee shall be provided to all Board members at the next meeting of the Board.

B. Other Committees. The Corporation shall have such other committees as may from time to time be designated by a majority vote of the entire Board of Directors. These committees may consist of persons who are not also members of the Board and shall act in an advisory capacity to the Board.

ARTICLE XII. INDEMNIFICATION

The Corporation shall indemnify any director, officer, or former director or officer of the Corporation against all expenses actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the defense of any action, suit, or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which he or she is made a party by reason of being or having been a director or officer, except in relation to matters as to which he is adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty. Such indemnification shall not be exclusive of any other indemnification provided for in the Articles of Incorporation or any Bylaw, by resolution or otherwise. The Corporation shall be authorized to purchase insurance or other similar device for the purpose of such indemnification.

ARTICLE XIII. FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Section 1. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be such year as shall be adopted by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Books and Accounts. The Corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of accounts and shall keep minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors and any committee having any of the authority of the Board. All such books and records shall be kept at the principal office of the Corporation unless the Board of Directors, by resolution, determines otherwise, subject to any requirements of law. All books and records of the Corporation may be inspected by any director or his agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

Section 3. Auditing and Reports. An annual report of the affairs of the Corporation for the previous fiscal year shall be submitted to the Board of Directors at each annual meeting, and filed with the secretary of the Corporation. The books and records of the Corporation shall be reviewed by an independent certified public accountant at the expense of the Corporation at such times as may be designated by the vote of a majority of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may also designate a committee of its members to audit the books and records of the Corporation at such times as it shall determine by a majority vote of its members.

Section 4. Checks and Endorsement. All checks and drafts upon the funds or credit of the Corporation in any of its depositories shall be signed by such officer(s) or agent(s) as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. All checks, notes, bills receivable, trade acceptances, drafts, and other evidences of indebtedness payable to the Corporation shall, for the purpose of deposit, discount or collection, be endorsed by such officer(s) or agent(s) of the Corporation or in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may provide for the use of facsimile signatures under specified conditions for any of the foregoing purposes.

Section 5. Execution of Instruments. The Executive Director shall have power to execute on behalf and in the name of the Corporation any deed, contract, bond, debenture, note or other obligations or evidences of indebtedness, or proxy, or other instrument requiring the signature of an officer of the Corporation, except where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Board of Directors to some other officer or agent of the Corporation. Unless so authorized, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation in any way, to pledge its credit or to render it liable pecuniarily for any purpose or amount.

-Section 6. Fidelity Bonds. The Board of Directors may require that officers and employees of the Corporation having custody or control of corporate funds furnish adequate fidelity bonds. The premium on such bonds may be paid by the Corporation.

Section 7. Prohibition Against Loans. The Corporation shall not make loans to any officer or director of the Corporation.

Section 8. Gifts. The Board of Directors may accept on behalf of the Corporation any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purpose or of any special Purpose of the Corporation.

ARTICLE XIV. IRC 501(c)(3) TAX EXEMPTION PROVISIONS

Section 1. Limitations on Activities. No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation [except as otherwise provided by Section 501 (h) of the Internal Revenue Code], and this Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Bylaws, this Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 2. Prohibition Against Private Inurement. No part of the net earnings of this Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, directors or trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes of this corporation.

ARTICLE XV. DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Procedure. The Corporation shall be dissolved according to the procedures outlined in the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 2. Distribution of Assets. After the liabilities of the Corporation have been discharged or provided for, the Corporation's remaining assets shall be disposed of to facilitate one or more of the exempt purposes of the Corporation. Assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or a state or local government, for public purposes. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the Corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations which are organized and operated for such purposes.

ARTICLE XVI. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Section L. Amendment. Except as may otherwise be specified under provisions of law, these Bylaws, or any of them, may be altered, amended, or repealed and new Bylaws adopted by the vote of at least two-thirds of the entire Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XVII. CONSTRUCTION AND TERMS

If there is any conflict between the provisions of these Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation, the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation shall govern. Should any of the provisions or portions of these Bylaws be held unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remaining provisions and portions of these Bylaws shall be unaffected by such holding. All references in these Bylaws to the Articles of Incorporation shall be to the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation filed with the Secretary of this State and used to establish the legal existence of this Corporation. All references in these Bylaws to a section or sections of the Internal Revenue Code shall -be to such sections of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended from time to time, or to corresponding provisions of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

The headings throughout these Bylaws are for convenience and reference only and shall in no way be deemed to define, limit or add to the meaning of any provision hereof.

**BYLAWS OF
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CASA, INC.**

ARTICLE I. NAME, TERRITORY AND OFFICE

The name of this organization shall be Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc.

The territory of this organization shall be Anne Arundel County, State of Maryland.

The principal office of the corporation shall be located in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

The corporation shall have and continuously maintain in Anne Arundel County a registered office, and a registered agent whose office is identical with such registered office. The address of the registered office may be changed from time to time by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSES

To advocate for and support abused and neglected children—who are the subjects of Court proceedings through programs established by the Board of Directors. It shall further be the Purpose of this organization to educate the community regarding its responsibility for children involved in the court process.

ARTICLE III. POLICIES

- Section 1. This organization shall not be under the direction or control of any governmental organization or agency unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors.
- Section 2. This organization may cooperate or contact for direct services with other agencies with the approval of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1. Classes of Members. The corporation shall have one (1) class of members.
- Section 2. Members. The members of the corporation shall consist of the Directors of the corporation.
- Section 3. Voting Rights. Each member shall be entitled to one (1) vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members.

Section 4. Proxies. Votes may be cast in person or by proxy. Proxies shall be in writing and must be filed with the Secretary before the appointed time of the meeting.

ARTICLE V. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1. *Officers and the Board of Directors of this organization shall be elected at an Annual Meeting by the membership at large to be held in May of each year at such time and place as directed by the Directors.*

Section 2. A Nominating Committee of three (3) members of Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. shall be appointed by the President at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting.

Section 3. Nominees for the office of the President of the organization shall be chosen from the Board of Directors.

Section 4. A vacancy in any office shall be filled by the Board upon recommendation of the nominating committee.

Section 5. The officers of the organization shall be President, President-elect, Secretary and Treasurer. These officers shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year and shall not exceed two (2) consecutive years in the same office.

ARTICLE VI. DUTIES OF OFFICE

Section 1. The officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws and shall assume such additional duties as may be prescribed by the board of directors.

Section 2. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Membership and the board of directors, and shall be ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 3. In the absence of the President, the President-elect shall discharge the duties of the office of the President. The President-elect shall be assigned specific duties as directed by the chairman.

Section 4. The secretary shall keep a correct record (minutes) at all meetings of the Board of Directors. Committees shall designate one of their members to take minutes of their (committee) meetings and report them to the Board of Directors.

Section 5. The treasurer shall be custodian of the funds, [in accordance with the organization's approved fiscal management procedures,] and shall disburse funds with the approval of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. General Powers. The affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors.

Section 2. Number, Tenure and Qualifications. After the first election, the number of directors shall not be less than five (5) nor more than twenty (20). All Directors shall serve a term of three (3) years provided, however, that any Director may be re-elected in accordance herewith.

Section 3. Quorum. One quarter of the current members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board.

Section 4. Notice. Written notice of regularly scheduled monthly board meetings shall be given three (3) days in advance of meeting date. Notice shall include an agenda of matters to be considered.

Section 5. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the President or any three (3) directors. Notice shall be given all Directors in accordance with above provisions.

Section 6. Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors shall be filled by the Board.

Section 7. Compensation. Directors as such shall not receive any financial compensation for their services.

Section 8. A member of the Board of Directors shall be removed upon 3 unexcused absences from meetings of the Board of Directors in one calendar year. An absence may be excused with notice prior to a board meeting.

Section 9. Ex-officio members. Any director who has served at least five (5) years on the Board of Directors may be eligible to become an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. The President of the Anne Arundel County Bar Association shall be an ex-officio member during the President's one year term of office. Ex-officio members shall be notified of all activities of the Board of Directors and may attend Board meetings and other functions. Ex-officio members shall not be entitled to a vote.

ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES

- Section 1. Permanent Committees. Permanent Committees of the Board of Directors are as follows:
- a. Executive Committee which shall consist of the officers, and the immediate past president, and the Ways & Means Committee Chair.
 - b. Public Relations Committee
 - c. Ways & Means Committee
- Section 2. Standing Committees. Standing Committees of the Board shall be:
- a. Bylaws
 - b. Nominating
- The committee chairmen and members of each standing committee shall be appointed by the President of the Board of Directors. The President-elect shall serve as the chairman of the Bylaws committee.
- Section 3. Advisory Council. The organization may establish an Advisory Council.
- Section 4. Other Committees. Other committees shall be established as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the first day of July and end on the last day of June in each year.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended and new bylaws may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting. All proposed amendments must be presented in writing by the Bylaws Committee to the Board of Directors three (3) days in advance of the meeting date. These bylaws shall be reviewed each year by the Bylaws Committee, and a report of the committee shall be included at each annual meeting.

BYLAWS OF CAPITAL AREA CASA ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I. NAME

1.01. Name. The name of the corporation shall be Capital Area CASA Association. The corporation shall be referred to as CASA in these bylaws.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

2.01. Purpose. The corporation is organized exclusively for the charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The primary purpose of the corporation is to provide court-appointed volunteer advocates for abused children who are involved in the court system.

ARTICLE III. PRINCIPAL OFFICE

3.01. Principal Office. The principal office of the corporation shall be located in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana.

ARTICLE IV. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

4.01. General Powers. The affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors.

4.02. Number. The number of Directors shall be no more than twenty-five.

4.03. Tenure and Qualification. The Board of Directors shall be constituted as follows:

The Directors shall be elected by majority vote at the regular annual meeting of the Board of Directors to serve staggered three-year terms, with an appropriate number of Directors being elected each year. A Director may serve only two consecutive terms. Any vacancy occurring in these positions shall be filled for the remainder of the term by the Board of Directors. Two Directors shall be chosen from among currently active CASA volunteer advocates, who shall serve a one-year term. A volunteer advocate member of the Board may be elected to serve on the Board of Directors for no more than two consecutive three-year terms following their term as a volunteer advocate Board member.

4.04 Vacancies. Any Director who fails to attend three (3) consecutive Board meetings shall be considered for all purposes as having resigned his or her position and the vacancy thus created shall be filled as provided in Article 4.03.

4.05. Regular Meetings. A regular annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held in the month of September of each year on a date and at a place designated by the Chairperson in the notice of the meeting. The Board of Directors may provide, by resolution, the time, date, and place of other regular meetings without other notice than such resolution.

4.06. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the Chairperson or by the written request of one-third (1/3) of the members of the Board of Directors. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Board shall fix the time and place of any special meeting of the Board called by them in the notice of the meeting.

4.07. Notice. Notice of any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given at least ten (10) days previously thereto by written notice delivered, either personally or by mail to each Director at his address as shown by the records of the corporation. If mailed, the notice shall be deemed delivered when deposited with postage prepaid in the United States Mail so Addressed. Any Director may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of a Director at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except when a Director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. The business to be transacted at the meeting need not be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting unless specifically required by law or by these bylaws.

4.08. Quorum. A majority of the Board of Directors then sitting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board.

4.09. Manner of Acting. The act of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, unless the act of a greater number is required by law or by these bylaws. A Director may only vote in person; no proxy shall be valid.

4.10. Compensation. Directors, as such, shall not receive any stated salaries for their services.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

5.01. Election of Officers. Officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors from among their members at the annual meeting. The Board of Directors shall elect officers to the following positions:

- (a) Chairperson
- (b) Vice Chairperson
- (c) Treasurer
- (d) Secretary

5.02. Terms of Officers. Officers may serve two terms of one (1) year and may succeed themselves. In the event of a vacancy in an officer position, the Board shall elect from among its members, a person to serve for the remainder of the term.

5.03. Chairperson. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors, and, in general, the Chairperson shall perform all duties incident of the office of Chairperson and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time.

5.04. Vice Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, or in the event of the Chairperson's inability or refusal to act, the Vice Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson, and when so acting shall have all the powers of and be subject of all the restrictions on the Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the Vice Chairperson by the Chairperson or by the Board of Directors.

5.05. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for the oversight of all funds and securities of the corporation; and, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of the Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the Treasurer by the Chairperson or by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall be responsible for fiscal operations in the absence of the CEO/Executive Director.

5.06. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings of the Board of Directors; see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws, or as required by law; be custodian of the corporate records; and, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to the Secretary by the Chairperson or by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

6.01. CEO/Executive Director. The Board of Directors shall be authorized to employ and discharge an Executive Director upon such terms and conditions as the Board may determine. The Executive Director shall be the Chief Executive Officer of CASA and shall be responsible to the Board of Directors for the management of CASA. The CEO/Executive Director may be assisted by such additional staff as provided for by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES

7.01. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. The Chairperson shall serve as Chairperson of the Executive Committee. Between meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee shall have all the power and authority of the Board of Directors except that it shall not have the authority (a) to select members of any standing committee, (b) to fill any vacancy in any office, (c) to approve the annual budget, or (d) to employ or discharge the CEO/Executive Director. The Executive Committee shall report its actions to the Board of Directors at the next meeting of the Board.

7.02. Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall be composed of the Treasurer and two (2) additional members of the Board of Directors appointed annually by the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall serve as Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall prepare the annual budget for presentation to the Board of Directors and file an audit report annually with the Board of Directors. The Finance Committee shall oversee the risk management function of the organization.

7.03. Nominating Committee. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be the immediate past Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The Chairperson shall appoint up to four (4) persons to the committee. The majority of the Nominating Committee shall be from the current Board. The Chairperson shall report those appointments at the January Board meeting.

The Nominating Committee shall make a report to the Board at the July Board meeting. The final report of the Committee shall be mailed to all Board Members not less than twenty (20) days prior to the annual meeting in September.

7.04. Vacancies. Vacancies in the membership of any committee may be filled by appointments made in the same manner as provided in the case of the original appointments.

7.05. Quorum. Unless otherwise provided in the resolution of the Board of Directors designating a committee, a majority of the whole committee shall constitute a quorum and the act of a majority of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the committee.

ARTICLE VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

8.01. Books and Records. The corporation shall maintain books and records of account with respect to all financial transactions (including income and expenditures) of the corporation in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Based on these records, the Board of Directors shall annually review the audit for the preceding fiscal year. All records, books and annual reports of financial activity of the corporation shall be kept at the registered or principal office of the corporation in the State of Louisiana for at least three (3) years after the closing of each fiscal year and shall be available to the public for inspection and copying during normal business hours. The corporation may charge for the reasonable expense of preparing a copy of a record or report and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its Board of Directors and committees having any of the authority of the Board of Directors.

8.02. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the corporation shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS

9.01. Amendments. The Board of Directors shall have the power to alter, amend, or repeal these bylaws at any meeting of the Board of Directors by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present, provided that written notice of the proposed change is given at least ten (10) days prior to such meeting.

Adopted by the Board of Directors: November 6, 1992

Amended by the Board of Directors: May 7, 1999

Steps in Board Member Selection

Step 1: “What characteristics, attitudes, traits, or skills does the organization need to function effectively?”

To answer this question, look at the plan of activities for the upcoming year and ask yourself what resources (informational, financial, managerial, and relational) will be needed to successfully implement the plan. Determine in what areas the board could best assist with implementation. Think also in terms of what you want your board to look like: in what ways should it represent the community in which you operate? Utilize the *Board Selection Characteristics* sheet for additional ideas. Think of terms of what you would like to see if you had a perfect board of directors.

Step 2: “What does the organization currently have? What is missing?”

Utilize the *Board Assessment Grid*. Of the desired characteristics, determine which should be present in all board members (minimum commitment of time, willingness to make personal donation), which should be present in some particular positions (board chair: public speaking, leadership skills; fundraising chair: ability to ask for money), and which might be present in any board member (as long as someone has them). Write these items in the appropriate vertical blanks on the upper grid.

List current board members down the left side of the grid. Evaluate each board member against the desired characteristics, giving credit if, and only if, the board member both has the desired trait and makes a commitment to use it for the organization. You can do the evaluation either with simple checkmarks (a mark for a ‘yes’) or by giving a numerical score (1 - 5) evaluating the extent of the contribution.

You can get the best results in this evaluation by first asking board members to assess themselves. Remind them that anything they list may be used as a means of assigning them work. After this self-assessment is done, have the board chair and executive director review it.

At the conclusion of this process, the vertical columns which are marked (or have high numerical scores) will represent your areas of strength. The vertical columns which do not have check marks (or have low numerical scores) will represent the areas of need for recruitment. Do not be surprised the first time you utilize this technique to discover that you are high over-represented in some categories and totally deficient in many others. This is a natural result of the cloning recruitment process which many groups utilize.

Step 3: “Fill in the blanks. Remove the dead wood.”

Give the completed grid to the nominating committee with instructions to look for candidates who can supply the missing characteristics. Utilize the principles of targeted recruitment to identify people with the required characteristics.

If openings must be created on the board for these new members, look at the horizontal columns to identify current board members who are contributing least to the organization. These might be people who do not have the skills the organization needs at this time, or they might be people whose skills are over-represented on the board at the current time.

Once possible candidates are identified, utilize the grid to determine which can contribute the most to the board, and then ask these persons first.

You may also want to assess the resources that the staff contribute. Analyze their strengths and eliminate some desired characteristics from the board list.

Step 4: “Recruit”

The grid is actually the beginning of a job description for the new board. If you are attempting to fill out the strengths of the board by seeking someone with skills in public relations, then in the recruiting interview with this person you can discuss the needs and plans of the agency in this area, since it is clear that the new person will be involved in implementing these plans. Recruit on the basis of the actual work that the person will be doing on the board, not just on ‘becoming a member’. If you let them know in advance what you want and expect them to do, they are more likely to actually attempt to do it later.

BOARD SELECTION CHARACTERISTICS

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

- Finance / Accounting
- Law
- Personnel
- Hiring Executive Director
- Strategic planning / Visioning
- Community Needs Assessment
- Membership Services
- Public Relations
- Marketing
- Computerization
- Managing Geographically Separate Offices
- Leadership Skills
- Leadership Potential
- Ability to Donate a Substantial Amount of Time
- Public Speaking Skills
- Community Savvy / Contacts

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

- Seniors
- Youth
- African-Americans
- Asian-Americans
- Hispanic Americans
- Religious Community
- Business / Labor
- Parents / Clients
- City / County Government
- Collaborating Organizations
- Education
- Media
- Males
- Females
- Persons with Disabilities
- Community Volunteers
- Downtown Area
- Outlying Geographic Areas
- Funding Community
- Group Members
- Old Guard in Community
- Newcomers
- Military

FUNDRAISING

- Special Events Management
- Clout
- Foundations
- Corporations
- Small Businesses
- Solicitation of Individuals
- Endowment Funds
- Personal Wealth
- Government Contracts
- Donated Goods
- Ability to Ask for Donations
- Ability to Make Personal Contribution
- Self-Generated Revenue
- Planning of FR Effort
- Capital Campaign
- Investments

PROGRAM EXPERTISE

- Volunteer Management
- Youth Involvement
- Business Partnerships
- Technical Assistance
- Starting New Projects
- Education and Training
- Subject Area Knowledge

BOARD AND STAFF . . . WHO DOES WHAT?

GOAL: To improve board-staff relationships by coming to consensus on who has *primary* responsibility for various organizational tasks.

SUGGESTIONS: Read each task and determine who has primary responsibility for doing it; write a 1 in that column. If someone/group has strong secondary responsibility, or the task/decision shouldn't be made without input from them, put a 2 in that column.

FUNCTION / TASK	RESPONSIBILITY		
	1 - PRIMARY 2 - SECONDARY/INPUT AND ASSISTANCE		
	BOARD	EX. Dir./ ADMIN.	STAFF
I. PLANNING 1. Determine basic organizational purpose and goals 2. Determine which community needs should be met and to what extent 3. Determine categories of services to be provided 4. Develop long-range plans for the organization 5. Develop programs to meet identified needs 6. Set specific program objectives 7. Establish funding level needed to run organization 8. Develop program evaluation system			
II. POLICY 1. Provides background information necessary for policy decisions 2. Gives input to policy 3. Makes policy			
III. FUND RAISING 1. Develop fund raising plan 2. Develop funding sources 3. Solicit funds and other resources 4. Evaluate fund raising success			
IV. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 1. Prepare agency budget 2. Monitor how funds are spent on a day to day basis 3. Monitors total funding picture 4. Hire a CPA for annual audit 5. Do bookkeeping			

<p>V. PERSONNEL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop agency personnel policies 2. Recruit, screen, hire, supervise, and terminate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. executive director b. paid staff c. board members d. direct-service volunteers 3. Provide training and development opportunities for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. executive director b. paid staff c. board members d. direct service volunteers 4. Develops evaluation procedures and evaluates the performance of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. executive director b. paid staff c. board members d. direct service volunteers 			
<p>VI. PUBLIC RELATIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a formal public relations plan 2. Implement the public relations plan 3. Serve on the boards of other community agencies 4. Maintain contact with state, regional, and national organizations with similar interests 5. Establish method of assessing management practices which impact “internal” public relations 			
<p>VII. BOARD RECRUITMENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop board nominating procedures 2. Suggest potential members to the nominating committee 3. Develop board orientation and training 			

Policy Making Boards

The following key is provided for *policy making* Boards. It reflects accepted practice and delineates responsibilities of the Board of Directors / Trustees and paid staff.

When the organization has a voting electorate or membership, they ultimately determine the Board's actions. Some of the responsibilities indicated as primary to the executive might be delegated to other staff in a large organization. In an organization without paid staff, the Board members may perform some of the functions indicated for the executive or staff.

Some tasks have not been included in the key, because the responsibility is based on agreements between Board and staff depending on the situation.

We haven't indicated responsibility for advisory councils, because their responsibilities are set directly by the individuals or groups which have commissioned them.

TASKS	DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY	BOARDS	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	STAFF
Planning	Primary Secondary	1, 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7, 8 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7, 8
Policy	Primary Secondary	3	1, 2	1
Fund Raising	Primary Secondary	1	1	
Financial Management	Primary Secondary	3, 4	1, 2 3	5 1
Personnel	Primary Secondary	1, 2a, 2c, 3a, 3c, 4a, 4c	2b, 3b, 4b 1	2d, 3d, 4d
Public Relations	Primary Secondary	4 1	1, 2, 4, 5	1,2
Board Recruitment	Primary Secondary	1, 2, 3	2, 3	

* The numbers correspond to the numbered tasks in worksheet

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

THE MISSION of the Denver CASA Program is to recruit, train and supervise volunteers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to assist the court in protecting the best interests of abused and neglected children and thus improve the system's treatment of this vulnerable population.

Achieving the goal of this program requires the development of good working relationships among the Denver Juvenile Court, the Denver Department of Social Services and the CASA Program. This Memorandum of Understanding identifies and clarifies those relationships.

SECTION I. CASES TO BE REFERRED TO CASA PROGRAM

IT IS AGREED that the following categories of dependency and neglect cases under the jurisdiction of the Denver Juvenile Court are most appropriate for referral to the CASA Program:

- A. Children under age twelve who are at risk of emotional, physical and/or sexual harm.
- B. Children under age twelve who are victims of neglect and/or suffer from failure to thrive.
- C. Children under age twelve who initially will be returned to the home where there is risk of continuing harm.
- D. Children under age twelve who initially will be assigned to out of home placements.

SECTION II. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CASA VOLUNTEER

IT IS AGREED that the role and responsibility of the CASA volunteer are as follows:

- A. **ROLE:** A CASA volunteer is appointed as an Officer of the Court in Denver Juvenile Court to provide the Court with independent and objective information regarding the status of children involved in dependency and neglect cases. Duties of the CASA volunteer complement but do not duplicate the duties of other responsible persons involved in dependency and neglect cases. Primarily, other responsible persons include the Court, the Social Worker, the Guardian Ad Litem, the City Attorney and the Attorneys for respondent parents. Upon appointment, the CASA independently gathers and assesses information, develops recommendations and submits written and verbal reports which will be considered by the Court to aid in its decisions and to protect the best interests of the child.

- B. RESPONSIBILITY:** The mandate of the CASA volunteer is to assist the Court in assuring that the best interests of the child are served in relation to his or her right to a safe and permanent living environment. The CASA volunteer, in consultation with Program Staff, is responsible for reporting any information regarding the continuing safety of the child, but is not responsible for providing direct services to assure the continuing safety of the child. The CASA volunteer reports to and is directly supervised by the CASA Program Coordinator. The CASA Program Coordinator is responsible for the CASA volunteer's performance and is responsible for facilitating effective interactions among the CASA, the Court and the Denver Department of Social Services.

SECTION III. IMPLEMENTATION OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- A. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION:** The Children's Legal Clinic, through the CASA Program Coordinator, will be responsible for conducting initial and on-going inservice training for CASA volunteers and will certify those volunteers completing the training program as being ready to begin service. The CASA Program Coordinator will be responsible for all volunteer management duties, i.e., recruitment, screening, training, assignment and supervision of CASA volunteers.
- B. APPOINTMENT:** When CASA volunteers have been trained and certified as ready for service, the Court will conduct swearing in ceremonies, appointing the CASA volunteers as Officers of the Court. This appointment will remain in effect until such time as the CASA volunteer's service is terminated.
- C. ASSIGNMENT:** The Court will identify cases for which the assignment of a CASA volunteer is requested. Cases will be identified for referral at the earliest possible stage, at the conclusion of the initial hearing when temporary custody of a child is determined, or at such other time as the Court deems appropriate. The CASA Program and the Denver Department of Social Services will be notified of cases identified for referral.

Contingent upon availability of a volunteer appropriate for the case, the CASA Program will assign a CASA volunteer and will notify the Court and the Denver Department of Social Services of the assignment. The court will issue an order confirming the assignment of the CASA volunteer. This order will include a reaffirmation of the confidentiality oath and will also include a specific order allowing the CASA volunteer full access to any and all information and material relevant to the child's case.

The time at which the CASA volunteer begins to actively perform service on the case will be determined on a case by case basis, by the CASA Program in consultation with the Court. Upon each new assignment, the CASA volunteer will reaffirm his or her commitment to be bound by confidentiality standards and ethics throughout the assignment. The CASA volunteer will continue in active service on the case until the CASA Program management, in consultation with the Court, determines that the assignment should be ended.

- D. INFORMATION GATHERING:** Once the CASA volunteer has been assigned, the CASA Program Coordinator will make arrangements for the CASA Program Coordinator and the CASA volunteer to review the Legal Jacket of the case.

The Program Coordinator will correspond with the Social Worker assigned to the case, introducing the CASA volunteer, providing information about the role and function of the CASA volunteer and suggesting alternative dates and times when the Social Worker could schedule an initial case consultation

The Social Worker will schedule the initial case consultation to review the background of the case, to identify informational sources already contacted and to identify key issues.

After the initial case consultation, the Program Coordinator and the CASA volunteer will develop a Work Plan for gathering information for the Court. This Work Plan may include:

- I. **Interviews:** Relevant and appropriate persons include school personnel, community social workers, medical and psychological care providers, parents, immediate family members, other relatives, foster parents and others, depending on the facts of the case. The CASA volunteer should make arrangements to visit the child, and can be assisted in making these arrangements by the CASA Program Coordinator.
 - II. **DDSS Staffing:** The CASA volunteer should be notified and may participate in regular staffings convened for informational purposes and conducted by the Social Worker assigned to the case. The CASA volunteer should be notified and may also participate in any special staffing convened by the Social Worker when the child's treatment plan is affected.
 - III. **Access to Information:** The CASA volunteer will have access to information relevant to the child's case through the Court Order of appointment. The CASA volunteer and Program Coordinator will have access to the Social Worker's case file at the time of the initial case consultation. If further review is requested at a later time, the CASA Program Coordinator will make arrangements with the Department to review the file at a mutually convenient time. Any documents or reports distributed to the parties in the case shall be distributed to the CASA volunteer at the same time.
 - IV. **Contact with Supervisor:** The Work Plan will specify what contact is expected between the volunteer and his or her supervisor, the Program Coordinator. Generally, this contact will be at least one time per week in the early stages of a case. Volunteers never before assigned to a CASA case will be expected to maintain weekly contact until the Work Plan is revised to provide otherwise.
- E. **REPORTING:** The CASA volunteer will provide the Court with both written and oral reports, as required.
- I. **Written Reports:** The CASA volunteer will prepare written reports under the supervision of the Program Coordinator in a format and manner prescribed by the Court.

Written reports are to be submitted to the Court in accordance with Court policy prior to any hearing, including dispositional hearings, review hearings, permanency planning hearings or any other hearing subsequent to CASA appointment for which the Court requests a written report. Copies of the written report are to be sent to the Social Worker, the Guardian Ad Litem, the City Attorney and the Attorney(s) for respondent parents and all parties of record. In addition to reports prepared for court hearings, written reports may be submitted whenever it is determined by the CASA volunteer and the CASA Program Coordinator that information discovered by the volunteer significantly impacts the welfare and safety of the child, and/or the continued implementation of the treatment plan.

II. Verbal Reports: The CASA volunteer will be requested to provide verbal reports during Court proceedings, at any hearing subsequent to appointment. The volunteer may be subpoenaed to testify by any of the parties and may be cross examined during such testimony. Written reports submitted by the volunteer are also subject to cross examination.

SECTION IV. WORKING RELATONSHIPS

- A.** The CASA Program Coordinator will supervise the CASA volunteer and facilitate the interaction of the CASA volunteer with the Department of Social Services and the Court.
- B.** The CASA volunteer will maintain an activity log with the CASA Program Coordinator and will seek guidance and assistance from the Program Coordinator in performance of CASA duties.
- C.** The Court and the Department of Social Services will remain accessible to the CASA Program Coordinator on an as-needed basis to facilitate the smooth and effective operations of the CASA Program.
- D.** The CASA Program Coordinator may accompany the CASA volunteer during Court proceedings and Social Services staffings, and will substitute for the volunteer if the volunteer is unable to attend these activities.
- E.** The CASA Program, the Department of Social Services and the Court will maintain open, constructive and effective communication regarding the CASA volunteer's performance.
- F.** The CASA Program, the Department of Social Services and the Court will maintain open lines of communication with one another and within their own organizations to support the effective management and operations of the CASA Program, and, to the fullest extent possible, will coordinate and cooperate in all matters pertaining to the implementation and operation of the Program.

SECTION V. ACCEPTANCE

This Memorandum of Understanding has been reviewed and accepted by the management and governing bodies of the organizations indicated below.

1. DENVER JUVENILE COURT:

Authorized Representative and Title	Date
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2. DENVER DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Authorized Representative and Title	Date
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3. Denver CASA Program

Authorized Representative and Title	Date
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Reprinted from the Denver CASA Program

Chapter IV GRAPHICS

IV. STANDARD

THE CASA PROGRAM ADHERES TO THE GRAPHIC STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL CASA ASSOCIATION.

IV.A. Requirement:

THE CASA PROGRAM ADHERES TO NCASAA REQUIREMENTS REGARDING USE AND GRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF THE NAME “CASA,” ITS OFFICIAL LOGO, THE SLOGANS “SPEAK UP FOR A CHILD.”, AND “GIVE HOPE TO A CHILD” AND PROMOTIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS. REQUIREMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Logo

- Only National CASA member programs may use the CASA logos.
- The logos should not be redrawn or modified in any way.
- The CASA logos may be used only in connection with programs, promotional materials, and projects directly related to the goals and purposes of the National CASA Association.
- The CASA logo is always used with the tag line, "A powerful voice in a child's life." The position line is placed below the logo in either of the exact positions shown. The font is Franklin Gothic Demi – all caps.
- The CASA logo must always appear with the trademark symbol - TM.
- The official CASA logo should be printed in either Pantone Reflex blue or black with a Pantone 185 red heart. The Pantone numbers specified are from a system of color formulation used by printers internationally.
- The CASA logo and tagline may be printed in white reverse when the logo and tagline are positioned against a dark background.
- The space for the heart created by the S and the A in the CASA logo should never be printed solid in an ink other than red.
- The CASA logo is not used on commercially developed or NCASAA-member products for sale to the public except as authorized by NCASAA;

Slogan

- The “Speak up for a child.” and “Give hope to a child.” slogans are used only by program members of NCASAA;
- The “Speak up for a child.” slogan is a registered trademark of NCASAA. This slogan always appears in a three-tiered stack with the registered trademark symbol - ®.
- The “Give hope to a child.” Slogan is in the registration process, appears in a two-tiered stack and must be followed by a TM symbol.
- Both slogans are used only in connection with promotional materials and projects that are directly related to the goals and purposes of NCASAA;

START-UP BUDGETS

Enotah, CASA, Inc.
Dahlonega, GA

July 1, 2000 – June 30, 2001

REVENUE:

Georgia CASA, Inc.	
Georgia Community Foundation	15,000
The Argo Foundation	5,000
Individual contributions	5,000
Golf Tournament	6,000
	15,000

TOTAL REVENUE:

\$46,000

EXPENSES:

Director's Salary	
Taxes	24,960
Rent	1,910
Affiliation & Membership Fees	2,800
Equipment	170
Postage	1,000
Telephone & Internet	1,500
Office Supplies	1,440
Accounting Fees	1,500
Subscriptions (legal organ of each county)	1,500
	145
Liability Insurance	
Volunteer Recognition	1,300
Volunteer Training & Supplies	1,000
Travel	1,000
Copying & Printing	4,000
	1,775

TOTAL EXPENSES:

\$46,000

CASA OF THE 7TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Montrose, CO

PROPOSED BUDGET July 1, 2000 – June 30 2001

INCOME

Colorado CASA (start up funds)	500
Foundations	10,000
VALE Funds	4,000
Corporations	4,000
Municipalities	1,000
Individual Donors	1,000
YCPI	10,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$30,500

EXPENSES

Executive Director @ .50 FTE (6 mo)	8,750
Administrative Assistant @ .50 (6 mo)	5000
Payroll Taxes @ 12%	1650
Office Space (donated)	-0-
Office Furnishings	500
Postage	1,000
Printing/Copying	2,000
Telephone	1,500
Computer	2,500
Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3)	50
Insurance	1,700
Travel Allowance	2,300
Volunteer/Staff Training expense	1,500
Staff and Volunteer mileage @ 3,000 x .31	930
Corporate filing / Articles of Incorporation	50
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$29,430

CASA of Collin County
Plano, TX

Proposed Budget

October '91 thru September '92

INCOME:

Grants (applications)	\$40,000
Contributions	5,000
Contributions in Kind	15,000

\$60,000

TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME

EXPENSES:

A. Administrative	
Salaries (2 part-time)	28,000
Accounting Services	1,500
Professional Association Dues	600
Training & Education (Conference, Travel)	3,000
Travel (non-Training & Education)	200
Office Leasing	6,000
Insurance (Liability & Property)	1,500
Utilities	1,200
Telephone	800
Furniture & Office Equipment	1,000
Office Supplies	2,400
Postage	1,000
Fundraising / Public Relations	400
Misc.	400

48,000

B. Volunteers	
Recruitment	2,000
Training (Initial & on-going)	1,000
Meetings / Conferences	1,000
Recognition	500
Misc.	400

4,900

C. Contingencies	2,000
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2,000

TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES **\$54,900**

CAPITAL AREA CASA ASSOCIATION BUDGET
Baton Rouge, LA

January 1, 1992 – December 31, 1992

	<u>1/1/92 – 12/31/92</u>
A – INCOME:	
Manship Foundation Grant	5,000.00
IOLTA Grant	25,000.00
National CASA Association Grant (proposed)	5,000.00
Community Contributions (estimated)	1,000.00
TOTALS:	\$36,000.00
 B – EXPENDITURES:	
I. PERSONNEL:	
Program Director (effective 1/1/92)	
30 hrs / week @ \$12 / hr	18,720.00
FICA @ 7.65%	1,432.00
Part-time Administrative Assistant (effective 1/1/92)	
15 hrs / week @ \$6 / hr	4,680.00
FICA @ 7.65%	358.00
Liability Insurance (staff and volunteers)	500.00
1/1/92 – 12/31/92	
 II. OFFICE EQUIPMENT:	
Brochures @ \$5 for 100	1,000.00
CASA – A Guide to Program Development	25.00
Library and Subscriptions	250.00
VCR Tapes	150.00
Postage	300.00
Business Cards – Director	60.00
Letterhead / envelopes	300.00
Miscellaneous Office Supplies	200.00
CASA Recruitment Tape	75.00
Xeroxing (court records)	75.00
File cabinet, desk, chair	800.00
Computer, Printer and Programs	2500.00
 III. FACILITY COSTS:	
Telephone	600.00

■ CONTINUED –

CAPITAL AREA CASA ASSOCIATION BUDGET

Page 2

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS:

Professional Fees:

CASA	90.00
NCJFCJ	150.00
VBR	25.00
Children's Coalition	150.00
CASA Convention	700.00
Audit Fees	500.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	200.00

V. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT:

Training Manuals – 50 @ \$20	1,000.00
3 ring notebooks from CASA – 50 @ \$6	300.00
Training Certificates – 50 @ \$6	300.00
Refreshments for Training	250.00
Volunteer Recognition – 50 @ \$5 pins	<u>250.00</u>

TOTALS: \$35,940.00

VI. IN-KIND DONATIONS:

Office space & utilities1/1/92 – 12/31/92

VOA Meeting room:

Board & Planning Committee Meetings.....1/1/92 – 12/31/92

VOA Meeting room (includes access to TV & VCR):

Volunteer Training.....1/1/92 – 12/31/92

Consultation re: Legal & Grant writing.....1/1/92 – 12/31/92
(From Board Member Agencies/Individuals/Committee Members)

Initial clerical support, access to computer & telephone,
Xerox machine, fax machine1/1/92 – 12/31/92

Filing Fee: Articles of Incorporation – VOA

Corporations Records Book – Nina Broyles

CASA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY:

The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for the overall management of the agency and all aspects of the agency's operations. This primarily involves the supervision and coordination of a volunteer service program which provides CASA services to abused and neglected children. Key responsibilities include, but are not restricted to: 1) Resource development and maintenance, 2) Agency and program planning, 3) Community and public relations, 4) Personnel management, 5) Agency liaison to the Board of Directors, and 6) Fiscal management.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:

1. Research and prepare grant proposals and other funding applications.
2. Develop and maintain a donor base for both monetary and non-monetary resources.
3. Develop and maintain a donor tracking system.
4. Work with Board in any fund-raising events or activities.

AGENCY AND PROGRAM PLANNING:

SHORT-TERM

1. Meet weekly with program staff: a) to determine and discuss any problems or plans involving volunteers, (recruitment, training, screening, and supervision). Court staff, agency personnel, agency operations: b) be kept informed of all relevant activities of the agency.
2. Assure all necessary forms are filed with the appropriate agency for all necessary permits, memberships, licenses, etc.
3. Prepare quarterly program reports.
4. Keep Juvenile Court administration and other Child Welfare agencies apprised of agency directives and activities.
5. Oversee agency and program compliance with established policies and procedures.

LONG-TERM

1. Develop, implement, and maintain tracking systems and/or for both volunteer and caseload files.
2. Develop and initiate time-oriented strategic plans to establish agency goals (e.g., 1-year, 5-year, 10-year plans).
3. Review program/agency progress and compare to goals and objectives.
4. Assure agency compliance with National and State CASA standards.
5. Attend and work with National and State CASA programs through conferences and meetings.

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS:

1. Coordinate public relations with the purpose of recruiting volunteers and increasing public awareness of the CASA program and its goals and activities.
2. Develop and maintain relationships with all appropriate groups, agencies, and organizations, and any and all other child advocacy agencies and community service organizations including (but not limited to):
 - 1) Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
 - 2) Tennessee Department of Human Services
 - 3) Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration
3. Oversee release of press packets and news releases, and follow-up of any media coverage.
4. Approve all written public relations material printed by the agency.
5. Be available for public speaking engagements.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT:

1. Hire and supervise administrative and management staff.
2. Write and revise, as necessary, the job descriptions for all staff (except executive director) within the agency.
3. Prepare yearly performance evaluations (oral and written) for all administrative and management staff.
4. Staff development.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS LIAISON:

1. Attend all Board meetings.
2. Oversee implementation of all Board directives, policies, and procedures.
3. Serve as liaison between Board and agency staff.
4. Keep Board apprised of agency operations, changes, and problems.
5. Monitor Board/Committee activities and attend Committee meetings.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT:

1. Manage day-to-day fiscal operations.
2. Submit monthly and quarterly financial reports to grantors (as required).
3. Review and approve all monthly and quarterly reports and documentation to substantiate those reports.
4. Submit bills and expenditures to the treasurer for reimbursement and accounting.

5. Assist in developing agency annual budget.

QUALIFICATIONS:

MBA or Bachelor's degree in Business or Public Administration with minimum of 3 years related experience in administration of volunteer, non-profit, or public service agency or Master's or Bachelor's degree in social work, psychology or related area with requisite experience in administrating an organization or division involved in human social services. Candidates will demonstrate strong skills in fiscal management, resource development and maintenance, agency and program planning, and public relations. Previous experience working with volunteers and knowledge and understanding of child abuse and neglect, families in crisis, and other social services skills are given priority.

OFFICE MANAGER
Job Description

Cleveland County CASA, Inc.
Norman, Oklahoma

QUALIFICATIONS

1. Minimum of two years college.
2. Minimum of three years secretarial work experience.
3. Typing ability (word processor/computer skills).
4. Ability to interact positively with the public, volunteers, board members, court and state personnel.
5. Ability to maintain statistical program data, files and record systems, financial records

SUPERVISION

The Office Manager shall be directly responsible to the Executive Director of Cleveland County CASA, Inc.

DUTIES

General Duties

1. Responsible for all general clerical duties.
2. Answer and screen all phone calls.
3. Purchase office supplies as directed and within budget guidelines.
4. Participate in bimonthly staff meetings.
5. Supervise volunteers who assist in the office
6. Maintain current mailing lists on active CASA volunteers, Board members, donors, and other pertinent lists.
7. Other duties as assigned by the Executive Director.

Volunteer Duties

1. Disseminate program information to any person making an inquiry.
2. Receive applications, mail reference forms, initiate background checks and set up volunteer files. Monitor screening process.
3. Assist with volunteer training and in-services; mails notices of meetings to all volunteers.
4. Responsible for procuring necessary paperwork to assign, rescind or close cases.
5. Schedules court observation for new CASAs and notifies appropriate court personnel.
6. Responsible for tracking court dates and notifying volunteer and staff.
7. Assists volunteers with necessary correspondence and Court Reports; distributes Court Reports to appropriate court personnel and professionals.
8. Consults with volunteers in absence of the Volunteer Coordinator and as appropriate.
9. Maintains volunteer files; records training and in-service attendance; documents volunteer hours.
10. Maintains CASA case files.

Administrative Duties

1. Maintains program statistics and prepares monthly reports.
2. Prepares monthly financial reports for the Board meeting and maintains financial records for the organization.
3. Works with the Executive Director and Treasurer in processing and paying the monthly bills.
4. Responsible for recording and preparing the minutes for the Executive Committee and for the Board meetings. Mails agenda and meeting notices to the Executive Committee and the Board.
5. Maintains donor records for the organization. Acknowledges all donations.

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION: Full time, exempt.

Volunteer Coordinator's Job Description

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Volunteer Manager provides professional staff support to CASA volunteers ensuring that children involved with the CASA program receive sound advocacy and early permanency planning. The Volunteer Manager is responsible for volunteer supervision and coordination of cases.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Volunteer Manager should have the following skills and experience:

- Bachelor's degree in social service-related field or equivalent combination of education and experience.
- The ability to communicate with, supervise and empower volunteers to be effective in their roles. Experience with volunteers given preference.
- The ability to work cooperatively with different types of personalities.
- Knowledge and understanding of issues and dynamics within families in crisis relating to child abuse and neglect given preference.
- Commitment to CASA's goals and mission.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Volunteer Manager is hired by the Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Executive Director of the program. The Volunteer Manager reports directly to the Executive Director who is responsible for his/her performance evaluations.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Complete CASA training.
- Assist in the recruiting, screening, interviewing and training of new volunteers.
- Review new cases and assign appropriate volunteers in consultation with the Executive Director.
- Prepare and distribute assignment documentation.
- Help develop initial case plans and on-going strategies for advocacy.
- Review and distribute volunteer court reports.
- Maintain case files in office.
- Attend court hearings when possible and track court dates.
- Provide assistance and consultation for volunteers as needed and when requested.
- Assist volunteers and office in completion of volunteer/case stat sheets.

- Participate in volunteer evaluations as assigned by the Executive Director.
- Oversee assigned mentors and assist with identified needs.
- Attend staff meetings and assist in the evaluation of the program.
- Attend in--service trainings and assist with coordination if requested.
- Assist in volunteer appreciation events.
- Provide office coverage as assigned by the Executive Director.
- Complete work time sheets monthly.
- Attend conferences/seminars/meetings as requested by the Executive Director.
- Participate in performance evaluations of this position as directed by the Executive Director.
- Other duties as may be assigned by the Executive Director or the Chairman of the Board.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

Court Appointed Special Advocates are trained community volunteers appointed by district court Judges to speak for the best interests of children who are brought before the court for reasons of abuse or neglect.

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) often referred to as a volunteer Guardian Ad Litem, is an official part of judicial proceedings, working alongside attorneys and social workers. By handling only two or three cases at a time the CASA has time to thoroughly explore the history of each assigned case. The volunteer talks with the child, parents, family members, neighbors, school officials, doctors and others involved in the child's background who might have facts about the case. The volunteer reviews all court facts about the case and the volunteer also reviews all court documents pertaining to the case. He or she then is expected to submit formal reports to the Judge at every scheduled hearing/review. The CASA continues to monitor the case to assure that the judicial and child welfare systems are moving ahead to secure a safe, permanent home for the child, and that court-ordered services are provided to the child and family. The CASA can be an invaluable resource for the attorney for the child and social worker in reaching their goals for permanency.

HISTORY

The CASA concept was first implemented by Judge David Soukup of Seattle, Washington in 1977. As a Judge he felt a compelling need to have more information available to him on which he could base his decisions, most of which had lifetime ramifications for children. Since the conception of the CASA program in 1977, CASA has grown to include over 640 member programs now in 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. An estimated 30,000 volunteers are "Speaking Up" for approximately 90,000 abused and neglected children nationwide. The National CASA Association has been established to provide leadership and lend technical support to new and existing programs. CASA of New Hampshire adheres to all program guidelines and standards established by the National CASA Association.

PROGRAM GOALS/PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide independent, factual information to the court regarding abused and neglected children.
- To provide advocacy for abused and neglected children who are the subject of judicial proceedings.
- To monitor cases involving abused and neglected children until the terms of the court order have been fulfilled
- To conduct independent and objective analysis concerning abused and neglected children.
- To factually and objectively report findings and observations to the court.
- To insure representation of the child's best interest in all judicial proceedings.
- To monitor cases following a court hearing or decision as designated by the court.

THE CASA VOLUNTEER

Complete an intensive independent review of each case:

- Speak with the child and relevant adults
- Review appropriate records and reports
- Observe the child and significant others

Report findings to the court:

- Provide a written report containing factual information
- Attend court hearings concerning the child
- Participate in case conferences concerning the child

Insure representation of the child's best interest:

- Attend all court hearings to see that all relevant facts are presented
- Attend appropriate interagency meetings regarding the child
- Prod public systems into action

Monitor case following a court hearing or decision as designated by the court.

Consult regularly with the volunteer coordinator concerning assigned case and develop a CASA case plan and review progress and reports.

REQUIRED SKILLS / ABILITIES

- Ability to keep all client and court information confidential
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds (economic, cultural, educational) in a variety of settings.
- Ability to transport self to a variety of locations
- Ability to deal with hostility, anger and other emotional attitudes
- Ability to maintain objectivity
- Ability to gather and record factual information accurately.
- A basic understanding of child development
- A basic understanding of family relationships

TRAINING

- CASA volunteers are required to attend approximately 40 hours of pre-service training
- CASA volunteers follow guidelines established by the National CASA Association
- CASA volunteers will attend in-service training and receive direct supervision and guidance from program staff

TIME COMMITMENT

- Volunteers are required to commit themselves to the program for eighteen months
- Volunteers are expected to be available for case assignment and to accept cases unless other arrangements have been made.

CONCLUSION

CASA of New Hampshire, Inc. has been appointing trained volunteer to abuse and neglect cases since October 1989. Currently, CASA of New Hampshire has trained over one hundred volunteers and is serving sixteen district courts and probate courts in New Hampshire.

CASA plays an integral part in assuring that children do not become lost in the court system. A CASA volunteer is a caring adult who tries to understand the child's concerns and report them to the judge. The long range goal is to have a trained CASA volunteer available to all abused and neglected children in the State of New Hampshire by the year 2000.

Early contact with children who become involved in the New Hampshire court as a result of abuse and/or neglect, can help to prevent future involvement either as a delinquent or an offending adult. The CASA program is dedicated to the premise that all children are entitled to grow up in a safe and loving home. The CASA program is committed to reunification of child/children with their biological family, when that home can be made safe for the child/children. Most important is the CASA volunteer's role in ensuring that all decisions regarding the child are in their best interest.

CASA of New Hampshire

A Board Member's Job Description

General Expectations

- ◆ Become knowledgeable about the organization.
- ◆ Serve in leadership positions or undertake special assignments willingly and enthusiastically when asked.
- ◆ Keep the director informed about any concerns the community has.
- ◆ Follow trends in the child welfare and juvenile justice fields.
- ◆ Recruit possible nominees to the board who are clearly women and men of achievement and distinction and who can make contributions to the work of the board and the organization.
- ◆ Bring a sense of humor to the board's deliberations.

Meetings

- ◆ Prepare for and participate in board and committee meetings, including appropriate organizational activities.
- ◆ Ask timely and substantive questions at board and committee meetings consistent with their conscience and convictions, while supporting the majority decision on issues decided by the board.
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality of the board's executive sessions, and speak for the board or organization only when authorized to do so.
- ◆ Suggest agenda items periodically for board and committee meetings to ensure that significantly policy-related matters are addressed.

Relationships with Staff

- ◆ Offer support and assistance to the director when appropriate.
- ◆ Avoid asking for special favors of the staff, including requests for extensive information, without at least prior consultation with the director.

AVOIDING CONFLICTS

- ◆ Serve the organization as a whole rather than any special interest group or constituency.
- ◆ Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest that might embarrass the board or the organization, and disclose any possible conflicts to the board in a timely fashion.
- ◆ Maintain independence and objectivity and do what a sense of fairness, ethics, and personal integrity dictate even though not necessarily obliged to do so by law, regulation, or custom.
- ◆ Never accept (or offer) favors or gifts from (or to) anyone who does business with the organization.

Fiduciary Responsibilities

- ◆ Exercise prudence with the board in the control and transfer of funds.
- ◆ Faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements and otherwise help the board fulfill its fiduciary responsibility.

Fund Raising

- ◆ Give an annual gift to the organization.
- ◆ Assist in resource development by implementing fund-raising strategies through personal influence with others.

Adapted from The Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards by Richard Ingram

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Name Date of Birth

Social Security Number Phone Number

Home Address

City, State Zip

Employed By (If Employed) Phone Number

Address

May you be called at work? Yes No

Brief description of work: _____

Formal Education (highest year of school completed): _____

Do you speak a foreign language? Yes No If yes, which language _____

Do you drive? Yes No Do you have regular access to a car? Yes No

Current community activities: _____

List current and previous volunteer work (list all previous volunteer work including brief description of duties and activities, dates of service.):

As a CASA volunteer you will be required to attend court hearings for the children you represent. Will you be able to arrange your schedule to attend these hearings?

Yes No

Are you willing to commit to one year of volunteer services? Yes No

What are your reasons for wanting to participate as a CASA volunteer?

Have you had any personal experience(s) involving:

- Child Welfare Foster Care
 Court System Other agencies offering services to a child

If so, please explain: _____

How did you learn of our program: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than a traffic violation? Yes No

If yes, what charge? _____ Date convicted: _____ Where _____

Do you consent to a routine check of your criminal records? Yes No

Can you think of any reason why a judge might be reluctant for you to serve as a CASA volunteer?

Please list three references of people who know you well, other than relatives, preferably for whom you have worked in either a paid or volunteer capacity. If you are currently working, either paid or as a volunteer, please include the name of your supervisor.

	Name	Address	Zip Code	Phone	Relationship
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

How long have you lived in the area? _____

CASA of New Hampshire, Inc. reserves the right to make any checks deemed appropriate as to the suitability of anyone responsible for this confidential work. All information obtained will be held in the strictest confidence.

Applicant Signature

Date

PART TWO

Please answer the following questions in **paragraph form** on a separate piece of paper.

1. Write a short summary about your interest in volunteering and how you hope to benefit from the volunteer experience.
2. Briefly explain what led to your decision to apply for a position in the CASA program? (What attracted you to this particular program?)
3. Briefly explain your philosophy of parenting, including the rights and responsibilities of both parents and children.
4. Briefly explain what role you believe society should play in:
 - a) protecting the rights of children.
 - b) helping a family overcome hardships and remain living together as one unit.
5. Please write a one page autobiography.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION AND ESSAYS TO:

PERSONAL REFERENCE COVER LETTER

Date: _____

Dear _____,

Your name has been submitted to our program as a personal reference for _____ who has applied as a perspective volunteer for the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer program.

Enclosed you will find a reference form which we would like for you to complete and return to us at your earliest convenience. This information will help us to make an informed decision regarding the suitability of the above named individual to become a CASA volunteer. Please be assured that any information you submit to our program will be held in the strictest confidence and reviewed only by program staff.

We have enclosed some information about the program which will help you understand more about the CASA volunteer role. Please feel free to call the office if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Director

CASA Program

PERSONAL REFERENCE FORM

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE HELD CONFIDENTIAL IN EVERY RESPECT

(Please Print)

FROM: _____ **CONCERNING:** _____

1. In what capacity have you know the applicant? _____
For how long? _____

2. Do you have knowledge of how the applicant relates to children? Yes No
If yes, please explain: _____

3. Can applicant separate personal life from volunteer work experience? _____

4. Check as many of the following that describe the applicant:

<input type="checkbox"/> Domineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Nervous	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Assertive	<input type="checkbox"/> Tactful
<input type="checkbox"/> Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Happy	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive	<input type="checkbox"/> Considerate	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative
<input type="checkbox"/> Reserved	<input type="checkbox"/> Moody	<input type="checkbox"/> Opinionated	<input type="checkbox"/> Follower	<input type="checkbox"/> Well-adjusted
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrogant	<input type="checkbox"/> Unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/> Stubborn	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks Confidence

5. Would applicants have problems in working with any of the following:
Racial minorities Females Males Handicapped
Various religious preferences Explain: _____

6. How well does the applicant finish projects and activities begun?
Very well Well Average Fair
Poor

7. To your knowledge, has the applicant ever had a drinking or drug problem? _____

8. Do you feel that the applicant is in a position to make a year-long commitment to a child?

9. Would you be comfortable having the applicant serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate to a child? _____

Please use the back of this sheet to add any additional comments summarizing your view of the applicant and their ability to work on behalf of an abused child.

Signature

Date

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

UPON APPOINTMENT as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, I Agree:

- To act in a responsible professional manner as an Officer of the Court in accordance with CASA volunteer policies and procedures, Court policies and relevant laws.
- To be an independent advocate for the best interests of the child.
- To maintain objectivity.
- To keep all matters confidential.
- To treat all persons with respect, fairness and courtesy regardless of race, religion or economic status.
- To complete all necessary court reports and documentation.
- To attend all hearings regarding the child and to monitor court orders in a timely manner.
- To maintain an active commitment to the child until the case has been dismissed or other disposition has been made by the Court.
- To seek and accept support and supervision from program staff.
- To participate in ongoing training.
- To maintain commitment to the mission statement and goals of the program.

Volunteer

Date

WITH APPRECIATION for your willingness to serve your community in this fashion, and in recognition of the above pledge, we assure you of our support.

Program Coordinator

Date

Presiding Judge

Date

AUTHORITY TO RELEASE INFORMATION

To Whom It May Concern:

I hereby authorize a representative of the [program name] to conduct an investigation on my background in conjunction with their official duties.

I further authorize any law enforcement agency to conduct a criminal records check and to release the results of said criminal records check to [program name].

This release is executed by me with the full knowledge and understanding that the information to be obtained about me is for official use of [program name].

I have read the above waiver and release statement and fully understand what rights I am waiving by signing this document.

SIGNATURE

DATE

FULL NAME (Please print)

PREVIOUS NAMES (MAIDEN, ETC.)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

DATE OF BIRTH

SEX: Male Female

CURRENT ADDRESS: _____

PREVIOUS ADDRESS(ES) FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS:

*NOTE: Program should ask law enforcement to provide documentation in writing.

FORMAT AND QUESTIONS FOR VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW

At least two people should be involved in interviewing prospective volunteers. This could be advisory committee members, board members, and/or staff members. Results of the interview should be summarized in writing and placed in the volunteer's file. The interview should begin with an explanation of the purpose of the interview and an overview of what kinds of questions will be asked. Applicants should understand that there are no right or wrong answers. As always, the applicant should be assured that the interview and all information discussed is confidential. You can establish your own questions for interviewing, but some suggested appropriate ones follow:

To Determine Objectivity / Flexibility / Adaptability:

1. How do you feel about parents who abuse their children?
2. Are you aware that most abused children want to return home? How do you feel about this?
3. Could you recommend returning a child to an abusive home?
4. Do you think all children are lovable?
5. Do you have any problems working with people of races other than your own?
6. Why do kids lie? Run away?
7. Identify any concerns you would have in representing a sexually abused child.
8. Do you have any preference for working with children of a particular age or sex on case work? Why do you have these preferences?

Note: interviewers should note any fixed opinions, preferences or unsubstantiated reasoning.

To Determine Maturity / Stability / Self-Esteem:

1. Have you thought about how you will handle your feelings when interviewing abusive parents? Describe.
2. What would you do if a child told you something in confidence which you knew someone needed to know?
3. How do you deal with stressful situations?
4. What would you do if your recommendation on a case was different than the worker and other parties?
5. What are you going to do when you get angry with a child? With a parent? Caseworker? What would make you feel angry?

6. What are your best qualities?
7. What are your three major weaknesses?

Note: Look for difficulty articulating, lack of insight into personal abusive experiences and personal requirements for “perfection”.

To Determine Motivation / Commitment:

1. Are you active in any organized religion?
2. What role do you see your religion playing in your work with these children?
3. Were you or anyone in your family abused?
4. What do you hope to accomplish in the program?
5. Are you able to commit yourself for at least one year in this program?

To Determine Family Attitudes / Practices:

1. How do you discipline your children?
2. Do you feel there are circumstances when corporal punishment is warranted?
3. How do you feel about children who are sexually active?
4. What are some mistakes you’ve made with your own children?
5. What are some basic needs of every child?
6. How do you feel about women staying home when their children are young?
7. What do you want from your children?
8. What are your feelings about mixed-marriages? Cohabitation?
9. What are your husband’s / wife’s complaints about you?
10. How were you disciplined as a child?

To Determine Natural / Instinctive Abilities:

1. What are your hobbies? What do you do for fun?
2. What one thing would you change about yourself if you could?
3. What are some of your strengths?
4. Tell me about some experience you’ve had with kids.
5. How would your closest friend describe you?

To Determine Problem Solving Ability:

Real life problem solving situations are an excellent way to view your applicant’s capabilities. The following are only suggested situations which should be changed to meet varying needs and are by no means inclusive.

1. A child placed in a shelter who has previously run away has promised you he will not run away again, but he breaks his promise. How do you feel? What will you say to the child when he is found?
2. A young child becomes very attached to you and begs you to take him home to live with you. How would you respond to him?

3. An adolescent girl who has been sexually abused refused to talk to you, then uses abusive language and tells you she doesn't want your help or that of anyone else. What is your approach to the situation?

To Determine Feelings About Personal Background:

1. What were your parents' expectations of you as a child?
2. What are your expectations of your own children?
3. What kind of friendships did you have as a child?
4. What kind of friendships do you have now? Are there people you can count on?

To Determine Prejudices / Biases (re: Abuse & Neglect):

1. Have you had any experience with child abuse or neglect in your immediate family or circle of acquaintances?
2. How did you respond to it?
3. What are your feelings about abusive and neglectful parents?
4. What are your feelings about abused or neglected children?

To Determine Ability to Cope:

1. What problems did you experience as a child?
2. Do any of those problems affect you currently?
3. How do you deal with stressful situations?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview for Guardian Ad Litem Volunteer

Name _____

Date _____

Interviewer _____

Make sure volunteer is aware of the following:

- 1. Commitment**
- 2. Attendance Court**
- 3. Court reports and monthly supervision**
- 4. Explain dress code**
- 5. No Reimbursement of mileage/phone-Tax deduction**
- 6. Mandatory to attend all five (5) days of training.**

Explain how the interview is to be conducted. Ask if there are any questions.

SECTION I: Determine emotional objectivity/prejudice.

What do you think are the reasons parents abuse their children?

Have you had any experience dealing with abusive parents/adults and/or abused and neglected children?

For what reasons do you think children are removed from their homes?

Under what condition would you recommend returning a child to an abusive home?

What are your concerns in being appointed to a case where a parent, sibling and/or extended family member has allegedly sexually abused a child?

What are your feelings about abused and neglected children?

Do you think race and gender play a factor in the abuse and neglect of children? How? (3 scenarios.)

Do you have any preferences for working with children of a particular age or sex? Explain.

Think of four adjectives that describe children to you.

SECTION II: Family Origin/Present Family, to determine family attitudes/practices.

Describe your mother and father and family of origin.

How were you disciplined as a child?

What were your parents' expectations of you as a child?

Do you think your basic needs were met?

How did your parents express love towards each other?

How did you spend your time as a child?

What values are important to your family? What is your most important value?

If you could label your level of self-esteem from 1-10, ten the highest, what score would you give yourself and why?

SECTION III: To determine maturity/stability/self esteem (watch for transference, protecting, rescuing and fixing)

Describe yourself... what do you think about the person you've described?

Describe stressful situations for you. What do you do with stress?

In what kinds of situations do you get angry? How do you express your anger?

What problems with employment have you encountered?
How many jobs have you had in the past five years?

Have you ever been fired from a job? If yes, why?

How many times have you moved in the past five years?

What type of supervision do you work best with?

How do you feel about working with men or women that could be much younger or older than yourself?

What are your strongest qualities/assets?

What are the areas you need to improve on?

SECTION IV: Related History (If volunteer answers yes to any question ask them to expand on answer.)

Were you physically or sexually abused/neglected or touched in a manner which made you uncomfortable as a child? Are you aware of similar incidents of others in your family?

Have you ever had any interaction with a child protection agency or department?

Have you ever been involved in a custody dispute? Explain in detail.

Have you ever been convicted of any major traffic violations, DWI's, etc.?

Have you ever had an addiction to drugs or alcohol?

At what time do you use alcohol? Is or has your alcohol or chemical use ever been different from what you would like it to be? Explain what you did.

Do you have any problems or concerns that may be raised by reference checks with the child abuse registry or criminal background check?

SECTION V: To determine motivation/commitment.

How do you practice spirituality?

What brought you to the CASA program?

What seems most intimidating to you about being a CASA volunteer?

Have you ever had any experience with domestic violence situations?
Have you ever been the victim of violent crime? Another type of crime?

Briefly describe your closest friend?

How would your closest friend describe you?

SECTION VI: To determine natural/instinctive abilities.

What activities would you enjoy doing with a child?

You are leaving the grocery store and come across a small child left in a parked car, what would you do in this situation?

SECTION VII: To determine feelings about personal background.

Describe your childhood friendships.

If you had a whole Saturday to yourself what would you do?

What do you define as pornography? Have you been exposed to pornographic materials?

What was the toughest decision you ever made?

SECTION VIII: Handling confrontation/adapting to new situations.

What would you do if your recommendation on a case were different than the social workers, lawyers, etc.? Explain.

How do you react if a friend suggests that you change plans you have already made?

What would you do if a parent told you to "mind your own damn business?"

How would you respond when a parent asks you "how would you know what it's like to be in my shoes? How can you possibly understand?"

How comfortable are you working with single parents? Going alone to a home with a single parent of the opposite sex?

Homosexual parents?

HIV/AIDS parents and children?

Scenario: Child confides "Help me get an abortion."

As a CASA there is a possibility for becoming personally involved with people associated with a case, including client parents becoming interested in you. How will you handle this. potential situation?

Is there any area we have not talked about that you would want to discuss?

By signing below, I assure that everything on this form and my application is true.

Signature _____

Print your name _____

Date _____

Revised 02/08/01

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Policy Guidelines to Avoid Material Conflicts of Interest Involving Board or Staff

No trustee or staff member may participate in any decision-making process when said person or members of her or his immediate family, or any party, group or organization to which said person has allegiance, may have an interest that may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of the CASA program.

Trustees and staff members must weigh carefully all circumstances in which there exists the possibility of accusations of competing interest. Trustees and staff shall disclose to the board any possible conflict of interest and any and all relevant information pertaining to the possible conflict and may not participate in any decision-making process related to the matter in which there may be a conflict of interest. Furthermore, trustees and staff shall excuse themselves from the room when there is any deliberation and decision on the matter of interest.

The minutes of the board and/or committee meetings shall reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not present during the deliberation and decision on the matter of interest. In the event of possible conflict of interest in a decision-making process at the level of management, the executive director shall report to the board in writing that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not in the room and did not participate in the final deliberation and decision on the matter of interest.

Notwithstanding the above, the Board of Trustees may waive the foregoing restrictions and allow a trustee or staff member with a conflict of interest to join in such portion of the discussion on the matter of interest as the board deems appropriate.

When there is doubt as to whether a conflict of interest exists, the matter shall be resolved by a vote of the executive committee, excluding the person(s) who may have the possible conflict.

The policy shall be reviewed at the first meeting of duly elected trustees, annually with all staff and with each new member of the staff at the time of his or her hire. Copies of this policy shall be given to each trustee and staff member.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

COLORADO CASA

All directors and officers have the duty to care - to attend, participate in decisions, and be reasonably informed on matters relating to board decisions; and the duty of loyalty - to exercise their powers in the interest of Colorado CASA, rather than in their own or anyone else's interest. This duty requires that directors and officer give diligent attention to participating, keeping informed, and exercising independent judgment on decisions that come before the Colorado CASA Board of Directors.

The duty of loyalty simply means that directors and officers not have another loyalty or interest that puts into question their loyalty as a trustee to Colorado CASA; that is, that directors and officers avoid any conflict of interest.

Therefore, a director or officer of Colorado CASA who is directly or indirectly a party to a material contract or transaction with Colorado CASA, shall disclose in writing to Colorado CASA, or request to have entered in the minutes of the meeting of the Board, the nature and extent of the interest. This disclosure of interest shall occur at the first meeting where the contract or transaction is discussed. In the event that an interest in a contract or transaction by a director or officer occurs after the item is first introduced, the director or officer shall disclose the interest at the next meeting

The director or officer who makes the disclosure of interest in an item of business shall not take part in any discussion, debate or vote on the item of business. The director or officer, on an adopted motion by the Board, shall leave the meeting until the item of business is completed.

Colorado CASA shall require its directors and officers to annually review and sign this full disclosure and conflict of interest statement.

(Over)

CERTIFICATION

I, _____, a director or officer of Colorado CASA, declare that I have read this full disclosure and conflict of interest statement and understand and agree to abide by its requirements.

Check applicable box:

I have no known past, present, or future conflicts of interest that must be disclosed.

I wish to disclose the following matter(s) that may be conflicts of interest:

Signature

Date

Approved by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors 7/25/00.

_____ Uncovers and communicates all pertinent facts

Comments: _____

Benefits to staff from working with this volunteer
are: _____

Benefits to program from this volunteer's skills, experience and knowledge
are: _____

Additional
Comments: _____

Signature of Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Volunteer: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What other training or growth opportunities would you like to see offered?

What additional "tools" would make your work more effective and/or pleasant?

What are some suggestions or goals you would offer for the CASA program?

How could CASA improve its volunteer - staff structure and/or relationships?

Additional Comments:

Signature of Volunteer: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

These sample financial policies and procedures are intended to provide you with a starting-point for developing customized fiscal guidelines. They address many issues relating to the following areas: internal controls, lines of authority and responsibility, safeguarding of assets, and ongoing record keeping. The size and complexity of your program are critical factors in determining the amount, type and variety of financial policies and procedures that you will need to adopt to fit your CASA program.

GENERAL:

- The Board of Directors is responsible for authorizing all bank accounts and check signers.
- Separate accounts are maintained for any restricted funds if required by the funding source.
- Financial institutions where CASA accounts are maintained are notified on an annual basis of any changes in check-signers, following the transition of officers or changes in staff with check-signing responsibilities.
- Dual signatures are required for all checks, usually including any two of the following signatures: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, CASA Director.
- Financial reports shall be presented to the CASA Board of Directors for review on a monthly basis.
- An annual financial review or audit, depending upon the size of the budget, will be conducted by a qualified outside auditor.
- In addition to these policies and procedures, any other applicable financial and administrative guidelines relating to specific grants shall be followed.

CASH RECEIPTS:

- Employees handling cash will have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the job and will be carefully supervised.
- Incoming checks must be restrictively endorsed “for deposit only” when received.
- Cash receipts must be deposited immediately.
- Incoming cash must be counted and receipts/bank deposits developed by two or more persons authorized to perform these functions.
- Records of cash received must be totaled and initialed by authorized employees.
- Cash collection documentation totals must be compared and reconciled to bank deposit receipts on a regular basis.
- Bank deposit receipts must be compared and attached to the original bank deposit slips.
- Adequate physical controls must be maintained over cash receipts from the time of receipt to deposit in the bank.

CASH DISBURSEMENTS:

- The Director must provide prior approval for all cash disbursements.
- All disbursements, including payroll, must be made by check.
- Signature stamps may never be used to sign checks.
- Supporting documentation must accompany checks when presented for signature.

- To prevent duplicate payment, invoices or other supporting documentation must be canceled at time checks are signed through a notation by the authorized staff check-signer of check number, date and his/her initials.
- Checks must be made payable to specific payees, based upon appropriate supporting documentation, and never to cash or bearer.
- Only prenumbered checks shall be used and always in sequence.
- Adequate controls will be maintained over blank check stock.
- Prior to preparing checks, receiving reports should be compared to vendor invoices for accuracy.
- Checks must be prepared from vendor invoices only and not from a vendor statement.
- All check numbers must be accounted for.
- Any voided/spoiled checks must be marked "VOID", mutilated with the signature portion removed, and retained in a secure place.
- Only persons authorized to prepare checks may have access to blank checks.
- Disbursements that require special approval of funding sources or the governing board must be properly documented.
- Employees must maintain and submit a detailed expense record, with supporting documentation, in order to be reimbursed for expenses.
- Expense records must be reviewed and initialed for approval by the authorized individual prior to payment.
- Signing of blank checks is strictly prohibited!

RECONCILIATION:

- Bank accounts must be reconciled by the person responsible on a monthly basis, and reviewed by the Director.
- The Director must receive the bank statements (with canceled checks, etc.) unopened from the bank.
- Checks outstanding over 90 days must be periodically investigated, with payment stopped and an entry made restoring such items to cash if appropriate.

INVESTMENTS:

- Authority for investment decisions rests with the Board of Directors.
- All investment transactions must be reviewed and receive prior approval from the board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors must ensure that investments must be of the type permitted by funding sources and donors, and that investment income and gains are used only for purposes authorized by laws, donors, or the governing board.
- Securities must be adequately protected and held only in the name of the program.
- Detailed investment records must be maintained that include the description of the investment, date of acquisition, purchase price, physical location, interest / dividend / income rates, accrual / receipt dates, ownership, and any restrictions.
- Recordkeeping functions for investment income must be performed by the accountant who has no access to investments.
- Investment earnings must be deposited to the proper bank account and accurately posted.
- The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring compliance with any restrictions regarding investment income.

INCOME AND SUPPORT:

- The Board of Directors must approve all fund-raising activities, including solicitation and acceptance of contributions, gifts and grants with related restrictions or requirements.
- Staff must keep accurate and updated records of all donations, including the donor's name, amount, date, and any related restrictions on contributions.
- The board and staff are responsible for assuring compliance with the terms and conditions of all grants and restricted contributions.
- Any billing for third-party reimbursements must be approved by the Director.
- Receivable must be reconciled to the general ledger on a monthly basis.

PURCHASING:

- Purchases must be made in accordance with any requirements of particular grants or funding sources.
- The conflict of interest policy must be followed regarding purchase of goods or services from board members or other suppliers that may create a conflict of interest.
- Purchases shall be made based upon maximum open and free competition, to obtain the best value in return for financial resources.

PAYROLL:

- Accurate time and attendance records must be maintained for all personnel.
- All laws and regulations regarding over-time compensation must be followed for employees paid on an hourly basis.
- Time/attendance records must be signed by the employee, as well as his/her supervisor following review.
- Payroll costs must be distributed to the proper accounts, programs, or other functions.
- W-2 wages for the year must be reconciled to the general ledger by the person responsible for financial management.
- Payroll tax withholdings from employees must be forwarded to the appropriate IRS and state departments of revenue in a timely manner. (Board members can be held personally liable if employee withholding taxes are not paid.)

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:

- The property and equipment must be adequately safeguarded against fire, loss, theft, physical deterioration or misuse.
- A physical inventory of property and equipment must be taken and compared to inventory records on an annual basis, with immediate follow-up and explanation of any discrepancies.
- All property and equipment additions or disposals in excess of \$100 in value require prior board approval.
- Periodic reviews shall occur relative to adjusting insurance coverage as needed.
- Purchases and control of property and equipment must be in accordance with any requirements of particular grants or funding sources.

- The conflict of interest policy must be followed regarding purchase of property or equipment from board members or other suppliers that may create a conflict of interest.
- Major equipment purchasing decisions will be based on careful board and staff review of needs vs. current available resources.
- Property and equipment purchases shall be made based upon maximum open and free competition, to obtain the best value for financial resources.

Adapted from *Organizational Development* by National Network of Child Advocacy Centers

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The volunteer shall adhere to the following guidelines with respect to maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of others in all matters relating to an assigned case. The guidelines are set out below. They govern circumstances in which the CASA requests or receives information. However, these guidelines cannot cover every possible situation which may arise. Any questions and/or concerns the CASA volunteer has regarding confidentiality or the application of this policy should be discussed with the CASA Coordinators. These will be resolved on a case by case basis.

- Cases involving parties who are known to the CASA Program as being HIV positive, having AIDS and/or having other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are governed by an additional confidentiality protocol to which the volunteer must adhere. If, after accepting a case, the CASA learns it involves a STD, the CASA should immediately contact the Coordinator to obtain the protocol.
- In requesting information in the course of an investigation, a CASA may need to obtain information from doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, attorneys, clergy, teachers, or other professionals who have a protected relationship status with a party or the child. Your Appointment Order should cover most cases. By statute, there are limitations on the disclosure of information a professional receives during the course of his/her relationship with a client or patient. Many professions also have ethical principles which govern their ability to disclose information (for example, attorneys are bound by Rules of Professional Conduct; doctors, psychologists, and social workers also have ethical codes). The professional has no authority to provide any information to a CASA without the express permission of the client or a court order.

If it is necessary to obtain any privileged/confidential information about someone who is directly related to the case but is not the child/ren, the CASA must obtain from that person a written release of information which allows the professional, hospital or treatment center to discuss the matter with the CASA.

While a person may sign a release allowing the CASA to obtain confidential information, he/she may not want to authorize disclosure to the other parties to the case and/or their attorneys. The CASA should review the signed release form very carefully and seek guidance from the Coordinator if the CASA has any questions at all.

- The CASA is not allowed to disseminate documents to any of the parties, their attorneys, and or collateral sources which are covered by state and/or federal confidentiality laws. These documents may include drug and alcohol evaluations/records; involuntary mental health treatment and rape crisis center information; and some criminal histories. Those covered by federal law usually are stamped, "This information is protected by Federal law (and prohibits you from making any further disclosure. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is NOT sufficient for this purpose."
- The CASA **shall never discuss** an assigned care for purely conversational purposes, particularly in specific terms, with anyone.

- The CASA should not promise a child or any party to the assigned case that his/her statements will be kept secret or confidential.
- The CASA must disclose confidential information learned during the course of an investigation in three circumstances:
 1. When consulting with the Coordinator, Director, or GAL who must be provided all significant case specifics known to the CASA;
 2. When ordered by the court in a hearing or trial;
 3. When the CASA thinks that there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse.
- A CASA may disclose confidential information and discuss case specifics in two circumstances:
 1. When the CASA consults with a professional service provider (medical personnel, mental health specialist, social worker, etc.) who is providing services to the child/ren who has agreed to the professional's disclosure or because their client signed a Release-of-Information Form.
 2. When the petitioner and respondent agree or when the court orders the disclosure.
- The CASA may discuss a case in hypothetical terms for purposes of illustration at professional meetings (seminars) designed to address issues promoting the best interests of children. The CASA shall not, however, mention the names of any individuals involved in the case or provide facts which may identify the case or parties.

Signature

Date

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