

## **CASA of Mercer County, Inc. Board of Trustee Guidelines**

### **I. Duties of the Board of Trustees as a Whole**

As dictated in the Bylaws, the Board of Trustees shall:

- A. Establish and maintain the mission of CASA through:
  - 1. Identification of community needs by reviewing reports from our volunteers, county and municipal officials, local lay leaders, other child-oriented organizations, Family Court, DYFS, NJ CASA, the National CASA Association and other source that may become available.
  - 2. Promotion and publication of CASA and its accomplishments by press releases, editorial letters, media interviews, PSAs and web site postings.
- B. Establish and maintain fiscal oversight through:
  - 1. Financial and budget reports at each Board Meeting.
  - 2. Strict adherence to the Internal Control Procedures and generally accepted accounting practices for non-profit organizations.
- C. Oversee and evaluate the work of the Executive Director through:
  - 1. ED reports at each Board meeting.
  - 2. Requesting ED attendance at all Board committee meetings.
  - 3. Regular and free communication between the ED and any Board member.
  - 4. A yearly formal ED job evaluation overseen by the HR Committee Chairperson.
  - 5. Entertaining feedback from other Staff members and CASA volunteers.
- D. Review, develop and adopt new policies and procedures through:
  - 1. Determining that documents need revision or creation by ongoing assessment of our activities and functioning on a day-to-day basis.
  - 2. Performing regular quality assessment exercises as dictated by NCASAA and NJ CASA.
  - 3. Recommendation of legal counsel.
- E. Actively participate in Fundraising, strategic planning, assessing CASA's needs, examining CASA's resources and capabilities and effecting public education and relations through:
  - 1. Event planning and solicitations via the Board Fundraising and Event Planning Committees.
  - 2. Organizing Strategic Planning sessions through the Board Strategic Planning Committee.
  - 3. Reviewing budgetary and personnel considerations at each Board meeting; free and frequent communication with the ED regarding personnel, finances and physical plant.
  - 4. Reviewing and enhancing community contacts through personal networking.
  - 5. See I.A.2. above
- F. Assure that CASA of Mercer County adheres to NCASAA standards and best practices and maintains its national charter through:
  - 1. Successful participation in all regular quality assessment exercises as required by NCASAA and NJ CASA.

2. Compliance with all applicable local, state and federal guidelines.
3. Ongoing discussion and review of our Vision, Mission and Goals.

## **II. Duties and Responsibilities of Individual Trustees**

A. In order to carry out the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees as delineated in the Bylaws and cited above, each Trustee must:

1. Maintain CASA Board Operations:

- a. Attend all meetings; unexcused absence from 3 consecutive meetings may result in termination from the Board. Trustees are to notify the Board President if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- b. Attend and participate in an annual Board of Trustees Strategic Planning meeting..
- c. Have active membership on and active participation in at least one standing committee of the Board.
- d. Be familiar with the ByLaws and Duties of the Board as a Whole, and participate in the efforts of the Board to fulfill its duties.
- e. Notify the ED and Board President immediately of any criminal changes brought against the Trustee.

2. Help Maintain CASA's Financial Stability.

- a. Identify CASA's financial requirements through budgetary reports at each Board meeting and review of financial data in Finance Committee meeting reports; review and approval of a yearly budget prepared by the Treasurer and Finance Committee.
- b. Actively support all efforts to provide resources to meet CASA's financial needs. Support can include: personal contributions, recruitment of individuals or corporate financial resources, purchase and sale of tickets to CASA events, purchase or sale of CASA products, and the development or identification of potential funding sources. Personal financial support at any level the Board member is comfortable with, is expected.
- c. Each member is expected to provide support for and devote time to key fundraising programs in our organization. Support can include: work on committees that drive the programs; volunteering to help on special projects or events; purchase and/or sale of tickets and/or products from each program.

3. Participate in Public Relations and Public Education.

- a. Each Board member is expected to act as an ambassador for CASA. Each Board member shall memorize a brief capsular description of CASA and what CASA does.

- b. Casual conversations with informal acquaintances can be used as a forum for public education and cultivation of contacts and human resources.
- c. Provide support through personal contacts whose background and/or training would aid CASA in carrying out its mission.
- 4. Adherence to Board Confidentiality Policy.
- 5. Contribute to Organizational Effort
  - a. Recruit new Board members, Advisory Board members and volunteers.

### **III. Procedures for Screening, Nominating and Electing Board Members**

A. A prospective member of the Board must be nominated by a current Board member.

B. The Board Governance Committee identifies the needs of the Board, such as expertise with accounting, law, fundraising, public relations, etc. Membership on the Board depends on a candidate's ability to provide what CASA requires, not on friendship, donations or pledges of money.

C. The Governance Committee solicits names of prospective board members from the Board and the Executive Director to fulfill the identified needs.

D. The Governance Committee will:

1. Assign a trustee to initiate informal contact with the prospective Board member to determine prospect's interest in the Board and the skills he/she might bring to the Board.
2. Assign a governance committee member to send out a Board Application Packet which includes the following items, but not limited to:, a Board Application, Board Guidelines, By-laws, and a Confidentiality Agreement.
3. Interview the prospective Board member with the Executive Director and another Board member (if available) using the Board Screening and Interview Guide.
4. Review the application, and send out reference forms to be filled out by two references. The assigned Governance Committee member will then write a short paragraph of recommendation or lack of support for the prospective board member's candidacy. This paragraph, the application, the interview synopsis and all of the references will be distributed to all Governance Committee members and discussed at the next Committee meeting.
5. If the Governance Committee has determined to recommend the applicant for board membership, it then will distribute a Recommendation to the full Board, to include a brief biography, a review of the applicant's suitability for the board, and a description of the skills offered by the applicant. Invite the prospective board meeting to attend a Board meeting as a guest..

5. Request CASA staff to arrange for the candidate to be fingerprinted for a criminal background check. The candidate's election to the Board may take place at the Board meeting following the meeting attended as a guest, contingent on a clean background check.
6. Fill out the Board Qualification Checklist throughout the screening process.
7. Conduct the screening process in a timely manner to ensure that the time from initial contact with the prospective Board member to the decision to elect the Board member to the office takes no more than 4-6 weeks.

E. Upon being voted onto the Board, each new member will be:

1. Required to participate in a new Board member orientation program which will cover all of the information in the Board Orientation Checklist.
2. Asked to become familiar with the organization's policies, rules and regulations and all manuals.
3. Asked to complete one in-service training (approximately 1-2 hours) per year.
4. Invited to observe a family court session (approximately 3 hours).
5. Invited to observe a new-advocate training session (approximately 3-6 hours).

Revised 3/13/03  
Revised 2/26/04 (CM)  
Revised 4/25/04 (ML)  
Revised 11/15/05 (ML)  
Update 9/28/08 (KHM)  
Update 10/03/08 (LVM)