

Achieving Our Mission: A Management Guide for State CASA and GAL Organizations



THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION

Achieving Our Mission: A Management Guide for State CASA & GAL Organizations

2004 Edition

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A National CASA Association Resource Library Publication

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This project was supported by Cooperative Agreement No. 2002-CH-BX-K001 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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The National CASA Association Mission Statement

Our mission is to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are involved in the juvenile courts. The National CASA Association works with state and local CASA and volunteer guardian ad litem programs to promote and support quality volunteer advocacy to help assure each child a safe, permanent and nurturing home.

Acknowledgements

This handbook is the result of hard work on the part of many people. National CASA would like to express its thanks to State Director of the Arkansas State CASA Association Diane Robinson who gave an enormous amount of time and dedication to *Achieving Our Mission: A Management Guide for State CASA & GAL Organizations*. Thank you also to National CASA Director of Program Development Sally Erny who served as the staff liaison for the project. The following state directors served as the advisory committee for this project and their involvement greatly shaped the direction of this project. Their willingness to be involved, knowledge about state CASA/GAL issues, commitment to the project and willingness to review numerous drafts will have a positive impact on the CASA/GAL network for years to come.

- Megan Ferland—Texas CASA
- Brian O’Connell—New Mexico CASA Network
- Ginny Rudloff—Minnesota Association of Guardians ad Litem
- Becky Smith—Oregon Commission on Children & Families
- Jane Volland—North Carolina State GAL Program
- Darlene Ward—Advocates for Children of New York State.

The resources provided at the end of each chapter are primarily National CASA documents and sample documents from state organizations. We are grateful to the following individuals who also contributed: Donna Gay, Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts; Ed Kilcullen, Maryland CASA Association; Barbara Mattison, Colorado CASA; Elizabeth McCormick, Alabama CASA Network, Inc.; Lynn Shreve, CASA Program/ Family Court of Delaware; Jackie Wilson, Ohio CASA/GAL Association; Robin Allen, California CASA Association; Duaine E. Hathaway, Georgia CASA; Loreale Liss, Illinois CASA; Charlene Lund, South Dakota CASA Association; Janette Meis, Kansas CASA Association; Becky Smith, Oregon Commission on Children & Families; Jane Volland, North Carolina State GAL Program; Cathy Cockerham, Texas CASA; Liza Kirschenbaum, CASA of New Jersey; Patricia Wagner, Michigan Association of Court Appointed Special Advocates; Becky Smith, Oregon Commission on Children & Families; Melissa O’Neill, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services; Gail Shearer, CASA of the Virgin Islands; Marcia Sink, CASA of New Hampshire, Inc.; Charlotte Thomason, Tennessee CASA Association; Darlene Ward, CASA: Advocates for Children of New York State; Ginny Rudloff, Minnesota Association of Guardians ad Litem; Bruce Oudekerk; Mary Gratch, National CASA Association Curriculum Advisory Committee; Marion Hallum, Alaska CASA; Ruth Kravitz, North Carolina State GAL Program; Sandra Miller, Center for Arkansas Legal Services; John Stout, Washington State Association of CASA/GAL Programs; Brenda Dickerson, Alaska CASA; Diane Payne, Tribal Law and Policy Institute; Linda Wright, Arizona CASA Program.

Diane Robinson would like to especially thank her husband Wayne for being incredibly supportive and serving as grammar expert. She also expresses thanks to her job-share partner Terri Looney, for her support of this project.

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Introduction

This guide for state organizations is intended to be a resource and best practices guide for state directors. It is also meant to help orient new state directors to the rewarding and challenging work of state CASA/GAL organizations. This handbook is not intended to serve as a standards document.

Each chapter of this guide contains:

- narrative and discussion
- chapter review questions
- additional resources (if applicable) in an appendix following the chapter

Note: State CASA/GAL organizations vary greatly. This handbook is written to be as broadly applicable as possible, but not everything will apply to all organizations. For example, this handbook refers to “local programs.” Many state organizations work with local programs that are independent, self-governing organizations; however others have local offices directly supervised by the state organization and some state organizations are single statewide programs with no local offices or local programs. While the relationship is very different in these situations, the basic principles should apply.

The variety of responsibilities involved in running a state office differ: promoting CASA on a statewide level, educating the public about CASA, working with other child welfare agencies and dealing with “big picture” planning, evaluations and quality assurance issues.

But the heart of the state office is working collaboratively with and supporting local programs in a variety of ways: starting CASA programs, helping existing programs expand, providing technical assistance and legislative education as well as generally “lightening the load” for local programs. Perhaps most gratifying is getting to know the inspirational people who volunteer, sharing the joy of a case that ends well and knowing that your work helps to improve the lives of children in your state.

The work done in state organizations supports the most important work in the CASA/GAL network: that of the local programs and the thousands of individual volunteers willing to advocate for children in some of the most difficult cases facing our court systems.

Getting Started

The phone rings. You have been offered the position of director of the state CASA/GAL organization! You begin Monday.

Welcome to the CASA/GAL network. There are many wonderful resources available for state directors, including incredibly supportive peers around the country.

The first person to call is your National CASA regional program specialist. You can find out who that person is by going to casanet.org or by calling the National CASA Association office at (800)628-3233. Ask your regional program specialist if another state director might be willing to serve as a mentor. Find out when the next state directors' meeting will be held: meetings are held twice a year, once in the fall and once at the annual conference. If there are topics of particular concern to you, suggest them for the state directors' meeting agenda. Your program specialist can tell you who is on the meeting planning committee.

National CASA maintains a state directors' listserv that you will find to be a great source of information and support. Questions posted to the list are sent to all state directors as well as to National CASA staff. Subjects and topics addressed include asking for advice on handling specific situations or policy issues, requesting sample documents and discussions about National CASA initiatives. If your question would be best answered by National CASA staff, please direct it to your program specialist rather than the list. Archives from the last few years are available. Before posting a question, see if your question has already been asked and answered. Your regional program specialist can help you sign up for the listserv as well as review archives.

Note: Numerous resources are available at National CASA's program website (casanet.org). CASAnet contains a section for states and also a section on program management. Get a sense of what areas are covered on the website as this will often be your best source for answers to questions asked by local program directors. The National CASA Association also maintains an external website (nationalcasa.org) that provides basic information for the general public. If you are new to the state organization, spend time on the state organization's website, if one exists.

Helpful State Documents

There are a number of documents to locate in the office:

- State CASA/GAL organization policies and procedures
- Most recent IRS form 990 (for nonprofit organizations)
- Most recent audit
- Current budget
- Current state CASA/GAL organization strategic plan

- Current grant proposals (activities, goals and budgets), along with grant reports submitted in the current grant cycle
- Final grant report to National CASA from the previous grant cycle
- State statutes regarding the CASA/GAL program
- State standards for local programs (many states use the National CASA standards)
- Statewide memoranda of understanding with the Child Protective Services (CPS) agency or other state agencies
- Contact log with local programs

If you cannot locate these documents above, talk to your predecessor (if that person is available), the board chair (if a nonprofit) or to your supervisor. The National CASA regional program specialist can also help locate some documents (for example, National CASA grant reports from the previous grant cycle).

Helpful National CASA Resources:

- *Achieving Our Mission: A Management Guide for Local CASA/GAL Programs*
- *National CASA Standards for Local Programs and for State Organizations*
- *National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum* (ideally customized for your state)
- Current National CASA Association Public Relations Toolkit (issued each spring)
- National CASA public relations materials:
 - Amy Brenneman Video PSA
 - Everyday Heroes PSA
 - Everyday Heroes Video
- Other guides and manuals published by National CASA
 - National directory of Local Programs (also available online at casanet.org)
 - National CASA Association Directory of Member Program Services and Resources
 - *CASA: A Guide to Program Development**
 - *A World of Difference—A Manual for Achieving Greater Inclusion **
 - *Measuring Child Outcomes **
 - *Communications Manual for CASA/GAL Programs**
 - *Resource Development: Guide for CASA/GAL Programs**
 - *Employment Practices Handbook: A Management Guide for Effective Employment Practices for CASA/GAL Programs** (available Fall 2004)
 - *A Question of Balance**
 - *Strengthening the Theta Connection**
 - *Casas for CASA - Kit for a Playhouse Fundraiser **

Note: Order these documents (*) from casanetstore.org. Other documents are available for download from casanet.org. Contact the National CASA communications department to order PSAs.

Things to do as Soon as Possible:

- Issue a press release about your hiring (this can be an opportunity to get the CASA/GAL name before the public)
- Check the status of bank accounts and, with the proper governing body approval, change signature cards if necessary
- Order business cards
- Participate in a volunteer training (if you have not already done so).

As a new state director, there are a number of people you should meet fairly quickly. The most important individuals and groups (along with some questions you might want to ask) may include:

- Your predecessor, if available, or a well-connected program director
 - Who is it important that I meet?
 - What is the history of the state organization?
 - What are the strengths of the state organization? What are the challenges?
 - What is the state organization's role in the National CASA Quality Assurance (QA) process?
 - When was a needs assessment or satisfaction survey of local programs last done?
- Members of the state organization governing board or advisory council
 - Who is on the board/council? What skills do they bring? What are their terms?
 - What have been the priorities of the board/council?
 - What does the board/council need to work on?
 - What is the history of fund development with the organization?
 - Who is my main contact on the board/council?
- Local and regional CASA/GAL program staff
 - What is the history of the state organization?
 - What has the relationship been between your program and the state organization?
 - What do you like or value about the state organization?
 - What would you like to see done differently at the state organization?

Individual contact will take time if there are a number of programs in the state. Be strategic about which programs are visited first. It may be helpful to complete a needs assessment of the state organization if one has not been done recently. More information on this topic is in the Evaluation, Data & Planning section of this guide.

Other Important Contacts to Make in the First Few Months:

- Any person or agency with whom initial contact indicated there has been a troubled relationship.
- Juvenile/family court judges in your state
 - What has your experience been with CASA/GAL volunteers in your courtroom?
 - How are CASA/GAL volunteers assigned?
 - What do you think the state organization can provide to improve volunteer advocacy?
- The primary contact person for juvenile/family court judges statewide, if there is one. This might be a staff attorney at the Administrative Office of the Courts or the state court administrator. There may be an organization of juvenile/family court judges or a chair of a juvenile committee.
 - What do juvenile/family court judges want from CASA/GAL advocacy?
 - How can the state CASA/GAL organization best meet judges who do not have CASA/GAL programs?
- The Court Improvement Program (CIP) coordinator in your state (abanet.org/child/cipcontactlist.doc to find state contact)
 - How has the state CASA/GAL organization been involved with court improvement?
 - What is the current CIP plan?
- The head of the child protective services (CPS) agency
 - What has the relationship been between the CASA/GAL organization and CPS?
 - Are there any areas we need to work on?
- The Children's Justice Act grant administrator, VOCA grant administrator, and any other common grantor for local programs
- Other state CASA/GAL directors
- Foster Parents Association
- Child Abuse Prevention Organization, frequently a chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America (preventchildabuse.org to find local chapters).
- Kids Count project coordinator (aecf.org/kidscount/contacts.htm to find local contact)
- Juvenile crime prevention people – Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) coordinator (ojjdp.ncjrs.org/titlev/grant.html to find local contact)
- Citizen Review Panels
- Children's Advocacy Centers (nca-online.org/ to find local contacts)
- Legislative children and youth committee chairs (or most relevant committee; might be judiciary or other)
- Governor's office liaison for human services

With each of these people, ask them who else you should be meeting.

Terms & Acronyms for the New Director

If you have not worked in child welfare or with a CASA/GAL program previously, take some time to become familiar with the language commonly used. The most helpful and comprehensive resource will be the glossary of the *Volunteer Training Curriculum*. For more information on laws, see Chapter Two of the *Volunteer Training Curriculum*.

Common Acronyms in the CASA/GAL Network

CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
GAL	Guardian ad litem. Guardian ad litem means a guardian appointed for a special purpose under the law. Federal law requires children to have a GAL appointed when they are in court for abuse or neglect. Some states have attorneys in the GAL role, while others use lay volunteers (called either GAL or CASA volunteers). Where volunteers are used in the GAL role, they are teamed with or represented by attorney advocates.
ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Act. This act, Public Law 105-89, passed in 1997, set strict timelines for permanency for children.
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Public Law 93-247, passed in 1974 and amended in 1996 and 2003, requires that every state have a mechanism for reporting and investigating child abuse, and for appointing a GAL for every child. The GAL may be an attorney or CASA volunteer, and shall have received training appropriate for their role.
CPS	Child Protective Services – this is the general term used by National CASA for the child welfare agency, but it likely has a different name (and acronym, no doubt) in your state.
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act. Enacted as PL 95-608 in 1978 to protect the rights of Indian children. It affirms the right of the Tribe to intervene and sets placement preferences and standards of proof for Indian children.
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
ICPC	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
MEPA	Multi-ethnic Placement Act. Passed in 1994 to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the placement of foster children.
PIP	Program Improvement Plans are the remediation plans required of state CPS agencies to address outcomes or systemic factors not in compliance with federal requirements as determined by the Child and Family Service Review.

- SACWIS** Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System. This is a case management tool used by state CPS agencies, each of which have a slightly different system (and acronym).
- SANCA** Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act
- SCHIP** State Children's Health Insurance Program. Health insurance programs for otherwise uninsured children. Programs vary state to state in eligibility and services.
- TANF** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Replaced the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Intended as a temporary source of aid while encouraging parents to work.
- TPR** Termination of parental rights

Welcome to this position and thank you for taking on this important work!

Chapter 1

Role of the State Organization

The phone rings. It is a local program director who has discovered that her office lacks a transition plan in the event of her absence. Do any other programs in the state have one they would be willing to share?

History of State CASA/GAL Organizations

The National CASA Association was organized in 1982, with the office opening in 1984. The first meeting of state organizations occurred in 1987. This is how it was reported in the Delaware Family Court newsletter (August, 1987):

On July 23 and 24, 1987, the National CASA Association sponsored a two-day meeting in Washington, DC for directors of statewide CASA/GAL programs. Representatives from Florida, Connecticut, Arizona, Utah, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Delaware met with Linda Selsor, Executive Director, and Beth Waid the Assistant Director of National CASA. The group discussed such issues as the development of statewide CASA systems, program relationships with National CASA, program accreditation, interstate compact systems for CASA programs, program management and administration problems, and the role of CASA in influencing change.

All of the programs attending this meeting were court-based state-administered programs, where the state organization was established first and had the duty to develop local offices under the supervision of the state organization.

Note: As of 2003, the average state-administered program was 18 years old, while the average nonprofit state organization was ten years old. The National CASA Association Annual State Program Survey, 2002, p. 5.

By the next year, when the group met in Miami, there were approximately 15 representatives. Nationally in 1988, 377 programs in 47 states had 13,000 volunteers serving 50,000 children. During this period in many parts of the country, individual nonprofit CASA/GAL organizations were developing without the support or coordination of state organizations. These programs formed informal networks to share ideas and support one another. These loosely organized state groups gathered for four primary reasons: to establish standards, to develop strong links with the court, to participate in joint training and for legislative advocacy. Many state organizations were developed by local program directors to help fill the common needs identified by local programs.

In 1989, the state directors met again at a critical juncture for child welfare in America. The National CASA Association newsletter, *The Connection*, reported (“State CASA Directors Discuss Issues”, Fall 1989.):

Representatives from 26 state CASA organizations will be taking a look at issues affecting growth and development of the National CASA network when they meet for National CASA’s third annual State Director’s Conference, November 9-11 in South Lake Tahoe, CA.

The meeting, hosted and subsidized by the National CASA Association, will explore topics such as state-based advocacy, data collection, statewide standards, improving minority outreach, developing funding for statewide organizations and program performance evaluations.

State CASA Directors will also be invited to sit in on the November 11 meeting of the National CASA Board of Directors, which is being held this year in conjunction with the state conference.

According to National CASA Executive Director Beth Waid, “this will be an invaluable opportunity to establish a dialog between the Board, the National CASA staff and the State Directors to unify our efforts for children. Our national Policy Committee will be asking the Board to support a National Legislative Agenda for the first time.”

The Association will ask the group to pass resolutions supporting the Young Americans Act (HR 1492), the National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges’ proposed amendments to P.L. 93-247, the law requiring a guardian ad litem for every child who comes into the system.

Different Types of State CASA/GAL Organizations

There are many successful models of state CASA/GAL organizations, but there are five main models:

Five Models of State CASA/GAL Organizations (As of 2002)	
Type of Program	% of National CASA Network
State Administered Program (SAP) Providing Direct Service	15%
State Administered Program (SAP) NOT Providing Direct Services	13%
Nonprofit Organization (NPO) Providing Direct Service	7%
Nonprofit Organization (NPO) NOT Providing Direct Service	54%
Informal Networks of Local Programs	11%

State-administered programs have state CASA/GAL organizations as part of the state government, most often housed in the Administrative Office of the Courts or in a relevant Commission. Over half of them provide direct services: they are directly responsible for recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers to advocate for children and for supervising the staff of local program sites.

By contrast, the majority of nonprofit state organizations do not provide direct services. They typically work with independent local CASA/GAL programs which are governed by local boards of directors, counties, or umbrella organizations. The NPO state organization is governed by its own board.

In many states, the role of the CASA/GAL volunteer is addressed in state law. The role of the state organization may also be defined. In addition to having the role of the CASA/GAL volunteer defined, it is worthwhile to see where else CASA/GAL may be mentioned. Examples include who must be invited to staff or family-centered meetings, who must receive copies of court reports, etc.

According to the National CASA Association Annual State Program Survey (2002), the median number of staff for state CASA/GAL organizations was 1.9 full-time equivalents; this means half of state organizations had fewer than 1.9 staff members. Programs that provide direct services (usually SAPs) have significantly larger staffs (as many as 60). Nearly all state offices receive funding from the National CASA Association. Other common sources of revenue include the state, individual donors, corporate contributions, foundations and other grants. More information on funding is available in the chapter on fund development. As of 2003, the median revenue for a state organization was \$217,260. For NPOs, the median was \$141,800 and for SAPs the median was \$828,500. Twenty-five percent of state organizations reported revenue under \$103,300 and the top 25% reported revenue over \$796,000.

More information about state organization structure, size and services offered is available from the annual report of the survey of state offices (available at casanet.org).

What is GAL?

GAL stands for Guardian ad litem, which means a guardian appointed for a specific purpose under the law. Federal law requires all children in court because of abuse or neglect have a GAL appointed to speak for their best interests. In some states, the CASA/GAL volunteer is the GAL (though sometimes the volunteer is called a CASA volunteer) and is typically a party to the case. The GAL may call and question witnesses, introduce evidence and have the right to appeal. A GAL volunteer is typically represented by an attorney for the program.

In other states, the CASA volunteer is a “friend of the court”, meaning that he/she may testify and submit a court report but is not a party to the case and cannot call or question witnesses. In states where the CASA volunteer is not the GAL, an attorney is appointed to serve as the GAL. Some states have consistent statewide programs overseeing the attorney GAL, while in some states this is handled by local jurisdictions.

CASA/GAL programs that are not routinely represented by counsel are required to have access to legal counsel should the need arise. An attorney on the board or advisory council usually provides this assistance, but there may be an attorney in the community who is willing to assist when necessary. Even state organizations that do not provide direct services

need access to legal counsel for assistance with legal questions raised by local programs. This may be an attorney on the state board or advisory council or may be an attorney in a state agency or umbrella organization for the state office.

Why a State CASA/GAL Organization?

State CASA/GAL organizations provide essential services and training to local programs or offices and can facilitate communication and sharing of best practices among their local programs. Because state organizations are usually in close communication with local programs, they are well situated to understand local issues, regional interests/groupings and provide timely and appropriate technical assistance. In response to local needs, state organizations also develop and administer state standards, which may be more detailed than national ones.

State CASA/GAL organizations can provide some services more efficiently or effectively than local offices. For example, state offices often track state legislation and policy, collect and analyze statewide data, coordinate statewide public relations efforts and provide a conference for volunteers, local board members and local program staff. State organization staff also represents the network on statewide task forces and work groups, ensuring that the CASA/GAL voice is heard.

In addition, state CASA/GAL organization assistance is critical for new program development. Planning teams, new boards and new program directors typically require a great deal of technical assistance. State CASA/GAL organizations can provide technical support through frequent visits and easy accessibility by phone or email. In addition, the state organization may have a better understanding of critical local issues or politics that may affect the start-up process, and may already have a relationship with the judge, with the department, and with other individuals or organizations that will be important to the local program. Because state CASA/GAL staff is very familiar with other local programs, they can provide information and examples of how things have worked in other nearby communities and set the new director up with an appropriate mentor.

Another important role of state CASA/GAL organizations is to be an effective and reliable conduit of information. State staff helps insure that detailed and complete information from National CASA is relayed to local programs. State offices also gather information, formally and informally, from local programs to help identify trends in their state and pass those aggregate concerns to the national office. State staff and the National CASA program specialists work together with local programs to ensure that local programs operate in compliance with national and state standards and ultimately that the children served through the CASA/GAL network are receiving quality volunteer advocacy.

Core Services Provided by State Organizations

The standards for State CASA/GAL Organizations call for state organizations to provide core services including:

- Create opportunities for communication, networking, sharing of information and support for CASA/GAL program staff.
- Provide current information regarding federal and state legislation, policy changes, trends in child welfare and court improvement and court decisions that impact the work of CASA/GAL programs.
- Increase awareness of CASA/GAL work and the needs of abused and neglected children by providing information to legislators, targeted groups and the public.
- Provide information and assistance to local programs to help them obtain funding.
- Act as the state's representative at meetings sponsored by National CASA or other organizations.

These core services are in addition to what is perhaps the most critical service of the state office: assisting local programs and helping develop new CASA programs.

How states provide these core services will vary and CASA/GAL offices may provide additional services. Many states provide an annual conference for volunteers in addition to providing more frequent meetings or trainings for local program staff and/or volunteers. Some states provide recognition for outstanding programs, volunteers, judges, or others. The state organization represents CASA/GAL on state level committees. Many state offices play a very active role in the Quality Assurance process.

Note: The National CASA Association conducts an annual survey of state offices and the services they provide; results are available at casanet.org or from a program specialist.

How does a state organization decide to offer services beyond the core ones? National CASA standards for state organizations raise a number of important questions to address:

- There is a need identified by the local programs. This may be determined through surveys of local programs or from the strategic planning process.
- The organization has adequate financial and staff resources. This is the most significant limiting factor of state offices. Adding a new service may mean eliminating a current one. Is that acceptable? Is the state office still providing the core services?
- The service can be provided by the state organization more effectively and efficiently than by local programs or National CASA.
- Is the new service consistent with the state organization's mission?
- Does it help the organization achieve that mission, or does it distract from it?

What about having two state organizations?

National CASA recognizes only one state organization per state. Having a single state organization simplifies services to local programs and communication with other agencies. It also reduces the administrative costs so that more resources can be focused on the core services of the state organization. In rare cases, there may be both a state-administered CASA/GAL organization and a nonprofit office. The state organization may be responsible for administering state funds, providing technical assistance to local programs and for quality assurance while the nonprofit entity may be responsible for other fundraising efforts and perhaps public relations.

Having more than one state organization has proved to be problematic in several states. If a state chooses to go this direction, it is critical to ensure that roles and responsibilities are absolutely clear and that resources are available to support two offices. There should be a written agreement between the offices and local programs must know which office to call depending upon the particular situation. It is also important to have very good communication so that local programs or outside agencies cannot “answer shop” in search of the answer they want.

State-administered-programs may be ineligible to fundraise in certain states. In this case, having a small and clearly defined auxiliary may be useful. This auxiliary will likely not have any staff members and have minimal overhead expenses. For example, the by-laws of the Delaware auxiliary specifically state that the purpose is to support the state CASA program and help with recruitment, retention and recognition of CASA volunteers. The funds are distributed to local offices based strictly on the number of volunteers and may be used for purchasing advertising, providing a volunteer recognition event, providing special in-service volunteer training or paying expenses such as mileage and telephone costs for volunteers.

The state CASA/GAL organization will want to look carefully at how the auxiliary is governed. There may be state laws, rules or policies about whether staff members of the state organization, for example, can be on the board of the auxiliary. Local program volunteers or staff should not be on the board if local organizations are receiving funding from the auxiliary, although the auxiliary will want to seek their input. By the same token, state staff members should not be on the board if the auxiliary funds the state organization. The auxiliary should provide clear guidelines about how funds raised are distributed to local programs and how the state organization and local programs may spend them.

Sample by-laws for a CASA auxiliary are available in the resource section of Chapter 5: Resource Development.

Mission

The state CASA/GAL organization’s mission should communicate why the state organization exists and what the organization does. The mission of the state organization should be consistent with the mission of the National CASA Association:

The mission is to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are involved in the juvenile courts. The National CASA Association works with state and local CASA and volunteer guardian ad litem programs to promote and support quality volunteer advocacy to help assure each child a safe, permanent and nurturing home.

The mission should be the basis for all decisions about what the state organization does; anytime the state office is considering taking on new activities, ask the question, “Does this help us accomplish our mission?” The mission is normally communicated in a brief statement developed by the board of directors (for NPOs) or by the governing body or advisory council (for SAPs).

The mission statement should not be rewritten every year, but it should be reexamined every few years to ensure that it is still appropriate. A logical time to do this is as part of the regular strategic planning process.

Samples of state CASA/GAL office mission statements are available in the resource section of this chapter.

Code of Ethics

The state CASA/GAL office should have a code of ethics approved by the governing body. This code should affirm the organization’s commitment to operate in an honest, fair, professional and humane manner and be an inclusive organization reflecting the diversity of the state. The code should address conflicts of interest, accountability and delegation of authority. It should prohibit employees, board members and consultants from having a financial interest in the organization. A sample code of ethics is available in the resource section of this chapter.

Developing Policies and Procedures

Written policies and procedures are important for any CASA/GAL organization. Whether the state organization has multiple staff or one person, clear guidelines and documentation are essential. Having clear procedures eases staff transitions and allows the office to operate effectively should the director have an extended absence.

Policies and procedures should include basic information about office operations:

- Job descriptions and personnel requirements
- Staff orientation
- Initial and on-going staff training opportunities and requirements
- Technical assistance to and questions from local programs
- Volunteer referrals to local programs
- Complaints from or about local programs
- Electronic communications (for example: email, web page and listserv policies)
- Phone/Voice Mail
- Local Staff Changes
- Travel – in state and out of state
- Budgets/purchasing
- Program staff meetings
- Board/advisory council meetings
- Quality Assurance process
- Supervising staff & interns
- Annual Calendar

Oversight for Local Programs

The level of oversight for local programs will vary according to the history and structure of the state CASA/GAL organization and whether the state office has a direct supervisory relationship and/or has served as a funder to the local program.

In some states, the state organization has statutory authority and responsibility to provide oversight of local programs. If there is statutory authority, the state director needs to read and be knowledgeable about the law and keep a copy available for easy reference. In many states, statutory authority exists but is not well defined.

Learn the history of the state organization's role in oversight of local programs. Some areas to explore include:

- What data has the state organization collected from local programs and for what purposes?
- How has the state organization handled complaints about local programs? Is there a written policy about this?
- What role has the state organization played in Quality Assurance?
- Does the state organization directly supervise the staff of the local programs? If not, who does?
- What is the relationship between the state organization and the boards of directors or umbrella organizations of the local programs (where applicable)?
- Have conflicts arisen between the state organization and local programs over the question of oversight?

Asking these questions will help state staff understand the organizational history of the program and identify problems as well as successes from the past. This can lead to developing best practice in the area of local program oversight.

Working with National CASA

National CASA provides advance notice to state directors of policy changes, major events, new initiatives and upcoming requests to local programs. Depending on the content, information could come from any department at National CASA. Examples of advance notice might include announcements of a technology development from Information Services, pending legislation from Government Relations or a new ad campaign from Communications. Sharing information with the state organization first provides a forum for questions and clarification before dissemination to the entire network.

However, the primary point of contact between the state CASA/GAL office and National CASA is the program specialist. The role of a program specialist is to provide technical assistance and support to state offices and local programs within a region. Each National CASA program specialist covers a specific region of the country. A list of program specialists and states included in their respective regions can be found at casanet.org.

Program specialists answer questions, research information, share resources from other programs and help resolve complaints to the national office. The program specialist also consults with the state director on questions of provisional and full membership for new programs.

Whether a question from a local program goes to a state director or a National CASA program specialist depends on the type of question and on the availability, timing, resources and administrative structure of the state office. Programs that are National CASA grantees will typically have more contact with the program specialist than other programs. As a general rule, program specialists will share substantive questions or concerns they receive with the state director. If a state director gets questions more appropriate for National CASA, the caller should be referred to the program specialist.

For more information on working with the National CASA Association, see Chapter 12.

Technical Assistance to Local Programs or Staff

One of the most important, rewarding and time-consuming tasks of the state office is to provide technical assistance to local programs or staff. Questions can come in a wide range from, “How do I get my board to fundraise?” to “Can a volunteer get TB from interviewing an infected person?”

It is critical to let programs know how to get assistance from the state organization. Who should they call? When? Is it best to send an email message? How do they contact the state office in an emergency, especially if it is outside normal work hours?

One of the most effective means of providing technical assistance is to provide in-person meetings with local program directors or other staff. Meetings can be anything from statewide trainings lasting several days to small regional drive-in meetings; meetings planned by a committee of local program directors insures the gatherings meet the needs of the local directors. Include program-sharing time at these meetings for local program staff to present questions or concerns as well as best practices. Consider recruiting a local staff person to facilitate the discussion and keep it moving. In-person meetings encourage programs to share ideas and make it more likely they will communicate by phone and email after the meeting. Meetings also enable state organization staff to have contact with programs and to provide technical assistance on matters of broad interest or concern.

When possible, encourage programs to help one another with technical assistance. One common way of facilitating program collaboration is to set up a listserv where a question can be sent to all programs simultaneously. See Chapter 9 for more information on listserv technology.

Facilitating a mentor program between new and experienced local staff is a valuable tool in helping new directors through their first year (or whatever time period seems appropriate). If possible, have the new director visit their mentor, observe court hearings and participate in at least one volunteer training session. It is helpful if the state organization can provide money to reimburse mileage. Ask the more experienced director to check in with the new director on a regular basis. This does not substitute for state organization support, but gives a new director an additional resource.

Include Tribal Court CASA programs with technical assistance provided at meetings for program staff, on state listservs and on all email and regular mailing correspondence. See Chapter 13 for more information on working with Tribal Court programs.

Consider establishing a resource library or information center for local programs to check out various support materials (for example board development literature or fundraising

videotapes). The state office may also want to post materials on their website and also refer programs to the program, fundraising and volunteer management resources available at casanet.org.

Keep National CASA printed resources available in the state office to easily refer local program staff to their contents. The most commonly used National CASA resources are *Achieving Our Mission*, *Guide to Program Development*, *Standards for Local Programs*, and the *Volunteer Training Curriculum*. Also used frequently are publications including *Resource Development: Guide for local CASA/GAL programs*, the *Communications Manual*, and *Measuring Child Outcomes*.

There are likely to be questions that stump even the most experienced state director. In this situation, contact a National CASA program specialist, put the question on the state directors' listserv (the email list for communicating with other state directors), or call on other local resources. For more information on Working with Local Programs see Chapter 2.

Confidentiality

A confidentiality policy is important for state staff. There are several ways to address this question. First, it may be that the same statutes that cover local staff and volunteers also cover state staff members. If not, confidentiality should be addressed in the personnel manual and the code of ethics and/or state staff members should be required to take an oath of confidentiality.

Local program staff and others need to know that the state office takes confidentiality seriously—both as a model and also to know that it is safe to discuss confidential questions with the staff. Part of the role of the state office is to uphold the credibility and dignity of the CASA/GAL mission.

Confidentiality frequently becomes a challenge in public relations or fundraising efforts. Current CASA/GAL children cannot be placed in the public eye. The state organization can create composite case scenarios for state and local program staff to use in telling the CASA/GAL story. If the state organization does not provide CASA/GAL advocacy directly, ask local programs for success stories, either as part of the regular reporting they do for the state organization or at a meeting of local program staff. Keep local programs informed about how the information will be used and then create composite stories that are accurate in their portrayal of CASA/GAL advocacy but are not case-specific.

Promoting Diversity and Cultural Competency

The state office must show leadership in promoting cultural competency and network diversity. One of the greatest challenges of the CASA/GAL network is to provide culturally sensitive advocacy and to recruit staff, board members, and volunteers who reflect the communities and the children served.

The National CASA diversity philosophy statement reads:

Building on the National CASA Association's legacy of quality advocacy, we acknowledge the need to understand, respect and celebrate diversity including race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language and the presence of a sensory, mental or physical disability. We also

value diversity of viewpoints, life experiences, talents and ideas regardless of a person's socioeconomic status.

A diverse CASA/GAL network helps us to better understand and promote the well-being of the children we serve. Embracing diversity makes us better advocates by providing fresh ideas and perspectives for problem solving in our multicultural world, enabling us to respond to each child's unique needs.

National CASA is proud to be a leader in creating and supporting the best possible child-focused advocacy. We pledge to:

- Hold ourselves accountable to provide measurable, child-focused advocacy.
- Represent children's voices to the court and advocate for their best interests.
- Partner with communities to find safe, permanent and nurturing homes for the children we serve.
- Promote a diverse CASA/GAL network of board, staff and volunteers.

The first step in promoting diversity is to find out where the state organization stands on the cultural competency continuum. Are state organization staff members sensitive to diversity issues? What are the demographics of the state as a whole and have there been significant changes in recent years in those demographics? Is the state office staff reflective of the community? Is cultural competency a part of state CASA/GAL organization's values statement, strategic plan, and staff training?

Next, find out about the communities the local programs serve. Who are the children served by local programs? Who are the volunteers? Are they men, women, older, younger, wealthier, poorer, white, African American, Latino/Latina? What languages do they speak? Are there particular diversity challenges in given communities?

Seeking and offering consistent education on cultural competency will help both state and local program staff members develop skills and demonstrate leadership. Who are the speakers if the state organization provides regional or statewide trainings or conferences? What are the topics? Do the topics reflect the community served and address topics of cultural competency? At meetings and training for program staff, are issues of diversity routinely included? What about in the newsletter and other publications of the state organization? Do both the text and the pictures reflect the organization's commitment to diversity?

If the state CASA/GAL organization does not have the resources to provide training on cultural competency, it is wise to partner with other organizations. These include:

- The National CASA Hispanic/Latino Advisory Committee (casanet.org/program-services/lhac/index.htm).
- The National CASA African American Advisory Committee (casanet.org/program-services/aaac/index.htm).
- The National CASA Tribal Court Advisory Committee (casanet.org/program-services/tcac/index.htm).
- A state or local diversity commission or committee
- The National Conference for Community and Justice (nccj.org)

- National minority organizations (contact information available at casanet.org)
- Churches or fraternity or sorority groups whose membership primarily consists of a group underrepresented in staff, boards, and volunteers.

Note: Encourage local programs to share what has worked in terms of increasing cultural competency and diversity of volunteers. Local programs may need encouragement to develop creative strategies. For example, one program may successfully recruit monolingual Spanish-speaking volunteers to assist in recruiting bilingual volunteers. That program could share with other programs their success and how they have achieved it in a program staff meeting, in the state newsletter or in a session at the state conference.

Developing Best Practices & Model Policies

As the state CASA/GAL organization sees excellence in local programs, it is important to document and share this information with other local programs. If a local program does something well, the state organization can help programs share successes and help other programs replicate the practice.

If a local program has an excellent policy or written document, the state organization could place that (with the local program's permission) on the state website or in an operations handbook for local programs. Programmatic success can be shared as a feature on the website or in a newsletter. Local programs should be invited to share their best practices at program staff meetings and at the state conference and to submit programs for the National CASA conference. See Chapter 15: Awards and Recognition for more information.

It may be helpful to share best practices from other state programs as well. The National CASA program specialist for the region may be able to help identify examples of best practice; other state directors may also know of appropriate examples.



Additional Resources:

National CASA Annual Survey of State Organizations

CASAnet.org

National Conference for Community and Justice
(nccj.org)

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with the role of the state CASA/GAL office:

- Does the state organization supervise local offices and/or volunteers directly?
- What is the administrative structure of the state organization? Is it a state administered program (SAP) or a non-profit organization (NPO)?
- Does the organization have a mission statement? Who wrote it and when?
- Do CASA/GAL volunteers have party status or are they “friends of the court”? Is this consistent statewide?
- Is CASA/GAL advocacy addressed in state law?
- What is the funding history of the state organization and local programs?
- What rules of court apply in CASA/GAL cases? Are there local or state court rules governing hearings, priority of courts, continuances or time deadlines?

Role of the State Organization Resources & Sample Documents

National CASA Association Needs Assessment Template for State Offices

Sample Mission Statements

Sample Code of Ethics

Sample Legislation Creating CASA—SAP

Sample Legislation Creating CASA—NPO

Sample Legislation Creating CASA—Hybrid

Sample Legislation—Role of the Volunteer

Sample Roles of the State Organization

Sample State CASA/GAL Organization Survey of Local Program Needs

The state organization exists to meet the needs of local CASA/GAL programs. Please complete the following questionnaire to provide us the information we need to better serve you. Thank you.

Program _____

Number of Program Staff: Full time ____ **Part time:** ____

Number of Volunteers: _____

Number of Children Currently Served: _____

Current Annual Budget: _____

1. The following is a list of services/activities offered by state CASA/GAL organizations to benefit local programs. Based on the needs of your local program, please check all those that you would like to have offered by this organization.

- Funding for local programs
- Fund-raising activities to benefit all programs
- Assistance with grant writing
- Coordination of regular meeting for program staff
- Conference calls with program directors
- Website
- Newsletter
- Volunteer recruitment activities
- Volunteer recruitment materials
- Management training for program staff
- Board training for local boards
- Computer training
- Volunteer training materials
- Training for volunteers
- Technical assistance on program and volunteer management issues
- State standards for local programs
- Monitoring programs for compliance with national standards
- Monitoring programs for compliance with state standards
- Technical assistance with new program development
- Legislative advocacy
- Public awareness activities
- Representation on state committees/task forces relevant to CASA programs
- Linkage with other state child advocacy organizations
- Data collection

Local Program Survey

2. Please list services/activities (not in list above) that you would like your state organization to provide:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Based on the needs of your program, from the lists above, indicate the five services/activities that should be the top priorities for your state organization:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

4. How often would you like the state organization staff to contact your program? _____

To visit your program? _____

5. How are you willing to support your state organization? (Check all that apply):

- Operate in compliance with state standards
- Submit statistical information as requested
- Utilize resource material
- Participate in networking opportunities, training events, conferences, meetings, etc.
- Serve on the state board
- Serve on a committee
- Pay program membership dues
- Pay individual membership dues
- Make an individual financial contribution

6. Comments/Suggestions:

Sample State Organization Mission Statements

For programs that do not provide services:

The Arkansas CASA Association promotes and supports local programs providing qualified volunteer advocates to help abused and neglected children in juvenile dependency-neglect proceedings reach safe, permanent homes.

Texas CASA advocates for abused and neglected children in the court system through the development, growth and support of local CASA programs.

For programs that do provide services:

The mission of the North Carolina Guardian ad Litem program is to provide trained independent advocates to represent and promote the best interests of abused, neglected, and dependent children in the state court system and to work towards a plan that ensures that these children are in a safe, permanent home.

For a state office within an umbrella organization, a statement of guiding principles (from Oregon):

Every abused or neglected child in a juvenile court proceeding is entitled to a CASA by law. It is vital that a CASA volunteer be an independent voice as a party to the case. To fulfill this mandate, more trained, culturally diverse, empowered, and highly committed volunteer advocates are needed. Volunteers need training, support and supervision by accountable local programs that are adequately staffed and funded. CASA programs work best with clearly articulated state and national standards, and within a cooperative network of local programs with strong state coordination and oversight.

Sample Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics, adopted by the Board of Directors on xx/xx/xxxx, provides staff and board members of the state CASA/GAL organization guidelines for professional behavior and ethical conduct.

The state CASA/GAL organization is committed to operating in an honest, fair, professional, and humane manner. We are an inclusive organization which seeks to reflect the diversity of our state.

1. CASA/GAL staff, board members, and consultants shall avoid having any conflict of interest with the organization. Where such a conflict occurs, the individual in question shall reveal the conflict and recuse from all action or activities related to that conflict.
2. CASA/GAL staff, board members and consultants shall not have a financial interest in the organization beyond normal pay for staff and consultants.
3. The Board of Directors, through the Chair of the Board or his/her designee, shall select, supervise, evaluate performance of and, if necessary, release the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall select, supervise, evaluate performance of, and, if necessary, release any other employee of the organization. The Chair of the Board or his/her designee shall be the primary contact on the Board of Directors for the Executive Director.
4. The organization shall annually contract for a financial audit, within three months of the end of the fiscal year.
5. The organization shall publish an annual report summarizing the financial situation and the services provided by the state CASA/GAL organization. This annual report shall be published within three months of the end of the fiscal year.
6. CASA/GAL staff, board members and consultants shall keep information regarding cases confidential, sharing necessary information only with appropriate persons.
7. In carrying out their responsibilities, CASA/GAL staff, board members and consultants shall treat all individuals with dignity and respect.
8. CASA/GAL staff, board members and consultants shall use authority appropriately, shall avoid the appearance of impropriety, and shall not use the position to promote personal gain.

Adapted from Minnesota Association of Guardians Ad Litem, Inc.

Sample Legislation for State Administered Program

§7B-1200. Office of the Guardian ad Litem Services established.

There is established within the Administrative Office of the Courts an Office of Guardian ad Litem Services to provide services in accordance with G.S. 7B-601 to abused, neglected, or dependent juveniles involved in judicial proceedings, and to assure that all participants in these proceedings are adequately trained to carry out their responsibilities. Each local program shall consist of volunteer guardians ad litem, at least one program attorney, a program coordinator who is a paid State employee, and any clerical staff as the Administrative Office of the Courts in consultation with the local program deems necessary. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall adopt rules and regulations necessary and appropriate for the administration of the program.

§7B-1201. Implementation and Administration.

- a) Local Programs. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall, in cooperation with each chief district court judge and other personnel in the district court district, implement and administer the program mandated by this Article. Where a local program has not yet been established in accordance with this Article, the district court district shall operate a guardian ad litem program approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts.
- b) Advisory Committee Established. The Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts shall appoint a Guardian ad Litem Advisory Committee consisting of at least five members to advise the Office of Guardian ad Litem Services in matters related to this program. The members of the Advisory Committee shall receive the same per diem and reimbursement for travel expenses as members of State boards and commissions generally.

§7B-601. Appointment and Duties of Guardian ad litem.

- a) When in a petition a juvenile is alleged to be abused or neglected, the court shall appoint a guardian ad litem to represent the juvenile. When a juvenile is alleged to be dependent, the court may appoint a guardian ad litem to represent the juvenile. The juvenile is a party in all actions under this Subchapter. The guardian ad litem and attorney advocate have standing to represent the juvenile in all actions under this Subchapter where they have been appointed. The appointment shall be made pursuant to the program established by Article 12 of this Chapter unless representation is otherwise provided pursuant to G.S. 7B-1202 or G.S. 7B-1203. The appointment shall terminate when the permanent plan has been achieved for the juvenile and approved by the court. The court may reappoint the guardian ad litem pursuant to a showing of good cause upon motion of any party, including the guardian ad litem, or of the court. In every case where a nonattorney is appointed as a guardian ad litem, an attorney shall be appointed in the case in order to assure protection of the juvenile's legal rights throughout the proceedings. The duties of the guardian ad litem program shall be to make an investigation to determine the facts, the needs of the juvenile, and the available resources within the family and community to meet those needs; to facilitate, when appropriate, the settlement of disputed issues; to offer evidence and examine witnesses at adjudication; to explore options with the court at the dispositional hearing; to conduct follow-up investigations to insure that the orders of the court are being properly executed; to report to the court when the needs of the juvenile are not being met; and to protect and promote the best interest of the juvenile until formally relieved of the responsibility by the court.

Sample Legislation for State Administered Program

- b) The court may authorize the guardian ad litem to accompany the juvenile to court in any criminal action wherein the juvenile may be called on to testify in a matter relating to abuse.
- c) The guardian ad litem has the authority to obtain any information or reports, whether or not confidential, that may in the guardian ad litem's opinion be relevant to the case. No privilege other than the attorney-client privilege may be invoked to prevent the guardian ad litem and the court from obtaining such information. The confidentiality of the information or reports shall be respected by the guardian ad litem, and no disclosure of any information or reports shall be made to anyone except by order of the court or unless otherwise provided by law.

Sample Legislation for Nonprofit Programs

SENATE BILL 96-030 (1996)

BY SENATORS Wham, Johnson, Matsunaka, Powers R., and Weddig; also REPRESENTATIVES George, DeGette, Hagedorn, Kaufman, Knox, Kreutz, Leyba, Lyle, Mace, McPherson, Morrison, Owen, Schwarz, Swenson, Taylor, and Tool.

CONCERNING A COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. 19-1-103, Colorado Revised Statutes, 1986 Repl. Vol., as amended, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF THE FOLLOWING NEW SUBSECTIONS to read:

19-1-103. Definitions. As used in this title, unless the context otherwise requires:

(34.3) "COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE" OR "CASA VOLUNTEER" MEANS A VOLUNTEER APPOINTED BY A COURT PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF PART 2 OF THIS ARTICLE TO ASSIST IN ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN.

(34.5) "COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM" OR "CASA PROGRAM" MEANS A PROGRAM ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF PART 2 OF THIS ARTICLE.

SECTION 2. 19-1-111 (5), Colorado Revised Statutes, 1986 Repl. Vol., as amended, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SUBSECTION to read:

19-1-111. Appointment of guardian ad litem. (5) THE GUARDIAN AD LITEM SHALL COOPERATE WITH ANY CASA VOLUNTEER

Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.

APPOINTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 19-1-206.

SECTION 3. Article 1 of title 19, Colorado Revised Statutes, 1986 Repl. Vol., as amended, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

19-1-111.5. Court-appointment special advocate. THE COURT MAY APPOINT A CASA VOLUNTEER PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF PART 2 OF THIS ARTICLE IF THE COURT FINDS THAT THE APPOINTMENT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD. THE COURT MAY DIRECT THE MANNER IN WHICH A CASA VOLUNTEER AND ANY GUARDIAN AD LITEM APPOINTED IN A CASE SHALL COLLABORATE.

SECTION 4. Article 1 of title 19, Colorado Revised Statutes, 1986 Repl. Vol., as amended, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW PART to read:

**PART 2
COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM**

19-1-201. Legislative intent. (1) (a) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT QUALITY REPRESENTATION FOR CHILDREN REQUIRES LEGAL EXPERTISE AND THOROUGH CASE MONITORING.

(b) THE WORK OF COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN.
PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GUARDIANS AD LITEM AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS CAN ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF REPRESENTATION FOR CHILDREN.

(c) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER FINDS AND DECLARES THAT THE STATE SHOULD PROMOTE VOLUNTEERISM AND THE EXERCISE OF RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP TO ENABLE MEMBERS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO BECOME ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN.

(2) THEREFORE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY AUTHORIZES THE CREATION OF VOLUNTEER COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAMS IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN.

19-1-202. Creation of court-appointed special advocate programs. (1) CASA PROGRAMS MAY BE ESTABLISHED IN EACH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OR ANY TWO OR MORE ADJACENT JUDICIAL DISTRICTS AND SHALL OPERATE PURSUANT TO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CHIEF JUDGE OF THE JUDICIAL DISTRICT AND THE CASA PROGRAM. THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SHALL IDENTIFY THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ANY CASA VOLUNTEER APPOINTED IN THE JUDICIAL DISTRICT AND SHALL INDICATE WHETHER ANY CASA VOLUNTEER MAY BE MADE A PARTY TO THE ACTION.

(2) A CASA PROGRAM ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS PART 2 SHALL:

(a) BE A COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION THAT SCREENS, TRAINS, AND SUPERVISES CASA VOLUNTEERS TO ADVOCATE FOR THE BEST INTERESTS OF

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CHILDREN IN ACTIONS BROUGHT PURSUANT TO THIS TITLE AND TITLES 14 AND 15, C.R.S.;

(b) BE A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING OF THE COLORADO CASA ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL CASA ASSOCIATION AND ADHERE TO THE GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY THOSE ASSOCIATIONS;

- (c) APPOINT A PROGRAM DIRECTOR WHO SHALL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITIES SET FORTH IN SECTION 19-1-203;
- (d) HAVE ADEQUATE SUPERVISORY AND SUPPORT STAFF WHO SHALL BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE, HOLD REGULAR CASE CONFERENCES WITH CASA VOLUNTEERS TO REVIEW CASE PROGRESS, AND CONDUCT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS FOR ALL CASA VOLUNTEERS;
- (e) PROVIDE STAFF AND CASA VOLUNTEERS WITH WRITTEN PROGRAM POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROCEDURES;
- (f) PROVIDE THE TRAINING REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SECTION 19-1-204; AND
- (f) ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN A CASA VOLUNTEER-TO-SUPERVISOR RATIO OF THIRTY-TO-ONE.

19-1-203. Program director. (1) THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CASA PROGRAM, INCLUDING RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, TRAINING, AND SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION OF STAFF AND CASA VOLUNTEERS.

(2) THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR SHALL SERVE AS A PROFESSIONAL LIAISON BETWEEN THE COURT AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES SERVING CHILDREN.

19-1-204. Training requirements. (1) ALL CASA VOLUNTEERS SHALL PARTICIPATE FULLY IN PRESERVICE TRAINING, INCLUDING INSTRUCTION ON RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, CULTURAL AWARENESS, CHILD DEVELOPMENT, THE JUVENILE COURT PROCESS, PERMANENCY PLANNING, VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, ADVOCACY, INFORMATION GATHERING, AND DOCUMENTATION. CASA VOLUNTEERS SHALL BE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN OBSERVATION OF COURT PROCEEDINGS PRIOR TO APPOINTMENT.

(2) ALL CASA VOLUNTEERS SHALL RECEIVE A TRAINING MANUAL THAT SHALL INCLUDE GUIDELINES FOR THEIR SERVICE AND DUTIES.

(3) EACH CASA PROGRAM SHALL PROVIDE A MINIMUM OF TEN HOURS OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING PER YEAR TO CASA VOLUNTEERS.

19-1-205. Selection of CASA volunteers. (1) EACH CASA PROGRAM SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS CONSISTENT WITH SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION, AND WITH THE COLORADO CASA ASSOCIATION AND NATIONAL CASA ASSOCIATION GUIDELINES GOVERNING QUALIFICATIONS AND SELECTION OF CASA VOLUNTEERS. EACH CASA PROGRAM'S REGULATIONS SHALL INCLUDE

PROVISIONS THAT QUALIFIED ADULT SHALL NOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BASED ON GENDER, SOCIOECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS, RACIAL, ETHNIC, OR AGE FACTORS.

- (2) THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR ANY PROSPECTIVE CASA VOLUNTEER ARE THAT HE OR SHE SHALL:
 - (a) BE AT LEAST TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER AND HAVE DEMONSTRATED AN INTEREST IN CHILDREN AND THEIR WELFARE;
 - (b) BE WILLING TO COMMIT TO THE COURT FOR A MINIMUM OF ONE YEAR OF SERVICE TO A CHILD;
 - (c) COMPLETE AN APPLICATION, INCLUDING PROVIDING BACKGROUND INFORMATION REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION;
 - (d) PARTICIPATE IN A SCREENING INTERVIEW;
 - (e) PARTICIPATE IN THE TRAINING REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SECTION 19-1-204; AND
 - (f) MEET OTHER QUALIFICATIONS AS DETERMINED BY THE CASA PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND THE CHIEF JUDGE OF THE JUDICIAL DISTRICT.
- (3) A PROSPECTIVE CASA VOLUNTEER'S APPLICATION SHALL INCLUDE:
 - (a) A COPY OF ANY CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD, CENTRAL REGISTRY RECORD, AND MOTOR VEHICLE RECORD;
 - (b) AT LEAST THREE REFERENCES WHO CAN ADDRESS HIS OR HER CHARACTER, JUDGMENT, AND SUITABILITY FOR THE POSITION; AND
 - (c) RECORDS FROM ANY OTHER JURISDICTIONS IN WHICH HE OR SHE RESIDED DURING THE ONE-YEAR TIME PERIOD PRIOR TO THE DATE OF THE APPLICATION IF THE PROSPECTIVE CASA VOLUNTEER HAS RESIDED IN THE STATE OF COLORADO FOR LESS THAN TWELVE MONTHS.

19-1-206. Appointment of CASA volunteers. (1) ANY JUDGE OR MAGISTRATE MAY APPOINT A CASA VOLUNTEER IN ANY ACTION BROUGHT PURSUANT TO THIS TITLE AND TITLES 14 AND 15, C.R.S., WHEN, IN THE OPINION OF THE JUDGE OR MAGISTRATE, A CHILD WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY SUCH ACTION REQUIRES SERVICES THAT A CASA VOLUNTEER CAN PROVIDE. AT THE DISCRETION OF THE JUDGE OR MAGISTRATE, A CASA VOLUNTEER MAY BE A PARTY TO THE ACTION IF SO PROVIDED FOR IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

- (2) A CASA VOLUNTEER SHALL BE APPOINTED AT THE EARLIEST

STAGES OF AN ACTION PURSUANT TO A COURT ORDER THAT GIVES HIM OR HER THE AUTHORITY TO REVIEW ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND INTERVIEW ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE CASE, INCLUDING PARENTS, OTHER PARTIES IN INTEREST, AND ANY OTHER PERSONS HAVING SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION

RELATING TO THE CHILD.

(3) THE CASA VOLUNTEER'S APPOINTMENT SHALL CONCLUDE:

- (a) WHEN THE COURT'S JURISDICTION OVER THE CHILD TERMINATES;
OR
- (b) UPON DISCHARGE BY THE COURT ON ITS OWN MOTION OR AT THE REQUEST OF THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF THE CASA PROGRAM TO WHICH THE CASA VOLUNTEER IS ASSIGNED.

19-1-207. Restrictions. (1) A CASA VOLUNTEER SHALL NOT:

- (a) ACCEPT ANY COMPENSATION FOR THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIS OR HER APPOINTMENT;
- (b) HAVE ANY ASSOCIATION THAT CREATES A CONFLICT OF INTEREST WITH HIS OR HER DUTIES;
- (c) BE RELATED TO ANY PARTY OR ATTORNEY INVOLVED IN A CASE;
- (c) BE EMPLOYED IN A POSITION THAT COULD RESULT IN A CONFLICT OF INTEREST OR GIVE RISE TO THE APPEARANCE OF A CONFLICT;
- (d) USE THE CASA VOLUNTEER POSITION TO SEEK OR ACCEPT GIFTS OR SPECIAL PRIVILEGES.

19-1-208. Duties of CASA volunteer. (1) Independent case investigation. UPON APPOINTMENT IN AN ACTION, A CASA VOLUNTEER MAY HAVE THE DUTY TO:

- (a) CONDUCT AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION REGARDING THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD THAT WILL PROVIDE FACTUAL INFORMATION TO THE COURT REGARDING THE CHILD AND THE CHILD'S FAMILY. THE INVESTIGATION SHALL INCLUDE INTERVIEWS WITH AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHILD, INTERVIEWS WITH OTHER APPROPRIATE INDIVIDUALS, AND THE REVIEW OF RELEVANT RECORDS AND REPORTS.
- (b) DETERMINE IF AN APPROPRIATE TREATMENT PLAN, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 19-3-508, HAS BEEN CREATED FOR THE CHILD, WHETHER APPROPRIATE SERVICES ARE BEING PROVIDED TO THE CHILD AND FAMILY, AND WHETHER THE TREATMENT PLAN IS PROGRESSING IN A TIMELY MANNER.

(2) **Recommendations.** UNLESS OTHERWISE ORDERED BY THE COURT,

THE CASA VOLUNTEER, WITH THE SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION OF THE CASA PROGRAM STAFF, SHALL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD REGARDING PLACEMENT, VISITATION, AND APPROPRIATE SERVICES FOR THE CHILD AND FAMILY AND SHALL PREPARE A WRITTEN REPORT TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE PARTIES OF THE ACTION.

- (3) **Reports.** THE CASA VOLUNTEER SHALL ASSURE THAT THE CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS ARE BEING ADVOCATED AT EVERY STAGE OF THE CASE AND PREPARE WRITTEN REPORTS TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE PARTIES OF THE ACTION.
- (4) **Case monitoring.** THE CASA VOLUNTEER SHALL MONITOR THE CASE TO WHICH HE OR SHE HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO ASSURE THAT THE CHILD'S ESSENTIAL NEEDS ARE BEING MET AND THAT THE TERMS OF THE COURT'S ORDERS HAVE BEEN FULFILLED IN AN APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY MANNER.
- (5) **Witness.** THE CASA VOLUNTEER MAY BE CALLED AS A WITNESS IN AN ACTION BY ANY PARTY OR THE COURT AND MAY REQUEST OF THE COURT THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR AS A WITNESS.

19-1-209. Role and responsibilities of Guardians ad litem - other parties. (1)

(a) ANY GUARDIAN AD LITEM, AND ALL STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, DEPARTMENTS, AUTHORITIES, AND INSTITUTIONS SHALL COOPERATE AND SHARE INFORMATION WITH ANY CASA VOLUNTEER APPOINTED TO SERVE ON A CASE AND WITH EACH LOCAL CASA PROGRAM TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS PROGRAM.

(b) THE CASA PROGRAM WILL HELP FACILITATE THE COOPERATION AND SHARING OF INFORMATION AMONG CASA VOLUNTEERS, THE ATTORNEYS, THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, AND OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES.

- (2) IN ANY CASE IN WHICH THE COURT HAS APPOINTED BOTH A CASA VOLUNTEER AND A GUARDIAN AD LITEM, THE CASA VOLUNTEER AND THE GUARDIAN AD LITEM SHALL COOPERATE TO REPRESENT THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD.
- (3) THE CASA VOLUNTEER SHALL BE NOTIFIED OF HEARINGS, STAFFINGS, MEETINGS, AND ANY OTHER PROCEEDINGS CONCERNING THE CASE TO WHICH HE OR SHE HAS BEEN APPOINTED.

19-1-210. Access to information. UPON APPOINTMENT OF A CASA VOLUNTEER, THE COURT SHALL ISSUE AN ORDER AUTHORIZING ACCESS TO SUCH RECORDS AND OTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO THE CHILD, PARENT, LEGAL GUARDIAN, OR OTHER PARTIES IN INTEREST AS THE COURT DEEMS NECESSARY.

19-1-211. Confidentiality. A CASA VOLUNTEER SHALL NOT DISCLOSE THE CONTENTS OF ANY DOCUMENT, RECORD, OR OTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO A CASE TO WHICH THE CASA VOLUNTEER HAS ACCESS IN THE COURSE OF AN INVESTIGATION. ALL SUCH INFORMATION SHALL BE CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL AND SHALL NOT BE DISCLOSED TO PERSONS OTHER THAN THE COURT AND PARTIES TO THE ACTION.

19-1-212. Liability. CASA PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATING IN A CASA PROGRAM SHALL HAVE THE SAME CIVIL IMMUNITY AND LIABILITY AS DESCRIBED IN SECTIONS 13-21-115.5 AND 13-21-115.7, C.R.S.

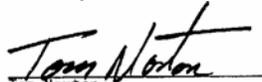
SECTION 5. 24-4.2-105 (7) (c), Colorado Revised Statutes, 1988 Repl. Vol., as amended, is amended to read:

24-4.2-105 Allocation of moneys from fund - application for grants - disbursements. (7) For purposes of this section:

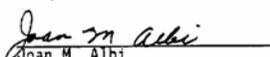
(c) "Court-appointed special advocate" or "CASA" means a trained volunteer appointed by the court PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF PART 2 OF ARTICLE 1 OF TITLE 19, C.R.S., in a district to aid the court by providing independent and objective information as directed by the court, regarding children involved in actions brought pursuant to this title.

SECTION 6. No appropriation. It has been determined by the general assembly that no state moneys need be appropriated to state agencies to carry out the purposes of this act.

SECTION 7. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety .


Tom Norton
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE


Charles E. Berry
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES


Joan M. Atbi
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE


Judith M. Rodrigue
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED May 23, 1996 at 1:35 P.M.


Roy Romo
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

Sample Legislation Hybrid Program

9-27-401. Creation - Representation for children and parents.

(a) There is hereby created a Division of Dependency-Neglect Representation within the Administrative Office of the Courts which will be staffed by a court-appointed special advocate coordinator and an attorney coordinator.

(b) (concerned with the attorney representation)

(c) The director is authorized to:

(1) Establish a statewide court-appointed special advocate program;

(2) Provide grants or contracts to local court-appointed special advocate programs;
and

(3) Work with judicial districts to establish local programs whereby the juvenile divisions of chancery court appoint trained volunteers to provide valuable information to the courts concerning the best interests of children in dependency-neglect proceedings.

Sample Legislation Role of the Advocate

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 9-27-316(g), concerning counsel for juveniles in dependency-neglect proceedings, is amended to read as follows:

(g)(1) The court may appoint a volunteer court-appointed special advocate from a program which shall meet all state and national court-appointed special advocate standards to advocate for the best interest of juveniles in dependency-neglect proceedings.

- (2) No court-appointed special advocate shall be assigned a case before:
 - (A) Completing a training program in compliance with National Court-Appointed Special Advocate Association and state standards; and
 - (B) Being approved by the local court-appointed special advocate program which will include appropriate criminal background and child abuse registry checks.
- (3) Each court-appointed special advocate shall:
 - (A)(i) Investigate the case to which he or she is assigned to provide independent factual information to the court through the attorney ad litem, court testimony, or court reports.
 - (ii) The court-appointed special advocate may testify if called as a witness.
 - (iii) When the court-appointed special advocate prepares a written report for the court, the advocate shall provide all parties or the attorney of record with a copy of the written report seven (7) business days prior to the relevant hearing; and
 - (B) Monitor the case to which he or she is assigned to ensure compliance with the court's orders
- (4) Upon presentation of an order of appointment, a court-appointed special advocate shall be provided access to all records relevant to the juvenile's case, including, but not limited to, school records, medical records, juvenile court records, and department records to the extent permitted by federal law.
- (5) A court-appointed special advocate is not a party to the case to which he or she is assigned and shall not call witnesses or examine witnesses.
- (6) A court-appointed special advocate shall not be liable for damages for personal injury or property damage, pursuant to § 16-6-101 et seq.
- (7) Except as provided by this subsection, a court-appointed special advocate shall not disclose any confidential information or reports to anyone except as ordered by the court or otherwise provided by law.

Responsibilities of CASA State Coordination

The CASA Planning and Advisory Committee, as per Chapter 827, Oregon Laws 1999, commonly known as the CASA Task Force, reported in 2000 that State support, coordination and oversight of local CASA programs is essential to the continuing development of CASA in Oregon and listed specific roles and functions for state staff. They also recommended that at least four FTE are needed to adequately address these functions. The National CASA Association has also outlined core services for state organizations. The following list of responsibilities meets the requirements of both guidelines.

Provide technical assistance and support to local CASA programs, to local Commissions on Children and Families (who hold local contracts for state funds).

- Maintain regular and frequent telephone, fax and email communication.
- Conduct onsite visits.
- Assist in the resolution of conflicts involving CASA programs.
- Assist in the development and implementation of program policy.
- Assist in assessing and addressing cultural competency and diversity needs:
 - 1) Provide information and training.
 - 2) Help define cultural competency and diversity and help local programs identify priority needs and realistic goals.
 - 3) Make contacts, connections, and cultivate relationships to achieve these goals.
 - 4) Highlight examples of success.
 - 5) Demonstrate cultural competency in the work of the state organization.

Provide a statewide CASA information clearinghouse.

- Orientation for new directors.
- Email list serve for dialogue and information sharing.
- Quarterly newsletter for CASA directors.
- Collect and share program policies and practices.
- Maintain current updates on research regarding CASA effectiveness and best practice.
- Provide current information regarding federal and state legislation, policy changes, trends in child welfare and court improvement, and court decisions that impact the work of CASA programs.

Provide network and training opportunities for CASA program staff and volunteers.

- Facilitate Oregon CASA Association meetings three or four times each year.
- Sponsor or co-sponsor statewide or regional training opportunities.
- Coordinate Oregon gatherings at National CASA conferences and meetings.
- Develop training tools.
- Provide specific support for board development, strategic planning and program management.

Advocate for public and private funding and resource development.

- Apply for federal funds from the National CASA Association, complete six-month narrative reports and work with our accountant on fiscal reports.
- Identify and develop other federal, state and private funding sources.
- Develop the nonprofit CASA fundraising organization to increase access to funding for state and local CASA programs and projects.
- Request and administer state funding for local programs.

Represent CASA at the state level and maintain state level relationships with CASA partners.

- Increase awareness of CASA work and the needs of abused and neglected children by providing information to legislators, State OCCF Commissioners, partners, and targeted groups.
- DHS Advisory Group
- Juvenile Court Improvement Project Advisory Board (JCIP)
- JCIP Dependency Mediation Project Advisory Board
- Children's Justice Act Task Force
- Ad hoc workgroups such as the Adoption Task Force and the DHS Post-Adoption Communication Rules Review Workgroup
- Facilitate a collective approach to system improvement among local CASA programs and with partners at the state level. (Examples include the Memorandum of Understanding with DHS, the CASA director-child welfare manager dialogue and the joint training video.)
- Engage local program staff and volunteers in system improvement and the development of public policy governing child welfare.

Develop and maintain a system of program accountability and quality assurance.

- Set statewide standards and performance measures.
- Train and assist programs in collecting, using and reporting data using the CASA Outcomes Measurement and Evaluation Tool (COMET), a database provided by the National CASA Association.
- Monitor CASA information as reported in FMORS database.
- Coordinate, collect and report CASA program data.
- Develop and implement a peer review system of support.
- Implement the OCCF-National CASA Association Certification Agreement for CASA program, documenting local program compliance with National CASA Association Standards for Programs.
- Conduct statewide CASA program evaluations.
- Ensure compliance with the National CASA Association Standards for State Organizations.

Serve as Liaison with the National CASA Association.

- Meet frequently with National CASA Association staff.
- Attend National CASA Association annual conferences, state organization meetings and committee meetings as required.

Fulfill responsibilities as an OCCF staff member

- Contribute to the development of the Commission system.
- Attend staff meetings and participate in committees and projects.
- Provide technical assistance in both local and state settings as requested.
- Maintain communication with the management team and other staff members.
- Work effectively with other staff assigned with CASA responsibilities.

Chapter 2

Working with Local Programs

The phone rings. A volunteer on a case has begun dating the caseworker. The volunteer supervisor wants to know what to do.

State organization staff receives many and varied technical assistance calls from local programs. In the example above, the organization should talk about the conflict of interest issues in this case to help the volunteer supervisor make a decision—likely remove the volunteer. Working with local programs can be one of the trickiest (yet most rewarding) tasks for state directors.

The CASA/GAL network is fundamentally a grassroots organization founded to meet community needs. The work that matters most is the volunteer advocacy for the children. Everything that state organizations do supports the work of the volunteers. New York state director Darlene Ward wrote:

“Support for CASA/GAL programs comes from the fact that our local programs make a significant difference in the lives of children. There needs to be respect for the expertise at the local level. While we surely are here to monitor compliance with state and national standards and have an obligation to maintain quality statewide, we also must practice the diversity we preach—not just in the way our own staff looks, but in our respect for the individual needs of each community within our state and each program’s unique ability to meet that need.”

One important role the state organization can play is to be a support to the local program directors, who frequently feel somewhat isolated and may have limited local support. Sometimes they need a safe person to talk to, brainstorm with, cry or laugh with. This person may be the state director, regional director or a peer; never the less, making sure that local program staff feels supported is a critical role of the state office.

Structure of State Organization

In some states, local programs answer directly to the state organization, as in purely state-administered programs where the state organization has a supervisory role to the local programs. In these states, clear policies and well-defined supervisory relationships are needed. Larger states frequently have regional directors who are the direct supervisors of the local directors and who are primarily responsible for technical assistance, supervision and support of those programs.

In other models, the local CASA/GAL programs may be independent, answering to a local board of directors or to an umbrella agency. In this case, the state organization does not have a supervisory role. The role of the state organization and its relationship to local programs must be defined by both parties. Affiliation agreements may be helpful to clarify roles, and needs assessments of local programs can also be helpful. The strategic planning process can also provide a means for discussing this relationship in the context of setting goals and priorities for the state organization.

More information about the make-up of state organizations is in Chapter 1: Role of the State Organization.

What do Local Programs Look Like?

According to the 2002 annual program survey, there were 930 local CASA/GAL programs. There were an estimated 70,130 volunteers serving approximately 279,160 children and giving an estimated 9,887,640 volunteer hours. Just over half of the local programs are independent nonprofits, 27% are part of state or county government, and 21% are governed by an umbrella agency.

The average local program as of the end of 2002 was 11 years old and had three program staff and 35 volunteers. Each volunteer gave, on average, 80 hours per year. The average program served 121 children and had revenues of just under \$92,000. The average cost per child served is about \$750, but this amount varies greatly according to the age and location of the program.

More information is available in the National CASA Association annual local program survey, available at casanet.org.

Proactive Communication and Support

Do not wait for a crisis to communicate with local programs. Successful state organizations have regular contact with local programs. Frequency of communication depends on the number of programs in the state, type of program and the experience and skill of the local director. As a general rule there should be personal contact with each program every month. A call just to ask how things are going will frequently lead to good conversations and brainstorming about challenges the program is facing and may reveal issues that do not get mentioned in more formal communication. Regular in-person visits are also a valuable tool, particularly when they are not for formal evaluation or monitoring purposes. Observing in court or attending a board meeting, volunteer training, volunteer meeting or recognition event is a wonderful way to connect with the local program and frequently yields best-practice information that does not come across in telephone calls. Non-evaluative meetings with the judge or the board help to build those relationships, particularly if the state organization can help support local staff through those meetings. The frequency of visits will depend on the needs of programs, the number of programs and the size of the state organization staff; many states seek to visit each program at least once a year or do at least one program visit per month.

States with a large number of local programs may wish to have regional program support staff. These staff members typically have offices geographically closer to local program staff. Regional staff should have consistent policies and provide relatively consistent support from

area to area. Housing these staff may be an issue—if they are housed with a local program there may be perception of favoritism. Long distance supervision of these staff may also be an issue.

See Chapter 14: Training for more information on providing training for local program staff and volunteers.

Contact Management

It is good practice to keep records of all communication between the local programs and the state organization. Although this requires some time commitment on the front end, it pays off in the long run. Records provide a relatively easy way to look at the level of contact with any given program. This allows staff to touch base with a program that has not had any contact with the state organization. It also provides a history of specific contacts, which can be particularly useful when there is staff turnover or in the unfortunate circumstance of having problems with a particular program or director. It allows the state organization to ensure consistent information and advice is given. If computers are networked, the contact management database can be kept on the network, allowing all staff to see what contacts have been made with particular programs. Finally, good, solid communication records can help state organization staff to plan technical assistance for local programs based on topics for which programs are requesting assistance. Tracking the technical assistance also helps state organizations know how many phone calls and emails they are answering, how many trips they are making, how many trainings they are providing, etc. This can help define staff and budgetary needs, show programs the level of work being done, and provide information to donors and potential donors.

Contact management can be done in a number of different ways, but one effective method is to use a database program to create a contact management database. In Microsoft Access, for example, there is a sample database called “contact management” that can be very effective for this purpose. There are many software programs useful for this purpose.

Each time a state organization staff person has a conversation or email with a local program person, it should be logged in the database with date, time, topic, who took (or made) the call or email, and what information was shared.

With Whom do you Talk?

As a state director (or other staff person) it is helpful to know whom to communicate with at the local level. All staff people? The director? The local board chair? Other members of the local board? Staff of the umbrella organization, if one exists? While this question may seem trivial, misunderstandings can easily arise as a result of crossing an unmarked boundary.

Answering technical questions from any member of a local program’s staff is generally acceptable, but some program directors are sensitive about staff going to the state organization with a question. The state organization may have a clear policy on this or may vary it from program to program depending on the comfort level of an individual director.

It is very important to understand the chain of command for particular programs. This may be consistent for all programs statewide or may vary from program to program. If local programs are independent organizations, knowing when to talk to local boards can be the most delicate issue. In general, it is good policy to speak only with the chair of the local

board, but the state organization may be willing to answer specific questions from others, such as a financial reporting question from the board treasurer. Developing some relationship with local board chairs is good practice and can be accomplished by setting up some routine communication. Clearly, local board members should receive the state newsletter, but the state organization may also want to send regular email messages to board chairs. One way to do this is to send an email newsletter, such as the Compasspoint newsletter for board members (compasspoint.org), to the board chairs. Another way is to have a special session for board chairs at the state conference or at regional training events or to include them in training sessions as appropriate. The state organization may also want to offer staff as speakers for local program board meetings on topics of interest such as state legislative activity or funding requests. This type of relationship will make it easier when a board chair needs assistance or times when the state organization calls the board chair.

If the local program is part of a larger umbrella organization, communicate with the person in that organization responsible for supervising the CASA/GAL program and be aware who that person's supervisor is.

Some local program directors may feel threatened by the state organization having contact with their boards or umbrella organizations. Let local program directors know what the state organization is communicating. Copy local program directors on email messages sent to board chairs. Let local program staff know the agenda for board chair meetings and have a skilled local board chair conduct such meetings rather than state staff.

Handling Complaints

The state organization may occasionally receive complaints from the public or from other agencies about a local program, a staff member or volunteer. The state organization needs to have a clear and consistent way of handling these complaints, though the specific grievance procedure will vary depending on the organizational structure. The first rule to keep in mind is that all stories have at least two sides. The second rule is to document all conversations. The person taking the call must tell the complainant that the information they provide cannot be kept confidential if action is to be taken. Typically, if there are complaints about the work of a particular volunteer or handling of a particular case, those complaints should be referred back to the local program director with whatever assistance is needed to help resolve the problem. The same is true for a complaint about any staff person other than the director. Let the program director know about the complaint and provide the name and contact information of the person filing the complaint.

When the complaint is about the director or about a program being out of compliance with standards, the first step is to get as much information as possible. Do not accept broad statements such as "they are unprofessional." Have the caller further describe the situation and ask for examples. Make sure the caller understands the relationship between the state organization and the local program. Those outside the CASA/GAL network tend to assume that the state organization supervises the local programs, even when that is not the case. If the caller wants to speak to the supervisor of the director, refer them to the appropriate person, whether that is the board chair, a regional director or the director of an umbrella agency.

Next steps in handling the complaint will depend on the particular situation and the policies of the state organization. If appropriate, refer the caller to the local director or board chair;

provide these individuals advance warning of the call and offer assistance. The state organization may choose to play the role of mediator in helping the disagreeing parties resolve the issues.

The National CASA Association complaint policy, which can serve as a model for state offices, can be found in the resources documents at the end of this chapter..

Local Program Situations

What have you done for me lately?

Occasionally local programs resist working with the state organization. In some cases, such as when there has been frequent turnover in the state organization, this is understandable. There are also instances where the local program is older and has many more resources than the state organization so the local staff may feel the state organization has little or nothing to offer them.

There are no easy solutions to these situations, but there are some practices that can improve the relationship over time. One is to be sure that local CASA/GAL programs are aware of the activities and accomplishments of the state organization. There may be a regular email updates, a feature in the newsletter or a progress report at a program directors' meeting. Local programs should receive the state organization's annual report.

The state organization director and other staff should stay absolutely professional and not talk negatively about particular programs or local staff. The state organization should continue to offer quality training and materials to local programs. The state director will also want to choose battles wisely. What is most important? Reporting from the local program? Having the local program represented at trainings? Cooperating on legislative activities? Something else? Also consider how that program's resources or expertise could be helpful to other programs in the state. Do not avoid highlighting accomplishments of a local program just because they are less than enthusiastic participants in state organization affairs.

Local staff must see the value of any state organization activity, particularly if it is something that requires effort from local programs. For example, if the state organization has trouble getting program reports from local programs, perhaps the local programs does not see the benefit to them of having that information compiled. What is the benefit? Does that information help with donors that benefit the local program, statewide public relations or legislation? If local programs are not sending representatives to meetings or trainings offered by the state organization, find out why. Has the training not been of good quality or applicable to their needs in the past? Is the expense a problem? Work with local programs to overcome the barriers.

The state organization may wish to examine its state standards or membership requirements, and ensure that the items that are truly important are included. The National CASA Association standards for member programs require, "The CASA program is affiliated with a state CASA program, association, or network, if one exists, and meets standards of that organization." The state organization may wish to seek changes or additions to its state standards to help ensure cooperation.

Find out what the local programs need from the state organization. There are several ways to do this. One is to do a survey or needs assessment. Another is to do a formal evaluation of the state organization. The state director (or other state staff) could also visit programs to

talk to directors personally about what they most need from the state organization. When meeting with judges or board members, always ask what the state organization can do to benefit local programs.

An example of a needs assessment can be found in the resource documents located at the end of Chapter 1. An example of a state organization survey is located in the resource documents section of Chapter 4: Evaluation, Data and Planning.

When a local director leaves

When a local director leaves, contact the remaining staff to offer technical assistance. Also contact the person(s) responsible for hiring the replacement to offer any assistance they might need. Make sure the supervising entity (board, umbrella agency director or regional director) has ensured continued operation of the program. Local program standards require that there be a written protocol in place for the delegation of authority in the absence of a program director, but help is often needed, particularly in the case of programs run by boards. The National CASA regional program specialist should also be informed about the staff change.

If the director who left was the only person supervising volunteers, the departure creates significant liability. Staff from a neighboring program may be willing to provide administrative oversight. There may be experienced volunteers who are willing to help supervise newer ones. There may be board members sufficiently knowledgeable about the operations of the program to help. They will need to ensure that the judge and other agency representatives know about the staff change and that volunteers know what is happening and are not left without support and supervision. The state organization can be instrumental in helping the program with a transition plan: who will do what until a new director is on board and when someone new is hired, how will responsibilities be transitioned to avoid overload?

Training new local directors

The state CASA/GAL organization can play an important role in training new local directors. While the boards of independent programs have responsibility for doing this, they will likely welcome the assistance of the state organization. In states where the state organization does not hire the director, the board or umbrella organization should inform the state organization about a new hire.

When there are a number of new directors, the state organization may wish to offer a formal training for new directors. See Chapter 14: Training for more information and a sample training agenda.

When a new director starts, someone from the state organization should visit relatively soon to help orient the new director to CASA and to offer any necessary assistance. The topics to be addressed on this visit will depend on the background and experience of the new director and on the pressing needs of the local program. This is an excellent time to orient the new director to the *Achieving Our Mission* guide for local programs and other helpful resources. The state organization may also provide an operations handbook with state-specific material. See Chapter 10: New Program Development and Expansion of Services for more information.

If the new director is the founding director of a new program, spend time ensuring that the program's systems are adequate for the needs of the program. For example, does the program have a financial accounting system? Does the director (or someone associated with the program) know how to set up logical accounts that will ensure fund separation? Does the program have a database (COMET or other) to track volunteers and children?

One common source of anxiety among new program directors is training volunteers. If possible, have new directors attend volunteer training sessions at a neighboring program or encourage them to co-train with a neighboring program. If there are other program directors or state organization staff able and willing to "guest facilitate" sections of the national curriculum, offer this option to new directors.

Setting up a mentor relationship with a more experienced program director is also very helpful. It is generally best to choose someone relatively close (geographically) to the new director and make sure it is someone with both time and willingness to mentor the new person. If geographic proximity is not possible, identify a mentor director whose program is similar in structure and size to the new one.

New directors typically need more assistance than experienced staff. Weekly or semi-weekly calls may be necessary at this stage. Ensure new program directors are included in the listserv or any other communications.

Major transitions in local programs

Occasionally a local program will have a major transition, such as breaking away from an umbrella organization, joining an umbrella organization or closing its doors.

If a program is considering a break from an umbrella organization, consultation from the state organization may be helpful. What are the reasons for the break? Can the problems be remedied without breaking away? Are there any services the state organization could provide to help resolve problems? What kind of support and assistance has the umbrella organization offered? How will the program access those services as an independent organization? Will it help or hurt the program's standing in the community to be an independent organization? How will it affect fundraising?

If the program does decide to break away, it may need the same kind of support that a new CASA/GAL program does, such as help forming a governing board, incorporating, filing for IRS 501(c)(3) status and getting a tax identification number. In addition, the program may need to rewrite or renegotiate memoranda of understanding with the court and CPS.

If a CASA/GAL program is in danger of closing, help the program explore whether it is possible for them to merge with a neighboring CASA/GAL program or to join a stronger umbrella organization rather than shutting down completely. There may be particular technical assistance, such as board development, volunteer recruitment, staff training or fundraising strategies that would enable the program to continue.

If a program is joining an umbrella organization, it may need samples of umbrella agency agreements and questions to consider. The program may need to revisit their memoranda of understanding. In the event of any transitions in local program status, the National CASA regional program specialist should be informed.

Note: More information on umbrella organizations is available in the National CASA publication *National CASA Umbrella Structures, Mergers & Acquisitions*.

Program closure

If a program is closing, the state organization should ensure the closure happens in a way that does not harm other CASA/GAL programs in the state and preserves as much goodwill as possible for a new program to begin in that community at a later date.

A program may close for a number of reasons, but the most common is a lack of funding. There may also be situations where a program is unable or unwilling to comply with national and state standards. In this situation the state organization must work closely with National CASA and the regional program specialist.

Ideally, the local board or umbrella organization takes the lead in closing the program, but there are a number of entities and people with whom the state organization may need to communicate the news. If the state organization is shutting down the program it should be very clear with the board and staff why it is being done and under what conditions the program could re-start. If the program chooses to continue without the support of or affiliation with the state CASA/GAL organization or the National CASA Association, the local program will not be able to use the CASA name and will lose all member benefits. It may be helpful to meet with the board, staff and volunteer representatives in person or by conference call to discuss dissolution strategy.

Acknowledge the hard work and efforts by board, staff and volunteers that helped make the program succeed.

Program Closure Checklist	
Local board	Acknowledge efforts, inform under what circumstances the program could restart. Meet regarding dissolution responsibilities and dispersal of assets.
Local staff	Acknowledge efforts; inform under what circumstances the program could restart. Inform as to unemployment and/or any other available benefits. Get a list of current volunteers and donors. Ask about media contacts and likely level of interest. Ask about primary CPS contact.
Volunteers	Thank for time and advocacy. Help them in officially closing their cases and saying good-bye to the children they served. Suggest other volunteer activities. Ask them to let state organization know if would be interested in helping with program restart.
Local judge	Thank for support. Let him/her know how and when program could restart.
Local CPS staff	Thank for support. Involve in restart if it happens.

Press	Evaluate the news significance. If there is controversy or great community interest, issue press release or contact reporter who has previously reported on CASA/GAL acknowledging work of volunteers and others but giving reasons for closure. Include what is happening to assets of program.
Donors	Inform about closure. Ask for direction regarding unexpended funds and particularly if they could be kept for future start-up in the community or given to other programs.
IRS	Inform of dissolution of 501(c)(3) organization.
Attorney General	Inform no longer soliciting for contributions.
Secretary of State	Learn whether incorporation could be made inactive. Review original incorporation paperwork to learn what must be done with assets if completely dissolved. File notice of dissolution.

Membership

Some state CASA/GAL organizations are membership organizations. Membership in the state organization may include program membership, individual membership or both.

Program membership typically includes access to the services of the state organization. Some states charge a flat fee, while others charge according to the size of the organization. A sliding scale has proven problematic in many states, as the larger organizations do not generally receive a greater proportion of the services so they feel penalized for effective fundraising.

Individual memberships may also include certain benefits including newsletters and reduced registration fees at conferences. This might be an effective way to raise funds and build a donor base, but only if local programs do not see it as an effort to “poach” their donors. Most state organizations that are member organizations do not raise significant funds from membership fees.

Quality Assurance

The National CASA Association requires that all programs operate in compliance with its standards and that local programs participate in a Quality Assurance (QA) process every four years. The National CASA Quality Assurance system was implemented in 2003.

Demonstration of compliance with National CASA standards through participation in the QA System is a condition of membership in the national association and includes:

- Recognition of the diverse structures of our network.
- Multi-layered system with stages for provisional member and full program member self-assessment, and full program onsite review. The self-assessment process is mandatory in order to gain and retain membership, while the onsite review component (the highest level of quality assurance) is voluntary.

- State CASA/GAL organizations may play a role in the self-assessment process and onsite review.
- National CASA and state CASA/GAL organizations provide technical assistance in the self-assessment process and onsite review and assist local CASA programs in meeting the standards.

The role that state organizations play will depend on their capacity and the agreement made with National CASA. State organizations may do the primary review of the self-assessment component and may also conduct site visits. State organization staff may also be the immediate provider of technical assistance to help a program develop an improvement plan to come into compliance with standards.

Onsite review is part of an optional category for the QA system. The purpose of the onsite review performed by National CASA is to verify compliance with standards as demonstrated through the self-assessment process as well as to identify areas of excellence including innovations, successes and outstanding performance.

The state CASA/GAL organization may choose to conduct onsite reviews as part of their own QA process, although they are not required as part of the National CASA self-assessment. These onsite reviews may be conducted by the state organization or may include peer reviews. If the state organization coordinates onsite reviews, staff needs a protocol for what the reviews will entail and what documents need to be reviewed. In addition to the documents required by the self-assessment process, an onsite review may include the review of board minutes, financial records, case files and volunteer files.

The onsite review also includes interviews with program staff, volunteers, the local judge, and possibly the CPS agency and attorneys. Onsite reviews should focus on standards compliance while the identification of best practices, celebration of excellence, and identification of further technical assistance needed are additional benefits.

A sample state organization site visit protocol form is located in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.



Additional Resources:

National CASA’s *Achieving Our Mission*

National CASA Association Umbrella Structures, Mergers & Acquisitions Guide

CompassPoint Nonprofit Services: compasspoint.org.

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with working with local programs:

- What has the state organization's relationship been with local programs?
- What has National CASA's relationship been with local programs?
- What is the state organization's role in quality assurance?

Working with Local Programs Resources & Sample Support Documents

National CASA Standards and Quality Assurance Fact Sheet

Quality Assurance Planning Process

Sample Site Visit Form

Guidance for Local CASA/GAL Program Closure

National CASA Procedure for Handling Complaints

National CASA Association Standards and Quality Assurance

What quality assurance can do for CASA/GAL Programs

In the spring of 2002, five CASA/GAL programs agreed to pilot the self-assessment tool, each spending approximately 10 -12 hours completing the self-assessment instrument and providing NCASAA with valuable feedback on their experience. The self-assessment tool and process were then revised based heavily on the feedback and self-assessment data. Following up with the pilot programs months after completion of the pilot, here is what they had to say about the process.

- ⇒ *“felt great.”*
- ⇒ *“a pleasant surprise.”*
- ⇒ *“like having a coach around.”*
- ⇒ *“beneficial and easy to use.”*
- ⇒ *“appears daunting at first. It isn't, however.”*
- ⇒ *“not all that time consuming, particularly when you consider the wealth of information that can be derived.”*
- ⇒ *“single most important event in my first year as director in terms of planning.”*
- ⇒ *“allowed me to look into areas that we don't much think about on a daily basis.”*
- ⇒ *“taking a fresh look at marketing our program, our policies and procedures, diversity results...”*
- ⇒ *“I think we are a better organization today as a result of having completed the tool.”*

Ways CASA/GAL programs and the children they serve benefit from quality assurance.

Better advocacy

Critical self-assessment helps achieve exceptional volunteer training, supervision, support and management practices.

Increased confidence

Demonstration of compliance with a specific set of standards instills the program's stakeholders, as well as staff and volunteers a sense of self-confidence and accomplishment.

Promotes professionalism

Supervision, training and management of volunteers and organizations are responsibilities that require a high level of professionalism.

Concrete definitions of quality

Benchmarking against established standards provides clear and concrete definitions of quality program management.

Overcomes objections

Objections to volunteer involvement are often best overcome by demonstration of compliance with a specific set of standards, which provides the program with solid evidence of quality program management.

Better risk management

Ongoing improvement of program management practices reduces potential liability.

Strategic planning and program growth

Guides you with concrete steps to continue setting goals toward growth and sustainability.

Reduced isolation

A sense of camaraderie develops when all programs in the network are following the same standards.

Leadership opportunities

This process provides a mechanism for sharing successes and innovations with other programs in the network. Compliance with standards also provides directors with leadership opportunities such as making presentations and eventually becoming a self-assessment reviewer.

Increased public trust and marketing of the program

Compliance with national standards demonstrates accountability and helps build name recognition and public awareness.

Increased accountability to funders and the community

Funders do care that the program is managed in compliance with a national set of standards. Compliance with national standards instills confidence in the program's use of funds.

Independent confirmation of our commitment to quality

The Standards for NCASAA Member Programs and the Standards Self-assessment Tool are stand-alone documents that clearly and specifically spell out the CASA commitment to quality.

Increased support and technical assistance for program growth

NCASAA will provide support specific to the QA process. Participating in the QA process provides programs with a tool and mechanism for achieving growth and sustainability.

Improved volunteer recruitment and retention

Volunteers appreciate an organization that respects the individual and his/her time by following standardized operating procedures in order to ensure the highest quality services to children. Volunteers expect the program to function at a high level of quality.

Brings decision-makers to the table

The quality assurance system provides a mechanism for securing additional buy-in and support from decision-makers. Achievements and challenges of the program are brought to light, helping to procure resources to meet program needs while celebrating high quality program management.

Provides data to back up requests for funding

Results of the self-assessment provide concrete information as to the challenges programs may be facing collectively and the need for additional resources.

Helps NCASAA plan future training events and provide more specific technical assistance.

NCASAA will utilize the self-assessment information for the planning of training events and further development of training materials, resource development support, and technical assistance manuals.

National CASA Association 5/9/03

Quality Assurance Process Planning

Target date for QA Process Completion:

Board meeting dates between now and Target date:

Self-Assessment Team

Staff:

Volunteer:

Board member:

Others:

Section of Standards/Task	Self-Assessment Completion and Indicators of Compliance Finalization and Approval	People who need to be involved	Meeting dates	Target date for completion	Done!
Complete program information					
I	Self-Assessment Section Completion Mission Statement (I. A., I. B.) Articles of Incorporation (if applicable) (I. C.) Written Working Agreement with Court (I. D.) State Statute Relating to CASA/GAL Program (if applicable) (I. C.) Court Rules Relating to CASA/GAL Program (if applicable) (I. C.)				
II	Self-Assessment Section Completion Bylaws (if applicable) (II. A.) Program Organizational Chart (VII. G.) List of Current Governing or Advisory Board Members with Affiliations Noted (if applicable) (II. C.) Board Member Job Description (if applicable) (II. A.) Board Orientation Checklist (if applicable) Conflict of Interest Policy (II. C.)				

III					
IV	Self-Assessment Section Completion Samples of materials produced with proper usage of the CASA logo and slogan (two)				
V	Self-Assessment Section Completion				
VI	Self-Assessment Section Completion Verification of membership/affiliation with the state CASA/GAL organization				
VII	Self-Assessment Section Completion Personnel Policies (VII. D.) Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (VII. E.) Written plan for Staff, Board, and Volunteer Diversity (VII. E.) Job Descriptions for Staff Positions (VII. B.) Resume of Chief Executive Officer/Program Administrator (VII. A.) Screening Policy for Staff (VII. F.) Staff Orientation Checklist (VII. G.) Sample Employee Performance Review Form (VII. I.)				

VIII	<p>Self-Assessment Section Completion</p> <p>Job Description for CASA/GAL Volunteer (VIII. E.)</p> <p>Volunteer Application (VIII. B.)</p> <p>Volunteer Interview Questions (VIII. B.)</p> <p>Volunteer Reference Form (VIII. B. 5)</p> <p>Training Agenda (VIII. C.)</p> <p>Table of Contents from Volunteer Training Manual (VIII. C.)</p> <p>Volunteer Policies and Procedures (VIII. E. and VIII. G.)</p> <p>Policy on Volunteers Transporting Children (for all programs – regardless of whether the program prohibits or allows transportation) (VIII. E.)</p> <p>Volunteer Termination Policy (VIII. F.)</p> <p>Sample Court Order Appointing CASA/GAL Volunteer (VIII. B.)</p> <p>Sample Notice of Volunteer Appointment Form (XII. B.)</p> <p>List of In-Service Training Offered in Prior Calendar Year including Topic, Date, and Length of Time (VIII. C.)</p>				
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IX	<p>Self-Assessment Section Completion</p> <p>Verification of Non-Profit Status (501c3) (if applicable) (IX. B.)</p> <p>Financial Internal Controls Policy (IX. D.)</p> <p>Most Recent Year End Financial Statements (IX. D.)</p> <p>Operating Budget for your Current Fiscal Year (IX. A.)</p> <p>Most Recent IRS Form 990 (for programs with expenditures over \$25,000 annually) (IX. C.)</p> <p>Most Recent Program Audit (for programs with expenditures of over \$100,000 annually) (IX. C.)</p> <p>Proof of any forms of Liability Insurance and/or Statutory Immunity (IX. G.)</p>				
X	<p>Self-Assessment Section Completion</p> <p>Program Brochure (X. A.)</p>				
XI	<p>Self-Assessment Section Completion</p> <p>Most Recent Report of Statistical Information as Required by Standard XI.B. (XI. A.)</p>				
XII	<p>Self-Assessment Section Completion</p> <p>Sample Case Data Entry Form (XII. A.)</p> <p>Volunteer Release Form (XII. A.)</p>				
Standards Certification		Director Board Chair			

Sample State Association Technical Assistance Visits

As part of the national Quality Assurance process, CASANYS will be meeting with local programs to help prepare them for the National CASA assessment. We have suggested the following activities for those Technical Assistance Visits, as well as detailing some of the questions we will be asking. In advance of the site visit, we will ask all programs to review the self-assessment they submitted to the State Association last fall, and will indicate in advance if there are any particular areas of concern we want to address at that meeting.

Meet with Board/Advisory Board leadership

1. What is the composition of the Board?
2. How often does the Board meet?
3. What is the nomination process for the Board?
4. What is the Board oversight responsibility for the CASA program? How does it administer that responsibility?
5. Are there any training or support needs that CASANYS could assist in providing?
6. Document review – board minutes

Meet with Family Court Judge(s)

1. Are there any trends in the types of cases coming before the court? What needs are you identifying?
2. How is the court using CASA volunteers? Is there a need for change in that practice?
3. What is the referral process for cases to CASA?
4. Are there any technical assistance needs the State Association can meet?

Meet with Umbrella Agency Leadership

1. Is the role of CASA included in the agency mission statement?
2. How does the CASA program fit into the administration of the agency?
3. How is the CASA program financed?
4. Are there any technical assistance needs the State Association or other programs in the network can meet?

Meet with CASA Program Director

1. Did the program find the self-assessment completed previously helpful? What areas were highlighted for attention? What progress has been made?
2. Are there any questions regarding program compliance with state and national standards?
3. Review areas for the visit will include:
 - Case assignment and processing procedures
 - Volunteer training and management
 - Data collection
 - Grant reports and compliance
4. Are there any technical assistance needs the State Association or other programs in the network can meet?
5. Document review: random selection of case files and volunteer files

Meet with Fiscal Personnel

1. How is the CASA funding tracked? How is fund separation ensured?
2. How does the program ensure all reporting requirements are met?
3. How are finances allocated and tracked?
4. Are there any technical assistance needs the State Association can meet?

Meet with volunteers

1. Are there any trends in the types of cases you have been advocating for?
2. Did your training adequately prepare you for your advocacy?
3. How is the court using CASA volunteers? Is there a need for change in that practice?
4. Are there any technical assistance needs the State Association can meet?

Meet with attorneys who represent the children

1. Are there any trends in the types of cases coming before the court? What needs are you identifying?
2. How is the court using CASA volunteers? Is there a need for change in that practice?
3. What is the referral process for cases to CASA?
4. Are there any technical assistance needs the State Association can meet?

Meet with Child Protective Services

1. What best practices can you recommend in working with CASA?
2. Are there any trends in the types of cases coming into CPS care? What needs are you identifying?
3. Are there any technical assistance needs the State Association can meet?

Guidance for Local CASA/GAL Program Closure

Infrequently, and unfortunately, local CASA/GAL programs close their doors. There are a number of reasons this may occur, including inadequate financial resources, program mismanagement, and non-compliance with National CASA Association or state organization standards.

When a local program requires dissolution, the program should work with the state and National CASA Associations in their efforts and activities to reach full and appropriate closure of the program. Ideally, the state organization and National CASA Association will have been consulted prior to the decision to close the program and in an effort to keep the program open, if appropriate.

Whatever the reason for program closure, the results will be far reaching. Certainly the children served, the court, program governing body, staff, volunteers and supporters, and the community at large will be impacted. In addition, the closure of the program may well have a negative impact on other CASA/GAL programs in the state or nearby areas. Appropriate and timely activities should be undertaken to insure the least harmful consequences from the program closure.

Ideally, the local program governing body should make the decision about program closure and, along with program staff, take the lead on carrying out the activities below. The governing body may be a Board of Directors in the case of an independent 501(c)(3) organization or an umbrella agency housing a CASA program or the court or public entity in the case of a publicly administered program.

The governing body should begin by:

- Advising the state CASA/GAL organization, the National CASA Association, local program staff, volunteers, court, social services, and other child welfare providers, donors, and program supporters of the program closure

In relation to the staff, the governing body should:

- Inform them of the timelines and process for program closure
- Inform them as to any opportunities for vacation payout (if provided by the personnel policies), unemployment, and continuation of benefits (i.e. COBRA)
- Direct and support the staff in their efforts to close cases and bring closure to relationships as delineated below

In relation to the court, the governing body should:

- Express appreciation to the court for their support of the program
- Assure proper volunteer release from assigned cases including a court order terminating the volunteer's involvement if dictated by practice
- Determine where CASA/GAL program case records will be held
- Advise the court how they can proceed in initiating a new program (i.e. working with the state organization and National CASA Association) if so desired

In relation to active volunteers, the governing body should:

- Express appreciation for their commitment and the significant time and energy they have devoted to serving children through the program
- Provide guidance on saying good-bye to the children they have served and explaining the case closure
- Provide a format for and assure that the volunteer writes a final case summary to be included in the case file
- Require and assure the return of all case records and related material to the program

- Require and assure there is a signed release from the case form to be submitted to and signed by the court; a copy of which should be placed in the case and volunteer file

In relation to donors and supporters, the governing body should:

- Express appreciation for their generosity, support and commitment
- Inquire as to requirements for any unexpended funds

Throughout this process, the governing body will have significant decisions to make and additional activities to undertake including:

- Legal dissolution of the organization, usually through the Secretary of State
- Notification of the Internal Revenue Service about the organization's dissolution as a 501(c)(3) organization
- Determination of the distribution of the program's assets including funds, equipment, and materials. Most programs set out the dispersal of assets upon dissolution in their organizational bylaws or articles of incorporation so the program should be certain to follow their own governance documents in this process
- Advise and negotiate with service providers to the program (i.e. landlord, equipment contract holders, local utilities, bank, etc.)
- Determine and carryout appropriate storage of program and case records; be mindful to check any statutory or court requirements that might apply to record retention
- Determine appropriate storage of financial records and duration for retention; keeping them reasonably accessible for reference for tax or other purposes
- Determine how to address inquiries from the local media in relation to the program closure. If the program's closure is controversial or happens without the consensus of the community involved, and the program desires assistance in working with the local media, the state organization or National CASA Association can provide assistance.
- Advise the state organization and National CASA Association when the program is officially closed

All parties involved with the CASA/GAL program should be given the contact information of the state organization and National CASA Association in the event that questions or concerns arise after the program is fully dissolved or in the event there may be interest in starting a CASA/GAL program in the future.

6/1/04

National CASA Association Procedure for Handling Complaints

Complaints that are received by the national office generally fall into one of the following:

- **Complaints about an individual volunteer.** These are usually made by a parent or family member who feels that the volunteer made erroneous statements about them in court.
- **Complaints about a program's practices.** These can be lodged by a parent, a volunteer, another CASA program, or a professional in the community who works with the program.

1. Complaints about a Volunteer

When possible, complaints are handled by the Chief Program Officer or one of the Program Specialists. When the complainant is a person involved in a CASA case, their complaint often arises from misunderstanding about the role of the CASA or a misperception of the legal process. Often the individual is satisfied to have someone listen to their story.

Complaints should be resolved at the local level by the director of the program and those lodging a complaint are referred to the program. National CASA does not intervene in cases or complaints about an individual volunteer. National CASA will notify the program of the nature of the complaint and the referral back to the program. Technical assistance is also offered to the program on how to deal with the problem if it is needed or requested.

If the complaint is written correspondence, National CASA will contact the program to learn about the situation before responding. A copy of National CASA's response is sent to the program.

In some cases, the complainant has already spoken to the program director and has been given our number by the director. In these cases, we refer the person to the governing body of the program which is either the board of directors or the administrator of the agency.

When requested, National CASA provides printed information about the national program standards or any other information requested. National CASA staff respects the program, program staff's, and volunteers' right to privacy and will not reveal or discuss any information about any of these parties.

2. Complaints about a Program

If the complaint is lodged by someone outside the CASA network, the above procedure is followed. If the complaint alleges that the program does not follow national standards, the state organization will be notified and asked to look into the matter.

If the allegations prove true, National CASA can ask that a program take corrective action to remediate the problem and every effort is made to provide training, technical assistance and support to the program's staff and board or administrator.

If after adequate time and assistance has been provided, the program still does not comply, membership in the Association and all accompanying benefits may be terminated. The

program is notified in writing of this decision. A program may regain its membership if the oversight body certifies that the problems have been sufficiently corrected. If membership is terminated, National CASA will notify the chief judge in the program's jurisdiction of this action.

If the program is a grantee, National CASA will monitor the program if appropriate and grant funds may be suspended until the program takes acceptable corrective action.

Chapter 3

Board Development

The phone rings. A program director thinks it is unfair that the western part of the state has 2/3 of the representation on the board and they get most of the money from the state allocation.

This chapter focuses particularly on issues for statewide boards, including board composition issues. The board development section in *Achieving Our Mission* for local programs is an excellent resource on general board development issues.

Governing Board vs. Advisory Council

Every nonprofit organization must have a **governing board**. The standards for state CASA/GAL organizations require the organization to have either a governing board or an advisory board. BoardSource (formally the National Center for Nonprofit Boards; boardsource.org) is an organization whose mission is increasing the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations by strengthening their boards of directors. This organization lists ten basic responsibilities of nonprofit governing boards:

1. Determine the organization's mission and purpose. It is the board's responsibility to create and review a statement of mission and purpose that articulates the organization's goals, means and primary constituents served.
2. Select the chief executive. Boards must reach consensus on the chief executive's responsibilities and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.
3. Provide proper financial oversight. The board must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.
4. Ensure adequate resources. One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to provide adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission.
5. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability. The board is ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.
6. Ensure effective organizational planning. Boards must actively participate in an overall planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals.
7. Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance. All boards have a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates orient new members and periodically and comprehensively evaluate its own performance. Enhance the organization's public standing. The board should

- clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.
8. Determine, monitor and strengthen the organization's programs and services. The board's responsibility is to determine which programs are consistent with the organization's mission and to monitor their effectiveness.
 9. Support the chief executive and assess his or her performance. The board should ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization.

The role of the **advisory council** is less well defined, but as the name implies, is advisory in capacity. State administered CASA/GAL organizations may have only an advisory council since they are not nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit CASA/GAL state organizations may have an advisory council in addition to the governing board. Advisory councils have no legal responsibility for the organization. Typically they focus on roles such as fundraising, public relations or advice and counsel on policies. They may also have other responsibilities such as reviewing grants made by the state organization. Where the state CASA/GAL organization is part of state government, the advisory council may take on some of the responsibilities of governing boards (subject to the approval of the office in which the state CASA/GAL organization is housed). For example, they may be involved in strategic planning for the state organization. Because they have no legal responsibilities, one of the biggest challenges for advisory councils is ensuring they have purpose and direction. The advisory council needs to have a mission statement, goals and objectives.

The mission statement is likely to use wording such as “to support the work of the state CASA/GAL organization to assist local CASA/GAL organizations in serving abused and neglected children in the court system.”

In some cases the state CASA/GAL organization may be governed by the board of an umbrella organization, such as a gubernatorial commission. In this situation, the challenge may be to raise the profile of the CASA/GAL organization within the larger organization so that the program gets the attention and resources needed. When the state organization is under an umbrella organization, having an advisory council specifically for CASA/GAL is advisable.

Board Composition

The composition of the state CASA/GAL board, whether governing or advisory, will depend on the needs and goals of the state organization. A board composition assessment grid can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter. Using this worksheet, boards (or planning committees) can identify the skills, characteristics and affiliations needed by the organization; boards can then brainstorm a list of individuals who meet those needs.

Diversity is one critical component of board composition. The state organization board needs varying viewpoints and backgrounds on the board in order to best help local programs and serve abused and neglected children. This should include diversity in race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language and the presence of a sensory,

mental or physical disability as well as diversity of skills and professional backgrounds. If the board makes funding decisions for local programs, geographic diversity is particularly important to ensure that the needs of the entire state are considered and to avoid even the appearance of favoritism.

In addition to the value diversity brings to the state organization, it is important that the state organization model this commitment for local programs. One website, boardsource.org, provides important perspective on the importance of true diversity on the board:

“To avoid creating token positions on your board, start with a firm commitment to diversity. Announce it; put it in writing. Creating a sense of ownership is difficult if recruitment of new board members is based on pure representation of a specific group in the constituency. No board member wants to fill a quota. No one should be expected to - in fact, no one is able to - represent an entire subsection of the population. Board members contribute according to their skills and knowledge. Focus on the entity as a diverse mixture, not on individual representation.

Remind all board members of their duty to loyalty. Board members need to represent the organization and its best interests. Tokenism tends to promote individual commitment to a population group or interest.

To avoid the appearance of creating token positions, treat each board member equally. Expect the same from everyone; each board member, new or old, has the same responsibilities. Involve every new member immediately. Assign tasks independently of cultural or ethnic background. Recruit several members at the same time from the same group.”

Local program staff on the board

One controversial issue for organizations is whether local program staff should be part of the board. Historically, many state organizations began with boards comprised entirely of local program staff primarily because they were the impetus behind the development of a state association. The board usually did not have paid staff for the state organization and therefore board members performed the functions of the state office. This worked well in the early stages of a state organization when the number of programs in the state was small and the universal goal of the board was developing a state organization. However, as the state organization evolves and adds staff, having a board composed entirely of local program staff has proven to be problematic in many states. Once a state association is established, ongoing funding is needed. This need to raise money for a state organization inevitably presents a conflict of interest for local directors whose first priority is to raise money for their own programs. Funding issues are especially a problem if the state CASA/GAL organization is in the position of making grants to local programs. Additionally, diversity is very important for the state organization; and local program directors are typically not diverse in ethnicity or professional background.

Transitioning From a Program Director Board

If a state CASA/GAL organization is making a transition from a board made up largely of program directors to a more diverse board, care must be taken to ensure that the local

program perspective is not lost. One way to achieve this is to have a limited number of program representatives remain on the board. Local program input should also be sought as to board membership. Some states have a Program Advisory Committee for the state organization board. This is comprised of local program directors who are encouraged to give input and advice to the board. The by-laws of the state organization may require the board to seek input from the Program Advisory Committee on any program issues.

One possible plan in transitioning the board includes¹:

- Amending by-laws regarding at-large representation.
- Appointing a board development committee to identify needs of the board and possible individuals to fill those needs.
- Filling at-large seats allowed under current by-laws.
- Continuing recruitment for new board members.
- Creating a Program Advisory Council consisting of program directors or other representatives.
- Holding an annual meeting to: elect additional at-large members, elect program representatives to the board, remove non-elected program representatives from the board and recognize accomplishments and contributions of outgoing board members.
- Continue to evaluate board effectiveness and amend by-laws as necessary.

Transitioning away from a program director board is not easy. Care must be taken to give clear rationale about why having a more diverse board is important to the mission of the state organization and to local programs. Local program directors must be involved in the transition process and the board and the state organization must have a formal mechanism for soliciting program input.

Other Board Members

Another board composition issue to consider is whether other state agency or organization representatives should be on the board. The state governing board or advisory council may wish to consider individuals representing the following areas and organizations:

1. Child welfare agency
2. Commission on child abuse
3. Judicial council
4. Bar association or legal aid
5. Governor's office
6. Volunteerism agency (if one exists)
7. Mental health community
8. Former foster youth
9. Foster parents association
10. Administrative Office of the Courts
11. CASA/GAL volunteers

In some states members of the state legislature may serve on the board. There are a number of factors that should be taken into account. Are there ethics rules regarding a legislator

¹ This plan is based on that of Oklahoma CASA.

serving on a board? If the state CASA/GAL organization receives state funding does it affect the rules? Will the membership of a legislator make the CASA/GAL organization appear partisan? Should there be two representatives from different parties? Will legislators be active, effective board members? Would retired legislators be a possibility?

However desirable members from some of the above categories are, their inclusion alone will not provide the skill sets and connections every board needs. Also recruit members from the corporate and foundation arenas. Needed skills and expertise of board members might include public relations, finance, law, human resources, technology and fundraising. Locating members with these skills can be challenging. The board will need to have a nominating committee to identify the skills needed and individuals who can bring them to the board.

Geographic diversity is necessary for the board. Recruiting individuals from outside the area of the state organization's office can be a challenge. One approach is to seek representatives of the "easier" skills to fill from outside the capital city or major metropolitan areas. For example, if the board has a position for a child welfare agency representative, this person could come from a less represented area.

The Board Nominating Committee should be active year round. Prior to a new member being elected and invited to join they should meet with a representative of the board (preferably the Nominating Committee Chairperson). During this meeting, board roles and responsibilities should be discussed; doing so provides an opportunity to determine if this relationship will be a good one for both the potential board member and CASA/GAL state organization.

Meetings

Because the governing or advisory board for the state organization represents the entire state, finding convenient meeting times and locations can be problematic. Many statewide boards meet only quarterly, but the executive committee may meet more frequently either in person or by teleconference. If the board meets only quarterly, there should be effective committees doing a great deal of work between meetings, most likely by telephone and email. This type of board working style necessitates that committee responsibilities and expectation be very clear. In-person board meetings should be spent asking questions and making decisions about next steps based on committee reports that have been distributed prior to the meeting. When new board members are recruited, it should be made clear whether or not the state organization will reimburse meeting costs and what the expectations are of long-distance board membership.

The board may wish to rotate its meetings around the state in order to equitably share the travel burden. This could also be an opportunity to hear brief reports from a local program about their advocacy for children and their feedback about the services they would like to see provided by the state organization.

The director and the board chair should ensure that board meetings are comfortable for attendees; the space should be adequate with chairs and writing surfaces for all attendees. Offering refreshments is always appreciated. For a board that meets less often, nametags are helpful.

If the board meets only quarterly, frequent updates are needed to keep members involved and motivated. Monthly progress reports via email from the state CASA/GAL director and

board committee chairs may help accomplish this. The board secretary or other member might take responsibility for compiling these reports into a single document for members.

In some states, members of the press must be notified when the board meets. Rules on this requirement vary by state. To find the rules for a particular state, visit rcfp.org/tapping/index.cgi.

Board Orientation

Orientation is the process of educating new members on the state CASA/GAL organization's mission, history and services, as well as the roles and responsibilities of board members and the executive director.

Experienced board members and the executive director should conduct orientation using the board handbook. Each board member should receive a handbook containing:

- mission
- by-laws
- brief history of the organization
- committees of the board
- budget
- latest strategic plan
- recent minutes of board meetings
- state brochure and other recent public relations materials
- board membership list (including terms)
- contact information and map of local programs
- most recent annual report and financial audit
- most recent IRS form 990 (if a nonprofit organization)
- organizational chart
- conflict of interest policy
- Other policies relevant to the board

State CASA/GAL programs with advisory councils rather than boards may not need to include all the above information.

During orientation, particular attention should be placed on the role of the board, member responsibilities and the role of the state CASA/GAL director. Attention should also be given to the challenges of a long-distance board and how this particular board addresses those challenges. The section of the by-laws addressing attendance should be highlighted. If the board is made up primarily of community representatives, spend time explaining the role of CASA/GAL advocacy, the law and how systems work together. It may also be helpful to provide a list of commonly used acronyms in the CASA/GAL network.

Expectations regarding financial contributions on the part of board members should be made clear. Many state organizations require board members to contribute to the program based upon their ability to do so and respecting the socio-economic diversity on the board. Many outside donors ask about the level of board giving and expect to see 100% contribution levels regardless of the amount given. Some state organization boards exempt local program representatives on the board from the contribution requirement.

A board member job description and board member orientation checklist can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.

Role of the Executive Director Vis-à-Vis the Board

One state director gave the following advice, “Don’t start out trying to do it all yourself – your board will get more and more passive.” It is true that most state organizations have limited staff to accomplish ambitious strategic plans and goals and the board needs to be a working board.

The first step is to differentiate between the roles of the board and the staff. A useful worksheet, *Board and Staff – Who does What?* is available in resource documents section at the end of this chapter. Completing this worksheet at a board retreat can lead to a helpful discussion about board member responsibilities and realistic expectations. It may be useful to have an outside facilitator assist with this process.

Ensure that job descriptions for board members and the executive director are consistent with the agreed upon roles. Action steps in the strategic plan and from board meetings should be consistent with these roles.

Conflicts may occasionally arise between the board and the executive director. In this situation, the director should communicate with the board chair designee (such as the chair of the personnel committee). When a board micro-manages, it may be because they are too focused on the details or the process and not focused enough on the outcomes of the organization. Reports to the board should be focused on progress towards the goals of the strategic plan.

Motivating and Evaluating the Board

Keeping local boards composed of people who see one another regularly can be challenging. Keeping a state board motivated and on-track may seem overwhelming.

The director should collaborate with the chair of the board on strategies to keep board members involved. One way is communication. Be sure all board members receive the organization newsletter, whether on paper or by email. It may be useful to have a listserv for board members only or to send a regular progress report from the state director. If the board meets less often than monthly, it is particularly important to send a monthly report from the state organization staff to help keep board members updated.

Boards need to see the results of their work. Committees should report at each board meeting and the chair should review accomplishments. Minutes of meetings should be action oriented, describing decisions made and actions taken rather than describing long conversations.

Every board should regularly engage in evaluation to ensure that it is effectively governing or advising the state CASA/GAL organizations. Members may also want to evaluate their own contributions to the board. A sample board member evaluation can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter. Evaluations should focus on past accomplishments and on how to have a more effective board.

A final note on boards: Every state CASA/GAL organization needs the expertise and support of a strong board, whether it is governing or advisory. The director of the state organization should consider the care and feeding of the board to be a high priority, and should work in partnership with the chair of the board to further the mission of the state organization.



Additional Resources:

National CASA's *Achieving Our Mission*

United Way (board training resources)

Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management (pdf.org)

Board Builders (boardbuilders.org)

Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations (mdnonprofit.org)

Independent Sector (indepsec.org)

National Alliance for Nonprofit Management (allianceonline.org)

Board Source (boardsource.org)

National Council of Nonprofit Associations (ncna.org)

Center for Creative Leadership (ccl.org)

Nonprofit Risk Management Center (nonprofitrisk.org)

Council on Foundations (cof.org)

American Management Association (amanet.org)

Management Assistance Program (managementhelp.org)

Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press; information about FOI and open meeting laws (rcfp.org/tapping/index.cgi)

To Go Forward, Retreat! The Board Retreat Handbook by Sandra R. Hughes. BoardSource, 1999.

The Board Building Cycle: Nine Steps to Recruiting and Engaging Nonprofit Board Members by Sandra R. Hughes. BoardSource, 2000.

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with development of the board of directors:

- What is the history of this board? What challenges have they faced?
- Who are the board members? How were they chosen? What skills do they bring?
- Has the board evaluated itself?

Resource and Support Documents

Board Development

Board Selection Assessment Grid and Characteristics

Sample Board Member Self-evaluation

Sample By-laws

Sample Board Policies and Procedures

Board and Staff: Who does what?

Board Member Job Description

Board Member Orientation Checklist

Role of Advisory Councils

Board Selection Assessment Grid Directions

First brainstorm the skills or attributes needed on the board or advisory council. It may be helpful to review the board member job description and the organization's strategic plans.

Consider which of them are needed by all board members. One common example is time. Another might be willingness to donate to the organization. Write those in as headings in the appropriate columns under "ALL".

Next, consider which qualities are needed by specific board members, such as the chair or the fundraising committee chair and write those in as headings in the appropriate columns under "SOME". Then consider which skills or attributes are needed by at least one board member, regardless of position. Typical categories are included: management and administration, fundraising, program expertise, and community representation. Write the specific skills or attributes at the top of the appropriate column.

The second step is to write in the names of all current board or advisory council members in the column on the left-hand side of the chart. Each person should then place a check mark under each skill or attribute that they have AND are willing to bring to the board.

The third step is to identify those skills or attributes which are not represented on the board or advisory council or which are inadequately represented. The group can then focus on recruiting members who will fill in those gaps.

Many facilitators have the board assessment grid as an overhead or on a flip chart so that all members can view it simultaneously.

Sample Board of Directors Self-Evaluation

3. NETWORKING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

(LOW)					(HIGH)
1	2	3	4	5	
Rating criteria:					

- Providing information about CASA/GAL in the community
- Introducing CASA/GAL to new contacts or liaisons from various sectors of the community
- Encouraging personal contacts to become volunteers or to support CASA/GAL
- Setting up meetings with staff and other board members to establish personal contacts within the corporate community

Comments: _____

4. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

(LOW)					(HIGH)
1	2	3	4	5	
Rating criteria					

- Making an annual personal/business donation to CASA/GAL
- Soliciting donations for CASA/GAL from friends or business contacts
- Soliciting non-monetary donations for CASA/GAL from friends or business acquaintances
- Opening new fundraising venues for CASA/GAL

Comments: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

This form was adapted from the Voices for Children Foundation of Miami, FL.

AMENDED BY-LAWS OF ALABAMA CASA NETWORK, INC.

Article I- Directors

Section One: Number and Qualifications. The board of directors shall consist of 15 persons. All directors shall be at least 25 years old. The number of directors may be increased or decreased from time to time, but shall never be more than 15 nor less than seven without amendment to these By-Laws. Directors shall be residents of the State of Alabama.

Section Two: Manner of Election. A nominating committee composed of not fewer than three directors shall nominate successive directors. Directors shall then be elected from the nominations of the nominating committee and by a majority vote of the remaining directors. Failure to elect directors at any time designated for their election shall not dissolve the Corporation. Every two years, the directors shall nominate and elect the president and other officers of their board who shall serve for two-year terms.

Section Three: Term of Office. The term of office of all directors shall be staggered in terms of from one to three years as follows, and a director shall serve until such time as the successor has been duly elected and qualified:

- A. Seven directors representing Alabamians interested in the CASA Program shall be appointed, with due regard given to geographical diversity, to serve two-year terms; (changed April, 2001)
- B. One director representing the Kappa Alpha Theta Greek fraternity, which person shall be active in a chapter alumni organization, shall be appointed to serve a three-year term. This appointment is a recognition that CASA has benefited from many donations and contributions from Kappa Alpha Theta;
- C. Three directors representing the Alabama CASA Network of program directors shall be appointed to serve two-year terms;
- D. One director representing the professional field of either certified public accounting or tax law shall be appointed to serve a three-year term;
- E. One director representing the professional field of social work or a related professional field who works with children and families shall be appointed to serve a one-year term;
- F. Two directors representing the at-large category of active and/or former CASA volunteers in Alabama shall be appointed to serve two-year terms.

Section Four: Duties and Powers. The board of directors shall have control and management of the affairs and business of the Corporation. The directors shall in all cases act as a board, regularly convened, and in the transaction of business the act of a majority present at a meeting, except as otherwise provided by law or the Articles of Incorporation, shall be the act of the board, provided a quorum is present. Directors may adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of their meetings and the management of the Corporation as they may deem proper, not inconsistent with law or these By-Laws. The board of directors shall serve without compensation. The board of directors may, with or without cause, remove any officer at any time.

Section Five: Meetings. The board of directors shall meet for the election or appointment of officers and for the transaction of any other business as often as practicable and necessary, but in no event less than bi-annually. All regular meetings of the board shall be held at such times and places as the board may determine and designate in its notices of meetings.

Section Six: Special Meetings. The president may call special meetings of the board of directors at any time, and the president must, upon the written request of any two directors, call a special meeting to be held not more than seven days after the receipt of such request.

Sample Amended By-laws of Alabama CASA Network, Inc.

Section Seven: Notice of Meetings. Notice of regular and special meetings of the board shall be served upon each director in person, by facsimile transmission, electronic transmission, or by United States mail addressed to such director at the last-known mailing address, at least five business days prior to the date of such meeting, specifying the time and place of the meeting and the business to be transacted thereat. At any meeting at which all of the directors shall be present, although held without notice, any business may be transacted which might have been transacted if the meeting had been duly called.

Section Eight: Place of Meeting. The board of directors or any committee thereof may hold its meeting at such place as may be designated in the notice of any such meeting or agreed to by a majority of the directors.

Section Nine: Quorum. At any meeting of the board of directors the presence of a majority of the board shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. However, should a quorum not be present, a lesser number may adjourn the meeting to some further time, not more than seven days later.

Section Ten: Voting. At all meetings each director shall have one vote. Voting procedures shall be according to the Roberts Rules of Order.

Section Eleven: Action Without a Meeting. Any action which may be authorized or taken at a meeting of the board of directors may be authorized or taken without a meeting in a written consent signed by three-fourths of the directors, which consent shall be filed with or entered upon the records of the Corporation.

Section Twelve: Compensation. Directors are to serve without compensation. However, each director may be entitled to receive for attendance at each meeting of the board, or of any duly constituted committee thereof which the director attends, such expenses of attendance as are fixed by the board. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any director from serving the Corporation in another capacity as an officer, agent or otherwise, and receiving compensation therefore.

Section Thirteen: Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring in the board of directors by death, resignation, or otherwise shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining directors, at a special meeting which shall be called for that purpose within six months after the occurrence of the vacancy. The director thus chosen shall hold office for the unexpired term of the predecessor director and the election and qualification of the successor.

Any directorship to be filled by reason of an increase in the number of directors shall be filled by election at an annual meeting of the board of directors, or at a special meeting of the board of directors called for that purpose, and any additional director so chosen shall serve a term of from one to three years based on the designation allotted that directorship, and until their successors are elected and qualified.

Section Fourteen: Removal of Directors. Any director may be removed either with or without cause, at any time, by a majority vote of the remaining directors, at any special meeting called for that purpose or at the annual meeting of the board. Provided, however, that the membership on the board of directors of any director who is absent from two meetings of the board of directors within a year shall automatically terminate upon adjournment of the second meeting in that year from which the director was absent, unless the board of directors, by a majority vote of directors present, votes to retain or reinstate the director.

Section Fifteen: Resignation. Any director may resign the office of director at any time. Such resignation shall be made in writing to all directors, and shall take effect immediately without acceptance by the remaining directors.

Section Sixteen: Contracts. No contract or other transaction between this Corporation and any other corporation shall be affected or invalidated by the fact that any one or more of the directors of this Corporation is interested in, or is a director or officer of such other corporation, and any directors or officers of such other corporation, and any director, individually or jointly, may be a party or parties to or may be interested in any contract or transaction of this Corporation or in which this Corporation is interested; and no contract, act or transaction of this Corporation with any person or persons, firm or association shall be affected or invalidated by the fact that any director of this Corporation is a party to, or interested in, such contract, act or transaction, or in any way connected with such person, firm or association, and each and every person who may become a director of this Corporation is hereby

relieved from any liability that might otherwise exist from contracting with this Corporation for the benefit of himself or herself or any firm or corporation in which he or she may be in anyway interested.

Section Seventeen: Fiscal Year. The fiscal year shall begin the first day of the month of July and end the last day of the month of June.

ARTICLE II- Officers

Section One: Officers and Qualifications. The officers of the Corporation shall be a president, two vice presidents one of whom shall serve as parliamentarian, a secretary and a treasurer and such other officers as the board of directors may determine. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person upon written designation by the board of directors.

Section Two: Election. All officers of the Corporation shall be elected every two years commencing in 1999, by the board of directors at its annual meeting in April of each year held for that purpose.

Section Three: Term in Office. All officers shall hold office for two years until their successors have been duly elected and have qualified, or until removed as hereinafter provided. Notwithstanding any provisions herein, officers shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms unless unanimously approved by the board of directors.

Section Four: Removal of Officers. Any officer may be removed either with or without cause by the vote of a majority of the board of directors.

Section Five: Duties of Officers. The duties and powers of the officers of the Corporation shall be as follows and as shall hereafter be set by resolution of the board of directors:

President

- A. The president shall attend and present at each annual meeting of the board of directors a report of the condition of the business of the Corporation, and the financial and other needs of the Corporation.
- B. The president shall cause to be called regular and special meetings of the board of directors in accordance with the requirements of statute and these By-Laws.
- C. The president shall appoint, discharge, and fix the compensation of all employees and agents of the Corporation, with the written approval of the board of directors.
- D. The president shall sign and execute all contracts in the name of the Corporation.
- E. The president shall cause all books, reports, statements, and certificates to be properly kept and filed as required by law.
- F. The president shall enforce these By-Laws and perform all the duties incident to the office of president and which are required by law, and, generally, supervise and control the business and affairs of the Corporation.

Vice President

- A. During the absence or incapacity of the president, the first vice president shall perform the duties of the president, and when so acting shall have all the powers and be subject to all the responsibilities of the office of president and shall perform such duties and functions as the board of directors may prescribe.

Second Vice President

- A. During the absence or incapacity of the president and first vice president, the second vice president shall perform the duties of the president, and when so acting shall have all the powers and be subject to all the responsibilities of the office of president and shall perform such duties and functions as the board of directors may prescribe. The second vice president shall, in addition to the aforementioned duties, serve in the capacity of parliamentarian at all meetings of the board of directors.

Sample Amended By-laws of Alabama CASA Network, Inc.

Secretary

- A. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the board of directors in the corporate record book.
- B. The secretary shall attend to the giving of notice of meetings of the board of directors.
- C. The secretary shall be custodian of the records and seal of the Corporation, and shall affix the seal to corporate papers when required.
- D. The secretary shall make available, upon reasonable notice, during usual business hours, at the office of the registered agent of the Corporation, all corporate record books containing the acts of the Corporation and minutes of meetings of the board of directors. The secretary shall make such books or records and the minutes of the proceedings of all meetings available for inspection, within the limits prescribed by law, by directors, any person duly authorized by the board of directors, or any person duly authorized by law to inspect such records. At the request of the person entitled to an inspection thereof, the secretary shall prepare and make available a current list of the officers and directors of the corporation and their residence addresses.
- E. The secretary shall attend to all correspondence and shall attend and present to the board of directors at its meetings all official communications received by the secretary.
- F. The secretary shall perform all the duties incident to the office of secretary of the Corporation.

Treasurer

- A. The treasurer shall have the care and custody of and be responsible for all the funds and securities of the Corporation, and shall deposit such funds and securities in the name of the Corporation in such banks or safe deposit companies as approved by the board of directors.
- B. Each bank account shall have four persons authorized to make, sign, and endorse in the name of the Corporation all checks, drafts, notes, and other orders for the payment of money: the executive director, president, vice-president, and treasurer. Of the four authorized persons, there shall be two signatures for each check, draft, note or other order for the payment of money and, except in extenuating circumstances, the second signature shall be that of the executive director.
- C. The treasurer shall make available, upon reasonable notice, during usual business hours, at the office of the registered agent of the Corporation, accurate books of account of all the Corporation's business and transactions and shall at all reasonable hours exhibit such books and accounts to any director, any person duly authorized by the board of directors, or any person duly authorized by law to inspect such records.
- D. The treasurer shall render a report of the condition of the finances of the Corporation at each regular meeting of the board of directors and at such other times as shall be required of him or her and shall make a full financial report at the annual meeting of the board of directors.
- E. The treasurer shall further perform all duties incident to the office of treasurer of the Corporation.
- F. If required by the board of directors, the treasurer shall give such bond as the board shall determine appropriate for the faithful performance of the treasurer's duties.

Other Officers

Other officers shall perform such duties and have such powers as may be assigned to them by the board of directors.

Section Six: Vacancies. All vacancies in any office shall be filled by the board of directors, either at a regular meeting or at a meeting specially called for that purpose.

Section Seven: Payment for Expenses to Officers. The officers shall serve without compensation, but may be paid their reasonable expenses of service, as such expenses are approved by the board of directors.

ARTICLE III

Section One: Seal. The seal of the Corporation is as follows:

ARTICLE IV

Section One: Execution. All bills payable, notes, checks, drafts, warrants, or other negotiable instruments of the Corporation shall be made in the name of the Corporation and shall be signed by such officer or officers as the board of directors shall from time to time by resolution direct.

No officer or agent of the Corporation, either singly or jointly with others, shall have the power to make any bill payable, note, check, draft, or warrant, or other negotiable instrument, or endorse the same in the name of the Corporation, or contract or cause to be contracted any debt or liability in the name and on behalf of the Corporation except as herein expressly prescribed and provided.

ARTICLE V – Offices

Section One: Principal Office. The principal office and mailing address of the Corporation shall be: The Alabama CASA Network, 2806 Ruffner Road, Suite 111, Irondale, Alabama, 35210.

The board of directors may change the location of the principal office or the mailing address of the Corporation and may, from time to time, designate other offices as the business of the Corporation may require.

Section Two: Registered Office. The registered agent and registered office for service of process on the Corporation or for inspection of the books of the Corporation shall be: Pamela Millsaps, Attorney at Law, 808 Downtowner Boulevard, Suite I, Mobile, Alabama, 36609-5417. The board of directors may change the registered agent and location of the registered office of the Corporation from time to time as the business of the Corporation may require.

ARTICLE VI – Amendments

Section One: Manner of Amending. These By-Laws may be altered, amended, repealed, or added to by the affirmative vote of a majority of the board of directors at its annual meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose, provided that a written notice shall have been sent to each director at the director's last-known address at least ten days before the date of any such annual or special meeting. The notice shall state the alterations, amendments, additions, or changes which are proposed to be made in such By-Laws. Only such changes shall be made as have been specified in the notice.

ARTICLE VII- Waiver of Notice

Section One: Authority to Waive Notice. Whenever under the provisions of these By-Laws or any statute any director is entitled to notice of any regular or special meeting or of any action to be taken by the Corporation, such meeting may be held or such action may be taken without the giving of such notice, provided every director entitled to such notice waives, in writing, the requirements of these By-Laws in respect thereto.

Sample Board Policies and Procedures

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Revised Colorado CASA Board Policies and Procedures

The following policies are statements of the mission and values held by the Board of Directors of Colorado CASA which are to be used by both Board and staff in determining, implementing, and monitoring their actions:

MISSION STATEMENT OF COLORADO CASA

The Colorado Court Appointed Special Advocate Association advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children. It supports the development, growth and continuation of programs which recruit and train volunteers to serve as Court Appointed Special Advocates for abused and neglected children in juvenile dependency and family court proceedings.

THOSE IN WHOSE INTEREST WE WILL ACT

Colorado CASA will act in the interest of its member agencies and the abused and neglected children whom those agencies serve.

GENERAL STATEMENTS ON VALUES

ETHICS

Ethical Behavior. Colorado CASA is committed to the highest standards of ethics and integrity in all of its work.

Respect. Colorado CASA treats all people well, with fairness and respect. Rude or demeaning treatment of others isn't tolerated anywhere within the organization.

Confidentiality. Colorado CASA is committed to the highest standards of confidentiality. Clients rights and privacy will be accorded respect in all circumstances. Inquiries from the media or public for information regarding confidential matters are dealt with only by the Executive Director, or a designated representative.

CASA VOLUNTEERS (OR CASAs)

Volunteer advocates. Colorado CASA is committed to supporting the provision of volunteer, lay advocacy for children. Although not child welfare professionals, CASA volunteers operate with the highest standards of professionalism.

Role of lay advocates in the child welfare system. CASA believes in the tremendous value of lay advocates (CASA volunteers) working as members of a team of professionals. CASA volunteers are equal participants. Colorado CASA believes in the importance of the professionals within the system. CASA volunteers in no way replace them.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship to the child welfare system. Colorado CASA values strong working relationships and open communication with all others working within the child welfare system. After extensive evaluations, the focus of the CASA volunteer is upon productive problem solving, on occasion resulting in a recommendation that is not parallel to other parties in the case. Colorado CASA encourages a respectful and cooperative relationship with all parties engaged in cases where a CASA volunteer has been appointed. Colorado CASA recognizes that reasonable people may disagree, and that the best outcomes for children result from a full and complete discussion of all issues

Relationship and Responsibility to the Court. Colorado CASA has a responsibility to operate with the highest standards of ethics and accountability, and to do nothing to discredit the Court or the position of trust CASA is accorded. As appointed officers of the Court, Court Appointed Special Advocates must demonstrate the highest ethical standards in their conduct, both inside and outside the courtroom. They must abide by the laws of Colorado and the federal government, and the rules of the Court.

Sample Board Policies

CASA Position on Guardian Ad Litem Attorneys (GALs). CASA supports the appointment of GALs to all child abuse and neglect cases as required by Colorado statute. The attorney GAL has the ability and authority to present evidence, cross examine witnesses, file motions and otherwise participate in the legal aspects of the case to represent the child's best interests. Children need and deserve attorney GALs to represent their best interests. *(Adopted as policy by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors, 5/14/96.)*

Teamwork. Everyone working to further CASA's mission, regardless of job title or paid or volunteer status, is equally important. Teamwork is vital and integral to the success of our mission.

Statewide Relationships. Colorado CASA will work to ensure the highest quality communication and relationship building with, in particular, the Colorado Judicial Branch, the Office of the Child's Representative, and the Colorado Department of Human Services. In addition, Colorado CASA will cultivate positive and productive relationships with other statewide entities, such as the Colorado Bar Foundation, the Colorado Bar Association, the Colorado Judicial Institute, the Colorado Children's Campaign and CANPO. In building relationships, Colorado CASA will seek, and/or delegate, service on appropriate committees and task forces.

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Board of Directors shall hire and annually evaluate the performance of the Executive Director.

The Executive Director is responsible to the Board acting as a whole and is the only staff member so responsible.

The Chair of the Board shall be the chief liaison between the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

The agenda for all Board meetings should be set by the Chair in consultation with the Executive Director.

The Executive Director is responsible for hiring subordinate staff and for directing the overall program.

The Executive Director is responsible for reporting the current activities and programs of the agency fully and factually to the Board and to its various committees.

The Executive Director is responsible for keeping the Board and relevant officers informed about issues which may affect the agency.

The Board shall have a letter of understanding with the Executive Director which details the terms of employment and evaluation.

BOARD

It shall be the responsibility of every Board member to attend committee meetings and Board meetings and to prepare for those meetings. Every Board member, from his or her own area of expertise, should contribute to the understanding of issues that may affect the agency.

It shall be the responsibility of every Board member to be fully acquainted with these Colorado CASA Board Policies.

Each member of the Board of Directors accepts the personal responsibility for personal financial support of the agency and for assisting to raise funds for the organization.

The Board shall evaluate these policies annually.

The Board shall conduct the organization in compliance with the bylaws.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Board Committees and purposes are generally as follows:

Board Development Committee:

Committee Purpose:

- To ensure quality and diversity in selection of candidates for the Colorado CASA Board of Directors through:
 - 1) Determination of areas of membership need for the Board of Directors
 - 2) Annual selection of Board candidates
 - 3) Oversight of the nominating and ballot process
 - 4) With the Board Chair and Executive Director, oversight of Board orientation/training.
- To plan the Annual Board Retreat in coordination with the Executive Director
- To review the Colorado CASA bylaws, making recommendations to the Board
- To initiate a regular Board assessment process

Finance Committee

Committee Purpose:

- To develop the annual Colorado CASA budget in coordination with the Executive Director and present it for approval at the May Board meeting.
- To monitor the finances of the organization and oversee preparation of a financial report to be presented at regularly scheduled Board meetings.
- To secure an annual audit and present it to the Board at the Annual Meeting
- To monitor financial procedures for the Colorado CASA office, including procedures relating to Angels for Colorado CASA.
- To ensure, thorough oversight and suggestion of resources, necessary insurance coverage for Colorado CASA.

Fund Development Committee

Committee Purpose:

- To develop and implement an overall annual fund development plan for Colorado CASA.
- To work with Angels for Colorado CASA in implementing portions of the fund development plan

Legislative Liaison

Purpose:

- To plan an annual legislative reception or other event
- To research funding sources for the CASA Fund, working with the Executive Director and the Office of Child Representative

Public Relations Committee

Committee Purpose:

- To survey agencies, including Colorado CASA, about public relations needs
- To define Colorado CASA's role in relation to those needs
- To develop a statewide CASA public relations plan
- To develop tools, in conjunction with the Fund Development Committee, for immediate use by Colorado CASA

Training Conference Committee

Committee Purpose:

Sample Board Policies

- To plan and carry out, with the Executive Director, Colorado CASA's annual statewide training conference.
- To provide, through the conference, ancillary training for CASAs, program staff and Boards of Directors to help ensure program quality.
- To survey and determine the training needs of CASA programs.
- To develop a new training design for CASA in Colorado.
- To evaluate and revise statewide training annually.

Committee Chairs

The Board Vice Chair (Chair-Elect) serves as Chair of the Board Development Committee.

The Board Treasurer serves as Chair of the Finance Committee.

Non-Board Members on Committees

Role of Non-Board Members on Committee

Three Colorado CASA Board Committees have non-Board members: 1) Fund Development, 2) Public Relations and 3) Training Conference. Other standing committees (Board Development and Finance) do not have non-Board members. It is recommended that this structure continue.

The Executive Committee recommends that, relative to non-Board membership, each Ad hoc Committee's needs be considered on a committee-by committee basis.

There should be two categories of non-Board members: 1) Consultants, and 2) Committee Members.

- Parameters for Committee Membership as a non-Board member:
- The Committee as a whole decides who should join, why that person is valuable,
- and the term for that person - The Committee Chair discusses this with the person being recruited.
- It is recommended that each Committee Chair give a report at the Board's Annual Meeting or the meeting following as to whom is needed on a particular committee
- Each Committee Chair needs to be clear about this procedure and follow it.
- An orientation for non-Board committee members will be developed and provided by Colorado CASA.
- The Executive Committee recommends that orientation for non-Board members on committees be similar to that provided by Colorado CASA for new Board members.

Approved by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors November 28, 2000

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

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 officers 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 in to 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 a full disclosure and conflict of interest statement.

PLANNING

1. The Board and the Executive Director shall prepare a long-range plan at the annual retreat. The plan shall include broad goals for the next three years. Committees will use the long-range plan when developing activities for the year.
2. The ideas discussed at the annual retreat will be recorded and presented to the Board at the next board meeting for review and modification.
3. The Executive Director and/or staff members shall present a final report on the previous year's accomplishments in accordance with the previous year's plan at the organization's Annual Meeting.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES

BUDGET

1. The previously adopted plan shall form the basis of an annual budget which will be prepared by staff and submitted to the Finance Committee for approval by the Board.
2. Angels for Colorado CASA shall present its annual budget to the Colorado CASA Board of Directors for approval as part of the Colorado CASA annual budget process and time frame.

ANGELS FOR COLORADO CASA

1. Angels for Colorado CASA Treasurer shall submit a monthly financial report, prepared by an outside accountant, to the Colorado CASA Finance Committee.
2. From the Colorado CASA Board's Bylaws: "The Officers of the Angels shall have no authority to bind the corporation to any contractual obligations. Any contractual obligations the Angels seek to incur shall require the approval of the Colorado CASA Board of Directors and the signature of the Executive Director of the corporation. Disbursement of funds shall require the signature of a person authorized by the (Colorado CASA) Board of Directors."

INTERNAL CONTROL POLICY

GENERAL:

- The Board of Directors is responsible for authorizing all bank accounts and check signers.
- The Board Chair, Treasurer, and Executive Director have signing authority on all bank accounts.
- Separate accounts are maintained for any restricted funds if required by the funding source.
- Otherwise, all funds are considered unrestricted and are deposited into one bank account (and/or savings account).
- Financial institutions where Colorado 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.
- Financial reports shall be presented to the CASA Board of Directors for review at the Board's regularly scheduled meetings.
- An annual financial review or audit, depending upon the size of the budget, will be conducted by a qualified outside auditor.

- A budget is to be prepared on an annual basis by the Finance Committee, with the assistance of the Executive Director. The Board of Directors is to approve the annual budget before the beginning of that fiscal year. The budget can be amended during a fiscal year if unusual circumstances warrant. The Finance Committee is to present this amended budget for Board approval. The Finance Committee monitors the budget to actual amounts each month.

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.
- Income cash must be counted on 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 total must be compared and reconciled to bank deposits on a regular basis.
- Bank deposits receipts must be compared and attached to 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 Executive Director must approve all cash disbursements.
- All disbursements, including payroll, must be made by check.
- Signature stamps may never be used.
- Supporting documentation must accompany checks when presented for signature.
- To prevent duplicate payment, invoices or other supporting documentation must be canceled at the time checks are signed through a notation by the authorized staff check signer of check number, date, and initials.
- Checks must be made payable to specific payees, based upon appropriate supporting documentation, and never to cash.
- Only pre-numbered 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 vendor statements.
- 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.
- The Executive Director must come to the Executive Committee for approval of expenses of \$500 and more over budget.
- 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 on a monthly basis. Our outside accountant does this.
- The outside account receives the bank statements directly 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.
- The Executive Director codes all check stubs/copies for the outside accountant to enter into the general ledger.

AUDITS

1. The Board shall retain, annually, a firm of auditors to conduct a financial audit of the organization. Staff recommendations shall be received prior to hiring.
2. Such audit shall be conducted immediately following the end of the fiscal year.

FUNDRAISING

- A. UNACCEPTABLE FUNDS. Donations offered or received for restricted purposes which may not be in accordance with the mission and values of this organization will not be accepted.
- B. CONFIDENTIALITY OF DONOR LISTS. See Business Partners Policy this section.
- C. RESTRICTED FUNDS. Donations restricted by the donor to a specific program and accepted by Colorado CASA will be expended only for the purpose specified by the donor.
- D. FUNDING PROPOSALS. Grant proposals for purposes within the plan and budget of the organization may be sought by staff without additional approval by the Board.
- E. The Fund Development Committee shall set the budget for Colorado CASA fundraising events and the Finance Committee shall review each budget for conformity to the current Colorado CASA budget.
- F. All major expenses of Angels for Colorado CASA events (i.e. catering, decorations, printing) shall be based on at least two bids.

BUSINESS PARTNER POLICY

- The corporation or group proposing fundraising must be compatible with Colorado CASA, i.e. not contrary to our mission, objectives, etc.
- Target audience and marketing and public relations needs must be clear.
- Any proposed fundraising activity must not conflict with or be too close in time to an approved Colorado CASA event/activity.
 - If a special event opportunity arises that is not in the annual Fund Development Plan, the Fund Development Committee will present the event to the Board, including budget. The special event must meet the Business Partner Policy criteria and must not unduly impact donors and staff. Any special event must realize a significant net income for Colorado CASA.
- Colorado CASA shall not give out its mailing list. The Angels roster is distributed at the discretion of Angels for Colorado CASA.
 - Colorado CASA shall not disclose privileged or confidential donor information to unauthorized parties.
 - Colorado CASA shall adhere to the principle that all donor and prospect information created by, or on behalf of, an organization is the property of that organization and shall not be transferred or utilized except on behalf of that organization.
- Any activity sponsored by another group should be managed efficiently and professionally with little impact on the Colorado CASA staff.

The Colorado CASA Board will review this policy annually.
Approved as Policy by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors July 24, 2001.

FUNDING PRINCIPLES***Definitions:***

- **Pass-through Funding** is donor-designated or restricted funding. This is generally the sharing of funds by Colorado CASA with local CASA agencies when a donor or grantor requires sharing. Colorado CASA will generally act as the administrator of these funds.
- **Discretionary Funds** are Board-designated. These funds are monies raised by, or given to, Colorado CASA that the Board determines are not required to support the current and anticipated needs of

Sample Board Policies

Colorado CASA. The Board of Directors of Colorado CASA may decide, after Board approval of the agency's annual audit, to distribute some or all of those funds in accordance with the Colorado CASA Funding Principles.

Approved by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors 7/25/00

ANGELS FOR COLORADO CASA

Roles of the Fund Development Committee and Angels for Colorado CASA

- **Fund Development Committee Role is to provide leadership, direction and assistance in funding Colorado CASA.** The purpose of the Committee is to review each proposal for Fundraising for relevancy, community involvement, agency support and impact on how it builds awareness for CASA. The Committee will monitor and provide feedback to the Colorado CASA Board of Directors on all Fundraising results. The Fund Development Committee monitors the activities of Angels for Colorado CASA, and may choose to provide assistance with specific Angels' Fundraising activity. Angels for Colorado CASA must submit, in a timely fashion, proposed event budgets to the Fund Development Committee which will then submit the proposed budgets to the Colorado CASA Board of Directors for approval.
- **Angels for Colorado CASA is an Auxiliary Committee of the Board of Directors. From the Colorado CASA Board Bylaws:**

"The purpose of Angels for Colorado CASA is to support the charitable purposes of Colorado CASA through funding and programs which will educate the general public about the operations of Colorado CASA and CASA agencies throughout the state. Angels for Colorado CASA shall at all times act in accordance with the charitable purposes of Colorado CASA."

Angels for Colorado CASA is responsible for its signature event: the men's celebrity fashion show. Angels for Colorado CASA will work with Colorado CASA staff to set a timeline for the fashion show, will agree to the timeline and will work with staff to implement it. The Angels Committee will take an active role to make the fashion show profitable and successful. The proposed budget for the fashion show will be submitted by the Angels Committee to the Fund Development Committee 10 months ahead of the event. The budget must be approved by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors; a bidding process to keep expenses down must be included.

COMPUTER POLICY

Colorado CASA does not use any software that is not registered with the manufacturer. All of Colorado CASA's software will be legally licensed from the manufacturer and no violations of the agreement will be allowed.

(Adopted by Colorado CASA Board of Directors 9/3/97)

ADVOCACY

- A. **PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRESENCE.** Colorado CASA shall strive to maintain a public affairs presence for CASA programs throughout the state.
- B. **BOARD ADVOCACY.** Each member of the Board shall be an advocate to the community for safety and permanency for all abused and neglected children, and for Colorado CASA as the statewide representative of CASA agencies throughout the state.
- C. **BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT.** The agency will seek bi-partisan support and will not identify itself with any single political party or organization.
- D. **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.** The agency will assist other organizations only in furtherance of its own policies and goals.

PERSONNEL

- A. **HIRING.** Staff members shall be hired solely on the basis of abilities, without regard for race, age, religion, gender, veteran status, sexual preference, education, or socio-economic status.
- B. **TREATMENT OF STAFF.** Staff shall be treated with honesty, dignity and respect.
- C. **APPLICATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES.** Employee guidelines shall be applied uniformly to all levels of employees.
- D. **CAREER DEVELOPMENT.** The agency shall offer the maximum amount of education and career development opportunities to staff members as is possible.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Colorado CASA actively recruits, selects, and promotes qualified employees and volunteers broadly representative of the community served and administers its personnel practices without discrimination based upon age, gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, nationality, disability, or religion.

(Adopted by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors 9/3/97.)

COLORADO CASA POLICIES WITH RESPECT TO INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

Colorado CASA's Relationship to the agencies:

With respect to developing agencies, Colorado CASA's role is to help locate initial resources, help in planning and assessment in preparation for provision of 1) technical assistance, 2) identification of consultants to provide customized training for new agency Directors, Boards of Directors, and additional agency staff, and 3) written documentation on best practices for CASA programs in Colorado. Colorado CASA will work to connect agency Directors with appropriate mentoring resources for Director, staff and Boards and will connect agencies with instruction on implementation of the National CASA statistical database.

With respect to established agencies, Colorado CASA will work to provide 1) ongoing access to resources, 2) information on legislation affecting children and CASA programs and 3) technical assistance.

With respect to all agencies, Colorado CASA will serve as a clearinghouse for information, coordinate a fundraising and activities calendar, provide web page referrals, help coordinate statewide collaborative grant opportunities, act as a liaison to the National CASA Association and act as a liaison to the state legislature and additional statewide groups. Furthermore, Colorado CASA will strengthen inter-agency communication through directors' sharing meetings and a monthly newsletter.

Colorado CASA will bring together CASA volunteers, program staff, legal, judicial and social services personnel for an annual training conference.

Colorado CASA will be sensitive to avoiding fund solicitation from corporations & foundations that have funding relationship with one or more agencies or with whom agencies are attempting to establish a relationship.

Colorado CASA expectations of agencies:

All CASA agencies in Colorado must be members of the National CASA Association and Colorado CASA.

All CASA agencies in Colorado must strive toward meeting the program standards of both National CASA and Colorado CASA.

Sample Board Policies

All member agencies must inform Colorado CASA in a timely fashion of changes/developments in their agency that might jeopardize their ability to continue providing services.

All new CASA programs will be granted interim probationary membership status in Colorado CASA until they hire an executive director. When the executive director has been hired, their status will change to probationary and remain so until 12 months after the first case is assigned to a volunteer.

If an agency ceases to be in compliance with Colorado CASA or National CASA Association standards, and is not actively working toward compliance, membership in Colorado CASA will be reviewed and may be suspended. During suspension, an agency must work cooperatively with the Colorado CASA Quality Assurance Committee and program staff toward reaching compliance. If no progress is made in 6 months, Colorado CASA may, at its discretion, revoke membership in accordance with the Colorado CASA bylaws.

Agency Executive Directors Taking Cases

The Executive Director of a CASA agency should not take on any cases as a CASA volunteer due to the potential for conflict.

(Adopted as Policy by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors, 11/30/99.)

MANAGEMENT OF MEDIA SITUATIONS

Inform the Chair of your agency's Board of Directors immediately

Inform Colorado CASA – Colorado CASA will inform the National CASA Association, the Colorado CASA Board and CASA agency directors.

Work with your Board's Executive Committee to formulate your plan.

Have one agency spokesperson – this will most likely be the Executive Director; refer all questions to that person and instruct all staff, Board members, CASA volunteers and others to do so.

Decide on the factual message that will be given to the press or public and write it out. It may be that the agency, with Board approval, will want to release this as a public statement. Send this statement also to Colorado CASA and the National CASA Association.

In the case of a child death, express sorrow for the loss of a child.

Do not give case information or information from CASA reports.

Provide factual information about the work of CASA as appropriate to the situation.

Build ongoing relationships with local media personnel before any crisis occurs.

Approved as Policy by Colorado CASA Board of Directors 5/29/01

Agencies should also utilize the Introduction to Crisis Communications section of the 2001 National CASA Association Communications Manual.

CRIMINAL CASE HEARING POLICY

- A. CASA volunteers will not testify in any phase of a criminal case unless required to do so by a subpoena. Should a volunteer receive a subpoena to testify in a criminal case, a CASA Volunteer Supervisor should be contacted to review the subpoena and to discuss the expected

testimony. Such subpoena should be reviewed by counsel advising the CASA program as soon as practical.

- B. A CASA volunteer should not voluntarily prepare a report, letter of support, or make any oral or written recommendation to be used in the sentencing phase of a criminal case without first discussing the request and the contents of the report, letter or recommendation with his or her CASA Volunteer Supervisor. The CASA Volunteer Supervisor should give written approval of the report, letter or oral or written recommendation before the CASA volunteer can proceed. Such approval should be noted and signed in the case file.

Background Information:

From Judge Donald Campbell, Senior Judge and former Chief Judge, 4th Judicial District:

The potential request or demand for a CASA volunteer to testify in a criminal case falls into two areas: 1) testimony at the guilty or not guilty phase of the case, and 2) the dispositional or sentencing phase of the case. Documents, letters and affidavits are generally not admissible in the guilty or not guilty phase of the case. In the sentencing phase, the probation department will accept letters describing experience with the Defendant and even including a recommendation as to the sentence to be imposed.

If a subpoena is issued to any person to appear before the Court to testify, that person must appear. Motions to quash a subpoena or to limit testimony should be left to counsel.

Recommendations for Agencies

- That the CASA volunteer bring any subpoenas or any requests from any Party to the Proceedings for the CASA volunteer to participate in criminal matters to the CASA program staff immediately.
- That CASA volunteers testify as researchers from the standpoint of the child’s best interests.
- That a CASA volunteer observe the CASA role, speaking for the child’s best interests, and not to be coerced into supporting the guilt or innocence of an accused party.
- That all CASA volunteers involved in criminal proceedings receive training from CASA staff or legal counsel for the CASA Program prior to testifying. Volunteers should be given support and information regarding appropriate testimony procedures. They shall not be coached or prompted as to specific testimony.
- That staff, as in D and N cases, attend hearings in criminal matters where a CASA volunteer has been subpoenaed.

Approved as Policy by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors 11/27/01.

COLORADO CASA AWARDS POLICY

Community Advocate for Children and Foundation/Corporate Advocate for Children

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN

A public figure who, through personal action, legislative leadership or operational support, has been an advocate toward the improvement of the health and welfare of the children of our communities.

FOUNDATION/CORPORATE ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN

An organization which has been an advocate for children through the support and development of programs and community resources or as a catalyst to improve the health and welfare of children in our communities.

Sample Board Policies

SELECTION PROCESS (assuming an annual autumn “signature event”)

1. Nominations with documentation will be sought in the spring annually from the Fund Development Committee, the Executive Committee and from the leadership of the “signature event”.
2. Nominations will be reviewed by the Fund Development Committee. Colorado CASA will initiate a review with and by any impacted community or program. Up to two names for each award will be submitted to the Board for final selection.
3. Awardees will be notified and their ability to accept the award at the “signature event” will be confirmed.
4. Awards will be presented at the “signature event” by the Chair or Master of Ceremonies and by others as appropriate.

(The above awards will be presented at the “signature event”; four additional awards – CASA Volunteer of the Year, Judge of the Year, Caseworker of the Year and Attorney GAL of the Year – will be presented annually at the Colorado CASA Training Conference. That selection process is already in place and is implemented through the Training Conference Committee.)

Approved by the Colorado CASA Board of Directors July 24, 2001.

Overall Policies Document Draft revised 10/25/01 for submission to Board Development Committee.

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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides background information necessary for policy decisions 2. Gives input to policy 3. Makes policy 			
III. FUNDRAISING <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Fundraising plan 2. Develop funding sources 3. Solicit funds and other resources 4. Evaluate Fundraising success 			
IV. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 			

Source: *Achieving Our Mission: A Guide for CASA/GAL Programs* (Appendix 4-d)

Governing Organizations, Advisory Councils, and Staff . . . Who Does What?

Goal: To improve working relationships and program effectiveness 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, put a 2 in that column. If someone/group needs to provide input or give approval for that task, put a * in that column.

Function/Task	Governing Organization	Advisory Council	Director
Planning			
1. Determine basic organizational purpose and goals.			
2. Determine which community needs should be met and to what extent.			
3. Determine categories of service 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			
9. Develop memorandum of understanding between program and governing organization.			
10. Determine whether program should at some point become independent.			
Policy			
1. Provide background information necessary for policy decisions.			
2. Give input to policy.			
3. Make policy.			
Fundraising			
1. Develop Fundraising plan.			
2. Develop funding sources.			
3. Solicit funds and other resources.			
4. Evaluate Fundraising success.			
Financial Management			
1. Prepare program budget.			
2. Monitor how funds are spent on a day-to-day basis.			
3. Monitor total funding picture.			
4. Hire a CPA for annual audit.			
5. Do bookkeeping.			
Personnel			
1. Develop agency personnel policies.			

Governing Organizations: Who Does What?

2. Recruit, screen, hire, supervise, and terminate: a. program director b. paid staff c. advisory council members d. direct-service volunteers			
3. Provide training and development opportunities for: a. program director b. paid staff c. advisory council members d. direct-service volunteers			
4. Develop evaluation procedures and evaluate the performance of: a. program director b. paid staff c. advisory council members d. direct-service volunteers			
Public Relations			
1. Develop a formal public relations plan for the program.			
2. Implement the public relations plan.			
3. Maintain contact with state, regional, and national organizations with similar interests.			
Advisory Council Recruitment			
1. Develop advisory council nominating procedures.			
2. Suggest potential members to the nominating committee.			
3. Suggest potential members for the governing organization's board (if applicable).			
4. Develop Advisory Council orientation and training.			

Following is a key that reflects accepted practice. "Correct" answers will vary by the situation, written agreement between the program and governing organization, and resources available. A "1" indicates primary responsibility, "2" secondary responsibility, and "*" indicates input or approval is necessary.

Some of the responsibilities indicated as primary to the program director may be delegated to other staff in larger organizations. In an organization without paid staff, the governing organization or advisory council may perform some of the functions indicated for the director.

Function/Task	Governing Organization	Advisory Council	Director
Planning			
1. Determine basic program purpose and goals.	*	1	2
2. Determine which community needs should be met and to what extent.	*	1	2
3. Determine categories of service to be provided.	*	1	2
4. Develop long-range plans for the program.	*	1	2
5. Develop programs to meet identified needs.			1
6. Set specific program objectives.			1
7. Establish funding level needed to run organization.	2	*	1

8. Develop program evaluation system			1
9. Develop memorandum of understanding between program and governing organization.	1	1	*
10. Determine whether program should at some point become independent.	*	1	
Policy			
1. Provide background information necessary for policy decisions.			1
2. Give input to policy.		1	1
3. Make policy.	1		
Fundraising			
1. Develop Fundraising plan.	*	1	*
2. Develop funding sources.		1	1
3. Solicit funds and other resources.		1	2
4. Evaluate Fundraising success.		1	*
Financial Management			
1. Prepare program budget.	*	*	1
2. Monitor how funds are spent on a day-to-day basis.			1
3. Monitor total funding picture.	1	1	
4. Hire a CPA for annual audit.	1		
5. Do bookkeeping.	1		
Personnel			
1. Develop agency personnel policies.	1		
2. Recruit, screen, hire, supervise, and terminate:			
a. program director (responsibility may be reversed)	1	*	
b. other paid staff			1
c. advisory council members		1	1
d. direct-service volunteers			1
3. Provide training and development opportunities for:			
a. program director	1	*	
b. paid staff			1
c. advisory council members		1	1
d. direct-service volunteers			1
4. Develop evaluation procedures and evaluate the performance of:			
e. program director	1	*	
f. paid staff			1
g. advisory council members		1	1
h. direct-service volunteers			1
Public Relations			
1. Develop a formal public relations plan for the program.	*	1	2
2. Implement the public relations plan.			1
3. Maintain contact with state, regional, and national organizations with similar interests.			1
Advisory Council Recruitment			
1. Develop advisory council nominating procedures.	*	1	

Governing Organizations: Who Does What?

2. Suggest potential members to the nominating committee.		1	2
3. Suggest potential members for the governing organization's board (if applicable).		1	
4. Develop Advisory Council orientation and training.		1	2

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
Fundraising	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

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.

Fundraising

- 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
This document is an excerpt from *Achieving Our Mission: a Guide for CASA/GAL Programs*

Board Member Orientation Checklist

Board Member _____

Date of Orientation _____

Board member has provided:

- Mailing address, home and work phone numbers.
- Best time to call
- Best times and days for meetings
- Signed application (including permission for criminal check)
- Signed commitment to serve on the board
- Confidentiality pledge

Date Completed

Board member attends orientation session which includes:

- Mission of the CASA program
- Current funding
- Current Activities
- Introduced to the staff
- Discussion of board member’s role
- Introduced to other members of the board

Board member receives Board Handbook which contains:

- List of current board members
- List of current staff & assignments
- Charter & by-laws
- Current Budget
- Current strategic & work plan
- Most recent annual reports
- Most recent audit
- Minutes of board meetings of the last year
- Financial Management policies
- Personnel policies
- Samples of publications
- Information on legislative positions
- List of committees & chairpersons

Source: Achieving Our Mission: A Guide for CASA/GAL Programs

Chapter 4

Evaluation, Data & Planning

The phone rings. It is a local program director who is a strong director but very independent. She is mad about this new COMET aggregation feature. Why is the state organization checking up on her, anyway?

The state CASA/GAL organization has an important role in data collection. Very often legislators, donors and the public want to know how CASA/GAL advocacy is making an impact locally and in the state. While national data is helpful, it is most effective when paired with information about what it means for the children served by CASA/GAL volunteers at home.

All data collection and evaluation should be mission-driven. It should help the state CASA/GAL organization measure progress towards the strategic plan and be based upon the mission. Having clear goals for the collection of data and for the use of that data will help to build support for data collection with local program staff.

There are several kinds of data state CASA/GAL organizations may decide to collect:

Case and child data, including:

- Number of cases and children newly assigned in the data collection period (quarterly or annually)
- Reason new cases entered the system (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect)
- Number and types of placements
- Number of children whose cases have closed
- Reason for closure/outcome of cases closed (children returned home, with relatives, TPR and adoption, etc.)
- Total number of cases and children served
- Number of cases assigned to staff (if staff work cases)

Case and child outcome data

Volunteer data, including:

- Number of volunteers assigned cases
- Number of new volunteers trained
- Number of volunteer hours given
- Volunteer case activities

Effectiveness of the State Office

Data should not be collected solely for the purpose of having data. Data should only be collected if the state organization has a purpose in using it, such as:

- Strategic planning
- Improving the services and effectiveness of the state and local organizations
- Improving outcomes for children
- Reporting to the legislative, judicial and executive branches of government
- Seeking funding
- Reporting to funding agencies or individuals
- Reporting to the media and other groups
- Monitoring grant performance, if the state organization provides grants to local programs

Collecting Case and Child Data

National CASA strongly encourages the use of some type of database/software program to collect data. Local CASA/GAL programs may use a number of options for collecting case and child data. COMET (CASA Outcomes, Management, and Evaluation Tool) is the most widely-used program. This tool was developed by National CASA and is provided free (along with free technical support and updates) to National CASA member programs. There are other CASA-specific case management databases available at a cost from private vendors.

Some programs may choose to use a customized software program developed by a local database consulting firm. Developing a custom database typically costs from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Technical support, program maintenance and updates will normally cost extra. It is strongly recommended that a program first examine whether they have the resources, not only to create, but to maintain and update the software.

If local programs or offices make their own software decisions, the state organization may not be familiar with all the software used by local programs. In this case, the state organization must be clear with local programs about whether and how it can provide support. If all or most local programs are using particular software, such as COMET, the state organization staff may seek formal training on the software. The designated staff person should be responsible for implementing the database's use at the state organization as well as for conducting training and providing assistance at the local level. Alternatively, a local program director with particular skill and interest in the software may serve as the point person for questions regarding its use.

COMET overview

Designed by National CASA specifically for CASA/GAL programs, COMET is a child-centered database that maintains and tracks information on abused and neglected children and the volunteers who advocate for them in the court system.

COMET helps programs manage vital case information, produce activity reports, evaluate their program effectiveness and measure outcomes for the children they serve. COMET is free to National CASA member programs.

COMET tracks information on each child in seven main areas:

- Demographics, siblings and initial case information
- Family members' addresses, phones and issues/concerns
- Case worker, attorney and other professionals such as teachers, doctors, therapists
- Hearings, including status, dates, outcomes and schedules
- Case plan, including permanent plan goal, placements, services and visitations
- Volunteer activities and reports
- Case closing, including reason and final placement

COMET tracks information on volunteers in seven main areas:

- Contact information
- Demographics
- Employment and current status
- Screening, including references, background checks and auto insurance
- Initial and in-service training
- Preferences, interests and skills
- Assignment history

Free technical support for COMET is available via email (comet@nationalcasa.org) or by phone (877) COMET TA or (877) 266-3882). COMET training is also available at the national conference. It is also helpful to set up case management software training for all program staff around the state or region. This training can be done in person or online with the assistance of National CASA staff.

Statewide Aggregation of Data

Regardless of the method used to collect data statewide, some local CASA/GAL programs will be hesitant to submit data to the state office if it is perceived as a way of “checking up”. Some local programs will need to be encouraged to share or report their data. The state CASA/GAL organization should have discussions with local programs about why data collection is important and how the aggregate data will be used. The state organization should have a written policy on the use of data. A sample data usage policy can be found with the resource documents located at the end of this chapter.

Most state CASA/GAL organizations collect data quarterly; others may collect data monthly or annually. If the state organization provides funding or grants to local programs, the simplest way to gather the information is to make it a funding requirement. Another method is to link it to membership or state standards. One state director requires local program staff to turn it in before receiving lunch at program staff meetings. It is common to need to remind programs multiple times to submit data.

Another challenge of data collection is language: for example jurisdictions or local programs may use different terminology for types of hearings, plans, placement, disabilities and reason for closure. For aggregation of data to be meaningful, everyone must agree on common terms; otherwise, local programs should provide information about exact meanings of terms used (a key) when submitting data.

Statewide aggregation of data using COMET

COMET has an aggregation feature for state CASA/GAL organizations, which is an added value for local programs to utilize COMET. The aggregation tool was developed specifically for state CASA/GAL organizations as a way of collecting case information and volunteer information on a statewide level from the COMET database.

The aggregation feature works only with the COMET database. This feature copies data from the local program's COMET database to a separate database, eliminating all confidential information. It then takes that information and merges it with other copied data into one data file that can be used for comparative analysis on a state level.

Note: A demonstration of the COMET aggregation feature is available by contacting COMET Tech support at (800) 628-3233, ext 289 or comet@nationalcasa.org.

Effectiveness of the State CASA/GAL Organization

Measuring the effectiveness of the state organization can be difficult. The board or advisory council of the organization should be involved closely with the process. While they are certainly related, the effectiveness of the state organization and the effectiveness of the state director are two separate things and should not be confused. Measuring the performance of the state director is a personnel function and is done by the director's supervisor or the board personnel committee. Chapter 11: Human Resources contains more information on evaluating the performance of the state director.

One way to measure effectiveness is to survey local programs or offices. A sample survey is found with the resource documents located at the end of this chapter. Considerations include: Who will be surveyed? How often will they be surveyed? Who will collect and compile the surveys? And what will be done with the survey information?

In addition to local programs, it may be useful to survey other partners of the state office, such as training partners, judges or the state child welfare agency.

If the state organization provides funding to local programs, those programs may be less willing to be candid in annual surveys. While surveys may be anonymous, programs may be concerned that comments could cause a problem and a subsequent reduction in funding. There are several ways to address this. If there is a program advisory council, that group could be responsible for issuing and compiling the surveys. There also may be an independent person, such as a professor or graduate student at a local university, who is willing to conduct the survey. Alternatively, the survey may come from and be returned directly to a member of the governing board or advisory council.

It should be clear to all survey participants how the information will be used. Some state offices use the information in their strategic planning process. Some boards use it as part of the information used to evaluate the executive director. The information should be shared with the board or advisory council and the cumulative data should be shared with the local programs.

Another tool to measure effectiveness is by participating in a Quality Assurance process based on the National CASA standards for state organizations and the strategic plan for the state organization.

A sample evaluation for a state organization can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.

Strategic Planning for the State Organization

One of the primary purposes of data collection and evaluation is its use in strategic planning. Each state organization should engage in regular strategic planning and should actively use the strategic plan throughout the year to make decisions about the activities and services of the organization. This is particularly important in times of financial hardship, as it can be used to prioritize activities and funding requests. The director alone cannot and should not attempt to formulate the strategic plan. The governing board or advisory council must play a central role in this process. Others may be included as well, such as local program representatives (or the program advisory council if one exists).

Bringing in an objective independent facilitator can be very useful. The only way the state director and/or the chair of the board or advisory council can fully participate is to have another person facilitate the discussion. Ask your regional program specialist, other state directors or nonprofit organizations in your community for recommendations. It is wise to budget for the expense of having a facilitator, a comfortable meeting room and food, because strategic planning is an extremely worthwhile investment in the organization and its future.

Typically, strategic planning will include a review of the mission, a review of the values of the organization and a review of the prior strategic plan and progress towards past goals. In addition, the strategic planning process should include a review of National CASA's strategic plan and any surveys or needs assessments completed by local programs. The next step is to look toward the future. What are the goals for the state CASA/GAL organization? The strategic plan may be for the following year, but typically for two to three years. The final step is to create a benchmark chart attaching specific time frames and individuals responsible for each activity in the strategic plan. The strategic planning team must look carefully at the benchmark chart to ensure that the activities and timeframes are realistic.

A Final Word About Evaluation, Data and Planning

Showing how CASA/GAL advocacy benefits abused and neglected children is important to legislators, donors, the public, volunteers, ourselves and, most importantly, the children served. Quantitative information is relatively straightforward to gather and analyze. Local programs or offices can count the number of children served, for example. The challenge is in reporting outcomes. What difference does it make to have a volunteer advocate for a

child? Does the child fare better, reach a permanent home or spend less time in care or is the child more likely to reach a permanent home? Outcome data is currently being collected (anecdotally for the most part) through a project sponsored by the National CASA Association. The state organization will want to collect both qualitative and quantitative data in order to share the story of CASA/GAL advocacy. For a summary of CASA/GAL program evaluations visit casanet.org.

	<p>Additional Resources:</p> <p>Child Outcomes: A Guide to CASA Effectiveness (a National CASA publication)</p> <p>casanet.org</p> <p>Center for Excellence in Nonprofits (cen.org)</p> <p>BoardSource (boardsource.org)</p>
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Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with evaluation, data and planning:

- Does the state organization currently have a strategic plan? If so, when was it developed, who participated in its development, and how was it developed? What is the time frame?
- Are local programs using database software to track case, child, and volunteer data? If so, which one(s)?
- What data items are the state organization collecting, and for what purposes?
- How are data analyzed, by whom, and how often? With whom is it shared?
- Is the data analysis shared with local programs or offices?
- Are local programs using the same language for hearings and outcomes?

Evaluation, Data and Planning Resources & Sample Support Documents

Sample Data Policy

Sample Detail Case Report

Sample Evaluation of State CASA/GAL Organization by Local
Programs

Sample Policy on Use of Data

The state CASA/GAL association will collect financial and service data from local programs for the following purposes (*):

1. Provide aggregate data to the legislature and current and potential grantors or donors.
2. Provide aggregate data for public relations purposes, including to the press and on the state association website.
3. Publish aggregate data in the state association annual report.
4. Provide individual programs with an analysis of the costs of their service in comparison to the state and national averages.
5. Provide individual data for purposes of evaluating future grant applications and progress towards the goals stated in the current and past grant applications.
6. Use the data as one means of evaluating compliance with National CASA and state association local program standards and National CASA state organization standards.

(*) If the state association is publicly funded, all data collected is publicly available through the Freedom of Information act. Check your state FOIA laws.

CASA Case Report Format

For a number of grants, CASANYS requests that you submit sample case reports. So that these reports are helpful to our donors, and to ensure consistency among programs, please use the following format.

Note: Use pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of the children and other parties in the case, but please keep a record at your office identifying the case for your reference, since further information or follow-up may be requested.

This form is available by email, and will be posted in our Affiliate Resources section of our website, casanys.org.

- **Name of CASA Program:** _____
- **Date case report is being submitted to CASANYS:** _____
- **Date that case was assigned to the CASA program:** _____
- **Names (please use pseudonyms to protect confidentiality) and ages of children at the time the case was assigned:**
- **Circumstances at case assignment (for example, why children are in care, where children are placed and number of placements):**
- **Goal at case assignment (i.e., return home, adoption, etc.):**
- **BRIEF (no more than three paragraphs) summary of case activity:**
- **Specific activities that CASA has performed to expedite case resolution:**
- **What is the current status of the case? What are the permanency goals? Have these changed from case assignment and if so, how and why?**
- **Comments by judge or parties in the case about CASA involvement:**
- **Additional comments or concerns:**

Sample Evaluation of State CASA/GAL Organization by Local Programs

The state organization exists to meet the needs of local CASA/GAL programs. Please complete the following questionnaire offering your honest appraisal of the services provided by this organization. Thank you.

Program Name _____

1. The following is a list of services/activities of the state organization. Please indicate which of these services your program has used by placing a check in the box. If you have used a service, please rate your overall satisfaction with it.

	Satisfaction Rating
	Poor Excellent
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding for local programs	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Fund-raising activities to benefit all programs	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with grant writing for local programs	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Coordination of regular meetings for program staff	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference calls with program directors	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Website	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer recruitment activities	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer recruitment materials	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Management training for program staff	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Board training for local boards	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer training	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer training materials	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Initial training for volunteers	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> In-service training for volunteers	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical assistance on program and volunteer management issues	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> State standards for local programs	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring programs for compliance with national standards	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring programs for compliance with state standards	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical assistance - new program development	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Legislative advocacy	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Public awareness activities	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Representation on state committees/task forces relevant to CASA/GAL programs	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Linkage with other state child advocacy organizations	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Data collection	1---2---3---4---5
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (list _____)	1---2---3---4---5

2. Based on the needs of your program, what additional services would you like your state organization to offer?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

3. Based on the needs of your program, from the lists above, indicate the five services/activities that should be the top priorities of your state organization:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

4. Does your state organization respond to your requests for assistance in a timely manner? Yes-----No-----Usually

5. Does the response generally meet your needs? Yes-----No-----Usually

Comments:

6. Is the amount of contact initiated by your state organization: too much-----too little-----just right?

Comments: _____

7. What do you see as the strengths of the state office? _____

8. What improvements would you recommend? _____

9. Other Comments/Suggestions:

Chapter 5

Resource Development

The phone rings. It is a local program director who is upset because an adjacent program held a fundraiser in a mall located in her district.

Any time CASA/GAL program staff members perceive they are in competition for fundraising dollars, relationships will be strained. One service the state organization can provide is to help local programs develop fundraising protocols and to help them understand and respect state and national protocols. Collaborating on fundraising is beneficial to all involved.

State CASA/GAL offices raise money primarily for two purposes: operation of the state office and providing grants to local CASA programs. The first part of this chapter will address fundraising for operation of the state office.

Resource Development–Basic Considerations

A stable and successful state CASA/GAL office requires adequate revenue. Methods used to generate funds will differ depending on the administrative structure of the state organization. For example, state associations administered by governmental entities must always remain alert to shifting priorities of state legislators and the intricacies of the appropriations process. State CASA/GAL organizations that produce their own revenues must follow all state laws and rules regarding fundraising. For example, some states require programs to register with the Attorney General’s office.

Regardless of what kind of resource development is done, it is likely that the state CASA/GAL organization will at some point receive “restricted” funds, meaning that the money can be spent only for the purposes specified. This requires that the organization use a bookkeeping system in which funding and expenditures from multiple sources can be tracked separately. See Chapter 7: Financial Management for more information on fund accounting.

Just as it is difficult to balance on a unicycle, it is difficult to have a stable state organization with just one funding source. State CASA/GAL organizations need to focus on revenue diversification: having multiple and varied sources of support rather than one or two. An exception to this may be the state organization that is administered and fully funded by state government; however, even these programs have seen budget reductions in difficult economic times. Fundraising is always precarious. State and federal grants can disappear quickly. In difficult economic times, foundations, corporations and individuals may decrease

or discontinue charitable gifts. When an organization is relying on a single source of funding, cutbacks can be catastrophic. When the organization has multiple sources, cutbacks may be painful but not fatal.

Preparing for fundraising

Fundraising, whether writing for grants, conducting a campaign or hosting a special event, requires good preparation and teamwork. Board members (governing or advisory council) should be closely involved in strategy and execution. For the purpose of fundraising, the state organization should collect and keep the following documents on file:

- Past annual reports
- Mission statement
- Strategic plan, including current unfunded or under funded needs
- Letters of support from CASA/GAL friends
- Quotes from volunteers, children served, or family members about how CASA/GAL advocacy affected the outcome of a case. It is critical to stress the positive results of volunteer advocacy and the improved outcomes for children.
- Fact sheet

When these documents are easily accessible, the state CASA/GAL organization will be able to plan for resource development as well as respond quickly to a fundraising opportunity.

Accountability

CASA/GAL organizations, like all nonprofit organizations, have a legal and moral obligation to be accountable to donors and grantors. They must use funds for the purpose intended and limit the percentage of revenue used for administrative and fundraising costs. As stated in *Philanthropy* magazine (January/February 2003), “Accountability boils down to the basic life-lessons we learned as children – tell the truth, respect others, and play fair.

State CASA/GAL organizations must be aware both of the legal requirements and the National CASA Association standards for accountability. Requirements include filing the IRS form 990, registering with the appropriate state agency (such as the Attorney General or Secretary of State), securing a fundraising permit and issuing an annual report. However, the obligations to CASA/GAL donors go far beyond that. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) Wise Giving Alliance (give.org) contains standards for charitable accountability that include specific recommendations in the areas of governance and oversight, measuring effectiveness, finances and fundraising and informational materials.

Resource Development Protocol

State CASA/GAL staff frequently feel “in the middle” when it comes to fundraising. State offices may not qualify for grants from large national foundations and companies but they also need to be careful about stepping on the toes of local programs when it comes to pursuing local or regional givers and grantors.

The National CASA Association has developed for its member programs a resource development protocol detailing a fair, coordinated and effective approach that can be made to various types of donors. Some states also have resource development protocols with local

programs. Guidelines in this area are necessary so that CASA/GAL programs present a united front. If donors, who are often unfamiliar with CASA/GAL, are confused by competing uncoordinated bids, all programs lose. A copy of the resource development protocol can be found in the resource documents located at the end of this chapter.

A resource development protocol between a state office and local programs should:

- Define when it is necessary for local programs to inform the state office about a funding request.
- Define when it is necessary for the state office to inform local programs about a funding request.
- Explain how information about potential donors will be shared.
- Establish a process to resolve potential conflicts.

As with the sample scenario given at the beginning of this chapter, local programs with shared donors or fundraising venues may also need to develop resource development protocols.

Grant Resources

Grant writing can be intimidating for state directors who have little experience with it, but there are many wonderful resources to help. National CASA's webpage, casanet.org, contains articles and tips about grant writing and links to other sites; program specialists can also provide assistance. Grant writing classes are available through a number of organizations, including the Grantsmanship Center (tgci.com) or through a local college, university or United Way. It can also be useful to post a message on the state directors' listserv inquiring about experiences with a particular grantor.

There are a number of grant sources used by state CASA/GAL offices. The National CASA annual state survey provides a list of the most common grant sources. Eighty-nine percent of state organizations included in the 2002 survey receive grants from National CASA. These grants are federally funded through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. State organization can apply for several grants from National CASA:

- State Grants. These typically fund state office operations, and are capped (in 2004 at \$50,000). These grants are renewable and National CASA has made an ongoing commitment to fund state offices.
- Demonstration or Special Projects Grants. These grants are sometimes available to fund new or innovative projects, with the understanding that the receiving office will share information about those projects with other CASA programs.
- Conference Mini-grants. These grants are limited, but can help pay to bring speakers to state conferences.

Other federal funding sources are also available and the *Prospective Federal and State Funding Resources for CASA/GAL Programs* (2003) published by National CASA contains information about these opportunities. This section outlines the most commonly used funds.

To find out your state contacts for funding opportunities from the Department of Justice, visit ojp.usdoj.gov/state.htm. These contact names are not always up-to-date, but basic office contact information will be a good start to finding the information..

- **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA).** VOCA funds come from fines and fees imposed in the federal court system. The funds must be used for direct services to crime victims. Each state has an agency, designated by the governor, to receive and distribute VOCA funds. The rules vary from state to state, but 10% of these funds must go toward services to children who are victims of crime. Some states allow state CASA/GAL offices to apply for VOCA funds, others allow only local programs (or state offices if they provide the advocacy directly) to apply. However, some do not consider the work of CASA/GAL programs to be an eligible service to crime victims. For more information, go to ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/. This website includes state-by-state information. In 2002, 11% of state CASA/GAL offices received VOCA funds.
- **Children's Justice Act (CJA)** funds come from the US Dept of Health and Human Services/The Administration for Children and Families. This funding also comes from fines and fees imposed in federal courts. The Children's Justice Act (CJA) provides grants to states to improve the investigation, prosecution and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim. This also includes the handling of child fatality cases in which child abuse or neglect is suspected. Each state gets \$50,000, plus an additional amount based on the under-18 population of the state. Typical activities include training for investigators, operations of child advocacy centers and child fatality review teams, and improving the judicial system's response to and receptivity to children. (acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cjafact.htm). In 2002, 4% of state CASA/GAL organizations received CJA funds.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** was created by the Welfare Reform Law of 1996. The stated purposes of TANF are:
 1. To provide assistance to needy families
 2. To end dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage
 3. To prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
 4. To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. (acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/funds2.htm).

In 2002, 20% of state CASA/GAL organizations received TANF funds. States that have received TANF funds have tapped into unexpended funds. This funding has been used to assist with family reunification and to prevent placement in foster care.

- **Court Improvement Program** funds are available from the US Department of Health and Human Services Children’s Bureau to the highest courts in each state. States then develop plans about how to use the funds to improve the court process for children in care. To find the primary contact in your state, contact your Administrative Office of the Courts or go to abanet.org/child/cipcontactlist.doc. To get more information about the program, visit the American Bar Association (ABA) website: abanet.org/child/courtimp.html.
- **Americorps/Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)** is a federal program to provide volunteers to increase the capacity of organizations to solve community problems. Volunteers are on one-year assignment and are paid a living allowance by the sponsoring organization. State agencies and nonprofit organizations are eligible. State office contact information and application materials are at americorps.org.
- **Byrne Grants** were created by Congress in 1988 to combat violence and drug-related crime and to assist the victims of those crimes. State agencies and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. The Bureau of Justice Assistance in the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs (OJP) administers them (<http://ojp.usdoj.gov/>).
- **The Federal Register** (<http://gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>) lists all grants available through the federal government. The Grantsmanship Center (tgci.com) provides daily updates.

Other (non-federal) grant sources of funding:

- **Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA)** funds come from the interest paid on money handled by attorneys on behalf of their clients. These are frequently small amounts, but when pooled can create sizable deposits. The interest has been used for charitable purposes within the legal system. The legality of collecting and distributing these funds is currently being questioned, but for now each state has IOLTA funds, controlled by a board or bar association. The easiest way to find out about IOLTA funding in a particular state is to do an Internet search for the state name and IOLTA. In 2002, 7% of state organizations received IOLTA funds.

Other Opportunities for Fundraising

Raising funds from individuals has five key elements: identification, cultivation, solicitation, recognition and accountability². Board members should be closely involved in all five elements. Identifying donors can be tricky for state organizations, as local programs may perceive it as competition with their fundraising. While there is no ideal solution to the reality of competition for limited charitable funds, setting aside time to brainstorm ideas about the issue and providing advance notice of state office fundraising initiatives can minimize conflict.

² Inman, Pete. “The Importance of Donor Systems.” *Heartbeat* (Texas CASA newsletter) spring 2003. pp. 14-15.

Cultivation of donors involves letting them know about CASA/GAL efforts and how volunteer advocacy makes a difference for abused and neglected children. One strategy may be involving the donor in the organization through public awareness events.

Solicitation is the actual ask, targeted to the level (or slightly above) the donor is likely to make. Recognition is thanking the donor for their gift in a way meaningful to that donor, and accountability is ensuring that the program is using the gift in the way and for the purpose intended by the donor.

If the state CASA/GAL organization does significant fundraising, the organization may want to use donor database software to manage the process. Software is increasingly affordable and helps provide donors with regular communication, recognition, and accountability. In purchasing software, it is essential to look not only at the initial price and features, but also at initial training costs, ongoing support and upgrades. Popular donor systems in 2003 include GiftMaker Pro, The Raiser's Edge, and DonorPerfect.

State CASA/GAL organizations have successfully raised funds through the following mechanisms.

- **Membership dues** are collected by some state organizations, but are typically not a significant source of funds.
- **Individual contributions and direct mail solicitations** are reliable fundraisers for many organizations, but care must be taken to coordinate fundraising with local organizations. Sending out fundraising letters to everyone on the state CASA/GAL organization mailing list is likely to reach many individuals who already donate to their local organizations. Purchasing a mailing list may also result in overlap with local program donors. An argument should be made to donors for why supporting the state office is valuable in addition to (rather than instead of) supporting the local program. In 2002 35% of state organizations collected membership dues and 43% had individual donors.
- **Sales from merchandise.** Many programs sell merchandise carrying the CASA logo. Be sure to review the National CASA Association graphic standards before ordering merchandise and if there is any question contact a member of the National CASA staff for assistance. For examples of the merchandise sold by various programs, visit casanet.org and click on shop. Have a detailed plan including: cost of the items, sales price, shipping costs, sales tax to be collected and remitted (if applicable), who is going to handle order fulfillment, how much time is involved and most critically, who is the likely market. Compare anticipated profit to the cost of both material and staff time. In 2002, 28% of state organizations raised funds through sales.
- **Special Events** can provide publicity and be fun in addition to raising funds, but can also be a great deal of work for staff. When considering a special event, complete a careful cost/benefit analysis. Include financial and human resources expended as well as appropriate liability coverage on the cost side. Information about

planning special events is available on casanet.org. In 2002, 22% of state organizations had fundraising events.

- **Online Giving** is increasingly popular with nonprofit organizations and their donors. An excellent website for information on this topic is ephilanthropy.org.
- **Churches, civic organizations, and Kappa Alpha Theta** are all good organizations to approach if you can do so without stepping on the toes of a local program, though any single organization is likely to make a relatively small contribution. Only 4% of state organizations received funding from churches and 13% from Kappa Alpha Theta in 2002.

Community fundraising can be time-consuming. The state organization board or advisory board should take a lead role in such efforts. The state organization may also want to consider forming a Fundraising auxiliary. This auxiliary could utilize the 501(c)(3) status of the state organization if it is a nonprofit organization, or could form an independent 501(c)(3) if the state office is a SAP. Sample by-laws of a nonprofit fundraising organization are in the resource materials of Chapter 1: Role of the State Organization.

Donations over \$250 must be acknowledged in writing with a description of the gift. The organization is not responsible for assigning a value to in-kind donations.

The resource development section of casanet.org features information about the basics of fundraising and involving the board, as well as links to useful articles and sites.

Local Corporations and Foundations may give gifts specific to your geographic area. The first step is to identify potential sources. Ask your board members what foundations and corporations they have ties to or where they can cultivate relationships. If your state office directly supervises volunteers, consider where your volunteers work. Many employers make matching gifts or will donate based on volunteer time.

A great resource for identifying funders is the Foundation Center (fdncenter.org). This website contains information about making proposals as well as ways to research potential donors. The Foundation Center does charge to research foundations online, but they also offer free information through their cooperating collections (usually at public or university libraries). To find a cooperating collection in your state, visit fdncenter.org/collections/. Then visit and talk to the librarian about how to use the collection to identify potential donors.

Another good resource is tgci.com, the Grantsmanship Center website. The site includes state-by-state contact information for community foundations. The Grantsmanship Center also offers grant-writing courses. Although these classes are costly, scholarships may be available, particularly if your organization hosts the course.

When approaching a foundation or corporation, prepare carefully for “the ask”: how will helping the state CASA/GAL organization be consistent with their mission or help their organization? What exactly are you asking them to do? Are there in-kind donations that would help accomplish the mission of volunteer advocacy for children? When is the best time to approach? Who in the organization and from the board should make the approach? What have they funded in the past? In addition to the sites listed above, the casanet.org has

tips on writing good proposals. In 2002, 26% of state offices received foundation grants and 26% received corporate contributions.

Look carefully at corporations that have offices around the state. There may be an opportunity to tie fundraising with volunteer development and assist local programs with fundraising as well. A company may agree to give release time to its staff who volunteer statewide and that company and volunteers could be recognized in the state newsletter or on the state website. A corporation with multiple offices may be willing to pool resources to have a larger impact. In New York, for example, regional Verizon offices gave a combined grant to the state organization for technology to aid local program volunteer recruitment. The Verizon funding was then used as seed money to get additional funding from the state. Press conferences were held at each of the regional offices, recognizing Verizon and to publicizing the need for CASA volunteers.

State Funding

Just over a third of state CASA/GAL organizations receive state funding, according to the 2002 survey. This funding frequently provides operating expenses for the state organization, but may also be pass-through funding for local CASA/GAL programs.

When seeking state funding, it is very important to begin preparations early, long before the legislative session begins. **The first step is to define the need for funding.** How much funding is needed? How will it be distributed? What difference will that state funding make? Will the funding enable new programs to begin? How will you provide accountability for the funding? How will the state network cooperate to seek this funding? Will local programs be required to match the funding with local dollars?

In the initial preparation phase, it is also important to consider the source of the funds. General revenue dollars are typically the most difficult to tap, particularly when state budgets are tight. There are several strategies other than seeking general revenue.

- **Fees** are one way to generate revenue designated for CASA/GAL programs. South Dakota CASA successfully sought legislation adding \$2 to court fees. Missouri receives \$2 for all domestic relations petitions filed, and Kansas CASA receives \$1.50 for each birth certificate purchased. Sample legislation can be found in the resource documents at the end of this chapter.
- **License Plates** are an increasingly popular way to raise revenue at the state level. The state creates a specially designed license plate to benefit CASA/GAL programs, charges more for those plates, and gives the difference (or a significant percentage of the difference) to the organization. This requires legislative approval. Most states will not create plates without a specific number of orders for the special plates. For an example of a specially designed CASA license plate, visit texascasa.org. Sample legislative language for this initiative can be found in the resource documents located at the end of this chapter.
- A **Tax Check off** is a form of fund-raising connected with state income taxes. When taxpayers file their state returns, they can donate a given amount to a charity listed on the income tax form, either from their refund or an amount added to their final taxes due.

Typically, legislation is required to add an organization to the form, and there may be requirements about how much they have to receive to stay on the form the following year. The state may also deduct a percentage for administrative costs. As with any fundraising, marketing is critical. Colorado CASA partnered with H&R Block to underwrite a general campaign for the check-off program, and also solicited other sponsors to underwrite the campaign for the CASA check-off specifically. A sample legislative bill can be found in the resource documents at the end of this chapter.

Prior to the legislative session, learn what steps the state CASA/GAL organization must take in order to legally lobby legislators. More information follows below and all CASA/GAL state directors should become familiar both with the Internal Revenue Service guidelines on lobbying and whether funds from specific sources can be used for lobbying (National CASA grant funds cannot be used).

The second step is to begin educating legislators about the value of CASA/GAL advocacy for children in the state and in their own communities, short- and long-term. Invite legislators to volunteer swearing-in or recognition ceremonies. Talk to judges about the funding the state CASA/GAL organization is seeking. Ask them to invite local legislators to court so that they can see CASA/GAL volunteer advocacy in action. In this phase, the state organization should also approach the Governor's Office. The Governor may or may not be willing to actively support the program, but needs to be willing to sign the bill authorizing the funding.

Next, identify legislators who support the CASA/GAL program and who are in positions to assist with the funding request. This may take some research—talk to CASA/GAL friends experienced in working with the legislature. Ask them about legislators on the appropriations committee, often called the Joint Budget Committee. Who are the most influential legislators on the committee? Who is interested in child welfare issues? Who will be willing to fight for the funding? Find a few champions for CASA/GAL in the legislature.

Also important are considerations about how the funds will be routed. If the state CASA/GAL organization is a SAP, then state funding probably goes directly to the CASA/GAL office. If the state organization is a nonprofit organization, find out whether funds can go directly to a nonprofit organization or if they must be routed through a state agency. If so, which one? If it is a human service agency are there real or perceived conflicts of interest? Will the agency take a percentage? Is that funding line “safe” in times of budget cutbacks? Most states prioritize funding levels. Frequently there is a category known as “state central services” or an equivalent that is the most stable funding. These funds are the last to be cut in times of a budget crisis and therefore are the best place to be. Many states then categorize expenses as “A” “B” or “C” priorities, with “B” and “C” priorities rarely receiving funds even if they get an appropriation from the legislature. Getting an appropriation in the “C” category may be a moral victory, but is unlikely to lead to any actual dollars.

Once the legislative session begins, you should already have solid relationships with many legislators. Talk frequently with the sponsor of your funding legislation to know when the bill is filed. Watch every day for activity or progress. Most state legislatures have websites where it is possible to check the status of a bill. Alert local programs when a vote is coming up and ask them to have volunteers or local board members contact their own legislators.

Visit the Capitol and talk to key legislators just before votes. It may be preferable to have local volunteers or board members visit the Capitol to talk to their own legislators if possible.

If witnesses are needed for a committee meeting, select them carefully. Talk with the bill sponsor about what kind of witnesses they need. If possible, having a young adult helped by CASA/GAL advocacy testify is very powerful. This will only be possible if the young person is over 18 or if the child's parent consents. Volunteers also can be powerful witnesses. Preparing witnesses to testify in the legislature is very important, just as in the courtroom. Let them know what questions they are likely to be asked. Legislators appreciate concise testimony from the person's own experience.

Make sure state office staff clearly understands the requirements of state funding. The state organization may be required to periodically report to a legislative committee or to seek approval of pass-through funding. If local programs are receiving an appropriation, have local volunteers periodically update their legislators about the impact of the state funding in their community.

Is it Legal to Lobby?

The short answer: it depends. First, it depends on how the state CASA/GAL organization is organized. If the state organization is a SAP, talk to those in the department or agency in which the state CASA/GAL organization is housed about the rules and guidelines concerning lobbying. If the state organization is a nonprofit, then IRS rules apply. The state organization should consult an attorney if any doubt exists. Donors often have limitations on whether funds may be used for lobbying and it is critically important to be familiar with and follow those rules. National CASA Association grant funds may not be used for lobbying. The terms and conditions of National CASA grants to state organizations include the following provisions:

Grant funds shall not be used to conduct activities directed at legislative or executive agencies, or to influence, directly or indirectly, legislation, executive orders or similar promulgations by federal, state or local agencies. No recipient shall contribute or make available grant funds, personnel, or equipment to any political party or association, or the campaign of any candidate for public or party office. Grantees are prohibited from using funds in advocating or opposing any ballot measure, initiative, or referendum.

According to the Nonprofit Lobbying Guide published at clip.org, nonprofit organizations can make limited lobbying expenditures without losing their tax exempt status but their lobbying must be "no substantial part" of their activities. The IRS has some guidelines and regulations about lobbying, but they do not clearly define what substantial means.

Nonprofit organizations wanting more specific guidelines may elect to come under the provisions of PL94-455 (section 1307) of 1976 which governs lobbying for 501(c)(3) organizations. This law resulted in Sections 4911 and 501(h) of the IRS code. A 501(c)(3) organization elects to come under the 501(h) provisions of the IRS code by having a vote to do so by the governing board, as reflected in the minutes and completing IRS form 5768. It

can be revoked in the same manner. Form 5768 can be filed at the same time as form 1023 (application for nonprofit status).

In a nutshell, section 501(h) of the IRS code regulates lobbying by nonprofits to the extent that money is spent for lobbying. Lobbying expenditures can total no more than 20% of the first \$500,000 of expenditures by an agency, and decreasing percentages for expenditures over that amount. Grassroots lobbying (attempting to influence the public at large) can account for no more than 25% of the lobbying ceiling.

The Nonprofit Lobbying Guide, written by Bob Smucker, addresses what actions count as lobbying efforts. The following table highlights some of these actions.

Actions Not Considered Lobbying	Actions Considered Lobbying
A volunteer uses his or her own time to lobby on behalf of a CASA/GAL organization.	The volunteer is reimbursed for expenses (the amount of the reimbursement). Staff time is spent lobbying.
The organization communicates with members on legislation, even if the CASA/GAL organization takes a stand, if the organization does not request action from its members.	While communicating with legislative members, the organization requests action from members (staff time and direct expense in copying and mailing the communication).
The organization provides testimony that has been requested in writing from a legislator.	The testimony is on the organization's own initiative
The organization is lobbying legislators on matters considered "self-defense activity," such as on legislation that may affect the organization's existence.	
The organization is educating members or others on broad issues, as long as it does not address the merits of specific legislation.	

Additional information on lobbying is available at the Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest website, clpi.org. *The Nonprofit Lobbying Guide*, from which this information was taken, is available free of charge at this website.

Pass-Through Funding

If the state organization receives state or private dollars to pass through to local programs, it is important to have a clear strategy for disseminating these funds. Will these funds be for planning/start-up expenses or for ongoing operating expenses or both? Are there limitations on what the funding can be used for? Does the funding source have rules that need to be conveyed to local programs?

If possible, it is preferable to pass the funding through in a non-competitive manner. Many state associations choose to fund non-competitively using a formula. Formulas typically take into account the number of counties served by a local program, the number of children

needing a CASA/GAL volunteer and/or the number of CASA/GAL volunteers in the program. Another possible factor to consider is the poverty rate or financial need of a program; however, defining this can be difficult. In order to provide accountability, the local programs should submit a proposed budget for the funds that is tied to specific goals and activities. If local programs receive funding from the state office, it is reasonable to request and expect periodic financial and programmatic reports from the program.

If funding is fairly limited, it may be more useful to have a competitive process and give larger grants to a few programs rather than a minimal amount to all programs. If this is the case, the state CASA/GAL organization must determine the priorities for funding. Whether the funding is formula-based or competitive, it is highly advisable to have individuals outside the state CASA/GAL organization evaluate the applications or proposals. This could be a committee of the board or advisory council, or could be a special committee set up for this process. Generally speaking, local program directors should not have a vote on such a committee, but it may be very useful for a representative program director to serve in an advisory capacity.

Sample funding formulas for pass-through funding can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.

There are down sides to providing pass-through funding. Administering pass-through funds is very time-consuming for the state organization. Staff will be required to create the RFP, process the applications, coordinate the review process, disburse checks and evaluate the reports. When applying for this type of funding, be sure to factor in the necessary administrative costs.

Competitive funding can also set local programs against one another, undermining the spirit of cooperation and teamwork that the state organization should foster. Finally, while programs are grateful for new funding, the expectation quickly forms that such funding will always be provided.

Helping Local Programs with Resource Development

Many local CASA/GAL programs have difficulty with resource development and look to the state organization for assistance. The state organization and local programs must be realistic about what kinds of help are available. Except in entirely state-funded programs, it is unlikely that the state organization will be able to solve the budget woes of all of the local programs and state staff should be careful about setting expectations that there is a magic bullet.

Given the inherent tension in resource development, there are many means of providing assistance to local programs. The simplest ways are to forward information about potential sources of funding (such as grantors in your state) and to encourage local programs to share best practices around fundraising. They will do so however, only if they do not feel that they are in competition for the same dollars.

Sometimes, difficulty with resource development is a symptom of deeper organizational problems. If the board or the director (or both) is unclear about their respective roles or unable to do their job competently, the organization will generally be unsuccessful at raising

funds. If this is the situation, the state organization's primary responsibility is to help the program analyze and remedy its situation.

Tennessee CASA received a grant to assist local programs with resource development. They used the initial funds to hire a consultant to visit local programs and complete assessments. The consultant met with the board chair, the staff member working with resource development and with a community funder to determine how donors viewed the local program. The consultant was then able to give advice to the local programs as well as the state organization. The state organization planned training and technical assistance around the common themes discovered during the assessment and was able to use the second part of the grant to provide specific assistance to local programs around resource development. Some local programs needed help with strategic planning, others needed grant writing; still others needed basic help in board development, board/staff responsibilities and formulating a marketing plan.

Even without a grant to focus on resource development, there are ways to assist local programs. The National CASA program resources specialist can provide technical assistance and can also provide training on resource development for program directors and board members. Resource development may also be the subject of a teleconference or a conference track/session. There may be someone on the state CASA/GAL board with expertise who would be willing to consult with local programs. If a local program has a staff member or board member with fundraising experience, perhaps the program could share or trade services with another program; the state office might want to help facilitate these efforts.

In Tough Financial Times

Preparing for budget shortfalls that periodically occur in almost all service organizations is critical. Having money from a number of sources reduces the likelihood that a decrease from one funder will result in drastic program cuts but it is no guarantee. When cuts are necessary, include others in the decision-making process. The board or advisory board should be involved and the state office may want to get input from local programs as well. After budget decisions are made, immediately inform constituencies (not only local programs but also judges, legislators, partner agencies and other groups) about the services that will no longer be offered.

The largest cost for almost any service organization, including CASA/GAL programs, is staff. Consequently, staff reduction is often necessary as a result of significant funding losses. State offices should have clear policies on how reductions in staff will be carried out in times of economic hardship and how work will be divided among those staff members remaining. These policies should exist before the crisis. In addition, if the budget shortfalls also affect local programs, the state office may need to provide guidance or direction on how to prioritize service.

There may be other ways to cut the programmatic budget as well. Some services may be provided less frequently. For example, an annual conference may need to become a biennial one, or perhaps regional meetings and teleconferences instituted instead. Conference calls could replace in-person meetings. An electronic newsletter could replace one traditionally mailed.

While making these difficult decisions, keep the core services and standards in mind. If the state office provides volunteers directly, the staff to volunteer ratio cannot exceed 1:30 and remain in compliance with National CASA standards.



Additional Resources:

Prospective Federal and State Funding Resources for CASA/GAL Programs (National CASA publication)
Resource Development Guide (National CASA publication)
American Bar Association court improvement information (abanet.org/child/cipcontactlist.doc)
Association of Fundraising Professionals (afpnet.org)
Americorps/VISTA (americorps.org)
Association of Fundraising Professionals (afpnet.org)
BBB Wise Giving Alliance (give.org)
Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest (clpi.org)
Ephilanthropyfoundation.org (ephilanthropy.org)
Federal Register (gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html)
The Foundation Center (fdncenter.org)
Kappa Alpha Theta (kappaalphatheta.org)
The Grantsmanship Center (tgc.org)
U.S. Department of Justice (ojp.usdoj.gov/state.htm)
U.S. Health and Human Services Children's Justice Act (acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cjafact.htm)
U.S. Health and Human Services TANF information (acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/funds2.htm)

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key resource development issues in your state:

- How is the state organization funded?
- How are local programs in the state funded?
- Does the state organization pass through any funding to local programs? How is this done?
- If the state organization receives funds from the state, who were the key legislators in making that happen?

Resource Development Resources & Sample Documents

National CASA Association Resource Development Protocol

National CASA Association Government Relations Protocol

Additional Resource Development Websites

Sample Pass-through Funding Formulas

Sample Legislation for CASA/GAL Funding by Fees

Sample Legislation for a CASA/GAL License Plate Initiative

Sample Legislation for CASA/GAL Tax Check-off Program

Sample Corporate Solicitation Letters

Sample By-laws for a Friends of CASA Auxiliary Organization

National CASA Association 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, in this decade we are experiencing escalating human service needs and costs, while the availability of government funds is sharply curtailed. As a result, more organizations than ever 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 funders' 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.

1. Research

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

When National CASA learns of a prospective funder whose priorities are appropriate for CASA program support, yet restricts giving to a specific geographical area, National CASA 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 National CASA.

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,** National CASA 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 below.

Submission of Funding Requests

1. Before submitting a request for funding, National CASA 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 National CASA may affect the outcome of the CASA program's request, National CASA may defer any action until the prospective funder acts upon the CASA program request. National CASA and the CASA program should then come to an

agreement on the best timing of National CASA's request. Certain circumstances may warrant notification after an initial proposal.

2. A funder who provides ongoing support for a CASA program may also consider national projects. The State or local programs and National CASA 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, National CASA/State/local program may take the opportunity to team in their meetings with a prospective funder, or collaborate on the grant proposal.
3. State and local CASA programs should notify National CASA before approaching a national funder, most especially when National CASA has an established relationship with that funder. National CASA may have a request pending or ready to submit to the funder. National CASA 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 National CASA to defer solicitation. Programs should coordinate their solicitations as described in #1 above.
5. National CASA/State/local programs should make every effort to follow this protocol when there is potential conflict with the development efforts of another program.

*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, national), there is little potential for conflict between National and 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.

**Reviewed by CASA State Directors and
Approved by National CASA Board of Directors, 11/17/91**

National CASA Government Relations Protocol

In state and federal legislatures, CASA and volunteer GAL programs enjoy strong bi-partisan support. This support has been generated both because of the strength of our volunteers' work for children, and because of the thoughtful and coordinated efforts of the CASA/GAL network to inform legislators about that work. Legislators appreciate the fact that the network presents a unified voice in support of the best interests of all programs, rather than making multiple requests for funding which would benefit only individual programs. The coordinated approach distinguishes our network as one that is committed to the welfare of abused and neglected children in all jurisdictions, rather than a group of loosely affiliated organizations protecting their own self-interests.

The following protocol has been developed in order to maintain this level of support, and to continue the tradition of local/state/national collaboration in the area of government relations:

1. Communication on policy issues

Any representative or organization acting on behalf of a CASA-member organization that is contemplating contacting a legislator or agency of federal or state government on policy issues which might affect other CASA and GAL programs should inform the state office (in the case of state government) or the National CASA office (in the case of the federal government) prior to the contact. Program representatives shall inform both the state and national offices in the event that an unplanned contact with a legislator or government official produces information that is relevant to the interests of CASA/GAL programs generally.

2. Coordination of requests for Government Funding

Any representative or organization acting on behalf of a CASA-member organization should contact the state or national office prior to communicating with the state or federal government (executive, legislative or judicial) concerning potential funding. Requests for government funding should be in collaboration with the state office (for state funding) or the national office (for federal funding). The common good of all CASA/GAL programs should take precedence over the benefit of an individual local or state CASA/GAL program. When there is an avenue for funding which can only be made to a local jurisdiction and which will not jeopardize funding requests for broader CASA/GAL purposes, the state or national office may approve a direct local approach.

3. Responding to Government Requests for Proposals

Proposals submitted in response to a Request For Proposals (RFP) by a government agency need not be submitted through the state or national office. However, the same provisions for communication with state and national offices should be followed.

Approved September 14, 2002, Amended May 31, 2003
National CASA Board of Directors

Comments or questions should be directed to M. Carmela Welte, Deputy CEO (carmela@nationalcasa.org)

Additional Resource Development Websites

American Institute of Philanthropy	charitywatch.org
Association of Fund-Raising Counsel	aafrc.org
BoardSource	boardsource.org
Center for the Study of Philanthropy	philanthropy.org
Chronicle of Philanthropy	philanthropy.com
Council on Foundations	cof.org
The Foundation Center	fdncenter.org
Foundations On-line	foundations.org
Grantscape	grantscape.com
The Grantsmanship Center	tgci.org
GuideStar	guidestar.org
Internet Nonprofit Center	nonprofits.org
Measuring Philanthropy	measuringphilanthropy.com
More Than Money	morethanmoney.org
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy	ncrp.org
National Committee on Planned Giving	ncpg.org
Nonprofit Gateway	nonprofit.gov or firstgov.gov/Business/Nonprofit.shtml
NonProfit Times	nptimes.com
Philanthropy Journal Online	philanthropy-journal.org
Prospect Research Site	ups.educ/our/adi/research/research.html
Raising More Money	raisingmoremoney.com
Women's Philanthropy Institute	women-philanthropy.org

Sample CASA/GAL Pass-through Grants Formulas

Virginia CASA Grants Formula

# of Cases Served in 2001-02	Proposed FY03 Award
less than 25	\$ 16,978
25 – 74	\$ 29,603
75 – 149	\$ 33,803
150 – 224	\$ 38,003
225 – 299	\$ 42,203
300 or more	\$ 46,403
planning grants	\$ 1,000

Arkansas CASA Grants Formula

base	\$15,000
small county (0-19 cases)	\$6,000
medium county (20-39 cases)	\$11,000
large county (40+ cases)	\$16,000
extra large count (100+ cases)	\$21,000
number of cases served by volunteers	
0-19	0
20-39	\$5,000
40-59	\$10,000
60-79	\$15,000
80-99	\$20,000
100+	\$25,000

How to figure your maximum grant award based on this formula:

1. Start with \$15,000.
2. Add amounts for each county you serve or plan to serve for the next year, including your “home” county. The number of cases will be determined from attorney ad litem figures. Any county served must have a goals sheet.
3. Add funds based on additional cases served by volunteers. ONLY dependency-neglect cases served by volunteers may be counted. Use the average from your previous four quarterly reports to determine the number.

State of South Dakota

SEVENTY-EIGHTH SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2003

38110297

HOUSE BILL NO. **1247**

Introduced by: Representatives Murschel, Adelstein, Bartling, Begalka, Bradford, Burg, Christensen, Craddock, Cutler, Davis, Dykstra, Engels, Frost, Fryslie, Gassman, Gillespie, Glenski, Hackl, Hanson, Hargens, Haverly, Hennies, Hunhoff, Konold, Kraus, Kroger, Lange, Lintz, Madsen, McCoy, Miles, Nesselhuf, Novstrup, O'Brien, Olson (Mel), Olson (Ryan), Pederson (Gordon), Peterson (Bill), Peterson (Jim), Rounds, Schafer, Sebert, Sigdestad, Solum, Thompson, Valandra, Van Etten, Van Norman, Weems, and Williamson and Senators Ham, Abdallah, Apa, Bogue, Brown, de Hueck, Dempster, Dennert, Duenwald, Duniphan, Duxbury, Earley, Greenfield, Jaspers, Kelly, Kleven, Kloucek, Knudson, Koetzle, Kooistra, Koskan, McCracken, Moore, Nachtigal, Olson (Ed), Reedy, Sutton (Dan), Sutton (Duane), Symens, and Vitter

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to provide for the funding of certain court appointed special advocate grant programs and to establish the Court Appointed Special Advocates Commission.
BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

Section 1. Terms used in this Act mean:

- (1) "CASA," court appointed special advocate;
- (2) "Commission," the Court Appointed Special Advocates Commission;
- (3) "Fund," court appointed special advocates fund; and
- (4) "Grant program," the court appointed special advocates grant program.

Section 2. The court appointed special advocates grant program is hereby established. Under the grant program, the commission shall award grants to entities within the state of South Dakota that are recognized by the National CASA Association, Incorporated, as administering CASA programs. Grants may also be awarded from money in the fund to the South Dakota CASA Association. Grants shall be awarded to support the development, growth, quality, and continuation of CASA programs in South Dakota.

Section 3. There is established within the state treasury the court appointed special advocates fund to be administered by the Unified Judicial System. Money shall enter the fund as provided in § 23-3-53 and through contributions, grants, settlement funds, payments ordered by the court, interest received on moneys in the fund, and any other fees and moneys collected for the purposes of this Act. Money in the fund shall be used for the purpose of funding and administering the grant program. Any expenditure from the fund shall be paid on warrants drawn by the state auditor on vouchers approved by the state court administrator of the Unified Judicial System.

Section 4. That § 23-3-52 be amended to read as follows:

23-3-52. In addition to any other penalty, assessment, or fine provided by law, there shall be levied liquidated costs in the amount of ~~twenty-five~~ twenty-seven dollars for partial reimbursement to state government and its subdivisions for law enforcement and judicial expenses incurred in providing the

personnel, training, and facilities relative to the criminal justice system and to the 911 emergency reporting system, on each conviction for the following:

- (1) Violation of state statutes or regulations having criminal penalties; or
- (2) Violation of county or municipal ordinances.

If a fine is suspended in whole or in part, the liquidated costs for law enforcement and training may not be reduced, except that the judge may waive all or any part of the payment of liquidated costs which would work a hardship on the person convicted or on the person's immediate family.

Section 5. That § 23-3-53 be amended to read as follows:

23-3-53. After a determination by the court of the amount due, the clerk of courts shall collect the amount due and transmit such amount monthly to the state treasurer. The state treasurer shall place seventeen dollars of the ~~twenty-five-dollar-twenty-seven-dollar~~ fee into the law enforcement officers training fund, six dollars of the ~~twenty-five-dollar-twenty-seven-dollar~~ fee into the court appointed attorney and public defender payment fund, two dollars of the twenty-seven-dollar fee into the court appointed special advocates fund, one dollar of the ~~twenty-five-dollar-twenty-seven-dollar~~ fee into the 911 telecommunicator training fund, and one dollar of the ~~twenty-five-dollar-twenty-seven-dollar~~ fee into the abused and neglected child defense fund.

Section 6. There is created the Court Appointed Special Advocates Commission to make awards through the grant program and to perform related functions as provided in this Act. The commission is administered and staffed by the Unified Judicial System and consists of five residents of the state, appointed to three-year terms. The commission shall include one member appointed by the Governor with experience in the duties of investigation of child abuse and neglect, one member appointed by the Governor who is a current or former South Dakota legislator, one member appointed by the Governor who has experience in issues of child abuse and neglect in a tribal setting, one member appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who has a background in judiciary or legal services with experience and knowledge in abuse and neglect court proceedings, and one member appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who has experience with providing treatment services to children who are victims of abuse and neglect. The commission shall meet as necessary to carry out its functions. Each member of the commission shall be paid mileage at the same rate as allowed for state employees and shall receive per diem compensation and allowable expense reimbursement in an amount set pursuant to § 4-7-10.4 for time spent attending commission meetings. However, no per diem may be paid to any commission member who is a state employee.

Section 7. The commission shall award grants as provided in this Act and publicize the availability of and procedures for obtaining grants under this Act.

Sample License Plate Legislation

A Bill

Regular Session, 2003 HOUSE BILL 1020

By: Representatives

For An Act To Be Entitled 11

AN ACT TO AMEND xxx CODE TITLE 27, CHAPTER 12 15, TO ADD A SUBCHAPTER 39 TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL "CASA" LICENSE PLATE FOR SUPPORT OF CASA PROGRAMS IN XXX AND TO PRESCRIBE REGISTRATION FEES FOR THE LICENSE PLATES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL "CASA" LICENSE PLATE FOR SUPPORT OF CASA PROGRAMS IN XXX AND PRESCRIBE REGISTRATION FEES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF xxx:

SECTION 1. Xxx Code Title 27, Chapter 15, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows: Subchapter 39. "CASA" license plate.

27-15-3901. "CASA" license plate authorized. 32

The Director of the Department of Finance and Administration shall issue a special "CASA" motor vehicle license plate in the manner and subject to the conditions prescribed in this subchapter.

27-15-3902. Design.

(a)(1) The special "CASA" motor vehicle license plates shall be designed by Xxx CASA and the design shall be submitted to the Director of the Department of Finance and Administration for design approval.

(2) The Director of the Department of Finance and Administration shall have the final authority for the design approval and the issuance to any person of the "CASA" license plate.

(3) The purpose of the special license plate is for a person to support CASA programs which provide volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children.

(b)(1) Before the license plate is issued, there shall be remitted to the Department of Finance and Administration a fee in the amount of six thousand dollars (\$6,000) to cover the cost of the initial order of each newly designed license plate.

(2) This fee shall be deposited to the State Central Services Fund for the benefit of the Revenue Division of the Department of Finance and Administration and shall be credited as supplemental and in addition to all other funds as may be deposited for the benefit of the division.

(3) The fee shall not be considered or credited to the division as direct revenues.

(4) The fee amount may be paid by any person, organization, or by any combination of persons or organizations.

27-15-3903. Fees.

(a) Upon payment of the fee required by law for the registration of the vehicle, payment of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) to cover the design use contribution, and payment of an additional ten dollars (\$10.00) handling and administrative fee for the issuance of the special "CASA" license plate, the Department of Finance and Administration shall issue to the vehicle owner a "CASA" license plate which shall bear the approved design.

(b)(1)(A) The handling and administrative fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) shall be deposited to the State Central Services Fund for the benefit of the Revenue Division of the Department of Finance and Administration.

(B) The fee shall not be considered or credited to the division as direct revenues.

(2) The design use contribution of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) shall be deposited as special revenues in the “*State Treasury*.”

27-15-3904. “CASA” Program Fund.

(a) There is created on the books of the Treasurer of State, the Auditor of State and the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State a special revenue fund to be known as the “CASA” Program Fund.

(b)(1) All moneys collected as design use contributions under § 27-15- 8 3903 shall be deposited as special revenues to the “CASA” for distribution to nonprofit organizations under this subchapter.

(2) The Administrative Office of the Courts shall distribute the funds to qualified organizations that provide volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children in the court system.

(3) All moneys accruing to the credit of the “CASA” Fund shall be appropriated and shall be distributed at the beginning of each fiscal year in a pro rata share to all qualified organizations.

(4) Any unused funds in excess of ten percent (10%) of the funds allocated to a nonprofit organization shall be returned to the “CASA” Program Fund at the end of the fiscal year to be aggregated and distributed with the next fiscal year distribution.

(c) To qualify to receive the funds available through the CASA Program, an organization shall deliver to the Administrative Office of the Courts an affidavit signed by a representative of the organization that states the organization:

(1) Is a nonprofit organization;

(2) Does not discriminate because of race, marital status, gender, religion, national origin, handicap or age;

(3) provides volunteer advocates for abused and neglected children in the court system;

(5) Does not charge children or families for any services received;

(6) Will use the funds received only for the purposes and under the restrictions of subsection (d) of this section, will use none of the funds for administrative expenses, legal expenses, or capital expenditures;

(7) Will return at the end of each fiscal year any unused funds exceeding ten percent (10%) of the funds received;

(8) Will submit to an annual audit of the funds received.

27-15-3905. Renewal. 35

(a)(1) The special “CASA” license plate issued under this subchapter may be renewed annually under the procedures in § 27-15-3903 and under §§ 27-14-1012 and 27-14-1013. 2

(2) Registration may continue from year to year as long as it is renewed each year within the time and manner required by law.

(b) A motor vehicle owner who was previously issued a plate with the “CASA” design authorized by this subchapter and who does not pay a design use contribution of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) at the subsequent time of registration shall be issued a new plate which does not bear the “CASA” design.

(c) Upon expiration or if the special “CASA” license plate is lost, the plate may be replaced with a regular license plate at the fee specified in § 27-14-602(b)(6).

(d) If the special “CASA” license plate is replaced with a new “CASA” license plate, the owner shall be required to pay the fees for the issuance of the license plate under § 27-15-3903.

27-15-3906. Transfer to another vehicle.

The special “CASA” license plate issued under this subchapter may be transferred from one vehicle to another as provided in § 27-14-914.

27-15-3907. Compliance with other laws.

The special “CASA” license plate shall comply with:

(1) The minimum number of license plate applications required under § 2327-15-4004;

Sample Legislation for CASA/GAL License Plate Initiative

(2) All other state motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor vehicles, unless specifically provided otherwise in this subchapter.

27-15-3908. Rules and regulations.

The Director of the Department of Finance and Administration shall promulgate reasonable rules and regulations and prescribe forms as the director determines to be necessary for effectively and efficiently carrying out the intent and purposes of this subchapter.

NOTE: This bill has been prepared for the signature of the appropriate legislative officers and the Governor. To determine whether the Governor has signed the bill or taken other action on it, please consult the legislative status sheet, the legislative history, or the Session Laws.

2002



HOUSE BILL 02-1176

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Alexander, Larson, Bacon, Borodkin, Coleman, Garcia, Groff, Hodge, Jahn, Madden, Miller, Plant, Ragsdale, Romanoff, and Stafford; also SENATOR(S) Tate.

³CONCERNING THE REQUIREMENT THAT COLORADO STATE INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURN FORMS CONTAIN A LINE WHEREBY INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYERS MAY MAKE A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE COLORADO COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES FUND, AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Article 22 of title 39, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW PART to read:

PART 23
COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES
VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION

39-22-2301. Legislative declaration. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT CHILDREN IN COLORADO WHO ARE ABUSED, NEGLECTED, OR ABANDONED BY THEIR FAMILIES OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES IN COURT WHERE JUDGES WILL DECIDE THEIR FUTURES. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER FINDS AND DECLARES THAT THE JUDGES, ATTORNEYS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS IN COLORADO'S OVERBURDENED CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM MAY NOT HAVE THE

³ Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.³

RESOURCES TO INVESTIGATE AND RESPOND TO THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF EACH CHILD IN THE SYSTEM AND AS A RESULT, MAY UNINTENTIONALLY TAKE ACTIONS THAT ARE NOT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THOSE CHILDREN. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECOGNIZES THAT THE COLORADO COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES, HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS COLORADO CASA, IS A STATEWIDE NONPROFIT AGENCY THAT SUPPORTS THE TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE APPOINTED BY JUDGES TO BECOME ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN WHO OTHERWISE MAY NOT HAVE A VOICE IN COURT. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER RECOGNIZES THAT MANY COLORADO CITIZENS WOULD BE WILLING TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR CHILD ADVOCACY PROGRAMS IF GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY. IT IS THEREFORE THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ENACTING THIS PART 23 TO PROVIDE THOSE COMMITTED AND CONCERNED COLORADO CITIZENS THE OPPORTUNITY TO FINANCIALLY FOSTER THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF CHILD ADVOCACY PROGRAMS IN THE STATE BY ALLOWING CITIZENS TO MAKE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS ON THEIR STATE INCOME TAX RETURNS FOR SUCH PURPOSE.

39-22-2302. Voluntary contribution designation - procedure. FOR INCOME TAX YEARS COMMENCING ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2002, BUT PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2005, THE COLORADO STATE INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURN FORM SHALL CONTAIN A LINE WHEREBY EACH INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYER MAY DESIGNATE THE AMOUNT OF THE CONTRIBUTION, IF ANY, THE INDIVIDUAL WISHES TO MAKE TO THE COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA) FUND CREATED IN SECTION 39-22-2303.

39-22-2303. Contributions credited to the court-appointed special advocates (CASA) fund - appropriation.

(1) THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE SHALL DETERMINE ANNUALLY THE TOTAL AMOUNT DESIGNATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 39-22-2302 AND SHALL REPORT SUCH AMOUNT TO THE STATE TREASURER AND TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THE STATE TREASURER SHALL CREDIT SUCH AMOUNT TO THE COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA) FUND, WHICH FUND IS HEREBY CREATED IN THE STATE TREASURY. ALL INTEREST DERIVED FROM THE DEPOSIT AND INVESTMENT OF MONEYS IN THE FUND SHALL BE CREDITED TO THE FUND.

(2) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE ANNUALLY FROM THE COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA) FUND TO THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE ITS COSTS OF ADMINISTERING MONEYS DESIGNATED AS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND. ALL MONEYS REMAINING IN THE COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA) FUND AT THE END OF A FISCAL YEAR, AFTER SUBTRACTING THE APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, SHALL BE TRANSFERRED TO COLORADO CASA, A COLORADO NONPROFIT AGENCY. COLORADO CASA SHALL ADMINISTER SUCH MONEYS IN FURTHERANCE OF THE WORK OF COLORADO CASA MEMBER AGENCIES STATEWIDE.

39-22-2304. Repeal of part. THIS PART 23 IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2006, UNLESS THE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA) FUND ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 39-22-2303 IS CONTINUED OR REESTABLISHED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTING BY BILL DURING THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY. PRIOR TO OR DURING SUCH SESSION, A COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE IN EACH HOUSE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL HOLD A HEARING REGARDING THE POSSIBLE TERMINATION, CONTINUATION, OR REESTABLISHMENT OF THE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA) FUND AS PROVIDED FOR IN THIS PART 23.

SECTION 2. Appropriation. In addition to any other appropriation, there is hereby appropriated, out of any moneys in the court-appointed special advocates fund created in section 39-22-2303 (1), Colorado Revised Statutes, not otherwise appropriated, to the department of revenue, cash and document processing division, for data entry costs, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2002, the sum of eight hundred twelve dollars (\$812), or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the implementation of this act.

SECTION 3. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Doug Dean Stan Matsunaka
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE PRESIDENT OF
OF REPRESENTATIVES THE SENATE

Judith Rodrigue Karen Goldman
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE SECRETARY OF
OF REPRESENTATIVES THE SENATE

APPROVED _____

Bill Owens
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

Sample Letters to Corporations

Date

Ms. Jane Doe
Marketing Director
XX Corporation
address
city, state, ZIP

Dear Ms. Doe:

We would like to propose a joint marketing venture that will help thousands of abused and neglected children across New York State.

The NYS Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association, a 501(c)(3) organization, represents CASA programs in 25 counties. These programs, which rely on community fund-raising, train and supervise volunteers protecting the rights and safety of at-risk children. More than 3,000 children – most representing minority groups and most living in poverty – are helped by more than 500 CASA volunteers each year statewide.

In other states, CASA programs have found selling holiday cards to be successful in not only raising funds but in spreading the word about CASA and child abuse and in drawing new volunteers to our effort. A sample of another state's card is enclosed. We would like to start a Holiday Card campaign in New York State, and have received donations of drawings from both adult and child artists, two examples of which are enclosed. In order to produce a marketing brochure, and to help underwrite the initial cost of producing the cards, we are seeking corporate sponsorship for this project.

The initial cost of the project is \$5,000, and we are seeking major sponsors of \$1,000 apiece. We would be honored to have XX Corporation as a sponsor of our cards. Your name and logo would be printed on the back of our cards, distributed to thousands of homes across the Northeast, and your contribution credited in our association publications – which go to businesses, not-for-profits and individuals throughout the state.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss CASA and our holiday card campaign in more detail, and we will call you the week of August 15. We can also be reached at the number below. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Darlene Ward
Executive Director
Enc.

June 16, 20XX

XXXXX
XXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXX
XXXXX

Dear Mr./Ms. XXX:

The New York State CASA Association, Inc. (CASANYYS) is assembling a group of key business representatives from across the state to attend a Corporate Roundtable. The purpose of this discussion is to advise us on strategies to increase visibility of the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program in New York and to develop partnerships with the business community.

XXX XXXX, a member of the CASANYYS Board of Directors, suggested your name for this committee, which will meet for the first time at noon Monday, July 24th, at the Adelphi Hotel in Saratoga Springs. The meeting will last approximately two hours and will include lunch.

Court Appointed Special Advocates are trained volunteers dedicated to the safety of children. When an abused, neglected or at-risk child comes before Family Court, a judge may assign a CASA to gather information and monitor court orders. CASA volunteers take only one or two cases at a time, to ensure that the children in those cases quickly move to the safe, permanent homes they deserve. The New York State CASA Association supports the work of affiliated CASA programs in 23 counties across New York through training and technical assistance.

CASANYYS, a 501(c)(3) organization, relies on grants and contributions for funding. As a volunteer organization, we also are dependent on community awareness and support to sustain our important work. A key part of our Strategic Plan is building relationships with the business community. We would greatly appreciate your time and expertise in developing this part of our outreach.

If you would consider participating in this Corporate Roundtable, please complete the attached form and return to our office by July 17th. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rod Soltis
Board President

Darlene Ward
Executive Director

Sample By-laws for a Friend of CASA Auxiliary Organization

ARTICLE I FUNCTIONS

Section 1.01 Functions. In pursuance of the purpose provided in its Certificate of Incorporation, the FRIENDS OF CASA ASSOCIATION (the "Association") shall contribute services and funds to the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program in the State of Delaware under the direction of and in full cooperation with the Family Court of the State of Delaware, or its successor institutions.

The Association shall, in pursuance of its purpose, be authorized to cooperate with other organizations sharing similar purposes and objectives, and to expand its existing programs by any means, including, but not limited to, merger or consolidation into one or more other organizations which are tax-exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and which provide programs within in the scope of the purpose of the Association. Such merger or consolidation shall be made on such terms and under such conditions as are approved by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

Section 2.01. Membership. Any person, regardless of sex, race, creed, or national origin, who is over the age of eighteen years, shall be eligible for membership if such person shall have an interest in contributing services and/or funds to the CASA program in the State of Delaware. The initial members of the Association shall be the following persons, namely:

- (a) xxx, President
- (b) yyy, Treasurer
- (c) zzz, Secretary

and such other persons as shall be hereafter approved by a vote of a majority of the current membership, keeping in mind that all new members shall be elected for the experience each has had and the contributions each is expected to make on behalf of the CASA program in the State of Delaware.

Section 2.02. Supporting Membership. Membership in the Association may also consist of persons in each of the categories of the Supporting Membership of the Association. The Board of Directors may establish categories of Supporting

Membership and the requirements of qualification for each. The Members of each category of Supporting Membership shall have such rights and privileges with respect to the Association as the Board of Directors shall establish.

ARTICLE III BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 3.01. Function of Directors. The business and affairs of the Association shall be managed under the direction of its Board of Directors. All powers of the Association may be exercised by or under authority of the Board of Directors.

Section 3.02. Number of Directors. The Association shall initially have three (3) Directors. A majority of the entire Board of Directors may later increase the number of Directors, by adopting amended By-Laws, to no more than seven (7) nor less than three (3) Directors, but the action may not affect the tenure of office of any Directors, except as provided in Section 3.04.

Section 3.03. Election and Tenure of Directors. The Directors shall hold office until the next annual meeting and until their successors are so named and qualify. A majority of the entire Board of Directors may later amend the method of naming or electing of Directors.

Section 3.04. Removal of Directors. Any Director may be removed with or without cause, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the entire Membership, provided, however, that the proposal to consider such removal shall have been specified in the notice of the meeting.

Section 3.05. Vacancy on Board. If the number of Directors on the Board of Directors decreases below three (3), a majority of the Membership shall name an additional Director or Directors to fill the vacancy or vacancies. A Director named or elected to fill a vacancy shall serve until the next annual meeting of Directors and until his successor is elected and qualifies.

Section 3.06. Annual and Regular Meetings. Annual or regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such place, in or out of the State of Delaware, as may be designated from time to time by the Board of Directors. Annual meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held on the second Thursday of April in each year, or on such other date as may be designated from time to time by the Board of Directors. Failure to hold an annual meeting shall not invalidate the Association's existence or affect any otherwise valid corporate acts. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held on such date as may be designed from time to time by the Board of Directors.

Section 3.07. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at any time by the Chairman of the Board or the President or by a majority of the Board of Directors by vote at a meeting, or in writing with or without a meeting. A special meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held on such date and at any place in or out of the State of Delaware as may be designated from time to time by the Board of Directors. In the absence of such designation, such meeting shall be held at such place as may be designated in the call.

Section 3.08. Notice of Meetings. The Secretary shall give each member of the Board of Directors notice of all meetings of the Board which shall state the time and place of the meetings. Neither the business to be transacted nor the purpose of any meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice except as otherwise required by statute, these By-Laws, or resolution of the Board. Notice may be oral or written, including telegraphic, and must be either given orally at least seventy-two (72) hours before the time of the meeting, or provided in writing at least seven (7) days before the time of the meeting, to each member of the Board at his or her address as it appears in the records of the Association. Whenever notice is required to be given, a waiver in writing, signed by the person or person entitled to such notice either before or after the time of the meeting stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Attendance of a member of the Board of Directors at any meeting of the Board shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a member attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened. Any meeting of the Board of Directors may be adjourned from time to time to reconvene at the same or some other place, and no notice need be given of any such reconvened meeting other than by announcement.

Section 3.09. Action by Directors. Except as otherwise required by statute, the Certificate of Incorporate or these By-Laws, the greater of two (2) Directors of a majority of the entire Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If a quorum is present, the act of the majority of the Directors present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, unless the act of a greater number is required by statute, the Certificate of Incorporation, or these By-Laws. In the absence of a quorum, the Directors present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum shall be present. At any such reconvened meeting at which a quorum shall be present, any business may be transacted at the meeting as originally notified. Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors may be taken without a meeting, if a unanimous written consent setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by each member of the Board of Directors, and filed with the minutes of proceedings of the Board.

Section 3.10. Meeting by Conference Telephone. Members of the Board of Directors may participate in a meeting by means of a conference telephone or similar communication equipment if all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participation in a meeting by these means constitutes presence in person at a meeting.

Section 3.11. Compensation. Directors shall not receive compensation for their services. However, the Board of Directors may authorize reimbursement for all reasonable expense incurred in connection with the performance of services for the Association, including but not limited to attendance at annual, regular, or special meeting of the Board of Directors or committees thereof.

ARTICLE IV COMMITTEES

Section 4.01. Advisory Committees. The Board of Directors may appoint from among its members advisory committees composed of two (2) or more Directors and delegate to these committees the power to make recommendations to the Board of Directors on any of the matters on which the Board of Directors, may act. Each advisory committee may fix rules of procedure for its business. A majority of the members of an advisory committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the act of a majority of those present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the committee. The members of an advisory committee present at any meeting, whether or not they constitute a quorum, may appoint a Director to act in the place of an absent member. Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of an advisory committee may be taken without a meeting, if a unanimous written consent which sets forth the action is signed by each member of the committee and filed with the minutes of the committee. The members of an advisory committee may conduct any meeting thereof by conference telephone in a accordance with the provisions of Section 3.10.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS

Section 5.01. Executive Officers. The Association shall have a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer, each of whom shall also be Directors of the Association. It may also have a Chairman of the Board, who shall be a Director of the Association, and one or more Vice-Presidents, one or more Assistant Vice-Presidents, one or more Assistant Secretaries and one or more Assistant Treasurers. A person may hold more than one office in the Association but may not serve concurrently as both President and Vice-President of the Association.

Section 5.02. Chairman of the Board. The Chairman of the Board, if one be elected, shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors at which he shall be present. He shall have and may exercise such powers as are from time to time assigned to him by the Board of Directors.

Section 5.03. President. In the absence of the Chairman of the Board, the President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors at which he shall be present; he shall have general charge and supervision of the assets and affairs of the Association; he may sign and execute, in the name of the Association, all authorized deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts or other instruments, except in cases in which the signing and execution thereof shall have been expressly delegated to some other officer or agent of the Association; and, in general, he shall perform all duties incident to the office of a president of a corporation, and such other duties as are from time to time assigned to him by the Board of Directors.

Section 5.04. Vice-Presidents. The Vice-President or Vice-Presidents, at the request of the President or in his absence or during his inability to act, shall perform the duties and exercise the functions of the President, and when so acting shall have the powers of the President. If there be more than one Vice-President, the Board of Directors may determine which one or more of the Vice-Presidents shall perform any of such duties or exercise any of such functions, or if such determination is not made by the Board of Directors, the President may make such determination; otherwise any of the Vice-Presidents may perform any of such duties or exercise any of such functions. The Vice-President or Vice-Presidents shall have other powers and perform such other duties, and have such additional descriptive designations in their titles (if any), as are from time to time assigned to them by the Board of Director or the President.

Section 5.05. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of any committees, in books provided for the purposes; he shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of the By-Laws or as required by law; he shall be custodian of the records of the Association; he shall witness all documents on behalf of the Association; the execution of which is duly authorized, see that the corporate seal is affixed where such document is required to be under its seal, and, when so affixed, may attest the same; and, in general, he shall perform all duties incident to the office of a secretary of a corporation; and such other duties as are from time to time assigned to him by the Board of Directors or the President.

Section 5.06 Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have charge of an be responsible for all funds, securities, receipts and disbursements of the Association, and shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, in the name of the Association, all

moneys or other valuable effects in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as shall, from time to time, be selected by the Board of Directors; he shall render to the President and to the Board of Directors, whenever requested, an account of the financial condition of the Association; and, in general, he shall perform all the duties incident to the office of a treasurer of a corporation, and such other duties as are from time to time assigned to him by the Board of Directors or the President.

Section 5.07.. Assistant Officers. The Assistant Vice-Presidents shall have such duties as are from time to time assigned to them by the Board of Directors or the President. The Assistant Secretaries shall have such duties as are from time to time assigned to them by the Board of Directors or the Secretary. The Assistant Treasurers shall have such duties as are from time to time assigned to them by the Board of Directors or the Treasurer.

Section 5.08 Subordinate Officers. The Association may have such subordinate officers as the Board of Directors may from time to time deem desirable. Each such officer shall hold office for such period and perform such duties as the Board of Directors, the President or the committee or officer designated pursuant to Section 5.10 may prescribe.

Section 5.09 Compensation. The Board of Directors shall have power to fix the salaries and other compensation and remuneration, of whatever kind, of all officers of the Association, provided that a Director who is a director or employee of a member must abstain from a vote in favor of compensation for an officer of this Association who is a director or employer of the same member.

Section 5.10. Election, Tenure and Removal of Officers. The Board of Directors shall elect the officers. The Board of Directors may from time to time authorize any committee or officer to appoint subordinate officers. An officer serves for one year and until his successor is elected and qualifies. If the Board of Directors in its judgment finds that the best interests of the Association will be served, it may remove any officer or agent of the Association. The removal of an officer or agent does not prejudice any of his contract rights. The Board of Directors (or any committee or officer authorized by the Board of Directors) may fill a vacancy which occurs in any office for the unexpired portion of the term.

ARTICLE VI FINANCE

Section 6.01. Checks, Drafts, Etc. All checks, drafts and orders for the payment of money, notes and other evidences of indebtedness, issued in the name of the Association, shall, unless otherwise provided by resolution of the Board of

Directors, be signed by the President, a Vice-President or an Assistant Vice-President and countersigned by the Treasurer, an Assistant Treasurer, the Secretary or an Assistant Secretary.

Section 6.02. Annual Statement of Affairs. There shall be prepared annually a full and correct statement of the affairs of the Association, to include a balance sheet and a financial statement of operations for the preceding fiscal year. The statement of affairs shall be submitted at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors and, within twenty (20) days after the meeting, place on file at the Association's principal office. Such statement shall be prepared or caused to be prepared by such executive officer of the Association as may be designated in an additional or supplementary By-Law adopted by the Board of Directors. If no other executive officer is so designated, it shall be the duty of the President to prepare or cause to be prepared such statement.

Section 6.03. Fiscal Year. The Fiscal year of the Association shall be the twelve (12) calendar months period ending December 31 in each year, unless otherwise provided by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 7.01. Books and Records. The Association shall keep correct and complete books and records of its accounts and transactions and minutes of the proceedings of its Board of Directors and of any executive or other committee when exercising any of the powers of the Board of Directors. The books and records of the Association may be in written form or in any other form which can be converted within a reasonable time in written form for visual inspection. Minutes shall be recorded in written form but may be maintained in the form of a reproduction.

Section 7.02. Corporate Seal. The Board of Directors shall provide a suitable seal, bearing the name of the Association, which shall be in the charge of the Secretary. The Board of Directors may authorize one or more duplicate seals and provide for the custody thereof.

Section 7.03. Bonds. The Board of Directors may require any officer, agent or employee of the Association to give a bond to the Association, conditioned upon the faithful discharge of his duties, with one or more sureties and in such amount as may be satisfactory to the Board of Directors.

Section 7.04. Voting Upon Shares in Other Corporations. Stock of other corporations or associations, registered in the name of the Association, may be

voted by the President, a Vice-President, or a proxy appointed by either of them. The Board of Directors, however, may by resolution appoint some other person to vote such shares upon the production of a certified copy of such resolution.

Section 7.05. Mail. Any notice or other document which is required by these By-Laws to be mailed shall be deposited in the United States mails, postage prepaid.

Section 7.06. Execution of Documents. A person who holds more than one office in the Association may not act in more than one capacity to execute, acknowledge, or verify an instrument required by law to be executed, acknowledged, or verified by more than one officer.

Section 7.07. Indemnification of Directors and Officers. The Association shall indemnify person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, by reason of the fact that he is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the Association, or is or was serving at the request of the Association as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprises, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such action, suit or proceeding upon a determination that he acted in good faith and in a manner which he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Association, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful; provided that no indemnification shall be made in respect of any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duty to the Association. Any indemnification shall be made by the Association only as authorized in the specific case by a determination that indemnification is proper in the circumstances, which determination shall be made by a majority vote of those members of the Board of Directors who were not parties to such action, suit or proceeding, or in the absence thereof, by written opinion of Counsel of the Association.

Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding shall be paid by the Association in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding to the extent, if any, authorized by the Board of Directors in accordance with the provisions of said General Corporation Law, upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the director, officer, employee or agent to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that he is entitled to be indemnified by the Association.

The Association shall have power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the Association, or is or was serving at the request of the Association as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the Association would have the power to indemnify him against such liability under the provisions of this section.

Section 7.08. Amendments. Subject to the special provisions of Section 3.02, the Board of Directors shall have the power, at any regular or special meeting thereof, provided that notice shall be given no less than ten (10) days in advance, to make the adopt new By-Laws, or to amend, alter or repeal any of the By-Laws of the Association.

Section 7.09. Use of Words. Wherever appropriate, words used in these By-Laws in the masculine may mean the feminine, and vice versa, and the singular may mean the plural, and vice versa.

Chapter 6

Public Relations

The phone rings. It is 11:15 a.m. It is a television news reporter, wanting to do a story on the CASA/GAL program. She wants video of a CASA/GAL volunteer with a child, an interview and statistics on CASA/GAL advocacy in time for the 5 p.m. news. She would also like a response to the actions of a parent who has been posting signs around town demanding the return of her child.

Increasing public awareness about the need for child advocacy and the role CASA/GAL volunteers play is critical to the future of both local programs and the state organization. Without an ongoing, collaborative public relations effort between state and local programs, each community has to struggle individually to attract volunteers and donors. The public relations function is so basic to the state organization's role that the National CASA Association includes as one of the "core requirements" in the standards for state organizations.

National CASA provides high-quality public relations materials including sample ads, brochures, and public service announcements (PSAs). These are released in a toolkit to state offices and local programs and are also available at casanet.org. These materials include samples of letters, opinion/editorial (op-ed) pieces, PSAs, proclamations, statistics to use in presentations and more. The communications manual produced by National CASA is also a valuable resource. By working with National CASA and local programs, state organizations can tailor a communications message for their state.

Creating a Statewide Campaign

State organizations typically do not have a large amount of money available for public relations efforts, so making the most of the resources available is critical. Start with the simple things—make sure the CASA/GAL logo appears on every printed piece produced by the state office. Also take advantage of current events—a story in the news may be an excellent opportunity for an op/ed piece or a letter to the editor. For example, a piece could be written in response to child abuse statistics in the news or to a story about substance abuse or domestic violence. Both the state organization and local programs should issue press releases at every opportunity for events such as swearing-in ceremonies for volunteers, new hires, volunteer recognition events or upcoming trainings. Sample press releases are available at casanet.org. Potential volunteers and donors need to see the CASA/GAL name many times before they will take action.

It may be more useful to focus time, energy and limited resources on one or two periods a year of intense public relations initiatives statewide. Choosing the time depends on local programs' training schedules or other events occurring in the state. April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month and Volunteer Recognition Month and may be a good time to focus on public relations efforts. Some programs also use November with its Thanksgiving theme and its designation as National Adoption Month to pursue public relations efforts. Coordinate with local programs so that similar news stories, PSAs, letters to the editor, op/ed pieces or advertisements are occurring simultaneously around the state.

In some states, not all programs use either the CASA or GAL name. This makes public relations efforts challenging. One way to approach this situation is to use a consistent logo and to include the various names of programs in the text or visual of all PSAs or advertisements. The state organization may also want to include the names of the local programs in all printed documents. For example, the names of local programs could be listed across the bottom or down the side of the state office letterhead. The state organization will also want to provide all public relations materials produced by the state in electronic form or in an easily editable form for local programs to add in their own program name. One option is providing a space on the back of a brochure for a local program to stamp or add a label with their program name and contact information.

Key Messages

It is essential to have consistent messages statewide in the media, in speaking engagements, with outdoor advertising and in all public relations efforts for recruiting CASA volunteers and donors. National CASA regularly conducts research to help determine what messages are the most effective for key audiences. The following message that particularly resonates with donors is:

Innumerable studies have documented the link between abuse and neglect of children and a wide variety of medical, emotional, psychological and behavioral problems. It is estimated that children who suffer abuse and neglect are 53% more likely to become juvenile delinquents and 38% more likely to become violent criminals as adults. A major factor in avoiding undesirable outcomes for an abused child is the presence of a concerned adult in that child's life. For many abused children, that constant adult presence is often their CASA volunteer. It can make the difference between homelessness and a safe home, between dropping out and completing school, between unemployment and success, between jail and becoming a productive member of society.

Clearly this message does not work well on a billboard, but adapting the information to the context to send consistent messages is important. Tag lines such as "Stand up for an abused child," and "Make a lifelong change for a child" send the message in a much more concise way.

Messages about what CASA/GAL volunteers do must be clear and honest. Using messages depicting CASA volunteers as mentors who take a child fun places is unlikely to recruit the volunteers who will complete training, respect boundaries, write quality court reports and stay with the challenging advocacy work CASA/GAL volunteerism entails.

Media Guide

One useful resource state organizations can provide for local programs is a statewide media guide listing newspapers, cable companies, television and radio stations along with contact names for each. Compiling this resource can be a great deal of work, so begin first by asking the public relations expert(s) on the state organization board or advisory council if one already exists. This may also make an excellent project for an intern.

Press Releases

Press releases must be well written, to the point and brief. Press releases follow a standard format that includes:

- Date
- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (or specific date)
- Contact name
- Organization
- Phone number
- Email address
- HEADLINE (Topic or name of event)
- City, state
- Text related to the event
- Boilerplate language explaining what CASA/GAL does
- ### to signal the end of the document.

Press releases should always be proofread by a second (and maybe third) person to ensure accuracy and clarity.

A press release has greater impact and results when sent to a media contact familiar with the state CASA/GAL organization. If no such relationship exists, call ahead to find out to whom the press release should be addressed and call after it is sent to ensure that it was received. Call again just before the event to see if the reporter has any questions or needs any additional information. Television stations typically make assignments for the day first thing in the morning, so it is good practice to also call the morning of an event to ask again for event coverage by the media outlet.

More information about press releases is available in the *National CASA Communications Manual*. A sample press release can be found in the resource documents section located at the end of this chapter.

Television and Radio

Helping local programs coordinate their press outreach efforts can maximize benefits for everyone. Television stations reach across jurisdictional boundaries, so it makes sense for the state organization to coordinate efforts. If television stations in neighboring states serve part of the state, the state organization may want to contact the state CASA/GAL organizations in those states to coordinate advertising.

Television and radio stations are required to donate a certain amount of airtime for PSAs. Using only donated time often means that the PSA will run at 4 a.m. If at all possible within the limits of the state association budget, approach media contacts with some funding for

paid spots. The station will be much more likely to negotiate an advantageous deal with PSA timing and additional contact when a related news story occurs if the state organization has also bought some advertising time.

Note: The state office may provide the video for the PSA/advertisement using either one from the National CASA Association (with the state organization's toll-free telephone number and website dubbed in) or a locally produced one. The state organization and the relevant local organizations should then decide together how to approach the station. The PSAs from the National CASA Association are well produced; though if the state organization is able to also produce a high-quality PSA using a local celebrity, it may get more airtime.

The state organization should plan visits to television stations carefully. Find out whom to talk to – there may be a community affairs person or it may be a news director. Know before the visit when the television station typically does community events, either by watching the station or by asking public relations experts on the state CASA/GAL advisory board. On the first visit to a television station, take a sample PSA on regular videotape. Ask the contact if this is something the station would be interested in airing. If so, ask what format the station needs the PSA in. It is common for stations to want PSAs in Beta or 3/4" format. These tapes are quite expensive, but the state organization can either ask the National CASA Association to provide one or have tapes made locally. The state CASA/GAL organization may also want to ask television stations for the following:

- Coverage of a special event such as Light of Hope. What part of an event will provide the strongest visuals for television?
- Time on the local morning show
- Time during the weather segment or community events segment
- Time on a community affairs show

Cable television networks also provide many public relations opportunities. Many have community calendars on which any organization can post events or recruitment messages. They may have community-based talk shows with longer interview formats. They may be willing to run messages across the bottom of the screen. Some will choose a particular organization to feature for a given month.

Radio stations are more local in nature but the state office may still be helpful in coordinating PSAs or ads on radio where large stations cover more area or where one company owns many radio stations. Because the radio listening audience tends to be highly segregated, radio PSAs or paid advertisements are opportunities to do targeted marketing for the volunteers most needed in the local area. As of 2003, National CASA provides radio PSAs targeted to African American and Hispanic/Latino audiences. Some radio stations will have a local announcer read a written PSA on the air, while others prefer organizations to provide a CD with the PSA pre-recorded. Most radio stations are now owned by large corporations. This can make it more difficult to build relationships, but the state CASA/GAL organization may be able to negotiate airing PSAs on multiple radio stations. When purchasing airtime for advertisements, bargain heavily. The stations may be willing to give special deals, such as 2 for 1 rate for a nonprofit organization.

When distributing PSAs, always include a “kill date”—the date after which the PSA should not be aired. This is particularly important if the PSA mentions or promotes a specific event or if the organization is a United Way agency and must be cognizant of the “black out” period.

Television and radio may offer special opportunities for in-kind donations. Most communities have several organizations and businesses that purchase large-volume airtime (for example, car dealerships, furniture stores or other local businesses). The state organization may want to consider approaching these organizations about including a CASA/GAL ad in with their regular rotation; this is clearly an option with a reputable organization only.

If a television or radio station covers a particular event, be sure to have articulate volunteers ready to be interviewed. Provide the reporter with a fact sheet about CASA and a written press release that includes contact information. Be sure that press contacts/reporters have contact information for last-minute details in between the event and the broadcast. Provide the phone number and website of the state office and in the case of television, request contact information be aired onscreen.

More information on approaching TV and radio stations is available at casanet.org.

Using Celebrities

Using celebrities as part of a statewide campaign can be effective under some circumstances:

- The person is well known and respected in the state.
- The person has no “dirty laundry” (past or current child abuse or domestic violence allegations, current substance abuse problems, etc.).
- The person is well spoken and knowledgeable about the CASA/GAL program.

The state CASA/GAL organization will have more success if there is a connection to that celebrity—a board contact, for example. A celebrity may be willing to do a single appearance or PSA; or perhaps they are willing to appear in print advertisements and brochures.

If the celebrity has been involved with a local program previously, include the program in approaching the celebrity and negotiating celebrity requirements and details for the CASA/GAL organization throughout the state. The local program will receive more benefit for having the celebrity represent CASA/GAL advocacy in a wider arena.

Speakers’ Bureau

Many organizations develop speakers’ bureaus—individuals who are prepared and willing to speak about the CASA/GAL organization to civic groups and others. These may be the same individuals who are prepared to talk to the media, but it may also include others.

Volunteers and board members can be excellent representatives of the organization, but only if they are prepared and comfortable with public speaking. The state organization can create a speakers’ bureau at the state level and also help local programs by preparing a packet for speakers. This packet may include:

- Brochures
- Fact sheet about CASA/GAL activities
- Tips for public speaking
- Short videotape about CASA/GAL advocacy (for example, *Everyday Heroes*)
- PowerPoint presentation on disk (only for large presentations)
- Overheads, such as news clippings of local child abuse and neglect cases.

The state organization may wish to sponsor training for the speakers' bureau. This training should include information on preparing for a public talk as well as content for the talk and practice giving short speeches.

Tips for public speaking can be found in the resources documents located at the end of this chapter.

Brochures

The National CASA Association provides brochures for use by programs throughout the nation. Creating state specific brochures can be very helpful for marketing efforts and assisting local programs. The state organization may want to seek a public relations/marketing firm to donate design services for a brochure. National CASA member programs have access to professional photos for use in marketing communications; photos are available at casanet.org.

Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor advertising can be very useful in increasing name recognition for the CASA/GAL organization as part of a larger strategy. It is frequently helpful in rural areas where media outlets are limited. Outdoor advertising includes billboards, but in urban areas also includes advertisements on buses, subways, benches or transit shelters.

Outdoor advertising companies may be willing to donate space, particularly in a weak economy. They may also be willing to bargain (such as buy one get one free) with the state CASA/GAL organization. The state organization may be able to negotiate favorable rates by looking at outdoor advertising statewide, saving local programs money.

The cost of billboards includes the space rental, and the material/covering (usually made of paper or vinyl). The state organization may purchase the covering or have it donated and then provide it to local organizations as they secure donated space. Sample billboards are available from casanet.org.

Some things to think about when using outdoor advertising:

- Use the logo and keep words to a minimum.
- Select locations carefully. Billboard locations that are secondary (not on major highways) or "distressed" may be donated or very inexpensive and still reach the potential volunteers that CASA needs.
- Use bright colors.⁴

⁴. Prentice, Kathy. "Four Common Mistakes of Outdoor Advertising." [Media Life Magazine](http://archives.medialifemagazine.com/news1999/june99/news5609.html) June 1999. archives.medialifemagazine.com/news1999/june99/news5609.html.

To find outdoor advertising vendors in your area, visit oaaa.org, the Outdoor Advertising Association of America, and select the member roster.

Targeted Volunteer Recruitment

In developing public relations strategies and campaigns, it is critical to consider the primary targeted audience(s). Public relations planning should consider the needs of the organization and the children served. If, for example, the children served by local programs are 30% African American but volunteers are only 11% African American, public relations efforts should focus on recruitment of African American advocates to close that gap. If 50% of the children served are boys but only 17% of volunteers are men, public relations efforts should focus on the recruitment of men.

The public relations team should include members from targeted audiences and this group should help brainstorm the best ways to reach those individuals, including developing key messages and choosing celebrity spokespeople. Targeted recruitment also involves selecting radio and television stations based on demographics, seeking out publications read by targeted groups, considering locations of outdoor advertising and considering which section of the newspaper in which to place an advertisement. The National CASA Association has specialty volunteer recruitment materials that target African American and Hispanic/Latino communities.

Responding to Media Requests

The state CASA/GAL organization should have a protocol for responding to media requests for information and designate an articulate, informed spokesperson. When requests come, the organization should always find out the following information:

- What is the topic of the story?
- What is the history of this reporter/media outlet in covering similar stories?
- How can CASA be helpful? What information is needed?
- If television, what visual is needed?
- Is the reporter on deadline?
- Who is the typical audience for this media outlet?

Often the media are on tight deadlines, leading to calls with requests such as the one at the beginning of this chapter. These can be wonderful public relations opportunities, but only if the organization is prepared with a number of people who are articulate and readily available. The state organization should identify a number of volunteers of varying ages and ethnicities who are willing to speak to the media. They should be prepared specifically in regards to confidentiality and should be vetted carefully to ensure that the message they will send is consistent with the mission, values, and standards of the CASA/GAL organization.

Television reporters often want images of a volunteer with a child. Children served by CASA/GAL programs cannot be shown because of confidentiality. Explain this to reporters, and suggest other visual images, such as a courtroom (talk to judges about who might be willing to have their courtroom used for such a purpose), non-CASA/GAL children playing in a park or volunteers in their home or work settings.

If the media are calling for comment on another organization or specific situation, proceed cautiously. The CASA/GAL representative can speak about the system and the CASA/GAL

role, but because of confidentiality generally cannot comment on specific cases. Be particularly careful around tragedies such as child deaths. When it appears that a tragic situation might be exploited, the CASA organization should think carefully before becoming involved by making statements to the press. Ask local programs to contact the state organization and/or National CASA if they have any questions about what is appropriate action to take with a media inquiry.

Public Relations in a Crisis

Each state CASA/GAL organization should have a crisis communication plan and local programs or offices must also be prepared to handle a crisis. At least one state organization requires local programs to have a crisis communications plan in order to be eligible for state grants. Preparation is key to both avoiding and handling crises. Legal counsel and public relations professionals will often have different opinions regarding the best public response to a crisis. State and local organizations should have access to advice from both.

At the very least, local programs should know to contact the state or national organization for guidance. The state organization should share after-hours phone numbers for programs to use in an emergency. National CASA staff is also available to participate in a conference call with the state organization and local program regarding the situation.

There are a number of decisions that should be made prior to a crisis:

- Who should be contacted? (Examples might include the state office, the board chair, involved staff and the program attorney).
- Who will draft and review the statement for the media? What will the key messages be?
- Who will speak to the media?
- Who will research the reporter and media outlet? (What is their history with covering similar stories?)

The Georgia Crisis Communications Manual can be found in the resource documents located at the end of this chapter.

A Final Word About Public Relations

The state CASA/GAL organization should always be prepared and proactive with public relations efforts. Public relations should be included in the strategic plan for the organization and the board or advisory council should include members who are knowledgeable about this topic. Look for opportunities to get the CASA/GAL name before the public. Seek partnerships. Be prepared to respond when the media call with a question or request.



Additional Resources:

National CASA Communications Manual (casanetstore.org)

Annual National CASA PR Toolkit (casanet.org)

Outdoor Advertising Association of America (oaaa.org)

Public Relations Society of America (prsa.org)

State PRSA chapter (select **Chapters** at prsa.org)

A World of Difference – A Manual for Achieving Greater Inclusion (casanetstore.org)

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key public relations issues in your state:

- What public relations efforts/campaigns has the state organization conducted? How successful have they been? How was the success measured?
- Are local PR professionals serving on the board or advisory council? Who are they?
- How do local programs increase community awareness? What are examples of best practices?
- Is there a current state fact sheet? A specific state brochure or other state specific media resources?
- Is there a speaker's bureau? Does it include people comfortable talking on camera?
- Is there a crisis communications plan?
- Is public relations addressed in the strategic plan?

Public Relations Resources & Sample Documents

Sample Press Release

Tip Sheet for Speakers' Bureau

Georgia CASA Crisis Communications Manual

Sample News Release

June 12, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jim Clune, Chief Communications Officer
The National CASA Association
(800) 628-3233, Ext. 42
jclune@nationalcasa.org

The Champions for Abused Children Initiative Receives Generous Support From the Jewelers Charity Fund for Children

SEATTLE, The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association is pleased to announce that the Jewelers Charity Fund for Children will be partnering with The National CASA Association in 2003 and 2004 on the Champions for Abused Children Initiative. By providing a generous grant of half a million dollars, the Jewelers Charity Fund will significantly advance National CASA's mission to provide a CASA volunteer for every abused and neglected child who needs one. The initiative will also provide numerous opportunities for jewelry industry members to volunteer to help abused and neglected children.

CASA volunteers are local community citizens who are appointed by judges to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children. By having a CASA volunteer, a child is far less likely to be lost in the overburdened child welfare system, and more likely to be provided with the resources and safe permanent home they need. Currently, there are only enough CASA volunteers to serve one-half of the abused children who need them.

"Having a CASA volunteer can make a lifelong difference for an abused child, and every one of these children deserves to have one," says Michael Piraino, CEO of the National CASA Association. "The generous support we have just received from the Jewelers Charity Fund will go directly towards recruiting more caring CASA volunteers, so more abused children will have a chance to grow up in a nurturing and safe home where they can thrive." "As the charity that represents the united efforts of jewelry manufacturers, retailers and trade organizations, we are particularly proud to expand our reach from children with catastrophic illnesses to those who suffer the devastating effects of social issues. While a new partnership, we know of many from within the jewelry industry who already support CASA's endeavors, and we look to involve even more as volunteers through the Champions for Abused Children initiative," says Victor Weinman, Chairman of the Jewelers Charity Fund.

About the National CASA Association and the Jewelers Charity Fund for Children

In 1976, concerned over making decisions about abused and neglected children's lives without sufficient information, a Seattle judge conceived the idea of using trained community volunteers to speak for the best interests of these children in court, helping to ensure that they will live in a safe and loving environment. So successful was this Seattle program, that soon judges across the country began utilizing citizen advocates. More than 900 CASA/GAL programs currently operate in all 50 US states. Last year, nearly 70,000 CASA/GAL volunteers served nearly 280,000 abused and neglected children. CASA volunteers have helped more than one million abused children since the program was established 24 years ago.

The Jewelers Charity Fund for Children (JCF) is a not-for-profit organization created by the jewelry industry with the sole mission of raising monies for charities that benefit children. As a result of the hard work and generosity of the JCF's underwriters and other members of the jewelry industry (such as manufacturers, retailers and professional service providers), the Jewelers Charity Fund for Children has distributed over \$10 million to its recipient charities since 1999.

For more information, contact **Jim Clune** at **(800) 628-3233, ext. 42** or Email at **jclune@nationalcasa.org**. You can also visit the National CASA website at nationalcasa.org.

###

Sample Tip Sheet for a CASA/GAL Speakers' Bureau

Prepare

Know your audience

- ◆ Why are they there?
- ◆ What do they want?
- ◆ How might they be willing to help the CASA/GAL program? Volunteers? Donations? Office supplies? Public relations? Other?
- ◆ Who are they (age, interests, background)?
- ◆ Where and when do they meet?
- ◆ How long is the talk?
- ◆ What audio/visual equipment is available?

Know your message!

- ◆ Keep it simple.
- ◆ Have 3-4 main points.
- ◆ Keep your talk short.
- ◆ Remember that people want to help CHILDREN not PROGRAMS.

Keep it local!

- ◆ Use local stats – what are the numbers in YOUR community?
- ◆ Tell a story or involve a volunteer (but be careful that you are not violating confidentiality!)

Anticipate questions

Practice!

- ◆ If you haven't given this presentation before, ask a friend who knows nothing about CASA/GAL to listen. Did they understand what the children need and how CASA/GAL volunteers can help?

Present

- ◆ Always ask for what the program needs. Have a sign-up sheet ready.
- ◆ Use auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning.
- ◆ Don't stay tied to your lectern!
- ◆ Distribute brochures around the room
- ◆ If audio/visual equipment is not available, use flipcharts.

Follow up

- ◆ Evaluate - what went well, what didn't? Make notes as soon as possible so you will remember next time.
- ◆ Write thank you note to host. **Follow up on all leads and questions.**

Georgia CASA Crisis Communications Manual

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INTRODUCTION

If we lived in a perfect world, there would be no need for a crisis plan. Needless to say, in today's environment, being prepared to handle adversity – whether in the office or on the front page of your local paper – is not only important, it's imperative.

CASA volunteers, by the very nature of their work, are continually confronted with situations that must be handled delicately and diplomatically. We prepare for these situations with extensive training, documents we can refer to and experts we can consult. The approach to crisis communications is no different. You must be trained, have a plan, know how to implement that plan and be able to bring the situation to a resolution.

That brings us to the reason for this document. The descriptions of various types of potential crisis situations and recommended communications tips and tactics will provide you with steps you can take to ensure that your CASA program is ready to face critical situations that may arise. *Note that the tips and tactics are written from a general approach. You may need to slightly modify your responses based on your type of program (independent nonprofit, court-sponsored or umbrella-sponsored).*

One of the most important steps in crisis communications may well be crisis avoidance. Learning to look for situations that have the potential to get out of hand takes a heightened sense of awareness. Recognizing crisis warning signs means keeping a watchful eye and maintaining open communications among staff and CASA volunteers. Even if you can't stop a crisis from occurring, your knowledge of the situation will be extremely helpful in the early stages.

The other important factor in crisis communications is being prepared. Planning ahead not only reduces the risk and uncertainty inherent in all crises, but will give you, your staff and your CASA volunteers increased confidence when confronted with a crisis situation. For instance, keeping a current media list and key contact list with you at all times is just one important way to be prepared. It's also important to make sure everyone knows who the designated spokesperson is and to make sure you always have updated information about your local program and Georgia CASA.

By carefully reviewing this document, and taking steps to implement it, you can even go a step further by creating some "worst case" and "what-if" scenarios. Working these scenarios out will help you and your staff see things a little differently and help you prepare for what *could* happen. Not what *will* happen.

Crisis management means just that - "managing the crisis." The goal is to have the knowledge and experience to make good decisions during a crisis situation. When you're prepared for that, no situation will seem unmanageable.

Make sure you have these 10 items ready now, before a crisis occurs:

- 1) Media and public relations policy
- 2) Crisis communications action plan
- 3) Fact sheet about your CASA program
- 4) Fact sheet about Georgia CASA (including local program directory and map)
- 5) CASA key messages
- 6) Any information on potential crisis situations (news clippings, notes from CASA volunteers, etc.)
- 7) Key contact list (with cell phone numbers, if applicable)
- 8) Designated spokesperson and designated media contact (if different from spokesperson)
- 9) Media list
- 10) Media contact log

Remember: The staff of Georgia CASA is available for assistance in any crisis situation.

LEGAL CRISIS ACTION STEPS

Burning Crisis: *The following are general action steps to be taken in any matter that could IMMEDIATELY involve lawsuits or legal action.*

1. *Determine the severity of the crisis. **Gather as many facts as possible about the situation.***
2. *Immediately inform the Board Chair/Executive Director/ Court Supervisor and Georgia CASA. **If the crisis has immediate legal ramifications, all these parties can help you manage the crisis, and all need to be apprised of the situation.***
3. *Inform staff. **Communicate the situation as needed to appropriate staff members and emphasize the importance of not discussing the crisis externally.***
4. *Talk to an attorney. **Consult with your program attorney or one at Georgia CASA and discuss the legal aspects of the issue.***
5. *Determine course of action. **Based on the above discussions, determine course of action to resolve crisis.***
6. *Prepare a statement and key messages. **Prepare a clear, concise written statement, providing only the confirmed facts. Create key messages (usually three or four) about the situation and about CASA's role. Use the statement and messages as needed; generally, you will not send this statement out externally. This preparatory step of drafting a statement and messages will also help solidify your strategy. These documents can be used internally to clarify the crisis response.***
7. *Finalize draft statements with Georgia CASA. **Let the CASA communications staff assist you in preparing and finalizing your statements and messages.***
8. *Designate a CASA spokesperson. **The spokesperson will manage all communications about the situation, both externally and internally.***
9. *Provide regular updates. **Until the crisis is over, provide regular updates to the Board Chair/Executive Director/Court Supervisor, Georgia CASA, your internal staff and board members as appropriate.***
10. *Over-communicate internally, NOT externally. **Some crises will stay below the radar screen of the external public. Be wary of publicizing a situation that may not be public knowledge.***

Smoldering Crisis: *The following are general action steps to be taken in any matter that could involve future lawsuits or litigation.*

1. *Put the issue in writing. **Outlining the issue on paper will help you organize your thoughts and create an action plan to address the issue.***
2. *Inform appropriate staff of the situation and look for guidance. **Discuss the issue with appropriate staff internally or with Georgia CASA.***
3. *Talk to an attorney. **Consult with your program attorney or one at Georgia CASA and discuss the legal aspects of the issue.***
4. *Determine course of action. **Based on the above discussions, determine course of action to resolve the issue before it becomes a burning crisis.***

MEDIA CRISIS ACTION STEPS

Burning Crisis: *The following are general action steps to be taken in any matter that involves the news media.*

- 1. Review the Media Crisis Scenarios in this book to determine if any are appropriate for your situation. **Follow the examples given in these scenarios.***
- 2. Research the reporter. **Find out what types of articles the reporter writes and his or her favorite topics, how long he or she has been on the job, etc. This will help you be better prepared for his or her questions.***
- 3. Research the newspaper, TV or radio station. **Find out what type of news coverage they generally provide, if you are not familiar with it already.***
- 4. Respond to media inquiries when ready (but by their deadline). **If you receive a call from a reporter, you do not have to answer questions immediately in most instances. Ask the reporter what he or she is looking for and find out the deadline for the information. Call back after you have researched your answers. It is almost never advisable to give an immediate response.***
- 5. Answer media questions with only the KNOWN facts. **Respond to reporter questions with the information you know that is pertinent, appropriate and factual. Do not divulge proprietary information or discuss rumors. Do not divulge confidential information. Stick to the facts.***
- 6. Consult with the communications staff at Georgia CASA. **They can assist you in researching the reporter and crafting your response.***
- 7. Prepare a statement. **Prepare a clear, concise written statement, providing only the confirmed facts. Use this statement as needed; generally, you will not send this statement out to all media outlets, but only to those that request a statement.***
- 8. Create key messages to prepare you for any interviews. **Create key messages (usually three or four) about the situation and CASA's role. Have these messages in front of you during any interviews. These messages can be used internally and externally.***
- 9. Inform the Board Chair/Executive Director/Court Supervisor, staff, PR Committee (if applicable) and Georgia CASA. **If the media contact could lead to an article, all these parties should be apprised.***
- 10. Over-communicate internally, NOT externally. **Some crises will stay below the radar screen of the external public. Be wary of publicizing a situation that may not be public knowledge.***

Smoldering Crisis: *The following are general action steps to be taken in any matter where media have an ongoing interest.*

- 1. Document any media contact. **Note the time, date, reporter's name and station and topic of the media contact, and any actions taken. Route this information to appropriate internal parties, including the Georgia CASA communications staff.***
- 2. Monitor the paper and other news outlets. **Watch for articles related to this potential crisis, including online versions.***

3. *Prepare key messages and statements in advance. This will provide more time for internal and attorney review.*
4. *Discuss and implement resolution strategies. Work with the Board Chair/Executive Director/Court Supervisor or Georgia CASA to create solutions to resolve this issue before it becomes a burning crisis.*

PERSONALITY ISSUES ACTION STEPS

The following are general action steps to be taken in any matter that involves personality issues. Generally, personality issues can and should be addressed as a “smoldering crisis” and not allowed to get to the “burning crisis” stage.

1. *Determine the severity of the crisis. Gather as many facts as possible about the situation.*
2. *Inform the staff and the Board Chair/Executive Director/Court Supervisor and Georgia CASA. Communicate the situation as needed to appropriate staff members and emphasize the importance of not discussing the crisis externally.*
3. *Determine course of action. Based on the above discussions, determine course of action to resolve crisis.*
4. *Provide regular updates. Until the crisis is over, provide regular updates to the Board Chair/Executive Director/Court Supervisor, Georgia CASA, internal staff and board members as appropriate.*
5. *Create protocols to reduce future occurrences of similar crises. Look at the situation and take steps to reduce the possibility of the same or similar situations from occurring in the future.*
6. *Over-communicate internally, NOT externally. Some crises will stay below the radar screen of the external public. Be wary of publicizing a situation that may not be public knowledge.*

LEGAL CRISIS SCENARIO EXAMPLES

<p>Lawsuit Brought Against CASA Program</p> <p>Scenario: A grandmother of the children in a case sues everyone involved in the case, including the CASA program.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: In this scenario, the grandmother is furious that the children have been removed from the home.</p> <p>The CASA program had to respond to being sued. An attorney was hired (the budget included money for attorney’s fees) and later the county’s attorney represented the CASA program. The judge dismissed the lawsuit.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice proper risk management, especially in the areas of CASA volunteers and case management. • Follow policies for appropriately screening, training and supervising CASA volunteers. • In many situations, potential lawsuits can be avoided. 	<p>Paid CASA Staff Takes on Volunteer Responsibilities</p> <p>Scenario: A CASA volunteer who is handling two cases becomes ill and cannot continue her work. Jill, a paid CASA staff person, attends two court hearings and plans to permanently take the cases.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: If CASA staff take cases, this undermines the mission of volunteer-driven advocacy. In addition, since CASA staff are paid, they can be sued. They are usually not protected under the immunity law.</p> <p>The cases were permanently given to a CASA volunteer who could take additional cases.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policy against CASA staff taking open cases. • If there are not enough CASA volunteers to do the work, do not take any new cases until capacity increases. 	<p>Confusion About Role of CASA Volunteer</p> <p>Scenario: Liz, a CASA volunteer, advocates for a child to be reunified with his parents and the judge follows her recommendation. The child’s foster parents, who want to adopt, hold Liz responsible for the decision.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: Since the decisions of judges often match the recommendations of CASA volunteers, people misinterpret the role of CASA volunteers.</p> <p>At the beginning of a case, clearly explain the role of a CASA volunteer to all involved with the case. The CASA volunteer only makes a recommendation; the judge makes the final decision.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate all in the child welfare system and the public about the role of a CASA volunteer.
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LEGAL CRISIS SCENARIO EXAMPLES, continued

<p>Inappropriate Meeting Location/Time for CASA Volunteer</p> <p>Scenario: Ned, a CASA volunteer, agrees to meet the mother of a child. For convenience, he picks the mother up in his car and agrees to stop and talk while parked.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: In this scenario, the child’s father saw the mother being picked up and became jealous. He threatened legal action against the CASA volunteer.</p> <p>The CASA volunteer was removed from the case and reassigned.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly define appropriate meeting places with all CASA volunteers (never meet in a car). • Have constant communication (at least monthly) with all CASA volunteers. 	<p>CASA Volunteer Oversteps Job Responsibilities</p> <p>Scenario: Gwen, a CASA volunteer, shares confidential personal information about a child with a new foster parent, hoping to help ease the foster parent’s handling of the child.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: Legally, CASA volunteers cannot divulge personal information about a minor. DFCS has this responsibility to the foster parents.</p> <p>In most cases, reprimanding* the CASA volunteer is appropriate and adequate.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a “contact log” to track all CASA volunteers’ contacts with cases. • Ensure CASA volunteers know job responsibilities. • Ensure CASA volunteers are adequately supervised. <p>*The reprimand should be documented, signed by the volunteer and kept in the volunteer’s file.</p>	<p>CASA Volunteer Does Not Perform Job Responsibilities</p> <p>Scenario: Mark, a CASA volunteer, makes a recommendation and never interviews the child’s parents.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: CASA volunteers are to interview all parties who have information about the child.</p> <p>In most cases, reprimanding* the CASA volunteer is appropriate and adequate.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a “contact log” to track all CASA volunteers’ contacts with cases. • Ensure CASA volunteers know job responsibilities. • Ensure CASA volunteers are adequately supervised. <p>*The reprimand should be documented, signed by the volunteer and kept in the volunteer’s file.</p>
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MEDIA CRISIS SCENARIO EXAMPLES

<p>CASA Program Has Case Receiving Media Attention</p> <p>Scenario: A judge assigns CASA volunteer Emily to a case involving a child whose parents are cult members. Both radio and TV have publicized the cult.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: A CASA volunteer is involved in a case which the media is publicizing.</p> <p>The CASA program followed its media policy. CASA and other agencies involved in the case collaborated ahead of time about a consistent response. When contacted by the media, the program director, as spokesperson, simply stated what role a CASA volunteer has in a case.</p> <p>Note there was no breach of confidentiality.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a media policy and ensure it is followed by all who are a part of CASA. 	<p>Media Receives Negative Call About CASA Program</p> <p>Scenario: The grandmother of the children in a case calls the media to report that the CASA volunteer made an inappropriate recommendation. She now fears for the safety of the children since they have been placed with foster parents.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: A legal or personality crisis may lead to someone contacting the media.</p> <p>The CASA program followed its media policy. Key messages were developed about the media inquiry. The program director, as spokesperson, communicated the key messages to the reporter, stating the role of CASA is to make an independent recommendation; the judge makes the final decision.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a media policy and ensure it is followed by all who are a part of CASA. 	
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PERSONALITY ISSUE SCENARIO EXAMPLES

<p>CASA Volunteer Has Ulterior Motives</p> <p>Scenario: Leslie becomes a CASA volunteer because she has a personal grievance against DFCS.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: People may want to be CASA volunteers for reasons other than to advocate for the best interest of the child.</p> <p>The CASA volunteer was removed from the case and not given any more cases. She was informed about other organizations in the community for which she may be a better “fit” to volunteer.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure screening is a major aspect of recruiting CASA volunteers. • Carefully screen (and screen out, if needed) CASA volunteers in the initial interview and before training is completed. • In training, some people may be able to work through their ulterior motives and channel the energy to effectively advocate for the best interest of the child. 	<p>Dislike of CASA Volunteer’s Recommendation</p> <p>Scenario: The parents of three children do not like the recommendation Bob, the CASA volunteer, makes. Since the parents have continuously failed to follow their case plan, he advocates for their rights to be terminated and for the children to be adopted by an aunt and uncle.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: In this scenario, the parents do not want to give up their rights because they are the biological parents.</p> <p>At the beginning of a case, clearly explain the role of a CASA volunteer to all involved. After a thorough investigation, the CASA volunteer makes an independent recommendation for what is in the best interests of the children. The judge makes the final decision.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate CASA volunteers, all in the child welfare system and the public about the role of a CASA volunteer. 	<p>Rumors Spread About CASA Volunteer or Staff</p> <p>Scenario: The ex-husband of Teresa, a CASA volunteer, spreads rumors about the CASA program as part of retaliating against Teresa.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: In this scenario, the CASA program is depicted in the community as “worthless” due to the untruthful comments made by the ex-husband of a CASA volunteer.</p> <p>The CASA program addressed each comment and provided evidence that the comments were false. The program kept reinforcing its importance to the community.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure CASA has a good reputation and that its reputation is known throughout the community.
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PERSONALITY ISSUE SCENARIO EXAMPLES, continued

<p>CASA Volunteer Inappropriate for Particular Case</p> <p>Scenario: The judge wants a particular CASA volunteer, Rafael, assigned to a case and since he has the authority to appoint (or dismiss) CASA volunteers, he appoints Rafael to the case.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: In this scenario, the judge specifically wanted Rafael assigned to the case even though he was not the best CASA volunteer for the case. Rafael prefers to handle neglect cases; this was a sexual abuse case.</p> <p>The CASA program director explained to the judge why Rafael was not the best CASA volunteer for the case and asked the judge to assign a different CASA volunteer. The judge understood and assigned another CASA volunteer.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine, in the initial interview and in training, the type(s) of cases each CASA volunteer is most appropriate for. • Keep open lines of communication at all times with the judge. 	<p>Communications Issues between Child Welfare Agencies</p> <p>Scenario: Mike, a CASA volunteer, makes numerous requests to DFCS for a copy of the case plan. His requests are never granted and he calls the county DFCS director.</p> <p>Problem/Solution: CASA volunteers may become frustrated while working with others in the system and go through the wrong “chains of command” to complain.</p> <p>Directors of CASA and DFCS met and reviewed the protocol, including the steps to follow for CASA volunteers to receive copies of the case plans and who to contact if a problem arises. Each director then reviewed main points of the protocol with staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Prevention Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff and CASA volunteers know the protocol. • Review protocol annually and amend as needed. 	
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MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY

MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY

(Name of CASA program)

for staff, board and CASA volunteers

Effective (date)

When working with the media or any other public contact, (name of CASA program) will follow this general policy. By following the policy, we can better communicate a consistent, credible message and ensure that the proper information (and not confidential information) is being spread to the public.

1. (Insert name of spokesperson) is the designated spokesperson for (name of CASA program). The spokesperson answers questions from the media about CASA, participates in interviews, etc. The spokesperson is often the executive director.
2. (Insert name of day-to-day media contact) is the designated media contact person for (name of CASA program). The media contact person submits press releases to the media, arranges interviews with the media, etc.
3. To contact the media concerning your work/volunteerism with (name of CASA program):
 - Coordinate your submission with the media contact person before submitting anything to the media.
 - Determine the most appropriate media people to contact.
 - Confirm the contact information for each media person you wish to contact.
 - Keep in mind the media’s deadlines.
 - Contact the media people using their preferred method of contact (email, U.S. mail, fax, phone, etc.).
 - Always follow-up with the media after submission.
4. If the media contacts you:
 - Take the reporter’s questions and tell him/her you will have his/her call returned.
 - Refer the reporter’s contact information to the media contact person. The media contact person and executive director, if applicable, will coordinate the appropriate response to the reporter, including which people may respond (for example, the reporter may want to do a story on a CASA volunteer) and the message to send to the public.
5. If the media wishes to report on a story with a personal nature (such as one that may involve a real CASA family or child), you must have permission from the person or agency holding legal custody to do the story. If you are able to follow through with the story, have the media sign a confidentiality agreement with (name of CASA program).

A sample agreement is on the following page.

SAMPLE: MEDIA CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

“I hereby attest to the validity of my media credentials and I promise to hold in confidence all pertinent information. I will not compromise or violate any confidential relationships between (name of CASA program), its CASA volunteers, board, related agencies, court or any other parties interviewed. I understand reading and/or removal of any written documents is prohibited without prior consent of the Executive Director, (name of Executive Director). I will not contact any staff, CASA volunteer or board member without permission of the executive director and/or media contact person. I agree not to use any personal identifying information of any children, family members or foster care persons of (name of CASA program).

I accept full responsibility for maintaining confidential and private nature of all records and information. I understand and accept personal liability for any violation of this agreement.”

Signed _____ Dated _____

Agreement adapted from The National CASA Association Communications Manual, 2001

CASA VOLUNTEER POLICY

CASA VOLUNTEER POLICY

(Name of CASA program)

What CASA volunteers are NOT to do outside the scope of their duties and responsibilities

I agree to **NOT** take the following actions as a CASA volunteer. These actions are outside the scope of duties and responsibilities defined for a CASA volunteer (see following page).

1. Breach confidentiality. *Information regarding children and families may be confidential under federal and/or state laws, rules, regulations, ordinances and policies.* Additionally, confidential information cannot be disclosed when a CASA volunteer leaves the CASA program.
 - *Can only disclose case information to the court or pursuant to a court order*
 - *Must limit reproduction and distribution of information related to a child or family*
2. Endanger a child or other parties to a case.
3. Fail to monitor a case and fail to advocate for timely hearings.
4. Have inappropriate and insufficient contacts with parties and children involved in a case.
5. Violate approved guidelines, local court procedure or any law.
6. Simultaneously become employed with or subject to the policies of the Division of Family and Childrens Services (DFCS), become a foster parent or become a Citizen Review Panel Member.

Signed _____

Date _____

Witness _____

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CASA VOLUNTEER

(Name of CASA program)

Following the completion of training, CASA volunteers must take an oath before the court that requires them to fulfill the role that is assigned to them and to do so while respecting the confidentiality of all information or reports revealed to them.

The National CASA Association sets standards for CASA volunteer work. The following responsibilities, which may be required by state and local programs, are listed in those standards:

- Reviewing records;
- Interviewing appropriate parties involved in the case, including the child;
- Determining whether a permanent plan has been created for the child in accordance with federal and state laws and whether appropriate services, including reasonable efforts, are being provided to the child and family;
- Submitting a signed written report with recommendations to the court on what placement, visitation plan, services, and permanent plan are in the best interest of the child;
- Attending court hearings;
- Maintaining complete records about the case, including appointments scheduled, interviews held, and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances; and

- Returning all case records and notes to the CASA program when the case is closed or when the volunteer closes the case.

National CASA standards regarding confidentiality include the following:

- CASA volunteers respect the child’s right to privacy by maintaining confidentiality;
- The CASA volunteer complies with all applicable statutory requirements pertaining to confidentiality of client information;
- Access to confidential records obtained by CASA volunteers is limited to the court, authorized agency personnel, and others outside the agency whose request for access to confidential information is permitted by statute or the court; and
- All records are safely and securely maintained.

From The National CASA Association Volunteer Training Manual, 2001

(Guidelines specifically from your CASA program concerning the role of the CASA volunteer may be added here.)

KEY CONTACT LIST

Georgia CASA

Name	Office Number	Home Number
Allyson Anderson <i>(Staff Attorney)</i>	404.555.5555 or 1.800.555.5555	
Ann Barrett <i>(Program Operations Director)</i>	404.555.5555 or 1.800.555.5555	
Lori Derhammer <i>(Communications Staff)</i>	404.555.5555 or 1.800.555.5555	
Duaine Hathaway <i>(Executive Director)</i>	404.555.5555 or 1.800.555.5555	770.555.5555 <i>(only call if crisis emergency)</i>

Local CASA Program (fill in with appropriate names; examples are given)

Name	Office Number	Home Number	Cell Number
Bd. Chair/E.D./ Court Supervisor			
Staff			
Staff			
Staff			
Staff Attorney			
PR Committee			
Board Member			
Board Member			
Board Member			

CASA KEY MESSAGES

What is CASA?

CASA trains volunteers to help abused and neglected children in the juvenile court system. A CASA volunteer assesses the child's situation and reports to the judge what is in the best interests for the child. Our goal is to advocate for a safe, permanent home for each child.

Key Messages

- **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT:**

Child abuse and neglect in Georgia are rampant. Georgia is one of the worst states in the nation for child abuse and neglect cases. *(Then add relevant facts for your audience.)*

- **-- 48 children in this state alone died from abuse and neglect in 2001.**

- -- Every day, 200 cases of abuse and neglect are reported throughout the state.

- -- More than 14,000 children are in the legal custody of the state.

- -- Every 15 minutes in Georgia a child is the victim of confirmed abuse or neglect.

- **HOW CASA HELPS:**

We have a role after the children have been removed from the home and entered the Georgia court system. A judge can appoint a CASA volunteer, who gathers information about the child's situation, attends court proceedings, and makes a recommendation to the judge to help the court make a sound decision about the child's future.

- --Research suggests that children who have been assigned CASA volunteers tend to spend less time in court and less time within the foster care system than those who do not have CASA representation. Judges have observed that CASA children also have better chances of finding permanent homes than non-CASA children.

- --Research demonstrates that these children can overcome their trauma if they rapidly find a safe, permanent home in which to heal. Those who don't often experience school failure, joblessness, welfare dependency, criminality, mental illness, and often become abusers themselves. *(Then add relevant facts for your audience.)*

- -- Currently, we have over 1,300 volunteers who serve more than 6,300 children.

- -- There are over 60,000 CASA volunteers nationwide with over 900 CASA programs.

- -- Since CASA was founded in 1977, 1 million children have been served.

- **HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

We would like everyone to become a CASA for a child – by volunteering, giving a charitable donation or helping to create a CASA program in your community.

*****It is also helpful to have several CASA Success Stories from your local program to go along with the key messages.***

Georgia CASA Fact Sheet

What is the condition of child abuse & neglect in Georgia?

48 children died from abuse and neglect in 2001.
More than 14,000 children are in the legal custody of the state.
200 incidents of child abuse and neglect are reported daily.
Every 15 minutes, a child is the victim of confirmed abuse or neglect.

What is federal and state law concerning CASA?

Federal law requires that a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) be appointed in all cases of child abuse or neglect.
Georgia law includes “court appointed special advocates” and/or attorneys as Guardians ad Litem for children in juvenile court deprivation proceedings.

Why is CASA so important?

Many workers in the child welfare system, including lawyers, social workers and judges, are often too overburdened to give thorough, detailed attention to each child who enters the system. A CASA volunteer has the time to focus solely on the child.

What is the CASA volunteer’s role?

A CASA volunteer gathers information about the child’s situation, attends court proceedings, and makes a recommendation to the judge to help the court make a sound decision about the child’s future. The CASA volunteer’s goal is to advocate for a safe, permanent home for the child.

How many CASA programs are there?

*There are now 40 CASA programs in Georgia, serving 38 of 49 judicial circuits.
There are over 900 CASA programs throughout the United States.*

How successful is CASA?

In Georgia, currently there are over 1,300 CASA volunteers who serve more than 6,300 children. Nationwide, there are over 60,000 CASA volunteers. Since CASA was founded in 1977, 1 million children have been served.

How effective is CASA?

Research suggests that children who have been assigned CASA volunteers tend to spend less time in court and less time within the foster care system than those who do not have CASA representation. Judges have observed that CASA children also have better chances of finding permanent homes than non-CASA children.

How does CASA help society?

Research demonstrates that abused and neglected children can overcome their trauma if they rapidly find a safe, permanent home in which to heal: those who do not often experience school failure, joblessness, welfare dependency, criminality, mental illness, and often become abusers themselves.

MEDIA CONTACT LOG

Date	Time	Reporter's Name & Station	Topic	Action(s) Taken
10/21/2002 SAMPLE	9:30 a.m.	Sharon Jones, Channel 8 News	Wants to do profile story about CASA Volunteer of the Year (found out by press release)	Will gather info. & contact volunteer to prep for interview; will follow-up with Sharon on 10/24

Chapter 7

Financial Management

The phone rings. Local programs have been awarded grants from the state organization, but because of the state fiscal crisis the money is not being released. A director calls saying the program is in a cash flow crisis.

Good financial management of a state organization is necessary to protect the organization, employees and board members, and to engender trust in donors to the organization.

See Chapter 8: Risk Management for more related information.

Financial Basics

The financial management of the state organization will be very different for State Administered Programs (SAPs) and Non Profit Organizations (NPOs). SAPs will work within the state budgeting and fiscal processes, while NPOs are entirely responsible for developing and following their own budgeting and fiscal processes.

Directors (or financial officers) of SAPs should monitor the state financial system closely to ensure that credits and debits are appropriately posted. They should receive and review statements on a regular basis and keep copies of all documentation.

What makes an organization nonprofit?

- IRS 501(c)(3) designation, indicating that it is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, literary or scientific purposes. Governments, foundations, individuals or other organizations give significant amounts of resources (money or in-kind donations) to the nonprofit organization and do not expect to be paid back or to receive economic benefits in return.
- Operating purposes that are primarily other than to provide goods or services at a profit.
- Absence of defined ownership interests that can be sold, transferred or redeemed.

Common accounting terms

It is good practice to ensure everyone is using the same terminology when addressing financial issues. The following definitions can be helpful.

Common Accounting & Financial Terms

Accrual basis	Income (revenue) is recorded in the accounting system when earned and expenses are recorded when incurred. For example, an NPO records a donation as income when pledged even if the cash has not been collected. An example for expenses would include recording supplies when they are received, even if not yet paid. An insurance premium due in March that covers the entire year would be entered as a pre-paid expense and recorded monthly to indicate that 1/12 of the cost was incurred each month.
Assets	What the organization owns.
Cash basis	Expenses and income are recorded when they are paid for, regardless of when they were incurred or earned. For example, supplies received in May and paid for in June are recorded in June.
Expenses	Dollar amounts paid for labor, goods, and services.
Fiscal year	A period of twelve consecutive months chosen by an organization as the accounting period.
Internal controls:	A system of checks and balances to prevent and detect errors and fraud.
Liabilities	What the organization owes.
Net assets:	Residual balance for carrying out the objectives of the CASA/GAL program. $\text{Assets} - \text{liabilities} = \text{net assets}$. Also referred to as a fund balance. In business, equivalents include equity, capital, or retained earnings.
Petty Cash	Cash kept on hand for small purchases.
Revenue	Income in dollars or in-kind donations received by the organization.

Finance policy

The policies and procedures of the state organization should include financial policies. Typical policies to be included are:

- Budgeting process
- Accounting basis used (cash or accrual)
- Auditor selection and timing
- Tax forms (who files and when)

- Annual report (what is included, when it is produced, distribution list)
- Internal control policies
- Financial reports
- Disbursements, including competitive bidding where applicable
- Definition of capital expense
- Reserve (amount set aside for contingencies)
- Investment policy

The board should approve and review the financial policies of the organization on a regular basis.

Budgeting

Budgeting for the state organization should develop from the strategic planning process, whether for a nonprofit organization or state-administered program. A budget states the mission and programmatic goals of the organization in financial terms for the upcoming fiscal year. Once the program has developed a strategic plan and related goals or benchmarks, a budget should be developed for meeting those goals. Actual historical expenses, adjusted for inflation, are used for recurring items and projected expenses are used for estimating future projects. For nonprofit organizations, a small committee including the board treasurer and appropriate staff usually prepares the budget which is then discussed and approved by the entire board. For SAPs, the budget is usually prepared by the CASA/GAL staff along with the fiscal officer of the state agency where the CASA/GAL program is located.

The budget includes a statement of anticipated revenues showing the sources of revenues, including donated material and services, in addition to expenditures. Anticipated revenues should indicate which items are restricted for specific purposes and which are unrestricted.

Typically, the most significant expenses for state CASA/GAL organizations are salary and related personnel expenses such as social security, health and life insurance, retirement, and unemployment insurance. Other items typically in state organization budgets include:

- Rent and utilities including local, long-distance and toll-free phone service, Internet service and webpage hosting fees
- Office supplies
- Travel (in-state and out-of-state)
- Training (for state organization staff and for local programs)
- Printing/copying
- Postage
- Capital expenditures (typically more permanent and more expensive purchases)

The board and staff should review the budget at least quarterly.

Fund accounting

All state CASA/GAL organizations whether SAP or NPO, must practice fund accounting. This simply means clearly tracking what funds are used for what purposes and ensuring that restricted funds are only used for approved purposes.

Fund accounting must track various types of funds:

Unrestricted funds	Resources over which the board or program has discretionary control.
Restricted funds	Resources available for use, but only for the programs, agency or activities specified by the donor. Most grants, including National CASA grants, are restricted funds. These funds are only to be used for the purposes for which the grant was awarded.
Land, Building, Equipment (property) funds	Shows the organization's net investment in fixed assets.
Endowment funds	Includes resources accepted with the donor's condition that the principal be maintained intact in perpetuity (the original gift cannot be spent), until a specific event occurs or until a designated period of time has elapsed. Usually only the income (interest or dividends) can be used each year.

Accounting software

In most cases funds are not kept in separate bank accounts, but are tracked through the organization's accounting system. Tracking funds is easier using accounting software. Consider the following questions when choosing accounting software:

- Does it do what the organization needs?
- Can it track expenses by funding source?
- How easy is it to install and use?
- Can data be used in other applications?
- What reports can be produced?
- Is the cost reasonable?
- Is training and support available?
- Does it have a payroll module (if needed)?
- Will the software interface with other systems used by the agency, for example, a donor software system?
- How often does it require updates?

Accrual basis accounting

The National CASA Association recommends member organizations use the accrual basis of accounting. The accrual basis allows the program to track and record expenses accurately and to budget effectively. For example, if an organization receives a one-year or two-year grant, the entire grant would be recorded as an asset (accounts receivable) and as grant revenue at the beginning of the grant period. As grant checks are received, the cash account is increased and the receivable is reduced. Expenses incurred but not yet paid are recorded as

accounts payable, a liability. This basis of accounting allows the organization to plan for long-term income and expenses.

Internal controls

All organizations must have sufficient internal controls to minimize the risk of errors and fraud. There are a number of basic precautions all organizations should take. Suggestions for internal control procedures can be found in the resource documents located at the end of this chapter.

The first precaution is not to depend on trust alone. For the protection of both the organization and the individuals involved, there must be internal controls for all financial functions. Internal controls catch honest errors as well as fraud.

The second precaution is to remove the opportunity to commit fraud and to provide opportunities for catching errors. This is done by segregation of duties, which separates record keeping from physical custody of assets in order to guard against misuse. The smaller the organization, the harder this is to achieve. For example, persons responsible for signing checks should not reconcile the bank accounts. Another example of a good internal control is the reconciliation of fundraising tickets sold, using prenumbered tickets, to cash collected at a fundraising event.

A third essential precaution in practicing internal controls is to ensure the board stays involved and provides oversight.

Financial Statements

If the state CASA/GAL organization is a SAP, it is important to read and understand the budget reports or financial statements provided to the office. While each state has a unique accounting system, the state director or designee can follow these general guidelines:

- Check the headings
- Look for comparative data
- Scan the page as a whole
- Compare actual and budgeted expenses
- Check that expenses and income have been appropriately coded
- Look for unexplained or unanticipated expenses and income

State organizations that are NPOs need to provide financial statements to the board. These may be prepared by staff, treasurer of the organization, or an accountant or bookkeeper.

Boards may ask for the following types of financial statements:

- **Statement of Financial Position.** Known as a balance sheet in business, this statement presents financial worth on a specific date. It is a listing that summarizes the assets, liabilities and net assets of the organization as of that date.
- **Statement of Activity.** Also known as a profit/loss sheet in business, this statement summarizes revenue and expenses within a fund for a period of time and compares actual results with current budget. These statements often use the abbreviation YTD (year-to-date) figures.

- **Statement of Functional Expenses.** Shows expenses by category (personnel, rent, supplies, etc.) and by functional classification (for example: program services, management and fundraising). It is prepared for the same period as the Statement of Activity.
- **Interim Statements of Activity.** Known as Interim Financial Statements in business, this monthly statements provides the board with basic financial information and calculates variance (the difference between what has been budgeted and what has been actually spent or received).
- **Statement of Cash Flows.** Summarizes cash inflows and outflows for a period of time.

The board should review the financial statements of the state CASA/GAL organization at every full meeting and this should be recorded in the minutes. Any approval of budget changes or unusual expenditures and the rationale for them should also be reflected in the board minutes.

It is important that personnel responsible for preparing financial statements have the necessary financial training and background in order to correctly complete this task.

Audit

A financial audit is an examination of accounting records by an independent Certified Public Accountant to formulate an audit opinion on the correctness of the financial statements. The auditor must follow generally accepted auditing standards. Source documents (for example, grant documents, invoices, etc.) are examined for legitimacy and internal controls are evaluated.

A compliance audit ascertains the nonprofit organization's compliance with specified rules and regulations. This type of audit is required for NPOs receiving in excess of \$300,000 per year in federal funds. It is referred to as a U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133 audit. Note the threshold is raised to \$500,000 for NPOs with fiscal years ending after December 31, 2004. The compliance audit is performed along with the financial audit.

The board of directors of a nonprofit state CASA/GAL organization should contract with an independent audit firm. Before doing so, the accounting firm will submit an engagement letter to the board which is essentially the contract for audit work.. The Executive Director or chief financial officer of the organization will work closely with the auditor. The organization should look for an auditor with nonprofit experience and ask for references from other nonprofit organizations. The state organization should also request an independent auditor's report once the audit is complete. Any audit findings including questioned costs, reportable conditions or material weaknesses will be disclosed.

Audits are expensive but NPOs are sometimes able to secure discounted services, especially if they can schedule their audit at an off-peak time. Auditors generally work with organizations for several consecutive years. This is good practice as the auditor gets a sense of organizational operations and record keeping; as a result, the audit work goes more smoothly after the first year. However, it is prudent for the board to consider a change in auditors periodically as a financial safeguard.

There are a number of items that should be available for the auditor to review. These include:

- Board minutes
- Physical assets
- Policies and procedures manual
- Leases and other contracts
- Bank statements, bank reconciliations, checkbooks and canceled checks
- Financial files for paid bills and deposits
- Components of the accounting system—chart of accounts, journals and ledgers, printouts if the system is computerized, trial balance, etc.
- Budget for the fiscal year being examined.

In addition, an audit will include the following activities:

- Confirmations to support the financial information provided. Auditors will send letters prepared by the NPO to banks, donors, and others to confirm the amounts of money owed or received which were recorded in the financial records of the organization.
- Review of internal controls, which are generally done by interviews with or surveys of staff members.
- Documentation of assets (accounts receivable and fixed asset listings), liabilities (copies of invoices not yet paid or loans outstanding), revenue (including grant documents, contributions or amounts pledged, in-kind donations, special events, and membership fees), and expenses (including payroll records and taxes).
- An internal management letter which addresses for the organization any concerns the auditor has with the internal workings, policies and procedures of the program.

Required Tax Forms for Nonprofit Organizations

IRS Form 990

Each nonprofit organization with annual receipts over \$25,000 must annually file an IRS Form 990 or 990EZ informational tax return. The forms are available at irs.gov. The tax return is due 4 ½ months after the end of the organization’s fiscal year. It is possible to ask for an extension but the penalties can be significant for failing to file either the return or the extension request on time.

The Form 990 for the last three years must be made available to the public, though the schedule listing individual donors and amounts can be deleted. Posting the tax return on the organization’s website fulfills the public access requirement. To see sample completed form 990’s, visit guidestar.org.

State requirements for nonprofit organizations vary. Contact the taxing authority in your state for information on what state forms must be filed for NPOs.

Payroll reports

The state organization is required to keep a W-4 (withholding form) on file for each employee. Annual W-2 forms to report income and deductions for each employee are to be

completed, as well. Employees must receive a W-2 statement by January 31. The IRS due date depends on whether the organization is filing by paper or electronically. Visit irs.gov for more information.

Annual report

Each state CASA/GAL organization will want to produce an annual report. The annual report should include information regarding finances and services. A typical annual report will include:

- Letter from the director and/or board chair
- Mission statement
- Major achievements for the fiscal year
- Statistics about children served
- Donors and contributors
- Financial statements for the year

Many organizations choose to put their annual report on their webpage to save on printing costs; however, physical copies should be available to local CASA programs or offices, National CASA, the public and administrative and governing personnel.

Managing Incoming Grants

Virtually all state organizations receive grant funds from National CASA and some states also receive grants from other organizations. Managing incoming grants requires a few simple steps. The first, and most important, is to read the grant terms and conditions document carefully and know what the grantor expects in terms of reports and evaluation. The grant manager must know for what purposes the grant funds may be used, whether and how revisions are handled and when reports are due. It is also important for the organization to practice appropriate fund separation so grant expenses can be easily monitored and reported.

Each grant should have a file that includes the grant agreement (or terms and conditions document), approved budget and any correspondence, collaborative agreements or contracts related to the grant. In addition, each grant should have a monthly or quarterly file including all invoices with check numbers as well as evaluation documents such as activity reports, participant feedback and samples of materials produced.

Monitoring Pass-Through Funds

If the state CASA/GAL organization provides pass-through funds to local programs or offices, the state organization must have adequate accounting practices to track and monitor those funds. The state organization must have clear documentation of specific funds including terms and conditions, amounts that have been disbursed and remaining balances. Policies must be clear on the status of unexpended funds at the end of the grant period.

The state CASA/GAL organization may require annual audits of programs, depending upon the level of grants or pass-through funding received from the state organization.

Programs receiving funds should be required to submit quarterly reports with expenditures, funds received and cash on hand. State organizations with the technical capacity may want to explore using a grantee management system such as the GBIS program used at National

CASA. It is also possible to do an adequate report using a spreadsheet. Some grantors require receipts documenting every transaction, others do not. The amount of documentation required from local programs will depend upon the requirements of the original source of the funding (typically the state legislature, a foundation or a private donor).

If the state organization is a grantor, financial reviews with program visits or the Quality Assurance (QA) process might be included. Such financial reviews might include:

- Inspection of the audit report
- Inspection of the IRS form 990
- Inspection of payroll reports
- Selection of records for one quarter to ensure that appropriate documentation is present for all grant expenses. Documentation should match the bookkeeping of the local program and the financial reports submitted to the state organization.

If problems are discovered, the state organization should document the situation in writing to the program and provide or help the program access appropriate technical assistance to correct the problems.

Providing pass-through or grant funding to local programs is a tremendous service to those programs and can lighten the fundraising load for them, but it is a significant time investment for the state organization. The organization must have adequate capacity to manage the grants.



Additional Resources:

Achieving Our Mission (National CASA publication)

Internal Revenue Service (irs.gov)

California Management Assistance Partnership's
Nonprofit Genie (genie.org)

Guidestar, the national database of nonprofit
organizations (guidestar.org)

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key financial issues in your state:

- When is the audit done and who does it? How is the auditor selected? What is the outcome of the most recent audit?
- What is the current budget?
- What are the current funding sources? What can those funds be used for?
- Are there funding requests in the application stage?
- Who pays the bills? Who can sign the checks?
- When is the organization's fiscal year?
- What fiscal year are current grantors on?
- When are grant reports due? Whose responsibility is it to complete them?
- How are local programs funded? Is there pass-through money from the state organization? If so, what is the process for distributing and reporting on the funds?
- Does the accounting system track budget and expenses accurately?
- What do the most recent financial statements show?
- How are budget lines developed & monitored?
- Does the organization use the cash or accrual basis of accounting?
- What are the program's internal control policies? Is there a written internal controls document?

Questions Specifically for SAPs

- From what sources can funds be accepted?
- Is lobbying for additional agency resources permissible? How and when?

Financial Management Resources & Sample Documents

Suggested Internal Control Procedures

Sample Grants Formulas

Sample Financial Statements

Suggested Internal Control Procedures

General

- Adopt written internal control procedures, including policies for cash receipts and disbursements. Ensure that procedures are included in orientation for board members and for staff.
- Ensure that all cash assets are held with an FDIC approved financial institution and that assets do not exceed the insured limits. Periodically analyze whether bank charges on the account are excessive.
- The governing body should review periodic financial statements.
- Put large checking balances into a short-term CD.
- Question unusual credit card or bank activities
- Separate authorization and recordkeeping functions
- Have an audit performed by an external auditor.

Cash receipts

- Give receipts for all cash receipts, including dues or donations.
- Use pre-numbered cash receipts and deposit ticket books.
- Keep documentation such as dues statements or membership applications.
- Immediately place restrictive endorsements (“for deposit only”) on checks.
- Photocopy all checks.
- Make deposits daily.
- Deposit all receipts intact without withdrawal of petty cash.
- Donor acknowledgements should be done by someone other than the person making the deposit or opening the mail.

Cash Disbursements

- Have authorization/approval procedure for cash disbursements.
- Require documentation to support cash disbursements that includes date of check, check number, payee, description of expense, and authorized signatures
- Do not write checks for an amount that exceeds supporting documentation.
- Use pre-numbered checks
- Pay from original invoices only to prevent duplicate payments for items.
- Prohibit purchase of personal items with organization funds.
- Don’t permit organization checks to be made out to “cash”.
- Have designated check signers and require two signatures on checks. Never use rubber stamp signatures on checks. Never sign blank checks.
- Mail signed checks immediately
- Be sure the payee is listed in check register for each check.
- Classify expenses for control purposes.
- Enter bank service charges in check register.

Credit Card Transactions

- Keep receipts and monthly statements together
- Have written policy for type of expenses authorized for credit card use
- Do not allow unnecessary credit card issuance
- Reimburse allowed credit card expenses from original receipts only

Physical Controls

- Limit access to unused checks, unused cash receipts, and unused bank deposit books.
- Limit access to petty cash and monitor for activity
- Have only specific people be responsible for cash at fundraising events. Always have two people count cash.

- Limit access to fundraising assets: raffle tickets, T-shirts, cookies, etc.
- Seal all collection devices and place devices in conspicuous places

Reconciliations

- Reconcile cash deposited for dues to membership forms.
- Compare deposits with amounts in the checkbook register, bank statements and validated deposit slips.
- Reconcile raffle tickets, etc., with cash receipts.
- Match original vendor invoices to monthly statements
- Perform bank reconciliation monthly by someone other than the one who authorized disbursements.
- Keep the bank statements or canceled and voided checks.
- Reconcile money transferred to or from national or local organizations.

These suggestions were adapted from “Reduce your losses from errors and fraud” by Joyce Lambert, Daphne Main, & S.J. Lambert III. *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 16, No. 5, p. 47, Georgia CASA's Internal Control Procedures, National CASA Association's Finance 101 Presentation by Shanon Doolittle and Tom Dunn, and St. Louis City CASA's Financial Procedure Manual

Sample State Grant Formulas

Virginia

# of Cases Served in 2001-02	Proposed FY03 Award
less than 25	\$ 16,978
25 – 74	\$ 29,603
75 – 149	\$ 33,803
150 – 224	\$ 38,003
225 – 299	\$ 42,203
300 or more	\$ 46,403
planning grants	\$ 1,000

Arkansas

base	\$15,000
small county (0-19 cases)	\$6,000
medium county (20-39 cases)	\$11,000
large county (40+ cases)	\$16,000
extra large count (100+ cases)	\$21,000
number of cases served by volunteers	
0-19	0
20-39	\$5,000
40-59	\$10,000
60-79	\$15,000
80-99	\$20,000
100+	\$25,000

How to figure your maximum grant award based on this formula:

4. Start with \$15,000.
5. Add amounts for each county you serve or plan to serve for the next year, including your “home” county. The number of cases will be determined from attorney ad litem figures. Any county served must have a goals sheet.
6. Add funds based on additional cases served by volunteers. ONLY dependency-neglect cases served by volunteers may be counted. Use the average from your previous four quarterly reports to determine the number.

Sample Financial Statement EXAMPLE 1

CASA of _____ STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION 6 MONTHS ENDING 2/28/03

	OPERATIONS			Property Fund	GRAND TOTAL
	A Unrestricted	B Restricted	TOTALS		
<u>ASSETS</u>					
Cash	\$22,362	\$10,433	\$32,795	\$0	\$32,795
Revenue receivable (1)	5,000	10,000	15,000	0	15,000
Prepaid expenses (2)	0	0	0	0	0
Furniture & Equipment (net)	0	0	0	15,366	15,366
TOTAL ASSETS:	\$27,362	\$20,433	\$47,795	\$15,366	\$63,161
 <u>LIABILITIES</u>					
Accounts payable (3)	0	1,824	1,824	0	1,824
Obligated revenue (4)	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES:	\$0	\$1,824	\$1,824	\$0	\$1,824
 TOTAL NET ASSETS:	\$27,362	\$18,609	\$45,971	\$15,366	\$61,337

(1) A: Individual donations-\$500; XYZ Corporation-\$4,500.

(1) B: Texas CASA-\$3,333.34; VOCA-\$6,666.66.

(2) This would be expenses incurred in the current fiscal year prior to an event in next fiscal year.

(3) Travel-\$978.24 and training materials-\$845.76.

(4) This would be revenue incurred in the current fiscal year prior to an event in next fiscal year.

Sample financial statements courtesy of Texas CASA.

Sample Financial Statement EXAMPLE 2

CASA OF _____ STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES 6 MONTHS ENDING 2/28/03

SUPPORT & REVENUE	Unrestricted	Restricted	Property Fund	TOTAL
Note 1) Restricted grants & contributions	\$0	\$71,500	\$0	\$71,500
Note 2) Unrestricted grants & contributions	31,850	0	0	31,850
<i>TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE:</i>	\$31,850	\$71,500	\$0	\$103,350
 <u>EXPENSES</u>				
Salaries	\$18,000	\$44,500	\$0	\$62,500
Payroll taxes	1,500	3,281	0	4,781
Health benefits	800	1,200	0	2,000
Mileage	100	900	0	1,000
Meetings/Trainings	250	500	0	750
Travel	200	1,800	0	2,000
Rent	5,500	12,000	0	17,500
Telephone	200	2,200	0	2,400
Supplies	463	737	0	1,200
Postage	100	500	0	600
Printing	300	100	0	400
Dues & fees	125	125	0	250
Equipment & rental	1,000	200	0	1,200
Office insurance	700	800	0	1,500
Audit	500	2,500	0	3,000
Miscellaneous	250	0	0	250
<i>TOTAL EXPENSES:</i>	\$29,988	\$71,343	\$0	\$101,331
 Total Support & Revenue minus Total Expenses:				
	1,862	157	0	2,019
*Fund Balances, beginning	25,500	18,452	15,366	59,318
**Fund Balances, ending	\$27,362	\$18,609	\$15,366	\$61,337

* This number is given to our program by the auditor.

** This must equal Total Net Assets on page 1. Formula: Total Support & Revenue minus Total Expenses plus

Beginning Fund Balances equals Ending Fund Balances.

Sample Financial Statement Example 3

CASA OF _____ ACTUAL EXPENSES vs. BUDGETED EXPENSES 6 MONTHS ENDING 2/28/03

	Actual Expenses To Date 9/1/02-2/28/03	Total Budgeted Expenses 9/1/02-8/31/03	% of TOTAL
Salaries	\$62,500	\$125,000	50%
Payroll taxes	4,781	9,563	50%
Health benefits	2,000	4,500	44%
Mileage	1,000	2,500	40%
Meetings/trainings	750	1,000	75%
Travel	2,000	8,000	25%
Rent	17,500	35,000	50%
Telephone	2,400	4,800	50%
Supplies	1,200	3,200	38%
Postage	600	1,200	50%
Printing	400	800	50%
Dues & fees	250	700	36%
Equipment & rental	1,200	2,200	55%
Office insurance	1,500	3,000	50%
Audit	3,000	3,000	100%
Miscellaneous	250	1,000	25%
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$101,331	\$205,463	49%

Sample Financial Statement EXAMPLE 4

CASA of _____ ACTUAL REVENUE vs. BUDGETED REVENUE 6 MONTHS ENDING 2/28/03

	Actual Revenue To Date 9/1/02-2/28/03	Total Budgeted Revenue 9/1/02- 8/31/03	% of TOTAL
<u>NOTE (1)</u>			
RESTRICTED REVENUE			
Texas CASA	\$20,000	\$40,000	50%
VOCA	40,000	80,000	50%
XYZ Foundation	10,000	22,900	44%
United Way	1,500	3,000	50%
	\$71,500	\$145,900	49%
 <u>NOTE (2)</u>			
UNRESTRICTED REVENUE			
* Foundations	\$5,000	\$5,000	100%
** Corporations	8,500	15,000	57%
*** Individuals	5,000	12,563	40%
**** Fundraising events	5,000	12,000	42%
***** Donations--special events	8,350	15,000	56%
	\$31,850	\$59,563	53%
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$103,350	\$205,463	50%

- * TUV Foundation-\$5,000.
- ** ABC Corporation-\$500; My Bank Corporation-\$6,000; and DEF Corporation-\$2,000.
- *** Includes individual donations-\$4,973.52 and interest earned-\$26.48.
- **** Casas for CASA-\$5,000.
- ***** Dinner-\$3,000 and XYZ contest-\$5,350.

Chapter 8

Risk Management

The phone rings. A local program director is calling because her program's insurance is getting more and more expensive and she doesn't know what coverage she HAS to have.

Why Risk It?

The Nonprofit Risk Management Center defines risk as, “any uncertainty about a future event that threatens a nonprofit organization’s ability to accomplish its mission.” Accepting some level of risk is necessary for the state CASA/GAL organization. The only way to eliminate risk is to shut the doors and not provide advocacy for children or employ staff. Risk management is a process of anticipating possible risks and minimizing the possibility of harm to the organization or individuals involved. State organization staff must be constantly engaged in this process and must also work with local programs or offices to engage in risk management.

Sometimes the role of the state director feels like that of the voice of doom, always asking, “What if?” and “What about?” In a sense it is the job of the state organization to look for the worst case scenario in order to help minimize the chance of harm and to help plan what the state organization and local program will do if a worst-case scenario does happen.

Where local programs are independent organizations, the boards of those programs have the primary responsibility for developing a risk management plan. The state organization can play an important role in helping local programs implement a risk management process and in sharing best practices among local programs in relation to risk management. The state organization can also participate in the Quality Assurance process for local programs, which will help programs anticipate risks and, in some cases, avoid them.

The risk management process includes four steps:⁵

1. Acknowledging and identifying risks
2. Evaluating and prioritizing risk
3. Implementing risk management techniques
4. Monitoring and updating the program.

These steps are a cycle and the organization needs to continually return to identifying potential risks. This cycle will help the organization reduce the likelihood of negative events and, in the event of a lawsuit demonstrate the organization has exercised care in its activities.

⁵ White, Leslie (Nonprofit Risk Management Center). “Back to Basics: Risk Management 101.” A presentation for the 2000 Nonprofit Risk Management Institutes in Washington D.C.

There are tools available to help nonprofit organizations engage in the risk management process. The Nonprofit Risk Management Center (nonprofitrisk.org) offers a web-based tool called CARES. A free tool for small nonprofit organizations called “Pillars” is also available at the same site.

Acknowledge and identify risks

Risk to a CASA/GAL organization can include risks to people (including children, volunteers, staff and board members), property, income (grants and donations) and goodwill. The state organization should play an important role in helping local programs or offices with risk management since the potential negative consequences cross-jurisdictional boundaries and affect all programs. For example, a loss of goodwill for one local program could have statewide ramifications for volunteer recruitment and could therefore hamper advocacy for children.

One means of identifying potential risks is to simply ask staff or board members, “What could go wrong?” Conduct a brainstorming session to identify the potential risks in everyday operations and for special events. In order to stimulate discussion, the facilitator of the discussion may wish to post categories such as accidents, decline in volunteers, theft or destruction, harm to a CASA/GAL child client, and the unexpected loss of a key organization leader.

Evaluate and prioritize risks

The brainstorming session is likely to generate more possibilities than the organization can plan for, so evaluating and prioritizing the risks is the next logical step. In prioritizing risks, examine both the likelihood of something negative happening and the severity of that event. Each potential risk should be examined for frequency:

extremely unlikely	could happen but unlikely	happens occasionally	happens regularly
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The risk should also be examined for severity:

slight	significant	severe
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If the severity of the risk is slight, the organization can retain the risk. If it is significant, the organization must transfer some of the risk. If it is severe, the event could endanger the survival of the organization and action must be taken to prevent or minimize the chances of the event occurring.

Something highly likely to happen should receive more attention and planning than something extremely unlikely to happen. Something very severe, even if unlikely, should receive attention if it would jeopardize the children CASA/GAL serves or the program itself.

Implement risk management techniques

Once risks are identified and evaluated, the organization must make a decision about how to address the risks. One approach to addressing risk might be avoidance. If an activity is deemed to have very high or moderate risk but is easy to avoid, the organization may choose

not to engage in the activity. A good example is the issue of whether or not to transport children. Many CASA/GAL programs bar the practice completely to avoid the risk.

Modification is another technique in tackling a risk. An activity could be accepted as risky, but the organization establishes policies and procedures to reduce the risk. Using the example of transporting children, a way to modify the risk is to conduct periodic checks on drivers' licenses and to require volunteers to carry passenger coverage on automobile liability insurance policies at a level determined by the program (a requirement of National CASA standards).

A third approach to risk management is to retain the risk, but examine how the organization would handle and pay for the consequences of a risky event. The organization may also choose to transfer the risk. This is the reason most organizations carry insurance. As an example, small nonprofit organizations may not be required to carry unemployment insurance. They must then choose to retain the risk, by having adequate operating or reserve funds to pay an unemployment claim or to transfer the risk by purchasing unemployment insurance. The organization must keep in mind, however, that while it may be possible to transfer financial risk it is not possible to transfer the risk to the CASA/GAL organization's goodwill.

Monitor and update the program

Once the CASA/GAL organization has identified and prioritized risks and implemented risk management techniques, the board and staff must monitor and update the program. Did anticipated risks materialize? Did unexpected events occur? Are there any new programs or special events that must be examined for potential risk? Are any changes in strategy needed?

Insurance

Both state CASA/GAL organizations and local programs should carry certain types of insurance. Insurance is not just for when there is an accident or when the organization does something wrong. It should cover the costs incurred by the organization in the event of an accusation of wrongdoing. These costs can be significant.

Finding an agent, broker, or insurance consultant

It is important to establish a relationship with an insurance agent or broker who can issue policies from a number of different companies and can help advise the program on the policies that best meet the needs of the organization. Better yet, seek out an insurance consultant who is well versed on the topic but does not actually sell insurance. Finding that agent or broker who has experience working with nonprofit organizations can be a challenge. Talk to other nonprofit leaders in the community and to a National CASA program specialist.

Some questions to ask an agent or broker include:

1. What is your experience working with nonprofit organizations?
2. How have you helped those organizations evaluate their risks and insurance needs?
3. Do you have references from other nonprofits?

4. What insurance companies do you work with that offer insurance for nonprofit organizations? Do they have an ongoing commitment to providing insurance for the nonprofit sector?
5. What are the ratings of the carriers that the broker works with?
6. What types of coverage would the broker recommend for the nonprofit organization?

In talking to the insurance broker or their references, look for the following qualities in a broker:

- Knowledgeable about insurance for nonprofit organizations and experienced regarding evaluating insurance needs.
- Willing to take the time to learn about your agency's operations and to provide thoughtful advice and counsel about the agency's exposures and insurance needs and is assertive in advocating for the CASA/GAL organization's interests.
- Well connected with the various insurance markets and able to offer competitive choices with respect to pricing and coverage terms.
- Organized and responsive to the agency's needs.

Occurrence vs. claims-made coverage⁶

There are two common types of insurance policies. An occurrence policy, which was the type of coverage offered prior to the mid 1980s, has coverage based on when an injury or accident happened regardless of when the claim was made to the insurance company. A claims-made policy covers only those injuries or accidents that occur after the policy's retroactive date (usually the start date of the first claims-made policy) and for which the claim is made during the policy period. Claims made after the end of the policy period will not be covered. For this reason, the CASA/GAL program with claims-made policies must have a policy of submitting claims immediately.

If the organization is considering canceling a claims-made policy, representatives will want to talk with an insurance advisor about ensuring continued protection for the organization. Changing the retroactive date may create significant liability for the nonprofit organization. When a nonprofit organization changes insurance companies, the new insurance carrier will often want to make the start date of the new policy the retroactive date. If this occurs, the nonprofit agency will have no coverage for any incidents that occurred during the time period between the date of the first claims-made policy and the new retroactive date. Options to discuss with an insurance advisor include keeping the original retroactive date, having a new policy with "full prior acts" coverage or purchasing an Extended Reporting Period (ERP) to extend the time under which claims may be made.

Types of Insurance Policies

There are many types of insurance a CASA/GAL program may wish to discuss with an insurance agent or broker to ensure the program has adequate coverage. Some of the most common are below.

⁶ Nonprofit Risk Management Center, "Who's afraid of claims-made?" (nonprofitrisk.org).

General liability

General liability insurance is necessary for all nonprofit organizations. This is the most common coverage available that provides coverage for various negligent acts, which result in bodily injury or property damage to other people. It also may cover personal injury, which is libel, slander, wrongful eviction and advertising injury. The most common claims we see under this coverage would be slip and fall injuries.

Liability insurance policies have lists of exclusions, which the organization must read carefully. Occasionally these exclusions will include the kind of claim the organization is most likely to make. Amendments, known as endorsements, may be possible to remove these exclusions.

The CASA/GAL organization must understand clearly who is covered under a general liability policy. Staff? Volunteers? Who would pay for their defense? If the organization wishes to have the general liability policy also protect volunteers, the word “volunteer” must specifically appear in the policy, either on the list of insured or in an endorsement.⁷

If the state CASA/GAL organization holds special events, such as a conference or fundraiser, an additional endorsement might be necessary for that event coverage. The organization should not assume that an unusual or large event will be included in the general liability policy.

Crime insurance and fidelity bonds

Two primary ways of protecting the organization against financial loss from theft or fraud are crime insurance and fidelity bonds. An agent can discuss the crime insurance options, which protects the organization against theft by someone outside or within the organization. This may be included as an endorsement to a general liability policy. A fidelity bond protects the organization in the event of fraud on the part of a staff member. A fidelity bond can specify particular job titles or all individuals connected with an organization. If the organization wants to include volunteers, the policy may need a specific endorsement stating this fact.⁸

Employee benefits liability

Employee Benefits Liability coverage can be endorsed to the General Liability Policy. Such coverage is intended to cover damages from the organization’s negligent handling of the administration of an employee benefits program. This includes failing to add a new employee to a benefit plan or incorrectly advising an employee that a particular procedure is covered.

Workers’ compensation

The workers’ compensation system pays individuals who are injured while on the job and who have expenses or lost income as a result of that injury. Employers purchase workers’ compensation insurance to pay for any successful claims. Just as with any insurance, the cost of workers’ compensation increases if claims are made.

⁷ Trempner, Charles and Pamela Rypkema. “Insurance Basics for Community-Serving Programs.” nonprofitrisk.org

Some states allow volunteers to be included in the workers' compensation system. While this ensures that volunteers would be compensated for injuries, the cost to the organization is likely to be high. Any CASA/GAL organization considering including volunteers in a workers' compensation policy should also examine what benefits might be available under the general liability policy. The CASA/GAL organization may also want to consider purchasing accident and injury insurance, which serves as a secondary policy to the volunteer's own health insurance. A disability policy, which helps compensate for lost income, can be added to accident and injury insurance.

National CASA standards require local programs to carry workers' compensation insurance; however, standards do not require such insurance to include volunteers.

Directors' and officers' liability (D&O)

D & O coverage applies to the insured's legal obligation to pay because of a "Wrongful Act" arising from an insured's duties on behalf of the organization. A "Wrongful Act" is defined as any actual or alleged act, error, omission, misstatement, misleading statement, neglect or breach of duties. This coverage will defend claims made against the entity, employees and volunteers (including Directors & Officers).

D&O insurance is critical because it enables individuals to serve as board members without risk to their personal assets.

When examining D&O policies, consider the following:

- Price
- Definition of insured persons, which should include administrators in addition to board members for any area in which decisions are jointly made
- Inclusion of payment for defense against litigation
- Cancellation policy (it should not be able to be cancelled during the period of the policy)
- "Bilateral discovery option" to include claims reported after the policy has been terminated
- Inclusion of claims for wrongful acts by the organization itself in addition to those by directors, officers, or employees
- Inclusion of personnel actions, including claims against discrimination, sexual harassment, and wrongful termination
- Inclusion of antitrust violations.

D&O policies are significantly different from other types of insurance and are critical for the nonprofit organization to carry. It is important to work with an insurance professional in purchasing this type of insurance to ensure that the policy adequately protects the organization, board members, and staff.

Employment practices liability

Employment Practices Liability coverage is part of D & O Liability and insures against "Wrongful Employment Acts" arising solely out of an insured's duties on behalf of the organization.

Wrongful employment act means any actual or alleged act of any of the following:

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Retaliation
- Wrongful termination
- Employment related misrepresentation
- Negligent evaluation, training or supervising of employees
- Failure to enforce adequate policies and procedures relating to any Wrongful Employment Act
- Wrongful discipline
- Wrongful deprivation of career opportunity
- Negligent violation of the Family Leave Act of 1993
- Acts described in clauses (1) through (10) above arising from the use of the organization's Internet, email, telecommunications or similar systems, including the failure to provide and enforce adequate policies and procedures relating to their use.
- Third Party Discrimination
- Third Party Sexual Harassment

Professional Liability

Professional liability insurance covers errors or omissions by professional or paraprofessional staff, including volunteers. It covers any harm caused by an individual due to alleged negligence or malfeasance when providing a professional service.

Business auto

If the organization owns or hires vehicles, the organization must have liability insurance for those vehicles. This insurance should cover bodily injury as well as property damage. States have minimum requirements for auto insurance.

Non-owned/hired auto liability

Auto Liability provides coverage for the organization in excess of an individual employee or volunteer's auto insurance. If the organization is held liable for the employee or volunteer's action involving their vehicle and the limits of the individual's personal auto policy have been exhausted, the coverage will take effect. This will not cover damage sustained by an employee or volunteer's vehicle.

Liability rules affecting CASA/GAL programs

Many CASA/GAL staff and board members become quickly intimidated upon hearing terms like "tort" or "vicarious liability", but these are simply terms that describe some of the liability rules that can affect programs. Melanie Herman, presenter at the 1999 National CASA conference, helped by explaining the following in her workshop *Risk Management for Nonprofit Organizations*.

Tort

A tort is a private or civil wrong recognized by law as grounds for a lawsuit. A claim is based upon the injury or harm caused.

Under tort law, a person injured in the operation of a CASA/GAL organization may recover monetary damages (including pain and suffering) from the organization that caused the harm. In order to recover damages, the injured party must prove that the defendant acted negligently, the negligence caused the injury, and that there were damages.

Negligence can be by omission or commission: the failure to do an act that a reasonable person would do or committing an act that a reasonable and prudent person would not do.

Direct and vicarious liability

Direct liability is liability for injuries caused by acts that can be attributed directly to the organization. For example, if a CASA/GAL organization did not screen volunteers, it could have direct liability if a child were hurt as a result of the action of an unscreened volunteer.

Vicarious liability is the liability an organization has for the actions of its volunteers and employees. Whether vicarious liability can be proven depends on the following factors:

- degree of control the organization can exercise over the volunteer,
- scope of the volunteer position, and
- benefit the organization derives from the volunteer's services.”

The organization may be held liable even if the actions of the volunteer were contrary to policy or outside the scope of duties for the volunteer. However, the failure to have adequate policies or supervision may result in a finding of direct liability.

With both direct and vicarious liability, the typical standard for determining liability is whether the action or inaction was reasonable under the circumstances.

Volunteer Immunity

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 (PL 105-19) addresses volunteer liability, and there is corresponding legislation at the state level. The VPA provides that a volunteer for a 501(c)(3) organization or governmental entity who does not receive anything of value in lieu of compensation in excess of \$500 per year has a defense to a suit alleging simple negligence. This does not prevent a lawsuit, but provides a defense to that suit.

The VPA applies if

1. The volunteer was acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities in the nonprofit organization or governmental entity at the time of the act or omission.
2. If appropriate or required, the volunteer was properly licensed, certified or authorized.
3. The harm was not caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer.
4. The harm was not caused by the volunteer operating a motor vehicle.

The VPA does not apply if the alleged misconduct constitutes a violent crime or sexual offense for which the defendant has been convicted, constitutes a hate crime, involves a violation of civil rights law or if the defendant was under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the misconduct.

The state CASA/GAL organization should provide information to local CASA/GAL programs or offices on any additional conditions the state has imposed on the Volunteer

Protection Act. This information should also be included in the customization of the volunteer training curriculum.

Crisis Response Protocol

Even with excellent risk management planning, crises can still occur. The state organization should have a crisis response plan and should work with local programs to ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a crisis. In a crisis, it is important to protect the good name of the CASA/GAL organization so that future advocacy is not jeopardized.

Information on crisis response is also available in Chapter 7: Public Relations. The Georgia CASA Crisis Manual is available can be found in the resource documents located at the end of Chapter 7.



Additional Resources:

Alliance of Nonprofits for Insurance (ani-rrg.org)

Council on Foundations (cof.org)

Independent Sector (indepsec.org)

National Alliance for Nonprofit Management
(allianceonline.org)

National Center for Nonprofit Boards (ncnb.org)

National Council of Nonprofit Associations (ncna.org)

Nonprofit Risk Management Center (nonprofitrisk.org)

Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit
Management (pfd.org)

Public Entity Risk Institute (riskinstitute.org)

D&O: What you need to know (1998). Published by the
Nonprofit Risk Management Center.

Coverage, Claims & Consequences: An Insurance
Handbook for Nonprofits (2002). Published by the
Nonprofit Risk Management Center

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key risk management issues in your state:

- Is there a process in place to respond to various complaints?
- What insurance coverage does the state CASA/GAL organization currently have?
- Who represents the state CASA/GAL organization if a lawsuit is filed?
- Does the state organization have a risk management plan? A committee? Does risk management appear in anyone's job description?
- Do local CASA/GAL programs or offices have risk management plans?
- Are there state statutes or attorney general's opinions related to liability and the Volunteer Protection Act?

Chapter 9

Technology

The phone rings. A board member is calling because he has just seen a promising grant opportunity for upgrading technology; however, the application is due on Friday.

Most CASA/GAL staff members join the program because they care about children, not because they are technology gurus. Nonetheless, appropriately used technology will save the organization money and staff time. It also helps the state office communicate better with their local programs, tribal programs, the public and other agencies. Sending email is quicker and cheaper than any other form of communication and volunteers and donors increasingly want the convenience of communicating with the organization electronically.

This chapter addresses several technology subjects which help the state office operate more efficiently and productively, using technology to communicate with others, and helping local programs with technology.

Note: This section mentions many products by name. The National CASA Association in no way endorses or recommends the purchase of these products; they are listed to provide examples of technology only.

Using Technology in State Organization Operations

Technology plan

Having a technology plan is important for any organization with limited resources. State CASA/GAL organizations need to make decisions about what technology helps fulfill their mission. State organizations also need to avoid expensive mistakes. Having a technology plan allows a state organization to budget appropriately for technology and prepare for submitting grant proposals. The website techsoup.org has great information on how to create a technology plan.

Basic steps in developing a technology plan include:

1. Assessing what the state organization has, including hardware, software, network set-up, access policies and services. Visit techsoup.com for a sample assessment form.
2. Defining the needs of the state organization in terms of goals, not equipment. Start with the mission statement and strategic plan.

3. Explore solutions. This is a good time to get expert help. Visit techsoup.com for a Technical Assistance Providers Resource List. Make sure that the organization finds someone trustworthy. Help this expert to become familiar with the CASA/GAL mission, needs and financial situation. A costly option does not always mean the best solution.
4. Write a technology plan. This should include:
 - a. organizational profile
 - b. technology vision (using the assessment and needs, link technology to furthering the CASA/GAL mission and goals for the organization).
 - c. technology projects, including description, benefits, tasks (the activities necessary), lifespan and cost for each.
 - d. budget, keeping in mind that only 30% of the technology budget should go for purchases and 70% should go for technical support, training, repairs and upgrades.
 - e. timeline.

Another excellent resource for technology planning is NPower at npower.org, which offers an online tool called Tech Atlas. Tech Atlas helps nonprofit organizations assess current technological capacity and provides recommendations on how technology can be better used to achieve the mission of the organization.

Backup, backup, backup

It is critical to have an easy, regular method of backing up data and storing that backup offsite. Organizational policies and procedures should include the backup protocol, specifying what is backed up, when, by whom and how, as well as where that backup is stored. Be sure to include laptop(s) and PDA(s) in the backup plan.

Large state CASA/GAL organizations should have a network. All staff should log on to the network and save all documents to the network drive. The network administrator should back up this network drive daily through an automated system, usually a tape drive. This has several advantages: when someone leaves (even suddenly) the organization has easy access to their documents. This action ensures that the responsibility of backing up files and documents does not fall on individual employees. The network administrator should investigate having the network save to a device known as RAID storage; this saves data to multiple drives.

Smaller state CASA/GAL organizations (one or two staff or an office without a network) should backup data regularly to a CD, zip drive or tape. Because computer documents are not equally important, establish priorities for backing up files. Accounting should be backed up daily—losing even two or three days worth of financial data could be devastating. Critical databases should also be backed up at least daily. Other documents, depending on how important they are and how difficult they would be to recreate, should be backed up at least weekly. It is usually very time consuming and unnecessary to backup an entire hard drive. A good deal of storage space is taken up with the operating system and application software, and this can be easily reloaded (make sure the CDs or floppies are stored in a safe place).

Store the backup off-site. If the state CASA/GAL organization has a fire, flood, tornado, earthquake or other disaster, backups will only help if they are stored away from the office.

A safety deposit box is a good choice for off-site storage. Rotate backups off-site at least once a week.

Test the backup before it is needed: restore a few files and make sure it works. This is critically important—do not wait until it is an emergency to find out if the backup protocol works.

There are a number of ways to backup data and technology continues to evolve. Additional information on backing up files (including cost comparison) can be found at techsoup.org.

Cloning

Cloning is one option that will save great amounts of time and aggravation should a hard drive be lost. Cloning is a machine specific technology whereby an “image” is made of the boot drive on a machine. The restoration of this image creates a new computer identical in every way to the original. If a clone exists of the machine a computer can be restored in minutes using a program such as Ghost or Drive Image. Cloning is most useful when an office intentionally purchases identical computers with this strategy in mind, since cloning is machine specific. Having identical computers will also reduce support costs. This does not mean that all computers need to be purchased simultaneously, but an office should stay with the same brand and model (or update of the same model). Cloning does not eliminate the need to backup files, but simplifies the restoration of the hard drive should that become necessary.

Using Technology to Communicate

Email

Email technology makes the work of state directors much easier—it is possible to communicate with staff, local programs, National CASA, one another and the public in an easy, cheap and quick manner. It is an essential tool for state offices.

Unfortunately, even though email feels private, it is not. An email message is more like a postcard than a sealed letter. Email messages can be easily read at any one of a number of points along the route it takes from the sender’s computer to the final destination. Confidential or sensitive information should never be sent by email unless it is encrypted.

Although Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) laws vary, it is probably safest for state directors who are state employees to assume that anything in an office email account is subject to an FOIA request.

Note: As a general rule about using email, do not send anything by email that you would not want to appear on the front page of the local paper.

Office policies should state whether staff can use their computers and email accounts for personal use. Make sure the organization reserves the right to examine email accounts for appropriate use and that employees are aware of this policy.

Additional security

Viruses, worms and other destructive programs have the potential to destroy data and incapacitate a computer network. All removable storage devices such as CDs and floppy disks should be scanned for viruses before being used. Email messages with attachments can also carry viruses that will damage computers. Always keep virus software up-to-date and configured to check regularly for updates, but do not rely on anti-virus software alone. Do not open an attachment unless the sender is known and the attachment is expected.

Note: Be particularly cautious of attachments with file extensions of *.vbs, *.exe, *.kak, or *.hta.

The internal computer network or any computer with access to the Internet should also have a firewall. A firewall helps to protect computers from attack. Without a firewall, someone outside the organization may be able to access files and sensitive information stored on computers. A firewall can be a piece of hardware that sits between a computer and the Internet connection such as Sonicwall, or software such as ZoneAlarm.

Many programs track usage when a computer has access to the Internet. The software may be relatively harmless, such as those that inform users about updates. The software may also be used to gather information about websites visited in order to put the user on mailing lists. Many programs are available for detecting this “spyware”. Two free ones are Ad-aware (lavasoft.nu) and Spybot (<http://beam.to/spybotsd>).

The state organization’s website

Offering a website is something a state office can do more economically than individual programs.

Professional web design is expensive, but a website does not have to be fancy or be designed by a professional. A staff member or volunteer can produce a credible site. National CASA has created a relationship to assist in the development of CASA program websites. CASA Websites (casawebsites.com) provides free support services, customized web templates and images specifically designed for programs as well as website hosting. Another option is to find a PR agency or web designer willing to donate services, or contact the computer science or graphic design department of a local college or high school. Consider another option: visit charityfocus.org, which designs websites for free!

There are three important considerations for a website:

1. Document the work needed to update the website so staff or volunteers can edit and maintain the site! Have the person with ongoing responsibility practice updating the site before the designer leaves.
2. Be wary of a graphic-intensive website. It may look pretty, but many individuals and local programs often use fairly slow modems. Sites with a lot of graphics take a long time to load.
3. Make sure that information on the website is updated regularly. It is better not to have a website than having a stale site with outdated information.

A domain name is a name given to a computer that hosts a website, such as casanet.org. It is used in place of the Internet protocol (IP) address, which is a string of numbers unique to each computer. Registering domain names is easy. CASA Websites will handle this or the program can register the domain name at a site such as dotster.com or namesecure.com. More options are available at icann.org. Registration can be done with a credit card. Make sure the name is easy to spell and remember and have a system in place to ensure that the name is re-registered as necessary. In order to set up the webpage, there must be a host site. CASAwebsites.org provides this service, as do Internet service providers.

As with any public relations tool, careful planning is critical. Who are the primary users of the state office website? Local programs? The public? Others? What are they looking for or seeking to learn from the site? How can it be made easy to find? What does the organization want to accomplish with the site? What is going to keep people coming back to the site? Look at other websites and make note of strengths and weaknesses of the site: visually as well as with content. Following are potential topics to include:

For the public/other agencies:

- History & mission of the organization
- Organization fact sheet
- State map showing all CASA/GAL programs
- Donation options. Make this obvious. It's a great option to accept donations online. If online donations are not possible, be clear on how donations can be accepted.
- How to volunteer
- Training requirements and schedules
- State office contact information (address, phone, email)
- Local program contact information and links to their websites, where applicable.
- Conference information and, if possible, a registration form. Again, if the office cannot handle registration over the web, put a printable registration form on the site.
- Staff directory
- Newsletters
- Links to other resources such as: nationalcasa.org, casanet.org, CDF (childrensdefense.org), CWLA (cwla.org), Annie E. Casey Foundation (aecf.org) and the ABA Center on Children and the Law.
- Recognition of major donors, corporate sponsors, etc.
- Frequently asked questions

For local programs/volunteers

- Training materials
- Technical assistance, such as
 - Questions/answers to frequently asked questions
 - Volunteer recruitment/retention best practices
 - Fundraising projects and ideas
- Staff training dates and topics
- Web-based reporting (this requires more sophisticated programming)

To see some sample state pages, visit casanet.org and look for the online list of programs.

Listserv

Offering a listserv to local program directors can be an incredibly useful service as well as an effective technical assistance tool for local programs. A listserv is an email list for a specific group of people: when a member posts a message to the list, it is automatically sent to everyone. Listserv technology provides a quick and easy way to send a message to all local programs. It's also a useful tool for local program directors to get advice or assistance from peers.

There are a number of ways to run a listserv. For state organizations without a designated technology staff person, one option is to use a web-based site. Someone in the office needs to be designated as the list administrator. This person is responsible for adding or deleting people from the membership list as well as approving emails that are not automatically forwarded (such as long messages, those with attachments or messages from people who are not members of the list). A staff member should also be designated to monitor the listserv in order to give input or feedback where appropriate.

Some guidelines can be useful: in general, allow postings only from members of the list. Start with only local program directors on the list, but allow them to add other staff members to the list if they want to. Decide whether a user clicking on “reply” will generate a response only to the person sending the original message or to the entire list—this depends on the number of people on the list and how active the discussion is. Allow attachments only if local programs' modems and computer systems can handle the size of the files. To encourage discussion, the state office should not answer every question on the list; this tends to quash the responses of others. There will be some issues however, such as standards or correcting misinformation, that requires a state organization response.

Helping Local Programs with Technology

State offices should do whatever possible to encourage and assist local CASA programs to acquire basic computer systems and Internet access. If the state helps fund local programs, then having Internet access can be a condition of receiving those funds. The state can also assist local programs with technology grant writing. Beyond acquisition, local programs sometimes need encouragement and training to use what they have. Nothing is more frustrating than having two or three local program directors who that never check email or do not know how to collect accurate data.

Software and hardware can be prohibitively expensive, but there are inexpensive options for state and local nonprofit CASA programs. One option is compumentor.org (linked to techsoup.org), which sells software to nonprofit organizations at a great discount and also has referrals for hardware recyclers and refurbished items. Another site for purchasing cheap software for nonprofits is giftsinkind.org. If the state organization is a SAP, information should be available within the agency about software licenses.

Another possibility for local programs is to solicit used computers as gifts. This should be done with great caution, however, as a used computer may have too little memory (or too many problems) to be useful. In addition, a used computer is unlikely to come with a

warranty. It is probably a better option to go through a vendor selling refurbished equipment.

Two websites provide high quality information and advice on technology issues for nonprofit organizations: techsoup.org and npower.org. NPower offers many tools and services to help nonprofit programs with technology issues.

Providing training

Many local program staff members need training on technology issues, but the state organization staff may feel limited in providing such training. There are many options for training. One online resource is supportnet.merit.edu. This site is intended for educational institutions but has many helpful resources including online training and “Best tech support sites”.

Other very affordable possibilities for individuals are the local adult education center, community colleges and any organization that provides training for nonprofit organizations.

If many local programs have a particular need, the state organization may wish to contract an outside vendor to facilitate training. COMET assistance is available at the COMET help desk at (800) 628-3233, ext. 289 or by email at comet@nationalcasa.org. National CASA program specialists or other state directors may also be able to provide assistance locating training for technology issues. There may be a technology company in the state willing to provide some training as an in-kind donation to the CASA/GAL program.

NPower (npower.org) provides technology summits around the nation to assist nonprofit organizations with technology issues.

More information is available in Chapter 14: Training. If the state organization is providing technology training, it should locate a computer lab that will allow everyone to actively participate. This may be possible at a library, a college or university or at a company that provides technology training for its own employees.



Additional Resources:

Techsoup (techsoup.org) Technology assistance on numerous subjects.

CharityFocus (charityfocus.org) Website design.

Compumentor (compumentor.org) Inexpensive software for nonprofit organizations.

Gifts in Kind International (giftsinkind.org) Inexpensive software for nonprofits.

Support Net Online (supportnet.merit.edu) Online training and links to useful technical support sites.

NPower (npower.org) Technology assistance for nonprofit organizations.

TechAtlas (techatlas.org/tools/origins.asp) Technology evaluation and planning.

Technical Assistance for Community Services (tacs.org)

CASA Websites (casawebsites.com) Web hosting, domain name registration, templates and images for CASA/GAL program websites.

“Spyware” detection software (lavasoft.nu) or (beam.to/spybottd).

Domain name registration (dotster.com, namesecure.com or icann.org).

Lsoft (lsoft.com) Listserv management software.

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key technology issues in your state:

- How is data saved and backed up?
- Does the state organization have a technology plan?
- What is the budget for technology?
- Is the use of email addressed in office policies?
- Does the state organization have a website? Who designed it? Who maintains it? Where is the name registered?
- Does the state organization maintain one or more listservs?
- What technology do local programs or offices have?
- Are there security protocols?
- Are the organization’s confidentiality policies inclusive of technology?

Chapter 10

New Program Development & Expansion of Services

The phone rings. A community member wants to start a CASA/GAL program. It is not an area designated as a high priority for new program development by the state strategic plan.

The state organization plays a critical role in new program development and concerted efforts at new program development require a significant investment of staff time and energy.

The impetus for new program development can come from a number of sources:

- State level (for example, a Court Improvement Committee or a Children's Justice Act task force)
- Judges who hear the cases of abused and neglected children
- Local community members (as in the example above) who are familiar with CASA/GAL advocacy and want volunteer advocates for children in their own community.
- The strategic plan of the state CASA/GAL organization. For example, CASA of New Jersey used census data to compare the total population of children under the age of 18 to the number of children in care and focused new program development on areas with the highest number of children in care per thousand.

When judges or community members want programs developed in non-priority areas in the state, the state organization needs to consider how to respond. One possibility is to consider any area with significant judicial or community interest as a priority, but this is only an option if there are adequate human and financial resources. Another option is to support the development in a limited way, being straightforward about what the state organization will be able to provide. A third option is to not support the program development at all. If the state organization does not provide support, however, the community may start a program without adhering to national and state standards.

Even with some financing available, starting a new program is challenging. Without readily available funds it is doubly so. The advantages of starting programs are obvious, however. Every abused and neglected child deserves CASA/GAL volunteer advocacy no matter where the child lives. Every community needs adults who are aware of the needs of abused and neglected children and who are trained in advocacy. Every state needs concerned adults statewide who will speak for children's needs in the public policy arena.

This chapter mirrors Part I of the Guide to Program Development (2002, published by the National CASA Association) and focuses on the role of the state organization in developing a new CASA/GAL program. The state organization's level of involvement in program development will vary from intense support to occasional guidance. The level of support provided will depend upon the strategic plan and resources (including human resources) of the state organization and the abilities and skills of the local planning team. Some states have used Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) volunteers to staff the planning team for new program development.

Planning a Quality Program

Initial planning steps

The first step in working with a new community is to meet with concerned citizens to provide information about CASA/GAL advocacy and to assess the needs of the community. This first meeting may be with just a few interested individuals or with a civic group, such as a Theta chapter or with a Rotary Club, or may be with a small group of handpicked individuals. Ideally, several people should be present from the beginning:

- Judges hearing cases of abused and neglected children
- Child welfare agency representatives
- Attorneys representing children and/or parents
- School representatives
- Community leaders such as religious leaders, members of the media, leaders of civic groups and nonprofit agencies as well as elected officials.

The initial presentation to this group is very important and may include a CASA/GAL video describing volunteer advocacy, the level of need in the community, expectation of commitment, and some success stories of CASA/GAL advocacy.

The state organization may also want to meet individually with stakeholders as noted above who are likely to have different questions and concerns.

The planning team

This initial group should form (or recruit others to form) a planning team, usually consisting of 5-9 individuals. This planning team will be short-lived but have several important tasks. The following table provides more information on planning team tasks as well as how the state organization might help with those tasks.

The Role of the Planning Team	
Planning Team Tasks Recommended by National CASA	Possible State Organization Role
Become educated about CASA/GAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connect people in the community with shared interest in starting CASA/GAL. ▪ Connect interested individuals with established CASA/GAL programs in neighboring communities, if possible. ▪ Request National CASA start-up packet ▪ Provide National CASA's 's <i>Guide to Program Development</i>. ▪ Provide national and state standards. ▪ Provide history of CASA/GAL in the community, if applicable. ▪ Provide National CASA and state organization websites.
Assess the Community's Response to Child Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide community statistics on children in care, or help them locate that information. ▪ Provide information about existing GAL representation for children statewide. ▪ Provide state statutes regarding the role of the Guardian ad Litem and/or CASA.
Make the Case for a CASA Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help the planning team evaluate the information they have gathered.
Determine if the Program Will Succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk with other relevant state association representatives, such as the state Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) coordinator or Child Advocacy Center association. ▪ Help the planning team evaluate local community support. ▪ Share funding strategies of other programs in the state.
Obtain Judicial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet jointly with the judge and the planning team. ▪ If possible, have other judges with successful CASA/GAL programs talk to the judge.
Enlist the Right People to Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help the planning team consider possible conflicts of interest or other issues.
Form a Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help the planning team ensure that the steering committee is broad-based.
Plan the Committee's First Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a sample agenda. ▪ Participate in the meeting.

Creating the organization/organizational structure

The steering committee, like the planning team, will be short-lived. A steering committee will often have some of the same members. The goal of this committee is to put in place the foundation of the CASA/GAL organization and to recruit the governing (or advisory) board of the organization.

The Role of the Steering Committee	
Steering Committee tasks recommended by National CASA	Possible State Organization Role
Establish the Mission of the CASA/GAL program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide sample mission statements from other programs in the state as well as the state organization's mission statement.
Establish a Program Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help the group stay focused on the short-term and be realistic about activities and timelines. ▪ Inform the Steering Committee about any start-up money available from the state organization (if applicable). Inform the group of any important deadlines (such as for grant applications) which need to be considered in determining timelines.
Determine Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help the committee evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of various models based on the experience of other CASA/GAL programs in the state. ▪ Connect the committee with other programs using particular models. ▪ Help the committee consider whether there are already too many small nonprofit organizations competing for limited fund-raising dollars. ▪ Provide samples of documents such as Articles of Incorporation, by-laws and 501(c)(3) applications if the organization will be an independent nonprofit organization. ▪ Emphasize the importance of and provide samples of written agreements if the CASA/GAL program will be part of another organization (available in the resource documents located at the end of this chapter). ▪ Meet with the CEO or board of the prospective umbrella agency.

The *Guide to New Program Development* provides excellent information on establishing a CASA/GAL program as a nonprofit organization and establishing CASA under another organization. The state organization should also evaluate and provide information about the possibility for a current CASA/GAL program to expand into the new community. This can be an excellent option but only if certain factors exist. Questions to ask when considering this option include:

- Is there a strong, well-run program in close proximity?
- Is it currently serving all or most of the children in its own jurisdiction?
- Is the board of existing program willing to expand services and add board members from the new community?

- Will the likely donors and volunteers from the new community look favorably on being associated with the existing program rather than having their own? If not, how might their concerns be addressed?

Another operating model is for the CASA/GAL program to form as part of the county government. This shares some of the advantages of having an umbrella organization. Governmental programs are, generally speaking, more stable. Employees tend to have more and better benefits available. There is immediate credibility in being associated with an office of government. However, there are also difficulties with this model. Will the county consistently support the program? Will it be possible for the CASA/GAL program to add staff when needed? Will the government agency comply with National CASA standards regarding program operation, especially in maintaining a volunteer-driven program? Where will the CASA/GAL program be placed administratively? Some members of the legal community may view an inherent conflict with a program administered by the judge who hears abuse and neglect cases.

Establishing the board

Once the planning team has done the preliminary organizational work, it is time for the governing body (or advisory council, if the program is under the umbrella of a governmental or nonprofit organization) to form and begin work. The importance of this first board cannot be overstated. The main goals of the governing body will be to complete the establishment of the program as a legal entity, develop community support, secure funding, staff the program, establish an office, build a relationship with the court and implement the program.

The steering committee may need assistance from the state organization to establish the board. Help the committee develop a board member job description to clarify responsibilities and avoid conflicts of interest as well as identify the skills and affiliations needed by members. Be available to make a presentation to prospective board members about the work of CASA/GAL volunteers, perhaps recruiting a board member or volunteer from another program to help.

It is critical for a new program to have board members who are known and who have access to funding within the community. All boards, but especially new ones, will need representation of the 4 W's: wealth (or access to it), wisdom, work and wit. Seeking board members from groups such as the National Council of Jewish Women or the Junior League can bring organizational expertise as well as access to fundraising in the community. These two organizations have been instrumental in starting a number of CASA/GAL programs across the country.

Typically, the initial governing body of the organization will need a high level of support from the state organization. It will be very helpful to provide best practices and sample documents used by other programs in the state. If the state organization is engaged in significant new program development, consider providing common forms and documents on the state website or in a binder for planning teams and new boards. While this should not duplicate what is already available from the National CASA Association, seeing state-specific information is helpful. The table of contents for New Jersey's program development tool kit can be found in the resource documents located at the end of this chapter.

The power of image

The state organization can assist the board of the new program in their public relations efforts. Providing samples of items such as oral presentations, talking points, videos, press releases, brochures, business cards and stationery are all helpful. Make the board aware of the downloadable graphics and print materials already produced by National CASA so they don't waste precious time, energy and money developing their own. The new program will also need assistance to ensure public relations efforts are consistent with standards. If the new program shares media with other established CASA/GAL programs, encourage the programs to coordinate public relations efforts so both programs win.

Funding the program

Finding funding for new CASA/GAL organizations is challenging. If the state provides funding for local programs, setting aside a certain percentage or amount for new program development ensures that new programs will get some financial assistance.

CASA of New Jersey has worked proactively to seek funding for new programs. In that state, some Court Improvement Project funding has been earmarked for new program development grants. The state organization has targeted two or three donors in the relevant geographic area (before the program even begins) asking for grants for a CASA development project. The funding is then used to help start the program.

The National CASA Association has new program development grants and the state organization can provide assistance in writing those grant applications. Other funding sources to explore for new program development include IOLTA (Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts), CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) and CSBG (Community Services Block Grants). VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) grants may also be available for new CASA/GAL programs as well as Children's Justice Act (CJA) funds, and some states have used VISTA volunteers for start-up programs. More information is available in Chapter 5: Resource Development.

The state organization or local board members should also talk to county and municipality leaders about possible funding sources and in-kind donations. Frequently, a county may be able to donate office space and utilities along with access to equipment such as copy and fax machines. Corporations or civic groups may be willing to donate office supplies or expertise. One new program faced with the expense of initially stocking the office with supplies asked a local Rotary club to have an office supply drive, which brought enough materials to stock the office for more than a year.

The local program should also engage in local fundraising, focusing on events that are likely to generate media attention to assist with public relations efforts. The state organization can assist by sharing what has worked well in other communities or by putting the new program in contact with other CASA/GAL programs with successful early fundraising events.

Note: The state organization should review the National CASA Association Resource Development Protocol as well as the Government Relations Protocol with new CASA/GAL programs to ensure the local program understands and follows the protocols.

Joining National CASA

Once the program has completed the first five program development steps (establish commitment, develop program mission, create organizational plan, establish program as a legal entity and secure funding) the board should apply for provisional membership with National CASA. The group will need to complete the new program provisional member self-assessment; a sample is available in the resource documents located at the end of this chapter. The state organization can help the group by providing any samples of Indicators of Compliance the program may be lacking. It may also be helpful to meet with the local team at this point to go through the standards self-assessment.

At this time in new program development, the National CASA program specialist will also be available to assist the local program. The state organization will be notified when a new program applies for provisional membership.

Staffing the program

Unless the local CASA/GAL program is directly supervised by the state organization, it is the responsibility of the local board or umbrella organization to hire the staff for the program. The state organization can be helpful in this stage by providing sample job descriptions and information about average salaries and benefits in other programs in the state. The board may also need assistance in conducting criminal background and child abuse central registry checks. In addition, providing sample interview questions and legal/illegal questions can be helpful (see Chapter 11: Human Resources for more information on interviews). The state organization may also provide sample personnel policies to the new CASA/GAL program.

Some local boards may want the state organization to participate in the interviewing and hiring process. There are pros and cons to participating. On one hand, the state organization may wish to help the local board or umbrella organization evaluate candidates and have input on who is hired. On the other hand, the state organization must be prepared for the possibility that the local program will not follow the recommendation of the state organization representative. Worse case scenario, they may even tell the new director that the state organization did not recommend their hiring; this could create challenges in building a relationship with the new director. Participating directly in the hiring process can also create potential conflicts in conducting Quality Assurance, administering grants and providing technical assistance. It may be in both parties' best interests for the state to provide guidance in the recruitment and selection process. The local program could provide to the state the resume of the individual they are considering hiring for the position so that the state organization may review the applicants' qualifications and make recommendations. If the state organization provides funding for the local program they may have the authority to review and approve the hiring of key staff.

A better practice is empowering the local board to conduct the hiring process. The state organization can ensure the board has access to all the information they need, including

sample advertisements, job descriptions, salary information and interview questions. If the state organization does participate in the hiring process, clearly articulate complete support for the program and candidate no matter who is hired.

Establishing an office

Locating an office and setting up the necessary utilities is best done by the local board or umbrella organization that knows the community. Proximity to the courthouse is helpful. Having an office accessible to staff or volunteers with disabilities is important. Parking access and cost are also issues when working with volunteers. The state organization can be helpful in making suggestions about where to find donated or low-cost office space based on the experiences of other local programs. The state organization may also be helpful in suggesting ways to get the hardware and software needed for the office (see Chapter 9: Technology for more information).

Establishing a relationship with the court

A state organization representative should be available to meet with the local judge even though the judge may have already been involved in new program development. Samples of agreements with the court from other jurisdictions within the state are likely to be a helpful resource for new programs. It may also be helpful to arrange for a judge with a successful CASA/GAL program to speak with a judge affiliated with a new program.

Other Ways State Organizations can Assist New Program Development

Mentors

Because new programs typically need a great deal of technical assistance, asking an older, more established program to serve as a mentor program is a good practice for new programs. The established program can assist the new program in a number of ways including sharing forms and policies, inviting the new director to attend volunteer training, discussing common new program development issues and inviting the new director to observe in court. The new director may be more comfortable calling a peer in some circumstances.

The mentor program should be a program in good standing and in compliance with state and national standards. Ideally, the mentor program should be located geographically near the new program and serve a similar-sized jurisdiction. The mentor program must be interested in new program development and the director must be willing and able to spend some time with the new director.

Providing a mentor program does not eliminate the need for the state organization to provide significant technical assistance, but it will help to strengthen the partnerships within the state and will give the new director a different perspective.

Expansion of Services

Expanding services in existing programs

Encouraging the expansion of services in local programs or offices is an important role of the state organization. The first and most important strategy is to help local programs

understand the needs of the unserved children in their communities. Local programs should be included in the state organization strategic planning process to ensure that local and state goals are consistent with those of the national organization. Board members and staff of local programs should have access to information about children served and about unmet needs. This can be one use of statistical information gathered by the state office: help local programs or offices see their progress over time in children served and how that compares with state or national data.

Another important strategy is to celebrate the successes of expanding programs and recognize those programs in some meaningful way (for example, recognition at the state conference, in the newsletter or on the state website. Help those programs to share their best practices for expanding services.

Local programs frequently feel frustration when volunteer recruitment numbers plateau and they seem to lose a volunteer for each new one they recruit. The programs may want assistance identifying the underlying causes. For example, is the program recruiting diverse volunteers? Programs that limit their possible volunteer pool, intentionally or not, are limiting the children they can effectively serve. One local program with many retirees in the area had refused to consider any volunteer who worked full time because they did not see how working volunteers could attend daytime meetings. The state organization was able to connect that program with others that had volunteers with full-time jobs to see how such volunteers could be effective advocates. Many local programs have difficulty recruiting in minority communities because they do not have any staff or board members with connections in those communities. The state organization can help local programs by providing strategies to increase diversity.

Is there a problem with volunteer retention? The state organization can help the program evaluate why retention is poor. Also helpful is the National CASA Volunteer Retention Training, which is one way to provide training for local program staff on volunteer recruitment and retention issues and also provide a mechanism for local programs to evaluate their current volunteer retention strategies.

If the state organization provides funding to local offices or programs, the formula can be written in a way to provide incentives for program expansion. For example, the formula could include additional funds for an increased number of children served and for increased numbers of volunteers. Attaching funding to advocacy provided is a very effective way to achieve goals and motivate local program staff or board members who seem content with the status quo.

One strategy used by Texas CASA is to have an Outreach and Recruitment Team at the state level to support local programs' volunteer recruitment and retention efforts. This team is also focusing on diversifying the volunteer base which is critical to expansion.

Serving multiple counties

In some states, judicial districts may cover multiple counties. Counties in different judicial districts may also wish to have a combined CASA/GAL program and the state organization may want to encourage the development of multi-county programs where it would lead to more effective and efficient volunteer advocacy. Multi-county programs are particularly recommended where the number of volunteers required to serve all the children in care in a single county does not justify a full-time staff person. Generally speaking, it is wise to start a

CASA/GAL program in a single county and let it develop relationships, name recognition and a volunteer base before expanding into additional counties.

The state organization should help new multi-county programs determine the best strategy for startup. Based on the needs assessment, which community most needs CASA/GAL volunteers? In which community is volunteer and financial support likely to be greatest? What is the expansion plan and timeframe? How will the organization be held accountable for expansion into all of the targeted areas?

Once the program expands to additional counties, a decision needs to be made regarding satellite offices. Having a satellite office provides clear advantages in community presence and accessibility to volunteers and the professionals with whom they work. The disadvantage is cost and, in some cases, the added challenge of remote staff supervision.

Bringing existing organizations into the CASA/GAL network

In some areas, there may be stand-alone programs or services offered by an umbrella agency doing advocacy work similar to that of CASA/GAL programs, but are not part of the CASA/GAL network. These local programs may wish to become part of the CASA/GAL network. In this case, the role of the state organization will be to work with the group to determine their readiness to comply with national and state standards. Many of the steps outlined above will still be relevant, though many of the building blocks will already be in place. One way to evaluate readiness would be to complete the National CASA Application for Provisional Program Membership, which is based on the standards for new program development. If the program is in compliance with that section of the standards, they could apply for membership with National CASA and if awarded begin receiving the benefits of membership such as the use of the name and logo and public relations materials, training curriculum for volunteers and *Achieving Our Mission*. The state organization may then want to work with the program to complete the full National CASA Quality Assurance assessment.



Additional Resources:

Guide to New Program Development (National CASA publication)

Achieving Our Mission: A Management Guide for CASA/GAL Programs (National CASA publication)

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key program development and expansion issues in your state:

- How has the state been involved in new program development?
- Where are CASA/GAL programs currently? What areas are not being served?
- What areas are in greatest need of new programs?
- Is there a budget in the state organization for new program development?
- Does the state organization have a new program development guide or packet of information?
- Where can the state organization obtain reliable data on the numbers and demographics of children in the child welfare system?

New Program Development and Expansion Resources & Sample Documents

National CASA Provisional Membership Application and Self-assessment

Sample Umbrella Agency Agreement

Sample Table of Contents for New Program Development Toolkit

National CASA New Program Development Steps

Sample Plan for Program Expansion

**The National CASA Association
Application for Provisional Program Membership**

Membership is available to organizations in communities in which there is not already a provisional or full CASA program member. **Provisional Membership is open to: a steering committee, community organization, or a court, which is taking steps to develop a volunteer CASA/GAL program.** Provisional membership will be extended only when the first five (5) steps of the new program development checklist and the following provisional membership self-assessment are completed.

Contact Person: _____

Title: _____

Program/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ County: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____ Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Court District/Jurisdiction Served: _____

Name of Chief Judge: _____

Address of Judge: _____

_____ Telephone Number: _____

Please provide information to the National CASA Association about the status of your startup efforts by completing the attached Self-Assessment Readiness Tool.

1/25/02

- Membership Requirements:** Members in this category must be committed to developing a program that operates in compliance with National CASA’s Program Standards. Provisional membership dues are \$60 for one year and provisional members are expected to apply for a full program membership at the end of the provisional year. Provisional memberships can be extended only to starting programs not assigning volunteers when it is probable that a program will become operational within the extension period. The fee for an extended provisional membership is \$60 and consultation with National CASA Program Services staff is required to obtain approval for membership extension.

I have reviewed the requirements of provisional membership and agree to abide by them.

Signature

Date

Indicators of Compliance:

Attach each of the following along with the completed Self-Assessment:

- Completed Needs Assessment
- Letter of Support from the Presiding Judge
- Mission Statement
- State Statute Relating to CASA/GAL Program (if applicable)
- Court Rules Relating to CASA/GAL Program (if applicable)
- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws**
- List of Current Board Members with Affiliations Noted
- Proof of Nonprofit (501c3) Status (if applicable)
- Operating Budget for the Current Fiscal Year

National CASA Association Provisional Membership Self-Assessment

Development Step #1: Establish Commitment

Have personal interviews been conducted with key judges in the jurisdiction before program start-up to educate them about the CASA/GAL program and gain support for the program?

Yes _____ No _____

Was a steering or planning committee created to guide the initial development activities?

Yes _____ No _____

Did the planning committee conduct a needs assessment to document the need for the program in the community/geographic location?

Yes _____ No _____

Did the needs assessment include:

a. *Interviews with key players:*

Judges? Yes _____ No _____

Child Protective Services Personnel? Yes _____ No _____

Prosecutor/Attorney General's Office? Yes _____ No _____

Community Child Advocates? Yes _____ No _____

b. *Collecting baseline statistics:*

Number of reports of suspected child abuse in the area?

Yes _____ No _____

Number of petitions filed? Yes _____ No _____

Average length of stay of children in foster care?

Yes _____ No _____

Duration of the court process in child abuse cases?

Yes _____ No _____

Development Step #2: Develop Program Mission

During the planning process, was a written mission statement for the program adopted?

Yes _____ No _____

Development Step #3: Create Organizational Plan

Did the CASA/GAL program prepare a plan with timeframes for its development?

Yes _____ No _____

Did the implementation plan of the CASA/GAL program address employee and volunteer needs in the following areas:

a. *Projection of the number of volunteers needed to effectively serve the population?*

Yes _____ No _____

b. *A first year budget?*

Yes _____ No _____

c. *Strategies to secure donations, in-kind contributions, and other sources of revenue to meet long and short term financial needs?*

Yes _____ No _____

Development Step #4: Establish Program as a Legal Entity

8. What is the CASA/GAL Program's legal status?

_____ *Independent nonprofit organization?*

_____ *A unit of a government entity? (Please skip to question #15.)*

_____ *A unit of an already established nonprofit organization/umbrella agency? (Please skip to question #12.)*

9. If the program is an independent nonprofit organization, has the organization applied for 501c3 status?

Yes _____ No _____

Secured?

Yes _____ No _____

If not yet secured, anticipated date? _____

10. Has the first Board of Directors been convened?

Yes _____ No _____

11. If so, does the first Board of Directors have written directives for the following:

a. *Job descriptions for board members?*

Yes _____ No _____

b. *Identification of skills needed on the board?*

Yes _____ No _____

c. *Development of board recruitment strategies?*

Yes _____ No _____

d. *Development of election and screening procedures?*

Yes _____ No _____

e. *Board member training?*

Yes _____ No _____

12. If the CASA/GAL program was developed under the umbrella of a parent organization:

a. *Was a written agreement developed?*

Yes _____ No _____

b. *Did the written agreement detail procedures for resolving situations in which a conflict of interest might exist between the CASA/GAL program and its parent organization?*

Yes _____ No _____

c. *Did the written agreement detail the protocol for fundraising activities of the organization?*

Yes _____ No _____

d. *Was a time frame established for review and possible revision of the agreement?*

Yes _____ No _____

13. If the program is a nonprofit organization, does the Board of Directors meet at least quarterly?

Yes _____ No _____

14. Are up-to-date written minutes maintained of all governing body and advisory council deliberations and decisions?

Yes _____ No _____

15. Do the constitution and bylaws of the CASA/GAL program, or its written operational procedures in the case of a sub-unit of an organized legal entity:

a. *Describe the organizational structure and responsibilities of the governing body or advisory council?*

Yes _____ No _____

b. *Establish the mechanisms for selection, rotation, and duration of membership and for election of officers?*

Yes _____ No _____

c. *Set the minimum number of formal meetings of the full governing body or advisory council?*

Yes _____ No _____

d. *Set the quorum for these meetings as at least a simple majority of the current membership of the governing body or advisory council?*

Yes _____ No _____

16. Does the governing body of a CASA/GAL program:

a. *Review the management's handling of the CASA/GAL program's fiscal affairs?*

Yes _____ No _____

b. *Review fiscal reports at least quarterly with attention to the relationship between budgeted expenditures and revenues?*

Yes _____ No _____

c. *Examine issues of fiscal policy and budget preparation?*

Yes _____ No _____

17. Did the CASA/GAL program:

a. *Develop written goals and objectives to guide the first year of development?*

Yes _____ No _____

b. *Include designation of responsibility and timelines for each goal and objective?*

Yes _____ No _____

c. *Explore and define potential conflicts of interest?*

Yes _____ No _____

d. *Specify key indicators to measure progress?*

Yes _____ No _____

e. *Identify the personnel, financial, and other resources needed to successfully start a CASA/GAL program and the variety of funding sources that might be available?*

Yes _____ No _____

18. Does the governing body have responsibility for determining the extent and nature of the liability protection needed for personnel and volunteers?

Yes _____ No _____

19. Does the CASA/GAL program have liability protection for staff and volunteers through private insurance or a court/state statute?

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, through which mechanism(s)?

Development Step #5: Build External Relations

20. If the CASA/GAL program is a nonprofit, does it have a written agreement with the juvenile or family court defining the working relationship between the program and the court?

Yes _____ No _____

21. Does the CASA/GAL program regularly communicate with and seek input from the court:

Yes _____ No _____

22. Does the CASA/GAL program make known its roles, functions, and capacities to other agencies, community organizations, government bodies, and corporations, as appropriate to its mission?

Yes _____ No _____

23. Does the CASA/GAL program work closely with organizations such as local bar associations, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups, and with businesses to accomplish its purposes?
Yes _____ No _____
24. Do strategies for increasing community awareness of the program include:
- a. *Media outreach?*
Yes _____ No _____
 - b. *Speaking engagements?*
Yes _____ No _____
 - c. *Distribution of materials?*
Yes _____ No _____
25. Does the CASA/GAL program have a plan for working with the media?
Yes _____ No _____
26. Is there an official, designated spokesperson for the program?
Yes _____ No _____

Memo of Agreement Between

**Friendship Community Care, Inc.
and
CASA of the 5th Judicial District**

The intent of this memo of agreement is to specify the relationship between Friendship Community Care and the CASA advisory board in order to provide high quality services to the youth of the 5th Judicial District of Arkansas. This agreement will be reviewed by the Boards of Friendship Community Care, Inc. and CASA of the 5th Judicial District within the first two years regarding the termination or renewal of this agreement.

Both Friendship Community Care and the CASA Board agree to the following:

1. For the first two years, beginning on April 1, 2000, Friendship Community Care will be the administrative agent for the CASA project. This will include:
 - a) Use of the 501(c) 3 status as a program of Friendship Community Care, Inc.
 - b) Coverage as part of the Friendship Community Care, Inc. liability insurance.
 - c) The staff to be hired will be employees under the personnel policies of Friendship Community Care, Inc. with all rights and benefits. The CASA advisory board will make a hiring recommendation to Friendship Community Care, subject to the approval of the Executive Director and/or board of Friendship Community Care.
 - d) The CASA Program Director will be supervised on a day-to-day basis by the CASA advisory board.
 - e) Friendship Community Care, Inc. will establish a separate fund within the Friendship Community Care, Inc. Accounting System to receive and distribute resources of the CASA Program.
 - f) Friendship Community Care, Inc. will provide assistance with grant writing to the extent possible as designated by the Executive Director.
 - g) Friendship Community Care, Inc. will provide support and expertise to help shape and implement the CASA Program within the 5th Judicial District.
2. There is an agreement that in all public relations material the name of Friendship Community Care, Inc. is used. All written material will include "CASA is administered in the 5th Judicial District of Arkansas by Friendship Community Care, Inc."
3. The CASA Planning Committee will provide appropriate individuals for the establishment of a separate Advisory Board. These individuals will:
 - a) Provide two individuals to sit on the Board of Directors of Friendship Community Care, Inc. in order to provide the support and connection with the Governing Board.
 - b) Adopt by-laws to govern CASA and provide for election of future board members.
 - c) Raise funds so that the program could be self-sufficient and self-sustaining in the 5th Judicial District.
 - d) Seek to establish CASA of the 5th Judicial District as a separate nonprofit organization within the two-year period as described above.
4. The CASA Program will at all times abide by the rules and policies of Friendship Community Care, Inc. and preserve the positive reputation of Friendship Community Care, Inc. in the community.
5. In the event that a conflict of interest exists between the CASA program and Friendship Community Care, the CASA program director, the Executive Director of Friendship Community Care and a CASA representative to the Board of Directors of Friendship Community Care will meet and attempt to find a mutually acceptable solution. If no solution is found, the conflict will be taken to the Board of Directors (or appropriate committee thereof) of Friendship Community Care for resolution.
6. Funds raised by the Friends of CASA, an Auxiliary Board, CASA staff, or the CASA Board will be used for CASA and stay within the CASA account. In any joint fundraising efforts, the division of proceeds will be determined on a case-by-case basis, by mutual agreement of the parties.

Sample Memo of Agreement

7. CASA is regulated by Arkansas Supreme Court and must be implemented in the fashion and language described in Section 9-27-316 of the Arkansas Code. CASA of the 5th Judicial District must be in compliance with the standards of the National and State CASA Associations.

Friendship Community Care, Inc.

Date

CASA Planning Committee

Date

Court Appointed Special Advocates of New Jersey, Inc. Program Development Tool Kit – Phase I

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Developmental Steps for CASA/GAL Programs

1. Establish Commitment

- Conduct Needs Assessment
- Seek Judicial Support
- Inform Key Community Leaders
- Establish Planning Committee

2. Develop Program Mission

- Write Mission Statement

3. Create Organizational Plan

- Decide type of Organization
- Determine Program Structure
- Determine Staffing Needs
- Establish Goals and Timelines

4. Establish Program as a Legal Entity

- Complete Necessary Legal Steps (if incorporating as a new nonprofit corporation)
- Establish Governance or Advisory Body
- Define and Assign Financial Management Duties
- Define and Assign Oversight of legal responsibilities
- Determine Liability Risks
- Research Insurance Needs

5. Secure Funding

- Identify Potential Donors
- Create Initial Budget
- Develop Fundraising Plan
- Seek Funding

6. Develop Management Plan

- Determine Decision-Making Authority
- Develop Job Descriptions
- Determine Position Qualifications
- Establish Hiring Policies and Procedures

7. Build External Relations

- Establish Strong Partnership with Court
- Inform and Educate Community Agencies
- Begin Negotiation of Working Agreements
- Speak to Civic and Community Organizations

8. Plan for Program Operations

- Establish Office
- Recruit and Hire Staff
- Train Staff
- Develop Policies and Procedures

9. Implement Program

- Recruit and Screen Volunteers
- Conduct Training
- Assign Cases
- Evaluate What Works
- Plan for the Future
- Celebrate Accomplishments

Provisional membership extended upon completion of steps 1-5 and the Provisional Membership Self-Assessment that is available by calling the National CASA Association at 800-628-3233. National CASA may invite input from your state association before extending membership.

Full Membership may be extended upon completion of steps 6-9.

Sample Plan for Program Expansion

Blue Ribbon Panel on CASA Program Expansion in New Jersey Final Report and Recommendations

Introduction

The Blue Ribbon Panel was convened to address the challenges of CASA program expansion throughout the State of New Jersey. These challenges include the sustainability of 21 or even 15 separate, independent nonprofit CASA entities in New Jersey, concern about (1) their ability to obtain sufficient funding in an increasingly difficult, highly competitive arena, (2) the need to avoid any public confusion or perception of competition, (3) the need to increase awareness of CASA and educate the public regarding the seriousness of the problem of child abuse and neglect, and (4) avoiding unnecessary duplication of costs and/or efforts.

The goal of the Blue Ribbon Panel was to make recommendations that will allow CASA as a whole to optimize its infrastructure statewide while providing the highest quality of services to children in out-of-home placement.

Accordingly, the Blue Ribbon Panel has made recommendations designed to:

- Consolidate cost centers
- Establish the “CASA Brand” throughout the state (thereby making CASA more recognized and respected)
- Streamline fundraising statewide (in order to capture and capitalize on both local and state-level funder interest)
- Ensure the highest quality of CASA service, and
- Create an organizational structure that allows and encourages economies of cost and program excellence while nurturing critical community ties

CASA of NJ turned to leaders in the corporate, nonprofit, and funding communities for advice and direction. We also looked to a local CASA Board President and an experienced local nonprofit program Executive Director for their significant expertise. Finally, the Blue Ribbon Panel was chaired by a member of the CASA of NJ Advisory Board.

In order to prepare the Blue Ribbon Panel for their task, CASA of NJ provided them with significant information on both the state and local CASA programs, including budget, staffing, capacity, and operation information. In addition to the involvement of a local program Board President and Executive Director on the Panel, all of the nonprofit Board Presidents attended the final discussion meeting at which the Panel’s recommendations were formulated. Their input and observations were critical to the final recommendations.

Central to the Blue Ribbon Panel’s concerns were the need for a united mission and vision among all CASA programs such that, externally, CASA is simply CASA, regardless of program borders. At the same time, the Blue Ribbon Panel recognized the need for local programs to continue to provide community-based services and to have a consistent presence within the individual county. Accordingly, the Blue Ribbon Panel’s recommendations seek to free local programs from mundane administrative functions and allow them to focus needed time and energy on serving children.

The Blue Ribbon Panelists:

Judy Reeves, Blue Ribbon Panel Chair

President, Burgdorff Realtors

Harry Cassidy

Director of the Family Practice Division, Administrative Office of the Courts

Michele Dillon

Board President, CASA of Atlantic and Cape May Counties

Peter Frampton

Strategic External Affairs, PSE&G

Sample Plan for Program Expansion

Wendy McWeeny

MCJ Foundation Grant Administrator and Program Officer

Richard O'Grady

Retired Deputy Director, Division of Youth and Family Services

Linda Reilly

Private Consultant specializing in Program Development, Capacity-building, and Resource Development

Ed Remsen

Executive Director, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of New Jersey

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CASA of New Jersey Board President

Stuart D. Sendell

Community Foundation of New Jersey

Barbara Ward

Executive Director, CASA of Morris and Sussex Counties

Staff support provided by:

Liza Kirschenbaum, CASA of New Jersey

Rita Gulden, CASA of New Jersey

Participation by Nonprofit Board Presidents Cathy Pinto, John Catalano, and Tom Curtin

Recommendation #1

CASA programs should, to the degree possible, consolidate costs centers.

Implementation Steps:

1. Analyze existing local and state program budgets and identify common cost centers and expense items across program lines.
2. Items to include in the analysis:
 - a. Professional Services
 - i. Payroll Service
 - ii. Accounting
 - iii. Audits
 - iv. Bookkeeping
 - v. Attorneys
 - vi. Equipment maintenance
 - vii. Computer consulting
 - b. Printing and duplication
 - c. Insurance
 - i. Liability
 - ii. Director's & Officers
 - iii. Health/Medical
 - d. Bulk or Bundle Phone Rates
 - e. Equipment
 - i. Telephones
 - ii. Computers
 - iii. Business Machines
 - f. Internet and web-related costs
 - g. Advertising
 - h. Purchases
 - i. Major purchases

- ii. Standard supplies purchasing (paper, file folders, etc...)
 - i. Any others identified by budget reviews
3. Conduct a cost/benefit analysis regarding each item of expense or cost center to determine if that item/service could be purchased at a lower cost if done by CASA of NJ on behalf of all of the programs.

Recommendation #2

Develop a unified public awareness campaign in order to ensure that the CASA name is readily identified and its mission is understood by the public. This is often referred to as “Branding.”

Implementation Steps:

1. Create a state-wide approach to public relations with a focus on “the child” and “the volunteer” as opposed to “the CASA program in X County.”
 - a. Analyze existing local and state Public Relations materials (materials that go out to the public).
 - b. Analyze the PR needs of the local and state organizations
 - i. Identify the customer(s) (i.e., the volunteer, the Court, donors, the child him/herself)
 - ii. Analyze how to best appeal to the customer(s)
 - c. Develop PR materials for each type of customer which can be used by all of the CASA organizations (i.e., standard volunteer recruitment brochure, standard funder PR materials, standard press kit materials).
 - d. Focus on articulating a unified vision and mission as well as on establishing measurement indicators.
 - e. Assign PR efforts or out-source them to persons with professional PR experience – there are a number of agencies that have successfully assisted organizations in establishing their “brand.”
2. CASA of NJ should continue its centralized Legislative Education efforts.
3. Funds/resources sufficient for this public relations effort should be identified and dedicated.

Recommendation #3

As CASA of NJ and local CASA programs raise funds, care must be taken not to create confusion in the eyes of the public/donors.

Implementation Steps

1. Create a Strategic Fundraising and Development Plan to support local and state operations.
 - a. Central elements of that Plan should include the following:
 - i. Fundraising by CASA of NJ should be focused on larger resources which would provide more substantial revenue. However, local programs can seek assistance from CASA of NJ when the need or opportunity arises.
 - ii. Funds raised at the state level for pass-through should be allocated out to the local programs based on a number of criteria to be set forth in the Plan, including caseload, demographics, and other factors. Additionally, funds should be dispersed to those local programs which provide services meeting or exceeding Standards and whose volunteers and employees have met related training requirements.
 - iii. To the extent that a local program provides a successful lead to the state level, then the local should receive some form of credit for the lead, whether a certain percentage of the funding received or some added services or assistance from the state organization.
 - b. The Plan should include delineation between state and local fundraising as well as fundraising from one program to another.

2. A full-time, development professional should be hired by CASA of NJ to provide support and direction for state and local fundraising efforts, including soliciting donations, addressing individual giving, and applying for grants.
3. CASA programs at both the state and local level should seek to partner with other nonprofits, particularly those involved with the same group of children and those supportive of the CASA mission. Such partnerships would allow for cross-referrals and partnering for special events.

Recommendation #4

CASA programs should develop a state-wide Quality Assurance Program with established criteria for excellence and a process for ensuring that these criteria are met.

Implementation Steps:

1. Create an Oversight Committee comprised of one representative from each CASA program as well as key stakeholders.
 - a. The Oversight Committee should consistently monitor compliance with the standards established. Monitoring should include regular contact with and site visits to local programs. A primary goal of monitoring should be to identify areas where the state organization can provide services and assistance.
 - b. The Oversight Committee should consider reviewing existing Standards and Management Guidelines in order to develop criteria for CASA program excellence. Criteria for excellence should be established in both program/operations and internal management/fiscal areas, including:
 - i. Program costs (cost per child and cost per volunteer)
 - ii. Numbers of Children Served based on length of time in operation
 - iii. Program Policies and Case Management
 - iv. Volunteer Management
 - v. Personnel Policies
 - vi. Internal Financial Controls
 - vii. Data Collection and Outcome Measurement
 - viii. Board Policies
 - c. The Oversight Committee should consider creating formal agreements (i.e., Charter Agreements or Franchise Agreements) that would govern the relationship between the locals and CASA of NJ and define respective roles. The agreement should also outline the benefits associated with complying with the standards as well as the consequences of non-compliance.
 - d. The Oversight Committee should consider an accreditation or certification process based on evaluations and achievements of criteria established.
2. CASA of NJ should offer consistent technical support, assistance, and training for local programs in order to ensure compliance with standards. CASA of NJ should train to the standards. Special attention should be paid to staff, and particularly case supervisor, training.

Recommendation #5

The organizational structure of CASA in the State of NJ should allow for local program autonomy while maximizing resources and consolidating functions wherever feasible.

Implementation Steps

1. Local programs should, whenever possible, cover regions covering more than one county.
 - a. CASA of NJ should provide support for expansion of existing county programs and development of these regional local programs.
 - b. Regional local programs should be created on the basis of community focus and culture, caseload and need, demographics, and other factors identified during the process of program development.
 - c. CASA programs serving 2 or more counties should maintain an in-county presence but should regionalize administrative and executive functions. This means an office in each county and volunteers recruited from and serving within that county but only 1 central office, 1 Board of Trustees, 1 Executive Director, 1 Program Budget and set of books.
2. Local programs (whether single- or multi-county) should maintain autonomy from CASA of NJ, establish and maintain community connections, and be responsible for local issues and development. All programs should maintain their own Board of Trustees, Budget, Staff, Volunteer Recruitment and Training, and Fundraising.
 - a. In the case of a multi-county program, each county within the program should be responsible for community-based service delivery and responsiveness to the local Family Division as well as local community leaders and community-based groups or agencies.
 - b. Each county within a multi-county program should consider maintaining its own county advisory group to the overall Board of Trustees, its own Budget, Staff, Volunteer Recruitment, Support and Supervision, localized Fundraising and Public Relations.
3. The CASA of NJ Board of Trustees should include one to three representatives from local programs chosen by the Local Program Directors' Network and the Board President's Network. These representatives can be local program volunteers, staff, or board members and will be voting members of the CASA of NJ Board of Trustees. Each such representative should serve for a term of 2 years and then be replaced with a different representative. Local board members should be provided the opportunity to move up to the state level board.
4. Local programs (whether single- or multi-county) should be required to pay "annual dues" or provide some type of financial support to the state level in return for specified benefits (see Charter Agreement referenced in Recommendation #4 above). While the "dues" could be a flat fee, it is highly recommended that it be a percentage of the revenue or budget of that program.
5. CASA of NJ should provide advice and technical assistance as needed, quality assurance through standards or criteria for excellence, regionalized training and development, promotion of the CASA vision and mission, visibility of organization, and professional fundraising/grant writing assistance. While local programs are responsible for training local volunteers, CASA of NJ should be incorporated into volunteer training in order to explain the National and State CASA perspective (i.e., the overall philosophy and approach of CASA)

Chapter 11

Human Resources

The phone rings. The personnel committee chair of the board is asking what needs to be done to ensure office security since an employee was fired yesterday.

Hiring and supervising staff is one of the most challenging tasks for the state CASA/GAL directors who are fortunate enough to have staff. Being supervised by a board can be both wonderful and challenging. This chapter is intended to give a brief overview of common human resources issues for state organizations. Please refer to the National CASA publication, *Employment Practices Handbook: A Management Guide for Effective Employment Practices for CASA/GAL Programs* (available Fall 2004) for more detailed information.

State CASA/GAL organizations that are state-administered programs generally have access to a human resources department and written personnel policies.

Job Descriptions

Written job descriptions are important from the hiring stage onward. Developing a job description helps the staff and board decide what skills are needed in the organization. Start by using the strategic plan to develop job descriptions. What items on the strategic plan are current staff having difficulty completing? What skills are needed to achieve those goals?

Good job descriptions also help the organization recruit and retain the right people. The job posting allows candidates to know precisely what the organization is seeking and the reviewer (or review committee) can focus on which candidates best meet those needs.

Sample job descriptions for the directors of both large and small state organizations can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter. The head of the state organization is usually called the Executive Director if the organization is a nonprofit; if the organization is a state administered program (SAP), this individual is called the CASA/GAL director, CASA/GAL coordinator, CASA/GAL manager or administrator.

When is it time to add staff?

There is no easy answer to the question of when to add staff, but there are a number of factors to consider.

- What is the strategic plan? Are the demands more than current staff can accomplish?
- What is the role of the state organization? Does the state organization facilitate pass-through funding? Is there significant fund

development? Significant involvement in the quality assurance process?

- What are the needs of the local programs? One factor is the age and development level of the programs. New programs typically need more support than older programs. Typically, it is difficult for a state director to effectively support more than 15 local programs if they are nonprofit organizations.

Making the case for adding staff members is essential. Whether a state organization is a SAP or nonprofit, the need for additional staff should be tied to the strategic plan. It may be helpful to have a committee or task force examine the functions of the state organization and envision the staffing required for an “ideal” organization. It may also be helpful to look at comparable organizations: other state CASA/GAL organizations as well as other organizations within the state.

Once the case for additional staff is made, the next question is to seek funding for the position. For SAPs, adding staff will depend in large part upon the state budget status. Timing is critical; if the state is eliminating services and employees, the odds are slim that a request for a new staff person will be viewed positively.

The *Prospective Federal and State Funding Resources for CASA/GAL Programs* guide and the *National CASA State Organization Survey* provide information about funding sources. When a state organization obtains funding for a second (or third or fourth) position, it is an exciting opportunity to diversify the skills and experience of the state organization. Typical job responsibilities include one of the following areas:

- Resource development
- Public relations*
- Grants administration
- New program development
- Field representative, Program Specialist, or Program Operations coordinator*
- Training

(*) Sample job descriptions of these positions are available in the resource documents located at the end of this chapter.

Possible job titles could be Assistant Director (if it is a second position in the office) or Resource Development Coordinator.

Seeking staff diversity

The staff members of CASA/GAL programs nationwide do not reflect the children that we serve in gender or ethnicity. It is vital that the state organization make an effort to recruit qualified diverse applicants. When the staff of state and local CASA/GAL organizations is more diverse, volunteer diversity will be easier to achieve, which leads to better advocacy for children.

Note: The National CASA diversity statement reads, “A diverse CASA/GAL network helps us to better understand and promote the well-being of the children we serve. Embracing diversity makes us better advocates by providing fresh ideas and perspectives for problem solving in our multicultural world, enabling us to respond to each child’s unique needs.”

The 11th Judicial Circuit GAL Program in Miami, Florida suggests the following strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse staff.

“Recruiting is the first step in the hiring process. The goal is to attract qualified people who have skills and experience that meet the requirements of the job you want to fill. Once you have an initial pool of qualified people from which to draw, interviewing and references will screen for other desirable qualities until you can zero in on the candidate with the highest qualifications, *regardless of race or ethnicity*. No one expects you to hire a less-qualified applicant over a more suitable one just because you have set a goal to diversify staff. There are, however, ways you can expand your pool of applicants. This will increase your chances of finding a highly qualified employee who may also be a member of an underrepresented minority in your organization. Here are some tips:

- Place employment advertising in publications, websites or news media that target minority populations.
- When placing an employment ad, be sure to identify your organization as an equal opportunity employer.
- Encourage minority employees to refer qualified minority applicants for open positions.
- Recruit among colleges and universities having high enrollments of minorities by placing ads with their career placement departments.
- Always depict minorities in program materials/brochures.
- Network with community representatives, social groups and professional associations in your community that target minorities.
- Consider allowing staff to join community organizations that target minorities. Besides being a great resource for recruiting staff, it can also boost volunteer recruitment and build community awareness about your program.
- Pay special attention to academic, experience and skill requirements for existing job descriptions to ensure that the requirements in themselves do not constitute inadvertent discrimination. If requirements screen out a *disproportionate* number of minorities, such requirements should be evaluated, and kept only when deemed appropriate.

- Carefully select and train all personnel involved in the recruiting, screening, selection, promotion, disciplinary and other personnel-related processes to ensure elimination of bias in all personnel actions.
- Provide diversity training for all staff to ensure retention.”

A World of Difference—A Manual for Achieving Greater Inclusion (2003, National CASA publication and companion video/DVD) provides additional guidance on diversity issues.

Interviewing and hiring

When hiring state office staff, carefully consider who needs to be involved in the interview process. The people who need to be involved will depend upon the responsibilities of the person being hired, but those with the closest working relationship should be included. These may include state and local staff members, judges or volunteers.

Everyone participating in the interview process should be prepared with a copy of the job description, the applications and résumés of interviewees and a list of permitted and prohibited interview questions. When in doubt about whether a question is permitted, the interviewer should always ask, “Is this question directly related to the job performance?” Examples of prohibited and permitted questions are below.

Prohibited Interview Question	Permitted Interview Questions
Do you have children?	Are you able to work nights and weekends for meetings and trainings? Are you able to travel (if the job requires it)?
Have you ever been arrested?	Do you have any convictions for crimes involving children or domestic situations? Do you have any felony convictions?
What church do you go to?	What community organizations are you involved in that might be helpful to you in your work with CASA/GAL?
How old are you?	Are you over 21?

The same questions should be asked of all candidates, though interviewers should feel free to ask relevant follow up questions. All questions should focus on job duties and the applicant’s skills and experience.

In structuring interview questions, phrase questions in terms of past performance; this is the best indicator of future performance. Instead of asking how a candidate might handle a hypothetical situation about conflict, ask, “Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a client or co-worker. How did you handle it?” If the interviewee does not provide a detailed answer, ask the candidate to be more specific. Be sure to summarize the answers in order to support the hiring decision and for reference in the personnel file.

References should be checked thoroughly by telephone. Be prepared with a specific list of questions concerning the applicant's skills and past performance. Many references are unwilling to give written references because of concerns about liability. Document any feedback provided by references.

When the job is offered and accepted, inform other candidates by phone or by letter. Many states have new hire reporting requirements. If you are not sure what the requirements are, contact your state department of employment. SAPs should contact the human resources department.

Orientation for New State Organization Staff

It is good policy to require all new staff members who do not have previous CASA/GAL experience to attend a volunteer training, regardless of their area of responsibility. This will give them an understanding of and appreciation for the work of volunteer advocates as well as background information on child welfare, relevant laws and the roles of the parties and partners with whom CASA/GAL organizations work. It also increases credibility within the state CASA/GAL network.

Additional orientation for staff should cover the following topics:

- Mission and history
- Review of personnel policies and benefits
- Policies and procedures of the organization
- Budget (particularly as it applies to the position)
- Latest strategic plan
- State brochure and other recent public relations materials
- Contact information and map of local programs
- Most recent annual report
- Organizational chart
- Code of ethics
- Conflict of interest policy
- Specific job responsibilities

While these topics will not be covered in a single orientation session, employers should schedule time early in the tenure of new employees for this important task.

Personnel Policies

Adhering to written personnel policies is the best insurance against an employment-related legal action. Even if there is just one employee in the state office, the organization should have personnel policies and an attorney experienced in employment law should review these policies.

A sample list of topics to be included in personnel policies and sample personnel policies can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.

Each employee should also have a personnel record, which should contain the following documents:

- Job application and/or résumé
- Correspondence including offer of employment letter
- Receipt for employee handbook
- INS Form I-9 (recommended to keep in separate file by year of hire)
- IRS Form W-4
- Salary history
- Performance reviews
- Enrollment forms for employee benefits
- Written communication to and from the employee pertaining to the job
- Complaints and compliments from customers and co-workers
- Awards or citations for excellent performance
- Training records
- Warnings and disciplinary actions including notes on attendance or tardiness
- Documentation of termination or resignation and reasons

Salary and Benefits

The most recent salary and benefit information is available in the National CASA Association *Annual State Organization Survey* (available at casanet.org; see Research and Evaluation). Salaries vary greatly according to the age and structure of the organization. In 2001, just over two-thirds of the state organizations provided health insurance for the executive director, while 57% provided retirement benefits.

For nonprofit state organizations, accessing benefits for employees is a challenge. The National CASA Association is unable to provide a nationwide health insurance plan because no insurance company is willing to underwrite a plan for employees of multiple independent organizations across the country and because insurance companies, plans and regulations vary from state to state.

To obtain an individual (or small group) health insurance policy, start by interviewing insurance agents or brokers to investigate policies from a number of different companies. Ask around at other nonprofit organizations to find out which insurance agent they use and if they have been satisfied. Next, compare policies. Consumer Reports offers ratings of various insurance plans sold around the country along with advice about shopping for individual insurance plans. More affordable options are sometimes available from Blue Cross Blue Shield or HMOs. Some local Chambers of Commerce offer health insurance coverage to their member organizations, although they generally require that the organization have at least two full-time employees.

Lack of benefits and low salaries available to employees are factors that may limit the diversity of staff in state CASA/GAL organizations. Any organization seeking to attract a more diverse staff needs to examine whether limited benefits are affecting staff recruitment. The organization may need to make providing competitive salary and benefits a budgetary priority for the organization. Consider offering low or no cost benefits to employees such as flexible scheduling, telecommuting options and other life balance and family friendly options.

Supervising Staff

Supervising staff is an extremely important and time-consuming task. Job descriptions must consider the time involved supervising others. Evaluation and feedback should be an ongoing practice. At a minimum, each staff member and supervisor should have regular meetings to discuss project priorities and progress. Set aside time for providing appropriate supervision and honor this time. The frequency and length of these meetings will depend on the staff members and the projects involved. For a new employee, weekly meetings are good practice. By having regular meetings, the supervisor will be able to identify problems or challenges early and provide positive feedback. While the CASA/GAL organization should be welcoming and supportive to new employees, it is better to start with closer supervision and then back off as the supervisor and new employee learn the work styles and abilities of each other. It is difficult to begin with loose supervision and then make it more restrictive if warranted.

If an employee is not working to expectations, address the problem promptly. Typical steps for employee counseling are:

1. Meet with employee, attempt to learn the reasons for the underperformance and give an oral warning. This should be documented.
2. If the underperformance continues, give written statement to employee including both the areas of underperformance and the improvements expected. The employee may be considered to be on probation for a given period of time.
3. If the employee does not improve, terminate the employee.

This process should be spelled out in the personnel policies. Employees should also be made aware that depending on the severity of the problem one or more of the steps in the process may be bypassed. If it becomes necessary to terminate an employee, acting quickly (within the policies of the organization) is preferable. The employee's supervisor should inform upper management about the situation and ensure there is a clear record of corrective actions taken. If the director is terminating an employee, the board chair (or personnel committee chair) should be informed.

If an employee is terminated, procedures should exist to ensure office security and confidentiality of files. All computer passwords and pass codes to doors should be changed and the employee should return any keys and employee identification. Locks should be changed, if necessary. If there is security in the building, inform officers that the person is no longer an employee. It is also good practice to inform program staff, judges or others who have worked with the individual about the change in staff. Reasons for terminating the employee should not be given.

It is important to have some familiarity with state employment laws. If the state director is unsure, consult the supervisor, board or an attorney knowledgeable in employment law. Many states are "at-will" employment states, meaning an employee can be terminated for any reason at any time. Even these states may have written policies that provide fair employment practices and procedures for the filing of grievances. Being in an "at-will" state does not exempt an employer from operating within state and federal anti-discrimination laws and following the organization's written policies and procedures. To protect the organization, always have a good business reason for terminating an employee.

An organizational policy should be established on providing references for former employees, whether they resigned or were terminated. Many attorneys are recommending employers only verify dates of employment but not provide any evaluative information. This matter should be discussed with legal counsel.

Evaluations

Regular employee evaluations are a basic element of operating a quality CASA/GAL program; evaluations protect both the employee and the organization. Despite this, many nonprofit boards of directors and even state governments neglect this duty entirely. It may be incumbent upon the state organization director to request their own evaluation.

The simplest way to conduct an evaluation is to start with a job description. Each item on the job description can be rated with a simple scale such as “exceeds expectations, meets expectations, does not meet expectations,” along with room for comments. The supervisor should complete the form (the personnel committee of the board, for nonprofit state organization directors; the director or immediate supervisor for other employees) and the employee being evaluated should complete the form as well. A meeting should be scheduled to discuss the performance appraisal. Particular attention should be paid to areas where the employee and the supervisor disagree about the ratings; this provides an excellent opportunity to clarify job expectations. The supervisor and employee should develop an improvement plan, if called for, and both should sign the evaluation.

A sample performance evaluation based on the sample director job description is available in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.



Additional Resources:

Employment Practices Handbook: A Management Guide for Effective Employment Practices for CASA/GAL Programs (available Fall 2004)

National CASA’s *Achieving Our Mission* (*)

Standards for Local Programs (*)

A World of Difference—A Manual for Achieving Greater Inclusion (*)

African American Advisory Committee, (casanet.org/program-services/aaac/index.htm)

Hispanic/Latino Advisory Committee (casanet.org/program-services/lhac/index.htm)

(*) National CASA Association Publication

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key human resource issues in your state:

- Are there job descriptions for all staff members?
- Are there up-to-date personnel files for all staff members?
- Does the organization do at least annual formal reviews of all staff? Who is responsible for these? What format is used?
- Are there personnel policies? Are they clear and consistent and do they include all recommended areas?

Human Resources Resources & Sample Documents

Sample Job Descriptions (Executive Director)

Sample Job Description (Program Operations/Field Representative)

Sample Job Description (Assistant Director/Public Relations)

Sample Employee Evaluation Form

Sample List of Personnel Policies

Sample Personnel Policies Manual

Sample Reference Questions

Executive Director Job Description

The Executive Director of the Court Appointed Special Advocate Association serves as the organization's Chief Executive and Administrative Officer, reports to the Board of Directors and serves at its pleasure, subject to the provisions of any employment contract and the personnel policies of the organization.

The Executive Director's duties include:

I. Board Relations And Development

- Maintains ongoing relations with the Association's Board of Directors, Board Committees and Advisory Council.
- Administers the Board orientation and training program.
- Participates in new member recruitment and development activities.
- Interprets and informs the Board concerning trends in the field of service in which the Association is engaged by maintaining involvement in the profession and nonprofit management.
- Staffs Board Committees as required and attends all meetings of the Board of Directors.
- Provides written quarterly activity reports outlining achievements and concerns.

II. General Administration

- Recommends policies to the Board and/or assists Board in effective and economical operation of the agency.
- Implements policies adopted by the Board.
- Maintains accountability of the agency.
- Overall responsibility for management of day-to-day operations.
- Hires/fires and supervises all Association staff.

III. Financial Administration

- Oversees operation of agency budgets, controls resources once approved.
- Directs financial operations, including preparation of tax returns and financial statements.
- Oversees preparation for audits and preparation of financial reports as required by funding sources.

IV. Fund Development

With Board of Directors and Fund Development Committee, directs resource development efforts for the agency, including direct solicitations, grant and proposal writing, event planning, and obtaining public funding. Supervise other staff and consultants, as available, in performance of these duties.

Works with the Judicial Council to maintain and increase state public support for local CASA programs and for the Association.

V. Program Development

- Provides management and leadership with respect to all programmatic goals as adopted by the Board of Directors.
- Works in partnership with local CASA programs in establishing and pursuing strategies for serving more children in the dependency system.
- Provides or directs training and technical assistance programs to support and develop local CASA programs throughout the state.
- General management of special Association projects.
- Provides direct consultation on local program issues and direct assistance to local programs and start-ups in complying with legislative mandates, including State Rule of Court 1424 governing local CASA programs and Welfare and Institutions Code section 100 et. seq.

VI. Public Relations

- Works in partnership with local CASA programs to achieve name recognition statewide and to facilitate collection and dissemination of public relations resources.
- Maintains contacts with the media and with other agencies through presentations, speaking engagements and written communications.
- Designated as chief spokesperson for the organization.

VII. Public Policy and Legislative Advocacy

- Works in partnership with local CASA programs to address public policy issues and engage in legislative advocacy on behalf of dependent children, balancing the need for the credibility of a unified state position with the needs of local organizations.
- Maintains effective relations with other professional and social service groups, the state legislature, state agencies, and other policy makers.
- Serves on appropriate statewide committees or otherwise ensures participation by the Association.

VIII. Cultural Competency

Works in partnership with local CASA programs to promote cultural competency in board, staff and volunteer recruitment, development, and retention.

Adapted from the California CASA Executive Director Job Description

STATE OF OREGON

OREGON COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

This position is:

- Mgmt Service-Supv
- Mgmt Service-Conf
- Classified

- Unclassified
- Executive Service

- New Revised

POSITION DESCRIPTION

** PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM **

SECTION 1. POSITION INFORMATION

- a. Class Title: **Program Representative 2**
- b. Class No.: **Z0813**
- c. Effective Date: **6/1/02**
- d. Position No.: **7112079**
- e. Working Title: **CASA Program Coordinator**
- f. Work Unit: **Program Services Section**
- g. Agency No.: **423000**
- h. Agency Name: **Oregon Commission on Children and Families**
- i. Employee Name: **Rebecca F. Smith**
- j. Work Location (City-County): **Salem, Marion County**

- k. Position: Permanent Seasonal Limited Duration Academic Year
 Full Time Part Time Intermittent Job Share

- l. FLSA: Exempt Non-Exempt
- m. Eligible for Overtime: Yes No

SECTION 2. PROGRAM/POSITION INFORMATION

- a. Describe the program in which this job exists. Include program purpose, who's effected, size, and scope. Include relationship to agency mission.

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program provides advocacy for abused and neglected children in the juvenile court proceedings. This is achieved through a network of local programs that train and supervise volunteer advocates that need technical assistance. This program is currently operational in each of Oregon's 36 counties. This program assists the Oregon Commission on Children and Families in meeting its mission to *champion community efforts that foster healthy children and families*. CASAs provide support for abused and neglected children in local communities.

- b. Describe the purpose of this position, and how it functions within this program, by completing this statement:

The purpose of this job/position is to . . .

The CASA Program Coordinator coordinates the statewide effort to provide quality training, support and technical assistance to more than 1000 volunteers serving 3,927 children (in 1999) with the hope of continuing to expand the number of volunteers statewide and thus the number of children served. While great strides have been made in this area, it is estimated that only one-third of the children are currently being served. The CASA Program Coordinator must be knowledgeable about the child welfare system and the juvenile court system, and shall have experience in developing and administering local, state and national CASA program standards, services and outcomes, program planning, management and evaluation, training, meeting facilitation, and conflict management and resolution, while being familiar with the issues unique to Oregon.

SECTION 3. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES

List major duties. Note percentage of time duties are performed. If this is an existing position, mark "N" for new duties or "R" for revised duties.

Sample Job Description (Program Operations)

% of Time	N/R	DUTIES
30		<u>Technical Assistance/Training/Community-based Program Development:</u> Provide consultation (telephone/fax/online) and onsite visits for the 32 programs (serving 36 counties) in Oregon. Explores and maintains current knowledge of local, state and national issues, research findings, model program designs, and creative ideas relating to CASA programs. Provide training, assistance, communication networking, and consultation to CASA Programs in developing and maintaining systems to assure quality/best practice and compliance with National and State standards.
20		<u>Outreach and Advocacy:</u> Serves as a resource to state and local commissions, government administrative officials, and related agencies, when expertise is needed in the CASA program and issue areas related to advocating for children in the court system. Joins Commission staff and other state and local partners in creating a uniform system for systems change on behalf of abused and neglected children in the court system. Assures that there is appropriate community education and public awareness for the program and for the valuable investment our state makes as it supports and funds advocacy for these children.
30		<u>Program Monitoring and Outcome Measurement:</u> Assists local programs in developing and maintaining clear research-based outcomes and measures based in best practice. Develops/maintains statewide research-based outcomes and measures based in best practice, and a clear system of data collection and reporting that meets the needs of the state CASA program, the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, and National CASA. Ensures that this data is collected and disseminated accurately and in a timely fashion. Develops/maintains a monitoring system, including onsite review, to support program improvement and National and State standard compliance.
20		<u>Policy Development/Government Administration:</u> <u>Team:</u> Represents Executive Director at state level meetings. Assists the Director with responsibilities in strategic planning, analyzing resources and needs, problem solving of politically sensitive issues, and development of Commission policy and budget. Develop procedures and issue summaries. Work in a team environment with other staff to develop team strategies, goals and objectives. Handle special projects for Executive Director. <u>Intergovernmental Relations:</u> Work collaboratively with other state agencies in liaison role to facilitate coordination of CASA program findings with other state agencies. Responsibilities may include developing interagency agreements, leading or serving on special task forces or committees, and solving problems related to the impact of state policies and practices on abused and neglected children. Work to improve and develop relationships between state and local government. <u>Legal/Administrative:</u> Meet with state and local government officials, other community leaders, and the public to interpret program requirements, applicable federal and state laws, statutes, state administrative rules, regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures related to CASA management.
100%		

SECTION 4. WORKING CONDITIONS

Describe special working conditions, if any, that are a regular part of this job. Include frequency of exposure to these conditions.

General office conditions, occasional overtime, and travel to all parts of the state. Occasional out-of-state travel.

SECTION 5. GUIDELINES

- a. List any established guidelines used to do this job, such as state or federal laws or regulations, policies, manuals or desk procedures.

The work of this position follows the legislative intent, policies, and procedures outlined in ORS419A.170 and in House Bill 2004 (1993 Legislature). It is guided by agency administrative rules and policy decisions of the State

Commission on Children and Families, in addition to Department of Administrative Services administrative rules and other laws, policies, and regulations related to agency budgets and state agency administration.

b. How are these guidelines used to perform the job?

This position will often interpret and explain CASA program standards, juvenile court proceedings and child welfare case management laws, Commission and other rules, policies and guidelines to CASA directors and volunteers, county administrative officials, youth agencies, state agency staff, and other state agencies, and to the National CASA Association.

SECTION 6. WORK CONTACTS

With whom outside of co-workers in this work unit must this position regularly come in contact?

<u>Who Contacted</u>	<u>How</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>How Often?</u>
Non-profit Boards of Directors CASA Coordinators & volunteers Advisory Boards, County & non-Profit sponsoring organization staff	Written/oral	Communicate information, interpret rules, guidelines, and policies Communicate program information, gather information from these groups about current issues, program design needs, and evaluation models	Daily
County administrative officials	Written/oral Communication	Communicate information, interpret rules, guidelines, and policies	As requested
County Children and Families Commissions	Written/oral	Communicate information, interpret rules, guidelines, and policies; provide technical assistance, program development, and system evaluation information	Daily and weekly
Federal officials and staff Other state agencies	Written/oral	Provide technical and program information and data; coordinate technical assistance System development	As requested
Interest and advocacy groups	Written/oral	Communicate program information, gather information from these groups about current issues, program design needs, evaluation models, collaborate on system development	Weekly, monthly,

SECTION 7. JOB-RELATED DECISION MAKING

Describe the kinds of decisions likely to be made by this position. Indicate effect of these decisions where possible.

The work of this position requires on-the-spot decision-making while working with local government officials and CASA programs in communities and decision-making that must be researched by investigating state, federal, and agency policies and guidelines. Day-to-day decisions are made independently. The consequence of poor judgment or the inability to make appropriate decisions will directly affect the Commission’s ability to work effectively and in good faith partnership with local governments and communities, and will directly affect the ability of CASA programs to strengthen their service to abused and neglected children.

SECTION 8. REVIEW OF WORK

Who reviews the work of this position? (List classification title and position number.) How? How often? Purpose of the review?

The work is reviewed by the Program Service Manager and the Deputy Director through informal conferences, status reports and formal evaluation. Work is also guided by consultation with other program staff and team members.

SECTION 9. SUPERVISORY DUTIES TO BE COMPLETED ONLY FOR POSITIONS IN MANAGEMENT SERVICE

a. How many employees are directly supervised by this position? 0 Through Subordinate Supervisors? 0

b. Which of the following supervisory/management activities does this job perform?

- Plans Work
- Responds to Grievances
- Hires/Fires (or Effectively Recommends)
- Assigns Work
- Disciplines/Rewards
- Prepares and Signs Performance Appraisals
- Approves Work

SECTION 10. ADDITIONAL JOB-RELATED INFORMATION

Any other comments that would add to an understanding of this position:

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: List any special mandatory recruiting requirements for this position:

The CASA Program Coordinator must be knowledgeable about the child welfare system and the juvenile court system, and shall have experience in developing and administering local, state and national CASA program standards, services and outcomes, program planning, management and evaluation, training, meeting facilitation, and conflict management and resolution, while being familiar with the issues unique to Oregon.

BUDGET AUTHORITY: If this position has authority to commit agency operating money, indicate in what area, how much (biennially) and type of funds:

Budget is committed with delegated authority of the Executive Director.

SECTION 11. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Attached is a current organizational chart.

=====

Employee Signature Date

Supervisor Signature Date

Appointing Authority Signature Date

Colorado CASA Field Representative Job Description

Job Focus:

- Ongoing technical assistance -*particularly* to newer programs
- Statewide CASA Agency Quality Assurance Process
- New Agency Development
- Colorado CASA Training Conference

Job Description:

Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree and progressive experience as staff person in a nonprofit agency. Experience must include: work with nonprofit Board of Directors and supervision of volunteers. Must have a valid Colorado driver's license and be able to travel across Colorado - generally by automobile.

- 1. Provide ongoing technical assistance and communication tools for existing CASA programs**
 - a. Coordinate Program Directors' Sharing Meetings
 - b. Contribute to publishing of monthly CASAFAX
 - c. Provide research and resources, including *CASA in A Box*, as appropriate and needed for program directors, boards and staff.
 - d. Continue the development of *CASA in A Box* materials
- 2. Ensure and enhance CASA program quality through establishment of a statewide CASA agency quality assurance process.**
 - a. Work collaboratively with Agency Directors and State Executive Director to research and develop a process.
 - b. Implement quality assurance process.
- 3. Assist communities with new CASA program development.**
 - a. Focus on the development of a specific number of new CASA programs annually.
 - b. Provide technical assistance to communities starting CASA programs.
- 4. Assist with organization, planning and implementation of annual Colorado CASA Training Conference.**

Arkansas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Assistant Director (Public Relations) Job Description

Public Relations

- ◆ Plan and implement a public relations program in order to:
 - increase awareness of CASA statewide,
 - help local CASA programs recruit volunteers and board members, with an emphasis on reaching the African American and Latino communities, and
 - educate the public on issues surrounding child abuse and neglect.
- ◆ Produce quarterly newsletter for program staff, volunteers, board members, and the public.
- ◆ Maintain and update an Arkansas CASA website with links to local programs and contact information for each area.
- ◆ Assist local offices with press releases and publicity materials.
- ◆ Prepare education materials for legislative session.
- ◆ Coordinate CASA participation in Child Abuse Awareness Month, including the Light of Hope event.
- ◆ Coordinate CASA conference and/or participation with joint meetings and conferences.

Fund Development

- ◆ Develop statewide fundraising plan to target private corporations and individuals.
- ◆ Research and disseminate information to local CASA programs regarding potential grant sources.

Program Development

- ◆ Assist director to provide training and technical assistance programs to support and develop local CASA programs throughout Arkansas.
- ◆ Assist director to provide direct consultation on local program issues and direct assistance to local programs and start-ups in complying with National and State standards.

General Administration

- ◆ Coordinate other projects as assigned by the director.

Qualifications

- ◆ Bachelor's degree in marketing, public relations, journalism, liberal arts or related field.
- ◆ Experience in public relations, marketing, fundraising and/or grant writing preferred.
- ◆ Previous experience with a CASA program strongly preferred. If not already a trained CASA volunteer, the assistant director is expected to participate in CASA volunteer training within the first six months of employment.
- ◆ Strong community connections preferred.
- ◆ Excellent writing skills required.
- ◆ Travel and some weekend and evening work required.
- ◆ Criminal background check and child abuse central registry check required.

Ad Copy

The Administrative Office of the Courts is seeking an Assistant Director for the state Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) office to increase public awareness of CASA with a focus on the African American and Latino communities. Bachelor's degree required. Experience with public relations, marketing, and grant writing preferred. Résumé and references should be sent to Arkansas CASA, 625 Marshall St., Box 2100, Little Rock, AR, 72201. Review of applications will begin on . . .

Executive Director Evaluation

I. Board Relations And Development

- Maintains ongoing relations with the Association's Board of Directors, Board Committees and Advisory Council.
- Administers the Board orientation and training program.
- Participates in new member recruitment and development activities.
- Interprets and informs the Board concerning trends in the field of service in which-the Association is engaged by maintaining involvement in the profession and nonprofit management.
- Staffs Board Committees as required and attends all meetings of the Board of Directors.
- Provides written quarterly activity reports outlining achievements and concerns.

exceeds expectations

meets expectations

does not meet expectations

Comments:

II. General Administration

- Recommends policies to the Board and/or assists Board in effective and economical operation of the agency.
- Implements policies adopted by the Board.
- Maintains accountability of the agency.
- Overall responsibility for management of day-to-day operations.
- Hires/fires and supervises all Association staff.

exceeds expectations

meets expectations

does not meet expectations

Comments:

III. Financial Administration

- Oversees operation of agency budgets, controls resources once approved.
- Directs financial operations, including preparation of tax returns and financial statements.
- Oversees preparation for audits and preparation of financial reports as required by funding sources.

exceeds expectations

meets expectations

does not meet expectations

Comments:

IV. Fund Development

- With Board of Directors and Fund Development Committee, directs resource development efforts for the agency, including direct solicitations, grant and proposal writing, event planning, and obtaining public funding. Supervise other staff and consultants, as available, in performance of these duties.
- Works with Judicial Council to maintain and increase state public support for local CASA programs and for the Association.

exceeds expectations

meets expectations

does not meet expectations

Comments:

V. Program Development

- Provides management and leadership with respect to all programmatic goals as adopted by the Board of Directors.
- Works in partnership with local CASA programs in establishing and pursuing strategies for serving more children in the dependency system.
- Provides or directs training and technical assistance programs to support and develop local CASA programs throughout the state.
- General management of special Association projects.
- Provides direct consultation on local program issues and direct assistance to local programs and start-ups in complying with legislative mandates, including State Rule of Court 1424 governing local CASA programs and Welfare and Institutions Code section 100 et. seq.

exceeds expectations

meets expectations

does not meet expectations

Comments:

VI. Public Relations

- Works in partnership with local CASA programs to achieve name recognition statewide and to facilitate collection and dissemination of public relations resources.
- Maintains contacts with the media and with other agencies through presentations, speaking engagements and written communications.
- Designated as chief spokesperson for the organization

exceeds expectations

meets expectations

does not meet expectations

Comments:

VII. Public Policy and Legislative Advocacy

- Works in partnership with local CASA programs to address public policy issues and engage in legislative advocacy on behalf of dependent children, balancing the need for the credibility of a unified state position with the needs of local organizations.
- Maintains effective relations with other professional and social service groups, the state legislature, state agencies, and other policy makers.
- Serves on appropriate statewide committees or otherwise ensures participation by the Association.

exceeds expectations meets expectations does not meet expectations

Comments:

VIII. Cultural Competency

- Works in partnership with local CASA programs to promote cultural competency in board, staff and volunteer recruitment, development, and retention.

exceeds expectations meets expectations does not meet expectations

Comments:

What do you believe are the strengths of the executive director?

Where can the executive director improve his/her performance?

What goals does the executive director have for the coming year?

Signatures:

Executive Director

Chair, Personnel Committee

Sample List of Personnel Policies

Work Schedule

Work day hours
Lunch periods
Holidays
Vacation
Sick Time
Personal Leave
Leave of Absence
Severe Weather
Jury Duty

Hiring Procedures

Americans With Disabilities Act
Interviewing job candidates
Checking references
Offering employment

New Employee and Internal Orientation

New employee orientation – general information
Intern orientation
New employee and internal orientation checklist

Compensation

Paydays
Overtime and compensation time
Classifying employees as exempt or non-exempt
Salary ranges
Positioning pay within a salary range
Maintaining competitive salary information
Reclassifying positions
Salary review policy
Promotional increases
Withholding salary increase due to performance
Withholding salary increase due to leave of absence

Payroll Information & Timekeeping

Procedures

Payroll information -- General
Payroll information -- Direct deposit procedures
Payroll information -- Required and voluntary payroll deductions
Timekeeping -- General discussion of non-exempt and exempt employee classifications
Supervisor's signature

Benefits

Eligibility and general information
Types of available benefits
Medical insurance
Dental insurance
Disability insurance
Life insurance

Retirement plan
Social security
Employee assistance program

Workers' Compensation Information and Procedures

When there is an injury or accident on the job
What is covered under Workers' Compensation
Medical expenses resulting from a work-related injury
Resources available

Performance Assessment Procedures

Performance assessment cycle
Performance assessment process
Dealing with performance issues
Discipline: when the positive approach does not work
Separation from employment checklist
Communications by the supervisor regarding personnel issues
COBRA (Consolidated Budget Reconciliation Act)
Leave-taking procedures

Financial Management

Budget management
Capital expenditures
Supervisor's responsibilities in maintaining the budget
Operating management
Financial reporting

Supplementary Information

Discrimination or sexual harassment complaints
Complaints regarding programs or staff

Data Practices

Policy
Procedures
Definitions
Security of Records
External releases
Internal releases
Use of data
Legal procedures
Destruction of records
Staff access

Sample Personnel Policies Manual

Adapted from the Ohio CASA/GAL Personnel Policies Manual

The purpose of this manual is the presentation of guidelines and suggested courses of action which will contribute to the uniform, fair, and consistent treatment of all Ohio CASA/GAL Association employees. This Policies and Procedures Manual does not pretend to be a substitute for your good judgment and discretion; neither does it set forth magic resolutions to all conceivable personnel situations. Exceptions may be made from time to time on the basis of particular circumstances. This manual does not constitute a contract for employment with the Ohio CASA/GAL Association either express or implied, and the Association reserves the right at any time to change, delete, or add to any of the provisions at its sole discretion. Further, the Ohio CASA/GAL Association reserves the right, at all times, to take any action deemed to be in the best interest of the Association. Lastly, the employment relationship between the Ohio CASA/GAL Association and its employees is an employment-at-will relationship. As such, either the Ohio CASA/GAL Association or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason.

I. Statement of Non-Discrimination and Political Activity

- A. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association is an equal opportunity employer and follows all applicable Federal and State laws including those prohibiting discrimination in the workplace. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association values diversity and believes it makes the Association more effective. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association makes employment decisions solely on the qualification of the individual, and fosters that kind of culture throughout its dealings with all employees. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on any characteristic protected by law. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association welcomes qualified individuals with known disabilities and, whenever possible, makes reasonable accommodations for them. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association also makes reasonable accommodations for individuals' religious observances and practices.
- B. Employees shall not support, contribute to or assist any political candidate or issue during working hours.

II. Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Ohio CASA/GAL not to tolerate any form of sexual harassment.

All employees are entitled to work in a harassment-free environment without fear of threat or intimidation. Employees and applicants for employment have legal safeguards to assist them if harassment occurs.

The Executive Director is responsible for maintaining an atmosphere that is harassment-free and for taking steps to insure that harassment by anyone involving co-workers is prohibited.

Sexual harassment is defined as any deliberate, or repeated unsolicited verbal comment, question, representation or physical contact of a sexual nature unwelcome to the recipient.

Such conduct may include but is not limited to:

- a. Offensive and/or suggestive comments or gestures of a sexual nature.
- b. Physical actions and/or threats of a sexual nature.
- c. Continual or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
- d. Graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body.
- e. Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual.
- f. The display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Retaliating against someone who complains about sexual harassment is prohibited.

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated by the Ohio CASA/GAL Association. Persons who engage in sexual harassment will be subject to being discharged from employment.

It is our practice to investigate all complaints and resolve them as quickly as possible. If you experience sexual harassment, don't keep silent. Tell the offender to stop his or her behavior and report the incident to the Executive Director or confidentially to the Board President.

It is the Ohio CASA/GAL Association's practice to take reasonable preventative steps to eliminate sexual harassment from our facilities by raising the subject, expressing strong disapproval, developing appropriate sanctions, informing employees of their right to raise, and how to raise, the issue of harassment and developing methods to sensitize all concerned.

III. Qualifications For Employment

- A. Opportunity for employment with the Ohio CASA/GAL Association shall be open to any person who can present satisfactory evidence of qualifications for the position to be filled. No person may be employed by the organization if s/he will be supervising or will be supervised by another member of her/his immediate family.
- B. Board members and their immediate family members will be excluded from consideration for employment by the organization. If a Board member wishes to apply for a position s/he must resign from the Board of Directors prior to making an application for employment.
- C. Additionally, immediate family members of employees may not serve on the Board of Directors.

A member of an immediate family shall include: husband, wife, father, mother, children, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, grandchildren, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law or other relative residing with the employee.

IV. Promotion And Transfers From Within

Promotions or transfers of current staff shall be at the discretion of, and determined by the Executive Director, and may be based on the needs of the Association, evaluation of past performance, and capacity for the vacant position.

V. Personnel Records

A. Confidential Employee Record

1. A personnel record for each employee is considered confidential material and shall be kept by the Executive Director. This record may include all documents which the individual may have been required to complete, any evaluations, letters of recommendation or discipline and any other items considered to be necessary for either the application and hiring process or the appraisal and, when appropriate, the termination process.
2. The Executive Director, the Chair of the Personnel Committee and the President of the Board of Directors shall be the only persons having direct access to the record.
3. Information in the employee's record may be made available to those persons authorized by the President of the Board of Directors for the purpose of review and appraisal of the individual's performance. No other persons are permitted to have access to an employee's personnel record without the written consent of the individual whose record is being reviewed.
4. A current employee may view her/his record, except those confidential statements which the employee previously had waived the right to see, or that which is legally protected from disclosure upon request to the Executive Director.
5. A current employee may review her/his files only in the presence of the Executive Director, the Chair of the Personnel Committee or the President of the Board of Directors.
6. An employee will be notified when a new item is placed in his/her file.
7. The employee record will kept for a period of five years after the resignation or termination of the employee.

B. The Employee Working File

A partial working file may be maintained for each employee for the

purpose of conducting regular organizational functions such as keeping adequate information for payroll purposes, insurance and other fringe benefits, including vacations hours, etc. If maintained, this file may be in the custody of the administrative assistant or the executive director and only authorized staff members, as deemed necessary, shall have access to it. This file may include, but not be limited to:

1. The employment application, confirmation of employment letter, position description filled by applicant, program funding applicant's position, authorized salary, W-4 withholding statement, special withholding authorizations, authorized pay increases and dates, termination notices and other such materials necessary to maintain accurate records.
2. The employee's confidential personnel record and working file are the property of the Ohio CASA/GAL Association. No employee shall be allowed to take possession of her/his personnel records either while employed by or upon leaving the Ohio CASA/GAL Association's employ.

VI. *Job Description and Compensation*

A. *Job Descriptions*

A job description may exist for the positions in the Ohio CASA/GAL Association. These job descriptions will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. Given the size of our staff and the evolving needs of the organization the job description is only a general guide. The employee's job duties may be modified by the Executive Director or the Board at any time.

B. *Compensation*

Pay dates will be every other week and will be established with the approval of the Executive Director and the Finance Committee.

C. *Deductions*

All deductions as required by law will be made from an employee's pay. Additional voluntary payroll deductions may be made but are subject to the approval of the Executive Director and the Ohio CASA/GAL Association Board of Directors.

D. *Flex Time*

Flex time may be available if approved by the Executive Director. No overtime or compensatory time is available for exempt employees.

VII. *Performance Reviews*

A. *Probationary Review*

At the discretion of the Executive Director, new Employees may be subject to a 180 day probationary review during which time the employee will have the opportunity to determine her/his satisfaction with her/his employment; and the Ohio CASA/GAL Association will have the opportunity to closely review the work of the employee to determine her/his qualifications for continued employment. However, the Ohio CASA/GAL Association or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason.

1. Employees on probationary review may receive a performance appraisal by her/his immediate supervisor on or before thirty (30) days into the probationary period.
2. An extended probationary review may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director.
3. During the probationary review period, the employee is entitled to benefits as established in the Personnel Policies Manual.

B. *Annual Appraisal*

1. After satisfactory completion of any probationary review, it is the goal of the Executive Director to try to evaluate each employee once a year using the employee appraisal system adopted by the Ohio CASA/GAL Association. At the completion of the evaluation, the appraisal form must be signed by both the supervisor and the employee. Signatures of both parties simply indicates the written evaluation has been given to the employee by the supervisor and that there has been discussion.
2. In the event there is disagreement with the Executive Director and the employee over one or more parts of the evaluation, the employee may list those items with which she/he is in disagreement and may attach written reasons for such disagreement. Such statements must be completed within seven working days of the evaluation. The entire appraisal will become part of the employee's permanent record.

VIII. *Separation From Employment*

1. **Resignation:** Employees who wish to resign shall give notice to the Executive Director at the earliest possible date preferably thirty days, but no less than two weeks. Employees who resign will be paid for accumulated vacation time if all pertinent job assignments have been completed, including the filing of written reports and/or pending lists as directed. Accumulated sick time is not paid out at resignation.
2. **Dismissal:** Dismissal is be construed as an employee's separation from employment other than resignation.

- a. Dismissal can result from unsatisfactory job performance, misappropriation of funds, violation of office rules and regulations, unethical behavior, working under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol, incompetence, reorganization, economic factors, any behavior which reflects negatively on the image of the agency, the needs of the Association or any other reason with or without cause.
- b. In the event of dismissal due to no fault of the employee the Executive Director may in her/his discretion authorize the payment for accrued but unused vacation days not to exceed the maximum number of days the employee is able to earn in one year, if all pertinent job assignments have been completed, including the filing of written reports and/or pending lists as directed.
- c. The Executive Director is responsible for the decision to dismiss or discipline all subordinates employees.

IX. *Grievances*

- A. The employee should address the grievance in writing and request the intervention of the Executive Director. The written grievance shall identify the aggrieved, the date and time the incident occurred, the facts and a summary of the informal attempt to resolve the issue. The Executive Director at her/his discretion may schedule a grievance meeting to discuss the matter after receiving the grievance. Copies of the grievance and any written response will be maintained in the employees file.
- B. If the grievance concerns the Executive Director, the same procedure shall apply but the grievance should be addressed to the Chair of the Personnel Committee of the Board, who may schedule a grievance meeting.

X. *Employee Benefits*

All employees shall be eligible to receive the following benefits, subject to the specific conditions of the benefit:

- A. *Vacations*
 1. The normal vacation period will be considered to be the twelve month period corresponding to the anniversary date of the employment of the employee. Vacation time shall be accumulated beginning with the date of employment.
 2. Staff will utilize vacation time within the earned vacation year. One week vacation may be carried over to the following year with the approval of the Executive Director, for staff, and the Executive Committee, for Executive Director.
 3. Staff vacations and personal days will be approved at the discretion

of the Executive Director to ensure appropriate staffing of the office.

4. The following table shows how much vacation may be earned by an employee in any given year:

Part-time, non-exempt employees
offered as budget allows and as approved by Board.

Full-time, non-exempt employees
2 work weeks in years 1 - 4
3 work weeks in years 5 and beyond

Full-time, exempt employees
3 work weeks in years 1 - 4
4 work weeks in years 5 and beyond

5. Records of vacation times earned and used by staff will be maintained by the executive director or administrative assistant.
6. Vacation time may be taken as it is earned/accrued. The accrual schedule is defined as 3.08 hrs per pay period.

B. *Holidays*

1. The following are paid holidays for all Ohio CASA/GAL Association staff. They are listed as they appear starting with the beginning of the fiscal year.

Independence Day (July 4)
Labor Day (1st Monday in September)
Veterans Day (November 11)
Thanksgiving (4th Thursday and Friday of November)
Christmas (December 25)
New Year's Day (January 1)
Martin Luther King Day (3rd Monday of January)
President's Day (3rd Monday of February)
Memorial Day

2. Holidays occurring on Saturday will be observed on Friday while those occurring on Sunday will be observed on Monday. A holiday falling within a scheduled vacation period will not count as a vacation day.
3. Compensation for paid holidays for part-time staff will be determined by averaging the number of hours worked per day and applying those hours to the paid holiday reimbursement.

C. *Leaves of Absence*

1. **Sick Leave:** In cases of illness, paid sick leave will be granted within reasonable limits. Such paid sick leave will accumulate at the rate of one day of sick leave for each month of employment. Part-time employees will accrue sick leave at the rate of 1/5 of their work week per month. No more than 30 working days of sick leave may be accumulated. Part-time employees can accrue up to 30 times 1/5 of their work week. Absences of more than 5 continuous days require written validation by physician.
2. **Family leave:** Sick leave, personal leave and accumulated vacation time may all be used as part of a maternity/adoption/foster care leave or leave to care for an ill family member. In addition, an individual may, with approval of the Executive Director, may take consecutive calendar days as leave of absence, not to exceed 90 total days, without pay, and the Ohio CASA/GAL Association will continue to pay for non-government benefits other than salary. The individual's position will be held open during that time.
3. **Personal Leave:** All staff members may have up to two (2) days per year of personal leave with salary. Such days must be approved by the Executive Director. One day of personal leave may be accumulated for each six months of employment and may not be carried over to the next employment year.
4. **Bereavement Leave:** Any employee who experiences the death of a member of his/her immediate family may receive five days leave with pay. The immediate family means husband/wife, father/mother, children, sister/brother, grandmother/grandfather, grandchildren, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law or others residing with the employee. In the case of the death of others not previously stipulated, the employee may take off the day of the funeral with pay. It shall be within the discretion of the Executive Director to grant other bereavement leave under unusual circumstances.
5. **Military Leave:** Any employee who is a member of the Ohio National Guard or a military reserve unit may be granted leave to fulfill military obligations
6. **Leave of Absence:** The Personnel Committee, on the recommendation of the Executive Director, may grant an employee a leave of absence without pay. During such leaves of absence, the employee will be retained on the inactive rolls and will be reinstated upon return to work on or before the date specified at the time the leave was granted. After such date, return to the position cannot be guaranteed. Medical insurance coverage may continue for the employee if the employee desires such protection and reimburses the agency for any coverage desired by the employee, including him/herself.

D. *Jury Duty*

Staff members serving jury duty will be excused from work and compensated according to state law.

E. *Inclement Weather Policy*

The Ohio CASA/GAL Association will follow the inclement weather decisions of the XXX school district. On days when the schools are closed due to weather the offices will also be closed.

F. *Insurance Benefits*

1. Medical: The Ohio CASA/GAL Association may offer a hospital/medical protection plan to all salary employees. Full or partial premium payments by the Ohio CASA/GAL Association will be dictated by budgetary allocations and will be under the direction and approval of the Ohio CASA/GAL Association Board of Directors.
 - a. If the employee is covered under another health insurance plan, employees are encouraged to relieve the Ohio CASA/GAL Association from the responsibility to provide health insurance coverage.
 - b. Part-time employees are not offered medical benefits.
2. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association Board of Directors may offer retirement benefit coverage to employees provided such action stays within budgetary constraints.
3. Worker's Compensation: Employees are covered by the State of Ohio's Worker's Compensation Law if the employee is injured or disabled as a result of a job-related injury or disease. There is no cost to the employee for such protection.
4. Unemployment Compensation: The Ohio CASA/GAL Association participates, without cost to the employee, with Unemployment Compensation except where not required or prohibited by law.
5. Life Insurance: Employees may be offered a contribution toward a life insurance plan of the Association's choosing. Coverage offered will be dictated by budgetary allocations.
6. General Liability Insurance: All Employees are covered, at no cost to the employee, by a general liability insurance policy as a protection against civil suits resulting from personal injuries or property damage claimed to have been caused by negligence of the employee at any time while acting within the scope of his/her employment.

G. *Travel Benefits*

The following items shall be considered legitimate expenses and are governed by and limited to budgetary allocations: travel costs, food and lodging, local travel including taxis, buses, conference fees, etc. All benefits must be authorized by the Executive Director. All authorized travel must be recorded on the approved travel forms.

1. Mileage: Mileage for travel on agency business shall be reimbursed to the employee at a rate consistent with Internal Revenue Service guidelines. Each employee who is reimbursed for driving his/her own vehicle must be in compliance with the financial responsibility laws of the State of Ohio. No reimbursement will be authorized for persons not in compliance.
2. Local Travel: Local travel shall be construed as mileage accumulated for travel within a radius of fifty miles of the Ohio CASA/GAL Association.
3. Non-local Travel: all non-local travel must be authorized in reimbursed by the agency within the limits of the budget. Prior to non-local travel, the employee shall complete the proper form and his/her estimate of expenses. Upon his/her return, an actual expense form shall be completed with receipts attached.
4. Meal Expenses: An employee's meal expense will be reimbursed when the employee is required to attend a meeting at a normal meal time at the request of the Executive Director or because of the employee's job description.

H. *Other Expenses*

1. Reimbursement shall be made for authorized supplies which an employee buys and which are not properly in the category of petty cash. Receipts must be provided. The person making such purchases should, wherever practical and possible, arrive at an estimated amount of expense and clear that amount with the Executive Director before the purchase.
2. Use of Petty Cash as a purchase method does not need to be cleared with the Executive Director since said amounts may not exceed \$15.00. Receipts are required for Petty Cash reimbursement.
3. Whenever possible, purchases should be charged.
4. The tax-exempt number shall always be used.

XI. *Work Schedule*

Work schedules shall be arranged by the Executive Director. The work week for a full-time employee shall consist of 40 hours. Normal office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

XII. Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs

- A. Alcohol will not be brought to Ohio CASA/GAL Association offices or events. Any exception must be approved in advance with the Executive Director.
- B. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association is a "drug-free" work place. Misuse of alcohol or use of illegal drugs in the work place will result in immediate dismissal.
- C. Employees will notify their supervisor of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace within five (5) days.

XIII. Use of Tobacco

Tobacco products may not be used in the offices of the Ohio CASA/GAL Association or within 15 feet of the entrances to the offices.

XIV. Ancillary Activities and Employment

- A. Employees are permitted to accept honoraria for teaching in institutions, workshops and clinics, or to be consultants to other organizations upon prior approval of the Executive Director.
 - 1. If teaching as a representative of the Ohio CASA/GAL Association, the honoraria shall be provided to the Ohio CASA/GAL Association.
 - 2. Employees are not permitted to accept honoraria for engagements during Ohio CASA/GAL Association work hours unless they take vacation.
- B. Employees may not use Ohio CASA/GAL Association time, space, telephone services, or supplies for personal and/or commercial use during regular working hours.

XV. Confidential Information

Employees working for the Ohio CASA/GAL Association may work with information considered confidential - that is, anything that is non-public, sensitive or proprietary in nature. All employees are expected to safeguard all confidential information when using it, filing it properly, discussing it only with those who have a legitimate need to know and properly destroying it prior to disposal.

XVI. Computers, Internet-access and email

Employees may have a computer, access to the Internet or email to allow the employee to do the work in the most efficient and professional way possible. This privilege brings with it a number

of responsibilities, as well as activities employees must avoid. The Internet and email are employment tools. All documents created by the employee in the course of the workday on Association computers or otherwise are the property of the Ohio CASA/GAL Association. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association may monitor and record all Internet usage and email employees' send or receive, so remember that by using the Association's Internet access or email, employees forego any right to privacy. Therefore, employees will want to avoid sending or receiving messages that are sensitive or confidential. Employees may also want to delete personal messages as soon as they are read or replied to. The Ohio CASA/GAL Association reserves the right to authorize access of an employee's Internet, email and computer area by other employees or outside individuals when the situation requires such access.

Review of Personnel Manual Form

This is to certify that I have reviewed the Ohio CASA/GAL Association's Personnel Manual including the sexual harassment policy.

I understand that the policies outlined in the Personnel Manual are the basic terms and conditions of my employment at Ohio CASA/GAL Association. I further understand that the contents of these policies may be changed from time to time, at the discretion of Ohio CASA/GAL Association, without notice to me. I also understand that the language in the Personnel Manual is not intended to create, and should not be interpreted as creating, an employment contract for a specific period of time. I understand that I have the right to terminate my employment at any time and for any reason, and that Ohio CASA/GAL Association has the right to terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause, orally or in writing.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

This separate sheet shall be signed and dated by the employee and will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Sample Reference Questions

Name of reference: _____

Position reference holds currently: _____

Position held when working with candidate: _____

Position held by candidate: _____

Name of employer: _____

Approximate dates they worked together: _____

What were the candidate's job responsibilities?

Did the candidate advance/grow while employed with you? How?

What areas do you feel were this candidate's strengths?

What areas do you feel we could help the candidate develop- areas where he/she could grow with training?

Are the areas where the candidate was lacking in skills or experience?

Under what circumstances did the candidate leave your employ?

How would you rate the candidate's overall work performance? Below average, average, above average, excellent.

How would you rate the candidate's attendance and timeliness (getting to meetings on time, etc.): poor, fair, good, excellent

How did candidate get along with coworkers/supervisor/customers/clients, etc?

Is there anything else you feel we should know about the applicant?

Chapter 12

Relationships with National CASA & Other Agencies

The phone rings. The local program director on the phone disagrees with his program's self-assessment compliance score from National CASA.

CASA/GAL work, by its very nature, is collaborative. The state CASA/GAL organization has an important role to play in building relationships with National CASA and with agencies on the state level as well as helping local programs form good working relationships with local agencies. In situations like the one above, the state director can serve to help the local program understand the compliance score and correct the problems that led to the score or to help the director make his case that it was not accurate.

Relationship with National CASA

The relationship between the state CASA/GAL organization and National CASA is a collaborative one. The National CASA Association has made state organization development a high priority and is committed to a strong working partnership and financial support to the extent possible. One of the reasons for this support is the recognition that National CASA staff alone is not able to provide the diverse technical support needed to a network of more than 900 programs.

National CASA attempts to work in partnership with the state organization. State offices receive early notice of events and their input is routinely sought regarding activities within their states and the network as a whole. National CASA proactively works with state organizations; examples of collaboration include:

- Allowing the state organization to have input on local program grant applications
- Notifying the state organization and allowing ten days for input from the state organization when receiving a startup inquiry from a community.
- Sending a copy of a new program's application for provisional membership to the state organization.
- Participating with state organizations in the Quality Assurance process for local programs.
- Notifying state organizations if a regional program specialist plans to visit or if National CASA is holding a meeting or event in the state.

- Sending advance notice of policy changes or informational material to state organizations. This usually occurs by email several days before an item is sent to the entire network. This advance notice allows state organizations to ask questions of National CASA and to be prepared to answer questions from local programs.

State organizations can be helpful in sharing National CASA information with local program directors (for example encouraging responses to program surveys) because they typically have more contact with local programs. National CASA staff members also appreciate hearing from state organizations in other situations. Examples include:

- Invitations to state conferences, volunteer recognition events, local program directors' meetings or special occasions.
- Information when a program, particularly a grantee, is encountering particular challenges.
- Questions needing additional support or information.
- Unusual legislative activity affecting CASA/GAL programs or child welfare.
- Unusual public relations opportunities.

As of 2004, the National CASA Association was comprised of the following departments:

- Administration (association management, governance, government relations, human resources management, conference planning, executive administrative and general office support)
- Communications (public awareness/education; newsletters, websites, print materials, publications, brochures, local and national media relations, general public inquiries, national video and PSA and speakers bureau)
- Finance (accounting and financial management, grants program management, resource catalog and sales)
- Information services (technology, COMET, evaluation, list serves, website technology, databases)
- Program Services (program and volunteer management, new program development, policies and procedures, Tribal Court program support, training, Quality Assurance, best practices, program standards, resource development for state and local programs, program directory, program evaluation, regional program specialist support)
- Resource Development (resource development for National CASA itself, donor and foundation relations management, National CASA individual membership)

Each year, National CASA distributes a list of staff and board members at the national conference. A list of National CASA staff is available at casanet.org/staff/index.htm.

See Chapter 1: Role of the State Office for more information about regional program specialists.

When problems arise

If a state organization director has a problem or complaint about National CASA, first share the situation with the staff person involved. If there is no response or if the response is not acceptable, then the state director can talk to that person's supervisor. Contact the regional program specialist to locate the person's supervisor. While policy issues are appropriate for discussion on the state directors' listserv, a complaint about a specific person or action should be directed to the appropriate person or supervisor.

Getting involved with National CASA

Some state directors choose to be involved with National CASA as members of committees. If there is a committee of interest to a state director, contact the National CASA program specialist or staff person assigned to that committee. Some committees are board-appointed, while others are ad hoc. Examples of National CASA board standing committees in 2003 include:

- Executive Committee
- Resource Development Committee
- Finance/Audit Committee
- Board Development & Nominations Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Diversity Committee
- Standards Committee
- Education & Public Awareness Committee
- PR/Marketing Committee

Examples of other National CASA committees are:

- Strategic Planning Committee
- African American Advisory Committee
- Hispanic/Latino Advisory Committee
- Tribal Court Advisory Committee
- Curriculum Advisory Committee
- Judicial Liaison Committee

State organization representatives may also seek through election (five members) 5 member-elected positions or appointment (up to 18 members) to join the National CASA Association Board of Directors.

Getting Involved at the State Level

The state director is frequently the face of CASA/GAL programs in the state. The director should be involved in child welfare discussions to ensure that the valuable perspective of the volunteer movement is brought to the table. State directors may want to recommend or appoint others (such as other state organization staff or strong local program directors) to represent the CASA/GAL network in committees. If the state has a program advisory board, these members could also be involved in selecting representatives to committees.

It is also important to do a cost/benefit analysis of participating in a committee or commission before and during one's tenure. Some committees are more relevant to

CASA/GAL advocacy than others; some provide important relationship building opportunities, others do not. State CASA/GAL directors and local program directors have limited time and resources. Carefully choose committees that have the most relevance for the programs, children and families in the state.

Below is a list of committees with state CASA/GAL directors' participation. The best way to become involved is to call the committee contact and inquire about participating. For some, such as gubernatorial commissions, it may be possible (and perhaps preferable, depending on the politics) to serve on a committee or work group of a commission without having a formal appointment.

- Court Improvement Committee (abanet.org/child/cipcontactlist.doc for local contact)
- Children's Justice Act task force
- Federal review teams, such as those for the Children and Family Services (CFS) reviews
- Coalitions that advocate for children, such as Kids Count, may have child welfare committees or task forces. Local contacts for Kids Count can be found at aecf.org/kidscount/contacts.htm.
- Cultural competency task forces
- Child abuse prevention organizations, such as Prevent Child Abuse (preventchildabuse.org)
- Juvenile crime prevention task force

It is also helpful to be on the mailing lists of relevant organizations such as the Child Welfare League of America, ABA Center on Children and the Law and Prevent Child Abuse America.

If the state organization is considering formal collaboration with another organization, attention should be given to ensuring that the missions of the organizations are compatible. Take time to explore and understand the structure of the partner organization and know whether the state organization is making commitments for local programs (and whether it is acceptable to do so). It is also wise to include a sunset provision, a specific time after which the agreement will be terminated or reevaluated.

Child Advocacy Centers, multidisciplinary teams and citizen review panels

Some state CASA/GAL organizations have contact with child advocacy centers, multidisciplinary teams and citizen review panels.

Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) stress coordination in the investigation of and intervention in child abuse cases. The goal is to prevent children from being victimized again by the system. They usually provide interview rooms with two-way mirrors so that multiple professionals can participate in a single interview with a child victim, and some provide medical exam rooms. Some states have state associations for CACs. For more information and a list of individual advocacy centers and state associations, visit nca-online.org; the website of the National Children's Alliance (formally the National Network of Children's Advocacy Centers).

Multidisciplinary teams are essential for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), but many communities have multidisciplinary teams even if they do not have a CAC. The goal of multidisciplinary teams, like the CACs, is to better coordinate investigation and intervention in abuse cases. Local CASA/GAL program staff may participate in these multidisciplinary teams. According to the National Children’s Alliance (nca-online.org/network.html), teams typically include representatives from law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, mental health, medical, victim advocacy and children’s advocacy centers.

Each state is required under the provisions of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to have a mechanism for citizen review. The scope of these review panels, however, varies widely. They are required to meet at least quarterly and issue an annual report. “They must examine the policies, procedures, and, where appropriate, specific cases handled by the state as well as by local child protective service (CPS) agencies. The purpose of this citizen review is to determine whether state and local agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities.”⁹ The Citizens Review Board (CRB) may be called by another name and may be a committee within the state child welfare agency.

Generally speaking, CASA/GAL volunteers should not serve on Citizen Review Boards if they will be reviewing specific cases. The reason for this is twofold. First, the purpose of a CRB is to have a fresh set of eyes review cases. Second, participating in the group review could compromise the volunteer’s work with current and future cases. Participating in a group review could hamper the volunteer’s willingness to make decisions or recommendations different from the agency (out of concern for how it might be perceived in the group review at a later date).

Legislative branch

Some state CASA/GAL directors are very involved in the state legislative process while others do relatively little. The level of involvement will depend in large part on the policies of the governing board or umbrella agency for CASA/GAL.

At a minimum, the state CASA/GAL organization should track and report on legislation affecting CASA/GAL advocacy in their state. This can be done as a weekly email during the legislative session, in the newsletter and/or as a legislative update session at the state conference. Legislative updates can be sent to local programs as well as to anyone interested in participating in the legislative process (for example, local program board members or volunteers). A sample legislative update can be found in the resource documents at the end of this chapter.

In many states, formal or informal groups gather to work on legislative initiatives. The best way to learn about these groups is to ask others involved in child welfare to help identify others typically working on legislation. Normally the child welfare agency is very involved and there may be juvenile judges (or a judicial staff member who works on legislative issues) who are central to drafting new legislation. There may be a Juvenile Code Revision committee of the Court Improvement Program or through the Children’s Justice Act grant. The legislative leaders of the appropriate committees of the legislature may also be involved. By participating in these work groups prior to a legislative session, state organization

⁹ Kot, Veronika with Charles Bruner and Stephen Scott. Citizen Review Panels for the Child Protective System: Guidelines and Protocols. Published online (dss.cahwnet.gov/pdf/CitizenReviewPanelsGuidelinesandProtocols.pdf), p. 1.

directors can look for opportunities to improve the child welfare system and to maximize CASA/GAL effectiveness.

To have the greatest impact on legislation, it is important to be involved early. The principles are not unlike those of CASA/GAL volunteer advocacy: do the homework, make suggestions and do not surprise anyone at the last minute. When working with someone at the child welfare agency the state director can make suggestions to improve draft legislation before the legislative session even begins. Most often, differences of opinion can be worked out to create stronger legislation than any one individual would be able to produce. When differences cannot be worked out, keep a good working relationship by letting the partners know what the state CASA/GAL organization will testify to or work for or against in the legislative session.

Chapter 5: Resource Development contains information on getting bills passed, seeking funding from the legislature and lobbying guidelines. The resource section for Chapter 5 also includes the National CASA Association Government Relations Protocol.

Executive branch

Forming relationships with individuals in all three branches of government is important for the CASA/GAL organization. There is typically a staff person in the governor's office designated as the human services or child and family liaison. Invest time in educating this person on the mission and role of CASA/GAL both for background and support and to ensure appropriate questions and callers are referred to the CASA/GAL program.

Working with the child welfare agency

There are many opportunities to work with the state child welfare agency. Many state CASA/GAL organizations have drafted a statewide memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the state agency and this can serve as a model for local programs. A great deal of the value of having a statewide MOU is the drafting process itself. Working with a child welfare agency provides opportunities to discuss common issues and concerns as well as potential areas of collaboration. The MOU should include the mission statements of the organizations as well as information on roles, information sharing, problem solving and training. A sample MOU can be found in the resource documents at the end of this chapter.

Offer assistance to the state child welfare agency to discuss the role of CASA/GAL advocacy in statewide training of caseworkers, supervisors and foster parents. Likewise, invite child welfare agency representatives to training that the CASA/GAL organization offers such as the state conference. Including a representative from the agency on the conference planning team will help to ensure that they know about the conference and will encourage workers to attend.

The state child welfare agency may be looking for assistance with particular projects, such as the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) or the almost inevitable program improvement plan that results from the review.

Having good relationships with state level staff of the child welfare agency is essential for preventing and resolving problems. They need to know that the state CASA/GAL organization is responsive. Should problems arise, it is important that state child welfare staff understand the structure of the state CASA/GAL organization and what the state office can and cannot do to resolve them.

Judicial branch

The state organization should look for opportunities to provide training about the role of CASA/GAL volunteer advocacy for judges, both at the trial and appellate level, as well as to attorneys. There may be opportunities to present at conferences, judges' meetings, or bar association meetings. The state organization should also invite judges and attorneys to the state CASA/GAL conference and other applicable trainings.

Typically the way to reach judges statewide is through the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The AOC office may be willing to help with a mailing to judges. Talk to the AOC training coordinator or other staff about future judges' meetings and the possibility of being on the agenda. If invited to speak, recruit a judge supportive of CASA to co-present.

Reaching attorneys can be a challenge. There may be a list of attorneys who represent children or parents in abuse or neglect cases. The AOC may be able to help or the legal counsel for the CPS agency may know. In some states, parents are represented by legal aid or public defenders.

One way to encourage judges and attorneys to attend the CASA/GAL conference is to offer continuing legal education (CLE) credit. The training coordinator for the Administrative Office of the Courts should be able to provide direction on obtaining these credits.

The National CASA Association's Judicial Liaison Committee is comprised of judges, state directors, and National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and National CASA Association staff members. The purpose of this committee is to support judges, CASA Program Directors, and CASA State Directors throughout the nation in their efforts to form and improve CASA/GAL programs in their communities.

Special Note for New Directors: Building relationships within a state takes time—often years. Do not be frustrated or take it personally if at first it is difficult to join committees or meet decision-makers. Many people who work in child welfare have worked together for years. Remember that building trust takes time, especially if there has been high turnover in the state CASA/GAL organization.



Additional Resources:

Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest (clpi.org)

Court Improvement Project
(abanet.org/child/cipcontactlist.doc)

Independent Sector (independentsector.org)

Kids Count (aecf.org/kidscount/contacts.htm)

Prevent Child Abuse (preventchildabuse.org)

National Children's Alliance—formally the National Network of Children's
Advocacy Centers (nca-online.org)

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key relationship building issues in your state:

- Do statewide Memoranda of Understanding exist with other agencies?
- What collaboration or participation in training occurs with other agencies?
- What committees/commissions currently have CASA/GAL representation?

Building Relationships Resources & Sample Documents

Sample Memorandum of Understanding

Sample Legislative Update

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the State of Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) and the Oregon Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (OCASAA) shall become effective on the date at which all parties have signed.

This Memorandum of Understanding reflects agreed upon statewide guidelines for the working relationship of DHS child welfare workers and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers and programs. DHS child welfare workers operate within the policies of DHS. CASA volunteers work within the policies of local CASA volunteer programs and within the oversight of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families. Local CASA Volunteer Programs work together as the Oregon CASA Association.

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding, DHS, OCCF and OCASAA acknowledge the urgency and importance of effective and efficient advocacy and service to children and families in Oregon. DHS will urge local DHS offices, and OCCF and OCASAA will urge local CASA volunteer programs, to negotiate local agreements guided by this Memorandum of Understanding.

Department of Human Services Authorized Representatives:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Title	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name	Title	Date

Oregon Commission on Children and Families:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Title	Date

Oregon Court Appointed Special Advocate Association:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Title	Date

Mission Statements:

- DHS: Helping people to become independent, healthy and safe.
- OCASAA: To strengthen the ability of each CASA program in Oregon to advocate for safe permanent homes for abused, neglected and abandoned children.
- OCCF: A partnership of citizens and professionals working together to improve the lives of children and families in Oregon’s local communities. OCCF facilitates and supports local coordinated comprehensive planning for all children and families, promotes system integration, and provides leadership for local and state efforts focused on early childhood.

SECTION 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Roles and Responsibilities of the CASA Volunteer

1. A CASA volunteer is a full party in the case in which the volunteer is appointed by the Court. Pursuant to ORS 419A.170, it is the responsibility of the CASA volunteer to:
 - a. Investigate all relevant information about the case;
 - b. Advocate for the best interests of the child, ensuring that all relevant facts are brought before the court;
 - c. Facilitate and negotiate to ensure that the court, DHS, and the child's attorney, if any, fulfill their obligations to the child in a timely fashion; and
 - d. Monitor all court orders to ensure compliance and to bring to the court's attention any change in circumstances that may require a modification of the court's order.
2. The CASA volunteer should:
 - a. Contact the child regularly as appropriate to the case;
 - b. Provide consistent advocacy for the child from case assignment until the court vacates the CASA appointment. The goal is to provide one CASA from initial assignment to closure of the case;
 - c. Monitor educational, health, mental health and dental needs, assessments and treatment implementation;
 - d. Recommend appropriate services for the child or family, but not provide the service;
 - e. Monitor changes in out-of-home placements;
 - f. Attend/participate in all court events involving the child (hearings, dispositions, etc.);
 - g. Attend/participate in other agency meetings involving the child as appropriate;
 - h. Advocate for but not provide transportation for the child or family;
 - i. Recommend and monitor appropriate visits of the child and parent(s), but not supervise the visits; and
 - j. Make written reports and recommendations to the court.

B. Roles and Responsibilities of the DHS Child Welfare Caseworker

1. The primary responsibility for providing services for children in the care of DHS includes:
 - a. Assess risk of child;
 - b. Access and utilize court services;
 - c. Develop and implement plan for safety, well being and permanency;
 - d. Provide and obtain services; and
 - e. Recommend court appointment of CASA, when appropriate.
2. CASA volunteers can expect that a DHS child welfare caseworker will provide casework services to include:
 - a. Contact child regularly according to policy;
 - b. Receive and assess allegations of child abuse;
 - c. Develop safety plans including maintaining children safely with their families, placement of children in substitute care, and accessing court services;

Sample Memo of Understanding

- d. Engage families in Family Decision-Making Meetings to identify children's needs, family strengths and appropriate services;
- e. Develop, record and implement case plan and concurrent case plan;
- f. Obtain and provide appropriate services for the child or family to meet the child's safety, permanency and well being needs;
- g. Develop a visitation plan appropriate to the safety and attachment needs of the child;
- h. Assess and monitor educational, health, mental health, and dental needs;
- i. Monitor out-of-home placements;
- j. Attend/participate in other agency meetings involving the child as appropriate; and
- k. Make written reports and recommendations to the court.

SECTION 2: AGREEMENTS

- A. Initial and on-going communication between the CASA volunteer and the DHS child welfare caseworker:
 1. When a CASA volunteer is appointed to a case, the volunteer should make an appointment to meet the caseworker. The caseworker should make every attempt to meet with the CASA volunteer as soon as possible. At that meeting the CASA volunteer and the DHS caseworker should:
 - a. Agree on a communication plan including email/phone/fax preferences, long or short messages, expectations (including length of turn-around time for communications) and exchange of usual and emergency contact information;
 - b. Review the case, the history, the case plan, the permanency plan and the alternate plan;
 - c. Discuss the role of the CASA volunteer and clarify expectations regarding the ways he or she might facilitate achieving safety and permanency for the child(ren); and
 - d. Help ensure that notification (Section 4) is made, and make sure the file indicates that a CASA volunteer was appointed.
 2. Throughout the case:
 - a. The DHS caseworker and the CASA volunteer should provide frequent updates and return email/phone/fax within 48 hours; and
 - b. The DHS caseworker and the CASA volunteer should share court reports prior to court presentations so there are no surprises, meeting in person if possible.

SECTION 3: RECORDS ACCESS

1. The effective work of a CASA volunteer often depends on speedy access to complete information. According to ORS 419A.170, the appointed CASA volunteer shall have access to information from the child's file. The full record, with the exception of the reporter's identity, may be accessed by:
 - a. Parental release of information;
 - b. Court order; or
 - c. Through the process of discovery.
2. It is understood that DHS policy is guided by the advice of the Attorney General's office that Oregon statutes do not permit DHS to give CASA volunteers record information that identifies persons who have reported child abuse and neglect (Department of Justice File No. 412-100-GH0151-01).
3. Both DHS employees and CASA employees/volunteers carry statutory responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of records (ORS 419B.035 and ORS 419A.170).

4. Local DHS offices and CASA programs should negotiate agreements to:
 - a. Provide initial access to the child's file to the CASA volunteer at the DHS office within 24 hours if possible but not more than three (3) working days from the request;
 - b. While keeping the burden to DHS staff minimal, have DHS or the CASA volunteer copy the portions of the file the CASA volunteer deems necessary, except for information relating to the identity of the reporter and other parts of the file that may not be open (see paragraphs 1 and 2 above);
 - c. Ensure that the CASA volunteer, after reading or copying case files, returns the DHS file material in the same order as contained in record; and
 - d. Ensure that CASA volunteers or programs are not charged for copies.

SECTION 4: NOTIFICATION

1. Local DHS offices and CASA programs may negotiate a working definition of 'timely' that meets both their needs.
2. The appointed CASA volunteer should receive timely notification of:
 - a. All DHS staff and family meetings relevant to the child;
 - b. Sibling planning conferences;
 - c. Current caretaker committee meetings; and
 - d. Adoption committee meetings.
3. Cancellations and rescheduling should be communicated immediately to the CASA volunteer or CASA program.
4. The CASA volunteer should RSVP to meeting notifications in a timely fashion.

SECTION 5: ACCESS TO THE CHILD

1. The CASA volunteer needs reasonable access to the child in the home or placement, including adoptive placement.
2. The CASA volunteer has a need to have private conversations with the child. These conversations may occur in the home or placement, or in a public setting.
3. DHS should include in training for foster and adoptive parents the CASA volunteer's role and their need to visit the child; and actively facilitate and support positive working relationships between biological parents, foster parents, adoptive parents and the CASA volunteer.
4. The CASA volunteer should actively facilitate and support positive working relationships between biological parents, foster parents, adoptive parents and the DHS caseworker.
5. The CASA volunteer should remain active until the Court vacates the volunteer's appointment. After the case is closed there is no legal relationship or official contact with the child, the adoptive parent(s) or other parties.

SECTION 6: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. DHS and OCASAA have an expectation that cooperative problem solving will occur. Both DHS caseworkers and CASA volunteers are supervised; supervisors should be utilized in conflict resolution when necessary.

Sample Memo of Understanding

2. The local agreement for conflict resolution should include these principles:
 - a. Documentation of the concern, including the frequency, who is involved, whether the issues are based in policy or personality, etc;
 - b. Direct communication between the persons involved in the concern;
 - c. Communication with the supervisor;
 - d. Developing a resolution strategy involving the individual(s) and the supervisor before taking the issue to others;
 - e. The Service District Area (SDA) manager or liaison and the CASA Director or liaison should meet regularly and work together to address concerns; and
 - f. If a timely resolution is not reached, or if the issue has ramifications beyond the local DHS office or program, the SDA manager should contact CHS/CAF and the CASA director should contact the CASA State Coordinator, and together they should coordinate a plan for resolution.

SECTION 7: TRAINING

1. Positive working relationships develop more effectively when each individual understands the roles and responsibilities of both the DHS caseworkers and CASA volunteers. DHS and OCASAA will ensure that training on the roles and responsibilities of each is provided to new and current DHS caseworkers and CASA volunteers.
2. Local DHS offices and CASA programs may negotiate any number of ways to develop this knowledge, including, but not limited to, these possibilities:
 - a. CASA staff and/or volunteers could help train new DHS caseworkers or offer in-service training for DHS caseworkers/staff/providers;
 - b. DHS staff and/or caseworkers could help train new CASA volunteers or offer in-service training for CASA volunteers/staff;
 - c. DHS policies may be reviewed online at scf.info.hr.or.us/policy.htm;
 - d. DHS might provide a Ride-Along opportunity for CASA volunteers, including opportunities to listen to how calls are screened, accompany staff on a field assessment, etc.;
 - e. CASA volunteers might attend DHS training sessions, including adoptive and foster parent training;
 - f. DHS staff and/or caseworkers might attend some of the CASA training sessions;
 - g. Foster parents, adoptive parents and kinship providers might attend some of the CASA training sessions;
 - h. CASA programs and DHS might exchange newsletters, information brochures, organizational charts, critical juncture charts, acronym lists and reports;
 - i. CASA programs and DHS might schedule get-togethers; and
 - j. CASA programs and DHS might make a contact guide for various kinds of information.

SECTION 8: GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Services to Culturally Diverse Children and Families: Providing equal access to and maximum benefit from services for children and youth who are members of culturally diverse groups is a priority for DHS, OCCF and OCASAA.
2. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act: This memorandum is available in alternate formats such as Braille, large print, audio tape, oral presentation, and computer disk. To request an alternate format call the State of Oregon Department of Human Services, Contracts and Procurement Unit at (503) 945-5818 or TTY (503) 945-5928.

Arkansas CASA Legislative Update

(first page only)

This was up-to-date as of the morning of April 11. Acts (bills that have become law) and the inactive or withdrawn bills are at the end of this document. Each bill number is followed by (bill sponsor, current location of bill, and date of hearing when scheduled).

HB1546 (*Thyer, Senate Judiciary, 4/11/03*) extends the time in which an administrative hearing must take place (for placement on the central registry) to 180 days and would automatically remove the alleged offender from the central registry if the hearing was not completed in that time period. Senate Judiciary discussed but did not vote 4/9/03 – concerned that it would be the public that suffered if the 180 days expired and offenders were removed without hearing. *Passed House 3/28/03.*

HB1588 (*Martin, Governor*) changes the offense of permitting abuse of a child to permitting abuse of a minor so that it will apply to any case in which the victim is under the age of 18 (statute currently only applies to children under the age of 11). Senate amendment was significant in that it narrows the abuse under this law as pertaining only to sexual abuse, serious physical injury, or death which could be prosecuted as delinquent or criminal acts. *Passed House 2/28/03, Senate Judiciary as amended 3/17/03, House concurred 4/10/03.*

HB1658 (*Dees, Governor*) amends the juvenile code. Makes provisions similar to those in the child maltreatment act. A summary was sent 2/22/03. *Passed House 3/21/03, Senate 4/4/03, House concurred 4/10/03*

HB1694 (*Judy, Governor*) Creates a One Percent to Prevent fund to be administered by the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board to develop or make grants for parenting programs in prison and to assist children of incarcerated parents. *Failed House 3/21/03, vote expunged 3/24/03, passed House 3/28/03, Senate 4/8/03.*

HB1750 (*Thyer, Senate Judiciary, 4/7/03*) provides that administrative hearings shall occur in they physical presence of all parties if requested by the petitioner (or attorney) and that there would be sites around the state (Jonesboro, Pine Bluff, Hot Springs, Clinton, Fort Smith, Little Rock) where in-person hearings could occur. The goal of this is to provide for in-person rather than telephonic hearings. *Passed House 3/28/03.*

HB2000 (*Jackson, House*) would provide (but does not appropriate) \$200,000 annually for Child Advocacy Centers. *Passed Joint Budget Committee 4/3/03.*

Websites to visit:

warkleg.state.ar.us to see the full text of all bills filed, status of bills, agendas for the various committee meetings, legislators, and current law.

aradvocates.org to see Arkansas Advocates' legislative summary and to locate your legislator.

Chapter 13

Working with Tribal Programs & Native American Children

The phone rings. A local program director has talked with a representative from a tribe in his region who is interested in starting a CASA/GAL program.

State CASA/GAL organizations may work with tribal courts and tribal CASA programs in addition to state courts. In 2003 there were 24 tribal court CASA programs in 13 states; a listing can be found at casanet.org. Tribal courts exist on reservations, but may also exist in other tribal communities such as pueblos, Alaska Native villages or allotments. Allotments are parcels of land held in trust for a tribe or individual tribal members.

Tribes are sovereign governments that have the power to determine their own membership, regulate their land base through zoning laws and establish and enforce laws that impact tribal members and non-natives that reside on tribal land. Tribal governments have constitutions, bills of rights and tribal statutes. Of the over 500 federally recognized tribes, approximately 250 have tribal courts. For a list of the federally recognized tribes, visit the Bureau of Indian Affairs website at doiu.nbc.gov/orientation/bia2.cfm.

The majority of tribal court CASA/GAL programs are tribally administered—meaning the Tribal Council (which is the legislative branch of the tribal government) governs them. Most of the remaining programs are nonprofit organizations or under the umbrella of other organizations.

It is critical for state CASA/GAL staff to have some knowledge of the long and complicated relationship between tribes and the United States and to work to understand tribal issues. Recognizing that Native Americans may have distinctly different worldviews and life ways that are unique to their heritage and practices as indigenous people, it is important to realize these vary greatly from tribe to tribe. Native American individuals who come into contact with the state/county child abuse and neglect system may also have family histories that include displacement, oppression, poverty and other challenges that complicate their involvement with helping agencies.

Historical Perspective

A federally recognized tribe has a sovereign-to-sovereign relationship with the United States of America dating back to before the enactment of the U.S. constitution and reinforced by hundreds of years of interaction. Enrolled members have dual citizenship as a U.S. citizen and a federally recognized tribal member. Some tribes issue passports. Sovereignty and self-

determination are vitally important to tribes. Because of this, tribes see their relationship as being one with the federal government, not with states: as a result, tribes may resist being considered “local” in a federal/state/local hierarchy. In addition, tribes often have traditions of governmental decision-making that incorporate familial and spiritual values. Understanding these important differences between Native and non-Native governing structures will help state CASA/GAL organizations have more constructive discussions with tribal courts and tribal programs.

Much of Native American child welfare policy of the United States has been contrary to what we now know about children’s needs and best interests. In the 19th century and continuing well into the 20th, agents of the United States government routinely took Native American children from their homes and sent them to boarding schools to “assimilate”. Children were forbidden to speak their Native languages or practice Native customs and religions. In a study completed to urge passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), it was reported that Native American children were disproportionately removed from their homes. In 1974, 25% to 35% of Native children were in an out-of-home placement. In passing ICWA to address these travesties in 1978, Congress found:

“An alarmingly high percentage of Indian families are broken up by the removal, often unwarranted, of their children from them by non-tribal public and private agencies and that an alarmingly high percentage of such children are placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes and institutions, and that the States, exercising their recognized jurisdiction over Indian child custody proceedings through administrative and judicial bodies, have often failed to recognize the essential tribal relations of Indian people and the cultural and social standards prevailing in Indian communities and families.”

Given this history, tribal courts and tribal programs may express mistrust of state child welfare systems and, by extension, any organization working with the child welfare system.

For the state CASA/GAL organization, understanding this history and building credibility and trust is critical. Be willing to learn by inviting tribal representatives to be involved with CASA/GAL work and events. Attend tribal events and activities—most are open to the public. Culturally, teaching is often done by demonstration and modeling rather than by lecture. Watch, listen and when necessary, ask questions respectfully to better understand the issues that affect the best interest of Indian children. Understand, though, that asking too many questions may be perceived as aggressive or intrusive. Be flexible and patient, as building trust takes time. If tribal representatives see the state organization as being an arm of the state itself, the tribe may be distrustful—not because of anything the state CASA/GAL organization has done but because of past actions by the state or other non-Indian agencies involved with the tribe’s children. The state organization can extend invitations and make offers of support, assistance and resources as well as encourage input from the tribal programs to improve the state CASA/GAL organization’s ability to address the needs of Indian children. With a foundation of trust and respect, the shared cooperation between the tribe and the state CASA/GAL organization will grow.

Tribal Courts, Jurisdiction, and ICWA

Jurisdiction is the authority by which a particular court may hear and decide a case. Tribal jurisdiction derives from federal law but has been affected by acts of Congress and by court

precedent and is a complicated matter. Generally speaking, the tribe has jurisdiction over matters which occur on tribal land or involve tribal members as long as there is tribal code. One important issue to consider is whether the state is a PL280 state, where the state has both criminal and civil jurisdiction, or a non-PL280 state where the federal government has criminal jurisdiction. The text of ICWA, state court guidelines and additional information on tribal jurisdiction is available at the Tribal Law and Policy Institute website (tribal-institute.org).

Many tribal courts regularly handle child abuse and family law issues. These tribes usually have a social services department and their own child abuse investigators, including police officers that handle possible criminal child abuse investigations. When the child is within the jurisdiction of the tribe, these cases are often heard in tribal court. The child protection case can be heard in tribal court regardless whether the offender is an Indian or not.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Public Law 95-608, regulates states regarding the handling of child abuse and neglect and adoption cases involving Native children. It sets minimum standards for state courts, state child protection agencies and adoption agencies for the handling of these cases. This act also affirms the authority of tribes to handle these cases in tribal courts. Tribes are not required to follow ICWA, but many tribes have adopted some of the ICWA language into tribal codes.

In a child protection proceeding in state court, ICWA applies if the child is an Indian child, whether or not the tribe intervenes. An Indian child is defined as a child who is eligible for membership or is actually a member in any of the 562 federally recognized tribes. The Indian child's tribe must be notified and given the opportunity to intervene and become a party in the state court case. The tribe may also request jurisdiction, and the case may be transferred to tribal court. While there may not be federally recognized tribes or tribal courts in all states, there are undoubtedly Indian children living in all states.

Note: Not all Tribal membership criteria are the same, and membership is not the same as the enrollment standard created by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

It will take active efforts to contact the appropriate person or agency at the tribe. Tribal councils make the determination for intervention, transfer of jurisdiction and placement through adoption of tribal laws and protocols. Most tribes have an ICWA worker specifically for handling cases for tribal consideration and transfer, though some tribes rely on the tribal prosecutor to handle the cases. The tribal court can be a resource for finding the appropriate person or agency at the tribe for notification that an Indian child is in state court. It is the state's obligation to notify the tribe and the CASA/GAL volunteer's duty to ensure the Indian child's best interest is served by pursuing compliance with the ICWA.

State and local CASA/GAL organizations may be concerned about transferring a child's case to tribal court, which is becoming more common as more tribal courts and tribal child welfare systems are developed. Tribal courts may use traditional methods that look unfamiliar to non-native people: making decisions in a talking circle, using multiple judges to reach consensus or finding different ways to achieve permanency if termination of parental rights is culturally offensive. Non-native CASA/GAL staff and volunteer advocates working in tribal settings need to learn about these decision-making processes and the benefits to

children of having decisions made and services provided by members of their tribal communities. Keeping the best interests of the child paramount, knowing that it is in the best of the child to preserve cultural ties, is the core of CASA/GAL advocacy.

More information about ICWA can be found in National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum or at casanet.org. More information about tribal child abuse projects and services as well as the text of ICWA and the state court guidelines can be found at tribal-institute.org and nicwa.org.

Learning More About Tribes

Each state has its own history with the tribes and Native American people within that state. There are several places to go to look for information.

- Call the Tribal Council or tribal administrative office and request information.
- Subscribe to the tribal newspaper and listen to tribal radio.
- Contact the school district serving the tribal community and request educational information used to inform children about their heritage and culture.
- Find out if the state has an Office of Indian Affairs which is an excellent place to go to learn more about state-specific history.
- Visit a law library and ask the librarian for state history with Indian policy and about the judicial relationship between the state and tribes.
- Ask the tribe or the Governor's office about proclamations or accords with Indian tribes.
- Using the state's website or a search engine, type in the state name and Indian affairs.
- Locate websites for tribes within the state. Many have excellent cultural and historical resources available online.

Multiple Jurisdiction CASA/GAL Programs

Some CASA/GAL programs that serve state courts may also serve tribal courts; volunteers in a tribal CASA/GAL program may also serve in state courts. Since the law, court rules and practice may be different, additional training will be necessary for volunteers working in both courts. Generally speaking, state law and rules will not apply to tribal courts or tribal CPS systems and vice versa.

In order for a local CASA/GAL program to serve in tribal courts or a tribal CASA/GAL program to serve in a state court, a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate court should be developed. The state CASA/GAL organization can assist with this task, particularly if the agreement will impact more than one local program. Allow plenty of time and effort (especially for building the relationship) for developing this agreement.

Because tribal courts may operate very differently from state courts, there are a number of things the state organization and local CASA/GAL program need to learn, sometimes by observation and other times by requesting information about tribal law and practice:

- When are hearings held? What are the procedures?
- Who is/are the judge(s)?
- Is the child represented by an attorney? (Note: children usually do not have an attorney in tribal court.)
- Who is the presenting officer or prosecuting attorney?
- What is the required time frame for the hearings under tribal law?
- Who provides services to children and families and how are referrals made?

Local CASA/GAL programs serving tribal courts should place particular emphasis on recruiting volunteers from the Native American community as well as recruiting Native people who can provide mentoring for non-Native volunteers. Including Native representatives on the state governing board or advisory council is one way to establish and build relationships with tribal courts and child advocates that can be mutually beneficial, and most importantly, provide better advocacy for Native children.

The state CASA/GAL organization should provide the same services to tribal CASA/GAL programs as to programs that serve state courts. Talk with tribal program representatives about their special needs and be sure to include tribal program representatives on conference planning committees and state advisory groups.

Supporting the Development of a Tribal Court CASA/GAL Program

State CASA/GAL organizations can encourage tribes and tribal organizations to start tribal court CASA/GAL programs. By doing so, we expand CASA/GAL volunteer advocacy to children in tribal courts. We can also encourage involvement of native CASA/GAL volunteers in state court proceedings. An excellent resource is the *Tribal Court CASA: A Guide to Program Development* (National CASA publication) located in the Tribal Court section of casanet.org. Tribal court CASA/GAL program development is a collaborative effort between National CASA, the state organization and the tribe. A tribe that initiates the collaboration is a good candidate for partnership in developing a memorandum of agreement. An outreach project launched by the state CASA/GAL organization may be viewed with some skepticism and mistrust, though the CASA method of advocating for children with community members is consistent with native traditions. The National CASA tribal courts program specialist can assist in facilitating relationship building for more effective collaboration.

In encouraging the tribe to develop a CASA program, take the time to meet with the judges, tribal elders, tribal councils and/or governors and other individuals who may be interested in being involved. In order for a tribal CASA program to succeed, there must be committed stakeholders at the tribal level. Introductions to those individuals are important, so take the time to find out who can make the introductions. Because each tribe is a sovereign entity, approach the tribe humbly, asking how the state organization can help, rather than showing up as the “expert” with all the answers. Building relationships with more than one person is also a good practice.

Recruiting Native American volunteers for the CASA/GAL programs (whether they serve tribal court programs or not) may be a good place to begin. These volunteers will understand the vital role CASA/GAL advocacy plays in the court system and they may then be willing to be ambassadors for the CASA program with the tribal court.

In tribal communities, there are two places where support for a CASA/GAL program is essential: the Tribal Council and the Tribal Court. It is critical that tribal political and cultural leaders and judges weigh in with support early in the process. Securing a tribal resolution from the tribal council that supports the development of a CASA program is an important step. It may be valuable for key individuals from the tribe to talk with and perhaps visit existing tribal CASA programs. As is good practice with any new program, having a mentor program for the new tribal court CASA/GAL program could also prove beneficial. The National CASA tribal courts program specialist can assist with either of these contacts.

Funding for Tribal Court CASA/GAL Programs

The National CASA Association board issued the following policy statement in October 1998:

The national board adopts this policy position concerning the Tribal Court CASA programs. There is a critical need for state programs to work directly with the tribes and Tribal court programs in their states, especially in regard to state funding issues. Many of the state CASA programs are able to access state funds to assist with long-term sustainability, but the state legislation authorizing this funding often specifically excludes tribes and Tribal Court CASA programs from eligibility (despite the fact that Tribal members are also state residents). Consequently, whenever state CASA programs seek state funding for CASA programs they should attempt to ensure that Tribal Court CASA programs are also eligible to apply for these program funds. The board urges the state CASA programs to work more closely with the Tribal Court CASA programs on these critical sustainability issues.

Tribal court CASA/GAL programs are eligible to apply for grants from National CASA. Some states also provide funding to tribal court programs. If a state organization funds local programs, it should also seek to fund tribal court programs. The first step is to ensure that there is statutory authority to also fund tribal programs.

The state CASA/GAL organization, in conjunction with the National CASA tribal court specialist, will also want to explore with the tribe what funding sources may be available. Some tribes, for example, receive significant revenues from business enterprises that support other tribal programs and services, so they may be willing to include funds in the budget for a CASA/GAL program. Tribal CASA/GAL programs are also funded by other federal and private foundation funds.



Additional Resources:

Tribal Court CASA: A Guide to Program Development (*)

Tribal Law and Policy Institute (tribal-institute.org)

National Indian Child Welfare Association (nicwa.org)

The National CASA Tribal Court Advisory Committee

National Indian Justice Center (nijc.org)

Cultural Competency for Non-native Advocates, published by National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women (scircle@sacred-circle.com)

Bureau of Indian Affairs (doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html). The website was unavailable at the time of this writing. For general BIA information, call 202 208-3710. For the Tribal Leaders Directory, call 202 208-3711.)

Bureau of Indian Affairs listing of federally recognized tribes (doiu.nbc.gov/orientation/bia2.cfm)

Historical context for ICWA (casanet.org)

The Indian Child Welfare Act Handbook: A Legal Guide to the Custody and Adoption of Native American Children, by B.J. Jones. Available at abanet.org or by fax (312) 988-5522.

ICWA Presentation by Judge B.J. Jones on CD. CD can be ordered from 7th Circuit CASA Program, 2650 Jackson Blvd., Rapid City, SD 57702-3474. Phone: (605) 394-2203.

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key tribal court CASA issues in your state:

- How many Native American children are in the state court system?
- How many Native American CASA/GAL volunteers do we have
- Are there any tribal courts in the state?
- Are there federally recognized tribes in the state? Where are they located?
- Are there tribes that are recognized under state law, but not federally recognized?
- Who are the recognized cultural leaders?
- Is there a tribal elders program?
- What is the history of the tribe's political relationship with the state?
- Who are the tribal court administrators, judges, and officials?
- What programs are under the tribal court? Is there a CASA/GAL program?
- Does the tribal CASA program need technical assistance? If so, what have they requested?
- What is the state CASA/GAL organization's history with the tribal courts?
- Does the tribe manage its own child protection and social services agencies?
- What services for children and families are available through the tribe? What are the eligibility criteria for services?
- What is the tribe's relationship with the state child protection agency?
- Who has jurisdiction over crimes in tribal communities or involving Native peoples?
- What kind of working relationship does state law enforcement have with tribal law enforcement?

The following are key individuals to meet in order to better understand the role of tribal court CASA programs in the state:

- Tribal government leaders
- Tribal court administrators
- Tribal CASA/GAL program directors, judges and officials
- Tribal social services and child protection agencies
- Tribal family service treatment providers

Tribal Programs and Native American Children Resources & Sample Documents

Working with Native Communities

ICWA and CASA

TIPS FOR NON-NATIVES WORKING WITH OR IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES¹⁰

- ➡ **Keep in mind that you are the ‘stranger’.** Being ‘too familiar’ right off will only make you seem suspicious.
- ➡ **Adjust to the pace of the community.** Do not attempt to rush anything unless it’s absolutely necessary; when you realize that small communities are less dependent on the clock you are likely to neither suffer or inflict stress about time.
- ➡ **Be respectful at all times.** Do not assume that you are ‘right’, ‘needed’ or that you should be in control. Although you will be looked at as a person in an authoritative position, don’t assume control of all situations; wait to be asked for your input.
- ➡ **Listen.** Be aware of the way people communicate, how they share experiences, laughter and concerns.
- ➡ **Go slowly – be aware of your actions.** Be cautious about attempts to change systems already in place. Most people in Native communities make connections through many years of contact and familial connections; learn these connections and the intricacies involved with each before deciding it needs to be changed.
- ➡ **Speak calmly and allow time for response.** Even when English appears to be fluent, translation can be an important tool to gain rapport and show respect. Many Native people, especially in rural Native communities, are bilingual with their Native language being their primary conversational language. Although English is used when speaking to non-Native people with fluency, keep in mind that Native people often have to interpret English into their language and concepts to determine a response, and then interpret it back into English to reply to you. This takes time, and can be frustrating if the provider is trying to rush a response. Native Children also often may use their Native words more than English for concepts or familiar topics, and not be able to translate this into English. Offer to provide a translator, whenever possible, for intake and interviews where technical words and concepts as well as historical facts will be discussed.
- ➡ **Explain your role and services.** If you are in contact with the community by telephone, it is important for you to explain your role and your goals or purpose in making the contact. If you are visiting in person, do not assume that everyone understands what you are there for. Tell them how long you expect to be there, what you will do while in the community, where you’ve come from, and what your work has been in the past.
- ➡ **Be personable.** Be willing to share a bit about your own family. One of the main ways people in a village greet someone new is to ask who their family is. Even if you aren’t related to anyone there, people may ask about the kind of family you

¹⁰ Diane Payne, Children’s Justice Specialist, and Mona Evan, Program Assistant—Tribal Law & Policy Institute, 4155 Tudor Center Drive, Suite 206, Anchorage, AK 99508. 907-770-1950. tribal-institute.org.

come from. In subsequent meetings, people may inquire about your family as a way of greeting and showing friendship.

- ➡ **Avoid professional jargon.** Remember that some people may be unfamiliar with long or profession-specific words. Explain any written forms. Using commonly used, easily recognizable terms will be appreciated. Ask the client or patient to repeat instructions in their own words to be sure they understand, and provide an opportunity for clarification. For example, there are also many different words in the medical language that can describe the same illness or disease, so if you need to use specific terminology about a medical condition, let the client or patient know how other professionals might refer to it that way. This is especially important if it's something traumatic and life changing, like a tumor. It is important to be sure the implications of the term are understood as well. A tumor may also be referred to as cancer, which is often considered terminal, without further explanation. If clients/patients understand the use of terms that they might hear from other professionals (if referred to another facility) they will experience less stress if they have a clear understanding.
- ➡ **Make yourself available.** Accept that appointments may not always be kept. It may take several attempts. Sometimes in Native communities, family needs take priority, or an employer makes demands that prevent a person from taking time off work.
- ➡ **Spend time in informal social activities with staff and tribal community members.** Talk, listen, be seen and help out. Many of the public gatherings in small communities are for people to meet the new people who will be either living there or spending some time there. The more familiar you are to the people the more they will be able to help you as well as let you help them.
- ➡ **Be Flexible.** Be prepared to change gears during tribal events. Be willing to pitch in. In a small community, many of the jobs that people hold are dangerous. If there should happen to be a medical emergency, it is likely that the whole community and anything going on will be put on hold. Much the same if it's a particular season in the area, all places have certain times of the year when certain types of food are available to be gathered. Realize that this is a way of life for the people and that they will likely put off other things that you might consider important so that they can gather the foods to see their families through the long winter months.
- ➡ **Develop team relationships** with the local staff who can help you learn about culturally appropriate service approaches, ask for feedback and don't let yourself become isolated. Get to know the people you are working with, especially those who are from the community or have been there a long time. If you have a question about how to deal with certain people, these resource people will usually already know what procedures work best. Ask for feedback from co-workers and leaders as well. Do not let yourself become isolated, and do not operate too independently.
- ➡ **Respect traditional beliefs and practices.** Just as in any indigenous culture, there are certain Native traditional beliefs and practices that are still practiced today. You may not understand, and may even think that some of these ways are not appropriate. Remember, in most cases, the people have lived with these ways for

hundreds of years. Learn as much as you can about the Spiritual beliefs and practices of the people you are working with, and respect the fact that these are lifetime traditions passed down from generation to generation.

- ➔ **Remember that spiritual matters may be private.** Do not pry. Watch, express respectful interest and wait to be told. In some cultures it is not appropriate to allow people who are not from the community to attend or witness certain ceremonies; other cultural events may be open to everyone. It is a good idea to attend when invited, if possible. Also, spending time with and learning from the elders in any culture is always a good idea.
- ➔ **Learn who is related to whom and how this affects social roles.** Also be aware of the relationship your predecessor (if applicable) had with the community and specific families. Getting the history of the people in the community through co-workers and collaborating service providers is invaluable information. If the reports involve negative comments, keep in mind that there could be a history of bad relations between certain families and/or groups of people.
- ➔ **Be careful what you say about people, and remember that your attitudes and ability to honor confidentiality will be examined.** If you are new to a community, there is a certain basic trust that you are granted as you begin to work with the people. Native people will usually give you the benefit of the doubt at first. This is why you must understand relationships and social structures as well: even among co-workers, the person you are speaking with may be related to the person you are discussing. Your ability to keep patient confidentiality will be scrutinized constantly and frequently; it is critical that you establish plainly and visibly that you will not ever release or voice any confidential information, especially embarrassing information, to the general public. If you have a significant other that is also a part of the community, realize that anything you might tell him/her, might be unwittingly divulged and if this happens, your credibility will be decreased, if not lost entirely. If you have a comfortable attitude about the community, it will be transferred to its members and they will be more willing to come to you for help.

When Working with Traumatized Native Children and Their Non-offending Family Members, I will.....

- ➡ Acknowledge that Native peoples are not all the same;
- ➡ Acknowledge that my own heritage and history impacts how I view others;
- ➡ Respect the historical basis for Native distrust of the non-Native system;
- ➡ Acknowledge that I may make the child and the family uncomfortable because they are not used to dealing with strangers about intimate and personal issues;
- ➡ Ask questions and do research to understand the child's specific heritage, including primary and secondary language, special events and celebrations, religious beliefs, extended family network and community demographics;
- ➡ Seek input and advice from Native people of that culture to be sure I understand the child's context and recognize all support systems available to the child;
- ➡ Recognize that cultural protocols (for example, it may be disrespectful for an adult or child to look directly at the person talking to them) most often guide the unspoken behavior rather than willful disrespect or lack of cooperation. **NOTE:** "eye contact" protocol is NOT universally the same for all Native people, so be aware of the possibility that lack of eye contact may also indicate fear and distrust;
- ➡ Accept that the family and the Tribe may have different values and beliefs than I do (such as a definition of that is much broader than the "nuclear family" concept);
- ➡ Recognize that some Native parents are disconnected from their heritage and refrain from drawing conclusions about their commitment to their child based on an apparent lack of involvement with their culture or extended family (if applicable);
- ➡ Look at the *long-term* social, emotional, spiritual and identity needs of Native children vs. only the time they are involved with "the system".

This article appeared in the Fall 2001 issue of *The Connection*, quarterly newsletter for the National CASA Association. Judge Abinanti, a member of the Yurok Tribe in Northern California and a founding member of the National CASA Tribal Court Advisory Committee, is a San Francisco Superior Court Commissioner in the Unified Family Court for the State of California.

The Indian Child Welfare Act and CASA:

Advocating for the Best Interests of Native Children

By the Honorable Abby Abinanti

Passed by Congress in 1978, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) requires that every state court dependency matter involving an Indian child must be resolved with reference to specific provisions. The Act is a clear indictment of state courts and social service agencies whose practices and abuses lead to the unprecedented necessity of federal intervention. Within the Act, Indian children are afforded specific protections by Congress designed to insure that the pre-Act abuses of the states are eliminated. It is important for the CASA volunteer involved with an Indian child to realize that most courts and agencies resist being labeled as abusive, even within a historical context. The CASA volunteer must understand that the historical tendency of institutional abuse directed at Native American families led Congress to the pass this Act. When working with an Indian child, the CASA volunteer has the opportunity to protect the child's rights by insuring that the state agencies involved with the case are following the Indian Child Welfare Act.

In the 1970's prior to the passage of the Act congressional hearings were held. The hearings revealed terrible abuses, indicating a national pattern of wholesale public and private removal of Indian children from their homes which resulted in the undermining of Indian families and a had a devastating impact on tribes across the country. At the national level the following results were compiled:

- Indian children were placed in foster care or were adopted at three times the rate of non-Indian children.
- Approximately 25-35 percent of all Indian children were removed from their homes and placed in non-Indian foster homes and adoptive homes, or institutions.

Congress determined "that the Indian child welfare crisis is of massive proportions and that Indian families face vastly greater risks of involuntary separation than are typical for our society as a whole." It is important to note is that Congress did not find the separations warranted. Instead, it was found that the removals often resulted from states failing to

recognize the essential tribal relations of Indian people and the different cultural standards regarding extended families which prevail in Indian communities. The removals were not only removals from the nuclear family but from the tribal community and resulted in cultural alienation for the tribal children. The alienation frequently translated into serious adjustment problems during adolescence. Indian children were often not able to adjust to social and cultural environments that were significantly different from their home environments. The children grew up facing racism and exclusion in non-Indian communities and did not have the cultural skills to fit into a tribal environment.

In passing the Act, Congress made the following declaration of policy: "The Congress hereby declares that it is the policy of this Nation to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families and the placement of such children in foster or adoptive homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture, and by providing for assistance to Indian tribes in the operation of child and family service programs." This very strong statement is often times overwhelming to personnel in non-Indian systems who find it difficult to grasp that such a position evolved from the abusive behavior of institutions that they believe are essentially fair and operating for the good of the entire public. The CASA volunteer must find a gentle but firm way of making sure this policy is the guiding force in any dependency action involving an Indian child.

Many people, when initially faced with issues involving Indian children, grapple with the concept of different treatment for Indian children. Some may feel it is not fair to the Indian child to be treated differently, to have different rules than non-Indian children. It is the CASA volunteer's job to understand and insure that the Indian child's special rights are acknowledged and secured. To be able to advocate in such a manner it is essential that the CASA volunteer understand the basis for this difference. It can best be understood as a citizenship right. Congress in passing the ICWA essentially acknowledged the premise that an Indian child's citizenship within the tribe is a valuable right to be protected for the child. Many tangible and intangible benefits flow from citizenship, many people have strong identity based on citizenship, benefits and responsibilities flow between the sovereign and the citizen. The sovereign has an interest in the welfare of each of its citizens. An Indian child's rights as articulated in the ICWA are not based simply on race or cultural considerations, they are based on the political relationship that exists between the government of the United States and each of the recognized tribes. According to the law, these tribes are considered domestic, dependent nations and as such have a special relationship with the federal government that transcends the relationship of states to other citizens of each state. Each

Indian child has an interest in his or her tribe, and each tribe has an interest in each of its children. The ICWA is designed to prevent inappropriate interference with this relationship.

The CASA volunteer who is assigned an Indian child should immediately review the provisions of the ICWA to determine whether or not the Act is being adhered to by the state court and the social services agency. The CASA volunteer should attempt to make contact with the child's tribe and determine what resources are available to the Indian child. Those resources may include relative or tribal placement options, treatment programs for the parents or the child, housing options, educational placements, etc. The CASA volunteer should determine if the child is enrolled in the tribe, as enrollment is the acknowledgment of citizenship and is a vital interest that must be protect. If the child is eligible but not enrolled the CASA volunteer should do everything possible to facilitate that enrollment.

If the permanency plan is to allow the parents to try and reunify with the Indian child before offering placement options, the CASA volunteer should advocate for protection of the child's relationship with any potential tribal placement. The CASA can do this by encouraging contact between possible tribal placements and the Indian child during the course of reunification. The CASA can also seek out activities that connect the child with his/her native culture. Many services, and service providers, exist that are linked to Indian communities. The volunteer should advocate to have Indian children served by these providers. It is essential for proper development of Indian children's self-identity to have an advocate for their cultural identity and tribal citizenship. If they do not have this identity, studies show that these Indian children do not fare well as teenagers and adults.

Many Indian communities have long standing bias against social services, it is important to remember that the Act was not passed in a vacuum. The abuses which led to the passage of the Act were experienced by real people. Many of these victims live in the Indian community today. They remember, sometimes personally and sometimes in the community's collective memory, their children being unjustly taken from them. Their willingness to work with social services is often compromised even when it might lead to a better result in a specific case. The CASA volunteer is not tainted by a relationship with an agency who is responsible for the infliction of pain in the Indian community. This presents a unique opportunity for the volunteer to create a trusting relationship with a child's tribe and can provide an invaluable service to the Indian child by negotiating the issues associated with their dual citizenship.

It is possible under the ICWA that a case be transferred to a tribal court. (In certain limited circumstances it would be mandatory.) If there is discussion of transfer of jurisdiction, the CASA volunteer can be a very good liaison between the parties and the tribe. Often times

when a transfer is discussed the state officials, including the court and the social services personnel, react with apprehension. They often fear that a transfer is somehow a lessening of services, or that the tribal system is not as adequate as the state system to protect the child. This apprehension is often based on assumptions and stereotypes rather than on actual knowledge of what is available on any given reservation. The CASA volunteer's role may very well be to serve as an information link between these two worlds which may not have a good working relationship. The volunteer can only commit to this type of a role if they understand and accept the premise that the best interests of an Indian child includes protection of the child's Indian identity.

The ICWA imposes a federal standard on all states which decrees that the best interests of Indian children are served by protecting "the rights of the Indian child as an Indian and the rights of the Indian community and tribe in retaining its children in its society." H.R. Report No. 1386, 95th Cong., 2d Sess. 23 (1978). The Act has many provisions that are mandatory, the purpose of this article is not to make the CASA volunteer into an ICWA expert, but rather to develop an understanding that Indian children must have advocates who zealously protect their rights as Indian children, not just as children. At every stage of the proceeding special rules apply to the Indian cases, and the CASA must see that those involved in the proceedings adhere to these rules so that the Indian child's rights are not compromised. The CASA can play an essential role in securing those rights and in make those rights real. For instance, the Act sets out preferences for foster care placements. But if no Indian homes have been recruited or if no one vigorously seeks a tribal placement, it is possible that the placement preference scheme will be meaningless. As the child's advocate, the CASA can take the extra steps and put in the extra effort to make the law real for the Indian child.

In conclusion, a CASA volunteer working with an Indian child has a critical role. As with all CASA advocacy, it is a role that requires diligence. A special sensitivity is needed to help the parties involved understand the federal mandates and the added requirements of those mandates. The CASA must advocate for the child's citizenship rights within their tribe, while insuring that the child's day to day needs for basic care are being met. A challenging task, but one which is essential if the Indian children they work with are to reach their full potential.

Chapter 14

Training

The phone rings. The state court administrator (who funds the CASA program) is on the phone and wants the state organization to conduct all volunteer training (instead of local programs or offices doing so individually).

While local programs or offices typically conduct the initial training of volunteers, some state organizations do provide volunteer training. The decision about whether to do this will depend on factors including staff resources both at the state and local level, geography and timing. Regardless of the role in initial training, most state CASA/GAL organizations provide some level of continuing education for staff, volunteers and board members.

Quality training is essential for both staff and volunteers. Volunteers are required to receive at least 30 hours of initial training and 12 hours of continuing education per year. The goal of the National CASA training for volunteers is to develop individuals who are competent, reasonably autonomous, and able to exercise good judgment in their role as CASA/GAL volunteers. Substitute “staff” for “volunteers” and the goal could be the same for all of the training state organizations provide.

Standards for local programs state, “The CASA program plans and implements a training and development program for employees to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities and provide information about the backgrounds and needs of the children served by the program.” State organizations can play an important role in helping local programs meet this standard.

Structuring and Facilitating Training for Adults

When training CASA/GAL volunteers or staff, it is essential to remember that adult learners bring their own knowledge, history and experience to the training experience. This reality, in turn, shapes their learning. Working with adults can be extremely rewarding because it is an opportunity to build on what they already know.

Most adults have a preference in terms of learning style: they are visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners. Visual learners tend to rely more on what they see or read, and need visual stimulus to best learn. Auditory learners rely more on what they hear. Kinesthetic learners typically prefer doing something. For example, in learning a new software program, a visual learner might start by reading the manual. An auditory learner might prefer to have someone explain how it works, while a kinesthetic learner may jump in and start using the

new software immediately. It is important to respect all three training styles and to ensure that all educational opportunities incorporate them.

While there are many theories about adult learning, most agree that four basic steps are needed for adults to learn and remember skills. The National CASA training curriculum relies upon the work of Jane Vella, who calls these steps anchor, content, experience, and future use. Whether it is a one-hour workshop at a conference or a weeklong training, these steps should guide the structure of any training.

- **Anchor:** Connect the material to the learner’s experience.
- **Content:** Provide research data, theory, etc., presented via charts, lists, stories, readings, lectures, video, etc.
- **Application:** Work with the content and apply it.
- **Future Use:** Relate the content to future work.

Information about Jane Vella’s principles of adult learning is available in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter. More information can be found by participating in a Training of Facilitators sponsored by National CASA or in the National CASA Facilitator Guide and Chapter Notes available at casanet.org.

State CASA/GAL organizations typically make available a number of training opportunities and venues for local program staff, volunteers and board members. These most frequently include: program staff training, regional and state level meetings and conferences, volunteer training, video conferencing, web-based training and continuing education for local program directors.

Conferences

Many state organizations provide annual or semi-annual conferences for local program staff, volunteers and board members. The conference may also include caseworkers from the child welfare agency, child abuse investigators, attorneys (including those for parents, the child welfare agency, the CASA/GAL programs and children), judges, legislators and others interested in child welfare.

Conferences are wonderful opportunities to energize volunteers and staff, to increase knowledge and to share best practices, though planning a conference is a significant undertaking both financially and in terms of staff time. Partnerships are critical. Potential partners may include the state child welfare agency, a commission or coalition concerning child welfare or other nonprofit organizations.

A sample timeline for planning a state conference can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.

State Organization Role in Training Volunteers

If resources allow, the state organization will likely have some involvement in training volunteers at the local level. In some states, the state organization provides the initial 30-hour training of volunteers, though in most states this is the responsibility of the local programs or offices.

The state organization can help local programs in providing effective training. If possible, sponsor a Training of Facilitators workshop for local staff. This is a three-day workshop intended to help facilitators understand the structure and format of the National CASA volunteer training curriculum, to understand adult learning principles and to improve facilitation skills. For more information, contact National CASA for help in setting up a Training of Facilitators session.

The state organization can also assist local programs by customizing the volunteer training curriculum for the state, both the group training and the independent study edition. This involves language changes (such as replacing CASA/GAL volunteer with either CASA or GAL volunteer) and the insertion of state-specific information such as the history of the CASA/GAL movement in the state, state laws and sample court orders. If a local program has a person interested in customizing the curriculum, the state organization could facilitate the distribution of the customized curriculum. More information about the curriculum and about the customization required is available at casanet.org.

The state organization can also help local offices or programs evaluate when it is appropriate to use the independent study edition of the volunteer training rather than the traditional group training. It should be clear to local programs that using the independent study edition is not a time-saver or a short cut, either for staff or for prospective volunteers. While it involves less “face time” with prospective volunteers, it requires more support and considerable preparation (at least 30 hours on the part of volunteers is required). Valid reasons to use the independent study edition include:

- Volunteers who live too far to travel or for whom it is difficult to travel for an in-person training session (ensuring that this difficulty in traveling will not interfere with their capacity to volunteer).
- There are fewer than four volunteers to be trained in a training cycle.
- A volunteer misses a particular training session and needs a make-up (with the exception of Chapter Three). The make-ups should be allowed only in accordance with the local program policies on attendance.

The pilot of the independent study edition indicated that certain characteristics of the prospective volunteer were predictors of success in using the independent study edition:

- Volunteers who are independent and self-motivated.
- Volunteers who keep in good communication with staff.
- Volunteers for whom no “red flags” arose during the initial screening process.
- Volunteers who have access to email

An overview of the National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum and the list of customization suggestions can be found in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.

Program staff meetings

Many states provide continuing education meetings for local staff, either quarterly or annually. Staff training promotes teamwork and sharing of best practices, in addition to

learning new skills. If the state has a Program Advisory Council to the state board of directors or advisory council, combining meetings may be possible.

Building an agenda for these meetings is critical to ensuring it is the best possible use of time. Think about travel arrangements in setting start and end times. Consider how to incorporate different learning styles and the four training design steps (anchor, content, application, future use). Think about what business may need to be conducted in addition to the training topic. The state organization may wish to use outside facilitators for sections of the meeting.

One of the most important functions for this time is for local staff members to network with one another and to share best practices. When creating the agenda, and set aside time specifically for networking purposes. It may be preferable to have an experienced local staff person facilitate and to rotate this responsibility.

Possible topics of interest for program staff meetings may include:

- Training of Facilitators (contact National CASA)
- COMET training (contact National CASA)
- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Resource development/fundraising
- Strategic planning
- Board development
- Diversity awareness and cultural competence
- Public relations
- Handling conflict
- Office management
- Use of technology
- Crisis management
- Risk Management

National CASA Association staff may also be a good resource in conducting training for state conferences and program staff meetings. Contact your Regional Program Specialist for a listing of training topics offered.

Other great ideas can come from surveying local staff, by identifying common challenges in the Quality Assurance process or in technical assistance calls. For suggestions as to facilitators for training programs, contact National CASA, other state organizations and other nonprofit organizations in your own community. Regardless of the topic, the training must be a good use of local program staff members' time and resources in order for them to come.

It is important for the state CASA/GAL organization to model effective training. For program staff meetings, have an agenda and observe the adult learning principles. Ensure everyone's comfort and that they feel welcome. Some ways to do this include:

- Provide an agenda and directions to the meeting well ahead of the meeting date.
- Provide food and drinks.

- Provide a comfortable training environment, including all materials needed, such as handouts, flip chart, markers, tape, pads of paper, pens and sticky notes.
- Provide nametags.
- Personally welcome staff as they arrive.
- Allow time for introductions and for informal networking.
- Provide door prizes.
- If financially possible, provide hotel rooms if the training lasts more than one day or if it starts early in the day.

Some state organizations have the funds to pay for periodic meetings of program staff and others who provide grant funding may require local programs to budget for this in their grants. It may not be financially possible, however, for the state office to provide statewide in-person meetings for program staff. One option the state office may wish to use is technology such as telephone conferencing and videoconferencing instead.

Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing can be a cost-effective method of providing training. Videoconferencing may be available through a university system, the state information services system, a public television station or a statewide training provider. Other possible sites include community colleges, health departments and high schools.

When planning a videoconference, there are a number of items to consider:

- Does the topic lend itself to distance learning? Highly interactive workshops may be more difficult.
- Is the speaker or facilitator experienced in distance learning?
- How many sites are needed around the state? If the training is interactive it should probably be limited to four or five sites.
- What is the budget for the training?
- What written materials should be provided to participants? Will it be provided ahead of time or at the site?

More information on videoconferencing is available in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.

Web-based trainings

Online trainings and meetings are becoming relatively straightforward to organize. Technology allows for use of PowerPoint, group editing, web conferencing, voting and virtual white boards where participants can take group notes. Breakout sessions in small groups are also possible, and pre- and post-tests can be administered online. Communication can occur either by linked teleconferencing or through the use of text. However, in order to use web-based training, participants must have fast and dependable Internet access.

One advantage of web-based training is being able to record and distribute the session on a website for those who were unable to attend.

There are many providers of online training: two worth noting are genesys.com and webex.com. In choosing a provider, look for good online demonstrations, tutorials, customer service, technical assistance and help.

If a state organization does a lot of web conferencing, it may be economical to pay a monthly fee for an unlimited contract. It is also possible to contract per meeting.

Regional Meetings

Another way to provide quality training with lower cost than statewide meetings is to do a “road show”—take a training segment for staff, volunteers or board members to various sites around the state. A topic might be CASA/GAL-specific or might be an opportunity for cross-training with other groups. For example, a series of regional meetings on fund development could include CASA/GAL staff and board members, or could include other nonprofit organizations. A series on better working relationships between CASA/GAL programs and the child welfare agency could include both CASA/GAL volunteers and staff and caseworkers from the agency. It may also be the responsibility of the local programs within the region to plan the agenda.

Regional meetings allow for valuable in-person contact with staff, volunteers and board members while minimizing travel expenses. Meeting regionally may also encourage collaboration among programs in the same geographic area.

Training New Local Directors

Providing training for new local program directors or coordinators is an important investment in local programs. A program with a new director may be some distance from its nearest neighbor. Even close programs may not have the time or skill to provide mentoring. If the local program is a nonprofit organization, the new director may receive relatively little training or guidance from the board.

Training can be done centrally or locally. If several new people are starting at the same time, providing a central training will give them the opportunity to meet one another and will be an efficient use of resources. A sample agenda for training new staff is available in the resource documents section at the end of this chapter.

If only one person is starting or if the central training will not occur for some time, providing individualized training may be necessary. The local director may need assistance with topics such as COMET or financial software with which the state director may be unfamiliar. In this case, point the director to resources that can help. For example, since many state directors do not use COMET every day, encourage the local director to use the COMET helpline and attend COMET training when available.

Whether the training is individual or group, topics to include are:

- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Volunteer training
- Public relations
- History and services of the state organization
- Relationship to and services of National CASA
- Grant record keeping and reporting
- The juvenile court system

- Data collection (using COMET or other databases)
- Financial management
- State statutes
- Standards and Quality Assurance
- Board development
- Board and staff roles and responsibilities
- Fund development

The state organization should ensure each new program director has a copy of National CASA's *Achieving Our Mission for Local Programs* as well as any additional relevant National CASA publications. These resources are available for purchase from casanetstore.org.

Some states have also developed their own best practice handbooks for programs. These may include the history and structure of the juvenile court system, relevant state laws regarding CASA/GAL, confidentiality, volunteer liability, state tax or fundraising requirements and sample forms such as court orders, personnel policies, etc.

Continuing Education for State Directors

Providing continuing education for local program staff, volunteers and board members is an essential role for the state organization, but continuing education is also important for the state organization staff. There are a number of meetings and conferences that can be helpful.

Attending a Training of Facilitators session sponsored by National CASA is very useful for new state organization staff, both in better understanding the volunteer training and in improving facilitation skills. Ask the National CASA program specialist for an onsite orientation and suggestions for a mentor. Use the state director listserve.

Other child welfare or nonprofit organizations in the state may host conferences or meetings; these can be wonderful opportunities to learn more and network in the state. Ask the child welfare agency, any related coalitions or commissions, the Children's Justice Act contact, the state chapter of the National Association of Counsel for Children, judges and the Court Improvement Project contact about trainings or conferences they attend or recommend.

The National CASA Association typically offers two training opportunities for state directors each year: the state directors' meeting held in the fall and the annual conference in the spring. Both conferences provide rich opportunities to learn from fellow state directors, who bring a wealth of experience and wisdom. Specific dates for the meetings can be found at casanet.org.

Attending a neighboring state's CASA/GAL conference may be another opportunity—both in how they put a conference together and from the sessions. Often state directors find it difficult to attend many educational sessions at their own state conference.

In addition, the following organizations offer training or conferences that might be helpful:

- Child Welfare League of America (cwla.org) sponsors numerous conferences, teleconferences and executive retreats. Their webpage also provides links to training opportunities offered by other organizations.

- National Council on Family and Juvenile Court Judges (ncjfcj.org). Their conference includes a wide variety of current topics: delinquency, dependency, divorce and domestic violence related issues. This conference is designed for judges, hearing officers, managers and all those interested in juvenile and family courts. This conference is held in the summer.
- National Association of Counsel for Children (naccchildlaw.org) offers national and regional trainings. The national conference is in the early fall. The conference is geared toward continuing legal education, but many of the topics are relevant for CASA/GAL staff.



Additional Resources:

National CASA Association (casanet.org)

Web-based training providers (genesys.com and webex.com)

Child Welfare League of America (cwla.org)

National Council on Family and Juvenile Court Judges (ncjfcj.org)

National Association of Counsel for Children – (naccchildlaw.org)

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key training issues in your state:

- Who are trainers from local programs?
- What are the training requirements both for initial training and for in-service training? Are these in compliance with National CASA standards? Who provides it? Who tracks it?
- Who is trained – volunteers, attorneys, staff?
- How has the state CASA/GAL organization collaborated with other organizations or agencies on training?
- Has the state CASA/GAL organization offered a statewide conference?
- What topics have been included in regional or statewide meetings of staff?
- How are attorneys in the child welfare system trained? Has the state CASA/GAL organization participated in the past?
- What are the procedures for getting Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit?
- What are the procedures for getting Continuing Education Units (CEU) credit?
- What training videotapes exist?
- What training do judges receive? Has the state CASA/GAL organization participated in the past?

Training Resources & Sample Documents

Principles of Adult Learning

Sample Conference Planning Timeline

National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum Overview

Customization List for National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum

Videoconferencing

Sample New Director Training

Principles of Adult Learning

Regardless of the training situation, facilitators should be mindful of basic principles of adult learning. More information on this topic is available in the National CASA Facilitator Manual.¹¹

1. Accountability

Adults learn what they are ready and able to learn. In that sense, they are accountable to themselves. Educators are accountable for the design and process of training—for ensuring that learning materials are accessible, relevant, culturally appropriate, and useful. They are not, however, accountable for the actual learning.

Adult learners have to take responsibility for their own learning. However, if people in a training session are not learning, those responsible for the training must examine their part in the accountability equation. As a facilitator, questions to ask yourself include: Did I prepare carefully? Was the Needs Assessment thorough and accurate? Is the design of the training appropriate? Is my facilitation careful and effective? Am I listening to the learners? Are my evaluation and follow-up providing the necessary information to me? To the learner?

2. Affirmation

It helps adults to hear simple encouragement of their efforts, such as “Well done!” “Good question!” “Yes!” or “Very interesting!” Affirmation means generous encouragement and loud and clear recognition of the effort the participant is making to learn new knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It is one way that facilitators can convey respect.

What is encouraged is the learning, not just the product. The product may be brilliant or not, but what you want to encourage is the effort. What you want to avoid is the “plop.” A plop occurs when an adult learner responds to a question, asks a question, or ventures an opinion, and the facilitator’s response is a blank stare, silence, or a move to the next activity without reference to what the person said.

A plop can happen because a facilitator is absorbed in the content, worried about covering the material, concerned about time, or just doesn’t hear the participant. Whatever the reason, this response—or failure to respond—is destructive to learning. You will be lucky if the person returns after experiencing a plop. Facilitators who focus on respect and affirmation reduce the risk of plops.

3. Autonomy of Learner

A goal of CASA/GAL volunteer or staff training is preparing reasonably autonomous individuals who can think critically and exercise good judgment. What better place to start encouraging this personal autonomy than in the actual training sessions?

Think about supporting participants’ autonomy in a variety of ways, including sharing information about the learning activities, involving participants in hands-on exploration and application of content, and providing discussion questions that encourage participants to express their ideas and opinions. Facilitators can support learner autonomy by honoring participants’ unique perspectives and welcoming their honest responses—including ones that challenge the material.

¹¹ Adapted from the NCASAA Facilitator Manual, written by Merilee Clunis. The original source of the information is *Training Through Dialogue: Promoting Effective Learning and Change with Adults*, Jane Vella, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

4. Congruence

Congruence in the training situation means that facilitators do what they say. Participants learn how to behave from how the facilitator behaves, so you need to do what you are teaching. For example, if you want participants to strive to be culturally competent, you need to model this behavior. If you want participants to work well as a team with their co-learners, you need to model effective teamwork with your co-facilitator.

Are you modeling behavior that you want participants to translate into their own work?

5. Dialogue

An exchange among equals occurs in a training situation when each person's ideas, feelings, and experiences are valued. The learning takes place in the exchange between participants as they examine the training content, question it, and consider its value, usefulness, and applicability to their lives. The principle of dialogue encourages participants to transform the content and make it their own.

6. Evaluation

Evaluation involves looking for clear and precise indicators of success in the learning of skills, knowledge, and attitudes. But how do the learners know that they have learned something new? And how do you, as the facilitator, know that you have done your job?

Since adult learners are responsible for their own learning, only they can determine what they have learned. Asking what they learned from an activity or what questions remain about a topic are ways that you can encourage participants to engage in evaluating their own learning.

As a facilitator, your responsibility is to make the learning process as easy as possible by establishing and maintaining a positive learning climate and by engaging participants in the activities that will prepare them for their work. You can evaluate your success informally through participants' comments and your observations of their engagement in the learning. You can also request specific feedback from participants about aspects of the learning experience.

7. Immediacy

Immediacy makes for high motivation. When learners use new content immediately, within the training session, they know that they understand it because they have used it. Clearly connecting the training activities with the work that they will be doing in the near future reinforces the immediacy.

8. Inclusion

The question here is, "Is everyone on board?" The alternative to inclusion is exclusion. When an adult learner feels excluded, little or no learning takes place. This principle is clearly related to respect, immediacy, relevance, and accountability.

The design of the training and the behavior of the facilitator assure inclusion. Each gesture of respect and courtesy is an expression of this principle. Learning people's names and using them, affirming each person's contributions, and using small groups help create inclusion. Establishing norms for language and participation (e.g., having the group create their own guidelines for communication) also encourages inclusion.

9. Learning by Doing

People learn more when they are actively involved in the learning process. Learning by doing engages people more than merely listening to someone talk about a subject. This engagement of learners is not

only an indication that they are learning, it is how they learn! Without it, little or no learning takes place. Malcolm Knowles's (1980) research showed that adults learn twenty percent of what they hear, forty percent of what they both hear and see, and eighty percent of what they do or discover for themselves.

10. Relevance

Adults learn faster and more permanently when the material is significant to them and to their current lives. The facilitator can emphasize relevance by connecting the content and activities to what the learners already know, to what is important to them, and to what they will be doing in the future. Relevance is also closely related to immediacy. If adults do not see the immediate relevance of the content, they quickly figure out that they don't need to know it.

11. Respect

According to Malcolm Knowles's research, respect is the prime factor in adult education. Another word for respect is courtesy. Although it may be shown differently in different cultures, respect transcends culture. The task for the training facilitator is to discover how to show respect.

Respect is conveyed in small and large ways. For example, creating a welcoming atmosphere by having nametags, greeting participants individually, and providing breaks and refreshments all demonstrate respect. Prescreening to determine whether the program is a match for the person's needs, acknowledging and utilizing participants' knowledge and strengths in the training, and genuinely inviting participation also embody this principle.

How will you know if you have successfully conveyed respect? When adults feel respected, they are more likely to engage with the material, to speak up, to ask questions and even challenge the content and the facilitator, to apply the content in unexpected ways, and to suggest changes or alternatives to what is planned. Respecting learners creates an energizing experience for everyone involved—facilitators and participants alike.

12. Safety

Learning involves taking risks. Adult learners typically worry about making a mistake or appearing foolish. As a facilitator, you need to provide a learning environment that balances the challenges of learning new skills with a sense of safety that allows your participants to risk exploring or doing something new. Treating people with respect, addressing them by name, being supportive, affirming their contributions, and asking for feedback about the process all help establish safety.

13. Task & Process Maintenance

In any group activity, there is the need to get the job done and the need to protect and nurture the group that is doing the job. The first is called task maintenance, and the second is process maintenance. As a facilitator, you need to attend to both and to support participants to do the same, especially when they are working in small groups.

14. Time & Reinforcement

Facilitators need to give adults time to learn. Just as each learner has his/her own pace, so does each facilitator. The principle of time invites facilitators to accommodate their own personal style to the needs of their adult learners. Facilitators often get focused on covering the content and try to teach more than people can learn in the time allotted. If you get overly focused on covering the material, you may miss the point, which is for participants to learn.

The learner not only needs time to master the new knowledge, skills, and attitudes but also needs to have this mastery reinforced at every opportunity. As a facilitator, you can reinforce learning in various ways, including the following:

- When you introduce new learning activities, make sure you mention what participants will be learning and why it is important.
- Keep making the connection between what they are learning now and what they learned before or already know. Such phrases as “Remember when you learned about (specific content) or practiced (a skill) in the last session?” can link the old and new. This reinforces what they learned previously.
- Encourage participants to apply a concept to a number of case situations rather than only one, or to practice a skill more than once and to continue practicing outside the training session.

Sample Conference Planning Timeline

Sample Conference Planning Timeline		
Time	Activity	Notes
12-15 months before	Set specific date and budget for event	Date may depend on hotel availability
	Visit potential hotels	View training rooms, look at areas for vendors, registration, etc. Check for convenience and adequacy of restrooms. If possible, try conference food. Put holds on meeting rooms if possible.
	Sign contract with hotel	Negotiate heavily on room rates, meeting room expenses, and food. Ask what can be “comped.” Ask if changing dates would reduce costs. Read the contract VERY carefully. Once contract is signed, stay in touch with hotel regarding agenda and space needs. Be sure to get an “office” for the conference. Be sure all conference events are accessible to the disabled.
	Decide theme and audience	Is the conference primarily for volunteers? Others?
	Have logo designed	If no one in office is a graphic artist, may be able to use board contacts, local program person, or a graphic design class at a college or high school.
9-12 months	Invite major speakers, including keynote for banquet	Negotiate on fee. Be clear about what expenses (such as travel) will be in addition to fee and what A/V equipment will be needed.
6-9 months	Issue call for programs, invite other speakers	Think about the diversity of speakers (people who are CASA/GAL staff & volunteers and those who are not, people from different parts of the state, ethnicity)
	Assign committees & chairs	Likely to include registration, program, banquet, and audio-visual
	Solicit vendors & sponsors	Set prices for vendor tables and for sponsors. May have different rates for CASA/GAL programs.
	Finalize agenda	Match anticipated audience for particular programs to room size. Include all major decision makers in setting final agenda.
	Arrange entertainment groups	Banquet and plenary may need entertainment – children’s groups are always appropriate. Think about diversity.
4-6 months	Mail registration brochure	
	Arrange for CLE and CEU credit	
	Mail nomination forms for awards	May use National CASA forms as a sample so state winners can be nominated easily for national awards. Include question about compliance with standards.
	Order any conference goodies	Tote bags, t-shirts, specially printed binders, etc.
	Create and copy evaluation forms	If possible, use forms that can be electronically scanned.
3 months	Have handouts, brief bios, A/V needs, and program descriptions due from speakers/	
	Duplicate handouts	

Sample Conference Planning Timeline

2 months	Make travel arrangements for speakers	
	Arrange for A/V equipment	It may be cheaper long term to purchase A/V equipment than rent from the hotel.
	Choose award winners and order plaques	Who chooses winners? Are winners notified in advance?
	Create and copy banquet program	
	Create press releases for winners to be distributed to press and nominating programs at the banquet	
6 weeks	Early registration due	
	Make speaker packets	Include agenda (including their session time & place highlighted), their handout, evaluation form, and any other information they need
	Recruit volunteers to work the registration table, banquet set-up, room monitors	
	Make room monitor packets	Include same information as in speaker packet, reminder to collect evaluations, and speaker bio along with instructions.
4 weeks	Make name tags	
	Plan specific menu	Include breaks and any meals provided. Be aware of special needs of those who are vegetarian, diabetic, etc.
	Send final agenda to hotel	Make sure hotel is aware of space needs and any room transition issues (changing seating, splitting up a room, etc.)
	Send billing instructions and direct-bill room lists to hotel	Provide information about what should be billed and who can authorize additional expenditures. Let hotel know about any VIP's.
	Send press releases	Notify morning shows in addition to newspapers, radio and television
1-2 weeks	Have final planning meeting with hotel	Do walk-through, discuss transitions, food, A/V. Let hotel know who is authorized to order changes (such as increase in food).
After the conference	Send thank you notes	Include all speakers, sponsors, vendors, etc.
	Evaluate conference and begin planning for next	
	Pay bills	Check all bills, particularly those from the hotel, carefully.

National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum Overview

Philosophy

Initial training is part of the process of preparing individuals to become quality CASA/GAL volunteer advocates. The curriculum focuses on the knowledge, skills and attitudes identified as necessary by local programs and National Standards. Some content, of course, requires customization to reflect such specifics as state laws and local program procedures.

The curriculum is learner-centered, interactive and experiential. It uses case-based material to engage volunteers in practicing skills that they will use on the job. The belief that adults are responsible for their own learning guided its development. This philosophy, along with key principles of adult learning, shaped the structure and process of the curriculum and determined the role of the trainer.

The trainer's role typically includes wearing a number of different "hats." Teacher, organizer, coach, presenter, facilitator, caterer and sanitation engineer are just a few of the possibilities. The use of the term "facilitator" rather than "trainer" as your title is a deliberate and thoughtful choice, based on research about teaching adults and on the overall philosophy of this training.

The primary role of the trainer with this training curriculum is facilitation. Your responsibility as a facilitator is to make the learning process as easy as possible by establishing and maintaining a positive learning climate and by engaging participants in the curriculum activities that will prepare them for CASA/GAL volunteer work.

The intentional design of this curriculum maximizes adult learning and retention by anchoring the content to what participants already know, by engaging them in working with the material as they will be doing as CASA/GAL volunteers, and by inviting them to think about how they will use what they are learning in their future work with their CASA/GAL program.

The activities appeal to different learning styles. Because the learning is in the doing, it is critical that you involve volunteers in hands-on activities and attend to different learning styles. While it is important that you, as a facilitator, make this training yours, it is also important to do so within the philosophy, approach and framework of the training design.

Framework

The Volunteer Manual organizes material into chapters (main topics) and units (specific content within each main topic). It is designed to be delivered in sessions of approximately three hours that may be combined for all-day sessions. To maximize the use of face-to-face training time, some sessions have homework assignments. The total time required for this initial training, excluding homework and other outside activities, is thirty hours. Using the optional activities, titled "Activities to Extend the Learning," expands the curriculum to forty hours. In-service training will be needed to address additional topics and to cover curriculum topics in more depth.

Because it is based on the principle that adults are responsible for their own learning, the Volunteer Manual contains not only the content information that CASA/GAL volunteers need for their work, but also the objectives and activities for the training sessions. This approach best supports the goal of encouraging autonomous, competent volunteers and models the values of respect and responsibility. Thus, the only sections that appear exclusively in the Facilitator Notes are certain resource materials and activities for extended learning.

Accessing the Manuals

Both the Facilitator Guide and the Volunteer Manual may be downloaded free of charge from the CASA website. They are also available, for a fee, in print or on CD-ROM from National CASA. The terms and language used in the training materials were chosen to be broadly applicable and inclusive. Those of you who wish to customize language to better reflect the language used in your state or program may do so

using the CD-ROM or website version. The customization necessary to reflect state laws and program specifics can also be accomplished with each of these versions.

Scope, Sequence & Customization

The volunteer training must address the knowledge, skills and attitudes that a participant needs in order to advocate effectively for the child he/she represents. This curriculum is designed to provide only what the volunteer needs initially, leaving related topics and more depth for later trainings. Nonetheless, the scope is broad and the content extensive.

The sequence of information is from general to specific, using activities that build on each other from simple to more complex. By the end of the training, participants will have practiced using all the skills they will need in their work as CASA/GAL volunteers.

Customization is necessary to reflect specifics such as state laws, local policies, program procedures and forms. For some programs, customization will be completed prior to the production and distribution of training materials. For others, you will need to create pieces for your own use (samples of each piece can be found on the CASA website). Regardless, there are several pieces requiring your local program information, so it is important to review all materials prior to training.

Adapted from the National CASA Facilitator Guide and Notes

National CASA/GAL Volunteer Training Curriculum Volunteer Manual

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Customizing the National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum

The National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum was written to be broadly applicable across state and local programs, though customization will make the document more meaningful for your local volunteers. There are two main types of customization that will need to be done.

1. **Language modification** consists of “find and replace” of terms that vary between states. For example, Word can search for the acronym CASA/GAL and replace it with either CASA or GAL, depending on which term the state or program uses. If the state agency is not called CPS, conduct a find and replace for that term as well. (The “find and replace” function is found under the EDIT menu. Do not choose “replace all” unless you are absolutely sure that every instance will need to change – sometimes replace all leads to unintended and humorous text changes.)
2. **Content additions** include those items that states or local programs will add to the curriculum. The chapter outline of the National CASA Volunteer Training materials requiring customization is below. Items that can or should be customized are listed under the chapter headings. Possible sources for obtaining information and sample documents are suggested in italics and on casanet.org.

Suggested content customization by chapter:

(note: Tribal programs may need additional customization)

Chapter One: Introducing the CASA/GAL Volunteer Role

- Mission of the program (for Unit 2) – *program, state organization*
- Local volunteer job description (for Unit 3) – *program*

Chapter Two: Introducing the Law, the Child Protection System, and the Courts

- Information on state and local history of CASA (Add this under the heading of “Closer to Home” in Unit 1) – *court, state Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), law library*
- Local statistics on children in the system e.g. numbers, racial balance, average time in care, etc. (Also add this to “Closer to Home” in Unit 1)
- History of the juvenile court process/child advocacy (for Unit 1)
- History of the state/local program (for Unit 1, Activity 2B) – *court, state AOC, law library*
- Excerpts from relevant state and local laws (for Unit 2, Activity 2C: Researching Your State, Tribal, and/or Local laws)
- The Child Protective Services (CPS) System (for Unit 3, Activity 2E) – Correct this for local terms and role definitions – it doesn’t need to be created.
- Roles of participants in the case (for Unit 4) – Correct this for local terms and role definitions – it doesn’t need to be created.
- Names of Hearings in chart (for Unit 6, Activity 2K)
- Juvenile Court process (for Unit 6)
- Juvenile Court proceedings chart (for Unit 6)

NOTE: Resource Materials Customization

The “Responsibilities Chart – CASA/GAL Volunteer, CASA/GAL Staff, and the Attorney Appointed for the Child or CASA/GAL Volunteer” that appears in the Resource Materials section

of the Volunteer Manual may need customization to make it consistent with the responsibilities of each of these participants in your local jurisdiction.

Chapter Three: Exploring Cultural Awareness

Organizations that provide assistance to people of different cultures in your community – *National CASA Diversity Committee* is creating a national resource list that will be available at *casanet.org*.

Each state organization should also provide a resource list pertinent to their own state.

The Chapter three facilitator notes which accompany the manual explain more ways that this material can be customized for local use.

Chapter Four: Understanding Families, Part 1

Local definition of minimum sufficient level of care – state/local Child Protective Services (CPS) agency may have written community standards, use your local CPS risk assessment tool

Chapter Five: Understanding Families, Part 2

- Local statistics related to poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence and mental illness. Statistics may be available from your local or state social services agency, mental health agency or county/parish public information office. The Children’s Defense Fund has a web site, which includes state statistics (*childrensdefense.org*). “Kids Count Data Book” (*aecf.org/kidscount*) is also a great source for such information.
- Insert the following information into the volunteer manual or share it verbally or as a handout in class: the local terminology for TANF, local poverty statistics, and the local impact of TANF time limits. It would be helpful to give out the local social services TANF handout or brochure as well. – local/state child protective services agency

Chapter Six: Understanding Children

Only language customization required.

Chapter Seven: Communicating as a CASA/GAL Volunteer

Local laws/rules on confidentiality (for Unit 5)

Chapter Eight: Practicing the CASA/GAL Volunteer Role – Gathering Information

- What the petition contains (for Unit 1)
- Forms and petition (for Unit 1, Activity 8A: Training Case Two: CASA/GAL Appointment and First Steps). Ideally use local forms but fill in the information for the Brandi Underwood case. These will include:
 - Juvenile petition;
 - Affidavit as to status of minor child;
 - Court order regarding custody (if the child is taken into CPS custody);
 - Juvenile summons;
 - Notice to the parent(s) regarding the right to a lawyer;
 - Notice to the tribe;
 - CASA/GAL volunteer appointment order; and/or
 - Order on the need for continued custody (if the child is taken into CPS custody).
- Hearing date checklist (for Unit 1, Activity 8A: Training Case Two: CASA/GAL Appointment and First Steps) Correct for local terms and timelines

Customization of National CASA Volunteer Training

- Sources of information chart (for Unit 2, Activity 8B: Sources of Information) Correct for local terms and role definitions
- Protective services incident report (for Unit 4: Community Resources). If possible, substitute local form with Brandi's information.
- Community agency resource list (for Unit 4, Activity 8I, created for Chapter 3) – *Chamber of Commerce, refugee agencies, faith community*

Chapter Nine: Practicing the CASA/GAL Volunteer Role – Reporting and Monitoring

- Volunteer report – standard elements (for Unit 2)
- Substitute volunteer's Underwood court report according to local guidelines (for Unit 2)
- Copies of court forms and orders
- Any other case documentation or forms developed by your program, state, or jurisdiction.

Chapter Ten: Pulling It All Together

- Office procedures (for Unit 4, Activity 10E: Local administrative procedures) If you have written information regarding office procedures, insert it in the manual prior to training or share as a handout.
- Local standards as to in-service training (for Unit 3, Activity 10D: CASA/GAL staff)
- Insert name of local CPS agency in Jeopardy under "History/Role of CASA/GAL Volunteer"— \$300 answer (for Unit 7, Activity 10K).

Videoconferencing—Tips for best practice

Videoconferencing can be a cost-effective means of providing training across a large geographic area, but effective videoconferencing requires thorough preparation. These steps are adapted from the North Carolina information highway (ncih.net).¹²

1. Identify several different dates and times that are possibilities for the videoconference(s)
2. Identify the various regions/cities of the state which must be represented
3. Identify an "originating" site. This will be the site where the moderator, main speaker or host of the videoconference will most likely attend.
4. Contact the prospective "originating" site to inquire about availability and request that time in their room be reserved on the desired date(s). Other issues to discuss include availability of a site facilitator, videoconference requirements (i.e. use of a video, PowerPoint presentation, whiteboard, etc.), accommodation logistics for the expected number of participants, any associated costs, parking, directions, etc. Always ask if costs can be reduced or waived.
5. Identify the prospective "receive" site(s) for the videoconference. Contact the prospective "receive" site(s) to inquire about availability and request that time in their videoconferencing room be reserved on the desired date(s). Other issues to discuss include availability of a site facilitator, videoconference requirements (i.e. use of a video, PowerPoint presentation, whiteboard, etc.), accommodation logistics for the expected number of participants, any associated costs, parking, directions, etc.
6. After a comprehensive list of participating sites has been confirmed contact the "originating" site's scheduler to confirm and to find out if additional steps are necessary.

To ensure a quality videoconference:

- Don't assume that visuals such as a video or presentation will transmit clearly enough to be read. Provide essential materials in writing. Include a bio of the speaker, an evaluation form, a list of sites and attendees and some information about how the videoconference will work.
- Prepare the speaker for videoconferencing. Because of the slight time lag, it is easy to talk on top of people.
- Have a technician at each site.
- Have a "host" at each site who will collect the evaluation forms, mileage forms, etc. and hand out materials. The host may also be responsible for forming participants into small groups and helping them with tasks if that is part of the training. Provide a checklist or instruction sheet for hosts.

¹² This site suggested by Ruth Kravitz, training administrator of the North Carolina GAL program.

Maryland New CASA Program Director Orientation

10:00 – 10:30	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview and Goals of Orientation ▪ History of CASA in Maryland ▪ State and Federal Laws; Courts
10:30 – 11:00	<p>Overview of Maryland CASA Association, CASA Network of Maryland, Administrative Office of the Courts, National CASA Association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CASA Rules & Guidelines; Financial & Statistical Reporting Requirements ▪ National CASA Standards ▪ Core Services for State CASA Organizations; Maryland CASA Services
11:00 – 11:15	BREAK
11:15 – 12:30	<p>Program Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policies and Procedures ▪ Conflicts of Interest ▪ Program Evaluation ▪ Quality Assurance ▪ Data Collection ▪ Risk Management ▪ Managing Growth
12:30 – 1:15	LUNCH
1:15 – 1:45	Program Budget & Financial Record-Keeping
1:45 – 2:15	Funding Sources & Fundraising Strategies for CASA Programs
2:15 – 2:30	BREAK
2:30 – 3:00	<p>Working with your Board of Directors/Advisory Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building a Relationship with your Board ▪ Recruitment of the <i>right</i> Board members ▪ Role of the Board & Board members ▪ Board Priorities
3:00 – 4:15	<p>Volunteer Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment, Screening and Training; Diversity ▪ Confidentiality ▪ Retention/Recognition ▪ Supervision; Data Collection; Report-Writing ▪ Evaluation ▪ Dealing with Difficult Volunteers ▪ Terminating Volunteers
4:15 – 4:30	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internet (child welfare related websites, etc.) ▪ casanet.org ▪ marylandcasa.org ▪ Maryland CASA Resource Library ▪ Maryland CASA List Serve ▪ National CASA Publications ▪ Kids Count Data Book
4:30 – 5:00	Questions/Wrap-Up

Chapter 15

Awards & Recognition

The phone rings. It is a volunteer, calling because she is upset that HER judge didn't win an award at the state recognition banquet.

The state CASA/GAL organization can support the work of local programs and offices through formal and informal awards and recognition programs. State offices are in a unique position to recognize outstanding work and to thank the many individuals whose time and energy makes CASA/GAL advocacy possible. Recognition awards and events also provide public relations opportunities as well as occasions to build relationships with other organizations.

The type of recognition provided should be tailored to the individual involved. Some individuals really value the formal awards given at banquets or other special events while some are more touched by a personal note or thank you.

Formal Awards

Many state CASA/GAL organizations present formal awards at an annual conference or a Light of Hope event. These awards can serve to celebrate the work of CASA/GAL volunteers and staff as well as others in the child welfare system. The events themselves can serve to reinforce a sense of identity and belonging in the CASA/GAL network. Some typical awards include:

- Local program or office of the year
- Program director of the year
- Volunteer of the year
- Judge of the year
- Board member of the year
- Attorney of the year
- Foster parent of the year
- Child welfare caseworker of the year
- Parent counsel of the year
- Child Advocate of the year (a generic category that can be awarded to any non-CASA/GAL person, including a legislator, a therapist, a foster parent, a caseworker, a corporation)

The award selection process

Choosing award winners is a delicate function, and it is a good practice to have people other than state organization staff choose the winners—partially because of the calls the state organization is likely to receive (like the example given at the beginning of this chapter). Many state organizations have a committee of the board or advisory council select the winners, based on nominations from local programs, judges and attorneys. Another possibility is using a state director from another state to determine the award recipient.

The simplest way to gather nominations is to use the forms provided by National CASA for the national award categories. The state organization can then easily nominate the state winner for national awards. Several months before the national conference, National CASA distributes the Awards of Excellence Call for Entries. The Call for Entries is also posted at casanet.org. Questions asked on the nomination form may include:

- How has this individual shown creativity or innovation in solving problems or building relationships?
- For a judge, what improvements has this judge made to the court to make it a better experience for children?
- How has the nominee worked to improve the child welfare system or outcomes for individual children?

One important consideration is to ensure that award winners are in compliance with national and state standards. There should be a statement on the nomination form affirming that the award recipient is in compliance with standards and only programs in good standing should be allowed to submit nominations.

The state organization may want to set policies about repeat award winners. Another consideration may be if multiple winners from a single area in a single year are permissible.

Naming the awards

Some organizations name the awards given, such as the National CASA G.F. Bettineski Volunteer of the Year Award. Awards do not have to be named; however, if the organization does name the award, selection should be done carefully. In general, awards are only named after people who have performed over and above all expectations in some way or who supported the organization in a unique fashion. Names are sometimes bestowed on existing awards when a supporter dies as a special kind of on-going remembrance. Naming an award is a way to recognize an individual in a meaningful and long-term way, but it is also an opportunity to hold that person up as an example of truly dedicated service and to make that person part of the history of the organization.

At the Recognition Event

In planning the event at which awards will be announced, consider whether the award recipients will know about their award ahead of time and whether or not they will be expected to speak. If so, they should be informed in advance and be told how long they will have to speak. If they do not know ahead of time, there should be a process for ensuring that award winners are at the event. All nominees should be informed that they have been nominated and their names should be printed in the program. If possible, send a free ticket for the nominee and a guest to attend.

At the event winners typically receive a token of their award, most frequently a plaque. The state organization may wish to use creativity, however, in choosing the item. Think about items that are particular to the state or to the CASA/GAL program. Consider ways to honor other individuals at the event. One state organization has a children's choir sing and at the end of the performance asks all volunteers present to stand. The children then deliver a flower to each volunteer. Another state organization provides a photo opportunity with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for every volunteer who has served more than ten years.

There should be an official photographer, preferably with a digital camera, to record the event. Have the press releases prepared in advance so they can be given to the relevant program director at the event to take home to their local newspapers. Digital photos can go with the press releases and can also be used for the state organization website and newsletter.

National CASA encourages local programs and state organizations to submit photographs and stories for possible submission in their quarterly newsletter, *The Connection*.

Options for the recognition event

The traditional event is a formal banquet, but that can be quite expensive. Some state organizations charge admission to cover the cost of the meals and others use it as a fundraising event. It may be possible to subsidize the event by seeking sponsors and by selling advertising space in the program for the banquet. A restaurant may be willing to support the state CASA/GAL organization by hosting the event at reduced cost.

Awards do not have to be given at a formal banquet. Consider presenting awards at the opening or closing session of the conference or at the Light of Hope event.

Nominations for External Awards

Always look for opportunities to nominate CASA/GAL volunteers and staff for awards outside the CASA network. Some states have volunteerism commissions or departments that sponsor awards for volunteers. Some television stations and print media recognize volunteers. Some agencies such as the United Way select a "Volunteer of the Month". Bar associations give awards to attorneys. Nominating CASA/GAL volunteers and staff for these awards lets them know how much the state organization appreciates and recognizes their advocacy. It can also lead to positive public relations for the state and local program.

Informal Recognition

Recognition can also happen in less formal ways. One often-overlooked means of providing recognition is the thank you note. When traveling to visit programs, always carry a stash of thank you cards to write notes to program staff or volunteers or anyone whose work is notable. Be sure to pass on kudos and compliments heard from others, either directly to the program or on the state listserv or in the newsletter.

At program directors' meetings, recognize outstanding work and compliments received from those outside the CASA/GAL network. Have small door prizes or donated restaurant gift certificates. Local staff members may also appreciate birthday cards, acknowledgements of the births of children or grandchildren and recognition of work anniversaries.

If the state organization has the opportunity to speak at judicial trainings, ask judges to thank volunteers for their work from the bench, when appropriate. A simple thank you from the local judge often means more than any formal recognition.

Newsletters

Newsletters both within and outside the CASA/GAL network can be used for recognition. Some states do a volunteer profile in each newsletter, while others include profiles of board members or local programs. Featuring program news in the newsletter is one way to celebrate accomplishments and asking someone to write an article for the newsletter is a form of recognition. In addition, submitting photos or stories to the National CASA quarterly newsletter, *The Connection*, is a way to recognize great work.

Send items recognizing the work of those in the CASA/GAL network to their professional newsletters. For example, information about nominees for attorney of the year could be sent to the bar association newsletter. Send thank you items to the employers of volunteers praising their support of the employee's advocacy work. This should be done in coordination with local programs and only where the state organization is reasonably confident that public recognition is welcome.

Webpage

The state organization webpage can include a feature about an outstanding volunteer or staff person. This feature should rotate regularly, to encourage repeat visits and to recognize as many people as possible.

Encouraging a Culture of Thanks

Providing recognition for work well done should be part of the culture of the CASA/GAL movement and the state organization can help to model and foster that process. As an icebreaker at a program directors' meeting, ask about the most fun way local programs have recognized outstanding work recently. Participate in awards ceremonies that local programs host when possible. State organization staff should personally thank all the volunteers and board members they meet.



Additional Resources:

CASA Smart Library for Volunteer Management
(casanet.org)

Volunteer Management, by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch.

Annual Call for Entries Brochure (casanet.org)

Chapter Review

After reviewing this chapter, use the checklist below to ensure familiarity with key awards and recognition issues in your state:

- What awards are currently given by the state organization?
- Who are the previous recipients?
- How are the recipients chosen?

Chapter 16

Transitions

The phone rings. It is you, calling in because you have just won a six-month around-the-world cruise and will not be coming into the office.

Planning for Your Replacement, Even if You're Not Planning to Leave . . .

Sometimes life changes unexpectedly, and it is good policy and practice to ensure that state office procedures are well documented. Particularly if the state CASA/GAL organization is a one-person office, it is important to have procedures in writing. In addition, having these documents readily available for your successor will be very helpful:

- State CASA/GAL organization policies and procedures
- Most recent IRS form 990 (for nonprofit organizations)
- Most recent audit
- Current budget
- Current state CASA/GAL organization strategic plan
- Current grant budgets and goals, along with grant reports submitted in the current grant cycle
- Final grant report to National CASA from the previous grant cycle
- State statutes regarding the CASA/GAL program
- State standards for local programs (many states use the National CASA standards)
- Statewide memoranda of understanding with the Child Protective Services (CPS) agency or other state agencies
- Contact log with local programs
- Calendar with deadlines and important tasks marked.

When you leave your position, in addition to the governing body there are a number of people you should contact and, if possible, to whom you should introduce your successor:

- Local program directors
- Regional program specialist
- Important contacts in other agencies including the judicial, executive and legislative branches.

Working to ensure a smooth transition will help the state organization continue to provide high quality support to local programs, even in your absence. A sign of a true leader is the attention paid to ensuring long-term, sustainable success of the organization.