**STANDARD | TECHNICAL GUIDANCE (TG)**

**TG Legend**

***Standard (What): Measurable requirement(s)***

***Technical Guidance (How)–TG: Criteria and resources to fulfill the standards***

*[NOTE: All guidance categories may not apply to every standard; input is welcomed for all categories]*

* **Requirements:** Factors that have to be considered/addressed to meet the standard
* **Required Documents:** Documents that the member must present/have in place in order to successfully meet the standard
* **Helpful Hints:** Additional factors that can be considered/adopted but are not required to meet the standard
* **Resources and Links:** Samples, templates, other references or documents if available to assist in fulfilling and/or better understanding the standard

**MISSION & VALUES**

(Mission – statement of purpose, who we are and our reason for existing / Values – important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of an organization; principles or standards of behavior)

1. **Has a written mission statement**

* **Requirements**
  + Written
    - Clear, simple and easily explained
    - Be recognizable as a mission of a state organization
    - Mission reflects the values of the organization
  + Consistent with National CASA mission and values
  + Formally adopted by organization’s governing body
* **Required Documents**
  + Mission Statement
* **Helpful Hints** 
  + Governing body members and staff know the organization’s mission
  + Mission statement considered in fundraising, decision making and planning
  + Leadership refers to mission statement when making decisions about priorities, actions and responsibilities
  + Avoid elaborate language and buzz words
* **Resources and Links** 
  + National CASA’s Mission Statement

1. **Working in partnership with National CASA and local CASA/GAL programs, fulfills the elements of the** [**Role of the State Organization**](file:///P:\Network%20Development\Roles\Role%20of%20the%20State%20Organization\Role%20of%20the%20State%20Organization%20-%20Final%20Draft%20011118.docx)

* **Requirements**
  + Promote Awareness of the Organization and the Children Who Have Experienced Abuse and Neglect
  + Support Local Programs/Offices (where applicable)
    - Involves local program network in at least quarterly scheduled meetings (in person or via phone) through presentations or sharing of best practices
  + Support the National CASA/GAL Network
    - **Communication Plan**. Has a written communication plan that is inclusive of a plan for communicating with local programs and a plan for communicating with National CASA.
    - Informs National CASA about local program situations that could have impact beyond the state (for example: lawsuits, executive or legislative considerations or negative publicity), as well as financial or any grant obligation failure
    - If the state organization has a fundraising auxiliary, the state makes that entity aware of National CASA standards, protocols and membership requirements
* **Required Documents**
  + Communication Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Has a statewide conference for local CASA/GAL network
  + Possible methods of communicating– webpage, listserv, skype meetings
  + Regularly recognizes positive work of local programs and volunteers – awards, recognition, press releases
  + If a state organization participates in legislative policy making, the organization gives opportunities for local program input
  + Works with National CASA to develop advocacy approaches that address current child welfare issues in their community
* **Resources and Links**
  + [Role of a State Organization](file:///\\ncsea-fs1\data1\Network%20Development\Roles\Role%20of%20the%20State%20Organization\Role%20of%20the%20State%20Organization%20-%20Final%20Draft%20011118.docx)
  + Sample Communication Plan/Template

1. **Has written values**

* **Requirements**
  + Values are defined, reinforced and known by staff and leadership
  + Mission reflects the values of the organization
* **Required Documents**
  + Values
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Values are consistently referred to by the governing body and leadership when making decisions for the state organization
  + Values are displayed, are part of the job descriptions and performance evaluations, and are included in meeting agendas and/or staff communications
* **Resources and Links**
  + National CASA Values

**LEADERSHIP**

(The highest level of organizational staff to include the State Director and any executive staff)

1. **Has regular meetings with and opportunities for input from the governing body with agreed upon deliverables**

* **Requirements**
  + Meetings are conducted in accordance with the state organization’s bylaws
  + Meetings are regularly held with the governing body and minutes reflecting decisions made
* **Required Documents**
  + Bylaws/Operational Procedures
  + Meeting Minutes
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Governing body meeting packet
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Has tasks and goals directly linked to the identified and measureable goals of the organization as evidenced by the job description and at least an annual performance evaluation**

* **Requirements**
  + State Director’s job description aligns with the tasks identified below
  + Documentation of annual performance evaluations
* **Required Documents**
  + - State Director Job Description
    - Annual Performance Evaluations (for State Director)
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Sample State Director Qualifications

1. **Implements and tracks progress of a written plan for the continuous improvement of the governing body, state director and staff through training and leadership development**

* **Requirements**
  + Provides governing body with comprehensive and proper orientation and training where attendance and content is documented
  + Must have a written Board/Governing Body Development Plan
  + Must have a written State Leadership Development Plan
  + Governing body identifies, supports and determines needed state leadership development opportunities
* **Required Documents**
  + Board/Governing Body Development Plan
  + State Leadership Development Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Consistently provides governing body with opportunities to participate in workshops, attend conferences, including the National CASA conference, expand networking, and be mentored in all governing matters
  + Provides an outside expert to train governing body when appropriate
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Adopts and implements an ongoing, written plan to track, evaluate and guide diversity of its governing body, staff and volunteers as needed to reflect the demographics of the children served as compared to the local community**

* **Requirements**
  + The state organization engages in reciprocal relations with its local CASA/GAL network around issues of diversity and inclusion
  + Leadership, staff and governing body participate in trainings relating to diversity
* **Required Documents**
  + The diversity plan:
    - Identifies specific measurable goals
    - Identifies new goals and activities to be met in the future
    - Includes measurable action steps which are reviewed, measured and documented at least annually
    - The plan is revised every three years
* **Helpful Hints**
  + The state organization works closely with representatives from legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service organizations and civic groups to address the need for systemic changes that address issues of diversity, inclusion, disproportionality and disparate outcomes
* **Resources and Links**
  + Link to National CASA Trainings
  + Template and sample completed diversity plan
  + Provide ways for states to access and evaluate demographics, possible resources (e.g., Census data)
    - [Understanding Disproportionality](http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.8289581/k.47E5/Understanding_Disproportionality.htm)
    - [Calculating Disproportionality](http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.8371205/k.3AEA/Calculating_Disproportionality.htm)

1. **Does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), religion, national origin, marital status, age (4o or older) or disability or genetic information in policies, practices or delivery of services**

* **Requirements**
  + Understands and seeks to provide reasonable accommodations and is in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as required
  + Has an anti-discrimination policy
  + Has no known discrimination violations
* **Required Documents**
  + Anti-discrimination policy
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Engages individuals who can help the organization identify and understand the needs of the children served and the actions the organization can take to address these needs in governance, recruitment, cultural competency education and training, supervision, retention, evaluation and advocacy from a diversity perspective
  + May partner with a local organization to provide diversity and inclusiveness training and support
* **Resources and Links**
  + Americans with Disability Act ([ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov/))

1. **Participates in National CASA and local CASA/GAL initiatives**

* **Requirements**
  + State organization staff members participate in the activities of National CASA and communicate regularly with National CASA staff regarding the needs and activities of the programs in their state
  + State organization provides timely information and documentation about the state organization’s operations, as required by National CASA
  + State organization informs developing and existing programs in its state about National CASA activities, services, membership requirements and benefits
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
  + The state organization staff, leadership and governing body members, may:
    - Serve on National CASA sponsored councils and committees
    - Attend National CASA annual conference
    - Attend trainings
    - Contribute to/provide feedback during network comment periods
    - Participate on community calls and webinars
    - Coordinate with National CASA regarding legislative activities
    - Engage in press releases/events
    - Host toy drives
    - Support local programs for National CASA grant initiatives
* **Resources and Links**
  + Community Call/Webinar calendar

**FUNDING, LEGISLATION AND PRESENCE**

(The legislative language and financial resources to provide organizational stability along with the ability to influence decision-making in statewide forums)

1. **Responsive to National CASA regarding federal legislation and/or appropriations**

* **Requirements**
  + Acknowledge and reply to requests from National CASA indicating the position or action the state organization will take considering its type of entity, governing laws, policies and rules
  + The state organization informs and coordinates with National CASA prior to meeting with members of Congress or federal agency officials regarding national legislative or funding issues
  + The state organization works in partnership with National CASA before taking a position on national legislative issues
* **Required Documents**
  + Public policy agenda, if one is developed by your state
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links –** 
  + How to put together a public policy agenda
  + Government Relations protocol
  + National CASA’s (if current one exists)

1. **Responsive to National CASA regarding national private and public funding opportunities**

* **Requirements**
  + Acknowledge and reply to requests from National CASA regarding prospective relationships and funding opportunities to indicate the state organization’s intention considering its type of entity, governing laws, policies and rules
  + The state organization informs and coordinates with National CASA prior to pursuing national funding opportunities
* **Required Documents**
  + Resource development protocol, non-profits only
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Work with National CASA to ensure transparency and trust among all parties involved and that funding relationships are mutually beneficial
  + When the state organization discovers a funder which is not appropriate for its support but may be appropriate for national projects, the organization should provide that lead to National CASA
  + Collaborate with National CASA to develop and implement strategies to secure support from national or regional-level funders and donors
* **Resources and Links**
  + Resource Development protocol

1. **Seeks to participate in state-level decision-making**

* **Requirements**
  + The state is aware of the needs of and represents the voice of all of the local CASA/GAL programs in their state
  + The state organization makes known its role, functions and capacities to other agencies, community organizations, governmental bodies and corporations, as appropriate to its services and as a basis for interagency cooperation and coordination of services resulting in representatives from the legal and social service community seeking the input of the state organization.
  + The state organization works closely with representatives from the legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups, as well as with businesses, to accomplish its purposes.
* **Required Documents**
  + Public policy plan, non-profits only
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Examples of types of opportunities for participation or hosting include:
    - Conferences
    - Legislative sessions
    - Hearings
    - Trainings
    - Workshops
    - Discussions
    - Panels
    - Meetings
* **Resources and Links**
  + National CASA Public Policy Plan, if applicable
  + Definitions:
    - Child welfare leader – thoughts, opinions and input of the state organization are sought from others in the state as it relates to child welfare
    - State level decision making – having critical input into the direction of matters that may impact communities or persons throughout the state

1. **Receives support from the state for funding opportunities**

* **Requirements**
  + Actively pursue and maintain positive relationships with staff in relevant state offices
  + Participate in regular opportunities to educate and increase awareness to targeted groups and to the public of the benefits of CASA/GAL services
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Research appropriate funding opportunities and secure State support as necessary
  + Identify and track contacts and communications via a contact log
* **Resources and Links**
  + Sample Contact Log
  + Sample list of state commissions, offices, etc.

1. **Seeks opportunities for state funding**

* **Requirements**
  + Resource development planning includes strategies to obtain, increase and/or leverage state funding
* **Required Documents**
  + Resource Development Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Sample of Resource Development Plan

1. **Has adequate resources to meet current state organization operations and a financial sustainability plan**

* **Requirements**
  + Budget is reviewed annually to ensure adequate funding is available and to align budget with organizational needs and priorities
  + A financial sustainability plan is written, approved by the governing body and reviewed and tracked annually
* **Required Documents**
  + Financial Sustainability Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Can show funding and funding sources have increased over multiple years
  + Funding is derived from diverse and multiple sources, if one funding stream ends, the state organization would still be financially secure
  + Is not reliant upon one funding source for sustainability; there is a well-distributed balance of funding sources
* **Resources and Links**
  + Financial Sustainability Plan Template
  + Definition:
    - Financial Sustainability Plan a document that outlines the short- and long-term financial goals, strategies and action plans that will enable a program to grow and sustain itself through both predicted and unforeseen times throughout its operation. The plan should guide and inform funding present and future priorities, it also serves as an operational commitment by the organization toward appropriate budget allocations.

1. **Has or is working to achieve CASA/GAL-enabling legislation and/or contractual authority including the volunteer role**

* **Requirements**
  + State statute or court rules relating to CASA/GAL Program, **or**
  + A written plan for how the state proposes to achieve enabling legislation and/or contractual authority
* **Required Documents**
  + State statuterelating to CASA/GAL Program, **or**
  + Court rules relating to CASA/GAL Program
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + ‘State of the States’ (possible link when ready)

1. **Has written financial internal controls and systems that are consistent with generally accepted accounting principles and generally accepted management principles**

* **Requirements**
  + **Budget** 
    - Based on:
      * Anticipated funding
      * Fixed and incremental costs of operating the state organization
      * Identification of potentially changing costs and conditions
    - Written
    - Reviewed and approved by governing body prior to beginning of fiscal year
    - The governing body has a policy for the review and approval of deviations from and revisions to the budget
  + **Financial Reporting**
    - Reporting as required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
      * Annual 990 filed only for non-profits
      * The nonprofit state organization makes timely payments (e.g. IRS Form 941) and reports to the IRS and to other taxing authorities, as required by law
    - Annual report – financial, statistical and service data summary
    - Audits or independent financial reviews as required (requirements under review)

***Non-profits***

* + - Designated committee reviews findings and meets with the independent auditor as necessary
    - Reviewed and formally approved by the governing body
    - Made available for public inspection
    - When recommendations are made by the independent auditor the organization’s governing body promptly reviews and ensures that management acts on the recommendations

***Public Agencies***

* + - In a state organization operated under public auspices, an audit is conducted periodically which covers all years since the previous audit was conducted and is conducted in accordance with laws or regulations governing audits of the financial operations of a public agency
    - If the state organization receives government funding, it is in compliance with regulations that prohibit spending government funds for lobbying activities
  + **Financial Accounting and Record Keeping**
    - Annual financial statements prepared using accrual method of accounting used by state organization
    - Donor/funder restricted funds must be segregated in the accounting system
    - Operational Procedures in regard to accounting control include:
      * Descriptive chart of accounts
      * Prompt and accurate recording of revenues and expenses
      * Maintenance of a filing system which contains account records and receipts
      * Safeguarding and verification of assets
      * Control over expenditures
      * Separation of duties to the extent possible
      * Internal financial control policies (e.g. segregation of duties, and account reconciliations)

**Disbursement of Funding**

* + If the state organization disburses funding to local programs the state organization must have:
    - Written policy guiding the award process which:
      * Describes the decision-making process
      * Requires local program input into the derivation of the formula or criteria used in the decisions to grant funds, unless such formula or distribution of funds is prescribed by the funder
      * Identifies the person or entity of the state organization that makes the final decision regarding the grant formula and/or awards
      * Explains the mechanism and timeframes for disbursal of funds and publication of fund recipients
      * Is available for review upon request
    - Written policy regarding oversight of the funds which:
      * Requirement for a written agreement between the state organization and the local program that stipulates the terms and conditions of funding and includes financial reporting requirements and programmatic reporting requirements
      * Requirement that local programs that receive funding adhere to all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations regarding the use of funds
      * A description of the monitoring process including timeframes and grantor and grantee responsibilities
      * A description of consequences for non-compliance with the grant terms and conditions
  + Complies with all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations relating to the disbursement of funding.

**Facility and Workplace Management**

* + Operates from commercial or community (donated or leased) office space that provides a safe, well maintained physical environment for its staff, volunteers and visitors.
  + Maintains a work environment for its staff and volunteers that is conducive to effective performance.
  + Facilities comply with applicable ADA standards, fire safety codes and regulations.
  + The nonprofit state organization plans for the dispersal of property in the event of its dissolution.

**Risk Management**

The state organization:

* + Protects its physical, human and financial resources by evaluating, preventing or reducing the risks to which they are exposed.
  + Has liability protection for the governing body, organization, state staff and state volunteers through the court, state statute or private insurance coverage.
  + Evaluates and reduces its potential liability by:
    - Assigning the risk management function to a person or committee whose job description includes responsibility for risk management policies and activities
    - Ensuring that appropriate bonding, self-insurance or external coverage is adequate to meet the potential liability of the state organization
    - Developing a process to identify risks in terms of their nature, severity and frequency
    - Avoiding risk through loss prevention and risk reduction
    - Evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the risk-management function
  + Carries workers’ compensation insurance and other insurance as deemed necessary based upon evaluation of its risks, and protects itself through means such as indemnification, participation in a risk-pooling trust or obtaining external insurance coverage.
  + Requires that all persons with authority to sign checks, handle cash and contributions or manage funds be bonded, or that the program maintains appropriate insurance coverage to cover losses which may be incurred.
  + Informs its governing body, officers, employees and volunteers of the amount and type of coverage that is provided on their behalf by the program.
  + Annually reviews its insurance coverage with its insurance carrier to ensure adequate coverage.
  + Requires appropriate automobile liability insurance and operator’s licensing for employees who use the organization’s motor vehicles, or their own, for organizational business.
  + Requires that staff, volunteers and governing body members immediately notify the state organization of any criminal charges.
  + Displays licenses or other evidence of compliance prominently in the office.
* **Required Documents**
  + Annual Budget
  + Annual 990
  + IRS Form 941
  + Annual Report
  + Audits, Final Reviews, Financial compilation reports
  + Internal Financial Controls Policies
    - Disbursement of Funding Policy
* **Helpful Hints**
  + **Facility and Workplace Management**
    - The state organization takes reasonable measures to maintain its equipment and ensure it is used as intended.
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Complies with terms of the National CASA membership agreement**

* **Requirements**
  + The state organization uses the name CASA or identifies itself as a member of National CASA on all promotional materials
  + When using the National CASA trademark (including word marks, slogans and logos), the state organization adheres to the graphic standards and requirements of National CASA
  + If the state organization has a fundraising auxiliary or affiliate, the state makes that entity aware of National CASA standards and protocols and auxiliary standards.
* **Required Documents**
  + Copy of current executed National CASA Membership Agreement
  + Samples of the use of the logo, trademark, etc.
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Link to Membership Agreement
  + [Marketing@casaforchildren.org](mailto:Marketing@casaforchildren.org) – technical assistance for branding and trademark compliance
  + Link to Auxiliary Standards (if determined necessary)

**GOVERNANCE**

(The highest level of oversight and direction of an organization with fiduciary accountability for the stewardship of tangible assets)

1. **Is in compliance with regulations, laws and governing documents**

* **Requirements**
  + Bylaws, articles of incorporation, governing body structure including format and number of meetings are clearly defined and regularly reviewed

Bylaws or Operational Procedures must:

* + - Describe the organizational structure and clearly define roles and responsibilities of the governing body
    - Establish the mechanisms for selection, rotation and duration of membership and for election of officers
    - Set the interval and minimum number of meetings for the full governing body (no less than four times per calendar year)
    - Set the quorum for these meetings so at least a simple majority of the current membership of the governing body is present
  + Written Record. The governing body of the state organization maintains a written record of every meeting.
    - Summary of the governing body’s deliberations
    - All actions taken by the governing body
    - Reports from governing body committees, where applicable
    - Date, time, location of the meeting
    - Type of meeting – regular, special, subcommittee
    - Those in attendance
    - Guests and their affiliation
    - Written record is prepared in a timely manner and copies are made available to members of the governing body and kept with the organization’s official documents
  + Whistleblower Policy. The governing body of the state organization adopts and adheres to a whistleblower policy that provides members of the governing body, staff and volunteers a procedure for reporting unethical, inappropriate or illegal activities by members of the governing body, staff or volunteers. The policy affords the reporter protection in making a good-faith report about such activities
  + Conflict of Interest Policy. Conflict of interest policy is adhered to and reviewed by the governing body and leadership annually. There is a well-developed understanding of what a conflict of interest is and how to apply the policy.
    - Require that those associated with the organization in the capacities named above will not use their relationship with the organization for personal or professional gain
    - Identify and define transactions and conduct in which a conflict of interest exists or has the potential to exist and warrants disclosure
  + Prohibit employees, paid consultants, governing body and committee members of a nonprofit or public state organization from having direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions or professional services of the organization
    - Identify other specific conduct which is prohibited
    - Establish the requirement that the individual involved make timely disclosure of the conflict or potential for conflict in the transaction
    - Mandate that disclosed conflicts, and the actions taken in response, be documented
    - Include a procedure for recusal from the transaction or decision by the person with the conflict or potential conflict
    - Include a procedure for dismissal or other appropriate discipline of the person involved with the conflict in the event said person fails to disclose the conflict prior to becoming involved in the transaction or decision affected by the conflict
  + If the state organization has a fundraising auxiliary, the state makes that entity aware of National CASA standards and protocols
  + Maintains tax exemption status, if applicable
* **Required Documents**
  + Bylaws or Operational Procedures
  + Meeting Minutes
  + Whistleblower Policy
  + Conflict of Interest Policy
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Be sure to review your state’s open meeting/Sunshine laws
  + Provides the organization access to legal counsel with relevant legal expertise to clarify the meaning of laws or regulations governing its program operation, and provides legal counsel as needed
    - A lawyer who sits on the state governing body may also provide pro bono legal counsel as long as the roles have been clarified by the governing body in order to keep the two functions separate
* **Resources and Links**
  + Link to Auxiliary Standards (to be developed)

1. **Is familiar with and has access to resources that enable compliance**

* **Requirements**
  + Governing body works to research, identify and make available resources related to effective management and legal compliance of the organization
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Examples include:
    - GAAP
    - ADA Requirement
    - Labor Laws (e.g. EEO)
    - IRS.gov

1. **Establishes and evaluates the organization's goals annually**

* **Requirements**
  + Has a written Strategic Plan
  + Has a written Resource Development Plan
  + Has a financial sustainability plan
  + Has a written Growth Plan
  + Has a Logic Model detailing the current state organization
* **Required Documents**
  + Strategic Plan
  + Resource Development Plan
  + Financial Sustainability Plan
  + Growth Plan
  + Logic Model
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Sample Strategic Plan template(s)
  + Sample Resource Development Plan template
  + Financial Sustainability Plan
  + Growth Plan Template
  + Template for Unified State Logic Model

1. **Secures adequate resources and manages them prudently in order to support the state organization's provision of services**

* **Requirements**
  + The state organization seeks to conserve its financial resources by:
    - Maintaining sound policies regarding purchasing and inventory control
    - Using competitive bidding, where applicable, in accordance with governing body policy and laws or regulations
  + Set realistic financial and fundraising goals regarding foundation funding and donor development
  + Calendar donor development activities

**Non-Profit Organizations**

* + Governing body sets policies and exercises control over fundraising activities carried out by its employees and volunteers
  + Conducts solicitations of individuals, groups, corporations and other potential funders in an ethical manner
  + Provides potential funders with an accurate description of the program, its purpose and services, as well as the financial need for which the solicitation is being made
  + Spends funds in accordance with the purposes for which they were solicited, except for reasonable costs for administration of the fundraising activities
  + Establishes controls on processing and acknowledging contributions in accordance with applicable laws
* **Required Documents**
  + Fundraising Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
  + The state organization seeks to conserve its financial resources by:
    - Taking advantage of benefits allowed tax-exempt organizations, when applicable
* **Resources and Links**
  + Links to non-profit funding resources

1. **Reviews and adopts needed changes for all policies annually**

* **Requirements**
  + Develop and implement a plan to review and update as necessary required policies annually
* **Required Documents**
  + Internal Financial Controls
    - Evaluates the management’s handling of the organization’s financial affairs
    - Reviews financial reports at least quarterly, comparing actual versus budgeted expenditures and revenues
    - Disbursement of Funding Policy
  + Human Resources Policies
    - Whistleblower Policy
  + Conflict of Interest Policy
  + Confidentiality Policy
  + Records Retention Policy
  + Non-discrimination Hiring Policy
  + Travel Policy
  + Background Screening Policy
  + Insurance Policy
    - The governing body has responsibility for determining the extent and nature of the liability protection needed for state personnel and state volunteers, when applicable laws are unclear or silent.
    - The governing body regularly reviewing potential liability to the organization and staff and establishes the necessary protections for preventing or reducing exposure.
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Any National CASA versions/samples of above

*WHEN A BOARD OF DIRECTORS/ADVISORY BOARD EXISTS*

1. **Has and complies with written roles and responsibilities**

* **Requirements**
  + Documentation of roles and expectations
    - Includes legal and ethical responsibilities; programs and activities of the organization
    - Board regularly participates in fundraising
    - Evaluates the state director’s performance:
      * In writing at least annually against written performance criteria and objectives established for the time span between evaluations
      * Provides for the participation of the state director in the evaluation process and his/her review, signature on the review and response to the evaluation before it is entered into the staff record
    - Responsible for replacing state director when necessary
      * Has a written succession plan for the state director­­ which:
        + Designates an interim chief executive officer/organization administrator
        + Develops a strategy for the delegation of authority and tasks for the interim director in the absence of the chief executive officer/organization administrator
        + Charges a committee with responsibility for conducting a formal search for a new CEO/organizational administrator
        + Provides the resources needed to carry out the search effectively
    - The governing body establishes an effective, systematic process for education of and communication with members to ensure they are aware of their legal and ethical responsibilities, are knowledgeable about the programs and activities of the organization and can carry out their oversight functions effectively.
  + Formal Board orientation provided and attended by all members
    - Board orientation includes:
      * State organization’s goals, objectives, structure and methods of operation, training related to services provided by the organization; a clear expectation regarding annual financial contribution, and provision of key documents related to governance and governing body responsibilities.
* **Required Documents**
  + Written board role descriptions
  + State Director Succession Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Link to National CASA Board webpage

1. **Is comprised of members representing various constituencies and affiliations**

* **Requirements**
  + Board members come from a variety of backgrounds such as legal, financial, child welfare and business
  + Requirements of governing body member:
    - Skills and experience to serve at a policy-making level
    - Ability to advocate for sufficient financial resources for the organization to carry out its work
    - Knowledge of the court system and the communities served
    - Ability to reflect the interests of community, local programs and children served and to advocate for culturally responsive delivery of service
    - Other specialized skills needed to carry out the objectives of the program
    - Has a mechanism to ensure local program feedback for the board
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Determine if local programs should be voting members of the state governing body
  + State organization has assessed the skills and experience of current governing body members to identify gaps and have filled any gaps in their background
* **Resources and Links**
  + Board Recruitment policy

1. **Board members are screened through required background checks**

* **Requirements**
  + The state organization secures a criminal background check on each governing body member at least every four years. To include:
    - Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant currently resides and works
    - State criminal records  
      FBI or other national criminal database
    - National sex offender registry
    - Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law
    - Checks that will allow for additional names, aliases and/or addresses to be obtained for the individual for further checks
* **Required Documents**
  + Documentation that the required background checks were completed. Full screening reports with sensitive information are not required.
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Social security number verification
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Has a diversity and inclusion plan for governing body, staff and volunteers**

* **Requirements**
  + Develops and adopts a diversity and inclusion plan for governing body members, staff and volunteers
  + The governing body aims to reflect the diversity of the children served and has members who bring a range of skills, backgrounds and knowledge that support the state organization in fulfilling its mission
* **Required Documents**
  + Diversity and Inclusion Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Diversity and inclusion is a priority for the governing body and leadership
  + Understands that a focus on inclusion and sensitivity to cultural differences (i.e., diversity of staff and governing body members) can help ensure decisions are based on a full spectrum of perspectives.
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Evaluates progress towards the goals in the diversity and inclusion plan annually**

* **Requirements**
  + Diversity and inclusion plan is reviewed annually, tracked for progress and updated as necessary
* **Required Documents**
  + Diversity and Inclusion Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**

**STAFF**

(Personnel, paid or unpaid, to carry out daily operations)

1. **Has relevant education and/or experience required by job descriptions**

* **Requirements**
  + Has education, experience and/or training in a field related to non-profits, human service or child welfare
  + Administrative and/or supervisory responsibility is assigned to employees qualified by experience and training
  + The state organization employs and retains only persons who are qualified according to the job description for the position they occupy
  + Employees meet all applicable state registration, licensing or certification requirements for their assignment and/or use of profession
  + The state organization, in its ongoing planning process, details the type and number of staff required to accomplish the organization’s goals and objectives
  + There are written job descriptions for each position or group of similar positions which clearly specifies qualifications and responsibilities
  + The state organization manages its clerical and administrative systems, including accounting, bookkeeping, staff records and statistical reporting, and assigns appropriately skilled staff to carry out those tasks
* **Required Documents**
  + Written Job Descriptions
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Examples of job descriptions for various roles

1. **Staff are screened through required background checks**

* **Requirements**
  + The state organization secures a criminal background check on each staff at least every four years. To include:
    - Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant currently resides and works
    - State criminal records  
      FBI or other national criminal database
    - National sex offender registry
    - Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law
    - Checks that will allow for additional names, aliases and/or addresses to be obtained for the individual for further checks
* **Required Documents**
  + Documentation that the required background checks were completed. Full screening reports with sensitive information are not required.
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Social security number verification
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Has written human resources policies and procedures which direct the work and activities of all staff in the organization**

* **Requirements**
  + Develop comprehensive, written human resources policies and procedures
  + Human resources policies are:
    - Adopted by the governing body
    - Clear, consistent and equitable
    - Comply with applicable laws and regulations governing fair employment practices
  + Provide written notification of any changes to human resources policies
  + Administer policies without discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), religion, national origin, marital status, age (4o or older) or disability or genetic information

**Recruitment and Selection Policy for Employees**

* + *Applicants must:*
    - Complete a written application containing information about educational background and training, employment history and experience working with children
    - Submit the names of three or more references, at least two of whom are unrelated to the applicant
    - Authorize the state organization and other appropriate agencies to secure state and local criminal records check as well as a national criminal records check, sex offender registry and child protective services check as permissible by state law
    - Attend and participate in personal interviews, if requested
    - Verify the accuracy of the information submitted on the written employment application
    - If the state organization permits staff to transport children or drive on behalf of the organization, the applicant shall provide to the organization at the time of the application:
      * Copy of a valid current driver’s license
      * Evidence of adequate personal automobile insurance
  + *State Organization must:*
    - Verify the information provided on the application regarding licensures, education and certifications.
    - Obtain the following:
      * References from a minimum of three persons.
      * Criminal background check on each employee prior to hire
      * State and local criminal records check; national criminal records check, sex offender registry and child protective services check as permissible by state law
      * Motor vehicle division records check
    - Reject applicant if:
      * Applicant refuses to sign a release of information form or submit to required information or fingerprints for any requested records check (this policy must be state on application form)
      * Applicant found to have been convicted of, or having charges pending for, a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect or related acts that would pose risks to children or the state organization’s credibility is not accepted for employment.
    - Assess the applicant’s awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural and socioeconomic factors of the children and families served by CASA/GAL programs.
  + **New Employee Orientation** must include information regarding:
    - Mission and purpose of CASA/GAL programs on local, state and national levels
    - Policies and services
    - Information about confidentiality laws and the employee’s responsibility to abide by these laws
    - Information about the state organization’s structure, service mandates and professional ethics, including sexual harassment and nondiscrimination policies
    - Lines of accountability and authority within the organization
    - Information about pertinent laws, regulations and policies
  + **Employee Training and Development**
    - The training and development program is reviewed annually and revised based on the state organization’s assessment of its training needs.
    - The training and development program includes the opportunity for employees to pursue continuing education to improve knowledge and skills and fulfill the requirements of their respective positions.
    - The training and development program provides information related to children who are abused or neglected and in the court system, including topics of cultural competency, inclusion and diversity issues.
  + **Employee Supervision**
    - Provides adequate supervision to for its employees
    - The state organization delegates supervisory responsibility and holds employees accountable for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.
    - Frequency of individual or group supervision is arranged on the basis of employee needs, the complexity and size of the workload and the newness of the assignment.
    - Supervisors are easily accessible and make every effort to provide quick and thorough guidance to employees
  + **Employee Evaluation**
    - At least once a year, the performance of employees is evaluated by the person to whom they are accountable, using a standardized evaluation form, to review their performance against established criteria. The employee is an active participant in this process.
    - Employee evaluations include:
      * Assessment of job performance in relation to the quality and quantity of work defined in the job description and to the performance objectives established in the most recent evaluation
      * Clearly stated objectives for future performance
      * Recommendations for further training and skill-building, if applicable
      * Opportunity for employee self-evaluation
    - Employees are given the opportunity to sign the evaluation report, obtain a copy and include written comments before the report is entered into the staff record.
  + **Employee Discipline and Termination**

The state organization has:

* + - Written policies and procedures for the termination of employees that are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
    - Human resources policies and practices that specify the conditions for disciplinary action and non-voluntary termination of employees, including violations of program policy and/or documented substandard performance.
    - Policies and procedures that specify the person or persons with authority to terminate or discharge an employee.
  + **Staff Records**
    - The state organization maintains a written staff record for each employee that contains:
      * Employees must be granted access to staff records
      * Identifying information and emergency contacts
      * Recruiting and screening documents such as applications and resumes and educational verification.
      * Pay and compensation information.
      * Job description
      * Training records
      * Performance evaluations
      * Disciplinary actions
      * Termination summaries
      * Letters of commendation
      * Time attendance records
    - Written policies grant employees access to their records and detail the procedures for review, addition and correction by employees of information contained in the record.
    - **Confidential records** that *must* be kept separate from basic staff file include:
      * Equal employment opportunity (EEO)/invitation to self-identify disability or veteran status records.
      * Reference/security/background checks.
      * Drug test results.
      * Immigration (I-9) forms.
      * Medical/insurance records (medical questionnaires, benefit enrollment forms and benefit claims, doctor’s notes, accommodation requests, and leave of absence records).
      * Child support/garnishments.
      * Litigation documents.
      * Workers’ compensation claims.
      * Investigation records (although relevant disciplinary action, counseling or other direct communications are placed in the employee’s staff file).
      * Requests for employment/payroll verification.
* **Required Documents**
  + Human resources policies
    - Employee Handbook contains:
      * Human resources practices
      * Working conditions
      * Wage policy and benefits
        + Salaries and Benefits. Established by considering practices of similar agencies and organizations or, in the case of a public entity, are in compliance with salary and benefit levels set by appropriate executive or legislative bodies.
      * Insurance protection
      * Required and supplemental training and development opportunities
      * Non-Discrimination Policy
        + Covers employment, application for employment and the administration or delivery of services
        + Equal employment opportunity policy - The state organization has a written equal opportunity policy which clearly states its practices in recruiting, selecting and promoting staff.
        + The state organization publicizes its equal opportunity policy in its personnel recruitment materials.
        + ADA -The state organization makes an effort to ensure its facility is free of barriers that restrict the employment of or use by physically challenged
        + Compliant with Americans With Disabilities Act as applicable
      * Whistleblower policy. The governing body of the state organization adopts a whistleblower policy that provides members of the governing body, staff and volunteers a procedure for reporting unethical, inappropriate or illegal activities by members of the governing body, staff or volunteers. The policy affords the reporter protection in making a good-faith report about such activities.
      * Travel Policies.
      * Grievance Policy. Written operational procedures regarding grievances to provide staff the fair and equitable opportunity and forum to lodge formal complaints and appeals, where allowed by state law.
        + Documented and includes final resolution
        + Retained according to organization’s written retention policy
  + Staff Records

**Workforce Diversity**

* + Diversity and Inclusion Plan –
    - Promotes cultural competency and equal opportunity
    - Has a goal and strategies to reflect the children served
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Participation of staff in review of human resources policies
  + Shall notify all candidates, in writing, of their application status when the position applied for is filled
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Utilizes a system of checks and balances to ensure effective oversight**

* **Requirements**
  + Employee Performance Evaluation
    - Yearly
    - Evaluated by person to whom they are accountable
    - Standardized evaluation form
    - Review employee performance against established criteria
    - Employee is an active participant
    - Assessment of job performance
    - Clearly stated objectives for future performance
    - Recommendations for further training and skill-building
    - Opportunity for employee self-evaluation
    - Signed by the employee
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Others in the leadership team participate in meetings with the executive director (Board, community members, stakeholders) in order to understand the State Director’s role
  + Policies and procedures regarding fundraising, training, volunteer retention and recruitment are documented, and where applicable, multiple people from the leadership team are trained regarding those policies and procedures
  + A wide variety of staff are intentionally included regarding important organizational matters
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Has developed/maintained positive relationships with multiple stakeholders**

* **Requirements**
  + Cultivates and maintains relationships with appropriate agencies and private organizations to advance CASA’s mission
  + Represents CASA on appropriate statewide committees and coalitions dealing with issues that impact child welfare
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**

**SERVICE**

(Process by which a need is addressed)

1. **Is organized to serve the entire state**

* **Requirements**
  + Has a strategy for serving the entire local network
* **Required Documents**
  + Growth Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + National CASA Gaps Analysis
  + Gaps Analysis Map

1. **Assesses local network needs annually**

* **Requirements**
  + Surveys and regular communication with local programs regarding their needs. This could be calls, surveys, focus groups or any other format that ensures every local program has an opportunity to express their needs on a regular, consistent basis.
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Assesses state organization’s capacity to address needs annually**

* **Requirements**
  + Conducts a self-assessment of capacity and resources available as compared to the needs observed for and expressed by the local programs
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Develops and implements a plan to meet needs**

* **Requirements**
  + State organization creates and provides resources based on local program feedback
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Evaluates service delivery to the network annually**

* **Requirements**
  + Track progress of plan to include gauging satisfaction of local programs of state provided services
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Develops a written strategic plan every 1-3 years that incorporates short and long-term goals necessary for fulfilling the organization's mission**

* **Requirements**
  + Strategic Plan. Strategic plan is completed every 1-3 years with input from the Board, local programs, or other stakeholders
    - **Assessment.** To develop the strategic plan, an assessment must be completed including evaluation of:
      * Local program needs
      * Delivery of services to local CASA/GAL staff and programs
      * Local program staff satisfaction
      * State organization financial and human resources
      * State organization governance and management
      * Community Demographics, Demographics of volunteers, staff and Board (if applicable)
    - **Elements of Strategic Plan (Example of Strategic Plan)**
      * Statement of mission and purpose
      * Staffing – including current and projected needs
      * Board of Directors membership, size, method of selection, governing body member performance assessment, meetings, committee structure, and other bylaw provisions
      * Financial projections including income, expenses, reserves and new revenue streams
      * Public education of mission
      * Fundraising goals and strategies
      * Provision of services in accordance with local program needs
      * The development of resources to achieve the state organization’s mission
      * Diversity and Inclusivity Plan. The ways the state organization will address the inclusiveness and diversity needs at the state and local levels, including outreach, staffing, volunteer recruitment and training.
        + The Diversity plan should include:

Statement of commitment to diversity and inclusion

Assessment

Community demographics

Demographics of children served

Analysis of the disparities between children served and volunteers, staff, and Board

Strategies to achieve diversity and inclusivity

Methods to monitor the effectiveness and relevance of the plan:

Surveys and other forms of staff, Board and volunteer feedback

Regular communication relating to diversity and inclusion

Diversity and Inclusivity advisory committee

Outreach strategy to ensure a diverse pool of applicants for staff, volunteer and Board positions

* + - * The desired outcomes for each of its services and criteria for measuring whether and to what extent they are achieved
      * The activities that will be undertaken to accomplish the objectives
      * A timeline for accomplishing the stated activities
      * Parties responsible for accomplishing the stated activities and objectives
      * Includes marketing, finance, operations, and legal plan
    - **Evaluation of Strategic Plan**
      * The state organization conducts a comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness in accomplishing its strategic plan at least every year to determine:

The degree to which the organization is achieving its objectives and priorities

The degree to which the organization uses its human and financial resources efficiently

Strengths, weaknesses and strategies for correcting deficiencies and improving organizational performance

* + - * Results of Evaluation

Evaluation results and any changes to organization’s mission, objectives, goals and activities are provided to the governing body.

The results are also made available, upon request, to state organization staff and local programs.

* **Required Documents**
  + Strategic plan
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Strategic Plan template(s)

1. **Participate in an annual review conducted by National CASA**

* **Requirements**
  + Participates in an annual review conducted by National CASA
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Evaluation may include surveys, regular meetings, interviews or focus groups
* **Resources and Links**
  + Assessment criteria and measures

1. **Ensures that an annual review, which includes financial, statistical and programmatic information, is completed**

* **Requirement**
  + The state organization establishes and maintains a system for collecting the information and program data necessary from local programs to evaluate the state organization’s effectiveness
  + The state organization completes and submits the National CASA Association Annual State Organization Survey
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Has and executes a public education and community awareness plan**

* **Requirements**
  + Public Education and Community Awareness Plan
  + Reaches out to effect change for children on a state level.
  + Partners with community organizations in regular training and mutually beneficial and supportive functions (legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups, and businesses)
  + Child welfare stakeholders often look to the state organization for their expertise in child welfare, volunteering, volunteer retention and fundraising.
  + The state organization makes known its role, functions and capacities to other agencies, community organizations and government bodies as appropriate to its services and as a basis for interagency cooperation and coordination of services.
  + The state organization works closely with representatives from legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service organizations and civic groups to address the need for systemic changes that address issues of diversity, inclusion, disproportionality and disparate outcomes.
  + System in place for referring volunteer inquiries to the appropriate local CASA/GAL program.
  + The state organization has a process for seeking the input of local CASA/GAL programs to coordinate public education efforts through:
    - Establishing a public education committee or team
    - Sharing materials developed for public education purposes among programs
    - Surveying local programs annually to determine needs and suggestions for public education activities
  + The state organization collaborates with local programs and National CASA to ensure that public education efforts meet the needs of local programs and avoid overlap and duplication.
  + When the state organization plans statewide publicity, local programs are given sufficient notice to prepare for the possibility of increased inquiries.
  + The state organization conducts an ongoing program of public information and education to provide an understanding of the organization’s purpose, function and place in judicial proceedings and the community social service system.
* **Required Documents**
  + Public Education and Community Awareness Plan
* **Helpful Hints**
  + Provides opportunities to educate local representatives regarding issues of importance to CASA programs and the children they serve
  + Use social media to motivate and educate local programs, child welfare stakeholders and community
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Has a process to ensure the timely submission of data from the local program network to National CASA**

* **Requirements**
  + The state organization receives from each local program a copy of its National CASA Annual Local Program Survey and/or other annual statistical reports.
  + The state organization supports National CASA’s efforts to collect data and assists in securing it from local programs as needed.
  + The state organization follows the National CASA Association and State CASA/GAL Organization Data Collection Protocol
  + The state organization maintains written policies and procedures regarding what uses will be made of the collected data, for the purpose of building transparency and public trust.
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + National CASA Association and State CASA/GAL Organization Data Collection Protocol

1. **Reviews data from local programs for accuracy**

* **Requirements**
  + The state organization reviews and confirms with National CASA data received from each local program via a copy of its National CASA Annual Program Survey and/or other statistical reports
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**

1. **Has a process, or works with National CASA, to ensure high quality delivery of National CASA/GAL training**

* **Requirements**
* **Have at least one Master Facilitator trained for the state according to National CASA/GAL standards**
* **Required Documents**
* **Helpful Hints**
* **Resources and Links**
  + Training Standards