



JOB DESCRIPTION

**TITLE: CASA/GAL (COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE)
DEPENDENCY SERVICES**

JOB SUMMARY: VOLUNTEER JOB SUMMARY:

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a **volunteer** appointed by the Court to advocate for the best interest of a child who is alleged to have been abused or neglected. In order to do this, the CASA/Guardian ad litem must investigate the facts of the case, recommend a course of action to the Court, explain the Court's findings to the child, facilitate the resolution of the presenting problems, and monitor progress toward established goals.

JOB DUTIES:

- Challenge the system to do what it should be doing without being confined by the established legal and social work professions.
- Ensure that the system acts responsibly towards the child.
- Provide consistent follow-up on the case progress and the parties' compliance with the Court orders.
- Thoroughly research the assigned case and influence what is included in the case plan.
- Be a full party to the Court proceedings and have access to all Court documents relating to the case.
- Review case documents, maintain complete records, and talk with relevant individuals.
- Focus not on the guilt/innocence issues but rather on the information that relates to the child's welfare.
- Bring significant changes in the family situation to the Court's attention.
- Advocate for the child's best interest including permanency planning.
- Conduct an independent assessment of the facts and issues of the case from the perspective of a neutral third party.
- Question social workers about the appropriateness of case plans.
- Develop recommendations for the Court, which are included in a written report.
- Participate in all hearings and settlements.
- Report volunteer hours monthly to Volunteer Services.
- Attend ongoing training workshops (12 hours per year).

THINGS A CASA DOES NOT DO:

The CASA does not diagnose when a child has special needs (i.e., medical, educational, or psychiatric). The CASA can observe behaviors and make the necessary recommendations for counseling, treatment or medical attention. The CASA does not become a friend to the child and help them through rough times or take them on overnight visits.

The CASA does not provide a home for the child.

The CASA does not arrange for the child's placement, medical treatment or manage the case plan for the social worker.

The CASA should observe but not supervise visits between parents and children.

The CASA does not file legal documents with the Court without assistance of counsel or a CASA supervisor.

The CASA does not contact the judge directly to discuss a case.

The CASA's legal role is not to prove or disprove the allegations in Dependency Petitions.

**TRAINING,
EDUCATION
EXPERIENCE:**

High School Diploma required.

Post High School education preferred.

Attendance at a half-day Cultural Diversity Training required.

Must study the CASA/GAL Training Manual prior to and attend the three-day training.

**PERSONAL
TRAITS:**

Interest in children, their rights, and special needs.

Ability to work with a child, family members, and professionals, using tact, concern and basic human relations skills.

Must possess excellent written and oral communication skills.

Ability to be objective and maintain confidentiality.

Must possess professional attributes of diplomacy, objectivity, decision-making ability, appearance, demeanor, and the ability to function in an adversarial situation.

REQUIREMENTS:

Must be 21 years of age or older.

Must attend Court hearings on assigned case.

Maintain an up-to-date and complete file on each case assigned.

Adhere to deadlines and timetables involving an assigned case, and turn in all reports on time.

Must make physical contact with children in their placement homes once a month.

Must have a telephone.

Must complete a volunteer application.

Must submit to a background check.

**JOB
RELATIONSHIPS:**

Supervised by the CASA Coordinator.

Responsible to the CASA Coordinator, Dependency Supervisor and the Volunteer Services Manager.

TIME

COMMITMENT:

Must be willing to commit to a chosen case for the duration of that case assignment. (The average duration of a case is 18 months to 2 years.)
Investigation and preparation for the first court hearing: generally 15 hours over a six-week period.

Monitor court orders and prepare for twice-yearly review hearings: average 5-10 hours per month.

BENEFITS:

Involvement in the CASA Program provides an opportunity to enhance written and oral communication skills, to gain an understanding of the juvenile legal system, to increase awareness of child abuse and neglect, and to have a potential impact on the quality of a child's life.