

Guidelines for
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
Grant Recipients

Department of Family Administration
Administrative Office of the Courts
Maryland Judiciary

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Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Grants

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program was authorized to operate in Maryland, subject to approved Rules and Guidelines, by the 1989 adoption of Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article §3-830. The Annotated Code of Maryland states that the role of the Court Appointed Special Advocate is to:

- Provide the court with background information to aid the court in making decisions in the child's best interest; and
- Ensure that the child is provided appropriate case planning and services.

CASA grants are intended to support these programs, which are designed to ensure that children are provided a CASA volunteer, as appropriate, to serve their individual needs and promote a safe, permanent placement as timely as possible.

A. Application Process

1. Application, Review and Award

1.1 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

The NOFA and grant application will be published in the Maryland Registry and posted to the DFA's website by early February of each year. This document will outline the requirements for funding, define the funding term and provide instructions for submitting an application.

1.2 Eligibility

- a. To be eligible to receive a CASA Grant, an applicant must be a:
 - i. State or local government administering a CASA program, or
 - ii. Non-profit organization administering a CASA program, or
 - iii. Institution of higher education administering a CASA program

AND, the program must also:

- i. Be a member in good standing of the National CASA Association and be in compliance with NCASAA standards;
- ii. Be a member in good standing of the Maryland CASA Association and in compliance with Maryland CASA standards;

- iii. Be in compliance with all CASA Rules & Guidelines (found at www.courts.state.md.us/family/grantadmin.html);
- iv. Demonstrate the ability (i.e. experience and expertise) to provide the service (NOTE: Qualifications of all new Program Directors must be submitted to the Administrative Office of the Courts prior to budget approval and release of funds);
- v. Demonstrate adequate internal financial controls to properly administer grant funds; and
- vi. For CASA programs who have received AOC funding in the prior year, submit all required reports and documentation prior to submitting an application for funding in a subsequent year.

b. A government, non-profit or institution of higher education in which there is not presently an established and active CASA program, but where one is being planned, are eligible to apply for a one-time planning grant from the DFA. The program must demonstrate that they are working in conjunction with the Maryland CASA Association when starting a program for a jurisdiction.

c. “Pass-Through” Prohibited

The DFA only awards funds directly to the eligible grantees described in subsection (a) of this section. Grantees are not permitted to pass through or sub-award funds to another organization (even if the second organization would be eligible to apply for funds under subsection a.).

1.3 Funding Decisions

a. Priorities

For best consideration, applicants should demonstrate a need within the community that is to be served and that the program’s services will be complimentary to those provided by the court. Priority is given to the continuation of projects currently funded through the DFA CASA Grants.

b. Grant Review

Grant applications will be reviewed by a committee including DFA staff members and the Maryland CASA State Director.

c. Award Determination

- i. The DFA's ability to award funds is contingent upon the provision of funds by the Maryland Judiciary budget as allocated by the Maryland General Assembly.
- ii. Awards will be granted in accordance with the process explained in great detail in the *Performance Based Funding Model for Maryland CASA Programs* found at: www.courts.state.md.us/family/grantadmin.html and in Appendix A of this document.

As outlined in that model, the CASA grant award is a sum of four possible awards:

1. Quantitative Award – based on the number of volunteers in the program who are assigned to and serving children.
2. Qualitative Award – based on the program's efforts to meet the ten performance elements.
3. One-Time Expansion Grant – a flat, prorated amount awarded for use for hiring an additional case supervisor or other capacity building activities.
4. Multi-Jurisdictional Bonus – a flat, prorated amount per additional jurisdiction determined by the number of active volunteers in the additional jurisdiction or a flat amount awarded to support expansion into a new jurisdiction.

iii. The review committee will make funding recommendations in accordance with the Performance Based Funding Model. Final award determinations will be made by reconciling the recommendations of the review committee with the funding available.

1.4 Award Notification

Grantees will be notified of their grant award through an Award Letter signed by the Chief Judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals. Letters will be issued prior to the start of the funding period.

B. Grantee Requirements

1. Finalizing the Award

To accept and finalize the grant award, applicants are required to complete the following documentation and submit it to the DFA before the start of the funding period:

a. A Signed Grant Agreement

Each applicant will be required to sign a Grant Agreement signed by the DFA's Executive Director and provided with their Award Letter. That Agreement will indicate that the grantee agrees to abide by the terms of funding outlined in the DFA's Grant Guidelines and outlined in the Agreement.

b. A Signed Adjusted Budget

Upon the request of the DFA, applicants will be required to submit an Adjusted Budget reflecting a spending plan based on the actual grant award. This revised budget must be signed by the program's authorizing official. A signed copy of the adjusted budget will be returned to the grantee upon approval of the DFA's Executive Director.

c. A Completed & Signed Financial Information Form

The grantee is required to designate a fiscal authority; the fiscal contact who will receive payments for the grant. Grantees will be provided a form to complete and submit prior to the start of the funding period designating the project's fiscal authority. This form will need to be signed by the fiscal authority and will include the address to which payments will be sent and other financial information needed for processing of payments.

New Grantees must provide the following additional documentation:

a. Proof of non-profit status

b. Completed W-9 form

2. Reporting

2.1 Program & Statistical Reporting

a. Programs must use the *CASA Outcomes Measurement and Evaluation Tool (COMET)* or *Efforts to Outcomes (ETO)* systems for data collection purposes. Programs are required to report on progress toward specific project goals and to provide statistical information on a quarterly and annual basis.

b. Specific program and statistical reporting requirements, including required reporting forms, will be provided to grantees by email prior

to the start of the funding period. Reporting forms will be cumulative Excel Workbooks.

2.2 Financial Reporting

a. Programs are required to provide signed expenditure reports and requests for payment on a quarterly basis. These documents must be submitted by the due dates outlined below, even if the grantee did not expend any funds during the quarter.

b. Specific reporting requirements, including required reporting forms, will be provided to the grantee by email early in the funding period. Reporting forms will be cumulative Excel Workbooks personalized for each grantee.

2.3 Submission Requirements

All reports (financial and program/statistical) must be submitted electronically to the DFA, emailed to Jennifer.White@mdcourts.gov by the due dates outlined below. Hard copies with original signatures must also be submitted, postmarked by the due dates below.

<u>Reporting Period</u>	<u>Report Due Date</u>
1 st Quarter (July 1 thru Sept 30)	October 15
2 nd Quarter (Oct 1 thru Dec 31)	January 15
3 rd Quarter (Jan1 thru Mar 31)	April 15
4 th Quarter (April 1 thru June 30)	July 15
& Annual Report	

Partial or incomplete reports will not be accepted. Reports submitted on forms other than those provided by the DFA for FY12, will not be accepted.

2.4 Use of Information

Information collected from the quarterly and annual reports will be used to monitor funded programs and assist the DFA in determining if the program is meeting its stated goals and objectives. Additionally, the AOC reserves the right to use this data in statistical reports, annual reports, and other publications for general distribution.

3. Funds

3.1 Fiscal Authority

The grantee is required to designate a fiscal authority, the fiscal contact who will receive payments, for the grant. Grantees will be provided a form to complete and submit prior to the start of the funding period designating the project's fiscal authority as described above in section B.1.c.

3.2 Funding Cycle

The DFA awards CASA grants on the state's fiscal year cycle. Grants awarded for Fiscal Year 2012 will support program needs from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. All funds must be expended within this time period.

3.3 Distribution of Funds

- a. All funds will be paid on a *reimbursement basis* only. Grantees must submit a timely financial expenditure report, program report and request for payment form each quarter reflecting funds actually expended during the quarter for which the program is seeking reimbursement. The DFA may request documentation of expenditures if deemed necessary.
- b. The DFA will withhold payments in the event that the grantee has failed to comply with the grant requirements.
- c. The DFA may change funding amounts at any point in the funding period if the funds available to the DFA are reduced.

3.4 Unspent Grant Funds

Grantees must project unspent or unobligated funds no later than June 15th. All grantees will be provided a "Fourth Quarter Estimate" form in their financial reporting workbooks to use to submit this projection. Grantees must expend all grant funds by the end of the fiscal year in which they were awarded.

3.5 Matching Fund Requirement

- a. CASA grantees must provide a 100% match for their total CASA grant award. Up to 25% of the match can be in-kind with the remaining 75% being cash match.

- i. Cash Match is defined as the direct outlay of funds by the grantee or a third party to support the project.
- ii. In-Kind Match is defined as consisting of contributions of time and/or services of current staff members, supplies, space, etc., made to the project by the grantee or others working directly on the project.

b. Waiver: At the discretion of the grantor, matching fund requirements can be waived for:

- i. start-up programs;
- ii. the optional one-time expansion grant bonus; and/or
- iii. the multi-jurisdictional bonus.

3.6 Direct vs. Indirect Costs

a. CASA grantees may request funding for direct costs associated with their project.

Direct Costs are defined as those readily assignable to a particular project.

*Travel is an allowable direct cost where such travel will provide a direct benefit to the project and the traveler is an employee of the grantee.

b. Non-court CASA grantees may request funds to support indirect costs with appropriate justification and when those indirect costs total no more than 10% of the total direct costs of the project.

Indirect costs are those costs of an organization that are not readily assignable to a particular project, but may be necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the funded project.

Please Note: Court grantees may *not* request funds to support indirect costs.

3.7 Mid-Year Modifications

By Grantee:

a. Grantees may make minor budget adjustments between existing line items during the course of the fiscal year. Any budget modifications must be submitted for review by the DFA using the Budget Modification spreadsheet contained in each grantee's financial workbook.

b. Projects seeking a modification that would result in a deviation of 10% of the overall budget or \$25,000, whichever is lower, or any commitments such as a new position or contract which is likely to impact future fiscal years, must be approved in advance of spending the funds. Grantees must submit modification requests in writing using the Budget Modification spreadsheet contained in their financial workbook. Expenditures that do not comply with the adjusted or approved budget will not be authorized until the DFA staff signs and returns a copy of the approved budget modification form to the grantee.

c. Any grantee requesting a modification of the purpose of the grant must submitted a written request providing an explanation for the change. The grantee may not expend grant funds for activities related to the change of purpose until the grantee receives written approval from the Executive Director of the DFA authorizing the change.

d. Modification Requests will not be accepted after May 1st. Any request to modify after that date will require an exception from the Executive Director of the DFA.

By the DFA:

When an adjustment to a grantee's award is made by the DFA after the funding period has started, the grantee will be required to submit a signed adjusted budget reflecting the allocation of the funds. An adjusted budget must be submitted even if the change is not more than 10% of the overall budget.

3.7 Mid-Year Grant Requests

The DFA may make mid-year grants upon request, dependent upon availability of funds. Requests may be submitted in response to a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) or upon consultation with DFA staff. Grantees may request funding for positions or programs which were not anticipated in their original budget request. Mid-Year Grant Request applications are found on the DFA grants web page:

<http://mdcourts.gov/family/grantadmin.html>

4. Accounting and Business Requirements

4.1 Personnel and Payroll Records

All grantees must follow their organization's payroll, personnel, and time and attendance policies for each position provided for by these grants. These policies must be in writing. Upon request, grantees must provide a copy of those policies to the DFA.

4.2 Procurement

- a. All grantees must abide by their organization's procurement and financial policies in expending grant funds. These policies must be in writing. Grantees must provide a copy of these policies to the DFA upon request.
- b. Grantees that do not have an established written procurement policy must develop one as a condition of their award. The Department of Family Administration will provide technical assistance to grantees as requested.
- c. Goods and/or services purchased with grant funds shall remain in the ownership and liability of the grantee, and the grantee shall assume responsibility for all routine equipment maintenance and/or replacement costs.
- d. Grantees that use grant funds for contractual services must notify potential contractors that funds for the project originated from a Maryland Judiciary grant and that the terms and conditions which accompany that grant award are part of the contract.
- e. Grantees may not use grant funds to contract with any individual or entity that has been "debarred" by the Judiciary's Department of Procurement and Contract Administration.

4.3 Financial Accounting Requirements

- a. Programs are required to establish and maintain financial accounting systems and records to accurately account for funds. Minimally, they should conform to the National CASA Minimum Recommended Internal Financial Control Procedures.
- b. Programs are required to have an independent audit conducted annually. Grant funds are subject to any additional terms and

conditions issued by the Administrative Office of the Courts upon award of grants, and may be terminated if any terms or conditions are violated, or if adequate progress toward project goals is not demonstrated.

c. Grantees must maintain full and accurate records of all financial transactions and accounts related to the grant-funded project for a minimum of three years after the grant period ends, and until audited. This includes request for payment and receipts for expenses incurred, and timesheets for any salaries paid for with grant funds. These are subject to review by the DFA, the Judiciary Grants Coordinator, and/or the Judiciary Internal Audit Department, at any time.

5. Grantee Monitoring and Review

5.1 Program Monitoring & Site Visits

DFA staff will review submitted reports to evaluate the grantee's progress towards meeting their stated goals and objectives. Staff will follow-up with grantees regularly to gather additional information and assess performance. Follow-up will be made by phone and in person through site visits. The site visits will be designed to ensure compliance with the grant guidelines and evaluate the project in terms of its stated goals and objectives. Site visits may also include a fiscal review of grantee/project expenditures.

5.2 New Positions or Programs

a. All new positions and/or programs supported by a DFA CASA grant award must commence within 90 days of the beginning of the funding period or other projected start date as indicated in the grantee's budget. If the project is not operational within that time frame, the grantee must report the steps taken to initiate the project, the reason for the delay, and the expected start date.

b. Grantees can request an extension of this 90 day period by submitting a written explanation for the need for the cause for delay and need for extension. All requests must be received prior to the expiration of the 90 day period.

c. Failure to implement new positions or projects within this 90 day period or to obtain an extension from the DFA may result in a cancellation or delay of fund distribution.

5.3. Advisement of Judiciary Audits

In addition to monitoring by DFA staff, grant recipients may be subject to periodic audits by the Judiciary's Internal Audit Department. Upon accepting a grant award, grantees agree to provide any authorized representative of the Judiciary's Internal Audit Department access to and the right to examine all records, papers, books, and documents related to the Judiciary grant.

6. Acknowledgement of Support & Notice Requirement

a. All CASA Grantees agree that any publication (written, visual or sound) issued by the Grantee describing projects funded in whole or in part with Maryland Judiciary Grant Program funds shall contain the following statement: "This project is supported by a CASA Grant from the Maryland Judiciary, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Family Administration."

b. The DFA also requests notification from grantees of any events (e.g. trainings, outreach events, volunteer appreciation events, etc.) that occur as a result of DFA grant funds received.

7. Contact Information

a. Grantees are responsible for ensuring that the DFA is provided with accurate contact information for their program. This includes an email address, as the DFA sends many important grant announcements by email.

b. Unless otherwise indicated, all communications with the DFA should be directed to:

Connie Kratovil-Lavelle, Executive Director
Department of Family Administration
Administrative Office of the Courts
580 Taylor Avenue, 2nd Floor
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone: 410-260-1580
Fax: 410-974-5577

or by email to: Kelly.Franks@mdcourts.gov

APPENDIX A

CASA Performance Based Funding Model

A Performance Based Funding Model for Maryland CASA Programs

A PROJECT OF THE MARYLAND CASA DIRECTORS, THE MARYLAND CASA
ASSOCIATION AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

Revised: January 2011

The Ten Point Performance Model for CASA Programs in Maryland

Maryland CASA Programs:

- 1. Strive to meet the needs of children in the child welfare system.**
- 2. Train high quality volunteers.**
- 3. Meet the court's needs.**
- 4. Collaborate with other organizations inside and outside the jurisdiction to achieve good results for children.**
- 5. Provide a committed, caring presence for each child and ensure children receive needed services.**
- 6. Maintain a high quality program structure.**
- 7. Demonstrate organizational efforts to be culturally competent and sensitive.**
- 8. Advocate for children to reach permanency.**
- 9. Heighten public awareness of the needs of children in the child welfare system.**
- 10. Follow the Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs established by the National CASA Association.**

A Summary of the Performance Based Funding Model for Maryland CASA Programs

This Performance Based Funding Model for Maryland CASA Programs was designed by the directors of the local CASA Programs in Maryland, in consultation with the Department of Family Administration at the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Maryland CASA Association.

The purpose of the Performance Based Funding Model for Maryland CASA Programs is to:

- Increase access to CASA advocacy for children in the Maryland courts.
- Leverage program performance by tying a portion of the grant award to the program's ability to meet the ten performance hallmarks developed by the Maryland CASA programs themselves.
- Leverage program performance by providing additional funding tied to increased levels of performance, and by making funding levels that more accurately reflect the costs of operating the program.
- Increase the predictability of the grant award for Maryland CASA programs.
- Promote administrative efficiencies by encouraging programs to serve more than one jurisdiction where appropriate.

How the Funding Model Works

To receive an annual CASA grant from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Department of Family Administration, CASA programs must submit a grant application. An AOC grant review team, which shall include the Executive Director of the Maryland CASA Association, shall meet to review the applications. Only applications submitted by the application due date will be considered.

How the Grant Award Is Calculated. There are two primary parts to the funding model:

- **Part 1** – This is the *quantitative portion* of the model. **The applicant must report the number of active volunteers that served (i.e. assigned to children) during the quarter.** (Active volunteers means the number of volunteers who were actively assigned to and serving children during the reporting period.) This is an average of the four figures reported quarterly to the Maryland CASA Association for the last four quarters before the application is due. That figure determines at what *capacity level* the program is operating. Programs receive a base grant associated with that level.

- **Part 2** – This is the *qualitative portion* of the model. The applicant must complete a narrative that responds to actions they have taken and plans they have made to fulfill the ten point performance measures. Each measure is worth 25 points. Grant reviewers score the grantees on each point. A total score of up to 250 points is given the grantee for Part 2. The Part 2 award is a prorated amount based on the total score. A perfect score of 250 points will merit the grantee the highest possible Part 2 award. For Fiscal Year 2012 the highest possible Part 2 award is **\$35,000**.

Optional Additional Awards. In addition to Part 1 and Part 2 funding, potential grantees may apply for two additional optional awards:

- **One-Time Expansion Grant.** A one-time expansion grant may be awarded to permit a program to hire a part-time or full-time supervisor. This type of award is designed to permit programs to expand and add up to an additional 30 volunteers, and remain within the National CASA Standards regarding the staffing necessary for the proper supervision of volunteers. This is a non-renewable component of the grant. If the program is able to expand its capacity, then the following year it should be eligible for funding at a higher *capacity level* which should then permit it to retain the added supervisor.
- **Multi-jurisdictional Bonus.** A program that serves more than one jurisdiction may apply for and receive a bonus, to be added to the total grant award. These funds are designed to aid programs in serving multiple jurisdictions. Costs may be used to hire additional supervisory staff, add support staff, provide for facilities or reimburse volunteers or staff for travel to another jurisdiction. The bonus *is* renewable, so long as the program continues to serve the additional jurisdiction. A jurisdiction may receive one bonus for each additional jurisdiction it serves, provided that performance in each jurisdiction is substantial. The amount of the bonus will be calculated based on the number of active volunteers in the additional jurisdiction.

Programs expanding into a new jurisdiction for the first time during the funding period, who are not actively serving children in that new jurisdiction, are eligible for a flat bonus of up to \$20,000. The amount to be awarded will be determined based on the need described in the Multi-jurisdictional Bonus Narrative section of the application.

Matching Fund Requirements. Finally, Maryland CASA programs must continue to provide a one hundred percent match for their total CASA grant award. Both cash (at least 75%) and in-kind (no more than 25%) may constitute match. Matching fund requirements may be waived for start-up programs, at the discretion of the Administrative Office of the Courts. Matching requirements for the optional one-time expansion grant and the multi-jurisdictional bonus may also be waived at the discretion of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

To summarize, the CASA grant award is the sum of four possible awards:

- **Part 1 Award** – based on the number of **active** volunteers in the program;
- **Part 2 Award** – based on the program’s efforts to meet the 10 performance elements;
- **One-Time Expansion Grant** – a flat prorated amount for an additional supervisor.
- **Multi-jurisdictional Bonus** – a flat prorated amount per additional jurisdiction determined by number of active volunteers in the additional jurisdiction or a flat amount for expansion into a new jurisdiction.

Part 1 – Quantitative Measures

Maryland CASA programs follow the *Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs* developed by the National CASA Association. These Standards specify staffing levels required based on the number of active volunteers in the program. For example, Standard 7 D requires that local program supervisors be responsible for no more than 30 volunteers or a maximum of 45 cases. For this reason, program costs can be correlated, at least in part, to program capacity. Part 1 of the funding model establishes a base funding level for programs, corresponding to the number of active volunteers in the program.

Helping Programs Expand. To aid programs in expanding the number of volunteers they can accommodate and still meet National CASA standards, they need the opportunity to add a supervisor before recruiting new volunteers. Programs seeking to expand will thus need an opportunity to add staff, before they can reach the next capacity level. To permit this, programs can apply for a one-time *expansion grant*. This flat amount is sufficient to permit programs to hire one additional full-time supervisor. Programs seeking to hire a part-time supervisor can apply for less than the full expansion grant on a prorated basis. Applicants should be aware that expansion grants are non-renewable. They are designed to permit programs to increase the numbers served so that the following year their base grant might be at a higher level. If the program fails to maintain a sufficient number of new volunteers during the year of the expansion grant, funding will revert to the appropriate level.

Programs Serving More than One Jurisdiction. To encourage programs to expand beyond a single jurisdiction, where appropriate, to capture administrative efficiencies, in Part 1 of the funding model, programs can apply for and receive a multi-jurisdictional bonus for each additional jurisdiction they serve. Multiple programs, however, may not serve the same jurisdiction.

Calculating Capacity Level. The number of volunteers referred to in the table below is the *average number of assigned volunteers from CASA program quarterly reports for the year. The total reported for each quarter is averaged to obtain the prior year total.*

Table 1. Calculating Part 1 of the Funding Model – Quantitative Measures

Capacity Level	Average Active Volunteers for the Last Year	No. of Supervisors Required	Base Funding
LEVEL I	Volunteers: 1 - 20	Supervisors: .5 – .75	\$ 20,600
LEVEL II	Volunteers: 21 – 35	Supervisors: .75 - 1.25	\$ 25,235
LEVEL III	Volunteers: 36 – 50	Supervisors: 1.25 – 1.75	\$ 44,805
LEVEL IV	Volunteers: 51 – 80	Supervisors: 1.75 – 2.75	\$ 69,010
LEVEL V	Volunteers: 81 – 110	Supervisors: 2.75 – 3.75	\$ 91,670
LEVEL VI	Volunteers: 111-140	Supervisors: 3.75 – 4.75	\$ 114,330
LEVEL VII	Volunteers: 141 - 170	Supervisors: 4.75 – 5.75	\$ 136,990
LEVEL VIII	Volunteers: 171+	Supervisors: 5.75+	\$ 159,650
EXPANSION GRANT			\$ 23,175

MULTIJURISDICTIONAL BONUS – PER ADDITIONAL JURISDICTION

Level I	Volunteers: 1 – 7	Supervisors: .25	\$ 5,000
Level II	Volunteers: 8 - 15	Supervisors: .5	\$ 10,000
Level III	Volunteers: 16 -22	Supervisors: .75	\$ 15,000
Level IV	Volunteers: 23+	Supervisors: .75 - 1+	\$ 20,000

----- **OR** -----

One time bonus for programs expanding into a new jurisdiction: up to \$20,000

Part 2 – Qualitative Measures

Maryland CASA Programs follow the ten point performance model outlined below. Each prong of the performance model is considered equally important. Programs must describe their efforts to meet each of the ten points by answering the questions detailed below as a part of their grant program narrative. The narrative must list each point and specify in detail how the performance goal is achieved.

Programs can receive up to 25 points for each of the ten performance areas. The total score can be up to 250 points. Programs are scored on their ability to meet the goals by grant reviewers based on the application narrative and actual knowledge of the program. The amount of Part 2 funding the program receives is based on the Part 2 performance score. For Fiscal Year 2011, programs will be awarded \$140 for each point scored. So, for example, a program receiving a score of 200 will receive \$28,000 in Part 2 funding. A program that receives the highest possible score of 250 will receive \$35,000 in Part 2 funding.

The Ten Point Performance Model for Maryland CASA Programs

Maryland CASA Programs:

1. Strive to meet the needs of children in the child welfare system.

- What efforts has your program made to identify and address the need for enhanced program capacity (i.e., number of potential volunteers)?
- Has your program done any strategic planning?
- What additional resources has the program secured to meet any needed growth?
- How does your program collaborate with the court to prioritize which individuals are appointed a CASA?

2. Train high quality volunteers.

- How does your program meet National CASA standards for screening potential volunteers?
- How does your program meet National CASA standards for training volunteers?
- How does your program provide high-quality in-service trainings for volunteers?
- How do the volunteers rate the quality of the trainings provided?
- How does your program evaluate volunteers?
- How are volunteers supervised?
- How does your program support its volunteers to avoid burnout, renew volunteer enthusiasm and commitment, and retain volunteers once their case is concluded?

3. Meet the court's needs.

- How does your program maintain ongoing communications with the court?
- At what point in a case does the court appoint a CASA? What efforts has your program made to ensure CASAs are appointed as early as possible in each case?
- Are CASA reports submitted to the court for every hearing and on time? How do you track this?

4. Collaborate with other organizations inside and outside their jurisdiction to achieve positive results for children.

- What organizations does your program partner with to improve the handling of child welfare cases?
- How have these collaborations impacted the way agencies or courts serve children and their families?

5. Provide a consistent, caring presence for each child and ensure children receive needed services.

- How do CASA volunteers meet the minimum standard of monthly face-to-face contact with the child? How is this tracked?
- Do CASA volunteers attend all hearings once appointed?
- How have CASA volunteers been instrumental in ensuring children receive the services they need? How do you track that impact?

6. Maintain a high quality program structure.

- What is the composition of the board of directors? How are they recruited, and what qualifications are sought in recruiting board members?
- Who staffs the program? What qualifications are sought in recruiting staff?
- How are personnel problems, complaints or concerns addressed?
- Have there been any complaints about staff or board members from volunteers? From clients? From the court? From the community? What was the nature of any complaints, and how were they addressed?
- How are external complaints about volunteers handled and addressed?
- How are internal problems with volunteers handled? (*ex. Volunteers who do not meet program requirements for training and supervision*)
- How does the program identify or handle conflicts of interest in board members, staff or volunteers?

7. Demonstrate organization efforts to be culturally competent and sensitive.

- What are the demographics of your jurisdiction?
- How do the demographics of your volunteers and board members reflect the demographics of your jurisdiction? Of the children served?
- How do you recruit volunteers, board members and staff to best meet the diverse needs of the children served and the community?
- What challenges does your program face with regard to the bullet above?
- How have you attempted to meet those challenges? (e.g., outreach activities, etc.). What have your results been? How are you going to use those results to plan for the future?
- How do you promote cultural competence among your volunteers, staff and board members?

8. Advocate for children to reach permanency.

- How many cases total were closed by the program during the last year? Of those cases, at the time the program closed its case, in how many was the child in a permanent placement? [How many were either returned to a biological parent/guardian, adopted, TPR granted/pending & child in pre-adoptive home, or are in a relative placement (not adopted).]
- What is the average length of time for a child with a CASA appointed to achieve permanency? What is the average length of time for a child (with or without a CASA) in your program's jurisdiction to achieve permanency?
- What impact has your program had in reducing the number of placements children have before permanency is achieved?

9. Heighten public awareness of the needs of children in the child welfare system.

- How has your program educated the community about the needs of children in the child welfare system within the last year?
- In what ways has your program used print media, radio, television, cable and/or the internet in the past year to educate the public about the needs of children in the child welfare system and the role your organization plays?
- What was the most effective educational outreach activity your program undertook within the last year? How do you know it was effective? What was the goal of that activity? What did you learn that other programs might benefit from?
- What outreach initiatives do you have planned for the coming year? What segments of the population do you plan to target, and what is your goal for each initiative?

10. Follow the Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs established by the National CASA Association.

- How does your program measure its performance in light of the National CASA Standards?
- How successful have you been in following those Standards?
- What challenges have you had in meeting the Standards and how have you overcome those challenges?
- Have you received any technical assistance from the National CASA Association or the Maryland CASA Association in meeting those standards?
- Does your program actively participate in CASA Network meetings and activities?

Calculating the CASA Total CASA Grant Award

Table 2. Calculating the Total CASA Grant Award

Capacity Level	Part 1 Funding	Part 2 Funding*	TOTAL** Funding	Match Funds Requirement
LEVEL I	\$20,600	\$ 35,000	\$ 55,600	\$ 55,600
LEVEL II	\$ 25,235	\$ 35,000	\$ 60,235	\$ 60,235
LEVEL III	\$ 44,805	\$ 35,000	\$ 79,805	\$ 79,805
LEVEL IV	\$ 69,010	\$ 35,000	\$ 104,010	\$ 104,010
LEVEL V	\$ 91,670	\$ 35,000	\$ 126,670	\$ 126,670
LEVEL VI	\$ 114,330	\$ 35,000	\$ 149,330	\$ 149,330
LEVEL VII	\$ 136,990	\$ 35,000	\$ 171,990	\$ 171,990
LEVEL VIII	\$ 159,650	\$ 35,000	\$ 194,650	\$ 194,650
<i>Additional Possible Funding:</i>				
One-time Expansion Grant			\$ 22,660	
Multi-jurisdictional Bonus			up to \$20,000	

* This assumes each program receives the full 250 points and is eligible for full Part 2 Funding.

** TOTAL possible award is calculated assuming the program is not applying for a One-time Expansion Grant or a Multi-jurisdictional Bonus.

APPENDIX B

Maryland CASA Program Performance Standards

MARYLAND CASA PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Revised: April 2008

**Department of Family Administration Administrative
Office of the Courts Maryland Judicial Center
580 Taylor Avenue, 2nd floor
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

MARYLAND CASA PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1. AUTHORITY FOR THE CASA PROGRAM

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program was authorized to operate in Maryland, subject to these performance standards, by the adoption, in 1989, of Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article § 3-830 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEER AND STATUS IN THE COURT PROCEEDING

The Annotated Code of Maryland states that role of the Court Appointed Special Advocate is to:

1. Provide the court with background information to aid the court in making decisions in the child's best interest; and
2. Ensure that the child is provided appropriate case planning and services.

The CASA volunteer is considered a friend of the Court and does not have party status. The volunteer is considered an agent of the court and is appointed at the judge's discretion to represent the child's best interest. Volunteers are not represented by an attorney but should be provided access to legal counsel by the program.

3. PROGRAM OPERATION

CASA Programs shall be administered by a director who has been selected by the local entities who are sponsoring the CASA program and approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts. The minimum requirements for this appointment are:

1. A master's degree in the field of social work, psychology or child welfare-related field of study, or a bachelor's degree and an equivalent number of years of child welfare and/or non-profit management experience.
2. A minimum of 5 years experience in the field of child abuse and neglect.
3. A minimum of 2 years experience in administration or supervision.
4. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the juvenile court system and the needs of abused and neglected children.
5. Knowledge of fundraising/development.

All supervisory staff shall have the following minimum qualifications:

1. Bachelor's degree in the field of social work, psychology or other clinically-oriented discipline.

2. A minimum of 2 years experience in the field of child abuse and neglect.
3. A minimum of 1 year experience in supervision of volunteers/staff is preferred.
4. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the juvenile court system and the needs of abused and neglected children.

4. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program director shall establish and maintain a structure designed to facilitate the recruitment, screening, training, and supervision of CASA volunteers by:

1. Developing and implementing an annual volunteer recruitment plan, including such strategies as meeting with relevant organizations for the purpose of recruiting their membership for volunteers and soliciting the print, radio and TV media to aid in this recruitment. Special efforts shall be made to recruit individuals who reflect the characteristics of the community of which they will be serving minimally, and, optimally, reflect the diversity of the children served.
2. Developing and implementing an application and screening process whereby applicants will be appropriately selected to participate in a pre-service training program.
3. Designing and conducting a pre-service training program that will educate the applicants about the following:
 - a. History of CASA;
 - b. Roles and Responsibilities of a CASA and program procedures; and the role of all the relevant agencies and professionals in the child welfare and juvenile court systems;
 - c. Cultural Awareness;
 - d. Dynamics and Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect;
 - e. Child Development and Permanency Planning;
 - f. Laws Affecting Children;
 - g. Communication and Information Gathering;
 - h. Juvenile Court System;
 - i. Advocacy Skills;
 - j. Court Report Writing;
 - k. Confidentiality requirements.

4. Establishing a procedure with the local Department of Social Services for screening CASA applicants for past allegations of child abuse and/or neglect.
5. Designing and implementing a supervisory process whereby CASAs will receive frequent and complete feedback of their CASA activities by:
 - a. Permitting no more than a 30 to 1 ratio of active CASA volunteers to supervisor. (Note: It is recognized that during the initial developmental stages of CASA programs, due to a temporary shortage in funding, this ratio may not always be met by a CASA program.)
 - b. Establishing and implementing a regular in-service training schedule designed to increase the CASAs' understanding of the dynamics of the population they are serving and consequently enhance their service provision.
6. Establishing either an Advisory Board and/or Board of Directors for the purpose of overseeing the operation of the program and/or providing technical assistance. The membership of an advisory board should include representation from agencies affected by this program but should be made up, primarily, of representatives of the corporate community and the private sector. Boards of directors must have the above representation.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEER SCREENING AND SELECTION

The program director shall ensure that applicants meet minimal qualifications prior to certification as a CASA. A CASA must:

1. Be twenty-one years of age or older;
2. Complete an application;
3. Successfully complete the required 30-40 hours of CASA pre-service training;
4. Successfully complete a pre-training screening interview and post-training interview/assessment by the CASA staff;
5. Observe a juvenile court hearing(s);
6. Provide three positive character references;
7. Pass a criminal background check and be found to have not been convicted of or currently charged for the commission or attempt to commit: Murder; Child Abuse; Rape; Child Pornography; Child Abduction; Kidnapping of a Child; or a Sexual Offense as defined under the Criminal Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, §§ 3-305-30308, or any other charge that poses a threat to the safety and/or well-being of a child, indicates poor judgment and/or threatens the credibility of the program;

8. Pass a child abuse registry clearance conducted by the local Department of Social Services (if available);
9. Pass a driving record check conducted by the Motor Vehicle Administration, indicating no more than two points. Prospective volunteers who choose not to transport must still comply with the MVA check. Anyone whose driving record exceeds the above limit may be accepted with the provision that they not transport, however careful consideration must be given to the type, frequency and circumstances of the violations;
10. Provide car insurance information regarding the amount and type of coverage or sign a waiver stating he/she will not transport the child. Programs shall make volunteers aware of the liability issues involved in transporting children;
11. Commit to a minimum of one year service to the program;
12. Sign an oath of confidentiality;
13. Not be employed in a position and/or otherwise involved with an agency that might result in a conflict of interest on the part of the CASA volunteer;
14. Volunteers shall be officially appointed as a CASA via swearing in and/or specific order of the court.

6. TRANSFERS WITHIN THE STATE

CASA volunteers moving to another county or city within the state that has a CASA program shall be subject to the same screening process conducted for other applicants before being allowed to serve as a CASA volunteer in that county or city. The volunteer may be required to attend any or all units of the pre-service training, as determined by the program to which the applicant has applied before being allowed to serve as a CASA.

7. AUTHORITY FOR APPOINTMENT OF COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE AND CASE ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

The CASA Program is authorized by an official Order of the Court, at the judge's discretion, to assign a volunteer to a child's case. Volunteers should be assigned at the earliest stages of the court proceedings and shall remain involved in their assigned cases until dismissal by official Order of the Court. Volunteers who terminate from their assigned cases prior to the conclusion of the court proceedings shall be replaced by the CASA program with other volunteers as soon as possible. A volunteer shall remain appointed to the case until the child is placed in a safe, permanent home or the appointment order is rescinded by the judge or the case is otherwise closed by the court.

Upon reviewing a case assignment, the Court-Appointed Special Advocate shall:

1. Review the Court Order and the case history;

2. Review the Juvenile Court File;
3. Meet with the CASA staff to develop the CASA Case Plan;
4. Schedule and attend appointments with relevant parties;
5. Complete required CASA forms and documentation;
6. Maintain the confidentiality of any and all information received on behalf of the child.

8. COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE RECORDS AND SUPERVISION

Upon beginning a case assignment, the Court-Appointed Special Advocate shall:

1. Maintain and submit at least monthly a CASA Contact Log, indicating the date, amount of time spent, and type of all CASA contacts.
2. Maintain and submit monthly a record of travel expenses incurred on the Expense Reimbursement form provided if program provides reimbursement and the CASA desires reimbursement of said expenses.
3. Provide to the Director or staff supervisor a court report, using the Court Report Format, for the assigned case to ensure timely submission to court and parties, according to court procedure.
4. Attend quarterly, individual, face-to-face supervisory meetings, as scheduled by the CASA staff.
5. Complete a minimum of 12 hours of in-service training each year.

9. VOLUNTEER DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAMS

The program director may dismiss a volunteer from the program when the volunteer:

1. Takes action without program or court approval which:
 - a. Endangers the child;
 - b. Is outside the role or powers of the CASA;
 - c. Violates a program policy, court rule, or law, or;
 - d. Contravenes program or court direction.
2. Fails to adequately perform a responsibility as a CASA.
 - a. Fails to maintain regular contact with the program office regarding CASA activities as

defined by the individual program; and

b. Fails to maintain regular contact with the assigned child and/or family as defined by the individual program.

3. Falsifies the volunteer application, misrepresents facts during the screening process, or commits an act which results in a substantial alteration of his/her qualifications as a CASA.

10. COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE AND THE CHILD

Communications between a child and a CASA are not privileged. A CASA shall not assure the confidentiality of such communications. Incidents of abuse or neglect disclosed by a child, or otherwise discovered by a CASA, in addition to the original allegation, or after a finding has been reached and treatment services begun, shall be immediately reported to the local Department of Social Services and the program staff.

11. LIABILITY

Volunteers have limited protection from liability while carrying out their responsibilities according to the CASA role, per Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article §3-830. Programs must carry all appropriate forms of liability insurance for the protection of volunteers, staff, board members and the organization.

12. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER CASA PROGRAMS, MARYLAND CASA ASSOCIATION AND NATIONAL CASA ASSOCIATION

An organization may not operate a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) program in the State of Maryland without being approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts. CASA programs must belong to and actively participate in the Maryland CASA Association, a statewide network of CASA programs, and are eligible for technical assistance and other benefits of membership. CASA programs must also be recognized by the National CASA Association as a CASA program. CASA programs must abide by any established Maryland and National CASA Association protocols regarding the recruitment of prospective volunteers and fund raising to prevent impeding other programs' efforts and those of the state and national organizations. CASA programs are not authorized to conduct home studies or evaluations of any kind at the request of other jurisdictions within or outside the state.