



## What is a CASA Volunteer?

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is a trained community member who is appointed by a judge to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in court. This is done so that the children can be safe, have a permanent family and an opportunity to thrive.



## Who can be a CASA volunteer?

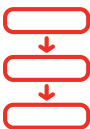
CASA volunteers must be 21 years old and pass a background check. Volunteers come from all walks of life, with a variety of educational and ethnic backgrounds. Many are employed full-time outside CASA. There are almost 98,000 CASA volunteers nationally.

## THE VOLUNTEER ROLE

CASA volunteers focus on providing best-interest advocacy for the child or sibling group with whom they are working. This work consists of five main tasks:

- Volunteers **LEARN** all they can about the child and that child's life.
- Volunteers **ENGAGE** with the child during regular visits.
- Volunteers **RECOMMEND** by speaking up for the child's best interest in court. Recommendations are made regarding the child's placement and needed services. Volunteers monitor the child's situation until the case is released by the court.
- Volunteers **COLLABORATE** with others to ensure that necessary services are provided and are in the child's best interest.
- Volunteers **REPORT** what they have learned and observed to the court via written or verbal report.

Working alongside other team members (case workers, Guardians ad Litem, juvenile officers, and other professionals), CASA volunteers provide information to the court. They do not provide any legal representation for their child.



## How is CASA Organized?

Every CASA volunteer is part of a local CASA program staffed by professionals who recruit, screen, train and supervise volunteers, as well as educate the community about the needs of these children.



## How many CASA programs are there?

Nationally, there are 939 CASA programs in 49 states and Washington D.C. Missouri has 24 local CASA programs serving 27 of the 46 judicial circuits in the state.



## How are CASA programs funded?

Local CASA programs are generally funded through a combination of private and public sources.



## How much time does volunteering require?

Each case is different. A CASA volunteer spends about 10-15 hours doing case research and conducting interviews prior to the first court appearance. More complicated cases take longer. Once oriented with the case, volunteers spend an average of 8-10 hours a month doing case related activities.



## How many cases does a single volunteer carry at a time?

The number varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, but an average caseload is one child or sibling group.



## How much training is provided?

Volunteers complete 30-40 hours of interactive, pre-service training, including court observation. Depending on the program, training is offered at various times of day, and multiple times a year. Once sworn in, 12 hours of in-service continuing education is required annually.

## HOW CASA HELPS

Studies have show that children who have a CASA volunteer by their side experience great benefits.



THEY ARE

**more likely**

to find a safe, permanent home



THEY ARE

**more likely**

to succeed in school



THEY ARE

**half as likely**

to re-enter the foster care system