



Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer advocate for CASA of the 20th Judicial District. Enclosed you will find information and application materials for your review.

A CASA volunteer plays a very unique role in our community and in the life of the children we serve. It is a role that requires a strong dedication to children, some daytime flexibility, and most importantly, the ability to be objective. It takes a very special person to step up and speak for the abused and neglected children in our community.

After you have made the decision to become a CASA volunteer please contact our offices to return the enclosed application and to set up an interview time.

If you would like to help CASA of the 20th Judicial District in other volunteer capacities, please visit our web site for other ways to support CASA.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Our staff is here to support our volunteers and that support begins with guiding you through the application process.

Thank you again for your interest in CASA of the 20th Judicial District. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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CASA FAST FACTS

- ✿ CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate.
- ✿ CASA of the 20th Judicial District is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves abused and neglected children in Faulkner, Van Buren & Searcy counties.
- ✿ Our Mission is to provide a voice in court for and on behalf of abused and neglected children who might otherwise have no voice for placement in a safe, permanent home.
- ✿ CASA of the 20th Judicial District is a member of the National CASA Association that has been in existence since 1977.
- ✿ There are currently more than 50,000 advocates serving in 948 state and local program offices nationwide.
- ✿ CASA programs across the country are known by several different names, including Guardian ad Litem, Child Advocates and Voices for Children.
- ✿ Since the inception of CASA advocacy, volunteers have helped well over 1,000,000 children find safe, permanent homes in which they can thrive.
- ✿ In 2008 The Arkansas Department of Human Services investigated 27,672 reports of child abuse and neglect in Arkansas.
- ✿ As a result of these investigations 8,718 children were placed into foster care.
- ✿ Our Vision is for every abused and neglected child in the 20th Judicial District to have a CASA Volunteer.



CASA Volunteer Advocate Role

What is a CASA Volunteer?

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is a trained citizen who is appointed by a judge to represent the best interest of an abused and neglected child in court.

What is the CASA volunteer's role?

A CASA volunteer provides the judge with carefully researched information about the child to help the court make a sound decision about that child's future. The CASA volunteer makes recommendations about placement to the judge and follows through until the child reaches a safe, permanent home.

How does a CASA volunteer investigate a case?

To prepare a recommendation, the CASA volunteer talks with the child, parents, family members, social workers, school officials, health providers, and others who are knowledgeable about the child. The CASA volunteer also reviews all records pertaining to the child- school, medical and case worker reports and other documents.

How does the CASA volunteer relate to the child he or she represents?

CASA volunteers offer children trust and advocacy during complex legal proceedings. They explain to the child the events that are happening, the reasons they are in court, and the roles of the judge, lawyers, and social workers. CASA volunteers also encourage the child to express his or her own opinion and hopes, while remaining objective observers.

How many cases on average does a CASA volunteer carry at one time?

Volunteers can carry up to a maximum of two cases.

How much time does being a CASA volunteer require?

After thirty hours of initial training, volunteers typically work about 10-15 hours a month.

How long does a CASA volunteer remain involved in the case?

The volunteer continues until the case is permanently resolved.

What children are assigned CASA volunteers?

Children who are victims of abuse and neglect who have become wards of the court are assigned CASA volunteers.



CASA Volunteer Qualifications & Job Description

A CASA VOLUNTEER IS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:

- Is at least 21 years old.
- Successfully passes screening, background checks and a personal interview prior to starting training.
- Has strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Is able to commit 15 hours each month.
- Is willing to travel within the state depending upon child placement.
- Successfully completes 33 hours of initial training provided by the CASA program. Any sessions missed must be made up before the applicant is assigned to case.
- Is able to keep information confidential and can work within established program guidelines.
- Respects a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe and nurturing environment.

A CASA VOLUNTEER MUST:

- Have the ability to keep all information confidential.
- Be able to deal with hostility, anger, and other emotional attitudes.
- Be able to communicate effectively and relate to people from various backgrounds in a variety of settings.
- Be able to maintain objectivity.
- Maintain professionalism in behavior and appearance.
- Be willing to report any incidents of child abuse or neglect.

A CASA VOLUNTEER'S RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Maintaining written records about the case.
- Interviewing all parties involved in the case, including the child.
- Remaining actively involved until the case is closed and no other services are needed.
- Providing the CASA office with a court report 10 business days prior to all court proceedings.
- Attend 12 hours of continuing education each year. Provided through monthly CASA In Service Programs.
- Make visits to the child at a minimum of once per month.
- Participate in the child's planning and treatment program and ensure that essential needs are being met at all times.



CASA Volunteer Application

The information on this form will help us assess your qualifications to serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Please read the questions carefully and complete all sections of the application as thoroughly as possible.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____ Home Phone: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____ SSN: _____

Maiden/Prior Name/AKA: _____

Marital Status: _____ # of Children: _____ Ages & Gender: _____

Spouse's Name: _____ Spouse's Occupation: _____

Local Emergency Contact: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

How did you become aware of the CASA program?

- Flier Friend Internet Local Newspaper Local Radio National Media
 CASA 20th Event Church Bulletin Other _____

Are you aware that you will be required to complete 30 hours pre-service training? Yes No

Are you willing to participate in ongoing training and court appearances? Yes No

Can you see yourself visiting with a family in their home, or with an institutionalized child? Yes No

What do you feel are the strengths that you will bring to this program? _____

Write a brief statement explaining why you have chosen to volunteer as a Court Appointed Special Advocate at this particular time in your life. _____

ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

List community service organizations or clubs to which you belong: _____

List hobbies and special interests: _____

Previous and/or current volunteer activities: _____

Would you like to volunteer on a regular basis in the CASA office or help with special events? _____

What skills do you possess that could be useful in the office? _____

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Current Employment Status:

Employed Unemployed Self Employed Retired Homemaker

Name of current employer or previous employer if retired or unemployed _____

Address: _____ Work Phone: _____

Supervisor: _____ Work Email: _____

May we call and/or email you at work? Yes No

Title and brief description of your work? _____

How long have you been with your current employer? _____

If employed at current job less than six months, who was your former employer? _____

Address of former employer: _____

How long were you there? _____

Describe any personal or employment constraints that may restrict your availability: _____

EDUCATIONAL DATA

Last grade completed High School - 9 10 11 12 Some College Bachelors Post Graduate

Area of Study/Degree: _____

Are you presently attending school? Yes No If yes, where? _____

Do you have any special skills or licenses? Yes No If yes, please explain/describe: _____

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1. Have you ever been:
 - (a) Arrested for a crime against a child? (Please circle) Yes No
 - (b) Arrested for a violent felony? Yes No
 - (c) Arrested for a sex crime? Yes No
- 2. Have you been convicted of any crime in the past five years (excluding vehicle code infractions, but including vehicular misdemeanors or felonies)? Yes No
- 3. Are you currently undergoing prosecution for any crime (excluding vehicle code infractions, but including vehicular misdemeanors and felonies)? Yes No
- 4. Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime not mentioned above? Yes No
- 5. Are you, or have you ever been, the (circle all that are appropriate): **sibling, household member, parent, significant other or spouse** of a child who has been
 - (a) The subject of a report to a Child Protective Agency? Yes No
 - (b) An adjudicated dependent of any juvenile court? Yes No
 - (c) Placed under informal supervision in any county’s children’s Social Service Agency? Yes No
- 6. As a child, were you ever the subject of a child abuse or neglect report? Yes No
- 7. Are you currently paid or reimbursed to provide a service to children and/or parents within the Child Welfare and/or Juvenile Court System? Yes No
- 8. Have you had a personal experience involving (check all that apply):
_____ Child Welfare _____ Foster Care _____ Juvenile Court _____ Other agencies offering service to a child?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please explain: _____

CASA 20th reserves the right to reject volunteer applicants who 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 CASA 20th program credibility.

REFERENCES

Please list three personal references. One must be an employer or co-worker if employed. Teachers, ministers, volunteer supervisors or similar may be used in place of employer if unemployed. *Please do not list relatives.* We will be contacting all of your references.

Name_____ Relationship_____

Address_____ Phone_____

City/State/Zip_____

Name_____ Relationship_____

Address_____ Phone_____

City/State/Zip_____

Name_____ Relationship_____

Address_____ Phone_____

City/State/Zip_____

FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES ONLY

CASA of the 20th Judicial District does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status or disability.

Please check all that apply

Ethnic Background: African American Asian American Caucasian Latino

Native American Other _____

Primary Language: English Spanish French Sign Language

Other:_____

Secondary Language: English Spanish French Sign Language

Other:_____

Disabilities: Cardiac Cerebral Palsy Circulatory Hearing

Learning Neurological Vision None

FOR CASE MATCHING PURPOSES ONLY

Are you willing to work with all ages of children? Yes No, I prefer ages: 0-5 6-12 13-17

Preferred Gender of child: Male Female No Preference

Preferred Number of Children: Single Group Sibling Group No Preference

Please be aware that CHILDREN ARE FREQUENTLY MOVED. If you have a preference in the county area where you would be willing to accept a case assignment, you may be required to travel to other areas in the county to maintain contact with the child(ren) to which you are assigned.

Preferred Geographic area? Yes No If yes, please specify_____

Are you willing to travel to maintain contact? Yes No Possible

Prefer to NOT work with these disabilities: Cardiac Cerebral Palsy Circulatory
 Vision Respiratory Neurological Mental Retardation
 Hearing Speech Disorder Behavior & Eating Psychological
 Learning Disabilities Reactive Attachment Disorder
 Other: _____

Prefer to NOT work in these situations: Abandonment Dependent/Neglect
 Educational Neglect Emotional Abuse
 Environmental Medical Neglect
 Paternal Drug Abuse Physical Abuse
 Physical Neglect Sexual Abuse

How soon would you be able to accept a case if approved and accepted for this program? _____

I certify that all of the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand and agree that any false statement or omission of material fact will cause my immediate and unconditional dismissal from the Court Appointed Special Advocate program.

Signature

Date