



## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA VOLUNTEER)**

**AGENCY MISSION:** Court Appointed Special Advocates provides a powerful voice for abused and neglected children in Lane County.

**POSITION:** The CASA Volunteer provides abused and neglected children who are currently under the jurisdiction of the Lane County Juvenile Court with effective advocacy. The CASA Volunteer serves as a fact finder for the judge by researching the background of his/her assigned case. They speak for the child in the courtroom, representing the child's best interests, and work to move the child as quickly and effectively as possible through the system and into a safe, permanent home.

**IMPACT OF POSITION:** Children with a CASA Volunteer: are less likely to experience new abuse; receive more, and more appropriate services (e.g., therapy, health care and education); are less likely to be moved from foster home to foster home, creating greater stability and minimizing the number of school placement changes; are more likely to return home or be adopted rather than remain in long-term foster care; have greater self-esteem, a positive attitude toward the future, value achievement, and work well with others; parents of children with a CASA Volunteer were offered and also completed more services than those assisted by the Department of Human Services alone.

**SUPPORTED BY:** **Peer Coordinator.** Support Review after 60 days and at case closing.

**COMMITMENT:** On average CASA Volunteers spend 15 hours a month on their case. CASA Volunteers must be willing to commit to a case as long as the child(ren) remains a ward of the court. The average duration of cases where a CASA Volunteer has been appointed by the court is two years.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Investigate all relevant information about the case;
- Advocate for the child(ren), ensuring that all relevant facts are brought before the court;

- Facilitate and negotiate to ensure that the court, Department of Human Services, if applicable, and the child(ren)'s attorney, if any, fulfill their obligations to the child or ward in a timely fashion;
- Monitor all court orders to ensure compliance and to bring to the court's attention any change in circumstances that may require a modification of the court's order;
- Visit with the child at least once a month;
- Observe parent-child interactions;
- Review relevant documents and records in the case file;
- Attend all court hearing, trials and Citizens Review Board meetings;
- Interview all parties and important persons in the case (i.e. attorneys, caseworkers, teachers, foster parents, parents, counselors, etc.);
- Maintain open communication with Peer Coordinator and other parties to the case;
- Produce a written report for all court hearings;
- Prepare and present oral presentations for the court and Citizens Review Board;
- Make recommendations to the court regarding the best interests of the child;
- Make recommendations for appropriate services for the child and the family;
- Participate in case planning meetings, family unity meetings, and all conferences about the child;
- Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child;
- Provide Peer Coordinator with a case update each month;
- Provide Discovery Summaries;
- Calculate and turn in quarterly statistics;
- Return case files and other case materials to the CASA office when the case closes;
- Understand and follow statutory guidelines;
- Work within CASA of Lane County Volunteer Policies.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Must be a minimum of 21 years of age;
- Must be at least 6 months away from any major life stress (i.e. just moved to town, just married, just started/ended school/job, loss of a loved one, etc.);
- Must have no working connection with Department of Human Services, Child Welfare (DHS/CWP) or the Juvenile Justice system;
- Must have access to and the skills to utilize a computer, word processor, internet and e-mail;
- Must possess a current Oregon Drivers License;
- Must have access to transportation;
- Must be able to pass an FBI criminal history background check;
- Must be able to communicate effectively and compassionately with diverse populations;
- Must have excellent written and verbal skills;
- Must be able to work under pressure and occasional short time lines;
- Must possess professional attributes of diplomacy, professional appearance, demeanor, and the ability to function in adverse situations;

- Must be willing to be supervised and have the ability to follow direction;
- Must be willing to be part of a team;
- Must have time flexibility during the workday;
- Must have a passion and desire to help children who are wards of the court;

**TRAINING AND EDUCATION:**

- Must successfully complete the CASA program training which includes (but is not limited to) 40 hours of instruction.
- Must maintain and track 12 hours of continuing education each year per National CASA requirements.

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