



## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

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

**REPORTS TO:** Peer Coordinator/Program Supervisor

**AGENCY MISSION:** Court Appointed Special Advocates provide 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 and writing a court report for the court. They speak on behalf of 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 appropriate services (e.g., therapy, health care and education); are less likely to be moved from foster home to foster home, have greater stability and minimize the number of school placement changes; are likely to return to a parent 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.

**SUPPORTED BY:** Peer Coordinator and Program Supervisor

**COMMITMENT:** On average CASA volunteers spend 10-15 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, ensuring that all relevant facts are brought before the court for the best interest of the child;
- Facilitate and negotiate to ensure that the court, Department of Human Services, if applicable, and the child'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 in person at least once a month and at least every other month in the child's placement;
- Observe parent-child interactions;
- Review relevant documents and records in the case file;
- Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child;
- Provide Peer Coordinator/Program Supervisor with a case update each month;
- Attend all Court hearing, trials and Citizens Review Board (CRB) meetings;
- Interview all parties and important persons in the case (i.e. attorneys, DHS caseworkers, teachers, foster parents, child, parents, counselors, etc.);
- Maintain open communication with your Peer Coordinator, Program Supervisor and other parties to the case;
- Produce a written report for all Court hearings and CRBs;
- Prepare and present oral presentations for the Court hearing 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;
- Informing the Court promptly of important developments in the case through appropriate means as determined by the CASA program;
- Participate in case planning meetings, Team meetings, and all conferences about the child; Permanency meetings; and Adoption Committee meetings.
- Enter case hours in OPTIMA under contact logs;
- Return case files and other case materials to the CASA office when the case closes and delete any case information from your personal computer;
- Understand and follow statutory guidelines;
- Work within CASA of Lane County Volunteer Policies;

**REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Be a minimum of 21 years of age;
- 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.);
- Have no working connection with Department of Human Services, Child Welfare (DHS/CWP) or the Juvenile Justice system;
- Have access to and the skills to utilize a computer with a Word program installed, internet access and e-mail;
- Possess a current Oregon Drivers License;
- Have reliable transportation;
- Be able to pass DHS Child Welfare and FBI criminal history background checks and Social Security number verification;
- Be able to communicate effectively and compassionately with diverse populations;
- Have excellent written and verbal skills;
- Be able to work under pressure and occasional short time lines;
- Possess professional attributes of diplomacy, professional appearance, demeanor, and the ability to function in adverse situations;
- Be willing to be coached by their Peer Coordinator/Program Supervisor and have the ability to accept direction;
- Be willing to be part of a team;
- Have time flexibility during the workday;
- Have a passion and desire to help children who are wards of the court;

**REQUIRED TRAINING AND EDUCATION:**

- Successfully complete the CASA program training which includes (but is not limited to) 40 hours of instruction;
- Read bi-weekly CASA volunteer Update sent out via email;
- Maintain and track 12 hours of continuing education each year per National CASA requirements;
- Enter continuing education hours in OPTIMA on the volunteer dashboard under the in-service training tab.

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