

Affiliate Guide to Georgia CASA Services

2009-2010



AFFILIATE GUIDE TO GEORGIA CASA SERVICES

Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. develops and supports court-sanctioned, community-based programs that provide trained and supervised volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children involved in juvenile court proceedings. As the founding entity of CASA in Georgia, Georgia CASA has provided support to programs and their communities for over twenty years.

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TRAINING

CASA volunteers are trained to effectively advocate for abused and neglected children. Staff and board members are trained to supervise CASA volunteers and administer thriving programs that provide all deprived children with quality advocacy in and out of the courtroom.

State Volunteer Conference Presented by Georgia CASA, the state conference is an opportunity for CASA volunteers, board members and staff to come together to hear from professionals in the fields of child abuse and neglect, child protection, and volunteer and nonprofit management. The conference is a great networking opportunity for all in attendance and is the largest statewide CASA event. The *CASA Volunteer of the Year Award* is presented at the conference as well as three *Awards of Excellence* for CASA programs. (Note: The state conference will not be held in 2010 since the National CASA conference will be in Atlanta in 2010.)

Council of Programs (COPs) Meeting Each fall and spring, Georgia CASA hosts a meeting of the program directors from across the state. The meetings provide opportunities for training, networking, sharing expertise and discussing issues or concerns that affect the CASA network and abused and neglected children in juvenile court deprivation proceedings across the state.

Training of the Facilitator Workshop This intensive, three-day training prepares CASA staff to deliver the pre-service 30-hour CASA volunteer training curriculum. The hands-on, interactive training provides participants with the opportunity to facilitate mock training sessions as well as to discuss adult learning theory principles, facilitation skills and how to manage training logistics. The workshop is held up to three times per year and is open to all CASA staff.

Volunteer Supervisor Training CASA staff who supervise volunteers are encouraged to attend this training, which focuses on volunteer management skills and case building strategies to effectively supervise CASA volunteers. It has a strong emphasis on volunteer retention and utilizes materials from National CASA's Strategic Volunteer Retention Training. Participants are provided with a Volunteer Supervisor training manual and a copy of *The Myth of Best Interest: Why Good Intentions are Not Good Enough*. The training is open to all CASA staff and is held two times per year.

Targeted Training Georgia CASA presents workshops for boards, staff and CASA volunteers that target specific subjects throughout the year. Training may be offered statewide, regionally or on-site.

Leadership Opportunities

- Four program directors are elected by the Council of Programs (COPs) to serve on the Georgia CASA Board.
- Directors, staff and board members may serve on Georgia CASA Board committees or subcommittees.
- Directors, staff, board members and CASA volunteers may represent CASA on statewide committees, groups and special projects.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Georgia CASA offers assistance to CASA staff and board members to build successful programs. Opportunities exist to learn new skills, acquire knowledge of best practices, and be coached in unfamiliar situations.

For New Programs Georgia CASA staff provides information and consultation to communities that wish to establish a program. After the Judge has signed a letter of intent, community members form a Steering Committee to build local support for CASA, to determine the governance of the program, and to form a Board of Directors or Advisory Group.

- Program Development Steps, established by National CASA, are followed to assist communities in the process of establishing a strong program.
- Program Orientation provides an in-depth overview of the CASA Standards for Local Programs and the day-to-day operations of a program for newly hired program directors and their supervisors.
- Georgia CASA Orientation introduces the services available for programs to the new staff and board members of programs.
- On-site Visit addresses any questions and/or comments of the program anytime after the assignment of the first class of CASA volunteers.

For Established Programs Georgia CASA staff members work closely with program staff members, Boards of Directors and Advisory Boards. On-site assistance is available to programs as well as state representation at local events. Consultation is available, but not limited to, the following:

- Budget development and financial administration
- Board/advisory board development
- Resource development, which includes reviewing local program grant requests
- Volunteer recruitment, screening, training, supervision and recognition
- Legal issues regarding program operations and child advocacy
- Program planning and evaluation
- Human resources and staffing structure
- Local community education and publicity
- Grant writing
- Outcome measure and logic models

Training is available upon request for COMET, QuickBooks, record keeping, board orientation and planning, staff hiring and training, and program operations.

Statistical Reports Georgia CASA collects statewide data for children served, volunteers and case outcomes. Each local program reports quarterly information via the internet. Georgia CASA compiles the information and submits a statewide report to the Georgia Department of Human Resources, as part of a contractual requirement, National CASA and the CASA network. Past and current statistical reports are available at www.gacasa.org.

WEBSITES

The Georgia CASA website (www.gacasa.org) provides local CASA programs, CASA volunteers, interested supporters, and other stakeholders with convenient, 24/7 access to pertinent information.

The Georgia CASA Website has valuable up-to-date information, including statistics, newsletters, press releases, success stories and a program directory. Also included is a calendar that lists trainings and events for Georgia CASA and the programs. The website is a great tool for educating the general public and gaining support for the programs in Georgia. Links are included to programs that have their own websites. The website serves as a clearinghouse of information for visitors and prospective CASA volunteers.

State CASA Internal Website (Intranet) Programs can access an intranet site that provides much in-depth information and resources, including sample forms, applications, protocols, policies, publications, and reference materials. While the intranet is password protected, CASA staff and board members have unlimited access. A unique password for each program is available from Georgia CASA.

Metro Atlanta CASA Collaborative Website Georgia CASA maintains a website (www.metrocasa.org) specifically designed for the metro Atlanta CASA programs in Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett counties. The website further assists the Collaborative to develop and share resources in order to strengthen each program's effectiveness and to increase the number of CASA volunteers in metro Atlanta advocating for abused and neglected children.

PUBLICATIONS

Volunteer Training Manual (2007) The 3rd edition of the National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum was released in 2007 and provides programs with a standard curriculum for CASA volunteers. The 30-hour training covers CASA roles and responsibilities, juvenile court law and practice, and information regarding child abuse and neglect, child development, cultural diversity and family dynamics. Training manuals are available for a reduced fee through the state office.

Facilitator Training Manual (2007) The Facilitator Edition accompanies the volunteer training manual and provides CASA staff and training facilitators with the necessary tools and information to facilitate the CASA volunteer training. Each program receives one complimentary copy of the facilitator manual. Additional copies are available through the state office for a fee.

Crisis Communications Manual Designed for CASA program staff, the manual includes common CASA crisis situations, crisis action steps, sample policies, and various communication resources useful in a crisis situation. The complimentary manual is available through the state office.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

As the founding entity of CASA in Georgia, Georgia CASA joins National CASA and affiliated programs in assessing and assuring that each child has the best volunteer advocate possible.

Georgia CASA Standards and Requirements Adapted from the standards and requirements established by National CASA, the Georgia CASA standards and requirements guide program staff and boards in establishing strong, viable programs to serve children in their areas and are intended to ensure consistent quality throughout the CASA network.

Self Assessment Tool Each program participates in a self-assessment of its program operations and adherence to state and national standards. The assessment is submitted to the state and national offices for review and feedback. Each program develops a plan to strengthen program effectiveness. Georgia CASA provides technical assistance and support throughout the assessment phases as requested.

Monitoring Visits These visits provide an opportunity for Georgia and local programs to discuss local program operations and adherence to standards. The monitoring visit may include, but is not limited to, review of governing documents, financial records, program policies, program statistics, National CASA self-assessment report, child and volunteer files, review of the annual Goals and Objectives and COMET, and court observations. The Director, Board Chair/Sponsoring Agent representative, and others may be included. If needed, the program may be asked to submit a Quality Improvement Plan to address areas needing attention.

CASA Outcomes, Management and Evaluation Tool (COMET) Georgia CASA provides training and assistance to local programs using National CASA's child and volunteer tracking database. COMET is available free of charge and can be downloaded from the National CASA website.

LOCAL PROGRAM FUNDING RESOURCES

Georgia CASA's mission to support programs includes both financial support and training and technical assistance to find and maintain local support.

State Allocation Georgia CASA administers funds appropriated by the Georgia General Assembly to affiliated programs. Funding is allocated to local CASA programs for the sole purpose of employing staff to recruit, screen, train and supervise CASA volunteers.

Fundraising Support Georgia CASA provides technical assistance, including grant research and review, development of local fundraising plans, as well as fundraising training for staff and boards. Additionally, Georgia CASA offers support to local programs in their consideration and completion of specific federal grants, such as Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) and National CASA.

Volunteer Screening and Training Support In order to support programs' screening and training of CASA volunteers, Georgia CASA pays for the FBI fingerprint-based checks on all volunteers and staff and offsets half of the cost of volunteer training manuals.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

The greatest assets of a program are the people who advocate for children, those who support the program as well as those who learn about child abuse and neglect and support the changes in law and policy that will improve the child protection system. Georgia CASA markets CASA in Georgia to help programs develop the constituencies to make them successful.

Toll Free Number to receive and manage general requests for information and inquiries from anywhere in the state.

April/May Activities April as National Child Abuse Prevention & Awareness Month and May as National Foster Care Month provide great opportunities for programs to hold community events to recruit and recognize CASA volunteers and to educate the general public, collaborative partners, key decision makers, supporters, and the media about CASA. Georgia CASA provides programs with several public relations tools for the timeframe. Program events may include a Light of Hope candlelight ceremony, community education programs, CASA volunteer recognition events and participation in local community collaboration events.

Public Awareness Materials Available for Programs (see the Intranet for details)

- Customized brochures and bookmarks (ready for print)
- Exhibit screens and brochure (ready to order)
- Name badges (ready to order)
- Cookbooks
- *Everyday Heroes* DVD (7-minute CASA informational video)
- Customizable fact sheet
- CASA key messages
- CASA success stories
- Recent national and state child abuse/neglect statistics
- PowerPoint presentation template
- Targeted volunteer recruitment tools and ideas
- Annual report template
- Newsletter template
- Ad files for billboard, print and radio
- Press release templates

Additional public awareness materials and resources often become available throughout the year.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

As advocates for children, CASA volunteers, staff and board members often continue their advocacy outside the courtroom to ensure that elected officials and policy makers have a greater understanding of the strengths and limitations of the child welfare system.

State Advocacy Georgia CASA provides a collective voice to the Georgia General Assembly on legislative issues impacting CASA and abused and neglected children in the child welfare system. As a statewide voice, Georgia CASA coordinates legislative activities and distributes education materials to legislators, CASA volunteers and staff, board members and other supporters of the CASA program. The state allocation is determined by the General Assembly and dependent on the support of elected officials.

CASA and Foster Youth Day at the Capitol A key component to CASA's advocacy efforts is the relationship between elected officials and CASA programs across the state. Annually, Georgia CASA hosts CASA and Foster Youth Day at the Capitol, which brings CASA volunteers, staff, board members, current and former foster youth from Georgia's Independent Living Program, and supporters to the Capital to meet and greet with legislators and state level officials. This event is held one day during the legislative session, which typically runs January through March.

Collaborative Partners Georgia CASA maintains mutually supportive relationships with other children's organizations to enhance CASA's reputation in Georgia, including the Council of Juvenile Court Judges, Department of Family and Children's Services, the Supreme Court of Georgia Committee on Justice for Children, the Georgia Network of Children's Advocacy Centers, the Office of the Child Advocate, Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, Voices for Georgia's Children, and the Barton Child Law and Policy Clinic.

DIRECTORY OF CASA PROGRAMS

Advo-Kids CASA, 770.710.2981
Fayette & Spalding Counties

Alcovy CASA, 770.385.7450
Newton & Walton Counties

Athens-Oconee CASA, 706.613.1922
Clarke & Oconee Counties

Atlantic Area CASA, 912.876.3816
Bryan, Liberty, Long, McIntosh & Tattnall Counties

Bartow County CASA, 770.386.1060
Bartow County

Camden County CASA, 912.882.3119
Camden County

Carroll County CASA, 770.838.1964
Carroll County

Chattahoochee CASA, 706.327.9612 x207
Muscogee County

CASA of the Alapaha Judicial Circuit, 229.686.6576
Atkinson, Berrien, Clinch, Cook & Lanier Counties

CASA of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit, 706.276.2272
Fannin, Gilmer & Pickens Counties

CASA of the Augusta Judicial Circuit, 706.737.4631
Burke, Columbia & Richmond Counties

CASA for Children, 770.345.3274
Cherokee County

CASA of Forsyth County, 770.886.4082
Forsyth County

CASA Glynn, 912.264.4448
Glynn County

CASA of Houston County, 478.396.2185
Houston County

CASA of the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit, 912.764.4849
Bulloch, Effingham, Jenkins & Screven Counties

CASA of Paulding, 770.505.0065
Paulding County

CASA of Polk & Haralson, 770.748.2414
Haralson & Polk Counties

CASA of Southwest Georgia, 229.248.1040
Baker, Calhoun, Decatur, Grady & Mitchell Counties

CASA of the Toombs Judicial Circuit, 706.359.5544
Glascok, Lincoln, McDuffie, Taliaferro, Warren & Wilkes Counties

CASA of Troup & Heard Counties, 706.845.8243
Heard & Troup Counties

Central Georgia CASA, 478.238.6318
Bibb, Crawford & Peach Counties

Children's Voice: Douglas County CASA, 770.577.7228
Douglas County

Clayton County CASA, 770.477.3268
Clayton County

Coastal Plain CASA, 229.386.9765
Irwin, Tift, Turner & Worth Counties

Coweta CASA, 770.253.0046
Coweta County

DeKalb County CASA, 404.378.0038
DeKalb County

Dougherty County CASA, 229.435.0074
Dougherty County

Enotah CASA, 706.864.0300
Lumpkin, Towns, Union & White Counties

Floyd County CASA, 706.235.2272
Floyd County

Fulton County CASA, 404.224.4720
Fulton County

Gordon County CASA, 706.629.4561
Gordon County

Gwinnett County CASA, 770.619.6015
Gwinnett County

Hall-Dawson CASA, 770.531.1964
Dawson & Hall Counties

Juvenile Court of Cobb County/CASA, 770.528.2285
Cobb County

Lookout Mountain CASA, 423.255.6147
Catoosa, Dade & Walker Counties

Murray/Whitfield CASA, 706.272.7919
Murray & Whitfield Counties

Northeast Georgia CASA, 706.886.1098
Elbert, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Madison, Oglethorpe, Rabun & Stephens Counties

Ocmulgee CASA, 478.452.9170
Baldwin, Greene, Hancock, Jasper, Jones, Morgan, Putnam & Wilkinson Counties

Piedmont CASA, 706.387.6375
Banks, Barrow & Jackson Counties

Rockdale CASA, 770.761.0202
Rockdale County

S.A.F.E. CASA, 912.283.7326
Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Coffee, Pierce & Ware Counties

Savannah/Chatham County CASA, 912.447.8908
Chatham County

South Central CASA, 229.276.0200
Crisp, Dooly, Ben Hill and Wilcox Counties

SOWEGA CASA, 229.931.4488
Lee, Macon, Schley, Stewart, Sumter & Webster Counties

TLC CASA, 478.275.8100
Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Jefferson, Johnson, Laurens, Toombs, Treutlen, Twiggs, Washington & Wheeler Counties

Thomas County CASA, 229.225.4338
Brooks & Thomas Counties

Tri-County CASA, 912.367.0064
Appling, Jeff Davis & Wayne Counties



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