

Second Judicial District CASA Program  
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## Volunteer Advocate Job Description

### A. Position Description

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a volunteer guardian *ad litem* appointed by the juvenile court to represent the best interests of a child who is alleged to have been abused or neglected or be otherwise in an unsafe home environment. In order to do this, the CASA must independently investigate the facts of the case, recommend a course of action to the court, explain the court's findings to the child, and monitor the progress of the case toward established permanency goals.

### B. Supervision

Supervision, guidance, and support are provided by the Volunteer Coordinator and/or Executive Director, with assistance from program staff.

### C. Typical Case-Related Duties

1. Upon appointment to a case, interview all parties involved to determine the facts.
2. Investigate alternatives available for the child, such as placement and services.
3. Formulate objective, fact-based recommendations for the court with respect to placement, visitation with parents and siblings, rehabilitative or medical services, educational stability, etc.
4. Submit reports to the court in a timely manner prior to each court hearing.
5. Appear at court hearings to provide an update on the child's current circumstances, make recommendations to the court, and advocate for the best interests of the child.
6. Continue regular contact with child on at least a monthly basis.

7. Continue contacts with family, social workers, service providers, and others to keep abreast of child's current circumstances, facilitate progress toward case objectives, and monitor compliance with court orders.
8. Bring significant changes in the family or child's circumstances to the court's attention and ensure all parties are following court recommendations.
9. Continue follow-up contacts, submit additional reports, and make new recommendations as needed, until the case is closed upon achieving permanency.

D. Requirements of a CASA

In addition to case-related duties arising from appointment to a case, a CASA must:

1. Must be 21 years of age.
2. Complete application process and thorough background check.
3. Complete 30 hours of pre-service training.
4. Maintain strict confidentiality.
5. Complete continuing education of at least 12 hours of in-service training annually.
6. After pre-service training, serve as a CASA for at least one child / case until that case is closed or dismissed.
7. Keep assigned Volunteer Coordinator informed of all case related activities, staffing the case at least monthly.

E. Time Commitments

1. Pre-service training: approximately 30 hours over eight weekly sessions.
2. Investigate and prepare a report for the first fact-finding hearing: generally, 15 – 20 hours over a period of three to four weeks following appointment.
3. Meet with parties and others, review records, monitor progress of the case after adjudication, and prepare for review hearings every 60 – 90 days: average three to five hours per month.
4. Monitor cases over the life of the case, generally between eight and 16 months.
5. Complete 12 hours of continuing education per year.

F. Skills and Qualifications

Because the CASA program is designed to be staffed by volunteers from the community, there are no requirements for special education or experience, but a CASA should possess:

1. Ability to keep all client and case information in the strictest confidence.
2. Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
3. Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds.
4. Ability to maintain objectivity and independence.
5. Ability to organize notes, records, and schedule
6. Schedule sufficiently flexible to allow for pre-arranged court hearings and meetings.
7. Access to transportation.
8. Basic understanding of child development and family relationships.
9. Basic competency with documents and word processing software.

G. Benefits

Involvement in the Second Judicial District CASA Program provides an opportunity to enhance written and oral communication skills, to gain understanding of the child protection and legal systems in Idaho, to increase awareness of child abuse and neglect, to become aware of the available services in the area, and to have a direct positive impact on the quality of a child's life.