

**HENRICO CASA**  
**PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The CASA program is a nonprofit organization committed to advocating for the best interests of children involved in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court process. The CASA program recruits, trains, and supervises competent volunteers dedicated to representing the needs of abused and neglected children, as well as other children in juvenile dependency proceedings. The program promotes safe, permanent homes for all children and seeks to educate the community concerning the needs of abused and neglected children.

## **BOARDS**

### **A. Composition and Terms**

The local CASA program will have a Board of Directors. Members on this board will represent all geographic areas served by the program and will have knowledge or an interest in court matters, child welfare and juvenile justice issues. Board members will be from both private and public sectors.

The local CASA program will have a minimum of nine and a maximum of thirty board members. Other than ex-officio directors, each member will serve for a term of two years, with no member being allowed to serve more than three consecutive terms. The period of ineligibility shall be for one (1) year only.

All of these terms and conditions will be set forth in the local CASA program's bylaws. Also included will be procedures for filling vacancies, removal of board members, the place and frequency of board meetings, committee descriptions, and any other information pertinent to the board's functioning and operation.

### **B. Training**

All board members will receive training within six months of their appointment to the board.

Training will consist of:

- purpose and function of the board
- role of the board president and other members of the executive committee
- relationship between the board and the CASA Executive Director
- goals and procedures of established committees
- the vision and direction of the CASA program

### **C. Code of Ethics**

The Board of Directors will also conduct themselves in a professional manner and adhere to a code of ethics similar to that followed by CASA volunteers.

### **D. Screening**

1. Each board applicant must sign releases authorizing the local CASA program to conduct the following record checks: an FBI fingerprint check or a national criminal database check, state criminal check and local criminal check where the applicant lives and works, national sex offender registry check, motor vehicles division record check with a Social Security Number verification, and local child protective services check as appropriate and permissible by Virginia State law, and where allowed by law a child protective services record check and a criminal record check in any county and state where the applicant has lived during the last seven years. Applicants who refuse to sign a release of information for these law enforcement checks will not

be accepted. These record checks will be conducted at least every four years for active board members.

2. If a board applicant falsifies or misrepresents facts during the screening process their application will be dismissed. Generally, applications are also rejected for applicants who have been convicted of a criminal offense or have a record of child abuse or neglect complaints which were "founded".

## **PROGRAM AND PERSONNEL**

- A. The local CASA program will ensure that an attorney is available for directors and boards to provide legal consultation in matters pertaining to administration of programs.
- B. The local CASA program will not employ, as paid staff, any individual who concurrently supervises children-in-need of services or juvenile offender cases, either for the courts or any child serving agencies.
- C. The local CASA program will make available to the court(s) in their jurisdiction, all written policies concerning program and personnel issues.
- D. The Board of Directors will create personnel policies governing staff selection and evaluation, work hours, salaries, benefits, and payment schedules, absences and leave, and employment termination.
- E. The local CASA program will have a written organizational plan, detailing the program's structure, funding plan, and policies and procedures.

## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

### **A. Executive Director**

1. **General Description of Work:** Performs administrative and resource development operations of the organization.
2. **Duties and Responsibilities:**
  - work with the Board of Directors to develop and implement a plan for funding of the organization
  - assist the Board of Directors in all aspects of events fundraising
  - research, write proposals for and manage grant funding from public and private sources
  - work with the Board of Directors to develop and implement strategic plans to achieve the organization's goals
  - manage the daily fiscal and business operations of the organization
  - hire and supervise staff
  - work with the Board of Directors to develop and implement a plan to increase awareness of Henrico CASA, its mission and services to children
  - attend all board meetings and provide regular reports of the agency's activities
3. **Qualifications:** The position requires a degree or equivalent experience in child welfare, public administration, counseling, human services, juvenile justice, or law. It is also important that this person have an understanding of and experience with community organizations and volunteer program management.

### **B. Program Director**

1. **General Description of Work:** Manages the daily aspects of the child advocacy program.
2. **Duties and Responsibilities:**
  - conduct and oversee the recruitment, screening, training, supervision, and evaluation of program volunteers and staff
  - work with the Executive Director to develop and implement strategic plans to achieve the volunteer program's goals
  - collaborate with the executive director to develop budgets for volunteer program activities
  - supervise staff who assist with program functions
  - support the Board of Directors in its efforts to increase awareness of Henrico CASA, its mission and services to children
  - attend board meetings and provide regular reports of program activities



3. **Qualifications:** The position requires a degree or equivalent experience in child welfare, public administration, counseling, human services, juvenile justice, or law. It is also important that this person have an understanding of and experience with community organizations and volunteer program management.

C. Program Assistant

1. **General Description of Work:** Supports the Executive Director with short-term and long-term fund development and program specific activities.

2. **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- assist the Executive Director in managing the daily fiscal and business operations of the organization, meeting financial obligations, reviewing all financial reports and supporting documents to manage grant funding from public and private sources (monthly, quarterly, annually)
- manage the QuickBooks accounting software and donor database
- represent Henrico CASA to key external audiences, peer organizations, philanthropic groups and funders for development purposes
- assist with management of the case database, volunteer training, volunteer recognition and volunteer case management.
- assist the Executive Director in preparing reports for the Board about the progress of the volunteer program and finances

3. **Qualifications:** The Program Assistant position requires knowledge or interest in court matters, child welfare, and juvenile justice issues. The Program Assistant will be at least 21 years of age, have attention to detail, and be able to demonstrate an ability to effectively track donors and finances through the provided software.

D. Case Manager

1. **General Description of Work:** Manages the case database, case assignment and supervision, court supervision, and volunteer case management.

2. **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- work with the Program Director to develop and implement plans to achieve the volunteer program's goals
- act as liaison between volunteers and the court clerk's office
- ensure that CASA case reports are submitted to the court in advance of scheduled hearings
- assist with recruiting, screening, training and recognizing volunteers in compliance with program policies and DCJS Regulations
- set up case files for volunteer and CASA office and maintain office files
- manage the volunteer and case data in CASA Manager database

- complete and file grant reports with the National CASA Association, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Service (DCJS), Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and others as assigned
- foster positive relationships with volunteers, social workers, guardians ad litem, clerks of the court, and other case personnel

3. **Qualifications:** The position requires knowledge or interest in court matters, child welfare, and juvenile justice issues. The Case Manager will be at least 21 years of age and be able to demonstrate an ability to accurately collect and enter program data and effectively work with staff, volunteers, and clerk's office personnel.

#### E. Volunteer Coordinator

1. **General Description of Work:** Assists the Program Director with assigned duties, particularly those relating to volunteer recruitment, screening, training, case assignment, and supervision.

2. **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- recruit, screen and interview prospective volunteers
- arrange training for CASA volunteers
- assist with supervision of volunteers in compliance with program policies
- read, edit, and prepare all CASA case reports for approval of the Program Director
- work with the Program Director to develop and implement volunteer recognition events
- conduct annual written evaluations of each CASA volunteer

3. **Qualifications:** The position requires a degree or equivalent experience in child welfare, counseling, human services, juvenile justice, or law. It is also important that this person have an understanding of and experience with community organizations and volunteer supervision. The coordinator will be at least 21 years of age and be able to demonstrate an ability to edit written documents and effectively supervise volunteers.

#### F. CASA Volunteer

1. **General Description of Work:** Investigates circumstances of a child or children involved in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for reasons of abuse, neglect, custody, Child-in-Need-of-Services or Supervision, or other issues to which the judge appoints a CASA representative.

2. **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- maintain complete written records about the case, interviews, and information
- interview parties involved in the case, including the child, to determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child and if the family and child are receiving appropriate services

- represent the child's best interests at all stages of the case and present a written recommendation to the Court as to what decision is best for the child
- monitor the case for court order compliance
- participate in planning and treatment team meetings in order to keep informed of the child's permanent plan
- remain actively involved in the case until formally discharged by the Court

3. **Qualifications:** The volunteer must be at least 21 years of age, be able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, to prepare court reports and to provide testimony, possess mature judgment, a high degree of responsibility, and sufficient time to assist in advocating for the best interests of the child, and be able to relate to persons of different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and different socioeconomic status.

#### H. Board Member

1. **General Description of Work:** Directs the goals, functions, and operations of the CASA program; supports continued program development.

2. **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- attend and participate in all scheduled board meetings
- serve actively as a committee member
- be a spokesperson in the community for Henrico CASA and its mission
- contribute financially to the program, both personally and through the support of fundraising activities
- review program financial matters, including revenues and expenditures; develop a program budget and monitor adherence to and changes in budgetary affairs over the fiscal year

3. **Qualifications:** Board members should have an interest in and knowledge about juvenile matters. Members should have community linkages and be able to garner community support for program activities.

#### I. Committee Member

1. **General Description of Work:** Focuses on specific areas of program operation subsumed under the Board's authority; advises the Board and makes recommendations on matters that have been considered and investigated.

2. **Duties and Responsibilities:** At a minimum, the following committees will be included under the Board's domain:

- executive
- development
- finance

- governance
- leadership

3. **Qualifications:** Committee members will have specific interest and knowledge in the committee areas; members will be able to devote time in addition to regular board meetings to attend to the matters related to their committee work. Each committee will be led by a chairperson who is appointed by the Board president/chairperson.

## **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT**

- A. Henrico CASA accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the Henrico CASA program.
- B. Volunteer recruitment will be targeted at individuals from diverse backgrounds, so as to represent various ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, cultural, and age groups.
- C. The recruitment plan will include speaking engagements and written materials aimed at attracting volunteers through increasing public awareness about the dynamics of abuse and neglect, as well as CASA's efforts to combat the child maltreatment epidemic.
- D. The CASA program will refer possible volunteer applicants to other CASA programs or National CASA, if the individual does not reside within the program's service area.

## **VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **A. Application**

1. Each potential volunteer will complete a written application that requires the following information:

- name and current address
- prior residences within seven years
- educational background
- employment history
- volunteer experience
- names, addresses, and phone numbers of three personal references who are unrelated to the applicant

2. Each potential volunteer will participate in a personal interview conducted by the program director or screening committee from the board. The interview will assess the applicant's qualifications and suitability to the volunteer position.

### **B. Screening**

1. Each volunteer applicant must sign releases authorizing the local CASA program to conduct the following record checks: an FBI fingerprint check or a national criminal database check, state criminal check and local criminal check where the applicant lives and works, national sex offender registry check, motor vehicles division record check with a Social Security Number verification, and local child protective services check as appropriate and permissible by Virginia State law, and where allowed by law a child protective services record check and a criminal record check in any county and state where the applicant has lived during the last seven years. Volunteers who refuse to sign a release of information for these law enforcement checks will not be accepted into the local CASA program. These record checks will be conducted at least every four years for active volunteers.

2. If an applicant falsifies or misrepresents facts during the screening process their application will be dismissed. Generally, applications are also rejected for applicants who have been convicted of a criminal offense or have a record of child abuse or neglect complaints which were "founded".

3. Each volunteer applicant must provide the local CASA program with three personal references who can attest to their character, judgment, and suitability to the position of CASA volunteer. The references should be contacted prior to an applicant's interview and an effort should be made to obtain all three references. If all three references are not obtained, the director should ask the applicant for additional references.

C. Notification

1. Applicants who are appropriate candidates for the volunteer position will be notified of their acceptance as soon as practicable after their personal interview. Applicants will be informed of the required pre-service training.
2. Applicants who are deemed to be inappropriate for the volunteer position will be notified of the rejection as soon as practicable after their personal interview.

D. Access to Volunteer File

1. All information or material placed in the volunteer's official public or exempt volunteer files shall be available to the volunteer upon request for inspection. To prevent abuses of this access privilege, the agency reserves the right to limit the number of times a volunteer can access his or her file during a twelve-month period.
2. Volunteers who are interested in reviewing the contents of their personnel file should contact the Executive Director and provide reasonable advance notice of their desire to schedule a mutually convenient time for an appointment.
3. Access to the file is normally granted within two work days after the request.
4. A designated representative of the Executive Director is present during the file review to ensure all documents remain in the file.
5. The agency will honor reasonable requests for a document copy from the file for the volunteer. The volunteer may be required to assume a reasonable cost for the copies.

## **VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

### **A. Terms**

1. Each new volunteer must complete a minimum of 38 hours of training, to include a minimum of three hours of court observation, before being assigned a case. Failure to complete all 38 hours will result in a rejection of the applicant from the local CASA program.
2. Established volunteers must complete 12 hours of in-service training annually. Failure to do so will result in termination of the volunteer's services.
3. Trainers and faculty for the initial and continuing in-service training should have substantial knowledge, training, and experience in the subject matter they present. They should also be competent in the provision of technical training to lay persons.

### **B. Content**

1. The initial training curriculum for a CASA volunteer, at a minimum, should include instruction on:
  - the delineation of the roles and responsibilities of a CASA
  - basic principles of advocacy
  - appropriate and inappropriate activities of a CASA
  - level of commitment required and performance expectations
  - case assignment process and procedures
  - differentiation between the role of the CASA and other system personnel
  - list of resources available and when to utilize them
  - importance of confidentiality and proper record-keeping techniques
  - dynamics of cultural diversity and the development of cultural sensitivity
  - nature of child abuse and neglect; the impact of drugs and alcohol on the incidence of child maltreatment; identification of family conditions and patterns that perpetuate abuse and neglect
  - general principles and concepts of child and family development
  - concepts of separation and loss, the role of foster care and permanency planning in the context of Virginia state law, with consideration of the state's position on family preservation, family reunification, and alternative permanent plans for a child who cannot be returned home
  - basic communication and interview skills, with guidelines for dealing with sensitive issues and the interaction between the CASA and other parties in conducting interviews and writing reports
  - the juvenile court process, including the types of court proceedings, the CASA's role, who to contact when there is a question about court matters, a glossary of legal terminology, how to prepare for a hearing, and how to prepare written reports
  - the development of advocacy skills, such as negotiation and conflict management, and how they may be used by the CASA to improve the conditions for a child.



2. The Program Director will use the Comprehensive Training Curriculum designed by the National CASA Association, as well as training curricula developed within the state, as a reference in designing and developing their training programs.

## **OBJECTIVES, STANDARDS, AND CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS**

### **A. Conflict of Interest**

A CASA volunteer should not become inappropriately involved in a case by providing direct service delivery to any parties that could lead to conflict of interest, liability problems, or ability or cause a child or family to become dependent on the CASA volunteer for services which should be provided by other agencies or organizations. In accepting or carrying out a case assignment, no CASA volunteer may have a personal or professional relationship with any of the parties involved in the case, or be employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest with any parties involved in the case.

### **B. Investigation**

1. The CASA's investigation involves fact-finding via interviews, professional reports, observation of family and social interactions, and observation of the child's environment.
2. CASAs may conduct interviews of children; however, CASAs are specifically prohibited from questioning or inquiring of the child information regarding a precipitating incident or allegation involving child abuse and neglect.

### **C. Examples of Inappropriate Volunteer Practice**

1. Taking a child home or sheltering a child in the home;
2. Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling;
3. Making actual placement arrangements for the child;
4. Giving money or expensive gifts to the child or any family member;
5. Transporting a child or family member of the child;
6. Participating in a case in which the volunteer is related to any parties in the case, or is employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest with any parties involved in the case.

### **D. Code of Ethics**

1. The CASA volunteers should conduct themselves in a professional manner, adhering to a code of ethics that is consistent with ethical principles established by local, state, or national guidelines.
2. CASA volunteers should develop a general understanding of the code of ethics of other professionals with whom the CASA volunteer will be working.
3. The CASA Program requires that all volunteers sign a copy of the Program's Code of Ethics which is kept in the volunteer file.

a. The Code of Ethics provides volunteers with guidelines for professional behavior and ethical conduct.

b. The Code of Ethics provides volunteers with guidelines pertaining to their conduct:

- representatives of the CASA Program will uphold the credibility and dignity of the CASA concept by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional and humane manner;
- representatives of the CASA Program will not use their authority inappropriately nor condone any illegal act or unethical practice related to their program or community;
- representatives of the CASA Program may not use CASA to promote personal gain;
- representatives of the CASA Program will avoid any action which could adversely affect the confidence of the public in the integrity of the program;
- representatives of the CASA Program will serve and respond to requests without bias because of race, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, veteran status, or handicap.

c. The Code of Ethics provides volunteers with guidelines pertaining to confidentiality:

- representatives of the CASA Program will respect the right of privacy of all individuals, and keep information about CASA cases confidential;
- representatives of the CASA Program will not use confidential information obtained through their work with CASA for personal benefit.

d. The Code of Ethics provides volunteers with guidelines pertaining to knowledge and understanding:

- representatives of the CASA Program must be trained in the operations of the Court and child welfare systems, and in the nature of child abuse and neglect;
- representatives of the CASA Program must respect a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe permanent environment that meets the child's best interests.

### **Computers, Electronic Mail and Social Networking**

Volunteers must abide by Henrico CASA's Social Networking Policy for Employees and Volunteers that will be provided during preservice training and can be found in the agency's Governance Notebook stored in the Executive Director's office. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

### A. Assessment

1. Before case assignment, a Case Priority Assessment form will be completed by a staff member. This form includes information on the child's age, placement history and current status, family issues, history of abuse, and special needs of the child.
2. A staff member will contact the guardian ad litem or other relevant system personnel to obtain additional information that could affect the case assessment.
3. A volunteer will be matched to the case, if one is available. The Executive Director will be responsible for all decisions pertaining to the assignment (or removal) of specific volunteers to specific cases. Consideration of a CASA's experience, preferences, and personal circumstances, as well as geographic factors, will be used in determining case assignments.
4. A CASA volunteer will not be assigned to a case involving any personal connection or close personal relationship with the child client or family.

### B. Priority

1. The mandate of the CASA program is to provide advocacy for children who are involved with the court system primarily as a result of abuse and/or neglect. In order to assure that CASAs are assigned to cases in keeping with this mandate, incoming cases will be prioritized.
2. Cases will be prioritized in the following manner:
  - 1st Priority: children alleged to be abused, neglected, abandoned, or in a dangerous environment
  - 2nd Priority: children in temporary foster care or other out-of-home placements
  - 3rd Priority: custody cases where allegations of child abuse and/or neglect have been raised
  - 4th Priority: CHINS cases where allegations of child abuse and/or neglect have been raised
  - 5th priority: CHINS, delinquency, custody, and status offense cases where the child is in need of an advocate to ensure their best interests are met in court.
3. In the event that more than one case falls into the same priority category, those cases will be prioritized based on the following factors:
  - serious or chronic abuse
  - multiple placements
  - long-term foster care
  - immediate court date
  - child is of pre-school age
  - presence of other siblings in the home

## **VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION**

### **A. Guidance**

1. CASA staff will be easily accessible to volunteers while assigned to court cases. The staff will make every effort to provide quick and effective support to the volunteer.
2. CASA staff will hold regular meetings with all volunteers while assigned to a case. These conferences will allow volunteers to easily seek guidance on their assignments and allow the staff to review case progression.

### **B. Written Reports**

1. All court reports will be submitted to CASA staff prior to admittance into court. Any recommendations about a child's best interests will be reviewed and signed by CASA staff before being presented to the Court.
2. No alterations to a volunteer's recommendations about the best interests of a child will be made by CASA staff without prior consultation with the volunteer.

## COURT REPORTS

### A. Submission

Volunteer recommendations will be submitted to the CASA office at least 10 days prior to the scheduled hearing date for abuse and neglect cases and 20 days for custody and visitation cases. It is the responsibility of the CASA staff to ensure that the final report is acceptable and entered into the Court three days prior to the court date for abuse and neglect cases and fifteen days in cases of child custody as directed in VA Code 16.1-274A.

### B. Reports

The report will contain the following:

- Identifying Information: including case name, docket number, child's birth date, court hearing date, name of CASA volunteer, date of the report
- Situation: summary of allegation and circumstances surrounding court involvement, current placement of child
- Documents: list of those reports reviewed by CASA, including school, police, medical, and psychological reports
- Facts: summary of CASA's review of the child's situation, including list of all people contacted and their position with respect to the child's placement
- Recommendation(s): CASA's views on the best interests of the child with respect to placement, custody, visitation, and needed services

## **STAFF TO VOLUNTEER RATIO**

For staff assigned to supervision as a full-time function, the staff will not supervise more than 30 active volunteers or a maximum of 45 cases. In the event the staff is required to perform duties other than supervision of volunteers, the number of volunteers the staff can supervise shall be reduced pro rata. If the one-to-30 ratio is exceeded, a rationale must be submitted to and approved by the Department of Criminal Justice Services prior to implementation.

## **CASELOAD SIZES**

No more than two children or two sibling groups are to be assigned to a volunteer at any one time. If more than two children or two sibling groups are assigned to a volunteer at any given time, a rationale must be submitted to and approved by the Department of Criminal Justice Services prior to assignment.

## **INACTIVE STATUS**

With the permission of the Program Director, a volunteer may reactivate after being on leave or inactive status for less than one year. If a volunteer wishes to return to active status after more than one year since their last case closed, the volunteer must complete the preservice training again. All inactive volunteers will contact the Program Director and arrange any training or other activities necessary to reactivate their status.

## **CONTACTING, INTERVIEWING, AND RESPONDING TO PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE CASE**

### **A. CASA staff**

The staff will send a letter to all parties involved in the case - child, parents, foster parents, DSS worker, GAL, and other professionals when appropriate - as soon as a volunteer has been appointed to a case. This letter will inform the parties of who the CASA is and what his/her duties are.

### **B. Volunteer**

1. The volunteer will follow up the written communication with a telephone contact and begin to set up interview appointments.
2. The volunteer will identify, interview, and keep in contact with all system professionals involved in the case. Rules of confidentiality and information-sharing will guide all of these interactions.



## **INTERACTING WITH OTHER PARTIES**

### **A. Guardian Ad Litem**

The volunteer will consult with the guardian ad litem (GAL) in an effort to determine what actions are in the best interests of the child. The volunteer will ask for suggestions from the GAL and cooperate with them when appropriate.

### **B. Department of Social Services**

1. The volunteer will consult with the DSS worker(s) in an effort to determine what actions are in the best interests of the child. The volunteer will ask for suggestions from the Department of Social Services (DSS) caseworker and cooperate with DSS when appropriate.
2. The volunteer will ask DSS about their recommendations for the child and family, the schedule of services to be provided to the child and family, and the times for any agency meetings or reviews concerning the child's well-being.

### **C. Information**

1. The CASA will share information about the case with other professionals involved in the court proceedings. All sharing of information will occur under provisions of confidentiality.
2. Other professionals involved with a case should share information with the CASA. Professionalism in dealing with these matters is required by the volunteer, but if they can demonstrate that social workers, attorneys, medical professionals, school personnel, or other parties in the case refuse to cooperate with information sharing, CASA staff should be notified.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

### **Volunteers**

#### **A. Records**

1. All CASA case files are confidential. Volunteers who handle files must sign a statement of confidentiality which formalizes their commitment to maintain the confidentiality of files. CASAs are not allowed to begin work on a case before this form has been signed.
2. The signed statement of confidentiality will remain in the volunteers' personnel file.
3. To the extent permitted by state and federal confidentiality regulations, CASA volunteers should share information gathered with other involved professionals whenever possible and practical.
4. The Code allows access to the child's record but does not permit access to information on the parent unless such information is embedded in the record of the child. Under circumstances where additional information about the parent is needed by the CASA Volunteer to complete their investigation and or to make proper recommendations to the court, it is suggested that the following steps be follows:
  - a. Request the parents to sign a "Release of Information" form;
  - b. If such a request is denied, request the court to make such a specification under #5 of the Order for Court-Appointed Special Advocate.

#### **B. Training**

1. The confidentiality of records and the importance of maintaining this confidentiality will be discussed during training sessions before any volunteer is assigned to a case.

### **Employees**

#### **A. Records**

- 1 All information provided by clients or potential clients is confidential and may not be disclosed outside the agency without written permission from the client unless required by law. If the client is incompetent, written permission must be obtained from the client's legal guardian or representative. If there is any question about whether a disclosure is appropriate or necessary, the Volunteer Coordinator must consult with the Executive Director.
2. Program staff should take measures to ensure that all electronic and hard copy correspondence, files and records are safely and securely maintained. Case files must remain in a locked cabinet, to which all staff have a key in order to ensure staff can access records at any time. All staff must log off of their computers whenever they leave the office and each monitor must be password protected.

3. Care will be taken by all staff and volunteers to protect the identity of clients within e-mail transmissions by omitting the client's name where possible. Staff and volunteers should use the client's initials when identification is necessary within e-mails.

4. Any confidential materials received from another individual or agency, including all information kept on file for governing board, advisory committee members, staff, volunteers and donors, may not be disclosed to anyone outside the CASA/GAL program's professional staff, except by court order or written consent of the party involved.

## REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

### A. Reporting

1. If a CASA volunteer or program staff member becomes aware of a suspected abuse or neglect incident during the course of working with assigned cases, the incident will be reported to the local Department of Social Services (DSS), Child Protective Services unit. A CASA volunteer reporting such an incident will then report their suspicions to the program staff.
2. If the knowledge of suspected abuse or neglect is obtained after working hours or during weekends/holidays, the report will be made to the DSS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-552-7096). A CASA volunteer reporting such an incident should contact the program staff with their suspicions as soon as reasonably possible.
3. If the incident of suspected abuse or neglect involves a local DSS employee, the report will be made to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court in the locality where the abuse or neglect was discovered.

### B. Imminent Danger

1. In situations involving imminent danger to the child, the CASA volunteer will contact the police department immediately. The volunteer will document events immediately including date, time, place, persons involved, what actions were taken, and persons contacted. The volunteer will contact the program staff as soon as possible.
2. Under no circumstances will the CASA volunteer:
  - attempt to intervene in any type of physically violent situation
  - take the child off the premises
  - transport a child in an emergency
  - take the child home or shelter the child in the volunteer's home
  - fail to report the child's whereabouts in an emergency

## **CASE MONITORING AND TERMINATION**

### **A. Monitoring**

1. After the initial investigation, the volunteer may be called upon to monitor a case between case hearings. Such monitoring includes maintaining contact with the child, family, DSS staff, and the GAL. Ensuring that a family is complying with court orders is also an essential part of the monitoring phase.
2. The volunteer will prepare supplemental court reports during the monitoring phase of their duties, when warranted.

### **B. Termination**

1. The volunteer remains active on a case until formally relieved of the duties by the Court. Once a case has been terminated, the CASA will return all records to the local CASA office within two weeks.
2. If a volunteer must resign from a case before its completion, reasons for the volunteer's resignation will be documented in writing. CASA staff will immediately find a replacement volunteer to be assigned to the case.

## PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

A. All new volunteers will receive a performance review after the initial court appearance and continuing feedback thereafter. The initial review and the continuing feedback will examine the volunteer's ability to:

- comply with goals and policies of the program
- accept and follow through with assignments
- communicate effectively, both written and orally
- work with supervisor
- demonstrate professionalism, both in court and when working with families

B. All volunteers will receive a formal performance review at least once a year. Additional reviews may be conducted at the discretion of the Program Director.

C. All volunteers will be given the opportunity for an exit interview prior to leaving the local CASA program.

## COMPLAINT PROCEDURES AND REMOVAL OF A VOLUNTEER

### A. Complaint Procedures

1. If a complaint is lodged against a staff member, the Executive Director will be notified. The director will contact the complainant and attempt to resolve the matter. Resolution will be documented and provided to the complainant, the staff member, and the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. If resolution cannot be achieved, the director will refer the matter to the Executive Committee. Once the committee has resolved the matter, resolution will be documented in writing and provided to the complainant, the staff members, and the Executive Director.
2. If a complaint is lodged against a volunteer, the volunteer's immediate supervisor will be notified. The matter will be reviewed and resolved by the immediate supervisor, in conjunction with the Executive Director. Review of the matter will include contact with the complainant and the volunteer. Resolution will be documented and provided to the complainant, the volunteer, the Executive Director, and the Executive Committee.

### B. Volunteer Removal

1. If it becomes necessary to remove a volunteer, as the result of a complaint from an individual or organization, or at the discretion of CASA program staff, the volunteer will be asked to arrange a meeting with the Executive Director to discuss reasons for their dismissal.
2. Any volunteer who fails to perform their volunteer responsibilities will be provided with notice that their performance is unsatisfactory.
3. Reasons for the removal of a volunteer include, but are not limited to:
  - failure to follow program policies and procedures
  - failure to complete pre-service and ongoing training
  - performing duties that are outside the role of the CASA
  - demonstrating an inability to carry out volunteer duties
  - breach of code of ethics
  - any ex parte communication

## REPORTING AND MONITORING

### A. Case Files

All information pertinent to a case will be maintained in case files. This includes all CASA documentation, medical reports, court orders, and professional notes. Program staff will have knowledge of file location at all times. Case files will be kept orderly and in a secure place while on the premises of the CASA office.

### B. Record Keeping

The CASA program will maintain records of all the activities of the program, including expenditures and revenues, case information, and volunteer information and assignments.

### C. DCJS Reports

The CASA program will report to the regulatory agency, DCJS, in accordance with Virginia Administrative Code Section **6VAC20-160-30: Recordkeeping and Monitoring**, which states:

A. CASA programs shall maintain records of the activities of the CASA program by using an automated data system prescribed by DCJS.

B. CASA programs shall provide annual and other reports on the operation of the CASA program to DCJS in a format prescribed by DCJS according to a timeline established by DCJS.



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## FISCAL MANAGEMENT

### A. Fundraising

1. The CASA Executive Director and Board of Directors will make every attempt to diversify funding sources and maintain a tax-exempt status.
2. All fundraising activities, including potential grant opportunities, will be reviewed by the Board. The treasurer or other members of the Executive Committee of the Board will be present at any projects involving cash revenues. A report will be issued immediately following any fundraising activity, describing the amount of revenue.
3. All fundraising activities will be conducted in an ethical manner.

### B. Records

1. The CASA program is guided by a written budget that includes anticipated revenue for the program year and the costs of operating the program.
2. The Board of Directors oversees all financial matters relating to program operation and revenue accrual. The Board insists the program receive, disburse, and account for funds in accordance with sound financial practices and generally accepted accounting principles.

### C. Reimbursement

1. Volunteers will keep a record of mileage and other expenses for which they need to be reimbursed by the CASA program. Expenses will be recorded on reimbursement forms and signed by the Executive Director. Volunteers are allowed to request reimbursement for travel expenses associated with CASA activities and telephone expenses incurred while contacting persons involved in the case.
2. Acceptable reimbursement costs and the reimbursement procedure will be explained during volunteer training.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

### A. Liability

The CASA program director, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, will assess possible areas of liability and make reasonable efforts to reduce the risks associated with these hazards.

### B. Insurance

The CASA program will have liability protection for staff and volunteers through the Court, state statute, or private insurance coverage. The program will annually review its insurance coverage with the insurance carrier to assure adequate coverage.

The CASA program will have officers and director's liability coverage for its board of directors.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **A. Community Relations**

The CASA Executive Director will endeavor to maintain good relations and communication with the community and other service providers associated with CASA program operations and service delivery. The director will also make known to the public the functions of CASA volunteers and attempt to garner community support of the program.

### **B. Political Activity Statement**

1. The CASA program will not endorse any candidate or political viewpoints. It is an independent program and as such, is neutral on political matters.
2. CASA employees and volunteers may lobby on behalf of state CASA programs for the purposes of monetary appropriations through the General Assembly.

## COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAWS

### A. Equal Opportunity Employment

In accordance with federal laws enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, this CASA program will not discriminate against employees or volunteers on the basis of an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability.

### B. Drug-Free Workplace

1. Employees and volunteers who take medication are permitted to work, provided that the medication does not impair their ability to perform their duties. Any employee or volunteer, who appears to be under the influence of intoxicants or narcotics while on duty, can be declared unfit for duty and subject to termination.
2. The illegal use, possession, distribution, or diversion of illicit substances by employees or volunteers, as defined in the Federal Drug-Free Work Place Act, will not be tolerated. CASA has the right to test for drug use on a discretionary basis. A positive drug screen on any employee or volunteer will result in dismissal from the CASA program.

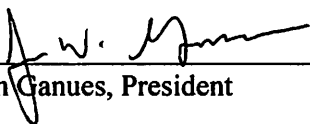
### C. Smoke-Free Workplace

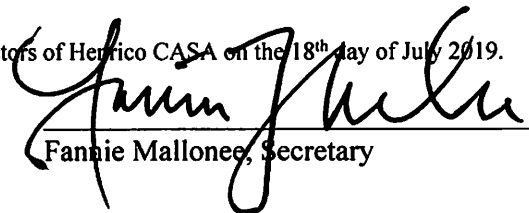
The CASA program is dedicated to providing a safe and comfortable work environment for both employees and volunteers. As a result, smoking will be prohibited within CASA buildings. This policy applies to all employees, clients, volunteers, and visitors. Further, smoking will not be allowed in the presence of children assigned by the Court to Henrico CASA.

## EVALUATION

1. The CASA program will conduct regularly scheduled program evaluations. Information will be gathered from volunteers, employees, judges, GALs, social workers, and attorneys. The evaluation should focus on the services provided by CASA volunteers and the areas in which CASA staff can improve their performance.
2. Special attention should be placed on the volunteers' evaluations of CASA staff support and training programs. Staff will also receive annual performance evaluations from the Board of Directors or one of its committees.

These Policies and Procedures were approved by the Board of Directors of Henrico CASA on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of July 2019.

  
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Jon Canues, President

  
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Fannie Mallonee, Secretary