



**Advisory Committee to the
Court Appointed Special Advocate
and Children's Justice Act Programs
Meeting virtually via Zoom**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83740975400>

Meeting ID: 837 4097 5400

Passcode: casacja21!

One tap mobile

Meeting ID: 837 4097 5400

Passcode: 5905893678

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbzmxhfxP>

Advisory Committee New Member Orientation Agenda

CASA/CJA Advisory Committee Information

- 1 - Advisory Committee member job description
- 2 - Member Roster
- 3 - By-laws
- 4 - Three Year Plan

CJA Program Overview

- 5 - CJA Program Information Sheet
- 6 - CJA Federal Act

CASA Program Overview

- 7 - Current CASA Program Statistics
- 8 - CASA Code
- 9 - CASA Regulations

Citizen Review Panel Overview

- 10 - Citizen Review Panel Information Sheet
- 11 - CASA/CJA CRP 2019 Recommendations Response

Questions and Answers

CASA/CJA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title:	CASA/CJA (Court-Appointed Special Advocate/Children's Justice Act) Advisory Committee Member
Reports to:	Criminal Justice Services Board
Purpose:	<p>To advise the Criminal Justice Services Board on matters relating to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program and the needs of the clients served by the program; to make recommendations as deemed necessary and proper to carry out such responsibilities assigned under the Title 9.1 of the Code of Virginia (Sections 9.1-151 through 9.1-157).</p> <p>The Committee shall oversee the Children's Justice Act program and serve as the advisory body for the purposes of Virginia's participation in this federal program for improving the investigation and prosecution of child abuse pursuant to Section I of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (U.S. Code), as amended most recently in 2010, which provides for a task force on children's justice.</p>
Term:	Four years, expiring July 1 st (eligible to serve two terms)
Expected Meeting Attendance:	Regularly attend meetings as scheduled (quarterly) Participate as an ad hoc committee member if appointed
Obligations of the Committee:	Provide perspective of applicable professional discipline Assist in development of Three Year Plan Maintain and update Three Year Plan Advise the Department of Criminal Justice Services on matters related to CASA and CJA Programs
Specific Duties:	Attend meetings and show commitment to committee activities Be well informed on issues and agenda items in advance of meetings Contribute skills, knowledge and experience when appropriate
Time Requirements:	Quarterly meetings Planning Meeting (Once every three years)

1/25/2021

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE
to the
COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE and CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT
PROGRAMS**

APPOINTEE	REQUIREMENT/CHARACTERISTIC	TERM OF APPOINTMENT
Jennifer Newman 7 East Franklin Street Richmond, VA 23219 Phone: (804) 421-9975 jnewmn@gmail.com	Attorney Attorney for Children	Appointment: July 1, 2019 - 2023
Regina Baker 4914 Radford Avenue Richmond, VA 23230 (804)467-2653 reginaebaker@verizon.net	Attorney Defense Attorney	Appointment: July 1, 2020 - 2024
Ashley Thompson P.O. Box 195, 2938 River Road West Building G. Goochland, VA 23063 Phone: (804) 928-7053 athompson@goochlandva.us	Attorney Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney	Appointment July 1, 2019 - 2023
Shardell Gerald 6060 Jefferson Avenue Newport News, VA 23605 Phone: (804) 926-6480 sgerald@nnva.gov	Local Child Protective Services Child Protective Services Agency - Local	Appointment: July 1, 2019 - 2023

Shannon Hartung
801 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: (804) 726-7554
shannon.hartung1@dss.virginia.gov

State Prog Mgr Child Protective Services
Child Protective Service Agency - State

Ongoing appointment

Vacant

Court-Appointed Special Advocate

Appointment
Vacant

Sandra Karison

Court Improvement Program
Office of the Executive Secretary
Supreme Court of Virginia
100 North Ninth Street
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: (804) 786-9546
skarison@vacourts.gov

Court Improvement Program Director
Knowledgeable in Court Matters

Appointment:
Ongoing

Randy Bonds

5540 Chestnut Ridge Road
Riner, Virginia 24149
540-357-1205
rbonds88@gmail.com

Law Enforcement

Appointment:
July 1, 2020 - 2024

Robin Foster, MD

MCV-VCU Children's Medical Center
P.O. Box 980401
Richmond, VA 23298
Phone: (804) 828-7400
rfoster@vcu.edu

Physician
Health Professional

Appointment
July 1, 2014 - 2018
Reappointment:
July 1, 2018 - 2022

Kimberly Scott-Barbarji
110 Seton Hill Road
Williamsburg, Virginia 23188
Phone: (757) 634-4542
kbarbarji@cox.net

Parent
or Parent Group Representative

Appointment:
July 1, 2020-2024

Molly Dellinger-Wray
VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities
PO Box 843020
Richmond, VA 23284-3020
Phone: (804) 828-6926
mdwray@vcu.edu

Program Director
Individual Experienced in Working With
Children with Disabilities

Appointment:
July 1, 2017 - 2021

Malcolm V. King
Child and Family Program Specialist
VA Department of Behavioral Health and
Developmental Services (DBHDS)
P.O. Box 1797
Richmond, VA 23218-1797
Phone: (804) 371-4604
malcolm.king@dbhds.virginia.gov

Child and Family Program Specialist
Mental Health Professional

Ongoing Appointment

Giselle Pelaez
1900 N. Beauregard Street #200
Alexandria, VA 22331
Phone: (703) 746-6017
giselle@alexandriaskids.org

Mental Health Professional

Appointment:
July 1, 2019 - 2023

Allison Gilbreath

9322 Silverbush Drive
Henrico, VA 23228
Phone: 757-535-5980
Allison.p.gilbreath@gmail.com

Adult Survivor of Child Abuse/Neglect
Representative

Appointment:
July 1, 2015 - 2019
Reappointment:
July 1, 2019 - 2023

Patricia Ann Popp

Clinical Associate Professor
The College of William and Mary
School of Education
P.O. Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187
Phone: (757) 221-7776
pxpopp@wm.edu

State Coordinator

Experienced in Working with
Homeless Children and Youth

Appointment:
Ongoing

The Honorable Jerrauld Jones

150 St. Paul's Boulevard, Suite 800
Norfolk, VA 23510
Phone: (757) 664-4591
jcjones@circuitcourtva.us

Judge

Civil and Criminal Court Judge

Appointment:
July 1, 2019 - 2023

The Honorable Thomas Sotelo

4110 Chain Bridge Road
Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: (703) 352-2519
thomas.sotelo@fairfaxcounty.gov

Judge

Juvenile Court Judge

Appointment:
July 1, 2019 - 2023

Name

Jennifer Newman
Ashley Thompson
Shardell Gerald
Shannon Hartung
Sandra Karison
Robin Foster, MD
Molly Dellinger-Wray
Malcolm V. King
Giselle Pelaez
Allison Gilbreath
Patricia Ann Popp
The Honorable Jerrauld Jones
The Honorable Thomas Sotelo

email

jenewmn@gmail.com
athompson@goochlandva.us
sgerald@nnva.gov
shannon.hartung1@dss.virginia.gov
skarison@vacourts.gov
rfoster@vcu.edu
mdwray@vcu.edu
malcolm.king@dbhds.virginia.gov
giselle@alexandriaskids.org
Allison.p.gilbreath@gmail.com
pxpopp@wm.edu
jcjones@circuitcourtva.us
thomas.sotelo@fairfaxcounty.gov

Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act Programs By-Laws

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this Committee shall be the Advisory Committee to Court-Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act Programs (Advisory Committee).

ARTICLE II

Purpose

Section 1.

The purpose of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program shall be to advise the Criminal Justice Services Board on all matters relating to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program and the needs of the clients served by the program; to make recommendations as it may deem necessary and proper, and to carry out such responsibilities assigned to it under Chapter 1 of Title 9 of the Code of Virginia (Sections 9.1-151 through 9.1-157).

Section 2.

The Advisory Committee shall oversee the Children’s Justice Act Program, and in this capacity serve as the advisory body for the purposes of Virginia’s participation in this federal program for improving the investigation and judicial handling of child abuse pursuant to: Section 107 (c) (d) and (e) of Title I of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) [U.S.C.42, 5106c] as amended by Public Law (P.L) 111-320 “The CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010”, which provides for a Task Force on Children’s Justice.

ARTICLE III

Members

Section 1.

Membership of the Advisory Committee to the Court-Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act Programs is established by Section 9.1-151 of the Code of Virginia and Section 107 (c) of Title 1 of CAPTA.

Section 2.

The Criminal Justice Services Board (CJSB) shall appoint members to the Advisory Committee to the Court-Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act Programs. However, the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Commissioner of the

Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), and the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) or their designee may serve as ex officio members without appointment by the CJSB. Further, an individual experienced in working with homeless children and youth as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act required by the Children's Justice Act may serve as an ex officio member without appointment by the CJSB.

Section 3.

Members of the Advisory Committee shall refrain from voting on any grant or contract which would have a direct financial impact upon the agency or organization which they serve, or the office they hold by virtue of employment, appointment, or election, or which would have a direct financial impact upon the political subdivision in which they serve by virtue of employment, appointment, or election.

Section 4.

If any member's lack of attendance causes concern, DCJS staff may inform the Chairperson, who shall then call the absences to the attention of the member and may recommend to the committee whatever action he or she deems appropriate in the circumstances.

Section 5.

Members of the Advisory Committee may appoint a substitute if they will be unavoidably absent from a meeting. Such appointments should be made in writing to DCJS via e-mail, and received at least 24 hours in advance of each meeting which the members will be unable to attend when practicable. Substitutes attending meetings of the Advisory Committee and its subcommittees may participate in discussion; however, they shall not have voting privileges.

ARTICLE IV

Terms of Office

Section 1.

The Criminal Justice Services Board shall appoint Advisory Committee members for four-year terms of office.

Section 2.

Appointed members shall be limited to serving a maximum of two consecutive terms of office. However, the members representing the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and the McKinney-Vento Act representative, may serve without term limits.

ARTICLE V

Officers

Section 1.

The Advisory Committee shall elect a Chairperson from its membership biennially.

Section 2.

The Advisory Committee shall elect a Vice Chairperson from its membership biennially.

Section 3.

In even-numbered years, the Advisory Committee shall biennially elect officers at the last meeting of the year prior to July 1. Those elected shall take office effective July 1.

Section 4.

In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall preside at meetings. In the event of the absence of both the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, the Chairperson shall appoint a Chairperson Pro Tempore and, if he does not, the quorum of members present at any meeting shall elect a Chairperson Pro Tempore to preside for the meeting.

Section 5.

In the event that the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson does not serve their full term, the Advisory Committee shall elect a new Chairperson or Vice Chairperson from its membership to fill the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VI

Meetings

Section 1.

The Advisory Committee shall schedule four regular meetings a year. The Chairperson shall fix the times and places of the meetings, either on his own motion or upon written request of any five members of the Committee. The annual schedule of meetings shall be set at the last meeting prior to September 1.

Section 2.

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or may be called at the request of any three members.

Section 3.

A majority of the Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum to do business. Decisions may be made by the majority of those present and voting.

Section 4.

Whenever possible and practical, Advisory Committee meetings and such meetings of subcommittees of the Committee as may be necessary shall be scheduled for the same day, or on adjacent days, to save travel and lodging costs.

Section 5.

The Department of Criminal Justice Services staff shall be responsible for the recording and maintenance of minutes and records of the Advisory Committee and its subcommittees and perform such additional duties as shall be assigned by the Committee or its Chairperson. The Department of Criminal Justice Services shall provide staff support to the Advisory Committee.

Section 6.

Any materials or supporting documents associated with the upcoming meeting shall be provided in advance of the meeting when practicable.

ARTICLE VII

Committees

Section 1.

The Chairperson shall appoint such subcommittees as needed to carry out the work of the Advisory Committee.

Section 2.

Subcommittees shall make their reports to the Advisory Committee. Whenever possible and feasible, the written report shall be distributed to the Advisory Committee members prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

Parliamentary Authority

The Rules contained in the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Advisory Committee and its subcommittees in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special order the Advisory Committee may adopt.

ARTICLE IX

Amendments of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Advisory Committee by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that the amendment has been submitted in

writing at the previous regular meeting and provided that the amendment is not in conflict with any applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Revised: July 31, 2020

**Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act Programs
Strategic Planning Meeting**

THREE-YEAR RECOMMENDATIONS DEVELOPMENT

<p>Proposed Three-Year Recommendations</p>	<p>Develop multidisciplinary trainings with a racial equity lens and a focus on trauma-informed care for Virginia professionals and volunteers involved in the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of child maltreatment.</p>	<p>Convene and provide ongoing technical assistance to localities around Virginia to increase implementation of training content.</p>	<p>Identify and disseminate additional resources that are available to support evidence-based and best practices in the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>Track and analyze policies, procedures, and legislation that may have an impact on the criminal justice and child protective systems.</p>	<p>Encourage the implementation, development, and growth of certified CASA programs throughout the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>Support efforts that enhance collaboration among local courts and child welfare stakeholders and consistency of judicial handling of child abuse cases.</p>
<p>Priority Areas</p> <p>A-investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim’s family and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused; B-experimental, model, and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>A/B</p>	<p>A/B</p>

<p>judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure procedural fairness to the accused; and</p> <p>C-reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children, which may include those children involved in reports of child abuse or neglect with a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, from child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.</p>						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Children's Justice Act Program

Program Description

The Children's Justice Act (CJA) requirements are set out in Section 107 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C. 5106c et seq.) as amended by Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-22); the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-198); and the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 as amended (42 U.S.C. 10603 et seq.). The CJA federal program helps states to develop, establish, and operate programs designed to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child. The program also helps to improve the administrative handling of cases of suspected child abuse or neglect related fatalities and the handling of cases of children with disabilities and serious health problems who are victims of child abuse or neglect. CJA funds cannot be used for prevention or treatment.

To be eligible for CJA funds, states must be eligible for the CAPTA Basic State Grant (which, in Virginia, is awarded to the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)) and are required to establish and maintain a multidisciplinary Task Force on children's justice. The Task Force is to be comprised of representatives from selected disciplines involved in handling child abuse and neglect cases. In Virginia the Task Force is the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and CJA Programs. The Task Force makes policy and training recommendations regarding improvements to how child abuse cases are handled. A focus is kept on reducing trauma to the child, while at the same time attempting to maintain fairness for the accused.

Every three years after the initial award, the Task Force is required by legislation to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the state's systems related to the investigative, administrative and judicial handling of child abuse, neglect and exploitation cases, as well as child maltreatment-related fatalities, then make recommendations for improvements to those systems.

Budget

Funds for this program are allocated from the Health and Human Services Children's Bureau. Virginia's Department of Criminal Justice Services' CJA funding history extends back to 1988 and includes the following recent allocations:

- FY12 \$399,950
- FY13 \$401,204
- FY14 \$403,962
- FY15 \$405,293
- FY16 \$406,941
- FY17 \$406,653
- FY18 \$406,653
- FY19 \$406,653

Typical CJA Activities

The Virginia CJA program has supported a variety of innovative approaches to helping improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases such as:

- Developing curricula and conducting training for personnel in law enforcement and child protective services, as well as health and mental health professionals, prosecutors and judges;
- Providing technical assistance, training and support to child advocacy centers, and local multidisciplinary teams to serve child victims and their families in order to minimize trauma;
- Supporting the enactment of laws to improve systems response, including allowing the admission of indirect testimony of children into evidence, making the courtroom setting less intimidating to children, increasing the penalties for sexual offenses against children, requiring mandatory sentencing, shortening the trial process, and permitting victims to make statements prior to sentencing;
- Offering forensic interviewing training to child abuse professionals who provide investigative interviewing of children and present child maltreatment cases in court;
- Providing training to judges, guardians *ad litem*, and CASA volunteers and program staff, who specialize in child maltreatment cases;
- Developing procedures and protocols for joint investigations;
- Providing conferences on Improving Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse;
- Providing funding for national speakers at the annual Crimes Against Children Conference offered by Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia; and
- Supporting child abuse trial advocacy training for new prosecutors.

**Excerpt from CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT (CAPTA)
As Amended by
By P.L. 114-22 and P.L. 114-198**

CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT Section

Sec. 107. GRANTS TO STATES FOR PROGRAMS RELATING TO INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES. [42 U.S.C. 5106c]

a. GRANTS TO STATES.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Attorney General, is authorized to make grants to the States for the purpose of assisting States in developing, establishing, and operating programs designed to improve— the assessment and investigation of suspected child abuse and neglect cases, including cases of suspected child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child and the child's family; the assessment and investigation of cases of suspected child abuse-related fatalities and suspected child neglect-related fatalities; the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation; and the assessment and investigation of cases involving children with disabilities or serious health-related problems who are suspected victims of child abuse or neglect.

b. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—In order for a State to qualify for assistance under this section, such State shall—

1. fulfill the requirements of section 106(b) [of this title];
2. establish a task force as provided in subsection (c) [of this section];
3. fulfill the requirements of subsection (d) [of this section];
4. submit annually an application to the Secretary at such time and containing such information and assurances as the Secretary considers necessary, including an assurance that the State will—
 - A. make such reports to the Secretary as may reasonably be required; and
 - B. maintain and provide access to records relating to activities under subsections (a) and (b) of this section; and
5. submit annually to the Secretary a report on the manner in which assistance received under this program was expended throughout the State, with particular attention focused on the areas described in paragraphs (1) through (3) of subsection (a) of this section.

c. STATE TASK FORCES.—

1. GENERAL RULE.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a State requesting assistance under this section shall establish or designate, and maintain, a State multidisciplinary task force on children's justice (hereinafter referred to as "State task force") composed of professionals with knowledge and experience relating to the criminal justice system and issues of child physical abuse, child neglect, child sexual abuse and exploitation, and child maltreatment related fatalities. The State task force shall include—
 - A. individuals representing the law enforcement community;
 - B. judges and attorneys involved in both civil and criminal court proceedings related to child abuse and neglect (including individuals involved with the defense as well as the prosecution of such cases);
 - C. child advocates, including both attorneys for children and, where such programs are in operation, court appointed special advocates;
 - D. health and mental health professionals;
 - E. individuals representing child protective service agencies;
 - F. individuals experienced in working with children with disabilities;

- G. parents;
- H. representatives of parents' groups;
- I. adult former victims of child abuse and or neglect; and
- J. individuals experienced in working with homeless children and youths (as defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)).

2. EXISTING TASK FORCE.—As determined by the Secretary, a State commission or task force established after January 1, 1983, with substantially comparable membership and functions, may be considered the State task force for purposes of this subsection.

d. STATE TASK FORCE STUDY.—Before a State receives assistance under this section, and at three year intervals thereafter, the State task force shall comprehensively—

1. review and evaluate State investigative, administrative, and both civil and criminal judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal; and
2. make policy and training recommendations in each of the categories described in subsection (e) of this section. The task force may make such other comments and recommendations as are considered relevant and useful.

e. ADOPTION OF STATE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS.—

1. GENERAL RULE.—Subject to the provisions of paragraph (2), before a State receives assistance under this section, a State shall adopt recommendations of the State task force in each of the following categories—

- A. investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner that reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and that also ensures procedural fairness to the accused;
- B. experimental, model, and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques that may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and that also ensure procedural fairness to the accused; and
- C. reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children, which may include those children involved in reports of child abuse or neglect with a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, from child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.

2. EXEMPTION.—As determined by the Secretary, a State shall be considered to be in fulfillment of the requirements of this subsection if—

- A. the State adopts an alternative to the recommendations of the State task force, which carries out the purpose of this section, in each of the categories under paragraph (1) for which the State task force's recommendations are not adopted; or

B.the State is making substantial progress toward adopting recommendations of the State task force or a comparable alternative to such recommendations.

f.FUNDS AVAILABLE.—For grants under this section, the Secretary shall use the amount authorized by section 10603a of this title (42 U.S.C. 10603a).

VIRGINIA COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAMS

What CASA Does

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers are appointed by juvenile court judges to cases involving child abuse and neglect. These specially trained citizen volunteers provide a consistent presence and a voice in court for children, helping to ensure the best possible outcome for child victims of abuse and neglect. CASA volunteers provide victims with a fighting chance to thrive during one of the most vulnerable times in their young lives by giving them a voice, ending the cycle of violence and working to place them in safe, permanent homes.

FY19 CASA PROGRAM STATISTICS

- There are 27 operational Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Programs in Virginia
- 4,040 children received advocacy services
- 1,373 citizen volunteers active on cases
- 143,387 volunteer advocacy hours were contributed valued at \$3,943,143



CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

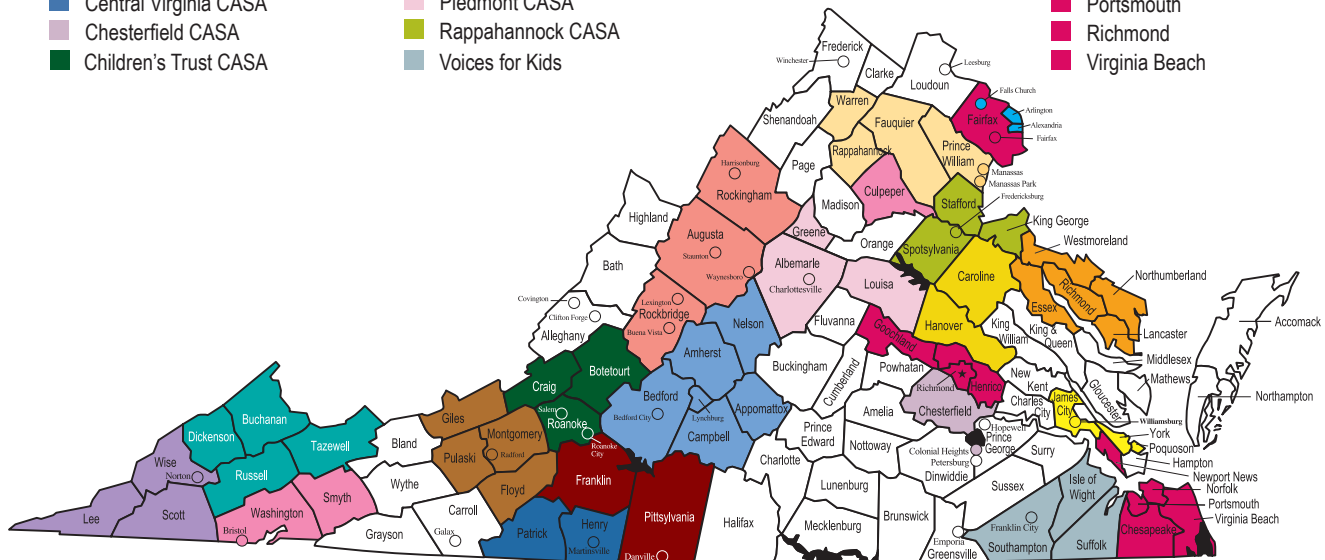
Programs in Virginia

Multi-Jurisdictional Programs

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 28th Judicial District | Colonial CASA |
| 29th Judicial District | FOCUS on Youth CASA |
| Alexandria/Arlington CASA | Franklin County |
| CASA Child Intervention Services | Hanover CASA |
| CASA for Children | LPOY CASA |
| CASA of the New River Valley | Northern Neck CASA |
| Central Virginia CASA | Piedmont CASA |
| Chesterfield CASA | Rappahannock CASA |
| Children's Trust CASA | Voices for Kids |

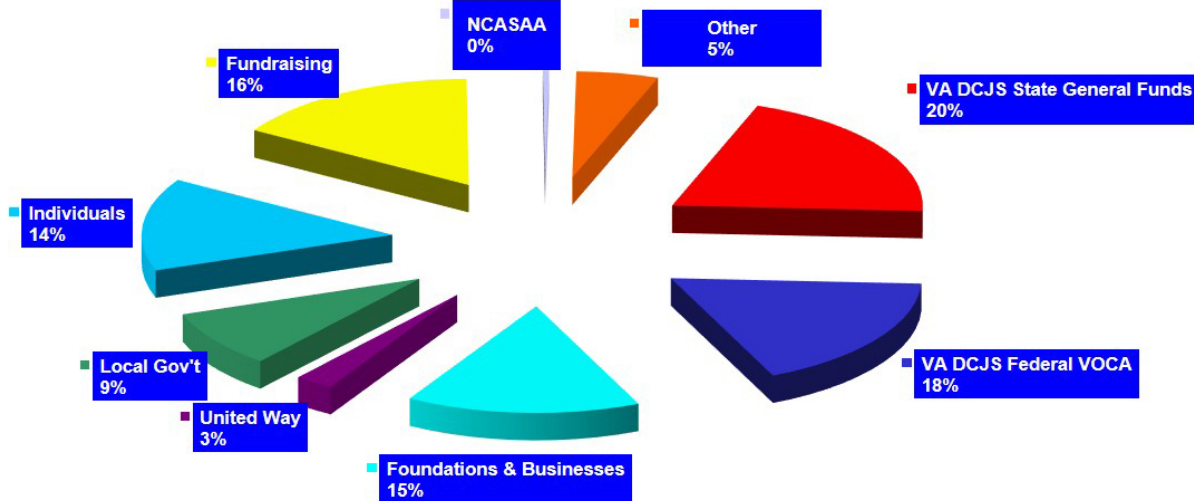
Single Jurisdiction Programs

- Chesapeake
- Fairfax
- Goochland
- Henrico
- Newport News
- Norfolk
- Portsmouth
- Richmond
- Virginia Beach



VIRGINIA CASA PROGRAMS HAVE DIVERSE FUNDING

2018–2019 Total Income for CASA Programs = \$7,291,337



SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Abuse and Neglect in Virginia in FY19

- 42,947 children involved in Child Protective Services Family Assessments
- 6,413 abused and neglected children in founded Child Protective Services Investigations
- 37 children died as a result of abuse or neglect
- 5,498 children in foster care
- 35% of the children in Virginia's foster care system are between the ages of 13 and 19

Young People Aging Out of Foster Care

Youth aging out of the foster care system face multiple challenges and their outcomes are poor. CASA programs are dedicated to improving outcomes for older youth. Research shows that, when compared with their peers, young people aging out of care are, on average:

- Less likely to have a high school diploma
- Less likely to be pursuing higher education
- More likely to experience unemployment
- Less likely to be earning a living wage
- More likely to experience homelessness
- More likely to have had a child without being married
- More likely to become involved with the criminal justice system

(Barth, 1990; Cook, 1991; Courtney & Barth, 1996; Courtney & Piliavin, 1995, 1998; McDonald, Allen, Westerfelt & Piliavin, 1996)

CASA Volunteers Make an Impact in Virginia

- 83% of CASA volunteer recommendations are accepted and incorporated into judicial court orders.

CASA is Economical

In Virginia in FY19, it cost:

- \$1,805 to provide CASA advocacy services to one child
- \$187,179 to serve one child in the direct care of Virginia's Department of Juvenile Justice.
- \$5,652 to \$8,400 to provide basic foster care to one child
- An average of \$26,974 to serve one child in Treatment Foster Care and \$29,894 for Residential Treatment

For questions regarding the administration of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program and funding in Virginia, please contact: Melissa O'Neill • 804.786.6428 • melissa.o'neill@dcs.virginia.gov



Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Article 5 – Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA)

§ 9.1-151. Court-Appointed Special Advocate Program; appointment of advisory committee.

- A. There is established a Court-Appointed Special Advocate Program (the Program) that shall be administered by the Department*. The Program shall provide services in accordance with this article to children who are subjects of judicial proceedings (i) involving allegations that the child is abused, neglected, in need of services, or in need of supervision or (ii) for the restoration of parental rights pursuant to § 16.1-283.2 and for whom the juvenile and domestic relations district court judge determines such services are appropriate. Court-Appointed Special Advocate volunteer appointments may continue for youth 18 years of age and older who are in foster care if the court has retained jurisdiction pursuant to § 16.1-242 and the juvenile and domestic relations district court judge determines such services are appropriate. The Department shall adopt regulations necessary and appropriate for the administration of the Program.
- B. The Board shall appoint an Advisory Committee to the Court-Appointed Special Advocate Program, consisting of 15 members, one of whom shall be a judge of the juvenile and domestic relations district court or circuit court, knowledgeable of court matters, child welfare, and juvenile justice issues and representative of both state and local interests. The duties of the Advisory Committee shall be to advise the Board on all matters relating to the Program and the needs of the clients served by the Program, and to make such recommendations as it may deem desirable.

§ 9.1-152. Local court-appointed special advocate programs; powers and duties.

- A. The Department shall provide a portion of any funding appropriated for this purpose to applicants seeking to establish and operate a local court-appointed special advocate program in their respective judicial districts. Only local programs operated in accordance with this article shall be eligible to receive state funds.
- B. Local programs may be established and operated by local boards created for this purpose. Local boards shall ensure conformance to regulations adopted by the Board and may:
1. Solicit and accept financial support from public and private sources.
 2. Oversee the financial and program management of the local court-appointed special advocate program.
 3. Employ and supervise a director who shall serve as a professional liaison to personnel of the court and agencies serving children.
 4. Employ such staff as is necessary to the operation of the program.

* The “Department” refers to the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

§ 9.1-153. Volunteer court-appointed special advocates; powers and duties; assignment; qualifications; training.

- A. Services in each local court-appointed special advocate program shall be provided by volunteer court-appointed special advocates, hereinafter referred to as advocates. The advocate's duties shall include:
1. Investigating the case to which he is assigned to provide independent factual information to the court.
 2. Submitting to the court of a written report of his investigation in compliance with the provisions of § [16.1-274](#). The report may, upon request of the court, include recommendations as to the child's welfare.
 3. Monitoring the case to which he is assigned to ensure compliance with the court's orders.
 4. Assisting any appointed guardian ad litem to represent the child in providing effective representation of the child's needs and best interests.
 5. Reporting a suspected abused or neglected child pursuant to § [63.2-1509](#).
- B. The advocate is not a party to the case to which he is assigned and shall not call witnesses or examine witnesses. The advocate shall not, with respect to the case to which he is assigned, provide legal counsel or advice to any person, appear as counsel in court or in proceedings which are part of the judicial process, or engage in the unauthorized practice of law. The advocate may testify if called as a witness.
- C. The program director shall assign an advocate to a child when requested to do so by the judge of the juvenile and domestic relations district court having jurisdiction over the proceedings. The advocate shall continue his association with each case to which he is assigned until relieved of his duties by the court or by the program director.
- D. The Department shall adopt regulations governing the qualifications of advocates who for purposes of administering this subsection shall be deemed to be criminal justice employees. The regulations shall require that an advocate be at least twenty-one years of age and that the program director shall obtain with the approval of the court (i) a copy of his criminal history record or certification that no conviction data are maintained on him and (ii) a copy of information from the central registry maintained pursuant to § [63.2-1515](#) on any investigation of child abuse or neglect undertaken on him or certification that no such record is maintained on him. Advocates selected prior to the adoption of regulations governing qualifications shall meet the minimum requirements set forth in this article.
- E. An advocate shall have no associations which create a conflict of interests or the appearance of such a conflict with his duties as an advocate. No advocate shall be assigned to a case of a child whose family has a professional or personal relationship with the advocate. Questions concerning conflicts of interests shall be determined in accordance with regulations adopted by the Department.

F. No applicant shall be assigned as an advocate until successful completion of a program of training required by regulations. The Department shall set standards for both basic and ongoing training.

§ 9.1-154. Immunity.

No staff of or volunteers participating in a program, whether or not compensated, shall be subject to personal liability while acting within the scope of their duties, except for gross negligence or intentional misconduct.

§ 9.1-155. Notice of hearings and proceedings.

The provision of § 16.1-264 regarding notice to parties shall apply to ensure that an advocate is notified of hearings and other proceedings concerning the case to which he is assigned.

§ 9.1-156. Inspection and copying of records by advocate; confidentiality of records.

- A. Upon presentation by the advocate of the order of his appointment and upon specific court order, any state or local agency, department, authority, or institution, and any hospital, school, physician, or other health or mental health care provider shall permit the advocate to inspect and copy, without the consent of the child or his parents, any records relating to the child involved in the case. Upon the advocate presenting to the mental health provider the order of the advocate's appointment and, upon specific court order, in lieu of the advocate inspecting and copying any related records of the child involved, the mental health care provider shall be available within seventy-two hours to conduct for the advocate a review and an interpretation of the child's treatment records which are specifically related to the investigation.
- B. An advocate shall not disclose the contents of any document or record to which he becomes privy, which is otherwise confidential pursuant to the provisions of this *Code*, except upon order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

§ 9.1-157. Cooperation of state and local entities.

All state and local departments, agencies, authorities, and institutions shall cooperate with the Department and with each local court-appointed special advocate program to facilitate its implementation of the Program.

§§ 9.1-158 through 9.1-160. Repealed.

Filing of CASA Reports

§ [16.1-274](#). Time for filing of reports; copies furnished to attorneys; amended reports; fees.

- A. Whenever any court directs an investigation pursuant to subsection A of § [16.1-237](#), § [16.1-273](#), or § [9.1-153](#), or an evaluation pursuant to § [16.1-278.5](#), the probation officer, court-appointed special advocate, or other agency conducting such investigation shall file such report with the clerk of the court directing the investigation. The clerk shall furnish a copy of such report to all attorneys representing parties in the matter before the court no later than 72 hours, and in cases of child custody, 15 days, prior to the time set by the court for hearing the matter. If such probation officer or other agency discovers additional information or a change in circumstance after the filing of the report, an amended report shall be filed forthwith and a copy sent to each person who received a copy of the original report. Whenever such a report is not filed or an amended report is filed, the court shall grant such continuance of the proceedings as justice requires. All attorneys receiving such report or amended report shall return such to the clerk upon the conclusion of the hearing and shall not make copies of such report or amended report or any portion thereof. However, the chief judge of each juvenile and domestic relations district court may provide for an alternative means of copying and distributing reports or amended reports filed pursuant to § [9.1-153](#).



Regulations Relating to the Court-Appointed Special Advocate Program



**Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
1100 Bank Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
804-786-6428**

Virginia Administrative Code

Effective Date – October 29, 2008

CHAPTER 160 REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM (CASA)

PART I: General Definitions

6VAC20-160-10. Definitions.

The following words and terms when used in this chapter shall apply unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Advisory council” means a locally appointed body with a specific purpose to advise the governing board of a local CASA program.

“CASA” means court-appointed special advocate.

“CASA program” means any locally operated court-appointed special advocate program which utilizes court-appointed volunteers to assist in judicial proceedings involving allegations that a child is abused, neglected, in need of services, or in need of supervision and for whom a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court judge determines such services are appropriate.

“Case” means a child for whom a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court judge has entered an order of appointment for a CASA volunteer.

“DCJS” means the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

“Director” means the director or coordinator of a local CASA program responsible for the day-to-day operations of the local CASA program.

“Governing board” means the oversight body responsible for the local CASA program. This may be a city council, county board of supervisors or the board of directors of a nonprofit organization.

“Staff advocate” means an employee of the CASA program who serves, in lieu of a CASA volunteer, as the assigned advocate for a case.

“Volunteer” means a court-appointed special advocate.

PART II: Program Administration

6VAC20-160-20. CASA program governance.

- A. A CASA program shall have a governing board responsible for overseeing the program's operations.
- B. A governing board may choose to establish an advisory council to support the CASA program operations. The governing board shall articulate in writing a clearly defined purpose for the advisory council, criteria for selection of members, a defined relationship between the council and the CASA program staff and a clear process for reporting to the governing board.
- C. If the governing board is not a city council or county board of supervisors, the composition of a local CASA governing board and any established advisory council should include representatives of each geographic area served by the program. Members should represent diverse cultures, professional disciplines, public and private sectors, and have knowledge of or an interest in matters including, but not limited to, the courts, child welfare and juvenile justice.
- D. All new governing board members and advisory council members shall receive an orientation within six months of their selection. The orientation shall include education about Virginia's CASA programs' mission, goals and objectives with emphasis on governing board member and advisory council roles, fiduciary responsibilities and fundraising.

6VAC20-160-30. Recordkeeping and monitoring.

- 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.

6VAC20-160-40. Program and personnel policies.

- A. CASA programs shall be in compliance with Standards for National CASA Association (NCASAA) Member Programs.
- B. CASA programs shall ensure that an attorney is available for CASA directors and governing boards to provide legal consultation in matters pertaining to administration of the programs.
- C. CASA program employees shall not concurrently supervise children in need of services, children in need of supervision, or juvenile offender cases, either for the courts or any child serving agencies.

- D. CASA programs shall write policies on the following and make those written policies available to the respective courts:
1. The maximum caseload to which a volunteer may be assigned at any one time. If that number is larger than two children or two sibling groups, a rationale must be submitted to and approved by DCJS.
 2. Assignment of CASA staff as an advocate. In the event a CASA supervisor or staff member is required to serve as an advocate, that staff member will serve no more than two children or two sibling groups. If that number is larger than two children or two sibling groups, a rationale must be submitted to and approved by DCJS.
 3. The maximum number of volunteers to be supervised by each staff person. The staff-to-volunteer ratio calculated and reported each quarter shall not exceed one full-time equivalent staff to 30 volunteers who are assigned to active cases. This ratio is reduced according to the number of hours the volunteer supervisor may be assigned to administrative or other responsibilities. A request shall be submitted to DCJS for approval should that ratio exceed 1:30.
 4. The review, investigation and handling of any complaints that may be received concerning CASA volunteers, including procedures for the removal of CASA volunteers should dismissal become necessary.
 5. The specific factors to be used by the CASA program to accept and prioritize cases for assignment to CASA volunteers.
 6. The confidentiality of the records and information to which CASA volunteers will have access, and training volunteers on the importance of confidentiality.
 7. The objectives, standards, and conduct for CASA volunteers and the procedures that the CASA program will use to evaluate the performance of its volunteers in order to ensure that volunteers are meeting CASA's objectives and standards of conduct.
 8. The CASA volunteers' responsibility to report incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect.
 9. Concerning CASA investigations, CASA's role and responsibility in assisting the guardian ad litem, and monitoring court order compliance.
 10. Compliance with federal laws, including Equal Opportunity Employment, Drug-Free Workplace, Smoke-Free Workplace, and political activity statements.
- E. CASA programs shall employ staff capable of managing effective and efficient program operations. The following job descriptions provide for essential CASA program management:
1. **Director.** The director is responsible for accomplishing organizational goals and all managerial functions. This staff position requires a degree or equivalent experience in child welfare, public administration, counseling, human services, juvenile justice or law. The person should have an understanding of and experience with community organization and volunteer program management. Generally the duties and responsibilities of the director are as follows:

- a. Conduct or oversee the recruitment, screening, training, supervision and evaluation of the program volunteers and staff;
 - b. Develop and maintain procedures for case recordkeeping; supervise staff and volunteers in completing recordkeeping tasks;
 - c. Serve as a liaison to the court, the local governing board, and if applicable, advisory council, to local agencies serving children, to DCJS, to the Virginia CASA Network, and to the National CASA Association;
 - d. Plan for and manage program growth, development and evaluation, including special projects, budgets, annual workplans, and analysis of trends in program services;
 - e. Represent the program to networks of service providers and community coalitions dealing with child welfare issues; and
 - f. Supervise program operations including financial management, risk management, and resource development.
2. **Program/Volunteer Coordinator.** Depending on program size, it may be necessary to designate a staff person having knowledge of, or willingness to learn about, court matters, child welfare and juvenile justice issues who will focus on volunteer recruitment, screening, training, case assignment, and supervision. Generally, the duties and responsibilities of the program/volunteer coordinator are as follows:
- a. Develop and distribute volunteer recruitment materials, and conduct presentations on the CASA program for the purpose of recruiting volunteers and increasing community awareness;
 - b. Screen volunteer applications and conduct interviews to determine the suitability of the applicant for the CASA program;
 - c. Arrange training for CASA volunteers;
 - d. Recommend trained volunteers for acceptance into the CASA program;
 - e. Assign cases and supervise volunteers;
 - f. Plan and implement volunteer recognition events;
 - g. Evaluate effectiveness of volunteer recruitment, training, and case assignment; and
 - h. Conduct annual written evaluations of each CASA volunteer.
- F. CASA programs are responsible for disseminating CASA reports according to § 16.1-274 of the *Code of Virginia*.

Part III: Volunteer Administration

6VAC20-160-50. Case assignment.

- A. The CASA director shall be responsible for all decisions pertaining to the assignment or removal of specific volunteers to specific cases.
- B. A CASA volunteer shall not be assigned to a case involving any professional connection or close personal relationship with the child client or family.

6VAC20-160-60. CASA volunteer duties and responsibilities.

- A. Volunteers shall follow specific policies regarding the nature of assistance:
 - 1. Provided to the guardian ad litem;
 - 2. Relating to their investigative role;
 - 3. Relating to monitoring compliance with court orders; and
 - 4. Relating to the submission to the court of written reports.
- B. The CASA volunteer's investigation involves fact-finding via interviews, professional reports, observation of family and social interactions, and observation of the child's environment.
- C. The CASA volunteer's investigation involves the observation of the child's circumstances. CASA volunteers may conduct interviews of children; however, CASA volunteers are specifically prohibited from questioning or inquiring of the child information regarding a precipitating incident or allegation involving child abuse and neglect.
- D. The CASA volunteer should encourage interdisciplinary coordination and cooperation, whenever possible, in an effort to develop a plan of action in conjunction with other local agencies and professionals.

6VAC20-160-70. Confidentiality.

- A. All CASA volunteers shall follow specific policies regarding the following:
 - 1. Reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, and the procedure for making such reports;
 - 2. Confidentiality of records and information; and
 - 3. Contacting, interviewing and responding to persons involved in the case.
- B. To the extent permitted by state and federal confidentiality laws, CASA volunteers should share information gathered with other involved professionals whenever possible and practicable.

6VAC20-160-80. Code of ethics.

- A. 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.
- B. CASA volunteers should not become inappropriately involved in the case by providing direct service delivery to any parties that could (i) lead to conflict of interest or liability or (ii) cause a child or family to become dependent on the CASA volunteer for services that should be provided by other agencies or organizations.

Part IV: Qualifications of Volunteers

6VAC20-160-90. Qualifications.

- A. CASA volunteers shall be at least 21 years of age.
- B. CASA volunteers shall have the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, to prepare court reports and to provide testimony.
- C. CASA volunteers shall possess mature judgment, a high degree of responsibility and sufficient time to assist in advocating for the best interests of the child.
- D. CASA volunteers shall be able to relate to persons of different cultures, ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status.

6VAC20-160-100. Screening.

- A. Prior to being sworn in, CASA volunteers shall successfully complete screening procedures, which, at a minimum, shall include a written application and personal interview.
- B. Pursuant to § 9.1-153 of the *Code of Virginia*, the director shall obtain, with the approval of the court, a copy of each applicant's criminal history record or certification that no conviction data is maintained on him, in accordance with § 19.2-389 of the *Code of Virginia*; a copy of information from the central registry, maintained pursuant to § 63.2-1515 of the *Code of Virginia*, on any investigation of child abuse or neglect undertaken on him or certification that no such record is maintained on him. If the volunteer applicant has lived in another state within the past five years, the CASA program director shall also obtain a copy of his criminal history record and a copy of information from the central registry from that area. An applicant shall be rejected if he refuses to sign a release of information for appropriate law-enforcement checks.

- C. The CASA program shall contact and obtain a response from three references provided by the CASA volunteer. References will speak to the character, judgment and suitability for the position of CASA volunteer.
- D. Before the volunteer is sworn in, the director shall determine that the CASA volunteer is qualified under 6VAC20-160-90 and 6VAC20-160-120.
- E. CASA volunteers shall successfully complete required training as set forth in 6VAC20-160-120.

6VAC20-160-110. [Redesignated]

Part V: Training Guidelines for Volunteers

6VAC20-160-120. Training.

- A. To ensure that volunteers are fully prepared to perform their role as a CASA volunteer and to assume the accompanying responsibilities, each volunteer shall participate in a minimum of 30 hours of training prior to being accepted as a CASA volunteer and assigned cases. Credit may be given towards the 30 hours of training for any previous training obtained by a volunteer prior to application to a local CASA program if that program uses the NCASAA Training Curriculum and documentation of completion of the training is provided.
- B. The initial training curriculum for a CASA volunteer should, at a minimum, include:
 - 1. The delineation of the roles and responsibilities of a CASA volunteer focusing on the rationale for family preservation/permanency planning, discussion of the basic principles of advocacy, distinction between the appropriate and inappropriate activities for a CASA volunteer, level of commitment required of a CASA volunteer involved in a case and the performance expectations, review of the case assignment process and procedures, differentiation between the role of the CASA volunteer and other child welfare system personnel, and a comprehensive list of resources available and when and how to utilize these resources;
 - 2. The obligation of confidentiality in CASA-related matters, proper recordkeeping techniques, and the scope of state and federal statutes on the confidentiality of records;
 - 3. The dynamics of cultural diversity and the development of cultural sensitivity by the CASA volunteer;
 - 4. The nature of child abuse and neglect, the impact of drugs and alcohol on the incidence of abuse, identification of the family conditions and patterns which lead to and perpetuate abuse and neglect, and instruction on how local departments of social services respond to and assess reports of abuse and neglect;
 - 5. The general principles and concepts of child and family development;

6. Concepts of separation and loss, the role of foster care and permanency planning in the context of 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 to the home;
 7. Basic communication and interview skills, with guidelines for dealing with sensitive issues and the interaction between the CASA volunteer and parties to a case, and practice in conducting interviews and writing reports;
 8. The juvenile court process which should include an outline of the various types of court proceedings, what transpires at each proceeding, the CASA volunteer's role, who to contact when there is a question about the court process, a glossary of legal terminology, how to prepare for a hearing, and how to prepare a report for the court;
 9. The development of advocacy skills, such as negotiation and conflict management, and how they may be used by the CASA volunteer to improve the conditions for a child; and
 10. The development of a general understanding of the codes of ethics of other professionals with whom the CASA volunteer will be working.
- C. The initial training program shall provide an opportunity for the volunteer to observe actual court proceedings similar to those in which he would be involved as a CASA volunteer. This observation is above and beyond the hours included in the initial training.
- D. CASA volunteers in training should be provided an opportunity to visit community agencies and institutions relevant to their work as a volunteer.
- E. The CASA program shall provide volunteers in training with the following written materials:
1. Copies of pertinent laws, regulations, and policies;
 2. A statement of commitment form clearly stating the minimum expectations of the volunteer once trained; and
 3. A training manual which is easy to update and revise.
- F. Trainers and faculty for the initial training program and any ongoing training or continuing education shall be persons with substantial knowledge, training and experience in the subject matter which they present and should also be competent in the provision of technical training to lay persons.
- G. CASA program staff and others responsible for the initial training program should be attentive to the participation and progress of each trainee and be able to objectively evaluate his abilities according to criteria developed by the CASA program for that purpose. CASA directors should use the Comprehensive Training Curriculum for CASA from the NCASAA and training curricula developed within the state as a reference in designing and developing their training program.
- H. The CASA program shall make available a minimum of 12 hours of in-service training annually for volunteers who are accepted into the program. These in-service programs should

be designed and presented to maintain and improve the volunteer's level of knowledge and skill. Special attention shall be given to informing volunteers of changes in the law, local court procedures, the practices of other agencies involved, CASA program policies and developments in the fields of child development, child abuse and child advocacy.

- I. CASA volunteers shall complete 12 hours of continuing education annually as approved by the director. This continuing education may be in-service programs provided directly by the CASA program, or in conjunction with another agency or agencies, or may be through an outside agency, through print or electronic media, or from other sources. All training not conducted or sponsored by the CASA program must be reviewed and approved by the CASA director for its suitability for the continuing education of CASA volunteers, and the amount of continuing education credit that is appropriate.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

1. **Why must the Commonwealth of Virginia establish Citizen Review Panels?** Answer: Under federal law, each state, in order to receive funding under the state CAPTA plan, must establish Citizen Review Panels.
2. **What is a Citizen Review Panel?** Answer: A Citizen Review Panel is an advisory group composed of volunteer members who are broadly representative of the community, and include individuals with expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. This group will meet quarterly to evaluate the child protective services programs in Virginia, and to make suggestions for changes.
3. **What is the role of the Citizen Review Panels?** Answer: The scope of the responsibility of a Citizen Review Panel is to examine child protective services' policies and procedures, and where appropriate, specific child protective services cases in order to evaluate the following:
 - CPS program's compliance with the State Plan;
 - Coordination with Title IV-E foster care and adoption programs;
 - Review of child fatalities and near fatalities;
 - Other criteria the panel considers important to the CPS program.
4. **What are some benefits of Citizen Review Panels?** Answer: Some possible benefits include the following:
 - Provide valuable insights that those working within the system may miss;
 - Provide outside validation of the efforts and successes of the system and recognition for staff within the system;
 - Increase community understanding, ownership, and investment in child protection;
 - Help involve the broader community to work with the CPS system to protect children;
 - Advocate for needed resources to achieve the goals of the CPS system.
5. **How much time will this require?** Answer: Each panel must meet at least quarterly. Issues to be discussed could be incorporated into the agenda of your existing meetings.

Virginia's Child and Family Services Plan

Mission Statement:

To promote self-reliance and protection for Virginians through community-based services.

Families, neighborhoods, service providers, and government collaborate to develop and implement a child and family service system that:

- Keeps children and family members safe at all times;
- Builds on the resources and strengths of families;
- Offers a continuum of services to children and families that is family-focused, community-based, easily accessible, and respectful of cultural and community characteristics; and
- Links the child and family continuum of services to other community child and family services and service delivery systems, and the courts, to ensure that families have access to comprehensive services to meet their individual needs.

Child Protective Services Section - Objectives

1. To improve the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of child abuse and neglect.
2. To improve the child protective system in the Commonwealth of Virginia by a) creating and improving the use of multidisciplinary and interagency protocols to enhance investigations; and b) improving legal preparation and representation.
3. To improve case management and delivery of services provided to children and their families.
4. To enhance the general child protective system by improving risk and safety assessment tools and protocols, automation systems that support the program and track reports of child abuse and neglect from intake through final disposition and information referral systems.
5. To develop and facilitate training protocols for individuals mandated to report child abuse or neglect.
6. To develop, strengthen, and support child abuse and neglect prevention, treatment, and research programs in the public and private sectors.
7. To develop and enhance the capacity of community-based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

December 20, 2019

Melissa O'Neill
CASA/CJA Citizen Review Panel Coordinator
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
1100 Bank Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Ms. O'Neill:

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) commends the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program and Children's Justice Act Committee for their work as an active Citizen Review Panel (CRP) as part of Virginia's Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan. The evaluation of our Child Protective Service Program by our Citizen Review Panels is crucial to the improvement of our program for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

We have reviewed your recommendations and thank you for your input. We offer the following responses to your recommendations:

Child Trafficking

VDSS developed program guidance on the child welfare system's new response track to all complaints involving the human trafficking of a child in order to comply with legislation passed during the 2019 Session of the General Assembly. VDSS provided five virtual training sessions on the new legislation and program guidance in June of 2019 to approximately 500 participants. Training was provided to ensure local departments of social services (LDSS) were prepared for implementation on July 1, 2019. VDSS will also be adding a second module to CWSE4000: Identifying Sex Trafficking in Child Welfare eLearning course available on the public website. Additionally, VDSS made regulatory changes to 22VAC40-705 to comply with the new legislation passed regarding the child welfare system's response to the trafficking of children in the Commonwealth. VDSS also made a number of system enhancements to their child welfare information system, OASIS, in order to improve the system's ability to capture data on the prevalence of child trafficking. Additionally, VDSS is participating in the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative Continuous Quality Improvement Academy to improve our ability to provide regional technical assistance to local departments and support the integration of the CQI process and data-driven management concepts into their daily operations. Furthermore, in June of 2019, VDSS convened a child trafficking workgroup comprised of stakeholders from the public and private sectors to improve Virginia's

response to the human trafficking of children and to expand the availability of services. The workgroup is now a subcommittee of the Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinating Committee and co-facilitated by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice. The workgroup has been meeting bi-monthly.

State Hotline

Over the course of the last year, VDSS Staff and a temporary part-time Call-Center Project Manager identified a number of challenges affecting the functionality and the wait times of the State Hotline. The challenges identified included: training of staff, adequate staffing during peak hours, utility of telephonic equipment, and increased call volume. Since that time, VDSS has taken a number of steps to improve wait times and the functionality of the State Hotline including:

- Development of a new training course, CWS6000 State Hotline Specialist New Worker Training, designed to teach the specifics of the daily operations of the State Hotline and shift responsibilities of Hotline Specialists as well as the importance of providing professional and timely customer service to all callers.
- Adjustment to staff work schedules to meet the increase in call volumes during peak hours. All hotline staff are now required to work weekdays and weekends to ensure there are enough Hotline Specialists available during peak hours.
- Update internal operational policies and protocols to enhance the efficiency of Hotline Specialists, i.e., eliminating CPS history searches for LDSS during standard business hours.
- Prioritization of calls from LDSS staff and Law Enforcement in the call queue to reduce wait times for first responders.
- Continued development of the Mandated Reporter website, called VaCPS, which will allow mandated reporters to submit reports of child maltreatment electronically. The development of VaCPS will expedite the submission of reports and decrease the wait time for citizens and other professionals calling the State Hotline.

VDSS will continue to monitor the functionality and the wait times of the Hotline and continue to identify opportunities for improvement and implement strategies that ensure a professional and prompt response to all reporters.

Family First Prevention Services Act

VDSS is leading Virginia's efforts to develop a robust statewide Prevention Program as part of the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Currently, VDSS provides funding to communities through federal grants for primary and secondary prevention efforts. Family First represents the first federal funding stream dedicated to tertiary and some secondary prevention. All services provided under Family First must be evidenced-based mental health, substance use disorder, or in-home skill-based parenting services and included in the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse. Additionally, in June of 2019, VDSS convened a workgroup comprised of staff from LDSS to advise VDSS on the development of revised Prevention practice guidance. The workgroup has been meeting monthly to identify best practice prevention strategies that could be implemented uniformly across the State and included in practice guidance. Statewide implementation of Family First is expected to occur in July 2020.

Child Fatality Investigations

VDSS agrees standardization and uniformity in the response by our LDSS to child maltreatment fatalities and near-fatalities is needed and has identified a number of strategies to improve our practice in this area:

- Creation of a decision tree tool to be used by the LDSS to assist with validity determination of reports of child maltreatment fatalities or near-fatalities. The new decision tree tool will be developed and implemented in 2020.
- Revision and publication of program guidance on child fatalities in 2020 that emphasizes increased collaboration and strengthens the investigative protocol for the investigation of child maltreatment deaths.
- Ongoing review of each fatality or near-fatality reported to Virginia's child welfare system by the Child Fatality Specialist at VDSS and the CPS Regional Consultant who provide technical assistance as needed to the LDSS and aid with validity determination, investigative process, and disposition.
- Publication of two annual statistical reports *Preliminary Report on Child Death Investigations* and *Child Fatality Review Teams Annual Report*. Both reports will be published in 2020.
- Creation of a sample multi-disciplinary Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between local departments of social services and law enforcement that emphasizes collaboration, information sharing, and the importance of joint investigations. Completion expected in 2020.

Substance-Exposed Infants

VDSS continues to partner with key and community stakeholders, including Department of Medical Assistance Services, Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services, Department of Health, community hospitals, substance use treatment providers, and our LDSS to improve Virginia's response to substance-exposed infants. VDSS serves on the steering committee for the newly formed Pathways to Coordinated Care Workgroup led by the Virginia Department of Health and created in response to House Bill 1157 (2018). This workgroup has identified cross-system training on Plans of Safe Care as a key priority. Additionally, VDSS participates in a monthly Maternal and Infant State Partner Collaborative where best practices, roles, and key activities at each intervention point are regularly discussed. VDSS's work in this area remains ongoing.

We look forward to continuing to work together. Please let us know if you have any additional questions. Again, we thank you for serving as one of our Citizen Review Panels.

Sincerely,



Shannon Hartung
CPS Program Manager

Cc: Kimberly Huhn Murphy, Children's Bureau

