



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

ADAMS & BROOMFIELD COUNTIES

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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Welcome!

Welcome to CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties and thank you for your interest in becoming a CASA or Family Engagement Volunteer. By stepping into this role, you are choosing to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children, youth, and families in our community.

Our volunteers play an important role in walking alongside children and families facing difficult circumstances, including abuse, neglect, school disengagement, and other significant challenges.

Whether serving as a CASA or a Family Engagement Volunteer, your presence, consistency, and compassion can have a lasting impact. Sometimes the simple act of showing up, listening, and advocating can help a child or family feel supported, connected, and hopeful for the future.

We know this work requires dedication, empathy, and a willingness to learn. This handbook is intended to serve as a guide throughout your volunteer experience and includes important information about your role, program expectations, policies, procedures, and available resources. It is designed to support your training and help prepare you for the work ahead.

At CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties, we also understand that every child, family, and situation is different.

No handbook or training can fully prepare someone for every experience they may encounter. Much of the learning happens through relationship-building, real-life advocacy, and ongoing support from our staff team. You will not do this work alone. CASA staff are here to provide guidance, encouragement, and support throughout your volunteer journey.

Our mission is to provide volunteer advocacy and support for at-risk children and youth, empowering families to thrive. We are grateful for individuals like you who are willing to invest your time and heart into strengthening outcomes for children and families in Adams and Broomfield Counties.

As you move through training and into your volunteer role, we encourage you to ask questions, communicate openly, and lean on our team for support whenever needed. This work is meaningful, challenging, and deeply personal, and we are committed to supporting you throughout the process.

Thank you again for your commitment to the children and families we serve. We are honored to have you join the CASA community.



VICKIE RICORD

Chief Executive Officer





About CASA

OUR MISSION

Provide volunteer advocacy and support for at-risk children and youth, empowering families to thrive.

OUR VISION

A community that values and strengthens children and families from all backgrounds and life experiences, providing opportunities to thrive and build successful lives.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We are **CHILD FOCUSED**: we put the good of the child first, always.

We are **CONNECTORS**: we use the power of connection to optimize outcomes.

We are **TENACIOUS**: we are relentless in our efforts to identify solutions and overcome obstacles.

We are **ACCOUNTABLE**: we set goals, measure progress, and deliver results to our stakeholders.

We conduct ourselves with **INTEGRITY**: we operate with character, honesty, consistency, and reliability.

Board of Directors

CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that is comprised of business and civic leaders throughout Adams & Broomfield Counties who lend their expertise in the fields of law, public relations and marketing, human resources, child welfare, accounting, business and more to the operations of CASA.

A current board roster can be found on the CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties website.

CASA Organization Departments

CASA is comprised of three departments: Development, Program, and Operations.

DEVELOPMENT: The Development team is responsible for developing, managing, and administering the fundraising plan for all organizational revenue, including major gifts, grants, government funding, event revenue, an endowment campaign, corporate giving, planned giving, sponsorships, direct mail, and e-philanthropy; as well as volunteer recruitment and raising community awareness of CASA's mission through a variety of outreach efforts.

PROGRAM: The Program team is responsible for the training and supervision of all active CASA volunteers. The program team oversees advocacy efforts on behalf of the youth served by the CASA program.

OPERATIONS: The Operations team manages the day-to-day effectiveness of CASA, including finance, office management, and human resources.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties serves children and families of many different races, ethnicities, abilities, classes, gender identities, sexual orientations, and religions. In support of our entire community, we are committed to reflecting the values of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in every aspect of the work we do.

We recognize that racism, ableism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and religious prejudice deeply affect people in the communities we serve. By denouncing systemic inequities and striving to continually improve upon our efforts, we can Change a Child's Story and build a better future for children and youth of all backgrounds.

Disproportionality

CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties is committed to addressing racial disproportionality issues within the local child welfare and court systems and their impact on the children we serve. Training on disproportionality issues is provided to all advocates during pre-service training and continuing education training, to increase awareness and understanding.

Advocate Overview



What is a Court Appointed Special Advocate?

A CASA is a trained volunteer appointed by the Juvenile Court to represent the best interests of children who are dependents of the Court. Advocates monitor their youth's circumstances, provide fact-based information and make recommendations to the Court, and serve as a source of support for their assigned youth. They work cooperatively with the other professionals involved in the case to supplement their role. They provide independent assessments of the youth's situation to determine whether court-ordered services are being provided and bring any gaps in service to the attention of the Court and social services agency. An advocate meets regularly with their youth to build a relationship and provide consistent support.

Colorado CASA programs and advocates are governed by Title 19 – CHILDREN'S CODE (§§ 19-1-101 – 19-7-315) and National CASA Standards. Advocates serve at the discretion of the Court, are considered officers of the Court, and are bound by all court rules.

Advocate Qualifications

CASA volunteers should be able to:

- Make a minimum 18-month commitment to the program.
- Enjoy working with children and individuals from various backgrounds and cultures.
- Display sensitivity and objectivity.
- Gather, accurately record, and present fact-based information about the youth.
- Communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Demonstrate basic computer skills, including case note entry in the program database and the ability to complete written Word document reports.
- Meet report deadlines and requirements.
- Maintain the confidentiality of case information at all times.
- Accept supervision and seek feedback from CASA staff.
- Be at least 21 years of age.

Advocate Training

Advocates are required to complete pre-service training before being sworn in and appointed as CASA volunteers. CASA training is designed to give volunteers a solid base of knowledge and skills to begin their volunteer work.

Advocate Training (cont.)

Training areas include child abuse and neglect, court process and report writing, child welfare laws and regulations, understanding family dynamics, child development and the impact of trauma, diversity, equity and inclusion, educational advocacy, and other topics related to the CASA role. As part of the pre-service training process, advocates also observe a Juvenile Dependency or Truancy Court hearing prior to attending court for the first time on their assigned case. Each advocate must take an oath of confidentiality and be sworn in by a Juvenile Dependency Bench Officer as an officer of the court.

By the end of the CASA pre-service training, advocates will:

- Understand the CASA role, duties, requirements, and policies.
- Have a basic understanding of the Child Dependency System and Court Process.
- Apply a trauma-informed approach to working with CASA youth.
- Set appropriate boundaries with the CASA youth and other parties on the case.
- Apply diversity, equity, and inclusion principles.

To be eligible to graduate and be sworn in as a CASA, advocates must:

- Complete all screening and training paperwork.
- Complete all pre-service training.
- Successfully complete and clear all background checks.
- Observe court proceedings (prior to swearing-in).
- Be available to accept a CASA appointment for a child immediately after being sworn in.

Advocate Continuing Education

Advocates are required to attend a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education for every year they remain active as a CASA. Continuing education hours are accumulated during CASA's calendar year (January 1-December 31), and are pro-rated for new advocates in their first year of service. Hours earned in excess of 12 hours per fiscal year are not rolled over into the next year. The goal of continuing education is for advocates to add knowledge and keep current with new information, services, policies, and legislative changes that impact their role as an advocate. All content should be related to work as an advocate.

Volunteer Roles



Core Model

CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties models the basic operations of our program to be in line with National CASA's core model: Learn, Engage, Recommend, Collaborate and Report.

CASA/GAL Best-Interest Advocacy



Guiding Principles

CASA provides best-interest advocacy for children as reflected in our guiding principles which recognize the importance of family preservation and reunification, equity, diversity, inclusion, and collaboration.

Recognizing the importance of family preservation and/or reunification.

- It is in the child's best interests to remain with their family of origin when safely possible.
- Children experience trauma when separated from their family of origin.
- If a child is removed from their family of origin, it is in the child's best interests to be reunified with their family of origin as soon as safely possible.
- If a child is removed from their family of origin, the child should be placed with a relative whenever safely possible and in the child's best interests.
- Strengthening families through recommendations for services, supports, visitation and communications is in the child's best interests to achieve stability and/or reunification.
- Requires and demonstrates respect for the parents and all parties associated with the case.
- Ensures that information regarding the child's wishes is incorporated into court reports.
- When a court determines a child cannot be safely reunified with their family of origin consistent with legal mandates, another permanent placement is in a child's best interests.

Recognizing the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- All children regardless of age, race, ethnicity, national origin (ancestry), color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or physical challenge should be safe, have a permanent home, and an opportunity to thrive.
- Acknowledges the existence of implicit bias and takes steps to minimize and/or eliminate implicit bias.
- Demonstrates an understanding of disproportionality impacting children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

Recognizing the importance of collaboration.

All CASA staff and advocates cooperate and coordinate with other volunteer and public service agencies, the courts, community groups, families, and individuals to:

- Improve services for individual children and their families.
- Advocate for needed change in the conditions which adversely affect the children served.

Key Responsibilities of the Dependency & Neglect (D&N) CASA

The CASA Volunteer engages in the following activities to ensure that the best interests of the child are always met:

- **Investigation**
- **Facilitation**
- **Monitoring**
- **Advocacy**

The goal is to promote strong teamwork between CASAs (Court Appointed Special Advocates), GALs (Guardian ad Litem), and DHS (Department of Human Services), with each group retaining its independent pursuits while striving to meet the needs of each child.

- Reports any incident or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities and the CASA program as soon as possible.
- Obtains, first-hand, a clear understanding of the needs and situation of their youth by reviewing relevant documents and records, meeting with and gathering information from the child, parents, social workers, teachers, and other important persons on the case regarding the child's situation.
- Identifies and advocates for the child's best interests.
- Assists the youth with understanding their rights while in the dependency system.
<https://coloradochildrep.org/youth/foster-youth-rights/>
- Collaborates and coordinates with legal, child welfare, and other partners to ensure the child is receiving the necessary services and support.
- At every statutory hearing, provides a written report to the Court and all parties which includes information and recommendations about the child's needs and best interests.
- Discusses all recommendations concerning the case with their Advocate Supervisor prior to submitting recommendations to the Court.
- Appears in court to advocate for the child's best interests.
- Maintains minimum monthly contact with their Advocate Supervisor and participates in case reviews with the supervisor.
- Maintains complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.
- Makes recommendations for services for the child.
- Seeks information about whether a permanency plan has been created for the child and makes recommendations concerning permanency.
- Monitors implementation of service plans and court orders and assesses whether court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner.
- Informs the Court and social worker promptly of important developments in the case through appropriate means as determined by court rules or statutes.
- Returns case file and notes to the CASA program when the advocate's assignment concludes or the case closes.
- Completes a minimum of 12 hours of CASA Continuing Education training per year.

Investigation

The D&N CASA should determine whether court orders are being followed in an appropriate and timely manner; whether a permanency plan has been created; whether appropriate services, including reasonable efforts, are being provided to the child and family; and whether the court-ordered treatment plan is in compliance. Involvement with the family in these related areas should be focused on the best interests of the child(ren) in the case. The D&N CASA should participate in any planning or treatment team meetings involving the child to stay informed of permanency plan developments. The volunteer should monitor the case by visiting the child twice a month, or more often, if necessary, to ensure essential needs are being met. The D&N CASA should also research permanent connections for the child(ren).

Court Order

Once a Dependency & Neglect or Truancy CASA volunteer accepts a case, a court appointment acceptance form is filed with the court, and a Court Order is signed by the Judge or Magistrate. All parties to the proceeding will receive copies.

Meetings

With the Caseworker, GAL and other professionals: The CASA will meet with both the caseworker and the GAL. CASAs should notify the caseworker, GAL, and other professionals by email of their appointment to the case within one week of the appointment. It can be helpful to schedule a meeting with both parties, but if this is not possible, the CASA may wish to meet individually with these professionals.

- *Children:* Arrange for an initial meeting with the child/children on your case within 2 weeks of the appointment. You are required to meet with your child/children at least twice per month. An exception may be granted at the discretion of program staff, provided the Standard Exception form for the monthly visit standard is completed.
- *Parents:* Reach out and arrange a brief introductory meeting with the family to explain the CASA role and address any questions they may have. If the children are at home, this is a good time to introduce yourself to them. It may be helpful to hold this meeting with the GAL so that both roles can be defined in the same meeting. This should be done within three weeks of receiving a court appointment to the case.
- *Foster Parents/Children:* If children are in a foster home, the CASA will contact the foster parent to inform them that a CASA has been appointed, provide information about the program, and arrange to meet with the child and foster parents. A meeting should also occur within three weeks of the appointment. CASA may want to take the children for a walk or have them sit in another room to ensure the confidentiality of the conversation.
- *Other Professionals:* If the children are school age, the child's teacher will generally be the next person contacted to gather pertinent information about the child. If the child is in special education, the CASA is expected to attend the IEP (Individualized Education Program) meeting. All CASAs are required to complete an educational advocacy checklist for children who are in preschool or older. School records can be obtained by contacting the school secretary for the school the children attend and providing the CASA Appointment Order signed by the Judge or Magistrate. In addition to educational advocacy, other contacts, depending on the type of case, might include therapists, doctors, lawyers, and counselors working with the child or the parents.

CASA Volunteer Role Description

A CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) is a trained volunteer who represents the best interests of children who have experienced abuse and neglect that are currently in the judicial system, through no fault of their own. CASA Volunteers are supervised by CASA team members and work alongside the child's legal and professional team. They ensure that the child's physical, mental, educational, and emotional needs are being met, and advocate for the child in court, all while supporting them in their journey to find a safe and permanent home.

Requirements and Qualifications

A successful CASA Volunteer is mature, stable, open-minded, empathetic, collaborative, and confident. They have an ability to problem-solve and strong written and verbal communication skills. CASA Volunteers must also:

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Have lived in the United States for the past 7 years.
- Complete a criminal background check and fingerprinting. Applicants are ineligible if they have been convicted of or have charges pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related offenses that would pose risks to children. All other offenses will be evaluated according to the program's standards and with consideration of the duration of time since the incident.
- Complete 20 hours of classroom pre-service training, plus approximately 15 hours outside the classroom, including homework and court observation.
- Complete 12 hours of Continuing Education hours each year.
- Commit to serving for at least 18 months (average length of a case).
- Have the ability to spend approximately 10-15 hours per month on their case.

Duties:

- Attend pre-service trainings, swearing-in, and continuing education trainings.
- Conduct an independent examination into each case.
 - Review all pertinent records and documents.
 - Meet with the child(ren) at least twice a month.
 - Contact other individuals in the child's life as needed (biological parents, family members, teachers, etc.).
 - Assess if the needs are/are not being met (physical, emotional, social, education).
 - Identify resources needed to meet the needs of the child.
- Monitor the child(ren)'s progress by visiting them twice a month and assess if court orders are being carried out.
- Submit a written court report two weeks in advance of each court date under the guidance of your CASA Advocate Supervisor or Peer Coordinator.
 - Include pertinent information about the case and recommendations to the Judge.
- Attend all court hearings (mandatory unless there is an emergency).
 - Typically occur every 60-90 days.
 - Provide a verbal update at the hearing with the most recent update on your case.
- Maintain complete and accurate records of case-related activities on volunteer database.
- Connect with the professional team when necessary.
- Maintain strict confidentiality.

Key Responsibilities of the Truancy CASA (TCASA)

- Reports any incident or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities and the CASA program as soon as possible.
- Obtains, first-hand, a clear understanding of the needs and situation of their youth by reviewing relevant documents and records, meeting with and gathering information from the child, parents, teachers, and other important persons on the case regarding the child's situation.
- Identifies and advocates for the child's best educational interests.
- Collaborates and coordinates with any educational, legal, child welfare, and other partners who may be assigned to ensure the child is receiving the necessary services and support.
- At every statutory hearing, provides a written report to the Court and all parties which includes information and recommendations about the child's educational needs and best interests.
- Discusses all recommendations concerning the case with their Advocate Supervisor prior to submitting recommendations to the Court.
- Appears in court to advocate for the child's best educational interests.
- Maintains minimum monthly contact with their Advocate Supervisor and participates in case reviews with the supervisor.
- Maintains complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.
- Makes recommendations for services for the child.
- Monitors implementation of plans and court orders and assesses whether court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner.
- Returns case file and notes to the CASA program when the advocate's assignment concludes or the case closes.
- Completes a minimum of 12 hours of CASA Continuing Education training per year.

TCASA Volunteer Role Description

A Truancy CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) is a trained volunteer who represents the educational interests of a child or youth with a truancy case in the 17th Judicial District. TCASAs are appointed by the Court and are supervised by CASA team members as they work with the child and family to identify barriers to attendance, access community resources, and to improve the student's school attendance and academic success.

Requirements and Qualifications

A successful TCASA Volunteer is mature, open-minded, empathetic, collaborative, and confident. They are creative problem-solvers and have strong written and verbal communication skills. They respect the dignity of all children and families and demonstrate the desire and ability to work within diverse communities.

TCASA volunteers must also:

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Have lived in the United States for the past 7 years.
- Complete a criminal background check and fingerprinting.
 - Applicants are ineligible if they have been convicted of or have charges pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related offenses that would pose risks to children. All offenses will be evaluated according to the program's standards and with consideration of the duration of time since the incident.
- Complete 20 hours of classroom pre-service training, plus approximately 15 hours outside the classroom, including homework and court observation.
- Commit to serving for at least 12 months (average length of a case).
- Have the ability to spend approximately 10-15 hours per month on their case.

Duties

- Attend pre-service trainings, swearing-in, and continuing education training.
- Conduct an independent examination into each case.
- Review all pertinent records and documents.
- Meet with the child(ren) at least twice a month.
- Maintain contact with other individuals in the child's life (parents/guardians, school district truancy case manager, teachers, counselors, therapist, etc.).
- Investigate barriers to attendance and assess any needs that are not met.
- Connect the child and family with needed resources.
- Advocate for testing, accommodation, and/or support from the school as needed.
- Monitor the child's educational progress by visiting twice a month, and remaining in contact with the school and district personnel to assess if court orders are being followed.
- Submit a written court report two weeks in advance of each court date under the guidance of your CASA Advocate Supervisor or Peer Coordinator.
- Attend all court hearings and give a verbal update with the most recent information about the case, typically 30-45 days.
- Maintain complete and accurate records of case-related activities on the volunteer database.
- Complete 12 hours of Continuing Education hours each year.
- Connect with the professional team when necessary.
- Maintain strict confidentiality.

Key Responsibilities of the Family Engagement Advocate

- Reports any incident or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities and the CASA program as soon as possible.
- Obtains, first-hand, a clear understanding of the needs and situation of their youth by reviewing relevant documents and records, meeting with and gathering information from the child, parents, teachers, and other important persons on the case regarding the child's situation.
- Collaborates and coordinates with other partners to ensure the child is receiving the necessary services and support.
- Maintains minimum monthly contact with their Advocate Supervisor and participates in case reviews with the supervisor.
- Maintains complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.
- Returns case file and notes to the CASA program when the advocate's assignment concludes or the case closes.
- Completes a minimum of 12 hours of CASA Continuing Education training per year.

Family Engagement Advocate Role Description

A Family Engagement Advocate is a trained volunteer who works with students who are chronically absent from school and are at risk due to socio-economic factors, inability to access needed resources, or other hardship. Our program is offered to families by their school as a supportive resource to get students back on track and avoid a truancy court filing. Advocates are supervised by CASA team members as they strive to provide strengths-based support to students and families who choose to participate in our program. Family Engagement Advocates visit with students at school and at home to build relationships and learn about the unique circumstances of each family that affect their child's ability to engage at school; and then work to support students and connect families with resources. Our goal is to achieve a high level of family engagement and increase attendance rates by providing high quality student advocacy and family support.

Requirements and Qualifications

A successful Family Engagement Advocate is mature, open-minded, empathetic, collaborative, and confident. They are creative problem-solvers and have strong written and verbal communication skills. They respect the dignity of all children and families and demonstrate the desire and ability to work within diverse communities.

Family Engagement Advocates must also:

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Have lived in the United States for the past 7 years.
- Complete a criminal background check and fingerprinting.
 - Applicants are ineligible if they have been convicted of or have charges pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related offenses that would pose risks to children. All offenses will be evaluated according to the program's standards and with consideration of the duration of time since the incident.
- Complete 12 hours of classroom pre-service training and approximately 3 hours of homework.
- Commit to serving for at least 12 months or the duration of the school year.
- Have the ability to spend approximately 8-10 hours per month working on their case.

Duties

- Conduct an independent examination into each case.
 - Review all pertinent school records and documents.
 - Meet with the student(s) at least twice monthly, at home, school, or in the community to set goals, provide social-emotional support and mentorship, and assess progress.
 - Investigate barriers to achievement and assess any needs that are not being met.
 - Connect the student and/or family with needed resources.
- Attend meetings with student, family, school, and community partner professionals.
- Maintain complete and accurate records of case-related activities in the volunteer database.
- Communicate regularly with school personnel and parent(s).
- Complete 12 hours of Continuing Education hours each year.
- Maintain strict confidentiality.

Advocate Supervision

Each advocate is assigned to an Advocate Supervisor or Peer Coordinator for the duration of their CASA involvement. Advocate Supervisors provide supervision, support, guidance, information, and collaboration to CASA Volunteers to help them navigate their youth's case. As an advocate builds their relationship with the youth, as well as the professionals on the youth's team, the Advocate Supervisor can aid the advocate in identifying areas of advocacy to pursue for the youth. Advocates are expected to communicate with their Advocate Supervisor at least once per month to share updates on their work, the case, and their interactions with their youth. Advocates are also required to submit contact logs documenting their case activities, information gathered, and case/training hours in the program database. Advocate Supervisors edit CASA court reports, attend court hearings and case meetings with their advocates, and also serve as a general resource to CASA Volunteers.

After being assigned to a case, a volunteer with any program will meet with the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator for a case opening meeting to discuss initial planning for action on the case. A preliminary case plan will be outlined to be used as a guide for the CASA's first steps on the case. Program staff will schedule regular case conferences (in person or via telephone) to review progress on the case with the volunteer. Frequency of these consultations will be based on the stage of the case and the level of experience of the volunteer.

Volunteers are encouraged to contact program staff at any time with questions about their volunteer work. In addition, volunteers and their Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator will communicate on a regular basis via email or telephone regarding your case, including information such as:

- Develop and review a plan for independent fact gathering.
- Discuss findings and observations.
- Review progress in the case.
- Discuss strategies for serving the best interest of the child.

Program staff and the CASA Volunteer will discuss the volunteer's work on the case, the monthly data requirement, court reports, in-service training and comments from the judge and other parties, noting areas of achievement and areas in which additional support is needed. The CASA will have an opportunity to request an internal staffing at any time to problem-solve ideas and solutions related to their case.

Monthly Case Conferences

In compliance with National CASA Standards, CASA requires a minimum of once per month case conferences with your Advocate Supervisor. Case conferences are an opportunity to keep your Advocate Supervisor apprised of your work on the case, gain assistance in developing advocacy action items, or get new ideas on how to engage your youth during visits. These can be in person, on the phone, or after a court hearing.

Monthly case conferences may include discussion about:

- Progress made on advocacy goals.
- Changes in placement, school, health/mental health, education, social workers, or other service providers.
- Coaching on advocacy/relationship building with the youth, setting boundaries, self-care, or any other guidance needed on the case.

While CASA Volunteers are required to maintain a minimum of one contact per month with their Advocate Supervisors, please be proactive in reaching out for support and guidance whenever needed on your case. Advocate Supervisors are available for consultations as needed, and supervisor coverage or management support can also be available as needed.

Please be sure to notify your supervisor of any planned time off that you will not be available for youth visits or contact from your supervisor. Please also keep CASA up to date with your preferred contact information, including preferred phone number, mailing address, and email contact.

Advocates should notify their Advocate Supervisor of any changes in names, addresses, and phone numbers for all individuals involved in their youth's case. Advocates should also notify their Advocate Supervisor in advance of times and locations for any meetings (FTM/FEMs, IEPs, etc.).

Communication between volunteer and supervisor is essential. Child safety is paramount, and supervision requires the Advocate Supervisor to be informed of volunteer case activities. If an advocate fails to comply with the minimum monthly contact requirements, the Advocate Supervisor will make three attempts to reach the CASA Volunteer – including phone, email, text. If upon the third contact the CASA Volunteer is still unresponsive, they may be relieved from the case and resigned from the program.

Case Notes

Thorough and accurate documentation of the Advocate's work is essential to effective advocacy. CASAs must maintain complete records about the case, including summaries of any contact with the youth and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances. CASA utilizes an electronic program database (OPTIMA) to organize and store all case-related information in a secure system.

CASA case notes are entered as Contact Logs, which are electronic records of each contact with the child and other relevant parties, in the program database. These notes should include:

- The amount of time spent “working” the case, including but not limited to: visits with the child, making phone calls/emailing to gather information, reviewing or drafting reports, attending case meetings or court hearings, etc.
- The type of advocacy being done.
- A general summary of the visit/meeting/hearing as well as any information gathered or exchanged regarding the child and case.

It is expected that advocates will enter their case notes as soon as possible, but no later than one week after the contact was made or information received. Exceptions may be made in consultation with your Advocate Supervisor.

Advocate notes in the database should be detailed and include information such as observations or statements describing specific behaviors or facts, ideas/opinions expressed by others, and decisions, plans, or actions.

Case notes should not include:

- The CASA Volunteers's subjective thoughts or "processing" notes. Processing the case is critical in understanding information and developing the next action steps, but these comments should not be included in the child's official case documentation in the database, as they can be highly subjective.
 - Advocate Supervisors are available to process your feelings about the case with you.
- Diagnoses suggested by the advocate, regardless of the advocate's professional background. Only diagnoses from a case professional should be documented in the database.
- The CASA Volunteer's interpretations or personal feelings about issues on the case or parties involved.
- Statements that cannot be supported by fact.

Although rare, CASA Volunteer case notes may be subpoenaed by the Court for review. Please keep this in mind when entering information into the database.

Case notes contain confidential information about the youth and/or their families. Both electronic and hard copies of notes must be properly secured in accordance with CASA confidentiality policies. When a CASA case is closed or the advocate is no longer assigned to the case, the advocate must return all hard copy case notes and information to the CASA office and delete any electronic copies.

Court Reports and Hearing Attendance for D&N and Truancy CASA Volunteers

CASA court reports and hearing attendance are an important component of the CASA Volunteer advocacy efforts. CASA Volunteers are expected to attend all hearings throughout the duration of their case and volunteer assignment. CASA Volunteers are also expected to submit a court report for each hearing when requested by the Advocate Supervisor to update the Court and all parties to the case. The Court report is the primary vehicle for the CASA Volunteer to provide the Court and professionals with an independent update on what is happening in the youth's life and to advocate for needs/services for the youth.

As part of the court report, CASA Volunteers will share objective and fact-based information about the child and family and make recommendations for specific appropriate services for the child, and where appropriate, for the child's family. These official documents are written by the CASA Volunteer and reviewed and edited by the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator prior to submission to all parties. The program staff will not alter the reports or recommendations without the CASA Volunteer's knowledge or agreement.

Reports shall be submitted to your Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator two weeks prior to the court hearing. If the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator does not receive the report two weeks prior to the court hearing, the CASA report may not reach the judicial officer in time for review before the hearing. Advocate Supervisors are responsible for final editing and distribution of all court reports to the Court and all parties to the case and have final discretion on what is distributed.

Failure to attend court hearings and submit the required court reports could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from the CASA Volunteer role.

More detailed information on the court process, court reports, and the CASA Volunteer's role in court proceedings will be provided by your Advocate Supervisor.

Polices & Procedures



Recognition & Celebration

CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties values its volunteers and has ongoing programs to recognize the efforts, dedication and hard work of our volunteers. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- Employee recognition letter from the CASA Board of Directors, when requested.
- Volunteer of the Month.
- Connection coffees with Program Staff, CEO, or Program Director, when requested.
- Notes of appreciation and support.
- Annual Appreciation event.
- Birthday cards signed by staff and board members.
- Annual Peer Coordinator appreciation lunch.
- Case closing recognition.
- Recognition of other community involvement.
- Numerous professional development & training opportunities.
- Acknowledgement of birthdays and other significant life events.
- Planned networking opportunities with other CASA Volunteers and Staff.

Mandated Reporter Policy

All CASA Volunteers and CASA staff are mandated reporters. This means that advocates are required by law to report any known or suspected child maltreatment to the county child welfare department, child abuse reporting hotline, or law enforcement agency that they encounter in their capacity as an advocate. Suspicions of child maltreatment must be reported immediately, or as soon as practically possible by phone, concerning the incident. If you suspect, you must report it.

Reporting Procedure

Report any suspicion of abuse, neglect, or threats and/or acts of self-harm immediately to your Advocate Supervisor.

- The CASA should immediately report any suspected child abuse or neglect that is observed or discovered during the CASA assignment. A report should be made by calling the child abuse and neglect hotline 844-CO-4-KIDS. CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties is a mandatory reporting agency.
- The CASA should notify the assigned caseworker and Guardian ad Litem that this report has been made. The CASA should also report to their Advocate Supervisor as soon as possible after making the report and document the report in Optima within 24 hours.
- The CASA does not investigate possible abuse. The CASA Program is a mandatory reporting agency per the Memorandum of Understanding. The social services department will determine the need for and whether to complete an investigation.

Cooperation in Criminal Investigation of Alleged Child Abuse

If any officer, director, employee, or volunteer of the organization should be asked to produce information or documents, or discuss the facts of any alleged child abuse with any investigator or counsel of record for the office of the prosecuting attorney or the defense attorney:

- No documents (written reports of the incident) shall be produced unless properly subpoenaed. Cooperation to facilitate the service of subpoenas should be extended as a professional courtesy.
- If any investigator or attorney of record wishes to conduct a personal interview, the person requested to appear may appear with legal counsel at such an interview.
- If a telephone interview is given, care should be taken to ensure the identity of the contact person. It is suggested that staff or volunteers call the office via the main switchboard and be transferred to the person requesting the interview.
- It will not be necessary to be subpoenaed for this personal interview, although every effort should be made to coordinate the interview date and time with legal counsel.
- Before granting an interview, the volunteer and staff should review what may be discussed.

Ethical Conduct and Confidentiality

Conflict of Interest

It is essential that advocates maintain an unbiased position in independently assessing their youth's circumstances and that there be no real or perceived conflict of interest.

Advocates may not:

- Be related to any parties involved in an assigned case or be employed in position or by an organization that might result in a conflict of interest involving the youth. The advocate must disclose to CASA staff any past, present, or newly discovered relationships that may pose a conflict of interest.
- Use the CASA organization or its relationship to the Court as a means to express personal views or a cause beyond the advocate role.
- Use agency letterhead to express political or other personal views.
- Identify as a CASA while acting as a spokesperson for another program/cause.

Confidentiality

Few areas are as sensitive to the Juvenile Court as the youth's rights to confidentiality. Advocates have access to highly sensitive and confidential case information about the child and the family to whom they are assigned. CASAs are charged with the responsibility of upholding the confidentiality of these cases. Prior to getting assigned to a case, advocates are sworn in by a judge and take an oath of confidentiality to protect case-related information. In doing so, advocates are agreeing that they will not discuss the identity of these youth with any persons other than those individuals who are rightfully involved in the case.

Your role as a CASA Volunteer requires you to gather information and then use that information to advocate for your child's best interests, needs, and services. You must do so within the context of confidentiality. In general, you can think of your role as an "information gatherer." You can gather as much information as you are able to and is needed for the scope of your work. However, you cannot freely share the information.

To maintain confidentiality, advocates must follow these procedures at all times:

- Upon being sworn in, advocates must maintain strict confidentiality as to the case and all proceedings in which the volunteer is involved. The volunteer shall request only that information which the volunteer is authorized to receive.
- Advocates must sign a statement of confidentiality upon the acceptance of each case.
- Advocates may not give detailed case information to anyone other than:
 - The social worker
 - The Juvenile Dependency bench officer
 - The child's attorney
 - CASA staff
- Advocates may not use the youth's last name or reveal any other information that would identify the youth and/or family to an individual not directly involved with the case; including the advocate's own family.
- The youth's attorney and other legally entitled parties are given copies of the advocate's court reports. These court reports must be distributed through the CASA office. All information contained in the court report must be approved by the Advocate Supervisor, Peer Coordinator and/or Program Director.
- All meetings related to the youth, family, or case are confidential. Information obtained from these meetings can only be disclosed to authorized parties.
- If it is necessary to obtain any privileged/confidential information about someone who is directly related to the case but is not the child(ren), the CASA Volunteer must obtain from that person a written release of information which allows the professional, hospital, or treatment center to discuss the matter with the CASA volunteer.
- While a person may sign a release allowing the CASA Volunteer to obtain confidential information, they may not want to authorize disclosure to other parties on the case and/or their attorneys. The volunteer should review the signed release form carefully and seek guidance from their Advocate Supervisor if they have any questions.
- The CASA Volunteer is not allowed to disseminate documents to any of the parties, their attorneys, or collateral sources, which are covered by state and or federal confidentiality laws. These documents may include drug and alcohol evaluations/records, involuntary mental health treatment, and rape crisis information, and some criminal histories. Those covered by federal law usually are stamped, "This information has been disclosed to you from records whose confidentiality is protected by Federal law and prohibits you from making any further disclosure." A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is NOT sufficient for this purpose.
- The CASA Volunteer will take appropriate measures to ensure that confidential records may not be observed by casual observers (this includes family members, foster parents, and anyone else not a legal party to the case).
- The CASA Volunteer should not promise a child or a party to the case that statements will be kept secret or confidential. The volunteer should proceed with the assumption that all statements made or relied on in reaching recommendations will be subject to disclosure to the court and other parties.
- The CASA youth's case file is the property of the CASA agency. Any copies of case information, electronic or hard copy, shared with the advocate must be kept in a secure location to maintain confidentiality (ie: locked file cabinet or password-protected electronic document). This includes all information received by advocates, such as school and medical records, and the advocate's case notes.

- The CASA Volunteer may discuss a case in hypothetical terms for purposes of illustration at seminars or meetings designed to provide education on child protection issues. The volunteer must not mention any names of individuals involved in the case or provide facts that would identify the case or parties. The CASA must never discuss a case for purely conversational purposes, even in general terms, with anyone.
- When a youth's case is closed, the advocate must return all hard copy case information to the CASA office and delete any electronic case information.
- Photographs of the youth are the property of the youth and can only be displayed by the youth. See the CASA Youth Photography Policy for more details.
- As part of the CASA role, advocates have the ability to access privileged or confidential information, such as information regarding a child's medical, mental health, or educational needs. When seeking confidential information from professionals about a dependent youth, the court order appointing the advocate is usually sufficient to gain access to the desired information.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

While confidentiality is one of the most important tenets of a CASA volunteer, there are times when CASAs must disclose detailed information about the child if/when child safety is a concern. Below are examples of exceptions to confidentiality:

- The child is at risk of harming themselves or someone else.
- There is reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected or at risk of being abused or neglected (refer to the Mandated Reporter section below).
- There is a court order requiring you to release specific information.
- If you are appointed as an Educational Rights Holder (ERH), you may consent to sharing of educational documents and information for the purposes of assessments and developing appropriate educational service plans. As an ERH, however, you are not permitted to release information beyond the scope of education.
- A nonminor dependent consents to you releasing information.

Confidentiality for Electronic Communication

To keep electronic communication confidential, advocates must adhere to the following procedures:

- Advocates must use an email account that they alone can access for all CASA case communication. Email accounts that can be accessed by others (including business accounts and personal accounts shared with family members) are strictly prohibited for CASA casework.
- Advocates must refer to their youth by only their first name or initials, never their full name, in emails to their Advocate Supervisor or any other professionals on the case.
- No personal identifying information about the child or their family should be communicated via email.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

CASA Volunteers may not use artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Grammarly, or any other AI-powered writing, editing, or content generation platform to draft, revise, edit, or otherwise assist with the preparation of court reports. Court reports must reflect the volunteer's own observations, assessments, and recommendations. Additionally, volunteers must never enter confidential or identifying information about a case, a child, a family, or any other protected information into an AI tool. Information entered into AI platforms may not be secure or confidential and could compromise the privacy of the children and families we serve. Volunteers are responsible for safeguarding all confidential information.

In-Service Training

In-service training will be offered throughout the year, and CASA Volunteers must complete a minimum of 12 hours of continuing training each calendar year. All training provided by any CASA organization will be eligible for training hours. Trainings offered by outside agencies must be approved by the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator to count as in-service hours. CASA Volunteers should enter all continuing education into their training logs in Optima.

Volunteers in all three programs shall not provide direct service delivery to any parties that could (but not limited to):

- Lead to a conflict of interest or liability problems.
- Cause a child or family to become dependent on the volunteer.

National CASA Standards prohibit CASA volunteers from engaging in the following activities:

- Taking the youth to the advocate's home or the home of the CASA advocate's friends or family.
- Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
- Making placement arrangements for the child.
- Giving money or expensive gifts to the child, the child's family, or the caregiver.
- Accepting money or gifts from the child, child's family, or caregiver.
- Interviewing the youth about specifics of the abuse that is alleged to have occurred.
 - If the youth raises the topic of abuse/neglect and wishes to discuss it, advocates should listen and respond appropriately but not probe or ask questions. Any new or corroborative information disclosed to the advocate should be discussed with their Advocate Supervisor. A child abuse report may also be required. Refer to CASA policies regarding Mandated Reporting for more information.
- Any requests from the social worker, attorney, judge or other member of the team that falls outside of CASA of Adams and Broomfield policy must be first discussed and approved by the Advocate Supervisor.

Appointment to a Dependency & Neglect or Truancy Case

After acceptance and completion of training by CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties, CASA Volunteers will be sworn in as Officers of the Court by the presiding juvenile judge.

The Advocate Supervisor will choose several case options for CASA Volunteers to review based on submitted preferences and program needs. The general issues in a case will be discussed with the CASA Volunteer, who has the option to accept or reject the case based on their experience.

CASA Volunteers will be assigned to one case at a time and may work on more than one case simultaneously only in exceptional circumstances. Exceptions for more than two open cases at the same time may be granted at the discretion of program staff. CASA Volunteers assigned to three cases must receive prior approval from the Program Director.

The CASA Volunteer has no authority to function on a case until officially appointed by court order, after being assigned to a specific case by the program staff.

Educational Rights Holder in a Dependency & Neglect Case

For most children, their biological parents retain the right to make decisions about their child's educational or developmental needs and services, even if the child is not currently in their physical custody. This includes requesting and agreeing to special education services and assessments. In some instances when a parent is not present or able to make important educational and developmental decisions for their child, an educational rights holder may be assigned by the Court.

An educational rights holder investigates the youth's educational needs and determines whether those needs are being met. They "stand in the shoes of a parent" and make educational decisions based on the best interest of the child. Educational rights holders must be involved in major educational decisions, like requesting educational assessments and services, changing schools, and/or school disciplinary actions.

Although all advocates will support and advocate for their youth's educational needs, advocates are not automatically appointed as Educational Rights Holders. If you are asked to hold educational rights for your youth, discuss this responsibility with your Advocate Supervisor before agreeing to do so. Appointment requires Advocate Supervisor approval as well as additional training and court appointment.

Access to Legal Advice

CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties will provide CASA volunteers access to legal advice and representation as needed within their CASA role.

Telephone Numbers

A Volunteer should carefully consider the implications of giving their work and home telephone numbers to children or family members. The decision to give out these numbers is up to the Volunteer. The Volunteer may wish to consult with their Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator in making this decision or obtain a cell phone at their own expense. Messages may be left at the CASA office, and they will be relayed to the volunteer.

Volunteer Visitation Policies for all Programs

CASA Volunteers are required to visit their youth twice per month. Visits are arranged with the child's caregiver in advance and in coordination with the child, caregiver, and volunteer's schedule. Unannounced visits for D&N case visits are allowed when necessary.

Advocates should plan to be reliable and consistent in their visitation schedule. This is crucial in establishing trust and rapport with the child and caregiver. Communicate as soon as possible in advance if a visit needs to be rescheduled.

Any challenges with scheduling visits should be discussed with the Advocate Supervisor. Building a relationship with the youth and learning about their individual needs is a crucial aspect of the CASA role, and routine visits with their youth are important.

Visitation Guidelines

- Advocates will meet in person with their youth twice per month and not exceed one visit per week.
 - An exception may be granted for less frequent visits at the discretion of the Advocate Supervisor.
 - Advocates who fail to maintain a minimum level of contact/visits with their youth may be subject to removal from the case.
- Advocates should:
 - Start slow in building their relationship/trust with their youth.
 - Conduct one-on-one visits with their youth.
 - Be patient, go at the youth's pace, and explore the youth's interests.
 - Be mindful of activity choices and child safety/trauma triggers.
 - Talk with the caregiver and/or Advocate Supervisor for activity ideas.
 - Always carry their CASA identification badge and a copy of the court appointment.
 - Document each visit, with a summary of what occurred in the program database within one week of the visit.
 - Plan free or low-cost activities for any visits that occur outside of the child's home.
- *Advocates may not:*
 - Include anyone besides their CASA appointed youth on visits/outings. The Advocate's own family and friends are strictly prohibited from meeting or interacting with the CASA youth.
 - Provide transportation on a routine basis for their youth and never without following CASA of Adams and Broomfield transportation policy.
 - If an advocate is being asked to transport a youth to appointments or non-CASA related activities, consult with the Advocate Supervisor. It is generally not allowed.
 - Provide expensive gifts or take CASA youth on expensive activities during outings.
 - CASAs are not permitted to routinely give the child gifts of any kind. When celebrating a special occasion with a gift, CASAs should consult with their Advocate Supervisor to learn how to utilize our community partnerships to obtain gifts.
 - Please keep in mind the feelings of the caregiver, the child's family, and the other youth in the home when considering outings and gift ideas.

- *Advocates may not. (cont.)*
 - Involve their youth in religious services or events unless initiated by the youth.
 - Please discuss whether a youth-suggested religious activity is permitted with your Advocate Supervisor before engaging in the activity with your youth.
 - Overnight visits with youth are strictly prohibited.
 - All activities prohibited by local dependency court and social services agency are prohibited for advocates to engage in with their youth, including:
 - Permitting the youth to alter their appearance or body (i.e. haircuts, temporary or permanent tattoos, body piercing, acrylic fingernails).
 - Waivers, permission slips, and liability forms cannot be authorized by an advocate.
 - Advocates are prohibited from engaging with their youth in swimming and other water-related activities without prior approval from their Advocate Supervisor and the child's legal guardian. A lifeguard must be on duty for swimming-related activities to be approved.
 - As a general policy, pets are not permitted on outings. Any exception to this policy must be approved by the Advocate Supervisor and a Pet Waiver must be completed and signed by your Advocate Supervisor in advance.
 - Advocates are strictly prohibited from using alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances in the presence of the CASA youth and/or immediately prior to a visit with a CASA youth. Failure to abide by this policy will result in termination from the CASA program.
 - Inappropriate and/or unsafe behavior by an advocate in the presence of their CASA youth may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of the advocate role.

Please exercise caution and discuss any questions or concerns with your Advocate Supervisor or Peer Coordinator. Policies are in place for both child safety and volunteer protection.

Transportation Policy

Transporting CASA Youth

For liability and safety reasons, volunteers for any program must submit requests to transport CASA children to their Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator in advance. CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties recommends that volunteers be judicious in their requests to transport children. Transportation may be approved in certain situations, as determined by the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator, if the following are in place:

All advocates must have a valid Colorado driver's license, current (within the last year) Motor Vehicle Record on file, a demonstrated history of safe driving for a minimum of four years, and current insurance coverage that meets Colorado state minimum requirements. Advocates are required to provide updated copies of proof of insurance and license to the CASA office to show uninterrupted licensure and insurance coverage. Failure to do so will result in loss of driving privileges, and the advocate will be prohibited from transporting their youth until proper documentation has been obtained.

The volunteer must ask their Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator for permission each time they wish to transport a child. If the request is approved, the volunteer must accept responsibility for transporting child(ren) and sign and Transportation Waiver each time before the transportation may take place. This waiver can be signed in person or scanned and emailed. The document will be uploaded to the electronic case file.

The volunteer must obtain written permission from the child's legal guardian prior to each transport and provide this documentation to their Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator for recording in the electronic case file.

The volunteer must document each time they transport a child. This documentation will include: date, time of transportation, total time spent transporting child(ren), location and purpose of visit. The signed documentation will be given to the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator and signed by the Supervisor. The signed document will be saved in the electronic case file.

The volunteer will abide by all federal, state and local transportation safety laws.

When considering transportation of CASA kids, the following points are important to remember:

- It is not the role of the volunteer to transport kids or adults to visits, appointments, staffing, etc. This is the role of the caseworkers, case aids, parents, foster parents, and social services. Volunteers may not pay for rideshares (e.g., Uber, Lyft, etc.) for children or families.
- D&N and Truancy CASAs are advocates for children, not mentors. Although it is important to establish a relationship with the children in your case, it is also important to remember appropriate boundaries.

Each time you wish to transport a child, you must adhere to the above policy. All requests must be submitted to your Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator in advance. Your supervisor will decide whether the request is appropriate. We must have a copy of a recent motor vehicle record, current and valid drivers license and current and valid car insurance on file.

Driving Safety

The safety and well-being of our advocates and youth is of critical importance to CASA. CASAs are required to drive in a safe, courteous manner and in conformance with all applicable laws when transporting their youth. In addition, advocates will be expected to follow all the safety procedures below when driving to/from CASA related business:

- All advocates and youth are expected to wear seat belts, or CASA youth ride in age-appropriate car seats, at all times while in a moving vehicle being used for CASA business, whether they are the driver or a passenger.
- Use of handheld devices while behind the wheel of a moving vehicle is strictly prohibited. This includes the use of making or receiving phone calls, sending or receiving text messages or emails, and downloading information from the web. If an advocate needs to engage in any of these activities while driving, they must pull over to a safe location and stop the vehicle prior to using any device. The use of hands-free technology may be warranted in emergency circumstances only.
- The use of alcohol, drugs, or other substances including certain over-the-counter cold or allergy medications that in any way impair driving ability is prohibited.
- All advocates are expected to follow all driving laws and safety rules, such as adherence to posted speed limits and directional signs, use of turn signals, and avoidance of confrontational or offensive behavior while driving.
- Advocates should never allow anyone to ride in any part of the vehicle not specifically intended for passenger use and/or any seat that does not include a working seat belt.
- If an advocate is involved in an automobile accident while on CASA business, they must immediately report the accident to law enforcement and their Advocate Supervisor or CASA program management immediately. Advocates should request and obtain a police report and police investigation at the scene of the accident.
- Advocates should not admit liability or guilt under any circumstances, even if they believe they are at fault.
- Advocates are also required to report any moving or parking violations received while driving on CASA business to their Advocate Supervisor.

Additionally, advocates:

- Must immediately report any major moving violations, including DUI, to the CASA staff. Failure to report may result in termination from a case and the CASA program.
- Are not permitted to allow their youth to drive their vehicle.
- Are not permitted to transport anyone other than their assigned CASA youth without permission from the Advocate Supervisor.
- Are responsible for transporting the youth to and from appropriate responsible adults and keeping the youth under supervision at all times.

Mileage

Mileage documentation may be provided to volunteers at the end of the calendar year, upon request, for tax purposes. Please consult with a tax professional for information about volunteer mileage deduction. The CASA volunteer must enter their mileage into their case in Optima to receive an annual statement.

Home Study

CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties will not perform any "home study" which will be used by the court as approval of a family for placement.

CASA Youth Photograph Policy

CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties' Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Court acknowledges that CASAs are permitted to take photographs of the CASA children for the sole purposes of:

- Inclusion with the specific youth's CASA report to the court, at the discretion of the CASA agency.
- To create a memory book for the CASA child.

Any use of photos outside the reasons listed above must be specifically approved by the CASA program. CASAs are prohibited from using photos of the child for social media, marketing, or personal use. The photos taken by the CASA must be regarded as part of the confidential CASA file and should not be shared with others. A nonminor dependent may provide their own consent for the use of photos. Photos must be deleted after use in a court report or memory book for the CASA child and may not be retained on the volunteer's phone or camera.

Facilitation

The CASA Volunteer is often in a position where it is appropriate to facilitate communication between parties in the case. In difficult situations or when conflicts arise in cases, it is often appropriate to hold a staffing, which is a meeting where all parties are invited to discuss the future direction of the case and the services to be provided. Although it is typically not the role of the CASA Volunteer to call a staffing, it is appropriate on an as-needed basis. Please discuss this option with your Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator if you think it may be appropriate.

CASA Volunteers are expected to communicate with all parties to the proceedings. Failure to communicate can result in dismissal from the case. It is recommended that CASA Volunteers email their Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator, GAL, and Caseworker about any visits, important contacts, or important information gathered regarding the child on the case.

Advocacy Role and Placement Relationships Policy

CASA Volunteers and staff must maintain clear professional boundaries and avoid situations in which personal interests could influence, or appear to influence, their advocacy on behalf of a child. CASA volunteers and staff may not use their role with CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties as a pathway to foster parenting or adoption opportunities involving children to whom they are assigned.

Current foster or adoptive parents are welcome to serve as CASA volunteers, provided there is no conflict between their caregiving role and their CASA advocacy role.

If a volunteer or staff member becomes a foster or adoptive placement resource for a child they are currently assigned to advocate for, CASA will evaluate the situation to determine whether continued service in the CASA role is appropriate.

In most circumstances, the volunteer or staff member will be asked to transition out of their CASA assignment to maintain clear professional boundaries and avoid conflicts of interest.

Religion, Politics, and Personal Beliefs Policy

As a private, independent, non-profit organization working in close partnership with the local court and social services agencies, the CASA organization, including staff and volunteers, may not, at any time, advance, promulgate, or proselytize any religious faith, political belief, or personal cause. Advocates are expected to abide by the following:

- Advocates may not, at any time, discuss their own religious, political, or other personal beliefs (or lack thereof) with their youth, the youth's families, or other parties to the case.
- Advocates must be open and objective about the beliefs of others.
- An advocate may not distribute any materials pertaining to their personal beliefs to their youth, the youth's families, or other parties to the case.
- An advocate may not attempt to persuade their youth to change their beliefs.
- Advocates may not involve their youth in religious services or events unless initiated or specifically requested by their youth. Even then, advocates must discuss whether a youth-suggested religious activity is permitted with their Advocate Supervisor before engaging in the activity.

Concealed Weapons

In accordance with federal law on concealed carry, a CASA may not carry a firearm on the property of any school, courthouse, airport, or other location protected by electronic screening, or anywhere concealed carry is prohibited by law. Additionally, CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties strongly recommends that CASAs licensed to carry a concealed weapon refrain from carrying their weapon when in the presence of their CASA child(ren), and that any such weapon be appropriately secured at all times.

Volunteer Records

CASA will maintain an electronic record for each volunteer that contains, at minimum:

- Application.
- Emergency & identifying contact information.
- Job description.
- Reference documentation.
- Documentation of record checks.
- Training records.
- Performance evaluations and any other applicable documentation related to performance.
- Documentation of volunteer status.
- Copy of volunteer's driver's license, motor vehicles records check, and verification of automobile insurance (if approved for transportation).

Volunteers may coordinate a time with CASA staff to review their personal file. The CASA Volunteer may submit additions and corrections to their volunteer record. The file will be maintained in the CASA database in accordance with the program's record retention policy. These records will be retained while the volunteer is active and for 10 years after a volunteer becomes inactive.

Resignation

The Dependency & Neglect or Truancy CASA Volunteer should remain actively involved in the case until formally discharged by the court. The CASA Volunteer should consider the CASA assignment a serious personal commitment. The CASA Volunteer should give honest and adequate notice if it becomes necessary to leave an assignment before the conclusion of the case.

A CASA Volunteer shall be considered active if s/he participates in at least one case, gives time to CASA in outreach activities at least once per year, or is an ongoing supporter of CASA.

If the CASA Volunteer is unable to do any of the above, the CASA Volunteer will be inactivated and removed from mailing and emailing lists. If a CASA Volunteer decides to become active again by participating in the above activities, s/he must contact CASA and a decision about how to proceed will be made at that time. After 12 months between cases, the CASA Volunteer may be required to participate in certain areas of the initial training. If there are special circumstances involved in a volunteer's inability to participate, the ability to remain active within CASA is at the discretion of the Program Director.

Case Closure

The volunteer may be terminated from a case through the following means: CASA program decision, the case being closed by the Court, determination by a Judicial Officer that the CASA's services are no longer needed, or, for a Family Engagement Program case, the family choosing to withdraw from the program. In addition, CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties has discretion to terminate a CASA from his/her case.

In circumstances when agreed between CASA program staff and the volunteer, the CASA may maintain contact with the children after the case is closed with the court. This is for the benefit of children who have formed a close relationship with their CASA and will primarily occur on cases where an adolescent youth is aging out of the system or when a family would like continued support from the volunteer and CASA Program. The volunteer will ensure that the child and family know they are not required to maintain contact and that any contact after a case is closed by the court is voluntary.

If the volunteer and family agree, the CASA Program may close the D&N case and reopen it as a voluntary Family Engagement case.

Child Case Closure

A youth's CASA appointment closes when dependency is terminated, a youth no longer wants an advocate, or the youth is deemed to be in a stable environment and no longer in need of CASA involvement. The Advocate Supervisor will discuss with the advocate the specific reasons for case closure and what the next steps will be.

Following case closure for any reason, advocates must immediately return all hard copy case records to the CASA office and delete all electronic case records. Advocates in good standing will be encouraged to take another CASA appointment or remain involved in another volunteer capacity with the organization.

Advocate Separation

Advocate Resignation

While advocates make an 18-month commitment, there may be circumstances that require an advocate to resign. Advocates must contact their Advocate Supervisor to discuss the resignation and develop a plan of transition. The advocate is required to return their CASA badge and return all case records in their possession. The CASA office will then notify all parties involved and may assign another advocate to the case if necessary.

If an advocate resigns from the program and then at a later date wishes to return to active status, they will at a minimum need to submit to new background checks and paperwork and may also have to repeat some or all of the initial advocate training, depending on the length of time the advocate has been resigned and the advocates' performance while active as a CASA Volunteer.

Advocate Leave of Absence

CASA Volunteers may request to take a leave of absence between case assignments. This can be a helpful rest period for volunteers who need to step back from the intensity of the role, but who wish to return to a new case assignment at a future date.

A leave that extends beyond 12 months will be considered a resignation from the program, and you may need to complete training and/or all background check requirements should you choose to return in the future.

During a leave of absence:

- You must keep your Advocate Supervisor apprised of your return date, and any need to extend your leave.
- You must continue to engage in the continuing education requirement of 12 hours/year.
- If you do not return for a new case at the end of your leave, and your Advocate Supervisor is unable to reach you after three attempts (email/text/phone call), you will be resigned from the CASA program and required to repeat training and background checks should you choose to return in the future.

Advocate Involuntary Resignation

A CASA may be discharged from a CASA assignment by the Court on its own motion or at the request of the Advocate Supervisor of CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties. If necessary, CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties may request that the Court relieve a volunteer of his or her appointment in cases of personal emergency. When the Court's jurisdiction terminates, the CASA appointment automatically terminates. Involuntary termination of a volunteer must be approved by the Program Director with the input of the program staff.

The following include, but are not limited to, grounds for involuntary termination:

- Misuse of CASA Status: CASAs will not use their volunteer status to promote other causes or for personal gain, unless otherwise stipulated by the Board of Directors. They are to call the Program Office when in doubt.
- The CASA takes action without program or court approval, which endangers the child or is outside the role of the CASA Volunteer.

The following include, but are not limited to, grounds for involuntary termination (cont):

- The CASA engages in ex-parte communication with the court.
- The CASA fails to complete the required pre-service or in-service training hours.
- The CASA violates program policy, court rule, or law.
- The CASA fails to demonstrate the ability to effectively carry out CASA duties.
- The CASA falsifies information on the volunteer application or misrepresents facts during the screening process.
- There are allegations of child abuse/neglect against the volunteer.
- A conflict of interest arises which cannot be resolved.
- Not maintaining close contact with the CASA Adams and Broomfield Counties Program Staff. A minimum monthly contact is required, either by e-mail, voicemail, or personal contact.

Advocate misconduct is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The course of action regarding advocate misconduct varies depending on the nature and severity of the advocate's misconduct. In instances of continued or severe advocate misconduct, an advocate may be relieved from their case and involuntarily resigned from the CASA program. The Advocate Supervisor, Peer Coordinator, and if appropriate, Program Director, will discuss the situation and evaluate how to proceed with addressing the challenge.

Corrective action may be taken if the volunteer's work is unsatisfactory or in the case of a policy infraction. Corrective action is within the discretion of the Program Director and Chief Executive Officer, and may include any of the following actions as deemed appropriate:

- Additional supervision.
- Temporary leave of absence.
- Retraining.
- Reassignment.
- Referral to another volunteer position.
- Separation from the program.

The following guidelines will be used in making this determination:

- The unique circumstances of the situation and advocate involvement, including feedback obtained from the CASA and youth's professional team.
- Whether or not the challenge can be addressed through routine coaching or if coaching has failed to address the current challenge.
- The CASA's training and experience.
- Extent of the harm or potential harm to the youth and/or family.
- Extent of the harm or potential harm to the CASA program's reputation.

Examples of misconduct by an advocate include but are not limited to:

- Commits, is arrested or convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic offense, or other minor citation.
- Becomes involved in dependency proceedings in which the advocate or a member of the advocate's immediate family is alleged to have committed child abuse or neglect.
- Transports a youth without a valid driver's license, insurance, and/or the use of proper safety restraints.

Examples of misconduct by an advocate include but are not limited to (cont):

- Provides placement to a youth (takes a youth home on a temporary basis or is in the process of becoming the appointed youth's adoptive parent/legal guardian/resource parent).
- Gives money or expensive gifts to the youth or family.
- Gives legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
- Violates the CASA conflict of interest policy.
- Violates the CASA oath of confidentiality.
- Fails to follow mandated reporting protocol.
- Violates the CASA code of conduct including:
 - Having inappropriate boundaries.
 - Engaging in discriminatory, harassing, or other unprofessional behavior with their youth, CASA staff members, other CASA Volunteers, or a member of the youth's team.
 - Fails to meet the minimum requirements of the advocate role (e.g. attendance at court hearings, timely and complete court reports, and monthly visits with youth).
- Failure to respond to their supervisor's guidance and coaching.
- Failure to maintain contact with their Advocate Supervisor at least once in a 30-day period.
- Failure to abide by any of the policies outlined in this advocate handbook.

Based on the above considerations and team discussion, the Advocate Supervisor may use the following tools (including a combination of these tools) to address the misconduct:

- Formal warnings to the advocate.
- Probation status for lack of contact with the CASA office.
- Immediate relief and resignation.

Grievance Procedure

Overall goal is communication: Good communication is often the key to avoiding conflicts in any organization or setting. It is hoped that disagreements can be resolved through communication among the parties.

If assistance is needed to resolve any issues, the following procedure shall be followed:

- Meet with your Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator
 - If a conflict arises between an Advocate and an Advocate Supervisor, both parties are encouraged to discuss the issue together and try to come to a resolution.
 - If a volunteer disagrees with any action, including correction or separation, taken by CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties or any of its agents, they shall first meet with the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator.
- Meet with Program Director
 - If a conflict remains, it should be discussed with the Program Director. If still unresolved, the Program Director will make the final decision about the matter. If the advocate is still not satisfied, they may be put in contact with the Chief Executive Officer.
- Meet with the CEO
- If the disagreement is still not resolved to the volunteer's satisfaction, the volunteer may elevate their concern to the CEO. If the issue is not resolved at this point, the volunteer can contact the Board of Director's Chair.

Conflict with Other Professionals Resolution Procedure:

- Meet with Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator
 - If a volunteer disagrees with any action taken by a caseworker, GAL, or other professional or party to the case, the volunteer should first contact the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator on the case to express concern.
- Contact the Professional directly
 - With the assistance of the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator, the volunteer should contact the professional with whom he or she has a conflict to discuss possible resolutions or compromises. If the volunteer and Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator believe that the Professional has engaged in inappropriate or unethical behavior, the Advocate Supervisor/Peer Coordinator should contact the Professional's direct supervisor or manager to issue a complaint. In certain situations, the volunteer may want to include information regarding the misconduct in court reports.

Grievance by an individual against the CASA program:

CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties is committed to creating an environment that values excellence in all aspects of its mission. At any time a caregiver, community partner, or child believes any volunteer or employee of CASA has not acted in a manner that reflects that value; the following procedure may be used to address the concern.

- Call or email the Program Director. Upon receiving the information, the Program Director will determine the next step. The main CASA number is 720-523-2855 and you will be provided with direct contact information.

Grievance by an individual against a volunteer:

- First, attempt to resolve the concern with the volunteer's direct supervisor. If you do not know the name of the volunteer's supervisor, call the main CASA number at 720-523-2855 and ask who the volunteer's supervisor is.
- If there is not a satisfactory resolution with the volunteer's supervisor, the Program Director can be contacted at the office number above.
- The third level of resolution is the Chief Executive Officer.
- If a grievance is brought against a volunteer, that information, including the outcome of the action, will be retained in the volunteer's file as well as in the database.

Grievance by a volunteer against a party to the case:

- If the two individuals are unable to reach a resolution, the volunteer will discuss the matter with their Advocate Supervisor who will determine the next step.

Grievance of a volunteer against a CASA staff:

- If the two individuals are unable to reach a resolution, the volunteer will discuss the matter with the next person in the chain of command. The CASA Chain of Command is as follows:
 - Peer Coordinator
 - Advocate Supervisor
 - Program Manager
 - Program Director
 - CEO
 - Board of Directors

Social Media

Social media, when used thoughtfully, can be a powerful way to raise awareness, build support, and strengthen the CASA community. A respectful and careful approach to online interactions helps protect the reputation of CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties and the children and families it serves.

CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties encourages staff, board members, and volunteers to share their passion for the mission online, but it is essential that everyone understands what is expected when discussing CASA-related topics, whether during CASA activities or on personal time. The organization's work depends on the community's trust and support, and it is critical to share the CASA story responsibly while protecting confidentiality.

General Policy

Advocates and staff shall refrain from posting inappropriate material, links to inappropriate websites, or undesirable comments, references, or pictures anywhere online where the posting directly or indirectly makes reference to CASA or any name meant to refer to the organization. Anyone found to be in violation of this policy may be sanctioned at the discretion of CASA management staff.

This policy includes public postings to any electronic media including, but not limited to, intranet and internet forums, blogs, weblogs, photo blogs, social networking/online web communities, social media platforms, listservs, internet diaries, instant messaging, text messaging, podcasts, amateur video sites, and all web postings – such as those in chat rooms, on bulletin boards, websites or web pages. Wikis, public/shared email, online compilations of photographs or videos, and links to any of the foregoing items are also prohibited.

Online Communications and Social Media Expectations

Maintain appropriate CASA boundaries. In the interest of upholding confidentiality and maintaining appropriate boundaries between advocates and youth, volunteers are prohibited from connecting with/friending/following your youth on personal social media platforms.

- Do not search/monitor the social media accounts of CASA youth or others involved in the case using your personal social media account.
- Do not private message your CASA youth or others involved in your case on social media.
- Do not use location tracking apps (e.g.; "find my friends," Life 360, etc) to monitor the location of your CASA child(ren).
- Do not post pictures of your CASA youth on social media.
- Do not "check in" (share your location on social media) at your CASA youth's placement, when you are in court for a hearing, or when on an outing with them.
- Do not discuss your CASA youth, providers on the case, or details related to the case on social media.

Never Reveal Confidential Information

Sharing stories that illustrate the value of CASA advocacy for children is often the most powerful way to engage the public in our cause. However, the sharing of confidential information about the children and families CASA serves is prohibited. This includes names, ages, locations, case-specific details, time-specific statements, and photographs.

Additionally, it is prohibited to post and share internal reports, policies, procedures, or other confidential internal communications from your work as a CASA.

No confidential or identifying details about CASA cases, children, families or other parties involved may be shared. Photos of children or families served by CASA must never be posted.

General stories or experiences may be shared only if they are completely non-identifiable and respectful. Broad terms should always be used to protect privacy.

Use Good Judgment

Refrain from including any inappropriate content, providing links to inappropriate websites, or including any inappropriate photos in postings or comments directly or indirectly referring to CASA, any individual associated with CASA, or your role with the organization.

Inappropriate material includes depictions or descriptions of illicit substances and/or their paraphernalia; underage drinking; harassing, hostile, false, or confidential information; and any other acts that violate local, state, or federal law and/or CASA statutes, rules, and regulations. Prejudice or discriminatory content is also prohibited. When using social media in connection with your capacity as an advocate take a moment to consider all online comments with respect to the above framework before posting. If there is any uncertainty about whether something is appropriate to post, it should not be posted.

Questions should be directed to the Program Director or CEO.

Be Transparent

Anyone sharing general information about CASA online should clearly identify themselves and their role (e.g., volunteer, staff member, board member). Communications should be written in the first person, and it must be clear that opinions expressed are personal and do not necessarily represent CASA unless the person is posting as part of their official duties.

Be Respectful and Accurate

All online posts should reflect CASA's values and reputation. Offensive, inflammatory, or divisive comments must be avoided. If incorrect information is posted, it should be corrected promptly. Any information shared must be truthful and accurate.

Keep It Positive and Constructive

Online platforms should never be used to publicly criticize CASA, its staff, families, case professionals, board members, donors, or other volunteers. Any concerns or suggestions should be communicated constructively through the proper internal channels.

Remember: The Internet is Permanent

Once something is posted online, it may remain accessible permanently, even after deletion. Everyone is expected to pause and think carefully before posting.

By following these guidelines, staff, board members, and volunteers help protect the children CASA serves and uphold the integrity and reputation of CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties.

Follow Copyright and Plagiarism Laws

All applicable copyright laws must be respected. Content created by others must not be posted without permission, except for brief quotations that fall under fair use.

Violation of Social Media Policy

Online content produced by CASA staff, volunteers, or board members in conflict with the above guidelines or including discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from your role with CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties.

Furthermore, retaliation or any negative action against any staff, volunteer, or board member for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating with an investigation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from your role with CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties.

Statements to the Public/Media

The CASA organization spokesperson shall always be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the Chair of the Board of Directors. All inquiries from the media (television, radio, press, digital press) or the public, court, agencies, and/or community organizations shall be referred to the CEO. This includes inquiries related to a CASA case, active or closed, and/or inquiries related to CASA policy, procedures, issues, or matters considered sensitive.

If advocates are contacted by a media representative for comment on behalf of CASA, advocates are expected to comply with the following policy:

- Say, "I am not an authorized spokesperson for CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties, but I can refer you to the right person. May I have your contact information to pass on to CASA?"
- Next, the advocate must provide the reporter's contact information to the CEO. The CEO will forward the information to the appropriate individual who will follow up with the media representative.

Advocates may never contact the media to attract attention to a case, even if it appears that a serious injustice has been done. Advocates may not repeat information to the press even if it has been previously stated in the media.

Equal Opportunity Clause

CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties shall not restrict its services or volunteer opportunities on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

Non-Discrimination Policy

CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties does not discriminate in the solicitation of business, employment or the recruitment or acceptance of volunteers on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, gender expression, gender variance, gender identity, age, marital or family status, pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, military status, physical or mental disability provided that an individual or company is qualified and meets the requirements established by the agency. CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties does not discriminate in providing advocacy services and support to at-risk children and youth on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, gender expression, gender variance, gender identity, age, marital or family status, pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, military status, physical or mental disability.

Background Check Policy

As part of the CASA Volunteer screening process, all CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties Volunteers will participate fully in various background checks. The required background checks that will be conducted on every CASA Volunteer applicant prior to acceptance as a CASA and before being sworn in and before the completion of the initial training program to include: FBI, CBI (Colorado Bureau of Investigation), other state and local checks, a Social Security Search, a 50 state Sexual Abuse Registry search, and Colorado TRAILS and other state abuse registries as needed. If a volunteer applicant has lived outside of Colorado in the past seven (7) years, then similar out-of-state background checks will also be conducted. The CASA program will conduct biennial background checks for all volunteers. CASA Volunteers must immediately notify the program of any criminal or civil charges filed against them.

Peer Coordinator Program



Peer coordinators are experienced, specially trained volunteers who step into a supervisory role to support other volunteers. They draw on their own experience as volunteers to provide support and guidance to other volunteers and offer resources and problem solving as issues arise. It is a cost-saving model that has helped our CASA program serve more children than we otherwise could with staff alone. Peer Coordinators are supervised by staff Peer Coordinator Supervisors.

We began this program in 2014 with five Peer Coordinators, and it has grown year over year to serve more than half of the children and volunteers served by our CASA program each year.

Role Description

Agency Mission: To provide volunteer advocacy and support for at-risk children and youth, empowering families to thrive.

Position: The Peer Coordinator position provides coaching and support to CASA Volunteers and Family Engagement Advocates to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and resources needed to provide effective advocacy for children.

Impact of Position: Advocates require and deserve competent coaching and support to provide effective and appropriate advocacy for children. CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties strives to offer support that maximizes each volunteer's strengths, while minimizing limitations.

Reports To: Peer Coordinator Supervisor, subject to Review after 60 days and annually.

Responsibilities to Advocate:

- Support and coach up to 10 volunteers by providing assistance and consultation as needed and when requested.
- If requested by the volunteer, accompany them on their first visit with the child and family.
- Review all case meetings with the volunteer and consult the Peer Coordinator Supervisor if needed.
- Review and edit CASA court reports and forward them to Peer Coordinator Supervisor to finalize and distribute.
- Support your volunteers by attending swearing in and appreciation events.
- Provide coaching, support and motivation as necessary to maintain and enhance advocacy.
- Remind the CASA Volunteers when court reports are due, to enter contact and training logs, and to complete wellbeing assessments.
- Enter PC supervision hours into Optima.
- Review and approve volunteer's contact logs and training logs.
- Intercede in a supportive and calm manner when external conflicts arise between the CASA and other parties and engage the PC Supervisor as needed.

Responsibilities to Advocate (cont.):

- Attend court hearings with your volunteer and other case-related meetings, as needed. If needed, stand in for the volunteer in the event of their absence.
- Visit the child(ren) if the CASA Volunteer has an extended leave of absence.
- Review cases with volunteers monthly, or more often if needed.
 - Consult with PC Supervisor to document the annual performance evaluation.
- Conduct a Case Closing with each assigned advocate at the termination of each case.
- Turn in expense reports in a timely fashion.

Responsibilities to Program:

- Remain in good standing as an Advocate of CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties.
- Familiarization with CASA Policies and Procedures including: Advocate Acceptance, Court Order of Appointment, Confidentiality Agreement, County Memorandums of Agreement and Advocate Handbook.
- Document the monthly review and other contacts with your volunteers in Optima.
- Review cases with Peer Coordinator Supervisor on a quarterly basis, or more often if needed.
- Notify Peer Coordinator Supervisor of critical events in a case.
- Track court hearings and confirm CASA Volunteer's attendance.
- Consult with Peer Coordinator Supervisor regarding volunteer performance concerns.
- Provide adequate notice to Peer Coordinator Supervisor for planned absences.
- Attend conferences, seminars, and meetings as requested by the PC Supervisor.

Commitment: Peer Coordinators will need to make a two-year commitment with the approximate monthly workload of 8-10 hours a month.

Qualifications:

- Experience – Must have served as an Advocate for CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties in good standing on at least 1 case, for at least 1 year.
- Professionalism – Follows through on commitments; Approaches others in a tactful manner; Reacts well under pressure; Treats others with respect and consideration regardless of their status or position; Accepts responsibility for own actions.
- Teamwork – Gives and welcomes feedback; Contributes to building a positive team spirit; Puts success of team above own interests; Able to build morale and group commitments to goals and objectives; Supports everyone's efforts to succeed.
- Communication – Speaks clearly and persuasively in positive or negative situations; Listens and gets clarification; Responds well to questions; Participates in meetings. Writes clearly and informatively; Edits work for spelling and grammar; Varies writing style to meet needs; Able to read and interpret written information.
- Delegation – Delegates and monitors work assignments of Advocates; Matches the responsibility to the person; Gives authority to work independently; Sets expectations; Provides recognition for results.
- Problem Solving – Identifies and resolves problems in a timely manner; Gathers and analyzes information skillfully; Develops alternative solutions.
- Planning/Organizing – Prioritizes and plans work activities; Uses time efficiently; Sets goals and objectives; Assists Advocates with organizing their tasks.

Qualifications (cont.):

- Interpersonal Skills – Focuses on solving conflict, not blaming; Listens to others without interrupting; Keeps emotions under control; Remains open to constructive feedback and others' ideas.
- Customer Service – Manages difficult or emotional Advocate situations; Responds promptly to Advocate needs; Solicits Advocate feedback to improve service; Facilitates communication.

Peer Coordinator FAQs

- Why was I asked to become a Peer Coordinator?
 - To be eligible, an advocate must have been a volunteer for at least one year and served on, or be serving on, at least one case. An advocate must be in good standing as a CASA volunteer and have the ability to make the required time commitment. The Program Director, PC Supervisors, and Peer Coordinators identify advocates that meet those criteria and have the qualities to make them a good PC. Such qualities include time availability and flexibility, good organizational skills, strong verbal and writing skills, critical thinking skills, and good listening skills.
- What if I am unsure I have enough experience in child welfare?
 - Learning the PC role is a combination of pre-service training and hands-on learning. Much like becoming an advocate, most of the learning occurs on the job. PCs (Peer Coordinators) complete 3 hours of pre-service training that includes coaching skills, knowledge of the D&N and Truancy court process, and court report editing. Each PC is assigned to a Peer Coordinator Supervisor responsible for on-going coaching, training and support. The PC Supervisor and PC have a collaborative relationship and speak regularly to discuss volunteer challenges/successes and case issues. In addition, the PC Supervisors hold quarterly meetings attended by PCs, PC Supervisors, Program Director and occasionally CEO, and encourage PC participation in many staff trainings and events.
- I am still on an open case; will I have to give it up?
 - No. In fact, our expectation is that you will continue to advocate on your own case until it is finished. After your case closes, you may elect to carry your own case simultaneously while doing PC casework so long as it does not interfere with your ability to supervise cases.
- How many cases will I be responsible for supervising?
 - The average number of cases under a PC supervisor is 7-10. After training, you will start with 2 or 3 cases and gradually increase the number as your availability and program needs evolve. You and your supervisor will determine together how many cases you will be assigned.
- What is the time commitment if I choose to become a Peer Coordinator?
 - On average, PCs spend 8-10 hours per month on case related activities, depending on how many advocates they supervise. This includes talking with advocates, editing court reports, attending court hearings, etc. PCs are encouraged to meet with each of their advocates once a month, either at court or in the community to offer support and discuss the case and any challenges/successes either party is having.

- How long must I commit to being a Peer Coordinator?
 - We ask for a commitment of 2 years as a Peer Coordinator. If the supervisor and PC agree, PCs are welcome to serve much longer than that.
- I travel; will that impede me from becoming a Peer Coordinator?
 - It is important to take vacations and travel. Your supervisor will cover your cases for you while you are away. We ask that you communicate your travel plans to your supervisor in advance to best prepare your supervisor to take over in your absence. However, if you regularly travel for more than 2 weeks at a time, you may have difficulty meeting the expectations of the Peer Coordinator role.
- I have a full-time job; will that impede me from becoming a Peer Coordinator?
 - No! We have a combination of PCs who work and those who do not. Other than attending court, most of the work can be done outside of normal business hours. With a combination of flexibility from your workplace and good communication with your supervisor, it is possible to do both. While attending hearings with your advocates is important, sometimes missing one is understandable. We ask that you communicate that ahead of time with both your advocate and your supervisor, and your supervisor will obtain court coverage for you.
- Will I still get to interact with children?
 - As a PC, your main interaction will be with advocates. Occasionally you may meet the child at a staffing or if you are filling in for the advocate on a home visit. However, unlike advocacy, your role is to create a relationship with the advocate and not the child.
- Are there any monetary benefits to becoming a PC?
 - Peer Coordinators are unpaid volunteers. However, CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties does offer a \$15 per month cell phone stipend to PCs. In addition, you may submit an expense report each month to be reimbursed for case related mileage and coffee/lunch with advocates. PCs are responsible for tracking their mileage and submitting an expense report and receipts to their PC Supervisor each month to be reimbursed and paid the cell phone stipend.

VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The volunteer policy handbook describes important information about CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties, and I understand that I should consult the Program Director or CEO regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my volunteer relationship with CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties voluntarily and acknowledge that the specified length of service is the duration of my CASA case.

Accordingly, either I or CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties, can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time, so long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state law.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur, except to CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties policy of termination-at-will. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Only the CEO of CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties has the ability to adopt revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

VOLUNTEER NAME (PRINTED)

VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE

DATE