

Arizona Supreme Court  
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program

**ADMINISTRATIVE CODE  
AND POLICIES MANUAL  
FY05 REVISED EDITION**

**AN ARIZONA CASA PROGRAM  
RESOURCE LIBRARY PUBLICATION**

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**Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program**

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**ARIZONA CODE OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**  
**Part 7: Administrative Office of the Court Programs**  
**Chapter 1: Dependent Children's Services**  
**Section 7-101: Court Appointed Special Advocate Program**

**A. Definitions.** In this section, the following definitions apply:

“Assigned judge” means the judge who hears a particular dependency case to which a CASA volunteer is appointed.

“CASA” means Court Appointed Special Advocate.

“County program staff” means all county coordinators and county support staff of the CASA program.

“DCATS” means Dependent Children Automated Tracking System, a database system.

“Disposition” means the final outcome of a criminal charge.

“Director” means the administrative director of the Administrative Office of the Court and the director’s designee.

“*In camera inspection*” means a judge’s inspection in chambers of a document which is the subject of a request for disclosure before ruling on its release.

“Manager” means the program manager of the CASA program administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

“State program office”<sup>@</sup> means the office responsible to administer the CASA program statewide.

**B. Applicability.**

1. The CASA program is established in the Administrative Office of the Court. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-523 the program shall establish local CASA programs in each county. The supreme court is to adopt rules prescribing the establishment of local programs and the minimum performance standards of these programs.
2. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-522(B) the supreme court shall certify special advocates pursuant to rules adopted by the court. Court rules for certification shall include compliance with qualification standards prescribed by the court.

**C. Purpose.** The purpose of the CASA program is to administer and provide oversight to a community-based volunteer advocacy program in the juvenile court for abused and neglected children.

#### **D. General Administration.**

1. The supreme court shall administer and maintain the CASA program. The court shall adopt rules and procedures necessary to implement the program, including qualification standards.
2. The director shall prepare fiscal projections, create a budget, allocate and expend funds for administrative costs and projects associated with the CASA program. The director is authorized to execute funding agreements and approve distribution to local programs.
3. The director shall appoint a manager. The manager shall oversee the implementation and administration of the CASA program which includes the daily management and supervision of state program office staff. The manager shall oversee the development and maintenance of all program performance criteria to include policies, procedures, recommended job descriptions, manuals, and other necessary materials.
4. The manager shall oversee training for all staff to include state program office staff, county program staff, and volunteers.
5. The state program office shall obtain and review all applicant criminal history records from the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Based upon this review the state program office shall:
  - a. Indicate the applicant has successfully completed this aspect of the screening process;
  - b. Forward the information to the county program office where the applicant is required to provide additional information before continuing the screening process;
  - c. Recommend denial of certification of the applicant if the applicant has not successfully completed this aspect of the screening process.
6. The state program office shall obtain, review, and make recommendations to the county program office regarding all applicant Department of Motor Vehicle (MVD) record information.
7. The state program office obtains, reviews, and makes recommendations regarding certification based on the review of the Department of Economic Security (DES) central registry.
8. The manager shall maintain a central list of all certified volunteers and issue them identification badges.
9. The manager may conduct investigations as specified in 7-101(N) of this code section.

10. The manager shall review all county programs. At a minimum the review shall assess each program's compliance with:
  - a. Arizona statutes, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court, administrative orders, rules, this code, and program policies and procedures; and
  - b. Case and volunteer file standards.
11. The state and county program staff shall not solicit donations.
12. All state and county program staff and volunteers shall comply with applicable statutes described in A.R.S. § 8-807, § 41-1959, Arizona Rules of Court, including, but not limited to Rule 123, Rules of the Supreme Court, and administrative rules regarding confidentiality.

**E. Budget Request Preparation.** The presiding judge or designee shall submit in writing to the director or designee a budget request and program plan to establish and maintain a county program. The manager shall annually supply each presiding judge or designee a budget request and program plan together with instructions for applying for funds appropriated to the supreme court pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-524. To the extent funds are available, the director shall allocate funds to meet the need for certifying volunteers pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-522(B).

**F. Program Plan and Financial Management.**

1. The county program shall:
  - a. Provide to the manager an annual budget request and program plan;
  - b. Submit quarterly progress reports to the state program office by the 5th day of the new quarter (October, January, April, and July);
  - c. Submit quarterly financial statements to the state program office by the 30th day of the new quarter (October, January, and April);
  - d. Submit a closing financial statement (year-end) to the state program office by August 15. Revertment shall be received annually at the state program office by August 31; and
  - e. Provide additional financial reports as directed by the manager (for example, "mid-year vacancy savings report").
2. The county program staff shall enter all DCATS statistical information on cases and volunteers on at least a monthly basis.
3. The county program staff shall reimburse volunteers for per diem and mileage costs for attending the mandatory initial orientation training, to the extent funds are available and according to state travel policies. The county coordinator may authorize reimbursement for volunteer training and extraordinary travel expenditures if funds are available, and according to state travel policies.

## **G. County Program Operations.**

1. The county program shall give priority to appointment of volunteers in dependency matters over delinquency or incorrigibility matters.
2. The program shall screen every dependency case, and any delinquency case if referred, to determine if the case is appropriate for appointment to a volunteer and to make effective matches of volunteers to cases.
3. An outside individual or agency (for example: DES, attorneys, private parties, law enforcement, etc.) shall not review any volunteer or case files unless a subpoena and an order of the presiding judge or designee has been issued.
4. Upon receipt of a subpoena, the county coordinator shall deliver a complete duplicate of the file to the presiding judge or designee for *in camera* inspection. The county coordinator shall not permit a file to be viewed without an order.
5. If a CASA volunteer testifies at a hearing before a judge or at a jury trial and uses contact logs or any portion of the volunteer's file that have not been the subject of a subpoena, any disclosure to the parties shall be ordered by the court.
6. If county staff or volunteers suspect the safety and well-being of a child is at risk, they shall report that information immediately to CPS as mandated in A.R.S. § 13-3620.
7. The county coordinator shall ensure that upon voluntarily or involuntarily leaving the program, volunteers return identification badges and all case-related materials.
8. The county coordinator shall not accept appointment as a CASA volunteer.
9. The county program shall review, maintain, and take action regarding MVD records as required by the state program office.
10. The county program shall submit completed applicant fingerprint cards to the DPS for a criminal history records check, pursuant to A.R.S. § 41-1750, 28 CFR, Part 20, and any other applicable federal laws.

11. In the event that definitive fingerprints are not obtainable, the county coordinator shall require the applicant to make a written statement, under oath, that the applicant has not been arrested, charged, indicted, convicted of or pled guilty to any felony or misdemeanor, other than as disclosed on the application, through the interview process, or polygraph exam. The county coordinator has the option to recommend that certification of a volunteer be granted or denied, even if this statement is provided.
12. If a volunteer has a record of conviction of a violation of A.R.S. § 28-1381, § 28-1382, or § 28-1383 driving under the influence (DUI), the county program shall prohibit the volunteer from driving any vehicle to transport children, staff, or any other individuals in the course and scope of CASA duties for a period of no less than five (5) years.
13. All county program staff and volunteers shall adhere to the ACJA § 7-101, the CASA code of conduct attached hereto and incorporated herein as Appendix A, and the program policies.
  - a. All county program staff and volunteers shall receive a copy of this code section and CASA program policies and procedures. Each county program staff and volunteer shall sign and date an acknowledgment of receipt and agreement to comply with these documents. The signed acknowledgment shall be placed in the staff member or volunteer's file.
  - b. All county program staff and volunteers shall avoid any action which could adversely affect the confidence of the public in the integrity of the CASA program. They shall not conduct themselves in a manner that would reflect adversely on the judiciary, the courts, or other agencies involved in the administration of justice.
14. All county program staff shall immediately notify the county coordinator or supervisor and volunteers shall immediately notify the county coordinator if:
  - a. They are the subject of an allegation or investigation in any criminal matter;
  - b. They have been arrested or charged in any criminal matter;
  - c. It is alleged in a civil, probate, domestic relations, or dependency matter or other court case that they have sexually assaulted, exploited, or physically abused any child or vulnerable adult;
  - d. They have been found in any professional licensing disciplinary board's final decision to have sexually or physically abused or exploited any minor, developmentally disabled person, or vulnerable adult;
  - e. They have engaged in an act listed in I(2)(a)(d);

- f. They are currently awaiting trial for criminal offenses listed in I(1)(e)(f)(g)(h) and I(2)(b)(c)(e) in this state or in another state or jurisdiction; and
  - g. They have been convicted of a criminal offense listed in I(e)(f)(g)(h). They have engaged in any behavior listed in I(1)(h)(i)(j)(k)(l)(m)(n) and (o).
15. Either the county coordinator or supervisor shall immediately notify the state program office if:
- a. They are the subject of any action listed in 14 (a-g) above; and
  - b. County program staff or volunteers have reported to the county coordinator that they are the subject of an action listed in 14 (a-g) above.
16. County program staff using county computers shall adhere to the ACJA § 1-503; Electronic Communications. CASA volunteers shall not transmit confidential information via home computers unless transmission is through the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) secure web server.

**H. Initial Certification and Application Process.**

1. Qualifications of the Volunteer. A volunteer shall meet the following qualifications:
  - a. U.S. citizen or legal resident;
  - b. Not employed by DES, the juvenile court, or child welfare agencies, unless specifically authorized by the juvenile court judge; and
  - c. At least twenty-one years of age.
2. Volunteer Application Process. A volunteer shall complete the following application process within ninety (90) days of the application date unless a good cause extension is obtained from the county coordinator:
  - a. Complete an application;
  - b. Provide the program with a readable fingerprint card or a notarized criminal disclosure statement as provided in subsection (G)(11) if definitive fingerprints are not obtainable. If the criminal history results do not show a disposition, it is the applicant's obligation to obtain documentation regarding the disposition which is acceptable to the program;
  - c. Complete a personal interview with the county coordinator;
  - d. Provide three non-relative personal references;
  - e. Complete a polygraph examination;

- f. Sign and date a statement indicating the volunteer has read, understands, and shall comply with all statutes, Arizona Rules of Court, this code, administrative orders, and policies and procedures of the CASA program;
  - g. Sign and date a pre-screening criteria form;
  - h. Attend 30 hours of initial Orientation Training (OT); and
  - i. Authorize the CASA program to secure a criminal history record check, MVD record check, and DES central registry information check as permitted by state and federal laws.
3. The CASA program shall reject the applicant if the applicant refuses to authorize a release of information to complete background checks.
4. Notification of Certification. The county coordinator shall promptly notify the applicant accepted for certification in accordance with this code section.
5. Volunteers who have been certified to enter the program and who transport children shall at all times maintain current automobile coverage. Volunteers shall provide proof of automobile insurance and any additional requirements set by the AOC to the county program office on an annual basis.
6. Access to records of applicants and volunteers. Unless otherwise provided by law, the following shall apply to applicant and volunteer records:
  - a. Program records regarding applicants and volunteers shall not be open to applicants, volunteers, or the public. This includes, but is not limited to, the application, polygraph examination, interview notes, criminal history record information, DES central registry information check, personal references, and MVD record check.
  - b. Upon request, the county program shall provide an applicant or volunteer with a copy of the applicant's or volunteer's individual application. Notes or work product of county staff shall be redacted.
  - c. The county coordinator shall notify applicants or volunteers of the general facts regarding a finding without providing specific information on the following:
    1. Criminal record;
    2. Negative MVD record; or
    3. Record in the DES central registry.

## **I. Denial of Certification.**

1. The county coordinator shall deny certification if any of the following conditions exist:
  - a. The applicant has not completed any aspect of the application process;
  - b. The applicant has not been fingerprinted, the county coordinator has not received the criminal background check, MVD records check, or the DES central registry information check;
  - c. The applicant has not completed the training requirements;
  - d. The applicant materially misrepresented facts or committed fraud in the application process;
  - e. The applicant has been convicted of any of the following criminal offenses as an adult:
    - (1) Sexual abuse of a minor
    - (2) Incest
    - (3) First or second degree murder
    - (4) Kidnapping
    - (5) Arson
    - (6) Sexual assault
    - (7) Sexual exploitation of a minor
    - (8) Felony offenses involving contributing to the delinquency of a minor
    - (9) Commercial sexual exploitation of a minor
    - (10) Felony offenses involving sale, distribution or transportation of, offer to sell, transport or distribute or conspiracy to sell, transport or distribute marijuana, dangerous drugs or narcotic drugs
    - (11) Felony offenses involving the possession or use of marijuana, dangerous drugs, or narcotic drugs
    - (12) Burglary
    - (13) Aggravated or armed robbery
    - (14) Robbery
    - (15) A dangerous crime against children as defined in § 13-604.01
    - (16) Child abuse
    - (17) Sexual conduct with a minor
    - (18) Molestation of a child
    - (19) Manslaughter
    - (20) Assault or aggravated assault
    - (21) Exploitation of minors involving drug offenses
    - (22) Offenses involving domestic violence
    - (23) Sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult

- f. The applicant has charges pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related acts that would pose risks to children served by the CASA program and the program's credibility.
- g. The applicant has been found to have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse, neglect, related acts or any other crimes against children.
- h. The applicant has been found in any civil probate, domestic relations, dependency or other court matter to have:
  - (1) Sexually abused or assaulted;
  - (2) Physically abused or assaulted; or
  - (3) Financially exploited any child or vulnerable adult.
- i. The applicant has been found in any professional licensing disciplinary board's final decision to have:
  - (1) Sexually abused or assaulted;
  - (2) Physically abused or assaulted; or
  - (3) Financially exploited any child or vulnerable adult.
- j. The applicant is currently a waiting trial for criminal offenses in this state or in another state or jurisdiction as listed in subsections I(1)(e)(f)(g)(h) and I(2)(b)(c)(e).
- k. The applicant is currently using or has used within the past two (2) years any non-prescribed controlled substances and/or illegal drugs, including marijuana.
- l. The applicant is the parent or guardian of a child currently in the dependency process or adjudicated to be dependent.
- m. The applicant or volunteer has a record in the DES central registry of substantiated acts of abuse or neglect.

2. The county coordinator may deny or recommend denial of certification if one or more of the following is found:
  - a. The applicant has a record of any act constituting dishonesty or fraud;
  - b. The applicant has a record of conviction by final judgment of any felony;
  - c. The applicant has a record of conviction by final judgment of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude;
  - d. The applicant has been found civilly liable in an action involving fraud, misrepresentation, material omission, misappropriation, or conversion;
  - e. Applicant has been convicted of a violation of A.R.S. § 28-1381, § 28-1382, § 28-1383; and
  - f. In determining whether to allow an applicant with the conduct or convictions listed in subsections (1)(2)(a-e) above to be certified, the county coordinator shall consider the following:
    - (1) The extent of the person's criminal or conduct record;
    - (2) The length of time that has elapsed since the offense or conduct was committed;
    - (3) The nature of the offense or conduct;
    - (4) Any applicable mitigating circumstances;
    - (5) The degree to which the person participated in the offense or conduct;
    - (6) The extent of the person's rehabilitation, including:
      - (a) Completion of probation, parole or community supervision;
      - (b) Whether the person paid restitution or other compensation for the offense or conduct;
      - (c) Evidence of positive action to change the conduct or criminal behavior, such as completion of a drug treatment program or counseling; and
      - (d) Personal references attesting to the person's rehabilitation.

3. Notification of Denial.
  - a. The county coordinator shall promptly notify the applicant denied certification in accordance with this code section. If the applicant is denied, only general reasons shall be given for the denial. If denial is due to a positive criminal history, that general fact may be disclosed.
  - b. The applicant shall be advised that if the volunteer application is denied, the applicant may have the decision reviewed by the presiding juvenile court judge upon request.

**J. Volunteer Status.**

1. A volunteer serves at the pleasure of the court. The court may terminate the services of a volunteer without cause. The county coordinator shall take action toward any volunteer not adhering to the minimum performance standards of the CASA program, which may include limitations on types of cases, suspension, or termination.
2. A volunteer shall have access to documents and information pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-522(F):

A special advocate shall have access to all documents and information regarding the child and the child's family without obtaining prior approval of the child, the child's family or the court. All records and information the special advocate acquires, reviews or products may only be disclosed as provided for in § 41-1959.
3. A.R.S. § 8-522(G) provides for notice to the CASA volunteer as follows:

The special advocate shall receive notice of all hearings, staffings, investigations and other matters concerning the child. The special advocate shall have a right to participate in the formulation of any agreement, stipulation or case plan entered into regarding the child.
4. A volunteer shall be on active status if the volunteer engages in any of the following activities:
  - a. Appointed to a dependency or juvenile probation case;
  - b. Involved in the administrative aspect of the county program office;
  - c. Serving as a mentor to other volunteers; or
  - d. Otherwise regularly involved with the county program.
5. Volunteers who are active but not assigned cases, shall provide a minimum of three hours per month in organized program activities and shall document those activities monthly.

6. A volunteer may be placed on inactive status if all of the following conditions are met:
  - a. Approved by the county coordinator, for no longer than six months;
  - b. Not currently appointed to a dependency or juvenile probation case;
  - c. Not involved in the administrative aspect of the county program office;
  - d. Not a mentor to other volunteers; and
  - e. Not otherwise regularly involved with the county program.
7. While on inactive status, the volunteer shall:
  - a. Provide performance-based assessment reviews.
  - b. Comply with the required in-service training each calendar year.

**K. Volunteer Minimum Performance Standards.**

1. The volunteer shall perform functions set out in A.R.S. § 8-522(E) and in state and local policies. A.R.S. § 8-522(E) provides:

A special advocate shall:

  - a. Meet with the child.
  - b. Advocate for the child's safety as the first priority
  - c. Gather and provide independent, factual information to aid the court in making its decision regarding what is in the child's best interest and in determining if reasonable efforts have been made to prevent removal of the child from the child's home or to reunite the child with the child's family.
  - d. Provide advocacy to ensure that appropriate case planning and services are provided for the child.
  - e. Perform other duties prescribed by the supreme court by rule.
2. A volunteer shall accept appointments in dependency, guardianship, termination, delinquency, and incorrigibility actions pursuant to Rule 3, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court and A.R.S. § 8-522(A).
3. A volunteer shall accept appointments as guardians ad litem pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-221(I) and Rule 40, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court and A.R.S. § 8-522(A).

4. A volunteer shall comply with Arizona statutes, Arizona Rules of Court, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court, administrative orders, rules, this code, and program policies and procedures.
5. A.R.S. § 8-522(H) provides: “A special advocate is immune from civil or criminal liability for the advocate’s acts or omissions in connection with the authorized responsibilities the special advocate performs in good faith.”
6. A volunteer shall comply with state program policies regarding training requirements.
7. A volunteer shall comply with state program policies regarding performance-based assessment reviews.

**L. Recertification Process.** If a volunteer leaves the CASA program for up to one year and is eligible for return, the volunteer shall, at a minimum, attend the initial orientation training. If a volunteer leaves the program for more than one year and is eligible for return, the volunteer shall repeat the application process.

**M. Ongoing Requirements for Continuing Certification.**

1. By December 31st every other calendar year starting with 2005 volunteers shall:
  - a. Sign a statement under oath that the volunteer has not been arrested, charged, indicted, convicted of, or pled guilty to, any felony or misdemeanor since the volunteer’s last certification;
  - b. Sign a statement that the volunteer has not engaged in any conduct that would be grounds to deny certification.
  - c. Authorize the CASA program to secure a criminal history records check, MVD records check, and DES central registry information check as permitted by state and federal laws; and
  - d. Provide proof of automobile insurance and any additional requirements set by the AOC if the volunteer is driving any vehicle to transport children, staff, or any other individuals in the course and scope of CASA duties.
2. The county coordinator may recommend that the volunteer’s certification continue based on the volunteer statement provided in compliance with M(1)(a–d).

## **N. Complaint Process.**

1. The structure of the CASA program allows complaints to come in at three different levels. Complaints may be made to the manager, presiding judge or designee, or the county coordinator.
2. All judicial officers and state and county program staff shall, and any person may, notify the county coordinator if it appears that a volunteer has violated Arizona statutes, Rules of Court, including Rules of Procedure of the Juvenile Court, this code, administrative orders, rules, or program policies.
3. All complaints shall be in writing with sufficient specificity to warrant further investigation. The name and telephone number of the complainant shall also be provided.
4. Investigations may be conducted at any of the three levels designated in N(1) and may be for the following purposes:
  - a. To determine whether a volunteer has violated this code section or other applicable statutes, rules, and policies;
  - b. To determine whether a complaint is valid; or
  - c. To secure information useful in the administration of the program or this code section.
5. While an investigation is pending, the county coordinator may seek a temporary order from the assigned judge, the presiding juvenile court judge, or designee, suspending the volunteer from duties as a CASA volunteer.
6. Any investigation under this provision shall be reported to all three levels designated in N(1).
7. Upon review of all evidence, the investigator shall make a report and recommendation to the presiding judge or designee for resolution of the complaint. The investigator, upon receiving judicial resolution of the complaint, shall inform the parties designated in N(1).
8. The county coordinator shall document any complaints in the volunteer's file and send a copy to the state program office. Information and documentation shall be confidential and available only for use in considering volunteer's continuing certification for review by the manager.
9. If the complaint involves alleged criminal activity as listed in, but not limited to, this code section, or immediate or potential danger to a child, the investigator shall promptly forward the written complaint and all other investigative progress reports to the parties designated in N(1).

**O. Dismissal from Case or Termination of a Volunteer from Program.**

1. Upon completion of the complaint process, the county coordinator shall refer any recommendation regarding discipline to the presiding judge or designee. The presiding judge or designee shall take action up to and including dismissal from the program.
2. Grounds for dismissal or termination of a volunteer from the program include but are not limited to:
  - a. Taking action that endangers the child or is outside the role of the statutory authority of the CASA program;
  - b. Failing to adhere to Arizona statutes, Rules of Court including the Procedures of the Juvenile Court, ACJA, administrative orders, rules, and program policies;
  - c. Failing to demonstrate an ability to effectively carry out assigned duties;
  - d. Falsifying the application or misrepresenting facts during the screening process;
  - e. A finding against the volunteer of child abuse or neglect by a court or any authorized governmental agency;
  - f. Existing conflict of interest which cannot be resolved;
  - g. Allowing the appointed child to visit the volunteer's home or stay overnight with the volunteer unless specifically ordered by the court; and
  - h. Any action that would have required initial denial of certification as a CASA volunteer.
3. A volunteer shall be suspended immediately following an allegation of existing child abuse and neglect against the volunteer.
  - a. A volunteer shall be suspended immediately pending a determination of alleged child abuse or neglect;
  - b. A volunteer shall be suspended immediately pending an investigation of an allegation of conduct that would be grounds for mandatory or discretionary denial of certification.
4. A volunteer shall be dismissed immediately if there has been a judicial or administrative determination of abuse or neglect.
5. A volunteer shall be dismissed immediately if the volunteer uses illegal drugs or alcohol while performing CASA duties.

*Adopted by Administrative Order 2000-85 effective November 28, 2000. Amended by Administrative Order 2001-108 effective October 31, 2001. Amended by Administrative Order 2005-13 effective February 3, 2005.*

**Section 7-101: Court Appointed Special Advocate Program**  
**Appendix A**  
**Volunteer Code of Conduct**

**Preamble.** This Code of Conduct is adopted by the Arizona Supreme Court to apply to all certified Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers in the state of Arizona. The purpose of this code is to establish minimum standards for performance by certified CASA volunteers.

1. The volunteer shall perform only authorized responsibilities pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-522(e). Those responsibilities include:
  - a. Meet with the child;
  - b. Advocate for the child's safety as the first priority;
  - c. Gather and provide independent, factual information to aid the court in making its decision regarding what is in the child's best interest and in determining if reasonable efforts have been made to prevent removal of the child from the child's home or to reunite the child with the child's family;
  - d. Provide advocacy to ensure that appropriate case planning and services are provided for the child.
2. The volunteer who performs activities other than those authorized in (1)(a-d) above, shall only do so pursuant to supreme court rule.
3. The volunteer shall consult with the county coordinator to resolve any ethical issues that arise.
4. The volunteer shall serve and respond to requests without bias of race, religion, sex, age, national origin, or physical impairment.
5. Before appointment to a case the volunteer shall disclose to the county coordinator or court any pre-existing relationship with a child or the child's family that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.
6. The volunteer shall, at all times, perform authorized functions in a professional and impartial manner.
7. The volunteer shall not use or attempt to use the volunteer's official position to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions.
8. The volunteer shall not request or accept any fee or compensation in the course of CASA volunteer service.

9. The volunteer shall use public resources, property, and funds under the volunteer's control responsibly and for the purpose intended by law and not for any private use.
10. The volunteer shall comply with applicable statutes described in A.R.S. § 8-707. § 41-1959, Arizona Rules of Court; including, but not limited to Rule 123, Rules of the Supreme Court, and Administrative Rules regarding confidentiality.
11. The volunteer shall not allow the appointed child to visit the volunteer's home or stay overnight with the volunteer unless specifically ordered by the court with prior approval of the CPS supervisor, CPS case manager, and county coordinator.
12. The volunteer shall not be related to any parties involved in the case or be employed in a position/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest.
13. The volunteer shall not engage in the following activities:
  - a. Give legal or medical advice;
  - b. Provide therapeutic counseling;
  - c. Provide health care services;
  - d. Make placement arrangements for the child;
  - e. Give money or gifts of value over \$10 to the child or family;
  - f. Solitary excursions to isolated places involving only the CASA volunteer and the appointed child; and
  - g. Perform home studies for out-of-state or in-state agencies.

## **PREFACE FOR PROGRAM POLICIES**

The Arizona Supreme Court CASA Program is very pleased to provide these policies and procedures to juvenile court judges, supervisors of CASA county programs, county program staff, and CASA volunteers.

Initially, when the first program was established in 1985 under the auspices of the Arizona Supreme Court, the Maricopa CASA Program and those that followed, operated with the guidelines set forth by the National CASA Association (NCASAA).

In May 1994, policies and procedures were adopted incorporating those NCASAA operational guidelines as well as Arizona statutes, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court, Administrative Orders, Rules, Arizona Code of Judicial Administration (ACJA), and program policies and procedures.

The Arizona CASA Program adheres to the standards set by the National CASA Association and continues to be in good standing with that organization. The state program office provides all county programs with a membership in the National CASA Association.

### **MISSION**

Our mission is to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are involved in the juvenile courts.

We promote and support community-based volunteers, certified by the Supreme Court, who provide quality advocacy to help assure each child a safe, permanent, nurturing home.

### **VISION**

**Change** the world...**Invest** in the future...**Bring** the gift of hope  
to all abused and neglected children—*one child at a time*.

### **VALUES**

- We will provide independent, objective, factual information to the juvenile court through quality court reports.
- We will be an active participant in the child's case management team.
- We will keep our commitment to the children.
- We will conduct ourselves and our work with competency and professionalism.
- We will be persistent in our work.
- We will continue to improve ourselves through education and experience in order to improve the lives of the children we serve.

## **General Administration**

1. The state program manager (Manager) shall oversee training for all staff to include state program office, county program staff, and volunteers.
  - a. The Manager shall review the training and its ongoing development at least annually and shall revise the trainings offered based on the Arizona CASA Program's assessment of its training needs.
  - b. The Manager shall use a variety of instructors, including, but not limited to program staff, attorneys, judges, agency representatives, and volunteers.
2. Pursuant to (A.R.S.) § 8-523, the Manager shall review all county programs. At a minimum the review shall assess each program's compliance with:
  - a. Arizona statutes, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court, Administrative Orders, Rules, Arizona Code of Judicial Administration (ACJA), and program policies, procedures, and performance standards.
  - b. Case and volunteer file standards.
  - c. There will be a periodic review that shall include, but not be limited to:
    - (1) A site visit to each county program office to review specific program files.
    - (2) A summary report evaluating minimum performance standards which shall be given to all appropriate judicial officers, administrators, and county program staff.
    - (3) A response by the county program staff with corrective action plans and time frames for compliance shall be required in the final written report.
3. As funding allows, the state program office shall provide a statewide conference or regional training to county program staff and volunteers.
4. The state program office shall provide New Staff Orientation Training, as stated in the Training chapter of this manual, to all new county program staff.
5. As funding allows and program needs require, the state program office shall conduct quarterly administrative meetings for county coordinators. One county coordinator per county shall attend administrative meetings. Of these administrative meetings, at least one shall include training for county coordinators and one for all state and county program staff. Brief records of meetings shall be completed after each meeting. Meeting records shall be maintained according to Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) records retention policies and code.
6. The state program office shall provide Dependent Children Automated Tracking System (DCATS) training to all designated program staff.

7. The state program office shall provide Orientation Training (OT) to volunteers. OT shall meet the required volunteer in-service training hours for the first calendar year.
8. The state program office shall provide specialized mentor training to new mentor volunteers. Training shall meet some of the requirements of the annual in-service training hours per calendar year.
9. The state program office shall develop and provide standardized and required forms to all county programs.
10. The Arizona Code of Judicial Administration, Part 7, Chapter 1, Section 7-101 states that "...All state and county program staff and volunteers shall comply with applicable statutes described in A.R.S. § 8-807, § 41-1959, Arizona Rules of Court, including, but not limited to Rule 123, Rules of the Supreme Court and administrative rules regarding confidentiality."

## Human Resources Management

1. Policies and procedures shall be established to address personnel issues. In the absence of county standards, the state standards shall apply.
2. The Arizona CASA Program complies with applicable laws and regulations governing fair employment practices.
3. Personnel records of county program staff shall be maintained by the county jurisdiction according to local court or county personnel policies.
2. The CASA Program shall make an effort to ensure that its facility is free of barriers that restrict the employment of or use by physically challenged employees.
5. At least annually, using a standardized evaluation form, the performance of the county program staff shall be evaluated by the designated supervisor. The evaluation shall review performance against established criteria with the county program staff being an active participant. Evaluations shall be consistent with local court and county personnel policies. Evaluations shall include, but are not limited to:
  - a. An assessment of job performance in relation to the quality and quantity of work defined in the job description and to the performance objectives established in the most recent evaluation.
  - b. Clearly stated objectives for future performance.
  - c. Recommendations for further training and skill-building, if applicable.
  - d. An opportunity for county program staff self-evaluation.
6. The county program staff is given the opportunity to sign the evaluation report, obtain a copy, and include written comments before the report is entered into the personnel record.
7. All employment concerns shall be referred to the county program staff's immediate supervisor or the appointing authority.
8. Personnel issues involving county program staff shall follow applicable disciplinary procedures, with the ultimate decision made by the presiding juvenile court judge, or designee, and notification made to the state program office.

## **Program Plan and Financial Management**

1. The county program shall provide to the Manager an annual Budget Request and Program Plan (Plan) pursuant to the schedule established by the state program office.
2. The director shall review the Plan. Upon approval and availability of funds, the director shall enter into a funding agreement with the submitting court for distribution of the allocated funds and operation of the program as set forth in the Plan.
3. Funding
  - a. County program staff shall reimburse volunteers for per diem and mileage costs for attending the mandatory initial Orientation Training, to the extent funds are available and according to state travel policies. The county coordinator may authorize reimbursement for volunteer training and extraordinary travel expenditures if funds are available, and according to state travel policies.
  - b. Funding will be provided on a ratio of 1 supervisor for every 10 county coordinators; 1 county coordinator for 40 volunteers; 1 county support staff for no less than 2 FTE county coordinator positions. The ratio shall be pro-rated for all FTEs lower than one. Distances and multiple offices in a county may be considered for exceptions to this ratio. The total county coordinator FTE shall not exceed 1.0 until the 40 volunteers to 1 county coordinator position ratio is met.

The number of volunteers who are active but who are not appointed to cases shall not exceed 10% of the total number of volunteers.
  - c. The supervisor position is responsible for direct reporting of 15 staff (10 county coordinators, 5 county support staff, and 400 volunteers) and shall not be held to the county coordinator to volunteer ratio.
  - d. The supervisor position shall manage at least 15 volunteers until the county program has 10 county coordinators and 5 county support staff.
  - e. The county program shall ensure funds disbursed from the manager are held in a separate revenue account.

## County Program Operations

1. All screening criteria shall be completed before the applicant is certified as a volunteer in the program, appointed a case, or involved in the program in any way except as allowed in the Arizona Code of Judicial administration, Part 7, Chapter 1, Section 7-101. If any criminal history discloses an offense with no disposition, it shall be the obligation of the county program staff to follow up with the applicant. It is the applicant's obligation to obtain documentation regarding the disposition which is acceptable to the program.
2. Within 30 days after completion of certification, the county coordinator shall assign a new volunteer either specific duties within the program or to serve in a judicial appointment to a case.
3. The county coordinator, or the mentor under the supervision of the county coordinator, shall be responsible for conducting Pre- and Post-Orientation Training to all new volunteers as provided in the statewide training curriculum.
4. A volunteer shall be appointed no more than 2 cases at one time in which to advocate. Additional case assignments shall be at the discretion of the county coordinator.
5. County program staff shall maintain and keep current all program performance manuals.
6. County program staff shall provide ongoing recognition of volunteers. As funding allows, county program staff shall provide at least one annual volunteer recognition event.
7. The county program staff shall enter all DCATS statistical information on cases and volunteers on at least a monthly basis.
8. County program staff and volunteers may accept referral cases over non-referral cases.
9. The CASA Program reflects the community and client interests and advocates for culturally competent service delivery.

## **County Staff Qualifications**

### 1. County Coordinator Supervisor Qualifications

The presiding judge or designee shall employ a county program supervisor who possesses, at a minimum, specific qualifications:

- a. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, preferably with an emphasis in social work, counseling, or a related field. In an exceptional case, four years' equivalent work experience in a related field with demonstrated ability may be considered.
- b. Two years' experience in the juvenile court and/or child welfare systems.
- c. Two years' experience as a county coordinator.
- d. One year's experience desired using computer software programs including word processing and spreadsheets.
- e. Satisfactory completion of a security clearance, which includes fingerprinting, and the signing of any state required certification and pre-employment affidavit per county requirements.

### 2. County Coordinator Qualifications

The presiding judge or designee shall employ a county coordinator who possesses, at a minimum, specific qualifications including but not limited to:

- a. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, preferably with an emphasis in social work, counseling, or a related field. In an exceptional case, four years' equivalent work experience in a related field with demonstrated ability may be considered.
- b. One year's experience in the juvenile court and/or child welfare systems.
- c. One year's experience desired using computer software programs including word processing and spreadsheets.
- d. Satisfactory completion of a security clearance, which includes fingerprinting, and the signing of any state required certification and pre-employment affidavit per county requirements.

3. County Support Staff Qualifications

The presiding judge or designee shall employ a county support staff who possesses at a minimum, specific qualifications.

- a. One year's experience in a clerical support capacity.
- b. One year's experience desired using computer software programs including word processing and spreadsheets.
- c. The ability to type at least 55 words per minute with minimal errors.
- d. Satisfactory completion of a security clearance, which includes fingerprinting, and the signing of any state required certification and pre-employment affidavit per county requirements.

## **Volunteer Recruitment and Retention**

1. The county program shall have written plans for recruiting and selecting volunteers. A standardized packet of information shall be given to each applicant which contains, but is not limited to:
  - a. The purpose and role of the CASA volunteer;
  - b. Details about the qualifications for becoming a volunteer; and
  - c. Minimum time commitment requirement.
2. The county program's recruitment plan shall include targeted strategies to attract volunteers from diverse cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. The program shall also seek age diversity.
3. The county program's strategies for recruitment of volunteers shall include but not be limited to community outreach.

## **Public Relations**

1. The state program office shall provide and inform county program staff prior to distribution of marketing materials (i.e., news clipping services, developing marketing materials, coordinating marketing plans statewide, etc.).
2. The county program shall:
  - a. Conduct an ongoing public information and educational program;
  - b. Disseminate public information for the purpose of broadcasting awareness of the needs and problems of the children that it serves; and
  - c. Make known its role, functions, and capabilities to other agencies, community organizations, government bodies, and corporations, as appropriate to its mission.
3. The CASA Program shall work closely with organizations such as local bar associations, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups, and businesses to accomplish its mission.
4. County program staff shall inform the state program office of any recruitment or marketing information not previously approved or prepared by the state program office or the National CASA Association they wish to prepare for distribution in their communities.
  - a. The county program office staff shall give the state program office a sample of such material before being distributed.
  - b. The state program office shall take no longer than 30 business days to review and approve or disapprove such material.
  - c. Once approved, either the state or county program office may produce the material for distribution. If disapproved, appropriate changes shall be made and resubmitted for review.

## Volunteer Minimum Performance Standards

1. Volunteers shall maintain the following minimum performance standards:
  - A. Perform only authorized responsibilities pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-522(E). Those responsibilities include:
    - (1) Meet with the child;
    - (2) Advocate for the child's safety as the first priority;
    - (3) Gather and provide independent, factual information to aid the court in making its decision regarding what is in the child's best interest and in determining if reasonable efforts have been made to prevent removal of the child from the child's home or to reunite the child with the child's family;
    - (4) Provide advocacy to ensure that appropriate case planning and services are provided for the child;
  - B. Maintain confidentiality in handling program issues, case, and volunteer information.
  - C. Review case records and interview the child and other appropriate parties involved in the case.
  - D. Develop and maintain a relationship with the appointed child including contact with the child on at least a monthly basis.
  - E. Maintain an accurate and complete Contact Log/Journal on the case and provide the documentation on at least a monthly basis to the county program office. Maintain records about the case, including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.
  - F. Communicate with caregivers about the child's behavior and relationships.
  - G. Participate as a member of the case management team.
  - H. Participate in the formulation of any agreement, stipulation, or case plan entered into regarding the child and provide input to subsequent revisions.
  - I. Advocate for the best interest of the child, identify service needs, and make recommendations to the court regarding timely placement of the child.
  - J. Monitor the child's placement to observe the child's behavior in the home and to assess problems or the child's needs.

- K. Assist the responsible parties to ensure that the child's educational needs are being met.
- L. Report to the appropriate authority's significant changes in family situations or violations of court orders.
- M. Consult at least monthly with the county coordinator in case/program discussion, and document the discussion in the Contact Log/Journal.
- N. Discuss all recommendations concerning the case with the county coordinator prior to submitting recommendations to the court.
- O. Submit a written, objective, and concise court report with recommendations to the court on what placement and services are best for the child. The volunteer shall also gather and provide information to aid the court in determining if reasonable efforts have been made to prevent removal of the child from the child's home or to reunite the child with the child's family. The volunteer shall deliver the court report to the county program office two weeks prior to the court hearing.
- P. Submit court reports at review and permanency hearings unless required otherwise.
- Q. Submit addenda at all other hearings not listed in item #P as determined by the volunteer in consultation with the county coordinator.
- R. Attend all court hearings pertaining to the appointed case and provide oral testimony to the court when requested. Attend a jury trial if one is requested, and provide oral testimony to the court and jury if called as a witness. If unable to attend a court hearing, the volunteer shall inform the county coordinator who will attend for the volunteer. If the volunteer and coordinator are not available, a volunteer mentor may attend.
- S. Assist the court in exploring alternative placements for the child.
- T. Make recommendations at Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) meetings.
- U. Remain appointed to the dependency case through all phases of the court process up to the time of permanent guardianship or adoption, unless otherwise directed by the court.
- V. Provide and document an annual performance-based assessment of the Arizona CASA Program.
- W. Maintain contact with the county coordinator to alert or to discuss high profile cases or problems as they arise. Report developments as directed by the county coordinator.

- X. Provide to the county program office all case-related correspondence as directed by the county coordinator.
  - Y. Comply with Arizona statutes, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court, Administrative Order, Rules, ACJA, and policies and procedures. A special advocate is immune from civil or criminal liability for the advocate's acts or omissions in connection with the authorized responsibilities the special advocate performs in good faith.
  - Z. Comply with the state program training requirements.
  - AA. Volunteers shall notify insurance carriers that their CASA volunteer work may involve transporting children.
2. Volunteers shall consult with their insurance providers to determine the minimum liability coverage under Arizona law and the recommended coverage for volunteers and their family in light of the fact that they may be transporting children.
  3. Volunteers who transport children shall at all times maintain current automobile insurance coverage.
  4. Volunteers shall provide proof of insurance to the county program office on an annual basis.
  5. A volunteer may receive authority for additional responsibilities set forth below.
    - a. With prior approval by the county coordinator, the volunteer may observe visits between the appointed child and the parent, and/or assist in arranging visits with siblings and other relatives.
    - b. Allowing the appointed child to visit the volunteer's home or stay overnight with the volunteer unless specifically ordered by the court with prior approval by the CPS supervisor, CPS case manager, and county coordinator.
    - c. A volunteer may be appointed as a Courtesy CASA.
    - d. A volunteer may be given additional or other assigned duties such as a mentor volunteer, recruiting assistant, and office worker.

6. A volunteer *shall not*:

- a. Allow the appointed child to visit the volunteer's home or stay overnight with the volunteer unless specifically ordered by the court with prior approval of the CPS supervisor, CPS case manager, and county coordinator.

7. Volunteer Mentor Qualifications

The county coordinator may assign a volunteer to the role of a volunteer mentor who possesses, at a minimum, specific qualifications.

- a. At least one year's experience as a CASA volunteer and been appointed to at least one dependency case.
- b. A working knowledge of CPS and juvenile court proceedings including, but not limited to dependency, delinquency, severance, and adoption.
- c. Meeting and/or exceeding minimum performance standards.
- d. Effective skills in organization, oral and written communication, leadership, and advocacy.
- e. Received additional mentor training required by the state program office.

8. Volunteer Mentor Minimum Performance Standards

The volunteer mentor shall maintain the following minimum performance standards:

- a. Comply with Arizona Statutes, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court, Administrative Order, Rules, Arizona Code of Judicial Administration, and policies and procedures.
- b. Assist the county coordinator by providing ongoing support to volunteers.
- c. Assist volunteers in the development of advocacy skills; e.g., negotiation, interviewing parties to the case, conflict resolution, effective communication, and providing court testimony to a judge or jury.
- d. Provide ongoing assistance to volunteers regarding documentation (Contact Log/Journal), report writing, and case management.

- e. Maintain contact with assigned volunteers as directed by the county coordinator.
- f. Maintain contact with the county coordinator to alert or to discuss high profile cases or problems as they arise. Report developments as directed by the county coordinator.
- g. Educate assigned volunteers on how to establish working relationships with parties to the case.
- h. Provide additional information to assigned volunteers regarding available community resources.
- i. Attend staffings, FCRB meetings, and court hearings at the direction and supervision of the county coordinator.
- j. Facilitate volunteer support groups at the direction and supervision of the county coordinator.
- k. Consult at least monthly with the county coordinator regarding case activity and assigned volunteers.
- l. Under the supervision of the county coordinator, may screen dependency cases for appropriateness of assignment, and organize and/or facilitate Pre- and Post-Orientation Training.

## **Personal Liability**

1. Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §§ 8-522(H), 8-523 (C), address liability for the Arizona CASA Program.
2. County coordinators shall ensure that applicants and volunteers:
  - a. Are made aware of liability and risk management laws and regulations including those pertaining to automobile usage;
  - b. Are provided the Arizona Code Of Judicial Administration (ACJA) and program policies pertaining to liability and risk management; and
  - c. Provide proof of insurance to the county program office on an annual basis.

## Training

1. New county program staff shall:
  - a. Attend New Staff Orientation Training provided by the state program office.
  - b. Attend the initial volunteer Orientation Training.
  - c. Observe a Pre-hearing Conference, Preliminary Protective Hearing, and a Review Hearing.
  - d. Observe a Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) meeting unless one is not scheduled during the training period.
  - e. Attend a case management staffing with CPS (county coordinator position only).
  - f. Attend a Pre- and Post-OT unless one is not scheduled during the training period.
  - g. Receive the training required by the state program office for handling ethical issues and confidential material.
  - h. Complete Committee on Judicial Education and Training (COJET) requirements annually. Credit for training hours shall be consistent with COJET guidelines.
  - i. Complete the Arizona Criminal Justice Information Systems (ACJIS) training video.
2. Before appointment to a dependency case, a volunteer shall complete 30 hours of training. Training shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Reading designated *Resource Guide* materials to include program policies and procedures.
  - b. Attending the initial Orientation Training.
  - c. Attending Pre- and Post-Orientation Training.
  - d. Observing a dependency hearing unless one is not scheduled during the training period prior to case assignment.
  - e. Observing a Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) meeting unless one is not scheduled during the training period prior to case assignment.
  - f. Discussing the case with the county coordinator before appointment.
  - g. Reviewing case files to become familiar with file contents.

- h. Attending support group meetings unless one is not scheduled during the training period prior to case appointment.
  - i. Attending additional applicable training as designated by the county coordinator.
- 3. Volunteers shall participate in and document 12 hours of in-service training per calendar year. The first year, Orientation Training shall fulfill the requirement for that calendar year.
- 4. All requests by volunteers for training not provided or organized by county program staff must be pre-approved by the county coordinator before training hours are credited.
- 5. County program staff shall organize or provide sufficient in-service training to allow volunteers to complete the required 12 hours of in-service training per calendar year.

## **File Management**

1. The county program office shall maintain copies of all volunteer reports, correspondence, and notes from telephone or in-person consultations concerning the case.
2. Cases
  - a. The county coordinator, or volunteer mentor under the county coordinator's supervision, shall initially screen and periodically review any referred dependency, guardianship, termination, delinquency, or incorrigibility cases to determine if they are appropriate for volunteer appointments.
  - b. Information about cases shall be shared only with parties designated by the court.
  - c. County program staff shall develop and maintain duplicate case files; one shall be given to the appointed volunteer and another shall be located in the county program office so staff has access to files whenever needed.
  - d. The following documents shall be maintained and kept current in case files or in the county program office:
    - (1) Court Order of Appointment, the Rescinding Order of Appointment, and/or the minute entry dismissing all parties involved in the case.
    - (2) A copy of the Legal Party Memorandum advising parties of volunteer appointment.
    - (3) Pertinent court documents, such as the CPS Initial Report and any prior reports, psychological reports, FCRB reports, court orders/minute entries, correspondence, etc.
    - (4) The volunteer's Contact Logs/Journals.
    - (5) Volunteer reports to the court.
    - (6) Documentation of the returned program files and/or noted items not returned.
  - e. After a case has been dismissed, the volunteer's appointment is rescinded, or the volunteer is dismissed from a case, all CASA-related documentation from the case file shall be retained for a period of five years from the date of dismissal and shall be maintained in a confidential and secure area. All other information in the case file shall be shredded by the county program office staff.
  - f. Required case file information on cases established before May 1994 shall be waived from program compliance.

3. Volunteer files

The following documents shall be maintained and kept current in the county program office:

- a. A completed, signed, and dated volunteer application.
- b. Identifying information and emergency contacts.
- c. A signed and dated acknowledgment of volunteer compliance with all appropriate Arizona statutes, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court, Administrative Order, Rules, ACJA, and policies and procedures.
- d. A signed and dated Pre-screening Criteria form.
- e. Documentation of a personal interview with the county coordinator.
- f. Three personal non-relative character references.
- g. Results of the state and national background checks.
- h. Written statement under oath if definitive fingerprints are unobtainable.
- i. Volunteer performance assessment.
- j. In-service training documentation.
- k. Polygraph examination.
- l. When a volunteer leaves the program, the file shall be retained for a period of five years from the volunteer's exit date and shall be maintained in a confidential and secure area.
- m. Required volunteer information on files established before May 1994 shall be waived from program compliance