

Section Six
BEING A CASA VOLUNTEER IN ARIZONA

	Page
○ History of the Arizona CASA Program.....	1
○ The Arizona CASA Program Today.....	2
○ CASA Programs By County.....	4
○ Important CASA Standards in Arizona.....	6
○ CASA Volunteer Support and Training.....	10
○ Advocacy Academy.....	12



Section Six

History of the Arizona CASA Program

In October 1985, a program was established for Maricopa County, with efforts spearheaded by Judge C. Kimball Rose, who presided over the juvenile court at that time. The Junior League of Phoenix and National Council of Jewish Women—Valley Section, were instrumental in advocating for implementation of the program and providing ongoing assistance. Considerable help and support were provided by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, and federal funding was secured from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The program was piloted in Maricopa County. Rules and procedures were developed, minimum performance standards were defined, and evaluations were performed by the Arizona Supreme Court. The Pima County CASA Program, which was independently formed in 1979, joined this effort in January 1987. In March 1987, the Arizona Supreme Court formally established the Arizona Court Appointed Special Advocate Program under the court's jurisdiction.

Funding for the program through fiscal year 1991 came from a combination of the state's General Fund, federal grants, and private monies. Legislation was passed in 1991 that institutionalized the Arizona CASA Program into a statutorily-mandated program with a specified funding source. Today, the Arizona CASA Program receives 30% of all unclaimed lottery prize revenues, which is deposited in a special Arizona CASA Program Lottery Revenue Fund. Each year's budget requires legislative approval and the Governor's signature. Program budget requests pass through the Supreme Court's internal budgetary process and the Legislature's political appropriation process. Available revenues have enabled the Arizona CASA Program to establish programs in all 15 counties. The dollars appropriated determine the number of staff positions funded, which affects the number of volunteers that can be recruited, trained, and supervised.

In 2001, the Policies and Procedures were revised and formalized by an order of the Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court. Policies and Procedures help to maintain consistency in the operation of the program statewide. Before being assigned a case, CASA volunteers are required to familiarize themselves with the Policies and Procedures and submit a signed declaration of their understanding of and compliance with them.

Currently the Arizona CASA Program is operated locally in all 15 counties by Arizona's Juvenile Courts and administered statewide by the Arizona Supreme Court. Since the Arizona CASA Program's inception in October 1985, more than 4,500 CASA volunteers have served over 14,800 of Arizona's abused, neglected, and abandoned children.



The Arizona CASA Program Today

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

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.

PHILOSOPHY: ADVOCACY VS. RELATIONSHIP-BASED PROGRAM

The Arizona CASA Program's philosophy encompasses both advocacy and a relationship-based approach to serving children. The CASA volunteer interviews all parties to the case, ensures appropriate services are being offered to the child and family, and obtains factual and objective information to be used for making recommendations to the court. However, in order to obtain specific information required for the CASA to advocate, it's imperative that relationships be developed with the child and, as appropriate, other parties to the case. The Arizona CASA Program's philosophy is that, to be most effective, both advocacy and relationships are important in speaking out for abused and neglected children.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

State Program Office

The Arizona CASA Program State Office is part of the Dependent Children's Services Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts, Arizona Supreme Court. Six staff members, based in Phoenix, provide administrative oversight and support to all 15 counties. Staff positions include:



Section Six

Program Manager

Administers the program statewide by obtaining funding, providing assistance in maintaining local programs, providing ongoing technical assistance, negotiating county budgets, reviewing program operations, reporting to the legislature as to how the allocated funds were spent, and assisting local staff on an as-needed basis.

Community Outreach Specialist

Develops and implements statewide outreach and awareness efforts and provides recruitment and retention support to county programs. This includes attendance at community events, assessing trends and capitalizing on exposure for CASA, including press releases, media contacts, and publicity and awareness events. The outreach specialist also provides and coordinates statewide recognition for individual CASA volunteers and CASA programs.

Training Specialist

Coordinates and facilitates the CASA Advocacy Academy (CAA) for new CASA applicants; prepares and provides ongoing volunteer in-service trainings; coordinates and maintains training resources offered in the Online Training Center on the Arizona CASA website; works with community experts to offer an array of training topics.

Web Designer

Designs and provides ongoing support, information, and training to CASA state and county staff, and CASA volunteers regarding the Arizona CASA Program website. The web designer develops training modules for CASAs via the Internet and maintains county web pages associated with the state website.

Senior Administrative Assistant

Responsible for budget information for the county programs and the state program office, including tasks associated with the daily financial operations of the program. The senior assistant assists the state program manager and serves as the liaison between the vendor and the state program office on matters relating to the maintenance of the statewide automated database system. The senior assistant is responsible for ordering all printed materials requested by the county programs.

Administrative Assistant

Provides support services for the state program office and county program staff, including preparation for and administrative support for CASA Advocacy Academy, background screening information of potential CASA volunteers including fingerprints, MVD and CPS checks, and supply orders for county programs. In addition, the assistant provides support for the community outreach and training specialists.

To reach the Arizona CASA Program State Office, call (602) 452-3407

You can also log onto the Web site at www.azcasa.org



Section Six

CASA Programs By County

COUNTY	MAILING ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX
Apache	PO Box 1222 St. Johns, AZ 85936	(928) 337-3552 (928) 337-2269 Fax
Cochise	PO Box 4219 Bisbee, AZ 85603	(520) 432-7521 (520) 432-7247 Fax
Coconino	Coconino County Juvenile Court 1001 E. Sawmill Rd. Flagstaff, AZ 86001	(928) 226-5422 (928) 226-5455 Fax
Gila (Globe)	1100 Monroe St., Ste. 200 Globe, AZ 85501	(928) 425-7971 ext. 27 (928) 425-9638 Fax
Gila (Payson)	714 S. Beeline Hwy., Ste. 104 Payson, AZ 85541	(928) 474-7145 (928) 474-1752 Fax
Graham	Graham County Courthouse 800 W. Main Safford, AZ 85546	(928) 792-5103 (928) 348-0587 Fax
Greenlee	PO Box 1146 Clifton, AZ 85533	(928) 865-2072 ext. 129 (928) 865-5358 Fax
La Paz	1316 Kofa Ave. Parker, AZ 85344	(928) 669-6188 (928) 669-9770 Fax
Maricopa	Juvenile Court Center 3131 W. Durango St. Phoenix, AZ 85009	(602) 506-4083 (602) 506-5512 Fax www.maricopacasa.org
Mohave (Kingman)	PO Box 7000 Kingman, AZ 86402	(928) 753-0795 ext. #4414 (928) 753-8908 Fax
Mohave (Lake Havasu City)	2001 College Dr., Ste. 148 Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403	(928) 453-0705 ext. #3730 (928) 680-0193 Fax
Navajo	PO Box 668 Holbrook, AZ 86025	(928) 524-4135 (928) 524-4325 Fax
Pima	Juvenile Court Center 2225 E. Ajo Way Tucson, AZ 85713-6295	(520) 740-2060 (520) 243-2211 Fax



Section Six

COUNTY	MAILING ADDRESS	PHONE/FAX
Pinal (Florence)	PO Box 906 Florence, AZ 85132	(520) 866-7076 (520) 866-7081 <i>Fax</i>
Santa Cruz	PO Box 1929 Nogales, AZ 85628	(520) 375-7740 ext. 6755 (520) 375-7741 <i>Fax</i>
Yavapai (Cottonwood)	10 S. 6 th St. Cottonwood, AZ 86326	(928) 639-8170 (928) 639-8116 <i>Fax</i>
Yavapai (Prescott)	Yavapai County Courthouse 120 S. Cortez, Rm. 402 Prescott, AZ 86303-4747	(928) 771-3165 (928) 771-3387 <i>Fax</i>
Yuma	2440 W. 28 th St. Yuma, AZ 85364	(928) 314-1830 (928) 314-1995 <i>Fax</i>



Important CASA Standards in Arizona

CONFIDENTIALITY

CASA volunteers become officers of the court when appointed to a case. As such, they are subject to the same standards of confidentiality as other court personnel, DES case managers, and other professionals working in the foster care system.

- Any information pertaining to individual families or children that is received in the course of the CASA volunteer's duties, either verbally or from written records, is strictly confidential.
- CASA volunteers may not discuss their case with anyone except case managers, court personnel, CASA program staff, or others involved in an official capacity and who are authorized to receive such information.
- CASA volunteers may not write, speak, or confer about the case with any person, other than what is prescribed by law and program guidelines.
- All files and written records developed as part of the duties of a CASA volunteer are the property of the Arizona CASA Program and are not personal property. During the time a CASA is active on a case, pertinent records may be kept in the CASA volunteer's possession in a secure manner. These materials must be returned to the county program office when the CASA is relieved of duty by court order or if the CASA leaves the program. Withholding case materials from the court is a misdemeanor offense.

MANDATORY vs. DISCRETIONARY REPORTER

In the state of Arizona, CASA volunteers are not included in the list of people who are defined as "mandatory reporters" and obligated by law to report concerns about the abuse or neglect of a child. This makes us, then, "discretionary reporters," in that the law states that "a person other than one required to report...*may* report the information..." This in no way is to say that CASA volunteers or program staff should not report abuse. It is merely a clarification that we do not fall under the definition of a person who is "required" to report in the "Mandatory Reporter" statute (13-3620). It is up to each person individually to decide whether or not to report concerns of this nature to the appropriate authorities.



Section Six

PERSONAL LIABILITY

Arizona Revised Statutes § 8-522(H), states that a special advocate is immune from civil and criminal liability for the advocate's acts or omissions in connection with the authorized responsibilities the special advocate performs in good faith.

The State of Arizona Risk Management Section provides liability insurance for CASA volunteers during the performance of their duties. This coverage lasts for the duration of the CASA's official appointment by order of the court.

A.R.S. § 41-621(A) reads:

“The Department of Administration shall obtain insurance against loss, to the extent it is determined necessary and in the best interests of the state as provided in subsection (F) of this section on the following...

“The state and its departments, agencies, boards and commissions of all officers, agents and employees thereof and such others that may be necessary to accomplish the functions or business of the state and its departments, agencies, boards and commissions against liability for acts or omissions of any nature while acting in authorized governmental or proprietary capacities and in the course and scope of employment or authorization except as prescribed by this chapter.”

A CASA volunteer will not be held liable for an injury or damage resulting from an act or an omission in a public official capacity where the act or omission was the result of the exercise of the discretion vested in him if the exercise of the discretion was done in good faith without wanton disregard of his statutory duties.

The Department of Administration, with the assistance of the Attorney General, will provide for defense of claims arising from the volunteer's acts or omissions.

Exclusions to this coverage include:

- 1. Discrimination actions.*
- 2. Losses that arise out of and are directly attributable to an act or omission determined by the court to be a felony by an agent.*
- 3. Coverage for workers' compensation benefits and occupational diseases that might be contracted or injury sustained to the volunteer by the client.*



Section Six

CASA SAFETY

The Arizona CASA program is highly invested in keeping CASA volunteers safe. A CASA should consult with the county coordinator if there is a question or concern about safety, or any aspect of the work or of a particular area of the community. It is sometimes wise for a CASA volunteer to meet the biological parents or family members in a neutral place until a relationship can be established that allows the CASA to feel comfortable going to the home. It is also reasonable to ask the county coordinator or another CASA volunteer to accompany the CASA on a home visit.

If a situation ever feels unsafe, CASAs should remove themselves from that situation and gather more information. Some of the people a CASA volunteer may encounter may have criminal records, drug involvement, or may live or work in an unsafe area of the community. A CASA should always trust instincts and not be hesitant to ask questions.

The CASA program recommends that a CASA volunteer not give out home phone numbers to biological parents and family members. The county program office staff can relay messages. In order to maintain a positive working relationship and effective communication with the CPS case manager and foster parents, it may be necessary to provide the CASA volunteer's home number to those individuals. Please note that these individuals are responsible for keeping all contact information confidential.

AUTOMOBILE USAGE

In the performance of duties, a CASA volunteer may use an automobile, usually their personal vehicle. Rarely will a state or county vehicle be provided to a CASA.

When a personal automobile is used on authorized state business, CASA volunteers should be aware of the differences in liability coverage provided. The CASA's personal insurance becomes the first responsible insurer, and the state coverage acts as a supplement if the liability coverage is inadequate. For example, if a volunteer caused \$1 million in damages but their liability insurance policy limit is only \$500,000, the State Risk Management Revolving Fund will assume the \$500,000 difference, provided the accident resulted from the error of the CASA volunteer rather than that of the other driver.

The State of Arizona provides primary auto liability coverage to the CASA while using a state-owned vehicle or a leased or rented vehicle under the name of the Arizona CASA Program, if the vehicle is used for ***authorized*** purposes within the course and scope of CASA duties. Accidents caused by the CASA volunteer's negligence are not covered. There are no deductible charges for damage exceeding \$100.



Section Six

Exclusions to this automobile coverage are:

- 1. Personal injuries resulting from an automobile accident requiring medical benefits; coverage is derived from the CASA's personal automobile insurance policy.*
- 2. Volunteers of the state are not covered by worker's compensation benefits.*
- 3. Injuries to passengers while being transported by the CASA volunteer may or may not be covered; there must be negligence on the part of the CASA in order for Risk Management to extend liability coverage to passengers being transported by the CASA.*



CASA Volunteer Support and Training

The Arizona CASA Program recruits, trains, and supervises concerned, sensitive individuals from the community who advocate solely for the best interests of the child. A CASA's advocacy may lead to an enhancement of the quality of services provided to the child. This involvement is to help ensure that progress is being made toward achieving a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible, with the least amount of trauma for the child. In addition, the CASA volunteer aids the system to work more effectively by pointing out system problems and making appropriate recommendations for improvement.

County coordinators are the judge's delegate to supervise a CASA's advocacy efforts and provide them with assistance in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. CASA volunteers should plan to work closely with their assigned county coordinator throughout their service.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

To meet National CASA Association standards, the Arizona CASA Program and your county provides you with 7.5 hours of "Getting Started" training, 15 hours of training at the two-day Advocacy Academy, and 7.5 hours of "Beyond the Basics" training, with the goal of preparing you to be a thorough, effective, and autonomous child advocate. Additionally, new CASA volunteers may have the opportunity to observe a Foster Care Review Board hearing and/or a Report and Review court hearing prior to taking the first case.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

CASA volunteers in Arizona must participate in and document a minimum of 12 hours of in-service training every calendar year. The pre-service training described above fulfills the 12-hour requirement during a new CASA volunteer's first calendar year with the program.

In-service training can include things like reading a book, attending a workshop, or taking an online course. There are many resources to choose from:

- County programs provide networking and training opportunities on relevant topics to assist CASA volunteers in their ongoing advocacy efforts.
- The State Office provides a comprehensive CASA Online Training Center with a diverse selection of subject matter, training opportunities, and resources at www.azcasa.org.



Section Six

- The Department of Economic Security and other state agencies and organizations frequently offer seminars and conferences, which CASA volunteers can attend. County coordinators share these opportunities as they become available.

Be sure to work with your county coordinator to determine if a learning opportunity will qualify for in-service training credit.



Section Six

Advocacy Academy

The two-day CASA Advocacy Academy is held every month (excluding December), on a Friday and Saturday, with the location alternating between Phoenix and Tucson. You can view the Advocacy Academy dates and location by visiting www.azcasa.org and clicking on “Event Calendar.”

Below is a list of topics typically covered at the Advocacy Academy.

Friday

The Role of a CASA Volunteer in Arizona
Child Protective Services (CPS)
The Arizona Dependency Process
Confidentiality
Substance Abuse

Saturday

Values & Viewpoints
Trauma and Children
Attachment and Bonding
The Work of a CASA Volunteer
CASA Court Reports
Next Steps

The Advocacy Academy training **begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends by 5:00 p.m.** each day, providing new CASA volunteers with 15 hours of their 30-hour pre-service training requirement. A continental breakfast and lunch are provided on both days.

Your county program will register you for the Advocacy Academy and provide you with further information for your specific training. If extended travel and lodging are necessary for you to attend the Academy, your CASA office will work with you on any arrangements, including lodging, mileage, and meals not provided at the training. Be sure to attach a hotel receipt and a copy of your certificate of completion with your reimbursement request for prompt reimbursement following the training.

You will receive the complete agenda and all of the necessary materials needed for the training when you arrive on the first day.



