



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

SHAWNEE COUNTY

Third Judicial District

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Adopted 1987
Revised
September 2025

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I. CERTIFICATION OF CASA VOLUNTEERS

A. Certification Requirements

Applicants must be certified as volunteers prior to assignment as a court appointed special advocate. CASA program applicants are certified upon successful completion of the following:

1. Screening procedures
2. Training requirements (see Section II of these standards)
3. Written request to OJA as outlined in Section II and
4. Written notification from OJA to the program when a volunteer is certified

B. Application and Screening Process

Prospective CASA volunteers shall be screened according to the following procedures prior to certification and appointment to a case.

1. *Written Application*

The Application must inform the applicant that the program is required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

All applicants shall complete a written that will contain the following information at minimum:

- a. Educational background and training
- b. Employment history
- c. Experience working with children
- d. Personal experience with child abuse and neglect
- e. Prior contact with juvenile justice and criminal justice
- f. Contact information for three references unrelated to the applicant

2. *References*

All applicants must have three written references from people unrelated to them.

3. *Personal Interview*

The person interview will occur once the application has been submitted and will be used to assess the applicant's qualification and his/her commitment to fulfill the requirements of the position.

4. *Results of Records Check*

C. Records Checks

1. All applicants must submit to the background checks listed below. Any applicant who does not consent to these checks will be rejected for further consideration of certification. The program will obtain the applicants fingerprints on a fingerprint card provided by OJA. The program will perform the following record checks no sooner than ninety (90) days before the certification is sent to OJA. While maintaining certification, background checks will be required every 4 years.
 - a. Criminal History Record Inquiry (CHRI) and Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) criminal record
 - b. Criminal History Records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant currently lives and works.
 - c. Criminal History records from any county, state, or country in which the applicant has lived or worked in the last 7 years.

- d. Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry or equivalent for any state or county the applicant has lived or worked in the last seven years.
 - e. Nation Sex Offender Registry.
 - f. Social Security number verification.
2. If the applicant has not been a resident of the United States, Kansas, or current county of residence for the past seven years, the program must make inquiries of the criminal history records of all countries, states, and counties where the applicant has lived and worked in the seven years prior to application. Certification will not be denied if another state, county, or country does not respond in a reasonable amount of time to the record check inquiry after a minimum of two attempts to obtain the information. If the program receives information that indicates a volunteer has a criminal history equivalent to section I.D.1. a-f, the volunteer will not be certified.
 3. The applicant must complete the following record check authorizations:
 - a. KBI Waiver Agreement and FBI Privacy Act Statement.
 - b. Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Release of Information form.
 - c. OJA CHRI Form
 - d. Social Security Number Verification form and
 - e. Any additional releases needed to complete a records check

D. Certification Restrictions

1. CASA certification generally cannot proceed if any of the following is found to apply to the applicant:
 - a. was convicted as an adult of any felony;
 - b. was convicted as an adult of any misdemeanor which is a sex offense, a crime against public morals, a crime affecting family relationships and children, assault, battery, crime against the public peace, crimes against persons, crimes against public safety, crimes involving controlled substances, or an attempt or conspiracy to commit any such misdemeanor;
 - c. was adjudicated as a juvenile offender because of having committed an act, which if done by an adult, would constitute the commission of a felony;
 - d. was adjudicated a juvenile offender because of having committed an act, which if done by an adult, would constitute a misdemeanor as described in section I.D.1.b;
 - e. entered into a diversion agreement involving a charge of child abuse or a sexual offense; or
 - f. was convicted or adjudicated of any act that would pose a risk to children or to the credibility of the CASA program.
2. Applicants who have charges pending for offenses listed shall not be cleared unless those charges have been dismissed or the applicant is found not guilty in the court of law.
3. OJA must give written notification to the program regarding an applicant's eligibility to serve as a CASA volunteer. Only applicants who are found eligible or are granted an exception by the Chief Judge or their Judge designee may be certified as a CASA volunteer.
4. The CASA Program's Executive Director has the right to determine an applicant ineligible for certification.

E. Screening Exceptions

Applicants who do not screen satisfactorily according to the Standards of Kansas CASA Programs must have a written exception by the Chief Judge. This exception must document in writing the justification for granting an exception. Applicants found to have been convicted of or have changes pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related acts that would pose risks to children or the CASA program's credibility will not be granted an exception.

F. Notification of Criminal Charges to Program

Applicants and volunteers must immediately notify the program of any citations or criminal charges filed against them. Failure to notify the program could result in decertification.

G. Continued Screening

The Executive Director and/or other program staff will continue to screen applicants during the training process to determine suitability for CASA responsibility and functions. Applicants will continue to be screened until certification is granted. If during the screening or training process the program Executive Director determines an applicant cannot be certified, the applicant must be notified in writing, and the notice placed in the applicant's file. The program Executive Director may determine an applicant ineligible for certification.

H. Acknowledgement of Duty as a Volunteer

All applicants must be provided with a job description which clearly outlines the duty of the CASA volunteer. Prior to certification, the applicant must sign a form of acknowledgement of expectations of a CASA volunteer and agree to fulfill duties as outlined.

The acknowledgement must include:

1. duties as outlined in Supreme Court Rule 110.
2. Kansas CASA standards; and
3. conduct expectations.

I. Request for Certification and Decertification to OJA

1. Within thirty (30) days of completion, the program must send a list of volunteers who have met all requirements to OJA and request certification.
2. If a program determines that a volunteer must be decertified, the request to decertify the volunteer must be sent to OJA within fourteen (14) days, and the program must provide the reason for decertification. If a volunteer is assigned to a case at the time of decertification, the program must obtain a court order discharging the CASA's appointment.
3. OJA may decertify a volunteer on its own if deemed appropriate.
4. Program requests for certification and decertification must be submitted on forms provided by OJA.
5. OJA must notify the program when a volunteer is certified and decertified.

J. Maintenance of Volunteer Certification

1. To remain a certified CASA volunteer, individuals must complete the following:
 - a. record check authorizations as outlined in I.C.3 every four years.

- b. continuing education requirements as outlined in section I1.C.
- c. written acknowledgement of conflict of interest every four years; and
- d. written acknowledgement of confidentiality every four years.

K. Retention of Applicant and Volunteer Records

The program must maintain records for an applicant for a minimum of three years. If certified, the program must maintain records on a CASA volunteer for a minimum of five years after a volunteer has been decertified. The following written records pertaining to each applicant's screening procedures and training must be maintained by the program:

1. Volunteer application.
2. Emergency and identifying contact information.
3. Volunteer position description.
4. References documentation.
5. Documentation of all records checks.
6. Documentation of personal interview.
7. Pre-service training and continuing education records.
8. Performance evaluations and any other applicable documentation related to performance.
9. Documentation of volunteer status.
10. Signed agreements.
11. Case assignment tracking including the name of each child assigned, date of each assignment, date of release, and reason for release from each assignment.
12. Copy of the volunteer's current driver's license, motor vehicle records check and verification of automobile insurance (if the volunteer transports children).

L. Volunteer File Review

If the CASA volunteer desires to review their record, they must make a written request, and a review shall be coordinated by appointment with the Program Manager or designee. Any changes or amendments to the volunteer records should be discussed, agreed upon, and made during the record review in the presence of the volunteer and CASA program representative. Personal references are considered confidential and will not be shared with the CASA volunteer.

II. TRAINING OF CASA VOLUNTEERS

A. Pre-Service Training

CASA pre-service training is conducted using the National CASA (NCASA) Volunteer Training Curriculum along with a synopsis of pertinent Kansas laws. Applicants will receive a copy of the NCASA training manual and state and local laws as well as policies and procedures that relate to the program. Topics will be consistent with NCASA and OJA standards and guidelines. Credit hours may not be given for education or professional training obtained prior to the individual's application.

CASA will provide training to any interested agency or person that requires knowledge of CASA and how to work with CASA effectively. Upon completion of training, the trainee will be asked to complete a volunteer profile to be used in the post training meeting with a staff member and for case-matching purposes.

A qualified volunteer who transfers to a new program must complete, at a minimum, four hours of training regarding the local court, laws, program policies and procedures, investigation, and report writing.

B. Court Observation

Pre-service training must include observation of juvenile court proceedings. Program staff will communicate with the Administrative Aide assigned to each Judge to obtain approval prior to scheduling observation of court hearings. A statement of confidentiality must be signed by the trainee prior to observing court.

C. Continuing Education

Certified CASA volunteers will be required to complete at least twelve (12) hours of Continuing Education Unites (CEU's) annually. Hours for the first year will be prorated based on the date the volunteer is certified. CASA of Shawnee County will provide or assist in the provision of a minimum of twelve (12) hours of CEU training annually.

CEU's may be obtained through several methods: attending CASA coordinated in-service training, community training, webinars, relevant books or articles, podcasts, videos, documentaries, seminars, etc. The CASA volunteer will refer to their Advocate Supervisor for credit approval. To encourage a diverse learning experience, no more than four hours should be completed by reading books or articles.

Volunteers' continuing education hours must be completed by December 31st. An extension may be granted by the program for up to thirty (30) days. If the program grants an extension, the extension must be documented in the volunteer file.

III. PROGRAM POLICIES GOVERNING ADMINISTRATION

A. Supreme Court Rule 110

Program staff and certified CASA volunteers must comply with Supreme Court Rule 110.

B. Program Membership

The program shall be a program member in good standing with the Kansas and National CASA Associations and in compliance with current Standards for Local Programs.

C. Communications Policy

CASA of Shawnee County strives to apply a positive, proactive, and transparent approach to communications with the public and its constituencies. CASA of Shawnee County has a firm commitment to protecting the credibility, reputation, and integrity of the CASA program and the privacy and confidentiality of the clients it serves.

1. Communication about issues with the program

If an entity expresses concerns regarding the CASA of Shawnee County program, absent extraordinary circumstances, the Executive Director will first discuss the concerns with the entity and attempt to come to a resolution. If the concerns remain unsolved, the Executive Director shall contact the Board President and Board of Directors. If the concerns cannot be resolved by the Board of Directors, the Executive Director and/or

Board President shall contact KCA for assistance.

2. *Communications with the media*

When appropriate, the Executive Director will provide information about CASA of Shawnee County and child abuse and neglect in general to the media. Press releases will be generated by the Executive Director with approval by the Board President. Any media request regarding specific case will be handled with priority of maintaining case confidentiality. CASA volunteers, staff, and members of the Board of Directors shall not speak independently to the media on behalf of the agency without approval from the Executive Director and/or Board of Directors.

3. *Crisis Response/Crisis Communication*

In the occurrence of an incident that has the potential to have a significant impact on the program's credibility, reputation, or funding at the local, state, or national level, the Executive Director shall immediately contact the Board President and Board of Directors. Together the Executive Director and Board of Directors will create a plan to respond to the critical incident. Only the Executive Director or designee of the Board of Directors shall have contact with the media regarding a critical incident. The Executive Director shall notify the Kansas CASA Director and the Office of Judicial Administration, in writing, within 24 hours of the incident.

4. *Information sharing between national, state, and location organization*

It is CASA of Shawnee County's priority to maintain the confidentiality of the clients it serves. CASA of Shawnee County will share data requested by National and Kansas CASA for the purpose of outcome reporting.

D. Maintenance of Required Case Information

The program must maintain the following:

1. complete case assignment records.
2. list of certified CASA volunteers and contact information
3. calendar of scheduled court hearings; and
4. case files, including:
 - a. copies of all CASA volunteers' monthly reports and court reports,
 - b. case related documents filed with the court in the official and social files,
 - c. documents obtained by the program or volunteer during the course of appointment,
 - d. documentation of calls, hearings attended, in-person consultations, and other correspondence,
 - e. name of CASA volunteer,
 - f. name of CASA child,
 - g. date of CASA volunteer assignment,
 - h. date of CASA volunteer discharge,

- i. affidavit, petition, and amendments thereto,
- j. court orders, and journal entries

5. If the program is unable to procure a written copy of required information, attempts to obtain the information must be documented in the case file, along with the reason the information was not obtained.

E. Case File Return

The CASA volunteer must return all case files, notes, and case related materials to the program within thirty (30) days of discharge or case closure. The program must notify the court and OJA immediately if case related materials have not been returned.

F. Case File Record Retention

At the closing of a case, all CASA materials, including CASA volunteer and staff notes, monthly reports, reports to the court, and any documents not found in the court's files must be maintained until the child reaches eighteen (18) years of age and the case is closed. The document releasing the CASA as outlined in section 111.H. must be maintained in the file. When the child reaches the age of eighteen (18), files on cases will be destroyed when the child reaches the age of 18 or after 7 years of case closure with the Court, whichever is more restrictive.

G. Case File Destruction Policy

Hard copy closed case files will be archived and filed in a locked room. The case will be filed by the year in which the file is to be destroyed. Destruction of records dates will be maintained in the CASA database. Files will be destroyed on a semi-annual basis.

Electronic closed case files will be moved to a closed case file folder where they will remain until the file is ready to be permanently deleted. Destruction of records dates will be maintained in the CASA database. Electronic files will be permanently deleted on a semi-annual basis.

H. Case Closure Documentation

The program must maintain a record of each case closed to the program including the date of the program's discharge and the permanency outcome pursuant to K.S.A. 38-2203(c). Documentation of case closure must be maintained in the case file and must include a court order discharging CASA or terminating the court's jurisdiction and a database entry.

I. Notification of Volunteer Appointment and Removal

The program must notify the following individuals, in writing, of an appointment or removal of a CASA volunteer.

1. attorneys for parties to the case; and
2. other interested parties.

J. Files and Information Sharing

1. Case files may be maintained electronically. Electronic files will be backed up on a separate system at least once a week and the backup will be stored off site. At minimum case notes, CASA

monthly and court reports, and documentation not found in the court's files will be maintained in a hard copy case file.

2. To ensure secure exchange of electronic information:

a. Emails containing confidential information must be encrypted.

b. Flash drives containing confidential information must be password protected and returned to the program upon case closure.

3. Electronic signatures must be verified by the applicant or volunteer at the time of signing.

K. Reporting Suspected Abuse

Program employees should report to DCF or law enforcement any incident of child abuse or neglect or any situation in which the employee has reason to believe that a child served by the program is in imminent danger. Documentation of any reports made by a program employee must be filed in the case file.

L. Statement of Confidentiality

Prior to employment or service as a member of the board of directors, individuals must sign a statement of confidentiality. Members of the board of directors do not have access to case records in accordance with K.S.A. 38-2211.

M. Screening Requirements

The program must ensure that employees, members of the board of directors, and any volunteer who may have access to confidential information undergo record checks as outlined in section I.C. The program must repeat the screenings every four years.

N. Training Requirements and Program Leadership

The program Executive Director must attend training provided or approved by OJA within twelve (12) months of their initial hire date. The program's president of the board of directors must attend the training within the first year of their term. The training must include: 1. Supreme Court Rule 110; and 2. Standards for Kansas CASA Programs, including OJA requirements and timeframes.

O. Program Attorney

The program must ensure that an attorney is available for legal consultation with the program, its employees, or its volunteers on any case in which the program executive director deems appropriate. The program's attorney must not consult with the program, its employees, or its volunteers on any case in which the attorney is serving in any capacity, or in any case in which there appears to be a conflict of interest. The program must have a current written agreement with the program attorney.

P. CASA Case Limit Policy

1. CASA volunteers may serve on two cases. A case is defined as one child. An exception may be granted by the program executive director to allow a volunteer to serve on more than two cases. The program executive director may not grant an exception to allow any CASA volunteer to serve

more than 5 children at one time. The program must document the exception in the CASA volunteer's file on a form provided by OJA. The program may request an exception from OJA, on a form provided by OJA, to allow a volunteer to serve as the CASA for more than 5 children. OJA must provide a written response to the request, and the program must file the response in the case file.

2. The program may allow employees to serve in the CASA volunteer role. If a program employee serves in the role of a CASA volunteer, Kansas CASA Standards and relevant procedures concerning CASA volunteers must be applied.

Q. Conflict of Interest Policy

The program must maintain a written conflict of interest policy approved by the board of directors. This policy must govern the conduct of members of the board of directors, program employees, program volunteers, and interns. Members of the board of directors, program employees, program volunteers, CASA volunteers, and interns must sign the conflict-of-interest policy every four (4) years.

R. Annual Report

An annual written report containing information required by OJA will be compiled each year and distributed to the district Chief Judge and OJA.

S. Annual Budget

The program must prepare and submit to OJA an annual budget reflecting actual and projected expenses.

1. The program must prepare the annual budget using accounting software.

2. The CASA program must re-submit the budget to OJA if it deviates more than 10% from the previously submitted budget. The revised budget must be submitted within 30 days of deviation discovery.

T. Fundraising Policy

Programs must comply with the Kansas Attorney General opinions and local district or county attorney's guidance on fundraising.

U. Volunteer Case Management

An individual, certified CASA volunteer must be appointed by the court with a court order to have access to the file. The program may access the court file prior to volunteer appointment with an order from the court.

V. Volunteer Supervision

Program staff supervising volunteers full-time will not supervise more than 30 active volunteers or a maximum of 45 cases. Consideration will be given to the number of hours each staff member spends on administrative or other duties and the number of volunteers to be supervised will be reduced pro rata.

Advocate Supervisors will provide timely and thorough guidance to volunteers through contact at least once per month by video conference, telephone, or in-person meetings. During such meetings, the Advocate Supervisor and volunteer will review the issues and/or progress of the case and needs of the children.

Advocate Supervisors will conduct reviews of the case and the volunteer's performance of the CASA volunteer position description on an ongoing basis and as a component of case closure.

W. Non-Discrimination Statement

CASA provides equal opportunities to all volunteers, without regard to race, color, religious belief, national origin, ancestry, gender, age, disability, or marital status.

IV. PROGRAM POLICIES GOVERNING CASA VOLUNTEERS

A. Certification, Decertification, and Case Assignment Decisions

The program executive director is responsible for requesting certification and decertification of volunteers and making case assignment decisions of CASA volunteers.

B. Confidentiality Policy

Information about a CASA case is safeguarded as confidential. Unlike doctor-patient or lawyer-client relationships, there is no privilege of absolute confidentiality for CASA volunteers. No disclosure of specific case information (names, addresses of child or family, specific facts) should be made to anyone who does not have a professional reason for knowing such information. Confidential information may be shared with professional staff at the CASA program office. CASAs may discuss with each other general issues and facts of a case for purposes of enhancing their ability to serve the child, but may not share specific information (names, addresses of child or family, identifying details, or specific facts about the case).

The basis for this policy can be found in statutes, professional codes of ethics, and licensing standards. No information should be released to anyone not authorized to receive it. There should be no disclosure of specific case information to people not directly involved in the case. The CASA volunteer shall never discuss an assigned case for purely conversational purposes with anyone. No information should be released to family or friends of the parties. There may be occasions when an individual involved in the life of the child or the child themselves asks the CASA volunteer not to reveal information that is shared with the CASA volunteer. The CASA volunteer must never intentionally withhold relevant information from the court concerning a child. Therefore, the CASA volunteer must respond in these circumstances that any information received is subject to disclosure to the court.

The CASA volunteer must:

1. Take an oath of confidentiality upon completion of pre-service training to be retained in the volunteer's file,
2. Sign the Kansas Judicial Council's Oath of Court Appointed Special Advocate specific to each case assigned to be retained in the case file, and
3. Sign a statement of confidentiality every four years to be retained in the volunteer's file.

C. Conflict of Interest Policy

To avoid conflict of interest, no volunteer shall be certified if they are currently employed in the juvenile division of the district court, the youth services division of DCF, child welfare providers, the Department of Corrections Juvenile Services, Community Corrections, or any agency that could result in a conflict of interest.

1. No volunteer may be assigned to a specific case where they are connected to the family in a professional capacity or in a close personal relationship.
2. A CASA volunteer may not be related to any parties in the case or be employed in a position that might result in a conflict of interest.
3. CASA volunteers, members of the board of directors, program employees, program volunteers, and interns are prohibited from having direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions, or professional services of the program.
4. CASA volunteers, members of the board of directors, program employees, program volunteers, and interns may be recused from a transaction or decision with a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest.
5. CASA volunteers, members of the board of directors, program employees, program volunteers, and interns are required to disclose a conflict of interest or the potential for conflict of interest. Failure to disclose will result in disciplinary action up to dismissal from any assigned case involvement in the CASA program.
6. CASA volunteers, members of the board of directors, program employees, program volunteers, and interns must sign the conflict-of-interest policy every four years.

D. Right to Accept/Deny

The CASA volunteer maintains the right to accept or deny any case based on their interest and their belief in their ability to work the case effectively. The CASA volunteer should consider the amount of time available, any anticipated life changes, and personal biases before accepting a case.

E. Volunteers Case Records

All volunteers will be provided with copies of their appointment order and the legal and social files on the case to which they are appointed. Volunteers must also maintain:

1. Copies of court reports.
2. Court orders and current case plans.
3. Any other pertinent records received during the duration of the case.
4. Case notes and correspondence.
5. Interviews and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.

CASA Volunteer's case records could be subpoenaed and reviewed by attorneys and/or judges. Therefore, notes must be clear and accurate. Case files should be unbiased, historical record, including dates and sources of information, and should be free of subjective editorial comments.

Case files should be secure at all times and never left in a place that can be accessed by parties not involved in the case. Case files may need to be transported between the CASA office, court,

and meetings; however, the CASA volunteer should ensure the confidentiality of the files by limiting such transportation to which is vital to the case.

All electronic records, including emails, should be stored on password protected device or account that no one other than the appointed advocate has access to. Password protected flash drives are available through the CASA office. All electronic records must be deleted, and flash drives must be returned to the CASA office upon case closure.

F. Case Conference Requirements

The program's volunteer supervisor must hold regularly scheduled case conferences with the CASA volunteered to a case to review case progress. The volunteer supervisor must be accessible to provide case specific guidance.

G. Questioning a Parent

When a parent has an attorney, prior to making initial contact, the CASA office notifies the parents attorney of the CASA's volunteers' appointment and intention to have regular contact with their client.

H. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

CASA volunteers should report to DCF or law enforcement any incident of child abuse or neglect or any situation in which the volunteer has reason to believe that a child is in imminent danger. Documentation of any reports made by a program volunteer must be filed in the case file. For situations involving suspected child abuse or neglect, contact the Kansas Protection Report Center at 1-800922-5330 or call 911 if there is immediate danger. They are staffed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. Subsequent to reporting suspected abuse/neglect, the CASA volunteer is to notify the assigned Advocate Supervisor and all parties on the case.

I. CASA Volunteers Role and Responsibilities

All applicants must be provided with a job description which clearly outlines the duty of the CASA volunteer. Prior to certification, the applicant must sign a form acknowledging the expectations of a CASA volunteer and agreeing to fulfill duties as outlined.

J. Personal Involvement with Children and Families

A CASA volunteer's effectiveness and credibility in court depends on the volunteers maintaining professional relationships with the CASA children and parties involved in their case. Volunteers are cautioned to maintain boundaries and not become over-involved with CASA children and families. Inappropriate personal involvement can be grounds for dismissal. Volunteers are prohibited from:

Personal Involvement with Children and Families cont.

1. Taking a child to the volunteer's home or any home other than the child's home.
2. Taking a child to any location that is not pre-approved by the CASA Supervisor and the child's parent or legal guardian.

3. Giving money or expensive gifts to the child, the child's family, or caregiver.
4. Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
5. Making placement arrangements for the child(ren).
6. Aligning with any parent, relative, or interested party. The child must always be the focus and the volunteer must remain a neutral party.

K. CASA Child Visitation

CASA volunteers are required to see their appointed child(ren) in person a minimum of one time every thirty (30) days. If an in-person visitation cannot be made during a given month, the volunteer is responsible for communicating this along with the reason to their assigned Advocate Supervisor. An exception may be granted by the program if a CASA volunteer is unable to meet with the child. The exception shall be documented on a form provided by OJA.

There are circumstances in which a standing exception for frequent in-person contact, or alternatives for in-person contact, may be permitted. Those circumstances include:

1. Distance between the CASA volunteer and a child's placement.
2. CASA child is AWOL.
3. Health of the CASA volunteer or child.
4. Extended travel by the CASA volunteer or child.
5. Other life circumstances deemed reasonable by the Advocate Supervisor.

If any of the above situations occur, it is the volunteer's responsibility to communicate the need for less frequent in-person visitation to their Advocate Supervisor. The volunteer and Advocate Supervisor will work together to develop an appropriate plan for alternative communication.

In-person contact should take place where the child lives for a majority of visits to ensure in-depth knowledge of the child's environment for informed recommendations to the court.

L. Transportation of a CASA child

This policy applies to all certified CASA volunteers and CASA employees who are authorized to act as volunteer advocates and who choose to transport CASA children or family members.

1. Voluntary Transportation

- a. Transportation of children or other persons by CASA volunteers or employees is **strictly voluntary and not required** as part of their duties. It is important to consider the safety of your passengers as well as your own safety and risk of personal liability.
- b. Volunteers must receive **written prior approval** from the CASA Program Director and meet all requirements before transporting any CASA child.

2. Eligibility Requirements

Volunteers must meet the following criteria to be eligible to transport CASA children:

- a. Hold a valid, non-restricted, non-suspended Kansas driver's license.
- b. Submit a copy of the current driver's license to CASA and update it upon expiration for file maintenance.
- c. Maintain motor vehicle liability insurance meeting or exceeding Kansas minimums (K.S.A. 40-3107).

- d. Submit proof of current insurance to CASA and update it upon expiration.
- e. Consent to and pass an annual Motor Vehicle Records (MVR) check.
- f. Obtain permission from the CASA Program Director to transport by signing the *CASA Transportation Agreement* which acknowledges the personal risk of liability and accepting such responsibility. A copy of this agreement is to be maintained in the volunteer file and case file.
- g. Complete the *CASA Volunteer Driver Information Sheet*. A copy will be maintained in the volunteer file.

3. Reporting Requirements

Volunteers must:

- a. Notify CASA of any changes to license status, insurance, or vehicle registration within 7 business days.
- b. Immediately report any accident involving a CASA child, regardless of severity and provide a police accident report if involved in a crash while transporting a CASA child.
- c. Disclose any traffic violations, citations, or legal infractions within seven (7) days of occurrence.

4. Restrictions on Transport

- a. Volunteers with more than one citation in three (3) months or have been the driver at fault in two (2) or more accidents in the last three (3) years may not transport children without Board approval.
- b. Volunteers with a DWI/DUI conviction or diversion within the past five (5) years are prohibited from transporting CASA children.
- c. Volunteers may not transport children who require specialized restraints due to disability unless approved by DCF and CASA leadership.
- d. Volunteers may not transport children under the age of four (4) years of age.
- e. OJA may instruct the program to disallow someone from transporting children based on information obtained during the screening process.

5. Safe Driving Practices

The CASA Volunteer must:

- a. Obey all traffic laws and drive at safe speeds appropriate to conditions.
- b. Never drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications.
- c. Refrain from texting or using a phone while driving with CASA children or other family members.
- d. Ensure all passengers comply with Kansas safety restraint laws, including proper use of booster seats when applicable.

6. Authorization and Termination

- a. Transportation is permitted only with written approval from the CASA Executive Director and the custodial agency.
- b. This agreement remains in effect until terminated in writing by CASA, the volunteer, or the custodial agent.
- c. Violations of this policy may result in revocation of transportation privileges and possible dismissal from the CASA program.

M. Emergency Procedures

If the CASA child is in imminent danger, the CASA volunteer is to immediately call 911 and notify the police. A CASA volunteer shall not remove the child or transport the child, nor intervene in a domestic dispute under any circumstance. After notifying the police, the CASA volunteer is to contact their assigned Advocate Supervisor.

For situations not involving imminent danger, CASA volunteers should call their assigned Advocate Supervisor at (785) 215-8282 during business hours. Outside of normal operating hours, volunteers should follow the after-hours emergency procedure.

N. Court Hearings and Case Meetings

CASA volunteers shall attend all court hearings and case meetings as required by Supreme Court Rule 110. If unable to attend, the volunteer should contact their Advocate Supervisor in advance to arrange for a substitute.

O. Reports and Deadlines

The CASA volunteer must keep abreast of all deadlines and timetables involved in their assigned cases.

1. Monthly reports and timesheets are to be submitted to the Advocate Supervisor by the fifth (5th) day of each month.
2. Court reports must be turned in to the Advocate Supervisor seventeen (17) days prior to the court hearing date.
3. CASA staff must review and approve all court reports, including all recommendations prior to submission to the court. Substantive changes to a volunteer's court report will not be made without the knowledge and consent of the volunteer. Volunteers must physically or electronically sign the report once it has been approved. It is the responsibility of the CASA office to submit court reports to all parties. The CASA volunteer must never submit any report or document directly to the court or interested parties.

Should there be a conflict between the CASA volunteer and the Advocate Supervisor regarding the reporting of information and/or recommendations made, the Advocate Supervisor and volunteer should follow the grievance procedure as described in section IV.X.

P. Communication with the CASA Office

1. Volunteers should communicate with their Advocate Supervisor whenever they are:
 - a. Stuck or unsure of how to proceed in a case.
 - b. Confused about any issue or procedure.
 - c. In need of assistance or consultation on any manner.
 - d. In need of a listening ear.
2. Volunteers should notify the CASA office if they are:
 - a. Changing their mailing address, phone number, or email address.
 - b. Going on vacation.
 - c. Having surgery.
 - d. Getting married or divorced.
 - e. Changing jobs.
 - f. Experiencing a personal situation that may affect their ability to fulfill their responsibilities as a CASA volunteer for any length of time.

Q. Social Media Usage

CASA of Shawnee County believes that social media, when used appropriately, can be a powerful tool to increase awareness, support, and sense of community for those engaged in advocacy for children who have been abused or neglected. It is important that those who choose to engage in social media understand what is recommended, expected, and required when they discuss CASA-related topics. The agency's ability to serve children depends entirely on the trust and support of the community and its constituents. It is critical that the confidential information entrusted to CASA volunteers is handled responsibly. Volunteers will be required to sign a social media usage agreement before certification.

1. While using social media, never:

- a. Reveal confidential information including identifiable details of anyone associated with a case.
- b. Add a CASA child or other case related party as a friend on social media or request that they add you. Exceptions may be made in the following circumstances (exceptions must be discussed with an approved by CASA staff):
 1. a child is AWOL and social media is the only avenue in which to attempt to connect with them.
 2. social media is the only available form of communication with a parent or other case related party.
- c. Publicly connect with a CASA child, or any party related to a case on any social media platform.
- d. Post meeting dates, times, or locations.
- e. Attempt to use information discovered via social media in a court report.
- f. Speak negatively about agencies or individuals as a representative of CASA of Shawnee County.

2. While using social media, always:

- a. Speak with CASA staff before using social media to communicate with a child or case related party
- b. Ensure that any case-related communication is not and cannot become public.
- c. Include disclaimers that opinions expressed are personal views and not the views of the agency.
- d. Show proper consideration for other's privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
- e. Consider how other parties in a case might feel about statements made. Keep working relationships in mind.
- f. Comply with the law in regard to trademarks and copyrights. Being aware of laws related to libel and defamation of character.

R. Photo Policy

1. Photos of CASA children are only allowed when:
 - a. Requested or required by the court to be included with or in the volunteer's court report, or;

- b. Written permission is obtained from the legal guardian.
 - c. Photos of CASA children are to be maintained in a confidential physical or electronic case file.
2. The use of photos of CASA children for social media, marketing, or personal use is strictly prohibited unless written authorization is provided by the legal guardian.

S. Inactive Status

CASA volunteers who are not assigned to a case are considered inactive. A volunteer on inactive status must maintain regular communication with the CASA office and complete the annually required twelve (12) hours of continuing education in order to maintain certification. Volunteers who have been inactive for more than one year will be decertified unless an exception to decertification is granted by the Executive Director. If an exception is granted, the justification must be documented. Volunteers who have been inactive for more than one year and receive an exception for decertification, must be reactivated. Reactivation shall include the completion of pre-service training unless it has been two years or less since training was originally completed. A CASA volunteer may not be inactive for more than two (2) consecutive years.

T. Volunteer Dismissal

CASA volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the CASA agency or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer duties are subject to dismissal by the Advocate Supervisor through approval by the Program Manager or Executive Director.

- 1. Taking action without CASA staff or court approval that endangers the child or is outside the role or powers of the CASA program.
- 2. Initiation ex-parte communication with the court without first consulting with the assigned Advocate Supervisor, Program Manager, or Executive Director.
- 3. Violating a program policy, court rule or law.
- 4. Failing to complete and report required continuing education hours.
- 5. Demonstrating inability to effectively carry out CASA duties as outlined in the CASA volunteer position description.
- 6. Falsifying volunteer application or misrepresenting facts during the screening process.
- 7. Existence of child abuse/neglect allegations against the CASA volunteer.
- 8. Existence of a conflict of interest which cannot be resolved.

U. Volunteer Resignation

While CASA volunteers make a two-year commitment to a case, there may be circumstances that require a CASA volunteer to resign from service. Resignations should be made in writing or verbally to the assigned Advocate Supervisor, allowing the CASA staff to notify all parties and agencies involved and assign another CASA volunteer, if appropriate. It is requested that volunteers provide advance notice, if at all possible, in an exit interview with the assigned Advocate Supervisor or Program Manager to aid in continuous quality improvement. Case files must be returned to the CASA office within two (2) weeks of resignation. The court will be notified if a case file has not been returned within thirty (30) days of the volunteers' resignation.

V. Suspended Certification

A CASA volunteer's certification must be suspended if:

- 1. The CASA volunteer is arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime. If the program is

made aware that a volunteer is under investigation for a crime listed in section I.D.1, the volunteer's certification must be suspended. The volunteer must remain suspended pending resolution of the case. If convicted of a crime listed in section I.D.1., the volunteer must be removed from the case and decertified immediately. If convicted of any other crime(s), the volunteer may be decertified.

2. The CASA volunteer's background screening results are more than four years old.

W. Transfer

A CASA volunteer who transfers to another CASA program must complete the full application and screening process, and a minimum of four hours of local training as outlined in section II.A. A copy of the CASA volunteer's file must be sent to the receiving program. After receiving the program completes the certification process, the transferring program must decertify the CASA volunteer.

X. Grievance Procedure

The CASA volunteer and Advocate Supervisor will work diligently to address any conflicts that arise amongst themselves, in order to preserve the integrity of their team and their working relationship.

If a conflict arises that is not able to be resolved between the CASA volunteer and the Advocate Supervisor, either the volunteer or the Advocate Supervisor will contact, in any convenient form, the Program Manager to seek assistance and advice. The Program Manager will address the conflict in a manner that is in the child's best interest and in accordance with CASA of Shawnee County's mission and policies.

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the response from the Program Manager or the grievance is with the Program Manager, the volunteer may then submit a written grievance to the Executive Director. The request for review should include an explanation of the grievance and details of all previous efforts to resolve the issue.

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the response from the Executive Director or the grievance is with the Executive Director, the volunteer may then submit a written grievance to the Board of Directors. The request for review should include an explanation of the grievance and details of all previous efforts to resolve the issue.

Decisions made by the Board are final. The complainant will be informed of the resolution of the complaint in writing. All complaints, concerns, or objections shall be confidential, and information shall not be communicated to those not involved in the investigation.

Y. Whistle Blower Procedure

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee, board member, or volunteer of the agency who reports any activity that he/she considers to be illegal, dishonest, unethical, or inappropriate to one or more of the parties specified in this policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.

Examples of illegal, dishonest, unethical, or inappropriate activities are in violation of federal, state, or local laws; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered or other fraudulent financial reporting.

If a volunteer has knowledge of or a concern of such activities, the volunteer is to follow the chain of command. Program Manager> Executive Director> Board of Directors and contact the appropriate party that is responsible for investigating and coordinating corrective action. The volunteer must exercise sound judgement to avoid baseless allegations. A volunteer who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas: providing confidentiality and preventing retaliation. To the extent possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and to provide accused individuals with their legal rights of defense. The agency program will not retaliate against a whistleblower. Any whistleblower who believes he/she is being retaliated against, must contact the Board President immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

Z. Prohibition of Weapons

Staff, volunteers, and board members shall not possess a weapon or firearm on the CASA premises or while conducting business on behalf of CASA.

V. COURTESY CASA APPOINTMENT

A. Intrastate assistance

CASA programs may provide intrastate courtesy advocate assistance to Kansas CASA programs. The appointed courtesy advocate must complete a memorandum of understanding which states:

1. The program in the jurisdiction of where the case originated is using a volunteer from another program;
2. The courtesy CASA volunteer must be appointed to the case in the jurisdiction where the case originated;
3. The program jurisdiction where the case originated is the only CASA program that may
4. The courtesy CASA's casework will be supervised by the program in the jurisdiction where the case originated, and;
5. The program in the jurisdiction where the case originated will count the case and the volunteer in their statistics until the courtesy CASA is discharged from the case.

Administrative Judge Approval of CASA Volunteer Policies

As Administrative Judge of the 3rd Judicial District of Kansas, I, the Honorable **Steven Ebberts**, do hereby swear that I have read and approve the Policies and Procedures of the CASA of Shawnee County, Inc. Court Appointed Special Advocate program. Any change in policies that are required by the Office of Judicial Administration to be approved by the Administration Judge will void this agreement until such time as the policy changes can be reviewed and approved by the Administrative Judge.

Hon. Steven Ebberts

Hon. Steven Ebberts (Sep 20, 2025 08:20:23 CDT)

Signature of Presiding Judge

20/09/2025

Date

Updated September 2025