



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

Kentucky CASA Network

KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK

FY '17-18 Annual Report

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THE KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK

About

The Kentucky CASA Network is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, governed by a board of directors, providing ongoing development, training, technical assistance, and resources to local CASA programs across Kentucky. Currently, the KCN is an association of 22 local programs. The KCN also advocates for the needs of CASA programs with industry stakeholders in the Capitol and throughout the state.



Mission

The mission of the Association is to support the development, growth, continuation, and strengthening of Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs in Kentucky. CASA programs recruit and train volunteers to advocate on behalf of children who have come into the court system as a result of dependency, neglect, or abuse.

Board of Directors

Joe Schuler—Chair

The Law Office of Joseph P. Schuler

Suzanne Blazar—Vice Chair

Freelance Trainer

Tiffany Yahr—Secretary

KY Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Bryan Bulkley—Treasurer

Dean Dorton Allen Ford, PLLC

Barbara Grosso

Belterra Casino Resort

Sara Osborne

MML&K Government Solutions

Hollie Spade

AT&T Kentucky

Nicky Jeffries—Outgoing Local Program Rep.

CASA For Kids Serving Kenton, Campbell & Pendleton Counties, Inc.

William Myers—Outgoing Local Program Rep.

CASA of the River Region

Melynda Jamison—Incoming Local Program Rep.

CASA of Lexington

Staff

Andrea Bruns—State Director

Della Justice—Deputy Director

Melissa Paris—Director of Training

Brittany Garrett—Manager of Member Services & Communications

Doug Myers—Quality Assurance Associate

FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Andrea Bruns,
State Director

Dear Kentucky CASA Network stakeholders,

The past fiscal year has been an exciting time of growth for the Kentucky CASA Network and our 22 local CASA member programs covering 56 counties. Our vision for CASA in Kentucky is that each abused, neglected, and dependent child involved in the juvenile court system in the Commonwealth has a safe and permanent home. More than 1,000 active CASA volunteers work tirelessly each day to ensure that the best interests of these children are represented. With over 26,000 petitions for abuse, neglect, and dependency in Kentucky in 2017, our work is more important than ever to give these children a voice and an opportunity to thrive.

As you will see throughout these pages, the Kentucky CASA Network provides extensive training and technical assistance to our local programs. We have witnessed significant growth and development with the creation of four new CASA programs in 18 months and the expansion of existing programs into 12 new counties. The KCN spearheaded a statewide volunteer recruitment campaign titled, "Be for the Child, Kentucky." For the campaign, we purchased radio ads, billboard space, and movie theater advertising to promote CASA throughout Kentucky. We offered multiple trainings to programs this year, including board governance training, new volunteer coordinator training, a master training of facilitators for National CASA's new pre-service curriculum, financial nonprofit training, and grants management training. We are proud that all member programs participated in these trainings, making a steadfast commitment to meet the continually increasing demand for CASA services.

In 2018, we have been especially excited about the National CASA Association's recognition of CASA in Kentucky. Melynda Jamison, Executive Director of CASA of Lexington, was awarded the Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director of the Year award at the National CASA Association's annual conference in Boston. Melynda was selected among 1,000 local CASA programs for this prestigious award. In addition, I was so pleased to be selected as the inaugural State Director of the Year by National CASA, which is a reflection of all of the great collaborative work being done between local programs and the state association in Kentucky. These awards are equally shared by all those who work within our statewide membership network and are a testament to the commitment, hard work, and dedication of program staff, the board of directors, and volunteers.

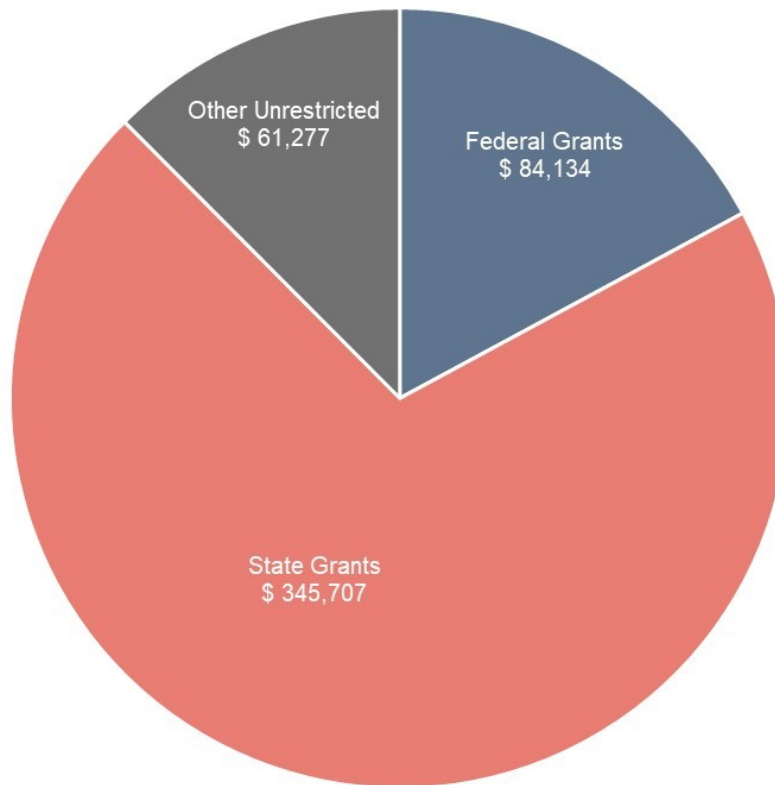
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Bruns".

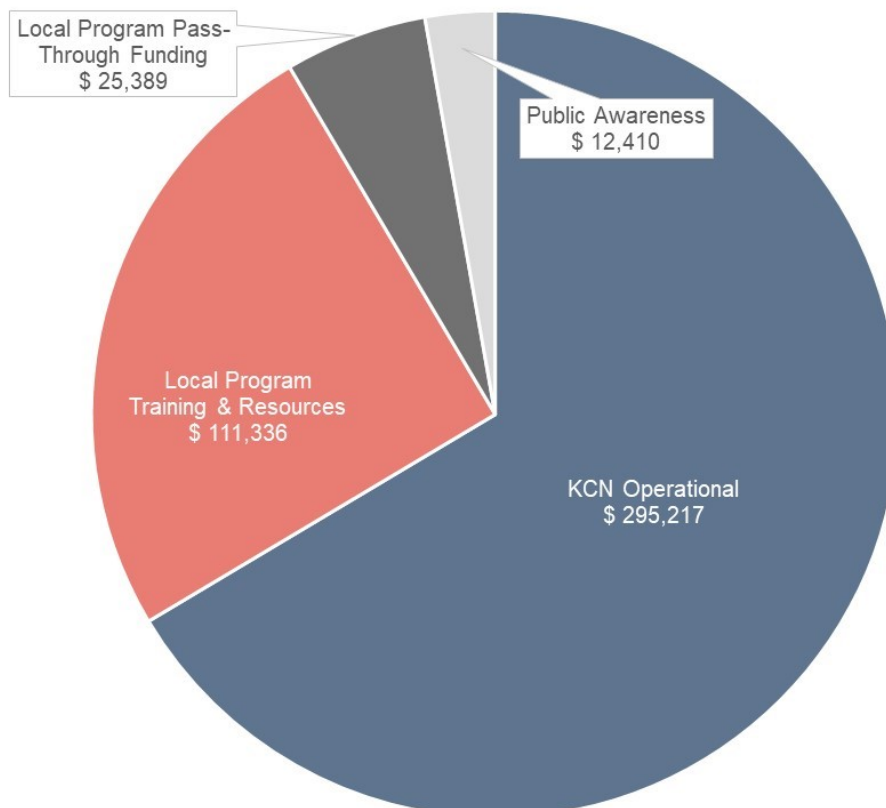
Andrea Bruns
State Director

FISCAL YEAR '17-18 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY 17-18 Revenue by Source



FY 17-18 Expenses by Category



YEAR IN REVIEW

Legislative Updates

The 2018 budget session included \$1,406,000 per funding year for the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program during the 2018-2020 budget year. In addition to this funding allocation, Senate Bill 204 was signed by Governor Matt Bevin, which created a Kentucky CASA Network Trust Fund. CASA will be listed on the 2018 Kentucky Tax Return as one of several charities that taxpayers may select as a recipient of their tax refunds.

Communications & Awareness

In November 2017, the KCN launched a statewide campaign aimed at attracting volunteers. The *Be For The Child* slogan was adapted from National CASA's *I am for the child* mantra, and sought to inspire those who heard the message to stand up and be for Kentucky's most vulnerable children. Messaging was integrated throughout statewide communications, highlighting seven distinct volunteers throughout the state through social media advertising. The accompanying website is still active and continues to receive inquiries from potential volunteers.

In May 2018, the KCN ran a movie theater advertisement via Screen Vision Advertising in five markets throughout the state: Louisville, Northern Kentucky, Lexington, Owensboro, and Hopkinsville. The 30-second placement directed viewers to the *Be For The Child* website to inquire about volunteering in their area. For markets outside of Screen Vision's purview, the KCN provided interested local programs financial and technical assistance to run the ad in their local theaters.



Network Trainings

The Kentucky CASA Network facilitated 14 trainings—a combination of in-person and virtual—in the '17-18 fiscal year. These trainings affected nearly 300 participants. In addition, the KCN hosted two regional conferences, in Bowling Green and Lexington, and organized for staff and volunteers to attend the National CASA Conference in Boston, MA. Some of the training topics included:

- Board leadership and governance
- Volunteer coordinator training
- Learning about Optima
- Training of facilitators
- Grants management
- Executive leadership and strategic human resources
- Online in-service volunteer opportunities
- Financial training



YEAR IN REVIEW

Fundraising Events

For the fourth time, the KCN was selected as a charity for the Bourbon Chase, which took place in October 2017. The Bourbon Chase is a 200-mile relay race that begins at Jim Beam and runs through the Kentucky Bourbon Trail before finishing in downtown Lexington. Six teams were recruited in 2017, three of which came from outside the Commonwealth. Since 2014, the KCN has worked with 25 charity teams who collectively raised over \$185,000.

The KCN was also one of 142 participating nonprofits in KY Gives Day 2018, organized by the Kentucky Nonprofit Network. The KCN raised \$1,200 during the 24-hour giving event from 13 individual donors.



Regional Conferences

The annual KCN event was broken into two regional conferences in 2017 to accommodate staff and volunteer travel time and to offer workshops more specific to the geographic areas. There were 282 total attendees—163 in Lexington and 119 in Bowling Green—impacting more than 150 volunteers and 70 staff members. Both conferences featured breakout sessions that covered topics such as:

- Overview of KRS and NCASA Standards
- What is Permanency for Children?
- How to Engage Volunteers
- Understanding Childhood Trauma
- Understanding the New NCASA Pre-Service Training Curriculum



Mark Miller, Center for Behavioral Health, led the plenary session at both events, discussing the opiate crisis and its impact on Kentucky's children and families. Overall, the feedback from the conferences was positive. Volunteers and staff alike were grateful for the regional aspect of the conference and expressed appreciation that the location rotates each year. Attendees also liked having audience-specific content for the sessions.

Additional feedback from the conference suggested that programs were looking for more training opportunities that honed in on particular topics. The KCN took this feedback and increased the number of available trainings in 2018 and provided additional in-service opportunities for new volunteers that could be completed remotely. The next annual conference is a statewide event, taking place at the Omni Louisville Hotel in September 2018.



YEAR IN REVIEW

Children's Advocacy Day

Local Program executive directors joined Kentucky CASA Network staff at the capitol building for Children's Advocacy Day on January 18, 2018. CASA represented just one of many advocacy organizations that came together in Frankfort to raise their voice for children. It was a great day to share with legislators the important work being done by the more than 1,000 CASA volunteers in Kentucky.



Quality Assurance

With the support of the local CASA programs, the KCN launched a quality assurance review of all programs in the fall of 2016. One purpose of the 2016-2018 QA Review is to support and strengthen local CASA programs to ensure excellence in service to children. The Review assists local programs in identifying both strengths and needs, serves as a tool for accountability, and allows the KCN to provide technical assistance as needed. The QA Review has also allowed the KCN to become better informed about the challenges facing local programs so that we can plan to assist them to meet those challenges.

Since July 2017, the KCN has conducted site visits, reviewed documents for compliance with key standards, and surveyed the volunteers and board members for the last remaining nine local programs. The KCN also followed-up with local programs with technical assistance and provided draft reports and final reports to programs. It is anticipated that the 2016-2018 QA Review reports to programs will be concluded this fall. In the next phase of QA, the KCN will be working with local programs on implementing recommendations and best practices from the Review and on meeting the requirements of new standards expected to be released from the National CASA Association in 2019.

Toy Drive

In 2017, the National CASA Association selected the KCN as one of the recipients of a grant from the Toy Foundation and Amazon.com. Amazon customers from across the country had the opportunity to purchase toys to help a child in foster care during the holiday season. The KCN requested 2,700 toys; due to the overwhelming generosity of Amazon customers, the KCN received over 4,500 packages during an eight-day span, containing more than 8,000 individual toys with an estimated value of over \$200,000. CASA program staff and Kentucky citizens volunteered many hours before the holidays to unpack, sort, and distribute the toys to agencies and organizations who serve Kentucky's most vulnerable and at-risk youth.



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Kentucky CASA Network Volunteer of the Year—Suzanne Churchwell



Suzanne Churchwell, CASA Project of McCracken County, was named the Bob Babbage Kentucky CASA Network Volunteer of the Year at the Regional Conference in Bowling Green in September 2017. Volunteer Coordinator Liz Hansen said that “Suzanne has gone above and beyond for the children whom she is currently assigned...advocating fiercely for these children and what is in their best interest, making sure all their needs are being met in the timeliest of manners.” McCracken County Family Court Judge Deanna Henschel added, “Not only do I feel confident that I know the child’s current situation, I always feel as though I actually *know* the children on her cases.”

Kentucky CASA Network Volunteer of the Year—Brittney Thomas



Brittney Thomas, CASA of Lexington, was named the Bob Babbage Kentucky CASA Network Volunteer of the Year at the Regional Conference in Lexington in October 2017. Fayette County Family Court Judge Traci Brislin said, “Brittney does not believe that there is any problem without a solution. Her creativity and optimism secure her place as a priceless resource for *all* neglected and abused children in Fayette County.” Executive Director Melynda Jamison noted that “Brittney treats every member of every case with respect, kindness, and a genuine level of servanthood...she ensures confidentiality is always followed, complies with standards, and goes above and beyond in visiting with the children on her cases.”

National CASA Association State Director of the Year—Andrea Bruns



Andrea Bruns, State Director for the Kentucky CASA Network, was the first-ever recipient of the State Director of the Year award. It was newly created in 2018 by the National CASA Association in recognition that “state directors are invaluable members of this national network. They must combine vision and passion with practical know-how and leadership. They must juggle a wide range of demands and constituents. And through all this, they must stay focused on the needs of vulnerable children. They are ambassadors for the children in their state and across the country.” This award was accompanied by a \$20,000 grant for professional development. Andrea was recognized and received this award at the National CASA Association Conference in Boston in March 2018.

Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director of the Year—Melynda Jamison



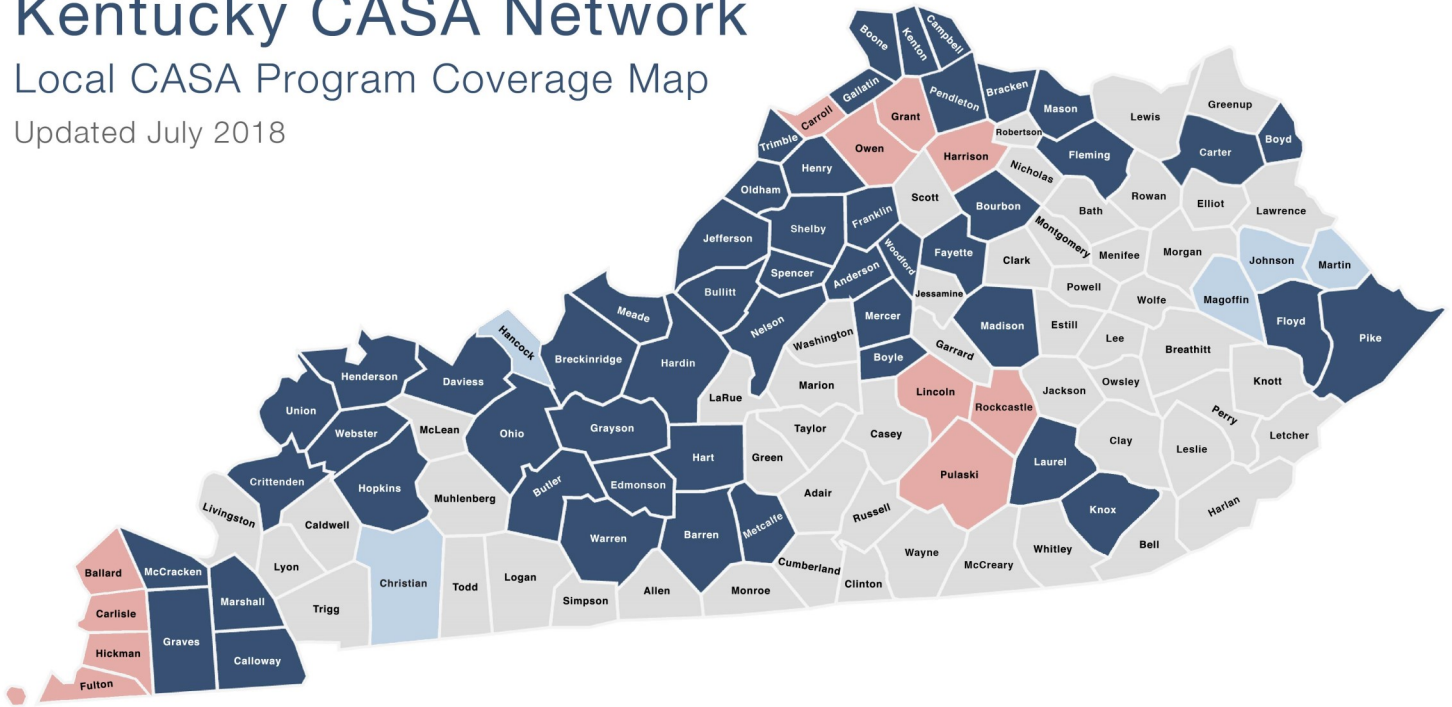
Melynda Jamison, Executive Director of CASA of Lexington, was named the 2018 Program Director of the Year. In presenting this award, Kappa Alpha Theta Vice President Kimberly Morris Martin observed that Melynda “has been the driving force behind the program’s tremendous growth and success, more than doubling the number of volunteers and tripling the number of children with an advocate” since she joined CASA of Lexington in 2013. Melynda was recognized and received this award at the National CASA Association Conference in Boston in March 2018.

LOCAL PROGRAM MAP & GROWTH

Kentucky CASA Network

Local CASA Program Coverage Map

Updated July 2018



Map Key

- Covered by a local CASA program with volunteers actively working cases in this county
 Covered by a local CASA program with volunteers not yet working cases in this county
 Local community and/or existing CASA program actively working to bring CASA to this county



Program Growth: Fiscal Year '17-18

CASA Programs in Kentucky have been growing since July 2017:

- Two new CASA programs formed and successfully obtained provisional membership with the National CASA Association: CASA of Knox and Laurel Counties, Inc. and CASA Program of Christian County, KY Inc.
- Two programs received full membership status with the National CASA Association: CASA Program of Hopkins, Webster and Crittenden Counties, Inc. and CASA of Eastern Kentucky
- Existing CASA programs expanded into 4 new counties

The CASA footprint in Kentucky today is the largest it has ever been with 22 local CASA programs covering 56 counties. We are building capacity to serve more children across the Commonwealth. If our 2018-2021 Growth Plan goals are met, by year end 2021 there will be 25 local CASA programs serving 80 counties.

The number of active CASA volunteers is also on the rise, but Kentucky's abused, neglected, and dependent children need more. In the 2017 calendar year, there were 980 active volunteers in Kentucky, almost 150 more volunteers than in 2016. CASA programs trained 389 new volunteers in 2017, a substantial increase over the 285 new volunteers trained in 2016. CASA programs served 3,069 children in 2017, but with so many new petitions for abuse, neglect, and dependency being filed every year, we continue to seek out new volunteers.

LOCAL PROGRAM LIST

CASA of the Bluegrass

Serving Anderson, Boyle, Franklin, and Mercer Counties

Laura Guerrant, Exec. Director

Boone County CASA

Serving Boone and Gallatin Counties

Colleen Maier, Exec. Director

CASA Program for Bracken, Fleming & Mason Counties, Inc.

Shanda Hamilton, Exec. Director

CASA Program for Bullitt County

Cindy Prestiagiacomio, Exec. Dir.

CASA Program of Christian County, KY Inc.

Incoming Executive Director

CASA of Eastern Kentucky

Serving Floyd and Pike Counties

Shawna Kelly-Blair, Program Dir.

Graves County CASA

Stephanie Floyd, Exec. Director

CASA of the Heartland

Serving Hardin County

Debra Smith, Executive Director

CASA of Henderson and Union Counties

Samantha Sigler, Acting Director

CASA Program of Hopkins, Webster and Crittenden Counties, Inc.

Daphyne Maddox, Exec. Director

CASA For Kids Serving Kenton, Campbell & Pendleton Counties, Inc.

Nicky Jeffries, Executive Director

CASA of Knox and Laurel Counties, Inc.

Christina Bentley, Exec. Director

CASA by the Lakes

Serving Calloway and Marshall Counties

Angelia Boyd, Executive Director

CASA of Lexington

Serving Bourbon, Fayette, and Woodford Counties

Melynda Jamison, Exec. Director

CASA of Madison County

Victoria Benge, Exec. Director

CASA Project of McCracken County

Janie Criner, Executive Director

CASA of Nelson County

Kate Mudd, Executive Director

CASA of Northeast KY, Inc.

Serving Boyd and Carter Counties

Carol Adams, Executive Director

CASA of Ohio Valley

Serving Daviess, Hancock, and Ohio Counties

Rosemary Conder, Exec. Dir.

CASA of the River Region

Serving Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble Counties

William Myers, President & CEO

CASA of South Central KY

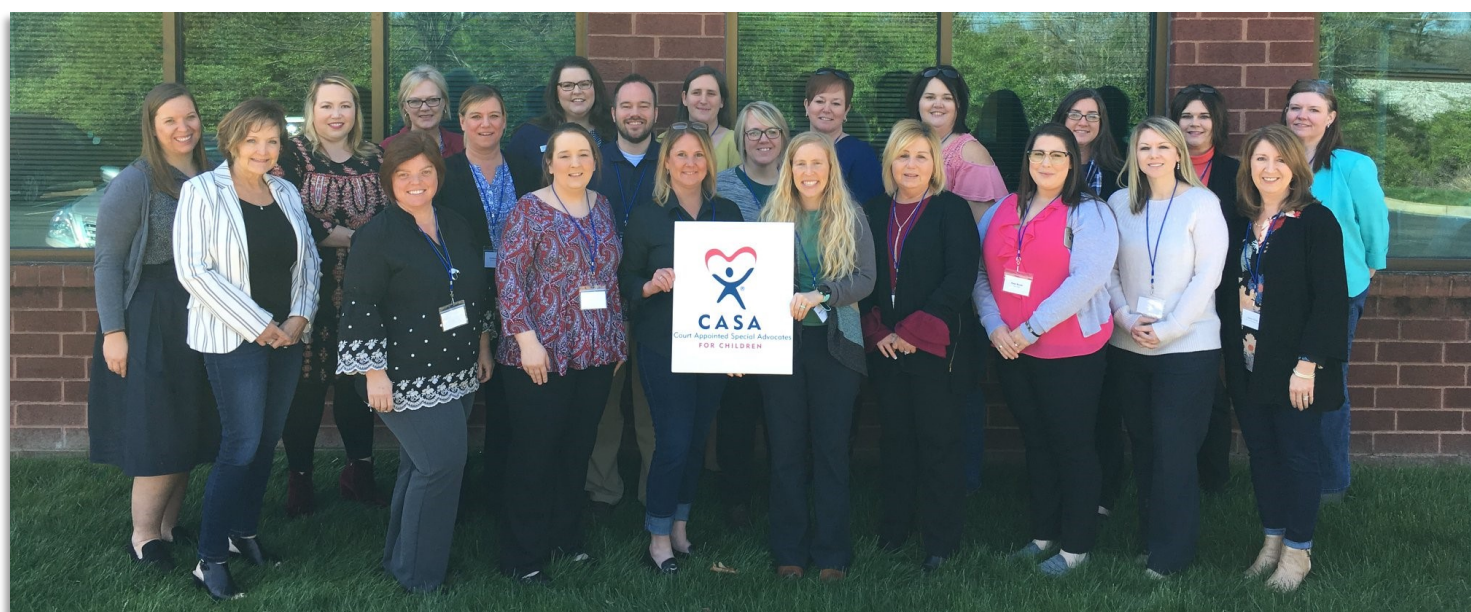
Serving Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Metcalfe, and Warren Counties

Jana Sublett, Executive Director

Tri-County CASA, Inc.

Serving Breckenridge, Grayson, and Meade Counties

Lori Aldridge, Executive Director



Local Program Executive & Program Directors | April 20, 2018



Kentucky CASA Network

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