



The Kentucky CASA Network, Inc.

Biennial Report

January 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The Kentucky CASA Network, Inc. (KCN) is the state Court Appointed Special Advocate association as described in Kentucky Revised Statute 620.530(1). Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are trained community volunteers appointed by judges to represent the best interests of dependent, abused, and neglected children in court. KRS 620.500 et seq. Local CASA programs are nonprofit organizations that train and supervise CASA volunteers. There are currently 22 local CASA programs and more than 1,100 CASA volunteers across Kentucky.

As the state association, the KCN is directed by statute to provide certain evaluations and recommendations relating to child welfare to the Supreme Court, the Governor, the Legislative Research Commission, and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services in the odd-numbered years. Specifically, KRS 620.535(3) requires the state association to “evaluate and make recommendations” regarding:

- (a) Laws of the Commonwealth and practices, policies, and procedures within the Commonwealth affecting the welfare of children and families; and
- (b) The effectiveness, or lack thereof, and the reasons therefore, of local CASA volunteers advocating for placement for the children in the Commonwealth.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS FOR POLICY REFORM AND IMPROVED EFFICIENCIES IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN KENTUCKY

I. Shorten the length of time for completing CASA volunteer child abuse/neglect background checks with the CHFS by allowing CASA programs to submit their requests to the local/regional DCBS offices

Evaluation: In 2018, the turnaround for receiving completed background checks for CASA volunteers was substantially lengthened because of the increase in volume for background check requests the CHFS was experiencing due to requests from other agencies/providers.

The KCN is concerned that the delay in background checks has delayed the appointment of CASA volunteers to cases. In 2018, CASA programs reported that 56 volunteers were not appointed to a case that year due to the length of time for getting background checks completed.

Recommendation: The KCN recognizes that much of this delay may be outside the control of the CHFS. One recommendation for consideration by the CHFS is to allow local CASA programs to make requests for background checks through their local/regional DCBS offices and for the local DCBS offices to complete the checks for the local CASA program. This decentralization may allow staff who are not otherwise already engaged in doing background checks to conduct the background checks for the local CASA program.

II. Additional collaboration between local DCBS offices and local CASA programs regarding the sharing of case-related information

Evaluation: CASA volunteers are required to work with the local cabinet representatives to advocate for the best interests of the children they are assigned (KRS 620.525(2)(k)). For this reason, CASA volunteers should be sharing the information they uncover and their court reports with the assigned social worker to improve the outcomes for the child. Likewise, local Cabinet workers need to share their information and court reports with the CASA volunteer once assigned to a case. Although CASA volunteers are entitled to the case-related information (KRS 620.505-.550), oftentimes local Cabinet workers seem unclear about the information the CASA volunteer is entitled to and do not share important information with the CASA volunteers. Specifically, CASA volunteers should be: (i) informed when a CASA child has been moved to a new foster home or placement, (ii) provided copies of the social worker's court report in advance of court and at least when it is served on the parties to the case, and (iii) provided notice when a treatment planning conference/review is scheduled.

Recommendation: The CHFS, local DCBS offices, the KCN, and local CASA programs should engage in joint training efforts to educate front-line Cabinet staff and CASA program staff/volunteers about the types of information that can and should be shared among the two stakeholders to support the CASA volunteer's ability to advocate for the child's best interest.

III. AOC should provide instructions and additional guidance to local clerks of the court to assure that CASA programs are provided with copies of court orders and other filings in the court record once a CASA volunteer is appointed

Evaluation: Once the court has referred a case to the CASA program and a CASA volunteer is appointed, local CASA programs should receive information relating to the court case, particularly court orders and notice of all scheduled hearings. In some jurisdictions, the local clerk of the court may be unaware of this requirement and the local CASA program works to educate the clerk about the role of the CASA and the need to receive copies of court orders, etc. per KRS 620.505 and KRS 620.520.

Recommendation: Local CASA programs' efforts to work with the clerk of the court may be strengthened with additional guidance from the AOC to the local clerk about including CASA programs in the electronic records management system, and how to best include the CASA program so that the program is included on the service list and receives copies of all orders and notice of any hearings in the case to which a CASA is appointed.

THE ROLE OF THE CASA VOLUNTEER IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN KENTUCKY

CASA volunteers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky play a vital role in many aspects of the child welfare system that include family and juvenile courts, DCBS, and the juvenile justice system. CASA volunteers serve as child advocates providing a much-needed voice for an

abused and neglected child caught up in a complex and daunting system through no fault of their own.

CASA volunteers are objective, community-based volunteers who are appointed by judges to serve in child abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. Once assigned to a child, the volunteer has regular in-person visits with the child, researches the child's case, reviews documents, interviews relevant people to the case, and makes a report to the court as to what is in the best interest of the child, in terms of services, placement, visitation, reunification, and permanency. CASA volunteers monitor the child's placement, whether they are in foster care, in relative placement, or remain in their current homes with their biological parents until permanency is achieved. Volunteers are often the only constant the child knows as he/she moves through the labyrinth of the child welfare system. This unique role is one that allows the CASA volunteer and local CASA programs to view the system with a unique lens.

Requirements and Description of a CASA Volunteer in Kentucky

Volunteers are screened, trained, and supervised by professional staff at local CASA programs. Pursuant to standards from the National CASA Association and Kentucky statutory provisions, volunteers are required to receive a minimum of 30 hours of initial training, engage in court observation pre-service if possible, and attend 12 hours of ongoing training each year.

STATEWIDE CASA DATA

	CY 2016	CY 2017	CY 2018
Children Served	2,895	3,069	3,514
Active Volunteers	808	980	1,112
New Volunteers Trained	241	389	430

State Funding Allocation by the 2018 Legislature

The Kentucky Legislature allocated \$1.406 million in each FY '19 and FY '20 to be distributed to the Court Appointed Special Advocates Program in the form of grants through the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet. This appropriation was the second budget year to fund the CASA program in Kentucky. In the 2016 budget year, CASA was allocated a total of \$3 million, which marked the first time Kentucky allocated state dollars to the CASA program. The Kentucky

CASA Network has a two-year contract with the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet to administer and pass through the FY '19 and FY '20 General Fund Allocation in the form of subgrants to local CASA programs in Kentucky. SB 204 also passed in the 2018 Legislature, which created the Kentucky CASA Network Trust Fund.

THE SYSTEM CASAS NAVIGATE IN KENTUCKY

	CY 2016	CY 2017	CY 2018
AOC Petitions Filed ¹	24,298	26,148	26,237
Children in DCBS Substantiations ²	28,763	33,417	33,828

¹CY 2016, 2017, and 2018 data provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts

²CY 2016, 2017, and 2018 data provided by the Department for Community Based Services

WHERE CASA PROGRAMS ARE LOCATED IN KENTUCKY AS OF JANUARY 2019

Currently, CASA programs serve children in the following counties in Kentucky:

Anderson, Barren, Bourbon, Boone, Boyd, Boyle, Bracken, Breckinridge, Bullitt, Butler, Calloway, Campbell, Carter, Crittenden, Daviess, Edmonson, Fayette, Fleming, Floyd, Franklin, Gallatin, Graves, Grayson, Hardin, Hart, Henderson, Henry, Hopkins, Jefferson, Kenton, Knox, Laurel, Madison, Marshall, Mason, McCracken, Meade, Mercer, Metcalfe, Nelson, Oldham, Pendleton, Pike, Shelby, Spencer, Trimble, Union, Warren, Webster, Woodford

By the end of 2019, CASA programs expect to be serving children in the following counties:

Ballard, Carlisle, Carroll, Christian, Clark, Grant, Hickman, Lincoln, Magoffin, McLean, Owen, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Scott



Kentucky CASA Network

Local CASA Program Directory



<p>CASA of the Bluegrass Serving Anderson, Boyle, Franklin, and Mercer Counties Laura Guerrant, Executive Director Maria Olson, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 45 Danville, KY 40423 473 West Walnut St Danville, KY 40423 ☎ (859) 936-3510 🔗 casaofthebluegrass.org</p>	<p>Boone County CASA Serving Boone and Gallatin Counties Colleen Maier, Executive Director Thomas Nienaber, Board Chair</p> <p>📍 2989 Washington St Burlington, KY 41005 ☎ (859) 586-1222 🔗 casanky.org</p>	<p>CASA Program for Bracken, Fleming & Mason Counties, Inc. Serving Bracken, Fleming, and Mason Counties Shanda Hamilton, Executive Director June Reis, Board Chair ✉ P.O. Box 631 Maysville, KY 41056 ☎ (606) 563-7431 🔗 casaforbrackenflemingmason.org</p>
<p>CASA Program for Bullitt County Serving Bullitt County Cindy Prestiagiacomio, Executive Director Denise Laferty, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 1025 Shepherdsville, KY 40165 340 S Buckman St, 2nd Floor Shepherdsville, KY 40165 ☎ (502) 543-4554 🔗 bccasa.org</p>	<p>CASA Program of Christian County, KY Inc. Serving Christian County Virginia Erxleben, Executive Director Federico Rodriguez, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 24 Hopkinsville, KY 42241 📍 Coming soon ☎ (270)-498-6609 🔗 facebook.com/Casaprogramofccky</p>	<p>CASA of Eastern Kentucky <i>Project of Judi's Place for Kids</i> Serving Floyd and Pike Counties Laura Kretzer, Executive Director Shawna Kelly, Program Director Genesia Kilgore-Bowling, Board Chair 📍 253 University Drive Prestonsburg, KY 41653 ☎ (606) 886-8520 🔗 eastkycasa.org</p>
<p>Graves County CASA <i>Project of Graves County Child Advocacy Program</i> Serving Carlisle, Graves, and Hickman Counties Stephanie Floyd, Executive Director Ryan Toombs, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 5200 Mayfield, KY 42066 229 W Walnut St, Suite 2 Mayfield, KY 42066 ☎ (270) 251-2060 🔗 gravescountychildadvocacy.org</p>	<p>CASA of the Heartland Serving Hardin County Debra Smith, Executive Director Patsy Whitehead, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 6065 Elizabethtown, KY 42702 245 W Dixie Ave Elizabethtown, KY 42701 ☎ (270) 982-2272 🔗 casaheartland.org</p>	<p>CASA of Henderson and Union Counties <i>Project of the CAC of Green River District</i> Serving Henderson and Union Counties Samantha Sigler, Executive Director Michaela DeHaven, Program Director Preston Herndon, Board Chair 📍 537 S Green St Henderson, KY 42420 ☎ (270) 830-8400 🔗 casaofhendersonunion.org</p>
<p>CASA Program of Hopkins, Webster and Crittenden Counties, Inc. Serving Crittenden, Hopkins, and Webster Counties Daphne Maddox, Executive Director Kay Hawkins, Board Chair ✉ P.O. Box 2 Madisonville, KY 42431 10 S Main St, Suite 26 Madisonville, KY 42431 ☎ (270) 245-5112 🔗 facebook.com/casaofhopkinswebstercrittenden</p>	<p>CASA For Kids serving Kenton, Campbell & Pendleton Counties, Inc. Serving Campbell, Kenton, and Pendleton Counties Nicky Jeffries, Executive Director Stacy Meyers, Board Chair 📍 303 Court St, Suite 707 Covington, KY 41011 ☎ (859) 392-1791 🔗 casaforkidsnky.org</p>	<p>CASA of Knox and Laurel Counties, Inc. Serving Knox and Laurel Counties Debra Hauser, Executive Director Carolyn Smith, Board Chair ✉ P.O. Box 3156 London, KY 40743 ☎ (606) 389-5968 🔗 casaknoxlaurel.com</p>

<p>CASA by the Lakes Serving Calloway and Marshall Counties Angelia Boyd, Executive Director Katie Hancock, Board Chair</p> <p>📍 1003 Poplar St Murray, KY 42071</p> <p>☎ (270) 761-0164</p> <p>🔗 casabythelakes.org</p>	<p>CASA of Lexington Serving Bourbon, Fayette, and Woodford Counties Melynda Jamison, Executive Director Miranda Wyles, Board Chair</p> <p>📍 1155 Harry Sykes Way Lexington, KY 40504</p> <p>☎ (859) 246-4313</p> <p>🔗 lexingtoncasa.com</p>	<p>CASA of Madison County Serving Madison County Victoria Bengé, Executive Director Erin Truett, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 634 Richmond, KY 40476</p> <p>📍 101 W Main St Richmond, KY 40475</p> <p>☎ (859) 624-4794</p> <p>🔗 madisoncasa.org</p>
<p>CASA Project of McCracken County <i>Project of Child Watch Counseling & Advocacy Center</i> Serving McCracken County Janie Criner, Executive Director Julie McKeel, Program Director Sandra Cargill, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 1262 Paducah, KY 42002</p> <p>📍 1118 Jefferson St Paducah, KY 42001</p> <p>☎ (270) 443-1440</p> <p>🔗 childwatchcac.org</p>	<p>CASA of Nelson County Serving Nelson County Kate Mudd, Executive Director Judy Beaven, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 726 Bardstown, KY 40004</p> <p>📍 860 W Stephen Foster Ave Bardstown, KY 40004</p> <p>☎ (502) 331-6325</p> <p>🔗 facebook.com/nelson.nelcasa</p>	<p>CASA of Northeast KY, Inc. Serving Boyd and Carter Counties Carol Adams, Executive Director Sheila Fraley, Board Chair</p> <p>📍 2800 Louisa St, Suite 300 Catlettsburg, KY 41129</p> <p>☎ (606) 739-2177</p> <p>🔗 casaneky.org</p>
<p>CASA of Ohio Valley Serving Daviess County Rosemary Conder, Executive Director Cathie Medley, Board Chair</p> <p>📍 415 Saint Ann St Owensboro, KY 42303</p> <p>☎ (270) 683-2138</p> <p>🔗 casaov.org</p>	<p>CASA of the River Region Serving Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble Counties William Myers, President & CEO Ruth Reid, Board Chair</p> <p>📍 982 Eastern Parkway, Box 9 Louisville, KY 40217</p> <p>☎ (502) 595-4911</p> <p>🔗 casariverregion.org</p>	<p>CASA of South Central KY Serving Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Metcalfe, and Warren Counties Jana Sublett, Executive Director Josh Heffinger, Board Chair</p> <p>✉ P.O. Box 867 Bowling Green, KY 42102</p> <p>📍 316 E 10th St Bowling Green, KY 42102</p> <p>☎ (270) 782-5353</p> <p>🔗 casaofsck.org</p>
<p>Tri-County CASA, Inc. Serving Breckinridge, Grayson, and Meade Counties Lori Aldridge, Executive Director Jody Hatfield, Board Chair</p> <p>📍 500 Carroll Gibson Blvd Leitchfield, KY 42754</p> <p>☎ (502) 744-3137</p> <p>🔗 tricountycasaky.com</p>		

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