



# Annual Report 2018-2019

KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK, INC.

CHANGE A  
CHILD'S STORY.™





# KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK

## Fiscal Year ‘18-19 Annual Report

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# ABOUT THE KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK

## ABOUT

Kentucky Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Network, Inc. (KCN) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, governed by a Board of Directors, that provides ongoing development, training, technical assistance, and resources to local CASA programs across Kentucky. Currently, the KCN is a membership association of 23 local programs. The KCN also advocates for the needs and interests of CASA programs and volunteers with industry stakeholders in Frankfort, participates on state child welfare policy-making committees, and advances the CASA mission statewide.



## MISSION

The mission of the KCN is to support the development, growth, and continuation 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.



## VALUES

### *Collaboration*

The strength of CASA in Kentucky lies in working in good faith as a unified team with local CASA programs, the National CASA/GAL Association, child welfare agencies, local communities, and statewide stakeholders.

### *Service*

We believe in putting the needs of the programs we serve first. We are here to assist the programs, Boards, staff, and volunteers to develop and become as highly effective as possible in their service to children involved in the court system.

### *Accountability*

We report on our activities and decisions to local programs, stakeholders, donors, grantors, and community partners. We accept responsibility for our activities and decisions. We report and disclose the result of activities and decisions in a transparent manner.

### *Gratitude*

We appreciate the opportunity and resources we have been provided to strengthen CASA in Kentucky. We are grateful for the work of local CASA programs with a shared vision with the KCN and each other.

### *Transparency*

We value the trust that we have been given by programs, grantors, community partners, stakeholders, and donors. To maintain that trust, we believe in making publicly available our financial and programmatic information regarding services performed.

### *Equity*

We believe in all children receiving the resources and access to services they need to reach their full potential.

## FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Kentucky CASA Network stakeholders,

Looking back over the past fiscal year, the trajectory of growth for CASA in Kentucky continues to accelerate as we work diligently to meet the demands of creating a strong sustainable network of CASA programs that deliver high-quality best-interest advocacy for abused and neglected children in Kentucky.

In calendar year 2018, we saw the highest number yet of active CASA volunteers who advocated for more than 3,500 abused, neglected, and dependent children in the Commonwealth. This number is the highest in CASA's 30-year history in Kentucky. The KCN also announced a three-year strategic growth plan that looks at building capacity, increasing quality, and advocating for more children through 2021. Our 23 Local Program Members have committed to this growth plan and remain committed to reaching the growth plan and its strategic goals. With more than 24,000 petitions for abuse, neglect, and dependency in 2018, our work to advocate for the best interests of these children who are in the child welfare system through no fault of their own is more important than ever. We are proud that we now have CASA services in 58 counties, a 25% increase in just four years.

The KCN's three-year strategic growth plan also involved evaluating whether we have adequate resources and staffing to meet the needs of our member programs, particularly regarding our service delivery and capacity to be able to fulfill our mission of growing and developing CASA in the Commonwealth. The development of a new strategic plan was part of the KCN's efforts as one of the inaugural states to go through the National CASA/GAL Association's Highly Effective State Review Process (HESRP) for state associations, which looks not only at compliance with 49 new National Standards for State CASA Associations but also at where the KCN falls on a continuum of effectiveness relative to those standards.

For the second year in a row, Kentucky was recognized for excellence on the national stage. The National CASA Board Member of the Year recognition was awarded to Charlotte Burton, Board member of CASA of Ohio Valley in Owensboro, Kentucky. This award was presented in June at the National CASA/GAL Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Lastly, in 2019 the KCN Board of Directors spent time developing a new values statement for the association. We believe that values are not just words on a piece of paper; they are tangible examples of how we move forward to create a culture of integrity for the programs we support and the children they serve. One of our key values is gratitude. We are grateful for the resources we are provided from funders, donors, and grantors; grateful for the faith and support of judges who appoint CASA to cases; and grateful for the tireless work of everyday citizens in the Commonwealth who decided to become CASA volunteers and show up each day to give a voice to abused and neglected children.

Sincerely,



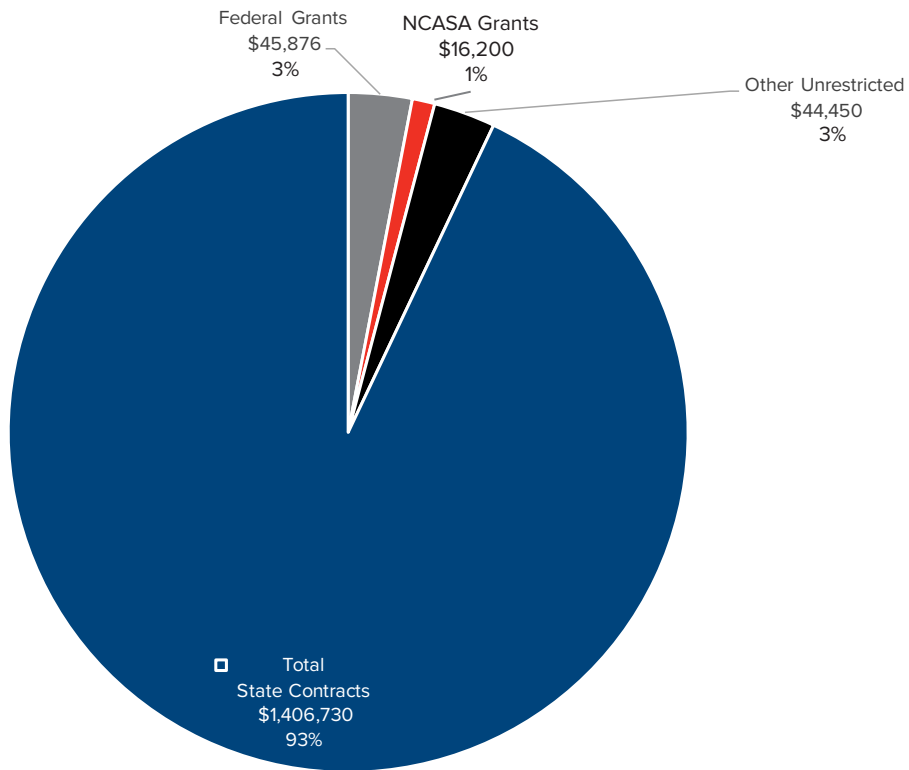
Andrea Bruns  
State Director



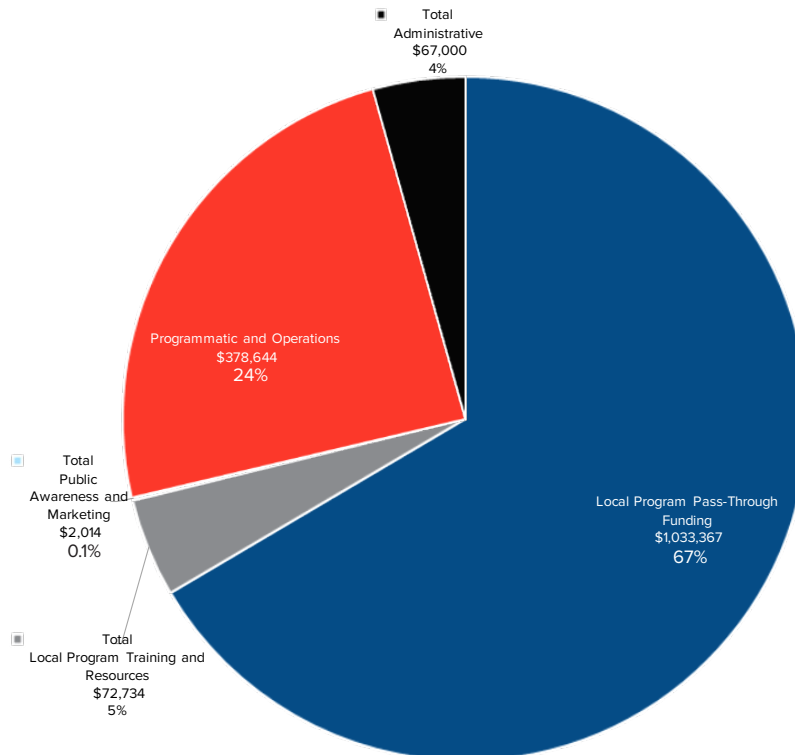


# FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## FY 2018-2019 - REVENUE BY CATEGORY



## FY 2018-2019 - EXPENSES BY CATEGORY

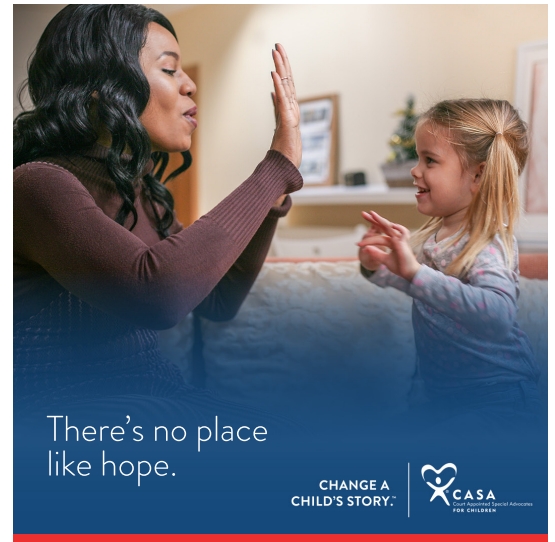


# YEAR IN REVIEW

## COMMUNICATIONS AND AWARENESS

In June 2019, the KCN created a new website for the state organization. The layout and images correspond with National CASA/GAL Association's new branding campaign, "Change a Child's Story™," which tells children's stories in their own words and shows the stabilizing influence of a CASA volunteer in their lives. The new website has allowed the KCN to consolidate resources by incorporating a volunteer inquiry landing page, Members Only portal for local programs, event registration and payment platform, and email marketing system. Using that system, the KCN has launched quarterly CASA volunteer and Board member newsletters, in addition to the existing monthly program staff newsletter, to provide tailored updates to these additional KCN stakeholders.

Throughout the spring and early summer of 2019, the KCN collaborated with local program directors, as the experts in their communities, to determine the most effective strategies for raising brand awareness within their service areas and prepare a state branding campaign grant application to the National CASA/GAL Association. The KCN was awarded a grant in June 2019 for \$72,534 to implement a comprehensive awareness campaign across Kentucky with the goals of establishing CASA name recognition as well as increasing social media reach, website traffic, and volunteer inquiries.



## NETWORK TRAININGS

In the '18-19 fiscal year, the KCN facilitated 16 network-wide trainings for more than 360 participants, incorporating both virtual and in-person meetings to accommodate the schedules and travel time of those in the network. Some of the training topics included:

- CASA staff and volunteer self-care
- Board governance
- Relationships between CASAs and GALs
- Pre-service facilitator training (in-person and ongoing webinars)
- Volunteer coordinator training
- State CASA Grant training (in-person and webinars)
- Implicit bias



In partnership with Pastor Edward Palmer, the KCN offered three free regional implicit bias trainings for CASA staff and volunteers across the Commonwealth. Pastor Palmer also has contracted with the KCN to provide an additional training at the 2019 annual conference in Owensboro.

KCN staff also facilitated 11 program-specific trainings for more than 60 attendees, including leading pre-service training for new programs, new director trainings, Board training, and a self-care in-service training.

The association has continued to update the in-service opportunity list for current CASA volunteers to offer remote options for completing their required annual in-service training hours. More than 400 hours have been recorded by CASA volunteers since implementing this opportunity.





## YEAR IN REVIEW

### CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY DAY

Local program directors, staff, and volunteers joined KCN staff at the capitol building for Children's Advocacy Day on February 13, 2019. This annual event is a time for many child advocacy organizations to come together in Frankfort to raise their voices for children. Several directors took this time to schedule meetings with legislators to share the important work being done by more than 1,100 CASA volunteers throughout the state.



### FUNDRAISING EVENTS

The KCN was once again one of the recognized charities of the Kentucky Bourbon Chase Ragnar Relay Race in October 2018. Four teams were recruited for the 200-mile relay that passes through central Kentucky's bourbon district. This was the fifth year of partnership with the Bourbon Chase, and since 2014, charity teams have raised just over \$215,000 for local CASA programs in Kentucky and the state organization.



### LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Andrea Bruns, State Director of the KCN, and Virginia Erxleben, Executive Director of CASA Program of Christian County, presented testimony on CASA to the interim joint committee on Judiciary in June 2019. Their testimony highlighted the growth of CASA programs that are members of the KCN since first receiving state funding and the impact of CASA's work in the child welfare system in Kentucky.





## YEAR IN REVIEW

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The annual statewide CASA conference took place on September 19, 2018, at the Omni Louisville Hotel. More than 300 attendees from across Kentucky gathered together for a day full of networking, learning, and recognition, including more than 150 active CASA volunteers. Hasan Davis delivered the keynote address, sharing his journey through the education, justice, and social service systems and simple strategies that his own personal champions employed to help him succeed. Throughout the day, CASA volunteers, staff, and Board members attended breakout sessions that covered topics including:

- Training in social and emotional intelligence,
- Reviewing national child welfare trends prevalent in Kentucky,
- Attracting, engaging, and retaining volunteers,
- Engaging and empowering Board members,
- Understanding childhood trauma,
- Terminating parental rights,
- Receiving updates from the Kentucky legislative session, and
- Participating in a Q&A session on court trends and best practices with Family Court judges.



Feedback for each session and the overall conference was overwhelmingly positive, with particular appreciation for the positive messaging from Hasan Davis during the opening plenary and the diverse range of content options for the breakout sessions. The KCN would like to thank Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer for presenting opening remarks as well as First Lady Glenna Bevin and special advisor Alicia Johnson for making a special appearance at the awards luncheon and afternoon sessions. The 2019 conference is being held in partnership with the Administrative Office of the Courts and will take place in Owensboro in November.





## AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

### NATIONAL CASA ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR - CHARLOTTE BURTON

Charlotte Burton, Board Treasurer with CASA of Ohio Valley in Owensboro, Kentucky, was named the National CASA Board Member of the Year at the National CASA 2019 Awards of Excellence event held in Atlanta, Georgia, in June 2019. Charlotte was a founding member of CASA of Ohio Valley when it began its development as a CASA program more than 25 years ago and has since served in various roles on the Board. In her nomination letter, Executive Director Rosemary Conder wrote, “Charlotte’s passion for our mission has contributed to the program’s positive reputation and driven local perception of the need for CASA services” and is the “personification of an ideal Board member.”



### KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR - CHERYL McGRUDER



Cheryl McGruder, longtime CASA volunteer for the CASA Program for Bullitt County, was named the 2018 Bob Babbage Volunteer of the Year. In addition to working some of the most challenging cases on the dependency, neglect, and abuse docket, Cheryl actively spreads awareness about CASA, participates in fundraisers, mentors new volunteers, and continues learning via in-service opportunities. For her nomination, Executive Director Cindy Prestiagiacommo noted that “Cheryl’s high level of respect for her role as a CASA makes her a model volunteer. She is very passionate and compassionate when it comes to serving the best interest of the child. I would venture to say that is just who she is.”

### KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK BOARD MEMBER, DIRECTOR, AND JUDGE OF THE YEAR

Josh Heffinger, CASA of South Central KY, was selected as the 2018 Kentucky CASA Network Board Member of the Year. Josh has served on the Board for seven years. In his current role as Treasurer, Josh has built vital relationships with Justice Department staff and helped the program weather a number of changes to the financial landscape. As the Board’s former President, Josh led the charge toward prioritizing employee benefits.

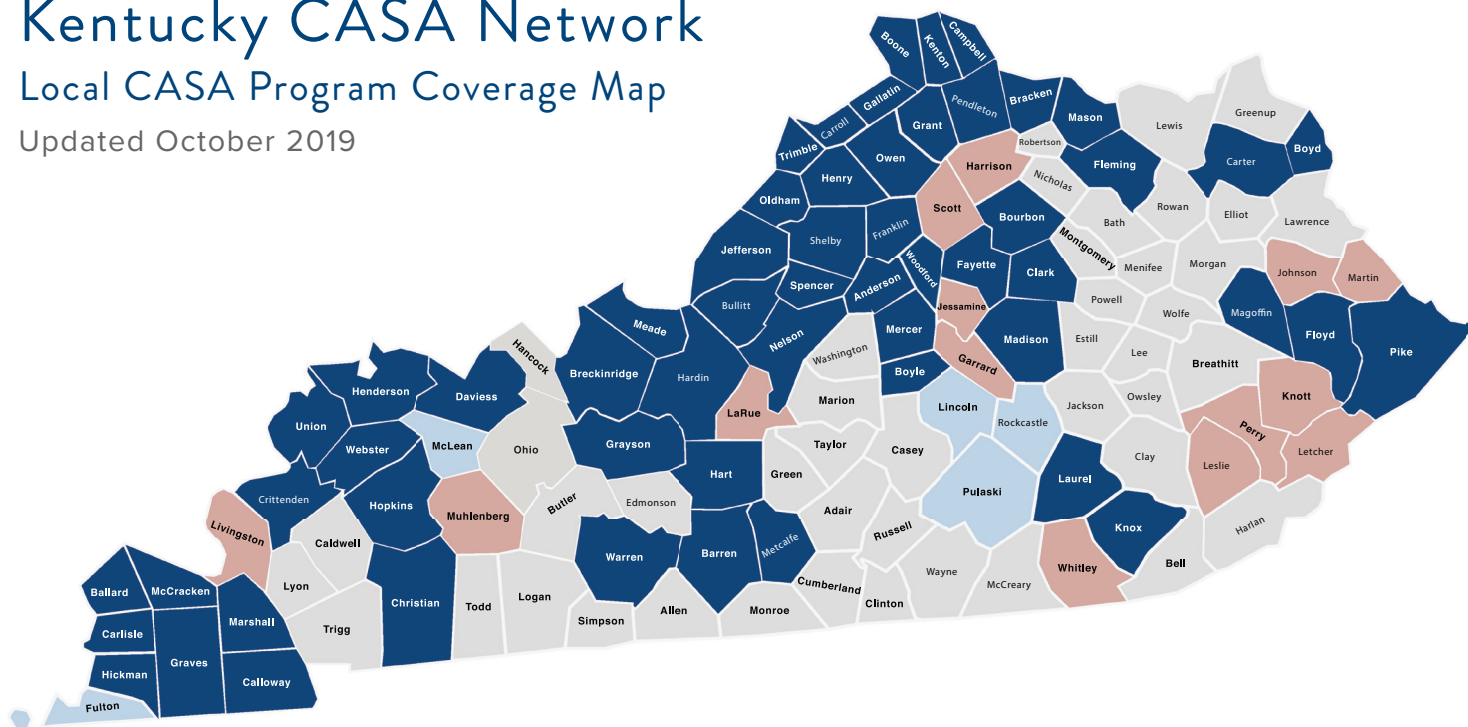
Nicky Jeffries, Executive Director of CASA For Kids serving Kenton, Campbell & Pendleton Counties, was selected as the 2018 Kentucky CASA Network Program Director of the Year. She has been with CASA For Kids for nine years, expanding the reach of the program by implementing new volunteer recruitment strategies, increasing revenue, and overseeing expansion of the original program into Campbell and Pendleton Counties.

Judge Deanna Wise Henschel, McCracken County Family Court, was selected as the 2018 Kentucky CASA Network Judge of the Year. Judge Henschel has been serving children from the judicial bench since 2015 and was a fierce CASA advocate even earlier, as a foster parent whose children were assigned a CASA volunteer.

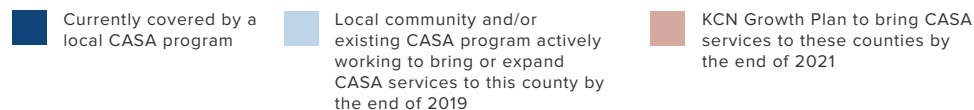
## LOCAL PROGRAM MAP & GROWTH

## Local CASA Program Coverage Map

Updated October 2019



## Map Key



## KCN 2018-2021 GROWTH PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: FY '18-19

The KCN is on track with the goals of the 2018-2021 Growth Plan to add 24 new counties and three new programs by year-end 2021.

During the past fiscal year:

- CASA of Carroll, Grant and Owen Counties, Inc. obtained National CASA/GAL Association membership.
- The KCN obtained National CASA/GAL Association authorization to develop CASA of Southern Kentucky, Inc. to serve Lincoln, Pulaski, and Rockcastle Counties. The KCN also received a VOCA grant to provide CASA services to these three counties while the new CASA program is under development.
- CASA of Knox and Laurel Counties, Inc. and the CASA Program of Christian County, KY, Inc. moved to full membership status with the National CASA/GAL Association.
- Existing CASA programs continue to expand into neighboring counties, incorporating five new counties into existing programs during the past year to follow the 2018-2021 Growth Plan's regionalization model.

Additionally, CASA programs were so successful in increasing their numbers of active volunteers that they outpaced the target number for active volunteers in the Growth Plan for the calendar year. In 2018, CASA programs had 1,112 total active volunteers and trained 430 new volunteers. CASA programs served 3,514 children in 2018, which substantially exceeded the 3,069 children CASA programs served in 2017. However, as always, Kentucky needs more CASA volunteers to advocate on behalf of the thousands of Kentucky children who are dependent or have been neglected or abused, especially given that Kentucky experienced the highest rate of child abuse and neglect among states in the U.S. in 2018.



## CURRENT LOCAL PROGRAM LIST

### **CASA OF THE BLUEGRASS**

Serving Anderson, Boyle, Franklin, and Mercer Counties  
Laura Guerrant, Executive Director

### **BOONE COUNTY CASA**

Serving Boone and Gallatin Counties  
Colleen Maier, Executive Director

### **CASA PROGRAM FOR BRACKEN, FLEMING & MASON COUNTIES**

Shanda Hamilton, Executive Director

### **CASA PROGRAM FOR BULLITT COUNTY**

Cindy Prestiagiacomo, Executive Director

### **CASA OF CARROLL, GRANT AND OWEN COUNTIES**

Julie Scott Jernigan, Executive Director

### **CASA PROGRAM OF CHRISTIAN COUNTY, KY**

Virginia Erxleben, Executive Director

### **CASA OF EASTERN KENTUCKY**

A project of Judi's Place for Kids serving Floyd, Magoffin, and Pike Counties  
Laura Kretzer, Executive Director of Judi's Place for Kids

### **CASA OF GRAVES COUNTY & SOUTHWEST KY**

Serving Carlisle, Graves, and Hickman Counties  
Stephanie Floyd, Executive Director

### **CASA OF THE HEARTLAND**

Serving Hardin County  
Debra Smith, Executive Director

### **CASA OF HENDERSON AND UNION COUNTIES**

*Program in Transition*  
A project of Children's Advocacy Center of the Green River District

### **CASA PROGRAM OF HOPKINS, WEBSTER AND CRITTENDEN COUNTIES**

Daphyne Maddox, Executive Director

### **CASA FOR KIDS SERVING KENTON, CAMPBELL & PENDLETON COUNTIES**

Nicky Jeffries, Executive Director

### **CASA OF KNOX AND LAUREL COUNTIES**

Debra Hauser, Executive 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, Executive Director

### **CASA OF MADISON COUNTY**

Serving Clark and Madison Counties  
Victoria Benge, Executive Director

### **CASA OF NELSON COUNTY**

Kate Broaddus, Executive Director

### **CASA OF NORTHEAST KY**

Serving Boyd and Carter Counties  
Carol Adams, Executive Director

### **CASA OF OHIO VALLEY**

Serving Daviess County  
Rosemary Conder, Executive Director

### **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, Hart, Metcalfe, and Warren Counties  
Jana Sublett, Executive Director

### **CASA OF SOUTHERN KENTUCKY**

*Program being Developed by KCN*  
Serving Lincoln, Pulaski, and Rockcastle Counties  
Gina Riddell, CASA Program Director

### **TRI-COUNTY CASA**

Serving Breckinridge, Grayson, and Meade Counties  
Lori Aldridge, Executive Director

### **CASA OF WEST KENTUCKY**

A project of Child Watch Counseling & Advocacy Center  
Serving Ballard and McCracken Counties  
Janie Criner, Executive Director of Child Watch Counseling & Advocacy Center  
Stephanie Moss, CASA Program Director



# KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK, INC.

## 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  
Waystar

Adam Caswell  
Northern Kentucky University

Chris Ordway  
*The News-Enterprise*

Sara Osborne  
MML&K Government Solutions

Hollie Spade  
AT&T Kentucky

Melynda Jamison - Local Program Representative  
CASA of Lexington

Rosemary Conder - Outgoing Local Program Representative  
CASA of Ohio Valley

## STAFF

Andrea Bruns - State Director

Della Justice - Deputy Director

Brittany Garrett - Director of Communications

Margaret McGladrey - Director of Program Capacity and Support

Melissa Paris - Director of Training

Stacy Findley - Grants and Data Compliance Coordinator

### Kentucky CASA Network, Inc.

1640 Lyndon Farm Court  
Suite 108  
Louisville, KY 40223  
(502) 238-2154



[info@kentuckycasanetwork.org](mailto:info@kentuckycasanetwork.org)

[www.kentuckycasanetwork.org](http://www.kentuckycasanetwork.org)

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