



# Annual Report 2025

KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK, INC.



**CASA**  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN

KENTUCKY CASA NETWORK



# 2025 Annual Report

## ABOUT THE KCN

The Kentucky 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. 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, continuation, and strengthening of Court Appointed Special Advocates (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 \* Service \* Accountability \* Gratitude \* Transparency \* Fairness

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bryan Bulkley - **Chair**

Lucinda Masterton - **Vice Chair**

Ruth Lynch - **Secretary**

Cole Bruner - **Treasurer**

### BOARD MEMBERS

Jennifer Apple

Jennifer Beckham

Robin Choate

Eric Embry

Kyle Kelly

Jonathan Koonce

Hilary Morgan

Sara Osborne

Barbara Ramlow

Jessica Foust - Local Program Representative

Nicky Jeffries - Local Program Representative

## STAFF

Andrea Bruns - **State Director/CEO**

Brittany Garrett - **Network Engagement & Strategy Officer**

Della Justice - **Legal & Operations Officer/Deputy Director**

Santana Berry - **Senior Director of Grants Management & Administration**

Casey Atwood - **Director of Training**

Karen Wilder - **Director of Network Services**

Courtney Williams - **Director of Community Engagement & Volunteer Recruitment**

Adrianna Coffee - **Manager of Administrative Operations**

Kathy Hertel-Baker - **Background Check Services Associate**

Doug Myers - **Quality Assurance Specialist (Contractor)**

# LETTER FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR

Dear Kentucky CASA Network friends, supporters, and stakeholders,

KCN's collaboration with local CASA programs in 2025 culminated in a new milestone: the development of two new counties with CASA advocacy that will officially mark CASA services being offered in over 100 counties in the Commonwealth. We are now midway through our 2025-2027 Statewide Growth Plan, which provides a roadmap for increasing volunteers and having CASA volunteers active in all 120 counties by year-end 2027. Ten years ago, we charted a path with this vision, and the execution of that vision is now becoming closer and closer to the reality of statewide coverage.



With this growth, the KCN has built capacity and met the challenge by listening to our member programs, including staff, board members, and volunteers - the true heart and core of CASA in Kentucky - on what tools and resources they need to serve every child in need with a CASA volunteer. This has included making the decision and laying the groundwork for delivering statewide virtual pre-service training for incoming volunteers. Virtual statewide training by the KCN will benefit local CASA programs and prospective volunteers, providing them with another option for pre-service training without the barrier of travel to and from a local CASA office during the initial training period. KCN plans to offer this additional pre-service training opportunity quarterly throughout 2026, and then assess its statewide offerings moving forward.

In 2025, KCN developed a Judges Best Practices White Paper for Family Court Judges on how to most effectively utilize CASA services in their courtrooms. We also launched a quality assurance project that focused on the CASA volunteer experience. As part of that project, we surveyed all CASA Judges about the effectiveness of CASA volunteers in their courtrooms. All respondents reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with the CASA services in their court. "CASA advocates...are a crucial resource for families in the process." This particular comment came from one Judge, but the sentiment was echoed time and again throughout the survey and across Judges from multiple programs.

We hosted our Advocacy at the Core Statewide Conference in Northern Kentucky in November, bringing together some of the most talented and impressive keynote and breakout speakers and sessions to our annual state CASA conference. While this event honors the great work being done across the network each year, we know that Kentuckians are speaking up for children in courtrooms every day. They do this work not looking for recognition or reward, but because they understand the power that one caring adult can have in the life of an abused or neglected child.

Please consider joining the CASA mission statewide. If not now, *when*? And if not you, *who*?

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Bruns". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Bruns  
State Director/CEO

# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



**3,387**

Children Served

*1,495 children were newly assigned a CASA volunteer.*

*There were 16,347 abuse, neglect, or dependency cases filed in 2025.*



**1,395**

CASA Volunteers

*1,186 CASA volunteers had an active case in 2025.*

*312 completed pre-service training, and 241 took their first case.*



**48,876**

Volunteer Hours

*CASA volunteers averaged 3.5 hours per month working their cases.*

*Collectively, that equals more than 5.5 years.*



**249**

Board Members

*Boards of directors govern local programs, which are all nonprofit organizations.*



**105**

CASA Staff

*Local program staff recruit, train, and supervise CASA volunteers.*



**99**

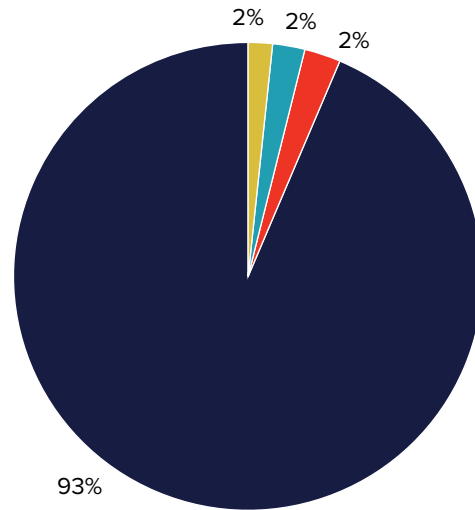
Counties Covered

*18 regional local CASA programs operate statewide. All programs serve at least 3 counties.*

# FY 24-25 FINANCIALS

## REVENUE

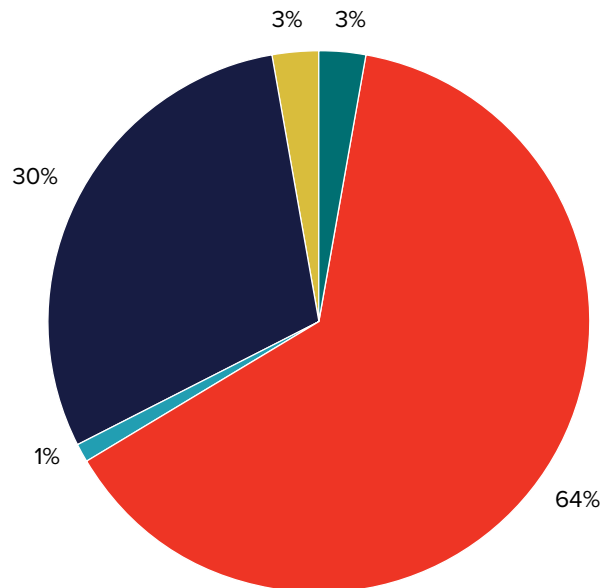
<span style="color: #FFD700;">●</span> Federal Funding	\$76,666
<span style="color: #00A0C0;">●</span> Other Grants	\$96,882
<span style="color: #E31A1C;">●</span> Other Unrestricted	\$103,776
<span style="color: #191970;">●</span> State Contracts	\$3,905,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,183,124</b>



Total Net Assets: \$1,126,746

## EXPENSES

<span style="color: #008080;">●</span> Administrative	\$119,029
<span style="color: #E31A1C;">●</span> Local Program Pass-Through Funding	\$2,506,000
<span style="color: #00A0C0;">●</span> Local Program Training and Resources	\$38,065
<span style="color: #191970;">●</span> Programmatic and Operations	\$1,172,712
<span style="color: #FFD700;">●</span> Public Awareness and Marketing	\$102,027
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,937,832</b>



All financial values rounded to nearest whole dollar

# 2025 KENTUCKY CASA CONFERENCE

KCN was excited to present **Advocacy at the Core: 2025 Kentucky CASA Conference** in November. This was the first time a statewide conference was hosted in Northern Kentucky. Conference attendees gained knowledge, skills, and understanding aimed at enhancing and supporting the best-interest advocacy provided to children served by CASA volunteers. This year's conference provided sessions centered around the Core Model of CASA advocacy, which includes the following components of the CASA role: Learn, Engage, Recommend, Collaborate, and Report.

Keynote speakers included Kentucky Supreme Court Justice Pamela R. Goodwine, Gaelin Elmore, and Shimaine Holley. The conference also featured a judges panel with family court judges from across the state, and 25 breakout sessions over the two days.

Awards of Excellence recipients were recognized during the volunteer appreciation dinner at the conference. "We commend these award recipients for their work to advance the CASA mission in the Commonwealth," said KCN State Director/CEO Andrea Bruns. "They exemplify the unwavering commitment and compassion that define CASA's mission to stand with children navigating the child welfare system."

The KCN is grateful to ARH Foundation, Kosair for Kids, Aetna Better Health of Kentucky, CasaManager, AT&T, Kentucky Bar Foundation, WellCare of Kentucky, Nielsen Training & Consulting, and United Healthcare Community Plan of KY for sponsoring this year's conference.



## 2025 Awards of Excellence

- **Statewide Partner of the Year:** Commissioner Jonathan Shell, Kentucky Department of Agriculture
- **CASA Board Member of the Year:** Ryan Toombs, CASA of Graves County & Southwest KY
- **CASA Judge of the Year:** The Honorable Terri Schoborg, Kenton Family Court, 16th Judicial Circuit, Division 2
- **CASA Staff Member of the Year:** Liz Hansen, CASA of the Northern Bluegrass Region
- **Kentucky CASA Network Spotlight Award:** CASA of the Gateway Region
- **Bob Babbage CASA Volunteer of the Year:** Paula Cooper, CASA of the Wilderness Trail

## CASA All-Star Awards

- **Legacy of Service:** Sandy Rogers, CASA of Graves County & Southwest KY
- **Determined Driver:** Cynthia Phillips, CASA of Lexington
- **Lifelong Learner:** Karen Proctor, CASA of West Kentucky
- **Community Connector:** Jim Gearhart, CASA of West Kentucky; Martha Steil, CASA by the Lakes
- **Unsung Hero:** Bill Renda, CASA of the River Region
- **Notable Newcomer:** Katie Welch Beyl, CASA of the Heartland



# PROGRAM SERVICES

## Quality Assurance Reviews

Kentucky law requires the KCN to monitor local programs for compliance with National and State CASA Standards, which serve as the basis for the KCN's quality assurance (QA) reviews. In 2025, KCN initiated a one-year Volunteer-Focused QA Review began, focusing specifically on the volunteer experience.

Family and District Court Judges were surveyed in August as the QA Review kicked off, with a 68% response rate. 100% of CASA judges reported being very satisfied or satisfied with CASA services in their Court. 77 of Kentucky's 120 counties were represented in survey responses. Additionally, 86.5% of judges strongly agreed that CASA volunteers are helpful in reaching decisions for the child's well-being, and 98.1% strongly agreed that CASA Volunteer Court Reports provide relevant information about the child's and family's circumstances and make recommendations for services.

Additional aspects of the QA reviews include surveys of and interviews with CASA volunteers, staff, and board members; reviews of volunteer and case files, and a holistic assessment of a local program's data over the last 5-10 years. This work both meets KCN's statutory requirement and provides local CASA programs insight into ways to continuously strengthen their volunteer recruitment, management, and retention practices in order to better advocate for more children across the Commonwealth.

“ I'm very grateful for all the CASA advocates who dedicate their time and compassion to our families in need. CASA is an integral, effective, and valued member of our community resource team. ”

-CASA Judge

## Teresa Nolet CASA of the Bluegrass



**Profession:** Retired engineer and technical training manager

**Years as a CASA Volunteer:** 5

“I was looking to volunteer in some way with children in my community after I retired. CASA was actively seeking volunteers and seemed like a very worthwhile way to help.

CASA volunteers provide consistency and continuity to a child in the foster care system and serve as the child's voice and advocate as the case progresses through the court system.

The need is great. There are children waiting for a CASA, and a volunteer's work is very helpful to the child, case workers, foster parents, and the judge.

Providing information to the court, advocating for the child's needs, and (as one of only a few people who are a 'constant' in a child's life) being able to provide some of the child's history to case workers has been a rewarding experience.”

# Camisha Boyd Powell

CASA of Lexington

**Profession:** Education

**Years as a CASA Volunteer:** 9



“I became a CASA volunteer because I believe every child deserves to be seen, heard, and given a chance to thrive.

One moment that stands out to me as a CASA volunteer was when I walked into a courtroom and saw the child I was advocating for make eye contact with me and smile--something they rarely did when we first met. That small moment spoke volumes.

When I was assigned to their case, they were quiet, reserved, and hesitant to trust adults. Over time, through consistent visits, listening to their concerns, and advocating for their needs, I watched them slowly open up. The day the judge ruled in favor of a stable, loving home, I felt a deep sense of purpose, knowing I played a small part in that outcome.

This reaffirmed why I chose to become a CASA volunteer--every child deserves someone in their corner who won't give up on them.”

## Network Trainings

This year, KCN produced a Board Governance Webinar Series. Sessions included: “Understanding the Role of a Court Appointed Special Advocate: What Board Members Need to Know,” “Safeguarding Your Mission: Identifying and Mitigating Risk in Your CASA Program,” “From Strategy to Success: Measuring What Matters to Drive Nonprofit Impact,” and “Practical Strategies for Evaluating the Board and Executive Director.”

KCN also facilitated multiple opportunities for executive directors to network and learn from one another, offering a combination of virtual and in-person gatherings, as well as hosting an in-person retreat for executive directors in March.

For local program staff, KCN provided two Trainings of Facilitators (TOF), a train-the-trainer program that prepares new staff for leading volunteer pre-service training. New staff supervising volunteers were invited to attend Volunteer Coordinator Training, where newly hired staff learn more about their role of managing CASA volunteers. KCN also hosted an inaugural retreat for local program volunteer coordinators, where they were able to learn new strategies from their statewide peers and bring new strategies back to their local programs to implement.



# PROGRAM SERVICES

Paula Cooper  
*CASA of the Wilderness Trail*



**Profession:** Regional procurement manager, the Americas

**Years as a CASA Volunteer:** 5

“My first CASA child summed it up perfectly when he asked, ‘Paula, will you be my forever friend?’ That is exactly my relationship with each of my CASA children. He has been adopted and moved out of state, but recently I visited him and his family while I was traveling in the area. I have attended kindergarten graduation, birthday parties, and family celebrations. He recently called me when he lost his first tooth and received distinguished in reading. I will always be one call away for any of my CASA children. They deserve love.

Volunteers are so critical to the children having consistent support and love. Many children in state’s care have several different social workers, foster homes, schools, etc. A CASA volunteer is someone who never leaves the child. The bonds are built forever, and all volunteers should be celebrated for the commitment of empathy and love in our world.”

## Background Check Services Program

2025 marked the first full calendar year of KCN running both new and recurring background checks on CASA volunteers, staff, and board members throughout the network. KCN ran 972 checks throughout the year, including checks for 421 new volunteers who started pre-service training. This service has saved local CASA programs \$30,500 in processing fees alone, and countless hours of staff time to complete the checks. Having a centralized system for conducting background checks minimizes risk to the network and, most importantly, to children served throughout our communities.

## Local Program Expansion and Regionalization

KCN continues to work with local programs to further the expansion of CASA services across the Commonwealth in 2025. Four counties - Boyd, Carter, Elliott, and Morgan - were added to CASA of the Gateway Region’s service area and CASA of Southern Kentucky expanded into two counties - Russell and Wayne. KCN maintains a firm belief that multi-county, regional CASA programs are better suited to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and to achieve long-term sustainability.

Progress toward expansion statewide carries on, with a goal of having CASA services statewide by the end of 2027. More than 75% of the remaining unserved counties are designated as Persistent Poverty Counties, which means the poverty rate is 20% or greater. This can pose challenges for soliciting donations and recruiting volunteers, but the challenges are not insurmountable. KCN and local programs remain committed to working hard to ensure that all of Kentucky’s children can have access to a CASA volunteer.



## Statewide Outreach and Volunteer Recruitment Efforts

In 2025, KCN continued its statewide outreach efforts to increase awareness and strengthen volunteer recruitment across the Commonwealth. Outreach included participation in community events, presentations to civic and professional organizations, and exhibiting at statewide conferences aligned with KCN's mission, leveraging established audiences likely to have an interest in CASA's work. Events and presentations included PCAK Kids are Worth It Conference, Middle Cumberland KY Retired Teachers Association District, KYA Blueprint Summit, and the KY Chamber of Commerce Young Professional Summit. KCN also supported local programs in identifying outreach opportunities, refining messaging, and increasing visibility within their communities through targeted technical assistance.

In addition, KCN convened statewide outreach and volunteer recruitment workgroups, bringing together CASA staff, volunteers, and board members from across Kentucky. These collaborative groups created opportunities to share effective recruitment strategies, identify promising practices, and strengthen alignment across local programs. Participants explored data-informed approaches to outreach, developed more impactful visual storytelling techniques, and initiated the development of a consistent statewide marketing strategy that aligns language and goals. The workgroups also began building a shared story bank, equipping programs with authentic, compelling narratives to support and enhance volunteer recruitment efforts across the state.

“ The volunteers are the most important part of our program. Without them, we could not achieve the goal of helping children. Helping them know how important they are is vital to finding and retaining our volunteers. ”

-CASA Board Member

## Debbie Oliverio

CASA by the Lakes



**Profession:** Retired special education assistant

**Years as a CASA Volunteer:** 5

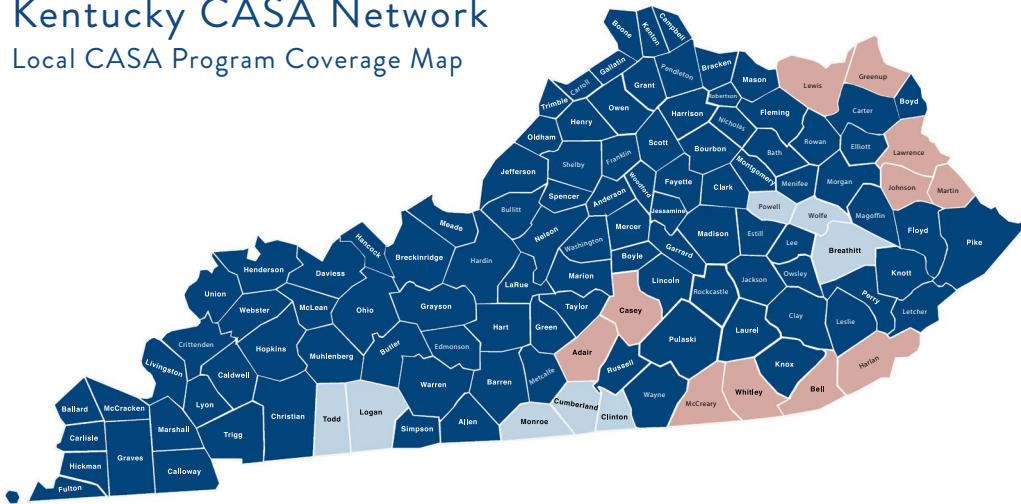
“A CASA by the Lakes board member spoke at our Murray Woman’s Club meeting. I knew immediately that being a CASA volunteer was what I wanted to learn more about.

CASA is so important because there are so many children who are in need of that one person who they can trust to always be there for them. A person who they can rely on to let others on the case know what their feelings are and what they need. A person who can help them through some scary times. A CASA volunteer is a voice in the courtroom for the child.

If you have the heart and patience, and are wanting to be a trusted adult for a child who is going through some hard times, please look into becoming a CASA volunteer.”

# Kentucky CASA Network

## Local CASA Program Coverage Map



### Map Key

- Currently covered by a local CASA program
- Local community and/or existing CASA program actively seeking expansion into these counties
- KCN Growth Plan to bring CASA services to these counties by year-end 2027



### CASA BY THE LAKES

Serving Calloway, Christian, and Marshall Counties

### CASA OF GRAVES COUNTY & SOUTHWEST KY

Serving Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, and Hickman Counties

### CASA OF LEXINGTON

Serving Bourbon, Fayette, Garrard, Jessamine, Lincoln, Scott, and Woodford Counties

### CASA OF MIDWEST KENTUCKY

Serving Crittenden, Henderson, Hopkins, Muhlenberg, Union, and Webster Counties

### CASA OF OHIO VALLEY

Serving Daviess, Hancock, McLean, and Ohio Counties

### CASA OF SOUTH CENTRAL KY

Serving Allen, Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Metcalfe, Simpson, and Warren Counties

### CASA OF SOUTHERN KENTUCKY

Serving Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, and Wayne Counties

### CASA OF THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS

Serving Floyd, Knott, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Perry, and Pike Counties

### CASA OF THE BLUEGRASS

Serving Anderson, Boyle, Franklin, and Mercer Counties

### CASA OF THE CUMBERLAND VALLEY

Serving Clay, Jackson, Knox, and Laurel Counties

### CASA OF THE GATEWAY REGION

Serving Bath, Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, and Rowan Counties

### CASA OF THE HEARTLAND

Serving Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, Hart, LaRue, and Meade Counties

### CASA OF THE LINCOLN TRAIL

Serving Green, Marion, Nelson, Taylor, and Washington Counties

### CASA OF THE NORTHERN BLUEGRASS REGION

Serving Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Harrison, Kenton, Owen, and Pendleton Counties

### CASA OF THE RIVER REGION

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

### CASA OF THE WILDERNESS TRAIL

Serving Clark, Estill, Lee, Madison, and Owsley Counties

### CASA OF WEST KENTUCKY

A project of Child Watch Counseling & Advocacy Center serving Ballard, Caldwell, Livingston, Lyon, McCracken, and Trigg Counties

### THE BUFFALO TRACE CASA PROGRAM

Serving Bracken, Fleming, Mason, Nicholas, and Robertson Counties

## Kentucky CASA Network, Inc.

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Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

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