Achieving Our Mission: A Management Guide for CASA & GAL Programs

1997 Edition

By
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**A National CASA Association
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The National CASA Association Mission Statement

Our mission is to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are involved in the juvenile courts. The National CASA Association works with state and local CASA and volunteer guardian ad litem programs to promote and support quality volunteer advocacy to help assure each child a safe, permanent and nurturing home.

Achieving Our Mission

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Foreword

The CASA and volunteer Guardian ad Litem network has grown dramatically in the last decade. Recent growth rates of about ten per cent per year have now brought CASA into over 700 jurisdictions throughout the United States. Hundreds of thousands of children benefit each year.

Throughout the country, the CASA idea has been successfully adapted to communities as diverse as Papillion, Nebraska, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Programs have been started in Native American tribal courts, in rural farming communities, and in the nation's largest cities. In many jurisdictions, volunteers serve as guardians ad litem. In others, they act as friends of the court. Diversity and flexibility have been essential in encouraging this expansion and adaptation of the CASA idea. The staff and volunteers from all these programs are united in their commitment to doing their best for the children they represent.

This diversity also presents challenges. Every program director wants to ensure the continued expansion of effective, high-quality volunteer representation of abused and neglected children. This manual is designed to help you do that. In these pages, you can find a wealth of quality program ideas culled from the national network and from similar organizations. We have designed this manual to be easily expanded and updated. Good ideas continue to evolve within the CASA network, and we will include new ones in future updates.

Not all the ideas in the manual will be relevant to every program, but I hope you will find this a thought-provoking program development tool. Often, what you read here will be only the starting point in your search for new program ideas. The national staff, as well as your colleagues around the country, are available to help you with further information.

We also hope you will tell us what you found most useful, and share any new approaches you would like to see included in future updates. Together, we can ensure the continued expansion of effective volunteer representation of abused and neglected children in the courts. And that will mean more children finding the safe, permanent home each of them deserves.

Michael Piraino, CEO
National CASA Association

Introduction

Over the years, the National CASA Association has developed a range of technical publications designed to assist local programs. Topics such as start-up strategies, volunteer training, finances and numerous others have been covered. This information continues to benefit the scores of new programs being formed each year. However, National CASA and many local programs are now well into their second decade. A different kind of guidance is needed. Seasoned programs face unforeseen management challenges. Organizations which once struggled merely to survive must now find ways to encourage growth without sacrificing quality. Both are necessary if the hard-won credibility of the CASA movement is to endure.

Organizations like CASA, which are based on altruistic notions like helping abused and neglected children have a common tendency to confuse means and ends. Members assume that because they are "doing good", there is no need to worry about doing it well. Unfortunately, nobility of purpose does not preclude the need for good management. There are CASA programs in some major cities which have ceased to exist because "doing good" by itself was insufficient. The old adage "A job worth doing is worth doing well" certainly applies to CASA's mission. Without the necessary management skills, the task of child advocacy may be done ineffectively or not at all.

In response to the needs of its member network, the National CASA Association has produced ***Achieving Our Mission: A Management Guide for CASA/GAL Programs.*** It embodies the best of current thinking in the realm of program and volunteer management. It attempts to meet the needs of diverse programs, whether they are court-based or non-profit corporations, urban or rural, five years old or fifteen.

When discussing programs, the authors use the CASA name. This is done solely for the purpose of readability without any intention to slight programs which use other names. Since the majority of CASA programs are of small or moderate size, care was taken to make sure that the concepts presented are applicable to all. In addition, an entire chapter is devoted to specific strategies for rural programs. Management issues, not programmatic concerns, are the focus. Discussions regarding various models of volunteer participation or court reports or the role of the volunteer on multi-disciplinary teams are left to future publications.

It has been said that good intentions don't move mountains; bulldozers do. This book can help programs translate their intentions into a workable mission and supply them with useful strategies to use as bulldozers. *Achieving Our Mission* was not written in an attempt to mandate perfection, but to encourage good practice. Taken as a whole, the book can assist staff or board members with their own program

assessment or strategic planning. The goal of this publication is to guide and inspire those in leadership roles. Hopefully, **Achieving Our Mission** will enlarge the vision of the manager "in search of excellence."

JLW & RHH

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Leadership

Leadership is much more an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do. The visible sign of artful leadership are expressed, ultimately, in its practice.

Max DuPree
Author,
The Art of Leadership

Most CASA directors could probably fund their programs out of their own pockets if they had a dollar for every word they ever heard or read about leadership. There are literally hundreds of books, articles and seminars done on the subject every year. They explore issues such as: How is leadership defined? Can it be taught or learned? What style is right for a particular organization? While it is unlikely that there is one "right" answer to each of these questions, there are several common threads in much of the writing on leadership. It embodies creativity and vision. It demands tolerance for risk and ambiguity. It requires support for innovation. Leadership is the ability to see things from a different perspective.

A marvelous illustration of this concept comes from Walt Kelly's beloved cartoon character, Pogo, who said that the way to be a great leader is to see a parade and run like hell to get in front of it. Rather than formulating a step-by-step plan, a leader brings his or her unique focus to a situation and convinces followers to accept that vision. It is this ability to synthesize diverse information, weed out the irrelevant and forge ahead that characterizes leadership.

When David Soukup invited a few people to talk to him over lunch about a way to make better judicial decisions for abused and neglected children, he did not envision founding the National CASA Association. What he did see was a need for additional information and a collaborative way to get it. While many localities had attempted to meet this need by providing attorney guardians ad litem, Soukup realized that public funding for such an effort would never match the number of children entering the system. He reframed the question from "How can we get more money for children's legal services?" to "How can we assure that children's rights are protected by the court system?"

Characteristics of Leaders

There are numerous ways to manage a CASA program. Each program is inevitably influenced by the skills and the leadership style of its director in addition to external factors. It is erroneous however to assume that directors who were not experienced volunteer managers at the time of hiring cannot learn the tricks of the trade. Peter Drucker, pre-eminent authority on management, has little use for the term "born leader" or the person whose accomplishments are credited to "charisma." Drucker believes leadership can be taught regardless of whether a person is quiet or gregarious, impulsive or compulsive, personable or aloof, austere or ostentatious. He sees a number of commonalties in effective leaders.

- An effective leader is not someone who is loved or admired. (S)he is someone whose followers do the right things. Popularity is not leadership. Results are.

- Leaders are highly visible. Therefore they set examples.

- Leadership is not rank, privileges, titles or money. It is responsibility.

- The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers. If there are none, whatever title is on the letterhead is pretty meaningless.

Drucker observes the following behaviors in leaders spanning a variety of personalities, styles, abilities and interests:

- They do not start out with the question "What do I want?" They start by asking "What needs to be done?"

- Then they ask "What can and should I do to make a difference?" This needs to be something that both needs to be done and fits the leader's strengths and the way (s)he is most effective.

- They constantly ask "What are the organization's mission and goals? What constitutes performance and brings results in this organization?"

- They are extremely tolerant of diversity in people and do not look for carbon copies of themselves. It rarely even occurs to them to ask "Do I like or dislike this person?" But they are totally - fiendishly - intolerant when it comes to a person's performance standards and values.

- They are not afraid of strength in their associates. They glory in it. Their motto was what Andrew Carnegie wanted to have put on his tombstone: "Here lies a man who attracted better people into his service than he was himself."

- Leaders submit themselves to the "mirror test" - that is, they make sure the person they saw in the mirror this morning is the kind of person they want to be, respect and believe in. This way they fortify themselves against the leader's greatest temptations - to do things that are popular rather than right and to do petty, mean, sleazy things.

- Finally, effective leaders are not preachers; they are doers.

Leadership Responsibilities

In their excellent book, *Leadership and Management of Volunteer Programs,* James Fisher and Kathleen Cole cite three key leadership responsibilities: setting direction, encouraging others to share that agenda and inspiring others to help accomplish it. These are clearly the "big picture" tasks. The CASA program director must look to the future and commit to a vision.

Setting Direction

"Vision is particularly important for non-profit organizations," say Fisher and Cole, "because most lack a 'bottom line,' rely heavily on unpaid personnel and reward them with intangible benefits. A clearly articulated vision defines for an organization's volunteers both the nature of their responsibilities and the level of performance to which they may aspire. Such visions have neither a standard form nor a specific substance. They are idiosyncratic, depending on the visionary, the nature of the program, and the internal and external environment of the organization. Often they redress present deficiencies: better facilities, more productive fundraising, a larger group of volunteers, a program that commands more respect in the community, a broader service area, more skilled leadership, or a higher level of performance. Sometimes the vision boldly charts a new direction."

CASA programs across the country have undertaken activities as diverse as supervising parent/child visitations, mediating with troubled families and locating absent parents, not to mention the expansion of in-court advocacy to include custody, delinquency, and criminal cases where a child is a witness. Regardless of what the vision is, its achievement will require change and a competent leader prepared to manage it.

Sharing the Vision

The second responsibility of a leader is to share the vision. This is sometimes referred to as the cheerleader function. It requires frequent communication of the vision to the board, staff and volunteers, especially in the initial stages.

Sometimes, tangible items such as buttons or banners are used as reinforcements. Sometimes a logo or slogan, adapted from organizational history can be incorporated. For example, several years back, the Avis Rental Car Company adopted the slogan "We try harder because we're number two". It was featured in their advertising and employees even wore buttons. This slogan is a great example of "sharing the vision", in this case, superior customer service, with those who can make it happen. This kind of "buy-in" is equally important in a CASA program. Over time, board, staff and volunteers begin to align themselves with the vision, accept it as their agenda, articulate it to others and incorporate it into their work.

Inspiring Others

The third responsibility of an effective leader is to inspire others to achieve the vision. This is done by using the organizational structure, collaborating with existing groups, developing special coalitions and preparing others for change. For example, a number of CASA volunteers were disturbed by the inordinate length of time that children in foster care spent awaiting completion of legal proceedings involving

absent parents. When the program director was approached about the situation, she responded to it as a leadership challenge. Rather than publicly castigating the local child welfare agency for the delay, she saw it as an unexpected opportunity to achieve the vision of more effective advocacy for abused and neglected children. Using the organizational structure, the CASA program enlisted volunteers who had time available and were already familiar with agency files. CASA collaborated with the child welfare agency to design a protocol and train volunteers to conduct a "diligent search" for absent parents. A coalition developed between overburdened agency staff and administrators who were happy to be relieved of this time-consuming task at no cost to the agency and empowered volunteers who were actually helping children move more quickly toward safe, permanent families. Information was shared between agencies and the new procedure was fully explained prior to start-up so that everyone, including the court, was prepared for the change.

Fulfilling this vision required the effort of all the parties involved, from the volunteers who received the specialized training, to the agency staff who had to resolve turf issues, to the board who had to consider a broadened definition of their mission. By being involved in both the decision making and the implementation, volunteers and staff were not only willing to take the risk of trying something new but their commitment and loyalty were greatly enhanced.

Managing the Organization

In addition to the responsibility for leadership on a large scale, a leader also contends with the daily demands of management. The Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) has identified four areas in which an organization's leader should be able to demonstrate competence: program planning and organization; staffing and directing; controlling; and agency, community and professional relations. Under program planning and organization fall responsibilities such as :

- Articulating (or re-evaluating) the mission statement.

- Developing an organizational plan with participation from all quarters and identifying necessary resources.

- Translating the document into goals and objectives for volunteer achievement, timetables, position descriptions and staffing and budget plans.

- Revising the planning document as needed.

These operational plans then become the basis for recruitment, selection, placement and fundraising. Further information is provided in Chapters 2, 5 & 6.

The task of staffing and directing is generally referred to as personnel management. This is often cited as the most critical management function. It is dealt with extensively in Chapters 8 and 9.

Controlling, the third management function, consists of program evaluation. Not only is the manager responsible for making sure evaluations of both programs and personnel are conducted periodically but also that needed modifications occur. Record keeping provides the manager with the data needed to perform these control functions. These topics are covered in Chapters 5 and 7.

Lastly, the volunteer administrator operates in numerous arenas and has a different role to perform in each. (S)he must interact appropriately with the board, the court, the child welfare agency, funding entities, the community, other local programs and state and national organizations, not to mention volunteers and staff. The maintenance of healthy relationships in each of these contexts bears heavily on the long-range success of the program. They are dealt with further in Chapters 3, 4 & 16.

Organizational Development

In the beginning stages of program development, it is important to know who in the community can help you and who can hurt you. In our programs, we created the opportunity to inform and educate the key player about CASA at a series of private luncheons held in the courthouse. The meetings addressed many of their concerns and set the stage for future cooperation.

Jan Zuver, Program Coordinator
Crawford County CASA

One way to build a basis for effective leadership is to examine the developmental stage of the organization. CASA programs, like the children they serve, are constantly growing and changing. As a program evolves, each new stage is accompanied by its own inherent challenges. They are often significantly different than those that came before. For each set of challenges, there is a complimentary management style that is most effective. It is the responsibility of the board in a non-profit program or management in a publicly administered program to determine where the program is developmentally and what skills are required to deal with the issues typical of that phase. (Figure 2.1 illustrates this concept).
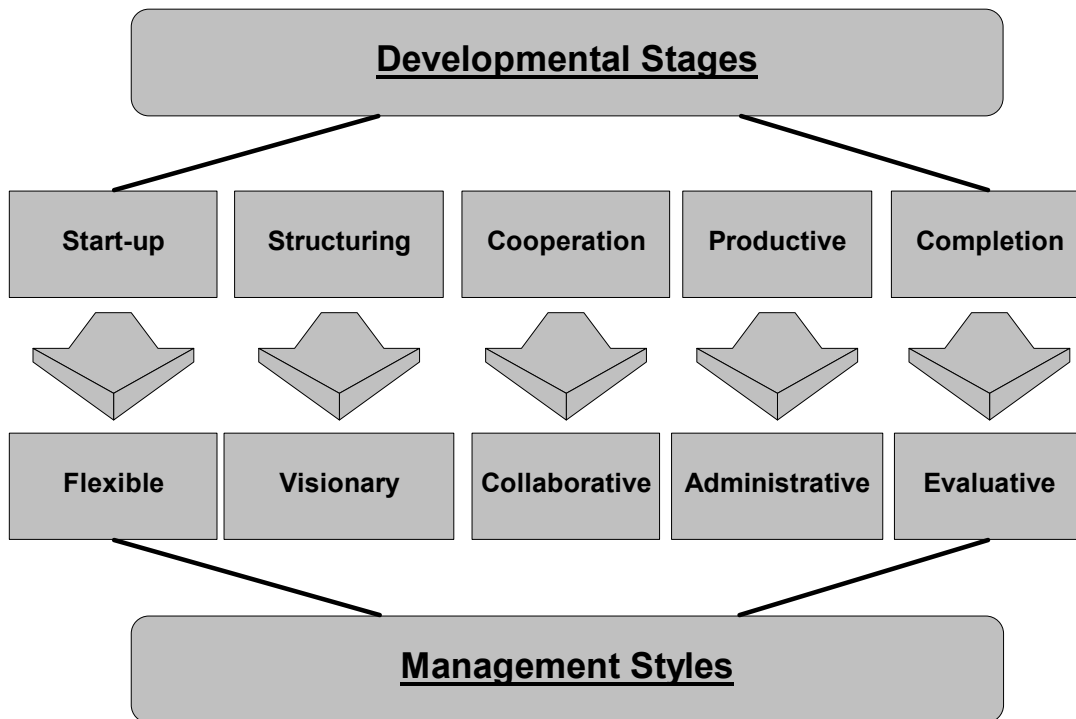
Figure 2.1

In the discussion that follows, adapted from ***Best Practices Manual, A Guidebook to Establishing a Children's Advocacy Center Program***, the five stages of organizational development are presented in depth along with the most desirable style of leadership for each stage.

To facilitate appropriate hiring as well as good management, board members need to understand what is happening in the context of organizational development and to realize that these dynamics occur in many organizations. Completing the goals of each phase helps provide a solid foundation for a well-run organization with strong

community support. The National CASA Association publication *Guide to Program Development* features information on these topics that is specific to local CASA programs.

Start-up Phase

The Start-Up Phase is the time when a task force conceives the purpose and mission of a future CASA program and a team begins to lay out a plan. The goal is to establish operating norms, to identify the people and financial resources needed to begin the task and to push toward the development of a mission. The challenge at this point is survival. In this phase, there will be a high degree of uncertainty. The informal structure of this stage is characterized by emotion and ambiguity. People are filled with enthusiasm and hope, as well as fear regarding their roles and responsibilities. They look for reassurance that their contribution will be useful, and that the goals of the group connect to their own sense of self. Committee members need to be oriented to the task and will experiment with methods of working together. Various concerns are consciously and unconsciously expressed during this phase. People want to know what is expected of them. They are also concerned about possible hidden agendas.

Flexible leadership is required at this stage. The leader should be a person(s) who is perceived as a neutral party, who has the ability to manage and facilitate the various power centers and who can support members through the ambiguity of developing a group identity. If a task force is coming together to start a CASA program, the group needs to spend time gaining insight into the culture of the parties involved, such as the court, the bar, the local child welfare agency, and how each defines the problems in the system. They need to talk to each other about the legal and bureaucratic limitations under which they operate. The facilitator must set the tone of a listening and learning environment which allows for full disclosure and for building trust. A discussion about confidentiality requirements and information sharing is important at this stage. Structural issues that will begin to define how the group operates also have to be discussed and implemented: record keeping; distribution of minutes; meeting schedules; evaluating the progress; accessing the necessary resources to do their work; and, finally, as this phase comes to closure, the writing of a vision and mission statement. If this phase is done well and the critical tasks are performed, a group identity should begin to emerge. The task force can move with confidence to the Structuring Phase.

Structuring Phase

The Structuring Phase is characterized by short-term decision-making, confronting conflict, and long-term planning. It is oriented toward the future implementation of the vision and mission of a particular organization. Gathering written information from the state organization and other CASA programs as well as visiting different programs is helpful at this stage. It gives the group a picture of operational programs. It can also clarify specific problem areas and help the committee or task force prioritize how they should spend their decision-making and planning energy.

The activities of the task force/committee during this phase are focused on developing an administrative structure and adopting a particular CASA model. It is the phase where committee members must reach agreement on a decision-making process in which there is enough trust to allow for the occasional necessity of confronting conflicting philosophical and legal viewpoints. This stage requires that everyone understands the difference between consensus building and decision-making and accept when each will be used.

Visionary leadership is necessary at this stage. The chair or facilitator must have the capacity to synthesize and articulate a clear picture of how the CASA program will function in relation to the various parties and how all can work together for the best interests of children. Leadership must also articulate possible strategies for achieving this goal and yet support the discomfort some task force members will feel as the decision making and planning process becomes more concrete. As the planning moves forward, the committee matures and moves into the Cooperation Phase.

Cooperation Phase

In the Cooperation Phase of development the pace quickens; the work of the task force/committee is in full gear. It is characterized by more interaction among the various players and agencies and requires more attention to the details of communication, coordination, collaboration, negotiation, and networking. In communities beginning a CASA program, it is important that people inside and outside the system have access to appropriate information and become part of the process. This will minimize some of the new barriers that tend to arise at this stage of development. If information is not shared at this point, people who were not involved in the initial planning process or whose positions might be affected by anticipated changes, can create serious roadblocks.

The task during this phase is to develop an internal coordination and communication network, so misinformation is kept to a minimum. In addition, the group must concentrate on sorting out their priorities so that human and financial resources are

apportioned in the right direction. This is just as important to the work of committees or teams as it is to a large task force. Regular meetings among key players not on a committee, written communication of key decisions to each member or agency, and periodic interagency information meetings are some methods of keeping the communication lines open and accurate.

It is important to build on the group's enthusiasm for the project by increased networking with the wider community. Board members need to be involved in this process through talking about CASA to their friends and colleagues. It is especially helpful for them to speak to other civic and business organizations to which they belong because such groups have potential for becoming contributors of both financial support and volunteers in the future. Groups should consider hosting a fun social event during this stage of development as a way to build team spirit among those involved as well as spreading the word in the community.

In this phase, leaders must be creative, have good listening skills, be communicative, enjoy coordinating diverse groups of people and know how to build a cooperative and harmonious climate. They must possess excellent problem-solving skills and a clear sense of priorities. They need to be able to negotiate agreements with the court, team members, agency heads and community leaders. These qualities need not be embodied in one person. Several people on a task force or a committee can fulfill the necessary leadership functions during this phase. Successful completion of this phase is reflected by ongoing communications and collaboration, increased ability to problem solve, appreciation for the skills members bring to the group, a growing sense of trust and concrete plans on how ideas will be implemented.

Productive Phase

The Productive Phase will move more slowly than the previous one. It is characterized by a more rhythmic pace. Tasks during this phase involve implementation of planned goals. Tasks range from training the first class of volunteers, to instituting a flagging system for high risk cases, or integrating a computerized data collection system. This phase is oriented in the present and focuses on giving everyone as much as they need to work together to deliver a quality service. Deadlines are required to accomplish the limitless amount of work. For CASA programs that are just getting started, the details of acquiring and staffing an office facility, collecting and accessing information, and finalizing operational procedures require disciplined execution. This will require training and a support system, so people learn how to pace themselves to avoid undue stress.

Leadership during this phase is managerial and administrative. It is a quieter style. Unlike the previous phase, individuals who take leadership roles at this time need to

be practical, reliable and detail oriented. They must focus on getting the operation to run smoothly. They need to give recognition to team members and build in a process where everyone feels a sense of satisfaction about the tedious tasks they accomplish. These are usually people who have a storehouse of knowledge and experience to work with problems and who know how to get and give group support. Effective completion of this phase will insure a smooth running, well-integrated program and continued movement toward positive interaction between individuals, groups, and agencies.

Completion Phase

The Completion Phase focuses on evaluating the implemented goals of the previous phases. It is the slowest phase and is characterized by precision. The focus can be on examining the quality and value of a particular program component such as interagency cooperation or board function, or reviewing the entire operation. It is a time to reflect on how well the organization or program fulfilled the initial vision and mission. It involves an ongoing conversation about the values of a CASA program and can inspire people to work toward high performance standards. It is oriented toward the past with a view toward future possibilities. It validates programs that work and the people who implemented them and provides a method of eliminating what is not valuable.

Leadership in this phase is evaluative. It requires a person or persons who are precise, analytic and incisive. They are concerned with the greater good and ask questions such as, "Are we doing this well? Should we continue, broaden or eliminate it?" By measuring for quality, this phase will lead toward improving, changing and possibly expanding programs. It closes this five phase cycle and provides the information to move toward a new level of development. The Completion Phase, done effectively, will direct attention to different issues and problems. It will make the members of the organization feel validated for their work. Ineffective programs will be eliminated or changed. The completed task in this phase is the basis for renewed personal and group resources to begin a new cycle.

Beyond the obvious succession of phases when a new CASA program is formed, there is also relevance for existing programs. When a local program suffers a crisis such as misconduct on the part of a volunteer, the departure of its founding director, or the election of a new judge hostile to the concept of volunteer CASAs, major shifts in the organization take place. Being conscious of these realignments and their associated leadership demands allows management to adapt quickly to the organization's needs.

3

Program Foundation

Most of our energies the last two years focused on maintaining quality service. As a result we did not spend enough time on agency management. During our board retreat the board looked critically at our mission and services and at our overall agency management. As a result we changed our mission and developed a two-year plan to use National CASA's recommended management practices as a guide to increase our organizational capacity.

Lani Wilkeson, Executive Director
Davidson County CASA
Nashville, TN

Mission

The fundamental basis of any organization is its mission. The mission should give meaning to daily activities and should be a constant reminder of how the organization intends to make the world better. The mission is what inspires employees and volunteers to become involved and to stay committed to CASA.

Most programs have a mission statement. But in many it is a document that is seldom used or reviewed to determine its relevance. It is included with funding proposals and is usually the preface of the strategic plan, but it is used for little else. The reality is that people get so involved in daily activities, they sometimes lose sight of why they are doing what they are doing.

A mission statement is a succinct way of stating the program's reason for existence, not the means of getting there. To do so effectively, it should be two or three sentences long and written in language that:

- Is broad in scope
- Is not technical
- Is not a list of organizational activities
- Provides a challenge to everyone at every level of the organization
- Provides a key to understanding what is distinctive about CASA
- Concentrates on the need/problem to be addressed rather than on internal operations and
- Is sufficiently detailed to avoid confusion of interpretation.

Consider the following mission statements of local CASA programs in light of these characteristics:

1. CASA Kane County is a non-profit membership organization which advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children within the court system. Based on the belief that every child is entitled to a safe and permanent home, CASA works in the court system through trained volunteers in collaboration with key agencies, legal counsel and community resources to serve as the child's advocate and represent the child in juvenile court.

2. The mission of CASA is to advocate for the best interests of children who are under the protection of the Multnomah County Juvenile Court, seeking to assure safe, permanent families for them as quickly as possible.

Key elements in any CASA mission statement would include volunteers, court-based advocacy, abused and neglected children, best interests, and permanency. What is most important for a program developing a mission statement for the first time is to see that current expectations are positively integrated with a long-term view.

Equally important for CASA programs which have long standing mission statements is a periodic analysis of them in comparison to current realities. The analysis should involve all the people who are necessary to carry out the mission. This means that the board of directors, the staff, and the volunteers should all have an opportunity to provide input.

Once input from everyone involved is obtained, the board and staff should spend the necessary time to reach consensus on any changes to the mission. If adoption is achieved by a simple majority vote, 49% of the people carrying out the mission may not agree with it and, therefore, may not feel a sense of ownership.

Organizational Values

With the mission statement developed and agreed upon, the next step in building a solid organizational foundation is reaching agreement on the essential values or beliefs that will drive the actions of board members, volunteers, and the staff. Without mutually agreed upon values, disagreements often surface, and people wind up working reluctantly on things that do not match their own sense of what is important. The "right" or mutually agreed upon values, internalized by the individual contributors, lead to right actions of the part of the organization. Senge calls mission, vision, and values the three "governing ideas" of an organization. "Core values," he states, "answer the question 'How do we want to act, consistent with our mission, along the path toward achieving our vision?'"

Richard Lynch, a Seattle-based management consultant and author of *Lead!,* says, "Organizations that have not established a clear set of values tend to rely on standard operating procedures and policies to make sure people do the right thing. Where there are no guiding values, procedure manuals are very thick. Whenever someone does something stupid or a crisis arises, managers in such organizations write a new procedure to prevent its recurrence. Because no procedure ever covers all eventualities, the procedures themselves can lead to irrational actions."

Although the primary responsibility for establishing shared values is that of the organization's leadership, others should be involved in helping to define those values. Lynch suggests that establishing organizational values involves a group process that includes asking questions like the following:

- Who are we?

- What do we stand for?

- What do we believe in?

- What are the characteristics of our organization?

- What does it mean to be one of us?

- What kind of individual would work or volunteer here?

Once these broader values have been developed, a leader should ask employees and volunteers to make a commitment to these values as guiding principles.

Even though the values are clearly stated and agreed to by all, it is a mistake to assume that everyone knows how to translate values into behavior. In many organizations, there is a wide gap between what management assumes is happening and what is really happening. It is important therefore, that the organization's leadership makes clear what the values mean in practice and then empower people to behave in accordance with them. Once people receive training and learn how to translate the program's values into behavior, management should reinforce them by doing the following:

- Paying attention to the right things

- Telling the whole group about accomplishments of an individual staff member

- Holding people accountable

- Setting an example

Organizational Culture

Another building block in the foundation of a solid CASA program is the culture or climate of the work environment. Used by management consultants and behavioral psychologists, the term simply means how it feels to work in a particular organization. It is an important concept because the climate affects everything that is done in an organization.

The concept is helpful in understanding, and hopefully dealing with the practical everyday problems of poor performance, lack of motivation, turnover, indifferent or hostile attitudes and conflicts between the personal goals of workers and the goals of the program. Negative behavior in a given situation is, to a great degree, a result of feeling powerless and unconnected to the organization.

Peter Drucker observed that climate is "the spirit of an organization that motivates, that calls upon an individual's reserves of dedication and effort, that decides whether

he will give his best or do just enough to get by." The climate of an organization is determined by its leadership. If the leadership style is not encouraging, neither employees nor volunteers will perform at their best.

Drucker lists climate factors that should be considered in establishing a motivating and highly productive work environment:

- **Provide a challenging job.** People want meaningful and challenging jobs. Since what is important to one worker may not be to another, it is equally important to meet people's needs by matching them to a job that will fulfill those needs.

- **Give people responsibility for their own actions and decision making.** People will work more enthusiastically and productively if they participate in decisions that affect their work. A key thought to remember is that people do things for their reasons, not yours. Therefore, it is important to give them ownership of ideas by being sure that they help make decisions.

- **Reward people for achievement.** Leaders can build confidence by rewarding people for good performance every time the opportunity arises, as long as it is done sincerely. Some directors only communicate with employees when something goes wrong. Constant negative messages create a tense and insecure climate. When providing rewards, remember: a) they should be personalized and appropriate to the individual involved; b) they should not be "canned"; c) they must be perceived as fair; d) they should be given as closely as possible in time to the achievement.

- **Create an atmosphere of trust.** People in an organization look to the director and board members to do what is in the best interests of the organization. When their trust is betrayed, they stop paying attention to leadership and begin, instead, to do things their own way.

- **Provide a sense of direction.** People need to know where they have been and where they are going in terms of past accomplishments and future needs. Directors need to emphasize planning for both the organization and the individual employee, and to assist people in determining their direction.

- **Be aware of the need for belonging, affiliation, and teamwork.** It is important to make people know that they are an integral part of the organization. It is also important to encourage teamwork in solving problems and accomplishing objectives.

- **Emphasize innovation and creativity.** It was Nicholas Murray Butler, a former president of Columbia University, who once noted that there are three kinds of people. "There is a small group of people who make things happen,

there is a somewhat larger group who watch things happen, and there is an overwhelming majority of people who don't have the slightest idea what's happening." Creativity and new ideas are essential to an organization's survival. They are also necessary to maintain a motivated employee. Encourage creativity through brainstorming and team meetings in which everyone is free to contribute.

- **Have concern for freedom and flexibility.** One of the great strengths of any sound organization is the ability of its leaders to sense problems or to realize that an operation is going awry. First, they aren't afraid to admit that there are problems or that a mistake has been made. Secondly, they are flexible enough to rethink and change their direction—with assistance from their employees. They are also willing to allow others in the organization this freedom.

- When there is a positive organizational climate, both staff and volunteers feel good about their work and their affiliation with CASA. Such a climate makes outstanding performance possible.

4

Focusing on Boards

I have observed program directors spend months recruiting, screening, and training staff and CASA volunteers, but think nothing of calling up a friend who owes them a favor or ask someone they hardly know to be on the board. I have learned the hard way that this is no way to provide leadership to an organization.

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The Board of Directors

When the CASA program is a nonprofit corporation, a board of directors is the governing body. The board holds responsibility to the public for assuring that the organization is carrying out the mission for which it was granted nonprofit status. It may delegate to staff the authority to manage the organization, but it cannot delegate its responsibility.

The necessary role of the board and the duties it must perform to fulfill its responsibility are less clear. Depending upon which authority you consult, a board's role has been defined from the all inclusive "it has responsibility for everything the organization does," to the other extreme that one writer suggested, "to give money, get it, or go away." The appropriate role is somewhere in the middle, but identifying the right balance can be difficult. Most experts observe that a board's role changes as the organization evolves. These transitions are necessary to maintain effectiveness, but, almost by definition, the role of the board becomes temporarily unfocused. A shift in equilibrium is often as uncomfortable for board members as it is perplexing to staff.

In trying to clarify the role of your CASA board, it is helpful to know that boards experience stages similar to the organizational stages discussed in Chapter 2. Karl Mathiasen, in *Board Passages: Three Key Stages in a Nonprofit Board's Life Cycle,* identifies three distinct stages that a board goes through as the organization grows and develops: organizing, governing, and institutional. Mathiasen maintains that board leaders must understand what is happening and what changes are necessary for a board to successfully make the transition from one stage to the next.

The First Stage - The Organizing Board

Most nonprofit CASA programs begin with a small organizing group that assumes a strong and active leadership role. These start-up boards are characterized by commitment and vision and are composed of people who have passion about bringing ideas to reality. Members are willing to do whatever tasks are necessary to get the program going and they generally develop a strong sense of ownership of the program.

Beginning boards tend to function as "committees of the whole," making policy as well as operating decisions, and carrying through with all implementation stages. When the program finally has the resources to be able to hire staff, the person must be extremely versatile. To achieve optimal teamwork, the board and staff member need to begin immediately to define their respective roles and responsibilities.

Probably the most common error for a founding board is not giving a new director enough authority to run the organization. When this occurs, it is usually because there is ambivalence on the part of board members. They want help with the work of running the program but are reluctant to give up control. A new CASA director in this situation may have to work for some time to earn the board's trust. Often the process is not fully completed until founding members rotate off the board. This is a good reason to plan early for the rotation of board members. Growth of the board to the next stage as well as the long-term health and vitality of the program depends upon new ideas and energy.

The Second Stage - The Governing Board

Transition to the governing board stage often occurs at a time of crisis, usually financial. Such an event necessitates a shift from performing operational, staff-like tasks to planning for the organization's well-being and its longevity. Eventually, the board accepts responsibility for long-range planning, oversight of finances including fundraising, and accountability for organizational integrity.

During this stage a more balanced relationship between the board and staff develops. There is more sharing of power and authority, and the board becomes larger and more diversified. Committees become more important in getting the work done.

A number of experts have determined that for the governing board to become fully effective in its new role takes at least three years and requires a substantial investment of time on the part of the CASA director. The development and staffing of committees are key tasks as are recruitment and orientation of new board members. Maintaining good communication with every board member although time consuming, is a must during this stage. If your CASA board is currently experiencing this stage of development, have patience and realize that the board is the slowest part of the organization to change.

The Third Stage – The Institutional Board

The governing boards of many CASA programs will never need to progress to the stage of an institutional board. Most will, however, take on some of its roles and characteristics.

Institutional boards are generally large – perhaps twenty-five to thirty members – and include more people who have the capacity to give or have access to funders and donors. This kind of board clearly accepts the role of fund-raising as its primary function and often delegates governance of the program completely to the staff and

an executive committee. Board members recruited for this type of board are long-time community leaders with little time for hands-on activities. The institutional, fund-raising board is thus more attractive to them. Boards of this type usually serve hospitals, museums, and universities.

Even when you can identify the organization's life cycle and the board's stage of growth, it is sometimes still difficult to define what the board "ought to do." This is because boards carry into each new phase remnants of previous activities and old methods of operation. As boards age, they discard and add roles and functions and may find it difficult to establish just the right relationship between board members and staff. Nevertheless, understanding the three-stage process should help to clarify what generally can and cannot be done at any point in an organization's life.

Board Responsibilities

Developing and clarifying the board's role is essential at each stage because the board of directors' involvement, commitment, sense of partnership, and strength can make a critical difference in an organization's ability to continue and to grow. Directors and staff members come and go, but a strong board that brings in new blood on a regular basis is the constant and can provide both the energy and stability needed in the life of a CASA program.

Although there are varied descriptions of a board's responsibilities in the literature, most authors agree about the broad functions. The following list reflects the compilation of several authorities. (See Appendix 4-A for another example of Board Job Description.) The activities necessary to carry out each responsibility may vary depending on the stage of development:

1. **Determine the organization's mission and purpose.** The board should keep the overall mission of the program clearly in focus by reviewing it periodically to determine its accuracy and validity and to assure that the activities of the organization are in harmony with the mission. The board should not have exclusive domain over the development or revision of the mission. Staff should be very much involved and stakeholders should be consulted, but it is the board's responsibility to adopt it. An adequate mission statement should serve as the guide to the other functions of the board.

2. **Assure that its legal and ethical duties are fulfilled.** The specific legal responsibilities include adhering to state and federal law and reporting requirements, maintaining the tax exempt status, safeguarding corporate

documents (articles of incorporation, bylaws, and tax exemption papers) and keeping minutes and financial records.

3. **Hire and support the executive and review his/her performance.** This responsibility has the greatest impact on the organization's development and effectiveness. A carefully designed staff search process is essential as is the board's recognition of its duty to provide the kind of working environment that will enable the program to succeed. Prior to hiring the director, the board should establish the mission; establish specific priorities and clarify expectations for at least the first year; determine the characteristics, skills, and style of management needed at this point in the program's development; clarify its own functions as distinct from those of the staff; and prepare a comprehensive job description. Once the director is hired, the board is responsible for providing ongoing support through:

- Frequent and constructive feedback;

- Encouragement to take professional and personal leave for renewal;

- Assistance when individual members overstep their roles;

- Regular performance reviews.

4. **Ensure effective organizational planning.** Board members must be involved extensively in the planning process if they are to assume ownership of the plan and help to acquire the resources necessary to implement the program's goals. Because board members are, or should be, free of vested interest, they should be considering issues and rendering judgments for the organization as a whole and ultimately assessing the quality of the goals and objectives that result from the planning process. Their role is essentially one of asking good questions, expecting good answers, and serving as resources in areas of personal and professional expertise.

5. **Ensure adequate resources.** An organization is only as effective as the resources available to carry out its purpose. Providing adequate resources should be first and foremost a board responsibility. While the director carries an important role in fundraising activities, the board determines what is possible and establishes the fundraising plan. An annual gift by each board member should be required in order to be able to report 100 percent participation to potential and past supporters. It is important to dispel the myth that giving time to an organization is equivalent to giving money. Both are necessary and everyone is capable of giving something. All prospective members should understand that an annual gift is one of the board's expectations.

6. **Manage resources effectively**. An important part of serving the public trust is protecting the assets and ensuring that current income is managed properly. Boards should be involved in helping to develop and approve the annual budget and monitoring its implementation by reviewing quarterly balance sheets, monthly finance reports, and an annual review or audit if the size of the budget requires it.

7. **Determine and monitor the growth of the program and its effectiveness.** Financial and programmatic decisions cannot be made independently and it is the board's role to establish a plan for growth that is consistent with the mission and current goals. Given limited resources and increasing demands from the community and the court, CASA boards must frequently decide among competing priorities.

   It is the board's responsibility to monitor the quality and cost-effectiveness of programs but it is the staff's responsibility to carry out the board's plan. It is in meeting these responsibilities that the board and staff roles often become confused. Candor, openness, and explicit job descriptions are necessary at this point to achieve an accommodation satisfactory to everyone.

8. **Enhance the organization's public image.** Ensuring a healthy public image for the program requires an ongoing marketing strategy. Board members should be able to articulate the program's achievements, its benefit to the children of the community, and explain how contributions, grants and other revenue sources are allocated and utilized. Annual reports, press releases, consistent communication initiatives with community and government leaders, and presentations by appropriate board and staff members to civic and community groups are important aspects of a comprehensive strategy. It is important to designate who is the primary spokesperson for the program and who can speak on his/her behalf. Having several staff and board members trained as speakers' bureau participants is beneficial. The board should guard against an overzealous board member or volunteer who represents him or herself as speaking for CASA. No one should assume that responsibility unless specifically authorized to do so.

9. **Serve as a court of appeal in personnel issues in rare instances.** One of the marks of an effectively managed and governed organization is its ability to avoid having its board intervene in personnel issues except in the rarest of circumstances. Sound personnel policies and procedures, grievance procedures, and an understanding of the director's responsibility for hiring, developing, and terminating staff help assure proper boundaries in this area.

Nevertheless, the time may come when the director's judgment will be challenged. A wise director knows when to consult with the board and ask for assistance involving disputes not manageable within the director's span of control.

10. **Assess its own performance.** Every so often, the board as a whole needs to step back and look at itself. Self-assessment is critical to the development and maintenance of a healthy decision-making group. It happens informally when members get together and talk about individual and board concerns. It should also be done formally on at least an annual basis, usually in conjunction with or prior to the board's assessment of the director.

A candid and anonymous written questionnaire of board member perceptions is a good place to find out where the trouble spots are. Individual members have different experiences and expectations for board performance. The goal of the questionnaire is to identify what changes members feel need to be made. Once there is consensus on priorities for change, the next step is to develop a plan of action. There is no single right way to fix a problem. If it looks insurmountable, there are outside resources that may be tapped to help plan corrective actions. Failing to do a performance assessment of the board can result in numerous problems, such as unresolved conflicts among members, "crisis management" and board burnout, just to name a few. Performing an annual assessment will keep the board functioning effectively and keep small problems from turning into disasters.

The Board's Policy-Making Role

Defining the board's role in policy-making requires that a distinction be made among three levels of policy. The mission, philosophy, goals and objectives represent governing policy. Executive or administrative policy making includes fiscal and personnel decisions. Operating policy covers the procedures and practices of the working environment.

The board is most directly involved in governing policy, having responsibility for formulating the mission, philosophy, and the goals and objectives as well as approving them. In the case of administrative policies, the board and/or the director develops them and the board approves them. The board is not involved in establishing operating policies but is aware of them, assuring itself of their conformity to legal requirements and to governing and administrative policies.

Discussion and approval of policy at all levels is one way the board understands the day to day operation of the agency and is able to fulfill its accountability to the

organization's various constituencies for seeing that the stated mission is being realized.

The Role of the Individual Board Member

The role of the board as a whole and that of individual board members differ but are complementary. Individual members cannot act on behalf of the whole board although they can be held accountable for their individual actions. This presents somewhat of a paradox for an individual board member. On the one hand, board members have no special privileges, prerogatives, or authority. On the other hand, individual board members are expected to meet high standards of personal conduct on behalf of the organization including avoiding any situation that might give even the appearance of a conflict of interest. (See Appendix 4.B, Conflict of Interest Policy). For this reason, it is helpful to have a job description for individual members as well as one for the collective board. Individual members can then see how their role fits with the whole board's and can focus clearly on their piece of the action. New and prospective board members who have a clear statement of what the program expects of its individual board members, can make a decision to serve or not serve with full knowledge. (See Appendix 4 - C, Board Member Job Description).

Relationship between the Board and Staff

The development and maintenance of a good working relationship with the board is one of the primary responsibilities and challenges of the executive director. It is the rare organization that does not have problems in this area from time to time. When conflicts arise, they generally have to do with whether certain tasks fall under the authority of the board or director. Having open communication, specific job descriptions, and clear expectations goes a long way toward preventing such overlap in job functions. However, even with well-laid groundwork, the appropriate separation of duties is not always clear. Many individuals have difficulty understanding the difference between the governance of the organization and the management of it. Boards made up of such individuals often attempt to micro-manage the director.

When this happens, it is important for the director to communicate the problem personally to the board president or chair. The president should lead the board to focus on the outcomes against which the director and the program will evaluated. Boards which focus on outcomes are less likely to micro-manage because their attention is on results, not the process of achieving them. Focusing the board meeting agenda on strategic, long-term issues is a way to direct the board's attention toward an outcome perspective. Providing budget reports that measure progress toward a year-end goal instead of comparing this month's figures to last month's is an example of encouraging the board to take a long-range view.

Sometimes a board micro-manages because they do not have confidence in the director. If the director perceives that to be the problem, it is again time to have a frank discussion with the board president. It is the president's responsibility to see that legitimate concerns are handled constructively.

It is also important to acknowledge areas in which help may be required. The job of director of an organization like CASA is very complex and requires varied skills: planning, organizing, financial management, fundraising, training, public speaking, and volunteer management, to name a few. It is the rare individual who has expertise in all these areas in addition to the necessary knowledge of the court system and child welfare issues. Being aware of shortcomings and asking for training or coaching in those areas is not an admission of weakness or failure. If the board is aware that assistance is being sought, members may be less focused on day to day performance and more willing to judge the results down the road.

Finally, it is crucial to orient new board members thoroughly regarding their roles and expectations. Providing them with a board member handbook containing job descriptions, the current strategic plan, the budget, copies of bylaws, and other necessary documents is essential. The board should regularly review its list of responsibilities and determine if any need to be modified or deleted. (See Appendix 4.D, Board Member Orientation Checklist).

Refresher training for long-term board members should also be provided periodically. Having an outside trainer from another nonprofit or having board members attend state CASA or national CASA conferences are other ways to help board members refocus on their appropriate roles. (Table 4.1 provides some differences in staff and board functions. See also Appendix 4 - E, Board and Staff ....Who Does What.)

Distinctions Between Board & Staff Functions

Function	Board/Governance	Staff/Management
FINANCIAL ANALYSIS	Reviewing performance against prior years, discussion organizational implications	Monitoring monthly increases and decreases in line items
PLANNING DECISIONS	All decisions that define the organization's mission, priorities and key strategies	Those decisions that are related to short-term implementation of the mission, priorities and key goals
STRUCTURE	The structure of the board and defining the programs of the organization	Staffing distribution; appropriate infrastructure to support services
EVALUATION	Oversight to ensure it happens	Deciding the most appropriate means of evaluating programs; revising the organization in response to the evaluation results

Table 4.1

Making Committees Productive

Committees are the subject of much derision and broad humor. Who hasn't heard the list of definitions of a committee? "A group of people who keep minutes and waste hours;" or "an organization of individuals who separately can do nothing but who collectively can decide that nothing can be done," are common ones that come to mind. Yet, despite a generally negative reputation, the committee structure continues to be the best available vehicle for getting the work of an organization done.

Committees can be tremendous time savers and can do a great deal of the legwork for the board by researching issues and developing recommendations. While there are not many specific rules for committee operation, there are certain principles that contribute to effective functioning. Committees do not exist in a vacuum; they exist in a web of expectations and relationships, all of which are set within a broader context of time, community, and organizational dynamics.

The work of any committee is inherently political. Its dynamics revolve around issues of power, influence, expertise, self-interest, and interpersonal communications. To be effective within that context, a committee needs to be clear about its responsibilities and sensitive to the relationships within the group. No committee can expect to operate without conflict nor can it expect to represent everyone's view

at all times. Members must give themselves permission to disagree, take their time and experience failure as they move toward long-range goals.

Generally, the board will need two kinds of committees: 1) standing committees which oversee the governance of the program, and 2) ad hoc committees or task forces which are given a specific charge to be completed in a specified period of time. Whatever the type of committee, there are certain guidelines which should be followed:

- **All committees need clear direction.** To be meaningful, a committee's charge should include a statement of the required tasks, the staff support and funds available, the scope of authority of the committee, a timetable for completion of the task, and a statement about how and when the committee should report on its progress.

- **All committees need written records.** Written documentation of the committee's actions serves to provide a sense of continuity and history when members change. Minutes also perform an accountability function.

- **All committees need to succeed.** The key to achieving success is to develop a plan of action that incorporates short term objectives that lead to the overall goal. Short term objectives should be achievable in six to eight weeks and should be acknowledged and celebrated.

Governance committees, such as personnel or finance, should be composed of board members appointed by the president with nominations from and approval by the board. For ad hoc committees, such as strategic planning or recruitment, it may be appropriate to involve members from outside the organization who have knowledge of the issue assigned to the group. Having someone from outside the board brings new perspectives and can help to identify and cultivate potential new members for the board.

Board Structure

A key aspect to the successful operation of a board is its size. There are several considerations in determining the optimum number of members: the necessary skills to fulfill the program's mission; the need for various constituencies to be represented; the need for enough people to serve on committees; and the need to have enough members so that no one member feels that (s)he is doing all the work. An optimum working board generally has 12-20 members. Most boards are smaller in the early stages of program development and members are added as the needs of the program grow. The by-laws should establish a minimum and maximum number of board members.

The by-laws should also establish the length of a board member's tenure. It is usually advisable to stagger the terms of board members so that one-half or one-third are elected every one or two years, for terms of two to four years. This approach better equips the board to deal with changes over time. Many non-profits limit a board member to two consecutive terms, and if a member is to be reappointed for a third term, (s)he is required to leave the board for at least a year. Such a system of rotation encourages the board to identify and cultivate new board members in a thoughtful and effective way.

Board Recruitment

An effective board does not happen by accident. It must be carefully built and maintained by the joint efforts of board members and the director. Two factors should serve as starting points. The first is the need for diversity. This includes diversity of demographics such as sex, age, and ethnic background; linkages to various sectors of the community; and the individual skills and interests which members bring. Strong boards have a composition that is representative of the larger world in which they operate.

The second factor is the need for commonality in board members. While acknowledging the need for diversity, the board must ensure that members have a shared belief in the mission and essential values of the organization. Each member must be committed enough to give the time needed.

The objective of the recruitment process is to identify and select people who can operate as a team in performing the board's duties. The first step is assessing the strengths of the current board and identifying needed skills and characteristics.

Once there is a profile of the new members needed, an active search begins. The best recruitment method is the "self-replacement" method in which outgoing board members recruit someone with similar skills to replace themselves. Obviously, this method should be used only when the board already possesses all the skills it needs. When recruiting for specific skills for the first time, look to professional organizations, local businesses and large corporations for someone with the needed expertise. The search for potential candidates is an ongoing process that should be conducted by board members, the director, and other staff. Keep a file of potential board members. Contact likely prospects well before an opening occurs in order to educate them about CASA and to determine their available time and commitment.

Potential board members should be asked to make a formal application for membership on the board. This sends the clear signal that CASA is a professional organization that is serious about finding quality board members. Board members

should also be screened by the same methods and criteria that are required of staff and volunteer applicants. This includes child protective services and criminal background checks as well as interviews. The program should establish a protocol for making decisions in case the background check of an applicant turns up negative information. Most applicants will not object to such screening if the nature of CASA's work and the potential damage that an inappropriate board member might cause is clearly explained to them. (See Appendix 4 - F, Board Recruitment Exercise).

Special Considerations for CASA Board Membership

Many board members of local programs are active in other organizations as well as CASA. Their talents and enthusiasm make such people valued contributors throughout the community. In most cases, membership or board status in another organization presents no conflict with the responsibilities of a CASA board member. Programs sometimes specifically recruit people with other connections, believing that the board would benefit by having representation from the medical community or the school system for examples. If appropriate screening is done as part of the nomination process, it is unlikely that a person whose values are glaringly incompatible with CASA's mission will be asked to sit on the board. Membership in a few special interest groups, however, may present a more subtle conflict for a potential board member. For example, foster care review team membership or involvement in a parents' rights group may limit a person's ability to view child welfare issues from a CASA perspective. Such associations could adversely affect the working relationship between the CASA program and the local social service agency. These outcomes are not givens, simply factors to be explored on a case-by-case basis.

Relatives

Often, interest in the CASA mission extends beyond the staff itself to members of their families. Family members may also have time available or specific skills, like accounting or computer experience, that would enhance board performance. The appeal of placing a relative on the board is heightened further when recruitment of new members has been less than successful. However, making such a choice presents several difficulties. The first is that it is almost impossible to have an employer/employee relationship between family members. Any action taken will be questioned within the context of the relationship and perceptions can be even harder to deal with than realities. Secondly, the financial checks and balances that ordinarily occur between board and program director are suspect, especially if the board member has any duties of a fiscal nature. Lastly, having a relative on the board of

directors gives the appearance of a "mom and pop" operation rather than a capable non-profit agency.

The Judge

If a judge started the CASA program and nurtured its early development, (s)he often has a strong feeling of ownership. When the program is administered and funded by the court, the judge's feeling of ownership is a generally positive dynamic. However, when the program is established as an independent nonprofit, the judge's involvement may be problematic. The key issue here is the necessity for program independence . A judge who both appoints volunteers to cases and sits on the board of directors can compromise that independence to the detriment of both the program and the quality of the advocacy provided by the volunteers.

If the judge is perceived as being overly influenced by the CASA volunteer's recommendations or too closely involved with the program, other professionals may question the judge's ability to give equal consideration to the evidence of all parties in a case. In extreme cases, an attorney for one of the parties could appeal a judge's decision based on undue influence of the CASA.

Most judges will not want to be a member of the board. They generally want input on some policy matters and involvement in training the volunteers. These are important and appropriate roles for the court. However, some judges do not see any conflict in hearing cases and serving on the board. Obviously, this is a delicate issue which will take some time and a considerable amount of diplomacy to resolve. Sometimes, board training and the development of job descriptions for board members will result in a judge's recognition that board membership is not appropriate. Often, however, it takes a candid private conversation with the judge about the potential for conflict. Providing public recognition to the judge for founding the program or lending strong support and assuring him/her that the court's input and opinions will always be sought may be enough to encourage a graceful departure. Allowing the judge to name a successor, perhaps a former judge, may also ease the exit.

Social Services Personnel and Public Attorneys

Having an employee from the public social services agency on the board looks like a good idea at first glance. That individual can help to smooth ruffled feathers in the agency when disagreements occur and can provide information about agency policies and procedures that might affect the activities of the volunteers. However, when the inevitable conflict occurs between CASA and the agency, that person may be putting his/her job on the line if (s)he chooses to support CASA's position as the role of a board member requires. On the other hand, if the board member adheres to

his/her employer's directives, permanent damage may be done to the program. Just such a situation occurred in a program when a new director of social services established a policy that CASA volunteers would not be allowed access to social services records or their assigned child without a social worker present. Though the board member in this case was not from child welfare, she felt that she could not sign a letter to the director (her boss) from the board objecting to the policy. She was eventually forced by the social services director to resign her position on the CASA board. The conflict was eventually resolved to CASA's advantage, but only after extended negotiations and involvement of the court, not to mention embarrassment for the board member in question. This example aptly demonstrates that even if the board member's job in the agency is outside the child welfare area, the potential for conflict still exists.

The same potential presents a barrier in the case of a county attorney, prosecutor, or district attorney. These public employees are frequently involved in the same cases that CASA volunteers are assigned to but they have different roles. They may or may not be in agreement with the position of a volunteer in any given case. For that reason it is best to avoid even the possibility of conflict by not utilizing them as board members. A CASA board member must be able to make a firm commitment to carry out the duties of membership. As long as a potential for conflict exists, that person faces the likelihood that at some future point, one or both of their roles may be compromised.

Foster Parents

Foster parents are often the most vocal critics of the court and child welfare agencies. All too often, they have witnessed children being victimized by the system that is supposed to protect them. Because of their unique perspective as caretakers of the children, they know far better than most people where the weaknesses of the system are and what could fill the gaps. Often, they view CASA as a full or partial remedy for the ills of the child welfare system. This is what motivates them to become involved with CASA by being a volunteer, a board member, or by starting a program where there is none.

The goal of improving the system is a worthy one. However, there are many avenues available other than CASA to advocate for system change and foster parents should be encouraged to pursue them. Active foster parents, especially if they are still under agreement with a public or private foster care agency and have, or expect to have, children in their care, have a great potential for conflict of interest. Simply assigning them to children other than those in their home does not eliminate the possible problems. Furthermore, no one knows better than CASA programs how impermanent the placement of any child in the foster care system might be. A child

who was in shelter care last week may be at that foster home tonight. In any case, foster parents are licensed or approved by the agency and have agreed as part of their approval process to abide by agency policy. This may once again bring them into conflict with a CASA program.

When former foster parents want to become involved, the potential for conflict is diluted to some degree. However, caution is still advised. Past foster parenting experiences may hamper the ability to make objective decisions about the goals of the CASA program. This is an issue that should be thoroughly explored during the screening and nominating process for board members.

Volunteers on the Board

Volunteers have a good sense of how board actions will affect them and what impact they will have on the children served, so eliciting the volunteer perspective is important. However, programs must examine the question of whether or not to have an active CASA volunteer on the board. Although a volunteer's views on some issues may be necessary for effective board deliberation, making a volunteer a board member creates the potential for conflict. It places the director in the uncomfortable position of being both employee and supervisor of the board member. While some programs have made such an arrangement work, they are taking an unnecessary risk, especially since there are other alternatives.

Some ways to obtain it include:

- Having a designated position on the board for a former volunteer;

- Having board members participate in volunteer training;

- Scheduling time at board meetings for a volunteer to present a case;

- Having board members individually take a volunteer to lunch both as recognition for the volunteer and education for the board member; and

- Having board members observe court hearings in which volunteers are involved.

If it is the decision of the local CASA program to utilize people from any of the groups mentioned above, everyone must be clear about roles and expectations. It is essential that when conflicts arise, they are dealt with quickly, before they get out of hand. Open and frequent communication is the only way to avoid misunderstanding and disagreement that can ultimately damage the program.

Advisory Boards

Advisory boards, councils, or committees can attract distinguished, influential people who bring invaluable contacts, visibility, and support for both public and non-profit CASA programs. Such groups can assist with fund-raising, address political problems, handle public relations activities, evaluate the program, and generally help to create good will in the community.

Unlike the members of a governing board who serve as fiduciaries and policy-makers, the members of an advisory group are not authorized to act as decision-makers. Generally, the advisory board's authority is limited to giving advice and counsel. In many states, CASA programs which are administered by a public agency are required by law to have advisory boards as a method of having input from and accountability to the citizens of the community they serve.

A successful advisory group can do much to help an organization fulfill its mission. On the other hand, an unsuccessful advisory group can be a costly drain on resources and the program's image. Far too many advisory boards are formed only because it seems like a good idea with good potential.

There is no exact formula for creating a strong advisory committee; much depends upon the size of your program and what the group's purpose will be. However, any advisory group must have a clear understanding of its purpose. Its explicit responsibilities should be contained in a written statement which includes:

- Purpose of the group;

- Duration of its appointment;

- Criteria for member selection;

- To whom the group reports;

- Specific responsibilities and expectations;

- Relationship to the governing board (in non-profits); and

- Relationship to the staff.

The most crucial ingredient for building a successful advisory committee is the quality of staff leadership. Most groups simply will not go far without staff time assigned to orient, educate, motivate, and help members carry out their responsibilities. Many organizations abandon the idea of an advisory group because they had not accounted for the substantial investment of resources required for the "care and feeding" of such a group. Without the investment, the committee will never accomplish its intended purpose.

Many public CASA and Guardian ad litem programs have been successful in expanding the role of an advisory group to that of a fund-raising auxiliary. Because employees of public agencies are generally forbidden to engage in fund-raising activities to supplement public funding of their programs, a "Friends of CASA" organization can be incorporated as a non-profit with its own governing board. Non-profit programs have also developed separate fund-raising organizations.

In collaboration with program staff and the administrative organization, auxiliaries have provided funds for such things as scholarships for volunteers to attend the national conference; hiring speakers and trainers to give in-service training; building resource libraries; and purchasing equipment or other needed items for the program.

5

Planning & Evaluation

Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. Hen a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind.

Seneca

Running a CASA program without goals and objectives is very much like running a race with no finish line. How does the runner pace him or herself or tell when the race is finished? Without long-range plans, board and staff may find themselves meandering along the track wondering what will happen next. Planning, establishing realistic objectives, and evaluating the program can keep the organization focused on its mission and prevent energy-sapping detours.

Planning allows organizations to determine where they would like to be in the near and long-term future and to choose the right track for getting there. Strategic planning differs from day-to-day operational planning in that it focuses on the big picture: the mission, the goals, the objectives and the resources that will be necessary. The operational or action plan focuses on the day-to-day activities necessary for short term objectives to be accomplished within a year.

Getting Ready to Plan

The planning process adopted will vary in complexity depending on the size and characteristics of the program. The board may choose to hire a facilitator to lead the process or may obtain assistance from the staff of the local United Way or another agency. Some programs choose to conduct a stream-lined process with staff assisting board members.

Whatever planning process is used, some advance preparation is needed to ensure its success. Consider the time available. Decide what type of environment will encourage those involved to stretch their imaginations and think creatively about the future. A week-end or day long retreat is one option that usually has positive results. It allows time for team-building, the opportunity for the board to focus on fundamentals, and a chance to strengthen trust and relationships among board members as well as between the board and staff.

Steps in the Planning Process

1. First, determine who will be involved, what work products will be produced, and how the process will be carried out. This effort usually involves establishing a planning committee, presenting the committee with a clear charge, and developing a schedule. It should also include an agreement on the planning model and terminology that will be used. One planner's "goals" are another's "objectives" and "activities" may be

synonymous with "targets" or the "necessary steps in reaching a target," so it is easy to get confused.

2. Gather the information necessary to conduct an organizational analysis. This step is often called environmental and internal scanning. Focus on the opportunities and threats posed by the external environment and the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization. The planning committee should review hard data about local and regional economic, demographic, and social forces, as well as about the organization's past performance. Much of this information can be solicited through questionnaires and interviews with staff, volunteers, judges, social workers, and other professionals who are likely to have perceptions and opinions about the program.

3. Review collected information to identify six to eight issues that are key to the long-term future of the organization. For most CASA programs, the future should include the next three to five years. This step can be completed by a facilitator (if one is involved) and the planning committee. A summary of all the information collected and the key issues should be provided to the full board and staff prior to the retreat. During the retreat, the board should establish its top three or four priorities that support a central thrust or theme for the future. Selecting a small number of priorities involves deciding what not to do as well as where attention will be focused. This is sometimes the most important part of the exercise. In the long run, the best way to carry out the mission of any nonprofit organization is to concentrate attention and resources in the right areas. As Peter Drucker says "There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all."

4. Develop action plans for each of the priority areas. This step should be completed by the whole board but may need to be done at a later date if there is not enough time during the planning retreat. It is important to allow time for brainstorming new activities to meet the objectives as well as ways to improve performance of existing tasks. Assignment of authority, responsibility, and accountability is also crucial to this step. These action steps become the basis for the organization's operational or implementation plan which is completed by the staff.

5. Select performance measures for tracking progress toward each of the goals. The measures selected should deal with such issues as financial health, growth in the number or quality of volunteers, the number of children being served, and the quality and efficiency of the program.

For many CASA programs, a comprehensive planning process seems to be a luxury they think they cannot afford. Reluctance stems from the amount of time it takes to complete the process, a lack of commitment and participation from many board members and, sometimes, the perception that planning is a boring process that leads nowhere. It is true that it takes a great deal of time and requires patience and persistence. When your program is under-funded and short of staff, you must do the best you can with the resources and time you have available. However, you should consider the time and energy devoted to planning to be an investment in the future of the CASA program. The process of planning builds the board's knowledge of the organization and its environment. This knowledge in turn enables the board to make informed decisions on important policy issues, long-term priorities, and organizational goals and objectives.

Program Evaluation

To many people the word "evaluation" means "judgment" and conjures up pictures of final exams or performance evaluations by supervisors. The notion of evaluation brings shudders to those who recall times when they were judged harshly, unfairly or inappropriately. Is it any wonder then that few relish this critical necessity?

Evaluations evoke negative reactions because they are so often done poorly and for the wrong reasons. The fear of negative consequences has often led to a "no news is good news" management philosophy in which formal evaluation is avoided. Such a stance has now become an unaffordable luxury. Today's environment of stiff competition for declining resources almost forces programs to perform systematic evaluations to demonstrate their effectiveness to funders. Without this validation, programs are unlikely to receive continued funding.

What Should be Evaluated?

Evaluation should look at both internal effectiveness and external results. It is a tool to assess the progress being made toward achieving your objectives and ultimate goals as stated in the strategic plan. Evaluation can be a periodic process: that is, performed at a fixed point in time; or it can be a dynamic process: ongoing and fluid. Both methods should be used.

Evaluation of Results

The periodic evaluation is a planned process that looks at the external impact and results of the program. The purpose of this type of evaluation is to determine whether the program is effective in meeting the expectations of the court and whether

or not it is having a positive impact on the children it serves. This type of evaluation is generally conducted annually but may be done less frequently such as every two to three years. It can be carried out by reviewing records and conducting interviews or surveys of those who collaborate with the program including judges, court administrators, social workers, attorneys, and other professionals.

This type of evaluative information is increasingly important to those who fund CASA programs and those who support them publicly. CASA must be able to prove its effectiveness by showing concrete numbers that validate program claims. In other words, CASA programs must show that they do what they say they do. More and more legislatures and funders are asking the question, "Does CASA make a difference to children?" This is a hard question for CASA to answer in quantifiable terms because the difference CASA makes is often of a qualitative nature.

Other than citing anecdotal incidents, it is currently difficult to provide data that confirms the difference CASA makes in actual outcomes for children. To do that, there would have to be universal agreement about the definitions of positive outcomes and long-term information about what happens to children served by CASA years after they leave the system. To determine if the CASA volunteer truly made a difference, the evaluation study would have to use research methodology that would take into account the many other factors that influence the outcome in a child's case, such as the severity of the problems in the family, the social work practices utilized, and many others. To conduct such an evaluation is both costly and time consuming, thus making it beyond the capacity of most local programs.

The research studies that have sought to evaluate CASA's effectiveness have done so by looking at the effect that a CASA volunteer has on the court process and the services the child receives. Most of these studies have compared CASA volunteers to attorneys on these measures. (See Appendices 5 - A and 5- B, Evaluation Summaries).

There is much more that needs to be done in the area of determining the results of CASA's work for children. National CASA hopes in the near future to be able to provide technical assistance materials on conducting outcome evaluations and determining what impact local programs have had on the children in their communities. In the meantime, local programs must identify their goals in terms that are realistic and measurable. For example, it is not realistic for a program to say that it prevents juvenile delinquency or child abuse. However, it is realistic to say, if there is the data to prove it for the local program, that children served by CASA are more likely to return home than those without a CASA volunteer. It is also realistic and measurable to say that having a CASA volunteer appointed to a case, means that that child will receive more services.

Evaluation of Program Efficiency and Effectiveness

The second type of evaluation is called dynamic evaluation. It is less formal and should be an ongoing part of the day to day operations. Its purpose is to identify changing needs, to assess what is working and what is not, and to modify current operations in order to improve or correct what is not working. (See Appendix 5-C, CASA Program Satisfaction Survey and Appendix 5-D, Program Assessment by Volunteers). Evaluation of this type is most effective when it is built into all program activities, from reviewing the effectiveness of committee meetings to providing feedback to volunteers on their performance. When used in this manner, evaluation becomes an integral part of the program's operations and allows you to stay on track toward achieving the goals of the strategic plan.

Peter Drucker recommends self-assessment as the most valuable method of evaluating an organization's overall effectiveness. He has developed a simple self-assessment tool that is built on basic questions:

1. What is our mission?

2. Who is our customer? (CASA programs may more readily think in terms of our client)

3. What have been our results?

4. What is our plan?

Although these questions appear simple, answering them completely and honestly can be challenging. Drucker believes that, while the answers are helpful guides to action, the most important thing is the asking of the questions.

The self-assessment tool is probably most effective when it is used as an integral part of the strategic planning process with an outside facilitator guiding the discussion. In this way, it provides the platform for successful planning because it combines strategic planning with performance evaluation and it is focused on results.

Some other tips on evaluations from Drucker that might prove helpful:

1. Evaluation reports should be economical. Use the least number of reports and statistics needed to provide a reliable picture of the program.

2. Evaluations must be meaningful. Be sure to measure significant things— never trivia.

3. Evaluation measures must be appropriate. Be sure that your measurement criteria are appropriate to CASA programs, not attorneys or social workers.

4. Evaluations must be timely. Some events need to have rapid reporting and others should be assessed after time. It is important to recognize which is appropriate for what.

5. Evaluations must be simple. Complicated program evaluations don't work. Instead, they confuse people. The methods and purpose need to be so clear and simply stated that they enable anyone to understand.

6. Evaluations must be operational. Action rather than information is the goal. Never compile information that someone might find interesting but does not need to know to make the organization work better.

An evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the program, from its financial management practices to its training for volunteers, not only enables but forces board and staff to examine the quality and value of the program. It forces the organization to be concerned, not only with how to do things more effectively, but to continue to ask hard questions about why certain practices are followed, and what happens as a result.

6

Funding

For the first time, our board members rolled up their sleeves and took total responsibility for a fundraising event. They organized a Casas for CASA project. Prior to the raffle, the playhouses were displayed on a parade float which won first prize and received wide coverage from newspapers, television and radio. The event cleared $3,500, but most importantly board members worked well as a team and they surpassed the goal they had established for the first year.

Sherry Sharp, Executive Director
CASA: A Voice for Children
Newton, KS

Controllable Funding Sources

Bequests,
Memorials,
Celebrity Grooming,
Testimonial dinner
for weathy individuals,
Committee visits to person's
home or office,
Person invited to another's home or club
Wealthy Donor's Market

Small receptions, Letters from high-status individuals,
Dinners (individual and/or testimonial), Telephone calls
from high-status individuals
Affluent Citizens Market

Fairs, Dances, Auctions, Book sales, Fashion shows, Art shows,
Bingo games, Anniversary celebrations, Parties in unusual places, Dinners,
Suppers, Lunches, Breakfasts, Benefits (theatre, movies, sports, events)
Collegues and Friends Market

Raffles, Tours, Rummage sales, Charity cans in stores, Thrift shops, Direct mail,
Sporting events, Walkathons, Readathons, Bikeathons, Danceathons, Jogathons, Swimathons
Mass Anonymous Small Gift Market

Raffles, Tours, Rummage sales, Charity cans in stores, Thrift shops, Direct mail,
Sporting events, Walkathons, Readathons, Bikeathons, Danceathons, Jogathons, Swimathons
Mass Anonymous Small Gift Market

Perhaps the biggest challenge for any locally based organization, including CASA, is to assure that there is enough revenue generated so that the organization will not only survive but thrive year after year. Fundraising experts say that an organization should be planning three to five years ahead to assure the necessary resources to accomplish the organization's mission. This is not just a good idea, but essential given the fact that many funding sources take time to develop before they pay off.

Yet, many CASA programs are still in a survival mode. Nonprofit CASA programs spend the majority of their fundraising energies trying to raise the money to make it through the current fiscal year or even the next quarter. The concept of planning for five years or even two years of funding, seems unrealistic to many program directors and pure fantasy to others. State and county administered programs that thought they were securely funded, are facing uncertain survival because of reductions in federal and state revenue. These publicly funded programs are realizing that even they must find ways to supplement inadequate resources through grants and the development of auxiliary fundraising organizations.

How to move from the funding crisis of today to being able to think about and plan for the future is the missing skill for many directors. CASA directors have listened to experts talk about planned giving, read books on marketing, and been to workshops on how to write successful grant proposals. They report that this information often seems overwhelming and beyond the capacity of a one or two person staff or a rural program in a community with little foundation or corporate presence. Sometimes the proposed strategies are intimidating. The effort needed to implement them leaves little time to advocate for children which is what most directors signed on for in the first place. What CASA directors say they need and spend endless time looking for are practical, common sense ideas and advice that will work for them. They want to know what action to take Monday morning and what to do each day thereafter to raise adequate funds.

By now, it should be obvious that there are no magic solutions. Though every director has surely heard it before, it bears repeating: fundraising is a long-term process that requires persistence, planning, time, and a sense of humor. There is a great deal of instructional information easily available to teach the methodology. There is no need to repeat that information here. Our purpose instead is to share the wisdom and advice of other CASA directors. They are the ones who have tried all kinds of fundraising strategies. Some worked beyond expectation the first time and some failed despite careful research and planning. They learned valuable lessons from both kinds of experience. The ten most important lessons are presented below.

Lesson One: Raising Money Is Simple, It's Just Not Easy

Fundraising is simply asking for money for a specific purpose. The part that is not easy is knowing who to ask, how to ask, and how much to ask for. Gathering the information to answer the first question, preparing to do the second, and planning in order to know the third, is what fundraising is all about. By taking it one step at a time, board and staff will succeed in raising the necessary funds to secure the future of the local CASA program.

Lesson Two: Controllable Funding Sources are the Best

The bottom line of fundraising is that you cannot depend on any money that is not raised through controllable funding sources. Controllable funding sources are dependable, renewable, and internally controlled. Included in the definition of controllable sources are:

- Individual donors,
- Corporate sponsors,
- Long-term commitments from civic or church organizations,
- Product sales,
- Special annual events (with at least three years of success).

Government, corporate, or foundation grants should be viewed as opportunities that enable the program to buy time while increasing the controllable funding sources or as a chance to conduct special, short-term projects. Most successful non-profits aim for 70 percent of their budget to come from controllable sources. This will not happen quickly, but it is a good goal for the long term. (See Figure 6.1 for Controllable Funding Sources).

Lesson Three: Don't Do it Alone

Unfortunately, raising money for the program is often seen as primarily the responsibility of the program director. Directors often find that they are solo pilots on every fundraising plan they fly. In addition to their day-to-day management tasks, they research the grants, draft the proposals, make the necessary phone calls, write the letters, make the contacts, give the speeches and, all too often, eventually burn out.

Fundraising is more successful as well as less painful if it is the shared responsibility of everyone associated with the organization. The director certainly has specific responsibilities in developing fund-raising strategies and in helping to implement funding plans. But, the director's most important responsibility is to ensure involvement and ownership by everyone who plays a part in the program, especially the board of directors in non-profit programs.

Getting Board Members Involved

Getting board members and others involved is a formidable job. One of the questions often asked is "How do I get my board members to understand and accept their responsibility to raise funds for the program?" First, they need to be educated as to what the responsibilities of board members are for the financial health of the program. While this might seem obvious, the director cannot assume that every board member understands what is expected. Some people may have been on other community boards that were strictly advisory because the program funding came from stable outside sources. Others may have been recruited by boards in order to utilize their professional skills and, therefore, they were not asked to be involved in fundraising.

Recruiting new board members who have experience and expertise in fundraising is one way of building board involvement. However, the good fund-raisers in most communities are few and far between and most of them are already involved with other organizations. Also, it takes several years to build a board with a number of such members. For a new CASA program, it may require building credibility and a positive reputation before it is possible to attract the people with the most fundraising potential.

It is a mistake to assume that board members who were recruited because they have connections which can bring in money are willing to use those connections or that they are good at asking for money. In fact, it is not wise to assume that their contacts or their positions mean they have had any success in fundraising. Sometimes, people accept positions on boards for prestige and have no intention of soliciting their family or friends. Unless you have information that an individual has raised large amounts of money for other organizations and is eager to do it again for CASA, you should assume that (s)he will need to be persuaded to accept a role in fundraising.

CASA directors are often faced with boards made up of professionals from the legal or social services fields who have no desire to do fundraising. Even when board members understand their responsibility, they can be masterful at postponing, making excuses, and delegating the job back to staff. So, how can board members be persuaded to become involved? Directors don't have to be professional fund-raisers

or magicians to persuade them, but they do need to do two things: help board members overcome their fear of asking for money, and get them started in a way that will guarantee their success. To accomplish the first, a CASA director needs a basic understanding of money and people and the relationship between the two. The second task involves several steps based on the principle "If they plan it , it will succeed."

Conquering the Fear

Money is like sex. Everyone thinks about it, but no one is supposed to discuss it in polite company. Most people have a lot of fears about money, especially about asking for money. They are generally afraid to ask for money because they fear they will fail and lose face. They think, "If I fail, everyone will know. I'll feel like a fool." Yet, only a few people recognize and are willing to admit that they are afraid. Most give other excuses. One of the most common is, "I don't know her well enough." This seems legitimate until the next excuse is, "He's my best friend. I'd feel like I am taking advantage of him." This neatly eliminates having to ask anyone for money, since the individual knows people either too well or not well enough. Other excuses are variations on the same theme: "It will put him on the spot," or "She already gives so much time."

The job of the director is to teach board members and other fund-raising volunteers to conquer their fear of asking for money. By understanding that each person comes complete with his or her own set of fears that are very normal and nothing to be ashamed of , the director can help them get control of their fears. Since many CASA directors have their own hang ups about asking for money and fundraising in general, it is crucial that their own fears are acknowledged and overcome. If this is not possible, it might be better to ask an outside person to work with the board on developing fundraising skills.

To help people get over the feeling that fund-raising is intimidating, help them bring it to a personal level. Ask them to think about the organizations to which they themselves give. Have them write down recent contributions, who asked for it, and why they gave. Generally, people give for one of two reasons. Either someone is selling a product or service the person wants anyway, or it is in his or her own self-interest to give.

For example, one of the easiest ways to raise money is to sell a product or service people want to buy anyway. What happens when you buy Girl Scout cookies from your neighbor? You make the Girl Scout happy; it pleases her parents; it helps her troop; it reminds you of the fun you had as a Scout; and you get tasty cookies. Selling something people want gives them good feelings as well as a good product.

The other impulse is contributing to something that will pay off in that person's own interest. Giving because a good friend asked you to may pay off in a stronger friendship or in that person's giving to a cause because you ask her to. Giving to CASA pays off in providing the opportunity to influence the court and child welfare system, not to mention the reward for improving the future for abused and neglected children.

Whatever the rationale, people give not only because they believe in a cause but because their donation benefits them in some way. The person asking is usually neither begging or bullying. (S)he is simply giving others an opportunity to get what they want. Once potential fund-raisers understand these concepts, it is easier for them to control their fears.

Fear is also lessened if a person feels prepared. Anyone who is going to engage in fundraising activities for CASA for the first time should be armed with commitment to the program's mission and goals, knowledge about the program and how it operates, and written information to share. First-timers should have the opportunity to practice with an experienced person and to have their questions and concerns addressed in advance. Knowledge of the potential funder is also critical because it is easier to anticipate what questions will be asked.

Ensuring Success

To get board members and others involved in the planning and implementation of a long range fundraising campaign, they must first have an initial taste of success. After they have a success, it will be much easier to put together a one-year and a five-year plan to meet program goals.

First, have the board select an event or fundraising technique that they would **like** to do and that has a high probability of good return. It should be a time limited undertaking and the board should decide in advance how the money raised will be used. The staff can make suggestions of possible projects, but the board should be allowed to do what the majority of the members want to do and they should do it their way. A softball tournament, a garage sale, or a raffle are good examples of events that meet the necessary criteria. They are also activities that will get people working together and talking about what they want to do next. Once the board has experienced success, it is time to get them involved in developing a long-range fundraising plan.

Lesson Four: You Need to Ask for Money

Fundraising is simply asking people to give you money to support your organization. While you may occasionally encounter an individual who will offer unsolicited

support, most people want to be asked. There are many techniques for asking and the one used depends upon whether you are targeting specific individuals, groups, or the general public. People who know CASA well and have provided support in the past or are likely to give support are "believers." The goal with this group is to design a strategy that allows you to get the most money in the least amount of time. A program newsletter is a good vehicle for this group. So is a direct mail campaign done with personally written letters by board members or volunteers to individuals they know.

Another route to self-sufficiency for CASA programs is to develop an individual donor program. This strategy targets individuals with substantial wealth who can potentially give large donations to the program over time. Such a campaign takes careful planning and will take longer than other strategies. Doing research to identify a list of possible donors and then narrowing it to good prospects is essential.

Contacts with likely donors should be made in person. The best contact is someone the donor is already familiar with if such a person is available. When a person has given to the program in the past, a phone call or letter is appropriate. When someone has not given but has the potential to do so, a visit by a board member and the director to explain the program and the goal of raising a specified amount of money is the best approach. Be clear that the program is seeking a contribution. Don't assume that a person knows you are there for money. After the request is made, be quiet. This is hard to do, but nothing else needs to be said.

If the donor does not make a gift, chalk it up to experience and take time later to consider what might be done differently or better the next time. Follow up with a thank you letter whether a check is received or not. Continue to build a relationship by contacting the individual periodically throughout the year to update him/ her on the program's progress or to invite the potential donor to an event. Including potential donors in program activities makes them feel comfortable and welcome. It also conveys the feeling that they are wanted as part of the program as well as for their financial contribution. Some prospects take many contacts before they finally give a large donation.

When asked to speak to civic organizations or other groups, always make it clear to the person extending the invitation that you plan to take five minutes of your allotted time to do a commercial for the program. Besides informing the audience about CASA and generating a positive image, every such event is an opportunity to gain a new donor. It might not happen at that time, but someone may remember your request later. One CASA director tells of being a speaker at a women's club luncheon. Several months later, a woman who attended called to say that she was part of another group that sponsors an annual golf tournament for charity. Upon her

recommendation, the members had voted to make the CASA program the recipient of the proceeds for that year. The program was required to do nothing but send someone to receive the check. That year the proceeds were $30,000. If the director had not made the appeal for financial support at the women's club luncheon, this woman might not have realized that CASA needed funds.

Lesson Five: Fundraising should be Mission Driven

The program's mission should always be the driving force for all fundraising. Fundraising is least effective when the organization takes off in a new direction. Board members and staff can get so wrapped up in fundraising techniques and strategies that they find themselves seeking new funding which will alter the program's goals rather than pursuing only funding that will further them. A mission-driven funding plan addresses the long-term needs of the program and then identifies the current priorities. This kind of plan enables the organization to take control of its own future by answering the following questions:

- What do we know about the future?

- What will be needed to be successful in the future?

- What will it take to get there?

Planning a resource development campaign should be a joint undertaking between the board and the staff. If the board is a large one, a resource development committee may be appointed to develop the plan. It is the full board's responsibility however, to establish the mission and the short and long-term goals for the program. If there is a committee, it should begin its work only after the full board has approved a strategic plan. Additionally, the board should understand that it is responsible for approving and implementing the fundraising plan.

Lesson Six: Require Board Members to Make a Personal Contribution

The notion that board members should be expected to make a monetary donation to the program in addition to the time and talent they contribute is controversial in some circles. Many CASA directors balk at the notion of expecting board members to give financially in addition to their time and energy. Yet, if people believe in CASA enough to serve on the board, it is only logical that they would want to contribute financially as well as to help the organization attain its mission. Financial participation by all board members is important for at least three reasons:

- Board members will find it difficult to ask others for contributions if they have not made one themselves. Many individual donors and foundations will ask if all board members have contributed.

- In our society, making a financial investment in something is a symbol of deeper emotional and intellectual involvement. Thus, when board members contribute, they tend to have a deeper stake in the organization's total success.

- Contributions from board members provide needed income.

The amount of a board member's contribution does not have to be set in policy, though many programs do establish a suggested amount. Since the board may contain some members who do not have the money to contribute, you may want to set a goal of 100% participation without setting an amount. Other programs have dealt with the issue by expecting board members to raise a specified amount either through a personal contribution, obtaining a donation from their company or business contacts, or by selling tickets to a special event. (See Table 6.2, Encouraging Board Member Contributions).

Encouraging Board Member Contributions

- Emphasize the act of giving, not the amount given.
- Discuss the pros/cons of member contributions at a board meeting. It should become obvious that the pros outweigh the cons.
- Make contributing one of the qualifications for board membership.
- Have the board president write a personal letter to each member requesting a contribution.
- Ask board members to host a luncheon or other event for potential donors. They will want to be able to say they have made a personal contribution before asking others.
- Publicize the names of donors. Board members will want their names on the list.
- Have a board member who has donated speak at a board meeting about his/her decision to give.
- Include board members when sending out appeals.
- Make suggestions about ways they can contribute without writing a check, like donating postage for a direct mail campaign, sponsoring a special event, or purchasing a piece of equipment for the office.

Table 6.2

Lesson Seven: Be Prepared

To be successful at fundraising, make the most of every opportunity. To do that, you need to have to have control of time and the calendar. Forgetting a meeting or

showing up late may cost the program the only chance to get a commitment for a large donation. It is also important to build some flexibility into your schedule to do research and preparation and to be available for short-notice meetings. Some directors have found that setting aside an afternoon or morning each week to devote to fundraising planning is useful. The specific time can vary depending on the need, but having those hours designated makes fundraising the priority it needs to be.

You need to have in your head or at your fingertips the facts and figures about your program. You should always be able to explain your mission, goals, current activities, how the program spends its money, and what the current financial needs are. Nancy Chandler, Executive Director of the National Network of Child Advocacy Centers, says she always keeps in her head a wish list of five things for which she wants to raise money. For each thing on the list, she knows specifically what is needed, why it is needed, how much it will cost, and what the positive impact will be. The five things range in cost and complexity, from $25 to buy books for the library, to $100,000 to start a new center. Being prepared in this way allows her to think on her feet if someone asks what the program could do with a specific amount of money or asks questions about what their donation would be spent for if they were to give one.

Being prepared also means having quality materials to visually depict what CASA does. Professional brochures, National CASA's informational seven minute video, a well done locally developed slide show, posters or overheads, can all enhance a presentation and help explain the program. Having stories to tell of successful outcomes for children served, with identifying details eliminated of course, can help to make the work done by volunteers more real.

When you have the facts and figures down pat, practice talking about CASA's work and asking for money. Be sure to practice both parts. Some people can give a beautiful talk on the importance of CASA but can never bring themselves to ask for the money. Try to get feedback and good advice from professional fund-raisers. Most successful people are generous with their time and encouragement.

Lesson Eight: You Have to take Risks

Good business people understand and accept the need to take risks in order to see their enterprises thrive. Directors of grassroots non-profits are sometimes afraid to take financial risks. Doing so is part of the fundraising game. If you wait until all of the contingencies are planned for, all the resources are in hand, and all the questions answered – you will wait forever. Worse yet, tremendous opportunities for growth may be missed.

This is not to say you should jump off a rooftop to see if you can fly or should accept 100 divorce and custody cases when the program doesn't have adequately trained volunteers. What it does mean is taking calculated risks – risks that based on your instincts and experience and the personal and professional experience of others, are worth taking. Seeking advice from others, planning carefully, and having "Plan B" in place will help to prevent the sleepless nights that are a predictable side effect of taking such chances.

An example of a calculated risk you and your board might decide to take would be spending money from the cash on hand to provide the start-up funds necessary to put on a special event. The factors to be calculated would include the amount of money and time needed versus the anticipated profits, publicity, and good will in the community. Or the program might decide to spend the necessary funds to start a for-profit business to sell a product. The Multnomah County CASA Program's Christmas Card business is probably the most successful example of a CASA program that took the risk to start a business. A variation on the same theme is a thrift store started by Choices for Children of Siskiyou, California. The Executive Director, Paul Janke believes the starting of the store was a risk worth taking because it has also provided a needed resource for the small rural community.

Other calculated risks might include using grant funds to hire new staff or rent a larger office with the expectation that the program will be able to raise the necessary funds to continue the expenditure. Playing it safe is for the government bureaucracies – CASA programs that always play it safe often will not achieve their mission. Sometimes it is necessary to do your research, develop your plan, take a lot of deep breaths, and then just do it.

Lesson Nine: Be Political

Every organization has to resolve conflicts, overcome obstacles, reach consensus, achieve objectives, and attempt to fulfill its mission. To be able to do these things successfully is what "politics" is all about. Achieving these goals and doing so in ways that are fair and equitable, without violating the integrity of another person, is the art of "politics" at its highest order. To be successful in the current turbulent times, directors must be able to read their "political maps". If they neglect to do so they may "sink into the marsh or be eaten by alligators." Good relationships and powerful friends are a necessity in today's environment.

CASA programs, both public and private, need a power base just as political organizations do. It is important to recognize the influential power groups or individuals in the community, particularly as they relate to the CASA organization, and to develop positive relationships with them.

Every community has the establishment power groups such as the state legislature, local governments, school boards, corporations, banks, chambers of commerce, etc. There are also sub-groups within these groups such as ministerial alliances, unions, PTAs, and so on.

When analyzing the community, however, focus on the *informal* power structure. Who are the people on the foundation boards? In the urban areas, who eats lunch at the "power" restaurants? In the rural areas, who drinks coffee at the local café each morning? What are the active service groups (Elks, Kiwanis, Lions, etc.) and who are the key people in those groups? Regardless of the program's need – computer equipment, passing legislation, seeking corporate sponsorship of a special event—it is important to know the "key players." Not only are these the people CASA programs should be calling on for support but, once they know and become involved in CASA, they become constituents. They will acquire a sense of ownership in your organization and "owners" are naturally protective of their organization.

As much as any organization wants to get along with others in the community, there are times when the interests of CASA will be at odds with others. There will be times when, no matter how hard you try, actions of the director, the board, or the volunteers will alienate certain individuals or groups. This does not happen through any conscious strategy, but simply because the program's interests are being represented. It is at these times that the friends the program has can be so important in neutralizing those who have lined up in opposition to CASA.

It is also important to keep things in perspective by remembering that people come and go rapidly. Politicians are in and out of office, foundation staff move from one funding source to another, and corporate executives move on. On the other hand, the program should be around for a long time. CASA staff may not only outlast their opponents, but may find that they are allies on future issues.

Lesson Ten: Persistence Pays Off

Successful fund-raisers are a distinct group of people, if for no other reason than that they are undaunted by rejection. They know well that for every grant awarded by a typical foundation, at least fifteen quality applications are rejected. This does not count those proposals rejected outright because they were incomplete, did not follow guidelines, or were inappropriate for the grant maker.

What is the best response in the face of rejection? Remember the advice, "Ask and you shall receive"? Maybe it should be modified to say, "Ask again and again and you shall receive." Study the letter of rejection. If it says that there were not enough

funds to go around, then it is certainly appropriate to ask again. When a foundation says "no" it may, in fact, mean "not now."

If the program is turned down for a corporate grant, a telephone call to the appropriate person is in order. Ask questions about the basis for the rejection. Did it meet the guidelines and priorities of the company? If so, ask if it would be appropriate to apply again in the future. In most cases, your questions will be genuinely received. Thank the person, take whatever advice (s)he gives, and apply again. Handling the many rejections that inevitably occur in fundraising requires stamina and patience. It also helps to have a good sense of humor.

CASA Fundraising Ideas

CASA directors and boards are constantly on the lookout for great new fund-raising ideas. The search is always focused on finding an idea that hasn't been tried yet, but is sure to be a winner. Yet, reality is that new ideas are rare. Certainly, there are creative new variations on old ideas (a children's festival instead of a carnival) and new products to sell (phone cards instead of note cards), but how successful a fundraising strategy is depends more on the planning and execution than the uniqueness of the idea. In fact, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is often the repetition of a fund-raiser that makes it pay off bigger and bigger. (See Table 6. 3, Fundraising Ideas Used by CASA Programs).

Fundraising Ideas Used by CASA Programs

Special Events	
CASAs for CASA playhouse raffle	Auction/Silent auction
Craft show	Benefit concert
Rummage sale	Home tour
Stay at home party	Casino Night
Used book sale	Raffle of goods/services
Children's festival	Garden party
Mother/daughter fashion show	Luncheon & fashion show
New restaurant opening night	Bazaar
Benefit lecture by well-known speaker	Carnival

Sporting Events	
Golf Tournament	Used sporting goods sale
Softball tournament	Aerobics benefit
Pledge run or walk	Pool tournament
Sports Clinic by local star athlete	Ice skating, sledding, tobogganing
Benefit basketball game	

Food Related Events	
Wine Tasting	Potluck dinners
Dessert & Champaign Benefit	Progressive dinners
Crawfish festival	Cocktail parties
Chocolate Lover's Fling	International food feast
Cooking classes taught by local chef	

Holiday Events	
New Year's Eve ball	April Fool's ball
New Year's Eve bingo	Halloween haunted house
Valentine's Day ball	Christmas craft sales, caroling
St. Patrick's Day gala dinners	

Product Sales	
Holiday cards	Tote bags
Entertainment coupon books	Aprons
Christmas ornaments	Tee shirts, sweat shirts
Cookbook produced by CASA	Caps
Poinsettias	Note cards
Christmas wreaths	Plants/Seeds
Specials offered by photographers	Posters
Phone cards	

Table 6.3

Occasionally a new fundraising strategy comes along that holds promise. Though some fundraisers are reluctant to share successful ideas, CASA directors are generally anxious to share techniques with their colleagues. Valerie Bish of the

Humboldt County CASA program in California, shared that her program recently began selling Scrip to community residents. The information below explains what it is and how it works:

**CASH VALUE CERTIFICATES
AT DISCOUNTED PRICES**

****
$$$

Scrip (also known as discount gift certificates) are cash value certificates that merchants sell to nonprofit (**tax exempt)** organizations at discounted prices. Since many merchants require purchase amounts that are too large for smaller nonprofits, scrip centers purchase large blocks of scrip, deduct a handling fee and re-sell them to nonprofits in smaller amounts - still at a discount. There are over 100 participating merchants including major grocery stores, department stores and restaurants.

The discount your organization receives ranges from 3 to 19 percent. Scrip typically comes in denominations of $5, $10, $25, and $50. Your organization takes orders and collects payment in advance for scrip at face value from your members and supporters. Your profit is the difference between the discounted purchase price of the scrip and the face value of the scrip purchased from us. Scrip allows supporters to provide financial support to your organization at no cost to themselves since scrip is used at participating merchants just like cash.

$$

Great Lakes Scrip Center 3660 Roger B. Chaffee - Suite 201
Wyoming, MI 49548   800- 727-4715
(There are other scrip centers in various locations around the country)

Table 6.4

7

Making the Most of Technology

National CASA's recognition that a program cannot expand to serve more children without efficient office tools has been proven many times over. As our program discusses systems development, we realize that a user-friendly, efficient computer system will allow us to conduct a meaningful evaluation of the 100s of cases we serve, including a waiting list of 64 children, and to focus more closely on the individual children again.

Vivian Watts, Executive Director
Fairfax CASA
Fairfax, VA

In today's world, it is impossible to dismiss the importance of technology to any organization's success. It is hard to imagine how any office could function without an answering machine or voice mail, a copy machine, or access to a fax machine. The time when such technology was non-existent seems like ancient history, when in reality, it was only a few years ago.

While we have become comfortable with much technology and rely on having the extra hours such machines save, the integrating of computer technology is still an evolving process in many CASA organizations. Most programs make good use of word processing, database programs for maintaining statistics, and accounting software for financial management, but there are other applications that can utilize computer capabilities to an even greater extent.

In National CASA's 1994's program survey, approximately 60% of programs reported that they currently had, or expected to have within a year, the equipment and software that would allow them access to the Internet and to send and receive information through National CASA's Web page, CASAnet. Several state CASA organizations have developed their own online systems for communicating with programs. Some states, including California, Texas, Alaska, and Georgia are requiring the use of a specific software database for collecting consistent program data and producing statistical reports. Of the remaining 40%, some currently have the necessary equipment but don't use it. Others are reluctant to upgrade or purchase new equipment.

Overcoming Roadblocks

Some managers believe that to incorporate current computer technology in their programs would take away resources from what they consider to be their more "important" activities. Others say that the level of computer expertise in their office is too low and the program can not afford to hire someone new. Many people become frustrated at the amount of time and patience it takes to become proficient at computer operations and give up. Some are just unconvinced that computers will really help them with the work they do.

There are also less obvious reasons for resisting the electronic age. Many individuals fear that they will not be able to learn to use the computer successfully. Some feel computers are a barrier in a "people-oriented" program. Computers pose a threat to people who think the program should continue to do things the way they have always been done. In order to develop the right system for a CASA program or any organization, it is necessary to get beyond the psychological roadblocks as well as the financial and organizational ones.

Getting past the roadblocks requires two steps. First, step back from the immediate situation and look at the program's needs from a different perspective. Remember that computer technology is a tool for performing certain kinds of work. It is not an end in itself. Next, recognize that no program obtains cutting edge technology or expertise overnight. However, by incorporating technology development in the overall planning process, it is possible to create a system which will be adequate for the program's needs and which will stay within the budget.

Planning the System

As with all program growth, an appropriate computer system design flows from a thorough assessment of the program's goals and its current and future needs. The assessment becomes the basis for the program's technology plan, which should identify the successive steps required to build the system overtime.

Translating the goals of the strategic plan into a technology plan and then into a working system requires a particular expertise. Many CASA directors have gained this expertise or have it available through their court, their volunteers, or their board of directors. If it is not readily available, it is probably advisable to purchase the services of a consultant. However, a major hazard to avoid in using computer consultants is getting locked into their view of the future and what they think the program's capabilities should be. This is where your strategic plan must be clear. Computer system decisions should be based on practical, operational considerations, not someone's new toy wish list.

No one can safely predict the future or what the needs of the organization will be five or ten years from now. Certainly, no one can predict where technology will be at that time. It is probably best, therefore, to choose a system that will perform current functions and those to be added in the next one to three years. The questions in the next section are designed to help programs with the assessment and planning processes.

What Are the Program's Needs?

There are two aspects to a computer information system. They are inter-related but have to be considered separately: the hardware and the software. One way to determine the kind of system that will meet program needs is to consider what software you will be using and then to evaluate the necessary hardware to run those programs. Every CASA program should have the following basic services available as a starting point:

- Word processing,

- A spreadsheet for budget preparation and cash flow projections,

- An accounting program for regular financial reports; and

- A database program for maintaining statistics and producing reports.

The program should also consider options like desktop publishing programs, graphics programs, and expanded database capacity. The efficiencies that a computer programs bring to repetitive tasks such as these are tremendous and the cost savings can be substantial.

Perhaps the most significant consideration is whether or not to acquire the capacity to communicate electronically. It can add greatly to the expense of equipment, software and telephone service, and security concerns present a challenge, but being able to send and receive E-mail and have access to the Internet (especially National CASA's own web site, CASAnet) provides information and assistance easily and quickly. It also allows for volunteers to send in reports to their supervisors, have them reviewed, and submit them to the court all electronically without leaving their homes.

Once you have determined the kinds of programs that will be utilized, the next step is to consider whether the program's current computer (if one exists), is adequate as is, can be upgraded, or must be replaced. Also consider the number of work stations needed and the number of users expected. It is desirable to have a work station available for volunteers to type or make corrections to their court reports.

Hardware Considerations

Should you have a network?

Networks of individual computers tied together were originally created to share expensive resources such as hard disks and printers. Since the price of hardware has come down significantly, networks are now used for sharing software and to facilitate communication. Many programs, even those with as few as four staff, work so closely together that a network can greatly add to their efficiency.

Recently, the greatest expansion of networks has been for the use of electronic mail. Most LAN (Local Area Network) programs have the capability of sending messages between internal users with files or other information attached. With access to the Internet, e-mail can be sent to anyone who has an electronic mail box.

Security of Information

One of the questions that must be addressed in planning for a program's computer system is whether to have centralized or decentralized information flow. There are pros and cons to each. The benefit of centralization is control. All of the information is kept in one place and is, therefore, more secure. The downside is that the users of the information may have more difficulty accessing information they need.

A decentralized system, such as a LAN, allows for greater information flow. It offers less security and data integrity, but the benefit is that the users of the information have greater access to it.

Choosing the appropriate system requires consideration of: the confidential nature of CASA cases; whether or not identifying information will be kept on the computer for case management purposes; what can be done to provide security of the information; the amount of time the confidential information will be retained; and how efficiently access can be achieved by individuals who need it.

Software Considerations

When considering the purchase of custom software, it is wise to remember the 80% rule: If a piece of software does 80% of the job and is the best available, buy it. It is much easier to modify in house operations or how data is maintained than it is to create a piece of software that does 90-100% of the work. Many organizations have fallen into the trap of spending large amounts of money to have custom software designed for them, only to find a year later that their new funder requires different data. They are then faced with either hiring or training an employee to make the necessary changes, hiring a programmer, or paying the original consultant more money.

A similar problem to avoid is the customization of off-the shelf software. Several CASA organizations customized database programs to such an extent that when the company published an upgrade of the program, they could not make use of it. Technology should provide you more options, flexibility, and power. It should not paint users into a corner and restrict their abilities. When it does, a person is using the wrong tool.

Purchasing software is like buying a partner, but that partner is useless unless staff and volunteers receive the training and support that is needed. To insure that this happens, it is usually best to buy "industry standard" off-the-shelf programs. Because new software is being developed constantly, it is unlikely that you will not find the right program to perform any necessary function.

What Training is Necessary?

Some computer experts say that an organization's investment in training should equal or exceed its investment in capital equipment. There are numerous ways of providing training and the process does not need to be extremely costly. Many community colleges offer inexpensive short courses in the use of various software programs. Many computer retailers offer classes as well. Training should be an ongoing process so that the staff does not become committed to one and only one tool. They should learn to generalize, to understand the principles behind the tools, and thereby adapt to a different tool easily.

Equally important is cross-training of several individuals on the same tasks. This prevents the shutdown of entire program functions due to the unavailability of one person. An added benefit is that training helps to keep morale up and people interested as well as making the whole staff stronger.

It Will Be Out of Date!

Many people worry that their systems will be out of date before they can become expert in using them. While there is some reality in that perspective, that is not a good reason to purchase a system that is more powerful, and therefore more complex and more expensive than necessary. With adequate training and support, a fairly simple system will perform the functions it was designed to do until the scope of the functions changes.

Upgrading

After purchasing off-the-shelf software for an information system, the program will inevitably be faced with the option of upgrading to new and improved versions. Managers need not examine their present software every time a new version comes out, but find out when the present version of software has been superseded by an new generation that truly performs better. Upgrades are justified not by simple improvement in degrees, but in kind.

Maintenance

Like any system, computer systems require regular and periodic maintenance. Once again, the strategy should depend on the program's technology plan and consideration of what resources are available. For example, a computer-savvy staff member may be able to diagnose and solve software problems. If not, look for outside assistance.

However, seek advice with care and weigh probability as well as expense. For example, hardware is extremely inexpensive to purchase when compared to a maintenance contract on a number of machines. The purchase of an extra workstation as a spare which can be swapped out at a moment's notice is probably cheap insurance. A defective unit can then be shipped back to the manufacturer for repair. A maintenance contractor might not advise you to put in spare equipment, suggesting that your machines and staff time are too valuable and that if a system failure occurs it should be corrected within four hours. Such assurance is not always valid.

Software companies usually have free telephone support lines. They are often crowded and may require waiting on hold for a long time, but they generally provide the right answer. There are also computer user network forums that can offer advice and answer questions.

Preparing for Disaster

You should have a competent support network as well as a complete disaster recovery plan to take care of any emergencies. Backup files should be made and kept on a regular, planned basis. You may want to keep back-up files in an off-site location in case of fire or other disaster. If you have a complete backup of data, it is possible to rent, borrow, or buy new machines and be up and running as fast as a new system can be set up. Think through what would be needed in such a situation, and keep duplicate data off-site.

Collecting Data and Using the Data You Collect

Once program staff and volunteers become comfortable with the use of the computer, it is not hard to think of ways that it can make day to day work easier. Most programs find that information on children served, volunteers, volunteer applicants, court schedules, and mailing lists are just some types of data that can be maintained efficiently. The preparation of statistical reports required by funders and necessary for effective organizational planning is far less cumbersome when the data is already easily available.

There is almost no end to the type of data that a program can keep. There are software programs that will provide the capability to do everything from keeping track of volunteer's birthdays to projecting how many children the program will need to serve in the year 2010. Many of the reports that can be produced are fascinating. Fewer of them are actually useful to the program. With computer capability, it is

easy to err on the side of collecting unnecessary data. Before the collection begins, think through your program's needs by asking the following questions:

- Why is this information needed?

- Who needs it?

- How long will it be kept?

- Will the information be really useful or just interesting?

If the answers don't justify the trouble of collecting the data, don't keep it. It is also good to periodically review the data your program is keeping to determine if it is being used and if so, how. Adjust what you collect to provide the most frequently used information. Most programs find that they need to keep the following data as a minimum:

Minimum Data For Collection

Information on the Children Served:
    Age
    Sex
    Ethnic Background
    Reasons for agency intervention
    Current and former placement information
    Dates of court hearings and results
Information on Volunteers:
    Age
    Sex
    Ethnic Background
    Occupation
    Education
    Number of hours spent on volunteer activities
    Date of initial application & training; Date & reason for departure from
        program (to track retention)
Program information:
    Number of children served by age, sex, ethnic background, & type of abuse
    Total number of children served
    Number of children referred for whom no CASA was available
    Number of volunteers
    Number of new volunteers each year
    Number of new children served each year
    Number of cases closed each year
    Type of final resolution for children whose cases are closed

Table 7.1

When these type of data are collected as well as financial and budget records, the program can track how much it costs to serve each child and to support one

volunteer, figures which are vital to planning for program expansion and justifying to potential funders why a specific amount of money is being requested.

The Importance of Data Collection

The amount and quality of data collected and maintained by social and human services programs are often the weakest spokes in the management wheel. Staff and volunteers are often resistant to providing the necessary documentation of their activities with and for the children they serve. There is a perception that the paperwork pales in importance next to the children themselves. While there is an element of truth in that view, the fact is that advocacy is impossible without data, that are accurate, complete and easily retrievable. How many times did the volunteer see the child? How long has the child been in care? What is the average number of placements a child experiences? Does that number drop if the child has a CASA? The answers are in the data. CASA programs must be able to prove that they can do what they say they do in the most efficient and effective way. CASA data take on even more importance when social service agencies do not have current information. The data collected by CASA may be all that is available to the judge, the funder or the legislator. Management , then, has a two-fold responsibility. Staff and volunteers must be trained to input information appropriately and technology must be made as accessible as possible. If both processes are maintained and refined, the program will have no difficulty demonstrating accountability.

Maintaining & Storing Records

CASA programs are faced with an ever-growing amount of data and records stored both electronically and on paper. What to do with all of the information depends upon the kind of record it is, what the law requires, what the court requires, whether or not confidentiality applies, and the amount of space or electronic memory available.

Records pertaining to children and their families usually contain highly confidential documents that must be kept secure at all times. When a case is closed by court order and the CASA volunteer is released from further responsibility, all notes, court orders, professional reports, evaluations, etc. should be returned to the program and combined with the program's file. How long the program keeps the record on file is variable and should be established in consultation with the court. Some programs keep the files for a period of one year and then return them to the court to be stored with the court's record. Other programs destroy all records after the court terminates its jurisdiction.

Volunteer records should be maintained for a reasonable period of time after the volunteer has left the program. Many volunteers request that the program staff provide references for employment or other volunteer jobs. Volunteers who move to a new location often desire to become involved with the CASA program in their new area, and may authorize the new program to obtain information from your program. Two to three years is probably adequate for these records. Records on volunteer applicants who are not accepted into the program should also be maintained, but for a shorter period of time, usually one year.

The law generally requires that personnel records by kept for five years after the employee has left. Resumes for applicants who were turned-down for a position should generally be maintained for a year after the position is filled.

To avoid being overwhelmed by mountains of paper or computer drives with no available memory within a few years, staff should review all the records and information that the program must keep as well as those which would useful but not required and establish procedures for handling the maintenance, storage, and destruction of each type.

8

Staffing the CASA Program

> *After screening the applicants, one candidate may stand out as the final choice for a position. It is likely, though, that no one person is the perfect candidate, but that some compromises have been made. If the hiring process has been carefully considered and executed, however, the odds of making a mistake are minimized.*
>
> *Peter Drucker*

In CASA programs, as in most other endeavors, competent leadership is a critical element. Even the most dedicated corps of volunteers can make only limited impact without adequate supervision and guidance. Since both program quality and viability are highly correlated with effective management, it is important that the director be chosen wisely. Hiring is a multi-step process.

The process is already well established when a CASA program is developed as a public program. In a state or county personnel system, the salary, qualifications for the position, and a general job description for management positions are usually in place. The program planning or steering committee may or may not have much input about how the position is defined or even who is hired. If a new position is to be created for the CASA director, there are likely to be several steps involved in getting approval. Because most local government officials are reluctant in the current environment of fiscal conservatism, to add new programs or personnel to the bureaucracy, responsibility for directing the CASA program may be added to the responsibilities of existing staff. In this situation, if the program is to receive the attention necessary to succeed, it is crucial that the person dedicated to the program understand how a CASA program operates. (S)he must also have adequate time to devote to CASA duties, sufficient staff support, and exceptional organizational and management skills. To the extent possible, the initiators of the program should advocate that these conditions be met.

When undertaken by a volunteer board, the process of hiring the director can become very complex. One way to ease the strain is to seek input from all board members but to delegate the responsibility for personnel matters to a committee. The personnel committee's tasks include drafting the job description, establishing the qualifications and salary level for the position, designing the recruitment campaign, conducting interviews, checking references, and extending the offer.

The Director's Qualifications

The selection of the director is the most critical hiring decision because the credibility and ultimate survival of the program depend on that individual more than any other. Awareness of the developmental stage of the program and the complimentary leadership style can help the personnel committee develop the job description and identify the necessary skills and other qualifications needed in a director.

In the case of a new CASA program hiring its first director, the personnel committee must develop a consensus about which duties will require the majority of the director's time and effort and which skills are most critical to accomplishing those

tasks. It is also helpful to look at what supplemental resources are available. For example, if an existing base of likely volunteers will be available through another organization, experience in recruitment may take a back seat to problem-solving or negotiation skills. If the board has a strong visionary component, those skills will be less necessary in a manager. If a decision is made to seek a director with proven ability to rally the community around a cause but little emphasis will be placed on administrative skills, the committee should consider how administrative tasks will be accomplished.

Establishing the qualifications for the director's job may also require sensitivity to the local political realities. The committee may decide that the most effective way to combat strong initial resistance to a volunteer CASA program is to hire an attorney or a former social services employee. While the job description would necessarily reflect that perspective, it is important not to lose sight of other, equally important characteristics. A person who is hired for professional credibility is likely to have long-established personal relationships in the profession as well. The committee must assess how that person will handle the inevitable conflicts that arise between new responsibilities and old allegiances.

Those responsible for hiring usually hope and expect that the director hired will be managing the organization through several, if not all, of the developmental stages. It is not unusual, therefore, for the director's job description to be written to include a broad range of responsibilities including personnel and financial management, fundraising, marketing, public speaking, collaboration with child welfare agencies and the court, and staff support for the board. Finding the "superperson" who possesses all the skills required to do such a job would be a real benefit, but the possibility is remote. Such individuals are rare and they usually can command salaries higher than CASA programs can afford. Having a job description that details duties beyond the reasonable capability of one person, creates unrealistic expectations on the part of the board and creates a set up for quick failure on the part of the new director.

The more realistic approach is to present the job as one that requires skills to accomplish the current priorities, but has expectation of additional responsibilities as the program grows. The position description should also indicate that training will be provided in those additional areas. This approach allows for the job description to change as the demands of the program change and for the director's salary to increase at a comparable rate.

Establishing Salary and Benefits

Setting salary levels is a difficult task for any type of organization, but the diversity of CASA programs nationally in terms of administrative structure, budget size, location

and age make it impossible to provide meaningful comparisons. For directors who are employees of local government, compensation includes benefits and salaries that are pre-determined. Their positions provide some security and reward for longevity but the periodic increases in salary are usually small.

Non-profit CASA programs usually establish salary levels based on the resources available. While an increasing number of programs is offering some benefits in the way of insurance and retirement plans, the majority still do not do so. Many people with the desire, interest, and qualifications to work for CASA (and other similar organizations), are finding that they can not because of family financial needs. A board in the process of developing a salary and benefits structure should consider a number of factors including salaries of directors of other non-profits in the local and surrounding communities, the existing need for the program's services and its potential for growth and the availability of likely future funding for the program. If the salary can not be set as high as it should be, consider offering "absorbed benefits," such as vacation leave, sick leave, and paid holidays. Don't forget, salary calculations should include federal and state tax withholding and FICA contributions. Also remember that when additional positions are established, they need to be classified as exempt or nonexempt to comply with the Fair Labor Standards. Exempt employees are exempt from overtime pay. Nonexempt employees must be paid time and a-half for time worked over 40 hours in a calendar week.

Developing the Job Description

There is no magic formula for the perfect job description. Constructing one begins with choosing an appropriate title. Programs should avoid terms like "case manager" when the job is actually volunteer coordinator. The same holds true for describing the employee's duties as "case management" or "casework." Neither is a function of a CASA program and using those terms tends to muddy the waters. It can also cause friction with the local social service agency whose role is casework. Most job descriptions contain a mix of hard and soft skills, credentials and previous experience in varying ratios. At a minimum, a job description should include:

- Job title
- Purpose / Function
- Hours required
- Qualifications / Skills
- Specific duties / Responsibilities

- Method of supervision

Any qualifications specified in the job description should be based on actual requirements of the job, such as the ability to relate to individuals from different ethnic backgrounds or the absence of a substantiated child protective services record. If the job description is being revised rather than newly created, input from current staff should be solicited.

Writing a job description is a time-consuming process. However, taking the time to assess the leadership needs of the organization and commit them to paper pays significant dividends. An accurate job description suggests questions that should be asked in the interview. It is a powerful risk-management tool. It keeps the selection process focused. For newly-hired staff, it serves as a map of unfamiliar territory. Job descriptions define roles and clarify relationships which help minimize conflict. Lastly, they are used as a basis upon which to evaluate performance. (See Appendix 8-A and 8- B for examples of a CASA Executive Director's Job Description and Volunteer Coordinator's Job Description).

Recruitment

How recruitment is handled significantly influences who responds. The challenge for the personnel committee is to attract the type of candidate identified in the job description while screening out undesirable applicants. For example, if the board has made a commitment to cultural diversity, a variety of recruitment techniques will be necessary to yield a broader range of applicants. In addition to standard approaches, the personnel committee should: send job announcements to community-based agencies in communities of color, network about open positions with colleagues of color and advertise in publications targeted to ethnic audiences. The advertising used should describe the nature of the work and the qualifications necessary. It is important to be clear about the demands of the job, since a title like "CASA Program Director" may have little meaning to the general public. One way to deter unacceptable candidates is to include a statement in the ad that a background check will be required.

Job Applications

Resumes are often received in response to an ad for a management position. However, there are several reasons to require the completion of a standardized application form as well. This greatly simplifies the task of comparing information on several candidates. An application makes it more difficult for an applicant to omit or gloss over unfavorable information. It may also serve as evidence to justify

termination if an employee is later found to have misrepresented facts regarding education, experience or personal history. The Nonprofit Risk Management Center book *Staff Screening Tool Kit - Keeping The Bad Apples Out Of Your Organization* by John Patterson with Charles Tremper and Pam Rypkema recommends that any application form include at least the following six elements:

1. *Identification -* the application needs to include items such as the applicant's name, social security number, and addresses for the past five years with dates of occupancy. If the individual does not have a social security number to prove U.S. citizenship, a copy of INS Form I-9 verifying that the person is permitted to work in the U.S. should be attached to the application form.

2. *Qualifications* - The application should record information required to document the qualifications for the position. The kinds of information needed for this include academic achievement, training courses with dates of completion, and certificates and licenses (with their expiration dates).

3. *Experience -* The application should ask the applicant to list relevant experience – both paid and volunteer; dates of service; description of duties; organization where service was provided; and name of immediate supervisor with address and telephone number to facilitate verification of the information.

4. *Background and References* - If permitted, the application should ask for a listing of any *convictions* for criminal or serious motor vehicle violations. Also, the application should ask for at least three personal references of individuals not related to, but who have known the applicant for a period of time. In addition to name, address and telephone number, the nature of the relationship and the length of time known to the reference should be listed.

5. *Waiver/Consent*- The application should include a statement certifying that the information provided is true and accurate. Further, the applicant authorizes the organization to verify the information included on the application and specifically waives any rights to confidentiality. The statement should specifically list the procedures that the applicant authorizes the organization to perform. e.g., criminal history and child protective services records check, reference checks, employment verification, etc.

6. *Signature and Date*

   Make sure any form the program uses meets Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) standards. It is important that documentation used to screen candidates initially is not discriminatory and

cannot be perceived as such. Review the form and remove any reference to the following:

- Date of birth

- Country of birth

- Marital status

- Number of children

- Graduation dates

- Native language spoken

- Status of military discharge

- References to personal appearance (height and weight, color of hair or eyes, etc.) or request for photograph

- Handicaps or physical disabilities

- Names of relatives

- Membership activities

This does not mean that some of these topics cannot be pursued at a later point in the hiring process. The necessary criteria is that any question asked must relate directly to the requirements of the job.

Determining the Candidate's Suitability

Once a candidate advances beyond the hurdle of qualifications, the committee must consider his/her suitability for the job. If one or more of the items below appears in an application, the candidate may have serious problems. If the applicant is otherwise qualified the committee must decide if an interview should be scheduled. During the interview, factors that cause concern should be explored and an explanation required.

1. *Have there been frequent, unexplained moves?* Individuals who move from community to community without apparent explanation may be leaving a trail of debt, criminal activity or child abuse.

2. *Are there gaps in employment?* Precipitous changes in employment with unexplained gaps may indicate poor work habits, termination, or employment not listed on the application for fear the employer would give a poor reference. Another explanation may be a period of incarceration or institutionalization.

3. ***Are any criminal convictions or serious motor vehicle violations listed?*** Any convictions should be examined in the light of the requirements of the position for which the applicant is being considered. Certainly, if the position involves handling money, crimes such as forgery, robbery and embezzlement are pertinent. If the position would not require use of an automobile, speeding tickets may not be germane. A series of tickets, however, may imply a lack of judgment or maturity needed for some positions.

4. ***What avocational interests does the applicant have (including hobbies and community activities)?*** Involvement in age-appropriate hobbies and community activities suggest emotional maturity. Over-investment in children's activities – youth groups, sports, Sunday school teacher – to the exclusion of social activities with other adults *may* indicate an unhealthy compulsion to be around children.

Suitability is as important as any other characteristic an applicant possesses, although often harder to measure. The lack of it sometimes comes across as a "gut feeling" rather than an identifiable shortcoming. Such feelings should be explored, not discounted. Do several members of the committee share the same uneasiness? Do the concerns stem from admissions or omissions made in the application or from an outside source? How reliable is it? Can a level of severity or frequency be determined? Answers to these questions should be pursued as the hiring process moves into the interview stage.

Interviewing

An employment interview is a two-way street. While the organization is assessing the applicant, the applicant is simultaneously gathering information about the prospective work place. The interview provides an opportunity for the candidate to absorb a sense of the "organizational culture" while learning about the position and the program. Savvy interviewers are aware of the subtle messages being transmitted by seemingly minor details such as the location of the interview, the composition of the committee and the manner in which questions are asked.

The job of interviewer(s) is to expand the information received in the application/resume and probe its validity. The interview also provides an opportunity to observe non-verbal behavior. While an interview yields a wealth of information, it is wise not to overestimate its importance. Even a well-conducted interview is only one, relatively brief exposure to a person who may have finely-honed interview skills or who may be having a very bad day. Scheduling two interviews for leading candidates provides additional data. It also allows more time

for exchanging information. A second interview, done by selected members of the committee and staff, allows insight from several perspectives and is a healthy check on bias. Interview questions should be directed at both skill and risk issues. Steve McCurley, nationally known management consultant, suggests using the following technique to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant.

Conducting the Interview

Step 1: Identify the five or six most important qualities or skills a person must have to do the job. Be direct and practical; you're not trying to be profound. Examples of possible qualities include:

• Judgment	• Organization	• Conflict Skills
• Relating	• Planning	• Leadership
• Initiative	• Energy	• Meticulousness
• Creativity	• Persuasiveness	• Contacts

Step 2: Write at least one question for each quality or skill. Each item will ask the person to describe past behavior involving one of the key job qualities of skills. Here are some examples:

- Tell me about a recent important decision you made and how you made it. (*Judgment)*

- Walk us through the details of the first and last half-hour of your most recent normal work day. What did you do first, second, etc. (*Organization*)

- Describe a conflict situation with your least-liked co-worker. Just turn on the tape recorder and let me hear the situation. (*Conflict skills*)

- Tell me about your best experience in leading and organizing a group of people in a project. What were the most important things you did? How did it turn out? (*Leadership*)

- Tell me about your most recent normal weekend, from Friday night to Monday morning. What did you have planned and what did you do? (*Energy*)

Step 3: Open the interview with a smile and about 30 seconds of friendly talk. Then say something like, "I've been looking forward to our time together. I want to find out some important information about you and I want to use our time well. I have some easy, conversational questions to ask you… there are no right answers… just about some of the things you've done. I'll be writing all the time, so I can remember what you say, please don't give that a second thought. OK if we start with question one?"

Step 4: Realize that once you form a judgment about the person, you will then sift and collect interview information that supports your conclusion. Work consciously and hard at avoiding unspoken conclusions. Don't allow judgment thoughts to enter your mind. Attending to your listening and writing task will make this easier. Start with a non-threatening question and alternate between threatening and non-threatening.

Step 5: Use these behaviors:

- Waiting - to give the person time to think after you ask a question

- Approving Nods - to show you are listening

- Follow-up Probing Questions - to get the person to be more specific

- Friendly Surprise - such as when a person says something you want to hear more about

Assessing the Risk of Child Abuse

In addition to skills-based questioning, risk assessment should be a part of the process. The following set of questions are adapted from those used by the Boys and Girls Clubs of America to get at the potential for child abuse:

1. ***Why are you interested in this position?*** Be alert for someone who over-identifies with children, is unduly excited about the possibility of working with children, or who emphasizes that working with children is much easier than working with adults.

2. ***How would you describe yourself?*** Be alert for someone who indicates shyness or is withdrawn or passive.

3. ***Please tell me about a situation in which you were responsible for disciplining a child, other than your own***. Listen for use of excessive force, denigration of the child, unrealistic expectations about children's needs, or use of discipline techniques that would violate your organization's policies.

4. ***What is there about children that makes you enjoy working with them?*** Listen for over-identification with children; for statements that young children are so easy to work with; or negative statements about teenagers or adults when compared to younger children.

5. ***What is there about this position that appeals to you most?*** Listen for appropriate skills, qualifications, etc. Also look for high interest in one-on-one activities with children, preference for a particular age and gender of child, and idealized statements about "saving children."

6. ***In what kind of supervisory style do you prefer to function?*** Be alert for preference to be left alone to "do their own thing". Also use this opportunity to explain the monitoring and supervision techniques used to ensure the safety of the children in the program. The applicant should understand that there will be "zero tolerance" for any form of child mistreatment within the program.

7. ***What was your childhood like?*** This question is intended to help uncover if the applicant was subjected to abuse as a child. If the applicant was, there may be an elevated chance that (s)he could be abusive. While individuals who were abused as children and who have resolved their victimization can make excellent volunteers and provide positive role models for children, applicants who appear not to have resolved their own childhood victimization should be screened out of unsupervised contact with children.

If an applicant reveals a history of child abuse, further exploration can be done with the series of questions below, based on those developed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The same questions are also useful in dealing with a history of substance abuse:

1. When did it occur or begin? How old were you? (Look at duration, severity, pattern of behavior, how recently an incident occurred.)

2. What happened?

3. What was the resolution?

4. Where are you today with this situation?

5. How might you use what you've learned in this position?

Examining how the applicant relates to children as well as adults provides important clues as to whether (s)he might pose a danger to children. For example, many child molesters have extremely limited peer contact and seek out opportunities to be around children. The difficulty, of course, is that well-intentioned, highly-motivated people seek such positions as well. While a single characteristic is unlikely to eliminate an applicant from consideration, the presence of several indicators and patterns of behavior are causes for concern. (See Table 8.1 for list of possible indicators).

Assessing Cultural Sensitivity

Another background factor that should be examined is the individual's history of personal prejudice. CASA programs are people-serving organizations. Staff for these organizations must be able to interact positively with adults and children from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious groups. Extreme views concerning these groups

or a personal belief system that encourages proselytizing, may interfere with the fulfillment of CASA's mission. The following questions are designed to probe applicants' prejudices and history. Sensitivity must be exercised, though, to avoid exclusion on an impermissible basis:

1. ***Can you tell me about any experiences you may have had working with members of ethnic groups?*** Members of minority groups can be asked about their experiences with Caucasians or a different minority group. This question is intended to open the topic to discussion. The interviewer may want to focus on a particular minority group if the local program serves a concentration of that particular group.

2. ***Have you ever had a negative experience with a member of a particular ethnic group?*** This is a follow-up question to the first and provides an opportunity for probing into what the nature of such an experience might have been and if it created any generalized feelings about any group.

3. **Are there any words which you use regularly that could be offensive to a member of a minority group or person of the opposite sex?** This question addresses the sensitivity of the applicant to unconscious biases as reflected in speech patterns. Some applicants may admit to using such language but try to justify its use by saying that it really does not mean anything. If an applicant routinely uses denigrating terms to refer to minority groups or to the opposite sex, the words used probably do reflect an underlying attitude.

Reviewing Criminal History

While it should not necessarily eliminate a candidate from consideration for employment, past criminal activity should be carefully assessed. Past criminal behavior may indicate an inability to perform the tasks necessary to a specific position. Even if the act itself was unrelated to the responsibilities of the job, community perceptions of such an individual may well render him/her unable to perform effectively. The following are suggested questions for discussing this issue:

1. ***Have you even been convicted of a criminal offense including criminal driving violations?*** The answer to this question may be subject to verification by checking law enforcement records. Addressing the subject during the interview provides an opportunity for applicants to explain their side of the story and give any mitigating circumstances. For example, a misdemeanor during college may not have any bearing on a senior citizen's character. A pattern of criminal behavior has stronger predictive value.

2. ***Have you ever held a position in which you were required to be bonded and had a bond refused or revoked?*** This could indicate financial problems for which a

bonding company found reason to believe the individual should not have responsibility for handling someone else's funds.

After your last question, give the person time to ask their questions about the workplace and the job. Close the interview with a 'thank you' and any information you have about next steps in the selection process.

After the interview is over, analyze your information. Review the key qualities or skills you are looking for and any data in the interview that relates to that factor. Note comparisons between this candidate and other applicants to determine which one has the best set of qualifications for the position.

Reference Checks

If a program is to follow only one rule regarding reference checks, it should be to do them. Horror stories abound about employees whose damaging behavior could have been predicted and presumably, prevented if only references had been contacted. Checking such information is considered standard business procedure. Not doing so might be construed as negligent in a court of law. If problems surface later, reference calls provide an additional opportunity to "flesh out" the total picture of the applicant when analyzed in conjunction with the application/resume and the interview. Certainly reference information has its limitations. There is no assurance of validity since the reference has been hand-picked by the applicant and is usually unknown to the caller. However, a surprising number of references reveal damaging information, sometimes without realizing its importance. That is another reason it is beneficial to check them.

A reference call has two purposes: to verify information which has already been provided and to determine if the reference is aware of anything about the applicant which might make him/her ill-suited to the position. While it is likely that a reference call will elicit less information in this "age of liability" than previously, there are several tactics that can increase the chance of success:

- If the reference is a previous employer, try to talk to the person's direct supervisor rather than the personnel office.

- Give the name and position of the caller, identify the organization and briefly describe the position being filled.

- Let the reference know that the applicant has given permission for information to be shared.

- Have a brief list of position-related questions prepared.

- Listen for non-verbal clues: tone of voice, hesitancy, emphasis and demeanor.

Contact references by telephone. In addition to gathering information more quickly, a phone call provides opportunities to probe and clarify that rarely exist in a letter. If the reference insists on a written request, send a cover letter along with your questionnaire and the applicant's release of information form as soon as possible. Try to get a commitment from the reference as to a date that the material will be returned so a follow-up call can be made if necessary.

Prepare for the call by reviewing both the job description and the individual's application. Develop a list of questions that will verify the basic information on the form, assess job-related qualifications and uncover possible risk factors. Some questions you may want to ask include:

1. What do you see as the person's strengths in doing the job they have (had) in your agency?

2. What do you see as their weakness in doing the job they have (had) in your agency?

3. When there has been conflict, how has the person resolved it?

4. Would you rehire or want to work again with this person?

Take detailed notes, including impressions formed during the conversation i.e., "Reference didn't appear to know applicant very well", "Information vague" or "Reference seemed evasive regarding question on conflict resolution". Much reference information is contained *between the lines* and committee members are generally making a substantial number of calls in a short period so it is helpful to be able to refer to notes.

Once the information from the application, interview(s) and reference checks has been compiled and verified, the personnel committee makes a final selection based on the data. Because the necessary skills for the position were defined early in the process and each applicant was thoroughly screened, the committee can focus on the match between needs and skills while incorporating their other impressions.

Making an Offer

When offering a position to an applicant, provide him/her with enough information to make an informed decision. In order to avoid costly mismatches, the person must have realistic expectations of the job and a good understanding of the organization. A well-informed applicant is more likely to be a successful, long-term employee.

To decide if working for a CASA program will meet career goals, a prospective employee needs information about the mission of the program, the program's structure, how it is funded, and how this individual will relate to other staff members,

the court, the volunteers, and community organizations. Let the applicant know if the functions of the job for which (s)he is applying are expected to change radically in the near future. For example, a person applying for the director's position in order to work closely with volunteers would be most unhappy to learn after being hired that the board's goal was for him/her to hire and train a volunteer coordinator. The prospective employee should also have an opportunity to see the CASA office, his/her workspace, and be informed about the availability of computers and other office equipment . The applicant should have an opportunity to meet other staff members and to ask questions about the work environment and the organization's culture. Additional information needed includes a thorough explanation of the employee benefits (when they exist), work schedule requirements, and expectations for overtime, evening or week-end work.

In making an offer to a prospective employee, a formal contract is not required. A letter offering the position should state the position being offered, the beginning salary, and a summary of any other benefits. It should not make reference to the duration of employment unless the individual is being hired for a specially funded project that will end on a specified date and that condition has been discussed in the interview.

Orientation

When the new employee reports to work s(he) should receive a list of work related items s(he) will be receiving. The list should include an employee handbook, personnel policies, explanation of medical and retirement benefits if applicable, office key, computer password, telephone credit card, etc. Have the new employee sign a statement acknowledging receipt of the items as well as an IRS Form W-4 for tax purposes.

New employees should be made to feel welcome and accepted into the organization as quickly as possible. Meeting a new staff member's personal needs is a first step toward achieving that goal. The first day on a new job, most people want to know things like the location of the restroom; where to hang a coat; the appropriate office attire; whether people go out to lunch or eat in; how to use the telephone and the copier; and where supplies are kept. Within a few days a new hire should be given the regular meeting schedule and told about attendance expectations and other scheduled events such as volunteer training. Such information provides a good start toward achieving comfort in the new environment.

Possessing the requisite skills is not the only thing necessary to become a fully contributing member of the staff. Becoming "socialized" to the organization is equally important. New employees need to know how the organization celebrates

accomplishments and deals with disappointments; how new projects are usually approached; and what the formal and informal rules and traditions are. Learning all of the unwritten ways the organization operates generally takes some time, but is important in making the new person feel like a valued member of the staff.

Ideally, an organization hires people with the knowledge and experience to immediately step into the new position. However, it is a rare new employee that does not require some on the job training to extend knowledge or improve skills. Providing training opportunities in the form of one-on-one instruction, attendance at workshops, participation in volunteer training, and a designated person of whom to ask questions and receive feedback, are all appropriate methods of training new employees. Shortly after hiring, supervisor and employee should meet together to establish a work-plan with individual goals and objectives for the employee. Understanding program expectations and time frames will help ensure success.

Ongoing Training

Directors and managers of top-notch programs know that it is the staff who make it possible to meet the objectives of the program. Whether there is a staff of one or one-hundred, opportunities for training are basic to strong performance. Whether it is training to develop new job skills or a seminar to learn techniques for dealing with stress, the organization as a whole benefits. Continuing education is undeniably expensive and frequently the first thing cut from tight budgets. Ongoing staff training should be seen as an investment in the growth of CASA and budgeted accordingly. Funding attendance at National CASA's annual conference and the state CASA conference (if there is one), is cost effective. It rewards staff for their work as well as giving them the opportunity to bring back ideas from other programs in the CASA network. Participation in such events usually creates renewed energy and enthusiasm on the part of the staff.

There are several other methods of providing ongoing training to staff. Take advantage of staff training provided by other organizations including corporations and small businesses. This could include workshops, videos, or well-known speakers. Budget money for a library of books and periodicals which allow staff to keep up on the latest innovations in volunteer management and child welfare practices. Fund travel to regular statewide meetings of other CASA program staff in which ideas are exchanged and joint projects planned. Encourage reading and sharing of the abundant material now available on the management of volunteers and organizational development. Even without being CASA-specific, books like those listed in the References list of this manual provide relevant information.

Increasing Staff Effectiveness

It is a given that local CASA programs do not always have enough staff to accomplish all the work that has to be done, much less maintain continued growth. The average program, according to NCASAA's 1995 program survey, has a staff of 2.5 people. This is not likely to change significantly in the near future, given the current economic climate. There is less funding available for human service organizations in general from both public and private sources. There is stiff competition from other worthy organizations for what few dollars exist. With little prospect for new staff, boards of non-profits and administrators of public programs need to be focused on how to gain the most efficiency and productivity from existing staff.

Maximizing efficiency and productivity of staff begins with hiring individuals with the necessary professional qualifications. It is likely, therefore, that most directors will need to develop skills in some of the necessary areas. Providing the opportunity for professional development for the director as well as other staff, is one important way to increase staff performance, maintain morale and increase productivity.

Research has shown that a supportive work environment in which employees feel involved in the organization, goes far in maintaining morale and commitment. Employees are most successful when they are empowered to make decisions about their work, are invited to contribute to planning and decision-making at the organizational level, and receive encouragement and recognition for their contributions. It is also critical that creativity and risk-taking be encouraged and that employees be allowed to make mistakes without recriminations.

Alternatives to Adding Staff

1. **Job Sharing.** The concept of job sharing, having two part-time people filling one position, is one that has proven very successful for companies. Research has shown that employees benefit because it allows them to meet other responsibilities without sacrificing time at work. Companies benefit by essentially having two people who each give more than 50% to the job. This would be an especially effective option for CASA programs needing different skills in the same position.

2. **Flex Time.** Permitting flexible work schedules and allowing staff to work at home when the task is appropriate are other ways of giving employees a sense of control in their jobs and a higher level of satisfaction. Setting up a satellite office has proven an effective strategy when the area covered by an employee is large enough to require frequent long distance travel. Satellite

offices do not have to be expensive operations, and may be as simple as a desk and telephone in the courthouse.

3. **Temporary help.** Providing some budget for bringing in temporary help when the workload is heavy is another way of getting the job done without further stressing already overworked staff.

4. **Retired Citizens.** Retired citizens are an excellent resource for local CASA programs. Retired professionals who desire to maintain their skills from previous employment are often willing and able to work as volunteers or for minimal reimbursement. They also have available time, and some retirees have computer training, marketing skills, or human resources experience that would qualify them to develop personnel policies, create information systems, or design a brochure or poster for your program. Enormous potential exists for using senior citizens in various capacities.

5. **Independent Contractors.** Another strategy that has proven effective for CASA is the use of independent contractors to perform some function necessary to the program's operation. Several years ago, the Baltimore CASA program contracted with three former social workers to supervise volunteers on case activities a few hours per week.

   This option allowed the program to maintain quality supervision even though they could not afford to hire additional staff. While the cost-saving aspect of hiring an independent contractor is certainly appealing, there are specific requirements that must be met to avoid running afoul of the Internal Revenue Service. A program must be able to show that it has not hired a contractor merely to circumvent paying taxes on a person who is actually functioning as an employee. To avoid such a pitfall, consult the program attorney and incorporate the following guidelines:

   - Use a contractual agreement.

   - Make sure the contractor works for clients other than your organization.

   - Have the contractor use his or her own equipment.

   - Assign a broad project and do not supervise closely.

   - Do not hire former employees as contractors unless it can be shown that the worker has established an independent business after leaving your organization.

   - Keep proper documentation indicating that the worker meets the criteria for an independent contractor.

6. **Sharing Staff.** Sharing staff for administrative functions with other nonprofit organizations is also a practical solution in some circumstances since all organizations need bookkeeping, accounting, and general office support. Working several hours a week for two or three organizations meets the needs of some people who want to work in the nonprofit area, but require full-time employment.

7. **Consultants.** Another way to provide expertise is hiring specialists or consultants to advise an organization for much less than it would cost to hire a staff member. When hiring a consultant, consider these points:

   - How accessible is the professional ?

   - Does (s)he respond quickly to your telephone calls and requests?

   - What is the experience, background and reputation of the person?

   - How billing is done? Will the program be charged and hourly fee or a set amount? How will expenses be charged?

   When trying to decide if a consultant will benefit the organization, look at what end product is desired. A consultant should be cheaper than hiring a permanent staff member and should provide the organization with expertise and experience that no current staff member possesses. The end product should be better than if it were done without a consultant.

8. **Volunteers.** Many CASA programs have successfully utilized volunteers from other organizations to supplement staff. Below are several to consider:

   - *SCORE* (Service Corps of Retired Executives) provides volunteers, usually experienced in management, to help non-profits with strategic planning, developing business plans, or other special projects. A donation to SCORE is generally required although it can usually be negotiated to meet the program's budget. The National Executive Service Corps. (NESC), is also a national organization that offers retired senior level managers at little or no cost.

   - *VISTA* (Volunteers in Service to America) is another volunteer program that CASA programs have utilized effectively. Programs in Kansas and Tennessee, among others, have had VISTA volunteers performing various tasks as full-time staff members.

   - *Americorps* is a volunteer program that has benefited a number of California programs. These volunteers have been used for a variety for functions from recruitment to data collection.

- *Professional Associations.* Getting services such as bookkeeping, accounting, printing, or training donated at low or no cost to the program is another way of augmenting staff. A number of professional membership organizations encourage their members to do pro bono work. Local chapters of fund-raising executives, certified accountants, and public relations professionals usually exist in medium to large communities.

- *County Extension Agents*. Extension agents who are generally found in rural communities, can offer a resource for training. Topics like child development or nutrition might be offered for different audiences such as parents or volunteers.

- *CASA Volunteers.* Experienced CASA volunteers can be used as trainers, newsletter editors, or to help with fundraising. These are great ways of providing volunteers with opportunities for new challenges and personal growth, which are important factors in keeping them with the program. Using seasoned volunteers to mentor new volunteers or as peer group leaders is another idea that has stretched staff capacity. See Chapter 13 for more discussion on Volunteer Mentors.

9. **College Interns.** Another cost-effective way to get staff without increased administrative costs is to hire college interns. Most colleges and universities have intern programs and some require that only a small stipend be paid to the student. An intern should always be assigned challenging work and should be supervised by a staff member. Work study programs through colleges also can provide quality employees at cost efficient rates when the hours can be flexible enough to meet a student's schedule.

Presenting and getting board approval for some of these ideas or numerous others that programs devise is sometimes difficult. The board or administrator in a public program may not be supportive of using other than standard methods to staff the operational functions. The argument can be made that bringing in outside people causes friction between them and staff or volunteers. Potential conflicts of interest may also arise. None of these problems are insurmountable, however, and taking risk can be worth the trouble.
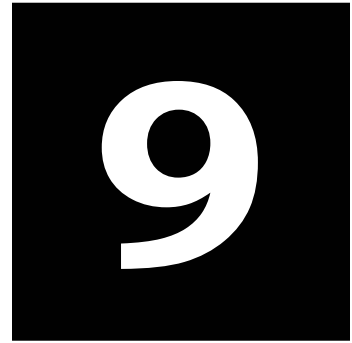
Staff Management

Standards for CASA staff performance must be reasonable, fair, and consistently applied. The best way to establish standards is through the example of the director.

Sally Erny, Executive Director
CASA of Jefferson County
Louisville, Kentucky

Supervision

Noted management authority Peter Drucker says "a supervisor does his/her work by getting others to do theirs". IBM defines a manager's job as "assistant to his/her subordinates". Topnotch managers motivate rather than issuing edicts. They make sure every member of the team understands their function and has the "tools" necessary to perform it. This view of management is equally valid in a state-administered CASA program in which staff members are government employees or a non-profit CASA program in which a volunteer board of directors supervises the program director. The basic principles of management remain true regardless of how a program is structured.

Work Planning and Goal Setting

Good supervision starts with a definition of the employee's role, in other words, a job description. The supervisor or personnel committee and the employee should sit down and review the job description. Together they can decide what they want to accomplish, set-up a timetable for each goal and assign priorities. The next step is to look at what tools the program is expected to provide in support of these efforts. Some goals may be unattainable or the timetable unrealistic without specific assistance such as a computer, an adequate budget, support staff, office space, training, etc. For example, the board may have felt pressure in the highly competitive climate for philanthropic dollars to quantify the good the local CASA program does by providing some impressive statistics. However, if the relationship between CASA and the court is less than comfortable or computer capacity is maxed to the last byte, there is no hope of accomplishing the goal. The stage is then set for recriminations at evaluation time. Far better to realize the potential difficulties in the planning stage and make the necessary changes at that point.

Just as it is important to check the availability of necessary tools when setting goals, it is equally critical to evaluate the strengths and shortcomings of the employee. No one can be an expert at everything. For example, if a director has proven expertise in volunteer management, public speaking and child advocacy, but has never written a grant application and that is the board's number one goal for this year, some adjustment needs to be made. It may be that the goal becomes to have the director locate and hire a contract person for this job, or to take a class in grant writing within the next three months, or perhaps, to raise the funds with a CASAs for CASA fundraising event.

Whatever is done to amend the goal, the needs of both the program and the person are met. No one is set-up to fail. Problems are anticipated and dealt with

proactively, rather than reactively. Once the newly-hired director has experienced the success of this flexible goal setting program, (s)he is that much more ready to do the same when new staff is hired. Belief in the efficacy of this system is crucial to the success of any program.

Written Policies

The next step in quality supervision is having written policies. Smaller programs sometimes resist the notion that they need to put policies in writing. This is the same kind of logic that many computer users employ when it comes to making back-up copies of the information in their computers. Backing up is a time-consuming nuisance, they reason, and they're right, sometimes for years. However, sooner or later the machine crashes. Then the user must spend untold hours (always at the least convenient time, courtesy of Murphy's law) and often many dollars to reclaim information that would have been at their fingertips if they had spent a few minutes per week making a back up. Scratch the surface of most computer users who religiously back-up their information and you will find the scars of old crash victims. Skilled directors, on the other hand, understand the need to devise policy before a conflict or emergency occurs.

Policies need to be in writing to cover the "what ifs." They afford protection from liability. It is almost impossible for a program without written policies to secure liability insurance. Written policies provide guidance for both staff and volunteers which protects them and limits the program's risk. Funders are also aware of these concerns and often ask to see a copy of certain policies as part of a grant application. Writing policy is tedious and time consuming work but it does not have to be done all at once. A good strategy is to plan to complete one per week until the job is done.

Personnel Policies & Records

The development of written policies should begin with personnel policies, even when there is only one employee of the program. They can be written by a committee of the nonprofit's board, but because the legal ramifications of personnel policies and practices are significant, they should then be reviewed by an attorney familiar with employment law.

Personnel policies should be written in a manual with copies made available to current and prospective employees. Like other policies they should be reviewed regularly to assure that they cover the necessary points and are consistent with current employment law which changes frequently. (Table 9.1 provides a list of recommended personnel policies).

Every employee should have a personnel record kept in a secure location in the office with limited access. These records should be retained for a minimum of five years after the employee leaves the organization. The following documents should be maintained in each employee's file:

- Job Application
- Resume
- Correspondence
- Form I - 9
- Salary History
- Performance Reviews
- Written communication to & from the employee pertaining to the job
- Documentation of termination or resignation & reasons

Recommended Personnel Policies

The Organization	Employee Benefits
• Mission	• Social Security
• History	• Workmen's compensation insurance
Work Schedule	• Unemployment insurance
• Workday	• Retirement plan
• Workweek	• Benefits for part-time employees
• Holidays	**Code of Conduct**
• Personal days	• Emergency Procedures
• Vacation	• Harassment
• Sick leave	• Personal conduct
• Family & Medical leave	• Smoking policy
• Leave of absence	• Drug policy
• Bereavement	**Recruitment**
• Severe weather conditions	• Equal employment opportunity policy
• Jury duty	• Employment of relatives
• Time off without pay	**Employee Records**
Compensation	• Policy on employee access to personnel record
• Paydays	• Employee notified when something placed in their file
• Overtime & compensatory time	• Personnel records kept for 5 years

Table 9.1

Supervisory Functions

A CASA program supervisor is expected to:

- Have enough general knowledge of each case to provide consultation and substitute for the volunteer in case of emergency.

- Be accessible to the volunteers at all times through an established on call system.

- Hold regular case conferences and supervisory conferences.

- Attend court hearings with volunteers to offer support and monitor performance.

- Oversee the preparation of the volunteer's written report. This includes consulting with the volunteer on the recommendations and following program policy should there be a difference of opinion.

- Facilitate regular peer meetings of volunteers for training and disseminating information.

- Provide frequent feedback (preferably at each contact) and formal evaluation once a year.

- Be given adequate time and resources for maintenance of professional development.

After supervisory functions have been clarified through the use of a job description and written policy, the supervisor should have a clear picture of his/her duties. A simplified definition of those responsibilities is communicate, motivate and evaluate. Much has been written about all three in Chapter 12 &13 which deal with volunteers but the principles are identical. Communication is essential and not just to transmit new information. Without feedback, staff assumes management either doesn't know or doesn't care how they are doing. That attitude quickly filters down to volunteers. Set up regular times to communicate with staff and give those appointments the same validity as other ones on your calendar. Motivation is maintained (or dampened) not just by the job itself but by the working conditions: the setting, the quality of interpersonal relationships, ease of access to supervision and frequency of contact.

Evaluation

Evaluation, in the informal sense, is an everyday occurrence. Management is constantly observing the performance of staff and hopefully offering reinforcement or

re-direction depending on which is appropriate. In a more formal sense, evaluation is communication regarding performance at stated intervals (usually annually). A written tool is advisable so that nothing is missed and to serve as documentation for the employee's personnel file. Many supervisors use a notebook to keep track of employee performance during the year so that they have an accurate and complete account for evaluation purposes. Setting the tone of the evaluation is almost as important as the content. (See Table 9.2, Performance Evaluation Rules). Make sure it is scheduled at a time when both supervisor and employee have time to cover the information without being rushed. Arrange a place that will be quiet and free from interruptions. Very often that excludes both people's offices. Especially if there are problem areas, make sure there is balance in how the information is handled. (See Appendix 9-A and 9 - B for Examples of Employee Evaluation Forms).

One topic that is sometimes brought up during evaluations but that can occur at anytime is reductions in force. Especially in a small nonprofit organization, a single funding problem can result in the need to reduce staff even if only temporarily. Whatever the case, make it clear to the employee that the loss of the position is in no way connected to substandard performance and, of course, do everything possible to assist in helping the employee find a new position.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION RULES

1. The employee should never be surprised by the supervisor's assessment of performance.

2. The criteria for measurement should be known in advance of the performance period

3. Prior to the performance appraisal, the employee and the supervisor should set specific performance standards, including a minimum level of acceptable performance.

4. The employee should receive regular feedback during the performance period that indicates the degree to which (s)he is meeting the performance standards.

5. The criteria for measurement should be objective, meaning not the subjective opinion of the supervisor.

6. The performance appraisal should appraise performance, not personality traits, motives, or personal qualities.

7. The focus of the performance appraisal interview should be on the future and on growth, not on the past and recrimination.

8. The performance appraisal process should be on-going, not just once a year.

Table 9.2

10

Financial Management

"Managing its financial resources intelligently is one of the most important ways a CASA Program ensures that abused and neglected children receive the help they need. Good financial management has simple underlying principles. Spend less money than you earn and put some aside for the inevitable rainy day. First, we must ensure that we have adequate financial resources to manage through aggressive fundraising, and then we must be certain that every dollar spent has a benefit to the children we serve. Even the best programs will jeopardize their ability to serve children if they don't place sufficient emphasis on financial management."

Francha Davis, Assistant to the Director
CASA of Montgomery County
Rockville, MD

Programs like CASA rarely fail for lack of a good cause or good intentions. Failure can usually be attributed to a lack of attention to "bottom line" issues. Financial management is not generally an area of specialized expertise for CASA directors, many of whom have backgrounds as service providers. However, if programs are to survive and thrive, directors and board members must develop fiscal expertise and seek sound financial advice.

A financial management system does not have to be complicated or intimidating in order to work. The system is not an end in itself. It should be viewed as a tool that, when used well, strengthens the ability of the program to accomplish its mission.

Elements of a sound fiscal management system include:

- Budgeting,
- An accounting system,
- A system of internal controls,
- A financial statement,
- Audit or financial review,
- Tax returns

Budgeting

The budgeting process must be tailored to the needs of each program. However, there are practical considerations common to all programs which prepare a budget. Because a budget is a benchmark for measuring the results of your operations in fiscal terms, you should develop a budget based on historical information, current trends and conditions and the economy. While the board should provide input as appropriate and has final responsibility for approving the budget before it is put into operation, the staff generally has responsibility for its development. The process of budget development usually requires several months and involves the following steps:

1. *Select a budget period.* The budget period deserves careful consideration. The periods most often chosen are the calendar year and the fiscal year that begins July 1. The budget period can close at the end of any month as long as it is a logical twelve month period. In some instances, it may be desirable to align the budget period with that of the most significant funder.

2. *Review historical data and documentation.* Records that detail past expenditures and receipts for all line items should be available as support for

projecting future budget items. When a budget is being prepared for the first time, try to obtain information from other programs in your area.

3. *Estimate Costs.* The best predictor of costs is what previous costs have been. Just as important though, is basing estimated costs on the strategic plan which identifies the activities to be carried out and the resources necessary to do so. This plan becomes the basis for identifying needed personnel, equipment, printing, postage, supplies, and other items. This is a far more accurate way of determining costs than assuming that a percentage added to last year's budget will cover new expenditures.

4. *Estimate revenues.* It has been suggested that organizations would be wise to estimate revenues before estimating costs because of the inevitable uncertainty in estimating revenues. What is called for is a balance in which you determine the needs of the program, and then estimate revenues by categorizing funds into those which can be counted on, those which you can reasonable expect, and those which are long-shots.

    Don't forget that you may not receive the full amount of funding requested and that some funds received will be restricted to specific purposes. Once you have projected revenues in this way, you may want to readjust the estimated costs to be more in line with realistically expected funding.

5. *Include donated material and services.* Many CASA programs would flounder without the in-kind support they receive from the community. Yet many are uncertain how to document such support. In-kind donations should be included in the budget. Of course, they must be reflected as both revenue and expense in order to keep the bottom line unaffected. They need to be shown to prospective funders in order to demonstrate how donations are leveraged.

6. *Plan for contingencies.* A continually changing environment creates the necessity for a plan to respond to unforeseen events by having a reserve amount built into the budget. Its size depends on individual circumstances, but a reserve should be sufficient to provide a hedge against decreasing revenues, unexpected expenses, or an unexpected rise in costs. The exact amount should be determined by reviewing the predictability of income, the stability and experience of the program, and the extent to which expenditures are fixed in advance.

The completed budget should be considered a guide, not a rule. When an organization considers the budget as an end in itself , it becomes its own worst enemy. As a tool, the budget should aid in planning and operating the organization.

While all staff should be urged to stay within budget parameters, the operating budget should be flexible. It should be reviewed frequently with adjustments made as needed. The board should have a procedure for passing budget amendments when necessary.

Accounting System

Establishing an accounting system, while not directly fulfilling the program's mission, is nevertheless a critical administrative task. A well-designed system, even if it consists solely of manual ledgers, can mean the difference between timely financial information and incomplete, unsupported records.

The accounting system is the mechanism that facilitates the recording of transactions into the computer or into various files and ledgers that can be used to generate financial statements.

Usually, the number of transactions (deposits, checks, and journal entries) will determine whether or not it is cost-effective to automate the accounting process. A new program that has few funding sources and limited assets may simply "keep the books" in a checkbook supplied by the local bank or a check register accounting system in which checks are manually recorded in a ledger at the same time they are prepared. This combination checkbook and expense distribution journal provides a simple way of recording receipts and disbursements while maintaining your checkbook balance.

An automated system does not have to be complicated. There are numerous software applications available that do not require any previous accounting or bookkeeping experience. Most accounting programs will run on the most basic computers and are easily installed and maintained. When deciding on an automated accounting package, consider the following:

- Does it do what you need it to?

- How easy is it to use?

- How easy is it to install?

- What reports can be produced?

- Can data be uploaded and downloaded to diskettes for use in other applications?

- Is the cost reasonable?

- Is training and support available from the dealer?

Many accounting packages include a payroll module which may meet the needs of the program admirably. Some programs use a payroll service to ensure that the complex tasks of withholding taxes, filing state and federal forms, and paying state and federal taxes are done quickly and efficiently by outside professionals. A payroll service can establish direct deposit and arrange for automatic payment and reporting of all taxes for a reasonable fee. Considering that penalties and interest accrue quickly if tax payments or filings are late, the use of a service might be a wise investment.

Chart of Accounts

Once your accounting system is established, the chart of accounts must be developed. This consists of the account numbers used to record and report financial transactions. The chart of accounts can be very simple and easy to use if it is not too detailed. A separate account number is not usually needed for every type of revenue and expense anticipated. Because the chart of accounts is the basis for generating monthly financial statements, think about what is important to monitor and whether or not this information should be specifically identified in the financial statements.

Accrual Basis Accounting

The two most common methods of keeping accounting records are the cash and accrual bases. The cash basis reflects only cash receipts and cash disbursements – that is, a transaction is recorded only when cash (currency or check) changes hands. Accrual basis accounting, on the other hand, projects transactions during a given period. Although a few start-up CASA programs which have little income and few assets may use the cash basis method, most programs are advised to use the accrual method.

Cash basis accounting is the way most people keep their personal checkbooks—they record cash receipts (revenues)when they are deposited in the bank and expenses when they write a check. In this method, there is no attempt to match income received with the expenses incurred and therefore, cash basis accounting is simple to use. However, the fact that it is so simple explains why cash basis accounting is not appropriate for most organizations. Because this method does not worry about prepaid expenses, future payables, or deferred revenue, the organization is subject to the possibility of unnecessary and unforeseen losses. Because an accounting system that provides complete information about the organization's assets, obligations, liabilities, and the current relationship of revenues to expenditures is necessary for sound fiscal decision-making and planning, generally acceptable accounting

principles, as established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, require that financial reports of most non-profit organizations utilize the accrual basis method of accounting.

The accrual basis accounting method provides a more accurate picture of the financial position of the organization because it records income and expenses in the <u>period</u> in which the transaction occurs regardless of when the money is received or disbursed. In other words, income that is earned or committed to the program but not actually received is considered an asset, called accounts receivable or accrued revenue. For example, a grant awarded to the program but paid on a quarterly basis would fall into this category. A deferred revenue account would be established in the accounting system. Funds might be received quarterly but each month a pro-rated percentage of the total grant would be recorded.

Expenses incurred but not paid during the reporting period are categorized as accounts payable or accrued expenses. These expenses are considered liabilities of the program because they must be paid in the future. For example, if your program were to pay a full year's insurance premium at the beginning of the year, the payment would go into an asset account called prepaid expenses. Each month, as the insurance coverage is used, one-twelfth of the payment is shown as an expense with the remaining amount left in the prepaid expense account. At the end of the year, the program will have received the full twelve months of coverage and the entire payment will have been expensed.

Fund Accounting

Fund accounting is a concept unique to nonprofit organizations and governmental entities. In this approach, financial records must be maintained for each project or activity that receives funds designated for that specific operation. Each set of records is called a "fund" and is considered a separate accounting entity with its own financial statements.

If all the funding you receive is for general operating purposes, your organization would have only one fund. Additional "funds" would be required when you receive grants or contributions for a specific project. For example, if your program receives a corporate grant to purchase computer equipment, software and training, you would set up a fund account that would segregate receipt of those grant dollars and the expenses for which the money is intended.

It is important to note that you usually do not need keep separate bank accounts or separate accounting records for each fund, though some grants do require that funds be kept separately. If your program is funded by several grants or donors which

require keeping multiple funds, it is probably more efficient to computerize your accounting.

Internal Controls

The objectives of financial controls are to safeguard the organization's assets, to ensure the reliability of financial records and reports, to promote operational efficiency, and to encourage adherence to policy. A good financial control system should have written policies which describe:

- Clear lines of authority and responsibility;

- Separation of duties;

- Procedures for authorization;

- Procedures for record keeping;

- Physical control over assets and records;

- Accurate documentation and sufficient audit trail;

- Independent review and audit of finances.

(See Appendix 10-A, Financial Policies and Procedures.)

Financial Statements

There are many possible kinds of financial statements that can be prepared, but the ones that are most commonly required include the following:

- *Balance Sheet*. The balance sheet summarizes the assets, liabilities, and fund balances of the organization. It is a snapshot taken at a specific point in time, presenting the financial position of an organization on a specific date.

- *Statement of Activity.* This report measures, in fiscal terms only, the effectiveness of your program's ability to carry out its mission. It reports the actual revenues and expenses and compares the results to the current budget.

- *Statement of Functional Expenses.* This report, reported for the same period as the statement of activity, shows expenses by category such as salaries, rent, postage, etc.

- *Statement of Cash Flow.* Also prepared for the same period, this report shows the cash receipts and cash payments during that time frame.

It is generally not necessary to provide the board with a full set of financial statements each month. At a minimum, however, they should receive a statement of

activity each month which follows the same format as the approved budget, calculating variances, explaining the reason for the variances, and offering suggestions for corrective action if needed. Other reports may be requested by the board on a quarterly basis and a full set of financial statements must be prepared at the end of the program's fiscal year.

Financial information should be provided to the board as soon as possible after the designated reporting period ends so that necessary corrective action can be made in a timely manner. Of course, it takes some time to prepare the statement, but most programs should be able to produce a monthly report within two weeks after the end of the month. A full set of financial statements for the year should be available within five or six weeks after the end of the year. If your accounting system cannot meet these deadlines, something is wrong and should be corrected.

Audits

Although your organization may not be required to have an audit, it is generally recommended that an audit be performed, even if your funders do not require it. An audit opinion stating that the financial statements accurately present the balances and results of operations is critical in fundraising and receiving grants. Internally, an audit provides assurances that the financial statements are accurate and complete.

An auditor will perform tests of your accounting system, review the internal accounting controls, examine your documentation, perform analytical review procedures, and confirm cash accounts and other balances in order to render an opinion on the financial statements taken as a whole. The audit will also include a review of the accounting principles being followed and the financial statement format to determine whether or not they comply with generally accepted accounting principles.

There are several levels of audit and audit reports that can be done by an accountant. A full audit includes an opinion, a statement of financial position, a statement of activities, a statement of cash flows, and footnotes. The footnotes disclose the nature of the operations, a summary of significant accounting policies, a description of significant events, and detailed information on the organization's commitments and contingencies. For a full audit, the auditors will require a management representation letter addressed to them that acknowledges management's responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. Usually, the executive director and a member of the board are asked to sign the letter. In addition to the audited financial statements, the auditors should provide you with a management or internal control letter in which they discuss any suggestions that they have for improving your policies and procedures.

A lower level of audit is a review of financial statements. The resulting review report indicates that the testing performed is less than that of a full audit and that only analytical review procedures were applied. A review provides only limited assurances that the financial statements are complete. This type of audit may be appropriate when the program is new and cannot afford a full audit.

The lowest level of service that auditors can perform is a compilation. This type of report states that the account balances presented are those provided by management. The auditor takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the numbers. This type of audit is appropriate only for programs that have a CPA prepare their monthly financial statements.

The cost of a full audit can be several thousand dollars, a real burden on programs that have minimal funding. You may be able to negotiate for a lower than normal fee, particularly if you are able to have the work performed in off-season. Another possibility for a lower fee is to obtain the services through the local chapter of the Association of Certified Public Accountants.

Tax Returns

There are various reporting requirements for non-profit organizations at the local, state, and federal levels. Filing of IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, is required if the organization has gross revenue in excess of $25,000 per year. Non-profit 501©(3) organizations are also required to file the 990-Schedule A. The filing must be done by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of the year. A penalty of $10 per day is assessed late filing or incomplete forms.

If the program has raised more than $1000 from an unrelated business such as some types of product sales, Form 990-T must be filed. Some types of income derived from unrelated business are subject to federal tax (and possibly state tax). The filing and payment of any taxes due must be paid by the 15th day of the fifth month after year-end.

If an extension is needed, IRS Form 2758 may be used to request it. The program is required to maintain a copy of your Form 990 tax return on file and available for the public's inspection.

Once the program employs paid personnel, it is required to file federal payroll reports, including a W-4 for each employee to claim exemptions for federal withholding and a W-2 for each employee at the end of the year to report income and deductions.

The director may want to ask the auditors to complete the annual tax return and request an extension when necessary. They can also advise you on other state tax filings that are required.

11

Risk Management

> *CASA organizations seek to perform public service. Recruiting staff or volunteers who pose an unacceptable risk of harming the children who are the beneficiaries of CASA negates that intent. Programs, therefore, should develop policies and procedures designed to minimize the risks that an inappropriate person could create.*
>
> *Nonprofit Risk Management Center*

Understanding Risk Management

Risk management can be defined as a mechanism for preventing problems, avoiding harm, and insuring that organizational obligations are properly carried out. In one sense, the concept of risk management is a sophisticated business practice. In another, it is simply a 90's rendering of the old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." As the saying makes clear, the element of risk is something that can be lessened but not eliminated, hence the term risk management. It seems somewhat ironic that a non-profit organization like CASA, whose mission statement embodies doing good for others, must be concerned with the possibility of doing harm. However, to ignore that risk can put a CASA program permanently out of the business of helping children and wreak havoc in the lives of anyone associated with the operation including clients, volunteers, board members and staff. CASA programs that employ sound practices in other areas sometimes avoid discussion of risk management either out of ignorance or fear of deterring potential volunteers or board members. While such reluctance is understandable, the consequences of the "ostrich approach" can be severe.

Risks to CASA Programs

The kinds of risk inherent in a CASA program can be loosely grouped into three categories although there is some overlap. The first type of risk is to the children served. A volunteer or staff member could conceivably cause physical harm through abusive behavior, misuse of an automobile or other machine or poor judgment. Emotional harm to a child could result from racist or sexist remarks, denigration of the child's physical or mental capabilities or his/her family. There is also ample opportunity to cause harm by violating the confidentiality of child-related information.

The second type is personal risk to the volunteers and/or staff themselves. Both are subject to accidental injury similar to that in any other workplace. Volunteers run additional risks due to the necessity of on-site visits in the course of an investigation. They are also subjected to a high degree of emotional stress created by dealing with vulnerable children in heart-wrenching situations over extended periods of time.

The third type of risk is to the CASA program itself. Faulty employment practices such as wrongful termination, discrimination, workplace harassment, inadequate screening and defamation account for the vast majority of liability claims against non-profit organizations. There are also opportunities for financial mismanagement such as neglected tax filings, embezzlement, fraud, theft and, more frequently,

misappropriation of funds. Increasingly, programs suffer liability as a result of conflicts of interest. These are usually related to board members but may also occur between two agencies such as a CASA program and its umbrella organization.

Obviously, any harm that befalls either CASA clients or volunteers is detrimental to the organization even if no lawsuit or insurance claim is filed. If the reputation of the program is damaged, it is possible to lose the most important asset of all - good will - without which the organization will find it extremely difficult to raise money, recruit volunteers or enjoy the trust of the court system and the community at large.

Is there anything CASA programs can do to guarantee that none of these catastrophes befall them? Of course not, but programs can minimize their exposure by practicing sound risk management.

Minimizing Risk

The following information is based on the work of George C. Dikeau, an attorney specializing risk management. Dikeau recommends that board, staff and volunteers be specifically informed as to what their duty is and what the limitations are. For example:

- To whom (staff, the court, volunteers, parents) does the CASA program owe an obligation (duty)?

- How is this obligation imposed? statute? agency mission?

- What is the reason for the program's existence?

- Who are the constituents to be served? children? volunteers?

In practice, this translates into a well-written job description which clearly defines each person's role in the organization. For example, a volunteer's job description would make it readily apparent that a CASA volunteer who was taking the assigned child to his/her home for overnight visits was acting outside the boundaries of a CASA volunteer's duty.

The CASA program's standard of duty requires that adequate policies and procedures are in place and that they are consistently implemented by staff. If a volunteer engages in an activity that results in damaging consequences, the program's degree of liability may be determined by assessing the level of compliance with existing requirements. For example:

- Did the volunteer meet the requisite screening procedures and training requirements?

- Was the volunteer following program guidelines?

- Did the volunteer do what a reasonable person with similar training and experience would have done given similar circumstances?

If the CASA program fails to adhere to its own standards of screening, training, and supervision of volunteers and the failure causes harm, the program's potential liability is likely to increase.

Once there is an awareness of how duty and liability affect the CASA program, the board or governing body can move toward effective risk management. Obviously, the time to do so is before a serious problem arises. Earlier in this chapter, a number of inherent risks facing volunteer programs were listed. One has been selected from each category to illustrate how risk can be minimized both before and after an incident occurs.

The examples are:

1. A volunteer sexually abuses a child assigned to him/her.

2. A volunteer is assaulted after completing a visit to the home of a child.

3. The board and program director are named in a lawsuit filed by a former employee charging sexual harassment and wrongful termination.

The first step in each situation is to identify the risk. Use both internal (staff, volunteers, board) and external (other organizations) mechanisms to help identify problems. In the example of a child being abused, what is preventing the CASA program from performing its function of advocating for abused and neglected children?

1. Does the job description fully define the duties and limitations of the position?

2. Is the screening adequate for volunteers who will work with vulnerable children?

3. Does the program check every prospective volunteer's references, criminal and child protective services records?

4. From what was revealed by the background check, could the program have anticipated this outcome?

5. Is training appropriate and was it utilized?

6. Is competent supervision available to the volunteer?

7. Is there a mandatory level of supervisor/volunteer contact and was it maintained?

8. Are there records to verify standard procedures and how those operated with the volunteer in question?

9. Could management have taken control or handled things differently before a negative situation arose?

Risk identification in the case of a volunteer being assaulted begins with the same premise: what is preventing the individual from performing his/her function? What are the factors impeding performance?

1. Does the program provide adequate training on volunteer safety in the field?

2. Does the volunteer possess enough experience to be assigned a case that presents a threat to personal safety?

3. Was the supervisor aware of the level of danger?

4. Should (s)he have been?

In the final example of the employee lawsuit for harassment and wrongful termination, risk identification looks at the same question. When an individual does not perform his/her function to the extent of being fired, what are the factors impeding performance?

1. Does the employee's level of education and experience match the requirements of the job description?

2. Is there an accurate and complete personnel record on the employee?

3. Does the record document any history of complaints or problems in the areas of work performance or staff relationships? What corrective action is indicated?

4. Is supervision competent? Is adequate supervisory time available?

The second step in a program of effective risk management is analysis and evaluation. The significance and severity of each risk must be assessed.

1. What kind of damage could each risk do to the program, its personnel, its finances, its credibility?

2. Could the program continue if certain risks were eliminated?

Using the three previous examples - without one-on-one child/volunteer contact, without visiting the family home, without staff to oversee the work of the volunteers, no CASA program could perform its mission. These are examples of risk inherent to the mission of CASA. They are taken with awareness of their existence but minimized where possible by things like training, screening, and written policies.

Once the analysis is complete, the third step is to eliminate risk or control it to whatever extent possible. New policies and procedures are developed. Old ones are modified or implemented in a consistent manner. In the case of the abusive volunteer, there may be consultation with an outside expert to deal with the repercussions, additional training for staff on screening for pedophiles or a new interview protocol devised. To prevent further assault incidents, a CASA program might add a personal safety segment to its in-service training, institute a policy of joint staff/volunteer visits or morning only visits in specified neighborhoods, solicit donated cell phones for its volunteers, or all of the above. Several responses to the lawsuit filed by the former employee might be used. Mandatory staff training regarding sexual harassment, conspicuously posted notices regarding discrimination in the workplace, revised performance evaluation forms, a general re-examination of organizational culture all could be beneficial.

The fourth step in risk management is to protect the program against things beyond its control. The primary method of doing so (which applies to all three examples) is adequate liability insurance. Consult a risk management professional to look not only at the amount of coverage but the terms as well. (See Appendix 11-A, "Protecting Your Board From Liability Risks")

Managing Failures

Even in programs with a strong preventive focus, risk can never be totally eliminated. That is why the final step in risk management is to manage program failures. Mistakes happen. The best course of action is to deal with them honestly, openly (within the bounds of confidentiality) and in a timely manner. When a problem arises, it is counterproductive to point fingers, attempt a cover-up or minimize the situation. This is true in-house as well as with outside forces such as the media. Being forthright provides an opportunity to earn respect rather than fueling existing anger. If an apology is called for, offer one sincerely. Organizational energy must be focused on the future, not mired in the past. Once a mistake has occurred, such as in the three examples above, there are still decisions to be made by the program prior to any litigation. How can this situation be resolved with the least damage to children, to the individuals involved and to the program? What alternatives exist: settlement, payment, policy changes, mediation, others? Although it is difficult to remember in trying times, a crisis can be an opportunity for a positive change.

Volunteer Safety

Safety is a serious concern in all CASA programs. Keeping volunteers out of harm's way is another element of risk management. While it is not possible to eliminate risk from a program that deals with the wide variety of situations a CASA volunteer does, it can certainly be minimized with proper instruction and practice. Here again prevention is the key. The following techniques, adapted from the *Safety for Advocates* manual of the California Court Appointed Special Representatives Program, are designed to be helpful in a number of different situations. Use them when presenting safety issues in volunteer training or as a review during in-service presentations.

- Be assertive and confident, but not aggressive. Don't look vulnerable.

- In an unfamiliar situation, wear sensible clothing which is easy to move in—no high heels, straight skirts, jewelry, etc.

- Think ahead. Know the situation and location in order to look confident. Do a drive-by to check out the surroundings.

- Be aware of everything in the immediate area.

- Make sure that someone knows the location and duration of the visit and time of return. If plans change, call and let that person know.

- If necessary, travel in pairs.

- Carry keys separately, not in a purse. If avoidable, don't carry a purse at all. Lock it in the car trunk before starting out.

- Always lock the car when leaving it, and check the rear seat before re-entering.

- Think about returning to the car: If the parking location is safe at 4:00 PM, will it be as safe at 9:00 PM?

- Keep car windows up, doors locked, and gears engaged in unsafe areas.

- Do not carry a weapon—it can be turned against you. Carry a whistle or some other noisemaker.

- Keep your arms free. Don't carry loose paperwork or notebooks.

- Trust your instincts. If really uncomfortable, take protective action—walk away.

- Don't walk alone near places where someone can hide or in dark areas at night.

- Don't walk through a group of people. If necessary, cross the street to pass them.

- Never give out too much personal information about yourself or your family, especially phone numbers and addresses. Remember that all correspondence and communications should flow through the CASA office.

In addition to making provisions for volunteers' personal safety, the program director must also do everything possible to assure that the workplace is safe for staff, volunteers and visitors. Since most programs rent space or have it donated by the court or other agencies, there are often limitations in how much control the director has over the facility itself. Nevertheless, it is helpful to assess the office to see what adjustments if any might be made to either the facility itself or the way in which it is currently utilized.

How safe is the neighborhood? If it is questionable, what can be done about lighting, security, instituting a buddy system for going to and from the parking lot?

How safe is the building? Are there hazards—leaks, slippery floors, badly lit stairways? How might they be fixed? Is there an exit plan in case of fire? Are fire doors able to be opened quickly in an emergency? Are smoke detectors, fire alarms, and extinguishers functional? Has there ever been a fire drill, a staff meeting or in-service training where emergency procedures were discussed?

This is by no means an exhaustive list of possible problem areas. Its intent is to focus attention on the issue of workplace safety. If you find that you need more guidance in the area, many insurance companies offer a "risk audit" to help pinpoint trouble spots. It is possible that these concerns have already been dealt with by the owner or primary tenant in your facility. Local ordinances may have already required that certain minimum standards by met. Digging up the answers is doubly important because they could affect funding as well as volunteer safety. Most federal funds (such as those disseminated through National CASA's grant program) require compliance with basic safety standards.

Considering HIV and AIDS

CASA programs, like American society as a whole, must deal with AIDS on two levels: the physical realities of the disease and the emotional reactions to it. Both, at times, seem equally intractable. While medical research makes slow but perceptible progress in developing treatment, education is the only way to alter perceptions and eradicate prejudice. Once the board and director have been educated, appropriate policies can be drafted to deal with AIDS as it affects volunteers, clients and staff.

When a CASA program designs an approach to AIDS, it must balance three competing demands: the best interests of the child, the avoidance of discrimination and the prudent management of risk. Within each of these issues, confidentiality plays a major role. The challenge is to weave these various threads together to create a consistent and comprehensive policy for everyone involved in the CASA program.

The touchstone of any AIDS policy must be the understanding that AIDS is not spread by casual contact. To treat it otherwise is to leave the program open to risk by sanctioning discrimination. While formulating AIDS policy, the board must consistently ask: "What purpose will it serve?"

AIDS and the CASA Volunteer

Generally speaking, questioning a prospective volunteer regarding sexual orientation or HIV status goes beyond the stated purpose of screening: to protect children. (One exception to this is the San Francisco CASA program which specifically recruits HIV positive volunteers as the most knowledgeable and committed advocates for its large number of HIV adolescent clients.) Since it is assumed that a volunteer would never have more than casual contact with a child, such questions would be an unreasonable violation of a potential volunteer's right to privacy. So would statements whose obvious intent is to make the applicant self-disclose sexual orientation or HIV status. On the other hand, screening procedures (such as those found in Chapter 8) which are intended to ferret out whether or not a person is at high risk to sexually abuse a child are perfectly appropriate because they go to the issue of protection and the child's best interests.

HIV/AIDS education, along with information about other sexually transmitted diseases, should be a component of pre-service and in-service training in all programs, but especially in areas with significant numbers of HIV positive children in foster care. This training segment should be done by a health care professional. Another excellent source of practical down to earth information is a foster parent who has cared for children with AIDS. Two areas to emphasize are the universal precautions to be used when handling bodily fluids and AIDS truths vs. myths. Volunteers should be instructed in the proper responses if they are the first to learn that a child assigned to them is HIV-positive.

Training of this nature leads naturally into the companion topic of how to advocate for children with AIDS and other health problems. Volunteers should be aware that children in foster care often lag far behind other children in numerous measures of general health. It is part of the advocates' role to make sure that the children assigned to them receive basic preventive care like immunizations and dental checkups as well as prompt, effective treatment for illness. It is equally important for

advocates to see that sexually active youth have access to screening/counseling about their own sexuality and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS. (An excellent resource on getting health care for teens with AIDS or HIV is the article entitled "Consent and Confidentiality: Important Elements in Adolescents' Access to HIV Care", by Abigail English. This article was reprinted in the Fall 1995 issue of *The Connection*.)

AIDS and the Client/Child

CASA directors and volunteer coordinators in most programs make every effort to match children with volunteers whom they feel can do the most effective job of advocating for them. This should be even more true for children with AIDS or who are HIV positive. If staff sense the slightest level of fear or discomfort on the part of the volunteer, it will be readily apparent to the child and a different volunteer should be assigned. The volunteer should be informed of the child's diagnosis at the outset. Regulations regarding confidentiality and universal precautions should be reviewed. The ideal person for this kind of advocacy is one who understands that there is more that a semantic difference between an "AIDS victim" and a "child with AIDS".

It is also important that a child with AIDS is matched with a volunteer who is comfortable dealing with grief and loss and who can make a long-term commitment. Many children in this situation have already lost one or both parents to the disease. The last thing they need is to establish a supportive relationship with someone who then departs when the going gets rough. This is the conundrum of recruiting HIV positive volunteers as advocates for children with AIDS. While such volunteers are generally "old hands" at dealing with grief and loss and are storehouses of AIDS resource information, their own health needs may prohibit them from being able to see a case through, thereby dealing another loss to a vulnerable child.

AIDS and the CASA Staff

From a legal perspective, screening prospective staff for AIDS is similar to screening volunteers. Since AIDS cannot be transmitted during normal social or occupational interactions, there is no logical basis for treating it differently than any other life-threatening illness such as cancer, stroke or heart disease. Some locales even have specific anti-AIDS discrimination laws on the books. A program that attempts to screen prospective employees for AIDS does so at its own risk. It is far more productive for local programs to decide to manage AIDS in the most humane and efficient way possible.

Management of AIDS in the workplace must come from the top. It is also most effective if policies are in place before the issue arises. Sam B. Puckett and Alan R. Emery, authors of *Managing AIDS in the Workplace*, suggest that organizations apply three general principles to everything they do regarding AIDS:

1. Manage AIDS the way you would manage any other workplace issue.

2. Do what you already know how to do.

3. Be consistent with your own organizational culture.

Puckett and Emery believe that because AIDS already carries so much socio-political baggage, it is not the topic to use in a new or experimental approach to organizational communication. The authors indicate that most firms which have developed AIDS policies have used one of three basic categories:

1. The "life-threatening illness" approach

2. The "AIDS-specific" approach

3. The deliberate "no policy" approach

While the approaches differ, the content of each of these policies is similar. One company makes no distinction in policy between the handling of AIDS and other life-threatening illnesses; a second develops a policy that discusses AIDS in isolation and a third takes the position that AIDS is automatically included in their existing policy on employee health matters so no additional policy is required. Whichever approach an organization chooses, the policies usually cover the following topics:

*   How HIV is transmitted.

*   The confidentiality of employee health information.

*   That the continuation of employee status for a person with AIDS is dependent on meeting acceptable performance standards and medical evidence indicating no health threat to him/herself or others.

*   That discrimination is prohibited.

Two other salient pieces of advice are offered by Puckett and Emery about managing AIDS in the workplace.

*   Prepare line supervisors first. They will be the people most likely to face the issue initially.

*   AIDS education is not a "one-shot deal". It requires time, patience and repetitive presentation to get the message across. A good working number is five or six exposures to AIDS information.

- Employees should be given a list of resources for further information or assistance.

Eventually, most employees, even those with strongly-held beliefs about the kind of people who get AIDS, can separate those beliefs from the facts about AIDS transmission at work.

Throughout the history of this disease, public health officials have said that dealing with the epidemic of fear has been as difficult as dealing with the disease itself. It is the role of the CASA director and board to assure a climate of acceptance for people with AIDS, be they volunteers, clients or staff.

Finding & Keeping Volunteers

Recruitment of volunteers is the life-line of any volunteer organization. When we seek to enroll new members, we restore and increase the health and vigor of the program. Retention of these volunteers is the other side of the coin, and equally important if consistency of service is to be realized. Diversification of volunteer members ensures that all entities will be represented.

Sheila Troxel, Executive Director
CASA of Rapid City
Rapid City, South Dakota

One of the frequent questions posed by CASA directors is how to maintain the right number of active, committed volunteers. Some programs never seem able to find enough potential volunteers; others report that they have so many they can not respond quickly enough to keep them interested. Some organizations have elaborate recruitment plans with numerous techniques for attracting and screening applicants, while for other programs recruitment is a minor activity either because turnover is low or because enough potential volunteers come forward without formal recruitment. What is the difference? Why do some CASA programs have enough applicants to allow them to select only the best candidates, while other programs spend most of their time rejecting inappropriate applicants?

Volunteer administrators agree that organizations which are successful in recruitment are well managed organizations that are generally successful in everything they do. In these programs, recruitment is not viewed in a vacuum, but as one element in a process that includes advance preparation and ongoing evaluation of what works and what doesn't. In that sense, recruitment can not be seen as separate from activities associated with fundraising, public relations, program evaluation, and techniques of volunteer training, supervision and recognition. The key to achieving success in recruiting volunteers, as in all other aspects of program development, is careful planning. The goals established during the program's strategic planning process should identify the rate at which growth will occur.

Setting Recruitment Goals

Program growth requires more than recruiting a new group of volunteers each year. If volunteers are added to the program without increasing the program's capacity to screen, train, and supervise the new volunteers without neglecting the old ones, the quality of the program will suffer. Volunteers will leave the program and staff will become burned out. Goals for the rate of growth should be made after consideration of a number of program and environmental factors:

- The number of children currently being served;

- The number of active volunteers;

- Staff capacity to supervise additional volunteers without violating national standards;

- Adequacy of current space, equipment, and telephone capacity;

- Current budget and anticipated increase in next year's funding;

- Satisfaction of current volunteers with supervision and training.

These factors (and others that may have importance for your program), will provide evidence about whether or not the program can accommodate an additional number of volunteers without shortchanging the volunteers or sacrificing the quality of services to children.

Planning for Recruitment

The ultimate goal of recruitment is to have a self-perpetuating cycle in which satisfied volunteers bring in new volunteers. To achieve that you have to assure that every person who has experience with the program, whether s/he becomes a volunteer or not feels positively toward the program. The importance of this was reinforced in the results of recent research which indicated that a person who has a negative experience in any arena will likely tell ten other people, while people who have a positive experience generally tell only two other people. Preparation for recruitment involves several steps:

1. Evaluate what attracts volunteers.
2. Review the volunteer job description for adequacy & accuracy.
3. Examine the community's image of the program.
4. Design recruitment strategies.
5. Evaluate outcomes and modify future plans accordingly.

Why Do People Volunteer?

The best source of information about what attracts volunteers and what keeps them committed to the CASA program is the volunteers themselves. If the program does not already do so, now would be a good time to ask volunteers to evaluate the program. Questionnaires or personal interviews with current volunteers will provide information about how and why people were first attracted to the CASA program, what benefits they feel they derive, what characteristics they share, and what suggestions they have for improving the program's support of its volunteers. If former volunteers are still in the area, it would be useful to survey them on these issues as well. Knowing why people leave the program is also important information and should be collected from exiting volunteers, preferably in interviews at the time they are leaving. (See Appendix 12 - A, Volunteer Exit Questionnaire). The findings obtained from current and former volunteers will assist in planning recruitment

activities as well as supporting additions and/or changes in program structure or operations.

A significant amount of research has been done and a great deal has been written about why and when people volunteer. Reviewing some of the information illustrated in Table 12.1 may be helpful during the preparation phase.

Volunteering in the United States
1990 Gallup Poll

How did you first learn about your volunteer activities?		Who asked you to volunteer?	
• Asked by someone	• 42.4%	• Friend	• 52.0%
• Through participation in an organization	• 41.3%	• Someone at church or synagogue	• 28.3%
• Family member or friend benefited	• 27.8%	• Family member or relative	• 25.0%
• Sought an activity on my own	• 21.0%	• Someone at work	• 11.3%
		• My employer	• 7.9%
• Saw an advertisement	• 6.0%	• Contacted by organization representative	• 7.9%
• Other	• 5.6%	• Teacher/school youth activities leader	• 4.0%
• Don't know	• 1.8%	• Other	• 5.1%
		• Don't know	• 1.8%
Have you been asked to volunteer?	**Have been asked**		**Volunteered when asked**
• All respondents	• 40%		• 87%
• Blacks	• 26%		• 87%+
• Hispanics	• 27%		• 87%+
• Youths age 18-24	• 31%		• 87%+
• People with incomes below $20,000	• 26%		• 87%+

Table 12.1

It is difficult to generalize about motivating reasons for volunteering because not every person is motivated by the same thing. Programs are often given some clue about motivation by scanning the section on the volunteer application that asks the question "Why do you want to be a CASA volunteer?" But for most people, the answer to that question goes deeper than altruistic responses like "I want to help abused children." Volunteering also meets some personal needs of the individual. Fisher and Cole describe how Maslow's classic hierarchy of needs can help in understanding the motivation of volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

Maslow described motivation as the individual's response to internal needs. He created a pyramid consisting of physiological, security, socialization, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs. Maslow believed that each of these needs prompts an

individual to act in a certain way until that need is met, after which it no longer serves to motivate, and movement to the next higher level of the pyramid occurs. For example, a person is not likely to be motivated by social needs until physiological and safety needs are satisfied.

This theory suggests that organizations wishing to attract and retain volunteers need to be sensitive to the needs that are dominant among those they seek. For example, to attract volunteers from some disadvantaged groups, an organization should plan to provide reimbursement for mileage, telephone calls, and parking in order that those costs do not prevent the meeting of physiological needs. These incentives, however, would have little attraction to affluent volunteers whose needs are for socialization, self-esteem, or self-actualization. CASA programs must be sensitive to these varying needs and develop strategies for motivating volunteers regardless of where their needs fall on the pyramid.

People become involved in CASA because it benefits them in some way at the same time their work helps others. It is rare that a volunteer is content with only the intrinsic satisfaction of volunteering. While this is important, the context in which the job is performed is equally important. When volunteers are not satisfied with both, they usually take their skills elsewhere. This is true even of CASA volunteers who have a lengthy history with the organization because their motivation changes over time. That makes it critical for programs to reward the achievements of their volunteers and provide opportunities for growth.

The results of research confirm what common sense already tells us: people volunteer for multiple reasons which may be complex and unknown even to themselves. What that means for recruitment efforts is that the message must be designed to appeal to many different motivations. The good news is that most people have a "button" that can be pushed.

Rather than why an individual volunteers, even more important questions might be when people volunteer and under what circumstances. On these questions, research has shown that people mentally calculate a cost/benefit analysis of each potential volunteer position. They consider the difficulty of the work, the time required, the potential risks, and the amount of inconvenience compared to their perception of how pressing the need is and the likelihood that their involvement will have a direct and positive impact. People do not want to feel that their time and work will be wasted.

Another issue to consider is why people might not want to volunteer for CASA. After all, there are many worthwhile causes seeking volunteers. CASA will not appeal to everyone. Anticipate obstacles so that a person's possible concerns can be acknowledged even before (s)he raises them. By the time doubts are expressed, the

candidate may already be lost to another organization. By anticipating potential concerns, some of them can be addressed to the person's satisfaction. If they can't, the person is probably not a good prospect. Table 12.2 summarizes some of the most frequent reasons people give for volunteering and not volunteering for CASA.

REASONS PEOPLE CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR CASA	REASONS PEOPLE CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR CASA
• To make a difference in a child's life • To give back to the community • Religious conviction • To have a new challenge • To learn new things • To explore a career path • To make new friends • To feel good about something • To change the system • To gain status • To work with professionals in other fields	• The problems addressed by CASA are overwhelming and depressing • Fear of experiencing something frightening or unpleasant • Too much time required • Work is too difficult • Intimidation about working in the court • Would "get too attached to the child"
WAYS CASA BENEFITS THE SYSTEM	
Volunteers: • Carry the sense of urgency to all persons involved in the system that this child's life is passing, and the child's needs must be met now • In some cases, reduce the number of times a child is moved while in the court system • Assist and ensure that the system does what it is supposed to do for children • Help the courts make timely and sound decisions about placements for children • In some cases, reduce the total time a child spends in foster care	

Table 12.2

Review the CASA Job Description

A next step in planning recruitment is to review the volunteer's job description with staff and current volunteers to determine if it accurately and thoroughly explains the responsibilities and expectations of the CASA volunteer. A good job description, shared with potential volunteers, will allow them to self-screen their abilities and their willingness to do the job. Job descriptions should include:

- The specific duties of the volunteer

- The time commitment required

- The qualifications & skills necessary

- The training that will be required

A well written job description also helps identify those skills, past experiences, and personality traits that are desirable in a CASA and those characteristics that are ideal. Having a clear idea about the kind of person being sought helps identify where to find those people in the community. (See Appendices 12-B & 12 - C, Volunteer Job Descriptions).

Assessing the Image of the Program

Volunteer recruitment must be viewed in the broader context of the public image of your program. When you ask someone to volunteer, you are asking him or her to affiliate with you. This means that people, whether consciously or not, will assess whether the program has an image that matches their self-image. The public's perception of the program will be determined by many factors. Answering the following questions will give you a good idea what the image of the program is at the current time:

1. What publicity has the program received lately?
2. If there has been publicity, was it good or bad?
3. What do the organization's printed materials say?
4. Are they likely to be inviting to all?
5. Is your office a welcoming place to all?
6. What happens when people telephone the office?
7. Is there a live, friendly voice answering calls at all times, occasionally, or never?
8. Does your answering machine work properly?
9. When someone leaves a message, how long is it before someone calls back?
10. After someone expresses interest, how long is it before they have face to face contact with someone?
11. How long do applicants have to wait to be screened and interviewed?
12. How long do they have to wait before training begins?
13. What do you do to keep them interested until training begins?
14. What is the racial and ethnic composition of the staff? Board? Volunteers?
15. Has the history of your program been one of growth and success or have there been controversies that became public?

An accurate assessment of how the public perceives the program is an important key to designing recruitment strategies that are likely to attract the people who would feel most comfortable affiliating with the CASA program.

Overcoming A Bad Image

Knowing both the positive and negative perceptions of the program will also prepare those doing recruitment to deal with inaccuracies and misperceptions directly. Without introducing controversial or negative thoughts to the audience, a speaker can anticipate hostility or skepticism and counteract their effects. There are several strategies that can be helpful in confronting past problems:

- Acknowledgment. Admit that there has been a problem or controversy.

- Without violating confidentiality or laying blame, explain what happened and how the program has dealt with it. In some instances, the appeal of "we need your help to turn things around" can be very effective.

- Challenge assumptions: be willing to engage in some non-aggressive confrontation of rumors or misinformation by providing accurate information and setting the record straight.

If there is damaging publicity to overcome, it may be a good idea to seek some pro bono consultation from a public relations specialist. It may also be useful to convene a discussion with board members, volunteers, and other staff to decide how questions or negative comments will be responded to.

If your program has experienced a crisis such as the tragic death of a child assigned to CASA, it is likely that such an event will impact the program's ability to attract new volunteers for a period of time. In these situations it is important to be candid about the possibility of similar tragedies occurring again. At the same time, stress the support and close supervision volunteers receive to minimize the potential of something going wrong and the assistance given to all volunteers when something does go wrong. Ultimately, if a volunteer candidate is overly concerned about potential risks, (s)he will decide not to volunteer. On the other hand, some people may perceive that they can help prevent such a fate for other children and may actually be spurred to become involved.

Designing Recruitment Strategies

Effective recruitment requires varied and creative strategies. One operating principle is never to utilize a recruitment strategy that serves only one purpose. The cost in dollars and time is rarely justified for a one-stop technique. Adapt the same speech

for several audiences or use the same brochures for fundraising, to increase cost effectiveness. (See Appendix 12-D, CASA Fact Sheet).

There are two general approaches to recruitment. The first is the broad appeal which tries to reach the largest possible audience. Examples of this approach include use of mass media, print materials widely distributed, and speaking to community groups. This approach is effective as an avenue for publicity and to increase CASA's visibility in the community.

The second method is targeted recruitment which is designed to reach the individuals and groups in the community who are most likely to have the qualifications being sought and would be most interested in volunteering for CASA. A targeted campaign would begin by exploring common characteristics among your current volunteers and then identifying where you would be most likely to find others from that population.

There are, of course, pros and cons to both approaches. The positive benefit to the broad approach is that it gets the message to the greatest number of people with the least investment of time and money. The downside is that the program may have to respond to a great many calls in a short amount of time and inquirers responding to general publicity may not be interested in volunteering. A recent Gallup poll conducted found that only 6% of volunteers learned of their volunteer job through mass media.

Targeted recruitment is highly efficient because it uses a tailored message to reach a specific audience in the most persuasive way. In its ultimate form, targeted recruitment could actually identify individuals to approach. The disadvantage of this method is that it is time and labor intensive. It also creates the possibility that you will not reach potential good volunteers who do not fit the usual profile.

The best campaign utilizes strategies from both approaches and combines the two by creating mass media material that is designed to target certain audiences. Regardless of the method used, people must be recruited to volunteer. When United Way conducted a study of why people do not volunteer, the most common reason given was that they had not been asked. Most people do not say "no"; they simply have not been given an opportunity to say "yes".

Targeted Volunteer Recruitment Ideas

- Ask each volunteer to recruit one friend.

- Ask local businesses to recruit one employee to volunteer and give the business recognition.

- Approach conservation & environmental groups. (They often care about children, too.)

- Approach sports groups like hiking or bicycle clubs.

- Put notices where aging baby-boomers will see them: health clubs, spas, beauty salons.

- Approach people who are aware of child abuse through their jobs: police officers, medical professionals, teachers, therapists.

- Speak to faculty & instructors at colleges, community colleges, and professional schools.

- Seek out senior citizens wherever they might be.

- Put ads in membership newsletters of professional societies.

- When someone is mentioned in the local newspaper for an achievement of note, write a note of congratulations asking if they would volunteer.

Table 12.3

Importance of Personal Contact

Every recruitment campaign should include personal contacts from people already affiliated with CASA. Research has shown that 80-85% of new recruits come from others involved with a program. There are several reasons why personal recruitment is the best strategy. One is that it is difficult to say no when asked directly to help, especially by a friend or acquaintance. The more direct the appeal, the more difficult it is to refuse. Another factor is modeling. Because the recruiter is often a volunteer, (s)he is not only asking for help but is also providing an example of acting as a volunteer. Each CASA volunteer is living proof to their friends and acquaintances that "regular folks" can do the job, and that while being a CASA volunteer may be challenging at times, it is not impossible. People are more likely to engage in helping behavior after watching someone else behave in a similar way.

Recruiting People of Color

Many CASA programs would like to involve more people of color in all aspects of their program's development and operations, but are frustrated that strategies tried have not resulted in significant numbers of people becoming involved. The commitment to diversity must be demonstrated by everyone in the program. It must be approached as a long-term process of developing relationships and communication with the neighborhoods and communities where people of color live. Adapted from work done by Mary Telesford, a Casey Foundation advisor to Families for Children's Mental Health in Arlington, Virginia, the following strategies should be considered:

Get to know community leaders. Avoid going just to churches as they are already asked to help in many ways. Seek out the leaders in the schools; locally owned small businesses; Head Start programs; day care programs; senior citizen centers; and public housing resident councils. Begin to develop relationships by volunteering to help in community projects.

Do community-based publicity. Fliers and posters about CASA can be placed in laundromats, clinics, grocery stores, day care centers, and bus or train stops. Fliers can also be given to children at school to take home. Presentations can be made at PTA meetings, Head Start Programs, and at community centers. Individuals can be asked to spread the word.

Hold public information meetings. Hold meetings in the community at a location that is accessible by walking or public transportation. Many people prefer meeting between 4:30 and 7:00 PM so they don't have to be out after dark. Announce in the publicity that there will be child care and food available.

Collaboration. Because CASA serves many children from minority communities, members of the community want to work in partnership to address the needs of their children. Ask for advice from members of the community about appropriate services that may not be widely known. Seek help in preparing brochures, meeting agendas, and other informational material.

Follow-up Promptly. If individuals express an interest in volunteering, get back to them within two or three days at the most.

Recruitment of diverse volunteers will not create a diverse program; it can only reflect the organization's commitment to diversity in every aspect of its operations. Successful recruitment of people of color can not take place until the program matches recruitment efforts with overall adjustments in the organization, including review of staff recruitment practices, changes in composition of the board, and re-assessment of program priorities. Once the organization demonstrates acceptance

and commitment to diversity, recruitment efforts can demonstrate to the community, the program's desire to have meaningful involvement of all segments of the community.

Keeping Volunteers

Having a strong recruitment program without giving equal attention to the issues of recognition and retention is like pouring water into a bucket with a gaping hole in the bottom. Recognition and retention are simply the continuation of the recruitment process. Successful recruitment requires that volunteers never be taken for granted – they are too valuable and the effort required to train them too great for them to be wasted. The key to retaining volunteers is to make sure they are getting their particular needs met through their volunteer experience. Volunteers are likely to remain with CASA if they experience a boost in self-esteem as a result of their performance as volunteers; they feel a sense of belonging to the organization; and at the same time, feel unique and special.

One critical point when volunteers may decide to leave the program is at or near the end of their first case. It is at this point that they may reassess their expectations of the program and if there is a significant gap between what they expected to be able to accomplish and the reality of what they were able to accomplish, they are likely to make the decision to depart. Close supervision and attention during this period are critical. The supervisor can assist the volunteers in analyzing their service to CASA and can perhaps help in identifying new goals and re-affirming the volunteers' commitment.

Recognition

Volunteers must feel a sense of appreciation and reward for their contribution. The most powerful type of recognition takes place informally in the day-to-day interchange between the volunteer and the organization through the staff expressing sincere appreciation and thanks for the work being done by the volunteer.

Most CASA programs also have formal recognition systems which are comprised of awards, certificates, plaques, pins, and formal events to honor volunteer achievement. Many hold a yearly reception or dinner at which individual volunteers are singled out for their contributions. In planning such an event or any formal ceremony, consider the following:

- Is this being done to honor the volunteers, or so that staff can feel involved and can feel that they have shown appreciation for volunteers?

- Is it real and not stale or mechanical?

- Does it fit? Would the volunteers feel better if you spent the money on more training or providing volunteers the opportunity to attend a state or national conference?

- Can you make it a sense of celebration and a builder of team identity?

Formal events and awards are helpful in satisfying the needs of the volunteer who has a need for community approval, but they have little or no impact on those whose primary motivation is for achievement and service to "their" children. The best system mixes different approaches in order to have something that meets the needs of every type of volunteer.

Volunteer Recognition Ideas

- Say thank you.

- Send thank you notes.

- Write letters to their families.

- Tell them they did a good job (when they did).

- Ask for their opinions.

- Invite them to coffee.

- Compliment their skills or positive qualities

- Take them to lunch.

- Provide food at group meetings.

- Appoint them to committees.

- Offer the opportunity to attend a conference or seminar.

- Have them make training presentations to their peers.

- Use them as speakers to community organizations.

- Feature in a newsletter articles.

- Nominate for awards.

- Give special tee shirts, mugs, pins, or other trinkets.

- Give them more responsibilities.

Table 12.4

Retention

When volunteer turn-over is high, the problem can usually be traced to problems of motivation. Conducting anonymous surveys of current and past volunteers can offer good clues about what changes the program can make in its efforts to keep volunteers motivated.

Keeping volunteers motivated requires creating an experience that allows an individual to meet his/her needs in ways that are productive for the organization and satisfying for the individual. Because each volunteer has a different combination of needs as discussed earlier each will do best in different working conditions. Some are motivated by gaining work experience, whereas others are motivated by the desire to meet new people. Still others have a burning passion to do something to contribute to the cause of reforming the child welfare system.

A positive, enthusiastic climate in which to work and helping people feel a sense of belonging to the organization are basic factors which encourage most volunteers, regardless of their motivational needs, to continue with the program. Providing careful screening of applicants, quality training, and good supervision also are necessary to retain successful volunteers. These issues are discussed in Chapter 13.

Table 12-5 provides what research has shown to be the most important strategies to retaining successful volunteers.

Volunteer Retention Strategies

- Vary your recognition program.
- Take the time to train your volunteers so that they know what they need to know to do their job.
- Provide guidance and supervision of the volunteers' work.
- Stay up to date on the progress in cases so that you will be able to respond appropriately to the questions asked.
- Ask volunteers to evaluate the program once a year.
- Acknowledge that your volunteers have other priorities by not assigning too many cases.
- Begin a Volunteer Advisory Committee to provide input on in-service training and other issues of importance to volunteers. Such committees give volunteers a stronger connection to the program and its mission, and a reason to stay involved.
- Resist the urge to "play favorites." Be consistent with policies.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to be involved in other aspects of the program, like attending legislative committee meetings or writing letters to elected officials.

Table 12.5

Evaluating What Works and What Doesn't

Evaluating recruitment and retention efforts should occur regularly as part of overall program evaluation. The first measure to examine is whether the program achieved the desired number of new volunteers. If not, why not? Maybe the goal was too ambitious. Maybe the timing of the campaign interfered with other competing events. Maybe outreach was aimed at the wrong groups. Keeping data on where and how many times applicants heard about the program will help determine what techniques to repeat and which ones to abandon.

Examining the quality of new applicants should help in making the decision about whether to do broad recruitment or more targeted recruitment next time. If the skills and qualifications of the applicants are not as good as desired, maybe the job requirements and expectations were not adequately explained during the initial contacts. Maybe the program's brochures do not state clearly the skills an applicant should have. Review and needed modifications should be completed prior to the next campaign.

By following these steps, a recruitment plan can be developed that, with minor modifications, will be successful for a long time. In time, the reputation of CASA as a great place to volunteer will make recruitment easy.

13

Volunteer Management

"In my experience, the only way to assure effective long-term volunteers is to conduct careful selection, thorough training, responsible supervision, and routine evaluation."

Lynn Shreve, State Director
CASA of the Family Court
Wilmington, Delaware

Assembling a corps of appropriate volunteers is a major accomplishment but it is only the first step in volunteer management. The next and equally challenging task is letting volunteers know how they are expected to fulfill their role as advocates. This is an ongoing responsibility for two reasons. Obviously, the volunteer population changes over time but, on a more subtle level, so do program expectations. Seasoned programs may be looking to experienced volunteers to assist with recruitment, training, mentoring or public speaking in addition to the basic skills necessary to do child advocacy. Whatever the requirements of the program, staff should not just assume that the policies and procedures which have been handed out are fully understood by the volunteers. Expectations need to be formally communicated, using all the means at the program's disposal. Job descriptions, screening, training, written policies, and supervision all present opportunities to transmit (and revise as needed) critical information. Having these tools available and documenting their use also helps clarify and professionalize the role of the CASA volunteer to others within the child welfare system.

Screening Applicants

Screening is a process that should help to select the best applicants to become CASA volunteers. It does not constitute the entire selection process, but is the first step in identifying individuals who have identifiable characteristics that pose a risk to children and to the program.

Legal claims that arise from inadequate screening generally are based on a theory of "negligence." Under the law, an action (or lack of action) is "negligent" if a reasonable person would not have acted the same way. While no screening process can predict with 100% accuracy, the program has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to protect the children served and the program from potential harm.

The screening process used by the program should be written and utilized by every employee with every applicant. The existence of a written procedure and consistent implementation of it will help to prevent most claims of negligent or inappropriate screening.

At a minimum, the screening process should include a written application; at least one extensive interview preferably with more than one person; at least three references other than family members; and criminal and child abuse registry background checks. There are a number of other screening tools that can be utilized including fingerprinting, credit checks, psychological tests, and FBI reports. The lack of general agreement about the reliability of these techniques and the time and cost involved, probably makes their use unnecessary in the routine screening process.

Volunteer Applications

At the initial inquiry, an interested individual should be given the volunteer's job description, the qualifications, skills and requirements for the position. There should also be the opportunity for the person to ask questions and to receive any additional information necessary to make a decision about his/her interest in applying to become a CASA volunteer. Once that decision is made, a written application can be completed. (See Appendices 13 - A & 13 - B for examples of Volunteer Applications).

Besides basic information about the applicant, CASA applications often request answers to essay questions. The goal is to determine the person's writing skill as well as his/her motivation for wanting to be a CASA volunteer. If a writing assignment is required, the applicant should be informed of its purpose in advance. One good technique is to pose hypothetical case situations that the applicant responds to. This provides some information about the person's attitudes and values regarding child abuse.

Most programs include on the application form or attached to it, a statement giving the applicant's permission to obtain criminal and child protective background information. If an applicant has recently moved to the area, it is important to obtain previous addresses to conduct systems checks in previous states of residence. Don't forget to ask for other names the applicant may have used in the past (See Appendix 13 - C, Authority to Release Information). Questions regarding criminal offenses should be included on the application to provide an opportunity for self-disclosure and explanations.

Interviewing

Guidance for conducting screening interviews is included in Chapter 8 and also in National CASA's *Guide to Program Development*. Volunteers should have an additional interview at the end of training. This provides an opportunity to answer lingering questions or address concerns that have arisen during training. If after obtaining all screening information, you determine that the individual is not appropriate for the program, the individual should be rejected at this point.

If a conclusive decision to reject the individual has been made prior to the final interview, the applicant should be invited into the office and rejected at that point. No one should begin or continue training once it is determined that (s)he will not be accepted into the program.

When something troublesome does arise in the screening or interviewing of a potential volunteer, it must be handled with sensitivity, respect, and strict confidentiality. Beyond conviction for a criminal offense that involved a child, there is no national policy on offenses that would make an applicant ineligible. Some

boards have developed strongly worded policy statements establishing specific criteria for acceptance or denial of a volunteer. Other programs have chosen to leave options flexible in order to deal with the circumstances of each individual case. When the policy is flexible, the following considerations are important to making the best decision:

- At the time of application or during the interview, did the applicant reveal the past incident and provide any explanation?

- If an explanation was provided, is it plausible? Does it describe extenuating circumstances that might justify the past action?

- Is the incident a one-time occurrence or did identical or similar incidents occur more often?

- Can the applicant's explanation be verified by references?

The applicant should have the opportunity to answer the above questions and provide any other information that could have relevance. The decision whether to accept the applicant as a volunteer depends upon whether or not there is potential for damage to children, to the program, or embarrassment to the individual if it became necessary to reveal the information under questioning in court. Fortunately, such instances are rare. Most of the time, a person with a problem in their past will not proceed with the application or will withdraw if informed of the difficulty.

References

References should always be contacted and documentation of the information provided maintained in the volunteer's file. (See Appendix 13 - D, Reference Form). While the applicant's chosen references will usually provide positive comments, they are a good source of confirmation for the information provided by the applicant and for insight about potential concerns. Contacting the individual's employer if provided as a reference allows explanation of the time requirements of the CASA's job and to determine in advance if time away from work might be a problem. If you have completed the screening process and feel that more information is still needed, it is appropriate to ask the applicant for additional references who might provide information of a certain type.

CASA programs often attract adults who were abused as children. Their motivation is honest and they feel that they, better than anyone can understand the child's feelings. Many individuals seek counseling to deal with the pain caused by abuse and are able to successfully integrate the past into present lives. Unfortunately, many have not. When such an individual applies, (s)he should be informed about the concerns in such a situation and the need to contact the therapist or counselor the person worked with. After obtaining all available information, you can not satisfy all

the concerns, it is better for the applicant and the program that s(he) not continue with the application process.

Is Citizenship Required?

A screening question which occurs with increasing frequency is whether a person who is not a U.S. citizen may serve as a CASA. Such a volunteer has the potential to bring cultural diversity, unique personal experiences and language skills to both a CASA program and the children it serves. While U.S. citizenship is not required of CASA volunteers, there are several screening issues to consider.

- Can sufficient background information be obtained (and translated, if necessary) to meet program standards set to insure child safety?

- Does the applicant have sufficient fluency in written and spoken English to perform the tasks required of a volunteer?

- Does the lack of U.S. citizenship pose any difficulty for the court system?

Once these issues have been settled, the prospective volunteer may proceed to the next step.

Ethical Issues

Even with appropriate policies and procedures in place, the director may find it difficult to communicate to volunteers the importance of strict adherence to the ethical standards required by the program. Two fairly universal practices are helpful in this regard.

The first is having each new class of volunteers sworn in by the presiding judge. This brief ceremony can be used to remind volunteers of their special relationship to the court and its attendant responsibilities. The judge (or the director , if the judge is unavailable) can emphasize the need for advocates to be thorough, timely, accurate, dependable and free from bias. Above all, (s)he can reinforce the necessity of handling case-related information in a professional and confidential manner.

The second practice which affirms the necessity of ethical conduct is the use of a confidentiality agreement. Most organizations have a volunteer sign one when (s)he is accepted into the program. Some reinforce its importance by executing a separate document each time a new case is assigned. In virtually all programs, a violation of client confidentiality is cause for immediate dismissal. This is an appropriate consequence for such a potentially devastating action. The importance of maintaining case information as confidential can hardly be over-stated. A breach in confidentiality can cause irreparable harm to the child and family involved. It can

poison working relationships between CASA and the professional community and cast doubt on the utility of the program. It could even result in litigation.

For all these reasons, it is important that staff and volunteers are clear about what is meant by confidentiality in this context. Just as American citizens were constantly admonished during World War II that "Loose lips sink ships," CASA volunteers should be reminded that confidentiality violations can occur unwittingly. Something as simple as discussing a case in the hall, the elevator or the bathroom, or leaving information on the coffee table at home can have unforeseen consequences. In order to minimize risk, each CASA program should review their policy frequently with volunteers. How confidentiality is to be handled in staffing or team meetings of volunteers should be specifically covered. Reminders in the newsletter, humorous posters on the wall, vignettes during training can all be used to reinforce the importance of confidentiality. (See Appendix 13 - E, Confidentiality Policy)

Ex-parte Communication

Another area of ethical quandary is ex-parte communication (communication about the specific details of a case with the judge outside the courtroom). From the volunteer's perspective, it almost seems that (s)he has been given two competing mandates: "advocate vigorously for the needs of the child" and "operate within the confines of the judicial system", however detrimental its frequent delays may be to the child. It is no wonder that CASA volunteers are frequently tempted to use their unique relationship with the judge to transmit information for the benefit of the child. Volunteers and staff cannot assume that the judge will automatically avoid inappropriate conversations. Advocates need to understand what constitutes ex-parte communication, the possible consequences its use and what alternatives exist for meeting the child's needs.

When Volunteer Desires to Change Relationship with the Child

A third area of ethical conflict occurs when a volunteer wants to change the nature of his/her relationship with the child for whom (s)he is advocating. A volunteer's sudden desire to become "Tonya's foster mother" or "Michael's visiting resource" presents a number of concerns for the program director. In one sense, it is not surprising that a person with a demonstrated commitment to children would become attached to a child who is "just another file" in a woefully inadequate system. However, there is more to the equation than a child in need of a home and an adult willing to provide one. What is the plan for this child? How might the interjection of the volunteer in a care-taking role affect it? What is the volunteer's level of exposure to the child welfare system? How long have child and adult known each other? Does this person have what it takes to be a foster parent, visiting resource, adopting

parent, etc.? How will the CASA program represent the child in the future if this change of roles occurs?

The director's response will obviously be conditioned by the answers to those and other questions. If no policies have been violated, it may be possible to put the volunteer on an extended leave of absence. Sometimes the volunteer's conduct has left the program with no option but dismissal. As always, the outcome will be determined by the best interests of the child which cannot be served by one person wearing the hats of caregiver and CASA volunteer at the same time. Nor can the volunteer simply be assigned to a different child. The potential for conflict of interest is too great. A foster or adoptive parent licensed or supervised by the local social service agency does not have the necessary freedom from competing interests to advocate vigorously. Even if the volunteer felt no pressure personally, any position (s)he took could be perceived by others as having been influenced by his/her foster or adoptive status.

Core Values

Beyond the ethical issues that are crucial to effective advocacy, there are four core values that it is important for a program to transmit to its volunteers.

- Advocacy is most effective when done on both the micro and macro level. The problems of children in the system will be solved much more quickly if each CASA not only represents "Jasmine" or "Jeffrey" in court but writes letters, works on campaigns, sits on boards, donates money, makes presentations and votes so that families will have the drug treatment programs, domestic violence shelters, adult literacy programs, job training, quality day care, etc. that they need to adequately care for their children.

- An advocate is a professional, not a baby-sitter, taxi driver, or dilettante. If volunteers act accordingly, in time, others will respond with respect. A CASA volunteer should always be prepared, sincere, look the part, and share information as appropriate. In many areas where CASA volunteers were initially looked upon with fear, contempt or worse, they are now seen as allies.

- An advocate has a specific job to do. A CASA volunteer is not an aunt or a big brother. Professionalism goes to the heart of the CASA/child relationship. It is important to be clear about what the function of a CASA really is and to stick to that definition. Avoid the three "pitfall promises" which are made with the best of intentions:

  - "I won't tell anyone what you tell me."

- "No one will ever hurt you again."

- "I'll make sure you go (or never go, depending on the child's wishes) back home."

  - An advocate who takes on the challenge of working in a cross-cultural environment has an ongoing obligation to educate him/herself about other cultures. This obligation goes further than good intentions. It requires a plan. What specific activities: books, visits, movies, conversations, classes, trips, etc. will be planned and when?

Like any values, these are best communicated by example. Program directors and staff have a heavy responsibility in that area. (See Appendix 13 - F, Volunteer Commitment Statement).

Pre-Service Training

The training curriculum (*Comprehensive Training for the CASA/GAL)* distributed by the National CASA Association or some variation of it is the standard within the network. Although the curriculum is designed to be covered in 40 hours, many programs have scaled back their requirements for pre-service training to 30 hours or less. While attending fewer hours of training may look attractive to volunteers initially, it actually saddles them with the burden of absorbing more information in less time. The concern for experienced CASA programs is mechanics, not content. No matter how long or short the training, the same substantive issues still require coverage. (See National CASA's Standards for CASA Programs for topics that should be covered). One method of orienting potential volunteers to CASA realities is to arrange for several hours of "shadowing" as part of the training program. Having a trainee accompany and observe a seasoned volunteer can be an unparalleled learning experience, not only for the more "exciting" aspects like home visits or court appearances, but also to get a taste of how it feels to dig through a ten inch thick social service agency record and pull out necessary information. (Obviously confidentiality issues must be dealt with up front).

In-Service Training

If a program has chosen to reduce mandatory pre-service training, the amount and quality of in-service training becomes even more important. What can staff do to assure that volunteers honor their commitment to a certain number of in-service training hours each year before the point of dismissal for non-compliance is reached?

First, approach the situation with creativity. Make sure that not every in-service training session offered is presented in the same old lecture format. Research on adult education suggests that it needs to be interactive and relevant to maintain interest. What about a video, a multi-ethnic panel discussing disciplinary practices within different cultures, a foster parent panel, a tour and orientation at a child caring institution, a debate about how to define the minimum sufficient level of care or how to know when it's time to file a termination of parental rights petition?

Second, be flexible. Make sure that some sessions are offered during the day, the evening and the weekend hours and not always on the same day of the week. Varied locations are also important, especially if the program operates over a large geographical area. Rotate training sites. Make sure transportation reimbursement is provided if possible and that baby-sitting is available. Offer refreshments. Remember that not all training takes place in groups. If a particularly insightful article appears in a magazine or journal, have it copied and mailed to volunteers or leave a stack in the office so they can pick one up the next time they have business there. Are there computer modules available that volunteers could utilize at home or in the CASA office at a time convenient to them? National CASA's CASAnet contains articles and other materials with educational value as do other Internet resources. There are certainly numerous books and audio tapes from seminars, especially recent National CASA Association conferences which would increase the knowledge base of volunteers. Hopefully, some are maintained in the program's resource library. Why not a selected reading/listening list and a requirement for a one page report or conversation with a staff member to qualify for a specific number of in-service credit hours? CASA director Deborah Kinsey, whose program covers a large, sparsely populated rural area in northern Florida, devised a quiz on the National CASA publication *A Question of Balance.* Her volunteers read the book and complete the quiz as one method of receiving in-service training.

Encourage volunteers to "piggy-back" on local social services training events whenever possible. Likewise, if a volunteer is able to attend a relevant medical, legal or educational seminar because of their own professional or personal interests, request that they present a short workshop, share the materials or complete a report.

Third, make sure that all training presented meets the standard of cultural competency. Seek out diversity of presenters, materials and viewpoints. Make sure cultural considerations are discussed as they relate to the children in the program. Insist that a designated portion of ongoing training focus on cross-cultural issues.

Fourth, simplify record-keeping. A Texas CASA program sends out self addressed post cards to its volunteers at the beginning of each year. Each card has spaces to fill in detailing what training was attended on what date for how many hours.

Volunteers return their post cards at the end of the month so training hours can be posted by staff. A high rate of return is assured by offering a prize to the volunteer whose card is randomly drawn from the group.

Many programs use volunteers themselves to call their peers when records indicate that the requisite number of training hours has not been completed. Other programs make calls to each volunteer on a pre-announced day each month to collect their volunteer hours and in-service training hours for that month. Whatever method a program utilizes, training records are an important part of each volunteer's file for evaluation purposes and ultimately to determine compliance with basic policy.

Volunteer Supervision

Some people seem to have more of an aptitude for supervision than others. However, good supervisors, like good musicians, spend time practicing every day to improve their skills. This is especially important in a volunteer program because there are few carrots (raises , corner offices) and the only stick (dismissal) is not a threat to one's livelihood. To work well with volunteers, the supervisor must assume that they are self-directed and internally motivated. Lynn Shreve, CASA Coordinator in Delaware, has operationalized this belief by putting an important piece of record-keeping/deadline responsibility in the hands of the volunteers. Each volunteer receives a CASA calendar/planner at the beginning of the year. It lists program activities for each month and has lots of open space. Behind each page is a tear-out sheet. At the end of each month the volunteer looks at the calendar, records hours spent on each case and any additional training attended, etc. on the tear-out sheet and sends it to the CASA office.

It is the work of the supervisor to create opportunities, remove obstacles, encourage growth and provide guidance. Once the volunteer has been trained, the supervisor clarifies questions, provides a supportive environment and then allows the CASA to begin planning and problem-solving in his/her first case.

It is important for volunteers to be taught what the supervisor's functions are. This instruction should begin during training. Then the volunteer knows that (s)he can look to the supervisor for direction, support and information. Direction is concrete as in "This looks like the next step. What do you think?" Support reflects what the volunteer is feeling as in "It sounds like you were really upset when the court ignored your recommendation." Information as in "There's a great tape in the resource library about helping children deal with grief and loss." It is sometimes difficult for supervisors to resist being overly cautious with new volunteers. Remember that most CASAs are not first-time volunteers. Many come to the program through other, very

active civic organizations. They are looking for challenges and independence, not hand-holding.

How Much Supervision is Enough?

The issue of adequate supervision is hotly debated in volunteer management circles. It is an especially relevant question for CASA supervisors since the majority of the volunteer's duties are conducted off-site. Clearly, the answer varies depending on the volunteer but there are some guidelines to assist those in a supervisory role. The first is the National CASA Association Standards which require a ratio of 1 supervisor for every 30 volunteers. While maintaining this ratio obviously raises personnel costs, to do less would put CASA programs in the same position as many social service agencies: children's' needs going unnoticed and unmet due to lack of adequate staff. Public and judicial support for such an advocacy program would quickly fade as would volunteer motivation.

The next point is that supervision like anything else having to do with human relationships is not static. It is influenced by the environment in which it occurs. For example, personnel changes, even positive ones like a promotion from within the ranks or the long-awaited addition of a new staff member, often trigger a temporary need for more structure and a return to step by step decision making. Volunteers may be unsure of how to relate to their former colleague or miss the special attention from the previous supervisor and attempt to circumvent the "new order." Adjusting to change is a gradual process and collaboration at the supervisory level is a must.

Lastly, appropriate supervision is a function of two interrelated factors: how much autonomy the volunteer is given and how frequently contact is maintained. Both exist on parallel continuums. Each volunteer requires a slightly different setting on each scale. For example, a new volunteer needs relatively frequent and elaborate direction. On the other hand you may have an experienced volunteer whose work is top quality but who has a problem with deadlines. That type of person performs well autonomously but requires a "high" setting on the frequency of contact scale to make sure the report gets in on time. Assessing where each volunteer falls on the two scales and dealing with him/her accordingly makes supervision much more effective.

Peer Supervision

Several different terms are being used for the peer supervision models common in CASA programs today. In these organizations, experienced volunteers are trained to function as mentors or supervisors of other volunteers. Programs have adapted the

concept in a variety of ways to meet their own needs. The duties of the volunteer leader vary from program to program.

A number of programs train seasoned volunteers as mentors to new volunteers. The mentor fills the traditional mentoring role of teacher, role model, sounding board, cheerleader, and support person to new volunteers. Generally, a mentor is required to perform this role only through the first case, but many volunteers find that they develop strong friendships and continue their relationship to offer each other encouragement, support, and creative ideas. For volunteers who are motivated by the need for affiliation, these relationships can be very rewarding.

Other programs have expanded the job of a mentor to that of volunteer supervisor. In this role, the supervising volunteer has responsibility for overseeing case activities. Volunteers used in a supervisory capacity are carefully selected and are given special training in leadership, giving feedback, and conflict management. To work effectively, the supervising volunteer must be clear about expectations and must have frequent communication with the staff.

Another variation on this concept is the use of experienced volunteers as leaders of peer teams. In this model, the team leader is responsible for arranging and facilitating peer support group meetings on a regular basis. At these meetings, volunteers wishing to bring questions about their cases to the group receive suggestions and feedback from the others. Volunteers receive in-service training credit for attendance at these meetings.

The idea of using volunteers in any of these roles has both positives and negatives. New volunteers report that they like having another volunteer to provide support as a supplement to, but not replacement for, the staff supervisor. Experienced volunteers are generally less positive about reporting to another volunteer. On the other hand, the volunteer mentors/leaders/supervisors report that they find the role satisfying and challenging.

The obvious downside is the risk of potential liability it creates for the program. When the program implements such a strategy, professional staff should also stay up to date with knowledge of the cases and maintain communication with the assigned volunteer.

This role also places the volunteer supervisor at considerable risk of liability if they direct a volunteer to perform a certain action that results in harm to a child or others. Volunteers used in a supervisory capacity should be thoroughly informed of the risk and should check out the advisability of undertaking this role with their families and insurance companies.

When a program is considering the use of mentors, there are a number of issues, in addition to the risk of liability, that should be considered:

- **The time factor.** Most programs using mentors report that the time staff are involved in preparing and supervising is considerable, at least in the beginning.

- **Potential conflicts.** There are those inevitable times when the two volunteers disagree about the direction of a case. Occasionally the mentor and volunteer have personality and work style differences which clash. Staff must carefully monitor these situations as well as those in which the mentor becomes overly critical of the volunteer and/or the volunteer stubbornly resists the advice of the mentor.

- **Mentors should be carefully selected.** Not every experienced volunteer has the necessary qualities. In fact, many of those qualities that are desirable in good advocates are not desirable in mentors. Mentors should have good listening skills, exceptional patience and a strong desire to help others succeed. A person who likes to take control of a situation or one who does not have the patience to allow others to process and analyze information at their own pace is less likely to succeed as a mentor to others. A mentor should have a strong alliance with the program and the ability to recognize when a situation might present risk for the volunteer or the program.

- **Role and duties of mentors should be very clear.** As with any job, mentors should have a written job description and an understanding of the expectations. If they are being used as supervisors, the difference between their role and a traditional mentor's should be made clear. Initial training should be provided as well as ongoing support.

- **Remember they are volunteers.** It is easy to forget that mentors are still volunteers and need the same recognition and thank- yous that are given to all volunteers. Regular feedback from the staff and periodic evaluations for the mentor are also necessary components of an effective mentor program.

When careful consideration of all the positives and negatives is a part of program development, using volunteers in an expanded role to assist new CASA volunteers can enhance and enrich the experience of the volunteers and improve the quality of program practice at the same time. Giving senior volunteers new challenges and the opportunity for personal growth is also a good retention technique. (See Appendix 13 G, Volunteer Team Leader Job Description.)

When Volunteers Get Discouraged

What about a volunteer who is "situationally discouraged" by a negative outcome in a case? One strategy that supervisors can use to help that person get back on track is called "reframing." The term comes from family systems theory and is used to describe the process of helping a person view a situation from a different perspective. It does not mean discounting the seriousness of the situation but shifting the focus away from blame and hopelessness to include other aspects, the "silver lining" if you will. For example, if a volunteer is upset that the court has returned a child to an inadequate parent despite his/her recommendation, the supervisor has a number of reframing options. (S)he can discuss how the move may bring a faster resolution and less time in foster care for the child in the long run, remind the volunteer of a similar case with a positive outcome, commend the volunteer on his/her level of caring and competence in working on the case and brainstorm with the volunteer to generate options for monitoring the child's well-being. In cases where irreparable damage has been done, grief work is necessary first. Reframing is often done around the theme of how to use the event to insure that something similar does not happen again. Reframing does not produce instant results. Change comes slowly, but with practice, reframing can greatly lessen the potential for burnout.

Remaining hopeful in the face of adversity is difficult for most people but contrary to conventional wisdom, it is a skill that can be taught. Martin Seligman, Ph.D., at the University of Pennsylvania has done some fascinating research on people's responses to adversity. It became the basis for his book, *Learned Optimism.* Seligman's research indicates that people who explain their setbacks as temporary and specific retain a positive outlook. People who view their misfortunes as permanent and general feel helpless to change the situation and are prone to depression. Supervisors can motivate discouraged volunteers by helping them view distressing events as temporary and specific, rather than permanent and general. In the example cited earlier, the volunteer may feel that the child's placement in the home is never going to change and that as a CASA, (s)he has been useless failure who has let the child and the program down. To counteract that kind of global negativity, the supervisor should reinforce the positive view that if the home situation is not good, change in the child's placement is quite likely and that, despite the negatives in the child's home life, (s)he still remains in Head Start, has a caring grandmother and an active CASA advocating for him.

Listening to the language patterns of volunteers offers strong clues about whether they tend toward a pessimistic view of things. This can be important in screening and interviewing as well. If their conversation is peppered with "always" and "never" and explanations of adversity begin with "I am" rather than describing the situation,

it is likely that the volunteer will have difficulty maintaining an optimistic outlook without assistance. That is not to say that such people are inappropriate choices as volunteers, only that certain supervisory strategies may be more effective in motivating them.

Supporting the Volunteer Through a Crisis

Every CASA program and every volunteer appointed to a child lives with the fear that a child will one day be killed by an abusive parent or caretaker during an unsupervised visit, after reunification, or perhaps even in a foster home. Child deaths happen far too often and the media report about them in sensationalized detail. Though the apprehension about such a possibility is mostly unspoken by volunteers and CASA staff, it is there nevertheless. It goes unspoken because it is every volunteer's hope that their involvement in the case can prevent such a tragedy.

National CASA recently gathered information from the thirty-three CASA programs which reported on their 1995 program survey that their program had experienced the death of a child currently being served by a volunteer. Of the reported deaths, the majority died of illness or accident. But three children died from abuse – not a statistically large number when compared to the over 100,000 children served by CASA during the same period, but certainly significant to the volunteers involved as well as their program's staff and the other volunteers in the program.

When such an event strikes, it can have devastating impact on the individual volunteer and on the program for years to come. Since most people are ill-prepared to respond appropriately in such situations, it is wise for programs to develop a crisis response plan before it is needed. Being prepared to support the volunteer should be the first priority, but the program must also be ready to respond to the state agency and law enforcement, and handle the media.

In the fall of 1992, the Multnomah County, Oregon, CASA program faced the death by abuse of a child represented by a CASA volunteer. That program found that the assigned volunteer needed special attention and support, as did the staff and other volunteers. The volunteer needed the opportunity to process the entire case with the staff and to reconsider each decision point to determine if anything should have been done differently. This volunteer concluded that (s)he would have done things the same way if (s)he were to do it over. Other volunteers may not want or need to go over the case, but may simply need supportive one-to-one contact with a staff person or another volunteer who has been through a similar event. It may be important for the volunteer to be permitted to talk to family members and other supportive people about his feelings and the fact that his CASA child has died. This can be done without violation of confidential details, especially if the media reports on the case.

Other examples of support that can be offered include providing educational tapes or books and offering to have the program pay for counseling.

One tool that can provide volunteers (and program staff as well) with confidence that the recommendation to return a child home is the best one available is a risk assessment instrument. (See Appendix 13 - H, Return Home Risk Assessment). This series of questions considers the presence and degree of factors considered by experts to be indicators of potential harm to the child. There are, of course no crystal balls and no assurances, regardless of the tools used. Such instruments can be of help however, in making sure that no important considerations have been overlooked.

Evaluation

The biggest single task of the supervisor is to provide feedback, informally as well as formally. According to Fisher and Cole, feedback should always be given in behavioral rather than personal terms; it is descriptive rather than judgmental. One definition of feedback is to provide a description of progress toward goals. Informal feedback consists of comments made by supervisors in the course of everyday communication such as, "The draft of your court report looked really good. You might want to add some more about the barriers to the mother's progress that you mentioned to me last week." Formal feedback is given in the volunteer evaluation or performance appraisal. In both cases, the objective is to help the volunteer measure up to predetermined and clearly communicated performance standards.

The first commandment of any appraisal or evaluation is "No surprises." If the volunteer is surprised at the content of his/her evaluation, it is a sure sign that the supervisor has not been effective in providing informal, ongoing feedback. The second commandment is "No one can measure performance without something to measure it against." The evaluation must start with a good job description that outlines goals, objectives and performance measures. McCurley and Lynch recommend conducting the session using the RAP method:

- Review the past.
- Analyze the present.
- Plan the future.

While a form may be helpful in this process (See Appendix 13-I, Volunteer Evaluation Form) the discussion between supervisor and volunteer is the main event. The supervisor should listen at least as much as (s)he talks. Stick to the basics: job proficiency, working relationships, comparison with the last review. If a reprimand is called for:

- Be specific.

- Focus on the problematic behavior rather than attitude or motivation.

- Let the volunteer know you and the program expect quality work and are disappointed with less.

- Put the reprimand in perspective and move on.

Other evaluation techniques which may be used independently or in conjunction with the standard supervisor/volunteer evaluation are self-assessment and peer review. In self-assessment, volunteers are provided with a questionnaire which they score themselves. It lists a number of factors related to job performance. This is the least threatening type of evaluation and can be a good place to start if a program has not had a system in place previously. Some programs incorporate a self-assessment into their formal evaluation procedure. If a supervisor finds that his/her score is not well correlated with that of the volunteer, some work is needed on supervisory skills.

The second alternative technique is peer review. Peer review offers volunteers the opportunity to learn from each other and view their colleagues as resources. Caution should be exercised with this style of appraisal. It demands that volunteers first be trained in how to offer feedback in helpful, non-judgmental and constructive ways.

Most supervisors are not particularly enthusiastic about doing evaluations. They think of them primarily as a system for dealing with problems. Evaluations are really a way to praise the majority of volunteers who are doing their job well. Evaluations can also serve as diagnostic tool. For example, they can help a supervisor determine if a volunteer is ready to take on new or increased responsibility, or, conversely, is suffering from burnout.

The third and final commandment regarding evaluations has already been made famous by athletic shoe manufacturer Nike in their ad campaign slogan "Just do it." Failing to conduct evaluations is both demeaning and demoralizing to volunteers. They require supervisory assistance and they need positive reinforcement to continue doing a job as challenging as child advocacy.

Dismissal of a Volunteer

Dismissing a volunteer is always a painful process for the individuals involved and the program as a whole. If the program does a careful screening of applicants, assures that volunteer applicants thoroughly understand the CASA job description, provides comprehensive training in the appropriate roles of volunteers, and provides regular feedback, dismissal of a volunteer should be a rare occurrence.

It will occur, however, regardless of the measures taken to prevent it. Because CASA staff are human and even problem volunteer applicants can present a good first impression, an inappropriate person will occasionally slip through even the most careful application process. When it becomes obvious that a person is inappropriate for the CASA program, it is best to take action immediately. Putting it off will only make it harder and place the program at greater risk.

Because of the nature of the work a CASA volunteer undertakes and the level of responsibility vested in the program, it is good practice to develop a written policy that specifies those actions which are so serious that they will result in immediate dismissal from the program. The list of violations should be made very clear to volunteer applicants during the application process and they should have a thorough understanding of why the actions are serious. Many programs have written the list of violations mandating dismissal in a statement that the volunteer applicant is required to sign before being appointed to a case. The violations might include:

- Falsifying information on the application;

- Breach of confidentiality;

- Failure to report abuse of a child;

- Falsifying information in a court report;

- Representing the program in a public forum without prior permission from the director;

- Ex-parte communication;

- Violation of the state or local laws while a CASA volunteer.

When information is received that a volunteer has violated this policy, (s)he should be given the opportunity to provide an explanation of the behavior. The director or other appropriate staff person should approach the volunteer with an open mind and no pre-determined judgment. Sometimes, when information comes from a third party, there is misperception or biased interpretation of the behavior on the part of the reporter. Care should be taken to conduct a thorough and objective investigation to the extent possible before dismissing the volunteer. It is sometimes difficult to determine what actually happened if the incident involves breach of confidentiality or an incident that others observed. Often people do not agree on what was said or done. In these cases, it is necessary for the director (and perhaps the board) to consider the facts as they are known and then make a judgment call. Where vulnerable children are involved, it is always best to make the call on the basis of protecting the child's interest. Such a call is likely to be in the best interest of the program as well.

The more common dismissal scenario involves the volunteer who continues to receive poor evaluations and corrective measures have been tried without success. Usually, the concerns are related to not keeping adequate documentation, not getting court reports in on time, failing to attend required in-service training, or not accepting feedback and supervision. When these concerns, all possibly tolerable by themselves, pile up over time, the program eventually has no choice but to dismiss the individual. Since dismissal can create negative repercussions in the community, it makes sense to see if any other approach is available before moving ahead McCurley and Lynch suggest six possible alternative courses of action:

- *Re-supervise*. Try a limited period of rule enforcement.
- *Re-assign*. Transfer the volunteer to a new position. Perhaps (s)he would be better suited to editing the newsletter, chairing the fund-raiser, working on the computer, or answering the phone.
- *Re-train*. Try a different training approach or re-exposure to the material.
- *Re-vitalize*. Give a volunteer a sabbatical or a less draining temporary assignment.
- *Refer.* Give the person an opportunity to volunteer with another agency. Maybe it will suit his/her personal needs better.
- *Retire.* If people are no longer able to perform at the required level, help them leave with dignity and the honor they deserve for past service.

If none of the above remedies are appropriate, the program must proceed with the decision to dismiss the volunteer. Staff and board must be philosophically committed to such an action before the occasion arises. Not to believe that there are some circumstances in which termination is appropriate both minimizes the contribution of the other volunteers and shortchanges the children CASA serves with less than quality representation.

Conveying the News

Once the decision has been made to dismiss a volunteer, someone has to deliver the news to the person. Of course, the news should not come as a surprise to the volunteer if evaluations have consistently indicated problems but conveying the decision is never pleasant. The dismissal should be done at an in-person meeting held in a private setting. In most cases, the director should deliver the news, but if the individual has been especially problematic, it can be a good idea to have the board president or an attorney present. While volunteers are not likely to sue the program (or succeed in bringing a case to court if they do), many have threatened to

do so. It is best to protect yourself and the program by the presence of another person of authority. Here are some additional strategies that may help:

- *Be quick, direct, and absolute*. Don't beat around the bush. It would be quite embarrassing if the volunteer showed up at a citizen's review meeting the next day because (s)he did not understand what happened. Practice what you are going to say in advance and make sure the message is clear.

- *Don't back down*. The purpose of the meeting is simply, and only, to communicate to the volunteer that (s)he is being separated from the program. It is not an opportunity to discuss or argue the decision. Allow the volunteer to vent if necessary, but stay quiet and don't be talked into reversing the decision or giving the person "one more chance."

- *Do not try to be a friend to the volunteer*. Even if you want to preserve your image as a nice person, do not attempt to counsel or express sympathy to her. Any attempt to do so would be demeaning and insulting.

- *Follow-up*. Follow up the meeting with a letter to the volunteer re-iterating the decision and providing any instruction for departure, such as returning case files and notes.

Follow-up should also include informing the judge of the action. This can prevent discomfort for the judge in case the former volunteer should contact him seeking his intervention. The judge should also sign an order terminating any case appointments of the person. If obtaining case records from the individual becomes difficult, the court can issue a subpoena for them.

Finally, if the dismissed volunteer was appointed to an active case to which another volunteer will be assigned, plans for a transition need to be made. The child's reaction needs to be considered and steps taken to decrease the impact as much as possible. The ideal transitional strategy would be to have the former volunteer visit the child to say good-bye. Since this is not usually possible or appropriate, try to have the former CASA telephone the child or write a letter. Having the new volunteer accompany the child's social worker on the first visit is always a good idea. The program should also remember to inform all parties in the case and other professionals involved of the change. It is not necessary to offer reasons for the change in volunteer, but informing others of the change will help the new volunteer step in more easily.

14

Rural & Small Programs

Rural CASA programs know how to start with nothing, struggle to survive on less and endure with little…because our children need us.

Julie Fallin, Executive Director
New Mexico CASA Network
Red River, NM

CASA In Small Communities and Rural Areas

Much concern has been voiced about the difficulty of managing CASA programs in small towns or largely rural areas with several widely spaced pockets of population. Although there are pros and cons to directing all kinds of CASA programs, some directors from small communities have allowed the disadvantages of their location to obscure the positive aspects. Hopefully, this chapter can help those directors reframe the issue and build on existing strengths to deliver a quality program to the children of the community.

What are the advantages inherent in smaller communities?

1. Everyone knows everyone else. In most small towns, the CASA director and/or board members are on a first name basis with people from all walks of life. It does not require a six figure account balance to see the bank president or a six week wait for an appointment with a principal, politician or police chief. The movers and shakers are already identified as are the "skunks", people that it is wise to avoid. This level of familiarity translates into recruitment opportunities for new board members and volunteers as well as fund-raising and donation possibilities. Getting the "right" person to make the contact will net the program a significantly greater response than "any warm body" recruiting. Board members and directors have the ability to approach small business owners personally. Tell the CASA story. Ask if they would be interested in serving as a volunteer or board member. Ask them who on their staff or in their plant or in their family has a special interest in children and might do so. When fund-raising events are planned, solicit in-kind donations such as soft drinks from the bottling plant or paper goods from the grocery store or a gift certificate from the dry cleaner. Talk to merchants about discounted services such as printing at slow times or on remnant paper, graphic design assistance, office equipment, or donating a percentage of one day's receipts. Request permission to insert recruitment flyers in paycheck envelopes, utility bills (gas, electric, phone, cable, internet service provider) church bulletins or to send them home from school with students. This "personal touch" recruiting can be as effective as media coverage. The key is utilizing all the people already identified with the CASA program, not just the director.

2. The volunteers' connections can benefit the program. Study after study has shown that the best source of new volunteers is existing ones. Some programs even offer a "bounty" such as a gift certificate at a local restaurant for any volunteer who recruits a new volunteer who completes training and

becomes a CASA volunteer. The "everybody knows everybody" syndrome can also be of benefit in case-related situations. The volunteer may be aware of extended family placement possibilities that social services might not have located.

3. Many items are less expensive. Fundraising goals can be set at a reasonable level because the cost of office space, professional services, insurance and personnel is lower.

4. CASA staff, board, and volunteers in a small town are in touch with local interests. That kind of "insider information" is invaluable in deciding whether a bike race, a quilt raffle or a softball tournament would be most successful as a fund-raiser. Having a finger on the pulse of the community allows the program to consider fundraising options like being part of local fairs or festivals and conversely makes staff knowledgeable about when not to schedule an event in competition with a local affair.

5. Rural CASA programs are not alone in their isolation. Other rurally based groups with a mission, whether educational or service-oriented, have struggled with this issue as well. These agencies have developed tools that CASA can utilize. Look to them for assistance. For example, the Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) authorizes some funding to be targeted specifically for rural areas. Communities that have links with land grant colleges have cooperative agricultural extension offices. Their staffs provide literature and training on many topics related to children and parenting. They are an excellent resource for both volunteers and the families with whom they work.

6. Technical and community colleges can be a source of instruction regarding computer use, a site for satellite or more traditional training or a provider of office assistance through intern and co-op programs. Small town health departments are often more open to home visits. Rural hospitals sometimes offer services to families. Informal support systems exist as well. Communities of all sizes have Twelve Step Programs to work with substance abusers. Many churches offer non-denominational support groups and parent training classes.

7. Civic organizations are very attuned to local needs. In one community, concern over the lack of immunization of infants led a local charitable organization to arrange monthly shot clinics on Saturdays at a convenient location. The club hired the nurse, bought the medication, publicized the free service, provided transportation and gave small "rewards" to mother and baby. Because the town was small, mobilization was comparatively

easy. The same thing often occurs when one or two prominent citizens adopt a cause. A hospice program starts or a domestic violence shelter opens. In one community, a CASA volunteer was disturbed by the lack of facilities and personnel to do supervised visitation. She took the situation into her own hands and convinced several friends to join in her efforts. They got training from the local social services department, secured a room at her church and donations of toys and equipment. One person's interest and energy provided a much needed service that made a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children.

Although there are advantages to being a small CASA program, there are clearly special challenges as well. Being small does not provide an excuse for poor management. In fact, it leaves less of a margin for error. Boards and directors must think in terms of adapting to their environment, a critical factor for the success of any organization. In formulating their mission and program design, size should be considered not as a limitation, but simply a reality. For example, extra effort (handouts, discussion, review) may be needed to clarify the role of board members vs. the role of the director. The informality of small town relationships can easily muddy the division of responsibilities. Some programs might find it beneficial to build in a little socializing time before the board meeting starts rather than try to quash chitchat or constantly feeling rushed because board meetings routinely start late.

Board size should be set at a moderate level. Too large a board dilutes each member's sense of personal responsibility to such a degree that attendance at board and committee meetings becomes problematic. Too small a board overburdens its members. Recruitment should be targeted towards people who will really contribute rather than those who are on every other board in town although a few of the latter may be needed for recognition and fund-raising purposes. Make it a specific duty of each board member when they first join to seek out and begin "grooming" their own replacement on an informal basis. They can do this by talking up the CASA mission and sharing their experience with a person whom they feel would benefit the program. If the CASA program serves several small towns spread over a large geographical area, board representation should be equally widespread. Once that and other kinds of diversity are achieved, using board members as recruiters will tend to keep it that way.

Size influences other program components as well. Priority in budgeting should be given to mileage and long-distance costs in general and volunteer reimbursement for them in particular. When doing volunteer screening, the availability of reliable transportation should be thoroughly addressed. Special emphasis on confidentiality should be built in to training as well as ongoing supervision to counterbalance the

over-familiarity of the small town population. Consequences for any violation of the policy should be strictly enforced.

Conducting Training

Volunteer training should be scheduled in outlying areas periodically. In-service training should be offered in various locations. Alternatives to standard group meetings have been created by a number of programs so that volunteers can meet in-service requirements in a more convenient way. Provide credit for in-service hours when volunteers read and report on program related books. (See additional information on volunteer training in Chapter 13.) Similar systems can be devised with videos, audio tapes from conferences or attendance at presentations on CASA-related topics.

Supervision

Small programs covering many square miles grapple with the issue of adequate supervision. Several options are available to enable staff to stretch available resources. Some rural programs make excellent use of mentoring systems. While the mentor does not provide case supervision directly, (s)he answers questions about locating resources, exploring placement options and the like. Mentors may also be responsible for an in-service training session in their locality. They can arrange facilities, call (or set up a phone tree to call) other volunteers, recruit a speaker or perhaps lead a group discussion after a video. An underutilized resource in rural CASA programs is the computer. This is unfortunate because its ability to provide informal communication through e-mail and transmit written reports over long distances allows real supervision much less expensively than telephones or site visits. Computers can also provide numerous other services such as recruitment, financial management, record-keeping and newsletter publication at the same time. It is imperative that directors of small programs explore electronic opportunities since rural areas stand to benefit the most from technology. Just as the fax machine moved from luxury to indispensable necessity in the last five years (and not coincidentally, became less expensive) so will the personal computer. Programs should make the acquisition of necessary technology and the training to utilize it efficiently an organizational priority. This includes incorporating the personal computer equipment and skills that already exist within the program.

Fundraising - A Place to Begin

When requesting money in a small town setting, make your request realistic in amount and tangible in concept. Providing alternative opportunities for volunteer in-service training as mentioned earlier effectively requires a growing resource library.

Establishing one is often a good place for a small, inexperienced program to start fundraising. Everyone understands what a library is and why it would be useful. Its benefits are not only tangible and far-reaching, they are relatively long-lasting. The amount needed is flexible and additional donations can be made over time by the original benefactor as well as new ones. All of these features make such a proposal appealing to funders. For more information on fundraising, see Chapter 6.

External Relations

A commitment to collaboration is the foundation of a successful CASA program. We must understand the needs and strengths of all circles of influence. The volunteers, the board, the court, social services, agencies, the bar, and the community at large should be included in planning and supporting CASA. When we collaborate with all of these parties in a win-win atmosphere, the synergy that develops will benefit not only the CASA program but also the children we serve.

Irene Cooke
Denver CASA
Denver, Colorado

Proficiency in management demands attention not only to the internal factors discussed in the previous chapters but to outside relationships as well. Just as no man is an island, no CASA program operates in isolation. Some CASA programs operate under the umbrella of another organization, yet maintain independence -- a balancing act that requires good collaboration. Every CASA program must work with the social services agencies, the court, and the bar and must give close attention to the relationships with these entities.

The ability to forge and maintain cooperative working relationships with external organizations is indispensable to program success. Quality relationships are often supported by the existence of a written agreement with each key entity. The document may be called a memorandum of understanding, rules of practice, CASA protocol or simply an agreement. The title is not important as long as each party understands that the contents define the relationship between them. In some areas, CASA programs have separate agreements with the court and the child welfare services agency. In others, all three parties are co-signers to one document. Both approaches are workable. Items to be included at a minimum are: how case assignments will be handled, who has access to what information, the role of the supervisor, the volunteer and how the court report is to be handled. (See Appendix 15-A, Memorandum of Understanding).

Umbrella Organizations

Because it is difficult to amass all the resources necessary to build a new program including: people with the necessary knowledge and skills; funding; 501-©-(3) standing necessary to raise funds; and a place to operate, many communities have found it beneficial to develop CASA programs under the umbrella of established agencies.

The benefits of such an arrangement can be many:

- Use of the umbrella agency's non-profit standing to raise funds;

- Space and equipment are often provided for little or no administrative fee;

- The agency's staff can provide advice and consultation;

- Contacts in the corporate and foundation communities;

- Reputation and name recognition.

These benefits often provide a CASA steering committee the push start needed to get a program off to a successful start. It is no wonder then, that there is a growing trend for new CASA programs to begin under the parentage of United Way; Children's Advocacy Centers; family services and support agencies; other child advocacy

organizations; domestic violence programs; and local Junior Leagues. These are the most common, but CASA programs have been organized by groups as widely divergent as the League of Women Voters and the local school system.

Umbrella arrangements usually work well in the first year or two of the CASA program's development, and it must be said that many work very well on a long-term basis. However, experience has shown that usually in the course of organizational evolution, there comes a point at which the interests of the two organizations go in different directions, and the arrangement is no longer beneficial to either. The common scenario involves the inability of CASA to raise funds on its own without permission of the parent agency's board, or the situation that requires CASA to compete with the parent organization for the same funds. A common occurrence is for the parent agency to come upon hard financial times and decide that it must charge CASA an administrative fee for the services it provides to the program. There is nothing wrong with such an administrative fee, but CASA can usually provide the service more cost effectively itself.

In some cases, CASA may not do independent publicity and must use the parent agency's name as part of its name. In other reported situations the mission of the parent agency was changed to one that did not complement CASA's and the CASA program was suddenly terminated.

Such threats to CASA's survival also exist when a program is under the administration of a court that is overseen by elected judges. When a new judge is seated, the support for CASA can disappear.

CASA can decrease its vulnerability somewhat by having a written agreement in place that is time-limited and specifies that the CASA program has control at least to some degree of its own future. It is a good idea to make the agreement effective for one year to be re-evaluated and re-negotiated at that time. If CASA is to be governed by the board of directors of the umbrella organization, the agreement should also allow for CASA to have an advisory board with representatives who sit on the main board.

In arrangements in which CASA and the umbrella agency may serve the same families, the agreement should spell out a protocol for resolving conflicts which occur when the CASA program disagrees with that organization about the appropriate goals in the case and what is in the best interests of the child. Having such a protocol may not spare hard feelings, but it may help to prevent lost relationships and damaged credibility in the community.

The Local Social Service Agency

A mother with several small children went out for a rare afternoon of shopping with an old friend who was single. After listening to numerous comments from her friend about the behavior of children at the mall and the inadequate adult responses, the mother remarked, "You know, I did most of my best parenting before I had children, too." In a similar vein, CASA volunteers are handicapped in their efforts to advocate for the best interests of children without a thorough grounding in the realities of the child welfare system.

Staff and volunteers must understand the limitations of the system in general and their local agency in particular. The information conveyed during volunteer training, even when presented by agency personnel, is often more a summary of program design rather than its actual operation. Use it as a foundation on which to build. Avoid the temptation to see a shortage of funds as the only impediment to good practice. There are a number of other fairly universal constraints on most child welfare agencies. Financial limitations (over which CASA obviously has very little influence) are usually combined with other, more malleable factors. Examples include: shortage of staff positions, high turnover rate, unavailability of relevant training, negative attitudes, lack of appropriate placement resources, inflexibility in service provision, absence of cultural competency, and political considerations.

CASA programs have utilized some very creative approaches in breaking down these barriers. Recognizing the difficult job that workers do goes a long way towards improving attitudes and reducing turnover. Programs have provided coffee and home-baked goodies for agency staff at the social service office. They have singled out caseworkers for awards at CASA recognition ceremonies. Several programs routinely plan cross-training events to include community professionals as well as volunteers. This is especially beneficial if a program has received funding to bring in an outside expert. Events of this type can be combined with a carry-in lunch or an informal time for sharing concerns. Some directors have organized meetings on a regular basis with supervisory staff from the child welfare agency. The meetings provide an opportunity for exchange of information and recognition of developing problems. If used as a forum for early conflict resolution, such meetings can prevent minor irritations from remaining untreated until they become permanent wounds. Ongoing communication also builds a trust relationship that is more likely to withstand a serious or public difference of opinion. CASA programs which have emphasized diversity have modeled cultural competency for agencies. Volunteers have shared information with caseworkers regarding possible placement options, sometimes gathered by distant members of the CASA network. Other mechanisms used to improve rapport with social service agencies include a social services liaison

specifically assigned to work with the CASA program, a CASA fact sheet distributed to all social workers and a volunteer confirmation letter sent to individual workers when a CASA is assigned to one of their cases. The letter clearly delineates the CASA's role so there is less likelihood of a clash of expectations. It also reminds the worker of the CASA's presence in the case. (See Appendix 15-B for Letter of CASA Appointment.)

Even with these practices in place, there may be a case over which the CASA program and the social service agency reach an impasse. People who choose to work in child welfare and people who volunteer as child advocates are often gifted with a kind of "grit" and commitment that enables them to persevere in the interest of a child when others would have given up hope. That same tenacity can become an obstacle to meeting the child's needs when people on two sides of an issue dig in their heels. While it is expected that CASA volunteers and social services personnel will have their differences, management must be alert to any signs that such conflicts have become personalized or are beginning to impede interagency cooperation in other areas. The importance of compromise cannot be over-emphasized. Management is responsible for the good of the program as a whole.

Whatever can be done to establish and maintain a relationship of mutual respect (or repair one damaged in the past) should be attempted because enhancing child welfare practice at the local level is one of the most effective means CASA has to positively impact the lives of abused and neglected children.

In addition to understanding the dynamics of the child welfare system, CASA programs need a working knowledge of policy and practice. Note that these two terms are not necessarily synonymous. Every CASA program should have a copy of local agency policy dealing with all child welfare issues and become familiar with its contents. There are several reasons for this. First, knowledge of agency policy prevents a volunteer from unintentionally making a recommendation in violation of it. Familiarity with the regulations also allows a volunteer to recommend a course of action not in keeping with policy, (if necessary) and to present appropriate justification. For example, "Although agency policy prohibits the adoption of pre-school children by parents over 60 years of age, it is the opinion of the guardian ad litem that an exception to the policy should be made in this case because of the child's placement in the home since birth, his bonding with the foster mother, his special physical needs which she has already learned to manage and the foster mother's excellent health."

Lastly, volunteers encounter situations in which practice has diverged from policy to the detriment of a child. If attempts to remedy the problem by addressing it with the agency are unsuccessful, the volunteer has the option of bringing the issue to the

attention of the court. For example, "The current case plan provides for a two hour parent/child visit once a month. This not only fails to meet the child's need for parental contact, it is out of compliance with the agency's own standards which mandate weekly visitation". Such a comment should be followed by the item and page number from the manual. Certainly, this course of action should be used sparingly and judiciously but it has been effective in bringing agency practice up to policy standards.

The Court

A written agreement with the court is an excellent first step towards defining the relationship between the judge(s) and the CASA program. Over time, however, issues will emerge that go beyond the scope of the agreement. For this reason, it is important to build in periodic, face-to-face communication between the program director and the presiding judge. It may not be easy. Even judges who are committed to CASA have an enormous number of competing demands on their time. The sense of urgency that the volunteer on the front line maintains is largely absent from the judicial perspective. Court calendars shift and continuances are a way of life. The judge may not feel much pressure to add such a commitment to his/her schedule since (s)he is free to give feedback to the program at any time. However, the director, with the assistance of the board if necessary, must press for these meetings. They present an opportunity for the court to be made aware of the ramifications of its directions and permit the airing of any court-related difficulties that have arisen within the program. While it is inappropriate for a presiding judge to sit on the governing board of directors for reasons of conflict of interest, his or her input and consideration is critical to the healthy functioning of the program. There must be an arena for timely resolution when differences of opinion occur.

Experience has shown that there are several areas in which conflict is likely to arise between CASA staff and the court. The most frequent issue is case assignment.

Example 1:

The court will be hearing a high-profile case that has already garnered lots of media attention and wants to assign a CASA while the program director feels an attorney advocate would be most appropriate.

Example 2:

The judge has an extremely difficult case and requests a specific CASA who has been an excellent advocate on several previous cases. This particular volunteer is already working on another very active and difficult case and is not in a position to take on a second one.

Example 3:

A CASA volunteer's conduct so angers a judge that (s)he tells the volunteer, "You're fired. Get out of my courtroom."

Example 4:

A well-connected volunteer who knows the judge socially violated program policy and was terminated from the program. The judge continues to appoint this person as an "independent" CASA.

Example 5:

The program director has just received three court orders appointing CASA volunteers in delinquency proceedings. When (s)he calls to see if there has been a mistake, (s)he is informed that the judge is so pleased with the information (s)he has received from CASA volunteers in abuse/neglect cases that (s)he is going to start appointing them in delinquencies as well.

None of the problems posed in the preceding examples are insoluble. They all share a common thread. In each situation, the judge has made a decision that is beneficial to his/her court without being aware of the extent of adverse consequences to the program. Periodic conferences can provide the court with enough exposure to the director's point of view that a judge would generally seek consultation before making a unilateral decision that negatively affects the program.

Relationships with attorneys

There are two key concepts that help CASA programs have the best possible relationships with attorneys. The first is professionalism. This quality is especially necessary in encounters with attorneys who are not connected in any way to the CASA program. This applies to attorneys such as those who represent the local social service agency, the biological parents of the child in care, the tribe in the case of a Native American child, legal services staff, public defenders and prosecutors. Professionalism with attorneys such as those listed above obviously requires that CASA staff and volunteers treat them with courtesy and respect. Beyond that, it is important not to make assumptions about their personal feelings or biases based on the role they play in a particular case. Although most people claim to understand that the American legal system is adversarial in nature, they fail to grasp how that dictates the in-court behavior of attorneys. Even people who have spent a considerable amount of time in courtrooms sometimes have difficulty separating the personal from the professional. There is a tendency to view the various techniques used to undermine witness credibility as personal attacks rather than tools of the trade. Program staff, including attorneys, must continue to prepare volunteers for

difficult cases. Volunteers should be taught to expect and to unemotionally answer questions that appear personal, irrelevant or harassing. Sample questions such as "Do you have any children?" "Do you ever spank your children?" "Do you have any professional credentials whatsoever on which to base that statement?" should be role-played with volunteers not only in initial training but immediately prior to a first case, a hotly contested case or one in which opposing counsel is especially adept at such techniques. Volunteers need frequent reminders that judges observe interchanges between witnesses and attorneys every day. They are well aware of the dynamics and able to separate drama from substance. Volunteers also require support afterwards. If necessary, find a private "safe space" in which anger and distress can be vented after a grueling cross-examination.

The second characteristic necessary to maintain good volunteer/attorney relationships is collaboration. Cooperation extended to other attorneys with whom the CASA volunteer is in agreement on a particular case will pay dividends long-term.

Collaboration is also a necessity in a CASA program's relationship with its own attorney. Rebecca Heartz and Irene Cooke in an unpublished paper entitled "CASA Volunteers and Attorneys: A Partnership That Works" have detailed important elements of that collaboration.

To ensure quality representation for the child, the partnership between the attorney advocate and the CASA volunteer should be structured in a framework of supportive conditions including:

1. **Clear Understanding of Roles and Commitment to Teamwork.** The attorney and the CASA must clearly understand the definition and division of their responsibilities. One feature which many successful programs have in common is an agreement that the CASA will formulate recommendations based on the investigation of factual circumstances and the attorney will determine legal strategies. This partnership has been likened to the British legal model of the barrister and solicitor. Like the solicitor, the CASA should work to thoroughly investigate the circumstances of the case and, like the barrister, the attorney will perform the legal tasks necessary to prepare presentations to the court. The unifying goal of the team is to represent the best interests of the child. The CASA can not achieve this goal without the expertise of counsel, nor can the attorney succeed in court without the diligent preparation of the CASA volunteer. The most successful attorney-volunteer partnerships operate under detailed job descriptions which clarify roles and responsibilities. It is

helpful if court administration guidelines or statutes mandate a team approach, utilizing program staff to coordinate these efforts.

2. **Frequent Two-Way Communication**. Equally important to the effectiveness of representation is the commitment to communication. The attorney and CASA must be accessible to each other and willing to invest the time to discuss the case as often as circumstances require. While there is no rule about how frequently the team must communicate, regular consultation will ensure that the CASA will receive legal advice when necessary and that the attorney will receive updated information about the child and new developments in the case as soon as possible. Frequent communication allows the team to anticipate legal issues or problems, to brainstorm and to respond creatively to the child's unmet needs. Prior to any court hearing, the team shall meet to prepare well in advance and develop recommendations based on solid factual information and legal strategy.

3. **Protocol For Resolving Differences.** The fear of differences of opinion between the attorney and the CASA volunteer is probably more common than the actual occurrence of disagreement. By establishing frequent communication and having a clear understanding of the roles each of the parties is to play, most disagreements can be prevented. However, partners do not always agree and they need to be prepared to find ways to resolve conflict should it occur.

   One commentator advises that the attorney and the CASA should first determine the nature of the disagreement. They should attempt to identify whether the difficulty is about overall goals and objectives of the case or if it concerns how to go about meeting those goals and objectives. The commentator suggests that the attorney's opinion should carry more weight on questions related to legal strategies while the CASA should be able to determine the ultimate goal of the case.

   Clear job descriptions can prevent most of these conflicts. Professional program staff can also assist with collaborative decision making. Program directors can arrange multidisciplinary team staffings to develop recommendations and strategies for cases in which the CASA and GAL are unable to decide or agree.

Another element of collaboration is cross-training. Attorneys are rarely experts in areas outside their own field. Further education on topics such as child development, permanency planning, substance abuse and cultural competency can

help them become more effective advocates. Attorneys are generally more willing to participate in such training if they can earn Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits. It is equally beneficial for volunteers to receive additional instruction in legal matters from counsel such as:

- Rules of evidence

- How to give effective testimony

- Reasons and procedures for filing motions with the court

- Grounds for termination of parental rights

A final word about collaboration. It can not occur in any relationship where the parties do not respect their partner and treat him/her as an equal. That is not to say that an attorney and a volunteer necessarily have an equal amount of education, commitment, earning power or social status. What it does mean is that each person understands their own role, the role of their partner and trusts the other to perform to the best of their ability.

If there are problems with the program's legal representation, there are several appropriate remedies according to Donald C. Bross, JD, Ph.D., Executive Director, National Association of Counsel for Children. In the Summer 1990 edition of the *CASA Connection*, he discusses this issue. "How can a concern or complaint be communicated best? First, seek a second opinion. Consult with someone who is experienced with the issues of representing children under similar factual situations—perhaps other lawyers, CASAs, CASA administrators, and judges not involved in the case. The confidentiality of the child and the lawyer should be respected and observed carefully. Identifying details should be avoided and only data necessary to understanding the reasons for concern should be presented to a person consulted.

A second step might be to meet in person with the attorney in order to clearly express the nature of the concerns being raised and what changes seem to be required.

The CASA in turn might ask a person with solid legal credentials to come along for this face-to-face meeting. Consider drafting a statement for presentation to the attorney which will also serve, if needed, to inform authorities at a later date.

If these steps do not improve the situation, further measures are justified. A direct appeal to the court is only one option. Another would be to file a grievance before the ethics committee of the proper bar association. If still in doubt about the best way to proceed, an attorney experienced with issues of professional ethics should be consulted."

In being a good "consumer for the child," a CASA volunteer should look for these minimum requirements in GAL representation:

1. Knowledge of the client. Each child and each child's placement are different. Attorneys are held responsible for knowing things which may only be evident upon "visual inspection." An attorney who has never observed a very young child or communicated appropriately with older children cannot be sure that even the most obvious aspects of a child's case have been brought to his or her attention. For example, everyone else who has seen the child assumes that the child's attractiveness, ugliness, biracial parentage, handicap, or other special feature is self-evident. Lack of direct contact can also mean a lack of personal commitment, unless the child's personal importance to the lawyer has been obtained other than through personal contact.

2. Pretrial work, including independent investigation. Detailed information about the child's injury or exposure to harm, history of the parents or household members, parental views of the child, child's view of or response to parents, special problems and characteristics of the child, crises or stresses in the family, other children in the home, changes in the child following removal, and the indications for and against independent evaluation of the child or parent(s) are just a few of the detailed factors which the guardian ad litem must make sure are brought before the court.

Witnesses cannot be expected to present good testimony unless they are apprised of the findings of fact which the court will need to make, conclusions of law which the court will have to reach, and their "rights", obligations and general role in dealing with the child's lawyer and other lawyers in the courtroom. This must be done in advance, to allow enough time for adequate communication between the witness(s) and child's representative.

CASA volunteers can have a profound effect on the needed development of law and lawyers for children."

Relationship between National CASA, State Organizations & Local Programs

In addition to establishing good relations with the court, social services and other agencies, and with the attorneys in the community, CASA program staff and volunteers can greatly benefit from relationships with staff of other local CASA programs, with their state organization, and with the National CASA Association. Becoming involved in the CASA network can provide opportunities for learning and support that can be both personally and professionally beneficial.

Since CASA was begun, one of its abiding strengths has been the willingness of CASA people to help each other by sharing ideas, offering support, and even giving advice on good funding prospects. Most every program has received assistance from another local program in its first planning and development stages.

Yet, with over 600 programs in 1996 and growth expected to continue at about the same rate, it becomes harder for individuals at every level of the organization to stay informed about local, state, and national issues and trends and to develop those personal and professional one-on-one relationships that are so important. Electronic communications are improving the flow of information and making it possible to broadcast news to the whole network within minutes of its happening. Not every program has the necessary computer capability at the receiving end, but more are going online every month. These easier, faster, and cost- effective communications strategies should make it easier to stay in touch and informed. However, they will not enable the personal connections and friendships. For those relationships, CASA staff must budget the money and time to attend state meetings and conferences and the annual national conference.

Other consequences of growth and change in any organization are disagreement within the ranks about the organization's direction; a shift in the mission of some local constituents; a feeling of isolation on the part of some; and miscommunication. CASA has experienced its share of such growing pains. As uncomfortable as these experiences are at the time they occur, organizational development experts declare that difficult periods are necessary to keep an organization vital and forward thinking toward achieving its vision.

One area of growth that has resulted in some confusion is the relationships between state organizations and National CASA, and how are local programs expected to relate to each. In any national organization that has local community based constituents as well as state level constituents, there is likely to be some blending of roles or overlap of services – CASA is not unique in that respect. Yet, CASA is unique in some ways that impact every level of the organization. A brief review of the history and structure of the organization is necessary to understand the dynamics and their implications.

The beginning of the volunteer CASA movement is well-known. The first program was begun in Seattle, Washington in 1977, by then Judge David Soukup. By 1984, the concept had spread across the country and there were over 80 programs in existence. During that early period, there was no national effort to develop programs according to one model or with a unified image. Communities heard about the idea and developed programs to meet community needs. The names of the programs

were different, the role of the volunteer varied, and funding sources and administrative structures covered a broad continuum.

The national organization was established in 1984 in recognition of a need for networking, training, and technical assistance to local communities developing programs. It was also anticipated that unity in image and quality would be an outcome. Establishing the national organization as a membership association was significant in that it made participation by local programs voluntary. This structure also meant that the national organization would have no control over who could start a local program; where programs should be located; how programs would be managed; or the role or activities of a volunteer.

In the early years of CASA's development, a number of states developed the program on a statewide basis and received full implementation funding from their legislatures. In these states, which eventually grew to twelve, administration of the program fell under the state court or another state agency. Local jurisdictions were required to follow a prescribed model and state policies and procedures were mandated. Most of these programs thrived and became institutionalized very quickly. Many of these states called their programs "Volunteer Guardian ad Litem" programs.

CASA directors in other states observed the enviable position of full state funding and sought to organize their mostly non-profit local programs in order to approach their legislatures with requests for funding and state legislation as a unified voice. Some of these state organizations, which were primarily informal networks in their early formative stages, evolved into private non-profits with sufficient funding to hire staff and provide services to the programs in their state. A few of the larger states currently offer a wide range of services including technical assistance, grants, training, and materials adapted from National's to be state specific. Over the years, most states have seen the value in having program staff get together on a regular basis, but made a considered decision to remain informal. A few states, mostly the geographically large states with low population and few programs far apart have found that their needs can be met through frequent conference calls and occasional meetings.

National CASA committed its support to the development of these organizations in the early stages and encouraged other states to organize. This support grew out of the awareness that CASA's strength is derived from its community-based nature and programs helping each other. Having a state organization would provide structure to that helping process and give CASA a stronger presence at each state level. At the same time that NCASAA encouraged the development of state networks and associations, it did not attempt to promote a national model or mandate how the

organizations should work. Following the successful history of allowing local programs the flexibility to develop according to local needs, the best approach seemed to be to follow that process again. Just as programs developed with a variety of approaches, so have state organizations.

Some have the full capacity to provide the same type of services that National CASA does and have become a valuable and integral part of CASA in their states. When state organizations have the resources and information available, local programs can and should look to that level for assistance. However, National CASA is always available for assistance and information to any starting community or local member program. Consultation, technical assistance and materials provided by NCASAA are usually national in perspective since it is not possible to maintain specific knowledge and materials for each state.

Obviously, National CASA believes that there is value in being involved at both the state and national levels and encourages programs to use all the services available to them from the state and national organizations. Each can offer a perspective that the other cannot and it is not likely that a person will make a bad decision or choose the wrong solution to a problem because of too much information. Besides, involvement at both the state and national levels provides more opportunities to make that human connection that can result in many opportunities for professional collaboration and personal growth. It is also a way to gain and maintain the inspiration and renewed energy necessary to keep doing the incredibly difficult and stressful jobs that CASA staffs and volunteers do.

Services of The National CASA Association
Organized in 1984, The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association supports a national network of volunteer child advocates who speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children in court. Our work is multi-faceted: • **Consultation and training** • **Ongoing technical assistance onsite, by phone, and in writing.** • **National standards and recommended management practices for CASA programs and volunteers.** • **Annual national conference** • **Materials for program managers addressing issues like program development, resource development, communications, public relations, and cultural competence.** • **A 40 hour training curriculum for CASA and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) volunteers.** • **Handbook for CASAs and GALs to assist them in formulating their recommendations to the court.** • **A grant program to promote the development and expansion of CASA programs around the country.** • **Publish the challenges and successes of the CASA movement through our national newsletter The Connection.** • **Public relations efforts to raise awareness of the CASA movement through informational brochures, posters, public service announcements, videos.**

Table 15.1

Handling Growth & Change

While chatting about nothing in particular with Josh, age 5, he told me "I know how daytime changes into nighttime. Daytime melts." I've thought about that image many times as CASA of Franklin County has grown and changed. Sometimes the growth has been just as Josh described, a gradual effort, with the old simply melting into the new. More frequently, though, we have changed through bursts, our efforts brittle with transitional edges that test us all.

Rita Sorenen, Executive Director
CASA of Franklin County
Columbus, Ohio

Management demands shift as programs grow. An infant organization with a jack-of-all-trades director and one part time secretary has different requirements than an organization which has evolved into a team of several professionals, a support staff and a sizable corps of volunteers. Parallel growth occurs externally as well. The program has established relationships with the court, the bar, the social services agency, other professionals, funders and the community at large which must be maintained and enhanced.

The fact that a program is still in existence after several years is not a guarantee that things are as they should be. Non-profit organizations require periodic maintenance, much like a house. A conscientious homeowner checks the house on a regular basis so that serious trouble can be averted. Even if a problem is missed, a well-built house does not tumble to the ground the first time the roof leaks. However, if the leak is not repaired, further damage is done and over time, the structure becomes irreparable. The same is true of a CASA program. A far-sighted board and director should seek periodic input from a variety of sources to see how services might be improved. The time to do this is not in mid-crisis but when the program seems to be doing fairly well. Feedback from volunteers, the court and the social service agency is especially important. The data gathered from these inquiries can then be combined with other information to accurately evaluate program effectiveness. Another way of doing program maintenance is through a review of the strategic plan.

While it is obviously impossible to anticipate every challenge that growth might create for a CASA program, several of the more common ones are discussed. The following material is an attempt to help board and staff anticipate, recognize and remedy problems.

Getting Your Strategic Plan Off the Shelf

Ideally, growth and change in a program should be handled by adjusting the strategic plan and the operational tools that flow from it. However, as management consultant Larry D. Lauer explains, many people's previous experience with strategic plans is that they end up on the shelf. Consequently, they are unwilling to commit the time and effort necessary to update the current plan. Lauer believes is that with adequate communication before and during the modification process, a strategic plan can be the key to unlocking productivity in an organization. He offers the following keys to generating a truly useful document.

Getting your plan off the shelf requires developing an updated report. Create a brief summary document which (1) states the organization's strategic vision, (2) addresses the concerns most on people's minds, (3) deals with communications issues related to making the place work better, and (4) simplifies the statement of goals. You may

have to create some new discussion groups to revitalize a sense of participation and interest.

You will need to do what your original planning process didn't: (1) Make people (especially opinion leaders) feel involved. (2) Deal with the issues on people's minds. (3) Make communication problem-solving a specific part of the planning. (4) Keep recommendations simple so that people will know new directions just from having participated. As Richard Moran, author of *Never Confuse a Memo with Reality,* said, "Written visions, missions and goals are not as important as knowing what you're supposed to do when you show up in the morning." (5) Leave some of the "how-to" to empowered leaders and work groups. In this way, possibilities for later initiative and flexibility will be preserved, and pride in the organization's future will be enhanced.

The Founding Parent Syndrome

Board/staff disagreements are frequently generated by growth and change. There is one type common to grass roots organizations like CASA that John Carver, PhD, a leading consultant on non-profit management calls "The Founding Parent Syndrome." This is a pattern of behavior in which the board of an organization consistently defers to the wishes of the founder out of respect and admiration for his/her heroic efforts in getting the program started. This abdication of responsibility is a temptation for many non-profit boards since members often bring with them a volunteer mentality—that is, the sense that they are on the board to help with someone else's pursuit, rather than to determine and own the choice of pursuit themselves. Responsible governance must begin with board members' assuming their rightful obligation—usually as trustees for some identifiable population—not primarily to help out, but to "own" the business.

Corporate boards of directors—in nonprofit as well as for-profit endeavors—bear overall accountability for an organization's destiny and all current activities. Whatever the actual practice and interpersonal dynamics, the chief executive works formally for the board, not vice versa. This circumstance presents problem enough for nonprofit boards in normal situations, but when the chief executive is the founding parent, many boards are stymied by the resulting authority inversion.

A board fortuitous enough to have such a leader is greatly blessed, but at the same time it is presented a dilemma not always happily resolved. Boards are often drawn to a tempting—albeit dysfunctional- way out of the dilemma. It is seductively easy for members of such a board to see themselves as advisors rather than governors. It is hard to avoid rubber-stamping the heroic founder's wishes. It is stressful for board members to require "employee behavior" of the person whose efforts they admired

enough to join the board to begin with. Although the board is clearly accountable, it is difficult not only to say "no" to any plan of the founder, but even to subject it to rigorous scrutiny.

What is such a board to do? How can it appropriately value, even revere, its founder without defaulting on its own task? And is the ultimate board control really available: firing the founder? If not, is all lesser authority then moot?

The dilemma is resolvable. But satisfactory resolution requires even more careful attention to the separate jobs of board and executive than usual. The board must find a way to be the organizational authority, truly the governing body, and at the same time properly respect, honor, and give latitude to the founding parent.

Carver's solution to the problem is the concept of policy governance. He maintains that the difference between the responsibility of the board and the staff lies in the breadth of issues belonging to each rather than in ownership of specific topics. For example, rather than taking duties like financial management or personnel policies or public relations and delegating them entirely to either the board or the director, it is assumed that the largest issues within each category are the responsibility of the board and what remains is under the control of the director. It is similar to the way the founding fathers envisioned the United States government: the states were free to assume any powers not expressly delegated to the federal government by the Constitution.

The board component is dominant, with all else, in a residual fashion, belonging to the executive. The board chooses how much of any issue to "own" by addressing the largest issue in any topic, then succeeding lesser issues until the board chooses to stop. What remains is automatically within the chief executive's purview. For example, one board may set the annual budget at $65,000, the amount of additional funds to be raised this year at $10,000 and give no further direction. Another board, using those same figures, may dictate all raises and office equipment purchases, may limit the number and timing of fund-raisers and may specify that all fund raising methods incorporate a public awareness component. Within each of those plans, there are still numerous decisions to be made by the director and staff and in which the board, quite appropriately has no say. The board actually governs staff methods and practices not by dictating to them but by limiting them. Another way to envision the concept is that the staff is the means to the ends articulated by the board.

Allowing staff significant latitude in making such choices—within which staff prerogatives are respected—is not only an efficient approach, but an empowering one as well.

In this proactive and value-focused way, a board can safely give its chief executive a great deal of autonomy. There is no need for the board to subject executive plans

and actions to the board approval ritual. There is no need for the board to involve itself in trivia or even in fairly large issues as long as the staff latitude exercised is within the board's acceptable range. Because criteria of success and failure are clear, monitoring executive performance can be both rigorous and simple, thereby saving board energies for doing its own job. That job is to continually revisit the long-range vision of the organization.

Staff Survival Skills

Keeping up with the ever-increasing demands of a growing CASA program requires special talent. Attempting to juggle all the management tasks as well as maintaining healthy relationships with the community and providing adequate support to a corps of volunteers tests creative abilities as well as our intellectual, physical, and emotional stamina. Directors and staff who are truly committed to the important work CASA does sometime tend to overlook their own needs, especially in times of significant change. Being an effective juggler requires that we pay attention to personal survival. If personal needs are not met, the director and staff will pay an exorbitant personal and professional price and, ultimately, so will the program.

It is no secret that when personal needs are ignored, stress begins to take a toll. Most people know that chronic stress causes sleep problems, irritability, worry, and anxiety. If not handled successfully, it can eventually result in ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, and other illnesses. Combating stress generally requires awareness and some behavioral changes. Experts have proposed various remedies to combat stress including regular exercise, healthy diet, meditation, and time management techniques. All of these have a positive effect if practiced consistently over time. But, psychologists in recent research studies are focusing on other skills and attributes that need to be utilized by individuals in addition to the usual prescriptive techniques.

One of the major causes of stress is the need to constantly adapt to changes in the environment. These changes occur much more frequently and rapidly than in earlier times. Surviving and remaining personally effective in the face of massive change requires new insights and methods. Researchers have observed that how people respond to change is somewhat affected by culture. Americans, they point out, focus on *primary control* – they try active intervention in an effort to change the existing reality. People from Eastern cultures are more likely to utilize *secondary control* consciously adapting themselves to events. In Japan, for example, secondary control has a much more central and culturally defined role than in the United States.

Deciding whether to take action (primary control) or to adapt oneself to circumstances (secondary control) is comparatively easy in routine settings in which

feelings of personal worth are not involved. For example, if a salesperson gives a customer the wrong change, the customer probably decides between primary and secondary control based on how much money is involved. If the amount is only a few pennies and there is a line of people waiting for services, most individuals implement secondary control by deciding that pursuing the correct change is not worth the trouble.   Although the action is taken so quickly that it seems unconscious, a decision is being made.

In the workplace, things become more difficult. When disagreements arise between staff members or between a volunteer and staff member, it is very tempting to ignore the situation and pretend it will go away. Usually it does not. In fact, the conflict often escalates until a blowup occurs, because a choice about primary and secondary control was not made. Avoiding either the option of active intervention or of conscious adaptation is costly both personally and to the organization.

In order to get beyond mere survival and begin thriving, it is helpful to consciously make choices in stressful situations instead of engaging in denial. Try to develop the appropriate blend of primary and secondary control. This balancing act is also important for an organization if it is to thrive in the broader community in which it operates.

For example, what can a director do when an important funding source dries up unexpectedly? Is it possible to exert primary control by taking action to change the situation? Can the program accommodate the loss of that funding? A primary control first response would be to try to learn why the funding is being terminated. If it is a result of misinformation or oversight on the part of the funder, contact the person directly to see if the decision can be reversed. A secondary control response would be to consider alternative sources of emergency funding or ways to cut expenses, such as delaying planned equipment purchases or cutting the hours of some staff. The ability to weigh primary and secondary control responses results in enhanced decision-making and better outcomes.

The skill of identifying the available choices and acting on them instead of avoiding and denying is expressed in another way by Shoma Morita, a Japanese psychiatrist who was influenced by Zen Buddhism. In Morita's view, the principles of effective behavior are made up of three basic directives:

- *Know Your Purpose*. Many people have never really given serious thought to what they want to accomplish in life. Clarifying personal values and goals allows people to make choices among available options with clarity and conviction.

- *Accept Your Feelings*. Individuals are not responsible at a given moment for their feelings. They are only responsible for their actions in response to the

feelings. If a confrontation with a staff member is a scary prospect, so what? Accept being scared.

- *Do What Needs to be Done.* Put more energy into deciding and doing than into avoidance. If a problem looms large, deal with it in the best way possible and move on. Actively choosing is the key.

Other strategies for thriving in spite of stress are included in the list below. Each will have a different level of appeal to different people. Choose one (or several) that feels comfortable.

- *Learn to Let Go*. One reason people sometimes feel overwhelmed is because of all the extra baggage they carry. Most people have at least some of the following: past hurts, resentments, grudges, unhealthy attitudes, and bad health habits. Letting go of stresses like these is sometimes aided by relaxation, diary writing and deep breathing in addition to standard recommendations like exercise and meditation.

- *Seek Variety*. Plan purposely to include changes of place and pace in life. Variety helps to revitalize attitudes and retain motivation.

- *Maintain Optimism*. Much of life is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If a person expects to succeed, (s)he probably will. If all of a person's energy is expended playing "ain't it awful", it's unlikely much will be left to promote positive change. One reason optimists so often succeed is that they learn the trick of setting smaller, achievable objectives. As one writer puts it, they tend to build "switch backs" into their trails. They take problems one step at a time and have the good sense to know that change comes slowly, so they don't get impatient or discouraged.

- *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff* . When primary control or active intervention cannot change the little irritations in life, choose secondary control (accommodation). Learning to see the humor in situations is an important tool in fighting stress.

- *Take Responsibility for Yourself*. **Regardless of who has the power to control a given situation, everyone has control over their own response.** That knowledge allows a person to take responsibility for dealing with the problem thus giving back a sense of personal control.

17

Considerations of New Directions

After our core program was well established and stable, we made the decision to expand in several new directions that fit within our mission. We currently serve custody, probate, and paternity cases as well as doing supervised visitation. Each of these new services was begun as a pilot project and was funded by new funding sources. We believe that volunteer retention has been enhanced through these services by offering volunteers new opportunities and challenges.

Trudy Strewler
Executive Director
CASA of Colorado Springs, CO

A number of CASA programs around the country are considering or have already undertaken projects beyond the organization's original scope. This expansion may have been many months in the planning or it may have come about quite suddenly. For example, programs often report that their presiding judge, having been pleased with the information furnished by volunteer in abuse/neglect cases, is now going to begin assigning CASAs to divorce custody or juvenile delinquency cases! Because of the court's authority (implicit or perceived) over the program, the situation is analogous to the old joke, "What do you feed a 500 lb. gorilla for dinner? Anything he wants."

If the local program does have some choice in the matter, there are several issues that merit exploration before attempting a new venture. If possible, have the judge sit in on some of these discussions. If not, at least present him/her with a summary of the board's conclusions on the matter. These can be helpful, especially if the board feels that expansion is not a good idea at the present time. There are three basic questions to begin with:

1. Does this activity, project, task need doing?

2. Do we have (or can we develop within a reasonable time frame) the resources to take on this added responsibility?

3. Is it within the scope of our mission?

The answer to number 1 is almost invariably yes. Like Pogo says, "We are confronted with insurmountable opportunities." There are literally hundreds of tasks that a highly trained and motivated group of volunteers could accomplish and at least a dozen that touch on child welfare concerns. That brings the discussion to the question of resources. Think beyond purely monetary considerations here. What about qualified staff, available supervisory time, willing and able volunteers, office space and computers, training expertise, credibility in the community? If the program already has most of its anticipated needs, how long will it take to acquire and additional ones?

If question 2 can be answered yes, the focus moves to the scope of the organization's mission. This is the question most often overlooked in the rush to enter a new area and it is easy to understand why. Doing something new is generally fun and exciting. It can revitalize a moribund program. Funders, even tried and true ones, like to be able to talk about their money going to new services. Government funding is often channeled to what legislators see as "hot." One year, its AIDS, the next, drug abuse prevention, the next, domestic violence shelters. Programs try to find a way inside the newly-drawn parameters. New projects can also come with money attached if they are filling an identified need or serving a population that has its own resources such as divorcing parents. It is extremely difficult for CASA programs

who struggle every year to make ends meet to ignore what appears to be a cash cow dropped in their midst.

But there are pitfalls associated with "mission creep." The biggest one is that the organization's primary clients will suffer. Here is a graphic illustration. A senior citizen's center was experiencing a drastic reduction in funding as a result of federal budget cuts. Its overhead remained fairly constant regardless of how many seniors were served. The director feared that the center might have to close its doors and leave the elderly of the community without services because of the shortfall. Casting about for replacement income, the director learned that the local social services agency had money to pay a contract provider to do off-site supervised visitation for abused and neglected children and their parents. The senior center director jumped in with both feet. She hired a visitation supervisor, designated space in the building and breathed a sigh of relief. But a funny thing happened. Just about the time the checks started coming in, so did the complaints. The seniors were up in arms. The children were noisy and disruptive. They strayed from their appointed space, and disturbed the seniors' belongings. They left trash all around the building. Some of the babies cried for the entire hour they were there. Some of the parents appeared drunk or threatening. The presence of these families made the seniors so uncomfortable that a sizable number of them simply stopped coming to the center. By venturing outside her organization's mission, even with the best of intentions, the director had destroyed the very thing she sought to save.

Two other difficulties sometimes associated with a shift in mission are community perceptions and conflicts of interest. The average person in the community hasn't the slightest ideas what a CASA is or does. Unlike the Red Cross or the Boy Scouts, CASA must educate people before it can ask for their support. Most local programs spend a fair amount of time and effort doing just that. Once the CASA mission has finally permeated the public's consciousness, it is a real struggle to reposition the organization in the marketplace so to speak. The potential for conflict of interest exists in several venues. If the CASA program is conducting supervised visitation for children that are wards of the local social services department, who is really the supervising agency? What about the confusion in the mind of the parent who was just told last week when a CASA volunteer visits his home that (s)he was an independent volunteer advocate and (s)he has now assumed a caseworker role. Will the volunteer's report on the quality of the visitation be suspect because (s)he has a vested interest in the outcome for the child? In custody and mediation cases CASAs may run afoul of influential people who are trying to make a living offering those same services. All of these issues deserve the thoughtful consideration of the board before a final decision is made.

Below is a list of pros and cons for some of the supplemental services that various programs are offering. Hopefully, seeing alternative programs in this graphic form will provide food for thought. In addition, other CASA programs who have already taken on one or more of these programs are an excellent source of information.

Considerations for Supplemental Services	
Pro	**Con**
Custody Cases	
- May provide challenge for experienced volunteers - Generally of shorter duration than abuse/neglect cases - May satisfy real need in the community - Will help maintain good working relationship with requesting judge (if applicable) - Information supplied increases likelihood of better outcome for the children	- Require a significant amount of additional training - No comprehensive "canned" training available - Not all volunteers are comfortable in extremely high conflict court settings - Volunteer may be in conflict with other evaluators - Volume in many jurisdictions is overwhelming - May siphon resources away from abuse/neglect cases - Depending on legislation, may pose increased liability risk to CASA program
SUPERVISED VISITATION	
- Requires fairly minimal additional training - Guidance available through the Supervised Visitation Network - Answers a need in virtually every judicial district	- Possible role confusion to parents, child, court, agency - Increased liability to CASA program - May siphon resources away from abuse/neglect cases
MEDIATION	
- Can be of tremendous value in family reunification cases by taking clients out of adversary system, venting feelings and empowering them - Sets example of positive way to resolve future disputes - Often successful in resolving parent - teen power struggle	- Requires extensive training - Basic 40 hour course runs about $900 - $1,000 - Steep learning cure, frequent practice required for proficiency - Difficult to redress huge power imbalance between client and the child protective services agency

Considerations for Supplemental Services	
Pro	**Con**
• Training readily available - check with state bar association • Will provide marvelous opportunity for volunteer growth with positive spill-over effect in other areas • Generally quicker resolution than court system	• Considerable wariness/resistance in child protective service cases • CASA cannot serve as both mediator and child's advocate on same case • State may have certain minimum requirements for which few volunteers qualify • May siphon resources away from abuse/neglect cases
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASES	
• Often dealing with families already familiar to the program • Frequently providing representation to children who might be more appropriate dependency cases in the first place • Furnish real advocacy for child whose court-appointed attorney has hundreds of cases • Training resources fairly easy to put together locally i.e. prosecutor, judge, staff attorney, juvenile probation dept, etc. • Provides challenge to experienced volunteers, especially those who enjoy teens • Cases generally of shorter duration but not always	• Requires additional training in juvenile justice and delinquency law • No "canned" training available • Not all volunteers comfortable with clients who have demonstrated anti-social behavior • Higher risk for both personal safety and program liability • Frequent travel necessary as juvenile facilities are often distant from jurisdiction • Visit settings often unpleasant • Volume in many jurisdictions overwhelming • May siphon resources away from abuse/neglect cases

Considerations for Supplemental Services	
Pro	**Con**
ADVOCATE FOR CHILD WITNESS IN CRIMINAL PROSECUTION	
• Previous familiarity with the child and with the facts of the case (usually) • Additional training requirement minimal and sources readily available through Victim's Advocate offices and Domestic Violence Shelters • Volunteer can be an invaluable support to the child, especially in cases where all family members side with the accused perpetrator • Challenging role for the right volunteer	• Extremely emotionally draining • Case and CASA role open to the scrutiny of the press • Volunteer may be uncomfortable with notoriety of high-profile case • Volunteer may feel powerless to assist child in the much less child-friendly atmosphere of criminal court • Cases often dragged out over many months - emotional highs and lows for child increased • Increased risk for program from both liability and public relations standpoint • May be increased risk to CASA's personal safety • Volunteer faces possible task of helping child deal with negative verdict • May siphon resources away from abuse/neglect cases

Considerations for Supplemental Services	
Pro	**Con**
DILIGENT SEARCH	
• Enhance likelihood of permanency by initiating search for relatives at case onset • Enhance child's sense of personal history by construction of a genogram • Speeds case resolution especially in termination of parental rights cases • Dedicated volunteer has time to do thorough research, facilitate child/relative contacts • May be excellent opportunity for volunteer who needs break from intensive case	• Limited child contact which is a prime motivation factor for most volunteers (can be ameliorated by providing a mix of diligent search and regular cases) • Boundary confusion between CASA and social service agency • Difficulty of long-distance home assessment • May encourage court to adapt oversimplified solution - just because a relative may be available does not mean (s)he is necessarily appropriate • May paradoxically result in less permanence as relative placements are often made without formalized adoption

Table 17.1

Shaping the Future

Preparing yourself and your CASA program for the uncertainties that face volunteer programs and the increasing demands for CASA's services is a challenging task that requires the constant balancing of many forces. CASA directors, their staff, administrators or board members, and volunteers all play an important role in setting a course, reviewing it often, making adjustments when necessary, and evaluating the journey when it ends.

Taking on new challenges that require change and new skills is what keeps people and organizations healthy and vital. Maintaining the adventurous attitude and the optimism that existed in the start-up days of CASA requires that programs consider every new opportunity with openness and a sense of adventure. At the same time, the focus of the program must remain those abused and neglected children in need of a voice.

As with each issue and decision discussed in this book, the program's decision to move in new directions has no simple answers. It requires the complex mixture of information, a sense of the future, good planning skills, and the ability to stay focused on the program's mission. Rita Sorenen, the Executive Director of Franklin County CASA in Columbus, Ohio, said it very eloquently:

> "Underlying the effort and hopes of transition, are the relentless whispers of the thousands of unserved children in our community. In change, we are reminded to continue to listen, for the whispers are the sounds which inspire our voices to remain strong and dedicated, knowing that whatever challenges we experience as an organization will never match the chaos, uncertainty or fear that so many of our children endure as they move through the juvenile justice system."

Resources For Further Research

Resources for Further Research

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Appendices

Appendix 4 - A

Board of Directors Job Description

Legal & Liability Issues

- Develop articles of incorporation.

- Develop by-laws, periodically review them and modify them as necessary.

- Obtain and guard 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status.

- Ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

- Approve and safeguard all legal documents.

- Maintain required records of the organization:

- Minutes of Board meetings

- Annual audits

- Annual Reports

- Hire, evaluate, and support the Executive Director.

- Set Director's salary and approve salary levels for other staff.

- Reduce risk of liability by "performing duties in good faith" manner.

- Exercise "due care" by:

- Recording votes and decisions

- Reviewing financial statements and audits

- Maintaining necessary liability insurance and include indemnification clause in bylaws to protect individual board members.

Financial Responsibilities

- Fundraising necessary to assure adequate financial resources to enable the organization to carry out its mission.

- Ensure that resources are well managed by:

- Approving final budget

- Monitoring cash flow and fund balances

- Reviewing annual audit.

- Ensure that fiscal policy complies with "Generally Acceptable Accounting Practices"

Planning and Evaluation

- Develop long-range plans for the organization's future based upon:

- External opportunities and threats

- Internal strengths and weaknesses.

- Periodically review and revise the mission statement.

- Determine the types of cases that CASA will serve and what services will be offered.

- Evaluate fundraising strategies to determine if they are in compliance with the organization's mission.

- Monitor and evaluate the progress towards meeting goals by assessing what is being accomplished and how well.

Community Relations

- Interpret the organization to the public.
- Develop linkages through community coalitions and partnerships.
- Authorize spokespersons to deal with the media and general public.
- Serve as ambassadors of the CASA program.

Adapted from the Organization Manual of National Network of Child Advocacy Centers

Appendix 4 - B

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
Policy Guidelines to Avoid Material Conflicts of Interest Involving Board or Staff

No trustee or staff member may participate in any decision-making process when said person or members of her or his immediate family, or any party, group or organization to which said person has allegiance, may have an interest that may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of the CASA program.

Trustees and staff members must weigh carefully all circumstances in which there exists the possibility of accusations of competing interest. Trustees and staff shall disclose to the board any possible conflict of interest and any and all relevant information pertaining to the possible conflict and may not participate in any decision-making process related to the matter in which there may be a conflict of interest. Further, trustees and staff shall excuse themselves from the room when there is any deliberation and decision on the matter of interest.

The minutes of the board and/or committee meetings shall reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not present during the deliberation and decision on the matter of interest. In the event of possible conflict of interest in a decision-making process at the level of management, the executive director shall report to the board in writing that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not in the room and did not participate in the final deliberation and decision on the matter of interest.

Not withstanding the above, the Board of Trustees may waive the foregoing restrictions and allow a trustee or staff member with a conflict of interest to join in such portion of the discussion on the matter of interest as the board deems appropriate.

When there is doubt as to whether a conflict of interest exists, the matter shall be resolved by a vote of the executive committee, excluding the person(s) who may have the possible conflict.

The policy shall be reviewed at the first meeting of duly elected trustees, annually with all staff and with each new member of the staff at the time of his or her hire. Copies of this policy shall be given to each trustee and staff member.

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Appendix 4 - C

A Board Member's Job Description

General Expectations
- ♦ Become knowledgeable about the organization.
- ♦ Serve in leadership positions or undertake special assignments willingly and enthusiastically when asked.
- ♦ Keep the director informed about any concerns the community has.
- ♦ Follow trends in the child welfare and juvenile justice fields.
- ♦ Recruit possible nominees to the board who are clearly women and men of achievement and distinction and who can make contributions to the work of the board and the organization.
- ♦ Bring a sense of humor to the board's deliberations.

Meetings
- ♦ Prepare for and participate in board and committee meetings, including appropriate organizational activities.
- ♦ Ask timely and substantive questions at board and committee meetings consistent with their conscience and convictions, while supporting the majority decision on issues decided by the board.
- ♦ Maintain confidentiality of the board's executive sessions, and speak for the board or organization only when authorized to do so.
- ♦ Suggest agenda items periodically for board and committee meetings to ensure that significantly policy-related matters are addressed.

Relationships with Staff
- ♦ Offer support and assistance to the director when appropriate.
- ♦ Avoid asking for special favors of the staff, including requests for extensive information, without at least prior consultation with the director.

Avoiding Conflicts
- ♦ Serve the organization as a whole rather than any special interest group or constituency.
- ♦ Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest that might embarrass the board or the organization, and disclose any possible conflicts to the board in a timely fashion.
- ♦ Maintain independence and objectivity and do what a sense of fairness, ethics, and personal integrity dictate even though not necessarily obliged to do so by law, regulation, or custom.
- ♦ Never accept (or offer) favors or gifts from (or to) anyone who does business with the organization.

Fiduciary Responsibilities
- ♦ Exercise prudence with the board in the control and transfer of funds.
- ♦ Faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements and otherwise help the board fulfill its fiduciary responsibility.

Fund Raising
- ♦ Give an annual gift to the organization.
- ♦ Assist in resource development by implementing fund-raising strategies through personal influence with others.

Adapted from The Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards by Richard Ingram

Appendix 4 - D

Board Member Orientation Checklist

Board Member_____

Date of Orientation_____

Board member has provided:	Date Completed
• Mailing address, home and work phone numbers.	_____
• Best time to call	_____
• Best times and days for meetings	_____
• Signed application (including permission for criminal check)	_____
• Signed commitment to serve on the board	_____
• Confidentiality pledge	_____

Board member attends orientation session which includes:	_____
• Mission of the CASA program	_____
• Current funding	_____
• Current Activities	_____
• Introduced to the staff	_____
• Discussion of board member's role	_____
• Introduced to other members of the board	_____

Board member receives Board Handbook which contains:	_____
• List of current board members	_____
• List of current staff & assignments	_____
• Charter & by-laws	_____
• Current Budget	_____
• Current strategic & work plan	_____
• Most recent annual reports	_____
• Most recent audit	_____
• Minutes of board meetings of the last year	_____
• Financial Management policies	_____
• Personnel policies	_____
• Samples of publications	_____
• Information on legislative positions	_____
• List of committees & chairpersons	_____

BOARD AND STAFF . . . WHO DOES WHAT

GOAL: To improve board-staff relationships by coming to consensus on who has *primary* responsibility for various organizational tasks.

SUGGESTIONS: Read each task and determine who has primary responsibility for doing it; write a 1 in that column. If someone/group has strong secondary responsibility, or the task/decision shouldn't be made without input from them, put a 2 in that column.

FUNCTION / TASK	RESPONSIBILITY 1 - PRIMARY 2 - SECONDARY/INPUT AND ASSISTANCE		
	BOARD	EX. Dir./ ADMIN.	STAFF
I. PLANNING			
1. Determine basic organizational purpose and goals			
2. Determine which community needs should be met and to what extent			
3. Determine categories of services to be provided			
4. Develop long-range plans for the organization			
5. Develop programs to meet identified needs			
6. Set specific program objectives			
7. Establish funding level needed to run organization			
8. Develop program evaluation system			
II. POLICY			
1. Provides background information necessary for policy decisions			
2. Gives input to policy			
3. Makes policy			
III. FUND RAISING			
1. Develop fund raising plan			
2. Develop funding sources			
3. Solicit funds and other resources			
4. Evaluate fund raising success			
IV. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT			

1. Prepare agency budget 2. Monitor how funds are spent on a day to day basis 3. Monitors total funding picture 4. Hire a CPA for annual audit 5. Do bookkeeping			209

V. PERSONNEL			
1. Develop agency personnel policies			
2. recruit, screen, hire, supervise, and terminate:			
a. executive director			
b. paid staff			
c. board members			
d. direct-service volunteers			
3. Provide training and development opportunities for:			
a. executive director			
b. paid staff			
c. board members			
d. direct service volunteers			
4. Develops evaluation procedures and evaluates the performance of:			
a. executive director			
b. paid staff			
c. board members			
d. direct service volunteers			
VI. PUBLIC RELATIONS			
1. Develop a formal public relations plan			
2. Implement the public relations plan			
3. Serve on the boards of other community agencies			
4. Maintain contact with state, regional, and national organizations with similar interests			
5. Establish method of assessing management practices which impact "internal" public relations			
VII. BOARD RECRUITMENT			
1. Develop board nominating procedures			
2. Suggest potential members to the nominating committee			
3. Develop board orientation and training			

Policy Making Boards

The following key is provided for *policy making* boards. It reflects accepted practice and delineates responsibilities of the Board of Directors / Trustees and paid staff.

When the organization has a voting electorate or membership, they ultimately determine the Board's actions. Some of the responsibilities indicated as primary to the executive might be delegated to other staff in a large organization. In an organization without paid staff, the Board members may perform some of the functions indicated for the executive or staff.

Some tasks have not been included in the key, because the responsibility is based on agreements between Board and staff depending on the situation.

We haven't indicated responsibility for advisory councils, because their responsibilities are set directly by the individuals or groups which have commissioned them.

TASKS	DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY	BOARDS	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	STAFF
Planning	Primary Secondary	1, 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7, 8 2, 3, 4	 5, 6, 7, 8
Policy	Primary Secondary	3	1, 2	 1
Fund Raising	Primary Secondary	 1	1	
Financial Management	Primary Secondary	3, 4	1, 2 3	5 1
Personnel	Primary Secondary	1, 2a, 2c, 3a, 3c, 4a, 4c	2b, 3b, 4b 1	2d, 3d, 4d
Public Relations	Primary Secondary	4 1	1, 2, 4, 5	 1,2
Board Recruitment	Primary Secondary	1, 2, 3	 2, 3	

*   The numbers correspond to the numbered tasks in worksheet

Steps in Board Member Selection

Step 1: "What characteristics, attitudes, traits, or skills does the organization need to function effectively?"
To answer this question, look at the plan of activities for the upcoming year and ask yourself what resources (informational, financial, managerial, and relational) will be needed to successfully implement the plan. Determine in what areas the board could best assist with implementation. Think also in terms of what you want your board to look like: in what ways should it represent the community in which you operate? Utilize the *Board Selection Characteristics* sheet for additional ideas. Think of terms of what you would like to see if you had a perfect board of directors...

Step 2: "What does the organization currently have? What is missing?
Utilize the *Board Assessment Grid*. Of the desired characteristics, determine which should be present in all board members (minimum commitment of time, willingness to make personal donation), which should be present in some particular positions (board chair: public speaking, leadership skills; fr chair: ability to ask for money), and which might be present in any board member (as long as someone has them). Write these items in the appropriate vertical blanks on the upper grid.

List current board members down the left side of the grid. Evaluate each board member against the desired characteristics, giving credit if, and only if, the board member both has the desired trait and makes a commitment to use it for the organization. You can do the evaluation either with simple checkmarks (a mark for a 'yes') or by giving a numerical score (1 - 5) evaluating the extent of the contribution.

You can get the best results in this evaluation by first asking board members to assess themselves. Remind them that anything they list may be used as a means of assigning them work. After this self-assessment is done, have the board chair and executive director review it.

At the conclusion of this process, the vertical columns which are marked (or have high numerical scores) will represent your areas of strength. The vertical columns which do not have check marks (or have low numerical scores) will represent the areas of need for recruitment. Do not be surprised the first time you utilize this technique to discover that you are high over-represented in some categories and totally deficient in many others. This is a natural result of the cloning recruitment process which many groups utilize.

Step 3: "Fill in the blanks. Remove the dead wood."
Give the completed grid to the nominating committee with instructions to look for candidates who can supply the missing characteristics. Utilize the principles of targeted recruitment to identify people with the required characteristics.

If openings must be created on the board for these new members, look at the horizontal columns to identify current board members who are contributing least to the organization.

These might be people who do not have the skills the organization needs at this time, or they might be people whose skills are over-represented on the board at the current time.

Once possible candidates are identified, utilize the grid to determine which can contribute the most to the board, and then ask these persons first.

You may also want to assess the resources that the staff contribute. Analyze their strengths and eliminate some desired characteristics from the board list.

Step 4: "Recruit"
The grid is actually the beginning of a job description for the new board. If you are attempting to fill out the strengths of the board by seeking someone with skills in public relations, then in the recruiting interview with this person you can discuss the needs and plans of the agency in this area, since it is clear that the new person will be involved in implementing these plans. Recruit on the basis of the actual work that the person will be doing on the board, not just on 'becoming a member'. If you let them know in advance what you want and expect them to do, they are more likely to actually attempt to do it later.

BOARD SELECTION CHARACTERISTICS

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

- ❑ Finance / Accounting
- ❑ Law
- ❑ Personnel
- ❑ Hiring executive director
- ❑ Strategic planning / Visioning
- ❑ Community needs assessment
- ❑ Membership services
- ❑ Public relations
- ❑ Marketing
- ❑ Computerization
- ❑ Managing geographically separate offices
- ❑ Leadership skills
- ❑ Leadership potential
- ❑ Ability to donate large chunk of time
- ❑ Public speaking skills
- ❑ Community savvy / Contacts

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

- ❑ Seniors
- ❑ Youth
- ❑ Afro-Americans
- ❑ Asian-Americans
- ❑ Hispanic Americans
- ❑ Religious Community
- ❑ Business / Labor
- ❑ Parents / Clients
- ❑ City / County Government
- ❑ Collaborating Organizations
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Media
- ❑ Males
- ❑ Females
- ❑ Persons with Disabilities
- ❑ Community Volunteers
- ❑ Downtown Area
- ❑ Outlying Geographic Areas
- ❑ Funding Community
- ❑ Group Members
- ❑ Old Guard in Community
- ❑ Newcomers
- ❑ Military

FUNDRAISING

- ❑ Special Events Management
- ❑ Clout
- ❑ Foundations
- ❑ Corporations
- ❑ Small Businesses
- ❑ Solicitation of Individuals
- ❑ Endowment Funds
- ❑ Personal Wealth
- ❑ Government Contracts
- ❑ Donated Goods
- ❑ Ability to Ask for Donations
- ❑ Ability to Make Personal Contribution
- ❑ Self-Generated Revenue
- ❑ Planning of FR Effort
- ❑ Capital Campaign
- ❑ Investments

PROGRAM EXPERTISE

- ❑ Volunteer Management
- ❑ Youth Involvement
- ❑ Business Partnerships
- ❑ Technical Assistance
- ❑ Starting New Projects
- ❑ Education and Training
- ❑ Subject Area Knowledge

BOARD ASSESSMENT GRID	ALL	SOME		ANY			
		BOARD CHAIR	FR COMM CHAIR	MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION	FUNDRAISING	PROGRAM EXPERTISE	COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

Appendix 5 - A
EVALUATIONS/REVIEWS OF CASA/GAL PROGRAMS/MODELS

WITH

PROCESS AND / OR OUTCOME MEASURES

(most have qualitative elements as well)

June 1996

Compiled and Summarized by:
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INDEX

NOTE to the READER

1. This compilation has been prepared for the CASA Evaluation Advisory Committee so emphasis has been placed on the variables used in measuring "effectiveness" as well as any possible problems and/or limitations with the studies.

2. The "process" and "outcome" measures discussed in this compilation are used as they were defined by the author of each study.

3. Another summary report, "Evaluations/Reviews of CASAs/GAL Programs/Models with a <u>Qualitative</u> Focus," has also been prepared for the CASA Evaluation Advisory Committee.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Abramson, Shareen	1991	Fresno (CA) Amicus Program	Comparison groups: with CASA volunteer who had same ethnic and cultural background as child, and without CASA volunteer

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: does the use of trained court-appointed advocates enhance permanency planning efforts for abused and neglected minority children?

- Outcome measures:

    1. placement of minority children (adoption versus long-term foster care)

    2. recidivism

RESULTS

- Adoption more likely achieved or planned for CASA cases; long-term foster care more likely for children without CASAs.

- CASA families less likely to return to court after case dismissed (this finding was not statistically significant).

COMMENTS/PROBLEMS NOTED

No problems mentioned.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Bogle, Trina G.	1996	Virginia CASA program and 3 specific sites	Interviews with CASA program directors; surveys of CASA volunteers, program directors, judges, social workers, and GALs; case records review

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall:

  - provide a better understanding of CASA activities and program characteristics

  - attempt to determine the impact of CASA intervention on its client population

- Opinion and program data (from interviews and surveys):

  - program and volunteer descriptive information (including training)

  - relationships with collaterals

  - perceptions of program value, benefits, and problems

  - satisfaction with the program

- Victim, family and abuser demographics (from case records review)

- Impact/outcome measures (from case records review) [note: no comparison group of cases was available - see comments/problems below]:

  - case length: CASA, court, total

  - placement: outcomes, type of household

  - subsequent activity (recidivism)

  - compliance with court orders

  - CASA reports to the court

    - number of

    - incorporation into court orders

  - CASA and social worker comparison

    - contacts with collaterals

    - contacts with children

      - during investigation

      - during monitoring

    - focus of recommendations

RESULTS

- Opinion and program data:

  - Overall, courtroom participants value the program and are largely satisfied with services it provides. Several areas identified where improvement may be made (e.g. role clarification, need for standardized court report, training for program directors and volunteers)

- Impact/outcome measures and demographics:

  - CASAs assigned to complicated cases (families had multiple problems besides abuse and neglect issues);

  - CASAs contacted victims more while social workers contacted abusers and other family members more; but CASAs had contact with fewer groups than social workers (evaluators note that this finding is somewhat contradictory to their survey findings);

  - CASAs made significantly more recommendations relating to the victims than social workers;

  - CASA recommendations found to be fairly consistent with court orders;

  - Almost one-quarter of closed cases returned to the system.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

Original evaluation plan proposed to investigate impact of CASA involvement by comparing outcomes for children with CASAs and those without. Evaluators abandoned this approach for the following reasons: unavailability of accurate statewide data on individual cases; variability across CASA programs on key process variables (e.g. training); and, lack of CASA programs, courts, and social services file information on services provided or outcomes of cases. Because of these limitations, the focus of the study was shifted to a process evaluation of the state program coupled with an impact evaluation at three sites. Lack of comparison group "greatly limited" evaluators' ability to draw conclusions about the impact of CASAs.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Condelli, Larry	1988	National in scope	Comparative study of 5 GAL models at 9 sites: interviews with judges, attorneys, program directors, and case "network (child, parent or principal caretaker, GAL, caseworker);" case records review

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: "impact of GALs in serving children's best interests and to examine GAL activity and responsibilities under [5] different GAL program models" (law school clinic, staff attorney, paid private attorney, lay volunteer/paid attorney, and lay volunteer).

- Process measures (from judges and state attorneys' assessments):

    1. GAL role and responsibilities

        - during investigation

        - in the court room

        - during post disposition

    2. selection and appointment

        - which cases assigned to

        - time of appointment

        - matching cases with GAL

        - stability of appointment

    3. amount of required training and monetary compensation

    4. level of independence from court and child welfare agency

    5. judicial and mediation activity.

- Outcome (best interest) measures (from case record analysis):

    1. legal activity

        - % of hearings GAL attended
        - % of hearings where motions filed
        - # of motions filed
        - # of exhibits entered

    2. services

        - total # ordered
        - # ordered per hearing
        - % appropriate

    3. placements

        - total # of
        - time out of home
        - per placement time
        - % with relatives and siblings

    4. case plan changes

        - court ordered changes were in case plan
        - # per case
        - # hearings where changes made
        - # of changes per hearing

    5. timing

        - of judicial action

            - time to first dispositional hearing
            - time between hearings
            - time between court reviews

        - under court jurisdiction

    6. case goal

        - initial goal of reunification maintained

- % changes to final goal of reunification

- % changed from reunification to adoption

- Qualitative data on GAL effectiveness (from case "network" interviews):

  1. investigation

  2. independence of viewpoint

  3. contact with child

  4. case monitoring

  5. resolution of disagreement

RESULTS

- Process: most problems identified with private attorney model – poorly compensated; untrained; not likely to serve for duration of case; did not conduct thorough investigation; ineffective in obtaining services or placements for child, facilitating service delivery, and expediting court processing. "GALs under other models performed well on the process variables and CASAs appear to be particularly strong" – especially in contact with child and post-disposition monitoring of case.

- Outcomes: CASA models produced greater number of best interest outcomes for the child than other models. Most effective areas were services and placements.

- Qualitative effectiveness: CASAs excelled in each of 5 areas researched, and were especially strong in case monitoring. Private attorneys again did not fare well compared to other models.

- Overall: Private Attorney model was "weakest method" of providing GAL representation - attributed primarily to lack of adequate compensation and lack of training. CASA model "clearly excelled" as a method of GAL representation, attributed primarily to personal motivation and low caseloads.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

- Generalizability of findings limited because:

  - Evaluators did not attempt to identify all sites employing each of the GAL models (required too much time and too much money); instead, relied on selective listing of sites provided by ABA.

- Proved not to be possible to select cases in a truly random sample as GAL programs and local child welfare agencies were unable or unwilling to produce a full case listing. However, evaluators believe no systematic bias was introduced by the employment of their selection system, which was selection of the most recently closed cases.

- Differences in record keeping from agency to agency, program to program, model to model, and court to court; differences in GAL responsibilities; and the fact that court records leave much out that occurs verbally or prior to hearings, created the "most serious imitations" of the study. Would have required full transcripts of hearings and extensive interviews with GALs, which were both beyond evaluation budget.

- Case "network" interviews were an attempt to obtain some of the above missing information. These, too, have limited generalizability due primarily to the small number of cases (limited budgetarily to one open and one closed case per site). Criteria for the selection of the actual case networks (child had to be old enough to be interviewed, and both parent (or caretaker) and child had to be available for, capable of, and agreeable to interviews) meant that the most difficult cases were excluded.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
CSR, Inc.	1995	National in scope	Comparative study of 3 GAL models (private attorney, staff attorney, CASA): interviews with GALs, caseworkers, and judges; case records reviews in 23 counties

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: measure effectiveness of GAL representation and validate select findings of 1990 CSR study (see NCASAA summary of qualitative CASA/GAL evaluations/reviews).

- Descriptive data: various dimensions of the 5 roles of the GAL (as defined by Don Duquette): factfinder/investigator; legal representative; case monitor; mediator/negotiator; and resource broker

- Process effectiveness based on the following performance measures of the 5 roles:

    1. Factfinder/Investigator

        - contacts with child, others (e.g. parents, neighbors, education personnel)

        - visits to the home, foster home or shelter

        - review of various written sources of information (e.g. police reports, medical records)

    2. Legal Representation

        - court room activities

        - recommendations to court

        - disagreements between GALs and other parties

        - child speaking in court

    3. Negotiator/Mediator

        - attempts to negotiate agreements or stipulations (both successful and unsuccessful)

        - parties and issues involved

        - activities performed

    4. Monitor

        - contacts with child and other parties

        - follow up on case plans and court orders

        - recommendations made to change case plan

- time involved

   5. Resource Broker

      - identification of resources
      - types of services assisted in obtaining
      - time involved

RESULTS

- Factfinder/Investigator: CASAs contacted child and visited home in higher percentage of cases than either private or staff attorneys; CASAs received highest effectiveness rating.

- Legal Representation: private and staff attorneys much more likely than CASAs to conduct legal representation activities; received higher effectiveness ratings than CASAs.

- Negotiator/Mediator: staff attorneys most likely to negotiate and CASAs least likely to; staff attorneys received higher effectiveness ratings than CASAs.

- Monitor: CASAs spent significantly more time monitoring case than attorney GALs; received higher effectiveness ratings than attorney GALs.

- Resource Broker: more often conducted by CASAs than either staff or private attorneys; received higher effectiveness ratings than attorney GALs. Evaluators noted that there is ambiguity concerning the extent to which GALs should be involved in "brokering."

- Overall: no single GAL model was consistently superior to the others across all 5 GAL roles. Optimal approach may involve having a GAL who possesses or has access to the expertise and resources of attorneys, lay volunteers, and caseworkers.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

- "During the pretest period, considerable difficulties were encountered in obtaining the necessary clearances to access individuals and records." Resulted in elimination of parent/child interview. Also, courtroom observation was eliminated due to "inordinate amount of staff time" required for it.

- Differences between OBM and the ACYF over the design of the study caused almost a 2 year delay and a change in the focus of the study from outcomes for children to procedural effectiveness of GALs.

- Miscellaneous comments on sampling plan:

   - California and Massachusetts were excluded from study because of reported problems in obtaining access to open child welfare agency records.

   - Only counties with populations over 100,000 were included in sample.

   - "Lengthy clearance process" indicates that future studies should plan ample time and resources to obtain study approvals.

- Field data collection:

- Some individuals delayed or avoided participating (e.g. by not returning calls).

- Difficult to find GALs with at least one new and one review case – had to broaden initial criteria for selection.

- Some organizations required special procedures for collecting data which made process "much more arduous."

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Duquette, Donald and Sarah H. Ramsey	1986, 1987 (study conducted in 1982)	Genesee County (Flint, Michigan) Juvenile Court	Comparison of 3 experimental groups (private attorneys, law students, and volunteers under supervision of an attorney – all of which received same GAL training) with each other, and with a control group consisting of attorneys who received no GAL training. Data derived from face-to-face interviews with all participants and court records review.

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: to determine who should represent the child in civil protection proceedings, what their duties and responsibilities should be, and how effective representation can be accomplished.

- Process measures:

    1. investigation/advocacy/mediation
    2. GALs attitude toward role
    3. GALs attitude toward child
    4. GALs attitude toward others

- Outcome measures:

    1. court processing time
    2. type of placement (home, relative, other)
    3. visitation orders
    4. treatment, assessment and services
    5. orders regarding formal court jurisdiction
        - no contest pleas
        - wards of the court
        - dismissals
        - other procedural orders

RESULTS

- No significant differences in cases as to the types of abuse and severity of the types of abuse. Also, no significant differences between demonstration and control groups on race, sex, and mean number of children per case.

- Processes:

  - Only significant differences among experimental (trained) groups were that the law students scored higher on the investigation-interaction scale, took significantly more actions to attempt mediation, and were more critical of the other actors in the process.

  - Many significant differences between trained groups and non trained group (e.g. trained groups spent more time on cases, took more steps to mediate).

- Outcomes:

  - No significant differences among trained groups

  - "Good number of significant differences" found between trained groups and non trained group (e.g. court processes moved faster and more cases resolved at preliminary hearings with trained groups).

- Overall:

  - ". . . the demonstration model [trained groups] of representation. . . was successful in improving the quality of representation and, as a consequence, 'better' case outcomes resulted."

  - ". . . because all three demonstration groups provided similar high quality representation, the demonstration model implicitly provides policy makers with a choice from among the three types of representatives. Our study demonstrates the importance of training child representatives, regardless of who the representative may be. Non-lawyers carefully selected and trained and under lawyer supervision performed as well as trained lawyers in representing children, and certainly performed better than lawyers without special training."

  - "Provided that the representatives are adequately trained and are committed to an active role, a flexible system of child advocacy drawing on several models would probably arrive at the most efficacious and cost-effective system of child representation."

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

No problems mentioned.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Kelly, Robert and Sarah Ramsey	1982-83, 1984-85	North Carolina	Telephone survey of attorneys; case records review; review of socio-economic, demographic, social service, and judicial-administrative data

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: does the presence of an attorney representing the child's interest make any difference in a court's custodial disposition of the case? Are there specific sorts of lawyers who make a difference?

- Standards:

  - removal of child from her/his parent(s) or guardian (immediate custody orders)

  - return of the child to the parent(s) or guardian

  - length of time child was away from home

- The study also investigated which factors such as race, sex, etc., influence the manner in which cases are handled by the courts. Characteristics included here were of:

  - the petition

  - the child

  - the court's treatment of the case

  - the parent(s) or guardian

  - the attorney GALs

  - the county in which the case was heard

RESULTS

". . . for the most part attorneys for children were not only ineffective but even tended to substantially delay a child's return home. An encouraging finding, however, was that those attorneys who spent more hours on their cases did expedite return."

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

No problems mentioned.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Leung, Patrick	1990, 1996	CASA program in the Denver Juvenile Court	Comparison groups: one experimental (with CASAs) and two control (without CASAs): 4 data collection instruments designed to collect information

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall:

  - Do CASAs contribute to positive outcomes?

  - At which point during the court process is CASA intervention most effective (before petition, pretrial, trial and disposition, review hearings, and permanency planning hearing)?

- Case variables:

  - # of children and any handicaps

  - primary caretaker: handicaps, age, deprived/abused as child, drug/alcohol history

  - financial stability

  - average # of moves

  - average # of times child relinquished

  - experienced death of a child

  - type and severity of abuse/neglect

- Outcome variables:

  - frequency of placement changes

  - types of placement changes ("positive" change defined as: child remains at home; returns home; remains in one foster home; or remains in one relative's home)

  - # and length of out-of-home placements for child

RESULTS

- Overall, no significant differences found between experimental and two control groups in terms of characteristics.

- "The data tend to support the belief that CASA programs are effective in reducing the length of time in out-of-home placement of a child. The data also indicate that CASA intervention tends to minimize the number of placement changes - the percentage of CASA subjects involved in second and third placements was lower than that of the comparison group. In addition, the percentage of subjects returned home was higher in the experimental group than in the comparison group in the second, third, and fourth placement periods. The data also indicate that the subjects in the experimental group had experienced more positive changes than subjects in the comparison group."

- CASA intervention found to be most effective when volunteer is assigned between the pretrial and disposition period.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

Experimental group consisted of those cases assigned to CASA (not random). First control group consisted of randomly selected juvenile court cases which were not involved with CASA. The second control group involved cases randomly selected from the juvenile court to CASA referrals before volunteers were assigned (no volunteers were available).

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Litzelfelner, Pat	1996	Three CASA programs in Kansas	Quasi-experimental prospective comparison of two groups: with and without CASAs

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall:

  - What is the impact of CASA programs on achieving positive outcomes for children in foster care?

  - What is the impact of CASA programs on foster care processes that are believed to lead to positive outcomes for children in foster care?

  - What processes, program and CASA volunteer activities, and case characteristics can be said to predict the desired case outcomes?

- Process variables:

  - amount of time spent and contacts

  - number and appropriateness of services

  - case reviews and continuances

  - court processing time

- Outcome variables:

  - recidivism and reabuse

  - case disposition

  - length of time under court jurisdiction and time spent out-of-home

  - number of out-of-home placements

RESULTS

Preliminary results available in two areas:

- descriptive information on CASA volunteers (e.g. 89% female; 62% Caucasian; mean age of 40);

- ". . . no differences found between groups on the matching variables age, gender, race, or reason for court involvement. Statistically significant differences were found on the extraneous variables; number of previous removals from home (comparison cases had more), number of previous referrals to SRS (CASA cases had more) and presence of drug and alcohol problems by primary caretaker (CASA cases more likely). These findings suggest that CASA cases may be indeed more severe than the comparison cases."

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

Random assignment of cases to CASA or no CASA not approved by juvenile judge and court service workers at two sites.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
MGT, Inc.	1981	Florida volunteer GAL program	Interviews with legislative and program staff, volunteers, judges, court administrators, HRS representative, directors of GAL programs in other states; case records review

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: evaluation of "process and product outcomes" for the project staff and relevant evaluative information for the Legislature to aid their determination of appropriate funding levels and possible statewide expansion.

- Specific evaluation areas:

    - management procedures

    - need for expansion

    - cost estimates on alternative methods of administration of GAL program

    - satisfaction with program

    - impact on placement:

        - comparison of GAL and caseworkers placement proposals

        - comparison of GAL and caseworkers placement proposals with final court decision

    - comparison of costs associated with placement recommendations

RESULTS

- In cases involving both volunteers and caseworkers, volunteer made more recommendations to court. Also, there is a stronger relationship between GAL final placement recommendations and court decisions than caseworker final recommendations and court decisions.

- Volunteers recommended typically less expensive alternative care settings while waiting court disposition. Court followed these 2/3rds of the time.

- Volunteers regularly recommended more supervised care by parents and relatives, and less foster care than caseworkers.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED
No problems mentioned.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
MGT, Inc.	1983	Florida volunteer GAL program	Interviews with key personnel and volunteers; case records review

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Follow up to 1981 study

    - sufficiency of financial and volunteer resources

    - management practices of state office program

    - impact on placement

        - comparison of GAL and caseworker placement proposals

        - comparison of GAL and caseworker placement proposals with court decisions

    - comparison of costs associated with placement recommendations

RESULTS

- Slightly higher tendency for court actions to more often parallel placement recommendations made by GAL than by caseworkers.

- Substantially greater agreement among volunteers and caseworker recommendations and court decisions as compared to 1981 study. Change lies primarily with caseworkers. GAL volunteers final placement recommendations remained relatively stable.

- "Unique savings" that was attributed to volunteer GALs in 1981 is now limited since caseworker recommendations are more similar with GAL recommendations.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

No problems mentioned.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Oregon Task Force on Juvenile Justice	1995	Oregon	Literature review; review of Citizen Review Board records; telephone interviews and informal surveys

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: how does Oregon "best meet the advocacy needs of children involved in judicial dependency proceedings in a manner that insures the juvenile court judge makes decisions providing for the safety, well-being and best interests of the child based on all the necessary information and maximum use of resources for the child?"

- Procedural and outcome measures:

    - effects of representation on months in foster care

    - types of representation

    - volunteer efforts on behalf of child

    - cost of representation

        - attorney

        - CASA

    - cost of termination of parental rights

RESULTS

- Children without representation spent an average of 37 months in substitute care; those with an attorney and a CASA averaged 26 months.

- Four types of representation found in Oregon: private attorney; lay volunteer; team (lay volunteer and attorney); no representation.

- "The Task Force concluded that the best advocacy for abused and neglected children can be provided by an attorney and a lay volunteer team that works cooperatively. An effective state-wide coordinated system for the appointment of advocates should be patterned on this team model."

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

- Vastly incompatible records maintained by state and county agencies.

- Statewide statistics not available in several areas they would have liked to measured (e.g. use of existing services, incidence of re-abuse or neglect).

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Poertner, John and Allan Press	1986	Two GAL models in a large mid-western city	Quasi-experimental retrospective comparison of CASA model and staff attorney model

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: do lay volunteers do as well as trained attorneys in representing the interests of children?

- Case variables:

  - child: age, sex, # per family, # in family under court jurisdiction, # of maltreatments

  - age of mother

  - type of maltreatment

  - who abuser was

- Process variables:

  1. # of continuances
  2. # of placement changes
  3. amount of time child spent out of home
  4. time in own home
  5. time from case opening to initial disposition
  6. # of voluntary dismissals
  7. # of services for child
  8. # of services for family

- Outcome variables:

  1. time in court system
  2. disposition of case (child living with parents, legal guardian, adopted or other)
  3. disposition of case as to whether or not the child stayed with abuser
  4. reentry into the juvenile system (recidivism)

RESULTS

- Case variables: staff attorneys had higher percentage of children per family as well as higher percentage of males. Both figures were statistically significant, but "on average they do not seem to be so disparate as to represent a major difference between caseloads." [See also comments/problems below.]

- Process variables: CASA volunteers performed as well as attorneys on 6 of 8 variables. For the two on which they differ, CASA cases have significantly more services for children and spent significantly less time on average placed in their own home.

- Outcome variables: no differences between CASA and staff attorney in regards to time to final disposition, reentry into the judicial system and the percentage of cases with final disposition to the abuser. In regards to general final disposition, CASA cases resulted in significantly more adoptions than did staff attorneys. Examination of these cases found that CASA adoptions in comparison to staff attorneys' were more frequently nonwhite, did not involve physical abuse, were in the court system longer, required more court appearances to consummate the adoption, and required a longer period of time for the children to be out of their homes before the adoption disposition.

- Overall: CASA volunteers performed at least as well as specialized attorneys in representing children in juvenile court.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

Initial groups were different in two ways: staff attorney cases were much more likely to involve sexual abuse and had a much higher percentage of children over the age of 12 . Consequently, staff attorney cases in which sexual abuse was involved were eliminated (so study was limited to all other types of abuse but sexual) and children were restricted to age 12 or under.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Smith, Stephanie	Cases from 1991-92 were reviewed	Texas	Comparison of children with CASAs and those without

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: effectiveness of CASA volunteers in Texas

- Outcome:

    1. length of time in system

    2. number of placements

    3. case outcomes

RESULTS

- Significant difference found in number of foster home placements: CASA children averaged 5.86 foster homes while non CASA children averaged 4.76 foster homes.

- Significant difference found in length of time in the legal system: CASA children averaged 1,110 days while non CASA children averaged 784 days.

- No significant difference found in types of case outcomes (returned home, adopted, long term foster care); but CASA children were more likely to be adopted or emancipated than non CASA children.

- "On the surface, it would appear that CASA volunteers are associated with cases with worse outcomes, not better ones. It is important to avoid jumping to this conclusion, however. It is entirely possible that CASA volunteers are appointed to 'worse' cases, where the children have already been in multiple foster homes and have been in the system a long time." [See comments/problems below.]

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

No tests were run to compare homogeneity of groups, or when CASA appointed. Evaluators recommend that future research should consider both points to help eliminate "severity" effect.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Snyder, Karen	1995: Phase I (qualitative) 1996: Phase II (quantitative)	Franklin County (Ohio) CASA	Phase I: interviews with court personnel; Phase II: comparison of cases with CASA GAL to cases with private attorney GAL. Data obtained through: interviews with court personnel; reviews of CASA records, case plans, and court files.

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall

    - Do CASAs and private attorneys in Franklin County deal with comparable cases?

    - If yes, do CASAs and private attorneys deal with the cases comparably?

    - If not, what are the differences and what are the implications of those differences with regard to representing the best interests of children in court?

- Case variables

    - type of complaint

    - # of children: in the case, in the home, in the family

    - gender and age of children

    - marital status of parents

    - age of father and mother

    - type of initial placement

    - initial case status

    - initial role of FCCS

    - whether mother and/or father was in the home

    - parent's drug, alcohol, and criminal history

    - date of initial complaint

- Best interest/process variables

    - "Factfinder and investigator: the thoroughness of collection of information relevant to the child's case that the GAL could bring to the court's attention.

    - Courtroom representative: the amount and type of representation the child receives in the court.

    - Mediator and negotiator: the ability of the GAL to work with agencies, particularly FCCS, outside of the courtroom to expedite the child's placement outcomes.

    - Case monitor: the amount of contact the GAL maintains with the child and his/her family. The extent to which a GAL stays "on top" of a case.

    - Resource broker: the extent to which the GAL facilitates the provision of services for the child and his/her family."

RESULTS

- Phase I:

    - "The judges and magistrates were pleased with the Franklin County CASA program because the CASAs provide in-depth information which, they feel, makes judicial decision making easier and better.

    - Primarily due to the thoroughness of CASAs' background investigation, the average CASA volunteer was seen by most of the people interviewed as being a better representative of the child in court than the average private attorney.

    - There is a very strong, positive perception of CASA's training program and its selection process for volunteers. In addition, the current CASA administration is viewed very highly by people in the court system.

    - Many in the court system expressed concern that CASAs might show a cultural bias. Some believe this leads to CASA recommendations for placement outside the home too frequently."

- Phase II:

    - Case variables: cases were found to be comparable.

    - Best interest/process variables:

        - "Factfinder and investigator: CASAs appear to be more thorough factfinders and investigators in that they are more likely to file for discovery and more likely to submit a written report to the family files.

- Courtroom representative: CASAs appear to be at least as good as or better than private attorneys in this role. They had fewer dismissals and fewer continuances due to GAL schedule conflicts. They were also more likely to appear at the court proceedings than the private attorneys . Furthermore, CASAs were more likely than private attorneys to participate in the court proceedings.

- Mediator and negotiator: CASAs appear to be just as good in this role as the private attorneys. It could be argued, in fact that they are better because they are significantly more likely to participate in case plans.

- Case monitor: Indirect evidence from court records suggests that CASAs are better case monitors than their private attorney counterparts. They are more likely to file a case summary report and have fewer dismissals without refilings than the private attorney cases. And, the mother was more likely to show up in court in CASA cases.

- Resource broker: these data are inconclusive with regard to the role of resource broker. Once set of quantitative data favors the private attorney GAL and another set favors the CASA GAL. On the other hand, our qualitative data from Phase I indicates the CASA GAL may be a better broker of resources."

- Overall: "both qualitative evidence and the quantitative evidence converge to suggest that the CASA program represents the best interest of the child in court better than or at least as well as the private attorney GAL program.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

- "Because abuse cases can only be assigned to a GAL who is also a lawyer [it is assumed that this is an Ohio state court ruling], sample was restricted to neglect, dependency, or neglect and dependency cases."

- Cases were not randomly selected because of the short time the CASA GAL program had been in existence.

- Multiple children in same family sometimes were assigned to one case, sometimes to separate cases, so evaluators chose to collapse cases across family units.

AUTHOR	REPORT YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY
Wert, E. Sue, et al	1986	Children in Placement, Connecticut	Comparison of CIP cases in Hartford and non CIP cases in Bridgeport

FOCUS OF STUDY

- Overall: do CIP volunteers expedite the movement of children in foster care to more permanent placement?

- Outcome measure: length of time in court

RESULTS

Presence of CIP associated with a more rapid movement of cases through judicial system, and with freeing children for adoption in TPR cases in less time.

COMMENTS / PROBLEMS NOTED

No problems mentioned.

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EVALUATIONS/REVIEWS OF CASA/GAL PROGRAMS/MODELS

WITH A

QUALITATIVE FOCUS

June 1996

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AUTHOR	YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY	FOCUS OF STUDY	RESULTS / RECOMMENDATIONS
Alabama CASA Network	1995	Alabama Juvenile Court Judges	Survey of Alabama's juvenile court judges	Familiarity, satisfaction, use of CASAs	• Only 5 of 31 judges responding to survey are using CASAs. All 5 "satisfied" or "extremely satisfied" with them. 14 of other 26 were not familiar with CASA. • Overall, judges believe that Alabama is serving children in need of care less than adequately.
Allegheny County CASA Program	1995	Allegheny County (PA) caseworkers	Survey of Allegheny County caseworkers	Understanding of CASAs role	• Three-quarters were aware of CASA at case assignment. Most understood CASAs' role and felt positively toward CASAs in general.
Annis, Ann W. and Rodger R. Rice	1995	Kent County (Michigan) CASA program	Surveys of volunteers, parents, caseworkers, attorneys, and judges	• Satisfaction with the program • Identification of strengths and weaknesses	• Volunteers overall fairly positive about their CASA experience, but would like more contact with child's attorney and caseworker. • Judges rated CASA most highly, followed by attorneys, than caseworkers. Suggested areas for training. • Only 10% of parents responded. General conclusion is that parent has poorer relationship with CASA than child.
Cox, Alene	1991	Arkansas Juvenile Court Judges	Survey of Arkansas' juvenile court judges	Familiarity, satisfaction, types of, and role of GALs	• Most judges reported using attorneys as GALs rather than volunteers. • Answers too varied to summarize.

AUTHOR	YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY	FOCUS OF STUDY	RESULTS / RECOMMENDATIONS
CSR, Inc.	1990	National in scope	Phase I: phone discussions with state GAL program coordinators, or chief court administrator or judge in all 50 states. Phase II: phone discussions with local judges, court administrators, CASAs, and attorneys in 555 counties or court jurisdictions across the country	Determination of how each state provided GAL representation	• Less than 100% of abuse and neglect children receive GAL representation in 26 states. • Little consistency in who may serve as GAL, their responsibilities, or how conflicts are to be solved. • Disagreement over whether GAL must represent best interest or best wishes. • Wide variation in disbursement with some concern over adequacy. • Training either nonexistent or extremely varied in terms of time and content. • Performance monitoring conducted on a regular basis for CASA but only 15% of the jurisdictions evaluation and monitor attorneys.
Dameron, Samuel L., et al	1995	Cabell County (West Virginia) CASA program	Surveys of court and social service professionals, parents of children served by CASAs, CASA volunteers	Assessment of strengths and weaknesses of CASA program and its staff	• Overall, "general acceptance indicates that it is a viable program which is perceived as both credible and a positive influence on the child welfare system." • Improvement needed in various areas such as retention and training of volunteers, relationships with various professionals.

AUTHOR	YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY	FOCUS OF STUDY	RESULTS / RECOMMENDATIONS
Erny, Sally Wilson	1994	Jefferson County (Kentucky) CASA program	Survey to attorneys, parents, foster parents, judges, social workers, mental health professionals/therapists, and temporary custodians (majority of responses were from social workers)	Opinion of performance, impact, roles, responsibilities, strengths and weaknesses of CASAs	• Overall positive ratings on such features as understanding role of CASA, quality of service and quality of relationship with CASA. • Weaknesses highlighted were unrealistic expectations of social workers, lack of volunteers, lack of knowledge of social service system and the law.
Goddard, Lucy	1988	Florida GAL program	Telephone interviews with circuit directors or asst. directors	Issues of common concern and background information for possible later formal evaluation	• Recommendations included increased recruiting of volunteers and pro bono attorneys; full-time staff attorney for every circuit; adequate staffing with continuing education opportunities; reimbursement of volunteer expenses; appointment of state advisory board.
Harris, Richard, et al	1985	Florida GAL program of 11th judicial circuit	Interviews with staff; telephone surveys with 9 other CASA programs in Florida and throughout the country; analysis of program logs and files	Procedures, organizational roles and structure, selection and monitoring of GALs	• Recommendations focused on streamlining and fortifying case management and tracking procedures, and creating a more structured approach to program management and day-to-day operations.

AUTHOR	YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY	FOCUS OF STUDY	RESULTS / RECOMMENDATIONS
Johnson, Clara L.	1978	Southeastern states	Survey of all juvenile court judges in Southeastern states	Utilization of GALs, costs and base of finances, and recommended changes and/or expansion of role	• Some of the pertinent findings of this study include: need for GAL should be determined by the court; general judicial satisfaction with performance of GALs, who were primarily attorneys; volunteers considered as alternative GAL by only 20% of judges.

Martin, Jocelyn S.	1995	Douglas County, Kansas	Interviews with children and their families	Qualitative study of how children and their families perceive their CASAs; whether CASA roles and actions viewed as valuable to them; and what makes an effective relationship between CASA, child and family	• Perceptions of roles/activities:
					  • CASAs provide material help to child and parents (transportation identified as a significant help);
					  • CASAs serve as liaison to other agencies (generally viewed as positive);
					  • CASAs provide emotional support to child (viewed as most important role by both child and parents), and to parents (mixed views);
					  • CASAs serve as source of knowledge to both child and parent (role model, help with peer problems, ally in learning better parenting);
					  • CASAs' reports (mixed views as to how fully informed they are before writing them);
					  • CASAs convey role to families (many family members unclear as to what a CASA is and what they are suppose to be doing for child).

AUTHOR	YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY	FOCUS OF STUDY	RESULTS / RECOMMENDATIONS
Martin, Jocelyn S. **(Continued)**					• Some of the implications for training include the need to emphasize listening without defensiveness and the importance of interviewing parents
Minnesota. Office of the Legislative Auditor. Program Evaluation Division	1995	GAL services in Minnesota	Interviews with legislators, judges, attorneys, court administrators, program coordinators, GALs, and citizens; literature, case law, and statute review; surveys of court administrators, attorneys, judges, GALs	Assessment of: GAL models in other states; models (and costs) in Minnesota; recruitment, training, selection, supervision, and liability; options for improvement	• Recommends more guidance from Legislature (articulate primary roles of GALs in statutes) and Supreme Court (revise 1986 guidelines to include standards for GAL selection, training, evaluation, and removal, written reports, etc.; develop, with State Bar, educational and awareness materials on GAL purpose and roles; establish oversight Board for investigation of complaints) rather than a centralized GAL system.
Partin, Emmett M. and Lynn Shreve	1989	Six CASA programs: Los Angeles, Dallas, CT, RI, NC, and Delaware	Surveys of judges, attorneys, volunteers, and social workers; interviews with program directors; observation of hearings, training, etc.; review of program materials	Comparative analysis of 6 CASA programs to determine most effective programmatic features and to formulate a CASA model based on these elements	• Proposed a series of recommendations for a "model" program (included basic guidelines in such areas as volunteer recruitment, training and supervision, statistical collection, training for attorneys, etc.). • Proposed recommendations for NCASAA (e.g. establish guidelines for volunteer/supervisor ratio). • Proposed that a national study be conducted to gain perceptions of judges, attorneys, social workers of CASAs.

AUTHOR	YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY	FOCUS OF STUDY	RESULTS / RECOMMENDATIONS
Sivan, Abigail B. and Mary Quigley-Rick	1991	Iowa	Review of literature, state statutes, and case law relating to role of GAL and attorney; survey of juvenile judges and referees, county attorneys, and public defenders in Iowa; interviews with attorney GALs	Assessment of role and function of attorney GALs - designed to develop guidelines for them	• "GAL role and function not sufficiently defined by either case law or statutes to insure that children receive more than nominal representation," as "real ambiguity exists in the attorney's perceptions of their role as GAL." • Research project developed a manual for GAL attorneys.
Vandiver, Richard D.	1988	CASA Program in Iowa	Interviews with judges, court officers, social workers, attorneys, advisory board, staff and volunteers; program documents review and comparative case review (very limited)	Assessment of the operational management, program needs, and the extent to which CASA programs were meeting original program goals	• "CASA program is valuable to all parties." • CASA kids moved through the system quicker, received better treatment, and were more quickly permanently placed.

Wilson, Vaugh	1995	CASA Program of Davidson County, Tennessee	Interviews with attorneys, judge and court referees, social workers, staff; surveys of volunteers; document review; courtroom observation	Community feedback for program improvement and/or expansion	• Program strengths:
					   • staff responsive and available to volunteers;
					   • consistent mission of advocating for best interest of child;
					   • "great emphasis" on continued program improvement.

AUTHOR	YEAR	STUDY GROUP/SITE	METHODOLOGY	FOCUS OF STUDY	RESULTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Wilson, Vaugh (Continued)					• Areas for improvement:
					
					   • contacts with other agencies should be continued and/or established to build relationships and promote awareness;
					
					   • technology training needed for staff;
					
					   • funds should be provided for staff training in new services and volunteer recognition;
					
					   • local churches should be contacted for recruitment;
					
					   • future satisfaction surveys should be conducted

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CASA Program Satisfaction Survey

1. How have you been involved with the CASA Project?

   ❑ Attorney for child

   ❑ Foster Parent

   ❑ Social Worker

   ❑ Mental Health Professional

   ❑ Parent

   ❑ County Attorney

   ❑ Attorney for parent

   ❑ Judge

   ❑ Relative / temporary custodian

2. How long have you known about CASA?

   ❑ less than one year

   ❑ one to five years

   ❑ more than five years

3. About how many CASA volunteers have you worked with directly?

   ❑ 1   ❑ 2 to 10   ❑ 10+

4. Do you feel that you have had enough contact with CASA volunteers to fairly evaluate their work?

   ❑ yes, please continue the survey

   ❑ no, please stop here and return the survey in the enclosed envelope

5. Do you understand the role of the CASA volunteer? ❑ yes ❑ no

6. To the best of your knowledge, what is the role of the CASA volunteer?

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the CASA volunteer?

   ❑ Poor   ❑ Average   ❑ Excellent   ❑ Don't know

8. How would you rate the quality of the relationship between yourself and the CASA volunteer(s) with whom you have worked?

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

9. The following list describes some of the services provided by CASA volunteers. How would you rate the CASA volunteer in each of the following service areas?

Gathering and presenting independent information

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

Quality of recommendations

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

Quality of court reports

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

Involvement after adjudication

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

Respect for confidentiality

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

Accessibility

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

10. Do you feel there is an adequate number of CASA volunteers in Jefferson County?

❏ yes ❏ no

Please explain your answer if you wish: _____

_____

_____

11. The following is a list of characteristics. How would you rate the CASA staff in each of the following areas?

Accessibility

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

Supervision of volunteers

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

Willingness to discuss issues and concerns

❏ Poor ❏ Average ❏ Excellent ❏ Don't know

12. Overall, how has the CASA Project influenced representation of children in the court process?

_____

_____

_____

13. What do you think are the primary strengths of CASA? _____

_____

14. What do you think are the primary weaknesses of the CASA project? _____

_____

_____

_____

15. Please feel free to add any additional comments that reflect your thoughts about CASA:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will help us evaluate and improve our service to children.

Adapted from survey done by CASA of Jefferson County, Kentucky

Appendix 5 - D
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT BY VOLUNTEERS

1. In which judicial district do you work as a CASA?

    ❑ 3rd (Sioux City area)   ❑ 5th (Des Moines area)

2. How long have you served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate?

    ❑ 0 - 6 months   ❑ 6 months - 1 year   ❑ 1 - 2 years ❑ over 2 years

3. On how many cases have you been assigned to date? ❑ 1   ❑ 2   ❑ 3

4. Estimate how many hours per month you volunteers as a CASA:

    ❑ 10 - 15 ❑ 15 - 25   ❑ 25 - 40   ❑ More than 40

5. Did the Pre-Service Training and orientation answer your questions about the program and the duties and responsibilities of a CASA? ❑ yes   ❑ no

6. After completing training, did you feel adequately prepared to be assigned to a case? ❑ yes   ❑ no

    Comments: _____

    _____

7. How long after the completion of training were you assigned?

    ❑ 1 - 4 weeks   ❑ 4 - 6 weeks   ❑ 6 - 8 weeks   ❑ more than 8 weeks

8. Describe your current CASA status:

    ❑ actively assigned on one or more case(s) ❑ not assigned to a case at this time

9. Do you feel you have a clear understanding of the duties and responsibilities of a Court Appointed Special Advocate? ❑ yes   ❑ no

    Comments: _____

    _____

10. Describe your feelings about your case assignment(s):

    ❑ challenging   ❑ important to community / society   ❑ interesting

    ❑ difficult   ❑ time consuming   ❑ not what I expected

    ❑ satisfying   ❑ frustrating

    Other/explanation: _____

    _____

11. Do you feel you have access to the local coordinator when needed? ❑ yes ❑ no

Comments: _____

_____

12. Do you feel the supervision provided to CASA volunteers is sufficient? ❑ yes ❑ no

   Comments: _____

   _____

13. How would you describe the continuing in-service training?

   ❑ helpful and informative

   ❑ of little usefulness

   ❑ inconvenient to attend

   ❑ current schedule acceptable

14. When you want information or help from staff, how likely are you to get the assistance you need?

   ❑ very likely to get all the help I need

   ❑ fairly likely to get the help

   ❑ rarely is help available

   ❑ no help is available to me

15. As a CASA, how would you describe community professionals perception of the program?

   ❑ helpful

   ❑ hindrance

   ❑ have time to talk to CASA

   ❑ can't be bothered

   ❑ willing to share information

   ❑ feel threatened by CASA's work

   ❑ uncertain of the CASA's role in the case

Adapted from work from the Iowa CASA Program

Appendix 5-E

CASA VOLUNTEER EVALUATION FORM

PART A: COMPLETED BY SUPERVISOR

Name:_____ Position:_____

Period of Evaluation:_____ Total # of cases handled or hours contributed:_____

Supervisor:_____

Rating scale:　　1 = needs improvement　　4 = very good
　　　　　　　　2 = fair　　　　　　　　　5 = superior
　　　　　　　　3 = good　　　　　　　　　N/A = not applicable

1. PROFESSIONALISM

_____ Understands purposes and goals of CASA

_____ Understands and complies with confidentiality in client relationship

_____ Relates well with public

_____ Exhibits poise-in handling difficult situations

_____ Exhibits sincere interest and enthusiasm towards clients and work

Comments:_____

_____

2. RESPONSIBILITY

_____ Reliable about schedule and time commitment

_____ Completes assignments in a timely fashion

_____ Pays attention to detail when necessary

_____ Willing to take on assignments

Comments:_____

_____

3. EFFECTIVENESS

_____ Welcome opportunities to learn information or procedures that will make work more effective

_____ Follows through on assignments

_____ Willing to ask questions when in doubt

_____ Uncovers and communicates all pertinent facts

Comments:_____

_____

Benefits to staff from working with this volunteer are:_____

_____

_____

Benefits to program from this volunteer's skills, experience and knowledge are:_____

_____

_____

Additional Comments:_____

_____

_____

Signature of Supervisor:_____   Date:_____

Signature of Volunteer:_____   Date:_____

CASA VOLUNTEER EVALUATION FORM

PART B: COMPLETED BY VOLUNTEER

Name:_____

Position:_____

Period of
Evaluation:_____

Supervisor:_____

Rating scale: 1 = needs improvement   4 = very good
                         2 = fair   5 = superior
                                    3 = good   N/A = not applicable

1. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

_____ The goals and purposes of CASA were clearly explained

_____ The job description for your position was reviewed and procedures to be followed were explained

_____ Training was effective and provided the tools needed to perform the assigned tasks

Comments:_____

_____

2. SUPERVISION

_____ Supervisor was available to you when you had questions or needed information

_____ Supervisor's attitude was one of professional regard

_____ Lines of supervision were clear

Comments:_____

_____

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What other training or growth opportunities would you like to see offered?

_____

_____

What additional "tools" would make your work more effective and/or pleasant?

_____

_____

What are some suggestions or goals you would offer for the CASA program?

_____

_____

How could CASA improve its volunteer - staff structure and/or relationships?

_____

_____

Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

Signature of Volunteer:_____   Date:_____

Signature of Supervisor:_____   Date:_____

Appendix 7 - A
COMPUTER POLICY

In order to safeguard our rules of confidentiality as well as to maintain appropriate standards, SFCASA has established the following computer practices and policies.

➤ Only authorized personnel or their designees may use SFCASA computers, hardware, and software. Passwords are to be assigned by the Executive Director or Office Manager as appropriate.

➤ Software programs are property of SFCASA and may only be installed in employee-owned computers for the express use of conducting SFCASA work.

➤ No software can be installed in any SFCASA-owned computer unless it has been licensed to SFCASA.

➤ If any computer hardware is purchased or donated, make sure it is PC compatible (e.g. Word 2.0 or Excel 5.0).

➤ All requests for and acquisitions of hardware or software material must be approved by the Executive Director or Office Manager. All maintenance and repair requests should be directed tot he Office Manager.

➤ Be sure to back up all files. An extra copy of back up files should be kept out of the SFCASA office in a locked box in case of a fire.

➤ Diskettes should be handled with care. They should not be placed near magnetic forces. They should be properly labeled. Disks should be properly filed and stored. Disks containing confidential materials should be stored in a locked disk box.

➤ There will be no eating, drinking, and smoking by the computers.

➤ Internet use is restricted to CASA-related activities only.

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Appendix 8-A
CASA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY:

The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for the overall management of the agency and all aspects of the agency's operations. This primarily involves the supervision and coordination of a volunteer service program which provides CASA services to abused and neglected children. Key responsibilities include, but are not restricted to: 1) Resource development and maintenance, 2) Agency and program planning, 3) Community and public relations, 4) Personnel management, 5) Agency liaison to the Board of Directors, and 6) Fiscal management.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:

1. Research and prepare grant proposals and other funding applications.

2. Develop and maintain a donor base for both monetary and non-monetary resources.

3. Develop and maintain a donor tracking system.

4. Work with Board in any fund-raising events or activities.

AGENCY AND PROGRAM PLANNING:

SHORT-TERM

1. Meet weekly with program staff: a) to determine and discuss any problems or plans involving volunteers, (recruitment, training, screening, and supervision). Court staff, agency personnel, agency operations: b) be kept informed of all relevant activities of the agency.

2. Assure all necessary forms are filed with the appropriate agency for all necessary permits, memberships, licenses, etc.

3. Prepare quarterly program reports.

4. Keep Juvenile Court administration and other Child Welfare agencies apprised of agency directives and activities.

5. Oversee agency and program compliance with established policies and procedures.

LONG-TERM

1. Develop, implement, and maintain tracking systems and/or for both volunteer and caseload files.

2. Develop and initiate time-oriented strategic plans to establish agency goals (e.g., 1-year, 5-year, 10-year plans.

3. Review program/agency progress and compare to goals and objectives.

4. Assure agency compliance with National and State CASA standards.

5. Attend and work with National and State CASA programs through conferences and meetings.

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS:

1. Coordinate public relations with the purpose of recruiting volunteers and increasing public awareness of the CASA program and its goals and activities.

2. Develop and maintain relationships with all appropriate groups, agencies, and organizations, and any and all other child advocacy agencies and community service organizations including (but not limited to):

    1) Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

    2) Tennessee Department of Human Services

    3) Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration

3. Oversee release of press packets and news releases, and follow-up of any media coverage.

4. Approve all written public relations material printed by the agency.

5. Be available for public speaking engagements.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT:

1. Hire and supervise administrative and management staff.

2. Write and revise, as necessary, the job descriptions for all staff (except executive director) within the agency.

3. Prepare yearly performance evaluations (oral and written) for all administrative and management staff.

4. Staff development.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS LIAISON:

1. Attend all Board meetings.

2. Oversee implementation of all Board directives, policies, and procedures.

3. Serve as liaison between Board and agency staff.

4. Keep Board apprised of agency operations, changes, and problems.

5. Monitor Board/Committee activities and attend Committee meetings.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT:

1. Manage day-to-day fiscal operations.

2. Submit monthly and quarterly financial reports to grantors (as required).

3. Review and approve all monthly and quarterly reports and documentation to substantiate those reports.

4. Submit bills and expenditures to the treasurer for reimbursement and accounting.

5. Assist in developing agency annual budget.

QUALIFICATIONS:

MBA or Bachelor's degree in Business or Public Administration with minimum of 3 years related experience in administration of volunteer, non-profit, or public service agency or Master's or Bachelor's degree in social work, psychology or related area with requisite experience in administrating an organization or division involved in human social services. Candidates will demonstrate strong skills in fiscal management, resource development and maintenance, agency and program planning, and public relations. Previous experience working with volunteers and knowledge and understanding of child abuse and neglect, families in crisis, and other social services skills are given priority.

Appendix 8 - B
Volunteer Coordinator's Job Description

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Volunteer Manager provides professional staff support to CASA volunteers ensuring that children involved with the CASA program receive sound advocacy and early permanency planning. The Volunteer Manager is responsible for volunteer supervision and coordination of cases.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Volunteer Manager should have the following skills and experience:

➢ Bachelor's degree in social service-related field or equivalent combination of education and experience.

➢ The ability to communicate with, supervise and empower volunteers to be effective in their roles. Experience with volunteers given preference.

➢ The ability to work cooperatively with different types of personalities.

➢ Knowledge and understanding of issues and dynamics within families in crisis relating to child abuse and neglect given preference.

➢ Commitment to CASA's goals and mission.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Volunteer Manager is hired by the Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Executive Director of the program. The Volunteer Manager reports directly to the Executive Director who is responsible for his/her performance evaluations.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

➢ Complete CASA training.

➢ Assist in the recruiting, screening, interviewing and training of new volunteers.

➢ Review new cases and assign appropriate volunteers in consultation with the Executive Director.

➢ Prepare and distribute assignment documentation.

➢ Help develop initial case plans and on-going strategies for advocacy.

➢ Review and distribute volunteer court reports.

➢ Maintain case files in office.

➢ Attend court hearings when possible and track court dates.

- Provide assistance and consultation for volunteers as needed and when requested.
- Assist volunteers ad office in completion of volunteer/case stat sheets.
- Participate in volunteer evaluations as assigned by the Executive Director.
- Oversee assigned mentors and assist with identified needs.
- Attend staff meetings and assist in the evaluation of the program.
- Attend inservice trainings and assist with coordination if requested.
- Assist in volunteer appreciation events.
- Provide office coverage as assigned by the Executive Director.
- Complete work time sheets monthly.
- Attend conferences/seminars/meetings as requested by the Executive Director.
- Participate in performance evaluations of this position as directed by the Executive Director.
- Other duties as may be assigned by the Executive Director or the Chairman of the Board.

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

_____   _____
Name   Date of Evaluation

_____   _____
Date Hired   Job Title

_____   _____
Evaluating Manager (Signature)   Time in Present Position

THE PURPOSE OF THIS EVALUATION IS TO:

1. **SET GOALS.** The manager and the employee establish mutually agreed-upon goals for future progress and development.

2. **INFORM.** The manager and the employee communicate openly and honestly about performance.

3. **DEVELOP.** The manager and employee identify actions the employee can take to enhance his or her development.

4. **EVALUATE.** The manager and the employee evaluate results based on pre-established goals and performance measures.

l. POSITION OBJECTIVES AND MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR REVIEW PERIOD.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ll. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND/OR IMPROVEMENTS: What specific accomplishments and/or improvements has this individual made since the last review? What progress has been made toward meeting established performance goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PLEASE CONSIDER THE EMPLOYEE'S DEMONSTRATED PERFORMANCE AND MARK THE CIRCLE WHICH MOST CLOSELY DESCRIBES THAT PERFORMANCE.

EXCEPTIONAL: Performance consistently far exceeds expectations

VERY GOOD: Performance consistently exceeds normal expectations and job requirements

GOOD: Performance consistently meets expectations and job requirements

ACCEPTABLE: Performance usually meets expectations and minimum requirements for the job

UNACCEPTABLE: Performance is below the minimum acceptable level

WORK QUALITY: The reliability, accuracy and neatness of work produced.

❏ Exceptional   ❏ Very Good   ❏ Good   ❏ Acceptable   ❏ Unacceptable

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WORK QUANTITY: The amount of volume of work turned out.

❏ Exceptional   ❏ Very Good   ❏ Good   ❏ Acceptable   ❏ Unacceptable

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

JUDGEMENT: The ability to make well-reasoned, sound decisions which affect work performance.

❏ Exceptional   ❏ Very Good   ❏ Good   ❏ Acceptable   ❏ Unacceptable

_____

_____

_____

INITIATIVE: The combination of job interest, dedication, and willingness to extend oneself to complete assigned tasks.

❑ Exceptional   ❑ Very Good   ❑ Good   ❑ Acceptable   ❑
Unacceptable

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

TEAMWORK: The working relationship established with fellow employees in the working environment.

❑ Exceptional   ❑ Very Good   ❑ Good   ❑ Acceptable   ❑
Unacceptable

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DEPENDABILITY: The reliance which can be placed on an employee to persevere and carry through to completion any task assigned. This also applies to attendance and punctuality.

❑ Exceptional   ❑ Very Good   ❑ Good   ❑ Acceptable   ❑
Unacceptable

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

III. DEVELOPMENT PLAN: What specific action can you suggest to help the employee improve their performance? How can you, as the manager, help?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

IV. NEXT YEAR'S GOAL STATEMENTS: Establish with your manager goals which may include new and better ways to carry out job responsibilities, as well as plans for personal development. Stated goals should be included as basis for next formal performance evaluation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

V. EMPLOYEE COMMENTS: Each individual evaluated is encouraged to add any comments to this review. If additional space is needed, attach a separate sheet.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I am signing this evaluation to indicate that my manager and I have had a discussion of the above comments.

_____   _____
Employee Signature   Date

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

_____ _____
Employee   Title

_____ _____
Supervisor   Evaluator

_____
Dates covered by evaluation

PURPOSE OF POSITION: _____

_____

EVALUATION BY "KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREAS":

AREA: _____

AREA: _____

AREA: _____

AREA: _____

AREA: _____

EVALUATION SUMMARY:

A. Employee's major accomplishments: _____

_____

B. Overall appraisal (performance strengths and areas for improvement): _____

_____

C. Professional goals for the next year: _____

_____

SIGNATURES:

_____ _____
Evaluator   Date

I have had the opportunity to read this evaluation and to add my comments in writing.

_____ _____
Employee   Date

Appendix 10 - A
FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

These sample financial policies and procedures are intended to provide you with a starting-point for developing customized fiscal guidelines. They address many issues relating to the following areas: internal controls, lines of authority and responsibility, safeguarding of assets, and ongoing record keeping. The size and complexity of your program are critical factors in determining the amount, type and variety of financial policies and procedures that you will need to adopt to fit your CASA program.

GENERAL:

➢ The Board of Directors is responsible for authorizing all bank accounts and check signers.
➢ Separate accounts are maintained for any restricted funds if required by the funding source.
➢ Financial institutions where CASA accounts are maintained are notified on an annual basis of any changes in check-signers, following the transition of officers or changes in staff with check-signing responsibilities.
➢ Dual signatures are required for all checks, usually including any two of the following signatures: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, CASA Director.
➢ Financial reports shall be presented to the CASA Board of Directors for review on a monthly basis.
➢ An annual financial review or audit, depending upon the size of the budget, will be conducted by a qualified outside auditor.
➢ In addition to these policies and procedures, any other applicable financial and administrative guidelines relating to specific grants shall be followed.

CASH RECEIPTS:

➢ Employees handling cash will have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the job and will be carefully supervised.
➢ Incoming checks must be restrictively endorsed "for deposit only" when received.
➢ Cash receipts must be deposited immediately.
➢ Incoming cash must be counted and receipts/bank deposits developed by two or more persons authorized to perform these functions.
➢ Records of cash received must be totaled and initialed by authorized employees.
➢ Cash collection documentation totals must be compared and reconciled to bank deposit receipts on a regular basis.
➢ Bank deposit receipts must be compared and attached to the original bank deposit slips.
➢ Adequate physical controls must be maintained over cash receipts from the time of receipt to deposit in the bank.

CASH DISBURSEMENTS:

➢ The Director must provide prior approval for all cash disbursements.
➢ All disbursements, including payroll, must be made by check.

- Signature stamps may <u>never</u> be used to sign checks.
- Supporting documentation must accompany checks when presented for signature.
- To prevent duplicate payment, invoices or other supporting documentation must be canceled at time checks are signed through a notation by the authorized staff check-signer of check number, date and his/her initials.
- Checks must be made payable to specific payees, based upon appropriate supporting documentation, and <u>never</u> to cash or bearer.
- Only prenumbered checks shall be used and always in sequence.
- Adequate controls will be maintained over blank check stock.
- Prior to preparing checks, receiving reports should be compared to vendor invoices for accuracy.
- Checks must be prepared from vendor invoices only and not from a vendor statement.
- All check numbers must be accounted for.
- Any voided/spoiled checks must be marked "VOID", mutilated with the signature portion removed, and retained in a secure place.
- Only persons authorized to prepare checks may have access to blank checks.
- Disbursements that require special approval of funding sources or the governing board must be properly documented.
- Employees must maintain and submit a detailed expense record, with supporting documentation, in order to be reimbursed for expenses.
- Expense records must be reviewed and initialed for approval by the authorized individual prior to payment.
- Signing of blank checks is <u>strictly prohibited</u>!

RECONCILIATION:

- Bank accounts must be reconciled by the person responsible on a monthly basis, and reviewed by the Director.
- The Director must receive the bank statements (with canceled checks, etc.) unopened from the bank.
- Checks outstanding over 90 days must be periodically investigated, with payment stopped and an entry made restoring such items to cash if appropriate.

INVESTMENTS:

- Authority for investment decisions rests with the Board of Directors.
- All investment transactions must be reviewed and receive prior approval from the board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors must ensure that investments must be of the type permitted by funding sources and donors, and that investment income and gains are used only for purposes authorized by laws, donors, or the governing board.
- Securities must be adequately protected and held only in the name of the program.
- Detailed investment records must be maintained that include the description of the investment, date of acquisition, purchase price, physical location, interest / dividend / income rates, accrual / receipt dates, ownership, and any restrictions.
- Recordkeeping functions for investment income must be performed by the accountant who has no access to investments.
- Investment earnings must be deposited to the proper bank account and accurately posted.

➢ The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring compliance with any restrictions regarding investment income.

INCOME AND SUPPORT:

➢ The Board of Directors must approve all fund-raising activities, including solicitation and acceptance of contributions, gifts and grants with related restrictions or requirements.
➢ Staff must keep accurate and updated records of all donations, including the donor's name, amount, date, and any related restrictions on contributions.
➢ The board and staff are responsible for assuring compliance with the terms and conditions of all grants and restricted contributions.
➢ Any billing for third-party reimbursements must be approved by the Director.
➢ Receivable must be reconciled to the general ledger on a monthly basis.

PURCHASING:

➢ Purchases must be made in accordance with any requirements of particular grants or funding sources.
➢ The conflict of interest policy must be followed regarding purchase of goods or services from board members or other suppliers that may create a conflict of interest.
➢ Purchases shall be made based upon maximum open and free competition, to obtain the best value in return for financial resources.

PAYROLL:

➢ Accurate time and attendance records must be maintained for all personnel.
➢ All laws and regulations regarding over-time compensation must be followed for employees paid on an hourly basis.
➢ Time/attendance records must be signed by the employee, as well as his/her supervisor following review.
➢ Payroll costs must be distributed to the proper accounts, programs, or other functions.
➢ W-2 wages for the year must be reconciled to the general ledger by the person responsible for financial management.
➢ Payroll tax withholdings from employees must be forwarded to the appropriate IRS and state departments of revenue in a timely manner. (Board members can be held personally liable if employee withholding taxes are not paid.)

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:

➢ The property and equipment must be adequately safeguarded against fire, loss, theft, physical deterioration or misuse.

➢ A physical inventory of property and equipment must be taken and compared to inventory records on an annual basis, with immediate follow-up and explanation of any discrepancies.

➢ All property and equipment additions or disposals in excess of $100 in value require prior board approval.

➢ Periodic reviews shall occur relative to adjusting insurance coverage as needed.

➢ Purchases and control of property and equipment must be in accordance with any requirements of particular grants or funding sources.

➢ The conflict of interest policy must be followed regarding purchase of property or equipment from board members or other suppliers that may create a conflict of interest.

➢ Major equipment purchasing decisions will be based on careful board and staff review of needs vs. current available resources.

➢ Property and equipment purchases shall be made based upon maximum open and free competition, to obtain the best value for financial resources.

Adapted from *Organizational Development* by National Network of Child Advocacy Centers

Appendix 11-A

PROTECTING YOUR BOARD FROM LIABILITY RISKS

For a majority of nonprofit organizations and their associations, members of the board of directors serve on a volunteer basis. As board members, they make difficult decisions for their organizations. However, even though they are volunteers, they can be sued as a result of their decisions as board members. In today's world, it has become crucial for nonprofit organizations and associations to purchase Directors and Officers (D&O) liability insurance so that board members can volunteer their services without risk to their personal assets.

Nonprofit board members are becoming more and more vulnerable to lawsuits. Many D & O claims are filed by employees of nonprofits for such claims as wrongful termination, failure to properly promote employees, sexual harassment, and discrimination in salary and duties. Board members may be sued individually or as a group in these types of issues. Increasingly, courts are holding board members accountable if they do not follow adequate procedures in making personnel decisions.

Discrimination issues, such as racial, sexual, religious, age and sexual-orientation matters, are also being litigated more frequently and board members are often included in the suits. Conflicts of interest may make board members vulnerable to lawsuits as well, especially when the board does not have or enforce strict conflict-of-interest rules.
The fiscal "crunch" that has affected many nonprofit organizations may also lead to litigation involving board members as individuals or a group. As nonprofits enter into new relationships, such as shared use of facilities with other nonprofits and other joint ventures, they may open the door to litigation involving these relationships.

The growth of regulation by the Federal government in financial and other areas may lead to litigation naming board members as defendants. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may even hold individual board members financially responsible when administrators have erred in not forwarding moneys withheld from employee payroll income tax promptly.

One of the most obvious and important actions that an NPO can take to control its board members' exposure to the risk of such litigation is to purchase appropriate D & O insurance to protect each board member's personal assets from threat or loss due to litigation. Evaluate different insurance providers not only on price but also on their willingness to include the coverage needed to protect board members from undue risk. Be sure your policy provides coverage in all the following areas:

- The definition of insured persons should be broad. In addition to members of the board of directors, key administrators should be included for any area in which decisions are jointly made. Courts have held that if every committee member is not insured, then no one is covered if the committee is sued.
- The insurer must provide payment for defense against litigation on a current basis. Otherwise, some attorneys may be less willing to provide a vigorous defense.
- The policy should state that cancellation may not take place during the period of the policy.

- A "bilateral discovery option" provision would also be helpful to provide that claims may be reported for some time after the policy has been terminated.
  - Claims for wrongful acts by the organization itself should be included, as well as claims for wrongful acts by directors, officers or employees.
  - It is essential that the policy include claims for personnel actions, such as dismissal, retirement and promotion.
  - Be sure that the policy covers claims brought by one or more insured under the same policy.
  - Claims against discrimination, sexual harassment and wrongful termination should also be specifically included.
- Be sure that the policy does not have a clause excluding antitrust violations. Such a clause can cause undue risk to the organization and its board of directors. New Federal government efforts may make this an applicable risk for NPOs in the future.

Adequate D & O insurance coverage can help organizations protect their board members from the risks of much litigation today. A good insurance policy will allow board members to focus their efforts on the organization's problems, without fear of undue exposure for their actions.

Appendix 12 - A
VOLUNTEER EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your honest feedback to the questions posed will give us valuable information about the weaknesses as well as the strengths within CASA and will help us make improvements. Thank you.

Please indicate your feelings regarding the following points as they apply to your position by checking the appropriate response.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall satisfaction with your experience as a CASA	❑	❑	❑	❑
Initial training	❑	❑	❑	❑
Ongoing training	❑	❑	❑	❑
Recognition of your efforts	❑	❑	❑	❑
Supervisor's availability	❑	❑	❑	❑
Guidance from your supervisor	❑	❑	❑	❑
Relationship with your supervisor	❑	❑	❑	❑
Job stress level	❑	❑	❑	❑
Amount of work required	❑	❑	❑	❑
Job description consistent with actual responsibilities	❑	❑	❑	❑
Communication with program staff	❑	❑	❑	❑
Performance evaluations	❑	❑	❑	❑
Resources available to you	❑	❑	❑	❑
Degree of contribution you feel you made	❑	❑	❑	❑

The main reasons that you are terminating your position with CASA are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for improving the program:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Volunteer's Signature: _____ Date: _____
                              (optional)

Appendix 12 - B
VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION
Court Appointed Special Advocates are trained community volunteers appointed by district court Judges to speak for the best interests of children who are brought before the court for reasons of abuse or neglect.

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) often referred to as a volunteer Guardian Ad Litem, is an official part of judicial proceedings, working alongside attorneys and social workers. By handling only two or three cases at a time the CASA has time to thoroughly explore the history of each assigned case. The volunteer talks with the child, parents, family members, neighbors, school officials, doctors and others involved in the child's background who might have facts about the case. The volunteer reviews all court facts about the case and the volunteer also reviews all court documents pertaining to the case. He or she then is expected to submit formal reports to the Judge at every scheduled hearing/review. The CASA continues to monitor the case to assure that the judicial and child welfare systems are moving ahead to secure a safe, permanent home for the child, and that court-ordered services are provided to the child and family. The CASA can be an invaluable resource for the attorney for the child and social worker in reaching their goals for permanency.

HISTORY
The CASA concept was first implemented by Judge David Soukup of Seattle, Washington in 1977. As a Judge he felt a compelling need to have more information available to him on which he could base his decisions, most of which had lifetime ramifications for children. Since the conception of the CASA program in 1977, CASA has grown to include over 640 member programs now in 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. An estimated 30,000 volunteers are "Speaking Up" for approximately 90,000 abused and neglected children nationwide. The National CASA Association has been established to provide leadership and lend technical support to new and existing programs. CASA of New Hampshire adheres to all program guidelines and standards established by the National CASA Association.

PROGRAM GOALS/PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
➢ To provide independent, factual information to the court regarding abused and neglected children.
➢ To provide advocacy for abused and neglected children who are the subject of judicial proceedings.
➢ To monitor cases involving abused and neglected children until the terms of the court order have been fulfilled
➢ To conduct independent and objective analysis concerning abused and neglected children.
➢ To factually and objectively report findings and observations to the court.
➢ To insure representation of the child's best interest in all judicial proceedings.
➢ To monitor cases following a court hearing or decision as designated by the court.

THE CASA VOLUNTEER

Complete an intensive independent review of each case:
➢ Speak with the child and relevant adults
➢ Review appropriate records and reports
➢ Observe the child and significant others

Report findings to the court:
➢ Provide a written report containing factual information
➢ Attend court hearings concerning the child
➢ Participate in case conferences concerning the child

Insure representation of the child's best interest:
➢ Attend all court hearings to see that all relevant facts are presented
➢ Attend appropriate interagency meetings regarding the child
➢ Prod public systems into action

Monitor case following a court hearing or decision as designated by the court.

Consult regularly with the volunteer coordinator concerning assigned case and develop a CASA case plan and review progress and reports.

REQUIRED SKILLS / ABILITIES
➢ Ability to keep all client and court information confidential
➢ Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
➢ Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds (economic, cultural, educational) in a variety of settings.
➢ Ability to transport self to a variety of locations
➢ Ability to deal with hostility, anger and other emotional attitudes
➢ Ability to maintain objectivity
➢ Ability to gather and record factual information accurately.
➢ A basic understanding of child development
➢ A basic understanding of family relationships

TRAINING
➢ CASA volunteers are required to attend approximately 40 hours of pre-service training
➢ CASA volunteers follow guidelines established by the National CASA Association
➢ CASA volunteers will attend in-service training and receive direct supervision and guidance from program staff

TIME COMMITMENT
➢ Volunteers are required to commit themselves to the program for eighteen months
➢ Volunteers are expected to be available for case assignment and to accept cases unless other arrangements have been made.

CONCLUSION

CASA of New Hampshire, Inc. has been appointing trained volunteer to abuse and neglect cases since October 1989. Currently, CASA of New Hampshire has trained over one hundred volunteers and is serving sixteen district courts and probate courts in New Hampshire. CASA plays an integral part in assuring that children do not become lost in the court system. A CASA volunteer is a caring adult who tries to understand the child's concerns and report them to the judge. The long range goal is to have a trained CASA volunteer available to all abused and neglected children in the State of New Hampshire by the year 2000.

Early contact with children who become involved in the New Hampshire court as a result of abuse and/or neglect, can help to prevent future involvement either as a delinquent or an offending adult. The CASA program is dedicated to the premise that all children are entitled to grow up in a safe and loving home. The CASA program is committed to reunification of child/children with their biological family, when that home can be made safe for the child/children. Most important is the CASA volunteer's role in ensuring that all decisions regarding the child are in their best interest.

CASA of New Hampshire

CASA VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE

Court Appointed Special Advocate

OBJECTIVE

To advocate for children who come to the attention of the court primarily as a result of abuse or neglect.

QUALIFICATONS

Volunteers shall be of majority age and shall successfully complete screening requirements which include a written application, personal interview, reference and a criminal background investigation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

➢ A CASA volunteer respects a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe environment that meets that child's best interests.

➢ A CASA volunteer ensures that the child's best interests are represented at every stage of the case.

➢ A CASA volunteer reports any new incidents of child abuse or neglect to the CASA supervisor and appropriate authorities.

➢ A CASA volunteer reviews records and interviews appropriate parties involved in the case, including the child, to determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child and whether appropriate services, including reasonable efforts, are being provided to the child and family.

➢ A CASA volunteer facilitates prompt, thorough reviews of the case.

➢ A CASA volunteer attends all court hearings, foster care reviews, and all other hearings and meetings which pertain to the child.

➢ A CASA volunteer maintains complete records and documentation about the case, including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child.

➢ A CASA volunteer submits recommendations concerning the case to the court in a signed, written report.

➢ A CASA volunteer makes contact with CASA, supervisors, and other parties involved in the case, including the child, at least once a month.

➢ A CASA volunteer maintains complete confidentiality regarding information about the child, as well as information regarding other parties involved in the case.

➢ A CASA volunteer exhibits professionalism in behavior and appearance.

➢ A CASA volunteer is not related to any parties involved in a case assigned to him or her or employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest.

➢ A CASA volunteer is not related to any parties involved in a case assigned to him or her or employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest.

➢ A CASA volunteer does not provide direct services to any parties that could lead to a conflict of interest or potential liability, or cause a child or family to become dependent on the CASA volunteer for services that should be provided by other agencies or organizations.

TRAINING

➢ A CASA volunteer completes a minimum of 30 hours of initial training, which includes policies and procedures of the CASA program, Department of Human Services, and Juvenile Court; dynamics and human behavior associated with child abuse and neglect; relevant local, state and federal laws; permanency planning and family preservation; cultural diversity; communication and interviewing skills; and the roles and responsibilities of a CASA volunteer. As part of their training, a CASA volunteer also observes a court proceeding and a foster care review board meeting.

➢ A CASA volunteer completes a minimum of six hours of in-service training each year, following their first year of service.

TIME COMMITMENT

Once assigned to a case, a CASA volunteer makes a commitment to the case for at least one year, and preferably until a permanent placement is found for the child.

SUPERVISOR

A CASA volunteer will be assigned to a CASA program staff member for the duration of the case.

<div align="right">Reprinted with permission from Davidson County CASA</div>

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA) FACT SHEET

WHAT IS THE CASA PROJECT?

The CASA Project is a private, non profit organization which provides trained volunteers to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children involved in Family Court. CASA of Jefferson County is part of a national movement which includes 531 CASA programs in 50 states.

HOW IS CASA AUTHORIZED TO PARTICIPATE?

The Kentucky General Assembly recognized the need for CASA through legislation; KRS 620500-620550. Since 1985 the Jefferson County judiciary has been using their authority to appoint CASA volunteers to children in need.

HOW IS CASA OF JEFFERSON COUNTY STRUCTURED?

CASA is guided by a 26 member volunteer Board of Directors which oversees the activities of the organization. CASA has a staff of seven which currently consists of an Executive Director, three Coordinators of Volunteers, a Development Director, a Secretary and Bookkeeper. The staff is responsible for volunteer coordination and program administration.

WHAT IS A CASA VOLUNTEER?

According to KRS 620500 "volunteer means a person who completes training through a (CASA) project and is appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of dependent, abused, and neglected children in court."

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A CASA VOLUNTEER?

A CASA volunteer must be at least 18 years of age and successfully complete screening (written application, three written references, at least one "blind" reference, personal interview, criminal record check and child abuse and adult protection registry checks) in order to be accepted into training. Training is 20 hours in length and consists of classwork and court and case observation. Inservice training is offered six times annually. Each volunteer and staff member take an oath of confidentiality.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF A CASA VOLUNTEER?

According to KRS 620525 the duties of a CASA volunteer are to:

➤ Advocate a prompt, thorough review of the case if the child needs attention;

➤ Maintain complete written records about the case;

➤ Report any incidents of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities and to the director;

➤ Interview parties involved in the case, including interviewing and observing the child;

- Assess whether "reasonable efforts" were made to provide services to the child and family, and whether a permanent plan has been created for the child;

- Assure the child's best interests are being represented at every stage of the disposition of the case, including attendance at all court hearings, and making a written recommendation to the judge on what decision would be best for the child;

- Monitor the case by visiting the child as often as necessary to observe whether the child's essential needs are being met, and whether court orders are actually being carried out;

- Participate in any treatment planning, conferences and reviews involving the child in order to keep informed of the child's permanent plan;

- Remain actively involved in the case until the case is resolved or unless dismissed by the project director or district judge; and

- Work in cooperation with the cabinet.

Although CASA volunteers work with others involved in the case they remain independent.

TO WHAT INFORMATION IS A CASA VOLUNTEER ENTITLED?

According to KRS 620520 (2) "each volunteer may have access to information and records of the cabinet pertaining to the parents or persons exercising custodial control or supervision of the child assigned to the volunteer, information and records of the court; the cabinet; public and private child care facilities; private and public schools; and medical and psychological records of the child assigned to the volunteer."

WHAT IS THE CASA VOLUNTEER'S ROLE IN TREATMENT PLANNING?

CASA volunteers are authorized to participate in treatment planning conferences and KRS 620550 requires that the cabinet notify the volunteer when it schedules treatment planning conferences and reviews.

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CASA?

If you have questions or require additional information about CASA please call Sally Erny at 555-1212 or 555-1234 . Questions about specific cases should be referred to the Coordinator of Volunteers with supervisory responsibility for the case.

Appendix 13-A
VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

_____   _____
Name   Date of Birth

_____   _____
Social Security Number   Phone Number

_____
Home Address

_____   _____
City, State   Zip

_____   _____
Employed By (If Employed)   Phone Number

_____
Address

May you be called at work? ❑ Yes   ❑ No

Brief description of work: _____
_____

Formal Education (highest year of school completed): _____

Do you speak a foreign language? ❑ Yes ❑ No If yes, which language _____

Do you drive? ❑ Yes ❑ No Do you have regular access to a car? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Current community activities: _____
_____
_____

List current and previous volunteer work (list all previous volunteer work; including brief description of duties and activities, dates of service.):
_____
_____

As a CASA volunteer you will be required to attend court hearings for the children you represent. Will you be able to arrange your schedule to attend these hearings?

❑ Yes ❑ No

Are you willing to commit to one year of volunteer services? ❑ Yes ❑ No

What are your reasons for wanting to participate as a CASA volunteer?

_____

_____

_____

Have you had any personal experience(s) involving:

❑ Child Welfare   ❑ Foster Care

❑ Court System   ❑ Other agencies offering services to a child

If so, please explain: _____

_____

How did you learn of our program: _____

_____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than a traffic violation? ❑ Yes ❑ No

If yes, what charge? _____ Date convicted: _____ Where _____

Do you consent to a routine check of your criminal records? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Can you think of any reason why a judge might be reluctant for you to serve as a CASA volunteer?

_____

Please list three references of people who know you well, other than relatives, preferably for whom you have worked in either a paid or volunteer capacity. If you are currently working, either paid or as a volunteer, please include the name of your supervisor.

Name	Address	Zip Code	Phone	Relationship

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

How long have you lived in the area? _____

CASA of New Hampshire, Inc. reserves the right to make any checks deemed appropriate as to the suitability of anyone responsible for this confidential work. All information obtained will be held in the strictest confidence.

_____ _____
Applicant Signature   Date

PART TWO

Please answer the following questions in **paragraph form** on a separate piece of paper.

1. Write a <u>short summary</u> about your interest in volunteering and how you hope to benefit from the volunteer experience.

2. <u>Briefly explain</u> what led to your decision to apply for a position in the CASA program? (What attracted you to this particular program?)

3. <u>Briefly explain</u> your philosophy of parenting, including the rights and responsibilities of both parents and children.

4. <u>Briefly explain</u> what role you believe society should play in:

   a) protecting the rights of children.

   b) helping a family overcome hardships and remain living together as one unit.

5. Please write a <u>one page</u> autobiography.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION AND ESSAYS TO:

Appendix 13 - B
CASA VOLUNTEER APPLICATION
(PLEASE PRINT)

_____
Name

_____
Address

_____
City   State   Zip

_____   _____

_____
Home Phone Number   Work Phone Number   Fax Number

Are you employed? ❑ Yes ❑ No If yes ❑ Full-time ❑ Part-time

_____
Previous Address

_____   _____
Place of Employment   Position

May you be called at work? ❑ Yes ❑ No

_____   _____
Social Security Number   Driver's License Number

_____ _____ _____
Race   Date of Birth   Marital Status

_____ _____ _____
Spouse's Name   Occupation   Phone Number

Do you have children?   ❑ Yes ❑ No If so, what are their ages? _____

In case of emergency please call: _____

Education: (circle highest completed)
High School: 9 10 11 12   College: 1 2 3 4   Graduate: 1 2 3 4

_____   _____
Major   Degree

Do you have any training or experience in any of the following?

❑ Medicine	❑ Mental Health	❑ Counseling
❑ Psychology	❑ Drug or Alcohol Abuse Programs	❑ Child Development
❑ Child Care	❑ Child Welfare	❑ Social Work
❑ Education	❑ Criminology	❑ Law Enforcement
❑ News Media	❑ Advertising or Public Relations	❑ Writing
❑ Public Speaking	❑ Art or Graphic Design	❑ Fundraising

List your community activities and memberships in clubs, religious and professional groups and other organizations:

_____

_____

_____

Languages spoken: _____

Hobbies/Special Interests: _____

Have you ever been arrested? ❑ Yes ❑ No If yes, on what charge? _____

Are you prepared to complete 35 - 40 hours of pre-service training; and, a minimum of 6 hours per year of in-service training?   ❑ Yes ❑ No

Does your schedule permit you to attend meetings, court hearings or foster care reviews during the work day?   ❑ Yes ❑ No

What do you feel are the strengths and weaknesses that you bring to this program?

_____

_____

_____

Please describe any personal or professional experiences you have had which involved child abuse or neglect, the Department of Human Services, the Juvenile Court system, foster care, or other agencies offering services to children:

_____

_____

_____

Write a brief statement on why you have chosen to work with the CASA program at this particular time in your life. (Use additional paper and submit with application).

PERSONAL REFERENCES: (**Preferably other than relatives.** At least one reference must be from someone other than a friend or co-worker. For example: teacher, therapist, or employer, if they know you well.) **(PLEASE PRINT)**

1. Name: _____
   Address: _____
   City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
   Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

2. Name: _____
   Address: _____
   City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
   Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

3. Name: _____
   Address: _____
   City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
   Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

I, _____ hereby affirm that all of the answers provided on my volunteer application are true. I hereby authorize CASA, Inc., and any law enforcement agency they authorize, to investigate my background to determine my fitness as a potential volunteer.

I understand that the information requested in this application will be used only for the purpose of determining my suitability as a CASA volunteer. Further, I understand that completion of training does not guarantee that I will be assigned a case. If I have successfully completed the training and have met all other requirements, and it has been determined that I am a suitable volunteer, I understand that I will be expected to serve a minimum of one year in the CASA program. If unforeseen circumstances prevent me from fulfilling this obligation, I will submit my written resignation to the program director with as much advance notice as possible. I aware of the sensitive and confidential nature of the official documents, reports and other material I will examine in my capacity as a CASA volunteer. I will discuss these matters only with those persons directly involved in the case or who will be consulted for their professional knowledge and expertise.

I also understand that if for any reason it becomes apparent that my activities are contrary to the policies, goals and/or philosophy of the CASA program, and their desire to provide quality services to abused and neglected children, my services as a CASA volunteer will be terminated.

_____
Name (please print)

_____
Signature

_____   _____
Date   Witness (CASA Program Staff)

Appendix 13-C
Authority to Release Information

To whom it may concern:

I hereby authorize CASA of New Hampshire to conduct an investigation on my background in conjunction with the program guidelines.

I further authorize any New Hampshire law enforcement agency to conduct a criminal records check and to release the result of said criminal records check to CASA of New Hampshire.

This release is executed by me with the full knowledge and understanding that the information to be obtained about me is for official use of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of New Hampshire, Inc.

I have read the above waiver and release statement and fully understand what rights I am waiving by signing this document.

_____
Name (please print)

_____ Date: _____
Signature

_____
Previous Names (Maiden, etc)

_____   _____
Social Security Number   Date of Birth

_____
Current Address

_____

_____
Previous Address(es) for the past 5 years

Reprinted with permission from CASA of New Hampshire.

Appendix 13-D
REFERENCE REQUEST

Re: _____

Date: _____

Dear

The above-referenced applicant has given the CASA program permission to contact you as a reference.

Although CASA is a volunteer position, the duties carried out by a CASA are extremely important. As advocates for children who have been victims of abuse and/or neglect, volunteers must be *responsible, articulate and mature*. This reference form will be used to assess the candidate's ability to carry out the role of a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Selected CASA applicants will receive 30 hours of training and ongoing program supervision. Once appointed to a case, the CASA will research the case, interview all relevant parties, and prepare written reports for the presiding judge.

Please do not hesitate to call if you seek any additional information about CASA. Thank you for agreeing to take a few minutes to fill out this form.

1. How long have you known the applicant? In what capacity? _____

   _____

   _____

2. Do you have knowledge of how the applicant relates to children?   ❑ yes ❑ no

   If yes, please describe briefly: _____

   _____

   _____

3. Have you observed the applicant in any of the following situations? If so, could you explain how the applicant handled the situation.

	OBSERVED YES/NO	SITUATION WAS HANDLED:		
		GRACEFULLY	COMPETENTLY	WITH SOME DIFFICULTY
Public speaking				
Working with sensitive or controversial issues				
Defending a position on an issue with colleagues				
Defusing a potentially explosive situation				

4. What three adjectives best describe the applicant? _____

_____

5. How well does the applicant finish projects and activities?

❑ Very Well   ❑ Well   ❑ Average   ❑ Below Average

6. How would you rate the applicant's:

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NEVER OBSERVED
Writing skills	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Interviewing skills	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Interpersonal skills	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Level of motivation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Political savvy	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

7. Would you describe the applicant as a leader? As self assured?   ❑ yes ❑ no
Overall, I would give the applicant the following recommendation for CASA:

❑ Excellent ❑ Very Good ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ I have some reservations

9. Please add any additional comments here summarizing your view of the applicant's ability to work with court professionals on behalf of an abused child.

_____
Signed

Appendix 13 - E

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The volunteer shall adhere to the following guidelines with respect to maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of others in all matters relating to an assigned case. The guidelines are set out below. They govern circumstances in which the CASA requests or receives information. However, these guidelines cannot cover every possible situation which may arise. Any questions and/or concerns the CASA volunteer has regarding confidentiality or the application of this policy should be discussed with the CASA Coordinators. These will be resolved on a case by case basis.

➢ Cases involving parties who are known to the CASA Program as being HIV positive, having AIDS and/or having other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are governed by an additional confidentiality protocol to which the volunteer must adhere. If, after accepting a case, the CASA learns it involves a STD, the CASA should immediately contact the Coordinator to obtain the protocol.

➢ In requesting information in the course of an investigation, a CASA may need to obtain information from doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, attorneys, clergy, teachers, or other professionals who have a protected relationship status with a party or the child. Your Appointment Order should cover most cases. By statute, there are limitations on the disclosure of information a professional receives during the course of his/her relationship with a client or patient. Many professions also have ethical principles which govern their ability to disclose information (for example, attorneys are bound by Rules of Professional Conduct; doctors, psychologists, and social workers also have ethical codes). The professional has no authority to provide any information to a CASA without the express permission of the client or a court order.

If it is necessary to obtain any privileged/confidential information about someone who is directly related to the case but is not the child/ren, the CASA must obtain from that person a written release of information which allows the professional, hospital or treatment center to discuss the matter with the CASA.

While a person may sign a release allowing the CASA to obtain confidential information, he/she may not want to authorize disclosure tot he other parties to the case and/or their attorneys. The CASA should review the signed release form very carefully and seek guidance from the Coordinator if the CASA has any questions at all.

➢ The CASA is not allowed to disseminate documents to any of the parties, their attorneys, and or collateral sources which are covered by state and/or federal confidentiality laws. These documents may include drug and alcohol evaluations/records; involuntary mental health treatment and rape crisis center information; and some criminal histories. Those covered by federal law usually are stamped, "This information is protected by Federal law (and prohibits you from making any further disclosure. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is <u>NOT</u> sufficient for this purpose."

- The CASA **shall never discuss** an assigned care for purely conversational purposes, particularly in specific terms, with anyone.

- The CASA should not promise a child or any party to the assigned case that his/her statements will be kept secret or confidential.

- The CASA <u>must disclose</u> confidential information learned during the course of an investigation in three circumstances:

  1. When consulting with the Coordinator, Director, or GAL who must be provided all significant case specifics known to the CASA;

  2. When ordered by the court in a hearing or trial;

  3. When the CASA thinks that there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse.

- A CASA <u>may disclose</u> confidential information and discuss case specifics in two circumstances:

  1. When the CASA consults with a professional service provider (medical personnel, mental health specialist, social worker, etc.) who is providing services to the child/ren who has agreed to the professional's disclosure or because their client signed a Release-of-Information Form.

  2. When the petitioner and respondent agree or when the court orders the disclosure.

- The CASA <u>may discuss</u> a case in hypothetical terms for purposes of illustration at professional meetings (seminars) designed to address issues promoting the best interests of children. The CASA shall not, however, mention the names of any individuals involved in the case or provide facts which may identify the case or parties.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Appendix 13-F

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE
STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

UPON APPOINTMENT as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, I Agree:

➤ To act in a responsible professional manner as an Officer of the Court in accordance with CASA volunteer policies and procedures, Court policies and relevant laws.

➤ To be an independent advocate for the best interests of the child.

➤ To maintain objectivity.

➤ To keep all matters confidential.

➤ To treat all persons with respect, fairness and courtesy regardless of race, religion or economic status.

➤ To complete all necessary court reports and documentation.

➤ To attend all hearings regarding the child and to monitor court orders in a timely manner.

➤ To maintain an active commitment to the child until the case has been dismissed or other disposition has been made by the Court.

➤ To seek and accept support and supervision from program staff.

➤ To participate in ongoing training.

➤ To maintain commitment to the mission statement and goals of the program.

_____   _____
Volunteer   Date

WITH APPRECIATION for your willingness to serve your community in this fashion, and in recognition of the above pledge, we assure you of our support.

_____   _____
Program Coordinator   Date   Presiding Judge   Date

Reprinted from Denver CASA

Appendix 13 - G
CASA TEAM LEADER PROGRAM

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Team Leader program will enable CASA of Humboldt to accept and efficiently manage a larger number of dependency (300) and delinquency (600) cases. Management of cases will be maintained by providing direction and available support to the individual CASA's. Consistent contact will assure fulfillment of program standards and practices.

GOALS:

➢ The Team Leader program will provide a positive outcome for all children being served.

➢ Team Leaders and peer advocates will engage in positive interaction and professionalism within the service delivery process.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Team Leaders will be selected based on the following criteria:

➢ Advocate will have demonstrated the interest, ability, experience and commitment to mentor their peer advocates.

➢ Advocate will agree to serve as a Team Leader for a minimum of twelve months, during which time they will attend and participate in monthly supervision and annual review with the direction of his/her designee.

JOB DESCRIPTON:

Team Leaders should be able to perform in a variety of different roles and settings, as demonstrated by the following:

➢ Serve as a role model, a resource and a support to the peer advocates assigned to their team.

➢ Assist peer advocates with problems and questions, as well as providing direction to proper resources.

➢ Maintain ongoing monthly contact with team members, CASA staff and quarterly contact with the entire team.

➢ Provide ongoing evaluation of the group process function by meeting with CASA staff and other team members.

Reprinted from Humboldt County, CA CASA

Appendix 13 - H

RETURN HOME ASSESSMENT TOOL

This assessment tool is to be completed for every child who is recommended for return home in the next 30 days.

Name of Child _____ **Name of Volunteer**_____

Return of the child to a parent is being considered at:

      Shelter Care Hearing_____

      Fact Finding/Disposition (In-home Dependency)_____

      Review Hearing_____

The CASA volunteer has been involved with this case for:

_____ weeks   _____ months _____ years

The CASA volunteer feels his/her ability to assess the risks of return home to be:

_____ poor   _____ fair   _____ good _____ excellent

Return home would be to:

      Parent involved with original allegations of abuse _____.

      Parent not directly involved in original allegations._____

1. Risk Factors

Severity of Original abuse/neglect Warranting Court Intervention:

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	Emotional / psychological abuse
❑	❑	❑	Physical abuse
❑	❑	❑	Medical neglect
❑	❑	❑	Educational neglect
❑	❑	❑	Lack of supervision
❑	❑	❑	Sexual abuse

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	Abandonment
❑	❑	❑	Chronic nature of abuse/neglect
❑	❑	❑	Failure to see / prevent hazard to child
❑	❑	❑	Unsafe or unsanitary home environment
❑	❑	❑	Inability to protect or believe the child
❑	❑	❑	Failure to teach / allow child to seek help

2. Child:

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	What the child wants is return home
❑	❑	❑	Age of the child
❑	❑	❑	Developmental level of the child
❑	❑	❑	The child can verbalize
❑	❑	❑	The child seems willing to verbalize problems
❑	❑	❑	This is a special needs child
❑	❑	❑	Behavior problems of the child
❑	❑	❑	Medical problems of the child
❑	❑	❑	Bonding to the parent
❑	❑	❑	Type of abuse the child has suffered
❑	❑	❑	Conscience development of child
❑	❑	❑	Self protection / self care
❑	❑	❑	Child's role in the family
❑	❑	❑	Child / teen's delinquency status
❑	❑	❑	School / academic performance
❑	❑	❑	Other:

_____

3. Parental Dynamics

RISK Factors

LOW **MOD** **HIGH**

❑ ❑ ❑ Acknowledges the problem(s)

❑ ❑ ❑ Conscience development

❑ ❑ ❑ Skill deficits

❑ ❑ ❑ Intellectual / developmental level

❑ ❑ ❑ Parent age

RISK Factors

LOW **MOD** **HIGH**

❑ ❑ ❑ History of domestic violence

❑ ❑ ❑ History of violent behavior

❑ ❑ ❑ Ego strength / self identity

❑ ❑ ❑ Criminal history

❑ ❑ ❑ Survivor of childhood abuse

❑ ❑ ❑ Drug / alcohol history

❑ ❑ ❑ Parenting skills

❑ ❑ ❑ Mental health issues

❑ ❑ ❑ Self sustaining

❑ ❑ ❑ Intensity and duration of CPS history

❑ ❑ ❑ Shows changes in behavior and lifestyle

❑ ❑ ❑ Completion of treatment plan

❑ ❑ ❑ Appropriate use of services

❑ ❑ ❑ Expressed desire to have family reunited

❑ ❑ ❑ Followed court orders for Dependency

❑ ❑ ❑ Success / progress in vocation / career

❑ ❑ ❑ Parent has realistic expectations of the child

❑ ❑ ❑ Other:

_____

4. FAMILY DYNAMICS

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	Family is in stable housing
❑	❑	❑	Basic needs of the child can be / are met
❑	❑	❑	There is a recognition of the problem(s)
❑	❑	❑	Extended family / chosen family support

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	Family plan to deal with problems in place
❑	❑	❑	Drug / alcohol problems being addressed
❑	❑	❑	Chance of relapse: Primary caregiver
❑	❑	❑	Chance of relapse: Other adults in home
❑	❑	❑	Appropriate use of humor
❑	❑	❑	Sense of play apparent in interactions
❑	❑	❑	Appropriate rules / structure in place for discipline of the children
❑	❑	❑	Affect is one of the trust of State / other agencies
❑	❑	❑	Respect each other's boundaries
❑	❑	❑	Seek help from each other with problems
❑	❑	❑	Primary caretaker of the children has completed services or well underway
❑	❑	❑	Other adult persons present in household
❑	❑	❑	Other children present in the household
❑	❑	❑	Other persons in the household are complying / cooperative with the plan and services
❑	❑	❑	Access to possible or identified perpetrators
❑	❑	❑	Parent desires return of child(ren)
❑	❑	❑	Other family members desire return of child(ren)
❑	❑	❑	Marital conflict
❑	❑	❑	Sibling conflict

5. Dynamics with State Agency

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	There has been progress with the case plan
❑	❑	❑	Cooperative with state social worker

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	All appropriate services have been offered
❑	❑	❑	Social worker and/or other state personnel are able to provide adequate monitoring
❑	❑	❑	Worker's perception of successful placement

6. DYNAMICS WITH CASA

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	CASA volunteer in place
❑	❑	❑	CASA able to adequately monitor the placement
❑	❑	❑	Relationship between CASA and family

7. VISITATION WITH THE CHILD PREVIOUS TO PLACEMENT

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	Frequency - often versus sporadic
❑	❑	❑	Duration - long versus cut short
❑	❑	❑	Proactive parent requesting longer visits
❑	❑	❑	Quality of visits - interactive versus one-way or no communication
❑	❑	❑	Reaction of parent to child - positive versus negative
❑	❑	❑	Reaction of child to parent - positive versus negative
❑	❑	❑	Reports of behavior after visits

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	Speed toward reintegration has been adequate

8. COMMUNITY

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	Resources available to meet family needs
❑	❑	❑	Resources available to meet child's needs
❑	❑	❑	Protections available to the child
❑	❑	❑	Natural helpers available
❑	❑	❑	School involvement
❑	❑	❑	Day care involvement
❑	❑	❑	Church involvement
❑	❑	❑	Probation/parole - compliance versus non-compliance
❑	❑	❑	Community status/history
❑	❑	❑	Transportation available
❑	❑	❑	Community staffing available/utilized

9. CURRENT STRESS FACTORS

RISK Factors

LOW	MOD	HIGH	
❑	❑	❑	Mental health of parent
❑	❑	❑	Physical health of parent
❑	❑	❑	Adequate income
❑	❑	❑	Number of household members
❑	❑	❑	Stability of school plan
❑	❑	❑	Stability of day care plan
❑	❑	❑	Other:

_____

SUMMARY: The CASA's opinion, comments, recommendations as to placement. (Focus on: What would the child gain and/or loose from returning home? What are specific needs of this child? What does the optimum placement for this child look like? What barriers still remain to reunification?)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

CASA VOLUNTEER   DATE

_____

Developed by the Clark County, WA Program

Appendix 13-I
Complaints and Grievances

Every effort should be made to solve problems cooperatively and informally before presenting them as a formal grievance. Should informal efforts fail, the following policy is set forth in order to provide an outlet for complaints and a systematic way to resolve the matter. All complaints will receive thoughtful consideration and will be discussed with the individual who raises them. Complaints and grievances may arise from external or internal (within the program) sources.

EXTERNAL:
Because CASA is involved in work that involves the future of the lives of children and families, it is emotionally charged work that evokes a wide range of feelings. It is therefore common and expected that there will be criticism from many of the parties involved, especially when the CASA does not make recommendations that are in agreement with their point of view. Should a complaint arise from someone outside the CASA organization, the volunteer or Case Manager to whom the complaint was given, should inform the Executive Director of the details of the complaint. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Director to decide if the complaint has substance and to request a written statement from the individual initiating the complaint. The written statement will be kept on record in the CASA office. In addition, the Executive Director, with advice from the Board if needed, will determine what action, if any, should be taken.

INTERNAL:
When a CASA volunteer wishes to make a statement of dissatisfaction with a policy, practice, condition or supervisor's decision, the volunteer should first discuss the matter with their Case Manager. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the volunteer, s/he should forward a written statement of the grievance to the Executive Director. In the event that the volunteer is still not satisfied with the conclusion of the matter after involvement of the Executive Director, the volunteer should present the written grievance statement to the Board of Directors. The Board's decision will be final. The volunteer will be entitled to receive a written response to their formal grievance from the Executive Director outlining the position the Director or the Board has taken on the issue.

Appendix 13 - J
Grievance Policy

In order to deal effectively with complaints from individuals and/or organizations regarding the services provided by the CASA program, the following grievance procedures shall be followed by staff, volunteers and board members.

VOLUNTEERS:

A. If a complain is lodged against a CASA volunteer it will be dealt with in the following manner:

1. The volunteer's immediate supervisor shall be notified.

2. The matter shall be reviewed and resolved by the immediate supervisor and the Program Director, or the Executive Director if the matter involves the Program Director. Such review shall include contact with the complainant and the volunteer.

3. A written reply shall be made to the complainant with copies to the Executive Committee of the CASA Board of Directors and to the volunteer.

PROGRAM STAFF:

B. If a complaint is lodged against a CASA program staff member it shall be dealt with in the following manner:

1. The Executive Director shall be notified.

2. The matter shall be reviewed by the Executive Director and shall include contact with the complainant and the staff member.

3. The Executive Director shall determine whether the matter should be taken to the Executive Committee for their review.

   a. If the matter is resolved by the Executive Director a written reply will be provided to the complainant with copies to the Executive Committee and staff member.

   b. If the matter is referred to the Executive Committee for review, it shall be resolved by this committee. A written report will be provided to the complainant by the President of the Board of Directors with copies to the Executive Director and staff members.

Appendix 15-A
Memorandum of Understanding

THE MISSION of the Denver CASA Program is to recruit, train and supervise volunteers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to assist the court in protecting the best interests of abused and neglected children and thus improve the system's treatment of this vulnerable population.

Achieving the goal of this program requires the development of good working relationships among the Denver Juvenile Court, the Denver Department of Social Services and the CASA Program. This Memorandum of Understanding identifies and clarifies those relationships.

SECTION I.	CASES TO BE REFERRED TO CASA PROGRAM

IT IS AGREED that the following categories of dependency and neglect cases under the jurisdiction of the Denver Juvenile Court are most appropriate for referral to the CASA Program:

A. Children under age twelve who are at risk of emotional, physical and/or sexual harm.

B.   Children under age twelve who are victims of neglect and/or suffer from failure to thrive.

C. Children under age twelve who initially will be returned to the home where there is risk of continuing harm.

D. Children under age twelve who initially will be assigned to out of home placements.

SECTION II.	ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CASA VOLUNTEER

IT IS AGREED that the role and responsibility of the CASA volunteer are as follows:

A. ROLE: A CASA volunteer is appointed as an Officer of the Court in Denver Juvenile Court to provide the Court with independent and objective information regarding the status of children involved in dependency and neglect cases. Duties of the CASA volunteer complement but do not duplicate the duties of other responsible persons involved in dependency and neglect cases. Primarily, other responsible persons include the Court, the Social Worker, the Guardian Ad Litem, the City Attorney and the Attorneys for respondent parents. Upon appointment, the CASA independently gathers and assesses information, develops recommendations and submits written and verbal reports which will be considered by the Court to aid in its decisions and to protect the best interests of the child.

B. RESPONSIBILITY: The mandate of the CASA volunteer is to assist the Court in assuring that the best interests of the child are served in relation to his or her right to a safe and permanent living environment. The CASA volunteer, in consultation with Program Staff, is responsible for reporting any information regarding the continuing safety of the child, but is not responsible for providing direct services to assure the continuing safety of the child. The CASA volunteer reports to and is directly supervised by the CASA Program Coordinator. The CASA Program Coordinator is responsible for the CASA volunteer's performance and is responsible for facilitating effective interactions among the CASA, the Court and the Denver Department of Social Services.

<center>**SECTION III   IMPLEMENTATION OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITES**</center>

A. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION: The Children's Legal Clinic, through the CASA Program Coordinator, will be responsible for conducting initial and on-going inservice training for CASA volunteers and will certify those volunteers completing the training program as being ready to begin service. The CASA Program Coordinator will be responsible for all volunteer management duties, i.e., recruitment, screening, training, assignment and supervision of CASA volunteers.

B. APPOINTMENT: When CASA volunteers have been trained and certified as ready for service, the Court will conduct swearing in ceremonies, appointing the CASA volunteers as Officers of the Court. This appointment will remain in effect until such time as the CASA volunteer's service is terminated.

C. ASSIGNMENT: The Court will identify cases for which the assignment of a CASA volunteer is requested. Cases will be identified for referral at the earliest possible stage, at the conclusion of the initial hearing when temporary custody of a child is determined, or at such other time as the Court deems appropriate. The CASA Program. and the Denver Department of Social Services will be notified of cases identified for referral.

Contingent upon availability of a volunteer appropriate for the case, the CASA Program will assign a CASA volunteer and will notify the Court and the Denver Department of Social Services of the assignment. The court will issue an order confirming the assignment of the CASA volunteer. This order will include a reaffirmation of the confidentiality oath and will also include a specific order allowing the CASA volunteer full access to any and all information and material relevant to the child's case.

The time at which the CASA volunteer begins to actively perform service on the case will be determined on a case by case basis, by the CASA Program in consultation with the Court. Upon each new assignment, the CASA volunteer will reaffirm his or her commitment to be bound by confidentiality standards and ethics throughout the assignment. The CASA volunteer will continue in active service on the case until the CASA Program management, in consultation with the Court, determines that the assignment should be ended.

D. INFORMATION GATHERING: Once the CASA volunteer has been assigned, the CASA Program Coordinator will make arrangements for the CASA Program Coordinator and the CASA volunteer to review the Legal Jacket of the case.

The Program Coordinator will correspond with the Social Worker assigned to the case, introducing the CASA volunteer, providing information about the role and function of the CASA volunteer and suggesting alternative dates and times when the Social Worker could schedule an initial case consultation

The Social Worker will schedule the initial case consultation to review the background of the case, to identify informational sources already contacted and to identify key issues.

After the initial case consultation, the Program Coordinator and the CASA volunteer will develop a Work Plan for gathering information for the Court. This Work Plan may include:

I.   Interviews: Relevant and appropriate persons include school personnel, community social workers, medical and psychological care providers, parents, immediate family members, other relatives, foster parents and others, depending on the facts of the case. The CASA volunteer should make arrangements to visit the child, and can be assisted in making these arrangements by the CASA Program Coordinator.

II.   DDSS Staffing: The CASA volunteer should be notified and may participate in regular staffings convened for informational purposes and conducted by the Social Worker assigned to the case. The CASA volunteer should be notified and may also participate in any special staffing convened by the Social Worker when the child's treatment plan is affected.

III. Access to Information: The CASA volunteer will have access to information relevant to the child's case through the Court Order of appointment. The CASA volunteer and Program Coordinator will have access to the Social Worker's case file at the time of the initial case consultation. If further review is requested at a later time, the CASA Program Coordinator will make arrangements with the Department to review the file at a mutually convenient time. Any documents or reports distributed to the parties in the case shall be distributed to the CASA volunteer at the same time.

IV. Contact with Supervisor: The Work Plan will specify what contact is expected between the volunteer and his or her supervisor, the Program Coordinator. Generally, this contact will be at least one time per week in the early stages of a case. Volunteers never before assigned to a CASA case will be expected to maintain weekly contact until the Work Plan is revised to provide otherwise.

E. REPORTING: The CASA volunteer will provide the Court with both written and oral reports, as required.

I. Written Reports: The CASA volunteer will prepare written reports under the supervision of the Program Coordinator in a format and manner prescribed by the Court. Written reports are to be submitted to the Court in accordance with Court policy prior to any hearing, including dispositional hearings, review hearings, permanency planning hearings or any other hearing subsequent to CASA appointment for which the Court requests a written report. Copies of the written report are to be sent to the Social Worker, the Guardian Ad Litem, the City Attorney and the Attomey(s) for respondent parents and all parties of record. In addition to reports prepared for court hearings, written reports may be submitted whenever it is determined by the CASA volunteer and the CASA Program Coordinator that information discovered by the volunteer significantly impacts the welfare and safety of the child, and/or the continued implementation of the treatment plan.

II. Verbal Reports: The CASA volunteer will be requested to provide verbal reports during Court proceedings, at any hearing subsequent to appointment. The volunteer may be subpoenaed to testify by any of the parties and may be cross examined during such testimony. Written reports submitted by the volunteer are also subject to cross examination.

SECTION IV   WORKING RELATONSHIPS

A. The CASA Program Coordinator will supervise the CASA volunteer and facilitate the interaction of the CASA volunteer with the Department of Social Services and the Court.

B. The CASA volunteer will maintain an activity log with the CASA Program Coordinator and will seek guidance and assistance from the Program Coordinator in performance of CASA duties.

C. The Court and the Department of Social Services will remain accessible to the CASA Program Coordinator on an as-needed basis to facilitate the smooth and effective operations of the CASA Program.

D. The CASA Program Coordinator may accompany the CASA volunteer during Court proceedings and Social Services staffings, and will substitute for the volunteer if the volunteer is unable to attend these activities.

E. The CASA Program, the Department of Social Services and the Court will maintain open, constructive and effective communication regarding the CASA volunteer's performance.

F. The CASA Program, the Department of Social Services and the Court will maintain open lines of communication with one another and within their own organizations to support the effective management and operations of the CASA Program, and, to the fullest extent possible, will coordinate and cooperate in all matters pertaining to the implementation and operation of the Program.

SECTION V.   ACCEPTANCE

This Memorandum of Understanding has been reviewed and accepted by the management and governing bodies of the organizations indicated below.

1. DENVER JUVENILE COURT:

_____
Authorized Representative and Title   Date

2. DENVER DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

_____
Authorized Representative and Title   Date

3. Denver CASA Program

_____
Authorized Representative and Title   Date

Reprinted from the Denver CASA Program

Letter Appointing a Volunteer to a Case

IN THE MATTER OF:

_____

Juvenile Court #: _____

This letter is to confirm that (volunteer name) _____

has been appointed CASA (COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE) for the above-named child(ren) who is the subject of _____ Juvenile Court proceedings. This assignment was made on (date) _____.

The CASA is appointed by the court to serve as an independent advocate for the child. The CASA is involved in legal proceedings involving child. The primary responsibility of the CASA is to insure that the best interests of the child are served. This necessitates gathering information from parents, relatives, foster parents, friends, school personnel, counselors and others having knowledge relevant to the child's situation. The CASA volunteer may be contacting you to discuss information you may have concerning this case.

Any questions concerning the CASA appointed in this case should be referred to the CASA office.

Sincerely,

_____

Volunteer Coordinator

Achieving Our Mission
Feedback Questionnaire

We encourage feedback to identify problems, shortcomings, strengths and weaknesses of this publication. Please take a moment to complete this short questionnaire and return it to address on the second page of this form. Your feedback helps ensure the usefulness of publications produced by the National CASA Association.

1. Type of Program Using *Achieving Our Mission* (check one):

       ___ State CASA/GAL Organization

       ___ Local CASA Program

       ___ Local GAL Programs

2. Position/Title of individuals using this guidebook (check all that apply):

       ___ Executive Director or Assistant Director

       ___ Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Support Personnel

       ___ Public Relations or Event Planning Professional

       ___ Board Member

       ___ Program Staff (not listed above)

3. How often does your program use this guide/manual?

       ___ Weekly

       ___ Monthly

       ___ Less than Monthly

4. What chapters, resources or sections were the most valuable?

5. List any suggestions for improving this publication:

6. Describe any problems or difficulties experienced while using this guidebook.

7. List any suggestions for additional topics or material to include in future editions.

8. How long have you worked for CASA or GAL?

Please forward completed questionnaires to:

National CASA Association
Attn: Publications
100 W. Harrison Street
North Tower, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98119

Fax (206) 270-0078