

CASA of Liberty/Chambers Counties advocates for the best interest of abused and neglected children in the court system, through the training and support of community volunteers.



**Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer for
CASA of Liberty/Chambers Counties.**

APPLICANTS ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Individuals desiring to volunteer with CASA of Liberty/Chambers Counties will be asked to Submit to national and local background criminal checks, CPS Central Abuse/Neglect Registry Check, and reference checks.

All criminal background checks will include:

- 1) Sex-offender registry check;
- 2) Finger-print based criminal background check from the FBI
- 3) CPS Central Abuse/Neglect Check

Applicants who do not agree to these checks cannot be accepted

CASA cannot accept applicants if their criminal history results include; guilty pleas, pleas of no contest, acceptance of deferred adjudication, and charges (whether pending or not, felony or misdemeanor) Involving violence, child abuse or neglect, or sex- or drug- related offenses of the individual or of someone whom the individual resides or regularly comes in contact.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Attached is our Volunteer Application, Criminal History Background Check Authorization, and Texas CPS/DPS Central Registry Check Authorization, and Volunteer Description.

CASA VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

CASA VOLUNTEER INFORMATION			
Last Name	First	M.I.	DOB
Street Address		Apartment/Unit#	
City	State	Zip	
Phone	Cell #	E-mail	
Work Phone	Fax No.	Social Security #	
Marital Status	Driver's License #	Driver's License State	
Do you drive: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO Do you have access to a car? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
Do you have children? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If Yes, how many? Ages?			
Do you speak a foreign language? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If Yes, which language(s)?			
Are you currently employed? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If yes, who is your current employer?			
Are you part time or full time? Can we contact you at work? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
How did you find out about our CASA program?			
EDUCATION			
High School		Address	
From	To	Did you graduate? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
College		Address	
From	To	Did you graduate? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree
Other		Address	
From	To	Did you graduate? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree
EMPLOYMENT HISTORY			
Company		Phone	
Address		Supervisor	
Job Title		Dates of Employment	
Responsibilities			
May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
Company		Phone	
Address		Supervisor	
Job Title		Dates of Employment	
Responsibilities			
May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (cont'd)		
Company	Phone	
Address	Supervisor	
Job Title	Dates of Employment:	
Responsibilities:		
May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
REFERENCES - Please list four references - two personal and two professional – no family members		
NAME	PHONE RELATIONSHIP	
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		
COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS/CLUB MEMBERSHIPS/VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE		
Agency/Organization	Dates of Involvement	Activities
Who may we contact in case of an emergency?		
Name	Address	Phone Number
DISCLAIMER AND SIGNATURE		
I understand that CASA does not accept an applicant whose criminal history check results include: guilty pleas, pleas of no contest, acceptance of deferred adjudication, and charges (whether pending or not, felony or misdemeanor) involving violence, child abuse or neglect, or sex- or drug-related offenses of the individual, or of someone with whom the individual resides or regularly comes into contact.		
I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.		
Signature	Date	

MISC INFORMATION & CONSENT		
Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than a traffic violation? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
If yes, what charge?	Date of arrest, filed or conviction:	
Court in which conviction was entered, or case is pending:		
Do you have any training, experience, or exposure to any of the following areas?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Drug/Alcohol Abuse Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychology
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling
<input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Court System
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations
Please Describe: _____		
Are you willing to commit one year of volunteer service? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
As a CASA 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? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
What are your reasons for wanting to participate as a CASA volunteer? _____		
Are you prepared to complete 30 hours of pre-service training (3 hours of pre-service court room observation) , and a minimum of 12 hours per year of in-service training ? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT:

Participating in the CASA program requires a significant volunteer commitment, requiring a special type of person, willing to work difficult and sometimes troubling cases. A CASA must keep information confidential, remain professional in demeanor, agree to program supervision, and agree to meet deadlines. In addition, he/she must be willing to devote an average of 5 – 15 hours each month for the duration of the case. Finally, a CASA must have a certain degree of flexibility in his/her schedule, to allow for court appearances on days when they submit reports, and for visits to family members involved in the case, either at their home, or, at another agreed upon location. **Are you willing to accept these responsibilities?** Yes No

HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK CAN YOU GIVE TO THE PROGRAM? _____ hrs./month

I understand that by submitting this application, I am authorizing inquiries to be made concerning my suitability as a volunteer court appointed special advocate. I certify that all the above is true, and that any untruthful or misleading answers may be cause for my volunteer application to be rejected, or my volunteer position to be terminated.

Applicant's Signature

Date



Agreement to Obtain

DFPS Background Checks Criminal Background Checks Sex Offender Registry Checks Motor Vehicle Record Checks

Due to the confidential nature of serving children who have been abused, neglected or abandoned, as a matter of routing, CASA of Liberty/Chambers Counties requests each prospective volunteer comply with obtaining DFPS background checks, DPS checks, Criminal Background checks including FBC fingerprint checks, Sex Offender Registry checks, Motor Vehicle Record checks and SSN checks.

In order to comply with this requirement, you will be required to complete the DFPS Background form in your packet. The following information will be requested:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Full Name | 5. Current Address |
| 2. Other Names Used | 6. Previous Address |
| 3. Date of Birth | 7. Race and Ethnicity |
| 4. Social Security Number | 8. Email Address |

We ask you to complete the information listed above **before** your initial interview. The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is responsible for requests and will complete the search.

Do you have any problems or concerns that may be raised by reference checks with the child abuse registry or criminal background check?

I understand, if I do not comply with this procedure, I will not be able to become a CASA Advocate, employee, or Board member.

Signature

Date

Volunteer Demographic Information

Quarter/Year _____

Last name _____ **First name** _____

Age of Volunteer _____

Gender

Female _____
Male _____

Marital Status

Divorced _____
Married _____
Separated _____
Single _____
Widow(er) _____

Language

English _____
Spanish _____
Sign _____
Other _____

Ethnicity

Hispanic/Latino _____
Not Hispanic or Latino _____

Race

African American _____
Asian American _____
Bi-racial _____
Caucasian _____
Hispanic/Latino _____
Multi-racial _____

Career Type

Attorney _____
Education Prof _____
Government/Military _____
Legal _____
Medical Prof _____
Teacher _____

Education

College _____
GED _____
High School _____
Post Grad _____
Some College _____
Other _____

Income

\$15,001-20,000 _____
\$20,001-30,000 _____
\$30,001-40,000 _____
\$40,001-50,000 _____
\$50,001-60,000 _____
\$60,001-70,000 _____
\$70,001 + _____

Employment Status

Full Time _____
Part Time _____
Not Employed _____
Retired _____
Student _____

How You Heard About CASA

Agency/Prof _____
Business/Corp _____
Event _____
Flyer _____
Friend _____
Internet _____
Media _____
Referral Agency _____
Religious Org. _____
Theta _____
Other _____

ADVOCATE INTERESTS

Do you have any experience working with children? Yes _____ No _____

Please list activity and ages of children. Professional or volunteer?

What are your strengths and weaknesses? _____

Have you ever applied to this or any other CASA programs in the past? Explain where and when:

Have you ever been hospitalized for an emotional problem? _____

Do you now or have you ever had a substance abuse problem? _____

What values are important to your family? What is your most important value? _____

Do you have personal experience with any of the following?

Child Abuse? _____

Foster Care? _____

Child Welfare? _____

Domestic Violence? _____

Victim of violent crime? _____

Have you ever been fired from a job? Why? _____

What type supervision do you work best with? _____

Do you have any kind of health impairments? _____

CASA ADVOCATE PREFERENCES

Do you have a preference regarding ages of children in your case(s)?

Any ____ Infants ____ 18 mos. to 5 ____ 6 to 11 ____ 12 to 18 ____

Do you have a preference as to:

Gender: Male ____ Female ____ Either ____

Number of Children: One ____ Sibling group ____ Either ____

Geographic Area: _____

Are there specific disabilities that you would prefer to NOT work with? No ____

Cardiac ____ Cerebral Palsy ____ Circulatory ____ Hearing ____ Respiratory ____

Learning Disabilities ____ Mental Retardation ____ Mobility ____ Neurological ____

Psychological ____ Reactive Attachment Disorder ____

Other _____

Are there any types of abusive situations that you would prefer to NOT work with? No ____

Abandonment ____ Educational Neglect ____ Emotional Abuse ____

Medical Neglect ____ Physical Abuse ____ Sexual Abuse ____

Do you have any disabilities? Yes ____ No ____

Cardiac ____ Cerebral Palsy ____ Circulatory ____ Hearing ____ Respiratory ____

Learning Disabilities ____ Mobility ____ Neurological ____ Psychological ____

Other _____

What would you do if a parent told you to "mind your own damn business"? _____

How would you respond when a parent asks you, "How would you know what it's like to be in my shoes?
How can you possibly understand?" _____

By signing below, I assure that everything on this form and my application is true.

Signature _____

Print Your Name _____

Date _____

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT - It is the policy of CASA of Liberty/Chambers Counties to implement affirmatively equal service to all clients without regard to race, religion, sexual orientation, group, age, gender, or national origin.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to be a lawyer or social worker?

No. People from all walks of life become CASAs. After you have been accepted into the CASA program, you will receive a minimum of 30 hours of training to prepare you for your work as a CASA. You will receive ongoing support from professional CASA staff.

What kinds of people serve as CASA volunteers?

Being a CASA volunteer requires no specialized degrees or legal experience. It does require special people over age of 21 who have:

- A concern for children;
- A genuine desire to help;
- The ability to remain objective;
- The maturity to deal with emotional situations;
- The commitment to complete a 30-hour minimum training course;
- Sensitivity to people who are different from themselves;
- Access to transportation and a flexible schedule; and
- A willingness to devote at least one year to a child's case.

Do I have time for this?

Most CASA volunteers work full time and find the CASA experience flexible enough to accommodate their schedules. You will go to court about 4-5 times a year and attend a few daytime meetings. The rest of a CASA volunteer's work is done on his or her own time - visiting the child, reviewing records and reading and writing reports. You will meet, email and call others involved in the case. Throughout a child's case, volunteers typically spend an average of 15 hours a month, including travel time and phone calls.

Can I handle this emotionally?

CASA volunteers are assigned to a case after the alleged child abuse or neglect has occurred and the child is placed in foster care. The CASA volunteer's focus is on determining the child's current and future needs. CASA staff provides emotional support and guidance throughout the case and accompanies volunteers to court hearings.

What kinds of children will I be working with?

You will be working with children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. These children could be living in an emergency shelter, a foster home, a residential treatment center or a relative's home. They range in age from newborn to teenager and in numbers from one child on a case to a large sibling group. Volunteers can choose an age range that they prefer to work with and also whether they'd prefer to work with a sibling group or only one child. Our goal is always to provide a CASA to every child who needs one.

Will I be safe?

CASA volunteers are never expected or encouraged to place themselves in dangerous situations. The work of

CASA is challenging, but you will always have the support of a CASA staff person.

How do I know what to recommend to the judge in a case?

CASA volunteers make recommendations based on the time they spend with the child, the review of records and information you gather in interviews with the caseworker, the attorney for the child, the foster parents, teachers, relatives, parents, and the CASA supervisor.

Why would the judge listen to me?

The judge appoints CASA to represent the best interest of the child and to make informed recommendations to the court about what you think is best interests of the child. Judges respect CASA volunteers and take their recommendations into account when making decisions.

Will my time make a difference?

Absolutely! CASA volunteers offer children hope and assistance as the children go through a very difficult time in their lives. And, CASA volunteers are often the one constant, strong voice advocating on behalf of children in care. As a result, children represented by CASA are more likely to:

- Receive the services and resources they and their families need,
- Maintain stable placements while in foster care, and
- Avoid the court system once their case is dismissed

How does a CASA volunteer differ from an attorney?

A CASA volunteer does not provide legal representation. A CASA volunteer takes into account what a child may want and speaks specifically to what is in the best interest of the child.

Are there any other agencies or groups that provide the same service?

No. There are other child advocacy organizations, but CASA is the only program where volunteers are appointed by the court to represent a child's best interests. While attorneys are appointed to represent the child's legal interests and advocate for what the child *wants*, CASA's duty is to advocate for what the child *needs*.