



Judicial Council of California · Administrative Office of the Courts

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INVITATION TO COMMENT

Title	Action Requested
Proposed CASA Funding Methodology	Review and submit comments by Monday, July 8, 2013 to Amy Nuñez at: amy.nunez@jud.ca.gov
To	Proposed Effective Date
Interested Persons and Organizations	CASA funding allocations in FY 2013–2014
Recommended by	Contact
Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee	Amy C. Nuñez, CASA Program Manager amy.nunez@jud.ca.gov 415-865-7564
Hon. Kimberly J. Nystrom-Geist, Cochair	
Hon. Dean T. Stout, Cochair	

Recommendation

The Judicial Council's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends revising the allocation methodology for the limited Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) funding available. Although the overall funding for CASA programs has remained stagnant for the past seven years, the number of local CASA programs and counties seeking to establish CASA programs has increased. The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee is seeking comments and or recommendation to propose this funding methodology to the Judicial Council.

Executive Summary

Welfare and Institutions Code section 100 charged the Judicial Council with establishing state funding procedures to establish, maintain, or expand local CASA programs. The statute determined two categories of award limits based on county population. The state grant for counties with a population less than 700,000 shall not exceed \$70,000 and counties with a population more than 700,000 shall not exceed \$100,000. The statute also states that funding shall be provided to only one program per county and encourages multi-county programs. For Fiscal Year 2012–2013, the Judicial Council CASA budget was \$2.213 million.

At the inception of the Judicial Council CASA grant program, there were only 12 local programs in California. Since then, that number has nearly quadrupled with 44 CASA programs serving 49 counties (45 programs as of July 1, 2013). From February through April 2013, a series of conference calls were held with the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee to discuss the current CASA funding methodology and the need for its revision to:

- Establish equitable allocations for CASA programs and eliminate wide funding variations that may result from historical funding formulas that have established higher funding for older programs.
- Supplement funding to local programs that work toward efficiency, effectiveness, and program growth.
- Address the need for a long-term, sustainable award methodology that takes into consideration courts that do not have a CASA program but wish to initiate a program.
- Increase the number of courts and the number of dependency youth served by CASA programs.

History of Award Methodology

Prior to FY 2003, CASA programs submitted requests for a grant amount and a detailed narrative application, which were reviewed by AOC staff and members of the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee. This method was discontinued in FY 2003, when formula base award levels were determined by averaging awards from the prior two years. This change was implemented in recognition that the lengthy narrative applications resulted in a similar award amount to each program from year to year and that the awards were essentially non-competitive since only one award was allowed per county.

In FY 2005, receipt of the State Appropriations Limit (SAL) increased the CASA grant budget significantly. A workgroup of AOC staff and CASA directors proposed that nine programs that exhibited maximum service efficiency (highest number of children served per award amount) receive significant increases to their base awards. In subsequent years, the SAL increase was awarded to all programs at the same rate. For example, all programs received a 5.7 percent increase in FY 2006. Later, reductions were applied equally as well. When the CASA grant budget allocation was reduced in FY 2011, all programs received a 10.25 percent reduction in funding.

After reviewing and discussing possible funding models, the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee voted to propose the following model to the Judicial Council as the new CASA funding methodology.

Proposed Funding Methodology

The proposed CASA award methodology takes on a two-step approach to establish award allocations for each local program. For the first step, a base amount is established. For the second

step, up to two (2) award incentives at a fixed amount for each, can be applied on top of the base amount *if* the program qualifies. The funding formula in Figure 1 illustrates this calculation.

Figure 1. Proposed Funding Methodology.

$\text{Base Amount} + \text{Incentive A} + \text{Incentive B} =$ $\text{Total Award Allocation}$
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Award methodology step 1—base amounts. The range between the lowest and highest county populations was utilized to determine tiers, with Tier 1 comprised of lower county populations and Tier 4 comprised of the most populous counties. The county population of each local program determines which tier it is categorized into to establish the base amount. This method provides a stable grant award that local CASA programs can expect and consider for budget planning moving into subsequent fiscal years. This funding methodology was proposed as it provides a greater distinction between each tier (\$8,000 difference), does not deviate immensely from current large county program median awards, and reserves approximately 20% of total program funds for award incentives.

Two- and multi-county programs will factor in the sum of their combined county populations for their tier category. These programs experience an added challenge working across two or more jurisdictions while sharing limited resources under one program administration. Each of the four (4) two-county programs’ award amounts will be multiplied by 1.5 to cover increased costs of this type of collaboration. Table 1 includes the four (4) tiers and each of the base award amounts. Table 2 includes a general overview of the methodology.

Table 1: Step 1—Tiers and Base Amounts.

Tier	1	2	3	4
Base Amount	\$26,000	\$34,000	\$42,000	\$50,000

*See Appendix A for a list of CASA program counties and tiers.

Award methodology step 2—incentive funding. The second step in the proposed funding methodology will include two types of incentive awards that can be added on top of the base amounts. The incentive funding focuses on measurable criteria that are strong indicators of a thriving program and its ability to grow. Each incentive award will be worth a fixed amount and will be given on top of the base amounts of the twenty local programs (44%) that achieve the greatest results in *each* of the two incentive categories. This is a competitive component to the formula and there may be programs that do not qualify for any incentives, only receiving the base amount as determined in step 1.

- **Incentive A—volunteer retention (Figure 2).** This rate speaks to how successful local programs are at training and retaining CASA volunteers, specifically from completing training, getting sworn-in as an officer of the court by the judge, and being assigned a child. This incentive also recognizes the number of CASAs that remain assigned to a

dependent child or youth beyond the 12-month commitment and those that take on another case after one has closed. The CASA mission is to serve as many foster youth possible and this can only be achieved by growing and retaining its volunteer pool.

- **Incentive B—dependency proportion served (Figure 3).** Comparing two factors in this incentive option will allow smaller counties to be recognized for serving a high proportion of their dependency children or youth. While larger counties may have a higher number served overall, any potential inequality can be addressed by considering that larger counties fall into Tiers 3 & 4, giving them higher base amounts to start.

Figure 2. Incentive A: Volunteer Retention Rate.

$$\frac{\text{Total \# of children served}}{\text{County dependency population}}$$

Note: Figures averaged from CASA Judicial Council quarterly deliverables reports.

Figure 3. Incentive B: Dependency Proportion.

$$\frac{(\text{\# of vols. assigned} - \text{\# of vols. trained})}{100}$$

Note: Figures from National CASA annual survey and CWS/CMS data.

Table 2: Proposed CASA Methodology Overview

Funding (Based on FY 12-13)	\$2.213M JC CASA budget \$1.778M for base amounts / \$432K for incentives
Description	More distinction in funding between each tier. Highly driven by county population.
Small County Effect	Reduced base due to smaller county population. Incentives for efficient programs that serve high proportion of dependent youth compared to county dependency population.
Large County Effect	Comparable to current median base to keep funding where county and dependency populations are higher (ability to serve more children and potential to increase volunteer pools).
Two- or Multi-County Program Effect	Receive 50% increase to their base as an incentive for working across two or more jurisdictions with one program administration.

Comments, Alternatives Considered, and Policy Implications

Limit number of incentive awards

Under the proposed funding methodology, local programs are able to receive up to two incentive awards should they qualify. An alternative considered limiting local programs to one incentive award, in order to distribute available funds among CASA programs with lower scores in the incentive scoring. For example, if CASA Program X qualified for additional funding for incentive options A and B, only the local program’s higher-scoring incentive would be selected.

CASA Program X's lower-rated incentive funds will then be reallocated to the next top-scoring local CASA program. This alternative was a suggestion from a Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee member submitted after the conference call that voted on the proposed methodology. It is included now for public comment.

Maintaining status quo or returning to the grant application process

Other alternatives considered by the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee included continuation with the status quo and use the current award allocations or returning to the narrative grant application process. Continuation with the status quo does not address the inequity in funding allocations between small and large counties, and older and newer CASA programs. Committee members determined that there was a great need to revise the methodology to create a process that considers program accountability and effectiveness.

It was also determined that returning to the narrative grant application process would require the development of a grant application process, formation of a review committee, and will be time, labor, and resource intensive for local CASA programs, AOC staff, and those that serve on the potential review committee. The application process may also result in unpredictable funding from year to year, a strain on non-profit management and possibly service to the courts.

Submission of comments

Please use the attached comment form to submit comments and suggestions on any or all components of the proposed CASA award methodology. Email the comment form to Amy Nuñez at amy.nunez@jud.ca.gov by Monday, July 8, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.

Attachments

1. Appendix A: Proposed CASA Program Base Amounts by Tier

Appendix A: Proposed CASA Program Base Amounts by Tier

Tier	Local CASA Program	Base Amount
1	Amador	\$26,000
1	Del Norte	\$26,000
1	Humboldt	\$26,000
1	Inyo & Mono*	\$39,000
1	Lassen	\$26,000
1	Mariposa	\$26,000
1	Modoc	\$26,000
1	Nevada	\$26,000
1	Plumas	\$26,000
1	San Benito	\$26,000
1	Siskiyou	\$26,000
2	Butte & Glenn*	\$51,000
2	El Dorado	\$34,000
2	Imperial	\$34,000
2	Kings	\$34,000
2	Marin	\$34,000
2	Mendocino & Lake*	\$51,000
2	Merced	\$34,000
2	Napa	\$34,000
2	San Luis Obispo	\$34,000
2	Santa Cruz	\$34,000
2	Shasta	\$34,000
2	Yolo	\$34,000
3	Monterey	\$42,000
3	Placer	\$42,000
3	San Francisco	\$42,000
3	San Joaquin	\$42,000
3	San Mateo	\$42,000
3	Santa Barbara	\$42,000
3	Solano	\$42,000
3	Sonoma	\$42,000
3	Stanislaus	\$42,000
3	Tulare	\$42,000
3	Ventura	\$42,000
4	Alameda	\$50,000
4	Contra Costa	\$50,000
4	Fresno & Madera*	\$75,000
4	Kern	\$50,000
4	Los Angeles	\$50,000
4	Orange	\$50,000
4	Riverside	\$50,000
4	Sacramento	\$50,000
4	San Bernardino	\$50,000
4	San Diego	\$50,000
4	Santa Clara	\$50,000

*These base amounts do not include incentive funding. Base amounts for two-county programs are multiplied by 1.5 to acknowledge the collaboration between two jurisdictions, sharing limited resources, and operating under one program administration.