



## Judicial Council of California

Family & Juvenile Law Advisory  
Committee

[www.courts.ca.gov/familyjuvenilecomm.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/familyjuvenilecomm.htm)  
[familyjuvenilecomm@jud.ca.gov](mailto:familyjuvenilecomm@jud.ca.gov)

### FAMILY AND JUVENILE LAW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

April 28, 2025

4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Virtual

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**Advisory Body Members Present:** Hon. Stephanie E. Hulse (Cochair), Hon. Craig E. Arthur, Hon. Brett Bianco, Hon. Ana España, Hon. Susan M. Gill, Ms. Julia Hanagan, Ms. Leslie Heimov, Mx. Cory Hernandez, Ms. Selis Koker, Hon. Mary Kreber Varipapa, Mr. Jonathan Laba, Ms. Sharon Lawrence, Justice Frank J. Menetrez, Hon. Kelly L. Neel, Ms. Sherry Peterson, Ms. Melissa J. Poulos, Hon. Lawrence P Riff, Hon. B. Scott Thomsen, Ms. Susan Thrall, and Hon. Rubén A. Villalobos.

**Advisory Body Members Absent:** Hon. Tari L. Cody (Cochair), Hon. Akemi D. Arakaki, Hon. Bunmi O. Awoniyi, Hon. Brooke A. Blecher, Hon. Roger C. Chan, Ms. Trina Edwards, Comm. Katherine Fogarty, Hon. Jennifer L. Guiliani, Ms. Diane Iglesias, Hon. Esther P. Kim, Ms. Rose Klein, Mr. Joseph Koller, Mr. Joe Navarro, Chief Brian Richart, and Hon. Monica F. Wiley.

**Others Present:** Mr. Tony Cheng, Ms. Audrey Fancy, Ms. Diana Glick, Mr. Cyrus Ip, Ms. Sarah Jacobvitz, Ms. Stephanie Lacambra, Ms. Amanda Morris, Ms. Lollie Roberts, Ms. Christy Simons, Mr. Christopher Sandino, Ms. Gabrielle Selden, and Ms. Marina Soto.

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#### OPEN MEETING

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##### Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and took roll call.

##### Approval of Minutes

The advisory body reviewed and approved the minutes of the April 29, 2024 and September 23, 2024, Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee meetings.

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#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS 1-2)

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##### Item 1

##### **Child Support: AB 1058 Child Support Commissioner and Family Law Facilitator Program Funding for Fiscal Year 2025-26**

Presenter: Lollie Roberts, Supervising Attorney, Center for Families, Children & the Courts, Judicial Council of California

This report details the program allocation of funding for the Assembly Bill 1058 Child Support Commissioner and Family Law Facilitator Program for fiscal year 2025-26 based on the current funding methodologies, with updated workload and population data. The funds are provided through a cooperative agreement between the California Department of Child Support Services and the Judicial Council, which requires the council to annually approve the Assembly Bill 1058

Program funding allocations. The committee reviewed the draft report and made recommendations on funding allocations discussed in the report.

***Action: The committee reviewed and approved the draft program allocation of funding report for the AB 1058 Child Support Commissioner and Family Law Facilitator Program for fiscal year 2025–26 without objection and with one abstention.***

## **Item 2**

### **Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2025-26 Funding Allocations for Court Appointed Special Advocate Local Assistance**

Presenter: Christy Simons, Supervising Attorney, Center for Families, Children & the Courts, Judicial Council of California

The committee reviewed and considered for approval a report to the Judicial Council on the allocation of \$2.713 million for fiscal year 2025-26 for the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Local Assistance program. The allocations will fund 44 local CASA programs serving 52 counties.

***Action: The committee reviewed and approved the proposed recommendations to the Judicial Council for the CASA Local Assistance funding allocations for fiscal year 2025-26 without objection and with one abstention.***

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## **A D J O U R N M E N T**

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on enter date.



# Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

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## M E M O R A N D U M

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**Date**

May 7, 2025

**Action Requested**

Please Review

**To**

Members of the Family and Juvenile Law  
Advisory Committee

**Deadline**

May 12, 2025

**From**

Sarah Saria, Attorney

**Contact**

Sarah Saria, 916-643-7078  
[sarah.saria@jud.ca.gov](mailto:sarah.saria@jud.ca.gov)

**Subject**

Draft Judicial Council Report and Draft  
Report to the Legislature regarding FY 2024-  
25 Funding for California Court Appointed  
Special Advocate Association

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The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory committee serves as the oversight body for the Judicial Branch Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program funding. The Budget Act of 2024 appropriated \$20 million to the California CASA Association for support of local CASA programs for fiscal year (FY) 2024-25<sup>1</sup> and requires the Judicial Council to submit a report to the Legislature on CASA program implementation and outcomes by July 1, 2025. The committee is asked to review and consider the attached draft Report to the Legislature and corresponding draft Report to the Judicial Council.

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<sup>1</sup> At its meeting on September 20, 2024, the Judicial Council [approved allocation](#) of the \$20 million in General Fund appropriations, included in the Budget Act of 2024, to the California CASA Association for FY 2024-25.



# Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

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## REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

*Item No.:*

For business meeting on July 17–18, 2025

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**Title**

Report to the Legislature: FY 2024-25  
Funding for California Court Appointed  
Special Advocate Association

**Report Type**

Information

**Date of Report**

May 7, 2025

**Submitted by**

Judicial Council Staff  
Christy Simons, Supervising Attorney  
Center for Families, Children & the Courts

**Contact**

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Sarah Saria, 916-643-7078

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### Executive Summary

The State Budget Act of 2022 (Stats. 2022, ch.45) amended the Judicial Council's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) grant funding to include an additional \$60 million, to be paid in three increments over three years, to the California CASA Association (California CASA) for support of CASA programs across the state. On or before July 1, 2025, staff for the Judicial Council's Center for Families, Children & the Courts submitted to the Legislature *Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year Three*, in accordance with the requirements stated in the Budget Act of 2024.

### Relevant Previous Reporting or Action

At its meeting on September 20, 2022, the Judicial Council approved allocation of the \$20 million in General Fund appropriations, included in the Budget Act of 2022, to the California CASA Association for fiscal year (FY) 2022-23.<sup>1</sup> On June 30, 2023, staff for the Judicial

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<sup>1</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2022–23 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (Sept. 2, 2022), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11204252&GUID=EAE945CB-DE38-46FB-B38D-9AA373B27A29>.

Council’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts submitted to the Legislature *Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year One*, in accordance with the requirements stated in the Budget Act of 2022.<sup>2</sup>

At its meeting on September 19, 2023, the Judicial Council approved allocation of the \$20 million in General Fund appropriations, included in the Budget Act of 2023, to the California CASA Association for FY 2023–24.<sup>3</sup> On June 28, 2024, staff for the Judicial Council’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts submitted to the Legislature *Report on the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year Two*, in accordance with the requirements stated in the Budget Act of 2023.<sup>4</sup>

At its meeting on September 20, 2024, the Judicial Council approved allocation of the \$20 million in General Fund appropriations, included in the Budget Act of 2024, to the California CASA Association for FY 2024-25.<sup>5</sup> On or before July 1, 2025, staff for the Judicial Council’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts submitted to the Legislature *Report on the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year Three*, in accordance with the requirements stated in the Budget Act of 2024.<sup>6</sup>

## Analysis/Rationale

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program is a nonprofit organization that supports trained volunteers appointed by a judicial officer to provide advocacy for a child who is under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court. A CASA volunteer spends time with the child, monitors the child’s needed services, and provides child-focused recommendations to the court based on the best interest of the child. In 2024, CASA programs served 10,472 children and youth with 6,747 active volunteers in 52 counties.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Report to the Legislature: FY 2022-23 Funding for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (June 21, 2023), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12124956&GUID=A040336C-429B-4192-AD16-D6CB0E323FAA>

<sup>3</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2023–24 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (Aug. 24, 2023), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12246017&GUID=71F6ABFC-A250-4283-9CF8-52ABFA1F6460>.

<sup>4</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Report to the Legislature: FY 2023-24 Funding for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (June 17, 2024), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13067032&GUID=A45084D5-74F5-4E83-BF24-9F1DE3A4F21D>

<sup>5</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2024-25 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (Aug. 15, 2024), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13259618&GUID=B7A0464A-8E24-47C2-9C78-671F26D4CCF0>

<sup>6</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Report to the Legislature: FY 2024-25 Funding for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (Month Day, 2025),  
Link

<sup>7</sup> Sharon Lawrence, CEO, California CASA Association, *Report to the Judicial Council on CASA Funding and Program Development*, Feb. 7, 2025, p.3.

The Budget Act of 2022 appropriated a total of \$60 million one-time General Funds for the California CASA Association for support of local CASA programs. This encumbrance was made available for a period of three years - \$20 million in FY 2022–23, \$20 million in FY 2023–24, and \$20 million in FY 2024–25. (Link A.) The Budget Act of 2022 further specified that for each funding year, the California CASA Association must allocate \$16 million to local programs for expanding capacity, recruitment, training, and budget stabilization and use \$4 million for statewide volunteer recruitment initiatives, training curriculum, and other projects. The Judicial Council is required to report annually to the Legislature on the implementation and outcomes of this program. (Link B.)

The Budget Act of 2024 includes the \$20 million appropriation for allocation to the California CASA Association for FY 2024–25. This amount is available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30, 2026. The attached legislative report describes funding allocations and program development for FY 2024-25 as required by the Budget Act. (Link C.)

### **Fiscal Impact and Policy Implications**

The purpose of the funding is to assist CASA programs with resources for staff, training, and expanding program capacity. Because CASA programs provide key information directly to the judicial officer, a thriving CASA network is of direct benefit to the courts.

### **Attachments and Links**

1. Attachment A: *Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year Three*
2. Link A: Sen. Bill 154 (Stats. 2022, ch. 43), SEC. 2.00, item 0250-101-0932, schedule (5), provisions 31, 32 & 33  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220SB154](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB154)
3. Link B: Assem. Bill 178 (Stats. 2022, ch. 45), SEC. 4, item 0250-101-0932 of section 2.00 of the Budget Act of 2022, schedule (5), provisions 31, 32 & 34,  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220AB178](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB178)
4. Link C: Assem. Bill 107 (Stats 2024, ch. 22), SEC. 2.00, item 0250-101-0932, schedule (5), provisions 23, 24, 25 & 26,  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB107](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB107)

July 1, 2025

# **Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year Three**

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Fiscal Year 2024–25



Judicial Council of California

## **JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA**

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*Chief Justice of California and  
Chair of the Judicial Council*

**Shelley Curran**

*Administrative Director  
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**Sarah Saria**

*Attorney and  
Primary Author of Report*



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## **Executive Summary**

The State Budget Act of 2022 amended the Judicial Council’s Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) grant funding to include an additional \$60 million, to be paid in three increments over three fiscal years, to the California CASA Association (California CASA) for support of CASA programs across the state. As required under the State Budget Act of 2024, the Judicial Council is submitting the *Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year Three* to describe funding allocations and program development. This report also projects activity that will continue through June 2026.

In the three years of funding, California CASA and local CASA programs have stabilized operations, staffing, and funding, enabling local programs to focus on targeted volunteer recruitment and service expansion. The statewide volunteer pool has become more diversified by gender and cultural background, which better reflects the demographics of children and youth served by CASA volunteers. Programs have expanded their services by adding additional counties and training more volunteers to serve youth in the juvenile justice system. Training has been centralized to ensure consistency, minimize redundancy, and update the curriculum with topics that will help volunteers work with the increasingly complex needs of youth who enter and stay longer in the foster care and juvenile justice systems.

## **I. Background**

### **CASA Programs**

A CASA program is a nonprofit organization that supports trained volunteers appointed by a judicial officer to provide advocacy for a child who is under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court. A CASA volunteer spends time with the child in person, monitors the child’s needed services, and meets with the stakeholders involved in the child’s life to provide child-focused recommendations to superior court judges based on each child’s needs and best interests. There are 44 local CASA programs in California serving 52 of the state’s 58 counties. Ninety-nine percent of the youth in foster care reside in these 52 counties.<sup>1</sup> In 2024, 6,747 active CASA volunteers served 10,472 youth in the dependency and juvenile justice systems across California.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>California CASA Impact Report for FY 2023-24, <https://www.californiacasa.org/>. In 2023, 8,012 CASA volunteers served 11,261 youth across the state.

<sup>2</sup> Sharon Lawrence, CEO, California CASA Association, *Report to the Judicial Council on CASA Funding and Program Development*, Feb. 7, 2025, p.3.

## **Funding and Reporting**

The State Budget Act of 2022 (Stats. 2022, ch. 45) amended the Judicial Council's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) grant funding to include an additional \$60 million, to be paid in three increments over three fiscal years, to the California CASA Association (California CASA) for support of CASA programs across the state. On January 10, 2023, Governor Newsom proposed eliminating \$40 million in funding for Year Two (2023–24) and Year Three (2024–25) in an effort to achieve a balanced budget. On May 12, 2023, the Governor's May Revision included funding for Year Two and Year Three. Although the proposed elimination of the second- and third-year funding caused delays in the capacity-building efforts of some local programs, the programs readjusted and repositioned to meet planned outcomes by July 2023.

The State Budget Act of 2024 appropriated a total of \$20 million for fiscal year (FY) 2024–25, including \$16 million to provide funding to local CASA programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training, and to stabilize local budgets and staffing. The remaining \$4 million is to be used by California CASA for statewide volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of statewide training curriculum, collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the report to the Legislature, and other uses to expand CASA services in the state.

The State Budget Act of 2024 specified that the Judicial Council annually report to the Legislature on CASA program implementation and outcomes. This third report, due on July 1, 2025, is required to describe funding allocations and program development. This report also projects activity that will continue through June 2026.

## **II. Year Three Funding Allocations**

Year Three funding of \$20 million included \$100,000 for the Judicial Council's administration of the funds. The remaining \$19.9 million was transferred to California CASA: \$19.5 million in November 2024 and \$400,000 in May 2025.

California CASA received \$3.9 million to implement statewide services and efficiencies that benefit the local programs collectively. California CASA allocated funds to implement a comprehensive statewide marketing campaign aimed at recruiting new volunteers and donors and initiated efforts to measure the impact of a CASA volunteer on the health and well-being of a child. California CASA is also supporting its network of local CASA organizations with growth plans, training, administrative support, and assistance in building a volunteer pool and staff that more closely mirrors the population of children and families served.

## **III. Year Three Grant Opportunities and Funding Allocations for Local CASA Programs**

California CASA solicited feedback from the CEOs/executive directors of local CASA programs in developing its grant opportunities. The review group supported the design of the grant

opportunities, including mitigation of the loss of funding under the Victims of Crime Act (see below) for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

California CASA created three grant opportunities for local programs in the third year:

- Grant Opportunity 1 provides funding to stabilize operations and staffing;
- Grant Opportunity 2 provides funding for Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) support; and
- Grant Opportunity 3 provides funding for growth and expansion of the CASA program.

California CASA allocated:

- \$7,900,000 for Grant Opportunity 1;
- \$2,500,000 for Grant Opportunity 2; and
- \$5,600,000 to 35 programs for Grant Opportunity 3.

Funds for Grant Cycle Three were distributed by California CASA in December 2024.

### **Grant Opportunity 1 - funding to stabilize operations and staffing**

This grant provides financial support to help local CASA programs cover day-to-day operating expenses. Funds can be used for recruiting, training, and supervising CASA volunteers and for retaining CASA staff through salary increases, benefits, and professional development opportunities. Funding allocation was based on 20% of the local program's annualized salaries. To document results, local programs will submit a written narrative by DATE describing how the funding strengthened the program's infrastructure, improved staff retention, and increased the number of children and youth served. Narratives will include a success story to highlight the impact of the funding and to illustrate progress that is measurable, meaningful, and demonstrates movement toward stated goals. California CASA distributed \$7,900,000 to local programs for this grant opportunity.

### **Grant Opportunity 2 - funding for Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) support**

Local CASA programs that applied for but did not receive funding from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Court Appointed Special Advocates (KS) Program (Victims of Crime Act funding) could apply for up to \$72,848 in funding under this grant opportunity. Funds are intended to help CASA programs provide more children in foster care with a CASA volunteer who will advocate for services and support needed by children who have experienced abuse and neglect. The application process required local programs to explain Cal OES findings of problems in their most recent performance assessments and the corrective actions they took in response. Applications also had to include the number of new children to be served with a CASA volunteer through the grant period (October 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026). California CASA awarded \$2,500,000 to local CASA programs for this grant opportunity.

### **Grant Opportunity 3 - funding for growth and expansion of the CASA program**

Local CASA organizations could use these funds to scale up and sustain growth to serve more children and expand to serve children in new areas such as juvenile justice proceedings or children who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Local programs submitted written

narratives that outlined specific goals, including at least two quantifiable outcomes that will increase the number of new children being served by a CASA volunteer and one or more stories of compelling successes that illustrate the impact of their programs. California CASA Association awarded \$5,600,000 to local CASA programs for this grant opportunity.

#### **IV. Year Three Progress and Ongoing Year Three Activities of California CASA and Local CASA Organizations**

To ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources across the network, California CASA centralized a range of services within its staff and administration. A total of \$3,900,000 is being used for this purpose in grant cycle three.

##### **Volunteer Recruitment Initiatives**

###### **Statewide Marketing/Advertising Campaign**

California CASA is building on the success of its “Just by Being You” statewide recruitment campaign with a multi-pronged approach to increasing the number and diversity of CASA volunteers. California CASA analyzed the rate at which 6,000 new volunteer inquiries led to trained volunteers to help determine how they will move forward with subsequent recruitment campaigns in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2024-25 and into fiscal year 2025-26.

###### **CASA Peer-to-Peer Recruitment Project**

Recognizing that peer recruitment is one of the most successful strategies to find qualified individuals to become CASA volunteers, California CASA developed a Peer-to-Peer Recruitment Toolkit to help train volunteers to make an emotional connection while providing information and transparency. The Toolkit was completed and distributed to all local programs in February 2025. Several programs have already integrated these strategies into their recruitment efforts. Data on full implementation and training is being generated and will be reported in October 2025.<sup>3</sup>

###### **Tailored Recruitment Strategies**

Working with a consultant over the past two years, California CASA has continued providing tailored recruitment strategies for rural and underserved areas, including coaching on recruitment and retention strategies. The aim is to enhance operational efficiency and volunteer engagement and reduce the number of interested candidates who drop out during the volunteer onboarding process.

Local programs shifted from broad outreach strategies to personal, tailored outreach that aligned with youth demographics. Successful events included outreach in community spaces such as faith-based venues and dog parks and “Coffee with a CASA.” CASA volunteers became

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<sup>3</sup> Sharon Lawrence, CEO, California CASA Association, *Report to the Judicial Council on CASA Funding and Program Development*, Feb. 7, 2025, pp 7-8.

recruiters using social media platforms such as LinkedIn, and targeted ads and email templates were placed on Facebook.

Programs made their application process clearer and their application forms simpler. They minimized delays in follow-up and incorporated interview practices that are more encouraging. They personalized prompt follow up contact with prospective volunteers and replaced formal orientations with “meet and greet” sessions using easy self-scheduling software.

Recruitment plans now include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals, budgets, timelines, and success metrics. Volunteer onboarding processes are being restructured to reduce preventable attrition and create stronger engagement from initial inquiry to appointment by the court.

### **Enhanced Volunteer Demographic Alignment**

When volunteers share similar cultural, racial, or gender identities with youth, youth tend to trust the volunteer more readily and develop relationships more quickly. To recruit volunteers whose demographics more closely mirror the youth served by CASA volunteers, California CASA developed targeted recruitment efforts that include more inclusive and welcoming marketing materials, community-based outreach, peer-to-peer campaigns, and recruitment storytelling. These efforts are leading to an increased diversity of backgrounds among volunteers and improved volunteer retention and engagement. The percentage of male volunteers rose slightly from 17% in 2022-23 to 17.5% in 2023-24. While this is a modest increase, it represents progress in this area of recruitment that has been historically challenging. From 2023 to 2024, in the percentage of volunteers who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) increased by 5%, a step toward better aligning with the 57% of youth in foster care statewide who identify as BIPOC.

Continuing efforts include community partnerships with local service and educational organizations, in-person and remote volunteer recruitment events, encouraging board members and volunteers to recruit volunteers, and campaigns targeted toward male demographics. Training and mentorship will ensure volunteers are culturally competent and well supported.

### **Plan for Shared Resources and Infrastructure**

#### **Human Resources (HR) Support**

California CASA engaged a human resources consulting firm that helped local programs improve their staff hiring and onboarding process, update their employee handbooks, and revise policies and procedures related to payroll automation, workplace investigations, performance issues, change management, and restructuring. The impact has been especially significant for local programs that lacked a professional level of HR practice or infrastructure support.

#### **Language and Accessibility Services**

California CASA partnered with LanguageLine Solutions to provide on-demand translation and interpretation so CASA volunteers can effectively engage with youth, parents, and caregivers

during home visits, case planning, and court proceedings. These services have helped CASA volunteers provide prompt and accurate case reporting. Translations of marketing and informational materials have strengthened outreach and recruitment.

### **Data Outcomes**

To support its statewide learning and evaluation efforts, California CASA engaged a consultant to study and report on the impact of a CASA volunteer. This work is in progress. California CASA now manages centralized data collection and analysis to provide local programs with insights and reports on key performance indicators and outcomes. This data is valuable for reporting, advocacy, and fundraising efforts.<sup>4</sup>

### **Regional Fundraising Support**

To help local programs gain increased financial sustainability, California CASA hosted multiple gatherings in different parts of the state and invited the CEOs and board members of local programs. These events modeled good fundraising practice, provided local programs opportunities to engage local donors and cultivate relationships, and raised overall awareness of the CASA network. California CASA also hosted training sessions on board governance, strategic planning, and fundraising and offered technical assistance to programs undergoing leadership transitions or board restructuring.

### **Database and Platform Enhancement**

California CASA prioritized strengthening data management and reporting systems to improve efficiency, consistency, and the ability to measure impact. California CASA staff worked directly with Optima and CASAManager vendors on behalf of local programs to standardize volunteer and case management fields across the network, streamlining the collection of essential service and advocacy data. Definitions for key metrics such as volunteer hours, case milestones, and case closure reasons were simplified and aligned, improving statewide data consistency.

California CASA launched a statewide database training series for 74 registered participants from 23 local programs in April 2025. Sessions were recorded and are available on the E-Learning Center (discussed below). Starting in May 2025, nine one-hour live training sessions were delivered, focusing on effective data entry, dashboard use, and using new fields to strengthen case management and volunteer tracking. These sessions were designed to increase staff comfort with new features, minimize reporting errors and administrative burden, and maximize each program's ability to analyze its own impact data and report outcomes effectively.

California CASA is considering developing a centralized volunteer management platform for the state to improve case management and track outcomes more efficiently across the network.

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<sup>4</sup> Sharon Lawrence, CEO, California CASA Association, *Report to the Judicial Council on CASA Funding and Program Development*, Feb. 7, 2025, p.9.



## **Development of a Statewide Training Curriculum**

### **E-Learning Center Enhancements**

Between 2022 and 2024, California CASA successfully transitioned all local programs to the centralized statewide E-Learning Center. This resulted in consistent, high-quality continuing education for volunteers and staff. With 75-80% percent of local programs' continuing education needs now met through the E-Learning Center, duplicated efforts by local programs have been reduced.

The E-Learning Center's curriculum now has 102 on-demand courses. Expansion included courses in juvenile justice advocacy and trauma-informed care. The Juvenile Justice Advocacy Module incorporates best practices, court procedures, and trauma informed approaches specific to probation youth. Trauma-Informed Care Modules address emotional and psychological injuries and how they impact child development, resilience, and advocacy. These modules have been widely used by volunteers preparing to serve youth with complex needs. To enhance engagement and retention, the curriculum has interactive features such as quizzes, knowledge checks, case studies, and downloadable resources and job aids.

### **Adult Learning and Accessibility Improvements**

California CASA solicited proposals in December 2024 to review the Pre-Service Training Curriculum for new volunteers. Using feedback from local programs, California CASA completed a full curriculum assessment to identify outdated materials, broken resource links, and opportunities to modernize and enhance content. The Learning and Development Plan was completed in April 2025, and it outlines a multi-phase strategy to redesign the curriculum and launch CASA University, a statewide training platform.

Expert consultants will lead the development of curriculum design and instructional delivery. New subjects will include cultural humility and system navigation, and new teaching tools will include gamified activities and case studies. To accommodate different learning styles, courses will include text transcripts for audio, video captions, alternative text for images (brief descriptions of images for those with visual impairments), adjustable font sizes, and multilingual and culturally responsive content. Curriculum redevelopment will begin in July 2025, and alpha testing is planned for early 2026. The phased statewide rollout of the new Pre-Service Training Curriculum is expected to begin in spring 2026 through CASA University.

### **Plan for the Collection of Data**

Throughout years 1 and 2 (October 2022-June 2024), California CASA implemented a structured data collection and reporting system. Quantitative reports, collected three times per year, track the numbers of children served and active volunteers as well as volunteer demographics and staff hiring and retention. Narrative reports are collected semi-annually and track expansion efforts such as rural outreach and bilingual recruitment. Notable data outcomes include a 5% increase in the percentage of CASA volunteers who identify as BIPOC, an increase in the average length of service for CASA volunteers to 47.75 months, and an improvement in staff retention to 67%.

## **Plan to Expand CASA Services in California in Grant Cycle Three**

### **Expanded Juvenile Justice Services**

The Juvenile Justice Training Module launched on May 1, 2025. This comprehensive training for CASA volunteers and staff who support youth in the juvenile justice system includes video-based trainings, narrated presentations, courtroom simulations, and practical tools. Twenty-eight local programs are adopting this module to replace or supplement their juvenile justice training, and five additional programs have committed to launching or expanding their juvenile justice advocacy work with the support of this module.

Courses include Starting a Juvenile Justice CASA Program (includes board engagement and alignment with justice system partners), CASAs for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System (a two-hour core training), Trauma and Brain Development, Juvenile Courtroom Roleplay (a court scene with a sitting juvenile court judge and a CASA volunteer), Youth and CASA Communication Boundaries, and recorded conference sessions on commercial sexual exploitation of children and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Tools include templates for volunteers' court reports and MOUs with courts and probation departments.

### **Growth Strategies**

Growth consultant engagements are ongoing. Qualitative feedback suggests that a phased approach that first focuses on stabilization and then moves toward structured external support works to position local programs for long-term organizational strength. California CASA is considering an initiative that will help selected programs build their capacity to navigate financial uncertainties proactively. If implemented, it would strengthen the network's ability to plan for growth and sustainability in an increasingly complex funding environment.

### **Professional Development**

To customize professional development, California CASA holds monthly remote meetings for executive directors/CEOs and regular remote meetings for CASA staff. In 2024, California CASA held a State Conference attended by 340 people, including CASA staff and volunteers. Training topics included trauma-informed practices, juvenile justice advocacy, supporting transitional-age youth, and skill building in board management. This was the first statewide CASA conference in nearly 20 years; another statewide conference is planned for October 2025.

## **V. Local CASA Program Accomplishments in Year Three**

To ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources across the network, California CASA centralized a range of services within its staff and administration. A total of \$3,900,000 is being used for this purpose in grant cycle three.

## **Community Engagement and Collaboration**

### **Resource Development and Distribution**

Local programs created and updated activity guides and resource guides for volunteers. A local program created a free app and website featuring local, state, and federal resources for volunteers, youth in foster care, and other stakeholders.

### **Staffing Enhancements**

Local programs have expanded their staffing to improve outreach, community engagement, service delivery, and sustainability. The presence of a male, bilingual community outreach coordinator at weekend community events has increased one program's visibility and strengthened its reputation as a community partner. A transition-age youth specialist has been able to deepen partnerships with organizations that provide housing, education, and life skills support for older youth. A local program created a community hub for youth, volunteers, court partners, and community organizations and hired community organizers for targeted recruitment efforts that led to 250 new volunteers across the county.

### **Community Partnerships**

Programs partnered with various other non-profit organizations providing complimentary services, for example, with food banks, Rotary Clubs, mental health providers, and educational institutions, to address food insecurity, the need for trauma-informed care, and needed academic support. Programs also partnered with faith-based groups, churches, and cultural coalitions to increase awareness, community involvement, and recruitment of volunteers.

### **Improved Access to Education**

Local programs have improved access to tutoring and financial aid and increased graduation support. They facilitated communication with attorneys, school liaisons, and social workers to advocate for the educational rights of children and youth.

### **Stability**

All local programs report that they have been better able to serve children in foster care. They are actively increasing volunteer recruitment efforts, enhancing outreach and training strategies, and utilizing technology to better manage caseloads and expand services. Since 2023, there has been a modest decrease in the number of children served statewide, which is due to several factors: the efforts of local programs to stabilize and professionalize their operations to set the stage for future growth; the difficulty in serving an increasing number of children placed out of county; and an increasing number of children in foster care with complex needs.

### **Organizational Capacity**

Each local CASA program completed an Organizational Capacity Evaluation in conjunction with its Pre-Assessment Tool submitted at the beginning of the grant funding for baseline data. Programs updated their evaluations in December 2023 and December 2024.

### **Staffing Optimization**

Stabilization funding allowed programs to offer more competitive salaries, invest in professional development, and improve workplace culture, which led to improved staff retention. To fill gaps, local programs hired temporary and specialized staff for tasks such as outreach coordination, management of volunteer recruitment, and coordination of community partnerships. Programs also implemented cross-training and succession planning for long-term sustainability.

### **Technology and Process Improvements**

To improve case management, local programs adopted management tools like Optima and CASAManager. They utilized cloud-based systems to streamline payroll, human resources, file management, and to reduce administrative burdens. Funding also allowed them to upgrade tablets and laptops for better efficiency.

### **Streamlined Training and Recruitment**

Volunteer participation in training increased with hybrid and online training opportunities. Data-driven outreach helped fill recruitment gaps. Standardized intake processes improved retention.

### **Enhanced Collaboration and Communication**

More structured meetings with social workers, judges, and partners improved communication and collaboration. Strengthened volunteer participation and external partnerships enhanced overall program effectiveness. Programs expanded collaboration with educational institutions, health providers, cultural organizations, and community groups, which strengthened the supports available to children and youth served by CASA volunteers.

### **Operational Restructuring**

Several local programs adjusted their workweek to boost productivity and morale. For smoother collaboration with county agencies, other local programs refined personnel and procedural policies.

### **Resource Allocation and Financial Management**

With guidance from California CASA, local programs conducted financial audits, automated their billing and grant tracking, and optimized fund allocation.

### **Specialized Services**

To improve support for youth in remote locations or on probation, some local programs created new staff positions, such as Distance Advocacy Specialist. Staff and volunteers at all local programs have access to translation services via LanguageLine Solutions. To meet their evolving needs, other programs expanded their in-house meeting spaces.

### **CASA Engagement Metrics**

Volunteer engagement metrics and advanced tracking systems for waitlists and recruitment have led to improvements in overall advocacy and service delivery.

## **Volunteer and Staff Support**

The professional staff and retained consultants at California CASA have enabled local programs to utilize centralized services in administration, human resources, and marketing. This has allowed programs to focus on supporting their volunteers, engaging in targeted recruitment, and improving staff onboarding and structured training.<sup>5</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In fiscal year 2024-2025, California CASA continued to centralize professional services for local programs in the areas of human resources, language translation, database operations, volunteer recruitment, and training for volunteers and staff. California CASA also continued to build upon its statewide volunteer recruitment gains and will analyze data for strategies to increase the likelihood that a volunteer inquiry will result in a successfully recruited and trained volunteer. Areas of planned growth include expanded juvenile justice services, support for local programs to execute their sustainable growth plans, and continued statewide in-person training for staff and volunteers.

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<sup>5</sup> Sharon Lawrence, CEO, California CASA Association, *Report to the Judicial Council on CASA Funding and Program Development*, Feb. 7, 2025, pp 5-6.

## **Appendix A**

### **Year Three Funding Allocations**

This table<sup>6</sup> lists the 44 local CASA programs and their grant award amounts, with the biggest award going to CASA of Los Angeles and the smallest to CASA of Butte, Glenn, Shasta, and Tehama Counties.

<b>County</b>	<b>CASA Organization</b>	<b>Total Award</b>
Alameda	Alameda County CASA	\$422,051
Amador, Calaveras	CASA of Amador and Calaveras Counties	\$61,957
Butte, Glenn, Shasta, Tehama	CASA of Butte, Glenn, Shasta, and Tehama Counties	\$42,454
Contra Costa	CASA of Contra Costa County	\$246,186
Del Norte	CASA of Del Norte	\$77,012
El Dorado	Child Advocates of El Dorado County	\$126,081
Fresno, Madera	CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties	\$556,814
Humboldt	CASA of Humboldt	\$250,930
Imperial	CASA of Imperial County	\$212,537
Inyo, Mono	CASA of the Eastern Sierra	\$98,594
Kern	CASA of Kern County	\$356,852
Kings	CASA of Kings County	\$138,141
Lassen	CASA of Lassen Family Services	\$85,123
Los Angeles	CASA of Los Angeles	\$2,439,118
Marin	Marin CASA	\$356,566
Mariposa	CASA of Mariposa County	\$101,604
Mendocino, Lake	CASA of Mendocino and Lake Counties	\$70,716
Merced	CASA of Merced County	\$85,085
Modoc	Modoc CASA	\$72,848
Monterey	CASA of Monterey County	\$449,203
Napa	Napa CASA	\$53,999

<sup>6</sup> California CASA Association, Memorandum to the Judicial Council, Center for Families, Children, and the Courts, re: Deliverable #5, Report to the Judicial Council on CASA Funding and Program Development (Feb. 7, 2025).

<b>County</b>	<b>CASA Organization</b>	<b>Total Award</b>
Nevada	Child Advocates of Nevada County	\$60,100
Orange	CASA of Orange County	\$2,069,038
Placer, Yuba	Child Advocates of Placer County (now serving Yuba)	\$517,626
Plumas	Plumas CASA	\$95,467
Riverside	Voices for Children Riverside	\$785,680
Sacramento	CASA Sacramento	\$524,414
San Benito	CASA of San Benito County	\$156,671
San Bernardino	CASA of San Bernardino County	\$276,330
San Diego	Voices for Children San Diego	\$726,608
San Francisco	San Francisco CASA	\$575,810
San Joaquin	CASA of San Joaquin County	\$219,020
San Luis Obispo	CASA of San Luis Obispo County	\$276,766
San Mateo	CASA of San Mateo County	\$323,066
Santa Barbara	CASA of Santa Barbara County	\$330,959
Santa Clara	Child Advocates of Silicon Valley	\$785,216
Santa Cruz	CASA of Santa Cruz County	\$425,091
Siskiyou	CASA of Siskiyou County	\$101,616
Solano	CASA of Solano County	\$514,145
Sonoma	CASA of Sonoma County	\$155,812
Stanislaus	CASA of Stanislaus County	\$146,032
Tulare	CASA of Tulare County	\$309,912
Ventura	CASA of Ventura County	\$201,539
Yolo	Yolo County CASA	\$119,211

Total Awarded: 44 Local CASA Programs, Year Three: \$16,000,000