



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 26-167

For business meeting on October 15–16, 2026

Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2026–27 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association

Judicial Council Report Details

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Effective Date

October 16, 2026

Recommended by

Family and Juvenile Law Advisory
Committee

Hon. Tari L. Cody, Cochair

Hon. Stephanie E. Hulsey, Cochair

Date of Report

August 28, 2026

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Report Type

Action Required

Executive Summary

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends approving the allocation of \$19.9 million in Court Appointed Special Advocate program grant funding, included in the Budget Act of 2026, to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association for fiscal year 2026–27. The funding supports local court-appointed special advocate programs that recruit and train volunteers appointed by judicial officers to provide advocacy for children under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court. The funding also supports the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association's initiatives for statewide volunteer recruitment, shared resources and infrastructure, and training.

Recommendation

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective October 16, 2026:

1. Allocate \$19.9 million in General Fund appropriations for the California Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association for fiscal year 2026–27 as specified by the Budget Act of 2026 (Assem. Bill 109; Stats. 2026, ch. 19) to:
 - a. Provide \$16 million in funding to local CASA programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing; and
 - b. Provide \$3.9 million to be used statewide for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of training curriculum, and collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the required report to the Legislature, and other uses to expand CASA services in the state; and
2. Direct the California CASA Association to:
 - a. Allocate \$16 million as described in recommendation 1a to local CASA programs using an equitable funding methodology based on local CASA program needs; and
 - b. Collect, compile, and submit data to the Judicial Council, as determined in collaboration with Judicial Council program staff, on program implementation and outcomes to support the required report to the Legislature and other uses to expand CASA services in the state.

The text of the Budget Act of 2026 is provided at Link A; for the relevant provisions, see section 2.00, item 0250-101-0932, provisions 28–32.

Relevant Previous Council Action

Legislation (Assem. Bill 4445; Stats. 1988, ch. 723) amended Welfare and Institutions Code section 100 et seq. (see Link B) to require the Judicial Council to administer a CASA grant program and maintain guidelines for local CASA programs. These CASA programs (1) assist abused and neglected children who are the subject of judicial proceedings, and (2) train and supervise CASA volunteers at the direction of their local juvenile court in accordance with California Rules of Court, rule 5.655 (see Link C).

The Budget Act of 2022 (Sen. Bill 154; Stats. 2022, ch. 43)¹ included \$60 million in one-time Judicial Council CASA grant funding to be allocated to the California CASA Association for support of CASA programs across the state. The act specified that “\$48,000,000 shall be allocated to the California [CASA] Association to provide funding to the local court-appointed

¹ Section 2.00, item 0250-101-0932, provisions 31–34.

special advocate (CASA) programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing” and

\$12,000,000 shall be allocated to the California [CASA] Association to be used statewide for 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 court-appointed special advocate (CASA) services in the state.²

The Judicial Council allocated the \$20 million in General Fund appropriated to the California CASA Association in the Budget Act of 2022 at its meeting on September 20, 2022,³ the \$20 million appropriated in the Budget Act of 2023 at its meeting on September 19, 2023,⁴ and the \$20 million in General Fund appropriated to the California CASA Association in the Budget Act of 2024 at its meeting on September 20, 2024.⁵

Staff for the Judicial Council’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts submitted reports to the Legislature describing funding allocations and program development for fiscal year (FY) 2022–23,⁶ FY 2023–24,⁷ and FY 2024–25⁸ in accordance with the requirements stated in the Budget Act.

Analysis/Rationale

A CASA program is a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes 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. Forty-five programs in 52 counties serve approximately 10,844 children with 7,400 trained volunteers.

Following the Budget Act of 2022, which appropriated a total of \$60 million one-time General Fund to the California CASA Association for the support of local CASA programs in

² *Id.*, provisions 31 and 32.

³ 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).

⁴ 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).

⁵ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., [*Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2024–25 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Association*](#) (Aug. 15, 2024).

⁶ 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).

⁷ 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).

⁸ Judicial Council of Cal., [*Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year Three*](#) (July 1, 2025).

FY 2022–23, FY 2023–24, and FY 2024–25, the Budget Act of 2026 appropriated a total of \$19.9 million one-time General Fund to the California CASA Association to provide funding to the local CASA programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing. This report recommends allocation of the FY 2026–27 appropriation included in the Budget Act of 2026.

The appropriation specifies that for FY 2026–27, “\$16 million shall be allocated ... to provide funding to the local [CASA] programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing,” and “\$4,000,000 shall be allocated to the California [CASA] Association to be used statewide for 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,” and that “[t]he Judicial Council shall annually report to the Legislature on the court-appointed special advocate (CASA) program implementation and outcomes.” (See Link A, provisions 28, 29, and 31.)⁹

The appropriated \$19.9 million shall be available for expenditure for an encumbrance period of two years, ending June 30, 2028. The Judicial Council’s initial report shall be due on July 1, 2027, and shall describe funding allocations and program development. (See Link A, provisions 30 and 31.)

Policy implications

The committee has no policy implications to present this fiscal year.

Comments

Public comments were not solicited for this proposal because the recommendation is within the Judicial Council’s purview to approve without circulation.

Alternatives considered

No alternatives were considered by the committee because the funding is allocated as directed by the Budget Act.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

There are no fiscal or operational impacts.

Attachments and Links

1. Link A: [Budget Act of 2026](#) (Assem. Bill 109)
2. Link B: [Welf. & Inst. Code, § 100 et seq.](#)
3. Link C: [Cal. Rules of Court, rule 5.655](#)

⁹ To support the Judicial Council’s administrative costs for implementing the development of these programs, the appropriation specifies the Controller to transfer \$100,000 of the total appropriation to the Judicial Council, upon approval of the Administrative Director. (See Link A, provision 32.)