**VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:** Court Appointed Special Advocate

**Reports To:** CASA Supervisor

**MISSION OF PROGRAM**

The mission of Crime Victim Services Court Appointed Special Advocate / Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) Program is to advocate for the best interest of abused, neglected, and dependent children to the courts with continuously trained volunteers who focus on investigation / assessment, relationships, and reports so each child can have a safe and permanent home.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

Volunteers shall be over the age of 21 with a high school diploma/GED, hold a valid driver’s license, and will successfully complete screening requirements which include a written application, personal interview, reference and criminal background investigation.

**REQUIRED SKILLS**

Ability to keep all clients and court information confidential;

Ability to communicate effectively, verbally and in writing;

Ability to respect and relate to people from diverse backgrounds in a variety of settings;

Ability to transport oneself to a variety of locations;

Ability to maintain objectivity and composure when confronted with conflict;

Ability to gather and record factual information in a timely manner.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

* A CASA volunteer respects a child’s inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe and permanent environment.
* 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 in their placement, a minimum of once a month and submits monthly activity sheets in a timely manner.
* 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/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 Children 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 roles and responsibilities of a CASA volunteer. As part of their training, a CASA volunteer also observes court proceedings.
* A CASA volunteer completes a minimum of 12 hours of in-service training each calendar year.

**TIME COMMITMENT**

Once assigned to a case, a CASA volunteer makes a commitment to the case until it is closed (typically two years or less). We expect that the CASA will meet with the child/ren a minimum of once a month.

**SUPERVISOR**

A CASA Supervisor will be assigned to each CASA Volunteer upon appointment to a case.