



CASA of Monterey County

## ADVOCATE VOLUNTEER DESCRIPTION

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Monterey County are trained community volunteers who are appointed to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the Juvenile Superior Court of Monterey County. An advocate is a caring adult who works for the best interest of a child and reports those interests to the court.

A processing fee of approximately **\$55-\$60** (subject to change) is required to cover costs of the volunteer background check. We ask that our volunteers cover the cost of this fee.

### **PROGRAM GOALS/PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- Investigate each case. Report findings and observations, make recommendations to the court.
- Facilitate any and all services in the best interest of the child as ordered by the court.
- Advocate for the best interest of a child involved in judicial proceedings.
- Monitor each case until the court has determined the role of CASA has been fulfilled.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS:**

- Advocates are required to attend 35-40 hours of pre-service training.
- Advocates follow program guidelines established by National CASA, W&I Code, and CA Rule of Court.
- Advocates are screened through pre- and post-training interviews, reference checks, background checks (which include FBI, CACI, Social Security number verification, DOJ, and National Sex Offender registry), as well as through the minimally required 35 hours of training.

### **THE CASA's RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **1. Investigation and review of each case:**

- Speak with the child and relevant adults.
- Review appropriate records and reports.
- Observe the child and significant others.

#### **2. Facilitate, with the interested parties, appropriate services for each case:**

- Research, review, and recommend services and providers.
- Participate in the development of an appropriate service plan.

#### **3. Report and advocate findings to the court:**

- Provide a written report containing factual information.
- Attend court hearings and case conferences concerning the child.
- Collect and record the data as required by the program.

**4. Monitor each case to ensure a child's best interest is represented:**

- Attend all court hearings to see that all relevant facts are presented.
- Attend appropriate interagency meetings regarding the child.
- Consult regularly (minimally once monthly) with the Advocate Supervisor concerning an assigned case and develop a goal plan which is reviewed and updated as needed.

**SKILLS / ABILITIES**

- Maintain complete confidentiality of all client and court information.
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- Respect and relate to people from various backgrounds (economic, cultural, etc.).
- Ability to transport self and child to a variety of locations.
- Ability to maintain objectivity, and gather and record factual information accurately.

**TIME COMMITMENT**

- Advocates are required to make a minimum 18 month commitment to the program.
- Advocates should anticipate spending an average of 12-16 hours a month on each case.

**TRAINING**

- Advocates are required to complete a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education annually.
- Advocates work under direct supervision of program staff and submit required documentation to assigned supervisor.