



BECOME AN ADVOCATE

To help us find qualified volunteers, and to help you decide if you wish to become an advocate, we follow a specific selection and screening process. Read on to see if becoming a CASA is for you.

OUR PROGRAM

OUR GOAL

The goal of CASA of Ucp'Dgpkq County is to prevent abused, neglected and abandoned children from becoming lost in the Juvenile Court system. We work carefully to match each CASA Volunteer with a child to ensure that child's best interest is served.

The volunteer has four essential roles:

1. Represent the child's voice in court.
2. Assist the Court by investigating each case and reporting their findings and recommendations.
3. Monitor the progress of the case as it moves through the system to reduce judicial delays and continuances.
4. Facilitate the services needed to maintain the active and positive growth of the child

OUR PROCESS

CASA volunteers are unique in providing information not usually available to the Court. Because of the enormous number of cases filed in Juvenile Court and dwindling resources to adequately investigate cases, judges are often compelled to make decisions based on less than complete or objective data. A CASA's objective, unbiased recommendation in the best interest of the child is an invaluable aid to the judge. Once CASA of Ucp'Dgpkq County receives a referral from the Judge, the case work begins:

1. The CASA selected reviews the case information and consults with the involved professionals and individuals involved in that child's life.
2. The CASA prepares a court report with their evaluations and recommendations for the child, prior to court hearings.
3. The Juvenile Court Judge reads and considers the CASA report along with the social worker's report prior to making a decision.
4. The CASA monitors the progress of the case.

SCREENING AND SELECTION PROCESS

CASA of Monterey County Volunteer Advocates must meet the following qualifications:

- ◆ Must be at least 21 years of age
- ◆ Pass screening requirements
- ◆ Make an eighteen month commitment

Advocates must demonstrate ability to:

- ◆ Keep all client and court information confidential
- ◆ Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
- ◆ Respect and relate to people from various backgrounds and lifestyles (economic, cultural, "" educational, etc.) in a variety of settings
- ◆ Transport oneself to a variety of locations
- ◆ Deal with hostility, anger, and other emotional attitudes
- ◆ Maintain objectivity
- ◆ Gather and accurately record factual information
- ◆ Demonstrate sound judgment and character

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INITIAL INQUIRY

Contact CASA of Monterey County to express your interest. One of our staff will speak with you to answer your questions and invite you to join us at an informational mixer (held monthly).

APPLICATION

Each potential CASA volunteer must complete a written application. Once the application is accepted, an interview will be scheduled.

◆ Pre-Training Interview

The applicant will be interviewed by program staff to determine the applicant's willingness, ability, and appropriateness to perform the roles and duties of a CASA. Qualified applicants will be invited to attend the next training program.

◆ Applicants who are accepted into training must submit the following:

1. DOJ, FBI and CACI background checks
2. DMV driving record printout (applicant will be enrolled in the DMV's automatic update program)
3. Three positive personal references
4. Proof of auto liability coverage (must be updated whenever coverage expires)
5. Proof of current driver's license

REFERENCES

Each applicant must provide five references regarding the character, competence and reliability of the applicant, and suitability for assuming the role of a CASA volunteer.

TRAINING OF CASA VOLUNTEERS

Through a comprehensive 36-hour training program volunteers are equipped with the necessary

skills and information to serve as a voice for the child. The areas covered in the training include:

1. Introducing the CASA Volunteer Role
2. Introducing the Law, CPS & The Court
3. Developing Cultural Competence
4. Understanding Families
5. Understanding Children
6. Communicating as a CASA Volunteer
7. Gathering Information
8. Reporting & Monitoring
9. Mandated Court Reporting
10. Runaways and Connectedness
11. Conflict Resolution
12. Impacts of Trauma
13. Permanency Planning
14. The CASA Concept
15. Goal Setting & Case Planning
16. Affects of Mental Illness
17. Affects of Substance Abuse
18. Attachment Theory
19. Disproportionality
20. Community Resources
21. Self-Care for Volunteers

- ◆ Each trainee will observe one afternoon session of juvenile court.
- ◆ A CASA training manual will be provided to each trainee.
- ◆ Trainees must attend all training sessions. Missed sessions must be made up at the first available opportunity. Trainees who have missed no more than three sessions may be sworn in with their class but may not be assigned a case until all missed sessions have been made up.
- ◆ Upon completion of training, candidates will participate with staff for a post-training interview. The purpose of this interview is to allow trainees to evaluate the training and make suggestions to strengthen future training, as well as to allow the program staff to terminate a trainee who has not successfully completed this screening process.

CONTACT

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