

ADVOCATE JOB DESCRIPTION

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

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 best interest of a child involved in judicial proceedings.
- Monitor each case until the court has determined the role of CASA has been fulfilled

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 concerning the child and case conferences concerning the child
- Record and collect the data as required by the Judicial Council of California (AOC)

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
- Stimulate the community and public systems into action
- Consult regularly with the advocate coordinator concerning an assigned case and develop a CASA case plan and review progress and reports.

REQUIRED SKILLS / ABILITIES

- Keep all client and court information confidential
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Respect and relate to people from various backgrounds (economic, cultural, etc.)
- Ability to transport self to a variety of locations
- Ability to deal with hostility, anger and other emotional attitudes
- Ability to maintain objectivity
- Ability to gather and record factual information accurately.

TRAINING

- Advocates are required to attend 36 hours of pre-service training
- Advocates follow guidelines established by the National CASA Association and W&I Code Rule 1424
- Advocates will attend 12 hours of in-service training and receive direct supervision from program staff
- Advocates will be screened through a pre-training interview, a reference check, fingerprinting for a FBI and DOJ background check as well as through the Megan's Law sex offender database

TIME COMMITMENT

- Advocates are required to commit themselves to the program for eighteen months
- Advocates are expected to be available for case assignment
- Advocates should expect to spend an average of 2 to 4 hours a week on each case.