

HANOVER COUNTY
Department of Community Resources
P.O. Box 470
Hanover, VA 23069



Hanover County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteer Job Description

The CASA Volunteer's role is one of a Friend of the Court and that of impartial observer. The CASA Volunteer functions objectively and independently as an information gatherer and monitor while working closely with the child's Guardian ad Litem. The CASA Volunteer also submits a written report to the court and may testify, if called as a witness.

In order to effectively advocate for the children to whom he/she is assigned, the CASA Volunteer must gather all of the facts of the case, recommend a course of action to the court, explain the court's finding to the child, facilitate the resolution of the problems, and monitor progress toward established goals. The court order assigning a CASA Volunteer to a case allows him/her access to the child's records.

Qualifications of a CASA Volunteer:

1. Interest in children, their rights and special needs.
2. Time to devote to training sessions, to information gathering, and to case monitoring (one year commitment, usually averaging five to ten hours a month).
3. Ability to work with children, family members, and professionals using diplomacy, empathy, and basic communication skills.
4. Ability to communicate verbally and in writing, making verbal and written reports to the court, to program staff, and to other persons as needed.
5. At least 21 years of age and pass both Criminal and Child Protective Service Central Registry checks.
6. Ability to maintain objectivity while dealing with families and children in crisis.

7. Ability to respect and relate to people from diverse backgrounds in a variety of settings.
8. Ability to engage in supervision with program staff.

Responsibilities of a CASA Volunteer:

1. Attend basic training sessions, approximately 40 hours in length.
2. Maintain strict confidentiality.
3. Attend in-service training sessions on an ongoing basis, six to eight per year, totaling a minimum of 12 hours per year.
4. After basic training, serve at least one child until a permanent plan has been implemented, often a period of one year.
5. Keep program staff informed of all activities related to assigned case and confer with him/her periodically.
6. Prepare a written report stating the factual information gathered by the CASA, to include recommendations for needed services and for the temporary or permanent placement of the child.
 - a. In gathering comprehensive information for the report, the volunteer shall review written records pertinent to the case as well as interview appropriate parties and participants.
 - b. The volunteer will maintain complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child's circumstances. At the disposition of the case, the volunteer will submit all case file material to the CASA office to be destroyed.
 - c. The CASA report must be submitted to program staff for review seven days prior to the court hearing and subsequently given to the court three days before the same hearing.
7. Be prepared to appear in court and to testify if required.
8. Monitor the progress made toward the prescribed orders of the court.
9. Determine whether appropriate services, including reasonable efforts, are being provided to the child and family. Alert the court of any significant discrepancies regarding the child's placement.

10. Advocate for the child's best interest in the community by interacting with mental health, educational and other community systems to assure that the child's needs in these areas are met.
11. Be available to reappear in court for review hearings until a final disposition is rendered.
12. Should the CASA find it necessary to withdraw from a case prior to dismissal of the matter, he/she must contact program staff and sign a withdrawal form. Any active case files must be returned to the CASA office.