New Jersey Court Appointed Special Advocate Network Report to the Governor’s office, the Judiciary, the Department of Children and Families, and the Legislature.
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Executive Summary

*CASA volunteer advocates work to ensure the safety and well-being of New Jersey’s most vulnerable citizens – abused and neglected children and youth in out-of-home placement.*

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of New Jersey serves and supports a statewide network of CASA programs, with the goal of bringing CASA advocacy to all children in foster care. CASA is a model “public-private partnership” that helps the state better protect abused and neglected children and, in doing so, reduces the state’s cost of caring for those children. CASA programs are authorized by N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-92 to provide needed one-on-one advocacy and monitoring for children removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. As such, we perform a critical state function for the benefit of New Jersey’s most vulnerable citizens – helping the Department of Children and Families (DCF) ensure the safety, well-being, and permanency of these children while assisting the Judiciary in making the best decisions possible for them.

- CASA programs exist in all 21 counties in New Jersey.
- CASA had nearly 1,800 volunteer advocates serving children across our state, up from just 300 in 2000.
- Those ~1,800 volunteers advocated for more than 3,660 children in FY16.
- The value of donated CASA services statewide comes to over $5,178,000 dollars a year.
- Through enabling legislation, CASA is the only entity authorized by State Statute to utilize trained volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children in placement.
- CASA programs received a quarter of our funding from the State Budget, yet our services save the State of New Jersey more than $7 million a year.

This document uses data supplied by the local Affiliate CASA Programs in New Jersey to provide a snapshot of various demographics, statistics, and unaudited financials for the CASA Network in New Jersey for fiscal year 2016.

Funding Sources
- Of the approximately $7.9M received by CASA Programs in FY16, 51% came from non-government sources while government funding (26% state and 23% federal) accounted for 49% of funding.

Children Served
- CASA programs served a record 3,660 children and closed 1,006 cases due primarily to permanency.
- The re-entry rate for children served by CASA was just 3.4%.
- Just over half (51%) of the children served were female and 49% were male.
- More than 80% of the children served were under the age of 16.
- Caucasian children comprised the largest racial group of children served (44%), followed by African American (40%). The remainder comprised multi-racial and other (16%) children.

Volunteer Advocates
- There were 1,796 volunteer advocates assigned to cases statewide in FY16.
• The majority of volunteer advocates were female (86%), White (75%), and over the age of 49 (64%).

**Trustees**

• As of June 30, 2016, there were 193 trustees on volunteer boards working on behalf of the children in New Jersey.

**Affiliate Staff**

• Of the 112 employees working at Affiliate CASA programs in New Jersey, 70 are full-time.
• The overwhelming majority are female (93%) and White (76%).
• A large majority of staff (91%) are either college graduates or attended a post-graduate program.

**CASA of New Jersey**

• CASA of NJ provides funding, training, and one-on-one technical support for the New Jersey CASA network as well as a forum for affiliate CASA programs to share resources, market their programs collaboratively, improve their outcomes, and unify CASA’s voice on behalf of children in placement.
Part 1: Funding Sources

CASA Funding From All Sources

Funding information shown in this report includes unaudited data as reported by the CASA network. While all programs do provide their audit results to CASA of NJ, audited information from all CASA programs was unavailable as of the date of this report.

**Major Funding Sources Supporting New Jersey’s CASA Network:**

- 23% Federal
- 26% State*
- 51% Non-Government

The table below shows the amount of funding, by funding source, for FY2014 through FY2016. The primary area for funding growth has been in the unrestricted/fundraising category. This growth has helped stabilize the network and added much needed advocacy for children and assistance to the judicial and child welfare systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>$1,435,000</td>
<td>$2,175,181</td>
<td>$2,050,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>$1,418,021</td>
<td>$1,413,656</td>
<td>$1,784,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>$221,512</td>
<td>$193,116</td>
<td>$231,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted/Fundraising</td>
<td>$2,017,513</td>
<td>$2,124,177</td>
<td>$2,857,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>$1,029,040</td>
<td>$1,063,111</td>
<td>$752,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Organizations</td>
<td>$214,966</td>
<td>$118,788</td>
<td>$194,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$290,214</td>
<td>$311,822</td>
<td>$24,735</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reflects all state funding and state grants flowing to all CASA programs as well as State Budget Funding of $2M.
Non-Government Funding

The pie chart below demonstrates that, in addition to funding from charitable foundations, non-government sources of funding to CASA programs in FY2016 included events, community organization and corporate support, major donor support, and other initiatives developed by CASA programs to sustain and grow their organizations.

51% of the funding came from non-government sources, and breaks down as follows:

- 66% Unrestricted/ Fundraising
- 17% Foundations
- 7% In-Kind & Other Donations*
- 5% Corporations
- 4% Community Service Organizations
- 1% Other

*Does not include volunteer hours or other volunteer advocate donated expenses such as mileage.
Part 2: Children Served

Number of Children Served

*CASA volunteers throughout New Jersey advocated for a record 3,660 children in FY16. According to the Administrative Office of the Courts, there were 12,872 children in care in New Jersey during FY16. This means that CASA Programs served 28% -- almost one-third -- of New Jersey’s children in care last year.*

Re–entry Rate of Children Served

During the FY16 tracking year (wherein DCF tracked children who found permanency through reunification, relative placement, or kinship guardianship during FY15), only 3.4% of children served by CASA Programs re-entered out-of-home placement within one year. This can be compared to 4.7% re-entry rate during the FY15 tracking year. By contrast, the most recent report from the DCF Federal Monitor cites a re-entry rate for all DCF cases statewide of 11.5%.

Demographics of Children Served

*By Gender*

The children served by CASA Programs in FY16 were 49% male and 51% female.

*By Reason of Case Closure*

Of the 1,006 children whose cases were closed in FY16, 42% were reunified with their parent(s), 25% were adopted, 20% were placed with a relative or guardian, and 9% aged out or went into independent living.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Case Closure</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*By Time in Care*

Of the 1,006 children whose cases were closed in FY16, 14% had been in care for less than 12 months; 32% between 12 – 23 months; 23% between 24 – 35 months and 31% 36 months or longer.
By Age

The majority (64.4%) of the children served in FY16 were under the age of 12, while 17% were between 12 – 15 years of age and 18.6 % were over the age of 16.

By Race

White/Caucasian children comprised the largest racial group of children served (44%). The next largest racial group advocated for was Black/African American children (40%) followed by Multi-Racial 9%. All other races -- Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native -- made up 2% of the children served.
Part 3: Volunteer Advocates

Number of Volunteer Advocates

There were 1,796 volunteer advocates assigned to help protect the best interests of children in FY16. The demographics of those advocates are as follows:

By Gender

The majority of volunteer advocates (86%) are Female, with Male advocates comprising 14% of the total number.

By Age

More than three fourths -- or 79% -- of CASA volunteer advocates are 40 years old or older, and more than half (64%) are over the age of 50.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of CASA Volunteer Advocates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Race

The majority of CASA volunteer advocates are White (75%). The next largest racial group of volunteer advocates are Black or African American (16%), and 3% are of unknown race. In the chart below, “other” races include Asia, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, equaling 6%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race of CASA Volunteer Advocates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Education

New Jersey’s volunteer advocates are very well educated. Across the state, 74% of the volunteer advocates have either a college degree (44%) or advanced coursework (30%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level of CASA Volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By Employment Status
The employment status of volunteer advocates is somewhat varied. However, almost half (47%) are employed either full-or part-time.
Part 4: Trustees

Number of Trustees

As of June 30, 2016, there were 193 Trustees on volunteer Boards (including the CASA of Middlesex Advisory Committee) supporting CASA Programs throughout New Jersey.

By Gender

In terms of gender, Trustees are almost equally represented, with 91 males and 102 females.

By Race

In terms of race, 86% of CASA Trustees are White.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race of CASA Trustees</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 5: Affiliate Staff

Number of Employees
In FY16, there were 112 CASA employees throughout the Affiliate Network, up from 109 employees in FY15.

By Status and Position
Of the 112 employees:
- More than two-thirds (71%) are full-time employees and 29% are part-time employees.
- 14 are Executive / Program Directors
- 5 are Associate Directors
- 55 are either Senior Case Supervisors (14) or Case Supervisors (41)
- The remaining 38 employees work in Fund Development, Community Outreach, Volunteer Recruitment and Training, and/or Office Management

By Gender
The overwhelming majority of CASA staff members are female (87%).

By Race
In terms of race, more than three quarters (83%) of CASA employees are White.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race of CASA Staff</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Other / Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Education
The vast majority of CASA staff across the state (91%) are college graduates, and nearly half (39%) have at least some post-graduate education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education of CASA Staff</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>College Graduate</th>
<th>Post-Graduate</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 6: CASA of New Jersey

CASA of New Jersey supports the statewide network of local CASA Affiliates, primarily through funding, training, public education, and technical assistance. This support is designed to help achieve our mission of providing all children in New Jersey who have been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect with a qualified, well-trained Court Appointed Special Advocate. Below is a summary of our accomplishments during Fiscal Year 2016.

Funding

State Funding
After months of legislative meetings, CASA’s appropriation was restored to two million dollars in the FY17 State Budget.

Grants for Implementation of Peer Coordinator Growth Model
During FY16, CASA of New Jersey provided funding to five local CASA programs serving nine counties to help them develop and implement the Peer Coordinator Model. The Peer Coordinator (PC) Model entails training experienced volunteer advocates to take on the role of coaching and supporting volunteer advocates working one-on-one with children removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. CASA programs that implement this model can reach more children while also recognizing the expertise of experienced volunteer advocates and ensuring that all volunteer advocates benefit from the most supportive environment possible. Traditionally, one staff member coaches and monitors a large group of volunteer advocates, who each take one or occasionally two cases at a time. Under the PC Model, these staff members would instead oversee a smaller group of Peer Coordinators, who would in
turn work directly with a cohort of 5-10 volunteer advocates. As such, the PC Model allows CASA programs to serve more children and maximize resources by increasing staff capacity.

Training

**Peer Coordinator Training**

During the 2016 fiscal year, CASA of New Jersey developed a training curriculum for Peer Coordinators along with a Peer Coordinator Training Manual. The Peer Coordinator Training was piloted in two counties and has been shared with all of the CASA programs statewide.

**Medical Advocacy Training**

In FY16, CASA of New Jersey worked with key stakeholders to develop a Medical Advocacy Training Curriculum for CASA volunteer advocates statewide. With critical input from high-level staff at the Office of Child and Family Health in the Department of Children and Families and the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center School of Nursing at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, we developed a curriculum that will enable every local CASA program to help ensure that children receive any and all healthcare needed to keep them in optimal health while in out-of-home placement. CASA of New Jersey will be piloting the training in FY17 and presenting the curriculum to all local CASA programs via a Train-the-Trainer day.

**Winter Forum**

On January 30, 2017, CASA of New Jersey held a network-wide Winter Forum for all staff, trustees, and volunteer advocates in every CASA program. Over 130 members of the CASA network, representing every local CASA program in New Jersey, attended the event. Highlights included:

- An address from New Jersey’s Administrative Director of the Courts, Judge Glenn Grant, stressing the importance of CASA advocacy not only to children in care, but to the Judiciary which works to protect their best interests.
- An opportunity to honor Senate President Stephen Sweeney and Senator Anthony Bucco for their support of CASA programs both locally and statewide.
- Keynote Speaker Sally Erny, Chief Program Officer at the National CASA Association, who discussed program growth and the need to serve greater numbers of children in care across the state.
- A presentation from the Executive Director of CASA of Atlantic & Cape May Counties on their successful pilot of the Peer Coordinator Model and how that Model is helping significantly greater numbers of children in our most southern counties.
Public Education

**Statewide Collaboration to Improve Public Awareness**
In FY16, CASA of New Jersey began a years-long effort to improve public awareness across New Jersey about CASA and the children that CASA serves statewide. Beginning with a survey of local CASA programs, and continuing through the remainder of the fiscal year, CASA of New Jersey and local CASA programs began developing a Communications Plan. The goal is to achieve statewide branding and marketing targeted toward volunteer recruitment as well as public education regarding the population that we serve. We anticipate that the Plan, which will include both online outreach and social media as well as traditional media, will be completed in the 2017 fiscal year.

**Statewide Executive and Legislative Branch Relations**
In April of FY16, CASA of New Jersey procured a Governor’s Proclamation declaring April 1 to be CASA Child Advocacy Day across the state.

During FY16, CASA of New Jersey facilitated 23 meetings and/or conference calls with State Legislative offices, representing 17 of New Jersey’s 21 counties.

**Thought Leadership in Issues Relating to Child Abuse and Neglect**
CASA of NJ’s Executive Director and Associate Director played key roles as part of leadership on the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect and its Staffing and Outcome Review Committee, Protection Committee, and Human Trafficking Work Group.

CASA of NJ staff also represented the CASA network on the State Judiciary’s Children in Court Improvement Committee as well as various workgroups looking at youth participation in court proceedings and visitation between parents and children and placement.

**Continuous Quality Improvement**
During FY16, CASA of New Jersey conducted a comprehensive Quality Review and Site Visit at four local CASA programs, serving children in Bergen, Essex, Ocean, and Monmouth Counties. The quality review process, first piloted in FY15, was developed in collaboration with the CASA network in order to meet the mandates of revised State Judiciary Standards. Pursuant to the process, all New Jersey CASA programs will be reviewed on a three-year cycle. Combining quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques, this represents a collaborative process designed to ascertain and address strengths, opportunities for growth, and areas needing improvement in accordance with National and State Standards.
Technical Assistance

In addition to fielding questions on a daily basis regarding a breadth of topics, CASA of NJ also provided individualized affiliate training on topics such as Governance, Board Roles and Responsibilities, and Legal and Fiduciary Duties; Outcome Measurement; additional service models such as *The Peer Coordinator Model*; Fund Development; and Fiscal Management.

CASA of New Jersey would like to thank all of our stakeholders in the child welfare system, as well as the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches for their support. The commitment and caring of these stakeholders has enabled Affiliated CASA Programs throughout New Jersey to leverage the dedication and hard work of Volunteer Advocates to improve the lives of our state’s most vulnerable children.

If you have any questions regarding the information provided, please feel free to contact the CASA of New Jersey office at 609-695-9400.