CHANGE A CHILD’S STORY.™
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Executive Summary

*CASA volunteers work to ensure the safety and well-being of New Jersey’s most vulnerable citizens – abused and neglected children and youth in foster care and other out-of-home placements.*

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of New Jersey serves and supports a statewide network of CASA programs. Our goal is to bring CASA advocacy to every child in foster care or other out-of-home placement. CASA is a model “public-private partnership” which 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. We help the Department of Children and Families (DCF) ensure the safety, well-being, and permanency of these children, and assist the Judiciary in making the best decisions possible for them.

- CASA programs operate in all 21 counties in New Jersey.
- CASA had a total of 2,264 volunteers across the state in Fiscal Year 2019. Of those volunteers, 2,091 were assigned to children.
- Those 2,091 volunteers advocated for a record 4,035 children in Fiscal Year 2019.
- The value of donated CASA services statewide comes to over $6.8 million 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 almost a quarter of their funding from the State Budget, yet our services save the state more than $8 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 the Fiscal Year 2019 (hereinafter, FY19).

**Funding Sources**

- Of all of the funding received by CASA Programs in FY19, 42% came from private, non-government sources while government funding (24% state and 34% federal) accounted for 58% of funding.

**Children Served**

- CASA programs provided advocacy services for a record number of children – 4,035 – and closed 1,323 of their cases.
- The re-entry rate for children served by CASA was 2.78%.
- Half of the children served by CASA programs were female and half were male.
- In FY19, 81% of the children served by CASA were under the age of 16.
- Caucasian children comprised the largest racial group of children served (38%), followed by African American (36%). The remainder of the children served were primarily multi-racial (12%) children.

Advocates
- There were a total of 2,264 advocates in FY19 and 2,091 advocates were assigned to cases statewide.
- The majority of Advocates were female (86%), Caucasian (78%), and over the age of 49 (66%).
- Over 77% of Advocates are college graduates or attended a post-graduate program.

Trustees
- As of June 30, 2019, there were 193 trustees on volunteer boards of trustees working on behalf of the children in New Jersey.

Affiliate Staff
- Of the 144 employees working at Affiliate CASA programs in New Jersey, 110 are full-time.
- The majority of employees are female (84%) and Caucasian (76%).
- The majority of staff (92%) are either college graduates or attended a post-graduate program.

CASA of New Jersey
- CASA of New Jersey supports the statewide network affiliate CASA programs, primarily through training, pass-through funding, capacity building, continuous quality improvement, community outreach and education, collective impact, and one-on-one technical support. It also provides a forum for affiliate CASA programs to share resources, to collaborate on marketing their programs, improve their outcomes, and unify CASA’s voice on behalf of children in foster care and other out-of-home placements.
Part 1: Funding Sources

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

CASA Funding from All Sources

CASA programs across New Jersey raised over $10.5 million in FY19 to support operations and provide service to children.

Major Funding Sources Supporting New Jersey’s CASA Network:

- 34% Federal
- 24% State
- 42% Non-Government

The table below shows the amount of funding, by funding source, for FY16 through FY19. The primary area for funding growth has been in the federal category through Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants. Over the past four fiscal years, funds have increased by nearly $1.56 million, contributing significantly to the sustainability of advocacy services to children.
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 FY19 included fundraising events, community organization and corporate support, major donor support, and other initiatives developed by CASA programs to sustain and grow their organizations.

42% of the funding came from non-government sources, and breaks down as follows:

- 71% Unrestricted/Fundraising
- 22% Charitable Foundations
- 4% Corporations
- 2% Community Service Organizations
- 1% Other

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

Number of Children Served

CASA volunteers in New Jersey advocated for 4,035 children in FY19. According to statistics from the Administrative Office of the Courts, there were 9,595 children in foster care and other out-of-home placements in New Jersey during FY19. CASA Programs served 42% of New Jersey’s children in foster care last year.

Re-entry Rate of Children Served

During the FY19 tracking year (which tracked children who found permanency during FY18), only 2.78% of children served by CASA Programs re-entered out-of-home placement within one year. By contrast, the most recent report from the DCF Federal Monitor cites a statewide re-entry rate for DCF of 12.2%.

Demographics of Children Served

By Gender

The children served by CASA Programs in FY19 were 50% male and 50% female.

By Reason of Case Closure

Of the 1,323 children whose cases were closed in FY19, 42% were reunified with their parent(s), 28% were adopted, 13% were placed with a relative or kin, and 7% aged out or went into independent living.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Case Closure</th>
<th>Reunification</th>
<th>Relative Placement / Kinship Guardian</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Child Aged Out / Independent Living</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunification</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Time in Care

Of the 1,323 children whose cases were closed in FY19, 19% had been in care for less than 12 months; 26% between 12 – 23 months; 24% between 24 – 35 months; and 30% for 36 months or longer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time in Care</th>
<th>Under 12 Months</th>
<th>12 – 23 Months</th>
<th>24-35 Months</th>
<th>36 Months +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 12 Months</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.
**By Age**

The majority (63%) of the children served in FY19 were under the age of 12, while 18% were between 12 and 15 years of age, and 19% were 16 years of age or over.

![By Age Bar Chart]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>1311</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>1236</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18+</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**By Race**

Caucasian children comprised the largest racial group of children served (38%). The next largest racial group advocated for was Black/African American children (36%), followed by Multi-Racial children at 12%. All other races -- Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native -- made up 7% of the children served.

![By Race Pie Chart]
Part 3: Volunteer Advocates

Number of Volunteer Advocates

A total of 2,264 Volunteers were sworn-in by Family Court Judges to advocate for children in FY19, and 2,091 were assigned to children throughout the year. The demographics of those 2,264 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
Volunteers ages 21 to 49 comprise 33% of all volunteers, whereas 66% of volunteers are age 50 or over.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of CASA Volunteer Advocates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Race
The majority of CASA volunteers are Caucasian (78%). The next largest racial group of volunteers are African American (12%), and 2% are of unknown race. In the chart below, “other” races include Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Native American or Alaskan Native, or multi-racial, equaling 8%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race of CASA Volunteer Advocates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**By Education**

New Jersey’s CASA volunteers are very well educated. Across the state, 46% of volunteers are college graduates and 31% have post-graduate education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level of CASA Volunteers</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>College Graduate</th>
<th>Post-Graduate</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**By Employment Status**

The employment status of volunteers is somewhat varied. However, 59% are employed either full- or part-time, and 21% are retired. Approximately 2% are students or disabled.

*Note that totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.*
Part 4: Trustees

Number of Trustees

As of June 30, 2019, there were 193 Trustees on volunteer Boards supporting state and local CASA Programs throughout New Jersey.

By Gender

In terms of gender, Trustees statewide include 87 males and 106 females.

By Race

In terms of race, 81% of CASA Trustees are Caucasian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race of CASA Trustees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 5: Affiliate Staff

Number of Employees
In FY19, there were 144 CASA employees throughout the Affiliate Network, up from 141 employees in FY18.

By Status and Position
Of the 144 employees:
- About three-quarters (76%) are full-time employees and 24% are part-time employees.
- 14 are Executive Directors
- 3 are Associate Directors
- 59 are either Senior Case Supervisors (18) or Case Supervisors (41)
- The remaining 68 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 (84%).

By Race
In terms of race, about three-quarters (76%) of CASA employees are Caucasian.

Race of CASA Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race of CASA Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Education
The vast majority of CASA staff across the state (92%) are college graduates; of that group, 37% have post-graduate education.

Education of CASA Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education of CASA Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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 training, pass-through funding, capacity building, continuous quality improvement, community outreach and education, collective impact, and one-on-one technical support. It also provides 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 foster care and other out-of-home placements. Below is a summary of FY19 accomplishments.

Funding

State Funding

After months of legislative meetings during FY18, CASA’s FY19 State Budget appropriation increased to $2.5 million. The majority of the funding is passed through to affiliate CASA Programs for sustainability and growth, while CASA of New Jersey retains a modest amount to fulfill its mission.

CASA of New Jersey is grateful to have strong support from both houses of the Legislature as well as the Governor’s office.
**Fiscal Year 19 Restricted and Unrestricted Grants** *(Not Including $2.5M State Grant Above)*

Public and private restricted and unrestricted grants, not including the $2.5 million grant cited above, contributed $158,867 in FY19 to offset CASA of New Jersey’s expenses and support affiliate CASA Program special initiatives.

![Graph of Restricted and Unrestricted Grant Fundraising](image)

**Grants for Implementation of Peer Coordinator Growth Model**

As of the end of FY19, CASA of New Jersey has provided funding to 9 local CASA programs serving 15 counties to help them develop and implement the Peer Coordinator Model. These counties include Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem, Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset, Hunterdon, Ocean, Mercer, Burlington and Warren.

The Peer Coordinator (PC) Model entails CASA programs training experienced volunteers to take on the role of coaching and supporting volunteer advocates to work one-on-one with children removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. CASA programs that implement this model are able to reach more children by empowering experienced advocates to provide leadership, coaching and support to a larger number of advocates than is possible through the traditional CASA model.

Traditionally, one staff member would coach, support, and monitor a large group of volunteer advocates, who would each take one, or occasionally, two cases at a time. Implementation of the PC Model enables each staff member to oversee a smaller group of Peer Coordinators, who, in turn, coach a cohort of 5-10 volunteer advocates. As such, the PC Model allows CASA programs to serve more children and maximize resources by exponentially increasing staff capacity.
Training

Through the expertise of our Statewide Training and Professional Development Coordinator, a variety of continuing education training was provided to the affiliate CASA program network. Pre-service training of CASA volunteers is conducted by the affiliate CASA programs.

New Jersey Judiciary Standards Training

During the summer of FY19, CASA of New Jersey conducted training for CASA staff and Peer Coordinators statewide on the New Jersey Judiciary Standards. Full-day training sessions were held to ensure participants had a clear understanding of the Standards, and the opportunity to discuss and share different aspects of volunteer management and problem-solving with their peers.

Statewide Conference

Cherish Every Child: Building Effective Advocacy Skills, CASA of New Jersey’s first statewide conference for New Jersey’s CASA advocates, staff, and trustees, was held in September 2018. Three-hundred people participated in a day of learning focused on enhancing advocacy skills. The conference offered 19 workshops facilitated by experts and professionals in their corresponding fields, including Helping Foster Youth Achieve Normalcy, Current Issues in Immigration and Child Welfare, Raising Your Voice in School, Addressing the Needs of Children and Youth with Incarcerated Parents, and Connecting Teens to Resources for Post-Secondary Success.

The day began with a welcome from Christine Norbut Beyer, MSW, DCF Commissioner, followed by an inspiring keynote address by Reverend Dr. Darrell Armstrong, Pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Trenton and Trustee at Prevent Child Abuse America. The conference ended with an equally powerful plenary, The Drug Epidemic: From Evidence and Resources to Hope, featuring keynote speaker Kim Guadagno, former NJ Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State, subject matter experts, and two individuals with direct personal experience with the child welfare system, including one whose child entered foster care due to parental addiction.

The conference served as a prime opportunity for CASAs to network with each another. Participants praised the conference, with some describing workshops as “amazing” and “Informative.” One advocate noted, “I had a chance to network with other CASAs – an AWESOME experience.”

Rutgers University Training Series

Through a collaboration with Rutgers University’s Healthcare Talent Development Center, regional training sessions were conducted for CASA staff throughout the state. Coordinated by CASA of New Jersey, workshops were facilitated by Rutgers faculty on topics including Children’s Mental Health, Communications, Cultural Competency and Trauma-Informed Workplace. Sessions were held twice in each region (North and South) to maximize participation. Workshops were tailored to the CASA program with a focus on the population we serve and the child welfare setting.
**Undoing Racism Training**

CASA of New Jersey sponsored a two-day Undoing Racism (UR) workshop for 40 child welfare stakeholders, including CASA Staff and Advocates, DCP&P Leadership, Law Guardians, Office of Parental Representation Attorneys, Judiciary and Administrative Office of the Courts Leadership, and Deputy Attorneys General. The training was conducted by the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISB). PISB is a national, multiracial collective of community organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social change. Undoing Racism training is designed to educate, challenge, and empower individuals to undo the racially biased structures that hinder effective social change. Participants examine race, class, power, and systemic racism as a basis for effectively eliminating disparities that may contribute to disproportionality in child welfare.

**Learning Management System (LMS) – Online Training**

CASA of New Jersey partnered with Traliant to develop and provide a platform for online training courses for the CASA network in New Jersey. CASA advocates are required to complete 12 hours of in-service training annually. Meeting that requirement with in-person training can be challenging for a myriad of reasons, including the hours devoted to their CASA case, having a job, family responsibilities and needing to travel to the training site.

Online training allows participants to complete the courses when it is convenient for them, at their own pace, and from the comfort of their home or anywhere they can access the Internet.

CASA of New Jersey develops the course content while Traliant transforms it into an interactive, online course and hosts it on their LMS platform. In June 2019, CASA of New Jersey’s first online course, *The Impact of Trauma on a Child’s Developing Brain*, debuted. CASAs have provided glowing feedback about the course and learning platform. One advocate’s comments are representative of others who have taken the course: “I thought the course was absolutely terrific…I found the material to be extremely helpful…I will hold onto this and probably retake the course to reinforce my understanding. This was an excellent use of my time.”

**Public Education and Awareness**

**Statewide Collaboration to Improve Public Awareness**

In FY19, CASA of New Jersey continued to use its Statewide Communications and Marketing Plan as a blueprint for branding, raising awareness of CASA’s mission, and recruiting volunteers across all 21 counties of New Jersey. The Plan, originally developed in FY17 by a group of students from the Rutgers University Graduate School of Communication and Information, has driven a collaborative process with the network of local CASA affiliate programs. We anticipate that, over time, a broad selection of public relations and marketing strategies will result in significant growth in the number of volunteer advocates recruited and children served.
Significant statewide financial investments targeted improvements and expansions in print and digital communications, presentations, exhibits, and articles in a number of key publications—all of which created opportunities for fundraising, program support, and mission awareness. Social media, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter, was instrumental in delivering strategic messaging to residents throughout the state, many of whom were introduced to CASA for the first time. CASA of New Jersey staff continue to reach out on a statewide and regional basis to successfully connect and reconnect—honoring volunteer recruitment strategies and implementation for 2020 and beyond.

2019 was a year of relationship building and accomplishment. Strategic partnerships with a myriad of Chambers (African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, Garden State Equality), Associations (NJREA/NJEA, NASW), networking groups (county Community Networking Associations of New Jersey), organizations (LINKS, NJ State Federation of Women’s Clubs) and companies (NJM and PSE&G) all had a significant impact increasing the number of volunteer advocates and placing CASA into the hearts of minds of individuals throughout the State of NJ.

**Statewide Executive and Legislative Branch Relations**

CASA of New Jersey procured a Governor’s Proclamation declaring April 2019 to be CASA Child Advocacy Month across the state.

During FY19, CASA of New Jersey facilitated meetings and/or conference calls with State Legislative offices, representing 18 of New Jersey’s 21 counties. The purpose of these meetings was two-fold: (1) to educate New Jersey’s legislative members about the needs of children in foster care and other out-of-home placements, and how CASA helps the state address those needs; and (2) to garner their support for maintaining the CASA state budget appropriation at $2.5 million in the coming year’s budget.

**Thought Leadership in Issues Relating to Child Abuse and Neglect**

CASA of New Jersey’s Associate Director played a key leadership role as Vice-Chair of the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect and the Child Protection Committee.

CASA of New Jersey 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, visitation between parents and children in placement, racial disproportionality in the children-in-court docket and how to improve the quality of court hearings.

**Continuous Quality Improvement**

During FY19, CASA of New Jersey continued its comprehensive Quality Review, conducting site visits in affiliate CASA programs serving children in Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem, Hudson and Middlesex Counties. The performance improvement process continued for seven CASA programs during FY19. By the end of FY19, seven programs completed the performance improvement phase, demonstrating compliance with all standards.
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 are 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 requiring improvement, in accordance with National CASA Association and State Judiciary Standards.

**Technical Assistance**

In addition to fielding questions on a daily basis on a wide range of topics such as the National CASA and New Jersey Judicial Standards, CASA of New Jersey also provided training on topics such as:

- Governance
- Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Trustee Legal and Fiduciary Responsibilities
- Volunteer Management
- Stakeholder Relationships
- Data Measurement, Tracking, and Reporting
- Peer Coaching

CASA of New Jersey continuously works to maximize the benefits provided to children and our state’s global child welfare system. We meet with judges and court staff to ensure that CASA efficiently provides comprehensive and accurate facts that inform and facilitate difficult decisions. Our staff meets with all levels of DCP&P personnel to discuss how CASA advocates can best support the policies, goals, statutory and constitutional requirements DCP&P is pressed to meet in its mission to keep children and families safe and healthy. These efforts have the collateral benefit of increasing judicial appointments and agency requests for CASA advocates. This in turn, meets CASA’s goal of increasing the number of children served.

**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 of Government for their support.** The commitment and caring of these stakeholders have 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 contact the CASA of New Jersey Office at 609-695-9400.