

Appendix B

Applicant and Volunteer Management Policies

(Amended and Approved by Board – June 21, 2023)

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1. Administration of Recruitment, Application, and Screening Processes

The Executive Director oversees recruitment, application, training, and screening, and is responsible for ensuring that these processes are carried out in accordance with written program policies and procedures. Specific aspects of these processes may be carried out by other employees or volunteers, as designated by the Executive Director.

2. Recruitment and Application

A. Recruitment

1) Recruitment Plan

Douglas County CASA, Inc. (hereinafter “the Program”) shall engage in appropriate strategies for recruitment, including speaking engagements, direct advertisement, and community collaboration and maintain a written plan for recruitment of volunteers from diverse cultural, ethnic, age, and socio-economic backgrounds. The Executive Director ensures that the recruitment plan reflects the need for diversity, the number of children to be served, the availability of staff supervision, and the financial resources of the Program.

2) Recruitment Materials

The Program shall prepare and maintain a standardized packet of written information for recruitment, which shall include at least the following:

1. Volunteer Job Description outlining the roles, responsibilities, and time commitments for the position.
2. Program Brochure
3. Equal Opportunity Statement

3) Referrals to other CASA Organizations

The Program shall refer applicants or certified volunteers who are relocating to other CASA/GAL programs, Kansas CASA, or National CASA when appropriate.

B. Application Processing

1) Standard Application Packet

The Program shall maintain a standard volunteer application packet which contains, at minimum, a volunteer job description, information regarding training, application forms (or information about obtaining forms), and information regarding Consent (see below). The application form contains information regarding compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).¹

¹ Kansas CASA standard I.C.5

2) Consent

Each applicant must sign a release of information or record check authorizations for:

- a. KBI Waiver Agreement and FBI Privacy Act Statement;
- b. OJA Criminal History Record Inquiry (CHRI) form;
- c. Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Release of Information Form (one for each state of residency for the past seven (7) years);
- d. Social Security Number Verification form;
- e. Motor Vehicle Registry Check form (one for each state of residency for the past seven (7) years);
- f. And any additional releases needed to complete a records check.

Applicants who refuse to sign releases or record check authorizations shall not be certified as CASA volunteers. If the applicant has not been a resident of the State of Kansas for the past seven (7) years, he/she must also sign a release of information for the purpose of additional criminal records checks in other states or countries where the applicant has lived and worked during the last seven (7) years.

At time of consent the applicant shall be informed of writing:

- a. of the screening procedures which will be used;
- b. that the CASA program executive director can determine an applicant ineligible for certification;
- c. that refusal to authorize the records checks will prohibit certification; and
- d. of the convictions and adjudications that prohibit certification.
- e. Of the program's requirement to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

3) Written Application

All applicants shall complete a written application. The completed application form shall contain, at a minimum, information regarding educational background and training, employment history, experience working with children, personal experience with child abuse and neglect, prior contact with the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems, and at least three references unrelated to the applicant.

4) Timely Processing of Application

Application packets shall be sent within five working days of a request. Completed applications shall be processed in a timely and appropriate manner, in accordance with Office of Judicial Administration (OJA) guidelines.

3. Applicant Eligibility, Screening, Records Checks & Certification

A. Eligibility / Conflict of Interest

No volunteer shall be certified if he or she is currently employed by the juvenile division of the district court, currently employed by the youth services division of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (hereafter "DCF"), DCF child welfare providers, juvenile services of the Kansas Department of Corrections, or community juvenile field services. Volunteers will complete and sign a written disclosure of any conflict of interest at least every four years.

B. Personal Interview

All applicants must complete a personal interview with program staff before beginning training to make a preliminary determination of eligibility and suitability for CASA roles and responsibilities.

C. Records Check & Results

- 1) The following record checks must perform the following record checks before requesting certification from OJA:

a. Criminal History Record Inquiry (CHRI) and Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) criminal record;

- i. The Executive Director or designee shall request blank Fingerprint Identification Records System (FIRS) cards from the Office of Judicial Administration (OJA).
- ii. Program staff will arrange for fingerprinting of each applicant
- iii. Program staff obtain the applicant's fingerprints on a fingerprint card provided by OJA.
- iv. For each applicant who has completed a Waiver Agreement and Statement, the Applicant or a staff designee shall fill in the required information on the FIRS card.
- v. A person trained to take fingerprints must roll the applicant's fingerprints on to the FIRS card. Fingerprinting should take place before training begins or as soon as possible thereafter.
- vi. Program staff will submit fingerprints and Criminal History Records Inquiry (CHRI) screening requests to OJA. OJA shall conduct the CHRI.
- vii. After fingerprinting, the Executive Director or designee should be in control of the FIRS card at all times. The applicant must not have custody of the FIRS card.
- viii. The Executive Director or designee shall submit the applicant's Waiver Agreement and Statement, application for CHRI and FIRS card to OJA at the same time. Copies of these documents shall be maintained in the applicant's file.
- ix. OJA will inform the Director whether the applicant is "eligible" or "ineligible" based on provisions of Kansas CASA standards.² When the applicant's eligibility notification is received, it shall be attached to the applicant's Waiver Agreement and Statement, application for CHRI, and FIRS card, and placed in the applicant's file.
- x. The Director or their designee shall inform the applicant in writing of their eligibility status. If an applicant has pending charges, a decision by OJA may be suspended until the outcome of the case is known.
- xi. Applicants who wish to contest a determination of "ineligible" will be directed to contact OJA.

² Kansas CASA Standard I.E.2

- xii. The Director may seek an exception for an ineligible applicant. If any exception is to be made, the chief judge or designated judge must document, in writing, the justification for granting an exception. The letter of exception must be placed in the applicant's file, and a copy of the letter must be provided to OJA.

b. criminal history records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant currently lives and works;

- i. Program staff will submit criminal background checks to the appropriate agency in each court jurisdiction where the applicant has lived during the past seven years.

c. criminal history records from any county, state, or country in which the applicant has lived or worked the last seven years;

- i. Program staff will submit criminal background checks to the appropriate agency in each county, state or country where the applicant has lived during the past seven years.
- ii. If the applicant has not been a resident of the United States, Kansas, or current county of residence for the past seven years, the program shall make inquiries of the criminal history records of all countries, states, and counties where the applicant has lived and worked in the seven years prior to application. Certification will not be denied if another state, county, or country does not respond in a reasonable amount of time to the record check inquiry after a minimum of two attempts to obtain the information. "Reasonable amount of time" is defined by the entity the program makes the request, or 30 days if not defined. If the program receives information that indicates a volunteer has a criminal history equivalent to section I.E.2., the volunteer must be decertified.

d. Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry (CANR) or equivalent for any state or country the applicant has lived or worked in the last seven years;

- i. Program staff will submit Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry screening requests to DCF.
- ii. Program staff will submit Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry screening requests of the registries of other states or countries where the applicant has lived during the past seven years.
- iii. If DCF, or a similar agency in another state or country, lists the applicant as the perpetrator of an act of child abuse or neglect, the applicant is ineligible for certification unless the chief judge or designated judge documents, in writing, the justification for granting an exception.
- iv. Certification shall not be denied if the registry of another state refuses to give information in a timely manner. If documentation stating that the CASA volunteer is a perpetrator of an act of child abuse and neglect is received after certification is granted, the program must decertify the volunteer.

- e. National Sex Offender Registry; and
 - i. Program staff will conduct a search of the Kansas and National Sex Offender Registry.
 - ii. Program staff will conduct a search of the National Sex Offender Registry and the registries of each state or country where the applicant has lived during the past seven years.
 - iii. An applicant whose name appears on a state or federal Sex Offender Registry list shall have 30 days to provide evidence to contest the listing, and will not be accepted for training or certified as a volunteer unless there is clear and convincing evidence that the applicant would not pose a risk to children and that certification would not negatively impact the credibility of the Program.
- f. Social Security Number Verification
 - i. Program staff will submit the applicant's Social Security Number for verification.
 - ii. An applicant whose SSN is not verified cannot be certified and will not be accepted for training or certified as a volunteer.
- g. Motor Vehicle Registry Checks.
 - i. Motor Vehicle Registry Checks are not required by Kansas CASA Standards unless the volunteer or employee is transporting children. Although our program requires this check for all CASA volunteers
 - ii. Program staff will conduct a motor vehicle records check for Kansas.
 - iii. Program staff will conduct a motor vehicle records check for each state or country where the applicant has lived during the past seven years.
 - iv. An otherwise qualified applicant whose motor vehicle records check reflects violations may be certified as a volunteer, but will be restricted in accordance with the terms of the Volunteer Transportation Agreement.

- 2) Program staff will perform record checks no sooner than ninety (90) days before the certification request is sent to OJA (Kansas CASA Standard I.C.) If record checks are not able to be completed in this timeframe, then reason for not meeting the timeframe will be documented in the volunteer file. If the completion of record checks exceeds 90 days due to the program, the program we will restart and run all record checks. If the completion of record checks exceeds 90 days due to circumstances beyond the program's control, the director may still request certification.

D. Screening during training

Program staff will continue to screen applicants during the training process for suitability to the roles and responsibilities of being a CASA volunteer. If during the screening or training process the Program or Director determines an applicant will not be certified, the applicant shall be notified in writing, and the notice placed in the applicant's file.

E. Transfer Applicants

A qualified CASA volunteer from another program or state must complete the full application and screening process, and a minimum of four (4) hours of local training as outlined in section II.B.14 of the Kansas CASA Standards.

F. Termination of Screening Process / Status Information / Unsuccessful Applicants

Applicants shall continue to be screened until certification is granted. On request, the Program should notify an applicant in writing of the status of their application. If during the screening or training process the director determines an applicant will not be certified, the applicant shall be notified in writing, and the notice placed in the applicant's file. Applicants not accepted for training or certified as CASA volunteers shall be treated with dignity and respect, and referred to alternative volunteer opportunities when appropriate.

G. Re-Screening

The Program shall repeat required record checks required for active volunteers at a minimum every four (4) years. Motor Vehicle Checks will be repeated annually for those transporting children.

4. Training & Certification

A. Pre-Service Training

Applicants shall be trained using a pre-service training curriculum approved by The National CASA/GAL Association and OJA or its equivalent. Training shall consist of at least 30 hours of training on topics required by Kansas CASA Standards and Guidelines, supplemented by National CASA guidelines when appropriate. Credit toward the 30-hour minimum may not be given for education or professional training obtained by an applicant prior to application to the CASA program. Training may include segments provided by other agencies or other CASA programs.

Training shall include a minimum of four (4) hours specifically designed to provide local information specific to the certifying program as outlined in subsection II.B.14 of the Kansas CASA Standards. Training shall also include court observation of juvenile proceedings. Training may also include observation of Citizen Review Board proceedings but may be completed after certification based on availability of CRB proceedings to observe.

Applicant trainees shall sign a statement of confidentiality prior to observing court or CRB. The Program (Supervisor or Administrative Assistant) will obtain court approval prior to observation of court hearings, pursuant to K.S.A. 38-2247.

Trainees shall be given a training manual that includes a synopsis of pertinent Kansas laws. This manual will be provided electronically whenever possible, hard copies will be provided upon request.

Training should be designed to increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of volunteers so that they can fulfill their volunteer roles and responsibilities. Program staff shall review and revise the curriculum as needed to meet the needs of volunteers.

B. Certification

To be certified as a CASA volunteer, each applicant must successfully complete the screening and pre-service training requirements detailed in Kansas CASA Standards. Prior to certification, the applicant must sign a form acknowledging the expectations of a CASA volunteer (job description) and agreeing to fulfill duties as outlined, including duties as outlined in Supreme Court Rule 110, Kansas CASA standards; and conduct expectations. Within 30 days of completion of training and record checks the Director will review the volunteer file and approve for certification, and the Director or designee shall send a certification request to OJA.

C. Continuing Education

The Program shall provide or assist in providing a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing education each calendar year. Continuing Education opportunities must include, but are not limited to cultural humility, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and recognizing abuse. To maintain certification, each volunteer must complete twelve (12) hours of continuing education training during each calendar year completed by December 31st. An extension may be granted by the volunteer's supervisor or executive director for

up to 30 days, and shall be documented in the volunteer file (supervisors will enter CE hours into Optima {database} training section using 12/31 as the date, and include the actual date of completion and document extension using the “notes” section of that record). Newly certified volunteers continuing education hours shall be prorated based on their certification date (date of notification from OJA) – following Kansas CASA standard and not the National CASA standard by Swear-In date – which for our programs is date of assignment on the case.

D. Inactive Status

A certified CASA volunteer may request a leave of absence for up to one (1) year. Such leave will be granted at the sole discretion of the CASA Supervisor. . The staff may make additional requirements if appropriate. The program director may grant an exception to decertification of an inactive volunteer, and justification shall be documented in the volunteer’s file. A CASA volunteer may not be inactive for more than two (2) consecutive years. Inactive volunteers must complete annual continuing education as required in this policy.

E. Decertification / Suspension of Certified Status

1) Program Notification

Any applicant or certified volunteer shall immediately notify the Program of any citations or criminal charges filed against them. Failure to notify the Program could result in decertification.

2) Arrests and Convictions

Certification may be suspended by the director or chief judge if the volunteer is arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime pending resolution. For crimes other than those listed in Section .E.2 of the Kansas CASA Standards and Guidelines, decertification shall be at the discretion of the Director. If convicted of a crime listed in Section I.E.4., immediate decertification is required.

3) OJA may decertify a volunteer on its own if deemed appropriate (Kansas CASA Standards I.M.3.).

4) Program Notice to OJA

Within fourteen (14) days of a volunteer’s resignation or dismissal for cause the Director or designee shall notify OJA of the volunteer’s name and the reason for decertification. If a volunteer is assigned to a case at the time of decertification, the program must obtain a court order discharging the CASA’s appointment.

5. Volunteer Assignment

A. Assignment authority

The Director or the Director's designee shall be responsible for the assignment and removal of volunteers to and from specific cases. Volunteers are sworn in by the Judge prior to case assignment. Appropriate consideration shall be given to racial, ethnic, gender, gender identity, cultural, and religious diversity when assigning volunteers to cases. The Director shall notify all parties and agencies involved in the case of the CASA volunteer's appointment. The program will ensure the following individuals are notified in writing, of an appointment or removal of a CASA volunteer:

1. attorneys for parties to the case; and
2. other interested parties

B. Case Load Limits

Generally, a volunteer will not be assigned to more than two children at a time. An exception may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director allowing for an assignment for up to five children to accommodate for sibling groups or for other appropriate circumstances. The rationale for the decision to permit a higher case load must be located in the volunteer's file.

An exception must be requested from and approved by OJA for an assignment of more than five children. OJA must provide a written response to the request, and the program must file the response in the case file.³

C. Case-Specific Conflicts of Interest

No volunteer may be assigned to a specific case if he/she is connected to the family in a professional capacity or in a close personal relationship. A volunteer who develops a case-specific conflict of interest after assignment to a case shall be removed from the case immediately.

³ Kansas CASA Association standard III.T.1

6. Volunteer Roles, Duties & Responsibilities

A. Written Policies

The Program maintains written volunteer policies. During training, volunteers will receive a CASA Volunteer Handbook containing Supreme Court Rule 110, as well as other policies and guidelines for their volunteer work. Policies and guidelines will be reviewed and revised as needed, and any policy changes will be communicated in writing to all volunteers.

B. Volunteer Compliance with Written Policies

Volunteers will sign an Acknowledgement that they have read and understand the policies contained in the CASA Volunteer Handbook and agree to abide by them.

C. Volunteer Contact with Assigned Child

Volunteers must have regular and sufficient in-person contact with the child to enable the volunteer to have an in-depth knowledge of the case and make fact-based recommendations to the Court. The volunteer shall meet in person with the child once every thirty (30) days at a minimum. An exception may be granted by the Supervisor, by completing the OJA required form and documenting in Optima. The decision to permit less frequent in person contact shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception.

A video visit will be considered “in-person” and not needing an “exception form” only under the following circumstances and when it is documented in the case file/Optima:

- a. Child is placed out-of-state
- b. Placement does not allow in-person visits due to their policies/lockdown
- c. Volunteer health concern - high risk (ie. High risk for infection and there is an outbreak of COVID locally).
- d. Child health concerns - high risk
- e. Weather issues combined with inability to reschedule visit due to other complications. If it is lack of visit just because of weather an exception report needs to be made.
- f. Distance documented in case file stating volunteer's concerns and plan to maintain consistent contact, and this is communicated and coordinated with case manager.

D. Specific Local Court-Approved Policies

1. Questioning a Parent

In gathering information concerning the child for which a CASA has been appointed, it will be necessary for the CASA to speak with a child’s parent(s) or legal guardian. When a parent is represented by counsel, the CASA must be aware that the parent may be instructed not to discuss the case with the CASA by legal counsel. It is also possible that a parent, represented or not, might begin discussions and wish to terminate those discussions after they have begun. It is also possible that the attorney

representing the parent(s) or legal guardian may wish to be present during such questioning. A CASA should tell the parent or guardian that talking to the CASA is voluntary. Anything said to the CASA may be used in a report to court. The CASA should inform parents that they may have counsel present if they wish.

2. Information Received by CASA

There may be occasions when a child or individual involved in a case requests a CASA keep secret information shared with the CASA. A CASA may not intentionally withhold relevant information from the court concerning the child. A CASA must inform all persons involved in a case that any information received, told to, or discussed with the CASA is subject to disclosure to the court. However, the CASA may make a judgment, in consultation with program staff, that some information disclosed is not relevant to the court case and therefore need not be included in a court report.

3. Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse/Neglect

It is required that CASA volunteers report suspected child abuse or neglect of their assigned CINC. There does not have to be a direct observation of abuse or neglect, but only a reasonable basis for concern about the physical and emotional health and welfare of the child. When a CASA has such a suspicion, the following procedure should be followed:

- A. A report should be made immediately to the volunteer's supervisor, or the Executive Director of the CASA program. However, if the first attempt to reach program staff fails, the volunteer should move immediately to the next step.
- B. An official report of the suspicion should be made to the DCF.
- C. If the child appears to be in immediate danger of serious physical injury or death, the CASA should call 911.

4. Confidentiality

- A. General Definition. Confidentiality is defined by Blacks Law dictionary as the "state or quality of being confidential: treated as private and not for publication".
- B. Juvenile Court Proceedings. CASA volunteers will be entrusted with confidential information regarding children whom they are appointed to represent. Any information obtained through this relationship from whatever source is intended to be held in confidence or kept secret. Volunteers are expected to adhere to confidentiality policies and procedures as outlined in the training manual.

CASA volunteers, members of the board and staff are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving/employed by Douglas County CASA. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in the termination of the individual's relationship with the Program or other corrective action. CASA volunteers must sign a written acknowledgement of confidentiality at least every four (4) years.

Photographs

CASA Volunteers may only take photos, including of their assigned CASA child, to attach or include in a CASA court report, for the purpose of informing the court.

Photos must either be included in a court report, shared with the child's caseworker, or child's biological family members.

The photo must immediately be deleted from the camera or device. Photos may not be used for personal use and cannot be shown to anyone outside the case, including posting on social media.

Photos included in a court report become part of the child's file and are subject to the same file retention and destruction policies.

Files and information sharing

The program retains files and records in paper and electronic format, transitioning to as many files being retained in electronic format in Optima as possible after 1/1/2023. Internal files are also stored only in the agency's securely maintained file storage. The program will only use electronic storage that is securely backed-up; currently that is Optima and Office 365 – OneDrive or SharePoint.

Electronic files are subject to retention, destruction, and closure procedures outlined in policy.

When sharing electronic files externally, file or email encryption must be used to ensure security and confidentiality of the file when the file contains case file or child information.

The Program does allow and accept electronic signatures. Electronic signatures will only be accepted when using tools that validate signatures and include a date of signature.

E. Transporting Children

CASA volunteers may not transport children without the following:⁴

1. a copy of valid personal automobile insurance must be maintained in the volunteer's file;⁵
2. written authority from the custodial agency and the CASA supervisor to transport children must be obtained on a form provided by OJA and maintained in the volunteer's file;⁶
3. written acknowledgement of the potential risk of being held personally liable must be obtained and maintained in the volunteer's file;
4. annual motor vehicle record checks must be completed and reviewed⁷; and
5. a copy of the volunteer's valid driver's license must be maintained in the volunteer's file

F. Emergency Procedures

If a CASA volunteer is involved in a medical or police emergency while engaged in CASA volunteer duties (i.e. domestic disturbance, serious injury to a person, or a threat of bodily harm), the volunteer should call 911.

Under no circumstances is a volunteer to transport children having a medical emergency, administer medical treatment other than CPR, or attempt to intervene in any type of violent situation.

In the event that a CASA volunteer calls 911 or witnesses a police or medical emergency, he/she should make an oral or written report about the incident to the volunteer supervisor as soon as possible.

G. Possession of Weapons

Volunteers shall not possess a weapon as defined in K.S.A. 72-6131 on CASA premises, while conducting business on behalf of CASA, or otherwise performing their duties.

H. Alcohol and Drug Use

Volunteers shall not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on CASA premises, while conducting business on behalf of CASA, or otherwise performing their duties. Volunteers who are taking prescribed or over-the-counter medications that may affect their judgment or the performance of their duties should exercise caution in using those medications and avoid scheduling CASA activities while under the influence of these medications.

⁴ National CASA/GAL Association Standard 6.G.10.c, Standard 6.10.d

⁵ National CASA/GAL Association Standard 6.G.10.e.ii

⁶ National CASA/GAL Association Standard 6.G.10.d

⁷ National CASA/GAL Association Standard 6.G.10.e.i

I. Online Communication and Use of Social Media

- 1. Transparency.** Absent specific permission from the Executive Director to post online statements relating to the Program or the Program's mission, including approval of content, volunteers must state that they are speaking only for themselves and that their statements do not necessarily represent the views of National CASA, the Kansas CASA Association, or the Program.
- 2. Comply with the laws regarding copyright and plagiarism.** Never post someone else's work without their express permission, including statements, images, statistics, or other content, unless your use constitutes "fair use" under the law. Give credit to the original source of material that is not original.
- 3. Other limits on content:**
 - a. Do not reveal any confidential information and respect the privacy of others.
 - b. Avoid statements that may be construed as libelous or defamatory.
 - c. Avoid inflammatory statements and topics, such as partisan politics and religion.
 - d. Be accurate.
 - e. Avoid attracting negative attention for the Program.
- 4. Do not become online "friends" of the children or family members in your case.**
- 5. Consider establishing a special "CASA work only" email identity if you need to exchange information with children or family members in your case.**

J. Prohibited Activities

CASA volunteers are prohibited from the following activities:

1. Taking a child to the CASA volunteer's home.
2. Taking a child to any location unless the volunteer is authorized to transport by having a signed Delegation of Authority to Transport on file.
3. Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
4. Making placement arrangements for the child.
5. Giving money or gifts to the child, the child's family, or caregiver over \$50 in value. Volunteers should talk to their supervisors before providing any gifts. The supervisor may seek guidance and approval from the case manager.
6. Becoming online "friends" of the children or family members in your case.

7. Volunteer Supervision, Evaluation, and Recognition

A. Staff/Volunteer Ratio

Program employees supervising volunteers full-time must not supervise more than 30 active volunteers. If the employee is required to perform duties other than supervision of volunteers, the number of volunteers to be supervised must be reduced pro rata.⁸

Staff to volunteer ratio is prorated based on the number of hours worked dedicated solely to supervision of volunteers, excluding hours dedicated to other non-volunteer supervisory activities.

The full-time Executive Director shall supervise no more than 5 active volunteers and no more than five (5) full-time volunteer supervisors.

B. Nature of Supervision

Supervision of CASA volunteers is to be closely monitored by the Executive Director. Volunteer supervisors shall keep the Executive Director informed of important case activity as needed.

Supervision shall be readily available, appropriate to the volunteer's needs and the complexity of the case, and should hold volunteers accountable for the performance of assigned roles, duties, and responsibilities.

Volunteer supervisors shall meet regularly with each volunteer to review case progress. Supervisors shall review the volunteer's report to the court and consider the volunteer's concerns and recommendations in a timely manner so as not to jeopardize the best interests of the child.

C. Editing of Court Reports

Volunteer supervisors edit volunteer court reports. The primary purpose of editing is to correct errors, simplify, clarify, and/or otherwise improve the readability of the report. Changes to substantive factual elements of the report or the specific recommendations of the volunteer should not be made without the knowledge and agreement of the volunteer. The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for the content of reports, and may file a court report on behalf of the Program that provides different information or recommendations regarding the volunteer's case.

D. Volunteer/Supervisor Case Conflicts

Volunteers who have conflicts with a supervisor regarding the handling of a case or editing of a report should contact the Executive Director for assistance in resolving the conflict.

⁸ Kansas CASA Association standard III.DD

E. Annual Volunteer Evaluation

Supervisors should evaluate each volunteer on an annual basis using a standardized evaluation form. The evaluation should include a review of the volunteer's work on the case, participation in in-service training, and any comments from the judge, other parties, or agencies, regarding the volunteer's service.

F. Volunteer Recognition

The program should provide ongoing verbal and written recognition of volunteers for their service.

8. Volunteer Resignation or Dismissal

A. Resignation

Volunteers may request removal from an assigned case at any time.

B. Dismissal Authority

The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for the decision to dismiss a volunteer for cause and for communicating the decision to the volunteer.

C. Grounds for Dismissal

Appropriate grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The volunteer takes action, without program or court approval, which endangers the child, or jeopardizes the reputation of the Program.
2. The volunteer engages in *ex parte* communication with the court.
3. The volunteer violates program policy, court rules or the law.
4. The volunteer fails to effectively carry out CASA volunteer roles, duties, and responsibilities, including the timely submission of reports.
5. The volunteer fails to complete required in-service training.
6. The volunteer falsified or misrepresented factual information on the volunteer application or in other aspects of screening process. (reworded)
7. A conflict of interest arises that cannot be resolved.
8. There are allegations of child abuse or neglect against the volunteer that cannot be resolved in favor of the volunteer.

9. Legal Consultation

The program shall ensure that an attorney is available for legal consultation with the program, its employees, or its volunteers on any case in which the program executive director deems it appropriate. The program's attorney must not consult with the program, its employees, or its volunteers on any case in which the attorney is serving in any capacity, or in any case in which there appears to be a conflict of interest. The program will have a current written agreement with the program attorney.

The program attorney cannot serve as a member of the Board of Directors..⁹

⁹ National CASA/GAL Association standard 4.A.3

10. Volunteer (including interns) / Program Relationship

A. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a member of the board of directors, program employee, program volunteer, or intern has a personal interest (including a personal or business interest in another organization) sufficient to appear to influence the objective exercise of his or her official duties.

The conduct of business between any volunteer and the Program is prohibited unless first fully disclosed and then only if approved by the Executive Director. . Volunteers shall not have a direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions or professional services of the Program.

Volunteers have a duty to make timely disclosure of a conflict or potential conflict of interest in a transaction with the Program.

B. Notification of Criminal Charges

A volunteer must immediately notify the Program of any criminal charges filed against them.

11. Case and Volunteer Records

A. Case Records

The volunteer shall have complete and timely access to all records and documents pertaining to the case. Case records will be kept in Optima, our online case database effective 1/1/2023 (prior to this time case records are hard copies).

The Program shall keep complete case files pursuant Kansas CASA Standard III.G.; including court documents from the clerk's legal and social history files, all volunteer reports, and volunteer and supervisor correspondence regarding cases, including notes from phone or in-person consultations.

Volunteers are required to return case files to the program office when the volunteer is discharged or when the case is closed. The court and OJA shall be notified immediately if a case file has not been returned to the Program within 30 days of the volunteer's discharge or case closure.

Case files shall be destroyed when the youngest child in the case reaches 18 years of age AND the case has been closed for at least seven (7) years.¹⁰ Prior to 1/1/2023, file destruction dates were maintained and tracked via spreadsheet and files were destroyed in December of the corresponding calendar year via shredding bins located in the basement of the Douglas County Courthouse or equivalent secure shredding service. After 1/1/2023, case files will be maintained in Optima. Destroying case files in Optima means that all documents will be deleted from Optima except for documentation of case closure and the court order discharging the volunteer or terminating the court's jurisdiction. All paper records will be shredded or destroyed upon case closure.

The Program shall maintain a list of certified volunteers with contact information, a calendar of court hearings, records regarding case assignments, and records regarding storage and destruction of case files.

All files are considered confidential and shall not be accessible to the public.

¹⁰ National CASA/GAL Association Standard 10.B.5.a.

B. Volunteer Records

The program shall maintain a volunteer file for each certified CASA volunteer. All files shall be considered confidential and shall be maintained for a period of five (5) years after decertification. Volunteer applications for individuals who did not complete training or certification requirements will be maintained for three (3) years. Records prior to 1/1/2023 are hard files, and after electronic records maintained in our volunteer management database.

Volunteers may view their own file upon request during a scheduled appointment with their supervisor or the Executive Director. If the volunteer feels that additions or corrections need to be made, they should request these changes in writing and submit to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will review the request, make a determination, and notify the volunteer in writing within six (6) working days.

The volunteer file shall include but is not limited to the following items:

1. Volunteer application
2. Interview form
3. Copy of driver's license and insurance card
4. Reference forms
5. CHRI eligibility determination by OJA and/or criminal records check results from other states
6. Kansas DCF Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry screening result and/or registry screening results from other states
7. SSN verification
8. Motor Vehicle Records check results
9. Sex Offender Registry check results
10. Signed Confidentiality Agreement
11. Signed CASA Acceptance Agreement
12. Signed Transportation agreement
13. Signed CASA Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement

C. Waiver of Confidentiality

Volunteers who list the CASA program or CASA staff members as references or who request recommendation letters from staff members are deemed to waive confidentiality of information the Program has regarding their volunteer service.

12. Courtesy Volunteer Assignments

A. Cross-Judicial District (Intrastate) Assignments

The Program may provide intrastate courtesy volunteer advocate assistance to another Kansas CASA Program. A courtesy volunteer appointed for this purpose must comply with the policies and procedures of the Program.

The Program may request intrastate courtesy volunteer advocate assistance from another Kansas CASA Program. The courtesy volunteer appointed for this purpose must comply with the policies and procedures of the local Program that appoints the courtesy volunteer.

The decision to request assistance or to accept a request for assistance will be made on a case by case basis and shall be at the discretion of the Executive Director and a MOU must be in place pursuant to Kansas CASA Standards.

B. Cross-State (Interstate) Assignments

The Program shall not request or provide courtesy volunteer advocate assistance to CASA programs outside of Kansas.

Policies reviewed and approved per Kansas CASA Standard:

DocuSigned by:

James R. McCabria

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James R. McCabria

Chief Judge

Douglas County District Court

7th Judicial District of Kansas

6/27/2023

Date

DocuSigned by:

Loretta Severin

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Loretta Severin

President, Board of Directors

Douglas County CASA, Inc.

6/26/2023

Date

DocuSigned by:

Erick Vaughn

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Erick Vaughn

Executive Director

Douglas County CASA, Inc.

6/23/2023

Date