

## Newaygo County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Program CASA Volunteer Job Description



### **CASA Volunteer's Role**

A CASA Volunteer is a trained community volunteer appointed by a district or family court judge to speak for the best interests of an abused and/or neglected child. A CASA Volunteer is an official part of the judicial proceedings, working alongside attorneys and social workers. By handling only one or two cases at a time, a CASA Volunteer has time to thoroughly explore the history and circumstances of each assigned case.

### **Supervision**

Direct supervision and guidance is provided by the CASA Volunteer Coordinator(s). CASA Volunteers fill out a monthly supervision sheet.

### **Duties & Responsibilities**

- Complete an extensive, independent review of each case:
  - Meet face-to-face with child at least once every thirty (30) days
  - Speak with the child and relevant adults (parents, family members, school officials, doctors, and others involved in the child's life who might have facts about the case)
  - Review appropriate records and reports
  - Observe the child and significant others
- Report findings to the court by submitting formal reports to the judge at every scheduled hearing/review:
  - Provide a written report containing factual information to the CASA/GAL program office ten business days prior to every hearing
  - Attend court hearings concerning the child
- Ensure representation of the child's best interests:
  - Attend all court hearings to see that all relevant facts are presented
  - Attend appropriate interagency meetings regarding the child
  - Participate in case conferences concerning the child
- Monitor case following a court hearing or decision as designated by the court:
  - Ensure that the judicial and child welfare systems are moving ahead to secure a safe, permanent home for the child
  - Ensure that court-ordered services are provided to the child and family
- Consult regularly with the volunteer coordinator concerning assigned case:
  - Develop a case plan
  - Review progress and reports

## **Training/Support Plan**

- Volunteers are required to attend approximately 30 hours of pre-service training and 12 hours of in-service training annually.
- Volunteers follow guidelines established by the National CASA Association.
- Volunteers have access to additional training opportunities offered by other agencies.
- Volunteers receive direct supervision and guidance from program staff.

## **Time Commitment**

- Volunteers are required to make an eighteen-month commitment to the program.
- Volunteers are required to attend all court hearings on their cases—approximately five per year.
- Volunteers are expected to be available for case assignment and to accept cases immediately upon completion of pre-service training, unless other arrangements have been made.

## **Knowledge & Skills**

- Ability to keep all client and court information confidential
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds
- Ability to transport self
- Ability to maintain objectivity
- A basic understanding of child development and family relationships
- Good common sense
- Does not require specific educational
- Must be 21 years old or older

## **Benefits**

Although we cannot provide you with monetary rewards, there are many benefits to being a CASA/GAL volunteer. These include the opportunity to:

- Make a difference in the life and future of a child who has been a victim of abuse and/or neglect
- Help a child find permanency in a safe, loving home
- Assist judges in obtaining a clear picture of a child's life and needs
- Gain an understanding of district and family courts, legal proceedings, and social service agencies
- Develop/utilize communication skills
- Develop/utilize assertiveness
- Utilize your past experience/skills
- Form friendships with like-minded people in your community