

THE ART OF RECRUITMENT:

ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS WHO OWN YOUR MISSION



OUR VISION

We envision a safe and positive future for all Texas children.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Texas CASA is to support local CASA volunteer advocacy programs and to advocate for effective public policy for children in the child protection system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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STRENGTHENING THE VOICES OF CASA STATEWIDE

WELCOME

At the heart of every CASA program are the volunteers. These are the individuals willingly donating their time to speak up for the children who need them the most. They are our lifeline and what drives this network, so the question we face is: how do we not only sustain this vital life force, but also keep it growing?

The Art of Recruitment: Engaging Volunteers Who OWN Your Mission represents a year of work from the Texas CASA Recruitment and Retention team to answer that question. We set out to bring the best of the best to you through groundbreaking approaches and cutting-edge research.

Intended to be a companion to *The Art of Coaching for Volunteer Retention*, this guidebook builds on materials that were designed using “boots on the ground” strategies that have already been successfully implemented by CASA programs around the state. Additionally, to take our recruitment efforts to a higher level, we are focusing on the Volunteer Ownership Cycle. This cycle is essential to our recruitment efforts for two reasons—1. CASA volunteers are professionals, and 2. CASA’s recruitment strategies should be reflective of the high-quality volunteers needed to do this challenging, yet indispensable job.

This new approach will encourage you to shift your view on recruitment to see recruiting CASA volunteers in the same light as recruiting employees for a company. Our volunteers are as critical to our success as an employee for any company, and to reach our goal of a volunteer for every child, we must recruit and retain advocates who own our mission.

Already the CASA network is growing faster than ever before, and together, we can keep the momentum moving forward. We hope that new recruiters and seasoned professionals alike will find exciting materials in this guidebook to help you to grow your recruitment efforts and better engage advocates.

Together, we can and will provide a CASA volunteer for every child who needs one – creating a lasting difference in your community and across the state for generations to come. Thank you for all that you do for CASA.

Sincerely,



Vicki Spriggs
Texas CASA CEO



Together, we can and will provide a CASA volunteer for every child who needs one.

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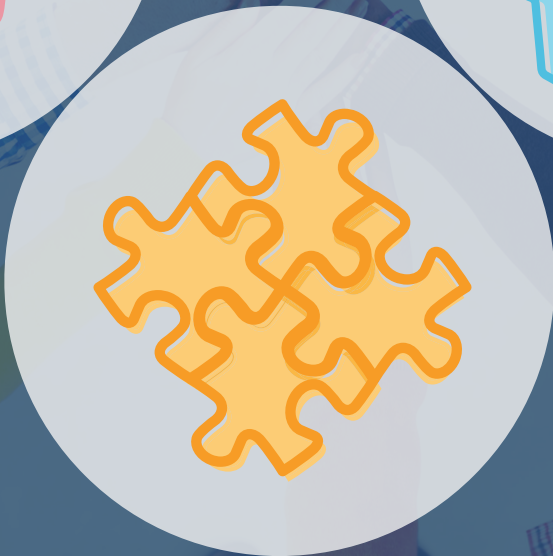


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GOALS

- Learn what key factors make people volunteer.
- Activate the Volunteer Ownership Cycle.
- Learn how the fields of volunteer recruitment, fundraising and employee onboarding are alike.
- Learn tools to build a valuable network to pump up your recruitment efforts.

CHAPTER ONE

ACTIVATE THE FORCE: RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS WHO OWN YOUR MISSION

MOVING HEARTS & MINDS FROM “YOU” TO “WE”

CASA programs understand the indisputable value of volunteers. They are the core of all that we do and a treasured necessity. We aim to treat volunteer recruitment as a professional endeavor worth our very best ideas, efforts and collaboration. CASA programs nationwide take this as seriously as companies take recruitment of employees, knowing that each person is a vital part of the whole.

The central question of the guide is this: How can we bring on volunteers who will not only serve the CASA mission, but also genuinely make it their own?

How can we recruit the volunteers who will find real purpose in life by serving the children? How can we attract those who will speak with such passion about CASA’s work that their friends will be drawn to the agency? What’s the pathway to securing devoted volunteers and facilitating a rock-solid bond? Getting an idea of some of the primary reasons why people do or don’t volunteer is a good way to start¹.

WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER



To make a difference in people’s lives.



To support an organization, community or cause.



To learn something new.



To meet people.



To develop personally or professionally.



They have an idealized view of people who volunteer and feel that they don’t measure up.



No one asked them.



What they do as a volunteer doesn’t match what they had hoped to get out of volunteering.



They don’t clearly understand what they are being asked to do.

THE VOLUNTEER OWNERSHIP CYCLE

This guidebook is a companion text to *The Art of Coaching for Volunteer Retention*. It’s framed using the Volunteer Ownership Cycle, which is a concept based on the fundraising field’s donor pipeline. The Volunteer Ownership Cycle moves volunteers from the You phase (**Awareness**) to the We phase (**Ownership**). The volunteer’s commitment builds over the evolution of their **Awareness**, **Involvement** and **Engagement**, until it finally lands at the true goal of **Ownership**. See how it works on the next page.

THE VOLUNTEER OWNERSHIP CYCLE

OWNERSHIP

- I've taken more than one CASA case.
- I recruit for and serve as a spokesperson for CASA.
- I happily take on leadership roles.
- CASA's mission is also my own personal mission.

INVOLVEMENT

- I've completed an interview.
- I've been selected for CASA advocate training.
- I believe this cause is a good one.
- I'm eager to learn more and get to know people here.



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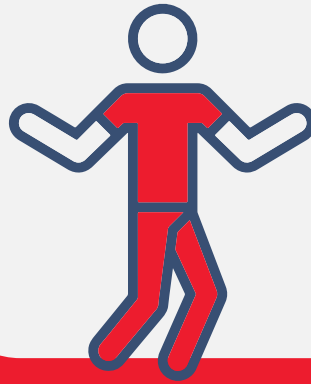


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THE YOU PHASE



"When I talk about CASA, I see myself as supportive but separate."



*"When I talk about CASA,
I say 'we.' I see myself as a
part of CASA."*

4



THE WE PHASE

3



ENGAGEMENT

- I'm undergoing training.
- I've accepted a CASA case.
- I see and feel the results of CASA's work in the world.
- I share CASA's values.



AWARENESS

- I saw a CASA ad on TV.
- I recognize the CASA name.
- I have a rough idea of what the group is about.
- A friend told me about her volunteer work at CASA.

GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO EACH STAGE

We treat each phase differently and invest different resources in the volunteer's development based on where they are in the cycle. The **awareness** and **involvement** stages are a time of mutual discovery. Here's an example: You learn from a current volunteer that his child's teacher is interested in getting continuing education about the child welfare system. You capitalize on this quickly and ask the volunteer for an introduction. Email the teacher, tell him more about CASA and harness his motivation of new learning. Invite the prospect to an upcoming continuing education conference, and offer to chat on the phone. In one conversation, you've activated the original **awareness** and transformed it into **involvement**. Now keep them close and stay in touch!

Next, if we do our jobs right, volunteers move into the We phases – **engagement** and **ownership**.

The **engagement** stage is a time of experiencing the impact of CASA firsthand. In this stage, people are actively coming to the CASA office, have taken training, and are meeting children, shadowing an advocate or working a case.

Imagine that you have a new volunteer lending a hand with admin skills in the CASA office. After a few months, offer them a leap: the chance to shadow a seasoned advocate. This is a transition to deeper **engagement**. They may become your next great CASA.

People who have been working cases for a while may also be in the **engagement** phase, or may be between **engagement** and **ownership**. Perhaps they've worked several cases and are ready to get involved on a higher level. Keep track of where volunteers are in the cycle, and encourage coach supervisors to see the big picture and do the same.

In the **ownership** stage, a volunteer has made a significant investment in the organization. They serve and they recruit from their circle of influence. They regularly seek out opportunities to connect others with the mission.

Say that you recruited an accountant two years ago, and after their first case, they took on a second one. Then they decided to reach out to their faith community to seek new volunteers, and to offer a brown-bag meeting at their workplace in order to fundraise for CASA at the holidays. This volunteer has embraced the CASA community and sees this work as a meaningful part of their life.

WHY DO PEOPLE BECOME ADVOCATES?

Human behavior is almost always motivated by multiple factors. There's never one single reason why we do something, and new folks come to CASA for a wide variety of reasons. The more we tailor recruitment efforts to multiple motivations, the more likely it is that a potential recruit will complete training and accept their first case.

There are both logical and emotional reasons why a CASA volunteer joins the cause. Some advocates will align their mission with that of CASA because of their passion to make a difference in children's lives. Others will embrace the mission because they bring the logic necessary to objectively deal with hard topics. Some come because they have the professional skill set to navigate through difficult situations.

CHILD ADVOCATES OF FORT BEND (CAFB): CHILDREN CAUGHT IN THE SYSTEM TRAINING

CAFB created a unique training for a variety of professionals involved with children. They offered Continuing Education Units (CEUs) so that it would be enticing to social workers, teachers and law enforcement officials who must earn CEUs annually.

Others come because they were abused and neglected as kids, and they've reached a place in life where they're devoted to preventing this from happening to other young people. Still more come because they are looking for deeper meaning in their lives.

Learn the real motivations for each of your advocates. What's driving their desire to get involved? What are they looking for, personally? Develop a relationship with your volunteers to understand their personal mission and values, and how those align with CASA's mission.

A CASA volunteer receives ongoing professional development and develops an expansive skill set in dealing with the legal, child welfare and education systems. Becoming an advocate is not only a life-changing experience, but also a resume builder. For those who may be new to the workforce, or returning after an absence, it has a lot of professional appeal. For those who may seek a career in social services, law or child development, there is no better training ground.

One of the beauties of being an advocate is the opportunity to grow emotionally, professionally and intellectually.

MAKING RELATIONSHIPS THE CENTER OF RECRUITMENT

It's better to take a targeted approach and meet real people where they are than to cast a wide recruitment net in shallower waters. We're here to get in deep and build relationships that last. So take time to reduce ambiguity around the expectations and responsibilities of being a CASA volunteer.

Create a clear picture of the characteristics your organization is looking for in potential recruits. With insights, you can recruit efficiently and build long-lasting relationships by moving people down the path to **ownership**.

Imagine that you are a Human Resources recruiter at a large corporation. Companies spend significant time investing in potential employees because they want to ensure their skill set aligns with the position and their recruit will have longevity. They may take a recruit to dinner to get to know them better. CASA programs don't have the resources of corporations, but we can probably take people to coffee! We can also throw a barbecue or potluck so people get to know each other as a group. The quickest way to commitment is to get personal.

Another way to conceptualize the relationship is to imagine volunteers the same way we think about financial donors. The donor pipeline is a concept for assessing where donors are in the process: from identification, to cultivation, to solicitation, to stewardship. In raising major gifts for an organization, staff members cultivate long-term relationships. A high-quality advocate or auxiliary volunteer has the same value to an organization as a major donor, and recruiting them requires similar cultivation skills.

THE BENEFITS OF AN IMPROVED ONBOARDING & SELECTION PROCESS



REDUCED STRESS

Connect potential advocates with experienced volunteers so they can ask questions to better understand unique situations they may encounter as an advocate. Learn about all of their questions so you can take any stress or uncertainty out of the equation.



IMPROVED ADVOCACY

When a CASA clearly understands the expectations of their role as well as the mission of CASA, their advocacy for the children they serve will be more effective. Take time to reduce ambiguity around expectations for, and responsibilities of, a CASA volunteer.



INCREASED SATISFACTION

By spending time with incoming volunteers and learning about their lives and motivations, you provide a foundation for increased satisfaction. The more a recruit understands about the role and feels personally connected, the more they can walk confidently in advocacy and feel great about their contributions.



BETTER RETENTION

When volunteers are happy with an organization, the odds of them seeking another opportunity are much lower. As a result, stress reduction, improved advocacy, and satisfaction all add up to the ultimate goal of higher rates of retention.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Of course, not all potential recruits will be selected. It's important to talk about the application, interview and training as a **selection process**. See chapters 4, 5, and 6 for further details.

Some people are really better suited for auxiliary roles—not the monthly commitment of visiting a child and writing a report, or the intensity of speaking to the court. Think creatively about how to engage them! Ask them to brainstorm other things they might like to do. What would they like to contribute? What would be fun and fulfilling?

For example, you can offer a student with a background in marketing the chance to make designs and do social media for your next recruitment campaign. Do you have a recruit who loves order, file folders and systems? Invite them to tackle the assignment of making your office more organized and efficient. These volunteer tasks are also vital, and the more community members are involved in the fabric of the daily work, the better the program will be rooted.

BUILDING A NETWORK FOR ROBUST RECRUITMENT

A network is the single most important tool in a recruiter's toolbox. A successful CASA recruiter knows their community well and partners with other organizations that have similar goals. The following are a couple of launching points to develop your network.



CONNECT WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

Reach out to other CASA programs! The Texas CASA website has links to all the program websites. If a program has a high-quality website, it's probably a good place to start building connections. Connect with other CASA staff and leaders on social media to learn from their recruitment campaigns or idea sharing. Of course, in-person conversations are the most powerful, so take advantage of regional meetings and gatherings. Find out what's working for your peers and share your wins, too.



ASK CURRENT VOLUNTEERS FOR LEADS

When a volunteer enters the **awareness** and **involvement** stages, take note of their gifts and connections. Who can be an asset for getting your foot in the door at a local church, or creating a partnership with a local business?

Consider gathering a small focus group of advocates. Ask questions about their experiences, and learn what it's like to spend time "in their shoes." An extended conversation can be critical to tailoring your recruitment efforts to your audience. Then, ask them to connect you with three more possible recruits. This helps a volunteer move towards the **ownership** phase of the cycle.

Volunteers grow as human beings by virtue of navigating the complex interpersonal dynamics of cases, and charting a path for children through choppy waters. They also grow as they become more committed to the program and fully take on a part in ensuring its success.

CASA OF LIBERTY/CHAMBERS COUNTIES: CASA COMPADRE PROGRAM

Volunteers who aren't ready for the commitment of advocacy can still support and enrich the program. CASA of Liberty/Chambers Counties developed a way to move these folks from **awareness** to **engagement** through a program called CASA Compadres. Compadres take a brief version of advocate training and complete the same background checks. Then, they can pitch in with office support, admin and behind-the-scenes work matched to their skill sets. Many decide to become advocates as they get comfortable. Currently, there are 27 Compadres serving the program. Executive Director Debbie Dugger says, "The CASA Compadre program has been a significant investment for our program due to our size. However, it has paid off tenfold with the number of committed volunteers who support our mission."



GOALS

- Maximize research and collaboration to create a strong Volunteer Recruitment Plan.
- Develop a Yearly Events Calendar with your leadership.
- Assess the effectiveness of your events.
- Analyze volunteer demographics to guide outreach.
- Map out your community's resources for recruitment.

CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPING A STRONG VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT PLAN

A PLAN IS YOUR BEST ASSET

The groundwork for a superb recruitment program is based in crafting a strong Volunteer Recruitment Plan. It's easy to try to fly by the seat of our pants when we are busy and working hard to meet our goals. We might be tempted to do what has always been done, rather than examine all options and make strategic new decisions. So, how do we create a successful Plan?



In order to create a living, breathing document for your organization, you must begin with the end in mind and set achievable goals. Each of the research steps here has an accompanying worksheet in the Appendix.

The Volunteer Recruitment Plan is your comprehensive agenda to increase community awareness of your organization, locate potential volunteers and bring them into the Volunteer Ownership Cycle. This document gives you a compass to evaluate effectiveness, and helps involve staff and community collaboration in the all-important recruitment journey.

GETTING STARTED

A Volunteer Recruitment Plan can be a great support that's also utilized by other staff and board members. Recruitment is everyone's concern, and people will thank you for a well-articulated Plan. Complete the research with the assistance of your leadership, and if possible, invite all staff and a core crew of volunteers to provide input. At a minimum, recruitment planning should occur on an annual basis prior to the beginning of your fiscal year.

If you are new to the CASA network, the first step in developing the knowledge to make a successful Plan is attending advocacy training. Executive Directors should ensure that their recruiters are given the time and access to attend. Then, try shadowing an experienced volunteer as they work their case. By working alongside them, you can experience what it's like to volunteer firsthand. You will be better prepared to recruit at all the fantastic events you'll generate in your Yearly Events Calendar. You'll also be confident (and accurate!) when explaining the job.

A budget is also necessary for successful recruitment. Of course, the quality of efforts is more important than the quantity of cash expended in the process. Local programs have varied financial resources – we offer examples for programs with different budgets, taking care to include both inexpensive approaches and more expansive ones.

Simplicity is key: the Plan should be a good-looking document that even someone new to the organization can pick up, easily understand and implement.

AMARILLO AREA CASA: USING LOCAL COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES AS A RESOURCE

Amarillo Area CASA's relationship with West Texas A&M University began when their Recruitment Director visited the university website to start recruitment efforts. On the clubs and organizations page of the site, they found the Enactus group. They submitted a proposal that Enactus choose CASA as their marketing research project of 2016-2017. Enactus agreed, and is now working on recommendations for CASA to improve their recruitment. Amarillo Area CASA was inspired to create the research steps in this guidebook and their accompanying worksheets in the Appendix.

Pro tip for program leadership: Give new recruiters the time to learn about CASA, research your community, and set achievable goals before they are sent in the field for new volunteers.

STEP 1: DEVELOP A YEARLY EVENTS CALENDAR

Kick it off! Develop a Yearly Events Calendar to learn what events are already in place at your agency and to facilitate a structured discussion with colleagues about current events and their purpose. Approach this with high energy, seeking to find all possible ways to maximize the impact of existing events.

Go month by month through a calendar year with your Executive Director and Program Director (including trainings and informational sessions). We've included a sample table below. Find out about existing

recruitment, fundraising, appreciation or retention events. What's the core purpose or goal behind each event? Place checks in the boxes to show how those events are being used.

EVENT NAME	MONTH	RECRUITMENT?	RETENTION?	FUNDRAISING?	DESCRIPTION

Once the events table is complete, use these questions to guide brainstorming, with the recruitment team and the whole staff.

- How can we better weave recruitment into this event?
- What events are consistently successful? Why?
- Which events are less successful? Why?
- What systems are in place for tracking inquiries directly following events?
- How effective was each event for recruitment purposes? (For example: How many people inquired or applied after attending the Community Market booth? Is it worth doing again next year based on those inquiries?)
- Are there any events people are interested in doing, but haven't tried yet? Make a wish list.
- Write a list to help spark ideas for months that are "slow."

STEP 2: ANALYZE THE DEMOGRAPHICS

Get clear on who's here! Take a good look at all of your current volunteers and think hard about what the demographic representation is like.

Who are the children your agency serves? How can you recruit volunteers from their communities? Is there a certain group you have a harder time retaining? Knowing your numbers helps determine where to focus and how to challenge yourself to grow so that the children are served in the very best ways possible.

To get clear, determine the demographic breakdown of your current volunteer pool using the categories below. Find the numbers using CasaManager™ or another data tracking system.

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS:

VOLUNTEER AGE:

21 TO 29:

30 TO 40:

40 TO 50:

50 TO 60:

60+:

GENDER:

MALE:

FEMALE:

CUSTOMS & BACKGROUNDS

List the customs & backgrounds of your volunteers and the children you serve.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN:

TOP 5 CAREER FIELDS/SKILL SETS OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS:

Do you see any trends in your volunteers' career paths or skill sets? List them.

1

2

3

4

5

You can imagine many other kinds of demographic data that can be useful for recruitment and matching volunteers with children—such as languages spoken, religions, and countries of origin. Map all the different factors you can think of.

STEP 3: PLAN ACTION BASED ON DATA

Once you've got a handle on demographic data and your top questions, check in with your program leadership to learn more about how to act on the information.

- How do the customs and backgrounds of your volunteers align with the children served?
- Have there been any struggles recruiting volunteers with different traditions and backgrounds?
- Is there an age group for which your program might need to improve recruitment efforts?
- Are any languages in need of greater representation?

STEP 4: EXAMINE RETENTION RATES

Once you analyze your demographics, take a look at your agency's retention rates. Recruitment and retention may seem like far-flung aspects of CASA work, but they are absolutely interconnected. We have to recruit the right people, then train and support them fully, in order to retain them in the long term. Strong retention doesn't happen without insightful recruitment.

Luckily, you can calculate retention rates using some simple math formulas—if your colleagues don't already have the figures. You'll help everyone by examining the info with a new pair of eyes. Learn how to determine rates in the Appendix.

Now, it's time to answer questions about those retention numbers. Reach out to other staff and have a brainstorming session! Collaboration advances everyone's goals.

- Look at your Yearly Events Calendar. How many events are retention-specific? Would adding more retention events or increasing the volunteer role at existing events improve retention rates?
- How many times a month does your program engage in advocate recognition? List the ways you recognize advocates (For example: birthday cards, Advocate of the Month, "good job" cards or treats).

STEP 5: RESEARCH YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Extend your reach! We live in a big world with lots happening. Find five community calendars that you can advertise CASA events on, and practice posting your next event. You'll want to know how easy or difficult posting is, what permissions you need to post and how far in advance you have to share something to ensure it's posted. You should also make sure all your events make it onto your social media calendar and invites are created.

Take advantage of various seasons, days and holidays that your community recognizes or celebrates! Whether it's "New Year's Resolutions" or "Back to School Season," make recruitment activities and marketing topical and timely.

Choose one topical or timely event/day/holiday each month of the year, and plan an effort to correspond. For example, many churches recognize "Orphan Care Sunday" in November. Calendars might show events that have already been planned by churches in November. Piggy-back on them! Ask to join, recruit, present or be a leading presence.

Pro tip: Take advantage of existing community events to reach new audiences and save recruitment money.

Connect with your leadership to complete these exercises:

- List 10 clubs and organizations that CASA spoke at in the previous fiscal year.
- Find 10 clubs and organizations that CASA has not spoken at. Make a list of contacts.
- Find five contacts for local print, digital and broadcast media. Invite them to lunch. Utilize them for PR stories!
- How often does your program write press releases to advertise upcoming events, trainings and informational sessions?
- Does your program have an established relationship with a local media outlet? Consider asking a group to be your media sponsor and provide free ad space in exchange for recognition as one of CASA's donors.
- Which months on your Yearly Events Calendar are a bit slow? Supplement those months with an existing community event. For example, if the Chamber of Commerce shows a networking event in May, attend that event instead of creating a new one.

Revisit your Plan regularly to keep it fresh! A strong Volunteer Recruitment Plan will keep you on point. It will also increase your leverage as a tool to activate recruitment efforts by all the other folks who are invested in the success of the program. It takes everyone's effort to make sure there's an advocate for every child in the system—and you have the power to lead this charge!

SMART GOALS

Develop a Plan with goals that are:

Specific

Measurable

Actionable

Relevant

Time-bound

For example: The CASA program will attend three Young Chamber of Commerce events by November 2018 to increase recruitment of volunteers age 21-30.



GOALS

- Bring in the largest number of volunteers with the least expenditure of resources.
- Understand your audiences and tailor materials to meet them.
- Learn the value of word-of-mouth campaigns.
- Learn to work with the media to maximize the power of your resources.
- Develop reciprocal relationships to best promote your efforts.

CHAPTER THREE

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS & MEDIA EFFORTS THAT IGNITE YOUR MESSAGE

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

How can you bring in more volunteers that children can identify with? What communities need greater engagement from your organization? Where do you find all the great advocates? Recruitment campaigns are the intentional, focused approach to getting new prospects to your table. To get the most bang for your buck with both finances and time, leverage word of mouth, social media, and traditional media organizations as a three-pronged approach.



Marketers use the “Rule of Seven”: the idea that a person will have to hear about something at least seven times before they remember it. Play a game with this idea! How could one person in your community get the CASA message seven whole times in one month? How will you diversify the meaning and delivery of the message so it seems new and interesting every single time?

Three or four meaningful interactions might be needed to urge a prospective volunteer into the **engagement** phase. Nonprofit fundraisers often design multiple asks before a donor decides to open their checkbook and make a gift. It can take similar strategizing to forge lasting connections with a volunteer. You’re up to the challenge!



CHILD ADVOCATES SAN ANTONIO: STREET BANNERS

Child Advocates San Antonio's recruitment staff took a good look at their numbers and knew their need for volunteers with cultures and languages was high. The City of San Antonio displays street banners at various points around town, so the recruitment team developed a relationship with the City office in charge of the program. Now not only do they have the banners in areas where the City was already posting them, they have also inspired the City to place CASA banners in other neighborhoods they hadn't previously considered.

Recruitment of volunteers speaking languages other than English has leapt from 25 percent to 45 percent since the banner program began one year ago! This success is a testament to knowing a community and understanding the best ways to develop awareness through methods that target your local neighborhoods and leverage existing community resources.

KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

What do you need to know about your target audience in order to create content that connects with them? How can you frame your appeals to be personal and meet their inherent interests?

Speaking to the "wants" of your audience is critical. Consider how parent-teacher organizations have different missions and goals than a group like Bikers Against Child Abuse. Change both the content and the tone of your presentations to meet them where they are. You might even choose different music to play before each event starts. Both groups have great pools of potential volunteers! Approach them like you know them.

It's also crucial to foster an environment of acceptance and understanding within your organization and recruitment strategies. Make a conscious effort to engage with groups that are not always well-represented. In *The Art of Coaching for Volunteer Retention*, you'll find numerous ideas for embracing the variety of volunteers and developing the skills needed to ensure your program serves everyone effectively. Ask the groups you are approaching what is most important to them!

For reaching broad and specialized audiences, media campaigns are a critical element of your Volunteer Recruitment Plan and are the way CASA awareness can permeate a wide variety of settings. For many, seeing an ad on TV, a story in the human-interest section of the paper or a post on social media may be their first point of contact with CASA. This can provide the all-powerful entry point to **awareness** in the Volunteer Ownership Cycle.

Let's look at the top three tools you'll be using to get your folks coming in the door: word-of-mouth publicity, social media and online marketing, and working with traditional media outlets such as print, digital, radio and TV organizations.

WORD-OF-MOUTH PUBLICITY

Great news! More than 70 percent of nonprofits find word-of-mouth recruitment to be their most valuable engagement tool, with online recruitment coming up second⁴. Don't have the budget to spend significant funds on media? Capitalize on word-of-mouth recruitment, and watch organic results unfold.

Make it easy for existing volunteers to share their stories. Host a writing workshop or a training that helps volunteers develop elevator speeches that testify to the power of CASA in three minutes or less. Then bring a current advocate with you to networking or community events.

Make word-of-mouth easy with an "Invite-a-Friend Campaign." Create an incentive-based campaign that's meaningful enough to advocates that they'd be willing to engage someone new. Provide a reward: ask local restaurants to donate gift certificates, or give out CASA t-shirts or conference passes if the friend completes a successful application and interview. These incentives should be limited to a certain time period to ease your budget, and can also be considered part of your retention efforts.

There are so many groups in your community whose visions may align with yours. Where do interested, active, caring people congregate? Consider parent-teacher organizations, farmer's markets, retired teacher groups, Chamber of Commerce events, United Way events, religious study groups, fitness groups, parks and recreation events, library lectures, university campuses and more. Pass out your materials generously so that word of mouth begins and buzz starts happening: CASA is the place to be!

SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE RECRUITMENT

Social media can make a huge difference in recruitment, especially if it's well targeted. It is an important, low-cost way for CASA programs to impart their mission and message. Ensure that your website is regularly updated with fresh content, and choose one social media platform on which to "shine." Some social media sites can also be set to automatically post on more than one platform – for example: Instagram can post automatically to Facebook, and Facebook can post automatically to Twitter. Consider using a social media scheduling platform, such as Hootsuite, to schedule your posts in advance, and plan around calendared events like Child Abuse Prevention Month.

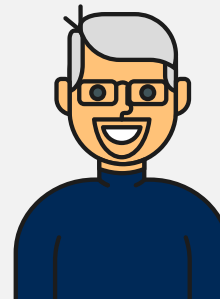
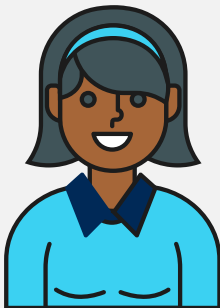
Post articles relevant to your work and share posts from other sources like Texas CASA. Focus on events that involve volunteers like case-closing celebrations. Create small incentives if your "likes" go above a targeted number on Facebook such as 500 or 1,000.

Track inquiries to determine media success. Quality media and word-of-mouth efforts will result in email and phone call inquiries to your organization. As a recruiter, you will always want to be prepared to respond to inquiries and track their sources! Ideally, ask:

- Where did you hear about CASA?
 - Media
 - Billboard
 - Location of billboard
 - Website
 - Word-of-mouth reference
 - Relation to potential volunteer
- When did you first hear of CASA?
- When did you most recently hear of CASA?
- What caused you to call now?

TARGETING SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS BY GENERATION

How will different age groups receive your message? How can you activate a variety of generations through your media efforts? Consider the following comparisons⁵.



MILLENNIALS

BABY BOOMERS

SIMILAR: ACTIVE & VOCAL

Both groups are active in causes/groups they feel strongly about and use social media to share their passion.



like, re-tweet,
or share
content on
social media.



follow
1 to 5
nonprofits
on social
media.



would join an organization
with programs for young
professionals.



participate
in a
movement.



follow or
like cause-
related
groups.

2 IN 5

share information about
a cause online.

DIFFERENT: LISTENING & TALKING

To effectively communicate with both groups, CASA must take many factors into consideration. Both use social media and websites for listening and talking, but they use them differently.

TOP CAUSE-RELATED INFORMATION SOURCES



EMAILS



FACEBOOK



NEWSLETTERS



TV



WEBSITES



NEWSPAPERS

WEBSITES

First learn about an organization and then use social following. Millennials are more likely to share photos.

Baby boomers are more likely to use for regular engagement and are more search oriented. Baby boomers are more likely to share videos.

SOCIAL MEDIA



like it when an
organization
uses success
stories.



connect to
websites
through
social media.



follow a
group or
organization.



watch and
post videos.

PRINT, DIGITAL, RADIO & TV MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS

Lastly, we come to traditional media. If you find ways to make the job of a reporter or editor easier, they will likely reward you for your efforts. Paying for media is often not necessary—many CASA programs don't even include media in their budget! Here are some ideas for how you can encourage coverage through well-established routes:

1. Write your own articles for submitting to the newspaper about your work in the community. What difference is CASA making for children in foster care?
2. Create blanket press releases with photos geared towards timely tie-ins or upcoming events.
3. Create graphics or other eye-catching resources with help from a student intern or a volunteer designer.
4. Go to local television stations and introduce yourself in person. Bring a one-pager describing CASA, or promotional items so they can put a face to a name. You'll want to be the first person they think of if it's a light news day.

Texas CASA also creates media placements and marketing materials you can use to connect with potential volunteers, and frequently makes media buys to purchase time for PSAs and other advertisements. Take advantage of the materials in the Statewide Marketing Campaign Toolkit. Your program can use the same messaging in your materials and share the PSA on your platforms. Media release templates are also regularly offered, with blanks to fill in your information and submit to local media outlets.

DEVELOP GIVE-&TAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Effective networking relationships are beneficial to both parties. For example, if you want to make connections within the Chamber of Commerce, do more than just attend meetings—try serving on a committee, such as women in business. When working with the media, give-and-take is even more key than in any other field. Reporters and editors typically have a huge number of requests to profile different organizations and campaigns. You must stand out by staying in touch, offering to take a reporter to lunch, and giving well-written copy and high-resolution photos when you make a pitch.

Reciprocity and personal caring in relationships creates a win for everyone, and is part of what CASA is all about. The same goes for all of our recruitment campaigns and relationships with organizations beyond our doors—especially those that have the greatest reach to help us meet our goals.

CASA OF ELLIS COUNTY: GIVE-&TAKE WITH THE ELLIS COUNTY PRESS

CASA of Ellis County took writing press releases a step further with their local paper. Rather than simply providing small amounts of copy, Case Supervisor Kim Garlitz regularly submits articles to the local paper. These articles are tailored to calendar events such as Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Editors appreciate it and regularly give her articles a prominent position in the paper. The biggest accomplishment of this partnership came recently when the Ellis County Press published a free, full-page spread with photos about CASA's upcoming gala.





GOALS

- Develop an information session for potential volunteers.
- Clearly define the role of a Court Appointed Special Advocate.
- Learn to convene a Speaker's Bureau, and train advocates to give presentations.
- Understand how information sessions can serve as a screening tool.

CHAPTER FOUR

CREATING IRRESISTIBLE VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SESSIONS

DEVELOP A WINNING PRESENTATION

Now we're in the heart of your recruitment efforts—when you're out in the community offering info sessions and reaching groups of people. It's exciting and unpredictable. You'll develop great connections and have to make hard calls. Above all, you'll be offering an extraordinary opportunity for people to change their own lives, and the lives of children in the hardest possible situations.

Let's look at the various methods of hosting an information session and how you can use your resources effectively when time is limited. When someone attends a volunteer information session, they have likely heard about CASA and have a basic understanding of the mission. It's up to you to move their hearts, deliver both data and stories, and present the opportunities that will appeal to the individuals present. The number one key is to ensure potential volunteers have a clear understanding of the advocate role—and feel connected.



When developing your presentation, imagine how your message will land with a variety of audiences with different backgrounds, availability, skill sets and expectations.

Educator Howard Gardner designed the concept of "multiple intelligences," which can be explored as primary learning styles, or ways that different brains engage with information. Research suggests that each individual learner prefers one above the others. When you are creating training plans, explore including something that will resonate best with each of the different learning styles.

VISUAL (SPATIAL)

Learners prefer using pictures, images and spatial understanding.



AURAL (AUDITORY-MUSICAL)

Learners prefer using voices, sound and music.



VERBAL (LINGUISTIC)

Learners respond best to using words, in speech and writing.



PHYSICAL (KINESTHETIC)

Learners like using their bodies, hands and sense of touch.



LOGICAL (MATHEMATICAL)

Learners enjoy using logic, reasoning and systems.



SOCIAL (INTERPERSONAL)

Learners prefer to learn in groups or with other people.



SOLITARY (INTRAPERSONAL)

Learners prefer to work by themselves.



Choose a variety of approaches so you can touch on several styles in each presentation. For example, here are some tools you might use:

- A short video about CASA (visual)
- A handout with space to take notes (verbal/reading/writing)
- A current advocate who shares about their experience working a case (interpersonal)
- Curated music played while on break or eating together (auditory)
- A physical warm-up game or icebreaker (physical)
- Personal writing or reflection time (solitary)
- Facts and percentages about children in foster care (logical)

A SAMPLE INFORMATION SESSION AGENDA

How do you lead an info session that's compelling and gets people inspired to join?

The following are the main talking points of what has proven to be a successful information session agenda.



1. WELCOME

- Introduce yourself, other staff and advocates.
- Thank everyone for coming.
- Show your program's recruitment video.
- Ask participants to write down questions and save them for the end of your presentation, to make sure you will have enough time to get through your materials.



2. SHARE YOUR STORY/STATEMENT/ELEVATOR SPEECH

- Share a concise and meaningful statement that summarizes the material presented in the video and clearly defines CASA's work and the volunteer role.

"CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. We listen to the voices of children who have been abused and neglected, and stand up for their rights. We visit the children, get to know them and advocate for their needs to be met in an overburdened foster care system. A CASA can be a mentor and friend, and provide stability to a child in need. A CASA fights for children and protects them from harm. The children that we serve are your children and our children. They are from your county and your towns, and they need us—and you—now."



3. DEFINE THE OPPORTUNITY

- Share the roles you have come to recruit for—emphasize the CASA advocate as the highest need for the organization.
- Share data pertinent to your audience that also aligns with your needs. For example, "We are looking for male volunteers to serve as advocates—more than half of the children we serve are boys, but only 13 percent of our advocates are men."



4. DESCRIBE THE HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

- Talk about the national significance of CASA.
- Share your local program's history followed with a strong quote such as, "We have continued to be the sole volunteer organization that speaks up for children who have been abused and neglected. We are the voice for those who have no voice."
- Give more detail about your specific needs. For example, "There are currently 104 children in the six counties we cover that do not have a CASA advocate." Elaborate on what this means for the community.



5. A SEASONED ADVOCATE OR SPEAKERS' BUREAU MEMBER PRESENTS

- If an advocate is present, have them share how long they have been an advocate, why they became an advocate, and one special thing they did on a case (10 minutes or less).



6. HAND OUT THE VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION (SEE CHAPTER 5 FOR A RECOMMENDED JOB DESCRIPTION)

- Highlight the role of the Coach Supervisor. For example: "You are assigned a Volunteer Coach Supervisor who will be your coach and your guide, and help you for the duration of the case."
- Discuss minimum expectations of service.
- Share the journey of a CASA from beginning to the end of a case. You can also use your advocate to incorporate this information into their story.



7. QUESTION & ANSWER TIME

- Take about 10 minutes to answer questions from participants. Thank each person for their question. Engage your advocate representative in this process.
- If a participant says or asks something that may be disengaging or harmful to the process, confidently redirect them. You could say, "Let's discuss that privately after the session." "I see your point. Back to the conversation we were having..." or "Thanks for sharing. Next, we're going to talk about..."



8. SHARE & COLLECT THE APPLICATION (SEE CHAPTER 5 FOR A RECOMMENDED JOB APPLICATION)

- Encourage participants to complete the application right then and there! Offer them options if they need some time: to come in and talk with you at the office, to meet for coffee, or to apply on paper or online later.
- Discuss the various background checks needed and the associated fees.



9. NEXT STEPS

- Discuss the interview and selection process for your organization.

SCHEDULING INFORMATION SESSIONS

Schedule your info sessions for new prospects at least once per month. Consider what makes the most sense for your program, and also make sure to consider what fits the needs of your potential volunteers. If you serve several counties, host info sessions in each county. Go to them; don't wait for them to come to you. Potential volunteers might not travel an extensive distance to reach you until they know how extraordinary CASA is – then, they'll move mountains to get there.

Keep info sessions upbeat, high-energy and limited to an hour or less (unless the audience has requested more time).

Train several staff in your office on how to conduct mini-sessions. You never know when a current advocate will bring friends by, or when a person walking on the street will feel moved to learn more about CASA and drop in as a visitor. Get your coworkers prepared and pumped up to make real recruitment connections on a moment's notice. Everyone is busy, so people might not remember to get you the info of people who come in. Regularly remind your colleagues to collect names, phone numbers, emails and interests, and to get it to you the same day they meet someone.

Take the time to promote the session on social media and your website. If you have a sign-in sheet from a recent community event, email those on your list and invite them to the information session.

STAYING ORGANIZED

Speaking of contact info, one of the most important elements of the info session is the humble sign-in sheet. At the very start of any event, gather contact information from attendees. You can bring a paper sign-in sheet, or set up a simple form on a tablet. There are benefits to going digital—recruits may share more info than they would on a form that's visible to everyone, and a web form will keep you from having to type in email addresses one by one. But a simple piece of paper on a clipboard (or several) also works!

As soon as you're back at the office, add all new contact info to your agency's membership database, and to your own spreadsheets. Then reach out and start cultivating your new contacts! This starting point will assist in moving volunteers from **awareness** to **involvement**.

New sign-ups offer a useful data point. How many people who came to the information session completed an application? Interviewed? Accepted a case? Think about successes or challenges in your efforts at the different locations and presentations, based on new sign-ups—and their follow-through after you follow up.



Consider hosting info session events at times that match up with different people's schedules. Try offering morning, lunchtime and evening sessions at regular intervals. Provide appropriate refreshments, or even lunch if it's in your budget. Also, be prepared to visit places of business and work around their schedule.

USING INFORMATION SESSIONS AS A SCREENING TOOL

The info session may be your first encounter with a potential volunteer. Not all who attend will be equipped to be advocates, and this event can be a valuable screening tool. Pay attention to the types of questions a potential volunteer asks during an info session. Are they thoughtful, open and considerate? Do they sound like they want to learn?

If an attendee comes from a place of, “How can I get involved?” or “How can I help?” they might be a great fit. If they are coming from a place of, “I know everything already,” or “The system is too broken to work with,” being an advocate might not necessarily be their path.

Red flags often present themselves when we meet someone—many times, we quell our awareness of them to give everyone a chance. But pay attention to your intuition. As a recruiter, you have the whole program’s wellbeing at the forefront of your mind.

If a prospect appears to have a negative attitude about CPS or seem overly angry or emotional about the plight of foster children or the volunteer process, they may not be equipped to hold a neutral or professional demeanor as an advocate. If awkward situations arise, do your best to redirect the participant to the positive. For example, if someone shares a negative story about CPS, tell them, “Thanks for sharing. There can be frustrations on every case. CASAs can be a part of the solution...”

Always be mindful of the fact that being a CASA volunteer requires a high level of commitment, and reassure participants that if it’s too much for them, you understand and appreciate that they know that about themselves. Some volunteers may not be ready for the role of an advocate, but may have a mission that aligns with yours. Some may be nervous about appearing in court or just not have enough time to commit to a child. Engage and welcome them by presenting other auxiliary opportunities. Ask them what they do best and wish to contribute! This can range from bookkeeping or writing thank you notes, to social media, graphic design, or being on a committee.

A short-term office volunteer may one day become a high-quality advocate. Everyone gets comfortable in their own time, and has a valuable square to add to the CASA quilt. We value all efforts and will welcome everyone into the work with enthusiasm. Offer appreciation no matter how large or small their contribution is.

CREATE A SPEAKER’S BUREAU PROGRAM

Lift advocates up as experts. Current advocates can be a great resource as speakers for information sessions – this is also a useful tool to bring people in to the **ownership** phase. One way in which you can engage advocates is to form a Speakers Bureau. A well-trained group member can take the lead on an information session and connect you with other community groups, such as the Lions Club or retired teachers.

Here are some tips for establishing a Speaker’s Bureau in your program¹:



Strategize – Create some parameters for an ideal program. You’ll be organizing this—get clear on how much time you have to devote to it, and how you’d like it to look.

Is there an application process, or is it by nomination only? What are the personal requirements? What is your vision of the time commitment and number of presentations that Speakers should be ready to take on? Seek out experienced volunteers or board

members to be in your Speaker's Bureau. You can probably immediately think of three people who are dynamic and passionate about the mission. Consider a catchy name for your group, such as CASA Home Team or Recruitment Heroes.



Recruit – Seek new members for your Speaker's Bureau by inviting people, and also by creating printed and online material encouraging people to join or apply. Ask everyone in your agency to contribute to a list of names of possible speakers from the corps of volunteers (past and present, including board members). Make it clear that it's an honor to join, and other CASA obligations might be shifted in order to balance the workload and time, if needed (and possible). Let folks know you won't throw them out there unprepared. You'll coach them through telling the story and giving a strong speech.



Train – Meet with your Speaker's Bureau regularly to train them on how to use your materials. Practice is key! Have people give mock presentations, and have other speakers try to stump them in a practice Q & A. If they want to use one, create a core presentation that can be tailored to engage and please various audiences, so there's an easy go-to for their appearances. Develop a PowerPoint or Prezi they can access easily online. Toastmasters.com has a ton of materials on how to become a confident public speaker. Always build in time for your volunteers to brainstorm and to discuss new recruitment opportunities they might present at.



Support & Give Feedback – Coach your volunteers through this process! Public speaking is fun for the extroverted among us, and for others, it can be harrowing. Always support your speakers. Provide them with feedback and rewards. If adjustments are needed, use a compliment sandwich—say what they did well, then what could use improvement, then wrap it up with praise. Invite them to give you feedback too. "Tell me how I can support you," is a phrase that never gets old.



Retain – Find fun and unique ways to thank volunteers serving in this important role. Show gratitude both person-to-person and to your Bureau as a group. They spend time and energy serving as the face of CASA in the wider community, help you recruit, and show up to make life safer for children in a concrete way with broad reach. They deserve major kudos.





GOALS

- Explore the recommended job description for CASA volunteers.
- Explain the job to candidates like a pro.
- Learn to streamline your process using a standard application.
- Understand how the application itself informs your interview process.

CHAPTER FIVE

GOLD STANDARD — THE ADVOCATE JOB DESCRIPTION & APPLICATION

The CASA job description and volunteer application serve dual roles: they help people know if the work is truly right for them, and also help you know if the recruit is right for the role. The advocate position is complicated! We have to draw the clearest picture possible for new recruits.

PUTTING THE JOB DESCRIPTION TO WORK

Successful nonprofits create job descriptions that thoroughly outline the expectations of their volunteers. This helps keep every stage of the volunteer's service on track—all the way from recruitment, case assignment and volunteer management to retention and mobilizing their power to recruit others.

Advocates play multi-faceted roles, so we recommend using a job description that is as thorough as possible. It should explain the duties, skills and abilities necessary to do a great job.

Share the job description with a potential volunteer multiple times, starting very early on in the process. This will ensure that volunteers have a clear understanding of whether they want to dive in for a whole year. Every volunteer appreciates clarity in their duties, and wants to do their job well. Consider giving them the description at these various points.

1

Give a handout of the job description during your information session.



2

Have a volunteer sign off on acceptance of the volunteer commitment in the application.



3

Review the job description in the interview, and ask the volunteer if they have questions.



4

Revisit the job description during training, and have them sign it again once training is complete.



THE RECOMMENDED JOB DESCRIPTION

Every volunteer job description, including those of auxiliary positions, should incorporate the following elements¹:

- Job Title
- Purpose of the Position
- Responsibilities and Duties
- Qualifications
- Commitment Expected
- Training

The job description below was developed by combining the best applications from various CASA programs. This standard description can be used throughout the CASA network. We invite you to modify it to meet your programs' needs and specifics – such as dates and timelines when a court report is due and how case materials are submitted.

Job Title: Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)

Responsible to: The Coach Supervisor (insert your program's appropriate job title here)

Purpose of the Position: The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a volunteer advocate for abused and neglected children who are involved in the legal system in _____ county (or counties) appointed by the _____ (insert district, county, or other type here) Judge. The CASA will review the facts of the case and recommend those actions believed to be in the best interest of the child(ren). The CASA will work to ensure that the child(ren) they are assigned to have a safe, permanent home.

Responsibilities:

- Read the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services case record and discuss with the CPS Caseworker.
- Interview all parties, clients and professionals involved in the assigned case.
- Investigate all placement alternatives available to the child.
- Maintain contact on a regular, recurring basis with all who have a responsibility to the child, or who can readily be expected to influence the final outcome of the case, including the caseworker, foster parents, attorneys for parties to the suit, and others.
- Maintain written records of all findings, dates of contacts and names of persons interviewed.
- Report the status of the case to the Coach Supervisor on a bi-weekly basis.
- Attend staffings concerning the child.
- Discuss the court report and recommendations with the Coach Supervisor prior to preparing the court report.
- Prepare and submit a typed draft of all court reports to the Coach Supervisor at least 10 days prior to scheduled hearings.
- Appear at all court hearings and testify according to the written court report, adding any new information not contained in the report.
- Monitor the case to ensure court orders are being carried out, services to the child are being furnished and placement is appropriate.
- Visit the child at least once a month.
- Keep the case activity information and submit volunteer hours to the Coach Supervisor by the first day of each month.

- Request and accept support from the Coach Supervisor.
- Return all case records to CASA at the conclusion of the case.

Qualifications and Requirements of the Position:

- Must be at least 21 years of age.
- Complete application, interview, background screening (CPS, DPS and fingerprinting).
- Have a concern for children and the genuine desire to help.
- Ability to work within the guidelines, policies and standards of _____ (your program name).
- Ability to work as part of a team and to receive guidance and direction.
- Good human relations skills, willingness to be objective and have sensitivity toward the customs and traditions of others.
- Sound oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality at all times.

Commitment: CASAs must commit to a minimum of one year of service.

Training: CASAs will complete 30 hours of pre-service training conducted by _____ (your program name).

PUTTING THE APPLICATION TO WORK

Make your applications available in hard copy at information sessions, and easily available to visitors at the CASA office. Consider bringing a tablet or laptop to info sessions in case people prefer to fill it out digitally.

Design your program's website so that an online application is very visible from the homepage, either as a linked button or a page called "Apply." On your social media, make sure there's a call to action inviting applications and linking to your homepage.

Your application collects information you'll use to inform the interview and build a relationship with the prospect, with the goal of bringing them warmly in once you determine they're a good match. Similar to an employment application, it should be as simple as possible to complete, while also providing the information you need to decide whether a potential volunteer will move on from the selection process to the interview. This will include employment and volunteer history, as well as personal history and disclosure. Here are the elements we consider to be key.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Questions on the application that inquire about the applicant's personal history of abuse or neglect are there to help guide your approach to the in-person interview. It's important to assess whether a volunteer has resolved potentially traumatic life experiences, and so can effectively advocate for children coming from difficult situations. We've included an invitation/disclaimer in this section to give the volunteer the option to discuss this information in person instead of writing about it on the application, if they prefer.

This abbreviated application does not include information collected for background checks and references which are required of all CASA programs.

THE RECOMMENDED APPLICATION



STRENGTHENING THE VOICES OF CASA STATEWIDE

[YOUR CASA PROGRAM NAME]

[YOUR CASA ADDRESS] • Phone: [YOUR CASA PHONE NUMBER] • Fax: [YOUR CASA FAX NUMBER]

Email: [YOUR CASA EMAIL ADDRESS]

General Information

Date _____

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

How long have you lived at this address? _____ If less than 5 years, please list your last address below:

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____ - _____ - _____ Mobile Number _____ - _____ - _____

Email Address _____ Date of Birth _____

How did you hear about [YOUR CASA ORGANIZATION]? _____

Education

Please check the appropriate box.

☐ High School Diploma

☐ Post Graduate

☐ Some College

☐ PhD/MD

☐ College Degree

☐ Other

Employment/Volunteer History

Please check the appropriate box.

☐ Full Time

☐ Student

☐ Self-Employed

☐ Part Time

☐ Homemaker

☐ Retired

☐ Unemployed

Employer/School:

Phone Number:

Occupation:

Language(s) Spoken ☐ English ☐ Spanish

☐ Other _____

Please list your volunteer activities, beginning with the most recent:

Organization	Volunteer Supervisor	Projects/Responsibilities	Date of Participation	Reason for Leaving

Personal Background Information

1. Have you had any personal experience involving the following?

Please check all that apply. Family includes parents, grandparents, siblings and children. If you would prefer to discuss this information in the interview, please indicate this in the "Interview" column.

Type of Abuse	Self	Family	Interview
Sexual Abuse	☐	☐	☐
Physical Abuse	☐	☐	☐
Emotional Abuse	☐	☐	☐
Neglect	☐	☐	☐
Exposed to Domestic Violence	☐	☐	☐
Involved with Children's Protective Services	☐	☐	☐
Substance Abuse (Drugs, Alcohol, Prescriptions, Inhalants, etc...)	☐	☐	☐

2. Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. All CASA/CAC volunteers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile liability insurance. Volunteers must provide the CASA office with a copy of the most up-to-date liability insurance and a current driver's license in order to process your application.

Do you have a current valid Texas driver's license? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 Do you have valid auto insurance? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 Do you have access to a car? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you interested in transporting children as a CASA volunteer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you been convicted of DWI/DUI in the last 10 years? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have been convicted of a DWI/DUI in the last 10 years, what was the disposition of the case(s)?

Short Answer Questions

Please answer the following questions below, to provide us with insight into your background and desires for volunteering. There is no "right" answer to these questions.

Please let us know if there is anything about you or your hobbies or interests that would be helpful for us to know when considering your CASA volunteer application and how well you would match with a child or sibling group. Feel free to discuss any historical information you feel especially shaped your life. You're welcome to include information about your childhood, current family, current participation in community activities, organization memberships, and

current lifestyle, such as career, hobbies, interests, etc..

Please provide a short summary about your interest in volunteering with [YOUR CASA ORGANIZATION].

Volunteer Commitment for CASA VOLUNTEER

Please be aware that, as a CASA volunteer, your primary focus is to advocate for the needs of abused and neglected children, ranging in age from birth to 17. These children find themselves in foster homes and group homes after being removed from their family by Child Protective Services. Our volunteers collaborate with family members, caseworkers, lawyers, therapists and caregivers (foster parents, relatives, etc.) to provide a recommendation to the judge as to where the children will have a safe and permanent home. As such, volunteers are expected to visit people involved with the child, attend court hearings, prepare court reports and communicate with all involved in the child's life during the legal process.

Volunteers with full-time jobs will have to be flexible with their time throughout their one-year commitment. They will have to attend court hearings and "staffings" during business hours. Tasks may involve carrying children, walking up stairs, getting to the courthouse, using computers, etc.

1. Based on the description above, is there anything that could limit you from performing these duties?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain:

USING THE APPLICATION TO INFORM THE INTERVIEW

No single form will give you the full picture of a volunteer's capacity or personality. Our belief is that the interview is your opportunity to collect more in-depth information and gain an understanding of that person as a unique individual. It's best to eliminate questions on the application that you'll ask in the interview, in order to respect the recruit's time and keep the process as relational as possible.

Once someone submits their application, they enter the **involvement** phase of the Volunteer Ownership Cycle. From that point on, it's time to develop a meaningful relationship, learn how their mission aligns with yours, connect personally and reach out to them regularly.



Review the application thoroughly before the interview to guide your conversation together. What volunteer experience do they have? How might you explore matters based on their answers to the application questions? Are there special issues that need to be addressed?

Come to the interview ready for a dynamic conversation, not a question and answer session, by becoming familiar with their answers before you begin. Our belief is that the interview is a prime opportunity to develop a relationship that moves the recruit's connection with CASA forward.





GOALS

- Understand the goals of interviewing a volunteer.
- Learn important considerations for conducting an interview.
- Understand what general topics should be covered in an interview.
- Learn about different types of interview questions and their purpose.
- Understand how the interview informs selection for advocate training.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDING YOUR CHAMPION ADVOCATES WITH THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

A TIME OF MUTUAL DISCOVERY

CASA programs vary when it comes to their specific interview questions, but all use the interview to go deeper – to get a better understanding of a volunteer’s skills and to assess their emotional capacity to do a difficult job.

You’ll tailor some aspects of each interview to the individual volunteer, but the general flow and structure of interviews should be similar across candidates. It is crucial to set up a system and protocols for your interview process, both so that it is fair and so that you get what you need from each interview. Creating standards for conducting interviews will help you to more accurately compare and select volunteers who want to be advocates.



The interview is a time of mutual discovery, and for asking questions such as: What other organizations are you involved with and why? What inspired you to get involved with CASA? Ask questions to understand each potential volunteer’s motivation as well as to gather ideas on how you might move them through the **involvement** stage, to the **engagement** and **ownership** phases.

Recruiters are not the only one making decisions during the interview—it’s a two-way street! A new recruit will likely be checking out the vibe, noticing how well people connect with them, and seeing if they feel comfortable and enthusiastic at this second stage. They are also still gathering information, so part of the job is to make sure they have all the information they need from you in order to decide if they want the job.

The manner of the interview shows the volunteer you take their involvement seriously and want to know who they are. Take your time to get centered and prepare. Going about it intentionally is good practice for both recruitment and retention, and lays the groundwork for a meaningful relationship.

GOALS OF THE INTERVIEW

The main goal of the interview is to determine whether the volunteer is, indeed, a good candidate for advocate training. You should have a fairly certain idea of your answer to this by the end of the interview, as well as a clear understanding of the volunteer’s expectations and their motivations for becoming involved with CASA¹.

A second goal is to learn about a volunteer’s passions and connections in the community, and to get a sense of how they might contribute to CASA in ways beyond case advocacy. Remember, just because a volunteer went to the information session and submitted an application does not mean that you must interview them. If none of the above goals can be met, and you’re aware of it, save your time for the relationships that will bear fruit (See Chapter 4 for screening indicators on whether or not a potential volunteer will be right for your agency).

IN-PERSON INTERVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

Who should be at the interview table? We recommend that at least two people conduct the interview. More minds are better! Having more than one interviewer gives you different perspectives, protects your interests, and ensures you find candidates that are invested in your mission. If possible, try to invite other interviewers to the table whose viewpoints or background are different than yours, so you get the widest possible view.

Sit down in a quiet place to review the application before the interview. Walk through your questions mentally, and get prepared for those questions that may be more difficult. For example, if a volunteer indicates that they would prefer to talk about their abuse history in the interview, you will want to carefully phrase your questions to be compassionate and respectful while eliciting the info you need: answers which indicate whether the volunteer has addressed a trauma history and can effectively advocate for children.

Some programs, such as Child Advocates of Fort Bend, have therapeutic interview questions that they ask a potential volunteer who has experienced abuse or neglect. They also have two staff and the program director participate in these cases. People with an abuse or neglect background can be very strong volunteers due to their experience and understanding.

INTERVIEW TOPICS

As part of the interview, you get a chance to review the advocate job description again. It's a great idea to go into more detail with examples and anecdotes, if there's time. Enthusiastically invite and answer any questions that the volunteer has about their potential role. Reiterate the responsibilities and time commitment! Gauge the volunteer's reactions to them to further assess their capacity. Other items to cover include:

The selection process:

Be clear that the interview determines whether they will move forward to the next step.



Training:

If you anticipate they will advance to the next step, discuss the advocate training process and your program's expectations for participating in the required 30 hours.



Other volunteer opportunities:

You may find after completing the interview that the volunteer is not well suited for the advocate role. Or, they may self-select out of the process, knowing this is not the right opportunity for them. Be sure to share other auxiliary options if you still want to move them forward in the Volunteer Ownership Cycle.



Some small programs may not have the capacity for more than one staff member to conduct the interview. Consider asking a board member or a seasoned, trusted advocate to participate in the interview with you.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are two main types of questions that you should ask in the interview: general screening questions and emotional intelligence indicators. General screening questions are aimed at getting to know the volunteer and their experience. Emotional intelligence questions deal with the potential volunteer's ability to perceive, reason with, understand, communicate and manage their emotions¹.

General Screening Question Examples:

- What initially interested you in becoming a CASA volunteer?
- Is there a specific aspect of our mission that motivates you to want to volunteer?
- Most cases require an advocate to commit to at least one year to 18 months. How would you work this into your schedule?
- Do you have any questions for us about our organization or the role of a CASA volunteer?
- What would be the ideal volunteer job for you and why?
- Describe your ideal supervisor.

Emotional intelligence is particularly important for CASA volunteers, as they will need to be able to work effectively with children who have experienced trauma and will likely face other difficult situations as they work a case. Another factor of emotional intelligence is understanding if a volunteer is capable of managing the stress and secondary trauma that they will face in this role.

Emotional Intelligence Question Examples:

- Do you believe people have the ability to change? If so, can you give an example of how you have given someone a second chance?
- In your opinion, what would make the "perfect parent?"
- Tell me a little about your childhood. What was it like growing up in your house? What were some of the positives, and what were the challenges of your upbringing?
- I noticed in your application that you wanted discuss your history with abuse and neglect issues in the interview. Would you please tell me a little bit about your history in this regard?
- Can you explain any unfortunate incidents or experiences that you have been exposed to regarding abuse or neglect, whether it be something that has happened to you, a family member or friend?
- Would you be willing to tell me about a difficulty you've faced in life lately? How has this affected you, what did you learn from it, and how did you cope with it?
- CASA volunteers work with children who have experienced trauma, in addition to facing other difficult situations as they work a case. Are you familiar with the concept of secondary trauma, also known as secondary PTSD, and the concept of compassion fatigue?
- What personal or friend resources can help you cope if you do encounter an experience or develop reactions of secondary trauma from the material in your case?

- CASA volunteers need to be comfortable working with children, foster parents, caseworkers, etc. with different experiences, identities and backgrounds, including but not limited to:

- Religion
- Physical/health/developmental limitations
- Mental health issues
- Socio-economic class
- Sibling groups
- Ages of children
- Types of abuse

How would you rate your comfort level with each of these, on a scale of 1 to 5? (Go through the list.)

Do you have experience working with any of these groups?

If so, what was that experience like for you? If not, do you have any concerns or questions about it?



Consider asking a volunteer to complete some written questions when they arrive for their interview. This will give you a good picture of their writing skills and how they work under pressure.

ADVOCATE SELECTION

The following is an example of a form that interviewers can use to score the candidates and make a determination of whether they will move forward in the selection process.

Name of Applicant:

Date of Interview:

Length of Interview:

Interviewer Comments & Post-Interview Evaluation

Please answer the following questions and provide supporting information if applicable.

1)	Did you have a favorable first impression of this volunteer (e.g. do they present with professionalism, poise, objectivity, etc.)?	Yes ☐	No ☐
2)	In your opinion, is the applicant here for the right reasons appropriate to the CASA mission?	Yes ☐	No ☐
3)	Do you believe the applicant understands their role?	Yes ☐	No ☐
4)	Do you think this volunteer would maintain a positive reputation for CASA as they interact with professionals?	Yes ☐	No ☐
5)	Will they be receptive to supervision?	Yes ☐	No ☐
6)	Will they be able to fulfill the role (seeing child, writing reports, contacting supervisor, talking to all parties)?	Yes ☐	No ☐

Please rate the following with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest:

With one being zero enthusiasm, 3 being an acceptable amount, and 5 being over-the-top excited.

Their enthusiasm/interest in helping youth	1	2	3	4	5
Your willingness to supervise this person	1	2	3	4	5

Please note if there are ANY potential conflicts of interest:

Please note whether you have any concerns about the applicant working with any particular population or case dynamic:

Did the applicant give any defensive/angry responses? If yes, please explain.

Did the applicant give any evasive responses? If yes, please explain.

Did the applicant describe patterns or themes of gaining access to children? If yes, please explain.

Did the applicant describe patterns or themes of preferences for a particular age range of children with no reasonable explanation for the preference? If yes, please explain.

Did the applicant describe patterns or themes of problems with authority? If yes, please explain.

Overall Impressions

This section should give the reviewer a general idea of your takeaways from the interview. Please note any additional behaviors, comments or conversations, or other observations that you made that were not addressed elsewhere.

Concerns

Discuss any concerns that should be addressed, if applicable – both concerns from the application, and impressions that were made during the interview.

Notes for Trainers

Use this section to highlight some of the things you would want to know if you were this person's trainer. What things should the trainer be aware of as far as past experiences, level of awareness, etc.?

Additional Staffing Notes

If there were any concerns noted in the pre-training interview, use this section to document any discussions and/or resolutions around the concerns with the decision-making team.

_____Accepted into Training

_____Not Accepted into Training

Signature of Interviewer

Date

Signature of Supervisor/Director

Date

Post-Interview Checklist:

- ☐ Created Volunteer Profile in Optima and documented outcome of Pre-Training Interview and staffing in the Notes section of Optima
- ☐ Additional references for any child care organization where applicant worked or volunteered
- ☐ Copy of Applicant Driver's License
- ☐ Copy of Applicant's Car Insurance
- ☐ Completed Application and Signatures (or initials)
- ☐ All background check forms are signed, including a copy of CASA's Transportation Eligibility form

Special Instructions for Volunteer Relations Specialist (e.g., international background check, missing signatures):

After the interview and scoring is complete, sit down with your co-interviewer(s) to discuss the candidate. Are they a good fit? Should they be invited to training? If they complete training, what potential case assignments might be ideal for them?

You can use the scoring form to present this information and discuss it with other staff.

If you determine that the volunteer is right for CASA, extend a formal invitation to begin training once the background check process is successfully completed! Then celebrate another recruitment win.

CASA OF THE PINES: A VOLUNTEER ALIGNED WITH THE MISSION

As with many programs, the first goal of CASA of the Pines is to provide all children assigned to them with volunteers. Their second goal is to recruit the best of the best volunteers to serve these children. They learned a lot from an experience with a volunteer they were originally unsure about: Lee Ann.

Lee Ann did not make a good first impression to the volunteer recruiter and executive director. They found it difficult to engage with her in conversation, and her presentation was awkward. Verbal communication seemed strained, at times. However, when given the job description, Lee Ann was very sure that she was a good fit for the role, she understood the role of a CASA and would be committed.

CASA of the Pines decided to take a chance on Lee Ann despite what seemed to be a possible stumbling block. She was assigned to a case with a special needs child who was non-verbal and did not engage with anyone. Lee Ann made it her mission to connect with this child! After some time, extraordinarily, the child began talking and interacting with her. Drawing on knowledge from her own adverse childhood experiences, Lee Ann also made a valuable connection with the child's biological mother. This connection helped her advocate deeply and effectively. Contrary to everyone's expectations, the child was successfully reunited with her biological parents. CASA of the Pines is very happy they welcomed Lee Ann into advocacy!





GOALS

- Learn why training is key to a happy, successful volunteer.
- Learn how CASA staff can promote a team culture.
- Practice the “Company’s Coming” approach to training.
- Understand why and how to observe behavior while training.

CHAPTER SEVEN

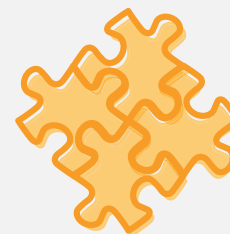
TRAINING VOLUNTEERS & BUILDING BONDS THAT LAST

THERE’S MORE TO TRAINING THAN KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

We train volunteers extensively to impart the vital skills for them to do the job well, but there’s more to training than transfer of knowledge. Emotions and connection deepen as a genuine commitment is built during pre-service training. Volunteers start to feel like a part of your team, and that’s crucial. 30 hours is no small investment of time, and people build lasting bonds there—with you and with each other. In training (both in-person and online) you can develop a deeper understanding of a volunteer’s strengths and possible challenges.

Let’s explore the role of training in the Volunteer Ownership Cycle. Volunteer training is a transitional phase of the Cycle. Upon completion of training and first case assignment, a volunteer becomes actively engaged in furthering the mission of CASA. Training is the launching pad to vibrant **engagement** and **ownership**.

Volunteers need to feel that they have their feet on the ground, and that they are equipped with everything necessary to make a positive difference in the life of a child and make the right calls when they make recommendations to the court. Their role is big, and if they don’t feel able to handle it, they won’t stay. We want to retain excellent volunteers and keep them happy and effective. Training is the other end of the retention equation.



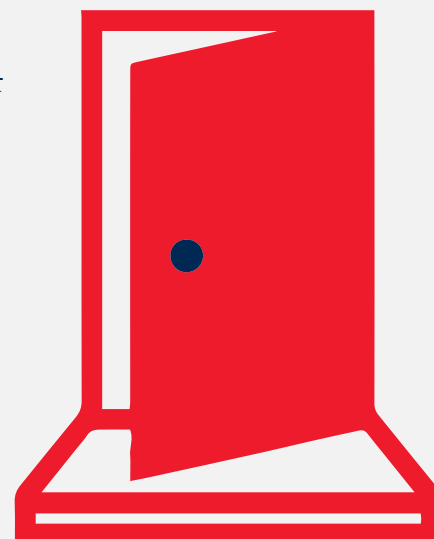
THE “COMPANY’S COMING” APPROACH

Volunteer training is the greatest opportunity to showcase your CASA program and put your best foot forward. If a volunteer is selected for training, you are making the statement that they are important to you. They are worth an investment. Similar to when you’re having company at your home for the first time, you also want to make a great impression.

Here are some tips for making your training memorable:

- Provide food for your volunteers. Training is hard work, and people love to fuel up. Food allows new recruits to both relax and bond. Some programs offer a meal made by auxiliary volunteers, or get something delicious and nutritious donated by local restaurants.
- Make warm introductions and facilitate connections between volunteers to establish comfort. If two volunteers both love your local sports team, make this connection for them in introductions. If there are people in the same profession, let them know. Show that you remember people enthusiastically, and want them to get to know each other.
- Practice your training sessions in advance to ensure engaging content and smooth transitions between topics and activities. Enlist your colleagues as actors to practice Q & A sessions or interactions that may be more challenging.
- Review your materials. Are they fresh? Volunteer training should be alive and a dynamic set of lessons and discussions. Good training contains the most up-to-date information and changes over time based on the needs of the organization and your volunteers. Ask everyone to regularly present new developments at staff meetings to keep your pre-service training and ongoing professional development current.
- Keep it fun! Being a CASA volunteer can be difficult, but it’s certainly not dull. Take brain breaks in your training to do a fun activity and encourage social interaction.

WELCOME!



PROMOTING A RECRUITMENT TEAM CULTURE AMONG STAFF

Encouraging a team culture among your colleagues will make your job more effective and more fun. Recruiters, trainers and supervisors should, ideally, be collaborating on creating the whole fabric of the program. Reach out anytime you need a hand. Ask your coworkers how you can help support them, and help them support volunteers.

Here are some ideas of how to promote a team-based culture:

- Make recruiters and trainers partners in the pre-service training! Share the responsibility of guiding volunteers through the process.
- As a recruiter, you don’t have to say goodbye to a volunteer after the interview. Let them know that while they’ll be working with Coach Supervisors once they are assigned a case, you’ll still be there to support them. You’re available to talk throughout their time as a volunteer.
- Please don’t operate in isolation. All staff members are responsible for recruitment and retention of volunteers, so stay connected with them regardless of where they are in the Volunteer Ownership Cycle.

These ideas are essential to the coaching model of supervising volunteers described in *The Art of Coaching for Volunteer Retention*.

TRAINING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOR

Although most volunteer screening occurs prior to training, there is still an opportunity during the training process to screen volunteers to determine if they will be the right fit for the job.

Volunteers present their best face during the application and interview phases, like all of us do when we're shooting for something we want. Every human being is complex, however, and as a recruiter you'll be on the lookout for positive and negative potential aspects of each individual's personality. Pre-service training is the time to make key observations. How does the volunteer interact with others? Will they be a team player? Can they effectively advocate for children? Do they have the mental and emotional temperament needed? Are they hesitant to work with certain groups? Are they open to feedback?

CASA programs know what behaviors and attitudes work best in their environment, as well as those that can undermine and compromise advocacy. Identifying positive and negative behaviors in advance, and creating environments where they can be played out and tested, is built into the CASA training curriculum. Watch carefully – use the moments where volunteers can be observed interacting individually, on a small team level, and as part of a larger group. Keeping your eyes open during training will help you to reinforce the behaviors and attitude you want people to practice, as well as reveal the volunteers who might struggle with them¹.

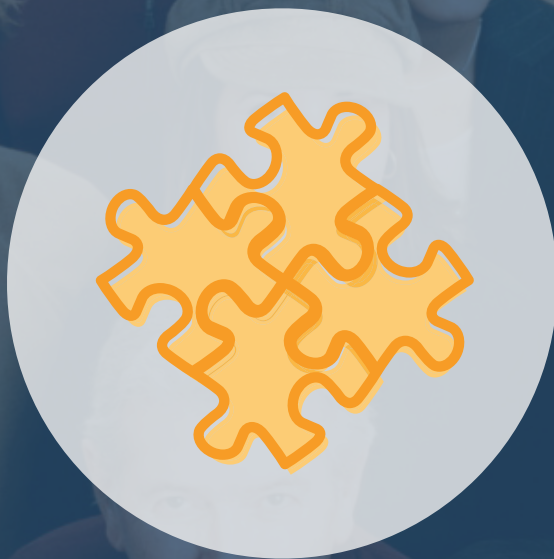
Sometimes negative behaviors may lead you to determine a volunteer is not a good fit for your program, such as demonstrating an unwillingness to change, or exhibiting hesitations against customs and traditions different from their own. Observing both positive and negative behaviors can also help you craft more individualized training and support opportunities for the future.

PROMOTING A TEAM CULTURE AMONG NEW VOLUNTEERS

Just as we work to create a team culture with staff members, it's a fine idea to tap the opportunities of pre-service training to build bonds among volunteers. Information about child abuse and neglect can be difficult to absorb and emotionally challenging. The more connection and community is created during the training experience, the more resiliency volunteers will have while processing the facts. The more resiliency volunteers have, the less likely it is that they'll drop out or determine that the job would be overwhelming.

Luckily, the same methods of training that keep learners interested serve well to build bonds. Encourage these bonds by having them work in pairs and in small groups. Volunteers can choose a "buddy" at the start to move through training and check in with. Depending on how many staff members are present, you could consider assigning a "mentor" to groups of six or 10 new recruits, as their own personal guide.

Remember that every single person in the training room is smart, creative, resourceful and caring. The accumulated knowledge, experience and awareness among the group of volunteers you're training is a great asset. That's the wonderful part of the unknown of getting to know new volunteers as a recruiter – you can identify and activate their best strengths in the service of a better world.



GOALS

- Understand the meaning of volunteer ownership.
- Learn about the recruiter's role in volunteer retention.
- Explore ways that volunteers can take on leadership roles.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUCCESS — RECRUITING & RETAINING VOLUNTEERS WHO OWN YOUR MISSION

SUCCESSFULLY MOVING FROM "YOU" TO "WE"

Once a volunteer has completed training and received their first case assignment, congratulate yourself! Your recruitment work was a sweet success. From spreading the word with your media campaigns (**awareness**) to getting that person in the door at an info session (**involvement**), to forming a relationship and seeing them through training to their first assignment (**engagement**), you have helped them move smoothly through the Volunteer Ownership Cycle. The final phase is the most important; the one that lasts: **ownership**.

In **ownership**, the volunteer has fully moved from the "you" phase to the "we" phase:

You Phase: *When I talk about CASA, I see myself as supportive but separate.*

We Phase: *When I talk about CASA, I say "we." I see myself as a part of CASA.*

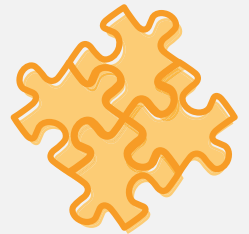
In the "we" phase, they talk about CASA with passion and purpose. They ask questions like, "How can I get my friends to come to a training and join me as an advocate?" and "How can I contribute even when I'm taking a break from case assignments?"

Volunteers who own the mission are thinking about ways to improve the program, and about how to direct community resources to CASA. They stay in touch with the children they serve. They commit to and attend events—and might make cupcakes or barbecue. Simply put, they show up.

PROMOTING AN ATTITUDE OF OWNERSHIP

Promoting volunteer ownership centers around offering each person targeted opportunities to be more deeply connected. There's a key to this. Knowing which of these deepening strategies is right for a particular volunteer is impossible to do without a personal relationship of trust.

That's where your team culture comes in. Between the recruiter, trainer, coach-supervisor and other staff, the volunteer should have at least one person who knows them well and can advise on the best route. Collaborate with your coworkers to design ownership and leadership plans for the most engaged volunteers. **Ownership is the secret to retention.**



OWNERSHIP DEFINED:

An attitude of accepting responsibility for something and taking control of how it develops.

- Invite a volunteer to join your Speaker's Bureau and present at volunteer information sessions.
- Invite a seasoned volunteer to be part of your Legislative Advocacy Team (LAT). If your program does not have a LAT, you can contact the Texas CASA Public Policy team at publicpolicy@texascasa.org for guidance on starting one.
- Partner with a volunteer to host a recruitment event at their home, workplace, house of worship or another community group they are part of.
- Invite a new volunteer to be part of a recruitment focus group designed around learning how they think you can better engage volunteers.
- Invite an auxiliary volunteer to take advocacy training.
- Ask a volunteer to assist with a fundraising event or help generate a list of possible donors.

THE RECRUITER'S PLACE IN VOLUNTEER RETENTION

What does recruitment have to do with volunteer retention? You're in luck—the subject is covered in depth in Texas CASA's guidebook *The Art of Coaching for Volunteer Retention*. There, you'll learn concepts, research, strategies and tools for building the kinds of relationships that people truly thrive in, and want to stay in.

In brief, volunteer retention is a fancy way of saying that volunteers have come to stay—your program isn't *losing* volunteers from year to year. You've invested in people who continue to take cases, and develop long-term relationships. Of course, no program can retain all of its volunteers, and it's not realistic for every person to stay. People change, move, have babies, retire from service or decide to do something different. It's no fault of the program.

Retention, however, is something we must actively work toward, the same way we do recruitment. There are proven strategies to retain volunteers.

Recruiters play an important role in this process—once you've brought someone in the front door of your organization, you don't want to lose them out the back door. Here are some strategies to help you retain the volunteers you invested in recruiting:

- Keep the lines of communication open between staff members – hear from Coach Supervisors about a volunteer's success on a case, and send them a note of congratulations.
- Everyone is on the retention team! A note or small gift of appreciation from the Executive Director can professionalize your efforts.
- Send out regular recruitment blasts to update your staff and board on your efforts—this connects them and initiates the Volunteer Ownership Cycle.
- Write about recruitment efforts and successes in posts for your program's public newsletter, blog, social media and other outward-facing communications.

Retention feeds recruitment in more ways than one. Volunteers who are happily retained can, and often will, become a pipeline, generating new contacts and interested recruits. They are your best advertisements, by far.

EMBRACE THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR ROLE

Volunteers are everything to CASA. Now, you are the one serving as a lighthouse to help new volunteers

find their life's work. It can seem like a very big job—and it is. Yet, you are never alone in it. In fact, everyone involved in the mission is with you.

You have the opportunity to serve as an organizer and coordinate the efforts of others through your Volunteer Recruitment Plan. Prospects come from a wide variety of sources, but there are some commonalities. New recruits will always be asking themselves certain questions:

- Do I agree with what CASA does?
- Do I want to learn more about CASA?
- Does CASA share my values?
- Can I contribute, and will I be valued?

With a well-developed Volunteer Recruitment Plan, the answer to all of these questions will be a resounding **YES**.

Engaged, committed volunteers are also asking themselves certain questions:

- Am I giving all that I have to give?
- Are my efforts valued and appreciated?
- Is this the most effective way to get the job done?
- Do I use my skills to guide others?

As you guide people through the Volunteer Ownership Cycle from **awareness** to **ownership**, their answers will also be a resounding **YES**.



AWARENESS

Recruitment Planning
Media Campaigns



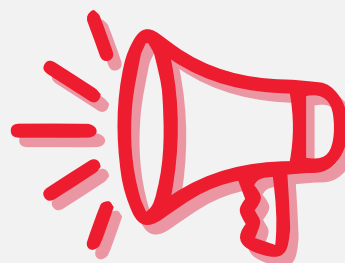
INVOLVEMENT

Information Sessions
Application
Interview



ENGAGEMENT

Training
Case Assignment and Beyond



OWNERSHIP

Volunteers Are Involved with
Furthering Your Mission!

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BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 1

YEARLY EVENTS CALENDAR

Worksheet Goal: To learn what events are already in place at your local CASA office, to have a structured discussion with existing staff about current events and their purpose, and to find possible ways to maximize the impact of those events.

PART 1

Directions: In chronological order, go month-by-month through a calendar year with your Executive Director and Program Director discussing existing events (retention, recruitment, and fundraising). This event calendar should not include trainings or informational sessions (those should not be considered “events”). Use this worksheet to find out the basic information about existing recruitment, fundraising or retention events. Try to also discuss the purpose or the goal behind having that event. Put “Yes” or “No” in the boxes to show how those events are or aren’t being used.

Event Name	Month	Fundraiser?	Recruitment?	Retention?	Event Description

PART 2

Directions: Further discuss how to enhance events that you already have in place. Answer the following questions about each event you’ve recorded above. You can write your answers/ideas elsewhere. Simply use the questions below to guide your brainstorming!

1. If this event is currently not being used as a recruitment event, how can I make it work for recruitment?
2. Are there possible ways to include a fundraising opportunity with this event?
3. To assist with retention, how can I empower volunteers to take on a larger role at this event? Are there ways to “recognize” volunteers at this event?

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 1

PART 3

Directions: This is an opportunity for you to look critically, again, at the calendar of events you've just created. Now answer the questions below with the calendar in mind.

1. Are there any months without an event?
2. Were there any events that staff described as unsuccessful? If yes, do they know why those events were "unsuccessful"?
3. Were there any events that staff said were consistently beneficial?
4. Is there currently a system in place for tracking inquiries directly following events? (For example: How many people inquired after attending the Community Market that CASA hosted a booth at? Is this worth doing again next year based on those inquiries?)
5. Are there any events your staff is interested in doing, but haven't done yet? If so, list those events below. This is your staff's wishlist. You can use this wishlist to help spark ideas for months that are "slow" on your Events Calendar.

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 2

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Worksheet Goal: To examine the demographic breakdown of your volunteer pool and find the populations your CASA office does well at recruiting, while also evaluating areas your office might need to focus on. To take a fair look at how well your staff and program is doing when it comes to volunteer retention. To brainstorm program improvement and recruitment ideas.

PART 1

Directions: Find the demographic breakdown of your volunteer pool using the categories below. To find these numbers you can use CasaManager™ or other volunteer lists your program might have.

Total Number of Volunteers:

Age Breakdown:

21-29 =

30-40 =

40-50 =

50-60 =

60+ =

Gender Breakdown:

Male =

Female =

Language Breakdown:

English =

Spanish =

Other (List)

Thinking Point: How do the customs, traditions and languages spoken of volunteers match up with the customs, traditions and languages spoken of the child population you're serving?

Top 5 Career Fields or Skill Sets of Your Volunteers:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

PART 2

Directions: Get with your Executive Director or Program Director and discuss the volunteer breakdown numbers. Use the questions below to guide your discussion.

1. Have there been any struggles recruiting with groups of similar customs and traditions?

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 2

2. How does your program do at recruiting both men and women?
3. Is there an age group that your program could improve at recruiting? Which age group does your program do especially well with and why?
4. How can you use your volunteers for recruitment within their career fields? Can you utilize your retired population for recruitment also?
5. Brainstorm ways to recruit people in the areas you're seeing low numbers of volunteers. This could be in regards to age, career type, language, etc. Include your brainstorm notes below or elsewhere.

PART 3

Directions: Use the formula provided to calculate your retention rate. This will provide insight into how well your program does at keeping volunteers around. All formulas and definitions come directly from Texas CASA's *The Art of Coaching for Volunteer Retention*.

Finding Your Two-Year Volunteer Retention Rate (VRR2)

"The percentage of the cohort (a cohort being a group of volunteers who completed CASA training during the fiscal year) still serving CASA cases two years later."

Step 1: Prepare a list of volunteers who completed pre-service training during the designated fiscal year.

Step 2: Prepare a list of volunteers assigned two years later.

Step 3: Obtain a count of the number of volunteers who appear on both lists.

Step 4: Divide the number of volunteers retained by the number of volunteers in the cohort.

Step 5: Multiply by 100 to obtain the two-year retention rate as a percentage.

VRR2 = Two-Year Volunteer Retention Rate

VYr0 = Count of volunteers who completed CASA pre-service training during the designated fiscal year

VYr2 = Count of members of training cohort assigned to cases in the fiscal year two years later

VRR2 = $(VYr2/VYr0) \times 100$

Our Two-Year Retention Rate is _____

PART 4

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 2

Directions: Using your retention rate you found, answer the questions below. You might need to utilize current staff to answer some of the questions.

1. Referring back to your Yearly Events Calendar (worksheet 1) consider how many events you have that are considered "retention" specific. Would adding more retention events or giving volunteers larger roles at existing events improve retention rates? Discuss with your Executive Director or Program Director.
2. How many times a month does your program engage in advocate recognition? List the ways you recognize advocates below (For example: birthday cards, Advocate of the Month, "good job" cards or treats).
3. Does your program ever have advocates fill out a "Get to Know You" form that would give ideas for advocate recognition (For example: favorite drink, favorite color, favorite snack, favorite movie, favorite book, etc.)?
4. Brainstorm and list fun ways to recognize advocates. Think outside the box! List things you haven't tried!

PART 5

Directions: In this section of your Program Overview, you will need access to the information regarding children your program serves. If your program utilizes CasaManager™, running a report on that platform will make this activity much easier. If you do not use CasaManager™, make sure you have access to any spreadsheets or database your program has for tracking children. It will also help you to have access to the DFPS Data Book.

Total Number of Children Served in Previous Fiscal Year by My Program =

Total Number of Children Served This Month by My Program =

Total Number of Children in Foster Care in the County/ies My Program Serves =

Demographics of Children Served by My Program in the Previous Fiscal Year:

Gender:

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 2

Boys=

Girls=

Child Age Breakdown:

0-2=

3-5=

6-9=

10-13=

14-16=

17+=

Removal Reasons (This is a good time to utilize the DFPS Data Book)

1. How many allegations of abuse were there in the previous year for the county/counties that my program is serving?
2. What is the breakdown of cases served by my program in the previous fiscal year? Provide percentage rates below for reasons of removal.
Neglectful Supervision =
Sexual Abuse =
Physical Abuse =
Emotional Abuse =
Medical Neglect =

Discussion Questions

1. How many children is my CASA office not able to serve? How can I include this in my recruitment messaging? Can it provide a sense of urgency to my message when asking people to become a CASA?
2. How does my CASA program do at serving children from all backgrounds? Are there plenty of opportunities for children to work with a volunteer they are comfortable with (Refer back to volunteer demographics to compare)?
3. Overall, how can I use the information I've collected about children my program serves and children in our area for recruitment? (For example: Are there chances for PR stories or can these numbers drive specific recruitment campaigns?)

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 2

PART 6

Directions: This is the final section of this worksheet. Using all of the information you've gathered on your program, answer the questions below. You can invite your Executive Director, Program Director or staff to participate in this section.

1. What are some of the most obvious challenges of our program?
 - a. Recruitment Challenges
 - b. Retention Challenges
2. Has our program addressed the above challenges? How?
3. How can we engage our community using the information we've gathered on this worksheet?
4. Did we discover new ways to improve retention or recruitment with this worksheet? How do we plan on implementing those ideas?

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 3

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Worksheet Goal: To gather an overview of the community resources available to you as a recruiter, and to gauge who you can contact to extend the reach of CASA in your community and surrounding counties.

PART 1

Directions: This is an activity - no need to answer any questions on this section of the worksheet. Find five local community calendars that you can advertise CASA events on. Your program might already be involved in some of these calendars, so make sure you're asking where and how events are posted before you begin (we don't want you doing double the work)! Make sure to take note of the calendars you do find and keep them somewhere useful to you. Once you locate five community calendars, practice posting an event. You'll want to know how easy or difficult posting is, what permissions you need to post and how far in advance you have to share something to ensure it's posted.

PART 2

Directions: Get with your Executive Director or Program Director to complete this activity.

1. List ten clubs and organizations that CASA spoke at in the previous fiscal year.
2. Find ten clubs and organizations that CASA has not yet spoken at. List those below along with contact info for those clubs.

Club/Organization	Main Contact

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 3

PART 3

Directions: Find five contacts for local media and list their contact information below. Remember print media too! These contacts can be utilized for PR stories – it's free!

Media	Main Contact

PART 4

Directions: When thinking about your specific community, as a recruiter, you must take advantage of various seasons, days, holidays, etc. that your community recognizes. An easy way to do this is to utilize the community calendars you found earlier on this worksheet.

Make a list of one event/day/holiday etc. in each month of the year that your community recognizes, celebrates or hosts. For example, many churches recognize "Orphan Care Sunday" in November, so a community calendar might show several community-wide events that have been planned by churches in November. CASA can take advantage of these events by either attending them or being a leading presence at them. **When we take advantage of existing community events, we can reach new audiences and save money as a program.**

PART 5

Directions: Answer the questions below using the information you've collected above or information from your Executive Director.

1. How often does your program use press releases to advertise for upcoming CASA events, trainings and informational sessions?
2. Does your program already have an established relationship with a form of local media?

BEGINNING A RECRUITMENT PLAN - WORKSHEET 3

3. Which months on your Yearly Events Calendar (worksheet 1) were a bit slow? Could you supplement those slower months with an existing community event? For example: The Chamber of Commerce Calendar shows a Networking Event in May... can CASA attend that event? Include ideas below.

PART 6

Directions: If you serve more than one county as a CASA office, complete this activity. If you serve only one county, this activity might not be as beneficial for you. With your Executive Director, discuss the following questions below.

1. Which of your counties does your program feel underrepresented in? Are there any areas that are resistant to your CASA program?
2. Do you have any volunteers, donors, sponsors, etc. that come from one of your less-involved counties? If so, how could you utilize them to recruit and build your presence in that area?
3. List unique things/events that the outlying counties you're serving have that you could use as recruitment tools – think festivals, locations, clubs, tourist attractions, etc.

TIPS & SAMPLE AGENDA FOR CASA INFORMATION SESSIONS

Below are some tips and a sample agenda, complete with timing, for presenting an information session for your local CASA program.

- **Keep in mind what an info session is for!** This is a brief time to give someone the basic information about CASA and teach them the foundation of who we are and what we do. It is NOT a time to tell them everything. It's not a training session. This is their next step. It's a time for you to begin seeing if they are a fit for your program and for them to see if we are a fit for their volunteer lives.
- **Have regularly scheduled info sessions, and publicize them on your program's social media.** Post them on your website and Facebook. For better attendance, consider creating an "Event" for each info session on Facebook vs. just announcing them as a post.
- **Whenever you have an inquiry come to your office, ask for their email, and contact them a couple of days before every info session.** Make sure, however, that you also give them the option to opt out of these emails. Emails sent out through email marketing software should have an opt-out option built in, but if you're sending these reminders through your normal email, include something like the example below:

If you would like to be removed from this courtesy reminder please just reply with "REMOVE" in the subject line. Thank you so much for your initial interest in the work we do for the abused and neglected children in our community.

- **Don't give up on inquiries.** Sometimes someone will walk through the door and say, "Thanks for being patient with me. I inquired a year and a half ago but I can just now be available. Thanks for not giving up on me."
- **Always be prepared for an info session, and expect someone to show up.** Sometimes no one will, but other days you might have to add chairs!
- **It's recommended NOT to hand out applications and other information at the very beginning of an info session,** because participants will read it and not give you their 100% listening attention.
- **Create a comforting and welcoming environment.** You can have coffee, water, or refreshments on hand. Also, have soft, upbeat music playing to break through the quietness. Have a slideshow of pictures of kids, past events and advocates going on a projected screen or on your laptop where the participants can see. Keep in mind as people show up they probably don't know one another. Encourage them to meet each other.
- **Start on time.** If it is a "Lunch and Learn," encourage them to go ahead and begin eating whatever they brought to eat, or to help themselves to any food you have provided.
- **Have a simple sign in sheet to collect the following:** name, email, phone, and how they heard about CASA and this info session.

TIPS & SAMPLE AGENDA FOR CASA INFORMATION SESSIONS

SAMPLE INFO SESSION AGENDA

This is a proven highly effective format. Remember: Success is never convenient. Have an URGENCY to your recruitment atmosphere.



1. WELCOME

- Introduce yourself, other staff and advocates.
- Thank everyone for coming.
- Show your program's recruitment video.
- Ask participants to write down questions and save them for the end of your presentation, to make sure you will have enough time to get through your materials.



2. SHARE YOUR STORY/STATEMENT/ELEVATOR SPEECH

- Share a concise and meaningful statement that summarizes the material presented in the video and clearly defines CASA's work and the volunteer role.

"CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. We listen to the voices of children who have been abused and neglected, and stand up for their rights. We visit the children, get to know them and advocate for their needs to be met in an overburdened foster care system. A CASA can be a mentor and friend, and provide stability to a child in need. A CASA fights for children and protects them from harm. The children that we serve are your children and our children. They are from your county and your towns, and they need us—and you—now."



3. DEFINE THE OPPORTUNITY

- Share the roles you have come to recruit for—emphasize the CASA advocate as the highest need for the organization.
- Share data pertinent to your audience that also aligns with your needs. For example, "We are looking for male volunteers to serve as advocates—more than half of the children we serve are boys, but only 13 percent of our advocates are men."



4. DESCRIBE THE HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

- Talk about the national significance of CASA.
- Share your local program's history followed with a strong quote such as, "We have continued to be the sole volunteer organization that speaks up for children who have been abused and neglected. We are the voice for those who have no voice."
- Give more detail about your specific needs. For example, "There are currently 104 children in the six counties we cover that do not have a CASA advocate." Elaborate on what this means for the community.

TIPS & SAMPLE AGENDA FOR CASA INFORMATION SESSIONS



5. A SEASONED ADVOCATE OR SPEAKERS' BUREAU MEMBER PRESENTS

- If an advocate is present, have them share how long they have been an advocate, why they became an advocate, and one special thing they did on a case (10 minutes or less).



6. HAND OUT THE VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION (SEE CHAPTER 5 FOR A RECOMMENDED JOB DESCRIPTION)

- Highlight the role of the Coach Supervisor. For example: "You are assigned a Volunteer Coach Supervisor who will be your coach and your guide, and help you for the duration of the case."
- Discuss minimum expectations of service.
- Share the journey of a CASA from beginning to the end of a case. You can also use your advocate to incorporate this information into their story.



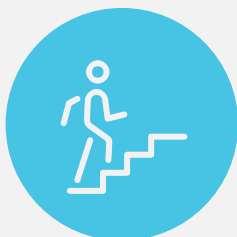
7. QUESTION & ANSWER TIME

- Take about 10 minutes to answer questions from participants. Thank each person for their question. Engage your advocate representative in this process.
- If a participant says or asks something that may be disengaging or harmful to the process, confidently redirect them. You could say, "Let's discuss that privately after the session." "I see your point. Back to the conversation we were having..." or "Thanks for sharing. Next, we're going to talk about..."



8. SHARE & COLLECT THE APPLICATION (SEE CHAPTER 5 FOR A RECOMMENDED JOB APPLICATION)

- Encourage participants to complete the application right then and there! Offer them options if they need some time: to come in and talk with you at the office, to meet for coffee, or to apply on paper or online later.
- Discuss the various background checks needed and the associated fees.



9. NEXT STEPS

- Discuss the interview and selection process for your organization.

CASA VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW

Volunteer: _____

Interview Date: _____

Interviewers: _____

Points to Make in the Introduction:

- Explain that CASA has a responsibility to explore the volunteer's personal relationships and family, as this is the background upon which the volunteer will base values and judgments.
- Stress that you want to make sure that it is an appropriate match for both the volunteer and for the organization.
- Explain that the same questions are asked of every volunteer.
- Explain that you will be writing a lot – this is only for documentation purposes.
- Review the CASA volunteer job description and ask if there are any questions.
- Encourage the volunteer to ask questions at any point in the interview.

Part 1:

1. Do you have any questions for us about our organization or the role of a CASA volunteer?
2. What initially interested you in becoming a CASA volunteer?
3. Is there a specific aspect of our mission that motivates you to want to volunteer?
4. Most cases require an advocate to commit to at least one year to 18 months of their time. How would you work this into your schedule?
5. What would be the ideal volunteer job for you and why?
6. Describe your ideal supervisor.
7. Tell me a little about your childhood. What was it like growing up in your house?

If candidate discloses abuse and/or neglect, whether on their application or in the interview process, ask the following questions (A-C) below. If no abuse or neglect history is identified, go to page 3.

CASA VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW

- A. I noticed you indicated in your application that you would rather discuss your history with abuse and neglect in the interview (or they may have disclosed their history with abuse and neglect in interview question #7 above). Can you explain any unfortunate incidents or experiences that you have been exposed to regarding abuse or neglect, whether it be something that has happened to you, or a family member or friend?
- B. How has this affected you, and how did you cope with it?
- C. How do you think your personal experience with abuse and/or neglect will impact your work as a CASA volunteer?

Part 2:

- 1. Do you believe people have the ability to change? If so, can you give an example of how you have given someone a second chance?
- 2. In your opinion, what would make the “perfect parent”?
- 3. What are your current beliefs regarding child discipline? If you have your own children, how do you/did you discipline them?
- 4. How do you personally feel about people who abuse their children? (Look for anger or extreme emotions.)
- 5. CASA volunteers work with children who have experienced trauma, in addition to facing other difficult situations as they work a case. How will you deal or cope with secondary trauma?
- 6. CASA volunteers need to be comfortable working with children, foster parents, caseworkers, etc. from all backgrounds. Some examples of the types differences in backgrounds you might \ encounter are:
 - Religion
 - Physical/health/developmental limitations
 - Mental health issues
 - Socio-economic class
 - Sibling groups
 - Ages of children

CASA VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW

- Types of abuse

Do you have experience working with any of the groups I've listed? If so, what was that experience like for you? If not, do you have any concerns or questions about it?

7. Would you have the ability to travel around our area (list counties or metropolitan areas served) to see your CASA children?
8. What is your work style? Do you prefer working independently or with a lot of support?

INTERVIEW SCREENING FORM

Name of Applicant: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Length of Interview: _____

Interviewer Comments & Post-Interview Evaluation

Please answer the following questions and provide supporting information if applicable.

1)	Did you have a favorable first impression of this volunteer (e.g. do they present with professionalism, poise, objectivity, etc.)?	Yes ☐	No ☐
2)	In your opinion, is the applicant here for the right reasons appropriate to the CASA mission?	Yes ☐	No ☐
3)	Do you believe the applicant understands their role?	Yes ☐	No ☐
4)	Do you think this volunteer would maintain a positive reputation for CASA as they interact with professionals?	Yes ☐	No ☐
5)	Will they be receptive to supervision?	Yes ☐	No ☐
6)	Will they be able to fulfill the role (seeing child, writing reports, contacting supervisor, talking to all parties)?	Yes ☐	No ☐

Please rate the following with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest:

With one being zero enthusiasm, 3 being an acceptable amount, and 5 being over-the-top excited.

Their enthusiasm/interest in helping youth 1 2 3 4 5

Your willingness to supervise this person 1 2 3 4 5

Please note if there are ANY potential conflicts of interest:

Please note whether you observed any concerns about the applicant working with any particular population or case dynamic:

Did the applicant give any defensive/angry responses? If yes, please explain.

Did the applicant give any evasive responses? If yes, please explain.

Did the applicant describe patterns or themes of gaining access to children? If yes, please explain.

Did the applicant describe patterns or themes of preferences for a particular age range of children with no reasonable explanation for the preference? If yes, please explain.

Did the applicant describe patterns or themes of problems with authority? If yes, please explain.

INTERVIEW SCREENING FORM

Overall Impressions

This section should give the reviewer a general idea of your takeaways from the interview. Please note any additional behaviors, comments or conversations, or other observations that you made that were not addressed elsewhere.

Concerns

Discuss any concerns that should be addressed, if applicable – both concerns from the application, and impressions that were made during the interview.

Notes for Trainers

Use this section to highlight some of the things you would want to know if you were this person's trainer. What things should the trainer be aware of as far as past experiences, level of awareness, etc.?

Additional Staffing Notes

If there were any concerns noted in the pre-training interview, use this section to document any discussions and/or resolutions around the concerns with the decision-making team.

_____ Accepted into Training

_____ Not Accepted into Training

Signature of Interviewer

Date

Signature of Supervisor/Director

Date

Post-Interview Checklist:

- ☐ Created Volunteer Profile in Optima and documented outcome of Pre-Training Interview and staffing in the Notes section of Optima
- ☐ Additional references for any child care organization where applicant worked or volunteered
- ☐ Copy of Applicant Driver's License
- ☐ Copy of Applicant's Car Insurance
- ☐ Completed Application and Signatures (or initials)
- ☐ All background check forms are signed, including a copy of CASA's Transportation Eligibility form

Special Instructions for Volunteer Relations Specialist (e.g., international background check, missing signatures):

PRE-TRAINING INTERVIEW NOTES, GUIDELINES & TIPS

As part of the screening process, all eligible applicants are required to participate in a pre-training interview. The interview allows (your program name) to screen applicants for appropriateness for the CASA volunteer role, and allows applicants to determine whether the program meets their needs and expectations. The interviewer is responsible for documenting responses to a set of standardized questions that are asked of the applicant. The applicant's responses are recorded on the interview questionnaire and remain in the volunteer's file. The interviewer is also expected to record a brief summary of the interview – including any overall impressions, observations, relevant experiences, history similar to the children and families served, scheduling issues in training, and/or other potential concerns - in OPTIMA (or other tracking system). The volunteer and training team, along with program staff, will have access to these notes.

Since interview assessments can be rather subjective, CASA has established a set of guidelines and tips to ensure a level of consistency and objectivity in our overall impressions of potential CASA advocates.

In preparing a summary of the pre-training interview, the interviewer should highlight the following information which would be helpful to the training and program team in assessing the applicant's eligibility, motivation and readiness for serving as a CASA advocate:

- 1) Any relevant experience to the child welfare or legal field including being an attorney regardless of what area of law
- 2) Similar or relevant experiences to the children and families served that might impact their role as a CASA (whether positive or negative)
- 3) Concerns with time commitment
- 4) Potential conflicts of interest
- 5) Overall impressions of the advocate's temperament that the training team or program staff might want to know (for example: an applicant that appears reserved, direct, etc.)
- 6) Any potential background check issues or special instructions regarding background checks and references

Tips on Documentation:

- State the facts
- Be explicit
- Consider the long-term implications of information that you share and how you share it
- When using adjectives to describe the applicant, clarify with observations (for example: "Volunteer is emotional." versus "Volunteer got emotional when discussing her past experience with abuse. She started to tear up and paused multiple times when describing the abuse.")
- Avoid overgeneralizations (for example: "She will make an excellent advocate." "Volunteer is very strong, confident and outgoing.")
- Use "I" statements when making impressions (for example: "I believe..." "I feel...")
- When reporting on an applicant's personal abuse history, be sure to document how that history is relevant or might impact their work as a CASA. Are they still dealing with the trauma from the abuse, or have they worked through their past trauma? Are they able to remain objective as a CASA volunteer? How does this impact their role as a CASA?
- If you feel the volunteer has a personality or temperament that should be considered when

PRE-TRAINING INTERVIEW NOTES, GUIDELINES & TIPS

matching to a supervisor, be explicit (For example: "Applicant seems very upfront and direct in her communication style. Applicant's temperament may need to be considered in case matching.")

Suggested Phrases:

- Applicant reported...
- Applicant stated....
- Applicant expressed...
- My initial assessment based on our time together...
- It appears the volunteer is...
- Volunteer seems to....

Sample PTI Notes:

"Volunteer worked as a corporate attorney, but is currently on sabbatical. Her mother volunteers with CASA in Dallas. She is eager to begin her training and service. The volunteer did report a DUI over 10 years ago. She expressed remorse and has matured a great deal since then. A criminal convictions form will need to be signed once the results of the criminal background checks are received."

"I believe the volunteer is motivated to be a CASA. She seems to be upfront and direct in her communication style which might need to be considered when matching to a specialist. The volunteer reported personal experience of physical and sexual abuse as a child. She reported being under the custody of the state in her early teen years and ran away from home at 15 years old. She lived in a van for the next 3 years. Subsequently, she was able to obtain her GED and Bachelor of Science in Engineering. I believe she will be able to remain objective in her role as a CASA based on her responses to the interview questions. The volunteer did spend extensive amount of time in the UK for work from 2013-2014. I have discussed the international background check process with her, and she understands that additional documentation will be required."

"Volunteer recently retired from teaching middle school. She reported having a 'rough' childhood which included enduring physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her mother. While describing the abuse, she teared up a lot and asked for a tissue. It appears that she may still be working through the pain from her childhood. She did not give me the confidence that she could remain objective in her role as a CASA, because I spent most of the time trying to console her."

OTHER RESOURCES

**Electronic copies of all of these materials as well as the following are available at
www.texascasa.org:**

Volunteer Application (includes reference form and background checks)
Director of Volunteer Recruitment Job Description
Interview Questions for Director of Volunteer Recruitment
Sample Information Sessions Presentations



STRENGTHENING THE VOICES OF CASA STATEWIDE

www.TexasCASA.org