



Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Job Description

Job Description:

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a volunteer appointed by the Court to advocate for the best interest of a child who is alleged to have been abused or neglected. In order to do this, the CASA/GAL must investigate the facts of the case, recommend a course of action to the Court, explain the Court's findings to the child, facilitate the resolution of the presenting problems, and monitor progress toward established goals.

Examples of Duties:

- ❑ Upon assignment of a case, interview all parties involved to determine the facts.
- ❑ Review records (court, CPS, law enforcement)
- ❑ Investigate alternatives available for the child, such as placement and services, etc.
- ❑ Submit written reports to the court for each court hearing.
- ❑ Appear at court hearings to make recommendations to the Court.
- ❑ Continue contacts with child, family, social workers and others to monitor court orders.
- ❑ Bring significant changes in the family situation to the Court's attention.
- ❑ Determine whether appropriate services, including reasonable efforts, are being provided to the child and family.
- ❑ Maintain complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.
- ❑ Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child.
- ❑ Not a mentor program; but have enough contact with the child to understand their needs.

Prerequisites:

- ❑ No criminal convictions in the past ten years.
- ❑ No criminal convictions ever, involving offenses related to child abuse or exploitation, or physical or sexual abuse.
- ❑ Participate in screening interview and allow for background checks prior to training.
- ❑ Observe in courtroom at least four hours prior to completing the initial volunteer training.

Requirements of a CASA:

- ❑ Complete initial volunteer training sessions (approx. 30 hours in length).
- ❑ Maintain strict confidentiality.
- ❑ Attend in-service training sessions on an on-going basis - 12 hours per year.
- ❑ After initial training, serve as a CASA/GAL for at least one child or sibling group until a permanent placement plan has been implemented (usually an 18 month commitment).
- ❑ Keep volunteer supervisor informed of all case-related activities, conferring periodically in person or by phone for guidance and/or assistance.
- ❑ Maintain an up-to-date and complete file on each case assigned. Return all files, notes, casework upon the completion and closing of each case.
- ❑ Adhere to deadlines and timetables involving an assigned case and turn in all reports on time.
- ❑ Turn in all hours worked on case and case updates on a minimum monthly basis.
- ❑ Maintain a valid Washington State Driver's License and state-mandated auto insurance.



- ❑ Immediately report to your CASA Program Coordinator or the Program Manager any arrests/charges/convictions for any crime, including but not limited to: domestic violence involving law enforcement response; child related offenses of any kind; DUI or drug related arrests or charges; any driving offense that will limit your driving privileges or ability to maintain auto insurance.

Selection Factors:

- ❑ Interest in children, their rights, and special needs.
- ❑ Time to devote to training sessions, investigation and follow-up of a case assigned (an 18-month commitment required).
- ❑ Ability to work with children, family members, and professionals using tact, concern, and basic human relations skills.
- ❑ Ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds including varied cultures, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, religions, sexual identities, and sexual orientations.
- ❑ Strong written and oral communication skills. Volunteers receive ongoing support and coaching as needed.
- ❑ Support the philosophy and issues relating to the work of the Juvenile Court.

Time Frames:

- ❑ Attend at least 12 hours of on-going training per year.
- ❑ Investigate and prepare for the first court hearing: generally, 15-25 hours over a four to six-week period.
- ❑ Monitor court orders and prepare for twice yearly reviews hearings: average 10-15 hours per month on busy cases and 5 hours per month on most stable cases. Time in court additional.
- ❑ Commit to the duration of the case(s) you are assigned.

Benefits:

- ❑ Involvement in the CASA Program provides an opportunity to; enhance written and oral communication skills, gain an understanding of the juvenile legal system, increase awareness of child abuse and neglect, and most importantly, to have a positive impact on the quality of a vulnerable child's life.

Lift up a child's voice. A child's life.