



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
220 NORTH MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 8645
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48107-8645
(734) 222-6850
FAX (734) 222-6715

TO: Jeff Irwin
Chair, Ways & Means Committee

THROUGH: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

FROM: Dan Dwyer
Trial Court Administrator

DATE: March 15, 2006

SUBJECT: National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program
Expansion Grant Application

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

The Washtenaw County Trial Court requests the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners ratify the County Administrator's signature on an application to the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (National CASA) for a grant to expand the Washtenaw County CASA Program in the amount of \$39,348 for the period of July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007.

BACKGROUND:

The Washtenaw County Trial Court initially established a CASA program in 1987. The program has consistently provided a highly trained and committed, though small, pool of volunteers to advocate for the needs of abused and neglected children who are the subjects of civil child abuse proceedings.

After thorough training, a CASA volunteer acts as an independent advocate (appointed by the Court) to investigate the case and offer an informed opinion of the child's best interests. The CASA volunteer visits with the child(ren) at least once every other week until a permanent home is found. The CASA volunteer speaks regularly with the child's parents, foster parents, school officials, therapists, case workers, and any others involved in the child's life in order to gather information about the child's progress and to advocate for the child's needs. The CASA volunteer attends each court hearing, submitting a report with specific recommendations regarding how to best serve the child and family. The CASA volunteer is a powerful voice in a child's life.

The year 2005 was a year of development for the Washtenaw CASA Program. In July, 2005, the Washtenaw County CASA Program achieved certification from National CASA, demonstrating 100% compliance with required items, including thorough policies and procedures and detailed volunteer recruitment and screening materials. The program almost

doubled the number of volunteers, from nine to 16, serving 35 children in 2005. The Friends of CASA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, founded in 2000, was rejuvenated in late 2005 with the addition of three new Board members. The mission of the Friends of CASA is to provide long-term sustainability to the CASA Program through fundraising, community communications and education, and CASA volunteer recruitment assistance.

The National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association (National CASA) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is authorized to distribute funds under the Victims of Child Abuse Act (P.L. 101-647) for the purpose of increasing the number of CASA volunteers assigned to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children. In 2006, National CASA anticipates awarding 53 expansion grants in the amount of \$5,000 to \$40,000. Recipients of 2006 National CASA expansion grants are eligible to apply for a second year of funding up to 75% of the first year award.

DISCUSSION:

The current Washtenaw County CASA Program is a component of the Child Care Fund with one .80 FTE CASA Coordinator. This position was created in 2004 and has responsibility for supervising volunteers, as well as program development responsibilities. National CASA standards require one volunteer supervisor per 30 volunteers. Expanding our CASA program requires additional staffing.

Funds from this grant will be used to increase the current 0.8 FTE CASA Coordinator position to 1.0 FTE and to create an additional .50 FTE CASA Volunteer Leader position. This will enable the program to recruit and supervise 21 additional volunteers (for a total of 37 volunteers) and serve up to 83 children.

In order to maintain the program growth at the conclusion of the grant period, expansion funds will be replaced by private donations from Friends of CASA to the CASA component of the Child Care Fund, allowing the County to net the income from private donations against program expenses before requesting 50% reimbursement from the State.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

This grant will support the creation of one (1) .50 FTE CASA Volunteer Leader grant status position, (AFSCME 2733, Grade 19), and an additional grant status .20 FTE for the existing CASA Coordinator position (AFSCME 2733, Grade 24). The Trial Court will use existing infrastructure to meet the space and technology needs that will result from the creation of a new position.

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

The total grant request is \$39,348. There is no match requirement. The Trial Court is not providing any in-kind contributions as a part of this grant request. All of the personnel expenses associated with the position modifications can be absorbed within the grant budget.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:

Indirect costs are allowed but cannot be supported by the grant budget, which is just under the maximum allowable grant request of \$40,000.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

This program benefits abused and neglected children in Washtenaw County and works in cooperation with the Department of Human Services and Attorney Guardian ad Litem (Public Defender and private-practice attorneys).

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

This request conforms to County policies and Administration and Finance Department grant application and resolution submission expectations.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

Grant Application

Job Description

CC: Honorable Archie Brown, Chief Judge
Honorable Donald Shelton, Circuit Judge

A RESOLUTION RATIFYING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S SIGNATURE ON THE GRANT APPLICATION TO THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION FOR EXPANSION OF THE WASHTENAW COUNTY CASA PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$39,348 FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2006 TO JUNE 30, 2007

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

APRIL 5, 2006

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Trial Court has submitted a grant application to the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (National CASA) in the amount of \$39,348 for the period of July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007; and

WHEREAS, this funding will be used to expand the Washtenaw County CASA Program; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County CASA Program was established in 1987; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County CASA Program provides trained community volunteers to advocate for neglected and abused children who are subjects of civil child abuse proceedings; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, 286 children were involved in the juvenile court for neglect and abuse, the CASA program served 35 children, leaving 251 Washtenaw County children without a CASA volunteer; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County CASA Program has doubled in size during the past year and requires additional staff to expand further; and

WHEREAS, this matter has been reviewed by Corporation Counsel, the Finance Department, Human Resources, the County Administrator's Office and the Ways & Means Committee.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby ratifies the signature of the County Administrator on the application with the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association in the amount of \$39,348 for the period of July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007, as on file with the County Clerk.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners takes the following actions contingent upon receipt of the grant award in conformity with the grant application:

1. Authorizing the County Administrator to sign the Notice of Grant Award
2. Amending the budget, as attached hereto and made a part hereof
3. Authorizing the Administrator to sign the delegate contracts in conformity with the application/award upon review of Corporation Counsel, to be filed with the County Clerk
4. Authorizing the following personnel changes:

<u>Position #</u>	<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Create</u>
1972-0001*	CASA Volunteer Leader	19	14	.50
2442-0001**	CASA Coordinator	24	14	.20

*This is a grant status position. Occupant will have no bumping rights when grant funding ends.

**Position will revert back to original .80 FTE status when the grant funding ends.

5. Adopting the job description as attached hereto and made a part hereof
6. Authorizing the Administrator to accept donations from individuals, corporations, and non-profit organizations for the CASA program.

Washtenaw County Trial Court – Family Division
National CASA Expansion Grant
July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007
2991061800

	<u>Original Budget</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
<u>Revenue:</u>			
50000 Federal Revenue	\$0	\$39,348	\$39,348
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
70050 Personal Services	\$0	\$39,348	\$39,348
	Indirect Costs = \$0		

Washtenaw County

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Code: 1972
Employee Group: 14
Authorization: 06-
Court Agreement: 04-0016

CLASS TITLE: CASA Volunteer Leader
DEPARTMENT: Family Division – Juvenile Center
FLSA STATUS: Exempt

JOB SUMMARY:

Under the supervision of a higher classified employee, the CASA Volunteer Leader provides professional staff support to CASA volunteers ensuring that children involved with the CASA program receive sound advocacy and early permanency planning. Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to, volunteer recruitment, training, and supervision; coordination of cases; and community and public relations.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Essential Duties:

- Assists in developing and implementing goals, objectives, policies, procedures and work standards for the Washtenaw County CASA program.
- Prepares a variety of technical, statistical, narrative reports, correspondence, project forms, project policies and procedures, and other written materials.

Volunteer Management:

- Assist in recruiting, screening, interviewing and training new volunteers.
- Review new cases and assign appropriate volunteers in consultation with the CASA Coordinator.
- Prepare and distribute assignment documentation.
- Help volunteers develop initial case plans and on-going strategies for advocacy.
- Review and distribute volunteer court reports.
- Attend court hearings when possible and track court dates.
- Provide assistance and consultation to volunteers as needed and when requested.
- Maintain volunteer/case statistics and volunteer/case files, including monthly volunteer activity reports.
- Conduct volunteer evaluations.

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- Conduct in-service trainings for volunteers in cooperation with CASA Coordinator.
- Assist in volunteer appreciation events.
- Attend conferences/seminars/meetings as requested by Supervisor.
- Attend staff meetings and assist with ongoing evaluation of CASA Program.
- Maintain tracking systems for both volunteer and caseload files.
- Develop and maintain relationships with all appropriate groups, agencies, and organizations, and any and all other child advocacy agencies and community service organizations.
- Be available for public speaking engagements.

Important Duties:

- Uses standard office equipment in the course of the work; use of a personal vehicle in the course of the work.
- Performance of job duties will be required outside of normal working hours.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by employees assigned this classification. They are not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all job duties performed by personnel so classified.

Knowledge and Skills in:

- Applicable federal, state and local laws; National CASA and Michigan CASA standards.
- Community resources available to youth, families, and individuals.
- Using sound independent judgment within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- The ability to communicate with, supervise and empower volunteers to be effective in their roles. Experience with volunteers given preference.
- The ability to work cooperatively with different types of personalities.
- Knowledge and understanding of issues and dynamics within families in crisis relating to child abuse and neglect given preference.
- Knowledge and understanding of volunteer management, program development, and program evaluation.

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- Commitment to CASA's goals and mission.
- Time management and organization.
- Effective oral communication with a variety of audiences; public speaking.

- Organizing and maintaining accurate records and files.
- Technology: word processing, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, desktop publishing, email, research on internet, and standard office equipment.
- Ability to independently initiate new tasks related to the job.

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Possession of a valid Michigan driver's license required.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Duties require sufficient mobility to work in a normal office setting and use standard office equipment including a computer, vision to read printed materials and a VDT screen and hearing and speech sufficient to communicate in person or over the telephone.

These requirements may be accommodated for otherwise qualified individuals requiring and requesting such accommodations.

EDUCATION

Bachelor's degree in social work, psychology or related social service field. Previous experience working with volunteers and knowledge and understanding of child abuse and neglect, families in crisis, and other social service skills are preferred.

EXPERIENCE

Three years related experience in administration of volunteers, non-profit, or public service organization preferred. Six month probationary period.

This class description intends to identify the major duties and requirements of the job and should not be interpreted as all inclusive. Incumbents may be requested to perform job-related duties other than those outlined above and may be required to have specific job-related knowledge for successful job performance.