



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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TO: Barbara Levin Bergman, Chair
Ways & Means Committee

THROUGH: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

FROM: Dan Dwyer
Trial Court Administrator

Linda Edwards-Brown
Juvenile Center Administrator

DATE: September 17, 2008

SUBJECT: Jewelers for Children / National CASA Association Grant

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners ratify the submission of a grant application to National CASA Association Jewelers for Children grant program in the amount of \$10,000 for the period of December 1, 2008 through November 30, 2009.

BACKGROUND:

The Washtenaw County Trial Court initially established a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for abused and neglected children) program in 1987. The program has consistently provided a highly trained and committed service through a small pool of volunteers. The year 2005 was a development year for the Washtenaw County 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, detailed volunteer recruitment and screening materials. The program almost doubled in the number of volunteers, from nine to 16; serving 35 children in 2005.

In July 2006, the Court received a two year expansion grant from National CASA in cooperation with the US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. In the first year, grant funds were utilized to expand the program staff from .80 FTE to 1.5 FTE. Reduced grant funds in year two were

augmented by our nonprofit partner, Friends of CASA, to maintain the expanded staffing level. Expansion goals were achieved and today the program has 27 volunteers serving 52 children. With this grant, we will be able to reach our capacity of 37 volunteers.

DISCUSSION:

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program provides highly trained 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 achieved. 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 recommendation regarding how to best serve the child and family. The CASA volunteer is a powerful voice in a child's life. In addition to screening, recruitment, and providing initial training, professional staff support is essential in providing good supervision to volunteers as they advocate for our most vulnerable children in the very complicated foster care system.

Funding and marketing of this program is achieved through a unique public-private partnership between the Court/County and Friends of CASA. 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 recruitment assistance.

This grant is administered by National CASA and is made available through a partnership with Jewelers for Children. Jewelers for Children (JFC) - the industry organization of jewelry retailers, manufacturers, watch companies and trade associations - is the leading private supporter of the National CASA Association and its member programs. Through its *Champions for Abused Children Initiative*, JFC has contributed \$5.3 million since 2003 to increase the number of children served nationally by CASA programs. This grant is to be used primarily to support the salary, benefits, and taxes of a staff person that works directly with volunteers in a recruiting, training or supervisory role.

This grant and a donation from Friends of CASA will supplement the salary and fringe of the CASA Volunteer Leader position and will enable us to continue our successful expansion and enhance our community outreach and volunteer retention efforts.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

None.

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

The total grant amount is \$10,000. The County is not required to provide a cash or in-kind contribution as part of this grant application.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:

None.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

None.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

Conforms to County Policies

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

Budget
Resolution

Washtenaw County Trial Court
National CASA Jewelers for Children Grant
Business Unit: Friends of CASA 29911800
12/01/08 – 11/30/09

		Original	Revised	Variance
Revenues				
50100	Federal Revenue	\$ 0	\$10,000	\$10,000
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	Total Revenue	\$ 0	\$10,000	\$10,000
 Expenditures				
70200	Salaried - Permanent	\$ 0	\$5,928	\$5,928
71520	Fringe Benefits	\$ 0	\$3,471	\$3,471
72700	Office Supplies	\$ 0	\$374	\$374
72900	Printing / Copying	\$ 0	\$227	\$227
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	Total Expenditures	\$ 0	\$10,000	\$10,000

A RESOLUTION TO RATIFY THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE NATIONAL CASA ASSOCIATION JEWELERS FOR CHILDREN GRANT PROGRAM TO CONTINUE TO EXPAND THE WASHTENAW COUNTY CASA PROGRAM.

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October 1, 2008

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Trial Court initially established a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for abused and neglected children) program in 1987; and

WHEREAS, the CASA Program provides highly trained volunteers to advocate for the needs of abused and neglected children who are the subjects of civil child abuse; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County CASA Program began a successful expansion effort in 2006; and

WHEREAS, Jewelers for Children (JFC) - the industry organization of jewelry retailers, manufacturers, watch companies and trade associations – has partnered with National CASA to offer grants to local programs to expand the number of CASA volunteers providing advocacy to abused or neglected children; and

WHEREAS, this grant will enable the Washtenaw County CASA Program to continue a successful expansion effort and enhance our community outreach and volunteer retention efforts;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby ratifies the submission of a grant application to National CASA Association Jewelers for Children grant program in the amount of \$10,000 for the period of December 1, 2008 through November 30, 2009.

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

1. Authorizing the County Administrator to sign the Notice of Grant Award and
2. Amending the budget as attached hereto and made a part hereof.