



## CASA of Travis County Job Description

**Job Title:** Early Family Engagement Specialist

**Date:** November 2020

**Reports To:** Program Manager

**FLSA Status:** Full Time, Exempt. Starting Salary: \$45,000

### About CASA

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Travis County speaks up for children who've been abused or neglected by empowering our community to volunteer as advocates for them in the court system. When the state steps in to protect a child's safety, a judge appoints a trained volunteer advocate to make independent and informed recommendations in the child's best interest. Created in 1985, CASA of Travis County is one of the top ten CASA programs in the nation.

### We operate with...

**Integrity:** we are committed to the best interest of the people we serve and of the organization we represent. We approach people and challenges with honesty, trustworthiness and openness. **Excellence:** We strive for continuous improvement, to be the best we can be, individually and collectively. We are accountable. **Action:** We get things done. We are determined, creative, strategic and goal-oriented. We persevere. **Empowerment:** We build resilience in each other to succeed in this rigorous work. We are empowered when we demonstrate the courage of our convictions. We empower others when we listen and respect their thoughts, opinions and feelings. **Inclusion:** We are stronger as a group when diversity and uniqueness are valued. We strive for equity. **Generosity:** We assume the best about each other's intentions. We speak of others with kindness and treat one another with care and compassion. **Hope:** We remember that good can arise from difficulty and we look for optimism. We believe in the power of one person to change another's life for the better.

### Join us!

---

### General Summary

The Early Family Engagement (EFE) Specialist furthers the mission of CASA by ensuring quality advocacy at the time of ex-parte appointment by supervising Early Family Engagement volunteers assigned to cases to explore possible family/fictive support and identify immediate needs of children and families. The Early Family Engagement Specialist position requires critical working relationships with partner organizations, including the Department of Family and Protective Services, the Office of Child Representation, the Office of Parental Representation and the Children's Rights Clinic, among others.

The ability to quickly and independently assist volunteers to make decisions about the needs and best interest of children. The Early Family Engagement Specialist must have a proven record of exercising cultural humility in their interaction with children and families, as well as knowledge of child welfare policy and legal procedure.

### **Essential Responsibilities and Duties**

#### *1. Leadership and Volunteer Management*

Supervises volunteers in the role of Early Family Engagement (EFE) Volunteer for the children to whom CASA of Travis County is appointed at the ex-parte stage.

- Provides coaching, motivation, and mentoring to EFE volunteers.
- Ensures EFE volunteers have the information needed to make contact with child placements, parents, and other relatives.
- Attends and participates in all related court hearings, providing assistance and supervision of EFE volunteer with court attendance and testimony, when necessary.
- Provides EFE volunteers with information regarding community resources, as well as DFPS policy and procedure in regards to kinship placements and legal guidelines.
- Coaches volunteers on best interest factors and immediate needs of children and families, as well as evaluation of family members for placement and family support.
- Assists volunteers in developing best interest recommendations to be made at initial court hearings.
- Coaches volunteers with regard to family engagement practices and the importance of maintaining familial connections for children to whom CASA is appointed.
- Enhances the opportunity for retention of volunteers for future cases by teaching new skills and evaluating the volunteer's experience in the EFE program.
- In all of the above, maintains awareness of child safety and prioritizes safety in decision-making on behalf of children to whom CASA is appointed.

#### *2. Case Management and Evaluation*

Provides informed and consistent guidance and supervision to EFE Volunteers.

- Assists in tracking all new ex parte appointments, ensuring all necessary documentation is received (original petition, affidavit, show cause order, appointment order).
- Evaluates cases for EFE volunteer matching and assignment.
- Identifies and maintains an understanding of DFPS policy and procedure changes.
- Coordinates with program leadership to ensure cases are assigned to CASs in a timely manner.
- Supports team members in the transition of cases from EFE program to CAS assignment.
- Ensure accurate and complete client case records in Optima database at time of case transfer.
- Maintain accurate case and Volunteer statistical data according to state and national standards for CASA and for grant purposes.
- Maintain a professional, organized environment.
- Assist with office and program demands as needed.
- Attend and participate in continuing education opportunities.
- Assist with program development and evaluation as needed by the Program Manager and Senior Director of Program Innovation.
- Participates in regular supervision with the Program Manager.

### 3. *Community Partnerships*

Ensures the high standard of performance of services of CASA of Travis County.

- Provides consistent contact in the process of maintaining and fostering relationships with the volunteer, clients, family members and other professionals while assigned at ex-parte stage.
- Communicates effectively with legal parties during the EFE stage.
- Attends and participates in community meetings as needed by the Program Manager or Director of Program Innovation.

### 4. *Other Responsibilities*

Assists the Program Manager with special circumstances involving ex-parte assignment.

### 5. *Other Duties as Assigned*

## **Knowledge, Skills and Experience**

### *Required:*

- A minimum of a Bachelor's degree required. CASA of Travis County welcomes employees from diverse educational backgrounds and degree programs.
- In lieu of a degree, at least eight years of experience with a CASA program or a similar organization.\*
- Demonstrated integrity, honesty and ethical conduct.
- Knowledge of the mission of CASA, role of Guardian ad Litem and best interest factors.
- Two years' experience in the child welfare of family law field.
- Understanding of child and family advocacy issues, including child placement options, therapeutic intervention/assessment/needs for children and families, legal intervention and rights regarding children and families.
- The ability to concisely and clearly convey and interpret information to and from others orally and in writing.
- Demonstrated initiative to identify and solve problems creatively and effectively, prioritizing the needs of the child, volunteer and/or organization.
- The ability to work under time constraints, be goal-oriented and maintain productive and effective performance and interaction with the experienced EFE volunteers, Child Advocacy Specialists, DFPS caseworkers, attorneys, children, parents and other family members.
- Demonstrated commitment to the values of diversity and inclusion.

### *Preferred:*

1. Master's Degree in related field.
2. Experience with CASA of Travis County.
3. Established relationships with key stakeholders involved in the Travis County court process.

\*If a college degree has not been completed, a writing sample may be requested.

## **Physical Requirements and Work Environment**

The Early Family Engagement Specialist will spend the majority of the time in the office and that could involve intermittent physical activities including bending, reaching, sitting and walking during working hours and must be able to lift at least 20 pounds. Additionally it is anticipated that the person will spend several hours of each day seated at a computer. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable a person with physical disabilities to perform the job.