



CASA of Travis County Job Description

Job Title:	Child Advocacy Specialist
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.

General Summary

The Child Advocacy Specialist (CAS) will motivate, empower, guide and supervise CASA volunteers as they advocate in the best interest of children to whom CASA is appointed by the courts, while ensuring accountability for meeting CASA of Travis County's values, policies, and standards of case management are met. Additionally, the Child Advocacy Specialist will fulfill the performance standards of Texas and National CASA, ensuring that advocates comply with the statutory obligations of guardian *ad litem* and meeting or exceeding the expectations of the Travis County courts. The CAS must demonstrate cultural humility in their interaction with children and families.

Essential Responsibilities and Duties

1. Supervises volunteer advocates in their role as "Court Appointed Special Advocates" (CASA) and Guardians ad Litem for the children to whom CASA of Travis County is appointed.

- Supervises no more than 30 volunteer advocates (unless multiple volunteers are assigned to a single family group) and a maximum of 30 family groups (with the optimum being 22-25 family groups). Caseloads and numbers of volunteers supervised will be reduced proportionately for employees working in this position on a less than full-time basis.
- Along with the Volunteer Advocate, attends and participates in case related meetings as necessary or as requested by the Volunteer Advocate.
- Attends and participates in all related court hearings, providing assistance and coaching of volunteer advocate regarding court reports, court attendance and testimony.
- Provides volunteer advocates information and professional contacts regarding community resources and placements.
- Guides and supervises volunteer advocates in their participation in placement selections by reading home studies and consulting as information is gathered and partners with the volunteer advocates in making recommendations to the Court.
- Assists the volunteer advocates in identifying permanency planning issues for children while steadily moving the case forward toward the goal of a safe and permanent placement.
- Attends and participates in volunteer related events for recruitment and retention, including but not limited to Swearing In ceremonies, volunteer meet-ups, and volunteer appreciation events.
- Completes annual volunteer evaluations and provides regular coaching of Volunteer Advocates.
- Fulfills the performance standards as outlined by Praesidium, through monitoring and supervision, incident reporting, shadowing of Volunteer Advocates, QA calls, and other tasks as assigned.
- Along with the Volunteer Advocate, works collaboratively with other professionals.

2. Provides informed and consistent guidance, coaching and feedback to volunteer advocates as well as encouragement and praise.

- Provides timely notification of staffings, meetings, and court hearings to volunteer advocates.
- Provides guidance, assistance and review of volunteer advocates' written and oral reports to the Court.
- Leads onboarding of new volunteer advocates and provides ongoing training and continuing education to volunteer advocates as needed.
- Provides consistent contact in the process of maintaining and fostering relationships between the volunteer advocate and other professionals in legal, social welfare, educational and therapeutic areas/organizations, as well as between the volunteer advocate and the children/families we serve.
- Enhances volunteer advocate engagement and retention by coaching new skills, evaluating the volunteer advocate's experience, and by matching the volunteer advocate with future cases based on strengths and skills and in accordance with CASA policy.
- Coaches volunteer advocates if they are not meeting expectations and provides feedback in order to empower advocates to be successful in their role.

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

- Models a commitment to race equity, child safety, and volunteer engagement.
- Participates in regular supervision with their Program Manager.
- Supports team members by providing coverage for meetings and court hearings and with volunteer advocates as needed.

- Maintains accurate and complete case records by empowering volunteer advocates and ensuring quality.
- Maintains accurate and complete documentation of volunteer advocate supervision records.
- Submits accurate and timely case and volunteer report data as directed by Program Manager and/or Director of Data and Evaluation.
- Attends and participates in continuing education opportunities per policy.
- Assists with program development and evaluation as directed by Sr. Director of Advocacy and Chief Program Officer.
- Attends and actively participates in required CASA meetings.
- Participates in committees as needed.
- When assignment of a volunteer advocate is not appropriate or possible, serves as the guardian *ad litem* on assigned cases, meeting or exceeding the minimum expectations of CASA.

4. Other responsibilities include:

- Assists Director of Volunteer Engagement with volunteer advocate training and retention efforts, which may include some evening and weekend events.
- Assists with fundraising events as needed.
- Attends and participates in community meetings as directed by Program Manager or Sr. Director of Advocacy.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Required:

1. Education

- 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, significant professional relevant experience may be considered.

2. Critical areas of qualifications include the following:

- Experience in providing staff or volunteer supervision and ability to manage people.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity of thought and experience effectively working with a diverse population, and understanding the impact of race and equity in larger systems.
- Understanding of child and family advocacy issues as it relates to the child welfare system.
- Demonstrated ability to concisely and clearly convey and interpret information to and from others orally and in writing.
- Demonstrated ability to work under time constraints, be goal-oriented and maintain productive and effective performance and interaction with Volunteer Advocates and clients.
- Demonstrated resilience, flexibility and self-awareness.

3. Spanish/English fluency is considered an advantage.

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

Physical Requirements and Work Environment

The Child Advocacy Specialist will be expected to have daily transportation to attend court hearings, staffings, visitations, fundraising events, etc. The position requires a flexible schedule as visits with Advocates may occur in the evenings or on weekends. He/she will spend some time in the office that could involve intermittent physical activities including bending, reaching, sitting and walking during working hours. Additionally, it is anticipated that the person may spend several hours of each day

seated at a personal computer. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable a person with physical disabilities to perform the job.

**During the COVID-19 pandemic, most work will be done remotely for health and safety reasons, but some functions will have to be performed in the CASA of Travis County office.*