

CASA Outcomes & Annual Report 2013



Strengthening Voices for Oklahoma's Abused and Neglected Children



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

OKLAHOMA CASA ASSOCIATION, INC.

Executive Summary

Each year, the Oklahoma CASA Association strives to meet its mission of providing a statewide voice for abused and neglected children by enhancing the growth and sustainability of CASA programs in Oklahoma. This has been annually achieved through statewide training, marketing, IT support, web design and maintenance, quality assurance, a grants program, and ongoing technical support.

During FY 2013, the State Association took steps to provide the 25 CASA programs with new technology, more training opportunities and marketing assistance. Our IT department procured new computers, customized and delivered them to local CASA programs, upgrading from XP operating systems to Windows 7. Another exciting endeavor that has been in the works is the implementation of a polycom video conferencing system to assist in training statewide. We started to move forward with this project and the potential to assist local programs with training for CASA staff and volunteers is exponential.

Oklahoma CASA also began embracing new partnerships with other child advocacy organizations this year - all with a common goal of helping abused and neglected children by the enhancement of training for our volunteers and professionals.

For certain, FY 2013 has served as a building block for better things to come and we are excited to continue along this path. Compiled in this report is a brief look at the past year at the State Association, but most importantly, we are proud to share our outcomes for children. The proof that CASA volunteers do indeed make a difference in the lives of Oklahoma's children.

The Oklahoma CASA Association would like to thank our advocates, dedicated board members, staff and other supporters who have made the commitment to strengthen voices for abused and neglected children in Oklahoma.

"I think my efforts have helped place children in safe, loving environments."

From the survey of CASA Volunteers, 2013

“I know that in all cases CASA is not afraid to stand up for what they believe is in the best interests of the children, regardless if they are in disagreement with the DA, DHS and/or myself. That kind of independence gives me the confidence to know that they are doing a great job.”

From the survey of Oklahoma Judges, 2013

Why CASA Exists?

In the fiscal year of 2012, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services substantiated that 9,842 children were victims of abuse and/or neglect. CASA is an independent entity that is in existence to make sure that these children have a voice in court and find their way to a permanent, safe home.

What is a CASA Program?

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates and is a nonprofit organization tasked with recruiting and training volunteers to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children.

What do Court Appointed Special Advocates Do for the Children?

Advocates are community volunteers who represent the best interests of abused and neglected children who are wards of the juvenile court. After being screened and trained, a CASA is appointed to a child or sibling group. Through his or her court order, the CASA researches the case, talks to the child and involved parties and professionals, advocates for needed services and timely decisions, and submits written recommendations to the court. The CASA appears in court and monitors the progress of the court-prescribed plan. A CASA usually handles one case at a time until it is fully concluded.

What are the Outcomes for Children?

The long range outcomes for children with a CASA are that children have a safe and permanent home and that children don't "fall through the cracks" of the system that's in place to protect them.

CASA programs in Oklahoma asked the question: how well do we do this? That question led to the identification of initial and intermediate outcomes that, when measured, demonstrate the real changes we are making in the lives of children.

These outcomes for children include:

- A quality comprehensive history/case statement that is compiled to facilitate the children's move to permanency.
- Social, mental, emotional physical, therapeutic, educational and safety needs of children are identified and addressed.
- Increased stability for children and continuity with an adult involved in the case.
- Faster move toward permanency.
- Children have a voice representing their best interests.



In 2012, 1,143 CASA volunteers tirelessly spoke up on behalf of 3,348 abused and neglected children who were wards of the juvenile courts.

“In some of my more difficult cases, the CASA worker helps the Court to gain insight and “think outside the box” to find resolutions to hard cases.”

From survey of Oklahoma Judges, 2013

Outcomes for Children

From the period of July 2012 to June 2013, 25 local CASA programs recorded outcomes for the children that were appointed a CASA volunteer. Following are the statewide results that clearly convey the impact CASA volunteers can have on the lives of children.

OUTCOME: Quality comprehensive history/case statements are compiled to facilitate the children’s move to permanency.

CASA volunteers serve as the “eyes and ears” of the court outside the courtroom. In order to provide judges with the most accurate information in their reports, volunteers must maintain contact with anyone who may have pertinent information to the case.

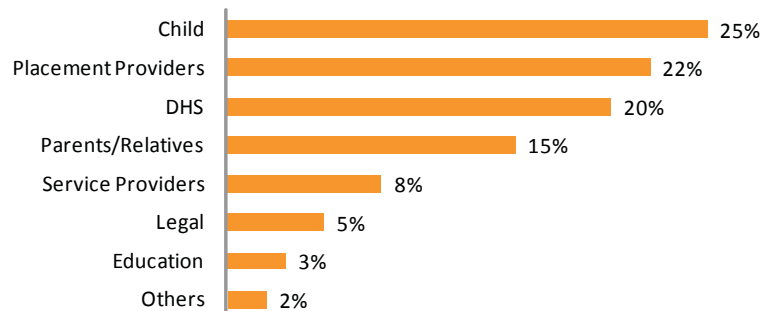
During the 2013 fiscal year, **63,335 contacts** were made by CASA volunteers on 1,186 cases. CASA volunteers talk to children, foster parents, service providers, educators, parents and relatives. All of the information gathered through these contacts is compiled into a report that is presented to the judge presiding over the case.

In a survey, judges were asked to rate the quality of reports received based on five indicators on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.

- 100% of respondents felt reports received from CASA are clear and concise, containing well-researched recommendations.

Types of Contact

N=63,335





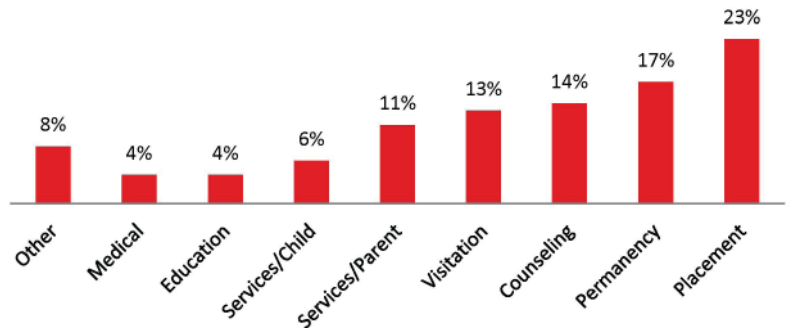
OUTCOME: Social, mental, emotional, physical, therapeutic, educational and safety needs of children are identified and addressed.

In their reports to the judges, CASA volunteers make recommendations based on their independent, objective opinions as to what is in the best interests of the children. A total of **12,465 independent recommendations** regarding services, visitation, placement, etc. were made to the court by CASA volunteers on 1,186 cases.

Judges were asked “Compared to cases without a CASA, do you feel children with a CASA receive: fewer services, more services or the same service?” 92% said they felt children received more services and 4% said that they felt children received the same amount of services.

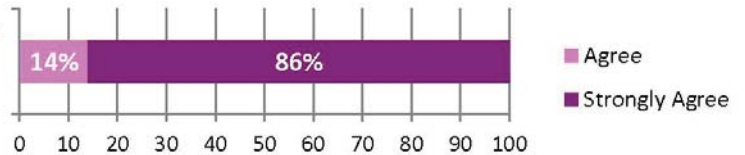
Types of Recommendations

N=12,465



100% of Judges Surveyed Feel Children’s Needs are Better Met with a CASA

I feel the needs of the children are better met while they are wards of the court when they have a CASA (N=22)



“Many CASAs in our cases take a particular interest in the child’s educational progress. They frequently meet with the school teachers and counselors. Occasionally they find unmet needs and are able to advocate for better outcomes. In addition, they will learn whether one or both of the parents are invested in their child’s education - a critical concept when the Court is considering reunification.”

From the survey of Oklahoma Judges, 2013

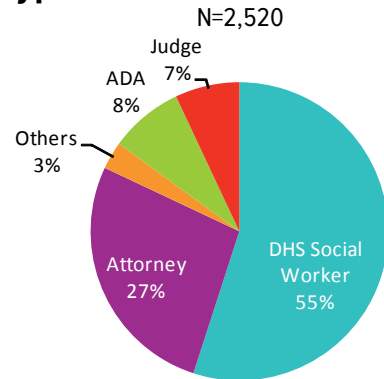


OUTCOME: Increased stability for children and continuity with an adult involved in the case.

CASA volunteers are a constant in the life of a child. Often times they are the people who have been on the case the longest and have first hand knowledge of the case’s history.

During the fiscal year, **2,520 professional changes** were made to 1,282 cases. That includes changes in social workers, attorneys, therapists and judges..

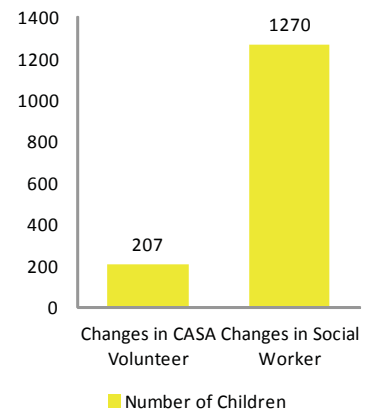
Types of Professional Changes



Changes in Social Worker Compared to CASA

CASA volunteers research a case by speaking with everyone involved and report back to the judge what they think should be done in the child’s best interests. They perform work most similar to that of a DHS social worker.

During the reported time period, more than six times as many children had a change in social workers assigned to their case than change in CASA volunteer.



- 51% of respondents to the CASA volunteer survey said they have been assigned to their cases longer than the present DHS workers (8% did not know.)

OUTCOME: Children have a voice representing their best interests.

During FY 2013, attorneys representing the children were absent for more than 25% of the hearings (4,789 total hearings with attorney present for 3,539). CASA representatives were present for *all* hearings.

100% of Judges Feel CASA Volunteers are Effective Spokespersons for the Best Interests of the Children



“It has been a very long drawn out case with many different placements, several different case workers and a few different therapists. I am the only one that has been with the kids since near the beginning. We still do not know how it will all turn out, but I feel it is important that I have watched the whole process and know the children, and can continue to work towards placements that will be the best for each of them.”

From survey of CASA Volunteers, 2013

Support for CASA Programs

The mission of the Oklahoma CASA Association is to present a statewide voice for abused and neglected children by enhancing the growth and sustainability of CASA programs throughout Oklahoma.

Program members receive many benefits from the state organization, including:

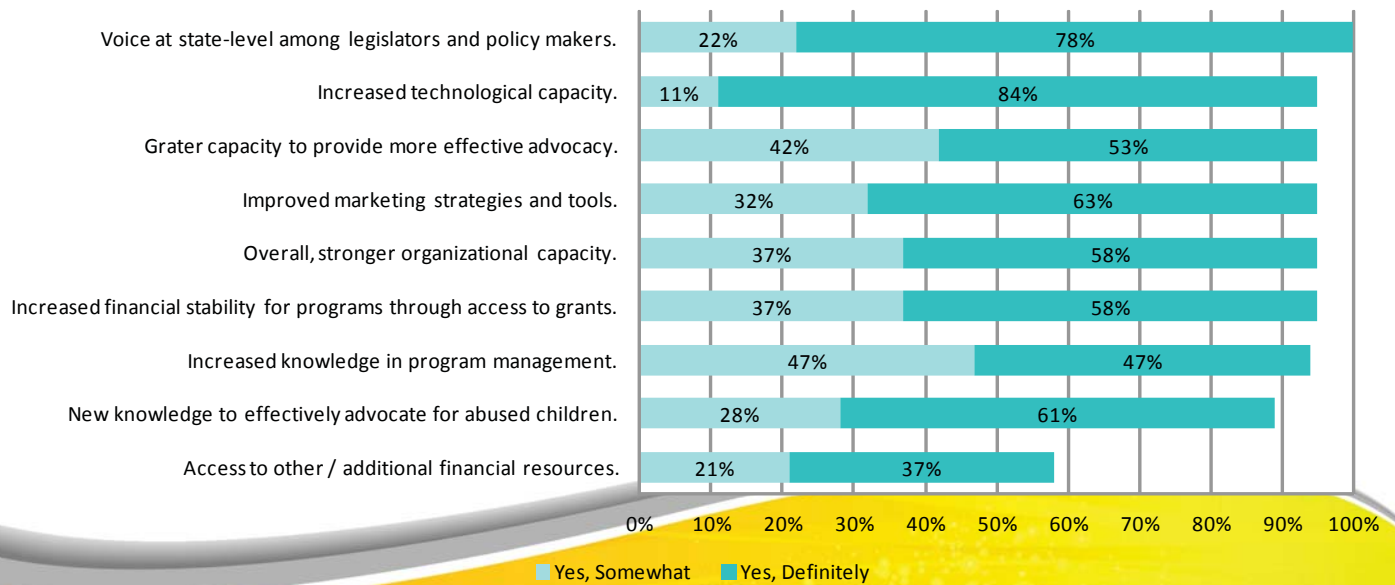
- Training for staff and volunteers that provides increased knowledge necessary to effectively advocate for abused and neglected children.
- Access to additional financial resources.
- A unified voice at state-level among legislators and policy makers.
- Improved marketing strategies and tools.
- Increased technological capacity.
- Increased knowledge in and assistance with program management.

Calls for Assistance

In the FY 2013, there were **902 documented technical assistance contacts** with local CASA program staff. These calls and e-mails ranged from IT assistance to program management and case guidance.

The graph below depicts the areas in which local CASA programs feel they benefit from being a member of the Oklahoma CASA Association.

State Level Outcomes - Benefits Realized by Local CASA Programs
(19 out of 25 local CASA programs responded to survey)



"I feel the State Association has been very beneficial in helping with additional in-service training, marketing information and technical support. It amazes me that all we have to do is make a phone call or e-mail if something is needed and they do not hesitate to give ideas or that extra help."

From the survey of Local CASA Programs, 2013

IT Support

In FY 2013, the Oklahoma CASA Association began purchasing new computers in order to update the equipment for local programs. The state CASA leased over \$200,000 worth of equipment consisting of computers, LCD monitors, laptops, printers and projectors. Our IT personnel also perform service and support for networking, repairing and application support at no charge to the programs and are also on call for assistance. Along with the marketing coordinator, the IT department also offers free website design and maintenance for local CASA programs. So far, fourteen program websites are hosted out of the state CASA office.

Marketing Support

Oklahoma CASA assisted with volunteer recruitment through heightened public awareness and working with individual CASA programs in promoting locally. Over the year, multiple design projects were completed for local programs. These projects included items such as invitations for fund-raisers, website design and direct mail campaigns. The Association provided standing banners to local CASA programs, free of charge. The banners featured the "I Am for the Child" campaign developed by National CASA in an effort to help provide a unified voice for CASA programs across the state of Oklahoma.

Training for Volunteers and Staff

Throughout the year, the Oklahoma CASA Association offers multiple trainings to CASA staff and volunteers. In 2013, trainings over topics such as *Human Resources* and *Therapeutic Foster Care* were offered at no cost to staff and volunteers. The 2013 Oklahoma CASA Conference, *Make It Count*, was well attended and generated excitement for future conferences. The annual conference is also an opportunity for Oklahoma CASA to recognize individuals who have gone above and beyond to help Oklahoma's abused and neglected children.

2013 Awards of Excellence Winners

Ben Bradford, Tri-County CASA - *Child Advocate of the Year*

Michelle Gantt, CASA of Oklahoma County - *Staff Member of the Year*

John Whittaker, CASA of Southwest Oklahoma - *Board Member of the Year*

Honorable James R. Pratt, CASA of Southeast Oklahoma - *Judge of the Year*

Lee Ann Limber, CASA of Oklahoma County - *Director of the Year*

Lori Blumenthal, CASA of Oklahoma County - *Lela Roddy Special Recognition Award*



Oklahoma CASA Association Board of Directors (FY 2013)

Ron Harp, *President*

Tiana Douglas, *Vice President*

Joe Clytus, *Treasurer*

Maria Rosales-Lambert, *Secretary*

Scott Mitchell

Carlos E. Johnson, Ed.D., CPA

Hollie Mackey

Mark Houts

Carole Wade

Kim Deer

Karla Luginbill

Lee Ann Limber

“One of the children on my case is separated from the other siblings due to behavioral issues. Since she is placed in the shelter, I visit her more often than I visit the brothers who are in a foster home. The little girl has come to look forward to my visits... She told me that when she grows up she wants to be a CASA so she can help kids who can't see their families.”

From the survey of CASA Volunteers, 2013



“I truly believe my child would be ‘lost in the system’. Without someone pressing for his best interest, I think he would fall victim to a system just trying to press cases through as quickly as they can. I know my impact is felt every night he is in a warm, loving home.”

From the survey of CASA Volunteers, 2013

Statements of Financial Position

For the Year Ended June 30, 2013

Assets

Current Assets

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Cash & Cash Equivalents | \$916,508 |
| Grants Receivable | 36,108 |
| Court Fees Receivable | 117,498 |
| Prepaid Expenses | <u>3,745</u> |
| Total Current Assets | 1,073,859 |

Fixed Assets

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Accumulated Depreciation | -\$225,654 |
| Equipment Capitalized | 224,918 |
| Furniture and Fixtures | <u>16,153</u> |
| Total Fixed Assets | 15,417 |

TOTAL ASSETS \$1,089,276

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Accounts Payable | \$ - |
| Accrued Expenses | 5,769 |
| Accrued Payroll and Payroll Tax | 6,553 |
| Accrued Vacation | 12,028 |
| Due to Programs | <u>119,863</u> |
| Total Current Liabilities | 144,213 |

Net Assets

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Unrestricted: | |
| Board Designated | |
| Local Program Sustainability | \$570,000 |
| State Office Sustainability | 265,000 |
| Special Projects & Training | <u>65,000</u> |
| Total Board Designated | 900,000 |
| Undesignated | <u>45,063</u> |
| Total Unrestricted Assets | 945,063 |
| Total Net Assets | 945,063 |

TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS \$1,089,276.00

Summary of Revenue and Expense

For the Year Ended June 30, 2013

Support and Revenue

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Court Fee Revenue | \$1,423,599 |
| Contributions | 28,636 |
| In-Kind Donations | 77,625 |
| Federal and State Grant Revenue | 309,312 |
| Dues and Assessment | 62,117 |
| Conference Fees | 12,720 |
| Interest & Miscellaneous | <u>226</u> |

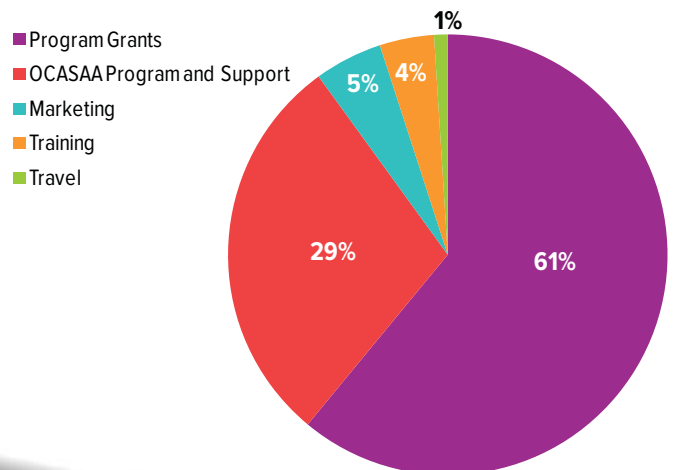
TOTAL REVENUE \$1,914,235.00

Expenses

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Program Grants | \$1,020,349 |
| OCASAA Program and Support | 478,935 |
| Marketing | 91,657 |
| Training | 75,054 |
| Travel | <u>13,381</u> |

TOTAL EXPENSES \$1,679,381

Expenses



CASA Programs

Oklahoma CASA programs serve a total of 56 counties and have a presence in four tribal courts in Oklahoma.

Cleveland County CASA

Serving: Cleveland, Garvin & McClain
Norman, OK
405-360-5295
www.clevelandcountycasa.org

Youth and Family CASA

Serving: Pottawatomie & Lincoln Counties
Shawnee, OK
405-275-3340
www.casaspeaksup.org

Bryan County CASA, Inc.

Serving: Bryan County
Durant, OK
580-924-6164

Okmulgee County/Creek Nation CASA

Serving: Creek Nation, Okmulgee,
Okfuskee & Creek Counties
Okmulgee, OK
918-756-2549

Tulsa CASA, Inc.

Serving: Tulsa County
Tulsa, OK
918-584-2272
www.tulsacasa.org

CASA of Oklahoma County

Serving: Oklahoma County
Oklahoma City, OK
405-713-6456
www.okcountycasa.org

CASA of Southern Oklahoma

Serving: Carter, Johnston, Love,
Marshall & Murray Counties
Ardmore, OK
580-226-0009

Payne County CASA Association, Inc.

Serving: Payne County
Stillwater, OK
405-624-2242
www.casaforkids.com

CASA of Southeast Oklahoma

Serving: McIntosh & Pittsburg Counties
McAlester, OK
918-426-5779
www.casaseok.org

CASA of Cherokee Country

Serving: Cherokee Nation, Adair &
Cherokee Counties
Tahlequah, OK
918-456-8788
www.cherokeecasa.org

Tri-County CASA

Serving: Rogers, Craig &
Mayes Counties
Claremore, OK
918-923-4570
www.tricocasa.org

CASA for Children, Inc.

Serving: Muskogee & Wagoner Counties
Muskogee, OK
918-686-8199
www.casaok.org

Kay & Noble County CASA

Serving: Kay & Noble Counties
Ponca City, OK
580-762-6470
www.kaynoblecasa.org

Second District CASA

Serving: Beckham, Custer, Roger Mills
& Washita Counties
Clinton, OK
580-323-3322

22nd Judicial District CASA

Serving: Pontotoc County
Ada, OK
580-332-1441

Counseling Inc. CASA

Serving: Atoka & Coal Counties
Tishomingo, OK
580-371-3551

Little Dixie CASA

Serving: McCurtain, Choctaw
& Pushmataha Counties
Antlers, OK
580-298-2921
www.littledixiecasa.org

13th Judicial District CASA

Serving: Ottawa & Delaware Counties
Grove, OK
918-787-6481

Fourth Judicial District CASA

Serving: Garfield, Blaine & Major Counties
Enid, OK
580-242-1153
www.garfieldcountycarecampus.org

Canadian County CASA, Inc.

Serving: Canadian County
El Reno, OK
405-264-5508

CASA Voices For Children, Inc.

Serving: Grady County
Chickasha, OK
405-224-0404
www.casav4c.org

Pawnee/Osage CASA

Serving: Pawnee County/Nation &
Osage County/Nation
Pawnee, OK
918-762-3776
www.pawneecasa.org

San Bois CASA, Inc.

Serving: Latimer, LeFlore & Haskell
Counties
Poteau, OK
918-647-3267

CASA of Southwest Oklahoma

Serving: Comanche & Jefferson Counties
Lawton, OK
580-248-2212
www.casaswok.com

Northwest Oklahoma CASA

Serving: Woodward, Woods, Ellis &
Harper Counties
580-248-2212
www.nwocasa.org

“One child I advocate for actually told me that if it wasn’t for me he would feel like an orphan. He has had so many workers come and go, as well as counselors and placements. I am the only one who he says he knows will be there. It has given him the opportunity to look beyond daily survival and look forward enough to imagine a future for himself. He went from zero thoughts about his future to imagining himself going to college and becoming an architect. He is only 14, but we are exploring the field, schools, offices and buildings.”

From survey of CASA Volunteers, 2013



**Improve Outcomes for Children.
Give an Abused Child a Voice. Yours.**

For more information, contact:

Oklahoma CASA Association
PO Box 54946

Oklahoma City, OK 73154

Phone: 405-524-8999

Fax: 405-524-7222

Toll Free: 1-800-742-2272

or visit

www.oklahomacasa.org



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

OKLAHOMA CASA ASSOCIATION, INC.