



Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program

Mission

The Hamilton County CASA Program engages responsible, trained, and compassionate volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children in court. Through this work, the program helps ensure that children have the opportunity to grow up in safe, stable, and nurturing homes.

Primary Goal

CASA is founded on the belief that every child deserves a safe, permanent home and the chance to thrive. Our goal is to lead in child advocacy by supporting dedicated volunteers and staff as they make a meaningful difference in children's lives.

Purpose and Role

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is a trained community member appointed by a Judge or Magistrate to represent a child's best interests throughout all stages of Juvenile Court proceedings.

CASA volunteers support the court by providing well-researched, objective information about the child and their circumstances. This includes offering an unbiased perspective on the family situation and ensuring the child's voice is heard in court.

At the request of the Judge or a magistrate, CASA volunteers conduct independent assessments of each case. They gather information through field visits—such as to homes and schools—and interviews with parents, relatives, teachers, and other relevant individuals. The volunteer then compiles their findings, along with any concerns, into a written report, which is submitted to the court at scheduled hearings.

Volunteer Requirements

Applicants must:

- Be at least 21 years old
- Complete a written application detailing education, training, employment history, and experience with children
- Provide three personal references (preferably non-relatives)
- Consent to background checks, including law enforcement, Child Protective Services, and sex offender registry screenings
- Participate in an individual interview with CASA program staff

Hamilton County Juvenile Court is committed to recruiting and selecting volunteers who reflect the diversity of the community. All personnel and volunteer practices are conducted without discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or religion.

Time Commitment

Volunteers complete 30 hours of pre-service training before receiving a case. This training includes classroom instruction, independent study, and courtroom observation. Time requirements vary by case. Typically, volunteers spend 5 to 10 hours conducting research and interviews before the first court appearance. More complex cases may require additional time. After becoming familiar with the process, most CASA volunteers contribute approximately 2 to 4 hours per month.

Additional Information

National CASA Association: <http://www.casaforchildren.org/>

Tennessee CASA Association: <http://www.tncasa.org/>