

CASA for Hunt County



General Requirements of All CASA Volunteers

- Must be a minimum of 21 years of age.
- Must complete the required volunteer training course & interview with CASA staff.
- Consent to a background check of felony records & child abuse registry.
- Must provide a driving record (dated within the last 30 days), if planning on providing transportation. All transportation must be approved by the Executive Director prior to transporting.
- Commit to serve for a minimum of one year.
- Complete the volunteer application & related forms including Pledge of Confidentiality.
- Attend a minimum of 12 hours of in-service training per year (offered throughout the year by CASA for Hunt County).

Qualifications of CASA Volunteers

- Willingness to work within the guidelines, policies, and standards of CASA.
- Good human relations skills and the willingness & ability to be objective.
- Commitment of time, interest, and energy necessary to fulfill responsibilities of volunteer position.
- Willingness to accept guidance and direction.
- Sensitivity towards cultural / ethnic / religious / etc. differences.
- Ability to formulate and maintain an independent position throughout the assignment.
- Ability to communicate both verbally and in writing.
- Understanding of confidentiality and the personal commitment to maintain that confidentiality at all times.
- Able to provide your own (licensed & insured) transportation.

Volunteer Job Description

Basic Function: A CASA volunteer is a trained community volunteer appointed by a Family Court Judge to speak for the best interests of an abused and/or neglected child. A CASA works as an official part of the judicial proceedings, working alongside attorneys and social workers. By handling only one (or occasionally two) cases at a time, the CASA has time to thoroughly explore the history and circumstances of each assigned case.

Supervision: Direct supervision and guidance is provided by the Executive Director and the Case Manager. These individuals will be available to volunteers to discuss case plans, progress, or problems, as well as provide other information needed by the volunteer to fulfill his/her role as a CASA. Volunteers will periodically be asked for feedback regarding supervision and overall satisfaction with the program.

Major Duties and Responsibilities:

- ◆ Complete an extensive, independent review of each case:
 - Meet face-to-face with child monthly;
 - Meet with social worker to discuss case history, obtain pertinent case information, and to ensure development of a permanency plan;
 - Speak with the child and relevant adults (parents, family members, school officials, doctors, and others involved in the child's life who might have facts about the case);
 - Review appropriate records and reports;
 - Observe the child and significant others;
 - Report immediately, any incident of suspected child abuse/neglect to the assigned social worker or the Child Abuse Hotline if the case worker is not available;
- ◆ Report findings to the court by submitting formal reports to the Judge at every scheduled hearing/review:
 - Provide a written report containing factual information to the CASA office 5 business days prior to every hearing;
 - Attend court hearings concerning the child.
- ◆ Ensure representation of the child's best interest:
 - Be certain that all relevant facts are presented at the court hearings;
 - Attend appropriate meetings regarding the child;
 - Participate in all planning conferences concerning the child.
- ◆ Monitor case following a court hearing or decision as designated by the court:
 - Ensure that the judicial and child welfare systems are moving ahead to secure a safe, permanent home for the child;
 - Ensure that court-ordered services are provided to the child and family.
- ◆ Consult biweekly with the volunteer coordinator concerning assigned case:
 - Develop a CASA case plan;
 - Review progress and reports;
 - Arrange with the coordinator for coverage of any conferences or court proceedings if unable to attend.

Training/Support Plan:

- CASA volunteers are required to attend approximately 30 hours of pre-service training and 12 hours of in-service training annually.
- CASA volunteers will appear before a judge upon completion of training to be sworn as a court appointee.
- CASA volunteers follow guidelines outlined in the Volunteer Policies and Procedures.
- CASA volunteers have access to additional training opportunities offered by other agencies.
- CASA volunteers receive direct supervision and guidance from program staff.
- CASA volunteers are encouraged to call their volunteer coordinator at any time with any questions/concerns.

Time Commitment:

- Volunteers are required to make a twelve-month minimum commitment to the program.
- Volunteers are expected to attend all court hearings on their cases – approximately 5 per year.
- Volunteers are expected to be available for case assignment and to accept cases immediately upon completion of pre-service training, unless other arrangements have been made.
- CASA volunteers, on the average, spend 8-10 hours a month on each case.

Necessary Knowledge and Skills:

- Ability to keep all client and court information confidential.
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds.
- Ability to transport self.
- Ability to maintain objectivity.
- A basic understanding of child development and family relationships.
- Good common sense.
- Does not require specific educational training beyond a high school diploma or GED.
- Must be 21 years of age.

Benefits: Although we cannot provide you with monetary rewards, there are many benefits to volunteering as a CASA. These include the opportunity to:

- Make a difference in the life and future of a child who has been a victim of abuse and/or neglect;
- Help a child/children find permanency in a safe, loving home;
- Assist judges in obtaining a clear picture of a child’s life and needs;
- Gain an understanding of the Family courts, legal proceedings, and social service agencies;
- Develop/utilize communication skills;
- Develop/utilize assertiveness;
- Utilize your past experience/skills;
- Form friendships with like-minded people in your community;
- Have access to training via local, state and national CASA.

Volunteer Signature

Date

CASA for Hunt County

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address (Street Address / City / State / Zip): _____

How long have you lived at the above address? _____

How did you learn about CASA for Hunt County? _____

Telephone: Home: () _____ Cell: () _____

Work: () _____ May you be called at work? YES NO

Email address: _____

Social Security # _____

Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth: _____

Drivers License No. _____ State of Drivers License: _____

Marital Status: M D S W If presently married, state spouse's name & occupation:

Spouse: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

<u>Children's Names</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Gender</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Emergency Contact

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

EDUCATION HISTORY

Please circle highest completed:

High School: 9 10 11 12

College: 1 2 3 4

Graduate: 1 2 3 4

Are you presently enrolled in school? YES NO

If yes, name of school and course of study _____

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Are you currently employed? YES NO

If so, will you be able to take time off for required daytime casework, including court appearances, mediations, case staffings & family visitations at FPS? YES NO

Employer: _____

Employer Address: _____ Employer phone#: _____

TRANSPORTATION

Do you drive? YES NO (please circle one)

Do you have a valid & current Texas Driver's License?
YES NO (please circle one)

Do you have an automobile available to you?
YES NO (please circle one)

Do you have valid & current automobile insurance coverage?
YES NO (please circle one)

APPLICATION AND RELEASE

I, _____, do hereby affirm that all of the answers provided on my volunteer application are true. I hereby authorize CASA for Hunt County to investigate my background as part of the screening process to determine my fitness / appropriateness as a potential volunteer. I understand that not all applicants who apply to be a volunteer are chosen to participate in the program and that CASA for Hunt County reserves the right to deny an applicant into the volunteer program for any reason.

Name (please print)

Signature Date

PERSONAL REFERENCES

Requirements:

1. Must **NOT** be a relative
2. If you are employed, one reference must be from your **employer**.

Name: _____

REFERENCE #1

Name: _____

Address (Street Address / City / State / Zip): _____

Telephone#: (_____) _____

Relationship to Volunteer Applicant: _____

REFERENCE #2

Name: _____

Address (Street Address / City / State / Zip): _____

Telephone#: (_____) _____

Relationship to Volunteer Applicant: _____

REFERENCE #3

Name: _____

Address (Street Address / City / State / Zip): _____

Telephone#: (_____) _____

Relationship to Volunteer Applicant: _____

CASA for Hunt County

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE EXAMINED THE ATTACHED LIST OF VIOLATIONS WITHIN THE PROHIBITED CLASS AND THAT I AM PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION RELATED THERETO:

I, _____, (circle) have have not
print

been convicted preceding this date of a felony or a misdemeanor within the prohibited class or any felony violation of any statute intended to control the possession or distribution of any substance included as a controlled substance in the Texas Controlled Substances Act.

If your answer is affirmative (i.e.: you HAVE been convicted), please give details below:

DATE	OFFENSE / NATURE OF CONVICTION	LOCATION	DETAILS & DISPOSITION

I, _____, (circle) am am not
print

currently under indictment or charged in an official criminal complaint accepted by a district or county attorney with a felony or misdemeanor within the prohibited class.

If your answer is affirmative (i.e.: you ARE under indictment), please give details below:

DATE	CHARGES	LOCATION	DETAILS

Volunteer Applicant Signature

Date

CRIMINAL OFFENSES FROM THE TEXAS PENAL CODE

TITLE 5. CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON

Murder
Capital Murder
Voluntary Manslaughter
Involuntary Manslaughter
Criminally Negligent Homicide
False Imprisonment
Kidnapping
Aggravated Kidnapping
Aggravated Rape
Sexual Abuse
Aggravated Sexual Abuse
Homosexual Conduct
Public Lewdness
Indecent Exposure
Rape of a Child
Sexual Abuse of a Child
Indecency with a Child
Assault
Aggravated Assault
Deadly Assault on a Peace Officer
Injury to a Child
Reckless Conduct
Terroristic Threat
Aiding Suicide
Tampering with Consumer Products

TITLE 6. OFFENSES AGAINST THE FAMILY

Bigamy
Incest
Interference with Child Custody
Enticing a Child
Criminal Nonsupport
Sale or Purchase of a Child
Solicitation of a Child
Harboring a Runaway Child
Violation of a Court Order

TITLE 43. PUBLIC INDECENCY

Prostitution
Promotion of Prostitution
Aggravated Promotion of Prostitution
Compelling Prostitution
Obscene Display or Distribution
Obscenity
Sale, Distribution, or Display of Harmful
Material to a Minor
Sexual Performance by a Child

CASA for Hunt County

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A. PROHIBITION FROM SERVING IN ANY CAPACITY AS AN EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER OF A CHILD-RELATED / CHILD-FOCUSSED AGENCY FOR ANY PERSON CONVICTED WITHIN THE PREVIOUS 10 YEARS (MINIMUM) OF:**
 - 1. Any felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against person or family;**
 - 2. Any felony or misdemeanor involving public indecency;**
 - 3. Any felony violation of any statute intended to control the possession or distribution of any substance included as a controlled substance in the Texas Controlled Substances Act.**

- B. REASSIGNMENT OR REMOVAL FROM CONTACT WITH CHILDREN OF ANY EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER WITH A CHILD-RELATED / CHILD-FOCUSSED AGENCY FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**
 - 1. An indictment alleging commission of a felony classified as offense against the person or family, or of public indecency, or of a felony violation of any statute intended to control the possession or distribution of any substance included as a controlled substance in the Texas Controlled Substances Act;**
 - 2. An indictment alleging commission of a misdemeanor classified as an offense against the person or family or of public indecency;**
 - 3. An official criminal complaint accepted by a district or county attorney alleging commission of a misdemeanor classified as an offense against the person or family or of public indecency.**

Volunteer Applicant Signature

Date

FELONY CONVICTION INFORMATION

I have read this form in its entirety, including the attached list, and understand that the information will be verified by CASA for Hunt County, and that the inclusion of any false information or the omission of any requested information is cause for my immediate dismissal by CASA for Hunt County.

I agree to inform CASA for Hunt County if this information changes any time during my employment or participation in any of the programs of CASA for Hunt County.

Name (please print)

Signature of Employee or Volunteer

Date

CONSENT FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND HISTORY CHECK

All CASA for Hunt County staff and volunteers who will be working directly with children are subject to criminal background checks. Each staff member or volunteer to be screened must sign an authorization form, giving approval for CASA for Kids to perform a criminal background search.

CONSENT:

I, _____ HEREBY GIVE MY PERMISSION IN EXCHANGE FOR GOOD AND VALUABLE CONSIDERATION FOR CASA FOR HUNT COUNTY TO OBTAIN INFORMATION RELATING TO MY CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD THROUGH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES. THE CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD, AS RECEIVED FROM THE REPORTING AGENCIES, MAY INCLUDE ARREST AND CONVICTION DATA AS WELL AS PLEA BARGAINS AND DEFERRED ADJUDICATION. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED, IN PART, TO DETERMINE MY ELIGIBILITY FOR AN EMPLOYMENT/VOLUNTEER POSITION WITH THIS ORGANIZATION. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT AS LONG AS I REMAIN AN EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER HERE, THE CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK MAY BE REPEATED AT ANY TIME. I UNDERSTAND THAT I WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE CRIMINAL HISTORY AND A PROCEDURE IS AVAILABLE FOR CLARIFICATION, IF I DISPUTE THE RECORD AS RECEIVED.

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, DO, FOR MYSELF, MY HEIRS, EXECUTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS, HEREBY REMISE, RELEASE AND FOREVER DISCHARGE AND AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND DEFEND CASA FOR KIDS AND EACH OF THEIR OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS HARMLESS FROM AND AGAINST ANY AND ALL CAUSES OF ACTIONS, SUITS, LIABILITIES, COSTS, DEBTS AND SUMS OF MONEY, CLAIMS AND DEMANDS WHATSOEVER, AND ANY AND ALL RELATED ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND OTHER EXPENSES RESULTING FROM THE INVESTIGATION OF MY BACKGROUND IN CONNECTION WITH MY APPLICATION TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER/STAFF MEMBER. THIS INDEMNIFICATION DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY GROSS NEGLIGENCE OR INTENTIONAL TORTIOUS CONDUCT ON THE PART OF THE VOLUNTEER CENTER.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

PRINTED NAME

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

DATE OF BIRTH

CASA for Hunt County

Statement of Understanding for CASA Volunteers

Please review the following and sign below:

1. I understand that I must interview with CASA for Hunt County staff prior to being considered for acceptance into this program.
2. I understand that participation in the Pre-Service Volunteer Training is required and essential, and includes at least 30 hours of training.
3. I understand that, in addition to the classroom sessions, I will be required to complete courtroom observation at the CPS court, as well as written and reading assignments outside of the classroom.
4. Attendance: I understand that I will be required to make up any missed training sessions at a future training class before I can qualify to be sworn in or volunteer with CASA for Hunt County. In addition, should it become necessary for me to miss a session, I will make every effort to notify the training facilitator prior to the missed session.
5. I am aware that the Pre-Service Training class is a part of the screening process, and that acceptance to participate in the training does not guarantee that I will be sworn in as a CASA for Hunt County volunteer or that I will be assigned to a case. I further understand that either CASA for Hunt County or I can choose to discontinue my involvement in the training/screening process at any time without further obligation on the part of either party. I understand that should either CASA for Hunt County or myself choose to discontinue my involvement with CASA for Hunt County during the training session, I am required to return the volunteer training manual. I also understand that if I fail to return the volunteer training manual I will be notified and asked to contribute \$50.00 for the production of a new manual.
6. I am aware that, upon completion of the Pre-Service Training class, my overall participation in the training process as well as other screening material (application, returned reference forms, criminal check) will be reviewed for the purpose of determining my eligibility to be a CASA for Hunt County volunteer.
7. I understand that in order to be accepted as a CASA for Hunt County volunteer I must be 21 years of age or older, and I confirm that I am.
8. I understand that if I do proceed to CASA GAL status, I will be asked to sign a binding commitment agreement regarding my work with CASA for Hunt County.
9. I believe I have & will maintain all of the necessary Qualifications of a CASA Volunteer, as outlined on the back of this agreement.

I understand and am willing to meet all conditions stated above, and wish to participate in the CASA for Hunt County Pre-Service Training.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Signature of CASA Staff

Date

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION Part II

Name: _____

VOLUNTEER HISTORY (You may attach an additional sheet if necessary.)

Please list in reverse chronological order (i.e.: start with the most recent):

ORGANIZATION & NAME of VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR	VOLUNTEER PROJECTS / RESPONSIBILITIES	DATES of VOLUNTEERING	REASON FOR LEAVING

List any other current community activities & memberships in clubs, churches & other organizations:

Do you have any training or experience in any of the following? (Please check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Counseling
<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drug / Alcohol Abuse Programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Work
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Criminology	<input type="checkbox"/>	Law Enforcement
<input type="checkbox"/>	News Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advertising/Public Relations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Art or Graphics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Foreign Language

If you answered yes to any, please describe / explain: _____

PERSONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Why have you chosen to do your volunteer work with CASA for Hunt County?

2. Have you or has anyone in your family of origin (includes parents, siblings, spouses, children, etc.) been:

Please check all that apply.

- Sexually abused?
- Physically abused?
- Emotionally abused?
- Neglected?
- Exposed to domestic violence?
- Involved with Children's Protective Services (CPS)?

3. Have you or has anyone in your family ever abused substances (e.g.: drugs, including prescription medications, & alcohol)?

- YES
- NO

If "YES", please expand in terms of "who?" & "when" & identify any recovery process: _____

4. If you checked one or more of the options in Question #2 and/or if you checked "YES" in Question #3, how do you think these experiences have impacted your life?

5. If you checked one or more of the options in Question #2 and/or if you checked "YES" in Question #3, how do you think these experiences will impact your volunteer work with CASA for Hunt County?

6. Have you ever been arrested for a crime?

YES NO

If yes, what charge? Please describe / explain: _____

Please include:

Date of arrest: _____

Location of arrest / arraignment: _____

Disposition of case: _____

Other relevant details: _____

7. Have you or a member of your family ever been directly or indirectly involved with CPS or any similar child protection agency?

YES NO

If yes, please describe / explain. (Please include date & location in your explanation.)

8. Do you have any mental health problems/issues/concerns that you are currently being treated for or have been in treatment for in the past?

YES

NO

If yes, please describe / explain: _____

9. Are you currently taking any medications that could affect your performance as a CASA volunteer? (Examples: mind or mood altering, narcotics, miscellaneous side effects, etc.)

YES

NO

If yes, please describe: _____

10. Do you have any physical or health limitations or concerns, which might affect your ability to serve as a CASA volunteer?

YES

NO

If yes, please describe: _____

Please complete the volunteer application and submit by email or by mail to the following address:

Email- casa4huntcounty@msn.com

Casa for Hunt County
PO Box 1571
Greenville, Texas 75403
903-450-4410