

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

ROUTE TO:

2016 APR 28 P 1:52

RETURN INSTRUCTIONS:



CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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Business Manager, County Executive Office
105 E. Anapamu Street, Room 406
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: 2016 Outside Agency Request

Please accept this request for 2016/2017 funding for Court Appointed Special Advocates of Santa Barbara County (CASA). We are requesting \$10,000 for our Best for Babies foster youth advocacy program.

BACKGROUND**1. History and Recent Accomplishments**

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Santa Barbara County (CASA) began operating in 1993 under the umbrella of a local youth services organization and became a fully independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency in June of 1995 with a mission to advocate for foster youth. During CASA's 23-year history, more than 1,100 volunteers have advocated for over 2,200 foster children.

Major accomplishments during fiscal year 2014-2015 include:

- 286 volunteer advocates served 438 of the foster children in Santa Barbara County
- Our advocates had 22,776 visits with foster children and donated 26,316 hours of service. These advocates also submitted 876 court reports on behalf of these children
- 77 new recruits completed 30 hours of training to join the CASA team and serve more children in need.

2. Current Programs and Activities

The mission of CASA is to ensure a safe, permanent, nurturing home for every abused and/or neglected child by providing a highly-trained volunteer to advocate for him/her in the court system.

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The mission of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Santa Barbara County is to assure a safe, permanent, nurturing home for every abused and/or neglected child by providing a highly trained volunteer to advocate for them in the court system.



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www.facebook.com/sbcasa



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SANTA MARIA

2601 Skyway Drive Suite A3
Santa Maria, CA 93455

LOMPOC

511 North H Street Suite K
Lompoc, CA 93436

SANTA BARBARA

118 East Figueroa
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

The goal of the CASA program is to prevent abused, neglected, and abandoned children from becoming lost in the foster-care system. Volunteer advocates work with the courts and the child welfare system to find the children safe, permanent homes as quickly as possible. Advocates meet with the child once per week; gather information from all interested parties (attorneys, teachers, doctors, etc.); advocate for the child's unmet needs; write and submit a court report to the juvenile court judge for each hearing; attend court hearings (at least every six months) and monitor the child's case until he/she is placed into a safe, permanent, nurturing home. Being a CASA volunteer are supported by our Advocate Supervisors and extensive CASA volunteer training, and ongoing continuing education.

The CASA volunteer has six essential duties to fulfill as an advocate:

- **Fact-Finder and Investigator.** Conduct a thorough, independent investigation of all the information relevant to the case.
- **Courtroom Representative.** Report the facts to the court in written or oral format with associated recommendations.
- **Case Oversight.** Ensure that all court-ordered services are being provided to the child and promptly notify the court if they are not.
- **Mediator and Negotiator.** Help solve problems through collaboration and cooperation to assist in bringing families together.
- **Resource Broker.** Seek out and advocate for services that will help establish a strong support network for the child.
- **Friend and Mentor.** Meet with their child at least once per week and serve as a friend, role-model and mentor for the child. It is not uncommon for this relationship to continue informally well after the child has exited out of the foster-care system.

Children are referred to CASA by the juvenile court judges. When considering a child's case, judges evaluate the instability of the child's current situation, presence of abuse and/or neglect and any conflicting statements in the case file. The presiding judge issues a court order appointing the advocate, who then has access to all court, school, doctor, therapist and other records regarding that child. No other organization is granted this kind of access to the confidential records of foster children.

CASA volunteers make sure that the abuse and neglect that the children originally suffered at home does not continue as abuse and neglect at the hands of the system. Judges, attorneys, child welfare workers, and parents overwhelmingly report that CASA volunteers make a difference with the children they serve.

- Low CASA caseloads mean the courts can make better decisions for children. CASA volunteers handle just 1 or 2 cases at a time, so that they can give each child's case the sustained, personal attention he or she deserves.
- Children with CASA volunteers spend 7.5 months less in foster care, experience fewer out of home placements and have significantly improved educational performance.
- More than 90% of children with CASA volunteers never re-enter the child welfare system, a significant difference compared to the general foster care population. This outcome also results in significant savings in child welfare expenses.
- Children with CASA volunteers, and their families, receive more court-ordered services and because of the volunteer's detailed knowledge of the child's circumstances, those services are more carefully targeted and monitored.
- By reducing long-term placements, subsequent victimization, and reentry into the foster care system, CASA substantially reduces child welfare costs.

This year, CASA is launching our "Best for Babies" program as an adjunct to our traditional foster youth advocacy services. Details of this program are covered in full in the funding request section of this application.

3. Other Organizations Meeting the Same Need

CASA of Santa Barbara County is the only organization whose sole mission is to advocate for foster youth. Once our advocates have been trained, they are sworn in as officers of the court, and are granted access to all confidential records involving their assigned foster child. No other organization has this relationship with the courts or has access to this confidential information.

FUNDING REQUEST

1. Need Addressed

Research has shown that infants and toddlers in the Child Welfare System have specific and unique needs, most of which are not being met in the current system.

For example:

- Infants under one year are removed by CWS at twice the rate of all other ages.
- Infants under one year are more likely to be severely abused; experience longer stays in foster care than older children; and are most likely to return to care within two years because of re-abuse.
- Also, of the infants in foster care: nearly 80% have been prenatally exposed to drugs and/or alcohol; 40% were born at low birth weight; and 48% were seriously physically neglected.
- Toddlers in foster care, who have been abruptly separated from everything familiar experience anxiety, depression, and problems sleeping and eating.

This trauma has serious consequences. Chronic stress changes the architecture and chemistry of the young brain. It can disrupt all aspects of development. It pre-disposes children to adult depression, anxiety disorder, addictions and chronic disease, and future relationships can be impaired.

CASA's volunteer advocates have unique, court-ordered access to these children and all the confidential information regarding their assigned child. No other agencies or care-givers have this access. By training and supporting these advocates to be alert to the unique needs of these children, we are dramatically increasing the chances that problems will be detected early when they are most preventable.

2. Goals & Outcomes

Our performance targets include:

- 1) Developing a Best for Babies certification program for advocates;
- 2) Training 25 new volunteers in Best for Babies techniques;
- 3) Tracking infants & toddlers served and compare results to a control group to evaluate effectiveness.

3. Program Description

In response to the unique needs of infants and toddlers in foster care, CASA has developed the Best for Babies program. The goal of this program is to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers in the foster care system through timely, evidence-informed, coordinated services and supports. Volunteers who complete the certification will have the tools needed to advocate for the most vulnerable population of all – children who are too young to speak for themselves.

In addition to our traditional advocacy programs, the Best for Babies program will include the following features and services:

- A dedicated advocate supervisor who will specialize in providing services for foster children ages 0-3.
- This is a CASA staff member with background working with infants and toddlers. This staff member will attend all meetings and group sessions, and be available for 1:1 meetings with volunteers who are “best for babies” trained.
- Special training for volunteer advocates serving these children, focusing on the child's special needs.
- We have engaged a LCSW with significant experience with infants in foster care, and well as an investigator who specializes in working on infant cases, in development of our certification program.
- Monthly advocate meetings to keep current on new developments and allow advocates to share their experiences with each other.
- Best for Babies advocates will attend ongoing group and individual meetings with experts in the field of child development, to ensure that they are aware of all resources available.
- The use of outside expert consultants when needed.

The role of the CASA advocate will be to

- Assure the health and developmental care of the infant.
- Observe important relationships for that child and determine if they are effective and sufficient.
- Connect parents (both foster and biological) with key resources.
- Focus recommendations to the Judge on the baby's well-being.
- Build alliances with all caregivers.
- Identify any recommendations that are not being followed.

The advocate will be responsible for maintaining substantial contact with the child and be fully aware of the baby’s needs, health, development, behavior, and key relationships. The advocate will also assure the child’s primary attachments are central in placement decisions made for that child.

4. Evaluation

CASA monitors the effectiveness of our programs by tracking our foster children and advocates through a computer-based “CASATracker” application.

Metrics routinely used by CASA to track the effectiveness of our programs, include:

1. Tracking the number of children served and on the wait list.
2. Tracking volunteer hours monthly.
3. Tracking the number of new advocates recruited, trained and assigned.
4. Undergoing State Judicial Council audit of the CASA program every three years
5. Complying with national guidelines which are monitored by National CASA annually.
6. Polling the judges and CWS regularly about the effectiveness and need for CASA's programs.

All of this information is used by the senior staff and Board of Directors to continually revise our programs to make them more efficient and effective. In addition, CASA staff routinely consult with the juvenile court judges and Child Welfare Services regarding the effectiveness and need for CASA.

5. Skills and Experience of Staff & Volunteers; Collaborating with Other Organizations

Central to the CASA program are the volunteer advocates who serve as the “eyes and ears of the court.” Our advocates come from all walks of life. In addition to regular visits with the child, volunteer advocates discuss their child’s situation with social workers, attorneys, caregivers, therapists, school personnel, and others to determine the child’s needs and best interests. Last fiscal year, 284 volunteer advocates donated 26,316 hours of advocacy services to support 438 foster children. The Administrative Office of the Courts

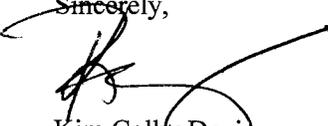
assigns the value of \$23.34/hr. for CASA volunteers – during 2014/2015, this was a resource valued at \$614,215.

Kim Colby Davis, Executive Director, began volunteering for CASA in 2006, first as an advocate and then in the office helping with events and publicity. By 2009, Kim was hired as Executive Director. Kim is currently serving as a director for the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum board and the CALM North County Advisory Committee. Kim is an alumnus of Leadership Santa Barbara County. In 2014, Kim was honored by the community when chosen as a “Women of Excellence” award recipient in the category of “Women of Spirit”. Kim is also a member of the Allan Hancock College EOPS Foster Youth Advisory Committee.

CASA collaborates with many other organizations and is strongly supported by the community. CASA works closely with Child Welfare Services, the Juvenile Court, and collaborates with other agencies and entities such as California CASA; National CASA; CALM; Angels Foster Care of Santa Barbara; Family Service Agency; Family Care Network, Inc.; Community Action Commission (CAC); the Unity Shoppe; Assistance League; and Santa Barbara’s Police Activity League. CASA also collaborates with Antioch University for our Court Appointed Special Monitors internship program.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (805) 739-9102 x5981 if you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,



Kim Colby Davis
Executive Director



County of Santa Barbara

FY 2016-17 Outside Agency Funding Request Form

Deadline for Submission: Monday, May 2, 2016, 5:00 p.m.

The Board of Supervisors *may* consider funding requests from outside agencies during the FY 2016-17 budget hearings in June 2016, if funding is available. An allocation of funding to outside agencies is not guaranteed.

Please submit the following by **5:00 p.m., Monday, May 2, 2016, NO EXCEPTIONS, via Email or Hardy Copy (postmarks will not be accepted):**

1. Provide a cover letter explaining your request; and
2. Fill out this application (no more than 2 pages); and
3. Attach the Line Item Budget spreadsheet (no more than 2 pages) for the agency's program request

Hearings are scheduled for June 13, 15, and 17, with Outside Agency Requests considered on one of these days (yet to be determined). The **requesting agency must be represented and present**; please plan accordingly.

Total Request: \$ 10,000

Name of Organization: CASA of Santa Barbara County

Title of Program: Best for Babies - foster youth advocacy New or ongoing program? Ongoing

Location(s) of services delivered: County-wide

Name of Agency Executive Director: Kim Colby Davis

Phone #: 805-739-9102 x5981 Email: kim@sbcasa.org Website: www.sbcasa.org

1. Briefly summarize the purpose of the program, why the funds are needed, and the benefit to the community:

Research has shown that infants and toddlers in the Child Welfare System have specific and unique needs, most of which are not being met in the current system.

This trauma has serious consequences. Chronic stress changes the architecture and chemistry of the young brain. It can disrupt all aspects of development. It pre-disposes children to adult depression, anxiety disorder, addictions and chronic disease, and future relationships can be impaired.

In response to the unique needs of infants and toddlers in foster care, CASA has developed the Best for Babies program. The goal of this program is to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers in the foster care system through timely, evidence-informed, coordinated services and supports. Volunteers who complete the certification will have the tools needed to advocate for the most vulnerable population of all - children who are too young to speak for themselves.

2. Briefly summarize the service to be provided and how many people will be served:

In addition to our traditional advocacy programs, the Best for Babies program will include the following features and services:

A dedicated advocate supervisor who will specialize in providing services for foster children ages 0-3.

Special training for volunteer advocates serving these children, focusing on the child's special needs

Monthly advocate meetings to keep current on new developments and allow advocates to share their experiences with each other.

3. Detail the timeline for providing the service:

The Best for Babies program is ongoing.

4. Describe key outcomes to be achieved with the funding and how they will be measured:

Our performance targets include:

- 1) Developing a Best for Babies certification program for advocates;
- 2) Training 25 new volunteers in Best for Babies techniques;
- 3) Tracking infants & toddlers served and compare results to a control group to evaluate effectiveness.

5. Describe if this is a one-time or ongoing request, and if funded in prior years and amounts:

This is a one-time request.

6. Describe the agency's expertise and capacity to deliver services including fiscal stability:

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Santa Barbara County (CASA) began operating in 1993 under the umbrella of a local youth services organization and became a fully independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency in June of 1995 with a mission to advocate for foster youth. During CASA's 23-year history, more than 1,100 volunteers have advocated for over 2,200 foster children. CASA has been financially secure for many years and our funding comes from a wide variety of sources: foundation, government, individual donors, etc.

7. Agency staff responsible for application: Kim Colby Davis, Executive Director

County Staff Comments Only:

Address submittals to:

Adriana de Bruin
Business Manager, County Executive Office
105 E. Anapamu Street, Room 406
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Requests can be emailed to: outsideagency@countyofsb.org

Questions: Please contact Adriana de Bruin, Business Manager, County Executive Office, at 568-3400.

FY 2016-17 Line Item Budget
For Program

Agency: CASA of Santa Barbara County
Program Name: Best for Babies - Foster Youth Advocacy
Amount \$\$ Requested: \$10,000

Program Budget	FY 2016-17	
	Funding Sources/Revenues	Committed Uncommitted
County of Santa Barbara		10000
Private Foundations		40000
Total	0	50000

Funding Uses/Expenses	Budget
Advocate Supervisor	35000
Training Expenses	5000
Outside Expert Consultants	5000
Volunteer Coordination	5000
Total	50000