

CASA VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Thank you for your interest in the Court Appointed Special Advocate program of the Tenth Judicial Circuit.

PURPOSE: The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) serves by judicial orders as an Office of the Peoria County Juvenile Court. The CASA serves on a volunteer basis as an independent advocate for the child's best interest and monitors the case until permanency is achieved. The CASA is directly responsible to the CASA Supervisor and must adhere to the rules and guidelines of the Juvenile Court Act.

QUALIFICATIONS: Following is the list of requirements to be accepted into the CASA training program:

- At least 21 years of age.
- You and your immediate relatives have no involvement with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
- Not an active foster parent.
- Not been convicted of or have charges pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related acts that would pose risks to children or to the CASA program's credibility.
- Completed the CASA Volunteer Application.
 - You have listed on the application all previous names you have used.
 - You have listed on your application three references and sent each person listed a reference form to complete, with instructions to return the form directly to the CASA office.
- Participated in a face-to-face interview.
- Submitted to and passed the following background checks:
 - CANTS (Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System)
 - LEADS (Law Enforcement Detailed Summary)
 - Fingerprints (submitted to the FBI)
 - National Sex Offender Registry
- Verified social security number.
- Possess good oral and written communication skills.
- Access to a computer and knowledge of word-processing programs.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS: To become a volunteer Advocate, **you must complete thirty (30) hours of classroom participation. Attendance for each class is mandatory.** The syllabus includes information pertaining to child abuse and neglect, the legal and social service systems, permanency planning and advocacy. Training also addresses practical issues related to case advocacy, such as policy and procedures, the court process and communication/negotiation skills. Upon successful completion of the training, you will be appointed an officer of the court in a swearing-in ceremony before a Juvenile Court judge.

CASA COMMITMENT & REQUIREMENTS:

As an Advocate, you will be assigned one case at a time requiring approximately five to 15 hours per month. Your role is to help ensure all decisions are in the best interests of the child. As part of this commitment, you must attend all court hearings and appropriate interagency meetings regarding the child. Hearings take place every three to six months. You are required to submit monthly activity reports to the CASA office.

As an Advocate, you are required to submit a formal report to the court detailing your findings and observations. Court reports are due to the CASA office no later than 21 days before the scheduled hearing.

An additional 10 hours of in-service training per year also is required each year you are an Advocate.