

# Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs

## *2012 Edition*

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A National CASA Association  
Resource Library Publication

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Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs

# **The National CASA Association Mission Statement**

The mission of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association, together with its state and local members, is to support and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy so that every abused or neglected child can be safe, establish permanence and have the opportunity to thrive.

# Acknowledgments

These revised standards, approved by the National CASA Association Board of Directors on (Date) build on the work of many committed individuals within and outside the National CASA network. They have worked since 1990 to develop program standards that ensure quality program management and volunteer advocacy.

This 2012 edition of the *Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs* was developed over a two-year period (2010–2012) by a committee representing a broad cross section of the CASA/GAL network. The committee embodied diversity in terms of demographics as well as skills. Represented were staff from state and local programs; urban and rural programs; guardian ad litem and friend of the court models, the judiciary, each of the six CASA/GAL geographic regions; and National CASA internal departments. To ensure the broadest consideration of local and state rules and practices, a draft of these revised standards was disseminated in the fall of 2011 for review and comment by all CASA/GAL member programs. The committee subsequently reviewed and deliberated regarding all comments before finalizing the 2012 edition of *Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs*.

The National CASA Association acknowledges and expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation to the following members of the Standards Committee who contributed hundreds of hours to develop these standards, ensuring quality volunteer advocacy for children through effective and well managed CASA/GAL programs:

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## Introduction

The objective of *Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs* is to set minimum performance levels for local programs to ensure quality while allowing individual programs room for creativity and innovation. Therefore, administrative and program staff must weigh how to create efficiencies and effectiveness to arrive at the highest quality advocacy on behalf of the children they serve, while operating in compliance with these Standards and under their individual models, governing structure and legislative constraints. It is expected that programs develop best practices through periodic reflection and evaluation of outcomes for children.

A set of quality standards to measure a program's operations demonstrates that a program:

- Respects and protects the children it serves
- Utilizes established policies and procedures necessary for effective management
- Manages its financial affairs prudently and is committed to the principles of public disclosure
- Continually evaluates its services and operations

## Background

The National CASA Association (National CASA) first issued standards and recommended management practices for CASA/guardian ad litem programs in 1990. A year later, compliance with the standards became a mandatory condition of National CASA Association membership. In 1994, the board of directors appointed a committee to review the existing standards, recommend management practices and revise the 1990 standards. *The Standards for National CASA Association Member Programs* were approved by the National CASA Board of Directors in 1997 and have remained in effect. In 2000, the National CASA Board appointed the Standards Committee and charged this committee with the responsibility of developing a quality assurance process for state and local programs and amending state and local standards. The standards committee developed the *Standards Self-Assessment* review process for local programs. The self-assessment was approved by the National CASA Board and programs participated in the self-assessment during the period 2003–2007. The Standards Committee, with in-depth input from the entire CASA/GAL network, reviewed and revised the 2002 *Standards for National CASA Association Member Programs*. This review culminated in the 2006 edition, *Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs*, approved by the National CASA Board in April 2006. Programs again participated in the self-assessment during the period of 2008-2012. In 2009, the standards were updated to reflect financial changes around audits and the screening policy for staff and volunteers. In April, 2012, the National CASA Board approved the revised *Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs*.

## Document Organization

An explanation of terms and an appendix have been added to the 2012 edition to help programs understand several key areas that the National CASA Association recognizes require definition in order for programs to accurately implement and record standard compliance.

This manual is organized into sections dealing with specific areas of program management. Each section begins with a standard. Under each standard, requirements are provided specifying how the standard is implemented.

The document as a whole provides a framework for quality program management. The standard statement in each section defines the most effective overall approach to manage a particular aspect of program operation. The requirements operationalize the standards by specifying the practices that carry out the intent of the standard. The order of the standards does not in any way represent importance; they are all equal in stature.

## **Implementation**

The primary goal and guiding principle of the standards system within the National CASA network is to strengthen programs and support their efforts to provide high quality child advocacy and achieve the maximum level of excellence.

As programs implement these standards, National CASA is eager to provide clarification, interpretation and technical assistance. Examples of policies addressed in the standards can be found on [National CASA's website](#) and may also be requested. National CASA is pleased to work with the network to increase the capacity and effectiveness of each and every program.

Compliance with standards is assessed through a program self-assessment. Submission of the completed *Standards Self-Assessment* instrument and accompanying Indicators of Compliance every four years is a requirement of National CASA full program membership. The tool is reviewed, scored and a report generated by an independent reviewer. Through the self-assessment process, programs will evaluate both strengths and weaknesses and identify areas where training or technical assistance is needed. This phase should be viewed as a process of analyzing how the organization does business and whether or not the program utilizes efficient and effective practices.

# Standards at a Glance

## **Standard 1: Program Mission and Purpose**

The CASA/GAL program's purpose is to provide and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy so that every abused or neglected child can be safe, establish permanence and have the opportunity to thrive.

## **Standard 2: Ethical Conduct**

The CASA/GAL program upholds the credibility, integrity and dignity of the CASA mission by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional and compassionate manner. Recognizing and respecting the sensitive nature of the work, the program maintains the highest confidentiality.

## **Standard 3: Inclusiveness and Diversity**

The CASA/GAL program is committed to inclusiveness and diversity as essential values. It demonstrates these qualities in its own operation and promotes them in its governance, management and quality advocacy for the abused and neglected children it serves.

## **Standard 4: Disproportionality**

The CASA/GAL program demonstrates an understanding of and is committed to addressing disproportionality issues and how they impact the children served and the abused and neglected children of their community.

## **Standard 5: Program Governance**

The CASA/GAL program has a governing body responsible for the following: oversight of the program's compliance with all applicable laws and regulations; adoption of policies; definition of services; and guidance of program development, assuring the program's accountability to the courts and community.

## **Standard 6: Human Resources Management**

The CASA/GAL program follows approved written policies for recruiting, selecting, training, and evaluating its personnel. Practices are in place that encourage development of a diverse, effective staff.

## **Standard 7: Volunteer Management**

The CASA/GAL program follows approved written policies regarding recruitment; application, selection and screening; training; supervision; assignment of roles and responsibilities; and dismissal of volunteers.

**Standard 8: Public Relations**

The CASA/GAL program communicates with its community and other service providers about its program and the needs of the children it serves and cooperates with other agencies to plan for programs needed to serve children.

**Standard 9: Planning and Evaluation**

The CASA/GAL program maintains management information and data necessary to plan, deliver, evaluate and report on its services.

**Standard 10: Financial, Facility and Risk Management**

The CASA/GAL program manages its operations in accordance with generally accepted financial and risk management practices and applicable federal, state and local statutory requirements.

**Standard 11: Record Keeping**

The CASA/GAL program maintains complete, accurate and current case records and follows written policies for acceptance and assignment of CASA/GAL cases.

**Standard 12: National Affiliation**

The CASA/GAL program is a member of the National CASA Association and meets its standards, requirements and policies.

**Standard 13: State Affiliation**

The CASA/GAL program communicates, collaborates and shares information with its fellow programs in the state and is a member of or affiliated with the state organization, association or network, if one exists.

**Standard 14: Program Development, Implementation and Expansion**

The developing CASA/GAL program engages in a comprehensive assessment, which includes a feasibility study and implementation process that guides the program's development.

## **Standard 1: Program Mission and Purpose**

The CASA/GAL program's purpose is to provide and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy so that every abused or neglected child can be safe, establish permanence and have the opportunity to thrive.

### **1. A. CASA/GAL Program Mission**

1. The CASA/GAL program's mission statement is:
  - a. Consistent with the mission and standards of National CASA.
  - b. Written.
  - c. Adopted by the program's governing body.
2. The child population served by the CASA/GAL program is clearly defined.
3. The CASA/GAL program provides trained and qualified community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children who are before the court as a result of abuse or neglect as defined by the state child welfare laws.
4. The CASA/GAL program assures that volunteers have regular and sufficient in-person contact with the child to enable them to have an in-depth knowledge of the case and make fact based recommendations to the court. The CASA/GAL volunteer shall meet in person with the child once every thirty (30) days at a minimum. An exception may be granted in the discretion of the CASA program staff; however, the decision to permit less frequent in person contact shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception.
5. The CASA/GAL program is an inclusive organization whose governing body members, staff, and volunteers reflect the diversity of the children they serve.
6. The CASA/GAL program consistently offers services in a manner that reflects:
  - a. CASA/GAL program mission.
  - b. Available personnel and financial resources.
  - c. Program's funding sources and requirements.
  - d. Roles and responsibilities required by law.
7. The CASA/GAL program's governing body and personnel cooperate and coordinate with other volunteer and public service agencies, the courts, community groups and with families and individuals to:
  - a. Improve services for individual children served and their families.
  - b. Advocate for needed change in the conditions which adversely affect the children served.
  - c. Identify gaps in services and work to eliminate them.
  - d. Share training and other resources efficiently and effectively.

### **1. B. Legal Authority to Operate**

1. The CASA/GAL program has been granted the legal authority to operate through state or local statutes, executive or judicial order or court rules.

## **1. C. Court Recognition and Support**

1. Nonprofit and publicly administered CASA/GAL programs have a written agreement, which must be renewed every four years, with the juvenile or family court that defines the working relationship between the program and the court.
2. The written agreement between the CASA/GAL program and the court must be renewed when there is a change in the judicial leadership or changes in policy, law or local court rules that substantially impact the relationship between the program and the court.
3. The court-based CASA/GAL program abides by the statutes or court rules which govern the relationship with the court.
4. The CASA/GAL program has regular communication with the court in order to evaluate the court's satisfaction with the program and to obtain the court's recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the program.

## **Standard 2: Ethical Conduct and Confidentiality**

The CASA/GAL program upholds the credibility, integrity, and dignity of the CASA mission by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional, and compassionate manner. Recognizing and respecting the sensitive nature of the work, the program maintains the highest confidentiality.

### **2. A. Ethical Conduct**

1. The CASA/GAL program establishes policies to govern ethical conduct of members of the governing body, staff and volunteers.
2. The chief executive officer/program administrator, any staff, paid consultant, volunteer or governing board member of the CASA/GAL program serves in accordance with written policies governing conflict of interest, accountability and delegation of authority.
3. Although legal counsel may be provided to the CASA/GAL program under voluntary auspices on a pro bono basis and a lawyer who offers legal counsel may sit on the CASA/GAL program board (particularly in a small or developing program), the program clarifies the roles in order to keep the two functions separate.
4. The CASA/GAL program shall maintain a written conflict of interest policy approved by the governing body. This policy shall govern the conduct of members of the governing body, program staff, volunteers and paid consultants. Members of the governing body and staff annually sign the conflict of interest policy. The conflict of interest policy will:
  - a. Identify and define conduct and transactions in which a conflict of interest exists or has the potential to exist and warrants disclosure.
  - b. Prohibit staff, paid consultants, governing body members and volunteers of a nonprofit or public CASA/GAL program from having direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions or professional services of the program.
  - c. Identify other specific conduct which is prohibited.
  - d. Establish the requirement that the individual involved make timely disclosure of the conflict or potential for conflict in the transaction.
  - e. Include a procedure for recusal from the transaction or decision by the person with the conflict or potential conflict.
  - f. Include a procedure for dismissal or other appropriate discipline of the person involved with the conflict in the event said person fails to disclose the conflict prior to becoming involved in the transaction or decision affected by the conflict.
  - g. Prohibit an assigned CASA/GAL volunteer from being related to any parties involved in the case or being employed in a position and/or affiliated with an agency that might result in a conflict of interest.
5. If active volunteer advocates are members of the governing body, processes and procedures are in place for handling potential conflicts of interest in relation to personnel and human resource issues and other issues with potential for a conflict of interest being addressed by the board.

6. The CASA/GAL program shall promptly refer to National CASA and the state CASA organization any credible evidence that a principal staff, agent, contractor, sub-grantee, subcontractor, or other persons has committed a criminal or civil violation of laws pertinent to fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity, or similar misconduct involving program funds.
7. The CASA/GAL program's staff, volunteers and governing body members must immediately notify the CASA/GAL program of any criminal charges filed against them.

## **2. B. Maintaining Confidentiality**

1. The CASA/GAL program follows written policies and procedures regarding access to, use of, and release of information about the children it serves to ensure that the confidentiality of children and their families is maintained at all times.
2. CASA/GAL staff and volunteers respect the child's right to privacy by maintaining confidentiality.
3. CASA/GAL volunteers take an oath of confidentiality upon completion of training and sign a statement of confidentiality upon acceptance of each case.
4. CASA/GAL staff sign a statement of confidentiality upon hire.
5. The CASA/GAL program demonstrates its compliance with applicable statutory requirements pertaining to confidentiality of client information by ensuring that its policy, procedures and practices are consistent with all applicable laws and regulations.
6. Access to records is limited to the court, authorized agency personnel and others outside the agency whose request for access to confidential information is permitted by statute or the court.
7. All confidential electronic and hard copy correspondence, files and records are safely and securely maintained.
8. Controls exist that enable records to be located at any time.
9. The CASA/GAL program has a policy to protect confidential information of governing body and advisory committee members, staff, volunteers and donors.

## **Standard 3: Inclusiveness and Diversity**

The CASA/GAL program is committed to inclusiveness and diversity as essential values. It demonstrates these qualities in its own operation and promotes them in its governance, management and quality advocacy for the abused and neglected children it serves.

### **3. A. Inclusiveness and Diversification**

1. The program adopts and implements a written plan to guide and measure progress in diversifying its governing body, staff and volunteers. As part of the planning process, the program:
  - a. Identifies specific measurable goals.
  - b. Reviews those goals to measure progress, at least annually.
  - c. Identifies new goals and activities to be met in the future.
2. The program creates and implements a written plan that addresses the needs of the children served from a diversity perspective.
3. The program engages individuals who can:
  - a. Help the program identify and understand the needs of the children served.
  - b. Identify the actions the program can take to address these needs in governance, recruitment, cultural competence education and training, supervision, retention, evaluation and advocacy.
4. The plan is part of the organizational strategic plan for governing body, staff and volunteers.
5. The plan includes measurable action steps which are reviewed at least once per year.
6. The plan is revised every four years.
7. The local program engages in reciprocal relations with its state organization around issues of diversity and inclusion.

## **Standard 4: Disproportionality**

The CASA/GAL program demonstrates an understanding of and is committed to addressing disproportionality issues and how they impact the children served and the abused and neglected children of their community.

### **4. A. Disproportionality**

1. The CASA/GAL program engages in activities to increase the awareness and understanding of staff and volunteers regarding issues of racial disproportionality within its local child welfare and court systems.
2. The CASA/GAL program participates with child welfare providers and court representatives in identifying and understanding their community's issues of racial disproportionality.
3. The CASA/GAL program works in partnership with child welfare providers and court representatives to address issues of racial disproportionality.

## **Standard 5: Program Governance**

The CASA/GAL program has a governing body responsible for overseeing the program's compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, adoption of policies, definition of services and guidance of program development assuring the program's accountability to the courts and community.

### **5. A. Roles of the Governing Body:**

1. Ensures program compliance with applicable state and local statutes, court rules, executive orders or appropriate regulations.
2. Provides CASA/GAL program access to legal counsel with relevant legal expertise to clarify the meaning of laws or regulations governing its program operation and to provide legal counsel as needed to assist in performing the duties assigned to the volunteers by the courts.
3. Maintains personnel policies and periodically reviews and adopts needed changes.
4. Procures sufficient financial resources, ensures a balanced budget and manages resources prudently in order to support its provision of services.
5. Appoints the chief executive officer/program administrator and delegates authority and responsibility for program and financial management and policy implementation.
6. Holds the chief executive officer/program administrator accountable for the program's performance.
7. Evaluates the management's handling of the CASA/GAL program's financial affairs.
8. Reviews financial reports at least quarterly comparing actual versus budgeted expenditures and revenues.
9. Examines and approves the program's audited financial statements, operating budget and fiscal policies.
10. The members of the governing body are qualified to carry out its responsibilities for adopting or recommending agency policies, selecting and evaluating the chief executive officer/program administrator and engaging in strategic planning, financial oversight, resource development, diversity outreach and court and community relationships.
11. The governing body maintains a written record of every meeting. The written record accurately reports all actions taken by the governing body and includes a summary of the governing body's deliberations. The written record also includes reports of board committees. The written record is prepared in a timely manner and copies are made available to members of the governing body. A master copy of the written record is kept with the CASA/GAL program's official documents.
12. In a nonprofit organization, the CASA/GAL program's bylaws or written operational procedures:
  - a. Describe the organizational structure and responsibilities of the governing body.
  - b. Establish the mechanisms for selection, rotation and duration of membership and for election of officers.

- c. Set the minimum number of formal meetings of the full governing body at four times per calendar year.
  - d. Set the quorum for these meetings of at least a simple majority of the current membership of the governing body.
13. In a nonprofit CASA/GAL program, the governing body serves as the link between the program, the court, and the community, establishes and evaluates the program's goals, develops resources, and approves policies.

## **5. B. Program Administration**

1. Clear lines of accountability and authority exist at all levels of the program's organizational and management structures and are formalized in a chart of the organization showing lines of accountability to which all staff, volunteers, and governing body members have received orientation.
2. If the CASA/GAL program is under the umbrella of a parent organization, a written agreement is developed that:
  - a. Details the rights and responsibilities of the program and the parent organization.
  - b. Includes procedures for resolving situations in which a conflict of interest exists between the CASA/GAL program and its parent organization.
  - c. Contains the protocol for resource development activities of both organizations.
  - d. Sets a time frame of no more than two years for review and possible revisions of the agreement.
3. Communication and collaboration between staff, volunteers and governing body members is promoted by:
  - a. Providing opportunities for interactions amongst volunteers, staff and the governing body.
  - b. Providing opportunities to serve on committees as appropriate.
  - c. Maintaining brief records of committee meetings.

## **5. C. Governing Body Membership and Orientation**

1. The governing body is diverse and has members who bring a range of skills, backgrounds and knowledge which support the CASA/GAL program in fulfilling its mission.
2. The CASA/GAL program governing body includes individuals with various capabilities:
  - a. Skills and experience to serve at a policy-making level.
  - b. Ability to advocate for sufficient financial resources for the program to carry out its purpose.
  - c. Knowledge of the court system and the community served.
  - d. Ability to reflect community and client interests and to advocate for culturally responsive service delivery.
  - e. Other specialized skills needed to carry out the objectives of the program.
3. The program develops and utilizes on an ongoing basis the following:
  - a. Job descriptions for board members.
  - b. Board recruitment strategies.
  - c. Election and screening procedures.
4. The members of the governing body receive formal orientation to the CASA/GAL program's goals, objectives, structure, methods of operation, and fiduciary

responsibilities, including financial oversight. The members are familiarized with its services and are provided with key documents related to governance and board responsibilities.

5. Record checks are completed on each board member including:
  - a. Social security number verification.
  - b. Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the board member currently resides and works.
  - c. State criminal records.
  - d. FBI or other national criminal database.
  - e. National Sex Offender Registry.
  - f. Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law.

## **Standard 6: Human Resources Management**

The CASA/GAL program follows approved written policies for recruiting, selecting, training, and evaluating its personnel. Practices are in place that encourage development of a diverse, effective staff.

### **6. A. Administration**

1. The chief executive officer or designee is responsible for the management of the CASA/GAL program.
2. The chief executive officer or designee has the following qualifications:
  - a. Education and/or training in a related field.
  - b. Management skills and experience to effectively administer the organization's personnel and financial resources.
  - c. Ability to effectively coordinate services with the court and other community agencies.
3. The chief executive officer or designee:
  - a. Plans and coordinates with the governing body the development of CASA/GAL program policies.
  - b. Attends or is represented by a designee at all meetings of the governing body and its committees to the extent authorized by the governing body.
4. The chief executive officer or designee is delegated overall personnel management authority by the governing body and ensures that the CASA/GAL program's personnel management is carried out in accord with written agency policy.
5. The chief executive officer or designee annually reviews and revises personnel policies including Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and practices; updates policies as needed and submits the proposed policies to the governing body for review and approval.
6. The chief executive officer or designee is responsible for the overall financial management of the program and reports to the governing body at least quarterly on the program's financial status.
7. The governing body adopts a written succession plan. The plan makes provision for the following in the event of the replacement of a chief executive officer:
  - a. Designates an interim chief executive officer/program administrator, if necessary
  - b. Charges a committee with responsibility for conducting a formal search.
  - c. Provides the resources needed to carry out the search effectively.
  - d. Notifies state organization, National CASA, significant funders, and other pertinent personnel of replacement.
  - e. Plans for the delegation of authority in the temporary absence, not replacement, of the chief executive officer.

### **6. B. Retaining Qualified Staff**

1. The CASA/GAL program retains staff qualified to carry out its program goals.
2. The CASA/GAL program has a written job description for each position or group of similar positions which clearly specifies qualifications and responsibilities.

3. The CASA/GAL program efficiently manages its administrative systems, including accounting, bookkeeping, personnel records and statistical reporting, and assigns appropriately skilled personnel to carry out those tasks.
4. Administrative and/or supervisory responsibility is assigned to staff qualified by experience and training.
5. CASA/GAL program staff meet all applicable state registration, licensing or certification requirements for their assignment and/or use of professional titles.
6. The CASA/GAL program, in its ongoing planning process, details the type and number of personnel required to accomplish the program's goals and objectives.

### **6. C. Personnel Policies**

1. Personnel policies and practices specify the responsibilities of paid personnel and are equitable, clear and consistent.
2. Personnel policies and practices are outlined in a handbook provided to all staff which covers:
  - a. Personnel practices.
  - b. Working conditions.
  - c. Wage policies and benefits, as applicable.
  - d. Insurance protection.
  - e. Required and supplemental training and development opportunities.
  - f. Social media policy.
3. Each staff receives a copy of the personnel policies and provides signed acknowledgement of reading and understanding the policies.
4. The CASA/GAL program complies with applicable laws and regulations governing fair employment practices.
5. CASA/GAL program personnel salaries and benefits are established by considering practices of similar agencies and organizations in its area or are in compliance with salary and benefit levels set by appropriate executive, legislative or elected bodies, in the case of a public entity.
6. The CASA/GAL program maintains written operational procedures regarding grievances to provide personnel the opportunity and means to lodge complaints and appeals, where this is allowed under state law.
7. The CASA/GAL program acts on any complaints in accordance with its procedures with all documentation kept on file.
8. The complainant is informed of the resolution of any complaint and a copy of the notification is maintained.
9. Procedures allow for the periodic participation of personnel in management's review of personnel policies and for written notification to personnel by management of any changes in those policies in regard to personnel.
10. The CASA/GAL program has a policy requiring disclosure of other paid employment, volunteer or contract work by all staff.

### **6. D. Workforce Diversity**

1. The CASA/GAL program is inclusive and actively recruits, selects, and promotes qualified staff reflective of the children served.

2. The CASA/GAL program administers its personnel practices without discrimination based upon age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability or religion.
3. The CASA/GAL program's personnel recruitment and selection practices are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
4. The CASA/GAL program is in compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.
5. The CASA/GAL program has a written equal opportunity policy, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies which clearly state its practices in recruiting, selecting and promoting personnel.
6. The CASA/GAL program publicizes its equal opportunity policy in their personnel recruitment materials.
7. The CASA/GAL program makes an effort to ensure their facility is free of barriers which restrict the employment of or use by physically challenged staff, volunteers and others.
8. The CASA/GAL program develops and implements a plan to diversify the workforce to promote cultural competency and equal opportunity consistent with the National CASA Association diversity vision, commitment and guiding principles.

## **6. E. Recruitment and Selection of Qualified Staff**

1. Recruitment and selection procedures ensure that the personnel needs of the CASA/GAL program are adequately met.
2. All applicants for paid employment with the CASA/GAL program are required to:
  - a. Complete a written application containing information about educational background, training, employment history and experience working with children
  - b. Submit the names of three or more references unrelated to the applicant
  - c. Authorize the CASA/GAL program and other appropriate agencies and provide the necessary information for them to secure the following record checks:
    - i. Social security number verification.
    - ii. Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant currently resides and works.
    - iii. State criminal records.
    - iv. FBI or other national criminal database .
    - v. National sex offender registry.
    - vi. Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law.
3. Participate in personal interview(s) with CASA/GAL program staff
4. The CASA/GAL program is required to complete the following:
  - a. Secure a completed written application for each applicant containing information about educational background, training, employment history and experience working with children
  - b. Secure three or more references, either written or documented by the program in writing who are unrelated to the applicant
  - c. Secure the following record checks on an applicant being considered for employment:
    - i. Social security number verification.

- ii. Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant currently resides and works.
    - iii. State criminal records.
    - iv. FBI or other national criminal database
    - v. National sex offender registry.
    - vi. Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law.
  - d. Conduct a personal interview with the staff applicant.
4. If the prospective staff has lived in another county/court and that jurisdiction is not covered by a national criminal background check then the CASA/GAL program secures local/county and state criminal record checks in any area in which the person has resided since the age of 18.
  5. A staff applicant is rejected by the CASA/GAL program if he/she refuses to sign a release of information form or submit the required information or fingerprints for any of the checks required by 6.E.4. This policy is stated on the staff application form.
  6. The CASA/GAL program repeats the record checks required in Standard 6.E.4 for each active staff at least every four years.
  7. If the CASA/GAL program permits staff to transport children or drive on behalf of the program, the applicant shall provide to the program at the time of the application:
    - a. Copy of a valid current driver's license.
    - b. Proof of adequate personal automobile insurance.
  8. The CASA/GAL program secures a motor vehicle division records check on each prospective staff. In addition, the CASA/GAL program has policies and procedures in place to assure that the following occur prior to CASA/GAL staff members transporting children:
    - a. Obtains permission of the supervisor or director.
    - b. Obtains permission of the child's legal guardian or custodial agency.
    - c. Are knowledgeable of the potential personal risk of liability.
    - d. Obtains proof of personal automobile insurance. Insurance must be the required state minimum if one exists or the programs insurance carrier minimum absent a state minimum.
    - e. Chooses to accept the responsibility.
  9. The CASA/GAL program's selection process for all staff includes an assessment of the applicant's awareness and sensitivity to the cultural and socioeconomic factors of the children and families the CASA/GAL program serves.
  10. Any applicant found to have been convicted of, or having 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 the CASA/GAL program's credibility is not accepted for employment. This policy is stated on the staff application form.
  11. If an applicant is found to have committed a misdemeanor or felony that is unrelated to or would not pose a risk to children and would not negatively impact the credibility of the CASA/GAL program, the CASA/GAL program will consider the extent of the rehabilitation since the misdemeanor or felony was committed as well as other factors that may influence the decision to accept the applicant for employment.
  12. The chief executive officer/program administrator or designee notifies all applicants in writing when the position applied for is filled.

## **6. F. New Staff Orientation**

1. The CASA/GAL program provides new staff orientation introducing its mission and purpose, policies and services including, but not limited to:
  - a. Information about confidentiality laws and the staff's responsibility to abide by these laws.
  - b. Information about the CASA/GAL program's structure, service mandates, relationship to the court and professional ethics including sexual harassment and non-discrimination policies.
  - c. Lines of accountability and authority within the program.
  - d. Information about pertinent laws, regulations, and policies.
  - e. Information about the mission and purpose of CASA/GAL programs on local, state and national levels.
  - f. Demographics of community and children served.
  - g. Staff's job responsibilities and description.
2. Newly hired directors and volunteer supervisors are required to attend volunteer pre-service training.

## **6. G. Staff Training and Development**

1. The CASA/GAL program plans and implements a training and development program for staff to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities and provide information about the backgrounds and needs of the children served by the program.
2. The training and development program is reviewed annually and revised based on the CASA/GAL program's assessment of its staff training needs.
3. The training and development program requires a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education annually for volunteer supervisors and includes the opportunity for other staff to pursue continuing education to upgrade knowledge and skills to fulfill the requirements of their respective positions.
4. The training and development program includes information related to children who are abused and neglected and in the court system, including cultural competency, disproportionality, and disparity in outcome training.
5. The CASA/GAL program provides ICWA compliance information and resources to all staff.
6. A CASA/GAL program considering using a peer coordinator model (or other models utilizing volunteers coordinating other volunteers) must:
  - a. Seek legal counsel before adoption so the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any state laws can be considered.
  - b. Engage in a review of insurance considerations, including workers compensation, to explore implications of such a model.
  - c. Participate in learning opportunities about the model.
  - d. Undergo an organizational assessment to determine need and readiness including considerations around budget, training, recruitment, staffing and organizational culture.
  - e. Develop a written plan and timeline for implementation of the model.

7. A CASA/GAL program that adopts and implements a peer coordinator model (or other models utilizing volunteers coordinating other volunteers):
  - a. Has a written job description for the position of peer coordinator.
  - b. Provides adequate supervision for the peer coordinator and holds them accountable for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.
  - c. Has a written policy that requires a peer coordinator to participate in equivalent staff orientation, training and evaluation as paid staff.
  - d. Maintains that an employee assigned to the supervision of a peer coordinator as a full-time function will not supervise more than 15 peer coordinators.
  - e. Maintains that a peer coordinator will not oversee more than 10 volunteer advocates.

#### **6. H. Staff Supervision**

1. The CASA/GAL program provides adequate supervision for its staff and holds staff accountable for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.
2. Frequency of individual or group supervision is arranged on the basis of staff needs, the complexity and size of the workload and the staff's familiarity with the assignment.
3. Supervisors are easily accessible and make every effort to provide quick and thorough guidance to CASA/GAL staff.
4. The CASA/GAL program supervisor holds regularly scheduled case conferences with staff who supervise volunteers to review progress on each case.

#### **6. I. Staff Performance Evaluation**

1. The CASA/GAL program develops and implements a system for the periodic evaluation of all staff.
2. At least once a year, the performance of staff is evaluated by the person to whom they are accountable, using a standardized evaluation form, to review their performance against established criteria. The staff is an active participant in this process.
3. Staff evaluations include:
  - a. Assessment of job performance in relation to the quality and quantity of work defined in the job description and to the performance objectives established in the most recent evaluation.
  - b. Clearly stated objectives for future performance.
  - c. Recommendations for further training and skill building, if applicable
  - d. Opportunity for staff self-evaluation.
4. Staff is given the opportunity to sign the evaluation report, to obtain a copy and to include written comments before the report is entered into the personnel record.
5. The governing body:
  - a. Evaluates the performance of the chief executive officer/organization administrator in writing at least annually against written performance criteria and objectives established for the time span between evaluations.
  - b. Provides for the participation of the chief executive officer/organization administrator in the evaluation process as well as their review, signature and response to the evaluation before it is entered into the personnel record.

## **6. J. Staff Discipline and Termination**

1. The CASA/GAL program has policies and procedures for termination of staff that are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
2. The CASA/GAL program's personnel policies and practices specify the conditions for disciplinary action and termination of staff, including violations of program policy and/or documented substandard performance.
3. The CASA/GAL program's policies and procedures specify the person or persons with authority to terminate or discharge a staff person.

## **6. K. Maintaining Personnel Records**

1. The CASA/GAL program maintains a written confidential personnel record for each staff that contains as appropriate:
  - a. Staff application.
  - b. Job description.
  - c. Reference documentation.
  - d. Documentation of all records checks.
  - e. Verification of education for professional and administrative personnel.
  - f. Training records.
  - g. Performance evaluations.
  - h. Disciplinary actions.
  - i. Termination summaries.
  - j. Letters of commendation.
  - k. Time attendance records.
  - l. Proof of eligibility to work in the US (I-9 form).
2. Written policies grant staff access to their records and detail the procedures for review, addition and correction by staff of information contained in the record.

## **6. L. Whistleblower Policy**

1. The governing body of the CASA/GAL program adopts a "whistleblower policy" which provides members of the governing body, staff and volunteers a procedure for reporting unethical, inappropriate or illegal activities by members of the governing body, staff or volunteers and such policy affords the reporter protection in making good faith report about such activities.

## **Standard 7: Volunteer Management**

The CASA/GAL program follows approved written policies for its volunteers regarding recruitment; application, selection and screening; training; supervision; volunteer roles and responsibilities and dismissal.

### **7. A. Volunteer Recruitment**

1. The CASA/GAL program is inclusive and has a written plan for recruiting and selecting volunteers who reflect the children served.
2. The recruitment plan demonstrates that inclusiveness and diversity are essential components of quality advocacy and includes targeted strategies to attract a diverse volunteer pool.
3. The CASA/GAL program prepares a standardized packet of written information to recruit volunteers which includes the following:
  - a. Purpose and role of the CASA/GAL volunteer.
  - b. Qualifications.
  - c. Minimum time commitment required.
  - d. Equal opportunity statement.
  - e. Community collaboration, media outreach, speaking engagements and other appropriate strategies are employed to recruit volunteers.
4. The CASA/GAL program informs potential volunteers of, and refers them to other CASA/GAL programs, National CASA or the state CASA organization if the applicant might be eligible for or prefer to serve in another CASA program.

### **7. B. Volunteer Application, Screening, Selection and Transfer Process**

1. A CASA/GAL volunteer is an individual who is at least 21 years of age and has successfully passed the application and screening process, been trained by and serves under the supervision of the CASA/GAL program and is appointed by the court to advocate for children who come into the court system as a result of abuse or neglect as defined by the state child welfare laws.
2. A qualified CASA volunteer who transfers to a new program must complete, at a minimum, training regarding the local court, laws, program policies and procedures, investigation and report writing.
3. The CASA/GAL program has a policy regarding the reactivation of volunteers who have been inactive for more than one year. The policy shall include guidelines under which a volunteer would not have to be retrained. The program shall document the specific information when reactivating a volunteer without retraining.
4. A CASA/GAL volunteer is an individual who respects a child's inherent right to be safe, establish permanence and have the opportunity to thrive.
5. The CASA/GAL volunteer is an individual who advocates for the child's best interests in the court at every stage of the case once appointed by the court.
6. All CASA/GAL volunteer applicants are required to:
  - a. Complete a written application containing information about educational background, training, employment history and experience working with children.

- b. Submit the names of three or more references that are unrelated to the applicant.
  - c. Authorize the CASA/GAL program and other appropriate agencies and provide the necessary information for them to secure the following record checks:
    - i. Social security number verification.
    - ii. Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant currently resides and works.
    - iii. State criminal records.
    - iv. FBI or other national criminal database.
    - v. National sex offender registry.
    - vi. Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law.
  - d. Participate in an in-person interview(s) with CASA/GAL program personnel.
7. The CASA/GAL program is required to secure the following:
- a. A completed written application for each applicant containing information about educational background, training, employment history and experience working with children.
  - b. Three or more references, either written or documented by the program in writing, which are unrelated to the applicant.
  - c. Record checks on each volunteer applicant including:
    - i. Social security number verification.
    - ii. Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant currently resides and works.
    - iii. State criminal records.
    - iv. FBI or other national criminal database.
    - v. National Sex Offender Registry.
    - vi. Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law.
  - d. Conduct a personal interview in-person with the volunteer applicant.
8. If the prospective volunteer has lived in another county/court jurisdiction and that jurisdiction is not covered by a national criminal background check then the CASA/GAL program secures local/county and state criminal record checks in any area in which the person has resided since the age of 18.
9. If a volunteer applicant refuses to sign a release of information form or submit the required information or fingerprints for any of the checks required by 7.B.7, the CASA/GAL program rejects the application. This policy is stated on the volunteer application form.
10. The CASA/GAL program repeats the record checks required in Standard 7.B.7 for each active volunteer at least every four years.
11. Any applicant found to have been convicted of, or having 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 the CASA/GAL program's credibility is not accepted as a CASA/GAL volunteer. This policy is stated on the volunteer application form.
12. If an applicant is found to have committed a misdemeanor or felony that is unrelated to or would not pose a risk to children and would not negatively impact the credibility of the CASA/GAL program, the CASA/GAL program will consider the extent of the

- rehabilitation since the misdemeanor or felony was committed as well as other factors that may influence the decision to accept the applicant as a CASA/GAL volunteer.
13. The CASA/GAL program's volunteer selection procedures ensure that those not selected are treated with dignity, respect and, if appropriate, referred to alternative volunteer opportunities.
  14. All screening is completed before the volunteer is assigned to a case and written verification is on file at the program office.
  15. A qualified CASA volunteer who transfers to a new program must complete the full application and screening process.

### **7. C. Volunteer Training**

1. The CASA/GAL program delivers training to volunteers using the *National CASA/GAL Volunteer Training Curriculum* or its equivalent. The purpose of the training is to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of volunteers so that they can fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a CASA/GAL volunteer.
2. The training consists of at least 30 hours of required pre-service training and 12 hours of required in-service training per year. The number of in-service training hours required for newly trained volunteers will be adjusted (or prorated) dependent on the time of year the volunteer is trained.
3. The training program is reviewed annually and revised based on the CASA/GAL Program's assessment of its training needs.
4. Guest speakers such as attorneys, judges, agency representatives and volunteers may deliver the training under supervision of staff.
5. Pre-service training includes the following topics:
  - a. Roles and responsibilities of a CASA/GAL volunteer.
  - b. Court process.
  - c. Dynamics of families including mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and poverty.
  - d. Relevant state laws, regulations and policies.
  - e. Relevant federal laws, regulations and policies, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the Multi Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA).
  - f. Confidentiality and record keeping practices.
  - g. Child development.
  - h. Child abuse and neglect.
  - i. Permanency planning.
  - j. Community agencies and resources available to meet the needs of children and families.
  - k. Communication and information gathering.
  - l. Effective advocacy.
  - m. Cultural competency.
  - n. Special needs of the children served.
6. The CASA/GAL program verifies that volunteers successfully complete at least 30 hours of pre-service training during which the volunteer must spend a minimum of 10 hours in personal contact with and under the supervision of the program staff delivering the

training sufficient for staff to evaluate the applicant's appropriateness to serve as a volunteer.

7. In addition to the 30 hours of pre-service training, if allowed by the court, the program requires each volunteer to visit the court served by the CASA/GAL program while the court is in session to observe abuse/neglect proceedings before appearing in court for an assigned case.
8. The CASA/GAL program provides ICWA compliance information and resources to all volunteers.
9. In-service training opportunities must include, but are not limited to, cultural competency, disproportionality, disparity in outcome training, and recognizing abuse.

#### **7. D. Volunteer Supervision**

1. The CASA/GAL program provides supervision which is appropriate to the volunteer's needs and complexity of the case assignment and holds volunteers accountable for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.
2. Supervisors are easily accessible and provide timely and thorough guidance to CASA/GAL volunteers through personal contact at least once per month.
3. For staff assigned to supervision as a full-time function, the staff will not supervise more than 30 active volunteers or a maximum of 45 cases. In the event the staff is required to perform duties other than supervision of volunteers, the number of volunteers the staff can supervise shall be reduced pro rata.
4. The CASA/GAL program supervisor holds regularly scheduled case conferences with volunteers to review progress on each case and written case records.
5. The CASA/GAL program has in place mechanisms for volunteer recognition.
6. The CASA/GAL program supervisor conducts an in-person review of the case and evaluation of the volunteer's work on the case as a component of case closure.

#### **7. E. Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities**

1. The roles and responsibilities of the CASA/GAL volunteer are clearly communicated through written policies, job descriptions and training, and are reinforced through the supervisory process.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains a current manual of volunteer policies and procedures.
3. Each volunteer receives a copy of the volunteer policies and procedures and provides signed acknowledgement of reading and understanding the policies.
4. The CASA/GAL program volunteer policies and procedures specify the role of the CASA/GAL volunteer, developed with the input and approval of the court (if not already determined by statute).
5. Written roles and responsibilities should include the following. The volunteer will:
  - a. Obtain first hand a clear understanding of the needs and situation of the child by conducting an ongoing review of all relevant documents and records and interviewing the child, parents, social workers, teachers and other persons to determine the facts and circumstances of the child's situation.
  - b. Identify and advocate for the best interest of the child.
  - c. Seek cooperative solutions by acting as a facilitator among parties.

- d. Provide at every hearing reports which include findings and recommendations.
  - e. Appear at all hearings to advocate for the child's best interests and provide testimony when necessary.
  - f. Have regular and sufficient in-person contact with the child where they live to ensure in-depth knowledge of the case and make fact-based recommendations to the court. The CASA/GAL volunteer shall meet in-person with the child once every thirty (30) days at a minimum. An exception may be granted in the discretion of the CASA program staff; however, the decision to permit a less frequent in person contact shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception.
  - g. Make specific recommendations for appropriate services for the child and, when appropriate, the child's family.
  - h. Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child and make recommendations concerning permanency.
  - i. Monitor implementation of service plans and court orders assuring that court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner and that review hearings are held in accordance with the law.
  - j. Inform the court promptly of important developments in the case through appropriate means as determined by court rules or statute.
  - k. Advocate for the child's best interests in the community by interfacing with mental health, educational and other community systems to assure that the child's needs in these areas are met.
  - l. Participate in all scheduled case conferences with supervisory staff.
  - m. Participate in in-service training.
  - n. Maintain complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.
  - o. Return case files to the program after the case is closed.
6. A volunteer will not be assigned more than two cases at a time. An exception may be granted in the discretion of the CASA program staff; however, the decision to permit a higher caseload shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception. Under the exception, a volunteer will not be assigned to more than five cases.
7. The CASA/GAL program's volunteer policies and procedures include but are not limited to the following:
- a. The CASA/GAL volunteer reports any incident of child abuse or neglect, or any situation in which the CASA volunteer has reason to believe that a child is in imminent danger to the appropriate authorities and the CASA/GAL supervisor.
  - b. The CASA/GAL volunteer does not engage in the following activities:
    - i. Taking a child to the volunteer's home or any home other than the child's.
    - ii. Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
    - iii. Making placement arrangements for the child.
    - iv. Giving money or expensive gifts to the child, the child's family or caregiver.
  - c. The CASA/GAL volunteer discusses all recommendations concerning the case with the program supervisor prior to submitting recommendations to the court.
  - d. CASA/GAL program supervisors do not alter reports or recommendations without the knowledge and agreement of the CASA/GAL volunteer.

- e. The CASA/GAL program has a clear policy to resolve conflicts between a volunteer and the program supervisor regarding the handling of a case, reporting of information or the recommendations to be included in a report to the court.
  - f. A CASA/GAL volunteer should not be related to any parties involved in the case or be employed in a position and/or affiliated with an agency that might result in a conflict of interest.
  - g. Social media policy.
8. When the CASA/GAL program has made the decision to allow volunteers to provide transportation to children, it has the necessary liability insurance to cover the program. In addition it has policies and procedures which assure the CASA/GAL volunteer:
- a. Has passed a motor vehicles division record check.
  - b. Provides annually to the program a copy of a valid current driver's license, a safe driving record and adequate personal automobile insurance.
  - c. Insurance must be the required state minimum if one exists or the programs insurance carrier minimum absent a state minimum.
  - d. Obtains permission of the supervisor or director.
  - e. Obtains permission of the child's legal guardian or custodial agency.
  - f. Is knowledgeable of the potential personal risk of liability.
  - g. Chooses to accept the responsibility.

#### **7. F. Dismissal of a CASA/GAL Volunteer**

1. The CASA/GAL program has policies and procedures that specify the conditions for disciplinary action and non-voluntary dismissal of volunteers.
2. Appropriate grounds for dismissal of a CASA/GAL volunteer include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Taking action without program or court approval which endangers the child or is outside the role or authority of the CASA/GAL program.
  - b. Engaging in ex-parte communication with the court.
  - c. Violating a program policy, court rule or law.
  - d. Failing to complete required pre-service and in-service training.
  - e. Failing to demonstrate an ability to effectively carry out assigned duties.
  - f. Falsifying a volunteer application or misrepresenting facts during the screening process.
  - g. Having allegations of child abuse/neglect brought against them.
  - h. Experiencing an irresolvable conflict of interest.
3. The CASA/GAL program's policies and procedures specify the person or persons with authority to dismiss a volunteer.

#### **7. G. Volunteer Records**

1. The CASA/GAL program maintains a written confidential record for each volunteer that contains, at minimum:
  - a. Application.
  - b. Emergency and identifying contact information.
  - c. Job description.

- d. Reference documentation.
  - e. Documentation of all records checks.
  - f. Training records.
  - g. Performance evaluations and any other applicable documentation related to performance.
  - h. Documentation of volunteer status.
  - i. Copy of volunteer's current driver's license, motor vehicles records check and verification of automobile insurance (if program allows transportation).
  - j. Documentation of personal interview.
2. Written policies outline when, and if, volunteers have access to their records and detail the procedures for review, addition and correction (by volunteers) of information contained in the record.
  3. The CASA/GAL program retains the record after a volunteer has left the program in accordance with the program's records retention policy.

## **Standard 8: Public Relations**

The CASA/GAL program communicates with its community and other service providers about its program and the needs of the children it serves and cooperates with other agencies to plan for programs needed to serve children.

### **8. A. Public Relations**

1. The CASA/GAL program conducts an ongoing program of public information and education to provide an understanding of the program's purpose, function and place in judicial proceedings and the community social service system.
2. The CASA/GAL program disseminates public information to broaden awareness of the needs and problems of the children it serves.
3. The CASA/GAL program conducts outreach to make known its role, functions and capacities to other agencies, community organizations, governmental bodies and corporations as appropriate.
4. The CASA/GAL program works closely with representatives from the legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups as well as with businesses to accomplish its purposes and to foster interagency collaboration and coordination of services.
5. The CASA/GAL program has a written policy that guides their utilization of online communication and social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and YouTube.
6. The local program works in partnership with the state organization and National CASA to provide timely information concerning newsworthy events, stories and occurrences which may raise awareness of the CASA/GAL movement
7. The CASA/GAL program has a written crisis management plan that addresses issues that may have significant impact on the credibility, reputation or funding at the local, state or national level. This crisis management plan provides for information sharing between national, state and local organizations within 24 hours, subject to confidentiality limitations.

## Standard 9: Planning and Evaluation

The CASA/GAL program maintains management information and data necessary to plan, deliver, evaluate and report on its services.

### 9. A. Data Collection

1. The CASA/GAL program collects the information needed to complete the National CASA Association's annual survey.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains data which includes:
  - a. Information on children:
    - i. Demographic information including age, gender and ethnicity for new, active and closed children's cases within a specific time period.
    - ii. Total number of children served within a specific time period.
    - iii. Number of new children served within a specific time period.
    - iv. Number of children whose cases were closed within a specific time period.
    - v. Type of case.
    - vi. Length of time in out-of-home care since assignment to advocate.
    - vii. Reason for CASA/GAL case closure by the program and court.
    - viii. Placement of child at time of CASA/GAL case closure by the program and court.
  - b. Information on volunteers:
    - i. Demographic information including, age, gender, ethnicity, education and work status within a specific time period.
    - ii. Status of volunteers during a specific time period (for example, new volunteers trained, numbers of volunteer assigned to cases, available for cases and those at inactive status as well as length of service with program).
    - iii. Number of volunteer hours contributed during a specific time period.
    - iv. Length of time volunteer is assigned to each case.
    - v. Reason for volunteer departure.
  - c. Other information:
    - i. Number of children in the court's jurisdiction needing CASA/GAL volunteers vs. number of children assigned to CASA/GAL volunteers.
    - ii. Case outcomes.
    - iii. Any other data required by funding sources.
3. When the CASA/GAL program develops and/or participates in a computerized information system, the following safeguards are implemented:
  - a. Operational procedures governing use of the system and software.
  - b. Confidentiality policies concerning electronic data and information sharing via electronic media.
  - c. Review of all decisions regarding computerized files by program management.

## **9. B. Program Planning**

1. The CASA/GAL program engages in ongoing and systematic planning to determine the scope of need for its services and how its services can most effectively be delivered.
2. During the planning process the CASA/GAL program seeks input from their governing body, staff, volunteers and local community, as appropriate to the program's structure.
3. The planning process includes:
  - a. Identifying advocacy needs of the child population served by the CASA/GAL program.
  - b. Developing long and short term measurable goals for 1) child outcomes, 2) volunteers and 3) resource development.
  - c. Determining objectives related to the goals.
  - d. Assessment and tracking progress.
  - e. Carrying out tasks with related timeframes and specified person responsible
  - f. Listing resources needed for achieving goals.
  - g. Assessing management's capacity to carry out the planning effort.

## **9. C. Program Review**

1. At least once in a two-year period, the CASA/GAL program conducts a review which includes assessment of the program goals, objectives and outcomes as well as alignment with those of National CASA and the state CASA/GAL organization that pertain to local CASA/GAL programs:
  - a. Degree to which the program identifies and meets the advocacy needs of the children it serves.
  - b. Changing demographics, increased community need, over-utilization and other reasons indicating a need to expand service, establish a priority system or refrain from increasing the caseload size carried by the program.
  - c. Effectiveness of the services, based upon predetermined definitions and criteria of effectiveness.
  - d. Progress made in implementation of the inclusiveness and diversity plan.
2. CASA/GAL management:
  - a. Submits results of its planning and evaluation processes to the governing body.
  - b. Shares findings with governing body, staff and volunteers.
  - c. Disseminates information or findings to funders, the courts and other community agencies, as appropriate.

## **Standard 10: Financial, Facility and Risk Management**

The CASA/GAL program manages its operations in accordance with generally accepted financial and risk management practices and applicable federal, state and local statutory requirements.

### **10. A. Budgeting**

1. The CASA/GAL program has a written budget which guides the management of its financial resources, based on:
  - a. Funding anticipated during the program year.
  - b. Fixed and incremental costs of operating the CASA/GAL program and identification of potentially changing costs and conditions.
2. The budget is reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.
3. The governing body or its designee reviews and approves all deviations (as defined by the governing body) from and revisions to the budget.

### **10. B. Financial Resources**

1. The CASA/GAL program follows a written plan for securing and maintaining diversified financial resources adequate to accomplish its established goals and objectives.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains its tax-exempt status, if applicable.
3. The CASA/GAL program seeks to conserve its financial resources by:
  - a. Taking advantage of benefits allowed tax exempt organizations, when applicable.
  - b. Maintaining sound policies regarding purchasing and inventory control
  - c. Using competitive bidding, where applicable, in accordance with board policy and law or regulation.
4. The CASA/GAL program regularly analyzes:
  - a. Cost of operations.
  - b. Current and potential funding sources
  - c. Allocation of funds.
  - d. Effectiveness in achieving budget objectives.

### **10. C. Financial Reporting and Accountability**

1. The CASA/GAL program is accountable to its governing body for prudent financial management.
2. The CASA/GAL program assures that an annual report is developed which includes financial, statistical and service data summary information.
3. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program annually files the required IRS form 990 in a timely manner which is approved by the governing body or designee.
4. Whenever the actual expenditure of funds exceeds \$200,000 annually, an audit of the nonprofit CASA/GAL program's financial statements, which conforms to generally

accepted auditing standards, is performed. The audit occurs annually within nine months of the end of the fiscal year by an independent certified public accountant approved by the governing body. Additionally:

- a. A designated committee of the governing body, such as finance or audit review committee, or a designated member of the governing body reviews the audit findings and meets with the independent auditor as necessary.
  - b. The auditor's report is reviewed and formally approved or accepted by the governing body and is made available for public inspection.
  - c. When a management letter has accompanied the audit, the nonprofit CASA/GAL program's governing body promptly reviews and insures that management acts on its recommendations.
  - d. The CASA/GAL program is required to send to National CASA any audit findings or questioned costs from any private or government audit/monitoring report.
5. Whenever the actual expenditure of funds exceeds \$50,000 and is less than \$200,000 annually, a financial review of the nonprofit CASA/GAL program's financial statements is performed. The review occurs annually within nine months of the end of the fiscal year and is performed by an independent certified public accountant approved by the governing body.
- a. A designated committee of the governing body, such as finance or audit review committee, or a designated member of the governing body reviews the financial review findings and meets with the independent CPA as necessary.
  - b. The CPA's report is reviewed and formally approved or accepted by the governing body and is made available for public inspection.
6. Whenever the actual expenditure of funds is under \$50,000 annually, a compilation of the nonprofit CASA/GAL program's financial statements is performed. The compilation occurs annually within nine months of the end of the fiscal year and is performed by an independent certified public accountant approved by the governing body.
7. In a CASA/GAL program under public auspices, the audit is conducted periodically by an independent auditor covering all years since the previous audit and in accordance with laws or regulations governing the audit of a public agency's financial operations.

#### **10. D. Financial Accounting and Record Keeping**

1. The CASA/GAL program receives, disburses and accounts for its funds in accord with generally accepted accounting principles.
2. The CASA/GAL program has written operational policies and procedures with regard to accounting control to which the program adheres. In the case of programs under public auspices or an umbrella organization, the program adheres to the extent of the program's control. These policies and procedures include:
  - a. Internal financial controls.
  - b. Descriptive chart of accounts.
  - c. Prompt and accurate recording of revenues and expenses.
  - d. Maintenance of a filing system which contains account records and receipts.

- e. Safeguarding and verification of assets.
  - f. Control over expenditures.
  - g. Separation of duties to the extent possible.
  - h. Handling of and requirements for reserves, endowments and investments.
3. The review and monitoring of the CASA/GAL program's financial management is delegated to its governing body or to the appropriate committee or entity when the program is under public auspices.
  4. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program makes timely payments to the Internal Revenue Service and to other taxing authorities, as required by law.
  5. The CASA/GAL program uses a financial management system that ensures the segregation of restricted funds.
  6. When the CASA/GAL program has the authority, its policies and procedures require:
    - a. Personnel with financial responsibilities receive orientation to the bookkeeping system and retraining when system changes occur.
    - b. Systems are in place to prevent or to detect fraud or abuses of the system, such as control, use and review of the system by more than one person.
  7. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program's accounting records are kept up to date and balanced on a monthly basis.
  8. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program reconciles bank statements to the general ledger on a monthly basis.

#### **10. E. Resource Development**

1. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program's board of directors sets policies and exercises control over resource development activities carried out by its staff and volunteers.
2. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program conducts solicitations of individuals, groups, corporations, and other potential funders in an ethical manner.
3. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program registers with the applicable state agency to conduct charitable solicitations.
4. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program provides potential funders with an accurate description of the program, its purpose and services as well as the financial needs for which the solicitation is being made.
5. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program spends funds for the purposes for which they were solicited, except for reasonable costs for administration of resource development activities.
6. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program performs a costs-benefits analysis prior to engaging in resource development activities.
7. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program establishes controls on processing and acknowledging contributions in accordance with applicable laws.

#### **10. F. Facility and Workplace Management**

1. The CASA/GAL program operates from offices which provide a safe, well-maintained physical environment for its personnel, volunteers and visitors.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains a work environment for its personnel and volunteers that is conducive to effective performance.

3. The CASA/GAL program's facilities comply with applicable health, fire safety and accessibility codes and regulations.
4. The nonprofit CASA/GAL program plans for the disposition of property in the event of its dissolution.
5. The CASA/GAL program takes reasonable measures to maintain its equipment and ensure it is used as intended.

## **10. G. Risk Management**

1. The CASA/GAL program protects its physical, human and financial resources by evaluating, and preventing or reducing the risks to which they are exposed.
2. The CASA/GAL program has liability protection for governing body, organization, program staff and volunteers through the court, state statute or private insurance coverage.
3. The governing body has responsibility for determining the extent and nature of the liability protection needed for personnel and volunteers, when applicable laws are unclear or silent, and has a plan for regularly reviewing potential liability to the organization and staff and establishes the necessary protections for preventing or reducing exposure.
4. The CASA/GAL program evaluates and reduces its potential liability by:
  - a. Assigning the risk management function to a person or committee whose job description includes responsibility for risk management policies and activities.
  - b. Ensuring that appropriate bonding, self-insurance, or external coverage is adequate to meet the potential liability of the CASA/GAL program.
  - c. Developing a process to identify risks in terms of their nature, severity and frequency.
  - d. Avoiding risk through loss prevention and risk reduction.
  - e. Evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the risk management function.
  - f. Determining how often records checks are required on governing body, staff and volunteers. The CASA/GAL program carries worker's compensation insurance and other insurance as deemed necessary based upon evaluation of its risks and protects itself through means such as indemnification, participation in a risk-pooling trust or external insurance coverage.
5. The CASA/GAL program requires all persons with authority to sign checks, handle cash or contributions, or manage funds to be bonded or the program maintains appropriate insurance coverage to cover losses which may be incurred.
6. The CASA/GAL program informs its governing body members, officers, staff and volunteers of the amount and type of coverage that is provided on their behalf by the program.
7. The CASA/GAL program annually reviews its insurance coverage with its insurance carrier to insure adequate coverage.
8. If the CASA/GAL program permits staff/volunteers to transport children the staff/volunteer shall provide to the program:
  - a. Copy of a valid current driver's license.
  - b. Proof of personal automobile insurance. Insurance must be the required state minimum if one exists or the programs insurance carrier minimum absent a state minimum. The programs also secures a motor vehicles division record check and

in addition the program, has policy and procedures which assure CASA/GAL staff/volunteers:

- c. Obtain permission of the supervisor or director.
- d. Obtain permission of the child's legal guardian or custodial agency when transporting a child.
- e. Remain knowledgeable about the potential personal risk of liability.
- f. Choose to accept the responsibility.

## **Standard 11: Record Keeping**

The CASA/GAL program maintains complete, accurate and current case records and follows written policies for acceptance and assignment of CASA/GAL cases.

### **11. A. Case Records**

1. The CASA/GAL program maintains complete, accurate and current records for each child served, which includes:
  - a. Biographical or other identifying information.
  - b. Background on the nature of the presenting problem or reason for referral by the court.
  - c. Court reports and any court orders related to the service being provided.
  - d. Social service case plan.
2. Records for all children served are kept up to date through:
  - a. Current contact entries.
  - b. Periodic progress notes or summaries.
3. The CASA/GAL program maintains copies of all volunteer reports, correspondence concerning the case, notes from telephone or in-person consultations between the program staff and volunteers and requires its volunteers to turn in their case records including all notes when the case is closed.
4. Information entered into the case record by program staff is specific, factual and pertinent to the nature of the situation.
5. Upon case closure a record (e.g. court order, case closure summary, recording in database) is made of the date and reason for closure.
6. The CASA/GAL program has written operational procedures, consistent with legal requirements and with the policy on confidential information governing the retention, maintenance, protection, destruction and return of case files when the case is closed. Procedures should include:
  - a. Hard copy files are kept a minimum of seven years from case closure unless there is a court or statutory requirement that dictates otherwise.
  - b. Electronic children's case records are kept a minimum of seven years from case closure unless there is a court or statutory requirement that dictates otherwise.
  - c. Electronic children's case files are backed up on a separate system at least once a week and the backup is kept off site.
7. The CASA/GAL program has established procedures for the legal and programmatic release, in writing, of volunteers when a case is closed or when a volunteer is removed from a case.
8. The CASA/GAL program has established procedures for encrypting confidential email messages sent through public accounts.

### **11. B. Acceptance, Assignment and Closure of Cases**

1. The CASA/GAL program has procedures for the acceptance and assignment of cases.
2. A CASA/GAL volunteer is sworn in by the judge before appointment to a case.
3. Cases are accepted by the program without discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability or religion.

4. When possible, a CASA/GAL volunteer is assigned at the earliest possible stage of the court proceedings.
5. The judge and the program's administrator determine which cases are to be referred to the CASA/GAL program. Written referral criteria are reviewed and renewed at least every four years regularly and changed as program resources change.
6. All appointments and assignments are made by an appropriate written order of the court.
7. The CASA/GAL program, in cooperation with the court, retains the right to determine which cases entering the court system as a result of abuse or neglect and referred for appointment, it can serve appropriately. Determining factors can include the limits of the program's resources, capacities, statutory authority and mission.
8. A CASA/GAL program or the court notifies all parties and agencies involved in the case of the CASA/GAL volunteer's appointment and release.
9. Ethnicity, national origin, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability and social economic status are considered in the appointment of volunteers to cases.
10. Volunteers are assigned to cases with consideration to their experience, knowledge, skills, availability and case type preference.
11. In determining volunteer caseload size the following must be assessed:
  - a. Nature and difficulty of the current caseload and proposed case.
  - b. Specific circumstances and availability of the volunteer.
12. A CASA/GAL program maintains complete case assignment records including:
  - a. Name of volunteer.
  - b. Name of the child.
  - c. Date of assignment.
  - d. Date of release.

## Standard 12: National Affiliation

The CASA/GAL program is a member of the National CASA Association and meets its standards, requirements and policies.

### 12. A. National Affiliation

1. The CASA/GAL program takes advantage of the services available from National CASA which includes:
  - a. Technical assistance.
  - b. Resource materials.
  - c. National conference.
  - d. Training opportunities.
  - e. Web resources.
2. The CASA/GAL program uses the National CASA trademark logo as their official logo or prominently displays the National CASA Association member logo on all promotional, public relations, recruitment and training materials.
3. When using National CASA trademarks including taglines, slogans, and logos, the CASA/GAL program adheres to National CASA graphic standards.
4. The program uses the name CASA, GAL or identifies itself as a member of the National CASA Association on all promotional, public relations and recruitment materials.
5. The CASA/GAL program adheres to the National CASA resource development, government relations and other protocols developed in the future.
6. If the local CASA/GAL program has a program auxiliary or affiliate, the program makes that entity aware of National CASA standards and protocols.
7. The CASA/GAL program collects and submits data to National CASA as requested.
8. The CASA/GAL program demonstrates compliance with National CASA's standards through the quality assurance process.
9. The CASA/GAL program provides a copy of the *Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs* to its governing body and supervisory staff.

## **Standard 13: State Affiliation**

The CASA/GAL program communicates, collaborates and shares information with its fellow programs in the state and is a member of or affiliated with the state organization, association or network, if one exists.

### **13. A. State Affiliation**

1. The CASA/GAL program complies with all state laws, regulations, administrative and court rules.
2. The CASA/GAL program takes advantage of the services available from the state organization which may include:
  - a. Technical assistance.
  - b. Resource materials.
  - c. State conference.
  - d. Local program directors meetings.
  - e. Training opportunities.
  - f. Web resources.
3. The CASA/GAL program complies with state standards. When the program believes a conflict exists between National CASA standards and state standards, laws, regulations or court rules, the program and state organization, present the perceived conflict to the National CASA Association. National CASA will substantiate a conflict and determine which regulation takes precedence.
4. The local CASA/GAL program acts in a manner consistent with any agreements made with the state organization.
5. Recognizing the unique relationship between tribal programs and state organizations, the tribal CASA/GAL program and state organization collaborate to the fullest extent possible.

## Standard 14: New Program Development, Implementation and Expansion

The developing CASA/GAL program engages in a comprehensive assessment, which includes a feasibility study and implementation process that guides the program's development.

### 14. A. Initial Planning Process

1. The developing CASA/GAL prospective program requests start-up materials (including the *Guide to Program Development*) from National CASA and the state association.
2. Prior to start-up the CASA/GAL prospective program contacts all judges (including referees, commissioners, hearing officers, magistrates) in the jurisdiction that hear child abuse and neglect cases to dialogue with them about the CASA/GAL program and gain judicial support.
3. The CASA/GAL prospective program creates a steering or planning committee to guide the initial development activities.
4. The steering committee should include but is not limited to judges, individuals who have expressed an interest in starting the CASA prospective program, child welfare staff, guardian ad litem, parents and prosecuting attorneys, counselors, private social service providers and representatives from the broader community including those who might provide leadership or access to financial support or potential volunteers.
5. The steering or planning committee conducts a needs assessment and creates a written document to confirm the need for the CASA/GAL prospective program in the community/geographic location.
6. The needs assessment includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Interviews with key players (for example, judges, child protective services personnel, prosecutor, state CASA/GAL director, adjacent local CASA/GAL program directors, guardian ad litem attorneys and community child advocates).
  - b. Baseline statistics including the number of reports and substantiations of suspected child abuse and neglect in the area; the number of petitions filed over the past five years; number and demographics of the children before the court and in foster care; average length of stay of children in foster care; duration of the court process in child abuse cases and permanency outcomes for children.
  - c. Current process for representation of child's best interest, wishes and legal rights before the court and who serves in those capacities.
7. The steering or planning committee conducts a feasibility study and creates a written document to confirm the feasibility of development of a successful CASA/GAL program in the jurisdiction.
8. The feasibility study includes but is not limited to:
  - a. An assessment of community support including financial support and available human resources (board members, volunteers and other leaders for the program).
  - b. An assessment of whether the program should be developed independently or as a part of an already existing program.
  - c. An assessment of the community's ability to sustain the program.

9. If the program is to be incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation the organization follows the state and federal laws in regard to corporate development including the development and approval of articles of incorporation and bylaws.
10. In a nonprofit organization, the CASA/GAL prospective program's bylaws or written operational procedures:
11. Describe the organizational structure and responsibilities of the governing body.
12. Establish the mechanisms for selection, rotation and duration of membership and for election of officers.
13. Set the minimum number of formal meetings of the full governing body at four times per calendar year.
14. Set the quorum for these meetings so at least a simple majority of the current membership of the governing body.
15. The nonprofit CASA/GAL prospective program develops the first board of directors so that it reflects the diversity of the children served and has members who bring a range of skills, backgrounds and knowledge which support the CASA/GAL program in fulfilling its mission.
16. The CASA/GAL prospective program governing body includes individuals with various capabilities:
  - a. Skills and experience to serve at a policy-making level.
  - b. Ability to advocate for sufficient financial resources for the program to carry out its purpose.
  - c. Knowledge of the court system and the community served.
  - d. Ability to reflect community and client interests and to advocate for culturally responsive service delivery.
17. The CASA/GAL prospective program develops the following:
  - a. Job descriptions for board members.
  - b. Board recruitment strategies.
  - c. Election and screening procedures.
18. The members of the initial governing body receive formal orientation from the state director/state office staff that includes the CASA/GAL prospective program's services, goals, objectives, structure and methods of operation. The governing body is provided with key documents related to governance and responsibilities.
19. The CASA/GAL prospective program develops a written mission statement.
20. The CASA/GAL prospective program develops written goals and objectives to guide the first year and beyond, including activities, designation of responsibility, timelines and key indicators to measure progress.
21. The CASA/GAL prospective program identifies and educates potential funders and community supporters who are essential to a successful program.
22. If the CASA/GAL prospective program will be under the umbrella of a parent organization, a written agreement is developed which details:
  - a. The rights and responsibilities of the program and the umbrella organizations.
  - b. Procedures for resolving situations in which a conflict of interest exists between the CASA/GAL prospective program and its parent organization.
  - c. The protocol for resource development activities of both organizations.
  - d. Process for receipt and allocation of funds.
  - e. Process for accounting for funds separately.

- f. The administrative rate, if any, to be paid to the umbrella organization by the CASA/GAL prospective program.
  - g. A time frame of no more than two years for review and possible revisions of the agreement.
23. Within one year of the receipt of National CASA Association provisional membership, the CASA/GAL prospective program completes the necessary steps to be granted full program membership.

#### **14. B. Development and Execution of an Implementation Plan**

1. Based on the outcomes of the needs assessment and feasibility study, the CASA/GAL prospective program develops and executes an implementation plan which includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Projections of the number of staff needed to effectively operate the program for a specified period.
  - b. Projections of the number of volunteers needed to effectively serve the population for a specified period.
  - c. A first year budget.
  - d. Strategies to secure resources, including in-kind contributions and other sources of revenue to meet long and short term financial needs.
2. The governing body develops and implements a plan to recruit, select and train staff and volunteers.
3. If an executive director/program administrator has been retained, the governing body delegates the staffing function to him or her.

#### **14. C. Program Expansion**

1. If the program desires to expand into another jurisdiction the following steps are taken by the CASA/GAL program prior to the expansion taking place:
  - a. Consults with the state office and National CASA regarding the desire to expand into another jurisdiction.
  - b. Makes an assessment of how program expansion will impact the program and service in the original jurisdiction.
  - c. Contacts all judges (including referees, commissioners hearing officers, magistrates) in the jurisdiction that hears child abuse and neglect cases prior to expansion to gain judicial support.
  - d. Conducts a needs assessment and creates a written document to confirm the need for expansion.
2. The needs assessment includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Interviews with key players (for example, judges, child protective services personnel, prosecutor, state CASA/GAL director, adjacent local CASA/GAL program directors, guardian ad litem attorneys and community child advocates).
  - b. Baseline statistics including the number of reports and substantiations of suspected child abuse and neglect in the area; the number of petitions filed over the past five years; number and demographics of the children before the court and in foster care; average length of stay of children in foster care; duration of the court process in child abuse cases and permanency outcomes for children.

- c. Current process for representation of child's best interest, wishes and legal rights before the court and who serves in those capacities.
  3. Conducts a feasibility study and creates a written document to confirm the feasibility of expansion into the jurisdiction. The feasibility study includes but is not limited to:
    - a. An assessment of community support including financial support and available.
    - b. Human resources (board members, volunteers and other leaders for the program).
    - c. An assessment of the community's ability to sustain the programs.
  4. Informs the state office and National CASA of their findings and decision regarding expansion.
-

## Explanation of Terms

The purpose of the following explanations is to assist the programs in understanding the context of and consistently and accurately implementing the Standards and recording standard compliance.

<b>Audit:</b>	A certified public accountant examines a CASA/GAL program's financial records in order to formulate an audit opinion on the financial statements. The auditor must follow generally accepted auditing standards. Internal controls are evaluated and transactions are tested for legitimacy. These tests provide a basis for an audit opinion which will state the accuracy of the financial statements.
<b>Best Practice:</b>	A set of guidelines, ethics or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action. Best practices are often set forth by an authority, such as a governing body. A method or technique that is used as a benchmark. Best practices generally dictate the ideal course of action.
<b>Case:</b>	An action before the court involving one child or a sibling group.
<b>Children who come into the court system as a result of abuse or neglect:</b>	The CASA mission is to advocate for children who are before the court as a direct result of abuse or neglect, as defined in the state's child welfare laws. This includes all forms of civil child protection proceedings. This includes the following types of cases filed in the court by or on behalf of the child welfare agency: child protective order proceedings, child removal and foster care proceedings alleging a child has been abused or neglected.
<b>Financial Compilation:</b>	A certified public accountant puts the financial information from the CASA/GAL program into the form of financial statements. The accuracy of the financial information is the responsibility of the CASA/GAL program. A compilation only does not meet the standards for review or audit.
<b>Financial Review:</b>	A certified public accountant reviews the CASA/GAL program's financial statements to ensure they are presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. A review includes inquiries and analytical procedures to identify trends or areas in the financial statements which may be presented incorrectly. The accuracy of financial information is the responsibility of the CASA/GAL program.
<b>Disproportionality:</b>	The over or under-representation of minority children in foster care, compared to their representation in the general population.
<b>Governing Body:</b>	A nonprofit volunteer board of directors or public entity administrative officer or team.
<b>IRS 990:</b>	These Internal Revenue Service forms are filed annually by public charities and private foundations. They list assets, receipts, expenditures and compensation of officers.
<b>Local program:</b>	Includes stand alone, independent CASA/GAL member programs, programs within an umbrella organization and local offices (for example,

	district, county or circuit offices of a publicly administered program).
<b>National CASA:</b>	The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association also referred to as National CASA.
<b>Peer Coordinator:</b>	Volunteers coordinating other volunteers within the guidelines of the Standards (6.G.6)
<b>Program Auxiliary or Affiliate:</b>	Some CASA/GAL programs are associated with separate nonprofit organizations whose primary purpose is to promote the CASA/GAL program by raising funds, heightening community awareness of the program, supporting the activities of the volunteers and/or promoting the activities of the CASA/GAL program in other ways. Such nonprofit organizations are referred to as "program auxiliary or affiliate" organizations.
<b>Reflect the Diversity of Children Served:</b>	National CASA recognizes each child is an individual with his or her own experiences and background. Various features of a child's experience or background may be held in common with others, and some may be unique. For example, a child who has a parental heritage of both Latino and Asian cultures may have language and cultural commonalities with individuals possessing the same background. The intent of this language is for CASA/GAL programs to include among the governing body, staff and volunteers, those persons who share the backgrounds and experiences of the children served, including race and ethnicity. The objective is not to set quotas of participation, but rather to enrich the program itself, to improve advocacy for children and to provide opportunities for those who understand the backgrounds and experiences of children to participate in a very direct way in the CASA/GAL program at all levels. The perspectives of these persons would be seen to complement, sometimes challenge, but ultimately enhance the perspectives of those serving CASA children.
<b>Records Checks:</b>	Records checks include criminal background checks from the Federal Bureau of Investigation or other national criminal database, state criminal records, sex offender registry, child abuse registry or CPS records where permissible by law... If a program allows volunteers to transport minors, a check of DMV records should be included.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	The overall systematic approach to analyzing risk and implementing risk controls.
<b>Social Media:</b>	Forms of electronic communication (as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (as videos).
<b>Trained and Qualified Community Volunteers:</b>	The National CASA Association history and mission support court appointment of individuals who serve as volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children. Standard 7 sets forth required training and supervision for individuals who serve as trained community volunteers. Volunteers must meet the screening and training requirements and be under the supervision and guidance of a program. National CASA acknowledges that there may be exceptional times when it would be necessary and appropriate to appoint local program staff members to fulfill all or a part of

	the CASA/GAL roles and responsibilities as set forth in Standard 7.E. on a limited and time specific basis. In the event local program staff members are assigned, the staff member appointed by the court must be trained and supervised in the same manner as required for volunteers in Standard 7.
<b>Written Operational Procedures:</b>	Organizational protocols and procedures or administrative codes. Written operational procedures for accounting are also called Financial Internal Controls.

# Appendix A

## Vision for Diversity

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association “stands up” for abused and neglected children.

Building on our legacy of quality advocacy, we acknowledge the need to understand, respect and celebrate diversity including race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or socioeconomic status and the presence of a sensory, immigration status, mental or physical disability. We also value diversity of viewpoints, life experiences, talents and ideas.

A diverse CASA/GAL network helps us to better understand and promote the well-being of the children we serve. Embracing diversity makes us better advocates by providing fresh ideas and perspectives for problem solving in our global community, enabling us to respond to each child’s unique needs.

## Guiding Principles

- Ethnic and cultural background influences an individual’s attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.
- Each family’s characteristics reflect adaptations to its primary culture and the majority culture, the family’s unique environment and the composite of the people and needs within it.
- A child can be best served by a CASA/GAL volunteer who is culturally competent and who has personal experience and work experience in the child’s own culture(s).
- To understand a child, a person should understand cultural differences and the impact they have on family dynamics.
- No cultural group is homogenous; within every group there is great diversity.
- Families have similarities but they are also unique.
- In order to be culturally sensitive to another person or group, it is necessary to evaluate how each person’s culture impacts behavior.