

**Children's Advocacy Programs of the Blue Ridge, Inc.
Court Appointed Special Advocate**

Employment Status: Volunteer Position

Reports To: Director of Volunteer Services or Coordinator of Volunteer Services

Summary: Franklin/Pittsylvania County CASA Volunteers are Court Appointed Special Advocates, trained community volunteers, appointed by a Judge to speak up for children in court. When a CASA is assigned to a case, he or she is responsible for taking time to find out as much information as possible about that child as possible. The CASA gathers facts by reviewing records; interviewing parents; talking to teachers, doctors, and counselors; but most importantly, by listening to the child.

The Franklin/Pittsylvania County CASA performs these duties with only one purpose in mind, "to protect the best interest of the child." A court report is presented to the Judge, detailing the information gathered throughout the investigation and recommendations regarding the child's future. CASA's then monitor the Court's orders until the case is retired. The CASA is expected to appear in court the day of the hearing and be prepared to testify upon request.

Time Commitment: 10 hours/month – 100% victim services – One Year Initial Commitment
(6 month leave of absence available)

I. Qualifications of a CASA:

- Shall be at least 21 years of age
- Shall have the opportunity to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, to prepare court reports and to provide testimony
- Shall possess mature judgment, a high degree of responsibility and sufficient time to assist in advocating for the best interest of the child
- Shall be able to relate to persons of diverse cultures, ethnic backgrounds and different socioeconomic status

II. Screening requirements of a CASA:

- Shall successfully complete screening procedures which, at a minimum, shall include a written application, three reference reply checks, and personal interviews
- Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 9-173.8, the coordinator shall obtain a copy of the applicant's criminal history background, as well as, a child protective services check
- Must complete required training as set by the Director of Volunteer Services (a minimum of 30 hours)
- Shall participate in 12 hours of continuing education annually to maintain appointment

III. Duties and Responsibilities:

- Agrees to accept a case after consultation with the Director of Volunteer Services and/or Coordinator of Volunteer Services
- Meet with the child, the primary caretaker and other family members available to gather information and explain the role of CASA
- Talk with the social workers, guardian ad litem, agency professionals, school officials and others having any direct bearing on the case
- Thoroughly reviews the all records and reports relevant to the case
- Investigates in person, all prospective placements of the child, including home, shelter, care facilities, etc.

- Meets with the Director of Volunteer Services to review the case in order to assure a valuable report to the court
- Prepares a written report that gives the basic descriptive information, states the factual findings and addresses the temporary or permanent placement of the child
- This report is submitted to the Director of Volunteer Services or the Coordinator of Volunteer Services seven working days prior to the court hearings
- The report is reviewed, signed, and copies are filed at the clerk's office
- Appears in court and may be required to testify
- Monitors the progress made towards prescribed goals of the Court
- Brings any significant occurrences or problems regarding the child's placement to the attention of the Director of Volunteer Services and is available to reappear in court for reviews and follow-up until final disposition is made
- Should the CASA find it necessary to withdraw from a case prior to dismissal of the matter, he/she must contact the Director of Volunteer Services. All case files and case information must be returned to the office immediately
- CASA's are expected to be available for case assignment and accept cases upon request of the Director of Volunteer Services or Coordinator of Volunteer Services

IV. Professional Development

CASAs are required to maintain 12 hours of on-going training annually. Training topics should reflect their job responsibilities and include current theory and research. Training certificates should be forwarded to the Director of Volunteer Services to be placed in their personnel file. Participation in on-going supervision and opportunities for peer review shall be required.

V. Competencies

To perform the job successfully, a volunteer should demonstrate the following competencies:

- Interpersonal Skills
Maintains confidentiality; keeps emotions under control; and remains open to others' ideas
- Oral Communication
Speaks clearly and persuasively in positive or negative situations; listens and gets clarification; responds well to questions; and participates in meetings
- Written Communication
Writes clearly and informatively; edits work for spelling and grammar; and is able to read and interpret written information
- Teamwork
Balances team and individual responsibilities; gives and welcomes feedback; contributes to building a positive team spirit; and supports everyone's efforts to succeed
- Ethics
Treats people with respect; keeps commitments; inspires the trust of others; works with integrity and ethically; and upholds organizational values
- Planning/Organizing
Prioritizes and plans work activities; uses time efficiently; sets goals and objectives; and develops realistic action plans
- Professionalism
Approaches others in a tactful manner; reacts well under pressure; treats others with respect and consideration regardless of their status or position; accepts responsibility for own actions; and follows through on commitments
- Quality
Demonstrates accuracy and thoroughness; looks for ways to improve and promote quality; applies feedback to improve performance; and monitors own work to ensure quality

- Adaptability
Adapts to changes in the work environment; manages competing demands; changes approach or method to best fit the situation; and able to deal with frequent change, delays, or unexpected events
- Attendance/Punctuality
Is consistently on time; ensures volunteer responsibilities are covered when absent; and arrives at meetings and appointments on time
- Dependability
Commits to needed hours to reach goals; and completes tasks on time or notifies appropriate person with an alternate plan
- Initiative
Volunteers readily; undertakes self-development activities; seeks increased responsibilities; looks for and takes advantage of opportunities; and asks for and offers help when needed

Note: This job description indicates in general terms the type and level of work performed and responsibilities held by the volunteer. Duties described are not to be interpreted as being all-inclusive. A background check will be conducted prior to consideration of acceptance into the program.

(dev. 1993, updated 1994, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2008, 2012, 2013)

Description of the main purpose of organization:

Franklin County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program began serving the judicial advocacy needs of abused and neglected children in 1993 as a program of the Franklin County local government.

In 1996, the Franklin County Child Abuse Review Team was created to provide a community-based MDT response to civil and criminal allegations of child abuse and neglect.

Children's Advocacy Programs of the Blue Ridge, Inc. (CAPS) is a non-profit incorporation created in June of 1999, transitioning children's advocacy services provided through the Franklin County CASA program into the non-profit umbrella organization.

Our purpose is to ensure all children have the opportunity to live in safe, permanent homes, and receive the needed services and support to build a foundation for each of them to grow up to be healthy, productive adults.

In 2001, CAPS created the Southern VA Child Advocacy Center, a community facility designed to house all of CAPS' services and special programs.

In 2008, CAPS physically expanded our facility to allow clinical, medical, and forensic interview services to be provided on-site.

In 2014, CAPS began initiating independent outpatient clinical services to victims referred from the CART team to supplement our contracted clinical services.

In 2015, In 1996, the Henry County and City of Martinsville Child Abuse Review Teams were created to provide a community-based MDT response to civil and criminal allegations of child abuse and neglect.

In 2017, CAPS agreed to expand its CASA services to Pittsylvania County.

In 2018, CAPS created the Southern VA Child Advocacy Center – Patrick County Office in Stuart, VA, as well as, opening an office in the Chatham Courthouse for Pittsylvania County CASA, another service program administered by CAPS.

Organizational Philosophies and Values:

- CAPS' mission is to promote the well-being of children through prevention, education, treatment, and advocacy.
- CAPS' vision remains; above all, we should have no higher priority than our children.
- CAPS value statements - We value all life. We strive to create and foster a community where all are valued. Our intentional focus is on the safety, health, and well-being of children and families. We know that our staff and volunteers are our most valuable asset, and we care for them so that they can take care of families. Our agency is built on respect — for each other, survivors, and our shared vision to eliminate child abuse. We are driven to seek justice, opportunities, and hope for children and families.
- Tag Line – Every Child Matters

In order to achieve our mission:

We advocate for safe, permanent homes for abused and neglected children; coordinate a multidisciplinary approach to the investigation, prosecution, treatment and advocacy services for victims implementing Child Advocacy Center's core strategies and standards; and provide

educational programming. The Southern VA Child Advocacy Center evaluates all programming provided to ensure quality and successful outcomes. We collaborate on projects while promoting local resources. We identify the value of volunteerism and diversity.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

CASA provides advocacy services for abused and neglected children who are involved in judicial proceedings. CASA volunteers investigate cases, submit reports to the court addressing issues of safety, individual and family needs, and permanency, assist Guardians *ad Litem*, and monitor cases for compliance with court orders. CASA's goal is to ensure that every abused and neglected child is appointed a skilled and committed CASA volunteer who will advocate for their best interest during these proceedings. We cover both Franklin County and Pittsylvania County which are in the 22nd judicial district.

Resource Office for the Child Abuse Review Team (CART)

The Resource Office coordinates a community-based multidisciplinary response to victims of child abuse by facilitating and conducted **forensic interviews** and investigations, providing comprehensive **case management**, supporting prosecution efforts, offering **victim and family advocacy**, and enabling medical and **clinical assessments and treatments** to be provided in a streamlined process within the CAC. The team's response is multifaceted and services are provided to ensure a timely, thorough outcome to each victim's needs. In addition, we assess and support families in **filing claims under the criminal injuries compensation fund** and operating closed circuit television for children testifying in court.

We began serving Franklin County and the Town of Rocky Mount with CART services in 1996. Henry County and Martinsville City in 2015 and Patrick County in 2018.

Darkness to Light

Our newest community outreach program targets community outreach. D2L - Stewards of Children introduces a curriculum that educates the community about child sexual abuse and surrounding issues, increases the identification of child abuse, child neglect, and child sexual abuse, and teaches community members how to report concerns of abuse and neglect. Skills developed in the D2L - Stewards of Children empower community members to share in the protection of children by effectively identifying, responding to and reporting child abuse.

Other Services Provided Through Partnerships with Local Agencies

Forensic interviews of victims, Individual and Family counseling, medical forensic assessments, filing insurance for victims through the State Compensation Claims Board, emergently removed children are temporarily placed here while foster care is arranged, support groups for children placed in independent living programs, internet crimes/sexual exploitation partner project, internships, community outreach and education, coordination of closed circuit television for victims testifying in court, summer camps, conducting and coordinating specialized training opportunities.

APPLICATION FOR CASA VOLUNTEER:

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OFFICE SKILLS:

DESCRIBE ANY EXPERIENCE/TRAINING WORKING WITH CHILDREN:

CRIMINAL HISTORY: Any applicant has lived within another state within the last 7 years; the applicant must provide this agency with a copy of their criminal history and child protective service checks from that state(s) during those time periods. Any individual, for employment or volunteer opportunities, will have additional background checks conducted before any offer of employment or acceptance into a volunteer position is rendered. These will include at a minimum, national criminal history and sexual offender checks, as well as, child protective services checks.

Have you ever had a founded or substantiated abuse or neglect finding? Yes No

If yes, explain: _____

EMPLOYMENT/VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: Include U.S. Military Service and previous internships/volunteer opportunities.

Employer/Placement _____ **Address** _____

Telephone _____ Position _____ Dates : From _____ To _____
Mo/Yr Mo/Yr

Supervisor _____

Duties _____ FT PT No. of Hrs. _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Employer/Placement _____ **Address** _____

Telephone _____ Position _____ Dates : From _____ To _____
Mo/Yr Mo/Yr

Supervisor _____

Duties _____ FT PT No. of Hrs. _____

Reason for Leaving _____

REFERENCES: References must know applicant for at least three years.

Professional

Name _____

Address _____

Phone () _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone () _____

Personal/Non-Family

Name _____

Address _____

Phone () _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone () _____

APPLICATION FOR CASA VOLUNTEER

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Briefly describe why you would like to be a CASA volunteer.

APPLICANT'S CERTIFICATION AND AGREEMENT

I hereby certify that the facts set forth in the above application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and authorize Childrens Advocacy Programs of the Blue Ridge, Inc. to verify their accuracy and to obtain reference information on my work performance/volunteer experience. I hereby release Childrens Advocacy Programs of the Blue Ridge, Inc. from any/all liability of whatever kind and nature which, at any time, could result from obtaining and having an employment decision based on such information.

I understand that falsified statements of any kind or omissions of facts called for on this application shall be considered sufficient basis for disqualification. Not signing the release related to criminal history checks and child protective services checks are also grounds for disqualification. I understand that falsified statements of any kind or omissions of facts called for on this application shall be considered sufficient basis for disqualification. Applications will be rejected for 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 agency's credibility.

I understand that should an internship or special project volunteer opportunity be extended to me and accepted that I will fully adhere to the policies, rules and regulations of this organization as well as the policies of any specific program I may be placed to volunteer with. I understand that any opportunity offered is for an indefinite duration and at will and that either the agency or I may terminate my placement at any time with or without notice or cause.

I understand that my involvement in any legal court proceeding, public or private as plaintiff, defendant, witness, or jury member or any other manner of participation is to be divulged to the Executive Officer or the Director of Volunteer Services as soon as I have knowledge of the fact.

Signature of Applicant _____

Date: _____

Complaints of Discrimination – If you wish to file a civil rights program complaint of discrimination complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form found on-line at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.htm or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested on the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov

Authorization for Background Check

*Background checks are required for all contract positions, in addition to any full or part time positions per terms of employment; due to the nature of operations conducted on Southern Virginia Child Advocacy Center property. This is also a requirement of any volunteer or board member positions.

Full Name (Please Print)*: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Driver's License Number: _____

Address: _____

I give CAPS of the Blue Ridge, Inc. permission to complete the necessary local, state, and federal background checks and screens befitting my position with the Southern Virginia Child Advocacy Center.

(Authorizing Signature)

(Date)

(Program Representative)

(Date)

(Representative Title)

***If married, please also include maiden name.**