



CASA of Sonoma County

2021 Strategic Plan

Executive Outcomes 2020

Summary

This plan is developed with the feedback from the board of directors, our executive director, staff, volunteers, and advisors. This document is driven by current funding sources and those contracted within. This document organizes the goals of the agency for the 2021 calendar year. This document also includes all current funding source obligations and fulfills all standards and management practices necessary for CASA program administration.

This plan assists the Executive Director in both organizing and delegating to program staff goals and objectives for the next year. The final step in this plan will be to develop a full schedule of activities with dates, times and assigned staff responsibilities. This plan will also serve as a foundation to begin to measure agency success, strengths and weaknesses over the next year. Board involvement in assisting the Executive Director with her goals is always encouraged. The Executive Director is also committed to supporting the Board of Directors and their goals. These goals should not be seen as mutually exclusive.

This plan is further supported by the annual strategic planning session which is scheduled for January each year. This session is each board member's opportunity to give direction and feedback regarding this plan for the next year's activities. Specific board goals will also be developed at this meeting after a discussion of agency responsibilities.

Summary of Contents

Mission Statement

Executive Outcomes 2020

Executive Goals for 2021

Board Goals

Commitments

Committees

Timeline and Activities for 2021

Activities Calendar

Board Meeting Dates

Committee Goals

Individual Plan of Action (IPAs) forms

Please add your IPA to this manual

Goals by Executive Director and her planned outcomes for 2021

Communication Committee

Development and Finance

Membership

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Sonoma County, Inc.

Mission Statement

The Sonoma County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program is committed to serving abused and neglected children coming before the Juvenile Court for rehabilitation and/or protective services.

The purpose of the CASA program is to humanize the complex child welfare system for the youth by providing a trained volunteer who will act as a consistent advocate, mentor and life connection.

In support of our mission, this organization is committed to:

1. Provide a 40-42-hour training program designed to orient, educate, and prepare volunteers to understand the Child Welfare and Juvenile Court System and the role they will play within it. **Realigned training to meet the CASA University standards for implementing online trainings. Increased training hours and updated training topics to meet the National CASA requirements.**
2. Provide supervision and case consultation to all CASA advocates at least every 60 days or more often as needed. **99% of our group or 1x1 sessions were held at an 85% success. 51 group sessions and 129 private sessions for a total of 1,441 attendees. Increased case review sessions by 100% to provide more contact and oversight. Increased by 100% availability of self-care opportunities to volunteers during pandemic.**
3. To increase public awareness regarding children of the courts and their needs. **100% of our goals were reached. 47 public contacts were made. All media, written and air were contacted at least quarterly. Increased by 60% contacts with cultural outlets over base line year 2019. 2020 again showed much more social media presence. With the renewal of the VOCA grant and the Sonoma Media PR plan, we have begun to have a much better and ongoing media presence.**
4. To advocate for the rights of all children, regardless of gender, gender identity, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation and to strive toward the development of a culturally competent organization. **80% success as we have continued presence with Los Cien at the Black and Hispanic Chamber and some community forums. Board members and Bob Chapman are to be applauded with their work with Los Cien. Latino Community Services and the virtual Chamber of Commerce meetings. Several new names of potentials volunteers have been generated. We had several articles in the local newsletter and online media for both La Prensa, SUN and LaVoz newspapers/magazines. It is planned that the Sonoma Media Campaign will enhance this effort and generate new outreach opportunities.**
5. To collaborate with the Sonoma County Juvenile Court, the Department of Family Youth and Children Services, the Probation Department, the County School Systems, Public Health Services providers and other community services. **100% attendance at required meetings with Judges, Social Services, Probation and to develop MOU with the Courts. Most meetings were virtual but it seems we had a better attendance in most meetings and the parties came together.**

2021 Mission Statement in Measurable Objectives - Executive Goals

On the following pages, the CASA Program Mission Statement has been broken down into statements that allow CASA to measure outcomes in a quantifiable way.

Judicial Council standards and obligations are considered and drove the formation of the objectives and they are as follow:

- Management practices defined by the California Judicial Council, California CASA Association and National CASA Association
- Current grants we are in contract with
- Grants we have a strong probability of receiving
- Past and current board goals and founding member vision
- Probability of greatest outcomes with the resources we currently have (Staffing, funding, office space and support services)
- Local Juvenile Court goals and needs as defined by the welfare and institutions code, section 100, defining the practices, boundaries and obligations of this CASA program

These objectives are the goals and objectives that I have placed for myself and are supported by the staff. However, they should be considered when the Board of Directors develops annual Individual Plans of Actions (IPAs). Once these objectives are developed, they are broken down into activities plan. This plan is charted and appropriate duties are assigned/delegated (see attached). The executive goals will then orient, drive and oversee staff members that are assigned to the duties.

It is the objective of the Executive Director to have staff participate in the plan and activities for 2021. All staff has agreed to the 2021 mission and its objectives as defined in this plan. They have been instrumental in designing the plan and the activities chart.

2021 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

Mission & Purpose

The Sonoma County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program is committed to serving abused and neglected children coming before the Juvenile Court for rehabilitation and/or protective services.

The purpose of the CASA program is to humanize the complex child welfare system for the youth by providing a trained volunteer who will act as a consistent advocate, mentor and life connection.

In support of our mission, this organization is committed to:

- 1) Implementing and conducting all program policies and procedures as defined by the W&I Code, Section 100, and providing a recruitment and training program to educate volunteer CASAs on the duties and responsibilities of becoming an Officer of the Court.
 - a. All policy and procedures will be adhered to as structured by the local rules of court and W&I Code, Section 100.
 - b. CASA will recruit 100-150 potential names of volunteers for 2021 of which 60-70 will become sworn officer/volunteer interns.
 - c. CASA will assign 60-70 new cases while maintaining our current youths.
 - d. CASA will implement 3-4 trainings and 12 continuing education seminars.
 - e. CASA will strive to increase the number of volunteers who are men and people of color by 20% over the base year of 2019.
 - f. CASA will increase our case referrals by 25% and begin to receive referrals during family reunification.
- 2) **Appoint and provide supervision and case consultation to all advocates and the caseloads.**
 - a. CASA will provide 4 monthly case review sessions (day, evenings).
 - b. CASA staff will be available for consultation and needed 24/7.
 - c. Training members will include professionals from the community that best represent the topic. (Judges, Human Services, Office of Education). CASA will use the National CASA training manual as a reference and guide when developing the training program.
- 3) **Increase public awareness of CASA and CASA services.**
 - a. CASA staff and advocates with the support of board members will provide a minimum of 30-35 presentations to community groups, service clubs, conventions, and conferences.
 - b. CASA will prepare and have available to the public, literature on CASA services; why children need advocacy services and the plight of abused children as they enter the Juvenile Court, Human Services, and Juvenile Probation systems.
 - c. CASA will make quarterly electronic contacts with all local media outlets to maintain community awareness of CASA services and volunteer opportunities.
 - d. CASA will utilize Zoom outreach techniques to build a more electronic presents in the community as assisted by the board and supported by the CASA staff.
- 4) **Advocate for the legal rights of all children, regardless of race, religion, disability or sex.**

- a. CASA will maintain membership in both National and State CASA Associations and other local commissions and councils.

5) Strive toward the development of a culturally sensitive organization.

- a. Staff, board, and volunteers will reflect our community by maintaining a diverse CASA case load of children of color.
- b. Strive toward recruitment of people of color for the staff, Board of Directors, and committees.
- c. Openly recruit and extend our search efforts into the arenas for potential employment opportunities.
- d. CASA continues to monitor the percentage of children of color in the county dependency and delinquency system against the percentage of children on CASA caseloads. CASA will move toward the goal of maintaining a 15-20% child of color caseload.
- e. CASA will update our current PR list to include media, which reaches people of color.
- f. Materials, policies, and procedures will be reviewed by our volunteers and staff of color, prior to publishing, in order to assure sensitivity and respect.

6) Provide advocacy networking with Family Youth and Children Services, the Probation Department and the Juvenile Court Judge.

- a. Staff will meet as needed with the Juvenile Court Judge/Commissioner. Social Services and Probation Department meetings will be attended as needed.
- b. Staff will maintain an open-door policy with Judge, Human Services, and Probation Department to assure open and on-going communications.
- c. Standing Operational agreements have been developed with Juvenile Court, Department of Human Services, and Probation Departments.
- d. Agency or Case conferencing will be held as needed or as requested by CASA, Social Services, or Probation Department workers.
- e. CASA will include the Court, Probation, and our Advisory Council as well as other related organizations.

Goals for the Board of Directors

Please review mission statement & purpose below

The Sonoma County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program is committed to serving abused and neglected children coming before the Juvenile Court for rehabilitation and/or protective services.

The purpose of the CASA program is to humanize the complex child welfare system for the youth by providing a trained volunteer who will act as a consistent advocate, mentor and life connection.

Board Member Commitment Goals & Objectives

Please review board member commitment

Mission Statement & Purpose

The Sonoma County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program is committed to serving abused and neglected children coming before the Juvenile Court for rehabilitation and/or protective services.

The purpose of the CASA program is to humanize the complex child welfare system for the youth by providing a trained volunteer who will act as a consistent advocate, mentor and life connection.

To support CASA, Board Members will:

- 1) Make every effort to attend our Board meetings (at least 7 of 9). Board meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of the month (excluding July and August) lasting from 12:00-1:30ish. Often the Board meets at an office in Santa Rosa, but sometimes the meeting is at the CASA office at Los Guillicos on Pythian Road.
- 2) Volunteer a minimum of 4-6 hours per month by attending board or committee meetings, speaking to community groups about CASA, and providing fundraising support. (During our busiest fundraising months of March and June, the time commitment may increase.)
- 3) It is very important for CASA to have 100% giving on behalf of the Board of Directors. You can provide fundraising support in a variety of ways, appropriate to your means:
 - a. Help with our Hearts for Children fundraising dinner (and/or online auction) by finding sponsors for the event, inviting friends and associates to fill a table of 10, attending the event, and/or soliciting items for our live or silent auction at the event.
 - b. Give an annual financial contribution to the CASA program. This can be accomplished by designating your contribution through the United Way or contributing directly to CASA or via PayPal.
 - c. Add 10 new names to our mailing list each year for public relations and fund-raising purposes. By adding your friends, company, church group, professional colleagues, and community service group names to our event list and mailing list, you may have created a new donor or volunteer to the organization.
 - d. Seek out opportunities to speak to service groups, companies, churches, etc. to increase visibility for CASA, recruit volunteers for the organization and suggest funding opportunities.
 - e. Research your Corporate Foundation or Matching Funds. Many companies will donate to agencies with which their employees are involved. If your company has such a program, inquire about how to set up the contribution.

- 4) The Board of Directors assists in several events each year. As a Board Member, your attendance is very important at our events. Your attendance tells everyone we are a part of a team striving to represent children and their needs.
 - a. Hearts for Children Dinner (fundraiser) – It is very important to attend and help with the event in a variety of ways described above.
 - b. Holiday Open House – This event is usually in November from 4:30-6:30. The Board hosts the event and provides a few refreshments and beverages. CASAs, social workers, probation officers, Juvenile Court Justices and attorneys are invited to meet with the staff and board for a holiday potluck social.
 - c. Judges Panel – coinciding with Volunteer Recognition Month in April. Date to announced and sponsored by the agency. This is typically a staff driven event.

- 5) The Board has a number of committees, including Finance/Corporate Partners/Events, Communication with the public via marketing materials and public relations and community presentations. Membership is driven by the executive committee but supported by the full board. We ask that you serve on one of these committees.

- 6) To increase the visibility of CASA, Board Members can help by:
 - a. Seeking out opportunities to speak to groups about CASA.
 - b. Hosting an informal get together for friends and neighbors to talk about CASA.
 - c. Serving on the Public Relations Committee to help market the organization.
 - d. Helping to find professionals who are willing to donate some time by serving on one of our committees, managing our website, or helping develop our speaking presentations (power point and video).
 - e. Assisting with opportunities for media exposure.

- 7) Directors shall serve without compensation. Directors shall be allowed reasonable advancement or reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of their regular duties, if so approved. Directors may not be compensated for rendering services to the Corporation in any other capacity unless such compensation is reasonable and does not provide an excess benefit to the Director. Directors may not have indirect financial interests in the leases, business transactions, or professional services of the organization.

Annual Board Meeting Dates 2021 - Note dates

DATE	ACTIVITY/EVENT/MEETING/TASK
January 19 th	Annual Board planning session on the last Saturday. New Executive Committee takes position.
February 16 th	
March 16 th	
April 20 th	
May 22 nd	CASA Fundraising via an online auction
June 15 th	
July/August	BOARD RECESS Committees meet. Executive committee meets as needed Each one Reach One Summer Campaign = members are asked to make an assert effort over the summer to recruit at least one new board members. Please see new board members process in your handbook
September 21 st	Board convenes after summer recess. Annual ED evaluation by Executive committee begins. Board is asked to begin thinking about 2022... Officers for 2022 put on agenda for next meeting. Does the planning session date in January still work for everyone?
October 19 th	Board President advises Membership Committee to research and identify next year's nominees for Executive Officers. Annual ED evaluation by board president started/completed. Annual Board recommendations and membership efforts are reported
November 18 th	Open House Annual Board Membership Campaign: Members are asked to bring new potential Board Members and to applaud the efforts of staff, fellow Board Members, committees and volunteers. This event should be hosted by the Board and all Board Members are asked to provide refreshments.
December 21 st	Board luncheon. Presentation of new Officers. Prior to the luncheon the annual review of executive director is performed by the President of the board.
January?? TBD	Annual Board planning session on the last Saturday. New Executive Committee takes position

Board meetings are generally the third Tuesday of each month; occasionally we must change dates to accommodate schedules. Please attend all sessions and to acknowledge attendance or lack of attendance.

Board members are asked to keep CASA a priority in their schedules and to act as ambassadors of our program by adding names to our mailing list and referring volunteers to become child advocates. A recommended guide-line is to prepare for 4 to 6 hours a month in committee and Board work.

Please assist the Secretary of the Board by always reading your minutes, prepare all reports in writing, mark your calendars for all dates and call staff and fellow Board members when you have questions.

Communications Committee

Staff and Communications Committee Responsibility

Purpose: To bring CASA into the year 2021 with better community recognition and awareness of agency services and the volunteer opportunities within.

- **ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS = CASA Feedback**

Staff will produce a minimum of two newsletters over the calendar year. Spring-Summer, Fall-Winter called, "CASA Feedback".

- **Social Media = Constant Contact, Facebook**

CASA staff to communicate with our volunteers and emailing list by sending Facebook and contact electronic mailing as needed but no less than quarterly.

- **Promote Inter-Agency Communications with CASA volunteers**

CASA staff will maintain communication with volunteers by sending two email memos monthly to remind volunteers on news, events, changes, continuing education, and recognition.

- **SPEAKERS PANEL AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Over the 2021 year the staff will work with CASA volunteers to target social and community groups such as churches, community fairs, social groups, etc. CASA will focus on Chamber Mixers and other professional groups also.

- **RECRUITMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Review and update application materials and PR Packets for training and agency use.

Place CASA on mailing lists of appropriate organizations.

Update PR mailing list used to notice press of upcoming training sessions.

Finance & Development Committee

Staff & Board of Directors Responsibility

Fund Development Committee Responsibility

Purpose: The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program will create a link between the individual, corporate, foundations, and service club contributors to support the financial goals of the agency.

- Create a Fund Development membership which will consist of the staff, other committee members and Board of Directors. Length of membership is three years, with option of another three-year term.
- Creating a donation direct mail campaign referred to as "Friends of CASA" (Individual Donors) in November and August (optional).
- Creating a committee that bridges Corporate, Churches and Service Club Contributors to the CASA program, referred to as "Partners" (Corporate Donors may also be known as sponsors to events).
- Implement a fund-raising event. HEARTS FOR CHILDREN.
- Create a structure for recognizing the contributor, community, and the impact of funds on abused and neglected children, thank you letters, personal calls from the Executive Director, personalize ways of thanking donors beyond the corporate thank you letter, invitation to the annual dinner and open houses.

CASA 2021 Board Membership and Recruitment Committee

Committee's membership is the executive committee and sponsoring board member

Purpose: to support current members and recommend priorities for the recruitment of new board members. Special attention will be given when recruiting new members to specific skills or attributes that will help the agency fulfill its mission and meet strategic goals.

The Board Membership and Recruitment Committee members, while working with other board members as well as the Executive Director, will identify, interview and screen potential members in step with the membership recruitment policies (see attached). This committee, in conjunction with the Executive Director, will also provide orientation and mentorship to all new members.

2021 Board Recruitment Priorities

- 1) Continue to evaluate prospective board members on a case by case basis, who proactively approach CASA and are interested in joining the Board.
- 2) Target new members to join the Board within one or more the following attributes: Attributes are also listed on the monthly board agenda to remind membership of this ongoing effort to replenish the board membership.
 - a. As targeting new members, the membership committee and the board will continue to strive to increase the racial, gender and geographic diversity of the board membership.
- 3) Recruit community members who have significant connections to the community and will assist with outreach and recruitment of potential CASA volunteers.
- 4) Recruit members who bring knowledge of the community and can assist the agency in increasing the awareness of the CASA program in Sonoma County.
- 5) To recruit members who hold high the philosophy of the agency's mission to find provide safe and significant mentoring relationships for children of the child welfare system. (see attached mission statement)
- 6) Measurable Outcomes:
 - a. To increase/maintain the board membership to 12 members by June of 2021.
 - b. To recruit new and to empower resigning board members that so desire to become involved in the committees of the board of directors as defined by the committee structure.

Staff Program Goals

Volunteer Recruitment, Training, Orientation and Training

Who is responsible: Executive Director, Training Coordinator, Faculty and others as appointed.

Purpose: To provide a quality-oriented training to the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) as outlined in the W&I Code Section 100 for CASA programs including National and State standards for CASA program management.

- 1) 2021 CASA Training for Child Advocates
 - a. Outcome: CASA will provide 3-4 trainings over the 2021 calendar year that will graduate 50-60 volunteers.
 - i. WINTER: See calendar
 - ii. SPRING:
 - iii. SUMMER:
 - iv. FALL: (optional) This last fall we combined the fall training into winter due to COVID

- 2) Develop Continuing Education Training for Child Advocates: Training to meet the continuing education units (12 hours) as defined by the State and National CASA Volunteer Management Practices will include:
 - a. CASA and Working with reunification families
 - b. CASA and Life Long Connection Project
 - c. CASA Connection and Transitional Teens
 - d. CASA and Educational Advocacy
 - e. CASA and Youth with at Risk Behaviors
 - f. Early assignment cases
 - g. Data collection via Optima data base

- 3) Office Advocate's recruitment and training
 - a. Agency Overview/Staffing/Roles
 - b. Phone Skills/CASA Contacts/Correspondence/Files
 - c. Policy and Procedures
 - d. Communication skills and referrals
 - e. Intakes/referrals/hearing calendar
 - f. Field Advocate needs/ relaying case data
 - g. Confidentiality
 - h. Events/training, education, etc
 - i. Diversification Policy

Measure: Participants feedback and evaluation from monthly log summaries.

- 4) Staff Case Review: To recruit, oversee and supervise CASA volunteer advocates promoting better clinical and legal outcomes for abused and neglected children.
- a. Goals for 2021 will include the implementation of 4 monthly case review sessions on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month (AM/PM).
 - b. Staff and case review team will conduct a session on court report writing/case review structure at two annual training sessions for new CASAs.
 - c. The staff of CASA will prepare for and implement 4 case review sessions monthly. These reviews will be split into 2 sessions including an afternoon and evening session in order to best meet volunteer schedules, 12:00-2:00 and 5:00-7:30 the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at the CASA office. These sessions include facilitators from the legal, therapeutic and staff population. The Executive Director supervises all case review activities and appoints the members of this committee. Staff implements the case reviews sessions with those team members assigned. Those members of this team shall understand that all case review members report directly to the Executive Director. Case review team members may be asked to attend program committee meetings when case review is a topic or agenda item. Case Review members may also be asked to serve as faculty members and community speakers when more expertise is needed.

Measure: Annual placement reviews with volunteers.

Advisors & Faculty Goals

Purpose: To work as consultants, as needed, with the Executive Director on Program evaluation and strategy to meet the overall mission of the organization as defined by W&I Code 100 and in accordance with the local and state rules of court. Enhanced importance in diversity outreach and recruitment of diversity training and members of color.

Especially noteworthy is the importance to cultivate the relations we have with the advisors and faculty members due to distant learning and Zoom training.

- 1) Over the 2021 calendar year the advisors and faculty will assist and provide consultation and advice to the Executive Director, as requested, on Program/case related issues. The Executive Director creates agendas, training schedule and advises program committee of agency needs, areas of strengths, weaknesses and concerns. Program committee members are not to become involved in the daily operations of the agency but rather to support the Executive Director in the advice and support she may need in the implementation of agency policies and procedures.
- 2) The Advisors and Faculty members are often involved in Case Review and training duties, these committees overlap often. Over the 2021 year the Program Committee will be asked to assist the Speaker's panel as developed by the Executive Director
- 3) Advisors and Faculty members are Child Welfare Experts and Faculty members holding appropriate credentials or experience deemed needed by the Executive Director for the overall effectiveness of the agency.
- 4) Over the 2021 calendar year meetings will be held as needed to look at agency needs, issues and to review policies as needed. These meetings will possibly include consultants from Probation, Social Services, Juvenile Court, and faculty members, if needed.
 - a. Topics that may be covered:
 - Judicial Council Standards/National Standards;
 - 602, CJA, and 300 cases; how are we doing?
 - Case review process;
 - Mentoring - Pre and Post care issues;
 - Collaborative; - How are they working?

Measure: Participant feedback on written evaluations from both trainees and presenters.