



## CASA Programs in California: Annual Report 2009

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a trained volunteer who is appointed by a judge, commissioner, referee, or other bench officer to provide one-on-one advocacy for a child who is under the jurisdiction of the courts owing to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. These volunteers spend time with children, ensure that court-ordered services are provided, attend court hearings for children to which they are assigned, and provide child-focused recommendations to the court based on the best interest of the children they serve.

CASA programs were first implemented in 1977 in the state of Washington; the following year, the first CASA program in California began providing services to children. In 1988, legislation amended California's Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 100 et seq., to require the Judicial Council to establish guidelines for local CASA programs and a CASA grant program. As a result, the council adopted rule 5.655 of the California Rules of Court, which contains mandated requirements for CASA programs. The council works closely with the California CASA Association to ensure that programs are in compliance with both rule 5.655 and National CASA Association standards. The council also established the CASA grant program to ensure funding for a paid administrator for each local CASA program serving the superior courts.

CASA programs in California vary by size, number of children served, and services offered. In 2009, 40 local CASA programs provided services in 43 of California's 58 counties. One tribal CASA program served four tribal courts<sup>1</sup> and two new programs were developing.

### Program Highlights

The findings reported here are from the California respondents to the 2009 Local Program Survey administered by the National CASA Association.

- **One hundred percent** of the CASA programs in California responded to the survey ( $n = 41$ ).
- About **6,560 volunteers** served children in 2009, an 8 percent increase from 2008.
- Approximately **9,365 children** were served by CASA volunteers in 2009, a 5.5 percent increase from 2008 and a 22 percent increase since 2006.
- In 2009, statewide total program revenue decreased about 5 percent to **\$19,774,000**.
- In 2009, the median cost per child was approximately **\$2,400**.<sup>1</sup>
- Programs statewide reported about **425,420 donated hours** in service to California's children.<sup>2</sup> Donated volunteer hours represent a monetary value of about **\$9,903,840**.<sup>3</sup>

Table 1 shows trends in CASA program services and revenue in California over four years. CASA services have steadily increased during this period, even as revenue has fluctuated. Although the total number of children in foster care has decreased statewide since 2006,<sup>4</sup> the numbers of CASA volunteers and children served have continued to increase over the same period by more than 20 percent. The number of cases closed by CASA programs has also increased since 2006. Meanwhile, the percentage of cases closed with children placed in a permanent home (reunification, adoption, or guardianship) has remained constant.

Table 1. Four-year annual trends for active volunteers, children served, CASA cases closed, and total statewide revenue.

| Trend Type               | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   | 2009   | Change Since 2006 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------------|
| <b>CASA Volunteers</b>   |        |        |        |        |                   |
| Total                    | 5,099  | 5,361  | 6,068  | 6,559  | 29%               |
| New                      | 1,789  | 1,793  | 2,093  | 2,485  | 39%               |
| <b>Children Served</b>   |        |        |        |        |                   |
| Total                    | 7,698  | 8,091  | 8,874  | 9,364  | 22%               |
| New                      | 3,273  | 3,404  | 3,613  | 3,733  | 14%               |
| <b>Closed Cases</b>      |        |        |        |        |                   |
| Total                    | 2,528  | 2,612  | 2,746  | 2,994  | 18%               |
| % closed to permanency   | 54%    | 55%    | 56%    | 55%    | 1%                |
| <b>Statewide Revenue</b> |        |        |        |        |                   |
| Total (in millions)      | \$18.3 | \$18.9 | \$20.8 | \$19.8 | 8%                |

## CASA Volunteers

### Number of Volunteers

The number of CASA advocates in California increased by more than 8 percent in 2009, with about 6,560 volunteers serving approximately 9,365 children. California programs trained 2,485 new volunteers in 2009 who were sworn in by California courts. This figure represents an increase of almost 19 percent from the prior year (2,093).

CASA programs reported an overall median of 129 volunteers actively serving children. The median number of volunteers increased across all regions, with a median 57 volunteers among Northern/Central programs, 141 volunteers among Bay Area/North Coastal programs, and 218 volunteers among Southern programs.<sup>5</sup> Many programs in the Northern/Central Region are located in small rural counties with low populations and, therefore, lower dependency populations than the other regions. Conversely, Southern California accounts for more than half the state's dependency population.

CASA volunteers statewide donated a total of 425,240 hours to serve children in 2009, a slight decrease from 2008. Volunteers contributed a median of 66 hours in 2009.

## Volunteer Demographics

CASA programs reported more that than half of all CASA volunteers were working either full time (44 percent) or part time (12 percent.) About 18 percent of CASA volunteers were retired, while the remaining volunteers were either unemployed (10 percent) or students (3 percent), or the employment status was not known (13 percent). CASA volunteers continued to be primarily female (81 percent), non-Hispanic white (70 percent), and more than 40 years old (71 percent.) For more details on the demographics of volunteers in comparison to the children they serve, see Table 3.

## Children Served

### Number Served

Approximately 9,365 children were served by volunteers throughout 2009. This figure represents a 5.5 percent increase in the total number of children served by volunteers. The median number of children served by a CASA program increased about 4 percent to 166 children in 2009. Meanwhile, CASA programs served 3,733 new children in 2009, an increase of 3 percent.

Point-in-time data collected by the Administrative Office of the Courts found that CASA programs served more than 9 percent of the children in California’s dependency system in March 2010. One-fourth of all programs served fewer than 8 percent of their county’s dependency system, while one-fourth served more than 49 percent.

CASA programs in California typically follow a “one child, one advocate” program model. However, volunteers may choose to serve more than one child at a time or to serve a sibling group. As in the previous year, the median number of children served by one volunteer in 2009 was 1.5.

### Case Types Served

In addition to child abuse and neglect cases, 20 programs served children in other types of cases: 2 programs served children in divorce custody cases, 1 program served probate/guardianship cases, and 19 programs served delinquency cases. Many CASA advocates follow their assigned children if the case is transferred from dependency court to delinquency court.

### Outcomes at Case Closure

CASA programs reported closing 2,994 cases in 2009, nine percent more than in the previous year (2,746). Table 2 describes the most common outcomes for children at CASA program closure or court case closure in 2009. The percentage of CASA cases that closed due to emancipation increased from 13 percent in 2008 to 16 percent in 2009. More than half of case closures (55 percent) resulted in children placed in a permanent home through reunification, adoption, or guardianship.

Table 2. Outcomes at CASA case closure in 2009 (n=2,994).

| Outcome at CASA case closure          | Children Whose Cases Closed |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Reunification                         | 34%                         |
| Adoption                              | 14%                         |
| Child aged out of system/emancipation | 16%                         |
| Guardianship                          | 7%                          |
| Relative foster care                  | 3%                          |
| Nonrelative foster care               | 3%                          |
| Transferred out of county or state    | 4%                          |
| Removed from docket                   | 6%                          |
| Delinquency                           | 2%                          |
| Other                                 | 9%                          |

## Children’s Demographics

In 2009, as reported by the survey, about 67 percent of children served by volunteers were children of color, predominantly Hispanic/Latino (36 percent) and Black/African American (16 percent). The percentage of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino children served was stable relative to that of previous years. As seen in Table 3, racial/ethnic disparities between staff, volunteers, and children continue—particularly for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino children.

Table 3. Percentage of staff, volunteers, children served, and California children in foster care in each gender and racial/ethnic group in 2009. Figures include about 110 children served by CASA program staff.

| Demographics            | Staff      | Volunteer    | Children Served | Children in Foster Care <sup>5</sup> |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>           |            |              |                 |                                      |
| Female                  | 87%        | 81%          | 51%             | 50%                                  |
| Male                    | 13%        | 19%          | 49%             | 50%                                  |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>   |            |              |                 |                                      |
| Hispanic/Latino         | 18%        | 11%          | 36%             | 45%                                  |
| Black/African American  | 6%         | 5%           | 16%             | 27%                                  |
| White (non-Hispanic)    | 67%        | 70%          | 33%             | 24%                                  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander  | 3%         | 4%           | 2%              | 3%                                   |
| Native American         | 2%         | 1%           | 2%              | 1%                                   |
| Multiracial             | 3%         | 3%           | 7%              | N/A                                  |
| Other/Unknown           | 1%         | 6%           | 4%              | N/A                                  |
| <b>Statewide Totals</b> | <b>339</b> | <b>6,559</b> | <b>9,474</b>    | <b>59,585</b>                        |

Available point-in-time child welfare data for California as of January 1, 2010, provides a rough comparison to the data on CASA children served (see Table 3).<sup>5</sup> These data suggest that the race/ethnicity of CASA children served in 2009 did not reflect the general child welfare population in that Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino children, in particular, were underrepresented and white (non-Hispanic) children were overrepresented. At the same time, the data reported by programs in the National CASA Association’s *Annual Survey* also included more than 1,090 children (11 percent) who could not be compared with state child welfare data because of their vague categorization as either “Multiracial,” “Other,” or “Unknown.”<sup>6</sup>

Point-in-time data collected by the Administrative Office of the Courts found that CASA programs served a higher proportion of adolescents than the state’s child welfare population (Table 4). Two-thirds of children served by CASA programs were more than 10 years old compared to only 47 percent of the total children in California’s foster care system.<sup>5</sup>

Table 4. Age of children served (n = 5,358) compared to children in foster care (n = 59,585).

| Age           | Children Served | Children in Foster Care |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Birth–5 years | 14%             | 32%                     |
| 6–10 years    | 20%             | 21%                     |
| 11–15 years   | 34%             | 27%                     |
| 16–17 years   | 19%             | 15%                     |
| 18+ years     | 13%             | 5%                      |

## CASA Staff

### Number of Positions

During 2009, CASA programs reported a median of 4.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions and an FTE range of 0.7 to 30 positions total. The average program was staffed by a full-time executive director and at least one full-time volunteer coordinator. The range of volunteer coordinators per program was 0 to 17 FTE positions. In 2009, the staff-to-volunteer ratio ranged from 1 to 55, with a median of 30 volunteers per staff member.

Most programs (61 percent) reported a change in the number of staff positions in 2009. More programs lost staff positions (14 programs) than increased staff (11 programs) for the first time in five years. In 2009, 14 programs reduced staff capacity, compared to 11 programs in 2008 and only 4 programs in 2007.

### Executive Director Position

The median executive director’s salary in 2009, when adjusted for full-time equivalent (FTE) status, was \$67,000 annually. The median salary in the Southern and Bay Area/North Coastal regions remained relatively constant in 2009. However, the median salary in the Northern/Central region decreased by 4.3 percent. Fewer programs reported providing benefits to executive directors in 2009, with seven programs providing no benefits.

### Volunteer Coordinator Position

In 2009, 90 percent of programs had a volunteer coordinator position. Statewide, the volunteer coordinator’s median FTE salary was \$36,400. The median salary of volunteer coordinators statewide and by region remained relatively constant compared to that of the previous year. However, the number of programs offering benefits to volunteer coordinators in 2009 decreased overall, with 24 percent of programs not providing no benefit package to volunteer coordinators.

Table 5. Annual 2009 median salary and benefits of executive directors and volunteer coordinators statewide and by region.

| Salary/<br>Benefit | Bay Area/North Coastal<br>(n = 14) |                          | Northern/Central<br>(n = 17) |                          | Southern<br>(n = 10)  |                          | All programs<br>(n = 41) |                          |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                    | Executive<br>Director              | Volunteer<br>Coordinator | Executive<br>Director        | Volunteer<br>Coordinator | Executive<br>Director | Volunteer<br>Coordinator | Executive<br>Director    | Volunteer<br>Coordinator |
| Median salary      | \$75,425                           | \$41,950                 | \$56,000                     | \$35,360                 | \$68,750              | \$38,500                 | <b>\$67,000</b>          | <b>\$36,400</b>          |
| Health             | 11                                 | 11                       | 13                           | 10                       | 9                     | 9                        | <b>33</b>                | <b>30</b>                |
| Dental             | 10                                 | 9                        | 8                            | 7                        | 5                     | 4                        | <b>23</b>                | <b>20</b>                |
| Retirement         | 6                                  | 5                        | 3                            | 2                        | 1                     | 0                        | <b>10</b>                | <b>7</b>                 |
| Other              | 3                                  | 3                        | 4                            | 4                        | 2                     | 2                        | <b>9</b>                 | <b>9</b>                 |
| None               | 2                                  | 2                        | 4                            | 7                        | 1                     | 1                        | <b>7</b>                 | <b>10</b>                |

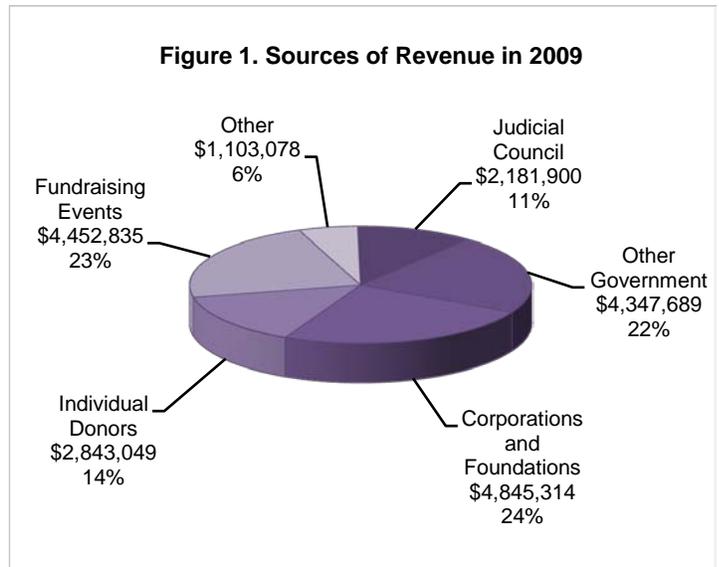
## Program Resources

### Program Revenue

CASA programs receive funding from a mixture of public and private sources. Respondents to the local program survey for calendar year 2009 were asked to report program revenue for their most recent fiscal year, typically July 2008–June 2009.

In 2009, the total revenue for all programs statewide (\$19,773,865) was about 5 percent lower than in 2008. Sixteen CASA programs reported decreased revenue in 2009, with a median decrease in revenue of 15 percent. Meanwhile, about half of all responding CASA programs (n = 24) reported revenue increases from 2008, with a median increase of 10 percent.

CASA programs in California are diverse in size and local economy. In 2009, 11 programs reported revenues less than \$150,000 and 9 programs reported revenues more than \$650,000. The median program revenue was \$347,600, slightly higher than that of the prior year (\$340,833).<sup>7</sup> Figure 1 details the major revenue sources in 2009; the total amount contributed by these five major sources represents about 94 percent of total program funding (\$18,670,787), and “other” sources account for the rest.



### Public Funding Sources

In 2009, public funding sources accounted for about 33 percent of the total funding for California’s CASA programs. Statewide revenue from public sources totaled about \$6.5 million, an 8 percent increase from the prior year (about \$6 million.)

The California Judicial Council grant remained the largest single source of public funding. Forty CASA programs received more than \$2.1 million from the Judicial Council in 2009, accounting for 11 percent of the total statewide revenue. Federal funding grew significantly by more than 43 percent in 2009 to become the second largest source of CASA funding. Twenty-seven CASA programs received almost \$1.3 million in federal funding in 2009. This increase was due in part to increases in National CASA Association funding.

While state and federal funding remained strong, county funding for CASA programs weakened in 2009, decreasing by 9 percent from the previous year. Seventeen CASA programs received about \$1.05 million from local counties. Local courts, however, continued to be a strong source of public funding for their CASA programs. Local courts provided almost \$1 million to 16 CASA programs in 2009, a 5 percent increase from the previous year.

### Private Funding Sources

In 2009, foundation grants, corporate contributions, individual donors, and fundraising events accounted for 61 percent of the total statewide funding for CASA programs. Statewide revenue from these primary private sources totaled about \$12.1 million, a decrease of almost 11 percent from the prior year (about \$13.6 million).

The most common sources of private funding—foundations, fundraising events, and individual donors—all decreased in 2009. CASA funding from foundations and fundraising events suffered the most. Total statewide funding from foundations decreased by 16 percent to about \$3.5 million. The total revenue reported from fundraisers decreased 15 percent to about \$4.4 million. Individual donor contributions also decreased from the previous year (5 percent) to about \$2.8 million.

Corporate contributions were the only private funding source to grow in 2009, with total funding increasing 14 percent. However, corporate contributions provide less than 7 percent of revenue for CASA programs statewide (less than \$1.3 million).

Many CASA programs (66 percent) also reported receiving in-kind donations in 2009. Examples of these donations include bookkeeping services, furniture, office supplies, and office space donated by the local court or county. Although these donations do not produce program revenue, they are an important resource for programs. Total in-kind donations increased statewide by almost 14 percent in 2009.

### Cost per Child

In 2009, the median cost per year to provide CASA services to a child in foster care remained approximately \$2,400 statewide. However, programs serving more than 200 children annually ( $n = 15$ ) provided CASA services at a lower median rate of \$2,069.

Table 6. Detail of funding sources for 2009.

| Funding Source           | Receiving Programs (n=41) | Median Funding   | Total Aggregate Funding | Total Statewide Funding |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Public</b>            |                           |                  |                         |                         |
| State: Judicial Council  | 40                        | \$56,850         | \$2,181,900             | 11%                     |
| State: Other*            | 13                        | N/A              | \$811,220               | 4%                      |
| Court                    | 16                        | \$53,250         | \$998,749               | 5%                      |
| County                   | 17                        | \$52,604         | \$1,067,880             | 5%                      |
| City                     | 7                         | \$10,228         | \$173,395               | 1%                      |
| Federal **               | 27                        | \$35,000         | \$1,296,445             | 7%                      |
| <b>Private</b>           |                           |                  |                         |                         |
| Foundation grants        | 29                        | \$97,464         | \$3,557,928             | 18%                     |
| Corporations             | 26                        | \$28,343         | \$1,287,386             | <7%                     |
| Individual donors        | 33                        | \$28,332         | \$2,843,049             | 14%                     |
| United Way               | 13                        | \$8,873          | \$241,391               | 1%                      |
| Community service        | 18                        | \$8,200          | \$237,787               | 1%                      |
| Kappa Alpha Theta        | 8                         | \$2,895          | \$41,392                | <1%                     |
| Church donations         | 9                         | \$2,000          | \$31,377                | <1%                     |
| <b>Fundraising</b>       |                           |                  |                         |                         |
| Fundraising events       | 35                        | \$62,975         | \$4,452,835             | 23%                     |
| Product sales            | 5                         | \$4,000          | \$90,254                | <1%                     |
| Other sources            | 18                        | \$14,384         | \$460,877               | 2%                      |
| <b>Statewide revenue</b> |                           | <b>\$347,600</b> | <b>\$19,773,865</b>     |                         |
| In-kind donations        | 27                        | \$50,000         | \$2,943,351             | N/A                     |

\*Details for non-Judicial Council funding received from the state are not reported.

\*\*Federal sources include the National CASA Association, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds, and title IV-E.

<sup>1</sup> Cost per child is calculated by dividing the total annual expenses by the total number of children served annually.

<sup>2</sup> The number of volunteer hours should be viewed cautiously because there is no standardized method for collecting such data.

<sup>3</sup> Total number of hours multiplied by \$23.29 (Independent Sector's California 2008 rate for the value of a volunteer hour).

<sup>4</sup> Data about children in foster care in California was taken from the Child Welfare Dynamic Report System website, a California Department of Social Services/University of California, Berkeley collaboration. Needell, B., et al. (2010). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved 11/18/2010, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: <[http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare)>

<sup>5</sup> Program regions are aligned with the California Administrative Office of the Courts' designated regions (see Appendix 2).

<sup>6</sup> The Administrative Office of the Courts' report *Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and the Courts: An Assessment* (2008) executed a detailed multi-categorical methodology and found that when multiracial Black/African American children are included with children identified solely as Black/African American, the disparity of CASA service for Black/African American children lessened significantly. However, the study continued to find that Hispanic/Latino children were underserved by CASA.

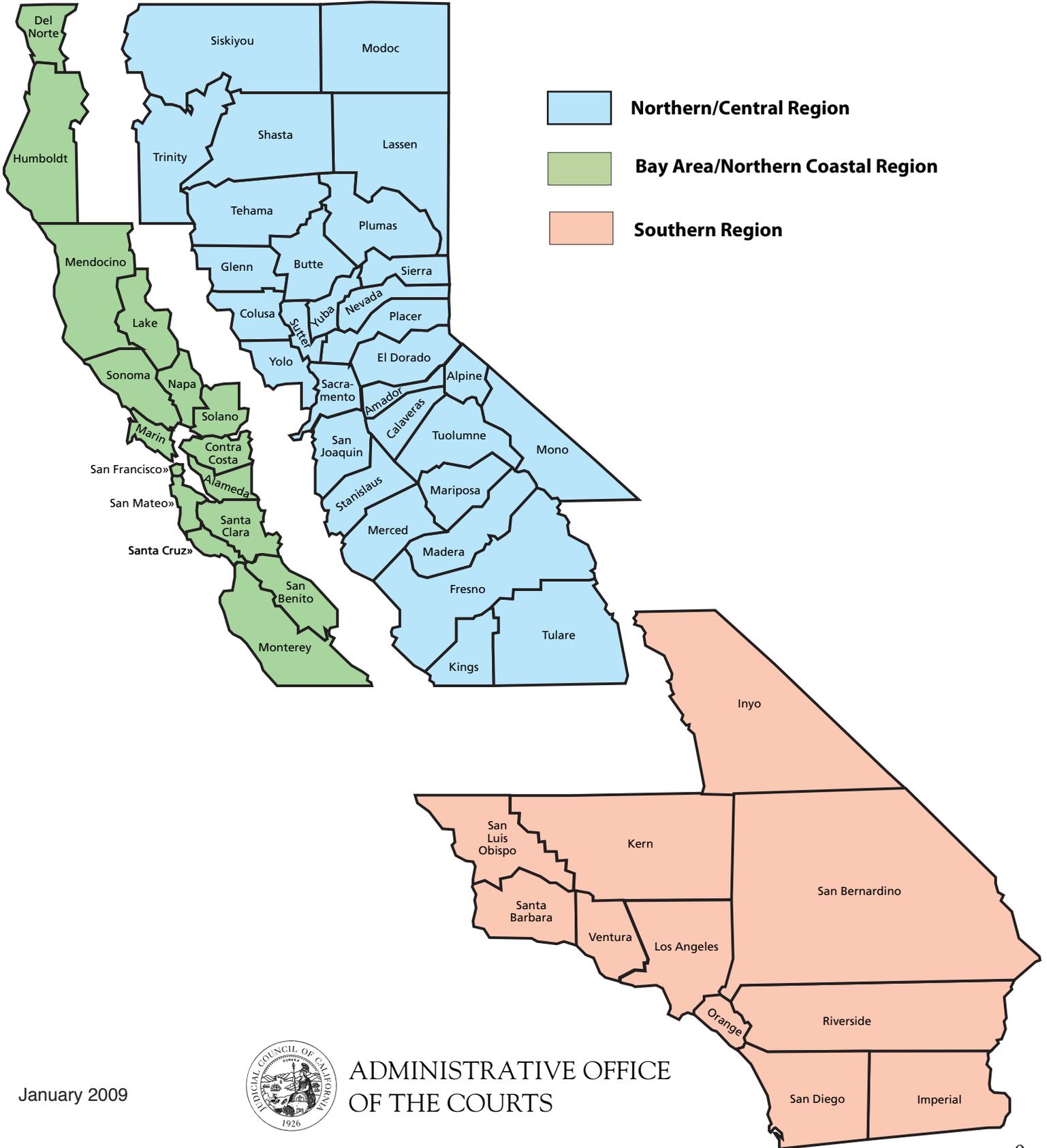
<sup>7</sup> Comparison with prior year data reflects corrected data and may not match data in the *California CASA Programs 2008 Report*.

## Appendix 1

### Program respondents included in data set in 2009 (n = 41)

| County/Tribal Court         | Program Name   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Alameda</b>              | Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Alameda County CASA Program  |
| <b>Amador</b>               | Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency, Amador County CASA Program  |
| <b>Butte/Glenn</b>          | Northern Valley Catholic Social Service, Inc., CASA of Butte and Glenn Counties                                    |
| <b>Contra Costa</b>         | CASA of Contra Costa County  |
| <b>Del Norte</b>            | CASA of Del Norte  |
| <b>El Dorado</b>            | CASA El Dorado   |
| <b>Fresno/Madera</b>        | CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties   |
| <b>Humboldt</b>             | CASA of Humboldt County  |
| <b>Imperial</b>             | CASA of Imperial County  |
| <b>Kern</b>                 | CASA of Kern County  |
| <b>Lassen</b>               | Lassen Family Services Inc., Lassen County CASA  |
| <b>Los Angeles</b>          | CASA of Los Angeles  |
| <b>Marin</b>                | Marin Advocates for Children, Marin CASA Program   |
| <b>Mariposa</b>             | CASA of Mariposa County  |
| <b>Mendocino</b>            | CASA of Mendocino County   |
| <b>Modoc</b>                | T.E.A.C.H., Modoc CASA Program   |
| <b>Monterey/San Benito</b>  | CASA of Monterey County/San Benito County  |
| <b>Napa</b>                 | Napa CASA, A Voice for Children  |
| <b>Nevada</b>               | Child Advocates of Nevada County, CASA of Nevada County  |
| <b>Orange</b>               | CASA of Orange County, Inc.  |
| <b>Northern Intertribal</b> | Northern California Intertribal CASA Program (Hoopa Valley, Karuk, Smith River Rancheria, and Yurok Tribal Courts) |
| <b>Placer</b>               | Child Advocates of Placer County, CASA of Placer County  |
| <b>Plumas</b>               | Plumas Crisis Intervention Resource Center, Plumas CASA  |
| <b>Riverside</b>            | CASA for Riverside County, Inc.  |
| <b>Sacramento</b>           | Sacramento CASA Program, Inc.  |
| <b>San Bernardino</b>       | Child Advocates of San Bernardino County   |
| <b>San Diego</b>            | Voices for Children, Inc. (San Diego CASA)   |
| <b>San Francisco</b>        | The San Francisco CASA Program   |
| <b>San Joaquin</b>          | Child Abuse Prevention Council of San Joaquin County, CASA of San Joaquin County                                   |
| <b>San Luis Obispo</b>      | CASA of San Luis Obispo, Inc.  |
| <b>San Mateo</b>            | CASA of San Mateo County   |
| <b>Santa Barbara</b>        | CASA of Santa Barbara County   |
| <b>Santa Clara</b>          | Child Advocates of Silicon Valley  |
| <b>Santa Cruz</b>           | CASA of Santa Cruz County  |
| <b>Siskiyou</b>             | CASA of Siskiyou County  |
| <b>Solano</b>               | CASA of Solano County  |
| <b>Sonoma</b>               | CASA of Sonoma County  |
| <b>Stanislaus</b>           | CASA of Stanislaus County  |
| <b>Tulare</b>               | CASA of Tulare County  |
| <b>Ventura</b>              | Interface Children & Family Services, CASA of Ventura County   |
| <b>Yolo</b>                 | Yolo County CASA   |

# Administrative Office of the Courts Regional Map



## Methodology

This report summarizes data submitted by all of California's 41 local CASA programs as part of the National CASA Association 2009 annual survey; the data discussed represents all 41 programs that responded to the survey, unless otherwise noted. All tables and charts note the number of respondents ( $n = xx$ ) for the data represented. The data in this report may vary from the data submitted to National CASA because of follow-up efforts regarding erroneous or missing data; in these instances, data errors were largely corrected, and the corrected data is reflected in this report.

## Production of This Report

Lora Collier  
*Court Services Analyst*

Chris Wu  
*Supervising Attorney*

Don Will  
*Manager*

Jens Zeschky  
*Administrative Coordinator*

If you have questions about this report, please contact Lora Collier at [lora.collier@jud.ca.gov](mailto:lora.collier@jud.ca.gov)



Administrative Office of the Courts  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94102  
E-mail: [cfcc@jud.ca.gov](mailto:cfcc@jud.ca.gov)

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