

Tips for Starting Conversations with Your Local CASA Program

While every CASA program in California operates within the guidelines prescribed by the California Welfare and Institution Code, the California Rules of Court, and the National CASA Standards, local programs also create local policies and enter into operating agreements with the local Superior Court to meet the needs the communities they serve. To learn more about your local CASA program, we encourage you to start a conversation with your local program director. Below are ideas for questions you can ask to get the conversation started.

Referrals/Matching

- What does your referral process entail? Can social workers and attorneys make a referral? How?
- How long does it take for a child to be matched with a CASA once the child is referred?
- If the referring party believes that a child would be better able to develop a rapport with someone of a certain gender, cultural knowledge, language skills, or other characteristics is there a way that can be communicated during the referral process?
- What does your program consider when making matches? Is there information that professional partners or judicial officers can provide during the referral process to assist the CASA program in making high-quality matches?

Recruitment and training

- How do you recruit volunteers? Is there anything that professional partners or judicial officers can do to assist with finding excellent volunteers?
- What does the programs pre-service training cover?
- What types of in-service (continuing education) training are volunteers provided? Are there opportunities for social workers and attorneys to help CASAs understand their roles?

CASA program and CASA supervision

- What agreements (formal or informal) exist between the court and the CASA program? Between the county and the CASA program? Between other partners and the CASA program?
- How many paid employees does the local CASA program have?
- How are volunteers supervised? Are all volunteers supervised directly by staff?
- To whom should professional partners or judicial officers direct their questions or concerns about the CASA program? About specific cases or volunteers?
- Are CASA program staff members available to make presentations about the program and the role of CASA volunteers?
- Are CASA program staff members available to participate on committees or task forces?

Funding

- How is the local CASA program funded?
- Where can partners and members of the public find information about the local program's financial position?