



# Judicial Council of California

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## REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

*Item No.: 23-105*

For business meeting on: July 20-21, 2023

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**Title**

Report to the Legislature: FY 2022-23  
Funding for California Court Appointed  
Special Advocate Association

**Submitted by**

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**Agenda Item Type**

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### Executive Summary

On or before July 1, 2023, staff for the Judicial Council's Center for Families, Children & the Courts submitted to the Legislature *Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year One*, in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Budget Act of 2022.

### Relevant Previous Council Action

At its meeting on September 20, 2022, the Judicial Council approved the allocation of \$20 million in Court Appointed Special Advocate program grant funding, included in the Budget Act of 2022, to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association for fiscal year (FY) 2022–23.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., *Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2022–23 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (Sep. 2, 2022), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11204252&GUID=EAE945CB-DE38-46FB-B38D-9AA373B27A29>.

## **Analysis/Rationale**

The Budget Act of 2022 (Sen. Bill 154)<sup>2</sup> specifies how \$60 million in one-time Judicial Council CASA grant funding is to be allocated to the California CASA Association for support of CASA programs across the state. Specifically, the act states: “\$48,000,000 shall be allocated to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association to provide funding to the local court-appointed special advocate (CASA) programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing ...[and] [¶] ... \$12,000,000 shall be allocated to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association to be used statewide for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of statewide training curriculum, collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the report to the Legislature, and other uses to expand court-appointed special advocate (CASA) services in the state.”

A total of \$60 million one-time General Fund is appropriated for the California CASA Association for support of local CASA programs, including \$20 million in FY 2022–23, \$20 million in FY 2023–24, and \$20 million in FY 2024–25. The appropriation specifies that for FY 2022–23, “\$16 million shall be allocated ... to provide funding to the local [CASA] programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing” and “\$4,000,000 shall be allocated to the California [CASA] Association to be used statewide for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of statewide training curriculum, collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the report to the Legislature, and other uses to expand [CASA] services in the state,” and that “[t]he Judicial Council shall annually report to the Legislature on the court-appointed special advocate (CASA) program implementation and outcomes. The initial report shall be due on July 1, 2023, and will describe funding allocations and program development.” (See Link A, provisions 31, 32, and 34.)

As required by the 2022 Budget Act, this legislative report describes funding allocations and program development for FY 2022–23.

## **Fiscal Impact and Policy Implications**

On January 10, 2023, Governor Newsom proposed eliminating the remaining \$40 million in funding for years two (2023-24) and three (2024-25), in an effort to achieve a balanced budget. As a result, California CASA and local CASA programs began adjusting their plans in preparation for the possibility of reduced funding. Subsequently, on May 12, 2023, the Governor’s May Revision included an adjustment to restore the funding for years two and three. While California CASA adjusted and retooled implementation plans in anticipation of the reduced funding, they are positioned to continue implementation efforts as planned.

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<sup>2</sup> SEC 4. Item 0250-101-0932 of Section 2.00 of the Budget Act of 2022, provisions 31–34.

## **Attachments and Links**

1. Attachment A: *Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year One*
2. Link A: SEC 4. Item 0250-101-0932 of section 2.00 of the Budget Act of 2022 (Assem. Bill 178), provisions 31–35,  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220AB178&firstNav=tracking](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB178&firstNav=tracking)

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July 1, 2023

# **Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year One**

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Fiscal Year 2022-23



Judicial Council of California

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## **Executive Summary**

Pursuant to The State Budget Act of 2022, the Judicial Council is submitting *Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year One* for the one-time \$60 million appropriation to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association.

The State Budget Act of 2022 (Ch.78, Stats. of 2022) amended the Judicial Council's Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) grant funding to include an additional \$60 million, to be paid in three increments over three years, to the California CASA Association (California CASA) for support of CASA programs across the state. The State Budget Act of 2022 (Act) appropriated \$20 million for fiscal year (FY) 2022–23, including \$16 million to provide funding to the local CASA programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing. The remaining \$4 million was to be used statewide for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of statewide training curriculum, and collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the report to the Legislature.

The Act specified that the Judicial Council shall annually report to the Legislature on CASA program implementation and outcomes. The initial report due on July 1, 2023, is required to describe funding allocations and program development.

On January 10, 2023, Governor Newsom proposed eliminating \$40 million in funding for years two (FY 2023-24) and three (FY 2024-25), in an effort to achieve a balanced budget. As a result, California CASA and local CASA programs began adjusting their plans in preparation for the possibility of reduced funding. Subsequently, on May 12, 2023, the Governor's May Revision included an adjustment to restore the funding for years two and three. While California CASA adjusted and retooled implementation plans in anticipation of the reduced funding, they are positioned to continue implementation efforts as planned.

### **I. Background**

There are 44 local CASA programs in California serving 51 of the state's 58 counties. In 2022, 8,871 active Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA volunteers) served 11,790 youth in the dependency and juvenile justice systems across California. Local CASA programs recruited and trained 1,866 new CASA volunteers in 2022. CASA volunteers spend time with youth in person each month, meet with the stakeholders involved in the youth's life, and provide recommendations to superior court judges based on each child's needs and best interests.

### **II. Year One Funding Allocations**

Year One funding of \$20 million included \$100,000 for Judicial Council's administration of the funds. The remaining \$19.9 million was transferred to California CASA: \$19.5 million, in December 2022, and \$400,000 in February 2023. In December 2022, California CASA awarded

\$16 million to local CASA organizations. The first payment was made to programs in December 2022, the second payment in May 2023, and the third will be made in December 2023.

The balance of \$3.9 million is designated for California CASA-driven initiatives to implement statewide services and efficiencies that benefit the local programs collectively. Of this amount, California CASA was allocated \$1 million for its implementation and oversight of the grant process and for its work in the areas of evaluation, marketing and volunteer recruitment, shared resources and infrastructure, training, growth strategy for the network, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) development. The two highest priorities for the remaining funds are: 1) implementing a comprehensive statewide marketing campaign to recruit new volunteers and donors; and 2) determining an appropriate way to measure the impact of a CASA on the health and wellbeing of children. These funds will be expended by June 30, 2024.

### **III. Year One Grant Opportunities and Funding Allocations for Local CASA Programs**

California CASA created three grant opportunities for local programs in the first year: Grant Opportunity 1 for operational expenses; Grant Opportunity 2 for staff retention; and Grant Opportunity 3 for innovation/growth/diversity in serving more children with CASA advocacy.

California CASA allocated \$3,997,832 to 39 programs for Grant Opportunity 1; \$6,916,266 to 37 programs for Grant Opportunity 2; and \$5,085,901 to 31 programs for Grant Opportunity 3. The total funding allocated to each program for FY 2022–23 is detailed at Appendix A. All 44 local CASA programs received Year One funding. The grant period for all opportunities is October 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024.

In Year One, some local programs experienced challenges fully implementing efforts to address staff retention (e.g., compensation increases or benefits) and hiring staff to support growth initiatives due to the uncertainty of funding for years 2 and 3. In order to prepare for the funding reductions proposed by the Governor in January 2023, California CASA created a budget modification process for those local CASA programs to request a change to their grant awards and modified the reporting period slightly. With the funding restored, California CASA will be able to return to the grants process that was underway for years two and three.

#### **Grant Opportunity 1**

Grant Opportunity 1 provides funding to local CASA programs for expenses related to day-to-day operations including, but not limited to general operational expenses and recruiting, training, and supervising CASA volunteers. This grant opportunity is intended to provide support for expenses related to the implementation and execution of the CASA model as defined by the [California Rule of Court, rule 5.655](#) and [Welfare & Institutions Code, §§ 100-110](#).

Programs are required to track two of the four outcomes listed below:

1. Maintain year-over-year number of children served, and/or
2. Maintain CASA volunteer retention year-over-year, and/or



3. Maintain or increase private or public philanthropy (excluding State funding & Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans/grants), and/or
4. Establish and/or maintain regular meetings with county's juvenile court judges and Department of Health and Human Services (social services in each county).

At the end of the grant period (June 30, 2024), each program will submit a written report that includes comparative data for how the funding supported the local program and how the program achieved two of the outcomes listed above.

### **Grant Opportunity 2**

Grant Opportunity 2 provides funding to meet competitive market wage rates in the programs' counties for existing CASA staff, provide or increase employee benefits, and/or offer opportunities for professional staff development and training. Programs will measure outcomes in year-over-year staff retention and equitable compensation and benefits within the workplace. At the conclusion of the grant period (June 30, 2024), programs will submit documentation and a brief narrative describing the impact this funding had on their staff, including outcomes.

### **Grant Opportunity 3**

Grant Opportunity 3 provides funding for CASA programs to scale up and sustain growth to serve more children in their counties. Programs proposed innovative ideas and projects that will increase their CASA services, or new innovations to build or maintain a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive staff and/or CASA volunteers. Local CASA programs were also able to request funds for new staff positions under this Grant Opportunity.

Programs submitted two measurable outcomes that will increase the number of children served with CASAs or new innovations that will build or maintain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive staff and/or CASA volunteers. Programs also submitted a California CASA budget template to explain the use of the funds. At the conclusion of the grant period (June 30, 2024), programs will submit written narratives documenting their expenditures and outcomes.

### **Organizational Capacity Pre-Assessment Tool**

All local CASA programs completed an Organizational Capacity Pre-Assessment as part of the application process. Programs answered questions in seven categories: 1) Aspirations, 2) Strategy, 3) Organizational Skill, 4) Human resources, 5) Systems and Structure, 6) Organizational Structure, and 7) Culture.

In addition, each program is required to submit reports for Data Collection of Outcomes through the grant period and a Post-Grant Organizational Assessment with supporting documentation by December 2023.

## **IV. Year One Activities of California CASA and Local CASA Organizations**

California CASA developed a comprehensive multi-year statewide plan for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of statewide training

curriculum, and collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the report to the Legislature.

California CASA delayed full implementation of certain efforts in the event funding reductions proposed by the Governor in January 2023 were enacted. However, California CASA is positioned to restart planned efforts with funding restoration.

#### Volunteer and Recruitment Initiatives

California CASA plans to expand marketing statewide to increase awareness of the needs of foster youth, the CASA model, and the range of statewide opportunities for volunteer advocates to serve youth in the foster care system. California CASA will assess the marketing capabilities of the local network, review National CASA/GAL (Guardian Ad Litem) Association marketing and branding standards, research successful statewide campaigns and other state CASA initiatives, develop an overarching strategic marketing/recruitment plan, issue a Request for Proposals for an outside consulting team, and hire a consultant. California CASA plans to spend a minimum of \$3 million for a robust volunteer recruitment campaign with extensive placement of radio and television ads, social media outreach, billboards, bus signs, and street banners.

#### Shared Resources and Infrastructure

California CASA plans to assist the network with recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and all aspects of cultivating a workplace where employees can thrive. Utilizing a consultant, California CASA will provide training on important employment laws and issues dealing with workplace rights. California CASA also plans to implement efforts to make the network more efficient and cost-effective via shared resources and infrastructure support, such as a service for language translation and a centralized CASA database to simplify data management.

#### Growth Strategist

California CASA will provide a Growth Strategist as a consultant to help local CASA programs create efficient and sustainable processes. The consultant will engage with the local CASA programs to create or modify their own existing strategic plans, with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of children served. The consultant will work closely with California CASA staff and provide change management training for all 44 local CASA programs.

#### Collection of Data and Outcomes

California CASA staff plans to conduct an assessment on statewide data and outcomes to measure impact. In Year One, California CASA partnered with a consultant to assess current data readiness, make recommendations for meaningful metrics both statewide and locally, develop a mixed-methods evaluation framework, and provide capacity-building to ensure sustainability. Local programs will provide data about their grant programs in the coming years, and California CASA will continue working with the consultant on collecting data and measuring outcomes.

#### Development of a Statewide Training Curriculum

CASA volunteers must complete at least 30 hours of pre-service training. California CASA provides CASA University to support this pre-service training with an online platform that allows trainees to access and complete half of the training virtually. Of the 44 local CASA

programs, 35 of them currently utilize CASA University. California CASA plans to review all of the content currently in the curriculum, which consists of eight chapters and 37 units. The goal is to make the curriculum more reflective of current needs, the diverse populations served by programs, and best practices in adult learning strategies.

CASA volunteers are required to complete at least 12 hours of in-service training annually. California CASA will work to enhance the availability of in-service training statewide. California CASA plans to build an on-demand online platform where volunteer CASAs can access in-service trainings on various topics at any time. This platform will include recordings of past webinars, details related to upcoming live webinars, and a series of interactive online courses. California CASA plans to hire a Learning and Education Specialist and intends to launch the in-service training platform in the third quarter of 2023.

#### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

California CASA plans include a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). In Year One, California CASA provided a statewide nine-month DEI training to staff representing 26 local CASA programs and California CASA staff and board members. Plans to expand DEI training more widely to the network include a DEI training guidebook that can be utilized by California CASA and local CASA organizations.

#### **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the Budget Act of 2022, in FY 2022–23 California CASA allocated \$16 million in funding to the local CASA programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training to stabilize local budgets and staffing through the three grant opportunities detailed in this report.

California CASA continues to utilize and make progress on the \$3.9 million in funding appropriated to their organization to initiate, administer, and execute projects of shared benefit to the entire local CASA network, including the implementation of efforts that support statewide volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of a statewide training curriculum, and collection of data on program implementation and outcomes.

California CASA's initial implementation plans were based on funding over a three year period. California CASA and local CASA programs began adjusting their strategy to prepare for the possibility of reduced funding and delayed implementation of certain planned efforts in response to the Governor's January 10, 2023 proposal to eliminate the remaining \$40 million in funding for years two (2023–24) and three (2024–25). With the restoration of the remaining funding in the Governor's May Revision budget proposal, California CASA is positioned to continue planned implementation efforts described in this report.

## Appendix A Year One Funding Allocations

The table<sup>1</sup> below lists the 44 local programs and their grant award amounts, with the biggest award going to CASA of Los Angeles, and the smallest award going to CASA of Mariposa County.

County	CASA Organization	Award	County	CASA Organization	Award
Los Angeles	CASA of Los Angeles	\$2,651,472	Marin	Marin CASA	\$255,190
San Diego	Voices for Children San Diego	\$1,253,480	Merced	CASA of Merced County	\$238,031
Orange	CASA of Orange County	\$942,095	El Dorado	Child Advocates of El Dorado County	\$211,423
Santa Clara	Child Advocates of Silicon Valley	\$811,342	San Joaquin	CASA of San Joaquin County	\$207,605
Sacramento	CASA Sacramento	\$725,596	Stanislaus	CASA of Stanislaus County	\$206,365
Riverside	Voices for Children Riverside	\$697,151	Alameda	Alameda County CASA	\$198,229
Santa Cruz	CASA of Santa Cruz County	\$544,573	Tulare	CASA of Tulare County	\$186,342
San Bernardino	CASA of San Bernadino County	\$535,440	Humboldt	CASA of Humboldt	\$183,850
San Luis Obispo	CASA of San Luis Obispo County	\$519,740	Sonoma	CASA of Sonoma County	\$149,715
Kern	CASA of Kern County	\$489,233	Butte, Glenn, Shasta & Tehama	CASA of Butte, Glenn, Shasta & Tehama Counties	\$122,923
Santa Barbara	CASA of Santa Barbara County	\$478,367	Mendocino and Lake	CASA of Mendocino and Lake Counties	\$109,587
Yolo	Yolo County CASA	\$366,449	Amador and Calaveras	CASA of Amador and Calaveras Counties	\$108,416
Contra Costa	CASA of Contra Costa County	\$358,153	Nevada	Child Advocates of Nevada County	\$107,771
Fresno and Madera	CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties	\$352,612	San Benito	CASA of San Benito County	\$106,142
Ventura	CASA of Ventura County	\$330,191	Lassen	CASA of Lassen Family Services	\$88,633
Solano	CASA of Solano County	\$328,032	Plumas	Plumas CASA	\$80,243
Monterey	CASA of Monterey County	\$324,072	Siskiyou	CASA of Siskiyou County	\$70,721
San Mateo	CASA of San Mateo County	\$312,727	Napa	Napa CASA	\$63,588
San Francisco	San Francisco CASA	\$291,617	Del Norte	CASA of Del Norte	\$55,113
Kings	CASA of Kings County	\$284,721	Inyo and Mono	CASA of the Eastern Sierra	\$44,381
Imperial	CASA of Imperial County	\$274,944	Modoc	Modoc CASA	\$41,500
Placer	Child Advocates of Placer County	\$259,423	Mariposa	CASA of Mariposa County	\$32,803

<sup>1</sup> California CASA Association Memorandum, California CASA Legislative Appropriation Funding Report, from Sharon Lawrence, Chief Executive Officer (February 1, 2023).