



## Judicial Council of California · Administrative Office of the Courts

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# REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

For business meeting on August 23, 2013

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Title	Agenda Item Type
Juvenile Dependency: Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Funding Methodology	Action Required
Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected	Effective Date
None	August 23, 2013
Recommended by	Date of Report
Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee	July 19, 2013
Hon. Kimberly J. Nystrom-Geist, Cochair Hon. Dean T. Stout, Cochair	Contact
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### **Executive Summary**

The Judicial Council's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends approving the proposed funding methodology for the limited available funding for the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. This methodology would (1) establish equitable allocations for CASA programs and eliminate wide funding variations resulting from historical funding formulas; (2) supplement funding to local programs that work toward efficiency, effectiveness, and program growth; and (3) increase the number of courts and the number of dependency youth served by CASA programs.

### **Recommendation**

The Judicial Council's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council change the current CASA funding methodology to a model that takes a two-step approach to establish award allocations for each program (see Attachment A). The first step would establish a base amount determined by four county population tiers. This amount would be recalculated each fiscal year and may require a shift in local programs from one tier to

another. For the second step, up to two award incentives—each at a fixed and equal amount—could be applied on top of the base amount if the program qualifies.

### **Previous Council Action**

From the CASA program’s inception in 1991 until fiscal year (FY) 2003, the council allocated CASA grant awards after members of the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee and staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) reviewed requests for grant amounts and detailed narrative applications submitted by local CASA programs. This method was discontinued in FY 2003 when the council approved formula base award levels that were determined by averaging awards from the preceding two years.

In FY 2005, receipt of the State Appropriations Limit (SAL) increased the CASA grant budget. In subsequent years, overall CASA grant budget increases or decreases were approved by the council and awarded to all programs at the same rate. For example, all programs received a 5.7 percent increase in FY 2006, and when the CASA grant budget was reduced in FY 2011, all programs received a 10.25 percent reduction in funding. During the past eight years, an increase in the number of local programs has created smaller allocations to each program.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The overall funding for CASA programs has remained relatively stagnant for the past eight years. At its highest baseline, the CASA budget was \$2.291 million for two consecutive fiscal years (2008 and 2009) and at its lowest baseline, the FY 2005 budget was \$2.047 million. The number of local CASA programs and counties seeking to establish CASA programs has increased. At the inception of the Judicial Council CASA grant program, California had only 12 local programs. Since then, that number has nearly quadrupled, with 45 CASA programs serving 49 counties.

All 45 CASA programs are recipients of Judicial Council grant funding each fiscal year. Currently, programs receive grant allocations based on historical amounts that do not use a funding formula. Implementation of the proposed funding methodology, applied to available CASA funding, would be more balanced and equitable, benefitting local programs that were not recipients of point-in-time SAL increases but that prioritize efficiency and effectiveness, maintaining comparable funding allocations for some programs, and significantly decreasing the funding for others that have historically received more. The formula in Figure 1 illustrates the proposed funding calculation.

**Figure 1. Proposed Funding Methodology**

$\text{Base Amount} + \text{Incentive A} + \text{Incentive B} = \text{Total Award Allocation}$
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**Award methodology step 1, base amounts**

The range between the lowest and highest county populations was used to determine tiers, with Tier 1 comprising lower county populations and Tier 4 comprising the most populous counties. Table 1 includes the four tiers and each of the base amounts. The county population of each local program determines the tier to establish the base amount. This method provides a stable grant award that local CASA programs can expect and consider for budget planning moving into subsequent fiscal years. This funding methodology provides a greater distinction between each tier (\$8,000 difference), does not deviate immensely from current large county program median awards, allocates 80 percent of the overall CASA budget toward base amounts, and reserves approximately 20 percent of total program funds for award incentives. When a start-up CASA program or county collaboration (a new CASA program partnering with another CASA program) forms, funding to support those endeavors would be drawn from the base funding only; the 80/20 percent proportion would remain in place regardless of an increase or reduction in the overall budget or number of programs.

**Table 1. Step 1—Tiers and Base Amounts**

<b>Tier</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Base Amount (\$)	26,000	34,000	42,000	50,000

\*See Attachment B for a list of CASA program counties and tiers.

Multicounty programs would factor in the sum of their combined county populations for their tier category. These programs experience an added challenge working across two or more jurisdictions while sharing limited resources under one program administration. The base allocation amounts of each of the four currently operating two-county programs would be multiplied by 1.5 to cover increased costs of this type of collaboration. Table 2 includes a general overview of the methodology.

**Table 2. Proposed CASA Methodology Overview**

<b>Funding (Based on FY 2012–2013)</b>	\$2.213M, total Judicial Council CASA budget: \$1.778M for base amounts; \$432K for incentives
<b>Description</b>	More distinction in funding between each tier; highly driven by county population
<b>Small County Effect</b>	Reduced base because of smaller county population; incentives for efficient programs that serve a high proportion of dependent youth within the county dependency population
<b>Large County Effect</b>	Comparable to current median base to keep funding where county and dependency populations are higher (ability to serve more children and potential to increase volunteer pools)
<b>Two- or Multicounty Program Effect</b>	Fifty percent increase to their base as an incentive for working across two or more jurisdictions with one program administration

## Award methodology step 2, incentive funding

The second step in the proposed funding methodology includes two types of incentive awards that could supplement the base amounts. The incentive funding focuses on measurable criteria that are strong indicators of a thriving program and its ability to grow. Each incentive award is a fixed amount and would be given to the twenty local programs (44 percent) that achieve the greatest results in *each* of the two incentive categories. This competitive component to the formula allows a program to receive *both* incentive awards on top of its base amount if it qualifies for both incentive options; by contrast, some programs may not qualify for any incentives, receiving only the base amount, as determined in step 1.

- **Incentive A, Volunteer Retention Rate (figure 2).** The number of volunteers assigned minus the number of volunteers trained, divided by 100. This rate speaks to how successful local programs are at training and retaining CASA volunteers, from completing training to getting sworn in as an officer of the court by the judge to being assigned a child. This incentive also recognizes the number of CASAs who remain assigned to a dependent child or youth beyond the 12-month commitment period and who take on another case after one has closed. CASA programs would be expected to uphold all professional and ethical standards in the recruitment and training process. This incentive should not encourage maintaining inappropriate CASA volunteers. The CASA mission is to serve as many foster youth as possible, and this goal can be achieved only by growing and retaining the CASA volunteer pool.
- **Incentive B, Dependency Proportion Served (figure 3).** Dividing the number of children who have an assigned CASA and the total number of children in the local dependency system allows smaller counties to be recognized for serving a high proportion of their dependent youth. Although the number served in larger counties may be higher overall, any perceived inequity could be addressed by considering that larger counties fall into Tiers 3 and 4, providing them with higher base amounts to start. The numerator (number of children served) also includes children in delinquency who may have a CASA assigned. The denominator does not include delinquent youth because not all programs serve this population. Adding the delinquency population to the denominator in this calculation may penalize those programs that are able to serve delinquent youth. This incentive rewards programs that are able to serve children in both dependency and delinquency.

**Figure 2. Incentive A, Volunteer Retention Rate**

$$\frac{\text{No. of Volunteers Assigned} - \text{No. of Volunteers Trained}}{100}$$

Note: Figures in this formula would be averaged from CASA Judicial Council quarterly deliverables reports.

**Figure 3. Incentive B, Dependency Proportion Served**

$$\frac{\text{Total No. of Children Served (CASA assigned)}}{\text{Total Dependency Population}}$$

Note: Figures would be obtained from National CASA annual survey and Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data.

## **Comments, Alternatives Considered, and Policy Implications**

The proposed funding methodology was circulated for comment June 18, 2013, through July 8, 2013, and was distributed to Presiding Judges of the Juvenile Court and executive directors and managers of California CASA programs. The proposed methodology was also distributed through *Court News Update* (July 18, 2013) and made available in the Invitations to Comment section of the California Courts website. Twenty-three individuals or organizations submitted comments on all or components of the methodology. Of the 23, 10 submitted comments on behalf of a local court, 12 on behalf of a local CASA program, and 1 individually (representing neither on behalf of an organization nor a court). An overwhelming majority agreed with the proposed base funding methodology, and more than half of the commentators agreed with the proposed incentive options, while 4 individuals suggested alternative incentives. The following issues received the most significant comments:

- Number of incentive awards
- Incentives established by local programs

A chart summarizing the comments and the committee's responses is attached at pages 8–26.

### **Number of incentive awards**

Under the proposed funding methodology, local programs would be able to receive up to two incentive awards, should they qualify. A suggested alternative would limit local programs to one incentive award in order to distribute available funds among more CASA programs. For example, if CASA Program X qualified for additional funding for incentive options A *and* B, only the local program's higher-scoring incentive would be selected. CASA Program X's lower-rated incentive funds would then be reallocated to the next top-scoring local CASA program. The majority of individuals who commented on this component of the methodology believe local CASA programs that qualify for both incentives should receive both incentives.

### **Incentives established by local programs**

A suggestion from three commentators (one on behalf of a court and two from local CASA programs, all from different counties) was to allow local programs to set self-defined incentives that measured internal improvement of a CASA program compared to past performance. As previously mentioned, the majority of comments agreed that the proposed incentive awards were appropriate and provided healthy motivation to improve the inefficiencies of any given program. The committee acknowledges the value in having local incentives; however, allowing local programs to create self-defined incentives loses objectivity, and those incentives would be difficult to measure.

### **Other comments**

The committee considered phasing in any potential cuts to CASA programs over multiple years for program planning purposes; however, program performance may vary from one year to the next, making a phase-in process impossible. Local programs have been requesting a fairer and

more balanced approach to funding allocations. The methodology is entering its second year of development; the goal has consistently been to implement this methodology by FY 2013–2014 if approved by the council.

Two commentators from different local CASA programs expressed concern for small programs in rural counties that may experience a significant budget reduction and the inability to rebound financially due to the lack of fundraising opportunities in small communities. Some programs, both large and small, may experience a significant budget reduction, and others may experience budget increases. The committee worked diligently to propose a balanced approach in regard to the base allocation and incentives. There was no intention to favor larger or smaller programs. If anything, the incentive options demonstrate the intent to reward any program's ability to overcome challenges and efficiently serve its dependency population and maintain volunteers, despite its size. As noted earlier in the report, this methodology repeals budget incentives that may no longer be warranted. For example, in FY 2005 when the SAL increased the CASA program significantly, nine programs that exhibited maximum service efficiency (had the highest number of children served) received a significant increase to their base allocation. In subsequent years their budgets reflected the same rate while some programs fell short of the previous service efficiency. The new methodology may impact these programs more significantly.

A commentator questioned the rationale for the 1.5 multiplier to base amounts for multicounty programs. Welfare and Institutions Code section 100 states that “[t]he council shall adopt program guidelines and criteria for funding which encourage multicounty CASA programs where appropriate, and shall in no case provide for funding more than one program per county.” Although partnering with neighboring counties to develop a multicounty program may not always be appropriate or possible, the committee does recognize the resource challenges and the collaboration required to serve dependent youth across multiple jurisdictions. For this reason the 1.5 multiplier was applied.

A few commentators from local programs inquired about the amount of each incentive. Once the upcoming overall CASA budget has been determined, each incentive will be calculated. For example, if the new methodology were applied to the current budget, each incentive would yield \$10,800. Programs would be notified when the data will be pulled to determine incentive eligibility, allowing programs sufficient time to prepare.

### **Maintaining status quo or returning to the grant application process**

Other alternatives considered by the committee included continuing the status quo or returning to the narrative grant application process. The application process may result in unpredictable funding from year to year, strain nonprofit management, and impact service to the courts. Continuation with the status quo does not address the inequity in funding allocations between small and large counties and older and newer CASA programs. Committee members determined that the need to revise the methodology to create a process that considers program accountability and effectiveness was great.

The committee also determined that returning to the narrative grant application process would require the development of a grant application process and formation of a review committee and would be time, labor, and resource intensive for local CASA programs, AOC staff, and those who serve on the potential review committee.

### **Implementation Requirements, Costs, and Operational Impacts**

Implementation of this CASA funding methodology would be effective for fiscal year 2013–2014. There are no implementation costs or operational impacts associated with the proposed methodology. Currently, local programs are required to collect and submit to the AOC a variety of data, including statistics on the number of children served, the number of active volunteers, and the number of new volunteers trained. This methodology would require no additional data collection because information is already collected as part of grant contract deliverables. These data should inform the court about the children it is serving.

### **Relevant Strategic Plan Goals and Operational Plan Objectives**

The proposed CASA funding methodology aligns with multiple strategic and operational goals established by the Judicial Council, specifically Goals II and III.

Goal II specifies that “[t]he judiciary must maintain its status as an independent, separate, and co-equal branch of government. . . . The judiciary will unify in its advocacy for resources and policies that support and protect independent and impartial judicial decisionmaking in accordance with the constitution and the law. The branch will maintain the highest standards of accountability for its use of public resources, and adherence to its statutory and constitutional mandates.” The proposed methodology includes revisions that incentivize efficient and effective use of Judicial Council funding distributed to CASA programs each fiscal year.

Goal III notes that “effective administration of justice requires deliberate attention to recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality staff at all levels, as well as to developing and implementing appropriate accountability and compliance measures.” Recruitment of court-appointed special advocates requires extensive screening and training of individuals; one of the proposed incentives in the CASA funding methodology rewards programs that retain these qualified, experienced volunteers.

### **Attachments**

1. Chart of comments, at pages 8–26
2. Attachment A: CASA Funding Methodology
3. Attachment B: Proposed CASA Program Base Amounts by Tier

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
1.	CASA of El Dorado County By John Adams, Executive Director	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	If we end up within \$500 (or so) of historical funding, then I am all for moving to incentive based funding for the greater good.	No response required.
2.	CASA of Mariposa County By Caroline Fruth, Executive Director	A – funding bases AM – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	<p>If it is specified how much each incentive will be, and what specific numbers/goals will be needed to qualify for each incentive. This would be helpful for planning purposes, especially for small organizations with budgets that rely heavily on AOC funding.</p> <p>Small organizations with limited funding rely on AOC funds for basic program operation. If a program, large or small, qualifies for an incentive, they should receive that incentive.</p>	Each program is required to collect data on the number of children served and advocates trained and assigned. The AOC will be using these numbers from CASA Tracker to determine the top 20 programs in each incentive category. CASA programs need to ensure that their data is up to date and will be informed on which incentives they have qualified for when the budget allocations are approved. Once the upcoming CASA budget allocation has been determined, each incentive will be calculated. If the new methodology were applied to the current budget, each incentive would yield \$10,800.
3.	CASA of Mendocino & Lake Counties By Sheryn Hildebrand, Executive Director	No position noted.	What are the tier cutoffs for population and just a quick question, it seems that potential for getting a "0" on incentive question B will be more likely in a rural program than an urban program.	The population quartiles were developed by taking the value between smallest county population and the largest county population and dividing that into 4 equal sectors. By July 1, 2013, there will be 45 CASA programs. As a result, one tier (#3) is comprised of 11 programs as opposed to other tiers that are comprised of 10. AOC



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	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
				<p>CASA staff worked with the committee to find balanced incentive options. For example, a larger county that serves less than 5% of their dependency population may not qualify for Incentive B; even though they serve a high number, they are not serving a high proportion. This would actually be likely for a smaller local program to achieve as the program may not have sheer volume, but have a more manageable dependency proportion that they are actively and efficiently serving.</p>
4.	<p>CASA of San Bernardino County By Kara Hunter, Executive Director</p>	<p>A – funding bases AM – incentive opts. AM – limit incentives</p>	<p>I am not comfortable with the idea of CASA programs competing for the same incentives funding based on the same criteria due to the fact that the demographics and cultures of our counties are so varied. I think it would be more appropriate to allow each program to set a program goal and base the incentive funding off of the individual programs ability to meet that goal. For example in San Bernardino we would set a goal like wanting to see 25% of our youth reconnected to family based off of our Family Search and Engagement efforts. Incentive funding could be tied to how well we do in reaching that goal.</p>	<p>Recognizing that programs vary significantly from one county to the next, raises the concern of objectivity when creating self-defined goals. The committee made a concerted effort to ensure that the incentives remained objective and measurable.</p>
5.	<p>CASA of Stanislaus County By Steve Ashman, Executive Director</p>	<p>A – funding bases A – incentive opts.</p>	<p>Love the idea.</p>	<p>No response required.</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	Commentator	Position	Comment	Committee Response				
		A – limit incentives						
6.	CASA of Ventura County By Miriam Mack, Executive Director	N – funding bases	<p>An alternative funding for the base grant is on a per capita basis with the denominator being the total population for all counties with CASA programs and the numerator being the population in the county with the CASA (or counties, if multiple counties).</p> <p>Incentive A, total # of children served/county dependency population: the formula needs to clearly define the dependency population, as some CASA programs serve children under five years of age or <i>After 18</i>, while others do not. Incentive B, (# volunteers assigned less # volunteers trained/100), is unclear. Is the formula designed to reward programs with a higher number or lower number? The example below shows that there is a need for clarification.</p> <p><u>Ex. 1</u></p> <table data-bbox="961 1295 1375 1362"> <tr> <td>Volunteers Assigned</td> <td>150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less Volunteers Trained</td> <td>50</td> </tr> </table>	Volunteers Assigned	150	Less Volunteers Trained	50	<p>Welfare and Institutions Code 100 uses population statistics to set upper limits on allocation amounts. This methodology is consistent with W and I Code 100. The statistics that would be utilized for determining the eligibility for each incentive would be as follows: the Child Welfare Systems Case Management Data to determine the number of children in dependency, CASA Tracker for the number of children with an assigned CASA and CASA tracker data for the number of volunteers trained.</p> <p>The volunteer retention formula rewards programs with a higher number. The formula looks at the number of trained volunteers within at least a 12-month period and compares that to the overall assigned volunteer pool within that same time frame.</p>
Volunteers Assigned	150							
Less Volunteers Trained	50							

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	Commentator	Position	Comment	Committee Response
			<p>Difference /100                      1</p> <p><u>Ex. 2</u></p> <p>Volunteers Assigned                150</p> <p>Less Volunteers Trained            25</p> <p>Difference/100                        1.25</p> <p>Also, what is the period of time that AOC would be counting Volunteers as trained? Is that number to include Volunteers trained during the previous calendar year, or volunteers trained and active on the program's roster?</p> <p>It is admirable that the two proposed incentive awards are designed to support two of CASA's main goals: advocacy for youth and recruitment/retention of volunteers, since both are inextricably linked. Creating one incentive category might be easier to administer. A suggestion is that the AOC set a benchmark, i.e. programs that serve x% of their dependency population (as redefined – see above) become eligible to receive a proportionate share of the funds set aside for incentives.</p>	<p>The 12 month time frame has not been determined. The goal of training volunteers is to increase the total number of volunteers assigned, not necessarily to conduct multiple trainings to maintain the same number of volunteers assigned.</p> <p>Recognizing that programs vary significantly from one county to the next, raises the concern of objectivity when creating self-defined goals. The committee made a concerted effort to ensure that the incentives remained objective and measurable. Setting benchmarks regarding proportion served is closely related to the second incentive (dependency proportion served). While not all programs qualify for this incentive, nearly 50% of the programs are able to attain the incentive under this new model. The competitive component would allow for programs that were shy of</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	Commentator	Position	Comment	Committee Response
				reaching the top 20 to evaluate their recruitment and training approaches/efforts to possibly qualify the following fiscal year.
7.	Child Advocates of Nevada County By Laura Harter, Executive Director	N – funding bases N – incentive opts. AM – limit incentives	<p>We agree a competitive bid process is time consuming for the programs and the AOC and it seems reasonable to create a method that provides a predictable base with an opportunity to reward prior year performance. We believe that any proposed change in calculating funding methodology should begin FY 2014/15, not 2013/14 because there is not enough time to develop alternative funding strategies for the upcoming year for programs that will find their funding substantially reduced. Those programs that do not receive any rewards and whose base amount is cut, may be swept into a cycle of decline. They may find it difficult to become eligible for rewards in the future or to bounce back. It is hard to understand the methodology as presented and how it will impact our program as well as others. It is hard to propose specific modifications to it without this knowledge. Any proposed modification may in fact have already been considered or may be irrelevant as it doesn't build on the assumptions of this proposed change.</p> <p>We are curious why the base level doesn't consider the number of children in care who remain in the county. Basing it on the total</p>	<p>Many local programs have been requesting a more fair and balanced approach to funding allocations. The methodology is entering its second year of development; the goal has consistently been to implement this methodology by FY 2013–2014 if approved by the council.</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
			<p>population of the county does not seem like a reasonable strategy. It appears that each tier contains counties that have a broad range of kids in care and that some counties with similar number of kids in care will receive different base amounts. See attached. With that said, the size of a county does matter. Smaller, rural counties with lower per capita income will have more challenges in developing their fundraising to augment needed revenue. We would prefer to see additional work on this issue and a revised formula created before voting, but have voted as indicated above.</p> <p>We agree that reward incentives seem like a good idea and CASA retention and percentage of children served seem like valid opportunities for rewards. However, the formulas seem overly simplistic. Incentive A – the percent of the number of children served of the number of children in dependency seems like a valid idea. However, the number of children who remain in care within the county should be considered. Sometimes the number in the court system does not reflect the number of children remaining in the county.</p> <p>Also, if a county with less than 50 children in dependency court can serve 100% of those children, does that put them at the top of the list?</p>	<p>Children or youth that are placed out of a local program’s jurisdiction would still be counted in the equation. Programs should consider innovative approaches to serving children placed outside of their county.</p> <p>The number used to calculate dependency population for each county is from the CWS/CMS data system. The data provided is a collaborative venture between the University of California at Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services, and not provided directly from the court system.</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	Commentator	Position	Comment	Committee Response
			<p>And what are the reward amounts? Would they be the same for each top 20 county? Are they staggered based on some other factor like the number of children in care that remain in the county? What happens when a county serves a child living in their county, but whose jurisdiction is in another county?</p> <p>Incentive B – this formula and strategy may miss the intended mark and encourage swearing-in and keeping CASAs that may not be appropriate. While potential CASAs are</p>	<p>Welfare and Institutions Code 100 uses population statistics to set upper limits on allocation amounts. This methodology is consistent with W and I Code 100. Yes, counties that serve 100% of their dependency population would be at the top of the qualifying list for that incentive option. Each qualifying program that falls within the top 20 in that incentive category would receive the same fixed incentive amount.</p> <p>Once the upcoming CASA budget allocation has been determined, each incentive will be calculated. If the new methodology were applied to the current budget, each incentive would yield \$10,800. Programs that qualify would receive the same, fixed amount regardless where the program fell within the top 20. The committee acknowledges the effort made and service provided by local programs that serve youth that are placed in their county but whose case is in another jurisdiction. These programs that partner with another local program to serve these youth should compromise on the children served count or develop a protocol that allows for co-CASA volunteers.</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
			<p>carefully screened prior to training; training is also a time for continued screening. There would be an unintended incentive to retain, swear-in, and assign trainees who may be otherwise dismissed. The same problem exists for keeping CASAs longer than 12 months, or signing them up for a second child; there would be an unintended consequence of providing an incentive to retain inappropriate CASAs.</p> <p>To place a program in a position where they may be “penalized” by terminating unsuitable trainees or CASAs is not consistent with a “reward” concept. Also, there are other ways to encourage retention, like Peer Coordination, that would not be rewarded by this formula. Additionally, we find different judges approach referrals differently. Some like to assign CASAs early in a case and to most, or all children, which results in a long waitlist. Newly trained CASAs are then matched and assigned to waitlisted children immediately upon their swearing in. Others want to know that there is a pool of CASAs available for the next several months so that there will be a CASA available to meet the highest need children. If there is a best practice that we should be following that this is meant to reward, we would like to be made aware of it. Our program and Court would benefit from this knowledge. We believe that some other method of measuring retention, or perhaps</p>	<p>The volunteer retention formula rewards programs with a higher number. The formula looks at the number of trained volunteers within at least a 12-month period and compares that to the overall assigned volunteer pool within that same time frame. The goal of training volunteers is to increase the total number of volunteers assigned, not necessarily to conduct multiple trainings to maintain the same number of volunteers assigned.</p> <p>CASA programs are expected to uphold all professional and ethical standards in the recruitment and training process. This incentive does not encourage maintaining inappropriate CASA volunteers. The assignment of a new CASA volunteer after he or she completes training is measured over a span of time. This would address judges who do not make immediate court orders for CASA assignments or programs that keep a small pool of available advocates to ensure that high-needs cases are able to have a CASA assigned.</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
			<p>CASA quality, is necessary for a proper reward. We would prefer to see additional work on this issue and a revised formula created before voting, but have voted as indicated above.</p> <p>In general, limiting the rewards to the top 20 programs or limiting programs to one incentive seems to encourage quality. However, there may be considerable challenge for programs who will not be eligible this year for a reward with base funding that does not match their prior year’s funding. Larger programs who have the benefit of extensive community support will in fact have a better chance of “picking up slack” if their overall CASA funding is reduced. We can understand the benefit of a reward based on the previous year’s performance, but only when proper notice to programs has been given. We would prefer to see additional work on this issue, but have voted as indicated above.</p>	<p>Some programs may experience a significant budget reduction and others may experience budget increases. The committee worked diligently to propose a balanced approach in regard to the base allocation and incentives. There was no intention to favor larger or smaller programs. If anything the incentive options demonstrate the intent to reward any program’s ability to overcome challenges and efficiently serve their dependency population and maintain volunteers, despite their size.</p>
8.	Child Advocates of Placer County By Don Kleinfelder, Executive Director	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	No specific comment.	No response required.
9.	Child Advocates of Silicon Valley By Karen Scussel, Executive Director	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	I appreciate the recognition of needs of different sized organizations and the ability to predict year to year funding levels. I like the idea of incentives for increased service.	No response required.



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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
10.	Jose Guillen, Executive Officer Superior Court of Sonoma County	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	Very nice job.	No response required.
11.	Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center By Dennis Thibeault, Executive Director	A – funding bases N – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	<p>The proposed base funding allocation is a Draconian cut for a small county program such as ours. The current amount is barely enough as it is – even with the extra funding that we’ve been able to receive from grants and fundraising. I would prefer that the current allocation remain in place.</p> <p>I disagree completely with the incentive options. If my calculations are correct, we would have to receive both incentives just to maintain our current allocation. Rural programs do not have the local resources to attract alternative funding, thus limiting the number of staff. National CASA recognizes a ratio of 15 volunteers to one staff. We currently have one staff and 24 volunteers. (We used to have another employee, but couldn’t afford to continue funding two positions. (Unless we can get her some help, she’s poised to resign from a 55 hour per week salaried position that leaves her feeling overworked and underpaid.) Ultimately, we’ll lose volunteers, so the ratio of volunteers to children in the dependency system will decrease, so we’d lose THAT incentive, and I envision a downward spiral as a result.</p> <p>However you cut it, the base amount plus the</p>	<p>Some programs may experience a significant budget reduction and others may experience budget increases. The committee worked diligently to propose a balanced approach in regard to the base allocation and incentives. There was no intention to favor larger or smaller programs. If anything, the incentive options demonstrate the intent to reward any program’s ability to overcome challenges and efficiently serve their dependency population and maintain volunteers, despite their size.</p> <p>No response required.</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
			two incentive amounts would equal our current allocation...which is barely sufficient.	
12.	San Francisco CASA Program By Renee Espinoza, Executive Director	A – funding bases N – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	<p>1) Include more of the funding into base amount pool instead of the competitive pool. AND/OR 2) rollout the new amount over a three year period to allow for better predictability, budgeting and planning.</p> <p>1) The term "served" should be clearly defined. (Does assessment of a case qualify as served? How will the proposed incentive weigh the depth of service versus breadth of service provided to children? It is our understanding there is great latitude in the definition of "children served" among various CASA programs.</p> <p>2) Instead of competitive incentives, consider incentive awards against measurement of</p>	<p>The committee proposed a methodology that offers over 3/4 of the available CASA funding toward base amounts while still including a competitive component that encourages program growth. The committee considered rolling out the methodology over multiple years to allow for planning purposes; however, program performance can vary from one year to the next making a rollout process impossible. A program that serves a large portion of their dependency youth needs to sustain it in order to qualify the following year. "Rolling over" is not manageable given the possible fluctuation in performance.</p> <p>The term "served" refers to children who have a CASA volunteer assigned to their case. With comprehensive initial training and ongoing continuing education, CASAs should provide quality service to all children or youth they are assigned.</p> <p>Recognizing that programs vary significantly from one county to the</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
			<p>past performance (internal improvement) rather than comparing /pitting programs against each other</p> <p>3) Consider need as a basis for funding start-up programs and programs that have gone through a significant transition (loss of ED, loss of financially supportive partnerships with Court and/or Human Services Agency) may have more need than other programs 4) can there be an incentive for programs collaborating to increase services, recruitment, retention, etc?</p> <p>If the incentive Options are to move forward as planned then we advocate for only one incentive award per program.</p>	<p>next, raises the concern of objectivity when creating self-defined goals. The committee made a concerted effort to ensure that the incentives remained objective and measurable.</p> <p>Given the limited CASA funding, the number of increasing programs and local economic downturn, the Judicial Council budget is not able to properly address all local program financial needs. The purpose of the methodology was to determine a fair and balanced approach to spreading these limited funds to the programs, knowing that remedying all local funding needs is not a possibility.</p> <p>No response required.</p>
13.	Superior Court of Butte County By Hon. Clare Keithley, Judge	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	We defer to the Committee’s work, evaluations and recommendations on this issue. We support rewards for those programs that are innovative and efficient and have good retention rates.	No response required.
14.	Superior Court of Contra Costa County By Jeff Jones, Fiscal Services Manager	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	No specific comment.	No response required.

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
15.	Superior Court of Los Angeles County By Janet Garcia, Court Manager	A – funding bases AM – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	<p>The Los Angeles CASA program is an integral part of our dependency court operations and we care deeply about the financial support that the Judicial Council can offer. We believe the proposed incentive structure is flawed. While Incentive A appropriately encourages programs to recruit committed volunteers, Incentive B is not good policy. The obvious starting point for variable funding is dollars per child served. We recognize that there are scale effects that make this problematic for small programs. But those effects are appropriately remedied by the allocation of base amounts.</p> <p>Incentive funding ought to relate to factors under a program’s direct control. Incentive B, however, punishes programs for increases in the dependent population that are beyond their control (e.g., when child protective services increase their detention rate). And it creates practically no incentive for large-population programs indeed, it is de-motivating, suggesting that helping 500 children in a large county has no value. Instead, one might look at rewarding an increase in the number of children served, as an incentive for program expansion.</p>	<p>Programs with larger populations receive a larger base amount before incentive funding is considered. The goal of the methodology was to create fair and equitable funding distribution while incentivizing program growth.</p> <p>Increases in the dependency population are a global concern and challenge. Programs should consider innovative approaches to serving the increasing number of children entering foster care. The goal of the incentives was to reward those programs that are able to do so.</p>
16.	Superior Court of Mendocino County By Hon. David Nelson, Judge	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. A – limit incentives	Looks fine to me.	No response required.
17.	Superior Court of Placer County	A – funding bases	Although Incentive A—Volunteer Retention	

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	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
	By Jake Chatters, Executive Officer	AM – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	<p>Rate attempts to measure the retention rate of volunteers, the formula is better suited for measuring the number of volunteers trained in general, not the retention rate. Currently, the formula measures volunteer retention rates by subtracting the number of volunteers assigned with the number of volunteers trained and divided by 100. Unfortunately, this formula penalizes counties that have more volunteers than they do assigned cases. If both county A and B have 50 assigned cases and county A has 100 volunteers and county B has 40, County A will have a lower retention rate even though it has a larger pool of trained volunteers and the same number of assigned cases as County B. The formula as it stands currently seems to measure how many trained volunteers have been assigned cases rather than how many trained volunteers are retained as the formula title suggests. If this is committee’s intent, then a title change may better represent the measure.</p> <p>We would, however, suggest an alternative formula that will accurately represent volunteer retention rate is as follows: <i>(Annual number of Volunteers that leave or withdraw/ Annual total number of active volunteers) X 100.</i></p> <p>By dividing the number of volunteers who leave during the year with the total number of active volunteers during the year, the funding</p>	<p>In response to the proposed alternative formula, programs have a difficult time determining between volunteers that are on temporary leave versus those that are not returning. Using volunteer assignment is a more accurate way of ascertaining the true active volunteer status.</p> <p>The volunteer retention formula rewards programs with a higher number. The formula looks at the number of trained volunteers within at least a 12-month period and compares that to the overall assigned volunteer pool within that same time frame. The goal of training volunteers is to increase the total number of volunteers <b>assigned</b>, not</p>

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Juvenile Dependency: CASA Funding Methodology

	Commentator	Position	Comment	Committee Response
			<p>methodology would accurately depict the rate and percentage of volunteers who leave or withdraw from CASA. Additionally, this formula model would incentivize CASA programs to train more volunteers.</p> <p>Although limiting incentive awards to one per CASA program will result in more CASA programs being awarded with incentive funding, this approach would diminish the desired impact of an incentivized funding model. Restricting programs to one award would allocate an equal amount of the \$432,000 to 40 of the 58 CASA programs. If the intent of limiting incentive awards is to provide as many CASA programs with as much funding as possible, it may make more sense to simply allocate \$7,500 more to each CASA program in the State. Doing so would, however, eliminate the incentive element. If, instead, the intent is to truly incentivize behavior, allowing programs to receive both incentives would seem more appropriate. We would encourage the latter approach, one that incentivizes programs to reach the program goals.</p>	<p>necessarily to conduct multiple trainings to maintain the same number of volunteers assigned.</p> <p>One of the goals of the methodology was to incentivize program growth. Rather than increasing everyone's base, the committee proposed a methodology that offers over 3/4 of the available CASA funding toward base amounts while still including a competitive component which encourages program growth and healthy motivation to achieve greater results.</p>

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	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
18.	Superior Court of Riverside County By Angie Murphy, Deputy Executive Officer	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	This funding methodology is more equitable than previous funding methodologies. Incentives provide a healthy motivation to improve efficiencies and serve more youth with the limited funding. The incentive awards are in two different areas, volunteer retention and increasing service to dependency children. If a CASA program has proven successful in both areas they are deserving of both incentive awards.	No response required.
19.	Superior Court of San Bernardino County By Hon. Christopher B. Marshall, Juvenile Presiding Judge	A – funding bases N – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	We agree with an equitable funding approach. We further agree with the Base Funding Methodology. We recommend that there be a third incentive award in addition to the two proposed by the Committee. We recommend that a third incentive award be put in place which evaluates the degree of success by the county CASA program in achieving its goals. For example, if the CASA program has a goal that the youth it serves receive family search and engagement services, the degree of the Casa program’s success in meeting this goal would be a measure for an incentive award. Another example of a measure for an incentive award would be the number of CASA representatives who serve as the educational representative for an assigned youth in addition to serving as the youth’s CASA volunteer. While the other proposed incentives involve	Recognizing that programs vary significantly from one county to the next, raises the concern of objectivity when creating self-defined goals. The committee made a concerted effort to ensure that the incentives remained objective and measurable.

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	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
			counties competing against each other, the focus of this incentive would be the individual CASA program's successes. Measuring the success of a program's goals would be a strong indicator of a thriving program and would consider a program's accountability and effectiveness. We think this third measure for an incentive award would permit more county CASA programs to receive incentive awards which we believe benefits more of the youth CASA serves.	
20.	Superior Court of San Mateo County By Neal Taniguchi, Finance Director	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	Depending on the specific needs of the child, the San Mateo Superior Court and the CASA Program attempt to assign both dependency and non-dependency clients to CASA volunteers. We understand that the intent of the CASA program and the legislation is to focus on both delinquency cases as well as dependency cases. Our question is whether incentive formulas should treat delinquency equally with dependency, rather than emphasize dependency cases.	CA Rule of Court 5.655 notes that CASA prepares “volunteers for appointment by the court to help define the best interest of children in juvenile court dependency and wardship proceedings”, thereby include delinquent youth. This formula treats delinquent youth equal to dependent youth which is consistent with Rule 5.655. The methodology acknowledges the effort required to serve more children in either jurisdiction.
21.	Superior Court of Solano County By Brian Taylor, Executive Officer	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. N – limit incentives	I've had the opportunity to discuss with Judge Fracchia who has thoroughly reviewed the proposal and discussed with our local CASA program. The Solano Court fully supports implementation of the proposed CASA funding methodology.	No response required.



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	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
22.	Superior Court of Yolo County By Kara Clarkson, Court Analyst	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. A – limit incentives	<p>We agree with the proposed Base Funding Methodology. The proposed methodology is more equitable and will encourage development of CASA programs in counties that do not have a CASA program as well as encourage counties with CASA programs that have stalled due to lack of funding.</p> <p>We agree with the award methodology for Incentive A – volunteer retention. A program should be rewarded if they are able to train and keep CASA volunteers. The more experienced the volunteer, the more benefit to the Court.</p> <p>No objection to Incentive B – Dependency Proportion Served.</p> <p>Yolo is concerned about the incentive of a 50% increase to base for working across two or more jurisdictions with one program administrator; this incentive favors those counties who have similar sized/populated counties in proximity to one another. There are some counties who are surrounded by larger populated, very dissimilar counties. That situation may not be conducive to linking CASA programs under one administrator.</p>	<p>No response required.</p> <p>No response required.</p> <p>No response required.</p> <p>Welfare and Institutions Code 100 states that “The council shall adopt program guidelines and criteria for funding which encourage multicounty CASA programs where appropriate, and shall in no case provide for funding more than one program per county.” While partnering with neighboring counties to develop a multi-county program may not always be appropriate or possible, the committee does recognize the resource challenges and the collaboration required to serve dependent youth across</p>

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	<b>Commentator</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Committee Response</b>
				multiple jurisdictions.
23.	Wild Iris/CASA of the Eastern Sierra By Lisa Reel, Executive Director	A – funding bases A – incentive opts. A – limit incentives	No specific comment.	No response required.

# CASA Funding Methodology

**CASA Funding Formula**

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Step 1 Base +  
Step 2A + Step 2B =  
Total Allocation

## Step 1. Base Amounts

Tier 1	\$26,000
Tier 2	\$34,000
Tier 3	\$42,000
Tier 4	\$50,000

\* These fixed base amounts do not include incentive funding and are based on county population. **Base amounts for multicounty programs** are multiplied by 1.5 to acknowledge the collaboration between two jurisdictions' sharing limited resources and operating under one program administration. Start-up grants would be drawn from incentive funding, not funding allocated for base amounts. **If a program does not qualify for any incentive options (Step 2A and 2B), then the program will receive only its funding base amount.**

## Step 2A. Volunteer Retention Rate

$$\frac{\text{Total No. of Assigned Vols.} - \text{Total No. of Vols. Trained}}{100}$$

\*Figures would be averaged from JC quarterly deliverables reports. This rate speaks to how successful local programs are at training and retaining CASA volunteers, from completing training to getting sworn in as an officer of the court by the judge to being assigned a child. This incentive also recognizes the number of CASAs who remain assigned to a dependent child or youth beyond the 12-month commitment period and who take on another case after one has closed. CASA programs would be expected to uphold all professional and ethical standards in the recruitment and training process. This incentive does not encourage maintaining inappropriate CASA volunteers. **The 20 programs that rate highest for this incentive option will receive the incentive funding on top of their base amount. The incentive award will be a fixed and equal amount for all 20 programs.**

## Step 2B. Dependency Proportion Served

$$\frac{\text{Total No. of Children Served (CASA Assigned)}}{\text{Total Dependency Population}}$$

\*Figures would be obtained from Child Welfare System Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data and National CASA annual surveys. Comparing the number of children that have an assigned CASA and the total number of children in the local dependency system allows smaller counties to be recognized for serving a high proportion of their dependent youth. Although the number served in larger counties may be higher overall, any potential inequality could be addressed by considering that larger counties fall into Tiers 3 and 4, giving them higher base amounts to start. The numerator (number of children served) also includes children in delinquency who may have a CASA assigned. The denominator does not include delinquent youth because not all programs serve this population. **The 20 programs that have the highest percentage in this incentive will receive the incentive funding (in addition to their base amount and any incentive funding qualified for in Step 2A). The incentive award will be a fixed and equal amount for all 20 programs.**

## Attachment B: Proposed CASA Program Base Amounts by Tier

Tier	Local CASA Program	Base Amount
1	Amador	\$26,000
1	Del Norte	\$26,000
1	Humboldt	\$26,000
1	Inyo & Mono*	\$39,000
1	Lassen	\$26,000
1	Mariposa	\$26,000
1	Modoc	\$26,000
1	Nevada	\$26,000
1	Plumas	\$26,000
1	San Benito	\$26,000
1	Siskiyou	\$26,000
2	Butte & Glenn*	\$51,000
2	El Dorado	\$34,000
2	Imperial	\$34,000
2	Kings	\$34,000
2	Marin	\$34,000
2	Mendocino & Lake*	\$51,000
2	Merced	\$34,000
2	Napa	\$34,000
2	San Luis Obispo	\$34,000
2	Santa Cruz	\$34,000
2	Shasta	\$34,000
2	Yolo	\$34,000
3	Monterey	\$42,000
3	Placer	\$42,000
3	San Francisco	\$42,000
3	San Joaquin	\$42,000
3	San Mateo	\$42,000
3	Santa Barbara	\$42,000
3	Solano	\$42,000
3	Sonoma	\$42,000
3	Stanislaus	\$42,000
3	Tulare	\$42,000
3	Ventura	\$42,000
4	Alameda	\$50,000
4	Contra Costa	\$50,000
4	Fresno & Madera*	\$75,000
4	Kern	\$50,000
4	Los Angeles	\$50,000
4	Orange	\$50,000
4	Riverside	\$50,000
4	Sacramento	\$50,000
4	San Bernardino	\$50,000
4	San Diego	\$50,000
4	Santa Clara	\$50,000

\*Base amounts are fixed and do not include incentive funding. Base amounts for two-county programs are multiplied by 1.5 to acknowledge the collaboration between two jurisdictions' sharing limited resources and operating under one program administration.