



TEXAS CASA STANDARDS FOR LOCAL CASA/GAL PROGRAMS SEPTEMBER 2015 EDITION



Texas CASA

Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs

September 2015 Edition

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Our Vision

A CASA volunteer for every child who needs one.

Our Mission

Texas CASA partners with the CASA community to be a voice for abused and neglected children through the power of volunteer advocacy and change in the child protection system.

Introduction

As of this revision, 71 local CASA programs provide powerful volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children in communities across Texas. Through the recruitment, training, supervision and empowering of CASA volunteers, these programs strive toward the common goal of providing a CASA volunteer for every child who needs one.

Texas CASA Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs September 2015 Edition closely aligns with National CASA Standards and the Texas Administrative Code. These are the operational rules and minimum requirements that serve as the foundation of successful programs. CASA programs use these standards to determine both necessary policy and effective practice. Texas CASA uses these standards to evaluate and measure program performance in key areas of nonprofit governance and administration, finance and risk management, volunteer management and advocacy for children.

A safe, permanent and loving home is the ultimate outcome sought by all CASA programs for the children they serve. In building upon these minimum expectations together, the CASA network in Texas is committed to succeeding in creating this very environment where every child can live and grow to their fullest potential.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Standards at a Glance _____	1
Standard 1: Program Mission & Purpose _____	3
Standard 2: Ethical Conduct _____	6
Standard 3: Inclusiveness & Diversity _____	9
Standard 4: Disproportionality _____	10
Standard 5: Program Governance _____	11
Standard 6: Human Resources Management _____	18
Standard 7: Volunteer Management _____	30
Standard 8: Public Relations _____	42
Standard 9: Planning & Evaluation _____	43
Standard 10: Financial, Facility & Risk Management _____	46
Standard 11: Record Keeping _____	52
Standard 12: National Affiliation _____	55
Standard 13: State Affiliation _____	56
Standard 14: Program Development, Implementation & Expansion _____	57

Standards at a Glance

Standard 1: Program Mission and Purpose

The CASA/GAL program's purpose is to provide and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy so that every abused or neglected child can be safe, establish permanence and have the opportunity to thrive.

Standard 2: Ethical Conduct

The CASA/GAL program upholds the credibility, integrity and dignity of the CASA mission by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional and compassionate manner. Recognizing and respecting the sensitive nature of the work, the program maintains the highest confidentiality.

Standard 3: Inclusiveness and Diversity

The CASA/GAL program is committed to inclusiveness and diversity as essential values. It demonstrates these qualities in its own operation and promotes them in its governance, management and quality advocacy for the abused and neglected children it serves.

Standard 4: Disproportionality

The CASA/GAL program demonstrates an understanding of and is committed to addressing disproportionality issues and how they impact the children served and the abused and neglected children of their community.

Standard 5: Program Governance

The CASA/GAL program has a governing body responsible for the following: oversight of the program's compliance with all applicable laws and regulations; adoption of policies; definition of services; and guidance of program development, assuring the program's accountability to the courts and community.

Standard 6: Human Resources Management

The CASA/GAL program follows approved written policies for recruiting, selecting, training, and evaluating its personnel. Practices are in place that encourage development of a diverse, effective staff.

Standard 7: Volunteer Management

The CASA/GAL program follows approved written policies regarding recruitment; application, selection and screening; training; supervision; assignment of roles and responsibilities; and dismissal of volunteers.

Standard 8: Public Relations

The CASA/GAL program communicates with its community and other service providers about its program and the needs of the children it serves and cooperates with other agencies to plan for programs needed to serve children.

Standard 9: Planning and Evaluation

The CASA/GAL program maintains management information and data necessary to plan, deliver, evaluate and report on its services.

Standard 10: Financial, Facility and Risk Management

The CASA/GAL program manages its operations in accordance with generally accepted financial and risk management practices and applicable federal, state and local statutory requirements.

Standard 11: Record Keeping

The CASA/GAL program maintains complete, accurate and current case records and follows written policies for acceptance and assignment of CASA/GAL cases.

Standard 12: National Affiliation

The CASA/GAL program is a member of the National CASA Association and meets its standards, requirements and policies.

Standard 13: State Affiliation

The CASA/GAL program is a member of Texas CASA, meets its standards, requirements and policies, and communicates, collaborates and shares information with its fellow programs in Texas.

Standard 14: Program Development, Implementation and Expansion

The developing CASA/GAL program engages in a comprehensive assessment, which includes a feasibility study and implementation process that guides the program's development.

Standard 1: Program Mission and Purpose

The Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) program's purpose is to provide and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy so that every abused or neglected child can be safe, establish permanence and have the opportunity to thrive.

1. A. CASA/GAL Program Mission

1. The CASA/GAL program's mission statement is:
 - a. Consistent with the mission and standards of National CASA and Texas CASA.
 - b. Written.
 - c. Adopted by the program's governing body.
 - d. Inclusive of volunteer advocacy for children.
 - e. Approved by Texas CASA.
2. The child population served by the CASA/GAL program is clearly defined.
3. The CASA/GAL program appoints trained and qualified community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children who are before the court as a result of abuse or neglect as defined by Texas child welfare laws.
4. The CASA/GAL program assures that volunteers have regular and sufficient in-person contact with the child where they live to enable them to have an in-depth knowledge of the case and make fact based recommendations to the court. The CASA volunteer shall meet in person with the child once every thirty (30) days at a minimum. An exception may be granted if the child(ren) are placed more than 1 but less than 3 driving hours away, CASA will meet in person with the child(ren) at least once every three months. If the child(ren) are placed more than 3 driving hours away, CASA will meet in person with the child(ren) at least once every six months.
5. The CASA/GAL program is an inclusive organization whose governing body members, staff, and volunteers reflect the diversity of the children they serve.
6. The CASA/GAL program consistently offers services in a manner that reflects:
 - a. CASA/GAL program mission.

- b. Available personnel and financial resources.
 - c. Program's funding sources and requirements.
 - d. Roles and responsibilities required by law.
7. The CASA/GAL program's governing body and personnel cooperate and coordinate with other volunteer and public service agencies, the courts, community groups and with families and individuals to:
- a. Improve services for individual children served and their families.
 - b. Advocate for needed change in the conditions which adversely affect the children served.
 - c. Identify gaps in services and work to eliminate them.
 - d. Share training and other resources efficiently and effectively.

1. B. Legal Authority to Operate

- 1. A CASA/GAL program has legal authority to operate through Texas Family Code statute as a GAL or volunteer advocate. Each program complies with the requirements and provisions of the contract between Texas CASA and the Office of the Texas Attorney General.
- 2. Each program shall be incorporated as part of a not for profit organization.

1. C. Court Recognition and Support

- 1. The CASA/GAL program has a written agreement with the court, reviewed every two years, that defines the working relationship between the program and the court.
- 2. The written agreement between the CASA/GAL program and the court must be renewed when there is a change in the judicial leadership or changes in policy, law or local court rules that substantially impact the relationship between the program and the court.
- 3. The CASA/GAL program abides by the Texas Family Code and any other statutes or court rules which govern the relationship with the court.
- 4. The CASA/GAL program has regular communication with the court in order to evaluate the court's satisfaction with the program and to obtain the court's recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the program.

5. The CASA/GAL program has a written agreement which defines the working relationship between the program and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), reviewed every two years, and other agencies as deemed appropriate.

Standard 2: Ethical Conduct and Confidentiality

The CASA/GAL program upholds the credibility, integrity, and dignity of the CASA mission by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional, and compassionate manner. Recognizing and respecting the sensitive nature of the work, the program maintains the highest confidentiality.

2. A. Ethical Conduct

1. The CASA/GAL program establishes policies to govern ethical conduct of members of the governing body, staff and volunteers.
2. The chief executive officer/program administrator, any staff, paid consultant, volunteer or governing board member of the CASA/GAL program serves in accordance with written policies governing conflict of interest, accountability and delegation of authority.
3. Although legal counsel may be provided to the CASA/GAL program under voluntary auspices on a pro bono basis and a lawyer who offers legal counsel may sit on the CASA/GAL program board (particularly in a small or developing program), the program clarifies the roles in order to keep the two functions separate.
4. The CASA/GAL program shall maintain a written conflict of interest policy approved by the governing body. This policy shall govern the conduct of members of the governing body, program staff, volunteers and paid consultants. Members of the governing body and staff annually sign the conflict of interest policy. The conflict of interest policy will:
 - a. Identify and define conduct and transactions in which a conflict of interest exists or has the potential to exist and warrants disclosure including, but not limited to:
 - i. A conflict that renders the person unable or potentially unable to perform his or her duties and responsibilities in an efficient and impartial manner; and
 - ii. A conflict that permits a person to receive or potentially receive private gain or favor for himself or herself or others, or otherwise creates the appearance of impropriety.
 - b. Prohibit staff, paid consultants, board members and volunteers of a CASA/GAL program from having direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions or professional services of the program.
 - c. Identify other specific conduct which is prohibited.

- d. Establish the requirement that the individual involved make timely disclosure of the conflict or potential for conflict in the transaction.
 - e. Include a procedure for recusal from the transaction or decision by the person with the conflict or potential conflict.
 - f. Include a procedure for dismissal or other appropriate discipline of the person involved with the conflict in the event said person fails to disclose the conflict prior to becoming involved in the transaction or decision affected by the conflict.
 - g. Include a procedure for dismissal of a volunteer, employee or board member who has abused or neglected any position of trust or violated the policies governing ethical conduct.
 - h. Prohibit an assigned CASA volunteer from being related to any parties involved in the case or being employed in a position and/or affiliated with an agency that might result in a conflict of interest.
 - i. Prohibit improper or unlawful consideration of race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, national origin, disability, or other legally protected characteristics in conducting business.
 - j. Include restricting the employment of any person related within the second degree of affinity (spouse, in-laws or the grandparents/grandchildren of a spouse) or the third degree of consanguinity (parent, child, sibling, grandparent/child, niece/nephew, aunt/uncle) to any member of the governing body, or to any other officer or employee authorized to employ or supervise such person.
5. If active volunteer advocates are members of the governing body, processes and procedures are in place for handling potential conflicts of interest in relation to personnel and human resource issues and other issues with potential for a conflict of interest being addressed by the governing body.
 6. The CASA/GAL program shall promptly refer to National CASA and Texas CASA any credible evidence that a principal staff, agent, contractor, sub-grantee, subcontractor, or other persons has committed a criminal or civil violation of laws pertinent to fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity, or similar misconduct involving program funds.
 7. The CASA/GAL program's staff, volunteers and board members must immediately notify the CASA/GAL program of any criminal charges filed against them.

2. B. Maintaining Confidentiality

1. The CASA/GAL program follows written policies and procedures regarding access to, use of, and release of information about the children it serves to ensure that the confidentiality of children and their families is maintained at all times.
2. CASA staff and volunteers respect the child's right to privacy by maintaining confidentiality.
3. CASA volunteers take an oath of confidentiality upon completion of training and sign a statement of confidentiality upon acceptance of each case.
4. CASA staff sign a statement of confidentiality upon hire.
5. The CASA/GAL program demonstrates its compliance with applicable statutory requirements pertaining to confidentiality of client information by ensuring that its policy, procedures and practices are consistent with all applicable laws and regulations.
6. Access to records is limited to the court, authorized agency personnel and others outside the agency whose request for access to confidential information is permitted by statute or the court.
7. All confidential electronic and hard copy correspondence, files and records are safely and securely maintained.
8. Controls exist that enable records to be located at any time.
9. The CASA/GAL program has a policy to protect confidential information of governing body and advisory committee members, staff, volunteers and donors.

Standard 3: Inclusiveness and Diversity

The CASA/GAL program is committed to inclusiveness and diversity as essential values. It demonstrates these qualities in its own operation and promotes them in its governance, management and quality advocacy for the abused and neglected children it serves.

3. A. Inclusiveness and Diversification

1. The program adopts and implements a written plan to guide and measure progress in diversifying its governing body, staff and volunteers. As part of the planning process, the program:
 - a. Identifies specific measurable goals.
 - b. Reviews those goals to measure progress, at least annually.
 - c. Identifies new goals and activities to be met in the future.
2. The program creates and implements a written plan that addresses the needs of the children served from a diversity perspective.
3. The program engages individuals who can:
 - a. Help the program identify and understand the needs of the children served.
 - b. Identify the actions the program can take to address these needs in governance, recruitment, cultural competence education and training, supervision, retention, evaluation and advocacy.
4. The plan is part of the organizational strategic plan for board members, staff and volunteers.
5. The plan includes measurable action steps which are reviewed at least once per year.
6. The plan is revised every four years.
7. The local program engages in reciprocal relations with Texas CASA around issues of diversity and inclusion.

Standard 4: Disproportionality

The CASA/GAL program demonstrates an understanding of and is committed to addressing disproportionality issues and how they impact the children served and the abused and neglected children of their community.

4. A. Disproportionality

1. The CASA/GAL program engages in activities to increase the awareness and understanding of staff and volunteers regarding issues of racial disproportionality within its local child welfare and court systems.
2. The CASA/GAL program participates with child welfare providers and court representatives in identifying and understanding their community's issues of racial disproportionality.
3. The CASA/GAL program works in partnership with child welfare providers and court representatives to address issues of racial disproportionality.

Standard 5: Program Governance

The CASA/GAL program has a governing body responsible for overseeing the program's compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, adoption of policies, definition of services and guidance of program development assuring the program's accountability to the courts and community.

5. A. Roles of the Governing Body

1. Ensures program compliance with state and federal contract requirements, applicable state and local statutes, court rules, executive orders or appropriate regulations.
2. Provides CASA/GAL program access to legal counsel with relevant legal expertise to clarify the meaning of laws or regulations governing its program operation and to provide legal counsel as needed to assist in performing the duties assigned to the volunteers by the courts.
3. Maintains personnel policies, reviews annually and adopts needed changes.
4. Procures sufficient financial resources, ensures a balanced budget and manages resources prudently in order to support its provision of services.
5. Appoints the chief executive officer/program administrator and delegates authority and responsibility for program and financial management and policy implementation.
6. Holds the chief executive officer/program administrator accountable for the program's performance.
7. Evaluates the management's handling of the CASA/GAL program's financial affairs.
8. Reviews financial reports at least quarterly comparing actual versus budgeted expenditures and revenues.
9. Examines and approves the program's audited financial statements, operating budget and fiscal policies.
10. Board members are qualified to carry out its responsibilities for adopting or recommending agency policies, selecting and evaluating the chief executive officer/program administrator and engaging in strategic planning, financial oversight, resource development, diversity, outreach and court and community relationships.
11. The governing body maintains a written record of every meeting. The written record accurately reports all actions taken by the governing body and includes a summary of the governing body's deliberations. The written record also includes reports of board committees.

The written record is prepared in a timely manner and copies are made available to board members. A master copy of the written record is kept with the CASA/GAL program's official documents.

12. The CASA/GAL program's bylaws or written operational procedures:
 - a. Describe the organizational structure and responsibilities of the governing body.
 - b. Establish the mechanisms for selection, rotation and term limits for board members and officers.
 - c. Set the minimum number of board members at no fewer than nine members, with an Executive Committee comprised of at least a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.
 - d. Set the minimum number of formal meetings of the full governing body at four times per calendar year.
 - e. Set the quorum for these meetings of at least a simple majority of the current membership of the governing body.
13. The governing body serves as the link between the program, the court, and the community, establishes and evaluates the program's goals, develops resources, and approves policies.

5. B. Program Administration

1. Clear lines of accountability and authority exist at all levels of the program's organizational and management structures and are formalized in a chart of the organization showing lines of accountability to which all staff, volunteers, and board members have received orientation.
2. If the CASA/GAL program is under the umbrella of a parent organization, a written agreement is developed that:
 - a. Details the rights and responsibilities of the program and the parent organization.
 - b. Includes procedures for resolving situations in which a conflict of interest exists between the CASA/GAL program and its parent organization.
 - c. Contains the protocol for resource development activities of both organizations.
 - d. Sets a time frame of no more than two years for review and possible revisions of the agreement.

3. A CASA/GAL program may not either employ or be a part of an organization that employs an individual (or have a financial relationship with any organization) that provides direct services to children under court supervision unless:
 - a. These services are provided by a separate part of an umbrella organization that maintains membership in a recognized statewide organization providing standards for the services provided and complies with Standard 5.B.2; or
 - b. Petitions for and receives written permission from Texas CASA.
4. Communication and collaboration between staff, volunteers and board members is promoted by:
 - a. Providing opportunities for interactions amongst volunteers, staff and the governing body.
 - b. Providing opportunities to serve on committees as appropriate.
 - c. Maintaining brief records of committee meetings.

5. C. Governing Body Membership and Orientation

1. The governing body is diverse and has members, 18 years or older, who bring a range of skills, backgrounds and knowledge which support the CASA/GAL program in fulfilling its mission.
2. The CASA/GAL program governing body includes individuals with various capabilities:
 - a. Skills and experience to serve at a policy-making level.
 - b. Ability to advocate for sufficient financial resources for the program to carry out its purpose.
 - c. Knowledge of the court system and the community served.
 - d. Ability to reflect community and client interests and to advocate for culturally responsive service delivery.
 - e. Other specialized skills needed to carry out the objectives of the program.

3. The program develops and utilizes on an ongoing basis the following:
 - a. Job descriptions for board members.
 - b. Written application for board members including consent and release for record checks.
 - c. Board recruitment strategies.
 - d. Election and screening policies or procedures, including personal interview.
4. If an employee also serves on the governing body, he or she may not be a voting board member.
5. Board members receive formal orientation and on-going education related to the CASA/GAL program's goals, objectives, structure, methods of operation, and fiduciary responsibilities, including financial oversight. The members are familiarized with its services, dynamics of child abuse, family violence and legal statutes. They are provided with key documents related to governance and board responsibilities.
6. Record checks are completed on each board member including:
 - a. Social security number verification.
 - b. Texas criminal record check obtained from the Texas Crime Information Center maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - c. National criminal record check obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigations.
 - d. Texas Public Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - e. National Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the United States Department of Justice.
 - f. The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
7. If the prospective board member has lived in another county and that jurisdiction is not covered by the national criminal background check utilized, the CASA/GAL program secures county and state criminal record checks and child abuse registry or child protective services

check in any county and state in which the person has resided for the previous seven (7) years.

8. A board member applicant is rejected by the CASA/GAL program if he/she refuses to sign a release of information form or submit the required information or fingerprints for any of the required checks. This policy is stated on the board member application form.
9. Barred Felony or Misdemeanor Offense: A board member whose background check produces a conviction, guilty plea, plea of no contest, acceptance of deferred adjudication or pending charge is barred from being a board member if the charge is any level of offense under the Texas Penal Code:
 - a. Chapter 19, Criminal Homicide.
 - b. Chapter 20, Kidnapping.
 - c. Chapter 20A, Trafficking.
 - d. Chapter 21, Sections 21.02, 21.07, 21.08, 21.11, 21.12 Continuous Sexual Abuse of Young Child or Children, Public Lewdness, Indecent Exposure to Another Person, Indecency With a Child, Improper Relationship Between Educator and Student.
 - e. Chapter 22, Sections 22.011, 22.02, 22.021, Sexual Assault, Aggravated Assault, Aggravated Sexual Assault, Injury to a Child. See additional Sections 22.04, 22.041, 22.05, 22.07, 22.11.
 - f. Chapter 25 Offenses Against the Family: Bigamy; Prohibited Sexual Conduct. See all additional Sections.
 - g. Chapter 28, Section 28.02 Arson.
 - h. Chapter 29, Robbery.
 - i. Chapter 30, Section 30.02 Burglary.
 - j. Chapter 33, Section 33.021 Online Solicitation of a Minor.
 - k. Chapter 42, Section 42.072 Stalking.
 - l. Chapter 43, Public Indecency.

- m. Chapter 46, Section 46.06, 46.09, 46.10 Unlawful Transfer of Certain Weapons.
 - n. Chapter 48, Section 48.02 Prohibition of the Purchase and Sale of Human Organs.
 - o. Chapter 49, Section, 49.045, 49.05, 49.07, 49.08 Intoxication Assault, Intoxication Manslaughter. See Additional Section 49.045.
 - p. Chapter 71, Organized Crime.
 - q. Any Other Charge Involving Violence, Child Abuse or Neglect, Assault with Family Violence, or a Sex-Related Offense.
10. Ten-Year Bar for Felony Offenses: A board member whose background check produces a conviction, guilty plea, plea of no contest, acceptance of deferred adjudication or pending charge that includes any grade of felony, other than for offenses listed in 5.C.9. (above) is barred from being a board member for 10 years after the offense, after which time the CASA program will consider the extent of the rehabilitation since the offense as well as other factors that may influence the decision to accept the applicant as a CASA board member.
 11. If a board applicant is found to have committed a misdemeanor or felony that is unrelated to 5.C.9, including a misdemeanor drug-related offense, or would not pose a risk to children and would not negatively impact the credibility of the CASA/GAL program, the CASA/GAL program will consider the extent of the rehabilitation since the misdemeanor or felony was committed as well as other factors that may influence the decision to accept the applicant as a CASA board member.
 12. If the charge that is barring the board applicant is not final, a review of the application may be made if the charge is dismissed or a finding of not guilty or other determination of innocence is entered.
 13. A board member whose background check produces information that includes a group of offenses or information, that if considered separately, would not bar an applicant, may result in the disqualification of a board member if it is determined that the offenses constitute a problematic pattern.
 14. A board member shall be barred if the board member knowingly or intentionally places a child, through the actions of the board member, in contact with a person whose criminal history involves a felony offense or offense under 5.C.9.
 15. The CASA/GAL program rechecks all required records once every 2 years for board members.

16. Board members may be foster, foster/adopt or adoptive parents for any child whose conservatorship is with DFPS.
17. At least one board member from each CASA/GAL program should attend the annual training conference provided by the statewide organization or a national association. If no board member can attend the annual training conference, at least one board member must obtain and review materials.

Standard 6: Human Resources Management

The CASA/GAL program follows approved written policies for recruiting, selecting, training, and evaluating its personnel. Practices are in place that encourage development of a diverse, effective staff.

6. A. Administration

1. The chief executive officer or designee is responsible for the management of the CASA/GAL program.
2. The chief executive officer or designee has the following qualifications:
 - a. Education and/or training in a related field.
 - b. Management skills and experience to effectively administer the organization's personnel and financial resources.
 - c. Ability to effectively coordinate services with the court and other community agencies.
3. The chief executive officer or designee:
 - a. Plans and coordinates with the governing body the development of CASA/GAL program policies.
 - b. Attends or is represented by a designee at all meetings of the governing body and its committees to the extent authorized by the governing body.
4. The chief executive officer or designee is delegated overall personnel management authority by the governing body and ensures that the CASA/GAL program's personnel management is carried out in accord with written agency policy.
5. The chief executive officer or designee annually reviews and revises personnel policies including Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and practices; updates policies as needed and submits the proposed policies to the governing body for review and approval.
6. The chief executive officer or designee is responsible for the overall financial management of the program and reports to the governing body at least quarterly on the program's financial status.

7. The governing body adopts a written succession plan. The plan makes provision for the following in the event of the replacement of a chief executive officer:
 - a. Designates an interim chief executive officer/program administrator, if necessary and notifies Texas CASA.
 - b. Charges a committee with responsibility for conducting a formal search.
 - c. Provides the resources needed to carry out the search effectively.
 - d. Notifies Texas CASA, National CASA, significant funders, and other pertinent personnel of replacement.
 - e. Plans for the delegation of authority in the temporary absence, not replacement, of the chief executive officer.

6. B. Retaining Qualified Staff

1. The CASA/GAL program retains staff qualified to carry out its program goals.
2. The CASA/GAL program has a written job description for each position or group of similar positions which clearly specifies qualifications and responsibilities.
3. The CASA/GAL program efficiently manages its administrative systems, including accounting, bookkeeping, personnel records and statistical reporting, and assigns appropriately skilled personnel to carry out those tasks.
4. Administrative and/or supervisory responsibility is assigned to staff qualified by experience and training.
5. CASA/GAL program staff meet all applicable state registration, licensing or certification requirements for their assignment and/or use of professional titles.
6. The CASA/GAL program, in its ongoing planning process, details the type and number of personnel required to accomplish the program's goals and objectives.

6. C. Personnel Policies

1. Personnel policies and practices specify the responsibilities of paid personnel and are equitable, clear and consistent.

2. Personnel policies and practices are outlined in a handbook provided to all staff which covers:
 - a. Personnel practices.
 - b. Working conditions.
 - c. Wage policies and benefits, as applicable.
 - d. Insurance protection.
 - e. Required and supplemental training and development opportunities.
 - f. Social media policy.
3. Each staff receives a copy of the personnel policies and provides signed acknowledgement of reading and understanding the policies.
4. The CASA/GAL program complies with applicable laws and regulations governing fair employment practices.
5. CASA/GAL program personnel salaries and benefits are established by considering practices of similar agencies and organizations in its area.
6. The CASA/GAL program maintains written operational procedures regarding grievances to provide personnel the opportunity and means to lodge complaints and appeals, where this is allowed under state law.
7. The CASA/GAL program acts on any complaints in accordance with its procedures with all documentation kept on file.
8. The complainant is informed of the resolution of any complaint and a copy of the notification is maintained.
9. Procedures allow for the periodic participation of personnel in management's review of personnel policies and for written notification to personnel by management of any changes in those policies in regard to personnel.
10. The CASA/GAL program has a policy requiring disclosure of other paid employment, volunteer or contract work by all staff.

6. D. Workforce Diversity

1. The CASA/GAL program is inclusive and actively recruits, selects, and promotes qualified staff reflective of the children served.
2. The CASA/GAL program administers its personnel practices without discrimination based upon age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability or religion.
3. The CASA/GAL program's personnel recruitment and selection practices are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
4. The CASA/GAL program is in compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.
5. The CASA/GAL program has a written equal opportunity policy, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies which clearly state its practices in recruiting, selecting and promoting personnel.
6. The CASA/GAL program publicizes its equal opportunity policy in their personnel recruitment materials.
7. The CASA/GAL program makes an effort to ensure their facility is free of barriers which restrict the employment of or use by physically challenged staff, volunteers and others.
8. The CASA/GAL program develops and implements a plan to diversify the workforce to promote cultural competency and equal opportunity consistent with the National CASA Association diversity vision, commitment and guiding principles.

6. E. Recruitment and Selection of Qualified Staff

1. Recruitment and selection policies or procedures ensure that the personnel needs of the CASA/GAL program are adequately met.
2. All applicants for paid employment with the CASA/GAL program are required to:
 - a. Be a minimum of 18 years of age.
 - b. Complete a written application containing information about educational background, training, employment history and experience working with children.
 - c. Submit the names of three or more references unrelated to the applicant.

- d. Authorize the CASA/GAL program and other appropriate agencies and provide the necessary information for them to secure the following record checks:
 - i. Social security number verification.
 - ii. Texas criminal record check obtained from the Texas Crime Information Center maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - iii. National criminal record check obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigations.
 - iv. Texas Public Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - v. National Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the United States Department of Justice.
 - vi. The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
3. Participate in personal interview(s) with CASA/GAL program staff.
4. The CASA/GAL program is required to complete the following:
 - a. Secure a completed written application for each applicant containing information about educational background, training, employment history and experience working with children.
 - b. Secure three or more references, either written or documented by the program in writing who are unrelated to the applicant.
 - c. Secure the following record checks on an applicant being considered for employment:
 - i. Social security number verification.
 - ii. Texas criminal record check obtained from the Texas Crime Information Center maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - iii. National criminal record check obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigations.
 - iv. Texas Public Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.

- v. National Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the United States Department of Justice.
 - vi. The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
- d. Conduct a personal interview with the staff applicant.
5. If the prospective staff has lived in another county and that jurisdiction is not covered by the national criminal background check utilized, the CASA/GAL program secures county and state criminal record checks and a child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law in any county and state in which the person has resided for the previous seven (7) years.
 6. A staff applicant is rejected by the CASA/GAL program if he/she refuses to sign a release of information form or submit the required information or fingerprints for any of the required checks. This policy is stated on the staff application form.
 7. Barred Felony or Misdemeanor Offense: An employee whose background check produces a conviction, guilty plea, plea of no contest, acceptance of deferred adjudication or pending charge is barred from being an employee if the charge is any level of offense under the Texas Penal Code: *see complete list of penal codes under Standard 5.C.9.
 8. Ten-Year Bar for Felony Offenses: An employee whose background check produces a conviction, guilty plea, plea of no contest, acceptance of deferred adjudication or pending charge that includes any grade of felony, other than for offenses listed in Standard 5.C.9. is barred from being an employee for 10 years after the offense, after which time the CASA program will consider the extent of the rehabilitation since the offense as well as other factors that may influence the decision to accept the applicant as a CASA employee. This policy is stated on the staff application form.
 9. If an applicant is found to have committed a misdemeanor or felony that is unrelated to Standard 5.C.9., including a misdemeanor drug-related offense, or would not pose a risk to children and would not negatively impact the credibility of the CASA/GAL program, the CASA/GAL program will consider the extent of the rehabilitation since the misdemeanor or felony was committed as well as other factors that may influence the decision to accept the applicant as a CASA employee.
 10. If the charge that is barring the employee is not final a review of the application may be made if the charge is dismissed or a finding of not guilty or other determination of innocence is entered.

11. An employee whose background check produces information that includes a group of offenses or information that if considered separately would not bar an applicant, may result in the disqualification of an employee if it is determined that the offenses constitute a problematic pattern.
12. An employee shall be barred if the employee knowingly or intentionally places a child through the actions of the employee in contact with a person whose criminal history involves a felony offense or offense under Standard 5.C.9.
13. The CASA/GAL program repeats the required record checks for each active staff at least every two years.
14. If the CASA/GAL program permits staff to transport children or drive on behalf of the program, the applicant shall provide to the program at the time of the application:
 - a. Copy of a valid current driver's license.
 - b. Proof of adequate personal automobile insurance.
15. The CASA/GAL program secures a motor vehicle division records check on each prospective staff. In addition, the CASA/GAL program has policies and procedures in place to assure that the following occur prior to CASA staff members transporting children:
 - a. Obtains permission of the supervisor or director.
 - b. Obtains permission of the child's legal guardian or custodial agency.
 - c. Are knowledgeable of the potential personal risk of liability.
 - d. Obtains proof of personal automobile insurance. Insurance must be the required state minimum.
 - e. Chooses to accept the responsibility.
16. The CASA/GAL program's selection process for all staff includes an assessment of the applicant's awareness and sensitivity to the cultural and socioeconomic factors of the children and families the CASA/GAL program serves.
17. The chief executive officer/program administrator or designee notifies all applicants in writing when the position applied for is filled.

18. Does not allow a CASA employee:

- a. To be a foster, foster/adopt, or adoptive parent for any child whose conservatorship is through DFPS, unless the staff member is related to the child or the child is not in conservatorship from any county served by the staff member's CASA program.
- b. To be a voting member of the governing body.
- c. To serve as DFPS mediators or have any contractual relationship with DFPS.

6. F. New Staff Orientation

1. The CASA/GAL program provides new staff orientation introducing its mission and purpose, policies and services including, but not limited to:
 - a. Information about confidentiality laws and the staff's responsibility to abide by these laws.
 - b. Information about the CASA/GAL program's structure, service mandates, relationship to the court and professional ethics including sexual harassment and non-discrimination policies.
 - c. Lines of accountability and authority within the program.
 - d. Information about pertinent laws, regulations, and policies.
 - e. Information about the mission and purpose of CASA/GAL programs on local, state and national levels.
 - f. Demographics of community and children served.
 - g. Staff job responsibilities and description.
2. Newly hired directors and volunteer supervisors are required to attend volunteer pre-service training.

6. G. Staff Training and Development

1. The CASA/GAL program plans and implements a training and development program for staff to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities and provide information about the backgrounds and needs of the children served by the program.

2. The training and development program is reviewed annually and revised based on the CASA/GAL program's assessment of its staff training needs.
3. The training and development program requires a minimum of 12 hours of continuing education annually for volunteer supervisors and includes the opportunity for other staff to pursue continuing education to upgrade knowledge and skills to fulfill the requirements of their respective positions.
4. The training and development program includes information related to children who are abused and neglected and in the court system, including family violence, applicable statutes, cultural competency, disproportionality, and disparity in outcomes training.
5. The CASA/GAL program provides the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) compliance information and resources to all staff.
6. A CASA/GAL program considering using a peer coordinator model (or other models utilizing volunteers coordinating other volunteers) must:
 - a. Seek legal counsel before adoption so the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any state laws can be considered.
 - b. Engage in a review of insurance considerations, including workers compensation, to explore implications of such a model.
 - c. Participate in learning opportunities about the model.
 - d. Undergo an organizational assessment to determine need and readiness including considerations related to budget, training, recruitment, staffing and organizational culture.
 - e. Develop a written plan and timeline for implementation of the model.
7. A CASA/GAL program that adopts and implements a peer coordinator model (or other models utilizing volunteers coordinating other volunteers):
 - a. Has a written job description and policies or procedures for the position of peer coordinator.
 - b. Has written supervisory policies or procedures for staff supervising peer coordinators. Provides adequate supervision for the peer coordinator and holds them accountable for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.

- c. Has a written policy that requires a peer coordinator to participate in equivalent staff orientation, training and evaluation as paid staff.
- d. Maintains that an employee assigned to the supervision of a peer coordinator as a full-time function will not supervise more than 15 peer coordinators.
- e. Maintains that a peer coordinator will not oversee more than 10 volunteer advocates.

6. H. Staff Supervision

1. The CASA/GAL program provides adequate supervision for its staff and holds staff accountable for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.
2. Frequency of individual or group supervision is arranged on the basis of staff needs, the complexity and size of the workload and the staff's familiarity with the assignment.
3. Supervisors are easily accessible and make every effort to provide quick and thorough guidance to CASA staff.
4. The CASA/GAL program supervisor holds regularly scheduled case conferences with staff who supervise volunteers to review progress on each case.

6. I. Staff Performance Evaluation

1. The CASA/GAL program develops and implements a system for the periodic evaluation of all staff.
2. At least once a year, the performance of staff is evaluated by the person to whom they are accountable, using a standardized evaluation form, to review their performance against established criteria. The staff is an active participant in this process.
3. Staff evaluations include:
 - a. Assessment of job performance in relation to the quality and quantity of work defined in the job description and to the performance objectives established in the most recent evaluation.
 - b. Clearly stated objectives for future performance.
 - c. Recommendations for further training and skill building, if applicable
 - d. Opportunity for staff self-evaluation.

4. Staff is given the opportunity to sign the evaluation report, to obtain a copy and to include written comments before the report is entered into the personnel record.
5. The governing body:
 - a. Evaluates the performance of the chief executive officer/organization administrator in writing at least annually against written performance criteria and objectives established for the time span between evaluations.
 - b. Provides for the participation of the chief executive officer/organization administrator in the evaluation process as well as their review, signature and response to the evaluation before it is entered into the personnel record.

6. J. Staff Discipline and Termination

1. The CASA/GAL program has policies and procedures for termination of staff that are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
2. The CASA/GAL program's personnel policies and practices specify the conditions for disciplinary action and termination of staff, including violations of program policy and/or documented substandard performance.
3. The CASA/GAL program's policies and procedures specify the person or persons with authority to terminate or discharge a staff person.
4. The CASA/GAL program does not retain staff that have abused or have failed to fulfill their position of trust or otherwise created a negative image for the CASA/GAL program.

6. K. Maintaining Personnel Records

1. The CASA/GAL program maintains a written confidential personnel record for each staff that contains as appropriate:
 - a. Staff application.
 - b. Job description.
 - c. Reference documentation.
 - d. Documentation of all records checks.
 - e. Verification of education for professional and administrative personnel.

- f. Training records.
 - g. Performance evaluations.
 - h. Disciplinary actions.
 - i. Termination summaries.
 - j. Letters of commendation.
 - k. Time attendance records.
 - l. Proof of eligibility to work in the US (I-9 form).
2. Written policies grant staff access to their records and detail the procedures for review, addition and correction by staff of information contained in the record.

6. L. Whistleblower Policy

1. The governing body of the CASA/GAL program adopts a "whistleblower policy" which provides members of the governing body, staff and volunteers a procedure for reporting unethical, inappropriate or illegal activities by members of the governing body, staff or volunteers and such policy affords the reporter protection in making good faith report about such activities.

Standard 7: Volunteer Management

The CASA/GAL program follows approved written policies for its volunteers regarding recruitment; application, selection and screening; training; supervision; volunteer roles and responsibilities and dismissal.

7. A. Volunteer Recruitment

1. The CASA/GAL program is inclusive and has a written plan for recruiting and selecting volunteers who reflect the children served.
2. The recruitment plan demonstrates that inclusiveness and diversity are essential components of quality advocacy and includes targeted strategies to attract a diverse volunteer pool.
3. The CASA/GAL program prepares a standardized packet of written information to recruit volunteers which includes the following:
 - a. Purpose and role of the CASA volunteer.
 - b. Qualifications.
 - c. Minimum time commitment required.
 - d. Equal opportunity statement.
 - e. Community collaboration, media outreach, speaking engagements and other appropriate strategies are employed to recruit volunteers.
4. The CASA/GAL program informs potential volunteers of, and refers them to other CASA/GAL programs, National CASA or Texas CASA if the applicant might be eligible for or prefer to serve in another CASA/GAL program.

7. B. Volunteer Application, Screening, Selection and Transfer Process

1. A CASA/GAL program has written policies or procedures for recruiting, screening, training and appointment of volunteers to cases.
2. A CASA volunteer is an individual who is at least 21 years of age and has successfully passed the application and screening process, been trained by and serves under the supervision of the CASA/GAL program and is appointed by the court to advocate for children who come into the court system as a result of abuse or neglect as defined by the state child welfare laws.

3. A qualified CASA volunteer who transfers to a new program must complete, at a minimum, training regarding the local court, laws, program policies and procedures, investigation and report writing.
4. The CASA/GAL program has a policy regarding the reactivation of volunteers who have been inactive for more than one year. The policy shall include guidelines under which a volunteer would not have to be retrained. The program shall document the specific information when reactivating a volunteer without retraining.
5. A CASA volunteer is an individual who respects a child's inherent right to be safe, establish permanence and have the opportunity to thrive.
6. The CASA volunteer is an individual who advocates for the child's best interests in the court at every stage of the case once appointed by the court.
7. All CASA volunteer applicants are required to:
 - a. Complete a written application containing information about educational background, training, employment history and experience working with children.
 - b. Submit the names of three or more references that are unrelated to the applicant.
 - c. Authorize the CASA/GAL program and other appropriate agencies and provide the necessary information for them to secure the following record checks:
 - i. Social security number verification.
 - ii. Texas criminal record check obtained from the Texas Crime Information Center maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - iii. National criminal record check obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigations.
 - iv. Texas Public Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - v. National Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the United States Department of Justice.
 - vi. The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

- d. Participate in an in-person interview(s) with CASA/GAL program personnel.
8. The CASA/GAL program is required to secure the following:
- a. A completed written application for each applicant containing information about educational background, training, employment history and experience working with children.
 - b. Three or more references, either written or documented by the program in writing, which are unrelated to the applicant.
 - c. Record checks on each volunteer applicant including:
 - i. Social security number verification.
 - ii. Texas criminal record check obtained from the Texas Crime Information Center maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - iii. National criminal record check obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigations.
 - iv. Texas Public Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
 - v. National Sex Offender Registry check maintained by the United States Department of Justice.
 - vi. The Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
 - d. Conduct a personal interview in-person with the volunteer applicant.
9. If the prospective volunteer has lived in another county and that jurisdiction is not covered by the national criminal background check utilized, the CASA/GAL program secures county and state criminal record checks and a child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law in any county and state in which the person has resided for the previous seven (7) years.
10. If a volunteer applicant refuses to sign a release of information form or submit the required information or fingerprints for any of the checks required, the CASA/GAL program rejects the application. This policy is stated on the volunteer application form.

11. Barred Felony or Misdemeanor Offense: A volunteer whose background check produces a conviction, guilty plea, plea of no contest, acceptance of deferred adjudication or pending charge is barred from being a volunteer if the charge is any level of offense under: *see complete list of penal codes under Standard 5.C.9.
12. Ten-Year Bar for Felony Offenses: A volunteer whose background check produces a conviction, guilty plea, plea of no contest, acceptance of deferred adjudication or pending charge that includes any grade of felony, other than for offenses listed in Standard 5.C.9. (above) is barred from being a volunteer for 10 years after the offense, after which time the CASA program will consider the extent of the rehabilitation since the offense as well as other factors that may influence the decision to accept the applicant as a CASA volunteer.
13. If an applicant is found to have committed a misdemeanor or felony that is unrelated to Standard 5.C.9., including a misdemeanor drug-related offense, or would not pose a risk to children and would not negatively impact the credibility of the CASA/GAL program, the CASA/GAL program will consider the extent of the rehabilitation since the misdemeanor or felony was committed as well as other factors that may influence the decision to accept the applicant as a CASA volunteer.
14. If the charge that is barring the volunteer is not final a review of the application may be made if the charge is dismissed, a finding of not guilty or other determination of innocence is entered.
15. A volunteer whose background check produces information that includes a group of offenses or information that if considered separately would not bar an applicant, may result in the disqualification of a volunteer if it is determined that the offenses constitute a problematic pattern.
16. A volunteer shall be barred if the volunteer knowingly or intentionally places a child, through the actions of the volunteer, in contact with a person whose criminal history involves a felony offense or offense under Standard 5.C.9.
17. The CASA/GAL program's volunteer selection procedures ensure that those not selected are treated with dignity, respect and, if appropriate, referred to alternative volunteer opportunities.
18. All screening is completed before the volunteer is assigned to a case and written verification is on file at the program office.
19. The CASA/GAL program repeats the required record checks for each active volunteer at least every two years.

20. A qualified CASA volunteer who transfers to a new program must complete the full application and screening process.
21. CASA volunteers cannot serve as foster, foster/adopt or adoptive parents for any child whose conservatorship is through DFPS unless the volunteer is related to the child or placement occurred prior to June 1999.
22. CASA volunteers cannot serve as DFPS mediators nor have any contractual relationship with DFPS.

7. C. Volunteer Training

1. The CASA/GAL program delivers training to volunteers using the *National CASA Volunteer Training Curriculum* or its equivalent. All such training materials are subject to review and revision by Texas CASA. The purpose of the training is to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of volunteers so that they can fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a CASA volunteer.
2. The training consists of and the program documents at least 30 hours of required pre-service training and 12 hours of required in-service training per year. The number of in-service training hours required for newly trained volunteers will be adjusted (or prorated) dependent on the time of year the volunteer is trained.
3. The training program is reviewed annually and revised based on the CASA/GAL program's assessment of its training needs.
4. Guest speakers such as attorneys, judges, agency representatives and volunteers may deliver the training under supervision of staff.
5. Pre-service training includes the following topics:
 - a. Roles and responsibilities of a CASA volunteer.
 - b. Operation of the court, court process and child welfare system.
 - c. Dynamics of families including mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and poverty.
 - d. Relevant state laws, regulations and policies.

- e. Relevant federal laws, regulations and policies, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the Multi Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA).
 - f. Confidentiality and record keeping practices.
 - g. Child development as well as the background and needs of children served by the program.
 - h. The nature and effect of child abuse and neglect.
 - i. Permanency planning.
 - j. Community agencies and resources available to meet the needs of children and families.
 - k. Communication and information gathering.
 - l. Effective advocacy.
 - m. Cultural competency.
 - n. Special needs of the children served.
6. The CASA/GAL program documents that volunteers successfully complete at least 30 hours of pre-service training during which the volunteer must spend a minimum of 10 hours in personal contact with and under the supervision of the program staff delivering the training sufficient for staff to evaluate the applicant's appropriateness to serve as a volunteer.
7. In addition to the 30 hours of pre-service training, if allowed by the court, the program requires each volunteer to visit the court served by the CASA/GAL program while the court is in session to observe abuse/neglect proceedings before appearing in court for an assigned case.
8. The CASA/GAL program provides ICWA compliance information and resources to all volunteers.
9. In-service training opportunities must include, but are not limited to, cultural competency on an annual basis, disproportionality, disparity in outcome training, and recognizing abuse.

7. D. Volunteer Supervision

1. The CASA/GAL program provides supervision which is appropriate to the volunteer's needs and complexity of the case assignment and holds volunteers accountable for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.
2. Supervisors are easily accessible and provide timely and thorough guidance to CASA volunteers through personal contact at least once per month.
3. For staff assigned to supervision as a full-time function, the staff will not supervise more than 30 active volunteers or a maximum of 45 cases. In the event the staff is required to perform duties other than supervision of volunteers, the number of volunteers the staff can supervise shall be reduced pro rata.
4. The CASA/GAL program supervisor holds regularly scheduled case conferences with volunteers to review progress on each case and written case records.
5. The CASA/GAL program has in place mechanisms for volunteer recognition.
6. The CASA/GAL program has written procedures for the support and supervision of volunteers.
7. The CASA/GAL program supervisor conducts an in-person review of the case and evaluation of the volunteer's work on the case as a component of case closure.
8. A volunteer will not be assigned more than two cases at a time. An exception may be granted in the discretion of the CASA/GAL program staff; however, the decision to permit a higher caseload shall be documented as to the justification for and reasonableness of the exception. Under the exception, a volunteer will not be assigned to more than five cases.
9. The minimum ratio of volunteers to assigned cases is 80%.

7. E. Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

1. The roles and responsibilities of the CASA volunteer are clearly communicated through written policies, job descriptions and training, and are reinforced through the supervisory process.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains a current manual of volunteer policies and procedures.
3. Each volunteer receives a copy of the volunteer policies and procedures and provides signed acknowledgement of reading and understanding the policies.

4. The CASA/GAL program volunteer policies and procedures specify the role of the CASA volunteer, developed with the input and approval of the court (if not already determined by statute).
5. Written roles and responsibilities will include the following. The advocate will:
 - a. Identify and advocate for the best interest of the child by obtaining first hand a clear understanding of the needs and situation of the child, by conducting an ongoing review of all relevant documents and records and by interviewing the child, parents, social workers, teachers and other persons to determine the facts and circumstances of the child's situation.
 - b. Have regular and sufficient in-person contact with the child where they live to ensure in-depth knowledge of the case and make fact-based recommendations to the court. The CASA volunteer shall meet in-person with the child once every thirty (30) days at a minimum. An exception may be granted:
 - i. If the child(ren) are placed more than 1 but less than 3 driving hours away, CASA will meet in person with the child(ren) at least once every three months.
 - ii. If the child(ren) are placed more than 3 driving hours away, CASA will meet in person with the child(ren) at least once every six months.
 - iii. In addition to in-person contact, have other types of monthly age appropriate contact with the child(ren) including telephone calls, emails, video conferencing and letters as applicable for the child's age and interests.
 - c. Communicate with the DFPS caseworker after appointment and at least one time per month for the duration of the case.
 - d. Meet in person with the child's primary placement provider, in a timely manner, after placement occurs. Communicate with the placement provider at least once per month thereafter for the duration of the child's case.
 - e. Advocate for the child's best interests in the community through regular contact with attorney ad litem, mental health, educational and other community systems to assure that the child's needs in these areas are met and seek cooperative solutions by acting as a facilitator among parties.
 - f. Determine the child(ren)'s permanent plan, access the educational portfolio and health passport and make recommendations regarding permanency, and education and medical services, as appropriate.

- g. Appear at all hearings to advocate for the child's best interests and provide testimony as needed.
 - h. Provide at every hearing reports which include findings and recommendations, including specific recommendations for appropriate services for the child and, when appropriate, the child's family.
 - i. Participate in all case-related meetings.
 - j. Monitor implementation of service plans and court orders assuring that court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner and that review hearings are held in accordance with the law.
 - k. Inform the court promptly of important developments in the case through appropriate means as determined by court rules or statute.
 - l. Maintain complete records about the case, including appointments, interviews and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances and return all records to the program after the case is closed.
 - m. Communicate at least once monthly with CASA supervisor and participate in case conferences as scheduled.
 - n. Participate in in-service training.
6. The CASA/GAL program's volunteer policies and procedures include but are not limited to the following:
- a. The CASA volunteer reports any incident of child abuse or neglect, or any situation in which the CASA volunteer has reason to believe that a child is in imminent danger to the appropriate authorities and the CASA supervisor, as mandated in the Texas Family Code.
 - b. The CASA volunteer does not engage in the following activities:
 - i. Taking a child to the volunteer's home or any home other than the child's current placement.
 - ii. Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling.
 - iii. Making placement arrangements for the child.

- iv. Giving money or expensive gifts to the child, the child's family or caregiver.
 - v. Taking a child on an overnight outing.
 - vi. Any activities which are likely to result in a conflict of interest or expose the program or volunteer to criminal or civil liability.
 - vii. Allowing the child to come into contact with someone the volunteer knows has a criminal history involving violence, child abuse, neglect, drugs, or a sex-related offense.
- c. A volunteer may, on an individual case basis, get written permission from the local program for an exception to an action listed under 7.E.6.vii. If a request for an exception is made, a volunteer must disclose if anyone who resides with the volunteer, or that the child might come in contact with through the volunteer, does not meet the background requirements of Standard 5.C.9. A reason for granting or not granting an exception must be documented in the case file.
- d. The CASA volunteer discusses all recommendations concerning the case with the program supervisor prior to submitting recommendations to the court.
- e. CASA program supervisors do not alter reports or recommendations without the knowledge and agreement of the CASA volunteer.
- f. The CASA/GAL program has a clear policy to resolve conflicts between a volunteer and the program supervisor regarding the handling of a case, reporting of information or the recommendations to be included in a report to the court.
- g. A CASA volunteer should not be related to any parties involved in the case or be employed in a position and/or affiliated with an agency that might result in a conflict of interest.
- h. Social media policy.
7. When the CASA/GAL program has made the decision to allow volunteers to provide transportation to children, it has the necessary liability insurance to cover the program. In addition it has policies and procedures which assure the CASA volunteer:
- a. Has passed a motor vehicles division record check.

- b. Provides annually to the program a copy of a valid current driver's license, a safe driving record and adequate personal automobile insurance.
- c. Insurance must be the required state minimum.
- d. Obtains permission of the CASA supervisor or director.
- e. Obtains permission of the child's legal guardian or custodial agency.
- f. Is knowledgeable of the potential personal risk of liability.
- g. Chooses to accept the responsibility.

7. F. Dismissal of a CASA Volunteer

- 1. The CASA/GAL program has policies and procedures that specify the conditions for disciplinary action and non-voluntary dismissal of volunteers.
- 2. Appropriate grounds for dismissal of a CASA volunteer include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Taking action without program or court approval which endangers the child or is outside the role or authority of the CASA/GAL program.
 - b. Engaging in ex-parte communication with the court.
 - c. Violating a program policy, court rule or law.
 - d. Failing to complete required pre-service and in-service training.
 - e. Failing to demonstrate an ability to effectively carry out assigned duties.
 - f. Falsifying a volunteer application or misrepresenting facts during the screening process.
 - g. Having allegations of child abuse/neglect brought against them.
 - h. Experiencing an irresolvable conflict of interest.
- 3. The CASA/GAL program's policies and procedures specify the person or persons with authority to dismiss a volunteer.

7. G. Volunteer Records

1. The CASA/GAL program maintains a written confidential record for each volunteer that contains, at minimum:
 - a. Application.
 - b. Emergency and identifying contact information.
 - c. Job description.
 - d. Reference documentation.
 - e. Documentation of all records checks.
 - f. Training records.
 - g. Performance evaluations and any other applicable documentation related to performance.
 - h. Documentation of volunteer status.
 - i. Copy of volunteer's current driver's license, motor vehicles records check and verification of automobile insurance (if program allows transportation).
 - j. Documentation of personal interview.
2. Written policies outline when and if, volunteers have access to their records and detail the procedures for review, addition and correction (by volunteers) of information contained in the record.
3. The CASA/GAL program retains the record after a volunteer has left the program in accordance with the program's records retention policy.

Standard 8: Public Relations

The CASA/GAL program communicates with its community and other service providers about its program and the needs of the children it serves and cooperates with other agencies to plan for programs needed to serve children.

8. A. Public Relations

1. The CASA/GAL program conducts an ongoing program of public information and education to provide an understanding of the program's purpose, function and place in judicial proceedings and the community social service system.
2. The CASA/GAL program disseminates public information to broaden awareness of the needs and problems of the children it serves.
3. The CASA/GAL program conducts outreach to make known its role, functions and capacities to other agencies, community organizations, governmental bodies and corporations as appropriate.
4. The CASA/GAL program works closely with representatives from the legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups as well as with businesses to accomplish its purposes and to foster interagency collaboration and coordination of services.
5. The CASA/GAL program has a written policy that guides their utilization of online communication and social networking.
6. The local program works in partnership with Texas CASA and National CASA to provide timely information concerning newsworthy events, stories and occurrences which may raise awareness of the CASA movement.
7. The CASA/GAL program has a written crisis management plan that addresses issues that may have significant impact on the credibility, reputation or funding at the local, state or national level. This crisis management plan provides for information sharing between national, state and local organizations within 24 hours, subject to confidentiality limitations.

Standard 9: Planning and Evaluation

The CASA/GAL program maintains management information and data necessary to plan, deliver, evaluate and report on its services.

9. A. Data Collection

1. The CASA/GAL program collects the performance measure data and information needed to complete Texas CASA's quarterly reports and National CASA Association's annual survey.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains data which includes:
 - a. Information on children:
 - i. Demographic information including age, gender and ethnicity for new, active and closed children's cases within a specific time period.
 - ii. Total number of children served within a specific time period.
 - iii. Number of new children served within a specific time period.
 - iv. Number of children whose cases were closed within a specific time period.
 - v. Type of case.
 - vi. Length of time in out-of-home care since assignment.
 - vii. Reason for CASA case closure by the program and court.
 - viii. Placement of child at time of CASA case closure by the program and court.
 - b. Information on volunteers:
 - i. Demographic information including, age, gender, ethnicity, education and work status within a specific time period.
 - ii. Status of volunteers during a specific time period (for example, new volunteers trained, numbers of volunteer assigned to cases, available for cases and those at inactive status as well as length of service with program).
 - iii. Number of volunteer hours contributed during a specific time period.

- iv. Length of time volunteer is assigned to each case.
- v. Reason for volunteer departure.
- c. Other information:
 - i. Number of children in the court's jurisdiction needing CASA volunteers vs. number of children assigned to CASA volunteers.
 - ii. Case outcomes.
 - iii. Any other data required by funding sources.
- 3. When the CASA/GAL program develops and/or participates in a computerized information system, the following safeguards are implemented:
 - a. Operational procedures governing use of the system and software.
 - b. Confidentiality policies concerning electronic data and information sharing via electronic media.
 - c. Review of all decisions regarding computerized files by program management.

9. B. Program Planning

- 1. The CASA/GAL program engages in ongoing and systematic planning to determine the scope of need for its services and how its services can most effectively be delivered.
- 2. During the planning process the CASA/GAL program seeks input from their governing body, staff, volunteers and local community, as appropriate to the program's structure.
- 3. The strategic planning process includes:
 - a. Identifying advocacy needs of the child population served by the CASA/GAL program.
 - b. Developing long- and short-term measurable goals for child outcomes, volunteers and resource development.
 - c. Determining objectives with an action plan related to agency goals.
 - d. Assessment and tracking progress.

- e. Carrying out tasks with related timeframes and specified person responsible.
- f. Listing resources needed for achieving goals.
- g. Assessing management's capacity to carry out the planning effort through a method for evaluating the progress of accomplishing the goals and objectives.

9. C. Program Review

1. At least once in a two-year period, the CASA/GAL program conducts a review which includes assessment of the program goals, objectives and outcomes as well as alignment with those of National CASA and Texas CASA that pertain to local CASA/GAL programs:
 - a. Degree to which the program identifies and meets the advocacy needs of the children it serves, as assessed through surveys of volunteers, judges, and other key stakeholders.
 - b. Changing demographics, increased community need, over-utilization and other reasons indicating a need to expand service, establish a priority system or refrain from increasing the caseload size carried by the program.
 - c. Effectiveness of the services, based upon predetermined definitions and criteria of effectiveness.
 - d. Progress made in implementation of the inclusiveness and diversity plan.
2. CASA management:
 - a. Submits results of its planning and evaluation processes to the governing body.
 - b. Shares findings with governing body, staff and volunteers.
 - c. Disseminates information or findings to funders, the courts and other community agencies, as appropriate.

Standard 10: Financial, Facility and Risk Management

The CASA/GAL program manages its operations in accordance with generally accepted financial and risk management practices and applicable federal, state and local statutory requirements.

10. A. Budgeting

1. The CASA/GAL program has a written budget which guides the management of its financial resources, based on:
 - a. Funding anticipated during the program year.
 - b. Fixed and incremental costs of operating the CASA/GAL program and identification of potentially changing costs and conditions.
2. The budget is reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.
3. The governing body or its designee reviews and approves all deviations (as defined by the governing body) from and revisions to the budget.

10. B. Financial Resources

1. The CASA/GAL program follows a written plan for securing and maintaining diversified financial resources adequate to accomplish its established goals and objectives.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains its tax-exempt status, if applicable.
3. The CASA/GAL program seeks to conserve its financial resources by:
 - a. Taking advantage of benefits allowed tax exempt organizations, when applicable.
 - b. Maintaining sound policies regarding purchasing and inventory control.
 - c. Using competitive bidding, where applicable, in accordance with fiscal policy and law or regulation.
4. The CASA program regularly analyzes:
 - a. Cost of operations.
 - b. Current and potential funding sources.

- c. Allocation of funds.
- d. Effectiveness in achieving budget objectives.

10. C. Financial Reporting and Accountability

1. The CASA/GAL program is accountable to its governing body for prudent financial management.
2. The CASA/GAL program assures that an annual report is developed which includes financial, statistical and service data summary information.
3. The CASA/GAL program annually files the required IRS form 990 in a timely manner which is approved by the governing body or designee.
4. The CASA/GAL program has an independent certified public accountant (approved by the governing body) perform an audit of its financial statements within nine months of the end of the fiscal year and submits the audit to Texas CASA by the state deadline. The audit should conform to generally accepted auditing standards. Additionally:
 - a. The audit must contain a separate schedule of all funds provided under CVC and VOCA contracts and a Statement of Functional Expenses.
 - b. A designated committee or member of the governing body (such as finance or audit review committee) reviews the audit findings and meet with the independent auditor as necessary.
 - c. The auditor's report is reviewed and formally approved or accepted by the governing body and made available for public inspection.
 - d. When a management letter has accompanied the audit, the CASA/GAL program's governing body promptly reviews and ensures that management acts on its recommendations.

10. D. Financial Accounting and Record Keeping

1. The CASA/GAL program receives, disburses and accounts for its funds in accord with generally accepted accounting principles.
2. The CASA/GAL program has written operational policies and procedures with regard to accounting control to which the program adheres. In the case of programs under an umbrella

organization, the program adheres to the extent of the program's control. These policies and procedures include:

- a. Internal financial controls.
 - b. Descriptive chart of accounts.
 - c. Prompt and accurate recording of revenues and expenses.
 - d. Maintenance of a filing system which contains account records and receipts.
 - e. Safeguarding and verification of assets.
 - f. Control over expenditures.
 - g. Separation of duties to the extent possible.
 - h. Handling of and requirements for reserves, endowments and investments.
3. The review and monitoring of the CASA/GAL program's financial management is delegated to its governing body or to the appropriate committee.
 4. The CASA/GAL program makes timely payments to the Internal Revenue Service and to other taxing authorities, as required by law.
 5. The CASA/GAL program uses a financial management system that ensures the segregation of restricted funds.
 6. When the CASA/GAL program has the authority, its policies and procedures require:
 - a. Personnel with financial responsibilities receive orientation to the bookkeeping system and retraining when system changes occur.
 - b. Systems are in place to prevent or to detect fraud or abuses of the system, such as control, use and review of the system by more than one person.
 7. The CASA/GAL program's accounting records are kept up to date and balanced on a monthly basis.
 8. The CASA/GAL program reconciles bank statements to the general ledger on a monthly basis.

10. E. Resource Development

1. The CASA/GAL program's governing body sets policies and exercises control over resource development activities carried out by its staff and volunteers.
2. The CASA/GAL program conducts solicitations of individuals, groups, corporations, and other potential funders in an ethical manner.
3. The CASA/GAL program registers with the applicable state agency to conduct charitable solicitations.
4. The CASA/GAL program provides potential funders with an accurate description of the program, its purpose and services as well as the financial needs for which the solicitation is being made.
5. The CASA/GAL program spends funds for the purposes for which they were solicited, except for reasonable costs for administration of resource development activities.
6. The CASA/GAL program performs a costs-benefits analysis prior to engaging in resource development activities.
7. The CASA/GAL program establishes controls on processing and acknowledging contributions in accordance with applicable laws.

10. F. Facility and Workplace Management

1. The CASA/GAL program operates from offices which provide a safe, well-maintained physical environment for its personnel, volunteers and visitors.
2. The CASA/GAL program maintains a work environment for its personnel and volunteers that is conducive to effective performance.
3. The CASA/GAL program's facilities comply with applicable health, fire safety and accessibility codes and regulations.
4. The CASA/GAL program plans for the disposition of property in the event of its dissolution.
5. The CASA/GAL program takes reasonable measures to maintain its equipment and ensure it is used as intended.

6. A CASA/GAL program has a weapons prohibition policy, approved by Texas CASA, stating that individuals are prohibited from possessing any firearm, ammunition, or weapon of any kind in CASA offices or in violation of any state or federal law or regulation. This policy will include:
 - a. Prohibition of firearms, ammunition, or weapons of any kind being carried or transported by CASA volunteers while involved in any CASA related activity.
 - b. Law enforcement agents are exempt from this policy.

10. G. Risk Management

1. The CASA/GAL program protects its physical, human and financial resources by evaluating, and preventing or reducing the risks to which they are exposed.
2. The CASA/GAL program has liability protection for governing body, organization, program staff and volunteers through the court, state statute or private insurance coverage.
3. The governing body has responsibility for determining the extent and nature of the liability protection needed for personnel and volunteers, when applicable laws are unclear or silent, and has a plan for regularly reviewing potential liability to the organization and staff and establishes the necessary protections for preventing or reducing exposure.
4. The CASA/GAL program evaluates and reduces its potential liability by:
 - a. Assigning the risk management function to a person or committee whose job description includes responsibility for risk management policies and activities.
 - b. Ensuring that appropriate bonding, self-insurance, or external coverage is adequate to meet the potential liability of the CASA/GAL program.
 - c. Developing a process to identify risks in terms of their nature, severity and frequency.
 - d. Avoiding risk through loss prevention and risk reduction.
 - e. Evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the risk management function.
 - f. Determining how often records checks are required on governing body, staff and volunteers, if more frequently than once every two years.

5. The CASA/GAL program carries worker's compensation insurance and other insurance as deemed necessary based upon evaluation of its risks and protects itself through means such as indemnification, participation in a risk-pooling trust or external insurance coverage.
6. The CASA/GAL program requires all persons with authority to sign checks, handle cash or contributions, or manage funds to be bonded in an amount that equals, at a minimum, the program's combined CVC/VOCA grant awards.
7. The CASA/GAL program informs its board members, officers, staff and volunteers of the amount and type of coverage that is provided on their behalf by the program.
8. The CASA/GAL program annually reviews its insurance coverage with its insurance carrier to insure adequate coverage.
9. If the CASA/GAL program permits staff/volunteers to transport children the staff/volunteer shall provide to the program:
 - a. Copy of a valid current driver's license.
 - b. Proof of personal automobile insurance. Insurance must be the required state minimum. The programs also secure a motor vehicles division record check and in addition the program has policy and procedures which assure CASA staff/volunteers:
 - i. Obtain permission of the supervisor or director.
 - ii. Obtain permission of the child's legal guardian or custodial agency when transporting a child.
 - iii. Remain knowledgeable about the potential personal risk of liability.
 - iv. Choose to accept the responsibility.

Standard 11: Record Keeping

The CASA/GAL program maintains complete, accurate and current case records and follows written policies for acceptance and assignment of CASA cases.

11. A. Case Records

1. The CASA/GAL program maintains complete, accurate and current records for each child served, which include:
 - a. Biographical or other identifying information.
 - b. Background on the nature of the presenting problem or reason for referral by the court.
 - c. Court reports and any court orders related to the service being provided.
 - d. Social service case plan.
2. Records for all children served are kept up to date through:
 - a. Current contact entries.
 - b. Periodic progress notes or summaries.
3. The CASA/GAL program maintains copies of all volunteer reports, correspondence concerning the case, notes from telephone or in-person consultations between the program staff and volunteers and requires its volunteers to turn in their case records including all notes when the case is closed.
4. Information entered into the case record by program staff is specific, factual and pertinent to the nature of the situation.
5. Upon case closure a record (e.g. court order, case closure summary, recording in database) is made of the date and reason for closure.
6. The CASA/GAL program has written operational procedures, consistent with legal requirements and with the policy on confidential information governing the retention, maintenance, protection, destruction and return of case files when the case is closed. Procedures should include:

- a. Hard copy files are kept a minimum of seven (7) years from case closure unless there is a court or statutory requirement that dictates otherwise.
 - b. Electronic children's case records are kept a minimum of seven (7) years from case closure unless there is a court or statutory requirement that dictates otherwise.
 - c. Electronic children's case files are backed up on a separate system at least once a week and the backup is kept off site.
7. The CASA/GAL program has established procedures for the legal and programmatic release, in writing, of volunteers when a case is closed or when a volunteer is removed from a case.

11. B. Acceptance, Assignment and Closure of Cases

1. The CASA/GAL program has procedures for the acceptance and assignment of cases.
2. A CASA volunteer is sworn in by the judge before appointment to a case.
3. Cases are accepted by the program without discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability or religion.
4. When possible, a CASA volunteer is assigned at the earliest possible stage of the court proceedings.
5. Written referral criteria is developed by the court and the CASA/GAL program and is reviewed at least every two years and changed as program resources change.
6. All appointments and assignments are made by an appropriate written order of the court.
7. The CASA/GAL program, in cooperation with the court, retains the right to determine which cases it can serve appropriately. Determining factors can include the limits of the program's resources, including volunteer availability, capacities, legal authority and mission.
8. A CASA/GAL program or the court notifies all parties and agencies involved in the case of the CASA volunteer's appointment and dismissal.
9. Ethnicity, national origin, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability and social economic status are considered in the appointment of volunteers to cases.
10. Volunteers are assigned to cases with consideration to their experience, knowledge, skills, availability and case type preference.

11. In determining volunteer caseload the following must be assessed:
 - a. Nature and difficulty of the current caseload and proposed case.
 - b. Work and time required to serve each child or to complete each task.
 - c. Past and current performance of Minimum Expectations of Service to a Case (Standard 7.E.5.a.-o.)

12. A CASA/GAL program maintains complete case assignment records including:
 - a. Name of volunteer.
 - b. Name of the child.
 - c. Date of assignment.
 - d. Date of dismissal or closure.

Standard 12: National Affiliation

*Texas CASA does not monitor National CASA affiliation requirements as part of its quality assurance review. The CASA/GAL program is a member of the National CASA Association and meets its standards, requirements and policies.

12. A. National Affiliation

1. The CASA/GAL program takes advantage of the services available from National CASA which includes:
 - a. Technical assistance.
 - b. Resource materials, including web resources.
 - c. National conference.
 - d. Training opportunities.
2. The CASA/GAL program uses the National CASA trademark logo as their official logo or prominently displays the National CASA Association member logo on all promotional, public relations, recruitment and training materials.
3. When using National CASA trademarks including taglines, slogans, and logos, the CASA/GAL program adheres to National CASA graphic standards.
4. The program uses the name CASA, GAL or identifies itself as a member of the National CASA Association on all promotional, public relations and recruitment materials.
5. The CASA/GAL program adheres to the National CASA resource development, government relations and other protocols developed in the future.
6. If the local CASA/GAL program has a program auxiliary or affiliate, the program makes that entity aware of National CASA standards and protocols.
7. The CASA/GAL program collects and submits data to National CASA as requested.
8. The CASA/GAL program demonstrates compliance with National CASA's standards through the quality assurance process.
9. The CASA/GAL program provides a copy of the *Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs* to its governing body and supervisory staff.

Standard 13: State Affiliation

The CASA/GAL is a member of Texas CASA, meets its standards, requirements and policies, and communicates, collaborates and shares information with its fellow programs in Texas.

13. A. State Affiliation

1. The CASA/GAL program complies with state laws, regulations, administrative and court rules.
2. The CASA/GAL program takes advantage of the services available from the state organization which may include:
 - a. Technical assistance.
 - b. Resource materials, including web resources.
 - c. State conference.
 - d. Local program directors meetings.
 - e. Training opportunities.
3. The CASA/GAL program complies with Texas CASA Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs, the Texas Administrative Code and state and federal funder contracts. When the program believes a conflict exists between National CASA standards and Texas CASA standards, funder contracts, laws, regulations or court rules, the program and Texas CASA present the perceived conflict to the National CASA Association. National CASA will substantiate a conflict and determine which regulation takes precedence.
4. The CASA/GAL program demonstrates compliance with Texas CASA standards through the quality assurance process.
5. The CASA/GAL program acts in a manner consistent with any agreements made with Texas CASA.
6. The CASA/GAL program submits accurate quarterly performance measure data in a timely manner as required by Texas CASA.
7. Neither the Office of the Attorney General nor Texas CASA will be liable for the actions of the CASA/GAL program volunteers, governing body or employees.

Standard 14: New Program Development, Implementation and Expansion

The developing CASA/GAL program engages in a comprehensive assessment, which includes a feasibility study and implementation process that guides the program's development.

14. A. Initial Planning Process

1. The developing CASA/GAL prospective program requests start-up materials (including the *Guide to Program Development*) from National CASA and Texas CASA.
2. Prior to start-up the CASA/GAL prospective program contacts all judges in the jurisdiction that hear child abuse and neglect cases to dialogue with them about the CASA/GAL program and gain judicial support.
3. The CASA/GAL prospective program creates a steering or planning committee to guide the initial development activities.
4. The steering committee should include but is not limited to judges, individuals who have expressed an interest in starting the CASA/GAL prospective program, child welfare staff, guardian ad litem, parents and prosecuting attorneys, counselors, private social service providers and representatives from the broader community including those who might provide leadership, financial support or potential volunteers.
5. The steering or planning committee conducts a needs assessment and feasibility study and completes a written application which includes the following:
 - a. Interviews with key players (judges, child protective services personnel, prosecutor, Texas CASA, adjacent local CASA/GAL program directors, guardian ad litem attorneys and community child advocates).
 - b. Baseline statistics including the number of reports and substantiations of suspected child abuse and neglect in the area; the number of petitions filed over the past five (5) years; number and demographics of the children before the court and in foster care; average length of stay of children in foster care; duration of the court process in child abuse cases and permanency outcomes for children.
 - c. Current process for representation of child's best interest, wishes and legal rights before the court and who serves in those capacities.
 - d. An assessment of community support including financial support and available human resources (board members, volunteers and other leaders for the program).

- e. An assessment of whether the program should be developed independently or as a part of an already existing program.
 - f. An assessment of the community's ability to sustain the program.
 - g. Signed judicial and DFPS endorsements.
 - h. Letter of support from an existing community organization.
6. The prospective program follows Texas and federal laws in regard to development including the development and approval of articles of incorporation and bylaws.
 7. The prospective program's bylaws or written operational procedures meet all requirements identified in Texas CASA Standard Five: Program Governance.
 8. The prospective program develops a written mission statement, in accordance with requirements identified in Texas CASA Standard One: Program Mission and Purpose.
 9. The prospective program develops written goals and objectives to guide the first year and beyond, including activities, designation of responsibility, timelines and key indicators to measure progress.
 10. The CASA prospective program identifies and educates potential funders and community supporters who are essential to a successful program.

14. B. Development and Execution of an Implementation Plan

1. Based on the outcomes of the needs assessment and feasibility study, the prospective program develops and executes an implementation plan which includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Projections of the number of staff needed to effectively operate the program for a specified period.
 - b. Projections of the number of volunteers needed to effectively serve the population for a specified period.
 - c. 12- and 24-month budget projecting revenue and expenses for the first two years of operation.
 - d. Strategies to secure resources, including in-kind contributions and other sources of revenue to meet long- and short-term financial needs.

- e. 12- and 24-month implementation timelines.
2. The governing body develops and implements a plan to recruit, select and train staff and volunteers.
3. If an executive director/program administrator has been retained, the governing body delegates the staffing function to him or her.

14. C. Program Expansion

1. If the program desires to expand into another jurisdiction the following steps are taken by the CASA/GAL program prior to the expansion taking place:
 - a. Consults with Texas CASA regarding the desire to expand into another jurisdiction.
 - b. Makes an assessment of how program expansion will impact the program and service in the original jurisdiction and the feasibility of initial and sustained service to the new county based on community resources and support.
 - c. Contacts all judges in the jurisdiction that hears child abuse and neglect cases prior to expansion to gain judicial support.
 - d. Conducts a needs assessment and completes an expansion application.
2. The needs assessment and application includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Interviews with key players (judges, child protective services personnel, prosecutor, Texas CASA, adjacent local CASA/GAL program directors, guardian ad litem attorneys and community child advocates).
 - b. Baseline statistics including the number of reports and substantiations of suspected child abuse and neglect in the area; the number of petitions filed over the past five years; number and demographics of the children before the court and in foster care; average length of stay of children in foster care; duration of the court process in child abuse cases and permanency outcomes for children.
 - c. Current process for representation of child's best interest, wishes and legal rights before the court and who serves in those capacities.
 - d. Signed judicial and DFPS endorsements.