

FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASA PROGRAM, INC.

**Court Appointed Special Advocate and Guardian ad Litem
CASA/GAL**

Volunteer Policies and Procedures Manual

Revised 05/30/06

29 May 2006

Dear Volunteer,

The Fifth Judicial District Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program is pleased to welcome you to this organization. Since 1986, the Fifth Judicial District CASA program has provided volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children involved in the child protection court process. As a volunteer, you are the most important component of our organization. Your commitment to the philosophy and goals of CASA will help us sustain and maintain a high level of effectiveness and professionalism.

This manual provides information about the basic volunteer policies of CASA. All volunteers are expected to respect and follow these policies, including future changes or additions to these policies. This Manual is not a contract: it does not guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of a volunteer's participation in the CASA program. Your service as a volunteer will last only as long as you and CASA program staff mutually agree, though CASA looks forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with all our volunteers.

Your commitment to CASA policies and procedures will make CASA a strong and effective organization. This commitment will also aid you in your advocacy efforts and enable you to provide many children with a sense of permanency and belonging. I hope your stay with us will be long and rewarding to both yourself and the CASA organization. We encourage any suggestions you may have for improving our services or volunteer policies and procedures.

Sincerely,

Janice Eisele
Executive Director

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1. CASA/GAL Standards

A. Program

Standard 1: GAL Program Purpose

The purpose of GAL programs in Idaho shall be to provide court-appointed volunteer advocacy to abused, neglected, abandoned and/or homeless children.

Standard 2: GAL Program Governance

Each GAL program shall have a governing body responsible for overseeing the compliance of all applicable laws and regulations, adoption of program policies, the defining of program services, and the guidance of program development.

Standard 3: State Collaboration

The GAL programs shall communicate, collaborate, and share information with fellow programs in the state.

Standard 4: Human Resources Management

The GAL Program follows written policies for inclusiveness, recruitment, selection, training, retention and effective performance of its paid personnel.

Standard 5: Volunteer Management

Each GAL Program shall develop and follow written policies for its volunteers regarding recruitment; application, selection and screening; training; supervision; volunteer roles and responsibilities; and dismissal.

Each GAL Program shall require that volunteers complete at least 30 hours of required pre-service training and 12 hours of required in-service training per year.

Pre-service training shall include the following topics:

- a. Roles and responsibilities of a GAL volunteer;
- b. Court process;
- 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;
- h. 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
- o. Volunteer safety
- p. Educational advocacy

Standard 6: Financial, Facility, and Risk Management

Each GAL program shall manage its operations in accordance with generally accepted financial and risk management practices and applicable federal, state and local statutory requirements.

Each GAL program shall have liability protection for governing body, organization, program staff and volunteers.

Standard 7: Planning and Evaluation

Each GAL program shall maintain management information and data necessary to plan and evaluate its services.

Standard 8: Record Keeping

Each GAL Program shall maintain complete, accurate and current case records and follows local policies for acceptance and assignment of GAL cases.

Standard 9: Confidentiality

Each GAL program shall follow written policies and procedures regarding access to, use of, and release of information about the children it serves to ensure that children's confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Standard 10: Background checks for volunteers, staff and members of the board of directors.

Each GAL program shall complete the following national fingerprint based criminal records checks:

- a. GAL volunteers shall obtain a national fingerprint based criminal records check prior to being assigned a case, at least every two years thereafter and at any time requested by the Program director;
- b. Program Staff shall obtain a national fingerprint based criminal records check at the time of hire and at anytime thereafter at the discretion of the Program Director; and,
- c. Members of the Board of Directors of the Program shall obtain a national fingerprint based criminal records check upon appointment to the Board and at anytime thereafter at the request of the Board of Directors or the Program Director.

B. Volunteer

1. A CASA/GAL volunteer is an individual who has been screened and trained by a recognized CASA/GAL program and appointed by the court to advocate for children who come into the court system primarily as a result of abuse or neglect. A volunteer reviews records; facilitates prompt, thorough review of the case; and interviews appropriate parties in order to make recommendations on what would be in the best interest of the child.
2. A CASA/GAL volunteer is 21 years of age or older, and has successfully passed screening requirements which include a written application, personal interview, reference and criminal records checks.
3. A CASA/GAL volunteer has successfully completed a minimum of 32 hours of initial training that includes instruction on the court and child welfare systems; child abuse and neglect; relevant state and federal law; permanency planning and family preservation; cultural awareness; and the role and responsibility of a CASA/GAL volunteer.
4. A CASA/GAL volunteer does not engage in activities which jeopardize the safety of the child, the integrity of the program, nor the objectivity of the volunteer; or activities which are likely to result in conflict of interest or expose the program or the volunteer to criminal or civil liability. A CASA/GAL volunteer also abides by the National CASA Association Code of Ethics.
5. A CASA/GAL volunteer respects the right to privacy by keeping information that would identify parties involved in child protection cases confidential.

2. Equal Opportunity Policies

A. Equal Opportunity Clause

As stated in the By-Laws of The Fifth Judicial District CASA Program: The Corporation shall not restrict its services, employment, membership of the Board of Directors, and all other public involvement by the Corporation because of race, creed, color, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or sex.

B. Non-Discrimination Statement

The CASA/GAL program provides equal opportunities to all volunteers, without regard to sex, race, color, religious belief, national origin, age or disability, except where the condition is such that the volunteer cannot perform the duties and responsibilities required of him/her.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of a Court Appointed Special Advocate / GAL

A. Role

A CASA/GAL volunteer is a trained volunteer child advocate appointed by a Magistrate Judge of the Fifth Judicial District to represent the best interest of children who are abused and neglected and are involved in active Child Protective Act cases. The CASA volunteer investigates the child's circumstances, provides fact-based information and makes recommendations to the court while becoming a source of support for the child. A CASA/GAL works as an official party in the judicial proceedings, working alongside attorneys and social workers.

B. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of a CASA/GAL may include all or some of the following, depending upon the needs of each individual case.

1. Complete an extensive, independent investigation of each case:
 - Meet face-to-face with child at least once a month.
 - Speak with the child and relevant adults (parents, family members, school officials, doctors and others involved in the child's life who might have facts about the case);
 - Review appropriate records and reports;
 - Observe the child and significant others.

2. Report findings and recommendations to the court by submitting formal reports to the Judge at a minimum the adjudicatory hearing, permanency hearings, and case plan hearing:
 - Provide a written (mailed, faxed, or emailed) report containing factual information and recommendations to the CASA office at least three business days prior to the hearing;
 - Attend court hearings concerning the child.
3. Insure representation of the child's best interest:
 - Attend and participate in all court hearings to see that all relevant facts are presented;
 - Attend and participate in appropriate interagency meetings regarding the child;
 - Participate in case conferences concerning the child.
4. Monitor case following a court hearing or decision as designated by the court:
 - Ensure that the judicial and child welfare systems are moving ahead to secure a safe, permanent home for the child in a timely manner;
 - Ensure that court-ordered services are provided to the child and family.
5. Consult regularly with the volunteer coordinator, if one has been assigned) concerning case:
 - Discuss strategies for advocacy;
 - Prepare action plans;
 - Review progress and reports.
6. A CASA Volunteer shall:
 - Report any incident of child abuse or neglect to the CASA Supervisor, Social Services Hot Line and any other appropriate parties to the proceedings.
 - Maintain complete written records about the case, including appointments, interviews, observations and other pertinent information gathered.
 - Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child, and whether appropriate services, including reasonable efforts are being provided to the child and family.
 - Ensure that the child's best interest are being represented in all facets of the case by attending court hearings, attending foster care reviews and school staffing, writing timely court reports and advocating verbally to parties involved.
 - Monitor the case by visiting the child as often as necessary and contacting involved parties to observe whether the child's essential needs are being met and whether the Court's orders are being followed.
 - Participate and/or recognize the need for planning meetings or calling hearings involving the child in order to move positively toward a permanent plan for the child.
 - Remain actively involved in the case until formally discharged by the Court and/or the CASA Program.
 - Provide quarterly documentation of case activities to the Program.
7. A CASA volunteer shall not:
 - Provide direct service delivery to any parties that could lead to a conflict of interest or liability problems

- Cause a child or a family to become dependent on the CASAGAL volunteer for services that should be provided by other agencies.

Examples of inappropriate volunteer practices are:

- a. sheltering a child in the home
- b. giving legal or therapeutic advice
- c. making placement arrangements for the child
- d. giving money or expensive gifts to the child or family
- e. excessive or inappropriate contact with the child

A CASA/GAL volunteer, at their own choice and liability risk, may transport children if he/she has a valid driver's license, current insurance coverage and appropriate safety seats, when the age and weight of the child make safety seats necessary. The volunteer must get permission from the person or agency that has legal custody of the child.

C. Time Commitment

Volunteer advocates are expected to devote the necessary time to serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. After court-appointment to a case, the CASA/GAL volunteer must remain actively involved in the case until formally discharged by the court. In an effort to assure continuity and effective advocacy for the children assigned to the volunteer, advocates are expected to:

1. Commit to a minimum of one year of volunteer service,
2. Attend all court hearings on their cases,
3. Be available for case assignment and to accept cases upon completion of pre-service training, unless other arrangements have been made,
4. Spend, on the average, 8 - 16 hours a month on each case.

D. Confidentiality

1. Volunteers have a responsibility to protect confidential information about the parties to a case. Volunteers must respect children's and families' rights to privacy in regard to personal information.
 - a. Disclosure or verification of case information shall not be made to anyone who does not have a professional reason for receiving such information, only on a need to know basis.
 - b. No information shall be released to anyone not authorized to receive it, without the express written and dated consent of the party.
 - c. Confidential information shall only be shared with professional staff at CASA, the Guardian ad Litem attorney, and the court.
 - d. Case records and notes shall be secured and kept private and inaccessible to public view.

- e. Discussions of case-related material are not to be held in hallways, elevators, or other public places.
2. Expectation of the parties' confidentiality
- There is no privilege of absolute confidentiality for information provided to CASA. Confidential information may be shared with professional staff at CASA and it is the CASA's job to transmit the information he or she collects to the Magistrate Court of the Fifth Judicial District. At the time of initial contact, the volunteer should carefully inform all parties and sources of information regarding what records would be maintained about them and what information will be shared, with whom, and under what circumstances. It is important to let all parties to a case know this at the time of initial contact.

3. Internal safeguard of confidential information and records

In order to insure confidentiality, CASA has adopted certain procedures regarding case records. In the CASA office, records are maintained in locked file cabinets. All copies of letters and reports concerning a case must be filed in the case folder.

Volunteers who keep case files outside the CASA office must take the steps to ensure that the files are maintained in such a way to prevent inadvertent disclosure to persons not having a reason to know. In addition, volunteers must ensure that they have a private place for phone conversations about their CASA duties away from the CASA premises, and a secure place at which to receive facsimiles.

No one outside of CASA personnel may have access to a CASA case record without a court order. Copies of the Report of the Guardian ad Litem are provided prior to a court hearing to the Magistrate Judge's clerk, the DHW caseworker, the GAL attorney, parent's attorneys, and the county prosecutor's office.

Any confidential materials received from another individual or agency may not be disclosed to anyone outside CASA's professional staff, except by court order or written consent of the party involved.

4. Duty to disclose

CASA volunteers and staff have a duty to disclose information in certain situations. The duty to disclose arises in the areas of 1) child abuse and neglect, and 2) harm to self or others.

CASA volunteers should notify their volunteer coordinator, the Executive Director, and/or the Department of Health and Welfare social worker assigned to the case if child abuse or neglect is suspected, or if you learn someone may harm himself or others.

E. Casework Files and Reports

All volunteers must maintain complete and up-to-date records on each assigned case, as defined during initial volunteer training. Notes must be clear, accurate, written legibly and devoid of slang and jargon. Reports should present an unbiased, factual, and historical record and should be free of subjective editorial comments. Each volunteer must keep abreast of all deadlines and timetables involved in cases. Reports must be turned in on time. If a volunteer is unable to meet a deadline, he or she must notify the assigned case supervisor immediately.

Once a case terminates and/or a CASA/GAL volunteer is no longer assigned to it, all notes and other associated paperwork must be returned to the CASA office. The CASA office will send out letters of notification upon case closure.

F. Refresher Training

On-going training is an essential factor in a CASA/GAL volunteer's effectiveness and success as an advocate. CASA offers in-service training sessions, and the opportunity for case review and individual supervision. All volunteers are expected to participate in a minimum of 12 hours of refresher training annually after their initial year of service.

4. Volunteering at CASA

A. Application and Screening Process of Prospective Volunteers

Volunteer recruitment is an on-going function of the organization coordinated by Volunteer Coordinators and supervised by the Executive Director. The volunteer

recruitment effort will be the responsibility of every member of the organization and can be accomplished in any community setting. It is the responsibility of each of the Volunteer Coordinators to recruit volunteers and to coordinate and assist the efforts of other organizational members to recruit other volunteers.

All applicants for CASA/GAL volunteer are screened for acceptance and assignment to the CASA program through an initial interview process (See Appendix B for the Screening Interview Form) prior to commencement of basic training. The interview is designed to be an in-depth determination of the suitability of the prospective volunteer for CASA/GAL work.

The candidate volunteer fills out a complete application form (See Appendix A) and submit names for five (5) references. These references are contacted by the program staff and asked to fill out and submit a statement description what they know about the applicant on several parameters.

A criminal record and background check, consisting of finger-print and name based criminal, law enforcement, and DHW Child Abuse Registry checks, is conducted during the last week of candidate volunteer training. The completed application form contains candidate's signed Authorization to Investigate statement. If a candidate fails to complete this form and sign it, he or she will not be accepted into the program.

Volunteer qualifications:

1. Must be 21 years of age.
2. No felony criminal convictions.
3. Must successfully pass screening requirements which include a written application, criminal record and Child Abuse Registry checks, personal interview, and five personal references.
4. Must successfully complete initial training provided by the CASA Program. Any sessions missed must be made up by the applicant before being appointed to a case.
5. Must be able to make a minimum one year month commitment to a case (in addition to initial training time), entailing 2-3 hours per week on the average.
6. Must be accepted as a volunteer by the CASA Executive Director.
7. Must participate in ongoing training, a minimum of 12 hours annually.
8. Must accept supervision and seek feedback from Volunteer Coordinator and/or Executive Director on a regular basis.
9. Must be able to keep information confidential and to work within established program policies and procedures.

Necessary knowledge and skills:

1. Ability to keep all client, case, and court information confidential.
2. Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
3. Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds.
4. Ability to transport oneself.
5. Ability to maintain objectivity, and independence.
6. Have a basic understanding of child development and family relationships.
7. Ability to exercise good common sense.
8. Does not require formal educational training beyond a high school diploma or GED.

B. Training of Prospective Volunteers

CASA provides prospective volunteers with an initial 32-hour training program. The curriculum, based on the NCASA Volunteer Training Program, includes topics such as volunteer duties, child protection law, cultural awareness, child development, casework strategies and information pertaining to court and the child welfare system. All prospective volunteers must attend these training sessions.

C. Volunteer Evaluations/Termination of Relationship

It is recognized that being a CASA/GAL volunteer is not for everyone. Therefore, the first three months of service after completion of training are considered a trial period. This will allow volunteers to learn more about the role of a CASA/GAL, as well as allow sufficient time for CASA staff to evaluate volunteers. At the third month of case assignment, the Volunteer Coordinator and Executive Director will evaluate the performance of the volunteer.

After the initial trial period, CASA/GAL volunteers will be periodically evaluated. CASA expects these periodic evaluations to be helpful in sustaining a long and mutually productive association with each of our volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to use the evaluation session to discuss areas of concern, and to make suggestions about improving the volunteer program.

We reserve the right to determine at any time whether or not an individual's participation continues to serve CASA's best interests. If CASA staff determines that its best interests are not being served, it may work with a volunteer to develop a remediation plan to improve the volunteer's efforts or may terminate the volunteer relationship immediately.

5. Volunteer Relations

As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you represent CASA and what you do reflects on the organization. Always conduct yourself in a way that reflects favorably on CASA. Volunteers must comply with all policies and procedures. CASA may change these policies when warranted, at its discretion.

A. Working Environment

CASA endeavors to promote a comfortable and productive working environment for all volunteers. In keeping with this policy, sexual, racial, religious, ethnic, or other kinds of harassment of, or by, volunteers is a violation of CASA policy and will not be tolerated. We expect volunteers to treat each other and CASA staff with respect.

B. Conflict of Interest

CASA Board of Directors, employees, and volunteers shall abide by all laws and regulations governing activities; conduct all business in an honest, fair, professional and humane manner; use authority appropriately; and do not use their CASA/GAL status or position to promote a personal agenda or for personal or professional gain.

A CASA/GAL volunteer shall not be related to any parties involved in a specific case, or be employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest.

A CASA/GAL volunteer shall disqualify his or her self from involvement in a case if for any other reason circumstances arise, or he or she knows the parties of the case well enough that it becomes impossible to remain impartial and/or unbiased.

C. Media Communication

Inquiries concerning CASA, its policies, practices, or clients, must be referred to the Executive Director. Volunteers are not permitted to make any statements involving CASA to the media without the prior consent of the Executive Director.

D. Direct Service Provision

CASA is not a direct service agency. As a facilitator, a CASA/GAL volunteer advocates for direct serviced agencies to provide appropriate services to children and their families. Therefore, volunteers are restricted from providing direct services such as: transporting parties, intervening in domestic disputes, counseling, and offering funds for food or other necessities.

E. Personal Involvement with Children and Families

CASA's effectiveness and standing in court depends on volunteers maintaining professional relationships with children and families. Volunteers and staff are expected to refrain from becoming personally involved with appointed children and families. Volunteers are expected not to put themselves in situations where they are alone with a child. If they do become personally involved, volunteers may be removed from a case at the discretion of the Executive Director.

F. Non-Partisanship

As a tax-exempt organization, CASA is restricted in its ability to engage in activity which would influence legislation, and that it is inappropriate for the CASA program to support or oppose any candidate for public office. Consequently, when volunteers engage in activity which supports or opposes a candidate for public office, such activity is personal in nature and is outside of the scope of the individual's relationship with the CASA program. Volunteers are expected to avoid the appearance that their personal political activity is authorized by or on behalf of CASA.

Volunteers are expected to refrain from any activity which would constitute either support for, or opposition to, candidates for public office when such conduct could be construed as activity on behalf of CASA. For example, volunteers may not use CASA letterhead or wear items with CASA's logo when promoting political activity or support for a candidate or legislation. Such activity must be conducted on the employee's personal rather than professional time.

G. Policy Against Violence

CASA prohibits any acts or threats of violence at any time against its clients, visitors, volunteers, or employees by any individuals on the premises of CASA, or while such individual is engaged in CASA/GAL business on or off CASA's premises.

Volunteers are expected to warn a CASA staff member of any suspicious workplace activity, situations, or incidents that they observe or know about that involve employees, other volunteers, former volunteers or employees, clients, or visitors and that appear

suspicious or problematic. This would include threats of violence, aggressive conduct, offensive acts, threatening or offensive comments, or remarks about firearms, weapons, or the like. Reports will be held in confidence to the maximum extent possible. CASA will not condone any form of retaliation against any employee or volunteer for making a report in good faith under this policy.

Physically hostile conduct or threats, regardless of how transmitted, towards employees, volunteers, clients, or visitors are prohibited. Such conduct should be immediately reported to a supervisor or the Executive Director. Any volunteer engaged in such conduct will face termination of his or her volunteer relationship with CASA.

H. Responsible Use of Technology

Each CASA/GAL volunteer is expected to use CASA's available computer technology responsibly and professionally. This policy required all volunteers who use computers and related technology to do so prudently, legally, and for the benefit of the CASA program. Computers are not to be used for personal use. While serving as a volunteer, volunteers should not have any expectation of privacy with respect to the files of the CASA computers they use or the contents of e-mail messages, either sent or received, or downloaded or uploaded files from the Internet. CASA reserves the right to access and disclose the contents of any computer files or any e-mail message for any lawful purpose.

Volunteers are not to display any material on CASA computer monitors that is offensive to the CASA staff, other volunteers, or visitors to CASA's office. Every volunteer is responsible for communicating to the Executive Director his or her discomfort, if any, with material displayed on computer terminals at CASA.

It is a violation of law and of this policy to download and distribute material from the Internet if such distribution would constitute a violation of copyright laws. It is also a violation of the Responsible Use of Technology policy to use CASA's computers for any activity in connection with pornography.

CASA will terminate the volunteer relationship of any volunteer who violates this policy.

I. Travel and Expenses

When a volunteer is required to use his or her automobile on CASA/GAL business, the volunteer may be reimbursed for mileage at the current US Government rate for use of personal automobile. Appropriate parking expenses, when incurred while doing CASA/GAL business, will also be reimbursed. Special travel requests, including approval of long distance travel plans, must be submitted to the Executive Director for authorization in advance.

A volunteer may submit a signed Expense Reimbursement Form, showing itemized mileage, postage, and telephone expenses with receipts to the Executive Director for approval. Expense reimbursement requests are to be submitted on a case basis, at least quarterly.

6. Safety Policy and Procedures

A. Safety Procedures

1. Volunteers should exercise maximum care and good judgment at all times to prevent accidents and injuries.
2. Volunteers should report to CASA staff any injuries as soon as possible, no matter how minor, and seek first aid.
3. Volunteers should immediately report unsafe conditions, equipment or practices to CASA staff.

B. Field Visits

CASA's safety procedures for field visits have been established in order to give volunteers guidelines on avoiding possible harmful situations. The following suggestions for ways to protect yourself have proven to be effective with our volunteers.

1. Dress in a fashion which is casual and not conspicuous.
2. Avoid exposing expensive jewelry or other items. Keep jewelry hidden under shirts or blouses. No volunteer should travel with large sums of money.
3. Before going out to visit or conduct an interview, verify the appropriate route with your Volunteer Coordinator or other staff already familiar with the area.
4. Upon approaching an area or a building, if you do not feel totally comfortable because of suspicious people loitering, darkness in the hallways, etc., do not enter the area or building. Another visit can be made at another time, and if necessary, arrangements made to have someone accompany you.

5. A neutral location, such as a local fast food restaurant, the CASA office, or the DHW office, can be used as an alternate meeting location if the home area or building of the interviewee does not feel safe.

7. Anti-Harassment Policy

- A. CASA is committed to an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has a right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discriminating practices, including harassment. It is therefore the expectation that all relationships among individuals associated with CASA be business-like and free of bias and prejudice. Illegal harassment and improper interference with the ability of individuals to perform their duties is prohibited. CASA's policy against harassment applies to employees and non-employees, including volunteers.
- B. If you observe or experience any discrimination or harassment based on your race, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or another factor, or believe that you have been treated in a discriminatory manner, promptly report the incident to the Executive Director. If you believe it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter with the Executive Director, you may bypass the Executive Director and report the concern directly to the Chair of the Board. Your complaint will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible and no retaliation will be taken against you for lodging a complaint.
- C. This policy extends to the conduct of non-employees which affects employees and non-employees, including volunteers, while they are working. Consequently, conduct by clients, vendors, family members of clients, or any other individual, which if conducted by an employee would be in violation of this policy, will not be tolerated. This policy requires volunteers to immediately report such offensive conduct to the Executive Director or Chair of the Board.
- D. Any volunteer who violates this policy will face termination of the volunteer relationship with CASA. CASA prohibits any form of retaliation against any volunteer for filing a bona fide complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation.

However, if, after investigating any complaint or harassment or unlawful discrimination, CASA determines that a complaint is not bona fide, was not made in good faith or that a volunteer has provided false information regarding a complaint of harassment, the volunteer may face the possibility of termination of the volunteer relationship with CASA.

8. National CASA Association Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics provides National CASA Association members with guidelines of professional behavior and ethical conduct. The Association may not, however, be held liable for the actions of its members.

A. Conduct

1. Members of the National CASA Association will abide by the NCASAA Code of Ethics and all laws and regulations governing their activities.
2. Members of the National CASA Association will uphold the credibility and dignity of the CASA concept by conducting all business in an honest, fair, professional, and humane manner.
3. Employees of CASA programs and CASA volunteers will not use their authority inappropriately, nor condone any illegal act or unethical practices related to their program or community.
4. CASA programs and individuals who are members of the National CASA Association may not use CASA to promote personal gain.
5. Members of the National CASA Association will avoid any action which could adversely affect the confidence of the public in the integrity of the Association.
6. The National CASA Association and its member programs will serve and respond to requests without bias because of race, religion, sex, age, national origin or handicap.

B. Confidentiality

1. CASA programs and volunteers will respect the right to privacy of all individuals, and will keep information about CASA cases confidential.
2. Persons affiliated with CASA will not use confidential information obtained through their work with CASA for personal benefit.

C. Knowledge and Understanding

1. Individuals working in CASA programs as staff and/or volunteers must be trained in the operations of the court and child welfare systems, and in the nature of child abuse and neglect.
2. CASA programs and volunteers must respect a child's inherent right to grow up with dignity in a safe environment that meets the child's best interest.

D. National Affiliation

1. CASA Programs which are members of the National CASA Association must operate in accordance with the NCASAA Code of Ethics, and adhere to its goals and purposes.
2. Official CASA designations may be used only for purposes in accordance with the goals and purposes of the National CASA Association.

E. Compliance

1. The Standards Committee shall monitor compliance with the Code of Ethics in accordance with the bylaws of the National CASA Association.

9. Acknowledgement

To: Executive Director
Fifth Judicial District CASA Program, Inc.
PO Box 22
Jerome, ID 83338

I have read and understand CASA's Volunteer Manual, Revision dated 5/30/2006.

I understand its contents and agree to follow the policies and procedures as set forth in it.

I also consent to CASA's access and disclosure at any time of computer files, Internet files, and e-mail messages generated from or transmitted to, CASA's computers.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A

Volunteer Application

The CASA/GAL program rejects any applicant found to have been convicted of, or having charges pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related acts that would pose risks to children or the CASA/GAL program's credibility.

CASA/GAL Volunteer Application Form

Please Print

Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle) (Maiden)

Home Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone Number _____

Social Security No. _____ Date of Birth _____

Person to notify in
emergency _____

Address _____ City/St. _____ Phone
No. _____

EMPLOYMENT

Employer _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Phone No. _____

May you be contacted at work? _____ Yes _____ No

Brief description of your work

EDUCATION

Formal Education (highest year of school completed) _____

Are you presently attending school? _____ Yes _____ No

Will you receive academic credit for your volunteer work? _____ Yes _____ No

Do you speak a foreign language? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, which language(s) _____

AVAILABILITY

Are you willing to commit to one year of volunteer service? ____ Yes ____ No

How many hours per week are you available? _____

What days and hours of the week are you available?

As a CASA Volunteer you will be required to attend court hearings for the children you represent. Almost always you will receive advance notice of these hearings.

Will you be able to arrange your schedule to attend these hearings? ____ Yes ____ No

Do you have a valid Idaho Driver’s License? ____ Yes ____ No

Do you have access to a car? ____ Yes ____ No

REFERENCES

Please list five references (no more than one family member, please). Please provide complete addresses. These five people will be asked to provide written references.

Name	Address/City/Zip	Phone No.
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____

Have you been involved with Social Services agencies or the Department of Health and Welfare for any violation of the Child Protective Act? If so, please explain.

Are there any facts not disclosed by your answers concerning your background, history, experience, or activities which in your opinion may have a bearing on your character, fitness, or eligibility to be a Guardian ad Litem volunteer? If so, please explain. _____

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Have you ever been convicted or received a withheld judgment as an adult of any felony or misdemeanor which is a sex offense, a crime against moral turpitude, a crime affecting family relationships and children, assault, battery, or an attempt or conspiracy to commit any such offense? _____ If yes, what crime were you convicted of? _____

Are you currently charged with a crime? _____ If yes, what crime are you charged with?

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

Please answer on a separate piece of paper in paragraph form where applicable.

1. Why do you want to become a CASA/GAL volunteer?
2. How did you learn about the CASA/GAL program?
3. What do you hope to get out of this volunteer experience?
4. List current and previous volunteer work.
5. Briefly explain your philosophy of parenting, including the rights and responsibilities of both parents and children.
6. Briefly explain what role you believe society should play in protecting the rights of children and helping a family overcome hardships and remain living together as one unit.
7. What experience or knowledge of children and families do you have to assist you in determining what may be in a child's best interests? (i.e. parenting, child care, etc.)
8. Do you have any experience with social service agencies as a staff person, foster parent, volunteer, or client? If yes, please describe.
9. Describe any strong interests, knowledge areas, hobbies or special skills which you could offer as a volunteer.
10. Please write a short autobiography (1 page or less).

BACKGROUND CHECK

Any applicant found to have been convicted of or having charges pending for a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, or related acts that would pose risks to children or the CASA program's credibility is not eligible to be a CASA volunteer.

I, _____ hereby affirm that all of the answers provided on my volunteer application are true. I hereby authorize the Fifth Judicial District CASA Program, Inc., and any law enforcement agency they authorize, to investigate my background to determine my fitness as a potential volunteer.

I understand that the information requested in this application will be used only for the purpose of determining my suitability as a CASA volunteer. Further, I understand that completion of training does not guarantee that I will be assigned a case. If I have successfully completed the training and have met all other requirements, and it has been determined that I am a suitable volunteer, I understand that I will be expected to serve a minimum of one year in the CASA program. If unforeseen circumstances prevent me from fulfilling this obligation, I will submit my written resignation to the program director with as much advance notice as possible. I am aware of the sensitive and confidential nature of the official documents, reports and other material I will examine in my capacity as a CASA volunteer. I will discuss these matters only with those persons directly involved in the case or who will be consulted for their professional knowledge and expertise.

I also understand that if for any reason it becomes apparent that my activities are contrary to the policies, goals and/or philosophy of the CASA program, and their desire to provide quality services to abused and neglected children, my services as a CASA volunteer will be terminated.

I submit the statements on this application are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that falsification on this application can disqualify me from consideration or can result in dismissal at a later time.

Your Signature _____

Date _____

Reference: _____

DISCLAIMER AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

This release and authorization acknowledges that we may now, or at any time while you are employed, conduct a verification of your motor vehicle records, and receive any criminal history record information pertaining to you that may be in the files of any federal, state, county, or local criminal justice agency and or other information as deemed necessary to fulfill the job requirements. The results of this verification process will be used to determine employment under employment policies. I hereby certify that the information provided by me for the purpose of employment is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and understand that if I am accepted, **any false statements or omissions will be considered as cause for dismissal/removal.** I do hereby agree to forever release and discharge any and all companies herein, and or any of its agents, and their associates to the full extent permitted by law from any claims, damages, losses, liabilities, costs and expenses, or any other charge complaint filed with any agency arising from the retrieving and reporting information

PLEASE COMPLETE THE BELOW - PLEASE PRINT NEATLY -

FIRST NAME: _____ FULL MIDDLE NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____
ALIAS / MARRIED LAST NAMES: _____

DRIVERS LICENSE #: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: _____ - _____ - _____ DATE OF BIRTH: ____/____/____
(Please Write Clearly & Neatly) (Please Write Clearly & Neatly)

List your addresses for the last 7 (seven) years. Include the COUNTY, and dates from/to for each address. Please PRINT clearly.

CURRENT ADDRESS:	CITY	STATE	ZIP	COUNTY	FROM / TO
FORMER ADDRESS:	CITY	STATE	ZIP	COUNTY	FROM / TO
FORMER ADDRESS:	CITY	STATE	ZIP	COUNTY	FROM / TO
FORMER ADDRESS:	CITY	STATE	ZIP	COUNTY	FROM / TO
FORMER ADDRESS:	CITY	STATE	ZIP	COUNTY	FROM / TO
FORMER ADDRESS:	CITY	STATE	ZIP	COUNTY	FROM / TO

FELONY OR RELATED MISDEMEANORS: YES NO PLEASE EXPLAIN: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

All arrests, charges, convictions and non-convictions need to be listed here. List location (county) of charge and date of charge. Please do not leave anything out here and print clearly. It is important you understand this section completely.

Printed Name of Applicant: _____ Signature of Applicant: _____

Today's Date: _____ Home Telephone Number: _____

IDAHO CASA ASSOCIATION

Confidentiality and Commitment Statement

I, _____, as a CASA volunteer do hereby agree to the following requirements of the program:

1. I will attend the basic pre-service training sessions required for certification.
2. I will participate in a minimum of 10 hours of related training or the in-service training sessions provided for continued education throughout the year.
3. I will make a commitment to serve as a CASA volunteer for at least one year.
4. I will keep confidential all information revealed to me about the people involved on any case.
5. In the event that I have had previous association with the principle parties involved in any case or am in any other way prejudiced, I shall declare myself to be unsuitable for appointment to that particular case.
6. I agree to keep required records and fill out required forms in each case on which I serve.
7. I will keep accurate record of the mileage I drive and the hours I spend during my service as a CASA volunteer.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the party(ies) has (have) executed this Contract the day and year indicated below.

Volunteer

Volunteer

STATE OF IDAHO)
 :
County of _____)

On this ____ day of _____, 19____, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the said County and State, personally appeared _____ who acknowledged that he/she executed the foregoing instrument on the date indicated.

Notary Public in and for the State of Idaho, residing at

Appendix B

Screening Interview Form

The screening interview, conducted face-to-face, gathers the following information about the prospective volunteer:

Name of Candidate: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Make sure volunteer is aware of the following:

1. Year long commitment
2. Attendance at case court hearings
3. Court reports and monthly supervision
4. Professionalism in dress, conduct
5. Reimbursement of mileage, postage, and phone
6. Thirty-two (32) hour new volunteer training and 12 hour annual refresher training requirements

Explain how the interview is to be conducted. Ask if there are any questions.

SECTION I: Determine emotional objectivity/prejudice.

What do you think are the reasons parents abuse their children?

Have you had any experience dealing with abusive parents/adults and/or abused and neglected children?

For what reasons do you think children are removed from their homes?

Under what condition would you recommend returning a child to an abusive home?

Do you have concerns being appointed to a case where a parent, sibling and/or extended family member has allegedly sexually abused a child?

Do you think race and gender play a factor in the abuse and neglect of children? How?

Do you have any preferences for working with children of a particular age or sex? Explain.

Think of four adjectives that you use to describe children.

SECTION II: Family Origin/Present Family, to determine family attitudes/practices.

Describe your mother and father and the family that you were brought up in.

How were you disciplined as a child?

What were your parents' expectations of you as a child?

Do you think your basic needs were met?

How did your parents express love towards each other?

How did you spend your time as a child?

What values are important to your family? What is your most important value?

SECTION III: To determine maturity/stability/self esteem (watch for transference, protecting, rescuing and fixing)

Describe yourself... what do you think about the person you've described?

If you could label your level of self-esteem from 1-10, ten the highest, what score would you give yourself and why?

Describe stressful situations for you. How do you deal with stress?

In what kinds of situations do you get angry? How do you express your anger?

What problems with employment have you encountered?

How many jobs have you had in the past five years?

Have you ever been fired from a job? If yes, why?

What type of supervision do you work best with?

How do you feel about working with men or women that could be much younger or older than yourself?

What are your strongest qualities/assets?

What are the areas you feel you need to improve on?

SECTION IV: Related History (If volunteer answers yes to any question ask them to expand on answer.)

Were you physically or sexually abused/neglected or touched in a manner which made you uncomfortable as a child? Are you aware of similar incidents of others in your family?
Have you ever had any interaction with a child protection agency or department?
Have you ever been involved in a custody dispute? Explain in detail.
Have you ever been convicted of any major traffic violations, DUIs, etc.?
Have you ever had an addiction to drugs or alcohol?
At what time do you use alcohol? Is or has your alcohol or chemical use ever been different from what you would like it to be?
Do you have any problems or concerns that may be raised by reference checks with the child abuse registry or criminal background check?

SECTION V: To determine motivation/commitment.

What seems most intimidating to you about being a CASA volunteer?
Have you ever had any experience with domestic violence situations?
Have you ever been the victim of violent crime? Another type of crime?
Briefly describe your closest friend?
How would your closest friend describe you?

SECTION VI: To determine natural/instinctive abilities.

What activities would you enjoy doing with a child?
You are leaving the grocery store and come across a small child left in a parked car, what would you do in this situation?

SECTION VII: Handling confrontation/adapting to new situations.

What do you define as pornography? Have you been exposed to pornographic materials?
What was the toughest decision you ever made?
What would you do if your recommendation on a case were different than the social workers, lawyers, etc.? Explain.
How do you react if a friend suggests that you change plans you have already made?
How comfortable are you working with single parents? Going alone to a home with a single parent of the opposite sex?
What are your beliefs and feelings about gay and homosexual parents?
Is there any area we have not talked about that you would want to discuss?

By signing below, I assure that everything on this form accuracy represents my statements during this interview.

Signature _____

Print your name _____

Date _____