



CASA for Children
Hearts of Gold Toolkit
February 2023

Table of Contents

- **Overview and Purpose**
- **Current Needs**
- **Facts and Figures**
- **Timeline**
- **Tactics and Points Breakdown**
 - Invite someone you know to a CASA Info Session
 - Distribute Flyers/Brochures
 - Invite CASA Recruiter to speak with your group, organization, or company
 - Share CASA for Children Social Media Posts
- **Tactics and Points Chart Summary**
- **Resources**
 - Flyers and Brochures
 - CASA Volunteer Recruitment Talking Points
 - CASA Volunteer FAQs
 - Elevator Pitch Worksheet

Overview and Purpose:

When we ask CASA volunteers where they heard about CASA for Children, one of the most common responses we get is “from a friend or family member” (often a current CASA volunteer!)

In an effort to leverage this tried and true tactic, CASA for Children is seeking to be more intentional about putting resources towards supporting ‘word of mouth’ as a recruitment strategy. We often say that our CASA Volunteers have hearts of gold so, beginning February 2023 we will be engaging with current CASA volunteers in the Hearts of Gold Campaign in an effort to recruit new CASA volunteers!

We believe in the value and strength of community and are excited to engage with current CASA volunteers in spreading awareness about the urgent need for CASA volunteers in Multnomah, Washington, Columbia and Tillamook counties.

How it Works:

This is a competition! All CASA volunteers will be a part of a team. Your team is determined by your supervisor. Individual CASA's will earn points for their team by engaging in specific recruitment tactics. For example, if your CASA Supervisor is Allie, you'll be on Allie's team and any points you earn will be counted towards your team total.

Teams will compete with each other by county. Winners will be announced after February 28th, 2023.

Current Needs:



Those are the words of our Intake Manager, reflecting on our large waitlist of children awaiting a CASA volunteer. Our Intake Manager is the first person to see new cases that come into our office and is working hard to manage the quickly growing list.

“Homelessness, gun violence, we’re downstream from all of it,” she continued.

Our needs are constantly changing, but one thing is constant... We always need CASA volunteers. We are seeing a growing number of families coming into the system in all of the counties we serve and that means our waitlist is also growing at an alarming rate in some counties.

Facts and Figures:

General:

- Of all completed CPS assessments, 7,352 were founded for abuse and involved 10,766 victims. Of those victims, 1,983 (18.4%) were removed from their homes (ORCW Data book 2021)
- Of all victims, 41.5 percent were 5 years old and younger. (ORCW Data book 2021)
- At 42.3 percent, parent/caregiver alcohol or drug abuse issues represented the most common family stress factor when child abuse was present. (ORCW Data book 2021)
- The next most common stressors were domestic violence (32.5 percent) and parent/caregiver involvement with law enforcement agencies (19.7 percent)

- An average of 5,665 children were in foster care daily. (ORCW Data book 2021)
- Teens (13 years and older) comprised 30.3 percent of the foster care population. A total of 2,616 teens spent at least one day in foster care. (ORCW Data book 2021)

From the Annie E Casey Foundation:

Currently, 18% of all children in the United States — nearly 13 million kids total — are living in poverty. Child poverty occurs when a child lives in a household where the combined annual earnings of all adults falls below a federally set income threshold. This threshold varies by family size and composition. In 2018, a family of two adults and two children were officially living in poverty if their household earnings fell below \$25,465 annually.

Education:

- Nationally: 34% of 17-18 year olds in foster care have experienced 5+ school changes
- 50% chronically absent from school
- 64% of foster students complete high school by age 18
- 3% of former foster youth attain a bachelor's degree (from fostercareandeducation.org)

From OR Dept. of Ed:

- Only 35% of Oregon children who spent time in foster care were eligible to graduate with their classmates in 2019
- Oregon test results showed 31 percent of children in foster care during the 2018-2019 school year scored proficient in reading and writing and just 18 percent scored as proficient in math. That compared with all-student proficiency rates of 55 percent in reading and writing and 41 percent in math.

Mental Health:

- At ages 17 or 18, **foster youth are 2 to 4 times** more likely to suffer from lifetime and/or past year **mental health disorders** compared to transition aged youth in the general population.
<https://experts.illinois.edu/en/publications/mental-health-and-substance-use-disorders-among-foster-youth-transition-aged-youth>
- New data from 2020 shows Oregon has the second-highest alcohol and drug addiction rates in the nation and ranks last in treatment options.

Timeline:

While we will continue to support word of mouth as a strategy year round, we are prioritizing February 2023 as an all hands on deck effort.

Wednesday, February 1st	Hearts of Gold Campaign Kickoff!
Tuesday, February 28th	Hearts of Gold Campaign Ends

*Each county will have 1 winning team who will be determined by earning the most points in their county by February 28th. Winning teams will be announced after February 28th, 2023.

Tactics and Points Breakdown:

1. Invite someone you know to a CASA Info Session

We all know someone in our lives who would make a great CASA volunteer! Email, call, text or meet up for coffee with people you know and invite them to sign up for an Info Session to learn more about becoming a CASA volunteer.

Info Sessions are held at least 2x/week on Zoom. Anyone can sign up on our website: <https://www.casahelpskids.org/hearts>

How to earn points:

You will earn 10 points for every person you prompt to sign up for an info session. To ensure you get credit, registrants will be asked to list your first and last name on the info session registration form.

2. Distribute Flyers/Brochures

Is there a local coffee shop you frequent? What about a favorite lunch spot or pizza place? Maybe you've noticed that your local grocery store or your company's break room has a community board. There are so many places and spaces where a CASA flyer could be posted or where brochures could be placed so that community members can be prompted to learn more about becoming a CASA volunteer.

Pick up flyers and brochures at your local CASA for Children office and start posting them today!

Note: Make sure to always follow the guidelines outlined by the business, organization, or community space before putting up any flyers or leaving behind brochures. Including getting approval/permission if necessary.

How to earn points:

You will earn 5 points for every flier you put up and for every time you leave brochures behind. To earn credit, take a photo of the flyers/brochures with your phone and text it to (503) 567-1408 or email it to recruitment@casahelpskids.org with your first and last name. Get 5 extra points by including the name of the business, organization, or location in your message!

3. Invite CASA Recruiter to speak with your group, organization, or company

Are you part of a local book club? Maybe you're involved in a local church group already or another service oriented group? Can you think of any other places and spaces where you gather with others? Perhaps your workplace encourages you and other employees to volunteer in the community? If so, we would love to have our Volunteer Recruiter come talk with your group, organization, or company about the opportunity to become a CASA volunteer! Whether you have 5 minutes or 30 minutes to learn more, we'd love to connect with you!

To schedule, submit a speaker request form on our website:

<https://www.casahelpskids.org/hearts>

You can also reach out to Volunteer Recruiter, Jazmin Roque at jazmin.roque@multco.us

How to earn points:

You will earn 10 points per group that you prompt to schedule a time for our recruiter to come speak with them. The speaking engagement does not have to take place during the month of February to qualify.

4. Share CASA for Children Social Media Posts

Do you already follow CASA for Children on social media? We are active on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)! Throughout the month of February, we will be posting regularly about the need for CASA volunteers and you will be able to earn points by sharing these posts!

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

Don't forget to like and comment on our posts as well to increase engagement!

How to earn points:

You will earn 5 points per re-share/per platform. To earn credit, take a screenshot or photo with your phone of the shared post and text it to (503) 567-1408 or email it to recruitment@casahelpskids.org with your first and last name.

Tactics and Points Chart Summary:

Tactic	Points	Get Credit
<u>Invite someone to a CASA Info Session</u>	10 points per person you prompt to sign up for a CASA info session	Registrants will be asked to list your first and last name on the info session registration form
Distribute Flyers/Brochures	5 points for every flyer you put up and for every time you leave brochures behind. <i>Note: Make sure to always follow the guidelines outlined by the business, organization, or community space before putting up any flyers or leaving behind brochures.</i>	Take a photo of the flyers/brochures with your phone and text it to (503) 567-1408 or email it to recruitment@casahelpskids.org . Get an extra 5 points by including the name of the business, organization, or location in your message!
<u>Invite CASA Recruiter to come speak with your group, organization, or company</u>	10 points per group that you prompt to schedule a time for our recruiter to come speak with them	Registrants will be asked to list your first and last name on the speaker request form.
Share CASA for Children Social Media Posts <u>Instagram</u> <u>Facebook</u>	5 points per re-share/per platform	Take a screenshot or photo with your phone of the shared post and text it to (503) 567-1408 or email it to recruitment@casahelpskids.org

Resources:

Flyers and Brochures:

You can pick up flyers and brochures at your local CASA for Children Office. Electronic flyers can be found on our website: <https://www.casahelpskids.org/hearts>

CASA Volunteer Recruitment Talking Points:

General/Timely:

- CASA for Children recruits, trains and supports community volunteers to speak up for abused and neglected children who are under court protection.
- CASA volunteers are community members. Just like you! Who are trained to advocate for children and youth in foster care.
- CASA volunteers get to know each child/youth by visiting them and speaking to those involved in the child/youth's life. Like teachers, family members, coaches, healthcare professionals etc.
- CASA volunteers help provide a stable, caring presence in these children's lives, giving them hope for the future by ensuring that their educational, emotional, medical and practical needs are met while they are living in foster care.
- CASA's monitor the case by attending meetings and hearings, provide an objective opinion to the court, and make recommendations to ensure that each child/youth's need for a safe, permanent home is met as quickly as possible.
- **The first step in the process of becoming a CASA is to attend an information session. We host information sessions multiple times a week. You can sign up on our website: [casahelpskids.org/infosessions](https://www.casahelpskids.org/infosessions)**

Time Commitment:

- About 70% of our current CASA volunteers work full time. So, it is possible to be a CASA volunteer and be employed full time.
- It is helpful for CASA volunteers to have some flexibility Monday - Friday between 9am and 5pm as some CASA duties, like attending court hearings, will happen during that time.

- CASA volunteers work on ONE case at a time and commit to staying on for the life of the case. On average, a case will last between 18 months and 2 years. Some will wrap up sooner, some will take longer.
- Because every case is different, it is difficult to say definitively how many hours a week or a month a CASA will spend volunteering. However, CASA volunteers can expect to spend 10-20 hrs a month doing CASA work.

CASA Volunteer Qualifications:

- CASA volunteers are community members just like you!
- CASA Volunteers are 21 years of age or older.
- You don't need a background in social work or the legal system to be a CASA. You don't need to be a parent to be a CASA.
- We look for CASA volunteers who:
 - Have an interest in advocating for the rights of children and youth.
 - Are conscientious, diligent, thorough and reliable.
 - Have time to devote to training sessions and all of the work involved with being assigned to a case (see time commitment).
 - Have the willingness and ability to work with a child/youth, family members and professionals in a cooperative fashion using tact, concern and positive human relations skills.

CASA Volunteer FAQs:

What is a CASA Volunteer?

A CASA volunteer is a Court Appointed Special Advocate who is assigned by a judge to a foster child or sibling set. CASA volunteers visit the child or children once a month, learn about and monitor their education and development, and then use all that information to make a recommendation to the judge about what is in the child/ren's best interest. CASA volunteers are legal parties to the child/ren's case, they attend court hearings and meetings, and work with all the adults in the child/ren's life to ensure that their needs are being met during this challenging time in their lives.

What does a CASA do?

CASA volunteers advocate for the best interest of the child (or sibling set!). CASA's visit their child(ren) in their home at least once a month and talk with them as well as the parents, family members, social workers, school officials, health providers, counselors, and others who are knowledgeable about the child's history and circumstances. CASAs also review records pertaining to the child including school, medical and caseworker reports. CASAs will use all this information to make recommendations to the court about what is in the child(ren)s best interest.

Why is the CASA role important?

A CASA volunteer is a legal party to a case, and CASA's are the only party solely devoted to advocating in the best interest of the child or children on our case. Also, volunteers typically work on ONE case at a time, which allows them to devote all their energy and attention to that child or sibling group, as opposed to other parties who have dozens or even hundreds of cases they are working on.

What are the benefits of the CASA program?

CASA volunteers offer children trust and advocacy during complex legal proceedings and, because every volunteer commits to stay with their case for at least 2 years, the volunteer is a consistent figure and provides continuity for the child until a safe, permanent home is found. The CASA volunteer also provides the court with detailed information and recommendations to the judge about the child(ren)'s best interest.

Can anyone be a CASA?

Yes! CASA volunteers are community members just like you! You don't need a background in social work. You don't need to be an attorney. You don't need to be a parent to be a CASA. CASA volunteers do need to be willing to dedicate 35 hours to training, and commit to seeing their cases through to the final resolution – of a safe and permanent home for the child(ren) involved. In our program, cases last an average of 2

years and CASA's stay on for the life of the case. Successful CASA's also have some flexibility in their schedules during the week as well (M-F, 9AM-5PM). Additionally, a CASA volunteer must be at least 21 years of age.

What training does a CASA receive?

Before taking on a case and serving as a CASA, all new CASA's are required to go through a 35hr training. Part of new CASA training includes working on a mock case, writing a mock court report, and observing a hearing with an active CASA. Additionally, CASA's are supported by a CASA Supervisor throughout the life of their case. Supervisors are CASA staff who have a deep knowledge of the juvenile dependency system and Oregon Department of Human Services and are there to provide guidance. CASA's also complete 12hrs of continuing education/year by attending live virtual workshops, roundtable discussions, reading books, articles, listening to podcasts, and/or watching documentaries.

How will I have support during my case?

During your time serving as a CASA you will always have the support of a CASA Supervisor. CASA Supervisors are CASA staff and the primary support people for CASA volunteers. CASA Supervisors work in tandem with CASA volunteers throughout the life of their case. CASA Supervisors also support CASA's by helping them navigate their role as a CASA, answer questions, troubleshoot issues that come up on a case, provide information on resources and so much more.

I work full time. Would I be able to be a CASA Volunteer?

Yes! Many of our volunteers work full time. In fact, about 70% of current CASA's in our program work full time! Being a CASA does require some flexibility in your schedule during the week (M-F, 9AM-5PM) and the most important thing is a supportive employer.

Elevator Pitch Worksheet:

To engage people in our organization, think of your basic introduction as something that can be accomplished in one elevator trip. In that time, you need to:

- Describe the organization itself and its work
- Introduce your involvement in your organization
- Invite involvement
- Do it in a way that will really grab the listener

Things to Remember:

- People tend to remember the emotional connection, so lean more on your personal experience and success stories you've witnessed.
- Avoid jargon and technical terms that others not in this line of work might not understand.
- Practice! Make it flow in a way that is comfortable for you and has maximum impact.

Components of the elevator pitch; use these prompts to develop your own:

1. Introduce yourself, your position, and how you became involved with CASA.
2. Introduce our organization and its mission in your own words and style.
3. Who is affected? Put a face to the organization's mission. Use specific stories of real people when possible (keeping in mind confidentiality)
4. A compelling statistic or fact that connects this issue to your listener. Choose one that you can speak to with the most passion.
5. Let your listener know how they can get involved.

**Adapted from CASA Jeffco/Gilpin*