



STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC ADVOCACY  
Alaska CASA Program

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COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE  
JOB DESCRIPTION

**Purpose**

The Office of Public Advocacy is appointed as guardian ad litem (GAL) for children in Child in Need of Aid (CINA) court proceedings. As a volunteer at the Office of Public Advocacy, the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) shall act as an independent advocate for the child's best interests and monitor the case until a permanent plan is achieved. The CASA volunteer is directly responsible to the assigned GAL/supervisor and the CASA Program Director.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- A. Independently **investigate** and gather information about the case on an ongoing basis
1. Meet with and interview the child(ren) as soon as possible.
  2. Read all relevant records
    - a. Office of Public Advocacy file
    - b. Office of Children's Services (OCS) file
    - c. Medical, education, mental health, criminal records
  3. Interview adults important in the child(ren)'s life and who have information about the child(ren)'s situation
    - a. Family members, relatives, caregiver(s)
    - b. Professionals (teachers, doctors, therapists)
    - c. OCS social workers
- B. **Facilitate** the progress of the case through the system
1. Provide input into OCS case plan, including appropriate provision of family visitation and services for the child(ren)
  2. Maintain independent contact with the child(ren)
    - a. Visit regularly to establish/maintain relationship
    - b. Explain proceedings and answer questions
    - c. Observe changes in child(ren) over time
  3. Maintain regular contact with OCS social worker to discuss case progress and/or roadblocks
  4. Maintain regular contact with tribal representative if ICWA case

- C. **Advocate** in the child(ren)'s best interest, ensuring that all relevant information is available to the court
1. Be present at all court hearings and meetings related to the case
  2. Inform the court about how the child(ren) is(are) doing and identify any barriers to permanency
  3. Complete court reports as required and submit to GAL/supervisor for review one week prior to court due date
  4. Advocate for appropriate placement and adequate care and services (e.g. counseling, clothing, medical care, etc) for child(ren)
    - a. Consult with caregivers, teachers, therapists, doctors and other service providers as needed
    - b. Ensure child(ren)'s cultural needs are addressed
    - c. Ensure paternity has been established and a relative search has been conducted
- D. **Monitor** the progress of the case through the system
1. Follow parents' progress in completing the case plan
    - a. Maintain contact with parent(s)
    - b. Consult with parents' service providers
    - c. Inform supervisor if court orders are not being followed
  2. Ensure case is moving toward permanency for the child(ren) in a time consistent with the child's age and developmental needs
  3. Keep GAL/supervisor informed of case activity and progress
    - a. Maintain contact at least twice a month
    - b. Consult with GAL/supervisor when problems arise
    - c. Keep GAL/supervisor informed of illnesses, emergencies or vacations that would temporarily prevent CASA activity
    - d. Consult with Program Director or Volunteer Coordinator when GAL/supervisor is unavailable or if conflicts arise between CASA and supervisor
- E. Keep all case records accurate and up to date
1. Record all case contacts and activities immediately in case file
  2. Maintain accurate record of time spent on case activity
  3. Submit statistical information to CASA program Volunteer Coordinator as requested
  4. Return file to OPA when case is closed
- F. Know and adhere to the policies of the Alaska CASA Program
1. Maintain all case information in strict confidence
  2. Follow the Guardian ad litem Code of Ethics
  3. Complete 12 hours of continuing education annually

