



## STRENGTHENING THE VOICES OF CASA STATEWIDE™

### THE ROLE OF A CASA VOLUNTEER

When children are removed from home due to evidence of abuse or neglect, they are placed in an overburdened and understaffed child protection system that is hard-pressed to meet their individual needs.

CASA volunteers are everyday community members from all walks of life who speak up for a child's best interest in court. They are not foster parents, but valuable voices making a real difference at a critical turning point in children's lives.

CASA volunteers get to know the child and gather information from everyone involved in his or her daily life, including family members, foster parents, teachers, daycare providers, doctors, lawyers, social workers and other relevant persons. They use the information gathered to report to the judge, ensuring that the child's physical, mental health, and educational needs are met while in the foster care system.

*"I trusted my CASA volunteer. She was the only person whose face I recognized after every move."*

*- Ashley, former CASA youth*

### CASA LEVERAGES STATE INVESTMENT TO IMPROVE CHILD OUTCOMES

*CVC funding resulted in \$25 million in donated volunteer service.*

In 2016, state funding will support approximately **9,000 volunteers** who will contribute an estimated 10 hours of volunteer service per month for a total of **1 million hours of volunteer service**, a value worth more than **\$25 million annually**, based on data from Independent Sector showing the value of volunteer time as \$25.11 per hour for Texas.

*Half of the local programs in Texas rely heavily on CVC funding.*

For FY 2016, 36 of the 72 local CASA programs have 29 percent or more of their overall program budget coming from CVC funding. Of those 36 programs, 11 are using CVC funding for 40 percent or more of their budget, compared to the statewide average of 22.5 percent.

*Every CVC dollar helps support \$2.20 in private charitable contributions.*

CVC pass-through funding amounted to \$10.4 million in FY 2016. The largest source of local program funding is private charitable funding and other related funds at \$23.8 million, which means every CVC dollar invested helps support \$2.20 in private charitable contributions.

### CHILDREN WITH A CASA VOLUNTEER ARE:

*(Data provided by National Court Appointed Special Advocates)*



More likely to do well in school and pass all classes.



Less likely to re-enter care once they find a permanent home.



More likely to have positive outcomes during and after foster care.



## USING CVC FUNDS

CVC funds create the *foundation* and *framework* for many of the local CASA programs across Texas and allow them to continue to grow and serve more vulnerable children.

### Foundation

**80%** of monies in 2016 were budgeted for salary and fringe benefits for local program staff, such as executive directors and volunteer supervisors.

By providing funds for leadership and volunteer supervisors, we can improve volunteer advocacy and grow our network to serve more children in care.



### Framework

The next largest uses of CVC funds include:

- rent and utilities,
- Growth Funds,
- services provided by Texas CASA, like Quality Assurance, grant management, recruitment and retention tools, and a statewide recruitment and awareness campaign - all further benefits to help support local programs.

## EXCEPTIONAL FUNDS ARE AN INVESTMENT IN TEXAS' FUTURE

The child welfare system is facing a crisis, and through it all, Texas CASA and the CASA network have maintained their position as a stabilizing force for vulnerable children. The number of children in care will only continue to increase, so the question becomes: ***will CASA be able to grow to meet this need?***

It is our goal to one day provide a CASA volunteer for every child in care, and in the last year, we have grown closer to this goal than ever before. Based on the data from the first three quarters of FY 2016, the number of children CASA programs are serving is increasing at an annualized rate of around 7 to 8 percent. This compares to our recent multi-year trend of approximately 5 percent annual growth. A move from 5 percent to 8 percent would mark a **60 percent increase** in our baseline growth rate for children served and, if sustained, would substantially shorten the time required to close the gap in serving all children in care.

However, this growth in volunteers and children served is not sustainable without building the capacity of the local programs. While Texas CASA does not direct local program spending decisions, we expect them to have an increase in staffing, direct operations, travel expenses, and other related costs to support the additional volunteers, which could be covered with pass-through CVC funds.

Additionally, these funds will give local programs more flexibility to:

- improve pay and benefits to stabilize and improve their workforce, and
- decrease their volunteer-to-supervisor ratio to better give volunteers the individualized coaching they need to cope with potential stress and prevent burnout.

Texas CASA believes that we can achieve what others think is impossible, and each of us is an essential part of the solution. We hope that you will continue to be a part of that solution with us by helping us grow to one day serve every child in care so that they can have the safe, positive future they deserve.