



STRENGTHENING THE VOICES OF CASA STATEWIDE

TEXAS CASA SEEKS GENERAL COUNSEL and CHIEF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER

Location: Austin, Texas

Reports to: Texas CASA CEO

Effective: 8/26/2021

Texas CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is part of a national volunteer movement that began in 1977 in Seattle when a juvenile court judge conceived the idea of citizen volunteers speaking up for the best interests of children who are in foster care due to allegations of abuse or neglect. Today, the CASA movement has evolved into one of the largest volunteer organizations in the country. CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to watch over and advocate for these children in court, school and other settings; with the goal of reuniting children with their families whenever safe and possible. Volunteers stay with each case until it is closed with the goal of ensuring these children are kept safe and have the opportunity to thrive and grow.

In Texas, there are 72 local CASA volunteer advocacy programs with more than 11,000 volunteers serving nearly 30,000 children in 219 counties across the state. Texas CASA is the statewide organization that provides funding, resources, training and support to these local programs to ensure they can operate effectively and seek out the best possible volunteers who will advocate passionately for the children they serve.

Texas CASA is an inclusive, welcoming and affirming organization that values, celebrates and actively seeks out diverse candidates. We are an equal opportunity employer and do not discriminate against any individual, employee or applicant on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, sex, age, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or veteran or citizenship status. People of all identities are encouraged to apply.

POSITION SUMMARY:

The General Counsel and Chief External Relations Officer is a member of the executive management team who provides legal counsel and guidance to the organization, as well as strategic leadership for Texas CASA's legislative and public policy advocacy efforts. This position directs development and execution of legislative advocacy work and other policy efforts in



collaboration with multiple stakeholders, cultivates the organization's relationship with the judiciary and state agencies, and aims to broaden the impact of Texas CASA and CASA programs in the child protection system. The General Counsel and Chief External Relations Officer provides guidance and legal counsel on contract management, government relations and all other legal matters that arise. This position oversees the Public Policy team, including events and collaborative partnerships to advance systemic reforms of the child protection system. This position also oversees the work of the Communications Team.

Texas CASA offers a hybrid work environment, where you will be able to have flexibility to work partially remotely and in person.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provide legal advice and guidance for Texas CASA based on applicable state and federal laws, regulations, statutory provisions and guidance to maintain best practices and address areas of concern as needed.
- Review, analyze, negotiate and draft contracts and other legal agreements, as needed.
- Provide legal advice and guidance on the Texas Family Code and issues affecting Texas CASA and local CASA programs.
- Act as a legal generalist, addressing issues in all areas of law and working with outside counsel as required.
- Serve as a registered lobbyist for Texas CASA.
- Increase the awareness and positive perceptions of CASA and Texas CASA and our goal of a CASA for every child who needs one.
- Position Texas CASA as the premier child advocacy organization and resource on child protection and foster care to policy makers.
- Develop, advocate and help to implement policy and legislation to improve the child welfare system.
- Oversee the coordination of a strong network of CASA advocates throughout the state to provide effective grassroots public policy advocacy.
- Identify and leverage significant public policy opportunities to support Texas CASA's mission.
- Oversee and advocate for increased legislative appropriations including preparation and development of information for HHSC and the Texas legislature.
- Identify, develop and maintain relationships with the judiciary, legislators, state agency leaders and other key stakeholders and partners
- Develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy for Texas CASA
- Lead the creation of a cohesive and innovative external affairs strategy to strengthen and leverage the CASA and Texas CASA brand.



- Manage, lead and mentor the Public Policy team and oversee the work of the Communications team.
- Liaison for departmental budget and for Texas CASA programs regarding significant changes in the child protection system.
- Provide and ensure high customer relations standards.
- Provide assistance to appropriate board committees assigned by the CEO.
- Other duties as assigned.
- Ability to travel up to 40% of the time.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Required:

- Six years of experience as an attorney with preferred experience in Texas Family Law and the child welfare system.
- Four years full-time leadership experience with a nonprofit or governmental organization.
- Experience in public speaking/appearances before legislative committees.
- Understanding of the legislative process in Texas.
- Must pass background check.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES:

- Excellent verbal/written communication skills and effective listening skills.
- Ability to manage and coordinate multiple projects and meet deadlines effectively.
- Ability to lead and manage a highly productive, fast-paced team of staff.
- Ability to engage internal and external clients from all organizational levels and varied backgrounds.
- Proficiency in use of legislative tracking software, content management systems, and social media.
- Understanding of the complexities of the Child Welfare System and CASA, including emerging systemic changes.
- Knowledge of the Texas Family Code.
- Experience with the state budget and legislative appropriation requests.
- Excellent presentation skills.
- Commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; as well as willingness and openness to learning, growing and having discussions around this arena.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS & WORK ENVIRONMENT:



- 60% of work will primarily be performed in an office environment requiring ongoing computer use.
- Travel is required 40% of the time throughout Texas. During this time, the employee may be occasionally exposed to a variety of working and environmental conditions.
- Must be able to remain stationary or move about for long periods of time.
- This position requires frequent communication in a multitude of settings. Must be able to exchange accurate information in these situations.

FLSA STATUS: Exempt

COMPENSATION: Excellent benefits with minimum starting salary \$80,000, depending on experience.

HOW TO APPLY:

Please email a cover letter, resume and three references to jobs@texascasa.org. The subject line of the email should be "Texas CASA GENERAL COUNSEL and CHIEF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER Application." The cover letter should describe your interest in the position and include a detailed explanation of how your experience meets the minimum qualifications and prepares you for the responsibilities outlined in the job description.

Please email requested documents with attachments in PDF format only. We do not accept phone inquiries regarding the position.

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