

KEEP TEXAS CHILDREN SAFE: Fund Texas CASA's New Mandated Background Check Process



Texas children deserve to work with advocates who undergo the most stringent, comprehensive and reliable background check process possible.

Texas CASA requests an increase in biennial legislative funding under the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) by \$1.5M.

Essential Need

Without additional funding from the Texas Legislature, Texas CASA and all local CASA programs will face a large financial burden in assuming the responsibility for conducting the required Fingerprint-Based Background Checks for CASA volunteers, staff and board members in Texas.

The Urgency

The CASA network will have to absorb the costs of new background check experts, thousands of re-checks and ongoing compliance. Without the additional funding:

- Resources would be extracted from Texas CASA and local CASA programming
- Local CASA program's ability to engage with their community and advocate for children and families could be reduced

CASA Background Checks Include:

- Immediate notification if someone is arrested
- Criminal records from the court jurisdiction that the applicant resides and works in
- State criminal records
- FBI criminal database
- State and national sex offender registries
- Child abuse and neglect registry

Background

- Following an audit from the FBI and the enactment of HB 4123 during the 88th Legislative Session, the responsibility for conducting background checks transitioned from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to HHSC
- HHSC determined that Texas CASA should be responsible for ensuring that each CASA volunteer, staff and board member in Texas has an up-to-date background check
- Texas CASA is working collaboratively with HHSC and DPS to develop a timeline and plan for this transition

Ongoing Cost Breakdown:

- Rerun and maintain 10,000+ background checks of current volunteers, staff and board members
- Hire a minimum of two full-time background check experts
- Audit process to ensure compliance
- Statewide travel for auditing and training