



# EVALUATION OF COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES/GUARDIANS AD LITEM VOLUNTEER IMPACT *JUDICIAL SURVEY*

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*Prepared for*

*The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association*

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# INTRODUCTION

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association contracted with Organizational Research Services (ORS), an independent research and evaluation firm, to evaluate the impact of Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardians ad litem (CASA/GAL) volunteers and program activities on judicial decision-making, court processes and case outcomes. Data to inform this evaluation was collected by surveying active judges and Juvenile Court commissioners that hear juvenile dependency cases and are connected to a local CASA/GAL program and/or work with CASA/GAL volunteers.

ORS worked in conjunction with CASA staff in the identification of the survey target population and the development of a survey instrument. Survey questions addressed the following topics through a series of closed- and open-ended questions:

- ♦ Demographic factors of respondents and the jurisdictions they serve;
- ♦ Factors considered in assigning CASA/GAL advocacy to a case;
- ♦ Roles CASA/GAL volunteers play in supporting judicial decision-making and court processes; and
- ♦ Satisfaction with local CASA/GAL programs and volunteers.

Packets containing an explanatory letter and a survey were mailed to 2,288 judges in courts throughout the United States. Respondents were given the option to return completed surveys by mail, or to complete them online.

This report summarizes the survey results and provides National CASA with insights on:

- ♦ Factors used by judges to select cases to assign CASA/GAL advocacy;
- ♦ Impact of CASA/GAL volunteers on judicial decision-making, court processes and case outcomes; and
- ♦ Role and effectiveness of CASA/GAL volunteers within the court system.

# METHODOLOGY

## SAMPLE SELECTION

The sample of judicial names and addresses was compiled by National CASA staff using mailing lists received from state and local CASA/GAL programs, judicial websites, and an internal database. The extent to which the sample is comprehensive and inclusive is unclear.<sup>1</sup>

An attempt was made to only include judges on the list that preside over juvenile dependency cases and work in an area served by a CASA/GAL program. However, these criteria could not always be determined, in which case all juvenile judges from a respective state were included. Those names and addresses collected from state CASA directors, local CASA/GAL programs and the National CASA database likely met our target criteria. Those names and addresses obtained from web links likely included all Juvenile Court judges regardless of whether they heard dependency cases or were in an area served by the program. This occurred in eight states.

Additionally, we believe that there is some skew to the geographic distribution. For example, there are 198 judges in the sample from Indiana, but only 63 from California.<sup>2</sup> (See **APPENDIX B** for a complete list of sources by state). Further focused qualitative data collection may provide additional insight into these issues.

## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Prior to administration the survey was reviewed the National CASA Judicial Liaison Committee and pilot tested by four judges selected by National CASA.

Survey administration was conducted through a mailing in early June 2005 that was successfully sent to 2,288 judges and commissioners in courts throughout the United States. The mailing included a cover letter explaining the project, a copy of the survey and a postage paid return envelope. (See **APPENDIX A** for a copy of the cover letter and survey.)

Judges and commissioners were asked to complete the survey if they 1) are currently (or have been during the past two years) connected to a local CASA/GAL program and/or work with CASA/GAL volunteers, and 2) hear juvenile dependency cases. All

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<sup>1</sup> North Dakota and New Jersey are the only two states not represented in the sample; there are no CASA/GAL programs in North Dakota and the AOC in New Jersey requested not to participate.

<sup>2</sup> We have also not yet determined whether the response rate from judges included in the National CASA database is disproportionate with those of other sources, though it is possible to determine this with additional data collection.

respondents were given the option of completing and returning the paper survey or completing the survey online. Each judge was assigned a six-digit code to allow for tracking. This code was printed on the surveys and respondents were asked to input this code when completing the survey online.

In an attempt to boost the response rate three email reminders were sent to non-respondent contacts with email addresses and a reminder letter was sent to all non-respondent contacts without email addresses in June and July 2005.<sup>3</sup> Data collection was closed on July 15, 2005.

The overall response rate was 24.6 percent, with 564 judges and commissioners completing the survey. Of these responses, 101 were received online and 463 were returned by mail. Response rates from geographic regions defined by National CASA ranged from 17.53 percent in the Northeast region to 30.28 percent in the Midwest. In regard to state response rates, Nevada, Arkansas and Minnesota all had response rates over sixty percent; Washington DC and Hawaii did not submit any responses. (See **TABLE 1** for a list of states by Region and Regional Response Rates, and **APPENDIX B** for a list of state response rates.)

**TABLE 1: Regional Response Rates (n=563)<sup>4</sup>**

Region	Total Contacts	Total Respondents	Response Rate
Midwest (MN, IA, MO, WI, MI, IN, OH, IL)	393	119	30.28%
Mountain Plains (MT, CO, KS, ND, SD, WY, NE, OK, NM)	263	74	28.14%
West (WA, OR, CA, NV, ID, AZ, AK, HI, UT)	295	76	25.76%
Mid-Atlantic (DC, MD, VA, WV, NC, SC, KY, TN)	455	117	25.71%
Southern Gulf (AR, LA, MS, AL, GA, FL, TX)	420	96	22.86%
Northeast (MA, VT, NH, ME, RI, NY, CT, PA, DE)	462	81	17.53%

We also examined response rates by the type of survey returned. Of those respondents that received email notification of the survey, a greater number responded by paper survey than by using the online tool (17.1% paper versus 12.9% online). It is important to note that the overall response rate is higher among those who received e-mail invitations to participate (30.0% versus 23.7%). (See **TABLE 2**)

<sup>3</sup> We were provided with accurate email addresses for 333 judges and commissioners. Also, the State Director in North Carolina asked that reminders NOT be sent to judges in that state.

<sup>4</sup> One survey was returned with the identification code removed so we were not able to determine the geographical location of the respondent.

**TABLE 2: Response Rates by Survey Type**

<b>Survey Type</b>	<b>Email – YES (n=333)</b>	<b>Email – NO (n=1,955)</b>	<b>TOTAL (n=2,288)</b>
Paper Response	17.1% (57)	20.7% (405)	20.2% (462)
Online Response	12.9% (43)	3.0% (58)	4.4% (101)
<b>Overall Response</b>	<b>30.0% (100)</b>	<b>23.7% (463)</b>	<b>24.6% (563)</b>

The survey included nineteen questions about the following topic areas: demographic factors, processes used to select cases to assign CASA/GAL advocacy, the role CASA/GAL volunteers play in supporting decision-making and court processes, and satisfaction with local CASA/GAL programs and volunteers.

## METHODS OF ANALYSIS

We first examined the frequencies and means of all of the variables to determine the attitudes and behaviors of the full sample. We followed up by using a combination of independent samples t-tests, Analysis of Variance and Chi-Square analysis to explore differences between various respondent subgroups on the key measures of interest. We relied on a standard measure of  $p < .05$  for tests of statistical significance.

The respondent subgroups utilized in the analysis are as follows:

- ♦ **Parties to Cases** (Yes versus No),
- ♦ **Communities Served** (Urban, Suburban, Rural, Tribal)<sup>5</sup>,
- ♦ **Years Involved with CASA** (< 2 years, 3-10 years, 11+ years),
- ♦ **CASA Geographic Region** (Western, Mountain Plains, Midwest, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southern Gulf), and
- ♦ **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases** ( $\leq 25\%$ , 26-75%, and  $> 76\%$ ).

In addition, we also computed three indices to aggregate rankings across questions related to various facets of the work of CASA/GAL volunteers. Creating an index is an effective way of reducing data for analysis and involves using a Reliability Analysis to assess the levels of inter-correlation between unique items to determine whether a single

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<sup>5</sup> Since the categories of Communities Served are not mutually exclusive it was not possible to use standard comparison methods and concurrent tests of significance in exploring differences between those who served different types of communities. We typically present the relevant measures across the subgroups in the tables, but make no conclusions about the levels of statistical significance for differences among the groups.

composite measure can be used as a proxy for each of the unique items. A highly coherent index is one with a high reliability coefficient (i.e., an alpha coefficient of .70 or greater). The alpha coefficients for each of the indices are presented below:

- ♦ **Input** provided by CASA/GAL volunteers to inform court decisions (average across eight items with alpha coefficient = .886),
- ♦ **Usefulness** of activities carried out by CASA/GAL volunteers to inform court decisions (average across eight items with alpha coefficient = .846), and
- ♦ **Effectiveness** of CASA/GAL volunteers in engaging in activities that support court processes (average across six items with alpha coefficient = .862).

We also summarized general themes from qualitative responses where appropriate. See **APPENDIX D** for a complete list of qualitative responses.



# KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings reflect analysis of data gathered from survey respondents and are not meant to attribute higher or lower quality to any one program model or geographic region. Rather they illustrate patterns observed through analysis of the data. These findings are reported in the same order as that of the questions on the survey tool.

## SURVEY RESULTS

- ♦ On average, 47.9 percent of the judges' dependency cases are *assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer*. About 29 percent report that over three-quarters of their cases are assigned to a volunteer. **Assignment Rates** are higher for those judges in jurisdictions where volunteers are "**Parties to Cases**" and that are situated in **Rural** areas, but considerably lower among **Northeastern** judges. (See **TABLES 8 and 15**)
- ♦ The judges consider a wide range of *factors in assigning CASA/GAL advocacy to cases*. Judges rated the extent to which they consider various factors on a five-point scale ranging from "not very much" to "a great deal".
  - ♦ They are more likely to consider: **Placement Factors** related to *instability of the current placement* (average=4.10), **Case Factors** related to *conflicting case information* (average=4.31), and *concerns about implementation of services* (average=4.10), and **Abuse/Neglect Factors** related to cases with *extreme neglect, physical or sexual abuse* (average ratings exceed 3.98). They are less likely to consider **Family Factors** such as *parental incarceration* (average=2.93) and *number of siblings* (average=2.53). (See **TABLE 11**)
  - ♦ We observe interesting patterns in assessments of these factors when looking at different subgroups defined by the **Percent Assignment Rates**. With respect to **Placement** and **Case Factors**, the extent to which these factors are considered remains high among judges in jurisdictions at 75 percent or less assignment rates, yet declines precipitously among those in jurisdictions with high volunteer assignment rates (i.e., +76%). Conversely, with the **Developmental/Medical** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors** we observe a reverse U-shaped pattern where the assessments of the factors are highest for those in jurisdictions with 26-75 percent assignment, yet lower among those with either low and high assignment rates (i.e., <= 25% or +76%). (See **TABLES 12-14**)

- ♦ **Northeastern** respondents are less likely than those in other regions to consider **Placement** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors** in their decisions about volunteer advocacy. As an example, the overall sample average for the item about *case involves sexual abuse* is 3.98; among **Northeastern** judges this average is 3.33. **Northeastern** judges are also among the most likely to consider **Case Factors** in the decision about assigning advocacy. (See **TABLES 12-14**)
- ♦ The judges clearly value the *input from CASA/GAL volunteers in informing court decisions*. All of the average rankings exceed 3.68 (on a five-point scale ranging from “not very much” to “a great deal”), and the average is 4.10 for the computed **Input Index**. The respondents most value input on issues related to *placement stability and permanence* (average=4.47) and *safety of children while in placement* (average=4.33). The assessments of volunteer input are somewhat higher for judges with **more experience with the CASA program** and those in jurisdictions with **Assignment Rates** over 75 percent. (See **TABLE 16**)
- ♦ The judges report that the *CASA/GAL volunteers’ activities have been “very useful” in making decisions about case outcomes*. The assessments of usefulness exceed an average of 3.96 for each of the items and the average for a computed **Usefulness Index** is 4.36. The assessments of the usefulness of volunteer activities are somewhat higher for judges with **more experience with the CASA program** and those in jurisdictions with **Assignment Rates** over 75 percent. (See **TABLE 17**)
- ♦ The judges report that the *CASA/GAL volunteers are “very effective” in engaging in a wide range of activities to support court processes*. The volunteers are most effective in *considering the best interests of children* (average=4.71) and *monitoring the case* (average=4.52). The average for a computed **Effectiveness Index** is 4.39. (See **TABLE 20**)
- ♦ Respondents frequently *incorporate volunteer recommendations into hearing’s court orders*. Over 70 percent responded to this item with a ‘4’ or ‘5’ on a five-point frequency scale. Those judges where volunteers are “**Parties to Cases**” are more likely to report that the recommendations are **incorporated into the court order**.<sup>6</sup> (See **TABLES 18-19**)

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<sup>6</sup> In a jurisdiction where volunteers are “Parties to Cases,” judges appoint the program volunteers to serve as guardians ad litem, and it becomes the responsibility of the advocate to investigate the situation and present a report and recommendations to the judge. In contrast to a “Friend of the Court” model, volunteers conferred “Parties to Case” status have more formal standing in court.

- ♦ There is uncertainty whether there are *sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet caseloads* (average=2.55). This sentiment is further echoed in some of the open-ended comments of the respondents noting concerns about the availability of volunteers for cases. We find even lower agreement among judges in jurisdictions with low **Assignment Rates** and those from **Western** and **Southern Gulf Regions**. (See **TABLE 21**)
- ♦ In general the judges agree that the *work of the CASA/GAL volunteers has been of high quality, beneficial to their decision-making and beneficial to the children and families they serve*. (See **TABLE 21-22**)
  - ♦ Over 97 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that children and families are better served because of CASA/GAL volunteer involvement (average=4.66); almost 97 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that the type and quality of information the CASA/GAL volunteers provide to me is beneficial to my decision- making (average=4.52).
  - ♦ Over 85 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that CASA/GAL volunteers receive adequate training to prepare them for their advocacy role. (average=4.14).
  - ♦ Over 80 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that *I assign CASA/GAL volunteers to the most difficult cases* (average=4.32).
  - ♦ In addition, respondents are highly satisfied with the program and volunteers: 90 percent rated their level of satisfaction with local CASA/GAL programs and with CASA/GAL volunteers as a ‘4’ or ‘5’ on a five-point satisfaction.

## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

There are some questions about the overall representation and inclusiveness of the sample.

- ♦ The contact information for judges came from multiple sources, including local CASA/GAL programs, the CASA national database and judicial websites. In instances where the information was gathered from the judicial websites, it is possible that the overall population includes some Juvenile Court judges who either work in jurisdictions not served by a local CASA/GAL program or who do not hear dependency cases.
- ♦ Given the mixture of different sources, we observe instances where the sample distribution seems discordant with what would be expected across the states. For example, there are more judges in the population from states such as Indiana and Georgia than from California. Additionally, while there are twelve judges

in the overall population from Anchorage, Alaska, there is only one judge from San Francisco, California.

Several demographic characteristics of the sample are noted below:

- ♦ Overall, 24.6 percent of the judges responded to the survey. The response rates are highest among those in the Midwest (30.2%) and Mountain Plains (28.1%) regions, and considerably lower among Northeastern judges (17.5%).
- ♦ The response rate is higher among those judges with e-mail addresses (30.0%). We sent multiple mailings of the survey and several follow-up reminders to complete the survey on-line to this subset of the population.
- ♦ Over 54 percent of the respondents report serving Rural jurisdictions and 43 percent report serving an Urban jurisdiction.
- ♦ On average, the responding judges have been hearing Juvenile or Family Court dependency cases for 10.1 years. Over 22 percent of the respondents have heard cases for 15 years or more. On average, the judges have been involved with the CASA/GAL program for 8.9 years.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- ♦ **Continue to work with local CASA/GAL programs in providing useful and relevant services to the local jurisdictions.** The findings suggest that most judges are highly satisfied with the work of the CASA/GAL programs and volunteers and believe that the input and recommendations the volunteers bring to the judicial process is very valuable. The National CASA can build upon this sentiment by working with the local programs in their efforts to improve services, expand their volunteer base, and collaborate effectively with the local jurisdictions.
- ♦ **Utilize the information about relevant factors for advocacy selection in helping local programs work more efficiently with the local jurisdictions.** The findings point to some variability in the extent to which particular factors are considered in the decisions about case advocacy, and to differences in relevant factors based on the assignment rates and region. Draw upon these findings to help local programs share information about what the volunteers can do for the local jurisdictions and in which situations these volunteers might of greatest assistance. This, in turn, might encourage greater assignment of dependency cases to the program when feasible. The findings consistently show that greater case assignment and more experience with the CASA/GAL program contribute to more positive support and sentiment for the program and its volunteers.
- ♦ **Use the study findings to tailor training, communication and coordination efforts in local jurisdictions.** The differences in various measures across the subgroups defined by geography and characteristics of the jurisdictions affirm that the local programs provide services under a complex set of factors and circumstances in different judicial systems. The results of this study may help local programs better understand the factors that judges in unique settings consider in their advocacy decisions and also better understand the relevant laws, procedures, processes, and statutes that influence local judicial decision-making. It seems that for local programs to sustain the strong connections to the local jurisdiction it is necessary for volunteers and program staff to understand as much as possible about the local environment.

- ♦ **Continue with efforts to recruit and retain local CASA/GAL volunteers.** The findings clearly suggest that the only real area of dissatisfaction is that there are not “sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet the caseloads.” This sentiment is echoed in many open-ended comments by the respondents. It is clear that once the judges start to work with the local programs they understand and appreciate the benefits of what the volunteers can contribute to the judicial decision-making process. Perhaps there are ways that local programs and judicial representatives can work together to bring more interested individuals into local programs and provide them with support and motivation to stay with the program.
- ♦ **Examine differences in patterns among those judges working with the program using a “Parties to Cases” model versus a “Friend of the Court” model.** Volunteers working in the first model are conferred a more “formal” status in the court proceedings and this is demonstrated in the study by the fact that judges report that volunteers who are “Parties to Cases” provide greater input into the court decisions and are more likely to have recommendations incorporated into the hearing’s court order. The question is whether this distinction is important in helping local programs better serve the overall interests of the court.
- ♦ **Investigate what is different and/or unique about the judges and jurisdictions in the Northeastern region.** The findings show that Northeastern judges have the lowest assignment rates, are the least likely to consider the various factors for advocacy selection, and are the least likely to have volunteer recommendations incorporated into the court orders. In addition, judges in this region demonstrated the lowest survey response rates. It is worth some effort to try and understand what might be different about the local environments for the CASA/GAL programs situated in Northeastern states and work with the programs in this region to address any systematic challenges that have arisen.
- ♦ **Encourage the development of a comprehensive national database of juvenile court dependency judges for continuing education and advocacy purposes.** The difficulty in assembling a representative sampling frame for this study highlights the need for a full and accurate record of all judges involved in juvenile dependency hearings. Not only would this allow for ongoing data collection and research efforts, but it would also assist National CASA, as well as state and local CASA programs in providing ongoing education to judges about the uses and benefits of CASA/GAL programs and volunteers.
- ♦ **Expand National CASA’s knowledge of program impacts and efficacy through on-going research efforts.** The findings of this study point to many questions about the CASA/GAL program’s role and contributions to judicial decision-making processes and case outcomes. National CASA will continue to benefit from additional quantitative and qualitative data collection from local

program staff and representatives of the judicial systems. Some of these studies might include:

- ◆ Surveys including more detailed questions about the different decision-making processes targeted to court representatives in jurisdictions with different geographic and system characteristics.
- ◆ In-depth interviews with selected judges focusing on process and procedural issues related to how they work with the volunteers and the local programs.
- ◆ In-depth interviews with a sample of judges who may express more concerns or questions about CASA program operations. It is often the case that those individuals who are “less satisfied” actually offer the most insight about program operations and effectiveness.

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following summary of findings reflects demographic frequencies of respondents, averages, and statistically significant patterns observed through analysis of data gathered from survey respondents. These findings are reported in the same order as that of the questions on the survey tool. A complete record of data tables can be found in **Appendix C**.

## RESPONDENT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

The majority of respondents indicated that their *court serves* a Rural (54.3%) or Urban (43.0%) community. An additional 28.9 percent report that their court serves a Suburban community, while 2.1 percent indicated that the court serves a Tribal community. (See **TABLE 3**)

**TABLE 3: Community Served by the Court**

	n	Percent of Respondents*
Rural	306	54.3%
Urban	242	43.0%
Suburban	163	28.9%
Tribal	15	2.1%

\* Responses are not mutually exclusive and total percentage sums to greater than 100% since the respondents could serve multiple types of communities in their jurisdiction

There is fairly even representation of respondents across the six *CASA geographic regions*. The greatest representation is from the Midwest (21.1%) and Mid-Atlantic (20.8%) regions; the smallest percentages reside in Western (13.7%) and Mountain Plains (13.0%) regions. (See **TABLE 4**)

**TABLE 4: CASA Geographic Regions**

	n	Percent of Respondents
Midwest	119	21.1%
Mid-Atlantic	117	20.8%
Southern Gulf	96	17.1%
Northeast	81	14.4%
Western	77	13.7%
Mountain Plains	73	13.0%

A high percentage of respondents have substantial *experience hearing Juvenile or Family Court dependency/abuse and neglect cases and working with CASA/GAL programs*. Almost 32 percent of the respondents have been involved with a CASA/GAL program for 11 years or more. The average number of years hearing Juvenile or Family Court



dependency/abuse and neglect cases is 10.1; the average number of years involved with a CASA/GAL program is 8.9.<sup>7</sup> (See **TABLE 5**)

**TABLE 5: Judges Involvement and Experience**

	Years Hearing Juvenile/Family Court Dependency Cases		Years Involved with CASA/GAL Program	
	<i>Average = 10.1 years</i>		<i>Average = 8.9 years</i>	
YEARS	n	Percent of Respondents	n	Percent of Respondents
2 Years or Less	56	10.1%	55	10.0%
3-5	115	20.8%	138	25.2%
6-10	155	28.0%	181	33.0%
11-15	104	18.8%	92	16.8%
15+	123	22.2%	82	15.0%

Sixty percent of the respondents report that *CASA/GAL volunteers* are “**Parties to Cases**” in their court jurisdiction. We examined whether this measure varied across the **Communities Served** and **Regions**. We found the highest rates of volunteers serving as “Parties to Cases” in Midwestern (71.6%) and Western regions (67.5%) and the lowest among those in the Mountain Plains region (42.3%). (See **TABLES 6-7**)

**TABLE 6: CASA/GAL Volunteers as “Parties to Cases”**

	n	Percent of Respondents
Yes	327	60.0%
No	218	40.0%

**TABLE 7: Volunteers as “Parties to Cases” by Geographic Region**

	Percent with Volunteers as “Parties to Cases”
Midwest	71.6%
Western	67.5%
Northeast	62.3%
Southern Gulf	58.7%
Mid-Atlantic	53.2%
Mountain Plains	42.3%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>60.0%</b>

<sup>7</sup> The averages are based on a computation using midpoints of the specified response categories. The midpoints are as follows: 2 Years or Less=1, 3-5=4, 6-10=8, 11-15=13, 15+=20.

## SELECTION OF CASES FOR CASA/GAL ADVOCACY

The second section of the survey addressed questions relevant to the *selection of cases for CASA/GAL advocacy*. The respondents provided information on the processes supporting selection and assignment of cases and offered assessments of the role of different factors in this process.

Slightly more than 35 percent of the respondents report that less than 25 percent of their dependency cases are *assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer in their court jurisdiction*. In contrast, about 29 percent report that over 75 percent of their cases are assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer. Overall, 47.9 percent of the judges' dependency cases are assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer.<sup>8</sup> (See **TABLE 8**)

**TABLE 8: Percentage of Dependency Cases Assigned to a CASA/GAL Volunteer**

	n	Percent of Respondents
None	10	1.8%
1-25 percent	191	34.5%
26-50 percent	91	16.5%
51-75 percent	75	13.6%
76-99 percent	96	17.4%
ALL	63	11.4%
I Don't Know	27	4.9%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>47.9%</b>

Over 80 percent of respondents indicate that *some form of written source is used to assign cases to CASA/GAL volunteers*. The most common sources are Court Protocols (41.0%) or State Statutes (39.1%). (See **TABLE 9**)

**TABLE 9: Written Sources Used to Assign Cases to a CASA/GAL Volunteer**

	n	Percent of Respondents*
Court Protocol	229	41.0%
State Statute	218	39.1%
Written Policy	103	18.4%
Grading Matrix	30	5.4%
Other	32	5.7%
<i>NO Written Sources</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>19.5%</i>

\* Responses are not mutually exclusive and total percentage sums to greater than 100 percent.

<sup>8</sup> The average percentage of dependency cases assigned is computed by using the midpoints of the specified response categories. The midpoints are as follows: None=0, 1-25=12.5, 26-50=37.5, 51-75=62.5, 76-99=87.5, ALL=100.

Over 79 percent of the respondents reported that they are *involved in the decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case*. (See **TABLE 10**)

**TABLE 10: Judges Involved in Decision to Assign CASA/GAL Advocacy**

	n	Percent of Respondents
Yes	436	79.4%
No	113	20.6%

These individuals then reported the extent to which they considered a variety of **Family, Placement, Developmental/Medical, Case** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors** in the decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case. (See **TABLE 11**)

- ♦ The most influential factor is whether there is *conflicting case information or highly adversarial parties* (average = 4.31, 63.8% consider this “a great deal”). Other factors related to *concerns about implementation, cases involving abuse or neglect*, and *instability of current placements* are also strongly considered in the decision-making process.
- ♦ The respondents are less inclined to consider **Family Factors** related to the *number of siblings* (average=2.53) and *parental incarceration* (average=2.93) or *status of the case in relation to ASFA* (average=3.20).
- ♦ The majority of the item averages range from three to four on a five-point scale. This suggests that there is room for change in these measures over time.

**TABLE 11: Factors in Assigning CASA/GAL Advocacy to a Case**

<i>To what extent do you consider these factors...</i>	<b>n</b>	<b>Average*</b>	<b>Percent “A Great Deal”</b>	<b>Percent “Not Very Much”</b>
<b><i>Family Factors</i></b>				
Parental incarceration	366	2.93	21.3%	27.3%
Number of siblings	362	2.53	10.5%	36.2%
<b><i>Placement Factors</i></b>				
Instability of current placement	376	4.10	52.1%	8.5%
Number and length of prior placements	373	3.94	48.0%	10.5%
Re-abuse while in out-of-home placement	368	3.72	44.3%	13.9%
<b><i>Developmental/Medical Factors</i></b>				
Child/Youth is medically vulnerable/fragile	376	3.89	41.8%	8.0%
Child/Youth has developmental delays	374	3.60	28.1%	8.6%
Child/Youth is possibly overmedicated on psychotropic drugs	363	3.50	32.0%	14.9%
<b><i>Case Factors</i></b>				
Conflicting case information, highly adversarial parties	381	4.31	63.8%	6.8%
Concerns about implementation of services	377	4.10	50.1%	6.1%
Issues related to reunification plans	376	3.98	41.5%	6.4%
Status of case in relation to ASFA	338	3.20	21.6%	17.5%
<b><i>Abuse/Neglect Factors</i></b>				
Current case involves extreme neglect	382	4.14	54.7%	7.9%
Current case involves severe physical abuse	382	4.07	51.6%	8.6%
Current Case involves sexual abuse	381	3.98	48.0%	8.9%

\* Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal

We also reviewed qualitative responses from respondents regarding *other factors they consider a great deal in (their) decision-making to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case*. The majority of responses could be included within the previously noted assignment factors; however, a few additional factors listed below were also identified. (Select quotations illustrating these themes are italicized below; see **APPENDIX D** for a complete list of responses.)

- ♦ Age of the child.
  - ◆ *Age – most kids up to age 12 we assign a GAL.*
  - ◆ *Our CASA agency focuses on children ages birth to three years.*
- ♦ Need for additional representation or support for the child.
  - ◆ *If I sense that a child could use a friend who could advocate for them as a friend.*
  - ◆ *When I feel adults have their own agenda and no one is really listening to the needs/wants of the child.*
- ♦ Availability of CASA/GAL volunteers.
  - ◆ *All assignments are based on availability.*
  - ◆ *Availability of a CASA/GAL volunteer – we have too few for the caseload.*
- ♦ Recommendations or requests from involved parties.
  - ◆ *Recommendations of attorneys, particularly children's attorneys, for whatever reason.*
  - ◆ *Request of a party of interest and/or social service agency.*
- ♦ Mental health, behavioral, educational, or general health issues of the child.
  - ◆ *Child has frequent runaway from home behavior or is incorrigible at home or school.*
  - ◆ *Child has history of mental health issues.*
- ♦ Mental health or addiction issues of the parent(s).
  - ◆ *If parent(s) are charged with drug charges.*
  - ◆ *Mental health of parents/ education or experience deficits of parents; criminal activity of parents.*
- ♦ Complex and difficult cases on which the court would like additional information (i.e., termination of parental rights).
  - ◆ *Any case where another set of eyes and ears may help; where children need more services than usual – vulnerable.*
  - ◆ *Potential for failure of reunification and termination of parental rights.*

We investigated whether there were any differences in the importance of factors in the decision-making process across different segments of the respondent sample defined by “**Parties to Cases**” status, **Years Involved with CASA**, **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases**, **Communities Served**, and **Region**. A full set of tables illustrating the averages for the individual factors across the different sample groups is presented in **APPENDIX C**. The following overall patterns emerged in the comparisons across groups. (See **TABLES 12-14**)

- ♦ In general there were few differences in the assessments of all factors when looking at subgroups defined by “**Parties to Cases**” status and **Years Involved with CASA**. We do observe that respondents in jurisdictions where volunteers are “**Parties to Cases**” are more likely to consider **Abuse/Neglect Factors**, especially with respect to *cases involving sexual abuse*.
- ♦ The **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases** in a jurisdiction seems to shape individuals assessments of the roles of different factors. The impact of this measure varies across different categories of decision-making factors.
  - ♦ With respect to **Placement** and **Case Factors** we typically observe a decline in the assessments of how likely these factors are considered among those in jurisdictions where assignment is over 75 percent. A particular example is *reunification plans* where the assessments decline to an average of 3.54 among those in that subgroup.
  - ♦ A reverse U-shaped pattern emerges in the assessments for the **Developmental/Medical** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors**. Judges in jurisdictions with 26-75 percent Assignment Rates are the most likely to consider these types of factors, while the assessments are considerably lower among with low or high assignment rates (i.e., <= 25% or +76%).
- ♦ We don’t observe consistent differences in assessments among those who serve different types of communities. The most noticeable disparities are with respect to the **Developmental/Medical Factors**; those respondents serving *Urban* communities are more likely to consider factors such as *developmental delays*, *medical vulnerability*, and *overmedication* in the decision-making process.
- ♦ It does appear that **Region** is an important variable in understanding some of the factors used in decision-making about CASA/GAL advocacy. In the case of **Placement Factors** we find that respondents from the *Northeast* are far less likely to consider factors related to the placement situation than those from other regions (specifically in contrast to those in the *Western* or *Southern Gulf Regions*). We observe a similar pattern in the assessments of **Developmental/Medical** and **Abuse/Neglect Factors**.

**TABLE 12: Placement Factors in Advocacy Decision by Respondent Subgroups**

	<i>Placement Factors</i>		
	<b>Re-Abuse in Out-of Home Placement</b>	<b>Instability of Current Placement</b>	<b>Number/Length of Prior Placements</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>3.94</b>
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>			
<= 25 percent	3.71	4.17	3.99
26-75 percent	3.82	4.22	4.08
76+ percent	3.64	3.78	3.64
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>			
Western	3.91	4.29	4.11
Mountain Plains	3.71	4.20	3.98
Midwest	3.59	4.08	3.92
Northeast	3.18	3.52	3.43
Mid-Atlantic	3.75	4.13	3.95
Southern Gulf	4.04	4.25	4.12

*To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case...*

*Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal*

*SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$*

**TABLE 13: Developmental/Medical and Case Factors in Advocacy Decision by Respondent Subgroups**

	<i>Developmental/Medical Factors</i>			<i>Case Factors</i>		
	<b>Developmental Delays</b>	<b>Medically Vulnerable</b>	<b>Overmedicated on Drugs</b>	<b>Conflicting Case Information</b>	<b>Reunification Plans</b>	<b>Implementation of Services</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>4.10</b>
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>						
<= 25 percent	3.44	3.73	3.28	4.48	4.10	4.19
26-75 percent	3.82	4.15	3.79	4.46	4.15	4.23
76+ percent	3.53	3.71	3.44	3.81	3.54	3.74
<b>Communities Served*</b>						
Urban	3.72	4.05	3.66	4.37	4.10	4.21
Suburban	3.51	3.76	3.32	4.35	4.05	4.06
Rural	3.54	3.85	3.47	4.34	3.99	4.05
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>						
Western	3.98	4.17	3.93	3.96	3.93	4.00
Mountain Plains	3.37	3.73	3.18	4.40	3.96	3.82
Midwest	3.41	3.75	3.32	4.30	3.82	4.05
Northeast	3.32	3.50	3.19	4.38	4.30	4.36
Mid-Atlantic	3.68	3.82	3.65	4.33	3.87	4.00
Southern Gulf	3.83	4.24	3.69	4.42	4.12	4.33

*To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case...*

*Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal*

*SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$*

*\* Unable to test for significant differences across the Communities Served since they are not mutually exclusive response categories*



**TABLE 14: Abuse/Neglect Factors in Advocacy Decision by Respondent Subgroups**

	<i>Abuse/Neglect Factors</i>		
	<b>Case Involves Sexual Abuse</b>	<b>Case Involves Severe Physical Abuse</b>	<b>Case Involves Extreme Neglect</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>4.14</b>
<b>“Parties to Cases”</b>			
No	3.82	3.94	4.01
Yes	4.10	4.16	4.24
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>			
< 2	4.38	4.44	4.49
3-10	3.94	4.03	4.13
11+	3.96	4.03	4.06
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>			
<= 25 percent	3.85	3.91	4.01
26-75 percent	4.24	4.36	4.41
76+ percent	3.84	3.88	3.90
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>			
Western	4.05	4.04	4.04
Mountain Plains	3.68	3.76	3.90
Midwest	4.12	4.20	4.33
Northeast	3.33	3.51	3.56
Mid-Atlantic	4.18	4.19	4.27
Southern Gulf	4.18	4.32	4.33

*To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case...*

*Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal*

*SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$*

**TABLE 15** presents the average percent of *dependency cases assigned to CASA/GAL volunteers* across various segments of the population. This average is higher among respondents in jurisdictions where volunteers are **“Parties to Cases,”** and where they serve more **Rural** or **Suburban** communities.

A telling finding is that percent assignment is substantially lower among respondents from the **Northeast Region** (average=32.4%). Coupled with our earlier findings that Northeast judges offer lower assessments of the importance of different selection factors, it raises the question of whether these judges interact with the local programs and volunteers to a sufficient extent to expect them to consider unique selection factors.

**TABLE 15: Assignment of Dependency Cases by Respondent Subgroups**

	Average Percent of Dependency Cases Assigned to CASA/GAL Volunteers
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	<b>47.9%</b>
<b>“Parties to Cases”</b>	
No	40.9%
Yes	52.8%
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>	
< 2	43.4%
3-10	48.5%
11+	48.7%
<b>Communities Served*</b>	
Rural	52.5%
Suburban	47.2%
Urban	40.3%
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>	
Western	53.2%
Mid-Atlantic	52.5%
Southern Gulf	49.9%
Midwest	48.9%
Mountain Plains	48.2%
Northeast	32.4%

*SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$*

*\* Unable to test for significant differences across the Communities Served since they are not mutually exclusive response categories.*

## ROLE CASA/GAL VOLUNTEERS PLAY IN SUPPORTING JUDICIAL DECISION-MAKING AND COURT PROCESSES

The third section of the survey examined the role that *CASA/GAL volunteers play in supporting judicial decision-making and court processes*. The questions focused on the types of input and activities the volunteers provide and their usefulness to courts in support of their judicial decision-making.

For the most part the respondents report that *input provided by volunteers has played an important role in informing court decisions*. The greatest input has been provided on issues related to *placement stability and permanence, safety of children while in placement, service provision, and placement with siblings*. We created an overall **Input Index**, aggregating the rankings across the issues. The sample average is 4.10 on a five-point scale ranging from “not very much” to “a great deal”. (See **TABLE 16**)

**TABLE 16: Input from CASA/GAL Volunteers Informing Court Decisions**

	n	Average*	Percent “A Great Deal”
Placement Stability and Permanence	540	4.47	60.0%
Safety of Children while in Placement and After Court Dismissal	520	4.33	59.0%
Service Provision	536	4.28	50.2%
Placement with Siblings	537	4.22	46.0%
Frequency of Visitation by Family of Origin	534	4.08	41.2%
Restrictiveness of Placement	536	3.96	35.1%
Location of Placement	536	3.82	34.1%
State’s Written Case Plans	529	3.68	28.7%
<b>INDEX</b> (average across all items)	<b>543</b>	<b>4.10</b>	

\* Scale: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal

We also reviewed qualitative responses from respondents regarding *other input from CASA/GAL volunteers (that) informs court decisions “a great deal”*. The vast majority of responses could be included within the previously noted categories; however, several respondents noted that they particularly value input from volunteers that address the issues listed below. (Select quotations illustrating these themes are also noted; see **APPENDIX D** for a complete list of responses).

- ♦ Promotes the child’s best interests, desires, or wishes.
  - ♦ *Needs of the child while in placement.*
  - ♦ *Relaying the wishes of the child.*
  - ♦ *Represent the child in determining what is in the best interest of the child, not necessarily the Department of Social Service or the parents.*
- ♦ In cases where conflict exists between involved parties (e.g., social worker and parent or the Bureau of Child Welfare).
  - ♦ *Dispute regarding facts between other parties to action or between parties and the Bureau of Child Welfare.*
  - ♦ *Conflict between social worker/other professionals and parent.*

- ♦ *How the parties and service providers are interacting or NOT to get the child moved forward. Red flags rise when CASA can't get people to talk to them.*

As expected, the respondents reported that the range of activities carried out by the CASA/GAL volunteers have been “very useful” in helping make decisions about case outcomes. The most useful activities have involved interviews with the children/youth. (average=4.70) and written reports to the court (average=4.56). The overall **Usefulness Index** average is 4.36 on a five-point scale ranging from “not useful” to “very useful.” (See **TABLE 17**)

**TABLE 17: Usefulness of CASA/GAL Activities in Judicial Decision-Making**

	n	Average*	Percent “Very Useful”
Contact/Interviews with child/youth	537	4.70	78.4%
Written Reports to the Court	537	4.56	67.4%
Contact/Interviews with Biological Parents	537	4.46	62.6%
Contact/Interviews with Foster Parents	536	4.39	56.0%
Contact/Interviews with Collaterals	536	4.39	57.5%
Verbal Testimony to the Court	521	4.21	51.1%
Contact/Interviews with Other Relatives	537	4.18	45.6%
Review of Records/Documents	533	3.96	42.8%
<b>INDEX (average across all items)</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>4.36</b>	

\* Scale: 1-not useful, 3-somewhat useful, 5-very useful

Respondents frequently incorporate volunteer recommendations into hearing’s court orders. Over 70 percent responded with a ‘4’ or ‘5’ on a five-point scale ranging from “almost never” to “almost always” when asked how frequently they incorporate volunteer recommendations. The average rating for this item is 3.93. (See **TABLE 18**)

**TABLE 18: Frequency with which CASA/GAL Volunteer Recommendations Become Incorporated into the Hearing’s Court Order**

<i>Average = 3.93</i>	n	Percent of Respondents
Almost Always (5)	157	29.6%
4	227	42.8%
Sometimes (3)	116	21.9%
2	11	2.1%
Almost Never (1)	19	3.6%

We investigated whether there were any differences in the *input and usefulness measures across different segments of the respondent sample* defined by “**Parties to Cases**” status, **Years Involved with CASA**, **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases**, **Communities Served**, and **Region**. (A full set of tables illustrating the averages for the individual items across the different sample groups is presented in **APPENDIX C**.) The tables in the main report present the comparisons across the **Input** and **Usefulness Indices**. The following overall patterns emerged in the comparisons across groups. (See **TABLE 19**)

- ♦ We observe that respondents from jurisdictions where CASA/GAL volunteers are “**Parties to Cases**” are more likely to value volunteers input on issues and incorporate recommendations into the hearing’s court order. A further analysis of the **Input** items indicates significant differences between the “**Parties to Cases**” status groups on all measures with the exception of *placement stability*, *location of placement*, and *service provision*.
- ♦ Respondents with greater experience with CASA/GAL programs are more likely to rely on input from the volunteers on a range of issues. We see a significant increase in the **Input Index** across the three groups defined by **Years of Involvement with CASA**. For each of the individual issues the highest ranking of input is provided by those with *11 or more years of experience* with the program. In looking at the usefulness of specific activities, we observe the greatest disparity in rankings of less and more experienced judges with respect to the volunteers’ *review of records*.
- ♦ The assessments of *input*, *usefulness* and *incorporation of volunteer recommendations* are typically higher among judges with higher **Assignment Rates** of volunteers to cases. It seems clear that greater interaction and exposure to program volunteers contributes to more positive assessments of what the volunteers bring to the judicial decision-making process.

**TABLE 19: Volunteer Input and Usefulness by Respondent Subgroups**

	<b>Input Index</b>	<b>Usefulness Index</b>	<b>Recommendations Incorporated into Order*</b>
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>3.93</b>
<b>“Parties to Cases”</b>			
No	3.99	4.32	3.82
Yes	4.18	4.38	4.02
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>			
< 2	3.87	4.23	3.67
3-10	4.05	4.32	3.95
11+	4.26	4.45	3.99
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>			
<= 25 percent	3.93	4.24	3.79
26-75 percent	4.09	4.33	3.94
76+ percent	4.35	4.57	4.22
<b>Communities Served</b>			
Urban	4.13	4.41	3.98
Suburban	4.11	4.35	3.94
Rural	4.10	4.34	3.94
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>			
Western	4.17	4.30	3.99
Mountain Plains	4.14	4.42	3.94
Midwest	3.99	4.28	3.87
Northeast	4.15	4.26	3.78
Mid-Atlantic	4.09	4.42	3.98
Southern Gulf	4.15	4.44	4.00

\* Scale: 1=almost never, 3=sometimes, 5=almost always

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$

# SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL CASA/GAL PROGRAM AND VOLUNTEERS

The fourth section of the survey assessed the respondents *overall satisfaction with the CASA/GAL volunteers and local programs*. The judges were asked to consider volunteers' effectiveness across different activities, and rate their agreement with different statements about the volunteers and the local programs.

The respondents report that the *CASA/GAL volunteers are “very effective” in engaging in a wide range of activities to support court processes*. The volunteers are most effective in *considering the best interests of children* (average=4.71) and *monitoring the case* (average=4.52), and slightly less effective in *assisting with permanent placement for the child/youth* (average=4.13). We created an overall **Effectiveness Index**, aggregating the rankings across the issues. The sample average is quite high: 4.39 on a five-point scale ranging from “not effective” to “very effective.” (See **TABLE 20**)

**TABLE 20: Effectiveness of CASA/GAL Volunteers**

<i>CASA/GAL Volunteers Activities</i>	<b>N</b>	<b>Average*</b>	<b>Percent “Very Effective”</b>
Considering the best interests of children	541	4.71	76.2%
Monitoring the case	544	4.52	60.1%
Preparing information for the court	544	4.43	53.9%
Working with others in the court system	546	4.34	51.1%
Researching case facts	541	4.25	48.2%
Assisting with permanent placement for the child/youth	536	4.13	44.0%
<b>INDEX</b> (average across all items)	<b>548</b>	<b>4.39</b>	

\* Scale: 1-not effective, 3-somewhat effective, 5-very effective

There is a general consensus that judges tend to *assign the CASA/GAL volunteers to the most difficult cases*. Over 80 percent of the respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement, and the average level of agreement is 4.32 on a five-point scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” (See **TABLE 21**)

For the most part, the respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with statements about their *satisfaction with different activities and functions carried out by the CASA/GAL volunteers* (i.e., making appropriate recommendations, carrying out work appropriately, serving children and families). There is moderate agreement that *volunteers receive adequate training to prepare them for advocacy roles* (average=4.14) and over 97 percent “agree” or “strongly agree” that *children and families are better served because of CASA/GAL volunteer involvement*.

There is some general concern about the *availability of volunteers for court caseloads*. Only 5.6 percent of judges “strongly agree” and an additional 24.4 percent “agree” with the statement that there are *sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet my caseload*. The average for this item is 2.55 on the five-point scale.

**TABLE 21: Agreement Items – Volunteers/Program Functions and Quality**

	N	Average*	Percent “Strongly Disagree, Disagree, or Neither”	Percent “Agree”	Percent “Strongly Agree”
Children and families are better served because of CASA/GAL volunteer involvement	545	4.66	2.8%	27.7%	69.5%
The personal knowledge that CASA/GAL volunteers about the children in their cases is beneficial to my decision-making	545	4.58	3.5%	34.7%	61.8%
The type and quality of information that CASA/GAL volunteers provide me is beneficial to my decision-making	547	4.52	3.3%	39.5%	57.2%
CASA/GAL volunteers make appropriate recommendations	544	4.37	5.0%	52.9%	42.1%
I assign CASA/GAL volunteers to the most difficult cases	496	4.32	19.3%	23.0%	57.7%
CASA/GAL volunteers carry out their work appropriately	543	4.20	12.6%	52.5%	35.0%
CASA/GAL volunteers receive adequate training to prepare them for their advocacy role	527	4.14	14.3%	54.5%	31.3%
There are sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet my caseload	536	2.55	70.0%	24.4%	5.6%

\*Scale: 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4- agree, 5-strongly agree

The respondents are *highly satisfied with the CASA/GAL programs and volunteers*. On both items, over 90 percent rated their level of satisfaction with local CASA/GAL programs and with CASA/GAL volunteers as a ‘4’ or ‘5’ on a five-point scale ranging from “not satisfied” to “very satisfied”. The average satisfaction for both items is 4.52. (See **TABLE 22**)



**TABLE 22: Satisfaction with local CASA/GAL Programs and Volunteers**

	<i>Satisfaction with Local CASA/GAL Programs</i>		<i>Satisfaction with CASA/GAL Volunteers</i>	
	<i>Average = 4.52</i>		<i>Average = 4.52</i>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Very Satisfied	346	62.8%	339	61.7%
4	152	27.6%	165	30.1%
Somewhat Satisfied	48	8.7%	40	7.3%
2	2	0.4%	2	0.4%
Not Satisfied	3	0.5%	3	0.5%

We investigated whether there were any differences in the satisfaction measures across different segments of the respondent sample defined by “**Parties to Cases**” status, **Years Involved with CASA**, **Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases**, **Communities Served**, and **Region**.

A full set of tables illustrating the averages for the individual items across the different sample groups is presented in **APPENDIX C**. The tables in the main report present the comparisons of the **Effectiveness Index** and some of the agreement statements. The following overall patterns emerged in the comparisons across groups.

*In general, perceived effectiveness and satisfaction is higher among those judges with a high percentage of cases assigned to volunteers. For many of the items, we observe a precipitous jump in satisfaction ratings among those with 76 percent or more assignment of cases. This is even true for questions about sufficient volunteers for the caseload. (See TABLES 23-25)*

The assessments of satisfaction are fairly consistent across different segments of the population defined by type of **Community Served** and **Region**, though we do find that judges from the Southern Gulf and Western regions are more likely to disagree that there are *sufficient volunteers for the caseload*. (See **TABLE 25**)

**TABLE 23: Effectiveness of CASA/GAL Volunteers by Respondent Subgroups**

	<b>EFFECTIVENESS Index</b>
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	4.39
<b>“Parties to Cases”</b>	
No	4.37
Yes	4.41
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>	
< 2	4.35
3-10	4.38
11+	4.42
<b>% Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>	
<= 25 percent	4.30
26-75 percent	4.35
76+ percent	4.56
<b>Communities Served</b>	
Urban	4.44
Suburban	4.43
Rural	4.38

*How effective are CASA/GAL volunteers in doing the following...Scale: 1-not effective, 3-somewhat effective, 5-very effective*

*SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$*

**TABLE 24: Agreement Items by Respondent Subgroups**

	Assign Volunteers to Most Difficult Cases	Sufficient Volunteers for Caseload	Make Appropriate Recom- mendations	Carry Out Work Objectively	Personal Knowledge Beneficial to Decision- Making	Information Provided Beneficial to Decision- Making	Receive Adequate Training	Children and Families Better Served
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.66</b>
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>								
<= 25 percent	4.15	2.38	4.32	4.15	4.54	4.45	4.11	4.59
26-75 percent	4.34	2.53	4.32	4.15	4.58	4.50	4.11	4.65
76+ percent	4.56	2.79	4.49	4.34	4.69	4.68	4.19	4.79
<b>Communities Served</b>								
Urban	4.39	2.46	4.38	4.23	4.65	4.56	4.21	4.69
Suburban	4.32	2.62	4.40	4.22	4.63	4.58	4.12	4.70
Rural	4.33	2.56	4.37	4.21	4.55	4.49	4.13	4.64
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>								
Western	4.18	2.28	4.44	4.18	4.66	4.55	4.13	4.70
Mountain Plains	4.46	2.80	4.40	4.26	4.58	4.57	4.19	4.69
Midwest	4.36	2.57	4.32	4.18	4.50	4.47	4.26	4.60
Northeast	4.16	2.74	4.41	4.28	4.54	4.51	4.15	4.55
Mid-Atlantic	4.38	2.75	4.33	4.18	4.56	4.52	4.04	4.73
Southern Gulf	4.36	2.17	4.34	4.19	4.64	4.55	4.09	4.70

Scale: 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4- agree, 5-strongly agree

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$

**TABLE 25: Program and Volunteer Satisfaction by Respondent Subgroups**

	Satisfaction with Local Program	Satisfaction with Volunteers
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>4.52</b>
<b>“Parties to Cases”</b>		
No	4.49	4.49
Yes	4.54	4.54
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>		
< 2	4.30	4.49
3-10	4.57	4.56
11+	4.47	4.44
<b>% Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>		
<= 25 percent	4.32	4.39
26-75 percent	4.59	4.57
76+ percent	4.71	4.65
<b>Communities Served</b>		
Urban	4.54	4.53
Suburban	4.62	4.56
Rural	4.50	4.54
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>		
Western	4.58	4.54
Mountain Plains	4.56	4.61
Midwest	4.58	4.54
Northeast	4.44	4.49
Mid-Atlantic	4.57	4.50
Southern Gulf	4.36	4.47

Scale: 1-not satisfied, 3-somewhat satisfied, 5-very satisfied

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

We also reviewed additional, general qualitative comments provided by respondents for themes. Of these, the most frequently mentioned are detailed below. (Select quotations illustrating these themes are noted in *italics*; see **APPENDIX D** for a complete list of responses.)

- ♦ Need for increased program funding to increase the number of volunteers and improve recruitment and retention.
- ♦ *Funding for our program has been cut – budgets in all government departments have been cut. The CASA/GAL volunteers are of greater importance in an environment in which programs are reduced and caseloads are increased.*

- ◆ *CASA needs more financial support in order to recruit/monitor more CASAs and to sustain a larger program.*
- ◆ *We have been plagued with people who trained, get assigned, and disappear.*
- ◇ CASA serves an objective resource for the court (i.e., the eyes and ears of the court regarding the needs of the child).
  - ◆ *I rely heavily on the GAL to bring forth the child's position to the court – especially where a child is too scared to testify.*
  - ◆ *In a system where the real parties of interest, the children, are underrepresented, I find CASA's advocacy not only helpful but essential to a good outcome.*
- ◇ Volunteers need increased training particularly in regard to how their recommendations fit within the law.
  - ◆ *I would recommend that time permitting all volunteers spend as much time as possible observing court proceedings so that they have an idea as to how the court engages in its decision- making process and what role the other participants play in the process.*
  - ◆ *Additional training and support around parent engagement in case planning may be helpful.*
- ◇ Occasional conflicts between CASA/GAL volunteers and other “Parties to Cases”.
  - ◆ *Most problems for our CASA are related to reluctance/resistance for state caseworkers to include CASA and work with them as an equal party.*
  - ◆ *The largest difficulty is when there is disagreement with our child welfare agency as the caseworkers then say that the volunteer is not a social worker and cannot possibly know what is best.*
- ◇ Need for policies, procedures and managerial oversight regarding the assignment and specific roles of CASA/GAL volunteers, as well as more information on how courts can better use CASA.
  - ◆ *They do not work the cases I need – you need to let your local people work cases where I do not have a state social worker!*
  - ◆ *I have never been clear on the parameters of services that can be provided by CASA. I would like more input as to what kinds of issues CASA can handle. I would like to utilize them more frequently.*

## **APPENDIX A**

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### ***COVER LETTER AND SURVEY***

## APPENDIX A: Cover Letter and Survey

May 31, 2005

Dear Judge or Juvenile Court Commissioner:

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association is gathering information through a survey about the impact that Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardians ad Litem (CASA/GAL) volunteers and program activities have had on court processes and case outcomes over the past two years. *(In some jurisdictions these volunteers are referred to as child advocates.)* The intent of this process is to gain the perspective of judges and juvenile court commissioners on the impact that CASA/GAL volunteers have had on judicial decision making, court processes, case selection, and overall satisfaction with CASA/GAL volunteers and programs. Please note, we are not seeking information on paid advocates, paid GALs or attorneys representing children in dependency cases.

National CASA contracted with Organizational Research Services, an independent research and evaluation firm, to assist in the development and administration of a survey to help us collect this information and the National CASA Judicial Liaison Committee graciously participated in the review and refinement of this tool.

Please see the enclosed survey form for instructions on how to complete and submit your survey. If you have any questions about this process, please contact Hallie Goertz or Marc Bolan at **1-800-943-5811**, or via e-mail at [casasurvey@organizationalresearch.com](mailto:casasurvey@organizationalresearch.com).

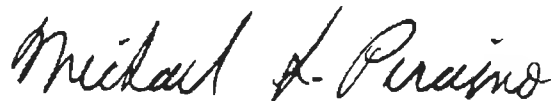
This data is being collected to improve the services provided by CASA/GAL programs and volunteers in support of court processes, and to provide information on how CASA/GAL volunteers are utilized by local courts. Important findings will be disseminated through [www.casanet.org](http://www.casanet.org) upon completion of the survey analysis. Also, please be aware that state CASA/GAL organizations will be receiving survey data for their respective states with all identifying information removed.

We would appreciate your response by **June 17, 2005**. Thank you for your participation in this effort. We hope that you will take this opportunity to share your opinion about the CASA/GAL program in your jurisdiction.

Sincerely,



Judge J. Dean Lewis (Ret.)  
Judicial Liaison Committee



Michael Piraino  
National CASA CEO

Enclosures



# National CASA Judicial Survey

**Do I need to complete this survey?** Please complete the survey if you: 1) Are currently (or during the past two years) connected to a local CASA/GAL program and/or work with CASA/GAL volunteers, **AND** 2) Hear juvenile dependency cases. (If you don't meet both of these criteria, please disregard the remainder of these instructions. Thank you for your time.)

**How should I complete and return the survey?** We strongly encourage you to complete the survey on-line – this format is fast and easy to access and use! The survey is available at the following web address:  
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=676661009450>.

Once you locate the survey web site you will need to enter the 6-digit code found at the bottom right corner on the printed copy of the survey to access the on-line versions. If you do not have easy web access, please complete the paper copy of the survey and return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope in which the survey can be returned. (All completed paper surveys should be returned to: National CASA c/o Organizational Research Services, 1932 First Avenue, Ste. 400, Seattle, WA, 98101.)

When you consider your responses please reflect back on your experiences with CASA/GAL volunteers over the past two years. Be assured that your responses will remain confidential and no responses will be attributed to specific judges or jurisdictions. This survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

## Section I: Demographic factors.

- Which of the following best describes the community that your court serves? *Please check all that apply.*  
☐ Urban    ☐ Rural    ☐ Suburban    ☐ Tribal
- How many years have you been hearing Juvenile or Family Court dependency/abuse and neglect cases?  
☐ 2 Years or Less    ☐ 3 - 5 Years    ☐ 6 - 10 Years    ☐ 11 - 15 Years    ☐ More than 15 years
- How many years have you been involved with a CASA/GAL program?  
☐ 2 Years or Less    ☐ 3 - 5 Years    ☐ 6 - 10 Years    ☐ 11 - 15 Years    ☐ More than 15 years
- Are CASA/GAL volunteers parties to cases in your court jurisdiction?  
☐ Yes    ☐ No

## Section II: Processes you use when selecting cases to assign CASA/GAL advocacy.

- Approximately what percentage of your dependency cases are assigned to a CASA/GAL volunteer?

<input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/> NONE	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 25%	<input type="checkbox"/> 26 - 50 %	<input type="checkbox"/> 51 - 75%	<input type="checkbox"/> 76 - 99 %	<input type="checkbox"/> ALL
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓↓↓↓↓
Please go to Question 2.						Please go to Question 3 on Page 2.

- In your jurisdiction, what written sources are used to assign cases to CASA/GAL volunteers? *Please check all that apply.*

<input type="checkbox"/> State Statute	<input type="checkbox"/> Written Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Court Protocol	<input type="checkbox"/> Grading Matrix	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> My jurisdiction doesn't use written sources.
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**3. Are you involved in the decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case?**

☐ Yes. Please go to Question 4. ☐ No. Please go to Section III, Question 1 on Page 3.

**4. To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case?**

a. Family Factors	Not Very Much ▼	▼	Somewhat ▼	▼	A Great Deal ▼	N/A ▼
Number of siblings .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parental incarceration .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Placement Factors	Not Very Much ▼	▼	Somewhat ▼	▼	A Great Deal ▼	N/A ▼
Re-abuse while in out-of-home placement .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instability of current placement .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number and length of prior placements .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Developmental/Medical Factors	Not Very Much ▼	▼	Somewhat ▼	▼	A Great Deal ▼	N/A ▼
Child/youth has developmental delays .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child/youth is medically vulnerable/fragile .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child/youth is possibly overmedicated on psychotropic drugs .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

d. Case Factors	Not Very Much ▼	▼	Somewhat ▼	▼	A Great Deal ▼	N/A ▼
Conflicting case information/highly adversarial parties .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Status of case in relation to ASFA .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Issues related to reunification plans (e.g., disruption of plan, extra monitoring needed for reunification) .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns about the implementation of services .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

e. Abuse/Neglect Factors	Not Very Much ▼	▼	Somewhat ▼	▼	A Great Deal ▼	N/A ▼
Current case involves sexual abuse .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current case involves severe physical abuse .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current case involves extreme neglect .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. What other factors not listed above, if any, do you consider 'a great deal' in your decision making to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case?**

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### Section III: Role CASA/GAL volunteers play in supporting your decision making and court processes.

#### 1. To what extent does input from CASA/GAL volunteers on the following issues inform Court decisions?

	Not Very Much ▼	▼	Somewhat ▼	▼	A Great Deal ▼	N/A ▼
Placement stability and permanence .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placement with siblings .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrictiveness of placement .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location of placement .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service provision (e.g., physical health, mental health, educational) .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequency of visitation by family of origin .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
State's written case plans .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety of children/youth while in placement and after Court dismissal ...	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 2. What other types of input from CASA/GAL volunteers not listed above, if any, inform Court decisions 'a great deal'?

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#### 3. In general, how useful have each of the following activities carried out by CASA/GAL volunteers been in helping you make decisions about case outcomes?

	Not Useful ▼	▼	Somewhat Useful ▼	▼	Very Useful ▼	N/A ▼
Contact/interviews with child/youth .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact/interviews with biological parents .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact/interviews with foster parents .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact/interviews with other relatives .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact/interviews with collaterals (e.g., teachers, doctors, neighbors) .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review of records/documents (e.g., psychiatric evaluations, school reports) .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written reports to the Court .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal testimony to the Court .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4. How often do CASA/GAL volunteer recommendations become incorporated into the hearing's court order?

1	2	3	4	5
Almost Never		Sometimes		Almost Always

### Section IV: Satisfaction with your local CASA/GAL program and volunteers.

#### 1. How effective are CASA/GAL volunteers in doing the following?

	Not Effective ▼	▼	Somewhat Effective ▼	▼	Very Effective ▼	N/A ▼
Considering the best interests of children (e.g., advocacy) .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with others in the court system .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing information for the Court (e.g., reports, oral testimony) .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Researching case facts .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring the case .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assisting with permanent placement for the child/youth .....	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2. I assign CASA/GAL volunteers to the most difficult cases.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion

**3. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

	Strongly Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Agree ▼	Strongly Agree ▼	No Opinion ▼
There are sufficient CASA/GAL volunteers to meet my caseload .....	SD	D	N	A	SA	<input type="checkbox"/>
CASA/GAL volunteers make appropriate recommendations .....	SD	D	N	A	SA	<input type="checkbox"/>
CASA/GAL volunteers carry out their work objectively .....	SD	D	N	A	SA	<input type="checkbox"/>
The personal knowledge that CASA/GAL volunteers have about the children/youth in their cases is beneficial to my decision making.....	SD	D	N	A	SA	<input type="checkbox"/>
The type and quality of information that CASA/GAL volunteers provide me with is beneficial to my decision making .....	SD	D	N	A	SA	<input type="checkbox"/>
CASA/GAL volunteers receive adequate training to prepare them for their advocacy role.....	SD	D	N	A	SA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children and families are better served because of CASA/GAL volunteer involvement .....	SD	D	N	A	SA	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. How satisfied are you with your local CASA/GAL program?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Very Satisfied

**5. How satisfied are you with your local CASA/GAL volunteers?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Very Satisfied

**6. What other comments would you like to share about your local CASA/GAL program or volunteers (e.g., what is working well, where is there room for improvement? *Please use the back of this page if you require more room for your comments.***

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National CASA may be interested in gathering more information from Judges on how they utilize and are impacted by local CASA programs. If you are interested and willing to be contacted, please fill in your contact information below. This information will be kept confidential between National CASA and Organizational Research Services.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Court: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (Street, City, State, Zip): \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!*

## **APPENDIX B**

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### ***SOURCES OF SAMPLE NAMES AND ADDRESSES AND RESPONSE RATES BY STATE***

# APPENDIX B: Sources of Sample Names and Addresses and Response Rates by State

State	SOURCE				RESPONSE RATES				
	State CASA Director	Web Links	National CASA Database	Local CASA Program	Number of Judges in Sample	Percent of Sample	Number of Respondents	Response Rate	Percent of Respondents
AK	X				24	1.05%	3	12.50%	0.53%
AL	X				21	0.92%	8	38.10%	1.42%
AR	X				34	1.49%	21	61.76%	3.73%
AZ	X				76	3.32%	22	28.95%	3.91%
CA	X				63	2.75%	11	17.46%	1.95%
CO			X		10	0.44%	3	30.00%	0.53%
CT	X				44	1.92%	8	18.18%	1.42%
DC			X		1	0.04%	0	0.00%	0.00%
DE	X				10	0.44%	4	40.00%	0.71%
FL	X				132	5.77%	19	14.39%	3.37%
GA	X				127	5.55%	24	18.90%	4.26%
HI			X		3	0.13%	0	0.00%	0.00%
IA			X		13	0.57%	7	53.85%	1.24%
ID			X		3	0.13%	1	33.33%	0.18%
IL	X				26	1.14%	15	57.69%	2.66%
IN	X				198	8.65%	43	21.72%	7.64%
KS			X		14	0.61%	7	50.00%	1.24%
KY		X	X		45	1.97%	14	31.11%	2.49%
LA			X		13	0.57%	3	23.08%	0.53%
MA	X				18	0.79%	4	22.22%	0.71%
MD	X				64	2.80%	27	42.19%	4.80%
ME	X		X		36	1.57%	8	22.22%	1.42%
MI			X		63	2.75%	14	22.22%	2.49%
MN	X	X			10	0.44%	6	60.00%	1.07%
MO			X		13	0.57%	5	38.46%	0.89%
MS	X				17	0.74%	4	23.53%	0.71%
MT	X				43	1.88%	17	39.53%	3.02%
NC	X				149	6.51%	26	17.45%	4.62%
NE	X				28	1.22%	10	35.71%	1.78%

# APPENDIX B: Sources of Sample Names and Addresses and Response Rates by State

State	SOURCE				RESPONSE RATE				
	State CASA Director	Web Links	National CASA Database	Local CASA Program	Number of Judges in Sample	Percent of Sample	Number of Respondents	Response Rate	Percent of Respondents
NH	X				94	4.11%	11	11.70%	1.95%
NJ			X		0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
NM	X				43	1.88%	10	23.26%	1.78%
NV				X	6	0.26%	4	66.67%	0.71%
NY	X				136	5.94%	20	14.71%	3.55%
OH	X				33	1.44%	17	51.52%	3.02%
OK	X				99	4.33%	20	20.20%	3.55%
OR			X		12	0.52%	5	41.67%	0.89%
PA				X	54	2.36%	20	37.04%	3.55%
RI		X			20	0.87%	4	20.00%	0.71%
SC	X				54	2.36%	15	27.78%	2.66%
SD	X		X		3	0.13%	1	33.33%	0.18%
TN	X		X		65	2.84%	16	24.62%	2.84%
TX		X			76	3.32%	17	22.37%	3.02%
UT		X			27	1.18%	5	18.52%	0.89%
VA		X	X		48	2.10%	10	20.83%	1.78%
VT		X			50	2.19%	2	4.00%	0.36%
WA		X	X		84	3.67%	26	30.95%	4.62%
WI				X	37	1.62%	12	32.43%	2.13%
WV	X				29	1.27%	9	31.03%	1.60%
WY	X				20	0.87%	5	25.00%	0.89%
TOTAL	29	8	17	3	2288	100.00%	563	24.61%	100.00%

## **APPENDIX C**

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### ***ADDITIONAL DATA ANALYSIS BY RESPONDENT SUBGROUPS***



## APPENDIX C: Additional Data Analysis by Respondent Subgroups

Family and Placement/Abuse/Neglect Factors in Advocacy Decision by Respondent Subgroups

Family Factors			Placement Factors			Abuse/Neglect Factors		
	Number of Siblings	Parental Incarceration	Re-Abuse in Out-of-Home	Instability of Current Placement	Number/Leng th of Prior Placements	Case Involves Sexual Abuse	Case Involves Severe Physical Abuse	Case Involves Extreme Neglect
OVERALL SAMPLE	2.53	2.93	3.72	4.10	3.94	3.98	4.07	4.14
“Parties to Cases”								
No	2.46	2.89	3.66	4.14	3.92	3.82	3.94	4.01
Yes	2.60	2.97	3.78	4.09	3.98	4.10	4.16	4.24
Years Involved with CASA								
< 2	2.50	3.15	4.00	4.15	4.18	4.38	4.44	4.49
3-10	2.47	2.87	3.66	4.09	3.85	3.94	4.03	4.13
11+	2.67	2.99	3.76	4.14	4.05	3.96	4.03	4.06
Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases								
<=25 percent	2.51	2.76	3.71	4.17	3.99	3.85	3.91	4.01
26-75 percent	2.68	3.07	3.82	4.22	4.08	4.24	4.36	4.41
76 percent+	2.25	3.05	3.64	3.78	3.64	3.84	3.88	3.90
Communities Served								
Urban	2.68	2.79	3.76	4.15	3.97	3.99	4.11	4.16
Suburban	2.44	2.96	3.58	4.04	3.86	4.00	4.06	4.14
Rural	2.50	3.07	3.77	4.07	3.96	4.03	4.10	4.17
CASA Geographic Region								
Western	2.74	3.09	3.91	4.29	4.11	4.05	4.04	4.04
Mountain	2.52	2.96	3.71	4.20	3.98	3.68	3.76	3.90
Midwest	2.54	3.16	3.59	4.08	3.92	4.12	4.20	4.33
Northeast	2.38	2.45	3.18	3.52	3.43	3.33	3.51	3.56
Mid-Atlantic	2.47	2.86	3.75	4.13	3.95	4.18	4.19	4.27
Southern	2.55	2.87	4.04	4.25	4.12	4.18	4.32	4.33

To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case...SCALE: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal  
 SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$



**Developmental/Medical and Case Factors in Advocacy Decision by Respondent Subgroups**

	Developmental/Medical Factors			Case Factors			
	Developmental Delays	Medically Vulnerable	Overmedicated on Drugs	Conflicting Case Information	Status in Relation to ASFA	Reunification Plans	Implementation of Services
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	3.60	3.89	3.50	4.31	3.20	3.98	4.10
<b>"Parties to Cases"</b>							
No	3.60	3.89	3.44	4.36	3.06	3.99	4.11
Yes	3.62	3.87	3.54	4.27	3.32	3.98	4.08
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>							
< 2	3.47	3.76	3.39	4.71	3.18	4.00	3.85
3-10	3.57	3.87	3.43	4.26	3.06	3.94	4.09
11+	3.70	3.96	3.66	4.30	3.44	4.07	4.18
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>							
<=25 percent	3.44	3.73	3.28	4.48	3.11	4.10	4.19
26-75 percent	3.82	4.15	3.79	4.46	3.43	4.15	4.23
76 percent+	3.53	3.71	3.44	3.81	3.07	3.54	3.74
<b>Communities Served</b>							
Urban	3.72	4.05	3.66	4.37	3.18	4.10	4.21
Suburban	3.51	3.76	3.32	4.35	3.04	4.05	4.06
Rural	3.54	3.85	3.47	4.34	3.24	3.99	4.05
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>							
Western	3.98	4.17	3.93	3.96	3.39	3.93	4.00
Mountain	3.37	3.73	3.18	4.40	3.04	3.96	3.82
Midwest	3.41	3.75	3.32	4.30	3.27	3.82	4.05
Northeast	3.32	3.50	3.19	4.38	3.02	4.30	4.36
Mid-Atlantic	3.68	3.82	3.65	4.33	3.14	3.87	4.00
Southern	3.83	4.24	3.69	4.42	3.29	4.12	4.33

*To what extent do you consider the following factors in your decision to assign CASA/GAL advocacy to a case ...SCALE: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal*  
**SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test.  $p < .05$**

CASA/GAL Volunteer Input by Respondent Subgroups

	Placement Stability	Placement with Siblings	Restrictiveness of Placement	Location of Placement	Service Provision	Frequency of Visitation	State's Written Case Plans	Safety of Children	INPUT Index
OVERALL SAMPLE	4.47	4.22	3.96	3.82	4.28	4.08	3.68	4.33	4.10
"Parties to Cases"									
No	4.39	4.09	3.83	3.71	4.27	3.97	3.49	4.19	3.99
Yes	4.52	4.31	4.06	3.88	4.27	4.16	3.80	4.42	4.18
Years Involved with CASA									
<2	4.24	3.92	3.80	3.51	4.00	3.90	3.37	4.18	3.87
3-10	4.47	4.20	3.88	3.75	4.22	4.02	3.59	4.33	4.05
11+	4.54	4.37	4.16	4.02	4.46	4.25	3.93	4.39	4.26
Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases									
<=25 percent	4.30	3.99	3.71	3.62	4.20	3.96	3.50	4.21	3.93
26-75 percent	4.47	4.24	3.92	3.82	4.26	4.03	3.66	4.34	4.09
76 percent+	4.73	4.52	4.34	4.05	4.42	4.29	3.92	4.52	4.35
Communities Served									
Urban	4.51	4.25	4.01	3.79	4.39	4.08	3.67	4.38	4.13
Suburban	4.53	4.22	3.93	3.78	4.32	4.10	3.64	4.39	4.11
Rural	4.48	4.22	3.95	3.80	4.22	4.10	3.66	4.37	4.10
CASA Geographic Region									
Western	4.51	4.28	4.07	3.84	4.35	4.21	3.78	4.36	4.17
Mountain	4.52	4.24	3.99	4.04	4.17	4.07	3.72	4.36	4.14
Midwest	4.39	4.04	3.78	3.68	4.19	4.01	3.57	4.34	3.99
Northeast	4.44	4.18	3.94	3.86	4.49	4.19	3.80	4.29	4.15
Mid-Atlantic	4.44	4.20	3.98	3.71	4.23	4.11	3.72	4.31	4.09
Southern	4.58	4.46	4.08	3.89	4.31	3.99	3.58	4.36	4.15

To what extent does input from CASA/GAL volunteers on the following issues inform Court decisions...SCALE: 1-not very much, 3-somewhat, 5-a great deal  
 SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$

CASA/GAL Volunteer Input and Usefulness by Respondent Subgroups

	Contact with Youth	Contact with Parents	Contact with Foster Parents	Contact with Relatives	Contact with Collaterals	Review of records	Written Reports	Verbal Testimony	USEFULNESS Index
OVERALL SAMPLE	4.70	4.46	4.39	4.18	4.39	3.96	4.56	4.21	4.36
"Parties to Cases"									
No	4.66	4.40	4.37	4.14	4.37	3.96	4.54	4.13	4.32
Yes	4.72	4.49	4.40	4.21	4.41	3.99	4.58	4.26	4.38
Years Involved with CASA									
<2	4.53	4.33	4.29	4.06	4.33	3.94	4.51	4.07	4.23
3-10	4.72	4.44	4.36	4.14	4.34	3.86	4.55	4.19	4.32
11+	4.73	4.53	4.48	4.30	4.50	4.16	4.59	4.27	4.45
Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases									
<=25 percent	4.60	4.29	4.32	4.06	4.33	3.73	4.47	4.06	4.24
26-75 percent	4.67	4.42	4.34	4.17	4.28	4.00	4.60	4.22	4.33
76 percent+	4.86	4.74	4.55	4.38	4.60	4.29	4.68	4.41	4.57
Communities Served									
Urban	4.70	4.46	4.40	4.18	4.49	4.06	4.64	4.33	4.41
Suburban	4.78	4.49	4.42	4.17	4.39	3.96	4.54	4.12	4.35
Rural	4.70	4.46	4.35	4.20	4.34	3.95	4.54	4.18	4.34
CASA Geographic Region									
Western	4.82	4.19	4.36	3.89	4.30	3.81	4.59	4.42	4.30
Mountain	4.77	4.61	4.56	4.27	4.39	4.04	4.56	4.09	4.42
Midwest	4.63	4.45	4.28	4.15	4.35	3.78	4.56	4.12	4.28
Northeast	4.47	4.40	4.31	4.03	4.34	3.93	4.49	4.11	4.26
Mid-Atlantic	4.75	4.48	4.46	4.30	4.49	4.09	4.65	4.17	4.42
Southern	4.76	4.61	4.39	4.35	4.42	4.14	4.50	4.36	4.44

In general, how useful have each of the following activities carried out by CASA/GAL volunteers been in helping you make decisions about case outcomes...

SCALE: 1-not useful, 3-somewhat useful, 5-very useful

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$

**Effectiveness of CASA/GAL Volunteers by Respondent Subgroups**

	Considering Best Interests of Children	Working with Others in System	Preparing Information	Researching Case Facts	Monitoring the Case	Assisting with Permanent Placement	EFFECTIVENESS Index
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	4.71	4.34	4.43	4.25	4.52	4.13	4.39
<b>"Parties to Cases"</b>							
No	4.67	4.28	4.44	4.22	4.55	4.07	4.37
Yes	4.73	4.38	4.42	4.28	4.49	4.17	4.41
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>							
< 2	4.71	4.25	4.45	4.25	4.49	3.96	4.35
3-10	4.70	4.37	4.42	4.21	4.51	4.12	4.38
11+	4.72	4.31	4.43	4.32	4.53	4.21	4.42
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>							
<=25 percent	4.62	4.23	4.35	4.14	4.46	4.01	4.30
26-75 percent	4.68	4.28	4.41	4.17	4.47	4.09	4.35
76 percent+	4.86	4.52	4.56	4.46	4.60	4.33	4.56
<b>Communities Served</b>							
Urban	4.72	4.38	4.50	4.29	4.56	4.20	4.44
Suburban	4.72	4.38	4.50	4.34	4.56	4.06	4.43
Rural	4.73	4.33	4.38	4.23	4.46	4.11	4.38
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>							
Western	4.67	4.25	4.28	4.11	4.47	4.25	4.34
Mountain	4.74	4.35	4.39	4.32	4.51	4.15	4.41
Midwest	4.69	4.26	4.40	4.06	4.46	3.99	4.30
Northeast	4.61	4.38	4.46	4.30	4.54	4.27	4.43
Mid-Atlantic	4.77	4.32	4.56	4.39	4.57	4.00	4.43
Southern	4.73	4.50	4.40	4.33	4.54	4.26	4.46

*How effective are CASA/GAL volunteers in doing the following...SCALE: 1-not effective, 3-somewhat effective, 5-very effective*  
*SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test: p < .05*

**Agreement Items by Respondent Subgroups**

	Assign Volunteers to Most Difficult Cases	Sufficient Volunteers for Caseload	Make Appropriate Recom- mendations	Carry Out Work Objectively	Personal Knowledge Beneficial to Decision- Making	Information Provided Beneficial to Decision- Making	Receive Adequate Training	Children and Families Better Served
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.66</b>
<b>"Parties to Cases"</b>								
No	4.35	2.63	4.39	4.18	4.53	4.52	4.19	4.70
Yes	4.32	2.49	4.37	4.24	4.60	4.52	4.12	4.63
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>								
<2	4.39	2.64	4.31	4.14	4.48	4.38	4.15	4.51
3-10	4.35	2.62	4.37	4.22	4.58	4.54	4.14	4.68
11+	4.26	2.35	4.38	4.21	4.60	4.53	4.14	4.65
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>								
<=25 percent	4.15	2.38	4.32	4.15	4.54	4.45	4.11	4.59
26-75 percent	4.34	2.53	4.32	4.15	4.58	4.50	4.11	4.65
76 percent+	4.56	2.79	4.49	4.34	4.69	4.68	4.19	4.79
<b>Communities Served</b>								
Urban	4.39	2.46	4.38	4.23	4.65	4.56	4.21	4.69
Suburban	4.32	2.62	4.40	4.22	4.63	4.58	4.12	4.70
Rural	4.33	2.56	4.37	4.21	4.55	4.49	4.13	4.64
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>								
Western	4.18	2.28	4.44	4.18	4.66	4.55	4.13	4.70
Mountain	4.46	2.80	4.40	4.26	4.58	4.57	4.19	4.69
Midwest	4.36	2.57	4.32	4.18	4.50	4.47	4.26	4.60
Northeast	4.16	2.74	4.41	4.28	4.54	4.51	4.15	4.55
Mid-Atlantic	4.38	2.75	4.33	4.18	4.56	4.52	4.04	4.73
Southern	4.36	2.17	4.34	4.19	4.64	4.55	4.09	4.70

SCALE: 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4- agree, 5-strongly agree

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### Program and Volunteer Satisfaction by Respondent Subgroups

	Satisfaction with Local Program	Satisfaction with Volunteers
<b>OVERALL SAMPLE</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>4.52</b>
<b>"Parties to Cases"</b>		
No	4.49	4.49
Yes	4.54	4.54
<b>Years Involved with CASA</b>		
< 2	4.30	4.49
3-10	4.57	4.56
11+	4.47	4.44
<b>Percent Assignment of Dependency Cases</b>		
<=25 percent	4.32	4.39
26-75 percent	4.59	4.57
76 percent+	4.71	4.65
<b>Communities Served</b>		
Urban	4.54	4.53
Suburban	4.62	4.56
Rural	4.50	4.54
<b>CASA Geographic Region</b>		
Western	4.58	4.54
Mountain	4.56	4.61
Midwest	4.58	4.54
Northeast	4.44	4.49
Mid-Atlantic	4.57	4.50
Southern	4.36	4.47

SCALE: 1-not satisfied, 3-somewhat satisfied, 5-very satisfied

SHADED Contiguous Vertical Cells indicate a significant difference in the measures across the subgroup categories based on an Independent Samples T-Test or Analysis of Variance F-Test:  $p < .05$

**APPENDIX D**

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***QUALITATIVE RESPONSES***



## Appendix D: Qualitative Responses

### *Other Assignment Factors:*

... Child welfare act.
1) The extent to which a case is contested 2) Conflicting interests between siblings 3) Inability of an infant (or other communication impaired) child to speak for herself 4) Recommendations of attorneys, particularly children's attorneys, for whatever reason 5) Need to have 'more eyes' checking on parent in need of supervision in difficult reunification case.
1. The number of fathers involved in the case. 2. The number of FSP goals for the parents.
A CASA is assigned in every case.
A change in case workers or a need for investigation.
A primary consideration is whether the child has been removed from parent custody or removal is imminent.
Adequacy of representations of child & parents perhaps...
Diversity of DAR vs. Family.
Age, length of time in the system.
Age - most kids up to age 12 we assign a GAL; However - since you're asking about volunteers, note that 3 of our CASA/GALs are in-house & paid to handle their own cases plus supervise volunteers.
Age is the only criteria. We assign GAL in all cases, but for older teens we do not use CASA.
Age of child - number of children previously in care - ...issues.
Age of child, family history, lack of cooperation prior to placement.
Age of children in custody, neglect & abuse cases.
Age of kids and are they dual wards.
Age of minors.
Age of the child, do they also have delinquency issues, status of parents, do they need an additional "voice".
All abuse cases, all neglect automatically assigned GAL.
All abuse, neglect, and dependency cases assigned a CASA!
All abuse, neglect, and dependency cases get CASA GAL. Delinquency and unruly cases get GAL if there is much instability, lack of support from parents, adversarial relationship w/ irresponsible parents.
All assignments are based on availability - all cases are CASA first, others . . .if not available.
All cases are referred to CASA.
All families, no exceptions.
I attempt to...
All cases of deprivation assigned.
All kids get CASAs.
All neglect/abuse cases are assigned to CASA, so individual factors are not significant.
All of them automatically get GAL in our area.
Always assigned in abuse. . . Matters if CASA available.
Any case where another set of eyes and ears may help. Where children need more services than usual -vulnerable.
Any child who is alleged to be abused or neglected is required to have a GAL. Dependency allegations in the judge's discretion.
Any factor that concerns the well being of children.



*Other Assignment Factors (cont'd):*

Appointment is required by law in all cases.
As of July 1, 2005, all abuse and neglect cases, by state statute, must have either a CASA or GAL assigned to represent the best interest of the children.
The Court is involved directly and/or indirectly via court protocol as to when CASAs are needed or advisable.
As to GAL appointment. All CASAs are appointed as GALs.
We try to assign CASAs in all cases, unless not available; then, abuse cases have priority.
Assign CASA at the time a complaint is filed. Our CASA agency focuses on children ages birth to 3 years and cases involving domestic violence. Our CASA agency does not accept abuse cases as the state requires the appointment of an attorney for the child.
Assign CASA/Gal to every other case.
Assignment is . . . Per case rule.
Assignment of a CASA is the rule, not the exception. My thought process is "why not" instead of "why."
Availability.
Availability of a CASA volunteer - we have too few for the caseload.
Availability of a volunteer.
Availability of CASA.
Availability of CASA volunteer.
Availability of CASA. I would appoint one in every case if available. Since there is a shortage, a casa is appointed in cases where the need is great. The need usually relates to the need to supervise or observe contact between children and parents.
Availability of CASAs or GALs - as I prefer to assign one or the other in every deprivation case.
Availability of CASAs or other family members willing to speak on child's behalf, or play a supportive role to child's benefit.
Babies/Infants - Babies Can't Wait.
Before CASA stopped taking "non DHR" (non state) dependency appointments. "Private Cases" were the cases I wanted and needed CAJA.
Best interest of child.
Bizarre or unusual circumstances; questionable judgment by child welfare regarding child in past.
CASA assigned in all cases where child age 12 or under.
CASA assigned on all dependency - CHINS cases.
CASA is assigned in all cases involving out of home placements or the possibilities of out of home placement.
CASA is fine unless conflict.
Pd. Staff -- volunteers on some cases
CASA is present at all cases in which an emergency removal is requested. Child has frequent runaway from home behavior or is incorrigible at home or school.
CASA/GAL appointed in all cases in which children placed in foster care per state law.
Casa/Gal is assigned all cases in our court.
Cases where DSS has, in my opinion, been too lenient or not moved quickly enough.
Caseworker experience; parental attitude.
Child has history of mental health issues or past abuse/neglect.
Child not receiving services.

*Other Assignment Factors (cont'd):*

Children who are stuck in hospitals or RTCs; Children of failed adoptions out of prior foster care; Children who need a friend and DSS can't find mentors for.
Child's age and ability to speak for her/himself. Parental cooperation with CFS on initial contact.
Child's attys advocacy cannot recognize best interest considerations; foster parent exercises inappropriate control over child's relationship with parents.
Child's commitment to . . . Health and family services.
Child's mental health status; whether child has available other appropriate support (family/friends).
Child's unmet/complicated educational needs.
Competency of social workers, attorney and guardian ad litem for children. Need for parental mentor/role model. Complexity of case.
Competency of the agency staff (DHS).
Complexity of case. Support given to child by family members.
Complexity/difficulty of case in conjunction with our perception of caseworker's competence and experience.
Conflict between or among siblings as to what permanency plan should be.
Conflict between parties at visitation - held for objective observer
Conflict within child protection case agency
Conflicts & failures to communicate between planning agencies.
Custodian not fostering a verification atmosphere.
Demands of the case.
Difficulty getting parents info counseling, getting psychological evaluations other special needs for children such as psychological evaluations, ADHD evaluations.
difficulty of case; more complex issues.
distance to placement facility.
Do the children have an attorney - in our jurisdiction children 10 and above get attorneys. Also are the children placed out of the home.
Drug addicted babies that need extensive follow-up treatment.
Educational needs.
Educational placement.
EPP cases are given preference in appointment of a CASA
GAL assigned by judge in all cases.
Hostility between respondent & Caseworker
I almost always assign a CASA unless child is an infant or is 17 yrs old +.
I appoint a CASA volunteer in every case! No one particular type of criterion is more important than another.
I appoint CASA on all (?) cases.
I appoint on every case. None of the factors above have any bearing.
I assign a CASA/GAL in practically all abuse and neglect cases that are adjudicated. Only rarely is one not appointed.
I assign CASA to all DNA cases.
I assign CASA to almost all cases so the factors abcde. As mentioned above, I usually appoint unless I feel the case is not serious.

*Other Assignment Factors (cont'd):*

I assign CASA to every case. There is a shortage of volunteers, so not every case gets one.
I assign in every case.
I assign in virtually all cases so "factors" don't effect the decision
I consider case that there seems to be little progress. I consider the CASA and the child's personality to try to get a good match.
I do it routinely
I have had too many cases when the CASA report helped me make a decision not to use them in as many cases as I can.
I make the assignment - but it is automatic where neglect and/or abuse are alleged.
I routinely appoint GALs in child protection cases. The law requires that I appoint a GAL --
I try to appoint a CASA for each dependent or neglected or abused child.
I use the CASA advocate for older children more frequently, that have been sexually abused.
I want a casa on every case!
I want CASA involved in every case -- Every child deserves a voice in court! It is a shame we have to pick & choose
icpc
If abuse or neglect alleged, a GAL is generally assigned.
If CASA/GAL has served the child's interests in prior unrelated or related court proceedings in my or another court.
If children to be placed in foster care, then I generally assign a CASA volunteer to monitor child.
If credibility of agency case manager is low.
If denial of petition claiming abuse/neglect is made by parents--always appoint CASA.
If I had enough CASAs, I'd assign one to every DN case. CASAs are INVALUABLE in decisions I make involving these children. I have to triage these cases in assigning CASAs due to not enough available CASAs.
If it appears that the court is not getting full information I tend to seek a CASA
If many service providers are involved with parents and parents are required to attend various evaluations/intake appointments, GAL is helpful in monitoring the many dates and insuring parents follow through.
If parents a charged w/ drug charges.
If requested by any party.
If requested by the dept of health and human services, I usually appoint.
Inconsistent and conflicting testimony about placement, progress, and services provided.
Input of OFC
Interstate issues, conflict with state DHR.
Involvement of parent in family treatment court
Is CASA statutorily required.
Isolated child with little support; medical issue & insufficient data given to court
It's not possible to answer 4 adequately for your purposes. We assign a CASA to all cases, whether these factors are present or not.
Kids just need someone - gut reaction.
Lack of DSS experienced case workers.

*Other Assignment Factors (cont'd):*

Large number of issues facing family Need for devotion of extensive periods of time to family
Location of children.
Many of the children simply need a friend, someone who is ready to listen to them and who is not a lawyer, not a cop, not a social worker, not a judge or master, not anyone in authority. If I sense that a child could use a friend who could advocate for them as a friend (including requesting things the child might not want, but which the child really needs), a CASA might be appropriate.
Maybe I don't understand the question - when our child protection agency brings a case I assign CASA unless there is a conflict and can't assign CASA.
Medical health needs of the children and educational needs of the children.
Mental health and/or Americans w/Disabilities Act issues regarding parents or children.
Mental health of parents, educational or experience deficits of parents, criminal activity of parents
More than one relative/kin seeking placement; older children problematic in placement; children with no immediately obvious placement option; cases where apparently legitimate difference of opinion exists between parent and CPS re return home
Multiple persons seeking placement.
My ability to receive complete and accurate information on the child.
My Court assigns cases to CASAs when the State Dept of Human Resources is not involved or has failed to act.
Need for additional person to insure protection of child.
Need for impartial source of info- someone really looking out for child's needs.
Need for more information concerning child.
Need/availability
Needs of the children that are unusual
New to bench; works on/with direction from CASA Director.
Number of prior court contacts with other courts (e.g. Family Court, Drug Court, Mental Health Court, Domestic Violence court).
Parental use of drugs, parents' attitude or lack of cooperation with supervising agency.
Parental/child conflict.
Parents indicate intent to voluntarily terminate parental rights.
Parent's willingness to work treatment plan, adversarial parents
Perceived failure of state,
Placement in foster care,. . . Changes against parents ... a child will result in appointment of attorney GAL rather than CASA.
Potential for failure of reunification and termination of parental rights.
Potential TPR; Need for visitation assistance
Presumption is CASA unless none is available. We try to assign all dependency cases to CASA unless they have too many.
Prior involvement of parent(s) in dependency cases.
Problems w/Bureau workers communicating w/family members.
Provide parent with an individual they may feel more comfortable working with than the caseworker from the Department of Social Services in regards to utilizing services.
recommendation of Social Worker

*Other Assignment Factors (cont'd):*

Recommendations from ... .. DHR caseworker.
Recommendations from our CYS agency and the caseworker
Recommendations of Court Personnel, C&YS Staff, Master, Attorneys and Guardian Ad Litem
Request for appointment
Request of a party in interest. Request of the social services agency.
Request of any party
Request of party or GAL
Request of wards attorney.
Requested by Department of Human Services caseworker.
Required by statute
Requirements of statute - don't have sufficient number of volunteers to appoint CASA except when required by law.
Resources needed/available for the family
School issues - is child eligible for special ed. Is IEP covered, Is School comply w/IEP. Manifestation hearing. Truancy where family neglect or abuse maybe present.
See statute, policy, conflict of interest
Sibling relationships; child's unmet needs (medical, educational, dental, counseling, etc); Lack of consistent, caring adult in child's life.
Special needs child
Stability of child's status
State requires assignment.
State statue requiring appointment.
Statutory requirement.
Substance abuse by parent/caregiver
Mental health issues/diagnosis of parent/caregiver
Termination of parental rights pending or reasonably foreseeable.
Termination of parental rights.
The age of the child. The length of anticipated out of home placement.
The age or ages of the subject child(ren)
The availability of a CASA/or assignment. If available, I'd assign in every case.
The child's character.
The DHS office involves... I rely on the DHS workers; The services available in the area; placement of the children are they in the home area or across the state and are the children together, are there multiple fathers and their involvement.
The extent of involvement in the child's life by the parents.
The involvement and reliability of the ad litem, the caseworkers, and the attorneys (if any) for the parents.
The limited number of CASAs we have, whether supervised visitation with a parent has been ordered (CASAs have volunteered to help supervise.
The needs of the child; CASAs become guardian angels to these little ladies and gentlemen who so much need someone to love and help them through it all.

*Other Assignment Factors (cont'd):*

The only child who is not assigned a CASA is an older teenager who makes sound decisions and is represented by an attorney.
The only reason we do not assign a CASA is when we run out of volunteers and simply don't have one available
The sheer vulnerability of the juvenile and current status of NC appellant law necessitates a GAL in almost each and every case.
The very fact that a child is removed from the family and placed in shelter care.
This form has little application to my county of 18,000 population
This is hard to answer, as was the above questions, because I assign a CASA/GAL to every one of my dependency cases regardless of all these relevant factors.
Transient families with histories with other states' child protection services
Uncertainty as to whether reunification is a realistic goal.
Untruthfulness of parents, truancy, third parties (boyfriend, etc.) who pose risk to child) Questionable ability of parents to supervise child, parent distrusting or negative about "system"
We appoint a CASA in every abuse/neglect case where removal is being requested. This is at the request of our program. When they have enough volunteers, we appoint them to every abuse/neglect case before the court.
We appoint on all child protection cases regardless of above factors.
We are blessed with an over abundance of CASA volunteers so as to allow appointment of CASA on all neglect/abuse/dependency/ cases without consideration of the above.
We assign 100% of the time
We assign CASA in every abuse, neglect or dependency so long as an advocate is available.
We assign CASA/GALs to almost every case, without regard to factors.
I assign a CASA/GAL to almost every abuse, neglect or dependency case filed in my court. The only exception is when a case may have unusual legal issues. Under those circumstances I ma
We assign GAL in almost every childs . . . Automatically.
We assign one in every neglect case (or abuse).
We attempt to assign a CASA on all cases, however, we do not have enough volunteers.
We try to appoint on all cases where children are under the age of 12 and where any party requests a CASA.
We usually would assign to all cases unless there was a reason not .
We utilize CASAs to do home evaluations when DFACs is unable to without grate delay or bureaucracy. We also utilize CASAs for monitoring households when intense monitoring cannot be adequately provided by DFACs.
When a child is emotionally harmed and needs a friendly face to speak softly to them with expressed feeling of genuine concern for the child.
When I feel adults have their own agendas and no one is really listening to the needs/wants of the child.
When reunification will not be immanent and a CASA is unable I do assign.
When the home environment is an issue.

*Other Assignment Factors (cont'd):*

When there is an apparent of possible conflict of interest in what the parent wants for the child and what may be in the child's best interest a GAL is appointed. Likewise, if the child is older and expresses a desired outcome to his lawyer that is different from the State's position or may not be in his best interest a GAL is appointed.

whereabouts of parent(s) unknown.

Whether appointed attorney for child has a conflict serving as both the child's attorney advocate and as the GAL for the child.

Whether I perceive that the case will lead to termination of parental rights  
The amount of services to be provided and my perception of how well the parents or child will respond.

Whether the child has another trusted person in his/her life he/she will confide in.

Willingness of the three county CASA Programs, per their respective directors, to take assignment of the case, i.e., the availability and particular strength of volunteers, as determined by the CASA Program Directors in each of the three counties. The availability of volunteers is often an issue; these are very small programs.

Young age of child

Your questions are confusing. We assign CASAs in every case at my direction, but I'm not the one who chooses the individual.



*Other input from CASA/GAL volunteers:*

Placement of children with relatives or other extended family. Issues around frequency and supervision of parent child visitations.
"school" and "educational" stability issues
1. Identifying special services (e.g. vision testing).
A big emphasis on permanency planning/concurrent planning.
A report on educational needs of child-if they need an IEP or further . . .
Adequacy of services and treatment providers.
Alcohol & drug knowledge
All cases.
Always on disposition
Amount of attention placement resources give to the child(ren)
Any issue before the court on a case - they are a party
Any and all factors that are in the child's best interests.
Appropriateness and quality of services being provided to child and parent(s).
Assessment of caseworker performance and of parent competence
Availability of in-home services
Background
CASA in this county is only just getting started. We have very limited experience. Volunteers have been appointed - but they have not yet participated in court.
Casa input is very helpful when there are true questions concerning the state's ability to meet the "active efforts showing".
Casa is there to make sure DCFS is doing its job.
CASA report of inter-family relationships Investigation of home life of family
CASA volunteers have established their credibility and common sense. They have therefore been important and influential.
CASA/CAJA vols. do great investigations of all the facts of the case.
CASA/GAL volunteers are very perceptive and can often convey ...feeling ...mean something.
CASAs often facilitate sibling visitation, including transporting them significant distances and they provide info to the court on those observations. They spend a lot of 'one-on-one' time with their kids and this allows them to provide additional info to the court on the child's wants, needs and wishes.
Child bonding with Foster parents/others
Children's emotional health and services being/not being provided
Child's & family's compliance with court order
Child's academic performance; child's behavior at school and in the community; child's preference
Child's desires and special needs.
Child's desires.
Child's educational issues; child's medical, dental and mental health issues.
Child's preference; basis of preference; degree of maturity.
Child's wishes; complaints, school records.



*Other input from CASA/GAL volunteers (cont'd):*

Closing continue with protective supervision if returned home review time after return home study of relatives
Collateral - neighbors
Coll... sources discussing case inconsistency of statements
Community based resources not being accessed.
Compliance by parents with the court orders (or non-compliance)
Conditions for visitation, permanency plan and resolving conflicts in testimony as to disputed events also are good subjects for input
Conflict between social worker/other professionals and parent
Contact with parent(s), info on agency or parent agendas.
Coordination with therapeutic foster families and education priorities, search for family members.
Criminal records of parents and others. Also, the child's wishes and concerns.
Decisions about TPR, ceasing efforts, whether TPR is in the child's best interest. I rely heavily on the information and recommendations of the GALs, because the GAL is the only person in the court room advocating solely for the child
Desires/statements of the children; schooling and collateral sources from schools/daycares etc.
Dispute re: facts between other parties to action or between parties and the Bureau of Child Welfare
Do you mean "impact"?
Educational information
Educational issues
Educational needs of children and a school district's ability to provide
Emergency motions filed by CASA
Even "routine observations" of the child are helpful to the Court to get a more in-depth picture of the child's situation. Our CASAs are EXCELLENT!!
Evidence information given to attorneys
History
Home studies in child custody cases.
Home visits and drop ins
How child doing in school, on visitation with parents
How the parties and service providers are interacting or not to get the child moved forward Red flags rise when CASA can't get people to talk to them
I am always very interested in the CASAs opinion in regard to: placement back in parents home, whether a petition to terminate should be filed, whether the case may safely be dismissed, whether CASA approves of a proposed adoptive home placement
I am very impressed with my CASA volunteers and their recommendations carry much with me.
I do not understand the question -- 'inform' court decisions.
I listen to whatever my CASAs say. I don't always follow but I appreciate their input.
I rely upon the intuition of a trained intelligent CASA volunteer in every case. They provide the oblique view that is often controlling.
I will inquire about attitudes of other participants
Identification of permanency plan and implementation

*Other input from CASA/GAL volunteers (cont'd):*

In one case CASA brought photos in to establish disputed issue - very helpful
Input is very important in that GALs have interviewed children, parents, and others, such as teachers, and represent the child in determining what is in the best interest of the child, not necessarily the Department of Social Services, or the parents. Therefore, GAL observations and opinions are considered very important.
It depends on the ability & competence of the CASA. I know who I can depend on!
Keeping service providers & mental health providers vigilant to their duties
Little or none after dismissal.
Monitoring parental progress
Monitoring parents' progress
Needs of children - best interest of children.
Needs of the child while in placement (i.e. bicycle, class ring, etc.)
None
None - when I make a decision it must be on the trial record. Unless CASA is called as a witness (very rare) the opinion is not considered.
Not many.
Not much (?) dismissal
Observations of parent(s) and whether parents have made necessary changes for reunification or dismissal of action.
Once in a while a CASA/GAL will develop an 'agenda', it becomes obvious that he/she has an 'ax to grind' or he/she 'can't see the forest for the trees', then the position and information the Court receives from the CASA/GAL has a profound impact on the decision. It stops the case, dead in its tracks, and a successor GAL must be appointed.
Overall best interests of the child(ren).
Parents' cooperation with court orders.
Parents' involvement and participation and conduct
Performance of the assigned Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem and caseworker involved.
prior medical and criminal history of parents
Progress towards reunification
Programs addressing needs of child.
Progress made in services/therapy.
progress of parents, sibling contact (visits)
Progress on treatment plans by parents, insight gained by parents & the children's preferences.
Propriety of reunification or alternate permanency plans.
Quality of home life if foster family wishes to adopt child/children in their care.
Quality of interaction between parents and children.
Quality of the visit with family, history of family.
Quality of visits with parents. Childs feelings toward parents and relatives.
Reasonable efforts of agency.
Recommendations as to plan that should be followed.
Relationships observed by CASA

*Other input from CASA/GAL volunteers (cont'd):*

Relaying the wishes of the child
School information
School performance & attendance, caretaker's view of child
School progress & behavior
School progress of minor
Service needs of kids not currently provided.
Status of interstate compact. Suitability of the resource in the receiving state
Termination of parental rights opinion
The appearance of the CASA in court is often helpful to answer unanticipated issues about the child's well-being. The types of information are not subject to categorization. They are varied, but important to a full understanding of the child's life.
The information relating to the openness of the child to share with the CASA.
The interaction of service provides/families/foster parents/agencies.
The personal touch observations as to what is going on in the child's life.
The professional GAL
The well being of the child in the placement
They are the eyes of the court. They don't have any axe to grind; they simply look out for the children. If it's a legal issue, I listen to the Department and the lawyers for the parents. But when it's just good sense, I get it from the Guardians.
They assist the paid GAL.
They tell me what the children want me to know
Type and intensity of services FOR CHILDREN, not just parents. The State seems to overlook the need for services for the child (other than foster care itself) because their statutory mandate is to work toward reunification. But often the children are so traumatized by the combination of abuse or neglect AND removal from their homes that they are in desperate need of services such as grief and trauma counseling. Without the CASA volunteer's constant reminders, we judges would probably overlook this need more than we should.
Updates on how child is doing under changing circumstances and upheaval caused by dependency
Various . . .
Virtually any issue before the court.
When CASAs have located relatives that DFALs has failed to locate.
When parties give conflicting stories CASA can give insight about the truth.
Whether parental rights should be terminated.
Whether the parties are complying with orders
Whether to file for termination of parental rights, guardianship or adoption
Wishes of child; unsafe association between parents and other adults.
Wishes of the child.
Written Background Reports

*Other Comments:*

[in regards to "Are CASA/GAL volunteers parties to cases..." ] understand what this means. They participate in court hearings, but technically are not 'parties' "
[notes from previous section: "was involved [with CASA] since I became a judge" "we use a court order" [to assign cases to CASA/GAL volunteers] ] The complexity of the case is extremely important. The varying needs of the children & families
[re: "Approximately what percentage of your dependency cases..."]: "(others are done by paid GAL)"
[re: "Are CASA/GAL volunteers parties to cases in your court jurisdiction?"]: "not parties, but are involved"
[re: "Are CASA/GAL volunteers parties to cases in your court jurisdiction?"]: "They are participants but not formal 'parties' as (?)" [re: "In your jurisdiction, what written sources..."]: MOU Memorandum of Understanding
I often assign a CASA to the home wh
[re: "Are CASA/GAL volunteers parties to cases in your court jurisdiction?"]: "Yes, in dependency & paternity cases, "standing in the shoes" of the child (at least in that sense); the child is the formal party in these cases"  (We assign a CASA in all dependency cases.)
[re: "Are CASA/GAL volunteers parties..."]: "not what you mean by 'parties' -- they do appear"  [re: "In your jurisdiction, what written sources..."]: "don't know. GAL involves CASA volunteers as GAL sees fit."
[use of written sources is] "unknown"
... We will need more volunteers.
[re: "How often do CASA/GAL volunteer recommendations become incorporated into the hearing's court order?"]: "The CASA recs. are frequently followed, but never referred to specifically in the court order."
[re: "How often do CASA/GAL volunteer recommendations become..."]: "They are always placed into record."
[re: "I assign CASA/GAL volunteers to the most difficult cases"]: "All cases get CASA or GAL"  "CASAs need to be in court more"
[re: "I assign CASA/GAL volunteers to the most..."]: "GAL assigns CASA volunteers."
[re: "Researching case facts"]: "Nott sought!"
[re: "verbal testimony to the Court"]: "infrequent"
[re: program satisfaction and volunteer satisfaction]: "I'd answer both of these as a '6' if I could"  "They are grossly underfunded. The state needs to provide adequate \$ & not leave it to counties and fundraising."
99% of the time the CASA recommendations are the same or similar to those of children's services and provides little, if any additional insight into the problems of the family. I have experienced deep and unnecessary conflicts between CASAs and Children's
All who have accepted their cases take their responsibility very seriously. They have provided me with invaluable information that would not otherwise be provided. Sometimes, I have concerns regarding the CASAs recommendations compatibility with the current law and objectivity.

*Other Comments (cont'd):*

As of 7-1-05, CASA/GAL will be required for all chins cases pursuant to statute.
Assigned on the basis of availability
Because of CASA, I know that I am making the most informed decision.
Because there are more cases than volunteers in our jurisdiction, CASA staff monitors all cases, assigns volunteers to appropriate cases, and the court can request a volunteer be assigned to a case. The system works well and effectively utilizes the actua
Better funding for CASA; more CASA advocates
Can't fund program.
CASA be more proactive in informing court about their range of services and make before sue or scope of their volunteers expertise
CASA has probably made the state DPHHS more objective and accountable.
CASA needs more financial support in order to recruit/monitor more CASAs and to sustain a larger program.
CASA volunteers are wonderful and are an essential component to administration of juvenile justice.
CASA volunteers help me be a better judge and make better decisions.
CASA/CAJA is most help to me in cases where the Dept of Human Resources has pulled out or never been a party.
CASAs are appointed on difficult cases yet CASAs would be better to really assist on less difficult cases- more difficult to assist with difficult, complex cases.
CASAs do a very good job of working toward permanency for children except when the plan is reunification with the parents. Additionally training and support around parent engagement in case planning may be helpful.
Continue working with existing resources to increase the number of GALs so that more children will have a GAL available to be assigned to their case.
Could not do my work without them.
Could use more volunteers.
Court run programs have some advantages but the capacity to grow volunteers to meet the needs of the Court is limited. I would like to see NCASAA provide TA to help programs grow to meet needs.
Currently there are a very strong group of volunteers who have the best interest of children always in the forefront the largest difficulty is when there is disagreement with our child welfare agency as the caseworkers then use that the volunteer is not a social worker and cannot possibly know what is best
Don't assign
Don't have one. Have a (lame) local program.
Excellent reports. Very dedicated volunteers.
Expand program
Expanded to family with service need . . .
Funding and independence of program are important.
I am submitting this as I was in dependency court for 9 1/2 years & still maintain contact w/ our CASA program.
Funding for our program has been cut. Budgets in all government departments have been cut. The CASA volunteers are of greater importance in an environment in which programs are reduced and caseloads are increased.
Funding is a problem. Also the quality & ability of CASAs varies considerably in this court.

*Other Comments (cont'd):*

GAL are appointed in all dependency cases, they have CASA volunteers to help them. The CASAs have little direct interaction with court.
GAL programs and volunteers are indispensable in the function of protecting our children in our courts.
GAL/CASA Program is essential for proper administration of the dependency program.
Great program!
High percentage of time they agree w/ State; recommendations
I believe the CASA volunteer excels at connecting with family members, interviewing women, bringing the human . . .into the court room . . .
I could not do my job without them--they are invaluable to the point that when one of them does a less than adequate job, I become frustrated and complain, ungrateful soul that I am.
I don't allow it [CASA/GAL volunteers to make verbal testimony]
I don't make the assignment decisions. Our CASA Director does.
I feel like we are still having some growing pains but I feel the need for CASA/GALs outweigh the few shortcomings right now. I am grateful to have volunteers these children can depend upon. In another year I will have a better perspective.
I have been very happy with CASA in HDC
I have nothing but praise for our CASA program. Staff and volunteers are fantastic! I wish they had funding to take on more delinquency cases.
I hear cases in 5 counties. One County (Liberty) does not have a CASA program and could really benefit.
I only allow CASA volunteer to make objective reports of their observations. I do not allow recommendations for decisions (my job). This avoids most court testimony and conflict between recommendation of a volunteer vs. trained knowledge of judge
I only hear delinquency cases.
I really appreciate having CASAs. They are my "additional eyes and ears."
I rely heavily on the GAL to bring forth the child's position to the court - especially where child is too scared to testify
I should clarify how our CASA volunteers are assigned. On occasion, I request a CASA be assigned. Other times the Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem or caseworker requests. Our coordinator then matches CASA volunteer to the requests. While I sign the order, this selection process has been effective as insulation. No party can claim the CASA is my 'pet' if I accept that recommendation. We routinely include CASA volunteers in training and pizza lunches with our attorneys. This gives all of them opportunity to interact and to have common information. Our state court rule requires the CASA volunteer to work with the Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem. They do not always agree, but in our court this seems to work very well.
I wish we had more of them! These folks provide an invaluable service. We need more of them. I'd love to have them in more cases.
I work with two different CASA programs one is just starting with 3 volunteers who have each been assigned a case approximately a month ago. The other program has been in existence much longer. The supervising staff carefully monitors the volunteers. The Charlottesville CASA program is well integrated into the Services system and (volunteers) are fully a partner with the Court and other agencies. The CASA workers are active in each phase of the case. Reports are well written, documented, insightful, fair and regarded as highly reliable. We view CASA as a vital part of the Court team.
I would like for CASA volunteer to be able to be assigned in other types of family law matters.
I would like to have a CASA volunteer for every child who is removed or may be removed from custody.



*Other Comments (cont'd):*

I would recommend that time permitting all volunteers spend as much time as possible observing court proceedings so that they have an idea as to how the court engages in its decision making process and what the role the other participants (attorneys, Law Guardians, etc.) play in the process.
If there are not more volunteers recruited SOON, I am afraid for the future of the CASA in Bell County
I'm very proud of my Director and in the dedication of our CASAs
In a system where the real parties of interest, the children, are unrepresented, I find CASAs advocacy not only helpful but essential to a good outcome.
in sense not saying relying on CASA recs.
In the rare instance when I have a concern about a particular volunteer I call their supervisor or the director and the problem gets addressed.
It is an invaluable resource for this court.
It is better and improving with each year.
I've only recently taken the bench and have little experience working with CASA at this point.
Just beginning - ask me in two (2) years. I am enthusiastic about the program and would welcome this questionnaire in @ 2 years.
Just don't have enough.
Just need more volunteers
Keep up the good work!
Keep up the good work.
Marty Sirek and her staff do a great job.
more training; more trial testimony
More volunteers are needed and they need more in-depth training. They should be compensated at least for their expenses, and recognized for their work.
Most problems for our CASA is related to reluctance/resistance of state caseworker to include CASA and work with them as an equal party
My CASA program failed when director was unable to recruit volunteers. AT the same time an attorney GAL filled the void admirably. As long as the GAL cost equals the CAS program cost, I will stay with this attorney (who is paid about the same as pauper co
My CASA workers are very dedicated and go the extra mile to do what is best for the child involved. And to get to know that child and their individual needs.
My CASA/GAL program does a fantastic job with their current staffing. Obviously, as the caseloads grow, I know that their workload grows as well, and I am concerned about overloading their program. The program and the Court staff work very well together.
My local CASA staff does an outstanding job of recruiting and training. The CASA volunteers take their duties very seriously. Very often the longest serving party in my neglect and abuse cases is my CASA volunteer. I rarely have one leave before a case is finished. I am very impressed with those volunteers who finish one case and agree to take another case. I feel very fortunate to have a CASA program in my jurisdiction.
My only concern is that we need more volunteers and we need to have a strategy for recruitment.
My only request would be find more CASAs! (qualified, of course)
My volunteers are conscientious and do a good job. At times they need to be more realistic as to services we are able to provide for the parent due to lack of resources.
Need CASA program to begin again.
Need for better funding

*Other Comments (cont'd):*

Need more GALs to use in family division.
Need more Spanish-Speaking advocates
Need more training. Mostly we need more effective recruitment so we have more qualified people & don't burn out the ones we have.
Need more volunteers
Need more volunteers.
Need more volunteers. CASA is an extremely helpful program. In fact, I would like to see expansion into adult guardianship area.
Need more volunteers. Our county is 80 miles long so the service area is large and there is a strain on the GAL resources.
Need to assess the changing demographics of volunteers.
Need to recruit more volunteers. Case coordinators have shown to be effective and helpful to the court and volunteers.
No juvenile court system should be without CASA!!!
Not enough GALs. Our judicial system needs four times the number of present guardians.
Not enough volunteers.
Not its fault, but more volunteers would be nice.
Often I receive the reports of the CASA volunteers & the CASA employees appear in court & present the reports.
Oklahoma should have one CASA organization in charge of all local CASA volunteers. Currently, CASA programs are organized for different Judicial Districts.
Our CASA Director is great - keeps in contact with the court & appropriately supervises volunteers.
Our CASA volunteers work almost exclusively in cases with very young children. There are cases where a CASA would be beneficial for older children. It would be great to have a CASA for every case!
Our coordinator has a monthly presentation on a topic that is relevant to the dependency cases. A majority of the CASAs attend so we feel they have a desire to continue their training. Our dependency court group (Ct comm., state atty., defense atty., juvenile court staff rep, and CASA rep) try to meet quarterly to address procedural concerns. We make sure CASA is always represented.
Our county has had a CASA program for many years, but has had its ups but mainly downs. The program is working better at this time than in many years. However, we still have inadequate numbers of volunteers to meet the need.
Our GAL lawyers deserve special recognition because, throughout the state, they are the best dependency lawyers there are.
Our juvenile court could not operate as well as it does with our outstanding CASA director and program
Our local CASA program works well in the case to which advocates are assigned. There currently is a very short waiting list for CINA (child in need of assistance) cases to get advocates. Ideally, I would like it if enough CASA volunteers occasionally were available in our jurisdiction in cases beyond CINA type cases, where similar issues occur. For example, there are some delinquency cases where the parents' care for a child is questioned (possibly abusive or neglectful) and some private custody/visitation disputes in which children are 'caught in the cross-fire.' If the Court had the ability to call on a CASA volunteer to make a few home visits and report findings, it could be immensely helpful in some of these difficult cases where the parties cannot afford to pay for private social workers or to get on a lengthy waiting list for Court staff to investigate.
Our local program is near perfect. The level of advocacy is highly effective.



*Other Comments (cont'd):*

Our program is in its infancy and is an expansion attempt from a neighboring county where the program is under utilized. We are enthusiastic about CASA and were very disappointed when we did not receive an expansion grant!
Our program was initiated with one . . . Office. Volunteers have made it what it is. I am proud of their successes.
Outstanding program. One of the best anywhere, I suspect.
P.S. I couldn't figure out how to do this online. I got the website but couldn't get into it.
Please keep up the good work. Often we find that the CASAs take on the role of a trusted adult or mentor for the children, and are the eyes and ears of the court. It is an important service to the children, and it also makes the children served feel important and cared for.
Problems in removing GAL once appointed. Also, not enough contact between volunteers & bench on non-specific case issues
Program Director is extremely responsive to working with the needs of the Court. New uses are being explored as well as trainings
Program is excellent -- we need more volunteers.
Recruitment is difficult in the area I serve.
Simply more need for more workers -- more funding -- too much time used to raise \$
Some GALs are excellent and others are marginal. I believe in the GAL program, any ratings in this survey which are less than 'very satisfied' are because of considering the question with the knowledge that all GALs are not equally as good or interested in doing a good job as others. I don't know if this is because of lack of interest because it is very hard and emotionally challenging work, or if it is lack of training.
Some volunteers get too emotionally involved; volunteers do not always remain objective in their reporting investigative facts; too few volunteers stretch thin those who do volunteer; the volunteers we do have are dedicated to the best interest of the youth.
Sometimes GAL recommendations are not possible to implement because of the law.
Terrible inadequacy of funding to provide Director/Supervisor of recruitment, training and maintenance of volunteers!!! Seems government would rather spend 2-3 times more to pay for GAL Attorneys than for supervisory costs of a volunteer program.
The attorneys representing CASA generally do a good job and are appropriately assertive
The biggest problem is lack of funding. Our program is near extinction due to lack of money.
The CASA program has been very beneficial - need more volunteers.
The CASA program has recently become more balanced and less inclined to be adversarial
The child protection cases are well-served by the ASA/GAL volunteers.
The dedication and care our CASs is great. The director's professionalism is most admirable.
The dedication of the program's director determines its success or failure; currently we are fortunate to have an excellent director who formerly worked for the public agency involved.
The GAL program must triage the cases because no more than 50% of cases have a GAL though the statutes require one in every case w/ abuse, etc. There are cases where lawyers, who rep the children's legal needs and wishes, should be appointed rather than a GAL presenting best interests.
The increased reliance on Children's Attorney has diminished the importance of CASA to the court but the program remains relevant in its ability to relate to foster children & assist with sources.
The lawyers who represent the GALs could be improved.
The local CASA is constantly recruiting volunteers and providing on-going training. They do an excellent job matching the volunteer with the case.

*Other Comments (cont'd):*

The program and the volunteers appear to be anti-birth family. Once a child is in the system, the GAL wants them to be adopted.
The program needs to be a non-profit program and not county funded.
The program works! I wish I could appoint CASA on every case.
The state organization is of little value to the local program.
Their service is greatly appreciated by this court.
There aren't enough GALs; we need more! They provide a buffer between the Department and the parents. They generally provide a common sense approach to problems, which is not always what lawyers (for either the Department or for the parents) do!
There is a long lag time between the court order for CASA and a real person being assigned. Sometimes too long. Further we have been plagued with people who train get assigned and disappear. In addition this is an extremely mobile area; a lot of volunteers have been transferred or moved away before completion of the task. What do these children need with another new person every couple of months? It is a new program, resurrected from a prior program that lapsed years ago but it has a long way to go.
There is urgent need for funding sufficient to appoint CASA in all Disputed Private Divorce/Custody cases when neither the parties nor the courts have funds to retain counsel/advocates for the children.
There needs to be more effort to effectively recruit suitable volunteers. There is a dire shortage of volunteers. I appoint to almost all cases but they only handle maybe one third of cases and often have to withdraw after a crisis situation has been remedied.
These folks make the difference in many of the cases I hear. They are all saints, and we should do all we can to encourage CASA participation.
They are always prepared, very thorough and voice their opinions appropriately even if some parties disagree with them.
They do a great job and are well organized. We just need a lot more of them.
They do a great job, as do the coordinators of our CASA program. I consider CASA contribution to be a vital part of the Court's ability to protect and serve kids.
They do not work the cases I need. You need to let your local people work cases where I do not have a state social worker!
This is a very important program. Almost all volunteers serve without compensation. This program is one of the best in the court system.
This is a very worthwhile program, and I have come to rely upon it regularly.
This is one of the best systems [one?] offers. CASA is invaluable to our court system.
This volunteer program is utilized only in Abuse and Neglect cases. My responses are directed to those cases only and not to private custody dispute cases.
To be able to network with the state coordinators for training purposes.
Training is always needed; training in ASFA, ICWA
Very dedicated volunteers. Excellent reports.
Very willing to provide needed home evals, good at fundraising and getting volunteers.
We are always looking for more volunteers. Without our CASA/GAL volunteers, children would not be so well served.
We are blessed by our CASA program. They do a great job of recruiting excellent volunteers and in managing the entire program. I suggest anyone contemplating starting a CASA program contact our director.
We could not survive w/o our CASA program.

*Other Comments (cont'd):*

We could use more CASA volunteers. If I could, I would assign them in most cases. There are not enough available volunteers.
We desperately need more CASAs.
We do not have CASA volunteers in the courts I am connected with.
We don't have enough CASA volunteers to meet our needs. We currently have approximately 5,000 children in foster care and only 2-300 CASAs. We need help with our recruitment process. The best, most detailed and most helpful reports come from the CASA. I wish I had one on every case. We need to work on how others in the system, including some judges, view the CASA function.
We don't have enough CASAs. CASE's always seem to be better off in terms of outcomes, processing if a CASA is involved
We have an excellent program with dedicated volunteers. We just need more of them!
We have an exceptional local director who sets the tone for the program.
We have both CASA & foster care review in my jurisdiction. While FCR has some redeeming qualities - CASA is By far the superior program and of much more use to me in my case work.
We have excellent leadership in our CASA program. Our director and volunteers will sometimes travel even out of state at their own expense to investigate a possible placement. This has saved a lot of what would be wasted time going through ICPC only to find out a placement would not be appropriate.
We have law guardians appointed to all children in our cases. I have never been clear on the parameters of services that can be provided by CASA. I would like more input as to what kinds of issues CASA can handle. I would like to utilize CASA more frequently.
We have one of the best CASA programs in state
We have outstanding coordinators who assure a high quality of service and promote great confidence in the program.
We need more funding and more volunteers
We need more minority and male CASA volunteers.
We need more volunteers!!
We need more volunteers.
We need more volunteers.
We need to attract more CASA volunteers
We need to continue this wonderful program for the benefit of our children
While I am very satisfied with the volunteers, there has been some infighting among the local coordinators & Board & Director in the past 2 yrs that caused us to lose some volunteers. We are seeing less volunteers b/c there are not enough trainings or advertising efforts.
Wish there were more. Sometimes they "rock the boat" which I believe fall directly within their job description.

*Other Comments (cont'd):*

With such small programs in each of our three counties, it is a never-ending struggle to have adequate funding, although this has improved somewhat as the Board of County Commissioners (budget people) have now 'bought into' the importance and value of this role; of course, there is a point of diminishing returns if the administrative costs of the program(s) exceed the cost of simply assigning hourly rate attorneys (which requires no administrative costs or local training dollars!). The quality of the representation, however, is so startlingly much better with the volunteers than with the attorneys that it is a factor I am always trying to emphasize to the funding source -- but this seems to fall on deaf ears if the cost is excessive, or if the program has a conflict of interest in a particular case and therefore can't handle it (a problem in small counties that probably doesn't exist in urban programs). When we have to BOTH fund the CASA program AND pay for the occasional outside attorney-GAL, the funders get uptight! Ah, well; we keep on plugging away at maintaining adequate funding to keep the programs afloat.
Without CASA many families and children would not receive services. Biological relatives, parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles would not be located without CASA volunteers. Potential adoptive parents would not be found without CASA getting children on website and assisting adoption specialist.
Wonderful aid to Court, children, DA, attys. & DHS.
Your on line survey did not ask but in my jurisdiction we assign GAL to all cases involving abuse and neglect. Dependency may be an issue in these cases and usually is. If the sole allegation is dependency, our statute does not require the appointment of a GAL. The statutory provisions in our Juvenile Code require that a GAL be appointed in the cases in my court. one good thing we do is to appoint them at the time of the filing of the petition when the attorney is appointed for the parent. The Clerk provides them with a copy of the petition based on our local juvenile court rules. These rules also require that we have a day one/Child Planning conference usually within three days of the child coming into custody. The GAL and the GAL attorney advocate participate in this conference along with the parents and their attys., the social worker, the DSS atty., mental health professionals, school officials, and the juvenile case manager in my Family Court serves as the facilitator. Issues of continued placement with DSS or placement with a relative are explored, visitation generally supervised by DSS is scheduled, mental health, substance abuse and physical evals. are scheduled, paternity is addressed if it is an issue, and potentially a referral can be made to the Family Treatment Court if substance abuse is an issue. We front load the system so that all of this occurs prior to adjudication/disposition of the petition. Many times we achieve a stipulated adjudication/disposition and thus can move the case along more expeditiously in an effort to obtain compliance with ASFA.
[re: "Safety of children/youth while in placement..."]: "We must terminate CASA upon dismissal or closure of case"
[re: "State's written case plans]: "I don't know"
[re: "Safety of children/youth while in placement..."]: "I don't understand this question"
[re: "To what extent does input from CASA/GAL volunteers..."]: "don't understand question"