

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CONNECTICUT

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A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP

Every child deserves safety, stability, and the chance to thrive. At Connecticut Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), our mission centers on a simple yet powerful premise: when a child experiences abuse or neglect, a dedicated volunteer Advocate can change the trajectory of their life. Appointed by judges to inform their decisions, CASA volunteers connect children and families to resources, build caring relationships to promote resilience, and aim for every child to have a safe, permanent home.

Over the past five years, our footprint and impact have grown significantly. Since 2021, we have more than quadrupled the number of children we serve and expanded from one juvenile court to eight statewide. This 2025-26 Annual Report reflects activities during the State fiscal year, during which some 107 volunteer advocates stood up for 219 children across Connecticut—providing a steady, caring presence when it mattered most. Whether the children we serve stayed with their families or were reunified, whether they were in (relative or non-relative) foster homes, experienced a transfer of guardianship or an adoption, CASA volunteers endeavored conscientiously to further each child’s best interests.

Part of a national movement, our momentum is powered by a diverse and dedicated community of supporters across both the public and private sectors. In 2025, our funding reflected this shared commitment: 40% from generous individual donations and community sponsorships, 25% from federal sources (including the Victims of Crime Act), 20% from state funding, and 15% from foundation grants. We extend our deepest gratitude to our state legislators and the Governor for including \$250,000 per year for Connecticut CASA in the biennial state budget—a vital investment that reinforces this broad base of support and fuels our ongoing expansion.

Our organization relies on an effective team not only of volunteer Advocates, who work with children and families directly, but also of Board and Advisory Council members and professional staff who provide structure and support for our volunteers’ efforts. We especially thank David Bayne, who—while remaining a valued Board member—recently stepped down as chair after more than six successful years of leadership.

Whether you are an individual donor investing in our mission, a foundation or community partner, a volunteer showing up for a young person, or a justice and child welfare partner working alongside us, you make this work possible. Thank you for standing with Connecticut’s children.

With gratitude,



Josiah Brown
Executive Director



Lauren Messner
Board President

WHO WE ARE

5 R's OF CASA ADVOCACY

Reporting
regularly to judges, to inform decisions about children's safe, permanent homes and best interests.

Resources
identified to fulfill needs ranging from birth-to-three, to special education, after-school care, health, mental health, and summer jobs.

Relationship-building
through visits at least monthly, and cases that can extend for years.

Resilience
promoted, to help children and youth overcome adversity.

Results
that have seen this program grow rapidly, from a single court in New Haven in 2020 to 8 of the state's 10 child protection courts through 2025.



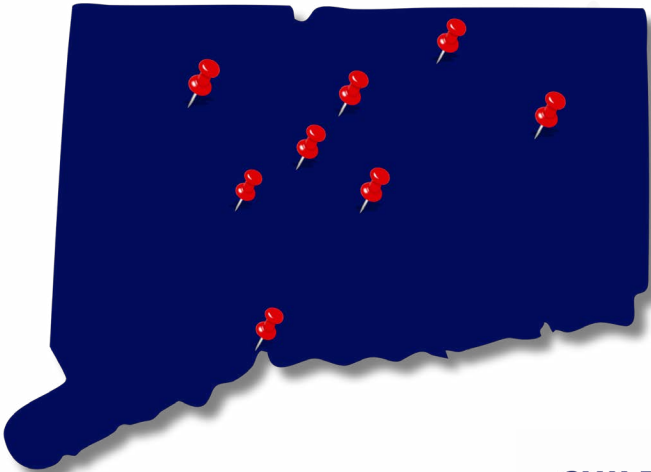
OUR MISSION Connecticut CASA empowers a statewide network of caring, consistent volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates to advance the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect—so every child has a safe, permanent home to thrive.

OUR VISION Connecticut CASA envisions a world where every child who has experienced abuse or neglect receives an opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.

OUR VALUES The Connecticut CASA movement is a community of volunteers and staff, rallying community resources for children and their families. We pursue our mission with adaptability, collaboration, integrity, respect, quality, service, and stewardship.

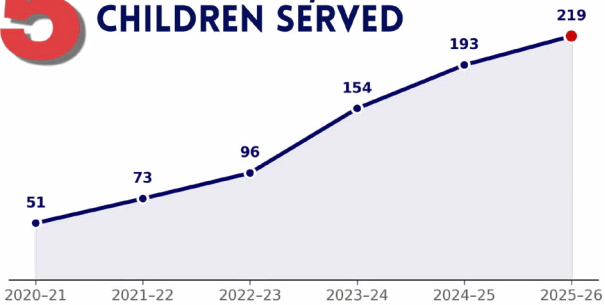
OUR IMPACT

8 COURTS ACROSS CONNECTICUT

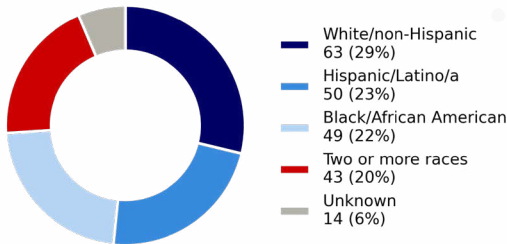


- NEW HAVEN
- WATERBURY
- TORRINGTON
- WILLIMANTIC
- HARTFORD
- ROCKVILLE
- NEW BRITAIN
- MIDDLETOWN

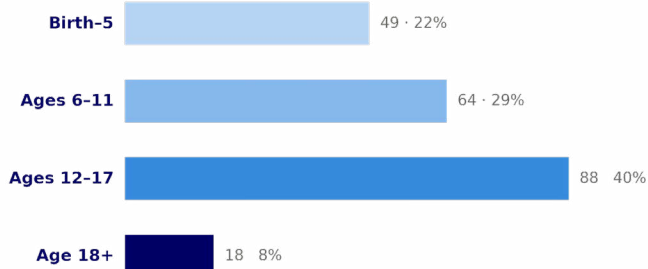
5 YEAR TREND, CHILDREN SERVED



CHILDREN SERVED, BY RACE & ETHNICITY



CHILDREN SERVED, BY AGE



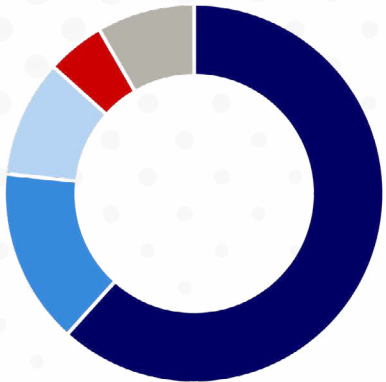
219 CHILDREN SERVED



“Knowing the child's history when other team members (DCF, school, foster parents, therapists) change frequently helps the team make more informed decisions.”
— CASA VOLUNTEER

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

CASE CLOSURE OUTCOMES 60 CHILDREN



- Remained with parent(s); protective supervision (PS) ended — 37
- Transfer of guardianship — 9
- Turned 18 / aged out — 6
- Reunified with family — 3
- Other (including adoption) — 5

296
COURT HEARINGS
ATTENDED

48
NEW
VOLUNTEERS
TRAINED

172
COURT REPORTS
SUBMITTED

1,440
PRE-SERVICE
TRAINING HOURS

“A big part of my decision to become a CASA volunteer was seeing their dedication to the children in one of my last cases as a DCF social worker. The volunteer never let its difficulty sway her from having the children’s voices heard. I signed up to be a CASA volunteer who can be that kind of a caring, resourceful advocate, supporting children in a complex system with many challenges.

— Jirina Fargeorge, Former DCF Social Worker

HOW CAN A CHILD CONNECT WITH A CASA VOLUNTEER?

Under Connecticut’s 2016 CASA statute, any child with a DCF Child Protection case in Juvenile Court is eligible for a CASA volunteer. The Assistant Attorney General, the attorney for the minor child, or a parent’s attorney can request the appointment; a judge may also appoint one on their own initiative.

INVESTING IN ADVOCATES

At CT CASA, we are committed to providing high-quality, ongoing training for our volunteers. In addition to the required 30-hour pre-service training program, we host numerous educational opportunities with national and local experts to help our advocates build knowledge, strengthen skills, and better support the children and families they serve.

RECENT TRAININGS FEATURED:



**FAMILY VIOLENCE &
CHILD WELFARE**
*A panel during Domestic
Violence Awareness Month*
JUDGE ERIKA TINDILL



**HOW CARING ADULTS
PROTECT TEEN MENTAL
HEALTH**
LISA DAMOUR, PH.D.
BESTSELLING AUTHOR

This also includes the following:

- "Adolescents & Transitional-Age Youth Supports," with Latosha Johnson of DCF
- "A Youthful Voice of Experience: Foster Care, Advocacy, and CASA's Role," with Tawanna Brown
- "Advanced Trauma-Informed Care for Children and Families," with Zlatina Kostova, Ph.D.
- "Post-Adoption and Guardianship Support in CT: Preparation & Resources"
- "Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR): Strategies for Suicide Prevention"
- "The Quality Parenting Initiative"

CASA supported a girl in a long-term placement with a foster mother very dedicated to the child and her development. The foster parent felt very supported and recognized by CASA and reached out regularly. CASA continued to ask and push for individual therapy for the child; eventually DCF and the provider agreed on half-individual, half-family therapy. The child was also enrolled in in-school therapy. While she decided not to be adopted, she did want to remain with the foster parent, and eventually a transfer of guardianship was secured.

CASE STUDY

“I am deeply thankful for every CASA volunteer who steps forward to make a difference. Your dedication, compassion, and unwavering commitment to children are truly inspiring. The work you do matters—and the lives you touch are better because you chose to be there.

— Attorney Jennifer M. Celentano

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

My first CASA assignment in Connecticut was a high-schooler whose excessive absences brought him to the attention of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). At first glance, it appeared to be a simple truancy case. As I got to know him, I learned he was often staying home to care for an older sibling with significant medical needs while his mother struggled with housing, transportation, and employment. With the right support, he was able to return to school consistently, and the Protective Supervision (PS) order was eventually lifted.

I'm currently working with a young man who lost both parents at an early age, experienced significant trauma, and entered DCF care after his family could no longer care for him. I attended his school's parent meetings, we've gone fishing, and we went to a concert. Most often when we visit, we just talk. Sometimes our visits are less about talk and more about simply being there. His path has not been linear, with progress often followed by setbacks. Today, he's working part-time and attending community college to become a chef.

CASA has taught me that while we can't change a child's past, we can help shape their future. By being a consistent voice, trusted advocate, and source of support, we can help young people see what's possible.

David Kinahan

CT CASA Volunteer Since 2022
Former New Orleans CASA Volunteer



The court ordered termination of parental rights for the two youngest siblings, and they are being adopted by a wonderful family. I am closest with the 10 year old, and although she does not have a pre-adoptive foster home, after a traumatic couple of years, and several hospitalizations, she has adapted well to her current foster home, and is doing well in school.

— CASA VOLUNTEER

I advocate for my children with DCF, their attorney, education surrogate, psychology counselor, teachers and foster parents, as well as with the Juvenile Court Judge. I feel that it does make a big difference.

— CASA VOLUNTEER

Serving as a CASA volunteer since March 2022 has reinforced the unique value that CASA advocates bring to children involved in the child welfare system.

My first case involved two siblings whose lives were marked by parental substance abuse, incarceration, repeated foster care placements, and the younger child's selective mutism. Through consistent advocacy, collaboration with DCF, schools, therapists, foster families, and community providers, and independent recommendations to the court, I helped ensure the children's needs remained the focus throughout the case. I engaged with their school administrators and guidance counselors, held weekly calls and emails with their DCF case worker, collaborated with Family Services who helped the family almost daily and provided free summer camp, engaged with a local nonprofit that provided clothing and school supplies for both children (as well as holiday food bins for many CASA families), and ensured the mother was receiving parental classes and other aid to ensure a positive reunification for her with her children.

These collective efforts contributed to the children's successful reunification with their mother in 2025, the lifting of Protective Supervision, and the family's continued stability.

The ability of CASA volunteers to devote time to identifying opportunities beyond those immediately available through the child welfare system helps ensure every available resource is considered in the child's best interest.

Beyond direct advocacy, I have also supported Connecticut CASA's mission through volunteer leadership and community outreach. By speaking with Board members about the impact of CASA advocacy, sharing experiences with volunteers-in-training, and presenting to Sacred Heart University's Theta sorority about Connecticut CASA's mission, I have helped increase awareness of the critical role CASA volunteers play in improving outcomes for children. These efforts support volunteer recruitment, community engagement, and continued investment in CASA's work.

These experiences demonstrate how CASA's model of consistent, independent advocacy helps children receive the services, support, and stability they need while giving judges the comprehensive information necessary to make decisions in each child's best interests.

I am so proud to be a part of CASA and its mission to advocate for children who have been neglected or abused and to make sure the court receives recommendations to support these children.

Hallie Wofsy

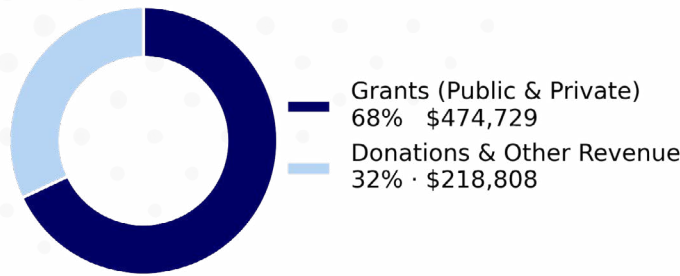
CT CASA Volunteer Since 2022



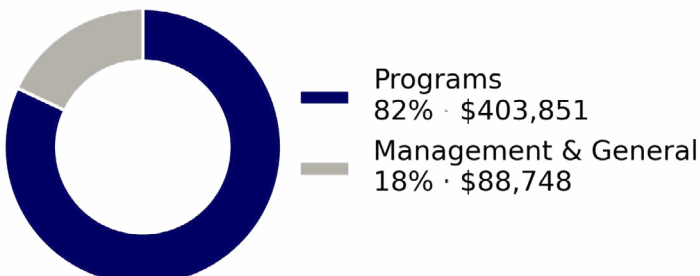
FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

2025 and 2026 represent a significant shift in the funding landscape for Connecticut CASA. Federal funding, which previously accounted for 45% of our annual income, dropped to 25% in 2025 due to cuts in federal VOCA funding. That loss has since been bolstered by the support of the State of Connecticut, whose funding now accounts for 20% of our income. As a local organization serving Connecticut children and families, we look forward to an ongoing partnership with the state, alongside growing support from local donors, as we continue to expand service statewide.

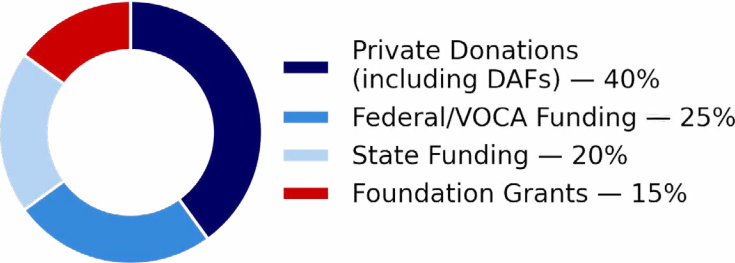
2025 REVENUE



2025 EXPENSES



2025 FUNDING SOURCES



“Every child deserves opportunity and a voice for their best interests, toward a better future. CASA volunteers provide that. I am proud to support Connecticut CASA and encourage others to join me.”
— **Lindy Lee Gold, CASA Donor**

SCAN HERE
to review
full financial
reporting from



OUR GRATITUDE

Connecticut CASA is grateful for all of its partners, grantors, and donors—public as well as private. In 2025, our public sources of support included the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), via a re-grant from the National CASA/GAL Association; the Federal Office of Health and Human Services (HHS), via a re-grant from the CT Children’s Alliance; the State Judicial Branch through Federal VOCA funds; and a crucial new State appropriation through the Judicial Branch, made possible by Connecticut’s state legislators and Governor Lamont.

- \$25,000+**
Everette E. Dennis (in memory of Emily T. Smith)
ForGood Fund

\$10,000+
Amour Propre Fund/LindyLee Gold, President
Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
McCance Foundation/Fritz Foley
Lauren & George Messner
NewAlliance Foundation
Kappa Alpha Theta (Theta Pi chapter, Sacred Heart U.)
Sarah Weingarten/NY Community Trust

\$5,000+
Sara J. Batchelder
David Bayne
Richard & Irene Brown
Kristen & John Burns
Mario & Lydia Chiappetti
Eder Family Foundation/Wesley & Courtney Eder
Charlotte Goode (in honor of Aaron Goode)
M&T Bank Charitable Foundation
Andrew & Ronni Smulian

\$2,000+
David A. Beckerman Foundation
Christopher Cesare
Umut Ergun
John Finley
Grant & Lara Gund
Sharma Joseph
Ira & Deborah Katznelson
Trisha & Eric Lindberg
George & Grace Long Foundation
Edmund Polubinski
Edward & Linda Ruby
Ben Sheffner
Kappa Alpha Theta (Eta Xi chapter, Quinnipiac U.)
Kappa Alpha Theta (Gamma Zeta chapter, UConn)
Troutman Pepper Locke
Vodafone Americas Foundation
Yale University

\$1,000+
James & Martha Alexander
Alexion/AstraZeneca
Tony Caldwell
Mark Casey
Community Foundation for Fox Valley Region
- Joseph Gitchell
Laurel Grodman
Randall Heck
Miriam Ingber
Adriana Joseph
Susan Kerley
Alan Kreczko
Delia Kulukundis
Boris Levin
Joan Annexy Lopez
Martha Luther
Rory MacFarquhar
William & Michele Rosa
RTX
Christopher Trombly
Nicholas Turner
Yale New Haven Children's Hospital

\$500+
Sarah Boone
Nicholas Brown
Megan Clarke
Connecticut Community Foundation
Gaelic American Club
Shelley Geballe
Christine Hall
Monte Financial Group
Charles Pillsbury
Indu Poonja
Better Rhodes
David Robinson
David Thompson
Aisha Usmani
Sahar Usmani-Brown

\$200+
Angelo Adams
Anonymous
Dimitrios Antos
Emily Barnard
Benevity Fund
Jeffrey Blocker
John Byrnes
Ryan Byrnes
Catherine Butler
Christopher Chiappetti
Charlotta Chung
Jessica Dodge
Natalie Drucker
James Enright
Martha Hennig
Hannah Hirschfeld
Matthew Jacobson
Jennifer Lemay-Sullivan
Toni Ligon
Rick Mayer
Linda Mayes
Pedro Mendia Landa
- Olaitan Ogunmakinwa (in honor of Opeyemi Oni)
Ivlie Oronsaye (in honor of Opeyemi Oni)
Adetola Oyenusi (in honor of Opeyemi Oni)
Harold & Lorraine Panciera
Ann Reed
Laurie Ruderfer
Paul Sabin
Mark & Ieke Scully
Benjamin Seelig
Rachel Sondheimer
Paul Van Tassel
Ann Withney
Beth Zafonte

up to \$200
Rebecca Allen
Mary Ann Attianese
Marie-Jose Babouder-Matta
Martha Banks
Bethany Bauer
Carolyn Bayne
Jonathan Bayne
Angela Beach
Erin Bekes
Abie Quinones Benitez
David Berkowitz
Sundari Birdsall
Kim Bohlen
Kristen Brandenburg
Deborah Brown
Josiah Brown
Rachel Kline Brown
Bill Burns
Elizabeth Burns
Nancy Clayton
Margaret Mary Coffield
Ronald Coleman
Bradford Collins
Claire Criscuolo
Sheryl Culotta
Kathryn Cunningham
CVS Health
Mehul Dalal
Dina Deana
Joy Delaney
Kristin Dolan
Patrick Edgar
Leah Fell
Megan FitzGerald
Daniel Fitzmaurice
Dennis Flaherty
Andrew Giering
Allison Goegel
Allison Good
Aaron Goode
Debra Gregory
Susan Grodman
- Jake Halpern
Fritz Hansen
The Hartford
Suzannah Holsenbeck
Yari Ijeh
Jennifer Jacquet-Murray
Marie & Theodore Jellineck
Leighton S. Jordan
Joe Jovanovich
Leslie Kern
Debra Kidder
Carolyn Kinder
Nancy Klein
William Klimashousky
Patricia Koller
Michael LeMoult
Laura McMillan
Donato Monaco
Matthew Mooney
Mary Ann Morelli
Brian Morgan
Munich Re
Kim Nguyen
Landon Osborn
Kevin Palmer
PayPal
Brent Peterkin
Lisa Petrocelli
Maya Polan
Chandra Prasad
Margaret Rague
Shari Rahamim
Kristina Rath
Tamara Remy
Michael Rigsby
John Rothert
Anna Saulitis
Soraya Shalforoosh
Carly Siuta
Amos Smith
T. Reginald Solomon
Jon & Angela Stein
Nancy Swearer
Tom Tang
Lou Ellen Treadway
Qamar Usmani
Tasneem Usmani
Steve Werlin
Audrey Williams
Steven Wisensale
James Wu
Lora Wu
Brian Wysolmerski
John Zurn

CASA LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Marcus Stallworth, Board Vice President
Kristen Brandenburg, Treasurer
Christopher Trombly, Secretary

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Elizabeth Burns
Mario Chiappetti
Allison D. Good
Laurel Grodman
Miriam F. Ingber
Sharma E. Joseph
Laureen “Toni” Ligon
Joan Annexy Lopez
Linda C. Mayes
Anamaria Orozco
Brent Peterkin
Andrew M. Smulian
Sarah Weingarten



OUR APPRECIATION

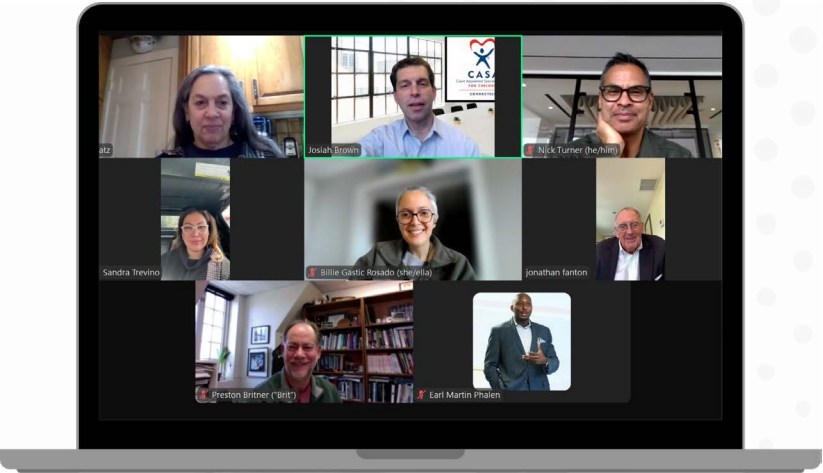
Our Board of Directors recognizes David Bayne, Partner at Akerman LLP in New York City and Darien resident, for his six years of distinguished service as President. As a founding member of CT CASA’s Board, David provided steadfast leadership and dedication to CASA’s mission. He guided us through the merger of our State office and local programs into a unified statewide entity, enabling us to effectively expand services to children throughout Connecticut’s juvenile courts. We thank David for his leadership and continued service to CASA.



ADVISORY COUNCIL

Connecticut CASA is fortunate to benefit from the advice of individuals from around the country as well as the state. On a volunteer basis, these experts assist the organization as it grows to serve the children and families of Connecticut.

Abie L. Quiñones-Benítez
Travis J. Bristol
Preston A. Britner
Jonathan F. Fanton
Dylan Gee
Edward Joyner
Joette Katz
Earl Martin Phalen
Angela C. Robinson
Billie Gastic Rosado
Jessica Sager
Dena N. Simmons
Susan M. Swearer
Sandra Trevino-Ranalli



“CASA volunteers help to ensure that each child’s best interests remain at the forefront of decisions regarding their permanency and placement.... As DCF continues to strengthen services in order to improve outcomes for the children and families we serve, partnerships with organizations such as Connecticut CASA remain essential to building a stronger, more responsive child welfare system.

— Peter Yazbak, CT Department of Children & Families Spokesperson

WHAT'S NEXT

As we look to the future, we are focused on broadening our reach and deepening our roots in the communities we serve:

Serving More Children

Expanding our capacity so that every child who needs a dedicated volunteer advocate has one by their side.

Engaging Our Communities

Hosting awareness events across the state to recruit volunteers, engage supporters, and elevate the voices of vulnerable children.

Strengthening System Partnerships

Continuing to collaborate closely with the judges, attorneys, and DCF social workers who partner with our advocates every day to achieve the safest, best possible outcomes.



“

Watching out for the well-being of children as they make the difficult transition to foster care has been a very meaningful part of my work. Knowing that they have an objective person assessing their needs and trying to determine what's in their best interest is a great, but rewarding, responsibility.

— CASA VOLUNTEER

JOIN OUR MOVEMENT

VOLUNTEER

As a CASA advocate, you become a reliable resource of support during turbulent times in a child's life when foster parents, judges, and social workers can change at any given time.

Our volunteers represent a diverse range of cultural, professional, and socio-economic backgrounds, bringing their expertise and compassion. These adults commit roughly two years to getting to know a child in need of a consistent, caring advocate to listen, learn, and amplify their voice.

As a volunteer you will:

- Receive 30 hours of training before being appointed to a case, with 12 hours of continued education required annually
- Receive ongoing support from CASA staff to advocate effectively on a child's behalf
- Visit your child monthly
- Devote 10-15 hours a month of your time
- Stay involved until the child achieves permanency.

DONATE

Every donation strengthens our capacity, builds upon our grant funding, and demonstrates increasing awareness and belief in our mission.

Unrestricted gifts make an especially meaningful difference. They give our team the flexibility to recruit, train, and support additional advocates—ensuring more children have someone in their corner.

When you give, you're not just contributing; you're joining a community committed to brighter outcomes for Connecticut's children.

SCAN TO
DONATE



AMPLIFY

Volunteering and giving aren't the only ways to stand with Connecticut's children. Help us spread the word about the great work that our organization is leading:

- **Follow & Share:** Follow us on social media and share our updates.
- **Attend an Event:** Join us at an info session, fundraiser, or volunteer appreciation event near you.
- **Spread the Word:** Talk about CASA at work, at your place of worship, in your neighborhood. Every conversation plants a seed.

ConnecticutCASA

connecticut-casa

@ConnecticutCASA

@ConnCASA

@connecticutcasa



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CONNECTICUT