

2020 Budget Request Form – Douglas County, KS

Summary and Community Partner Overview

Community Partner:	Douglas County CASA
2020 Request	\$60,000

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Community Partner Overview:
<p>Founded in 1991 by the Hon. Jean F. Shepherd (retired), the Douglas County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) agency has provided a unique and economical service to our community for 28 years, with CASA volunteers advocating for more than 1,075 abused and neglected children during this time. There are 23 CASA programs in Kansas and nearly 1,000 CASA programs nationwide and our local agency is a member in good standing with both the Kansas CASA Association and the National CASA Association. Douglas County CASA provides a voice for our community's most vulnerable children, providing crucial support during their journey to safe, permanent homes. CASA staff members recruit, train and supervise dedicated community volunteers (CASAs) who work with children from birth to age 18 who have been abused and/or neglected and are under the <u>protection</u> of the Douglas County juvenile court system. Placed in DCF custody with most residing in foster care, the children served by CASA volunteers often have complex problems resulting from the traumas they have endured. CASAs help ensure the child's safety and that their medical, educational, and other critical needs are met. CASA volunteers investigate, facilitate, monitor and mentor as they advocate for the child's best interests. They play a crucial role in helping these children find a safe, permanent home in a timely manner, thus reducing the time spent in the foster care system and other out of home placements. CASA volunteers serve as trauma-informed, caring and consistent mentors. They monitor and recommend services for the child, network with professionals, make the child's wishes known to the court, and assure the child's safety while they are under the protection of the juvenile court. CASA volunteers write and submit official court reports which are admitted into evidence in the Child in Need of Care hearings and provide critical information for the Judge and other professionals who make crucial decisions regarding the child's future.</p> <p>With the help of in-kind and restricted donations, our agency also provides special support via a child clothing fund, scholarships for summer camps and activities, birthday gifts, adoption gifts, holiday gifts, Halloween costumes, backpacks, diaper bags, and even footwear via the Shepherd Shoe Fund. In 2013, our CASA program formed a new local coalition, the Douglas County Child Abuse Prevention Task Force, to address child abuse prevention on a communitywide level, with efforts now reaching beyond Lawrence to Eudora, Baldwin and Lecompton. The Task Force now meets quarterly and has nearly 50 community partners, with collaborative outreach and awareness efforts extending far beyond Child Abuse Prevention month. As a leader of the task force, our CASA director has initiated community discussions regarding the possible formation of a Child Advocacy Center in Douglas County.</p> <p>County funds have been and will continue to be utilized for general program support, which allows our agency to offer reliable, quality services to abused and neglected children by providing them with a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). A great deal of time and effort is invested to recruit, train, supervise and retain qualified volunteer advocates for Douglas County CASA and County funds are used to support this crucial effort. With current challenges to the state foster care system, a record number of children in out of home placements, and excessive turnover among case managers, the stability and advocacy of a CASA volunteer have never been more important for children in the child welfare system.</p>

2020 Budget Request Form – Douglas County, KS

The requested County funding will also subsidize our agency's rent, utilities, and other operating costs that were previously provided by Douglas County via in-kind support while CASA was located in the courthouse from 1993 through December of 2009. This continued support is crucial to our agency and the children we serve.

Service Overview - Metrics and/or data that describe the service impact:

The number of child abuse and neglect cases in our county varies from year to year, but recent challenges to the economy and stressors on parents (e.g., substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, homelessness) and a reduction in state-funded safety nets are linked to a marked increase in the number of abused and neglected children in Douglas County who are in need of a CASA volunteer. In 2018, our agency served 159 children, more than doubling the 66 children served a decade ago in 2008. The number of CINC cases filed in Douglas County increased 30% from 2016 to 2018, and the number of children served by our CASA program also continues to increase each year, while the number of children in foster care continues at record levels statewide and in Douglas County. Our volunteers have already served 136 children thus far in 2019. However, despite serving more children each year, there are still more than 70 children currently on the waiting list for a CASA volunteer. Our ultimate goal is to provide a CASA volunteer for **every** Child in Need of Care in Douglas County.

Every year there are more than 3 million reports of child abuse made in the United States, involving more than 6 million children – a report of child abuse is made every ten seconds. The United States has one of the worst records among industrialized nations, losing an average of between 4-7 children every day to child abuse and neglect. A January 2016 federal report listed Kansas as one of 9 states in which child abuse cases increased more than 30 percent over the past five years. In Kansas, there were 72,683 reports of child maltreatment in state FY 2018. In Douglas County, there were 2,466 reports of child abuse and neglect in FY 2018, reflecting a 2% increase from FY 2017 and an 13% increase from FY 2015. At the end of state FY 2018, there were 203 children in out of home placements in Douglas County, compared to 181 at the end of SFY 2017, reflecting a 12% increase. With an increase in meth use and addiction among adults in Douglas County and the opioid crisis now impacting our community, we continue to see a related increase in the number of children being taken into protective custody due to abuse or neglect from one or more parents battling substance abuse. Some of these youngest victims include babies and toddlers who are on our CASA waiting list. We are also seeing more young teens in our community targeted as sex trafficking victims; some of these teens have a CASA but others are still on our waiting list. Protecting the rights and safety of abused and neglected children is one of society's most fundamental obligations, and County funding is essential to support these efforts in Douglas County.

By helping reduce the time spent unnecessarily in foster care, CASA programs can reduce child welfare costs and other direct costs (e.g., hospitalization, chronic physical and mental health problems, law enforcement, judicial system) and indirect costs (special education, mental health and health care, juvenile delinquency, lost productivity to society, adult criminality) that are associated with service to this vulnerable population. Every dollar spent on CASA yields \$23 in savings in the foster care and family court systems. Based on the national average value of volunteer time (\$24.69/hr. - 2016 Bureau of Labor Statistics data, indexed by Independent Sector in April 2018), the 6,176 case hours our volunteers dedicated as child advocates in 2018 are valued at more than \$152,485. This does not include ~2,700 hours volunteered by board members, ambassadors, and other non-advocate volunteers which add another \$66,663, making the total value of CASA volunteerism approximately \$219,148. Most notably, the impact of these volunteer hours on a child's life is *priceless*.

Furthermore, children who were identified as abuse victims in the past are 94.6% more likely to suffer further maltreatment compared to children who were not victimized previously. Children with a CASA volunteer are substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care: 13.3% for CASA cases vs. 27% for all other children in foster care. In addition, children with a CASA are less likely to re-enter the child welfare system.

In order to serve more children and decrease the substantial waiting list for a CASA volunteer, increased funding is essential for adequate staffing to train and supervise more volunteers. With the County directive to tailor our 2020 requested support for the status quo budget, we are not requesting increased funds for 2020. However, the need to increase our local support becomes more urgent each year.

2020 Budget Request Form – Douglas County, KS

Alignment to County Focus Areas and Collaboration:

Community Partner:	Douglas County CASA
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Focus Area:	Human Services and Public Safety
<p>Our CASA mission clearly aligns with the County’s focus on Human Services and also addresses Public Safety of children. Our agency shares the County's commitment to meet health, safety and welfare needs and we have adapted our service levels to meet evolving needs and expectations. The health and safety of children are paramount to the CASA mission, and our volunteers write Court Reports that reflect thoughtful, objective recommendations pertaining to the child's safety, medical and educational needs, and other factors relevant to the child's welfare. Children with CASA volunteers are more likely to receive the services they need. In 2006, the US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General conducted an audit of the National CASA Association and its programs. It determined that children and families with CASA volunteers received more necessary services. Research conducted by the US Department of Health and Family Services determined that "CASA Volunteers are excellent investigators and mediators, remain involved and fight for what they think is right for the child." The study concluded, "We give CASA models our highest recommendation." CASA volunteers are also mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect. Their frequent contact with children puts them in a unique position to notify the authorities when safety concerns arise. In short, CASA volunteers also improve safety for children.</p> <p>The field of Human Services is broadly defined, uniquely approaching the objective of meeting human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, focusing on prevention as well as remediation of problems, and maintaining a commitment to improving the overall quality of life of service populations. Our CASA staff participate in monthly Family Centered System of Care (FCSC) and Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings that include various stakeholders in Douglas County who provide human services to vulnerable children and families.</p> <p>Because CASA volunteers have contact with key service providers and community resources touching many aspects of a child's life (education, recreation, health, mental health and more), they serve to strengthen collaboration and communication among the programs and systems that serve child victims of physical and sexual abuse and neglect. This holistic approach helps target resources, increases efficiency, and raises questions, problems and issues earlier (when they are generally less expensive to address). Our agency regularly collaborates with Douglas County District Court, the Citizen Review Board, local offices of KVC and DCF, the Lawrence, Baldwin, Eudora and Lecompton school districts, and many other social service agencies in Douglas County. Our CASA program also continues to play a leadership role in leveraging partnerships in our community via the Douglas County Child Abuse Prevention Task force (DCCAPTF). In 2013, our CASA program united more than a dozen local agencies to work together on child abuse prevention month outreach activities and this effort evolved into the DCCAPTF, a local task for that now includes more than 50 agencies and programs. In collaboration with the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Boys & Girls Club, Willow, Success by Six, the Sexual Trauma and Abuse Care Center, DCF, KVC, and dozens of other agencies, our CASA program continues to help lead this task force and seek collaborative solutions in our community to prevent child abuse and neglect. Planting “Pinwheels for Prevention” throughout Douglas County is just one of the collaborative efforts our agency leads to increase awareness and prevention of child abuse and neglect. We are also proud to embrace another local partnership with USD 497 as local high school students design and build the CASA playhouse at the Lawrence College and Career Center for our summer tour and fundraiser.</p> <p>In addition, our CASA program depends on local economic growth and security, and our business practices align with these priorities. Our agency is a member of the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and we support – and rely on - local businesses and individuals throughout Douglas County for a significant portion of our operating revenue. We shop local whenever possible, and we rely on financial and in-kind donations from local businesses and individuals to sustain our program and help provide clothing, shoes, birthday gifts, Halloween costumes, Christmas stockings, Easter baskets, and much more for our CASA children in foster care. In addition, CASA is a highly cost-effective program. With a service delivery model that uses volunteers supervised by professionals, CASA programs provide continuous contact with children and crucial reports to the Court.</p>	

2020 Budget Request Form – Douglas County, KS

	2016 Actuals	2017 Actuals	2018 Actuals	2019 Adopted Budget	2019 Current Estimates	2020 Budget Request
Revenues:						
Unrestricted Fund Balance 1/1/xx	295,371	287,124	301,703		305,252	305,252
Douglas County	45,500	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
City of Lawrence	22,780	21,520	22,000	24,000	24,000	28,000
United Way	28,674	21,813	15,000	0	0	0
Grants	85,351	78,469	93,997	85,226	85,226	85,226
Fundraisers	104,947	122,159	84,773	103,000	103,000	103,000
Contributions	34,111	102,126	116,797	119,425	119,425	121,407
Other: Kappa Alpha Theta	8,614	6,327	10,391	8,000	8,525	8,000
Other: Memorials	2,263	1,395	148	500	1,585	500
Other: Miscellaneous revenue	19,471	5,164	7,818	0	0	0
Interest	3,257	5,421	5,036	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Revenues:	354,968	424,394	415,960	410,151	411,761	416,133
Total Revenues and Fund Balance	650,339	711,518	717,663	410,151	717,013	721,385
Expenditures:						
Salaries	202,209	196,192	220,200	222,715	222,715	225,105
Employee Benefits (IRA match in 2017)	574	8,109	10,623	5,283	5,283	5,283
Health Insurance	34,282	62,314	44,860	44,100	44,100	44,100
Supplies, Printing & Postage	9,796	11,575	7,744	9,500	9,500	9,500
Utilities, Building Maintenance	5,314	5,289	5,486	5,840	5,840	5,840
Travel & Training	7,997	6,654	6,564	3,500	3,500	3,500
Office Equipment	4,649	12,406	6,508	6,600	6,600	6,600
Debt Payments	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other: Rent	25,800	25,800	25,800	25,800	25,800	27,600
Other: Payroll Taxes	15,779	15,180	17,066	17,038	17,038	17,220
Other: Outreach & Fundraising	21,686	32,514	36,487	34,000	34,000	34,000
Other: Accounting, Professional Fees	7,387	7,884	5,824	7,050	7,050	7,050
Other: Memberships, Insurance	3,956	5,657	4,934	5,100	6,710	6,710
Other: Volunteer Training, Appreciation	4,750	5,628	3,163	4,625	4,625	4,625
Other: Restricted Programs	17,044	13,361	16,303	18,000	18,000	18,000
Other: Miscellaneous	1,992	1,252	849	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total Expenditures:	363,215	409,815	412,411	410,151	411,761	416,133
Ending Fund Balance 12/31/xx	287,124	301,703	305,252	0	305,252	305,252

0.00%

2020 Budget Request Form – Douglas County, KS

Budget Request Analysis

Community Partner: **Douglas County CASA**

Analysis of Revenue Sources:

Our current revenue structure is diverse, including income derived from **grants** (Douglas County, City of Lawrence, Crime Victims Assistance Fund from the Office of the Kansas Attorney General, Permanent Families Fund from the State of Kansas, Shumaker Family Foundation, Douglas County Community Foundation, Ethel & Raymond F. Rice Foundation, Children’s Justice Act and IOLTA grants via the Kansas CASA Association, etc.), **fundraising and special events** (CASAblanca benefit , Light of Hope luncheon, Superhero Run, CASA playhouse, restaurant fundraisers, mail solicitation, Facebook, etc.), and **contributions from individuals, businesses, churches, and civic groups**. The KU Chapter of the **Kappa Alpha Theta** sorority also conducts at least two independent fundraisers each year to raise donations for our CASA program.

Our Executive Director, Development Director and Board of Directors continually seek new resources to support our goal of serving more children, and to address the current challenges of longer, more complicated abuse and neglect cases that are increasing in the Douglas County juvenile court system. However, the potential for securing alternative sources of substantial revenue remains very limited. Because our organization only serves Douglas County and provides specialized services to a very specific segment of the population (Child in Need of Care), viable funding sources are limited and ongoing local financial support is crucial. CASA agencies statewide are struggling to maintain adequate funding in the wake of state and federal budget cuts and a challenged economy. We are hopeful that we can maintain and eventually expand our current funding with the help of a part-time Development Director, but these efforts are very limited at only 20 hours per week. We receive restricted grants from various foundations, but most of these grants provide project-specific funding and do not provide general program support, which is the most critical funding need for our agency. Sustainable, unrestricted funds, such as those provided by Douglas County, are vital to our organization and the children we serve.

While the need for our services continues to increase, several crucial funding sources are flat and others are in jeopardy for 2020: State funding via the Crime Victims Assistance Fund from the Kansas Attorney General’s Office is uncertain; due to dwindling support from the United Way and narrow funding parameters, our agency is no longer a UW partner for the first time in our 28-year history; and grant funding via the National CASA Association (NCASA) continues well below previous levels following a 63% decrease in federal funding in 2012 that has yet to be restored. In addition, future funding via our \$25,000 annual grant from the Shumaker Family Foundation is uncertain since we will complete our second 3-year funding cycle in the fall of 2019. In order to compensate for these reductions and maintain our current services to children, our agency has added more fundraisers and is exploring new grant opportunities. Reserve funds will be utilized as needed. Notably, 2019 is the first year in our agency’s history that we have operated without United Way funding support. We hope to compensate for the loss of United Way funding via a state VOCA grant or other grant, major gifts, and/or other new funding sources.

Analysis of beginning & ending fund balances, and dedicated or restricted cash reserves:

Our beginning and ending fund balances for the past several years have consistently shown a positive cash balance and growing reserve funds which are essential to offset the lack of guaranteed funding from our major revenue sources. In 2016, however, we did experience a net loss of \$8,247 due to decreased revenue and we transferred money from our reserve funds to offset this loss. Our reserve funds have been carefully cultivated in recent years to help fund increased hours of part-time staff members who train and supervise volunteers and to provide related health benefits that are essential for recruiting and retaining qualified staff and achieving our mission to serve more children. In 2016, simple IRA retirement funds were added for CASA employees and an agency match was provided in 2017 and 2018. At the end of fiscal year 2018, Douglas County CASA had \$292,552 in our Endowment Funds, which included a total of \$202,334 in our Vanguard Endowment funds, and \$90,218 in our Douglas County Community Foundation

2020 Budget Request Form – Douglas County, KS

Endowment Fund (this balance includes a previous \$10,000 match from DCCF for establishing this fund; this match is not restricted). Our checking account balance was \$133,780. The bulk of our Endowment funds are restricted, as are various grant funds and individual donations designated for clothing, shoes, and other specified purposes. Savings are restricted in two ways: 1) Reserves may only be used in the event of a financial emergency to cover operational expenses; 2) Cash reserves may be used to purchase any significant non-budgeted items that may be essential, but only with approval from the Board Finance Committee and the entire Board of Directors.

Analysis of expenditure changes:

Our expenses increase each year as our agency faces a rising demand for our services. With a record number of children in foster care in Kansas, we constantly have a waiting list of more than 60 children in need of a CASA volunteer. As we strive to serve more children on a tight budget while our major funding sources remain fairly stagnant, we have implemented more special events to help bridge the gap. Unfortunately, the financial return on these special events is very unpredictable and last year our *CASAblanca* benefit fell far short of our goal. Our *Light of Hope* event in 2019 also fell short of our budgeted goal. To offset loss of revenue, we have reduced our budget for staff training and changed to a local payroll company and a more economical auditor to reduce our annual expenses. Our current monthly rent for our office space is \$2,150 but this will increase to \$2,300 per month in 2020 per our existing contract with Berkeley Plaza, for an annual increase of \$3,600.

In addition, increased health insurance costs for employees present a significant expense to our agency. Although the FTE of our Advocate Coordinators decreased slightly in 2017 (5%), restructuring of part-time hours to offset the loss of an employee made two additional employees and their dependents eligible for health insurance for the first time and these significant insurance costs continue to rise each year. Our Kansas CASA annual dues have increased as well.