

CALIFORNIA CASA ASSOCIATION FIVE YEAR VISION

2013 – 2018
Reporting for FY 2014-15

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of California CASA Association is to ensure children in the foster care system have both a voice and the services they need for a stable future. We achieve this goal by strengthening California's network of local CASA programs and advocating for progressive child welfare policy and practice.

VISION

We are united in the belief that no child should have to experience the foster care system alone.

Our vision is that every foster child in California has access to the service and support of a CASA volunteer.

APPROACH

As the statewide organization for CASA in California, we bring attention to the needs of abused and neglected children in the dependency system and to the power and efficacy that CASA volunteers provide. We work to ensure that CASA programs have the knowledge and resources they need to continually improve and expand their service to children and youth in the foster care system.

APPROACH

We improve the scope, quality, and impact of the CASA network by:

- ❖ Strengthening local programs with technical assistance, training, and resources.
- ❖ Evaluating CASA programs and sharing best practices throughout the state.

APPROACH

- ❖ Communicating the CASA perspective and advocating for progressive child-centered legislation and policy.
- ❖ Identifying and pursuing valuable alliances that leverage and/or expand our children's resources statewide.

GOAL ONE: CASA programs throughout California are strong, stable, innovative, and able to consistently meet or exceed national, state, and local operating standards.

Strategies:

- Develop and retain highly competent people at all levels of the organization to carry out and expand our work on behalf of the network.
- Respond to challenges at the local level in a timely way to ensure that new, emerging, or struggling programs overcome barriers to success.
- Ensure that program quality is achieved and maintained through comprehensive, tri-annual site visits that confirm necessary compliance; provide as-needed follow-up consultation to facilitate successful resolution of compliance issues or program challenges.
- Expand capacity to facilitate communication, continuous learning, professional development, and sharing of best practices across the state.
- Facilitate regional peer learning and coaching opportunities to strengthen practice and build the movement.
- Develop special initiatives and tools informed by the needs of and inputs from our network and youth advisors.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL ONE: CASA programs throughout California are strong, stable, innovative, and able to consistently meet or exceed national, state, and local operating standards.

- ✓ This year, CalCASA staff shaped a **2015-2020 Growth Plan for CASA in California** outlining steps to reach the goal of **15,000 kids with a CASA by 2020**. 100% of programs in California signed on to this plan.
- ✓ In the 2014 calendar year, **service to children grew from 10,469 to 11,117, an increase of 6.2%** (growth rate in 2013 calendar year was 5%).
- ✓ Supported the **establishment of a new program** in Tehama County, as part of the Shasta County program.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL ONE: CASA programs throughout California are strong, stable, innovative, and able to consistently meet or exceed national, state, and local operating standards.

- ✓ Directly supported each of California's 44 CASA programs (serving 50 counties) with training, technical assistance, site visits, and more.
 - In Fiscal Year 2014-15, CalCASA delivered more than **882.5 hours of proactive and responsive technical assistance** (as compared to 600 hours in 2014).
 - In Fiscal Year 2014-15, CalCASA provided **12 trainings and convenings, totaling 49 hours, to more than 783 volunteers and staff members from all 44 programs**, with a statewide reach from Del Norte to Imperial County.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL ONE: CASA programs throughout California are strong, stable, innovative, and able to consistently meet or exceed national, state, and local operating standards.

- ✓ **Built a new website with fresh content & functionality** to ensure that all key stakeholders and donors have access to compelling, regularly updated information about CalCASA and the work of its members. This website offers:
 - A “Marketing Resource Center” for programs to share, upload, store, and search successful marketing materials and strategies. This tool will be highly promoted in the coming year.
 - Financial transparency and facilitates access to annual reports, financial documents, videos, resources, and the latest news about CalCASA and CASA Programs.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL ONE: CASA programs throughout California are strong, stable, innovative, and able to consistently meet or exceed national, state, and local operating standards.

- ✓ **Grew capacity to provide training** to the Network through purchasing GoToWebinar software. Began implementation with a program training about Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. In late October 2015, CalCASA will partner with a Child Advocates of Placer County to offer training in the Peer Coordinator Model. All staff members are learning how to use it to develop engaging webinars.
- ✓ Following the departure of two longtime employees, recruited two new professionals, a Fund Development Director and an Administrative & Financial Manager.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL ONE: CASA programs throughout California are strong, stable, innovative, and able to consistently meet or exceed national, state, and local operating standards.

- ✓ Created and offered new curriculum for program staff:
 - Adapted and expanded Child Advocates of Placer County's peer coordinator manual; collected input from programs employing the model, and then created a manual with uniform standards and guidelines for network-wide use. A webinar to follow (in Oct 2015), which will then be posted in the online Toolbox.
 - **Currently revising the After 18, Transitional Age Youth curriculum to incorporate youth perspectives.** Youth from California Youth Connection reviewed the course documents and provided valuable feedback based on their experiences.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL ONE: CASA programs throughout California are strong, stable, innovative, and able to consistently meet or exceed national, state, and local operating standards.

- ✓ From November 2014 to October 2015, conducted **19 in-person program quality assurance site visits** (some in conjunction with Judicial Council and others on our own.) Tested for compliance with CA. Rule of Court 5.655, and NCASA standards; offered technical assistance when needed to help programs overcome challenges; identified and disseminated best practices.
- ✓ **Continued with trainings initiated last year** throughout the state on the topics of grief and loss, vicarious trauma, LGBTQ competence and Youth After 18.

GOAL TWO: We consistently increase our funding through public and private means to enable us to achieve our 5-year vision and to meet our annual goals.

Strategies:

- Annually devise and implement a fund development plan with targeted goals, activities, and strategies to guide fund development efforts (Board and Staff).
- Build an active and effective Fund Development Committee (FDC) to ensure the Fund Development plan is implemented and monitored.
- Create funding opportunities for local programs through collaboration, brokering relationships with funders, and pass-through funding when possible.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL TWO: We consistently increase our funding through public and private means to enable us to achieve our 5-year vision and to meet our annual goals.

- ✓ **CalCASA's overall financial picture continues to be positive and the budget is on an upward trend with 30% growth since FY 2011-12.**
- ✓ **Total expenses in FY 2014-15 were \$40,000 less than budgeted.** Savings included reduced personnel benefits costs, conference/event expenses, professional and contractor fees, as well as decreased lease overhead due to an office move in December 2014 to a better space.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL TWO: We consistently increase our funding through public and private means to enable us to achieve our 5-year vision and to meet our annual goals.

- ✓ In FY 2014-15 (per audited Statement of Activities), **income from existing foundations increased by 29%**, in the amount of \$161,000. Due to their growing interest in supporting CalCASA and our work, Foundations are increasing their grant awards.
 - For example, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation awarded \$75,000 in FY 2014-15 and has subsequently invited us to apply for \$200,000 (100k each year for two years.) This is a significant jump from the \$25,000 we were receiving in 2012-13.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL TWO: We consistently increase our funding through public and private means to enable us to achieve our 5-year vision and to meet our annual goals.

- Exceeded our goal for new funding sources, primarily because of \$60k in Cy Pres funding, and one-time funding of \$50k from Judicial Council (a pass-through payment to Riverside CASA).
- Compared to the original budget goal for FY 2014-15, we were short ~ \$100k in renewals from current funders. However, this was due to grant timing NOT because any foundation has not renewed. For example, Kaiser So Cal \$60k was approved later than anticipated; Walter S. Johnson postponed their grant application timeline (now Dec. 2015).

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL TWO: We consistently increase our funding through public and private means to enable us to achieve our 5-year vision and to meet our annual goals.

- ✓ Early in 2015, California CASA staff **revised the existing marketing brochure** for use in donor and information packets. These are available for use by board, staff and others.
- ✓ California CASA staff also produced the **2013/14 Annual Report**, presenting a concise, image-driven summary of audited financial statements and achievements.
- ✓ At the Lifting Hearts 2015, **89 people attended** (of 112 RSVPs), **34 were new** to California CASA (39%). New attendees gave/purchased items in the amount of \$12,211 (26% of gross revenue and 41% growth over 2014).

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL TWO: We consistently increase our funding through public and private means to enable us to achieve our 5-year vision and to meet our annual goals.

- ✓ In FY14-15, the Board maintained its cash and event giving from FY13-14 and contributed a total of \$47,956, with 100% participation, representing 5% of total revenue. *Additionally, a board member sponsored venue expenses in the amount of \$8,362 for the Lifting Hearts event.*
- ✓ Individual (non-board) donor giving was maintained at nearly \$48,000 from 56 (unique) individuals in 2014-15 (compared to 46 (unique) individuals in 2013-14).
- ✓ In September 2015, received \$250,000 in funding from National CASA in support of the 2015-2020 Growth Plan for CASA in California!

GOAL THREE: CALCASA is highly-recognized as the leading volunteer-based advocacy voice for children in the foster care system.

Strategies:

- Develop and implement a communication plan that enables us to communicate regularly about CALCASA's work to local programs and donors.
- Create and employ communication strategies tailored to specific audiences and communities.
- Enhance and improve capacity of website to meet the needs of various stakeholders.
- Develop and implement marketing strategies that allow us to raise awareness of California CASA Association and to conduct outreach on behalf of local programs.
- Leverage NCASA marketing materials and campaigns.
- Develop Marketing Resource Center to promote local program exchange of innovative, adaptable materials and strategies.
- Recruit and enlist recognized personalities as advocates and spokespeople for CalCASA.
- Solicit partnership in promotional activities from a major marketing or PR firm.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL THREE: CALCASA is highly-recognized as the leading volunteer-based advocacy voice for children in the foster care system.

- ✓ **Promoted the AT&T Park CalCASA video**, which explains who California CASA is and what we do, within the network and to our social media fans; also posted it to our website.
- ✓ In January 2015, **coordinated the launch of our professionally produced, pro bono, music video, *Every Child's Eyes*, with local program staff throughout the state**, demonstrating the power and value of using social media to increase volunteerism and awareness about CASA. Viewership of this video YouTube increased 2667% in one week(!), and is now at nearly 10,000 views, in addition to activity on the CalCASA Facebook page.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL THREE: CALCASA is highly-recognized as the leading volunteer-based advocacy voice for children in the foster care system.

- ✓ **Developed and implemented a social media communications plan** to grow our social media presence. CalCASA staff (led by our contracted communications manager) established a guideline for activities and decisions related to social media strategy and postings.
 - In May 2015, launched social media plan to coincide with National Foster Care Month.
 - CalCASA now actively posts articles, stories and items from local programs and National CASA, as well as from third party platforms, such as National Public Radio, ChildWelfare.gov and the Advocate.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL THREE: CALCASA is highly-recognized as the leading volunteer-based advocacy voice for children in the foster care system.

- ✓ Communications manager led creation of articles for publication in newspapers, on social media, and within the network, including:
 - The *San Mateo Daily Journal* published a piece by communications manager and Pat Bresee about the need to reduce the caseload for court appointed attorneys representing children in dependency cases.
 - Phil Ladew appeared in a *San Jose Mercury News* article about the overuse/abuse of psychotropic drugs.
 - Cory Pohley appeared in two news articles about CASA of Riverside County.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL THREE: CALCASA is highly-recognized as the leading volunteer-based advocacy voice for children in the foster care system.

- ✓ **Issued our first e-newsletters** in Fall 2014 to donors - *Friends of CASA News* - and to the local CASA program staff - *Network News*. Published the second set of e-newsletters in Spring 2015 (*Friends of CASA* was sent to 284 recipients; *Network News* was sent to 290 recipients).

Also, included on our website an easy way for viewers to sign up to receive our e-newsletter and built in an archive of previous editions.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL THREE: CALCASA is highly-recognized as the leading volunteer-based advocacy voice for children in the foster care system.

- ✓ At least 90% of programs report they feel more informed and connected as a result of CalCASA's e-newsletter. Some comments:

“Great job on the newsletter! It really shines.” R. Smith

“CalCASA is on a roll – keep up the good work!” C. McGauley

GOAL FOUR: Increase the capacity of local programs to measure CASA effectiveness and impact.

Strategies:

- Pilot multi-year Youth Outcomes Project to determine effectiveness of the Youth Outcomes data collection effort;
- Develop and implement a plan to train all local programs in data collection method and use of new CASA Tracker fields;
- Follow progress of NCASA's data and performance evaluation work with Child Trends and incorporate or implement, if appropriate.
- Continue to look for better ways to collect youth outcomes data, and ways to classify CASA as an evidence based practice (i.e. control-group based study).

HIGHLIGHTS, 2013-2014

GOAL FOUR: Increase the capacity of local programs to measure CASA effectiveness and impact.

- ✓ **Completed Year two of the CASA Youth Outcomes Data Collection Project**
 - **Increased number of county programs participating** from 6 in year one (Alameda, Orange, Placer, Sacramento, Silicon Valley/Santa Clara, and San Bernardino) by adding 7 additional programs for a total of 13, including Merced, Monterey, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Stanislaus.
 - **Increased numbers of people reached** for the 13 pilot project sites in 2014 to: 3,457 volunteers, 147 staff members, 3,895 children served.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2013-2014

GOAL FOUR: Increase the capacity of local programs to measure CASA effectiveness and impact.

- ✓ **CASA Tracker is up and running.**
 - This working tool makes it easy for programs to collect and extract data. The reporting function enables programs to run reports on one data point or all, one child or all.
 - The interface includes specific, target questions that measure outcome as opposed to efforts/actions.
 - Once the data begins to show trends, CASA programs will be able to use the information to improve practice, prove up their value, and supply funders and stakeholders with information concerning efficacy of CASA.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2013-2014

GOAL FOUR: Increase the capacity of local programs to measure CASA effectiveness and impact.

- ✓ This project has had the added benefit of **refocusing programs on case management practices.**
- ✓ Has initiated the process of **shifting cultural processes and practices toward the idea that outcomes data matters.**
- ✓ **Kaiser Permanente Northern California** Community Benefit programs responded very favorably to progress so far and **is continuing funding in Year 3.**

HIGHLIGHTS, 2013-2014

GOAL FOUR: Increase the capacity of local programs to measure CASA effectiveness and impact.

- ✓ Survey responses showed that **100% of Year One pilot programs** felt that:
 - the new tool was easier to understand.
 - it seemed as though the new tool provides “more useful, relevant data.”
 - the reporting function made the tool easier to use.

After demonstrating the new reporting tool to a CASA program director, the director exclaimed, “This is amazing. It gives us all the information we want, we don’t have to go through any hoops, and we can sort the data anyway we want. And, the stats page is great!” - Executive Director, CASA Program

GOAL FIVE: Leverage CASA knowledge and expertise to improve public policies that affect children in the foster care system.

Strategies:

- Engage strategically with legislators, targeted groups, and others in the field to advance improved policy and legislation.
- Increase presence in Sacramento to influence policy development and raise awareness of CASA.
- Create systems and tools to effectively engage our programs and volunteers to advocate for the CASA mission to legislators, policy makers, and other key stakeholders.
- Keep the network informed of current information regarding changes in law and policy, as well as trends in child welfare and court improvement that impact the work of CASA programs.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL FIVE: Leverage CASA knowledge and expertise to improve public policies that affect children in the foster care system.

- ✓ **Actively engaged the network in supporting legislation that improves, enhances services for children, youth and young adults.**
- ✓ **Continued to make great progress in forming relationships in the policy arena.**
- ✓ **Supported and advised sponsors of 7 bills, 6 of which have since been passed.**

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL FIVE: Leverage CASA knowledge and expertise to improve public policies that affect children in the foster care system.

- ✓ Instrumental (“behind closed doors”) in **drafting language of AB424**, which clarifies the longstanding law and practice of volunteers representing delinquent youth in court. This bill will go into effect January 1, 2016.
- ✓ Built critical mass necessary to **pass budget bill supporting Dependency Counsel Funding resulting in \$11 million in additional funding.**
 - 96% of CASA programs in California sent in letters of support.
 - OpEd by Pat Bresee appeared in the *San Mateo Daily Journal*.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL FIVE: Leverage CASA knowledge and expertise to improve public policies that affect children in the foster care system.

- ✓ **Supported SB1023** in 2014 and, subsequently, **\$15M in funding** was allocated for up to 10 community college districts to provide additional funds for services in support of postsecondary education for foster youth. CalCASA staff is currently assisting with review of community college grant requests for these funds.
- ✓ **Released legislative update** in March 2015 to all 44 California programs.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL FIVE: Leverage CASA knowledge and expertise to improve public policies that affect children in the foster care system.

- ✓ **Visited Washington, D.C.**, in February 2015, together with NCASA's Ashley Lantz, and met with staff from offices of Rep. Karen Bass, Mike Honda, and Adam Schiff, as well as Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.
 - Thanked members for their leadership and support.
 - Updated them on CASA advocacy throughout the state.
 - Secured their support for increased VAWA and VOCA funding in 2016.
- ✓ **CalCASA CEO appointed as 1 of 13 state directors nationally to serve on the NCASA State Steering Committee**

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL FIVE: Leverage CASA knowledge and expertise to improve public policies that affect children in the foster care system.

- ✓ In September 2015, started program training that introduced **strategies for obtaining Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding.**
- ✓ **Created a Growth Plan that includes Policy Outreach and hiring of a new Policy Advocate.**
 - This position is covered for one-year by the NCASA Growth Grant.
 - Have posted a job announcement for the new position and are in the process of reviewing resumes. We expect to soon be scheduling interviews.

GOAL SIX: Expand our philosophy and focus within CalCASA to support local CASAs in their creating life-long connections for children and youth.

Strategies:

- Identify and track current permanency practices within the California CASA network.
- Create tools and provide technical assistance to guide local CASA program staff and advocates in their work to establish permanency for youth (e.g. concurrent planning, contact with important people, family finding, relative placements, etc.)
- Support and expand local CASA program involvement in, or advocacy for, Family Finding and Engagement efforts.
- Educate CalCASA staff on policies and best practices regarding permanency efforts.
- Advocate for increased permanency for youth, including in legislation, policy, and in policy forums (e.g. Child Welfare Council).

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL SIX: Expand our philosophy and focus within CalCASA to support local CASAs in their creating life-long connections for children and youth.

- ✓ **Responded to inquiries and offered technical assistance on issues related to Permanency and Family Finding.** Actively constructed “important person tree” for foster children and worked to engage these individuals in support of their relative.
- ✓ **Offered presentation at statewide programs E.D. meeting** where programs shared their models and best practices for Family Finding and Engagement.
- ✓ **Populated the online Toolbox** with additional information about Family Finding.

HIGHLIGHTS, 2014-2015

GOAL SIX: Expand our philosophy and focus within CalCASA to support local CASAs in their creating life-long connections for children and youth.

- ✓ CalCASA CEO continued to serve on both the CA. Child Welfare Council (CWC) and the CWC permanency committee.
- ✓ Continued presence on National CASA policy committee.

THANK YOU

Together we have made great strides in this, our second year, toward achieving our five-year vision.