



March 17, 2020

Dear friends and colleagues,

Every day, we learn more about the international Coronavirus pandemic and the profound implications it is having – and will have – on our day-to-day lives here in California. For those of us working on behalf of our state’s children in foster care, we face a mounting challenge to ensure that we are doing all we can for our staff members, for our CASAs, and especially for the children who depend on our volunteers. First of all, I want to remind you of the importance of taking care of yourself as you are caring for your own family, leading your CASA program, and striving to take care of your staff and volunteers. Please take time to step outside, take a nature walk, ride a bike, eat well, and get enough sleep! And, of course, follow all the CDC rules of keeping your hands clean, don’t touch your face, disinfect surfaces, and so forth. We care about you, and we’re here for you.

You are likely being deluged daily with email messages about COVID-19, and I am sorry to add to that flood. But there are several key issues of interest to many of you, and thus I wanted to reach out on behalf of California CASA.

We are going to schedule hour-long regional phone conference calls next week. We wanted to offer a chance for all of you to ask each other questions, ask us questions, and share your experiences. If you can’t make the call time for your region, feel free to call in at another slot. We will be sending out Outlook invitations with the call-in details for the conference call.

Monday, March 23, 2020

9:30-10:30am	Far North Region
11:00am-12:00pm	North
1:00-2:00pm	Central
2:30-3:30pm	Southern

If you are too busy on Monday, please know that we’ll have future opportunities. And you can always reach out to our staff at any time.

One thing is abundantly clear: for the near future, meetings at all our organizations will most likely need to be “virtual” rather than “actual.” That could include your Board or committee meetings, staff meetings, CASA information sessions, CASA interviews, and CASA training.

While every program will handle this differently, we would like to make an offer to you: California CASA will pay for a one-year Zoom Pro Subscription or other Web Conferencing system. You can purchase it through TechSoup: [TechSoup Zoom Pro Subscription](#). You’ll need to sign up yourself, but if you send us the receipt for the \$65 annual cost charged by TechSoup, as well as the \$74.95 per host cost charged by Zoom, CA CASA will reimburse you up to \$250 per program. If you have already signed up for a subscription to Zoom or another system, send us the receipt and we will also reimburse you. For questions, you can reach out to Joan Reilly (JReilly@californiacasa.org). All receipts should be sent via email to expenses@californiacasa.org.



Webinars: We will also be presenting a number of upcoming CA CASA webinars, including three dedicated to setting up a **Virtual Workspace** (on March 25, 2020, from 12:00pm-1:00pm, April 8, 2020, from 12:00pm-1:00pm, and April 22, 2020, from 12:00pm-1:00pm). Additionally, there will be a webinar on **Financial Crisis Management** (date and time to be announced). If there is another topic you'd like us to cover, please contact Teresa Romney, our Chief Program Director (TRomney@californiacasa.org).

VOCA funding: Some of you may be wondering about the status of VOCA during this crisis period. I reached out to Nicole Holm, and just received this response:

Hi Sharon – we are doing well. We are still operational and able to assist our Subrecipients, make payments, etc. Although there may be a delay in services that are provided, or a different method in which services are provided, the current situation is not going to impact payments to our Subrecipients. Depending on their situations, if they are still incurring operational and/or personnel costs, they can still submit those for reimbursement. I hope that helps. If you have additional questions or need to discuss further, please let me know.

Nicole Holm, Chief, Children's Unit |Office of Grants Management, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

California CASA is here for just one purpose: to provide support to you—the 44 local CASA programs that comprise our state network. While we wish we could wave a magic wand and return everything to normal, we can't do that. But we can serve as an "information hub" of sorts while we all hunker down and follow the federal and state guidelines.

I hope you can join our call on Monday, but in the meantime, please be well, and stay in touch,

Sharon M. Lawrence, Esq.
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