

**Annual Report of  
Maryland's CASA Programs  
July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008**

*Submitted by  
Maryland CASA Association  
to the State of Maryland --  
Administrative Office of the Courts*



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

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**MARYLAND CASA ASSOCIATION**

**Section I: Program Statistics and Operations  
Budget and Staffing**

There were fourteen Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs in operation in the State of Maryland in Fiscal Year 2008. No new programs started during this fiscal year but one program, CASA of Southern Maryland, expanded to a third jurisdiction, Calvert County. CASA of the Lower Shore discontinued service to Wicomico County. These changes resulted in no net gain in the number of jurisdictions served in the state, remaining at 16 of the state's 24 jurisdictions. The list below shows the name of each program, the jurisdiction(s) served, and the date each program began assigning volunteers to children's cases:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Jurisdiction(s)</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
CASA of Montgomery County	Montgomery County	April 1987
CASA of Baltimore City	Baltimore City	August 1988
CASA of Talbot County	Talbot County	August 1990
Court Appointed Special Advocates	Washington County	March 1991
Voices for Children	Howard County	February 1992
CASA of Harford County	Harford County	January 1996
Anne Arundel County CASA	Anne Arundel County	July 1997
CASA of Southern Maryland	St. Mary's County	July 1998
	Charles County	February 2004
	Calvert County	November 2007
CASA Prince George's County	Prince George's County	February 1992 – 1995; December 2001
CASA of Baltimore County	Baltimore County	February 2002
CASA of the Lower Shore	Worcester County	February 2002
	<i>(discontinued service to Wicomico County in July 2008)</i>	
Voices for Children of Carroll County	Carroll County	February 2002
CASA of Frederick County	Frederick County	January 2003
CASA of Caroline	Caroline County	February 2004

Maryland CASA Association, the state organization for CASA, began operations in August 1998. The state organization provides training and technical assistance, fundraising assistance, legislative and policy updates to the local CASA programs, promotes public awareness of CASA, and assists in starting new programs. Twelve of Maryland's fourteen CASA programs, as well as the state organization, operate as private nonprofit organizations (eight operate as independent non-profits and four as part of larger non-profits); one program is fully funded by state and county dollars and one operates within the County health department. The breakdown of public and private funding for Maryland's CASA programs and state organization in Fiscal Year 2008 was as follows:

Public Funding	\$1,906,721
<u>Private Funding</u>	<u>\$1,591,950</u>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$3,498,671</b>

This represents an 8% increase in total funding (20% increase in public funds and 7% increase in private funds) over FY 2007. Per guidelines established by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), state funds for CASA programs that are administered by AOC must be matched dollar for dollar by other public or private funds. Maryland's state and local organizations matched the state funding at a rate of \$1.79 for every state dollar. Maryland's CASA programs and state organization had a collective total of 25 full-time and 36 part-time employees, totaling 47.2 full-time equivalents (FTEs), an increase of 2.6 FTEs over FY 2007.

All of Maryland's CASA programs continued to routinely assign volunteers to Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) cases in FY 08. Two programs also appointed volunteers on a limited basis to delinquency cases. CASA programs assigned volunteers to an average\* of 1.4 children at a time, 0.2 more children than in FY 07. (\*Note: all averages in this report were weighted to take into account the varying number of volunteers and children among the programs.)

Maryland law requires that attorneys be appointed to the cases of all children involved in CINA proceedings. Unless the child is determined not to have considered judgment, the attorney must represent the child's expressed wishes rather than best interest. CASA volunteers are appointed at various stages of the proceedings to gather information for the court and make recommendations based solely on the child's best interest. The breakdown of the types of hearings at which CASA was most often appointed in FY 2008 is as follows:

<b>Type of Hearing at which CASA was Ordered</b>	<b>% of New Cases</b>
Review	42%
Adjudication	34%
Other (Permanency hearing; at request of DSS or child's counsel and ordered by judge with no hearing)	15%

The cases of children newly served in FY 2008 were open in court an average of 20.4 months prior to the court appointing CASA volunteers to the cases. This is three months shorter than the average length of time in FY 2007. This average reflects a delay in appointing CASA to cases in Baltimore City and Prince George's County, jurisdictions with high numbers of new cases and higher lengths of time before appointment of CASA. The average length of time ranged from less than one month in Talbot County, where the court appoints CASA to cases at adjudication, to an average of 56 months in Baltimore City (21 months shorter than in FY 2006). This also reflects the tendency by the courts in some jurisdictions to appoint CASA to older children who have been in foster care for many months, a trend supported by the continuing high percentage of teens served by CASA. We continue to work with the courts to appoint CASA volunteers as early in the proceedings as possible so volunteers may have the greatest impact.

The table below shows who requested the appointment of CASA volunteers in FY 2008:

<b>Individual Requesting CASA Appointment</b>	<b>% of New Cases</b>
Judge/Master	43%
Child's Attorney	33%
Social Worker	19%
Other: Family Services Coordinator; unspecified	4%
Parent's Attorney	2%

The average length of time between a court order appointing CASA to a case and the actual assignment of a volunteer was 4.9 weeks, 2.3 weeks shorter than in FY 2007. This average length of time varied widely among local jurisdictions, ranging from less than one week in St. Mary's, Charles and Calvert Counties, where the court does not order CASA to a case until a volunteer is available for assignment, to 23 weeks in Prince George's County, where CASA is appointed whether or not a volunteer is available.

## **Training**

Maryland's CASA programs provided an average of 33.25 hours of pre-service training in FY 2008, in adherence to the Administrative Office of the Courts' *CASA Rules and Guidelines*, which require a minimum of 30 hours of pre-service training prior to a volunteer's appointment to a case. CASA programs held between one and four pre-service training classes for volunteers during the year and used between 15 and 35 hours of the National CASA Curriculum for CASA volunteers. In addition to pre-service training, CASA volunteers are required to complete 12 hours of in-service training per year. An average of 43% of CASA volunteers completed the required number of in-service training hours in FY 2008, slightly higher than in FY 2007.

Maryland CASA Association hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Maryland CASA Conference for CASA volunteers and staff members from across the state. The conference was held at the Judiciary Education and Conference Center in Annapolis, MD and approximately 80 participants attended.

## **Section II: Volunteer Information**

1,012 volunteers served as Court Appointed Special Advocates for CINA cases statewide in FY 2008. This is a 3% increase over the number of volunteers who served in FY 2007. 35 volunteers served children involved in delinquency proceedings. Ten programs experienced a decrease in the number of active volunteers who served during the fiscal year.

CASA programs collectively assigned 314 new volunteers to their first CINA cases in FY 2008. This is a 14% increase in new volunteer assignments over FY 2007. The number of new volunteer assignments ranged from 0 in Washington County to 66 in Montgomery County. The median increase was 9.5 new volunteer assignments.

819 CASA volunteers reported more than 55,026 hours of service in FY 2008. This reflects an average of 6 hours of service per month to their assigned cases. If we apply that rate to all 1,012 volunteers who were active in FY 2008, we reach a total of 72,864 hours of service. 461 additional individuals volunteered in other capacities to assist their local CASA programs or the state organization, an increase of 45% over FY 2007. These volunteers served as members of Boards of Directors, advisory boards and fundraising committees, as Friends of CASA, web masters, interns, etc. These volunteers contributed more than 9,874 total hours of service during the year, nearly double the number of hours contributed in FY 2007.

CASA volunteers come from all walks of life and range in age from early 20s to over 70. The demographics of the volunteers who served as CASAs in FY 2008 are as follows:

**Age**

21 – 29 years	10%
30 – 39 years	14%
40 – 49 years	23%
50 – 59 years	26%
60 + years	27%

**Gender**

Female	67%
Male	33%

**Education Completed**

High School	8%
Some College	21%
College	39%
Post-Graduate	32%

**Student Status**

Full-time	2%
Part-time	4%
Not a Student	95%

**Employment Status**

Full-time	50%
Part-time	14%
Retired	20%
Unemployed	8%
Other (includes stay-at-home parents)	7%

**Ethnicity**

African American/ Black/African	28%
Asian American	2%
Caucasian	68%
Latino	2%
Native American	0%
Bi-racial	1%
Other	0%

These demographics are similar to those for volunteers who served in FY 2007 with the exception of the percentage of male volunteers, which increased from 14% to 33%. CASA volunteers generally reflect the racial makeup of their respective jurisdictions while our goal is for the volunteer pool to reflect that of the children CASA serves. All volunteers are screened and trained to be culturally competent, and case assignments are made on the basis of each child's best interest.

299 CASA volunteers left their respective programs during FY 2008, 15 fewer than in FY 2007. This reflects the cyclical nature of volunteer organizations, with large numbers of volunteers coming in to the program one year and then, a few years later when they reach the typical volunteer lifespan, a large exodus occurs. Volunteers who left the program served an average of 27 months, four months shorter than those who left in FY 2007 (this does not include Baltimore County's or Calvert County's volunteers' length of service). Length of service ranged from 9 months in Charles County to 66 months in Talbot County. Statewide, 30% of all the volunteers who served during the fiscal year left the program, 2% less than in FY 2007. Percentages ranging from 13% in Wicomico County to 45% in Caroline County. Volunteers left the program for a variety of reasons, including time constraints (24%), employment situation (16%), family needs (11%), health needs (8%), moved from area (8%), and lost interest or pursuing other volunteer work (8%). 9% left involuntarily, 3% left due to burnout or stress and 12% left for other reasons (e.g. death, did not specify, etc.).

**Section III: Children Served**

CASA volunteers served 1,361 children involved in CINA and post-CINA proceedings in FY 2008, including 66 children involved in guardianship cases and 51 in Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) cases. This is 1% higher than the number of children served in FY 2007 (1,347) and reflects a significant increase in the number of guardianship cases (55 in FY 07) and TPR cases (24 in FY 07). Three children adjudicated delinquent and one youth committed to the Developmental Disabilities Administration were served during FY 2008. Baltimore County experienced the largest increase in the number of children served, going from 128 children served in FY 2007 to 155 children in FY 2008, a 21% increase.

The following is a breakdown of demographics for the children served during FY 2008:

**Age**

Birth to 5 years	20%
6 – 11 years	22%
12 – 18	46%
18 +	12%

**Gender**

Female	49%
Male	51%

**Ethnicity**

African American/ Black/African/West Indies	52%
Caucasian	33%
Bi-racial	7%
Latino	5%
Asian American	2%

**Type of Maltreatment**

Neglect	60%
Physical Abuse	16%
Other (e.g. secondary victim, extraordinary needs of child, voluntary placements)	12%
Multiple forms of maltreatment (e.g. physical and sexual abuse)	7%
Sexual Abuse	5%
Mental Injury	<1%

The demographics of the children served in FY 2008 changed only slightly from FY 2007. The percentage of neglect cases increased by 4% and these cases continue to make up well above half of the children served by CASA. The percentage of cases of physical abuse decreased by 4% and the percentage of cases involving multiple forms of maltreatment decreased by 3%, while other types of cases increased by 5%. CASA continues to have very few mental injury cases.

Maryland's fourteen local CASA programs served 404 new CINA children in FY 2008, 21 (5.5%) more children than in FY 2007. The number of new children served by local programs ranged from five in Charles County to 67 children in Montgomery County, with an average of 25 new children served (median = 18.5).

The collective capacity of the CASA programs increased by 4% during FY 2008, as measured by the number of children being served on the last day of the fiscal year compared to the number served on the last day of the prior fiscal year. Changes in individual program capacity ranged from a decrease of 24% (25 children) in Harford County to an increase of 21% (27 children) in Baltimore County. The average change in capacity was an increase of four children.

978 families were involved in the cases of children served in FY 2008, 50 (5%) more than in FY 2007.

CASA volunteers submitted 1,673 reports to the court during FY 2008, 10% more than in FY 2007. The reports contained 7,891 recommendations on behalf of their assigned children, 8% more than in FY 2007. Judges ordered 6,395 (81%) of the recommendations, 5% more than in FY 2007 when 76% of CASA's recommendations were ordered.

### Case Outcomes

402 children's cases closed during FY 2008, ten more cases than in FY 2007 (392). 79% of the cases were closed in court, and CASA was rescinded from the remaining 21% of the cases. This reflects an increase in the percentage of cases closed in court versus cases in which CASA is rescinded but the cases remain open in court. The table below shows the breakdown of case outcomes for the children whose cases closed in court.

<b>Placement at Case Closure</b>	<b>% of Cases Closed in Court</b>	<b>% of All Closed Cases</b>
Returned to Biological Parent/Guardian	46%	36%
Placed with Relative/Guardian (not adopted)	17%	13%
Adopted	14%	11%
Living Independently	13%	10%
Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)	4%	3%
Other: transferred to DJS; detention; incarcerated, death, etc.	3%	1%
TPR Granted/Pending – Living in Pre-Adoptive Home	2%	1%
Runaway/AWOL	2%	1%
Remained in Out-of-Home Care (not APPLA)	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%*</b>	<b>79%</b>

*\*percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.*

The table below shows the placements of children at the time CASA was rescinded from the cases but the cases remained open in court.

<b>Placement at Case Closure</b>	<b>% of Rescinded Cases</b>	<b>% of All Closed Cases</b>
Remained in Out-of-Home Care	49%	10%
Living Independently	13%	3%
TPR Granted/Pending – Living in Pre-Adoptive Home	12%	3%
Placed with Relative/Guardian (not adopted)	10%	2%
Other (APPLA, transferred to another jurisdiction, etc.)	7%	2%
Returned to Biological Parent/Guardian	5%	1%
Runaway/AWOL	2%	1%
Adopted	1%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%*</b>	<b>22%</b>

*\*percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.*

Children whose cases closed in court had a higher rate of permanency than children in cases from which CASA was rescinded. Overall, 81% of the children whose cases closed in FY 2008 were living in permanent placements or independently at the close of their cases, down slightly from 84% in FY 2007. 13% of the children whose cases closed remained in non-permanent living arrangements, the same as in FY 2007, and 4% were in alternative planned, permanent living arrangements (APPLA), up slightly from FY 2007. The outcomes of all cases closed during FY 2008 are as follows:

<b>Placement at Close of Case</b>	<b>% of Closed Cases</b>
Returned to Biological Parent/Guardian	37%
Placed with Relative or Guardian (not adopted)	15%
Adopted	11%
Living Independently	13%
TPR Granted/Pending; Living in Pre-Adoptive Home	4%
Remained in Out-of-Home Care	11%
Runaway/AWOL	2%
Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)	4%
Other Non-Permanent Placement: Transferred to DJS, transferred to another jurisdiction, detention/incarceration, death	3%

The average length of time spent in foster care among the 402 children whose cases closed in FY 2008, and for whom this information was provided (does not include Baltimore and Talbot Counties), was 39 months, down slightly from FY 2007. The average length of time in foster care among the programs ranged from 15 months in Harford County to 70 months in Baltimore City. CASA volunteers were assigned for an average of 20 months to cases that closed in FY 2008, six months longer than in FY 2007.

Maryland's CASA programs were collectively serving 1,006 children adjudicated CINA on 6/30/08, 38 (4%) more than on 6/30/07. This is approximately 10.5% of the estimated 10,122

CINAs on that day in the sixteen jurisdictions in which CASA operates, up slightly from last year. Individual program percentages ranged from 3% in Baltimore City to 100% in Talbot County (median = 24%).