

**Annual Report of  
Maryland's CASA Programs  
July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010**

*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 fifteen Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs in operation in the State of Maryland in Fiscal Year 2010. There were no new programs started but one program, CASA of Talbot County, launched a pilot expansion to neighboring Dorchester County, increasing the number of jurisdictions served to 19 of the state’s twenty-four 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
	Dorchester County	January 2010
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
CASA of Queen Anne’s & Kent Counties	Queen Anne’s County	January 2009
	Kent County	June 2009

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. Thirteen of Maryland’s fifteen 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 2010 was as follows:

Public Funding	\$2,186,668
Private Funding	\$1,955,674
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$4,142,342</b>

Per guidelines established by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), state funds for CASA programs that are administered by the AOC must be matched dollar-for-dollar with other public or private funds. Maryland's state and local organizations matched the state funding at a rate of \$1.75 for every state dollar. Maryland's CASA programs and state organization had a collective total of 27 full-time and 43 part-time employees, totaling 49.3 full-time equivalents (FTEs), a decrease of 2.8 FTEs from FY 2009.

All of Maryland's CASA programs continued to routinely assign volunteers to Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) cases in FY 2010. Three programs also appointed volunteers on a limited basis to delinquency cases. CASA programs assigned volunteers to an average\* of 1.3 children at a time, slightly lower than in FY 09. (\*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 2010 is as follows:

<b>Type of Hearing at which CASA was Ordered</b>	<b>% of New Cases</b>
Review	57%
Adjudication	35%
Shelter	4%
Other (Permanency hearing; at request of DSS or child's counsel and ordered by judge with no hearing)	4%

The percentage of cases to which CASA was appointed at a review hearing increased by 5%, from 52% to 57%, continuing an upward trend in the percentage of cases in which CASA is appointed well into the life of the case. The percentage of cases to which CASA was appointed at the shelter care hearing dropped significantly, from 11% to 4% and the percentage of cases to which CASA is appointed at permanency hearings or without a hearing at the request of DSS or child's counsel dropped from 8% to 4%. The percentage appointed at adjudication increased only slightly from FY 2009 to FY 2010. This continues to be concerning given CASA's efforts to encourage the courts to appoint CASA volunteers earlier in the court process. The cases of children newly served in FY 2010 were open in court an average of 19.9 months prior to the court appointing CASA volunteers to the cases, 3.2 months longer than the average length of time in FY 2009.

The table below shows who requested the appointment of CASA volunteers in FY 2010:

<b>Individual Requesting CASA Appointment</b>	<b>% of New Cases</b>
Judge/Master	54%
Attorney	22%
Social Service Agency	21%
Other	3%

The figures above reflect a 13% increase in new cases to which the judge or master initiates the appointment of a CASA volunteer. The percentage of cases for which an attorney (child's or parent's) requests a CASA volunteer dropped by 12%. The percentage of cases for which CASA volunteers were requested by a social worker or other professional remained about the same. The average length of time between a court order appointing CASA to a case and the actual assignment of a volunteer was 6 weeks, slightly longer than 4.3 weeks in FY 2009. This average length of time varied widely among local jurisdictions, ranging from 0 weeks in Talbot County to 30 weeks in Prince George's County (the average for which increased by 12 weeks).

## **Training**

Maryland's CASA programs provided between 30 and 42 hours of pre-service training in FY 2010, 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 used between 15 and 30 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 26% of CASA volunteers completed the required number of in-service training hours in FY 2009, down from 42% in FY 2009.

Maryland CASA Association hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Maryland CASA Conference for CASA volunteers and staff members from across the state. The conference was held at Judiciary Education & Conference Center in Annapolis, MD and approximately 140 participants attended.

## **Section II: Volunteer Information**

1,243 volunteers served as Court Appointed Special Advocates for CINA cases statewide in FY 2010. This is a 6.3% increase over the number of volunteers that served in FY 2009. Montgomery County experienced the greatest gain in capacity, with an increase of 27 volunteers to its capacity.

CASA programs collectively assigned 337 389 new volunteers to their first CINA cases in FY 2009, 13% fewer than in FY 2009 and reverses an upward trend in the number of new volunteer assignments over the past two years. The average number of new volunteer assignments was 20 and ranged from 0 in Washington County to 89 in Montgomery County. The median increase was 13 new volunteer assignments during the year.

A snapshot approach was used in calculating volunteer service hours in FY 2009. 902 CASA volunteers reported more than 3,458 hours of service for the month of October, 2008. This translates to 3.8 hours per volunteer per month and, when multiplied by the average number of volunteers that served during the year, gives an estimate of 44,023 hours. 227 additional individuals volunteered in other capacities to assist their local CASA programs and the state organization, serving as members of Boards of Directors, advisory boards and fundraising committees, as Friends of CASA, web masters, interns, etc. These volunteers contributed more than 12,702 total hours of service during the year.

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 2010 are as follows:

**Age**

21 – 29 years	10%
30 – 39 years	13%
40 – 49 years	21%
50 – 59 years	29%
60 + years	27%

**Gender**

Female	59%
Male	41%

**Education Completed**

High School	9%
Some College	20%
College	38%
Post-Graduate	33%

**Student Status**

Full-time	2%
Part-time	3%
Not a Student	95%

**Employment Status**

Full-time	45%
Part-time	15%
Retired	21%
Unemployed	9%
Other (includes stay-at-home parents)	10%

**Ethnicity**

African American/ Black/African	27%
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 2009 with the exception of a significant increase in the percentage of male volunteers, from 29% in FY 2009 to 41% in FY 2010. 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.

312 CASA volunteers left their respective programs during FY 2010, 44 (16%) more than in FY 2009. Volunteers who left the program served an average of 26 months, four months longer than those who left in FY 2009 (this does not include Harford County's volunteer length of service). Length of service ranged from an average of 10 months in Anne Arundel County to 61 months in Caroline County. Statewide, 26% of all the volunteers who served during the fiscal year left the program, 3% more than in FY 2009, with percentages ranging from 4% in Washington County to 41% in Carroll County. Volunteers left the program for a variety of reasons, including time constraints (18%), family needs (12%), employment situation (10%), health needs (8%), moved from area (10%), lost interest or pursuing other volunteer work (8%), due to burnout or stress (4%) and due to frustration with the system (1%). 14% left involuntarily and 15% left for other reasons (e.g. death, did not specify, lack of case to assign to, etc.). This breakdown is similar to prior years although there is a slight increase in the percentage of volunteers who left due to burnout, stress, frustration as well as volunteers who did not specify a reason for leaving.

**Section III: Children Served**

CASA volunteers served 1,475 children in FY 2010, 45 (3%) more children than in FY 2009. This included 78 guardianship cases, 61 children in Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) cases, 7 shelter cases, 12 delinquent children, and 3 other post-CINA cases.

The following is a breakdown of demographics for the children served during FY 2010:

**Age**

Birth to 5 years	17 19%
6 – 11 years	23 25%
12 – 18	46 45%
18 +	14 11%

**Gender**

Female	51 48%
Male	49 52%

**Ethnicity**

African American/ Black/African/West Indies	50 52%
Caucasian	34%
Bi-racial	8 7%
Latino	6%
Asian American	1%

**Type of Maltreatment**

Neglect	53%
Physical Abuse	13%
Other (e.g. secondary victim, extraordinary needs of child, voluntary placements)	5%
Multiple forms of maltreatment (e.g. physical and sexual abuse)	15%
Sexual Abuse	6%
Mental Injury	4%
Other (drug-exposed newborn, abandoned, etc.)	2%

The demographics of the children served in FY 2010 reflect an increase in older children and teens served during FY 2010 than in FY 2009. Slightly more females were served in FY 2010 than in FY 2009 and slightly fewer African American, Black, etc. children were served. The percentage of neglect cases dropped by 6%, physical abuse by 3% and other types of maltreatment dropped by 5% while the number of cases involving multiple forms of maltreatment more than doubled, as did the percentage of mental injury cases. The number of sexual abuse and other cases (drug-exposed newborns, abandoned, etc.) remained the same as in FY 2009.

Maryland's fifteen local CASA programs served 432 461 new CINA children in FY 2010, 29 (6%) fewer children than in FY 2009. The number of new children served by local programs ranged from nine in Calvert, Charles and Queen Anne's/Kent Counties to 108 in Montgomery County, with an average of 25 new children served (median = 16) by each program.

The collective capacity of the CASA programs increased by 3% from FY 2009 to FY 2010, 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 37% (10 children) in Charles County to an increase of 36% (10 children) in Talbot/Dorchester County.

1,142 families were involved in the cases of children served in FY 2010, 102 (9.8%) more than in FY 2009.

CASA volunteers submitted 1,750 reports to the court in FY 2010, 226 (15%) more than in FY 2009. The reports contained 8,803 recommendations on behalf of their assigned children, 1,342 (18%) more than in FY 2009. Judges ordered 7,240 (82%) of the recommendations, 2% more than in FY 2009.

### Case Outcomes

434 children's cases closed in FY 2010, 40 (10%) more than in FY 2009 (394). 75% of the cases were closed in court, 12% fewer than in FY 2009, and CASA was rescinded from the remaining 25% of the cases. This reverses a positive trend over the past few years of greater numbers of cases closing in court as opposed to CASA being rescinded from cases that remain open in court. This is particularly true in Southern Maryland, where CASA is rescinded from more cases than close in court.

The table below shows the breakdown of case outcomes for the children whose cases closed in court.

Placement at Case Closure	% of Cases Closed in Court	% of All Closed Cases
Returned to Biological Parent/Guardian	44%	33%
Placed with Relative for adoption	9%	7%
Placed with Relative (not for adoption)	13%	10%
Placed with non-relative for adoption	15%	11%
Placed with non-relative (not for adoption)	2%	2%
Living Independently (no DSS involvement)	11%	8%
Still in out-of-home care	1%	0%
Runaway/AWOL	2%	2%
Other	2%	2%
Other	1%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%*</b>	<b>75%</b>

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

The above figures are similar to the case outcomes for children served in FY 2009 with a slight decrease in the percentage of children returned to their biological parents and guardians.

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>
Returned to biological parent/guardian	8.1%	2.1%
Placed with relative for adoption	2.7%	0.7%
Placed with relative (not for adoption)	2.7%	0.7%
Placed with non-relative for adoption	9.0%	2.3%
Placed with non-relative (not for adoption)	2.7%	0.7%
Living independently (no DSS involvement)	3.6%	0.9%
Still in out-of-home care	45.9%	11.6%
Runaway/AWOL	3.6%	0.9%
Other	21.6%	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%*</b>	<b>25%</b>

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

The outcomes of all cases closed during FY 2010 are as follows:

<b>Placement at Close of Case</b>	<b>% of Closed Cases</b>
Returned to biological parent/guardian	35%
Placed with relative for adoption	7%
Placed with relative (not for adoption)	1%
Placed with non-relative for adoption	13%
Placed with non-relative (not for adoption)	3%
Living independently (no DSS involvement)	9%
Still in out-of-home care	12%
Runaway/AWOL	3%
Other	8%

The average length of time spent in foster care among the 434 children whose cases closed in FY 2010 was 43.3 months, slightly shorter than in FY 2009. The average length of time in foster care among the programs ranged from 7 months in Queen Anne's/Kent Counties to 87 months in Baltimore City. CASA volunteers were assigned for an average of 24.8 months to cases that closed in FY 2010, slightly longer than in FY 2009.

Maryland's CASA programs were collectively serving 1,138 children adjudicated CINA on 6/30/10, 37 (3.4%) more than on 6/30/09. This is approximately 12% of the estimated 9,184 CINAs on that day in the eighteen of the nineteen jurisdictions CASA served in FY 2010 (does not include the number of CINAs in Dorchester County). The average percentage of CINAs served in each jurisdiction is 34% (median = 30.5), with individual program percentages ranging from 2.9% in Baltimore City to 100% in Talbot County (median = 28.5%).