



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

MARYLAND JUDICIAL CENTER
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Pamela Harris
State Court Administrator
410-260-1295

February 1, 2018

Honorable Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr.
President of the Senate
State House, H-107
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Honorable Michael E. Busch
Speaker of the House
State House, H-101
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: Annual Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program Reports
CJ § 3-830(b)(3)(ii)

Dear President and Speaker,

Pursuant to Courts and Judicial Proceedings, § 3-830(b)(3)(ii), please find enclosed the Annual Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program Reports for Fiscal Year 2017.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Franks at (410) 260-1722, or via email at kelly.franks@mdcourts.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Pamela Harris
State Court Administrator

Enc.

Hon. Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr.
Hon. Michael E. Busch
February 1, 2018
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cc: Honorable Mary Ellen Barbera, Chief Judge, Court of Appeals
Honorable Kathleen Gallogly Cox, Chair, Conference of Circuit Judges
Honorable John P. Morrissey, Chief Judge, District Court
Honorable Nicholas E. Rattal, Chair, Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee
Faye Gaskin, Deputy State Court Administrator
Roberta Warnken, Chief Clerk, District Court
Kelley O'Connor, Assistant Administrator, Government Relations
Patrick H. Murray, Chief of Staff, Senate President
Alexandra Hughes, Chief of Staff, House Speaker
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Maryland Judiciary

FY17 Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Data Summary



Administrative Office of the Courts
January 2018

This report is being issued by the Administrative Office of the Courts' (AOC) Department of Juvenile and Family Services (DJFS) pursuant to Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article §3-830(b)(3)(ii). This report was prepared by Kelly Franks, Family Services Program and Policy Manager and Jovonne Lewis, Family and Court Programs Evaluation Manager using data provided by the individual programs.

For more information, please contact Kelly Franks at 410.260.1722 or Kelly.Franks@MDCourts.gov.

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I. Overview

The Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program operates in Maryland subject to Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, §3-830. The Annotated Code of Maryland states that the role of the Court-Appointed Special Advocate is to:

- (1) Provide the court with background information to aid the court in making decisions in the child's best interest; and
- (2) Ensure that the child is provided appropriate case planning and services.

The CASA volunteer is considered a friend of the court and is appointed at the judge's discretion to represent the child's best interests.

II. Program Operations

A. Counties Served

There were fifteen (15) CASA programs active in Maryland in fiscal year 2017. These programs serve 21 counties. Only Somerset, Wicomico, and Garrett counties do not currently have CASA programs. The programs and counties served are as follows:

Programs by Service Area and Start Date

Programs (<i>Official Names</i>)	County/Countries Served	Start Date
CASA of Montgomery County	Montgomery	1987
CASA of Baltimore City	Baltimore City	1988
CASA of the Mid-Shore (formerly known as <i>CASA of Talbot and CASA of Queen Anne's & Kent</i>) (<i>CASA of Talbot began serving children in in Dorchester in 2010. In 2014, the program expanded to serve children in Queen Anne's and Kent.</i>)	Talbot Kent Queen Anne's Dorchester	1990 2009 2009 2010
Court-Appointed Special Advocates of Washington County	Washington	1991
Voices for Children of Howard County	Howard	1992
CASA of Harford County	Harford	1996
Anne Arundel County CASA	Anne Arundel	1997
CASA of Southern Maryland	St. Mary's Charles Calvert	1998 2004 2007
CASA of Prince George's County	Prince George's	1992-1995 2001
CASA of Baltimore County	Baltimore County	2002
CASA of the Lower Shore	Worcester Wicomico	2002 2002-2008

Programs by Service Area and Start Date (Continued)

Programs (Official Names)	County/Counties Served	Start Date
CASA of Frederick and Voices for Children of Carroll County <i>(Became one program under the Frederick County Mental Health Association in 2011)</i>	Carroll Frederick	2002 2003
CASA of Caroline	Caroline	2004
Allegany County CASA	Allegany	2013
CASA of Cecil County	Cecil	2015

B. Funding Sources

All CASA programs were funded by the Maryland Judiciary in FY17. Every grantee is required to match 100% of the funds awarded.

Other support for the programs comes from a variety of sources and varies depending on the type of program. Some programs are independent non-profits and others are programs within larger non-profit organizations.

a.) Program Funding (Public Sources): **63.7%**

27.9% AOC-DJFS CASA Grants

19.8% Victims of Crime Assistance Act (VOCA) funding through Governor's Office on Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP)

8.8% County/City

7.2% Other Public Sources (Foster Care Court Improvement Program, Children's Justice Act Committee)

b.) Program Funding (Non-Public Sources): **36.3%**

13.5% Foundations/Grants

14% Special Events

3.7% Individual Contributions

1.7% United Way/CFC/MD Charity Campaign, etc.

1.1% Other Private Sources

.9% National CASA

.8% Corporate Contributions

.4% Product Sales & Other Fundraising Activities

.2% Groups or Organizations

C. Staffing

Grant funding supports the partial salary and/or fringe costs of fifty-five (55) positions within the CASA programs.

- a.) Total Positions: 76
 Full Time: 41 Part Time: 35

- b.) Total Positions Supervising Volunteers: 52
 Full Time: 25 Part Time: 27

III. Program Activities

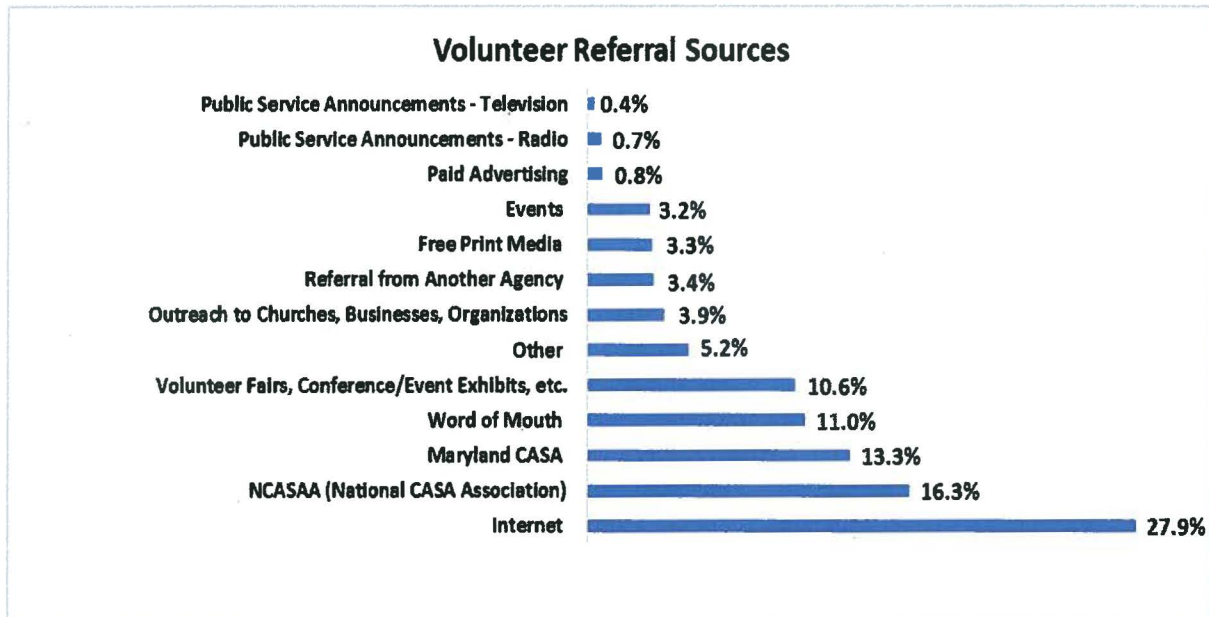
A. Volunteers

1. Recruitment

a. Volunteer Inquiries Received: 2,076*

**Inquiries have declined in recent years as programs developed more informative websites. People generally visit the program's website before inquiring directly.*

Approximately 30 percent of volunteers were referred to their local CASA program by the National CASA Association (NCASAA) or the Maryland CASA Association, and about 28% reached their local CASA program through internet resources. These resources include the program websites as well as sites such as VolunteerMatch.org. Overall, the referral sources were as follows:



b. Volunteer Applications Received: 833

Of the total volunteer inquiries, 40% resulted in an application being submitted.

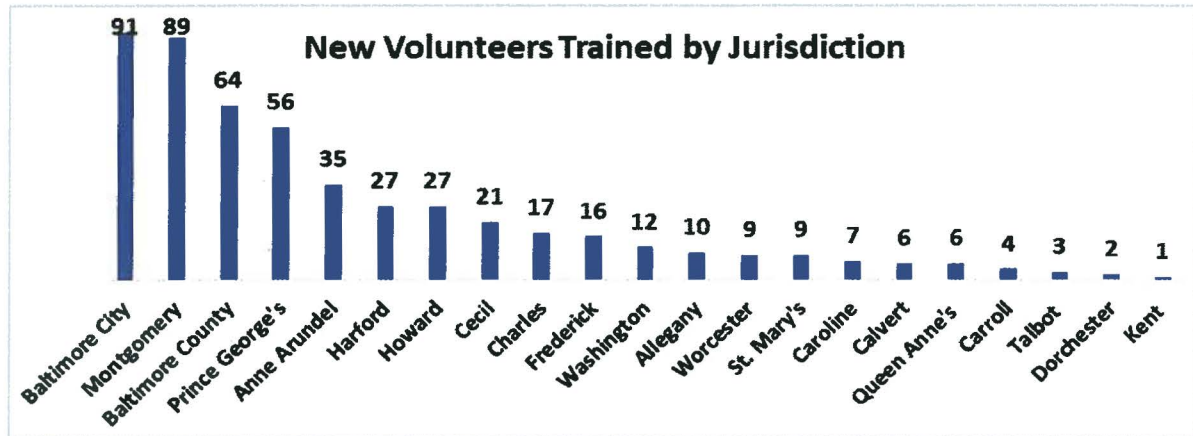
c. Prospective Volunteers Interviewed: 660

Of the total submitted volunteer applications, 79% resulted in an interview.

2. Training

a. Pre-Service Training: 512 new volunteers trained

The 512 newly trained volunteers represent 78% of volunteers who were interviewed. Some volunteers are screened-out through the interview process, and for others, the timing of the training is not feasible. New volunteers trained by jurisdiction were as follows:



b. In-Service Training (Continuing Education)

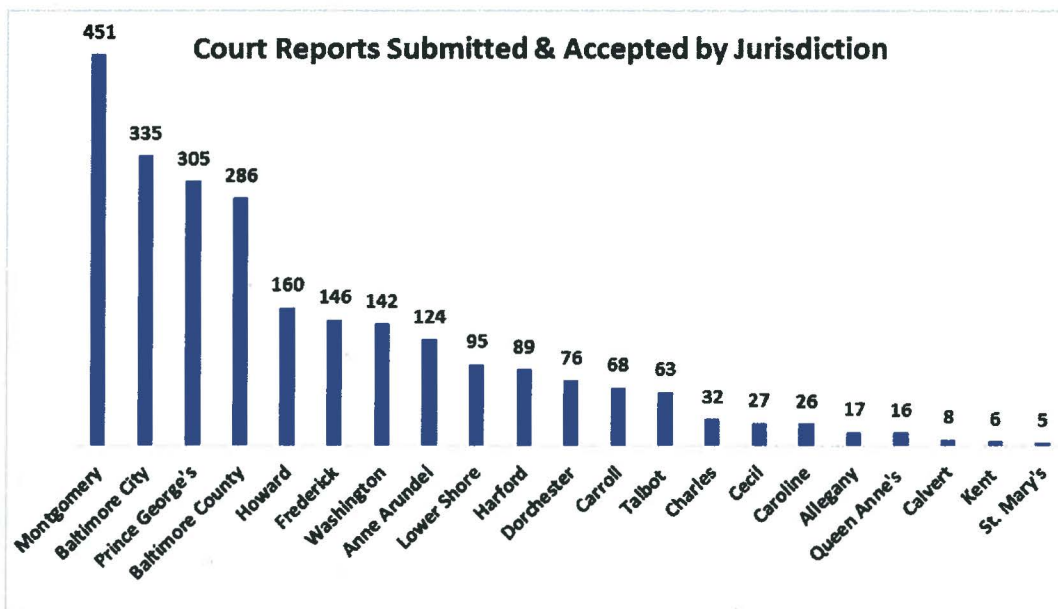
CASA programs provided 729 hours of ongoing training to active volunteers. Approximately 170.5 hours of that training (23%) were focused on increasing cultural competence of volunteers. Statewide, each volunteer advocate participated in an average of 8.6 hours of ongoing, continuing education training.

3. Advocacy

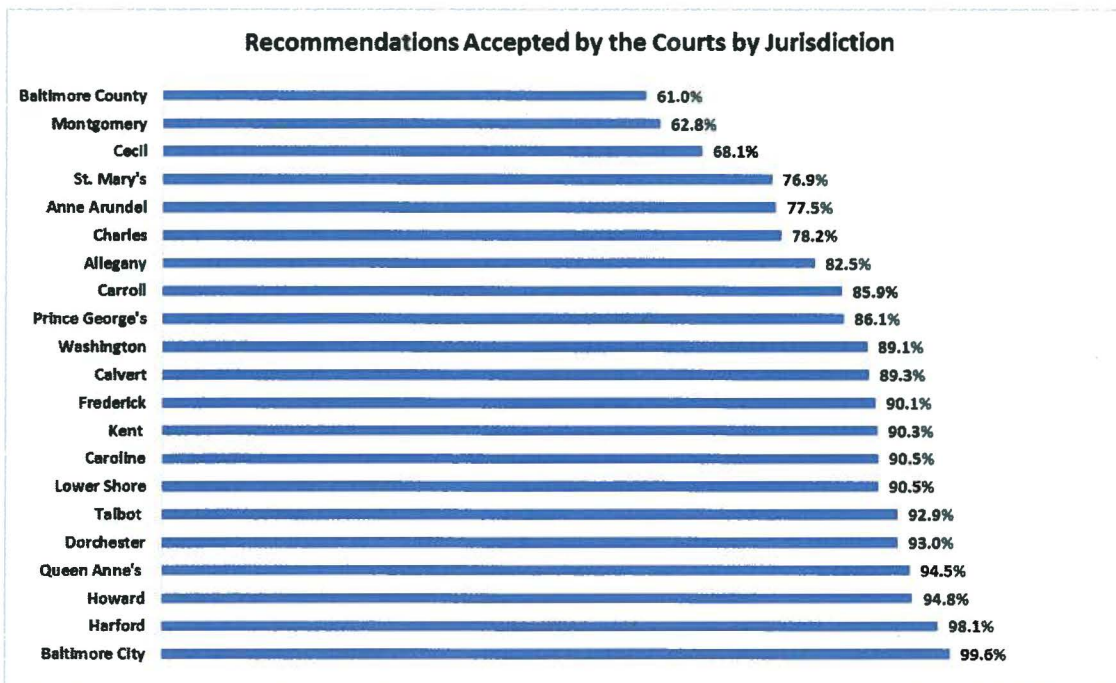
CASA volunteers advocate in court for the best interest of the children they are assigned to serve. To inform this advocacy, CASA volunteers visit regularly with their assigned child and meet with family members and professionals involved in the child's life (social workers, therapists, teachers, etc.). With the support of the program, the CASA prepares a report which provides the court with information about the child and recommendations regarding the child's needs and future placement.

a. Court Reports Submitted by CASA & Accepted by the Court: 2,477

Court reports with recommendations about the child's needs are submitted at every hearing for the children assigned to the CASA programs.



b. CASA Recommendations Ordered by the Court: 81% (10,113 of 12,409)
 CASA volunteers make recommendations about all issues that impact the child's life. This can include everything ranging from services the child needs to where the child should live.



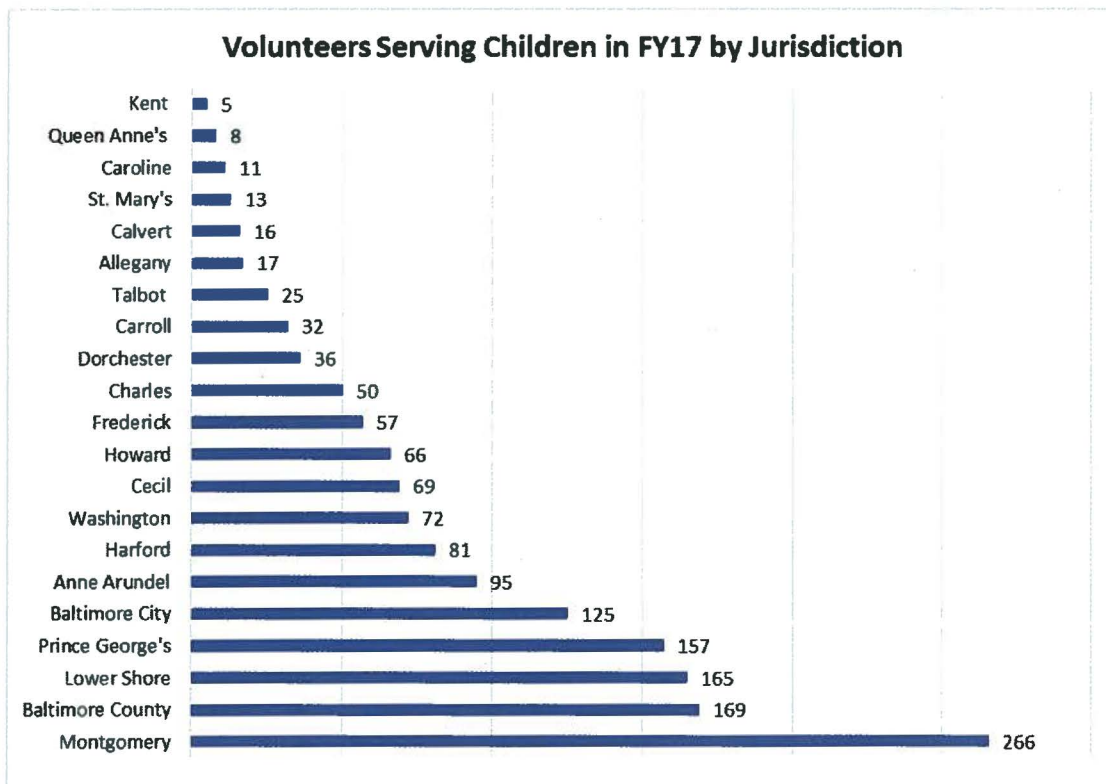
c. Volunteer Attendance at Court: 79% of CASA volunteers attended the hearings for which they prepared a report. This rate is often affected by continuances; a volunteer may appear for the hearing, but be unavailable to attend on the rescheduled date. CASA program staff attend all hearings.

4. Service

A goal of every CASA program is to provide a volunteer for every child who is adjudicated as a child in need of assistance (CINA). In Carroll, Dorchester, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, and Worcester counties, the programs have provided CASA volunteers for nearly all CINA children. There are exceptions in the case of older youth who may choose not to have a CASA and youth who have been placed so far away that assigning a volunteer may not be feasible.

a. Volunteers Serving Children in FY17: 1,535

b. Volunteers Serving Children on the Last Day of FY17: 1,071



5. Volunteer Demographics

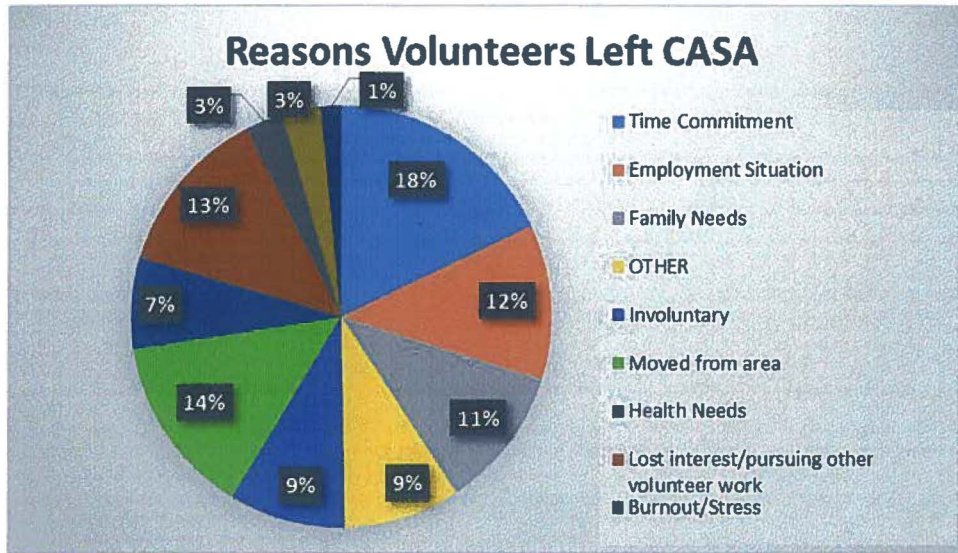
Gender		
Male	218	16.7%
Female	1091	83.3%
Age		
21-29	161	12.3%
30-39	202	15.4%
40-49	248	19.0%
50-59	299	22.9%
60 + above	398	30.4%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian / Alaska Native	2	0.2%
Asian / Asian American	24	1.8%
Black / African American	355	27.1%
Hispanic / Latino	37	2.8%
Indian	2	0.2%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	2	0.2%
White	828	63.3%
Two or more races	55	4.2%
Other: Input	4	0.3%
Education		
High School/GED	93	7.1%
Some College	171	13.1%
College	482	37.0%
Post-Grad	466	35.8%
Unknown	85	6.5%
Other	4	0.3%
Employment Status		
Full-time	636	48.6%
Part-time	193	14.7%
Retired	290	22.2%
Unemployed	124	9.5%
Unknown	41	3.1%
Other	25	1.9%

6. Retention/Attrition

Although it is the goal of all CASA programs to have volunteers that will serve their assigned child for the entire length of the child's stay in foster care, CASA volunteers are only required to agree to serve their assigned child for a minimum of one year.

a. Volunteers Who Left Their Program: 325

b. Average Length of Time of Service in Months (*volunteers who left*): 31.2 months

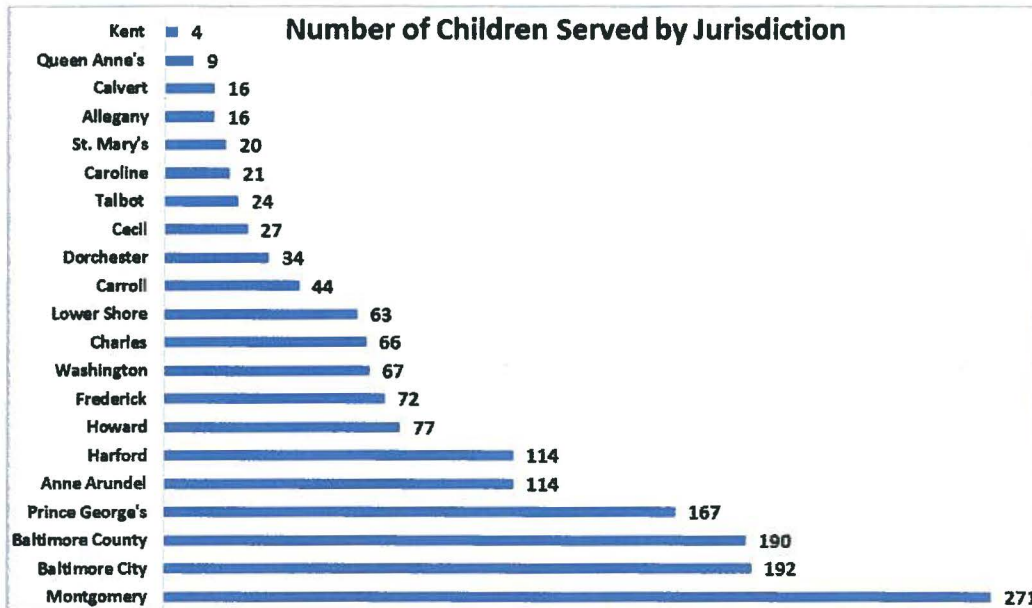


B. Children

There were nearly 4,000 children in foster care in Maryland in FY17. About 41% of these children received the benefit of CASA advocacy.

1. Children Served by a Volunteer Advocate in FY17: 1,655

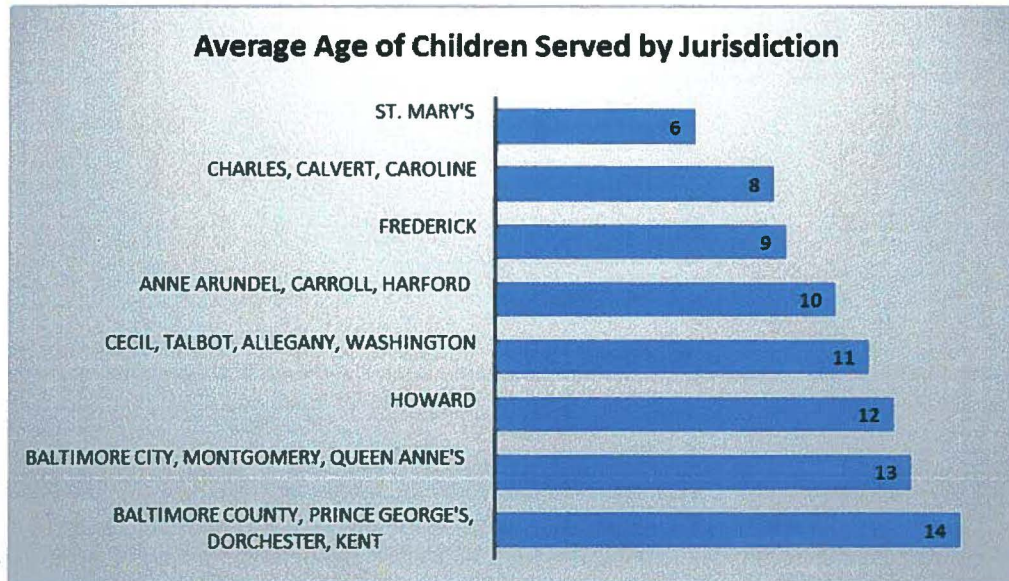
2. Children Being Served by a Volunteer on the Last Day of FY17: 1,219



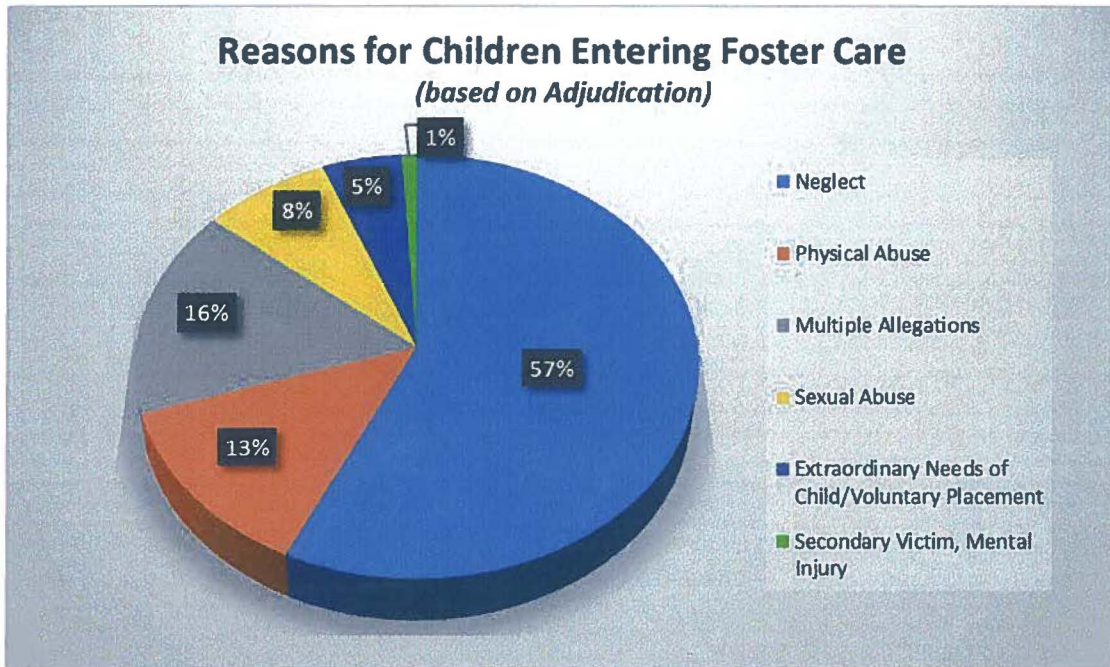
3. Details about Children Served in FY17

a. Demographics

Gender		
Male	771	49.6%
Female	782	50.4%
Age		
Birth to 5	356	22.9%
6 to 11	326	21.0%
12 to 17	577	37.2%
18 +	294	18.9%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian / Alaska Native	1	0.1%
Asian / Asian American	15	1.0%
Black / African American	661	42.6%
Hispanic / Latino	137	8.8%
Indian	0	0.0%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	1	0.1%
White	545	35.1%
Two or more races	192	12.4%
Other	1	0.1%



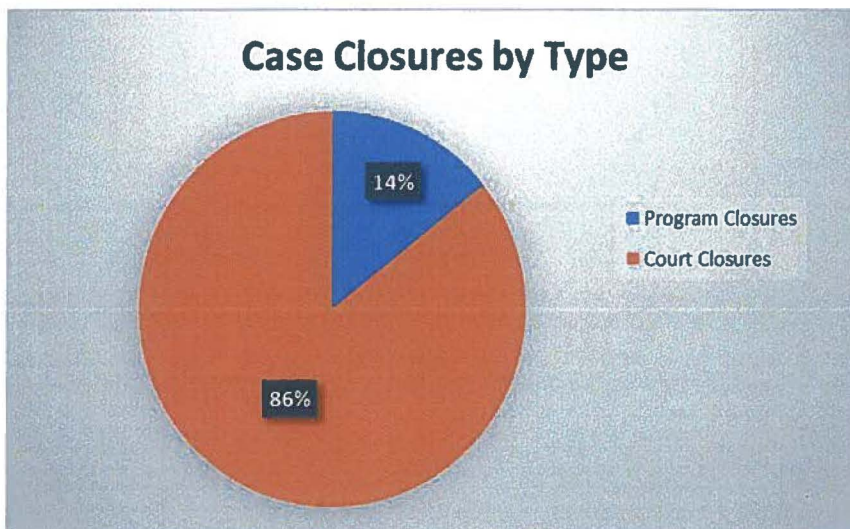
b. Reasons for Entering Care



**Neglect includes abandonment, and educational/medical/physical neglect.*

2. Case Closures

CASA programs closed 429 cases in FY17. Of those, 368 cases were closed by the court and 61 cases were closed by the programs but remained open in court.



A program closure may occur for a variety of reasons. Examples include: an older child who does not want a CASA, a child who is inaccessible to the volunteer due to placement location or runaway status, or a child who is in a stable permanent placement and is no longer in need of CASA advocacy.

a. Time Spent in Foster Care

The amount of time children spend in foster care before finding a permanent home, or aging-out of the system varies from county to county.

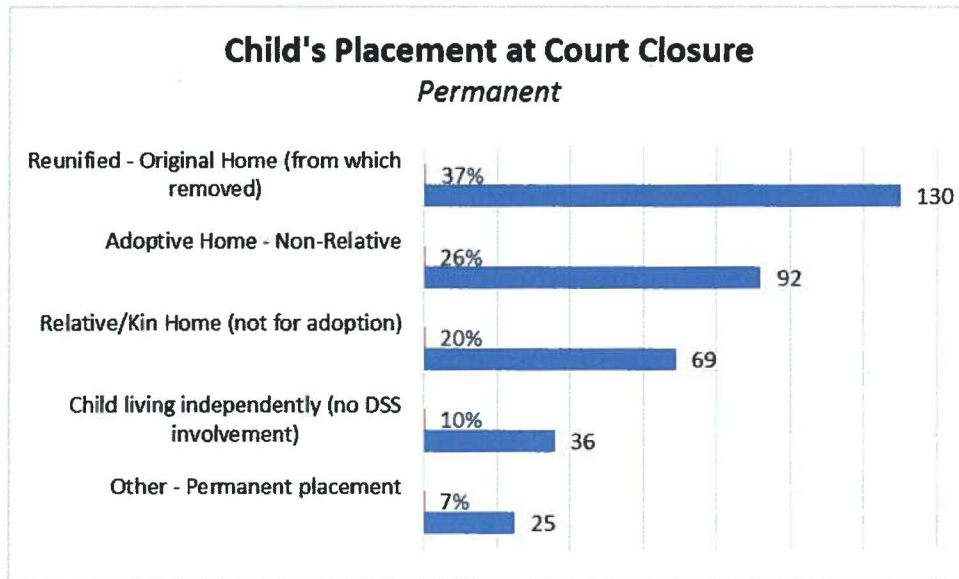
Average Length of Time in Foster Care for Cases Closed by the Court

Jurisdiction	Months
Baltimore County	59
Baltimore City	44
Montgomery	39
Cecil	37
Prince George's	33
Talbot	32
Harford	29
Kent	28
Howard	27
Frederick	25
Dorchester	24
Anne Arundel	23
Charles	22
Allegany	21
Queen Anne's	21
Caroline	19
St. Mary's	18
Calvert	17
Carroll	17
Washington	16
Lower Shore (Worcester)	15

b. Placement at Court Closure

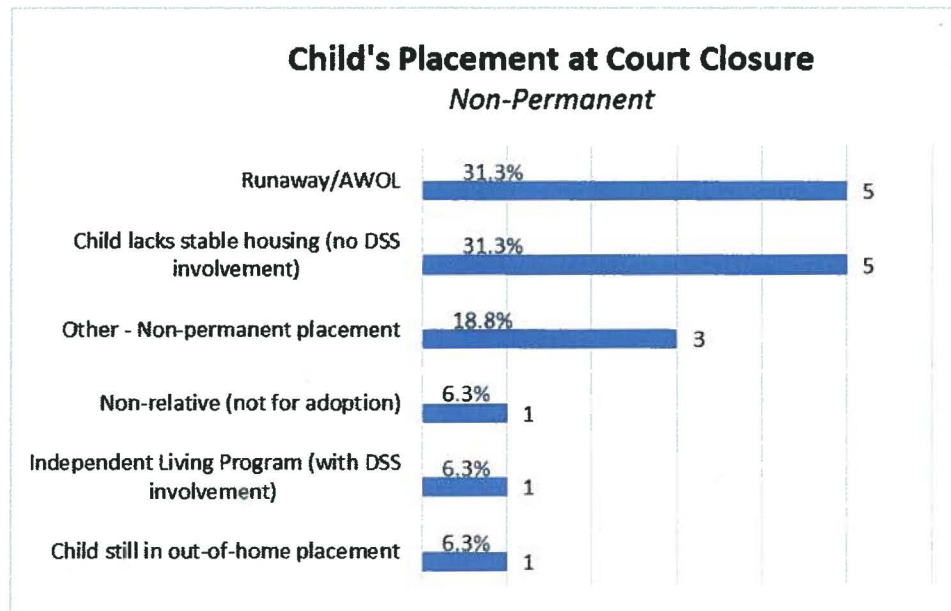
i. Permanent Placements

Of the 368 children served by CASA whose cases were closed by the court during FY17, 96% (352) were in a permanent placement at closure. A permanent placement is considered to be any placement that has committed to providing a legal and physical home for the child until adulthood. The majority of children served by CASA, 57%, were reunified with their family, 37% went home to their parent(s) and 20% went to live with other relatives.



ii. Non-Permanent Placements

Of the 368 children served by CASA whose cases were closed by the court during FY17, 4% (16) children were living in a “non-permanent” placement at closure. In 88% of these cases, the child was over the age of 18 and either requested that the court close their case, was not compliant with the Department of Social Services and the Court’s orders, or had been out of contact (on run-away) for a significant amount of time.



c. Impact of the Stage of CASA Appointment on Outcomes

For more than five years, DJFS has been collecting data from CASA programs regarding case closures and stage of case at appointment. Analysis of these data has consistently shown that assigning CASAs early in a child’s case leads to better outcomes. Specifically:

a.) Children who are assigned to CASA before their case reaches the review stage (generally within 6 months of entering care) spend an average of **21.8 fewer months in care** than children who are assigned to CASA during CINA review or permanency planning hearings. **This is a 1 year and nearly 10 month difference.**

b.) Children who are assigned to CASA before their case reaches the review stage (generally within 6 months of entering care) have **fewer placements** than children who are assigned to CASA during review: 2.0 vs. 4.2 and guardianship review: 2.0 vs. 10.3.

DJFS has been working to increase awareness of the benefits of appointing CASA earlier in a child’s case. As the data show, the earlier the child is assigned to CASA, the less time they spend in care and the fewer placements they experience. Over the past five years, CASA has gradually been assigned earlier and earlier. In FY12, only 44% of closed cases had been assigned before their case reached the review stage. In FY17, 58% of closed cases had been assigned before review.

