



Virginia Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program

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State CASA Program Coordinator



DCJS

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

Purpose of a CASA Program

CASA programs provide trained community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children who are subjects of juvenile court proceedings involving allegations of abuse and neglect.

CASA History

- First CASA program began in **1977** by a Juvenile Court Judge in Seattle, Washington
- First Virginia program began in **1985** in Roanoke, Virginia
- Virginia CASA legislation was passed in **1990**

Map of Virginia CASA Programs



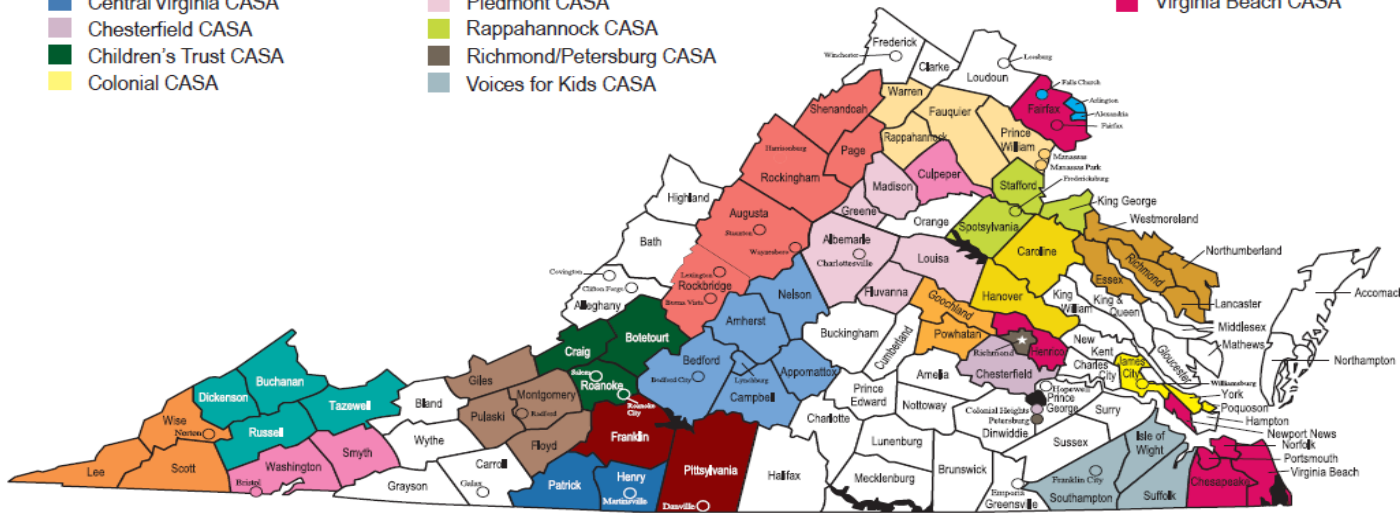
Programs in Virginia

Multi-Jurisdictional Programs

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 28th Judicial District | FOCUS on Youth CASA |
| 29th Judicial District | Franklin County/Pittsylvania County CASA |
| Alexandria/Arlington CASA | Goochland/Powhatan CASA |
| CASA Child Intervention Services | Hanover CASA |
| Blue Ridge CASA for Children | LPOY CASA |
| CASA of the New River Valley | Northern Neck CASA |
| Central Virginia CASA | Piedmont CASA |
| Chesterfield CASA | Rappahannock CASA |
| Children's Trust CASA | Richmond/Petersburg CASA |
| Colonial CASA | Voices for Kids CASA |

Single Jurisdiction Programs

- Chesapeake CASA
- Fairfax CASA
- Henrico CASA
- Newport News CASA
- Norfolk CASA
- Portsmouth CASA
- Virginia Beach CASA



Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

05/2024

Virginia CASA Programs

FY2025

Operational Programs.....	27
Children.....	3,430
Active Volunteers.....	1,419
Volunteer Hours.....	137,770
Value of Volunteer Hours.....	\$4,742,043

Legal Authority to Operate

- Sections § 9.1-151 et seq., of the *Code of Virginia*
- Rules Relating to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (6 VAC 20-160-10 et seq.)

DCJS Responsibilities

- Administer and oversee CASA programs
- Administer grant funding
- Promulgate regulations and ensure compliance
- Establish and oversee a statewide Advisory Committee
- Support training and technical assistance for new and existing CASA programs

Duties of a CASA Volunteer



§ 9.1-153(B) Volunteer court-appointed special advocates; powers and duties; assignment; qualifications; training.

1. Investigating the case to which he is assigned to provide independent factual information to the court.
2. Submitting to the court of a written report of his investigation in compliance with the provisions of § [16.1-274](#). The report may, upon request of the court, include recommendations as to the child's welfare.
3. Monitoring the case to which he is assigned to ensure compliance with the court's orders.
4. Assisting the guardian ad litem appointed to represent the child in providing effective representation of the child's needs and best interests.
5. Reporting a suspected abused or neglected child pursuant to § [63.2-1509](#).

Training Requirements and Volunteer Qualifications

- Training requirements include a minimum of 30 pre-service hours and 12 annual in-service hours
- CASA volunteers must pass rigorous background checks and meet stringent screening requirements

What does a CASA Volunteer do?

- Conducts fact-finding interviews
- Prepares professional reports
- Observes child and family interactions
- Encourages coordination and cooperation
- Builds a relationship with the child
- Provides consistency to the child
- Collects information regarding the **entire** family
- Makes recommendations to the court regarding best interests

What a CASA Volunteer does not do

- Serve as mentors
- Provide direct services
- Conduct Home Studies
- Provide transportation to services
- Share information with anyone other than the GAL without a signed release
- Buy the child gifts
- Provide legal counsel
- Inquire about a precipitating incident of abuse or neglect

CASA Volunteer Impact

- 84% of CASA volunteer recommendations are accepted and incorporated into judicial court orders
- 90% of children had one CASA volunteer throughout the duration of their case



In Virginia, each year, over 55,000 children are reported as victims of abuse.

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