



Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Thank you so much for your interest in volunteering with CASA of Collin County! In this packet, you will find more information about our agency, the requirements and duties involved in serving as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, our application and screening process, and training requirements.

The first step is two-fold. Applicants need to submit an online application at least 10 days prior to the training cycle you are interested in AND attend one of our pre-interview orientations. Both steps are required BEFORE setting up a personal interview. At the orientation, I will pass around a sign-up sheet to schedule an in person, pre-training interview. Your interview must be completed at least 4 days prior to the training cycle. Applications must be submitted via our online application. *We do not accept paper applications or pdf applications.*

As a CASA program, we serve children who have been abused and neglected, to the point of needing to be removed from their families. We are committed to ensuring that every child we serve does not suffer additional harm under our care. This is why we take our screening and training process very seriously, and we hope you do too! Thus, you will find that some of our application and interview questions are personal in nature. This is to ensure that our volunteers can remain objective and are safe and appropriate to work with at-risk children. Furthermore, as a volunteer, you will be paired with a staff supervisor. We use our screening process to get to know volunteers to ensure that we create the most effective volunteer-supervisor teams.

Please note that CASA of Collin County, Inc is an equal opportunity employer. As such, we do not discriminate against any individual, employee, applicant, or volunteer in the fulfillment of employment or volunteer practices on the basis of race, religion, national origin, creed, gender, age, veteran status or disability. CASA of Collin County, Inc. is an “at will employer.”

Should you decide to proceed with becoming a CASA Volunteer, please submit the online application and attend one of our volunteer orientations.

Thank you again, and please reach out if you have any additional questions.

*Lacey Dembicki, LMSW*

Lacey Dembicki

Volunteer Recruiter Coordinator

CASA of Collin County

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# One Voice Makes a Difference.



## Our Children

CASA of Collin County serves 100% of the children from Collin County who have been removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect and placed in the child welfare system. Within 24 hours of a child's removal by CPS from an unsafe home, CASA is appointed as the guardian ad litem for the child. Each of these children, suffering unspeakable abuse and neglect, rely on CASA of Collin County and their Volunteer Advocates to be their voice in court during their journey to find the safe, loving and forever home. These caring volunteers are the "eyes and the ears" of the court, providing impartial recommendations to meet the child's needs throughout the lengthy court process.

## Our Program

- Since 1991, CASA of Collin County has advocated for 9,237 abused and neglected children, providing hope for a brighter future.
- According to national and local study, a foster child with a CASA receives more services, moves through the system more quickly and achieves better outcomes than a child without a CASA. National studies show that a foster child with a CASA is less likely to re-enter the child welfare system.
- We serve 100% of the children from Collin County in foster care.
- In Texas in 2015, 8,476 CASA Volunteer Advocates served 25,947 abused and neglected children. There were 47,348 children in foster care in Texas last year.
- CASA of Collin County is part of 71 CASA programs across Texas and 949 CASA and guardian ad litem programs in 49 states.

## Our Volunteer Advocates

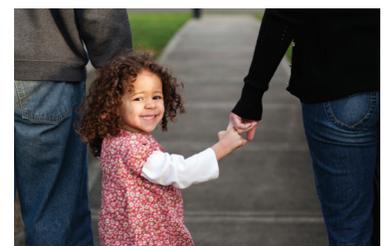
- In 2015, CASA of Collin County served 521 abused or neglected children.
- 209 CASA volunteer advocates committed over 50,000 hours to serve these children, an average of over 20 hours per month.
- 81 new CASA Volunteer Advocates and 14 Helping Hand Volunteers were trained. A Helping Hand is a spouse, significant other or relative that wants to help. Helping Hands can serve in a limited and supporting role for a CASA after the completion of two hours of training and a thorough background screen.
- Average age is 50; 80% are female, 20% are male; 33% work full time.
- CASA is usually the only consistent adult presence in a foster child's life.

## CASA's Impact

- With the help of CASA, 234 children were placed in a permanent and loving home.
- In 2015 it cost, on average, \$2,040 for CASA of Collin County to serve a foster child for an entire year.
- Because CASA provides state mandated services at no cost, CASA saves Collin County tax payers over \$5 Million per year.
- No other social service agency provides the services that CASA offers for severely abused children.



## You Can Make a Difference Too.



CASA OF COLLIN COUNTY

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CASA of Collin County, Inc.  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
Volunteer Job Description

**Purpose of Position:**

1. To recommend to the court, based on fact finding and investigation, the best interest of a child in Child Protective Services placement.
2. To work for and achieve the goal of CASA of Collin County, Inc, that every child has the right to a safe, permanent home to thrive.

**Requirements of Position:**

1. Must be 21 years of age-minimum.
2. If working, secure permission in advance of basic training for time off from work to attend periodic hearings.
3. Complete application for position.
4. Make appointment and come for office interview prior to initial training.
5. Appear before the court to be sworn in as Court Advocate.
6. Monitor court proceedings prior to accepting a case.
7. Appear at all hearings.
8. Attend a minimum of twelve hours of on-going training per year.
9. Sign statement of commitment to serve a minimum of one year.
10. Sign pledge of confidentiality.

**Responsibilities of Position:**

1. Interview all parties, clients, and professionals as well as child(ren) involved in the assigned case.
2. Advocate for the child's best interests in the community by interfacing with health, educational and other community systems to ensure that the child's needs are met.
3. Maintain records of all findings including appointments, interviews, and information about the child and the child's circumstances.
4. Confer with Casework Supervisors or designate on a regular basis at minimum of once each month and prior to any final decisions.
5. Inform Casework Supervisor if there are developments in the case that should be brought before the court immediately. The Casework Supervisor will contact the court through appropriate means determined by the court.
6. Attend all staffings concerning the child(ren).
7. Discuss court reports with Casework Supervisor prior to preparing a report.
8. Prepare court reports 10 days before hearing which contains recommendations for the child and the family.
9. Appear in court as to the child's best interests, testifying when necessary.
10. Visit child(ren) once or twice per month.
11. Monitor the case to ensure court orders are being carried out, that services to the child are being furnished, that placement is appropriate and that hearings are held in accordance with the law.
12. Work for permanency for the child whether the permanence is to be returned to the child's original home or freed for adoption.
13. Return the case file to the appropriate Casework Supervisor once the case is closed.

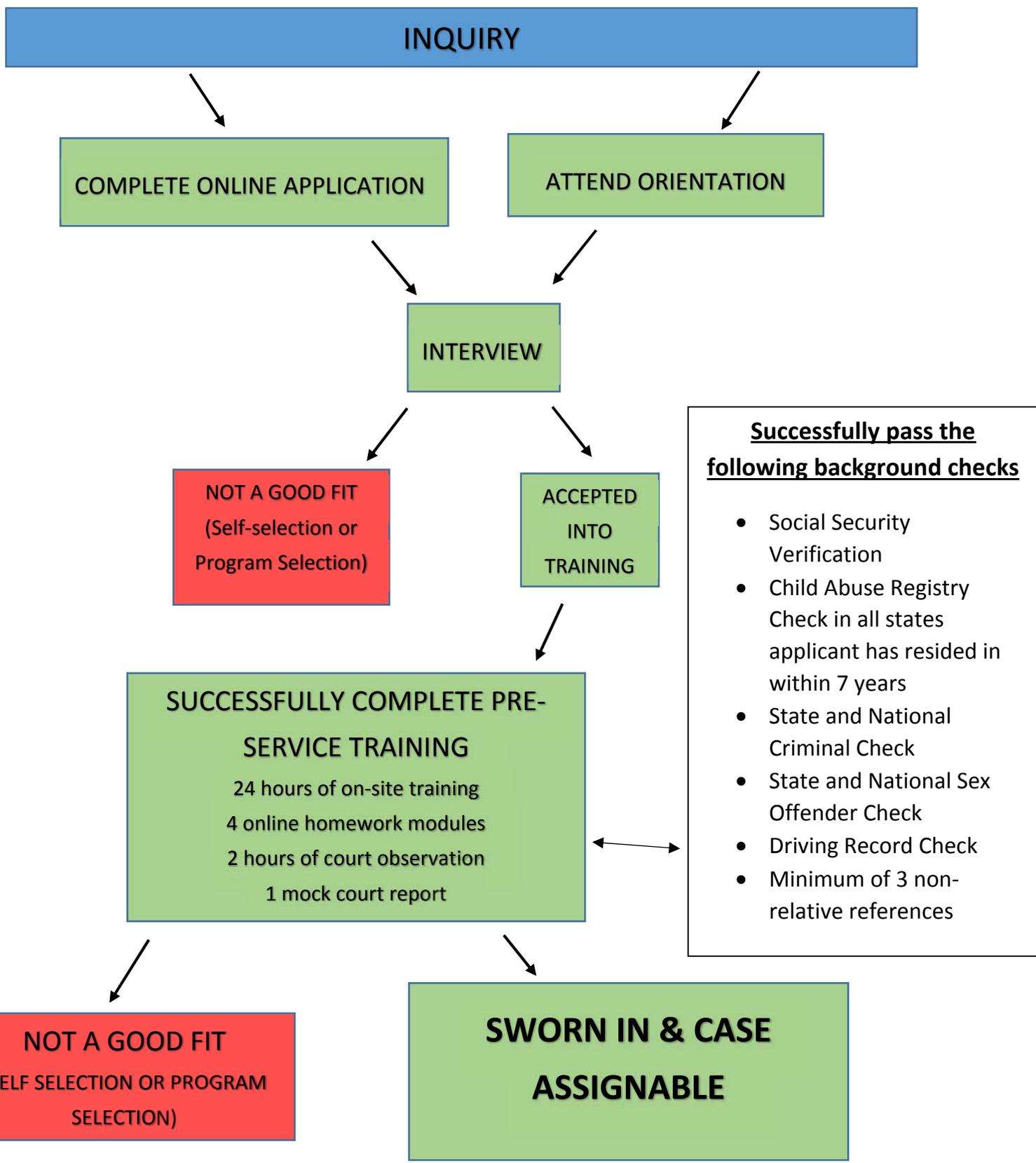
**Qualifications for the Position:**

1. Willingness to work within the guidelines, policies, and standards of CASA of Collin County, Inc.
2. Good human relations skills and the ability to be objective.
3. Must have conviction of the importance of providing for the best interests of children at risk, respecting the child's inherent right to be safe, establish permanence and have the opportunity to thrive.
4. Must be determined to be an individual who ensures that the child's best interest are advocated for in the court at every stage of the case.
5. Must have time, interest, and energy to do the job(an average of 15-20 hours per month.)
6. Must have access to transportation.
7. Must have the ability to stand up for convictions.
8. Must have willingness to receive guidance and direction and work as part of a team.
9. Must be sensitive to cultural/ethnic differences.

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Volunteer Signature

# Volunteer Intake Flowchart





## CASA of Collin County, Inc.

### Training Requirements

#### **Training Requirements**

- a. Completion of our on-site training (about 24 hours), completion of the online homework modules, 2 hours of courtroom observation, and completion of a mock court report..
- b. 12 hours of continuing education per year of CASA service.

Please note that if you do not accept a case within 12 months of going through training, you will have to go through some of the training classes again prior to accepting a case.

#### **Training Curriculum**

Our pre-service training curriculum includes the following topics:

1. Roles and Responsibilities of a CASA Volunteer.
2. Operation of the court, court process, and child welfare system.
3. Dynamics of families including mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and poverty.
4. Relevant state laws.
5. Relevant federal laws, regulations and policies including the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and the Multi Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA).
6. Confidentiality and record-keeping practices.
7. Child development as well as the background and needs of children served by the program.
8. The nature and effect of child abuse and neglect.
9. Permanency planning.
10. Community agencies and resources available to meet the needs of children and families.
11. Communication and information gathering.
12. Effective advocacy.
13. Cultural Competency.
14. Special Needs of the children served.

#### **Training Format**

Our trainings consist of 24 hours of onsite training and 10 hours of homework. Training is also considered another part of our screening process. Before being sworn in and case-assignable, a volunteer must successfully complete training and also complete and pass all the required background checks.