

Chief Sponsors:

Reps. Gary Leif, Courtney Neron, Alissa Keny-Guyer
Sens. Sara Gelser and Bill Hansell



THE NEED

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is the only person on a case whose sole responsibility is the child's best interest. An Oregon child usually has one volunteer CASA for the entire length of the case – even when there are multiple caseworkers, attorneys, teachers, foster parents, etc. involved.

- In 2018, **11,445 Oregon children** were placed in our state's care because they had been abused or neglected.
- **55% of Oregon foster children are waiting for a CASA**, despite the state statutory (ORS 419B.112) mandate of a CASA for every child in state care. Local CASA programs simply lack the funding to meet this goal.
- **State funding currently provides only 19% of total funding for CASA programs.**

THE SOLUTION

Children with a CASA have better outcomes (physical and behavioral health, education, less time in foster care), resulting in major taxpayer cost savings.

- Research demonstrates **better permanency, stability, and well-being for children** with a Court Appointed Special Advocate.
- Children with CASAs are **less likely to suffer re-abuse** and are **more likely to find a permanent home**, spend an average of five months less time in foster care, and do better in school.
- Programs actively **raise non-state resources** (81% of total revenue) and **maximize volunteer hours** (234,028 hours in 2018 – a \$6 million value above and beyond dollars).

OCN's 2020 Legislative Priorities

CASA programs across Oregon require greater State help to provide a highly effective CASA for every child in State care. New CASA volunteers are waiting to be trained by local CASA programs across Oregon – **only held back by inadequate program funding.** We ask you to consider the following priorities:

Ensure CASA program support & quality assurance

Enable the Oregon CASA Network to hire a new 1 FTE equivalent to ensure significantly greater support of and quality assurance within the 22 local CASA programs across Oregon. **Cost: \$141,740.**

Expand local recruitment/training to increase number and diversity of CASAs

Make a one-time state investment in local CASA programs to fund additional advertising and other recruitment activities as well as expand training for a larger and more diverse group of CASAs that will serve at least 1,000 additional Oregon children in foster care. Funds will be distributed to all 22 local CASA programs using the new DAS formula that provides a proportional investment based on the number of foster children in each county. **Cost: \$2,475,000.**

Total Cost: \$2,616,740

In 2018, 2,044 CASA volunteers provided advocacy for 5,728 Oregon children.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) change the story of thousands of Oregon children as the only party whose priority is the child's best interest and child's voice. CASA is a critical component in Oregon's fight against child abuse.

OCN'S AGENDA IS SUPPORTED BY:



Catholic Community Services



CONNECT + LEARN MORE

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