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The Association of  
Independent Colleges & Universities of Pennsylvania  
www.aicup.org

Funded *Privately*. Serving *Publicly*.

Ellen Brown PA CASA

Joan Burns CASA of Westmoreland

Melissa Protzek CASA of Allegheny County

Rebecca Matchett

PA CASA

Maura Kelly

PA CASA

1.8M Prop.

Stefano Support for CASA Proj

PCCCD



# CASA of Allegheny County

With Important Public & Private Support,  
Allegheny County Will...



## Serve

more children who need  
an advocate.



## Provide

consistent advocates for  
children in need.



## Improve

outcomes for children.

# 105

children served by a  
CASA volunteer in  
2020

## CASAs are Consistent

In 2020, **104** volunteers provided best-interest advocacy to Allegheny County's most vulnerable children, those who have been abused and neglected.

**99%** annual retention rate

## Children with CASAs find Permanency

Less than **2%** of children assigned a CASA volunteer re-entered the foster care system in **2020**, as compared to **20%** of the general population in foster care.



Please support the proposed appropriation for  
CASA of \$1.8 million in this year's budget.



CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocates Association – is a program dedicated to promoting the best interest of abused or neglected children. CASA volunteers work with the most vulnerable members of our community to help these children reach a better, brighter future.

CASA accomplishes this goal by occupying an important space that the system can't – it recruits and trains volunteers that are appointed by Dependency Court judges. These volunteers assist the Court in considering what is in the child's best interest. CASA volunteers are appointed to work with one child to focus efforts on the child. The volunteer works as a team with other court and social agency personnel and gathers information from every person that touches the child's life –biological parents, foster parents, teachers, counselors, and others. Based on his or her efforts, the volunteer then provides the Court a report with critical information on the child's well-being, including recommendations as to how to address the child's needs. Most importantly, a CASA volunteer stays with the child no matter where the system sends her, becoming a beacon of stability in a child's turbulent world.

CASA is the perfect example of a private-public partnership, and its benefits are both tangible and intangible. Tangibly, children assigned a CASA volunteer are substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care and less likely to re-enter the child welfare system. Less than 1% of children assigned a CASA volunteer re-entered the foster care system in 2019, as compared to 20% of the general foster care population. In other words, a child with a court-appointed CASA volunteer will leave the system and is less likely to return – thereby eliminating costs to the system and preserving public resources. But even more important, that means these children are finding better outcomes, which is the goal that overrides all else.

The problem is, simply stated, there are not nearly enough CASA volunteers or programs to work on behalf of our state's truly needy children. Existing programs only have the resources to serve less than 10% of children eligible for a CASA. In addition, only 22 local programs are serving just 28 of the state's 67 counties. Therefore, many counties in Pennsylvania do not have a program to provide abused or neglected children with a volunteer advocate program.

This year CASA is seeking \$1.8M in state funding to support existing programs and to grow it. Currently 94% of the country funds CASA at the state level. We are asking Pennsylvania to join the overwhelming majority of states who recognize the demonstrated success of the CASA network. We are petitioning the General Assembly to help meet the need for more programs and volunteers with a modest appropriation that will help the most vulnerable in our society. At the end of the day, these dollars will dramatically increase and extend services to abused and neglected children in Pennsylvania.

We thank you for your time and hope you will support this important program for the children of the Commonwealth.