

**CHANGE A
CHILD'S STORY.™**



Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)! We appreciate caring citizens from our communities who are willing to join us in making a difference in a child's life. We are excited to welcome you to our program. The greatest rewards come from the heart, and you **CAN** make a difference in someone's life by joining a nationwide child advocacy movement.

We have several ways that you can get involved to help a child find a permanent, safe, and loving home. We need volunteer child advocates as well as volunteers to assist with resource development, community outreach, office assistance, etc. If you would like to contribute in other ways, please send us an email with your skills and interests.

Below you will find some helpful information on **Becoming a CASA Volunteer**. If you would like to move forward in this process, please click the following link to complete the volunteer application:

<https://ms-lafayette.evintosolutions.com/volunteerapplication>

We look forward to receiving your complete application in order to see how you can help our program grow. Once submitted, we will arrange a time for an in-person interview. If you are no longer interested or you don't meet the guidelines listed below, please let us know. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to reply. If you would like to move forward, please fill out the application and we will be in touch as soon as we have verified your references.

Thank you,

CASA Staff
info@casaofnorthmississippi.com

Becoming a CASA Volunteer

So, what does it take to become a CASA volunteer? First and foremost is a desire to help the most vulnerable of our children. The safety and protection of the children we serve is of paramount importance. All potential volunteers, before beginning training, undergo an extensive screening process. In addition to the application, volunteers are interviewed, references are obtained and verified, and background checks, including fingerprinting are conducted.

WHAT DO CASA VOLUNTEERS DO?

Prior to being appointed to a case by the Juvenile/Youth Court Judge or Magistrate, the volunteer completes a 30-hour specialized pre-service training program. Once assigned a case, the volunteer begins getting to know the child and investigating everything to do with the child's life. With the guidance of CASA staff, the volunteer interviews and gathers information from the child, family members, neighbors, teachers, social workers, and other professionals who may have knowledge about the child. Based on this investigation, the volunteer prepares a report of their observations and recommendations regarding the child's best interests which they then present in court to a Magistrate with the assistance of their Advocacy Coordinator. Approximately 95% of CASA volunteer's permanency recommendations are accepted by the Court and included in its final order.

A CASA VOLUNTEER MUST SERVE AS:

An impartial observer, conducting an independent investigation
An information gatherer, obtaining all relevant facts about the child
A reporter, to prepare and present written reports to the Court
A monitor, to ensure that the Court's orders are carried out
Most of all, an advocate for the child's best interest

REQUIREMENTS

- 21 years old
- A minimum of a high school diploma
- Background check
- Ability to attend court during working hours
- No felony convictions or felony or misdemeanor charges pending involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect, domestic violence or any other offense that might pose a risk to a child

TRAINING

- Complete 30 hours of initial pre-service training (15 hours online and 15 hours in person)
- Complete 12 hours of annual in-service training

QUALIFICATIONS

- Maintain confidentiality of all children, family and court information
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Ability to respect and relate to people from various backgrounds
- The desire to advocate for a child and be his/her voice in Court.

COMMITMENT

- Be available for 3-5 hours per month to dedicate to CASA work Commit to the length of a case (average 12-18 months)