



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

COURT ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN FOR KITTITAS COUNTY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER TO APPLICANT 1

JOB DESCRIPTION – COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE / GUARDIAN AD LITEM..... 2

APPLICATION..... 3

REFERENCES 6

BACKGROUND RELEASE..... 7

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer court-appointed special advocate (CASA) a/k/a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) for abused and neglected children. For more information on the role of the volunteer court appointed special advocate please refer to the attached job description.

Along with your application materials (background check release, reference list, and position application), you must submit a cover letter addressing the following topics:

- Why you wish to be a CASA?
- Whether you have any attitudes or biases from your own background which *might* not allow you take an objective perspective cases (e.g., you were an abused child).
- Your understanding of factors that cause child abuse and neglect.
- The qualities you possess that would help you serve as a CASA.

Please note that the background release **must** be notarized. Most banks have notary services and it is my understanding that notaries are also available on the CWU campus for students and CWU employees. The background check includes a FBI and WSP fingerprint screening, which we will arrange for you and pay the fee.

After receipt of your application, we will contact you to arrange meetings and training sessions. The training sessions are part of the screening process to ensure that volunteer CASAs understand their duties and will be well-suited to undertake the serious responsibility of serving as a volunteer CASA. Please feel free to call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sandra Bankston

SANDRA BANKSTON
Executive Director
206.499.5620
SANDRABANKSTON@CASAPROGRAM.ORG

JOB DESCRIPTION – COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE / GUARDIAN AD LITEM

Any person at least twenty-one years old with a high school diploma who is of mature character with a sincere interest in serving abused or neglected children who are dependents of the State of Washington may apply to become a CASA/GAL. All applicants must submit to a FBI fingerprint check, child abuse and sex offender screening. Court Advocates for Children for Kittitas County is an equal opportunity program and will not discriminate against applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, marital status or disability. However, convictions or pending charges for crimes against children, sex offenses, child abuse or neglect or any acts that would pose a risk to children or adversely affect the program’s credibility will be grounds for rejection of an application.

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a volunteer Guardian ad Litem (GAL) appointed by the court to ensure that the needs and best interests of children who have been neglected or abused are met. To do this, the CASA/GAL must investigate the facts of the case, recommend a course of action to the court, explain the court’s findings to the child, facilitate the resolution of the presenting problems, and monitor progress toward established goals.

REQUIREMENTS

- Successfully complete basic training session and background check; a minimum of thirty hours.
- Complete continuing education training --a total of twelve hours annually.
- Serve as a CASA for at least one child until a permanent plan has been implemented for that child – usually a minimum of two years.
- Keep the executive Director and/or executive assistant informed of all activities, conferring with them periodically for assistance and direction.
- Maintain current and complete files on each case assigned and return them to Court Advocates upon closure of the case.
- Adhere to deadlines and timetables involving an assigned case.
- Complete evaluations, time studies and other data required for program reports.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding all aspects of assigned cases.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

- Review pertinent records, interview the child, family members, foster family, teachers, social worker, counselors and other appropriate persons to determine the facts.
- Determine the child’s needs and necessary services for the child and family.
- Investigate alternatives available for the child, such as placement options.
- Prepare and submit written reports and recommendations to the court.
- Appear and participate in court hearings.
- Interface with social workers and service providers to assist in implementing any plan ordered by the court (whether or not recommended by the CASA) and facilitate collaboration.
- Monitor and report to the court progress toward reaching the goals identified by the court and permanency, bringing urgent important developments to the court’s attention if immediate court action is necessary.
- Participate in meetings with CASA supervisory staff and with DCFS personnel.
- Have regular in-person contact with the child; once a month, unless an exception is granted by the CASA program.

SELECTION FACTORS

- Interest in and concern about the rights and special needs of children.
- Time to devote to training sessions and case management.
- Ability to work with children, family members and professionals, using tact, concern and basic human relations skills.
- Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing, to the court, social workers, the executive director and others as needed; represent a child’s best interests in the court; respect a child’s right to a safe and nurturing home;
- Satisfactory background check, including FBI/WSP fingerprint criminal history, child abuse and sex offender screening.
- Satisfactory reference check.
- Submission of a complete application packet (see letter to applicants for required contents).
- The CASA/GAL volunteer is appointed by the Superior Court of Kittitas County and is included under the court’s liability coverage while participating in the course and scope of court appointed duties.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name:

Date of Birth:

SSN:

Previous Name(s):

Phone:

Email:

Home Address:

How long have you lived at this address?

If less than two years, please provide an additional address:

Length at Previous Address?

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION: *You may put "none" for the fields where that is your answer.*

Employer:

Title:

Work Phone:

Work Email:

Work Address:

Will your employer permit you to take off from work to attend court hearings when necessary? Yes No

How long have you been employed by the above employer? If less than two years, provide your previous employer.

Length with Previous Employer?

Address of Previous Employer:

EDUCATION INFORMATION:

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

College or Post-Graduate degrees/certifications earned?

Major Areas of Study and/or Special Training?

PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER INFORMATION:

Previous / Current Volunteer Experience:

Previous / Current Experience Working with Children:

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Personal interests, hobbies, or skills:

VOLUNTEER CASA APPLICATION

Do you anticipate any changes in circumstances during the next two years that would affect your ability or availability to serve as a CASA in Kittitas County? YES NO

If so, please explain:

Have you ever been convicted of a crime or been the subject of a deferred sentence or deferred prosecution?
YES NO

If yes, list specific charges, name of court, date of conviction or deferral and the the sentence or conditions of probation or deferral that the court imposed:

Have you or anyone close to you had any other experience with the criminal justice system, child welfare or protection services, family court or guardian ad litem?
YES NO

If yes, please describe:

Have you ever previously served as a CASA/ YES NO

GAL? If so, where?

Were you ever removed from a case or cause? If YES NO

so, when and where?

Do you have an operable automobile? YES NO

Do you have automobile liability insurance? YES NO

Valid Driver's License? YES NO

Driver's License Number State Expiration

VOLUNTEER CASA APPLICATION

On the enclosed form, please provide three (3) references that we may to contact. Include an employer or immediate supervisor (may be from current volunteer work if applicable) and two (2) people who have known you for two (2) years or longer. You must use individuals other than relatives for your references.

I understand that by submitting this application, I authorize inquires to be made concerning my suitability as a volunteer advocate for children. I understand that a FBI and WSP finger-print based criminal history and child abuse background check will be conducted. I understand that the information requested in this application and such information as may otherwise be obtained will be used by Court Advocates for Children for Kittitas County only for the purpose of determining my suitability as a volunteer advocate for children and that all information will be held in confidence. I understand that convictions or pending criminal charges involving sex offenses, child abuse or neglect or acts that pose risk to children or the CASA/GAL program will automatically result in rejection of my application. I hereby declare that the information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I also understand that no individual will be rejected for volunteer service because of race, color, religious preference, national origin, gender, age, sexual preference or orientation, disability or marital status. I acknowledge and agree that Court Advocates for Children for Kittitas County is not obligated to accept my application or provide reasons if my application is rejected and is not obliged to assign me to a case. To the extent that insurance coverage is not available, I will assume all risks of injury occurring to me while on premises of any client and injury occasioned to me while fulfilling my voluntary services to or on behalf of the client.

SIGNATURE: _____

REFERENCES

Please list the names, complete mailing addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of three (3) references we may contact. Include an employer or immediate supervisor, if applicable (may be from current volunteer work) and two (2) people who have known you for two years or long. Do not use relatives.

REFERENCE #1

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Address:

REFERENCE #2

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Address:

REFERENCE #3

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Address:

DATE: _____

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am an applicant to be a volunteer for the Kittitas County Court Advocates for Children Guardian ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA/GAL). Court Advocates for Children for Kittitas County (Court Advocates) needs to thoroughly investigate my criminal history, as well as my driving record and history of civil litigation to evaluate my qualifications to become a CASA volunteer. It is in the public's interest that all relevant information concerning my criminal history and driving record be disclosed to Court Advocates.

I do hereby authorize a review and full disclosure of all records, or any part thereof, concerning myself whether said records are public, private or confidential. The intent of this authorization is to provide full and free access to my civil litigation, criminal history and driving records. This request is for the specific purpose of pursuing a background investigation that may provide pertinent data for Court Advocates to consider in determining my suitability to volunteer for this program.

I hereby release CASA, Court Advocates for Children for Kittitas County, and all others from liability or damages that may result from furnishing the information requested, including any liability or damages pursuant to any state or federal laws. I also hereby release any and all custodians of such records, including the custodian of records' officers, employees, or related personnel, both individually and collectively, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind, which may at any time result to me, my heirs, family or associates because of compliance with this authorization and request to release information or any attempt to comply with it.

In understanding my right to request access to any public records relating to me pursuant to Title 5 of the United States Code, Section 552 et. Seq., the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Chapter 41.17

RCW and specifically waive those rights understanding that the information furnished will be used by Court Advocates in conjunction with volunteer selection procedures. I will make NO attempt to gain access to the information provided by you to Court Advocates and/or the Presiding Judge of Kittitas County Superior Court.

A photocopy or facsimile copy of this release form will be valid as an original thereof, even though said photocopy or facsimile copy does not contain an original writing of my signature.

This waiver is valid for a period of eighteen (18) months from the date of my signature.

Should there be any questions as to the validity of this release, you may contact me at the address listed on this form.

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the person(s) to whom this request is presented and **his/her agents, employees, officers and related personnel from and against all claims, losses and expenses**, including reasonable attorneys' fees, arising out of or by reason of complying with this request.

_____ APPLICANT'S NAME (PRINTED)	_____ APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE
_____ ADDRESS	
_____ TELEPHONE NUMBER	_____ EMAL
_____ DATE OF BIRTH	_____ SSN
_____ WASHINGTON DRIVER'S LICENSE NO	_____ PREVIOUS NAME(S)

SUBSCRIBED and SWORN to before me this _____ **day of** _____, **20** _____.

**NOTARY PUBLIC in and for the State of
Washington residing at**

My commission expires: _____



We Need You...

A great strength of the CASA program is its volunteers!

Thank you for applying to be a
Court Appointed Special Advocate.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to
contact Sandy Bankston, Executive Director.

Sandra Bankston

sandrabankston@casaprogram.org

Office: 509.925.4871
