

## FERRY COUNTY CASA/GAL

### COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE - GUARDIAN AD LITEM

350 E. Delaware Ave  
Republic, WA 99166  
(509) 775-5225 ext 3151  
Valerie MacIntyre, Program Supervisor

### **VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION**

#### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a volunteer Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) appointed by the Court to advocate for the best interest of a child who is alleged to have been abused or neglected. In order to do this, the CASA/GAL must **investigate** the facts of the case, **recommend** a course of action to the Court, **explain** the Court findings to the child, facilitate the resolution of the presenting problems, and **monitor** progress toward established goals.

#### **EXAMPLES OF DUTIES**

1. Upon assignment of a case, interview all parties involved to determine the facts.
2. Investigate alternatives available for the child, such as living with relatives, in a foster placement, etc.
3. Submit a written report to the court no less than five working days prior to the court hearing.
4. Appear in court at Shelter Care Review Hearings, Motion Hearings, Fact-Finding/Disposition Hearing, and Permanency Plan Review Hearings and should it come to it, Termination of Parental Rights to make recommendations to the Court.
5. Continue contacts with child, family, caseworkers and others to monitor progress toward goals identified by the Court.
6. Bring significant changes in the family situation to the Court's attention. Ensure that reviews are done on schedule.
7. Continue follow-up contacts, submit additional reports and make new recommendations as needed, until a final disposition is made.

#### **PREREQUISITES**

1. Must have no criminal convictions in the past ten years.
2. Must have no criminal convictions ever, involving offenses related to child abuse or exploitation, physical or sexual abuse.
3. Appear for screening interview and allow for background checks prior to training.

#### **REQUIREMENTS OF A CASA/GAL**

1. Attend all basic training sessions, 30 hours in length.
2. Maintain strict confidentiality.

3. After basic training, serve as a Guardian Ad Litem for at least one child until a permanent placement plan has been implemented (usually 18 months).
4. Obtain first hand a clear understanding of the needs and situation of the child by reviewing all relevant documents and records and interviewing the child, parents, social workers, teachers and other persons to determine the facts and circumstances of the child's situation.
5. Identify and advocate for the best interest of the child.
6. Adhere to deadlines and timetables involving an assigned case, and turn in all reports on time.
7. Appear at all hearings to advocate for the child's best interests and provide testimony when necessary.
8. Have regular and sufficient in-person contact with the child to ensure in-depth knowledge of the case and make fact-based recommendations to the court. The CASA/GAL volunteer shall meet in person with the child once every thirty (30) days at a minimum.
9. Make recommendations for specific appropriate services for the child and, when appropriate, the child's family.
10. Determine if a permanent plan has been created for the child.
11. Monitor implementation of service plans and court orders assuring that court-ordered services are implemented in a timely manner and that review hearings are held in accordance with the law.
12. Inform the court promptly of important developments in the case through appropriate means as determined by court rules or statute.
13. Advocate for the child's best interests in the community by interfacing with mental health, educational and other community systems to ensure that the child's needs in these areas are met.
14. Keep Program Manager informed of all activities, conferring periodically for assistance and direction.
15. Maintain an up-to-date and complete file on each case assigned
16. Attend in-service training sessions on an ongoing basis, 12 hours per year.
17. Complete evaluations and time studies which may be requested in order to monitor the entire CASA/GAL program.

### **SELECTION FACTORS**

1. Interest in children, their rights, and special needs.
2. Time to devote to training sessions, investigation and follow-up of a case assigned (18-month commitment required).
3. Ability to work with a child, family members, and professionals using tact, concern, and basic human relations skills.

4. Excellent communication skills, making verbal/written reports to the Court, Program Manager, and other persons as needed.
5. Support the philosophy of Juvenile Court Services and the issues related to the work of Juvenile Court.

### **TIME FRAMES**

1. Basic Training Sessions: 30 hours
2. In-Service Training Sessions: 12 hours per year.
3. Initial investigation on a case: 15-20 hours over the first month prior to court.
4. Average five hours per month to monitor court order.

### **BENEFITS**

Involvement in Ferry County CASA/GAL Program provides an opportunity to enhance written and oral skills, to gain an understanding of the juvenile legal system, to increase awareness of child abuse and neglect, and to have a potential impact on the quality of a child's life.