

City of Lawrence Outside Agency Annual Report For Calendar Year 2021

Reports on activity should be submitted electronically to Danielle Buschkoetter, at dbuschkoetter@lawrenceks.org by 5:00pm on Tuesday, February 15, 2022. To answer the following questions please refer to your [2021 application/agreement for funding](#).

Reporting Period: Calendar Year 2021

Agency Name: Douglas County CASA, Inc.

1. Refer to the program in which your agency received funding; provide a participant success story that helps demonstrate the accomplishments of the program.

What "success" means for each of the children we serve is radically different because it depends on the variables of each case. Some example successes from 2021 include:

- A volunteer advocating to ensure the case manager and court understand realistic expectations regarding substance use recovery of the parent to better inform reintegration goals/expectation.
- Children and families accessing COVID vaccines and testing.
- Children and families accessing well child health care per best practices/recommendations.
- Volunteers advocating for unmet needs of the child and their family (food assistance, rental assistance, therapy, parenting classes, medical services).
- Volunteers advocating with the court and to support youth who turn 18 age to stay in care.

The Case Outcomes that we track are reunification with their family, adoptions, established guardianships or permanent custodianships. During calendar year 2021 we had 25 cases close with the following Case Outcomes:

- 10 (40.0%) children were reunified with their family
- 8 (32.0%) children were adopted
- 6 (24.0%) children successfully established Guardianships or Permanent Custodianships
- 0 (0.0%) child Aged-Out (turned 18 years old) and left state custody
- 1 (4.0%) child died

Here is a longer narrative of a story we believe highlights what you are asking for:

This is a good example of what a CASA volunteer does in a case for an entire quarter.

Mentorship & Advocacy:

- The volunteer worked to ensure they maintained almost daily contact via phone with the youth who was admitted to an inpatient residential treatment program that did not allow in-person or cell phone communication.
- The volunteer worked with teachers and provided encouragement to the youth to keep them on track to graduate on-time as well as continue improving independent living skills (budgeting, shopping, applying for employment).
- The volunteer has continued to advocate weekly by asking questions of treatment team members to keep their focus on concerns with delays at school due to challenges from virtual learning and COVID-19.
- The volunteer attended the one scheduled court hearing during the quarter with the youth.

Case Monitoring & Reporting:

- The volunteer submitted weekly data regarding their work on the case (all emails, texts, phone calls, etc.) into our case management database.

- The volunteer submitted a court report detailing information about the youth's placement, medical, behavioral health, educational, and mental health needs and progress to ensure the court was informed.
- Contacts & Activities:
 - The volunteer made 51 contacts with professionals on the case over the course of the quarter.
 - The volunteer made 31 phone contacts with the youth throughout the quarter.
 - The volunteer spent 32 hours working on the case (this does not include training hours) throughout the quarter.
- The volunteer completed 4 hours of continuing education to support their knowledge and skills related to Child Development and the Child Welfare System.

Volunteer Supervision:

- The volunteer's supervisor spent 10 hours of time supporting this volunteer and case.

2. Refer to your 2021 agreement for funding; provide a brief narrative of the activities funded with City funds.

In 2021 Douglas County CASA continued our ongoing efforts to recruit, train, and support volunteers who advocate for the best interest of children who have experienced abuse and neglect and are under the protection of the court system in Douglas County, Kansas. Most children served by CASA reside in foster care or with a relative until they are adopted, reintegrated with a parent, or another safe, permanent home is finalized. These children often have multiple, complex problems resulting from the abuse they have endured. Some have serious medical conditions and physical disabilities that present additional challenges. Children who are black, Asian, Native American are disproportionately represented in the child welfare at higher percentages than the general population. CASA Volunteers provide extra, targeted attention to ensure that all of their needs are met, and they find a safe, permanent home. CASA provides a stable, caring advocate for these vulnerable children to assure their physical safety and long-term care. CASA volunteers make weekly contact with the child and/or others involved in the child's life and case including parent/guardians, family members, friends, case managers, school personnel, teachers, service providers, etc. The CASA volunteer submits monthly reports detailing hours volunteered, miles driven, description of activities, and a summary of information collected. When it is time for a court hearing the CASA Volunteer writes a court report that includes a summary of all the monthly reports since the last hearing and makes any recommendations to the court based on that information. The CASA Volunteer is a resource for the child to help them understand what is happening before, during, and after court and is a consistent caring adult in the life of the child throughout the length of the case.

Our 8 staff supported 74 CASA volunteers in serving 127 children from 61 families. We unfortunately did not meet our stated grant goal of 150 children. COVID has continued to impact the number of volunteers and therefore the number of children we serve. COVID and the associated restriction of in-person events has impacted our ability to recruit and train new volunteers. We normally recruit and train about 20 new volunteers each year, we had 9 new volunteers this year in 2020 and 13 in 2021. Number are improving, but not back to pre-pandemic levels yet.

Volunteers made monthly face-to-face visits with their assigned child as long as the volunteer was willing, the placement (foster home, group home, etc.) allowed it, and they followed social distancing protocols. This was not possible with some children due to their development and lack of understanding, so face-to-face visits were (understandably) down this year. However, our volunteers did make additional contact weekly with their children by phone, video calls, and emails, and texts. Every volunteer submitted monthly reports to CASA on their activities investigating the child's circumstances which were then used to make reports to the court that are used to inform the judge and others during hearings.

3. Refer to your 2021 agreement for funding; report what progress was made toward your proposed outcomes and comment as necessary.

Outcomes	List 2021 outcomes from agreement	Comment as necessary
Outcome #1	Child safety: 98% of children assigned a CASA volunteer will not experience substantiated abuse or neglect in 2021	100% of children assigned a CASA volunteer (that is 127 total unduplicated children in 2021) did not experience substantiated abuse or neglect.
Outcome #2	CASA stability: 90% of children served by Douglas County CASA will remain with the same CASA volunteer throughout 2021	100% (127 of 127) of children served in 2021 remained with the same CASA volunteer.
Outcome #3	Children will remain in safe, permanent homes: 90% of children whose cases close in 2021 will not re-enter the local jurisdiction of the Court as a Child in Need of Care (CINC) within two years.	As of reporting, 100% of children whose cases closed in 2021 did not re-enter the local jurisdiction of the Court. As of reporting, 100% of children whose cases closed in 2020 did not re-enter the local jurisdiction. And as of reporting, 100% of children whose cases closed in 2019 did not re-enter the local jurisdiction.

4. Refer to the line-item budget provided in your 2021 application for funding; is this accurate to how your allocation was actually spent? If no, what changed and why?

Budget Categories	Requested Amount	Actual Amount	Comment as necessary
Personnel	\$20,000	\$20,000	This supports salary and benefits for Volunteer Advocate Coordinators (VACs). VACs recruit, train and supervise our CASA Volunteers. We must adhere to National CASA mandated staff to volunteer ratios of 30:1 for 1.0 FTE. The number of hours a VAC works directly affects the number of volunteers they can supervise, and thus directly impacts the number of children our agency can serve. We have five VACs on our staff, with 4.05 FTE.
Fees & Services	0	0	
Estimates/Bids	0	0	
Travel	0	0	
Marketing	0	0	
Cost of Materials	0	0	
Operating Expenses	0	0	
Other	0	0	
Grand Total	\$20,000	\$20,000	