

National CASA Association (NCASAA) Diversity Policy

We live in a multicultural society; therefore, an inclusive CASA/GAL network should also be multicultural. To achieve this goal and to hold ourselves accountable during this process, the strategic plan of the NCASAA board of directors includes the goal to increase involvement of currently underrepresented communities, particularly people of color, at the local, state, and national levels of the CASA/GAL network. This diversity initiative applies to all levels of the organization and includes staff, board, and volunteer composition. Cultural awareness and competency should be integral components of all board, staff, and volunteer activities.

As a diverse organization, the CASA/GAL network can better represent and advocate for the children served and have a far greater impact on abused and neglected children in the child welfare system. Therefore, it is the objective of NCASAA to achieve diversity of the CASA/GAL network as reflected in its policies, volunteer, board, and staff composition, committee activities, management plan, resource materials, publications, speakers bureau, and training and technical assistance.

Each CASA/GAL program should strive to achieve a volunteer base that reflects the makeup of the children in the judicial system as well as the local community. It is the goal of the National CASA Association to have a CASA/GAL volunteer for every abused and neglected child who needs one. In order for CASA/GAL volunteers to represent the best interests of children in juvenile and family court proceedings, they must be cognizant of and sensitive to children's frame of reference, including their heritage, culture, ethnicity, religion, and family structure. It is also important that volunteers be able to communicate sensitively with children and their families in order to communicate children's needs to the court. Volunteer service should be accessible to all individuals regardless of race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or disability.



Adapted from "A World of Difference: A Manual for Achieving Greater Inclusion," NCASAA, 2004.