

Arizona Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program

Advocate Minimum Performance Standards

According to Arizona State Law – A.R.S. § 8-522(E)

1. Advocates shall maintain the following minimum performance standards:
 - A. An Advocate's responsibilities include:
 - (1). Meet with the child.
 - (2). Advocate for the child's safety as the first priority.
 - (3). Gather and provide independent, factual information to aid the court in deciding what is in the child's best interest and in determining if reasonable efforts have been made to prevent removal of the child from the child's home or to reunite the child with the child's family.
 - (4). Provide advocacy to ensure that appropriate case planning and services are provided for the child.
 - B. Maintain confidentiality in handling program issues, case, and advocate information.
 - C. Review case records and interview the child and other appropriate parties.
 - D. Develop and maintain a relationship with the child including contact with the child at least monthly basis.
 - E. Maintain an accurate and complete Contact Log/Journal and provide the documentation at least monthly to the county program office. Maintain records about the case, including appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child and the child's life circumstances.
 - F. Communicate with caregivers about the child's behavior and relationships.
 - G. Participate as a member of the case management team.
 - H. Participate in the formulating agreements, stipulations, or case plans and provide input to subsequent revisions.
 - I. Advocate for the best interest of the child, identify service needs, and make recommendations to the court regarding timely placement of the child.
 - J. Monitor the child's placement to observe the child's behavior in the home and to assess problems or the child's needs.
 - K. Assist the responsible parties to ensure that the child's educational needs are being met.
 - L. Report to the appropriate authorities significant changes in family situations or violations of court orders.
 - M. Consult at least monthly with the coordinator in case/program discussion, and document the discussion in the Contact Log/Journal.
 - N. Discuss all recommendations concerning the case with the coordinator prior to submitting recommendations to the court.
 - O. Submit a written, objective, and concise court report with recommendations to the court on what placement and services are best for the child. The Advocate shall also gather and provide information to aid the court in determining if reasonable efforts have been made to prevent removal of the child from the child's home or to reunite the child with the child's family. Advocates shall deliver the court report to the county program office two weeks prior to the court hearing.
 - P. Submit court reports at review and permanency hearings unless required otherwise.
 - Q. Submit addenda at all other hearings not listed in item #P as determined by the Advocate in consultation with the coordinator.

- R. Attend all court hearings pertaining to the case and provide oral testimony to the court when requested. Attend a jury trial if one is requested, and provide oral testimony to the court and jury if called as a witness. If unable to attend a court hearing, the Advocate shall inform the coordinator who will attend for the Advocate. If the Advocate and coordinator are not available, an Advocate mentor may attend.
 - S. Assist the court in exploring alternative placements for the child.
 - T. Make recommendations at Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) meetings.
 - U. Remain appointed to the dependency case up to the time of permanent guardianship or adoption, unless otherwise directed by the court.
 - V. Provide and document an annual performance-based assessment of the Arizona CASA Program.
 - W. Maintain contact with the coordinator to alert or to discuss high profile cases or problems as they arise. Report developments as directed by the coordinator.
 - X. Provide to the county program office all case-related correspondence as directed by the coordinator.
 - Y. Comply with Arizona statutes, Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court, Administrative Order, Rules, ACJA, and policies and procedures. A special advocate is immune from civil or criminal liability for the advocate's acts or omissions in connection with the authorized responsibilities the special advocate performs in good faith.
 - Z. Comply with the state program training requirements.
 - AA. Advocates shall notify insurance carriers that their CASA volunteer work may involve transporting children.
2. Advocates shall consult with their insurance providers to determine the minimum liability coverage under Arizona law and the recommended coverage for Advocates and their family in light of the fact that they may be transporting children.
 3. Advocates who transport children shall at all times maintain current automobile insurance coverage.
 4. Advocates shall provide proof of insurance to the county program office on an annual basis.