

BECOME A CASA

Every child deserves a safe, permanent home.

Nobody longs for this more than a child in the foster care system. As a Court Appointed Special Advocate, you are empowered by the courts to help make this a reality. Through your volunteer advocacy, you will not only bring positive change to the lives of these vulnerable children, but also to the lives of their children, and generations to come. In return, you will enrich your own life as well.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

First Circuit CASA volunteers advocate for the best interests of an abused or neglected child who is under the protection of the First Judicial Circuit Court of South Dakota. CASA volunteers receive extensive training and are supervised by professional staff members. This enables them to effectively gather information to report back to the court. Primary duties include getting to know each child to ensure they are in a safe environment, visit CASA child(ren) on a monthly basis, review records, conduct interviews with care givers, teachers, doctors, therapists, and service providers, as well as submit a report to the Court.

VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS

First Circuit CASA requires all volunteers to meet the following qualifications:

Must be at least 21 years of age

Must possess effective communication skills (both oral and written), basic computer skills - for preparing court reports and providing testimony

Must be able to relate to persons of varied cultures, ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

All First Circuit CASA Volunteers must meet the following requirements:

Undergo Screening and Background Checks

Participate in 30 hours of Pre-Service Training provided by First Circuit CASA

Participate in 12 hours of Continuing Education each year

Want to make a difference in the life of an Abused and Neglected Child

READY TO GET STARTED?

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS: INFORMATION SESSION, APPLICATION, SCREENING, TRAINING

1. INFORMATION SESSION

Prospective volunteers can schedule an Information Session with a CASA Staff before filling out the application to gain more knowledge of CASA if they feel they need more information.

Email or call Michelle Mogck to schedule an Information Session.

Email: jackie.horton@mitchellcasa.org

Phone: [605-996-1212](tel:605-996-1212)

2. APPLICATION

Prospective volunteers may submit an application and are encouraged to attend an Information Session with a CASA staff if they want more information. Criteria used in the selection of volunteers will be such as to ensure that the individual is able to meet the responsibilities of a Court Appointed Special Advocate. No individual will be rejected because of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, marital status or age (unless under 21 then we have to look at other volunteer opportunities that don't work directly with the children). Information needed to fill out your application:

Personal Demographic Information

Education and Employment Information

Emergency Contact Information

Experience History and Volunteer Experience (if any)

Background Information

Auto Insurance Policy Information for CASA applicants and Drivers License number

Criminal History

Three Personal References (including address, phone, email) - references should be non-relative individuals whom the applicant has known at least one year

Inactivity after an hour will log users off the system and all information not submitted will be lost

3. INTERVIEW & BACKGROUND CHECKS

Each applicant must successfully complete an interview with the First Circuit CASA staff and complete all necessary background check forms prior to being accepted into training. Note: any applicant with a negative finding for a felony or misdemeanor or pending charges involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect or related acts on their background check that would pose risks to children or the CASA programs credibility will not be accepted into training and/or will be dismissed from the program.

4. TRAINING

All First Circuit CASA volunteers must be accepted into and complete Pre-Service training prior to taking a case. First Circuit CASA currently offers Training Sessions 5 times per year – Due to COVID-19 we are holding all of training online. Each session runs for 5 consecutive weeks with at-home online coursework on your own. One night per week we have an online meeting with other Volunteers in training and the CASA training staff. When COVID-19 is no longer an issue we will resume some in class training. Schedule to be determined as things progress.

5. ACCEPTANCE

Upon successful completion of Pre-Service Training, new CASA Volunteers will be officially accepted and sworn into service by a Judge and considered ready to accept a case. You will officially be a CASA by the State of South Dakota.

For more information about the application process, contact the First Circuit CASA office

Email: Jackie.horton@mitchellcasa.org

Phone: [605-996-1212](tel:605-996-1212)