

Today's Date Fri, 02/28/2020

Organization Name CASA of Cherokee Country

Street Address 201 E. Delaware St.

City TAHLEQUAH

State Oklahoma

Zip Code 74464

Mailing Address (if different) P.O. Box 1788, Tahlequah, OK 74465

Organization Phone Number 9184568788

Organization Fax Number 9180456041

Organization website address www.cherokeecasa.org

Number of Employees 2

Organization Mission Statement

The mission of CASA of Cherokee Country is to be a voice for children who come into the court system as a result of abuse and/or neglect by providing trained volunteer advocates who speak independently for the best interests of the children.

Page 2

CEO information

CEO's First Name Jo

CEO's Last Name Prout

CEO's Title Executive Director

CEO's Email Address ccncasa@sbcglobal.net

Primary Contact's Information

Primary Contact's First Name Jo

Primary Contact's Last Name Prout

Primary Contact's Email Address ccncasa@sbcglobal.net

Page 3

Program Information

Program Name CASA of Cherokee Country

Amount Requested \$10,000

What community impact area does this program address? Promoting Health and Well-being

Provide the Program Background - Year started, accomplishments
In 1995 the 501(c)3 program now known as CASA of Cherokee Country was established as Cherokee County/Cherokee Nation Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. At that time the program was a part-time program and served victims of child abuse and/or neglect in Cherokee County District Court and Cherokee Nation Tribal Court. Three years later the program was invited -- and agreed -- to serve abused/neglected children in Adair County District Court. In 2003 the program became a full-time program and has remained full-time ever since.

How does the program connect to your mission?
Activities of the CASA of Cherokee Country program bring CASA's mission into reality. CASA staff activities include recruiting, screening, training, activating and supervising community volunteer advocates, age 21 or older, to speak for abused and/or neglected children in Cherokee County District Court, Adair County District Court, and Cherokee Nation Tribal Court.

CASA volunteer child advocate activities include gathering information on a case by visiting any- and everyone involved in the case; submitting to the judge prior to each case hearing a written report that includes information gathered as well as recommendation for the best interests of the child(ren); staying with the case until it is closed by the judge; and, hopefully, by placing the child(ren) in a safe, permanent home.

List other current funding sources and amounts for this program

- Victims of Crime Act (Federal Grant) = \$45,398
- Oklahoma CASA Association = \$21,763
- Special Events = \$34,707
- Cherokee Nation = \$41,876 (for 2019 and 2020)
- Donations = \$9,965

Explain specifically how UW funding will be used.
Funding from Lake Area United Way will be used to provide quarterly travel

stipends to CASA volunteer child advocates who are required to visit the child(ren) in each case at least once a month. Due to the fact that there simply are not enough foster homes and/or therapeutic foster homes in the state of Oklahoma, DHS and ICW often need to place children wherever there is space available, resulting in advocates traveling to placements that are distant from Tahlequah, e.g., Enid, Lawton, Fletcher.

The CASA board of directors pays a mileage rate of \$.405 to each child advocate to offset miles traveled to serve cases. Most of the advocates keep the stipend; however, there are a few that return the check each quarter.

In calendar year 2019, CASA of Cherokee Country spent \$10,232 on volunteer child advocate travel.

United Way funding for volunteer travel will provide supplemental funding to maintain current service levels.

How would the lack of United Way funding affect your program?

Lack of United Way funding would result in elimination of travel stipends for child advocates who frequently travel great distances to serve the child(ren) in their cases.

Was the United Way funded program modified or changed within the past twelve months? No

What collaborative partnerships does the organization utilize to enhance the program services?

CASA of Cherokee Country maintains collaborative partnerships with members of Masonic Lodge #10, Talking Leaves Job Corps students, Hope House of Cherokee County, KiBois Head Start Program, Cherokee County Multi-Disciplinary Task Force.

Describe the nature of the collaborative partnerships

The 3rd Tuesday of each month members of Masonic Lodge #10 prepare a dinner to serve to the public, donating the proceeds to a local no-profit agency. CASA is the beneficiary in January. The relationship with the Masons dates back to 2004. Typical results of this fund raiser range from \$1,200 to \$1,700.

Students in the Talking Leaves Job Corps building construction class build the CASA Playhouses for Kids, CASA's most lucrative annual fund raiser. Also, TLJC students physically assist CASA each year with the Rally Against Child abuse in April, the drawing for the playhouse winner in June, the Ladies Fore CASA golf tournament in early September, and the Holiday Evening with CASA fund raiser in November.

CASA collaborates with Hope House and KiBois Head start to organize and implement the annual Rally Against Child Abuse in April each year on Cherokee Square.

The CASA advocate coordinator/trainer is an active member of the Cherokee County Multi-disciplinary Task Force.

What else would you like us to know about your program?
Throughout the year, CASA staff members, board members and advocates strive to identify and recruit men and women age 21 or older to train as volunteer child advocates for abused and neglected children in three area courts. When an individual applies to become a CASA child advocate, he/she must submit an application with three references, agree to three different background checks, and participate in an in-depth interview with CASA staff. No special experience or education is required. 30 hours of advocate training consists of 15 hours of online curriculum plus 15 hours of classroom (face-to-face) discussions with other members of the training class and the CASA trainer. In addition, prospective advocates are required to observe for 2 hours in each of the three courts served by CASA advocates in order to become familiar with each judge and the manner in which juvenile deprived hearings are processed.

Upload your Program Budget [20200210135544412.pdf](#)

Are you requesting funding for a second program? No

Page 4

Client Information

What is your target population? Abused and/or neglected children ages newborn - 18 who are in DHS or ICW care in three area courts.

Estimated number of individuals not served due to limited resources 219

How do clients learn about United Way funded programs/services?
There are 4 judges that hear "juvenile deprived" cases in the three courts served by CASA of Cherokee Country. CASA's advocate coordinator/trainer attends each juvenile deprived docket in each court: Cherokee County Court - Tues. mornings; Adair County Court - Thurs. afternoons; Cherokee Nation Tribal Court - two Fri. mornings each month.

During juvenile deprived hearings, the judges will request a CASA child advocate on a case, or a DHS or ICW case worker will request that a child advocate be assigned to a case, or a child's attorney will request that a CASA be assigned to a case.

Once the judge makes the request, CASA staff matches the case with a CASA child advocate.

Upload the client demographics information here [20200206132834354.pdf](#)

Upload client demographic by zip code here [20200206132845427.pdf](#)
Client Services Cost

Do client pay a fee for services? No

Cost of Unit of Service? The IRS places a value of \$24.69/hour on CASA advocacy. In 2019 CASA child advocates donated 1,637 hours to their cases.

Percentage of clients receiving free services? 100 %

To enter client information for 2nd program, click yes. No

Page 5

Story Time

Tell us about your success stories. Remember, our donors want to hear how their donations are helping our community. Do not include real names, but describe the client's situation as best as you can without exposing identify. You may have clients who want to share their story. Please include them if appropriate. If you need LAUW staff to help you with your storytelling, just ask. We are here to help.

1st Story

This case involved 3 children, 2 boys and 1 girl. The court became involved in Oct., 2016, because the mother was abusing drugs during her pregnancy, resulting in the youngest son testing positive for methamphetamine at birth. The children were placed in foster care for their safety. The mother entered treatment for her addiction and remained in treatment for 10 months, successfully completing treatment. She completed parenting classes and continued going to counseling. The father of the children relinquished his parental rights. The CASA advocate noted in his reports to the judge that the mother continued to maintain her sobriety and recommended the children return home to the mother to begin trial reunification. The foster mother strongly opposed the reunification, but the CASA advocate noted that for 16 months the mother had been free of all illicit substances and had completed the individual service plan. The court ordered the children returned to their mother for reunification and the CASA child advocate reported that after 6 months the children were safe and happy. The case closed in August, 2018.

2nd Story

This case involved non-verbal,autistic 4-year-old twin boys. The court became involved with the family when allegations of physical abuse and neglect were made against the mother. The father of the boys, aware of the mother's behavior, did not protect the boys from her, so the boys became wards of the state. CASA was asked to provide an advocate for the case in May, 2017. The twins were placed in separate therapeutic foster homes and the CASA advocate agreed that it was in their best interests to be separated; however, the advocate became aware that sibling visits were not occurring and she began recommending to the court that

those visits begin right away. For several months sibling visits were promised but did not occur, though DHS indicated visits were being set up. The CASA advocate continued to stress the importance of sibling visits to the court and the court eventually ordered the visits to begin. Once started, sibling visits continued for the life of the case which closed in Dec. 2018. The parents did not correct conditions and the boys were adopted by their respective foster parents who continue to meet for sibling visits.

3rd Story

This case opened in January, 2015. Two children, a boy age 2 and a girl age 5, became wards of the court due to the mother's opioid addiction which resulted in the death of her 3-month-old infant. A CASA advocate was requested by the court and one was assigned within the first 90 days. Both children were immediately placed in a traditional foster home and DHS began searching for extended family member with whom they could place the children. Throughout the length of the case the biological mother did not engage in services and continued to test positive for opioids, and the biological father failed to attend hearings and did not engage in services. The result: Both parent's rights were terminated and the children were available for adoption. Eleven months later an extended family member (a cousin on the mother's side) was found and was willing and able to adopt the children. The CASA advocate recommended the move to a new placement be a slow transition because the children had been in the same foster home since the start of the case.

In the meantime, the foster mother began telling the CASA advocate that the children were "bonded" to her and it would traumatize them if they were placed with someone else. The CASA advocate recommended the children begin visits with the new placement, first with foster mom present, and as the children became more comfortable, without foster mom. Foster mom was consistently late for the visits or cancelled at the last minute, so the advocate recommended the children be transported by the case worker in order to ensure the visits with the new placement occurred as ordered, making the transition easier for the children. Soon the children were staying with their extended family member on weekends. The CASA advocate visited them there several times and noted no difficulties or concerns; however, when the older child asked the CASA advocate why she and her brother would not be safe living with their new mom and dad, the advocate learned that the foster mom had told the child that they would not be safe in their new home. Also, the oldest child began having meltdowns when it was time to return to the foster home. The CASA child advocate reported this information to the court and strongly recommended that it would be in the children's best interest to be moved to their adoptive home right away. The judge agreed and the children were moved within 5 days.

Following the move, the CASA advocate visited the children in their new placement and reported that they were doing very well and were thriving. The children were subsequently adopted by the new foster parents and the case was closed in August, 2016.

Page 6

Outcome Results

Outcomes

Desired Outcomes

- Certified child advocates actively speak for the best interests of the abused/neglected children in all of their cases.
- Abused/neglected children are prevented from falling through the cracks of the judicial system and/or being returned to an unsafe placement.
- Abused/neglected children are placed in safe, permanent homes.

Indicators

- Judges in the three courts served by CASA child advocates say they make better informed decisions regarding the child(ren)'s best interests when a CASA child advocate is assigned to a case and gathers information which is presented to the judge in clear, concise reports.
- In calendar year 2019, of the 84 abused/neglected children served by CASA child advocates, 37 were placed in a safe, permanent home.

How do you measure outcomes? Describe the tools you use.

Outcomes are measured by counting the number of children placed in safe, permanent homes as well as children who are no longer in unsafe placements.

Previously Measured Outcomes

- In calendar year 2018, 80 abused/neglected children were served by CASA child advocates. During those 12 months, 31 (39%) were placed in safe, permanent homes.
- In calendar year 2017, 71 abused/neglected children were served by CASA child advocates. During that year, 36 (50%) were placed in safe, permanent homes.

List any influencing factors affecting the outcome results

The number of abused/neglected children served by CASA child advocates each year is a direct result of the judges' decisions to request a CASA advocate for a case.

Page 7

Is the organization required to abide by the Oklahoma Open Meeting and Open

Records Act? Yes

Provide the date the Board reviewed the Member Organization Agreement Thu, 02/20/2020

Does the organization provide the Board orientation and/or Board development training? Yes

Provide date of the organization's last Board retreat or strategic planning? Sat, 06/29/2019

When did the Board last review the organization's by-laws?

How many Board of Director meetings were held during the last fiscal year? 12

What is the percentage of regularly held Board meetings that had a quorum during the last fiscal year? 100 %

Do board members have term limits? Yes

What is the maximum length of consecutive years a board member can serve? 4

What percentage of the Board makes a financial contribution to the organization? 100%

Is a financial contribution a requirement? No

Provide the total number of volunteer hours provided by Board members 504

Board of Directors listing [Board List 2019-2020.doc](#)

Page 8

Upload required documents.

Upload current OK Charitable Certificate [20200224150501172.pdf](#)

Upload a signed copy of your most recent 990 [20200204121740858.pdf](#)

Upload your most recent audit or financial statements [20200204120550060.pdf](#)

Upload your IRS Letter of Determination - 501c3 [20200204120522391.pdf](#)

Upload staff salaries here [20200207125408216.pdf](#)

Upload your by-laws [20200204121128570.pdf](#)

Signature page of Membership Agreement [20200221102647600.pdf](#)

Marketing material with UW logo [20200228145101355.pdf](#)

Any additional comments

Page 9

Counter Terrorism Compliance Certification	Yes	No
1. This organization is not on any federal terrorism, "watch list," including the list in Executive Order 13224, the master list of specifically designated nationals and blocked persons maintained by the Treasury Department, and the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations maintained by the State Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The organization does not, will not and has not knowingly provided financial,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes

No

technical, in-kind or other material support or resources to any individual or entity that is a terrorist or terrorist organization, or that supports or funds terrorism.

3. This organization does not, will not and has not knowingly provided or collected funds or provided material support or resources with the intention that such funds or material support or resources be used to carry out acts of terrorism.

4. This organization does not, will not and has not knowingly provided

Yes

No

financial or material support or resources to any entity that has knowingly concealed the source of funds used to carry out terrorism or to support foreign terrorist or organizations.

5. This organization does not regrant to organizations, individuals, programs and/or projects outside the United States of America without compliance with IRS guidelines.

6. This organization takes reasonable, affirmative steps to ensure that any funds or resources distributed or processed

Yes

No

do not fund
terrorism or
terrorist or
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7. This orga **X**
nization
takes
reasonable
steps to
certify
against
fraud with
respect to
the
provision of
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kind or
other
material
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resources
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I certify as an authorized representative of this organization, that all the information included in this application is correct and accurate.