

STANDARDS *for* STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS



Court Appointed Special Advocates
Guardians ad Litem
FOR CHILDREN

NATIONAL CASA/GAL ASSOCIATION

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2018



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STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 25, 2018

APPROVED BY: Tara Perry

TITLE: Chief Executive Officer

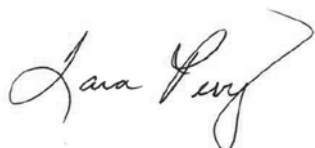


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Introduction

The implementation of the 2018 Standards for State CASA/GAL Organizations represents a significant milestone in the implementation of National CASA Association's Strategic Framework. The standards reflect our focus on becoming a highly effective organization at the national, state and local levels in providing quality volunteer advocacy for children who have experienced abused or neglect.

This work includes redesigning the prior quality assurance (QA) approach, which had been in place since 2004 and required state organizations to participate in self-assessments in relation to the state standards, scheduled to occur every four years. We are formally beginning the shift away from simply compliance with standards to a focus on helping and developing state organizations become highly effective.

The quality assurance process will utilize a continuum with Established, Advancing and Highly Effective levels to help identify program strengths, capacity, challenges and opportunities to promote program growth and sustainability. Operating based on a set of quality standards remains vital. This set of standards outlines expectations that state organizations:

- Respect and are committed to quality service to the local programs
- Work positively and collaboratively with other state organizations, local programs and with National CASA
- Utilize established policies and procedures necessary for effective management
- Manage their financial affairs prudently, are financially sound, and are committed to the principles of public disclosure
- Continually evaluate their services and operations
- Recruits, trains, develops and supports a high-caliber team through effective people practices

The National CASA network is strengthened through participation in the new highly effective standards review process, fostering greater awareness among staff, volunteers and governing body of how the organization operates, including both program excellence and program challenges. National CASA is committed to quality and will support this commitment through technical assistance to state organizations and the local programs they support.

We are excited about the direction it will take our network to achieve our collective mission.

History of NCASAA Standards and Revisions

Prior to 2018

The National CASA Association first issued standards and recommended management practices for local CASA/guardian ad litem (GAL) programs in 1990. A year later, compliance with the standards became a mandatory condition of membership in National CASA. In 1994, the board of directors appointed a committee to review the existing standards, recommend management practices and provide revisions and updates. As a result the Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs were formed. It contains standards, requirements and implementation guidelines for local program members of the National CASA Association, referred to in the body of the document as CASA/GAL programs. The standards committee incorporated the Code of Ethics document into the local CASA/GAL standards in 2000. In an effort to promote and maintain high-quality, consistent and ethical governance and management at both the state and local level, Standards for State CASA/GAL Organizations was developed in 1998. In 2003 the state standards were reviewed and revised by members of the National CASA network, Standards Committee and National CASA Board of Trustees, resulting in the 2004 edition. In 2009 the National CASA Board of Trustees approved an edition of the Standards for State CASA/GAL Organizations.

Preparing 2018 Standards

Work began in 2017 to update the standards to align with the direction of becoming highly effective organizations. The State Leadership Council served as the primary work group. First, the Role of State Organizations and the definition of a Highly Effective State Organization were developed. These then informed creation of the new Standards for State CASA/GAL Organizations.

The work was further shaped by reviews with the local leadership councils and input gathered from the CASA/GAL network at large. The first network comment period focused on the proposed state standards in late December 2017. The second comment period in March 2018 gathered input on the related technical guidance. The State Leadership Council then approved the revised standards with technical guidance in April 2018. And the standards with technical guidance were then approved in June 2018 by the National CASA Board of Trustees.

On the Standards and Quality Assurance webpage in the member portal, is a collection of related highly effective documents as well. The document set is dynamic, with new resources or policies added once approved and ready for implementation.

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Contributors

Many members of the CASA/GAL network have been contributing during the Standards and QA redesign efforts to date. This includes serving on work groups to revise or create specific elements and/or providing input during comment periods. We wish to recognize the following 2017 and 2018 leadership council members for their specific contributions to development of the standards.

State Leadership Council	Urban Leadership Council	Suburban Leadership Council
Jenny Bender, CO Andrea Bruns, KY** Maggie Blaedow, AL Traci Busch, WV Jennifer Childs, WY Jennifer DeBalko, PA Jim Hennessey, IA** Lynne Farrar, TN Kathleen Glumac, OH Mary Beth Luibel, AK** Corrie Kielty, NE Patty Sabin, MI Sue Schwartz, WI Vicki Spriggs, TX Nancy Molever, AZ Mary Purvis, MS Doug Stephens, OH <u>QA Staff:</u> Deedra Baker, TX Kim Holst, TN Della Justice, KY	Jessica Allen, FO Nancy Kay Blackwell, MD** Cindy Booth, IN Karen Burns, NJ** Tracy Cook, OH Richard Cooke, TX Mark Dinglasan, IL Dana Frady, NC* Sonya Galvan, TX Justin Grabowsky, AZ Paige Greene, SC Richard Harris, Washington, DC Robbyn Ingram, GA Kathleen LaValle, TX* Sharon Lawrence, CA Steve Moergen, MO** William Myers, KY Wende Nichols-Julien, CA Lisa Petersen, WA Betsy Stark Miller, OR Laura Wolf, TX** Robb Zarges, MA	Darci Anderson, ID Sara Applegate, MI Norma Castilla-Blackwell, TX Kim Colby Davis, CA** Ross DiEdoardo, MD Susan Etheridge, TX Sherri Gideon, TX Zane Grant, CO Deborah Moore, FL* ** Kesha Shipe Waters, TN Stacey Sobel, CT Shaney Starr, OR Crystal Vickmark, AR Janet Walden, GA* Angie Waters, NJ* Mandy Welty Zalich, PA** Anjuli Renold, TX
Rural Leadership Council	Tribal Leadership Council	
Pamela Burke, AZ CiCi Fisher Chalus, IL* ** Tommy Edwards, LA Alisa Hobbs, TN Andrea Holt, AL* Ellen Klym, WY Cherie LeBlanc-Dyba, MT** Catherine McDowell, NE** Delyce Palik, AR** Sara Robison, IL Leigh Ann Sigman, MO Candice Carter, IN Christine Slette, CA	Alex Cardenas, CA Kimberly Deer, OK Angela Fasana, OR Roxana Coleman Herak, MT Cathleen Kintner-Christie, WA Helen Norris, OK Jo Prout, OK Willow Jim, WA Thia Peters, AK	*Local Council Subgroup ** Also serves on National Leadership Council

We thank everyone for your time and your partnership as we focus on quality, capacity, growth and effectiveness at the national, state and local level.

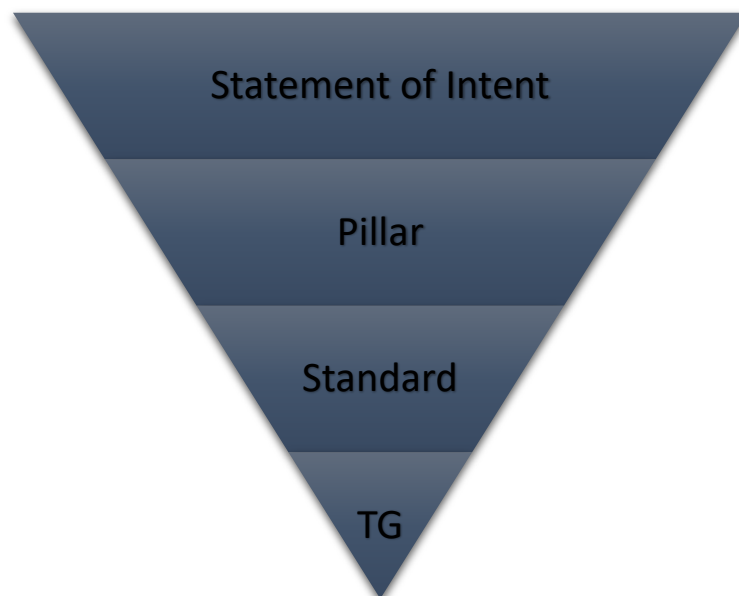
Operational Definitions

Statement of Intent: (Why) Reason for having standards

Pillar: (Where) The location of related standards

Standard: (What) The measurable requirement

Technical Guidance (TG): (How) Criteria and resources to meet and understand the standards



Technical Guidance Disclaimer

Any reference obtained from the National CASA/GAL website or through other National CASA/GAL documentation to a specific external product, process, or service does not constitute or imply an endorsement by the National CASA/ GAL Association of the product, process, or service, or its producer or provider. The views and opinions expressed in any referenced document do not necessarily state or reflect those of the National CASA/ GAL Association.

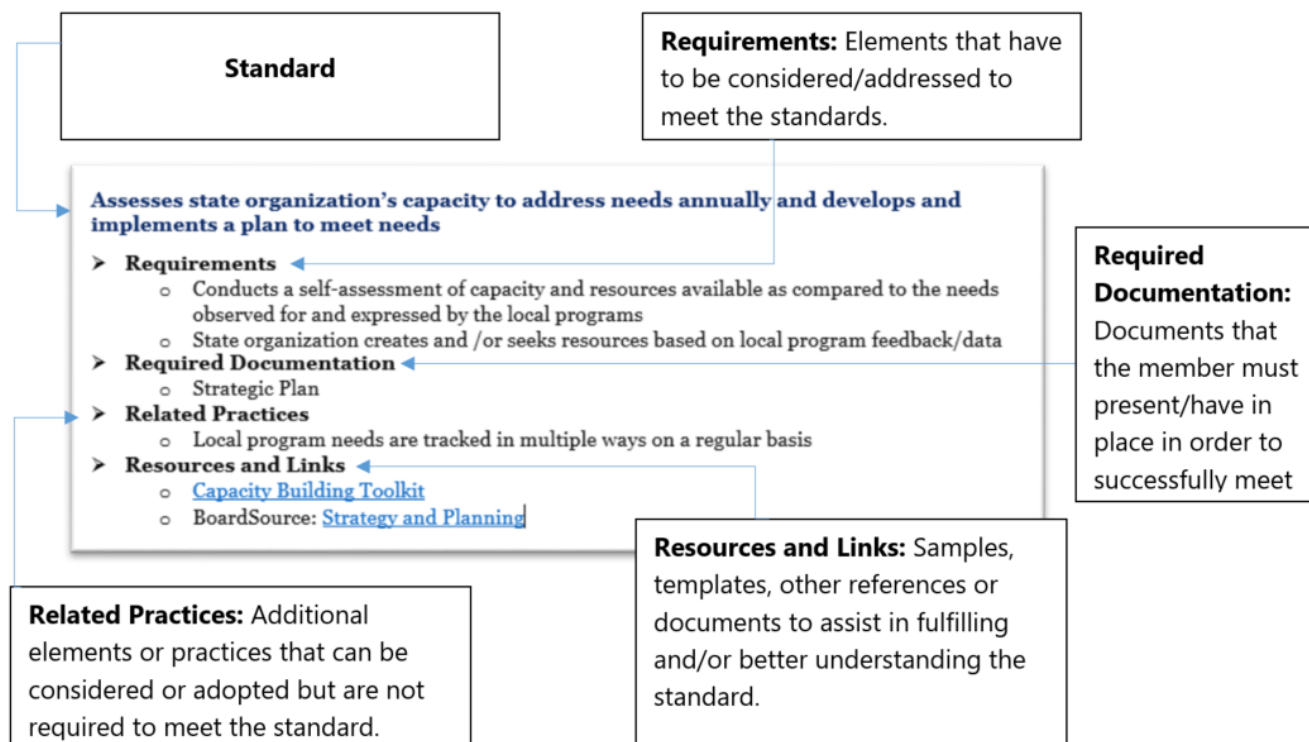
STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

Pillars and Standards at a Glance

Pillar: Mission and Values		Pillar: Leadership	
Standard	Effective Date	Standard	Effective Date
Core Model	2018 - September	Partnership with Governing Body	2018 – September
Role of a State Organization	2018 - September	State Director Responsibilities and Performance	2018 – September
Mission Statement	2018 - September	Staff Development	2018 – September
Values	2018 - September	Board Development	2018 – September
		Organizational Diversity	2018 – September
		Non-Discrimination	2018 – September
		Collaboration with National CASA and Local Programs	2018 – September
Pillar: Funding, Legislation and Presence		Pillar: Governance	
Standard	Effective Date	Standard	Effective Date
Federal Legislation and Appropriations	2018 - September	Regulatory Compliance	2018 – September
National Funding Opportunities	2018 - September	Organizational Goals	2018 – September
Public Policy: State-level Decision Making	2018 - September	Resource Management	2018 – September
State Funding	2018 - September	Organization Policies	2018 – September
Financial Sustainability	2018 - September	<i>NON-PROFIT STATE ORGANIZATIONS</i>	
Statutory Authority: CASA/GAL-enabling Legislation	2018 - September	Governing Documents	2018 – September
Internal Financial Controls	2018 - September	Roles and Responsibilities	2018 – September
CASA/GAL Branding	2018 - September	Board Recruitment	2018 – September
National CASA Policies	2018 - September	Resource Development	2018 – September
		Board Member Screening	2018 – September
		Diversity and Inclusion	2018 – September
Pillar: Staff		Pillar: Service	
Standard	Effective Date	Standard	Effective Date
Staff Job Descriptions	2018 - September	Service Delivery: Growth Plan	2018 – September
Staff Screening	2018 - September	New Program Development	2018 – September
Human Resource Policies	2018 - September	Local Network Assessment	2018 – September
Performance Evaluations	2018 - September	State CASA/GAL Organization Capacity	2018 – September
Stakeholder Relationships	2018 - September	Service Evaluation	2018 – September
		Strategic Planning	2018 – September
		Quality Assurance	2018 – September
		Data Collection	2018 – September
		Mission and Core Model of National CASA	2018 – September
		Public Education and Community Awareness	2018 – September
		Data Collection: Local Programs	2018 – September
		National CASA Pre-Service Training	2018 – September

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

Technical Guidance Categories for Standards



***Resources and Links – National CASA will continue to provide additional resources to aid state organizations in meeting the standards as they become available.*

Standards and Technical Guidance - Pillar 1: Mission and Values

(Mission – statement of purpose, who we are and our reason for existing / Values – important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of an organization; principles or standards of behavior)

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STATEMENT | **STANDARD** | **REQUIREMENTS**

Operates in alignment with the mission and values of the National CASA Association and adheres to and ensures the integrity of the Core Model in state organizations and local programs

1. State organizations will adhere to the National CASA Core Model

➤ Requirements

- Inform National CASA about any potential deviations from or risks to the Core Model
- Work with National CASA to assess alignment and relevancy before new practices and initiatives are developed and implemented at the state and local program levels
- Volunteers are screened, trained in dependency court matters, and provide best interest advocacy for the children served
- The Core Model:
 - Volunteers provide best interest advocacy to children and youth who are before the court as a result of abuse or neglect as defined by the state child welfare laws; living at home or in out-of-home care
 - Volunteers are screened per National CASA/GAL Association Standards
 - Volunteers are trained according to National CASA/GAL Training and Facilitation Standards

➤ Resources and Links

- [National CASA Core Model](#)

2. State organizations will adhere to the Role of a State Organization and respect and support the Role of National CASA and the Role of a Local Program

➤ Requirements

- The state organization can document that it has promoted awareness of the CASA/GAL Network and the need of children who have experienced abuse and/or neglect (as defined in the State Role)
- Provides support to local programs as defined in the Role of the State (if applicable)
- Leads or facilitates QA with local programs
- Supports the training of local volunteers
- Assists in fundraising initiatives that support local programs
- Supports the National CASA/GAL Network

➤ Required Documentation

- Public Education and Community Awareness Plan

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➤ Related Practices

- Promotes role of State CASA Organization in meetings and with other community partners (e.g. courts, child welfare organizations)

➤ Resources and Links

- [Role of National CASA](#)
- [Role of a State Organization](#)
- [Role of Local Programs](#)

3. Has a written mission statement consistent with the mission of National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association

➤ Requirements

- Written
 - Clear, simple and easily explained
 - Be recognizable as a mission of a state organization
- State statute that defines and authorizes the work and mission of the organization (public), or
- Formally developed and adopted by organization's governing body or legislative authority

➤ Required Documentation

- Mission Statement
- Written documentation that the mission statement was formally adopted

➤ Related Practices

- Annual review of the mission statement by the governing body to ensure relevancy
- Governing body members and staff know the organization's mission
- Mission statement should inform services, priorities, decision-making, planning, and resource development
- Avoid elaborate language, buzz words, jargon, abbreviations and acronyms

➤ Resources and Links

- National CASA Mission Statement: The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, together with its state and local member programs, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every abused or neglected child in the United States can be safe, have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive.
- BoardSource: [Tips for Developing a Mission Statement](#)

Models organizational values of integrity, transparency, inclusion, trust, respect and continuous learning and improvement

4. Has written values

➤ Requirements

- Values are defined, reinforced and known by governing body and leadership

➤ Required Documentation

- Values statement

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- **Related Practices**
 - Values inform and are consistently demonstrated by the governing body and leadership when making decisions for the state organization
 - Values are displayed, are part of the job descriptions and performance evaluations, and are included in meeting agendas and/or staff communications
- **Resources and Links**
 - [National CASA Values](#)

Standards and Technical Guidance - Pillar 2: Leadership

(The highest level of organizational staff to include the State Director and any executive staff)

Leads the organization effectively through a strong partnership with the governing body

5. Has regular meetings with and opportunities for input from the governing body with agreed upon deliverables

- **Requirements**

Non-profit organizations:

 - Meetings are conducted in accordance with the state organization's bylaws
 - Meetings are regularly held with the governing body and minutes reflect decisions made

Public State Organizations:

 - Confirms that it is part of a statutorily mandated structure that has responsibility, oversight and means for accountability for the state organization
- **Required Documentation**
 - Bylaws/Operational Procedures
 - Meeting Minutes
 - State statute (public)
- **Related Practices**
 - Governing body meeting packet
 - Has a state director who attends and presents a thorough board report with up-to-date and relevant information at each board meeting. Additionally, he or she may meet with the board chair or board committees between meetings to add an additional layer of transparency and collaboration (non-profit only)
 - Has a reporting assessment tool that is tied to outcomes
- **Resources and Links**
 - BoardSource: [The Board-Staff Partnership](#)

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LEADERSHIP

6. The State Director carries out the roles and responsibilities as defined within the job description that includes core competencies for a State Director as evidenced by an annual performance evaluation.

➤ Requirements

- Has a job description that reflects the core competencies, core duties and responsibilities, experience, abilities, qualifications and values as established by National CASA
- Annual State Director Performance Evaluation
 - a. Evaluated by person to whom they are accountable
 - b. Standardized evaluation form
 - c. Review State Director performance against established criteria
 - d. State Director is an active participant
 - e. Assessment of job performance
 - f. Clearly stated objectives for future performance
 - g. Recommendations for further training and skill-building
 - h. Opportunity for State Director self-evaluation
 - i. Signed by the State Director and governing body leader

➤ Required Documentation

- State Director Job Description
- Signed and completed Annual Performance Evaluation

➤ Related practices

- Job descriptions are reviewed annually and updated, as needed, in conjunction with annual performance evaluation

➤ Resources and Links

- Sample Performance Evaluation forms
 - [Sample 1](#) – publicly administered
 - [Sample 2](#) – non-profit
- BoardSource: [The 6 Core Competencies of Nonprofit Chief Executives](#) (*nonprofit organizations only*)

Demonstrates commitment to and implementation of development of the governing body and staff

7. Facilitates the development and progression of staff through training and leadership opportunities

➤ Requirements

- Must have a written professional development plan for staff
- Tracking of staff training and development opportunities

➤ Required Documentation

- Professional development plan for staff
- Documentation of completed staff training

➤ Related Practices

- Attends the National CASA/GAL annual conference and other trainings
- State sponsored staff development opportunities or benefits

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

8. Facilitates the development of the governing body

➤ Requirements

- Partners with the governing body leadership to ensure:
 - Comprehensive and proper orientation and onboarding process that educates the governing body on the mission, vision and network-at-large, national, state and local.
 - Understanding of Core Model, Role of National CASA, Role of a State Organization, Role of a Local Program, Standards for State CASA/GAL Organizations, and membership and regulatory reporting requirements.

Non-profit organizations:

- Informs and assists the Board in the establishment of a written Board development plan
- Supports the Board in the identification of state leadership development opportunities

➤ Required Documentation

- Board development plan (*Non-profit only*)
- Board/Governing Body orientation and onboarding materials

➤ Related Practices

- Consistently provides governing body with opportunities to participate in workshops, attend conferences, including the National CASA conference, expand networking, and be mentored in all governing matters
- Provides an outside expert to train governing body when appropriate

➤ Resources and Links

- BoardSource: [Orientation & Education](#)
- BoardSource: [Board Development Plan](#)

The organization is equitable, inclusive and reflects the diversity of the community it serves

9. Adopts and implements an ongoing, written plan to track, evaluate and guide diversity of its Board (non-profit organizations only), staff and volunteers in order to reflect the demographics of the community it serves

➤ Requirements

- Written Diversity Plan
 - Identifies specific measurable goals
 - Identifies new goals and activities to be met in the future
 - Includes measurable action steps which are reviewed, measured and documented at least annually
 - The plan is updated at least every three years
- Leadership, staff and Board (non-profit organizations only) participate in trainings centered on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- The state organization engages in mutual exchange with its local CASA/GAL network to maximize diversity, equity and inclusion
- Annual assessment of community demographics

➤ Required Documentation

- Diversity Plan

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- Documentation of completed staff training
- **Related Practices**
 - The state organization works closely with representatives from legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service organizations and civic groups to address the need for systemic changes that address issues of diversity, inclusion, disproportionality and disparate outcomes
 - Evidence of formalized methods of data collection and analyses (collected on an ongoing basis) regarding the diversity of the organization's governing body, staff and volunteers to reflect the demographics of community served and implementation of interventions to increase diversity.
 - Data should demonstrate that the organization's demographics reflect the community served and services are provided to individuals equitably.
 - Annual data collection of diversity of leadership, staff and Board

- **Resources and Links**
 - [National CASA Inclusiveness and Diversity Training Resources](#)
 - [US Census: QuickFacts](#)
 - [Understanding Disproportionality](#)
 - [Calculating Disproportionality](#)
 - [BoardSource: Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity](#)
 - Inclusiveness and Diversity Plan
 - [Sample 1](#) - nonprofit
 - [Sample 2](#) - nonprofit
 - [Sample 3](#) - tribal
 - Inclusiveness and Diversity Plan Progress Report
 - [Sample 1](#) - nonprofit
 - [Sample 2](#) - public agency

10. Engages and provides services to individuals equitably regardless of race, color, ethnicity, pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, marital status, age, disability, genetic information or other differences

- **Requirements**
 - Understands and seeks to provide reasonable accommodations and is in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as required
 - Has a non-discrimination policy
 - Has no known discrimination violations
 - All staff, board and volunteers read and sign the Anti-Discrimination policy
- **Required Documentation**
 - Non-discrimination policy
- **Related Practices**
 - Engages individuals who can help the organization identify and understand the needs of the children served and the actions the organization can take to address these needs in governance, recruitment, cultural competency education and training, supervision, retention, evaluation and advocacy from a diversity perspective
 - Partners with a local organization to provide diversity and inclusiveness training and support

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **Resources and Links**
 - Americans with Disability Act (ADA.gov)

Partners with National CASA and local CASA/GAL programs to foster network-wide collaboration and excellence

11. Participates in National CASA and local CASA/GAL activities

- **Requirements**
 - State organization staff members participate in activities of National CASA and proactively communicates with National CASA staff regarding the needs and activities of the programs in their state
 - The state organization should be a primary source of providing information to National CASA regarding the needs and activities of the local programs, including program closures or terminations
 - The State organization provides timely information and documentation about the state organization's operations, as requested by National CASA
 - The State organization informs developing and existing programs in its state about National CASA activities, services, membership requirements and benefits
- **Required Documentation**
 - Evidence of inclusion of National CASA information in network communication
- **Related Practices**
 - Attends monthly state director calls
 - Accesses the Member Portal for relevant information
 - The state organization staff, leadership and governing body members, may:
 - Serve on National CASA sponsored councils and committees
 - Attend National CASA annual conference
 - Attend trainings
 - Contribute to/provide feedback during network comment periods
 - Participate on community calls and webinars
 - Coordinate with National CASA regarding legislative activities
 - Engage in press releases/events
 - Support local programs for National CASA grant initiatives
- **Resources and Links**
 - [National CASA Association Training Calendar](#)
 - [State Director Call Calendar](#)

Standards and Technical Guidance - Pillar 3: Funding, Legislation and Presence

(The legislative language and financial resources to provide organizational stability along with the ability to influence decision-making in statewide forums)

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STATEMENT | STANDARD | REQUIREMENTS

Partners with National CASA to impact federal legislation and appropriations

12. Responsive to National CASA regarding federal legislation and/or appropriations

➤ Requirements

- Acknowledge and reply to requests from National CASA indicating the position or action the state organization will take considering its type of entity, governing laws, policies and rules
- The state organization works with, in, and through National CASA and coordinates any meetings or official engagement with members of Congress, Congressional staff or federal agency officials regarding national legislative or funding issues that relate to the CASA/GAL network
- The state organization informs National CASA of any informal interactions with members of Congress, Congressional staff or federal agency officials regarding national legislative or funding issues that relate to the CASA/GAL network.
- The state organization coordinates with National CASA before taking a position on national legislative issues

➤ Required Documentation

- Public policy agenda, if one is developed by your state

➤ Related Practices

- The state organization is in regular contact with National CASA regarding state legislation and appropriations.
- The state organization participates in the National CASA Meets Congress, Hill visits, in-district meetings with Congressional members and staff, and acts on National CASA legislative alerts
- The state organization notifies National CASA of state legislative days and shares any associated collaterals

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Partners with National CASA on national funding opportunities that benefit the CASA network

13. Responsive to National CASA regarding national private and public funding opportunities

➤ Requirements

- Acknowledge and reply to requests from National CASA regarding prospective relationships and funding opportunities to indicate the state organization's intention considering its type of entity, governing laws, policies and rules
- The state organization informs and coordinates with National CASA prior to pursuing funding opportunities that have a national scope/implementation

➤ Required Documentation

- Resource development protocol, non-profits only

➤ Related Practices

- Work with National CASA to ensure transparency and trust among all parties involved and that funding relationships are mutually beneficial
- When the state organization discovers a funder which is not appropriate exclusively for state level support, the organization should provide that lead to National CASA
- Collaborate with National CASA to develop and implement strategies to secure support from national or regional-level funders and donors

Operates on a statewide basis and is a recognized partner in state-level decision making and is a leader in advancing child welfare legislation that supports the mission

14. Seeks to participate in state-level decision-making

➤ Requirements

- The state is aware of the needs of and represents the voice of the local CASA/GAL programs in their state
- The state organization makes known its role, functions and capacities to stakeholders, as appropriate to its services.
- Pursues cooperation and coordination with: government agencies, legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups, and businesses.

➤ Required Documentation

- Public policy plan, non-profits only
- Documentation of state-level participation

➤ Related Practices

- Examples of types of opportunities for participation or hosting include:
 - Conferences
 - Legislative sessions
 - Hearings
 - Trainings
 - Workshops
 - Panels
 - Meetings
 - Councils

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- Task Forces
- Resources and Links
 - Definition:
 - State level decision making – having critical input into the direction of matters that may impact communities or persons throughout the state

Obtains, maximizes and leverages state funding support

15. Builds relationships with state agencies, legislators and the judiciary to support opportunities for funding

- Requirements
 - Actively pursue and maintain positive relationships with staff in relevant state offices
 - Participate in regular opportunities to educate and increase awareness to targeted groups and to the public of the benefits of CASA/GAL services
- Required Documentation
 - Plan for cultivating relationships
- Related Practices
 - Research appropriate funding opportunities and secure State support as necessary
 - Identify and track contacts and communications via a contact log
 - Shares successful strategies with other state directors

16. Seeks state funding

- Requirements
 - Resource development planning includes strategies to obtain, increase and/or leverage state funding
- Required Documentation
 - Resource Development Plan
- Related Practices
 - Has an annual process for budget requests
 - Shares successful strategies with other state directors

Secures sustainable, adequate, and diverse financial resources

17. Has adequate resources to meet current state organization operations and a financial sustainability plan

- Requirements
 - Has a viable process to manage resources to meet current budgetary needs
 - Budget is reviewed annually and tracked monthly to determine what level of funding is needed to align budget with organizational needs and priorities
 - A financial sustainability plan is written, approved by the governing body and goals are reviewed and tracked regularly

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➤ Required Documentation

- Financial Sustainability Plan
- Plan to carry out mandates with available funding (e.g. case reduction policy, budget requests) - Public State Agencies
- Annual Budget
- Finance Committee minutes (non-profit only)

➤ Related Practices

- Can show funding and funding sources have increased over multiple years
- Funding is derived from diverse and multiple sources, if one funding stream ends, the state organization would still be financially secure
- Is not reliant upon one funding source for sustainability; there is a well-distributed balance of funding sources
- Develops a budget contingency plan
- Maintains financial reserves as permitted

Supported by statutory authority for CASA/GAL programs and volunteer role

18. Has or is working to achieve CASA/GAL-enabling legislation including the volunteer role

➤ Requirements

- State statute or court rules relating to CASA/GAL Program, or
- A written plan for how the state proposes to achieve enabling legislation

➤ Required Documentation

- State statute relating to CASA/GAL Program, or
- Court rules relating to CASA/GAL Program

Maintains sound financial and operational systems assuring stewardship, accountability and risk management

19. Has written financial internal controls and systems that are consistent with generally accepted accounting principles

➤ Requirements

- Written Budget based on:
 - Anticipated funding
 - Fixed and incremental costs of operating the state organization
 - Identification of potentially changing costs and conditions
- Budget is reviewed and approved by governing body prior to beginning of fiscal year
The governing body has a policy for the review and approval of deviations from and revisions to the budget
- Financial Reporting
 - Reporting as required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
 - Annual 990 filed only for non-profits
 - The nonprofit state organization makes timely payments (e.g. IRS Form 941) and reports to the IRS and to other taxing authorities, as required by law
 - Annual report – financial, statistical and service data summary

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- Audits or independent financial reviews required annually. Audits are required at least every 3 years regardless of annual revenue.
 - A financial statement audit, review, or compilation in conformity with those respective accounting reporting standards, is required based on annual revenue. See table below:

Annual Program Revenue	Time requirement	Financial Statement Service	Service Provider
Revenue > \$500,000	Annually	Audit	Independent CPA
\$250,000 > \$500,000	Annually	Review	Independent CPA
Revenue < \$250,000	Annually	Compilation	Qualified Individual

- The financial statement service occurs within 9 months of the end of the fiscal year.
- A designated committee of the governing body, such as finance or audit review committee, or a designated member of the governing body reviews the report findings and meets with the independent accountant as necessary.
- The report is reviewed and formally approved or accepted by the governing body and is made available for public inspection
- When a management letter has accompanied an audit report, the nonprofit state organization's governing body promptly reviews and ensures that management acts on its recommendations.
- State organizations who are recipients of National CASA grants may be subject to additional financial oversight

Non-profits

- Designated committee reviews findings and meets with the independent auditor as necessary
- Reviewed and formally approved by the governing body
- Made available for public inspection
- When recommendations are made by the independent auditor the organization's governing body promptly reviews and ensures that management acts on the recommendations

Public Agencies

- In a state organization operated under public auspices, an audit is conducted periodically which covers all years since the previous audit was conducted and is conducted in accordance with laws or regulations governing audits of the financial operations of a public agency

○ Financial Accounting and Record Keeping

- Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) is applicable to independent audits and reviews. Therefore, management's financial statements must be prepared in accordance with GAAP
- Donor/funder restricted funds must be segregated in the accounting system

- Operational Procedures in regard to accounting control include:
 - Descriptive chart of accounts
 - Prompt and accurate recording of revenues and expenses
 - Maintenance of a filing system which contains account records and receipts
 - Safeguarding and verification of assets
 - Control over expenditures
 - Separation of duties to the extent possible
 - Internal financial control policies:
 - Accounting controls including limited system access, segregation of duties, dual controls
 - Authority parameters and approval procedures
 - Documentation standards
 - Protection of assets
 - Limited access to key assets
 - Reports, reconciliations and reviews

- If the state organization disburses funding to local programs the state organization must have:

- Describes the decision-making process
- Provides an opportunity for local program input into the derivation of the formula or criteria used in the decisions to grant funds, unless such formula or distribution of funds is prescribed by the funder
- Identifies the person or entity of the state organization that makes the final decision regarding the grant formula and/or awards
- Explains the mechanism and timeframes for disbursement of funds and publication of fund recipients
- Is available for review upon request

- Requirement for a written agreement between the state organization and the local program that stipulates the terms and conditions of funding and includes financial reporting requirements and programmatic reporting requirements (does not apply to direct service states)
- Requirement that local programs that receive funding adhere to all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations regarding the use of funds
- A description of the monitoring process including timeframes and grantor and grantee responsibilities
- A description of consequences for non-compliance with the grant terms and conditions

- **Facility and Workplace Management**

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Operates from commercial or community (donated or leased) office space that provides a safe, well maintained physical environment for its staff, volunteers and visitors.
- State office is located in the capital or another strategic location.
- Maintains a work environment for its staff and volunteers that is conducive to effective performance.
- Facilities comply with applicable ADA standards, fire safety codes and regulations.
- The nonprofit state organization plans for the dispersal of property in the event of its dissolution.

○ Risk Management

The state organization:

- Protects its physical, human and financial resources and data by evaluating, preventing or reducing the risks to which they are exposed.
- Has liability protection for the governing body, organization, state staff and state volunteers through the court, state statute or private insurance coverage.
- Evaluates and reduces its potential liability by:
 - Assigning the risk management function to a person or committee whose job description includes responsibility for risk management policies and activities
 - Ensuring that appropriate bonding, self-insurance or external coverage is adequate to meet the potential liability of the state organization
 - Developing a process to identify risks in terms of their nature, severity and frequency
 - Avoiding risk through loss prevention and risk reduction
 - Evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the risk-management function
- Carries workers' compensation insurance, which meets state requirements, and other insurance as deemed necessary based upon evaluation of its risks, and protects itself through means such as indemnification, participation in a risk-pooling trust or obtaining external insurance coverage.
- Requires that all persons with authority to sign checks, handle cash and contributions or manage funds be bonded, or that the program maintains appropriate insurance coverage to cover losses which may be incurred.
- Informs its governing body, officers, employees and volunteers of the amount and type of coverage that is provided on their behalf by the program.
- Annually reviews its insurance coverage with its insurance carrier to ensure adequate coverage.
- Requires appropriate automobile liability insurance and operator's licensing for employees who use the organization's motor vehicles, or their own, for organizational business.
- Requires that staff, volunteers and governing body members immediately notify the state organization of any criminal activity.
- Displays licenses or other evidence of compliance prominently in the office.

➤ Required Documentation

- Annual Budget
- Annual 990 (non-profits only)
- IRS Form 941

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Annual Report
- Audits, Final Reviews, Financial compilation reports
- Internal Financial Controls Policies
- **Related Practices**
 - **Facility and Workplace Management**
 - The state organization takes reasonable measures to maintain its equipment and ensure it is used as intended.
- **Resources and Links**
 - [Internal Controls Considerations](#)
 - Financial Accounting Foundation: [The Importance of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles \(GAAP\)](#)
 - BoardSource: [The Consent Agenda - A Tool for Improving Governance](#)

Promotes and maintains National CASA/GAL brand consistency at the local and state level

20. Complies with National CASA branding requirements and policies which includes trademarks, slogans, logos and other brand assets

- **Requirements**
 - Has the naming convention "Insert State Name CASA Association" or "Insert State Name GAL Program"
 - Complies with branding guidelines and graphic standards
- **Required Documentation**
 - Samples of the use of the logo, trademark, etc.
- **Resources and Links**
 - **Note:** National CASA is in the process of updating the brand standards and branding campaign. Once the work that is being done in partnership with R&R is complete in early 2019, National CASA will provide additional details about the new branding campaign, and any recommendations for an updated logo treatment. Until then, we ask that you adhere to the current standards, avoid making any significant changes or investments in a branding campaign, and not start the use of "I Am for the Child."
 - Marketing@casaforchildren.org – technical assistance for branding and trademark compliance

21. Adheres to National CASA policies that apply to State CASA/GAL Organizations

- **Requirements**
 - Is familiar with and adheres to all relevant National CASA policies
 - Is in compliance with the National CASA Membership Agreement
 - If the state organization has a fundraising or separate volunteer auxiliary, the state makes that entity aware of National CASA membership requirements, standards, policies and protocols, and specific auxiliary standards.
- **Related Practices**
 - Review of National CASA policies with staff

Standards and Technical Guidance - Pillar 4: Governance

(The highest level of oversight and direction of an organization with fiduciary accountability for the stewardship of tangible assets)

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STATEMENT | STANDARD | REQUIREMENTS

Operates in compliance with regulations and laws

22. Is in compliance with regulations and laws

➤ Requirements

- Whistleblower Policy. The governing body of the state organization adopts and adheres to a whistleblower policy that provides members of the governing body, staff and volunteers a procedure for reporting unethical, inappropriate or illegal activities by members of the governing body, staff or volunteers. The policy affords the reporter protection in making a good-faith report about such activities
- Conflict of Interest Policy. Conflict of interest policy is adhered to and reviewed by the governing body and leadership annually. There is a well-developed understanding of what a conflict of interest is and how to apply the policy.
 - Require that those associated with the organization in the capacities named above will not use their relationship with the organization for personal or professional gain
 - Identify and define transactions and conduct in which a conflict of interest exists or has the potential to exist and warrants disclosure
- Review state's open meeting/Sunshine laws
- Has access to legal counsel with relevant legal expertise to clarify the meaning of laws or regulations governing its program operation, and provides legal counsel as needed
- Prohibit employees, paid consultants, governing body and committee members of a nonprofit or public state organization from having direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions or professional services of the organization
 - Identify other specific conduct which is prohibited
 - Establish the requirement that the individual involved make timely disclosure of the conflict or potential for conflict in the transaction
 - Mandate that disclosed conflicts, and the actions taken in response, be documented
 - Include a procedure for recusal from the transaction or decision by the person with the conflict or potential conflict
 - Include a procedure for dismissal or other appropriate discipline of the person involved with the conflict in the event said person fails to disclose the conflict prior to becoming involved in the transaction or decision affected by the conflict
- If the state organization has a fundraising auxiliary, the state makes that entity aware of National CASA standards and protocols
- Is organized and/or structured in accordance to one of the four approved National CASA state organization structures
- Maintains tax exempt status, if applicable
- The governing body should review Whistleblower Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation at least annually

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

GOVERNANCE

➤ Required Documentation

- Whistleblower Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- 501c3 Letter of Determination
- Bylaws or Operational Procedures
- Articles of Incorporation
- Board Meeting Minutes

➤ Related Practices

- A lawyer who sits on the state governing body may also provide pro bono legal counsel as long as the roles have been clarified by the governing body in order to keep the two functions separate

➤ Resources and Links

- BoardSource: [Sunshine Laws](#)
- BoardSource: [Sample Conflict of Interest](#)
- Sample Conflict of Interest Policy
 - [Sample 1](#) – general
 - [Sample 2](#) – public agency
- Sample Confidentiality Policy
 - [Sample 1](#) – nonprofit
 - [Sample 2](#) – public agency
- Sample Social Media Policy
 - [Sample 1](#)
 - [Sample 2](#)

23. Is familiar with and has access to resources that enable regulatory compliance

➤ Requirements

- Governing body works to research, identify and make available, resources related to effective management and legal compliance of the organization

➤ Resources and Links

- [US Government Accountability Office – Government Auditing Standards](#) (applicable to Public Agencies)
- Board Source: [Like it or Not: You’re Being Watched \(Charity Watchdogs and What Your Nonprofit Can Do to Put Its Best Foot Forward\)](#) (Nonprofit organizations only)
- Additional Resources:
 - Financial Accounting Foundation: [The Importance of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles \(GAAP\)](#)
 - ADA.gov
 - [Title II \(State and Local Governments\)](#)
 - [Title III \(Public Accommodations and Commercial Facilities\)](#)
 - [US Department of Labor](#)
 - [Tax Information for Charities & Non-Profits](#)
 - [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - Health Information Privacy](#) (HIPAA)

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

Fulfills responsibilities for oversight, leadership, resource development and support

24. Establishes organizational goals and evaluates them annually

➤ Requirements

- Annual State Director Performance Evaluation
 - a. Evaluated by governing body to whom they are accountable
 - b. Standardized evaluation form
 - c. Review State Director performance against established criteria
 - d. State Director is an active participant
 - e. Assessment of job performance
 - f. Clearly stated objectives for future performance
 - g. Recommendations for further training and skill-building
 - h. Opportunity for State Director self-evaluation
 - i. Signed by the State Director and governing body leader
- Has a written Strategic Plan
- Has a written Resource Development Plan
- Has a financial sustainability plan
- Has a written Growth Plan
- Has a Logic Model detailing the current state organization
- Has a defined performance evaluation process for the State Director and for the governing body (*as applicable*)

➤ Required Documentation

- Strategic Plan
- Resource Development Plan
- Financial Sustainability Plan
- Growth Plan
- Logic Model
- Performance evaluation process

➤ Resources and Links

- [Growth Plan Process](#)
 - [Template](#)
- [Approved National Logic Model](#)
- [Unified State Logic Model](#)
- [W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide](#)
- BoardSource: [10 Common Benefits of Dashboard Reports](#)
- [Capacity Building Toolkit](#)
 - [State Organization SWOT](#)

25. Manages financial resources in order to support the state organization's provision of services

➤ Requirements

- The state organization seeks to conserve its financial resources by:
 - Maintaining sound policies regarding purchasing and inventory control
 - Using competitive bidding, where applicable, in accordance with governing body policy and laws or regulations

➤ Required Documentation

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Procurement policy

➤ Related Practices

- The state organization seeks to conserve its financial resources by:
 - Taking advantage of benefits allowed tax-exempt organizations, when applicable
- Annual review of vendor relationships to identify potential cost savings. Review should include evaluation of scope of work, necessity of services, and performance evaluation.
- Where appropriate, State Organizations explore ways to expand existing vendor relationships into financial partnerships (e.g., vendor exhibitions at state conferences)

26. Reviews, updates and adopts all policies at least every 3 years or as required

➤ Requirements

- Develop and implement a plan to review required policies and, where applicable, update as necessary or as required by statute or bylaws

➤ Required Documentation

- Background Screening Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Crisis Management Plan/Communications Plan
 - Written
 - Addresses issues that may have a significant impact on the organization's and/or local programs' credibility, reputation or funding at the local, state or national level
 - To the extent not prescribed by state or local laws, the program has an established procedure to allow the immediate reporting to a court or appropriate agency of a situation in which a court appointed special advocate volunteer has reason to believe that a child is in imminent danger
 - Mandates that information be shared among national, state and local organizations in a timely manner, subject to confidentiality limitations
- Gift Acceptance Policy
- Human Resources Policies
 - Whistleblower Policy
- Insurance Policy
 - The governing body has responsibility for determining the extent and nature of the liability protection needed for state personnel and state volunteers, when applicable laws are unclear or silent.
 - The governing body regularly reviewing potential liability to the organization and staff and establishes the necessary protections for preventing or reducing exposure.
- Internal Financial Controls
 - Evaluates the management's handling of the organization's financial affairs
 - Reviews financial reports at least quarterly, comparing actual versus budgeted expenditures and revenues
 - Disbursement of Funding Policy
- Non-discrimination Hiring Policy
- Records Retention Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Travel Policy

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

➤ Related Practices

- Gather and keep policies in a single place for easy access

WHEN A BOARD OF DIRECTORS EXISTS
(NON-PROFIT STATE ORGANIZATIONS)

Members are effective, engaged and understand their role

27. Operates in compliance with governing documents

➤ Requirements

- Bylaws, articles of incorporation, governing body structure including format and number of meetings are clearly defined and regularly reviewed

Bylaws or Operational Procedures must:

- Describe the organizational structure and clearly define roles and responsibilities of the governing body
- Establish the mechanisms for selection, rotation and duration of membership and for election of officers
- Set the interval and minimum number of meetings for the full governing body (no less than four times per calendar year)
- Set the quorum for these meetings so at least a simple majority of the current membership of the governing body is present at every meeting
- Written Record. The governing body of the state organization maintains a written record of every meeting
 - Summary of the governing body's deliberations
 - All actions taken by the governing body
 - Reports from governing body committees, where applicable
 - Date, time, location of the meeting
 - Type of meeting – regular, special, subcommittee
 - Those in attendance
 - Guests and their affiliation
 - Written record is prepared in a timely manner and copies are made available to members of the governing body and kept with the organization's official documents

➤ Required Documentation

- Bylaws or Operational Procedures
- Meeting Minutes

➤ Resources and Links

- [Robert's Rules of Order](#)

28. Has and complies with written roles and responsibilities

➤ Requirements

- Governing body job description
 - Includes legal and ethical responsibilities; programs and activities of the organization

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Board members should understand and be committed to the obligations of duty of care, loyalty, and obedience
 - Has at minimum a Finance Committee or financial oversight provision
 - Board regularly participates in fundraising
 - Evaluates the state director's performance:
 - In writing at least annually against written performance criteria and objectives established for the time span between evaluations
 - Provides for the participation of the state director in the evaluation process and his/her review, signature on the review and response to the evaluation before it is entered into the staff record
 - Responsible for replacing state director when necessary
 - Has a written succession plan for the state director which:
 - Designates an interim chief executive officer/organization administrator
 - Develops a strategy for the delegation of authority and tasks for the interim director in the absence of the chief executive officer/organization administrator
 - Charges a committee with responsibility for conducting a formal search for a new CEO/organizational administrator
 - Provides the resources needed to carry out the search effectively
 - The governing body establishes an effective, systematic process for education of and communication with members to ensure they are aware of their legal and ethical responsibilities, are knowledgeable about the programs and activities of the organization and can carry out their oversight functions effectively.
 - Formal Board orientation provided and attended by all members
 - Board orientation includes:
 - State organization's goals, objectives, structure and methods of operation, training related to services provided by the organization; a clear expectation regarding annual financial contribution, and provision of key documents related to governance and governing body responsibilities.
- **Required Documentation**
- Written board role descriptions
 - State Director Succession Plan
- **Resources and Links**
- [Program Governance](#)
 - BoardSource: [Checklist of Board Roles and Responsibilities](#)
 - BoardSource: [What Does Board Service Entail?](#)
 - BoardSource: [Board Committee Membership: Who Should Serve on Which Committee?](#)
 - BoardSource: [Chief Executive Succession Planning](#)
 - BoardSource: [Key Steps in Executive Succession Planning](#)

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

Board is comprised of individuals who are committed to advancing the organization's mission

29. Is comprised of members representing various constituencies and affiliations

➤ Requirements

- Board members come from a variety of backgrounds such as legal, financial, child welfare and business
- Requirements of governing body member:
 - Skills and experience to serve at a policy-making level
 - Ability to advocate for sufficient financial resources for the organization to carry out its work
 - Knowledge of the court system and the communities served
 - Ability to reflect the interests of community, local programs and children served and to advocate for culturally responsive delivery of service
 - Other specialized skills needed to carry out the objectives of the program
 - Has a mechanism to ensure local program feedback for the board

➤ Required Documentation

- Board List – Contact List of current board/governing body members with affiliations
- Board Recruitment Plan

➤ Related Practices

- Determine if local programs should be voting members of the state governing body
- State organization has assessed the skills and experience of current governing body members to identify gaps and have filled any gaps in their background

➤ Resources and Links

- BoardSource: [Sample Board Performance Matrix](#)
- BoardSource: [Board Recruitment: Are You Focused on the Right Things?](#)
- Board-Source: [Working with Legislators: An Advocacy Briefing Guide for Board Members](#)
- BoardSource: [Chief Executive Dos and Don'ts in Recruiting Nonprofit Board Members](#)

30. Secures adequate resources to support the state organization's provision of services

➤ Requirements

- Set realistic financial and fundraising goals for the organization
- Maintains calendar of donor development activities
- Sets policies and exercises control over fundraising activities carried out by its employees and volunteers
- Conducts solicitations of individuals, groups, corporations and other potential funders in an ethical manner
- Provides potential funders with an accurate description of the program, its purpose and services, as well as the financial need for which the solicitation is being made
- Spends funds in accordance with the purposes for which they were solicited, except for reasonable costs for administration of the fundraising activities
- Establishes controls on processing and acknowledging contributions in accordance with applicable laws

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **Required Documentation**
 - Fundraising Plan
 - Written Controls for processing contributions
- **Related Practices**
 - Addresses competition for funding with local programs through written agreements
 - Clarifies differences between the role of the state organization and local programs when seeking funding
 - Board has a fundraising committee that leads the organization's effort in identifying, cultivating, and approaching major donors
 - Board members actively engage in fundraising efforts
 - Board members have individual giving goals
- **Resources and Links**
 - [Foundation Directory Online](#)
 - [The Chronicles of Philanthropy / Resources](#)
 - BoardSource: [Tips on How to Address The Board's #1 Challenge: Fundraising](#)

31. Board members are screened through required background checks

- **Requirements**
 - The state organization secures a criminal background check on each governing body member when elected or re-elected or at least every 4 years if there are no Rap Back services, or comparable service that alerts the organization when processing and retention of criminal or civil transactions. To include:
 - Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant has resided and worked for the past 7 years
 - State criminal records
 - FBI or other national criminal database
 - National sex offender registry
 - Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law
 - Checks that will allow for additional names, aliases and/or addresses to be obtained for the individual for further checks
- **Required Documentation**
 - Documentation that the required background checks were completed. Full screening reports with sensitive information are not required.
- **Related Practices**
 - Social security number verification
 - Adult Abuse Registry (APS)
 - Fingerprinting
 - The organization has a policy for international screening of non-citizens or citizens that have lived abroad during the past 7 years
 - The organization has a screening policy describing any criminal convictions that are not an automatic disqualification
- **Resources and Links**
 - [Background Check Partners/Vendors](#)

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

Board membership reflects the goals in the diversity and inclusion plan

32. Has a diversity and inclusion plan for governing body, staff and volunteers

➤ Requirements

- Develops and adopts a diversity and inclusion plan for governing body members, staff and volunteers
- The governing body aims to reflect the diversity of the community and has members who bring a range of skills, backgrounds and knowledge that support the state organization in fulfilling its mission
- Evaluates progress toward the goals in the diversity and inclusion plan annually
- Board participates in trainings centered on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion

➤ Required Documentation

- The Diversity and Inclusion Plan:
 - Identifies specific measurable goals
 - Identifies new goals and activities to be met in the future
 - Includes measurable action steps which are reviewed, measured and documented at least annually
 - The plan is updated at least every three years

➤ Related Practices

- Diversity and inclusion is a priority for the governing body and leadership
- Understands that a focus on inclusion and sensitivity to cultural differences (i.e., diversity of staff and governing body members) can help ensure decisions are based on a full spectrum of perspectives.

➤ Resources and Links

- BoardSource: [Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity](#)
- BoardSource: [Where is Race on Your Board's Recruitment Agenda?](#)

Standards and Technical Guidance - Pillar 5: Staff

(Personnel, paid or unpaid, to carry out daily operations)

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STATEMENT | STANDARD | REQUIREMENTS

Highly qualified, skilled and experienced staff who provide effective leadership

33. Has relevant education and/or experience and competencies required by job descriptions

➤ Requirements

- Has competencies and education, experience and/or training in a field related to the position for which they are hired
- Administrative and/or supervisory responsibility is assigned to employees qualified by experience and training
- The state organization employs and retains only persons who are qualified according to the job description for the position they occupy
- Employees meet all applicable state registration, licensing or certification requirements for their assignment and/or use of profession
- The state organization, in its ongoing planning process, details the type and number of staff required to accomplish the organization's goals and objectives
- There are written job descriptions for each position or group of similar positions which clearly specifies qualifications and responsibilities
- The state organization manages its clerical and administrative systems, including accounting, bookkeeping, staff records and statistical reporting, and assigns appropriately skilled staff to carry out those tasks

➤ Required Documentation

- Written Job Descriptions

34. Staff are screened through required background checks

➤ Requirements

- The state organization secures a criminal background check on each staff at least every four years. To include:
 - Criminal records from the court jurisdiction in which the applicant has resided and worked for the past 7 years
 - State criminal records
 - FBI or other national criminal database
 - National sex offender registry
 - Child abuse registry or child protective services check where permissible by law
 - Checks that will allow for additional names, aliases and/or addresses to be obtained for the individual for further checks

➤ Required Documentation

- Documentation that the required background checks were completed. Full screening reports with sensitive information are not required.

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **Related Practices**
 - Social security number verification
 - Adult Abuse Registry (APS)
 - Fingerprinting
- **Resources and Links**
 - [Background Check Partners/Vendors](#)

Operates with trust, accountability and commitment

35. Has written human resources policies and procedures which direct the work and activities of all staff in the organization

- **Requirements**
 - Develop comprehensive, written human resources policies and procedures
 - Human resources policies are:
 - Adopted by the governing body
 - Clear, consistent and equitable
 - Comply with applicable laws and regulations governing fair employment practices
 - Provide written notification of any changes to human resources policies and require staff signature confirming they have received and read the policy
 - Administer policies without discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), religion, national origin, marital status, age (40 or older) or disability or genetic information

Recruitment and Selection Policy for Employees

- *Applicants must:*
 - Complete a written application containing information about educational background and training, employment history and experience working with children
 - Submit the names of three or more references, at least two of whom are unrelated to the applicant
 - Reference checks should be documented in writing either by the person who provided the reference or the staff person who conducted the reference check and retained in the employee file
 - Authorize the state organization and other appropriate agencies to secure state and local criminal records check as well as a national criminal records check, sex offender registry and child protective services check as permissible by state law
 - Attend and participate in personal interviews, if requested
 - Verify the accuracy of the information submitted on the written employment application
 - If the state organization permits staff to transport children or drive on behalf of the organization, the applicant shall provide to the organization at the time of the application:
 - Copy of a valid current driver's license
 - Evidence of adequate personal automobile insurance

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- *State Organization must:*
 - Verify the information provided on the application regarding licensures, education and certifications.
 - Obtain the following:
 - References from a minimum of three persons.
 - Criminal background check on each employee prior to hire
 - State and local criminal records check; national criminal records check, sex offender registry and child protective services check as permissible by state law
 - Motor vehicle division records check
 - Reject applicant if:
 - Applicant refuses to sign a release of information form or submit to required information or fingerprints for any requested records check (this policy must be state on application form)
 - Applicant found to have been convicted of, or having charges pending for, a felony or misdemeanor involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect or related acts that would pose risks to children or the state organization's credibility is not accepted for employment.
 - Assess the applicant's awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural and socioeconomic factors of the children and families served by CASA/GAL programs.
- **New Employee Orientation** must include information regarding:
 - Mission and purpose of CASA/GAL programs on local, state and national levels
 - Policies and services
 - Information about confidentiality laws and the employee's responsibility to abide by these laws
 - Information about the state organization's structure, service mandates and professional ethics, including sexual harassment and nondiscrimination policies
 - Lines of accountability and authority within the organization
 - Information about pertinent laws, regulations and policies
- **Employee Training and Development**
 - The training and development program is reviewed annually and revised based on the state organization's assessment of its training needs.
 - The training and development program includes the opportunity for employees to pursue continuing education to improve knowledge and skills and fulfill the requirements of their respective positions.
 - The training and development program provides information related to children who are abused or neglected and in the court system, including topics of cultural competency, inclusion and diversity issues.
- **Employee Supervision**
 - Provides adequate supervision to for its employees
 - The state organization delegates supervisory responsibility and holds employees accountable for the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities.
 - Frequency of individual or group supervision is arranged on the basis of employee needs, the complexity and size of the workload and the newness of the assignment.

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

STAFF

- Supervisors are easily accessible and make every effort to provide quick and thorough guidance to employees
- **Employee Evaluation**
 - At least once a year, the performance of employees is evaluated by the person to whom they are accountable, using a standardized evaluation form, to review their performance against established criteria. The employee is an active participant in this process.
 - Employee evaluations include:
 - Assessment of job performance in relation to the quality and quantity of work defined in the job description and to the performance objectives established in the most recent evaluation
 - Clearly stated objectives for future performance
 - Recommendations for further training and skill-building, if applicable
 - Opportunity for employee self-evaluation
 - Employees are given the opportunity to sign the evaluation report, obtain a copy and include written comments before the report is entered into the staff record.
- **Employee Discipline and Termination**

The state organization has:

 - Written policies and procedures for the termination of employees that are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
 - Human resources policies and practices that specify the conditions for disciplinary action and non-voluntary termination of employees, including violations of program policy and/or documented substandard performance.
 - Policies and procedures that specify the person or persons with authority to terminate or discharge an employee.
- **Staff Records**
 - The state organization maintains a written staff record for each employee that contains:
 - Identifying information and emergency contacts
 - Recruiting and screening documents such as applications and resumes and educational verification.
 - Pay and compensation information.
 - Job description
 - Training records
 - Performance evaluations
 - Disciplinary actions
 - Termination summaries
 - Letters of commendation
 - Time attendance records
 - Employees must be granted access to staff records
 - Written policies grant employees access to their records and detail the procedures for review, addition and correction by employees of information contained in the record.
 - Confidential records that *must* be kept separate from basic staff file include:

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Equal employment opportunity (EEO)/invitation to self-identify disability or veteran status records.
- Reference/security/background checks.
- Drug test results.
- Immigration (I-9) forms.
- Medical/insurance records (medical questionnaires, benefit enrollment forms and benefit claims, doctor's notes, accommodation requests, and leave of absence records).
- Child support/garnishments.
- Litigation documents.
- Workers' compensation claims.
- Investigation records (although relevant disciplinary action, counseling or other direct communications are placed in the employee's staff file).
- Requests for employment/payroll verification.

➤ Required Documentation

- Human resources policies/Employee Handbook contains:
 - Human resources practices
 - Working conditions
 - Wage policy and benefits
 - Salaries and Benefits. Established by considering practices of similar agencies and organizations or, in the case of a public entity, are in compliance with salary and benefit levels set by appropriate executive or legislative bodies.
 - Insurance protection
 - Required and supplemental training and development opportunities
 - Non-Discrimination Policy
 - Covers employment, application for employment and the administration or delivery of services
 - Equal employment opportunity policy - The state organization has a written equal opportunity policy which clearly states its practices in recruiting, selecting and promoting staff.
 - The state organization publicizes its equal opportunity policy in its personnel recruitment materials.
 - ADA -The state organization makes an effort to ensure its facility is free of barriers that restrict the employment of or use by physically challenged
 - Compliant with Americans With Disabilities Act as applicable
 - Whistleblower policy. The governing body of the state organization adopts a whistleblower policy that provides members of the governing body, staff and volunteers a procedure for reporting unethical, inappropriate or illegal activities by members of the governing body, staff or volunteers. The policy affords the reporter protection in making a good-faith report about such activities.
 - Travel Policies.

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Grievance Policy. Written operational procedures regarding grievances to provide fair and equitable opportunity and forum to lodge formal complaints and appeals, where allowed by state law.
 - Documented and includes final resolution
 - Retained according to organization's written retention policy

Workforce Diversity

- Diversity and Inclusion Plan –
 - Promotes cultural competency and equal opportunity
 - Has a goal and strategies to reflect the children served
- **Related Practices**
 - Participation of staff in review of human resources policies
 - Shall notify all candidates, in writing, of their application status when the position applied for is filled
- **Resources and Links**
 - [Society of Human Resources Management](#)

36. Utilizes a system of checks and balances to ensure effective oversight

- **Requirements**
 - Yearly employee performance evaluation:
 - Evaluated by person to whom they are accountable
 - Standardized evaluation form
 - Review employee performance against established criteria
 - Employee is an active participant
 - Assessment of job performance
 - Clearly stated objectives for future performance
 - Recommendations for further training and skill-building
 - Opportunity for employee self-evaluation
 - Signed by the employee
- **Required Documentation**
 - Organizational Chart
- **Related Practices**
 - Others in the leadership team participate in meetings with the executive director (Board, community members, stakeholders) in order to understand the State Director's role
 - Policies and procedures regarding fundraising, training, volunteer retention and recruitment are documented, and where applicable, multiple people from the leadership team are trained regarding those policies and procedures
 - A wide variety of staff are intentionally included regarding important organizational matters
 - Evolve performance management to coaching
- **Resources and Links**
 - Sample Employee Performance Review Form
 - [Sample 1](#) – publicly administered
 - [Sample 2](#) – non-profit

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

Is experienced and effective in building relationships

37. Has developed/maintained positive relationships with multiple stakeholders

- **Requirements**
 - Cultivates and maintains relationships with appropriate agencies and private organizations to advance CASA's mission
 - Represents CASA on appropriate statewide committees and coalitions dealing with issues that impact child welfare
- **Required Documentation**
 - Evidence of committee and conference participation
- **Related Practices**
 - Serving in leadership positions on statewide committees

Standards and Technical Guidance - Pillar 6: Service

(Process by which a need is addressed)

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STATEMENT | **STANDARD** | **REQUIREMENTS**

Has the capacity to effectively and efficiently meet local network needs and state service needs

38. Is organized to serve the entire local network and state service area

- **Requirements**
 - Has a strategy for serving the entire local network and all children in the state who have experienced abuse or neglect
 - Annual assessment of child service provision needs in the state
- **Required Documentation**
 - Growth Plan
- **Related Practices**
 - Operates statewide through service to/involvement in all jurisdictions and is a recognized and trusted partner on state-level child welfare, court and stakeholder initiatives and respected and relied on for valuable input in state-level decision-making
- **Resources and Links**
 - [Growth Plan Process](#)
 - [Components of a Growth Plan](#)

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

39. New and expanded local programs or auxiliaries are established in accordance with National CASA Program Development Process

➤ Requirements

- Inform and seek guidance from National CASA of any discussion or planning around new program development
- Ensures any proposed or potential program is accepted into the National CASA Program Development Process and before using the CASA name

➤ Required Documentation

- Growth Plan

➤ Resources and Links

- [Growth Plan Process](#)
- [Components of a Growth Plan](#)
- [Local Program Growth Analysis Toolkit](#)

40. Assesses local network needs annually

➤ Requirements

- Surveys and regular communication with local programs regarding their needs. This could be calls, surveys, focus groups or any other format that ensures every local program has an opportunity to express their needs on a regular, consistent basis

➤ Required Documentation

- Written documentation that feedback from local programs has been solicited, collected and analyzed

41. Assesses state organization's capacity to address needs annually and develops and implements a plan to meet needs

➤ Requirements

- Conducts a self-assessment of capacity and resources available as compared to the needs observed for and expressed by the local programs
- State organization creates and /or seeks resources based on local program feedback/data

➤ Required Documentation

- Strategic Plan

➤ Related Practices

- Local program needs are tracked in multiple ways on a regular basis

➤ Resources and Links

- [Capacity Building Toolkit](#)
- BoardSource: [Strategy and Planning](#)

42. Evaluates service delivery to the network annually

➤ Requirements

- Track progress of plan to include gauging satisfaction of local programs of state provided services

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

➤ Required Documentation

- Documentation of service evaluation (e.g., satisfaction surveys)

Develops a written strategic plan/framework every 1-3 years that incorporates short and long-term goals necessary for fulfilling the organization's mission

43. Engages in ongoing planning to advance the mission of the organization

➤ Requirements

- Strategic plan/framework is completed with input from the Board, local programs, or other stakeholders
 - **Assessment.** To develop the strategic plan, an assessment must be completed including evaluation of:
 - Local program needs
 - Delivery of services to local CASA/GAL staff and programs
 - Local program staff satisfaction
 - State organization financial and human resources
 - State organization governance and management
 - Community Demographics, Demographics of volunteers, staff and Board (if applicable)
 - Conducts an analysis of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
 - **Elements of Strategic Plan/framework (Example of Strategic Plan)**
 - Statement of mission and purpose
 - Staffing – including current and projected needs
 - Board of Directors membership, size, method of selection, governing body member performance assessment, meetings, committee structure, and other bylaw provisions
 - Financial projections including income, expenses, reserves and new revenue streams
 - Public education of mission
 - Fundraising goals and strategies
 - Provision of services in accordance with local program needs
 - The development of resources to achieve the state organization's mission
 - Diversity and Inclusivity Plan. The ways the state organization will address the inclusiveness and diversity needs at the state and local levels, including outreach, staffing, volunteer recruitment and training.
 - The Diversity plan should include:
 - Statement of commitment to diversity and inclusion
 - Assessment
 - Community demographics
 - Demographics of children served
 - Analysis of the disparities between children served and volunteers, staff, and Board
 - Strategies to achieve diversity and inclusivity

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Methods to monitor the effectiveness and relevance of the plan:
 - Surveys and other forms of staff, Board and volunteer feedback
 - Regular communication relating to diversity and inclusion
 - Diversity and Inclusivity advisory committee
 - Outreach strategy to ensure a diverse pool of applicants for staff, volunteer and Board positions
 - The desired outcomes for each of its services and criteria for measuring whether and to what extent they are achieved
 - The activities that will be undertaken to accomplish the objectives
 - A timeline for accomplishing the stated activities
 - Parties responsible for accomplishing the stated activities and objectives
 - Includes marketing, finance, operations, and legal plan
 - **Evaluation of Strategic Plan**
 - The state organization conducts a comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness in accomplishing its strategic plan at least every year to determine:
 - The degree to which the organization is achieving its objectives and priorities
 - The degree to which the organization uses its human and financial resources efficiently
 - Strengths, weaknesses and strategies for correcting deficiencies and improving organizational performance
 - Results of Evaluation
 - Evaluation results and any changes to organization's mission, objectives, goals and activities are provided to the governing body.
 - The results are also made available, upon request, to state organization staff and local programs.
- **Required Documentation**
 - Strategic plan or framework
 - State Logic Model
- **Related Practices**
 - Has access to each of the updated local program logic models
- **Resources and Links**
 - [W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide](#)
 - [Approved National Logic Model](#)
 - [Unified State Logic Model](#)

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

Continuously improves the quality of services and leadership it provides

44. Participates in the Highly Effective Standards Review Process (HESRP) conducted by National CASA as required

- **Requirements**
 - Participates in onsite reviews conducted by National CASA as required
- **Related Practices**
 - Review State Development Plan and/or Action Plan prior to onsite review

45. Ensures financial, statistical and programmatic information is collected

- **Requirements**
 - The state organization establishes and maintains a system for collecting information and program data necessary from local programs
 - The state organization completes and submits the National CASA Association Annual State Organization Survey
- **Related Practices**
 - Has a robust case management system that is able to track and link volunteers and children served. The data system should be able to generate reports based on child or volunteer –level data including the outcomes of permanency and return to care. Finally, the data system should be able to create reports that can be used widely across systems.

Educates the public regarding the mission of the organization, the work of local CASA/GAL programs and the needs of the children served

46. Works with the court and judiciary to educate and ensure compliance with the Core Model

- **Requirements**
 - Meets with state-level court and judicial personnel to ensure understanding of National CASA Core Model and scope
 - Assures programs work with their local judiciary to ensure understanding of and adherence to National CASA's Core Model and scope
 - Informs and seeks assistance from National CASA about any potential deviations from or risks to the Core Model
- **Required Documentation**
 - Documentation of meetings with courts and judicial personnel
- **Related Practices**
 - Examples of interactions with court and judicial personnel include:
 - Conferences
 - Legislative sessions
 - Hearings
 - Trainings
 - Workshops

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Panels
- Meetings
- Councils
- Task Forces

47. Has and executes a public education and community awareness plan

➤ Requirements

- Has a written Public Education and Community Awareness Plan
- Reaches out to effect change for children on a state level
- Partners with community organizations in regular training and mutually beneficial and supportive functions (legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service and civic groups, and businesses)
- Child welfare stakeholders often look to the state organization for their expertise in child welfare, volunteering, volunteer retention and fundraising
- The state organization makes known its role, functions and capacities to other agencies, community organizations and government bodies as appropriate to its services and as a basis for interagency cooperation and coordination of services
- The state organization works closely with representatives from legal and social services communities, other child advocacy programs, community service organizations and civic groups to address the need for systemic changes that address issues of diversity, inclusion, disproportionality and disparate outcomes
- System in place for referring volunteer inquiries to the appropriate local CASA/GAL program
- The state organization has a process for seeking the input of local CASA/GAL programs to coordinate public education efforts through:
 - Establishing a public education committee or team
 - Sharing materials developed for public education purposes among programs
 - Surveying local programs annually to determine needs and suggestions for public education activities
- The state organization collaborates with local programs and National CASA to ensure that public education efforts meet the needs of local programs and avoid overlap and duplication
- When the state organization plans statewide publicity, local programs are given sufficient notice to prepare for the possibility of increased inquiries
- The state organization conducts an ongoing program of public information and education to provide an understanding of the organization's purpose, function, need for volunteers and place in judicial proceedings and the community social service system

➤ Required Documentation

- Public Education and Community Awareness Plan

➤ Related Practices

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Provides opportunities to educate local representatives regarding issues of importance to CASA programs and the children they serve
- Use social media to motivate and educate local programs, child welfare stakeholders and community
- **Resources and Links**
 - [Advocacy in Action: Resources to Support Safety, Permanency, and Wellbeing](#)

Collects, reviews, ensures the integrity of, and reports data from local program network in non-aggregate form to National CASA and data as required to State agencies for national reporting.

48. Has a process to ensure the timely submission of data from the local program network to National CASA and state agencies

- **Requirements**
 - The state organization submits accurate state level data to state agencies in a timely manner
 - The state organization receives from each local program a copy of its National CASA Annual Local Program Survey and/or other annual statistical reports
 - The state organization supports National CASA's efforts to collect data and assists in securing it from local programs as needed
 - The state organization follows the National CASA Association and State CASA/GAL Organization Data Collection Protocol
 - The state organization maintains written policies and procedures regarding what uses will be made of the collected data, for the purpose of building transparency and public trust
- **Related Practices**
 - Board is aware of the organization's data submission requirements and provides oversight of submission process
- **Resources and Links**
 - [National CASA Reporting Tools](#)

49. Reviews data from local programs for accuracy

- **Requirements**
 - The state organization reviews and confirms with National CASA data received from each local program via a copy of its National CASA Annual Program Survey and/or other statistical reports
 - Responsive to National CASA when sharing annual local program data
 - Review core data elements per program for general accuracy
 - Report any errors or concerns to National CASA in the appropriate timeline (minimum one month)
- **Related Practices**
 - State organization reviews local program data submissions in their entirety
- **Resources and Links**
 - [National CASA Reporting Tools](#)

STANDARDS FOR STATE CASA/GAL ORGANIZATIONS

Submits accurate, validated and timely state level data and reports to National CASA.

50. Submits timely state level data and reports to National CASA

- **Requirements**
 - The state organization submits timely state level data and reports to National CASA (i.e. budget, staffing, and service information)
- **Related Practices**
 - Board is aware of the organization's data submission requirements and provides oversight of submission process
 - State organization has a process to review and validate data for accuracy prior to submission
- **Resources and Links**
 - [National CASA Reporting Tools](#)

Ensures high quality facilitation and delivery of research-informed and evidence-based National CASA/GAL Pre-Service training through evaluation and assessment

51. Ensures high quality delivery of National CASA Pre-Service training

- **Requirements**
 - Have at least one Master Facilitator trained for the state according to National CASA/GAL standards who will either provide training or equip local facilitators to deliver training to local program volunteers
 - Delivery is conducted by facilitators who have met the requirements established by National CASA
 - All pre-service curriculum must be delivered by a facilitator who is prepared and deemed ready to deliver training to volunteers:
 - Preparation can include (but is not limited to) attending a training of facilitator preparation course facilitated by state's Master Facilitator; ensuring local programs are co-facilitating with an experienced facilitator lead or receiving a facilitator certification from a nationally recognized organization.
 - Ensures all program facilitators have previously completed a CASA/GAL volunteer pre-service training, received some form of training by the state organization or National CASA, or have co-facilitated his/her first CASA pre-service training with a facilitator who has received some form of training by the state organization or National CASA.
 - Guest speakers shall not deliver the curriculum unless trained to facilitate the CASA training
- **Required Documentation**
 - Proof of completion of facilitator training or other certification process (if appropriate)
 - Proof of completion of volunteer pre-service training
 - Documentation of hours of in-service/continuing education training completed.
- **Related Practices**
- **Resources and Links**
 - [Everyone Ready](#)