

**CLARK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM**

Petitioner: Steven D. Grierson, Court Executive Officer

Recommendation:

Approve and authorize the Chair to ratify and accept a grant from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Association for Children in the amount of \$60,000 to increase public awareness about CASA's mission through paid media campaigns and increase the number of CASA volunteers supporting children of families impacted by substance abuse. (For possible action)

FISCAL IMPACT:

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|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Fund #: | 2031.000 | Fund Name: | County Grants |
| Fund Center: | 1160322000 | Funded PGM/Grant: | 1160.CASA.2022 |
| Amount: | \$60,000.00 | | |
| Description: | N/A | | |
| Additional Comments: | N/A | | |

BACKGROUND:

In 1977, the first CASA/GAL program was started in Seattle (King County), Washington and in the same year the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges committee endorsed the program as a model for safeguarding a child's rights to a safe and permanent family. In 1978, our very own Judge John F. Mendoza of Las Vegas, Nevada suggested the term "court appointed special advocate" or CASA, as a designation for the lay court appointed volunteers. Shortly thereafter, in 1980, the CASA program began in the Eighth Judicial District Court here in Clark County.

The mission of the CASA program is to support and promote court appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children so that they can thrive in a safe, permanent home. The CASA program recruits, screens, trains and supervises volunteers, who are appointed by a Judge to represent the best interest of abused and neglected children. These highly trained, court appointed volunteers are responsible for making recommendations to the court about the safety, permanency and well-being of their assigned child(ren). CASA volunteers advocate on behalf of their child(ren)'s physical, educational, medical, emotional and social needs. CASA volunteers have contact with social workers, attorneys, parents, teachers, family members, foster parents, health professionals and, of course, the children themselves. CASA volunteers establish a relationship with their child(ren) and provide consistency and stability during an extremely difficult time in their child(ren)'s lives. CASA volunteers are asked to remain with their child(ren) until permanency is achieved. Currently, the program has approximately 380 CASA volunteers and serve nearly 1,000 children annually. Our goal is to provide a CASA for every child in the system.

At any given time, approximately 3,300 children are placed in protective custody in our child welfare system. Over the previous forty one years, our program has served a maximum of 30% of children with a CASA volunteer annually. This first ever grant from the National CASA/GAL Association aims to improve this percentage by

Cleared for Agenda

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introducing National CASA/GAL Association's Change a Child's Story ad campaign to our community and increase the number of CASA volunteers supporting children of families experiencing alcohol and drug addiction.