



## CASE ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST

Jackson County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that mobilizes community volunteers who act as advocates for children who have experienced abuse and/or neglect and are under the jurisdiction of the Jackson County Family Court. Our clients face multiple risks, including permanent separation from their birth families due to factors such as substance use disorders, untreated mental health, and intimate partner violence, all of which are often the rooted effects of poverty, community violence, and intergenerational trauma. To mitigate these risks, CASA Volunteer Advocates engage in fact-finding and relationship building with their child clients to make recommendations about all their needs. Collaboration with our child clients and their families is one of our most crucial values and is what promotes excellent advocacy and just outcomes in a complex child welfare system.

Our model is simple: Every child client is assigned a volunteer advocate, who has been rigorously screened and extensively trained, and a guardian ad litem/staff attorney who advocates for their best interest. This team has access to staff social workers and child welfare experts who help them provide individualized advocacy grounded in evidence-based practices. Together, they assure the best possible outcomes for their children and increase the likelihood for families to be reunited.

At Jackson County CASA, we value our Volunteer Advocates, each other, and most importantly the children we serve. We work hard, love to learn, celebrate our successes, and support one another, all while having a ton of fun! **And best of all, Jackson County CASA is expanding its services and will soon represent all children in Jackson County under the Court's jurisdiction.** This means that we are doubling our service population and that's why we need you! With more staff and Volunteer Advocates, Jackson County CASA will be able to work toward its vision of ensuring every child involved with the Jackson County Family Court due to abuse or neglect will grow up in a safe and permanent home.

### OUR VALUES

**Connection:** We believe that every person deserves meaningful relationships with supportive and loving adults, family, and community and preservation of their cultural heritage, traditions, and identity.

**Respect:** We value people of all backgrounds and identities and believe that every person deserves to be honored, included, and heard.

**Collaboration:** We recognize that effective progress and problem-solving require diverse voices, ideas, and perspectives.

**Integrity:** We honor our commitments to our children and the Court with transparency, honesty, and fairness.

**Responsibility:** We maximize our resources and support through accountability to our children, stakeholders, and community.

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Working closely with Jackson County CASA's Staff Attorneys and as part of a multidisciplinary team, the Engagement Case Specialist is responsible for the immediate engagement with child clients newly appointed to the agency and the preliminary but thorough investigation into their circumstances. Pending the assignment of a Volunteer Advocate, the Engagement Case Specialist will provide the initial case management for up to 40 children to ensure that those children receive the highest quality of service and representation. The Engagement Specialist will zealously advocate for the best interest of children of all ages, genders, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender expressions and identities, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds. As part of a multidisciplinary team, this role provides client-centered representation and is committed to improving outcomes for the agency's clients, including advocating for timely services and family-based permanency. The Engagement Case Specialist also contributes professional expertise that is specific to the needs of each

case and consults regularly with the agency's legal and volunteer services departments to guide their advocacy and ensure best practice standards.

## **SUPERVISION RECEIVED**

Manager of Case Specialists

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Case Initiation**

- Completes a preliminary, but thorough, investigation of the case and exploration of the child's circumstances to ensure safety while minimizing disruption to the child's world.
- Meets with the child as early as possible after appointment to introduce CASA and the court process in a developmentally appropriate way, assess their decision-making capacity, ascertain their wishes regarding placement/family time/participation in services, and gather other information to understand the child's perspective and how decisions will impact their experience.
- Engages with the child welfare agency, family members, parents, and others to establish a working relationship, collect all available information about the child and family, and identify additional information sources for further investigation.
- Formulates recommendations regarding placement, family time and appropriate level and source of supervision necessary to ensure safety, and immediate service needs for the child, parents, and family to present at the initial court hearing.
- Ensures seamless transfer of the case to the assigned CASA team (Guardian ad Litem and Volunteer Advocate or Pro Bono Attorney) by providing an overview and initial theory of the case, review information gathered and documents prepared, and direction on further investigation needed.

### **Case Management**

- Develops a trusting and professional relationship with clients through face-to-face visits, a minimum of once per month. Visits will take place in multiple settings to best observe and document the child's living situation, developmental progress, educational needs, and emotional well-being.
- Communicates regularly with the child's Family Support Team, including but not limited to parents, family, social service workers, therapists, educators, and medical professionals, to collect the information needed to make recommendations regarding the child's best interest.
- Investigates the child's circumstances and wishes to evaluate and recommend permanency plans and services that will benefit the child and family.
- Reviews case documentation to assist with determining client well-being. Reports findings to the Staff Attorney assigned to the case.
- Monitors court orders and advocates for the implementation of timely and necessary services for clients.
- Maintains a sense of urgency for getting children and their families to safety in their permanent home.
- Attends and actively participates in case related meetings, including 72 Hour Meetings, Team Decision Making Meetings, Stability Staffings, and Family Support Team meetings, and other collateral matters (e.g., IEP meetings).
- Is familiar with community resources and links the child and their family to resources specific to their needs.
- Communicates regularly with staff attorneys, both verbally and in writing, with relevant information concerning the child and the case.
- Diligently investigates and assesses placement alternatives for the child if the child is not placed with their family.
- Uses a strengths-based, practical approach to help the case team identify and accomplish non-legal case goals.

### **Specialized Knowledge**

- Will develop a robust understanding of safety vs risk, trauma-informed care, and best practices in child welfare. Will create community partnerships with agencies and community actors with specialized knowledge.

- Provides consultation to Staff Attorneys, Volunteer Advocates, and Advocate Supervisors to guide their advocacy and assists with locating and accessing services needed for clients.
- Creates post-release service and safety plans and presents them to the client and case team.
- Partners with the Manager of Volunteer Training to create and provide high quality and relevant continued education for Volunteer Advocates.

#### **Customer Service**

- Provides timely communication to Staff Attorneys, Volunteer Advocates, and Advocate Supervisors.
- Will schedule and facilitate case transfer meetings with Volunteer Advocates and Advocate Supervisors to ensure continuity of advocacy to children, as well as excellent customer service to Volunteer Advocates.

#### **Record Keeping**

- Responsible for providing thorough records and ensuring all case related data and activities are promptly updated and/or documented in CASA's online database Optima.

#### **Professional Integrity and Development**

- Engages in respectful and collaborative relationships with clients, community partners, and Volunteer Advocates.
- Commits to understanding and complying with the Missouri Guardian ad Litem Standards, Rules of Professional Conduct, and other court rules.
- Shares in the agency-wide responsibility of Volunteer Advocate recruitment, engagement, and retention.
- Maintains strict confidentiality of Jackson County CASA's clients, volunteers, staff, and donors.
- Will complete a minimum of 12 hours of annual continuing education programming. Will identify personal development goals and training opportunities that will prioritize DEI and child welfare best practices.
- Embraces a culture of continued development by participating in an annual performance review with the Manager of Case Specialists and documents one's own milestones and achievements, as well as opportunities for growth.
- Maintains a positive image of Jackson County CASA and provides excellent customer service at all times.
- Acts in the best interest of Jackson County CASA and its clients at all times.

#### **OTHER DUTIES**

- Attends and participates in monthly and quarterly Volunteer Advocate engagement events such as appreciation and continuing education events.
- Must complete CASA Pre-Service Training within three months of start date.
- Perform other related duties as requested by the Director of Legal Services, Vice Presidents of Operations, and President/CEO.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS and ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

##### **EDUCATION and EXPERIENCE**

- Bachelor of Social Work or another human services degree required. Three years of case management experience in child welfare or serving at-risk populations will be considered in lieu of a bachelor's degree.
- Demonstrated commitment to providing client-centered advocacy.
- A working knowledge of issues that impact CASA's clients and their families, including the effects of poverty, trauma, intimate partner violence, substance use disorders, untreated mental health, and SOGIE. Must also have familiarity with child development.
- Must possess an understanding of services that impact children and their families such as child placement options, therapeutic interventions, permanency planning and safety planning, as well as Missouri Children's Division policies.

##### **ESSENTIAL QUALITIES**

- Ability to exercise objectivity in assessing and making recommendations for children and families.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships in a diverse, inclusive, and multi-disciplinary environment. Must value collaboration and teamwork.

- Empathetic and solution-oriented, using a blameless problem-solving approach.
- Commitment to remaining current on research and best practice standards and carrying out and teaching these practices.
- Promotes the dignity and well-being of all clients, staff, and volunteers.
- Comfort with respectful confrontation.
- Practices healthy professional boundaries and observes self-care practices.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills, as well as strong attention to detail and accuracy.
- Strong organizational skills with the ability to juggle multiple assignments and meet short deadlines.
- Ability to work with minimal supervision.
- Must be able to demonstrate adaptability due to the potential for changing duties and responsibilities during the agency's expansion. Optimism is a must.
- Commitment to Jackson County CASA's mission and values.

### **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Must submit to and pass a criminal and child abuse and neglect background check.
- A valid driver's license and reliable personal transportation are required for this position. Frequent travel within Jackson County and surrounding areas, including long-distance travel, will be required. Mileage will be reimbursed.

### **SALARY**

Salary range starts at \$44,000 and is DOE.

### **SCHEDULE and WORK LOCATION**

- Full time, 40 hrs/week. Frequent evenings and some weekend hours will be required. Ability to work some hours remotely. Jackson County CASA is located 2544 Holmes, KCMO 64108.

### **PHYSICAL and MENTAL DEMANDS and WORK ENVIRONMENT**

- Prolonged periods of both standing, walking, and sitting at a desk and working on a computer will be required. Will be required to use hands and fingers frequently. Will climb and descend stairs, grasp, handle, feel, and operate objects, tools, and controls. Will be required to bend, kneel, and crouch; speak, hear, and read both in quiet, loud, private and public settings, both large and small. In-office and out-of-office public contact with people. Vision abilities include close and distant vision, and the ability to adjust focus.
- Must be able to lift and move up to 25 pounds.
- A great deal of in-person contact with people outside of the office environment will be required.
- The noise level of the office environment is often low to moderate. Position is subject to the usual office interruptions associated with providing service and performing multiple duties in an office environment.
- Proper grooming and hygiene is required. Attire for this position is generally business casual but there may be times that attire is professional, as determined by the setting.
- Reasonable accommodation will be made to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential duties and responsibilities.

### **BENEFITS**

Benefits include 15 days paid time off & 15 days paid leave earned within the first year of employment. Paid holidays. 100% employer paid health insurance, 100% employer paid dental, vision, life, and long-term disability insurance. Simple IRA with match. Employee Assistance Program. Jackson County CASA is a child-centered, supportive, and collegial work environment.

### **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Submit a cover letter and resume to [hr@casakc.org](mailto:hr@casakc.org). Please submit a detailed cover letter indicating your interest and qualifications for this position. Resumes submitted without a cover letter will not be considered. No phone calls please.

## **OUR COMMITMENT**

Jackson County CASA is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer committed to building and supporting a culturally diverse and inclusive work environment that values all staff members' backgrounds and perspectives. We encourage applications from all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, disability or veteran status. We are committed to providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities.

This job description provides a general, but not comprehensive, list of essential responsibilities and qualifications required. It does not represent a contract of employment and Jackson County CASA reserves the right to change the job description and/or posting at any time without advance notice.