



# Judicial Council of California

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## REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

*Item No.: 23-150*

For business meeting on: September 19, 2023

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**Title**

Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2023–24 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association

**Agenda Item Type**

Action Required

**Effective Date**

September 19, 2023

**Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected**

None

**Date of Report**

August 24, 2023

**Recommended by**

Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee

Hon. Stephanie E. Hulsey, Cochair

Hon. Amy M. Pellman, Cochair

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### Executive Summary

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends approving the allocation of \$20 million in Court Appointed Special Advocate program grant funding, included in the Budget Act of 2023, to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association for fiscal year 2023–24.

### Recommendation

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective September 19, 2023:

1. Allocate \$20 million in General Fund appropriations for the California Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association for fiscal year 2023–24 specified by the Budget Act of 2023 (Assem. Bill 102; Stats. 2023, ch. 38) to:
  - a. Provide funding to the local CASA programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training, and to stabilize local budgets and staffing; and

- b. Be used statewide for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of training curriculum, collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the required report to the Legislature, and other uses to expand CASA services in the state; and

2. Direct the California CASA Association to:

- a. Allocate \$16 million to local CASA programs using an equitable funding methodology based on local CASA program needs; and
- b. Collect, compile, and submit data to the Judicial Council, as determined in collaboration with Judicial Council program staff, on program implementation and outcomes to support the required report to the Legislature and other uses to expand CASA services in the state.

A link to the relevant provisions in the Budget Act of 2023 is provided at Link A of the Attachments and Links section.

### **Relevant Previous Council Action**

A CASA program is a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes trained volunteers appointed by a judicial officer to provide advocacy for a child who is under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court. A CASA volunteer spends time with the child, monitors the child’s needed services, and provides child-focused recommendations to the court based on the best interest of the child.

Legislation (Assem. Bill 4445; Stats. 1988, ch. 723) amended Welfare and Institutions Code section 100 et seq. (see Link B) to require the Judicial Council to administer a CASA grant program and maintain guidelines for local CASA programs. These CASA programs (1) assist abused and neglected children who are the subject of judicial proceedings, and (2) train and supervise CASA volunteers at the direction of their local juvenile court in accordance with California Rules of Court, rule 5.655 (see Link C).

The Budget Act of 2022 (Sen. Bill 154)<sup>1</sup> included \$60 million in one-time Judicial Council CASA grant funding to be allocated to the California CASA Association for support of CASA programs across the state. The act specified that: “\$48,000,000 shall be allocated to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association to provide funding to the local court-appointed special advocate (CASA) programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing ... [and] [¶] ... \$12,000,000 shall be allocated to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association to be used statewide for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of statewide training curriculum, collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the report to the Legislature, and other uses to expand court-appointed special advocate (CASA) services in

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<sup>1</sup> SEC 4. Item 0250-101-0932 of section 2.00 of Budget Act of 2022, provisions 31–34.

the state.” At its meeting on September 20, 2022,<sup>2</sup> the Judicial Council approved allocation of the \$20 million in General Fund appropriations, included in the Budget Act of 2022, to the California CASA Association. On June 30, 2023, staff for the Judicial Council’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts submitted to the Legislature the *Report on California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Funding Allocations and Program Development: Year One*, in accordance with the requirements stated in the Budget Act of 2022.<sup>3</sup>

At its meeting on July 21, 2023,<sup>4</sup> the Judicial Council approved the allocation of \$2.713 million for CASA local assistance grants using the council’s funding methodology approved on July 20 and September 21, 2018.<sup>5</sup>

### **Analysis/Rationale**

A total of \$60 million one-time General Fund was appropriated to the California CASA Association for support of local CASA programs, including \$20 million in fiscal year (FY) 2022–23, \$20 million in FY 2023–24, and \$20 million in FY 2024–25 under the Budget Act of 2022. This report recommends allocation of the FY 2023–24 appropriation included in the Budget Act of 2023.

The appropriation specifies that for FY 2023–24, “\$16 million shall be allocated ... to provide funding to the local [CASA] programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training and to stabilize local budgets and staffing,” and “\$4,000,000 shall be allocated to the California [CASA] Association to be used statewide for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development of statewide training curriculum, collection of data on program implementation and outcomes to support the report to the Legislature, and other uses to expand [CASA] services in the state,” and that “[t]he Judicial Council shall annually report to the Legislature on the court-appointed special advocate (CASA) program implementation and outcomes.” (See Link A, provisions 31, 32, and 34.)

### **Policy implications**

The committee has no policy implications to present this fiscal year.

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<sup>2</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2022–23 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (Sept. 2, 2018), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11204252&GUID=EAE945CB-DE38-46FB-B38D-9AA373B27A29>.

<sup>3</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Report to the Legislature: FY 2022–23 Funding for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (June 21, 2023), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12124956&GUID=A040336C-429B-4192-AD16-D6CB0E323FAA>.

<sup>4</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Court Appointed Special Advocate Funding Methodology, Program Expansion, and Fiscal Year 2023–2024 Allocations* (June 21, 2023), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12124955&GUID=4BBC2005-07B6-4FC7-AF49-155BED6339E0>.

<sup>5</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Judicial Council Budget: Allocation of Augmented Funding for Court Appointed Special Advocate Grant Program* (Aug. 14, 2018), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6612315&GUID=5A5F8317-1BC8-45A1-8CB8-AB2BEA0C37EE>.

## **Comments**

No comments were sought because the Budget Act of 2023 specifies actions that must be taken pertaining to the California CASA Association.

## **Alternatives considered**

There are no viable alternatives to distributing the funds according to the recommendation of the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee. The Budget Act requires the council to distribute these funds to the California CASA Association.

## **Fiscal and Operational Impacts**

There are no fiscal or operational impacts other than the one-time \$20 million judicial branch funding to be distributed to the California CASA Association for FY 2023–24.

## **Attachments and Links**

1. Link A: SEC 6. Item 0250-101-0932 of section 2.00 of Budget Act of 2023 (Assem. Bill 102), provisions 31–34,  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB102&search\\_keywords=budget](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB102&search_keywords=budget)
2. Link B: Welf. & Inst. Code, § 100 et seq.,  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=100.&lawCode=WIC](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=100.&lawCode=WIC)
3. Link C: Cal. Rules of Court, rule 5.655,  
[www.courts.ca.gov/cms/rules/index.cfm?title=five&linkid=rule5\\_655](http://www.courts.ca.gov/cms/rules/index.cfm?title=five&linkid=rule5_655)