



# Judicial Council of California

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## REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

*Item No.: 24-021*

For business meeting on September 20, 2024

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**Title**

Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2024–25 Funding  
Allocation for California Court Appointed  
Special Advocate Association

**Agenda Item Type**

Action Required

**Effective Date**

September 20, 2024

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

None

**Date of Report**

August 15, 2024

**Recommended by**

Family and Juvenile Law Advisory  
Committee  
Hon. Stephanie E. Hulse, Chair

**Contact**

Kelly Meehleib, 916-263-1693  
[kelly.meehleib@jud.ca.gov](mailto:kelly.meehleib@jud.ca.gov)

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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 2024, to the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association for fiscal year 2024–25. The funding supports local court-appointed special advocate programs that recruit and train volunteers appointed by judicial officers to provide advocacy for children under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court. The funding also supports the California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association’s initiatives for statewide volunteer recruitment, shared resources and infrastructure, and training.

### Recommendation

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective September 20, 2024:

1. Allocate \$20 million in General Fund appropriations for the California Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association for fiscal year 2024–25 as specified by the Budget Act of 2024 (Assem. Bill 107; Stats. 2024, ch. 22) to:

- a. Provide \$16 million in funding to local CASA programs to expand capacity, recruitment, and training, and to stabilize local budgets and staffing; and
- b. Provide \$4 million to 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 as described in recommendation 1a 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.

The text of the Budget Act of 2024 is provided at Link A; for the relevant provisions, see section 2.00, item 0250-101-0932, provisions 23–27.

### **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. Forty-five programs in 52 counties serve approximately 10,600 children with 7,400 trained volunteers.

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 [CASA] 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 [CASA] Association to be used statewide for volunteer recruitment initiatives, shared resources and infrastructure, development

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<sup>1</sup> Section 2.00, item 0250-101-0932, provisions 31–34.

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 the state.”<sup>2</sup>

At its meeting on September 20, 2022,<sup>3</sup> the Judicial Council allocated the \$20 million in General Fund appropriated to the California CASA Association in the Budget Act of 2022 and allocated the \$20 million appropriated in the Budget Act of 2023 at its meeting on September 19, 2023.<sup>4</sup> Staff for the Judicial Council’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts submitted reports to the Legislature describing funding allocations and program development for fiscal year (FY) 2022–23<sup>5</sup> and FY 2023–24<sup>6</sup> in accordance with the requirements stated in the Budget Act.

## **Analysis/Rationale**

Under the Budget Act of 2022, 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 FY 2022–23, \$20 million in FY 2023–24, and \$20 million in FY 2024–25. This report recommends allocation of the FY 2024–25 appropriation included in the Budget Act of 2024.

The appropriation specifies that for FY 2024–25, “\$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 23, 24, and 26.)

## **Policy implications**

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

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<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, provisions 31 and 32.

<sup>3</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, 2022), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11204252&GUID=EAE945CB-DE38-46FB-B38D-9AA373B27A29>.

<sup>4</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2023–24 Funding Allocation for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (Aug. 24, 2023), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12246017&GUID=71F6ABFC-A250-4283-9CF8-52ABFA1F6460>.

<sup>5</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>6</sup> Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Report to the Legislature: FY 2023–24 Funding for California Court Appointed Special Advocate Association* (June 17, 2024), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13067032&GUID=A45084D5-74F5-4E83-BF24-9F1DE3A4F21D>.

**Comments**

Public comments were not solicited for this proposal because the recommendations are within the Judicial Council's purview to approve without circulation.

**Alternatives considered**

No alternatives were considered by the committee because the funding is allocated as directed by the Budget Act.

**Fiscal and Operational Impacts**

There are no fiscal or operational impacts.

**Attachments and Links**

1. Link A: Budget Act of 2024 (Assem. Bill 107),  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB107](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB107)
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)