

WISCONSIN CASA ASSOCIATION 2023 IMPACT REPORT



MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association champions the needs of abused and neglected children by supporting and expanding local CASA programs. Giving every child who has experienced trauma through abuse or neglect a voice in Wisconsin.

HOW CASA WORKS

CASA serves children up to the age of 18 as defined by state statute as the limit to youth remaining in care. Judges appoint CASA volunteers to advocate for children's best interests. Every CASA volunteer, called Advocates, works with legal and child welfare professionals, educators, and service providers to ensure that judges have all the information they need to make the most well-informed decisions for each child. The Advocate stays with each case until it is closed and the child is in a safe, permanent home.

Our best-interest advocacy is driven by the guiding principle that children grow and develop best with their family of origin if that can be safely achieved. Many children we work with are in foster care, but some are with their family of origin or kin care. Most children who leave foster care do so to return to their families.

WHAT ADVOCATES DO



LEARN

Advocates get to know the child and learn about their family and life.



ENGAGE

Children and Advocates meet for at least an hour a week, getting to know each other and the child's situation.



RECOMMEND

Advocates speak up for the child's best interest in court, until the case is closed.



COLLABORATE

Advocates work with the child's inner circle of support to ensure they're getting the care and attention they need.



REPORT

Advocates report what they have learned and observed to the court.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**CASA of Marathon County
was established in 2023.**

(Data not included in 2023 figures)

10

Local CASA programs

15

Counties served

938

Children served

558

Advocates

22,000+

Advocate hours volunteered

2,247

Eligible children NOT served by a CASA in counties where a CASA program currently exists.

WHAT MAKES CASA VOLUNTEERS UNIQUE?

1 CASA volunteers are people from all walks of life who have been rigorously screened and trained extensively by their local program to meet state and national standards.

2 Each volunteer receives more than 30 hours of training before they are assigned a child or family of children to work with and fulfill an additional 12 hours of continued education annually.

3 Volunteers receive ongoing support to help them advocate effectively on a child's behalf.

4 CASA volunteers are assigned to only one or two children or sibling groups at a time, allowing more one-on-one time with each child.

5 CASA volunteers stay involved in the case from the time of appointment until the child achieves permanency.

6 CASA volunteers are specially trained to consider issues relevant to the child's best interests, which may differ from those of other parties or the child's wishes. Traditional guardian ad litem attorneys who represent children are required to advocate for their client—the child's—wishes.



MELISSA SKALECKI

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(920) 362-0820
mmichel.wicasa@gmail.com

Wisconsin CASA Association
2701 Larsen Road
PO Box 11412
Green Bay, WI 54307

wisconsin-casa.org



CASA VS GAL

CASA = Court Appointed Special Advocate, a specially trained volunteer

GAL = Guardian Ad Litem, paid attorney

Both are appointed by the court to advocate for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

Local CASA programs currently serve 15 counties in Wisconsin: Barron, Brown, Columbia, Dane, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Marathon, Marinette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Outagamie, Rock, Sheboygan, St. Croix and Vernon counties.