

Annual Local Program QI Process

Introduction

The Louisiana CASA Association is dedicated to fostering a supportive and collaborative environment for all local CASA programs. Our comprehensive annual Quality Improvement (QI) reviews are designed to ensure that local programs maintain high standards in Advocate Recruitment, Training and Supervision, and Governance. These reviews are not intended to be overly burdensome; instead, they serve as a means for us to connect with the programs, understand their needs, and provide the necessary support to help them succeed.

Our approach is rooted in the belief that continuous improvement is best achieved through positive reinforcement and constructive feedback. By working closely with local programs, we aim to promote consistency, accountability, and excellence across all CASA initiatives in Louisiana. Through this supportive process, we strive to enhance the overall effectiveness of our collective advocacy efforts for the children and families we serve.

Focus Areas

- Advocate Recruitment
- Advocate Training
- Advocate Supervision
- Organizational Governance

Quality Improvement Process

Step 1: Annual Membership Renewal Packet

Local CASA programs are required to complete an annual membership packet as part of the membership renewal and QI process. This packet includes important information about the programs that help Louisiana CASA staff identify areas that we can help strengthen and build capacity within the program, including:

- QI Self-Assessment Form
- Program Feedback Surveys from Volunteers and Children Served
- 990s
- Annual Audits

Step 2: In Person Site Visits

- A. Preparation: Schedule the on-site review at least 30 days in advance, providing local programs with a checklist of documents and materials to prepare.
- B. On-Site Activities: Louisiana CASA makes annual site visits to local programs as part of our annual operations plan. During these site visits, Louisiana CASA will meet with the staff from the local programs, including the program director, volunteer coordinators, administrative personnel, and any other key staff members. The purpose of these meetings will be:
 1. Specialized Trainings: Identify any areas where the program could benefit from specialized trainings or additional resources. Discuss specific topics or skills that would enhance the effectiveness of volunteers and staff.

2. Building Program Capacity: Explore areas where the state association can assist in building program capacity. This may include staffing needs, technology upgrades, community outreach strategies, or other areas where support is needed.
3. Strengths and Challenges: Identify the program's strengths and any challenges they are currently facing. Encourage open discussion and feedback from all staff members.
4. Support and Resources: Offer suggestions and resources to address identified challenges and enhance program effectiveness. Discuss any immediate actions that can be taken to provide support.

C. Documentation that May Be Requested Before or During Site Visits:

1. Standard 1
 - a. Board Minutes Reflecting Adoption of the mission and values
2. Standard 2
 - a. Record/ documentation of orientation attendance or dates of completion for staff and governing board members
3. Standard 3
 - a. Confirmation/ documentation of annual DEI training for staff, volunteers and governing board members
 - b. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard
4. Standard 4
 - a. Signed, dated confidentiality policy, oath or agreement from each volunteer, staff person, and governing board
 - b. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard
5. Standard 5
 - a. Certificates of insurance for all insurance policies
 - b. Dated signature sheet from most recent executive director performance evaluation
 - c. Bylaws
 - d. Written/ signed authorizations for background checks (redacted if necessary) or case management system report with completion dates
 - e. Documentation of all background screening for volunteers, staff, and board members
 - f. Documentation that background screenings have been updated at least every 4 years which may include confirmation of Rap Back service for criminal background re-checks
 - g. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard
 - h. Board minutes reflecting review and adoption of annual budget
 - i. Board minutes reflecting review and/ or updates to insurance coverage
 - j. Board minute reflecting review and/or updates to agreement with the court
 - k. Board minutes reflecting review and/or updates to bylaws
6. Standard 6
 - a. Logic Model
 - b. 501c3 designation letter from IRS
 - c. Quarterly financial statements
 - d. IRS form 941s or proof of payment
 - e. Documentation of governing board's review of the audit, financial review or compilation
 - f. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard
 - g. Board minutes reflecting review of quarterly financial statements
 - h. Board minutes reflecting review of annual report

- i. Board minutes reflecting review of IRS Form 990
 - j. Board minutes reflecting review of the audit, financial review or compilation
- 7. Standard 7
 - a. Signed, dated acknowledgement of receiving human resources policies from each staff person
 - b. Complaints, investigations and responses are documented and kept separate from main human resources file for each staff person
 - c. Documentation of employment start date and pre-service training completion date for executive directors and staff supervising volunteers
 - d. Documentation of continuing education and ongoing training hours and content with dates of attendance and/or completion
 - e. Dated signature sheets for each completed staff performance evaluation
 - f. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard
- 8. Standard 8
 - a. Signed court order(s) of appointment
 - b. Documentation of staff supervision meeting dates with volunteer advocates
 - c. Signed acknowledgement of receiving the volunteer policies and procedures for each volunteer advocate
 - d. Copy of equivalent curriculum for review and written pre-approval before use from National CASA GAL if program is not using the current National CASA/ GAL Association preservice training curriculum
 - e. Documentation of pre-service attendance and completion date for each volunteer advocate
 - f. Documentation/ confirmation that facilitator requirements have been met consistent with Standard 8.C.4
 - g. Proof of court observation if allowable
 - h. Pre- Service Training records
 - i. Training dates
 - ii. Names of facilitators
 - iii. Verification that the facilitator has been trained in accordance with the standard
 - i. Participation and completion of records
 - j. Documentation of continuing education hours and content for volunteer advocates to include dates of attendance and/ or completion
 - k. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard
- 9. Standard 9
 - a. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard
- 10. Standard 10
 - a. Date and reason for case closure documented in case file
 - b. Court reports and correspondence
 - c. Child and case records
 - d. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard
- 11. Standard 11
 - a. Board minutes reflecting review of and/or updates to required plans and policies included in this standard

Step 3: Surveys

Conducting annual surveys of judges, board members, volunteers, and children served is a vital component of the Quality Improvement (QI) process for local CASA programs. These surveys offer critical insights into the effectiveness of the program, the quality of advocacy, and the overall governance. By gathering feedback from multiple perspectives, we can identify both strengths and areas needing improvement.

Member Programs survey their volunteers and children served on an annual basis to assess the services being provided and the satisfaction of those participating. As part of the annual membership renewal, local CASA programs are required to submit the results of their most recent volunteer and children served satisfaction surveys. This requirement ensures that comprehensive feedback is collected and reviewed, providing a full picture of the program's performance.

Additionally, an annual survey of the local program's judges and board of directors is required. Louisiana CASA will provide the link to these surveys. Local programs have the flexibility to either distribute the surveys directly to their board members and judges or request LACASA to handle the distribution on their behalf.

The feedback from judges offers an objective view on the effectiveness of CASA volunteers and their advocacy's impact on court proceedings and outcomes. Judges can provide valuable insights into how well volunteers are prepared, their understanding of the legal process, and their ability to make informed recommendations in the best interests of the children.

Board members, with their strategic oversight role, offer an external viewpoint on the program's governance, operational efficiency, and adherence to its mission. Their feedback helps assess the program's alignment with its goals and its ability to respond to community needs.

The insights gained from these surveys allow us to assess the quality of advocacy, identify strengths such as exceptional volunteer performance and successful advocacy efforts, and recognize areas for improvement like gaps in training and communication issues. This comprehensive approach enhances accountability and transparency, ensuring that programs remain focused on their mission and are accountable to their stakeholders.

Conducting these surveys and sharing the results with program staff, volunteers, and stakeholders fosters a culture of open communication and continuous improvement. The data collected provides a solid foundation for making informed decisions about program improvements and aids in strategic planning by setting realistic goals and developing effective initiatives.

Step 4: Remote Branding Review

An important role of the state CASA organization is to ensure fidelity to the National CASA branding guidelines. Louisiana CASA will conduct a remote review of the local CASA program's marketing and branding efforts to ensure adherence to the National CASA rules. The two main areas of focus are:

- A. **Website Evaluation:** Review the local program's website for compliance with branding standards, including logo usage, color schemes, and overall design consistency.
- B. **Social Media Evaluation:** Assess the local program's social media presence to ensure consistent and appropriate branding, messaging, and engagement with the community.

Reporting and Follow-Up

A. QI Report

Louisiana CASA will compile findings from the annual membership packet, on-site review, and surveys into a comprehensive QI report. The report will highlight strengths, identify areas for improvement, and provide specific recommendations for each local program. Louisiana CASA will share the QI report with the local program's leadership and governing board within 30 days of the review.

B. Action Plan

Louisiana CASA will work collaboratively with local programs to develop an action plan addressing any identified issues and implementing recommendations. We will also provide ongoing support and resources to assist programs in achieving their action plan goals.

C. Monitoring and Support (If Necessary)

Schedule follow-up meetings or additional visits as needed to monitor progress on the action plan.

Offer technical assistance, training, and resources to help local programs continuously improve their practices and maintain compliance with standards.

D. Commitment to Excellence

The Louisiana CASA Association is dedicated to supporting local programs in their mission to advocate for the best interests of children in foster care. Through our Quality Improvement reviews, we strive to ensure that every CASA program in Louisiana operates with the highest standards of excellence, accountability, and effectiveness. This commitment to quality helps us provide the best possible outcomes for the children and families we serve.