



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

ATLANTIC, CAPE MAY,
AND CAMDEN COUNTIES

2024FY Annual Report

23 Years Advocating for Children and Youth in southern New Jersey



Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children of Atlantic, Cape May, and Camden Counties and its trained volunteers advocate for the best interests of children in the foster care system. Through collaborative efforts, CASA ensures children receive the individual attention and support they need to thrive.

Best-Interest Advocacy



CASA Network Impact Launched in 2024FY

The CASA Network Impact was designed to unite all CASA programs in New Jersey in an evidence-informed approach that improves outcomes and lives. The core elements include building healthy and enduring relationships, invested funders, performance measurement processes aligned with outcomes, community connections to elevate awareness, equipped advocates to act in the best interest of children, written recommendations that reflect the children's needs, and dismantle and challenge inequities.

We exist to meet this need...

Children and youth who have experienced abuse or neglect need a caring consistent adult in their lives to ensure they are safe and well-cared for until they find a safe, permanent place to call home.

...and are addressing it by...

CASA volunteers--screened, trained, and supported by program staff--are appointed by judges to advocate for a foster child's best interests. CASA volunteers promote healing and help children thrive and reach permanent homes.

This is what success looks like:

CHILDREN & YOUTH HAVE...



Increased hope, trust, attachment, and ability to have relationships

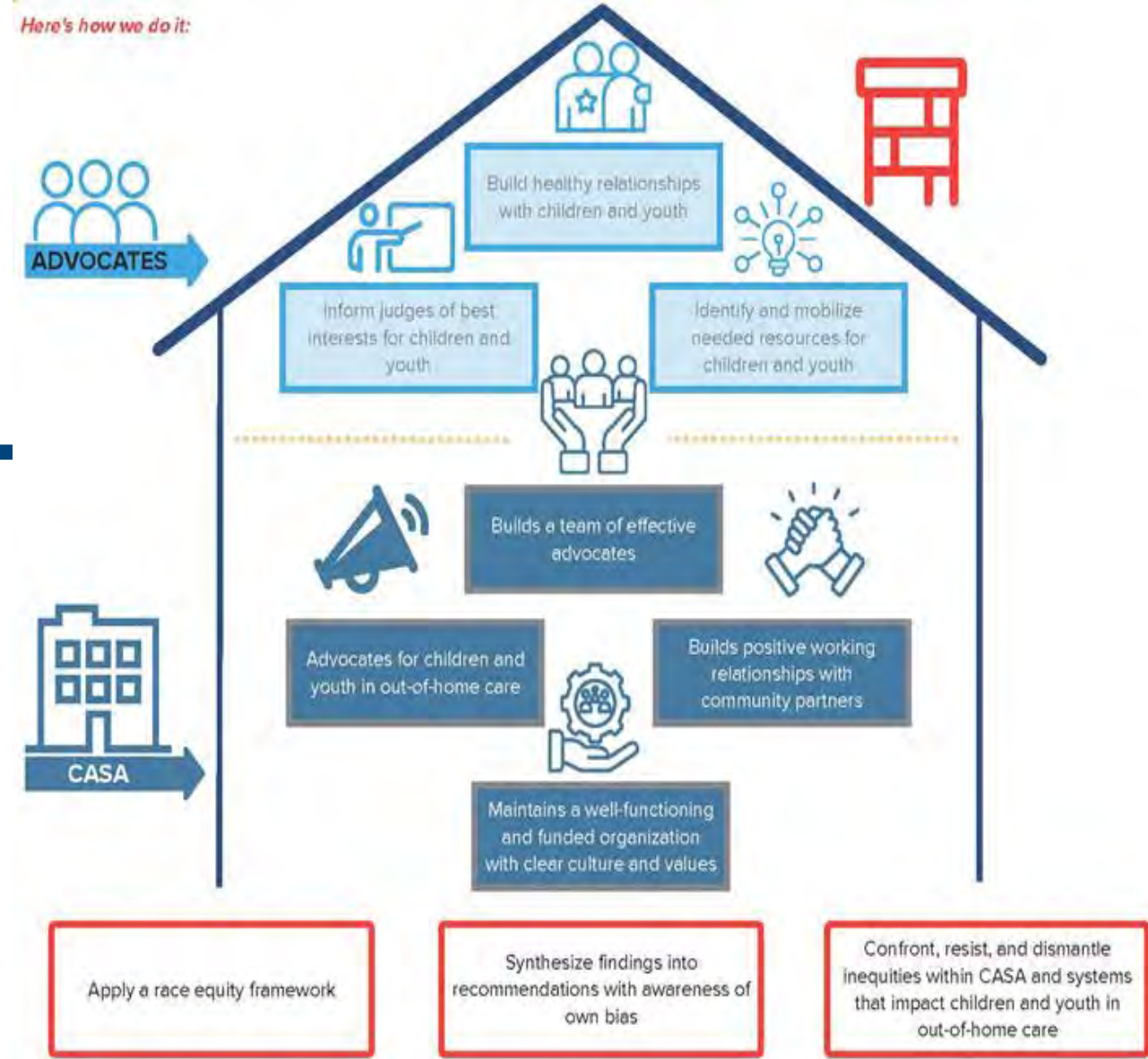
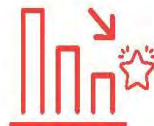


Increased stability/permanency



Improved academic and social development

Reduced justice involvement



Our Renewed Mission, Vision, and Commitment to Equity

Our Mission

CASA for Children of Atlantic, Cape May, and Camden Counties and its trained volunteers advocate for the best interests of children in the foster care system. Through collaborative efforts, CASA ensures children receive the individual attention and support they need to thrive.

Our Vision

A safe, positive, equitable future for children living in foster care in Atlantic, Cape May, and Camden Counties.

Our Commitment to Equity and Anti-Racism

- We confront, resist, and dismantle inequities within our organization.
- We challenge inequities in the systems that impact the children we serve.
- We address both direct and implicit racism, and support each other in unlearning our unconscious bias.
- We foster an inclusive culture of belonging and acceptance for the benefit of everyone in our community.



“A diverse mix of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone.” – Sundar Pichai





CASA volunteers donated 5,277 hours advocating on their cases



CASA volunteers made 2,514 recommendations to the courts regarding the overall well being of children – those recommendations were ordered 99% of the time by the family courts



382 children and youth were served by 185 CASA volunteers



151 children's cases closed, of those 74 children reunited with parents, 26 were adopted, 23 settled with relatives or friends, and 28 were living independently or the case was dismissed



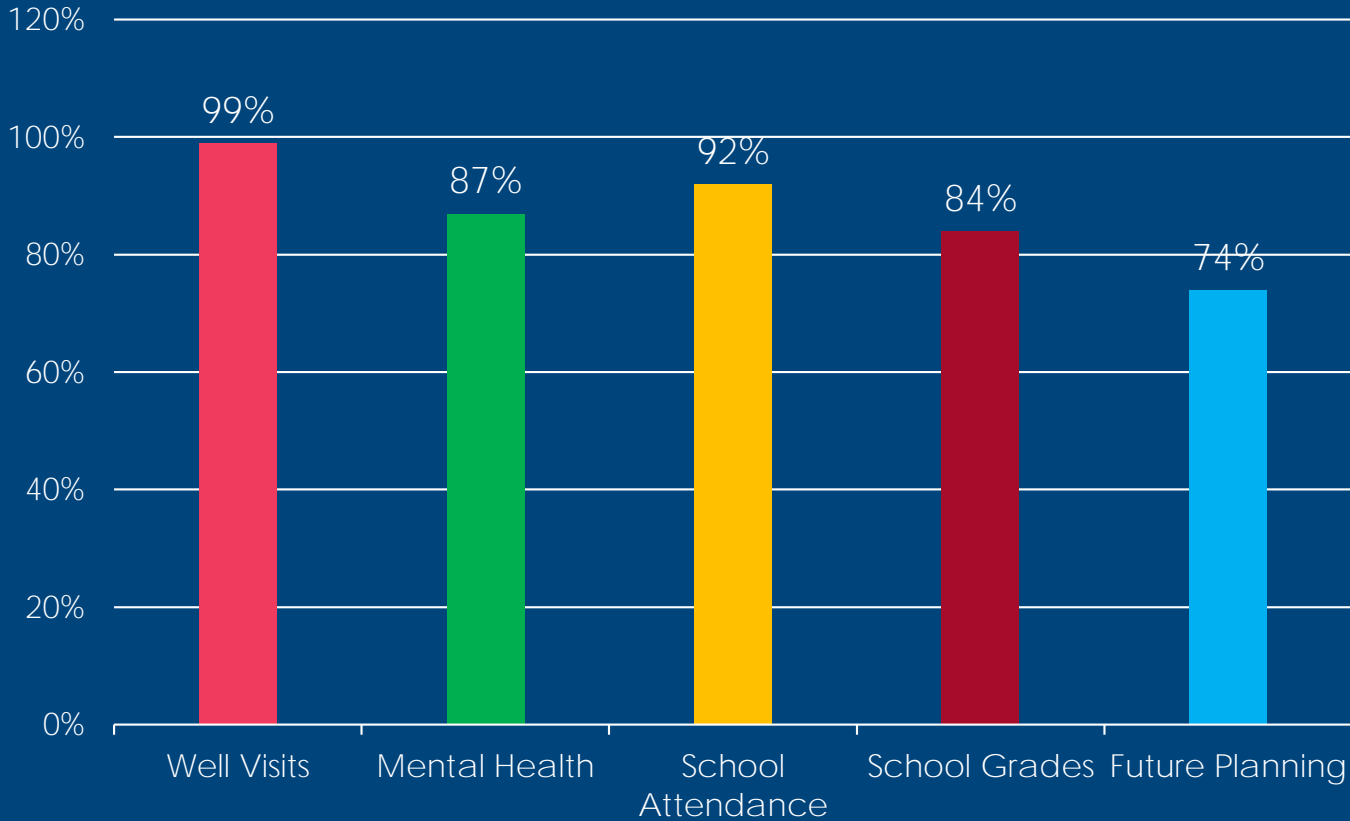


“People sometimes think that being a CASA requires a lot but it really just requires that you are there for the child...that you are caring and committed to that role in the child’s life. You learn that you can offer stability and perspective in the best interests of the child yet sometimes you can’t solve every problem. That’s ok, you can still be there for that child during a time of transition.” - CASA Peggy

Wellbeing Results for Children and Youth with a CASA

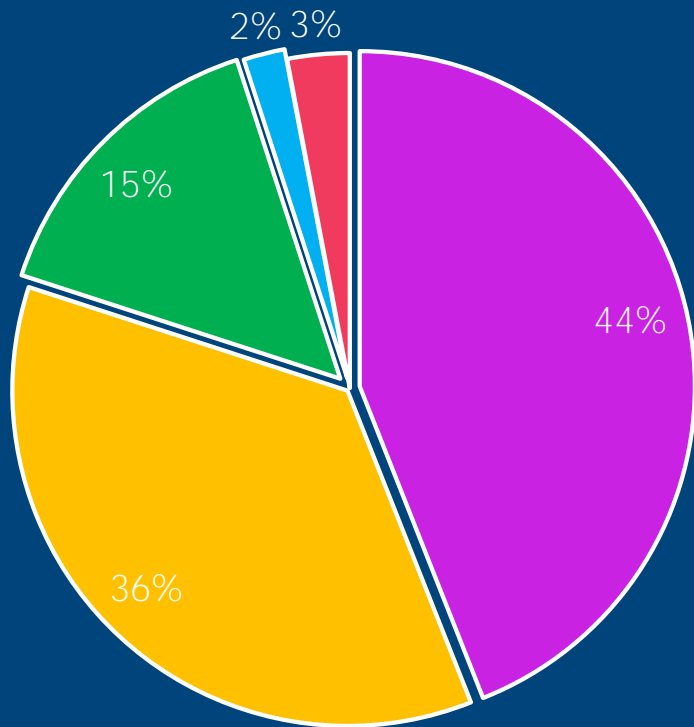
“I have seen first hand the children in need and the efforts made to assist these children. No singular program does more in this regard than the CASA program.” - Family Court Judge

- **99%** of the children (5-17) are current with medical well-visits or regular physicals
- **87%** of children (5-17) with mental health needs, are currently receiving the necessary care
- **92%** of children (5-17) had no reported school attendance problems
- **84%** of children (5-17) had C or above for the majority of their classes/subjects
- **74%** of youth (14-18+) were engaged in discussions with an adult (e.g., professional, caregiver, or CASA) about planning for future education/employment

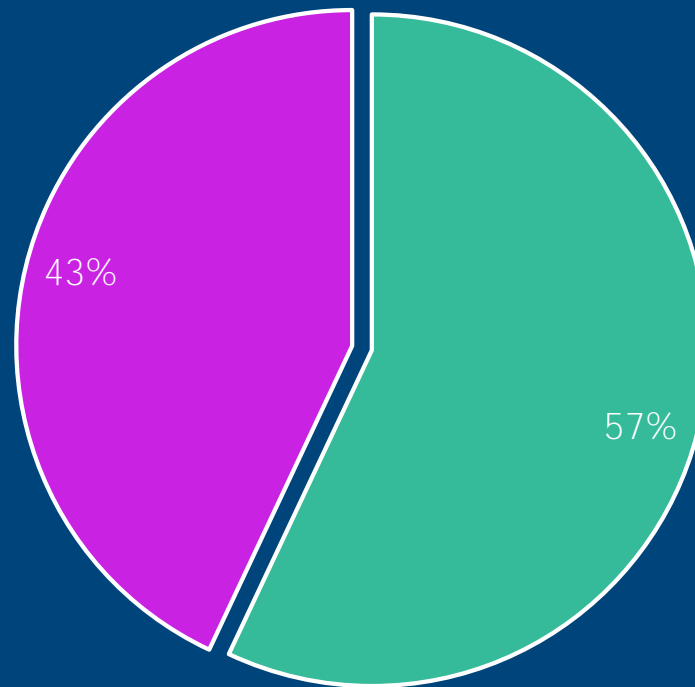


The Children CASA Serves

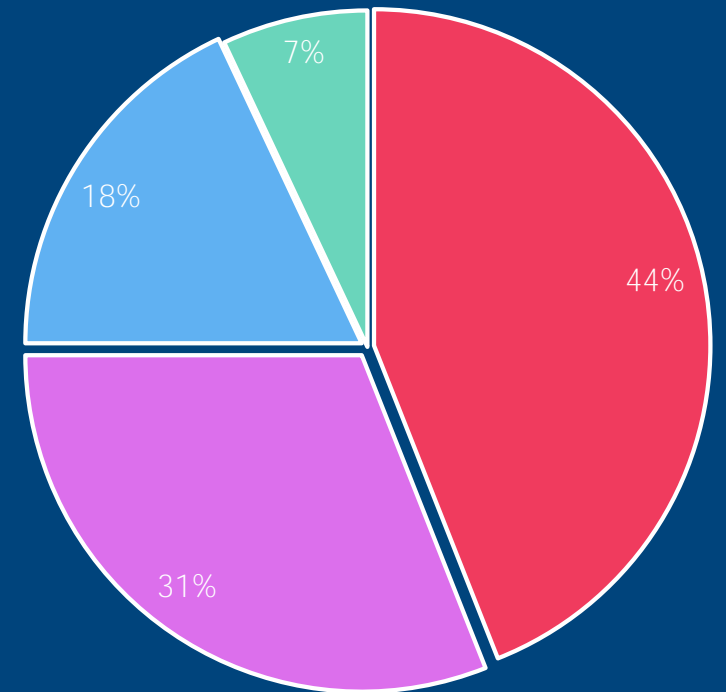
“We all have a responsibility to ensure that every youth living in foster care receives quality advocacy, access to services, and the guidance of a trained CASA volunteer,” - Lauren Crenshaw, Executive Director



White
Black
Multi-race
Unknown
Hispanic



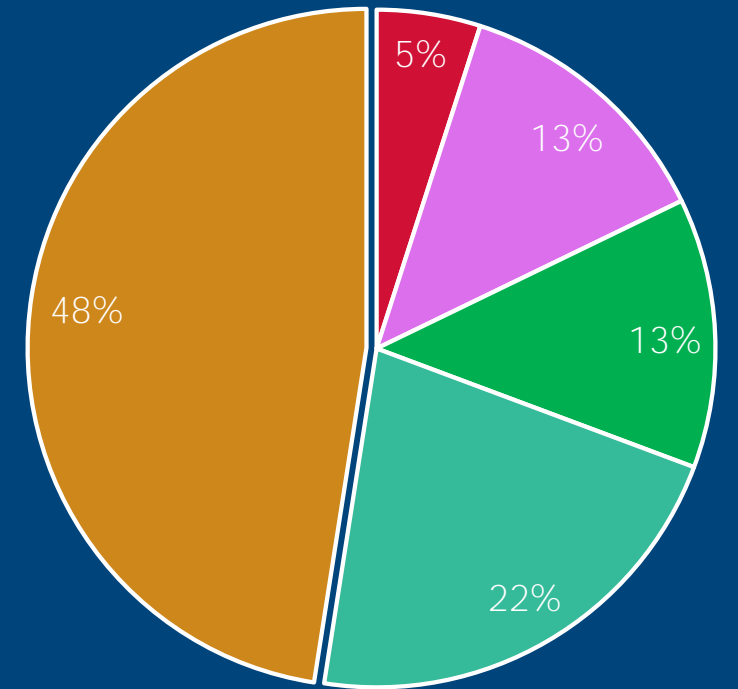
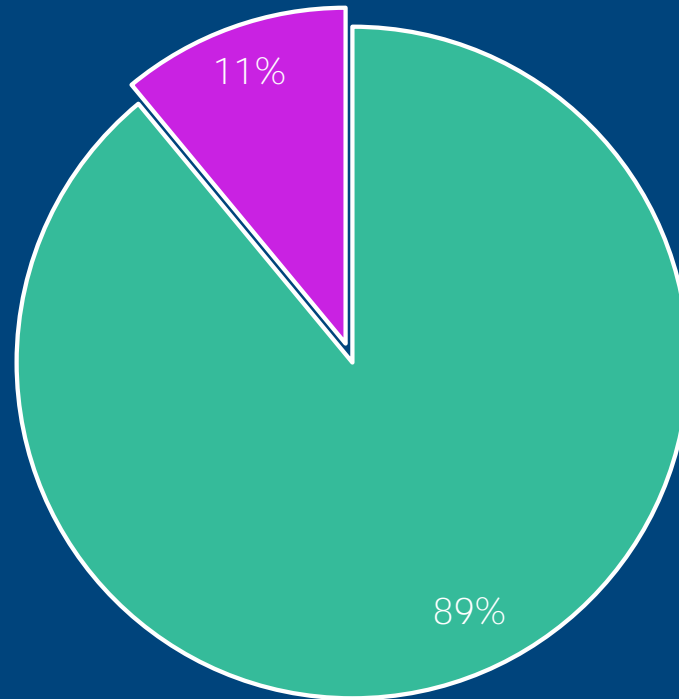
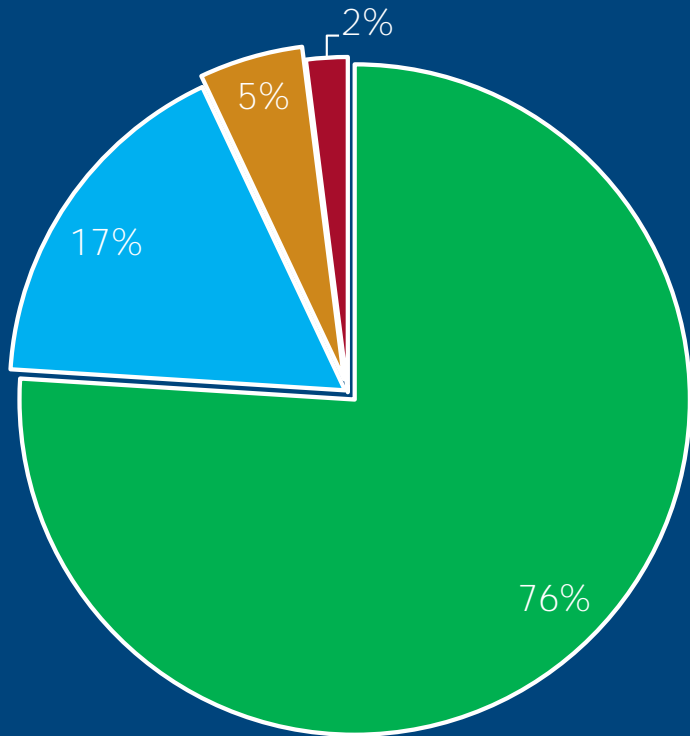
Female Male



Ages 0-5
Ages 6-12
Ages 13-17
Ages 18+

The CASA Volunteer Portrait

“Volunteers are the heart and soul of our mission. Their dedication, hard work, and compassion exemplifies our commitment to the children and families in our communities and our vision to provide a safe, positive, equitable future for children living in foster care in Atlantic, Cape May, and Camden Counties.” - Terri Schieder, CASA Board President



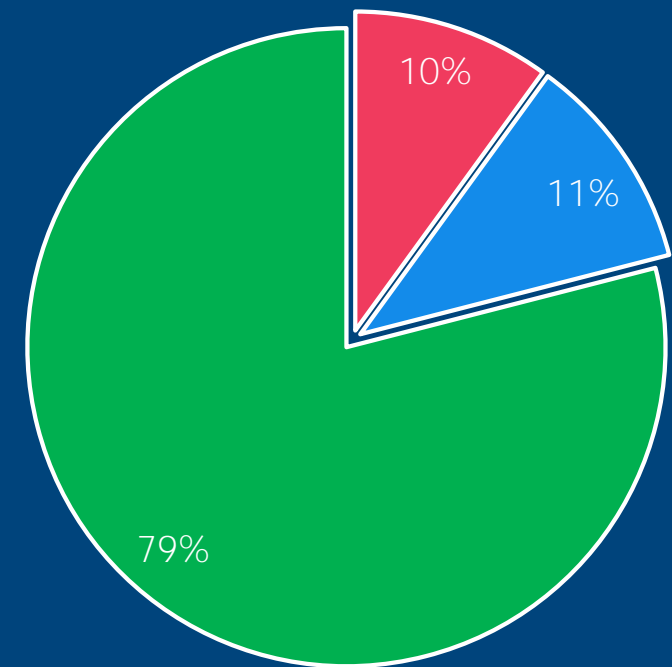
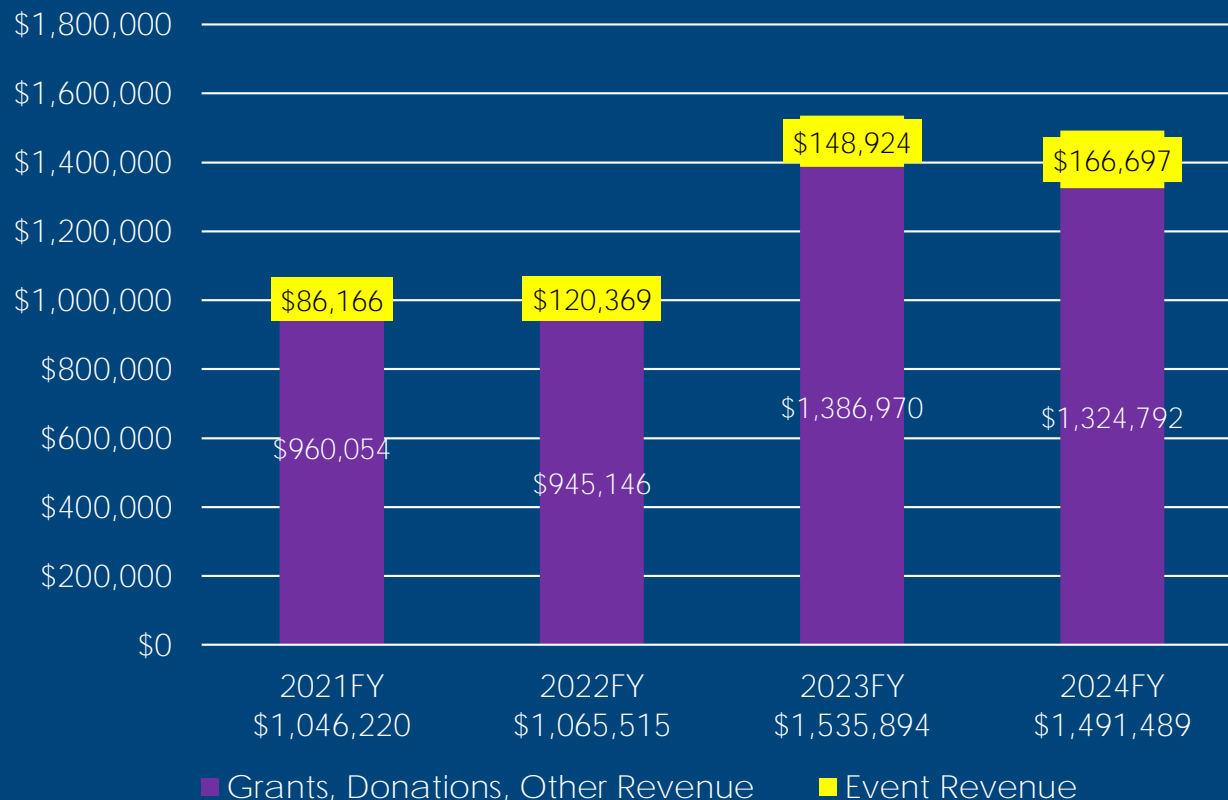
White Black
Multi-race/declined Hispanic

Female Male

21-29 year olds 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+

Long-Term Financial Stability

CASA's strong fundraising capacity provides the confidence and stability to sustain our program every year. Consistent donors, a balanced income stream, and proactive, strategic leadership ensure that the organization can weather the toughest funding years. CASA's Board and staff leadership expect that our positive financial condition will continue into the 2025 fiscal year and are confident that staff and Board will overcome any future, unforeseen funding challenges. For a more detailed financial picture please view our current 990 available at <https://CASAacc.org/who-we-are/financials.html>



■ Administration ■ Fundraising ■ Direct Service

CASA Helps Reunite Family

Toddlers Jake and Luke entered foster care in 2020 due to allegations of parental substance use. Soon after, their infant sister Selina was also removed and placed in the same home with her brothers. CASA Lenora was appointed to the children during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, she relied on phone calls and video chats to remain in touch with the children, the family, and other relevant parties to the case. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, CASA Lenora remained a steadfast advocate for the children.

As soon as pandemic restrictions eased, CASA Lenora met with the children in their foster placement. The children appeared well cared for, but they did not appear to be communicating or moving at age-appropriate levels. CASA Lenora immediately and effectively advocated for medical and specialized care services, early intervention, and motor skills testing. She also advocated for continued parental visitation. The children continued to grow and thrive in their foster placement. The services that CASA Lenora recommended were helping and the children were making excellent progress on their communication and motor skills.

While helping the children, CASA Lenora had consistent communication with both parents on this case, encouraging them to continue with their treatment services and even recommending grief counseling for dad after losing his mother. The children's parents were following all required treatments and were balancing their sobriety with staying involved in their children's lives.

CASA Lenora particularly built a positive relationship with the children's mother. She offered support to mom as she worked to maintain sobriety, find employment, and secure housing. As the path to reunification became clear, CASA Lenora was even able to use grant funding, secured by the CASA organization, to help mom into stable housing by providing a security deposit and her first months' rent. CASA Lenora also worked with mom to register for an initiative through our community partner, One Simple Wish, allowing mom to receive a \$500 gift card to purchase home items and clothing for the children. While dad had a harder road to recovery, he is still involved in his children's lives and hopes to be reunited with his family.



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