



# GROWING RESILIENCE

## 2021 **ANNUAL** REPORT



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

**COLORADO**



# 2019-2021 Colorado CASA\* Strategic Framework

**OUR VISION:** Every child in Colorado has a voice and a hopeful future

**OUR MISSION:** To strengthen local CASA programs and advocate for children in the child welfare system

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

Lead the Narrative  
Educate the Public  
Be Data Informed

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen Local Programs  
Optimize Collaboration  
Leverage Thought Leadership

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Educate Policy Makers  
Maintain Legislative Support  
Affect Public Policy

## ORGANIZATIONAL VITALITY

Govern Effectively  
Increase Sustainability  
Assure Quality

**OUR VALUES:** Children in Need Deserve a Voice / Data-Informed Advocacy / Diversity and Inclusion / Collaboration

Adopted by Board of Directors on May 5, 2019

\* State Organization of National CASA Association

# DEAR FRIENDS,

On behalf of Colorado CASA, we thank you for your generous support of our mission. Because of you — our dedicated donors, partners, and friends — the CASA network in Colorado was able to serve 4,556 children and youth who needed a caring adult by their side in 2021.

For Colorado children who have experienced abuse or neglect, or those at risk of maltreatment, the social isolation and economic uncertainty brought on by COVID-19 had far-reaching consequences. During these uncertain times, 2,509 CASA volunteers in Colorado became a critical lifeline for these children and families. CASA supports family preservation and became a resource for families strained in the pandemic. We are proud to share our 2021 Annual Report, Growing Resilience, which demonstrates the tremendous work of CASA staff and volunteers in our Colorado network.

For over 30 years, the Colorado CASA network has advocated for a child's right to a safe and permanent home. We are so very grateful to you for your steadfast, enduring

commitment, and selfless investment in 2021.

Our focus in 2021 was on providing our statewide CASA network with the necessary resources to support their work and advance our collective mission. This included data collection and analysis, a statewide branding campaign resulting in volunteer recruitment,

training resources, and expanding CASA's presence statewide through government relations.

Although last year brought many changes and new ways of working, our commitment to our mission has been steadfast. Through the challenges we have faced as a community, we have learned a great deal and experienced the resilience of our volunteers

and staff, as well as the children, youth, and families they serve. This perspective and knowledge will help us reimagine our work moving forward as we continue to provide best-interest advocacy in Colorado.

We are exceedingly grateful for your support in 2021, and your continued commitment to our mission. On behalf of children and youth who look to us with hope for a bright future, thank you.

**During these uncertain times, 2,509 CASA volunteers in Colorado became a critical lifeline for these children and families.**

Sincerely,



**JENNY BENDER**  
Executive Director  
Colorado CASA



**STEPHEN JENKS**  
Board Chair  
Colorado CASA



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## 2021 FINANCIALS

### INCOME

| Source                     | Amount           | FYE2021 Percentage |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| CO State Funding           | 1,520,000        | 84%                |
| Other Government           | 132,707          | 7%                 |
| Individuals & Corps        | 112,118          | 6%                 |
| Conference fees            | 8,239            | 1%                 |
| Foundations                | 6,188            | 1%                 |
| Membership and dues, other | 19,059           | 1%                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>1,798,311</b> |                    |

### EXPENSES

| Source                   | Amount           | FYE2021 Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Program                  | 1,574,450        | 92%                |
| General & Administration | 122,085          | 7%                 |
| Fundraising              | 10,638           | 1%                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>1,707,173</b> |                    |

# 2021

## Growing Resilience



**4,556**

children

**2,509**

cases served

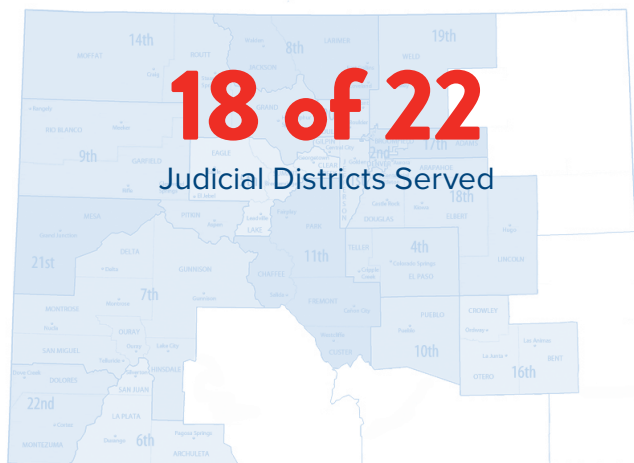


**2,357**

CASA volunteers (a 16% increase from 2020!)

Supported by **156** program staff  
(full & part-time) +

**3** Colorado CASA staff







## Colorado CASA strengthens local programs:

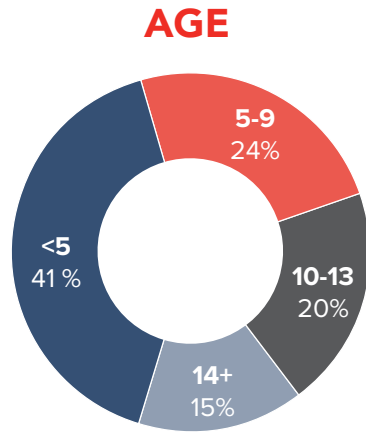
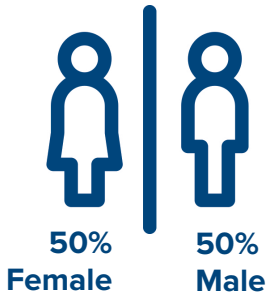
- Statewide marketing and branding campaigns for volunteer recruitment
- Hosted 273 staff and volunteers at the Colorado CASA conference, virtually in 2020 and 2021
- Served on multitudes of statewide committees and task forces, to strengthen connections with child welfare partners, stakeholders and bring the collective CASA voice to the table
- Convened a workgroup that successfully standardized data entry for statewide data collection on key metrics
- Evaluated short and intermediate outcomes for children served based on CASA volunteer surveys and administrative data collected between October, 2019 and February 2021.
- Grew relations with Judicial and Legislative branches by enhancing Government Relations and policy efforts

## CASA VOLUNTEERS STEPPED-UP IN 2021

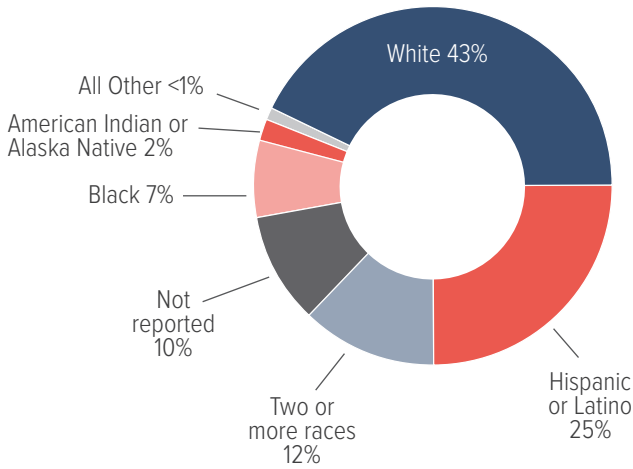
While all CASA volunteers are responsible for learning about children's placements and making recommendations that support the safety and permanency, their work goes far beyond. CASA volunteers are trained to make a difference in the areas that we know contribute to children's quality of life now and in the future.

# Who does CASA serve and where are they served?

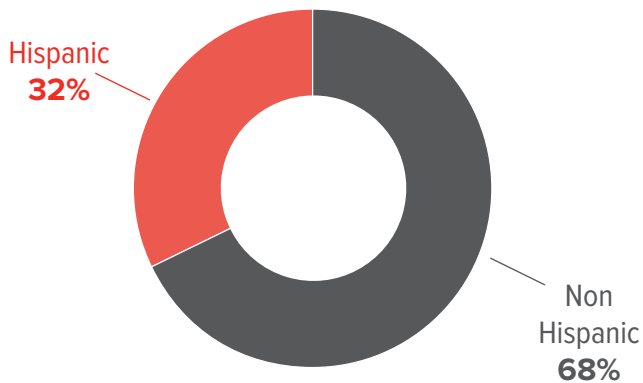
## CHILDREN SERVED BY DEMOGRAPHICS



### RACE



### ETHNICITY



CASA programs in Colorado serve children in all placement types, including those home with their parents, with kin and in foster homes.

At any given time approximately:

- 36 percent of children are placed in foster homes
- 32 percent of children are placed with kin
- 25 percent of children are placed with parents
- The remaining children are spread between institutions, and group facilities.

As the cases progress, children begin to return to parents and kinship placements.

#### By case closing:

- Over 80 percent of children are with parents or kin
- Of the 36 percent of children who start CASA service in foster care, 63 percent are reunified with their parents by case close
- Children stay with their parents: over 95 percent of children who entered CASA service placed with their parents, remained with their parents at case close.

### **CASA volunteers make a difference in children's lives by showing up and increasing support during challenging times.**

#### The WHY of the Colorado CASA model:

A large body of research demonstrates protective factors including consistent and caring adults and concrete supports during times of need counter the effects of adverse childhood experiences, and increase children's resilience, educational success, health, and overall wellbeing.

CASA volunteers are consistent and caring adults to many children in the child welfare system, and they work in- and outside the court to increase opportunities and support for children.



**“As a CASA, you develop a bond with the children and it becomes so intrinsic to your core that you want the best for them during this challenging time and for the rest of their lives.”**

— *CASA of 7 year old girl*

The CASA in Colorado data strategy aims to measure the extent that (1) CVs are serving as consistent adults for children, (2) CVs act to address children's unmet needs, and (3) Children demonstrate progress in the key domains from start to end of CASA service. *In addition to permanency and safety, CASA programs in Colorado monitor and advocate for children's health, development, education, extracurricular opportunities, and transition to adulthood.*

### **Relationships with caring adults and increased supports during times of need are researched-based ways of improving outcomes for children.**

#### Results of evaluating CASA consistency:

- 85 percent of children are served by their CASA volunteer from assignment until case close (N=5836)
- 80 percent of CVs self-rate as effective with the child
- 69 percent of children have a visit with their CASA volunteer every two weeks or more, and 40 percent of children are in contact with their CASA volunteer weekly or more.



## Evaluation highlights: CASA volunteers are informed about children’s needs

Our evaluation results found that volunteers are informed about the majority of children’s progress and needs in the key domains. For example:

- For 88 percent of school-aged children, the CASA volunteer knew about attendance, academic performance, work completion and behavior at school.
- For 92 percent of young children, the CASA volunteer was informed about development.
- For 91 percent of children, the CASA volunteer who was informed about participation in extracurricular activities.
- For 86 percent of children, the CASA volunteer was informed about access to regular care.

Child need and CASA advocacy across available assessments  
(The following table includes 6 wellbeing assessments administered between October 2019 and June 2021.)

| Key domain  | Total unique children included in question | Children with reported need (of total children) | Children receiving advocacy (of children with need) |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Permanency &amp; safety</b><br>(concerns around placement or behavior)         | 3,709                                      | 1,531 (41.4%)                                   | 1,234 (80.7%)                                       |
| <b>Health</b>   | 3,708                                      | 849 (22.9%)                                     | 447 (52.7%)   |
| <b>Development</b>  | 1,445                                      | 616 (42.6%)                                     | 230 (37.4%)   |
| <b>Education</b>  | 2,437                                      | 1,116 (45.8%)                                   | 772 (69.2%)   |
| <b>Extracurricular activities</b> (participating in at least one activity weekly) | 2,434                                      | 2,277 (93.5%)                                   | 890 (39.1%)   |
| <b>Transition to adulthood</b>  | 727  | 569 (78.3%)                                     | 442 (77.7%)   |

## Preliminary results show at the end of the case children are more likely to be doing better in the key domains. For example:

- Of 125 children who needed educational support at case opening assessment, 42 percent were doing better by case closing.
- Of the 92 children with developmental needs at case opening, 38 percent were doing better at case closing.

As we improve completion rates for case opening and closing assessments, and collect more assessment results over time we will be able to better examine child outcomes in key domains from start to end of case.



**“I signed him up for basketball and was main contact for coach.”**

— *CASA volunteer of 17 year old male*

**“I was able to help Spanish speaking custodial parent without computing skills connect to COVID basic resources like food, utilities, etc.”**

— *CASA of 6 year old girl*

**“Advocated for child to get medical care, referral for play therapy, dental care, and referral to medical specialists.”**

— *CASA volunteer of 5 year old girl*

**“Once, while the child was having a tough day, we practiced ‘belly breathing’ as a relaxation technique, while listening to soothing music. This helped her calm down and ‘re-center.’”**

— *CASA volunteer of 7 year old girl*

**“My [youth] did not value education and wanted to drop out of high school at 16. He didn’t participate in classes. He is now taking college level courses and plans to go to college.”**

— *CASA volunteer of an 18 year old*



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

**COLORADO**

# Our Supporters

Thank you to all of the donors and funders who make our progress possible. Together, we are a powerful voice for vulnerable children and youth.

## **\$1,500,000+** **Children's Circle** **of Champions**

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11 Summits

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# CASA PROGRAMS IN COLORADO

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**CASA OF JEFFERSON &  
GILPIN COUNTIES**

Golden, Leah Varnell

**CHILD ADVOCATES  
DENVER CASA**

Denver, Karen Silverman

**CASA OF THE  
PIKES PEAK REGION**

Colorado Springs, Angela Rose

**CASA OF THE  
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE**

Dillon, Kelly Miller

**4 THE CHILDREN CASA  
OF THE SOUTHWEST**

Durango, Ashley Hein

**CASA OF THE  
7TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

Montrose, Carlton Mason

**CASA OF LARIMER COUNTY**

Fort Collins, Jen Ryan

**CASA OF THE NINTH**

Glenwood Springs,  
Traci Gurley-Tomashosky

**CASA OF PUEBLO**

Pueblo, Zane Grant

**HEART OF COLORADO CASA**

Canon City, Zane Grant

**NORTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN  
COLORADO CASA**

Steamboat Springs, Alan Hallman

**ARKANSAS VALLEY CASA**

La Junta, Zane Grant

**CASA OF ADAMS &  
BROOMFIELD COUNTIES**

Brighton, Lindsay Lierman

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CHILDREN CASA**

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**BOULDER VOICES FOR CHILDREN**

Boulder, Jacob Harmon

**CASA OF MESA COUNTY**

Grand Junction, Joy Thompson

**4 THE CHILDREN CASA  
OF THE SOUTHWEST**

Durango, Ashley Hein

