



Golden Crescent Court Appointed Special Advocates

P.O. Box 1627 • Victoria, Texas 77902-1627 • www.goldencrescentcasa.org

361.573.3734 • 877.473.3734 • **FAX** 361.573.3729

November 12, 2014

Texas Rural Communities, Inc.
Attn: Sandra Tenorio
168 Cimarron Park Loop
Buda, Texas 78610
www.texasrural.org

RE: Texas Rural Communities, Inc. Grant Application

Please find enclosed our proposal for the Texas Rural Communities, Inc. grant. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is a national network of 950 community-based and volunteer centered programs that provide trained volunteer advocates to speak up on behalf of abused and neglected children who have been removed from their abusive homes and placed into the foster care system. There are 71 CASA programs in Texas and 1 in the Golden Crescent region, Golden Crescent CASA, which serves Calhoun County and 7 surrounding counties.

Golden Crescent CASA recruits, trains, and retains volunteers from our area's communities to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms. CASA volunteers—empowered directly by the courts—offer judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child's rights and needs are being met while in the foster care system. CASA volunteers advocate for children until they are placed in loving, nurturing, and permanent homes. A CASA volunteer, for many abused children, is the only constant adult presence during the time they spend in the foster care system.

Currently Golden Crescent CASA is appointed to 316 children and only 67% of these children have a CASA volunteer. Obtaining \$10,000 from the Texas Rural Communities, Inc. grant would allow us to recruit and train 50 additional volunteers by October 2015 and retain the trained volunteers and staff currently appointed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tim Hornback
Executive Director

Golden Crescent CASA is a volunteer driven organization which utilizes trained volunteers to advocate on the best interests of abused and neglected children in the Golden Crescent area. Currently assigned to 316 children and covering DeWitt, Lavaca, Calhoun, Jackson, Refugio, Goliad, Gonzales and Victoria counties.

Each volunteer must successfully pass a criminal, sex offender, and child protective services background check, complete 30 hour pre service training, and complete 12 hours of continuing education per year.

Golden Crescent Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is respectfully submitting a request from Texas Rural Communities, Inc. in the amount of \$10,000. Any funds received from Texas Rural Communities, Inc. will go towards assisting Golden Crescent CASA in recruiting, training additional volunteers, as well as retaining current volunteers.

For any questions you may contact Debbie Ramirez, Development Director, or Tim Hornback, Executive Director at (361) 573-3734.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Tim Hornback
Executive Director

Texas Rural Communities, Inc.

Section I: Contact Information

Debbie Ramirez, Development Director
P.O. Box 1627 Victoria, Texas 77902
(361)573-3734
debbier@goldencrescentcasa.org

Golden Crescent Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
P.O. Box 1637 Victoria, Texas 77902

Section II: Organizational Description

Dissatisfied with the same case plans and same recommendations for victims of child abuse who appeared before him in his court, Judge Soukop felt that more individualized attention would produce better recommendations and outcomes. Therefore, he began training community volunteers to provide needed information in child abuse cases.

In 1977 the Volunteer Guardian ad Litem program was created which recruited and gave authority to concerned community members to investigate and to make reports to the Court about a child abuse victim's particular circumstances independently of overworked State Child Protection caseworkers and attorneys.

Observing the success of CASA in other communities, a group of concerned Victoria citizens established Golden Crescent Court Appointed Special Advocates (Golden Crescent CASA). Golden Crescent CASA was established in 1994 to provide trained community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children involved in the court system.

The child's best interest is paramount; CASA volunteers monitor the efficacy of provided medical care, educational plans, mandated services, and foster placements. The CASA volunteer will report their findings to the court thus enabling judges to better serve the child. The strength of the CASA program lies not only in providing courts firsthand knowledge of a child's circumstances, but in volunteers providing care and support on a one-to-one basis throughout the court process, allowing the child to develop a trusting, and nurturing relationships.

The Golden Crescent CASA mission is to utilize trained volunteers, appointed by the court, to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children and assist in placing them in nurturing, permanent homes.

Section III: Program Description

CASA volunteers benefit both children and the community. A CASA volunteer can cut court cost by thousands of dollars by freeing children from the judicial system up to 25% faster than a child without a CASA volunteer.

Studies show that children with a CASA volunteer are also less likely to engage in criminal activity, perform better in school, and are less likely to re-enter state's care.

Your assistance in the amount of \$10,000 will help offset the costs of recruitment and training of new volunteers, and retention of volunteers who currently serve the children appointed to Golden Crescent CASA. With your support, Golden Crescent CASA will be able to recruit and train 50 additional volunteers and retain 80% of current volunteers. Additional volunteers would be able to provide essential services to approximately 100 children.

Today, Golden Crescent CASA serves 8 counties, which include Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Refugio, and Victoria counties which have a combined population of 199,721 people. Due to the sustained growth of population in some counties in the Golden Crescent area, the number of abuse and neglect children has steadily increased.

Due to this increase, there is an urgent need for additional CASA volunteers. Golden Crescent CASA needs 50 additional CASA volunteers to achieve the ultimate goal of providing a volunteer advocate to every child assigned to the Golden Crescent CASA program.

Currently Golden Crescent CASA volunteers and staff provide services to 316 children; this represents a 14% increase in the number of children served in 2013. These children come from several different races and ethnicities, and range from birth to age 20 years old.

Our goal is to increase the number and the racial/ethnic diversity of CASA volunteers in order to better serve children in the Golden Crescent CASA program. Also, it is important to Golden Crescent CASA to increase the cultural competency of new and current CASA volunteers to best meet the needs of the children we serve.

Although our continued community awareness campaigns have provided increased numbers of volunteers and increased financial resources, we must remain mindful of the limited resources in our rural region. Despite population growth in some of our counties, the remainder of our service region remains rural and simply put; there are only so many people in our area. It is vital that we focus on retention efforts to alleviate attrition.

It is the goal of Golden Crescent CASA to recruit, train, and retain volunteers, board members, and staff from all ethnicities within the region Golden Crescent CASA serves. Annually, Golden Crescent CASA will review population demographics of the communities we serve and identify cultural disparities, and build alliances with diverse groups.

Increase the number of child advocates by 33% so that 100% of our cases are served by a CASA volunteer. In accomplishing that goal, we want to have our volunteers mirror the ethnic diversity of the children served.

Increase the number of male volunteers by 75% so that the abused children are able to experience a positive male role model in their life.

Increase volunteer retention by 80% through volunteer recognition of service and provide training on topics to hone the volunteer's skill set which will enable the volunteer to better meet the needs of the children served.

The following time line has been developed as a benchmark for accomplishing our goal of 100% volunteers:

- January 2015, 80% of our children will be served by volunteers.
- May 2015, 90% of children will be served by volunteers.
- October 2015, 100% of children will be served by volunteers.

Golden Crescent CASA will continue to meet community leaders and form relationships with organizations and churches in our eight county service region to find potential volunteers. Recruiting is a joint effort among board, staff, and volunteers – all participants are encouraged to submit names of community leaders to contact, date and times of events in which to participate, and make introductions to organizations and local churches.

Additional recruitment strategies include a newspaper/digital series of "Meet A CASA Volunteer" introducing current CASA Volunteers and sharing why they find it important to volunteer for CASA. We also employ television advertisements on local TV stations. Social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Instagram are utilized on a daily basis as a recruitment tool. Recruitment efforts are intensified three month prior to classes in outlying counties.

Golden Crescent CASA's Volunteer Coordinator/Recruiter, assisted by current volunteers, provides training on an ongoing basis in our most populous county of Victoria and provides

training classes to one other outlying county each month. We will continue our current practice of holding volunteer training classes in two communities each month. Individual volunteer trainings will be held on a weekly basis throughout our eight county service area.

Along with the thirty hour pre-service training program that volunteers are required to complete, 12 hours of continuing education must be completed by volunteers, board, and staff each year.

Retention efforts will continue to include recognition of CASA volunteer accomplishments and retention of qualified staff. Educational opportunities to promote volunteer skills will be sought at the local, state, and national level. Golden Crescent CASA has found that increased training opportunities and qualified staff have helped in retention efforts of volunteers.

Our long-term strategies for funding this project are to increase the amount of community support through individuals, organizations, foundations and corporations.

By getting people involved through our Community Awareness Campaign, public speaking engagements, participation in community events, and fund raisers we allow CASA to educate the community and to build a relationships with individuals and gain financial support as well.

The Executive Director, Development Director, Volunteer Coordinator and Volunteer Supervisors will meet quarterly to evaluate and review the recruitment plan, training and volunteer retention process. They will meet monthly to evaluate the need for volunteers.

Golden Crescent CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is requesting a \$10,000 donation, but accepts, and appreciates any funds received from Texas Rural Communities, Inc.

All funds received from the Texas Rural Communities, Inc. will be expended on the submitted project.

Golden Crescent CASA Budget 2014

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

43400 · Direct Public Support	
Individual	50,000.00
43450 · Business Contributions	2,000.00
43460 · Organizations, Clubs Contrib	12,000.00
Total 43400 · Direct Public Support	<u>64,000.00</u>
43500 · Trusts and Foundations	
43500 · Trusts and Foundations - Other	56,000.00
Total 43500 · Trusts and Foundations	<u>56,000.00</u>
44500 · Government Grants	
44520 · Federal Grants	52,000.00
44540 · State Grants	136,940.00
Total 44500 · Government Grants	<u>188,940.00</u>
44600 · County Appropriations	32,000.00
44700 · Fundraiser Revenues	62,000.00
Total 44700 · Fundraiser Revenues	<u>62,000.00</u>
44800 · Indirect Public Support	
44820 · United Way, CFC Contributions	56,000.00
Total 44800 · Indirect Public Support	<u>56,000.00</u>
45000 · Investments	
45030 · Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	1,366.00
Total 45000 · Investments	<u>1,366.00</u>

Total Income

460,306.00

Gross Profit

460,306.00

Expense

62100 · Contract Services	
62110 · Accounting Fees	5,000.00
Total 62100 · Contract Services	<u>5,000.00</u>
62800 · Facilities and Equipment	
62840 · Equip Rental and Maintenance	3,000.00
62870 · Property Insurance	600.00
62890 · Rent, Parking, Utilities	20,000.00
Total 62800 · Facilities and Equipment	<u>23,600.00</u>
63000 · Fundraiser Costs	5,000.00
63200 · Beverages/Bar	
63300 · Decorations	
63400 · Entertainment	
63500 · Equipment/Furniture	
63600 · Food	
63700 · Invitations/Mailings	
63900 · Promotions	
63950 · Supplies-Event	
63000 · Fundraiser Costs - Other	
Total 63000 · Fundraiser Costs	<u>5,000.00</u>

65000 · Operations	
65010 · Books, Subscriptions, Reference	500.00
65020 · Postage, Mailing Service	2,500.00
65030 · Printing and Copying	2,000.00
65040 · Supplies	10,000.00
65050 · Tel, Network, Email Services	7,000.00
65060 · Software	1,000.00
Total 65000 · Operations	<u>23,000.00</u>
65100 · Other Types of Expenses	
65110 · Advertising Expenses	
65120 · Insurance - Liability, D and O	2,500.00
65130 · Memberships & Dues	650.00
65160 · Other Costs	
65170 · Staff Development	2,000.00
65172 · Background Checks	200.00
Total 65170 · Staff Development	2,200.00
65175 · Vol. Retention, Training & Recruitment	
65176 · Volunteer Retention	9,455.00
65177 · Volunteer Training	9,455.00
65178 · Volunteer Recruitment	18,821.00
Total Vol. Retention, Training & Recruitment	<u>37,731.00</u>
65180 · Promotional Materials	3,500.00
65100 · Other Types of Expenses - Other	
Total 65100 · Other Types of Expenses	<u>46,581.00</u>
66000 · Payroll Expenses	
66010 · Salaries & Wages	269,240.00
66020 · Payroll Taxes	33,618.00
66000 · Payroll Expenses - Other	20,267.00
Total 66000 · Payroll Expenses	<u>323,125.00</u>
68300 · Travel and Meetings	
68310 · Conference, Convention, Meeting	9,000.00
68320 · Travel	23,000.00
68300 · Travel and Meetings - Other	2,000.00
Total 68300 · Travel and Meetings	<u>34,000.00</u>
Total Expense	460,306.00
Net Income	-