

Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc.

FY25 Community Grant

Presentation to Annapolis City Council

April 23, 2024



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CASA, INC.

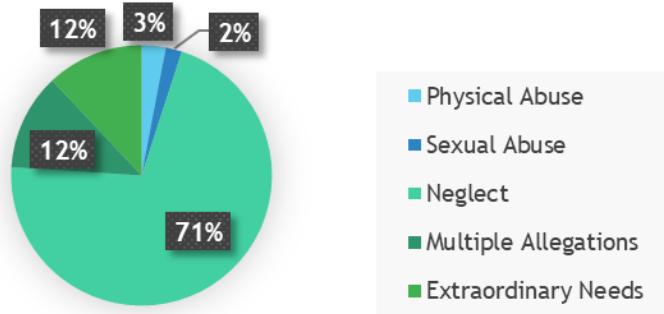
Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc.
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Who We Serve

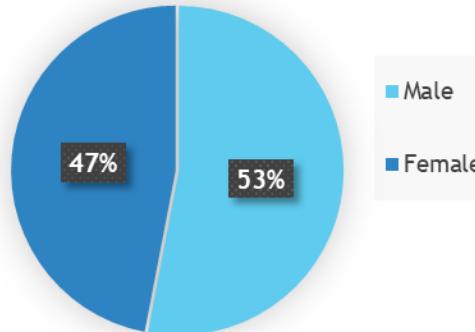
- ▶ Mission: To provide volunteers to advocate for and support abused and neglected children in the court system to ensure their right to safe, stable, permanent homes
- ▶ Children *adjudicated* as CINA (Child In Need of Assistance) by the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County:
 - In foster care due to abuse/neglect – NO fault of their own
 - Diverse ethnic population
 - Up to 21 years of age
 - 50% have biological parents who have substance abuse and/or mental health diagnoses
 - Nearly 20% of the children are substance-exposed, including newborns
 - Over 50% of the children have a mental health diagnosis
- ▶ Abused and neglected children are among the most vulnerable in our society
- ▶ AACCASA shares in the priorities of the City of Annapolis Community Grant Program and appreciates the opportunity to be considered

Demographics

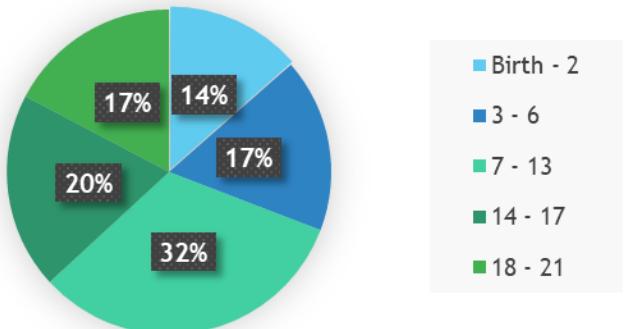
Children Served by Allegation Type



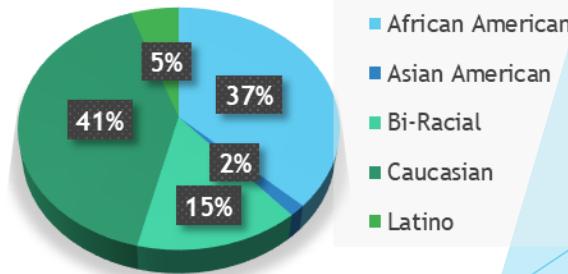
Children Served by Gender



Children Served by Age



Children Served by Race



What We Do

- ▶ CASA volunteers receive extensive initial and ongoing training on various topics:
 - Judicial and child welfare system
 - Court report writing
 - Impact of family issues: substance abuse, mental illness and violence
 - Collaboration, cultural awareness

- ▶ CASAs are immersed in ALL aspects of the child's life and they:
 - Visit weekly with the child
 - Review all court and DSS records
 - Gather information from EVERYONE in the child's life
 - Advocate for the child's needs: medical, psychological, educational, and social
 - Remain focused on ensuring that their child finds a stable, permanent, and loving home

How Well We Do It

- ▶ 100% of CASAs written court reports were accepted by the Court (124 court reports submitted)
- ▶ 85% of our CASAs recommendations were ordered by the Court
- ▶ 100% of the Judges indicate that:
 - They want a CASA appointed to EVERY CINA case
 - They read the CASA court report before hearing from anyone else as CASA has no agenda other than the best interest of the child
 - The CASA court report contains the most objective and unbiased information which helps the Judges make informed decisions

FY23 Outcomes

- ▶ 96 CASA Volunteers were assigned to 132 children, serving 89% of the children in foster care (13% increase over FY22)
- ▶ 54 new children received a CASA volunteer (108% increase over FY22)
- ▶ 24 new CASA volunteers were trained
- ▶ 110 hours of continuing education provided
- ▶ 19 seasoned CASAs available to take another case
- ▶ Of the 44 children whose cases closed, 97% were living in a permanent home at case closure

Use of Annapolis City Community Grant

- ▶ The \$15,000 grant funds would be used for general operating support - split evenly across three key staff: the Program Coordinator and two Case Supervisors
- ▶ Contributes to our goal of providing a CASA for 100% of the CINA population
- ▶ This funding will enable AACCASA to sustain and expand our progress toward this vision; we expect to serve 140 children in FY25

Sound Investment

- ▶ Cost Effective
 - Extensive use of volunteers (FY23: 10,198 hours - \$347,956 value)
 - Office space is donated by the Court (including utilities and parking)
 - Funds go to supervisor hours and training to handle caseload; the infrastructure is already in place
- ▶ Rapid Growth if Needed
 - Existing case supervisor staff want the additional hours (no staff recruitment required)
 - CASA pool plus normal recruiting/training will be adequate
 - Pace of expansion determined primarily by the judicial calendar and the appointment process
- ▶ Future Payoff (beyond the year of the grant)
 - More assigned CASAs (and children served) increases government funding for future years (both formula and maybe discretionary)
 - Leadership displayed by the Annapolis City Community Grant will send a strong, positive message about CASA to other potential donors

Impact

- ▶ Children with a CASA:
 - Spend less time spent in foster care
 - Receive more services
 - More likely to be placed with siblings
 - Have one consistent adult advocating for their best interests
- ▶ Benefits that ripple through the lives of their biological and foster families, their schools, churches, and workplaces, and their other caregivers
- ▶ Rewards for the Community – adult citizens who are more stable and stronger
- ▶ Moves us closer to our shared community goal of ensuring safe, loving permanent homes for all children