



# 2025 IMPACT REPORT

Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc.

*Dear Friends & Partners,*

**Your unwavering commitment continues to be the cornerstone of Anne Arundel County CASA's transformative work.**

As we reflect on another year of service, we're reminded that our community of volunteers, supporters, staff, and board members doesn't just advocate for children—you become the steady presence that changes everything.

In Anne Arundel County, over 180 children and families navigate the complexities of the juvenile court system each year. Behind these numbers are real stories: children who need someone to listen, families seeking stability, and communities working toward healing. Our Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) step into these moments with courage and compassion, becoming the reliable advocates these children can depend on during their most vulnerable times. Through dedicated relationships built on trust and understanding, CASAs create pathways to healing, justice, and renewed hope.

Anne Arundel County CASA's (AACCASA) foundation remains unshakeable: Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, loving home where they are nurtured and protected. As we embark on our 29th year, we're seeing the results of our strategic transformation—stronger systems, deeper engagement, and a culture where everyone belongs. This sustainable growth strengthens our impact, ensuring every volunteer and staff member feels valued, supported, and empowered to create meaningful change in children's lives.

This year, we've been struck by the profound concept of presence. Beyond the hours our advocates dedicate, there's something transformative about simply showing up consistently for a child. This presence builds bridges of trust, creates space for authentic expression, and amplifies young voices in courtrooms and communities. We've watched children discover their own strength, families find their footing, and healing unfold in ways that remind us why this work matters so deeply.

Your belief in our mission translates into real transformation. Every contribution, every volunteer hour, every word of encouragement ripples outward, creating waves of change that extend far beyond what we can measure. Together, we're not just advocating for children—we're helping them reclaim their stories and step into futures filled with possibility.

With profound gratitude and shared vision,



**Rebecca Tingle**  
Executive Director



**Jean Sovinski**  
Board President

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# Our HISTORY

In 1993, a handful of local attorneys recognized the need for a CASA program in Anne Arundel County. With the support from the local Bar Association, the Circuit Court, and the Department of Social



Services, Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. (AACCASA) was incorporated. AACCASA began serving children in July 1997. With a small staff of five professionals, we rely on volunteers to achieve our mission.

Since our inception, over 726 exceptional CASA volunteers have worked diligently to improve the lives of over 968 children in need in our community. Our dedicated volunteers contribute over 10,000 hours of their time annually to help these children who are unable to help themselves. AACCASA is a privately held 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We are funded through grants, donations, and fundraising and are part of a network of 15 CASA programs serving 23 Maryland counties.

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# Our LEADERSHIP

## PRESIDENT

**Jean Sovinski**  
Managing Partner |  
Studio 343

## TREASURER

**Shawn Schoene**  
Commercial Relationship  
Manager | First National Bank

## VICE PRESIDENT

**Cynthia Barbieri**  
Business Strategy & Initiatives  
Manager, SVP | Bank of  
America / Merrill Lynch

## SECRETARY

**Krysti Lantz**  
Residency Program  
Coordinator, Internal  
Medicine | Luminis Health

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Matthew Haught**  
Vice President - Base Building |  
Bognet Construction

**Pat Howe**  
Retired CASA, Artist

**Robyn Bedell**

**Susan Yocum**  
Vice President of Legal and Compliance for  
Cordish Gaming | Live! Casino & Hotel

## STAFF

**Rebecca Tingle**  
Executive Director

**Tracey Lane**  
Program Coordinator

**Christine Acton**  
Child Advocate Specialist

**Mary Ellen Barnes**  
Child Advocate Specialist

**Libby Barrett**  
Child Advocate Specialist



## *Our* **VISION**

A world where every child who has experienced abuse or neglect is given the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.



## *Our* **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.

## *Our* **VALUES**

### **1. COMPASSIONATE & CARING**

We are mindful, intentional, and responsive in recognizing the lived experiences and well-being of the children and families we serve, as well as our volunteers, board members, and staff.

### **2. EXCELLENCE**

We are responsible at our core to deliver the highest level of training and support for our CASA volunteers so they can provide quality advocacy for our children to ensure their best opportunity for a safe and stable home.

### **3. PARTNERSHIP**

We recognize the value of collaboration to foster cohesive relationships with community stakeholders and the children and families we serve to ensure open communication and trust.

### **4. INTEGRITY**

We recognize and appreciate the generosity of our supporters and we value excellence in program delivery, fiscal responsibility, and outcome measurement to instill trust.





## WHO WE SERVE

**ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN ARE AMONG THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR SOCIETY.**

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"

## WHAT WE DO

**CASA VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE EXTENSIVE INITIAL AND ONGOING TRAINING ON VARIOUS TOPICS:**

- Judicial and child welfare systems
- Court report writing
- Impact of family issues: substance abuse, mental illness and violence
- Collaboration, cultural awareness



## Our CASAs

### CASAS ARE IMMERSSED IN ALL ASPECTS OF A CHILD'S LIFE AND:

- 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 that their child finds a stable, permanent and loving home



#### CHILDREN WITH A CASA...

Spend less time spent in foster care, receive more services, are more likely to be placed with siblings, and have one consistent adult advocating for their best interests.



#### REWARDS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Adult citizens who are more stable and stronger.



#### WIDE-SPREAD IMPACT

Benefits that ripple through the lives of their biological and foster families, their schools, churches, and workplaces, and their other caregivers.



#### ONE SHARED COMMUNITY GOAL

Moves us closer to our shared Community Goal of ensuring safe, loving and permanent homes for all children.



## Our VOLUNTEERS

### ALL CHILDREN DESERVE A SAFE, STABLE HOME WITH A LOVING FAMILY TO CARE FOR THEM.



Anne Arundel County CASA is central to fulfilling society's most fundamental obligation by making sure a qualified, compassionate adult will fight for and protect a child's right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to learn and grow in the security of a loving family.

AACCASA achieves its mission through the appointment of each CASA volunteer. A judge appoints a CASA to one foster child or sibling group. The CASA gathers information, ensures necessary services and advocates for the child in court.

### THE CASA IS OFTEN THE ONLY CONSISTENT, RELIABLE ADULT IN THE CHILD'S LIFE.

With a CASA, the child has fewer foster care placements, receives more services, is less likely to suffer re-abuse, is more likely to be placed with siblings and more likely to find a safe, permanent home.

## Our **IMPACT**

*We believe* every child who's been abused or neglected deserves to have a dedicated advocate speaking up for their best interest in court, at school and in our community. AACASA educates and empowers diverse community volunteers who ensure each child's needs remain a priority in an over-burdened child welfare system.



When the state steps in to protect a child's safety because the people responsible for protecting them have not, a judge appoints a trained CASA volunteer to make independent and informed recommendations and help the judge decide what's best for the child.

*Did you know?*

**THERE WERE OVER 500 KNOWN  
VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT  
IN ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY LAST YEAR.**



# *Our* DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

## OUR PURPOSE

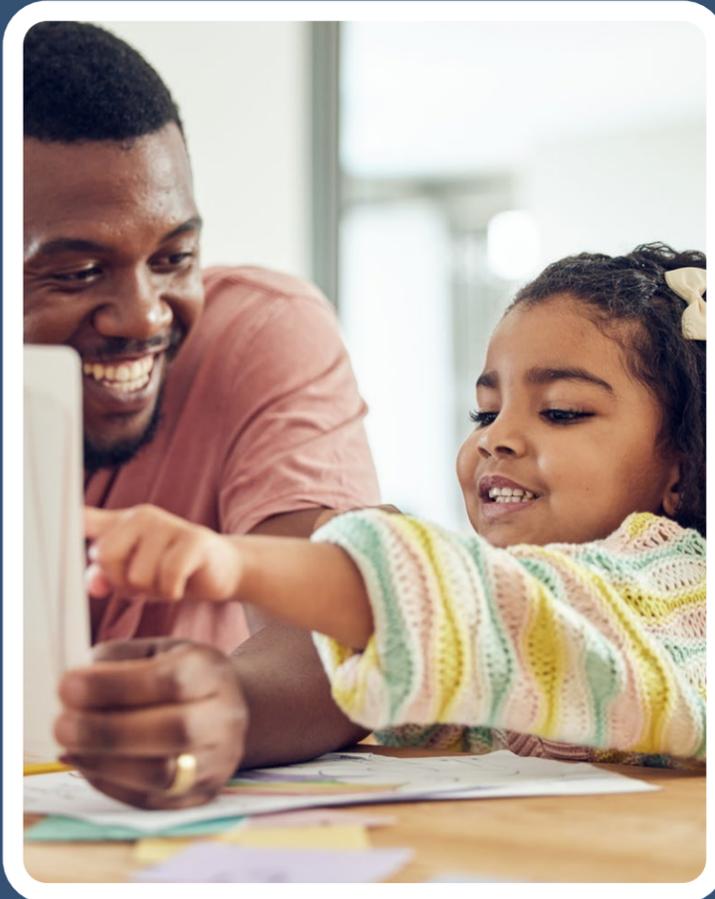
*Increase the effectiveness of Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. (AACCASA) by advocating and advancing the values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging (DEIAB).*



*Did you know?*

They range in age from infancy to 21 years and represent every segment of the County. They have unmet medical, educational, emotional, developmental and social needs.





## OUR COMMITMENT

Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. seeks to deepen its knowledge and understanding of the diverse identities and cultures of the children we serve to promote their best interests. We will strive to infuse fundamental values and practices of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Belonging into every aspect of our work.

“I find it difficult to find words strong enough to express or convey my thoughts and feelings towards CASA and the work the volunteers do, so I will say with my whole heart and on behalf of all those who have been given a hand up, thank you and thank you again.

**ROBERT G. WALLACE**

Founding Member of the CASA Board, Past Board President, Retired  
Administrator of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County



## MAKING IT HAPPEN

- We commit to assisting volunteers, staff, and board in developing a deeper appreciation of the systemic, structural, and generational issues that impact the lives of the children we support to better advocate for their needs.
- We are examining our recruitment strategies to ensure that we are attracting individuals who bring diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- We are continuing to expand our outreach to, and engagement with, community leaders who understand the root causes and systemic issues that bring children into the foster care system to better inform the work we do.
- We are re-committing to reaching community stakeholders regarding the critical importance of the AACCASA program and inviting them to partner with us to create opportunities for the children we serve.



# FY25 OUTCOMES

- ▶ 100% of the judges reported that the CASA volunteers increased their ability to make well-informed decisions
- ▶ 90 CASA volunteers were assigned to 129 children, serving 71% of the children in foster care
- ▶ 39 new children received a CASA volunteer
- ▶ 29 new volunteers were trained to support children in need
- ▶ 51 cases closed, placing children in safe, permanent homes
  - 16% were adopted
  - 53% returned home
  - 14% were placed with a relative
  - 8% were living independently at age 21
  - 4% were closed by the court

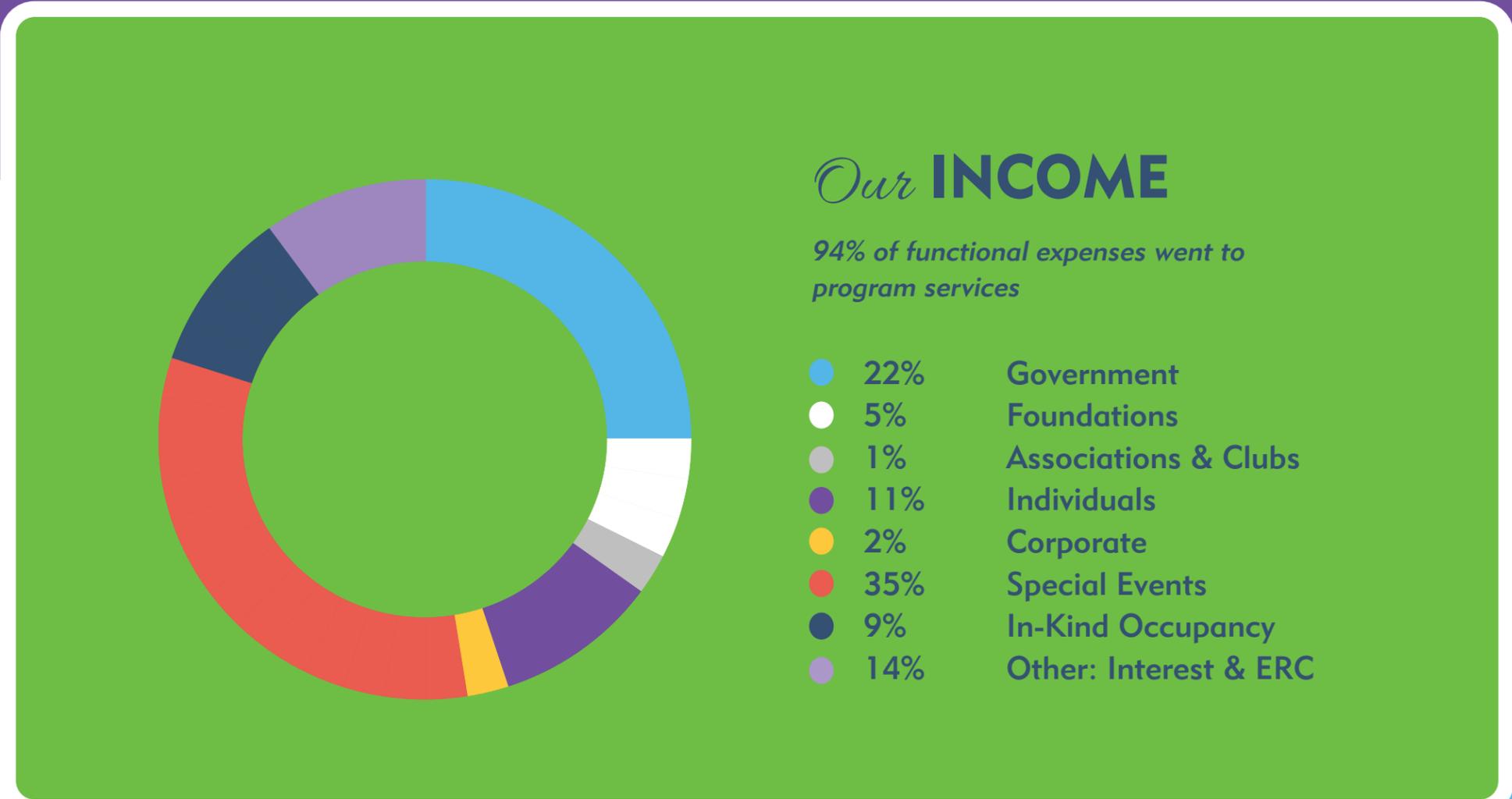


- ▶ 100% of CASAs written court reports were accepted by the Court (137 court reports submitted)
- ▶ 85% of our CASAs recommendations were ordered by the Court
- ▶ Of the 51 children whose cases closed, 96% were living in a permanent home at case closure
- ▶ CASA volunteers donated more than 10,091 hours totaling \$358,533 in volunteer time
- ▶ 100% of the Judges indicate that:
  - They want a CASA appointed to EVERY CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) 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.



“CASA is made up of the most compassionate people I have ever been involved with, they impact young people in a way that most can’t imagine in their most difficult times.”

**JEFF OSTENSO**  
 IRONMARK CEO,  
 Former CASA Board member

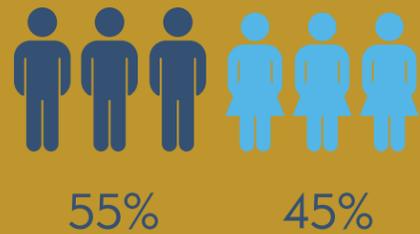


### Did you know?

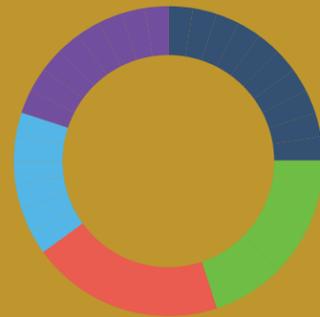
- THEY MAY HAVE SPENT UP TO THREE YEARS IN FOSTER CARE, AND SOME NEVER FIND PERMANENT HOMES.
- ALL OF THESE CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED IN THE FOSTER CARE AND COURT SYSTEM THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN.

# Our DEMOGRAPHICS

## OUR CHILDREN SERVED BY GENDER:

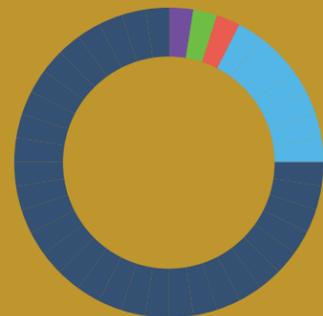


## OUR CHILDREN SERVED BY AGE:



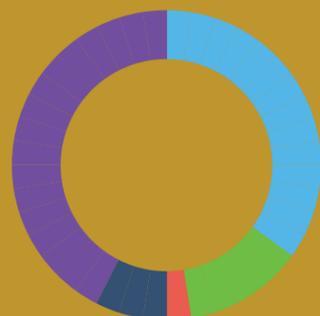
- 18% Birth - 2
- 19% 3-6
- 28% 7-13
- 21% 14-17
- 19% 18-21

## OUR CHILDREN SERVED BY ALLEGATION TYPE:



- 5% Multiple Allegations
- 16% Extraordinary Needs of the Child
- 76% Neglect
- 5% Physical Abuse
- 2% Sexual Abuse

## OUR CHILDREN SERVED BY RACE:



- 42% Caucasian
- 29% African American
- 5% Latino
- 22% Bi-racial
- 2% Asian American

## OUR CASAs ASSIGNED BY GENDER:

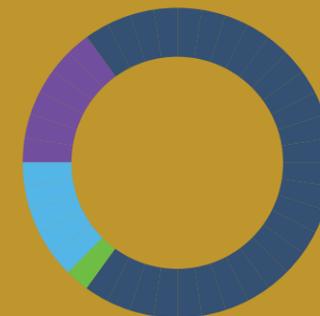


## OUR CASAs ASSIGNED BY AGE:



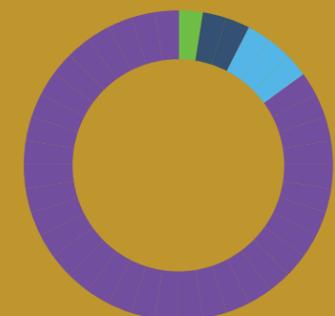
- 7% 21-29
- 18% 30-39
- 14% 40-49
- 25% 50-59
- 36% 60+

## OUR CASAs ASSIGNED BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS:



- 67% Full-Time
- 14% Part-Time
- 17% Retired
- 2% Not Employed

## OUR CASAs ASSIGNED BY RACE:



- 84% Caucasian
- 8% African American
- 7% Latino
- 1% Bi-racial





**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CASA, INC.

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