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June 27, 2025

City of Bay St. Louis
C/O Mayor Mike Favre & City Council
688 Highway 90
Bay St. Louis, Mississippi 39520

Dear Mayor Favre and Members of the City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this request for funding for fiscal year 2025–2026. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) serves as a lifeline for Hancock County’s most vulnerable children—those who have suffered abuse and neglect and who now find themselves under the supervision of the Youth Court. Through the dedication of trained volunteers, CASA ensures each child’s voice is heard and their best interests are represented with accuracy, compassion, and integrity.

To date, 68 CASA volunteers have provided critical advocacy for 133 children, including 44 who were residents of incorporated Bay St. Louis at the time of their victimization. In addition to serving foster children, we also support children involved in in-home cases—those in which abuse or neglect has been substantiated but the court allows the child to remain with their family while services are accessed under judicial oversight.

Meeting the needs of these children requires ongoing recruitment, training, and support of committed volunteers. Innovative efforts, such as our work with Remi—Mississippi’s only courthouse facility dog—and the implementation of trauma-informed practices like Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), are helping stabilize placements and promote healing for children who have endured significant early trauma.

CASA offers both a moral and fiscal return on investment. Because our advocates are volunteers, a full year of CASA support costs less than a single month of foster care. Moreover, children with CASA advocates spend less time in foster care and are half as likely to re-enter the system—ultimately reducing both human suffering and the financial burden on the state and local government.

With this letter, CASA respectfully requests the City of Bay St. Louis consider a contribution of **\$2,000** in support of our work on behalf of abused and neglected children for fiscal year 2025–2026. Your support affirms the City’s commitment to protecting its most defenseless citizens and ensures that no child in our community walks through the court system alone.

Enclosed you will find the Mississippi statute authorizing municipal support for CASA, along with our year-to-date outcomes and 2025 Community Impact Report. I welcome the opportunity to speak further and thank you for your thoughtful consideration. Together, we can continue to be a voice for the voiceless and a source of hope for Bay St. Louis’ most vulnerable children.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Chauvin

Executive Director, CASA of South Mississippi

cc: City Manager, Mike Reso
City Councilman, Ward 1, Jordan Bradford
City Councilman, Ward 2, Nancy Moynan
City Councilman, Ward 3, Phalba Holmes
City Councilman, Ward 4, Kyle Lewis
City Councilman, Ward 5, Linda Kay Davis
City Councilman, Ward 6, Josh DeSalvo
City Councilman-At-Large, Larry Smith

West's Annotated Mississippi Code
Title 21. Municipalities
Chapter 19. Health, Safety, and Welfare

Miss. Code Ann. § 21-19-46

§ 21-19-46. Donation to Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) authorized; limit on amount

Currentness

The governing authority of any municipality is authorized, in its discretion, to donate to any chapter of the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) out of any funds in the municipal treasury; however, the cumulative sum of donations to a chapter may not exceed the amount generated in the municipality by one-fourth ($\frac{1}{4}$) mill on all of the taxable property within the municipality during the fiscal year in which the donations are made. Nothing in this section authorizes the imposition of additional tax.

Credits

Added by [Laws 2011, Ch. 461, § 1](#), eff. July 1, 2011.

Miss. Code Ann. § 21-19-46, MS ST § 21-19-46

The Statutes and Constitution are current with laws from the 2025 Regular Session. Some statute sections may be more current, see credits for details. The statutes are subject to changes provided by the Joint Legislative Committee on Compilation, Revision and Publication of Legislation.

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Court Appointed Special Advocates of South Mississippi

Serving Hancock, Harrison, & Stone Counties

Our Mission

CASA's **mission** is to advocate for South Mississippi's abused & neglected children by supporting volunteers who promote safety, permanency, & resilience.

ADVOCATE SERVICE

- **173** Court Reports written by Advocates
 - **634** Recommendations were made
 - **97%** became Orders of the Court
- **130** Assigned Advocates
- **20** New Advocates Sworn In
- **1,262** Hours of Training Completed

130

Volunteers Provided

3,866

Hours of Service to Children

289

Children in Hancock, Harrison, & Stone Counties

County Data

- Hancock County: **66** volunteers are serving **123** children:

As of 6/1/25

Bay St. Louis: 38 (31%)	Unincorp BSL: 26 (21%)	Waveland: 12 (10%)	Diamondhead: 9 (7%)
Picayune: 11 (9%)	Kiln: 20 (16%)	Perkinston: 6 (5%)	Pearlington: 1 (1%)

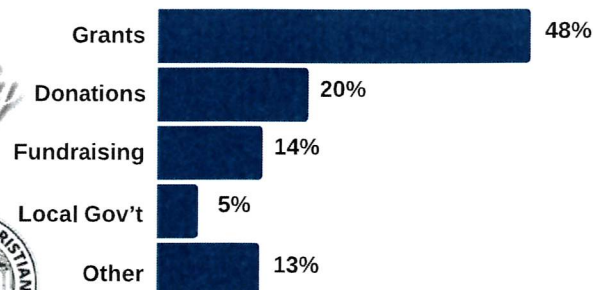
- Harrison County: **53** volunteers serving **125** children
- Stone County: **11** volunteers serving **41** children

Funding

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



CASA'S DIVERSE FUNDING



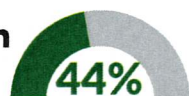
2025 PROGRAM GOALS

Current Data as of 6/1/25

GOAL #1

45 New Volunteers Trained & Sworn In
(10 Hancock, 25 Harrison, 10 Stone)

20 New Volunteers have been Sworn In



Three additional trainings are scheduled for new volunteers.

GOAL #4

75% of Children Achieve Safe & Permanent Homes

56 Children



62 children's cases have closed in 2025.
56 children (90%) achieved of safe & permanent homes. 5 children turned 18/21 & were released from custody. 1 child passed away.

GOAL #2

75% of Children in Foster Care Assigned an Advocate

289 Children Served



Additionally, 29 Children were assigned to our program, but were not able to be served until we have more advocates.

GOAL #5

400 Individuals Trained in TBRI®

194 Individuals Trained



Each year, CASA trains both caregivers & professionals in Trust-Based Relational Intervention, a trauma-responsive approach for children who have experienced stress & overwhelming life events.

GOAL #3

75% of Recommendations become Orders of the Court

634 Recommendations



634 Recommendations were made, and 617 (97%) of those recommendations became orders of the court

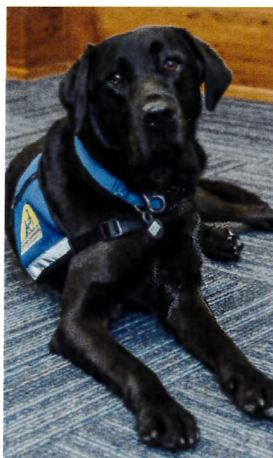
“My advocate has been our armor and shield from the start.”

14 year old youth in foster care



These pictures of children with their assigned advocates were drawn by CASA children in foster care: an 8-year-old (left) and an 11-year-old (right)

CHILD PROJECTS



Remi the Courthouse Facility Dog

Remi accompanies child victims to court hearings in order to enhance the fact-finding process. Remi also supports child welfare system staff to decrease secondary trauma & prevent burnout.



Candles of Hope

CASA has partnered with Claiborne Hills Supermarket (Hancock) and Quality Bakery (Harrison & Stone) to provide personalized birthday cakes at to children served by CASA volunteers. This project is supported by the Misfit Street Krewzers, the K. Ryder Foundation, & Community Connection. In Harrison & Stone Counties, **Kaiden's Candles of Hope** honors the legacy and memory of Kaiden Ryder McGill.

Trust-Based Relational Intervention®

Trust-Based Relational Intervention, or TBRI®, is a trauma-informed intervention designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. CASA has partnered with other TBRI® agencies to create a multi-disciplinary team to implement system-wide trauma-informed training within the state of Mississippi.



School Supplies

Each year, CASA meets the back-to-school needs of school-aged served by the CASA program in Hancock, Harrison, and Stone Counties. After backpacks are assembled, CASA volunteers deliver them to their assigned children.



CASA Christmas

Christmas Sponsor Drive: Each Christmas, every CASA child across Hancock, Harrison, and Stone Counties received personalized gifts tailored to their wishes.

Child Parties: CASA spreads holiday cheer by hosting Christmas parties for children in foster care across Hancock, Harrison, and Stone Counties. These parties are filled with festive fun, holiday treats, meaningful interactions with Santa, and most importantly, they also allow an opportunity for siblings divided in foster care to connect and make a holiday memory together.