



Proposal to City of Cartersville to assist in replacing VOCA Funding Cuts for the Children's Advocacy Center and Court Appointed Special Advocates Programs

Introduction

Advocates for Children requests the City of Cartersville administration's assistance in addressing significant funding shortfalls for our Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) programs due to cuts in the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). These programs are vital to the safety and well-being of vulnerable children in our community. Without sufficient funding, the continuity of services that directly impact the most at-risk children and families will be jeopardized.

The Critical Role of CAC and CASA

- **Children's Advocacy Center (CAC):** CAC provides a child-focused environment where abused and neglected children can receive forensic interviews, counseling, and medical examinations in a safe and supportive setting. By streamlining the investigation process, CAC minimizes trauma for children while ensuring evidence is collected effectively for justice.
- **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA):** CASA volunteers advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the court system. They ensure children receive necessary services and a stable, permanent home as quickly as possible. CASA programs reduce court delays and improve outcomes for children in foster care.

Together, these programs enhance the child and family well-being in our community by addressing abuse, neglect, and systemic barriers, ensuring that children thrive in safe environments.

Impact on Our Community

- **Improved outcomes:** Research shows that children served by CAC and CASA experience better physical, mental, and legal outcomes.
- **Cost efficiency:** CAC reduces duplication of services among agencies, while CASA reduces the length of time children spend in foster care, saving taxpayers money.
- **Community safety:** By addressing abuse and neglect, these programs contribute to healthier, safer families and communities.

Funding Levels 2019-Current

		2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
CAC	VOCA	123,721.00	161,653.00	129,322.00	88,909.00	58,307.00	58,307.00	58,307.00
	CESF			17,438.00				
	ARPA				52,206.00	94,928.00	91,243.00	
	VOCA CAC Standards	37,932.00						
	CAPTA			14,893.00				
Subtotal		\$ 161,653.00	\$ 161,653.00	\$ 161,653.00	\$ 141,115.00	\$ 153,235.00	\$ 149,550.00	\$ 58,307.00
CASA	VOCA	201,083.00	208,162.00	166,530.00	114,489.00	79,619.00	79,619.00	79,619.00
	CESF			41,632.00				
	ARPA				76,159.00	117,495.00	111,933.00	
Subtotal		\$ 201,083.00	\$ 208,162.00	\$ 208,162.00	\$ 190,648.00	\$ 197,114.00	\$ 191,552.00	\$ 79,619.00
TOTAL		\$ 362,736.00	\$ 369,815.00	\$ 369,815.00	\$ 331,763.00	\$ 350,349.00	\$ 341,102.00	\$ 137,926.00



Urgent Need

VOCA funding has significantly decreased from \$369,815 in 2020-2021 to a projected \$137,926 in 2025-2026. This results in a funding shortfall of \$84,000 for FY25, with the most critical gap occurring from October to December at \$19,054 per month—or \$57,161 total—directly impacting CAC and CASA operations. Without immediate financial support, these essential programs risk disruption, leaving children vulnerable without crucial services. The combined operating budget for CAC and CASA is \$733,972.

The following are the anticipated funding sources for FY25/26:

Funding Sources	Amounts			
VOCA	\$137,926			
PSSF	\$75,000			
CAC/GA	\$67,621			
Interview Rate	\$67,200			
CAPTA	\$80,000	(Added new bi-lingual interviewer 2025)		
SACNWGA	\$4,800			
GA CASA	\$72,781			
<i>Total all Grants</i>	<i>\$505,328</i>			
Combined Program Budget	\$733,972			
Shortfall	\$228,644			

Three Year Projections:

Funding Source	FY25	FY26	FY27
VOCA	\$137,926.00	\$144,820.00	\$152,063.00
PSSF	\$75,000.00	\$78,750.00	\$82,687.00
CAC/GA	\$67,621.00	\$71,002.05	\$64,552.00
Interview Rate	\$67,200.00	\$70,560.00	\$74,088.00
CAPTA	\$80,000.00	\$84,000.00	\$88,200.00
SACNWGA	\$4,800.00	\$5,040.00	\$5,292.00
GA CASA	\$72,781.00	\$76,420.05	\$80,241.05
Bartow County	\$50,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$40,500.00
City of Cartersville	\$25,000.00	\$22,500.00	\$20,250.00
City of Euahlee	\$5,000.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,050.00
City of Emerson	\$7,500.00	\$6,750.00	\$6,075.00
City of Adairsville	\$7,500.00	\$6,750.00	\$6,075.00
National CASA Pass Through Grant	\$0.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Private Fundraising (to be raised)	\$0.00	\$67,877.60	\$49,897.00
Total all Grants	\$600,328.00	\$733,972.00	\$733,972.00
Total Surplus/Deficit	\$133,644.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Around 50% of CAC and CASA programs in the state receive local government support, either through direct city budget allocations or 5% fund allocations. To sustain uninterrupted services, we are prioritizing new funding sources this year. This includes meetings with Bartow County and the Cities of Adairsville, Euahlee, and Emerson, renegotiating interview rates, and seeking private foundation



funding. Bartow County has already committed \$50,000 to our programs and has challenged us to secure matching contributions from all cities within the county.

Request

We respectfully request the following from the city administration:

1. **Emergency funding for FY25:** An allocation of **\$25,000** to ensure the uninterrupted operation of the CAC and CASA programs for the final quarter of the calendar year. This funding will address immediate gaps in operational costs.
2. **Inclusion in the city budget for FY26 and beyond:** Consideration for ongoing financial support to include Advocates for Children in the city's annual budget, ensuring long-term sustainability of these essential services.

By investing in CAC and CASA, the Cartersville demonstrates its commitment to the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable citizens—our children. Your support will sustain essential services that protect children, strengthen families, and foster a safer, healthier community for all.

In 2024 Advocates conducted 340 forensic interviews and served 868 children and their non-offending family members. Thank you for your consideration. We are available to discuss this urgent need further and provide any additional information.