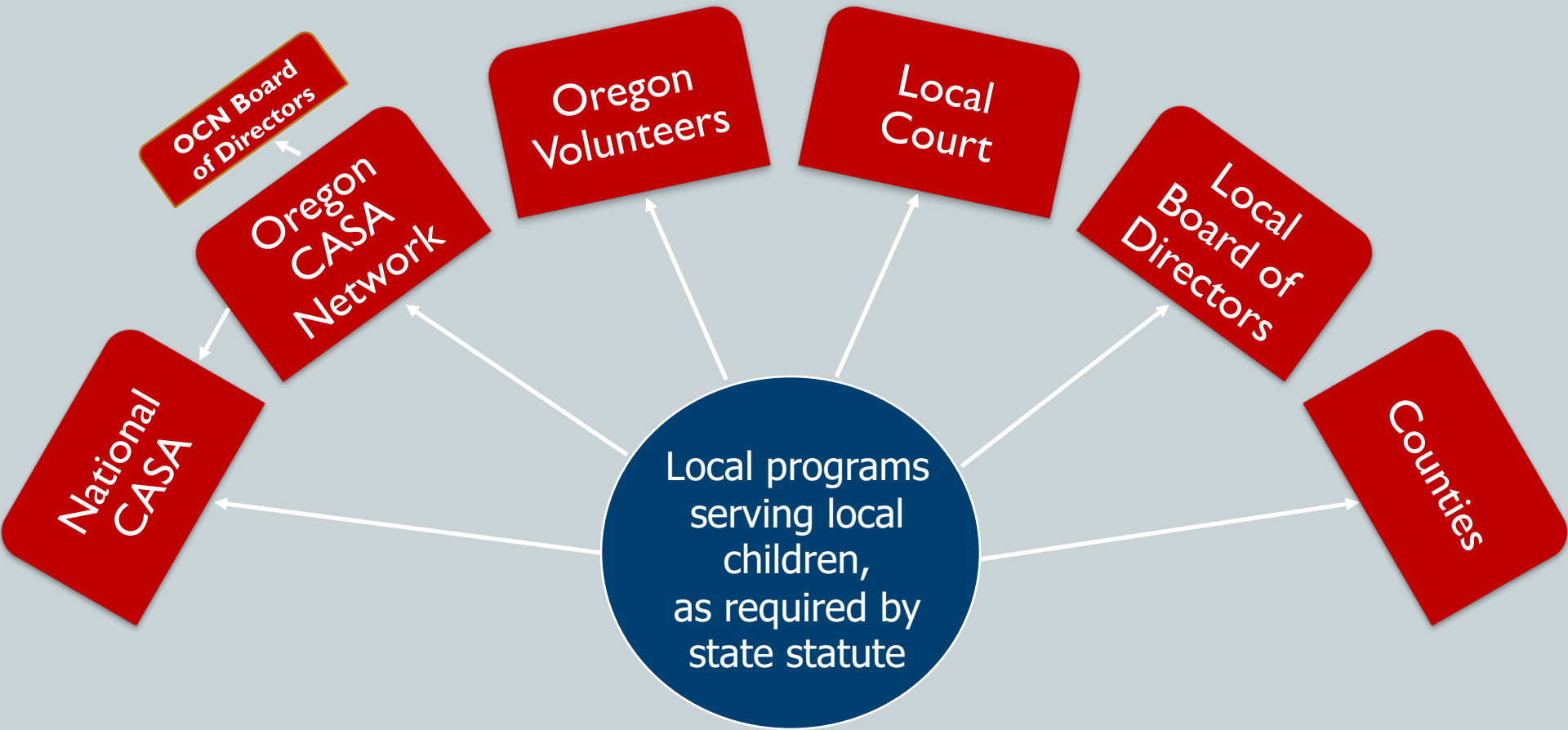




# OREGON CASA NETWORK

22 LOCAL PROGRAMS  
SERVING 35 COUNTIES

# Local Program Reporting



# CASA

## PRIORITIES

- Meeting the need of all children in care is our highest priority.
- HB 2600: Move CASA to new home
- HB 2171: Fund CASA to meet National CASA standards
- CASA supports the recommendations of the Taskforce
- We respectfully request that until we are able to serve the children in care, funding is directed to local programs to increase capacity to meet the needs of the 56% of the children who do not have a CASA

# CASA'S ROLE IN JUVENILE DEPENDENCY

## CURRENT SERVICES & DELIVERY

- CASA is a legal party to dependency cases
- CASA staff recruits, trains and supervises community volunteers who are extensively trained to advocate for the child in care
- The CASA assigned to the case investigates all relevant information about the case
- Advocates for the child/youth, ensuring that all relevant facts are brought before the court
- Facilitates and negotiate to ensure that the court, DHS and the child/youth's attorney fulfill their obligations to the child/youth in a timely fashion
- Monitor court orders to ensure compliance and to bring to the court's attention any change in circumstances that may require a modification of an order of the court

# HOW SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY DELIVERED

## INVESTIGATES

- Talks to people involved with the child and requests records (child, parents, relatives, case workers, teachers, attorneys, therapists, foster parents, medical/dental/vision
- Reads all discovery, review and assess all documents
- Understands relevant history, environment, relationships and current needs of child
- Determines what a child needs to be placed in a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible

# HOW SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY DELIVERED

## ADVOCATES

- Make recommendations regarding the child's best interests; both in and out of court
- Attend any and all meetings that relate to ensuring the child's needs are being met (DHS, school, treatment, placement, visitations)
- Bring together those who support a child and family to explore options
- Share thoughts and opinions with those who provide services to a child and family

# HOW SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY DELIVERED

## FACILITATES

- Identify resources and services that are in the child's best interest
- Ensure communication between service providers
- Request meetings and encourage communication; reduce barriers for families and promote permanency
- Support and ensure communication with foster parents

# HOW SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY DELIVERED

## MONITORS

- Communicate with the DHS caseworker to ensure services/progress for child and family
- Communicate with foster families to ensure child's educational, medical, physical and emotional needs are being met
- Communicate with schools to ensure educational needs are being met
- Request documentation from providers
- Track the court orders to ensure compliance by the parties and report status to the court
- May request hearings



# HOW SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY DELIVERED

## ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS

- Communicate with the DHS caseworker to ensure services/progress for child and family
- Communicate with foster families to ensure child's educational, medical, physical and emotional needs are being met
- Communicate with schools to ensure educational needs are being met
- Request documentation from providers
- Track the court orders to ensure compliance by the parties and report status to the court

# CASA DEPENDENCY CASELOAD

## FISCAL YEAR 2015-16

- 5,034 (44%) of the children/youth who were in the legal custody of the state were assigned a CASA
- 6,520 (56%) of children/youth did not have a CASA

# TASK FORCE ON DEPENDENCY REPRESENTATION

## CASA

- CASAs report to the court through written reports and oral testimony at all hearings. CASAs use information gathered during the investigation and ongoing contact to facilitate positive outcomes for children outside of court through direct advocacy with DHS, schools and other community providers. Well trained and supervised CASAs provide important high quality advocacy for children and can be as effective as attorneys or law students with similar levels of training and supervision.
- CASA programs without legal counsel report difficulty performing relatively simple legal tasks: initiating requests for court review, responding to subpoenas for CASA testimony, and preserving CASA recommendations and findings in court records. Programs also report challenges with other advocacy needs that generally are accomplished with legal consultation: interpreting new case law or statutory changes; developing strategies for advocacy outside of juvenile court proceedings that require understanding of administrative law; and continuing to provide meaningful advocacy in complex juvenile court proceedings.
- Currently, CASA for Children (serving Columbia, Multnomah, and Washington counties) is the only Oregon CASA program meeting this standard. Because volunteers are directly supervised by staff with expertise in juvenile court or child welfare systems; CASA for Children uses a program attorney model providing legal consultation and training, along with occasional in court representation. Most legal needs can be met without formal appearances by the attorney. The Program Attorney is on-call to the program, allowing for rapid access to legal services; participates in pre-service and on-going training for staff and CASAs; and assists with systemic program issues.
- Providing adequate legal consultation increases the effectiveness of CASA advocacy.

# TASK FORCE ON DEPENDENCY REPRESENTATION

## RECOMMENDATION

- **Prove funds sufficient to support four statewide CASA Program Attorneys so that CASAs in Oregon have timely access to legal consultation and representation.** Oregon's state administrator for general fund CASA appropriations should create standards and contracting procedures to manage legal services contracts for CASA programs through the Oregon CASA Network. To improve advocacy and bring programs into compliance with national standards, CASA programs should have access to legal counsel experienced in child welfare and juvenile court advocacy to provide consultation, limited direct representation, training and consultation on systemic processes and reforms. Services should be available regionally and be housed in local CASA programs selected for their capacity to support new personnel and regional accessibility.

# CASA ATTORNEYS

## ANTICIPATED BIENNIUM COSTS

Four Attorneys

Staff attorneys	3@ 76,000/yr =	\$456,000
Lead attorney	1	204,000
Admin support	.5 FTE	64,000
Travel and overhead		80,000
Administration costs		<u>50,000</u>
Total		\$854,000

- Salary costs for staff attorneys reflect competitive salaries for attorneys with 5 years of experience in direct juvenile court representation plus 27% for benefits and withholdings. Salary for lead attorney reflects competitive salary for an attorney with 10 years experience in direct juvenile court representation acting in a lead attorney position plus 27%

# CASA ATTORNEYS

## ROLE

Attorneys will be available to local program staff and advocates for assistance in legal matters:

- Consultation
- Assistance with trial preparation
- CASA representation in court, when appropriate
- Completing and filing of paperwork outside the scope of staff's and advocates' training or knowledge

# CASA ATTORNEYS

## IMPLEMENTATION

- Careful planning and implementation are critical to the success of the program and responsible utilization of the funding
- Implementation work to be completed:
  - Timetable that includes development, recruitment, training and implementation
  - Development of structure, expectations, performance measures, tracking of requests/work, prioritization of services
  - Development of pilot program
  - Developed in partnership with our new “home”

# CASA ATTORNEYS

## ALTERNATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- CASA attorneys be implemented after funding for local programs meets the need to provide a CASA for every child in care
- Rolling implementation; start with one or two attorneys



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