



GRANT-HARNEY COUNTY CASA, INC.
835 S. Canyon Blvd.
John Day, OR 97845
Phone (541) 575-5574
www.grantharneycasa.org

TO: Nick Green, City Manager, City of John Day
FROM: Hannah Hinman, Executive Director, Grant-Harney County CASA
DATE: March 18, 2020
RE: CASA Funding Request

Background

Grant-Harney County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) recruits, trains, and professionally supports volunteers who advocate for the best interests of neglected and abused children in the juvenile dependency system in Grant and Harney Counties. Appointed to just one or two cases, a CASA volunteer directs focused attention to the needs and circumstances of a vulnerable child or sibling set and reports directly to the court regarding the child(ren)'s best interests. Several studies have demonstrated that the attention of a highly trained CASA volunteer can improve the outcomes for a child in the state's care, by measurements of school performance, services received, time in care, and likelihood to return to care. Due to the clear efficacy of advocacy, the state of Oregon mandates that all children in the dependency system be appointed a CASA volunteer. However, the state does not fully fund local CASA programs – less than 20 percent of our program's funding comes from the state.

In 2016 Grant and Harney Counties began to experience an unprecedented surge in the number of children entering the state's care – a doubling of children in care at the peak – which challenged our organization's capacity to respond, as it did for many local agencies and services. While the surge of children in care has plateaued, the number remains much higher than prior years. (*See attached graph.*)

In 2018 Grant-Harney CASA received a state-administered federal grant allowing us to expand our staffing from .75 to 2.0 FTE and as a result recruited, trained, and swore-in 15 new CASA volunteers. In 2019, utilizing funding from Grant County and additional grant funds, we created a temporary part-time Administrative Internship position, which helped us improve our community outreach, implement new donor management practices, improve compliance with our data management policies, and show our volunteers some appreciation for their service.

Request

In order to build on the momentum created by these permanent and temporary FTE expansions, our board engaged in a strategic planning process early this fiscal year. One primary goal defined in our strategic plan is another permanent FTE expansion, so that we can increase the number of children we are able to serve and improve the quality of our volunteer advocacy. We have created a Grant County Program Coordinator position and submitted grant applications to several foundations to secure multi-year funding to support this additional .75 FTE. It is important within these grants to demonstrate local support for our work. Therefore, we are asking for local government commitments from both Grant County and the City of John Day. Our request to the City is \$1,500 in each of the next three fiscal years for a total of \$4,500, providing critical local match dollars for our foundation grants.



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Local investment in Grant-Harney County CASA will have important humanitarian and economic impacts, including supporting a newly created job, attracting additional external funds, providing fulfilling volunteer opportunities, increasing community awareness of pernicious social challenges, and, most importantly, improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children and families. Thank you for your time and consideration of our request.

Point-in-Time Number of Children in the State's Care in Grant & Harney Counties

