

3/13/2020

COVID-19 Update: A Message From Our CEO, Tara Perry

Dear National CASA/GAL Family,

I want to thank you for your efforts during this tumultuous time and for what you do best not only during a crisis but daily on behalf of children—work together and support each other for the greater good.

As a highly valued member of the CASA/GAL family, our highest concern is for your health, safety and well-being. I urge you to take good care of yourself to the very best of your ability—so that we can serve the children who count on us.

The CASA/GAL network of programs and state organizations represent a network of innovators, problem solvers and implementers. Many of you have shared ways you are addressing some of the fallout from this global crisis. We encourage you to share ideas and insights about how you are ensuring the health and safety of your volunteers, staff and children and ways you are continuing services and emergency response protocol. With this unprecedented event, we can all learn from each other and strengthen our processes and procedures. In fact, we'd like for you to share your best practices so that we can make them available on our member portal. If you have helpful information others can benefit from, please send it to: safetyinsights@nationalcasagal.org.

As we continue to monitor the effects of the coronavirus (COVID – 19) and its impact on all of our lives, we have been planning numerous alternative ways we can support you in your service to children and families, as they will continue to need our support, especially during trying times.

Here are a few ways that we at National CASA/GAL are here to support you:

Option for in-person pre-service volunteer trainings available. In recognition of the immediate interest in offering an alternative to in-person pre-service volunteer trainings, National CASA/GAL is currently making modifications to the 2018 Flex Learning Curriculum, so that it can be delivered in a totally virtual environment. Please join us for [one of two webinars](#) scheduled for next week to learn more about delivering this modified version. During the session, we will discuss the modifications made, conduct an abbreviated training of facilitator (TOF), and discuss technology requirements

and [platform options](#) to facilitate an in-person experience virtually. For more information, please go to our [Events page](#).

Funding available for videoconferencing to deliver flex training.

If you need financial assistance to cover the cost of providing video-conferencing for pre-service flex training and/or the cost of the Moodle room, please complete this [application](#).

Emergency grant opportunities available.

If your organization or program experiences an emergency due to COVID-19, resulting in the need for financial assistance, please contact Denice Hairston, National Quality & Accountability Officer at deniceh@nationalcasagal.org, describing the situation and inquiring about possible support.

Encourage volunteers to stay in touch.

As you know, many activities and events have been canceled out of an abundance of caution and care for our health and safety. While it may not be prudent for volunteers to meet in person with children at this time, consider advising them to replace the visit with a phone call, so that the communication with children continues, if possible. Encourage traditional activities such as writing a handwritten letter or sending a card. For specific guidance about how volunteers can effectively and safely stay in touch with children, please check out this helpful information: [National CASA/GAL Guidance for Safely Staying in Touch with Children](#).

Access the wealth of resources available on the member portal. There are countless resources available to assist, direct and support the children and families we serve. We will continuously update these resources as more information becomes available. Please go to the [member portal](#).

Here are a few additional useful tips and resources:

Stay informed. Seek out the latest information about COVID -19 and how you can stay healthy and safe by going to your local health department website and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

Keep in touch with your local/state organization network.

Stay in touch with your staff, volunteers, children and families served. Let them know how you can

best support them during this time. Seek out alternative ways to meet such as conference calls and videoconferencing, if available.

Follow the guidance of your local court system.

State government offices, court systems and other organizations you work with will likely come up with strategies to continue to support the children you serve. If offered, encourage volunteers to take advantage of options to call or video conference into permanency planning meetings and court hearings. Stay in touch with volunteers and advocates and exchange ideas about how to best support children and families during this difficult time.

Be a voice of encouragement, comfort and gratitude.

This is a great time to encourage your staff, volunteers, children and families. Thank them for their involvement with our network and support of the CASA/GAL mission.

Thank our donors.

We can't thank enough those who give financially to support local and state organizations and National CASA/GAL. Their support affords us all the privilege and countless opportunities to serve children and families.

I thank you for being a part of the most powerful movement on behalf of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and your tireless work in support of 950 programs across the country with more than 93,000 volunteers serving nearly 272,000 children. Even in the face of uncertainty, we remain deeply, firmly and diligently committed to the children and families we serve. I will keep you all in my thoughts and prayers.

Many Thanks,

Tara Perry