

**Fourth Judicial District Guardian *ad Litem* (GAL) Program  
Report to the Idaho Legislature for FY2019**

**CASES**

Number of Child Protective Act petitions filed: 221 \*

**CHILDREN**

Number of children served by a GAL program volunteer: 407

Total number of children appointed to the GAL program: 449

Number of children subject to proceedings in the district: 347 \*

**SERVICES**

Nature of services provided by GAL program volunteers: Services provided were in accordance with I.C. §16-1632, §16-1633, §16-1634, and Idaho Juvenile Rule 35.

Number of hours of service by GAL program volunteers: 14,917 hours

Number of hours of service by attorneys: 2,925 hours

Number of *new* GAL program volunteers trained: 82

**FINANCIAL**

A complete financial statement for the Fourth Judicial District Guardian *ad Litem* (GAL) program's preceding fiscal year is attached to this report.

\* Indicates number provided to the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA program by the Idaho Supreme Court.

**Additional Optional Information**  
**to include in the Legislative Report**

**CHILDREN SERVED**

Number of children served by GAL program *staff*: 12

Number of children *appointed to but unserved* by GAL program: 30

**GAL Program highlights including strengths, successes and challenges:**

Strengths:

- In FY19, the percentage of children (under 12 years of age) served by a GAL volunteer increased by 27.5%
- GAL volunteers reported 14,917 hours of services provided in FY19. This is a 95% increase in hours from FY18.
- Volunteer attorneys reported 127% more hours of service in FY19.
- Zero children were “monitored” in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in FY19.
- In FY19, the percentage of not served children dropped from 14% to 6.7%. We were unable to serve 30 children. However, this is a 44% drop from FY18 when we were unable to serve 54 children.

Successes:

- The 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program exceeded its goal of adding 70 new GALs in FY19. In fact, it added 82! This is a 15% increase from FY18 and a 418% increase from FY17. We are very proud of our year over year growth in this area.
- 6 Peer Coaches were added to the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA program in FY19. A Peer Coach is a volunteer support role developed by National CASA. A Peer Coach is an experienced Guardian ad Litem volunteer nominated to be specially trained to support other Guardians ad Litem throughout their case with the intention of their role being to make support more accessible to the volunteers.
- Over the last year, twenty-two pro-bono volunteer attorneys either re-engaged with the program or started representing Guardians ad Litem to serve Ada County. Some of these attorneys were recruited through the efforts of Judge Moody, Justice Brody, Judge Ellis, and others.
- The Honorable, Judge Ellis, presented a total of twelve Child Protection 101 trainings to our pool of pro-bono attorneys, attorneys from across the state, and local Guardians ad Litem. This free continuing education opportunity covered the law governing Child Protective Act cases from start to finish.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program has an excess of volunteers in Valley and Elmore Counties. Due to successful marketing efforts, in rural counties, we currently have more volunteers than needed in these two counties. This surplus is also due to a lack

of new Child Protection case appointments coming out of these counties.

- In FY19, the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program was able to procure a Legal Services Agreement with a local law firm, Naylor Hales. The nature of the representation provided included, but wasn't limited to: assisting with legal issues as they arise; providing mentorship and support for new pro-bono attorneys; assisting in the promotion of pro-bono attorney recruitment efforts in our judicial footprint. This service has been invaluable to the program as it grows and professionalizes.
- As a response to the 2018 Office of Performance Evaluation findings, the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program worked closely with the courts, in their district, to ensure that all children, that we have been appointed to, receive representation. The program, in teamwork with one of the local judges, implemented a standard for the filing of a motion to rescind the GAL appointment if the program did not have a GAL available to take the case and request the court appoint legal counsel for the child as envisioned by Idaho Code § 16-1614(1). Likewise, if a GAL was available but we could not find a pro bono attorney from our volunteer pool, we motioned the Ada County court to appoint counsel to the GAL. These motions were filed, via iCourts, by the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program on the fourteenth day prior to the scheduled Case Plan Hearing. While we hope to someday have enough volunteers to meet the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District's needs, the intent of these motions is to assist the courts in providing all children with legal representation when we cannot.
- Continuously solidifying partnerships with University of Idaho – College of Law and Concordia Law School to engage 1L and 2L students to become Guardians ad Litem.

#### Challenges:

- Additional and sustainable funding to hire more volunteer managers (Advocate Coordinators) to support the increase in volunteer numbers. Our estimated cost to operate CASA and serve all children under 12 years of age is ~\$448 thousand, we expect our numbers to double if we are serving youth under 18 years of age. Our FY2020 allocation from the Idaho Supreme Court is \$214,747.
- Ongoing need for volunteer Guardians ad Litem. Based off of FY18 number of children in out of home placements (809), the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program would significantly more volunteers to affectively served all the children in its jurisdictional footprint.
- Data. The 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program would benefit from having real-time, and consistent data which would tell them such things as the number of children who were subject to a Child Protection proceeding in our district. That way no child would be under-represented.

## **FISCAL YEAR 2019 VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROJECT**

### **Brief project description, goals, and outcomes:**

As we look back on FY19 the goals of the team at Family Advocates/ the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program were to:

- Recruit 158 new volunteer inquiries. This goal was achieved.
- Update our data management system to V16. This goal was achieved.

Revised Template 9/4/18

- Train 71 new Guardians ad Litem. We exceeded this goal and graduated 82 new GALs.
  - Retain 85% of our current Guardians ad Litem. The program retained 80% of their GALs.
- FY19 was a successful year for the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District CASA Program.