

LACKAWANNA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR A Court
Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA)**

August 3, 2011

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a fair and open process, sealed submissions will be received and reviewed by the County of Lackawanna (the "County") Board of Commissioners ("Board of Commissioners") for a Court Appointed Special Advocate program (CASA) for **July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012**.

Respondents must submit their written submission by **4:00** p.m. prevailing time on **August 17, 2011**.

County management personnel will be available by telephone (on an appointment basis) to answer the questions of potential respondents. Respondents desiring to schedule a telephone conference should contact Maria Elkins, Lackawanna County Chief of Staff at 570-963-6800.

Submissions received will be reviewed and evaluated by the Board, based upon such criteria as the Board, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate. The Board reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from any respondent. The Board, in its sole discretion, may accept the proposal of a respondent, may choose a respondent with which the Board will enter into negotiations, or may reject all proposals.

The Board reserves the opportunity to modify this Request for Qualifications at its own discretion and without prior notice, and to waive any immaterial defect or informality in any proposal as may be permitted by law.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Request for Qualifications is to solicit submissions from qualified practitioners to continue operation and/or for qualified agencies to develop and administer a CASA Program. Proposals must be submitted for either continued operation of a CASA Program or the development of a CASA Program.

The Contractor administering a CASA program will be responsible for recruiting, training, and supervising CASA volunteers. CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to advocate for abused and neglected children to make sure they don't get lost in the overburdened legal and social service systems or languish in the foster care system. CASA volunteers stay with each child until he or she is placed in a safe, permanent home and the case is closed.

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Four (4) copies of the proposal must be provided. Qualifications must be submitted to the Board of Commissioners, c/o Maria Elkins, Chief of Staff, 200 Adams Avenue, 6th Floor, Scranton, Pennsylvania 18503. Qualifications must be submitted in a sealed envelope with the name of the firm submitting clearly marked on the outside of the envelope. The County assumes no responsibility for delays in any form of carrier, mail, or delivery service causing the submission to be received after the above-referenced due date and time. Submissions by fax, telephone, or email is not permitted. The final selection will be made in the sole discretion of the Board.
2. All questions regarding this Request for Qualifications should be made in writing to the Board of Commissioners, c/o Maria Elkins, Chief of Staff, 200 Adams Avenue, 6th Floor, Scranton, Pennsylvania 18503.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL:

The Board will independently evaluate each submission and selection will be made upon the applicant's ability to meet the following:

The Contractor agrees to provide CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) specific services to Court clients in compliance with standards promulgated by the National CASA Association and the Pennsylvania Association of CASA. The Contractor will develop policies and procedures for the CASA Program, a funding plan and a public relations/recruiting plan. The services provided will include, but not be limited to the following specific activities/duties:

1. Recruit, screen and train prospective volunteers (CASA's) for appointments in any matter pending in the Court including but not limited to mediation, dependency court or any of the County's specialty courts.
2. Ensure that the screening includes ability to operate in a strength based environment.
3. Upon request by the Court, will assign cases to volunteers who have completed the required CASA specific training.
4. Supervise and monitor case progress to assure quality of services.
5. Shall consult with Children and Youth Services caseworkers, court workers, clients and their parents, lawyers, regarding case progress and/or needs.
6. Ensure that the CASA while advocating for the child, respects the family of origin and seeks appropriate input from same.

7. Ensure that the CASA meets with the child and all involved parties prior to making a recommendation.
8. Ensure recommendations are free of socio-economic bias.
9. Ensure that the CASA prepares written factual reports for the court and provides all parties to the court action with copies.
10. Train and supervise CASA office volunteers when volunteers are needed and when volunteers are available.
11. Will account for all amounts spent by providing valid receipts.
12. Shall prepare all orders of appointment for each CASA and submit them to the court for entry.

PROPOSAL

Each submittal must be in sufficient detail to permit evaluation, at a minimum, with respect to the following issues. Submittals must include the information that is specifically requested herein as well as such additional information as a respondent deems relevant to the process. Each respondent agrees that the submission constitutes a firm offer to the County that cannot be withdrawn for ninety (90) days from the proposal due date.

1. **Scope of Services/Prior Experience** - All submittals must detail the services proposed to be provided and the firm's experience in providing such services.
2. **Personnel** - All submissions to the County must include the following:
 - a. Name, address, and brief description of your firm;
 - b. The names, experience, and qualifications of the individual(s) who would be primarily responsible for performing services on behalf of the County;
 - c. A statement of assurance that your firm is not currently in violation of any regulatory rules and regulations that may have any impact on your firm's operations; and
 - d. A statement that your firm is not involved in any current litigation with the County.

3. Conflict of Interest - All submittals must state that there are no conflicts of interest to which the firm would be subject if it were to provide the requested legal services on behalf of the County.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

This Request for Qualifications, and all submissions received in response, will remain confidential (with the exception of information that was previously public information), and will not be used for any purpose other than the evaluation of the proposals received by the Board. Each respondent, by responding to this Request, acknowledges the terms expressed above and agrees to safeguard the details of this process and the contents of this document. If your organization does not agree to these conditions concerning confidentiality, or if you elect not to respond to this Request for Qualifications, please return this Request to the Board and retain no copies thereof.

Lackawanna County Qualification
Base Selection Process

The statement of qualifications will be evaluated in accordance with the County's Qualifications Base Selection Process. Anyone submitting a statement of qualifications is advised to review that process, which is set forth on the County's website.