

489—4.2(237) Program requirements.**4.2(1) *Establishing additional procedures and protocols.***

a. The state board is responsible for establishment of procedures and protocols consistent with the Iowa Code.

b. Responsibility is delegated by the state board to the administrator to establish and submit to the board for approval a program policy and procedures manual that provides detailed guidance to child advocacy board staff and volunteers on application of these rules and the statutes that govern the operation of the court appointed special advocate program.

c. Child advocacy board staff and volunteers are required to comply with the protocols and procedures established by the state board and the provisions of the policy and procedures manual established by the administrator and approved by the board.

d. Day-to-day implementation of program policy is delegated by the state board to administrative staff. Staff is responsible for bringing questions about policy issues to the state board for clarification or changes of state policy.

4.2(2) *Operation requirements.*

a. The state board delegates responsibility to the administrator to hire, train, and manage staff throughout the state to implement CASA programming. The administrator shall determine the number of court appointed special advocates or coaches an individual coordinator may supervise.

b. The state board delegates responsibility to the administrator to provide additional information or guidance in the program's policy and procedures manual regarding the analysis of applicant qualifications and requirements for the final selection of CASA volunteers and coaches.

c. The coordinator is responsible for recruiting, screening, selecting, training and supervising court appointed special advocates.

d. The CASA selection is made in a manner that provides the best match available between the knowledge, skills, abilities, and availability of the advocate and the needs of the child. The assignments shall be made in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest, risk to the child's or advocate's safety, and jeopardy to the program's integrity.

e. Upon selection of the CASA who will serve on an individual case, the court and all interested parties are notified of the selection.

f. The selected CASA continues to serve on the case until the assignment is terminated by the court.

4.2(3) *CASA advocate qualifications.* Potential coaches and advocates shall meet the following qualifications:

a. Possess a genuine interest in advocating for children and their rights and needs.

b. Have availability to complete mandatory duties.

c. Commit to serve on a case until terminated by the court.

d. Have the ability to interact with persons involved in the child welfare system.

e. Have the ability to communicate effectively both in verbal and written presentations.

f. Be at least 19 years of age or older.

g. Not be a person employed by the state board, the department of health and human services, the district court, or an agency with which the department of health and human services contracts for services for children.

h. Agree to use the child advocacy board's data management system for case work.

4.2(4) *Application requirements for CASA volunteers.* All CASA volunteer applicants shall complete the following requirements:

a. Submit a program application to the program office.

b. Provide the names and addresses of at least three nonrelative personal references.

c. Participate in at least one personal interview with the local coordinator.

d. Complete mandatory CASA preservice training.

e. Take a confidentiality oath, administered by the presiding juvenile court judge, or designee, for whom the CASA will be performing official duties.

f. Authorize a release of information for the CASA program to conduct a complete criminal history check of the applicant's background, including, but not limited to, checking records in the court jurisdiction in which the applicant has resided, state criminal records, Federal Bureau of Investigation or other national criminal database, sex offender registry, child abuse registry, and social security number verification. Applicants who refuse to sign required background check releases will not be considered for the CASA program.

g. Individuals with a negative background check finding may be approved to be a court appointed special advocate in accordance with the CASA of Iowa child abuse registry/criminal background check exemption policy.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.3 and 237.18.

[ARC 6676C, IAB 11/16/22, effective 12/21/22; ARC 7698C, IAB 3/6/24, effective 7/1/24; see correction note at end of chapter]