

2016 Economic Impact: CASA of Kern County (of 2015 efforts)

CASA volunteers are assigned to the abused children they serve at various stages in the juvenile dependency process. Judges in Kern County typically assign a CASA to a child at one of three stages:

1) **Family Maintenance:** The children are returning home to the parent(s) who initially abused the children, and the parents have completed the majority of their case plan. CASAs are assigned by the judge in these cases on a regular basis. The judge wants extra “eyes and ears” to visit the children weekly, and to ascertain the condition of the house and caregivers, while visiting announced and unannounced into the home.

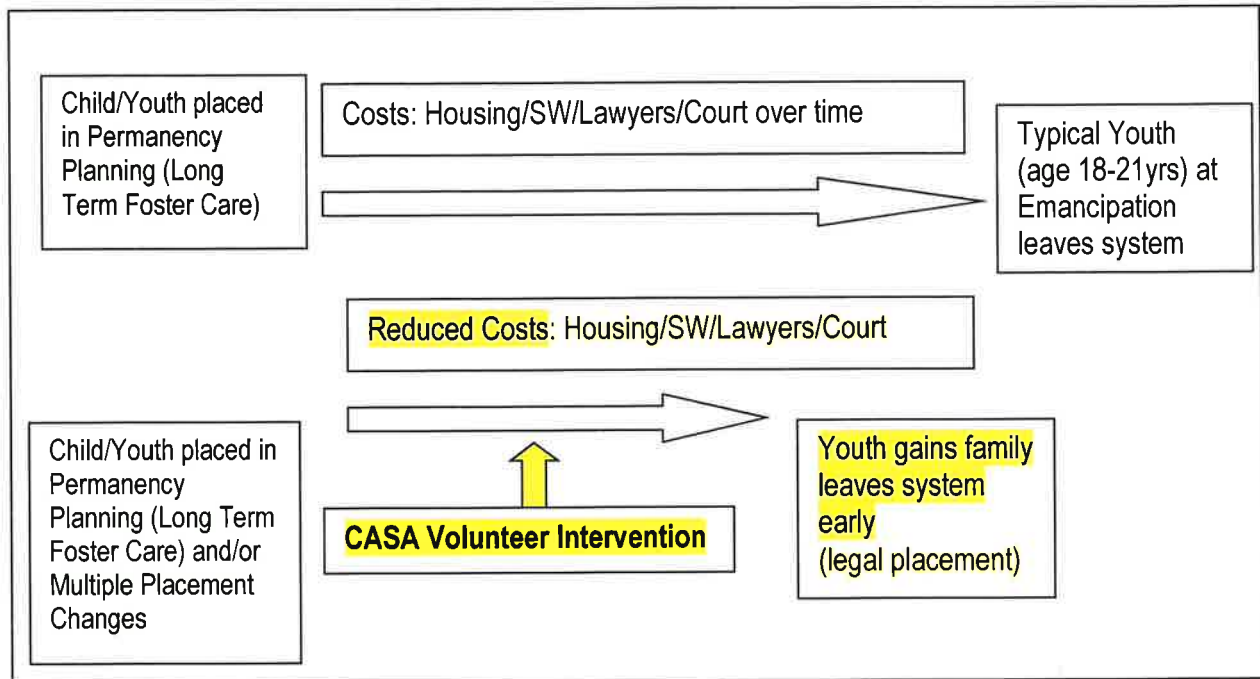
2) **Family Reunification:** The children are hoping to go home in the next six to twelve months, and the judge wants additional information about the services the children need, and the progress of the case plans of the parents, and the children. CASAs are assigned to a large number of these cases, and as we visit weekly, we observe the patterns of the family and how the separation is affecting the parties.

3) **Permanency Plan:** The children are in **long term foster care**, and will be in foster care until they turn 18-21. In these cases, the judge wants the CASA to advocate for any needs identified, and to give annual reports to the court about the child/youth’s progress and status. Although the new term for long term foster care in the State of California has been changed to “planned permanent living arrangement”, we prefer to use the more easily recognizable term of “long term foster care”.

This impact report deals with the cases CASA was assigned by the juvenile court in which the CASA made the significant difference in the child achieving a permanent outcome. The majority of these children were in Long Term Foster Care. The CASA Program of Kern County is committed to finding a permanent, “forever” family for each child we reach. CASA cannot do this work alone, and we rely on our collaborative work with the Department of Human Services. However, we believe that having a CASA work with these particular children has a direct and identifiable value and a cost savings to our community. When a child or youth finds a family, and leaves this system, there is a huge benefit to the community. Minimally, the community is saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in housing costs.

Once the court orders a child into the Permanent Plan of Long Term Foster Care, the County of Kern, and the community has committed to house this child/youth until their emancipation. The Causal Model below demonstrates the basis of this report. We believe that a CASA volunteer assigned to a child assists in the child leaving the system earlier than the court plan, thus saving housing costs. Children and youth are assigned to one of three types of placements, the Family Foster Home, a Foster Family Agency, or a Group Home. The actual housing costs per child vary according to the age of the child. This 2015 Report documents the current rate of housing, and we have **not adjusted for the bi-annual housing increases** which occur as each child ages. Youth can now stay until the **age of 21**, however the data set we use **stops** at their eighteenth birthday. Truly these are **very conservative** housing costs.

CASA Causal Model



In 2015 year, **195 CASA volunteers served a total of 315 children**, of the 2000 dependents in Kern County. Each year a number of our cases are dismissed from the court. In 2015, 115 cases closed with a CASA assigned. On average, over **93% of our children achieved legal permanency**. Legal permanency for this report is defined as return to safe family, adoption, legal guardianship or “supported” emancipation. Supported emancipation means a youth has a robust plan in place for work/housing/school along with all proper documentation.

CASA can demonstrate that we **saved the county over \$461,000** in housing costs in **this year alone**. Twenty-three more children* were able to leave foster care and gained their families through our intervention. Either in long term foster care, or with so many placement changes that the input and stability of the CASA-child relationship enabled the children to successfully exit the foster care system. These children would have cost **over \$4.1 million** to house them during their **253 additional years of foster care**. Truly CASA is worth your support, even in these very challenging economic times. The twenty-three children that qualify for this report are identified as children in which the CASA intervention made a unique and vital intervention into the child gaining their permanent success in a family.

It is interesting to note that these twenty-three children had **78 placement changes** during the time they were served by their CASA. Typically children that have numerous placement changes gain permanency less frequently as they can be labeled as “emotionally challenging” or “emotionally damaged” after so many moves. When we provide the consistent presence of weekly CASA contact in the life of one of these children, the CASA child can regain the possibility of permanency.

*See Attachment

**2015 CASA Economic Impact Report
Estimated Cost Savings from CASA Intervention**

Child ID	Age at Dismissal	Placement Type at Closing	Placement Rate at Closing	Prior Placement Type	Prior Placement Rate	Housing Rate Savings	Foster Care Time Saved	Housing Cost Savings
1498	10 Yr, 7 Mo	G	0.00	FFACH	1,844.00	1,844.00	7 Yr, 5 Mo	164,116.00
1989	17 Yr, 5 Mo	G	0.00	FHB	820.00	820.00	7 Mo	5,740.00
2023	4 Yr, 6 Mo	AP	0.00	FFACH	1,714.00	1,714.00	13 Yr, 6 Mo	277,668.00
2167	16 Yr, 2 Mo	BP	0.00	GH	8,935.00	8,935.00	1 Yr, 10 Mo	196,570.00
2250	4 Yr, 10 Mo	AP	0.00	RH	657.00	657.00	13 Yr, 2 Mo	103,806.00
2271	15 Yr, 4 Mo	G	0.00	FFACH	1,977.00	1,977.00	2 Yr, 8 Mo	63,264.00
2274	6 Yr, 2 Mo	AP	0.00	FFACH	1,789.00	1,789.00	11 Yr, 10 Mo	254,038.00
2275	6 Yr, 2 Mo	AP	0.00	FFACH	1,789.00	1,789.00	11 Yr, 10 Mo	254,038.00
2276	4 Yr, 2 Mo	AP	0.00	FFACH	1,714.00	1,714.00	13 Yr, 10 Mo	284,524.00
2306	3 Yr	AP	0.00	FFACH	1,714.00	1,714.00	15 Yr	309,520.00
2320	7 Yr, 4 Mo	AP	0.00	FHB	711.00	711.00	10 Yr, 8 Mo	91,008.00
2321	5 Yr, 9 Mo	AP	0.00	FHB	711.00	711.00	12 Yr, 3 Mo	104,517.00
2322	4 Yr, 4 Mo	AP	0.00	FHB	657.00	657.00	13 Yr, 8 Mo	107,748.00
2323	3 Yr, 2 Mo	AP	0.00	FHB	657.00	657.00	14 Yr, 10 Mo	116,946.00
2334	12 Yr, 8 Mo	G	0.00	FFACH	1,911.00	1,911.00	5 Yr, 4 Mo	122,304.00
2335	11 Yr, 9 Mo	G	0.00	FFACH	1,844.00	1,844.00	6 Yr, 3 Mo	138,300.00
2345	7 Yr, 8 Mo	BP	0.00	FHB	711.00	711.00	10 Yr, 4 Mo	88,164.00
2355	1 Yr, 11 Mo	AP	0.00	FHB	657.00	657.00	16 Yr, 1 Mo	126,801.00
2356	2 Yr, 2 Mo	AP	0.00	FFACH	1,714.00	1,714.00	15 Yr, 10 Mo	324,660.00
2409	5 Yr	G	0.00	RH	711.00	711.00	13 Yr	110,916.00
2416	1 Yr, 7 Mo	BP	0.00	FFACH	1,714.00	1,714.00	16 Yr, 5 Mo	337,658.00
2472	5 Yr, 5 Mo	AP	0.00	FFACH	1,789.00	1,789.00	12 Yr, 7 Mo	270,139.00
2473	3 Yr	AP	0.00	FFACH	1,714.00	1,714.00	15 Yr	308,520.00
Total housing costs --					Expected monthly savings:	38,454.00		
Annual Savings: \$461,448.00					Time in foster care saved:		253 Yr, 11 Mo	4,160,965.00

AP (Adoptive Placement) -- Housing cost rate: \$0.00/month

BP (Birth Parent) -- Housing cost rate: \$0.00/month

CS (Children's Shelter) -- Housing cost rate: \$640.00/month

FFACH (FFA Certified Home) -- Housing cost rate: \$1,828.00/month

FHB (FH:Basic) -- Housing cost rate: \$724.00/month