

# CDBG Success Story

## Voices for Children: Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program

Riverside County

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Cost: \$1,206,775

### Sources:

\$77,699 – Riverside County CDBG  
\$427,301 – Other Gov't Grants  
\$360,000 – Foundations  
\$341,775 – Donations

**Problem or need addressed:** Every year, approximately 4,000 children spend time in the foster care system in Riverside County. Each child has experienced abuse and neglect. Once in foster care, children face new stressors: being separated from their families, living with strangers, and frequently lacking consistent and caring adult figures in their lives.

**Solution:** Voices for Children's Riverside County CASA program fills a critical gap by providing children in foster care with a consistent and caring adult presence, a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate, also known as a CASA. CASAs are carefully screened and expertly trained to advocate on behalf of children. They spend time with a child during one-on-one visits and learn about their educational, health, and housing needs. They then advocate on a child's behalf in court, schools, healthcare settings, and the community to ensure that a child has access to the resources they need to heal from past trauma and create a brighter future.

**Results:** The grant VFC received from the County of Riverside CDBG program has allowed VFC to provide 39 children with the life-changing support and advocacy of a CASA volunteer.

CASA Gina was matched with Eva when she reentered foster care at the age of 17. One day, Eva called Gina to say she had been admitted to the hospital due to an anxiety attack and placed on a psychiatric hold. Eva was scared and confused, but mostly worried about preparing for her upcoming Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) exam. Gina quickly contacted the social worker and the attorney to update them. She also called Eva's housing manager to ask if she could pick up Eva's test-prep materials and take them to her at the hospital. CASA Gina dropped everything to make support Eva's mental health and to help Eva stay on track with her vocational goals.



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