

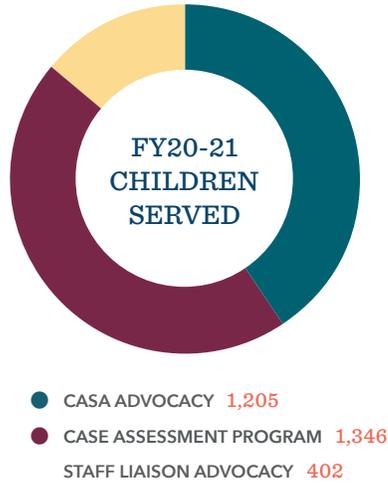
# Program Report

San Diego County | FY2020-2021 | Statistics through Q2



## Meeting the Need

Voices for Children (VFC) believes that every child deserves a safe and permanent home. To that end, we will provide a trained CASA volunteer to every abused, abandoned, or neglected child who needs one, and advocate to improve the lives of children in the foster care system. On July 1, 2020, approximately 2,830 children were in San Diego County foster care, and 588 children have entered the system since then. Of those children, VFC provided a CASA to 1,205 children, VFC staff liaisons advocated on behalf of 402 children, and VFC staff assessed or monitored the cases of 1,346 children through our Case Assessment Program (CAP). In addition, VFC provided CASAs to 92 youth through our Juvenile Justice program. As of December 2020, 81 children were on our waitlist to receive a CASA.



## RECRUITING & TRAINING CASA VOLUNTEERS

Voices for Children is dedicated to spreading awareness about the role of CASAs and the need for more volunteers to speak up for local foster children. Those interested in becoming a CASA begin by attending an Information Session, followed by a formal application, interview process, and thorough background checks. Once accepted, volunteers attend Advocate University, a comprehensive training program that prepares CASAs for their important role.

▶ *During FY2020-2021, VFC responded to 898 volunteer inquiries, hosted 10 Information Sessions for prospective volunteers, and completed 4 Advocate University trainings, averaging 27 graduates per class.*

## THE CASA PROGRAM: 'EYES AND EARS' FOR THE COURT, 'VOICES' FOR CHILDREN

CASAs have two key objectives: get to know their child in order to understand their needs, worries, hopes, and dreams; and use that information to advocate for the child's best interest to the judge making decisions on the case.

111	CASAs or VFC staff attended	379
new CASA volunteers graduated from Advocate University	900+ hearings* and submitted	children have received an advocate since July 1, 2020
	850+ court reports	

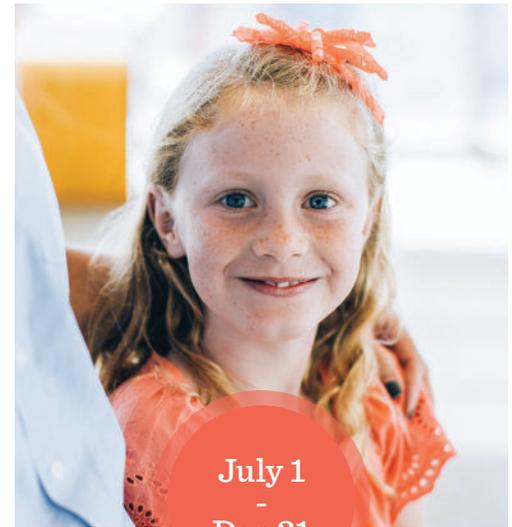
\*Due to COVID-19, CASAs and staff currently attend court hearings remotely via telephone.

## THE CASE LIAISON PROGRAM: EARLY INTERVENTION

Case Liaisons, stationed in each of San Diego's main dependency courtrooms, triage cases in real time, capture important information about the complexity and severity of each child's case, find and advocate for services on less urgent cases, and provide information to the matching team that will help find the most appropriate CASA volunteer for each child.

## THE CASE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: A VITAL PIECE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

VFC Case Assessment Program (CAP) staff monitor and review the case files of children in San Diego County's foster care who do not have advocates. They assess each child's circumstances to identify the most urgent situations, match those children with advocates, and monitor the remaining cases on an ongoing basis should the need for advocates arise.



July 1 - Dec 31

Since July 1, 2020, Voices for Children staff and volunteers advocated on behalf of

# 1,699

children and youth, newborn through age 21.

During that time

# 910

community members served as CASA volunteers in San Diego County.

# \$2,500

allows Voices for Children to recruit, train, and support a CASA for an entire year.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAM

The CASA model continues to deliver excellent results for those children involved or at risk of involvement in the juvenile justice (JJ) system. Notably, our juvenile court judges were the leading referral source in the program's early years. While judge referral rates have remained high, probation officers working directly with these youth have recently become our highest referral source. This demonstrates the recognition of the contributions CASAs are making in the lives of the children they serve and the relationships our staff and CASAs are building with community partners. This program currently has a waitlist of 20 children, and our JJ team continues to do an incredible job developing this program, providing specialized training to CASAs, and matching volunteers with youth who need the support of a CASA.

### Juvenile Justice Quick Statistics

- 27 new assignments this fiscal year to date
- 67 youth with active juvenile justice cases are being served by a CASA
- 134 youth served since the program's inception in 2017

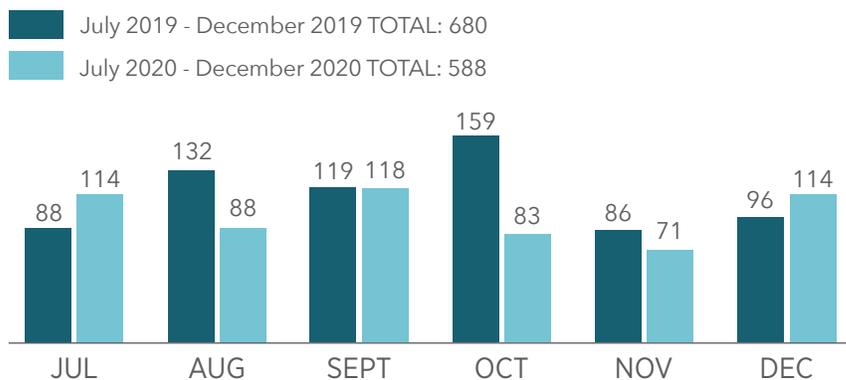
## VOLUNTEER RETENTION

Voices for Children is thankful to our selfless and dedicated volunteers, and we strive to provide an exceptional volunteer experience. Our volunteer retention this fiscal year has been outstanding with December 2020 marking the second lowest month for volunteer losses since 2015. This fiscal year's volunteer retention has improved 22% over the first half of last fiscal year. This improvement comes as a result of our team's high level of volunteer engagement and support, and is also a great testament to our volunteers' commitment to our children.

### Retention Metrics

- 22% increase in volunteer retention compared to last fiscal year to date
- 22 CASAs returned from a leave of absence or after previously resigning

## DETENTIONS YEAR OVER YEAR



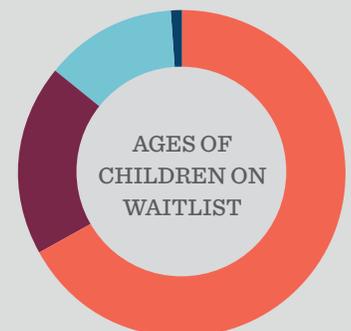
### Detention Metrics

- 588 total detentions for this fiscal year to date (compared to 680 last fiscal year to date)
- 98 average detentions per month (down from 113 during the same time period last year)

## OUR WAITLIST

When allegations of abuse or neglect are reported, Child Welfare Services must investigate the child's circumstances and, if they believe the allegations are substantiated, submit a petition to a judge to take jurisdiction of a child. In 2012, Voices for Children received permission to begin assigning advocates to children even before a judge has declared them dependents of the court, referred to as pre-jurisdiction. As of December 2020, our post-jurisdiction waitlist consisted of 81 children awaiting a CASA and 178 children awaiting a staff advocate.

When a child is identified as needing a CASA, our team immediately begins to search for the best match for their case. While our CASAs have immense capacity for serving a wide variety of needs, some children's specific needs keep them on our waitlist for longer periods of time. For example, many children currently on our waitlist require a CASA that speaks a language other than English, including Spanish, Arabic, and American Sign Language.



- AGES 0 - 5 67%
- AGES 6 - 12 19%
- AGES 13 - 18 13%
- AGES 19 - 21 1%