



## Sonoma County Upstream Investments Resolution of Alignment

### Aligning Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Sonoma County with the Sonoma County Upstream Investments Initiative

WHEREAS, the County of Sonoma is sponsoring a community-wide strategic initiative called Upstream Investments with the following **mission**: To facilitate the implementation of prevention-focused policies and interventions that increase equality and reduce monetary and societal costs for all residents of Sonoma County.

WHEREAS, the Upstream Investments **vision** for all residents of Sonoma County is that poverty is eliminated and all people have an equal opportunity for quality education and good health in nurturing home and community environments.

WHEREAS, the Upstream Investments Initiative is designed to target the following **factors**:

Social and economic factors

Poverty and racial/ethnic disparities  
Community conditions  
Public opinion, public policy, and laws

Family and individual factors

Family dysfunction  
Negative peer influences  
Early antisocial behavior

WHEREAS, the Upstream Investments Initiative seeks to promote four community **goals**:

1. The whole community is engaged in supporting the healthy development of children.
2. Community members have access to education and training and are adequately prepared for the challenges of the future.
3. All community members are well sheltered, safe, and socially supported.
4. Sonoma County has a thriving diverse economy that produces economic security for all.

WHEREAS, the Upstream Investments Initiative seeks to expand **funding** for Model Upstream Programs and also seeks to promote **organizational practices** that support the Upstream Vision.

WHEREAS, the Upstream Investments Strategic Initiative promotes the implementation of **outcomes-based practices** including Evidence-Based Practices, Promising Practices, and Emerging Practices.



WHEREAS, the following 26 **indicators of success** will inform the community about the success of Upstream Investments.

1. Reduced child maltreatment
2. Reduced youth binge drinking
3. Reduced youth drug/alcohol use
4. Reduced youth depression
5. Reduced youth tobacco use
6. Reduced teen births
7. Reduced childhood obesity
8. Improved pre-school attendance
9. Improved 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading
10. Improved 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math
11. Improved high school completion
12. Improved higher education
13. Improved housing affordability
14. Reduced homelessness
15. Reduced juvenile arrests
16. Reduced adult arrests
17. Reduced domestic violence
18. Reduced gang membership
19. Improved youth connectedness
20. Reduced poverty
21. Reduced unemployment
22. Improved health insurance coverage
23. Improved fruit and vegetable consumption
24. Improved physical activity
25. Improved dental visits
26. Decreased hip fractures

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CASA of Sonoma County shares the Upstream Investments **mission, goals, commitment to improving the indicators of success, and vision** and has aligned its organizational practices with the Upstream Investments Initiative as follows:

1. CASA of Sonoma County is committed to serving abused and neglected children and youth in our county who come before the Juvenile Court for protection. The mission of CASA is to humanize the complicated, unfamiliar, and frightening legal and child welfare systems for the youth victim by providing a trained volunteer (called a "CASA") who acts as a consistent support person, mentor and advocate. Juvenile court judges, in their need for unbiased information in their overwhelming caseloads, look to CASA to provide it. Often the judge is compelled to make decisions based on data that is less than complete, or biased in one direction or another. The objective opinion of a volunteer – who has no vested interest in the case except that which is best for the child – is an invaluable aid to the court. CASA performs its duties under a written operational agreement with the courts, which legally recognizes CASA volunteers.
  - a. To reduce the trauma of children in the Juvenile Court dependency system by matching a child with a trained CASA volunteer who will offer support through a long-term consistent relationship. The volunteer will explore and recommend resource options available to the child and offer the child guidance in understanding and dealing with the complex, unfamiliar court and child welfare systems.
  - b. To advocate vigorously for the rights of abused and neglected children in Sonoma County ensuring that all "reasonable efforts" have been made for a child at every stage of the court dependency process.
  - c. To improve the quality of information presented to the Juvenile Court, on behalf of the child, by informing the court of the child's adjustment and state of mind by gathering relevant information and making appropriate case recommendations documented in a written court report.



- d. To develop and implement a sound program management plan with a comprehensive strategy for the recruitment, retention, supervision, and training of a competent volunteer corps that is ethnically, racially, and linguistically representative of the population to be served.

CASA is the only community organization in Sonoma County preventing abused and neglected children from becoming lost in the system. Children are matched with a CASA Volunteer, who serves as the child's advocate as his/her case moves through the system. We currently have 160 youth matched with 141 volunteers & 56 youth wait-listed. We serve 100% of court appointed youth in our county.

2. The CASA program positively impacts the following Upstream Investments indicators of success:
  - a. Reduced child maltreatment
  - b. Reduced youth binge drinking
  - c. Reduced youth drug/alcohol use
  - d. Reduced youth depression
  - e. Reduced youth tobacco use
  - f. Reduced teen births
  - g. Improved high school completion
  - h. Improved higher education
  - i. Reduced homelessness
  - j. Reduced juvenile arrests
  - k. Reduced domestic violence
  - l. Reduced gang membership
  - m. Improved youth connectedness
  - n. Reduced poverty
  - o. Reduced unemployment
3. CASA is committed to submitting its program to the Portfolio of Model Upstream Programs.
4. CASA dedicates 100% of its funding to providing programming that supports the Sonoma County Upstream Investments community goals.
5. CASA's planning practices, organizational policies, budgeting, resource deployment, and contracting all reflect the Upstream Investments mission and vision.
6. CASA collaborates with Sonoma County's Juvenile Court, Probation Department, Department of Human Services Family, Youth and Children's Services Division, Public Defender, Office of Education, and Prevent Child Abuse Sonoma in a partnership that promotes Upstream Investments. CASA's programming is included as a component in the County of Sonoma's 2014-2019 Child Welfare and Juvenile Probation System Improvement Plan.
7. CASA promotes community-wide knowledge and understanding of Upstream Investments by linking to [SonomaUpstream.org](http://SonomaUpstream.org), including our alignment with Upstream Investments in our organizational publications; mentioning our Upstream Investments alignment in presentations to community organizations; and sharing our Upstream Investments alignment with our staff, volunteers, and community partners.



Approved and adopted the January day of 2015.

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Directors of Court Appointed Special Advocates of Sonoma County.

Following Roll Call Vote: Ayes: 9

Nos: 0

Abstains: 0

Chris Roach

Signature

Chris Roach, President, Board of Directors  
Court Appointed Special Advocates of Sonoma County