

Important Announcement from Massachusetts CASA Association

Dear Community Members and Partners,

We are writing to share an important update from Massachusetts CASA Association regarding our organizational direction. This decision is grounded in the broader context of child welfare in Massachusetts.

There are approximately 9,000 children and youth in foster care in Massachusetts at any given time, and nearly 90% are not currently served through CASA programs. Most child welfare involvement is driven by neglect, which is at times conflated with poverty-related barriers such as housing instability and limited access to basic supports. Racial disproportionality persists throughout the system, reflecting inequities in how families are reported, investigated, separated, and reunified.

These realities have made clear the need for an approach that extends beyond the current CASA framework in order to achieve greater impact. Over the past few years, Massachusetts CASA Association's work has expanded, grounded in lived experience, to include prevention and addressing the economic and social conditions that lead families into the child welfare system.

- In May 2025, we launched the [Advocates Unite! Summit](#), a lived-experience-led convening that brought together directly impacted individuals, child welfare partners, and community organizations to break down silos and identify shared pathways for change.
- We also launched the [Child and Family Welfare Justice Hub](#), focused on healing, mentorship, and leadership development for individuals with lived experience in the child welfare system, and designed to catalyze systems change by elevating their leadership in shaping policy, practice, and decision-making.
- In addition, we are serving in a leadership role on the [Massachusetts Initiative to Reduce Child Neglect](#), including chairing the Lived Experience Group, where we are working alongside state and community partners to shift how the Commonwealth supports families.

Over time, a misalignment has become evident between our values and practice and those of Massachusetts' local CASA programs. These differences have increasingly limited our ability to fully advance upstream, prevention-focused, equity- and justice-centered work. In some instances, our efforts have been viewed as outside CASA's scope. We do not view them as outside CASA's work; rather, we see them as foundational to improving outcomes for children and families.

After careful consideration, Massachusetts CASA Association has decided to separate from CASA in order to align our vision, values, and strategy with this direction, effective July 1, 2026. CASA programs in Massachusetts will continue operating as usual and are not affected by this change. Massachusetts CASA Association is a separate nonprofit entity from the local programs across the state, and this change does not affect CASA volunteers or the services provided to children and youth.

Our ongoing initiatives, including the Child and Family Welfare Justice Hub and our work with the Massachusetts Initiative to Reduce Child Neglect, will continue without interruption. We will adopt a new name and brand identity, while our commitment to our mission remains unchanged.

We do not take this decision lightly. Our team brings deep experience with CASA, including service as Court Appointed Special Advocates ("CASAs"), professional roles within CASA organizations, lived experience in foster care, and, for one member, firsthand experience as a parent whose child was supported by a CASA volunteer. We recognize the important role these volunteers play in the lives of children.

Building on the work and progress described above, we are refining a framework to guide our next chapter. This includes advancing upstream strategies that strengthen families before system involvement and centering directly impacted individuals in how we design programs, make decisions, and hold ourselves accountable. Through this work, we are contributing to a more compassionate, equitable, and socially just system—prioritizing family integrity over separation, reducing unnecessary system involvement, and supporting long-term stability for children and families. We will continue to prioritize advocacy for the safety and well-being of children and youth in foster care as a key area of our work.

We are grateful for the support and shared commitment to our mission. We look forward to sharing updates and engaging with our community as this work moves forward.

With appreciation and resolve,

Massachusetts CASA Association Board & Staff