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**Nebraska CASA Association**

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan 2021-2023**

**Plan’s Overarching Vision:** Diversify the Nebraska CASA Association and local program volunteers and boards of directors/advisory boards to better reflect the children served by CASA in Nebraska and improve access, equity and inclusion for children, volunteers, staff and board members of all backgrounds.

**Demographic Gap Analysis:** The statistics for all Nebraska CASA programs from 1-1-2022 to 6-30-2022 provide the following disparities regarding the race/ethnicity of volunteers who serve children:

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|  | Asian/Pac Islander | Native American | African American | Caucasian | Multi-Racial | Unknown | Hispanic |
| Children 1786 (n) | .86% 12(n) | 5.78% 81(n) | 17.13% 240(n) | 66.45% 931(n) | 7.35% 103(n) | 27.48% 385(n) | 3.5% 49(n) |
| Volunteers 1201(n) | .67% 8(n) | 0% | 2.66% 32(n) | 79% 949(n) | .58% 7(n) | 6.16% 74(n) | 14.32% 172(n) |

**Children in Nebraska’s Child Welfare System**. The following table is pulled from the Nebraska Foster Care Review Office (FCRO) data dashboard and includes information of children in out of home care on 3/31/2022. It compares the racial and ethnic categories of children in out-of-home care or trial home visit who are under the care of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) due to an abuse or neglect case open in Juvenile Court, to the number of children in the state of Nebraska. Minority children continue to be overrepresented in the out-of-home population.

Table: Race and Ethnicity of NDHHS Wards in Out-of-Home Care and Trial Home Visit on 3/31/22 Compared to Census, n=3,272 14 U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, County Characteristics Datasets: Annual County Resident Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: July 1, 2019. There is no significant statistical change in the NDHHS data since 2019.

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| White, Non-Hispanic | 43.5% NDHHS Wards  68.4% Nebraska Children |
| Hispanic | 24.5% NDHHS Wards  17.8% Nebraska Children |
| Black or African American, Non-Hispanic | 16.1% NDHHS Wards  5.9% Nebraska Children |
| American Indian, Non-Hispanic | 4% NDHHS Wards  1.1% Nebraska Children |
| Asian, Native Hawaiian, & Other Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic | .9% NDHHS Wards  2.8% Nebraska Children |
| Two or more races, Non-Hispanic | 9.6% NDHHS Wards  3.9% Nebraska Children |
| Unknown | 1.4% NDHHS Wards |

**Focus Area #1: Governance, Leadership, and Professional Development**

**Goal #1: Diversity Goal: Increase our representativeness of the diversity of our Nebraska CASA children among our state and local board members, local program staff, and volunteers.**

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| **Strategies** | **Performance Targets\* (Outputs and Outcome) w/ Timeframe** \*Targets not exhaustive of all expected results | **Metrics** | **Team Lead & Members Accountable** | **Completed** |
| (a) Nebraska CASA develops Diversity recruitment plan guidelines that local programs can use to recruit volunteers, staff, and board members.  (b) Track and analyze demographic data at the state and local program levels regarding children, volunteers, staff, and board members with aims to understand gaps in participation, representativeness, recruitment and retention trends.  (c) Collaborate with the local programs to evaluate data to identify and reduce (eliminate) gaps across participation, representativeness, recruitment, and retention. | 1. Diversity Recruitment Guidelines Distributed to local programs by Jan. 2022. 2. Training provided to local program data staff to synchronize use of terms for data entry.   (2) Local programs and state association begin using guidelines by March 2022.  (3) Racial and ethnic diversity representation trends up\*  (4) Local programs reduce racial/ethnic demographic gaps between children served and volunteers/staff\*  *(\*Specific outcome targets are not included until data allow for benchmarking that is realistic and relevant. More detailed targets are encouraged to be added as data become available)* |  |  | 1. Sample diversity, equity, and inclusion plans provided to local programs Jan. 2022. 2. Data updated on report July 2022. |

**Focus Area #2: Inclusion**

**Goal #1: Increase a culture of engagement, inclusion, and belonging among our children, volunteers, local program staff, and state and local board members.**

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| (a) Establish Diversity and Inclusion training plans that reflect ongoing training and education for state and local board members, local program staff, and volunteers using resources from National CASA and other in-house built and external resources/curricula.  (b) Establish regular surveying/feedback mechanism to measure quality of service and inclusive climate among children, volunteers, staff, and board members; disaggregate data when appropriate to understand how a diversity of groups are each experiencing their engagement with CASA services.  (c) Performance evaluations of program staff, volunteers, and boards includes a section to document evidence of contributing to DEI strategies in a meaningful way.  (d) Launch a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion track at the annual Nebraska CASA conference.  (e) (e) Every Nebraska CASA Association board member will participate in at least one diversity, equity, and inclusion training annually. | (1) All State Board members offered training and 80% participate in training by July 2022.  (2) 100% of local programs offered training and 100% of staff have completed training by Jan. 2023.  (3) Pre and Post-training surveys indicate increased proficiency in advancing DEI outcomes  (4) Quality of service and inclusive climate survey tool (Satisfaction Survey) is completed and adopted by Oct. 2022 to be delivered to every participant.  (5) Local and aggregate results from quality of service and inclusive climate survey tool are reported and analyzed on annual basis to inform new strategies to ensure we are reaching all individuals regardless of background or identity.  (6) Gains year over year in quality of service and inclusive climate survey.  (7) Performance evaluations with DEI component begin 8/21.  (8) Upward trend of recruiting and retaining volunteers.  (9) DEI track is included annually in Nebraska CASA conference starting in 2021. Feedback is evaluated for effectiveness. |  |  | (1) Training is began in Feb. 2022 & held monthly through Aug. 2022 provided by Doane University. Participants include 6 board members, (including 3 local program directors), 2 staff, & 3 additional local program directors and 2 local staff members.  Margaret Buck, Brooke Jensen Denker, Vaidehi Desai, Marci Felhaffer, Paula Creps, Tara Williamson, Sonia Almadovar, Amber Lovitt, Elizabeth Hain, Krista Bruns, Kelcie McBride, Christina Millsap, & Corrie Kielty  All participants completed an Intercultural Development Inventory & a debrief of the results with the facilitator, board member Luis Sotelo.  Nebraska CASA annual conference included a plenary session with a DEI component and a breakout session in August of 2021 and is scheduled for the same in 2022. |

**Focus Area #3: Access & Equity**

**Goal #1**: Improve access and equity outcomes among our children, volunteers, local program staff, and state and local board members, seeking to eliminate systemic barriers that impact historically marginalized and underrepresented populations.

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| (a) Establish an ad hoc committee to review state and local program policies and procedures to ensure best practices in seeking equity for individuals of all backgrounds and identities.  (b) Increase the adoption of equitable search and hiring practices; phase one should include the delivery of unconscious/implicit bias education for individuals conducting hiring at state and local level.  (d) Implement at least two proactive strategies that all local programs can lead to address root causes of why children of color are disproportionately represented in the care of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services | (1) Ad hoc committee can function like an internal consultant and can be engaged voluntarily by local programs; thus 50% of programs enlist assistance of ad hoc committee to review policies and procedures for equity best practices  (2) 100% of hiring leaders receive unconscious/implicit bias education every two years  (3) Based on the strategies selected to reduce root causes, assess in a timely fashion if intervention is producing intended outcomes. |  |  | (1) Policy review has begun. |

**Focus Area # 2: Community Engagement, Partnerships & Communication**

**1. Diversity Goal: Increase our representativeness of the diversity of our Nebraska CASA children among our state and local board members, local program staff, and volunteers.**

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| **Strategies** | **Performance Targets (Outputs and Outcome) w/ Timeframe** |  |  | **Completed** |
| (a) Increase partnerships with local organizations that serve underrepresented identities (race, religion, LGBTQ+, etc.) to increase a diversity pipeline of volunteers, staff, and board members. (i.e. Radio programming partnership with stations that reach predominantly historically underrepresented communities) | (1) Local programs and state association increase or strengthen community relationships with 3-5 new organizations to meet recruitment goals. |  |  | (1) Partnership begun OutNebraska in Jan. 2022. |

**Focus Area # 2: Community Engagement, Partnerships & Communication**

**Inclusion Goal: Increase a culture of engagement, inclusion, and belonging among our children, volunteers, local program staff, and state and local board members**

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| (a) Increase partnerships with local organizations that serve underrepresented identities (race, religion, LGBTQ+, etc.) to 1. increase joint programming events that are specifically relevant to underrepresented and marginalized communities to increase visibility of services and education around CASA advocacy issues, and 2. expand network of service providers to enhance the delivery of comprehensive services, among other mutual benefits to advance DEI outcomes.  (b) Ensure that all primary marketing content reflects a holistic commitment to diversity and inclusion. | (1) Local programs and state association increase or strengthen community relationships with 3-5 new organizations to meet education and advocacy and comprehensive services goals.  (2) [Insert performance measures that indicate quality service provided; make sure that trends are improving] |  |  | (1) Partnership begun OutNebraska in Jan. 2022. |

**Focus Area # 2: Community Engagement, Partnerships & Communication**

**Access & Equity Goal: Improve access and equity outcomes among our children, volunteers, local program staff, and state and local board members, seeking to eliminate systemic barriers that impact historically marginalized and underrepresented populations.**

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| (a) If 5% or more of the children and/or families served by a local program speak a second language other than English, ensure that forms are translated into the languages spoken in each local program service area.  (b) If child or family member speaks a second language other than English and would benefit from interpreter, ensure an interpreter provides communication assistance.  (c) Develop a tool to understand local barriers to services and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate barriers and disparities among diverse populations groups, based on collected data. | (1) By 2023, 100% of primary forms are translated into other languages if necessary  (2) 100% of children/families needing interpretation services receive interpretation services  (3) Tool to understand barriers to service is completed by Oct. 2021 and implemented by Jan. 2023. Barrier mitigation strategies are created and in place to address findings as appropriate. |  |  |  |