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Q1 Name of your organization.

Voices for Children

Q2 Grant #

20180519

Q3 Grant Period

August 15, 2018 – August 15, 2019

Q4 Location of your organization

City	Riverside
State	CA

Q5 Name and Title of person completing evaluation.

Jessica Muñoz, Executive Director - Riverside County, Voices for Children

Q6 Phone Number:

951-357-9100

Q7 Email address.

JessicaM@speakupnow.org

Page 2: Key Outcomes and Results

Q8 Total number of clients served through this grant funding:

87

Q9 Describe the project's key outcomes and results based on the goals and objectives. Use the following format: State the Goal: State Objective 1: Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 1: State Objective 2 (if applicable): Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 2: State Objective 3 (if applicable): Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 3:

Goal: Voices for Children's (VFC) goal for the Riverside County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program was to improve the safety, stability, and quality of life for Riverside County foster children.

Objective 1: Build a CASA volunteer base of 250 citizens through recruitment, training, and supervision, and match them with 375 Riverside County foster children in need by August 15, 2019.

We are pleased to report that we have exceeded our goal, and thus far into the grant period, VFC's staff has supported a CASA volunteer base of 299 community members, including 212 CASAs who were retained from our prior fiscal year, and 87 new CASAs who were recruited and trained during the grant period. In total, VFC CASAs have advocated on behalf of 396 Riverside County foster children during the grant period. With the help of their CASA, 63 children's cases were successfully closed: 42 children reunified with their families, 13 were placed with permanent guardians, and 8 were adopted into forever homes.

Q10 Please describe any challenges/obstacles the organization encountered (if any) in attaining goals & objectives.

At Voices for Children, our ongoing goal is to increase funding in order to recruit, train, and supervise the number of CASA volunteers necessary to serve the extraordinary number of children in foster care. As the only organization authorized by the court to provide CASAs to Riverside County foster children, it is our responsibility to inform the citizens in our community of the plight of foster children and the need for CASA volunteers. VFC's recruitment and staff expenses comprise the largest portion of our operating budget, not only because we serve a huge geographic region but because CASAs must have a professional staff member to help oversee their case and to continually guide and support their complex and legally sensitive work. It is vital that we reach as many potential volunteers as possible, since for each volunteer recruited and trained by VFC, a vulnerable child will have a brighter future. If our Riverside CASA program is to continue in our current growth trajectory, then we will need the support of all who passionately believe in our mission. We are so grateful for the generosity of the S. L. Gimbel Foundation which has enabled us to serve 396 abused and neglected children during the grant period.

Q11 How did you overcome and/or address the challenges and obstacles?

Voices for Children's (VFC) development team followed a detailed, strategic plan of research, cultivation, solicitation, and donor stewardship to seek a balanced mix of funding for our Riverside County CASA program. VFC's full-time Director of Philanthropy created a detailed development plan to identify and pursue new and diverse funding sources in Riverside County. With an increased budget, we were able to expend more monetary resources to recruit new CASA volunteers through advertisements and outreach events.

Q12 Describe any unintended positive outcomes as a result of the efforts supported by this grant.

A study published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation determined that a former foster youth who experiences poor outcomes in education attainment, too early pregnancy, or involvement with the criminal justice system costs taxpayers an estimated \$300,000 in lost wages or government support. Therefore, supporting vulnerable children and youth in foster care is an incredible investment that saves taxpayers a tremendous amount of money over the course of that person's lifetime. CASAs advocate for the rights and well-being of foster children in the courtroom, the classroom, and the community. They research and gather information on the foster children to whom they have been assigned and every six months present reports to the Court, helping judges make the best decisions for each individual child, e.g., special services, therapies, educational assistance, and extracurricular activities. CASAs change the trajectory of a foster child's life because they are a source of caring focus, consistency, and stability. The 87 CASA volunteers recruited, trained, and assigned to foster youth during the grant period will positively influence the lives of foster youth, and help them successfully transition to adulthood. As a result, taxpayers will save a minimum of \$26,100,000, at \$300,000 per person, as these children age out of the foster care system.

Q13 Briefly describe the impact this grant has had on the organization and community served.

This grant from the S.L. Gimbel Foundation allowed VFC to expand our capacity and serve more abused and neglected foster youth in Riverside County. Through grant-funded recruitment and training activities, we were able to increase our volunteer base from 212 CASAs to 299 CASAs, and exceed our goal by providing 396 abused and neglected foster youth with consistent and life-changing advocacy services.

Recruitment

In order to provide abused and neglected foster youth with critical support through CASA advocacy, VFC is dependent upon our ability to recruit new CASA volunteers. It takes a significant investment of time and energy, and a very specific skill set in order to advocate effectively for a foster child. CASA volunteers must have a high level of compassion, strong verbal and written communication skills, cultural competency, and the ability to interface with a diverse set of individuals including medical providers, attorneys, social workers, educators, caregivers, and biological parents. They must also be willing to devote 10-15 each month for a minimum of 18 months. Finding high quality volunteers who meet these qualifications is no small feat.

This year, the Recruitment and Training Manager conducted 25 community presentations to educational institutions, faith-based groups, corporations and small businesses, and other community groups. She also coordinated 28 information sessions and 142 interviews with prospective volunteers.

Training

The Recruitment and Training Manager was responsible for managing Advocate University, our internal CASA training program. Each of the 87 new CASA volunteers underwent 35+ hours of training, where they learned about dependency law, child development, cultural sensitivity, the impact of childhood trauma and abuse, and other topics critical to their volunteer work. They also completed a court observation, a background check, and they were sworn in as Officers of the Court.

Supervision and Support

Upon completion of training, each new CASA was assigned to the case of a child or sibling group in Riverside County foster care. Each of our 299 CASA volunteers were supervised by a full-time VFC Advocacy Supervisor who provided them with the ongoing case consultation, training, and support they need in order to advocate for their case children. CASAs spent 10-15 hours a month getting to know their case children and advocating on their behalf in court, at school, and in the community. Each CASA wrote and submitted a formal, written report two times, at a minimum, updating the judge about the education, physical and mental health, and placement needs of their case child.

Page 3: Budget

Q14 Please provide a budget expenditure report. Also, provide a budget narrative that explains how the funds were utilized, what was purchased, what were the expensed items based upon the budget that was submitted.

The generous \$25,000 grant awarded by the S.L. Gimbel Foundation funded 47% of the salary of VFC's Riverside County-based Recruitment & Training Manager, who managed all of the recruitment and training activities that allowed us to meet our grant objectives.

Other activities conducted by the Recruitment & Training Manager included continuing education for CASAs on topics including community resources for foster children, working with foster care professionals, and court advocacy. The Recruitment & Training Manager position was essential to providing CASA volunteers who positively impacted the lives of children in foster care.

Page 4: Success Stories

Q15 Please relate a success story:

CASA Nick advocates for 16-year-old, Jake. Jake was adopted out of foster care at a young age but his adoptive parents were not able to care for him and asked for him to be removed from their home. He then reentered foster care. Jake struggled in school, moved seven times in the last year, and attended numerous high schools as a result. CASA Nick attended a meeting at his school and advocated for Jake to receive proper educational services to address his trauma and needs. CASA Nick coordinated with Jake's summer school teachers to ensure he had the appropriate classes. CASA Nick met with the high school football coach to pave the way for his participation and keep Jake engaged in his last year of high school. Jake is now on a path to graduate high school and already said that when he turns 18, he needs CASA Nick at his side to transition into adulthood. Thanks to CASA Nick's advocacy, Jake is engaged in school and is open to services that will support his independence.

Q16 Please relate a success story here:

Here are just a few instances of the ways that Riverside County CASAs have advocated on behalf of foster youth:

CASA Vanessa advocated for Sara, who is profoundly developmentally delayed, to attend a Special Day Class preschool that would meet her behavioral and developmental needs. As her educational rights holder, CASA Vanessa ensured that she made progress with the critical services provided for her. Sara is now in kindergarten and will be adopted by relatives in the coming year.

CASA Jenna advocated for 17 year-old Brian. Brian has PKU, a metabolic disorder that makes it difficult for his body to process protein. Jenna ensured that he was able to receive care from a specialist and reported to the court about challenges his group home encountered monitoring his medication. Jenna also advocated for Brian to receive nutritional counseling as part of his preparation for transitioning out of foster care, so he could learn what he needed to eat to stay healthy.

Eleven-year old Jasmine had to be hospitalized for a frightening medical procedure due to the abuse she endured. CASA Mary Ann stayed by her side, made sure she understood her after-care instructions, and has advocated tirelessly for her to receive high-quality mental health care to start to heal emotionally as well as physically.

Q17 Please relate a success story here:

Respondent skipped this question

Page 5: Organizational Information

Q18 Which category best describes the organization.
Please choose only one.

Youth Development

Q19 What is the organization's primary program area of interest?

Youth

Q20 Percentage of clients served through grant in each ethnic group category. Total must equal 100%

African American	24
Asian/Pacific Islander	1
Caucasian	24
Native American	2
Hispanic Latino	43
All Ethnicities	5
Other	1

Q21 Approximate percentage of clients served from grant funds in each age category.

Children Birth-05 years of age	4
Children ages 06-12 years of age	20
Youth ages 13-18	58
Young Adults (18-24)	18

Q22 Approximate percentage of clients served with disabilities from grant funds.

Respondent skipped this question

Q23 Approximate percentage of clients served in each economic group.

At/Below Poverty Level	100
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Q24 Approximate percentage of clients served from grant funds in each population category.

Children/Youth (those not included in Family)	100
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