



CITY*of* **MARION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: City Gives \$20K to CASA of Grant County to help offset Federal Funding Loss

(MARION, IN) March 11th, 2026 – Mayor Ronald Morrell, Jr. has given \$20,000 on behalf of the City of Marion to assist CASA of Grant County, Inc. after learning of a significant drop in their federal funding.

CASAs are Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children. CASA of Grant County, Inc. served nearly 300 children in 2025, and currently operates with a waiting list of CHINS (Child in Need of Services) cases, while a looming 40% federal funding loss of \$180,000 begins Oct. 1st, 2026. As of March 4th, 2026, there were 302 children in Grant County needing help, with CASA of Grant County serving 171 of them while the rest remain on a waiting list.

CASA of Grant County recently approached Mayor Morrell about the burden, and he took their situation to heart and offered to have the City of Marion help boost their funding during the time of need.

CASA of Grant County Executive Director Leslie Hendricks Holt said they are incredibly grateful for the support of the City, and noted Mayor Morrell’s action as historical. “According to the State Office of GAL/CASA, Marion is the first municipality in Indiana to provide financial support to a CASA program. This contribution will help ensure that children in Marion and throughout Grant County who have experienced abuse or neglect continue to have a dedicated advocate speaking for their best interests in the courtroom.”

Indiana Court of Appeals Judge Dana Kenworthy praised the City for its contribution. “CASA of Grant County staff and volunteers advocate for our community’s most vulnerable children. In my 25+ years of interaction with CASA staff and volunteers, I observed firsthand, on a regular basis, CASA volunteers providing strong, effective, and heartfelt advocacy for children involved in CHINS and TPR (Termination of Parental Rights) cases. CASA volunteers serve not for money, not for prestige, not for power, but simply out of love and care for these children in need. I’m so pleased to see the City of Marion invest in this worthy and critically necessary service.”

Grant Superior Court 2 Judge Nathan Meeks has been overseeing the program in recent years. “This landmark gift from the City of Marion is a powerful first in our community’s commitment to vulnerable children. By investing in CASA of Grant County, the City is standing up for those who cannot stand for themselves, strengthening families, and shaping a brighter future not just for Marion, but for the whole of Grant County. I thank God for the City’s generosity and pray other cities and towns will join Marion’s efforts.”

CASA of Grant County, Inc. is a state-mandated program, but not fully funded by the state. Funding is distributed based on CHINS cases per county. Grant County contributed \$63,639 in 2026 - 39.7% more than their normal match with the state - in response to the need this year.

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