

## What Is CAAVA?

Court-Appointed Advocates for Vulnerable Adults (CAAVA) is a non-profit membership organization established to advocate for the best interests of vulnerable adults involved in guardianship and other legal proceedings in Oklahoma's state court system.

The organization is dedicated to the belief that all individuals are entitled to a life of dignity, independence, and self-determination for as long as possible.

The CAAVA program was created in 2002 by the Oklahoma Legislature to provide needed assistance for vulnerable adults involved in the court system. Through formal agreements with participating judges, CAAVA utilizes community volunteers as guardians *ad litem*.

The CAAVA volunteer, or guardian *ad litem*, is an appointed officer of the court who works alongside attorneys, adult protective services, social workers, and others. The volunteer serves as a vital information link between the court and the vulnerable adult.

CAAVA's services are provided at no charge to the vulnerable adults served. Funding for this program comes from individual and corporate donors as well as foundations such as the Oklahoma Bar Foundation.

## What Do CAAVA Volunteers Do?

The CAAVA volunteer serves as the "eyes and ears" of the court. The primary role of a CAAVA volunteer is to make sure that the rights and best interests of the vulnerable adult involved in the case are protected.

CAAVA volunteers gather information and make unbiased recommendations to the court. They conduct interviews and review medical, financial and other records. CAAVA volunteers also attend court hearings and conferences. They prepare written reports for the judges and may be asked to testify in cases.

## How Are CAAVA Volunteers Trained?

CAAVA volunteers complete an extensive training and certification process. They receive more than 50 hours of core training in such areas as mental and developmental disability concerns, ethical issues, elder abuse and exploitation, end-of-life issues, guardianship law, and court procedures. There is no cost to attend these trainings.

Certified volunteers continue to receive training and assistance with cases through monthly volunteer meetings.

## Who Can Be a CAAVA Volunteer?

CAAVA volunteers bring to the program diverse personal and professional backgrounds. They include educators, social workers, attorneys, health care providers, accountants, and business retirees. What they all share is a common commitment to protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable adults.

Potential volunteers must be able to complete the certification training program. Once volunteers have attended the core training sessions, they must demonstrate sufficient competency and knowledge by passing a comprehensive written test and writing a sample court report.

CAAVA volunteers must have their own transportation and consent to a criminal background check. They also must be able to conduct interviews as well as be available to attend court hearings and monthly volunteer meetings. These trainings, meetings, and hearings are generally held during regular business hours.

Approved volunteer expenses are reimbursed by CAAVA.

"What an amazing learning experience this has been. Not only will I be able to use the training as a CAAVA volunteer, but I have already put some of the training into use on my job and also in my private life. The CAAVA training is filled with such vital information and direction that it can be used in many areas of our daily lives."

Trish Engel, RN, LNC, CCM, Certified CAAVA Volunteer

## How Can I Become a CAAVA Volunteer?

The first step to becoming a certified CAAVA volunteer is to contact the CAAVA office and request a volunteer application. CAAVA will then inform you when the next volunteer certification training will be held. A background check will also be conducted at this time.

Certification trainings are offered several times a year and take approximately three months to complete. After going through the training, volunteers take a competency test and prepare a sample report.

To maintain certification, volunteers must complete a minimum of six hours of training and attend at least four monthly meetings per year.

## How Else Can I Help CAAVA?

CAAVA is a non-profit organization sustained by the generosity of donors. Please consider becoming a member and making a financial contribution.

*“CAAVA has impacted my life by just knowing there are people that care about elderly persons. I am excited to be a part of CAAVA knowing I may be the person that can cause an elderly person be more comfortable and have a better quality of life. “*

*Anna States  
Certified CAAVA Volunteer*

  
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## Protecting the Best Interests of Vulnerable Adults in the Court System



## How You Can Make a Difference for a Vulnerable Adult



**Court-Appointed Advocates  
for Vulnerable Adults**  
**(405) 208-4021**  
**[www.caava.org](http://www.caava.org)**