



# WASHINGTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1302 Pennsylvania Avenue • Hagerstown, MD 21742

[www.washhealth.org](http://www.washhealth.org)

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **SPECIAL ADVOCATES ADDS ON-LINE TRAINING TO UPCOMING SESSION**

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Washington County is proud to announce an on-line training format, in addition to its traditional group training format, planned for a Spring 2012 training program for persons interested in volunteering to serve as advocates for children under the court's jurisdiction due to child abuse or neglect in Washington County. Both programs will begin in March.

The on-line training program will be conducted for 10 weeks, beginning March 21 and concluding May 23. Persons enrolled in the on-line training program will participate in 4 group training sessions throughout this 10-week process.

The traditional group training format will be conducted for 8 weeks, in 2 separate, concurrent sessions beginning on Wednesday, March 21, and Saturday, March 24; concluding on Wednesday, May 9, and Saturday, May 12, respectively. Participants will choose to participate in either the Wednesday or the Saturday session, but not both.

All training sessions will be held at the Washington County Health Department, Behavioral Health Services Division, 13114 Pennsylvania Ave., Hagerstown, MD.

Advocate training programs are sponsored through support from the Alice Virginia and David W. Fletcher Foundation, Community Foundation of Washington County, Washington County Gaming Commission, Richard N. Funkhouser Foundation, and the Antietam Exchange Club.

Once completed training, certified Advocates are matched, one-on-one, with children under the jurisdiction of the courts because of adjudicated cases of child abuse and neglect. Advocates review case files, conduct interviews, and provide recommendations of care and services to the courts, which the Advocate considers to be in the "best interest" of children appointed. It is estimated Advocates volunteer about 10 hours per month in child contacts and case related efforts.

Persons interested in volunteering in the program undergo an extensive screening process, must be at least 21 years of age, free of a felony criminal record, free of any child abuse or neglect charges, and other screening procedures.

For more information, please call the program at 240-313-3383 or 240-313-3386 TTY 240-313-3391.

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