



Increasing Options for D/deaf Individuals Impacted by Domestic Violence



STRATEGIC PLAN

Keys 4 D/deaf Access is supported by Grant Number 2011-FW-AX-K004 of the Education, Training, and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Grant Program awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice.

The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

CONTENTS

Introduction & Overview	2
Overview of the Collaboration.....	2
Vision & Mission Statements.....	3
Overview of Planning Phase to Date.....	4
Summary of Needs Assessment	6
Purpose & Goals.....	6
Summary of Methodology.....	7
Goals, Key Findings, and Opportunities for Change.....	8
Foundation for the Strategic Plan.....	9
Overview of Key Short-Term Initiatives	11
In-Depth Overview of Each Short-Term Initiative	13
Overview of Long-Term Initiatives	20
Summary & Conclusion	22
Action Plans	25
Work Plan	33
Acknowledgements	34

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Collaboration

KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS is the result of a collaboration created by three organizations in Cuyahoga County, Ohio: Cleveland Division of Police, Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center (CHSC), and Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center (DVCAC).

- **Cleveland Division of Police:** The highest priority of the Division of Police is to provide public safety. Today, more than 1600 dedicated men and women make up the second largest police force in the State of Ohio. The Cleveland Division of Police strives to strengthen our neighborhoods and improve the quality of life by delivering superior services with professionalism, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence by working in partnership with the community.
- **Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center:** The Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center is the oldest free standing nonprofit hearing, speech, and deafness center in the United States and has over 90 years of experience in serving individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center is the only local organization devoted solely to serving individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have communication difficulties.
- **Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center:** Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center is a trusted leader in empowering individuals, educating the community, and advocating for justice to end domestic violence and child abuse. Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center is the new name for the recently merged Domestic Violence Center and Bellflower Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

Funding for the work of the collaboration began in October 2011 and will support the initiative during the three-year grant period. Funding is provided by the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. The collaboration partners are committed to working together to identify, develop, and implement needed organizational change that will result in victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing having full access to quality services. An accessible coordinated response to domestic violence will empower individuals to make choices that maximize their safety.

The project consists of two phases: the planning and development phase and the implementation phase. Planning and development is comprised of four components: creation of a collaboration charter, development of a plan to conduct a needs assessment, a report on the findings, and the completion of a strategic plan. The implementation phase will follow the strategic plan to make needed organizational change in line with our vision and mission statements.

Vision Statement

KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS envisions victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing having full access to quality services based on best practice. As a result, individuals who are D/deaf or hard of hearing will have a comprehensive understanding of all available options and will be able to make informed decisions when domestic violence impacts their life.

Mission Statement

KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS will create sustainable change for victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing by fostering collaborative relationships among the partner agencies and implementing needed organizational change to maximize law enforcement interaction, service provision, and choice for individuals.

Through the development and implementation of new policy and procedures, as well as increased learning opportunities within the criminal justice system, direct service agencies, and for victims/survivors who are D/deaf or hard of hearing, there will be greater awareness, understanding, and sensitivity toward individuals impacted by domestic violence. Furthermore, these new policies and procedures will create environments that will allow victims of domestic violence to obtain services to maximize their safety. The result will be that domestic violence victims/survivors who are D/deaf or hard of hearing will receive an accessible systemic response to their victimization.

Critically important to creating sustainable change in our agencies is to ensure that communication is as equally accessible and effective for individuals who are D/deaf or hard of hearing as it is for hearing individuals. Sustainable change will ultimately meet the needs, promote respect, and further empower those who are D/deaf or hard of hearing and who are victims/survivors of domestic violence.

Overview of Planning Phase to Date

Team members worked together for months to foster collaborative relationships and to create a Collaboration Charter that provides a foundation for our work by illustrating our commitment, framework, and direction. It defines our vision, mission, values, and the terms that we use. It identifies the partnering agencies and describes their work, as well as their commitment and contributions to the project. It outlines the manner in which the collaboration team members will communicate, make decisions, and manage conflict. It further describes how we will work to maintain the boundaries of confidentiality and mandatory reporting. It also outlines our work plan throughout the grant period. The process of developing the Collaboration Charter resulted in agency representatives learning and growing as a collaboration team. The Collaboration Charter was approved by Office on Violence Against Women on 19 November 2012.

Team members, with technical assistance from Vera Institute of Justice, then worked together for several months to develop a plan to conduct a needs assessment. The needs assessment plan was designed to obtain information regarding law enforcement and service provider environment, effective communication, quality services, general police orders and service provider policies and procedures, and partner agency collaboration. The needs assessment is critical to the identification, development, and implementation of needed organizational change. Our premise was that law enforcement and domestic violence service providers may not adequately meet the needs of D/deaf individuals. In addition, service providers for D/deaf individuals may not adequately meet the needs of domestic violence victims/survivors. Our premise further included the belief that law enforcement and service providers can collaborate to create an accessible and sustainable coordinated response to domestic violence that will empower D/deaf individuals to make choices that maximize their safety. Information gathered from the needs assessment is valuable because it helps us to understand what impacts access to effective communication and what constitutes quality services. It also helps to determine where general police orders and service provider policies and procedures are working well and where they need to be modified or created.

Collaboration team members developed the Needs Assessment Plan purpose, goals, and procedures, various needs assessment materials, and all questions used for data collection. The components of the plan describe participant recruitment strategies, incentives, methodology, participant consent, confidentiality, safety, access, training, and the project work plan. Needs assessment materials include participant fact sheets for specific audiences, recruitment scripts/e-mails for specific audiences, an RSVP form, statements regarding passive consent, confidentiality, and mandatory reporting for specific audiences, facilitator/interviewer scripts for specific audiences, a list of community resources for participants, and a focus group debriefing form. Focus group questions, interview questions, and survey questions were designed to

elicit certain information from each audience. The Needs Assessment Plan was approved by Office on Violence Against Women on 05 June 2013.

Data was collected from June 2013 to August 2013 as outlined in the Needs Assessment Plan. Collaboration team members then reviewed the data to identify key findings and opportunities for change.

The data collected was compiled into a Needs Assessment Report that summarizes our key needs assessment findings and the implications. The Needs Assessment Report was approved by Office on Violence Against Women on 31 October 2013. The report has served to inform the work of our collaboration by identifying the areas of needed change within each partner agency regarding:

- the provision of a safe and welcoming environment;
- access to effective communication;
- what constitutes quality services;
- general police orders and service provider policies and procedures;
- and opportunities for partner agency collaboration.

The findings outlined in the report form the basis for the initiatives in this strategic plan. They are the foundation for the clearly defined objectives and activities that will be central to our implementation efforts.

SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Purpose

The purpose of the Needs Assessment was to collect information regarding current partner agency accessibility, agency services and police response, staff knowledge, and opportunities for collaboration. The purpose was also to collect information regarding general police orders and service provider policies and procedures that impact D/deaf individuals and victims/survivors of domestic violence. Gathering information from community participants, various levels of law enforcement, and service provider staff, leadership, and board members was expected to help identify strengths and any areas needing change. This information will be used to create a strategic plan that will guide the development of needed organizational change in line with our vision and mission statements.

Goals

The partner agencies of **KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS** are fully committed to working together to identify, develop, and implement needed organizational change that will result in victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing having full access to quality services. An accessible coordinated response to domestic violence will further empower individuals to make choices that maximize their safety. We explored five primary areas in our needs assessment: law enforcement and service provider environment, effective communication, quality services, general police orders and service provider policies and procedures, and partner agency collaboration. Therefore, our needs assessment plan was designed:

To assess the ability of the partner agencies to provide a welcoming, accessible, safe, and responsive environment by examining staff knowledge, access to resources, as well as comfort level and competence in working with D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. The environment for law enforcement includes the police stations where individuals may seek assistance as well as the scene location for a first responder.

To assess the current level of staff ability within each partner agency to communicate effectively with victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.

To identify from local D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals and victims/survivors of domestic violence what constitutes safe, welcoming, and accessible quality services and what law enforcement can do to maximize successful interaction.

To identify any policies, procedures, general police orders, and practices within each partner agency which effectively aid or hinder law enforcement and service provider staff in responding to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

To assess the ability of **KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS** partner agencies to collaborate by examining areas where they can create policy to foster collaborative relationships that will maximize access, safety, law enforcement interaction, service provision, and choice for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Summary of Methodology

KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS conducted the needs assessment between June 2013 and August 2013 using focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys (an in-person written survey and an online survey). Each method was conducted in a manner that would maximize participant accessibility, safety, and confidentiality. Questions focused on assessing welcoming environments, communication accessibility, and needed services, as well as general police orders and service provider policies and procedures. The data collected reflects the experiences, knowledge, and opinions of D/deaf individuals, victims/survivors of domestic violence, various levels of law enforcement, partner agency staff and leadership, and agency board members. The data also reflects the areas of needed change within each partner agency as well as opportunities for the partner agencies to work together to increase their capacity to serve D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence in Cuyahoga County.

Audiences

Individuals invited to participate in the needs assessment process were D/deaf individuals who have received or are receiving services from Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center, women who have used or are using services from Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center, various levels of law enforcement officers, service provider staff and leadership, and service provider board members. D/deaf individuals and victim/survivors primarily participated in focus groups with the option to be individually interviewed. Service provider staff and leadership participated in focus groups with the option to be individually interviewed. Board members participated in an online survey. Chief dispatchers, executive directors, and the chief of police participated in an individual interview. Additional levels of law enforcement participated in focus groups or an in-person written survey.

Focus group and interview participants were asked 5-7 open-ended questions to assess law enforcement and service provider environment, access to effective communication, quality services and law enforcement response, agency policies and procedures and general police orders, and partner agency collaboration.

Questions were structured with one primary thought per question and included optional prompts to guide the discussion. Not all prompts were used in all focus groups; they were only used when necessary. Certain prompts asked the question in another way for the purpose of clarification and others were used to guide the discussion to a deeper level.

A total of 18 focus groups were conducted with a total of 131 participants.

A total of 14 individual interviews were conducted.

A total of 68 patrol officers completed and submitted an in-person written survey.

A total of 17 Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center board members and a total of 9 Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center board members completed and submitted an online survey.

Goals, Key Findings, and Opportunities for Change

Several key findings related to the goals of our needs assessment plan were identified. The data collected did not produce any surprises regarding the key findings. Each goal, key finding, and any resulting opportunity for change is indicated below.

Key Finding #1: Staff and leadership within all three partner agencies lack knowledge on how to effectively respond to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Key Finding #2: The majority of law enforcement and service provider staff/leadership are currently unable to communicate effectively with D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Key Finding #3: A safe, welcoming, and accessible environment is highly desired by individuals contacting law enforcement and service providers for assistance. The partner agencies vary in the degree to which they provide a safe and welcoming environment.

Key Finding #4: D/deaf individuals and victims/survivors are unaware of available services and resources and may lack access to them. In addition, there is a need for law enforcement to expand effective communication with D/deaf individuals in order to maximize successful interaction.

Key Finding #5: There is a lack of service provider policies and procedures and a lack of general police orders which address how to respond to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Key Finding #6: There are numerous barriers to change within each organization that may impact the development and implementation of general police orders and service provider policies and procedures.

Key Finding #7: The majority of law enforcement and service provider staff, leadership, and board members support collaborative relationships with one another to provide a coordinated systemic response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. At present, there is a lack of formal collaborative working relationships among the partner agencies.

The staff and leadership from all three partner agencies greatly supported the idea of working together to address the identified needs. The partner agencies have voluntarily begun to work together without formal procedures in place as the result of a new or greater awareness of one another due to the collaboration formed as a result of the grant funding this project. [KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS](#) embraces the challenge of using our goals and key findings to create and implement opportunities for change that will result in a sustainable coordinated response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence in Cuyahoga County.

Foundation for the Strategic Plan

The data obtained during the needs assessment certainly offers a positive outlook. Many of the strengths within each partner agency have the capacity to resolve many of the existing issues through collaboration of the partner agencies. An increase in communication between the partner agencies will be necessary to achieve this. Such communication would be expected to include ongoing discussions regarding the key findings and matching them to various strategies for change.

Collaboration team members have reviewed and discussed each key finding in depth. The key findings illustrate areas of needed improvement within each partner agency regarding their response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence, including

- the provision of a safe and welcoming environment;
- access to effective communication;
- what constitutes quality services;

- general police orders and service provider policies and procedures; and
- opportunities for partner agency collaboration.

The identified strengths have the capacity to provide a foundation to support the implementation of needed change. The findings described throughout the Needs Assessment Report will be used to substantiate strategic initiatives which will be developed based upon the data collected. The goal will be to design short-term and long-term strategic initiatives and corresponding activities that will be practical, manageable, and effective for all three partner agencies.

The time remaining in the current funding period is limited. It is expected that only a few activities will be completed by the close of the grant period in September 2014. The partner agencies expect to submit a request for a no-cost extension in order to extend the grant period. Short-term initiatives will continue to be implemented, and will include an expected no-cost extension. If the request for a no-cost extension is denied, short-term initiatives will continue throughout the current grant period, adjusting tasks and timelines as needed. Long-term initiatives will require additional funding and/or are beyond the scope of the current grant and no-cost extension period.

Prior to the strategic planning retreat, representatives from the collaboration team met with the executive directors and a member of police administration to review the findings from the needs assessment and provided them with a copy of the report. A copy of the report was also provided to interested staff members as offered during the recruitment and focus group/interview/survey phases of the data collection process.

Collaboration team members, service provider executive directors, and a member of law enforcement leadership participated in a Strategic Planning Retreat with technical assistants from Vera Institute of Justice on December 03-04, 2013. The Vera technical assistants facilitated discussions designed to identify the particular objectives and specific tasks that we intend to implement during the remainder of the grant period. We reviewed our key findings and determined our areas of concentration in a manner that integrates the perspectives from each partner agency and reflects the Cuyahoga County community.

We recognized that some of the suggested initiatives would not be feasible to implement during the remaining nine months of the grant period. Some of the suggested initiatives were beyond the scope of this grant. Many of these suggestions were determined to be long-term initiatives. From our seven key findings, we were able to clearly identify three main areas of focus: staff capacity, organizational capacity, and systems capacity.

We will begin work on the last two initiatives later in the implementation phase. The primary focus during the first few weeks following approval will be to

determine the roles and responsibilities of work group participants and to recruit the appropriate individuals for participation. Work group participants will need to attend an orientation session that will inform participants about the project and maximize their ability to achieve successful outcomes. The orientation will include:

- An overview of the grant project
- An overview of the partner agencies, foundational cross-training, and information relevant to the targeted objective
- An overview of the **KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS** vision and mission statements
- A review of the initiatives, objectives, and timelines for completion
- An overview of the roles and responsibilities of work group participants

Work Structure: The Project Director and Project Coordinator will be responsible for recruiting, planning, organizing, and leading the majority of the workgroups. Collaboration team members will participate in groups specific to their areas of expertise and interest. Team members will suggest key individuals at the partner agencies to participate in workgroups. The Foundational Training Workshop (which will include specific participants from each agency) will also serve as a tool for generating interest and enthusiasm for participation in particular workgroups. When it is not feasible for specific staff to attend weekly or bi-weekly workgroup meetings, the Project Director/Coordinator will lead a series of targeted meetings (or Round Table Discussions) to solicit input from those individuals with specific knowledge, expertise and responsibility. For example, it is not likely that the Commander responsible for Policy and General Police Orders at the Cleveland Division of Police will be available to attend regular workgroup meetings, but could participate in several targeted meetings or Round Table discussions. The Collaboration team will continue to meet regularly to review the progress of the various workgroups and to provide input and direction.

OVERVIEW OF KEY SHORT-TERM INITIATIVES

Collaboration team members developed four key short-term initiatives for this strategic plan based upon the key findings of the needs assessment. The initiatives are critical to creating an effective coordinated response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence in Cuyahoga County. Each initiative may be viewed independently and each initiative also interrelates with each of the other initiatives. This functional interrelationship will be the foundation for sustainable systemic change. The initiatives address four general concepts:

- A lack of access to effective communication and responsiveness for D/deaf individuals
- A lack of knowledge among partner agency staff
- A lack of effective general police orders and service provider policies and procedures

- A lack of collaborative relationships among the partner agencies

The four key short-term initiatives for this strategic plan are as follows:

- Enhance the ability of law enforcement and service provider personnel to communicate effectively and respond appropriately with D/deaf or hard of hearing individuals impacted by domestic violence.
- Build law enforcement and service provider staff knowledge, confidence, and competence to respond to the needs of D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.
- Modify and/or create general police orders and service provider policies and procedures to address how to best respond to the needs of victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.
- Formalize meaningful collaborative relationships that will create a sustainable and coordinated systemic response for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence in Cuyahoga County.

The Strategic Plan Initiatives are designed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase the capacity of the partner agencies to respond to victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing
- Increase staff capacity among the partner agencies by enhancing staff knowledge and competency
- Strengthen collaborative relationships among the partner agencies
- Effect sustainable systems change that will continue well beyond the end date of this grant

Each initiative is interrelated and supports each of the other initiatives. For change in all three partner agencies to be sustainable, the change needs to become an integral component of the culture and foundation of the partner agencies. Collaboration team members have carefully developed these initiatives in order to maximize the achievement of sustainable change being implemented through this strategic plan. These four initiatives were selected because we expect them to have the largest and most sustainable impact on the partner agencies and their response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. These initiatives reflect our key findings and present unique opportunities for change within the partner agencies. They are also in line with the **KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS** vision and mission statements and are within the scope of the grant funding this project.

Collaboration team members will begin the Implementation Phase with the objectives of the first two initiatives in the first two months immediately following approval of the Strategic Plan. Once the team has gained additional knowledge and expertise and conducted the Foundational Training Workshop, they will be prepared to commence the task of developing the Safety and Access Review Tool. The remaining two initiatives will begin later in the implementation phase

although some preliminary work (such as gathering existing agency policies and general police orders) will begin earlier. The Project Director and Coordinator are committed to keeping all workgroup members engaged and updated to ensure continued participation even though they may not be attending regular meetings until later in the project.

IN-DEPTH OVERVIEW OF EACH SHORT-TERM INITIATIVE

Each short-term initiative is stated along with a description of the basis for the initiative, a description of the objectives, and an outline of the tasks to be completed during the remaining nine months of the grant and the expected one-year no cost extension.

Initiative #1: Build law enforcement and service provider staff knowledge, confidence, and competence to respond to the needs of D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Rationale:

A key finding from the Needs Assessment Report is that staff and leadership within all three partner agencies lack knowledge on how to effectively respond to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. Targeted training is needed to increase knowledge, confidence, competence, and expertise of staff responding to the needs of D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. Training will allow the partner agencies to become more accessible, safe, welcoming, and respectful in their response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. Training and cross-training will impact current and future staff at each partner agency and will work toward the sustainability of an accessible coordinated response. Partner agency staff will have new and consistent opportunities to learn from one another. Building the Collaboration Team members expertise is an essential first step in making sustainable change in our organizations.

Objective: Build the capacity of the Collaboration Team to become experts on the intersection of D/deafness and domestic violence by learning from highly regarded personnel currently working with Deaf survivors, Deaf culture and accessible environments. This will be accomplished through trainings and site visits to designated programs and services.

Objective & Work Group Members:

The work group will be comprised of the collaboration team members. Partner agency staff who will be involved with the training initiative will also be included as appropriate. Collaboration team members will participate in training specific to the intersection of D/deafness and domestic violence. This workgroup will

identify appropriate sites and training opportunities that will increase knowledge and the capacity of the collaboration. A brief summary of information gained and site visit experiences will be submitted to Office on Violence Against Women for review to document progress.

As identified in the Needs Assessment Report, the Collaboration Team needs more in-depth training on:

- D/deafness
- Deaf culture
- Cultural competency throughout Cleveland Division of Police, DVCAC, and the Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Dynamics of domestic violence
- Unique safety issues for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence
- Protection orders
- Appropriate resources and working relationships
- Practical tips for working with D/deaf individuals and with interpreters

With input from the Vera Institute of Justice, the Collaboration Team will develop a series of site visits and trainings that will target these areas of incomplete knowledge. We will solicit organizations and service providers who have unique and specialized expertise as hosts and presenters.

Expected Outcomes:

- Collaboration team members will attend targeted training to increase awareness and knowledge regarding the intersection of D/deafness and domestic violence.
- Collaboration team members will attend site visits and/or trainings that will build knowledge, expertise and capacity.
- Increased awareness regarding the intersection of D/deafness and domestic violence will strengthen the commitment of the partner agencies to work toward completion of all project initiatives.
- Create a manual to serve as a guide for subsequent initiatives

Systems Change and Sustainability:

- Building collaboration capacity as a team will further strengthen the relationships that have been developed between the three partner agencies. Strengthening collaborative relationships is critical to sustainability.

Initiative #2: Enhance the ability of law enforcement and service provider personnel to communicate effectively with D/deaf or hard of hearing individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Rationale:

A key finding from the Needs Assessment Report is that the majority of law enforcement and service provider staff/leadership are currently unable to communicate effectively with D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. Communication accessibility is vital to D/deaf individuals pursuing assistance from “hearing” agencies, including law enforcement.

Information obtained during the Needs Assessment indicated that Cleveland Division of Police and Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center lack knowledge regarding current technology to effectively communicate with D/deaf individuals. In addition, they are unfamiliar with the procedures necessary to secure interpreting services and lack training on working effectively work with interpreters. Both organizations also lack current technology. Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center lacks knowledge regarding the dynamics of domestic violence and related safety concerns, specific both to interpreting staff and other key personnel.

Objective 2A: Safety & Communication Access Review

Create a safety & communication access review tool that will be used to assess the needs of the partner agencies regarding necessary changes. Making needed changes will maximize the ability of law enforcement & service provider personnel to communicate effectively with D/deaf individuals. The tool created by KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS will focus on the unique communication and safety needs of Deaf survivors and will build on the knowledge and experiences gained through the site visits. Therefore, a substantial part of this work will take place following those visits. Preliminary work and preparation however, will begin immediately.

Objectives & Work Group Members:

The work group will be convened that will be comprised of:

- a collaboration team member
- D/deaf individuals who will be screened and trained to go into any of the audit sites
- any appropriate agency staff member affiliated with the area(s) of each agency participating in the audit such as the shelter director
- an American Sign Language interpreter
- an appropriate partner agency staff member with expertise in domestic violence

- A hired consultant with expertise in D/deafness, safety, and communication access

Work group members will be responsible for the development of an accessibility and safety review tool focused specifically on communication access and the unique safety needs of women who are D/deaf. The results of this review will be used to work toward an effective plan to reduce communication and safety barriers.

The work group will review accessibility tools used by prior grantees for any relevant safety and communication access components. The work group will also research any additional existing safety and accessibility review tools for relevance and appropriateness to this project. A new or modified tool will be developed and this tool will be submitted to Office on Violence Against Women for approval. The approved tool will be used for the safety and accessibility reviews. A review will be conducted at each partner agency (specific departments to be determined at a later date). The findings from the review will be compiled into a report. Results from the review will serve as the foundation for efforts to remove any identified barriers. Collaboration team members will prioritize the findings to identify which barriers can be addressed with remaining grant funds or funds available with a no-cost extension. Proposals to remove barriers will be submitted to the respective agency leadership for approval. The removal of barriers will be documented. The removal of any remaining barriers may be considered a long-term objective.

Expected Outcomes:

- A safety and communication access review tool will be developed.
- Safety and communication access reviews will be conducted at the Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center, The Cleveland Division of Police (Dispatch and DV units), and Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center (Shelter, Counseling, and Visitation Center) to identify any existing barriers within the specific departments of each agency.

Systems Change & Sustainability:

- Identifying and removing barriers to a safe and accessible environment within the partner agencies will create a more welcoming environment for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.
- Increased knowledge regarding safety and communication barriers will increase awareness of unique concerns for victims/survivors at the intersection of D/deafness and domestic violence within the partner agencies.

- Improved access to effective communication will allow victims/survivor to obtain needed services where they previously could not or would not due to the lack of accessibility.
- The results of the safety and communication access audits may be used to seek funding from additional sources to promote ongoing collaborative efforts among the partner agencies.

Objective 2B: Technology

Identify & source needed technology for each partner agency to maximize effective communication with D/deaf individuals.

Objectives & Work Group Members:

A work group will be convened comprised of collaboration team members. D/deaf individuals and any appropriate partner agency staff may assist collaboration team members in researching current technology and associated costs. Collaboration team members will obtain and review quotes for technology considered appropriate for purchase. Collaboration team members will determine which items need to be purchased for each of the partner agencies. Any proposed technology purchases will be submitted to Office on Violence Against Women for approval as needed. Approved items will be purchased using grant funds. Appropriate partner agency staff will be trained on any new equipment. There will also be provisions to provide ongoing training that will sustain the ability for staff to use the technology regardless of changes in partner agency personnel. As needed, agency brochures/materials will be revised to advertise that the new technology and resulting capacity for effective communication is available.

Expected Outcomes:

- The collaboration will identify and purchase current technology to assist in effective communication with D/deaf individuals specific to each of the partner agencies.
- The presence of current technology and the ability of staff to properly use the technology will positively impact the manner in which a D/deaf individual may contact the partner agencies for assistance.
- The presence of current technology and the ability of staff to properly use the technology will assist the partner agencies in responding to D/deaf individuals.

Systems Change & Sustainability:

- Each partner agency will have current technology available to effectively communicate with D/deaf individuals. Increased access to effective

communication will allow the partner agencies to better respond to the needs of D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

- Training provided to partner agency staff regarding the use of the new and current technology will maximize the proper and effective use of the technology.
- Ongoing training in how to use current technology to effectively communicate with D/deaf individuals will allow the partner agencies to remain confident that newly purchased technology will be used properly regardless of any changes in personnel.

Initiative #3: Modify and/or create general police orders and service provider policies and procedures to address how to best respond to the needs of victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.

Rationale:

A key finding from the Needs Assessment Report is the need for general police orders and service provider policies/procedures that will improve the response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. Partner agency staff members are unaware of any existing general police orders and policies/procedures. Areas to be reviewed include the following:

Cleveland Division of Police

- When and how to obtain an American Sign Language interpreter
- How law enforcement will respond to D/deaf individuals

Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center

- Cultural competency throughout Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center
- How to respond to a disclosure of domestic violence at Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- How to make appropriate referrals to the partner agencies from Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing & Regional Infant Hearing Program of Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center
- Confidentiality & information sharing within Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Hiring policies to include D/deaf individuals throughout Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center

Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center

- Cultural competency throughout Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center

- Americans with Disabilities Act
- How to address accommodation needs
- When and how to obtain an American Sign Language interpreter
- How to use assistive technology
- How to assign a new client who is D/deaf or hard of hearing to appropriate staff

Objectives:

3A: Review and modify any existing general police orders and service provider policies and procedures as needed to provide guidance for staff regarding how to respond to victims/survivors who are D/deaf and then implement the changes.

3B: Develop new general police orders and service provider policies and procedures as needed to provide guidance for staff regarding how to respond to victims/survivors who are D/deaf and then implement the new additions.

Objectives & Work Group Members:

A work group will be convened with collaboration team members and other representatives from the partner agencies as needed. The collaboration will review the status of tasks and outcomes on a regular basis. Any relevant existing general police orders and service provider policies/procedures will be reviewed for responsiveness. The work of previous grantees and/or any relevant samples of existing general police orders and service provider policies/procedures from other organizations will be reviewed. Any areas requiring modification or the development of new general police orders and service provider policies/procedures will be identified and drafted. A draft of any modifications and/or new general police orders and service provider policies/procedures will be submitted to appropriate decision-makers as required. Once approved by the appropriate decision-makers, the drafts will be submitted to Office on Violence Against Women for review and approval where required. Any approved modifications and/or new general police orders and service provider policies/procedures will be shared with the Initiative # 4 work group, where necessary, for inclusion in any training for and/or existing staff members to implement the changes. The implementation of any modified/new general police orders and service provider policies/procedures may be postponed until the partner agencies have the capacity to respond effectively.

Expected Outcomes:

- The modified or new general police orders and service provider policies and procedures will provide partner agency staff with clear guidelines for responding to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.
- The modified or new general police orders and service provider policies and procedures will also provide staff with clear guidelines that will enhance inter-agency working relationships.

- The modified or new general police orders and service provider policies/procedures will improve response as well as the accessibility, safety, and welcoming environment at each partner agency independently and as a collaboration.

Systems Change & Sustainability:

- The presence of detailed guidelines will provide partner agency staff with a framework that is expected to increase staff confidence and competence in their response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.
- Modifications to any existing general police orders and/or service provider policies/procedures will increase awareness regarding how to respond to victims/survivors who are D/deaf. This will demonstrate to staff that equal provision of a quality response or services is required. Enforcement of the modified/created general police orders and service provider policies/procedures will lead to changes in organizational culture.

Initiative #4: Formalize meaningful collaborative relationships that will create a sustainable and coordinated systemic response for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence in Cuyahoga County.

Rationale:

Each partner agency recognizes the value in formalizing collaborative relationships in order to sustain the work that has already been completed and to ensure that future work will also be sustained. As we build our capacity as a collaboration team, we hope to ensure a solid foundation for future work in Cuyahoga County. Bringing together staff from each partner agency and members of the D/deaf community to work together in groups will help foster meaningful ongoing relationships among all three agencies and to increase confidence in the community. By engaging deaf individuals in the work groups, we expect increased involvement and exposure in the D/deaf community to the issues facing women who are deaf and victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, we expect this to increase the confidence among member of the community to interact with hearing agencies and to utilize their services knowing they are sensitive and capable of addressing the needs of this group.

OVERVIEW OF LONG-TERM INITIATIVES

Collaboration team members have identified numerous long term initiatives that we plan to implement upon completion of our short-term initiatives described above. The following initiatives are key to the sustainability of our collaboration

and the work of the partner agencies. Certain initiatives are long-term because they will allow us to further develop the objectives of a short term initiative. Other initiatives are long-term because they are beyond the scope of funding for this grant project.

KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS developed six possible long-term initiatives to pursue beyond the scope of our current funding. These initiatives focus on expanding our accessibility at our own agencies with victims/survivors who are D/deaf and with as well as promoting systems change within our broader community.

1. Implement a plan for ongoing staff education/development. This initiative will stem directly from the curriculum developed out of our first initiative. “Build law enforcement and service provider staff knowledge, confidence, and competence to respond to the needs of D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence”. Once the cross-training curriculum is developed and approved, we will work to develop a structure and plan for implementation (e.g. new staff orientation, regular staff development, on-going trainings available to the community, etc.). In addition, based on feedback from training evaluations, we will work to package the curriculum so that it is accessible and portable. This will allow it to be used by law enforcement and service providers to increase staff knowledge regarding the intersection of D/deafness and domestic violence. While pursuing this initiative, **KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS** will seek the additional funding necessary to pursue these long-term initiatives to create even greater systems changes throughout Cuyahoga County
2. Increase community awareness. Increase awareness of the issues that surround domestic violence and D/deafness and the resources available in our community. Look for funding to conduct an awareness campaign. Conduct outreach specifically to D/deaf individuals as well as the broader community. Ensure that resources are accessible and available in alternative formats. Provide education to D/deaf individuals regarding what constitutes domestic violence and the various options available for responding to domestic violence, including how to interact with law enforcement and how to report domestic violence to law enforcement. Victims/survivors were clear that information regarding available community resources is lacking. Community education events can be planned. It will take time and consistent targeted outreach to build relationships with the D/deaf community.
3. Explore the possibility of establishing an accessible shelter for victims/survivors of domestic who are D/deaf. Currently there are no fully accessible domestic violence shelters in Cuyahoga County. The task will be to determine if it is more feasible to integrate an existing shelter or

establishing a separate shelter would best meet the needs of D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

4. Provide co-facilitated or separate support group services in American Sign Language for victims/survivors who are D/deaf. Domestic violence support group participants and shelter staff and residents expressed a need for such services. This type of cross-discipline service provision would meet the needs of victims/survivors who are D/deaf and would further strengthen collaborative relationships. In addition, co-location of services among service provider partner agencies could include resource sharing of staff and materials.
5. Revise partner agency brochures and websites, as needed, to increase the capacity to provide information via effective communication for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.
6. Revise and/or create intake forms/procedures that are less English-focused and text heavy. Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing does not have an intake form and intake forms at Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center are very text-heavy.

While these are the areas of interest we have currently identified for post-grant work, new initiatives may emerge as we pursue our short-term plan. The future work groups for post-grant collaboration may also change based on the need for new or different allies and emerging priorities.

KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS collaboration team members hope to share what we have learned throughout this planning and development phase of the grant with other law enforcement agencies and service provider organizations throughout Ohio and across the nation. We also hope to share the lessons we have learned along the way and our accomplishments during the implementation phase. The ability to develop a model to serve individuals at the intersection of domestic violence and D/deafness will not only benefit the work between the partner agencies, it can positively impact the work in disciplines such as mental health, other areas of the criminal justice system, and other systems that respond to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The planning and development phase is complete and it is time for implementation. The work of the collaboration team members has resulted in a willingness and readiness to improve our community response to victims/survivors who are D/deaf or hard of hearing. Our collaboration is focused

on creating change. Collaboration team members have been diligently working together to identify and implement needed change since our first meeting. This Strategic Plan details our initiatives, objectives, and tasks that will create new standards and practices at Cleveland Division of Police, Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center, and Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center. Developing the collaboration charter, designing the needs assessment plan, collecting the data, preparing the needs assessment report, and designing this strategic plan have created a foundation that clearly illustrates and substantiates the need for a collaborative response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence in Cuyahoga County. While collaboration team members were not surprised by the key findings, there is now tangible data that demonstrates the need and rationale for the initiatives and tasks outlined in this strategic plan.

KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS has developed a strategic plan that will guide the collaboration through the process of modifying/creating needed organizational change within the partner agencies as identified in the needs assessment. This will be accomplished through:

- Building collaboration capacity to respond to victims/survivors at the intersection of D/deafness and domestic violence while building and strengthening working relationships among the partner agencies
- Increasing effective communication
- Enhancing and/or creating general police orders and service provider policies and procedures
- Improving law enforcement and service provider staff knowledge regarding communication differences, and how to access interpreting services, and knowledge regarding domestic violence

The collective impact of these four initiatives will culminate in sustainable change at Cleveland Division of Police, Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center, and Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center in line with the vision and mission statements of this collaboration. Within the scope of this project, the resulting change will highlight the manner in which our organizations respond to individuals at the intersection of domestic violence and D/deafness.

The short-term and long-term initiatives identified in this strategic plan will guide the process of systems change within and among each of the partner agencies. It will also guide the process of creating a coordinated response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. These initiatives create a foundation for continued collaboration among the partner agencies. The planning and development phase of this project has strengthened the relationships between the partner agencies and has solidified a shared interest in the achievement of individual agency improvements and collaboration goals. During the implementation phase, we will begin to incorporate the needs of D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence into changes within the partner

agencies which will further strengthen and formalize the inter-agency relationships.

We are confident that the short-term and long-term initiatives detailed in this strategic plan will result in systems change within the cultures of the three partner agencies and will result in an effective coordinated response to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

The **KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS** Strategic Plan is multi-faceted and seeks to provide the foundation for change within all three partner agencies. This will be achieved through the following:

- Enhancing organizational capacity by expanding knowledge and awareness of D/deafness, Deaf culture, D/deafness , Americans with Disabilities Act, dynamics of domestic violence, unique safety issues for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence, protection orders, appropriate resources and working relationships, and practical tips for working with D/deaf individuals and with interpreters
- Ensuring effective communication for victims/survivors who are D/deaf or hard of hearing
- Increasing accessibility to services and more effective law enforcement interaction
- Modifying existing and/or developing new general police orders and service provider policies and procedures
- Building and strengthening partner agency working relationships
- Developing a coordinated network of highly skilled professionals responding to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence

Collaborative efforts to complete the initiatives and objectives in this strategic plan will increase the knowledge and awareness regarding D/deafness and domestic violence within the partner agencies and enhance services and interactions with law enforcement for victims/survivors who are D/deaf. These changes will improve accessibility and responsiveness for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence. The initiatives and activities developed for this project are centered on weaknesses within the partner agencies regarding their present ability to address the unique needs of victims/survivors who are D/deaf or hard of hearing. Changes will allow Cleveland Division of Police, Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center, and Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center to respond to D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence in a manner that ensures full access to effective communication. Access to effective communication will result in a comprehensive understanding of all available options allowing for the ability to make informed decisions when impacted by domestic violence.

ACTION PLANS

TIMELINE FOR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Initiative #1: Build law enforcement and service provider staff knowledge, confidence, and competence to respond to the needs of D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Activity #1A: Capacity Building of the Collaboration Team – Planning

Rationale: In order for the Collaboration Team to be competent and comfortable in providing training to agency staff (who will ultimately interact and/or serve victims and survivors who are D/deaf) they must increase their own knowledge and expertise at the intersection of Domestic Violence and Deafness. Site visits to targeted locations will build on the knowledge gained at the Bridging the Gap Conference in Vancouver, WA and provide the team with greater capacity and competence.

Timeline Weeks		1	2	3	4	5-6
Task	This begins once the Strategic Plan is Approved by OVW					
1	Investigate Potential Site Visits	X	X			
2	Team Discussion to decide who will travel and to which sites	X	X			
3	Contact Sites–Develop Travel Schedule			X		
4	Develop Travel Budget			X		
5	Gain Approval from OVW			X	X	
6	Site Visits					X
7	Summary and Report					X

Activity #1B: Develop a Foundational Training Workshop

Rationale: The purpose of the Foundational Training is to kick off the implementation phase of the project by introducing staff at the partner agencies to important fundamental concepts and to provide a platform for recruiting members to workgroups.

Timeline	Weeks	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14
Tasks		March		April		May		June
Create Workgroup		X						
Identify dates & Location		X						
Identify Presenters			X					
Identify Workshop Participants			X					
Create Budget			X					
OVW approval				X				
Develop Evaluation					X			
Conduct Workshop							X	
Review Evaluations								X

Activity #1C: Develop Staff Training

Rationale: Following the site visits, targeted trainings for staff and law enforcement will be developed in order to increase the knowledge and capacity of agency and law enforcement personnel. There is the potential to gain a training slot in the training schedule of the Cleveland Division of Police in 2015. Therefore, training curriculum will be developed for CPD before the other partner agencies.

Timeline	Weeks	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16
Task		March		April		May		June	
Create Workgroup		X							
Identify Training Needs			X						
Review Existing Training - Internal			X	X					
Review Existing Training - External			X	X	X				
Identify Gaps and Needs					X				
Develop Training Curriculum						X	X	X	
OVW Approval								X	
Conduct Pilot Training									X

Initiative #2: Enhance the ability of law enforcement and service provider personnel to communicate effectively with D/deaf or hard of hearing individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Activity #2A: Conduct Safety and Access Reviews of all organizations.

Rationale: In order to determine the accessibility of services and law enforcement interaction with women in the deaf community in Cuyahoga County it is essential to develop a tool that will assist in evaluating the accessibility of each agency. The tool will not only assess barriers to communication but potential physical barriers as well. Two separate work groups will be created; one specifically for law enforcement and the other of service providers.

Activity #2B: Technology Review

Rationale: Review current technology options that can improve law enforcement and service providers' interactions with deaf individuals. This review can occur concurrently with the development of a Safety and Access Review Tool. Technology may be an integral component of the safety and access review. If the groups determine a consultant is needed, the collaboration will seek approval of Office of Violence Against Women.

Timeline	Month	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Tasks								
Create 2 Workgroups		X						
Recruit & Set Meeting Schedules		X						
Collect & Review Existing Tools	Project Director	March						
Review Existing Technology	Project Director	March						
Agency Visits with Workgroup Members		X						
Determine Needed Technology		X						
Develop Technology Budget		X						
Submit to OVW for Approval		X						
Develop New Access & Review Tool			X	X	X			
OVW Approval						X		
Train Reviewers							X	
Conduct Access Reviews							X	
Make recommendations to Agencies								X
Train on Technology								X

Initiative & Activity #3: Modify and/or create general police orders and service provider policies and procedures to address how to best respond to the needs of victims/survivors of domestic violence who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.

Rationale: Service providers and law enforcement do not currently have policies, procedures, or general police orders that address the unique needs of woman who are deaf and victims of domestic violence. Given time constraints of certain key members of the partner agencies it is likely that several round table discussions may replace the regular workgroup format to allow for valuable input while respecting scheduling and time limitations.

Timeline	Weeks	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11	13	15
Tasks	Begin in May								
Determine Meeting Format	Team	X							
Set Meeting Schedule		X							
Gather & Review Existing Policies	Project Director & Coordinator		X						
Gather& Review Model Policies	Project Director & Coordinator			X					
Determine Needed Enhancements Exclusions or New Policies	Workgroup/Team			X	X				
Revise &/or Create New Policies	Workgroup/Team				X	X			
Develop Strategy for Staff Adoption	Workgroup/Team					X			
OVW Approval							X		
Agency Review & Approval								X	
Introduce & Train									X

Initiative #4: Formalize meaningful collaborative relationships that will create a sustainable and coordinated systemic response for D/deaf individuals impacted by domestic violence in Cuyahoga County.

Rationale: In order to sustain the work of the project, a plan should be developed to ensure continued collaboration among the partner agencies. Creating an advisory group consisting of members from all three partner agencies will serve to sustain the work of **KEYS 4 DEAF ACCESS**. This will begin at the onset of the Implementation Phase and conclude with a formalized plan when the Grant is complete.

WORK PLAN

The Work Plan is a guide for the activities of the collaboration team and will be revised as needed. The time frame for the grant is 01 October 2011 through 30 September 2014.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Tasks</u>
Grant Awarded	09.16.2011	
Project Coordinator Hired	08.06.2012	
Create Collaboration Charter	August 2012 – October 2012	Complete all 11 elements w/Vera feedback
Submit Charter to OVW for approval (target date)	10.25.2012	
*Charter submitted to OVW for approval	11.05.2012	
*Charter approved by OVW	11.19.2012	
Needs Assessment Planning	November 2012 – March 2013	Methodology, data collection, sampling w/Vera feedback
Submit Needs Assessment Plan to OVW for approval (target date)	March 2013	
*Needs Assessment Plan submitted to OVW for approval	05.03.2013	
*Needs Assessment Plan approved by OVW	06.05.2013	
Conduct Needs Assessment (target date)	April 2013 – May 2013	Data gathering

*OVW Site Visit (Amy Loder)	06.18.2013	Collaboration overview, technical assistance
Conduct Needs Assessment (actual time)	June 2013 – August 2013	Data gathering
Prepare Needs Assessment Report	March 2013 – August 2013	Analyze data, determine findings w/Vera feedback
Submit Needs Assessment Report to OVW for approval (target date)	August 2013	
*Needs Assessment Report submitted to OVW for approval	10.18.2013	
Develop Strategic Plan	September 2013 – December 2013	Review findings, identify initiatives, implementation strategies, and costs w/Vera feedback
*Needs Assessment Report Approved by OVW	10.31.2013	
Strategic Planning Retreat (with Nancy Smith & Lisa Becker)	12.03-04.2013	Vera staff, collaboration team members, and partner agency leadership meet to identify strategic plan initiatives
*Submit Strategic Plan to OVW for approval	February 2014	
Apply for No-Cost Extension	August 2014	
Implement Strategic Plan	March 2014 – September 2014	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Strategic Plan Authors

Collaboration team members worked diligently to design this Strategic Plan as a guide for our implementation activities. The following collaboration team members are the original authors of this Strategic Plan:

Susan Bungard, MSSA, LSW
Director of Community Center for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center

Deborah McMyler, MA, LSW, RASS
Project Coordinator
Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center

James McPike
Lieutenant – Special Victims Section
Cleveland Division of Police

Karen Mitrisin, LSW
Community Services Director
Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center

Maria O’Neil Ruddock, PsyD
Coordinator, Training and Outreach Services
Community Center for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center

Special thanks to Nancy Smith, Director, Center on Victimization and Safety, Vera Institute of Justice, and Lisa Becker, Senior Program Associate, Center on Victimization and Safety, Vera Institute of Justice, for their skillful facilitation of our strategic planning process.

Special thanks to Linda Johaneck, Chief Executive Officer of Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center, Ed Tomba, Deputy Chief of Cleveland Division of Police, and Dr. Bernard Henri, Executive Director of Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center for their participation.