**Strategic Plan**

**PAH!**

**Partners Advocating for Healing**

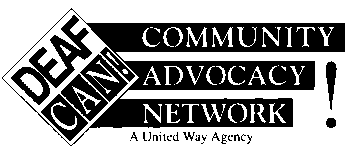
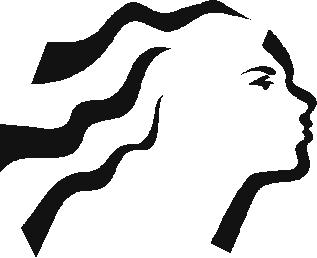
**Oakland County, Michigan**

**January 2011**

**HAVEN**

**Deaf Community Advocacy Network**

**Deaf Women’s Advocacy Services**

[](http://www.haven-oakland.org/i)

1. **Introduction**

**PAH!: *Partners Advocating for Healing*** is a community collaborative effort to increase responsiveness and accessibility of the service delivery system to Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Our name comes from the American Sign Language sign of “PAH”, which represents success or achievement. We thought it was only appropriate to name our collaboration PAH! , thus incorporating both the hearing and Deaf communities, and symbolizing the bridge we are building between these communities to combat domestic and sexual violence. PAH!, established in October of 2008, is a collaboration consisting of three community programs located in Oakland County, Michigan: HAVEN, Deaf Community Advocacy Network (DEAF C.A.N.!) and Deaf Women’s Advocacy Services (DWAS).

The collaboration of HAVEN, DEAF C.A.N.!, and DWAS is the first and only partnership in Southeast Michigan that brings together the skills, leadership and experiences of both Deaf and hearing advocates. All members of the collaborative are committed to create sustained systems change within their organizations that will extend well beyond the parameters of this three year, federally funded grant. Each agency and individual member is committed to learning from one another and their agencies collective experiences in order to plan, evaluate, develop, and eventually implement culturally sensitive services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of domestic and sexual violence.

This collaborative is funded by a three year, multi-phase grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (Grant # 2008-FW-AX-K005) received in October of 2008. The collaborative partners have been working together since December of 2008, meeting weekly to establish the goals, values and mission of the group. The PAH! collaboration charter, which was developed in the first year of the grant, outlines the vision, mission, goals and philosophy of PAH! The second phase of the grant was focused on developing a needs assessment plan, facilitating that plan, and subsequently reporting the results in a needs assessment report. The collaborative is now in the third phase, which is categorized as the planning and development phase. During this phase, the collaborative has reviewed the needs assessment results, determined strategic initiatives and activities based on those results, and have compiled the information into the following strategic plan. The strategic planning process marks the final step before the collaboration can move into the fourth and final phase, which is the implementation phase. The implementation phase will result in the completion of the collaborative strategic initiatives and activities, thus creating sustainable systems change in collaborative agencies.

**Agency Descriptions**

**HAVEN** believes that all people have a right to violence –free lives. Domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse should not be tolerated or condoned. HAVEN believes these acts have a devastating effect on victims, their families and the entire society. HAVEN believes abusive acts are acts of power and control that the victim does not provoke, enjoy or deserve. Moreover, HAVEN believes victims can regain control of their lives through appropriate support services.

HAVEN recognizes that women, children and men have a right to their own identities and need not define themselves according to cultural traditions, some of which tolerate abuse. The aim of HAVEN is to eliminate root causes of abuse and to believe education is a vital component in working toward the prevention of physical and sexual violence.

HAVEN provides a full spectrum of services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence including but not limited to residential shelter, counseling, court and legal advocacy, 24 hours crisis and support, education and prevention services.

**Deaf Women’s Advocacy Services (DWAS)** is a volunteer agency, whichprovides services to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind victims of domestic and sexual violence. Their mission is to provide empowerment to victims through a 24 hour crisis network, counseling, and medical, legal and systems advocacy. DWAS is also committed to changing cultural attitudes which foster and perpetuate violence.

**DEAF C.A.N.!** offers a wide range of services that focus on narrowing health, economic, legal, and educational disparities that occur due to the communication barriers that Deaf and Hard of Hearing people face. The majority of DEAF C.A.N.! clients are chronically underserved and face discrimination based on their deafness. Their services do not center on “fixing” the individual's deafness; they believe Deaf people are members of a linguistic minority, and as such services are provided from a cultural perspective utilizing American Sign Language. Wherever possible, this agency works to create systematic, institutional change to better serve the community.

**Agency Relationship History**

The length and nature of relationships among the project partners varies, but extends back many years, with several key individuals working together on a variety of projects. DEAF C.A.N.! and HAVEN have a history dating back as far as 1996, with DEAF C.A.N.! providing ASL interpreter services for Deaf survivors, and referring Deaf survivors to HAVEN for domestic or sexual violence services. HAVEN has been working with DWAS since 2006 to better meet the needs of Deaf survivors in Oakland County.

DWAS is a grassroots volunteer organization that was established to represent the needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing women who were touched by Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. DWAS has always been operated by Deaf women in the community who understand the need to bring awareness to the sensitive issues surrounding Domestic Violence. Regrettably in June 2010, the President of DWAS relocated out of state. At the present time DWAS does not have leadership, and it’s foundation as a volunteer support agency has become unstable. Marika Blumerick, who is the Vice President of DWAS and represents DWAS on the collaborative, is working on organizing a new Board of Directors and core of volunteers to revitalize, rebuild and solidify the organization.

Ms. Blumerick continues to represent DWAS at the PAH! Meetings and brings with her the community perspective that DWAS offered in the past. The collaboration understands given the current configuration of the organization that DWAS is unable to participate at the level of HAVEN and DEAF C.A.N.!, but the voice of the Deaf community will continue to be heard, through Ms. Blumerick’s participation, on behalf of DWAS. Ms. Blumerick will still be involved in all aspects of implementation initiatives and activities and will continue to serve as our liaison into the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities.

**PAH! Vision and Mission Statements**

In order to gain clarity around our goals, the PAH! collaborative developed jointly agreed upon vision and mission statements for our work. The vision and mission statements were established during the initial phase of this grant process, and were first documented in the PAH! Charter. These statements provide PAH! the structure and direction to successfully integrate the voices of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing community, and to expel myths and stigmas regarding needs and concerns of domestic and sexual violence victims.

**Vision Statement**

## Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of domestic and sexual violence will receive immediate services from PAH! agencies that are fully responsive, accessible and free from communication and cultural barriers. They will feel supported and empowered to move forward in their lives. Our advocates will support Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims in their journeys from crisis to healing in a competent and trusting environment.

# Mission Statement

PAH! will ensure the delivery of fully accessible and responsive services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of domestic and sexual violence, which will include crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy and shelter. PAH! will accomplish this mission through the following actions:

* Sharing our individual experience and expertise in our respective fields, to build a strong and trusting relationship with one another.
* Sharing experiences in our agencies and our communities.
* Increasing knowledge and awareness within our agencies regarding the differences between Deaf and hearing cultures.
* Increasing awareness and knowledge of domestic and sexual violence within DEAF C.A.N.! and DWAS.
* Increasing our communication capacity to appropriately and effectively communicate with Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors utilizing Certified American Sign Language interpreters and the latest communication technologies.
* Changing our existing policies, procedures, job descriptions, practices and budgets within our agencies to reflect our learned best practices in providing services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of domestic and sexual violence.
* Advocating for external systems change in areas such as criminal justice, health care, education and the legal arena, to make services accessible and responsive to Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of domestic and sexual violence.

**II. Needs Assessment Plan, Implementation, and Report**

**Purpose of The Needs Assessment**

To explore how PAH! agencies are currently delivering services to the Deaf community, and how collaborative agencies can improve the delivery and accessibility of services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients that have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.

**Background Information**

Information was gathered from collaborative agency staff, Board of Directors, clients, Deaf community groups associated with DEAF C.A.N.!, Deaf and hearing family members, and certified American Sign Language interpreters.

PAH! collected information from each of these audiences to create more comfortable, accessible, and responsive services to Deaf survivors.   The compiled results served as support in developing tactics for the strategic plan, and chart a realistic and manageable course for the implementation phase.

**Needs Assessment Goals**

Listed below are four areas that summarize the goals of the PAH! needs assessment. As a collaborative, each agency has committed to making the internal systems changes required to enhance and fill gaps in service. The data collected from our target audiences aided the collaborative in answering the following questions:

1. What are our current practices in terms of domestic violence services for our Deaf clients? What works? What doesn’t work? How can they be improved?
2. What are the gaps in our programs and services and how can we address them?
3. What do Deaf consumers want in terms of services in general? Who? What? Where? When and How?
4. What are our organizational capacities to serve Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients in a more inclusive, engaging and safe way?
   1. Staff knowledge and comfort
   2. Formalized policies, practices and procedures
   3. Budgets

**Needs Assessment Methodology**

After approval of the PAH! needs assessment plan, the team set out to implement the plan over a three month period, beginning June of 2010 and ending in August 2010. PAH! members were responsible for recruiting participants, scheduling focus groups and interviews, conducting the focus groups and interviews, capturing data, and compiling key findings.

Members of PAH! conducted interviews and focus groups to gather data from collaborative agency staff, Board of Directors, clients, Deaf community groups associated with DEAF C.A.N.!, Deaf and hearing family members, and certified American Sign Language interpreters. All recruitment was done through face to face contact. All questions were designed by the members of PAH, with technical assistance from the Vera Institute, and approval from the Office of Violence Against Women. Safety, accessibility, confidentiality and consent considerations were all discussed during participant recruitment and again, immediately prior to the interview or focus group.

From June 2010 through August of 2010, PAH! had projected a target audience between 80-144 participants. PAH! spoke directly to a total of 122 people, consisting of 71 agency staff and board of directors and 51 program participants.

**Focus Groups**

The focus groups were used to bring together 4-10 participants, who were asked 6-8 open ended questions about the accessibility of services provided by hearing agencies to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community residing in Oakland County, Michigan. There were no questions asked regarding domestic or sexual violence. The groups lasted approximately

1½ to 2 hours.

Focus groups were conducted with HAVEN staff and Board of Directors; DEAF C.A.N.! staff and Board of Directors; DWAS Board of Directors; and for the following Deaf community groups: Older Deaf adults, Hard of Hearing people fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), Deaf and Hard of Hearing people not fluent in ASL; certified ASL interpreters; and Deaf professionals.

These audiences were chosen to participate in focus groups because they are the providers and end users of services. Focus groups were held at either the HAVEN Counseling Center located in Bingham Farms, Michigan, or at the DEAF C.A.N.! offices located in Sylvan Lake, Michgan. All consumers received a $20 Meijer gift card upon arrival to the group. Staff and board members did not receive any incentive for participating.

Each focus group was lead by a group facilitator, and attended by a recorder, support person, and two certified ASL interpreters (for Deaf and Hard of Hearing participants). The recorder was the project manager, Christine Giresi who utilized a computer for note taking. The facilitators were either Marcy Colton (DEAF C.A.N.!) or Emily Matuszczak (HAVEN). For the staff focus groups, Marcy Colton facilitated the HAVEN staff focus groups, and Emily Matuszczak facilitated the DEAF C.A.N.! staff focus groups. The support person was a HAVEN employed licensed counselor**.**

There were eighteen projected groups, and seventeen actual groups held. The projected number of participants was 104-122 and the actual focus group participant count was 111. Of the 111 focus group participants, 67 were agency staff and board members, and 44 were Deaf participants.

**Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with agency leadership of PAH!: Beth Morrison, CEO of HAVEN; Emily Matuszczak, Senior Director of Programs, HAVEN; Marcy Colton, Executive Director, DEAF C.A.N.!, and Kate Slosar, President, DWAS. They were asked a combination of the same questions posed to their staff and board of directors. Interviews were held at DEAF C.A.N.! and HAVEN administrative offices, and facilitated by Emily Matuszczak and Marcy Colton. All interviews were recorded by Christine Giresi, who took notes on a computer.

PAH! also interviewed Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors of domestic violence; one Deaf Blind individual; Deaf individuals and their hearing family members; and Children of Deaf Adults to gain their insight to barriers the Deaf community faces when acquiring services from hearing agencies.

To reduce the risk of a breach of confidentiality, the Deaf participants were interviewed individually, as opposed to partaking in a focus group. With the exception of Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors, the interview questions were the same questions posed in a Deaf participant focus group. Deaf survivors of domestic violence were asked specific questions pertaining to accessibility to domestic violence services. PAH! did not ask any questions requiring disclosure – confidentiality and safety in this situation was paramount.

Interviews with Deaf survivors of domestic violence were held at HAVEN Counseling Center in Bingham Farms, Michigan. All other interviews with Deaf community participants were held at DEAF C.A.N.! in Sylvan Lake, Michigan, with the exception of the interview with the Deaf/Blind participant. The team needed to travel to Jackson, Michigan due to the participants’ inability to find transportation to DEAF C.A.N.! Interviews with the Deaf community were conducted by either Marcy Colton, Executive Director of DEAF C.A.N.!, and/or Kate Slosar and Marika Blumerick of DWAS. Each interview lasted between one and one and one half hours. A certified ASL interpreter was present at each interview, and a licensed professional counselor was accessible if needed. All Deaf participants received a $20 Meijer gift card upon arrival to the interview.

Of the eleven interviews conducted, four were with agency leadership. The remaining seven were with Deaf survivors(2), Children of Deaf Adults (2) and Hearing Family Members (2), and one(1) Deaf Blind individual.

PAH! was unable to meet with as many Deaf participants as it had hoped. Although the total actual interview number fell within projection, PAH! had hoped to have interviewed more Deaf and Deaf related participants.

**Needs Assessment Report Key Findings**

After reviewing the data collected from the focus groups and interviews with agency leadership, staff, Deaf community participants, and board members, PAH! has identified the following six key findings. Some of these findings and suggestions overlap, but the collaboration feels it is important to be all inclusive. These key findings directly correlate to the goals of the PAH! needs assessment, found on page five of this document.

*Key Finding #1 – Creating a Welcoming Environment*

When seeking services from a hearing agency, the three most important aspects to creating a welcoming environment for Deaf clients are:

1. A non judgmental attitude and sense of normality

2. Access to interpreting services

3. The comfort level of staff when working with Deaf clients.

*Key Finding #2 - Confidentiality*

When dealing with a ‘private matter,’ the majority of Deaf people we spoke to would prefer to speak with someone not involved or connected with the Deaf community.

*Key Finding #3 - Accessibility*

The primary barrier to service accessibility is communication (and the absence of domestic violence and sexual assault education in the Deaf community.)

*Key Finding #4 Knowledge and Awareness of Deaf Culture, Domestic and Sexual Violence, and the Unique Needs of a Deaf Survivor*

There is a lack of knowledge and awareness among (1) HAVEN staff in regards to Deaf culture and the Deaf community; (2) DEAF C.A.N.! staff in regards to domestic violence and sexual assault; and (3) all PAH! agencies in regards to the specific needs of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing survivor of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

*Key Finding #5 – Policies, Procedures and Protocols*

No policies, procedures or protocols exist for responding to a Deaf or Hard of Hearing survivor of domestic violence and/or sexual assault in any of the three PAH! agencies.

*Key Finding #6– Capacity of DWAS*

Regrettably, during the needs assessment phase, the collaborative lost one of its key members – Kate Slosar- the President of DWAS. Currently, DWAS does not have leadership, and it’s foundation as a volunteer support agency has become unstable. Currently, Marika Blumerick is continuing to represent DWAS at PAH! functional meetings. PAH! will be assisting the remaining members of DWAS in capacity building to restructure and rejuvenate their volunteer agency. Until DWAS becomes a stable agency, the collaboration is cautious not to overwhelm the remaining members while encouraging increased participation. We cannot presume or plan for the extent of DWAS involvement in the PAH! strategic plan.

**III. The Strategic Plan**

After consulting with our Vera Technical Assistance representative and utilizing our Needs Assessment Report Key Findings, the members of PAH! have developed short term implementation initiatives. All short term initiatives correlate back to the vision and mission of the collaborative which is to ensure the delivery of fully accessible and responsive services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of domestic and sexual violence (full vision and mission are stated on page 3 of this document). These initiatives have been carefully chosen to address the skills and knowledge of agency staff to increase culturally competency to effectively serve the Deaf population, and to provide the Deaf community with a safe, welcoming, respectful and accessible service delivery system. The fiscally responsible agency (HAVEN), will be applying for a no cost, twelve month grant extension, and if approved, will set the end date for this grant to September, 2012.

The following four short-term initiatives will take a minimum of ten months to be completed. The activities are detailed in section III (b) of this document, and the timeline of each initiative can be found in the attached workplan. The short term initiatives are as follows:

Initiative #1: Develop policies and procedures to support services for Deaf survivors

Initiative #2: Increasing staff capacity to serve Deaf survivors through knowledge building and training

Initiative #3: Improve communication access for Deaf survivors.

Initiative #4: Develop a long term plan to sustain the PAH! collaboration

**III(a) Summation of Short Term Initiatives**

**Initiative #1:** *Develop policies and procedures to support services for Deaf survivors*.

The collaborative will review and adjust applicable existing agency policies, and develop new policies and procedures to support Deaf services. These policy and procedural enhancements will be incorporated into agency operations with the goal being to empower agency employees and volunteers to feel more knowledgeable and helpful when serving a Deaf survivor. This initiative will have long term goals as well, with policies and procedures related to the Deaf community being reviewed annually by the collaboration, well after this grant period has finished.

**Initiative #2:** *Increasing staff capacity to serve Deaf survivors through knowledge building and training.*

The Needs Assessment findings indicated cross training on domestic violence and Deaf culture are required to ensure culturally competent service delivery. A total of four activities fall under this initiative. Activity #1 will focus on training HAVEN staff on Deaf Culture. Activity #2 will be developing training for HAVEN staff on working with ASL Interpreters. Activity #3 will focus on training DEAF C.A.N.!, DWAS staff and volunteers on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Safety Planning, and Lethality Assessment. Activity #4 will develop a trauma informed response training for all HAVEN, DEAF C.A.N.! and DWAS staff and first response volunteers. This activity requires the services of an expert in trauma informed response. The expert will be researched, approved by OVW, and hired as a consultant to develop a trauma informed response training module for the collaborative agencies.

**Initiative # 3:** *Improve communication access for Deaf survivors.*

After speaking with Deaf focus group participants and the staff of HAVEN and DEAF C.A.N.! the primary barrier to service accessibility is the issue of communication. Activity #1 is the development of an agency communication access review. The collaborative will be hiring an outside expert in communication access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to assist in the development of a communication access review tool. This tool will assess communication accessibility, and then, utilizing the results, the development of an accompanying communication barrier removal plan. Activity #2 is the creation of a current, state-of-the-art communication access kit for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients. Activity #3 is to conduct ASL interpreter training on appropriate domestic violence and sexual assault ASL training modules, as well as the intricacies of working with a Deaf domestic violence and/or sexual assault survivor. This training will be derived from the Vera Institute sponsored ASL interpreter training module, conducted in Rhode Island in 2010, and will require the hiring of outside consultants. Activity #4 will be to produce culturally relevant videos in ASL and closed captions to give Deaf survivors an overview of HAVEN’s shelter and services, the residential intake process and residential guidelines; information regarding domestic violence, sexual assault and safety planning. Activity #5 will be to enhance the collaborative agencies websites to include online pages for available Deaf services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

**Initiative #4** *Develop a long term plan for the sustainability of the PAH! collaboration.*

This initiative will be focused on developing a plan to sustain and continue the work of the collaboration in the future. An MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) will be created, along with agreements regarding future funding and resource sharing. Work committees will be established to ensure the MOU is adhered to and communication continues between agencies; funding and resources are being pursued and shared; and the communication barrier plan is annually reviewed and implemented.

**Additional Comments**

Each initiative is interconnected and relates back to the Mission and Vision of the collaborative, and the results of the collaborative Needs Assessment Report. The collective goal of the initiatives is to increase the knowledge and awareness of agency staff to provide an accessible, respectful, culturally competent and welcoming environment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

The success of bringing these initiatives from paper to reality is predicated on the collaboration agencies working together extensively over the next twelve months. The collaboration will be recruiting not only staff, but outside experts in the field of communication access, Deaf culture, Sign Language Interpreting, DV/SA trauma informed care and film production.

HAVEN, the fiscal agent, will apply for a no cost, twelve month grant extension from OVW. If the extension is approved, the initiatives are scheduled to be completed by September 2012.

**Work Processes**

To effectively complete the Strategic Plan initiatives, the collaborative has developed work processes. Each initiative contains activities, and attached to these activities are tasks. The work committees are led by one member of the PAH! collaborative, and are comprised of other employees, volunteers and community members. The work committees are responsible for completing the tasks under each activity. The committees will meet bi-weekly to do a concentrated and efficient review of activity progress.

Employing the participation of others spreads enthusiasm about the collaborative, and will aid greatly in successfully creating the system changes required. The members of the PAH! collaborative will continue to meet on a weekly basis throughout the remainder of the grant, and will report progress being made on their initiatives.

**Work Plan**

Attached to this strategic plan is a 10 month work plan, broken down by initiative. The work plan includes detailed tasks to be completed for each initiative, the responsible parties, accompanying deliverables, and a month by month timeline. As mentioned earlier, all initiatives are related to the Mission and Vision of the collaboration, and the results of the Needs Assessment Report completed in September 2010.

**III (b) Detail of Strategic Plan Short Term Initiatives**

INITIATIVE #1: Develop policies and procedures to support services for Deaf or Hard of Hearing victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

The collaborative agencies do not have existing policies or procedures to follow when interacting with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing victim of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. This initiative will consist of three stages:   
1. review of existing policies; 2. determining which policies need to be changed, and 3. which policies need to be developed, officially revised and then the appropriate documentation of the existing and new policies instituted.

Needs Assessment Justification

After speaking to staff at HAVEN and DEAF C.A.N.! and the volunteers who comprise DWAS, none are aware of any documented policies or procedures for responding to the needs of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. At HAVEN, few staff members feel relatively comfortable or efficiently skilled working with a Deaf or Hard of Hearing victim. At DEAF C.A.N.!, staff have no training in domestic violence or sexual assault. There are no guidelines for staff to follow if a client has experienced or is currently experiencing domestic violence or has been a victim of sexual assault. It is common for clients to walk into DEAF C.A.N.! without an appointment and be in a crisis situation, whether it be legal, financial, medical, or an issue with personal safety.

Action Items and Responsibility

The collaboration team members will organize a work group consisting of department directors from the partner agencies. Each agency will identify and set forth for review existing policies and procedures that will require enhancement to meet the needs of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing victim of DV/SA. The work group will also identify any new policies and procedures that need to be developed to fill any gaps in service. Confidentiality and safety planning policies are included in this review. Learning’s from Initiatives #2 and #3 will be incorporated into existing and new policies and procedures. New and revised policy and procedure drafts will be cross reviewed by each agency to ensure efficiency and depth. The drafts will be shared with the collaboration team members and other stakeholders as needed. Other past OVW grantees will be consulted on an as needed basis. Creation of new/changes to existing policies and procedures will be reviewed and approved by agency Board of Directors and submitted to OVW for approval as needed. All approved changes and additions will be incorporated into agency staff and volunteer training curriculums.

Desired Outcomes

* At collaboration agencies, appropriate existing policies and procedures will be enhanced and revised to include the unique needs of Deaf or Hard of Hearing victims of DV/SA.
* New policies and procedures are developed to fill any gaps in service identified by the collaboration and the work group.
* New and enhanced existing policies and procedures are documented and are included in orientation and ongoing training at both agencies.
* Agency staff and volunteers are given direction and knowledge on the serving the unique needs of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing victim of DV/SA and ultimately feel more comfortable and confident providing proficient services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of DV/SA.

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will monitor the work and ensure the timeline is on target.
* Questions will be added to existing staff and volunteer training evaluations to include validity increase of understanding/knowledge of Deaf and Hard of Hearing DV/SA policies and procedures.
* Department Directors will monitor long term change through one on one supervision and staff meetings.

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* Staff and volunteers feel better equipped and more confident in serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. This result leads to a more comfortable and welcoming environment for the client, and to a more accessible and efficient service delivery.
* Policies and procedures will be reviewed annually for updates
* Updated policies and procedures will be incorporated into service manuals and training materials

OVW Deliverables

* New and revised policy and procedures will be submitted for approval

INITIATIVE #2:

*Increase Staff Capacity to Serve Dear Survivors through* *Knowledge Building, Training and Awareness*

There is a lack of knowledge and awareness among (1) HAVEN staff in regards to Deaf culture and the Deaf community; (2) DEAF C.A.N.! staff in regards to domestic violence and sexual assault; and (3) all PAH! agencies in regards to the specific needs of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing survivor of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Therefore, four activities will fall under Initiative #2. Activity #1 will focus on training HAVEN staff on Deaf Culture. Activity #2 will be developing training for HAVEN staff on working with ASL Interpreters. Activity #3 will focus on training DEAF C.A.N.! staff on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Safety Planning, and Lethality Assessment. Activity #4 will be to increase knowledge in both agencies of trauma informed response and providing trauma informed response services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Initiative #2 – Activity #1

Provide Training to HAVEN Staff on Deaf Culture

Needs Assessment Justification

The staff at HAVEN has not had sufficient training in regards to Deaf culture, and the unique needs of a Deaf survivor. HAVEN staff struggle with understanding the depth and breadth of the barriers faced by Deaf victims, as well as intricacies of their culture. Increasing staff knowledge and skills will increase their comfort level in working with Deaf clients, which is a key factor in creating a welcoming environment.

Action Items and Responsibility

Marcy Colton, Executive Director of DEAF C.A.N.! will lead this activity, and will recruit a work committee from DEAF C.A.N.! staff and volunteers to review existing Deaf culture training curriculum, both internally at DEAF C.A.N.! and from external Deaf community resources. This work committee with then update and/or adapt any current trainings where appropriate. The training will be developed in PowerPoint format, and submitted to OVW for approval. After approval, the work committee will consult with members of the collaboration for training date selection(s) to present to HAVEN staff. The training will be presented by staff of DEAF C.A.N.! and Marika Blumerick of DWAS. Evaluation tools will be developed by the work committee to measure effectiveness of the training. This feedback will be reviewed, and the training will be revised accordingly.

Desired Outcomes

* The collaboration and work committee will design a thoughtful, cohesive and well rounded training module on Deaf culture.
* The training will accentuate the nuances of Deaf culture and how this may influence the unique needs of a Deaf survivor of domestic violence.
* Training will include role playing scenarios so that each staff member can interact with a Deaf person, and experience their voicing, signing and animated gestures.
* HAVEN staff will feel more at ease, and better equipped to provide respectful, welcoming and accessible services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.
* HAVEN staff will understand the oppressiveness of the hearing community on the Deaf world.

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will monitor the work committee and ensure timeline for activity is on target.
* A pre and post training survey will be given to HAVEN staff to assess efficiency and validity of training.
* Work committee will make additions/changes to training according to survey feedback.

Systems Change to Promote Sustainability

* Deaf Culture training added to all future HAVEN new staff orientation and volunteer trainings.
* Ongoing Deaf Awareness training integrated into HAVEN bi monthly all staff trainings, resulting in ongoing systems change within the agency.
* HAVEN staff increases its knowledge of Deaf Culture resulting in improved service delivery to Deaf community

OVW Deliverables

* “Deaf Culture 101” training PowerPoint
* Pre and Post training survey
* Report to OVW any major changes to training or significant findings from feedback.

Initiative #2 - Activity #2

Provide Training to HAVEN Staff on Working with ASL Interpreters.

Needs Assessment Justification

HAVEN staff has little or no experience working with certified ASL Interpreters. They have very limited knowledge on when and how to procure a certified ASL Interpreter; the many facets of the Interpreter/client relationship; the basic ethical guidelines a certified ASL Interpreter adheres to; and the cost of certified Sign Language Interpreting services.

Action Items and Responsibility

Marcy Colton, Executive Director of DEAF C.A.N.! will lead this activity, and will recruit a work committee to review any existing training curriculum, both internally at DEAF C.A.N.! and from external resources such as the Vera Institute; DeafHope; ADWAS; and DVAS. This work committee will work in partnership with the collaborative to update and/or adapt any current training where appropriate. The newly developed training will be in PowerPoint format, and submitted to OVW for approval. After approval, the work committee will consult with members of the collaboration for training date selection(s) to present to HAVEN staff. The training will be presented by staff of DEAF C.A.N.! and Marika Blumerick of DWAS. Evaluation tools will be developed by the work committee to measure effectiveness of the training. This feedback will be reviewed, and the training will be revised accordingly.

Desired Outcomes

Ensure all HAVEN staff learns:

* When it is appropriate to procure a certified ASL Interpreter
* Where to secure certified Sign Language interpreting services
* How to secure certified Sign Language interpreting services
* What credentials are required to be a certified ASL Interpreter
* The ethical guidelines a certified ASL Interpreter must follow
* The role of the certified ASL Interpreter
* The dynamic of the certified ASL Interpreter/Deaf client relationship
* The fundamental difference between spoken/written English and American Sign Language
* That many concepts in spoken English are difficult to translate into American Sign Language
* To know that Interpreters have different skills depending on their training, background and experience.

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will monitor the work committee and ensure timeline for activity is on target.
* A pre and post training survey will be given to HAVEN staff to assess efficiency and validity of training.
* Work committee will make additions/changes to training according to survey feedback.

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* “Working with a Certified ASL Interpreter” training added to HAVEN new staff orientation and volunteer training
* DEAF C.A.N.! is HAVEN’s provider of certified Sign Language interpreting services, thus strengthening the relationship between both the staff of HAVEN and DEAF C.A.N.!, and the collaboration as an entity.
* Familiarity with certified Sign Language interpreting services results in increased knowledge of Deaf Culture, which ultimately results in improved service delivery to Deaf community.
* Step by step procedure for obtaining a certified ASL Interpreter is integrated into HAVEN program manuals and is reviewed and updated yearly.

OVW Deliverables

* “Working with a Certified ASL Interpreter” training PowerPoint
* Pre and Post training survey
* Report to OVW any major changes to training or significant findings from feedback.

Initiative #2 – Activity #3

Provide Training to DEAF C.A.N.! staff on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, including Safety Planning, and Lethality Assessment.

Needs Assessment Justification

The staff of DEAF C.A.N.! have not been trained on the dynamics and characteristics of domestic violence and sexual assault. DEAF C.A.N.! is the only comprehensive Deaf service agency in Oakland County, and therefore, it is imperative that staff is knowledgeable about domestic violence and sexual assault, and be prepared to consider the accompanying safety needs of victims in the Deaf community.

Action Items and Responsibility

Emily Matuszczak, Senior Director of Programs at HAVEN will lead this activity, and will recruit a work committee consisting of HAVEN DV/SA experts. This work committee will work in partnership with the collaborative to review existing internal and external training curriculum; to update and/or adapt any current training where appropriate; and to develop a “Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault ” training module for DEAF C.A.N.! staff. The newly developed training will be in PowerPoint format, and submitted to OVW for approval. After approval, the work committee will consult with members of the collaboration for training date selection(s) to present to DEAF C.A.N.! staff. The training will be presented by staff of HAVEN. Evaluation tools will be developed by the work committee to measure effectiveness of the training. This feedback will be reviewed, and the training will be revised accordingly.

Desired Outcomes

Ensure DEAF C.A.N.! staff learn:

* Definition of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
* Power and Control Tactics
* Who are the Victims
* Affects on Children
* Myths/Facts
  + Common signs indicating domestic violence
  + Common signs indicating sexual assault
* Who are the Perpetrators
* Batterer Behavior
* Concepts of Victim Blaming
* Barriers Victims Encounter
* Helpful Communication / Communication to Avoid
* How to Safety Plan
* Confidentiality
* How to Assess Lethality – What is High Risk?
* How to Apply for a Personal Protection Order (PPO)
* HAVEN’s Mission
* HAVEN’s Services
* Obtaining Services from HAVEN

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will monitor the work committee and ensure timeline for activity is on target.
* A pre and post training survey will be given DEAF C.A.N.! staff to assess efficiency and validity of training.
* Work committee will make additions/changes to training according to survey feedback

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* “Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault” training added to DEAF C.A.N.! new staff orientation and volunteer training.
* HAVEN is Oakland County’s provider of DV/SA services. The HAVEN staff training the DEAF C.A.N.! staff strengthens the relationship between both the staff of HAVEN and DEAF C.A.N.! and the collaboration as an entity.
* DEAF C.A.N.! staff familiarity with the concepts of DV/SA and HAVEN services increases knowledge of community needs, which ultimately results in improved service delivery to Deaf community
* DEAF C.A.N.! staff will be able to consider the safety needs of victims and reduce the chance of offering options to victims that may be blaming or cause further harm.
* DEAF C.A.N.! staff will be able to recognize victims that have immediate safety needs and connect them to HAVEN.

OVW Deliverables

* “Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault” training PowerPoint.
* Pre and Post training survey.
* Report to OVW any major changes to training or significant findings from feedback.

Initiative #2 – Activity #4

Increase knowledge of trauma informed response for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Needs Assessment Justification

Although the majority of HAVEN staff have vast knowledge and experience working with victims of domestic violence or sexual assault and the trauma experienced by victims, very few staff have ever attended training on providing trauma informed services. Moreover, staff of DEAF C.A.N.! and DWAS have very limited or no experience working with victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, and would benefit greatly from training on how to work with victims of trauma, and how to provide trauma informed services. All agencies could benefit in reviewing and developing procedures that take into account Deaf victims needs and presentations.

Action Items and Responsibility

Neither HAVEN nor DEAF C.A.N.! have a trauma informed expert on staff to conduct trauma informed (TI) systems change training, therefore the collaboration will need to research and identify trauma informed experts within Michigan, as well as outside the state. The project director, Christine Giresi, will be responsible for leading this initiative. A working committee will be formed to research possible TI experts for consultation. The committee will review and compare chosen TI experts and their training curriculum. The chosen TI expert will be vetted through OVW for expertise and curriculum approval. After approval, consultant fees and services will be negotiated and contracted, logistics will be planned, and the training will be delivered.

Desired Outcome

* Knowledge regarding trauma and the impact of trauma on domestic violence and sexual assault survivors will be incorporated into service delivery practices at collaborative agencies.
* Trauma informed practices will be used to supervise staff as programs are developed and cases are reviewed.
* The agencies will become aware of macro level policies and procedures that may harm or otherwise not consider victims needs and presentations.

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will monitor the work committee and ensure timeline for activity is on target.
* Project Director will manage relationship with trauma consultant.
* A pre and post training survey will be given to DEAF C.A.N.! and HAVEN staff to assess efficiency and validity of training.
* Project Director will report to OVW significant findings from survey feedback

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* HAVEN and DEAF C.A.N.! staff have not spent time together. Sharing this training experience will further bond the organizations, and strengthen the relationship between the two staffs.
* Trauma informed response will become the status quo for service delivery in collaborative agencies
* Trauma informed training symposiums will be incorporated into new employee and existing organizational trainings.
* Trauma informed learning’s will be incorporated into future strategic plans
* Trauma informed learning’s will be used by the PAH! collaborative to consult on cases to improve future services and staff trainings.

OVW Deliverables

* Chosen trauma expert and curriculum to be submitted for OVW approval.
* Pre and Post training survey
* Report to OVW any major changes to training or significant findings from feedback

INITIATIVE #3:

Improve Communication Access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Survivors

Five activities will fall within the parameters of Initiative #3. All activities are related to enhancing communication, increasing levels of understanding, and removing communication barriers. For **Activity #1**, the collaborative will hire a consultant who is an expert in communication access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, to develop a communication access review tool to assess communication accessibility, and create an accompanying communication barrier removal plan.

The communication expert will also be consulted in regards to **Activity #2,** which is to research the latest available technological equipment and create a current, state-of-the-art communication access kit for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

**Activity #3** focuses on communication between interpreters and domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. The collaborative will partner with the Michigan ASL Interpreter Training Association to conduct ASL interpreter training on appropriate domestic violence and sexual assault ‘signs’, as well as the intricacies of working with a Deaf domestic violence and/or sexual assault survivor. This training will be derived from the Vera Institute sponsored ASL interpreter training module, conducted in Rhode Island in 2010. **Activity #4** is to (a) produce culturally relevant videos in ASL and closed captioning to give Deaf survivors an overview of HAVEN’s shelter and services, and information regarding domestic violence, sexual assault and safety planning; and (b) produce a residential intake DVD to assist Deaf survivors in understanding the residential intake process, rules and regulations, and resident expectations of the HAVEN shelter. **Activity #5** isto enhance the collaborative agency websites to ensure accessibility to all people with disabilities.

Initiative #3 – Activity #1 Conduct a Communication Access Review

Needs Assessment Justification

After speaking with Deaf participants and the staff of both HAVEN and DEAF C.A.N.! the primary barrier to service accessibility is the inability to effectively communicate. This difficulty with communication often results in feelings of isolation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

Action Items and Responsibility

The project director will be leading this initiative, and a communications access review team work group will be assembled. In addition, a Deaf and Hard of Hearing communication expert, will be hired as a paid consultant to assist the collaborative in this initiative.

Before conducting a communication access review of HAVEN’s Shelter, a communication access review tool must be created. The work group will be tasked with benchmarking existing communication review tools from past OVW disability grant programs. After reviewing this information, the hired consultant, along with the work group and members of the collaborative, will create the PAH! communication access review tool. The project director will then submit the review tool to OVW for approval. Upon approval, the communications access review team will be trained on how to conduct the communication access review. The review will be conducted at HAVEN’s administrative and residential locations, and the results will provide the foundation of the collaborative communication barrier removal plan. The review access team, in conjunction with collaborative members, and with direction from expert consultant, will compile the communication barrier removal plan. The implementation of the barrier removal plan will not fall within the parameters of this grant period, and will be considered a long term initiative.

Desired Outcomes

* Communication access review tool is developed
* Members of the collaborative and the communication work group are trained on identifying and addressing communication barriers
* A thorough and effective communication access review is conducted to identify and address communication barriers at HAVEN administrative and residential facilities.

Management and Assessment

Project Director will:

* Monitor the work committee and ensure timeline for activity is on target
* Initiate and finalize consultant involvement, and act as liaison between consultant and collaborative/work group
* Report to OVW any significant findings from communication access review

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* The communication access work group will consist of staff members from DEAF C.A.N.! and HAVEN, thus strengthening the relationship between the two agencies.
* Gaining knowledge in regards to communication barriers effecting Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors will raise awareness among HAVEN staff, and will promote further communication between staff of both agencies.
* Yearly communication access review will result in improved service deliver to Deaf and Hard of Hearing community members.
* Findings of the access review can be incorporated into grant searches and requests.
* A yearly communication barrier removal plan will be developed and updated, which will address communication barriers found in administrative and residential agency locations.

OVW Deliverables

* Proposal of Expert Consultant
* Communication Access Review Tool
* “Identifying and Addressing Communication Barriers” Training PowerPoint
* Communication Barrier Removal Plan

Initiative #3 - Activity #2 Create a communication access kit for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

Needs Assessment Justification

From the Needs Assessment, the collaborative learned the TTY (teletypewriter) is an outdated technology. Furthermore, there have been a number of technological advances in the area of mobile communication devices that need to be adopted by the agencies to better serve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. HAVEN staff would also benefit from the creation of communication tools to aid them in removing barriers to communication.

Action Items and Responsibility

This activity will be lead by Marcy Colton and Marika Blumerick, with the help of the communication expert consultant. Marcy and Marika will put together a work group, who will then consult with the communication expert in regards to the best suited equipment for the access kit. The chosen assistive communication devices will be purchased and the kit will be developed. The kit will include the purpose of each device and instructions on use. The group will also need to decide which agency staff members will be trained to use the equipment, how the training will be conducted, and build procedures for use of the equipment based upon safety. A yearly kit maintenance checklist will need to be developed, as well as a policy for updating the kits based on advances in technology.

Desired Outcomes

* Access kit is complete and covers all communication access needs for a Deaf or Hard of Hearing client that will be obtaining services from the collaborative.
* Staff understands the importance of technology and its value to Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.
* Staff training is comprehensive and staff is adept at the use of the equipment in the kit including yearly review and training on equipment use.
* Procedures for use and maintenance of equipment are in print, clear and concise, and based on client safety and confidentiality.

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will monitor the work committee and ensure timeline and budget for activity is on target.
* The work committee, with the input of the communication consultant, will ensure equipment is user friendly, cost effective and is considerate of client safety.
* Refresher training on use of equipment will be offered bi-annually to staff.
* A survey will be given to clients who use the communication access kit to measure equipment efficiency and viability.

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* Heightened awareness of communication access devices available to Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients promotes increased knowledge and improved service delivery.
* Collaborative agency staff working together to design the kit, and the sharing of knowledge of communication access devices between agencies will further support and strengthen the collaborative relationship.
* Availability of communication access devices removes communication barriers for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients
* Staff will be provided training on communication access devices

OVW Deliverables

* List of Access Kit devices and accompanying budget

Initiative #3 – Activity #3 Conduct ASL Interpreter training on appropriate domestic violence and sexual assault ‘signs’, as well as the intricacies of working with a Deaf domestic violence and/or sexual assault survivor.

Needs Assessment Justification

According to Needs Assessment findings, certified ASL Interpreters want and need training on the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault; what to expect when interpreting for Deaf victims; and which ASL signs to utilize for common domestic violence and sexual assault terms and phrases.

Action Items and Responsibility

This activity will be lead by Marcy Colton and Marika Blumerick. A work committee will be formed, and will partner with the Michigan ASLTA (American Sign Language/Teacher’s Association) to determine a curriculum and recruit presenters. ASLTA will partner with the collaboration to co-sponsor the training. The presenters and curriculum will be submitted to OVW for approval. After approval is granted, logistics will be coordinated and the training will be marketed to potential participants. The training will be conducted, and feedback will be collected at the end of the training.

Desired Outcomes

* A thorough training curriculum is developed based on the Vera Institute of Justice’s ASL training symposium held in Rhode Island in 2010.
* Sponsor a workshop for ASL Interpreters in cooperation with ASLTA to establish a strong language base for Interpreters working in the field of DV/SA.
* ASL Interpreters throughout Michigan attend the training to become knowledgeable and aware of the intricacies of interpreting for domestic violence and sexual assault victims.
* An increased number of DV/SA trained ASL Interpreters will be available to effectively and accurately interpret for Deaf victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in the state of Michigan.
* Standardized ASL signs will be utilized based on ASLTA’s recommendations
* Increased sensitivity by ASL Interpreters towards victims of DV/SA.

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will monitor the work committee and ensure timeline and budget for activity is on target.
* Marcy Colton and Marika Blumerick will manage the co-sponsorship relationship with ASLTA.
* A post training evaluation will be given to all participants to measure efficiency and validity of training.

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* Raising awareness of DV/SA in the certified ASL interpreter community will further support service accessibility for Deaf DV/SA victims.
* Co-sponsorship between the collaborative and the ASLTA provides a platform to promote the mission and vision of the collaboration, potential long term collaboration involvement from ASLTA, and volunteer opportunities to the certified ASL Interpreter community.

OVW Deliverables

* Curriculum and presenters for training
* Budget for training
* Participant recruitment marketing email
* Feedback survey

Initiative #3 – Activity #4(a) produce culturally relevant videos in ASL and closed captioning to give Deaf survivors an overview of HAVEN’s shelter and services, and information regarding domestic violence, sexual assault and safety planning.

Needs Assessment Justification

Many Deaf survivors rely on technology for access to services. By ensuring information is clearly presented in ASL and closed captioning communicates that the collaborative agencies are Deaf friendly and committed to serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

Action Items and Responsibility

The project director will take lead on this activity and compile a work committee. Research will be done on existing online video products that may exist at other Deaf friendly DV/SA agencies. Based on existing product content, and with input from the work committee, the content of the videos will be developed. The modality of the delivery of the content will be chosen by the work committee. The work committee will research and choose a production company to film, edit and produce the videos. The content and modality will be submitted to OVW for review and approval. After approval, the film date will be set. After filming, the videos will be edited, posted on collaborative agency websites, and DVD copies of the finished products will be located at all three collaborative agencies.

Desired Outcome

* Develop a clear and concise, cost effective visual aid to help Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims understand:
  + HAVEN services and how to obtain HAVEN services.
  + The basic tenets of domestic violence and sexual assault
  + How to safety plan

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will lead the work committee and ensure timeline and budget for activity is on target.
* Certified ASL Interpreters and Deaf work committee members will assess for accuracy of content interpretation.
* HAVEN’s services exit survey will include questions regarding the efficacy of the website for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* Creating products that aid in removing communication barriers promotes a welcoming environment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims, supporting the vision and mission of the collaborative.
* Deaf community and agency staff involvement in production will raise awareness of the collaborative, and symbolize the commitment of the agencies to the collaborative mission.

OVW Deliverables

* Film Budget
* Video content and modality of content presentation
* Finished video’s

Initiative #3 – Activity #4(b) Produce a residential intake DVD to assist Deaf survivors in understanding the residential intake process, rules and regulations, and resident expectations of the HAVEN shelter.

Needs Assessment Justification

The intake process at HAVEN’s residential shelter can be confusing and difficult to understand for someone who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. If a client is waiting for an interpreter to arrive at shelter, writing back and forth and lip reading are not acceptable forms of communication since 1) most Deaf have only a fourth grade reading level and 2) lip reading is at most 30% accurate. After speaking with Deaf and Hard of Hearing community members and survivors, it was apparent that developing a very simple DVD in ASL with closed captioning would be a very helpful tool in explaining the shelter intake process.

Action Items and Responsibility

The project director will take lead on this activity and compile a work committee. Research will be done on existing DVD products that may exist at other Deaf friendly DV/SA agencies. Based on existing product content, and with input from the work committee, the content of the DVD will be developed. The modality of the delivery of the content will be chosen by the work committee. The work committee will research and choose a production company to film, edit and produce the DVD. The content and modality will be submitted to OVW for review and approval. After approval, the film date will be set. After filming, the DVD will be edited, and copies of the finished product will be located at all three collaborative agencies.

Desired Outcome

* Develop a clear and concise, cost effective visual aid to help Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims understand the residential intake process, rules and regulations, and resident expectations of the HAVEN shelter.

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will lead the work committee and ensure timeline and budget for activity is on target.
* Certified ASL Interpreters and Deaf work committee members will assess for accuracy of content interpretation.
* HAVEN’s residential services exit survey will include questions regarding the efficacy of the DVD for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* Creating products that aid in removing communication barriers promotes a welcoming environment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims, supporting the vision and mission of the collaborative.
* Deaf community and agency staff involvement in production will raise awareness of the collaborative, and symbolize the commitment of the agencies to the collaborative mission.

OVW Deliverables

* Film Budget
* DVD content and modality of content presentation
* Finished DVD product

Initiative #3 - Activity #5isto provide basic information in ASL on websites regarding agency services, to ensure accessibility to Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors seeking DV/SA services.

Needs Assessment Justification

Having a website that is accessible for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community will increase the level of comfort and create a welcoming environment for those who are seeking DV/SA services. Furthermore, by ensuring information is clearly presented in ASL and closed captioning communicates that the collaborative agencies are Deaf friendly and committed to serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

Action Items and Responsibility

The project director will take lead on this activity and compile a work committee. Research will be done on existing website products that may exist at other Deaf friendly DV/SA agencies. Based on existing product content, and with input from the work committee, the outline of the enhanced website will be developed. Campbell-Ewald, the company that developed and currently manages the HAVEN website, will be contracted to create the additional links required to enhance the HAVEN and DEAFCAN! websites. The videos developed in Activity #3 will be included in these enhancements. The enhanced website outline and content will be submitted to OVW for review and approval. After approval, the content will be loaded onto the websites.

Desired Outcome

* The development of an accessible, web based informational resource for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.
* To communicate the DV/SA services available to survivors who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in a clear and safe manner.

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will lead the work committee and ensure timeline and budget for activity is on target.
* Certified ASL Interpreters and Deaf work committee members will assess for accuracy of content interpretation.
* HAVEN’s residential and non residential services exit survey will include questions regarding the efficacy of the website for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

Systems Change to Promote Sustainability

* Creating products that aid in removing communication barriers promotes a welcoming environment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims, supporting the vision and mission of the collaborative.
* Deaf community and agency staff involvement in production will raise awareness of the collaborative, and symbolize the commitment of the agencies to the collaborative mission.

OVW Deliverables

* Budget for web enhancements
* Website outline and content

INITIATIVE #4: Develop a long term plan to enhance and sustain the PAH! Collaboration

The PAH! collaborative was made possible through a three year, OVW process grant. PAH! was created in 2008 with a vision and mission to create accessible and responsive services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of DV/SA. The grant has provided the three agencies of the collaboration an opportunity to nurture a relationship based on trust and professional accountability. In February of 2012, this grant will conclude, and the collaborative will need a course of action to sustain itself beyond this three year grant period.

Needs Assessment Justification

All agencies in the collaborative are dedicated to creating systemic change within their organizations to better serve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community affected by DV/SA. Each agency understands and supports the need to institutionalize the changes being made, and to continue fostering the relationship between the agencies as a whole. Communication between agencies needs to remain open and direct for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and expertise. Sustainability is required for the collaborative to continue to build the hearing ally foundation, and to provide respectful, welcoming and accessible services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors of DV/SA.

Action Items and Responsibility

The Collaboration will continue to meet weekly to report status on strategic initiatives and activities, and to discuss long term collaboration sustainability plans. Working committees will be developed with staff and volunteers from collaborative agencies to ensure continued commitment to the strategic plan of the collaborative. The work committees will meet weekly until initiatives and activities have been completed.

For long term sustainability, MOU’s will be developed to outline continued future commitment from collaboration agencies; resource and information sharing; and the mutual effort to seek and apply for future funding.

Desired Outcomes

* The relationship that has been fostered between the three agencies is sustained and continues well beyond the three year grant period.
* Initiatives of the strategic plan are completed.
* MOU outlining future commitment of collaborative agencies, including cross collaborative resource and information sharing and the mutual effort to seek and apply for future funding

Management and Assessment

* Project Director will monitor the work and ensure the timeline is on target.
* Weekly initiative work committee meetings will ensure the progress of initiative activities are being monitored and evaluated
* The MOU will make certain procedures be developed for cross collaborative resource and information sharing, as well as seeking and applying for future funding.

Systems Change to promote Sustainability

* The collaborative MOU will document the expectations and commitment of the collaboration agencies. The MOU should include quarterly collaborative review meetings to maintain and evaluate the collaborative relationship between the agencies.
* MOU represents a professional agreement and holds accountable each agency responsible for sustaining the collaborative relationship.

OVW Deliverables

* MOU will be sent to OVW for approval
* Collaborative will report to OVW any significant changes or outcomes.

**Overview of Potential Long Term Initiatives**

PAH!’s short term initiatives are designed to strengthen the relationship between the collaborative agencies, with staff and volunteers of each agency becoming involved in and committed to the completion of initiative activities. The PAH! collaborative has discussed and identified a number of potential long term initiatives to support the mission and vision of the collaborative and sustain the systems changes set forth in the short term initiatives.

1. Review and edit agency materials, including websites and informational literature, and revise in universal ‘simple language’.

Although this is a very high priority to the collaborative, unfortunately, this initiative cannot be completed within the timeframe of this grant. This initiative requires the assistance of a language expert in reviewing and editing all collaborative agency materials to ensure simple language is utilized and materials are easily understood. This initiative is extensive and costly in terms of staff hours, expert fees, and reproduction of print media and materials, and will require collaborative research on funding resources.

1. Share learnings with other Deaf and DV/SA agencies in Michigan

The collaboration believes this process has benefitted all members, and the “lessons learned” are invaluable. Sharings these learnings and promoting the accomplishments of the collaboration raises awareness regarding the relationship between HAVEN, DEAF C.A.N.! and DWAS, and the ‘hearing ally’ partnership. The collaborative would like to develop a PAH! informational presentation, visit other Deaf and DV/SA agencies to promote the philosophy of PAH!, and recruit additional collaborative members.

1. Provide outreach to raise awareness in the Deaf community regarding Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and the services available in Southeast Michigan*.*

The Needs Assessment revealed that the Deaf community has limited knowledge regarding what defines domestic violence and sexual assault, and the DV/SA services available to victims. A first step may mirror the battered women’s movement – educational messaging that shows how emotional, verbal and physical abuse is wrong, and help is available. PAH! branded educational marketing pieces such as posters and fact sheets could be strategically placed and distributed at Deaf special events and locations where Deaf clubs and Deaf social events take place.

1. Develop and distribute a pictorial book for Deaf and Hard of Hearing community that explains Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

The Needs Assessment provided the collaborative with important information pertaining to the knowledge of the community regarding Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. In reality, the majority of the Deaf community knows very little about DV and SA. This includes root causes, victimization, and even an understanding of the basic vocabulary associated with DV and SA. PAH! would like to develop a very simple book with highly graphic drawings explaining DV/SA through the use of pictorials. These pictorials would allow individuals, even those functionally illiterate, to understand what DV/SA is all about and what can be done to stop it.

**Conclusion**

The PAH! collaborative is seeking to make participating agencies more comfortable, accessible, and responsive to Deaf survivors.   The Needs Assessment report provided a clear representation of the strengths and weaknesses existing within each collaborative agency when serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. The compiled results serve as support in the development of the Strategic Plan short and long term initiatives discussed in this report. This data enabled the collaboration to chart a realistic and manageable course for the implementation phase of this grant.

The collaborative members, the staff of both HAVEN and DEAF C.A.N.! and volunteers of DWAS are committed to developing culturally competent services for the Deaf community. The collaborative is looking forward to enhancing their services for this community, and putting into practice the systems changes necessary to successfully complete this strategic plan.