Agency Profile

The Domestic Violence Action Center is dedicated to alleviating the problem of domestic abuse in Hawaii. We are the only agency in the State that accepts large numbers of high risk divorce, temporary restraining order, post-decree and paternity cases. We are also the only agency in the community with a full complement of services to assist as a victim navigates the system and moves her (his) life to freedom and self-sufficiency. With advocates accompanying victims to court, seeking financial support, pursuing educational goals, obtaining child support, or maneuvering the military, medical or mental health systems a victim is empowered and closer to safety if she is working with one of our programs.

Domestic Violence Action Center was founded in 1990 and incorporated in 1991. With two staff in the beginning, we are now fully staffed at 52. Training and education, technical assistance and community building, direct services and public awareness are among the commitments the agency makes to the people of Hawaii.

The Domestic Violence Action Center staff is deeply involved at the community level and participates in working committees coordinated by government agencies such as the Department of the Attorney General, The Department of Education and The First Judicial Circuit. We also work collaboratively with local associations and agencies including The Hawaii State Bar Association, The Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and The Hawaii Association of Non-Profit Organizations.

Our work has become known across the country and our management staff participates frequently in initiatives related to post-traumatic stress disorder, needs of multi-ethnic communities, family practice issues, and cutting edge challenges facing domestic violence programs and survivors.

The agency has three departments overseeing direct services, specialized programs and administration. We provide outreach in civil and criminal court, accept referrals from many community programs and public agencies, and seek opportunities to let the community become better acquainted with our special services provided by expert staff intimately trained on the needs and challenges facing victims of abuse. Our target population are youth, immigrants, adult survivors and families in the child welfare system.

The cost for our legal services is based on a sliding fee scale with hourly costs assessed for those in a higher income bracket. Training and technical assistance is also fee based while court outreach is available to every victim seeking court protection or appearing as a witness in a criminal case.

Client advocacy, crisis support, safety planning, risk assessments, representation in court, education in the classroom and participation in community efforts to become more responsive to the needs of victims are the areas of the agency’s expertise.

Our Mission Statement

The Domestic Violence Action Center is committed to ending domestic violence and other forms of abuse through leadership, prevention, legal services, individual and systemic advocacy and social change work. We believe all persons should be treated with equality, dignity and fairness. With high quality and culturally sensitive programs, delivered with integrity and compassion we are creating safety and self-sufficiency for survivors and their children.
It has been a year in motion. Our experience was that the planet, our programs and many people were shifting. Accelerated change defines our retrospective view. As for many in the community and across the globe, the only thing constant at Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC)—was change.

New programs, new people, new dimension, shifting perceptions and farewells characterized 2014. That has been our reality in 2014. Occurring at once, it can feel a bit destabilizing. But with perspective, earnest reflection and the ability to lean in, learn and adjust, we grow stronger, wiser and more versatile.

There remain so many ways to serve and so many lessons to learn about the best ways to bring peace to our island families. We could not have accomplished as much as we did, without the continued cooperation and engagement of staff, volunteers, Board members, community leaders, partners and allies.

The complexity of domestic violence and the competing community needs press upon us. It is essential that we work with others and keep asserting our belief that safe families are at the core of a healthy community.

We embrace the responsibility for advancing the dialogue. The non-negotiable fact is that families suffer when we turn away. This reality seeks our attention every day. As we do every year, we urge you to join us. Take one step closer. The way forward is enriched by your presence and our unwavering commitments.
### Fiscal Year 2014 Revenue / Expenses

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- Changes in Net Assets: $181,665.46
- Net Assets at Beginning of Year: $2,652,806.33
- Net Assets at End of Year: $2,834,471.79
Economics of Delivering Program Services

The Domestic Violence Action Center worked throughout this year to maintain our core, unduplicated program services. Funding for agency programs has shifted over the last 5 years; we have been re-building a vital, sustainable organization by employing varied strategies. We have stretched support, increased the diversity of our revenue stream, and worked to stabilize core services in the face of the changing tides. It may seem like a long time ago, but the impact of changes resulting from budget cuts in 2009 created challenges to the way we work. Seeking funding, of course, is time consuming. Meeting the different requirements of different funding sources has its trials. Staffing for administrative functions is supported minimally, and, at best, at different levels by funders. Managing staff competences, honoring agency philosophy, upholding organizational integrity and meeting community demand are incumbent upon us as we work to balance opportunity with challenge; recognizing limitations and welcoming the tests is also a delicate balance to achieve. Earnest reflection, honest dialogue and the capacity to modify experiments that are inherent in the life of every not for profit agency was woven into our work in 2014. In addition, as our understanding of the complex journey to safety deepens, and the myriad of barriers on this journey are amplified, DVAC continued to broaden its array of programs. When we reached greater stability, after the initial retrenchment in 2009, we re-built some of what was lost, and what is certainly needed. Direct services and community services are essential for any real, meaningful change to occur for women, children, men, families and community.

We have expanded our pursuits to develop new program services and new partnerships. Engaging and mobilizing the community is a new cost – with the promise of great results. Collaborating with partners beyond the justice system – where many families prefer not to seek help – is an important endeavor. Designing new programs with special emphasis enables us to meet community needs not typically met through mainstream approaches.
Survivors of intimate partner violence and their children served by DVAC have the benefit of assistance over the telephone, in person, on site at court, in the courtroom and at other community resources (police, child support, schools, substance abuse testing, etc). Attorneys on staff opened three hundred and eighteen cases (318) and closed another two hundred and ninety five (295). Agency staff attorneys made 499 appearances in court for clients of DVAC. For those survivors seeking protection by Family Court in a restraining order or protection order matter, they are met by EXPO staff, a program of DVAC, to receive support with safety planning, understanding of the court procedures, what to consider in crafting their requests for protection (how to shape visitation, for example), and be accompanied in the hearing where the abuser is present or close by. Outreach to survivors by EXPO advocates in the restraining order process totaled 1,495; EXPO advocates completed 1,424 safety plans with clients. Advocacy staff opened 346 cases and closed 278 cases. 14,711 client contacts by direct services staff (case load/court/outreach programs & helpline) Brief services and counsel was added to the menu of available program services; there are survivors on the agency advocacy caseload that, it was determined, could benefit from an appointment and assistance with court paperwork by an agency licensed attorney. 31 survivors received this brief service during FY 2014. This service was offered when it wasn’t possible to accept a client for full representation.

DVAC has, for 10 years had, bi-lingual and bi-cultural staff to better meet the needs of survivors who are more comfortable, better matched and feel more supported by someone who speaks their language and mirrors their cultural identity. Support groups were offered monthly, throughout this year as in previous years, by the DVAC Japanese advocate. In addition, DVAC was assessed for its feasibility and selected to receive referrals from the Japanese Consulate; the agency entered into an agreement with the Consulate to receive direct referrals of Japanese nationals in need of support, safety planning and community navigation. This capacity was enhanced in 2014 by the award of a grant from Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Family – Family & Youth Services Bureau, Family Violence Prevention Services Program. Ho’oikaika ‘Ohana was conceived to meet the needs of native Hawaiian families who have moved beyond the crisis stage of decision-making and danger. With the assistance of cultural navigators, content experts, and community allies who met twice a month, and the completion of a Lolohe Tour (listening tour), a nine month program will be available to reinforce healing for the survivor and her ohana. With the insights and ideas shared by survivors, kumu and community members contributed ideas to facilitate the development of the new program model. Features of the program are rooted in cultural practice and honor the needs of families to remain safe, whole and sufficiently connected to their cultural identity. DVAC continues its work with Filipino families, begun originally with the agency’s program (Pilipina Rural Program) devoted to developing awareness within the Filipino community and in service to Filipina families with bi-lingual and bi-cultural advocates. These staff positions are now integrated into the agency staffing pattern. This year also saw the beginning of Pulama I Ka Ohana, a program designed and dedicated to meeting the needs of families in the child welfare system suffering the harm of child abuse and partner abuse. DVAC is serving families in Central Oahu and Leeward Oahu referred by child protective services staff, family strengthening programs and voluntary case management programs. Hiring, training, supervising, anchoring program services, and remaining flexible are exciting and daunting. The program is a longtime dream for the community; services for survivors who are enmeshed in the child welfare system has been a gap. One hundred and thirty eight survivors received services from this program; 196 children did, also. Staff in this program made 299 accompaniments last year with their clients. There were 11 successful closed cases. Which means that all efforts, goals and system expectations were fully met. Cases in the child welfare system often remain open for many months.

The Teen Alert advocate was busy this year serving young victims of dating abuse. The outreach education in schools and youth serving organizations, not infrequently, results in inquiries by youth or referrals for help. The caseload of our Teen Advocate has been steadily growing. This year, TAP advocate opened 96 cases and closed 93 cases.
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Community Organizing, Community Awareness, and Community Outreach

Long ago we reckoned our organization’s dedication to addressing domestic violence with a dual approach: serving survivors and engaging the community. Domestic violence impacts all communities throughout Hawaii. With this recognition comes the opportunity and the mandate to inspire our communities to work with us in addressing the problems facing island families: their families; their neighbors; their coworkers; the parents of their children’s friend; their fellow congregants.

DVAC has a history of focusing on the needs of victims through direct services and a deep commitment to help create an educated, responsive community. Broadcast and print materials are available, invitations for television appearances and airing of public service announcements are enduring, documentaries have been produced, newspaper columns and letters to the editor have been published. And, still, we are ramping it up.

Parades, marches, sign-waving, artwork, community fairs, booths, photography exhibits, and banners have been designed, facilitated and coordinated by DVAC. Some of the work was conceived and carried out by the Consortium for Health Safety & Support program partners working within Filipina and Native Hawaiian communities on the leeward side of Oahu; some of the work has been guided by our agency’s teen program and other aspects of the work have been under the general auspices of DVAC. With federal funds, uniforms were purchased for athletic teams in Nanakuli, Healthy and Hapai sessions for young and first-time parents were hosted, scholarships were provided for mid-career survivors of abuse, and theatre, was written by community members for performances. DVAC worked to facilitate Making Media that Matters and a Reel Camp for girls to advance opportunities for production of meaningful films that convey messages about the lives of girls and women.

The Consortium for Health Safety and Support provided community and grass roots organizations with support as they addressed issues such as anti-trafficking, childhood obesity, and support for young expectant mothers and fathers. Community members led the way in addressing the impact of intimate partner violence on the health of Native Hawaiian and Filipino women and girls by joining in “talkstory” community dialogues. Diverse community members such as pastors, canoe paddlers, hula halau members, and survivors as well as perpetrators of battering participated in talkstories and community created events. Talkstory groups became the vehicle for community members to explore culturally relevant responses and solutions for interrupting or stopping intimate partner violence in their personal lives, neighborhoods, work places, churches and other community venues.

The Vice President of the Community Organizing and Education Department provided training and consultation to child abuse prevention specialists in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya.
Anatomy of a Survivor’s Journey,

Funded with private dollars, enabled former clients and students at Kamehameha Schools to capture and narrate images about their personal experiences and gender messages. The exhibit was designed as a travelling show, unveiled at The ART at Mark’s Garage and used to help celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Consuelo Foundation.

“DVAC has a history of focusing on the needs of victims through direct services and a deep commitment to help create an educated, responsive community.”

Speaker’s Bureau

This year our Speaker’s Bureau was resurrected to help respond to the need for our community to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. It is understood by us that the best teacher is the person who can share her lived experience. Our Vice President of Community Organizing and Education facilitated a “training” to support the participants in shaping their story in a way that is comfortable to share and illustrative. With the many survivors we have in our lives, our challenge is to make their participation easy and satisfying.

Domestic Violence Action Center participates every year in Domestic Violence Awareness Month and this year was no different. Events on the calendar were coordinated by grassroots organizations and individual community members occurred island wide, on the leeward coast, in town, on campuses and in the media. DVAC coordinated the island wide focus on domestic violence which resulted in the successful completion of 27 events with over 6,488 people participating. Sermons were given at island churches, activities were planned at community high schools, training was conducted and the Clothesline, survivor Quilt and photography exhibit were on display 7 times throughout the month.

A regular eblast was disseminated throughout the year, featuring issues of interest and content relevance. With 2,100 on our mailing list and a fairly loyal “open” rate, we are uplifted by the belief that our work is valued by our community. We put Facebook to good use as well; posting pertinent articles, events and agency accomplishments so our friends in Hawaii, on the continent and across the globe can follow us. We produced a new television commercial this year, that will be aired in the upcoming year, after advertising costs are more reasonable (post election!).

Staff and agency leadership continued their participation in community efforts to strengthen the system making it more responsive to the needs of survivors. We were participants in the VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) Planning Committee work, and served on a Working Group of the VAWA convened by Attorney General, David Louie. We work with the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and serve on the Board of Directors. We have a place on the Boards of PHOCUSED and the Hawaii Women In Filmmaking. DVAC provided consultation to the Honolulu Police Department pertaining to department wide training, and officer involved domestic violence.

Our work in partnership with Queen’s Medical Center continues, with Hui meetings convened to initiate and institute policy, provide training for practitioners and develop materials for distribution to patients throughout the hospital system. We participated in a site visit from the Project Connect trainers (Futures without Violence) and travelled to San Francisco and Washington DC to gather with allies in the work of making our health care sector more responsive to patients suffering the harm of abuse. In Hawaii, we translated the standard safety card into 5 languages (Chuukese, Hawaiian, Tagalog, Chinese, and Japanese).

Ho’oikaika ‘Ohana (Strengthen the Family) successfully endeavored to work closely with the Hawaiian community. The funding received for Phase 1 of this grant award supported the convening of a Hui and efforts to engage community allies. Staff created forums for discussion and elicited input from Hawaiian Civic Clubs, Kupuna, native Hawaiian survivors and other community allies to align program design with community need and expressed community interest, to the greatest extent possible.
Agency work also focused on organizational stability, staff changes, and effective management.

New space was rented for one of the two new programs begun in FY 2014. Moving into new space is no small feat. And starting a new program is bigger than that! We recruited and hired many new staff during the year, due to life changes (career opportunities) and changing circumstances (preschool tuition costs)...as the world turns.

After recovering, in large part, from the significant loss of program funds in 2009, DVAC was able to re-organize its organizational functioning with the re-development of two departments to carry out our work. Direct services and community services had been collapsed into one department, and this year we were able to build two separate departments to strengthen focus, program services and alleviate staff burdens. The Department of Survivor Advocacy Services is the home to Helpline, Ho'oiaka ‘Ohana, PIKO and EXPO on site court outreach, legal services, and advocacy support; total number of staff in that department is 28. The Community Organizing and Education department encompasses the organization’s focus on community engagement, public awareness, training and outreach partnerships. Training, Speakers Bureau, outreach and community consultation is undertaken by this department’s hard-working, effective staff.

DVAC ran out of space this year. And with plans to remain anchored for servant leadership in the next decade, the decision was made to pursue acquisition of additional office space. With grants received from the legislature and the City and County of Honolulu, plans took shape to expand facility ownership and consequently, program stability.

During FY 2014, the agency’s Board of Directors adopted the Strategic Plan governing organization direction through 2016. Board Committees are active and Board recruitment is ongoing. Many hands make light work. The Board Development Committee met in retreat to evaluate work completed and plan a vision for the continued efforts to shift the balance from an organizational overreliance on government dollars to broad community support. A Development Plan was written and directs work moving forward. Succession planning is a point of focus, as the management team is comprised of executives who have served the community and been employed with the agency for more than 15 years (we are old now!). An Emergency Succession Plan was designed and adopted by the Board and is in place to be implemented, in the event of an emergency involving the agency’s CEO.

Agency staff participated in 332 trainings which totaled 1,408 hours of training. It is essential that Domestic Violence Action Center maintains a sharp and sophisticated focus on substantive issues impacting our target constituency, analysis of the political factors contributing to the perpetuation of violence in families, not for profit sector issues, best practices in courts and community and management functioning. As the experts in our community, sought after by many for our experience and enduring dedication it is imperative that we remain on the cutting edge…where we have always been.

Work began during this year to plan for the celebration of the agency’s 25th Anniversary in 2015. This is a milestone that speaks volumes about Hawai'i’s recognition that domestic violence is a problem of grave and costly consequence. The Anniversary represents an opportunity to sustain and elevate the community discourse and the community understanding of domestic violence.

When DVAC began its work, research efforts, data analysis and system wide involvement was undeveloped. This milestone for DVAC is about the accomplishments we have all made, and the recognition that a singular focus on the impact of violence in island families impacts all of us. More work must be done. We are not there yet. We move steadily in a positive direction, engaging more sectors in our communities, and establishing the undeniable fact that safe families are at the core of a healthy community. The costs of ignoring this fact will haunt us far into the future. DVAC has an enduring commitment and serves as an anchor for community engagement increasingly being demonstrated by health care, faith based institutions, educators, businesses, law enforcement, courts, civic groups, elected leaders, and citizens that this work must be done.

Supporters
The support we receive from foundations, public agencies, community organizations, student groups and individuals is incredibly uplifting. We are in this together. There is no other way to move as far as we have, without all of you. Someone you know, someone we know, has been impacted by domestic violence. That fact inspires action, interest and support. Verizon Wireless, Soroptimist International, Hawaii Women’s Legal Foundation, S & K Sales, HMSA, HGEA, Servco Pacific, Kalaeloa Partners, LP, Bronster Hoshibata, Pacific Solutions, Omidyar Ohana Fund, Foodland, Combined Federal Campaign, Aloha United Way have all chosen to support our important work this year, as they have in years past.

DVAC endeavors, always, to reach farther out and engage new allies for support. Sustaining the confidence of existing supporters and expanding this base demands effort and takes time…..both of which we are fully committed to.

We cannot do this alone. And it cannot be done without the Domestic Violence Action Center.
A sampling of the trainings, seminars, webinars and events our staff attended.

SOH: Safe Places for Youth Mini Conference • Power of our Stories: Conference on Culture: A Participatory Conference on Culture • HEC: Building Employee Performance/Addressing Misconduct • HI Youth Services: How to Connect with Youth in a Real Way • OYS: Why Try: Surrendering the One-Up Relationship • PBN: Non-Profit Seminar • Telecon: Trauma Informed representation of Intimate Partner violence survivors • Trauma Informed Legal Advocacy with Survivors of IPV • Telecon: Dr. Chris Downs: LGBTQ Youth Training Course • The Nonprofit Facebook: Giftworks Seven Powerful Ways to Build your Email List w/FB • American Red Cross - First Aid/CPR Training • Domestic Violence Courts (Battered Women Justice Project) • American Red Cross - First Aid/CPR Adult & Pediatric • SHRM: HR Workshop • SHRM/AARP: The Healthcare Law, SS, Medicare • DVAC (Stina): ACES Trauma Training • American Red Cross - First Aid/CPR Training • HEC: Connecting to the Hawaii Health Connector • Ofc on Women’s Health: A Public Health Response to Trauma: creating conditions, connection • OWH: A Public Health Response to Trauma: Creating Conditions, Connection & Community • Praxis International Affinity Discussion on Shelter Rules • Praxis Int’l Adv Learning Ctr: Telecon: Affinity Discussion on Shelter Rules • Tahirh Justice Center - Strategy for Safe Relocation • SHRM: HR Workshop • VLSH: Juvenile Records Expungement • Fred Pryor: The Ultimate Supervisor • Creative Problem Solving and Strategic Thinking • Nat’l Housing Law Project: Fed Housing and Language Access Rights of LEP Survivors • SHRM: HR Workshop • NCDBW: Women at Criminal Justice Involvement Pt. 2

The Next Imperative for Business Change to End Violence Against Annual Statewide Conference • Bar Convention • HSBA: Law Section • HSBA: Annual Section • HEC: Supervision 101 • Comprehensive Immigration Nakamoto: VLSH Training on Program: Strengthening Self AHA - Circle of Affection and informed services for immigrant survivors

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