About Us

The Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC) 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 at its inception, DVAC is now fully staffed with 48 employees. 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.

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.
Our Mission

The Domestic Violence Action Center is committed to addressing domestic violence and other forms of harm through leadership, unique services, legal representation, housing, survivor and system advocacy, community education and social change work.

Our Values

**Justice & Equality.** We advocate for the safety, well-being and self-determination of individuals, groups and communities as the foundation of justice, equality and equity in our society. We commit to challenging injustice, inequality and inequity because they are the root of domestic violence and all forms of harm.

**Respect & Dignity.** We see and embrace the life experiences of other people, meeting them where they are at, believing in them, honoring their strengths and expertise, speaking honestly about their challenges, and building trusting relationships that encourage their personal growth and development.

**Collaboration.** Experience, perspective and expertise are essential for system discourse and reform. We participate in all working groups and accept invitations to contribute to discussion in order to raise awareness and motivate appropriate and effective response to abuse and harm.

**Compassion.** We reach out with an open heart, understanding and acceptance when we see others suffering, supporting them and meeting their needs to the greatest degree possible.
Our Scope of Work

Agency staff focuses on safety planning, risk assessments, legal information, referrals, and accompaniments. Staff can also provide HopeLine cell phones, stalking kits, bus vouchers and emergency cash grants for children’s needs and assistance with scholarships for survivors to return to school. DVAC’s legal team carries a complex and potentially lethal caseload for court representation and community advocacy to help survivors make the transformative journey to safety and self-sufficiency. Facing the barriers, overcoming the fear, and quieting the ambivalence while working, parenting, and making life altering decisions is best done with the support of compassionate, expertly trained staff.

The agency continuously develops its expertise. A sophisticated understanding of the issues and attentive supervision shapes program development and community planning in the best interests of the community. The goals of the agency are to provide individual and system advocacy that enhance survivors’ safety and self-sufficiency, as well as to hold batterers and the community accountable.

The Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to alleviating the problem of family and relationship violence in Hawaii. The agency serves as a statewide resource for community programs, social service agencies, educators, health professionals, therapists, attorneys, employers, elected leaders and civic groups.
Our Programs

DVAC’s **Helpline** is often the first touch point for its growing client base. Managed by a dedicated rotating staff roster, callers may reach out for advice for themselves or someone they know. If the caller needs help, an in-take process begins and an advocate is paired up with that person. In FY 2023, DVAC received **7,001** Client Contacts.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, call our free helpline:

**808-531-3771**

DVAC’s **Legal Team** is a crucial part of the comprehensive services offered to survivors of domestic abuse. Clients can receive legal representation for attorneys on staff, offered on a sliding scale fee. Legal needs from divorce, paternity, restraining order and post decree representation can be met by expertly trained attorneys. In FY 2023, DVAC received **217** requests for legal representation. **180** cases were opened and **167** cases were closed. DVAC attorneys and advocates made **264** court appearances with clients.

The **Alaka‘i Advocacy Program** supports survivors as they navigate their way through complex systems (courts, social service agencies, prosecutor’s office, police, schools, immigration, welfare, etc.) Advocates assist clients in obtaining the best responses from these systems, in order to achieve safety, relocation, and self-sufficiency. The advocates work closely with the legal staff to effectively and comprehensively manage each individual case. In FY 2023, **293** new cases were opened, while **297** existing cases were closed. The Alaka‘i Team conducted **1,397** risk assessments and completed **1,496** safety plans.

As survivors look to restart their new lives in safety and security, they are often in need of new housing arrangements. DVAC’s **Housing Team** assists them with finding affordable housing solutions. Hale Maluhia, which opened in May 2020, has 20 units for individuals and their children. In FY 2023, **16** cases were opened, **11** cases were closed, with **494** risk assessments conducted and **496** safety plans completed.

DVAC has a dedicated **EXPO Court Outreach Team**, who are available to those who need help, stationed at Family Court. They often ask, “Do you need any help today?” In FY 2023, **1,310** new cases were opened and **563** cases were closed. EXPO Court Outreach conducted **1,508** risk assessments and completed **1,621** safety plans.
The Teen Alert Program (TAP808) is DVAC’s teen dating violence prevention, education, and intervention program. TAP808 provides education, workshops and training on healthy relationships, gender roles, dignified consent, and community intervention strategies to Hawaii students, parents, and community organizations. They also provide one-on-one individualized advocacy support for youth experiencing teen dating violence in Hawaii.

In FY 2023, they held 38 Community/School visits, delivered 350 youth presentations, and had 3,660 youth participants. TAP808 also conducted 254 risk assessments and completed 261 safety plans for Hawaii’s youth.

TAP808 recently expanded its outreach to the Big Island of Hawaii, with an advocate based in Hilo.

Recognizing that domestic abuse and substance abuse often intersect, a need to educate the community about this connection became evident and was the catalyst for creating DVAC’s newest initiative in October 2022, launching its Safe, Strong, & Sober Training Program.

Called “SSS” for short, the Safe, Strong, and Sober program was designed to improve the statewide response to domestic violence and substance use in the Hawaii community.

In FY 2023, they held 38 Community/School visits, delivered 350 youth presentations, and had 3,660 youth participants. TAP808 also conducted 254 risk assessments and completed 261 safety plans for Hawaii’s youth.

Safe, Strong and Sober

SSS provides one-of-a-kind training and professional development to better prepare substance use treatment providers, health care practitioners, and domestic violence service providers statewide to identify and address the link between domestic violence and substance use in their practices and programs.

DVAC acknowledges the important role providers play in keeping our island families safe and want to support their continued education and skill building. After the training, DVAC may also offer debriefing sessions to support new procedures, expert domestic violence consultation for high-risk cases, local resources to refer clients or patients to, as well as materials for staff to display and/or distribute in their perspective practices (posters, brochures, signage, handouts, etc.)
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION CENTER
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Ho’oikaika ‘Ohana (HO’O) serves Native Hawaiian families who have suffered the harm of domestic violence. Over a 9-month period, survivors, their keiki (children) and ‘ohana attend weekly group sessions. Together, they mend relationships through mo’olelo (talkstory) and cultural practices, such as lei-making, planting and pounding kalo (taro), chanting and dancing hula.

Ho’O was developed in response to the unfortunate reality that Native Hawaiians are the highest ethnic group receiving DVAC legal and advocacy services.

The program honors the need for programs and services that are built on Native Hawaiian values and practices, to better support survivors and their families towards healing and rebuilding. The program cultivates a survivor-defined environment in which, aided by staff, they can share, encourage, and heal with one another towards peace.

With special attention to children, DVAC’s Pulama i Ka Ohana (PIKO) Program supports island families to overcome challenges together.

PIKO accompanies survivors of domestic violence and their children on their path to safety and healing, through individual and family services and support groups.

PIKO Support Groups are a safe and comfortable way for moms and kids to learn and grow. From toddlers to teens, groups promote healing and nurture the bond between parents and children.

Parents in support groups benefit from domestic violence education, strengthen positive parenting and communication skills, and develop valuable self-care techniques. Meanwhile, children play, make new friends, and have the opportunity to engage in exciting cultural activities with their parent and siblings.

In Fiscal Year 2023, a new entity was created to support Hawaii’s diverse island populations. The Center for Pacific & Asian Communities (CPAC) is dedicated to meeting the needs of survivors of Pacific and Asian cultures. It is the first community-based effort in Hawaii to focus specifically on the diverse Asian and Pacific Island communities that are a part of Hawaii.

With expert leadership from Dr. Joycelyn Jurek, Barbara Yamashita, MSW, and Dr. Eva Repollo-Washburn, and with support from Cristina Arias (VP of Survivor Advocacy Services at DVAC), the Center will pave the way for a clear, strong commitment to broaden outreach, education and understanding of family violence in Pacific and Asian communities.
One-Day Snapshot of Services
October 2, 2023

- **106** Contacts with clients
- **27** Calls on behalf of a client
- **23** In-person contacts w/ clients
- **17** Helpline calls, texts, chats
- **41** Safety plans completed
- **91** Referrals made to community agencies
- **4** Court accompaniments
- **102** Children impacted from this work
Partnerships and Collaboration

The Domestic Violence Action Center has long held the belief that there is strength in numbers. We know that when we join with other forces to support our mission, we can accomplish more.

Holding the view that we are “Stronger Together,” DVAC is very receptive to offers of partnership, where like-minded organizations support one another in their efforts.

The agency receives numerous invitations each year to participate in conferences, workshops and panel discussions.

Some of the community organizations we have partnered with include: YWCA, HSCADV, Salvation Army, Child Welfare Services (CWS), Department of Health, Sex Abuse Treatment Center and the Department of Prosecuting Attorney.

DVAC received training requests from the following and provided expert DV training for their staff: Lili‘uokalani Trust, Kaiser Permanente, Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, The Queen’s Health Systems, JABSOM, Partners in Development, PACT, HMSA, WCC, U.S. Vets, IHS, Hina Mauka, AAPIGBV, Philippine Consulate, and Ku Aloha Ola Mau (Honolulu and Hilo).

Always growing, learning, evolving, DVAC staff training is highly encouraged and very much supported. Here are some of the training topics that took place in 2023:

- Effectively Addressing Abuse in Child Custody and Visitation
- Assisting Immigrant Clients in Obtaining Visas through VAWA
- Enhancing Legal Services for Survivors with Limited English Proficiency
- Addressing the Function of Adult Protective Services and Elderly DV Survivors
- Trauma and Healing in AA and NHPI Community Organizations
- Working with the Hearing and Visually Impaired
Community Initiatives

Coming off the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic, where many in-person events were limited due to social distancing restrictions, DVAC was eager to get out in front of the community once again.

These are important opportunities for DVAC to remain visible in the community, so that survivors know help is available to them. They also serve as a way for potential funders and supporters to see our work in action. As DVAC has an undisclosed location and makes client confidentiality a priority, it is often difficult for people to see advocates and staff working in action.

Plans quickly resumed for all previously scheduled events, like DVAC’s “Chipping Away Against Domestic Violence” golf tournament, one of the agency’s biggest fundraising events.

The 13th Annual Golf Tournament took place on August 26, 2022, at Pearl Country Club. Participation was high with a record-number turnout of 168 participants.

In September, DVAC held its new “Be a Torch for Change” candle vigil, a special community invitation to show support of survivors by lighting a candle each Wednesday night during the month of September between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.
Community Initiatives

The 28th Annual Men’s March Against Violence took place on Thursday, October 6, 2022, in front of Honolulu Hale. With an intentionally reduced crowd, being sensitive to lingering health and safety concerns, 50 men were invited to represent “all men”. This year’s theme was **Leadership Begins with You**.

Featured speakers were Chief Joe Logan of the Honolulu Police Department and young Raiden Barrientos, a middle school student who has marched since he was six years old. Dr. Jerris Hedges, retired Professor and Dean at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, was honored as the Distinguished Citizen of the Year, and a special tribute was made to Pono Shim.

To celebrate victories and share stories of survival, DVAC held its **“Be a Torch for Change”** gala event on Saturday, October 22nd, at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Under balmy skies, the audience listened to the soulful music of Paula Fuga and then heard from three survivors. Their harrowing tales of survival made it clear why DVAC services are so urgently needed.
As this fiscal year came to an end, it was time to send off Nanci Kreidman, CEO and Co-Founder of DVAC, on her retirement after 30+ years of service. In preparation for this transition, DVAC launched a “Tribute to Service” campaign, receiving donations in her honor. Kreidman officially retired on June 30, 2023, naming Monique Ibarra as her new successor.

Community Initiatives

The Poinsettias for Peace fundraiser took place in December, brightening up homes and hearts throughout Honolulu. In February, DVAC promoted “Safe Love” with its Let Love Bloom orchid sales. The Teen Alert Program (TAP808) used this opportunity to educate Hawaii’s youth on healthy vs. unhealthy relationships.

Healthy Relationships

Having healthy relationships is so important! Everyone deserves to be with someone that treats them right and makes them feel special. Sometimes relationships can be difficult, but the more we practice healthy traits, the better our dating relationships can be.

As this fiscal year came to an end, it was time to send off Nanci Kreidman, CEO and Co-Founder of DVAC, on her retirement after 30+ years of service. In preparation for this transition, DVAC launched a “Tribute to Service” campaign, receiving donations in her honor. Kreidman officially retired on June 30, 2023, naming Monique Ibarra as her new successor.

“The lifting and loving that goes on at DVAC is inspirational and deeply reassuring, in all ways.

I am so grateful. And the survivors are so lucky.

Thank you, every one of you.”
Summary

In fiscal year 2023, the Domestic Violence Action Center accomplished much and laid the foundation for substantial opportunity for growth in the future. Building new relationships and nurturing existing ones, the agency knows that we cannot do this alone. DVAC is forever grateful for the community support it receives on all fronts.

The agency has long held the belief that it will take a collective effort to change the current view and stance against domestic violence.

Society as a whole must come to acknowledge that violence in relationships is simply unacceptable. Leaders in all industries should support this message by committing resources to keep the community safe. Men must continue to join in voicing this out in the community.

Victims of abuse must feel safe in coming forward and receiving help. Policy reform must take place to better protect and support survivors. Decision makers need to see it through and put change into action.

We all have a role we can play in keeping our community safe. As Kreidman liked to stress at every opportunity, “It’s Gonna Take All of Us.” Thank you for standing with us.

What’s Next?

The next fiscal year may present its fair share of challenges, as each year does, but the Domestic Violence Action Center will see it through.

Dedicated to protecting and serving our community, DVAC will continue to unfurl its branches and grow in new directions. Always evolving, always thriving, always adapting to the changes.
Air Central LLC
Ala Moana Dental Care
Alexander & Baldwin, Inc.
Aloha United Way
AlohaCare
Alohilani Resort Waikiki Beach
ALTRES
Amazon Smile
American Savings Bank
Assistance League of Hawaii
Attorney At Law Linda Martell
Bank Of Hawaii Foundation
Big Island Candies
Black Shamrock Tavern
Brett Hill Management Group
Bronster Fujichaku Robbins
Brown & Brown Pacific Insurance Services, Inc.
Buzz’s Original Steakhouse
Central Pacific Bank (CPB) Foundation
Century 21 Homefinders
Century 21 iProperties Hawaii
Chamber of Commerce
Christ Church Uniting
City Mill
Clay Chapman Crumpton Iwamura & Pulice
Coffee Talk Inc.
Consolidated Theatres
Costco (Hawaii Kai)
Crum and Forster
CSAA Insurance Group
Dave and Buster’s
Dorvin D. Leis Co., Inc.
Doubletree by Hilton Alana Waikiki Hotel
DTRIC Insurance Company, Ltd.
Duke’s Waikiki
EAN Holdings, LLC (Enterprise Holdings)
Elks Honolulu Lodge No. 616
FAMES Hawaii
First Hawaiian Bank
First Insurance Company of Hawaii, Ltd.
Foodland Super Market
Four Seasons Resort
Give Lively Foundation Inc.
Hawaii Community Foundation
Hawaii Dental Service
Hawaii Engineering Services
Hawaii Foodservice Alliance
Hawaii Government Employees Association
Hawaii Hotel Industry Foundation
Hawai‘i Medical Service Association (HMSA)
Hawaii Pacific Health
Hawaii Permanente Medical Group
Hawaii State AFL-CIO
Hawaii State Federal Credit Union
Hawaii Theatre Center
Hawaiian Dredging Construction Company Inc.
Hawaiian Insurance and Guaranty Company, Limited
Healthy Living Cleaning Services
HEMIC (HEMIC Foundation)
HiCentral MLS
Honolulu Beerworks
Honolulu Board of Realtors
Honolulu Myohoji Mission
Honolulu Star-Advertiser
HSI Mechanical
Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa
IBEW Local Union 1186
ICR LLP DBA Island Court Reporting and Transcription Services
ILWU Local 42
Island Women Empowered by God
Jade Moon Photography
Jhamandas Watumull Fund
John H. Connors Insurance
Joyce Timpson & Associates, Inc.
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc.
Kaiser Permanente
Kalaeloa Partners L.P.
Kalapawai Cafe, Inc.
Kenneth T. & Eileen L. Norris Foundation
Knights of Rizal - Hawaii Chapter
Ko’olina Golf Club
Kyo-ya Hotels & Resorts, LP
Lanai Resorts, LLC
Law Office of David Hayakawa
Leu Okuda & Doi, Attorneys at Law
LPGA Amateurs Hawaii Chapter
Margie’s Jewelers
Matson Navigation Company, Inc & Subsidiaries
Maui Divers Jewelry
Maui Jim Sunglasses
Maui Mike’s Fire Roasted Chicken
FY 2023 Corporate & Community Support (con’t.)

Mauna Kea Beach Hotel
McDonald's Restaurants Of Hawaii, Inc.
McKinley Car Wash
Michael Moran & Associates
Microsoft Rewards - Give with Bling
Morgan Stanley Global Impact Funding Trust (GIFT)
Network for Good
Nordic PCL Construction, Inc.
North America Taiwanese Women's Association (NATWA)
Omnitrak Group Inc.
Organization Schatz for Senator
Pacific Commercial Services, LLC.
Pacific Guardian Life Insurance Co. Ltd.
Par Hawaii Refining
Pauahi Foundation
PayPal Giving Fund
Pearl Country Club
Pint Size Hawaii
R.M. Towill Corporation
Rotary Club of Pearl Harbor
Scott Hawaii
Sea Life Park
Seven-Eleven Hawaii, Inc.
Surf Line Hawaii LTD. (Jams World)
Target Corporation C/O CyberGrants, LLC
TD Food Group, Inc.
The Fish Family Foundation
The Queen's Medical Health Systems
The Swinerton Foundation
TMR Events
Trump International Hotel Waikik Beach Walk
University Health Alliance (UHA)
University Of Hawaii Foundation
Waikiki Aquarium
Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort and Spa
Ward Management
W CIT Architecture, Inc.
Whole Foods Market
Wikoff Combs & Co., LLC
Wong's Drapery Shoppe, LTD
Zephyr Insurance Co.
Zippy's
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