



Mission: To help deaf and hard-of-hearing (HOH) children and teens receive equal access to opportunity by providing financial assistance to enhance communication methods; gain access to education resources; and to grow socially, educationally and spiritually.

Critical Need in our Community and Population to Be Served by the Project:

Deaf and hard-of-hearing children face a critical, under-addressed need: early and consistent access to language. The optimal window for language development occurs in the first few years of life—once missed, full linguistic and cognitive growth is unlikely. According to the Texas Education Agency (2023-2024), 74% of deaf children ages 0-8 perform below expectations due to limited access to speech therapy and American Sign Language (ASL).

This gap affects more than academics—it impacts safety, emotional well-being, and family connection. Over 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents, yet 90% of fathers and 70% of mothers never learn to sign. This results in deaf children growing up in environments where they cannot communicate with their own families, increasing their isolation and vulnerability. Deaf children are at a significantly higher risk for neglect, abuse, and mental health challenges, in large part because they lack the basic tools of communication—even in their own homes.

While ASL is slowly being incorporated into some school systems, there remains a major gap: families are not learning to sign together. For language acquisition to succeed, it must be supported at home by families who can communicate fluently and consistently. Without early and ongoing access to both signed and spoken language—and without the involvement of families in that language development—DHH children are left without the foundation they need to grow, learn, and belong.

Aid the Silent serves deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) youth facing severe educational and communication inequities. Last year, Aid the Silent distributed 1,562 services to children with hearing loss. With 30,000+ births annually in Bexar County, an estimated 60-90 children are born with hearing loss each year. Based on available data, approximately 0.6% of children under 18 in Bexar County have a hearing disability. This equates to approximately 3,000 children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Bexar County. In 2024, most of our clients came from high-need San Antonio zip codes: 78237 (Edgewood ISD, Equity Score 10), 78239 (NEISD School, Equity Score 9), and 78207 (SAISD, Equity Score 10). These areas are predominantly Hispanic and economically disadvantaged. 56% of clients are ages 12-18, with most from low-income households, on Medicaid or uninsured. These youth face steep barriers to language access, education, and inclusion.

Description of Project and Proposed Use of Impact SA Funds:

Aid the Silent recently completed funding Phase 1 of our capital campaign and successfully paid off our building. With ownership secured, we are now launching the next phase: renovating the facility to create a dedicated Sign Language and Speech Therapy Language Center for deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) children, teens, and their families. Renovations are set to begin this fall for the "The Harvey Najim Foundation: Aid the Silent's Deaf Children and Teens Development Center".

This project includes the buildout of therapy rooms, ASL classrooms, and family learning spaces, designed to provide consistent, accessible language acquisition services. The space will be fully ADA-compliant and tailored to the communication and sensory needs of DHH individuals. This is the first center of its kind in the region to combine speech therapy and American Sign Language instruction under one roof, making it a transformative step forward in breaking communication barriers for our community.

Funds requested from Impact SA will be used for the interior construction and finish-out of Aid the Silent's new Sign Language and Speech Therapy Language Center. The total budget to complete the classroom is \$126,657, of which \$26,657 has already been secured from outside funders. The remaining funds will support framing, drywall, electrical, HVAC adjustments, insulation, ADA-compliant features, flooring, acoustic treatments, and interior finishes for therapy rooms, ASL classrooms, and family education spaces. This renovation will transform existing shell space into a fully functional, code-compliant center specifically designed to meet the language acquisition needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their families. This investment will allow us to begin delivering life-changing services in an inclusive and accessible environment.

Impact on People to Be Served - Measurable Outcomes (Described in "S.M.A.R.T." terms):

Specific: Aid the Silent will create a Sign Language and Speech Therapy Language Center to increase language acquisition and communication between deaf children and their families. The goal is to ensure DHH children receive timely access to ASL and speech therapy while also equipping parents and caregivers to communicate fluently with their child. This project directly targets early intervention and the strengthening of family bonds through shared language and understanding.

Measurable: We use a 1-5 social determinants of health scale to track outcomes in language development, communication, and family connection. Families complete a survey and interview 3 months after receiving services, assessing the child's progress, communication at home, and emotional well-being. Follow-up calls at 6 months and 1 year gather further insights on continued ASL usage, child confidence, school involvement, and how relationships within the family have improved.

Achievable: This is an ambitious but achievable project. We've successfully managed grant-funded construction and service expansions and already serve DHH families through casework, audiology, and ASL classes. Our team is equipped with the experience and passion to launch this center. With established referral networks and strong community partnerships, we are ready to enhance access to language resources that strengthen both the child's development and the family unit.

Relevant: Language is the foundation of learning, relationships, and independence. Most deaf children are born into hearing families who lack the tools to communicate. This project is central to our mission—bridging the language gap, preventing isolation, and promoting healthy family relationships. By increasing ASL and speech access, we're fostering lifelong learning, stronger home environments, and a more connected and confident generation of DHH youth.

Time-Bound: Construction of the center will be complete by fall 2027, with services launching immediately after. Surveys will begin 3 months after a family starts services, followed by evaluations at 6 months and 12 months. These touchpoints will measure both immediate and lasting impacts on language use and relationship quality at home, ensuring the program not only launches on time, but delivers long-term transformational outcomes for each family served.

Project Budget:

Funding Source	Amount	Narrative
Foundations/Corporations	\$26,657.00	This money has already been raised
Total Other Revenue	\$26,657.00	

Expense Category	ISA Exp	ISA Narrative	Other Exp	Other Exp Narrative
Indirect Costs	\$10,000.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Construction Costs	\$90,000.00	Construction costs for project	\$26,657.00	Construction costs for project
Total Expenses	\$100,000.00		\$26,657.00	