



LIRS

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WE BELIEVE

INVESTING IN THE MENTAL HEALTH OF VULNERABLE NEWCOMERS BENEFITS US ALL.

Immigrants, their families, and the wider community all benefit greatly when the mental health care needs of vulnerable newcomers are met. Family stability, academic achievement, secure and steady employment, greater access to legal protection, and improved physical health are just some of the advantages. When we provide mental health services to newcomers, we empower them to overcome the unique challenges they face and to realize their full potential.



URGENT NEEDS IN MARYLAND

Fifteen percent of Maryland's population are immigrants, not including over 5,470 unaccompanied migrant children who started living with caregivers in the state in 2021. While the need for mental health services for immigrants has grown, service delivery has not been able to keep pace. Cost is always a barrier. Lack of provider capacity, cultural competency, and fluency in the client's native language also stand in the way. Hostile attitudes toward immigrants can also discourage them from seeking health care. Most in need are foreign-born women and children, who make up a large percentage of victims of trafficking. Less acculturated, low-income Latina women, in particular, are at higher risk for intimate partner violence, which is associated with major depressive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The time to address the mental health needs of newcomers in our hometowns is now.

A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH

In a pilot effort to provide direct mental health services to vulnerable newcomers in a community-based setting, LIRS's Children and Family Services will provide individual and family therapy to immigrants and refugees living in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia.

OUR APPROACH

Bilingual clinicians will provide individual and family therapy in a community-based setting. The duration of treatment will average four months but can be extended based on the client's needs. Recognizing that housing instability, lack of access to medical care, food insufficiency, inadequate childcare, family violence, and other stressors have a negative impact on mental well-being and prevent clients from engaging in therapeutic services, LIRS will provide comprehensive and holistic care.

Our approach to treatment will be trauma-informed, culturally competent, and evidence-based. One example of an evidence-based treatment approach is trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT), commonly used to treat mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression. Research shows this approach to have particularly positive results for immigrant youth.

Case managers will help meet client needs that cannot be addressed through therapy alone, such as identifying and coordinating resources, advocating

for clients, and ensuring successful community integration. Case managers will work with each client to create a client-centered individual service plan with concrete goals, along with an outline of the resources needed to meet those goals. Case management services are part of an integrative and comprehensive approach to achieving optimal mental health for clients.

DEFINING SUCCESS

Measures of success will include clinical improvements in client functioning and overall mental health as well as client engagement, satisfaction, and feedback surveys. LIRS will actively solicit critical information from clients regarding the quality, appropriateness, and effectiveness of LIRS's services and referrals made to external community partners. Internally, LIRS has established systems for continuous quality improvement and will conduct case file audits and performance evaluations to ensure client needs are met in a timely and professional manner, that services provided adhere to social work ethics and values, and that clients are treated with dignity and respect.

LOCAL OUTREACH



LIRS has deep roots in the newcomer community through existing partnerships and peer relationships. LIRS is a member of the Latino Service Providers Network in Baltimore and the Maryland Human Trafficking Taskforce. LIRS has longstanding relationships with many community partners, including Asylee Women Enterprise (AWE), Catholic Charities of Maryland, Kennedy Krieger Institute, and The Access Program (TAP) at Johns Hopkins Medicine. Through these partnerships, LIRS will work to connect clients to a full range of supportive services and strive to ensure these services are culturally competent, trauma-informed, and accessible to all regardless of gender identity, nationality, sexual orientation, age, religion, legal status, insurance coverage, or income.



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

HOW YOU CAN HELP

LIRS has secured funding from private foundations to cover one third of the budget for the first year of this transformative pilot program. Your financial contribution to LIRS can transform the lives of immigrant children and families in Baltimore right now. What's more, you can help LIRS develop a model program that may serve communities across the country for years to come.

MARYLAND'S IMMIGRANTS	
	15% OF THE STATE'S POPULATION ARE IMMIGRANTS
	5,471+ UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN WERE UNITED WITH SPONSORS HERE IN 2021
#5	MARYLAND RANKS #5 AMONG STATES WITH RELEASED MIGRANT CHILDREN