About AWE
Background & Mission

• Founded in 2011
• Helps asylum seekers, survivors of human trafficking and other immigrants forced to flee home due to violence and disaster
• Grown rapidly from four staff in 2019 to 13 today
• Provide case management services to approximately 250 immigrants annually and serve another 400+ through other programs
• Located in northeast Baltimore
Who We Serve
Who We Serve

We serve “forced migrants” – people who were forced to leave their home country because of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations – who recently arrived in the US and are pursuing permanent immigration status.

Majority of AWE clients are asylum seekers and trafficking survivors.
What’s an Asylum Seeker?

A person who applied for humanitarian protection in the US because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, but whose application has not yet been reviewed by the US government.
Asylum Seekers in the US

- Over 1 million asylum seekers in US
- Asylum applications take 3+ years to adjudicate
- Face many obstacles and vulnerabilities while they wait for adjudication including:
  - Ineligible for public benefits
  - Initially ineligible for work authorization
  - Untreated physical and mental health concerns related to persecution, travel to US, and border detention
  - Often alone and without family or support system
  - Cannot obtain state ID or bank account
  - Cultural and linguistic barriers
  - Constant changes to immigration process
  - Difficulty securing legal representation
  - Few organizations providing supportive services
What We Do
Case Management

Trauma-informed, comprehensive case management services for asylum seekers and trafficking survivors. Services include:

• Help accessing mental health and medical care
• Assistance finding emergency, transitional, and long-term housing
• Emergency financial assistance
• Assistance accessing employment and professional trainings
Health and Wellness

- Scheduling medical appointments
- Health and wellness classes and activities
- Group and individual therapy in collaboration with onsite mental health organization
- Referrals for forensic medical and psychological exams in support of asylum applications
- Referrals to trauma-informed healthcare providers
- Healthcare for the Homeless onsite mobile clinic
- Partnership with John Hopkins School of Medicine to match vulnerable clients with team of med students
- Assistance accessing COVID-19 vaccine
Immigration Legal Services

Assist clients enrolled in case management services with:

• Asylum applications and representation in court
• Other humanitarian immigration relief applications
• Employment Authorization Document (EAD) applications
• Waivers requests for associated government fees
• Know Your Rights trainings
Food Security and Direct Assistance

• Assist 400+ individuals and families apply for public benefits (SNAP, MA, WIC)
• Distribute food through pantry and weekly food deliveries
• Distribute other in-kind assistance including diapers, baby gear, clothing, and feminine hygiene products
Community Connection

- ESL, job readiness, and financial literacy trainings
- Health and wellness, computer, parenting, and cultural orientation
- Community gardening
- Women’s Group
- Mindfulness Activities
- Orientations to public services
- Client leadership program
- Community mentor program
Housing

Transitional housing at three sites:

— House owned by AWE
— Partnership with convent
— Partnership with ASHN
Housing Requirements

- Must be asylum seeker without work authorization
- Must participate in AWE programming, including case management
- Must complete housing application and interview
- Provided monthly stipend to cover costs of living
- Eligible to remain in housing until grant of work authorization (between 1 – 2 years after arrival in US)
Housing Partnerships

Client benefits
• Fills huge, unmet community need
• Secure, safe housing accessible without ID or credit history
• Sense of community
• Learning about paying rent, bills

AWE benefits
• Increases local housing capacity
• Allows AWE to focus on other client services
• Lessens costs and time burden of providing housing
• Provides client incentive to participate in other AWE services