



Ayuda's Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health and Wellness Program continues to transform lives through the support of the Healthcare Initiative Foundation FY22 Capacity Building Grant

Ayuda's mission is to advocate for low-income immigrants through direct legal, social and language services, training and outreach in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. We envision a community where all immigrants succeed and thrive in the United States. For more than 49 years, Ayuda has served as the only non-profit organization in the D.C. metropolitan area to provide a full range of comprehensive programs that includes immigration legal services, social services, family law assistance, and language access support. Since our founding, we have proudly served more than 150,000 immigrants from more than 100 countries.

Due to Maryland's growing immigrant population, Ayuda has been providing services to crime victims and other underserved low-income immigrants in Maryland for many years. Maryland's immigrant population is now more than 915,000 individuals, or about 15% of the total population. In response to this growing population, we opened an office in downtown Silver Spring in 2019 where we offer case management services, behavioral health services, and legal services, all in one location to holistically meet the needs of low-income immigrants. In 2022, Ayuda provided services to 386 immigrant Montgomery County residents.

Through the support of \$40,000 from the Health Care Initiative Foundation FY22 Nonprofit Capacity Building Grant Cycle, Ayuda has provided trauma-informed "wrap-around services" to Montgomery County residents that are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Ayuda's Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health and Wellness Program has increased access to high-quality, culturally specific behavioral health and supportive services to immigrant survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in Montgomery County. Most recently, we started to offer survivors cultural activities such as "taller sanidad del duelo a travez del arte" (grief healing support group through art/patchwork), a way for survivors to tell their stories through traditional quilting or sewing tapestries. Ayuda has also provided emotional support groups, yoga, and music groups which helps survivors express their emotions through playing traditional musical instruments. As a result, victims can achieve their goals and gain skills that contribute to overcoming their trauma.

By avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach, as language, education, and levels of U.S. cultural knowledge can vary between individuals, Ayuda tailors our services to best fit our clients' individual needs, situations, and goals. Ayuda's Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health and Wellness Program, which includes therapeutic case management and group behavioral health services, have been vital to our clients living in Montgomery County during these times.

One of the best ways to illustrate the impact Ayuda has had on the community this year is through a client story. Please click on the link below to hear the testimony of Dorinda, one of our courageous

clients who has received services from our Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health and Wellness Program thanks to our grant with the Healthcare Initiative Foundation.

Client Story: [\(25\) Journey to Safety - Dorinda's Story - YouTube](#)

Ayuda is very grateful for the support from funders like the Healthcare Initiative Foundation, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has deeply affected our client communities. This support has been very meaningful to our clients and our social services team. This support allowed Ayuda's clients such as Dorinda to access culturally specific behavioral health and supportive services and ultimately have a safe space to heal from their trauma.

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