# Supporting Forcibly Displaced Students in Accessing Post Secondary Education

ARYSE
POST-SECONDARY SUPPORT PROGRAM

BCAP
Student Success Program
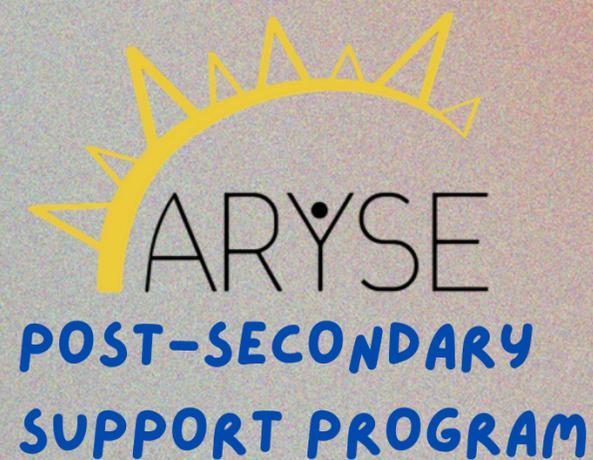
**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

# The Opportunity

How do we leverage the resources, relationships, and skills we do have as service providers?

# The Challenges

What gaps do we notice in service delivery for this population?

# ARYSE Overview

**OST**

**ADVOCACY**

**FORCED DISPLACEMENT**

*Post-Secondary Support Snapshot:*
- **35 students**
  - 18 current high school seniors
  - 9 current post-secondary students
  - 8 recent high school graduates
- **10 countries and 7 languages**
  - Arabic, Chin, Dari, French, Pashto, Swahili, Tigrinya
- **14+ areas of interest**
  - Auto tech, aviation, business, computer science & IT, construction, education, fashion design, international relations & refugee resettlement, law, marketing, nursing & healthcare, psychology, real estate, and social work

# PSP Interventions

One-on-one support and case management
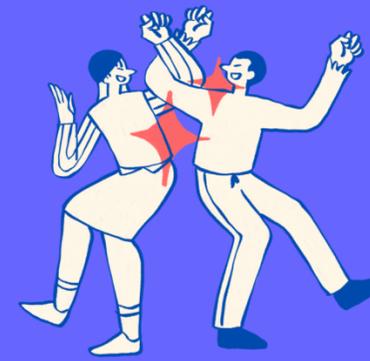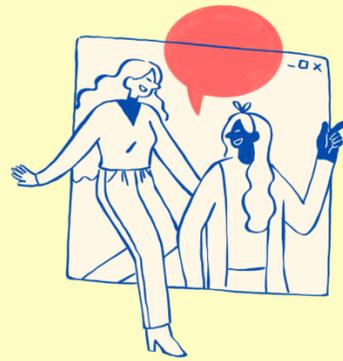
Adult and peer mentorship

Skill-building: financial and digital literacies

Continued support throughout the post-secondary experience

# BCAP Overview

One on One Support and Case Management

**Mentoring Program**
*Connecting Adults to Teens*

**Post-Secondary Prep**
*College, Trade, or Workforce*

Space to Build Community

# Post Secondary Support Program Cohort

**Established**

2024

**Participation**

'24-'25: 15 students

'25-'26: 20 students

**Surveys**

Data collected is based on 35 pre-program surveys, and 12 post-program surveys

**Experience**

85% of our students self identify as first generation college students

High School Counselors

Individual Case Management

Post-Secondary Institutions

Community-based Organizations
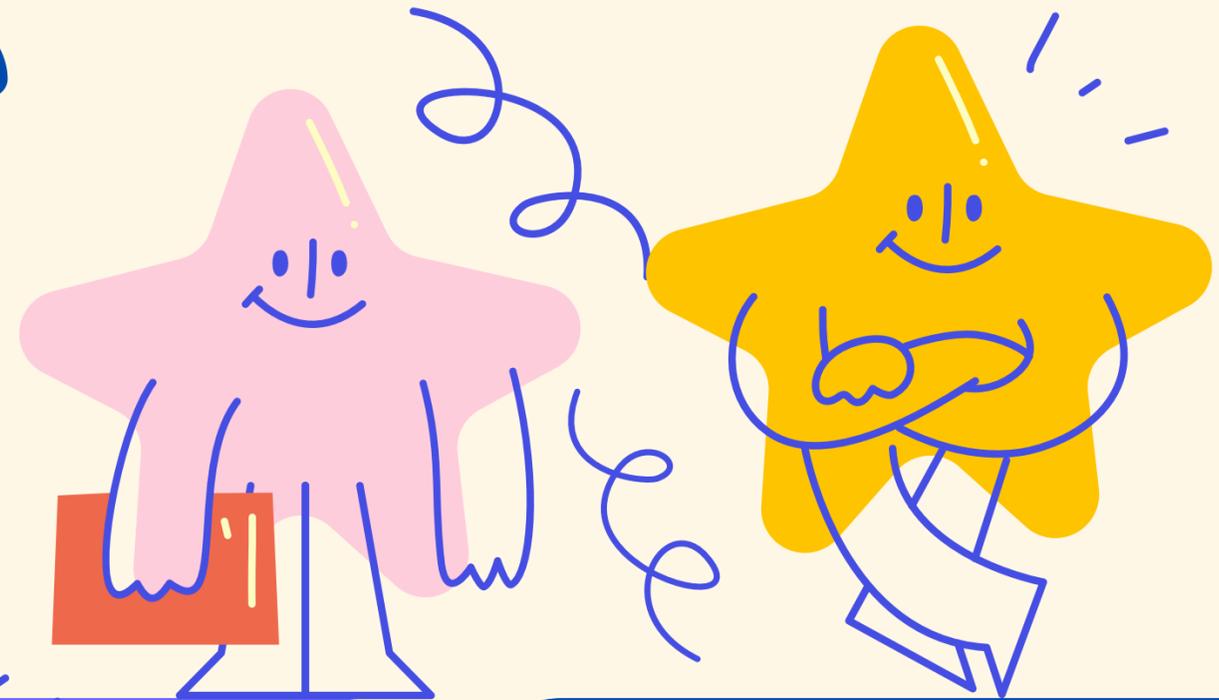
Family and Friends

Language Access Supports

WHO ARE STUDENTS INTERACTING WITH?

# Key Trends

- Moving beyond the information gap and understanding the importance of social capital
- Our story tells us about more than student learning, it highlights systemic barriers and potential for collaborative solutions
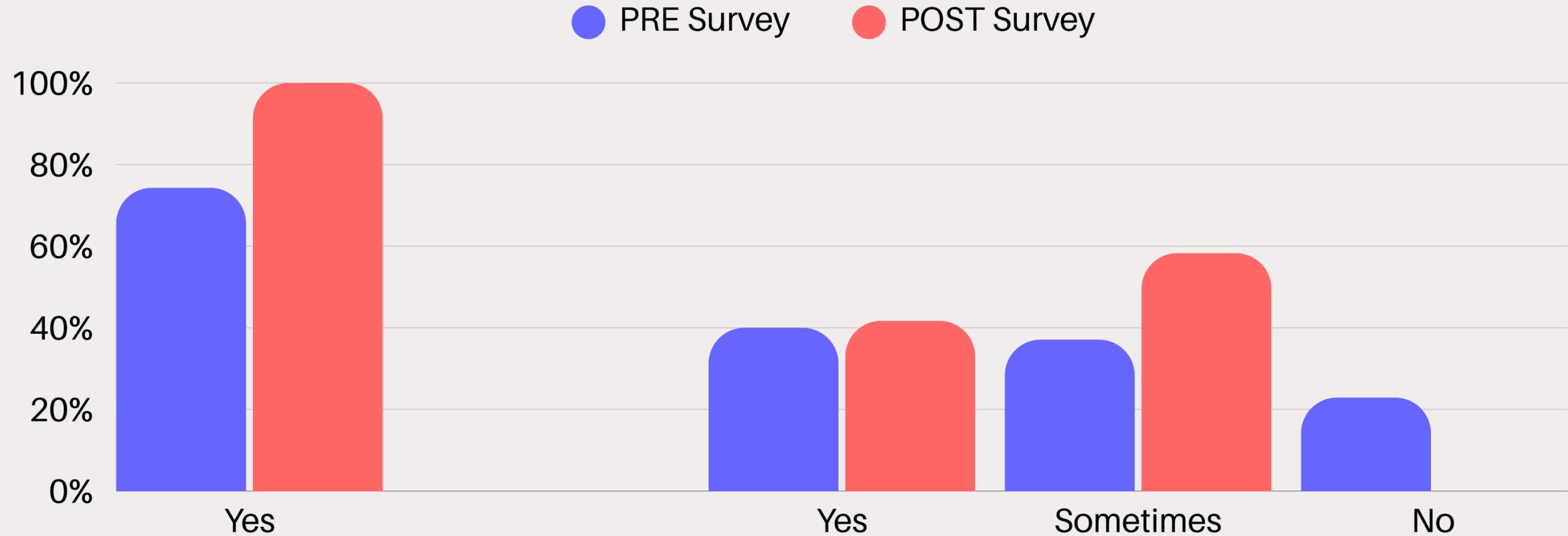
# Key Trends

**The Support Gap**

**Importance of Social Capital and Individualized Support**

**Anxious but Capable Shift**

# "I know who can support me at ARYSE"

# "I know who can support me at School"

PRE Survey   POST Survey

**"I know who can support me at ARYSE"**
- 100%
- 80%
- 60%
- 40%
- 20%
- 0%

Yes

**"I know who can support me at School"**

Yes    Sometimes    No

**+** Students often report "no" and "sometimes" to knowing who can support them at school
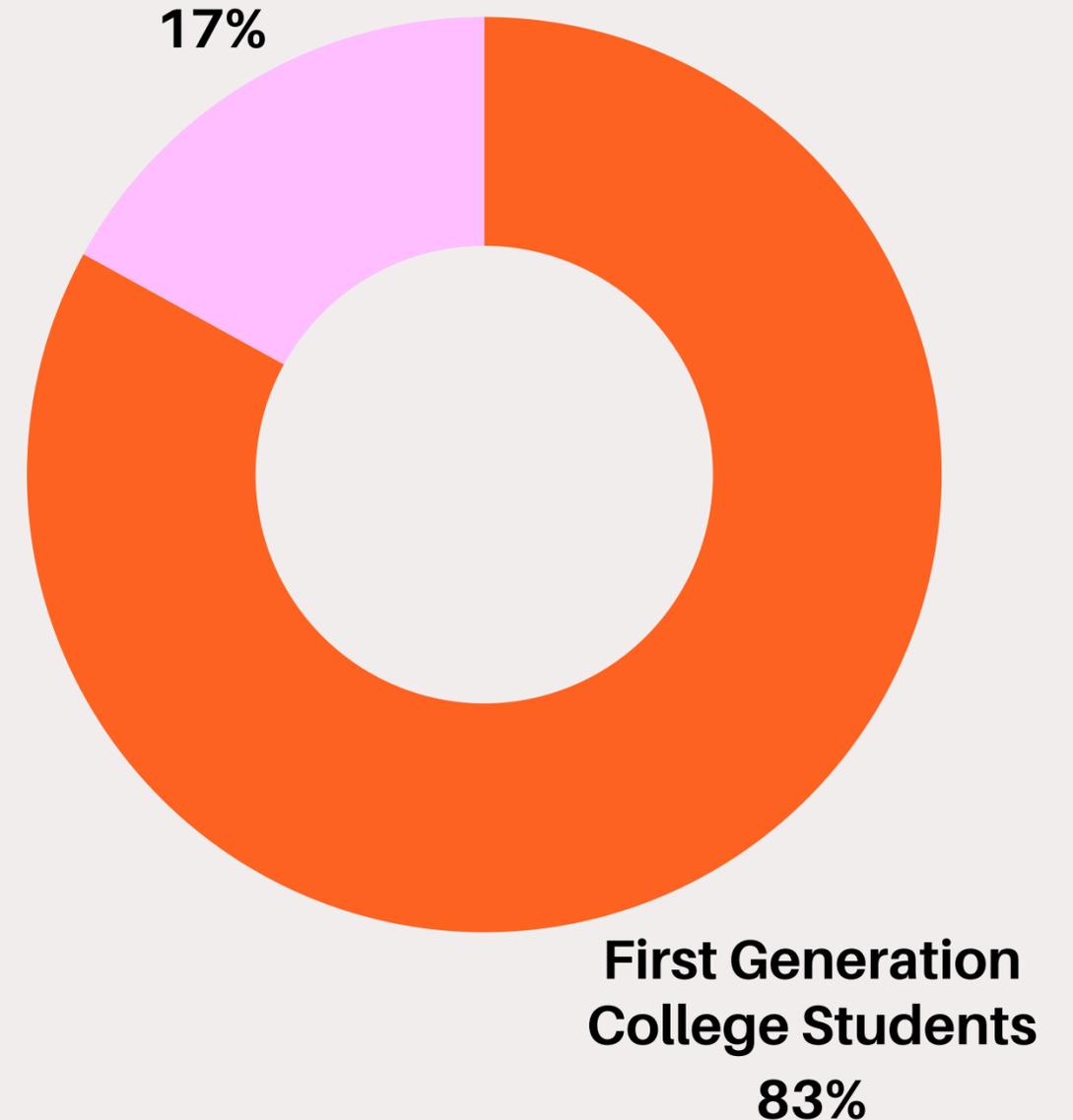
**+** Students feel alienated from formal institutions but find support in CBOs

**+** Recommendation: On-campus office hours with I&R partners

# Importance of Social Capital & Individualized Support



17%

First Generation College Students 83%

"This program was a big help for us. If you guys were not there, we would have struggled."

➕ "Whenever [Mr. Danny from the Pittsburgh Promise] saw me, he would ask me about my scholarships."

➕ "Mr. Mike was a big support — in ASC, they always talk about scholarships, college applications, and learn from other students (mentors)"

➕ Recommendation
Small budget for language access: Translating complicated materials or award offer letters, providing interpretation at campus visits. Once at post-secondary institution, specific support for this population of first-generation college students throughout their experience.

# "I am confident in completing application paperwork for a program"

# "I know what types of programs I can attend to meet my goals"

● PRE Survey "No"     ● POST Survey "No"



Confidence in paperwork          Knowledge of Program Options
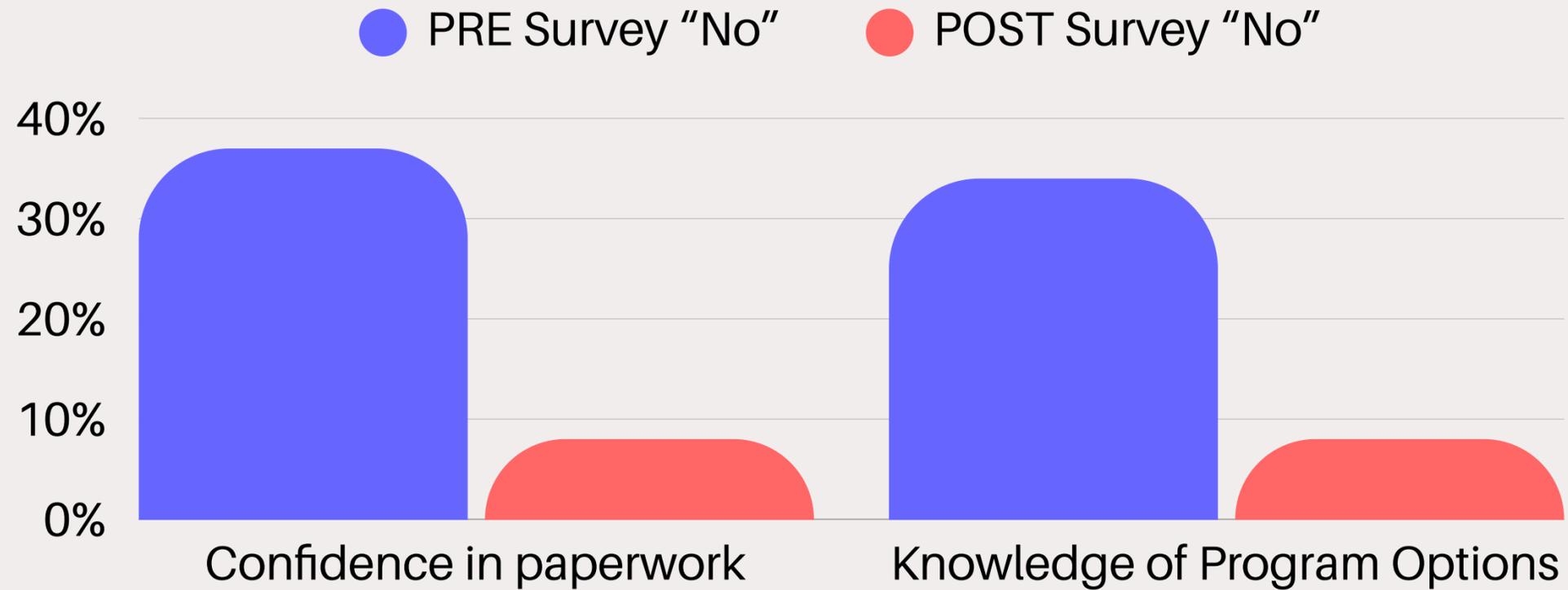
**+ From pre to post surveys, students still felt anxiety but were more capable. Knowledge doesn't always eliminate anxiety for displaced students—but it creates a path through it.**

**+ "I told my friends to apply to FAFSA; I helped them sign up and create an account"**

**+ Recommendation: Clear, coherent information, and support throughout the process**
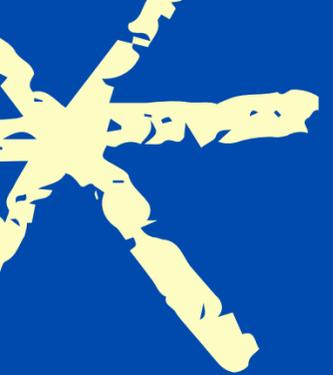
# Incorporating Participant Voice

- The initial idea for the college prep and mentoring program came from a group of BCAP tutors.

**01.** These tutors were first gen US college students that had recently navigated the college process. *3– Penn State, 1– MIT*

**02.** They recognized the obstacles that younger students would face.
- *where to start*
- *application completion*
- *FAFSA*
- *cultural component*

**03.** They created interest forms to match mentors and mentees. They also developed a detailed roadmap to guide mentees through the process from start to end.

**BCAP**

## FALL
### September to November

Make an ACT/SAT subject test plan

Request at least two letters of recommendations

**OCT. 15** build a balanced college list

Finalize your personal statement

Submit your Early Action/Early Decision applications

Apply to scholarships

**NOV. 15** submit your FAFSA and State financial aid

**DEC. 15** submit your Regular Decision Applications and CSS Profile

## SPRING
### March to May

## WINTER
### December to February

Research and compare all your accepted colleges

Review and verify your financial aid awards

Attend virtual or in person accepted student days

**CELEBRATE** your college acceptances

Apply to more scholarships

Follow up on your college applications

Sign up for college interviews

**APR. 15** create a college transition plan

**MAY 1** make your final college decision and submit your enrollment

Complete your college enrollment items. (i.e. housing, accepting aid, and choosing your meal plan

Explore your new campus- find clubs you want to join and support services to use

Meet new classmates by joining social media groups

Keep applying to scholarships

Share your enrollment decision with us!

**YOU DID IT!**

# Activity and Group Discussion

- Our feedback shows students often feel better seeking help at CBOs than in formal school settings. What do you think are the "invisible" barriers in a high school building or a post-secondary campus that make forcibly displaced youth hesitant to utilize these resources?

- If success is a support system, how can we collectively measure it beyond enrollment numbers?

# Our Vision for the Future
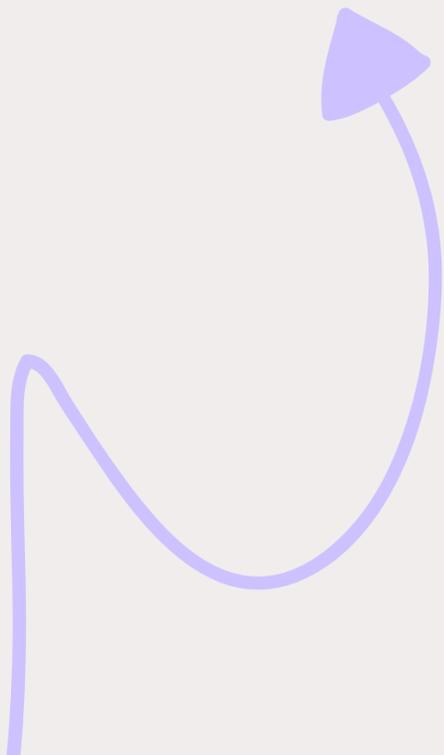
**Success is a Support System: How do we build the net?**

Together, we can cover gaps and strengthen supports.

**Trusted Relationships**

One-on-one support is important.
Peer and adult relationships are both valuable.

**Belonging**

Ensuring that our students not only attend post-secondary insitutions but thrive in them. Retention matters, but so does belonging.

# Thank You

Working Group Interest:

**STAY CONNECTED**

dakota@arysepgh.org

kmirt@bcap.us