

AFTER THE ELECTION

Many have expressed questions about what will happen with refugees and immigrants now that we have a new President-elect. There are many unknowns and our best advice is to proceed as planned but with new awareness. At USCRI we continue to operate our programs just as we were last week. Our mission is unchanged—we protect the rights and address the needs of persons in forced or voluntary migration worldwide and support their transition to a dignified life. Here are some things you can do now:

Protect clients, staff and communities. Create opportunities for dialogue so you can hear fears or concerns and respond appropriately. Encourage clients and staff to support each other while de-escalating the conversations. Take a break from news coverage if needed. Make sure you know of any threats and report them promptly to law enforcement and USCRI. This includes threats at schools or involving children. We are in constant communication with national groups tracking and responding to this type of activity.

Model that you will respect the outcome of this election while rejecting any bigotry. Discourage people from engaging in arguments with those who do not share their views. Again, calm dialogue with community members may be helpful but it's also fine for now to encourage communities of support and trust who you already know. Answer honestly about the future of our programs, we will continue to fight as we always have to provide protection to refugees and immigrants. Help community members and volunteers share goodwill with newcomers to build bridges and support. Remind everyone of their own resilience and hope. It has already gotten us here.

Explain our democracy when needed. Check facts, use dialogue and stay engaged as much as you can. Our system of government has checks and balances and little is accomplished with speed. Many campaign promises over the years have amounted to little action and we cannot speculate about what is ahead. We have the strong supporters in Congress that we have always had and now a chance to make friends with the newly elected. Remember that people voted for many reasons including fear of the economy and frustration with government. Not only because of immigrants.

You are leaders and everyone is looking to you for guidance. Please take care of yourselves because there is a lot ahead of you and you need to remain strong.

