

Administrative Priorities for the Biden-Harris Administration: Strengthen the Immigration Response to Survivors of Gender- Based Violence

The Alliance for Immigrant Survivors (AIS) works to defend and advocate for policies that prioritize the safety and autonomy of immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other gender-based abuses. Over the last several years, numerous administrative policies have undercut and undermined these protections by creating additional barriers for survivors, which have instilled distrust and fear. The Biden-Harris administration must join efforts to promote the well-being and safety of immigrant survivors by strengthening access to immigration protections so that everyone who is eligible has an opportunity to efficiently access relief that Congress intended for them.

We urge the Administration to protect immigrant survivors by prioritizing the following administrative policies:

Strengthen Immigration Protections for Immigrant Survivors, Undo Policies that Undermine the Purpose of Such Protections

- ▶ Make immigration pathways more accessible for survivors by reducing the multi-year backlog in case adjudications and support the eliminating or significantly raising the U visa cap.
- ▶ Halt harmful asylum rules limiting survivors' ability to qualify for and access protection and expand the ability of survivors of gender-based violence to obtain asylum and other humanitarian protection.
- ▶ Reverse destructive policies that increase barriers to victim-related applications such as burdensome fee-waiver guidelines or ICE referrals of denied applications.
- ▶ Restore and strengthen trauma-informed adjudication practice and training materials for victim-related and humanitarian applications.
- ▶ Restore prior refugee acceptance and resettlement levels in line with historic averages to create pathways for survivors to escape further persecution.



Prevent the Unjust Detention and Deportation of Survivors

- ▶ Stop overbroad enforcement practices and halt the detention and removal of survivors.
- ▶ Halt implementation of harmful DOJ regulations and rescind Board of Immigration Appeals decisions that impede immigration courts.
- ▶ End destructive enforcement practices and disentangle local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement.
- ▶ Halt implementation of policies and practices that put survivors in danger while denying them access to the system, access to counsel, and access to protection.
- ▶ End expedited removal which limits the ability of survivors to seek victim related immigration protections.
- ▶ End the detention of children in family or individual settings and halt the separation of parents from children.
- ▶ End private detention centers and the labor trafficking of detained immigrants.
- ▶ Improve language access and strengthen interpretation in immigration courts.

Protect Victim Confidentiality and Limit Information-Sharing about Survivors

- ▶ Strengthen implementation of confidentiality protections for victims and implement guidance and protective data-sharing policies and protocols.
- ▶ Create clear accountability and redress mechanisms for violations of confidentiality protections.
- ▶ Limit information-sharing about victim applications within DHS.
- ▶ Halt implementation of increased biometric and data collection and sharing of personal identifying information of non-citizens and their families.

Strengthen Training

- ▶ Conduct regular training for all DHS and DOJ immigration components on confidentiality obligations.
- ▶ Implement evidence-based training on gender-based violence and the impact of trauma for immigration case adjudicators, and require training for ICE and CBP officers.
- ▶ Strengthen training for U-visa certifiers, in particular on revised law-enforcement guidance.

Expand Access to Supports and Services

- ▶ Increase access for immigrant victims to housing by halting implementation of the HUD mixed-status rule and provide access to public housing for immigrant victims.
- ▶ Promote access to vital economic support for victims by undoing the harmful public charge rule.

- ▶ Increase Office on Violence Against Women and Office of Justice Programs funding for victim services and restore training and technical assistance related to immigration protections for victims.
- ▶ Strengthen language access and other civil rights compliance in federal grant programs.
- ▶ End the transfer of crime victim services funding and the Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement office.

Prioritize Cross-Agency Expertise and Coordination

- ▶ Prioritize expertise on the intersection of gender-based violence and immigration within the White House and throughout key agencies, including DHS and USCIS.
- ▶ Reinstate the Council to Combat Violence Against Women.
- ▶ Reinstate, resume, and strengthen DHS and DOJ engagement, transparency, and collaboration with victim advocates through stakeholder meetings and briefings.

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