

Trump's Election Spurs Increase in Volunteers and Donations



November 15, 2016 — The election of Donald Trump as the nation's 45th president ignited concern among a cross-section of Massachusetts nonprofits and their supporters that has driven an increase in volunteers, donations, and community engagement.

Since last Wednesday, Trump's campaign statements on immigration, healthcare reform, and climate change have had immediate impact on Massachusetts nonprofits that focus on those issues.

Eva Millona, executive director of the **Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition** (MIRA), a Boston-based nonprofit that comprises 130 community groups and social service agencies serving immigrants and refugees, said there "has been enormous increase in people seeking their citizenship since the election."

Volunteers signing up to help at a citizens clinic that MIRA had scheduled for this Friday doubled to 60 since last week's election.

Helena DaSilva Hughes, executive director of the **Immigrants' Assistance Center** in New Bedford, which helps integrate immigrants into the local community, said the Center has been "bombarded with phone calls since the election" from immigrant families and schools fearful of being deported by the Trump administration, as well as from potential volunteers. She added that over the last year her agency has worked with 300 legal residents applying for citizenship, triple the normal level.

Hilary Greene, director of the **Berkshire Immigrant Center** in Pittsfield, which helps settle new immigrants, reported receiving five new donations on Wednesday and that since then 15 people have offered to volunteer.

"People are saying 'We want to help refugees, whatever we can do for the Syrians,' although we are not a resettlement agency," Greene said. "The election got people thinking that the ugly aftermath has got to stop, though we haven't experienced it locally, and asking what they can do."

The **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center** (BARCC), a Cambridge-based nonprofit that works to end sexual violence, has seen an outpouring of support since Trump's win, according to a report in Metro Boston.

As of Friday, three days after the election, more than 20 people reportedly had inquired about volunteering at BARCC, up from the typical one or two inquiries a day. Donations, largely from first-time donors, have also reportedly increased. Sexual assault became an issue during the election after at least 10 women came forward to accuse Trump of sexual assault following the surfacing of a 2005 audio recording in which he boasted of groping women.

Ben Clark, executive director of **Enroot** in Somerville, a nonprofit that supports English language learners, said that it received 22 new volunteer applications since Wednesday, a 15% jump, even though its website says it is not accepting applications any more for this fall. In addition, eight donors, including five new donors, contributed since last week.

Maria Elena Letona, executive director of **Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts**, which works to develop grassroots power in Lynn, Holyoke, and Springfield, said, "What people most want is to engage directly in the work. Since the election there has been strong interest and eagerness to get more involved."

Health Care for All (HCFA), a Boston nonprofit that played a significant role in leading healthcare reform in

Massachusetts, reported an increase in calls to its hotline concerning the availability of healthcare coverage through MassHealth, which includes Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Health Connector, which is the state's marketplace for health and dental insurance.

Carol Oldham, executive director of **Massachusetts Climate Action Network**, a Boston nonprofit that works to implement clean energy policies across the state, reported that "a lot of people" have been donating funds, offering to volunteer, and liking its Facebook page since last Thursday.

Emily Norton, chapter director of the **Massachusetts Sierra Club**, said Trump's election "provides a new level of urgency to our work. We are already seeing an uptick in new members as well as inquiries to volunteer."

Kathryn Fenneman, executive director of **Tutoring Plus of Cambridge**, which provides out-of-school-time support to Cambridge youth, said volunteer applications for her organization's weekly tutoring and mentoring programs nearly doubled since the election – 15 applications to date in November vs. 14 for all of October. "People appear to be motivated to find ways to live out their commitment to their values and get more involved in their community," she said.

Jerry Rubin, president and CEO of **Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)**, a Boston-based social services organization, said that "given the election rhetoric that targeted vulnerable individuals of color, the poor, the disabled, immigrants, refugees, Muslims and many others who walk through JVS's doors every day, there is a great deal of anxiety among our inspiring clients and staff."