

# FIVE STEPS TO SAFER ELECTIONS

Election officials across the country have faced unprecedented threats and harassment. With rhetoric escalating, many election officials fear that worse may be at hand.

Threats take an agonizing toll on a target's sense of safety even if the perpetrators never move to action. We are unaware of physical violence against an official for their role in an election in the United States, though the risk may be growing. The consequences of threats and intimidation directed at election personnel are profound.

An important purpose of this document is to support election officials and law enforcement in increasing resilience to such threats.

Election Officials and Law Enforcement Professionals each work to uphold pillars of our democracy: fair and accurate voting and the just enforcement of the rule of law. Mutual support will advance that work and strengthen our republic.

A collaborative approach creates a path to increased security for election officials and our democracy. This resource suggests five essential actions that election officials and law enforcement should take together to improve security.

# 1

## MEET

Meet with counterparts and other stakeholders

# 2

## SHARE

Share experiences, contact information, election details, and expectations

# 3

## AGREE

Agree to work together regularly and define rules of engagement where voters are present

# 4

## PLAN

Plan incident response, information sharing, and crisis communications

# 5

## PRACTICE

Practice information sharing and response plans



Committee for  
**SAFE AND SECURE  
ELECTIONS**

**1**

## MEET

- Bring local partners to the table to build relationships
- Explain the need for security planning to community stakeholder groups
  - Identify and address concerns
- Consider whether to engage with other state or federal agencies

**2**

## SHARE

- The primary goals of the initial meeting are:
  - Sharing history of election worker intimidation to establish the need for cooperation
  - Understanding each other's operating environment
  - Sharing key details of election administration (calendar, locations, etc.)
  - Sharing contact information of liaisons and key staff
    - Assign duties accordingly
  - Setting expectations and boundaries, based on framework of law
  - Mapping a path forward
  - Identifying community stakeholder groups that may need to be kept informed

**3**

## AGREE

- A follow-up meeting should consider:
  - Routine security support for election operations
  - Statutory duties such as transport of secure materials
  - Other routine security oversight
  - Physical security advice
  - Security Communications
  - Rules of Engagement, especially where voters are present

**4**

## PLAN

- Plan for Incident Response to facilitate smooth operations, no matter what happens
  - Determine the scope and risk of an incident
  - Respond appropriately
  - Take protective measures for staff
  - Take preventive measures to ensure no recurrence of disturbance
- Plan crisis communications to create awareness and to deter further incidents
  - Identify, in advance, who needs to be notified in the case of an incident or emergency – include internal and external stakeholders

**5**

## PRACTICE

- Meet regularly to discuss new incidents, requirements and actions
- Conduct a tabletop exercise to role play scenarios and establish good habits and identify gaps.
  - Practice all aspects of emergency response, including communications