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CAPAS Program Evolves—In Programming and Its Name

The acronym will stay the same, but the words within will transform to meet the needs of those in migration.



By UUSC Staff on May 28, 2025

Words matter. Behaviors, ways of thinking, and impressions of groups of people are directly impacted by word choice. Advertisers know this, so do fascists! They know that the more phrases are repeated, the more they become ingrained. The more we hear them, the more

they seem to take on truth. These negative messages are powerful, but positive words can be as well.

“Sí, se puede”

“Forward”

Simple, but intentional word choices can help build safe communities. When we share our pronouns during introductions, we are using words to create space for others to share their pronouns. When we hang Black Lives Matter banners on our congregation buildings, we are showing solidarity with Black communities. When we avoid calling any humans “illegal” we change the narrative about people coming to the United States seeking safety.

In this spirit of intentionality, the name of the UUSC program formerly known as the Congregational Accompaniment Project for Asylum-Seekers (CAPAS) has changed to the **Community Accompaniment Program With Asylum-Seekers**. CAPAS supports groups as they prepare to welcome and host asylum-seeking individuals and families in their communities. The program began by working primarily with faith-based groups, but now also works with community groups dedicated to providing solidarity to newcomers. We want any welcoming group to know they are invited to participate—hence the change from “Congregational” to “**Community**.” The word “Project” changed to “**Program**” to reflect UUSC’s long-term commitment to this work.

The most important part of the name change was the smallest one—the change from “for” to “with.” The philosophy of the CAPAS program is that CAPAS groups offer solidarity and accompaniment to those seeking safety. Although groups assist those seeking asylum with basic needs such as housing and medical care, the work they do together with newcomers goes beyond charity and doing things *for* newcomers. CAPAS participants share in the struggles, the joys, and the relentless challenges of establishing a life in a new location, new culture, and often new language. Together **with** asylum-seekers they work through the challenges posed by our government that are aimed at deterring newcomers.

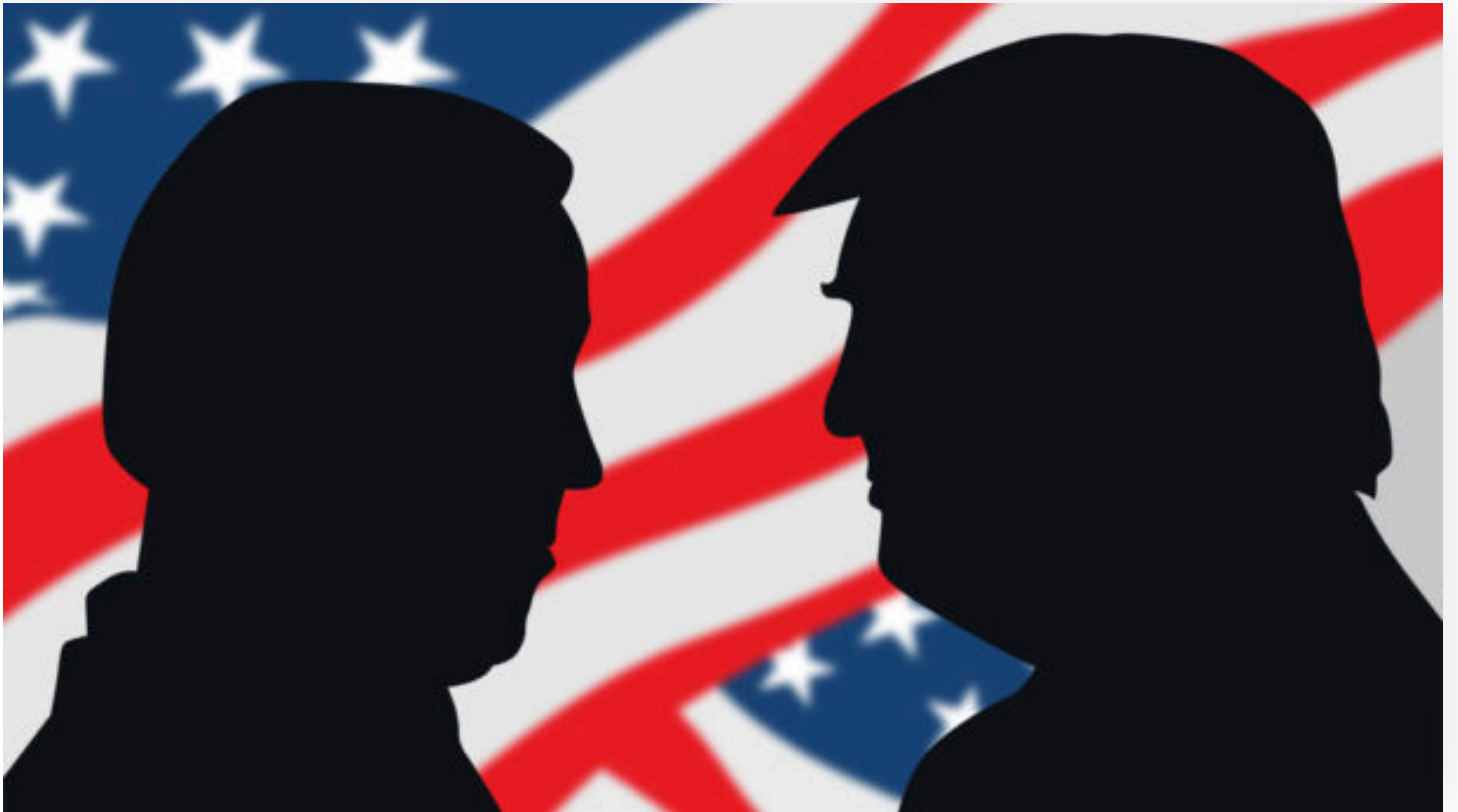
How can your word choice make your justice work more powerful? As you examine how you talk about the work you do, we invite you to explore the **resources and webinars** we offer on how to ethically and creatively tell justice-focused stories. To explore how your congregation or community group can work closely with those seeking safety to create a more just and welcoming world, please read more about the **CAPAS program** and contact us at capas@uusc.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Image Credit: UUSC

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