

Center for Constitutional Rights

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/what-we-do/our-cases/ice-citizens-academy-foia>

Policy Issue Resources

Freedom of Information Act lawsuit filed May 11, 2021. Document production is ongoing.

[Beyond Legal Aid](#), [Latino Justice](#)

[Immigrant Defense Project](#), [Organizing Communities Against Deportations](#)

In July 2020, ICE announced it would be holding a "Citizens Academy" in Chicago, Illinois where civilian invitees would be trained in various enforcement techniques used by the law enforcement agency. The invitation promised attendees would engage in scenario-based training and exercises conducted in a safe and positive environment, including, but not limited to defensive tactics, firearms familiarization, and targeted arrests." Immigrant rights organizations immediately objected to this program and called for it to be canceled. Soon after, it came to light that other components of the agency had operated similar "Citizens Academies" in past years, dating back to at least 2012.

Immigrant Defense Project in New York City and Organizing Communities Against Deportations in Chicago, along with the Center for Constitutional Rights, filed a FOIA request to shed light on these programs and get access to training materials and data regarding how ICE runs these "Citizens Academy" programs. When ICE failed to respond, we filed a lawsuit with the help of Beyond Legal Aid to compel the agency to release the documents.

This case is part of the Center for Constitutional Rights' [Open Records Project](#) and our larger work on behalf of activists and immigrant rights.

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