

Safe Spaces, Strong Voices: A Resource Toolkit for Member Institutions

Chicago Cultural Alliance | September 2025

Overview

This toolkit is designed to support cultural heritage institutions across Chicago as they navigate growing challenges facing immigrant communities. It provides practical resources to help member organizations protect their communities, communicate effectively, and respond with confidence and care.

The City of Chicago has also put together a website with resources that they are updating regularly. Please check in here for the most up-to-date information and resources.

[- Chicago Prepared](#)

Important Note: This toolkit is for informational purposes only. The Chicago Cultural Alliance is not a legal or immigration authority. We strongly recommend consulting with qualified legal professionals or immigrant advocacy organizations for specific advice. Whenever possible, we have linked to trusted partners and external expert resources.

1. ICE Response Protocols

Guiding Principles - Cultural institutions are not required to provide information to ICE without a judicial warrant. Staff should remain calm, avoid confrontation, and document any interactions. Prioritize community safety, transparency, and legal support.

Immediate Response Steps

1. **Do not engage or obstruct** ICE agents.
2. **Request identification** and whether they have a signed warrant.
3. **Inform your leadership** and legal contacts immediately.
4. **Do not share any documents or information** without legal review.
5. **Document the interaction:** time, date, names, photos (if safe), and agent behavior.

Preparedness Checklist - Designate a staff lead for ICE response. Train front desk or entry point staff. Post “Know Your Rights” signage visibly. Have legal counsel and immigrant advocacy group contacts on file.

External Resource: -

[National Immigration Law Center – Recommendations to Prepare for Potential ICE actions](#)

2. “Know Your Rights” Signage (Multilingual)

Member institutions should post visible, translated signage at entry points, event spaces, and community areas. Signage should include:

- A statement affirming the space as inclusive and culturally welcoming
- Basic rights during ICE or law enforcement encounters:
 - “You have the right to remain silent.”
 - “You do not have to open the door unless presented with a warrant signed by a judge.”
 - “You have the right to speak to a lawyer.”

Languages Available: - Spanish - Arabic - Chinese (Simplified & Traditional) - Vietnamese - Polish - Tagalog - Urdu - Somali - Additional translations available upon request

[ICIRR – Know Your Rights Resources](#)

[ACLU Know Your Rights Resources](#)

- [Downloadable templates](#) English & Spanish
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3. Staff Training Templates

CCA recommends scheduling short, scenario-based training sessions with staff and volunteers to ensure everyone is prepared.

Training Partners:

- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR)
- National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)

External Training Resources:

- [ICIRR Family Support Network Toolkit](#)
- [NIJC Community Training Materials](#)

Downloadable Templates:

- [Sample Training Agenda \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Role-Play Scenario Script \(PDF\)](#)
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4. Crisis Communications Templates

When to Use: In the event of an ICE encounter, protest activity, press inquiry, or community concern

Templates Included: - Press Statement (general response) - Community Message (email or social media) - Talking Points for Staff & Board - Media Holding Statement

Core Messaging Principles: - Reaffirm values of inclusion and safety - Do not speculate or confirm facts without legal review - Show leadership and calm without politicizing

Example Holding Statement: “[Institution Name] is committed to remaining a safe, welcoming space for all. We are aware of an incident earlier today and are actively gathering information. We are working with our partners and legal counsel and will share more as we are able.”

Downloadable Templates:

- [General Press Statement Template \(Google Doc\)](#)
- [Staff Talking Points Sample \(Google Doc\)](#)
- [Social Media Message Template \(Google Doc\)](#)

External Resource:

- [National Partnership for New Americans \(NPNA\) Messaging Resources](#)
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This toolkit will be updated regularly in collaboration with our member institutions and advocacy partners. Please share feedback or additional needs.