



ICIRR ILLINOIS COALITION
FOR IMMIGRANT AND
REFUGEE RIGHTS



For immediate release

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In Huge Victory, Immigrant Leaders Shut Down ICE “Citizen’s Academy”

(Chicago) Members of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (CAARPR) and Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) are celebrating the notice by the Chicago Field Office of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that it is postponing the “citizen’s academy” that it planned to start on September 15.

ICE had announced plans to hold the “citizen’s academy” in July. The invitation included few details, but specifically stated that the academy would include training in “firearms familiarization and targeted arrests.” This academy was an open invitation to vigilante activity targeting immigrant communities. This type of training encourages the same vigilantism we saw last week in Kenosha when a teenager wielding an AR-15 killed two Black Lives Matter protesters.

Although ICE cited COVID-19 concerns as an excuse for postponing the academy, advocates believe the real reason was the overwhelming voice of immigrant and allied communities opposing the academy. Working with Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) and the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (CAARPR), ICIRR and its members have been planning a People’s Academy bringing together 500 people outside the ICE office when the “citizen’s academy” would have started on September 15. ICIRR and its members had already flooded ICE leadership with nearly 1,000 emails demanding they shut down the academy.

“This is a great victory for our entire community and against the fear and racism that ICE embodies,” said ICIRR chief executive officer Lawrence Benito. “We beat ICE when they tried to build a detention center. We beat ICE when we passed state laws to welcome immigrants and keep them out of the ICE deportation pipeline. And now we have beat back ICE’s plans to train vigilantes in our backyard. While ICE’s academy will not take place on September 15th, the People’s Academy will.”

We know this fight is not over. We need to mobilize against the administration’s deployment of agents from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and other federal agencies attacking and detaining protesters calling for racial justice and an end to police violence. We need DHS



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to stop defying rulings by the US Supreme Court and start accepting new DACA applicants so that hundreds of thousands of immigrants get protection from deportation. We demand that DHS stop its impending hike in citizenship fees and its elimination of fee waivers, which will create more obstacles for legal permanent residents to naturalize and deny them the basic right to vote.

ICIRR, OCAD, and CAARPR remain steadfast and united in calling for the dismantling of oppressive institutions that perpetuate systemic racism and white supremacy. We demand power for Black, Brown, Indigenous and immigrant communities to decide how such systems of oppression will be replaced with conditions that guarantee full participation, rights, and investment in their lives. We call on Congress to defund ICE and Customs and Border Protection, and to fully fund and improve citizenship services. We stand with the Movement for Black Lives in calling for community control of the police through an all-elected Civilian Police Accountability Council (CPAC) as the pathway to defunding police and funding our communities instead.

On September 15th, we will gather for our People's Academy Rally and Teach In to celebrate a victory in shutting down another oppressive ICE tactic by educating and mobilizing our community to take action to defund ICE, CBP, and police at the People's Academy. The work is not over yet, so we will empower and turn out voters to the polls this fall to make our voices heard on November 3rd.

*The **Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights** is a statewide coalition of more than 100 organizations dedicated to promoting the rights of immigrants and refugees to full and equal participation in the civic, cultural, social, and political life of our diverse society. For more information, visit www.icirr.org.*

***Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD)** is an undocumented-led group that fights deportations and criminalization of Black, Brown, and immigrant communities in Chicago and surrounding areas. Find out more at www.organizedcommunities.org*

*The **Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (CAARPR)** is a Black-led, left-led organization by and for working and oppressed people. We defend the civil liberties of workers, activists, and prisoners. We struggle against white supremacy, the prison-industrial complex, and state violence. We demand community control of the police and full representation for Black people and other poor and oppressed people at all levels of government. Visit www.caarpr.org for more information.*

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