

# *U.S. immigration rights groups raise alarm over ICE plan to host Citizens Academy*

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Washington, July 11 (RHC)- In the U.S., Immigration and Customs Enforcement reportedly plans to launch a six-week so-called citizens academy class in Chicago, where the agency plans to teach attendees “defensive tactics” and “firearms familiarization” to arrest undocumented people.

Immigrant rights advocates are sounding the alarm on the initiative, which ICE hopes to expand nationwide. Silky Shah, executive director of Detention Watch Network, said: “ICE is recruiting an army of ‘citizens’ to fuel its propaganda machine and forge hatred in our communities. ... [T]he outcome of this program will be more terror unleashed upon immigrant communities and people of color.”

In other news, BuzzFeed reports the Trump administration has told a federal judge immigrant families should not be released from the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, prompting fears that immigrant children could potentially be separated from their parents once again.

The court filing comes over a week after a federal judge ordered ICE to free children in their custody by mid-July due to concerns over rising coronavirus infections. That ruling stems from a March lawsuit demanding ICE release all families held at three detention centers in Texas and Pennsylvania. Immigrant

rights advocates fear the move by the Trump administration could force immigrant parents to choose between separating from their children or exposing them to COVID-19.

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