

What should I do if ICE or law enforcement shows up at a Girl Scout event?

Answer: Stay calm. Do not approach them. Immediately notify the lead volunteer or council staff. Move children and families indoors if safe. Do not share any information or engage.

You can say, “Hello, this is a private youth event. If you have a court order or judicial warrant signed by a judge or magistrate, please let me review it. Otherwise, I cannot allow you to enter.” Request that the agent slide the warrant under the door or display it through a window and take a clear photo of the document.

Can ICE legally enter our meeting space?

Answer: Not without a valid Court order or a judicial search warrant signed by a judge or a magistrate. Per the recent Executive order by State of NJ, ICE agents are also barred from entering, accessing or using nonpublic areas of state property for enforcement operations unless authorized by a judicial warrant. If the officer provides a Court order or judicial search warrant that is signed by a judge or a magistrate, only information specified in the Court order can be provided, and only areas specified in a valid judicial search warrant can be accessed.

How do I know if a warrant is valid?

Answer: Only **judicial warrants** (signed by a judge) grant access to private spaces.

Administrative warrants (signed by ICE officers) do not. Volunteers are not expected to verify warrants - simply ask to see it, take a photo or note details, and contact council staff.

Am I allowed to ask families about their immigration status if I want to help?

Answer: No. Never ask about immigration status or make assumptions about their immigration status.

What if someone claiming to be from DHS calls or shows up?

Answer: Do not share any information and politely decline to speak. Ask for their name, agency, and contact information. Document the interaction and report it immediately to council staff.

What exactly should I document if there's an ICE-related incident?

Answer: Stick to facts: time, location, who was involved, what was said or observed, and any identifying details (e.g., vehicle numbers, badge names). Avoid speculation or assumptions.

Will I get in trouble if I don't know what to do in the moment?

Answer: No. The most important thing is to stay calm, follow the basic steps (don't engage, protect privacy, notify staff), and reach out for help. You're not expected to handle this alone.

What if a family tells me they are afraid to return to Girl Scouts?

Answer: Acknowledge their fears and validate them. Reassure them that we take safety and privacy seriously. Do not provide families with any legal advice.

Are we allowed to tell other families what happened?

Answer: No. ICE-related incidents must be treated confidentially to protect the dignity and safety of everyone involved. Only council staff will determine what, if anything, is shared publicly. If you receive any questions regarding ICE activity, please refer those questions to Council staff.

Can I physically block ICE from entering a space?

Answer: No. Never physically interfere with law enforcement. This can escalate the situation and put you and others at risk. Follow the protocol: don't engage, document, and report. You may advise that you need to take a photo of the documentation and contact council staff.

What if a child asks what's happening?

Answer: Keep your explanation age-appropriate. Say something like, "We're making sure everyone stays safe, just like during a fire drill. Let's stay together and keep calm."

What if ICE approaches me offsite, like in a parking lot or at home?

Answer: You are not required to speak to them. You can ask, "Am I free to go?" If yes, walk away. If they present a warrant, ask to see it but do not physically engage. Report the interaction to council staff.

Can volunteers be held legally responsible for not cooperating with ICE?

Answer: No, not in these contexts. As private individuals on private property, you are not legally obligated to assist ICE unless presented with a valid judicial warrant. Following council protocol protects both you and the organization.

What if another volunteer doesn't follow the protocol or shares private information?

Answer: Report it to council staff immediately. Council staff will handle any investigations relating to alleged violations of confidentiality or protocol. Reinforce the importance of safety and privacy among your team.

What happens after I submit an ICE Incident Report using the GSNNJ Incident Report?

Answer: Council staff will review it, assess any next steps, and follow up with you as needed. Further, if there is potential ICE misconduct involved, most recently the New Jersey Attorney General launched an online portal (www.njoag.gov/portal) which allows residents to upload information, photos and videos of interactions with ICE in New Jersey. We encourage you to report any misconduct here as well.