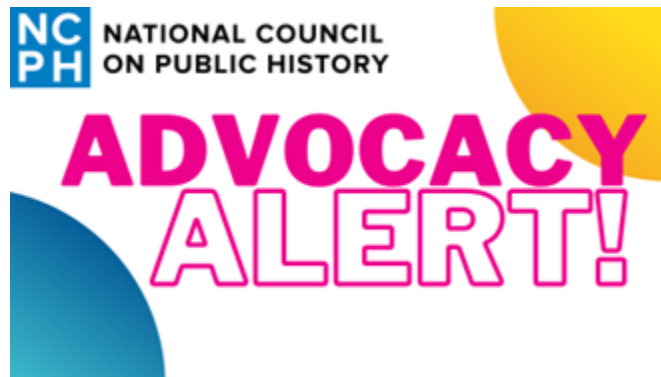


NCPH Call to Action - September 9, 2025



Increased deployment of National Guard units, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, and US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) forces are impacting public history sites—including museums, universities, and cultural organizations—across the country. Following military escalations in Los Angeles and Washington, DC, [the arrival of a large border patrol presence](#) in Chicago coincides with the start of Hispanic Heritage Month and may also affect public sites in midwestern states sharing the Lake Michigan border. This week, NCPH's Advocacy Committee of the Board shares resources to help your sites prepare for and navigate these challenges.

Ways to prepare

- Understand the difference between private space and public space—your museum or cultural institution may encompass both. This impacts whether or not federal agents can enter an area without a judicial warrant.
- Research your local and state laws to understand your legal rights and the role of local police.
- Have a plan in place for immigration enforcement action, including what to tell staff and visitors, how to document raids or interactions with federal law enforcement, and what not to do.
- Be clear on your organization or institution's community relationships and anticipate how to respond collectively in defense of those networks.

Resources

- The Chicago Cultural Alliance and the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) recorded their webinar for cultural organizations that reviews basic legal rights, how to document and report encounters with law enforcement, and strategies and resources for community defense: <https://youtu.be/8dd2I9JlBGE?si=j5eNdS6YPJG2IVBM>

- New York Lawyers for the Public Interest and the Lawyers Alliance of New York created a plain-language guide for nonprofits about your legal rights if US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) shows up at your workplace, during Trump's first term. While some of this information is specific to New York State, much of it is broadly applicable.
<https://www.nydpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Guidance-to-Nonprofits-Regarding-Immigration-Enforcement-1.pdf>
- Incorporating lessons from organizers navigating military escalations in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, and beyond, the Mapping Community Defense and Care in Our Neighborhoods Worksheet by Kelly Hayes and the Doing Justice Collaborative provides a set of questions that individuals and organizations can use to position themselves and their resources within neighborhood networks of care and protection:
<https://cryptpad.fr/file/#/2/file/Z9XTV5THc0GHxSwW9gnEVTcs/>

Stories of solidarity

- **LA Museum tells border patrol to get out.** The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles, California, decried the presence of masked federal agents on museum property while California Governor Gavin Newsom was delivering a press conference in the museum. Approximately 75 US Customs and Border Patrol Agents showed up at the museum to intimidate visitors and press, an action the museum connected to the historical intimidation and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. JANM president Ann Burroughs said, "The parallels are stark: entire communities were forcibly removed from the West Coast in 1942 and today our immigrant brothers and sisters face the terror of ICE and CBP raids across the country. It was a miscarriage of justice then, and it is a miscarriage of justice now."
<https://hyperallergic.com/1034720/los-angeles-japanese-american-national-museum-condemns-border-patrol-presence-on-grounds/>
- **Chicago leaders rally around National Puerto Rican Museum.** Federal immigration agents visited Chicago's National Puerto Rican Museum in July as a show of intimidation in advance of upcoming festivals in the neighborhood. Local officials and neighbors responded by gathering and defending the institution and the city's immigrant community. Museum president Billy Ocasio stated, "we've been down this road before with a lot of different immigration issues throughout decades, so I think we have a pretty good idea [of what could happen]...they try to push the envelope when they see that they are already intimidating someone, but if you stand up to them, you're confident about what you say, they know that you know the law."
<https://blockclubchicago.org/2025/07/09/after-federal-agents-pay-surprise-visit-to-puerto-rican-museum-humboldt-park-leaders-tell-ice-to-get-out/>