



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

MEMORANDUM FOR: Staci A. Barrera
Executive Associate Director
Management and Administration

FROM: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
(A) Executive Associate Director
Homeland Security Investigations

SUBJECT: Request for Training Exemption

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) has required that all Special Agent in Charge (SAC) offices initiate and fully implement an HSI Citizens Academy in their respective areas of responsibility. This is a community-based program that serves the purpose of fostering a greater understanding of HSI's role in the community through education that consists of discussions and scenario-based practical exercises. The current negative opinion that exists toward our agency, fueled by harmful headlines or political views, has in certain areas, created a mistrust in our communities. This campaign of misinformation has led to a challenging operating environment for our agents, one that has become an officer safety concern not experienced by other law enforcement agencies in our country. Providing a citizens' outreach program through a Citizens Academy is critical and instrumental in changing that narrative and improving our community relations. This program enhances HSI's external communications regarding community relations, public affairs, and congressional portfolios.

The HSI Citizens Academy was first launched in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 2014, expanded to Los Angeles, Tampa, New York City and subsequently implemented nationally in 2019. The Citizens Academy program has proven to be a game changer by strengthening relationships locally and nationally with minority groups, religious and civic organizations, schools, non-profits, and other business entities. These partnerships have led to a host of collaborative efforts with community leaders, who are now equipped with an informed understanding of HSI's mission and capabilities, and more importantly a deep appreciation for its workforce. Building on the existing success. It is essential that HSI remain actively engaged with and provide education on emerging issues and topics to members of the community.

The requested training in support of the HSI Citizens Academy is instrumental in addressing changes to the program since its national implementation and preparing designated representatives from the thirty (30) SAC offices, more than half of which are new to the

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program, to effectively continue the program in 2021. In addition to information sharing, HSI believes that this train-the-trainer approach is essential for the institutionalization of the program, as it will ensure program consistency throughout the agency and will allow our offices to capitalize on all resources available for this program.

As the primary investigative arm for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), HSI is responsible for border security, public safety, and homeland security. As a result, HSI will be holding critical mission-related training designated representatives from the thirty (30) SAC offices in a central location. The New Orleans office is one of HSI's most central locations that provides a direct and inexpensive way to gather all the field office representatives for this critical training.

As demonstrated in the attached agenda for the one-day training, there will be a mix of training, briefings, as well as panel discussions and breakout sessions. HSI will be efficient with both time management and the financial impact. In addition to this, the trainers will also be representatives for their local SAC offices to maximize the benefits of time, per diem, and travel costs.

In line with the October 26, 2017 memorandum updating the ICE approval process governing hosting and attending conference and conference like events, HSI believes that this training is **not** subject to the revised Conference Approval Process.

This HSI training event meets all required criteria for a training exemption:

- 1.) As the agenda indicates, all speakers/panel members/instructors are DHS employees. In addition, the speakers are either already travelers for this training or are local office Subject Matter Experts on the subject.
- 2.) The training will be conducted at the office located at the local HSI New Orleans Office. There is no cost associated with the venue/classroom space.
- 3.) The agenda covers 1 full day of planned, organized exchanges between presenters and the audience, and easily meets the definition of training in section 4101 of Title 5, United States Code.
- 4.) Costs for this training are limited to travel, transportation and per diem. HSI has ensured that efficiencies for travel are being met.

HSI requests concurrence validating that this training is **not** subject to the revised Conference Approval Process.

Concur

Date

Non-Concur

Date

Attachments:
Draft Agenda

HSI

HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS

Message from the Executive Associate Director



Launching the HSI Citizens Academy

I am pleased to announce the nationwide launch of the HSI Citizens Academy. This program is a strategic community-based program that serves the purpose of fostering a greater understanding of HSI's role in the community through discussions and scenario-based practical exercises. Over the course of a 7 to 10 week program, the attendees participate in a variety of activities that will give them a glimpse of what it is like to walk in the shoes of an HSI special agent. The participants conduct mock investigations, learn defensive tactics, and even participate in mock surveillance. Our workforce is one of the finest in all of U.S. law enforcement, and it is you, the women and men of HSI, who will take center stage in this program.

Since 2013, four (4) HSI domestic offices and one (1) Attaché office have successfully completed 14 academies establishing new partnerships and strengthening existing ones; leading to a host of collaborative efforts with community and private sector leaders, who are now equipped with an informed understanding of HSI's mission and capabilities, and more importantly a deep appreciation for its workforce. Now we will harness a program that was created by you in the field to inform the public about HSI.

The [HSI Citizens Academy](#) page on HSINet has resources to assist all offices in launching their own academy. Additionally, you can find a variety of media articles about the academies that have been held previously, as well as points of contact for the program. A national brochure is being printed and copies will be sent to all SAC offices in the coming weeks.



Thank you to HSI Puerto Rico for your innovation and forward thinking that ultimately resulted in the creation of the Citizens Academy. I would also like to thank SACs (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) as well as DAD (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) for leading this initiative, and the entire working group involved in making this happen. It was truly a team effort and our partners in the Office of Public Affairs, our Community Relations team, OPLA and the Office of Congressional Relations all had critical roles in making this possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Benner".

*Derek N. Benner
Executive Associate Director
Homeland Security Investigations*