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**Sent:** Monday, February 3, 2025 8:47 AM

**Subject:** Information & Resources – Immigration Enforcement in and Around Courthouses

**Importance:** High

***This e-mail is sent on behalf of Chief Justice Debra L. Stephens to the listservs for the presiding judges and administrators of the Superior, Juvenile, District, and Municipal courts.***

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing because I've received calls from a number of you with concerns about how to address the possibility of immigration enforcement activities in or around our courthouses in light of the recent Executive Orders. I know some courts are working through their policies and responding to media inquiries. This email is intended to assist you, by collecting and sharing guidance and resources available on the Washington Courts website, and to let you know we are in conversation with our legal advisors in the Attorney General's Office. State laws remain in place that protect the integrity of judicial proceedings and the open and safe access to our courts.

While we do not yet know whether courthouses will be targeted, I thought it would be helpful for you to have links to the existing resources on the Washington Courts website and the recent Executive Orders.

#### **Washington Laws, Court Rules and Guidance Resources**

- Courts Open to All Act: [2567-S.SL.pdf](#)
- Court Rule: [GR 38 Open Access to Courts](#)
- Reporting Requirements – see our Washington Court website: [Washington State Courts - News, Reports, Court Information](#) – click on the “Resources” banner, then the “Publications” Tab, and scroll down to **Civil Arrests at Courthouses**. There you will see information about legislative reporting requirements. These include the Law Enforcement Action Reporting Form and FAQs, as well as a Model Policy for courts to follow the Courts Open to All Act.

#### **Federal Directives to ICE & DOJ Employees**

- [Interim Guidance: Civil Immigration Enforcement Actions in or near Courthouses](#) -- the guidance includes the following:
  - ICE can act “in or near courthouses when they have credible information that leads them to believe the targeted alien(s) is or will be present at a specific location, and where such action is not precluded by laws imposed by the jurisdiction in which the enforcement action will take place.”
  - Retains certain protections/limitations in the 2018 directive, including that agent “should generally avoid enforcement actions in or near courthouses, or areas within courthouses that are wholly dedicated to non-criminal proceedings (e.g., family court, small claims court),”
  - ICE officers or agents must coordinate with the relevant local Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) office before conducting enforcement actions in or near courthouses to determine whether jurisdiction-specific legal limitations apply.
- [Interim Policy Changes Regarding Charging, Sentencing, And Immigration Enforcement](#)

As we continue to address the many open questions about the scope of immigration enforcement actions in our jurisdiction, I ask that you continue serving your community as you always have during challenging times. Courts must remain steadfast in our commitment to protect the integrity of our proceedings and ensure that individuals can access our courts without fear or intimidation.

Be assured that we will keep you updated as we learn more. I ask that you share this communication with each judge in your court and with your staff as appropriate. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any concerns.

Sincerely,  
Debra Stephens  
Chief Justice