

## ICE Raids Make Immigrant Respondents Fear Surveys

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Peace & Blessings. My name is Jeannette Bocanegra and I am the Director of Family Partnership at Justice for Families NYC. Our goals are to transform the juvenile justice system so that it is driven by the interest of youth and families and move the resources that are used on tough on crime policies and the criminalization of people of color back into the communities that are mostly impacted. This past summer we decided to partner with Ceres Policy Research to collect 100 surveys from undocumented individuals impacted by the juvenile and criminal justice system. By collecting surveys, I encountered a group of parents involved in the child welfare system with a tremendous fear of having their children taken and removed from their homes by ICE.

I'm aware of the challenges undocumented community members face, but I was surprised to learn that folks we had built relationships with while doing work in courthouses did not trust our intentions. The fear progressed when the current administration publicly threatened to increase immigration enforcement. A high sense of alert and fright with ICE enforcement and community raids in many areas with a high concentration of undocumented brothers and sisters created a sense of uncertainty and distrust. Many undocumented community members avoided addressing their legal court problems because they were terrified that immigration agents would be outside the court house waiting to arrest them. Some folks even fear leaving their homes to go to work, creating additional hardship and stress for families. A mom shared with us that she has nightmares of her children being taken away by ICE while in school.

As the media increased political awareness, folks didn't feel comfortable filling out the survey unless it was being conducted at a church. By partnering with Ceres Policy Research, I became better informed on ways to support and encourage folks to seek legal assistance and guidance, with love, empathy, and compassion.

***Jeannette Bocanegra** recently transitioned to become the Director of Family Partnership with Justice for Families. Prior to this role, she was an active educational activist and parent organizer who worked to mobilize parents for more than twenty years. For more information on the impact of ICE raids in courthouses, you can download Ceres' latest report on the chilling effect of ICE raids in courthouses [here](#). For any questions, contact Mitzia Martinez at [mmartinez@cerespolicyresearch.com](mailto:mmartinez@cerespolicyresearch.com).*