



Federal Bureau of Investigation

FBI Citizens' Academy

Background

In 1993, the Phoenix Division began a Citizens' Academy to develop and/or enhance the relationship between the FBI and the citizens of Phoenix. They solicited the input of various community leaders and visited local police agencies to discuss the ongoing program.

Academy Goals and Objectives

- To be a catalyst for improving the quality of life within the individual communities through law enforcement related and awareness programs.
- To project a positive image of the FBI in the communities we serve, and newly established partnerships and initiatives within these venues.
- To improve our understanding of the individual community by establishing the exchange of information between the FBI and the community.
- To identify crime problems affecting specific communities not currently being addressed, and thereafter, develop proactive initiatives to address crime problems identified.

Academy Purpose

The Citizens' Academy is a stimulating program that gives business, religious, civic, and community leaders an inside look at the FBI. During the Academy, students participate in firearms demonstrations and practical problems involving the collection and preservation of physical evidence; are introduced to the structure and operation of an FBI field office and resident agency; are provided an overview of the legal basis for the FBI's jurisdiction and issues relating to congressional oversight; and learn the services the FBI provides to local and state law enforcement agencies.

The six to eight week Academy is designed to give citizens an overview of FBI and Department of Justice policies and procedures. It is recommended that a Division operate an Academy with a minimum total of 18 hours. The curriculum and teaching methods are similar to the traditional methods used at the FBI Academy, but the weekly sessions are not designed to make the participants an FBI Special Agent. **The Academy classes are taught by FBI staff, and/or others deemed appropriate by the division's Special Agent in Charge (SAC).** It is the goal of the FBI Citizens' Academy to foster a greater understanding of the role of Federal law enforcement in the community through frank discussion and education.

Academy Schedule

It is recommended that a division choose to operate at least one Academy a year. The length of each session is six to eight weeks; this can include one Saturday segment. Classes meet in the evenings at the FBI facility, school, university, or an offsite building. Upon completion of the Academy, a graduation ceremony may be held in honor of the graduates. The coordination of the Academy should be assigned to the Community Outreach Specialist (COS) or Coordinator.

Academy Curriculum

The curriculum is design to educate the students about the mission, goals, history and inner workings of the FBI. The following topics should be included in the Citizens' Academy curriculum:

- Terrorism
- Foreign Counterintelligence
- Cyber Crime
- Public Corruption
- Major Thefts/Violent Crimes
- Field Intelligence Group
- White Collar Crime Program
- InfraGard
- Civil Rights
- Recruitment
- Citizens' Academy Alumni Foundation

The following are additional recommendations which may be incorporated in order to establish a successful program:

- SWAT Demonstration
- Evidence Response Team Demonstration
- Mock Polygraph Examination
- Defensive Tactics
- Range Day

Entrance Requirements

Potential candidates for the Citizens' Academy may include business, civic, religious, or community leaders, who meet the following criteria:

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must have no prior felony convictions
- Must live or work within the jurisdiction of the local FBI field office; and
- Must pass a security check assessment

Any of the above requirements can be waived upon review and approval of the SAC.

Selection Procedure

FBI Citizens' Academy students are selected by the SAC, along with the assistance from the COS through a nomination process. Alumni Foundations are prohibited from being part of the selection process. If selected, the students are notified by letter along with an application to ascertain their interest and are requested to submit the appropriate documents to the COS. Upon completion of the security check assessment and approval for an interim security clearance, the student is officially notified of selection. **Enrollment is a minimum of 20 students, but not to exceed 50 students per session.**

Academy Guidelines

Contained in the Coordinator's Manual are the Federal rules and regulations relative to procurement matters; use of the FBI name, seal, and initials; and other issues which will impact the Academy's development. Particular attention should be paid to the portions entitled, "COP Funds," "Funds Restrictions," "Fund Raising," and "Leave-Behind Items." A newly appointed COS is encouraged to review the manual and seek guidance from FBIHQ CRU.

Academy Resources

Divisions implementing the Academy are encouraged to use all available FBI resources. For example, the primary source for information is on the [redacted] [redacted] Another source of information is on the [redacted] managed by the Online Print Unit. It is also recommended that the COS keep in contact with one another to share thoughts and ideas.

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Since the FBI has limited funds to operate an FBI Citizens' Academy, each Division wishing to establish an Academy must do so with otherwise available monies. Unfortunately, paying for such programs with private-sector funding is prohibited since the FBI may not augment its appropriations from outside sources without specific statutory authority. This doesn't mean that the entire expense of operating a Citizens' Academy course is borne by the FBI. On the contrary, while the FBI does not charge any fee or "tuition" for the program, it is responsible for covering certain individual expenses associated with participation. These costs may vary from Division to Division depending on the nature and content of the course that the Division sponsors.

For example, a firearms session is often included as part of an Academy Program. One SAC may decide to not only use Bureau weapons during the sessions, but also to use Bureau ammunition. Another SAC may determine that each participant will be asked to supply his or her own ammunition. Both decisions are legally defensible. However, to donate funds to the FBI to cover the cost of the ammunition or chartering a non government organization to raise monies to buy the ammunition for the FBI would be illegal.

Academy Restrictions

OGC advised the following: "With respect to purchasing food and refreshments to be served to attendees at the FBI Citizens' Academy, appropriated funds may not be used to pay the travel, transportation, or subsistence expenses of private parties at meetings, seminars, or such other gatherings without specific statutory authority. Further, there is a distinction made between the general authority to sponsor a seminar, conference, or other such gatherings and specific authority to overcome the prohibition on furnishing food and refreshments to attendees. While authorized to incur expenses in furtherance of the COP as such a program is in furtherance of the Bureau's mission for the reasons set forth, the FBI has no specific statutory authority to pay for food and refreshments to be served to attendees at the FBI Citizens' Academy."

OGC suggest that Divisions use representation funds to purchase food and refreshments for the attendees. OGC advised, "From this general appropriation, each field office is allotted representation funds for the purpose of promoting liaison and other official activities that further the interests of the FBI, such as hosting events for local community leaders and serving food and refreshments at such events. Therefore, each Division may seek approval from the appropriate deciding official within its Division to use representation funds to pay for foods and refreshments to be served to the attendees at the FBI Citizens' Academy, should such funds be available."

Academy Alumni Association and/or Foundations

OGC advised that with limited exceptions (such as undercover operations) the FBI has no authority to charter or establish non governmental organizations, even if doing so facilitates the outreach program. Thus, the FBI cannot establish a FBI Citizens' Academy Foundation to raise money to fund Citizens' Academy Programs. Private Citizens, including Citizens' Academy "graduates" may, however, establish such foundations on their own. The FBI cannot ask for donations from these entities or be too closely aligned or involved with them. However, this does not preclude the foundations on their own initiative from voluntarily offering donations to the FBI to be processed under Department of Justice gifts acceptance guidelines. The FBI may cooperate with such foundations to the same extent that it does with other similarly situated community organizations but we cannot give them preferential treatment, participate in their management, or direct their operations.

Pursuant to Bureau policy revisions set forth in an EC, dated January 21, 2000, and subject to limitations set forth below, the name "FBI Citizens Academy" within the official name of a private CA is legally unobjectionable, and may be approved at the discretion of the SAC of the field division. The SAC of each field division should determine that the CA is an appropriate group to use the name "FBI Citizens' Academy" to ensure that the use of the name by the CA is appropriate. The name "FBI Citizens' Academy" may be used on the letterhead of the CA, and in the CA's correspondence. The CA shall use a prominent disclaimer "The CA is a private, nonprofit organization, and is not a part of the FBI". This disclaimer should appear on all print and electronic media. Any use of the name or initials of the FBI by the CA may not mislead members of the public to assume that the CA is a part of the FBI. Specifically, the CA must agree not to use its relationship to the FBI to advance any fundraising or lobbying efforts.

Additionally, the FBI must not yield control to a foundation of the process by which individuals are selected for participation in this or any other FBI Community Outreach Program. Divisions must select participants from all sectors of the community, not just from persons recommended by a particular organization, such as a foundation. Similarly, although possible security risks or potential embarrassment to the FBI are not accepted into the Program or are not permitted into FBI space, we cannot screen candidates for foundation membership.