For University Staff: What to do if federal law enforcement comes to your office

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There are different reasons federal law enforcement agents might come in person to a university office. Do not assume they are immigration agents. These guidelines are not intended to be legal advice, but can help you understand how to work with agents in a way that respectfully follows our rights and responsibilities.

1. Be Prepared
   - If you are not sure who in your department is responsible for responding to federal agents, ask.
   - Train staff, especially those answering phones or at reception areas, how to respond.
   - Keep a contact list of staff and/or legal counsel responsible for assisting with law enforcement inquiries. Include home, mobile and office contact information.

2. Government Inquiries in Person
   - Interact with the agent(s) in a calm and polite manner.
   - If not volunteered by the agent(s), ask for their name(s), agency affiliation and to see their identification. You can write the information down.
   - If not volunteered, ask them the purpose of their visit (e.g., speak with someone in charge, request documents). They may, but are not required to, explain the law enforcement reason for the visit.
   - Tell them you will connect them to the person who can assist them. Contact the person in your department who is responsible for responding to law enforcement requests.

3. Think twice before answering questions
   - You are not obligated to consent to an interview or answer questions.
   - If you voluntarily consent to an interview, remember to make answers clear and unambiguous. If you make a mistake, correct it immediately.
   - Do not share personally identifying information (for example, patient or student information).

4. Responding to a Warrant or Subpoena
   - Ask for the agent’s name and credentials.
   - Ask to see a copy of the warrant or subpoena.
   - Tell them you are not hindering their process but need to contact the staff and/or legal counsel responsible for responding to warrants/subpoenas. Contact them immediately.

5. Understanding Warrants
   - A warrant does not mean you have to answer questions.
   - A search warrant allows law enforcement officers to enter the place described in the warrant to look for and take items identified in the warrant.
   - An arrest warrant allows law enforcement to take an individual into custody.
   - A warrant must have a judge’s name, the address of the place to be searched, date and description of any items being searched and the name of the agency conducting the search or arrest.
   - A warrant of deportation/removal is an administrative warrant and does not grant authority to enter a home or other building to make a search or arrest.
   - Generally, a subpoena to produce records or information would allow time to contact legal counsel and time to produce the required information.

For more information: ACLU on Searches & Warrants and the UMN Office of General Counsel

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