



What is Immigration and Customs Enforcement?

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is a federal law enforcement agency under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). ICE was formed under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, following the events of 9/11. ICE, with an annual budget of \$6 billion, is the largest investigative arm of the DHS and a contributor to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force. ICE has more than 20,000 employees in 400 offices in the U.S., and 46 foreign countries.

What are the law enforcement components of ICE?

- **Homeland Security Investigations (HSI):** This is the primary investigative arm of DHS, consisting of more than 10,000 employees who are assigned to 235 cities throughout the United States. HSI special agents investigate violations of more than 400 U.S. laws that threaten national security and are responsible for disrupting and dismantling transnational crime organizations and terrorist networks.
- **Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO):** ERO manages all aspects of the immigration enforcement process, including identification and arrest, domestic transportation, detention, bond management, and supervised release. ERO manages the “Secure Communities” program which identifies removable immigrants located in jails and prisons and is responsible for deporting undocumented individuals to their country of origin.

How is leadership at ICE determined?

The Director of ICE is appointed at the sub-cabinet level by the President of the United States, confirmed by the U.S. Senate, and reports directly to the Secretary of Homeland Security.

What is the difference between ICE And Custom and Border Protection (CBP)?

ICE and CBP are both components of DHS, but CBP enforces customs and immigration law at and near the border, whereas ICE operates at the border as well as the interior of the U.S. CBP is tasked with keeping terrorists and weapons out of the U.S.; ICE is tasked with investigating cross-border crime and illegal immigration.

Does Ohio have an ICE field office?

No. The ERO Field Office in Detroit, Michigan includes Ohio in its “area of responsibility.” Ohio does have an [Office of the Principal Legal Advisor](#) in Brooklyn Heights; this division provides legal advice, training and services to support the ICE mission and defend the interests of the U.S. in the administrative and federal courts.

Do any county jails in Ohio have contracts with ICE?

Yes. As of 2024, Geauga and Seneca counties have contracts with ICE, using their jails to detain people who are in ICE custody. The counties are paid by the federal government for each person they hold on immigration charges, which financially incentivizes signing on to the program.

How else can state and local police officers collaborate with ICE?

There is a program called 287(g) which is a set of partnerships between ICE and state and local law enforcement agencies that effectively turns local officials into ICE agents. Under this program, local law enforcement offices are contracted to assist the federal government in the apprehension and detainment of undocumented persons.

Does Ohio currently have any 287(g) contracts with ICE?

Not currently. However, as recently as November 2024, Sheriff Jones of Butler County has expressed public desire to house ICE ‘prisoners’ in the county jail. This is the last [287\(g\) MOU agreement](#) between Butler County and ICE.

What is an ICE detainer?

When local or state law enforcement agencies arrest someone they suspect to be undocumented, they may contact ICE, and ICE may issue a detainer, or an “immigration hold.” This is a request for local authorities to detain the person in question for an additional 48 hours after they would otherwise be released from jail, giving ICE the opportunity to determine if they will funnel them into the federal deportation system.

Could ICE contract with Ohio's private prisons?

Technically, yes. In 2021, President Biden issued an executive order ending private prison contracts with the federal government; however, the order failed to include people without documentation in the list of who can and cannot be detained in private prisons for federal purposes. Relatedly, in 2022, the U.S. Marshal Service, which uses the Northeast Ohio Correction Center (a private prison) to house individuals arrested by federal agencies, stopped holding individuals for ICE; however, this could change.