



Fact Sheet: Transforming the Immigration Enforcement System

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Over the past three years, this Administration has undertaken an unprecedented effort to transform the immigration enforcement system into one that focuses on public safety, border security and the integrity of the immigration system. As the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues to focus its enforcement resources on the removal of individuals who pose a national security or public safety risk, including immigrants convicted of crimes, violent criminals, felons, and repeat immigration law offenders, we have taken a number of steps to transform our immigration enforcement system.

- **April 30, 2009:** U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) released a [new worksite enforcement strategy](#) which moved away from large worksite raids and toward more effective auditing and investigations.
- **July 10, 2009:** Secretary Napolitano [announced reforms](#) to the 287(g) program, including increased training, data collection, and the standardization of the agreements with state and local law enforcement agencies.
- **August 2009:** DHS created two new offices within ICE, the Office of Detention Policy and Planning as well as an independent Office of Detention Oversight, to focus on oversight and provide specific attention to detainee care. ICE also established two advisory boards of national and local stakeholders. These working groups have met for nearly three years and provide feedback to ICE on a variety of detention issues. You can learn more about the numerous detention reforms implemented by ICE, by [clicking here](#).
- **September 2009:** ICE issued [new protocols](#) to increase transparency in the reporting and notification of detainee deaths.
- **January 4, 2010:** ICE revised its policy for granting parole to individuals found to have a credible fear of persecution if they establish their identities, pose neither a flight risk nor a danger to the community, and have no additional factors weighing against release.
- **June 30, 2010:** ICE Director John Morton issued a [Memorandum](#) entitled “Civil Immigration Enforcement: Priorities for the Apprehension, Detention, and Removal of Aliens” articulating ICE’s commitment to prioritizing the use of its enforcement personnel, detention space, and removal resources to promote national security, public safety, and border security—with the removal of aliens who pose a danger to national security or a risk to public safety constituting the highest enforcement priority.
- **July 2010:** ICE launched the first-ever online detainee locator system enabling attorneys, family, and friends to find a detainee in ICE custody and to access information about the facility, including its location and visiting hours.
- **August 20, 2010:** ICE issued a Memorandum entitled “Guidance Regarding the Handling of Removal Proceedings of Aliens with Pending or Approved Applications or Petitions”—outlining a framework for ICE to request expedited adjudication of an application or petition (I-130) for an alien in removal proceedings that is pending before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) if the approval of such an application or petition would provide an immediate basis for relief for the alien.
- **June 17, 2011:** On June 17, 2011, ICE Director Morton issued [a new memorandum that provides guidance for ICE law enforcement personnel and attorneys](#) regarding their authority to exercise prosecutorial discretion where appropriate to ensure greater consistency in the treatment of individuals who do not fit within ICE’s enforcement priorities.
- **June 17, 2011:** ICE, in consultation with the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, developed [a new policy designed to protect victims of domestic violence and other crimes](#), and to ensure that these crimes continue to be reported and prosecuted. This policy directs all ICE officers and attorneys to exercise appropriate discretion to ensure that victims of and witnesses to crimes are not penalized by removal.
- **August 18, 2011:** ICE initiated an unprecedented review of all immigration cases pending in the immigration courts and incoming cases. [fact sheet](#)
- **November 7, 2011:** USCIS issued revised guidance on referral of cases to ICE and issuance of NTAs.
- **November 17, 2011:** ICE issued further guidance on how they would conduct the case by case review.
- **January 4, 2012:** ICE issued a new policy related to transferring individuals between detention facilities that established that if an individual has family-members or counsel nearby, he/ she will not be transferred absent

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extraordinary circumstances.

- **February 2012:** ICE issued its detention standards, now known as the Performance-Based National Detention Standards 2011, to improve medical and mental health services, increase access to legal services and religious opportunities, improve communication with detainees with limited English proficiency, improve the process for reporting and responding to complaints, and increase recreation and visitation.
- **February 7, 2012:** ICE announced the creation of their first Public Advocate to assist individuals and community organizations in addressing complaints and inform stakeholders of ICE policies and initiatives.
- **March 13, 2012:** ICE opened its first-ever designed and built civil detention center in Karnes City, Texas. The Karnes County Civil Detention Center is a civil immigration detention facility for low-risk, minimum security detainees.
- **May 2012:** ICE, in collaboration with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties created new trainings for state and local law enforcement on issues related Secure Communities. The goal is to provide actionable information to state and local law enforcement about the civil rights and civil liberties issues that may arise when ICE begins using federal information sharing capability through Secure Communities in their jurisdictions.
- **May 2012:** ICE, after consultation with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, promulgated a new directive on Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention and Response in order to comprehensively address and clarify procedures at the agency level relating to investigation, coordination, and response of sexual assault and abuse in immigration detention facilities.
- **May 17, 2012:** DHS announced it would undertake its own rulemaking to apply the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) to immigrant confinement facilities, building upon the zero tolerance policy for sexual assault and abuse in confinement facilities that DHS previously adopted.
- **June 15, 2012:** Secretary Napolitano announces that effective immediately, certain young people who were brought to the United States through no fault of their own as children, do not present a risk to national security or public safety, and meet several key criteria will be eligible for relief from removal from the country or from entering into removal proceedings. Those who demonstrate that they meet the criteria will be eligible to receive deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal. [Click here for the press release.](#)

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