

ICE black sites exposed: Secret detention network operated for years under both parties

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A report by the *Colorado Times Recorder* (CTR) following a Freedom of Information Act request revealed that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operates at least 170 “hold rooms” - unofficial, undisclosed detention sites - across forty-nine states and four U.S. territories, excluding only West Virginia, the District of Columbia, and American Samoa. 130 of these are located in ICE field offices or sub-offices, locations where immigrants often must report for routine check-ins with ICE. Nearly every major American city has at least one hold room.

Predictably, conditions of these black sites are deplorable. Several sites are nothing more than windowless warehouses, or low-quality structures near airports. Detainees are not provided beds, and must sleep on floors or chairs; and these facilities are not required to even have toilets.

According to analysis by CTR and No Concentration Camps in Colorado (NOCCC), these secret and inhumane detention cells have held more than 140,000 immigrants from January through October 2025. Immigrants who have been sequestered to these sites are frequently held for weeks at a time. 37 of these facilities held immigrant detainees for over a month, with one detainee being held for 292 days in Newark, New Jersey.

109 of these black sites have held at least one child. The New York site has held 927 children, and the Phoenix site has held 749. A one-year old girl was held at one of Colorado’s nine hold rooms. Both the New York and Phoenix locations are located in federal buildings housing government immigration offices, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services offices and Immigration Courts.

Under conditions of deep popular hostility to the Democrats and Republicans alike, and growing

sympathy for socialism, the Democrats first established this secret detention network and both parties have maintained and expanded it for the past 15 years.

The detention network has existed since at least 2011, under the Obama administration, and has been maintained and expanded by every administration since. In the final 16 months of the Biden administration, more than 80,000 people were detained in these facilities nationwide. After Trump’s return to the White House, their use surged even further, with more than 140,000 detainees held in ICE “hold rooms” between January and October 2025 alone. What Trump inherited was not a new apparatus, but a long-standing bipartisan system of clandestine detention, which his administration has escalated dramatically.

The Trump administration has increased the twelve-hour rule to 72 hours, coinciding with the ICE arrest quota increasing to 3,000 per day. From January 25, 2025 to October 25, 2025, more than 5,000 people were held in these ICE black sites for more than 72 hours. The Krome site near Miami alone has held more than 1,300 people for more than 72 hours.

The Krome site is located at the Krome Service Processing Center, an official ICE detention facility that has long been the site of abuse and detainee deaths. Together, the Krome, Dallas, and Montgomery, Texas black sites account for more than 38,000 detentions, over a quarter of all recorded detentions in ICE’s secret detention network in the first ten months of 2025.

Given ICE’s planned \$38.3 billion expansion of its concentration camp network, the only rational conclusion following the revelation that ICE also operates a network of secret black sites is that these, too, will grow and expand.

Detainees held at black sites are disappeared and are therefore placed outside the reach of the law, without

access to legal remedies such as *habeas corpus* through which they might challenge their detention. More than 20 years after the exposure of the US government's global network of secret prisons in the "war on terror," these same anti-democratic methods are increasingly being deployed within the United States itself.

To keep the black sites and for-profit concentration camps full, the federal government is paying millions of dollars to local police to function as immigration bounty hunters.

ICE's 287(g) program - part of a law enacted by Bill Clinton in 1996 - authorizes the Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security to enter formal agreements with state and local governments for immigration enforcement. The "Task Force Model" deputizes local police as ICE agents, granting them authority to carry out federal immigration law; the "Jail Enforcement Model" deputizes police to identify, process and hold immigrants it arrests; the "Warrant Service Officer Model" authorizes police to serve and execute administrative warrants on immigrants in local jails; and finally, the "Tribal Task Force Model" authorizes tribal law enforcement agencies to enforce immigration laws. As of 2025, more than 1,000 287(g) agreements are in effect, and more than 400 police departments have recently negotiated new or expanded agreements with ICE.

Bipartisan support for Trump's anti-immigrant agenda has provided ICE with an essentially unlimited budget. As a result, ICE has the capacity to allocate tens of millions of dollars as incentives and awards to local law enforcement agencies that participate in its 287(g) programs, paying off local and state police to turn them into immigration bounty hunters.

Recent reporting from Ken Klippenstein found that the Arkansas State Police receives a base award of more than \$4.2 million dollars for more than 550 task force officers, with an anticipated \$8.25 million to come. Oklahoma's Department of Public Safety has been awarded nearly \$5.4 million for 704 officers, alongside a \$1.65 million salary modification and more than \$38 million in pending line item funding. The Louisiana State Police receives a base award of \$880,025 for 104 officers, plus an additional \$45,000 salary modification. Florida law enforcement has received the largest payouts, with \$89 million being paid out as incentive funding to the Florida Department

of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Division of Highway Patrol alone.

ICE funding for immigration bounty hunters reaches even small and obscure state agencies, such as the nine task force officers at the Point Comfort Police Department in Texas. The Key Colony Beach Police Department in Florida and the Coward Police Department in South Carolina can each boast only a single officer, but together receive more than \$240,000 in ICE funding. A single officer in Bradley County Constable District 7 in Tennessee was awarded \$107,525, followed by a salary bump of \$11,500, and the District is now apparently to receive more than \$1.8 million in additional ICE funding.

Significantly, neither the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office nor the Minnesota State Patrol has a 287(g) agreement with ICE, but that did not prevent them from attacking and arresting protestors at the Whipple Federal Building in Minneapolis, effectively functioning as state and local auxiliaries for immigration thugs.

The exposure of ICE's nationwide network of clandestine detention sites, together with the lucrative payouts used to recruit state and local police as immigration bounty hunters, lays bare the class and bipartisan character of the repression of immigrants in the United States. The entire police apparatus operates in concert with the immigration police and cannot be relied on to defend the democratic rights of workers, regardless of immigration status. None of these agencies can be "reformed" to serve the interests of workers. They must be abolished, along with the capitalist system they defend.



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