

Secretary Napolitano and ICE Assistant Secretary Morton Announce New Immigration Detention Reform Initiatives



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[Fact Sheet: ICE Detention Reform: Principles and Next Steps \(PDF, 3 pages - 65 KB\)](#)
[Immigration Detention Overview and Recommendations](#)

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Assistant Secretary John Morton today announced new initiatives as part of the Department's ongoing immigration detention reform efforts—enhancing the security and efficiency of ICE's nationwide detention system while prioritizing the health and safety of detainees.

"These new initiatives will improve accountability and safety in our detention facilities as we continue to engage in smart and effective enforcement of our nation's immigration laws," said Secretary Napolitano.

"These new reforms will establish consistent standards across the country, prioritizing risk, strengthening oversight and increasing efficiency in our immigration detention system," Assistant Secretary John Morton said.

The reform efforts address the seven major components of the detention system outlined in a comprehensive review conducted by Dora Schriro, the former ICE Office of Detention Policy and Planning Director, over the past several months, focusing on greater federal oversight, specific attention to detainee care, and uniformity at detention facilities.

Each of the reforms announced today are expected to be budget neutral or result in cost savings through reduced reliance on contractors to perform key federal duties and additional oversight of all contracts.

Secretary Napolitano and Assistant Secretary Morton also announced that Phyllis Coven will serve as Acting Director of the Office of Detention Policy and Planning while a nationwide search for a permanent director is underway. Coven, who has 17 years of experience in the federal government and international community, comes to ICE from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Throughout her career, Coven has chaired numerous detention initiatives at the Department of Justice and the former Immigration and Naturalization Service.

To **better manage all detainee populations**, ICE will centralize all contracts under ICE headquarters' supervision. Currently, the majority of more than 300 active contracts are negotiated and managed by disparate ICE field offices. ICE will also aggressively monitor and enforce contract performance in order to ensure contractors comply with terms and conditions—especially those related to conditions of confinement.

To **advance the effective use of alternatives to detention (ATD)**, ICE will develop an assessment tool to identify aliens suitable for ATD and will submit a plan to Congress this fall to implement an ATD program nationwide. ICE will continue to work with the Department of Justice to expedite the adjudication of ATD cases to reduce costs.

To **better manage detention operations**, ICE will develop a risk assessment and custody classification, which will enable detainees to be placed in an appropriate facility. ICE will pursue detention strategies based on assessed risk and reduce costs by exploring the use of converted hotels, nursing homes and other residential facilities.

To **better manage special populations and improve program management**, ICE will house non-criminal, non-violent populations, such as newly arriving asylum seekers, at facilities commensurate with risk and expand programs available including legal support services.

To **enhance detainee medical care**, ICE will devise and implement a medical classification system that will improve awareness of an individual detainee's medical and mental health conditions from the time the individual first enters detention.

To **ensure accountability** and reduce reliance on contractors, ICE will more than double the number of federal personnel providing onsite oversight at the facilities where the majority of detainees are housed. ICE will also accelerate efforts to provide an online search system for attorneys, family members and others to locate detained aliens.

On Aug. 6, 2009, Assistant Secretary Morton announced the first steps in ICE's detention overhaul—including the creation of the Office of Detention Policy and Planning, the formation of two advisory groups comprised of local and national stakeholders and the establishment of the Office of Detention Oversight, an independent apparatus to inspect facilities and investigate detainee grievances.

For more information on the ICE detention reforms, visit www.dhs.gov.

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