

## OFFICE OF THE **Immigration Detention Ombudsman**

*The Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman independently examines immigration detention to promote and support safe, humane conditions.*

### **Welcome to the OIDO newsletter!**

The Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO) will send out an e-newsletter quarterly, or as needed to tell you about new developments in our office.

For this inaugural issue, we are introducing our Office:

OIDO is a new, independent, neutral office operating within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), but not within either U.S. Customs and Border Protection or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The Ombudsman's Office was established by Congress (Sec.106 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, Public Law 116-93). Our vision is for OIDO to be recognized as an objective, credible resource for those impacted by immigration detention, creating a more effective and humane system.

We serve as an independent office to investigate, resolve, and provide redress for problems related to the conditions of detention or misconduct by DHS personnel or contractors. OIDO assists individuals with complaints about the potential violation of immigration detention standards or misconduct by DHS (or contract) personnel; provides oversight of immigration detention facilities, including conducting

unannounced inspections and reviewing contract terms; and examines detention policy and standards.

### **OIDO can help with:**

- Violation of an individual detainee’s rights
- Potential misconduct
- Excessive force
- Violation of law, standards of professional conduct, contract terms, or policy related to immigration detention committed by ICE or CBP staff or contractors

### **OIDO cannot:**

- Communicate with anyone but the detainee or representative about a case without written permission
- Review or adjudicate requests to reconsider a detention determination, the reasons for detention, the denial of a request for release or parole, or the standards for considering requests for release
- Review or adjudicate requests to reconsider determinations made by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, such as credible fear determinations

## **A Note from the Acting Ombudsman, David Gersten:**

I am honored to serve as the Acting Ombudsman for Immigration Detention. My team and I have made a lot of progress since our creation in 2019, and we are excited to have an expanding presence outside of Washington, DC, to ensure humane conditions in immigration detention. We now have four divisions you may encounter in working with our office (see chart below), plus a division that handles our operations and resource management. We hope to hear from you about how we can better achieve our goals as we become fully operational in all detention spaces. This is a big mission, and as many of you know, there is no shortage of work in this space. I am glad to have met some of you both virtually and out in the field, and I look forward to meeting many more of you in the months to come. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to our office.

### **OIDO Program Offices**

#### **Case Management**

Makes regular visits to facilities to provide people in detention with the opportunity to speak with a case

#### **Detention Oversight**

Conducts announced and unannounced inspections of immigration detention

#### **Policy & Standards**

Collaborates with DHS and component-level policy offices to provide innovative and

#### **External Relations**

Engages with stakeholders within and outside of government, at the local, state, and national levels

manager	facilities	independent feedback and perspectives	
Conducts intake, triage, and resolution of complaints on-site	Records agency compliance with laws, standards, contract terms, and policies	Develops and provides policy, training, and technical assistance solutions for detention facilities	Provides insight into the detention system and OIDO's processes
Complaints may be submitted for free by detainees or their representatives in person in a facility, or soon by email, mail, and online	Makes recommendations for improvement	Conducts surveys of facilities to identify policy gaps and potential barriers to high performance and accountability	Brings to the Department stakeholders' concerns about the conditions of detention and the kind of assistance needed from OIDO and DHS more broadly—what they think has been missing that will help detained immigrants

## Case Management in Action

OIDO has begun accepting individual complaints in some detention centers and will soon expand across the country. To date, OIDO immigration detention case managers have addressed allegations about medical care, access to legal services, and quality of life, among other issues of significance to detained people. Having case managers at the ground level on rotation at detention facilities allows OIDO to respond quickly to complaints.

An OIDO case manager was asked for assistance in securing a medical appointment for an individual at the Stewart Detention Center, and the person was seen by medical staff the next day. In Arizona, the case manager heard from detainees in a particular pod that one shift of officers was not giving that pod outdoor recreation time. After the case manager raised this with both ICE and the contracted staff at the facility, that pod's outdoor recreation time was restored.

An attorney reached out to OIDO after being contacted by a client's concerned family members who could not find the person on the detainee locator, and OIDO was able to assist with finding the individual's location. These are just some examples of the hundreds of complaints case managers have addressed in the short time we have been accepting cases.

OIDO immigration detention case managers are currently accepting in-person case submissions from individuals detained at the following detention facilities:

- Adelanto ICE Processing Center

Desert View Annex

- Mesa Verde ICE Processing Facility
- Golden State Annex
- Eloy Detention Center
- Florence Service Processing Center
- El Paso Service Processing Center
- Otero County Processing Center
- Torrance County Detention Facility
- Cibola County Correctional Center
- Otay Mesa Detention Center
- Imperial Regional Detention Facility Center
- Aurora Contract Detention Facility
- Laredo Detention Center
- Port Isabel Service Processing Center
- South Texas Family Residential Center
- South Texas ICE Processing Center
- Rio Grande Detention Center
- Prairieland Detention Facility
- Montgomery Processing Center
- Joe Corley Detention Facility
- IAH Polk Adult Detention Facility
- Eden Detention Center
- Rolling Plains Detention Center
- Bluebonnet Detention Facility
- Kay County Detention Center
- Moore Detention Center
- Northwest Processing Center
- Adams County Detention Facility
- Alexandria Staging Facility
- Allen Parish Public Safety Complex

Jackson Parish Correctional Center

- LaSalle ICE Processing Center
- Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center
- South Louisiana ICE Processing Center
- Richwood Correctional Center
- River Correctional Center
- Winn Correctional Center
- Stewart Detention Center
- Folkston Main
- Baker County Facility
- Krome North Service Processing Center
- Broward Transitional Center

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## **OIDO Issues its First Detention Oversight Inspection Report – Limestone County Detention Center**

The Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman completed its first final report on the announced inspection of the Limestone County Detention Center (LCDC) in Groesbeck, Texas. The inspection occurred October 19 - 20, 2021. The final report contains one recommendation that LCDC be moved to a specific version of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention standards so that its detention operations can be measured and the facility can be held accountable for its compliance. The report can be found on OIDO's website [here](#).

### **Keep in Touch**

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