



Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Summary of CRCL's Recommendations and ICE's Response *Baker County Sherriff's Office*

On June 23, 2023, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) responded to a Key Civil Rights Findings and Recommendations Memorandum issued in December 2022 by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) that followed a spot check investigation at the Baker County Sherriff's Office (Baker). ICE concurred with eight recommendations, partially concurred with five, and non-concurred with six.

Background

Following a November 2021 onsite investigation at Baker, CRCL continued to receive allegations related to the facility. Ten months after the onsite, CRCL had opened 25 additional complaint investigations based on new allegations. The allegations involved numerous previously identified concerns, including verbal, emotional and physical abuse by staff; racial discrimination; language access; and legal access. The complaints also raised new concerns, such as inadequate medical care and retaliation by staff against noncitizens. As a result, CRCL conducted a spot check investigation in September 2022 with the assistance of contract subject matter experts to assess both the new allegations as well as previously identified concerns. CRCL identified several issues that required immediate attention. In October 2022, CRCL sent ICE a *Proposed Immediate Action Plan* (Action Plan) with six high priority recommendations.

Findings and Recommendations

Following the issuance of the Action Plan, on December 9, 2022, CRCL issued a Key Civil Rights Findings and Recommendations Memorandum (memo) to address the remaining issues. The memo included 19 recommendations related to medical and dental care, conditions of detention, grievances and religious access. The following highlights the top three findings and actions that ICE agreed to take as a result of CRCL's recommendations.

Female Preventive Medical Care

CRCL found that female noncitizens at Baker were not receiving appropriate preventive care outside the initial intake process, including annual gynecological exams and PAP smears, or education on the need for such care. ICE agreed, stating that education and care will be provided as part of noncitizens' comprehensive and annual health appraisals, and on a 24/7 basis upon request.

Medical Staffing

CRCL found that sick call requests were not being appropriately triaged, causing delays in assessing high-risk medical conditions, and that numerous noncitizens with high-risk conditions had never seen a physician – only a nurse – despite repeated requests and the need for physician oversight. ICE agreed to improve the medical triage process and elevate complex cases to the facility Medical Director.

Religious Access

CRCL found that Baker was unable to provide religious services for any denomination due to budgetary constraints that prevented hiring a full-time chaplain and purchasing religious materials for non-Christians in languages other than English. Baker redirected a portion of its budget, hired a full-time chaplain and spiritual counselor and acquired religious materials for non-Christian denominations in Spanish, Russian, Romanian, Turkish, and Arabic.

CRCL provides the public with documents related to complaint investigations. After it is prepared and reviewed, CRCL will post a redacted version of this Expert Recommendation Memorandum on our [website](#) that will contain additional information about the complaint investigation and CRCL's findings and recommendations.

January 30, 2024