



OIDO

Office of the Immigration
Detention Ombudsman

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

A Message from the Ombudsman

Hello! As the crisp autumn air gives way to the chill of winter, the changing seasons bring new opportunities and challenges. While the days may be getting shorter, we remain diligent in our mission as we move into the holiday season.

During the past few months, I've continued to do some traveling. I had the chance to meet with the staff at the Plymouth County Correctional Facility in Massachusetts. County facilities face different challenges compared to CBP, ICE, or contracted facilities. As long as these facilities are under contract with DHS and holding individuals for DHS, they fall under OIDO's purview to ensure individuals are being treated humanely and held in a safe environment.

Additionally, OIDO's Deputy Ombudsman, David Gersten, visited the Denver Contract Detention Facility in Aurora, Colorado as well as Krome North Processing Center in Miami, Florida.

This past quarter has been a bit different than usual. My focus this quarter was on refining our internal operations, making sure our procedures are aligned with OIDO's vision. This ensures effective communication across OIDO's various divisions, helping us avoid information loss, and remain accountable to the community we serve.

Innovation is key as we continue exploring solutions to issues like solitary confinement and contract compliance. If you have suggestions or are experiencing or hearing about related issues, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We want to hear from you! Also, please



follow us online and encourage your colleagues to join our newsletter mailing list. Plenty of great updates are shared below.

We hope you enjoy the holidays, and we look forward to seeing you in the new year!

New! Ask OIDO a Question

Do you have a question about OIDO's work? Would you like more information on how OIDO decides what facilities to inspect and what is an inspector's role? What OIDO can and can't do regarding property concerns? OIDO will feature questions like these and many others in our Newsletter each quarter. If you have a question in mind, don't hesitate to send it to us at OIDO_outreach@hq.dhs.gov!

Attorney Resources

In this newsletter, we want to share a valuable resource for attorneys. This resource allows them to request transcripts of educational courses completed by their detained clients through Cypherworx. These courses are accessed on tablets provided for detainees by Talton Communications.

Immigration Judges sometimes request information about educational courses completed by detainees. Talton tablets include an education section provided by a company called Cypherworx. The standard process to obtain a detainee's education information is for unit managers to obtain hard copies of transcripts, but in some cases, this is not happening, or the process can sometimes be misunderstood.

OIDO has identified an alternative solution. Attorneys can directly request their clients' course transcripts from Cypherworx by visiting this link: [Attorney requests to obtain incarcerated learner certificates : Support Hub \(cypherworx.com\)](#). Additionally, if utilizing this process, you will need the individuals A-number. For Cypherworx the A-number will be their "learner correctional facility identification."

Inspection Reports



South Louisiana ICE Processing Center (SLIPC) in Basile, Louisiana (October 2022, OIDO conducted an unannounced inspection)

OIDO's inspection assessed compliance with the 2011 Performance Based National Detention Standards, as revised in 2016 (hereafter 2011 PBNDS). OIDO inspected SLIPC, in part, to follow up on deficiencies that other inspection entities previously identified. Specifically, OIDO examined issues related to staff-detainee

communication, environmental health and safety, use of force, special management units, access to law library and legal counsel, correspondence and other mail, language access,

telephone access, grievance system, and medical care, including review of the health care staffing plan.

OIDO's inspection led to 15 general custody and 20 medical findings. Of the findings related to general custody issues, 11 were compliant findings, and four were non-compliant. Of the findings related to medical issues, three were compliant findings, and 17 were non-compliant findings.

SLIPC complied with specific standards in 14 areas reviewed. In addition, the facility had 21 instances of non-compliance with standards and/or contract terms. OIDO made seven recommendations designed to improve operations at the facility and meet ICE detention standards and contract terms.

ICE officials concurred with all seven recommendations and identified corrective actions. While OIDO considers several recommendations closed due to ICE's responsive corrective actions, it notes that many of the non-compliance findings affect critical aspects of detainee safety; therefore, OIDO will continue to monitor these areas to ensure the deficiencies are not repeated.

Evaluation of Health Care Staffing, Credentialing, and Training at Seven ICE Detention Facilities

(In January & February 2023, OIDO conducted announced inspections in Buffalo (Batavia) Service Processing Center, Joe Corley Processing Center, Moshannon Valley Processing Center, Otero County Processing Center, Port Isabel Service Processing Center, Prairieland Detention Facility, and South Texas ICE Processing Center.)

OIDO assessed these facilities' performance and compliance with the applicable detention standards and contract terms as well as relevant national and local policies and procedures. OIDO's inspections to evaluate health care staffing, credentialing, and staff training led to several findings. For staffing, OIDO found all seven facilities complied with requirements to conduct a review of their annual staffing plan. However, OIDO found five of the seven facilities did not comply with staffing requirements. Among these five non-compliant facilities, only the three ICE Health Service Corps facilities had penalties assessed against the facility for non-compliance.

For credentialing, OIDO found three of the seven facilities were non-compliant because they had incomplete credentialing files. An additional facility was initially found non-compliant but resolved the deficiency during the inspection. In addition, OIDO found five of the seven facilities were compliant with the requirement to have an external peer review program for the facility's independently licensed health care professionals. The two facilities that were non-compliant in this area of review made corrections during or after OIDO's inspection, bringing them into compliance.

Finally, for training, OIDO found four of the seven facilities were non-compliant with the requirement to develop and approve an annual training plan, four of the seven facilities were non-compliant with requirements to train health care staff annually on certain topics, and five of the seven facilities were non-compliant with requirements to ensure health care staff are trained to implement the facility's emergency health care plan.

Based on these findings, OIDO made three recommendations designed to improve facility operations and to comply with ICE detention standards and contract terms.

Full reports, which describe in detail the areas OIDO examined, recommendations, and other DHS component responses, are available on our website [here](#).

OIDO's Language Access Plan

OIDO is pleased to announce the publication our updated Language Access Plan.

As part of seeking improvements to the nation's immigration detention system, OIDO routinely engages directly with people in immigration detention, many of whom are primarily limited English proficient (LEP). Our goal is to identify and address individual complaints and inquiries, facility-level standards compliance, and Department-level issues. These communications are particularly important, as that they may pertain to legal rights and responsibilities, incidents of crime, mistreatment, medical and mental health, environmental health, or accommodation of disabilities and religious practices. OIDO's policy is to establish an accessible and standardized process regarding complaints and to ensure that the people OIDO engages with are provided professional interpretation and/or translation services to the extent possible.

OIDO's updated plan further builds systems within OIDO for ensuring, improving, monitoring, and evaluating access for limited English speakers so that they may fully access OIDO's programs, services, information, and activities. The plan has an expanded focus on indigenous language speakers and Deaf/hard of hearing individuals.

To request language access information, resources, or accommodations for any OIDO program or activity, contact OIDO by email at OIDODAC@hq.dhs.gov. For inquiries not related to language access, email [OIDO Outreach@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:OIDO_Outreach@hq.dhs.gov).

File specific complaints about language access issues at myOIDO.dhs.gov. OIDO has translators and interpreters, so use whatever language is best for you!

The new plan is available on OIDO's website [here](#).

OIDO Recent Events

We continued outreach efforts through the last days of summer, focusing on reaching new audiences and meeting with stakeholders to receive more feedback about the use of segregation, a priority for Ombudsman Michelle Brané.

Our outreach worked its way through new territory, resulting in our meeting with stakeholders in Virginia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. OIDO met with 43 different organizations in-person or virtually that represented consulates, congressional offices, non-governmental agencies, and law schools. Another aspect of this outreach is the inclusion of Case Managers, who offer valuable perspectives based on their regular visits to detention facilities. Not only were they able to answer many of the questions

and provide recommendations, but they also had the opportunity to hear feedback in real time.

In August, OIDO Ombudsman Michelle Brané accepted an invitation to a radio interview through the city of Richmond, Virginia, on WBTK 1380 AM Radio Poder. It was a great opportunity to introduce OIDO to the Spanish-speaking community in the mid-Atlantic region. Ms. Brané explained OIDO's mission and vision, the importance of neutrality, and how the complaint process works.

To explore the topic of segregation, OIDO met with medical organizations including a hospital that started an immigration health clinic after it recognized health disparities between immigrant and other populations. In October, OIDO met with a group of physicians dedicated to preventing human rights abuses to provide an overview of OIDO and its mission.

OIDO Leadership Conducts Tours of State-Run Corrections Facilities



As part of its mission to ensure safe and humane conditions in the immigration detention system, OIDO continually works to identify issues that are systemic in nature. The Office looks to its own internal data as well as to various external reporting and sources, including stakeholder input, to identify these issues and areas where OIDO can make positive change. Currently, OIDO is looking into the use of disciplinary and administrative segregation in our nation's immigration detention facilities and is exploring potential alternatives to traditional segregation methods that could

improve outcomes for both detained persons and the facilities where segregation is used.

OIDO has learned that various state- and locally run corrections facilities are already implementing these alternative methods to traditional segregation in an effort to improve conditions within their own systems. In September, OIDO leadership visited a number of these facilities, including those affiliated with the Washington State Department of Corrections and Oregon Department of Corrections, to hear about the practicalities, successes, and challenges associated with implementing an alternative system to traditional segregation. Ombudsman Michelle Brané met with the Resource Team at the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem, OR to learn about their approach to implementing "dynamic security" methods, peer-to-peer mentorship programs, and general investments in the humanity of prison detainees to lessen the need for and use

of segregation. Lessening the use of segregation may also lead to efficiency and resource improvements sought by facilities.

OIDO is continuing to explore alternatives to traditional segregation. To provide feedback or insight into novel methodologies, please e-mail OIDO at OIDOPolicy@hq.dhs.gov.

Case Management Data (8/1/2024 – 10/31/2024)



Since OIDO started taking in cases in late 2021, we have received many different complaints from people in detention, as well as their friends, families, and representatives. Complaints are related to people who are currently or were previously held in administrative immigration custody on the authority of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Between August 1, 2024, and October 31, 2024, OIDO received a total of 2,193 complaints. Most complaints concerned the facility environment, contact and communication, or medical/mental health care.

Case management data is one of many elements we look at to make recommendations on improving immigration conditions, to focus inspections, and our outreach efforts.

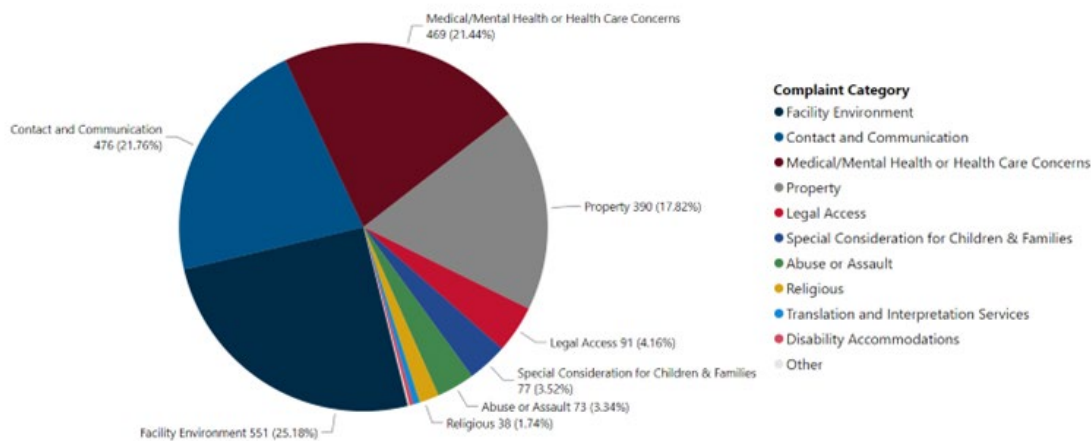
Case Management Complaint Snapshot

Number of Closed
Complaints

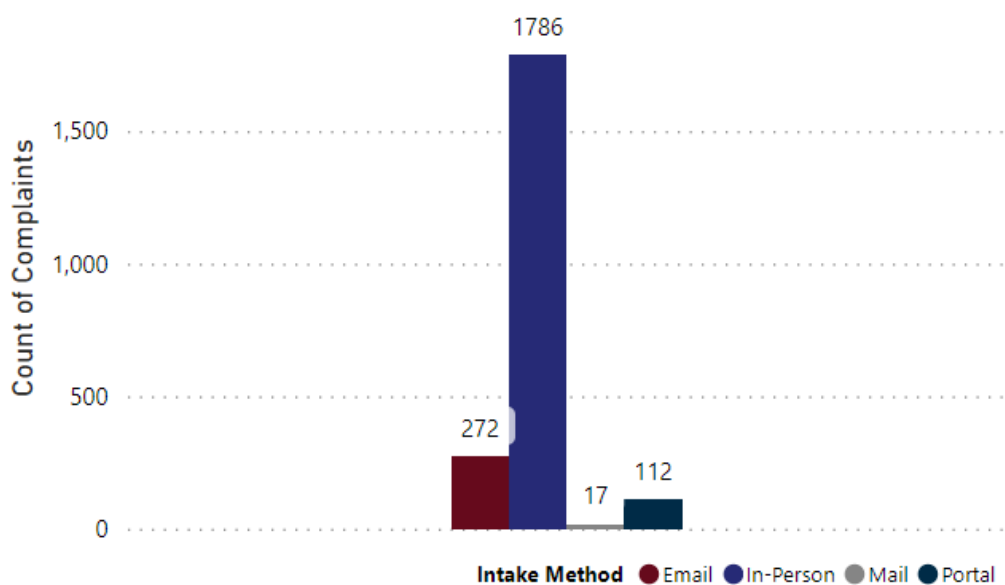
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These snapshots help us identify the categories of issues raised to OIDO and present them to our colleagues and stakeholders. Most complaints we receive come from within a detention facility, directly from an individual to one of our case managers. Others are received online via [myOIDO](#) or via a [paper form](#) emailed to the Office.

Complaints by Complaint Category



Complaints by Intake Method



Follow OIDO on X/Twitter!

Stay in the loop by following OIDO on X/Twitter [@OIDOGov](https://twitter.com/OIDOGov) – we'll be sharing important updates, OIDO engagements, handy tips to navigate our website and submit case forms, and new OIDO publications. Follow OIDO on X/Twitter and be part of the conversation as our office continues to grow!



To the Community

We want to hear from you! If you feel that your complaint has not been fully addressed, contact us—we are here to help. If you have concerns—or compliments!—about how a case was handled by OIDO, please contact us at OIDO_Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

Our mailing address is:

Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO)

Mail Stop 0134

Department of Homeland Security

Washington DC 20528-0134

ATTN: OIDO Case Intake Form (DHS Form 405)

About Our Office

OIDO is an independent, neutral office operating within DHS, but not within either CBP or ICE. 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.

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

For information on our structure and mission, please visit our website at dhs.gov/OIDO.

Keep in Touch

[Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)

OIDO_Outreach@hq.dhs.gov

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