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# ICE

*Overview*





# Introduction

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the principal investigative arm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the second largest investigative agency in the federal government.

ICE was created in 2003 through a merger of the investigative and interior enforcement elements of the former U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. ICE now has more than 20,000 employees in more than 400 offices in the United States and 48 foreign countries.

The agency has an annual budget of approximately \$6 billion, primarily devoted to two operational directorates — Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO). A third directorate, Management and Administration (M&A), is charged with providing professional management and mission support to advance the ICE mission.

ICE's primary mission is to promote homeland security and public safety through the criminal and civil enforcement of federal laws governing customs, international trade and immigration. This mission is executed through the enforcement of more than 400 federal statutes.

## Homeland Security Investigations

The HSI directorate conducts transnational criminal investigations that protect the U.S. against threats to its national security and bring to justice those seeking to exploit its customs and immigration laws worldwide.

This includes investigations into the smuggling of narcotics, weapons and various types of contraband; financial crime and export enforcement issues; cybercrime; immigration crime; human rights violations; and human trafficking and smuggling. HSI special agents also conduct investigations aimed at protecting critical infrastructure industries that are vulnerable to sabotage, attack or exploitation. HSI develops strategic data for operational units, and represents DHS with global law enforcement entities.

HSI is comprised of the following six main divisions:

- Domestic Operations: Investigations and operations within U.S. borders;
- Investigative Programs: Special investigative programs in support of HSI operations;

- International Affairs: Investigations and operations outside the U.S., in 48 countries around the world;
- Intelligence: Intelligence gathering and analysis in support of HSI operations;
- Mission Support: Management and administrative support to the HSI mission; and
- National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center): A multi-agency effort to combat intellectual property theft.

## Enforcement and Removal Operations

The ERO directorate identifies and removes aliens who present either a danger to national security or a risk to public safety, or defy our country's immigration laws. The directorate provides the safe, secure and humane confinement of an alien when detention is deemed necessary. ERO focuses its enforcement and removal efforts on convicted criminal aliens; aliens who are subject to a final order of removal and subsequently attempt to evade that order; aliens who have recently entered the U.S. illegally; and aliens who have abused any privilege of a visa program.

ERO is also responsible for transporting removable aliens while in custody, managing aliens in custody or in an alternative to a detention program, providing access to legal resources and representatives of advocacy groups, and removing individuals from the U.S. once they have been ordered to be deported.

## Management and Administration

The M&A directorate supports the missions of HSI and ERO and provides sound management for the agency. M&A offices are responsible for ICE needs, including finance, human resources, procurement and workforce recruitment. M&A also ensures collaboration with internal stakeholders to increase diversity; ensures responses to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests; and supports the agency's training needs.



# Preventing Terrorism

Most ICE offices and programs have a role in preventing terrorism. Several are on the front lines of this effort, either identifying dangerous persons before they enter the U.S. or finding them as they violate immigration or customs laws. ICE also works to prevent the illegal export of U.S. technology that could be used or repurposed to do harm.

## Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit

The Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit (CTCEU) prevents terrorists and other criminals from exploiting the nation's immigration system. CTCEU is also responsible for reviewing the immigration status of known and suspected terrorists, combating criminal exploitation of the student and exchange visitor visa system, and leveraging HSI's investigative expertise to identify national security threats.

CTCEU is composed of the following three sections:

- The National Security Threat Task Force;
- The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System Exploitation Section; and
- The Terrorist Tracking Pursuit Group.

These sections work together as an integrated national security force, drawing upon government databases to gather and analyze leads toward identifying visitors who pose potential security or criminal threats. CTCEU also coordinates with the National Counterterrorism Center to develop fraud investigations related to national security.



## Joint Terrorism Task Force

ICE plays a critical role in protecting the country against the threat of terrorism via Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs).

With special agents assigned to counterterrorism investigations across the U.S. and around the world, ICE lends its expertise in enforcing immigration and customs laws to the more than 100 JTTFs to investigate, detect, interdict, prosecute and remove terrorists, and to dismantle terrorist organizations.

Foreign terrorists need to move money, weapons and people across international borders to conduct their operations. ICE's JTTF partners depend on the agency to help thwart these movements and enforce immigration and customs laws in counterterrorism investigations.



## Counter-Proliferation Investigations

For decades, U.S. adversaries have sought to acquire U.S. and Western technologies through legal and illegal means. Such acquisitions provide these adversaries with advanced research and strategic technologies, largely without cost, and can be used to threaten U.S. soldiers, citizens and national interests.

ICE is the lead federal law enforcement agency for investigating and enforcing criminal violations of U.S. export laws related to military items, controlled dual-use commodities, and sanctioned or embargoed countries. Although ICE, through its predecessor agency the U.S. Customs Service, has more than 30 years of success investigating violations of export control laws, the scope and magnitude of the threats have never been greater than they are today. ICE special agents who conduct counter-proliferation investigations focus on the trafficking, smuggling and illegal export of the following commodities:

- Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) materials, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials;
- Military equipment and technology;
- Controlled dual-use commodities and technology; and
- Firearms and ammunition.