

Snapshot of ICE Detention: Inhumane Conditions and Alarming Expansion

September 2024

The U.S. government spends over three billion a year on the largest immigration detention apparatus in the world to detain and deport people who have lived in the U.S. for decades or who arrived recently seeking safety or a better life. People in detention experience [inhumane conditions](#) and rights abuses that include [medical neglect](#), [preventable deaths](#), punitive use of [solitary confinement](#), lack of [due process](#), obstructed [access to legal counsel](#), and [discriminatory](#) and [racist treatment](#). The numbers behind the immigration detention system provide a glimpse of the depths of inhumanity experienced on a daily basis by those in detention and the significant public costs, as more taxpayer dollars go towards [private prison companies](#) profiting each year off [detention contracts](#). **The numbers reiterate the urgent need to halt efforts to expand the system and phase out the use of immigration detention.**

IMMIGRATION DETENTION AT A GLANCE

DEATHS IN DETENTION

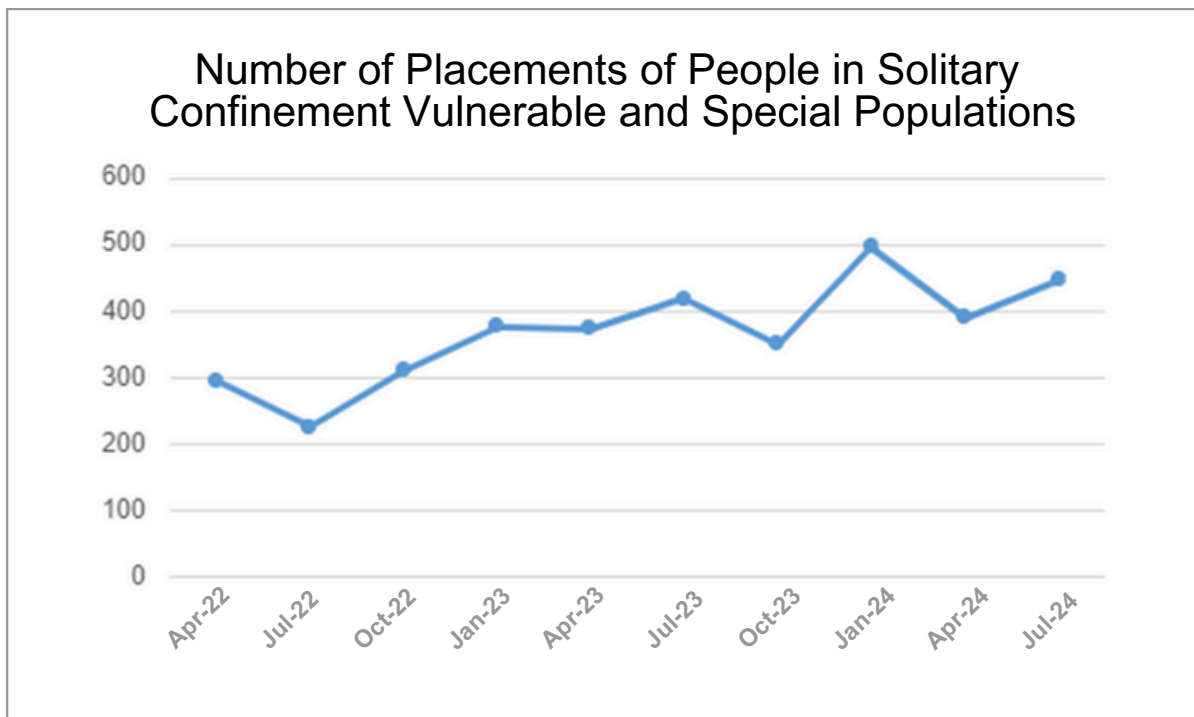
23 people have died in ICE custody since the start of the Biden administration.

- Twelve of those [deaths](#) have occurred over the last year alone, more than [double](#) the year before.
- ICE has [failed to improve](#) conditions that lead to tragic and largely preventable deaths.
- A June 2024 [report](#) examined 52 deaths between 2017 and 2021, finding that:

 **95%** of those deaths could likely have been prevented with adequate medical care.

USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

50% increase since March 2023 in ICE’s use of solitary confinement for people considered members of “vulnerable and special populations.”

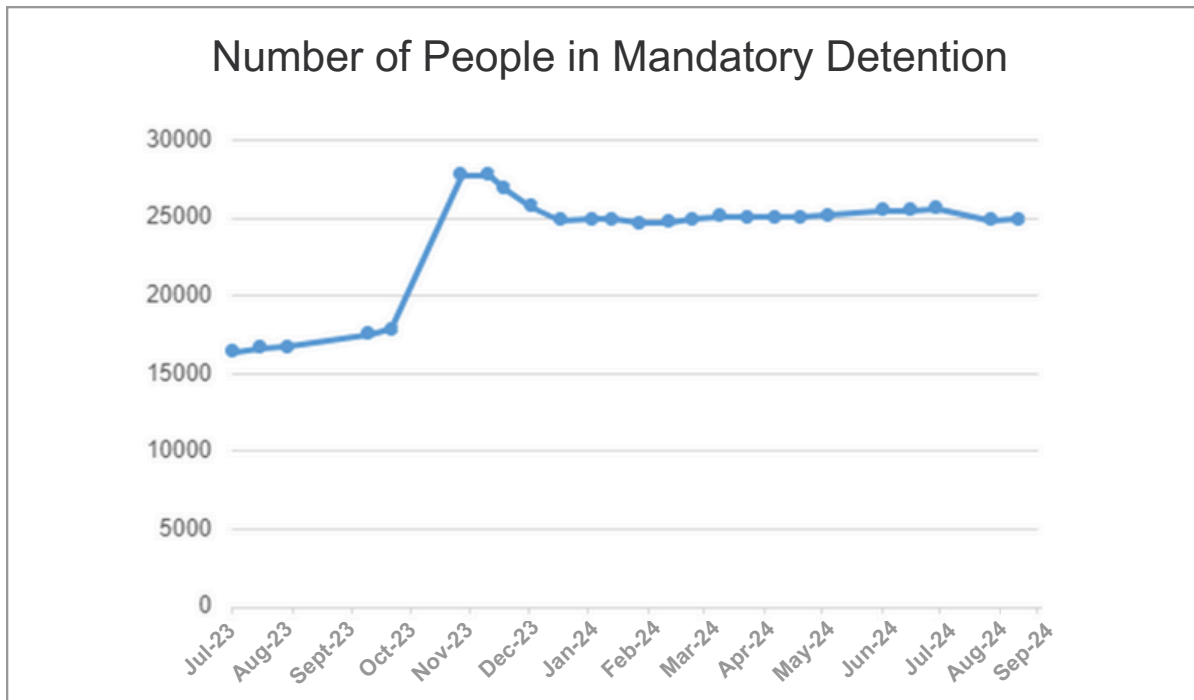


Source: [ICE Detention Statistics](#)

- The average number of consecutive and cumulative days in solitary has more than doubled for this population, which ICE classifies as people who self-identify as LGBTI, have a serious mental or medical illness, are on a hunger strike, or are on suicide watch.
- In [solitary confinement](#), which ICE refers to as “segregation,” people are isolated in small cells with minimal human contact for days, weeks, or years. The practice has a devastating [psychological and physical impact](#), as The New York Times recently [reported](#).
- NIJC continues to [call for an end](#) to the use of solitary confinement in immigration detention, and Members of Congress have [joined](#) human rights organizations in calling for an end to ICE’s use of the inhumane practice.

LACK OF DUE PROCESS

60% of people in ICE custody are subject to **“mandatory detention,”** meaning they do not have a right to a bond hearing to make a case for release, which is basic due process.



Source: [ICE Detention Statistics](#)

- Data on bond access illuminates racial disparities in ICE detention. Human rights groups have [found](#) that Black immigrants are less likely to be released on bond or parole, and are forced to pay much higher bonds.

PROFIT-DRIVEN EXPANSION

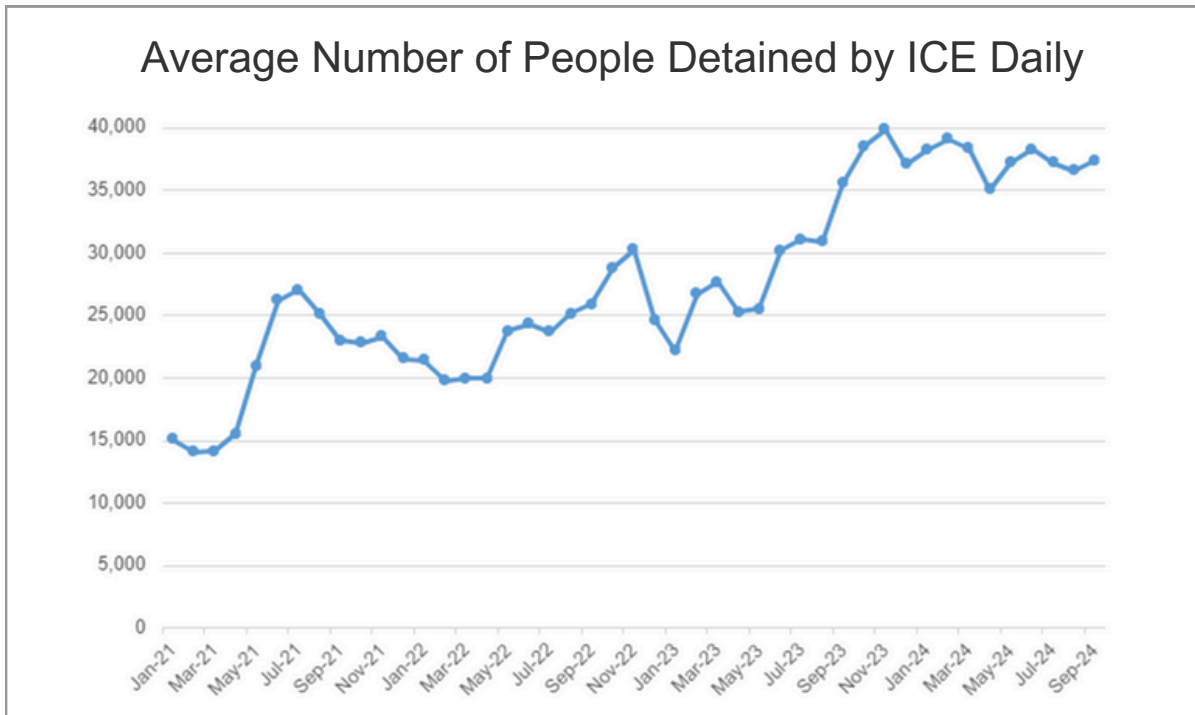
90% of people in ICE custody are held in detention centers operated for profit by **private companies** as of July 2023.

- This is a [10 percent increase](#) from the Trump administration.
- ICE’s oversight system [permits abuse and stifles accountability](#), allowing for [lucrative](#) contracts to continue with impunity.

MORE PEOPLE DETAINED IN WORSENING CONDITIONS

37K people are detained each day on average, an alarming 140% increase from the start of the Biden administration.

- ICE detained more than 260,000 people over the last year alone. This includes people who have lived in the U.S. for decades, parents of U.S. citizens, parents separated from their children, and people who arrived recently seeking asylum or a better life.
- People increasingly protest the [abuses](#) they face in detention. As of June 2024, hundreds of people in at least five different facilities were on [hunger strikes](#).
- ICE often responds to protests with [threats](#) and physical force, using pepper spray, non-lethal bullets, and sending protesters to solitary confinement.



Source: [ICE Detention Statistics](#)

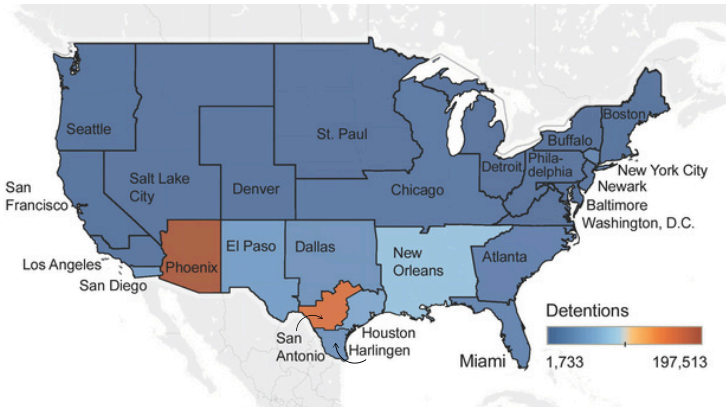
NEW FACILITIES AND CONTRACTS

ICE expanded immigration detention by **50% under the Trump administration.**

- During the Biden administration, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security renewed dozens of contracts and entered into new agreements with private prison companies, including opening the Moshannon Valley detention center in Pennsylvania, one of ICE’s 12 facilities that hold over 1,000 people each.
- ICE uses more than 190 different facilities for detention across more than 40 states and U.S. territories. The states with the most people detained by ICE are Texas, Louisiana, California, Arizona and Georgia.
- The Biden administration ended a small number of ICE contracts with some of the most egregious facilities, and ICE terminated agreements in states that banned immigration detention. Now, alarmingly, the Biden administration is seeking to expand the detention system, issuing solicitations for contracts for new facilities across the country.

Number of People in Detention by Region, FY2021-2024

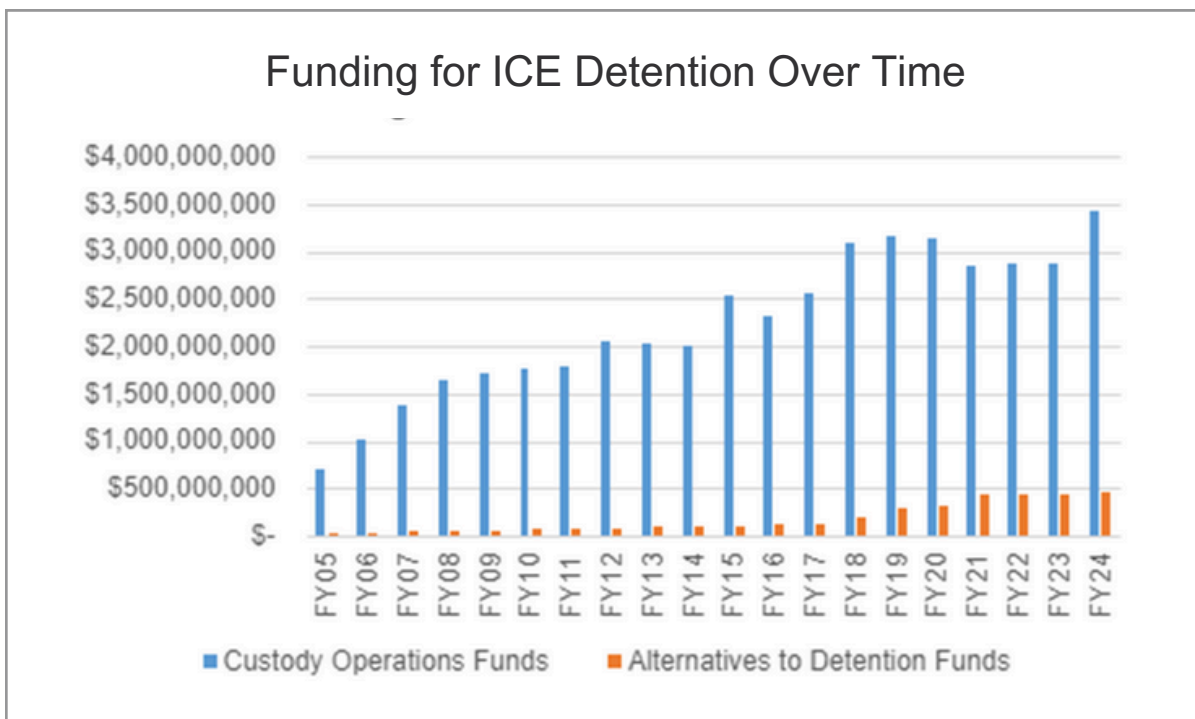
Areas of Operation	Number of People in Detention FY 2021-24
Phoenix, AZ	197,513
San Antonio, TX	165,559
Harlingen, TX	85,352
New Orleans, LA	77,545
Houston, TX	57,759
El Paso, TX	46,040
San Diego, CA	42,176
Dallas, TX	36,414
New York, NY	24,311
Miami, FL	22,567
Atlanta, GA	19,541
Chicago, IL	11,888



Source: ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations [Statistics](#)

Yearly funding for ICE detention has skyrocketed to **5x higher than what it was two decades ago.**

- Funding for detention is providing a windfall for private prison companies with enormous human and public costs.
- Congress [approved](#) \$3.4 billion in taxpayer dollars for fiscal year 2024 for ICE to detain an average daily population of 41,500 people - an increase of \$500 million from the prior year.



Source: [Congressional Appropriations Bills](#)

For more information, visit the National Immigrant Justice Center's website here:

<https://immigrantjustice.org/>