



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# Fact Sheet

## **ICE Operations in the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)**

As the largest investigative agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) plays a key role in promoting public safety and preventing terrorist activity. As the agency's name indicates, ICE's unique legal authorities include enforcement of U.S. immigration and customs laws. While ICE has been involved in investigative activities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in the past, the implementation of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) in the CNMI means an expanded role for the agency in the region. Below is more information about key programs and ICE divisions that will be in place in the CNMI.

### **Student and Visitor Exchange Program (SEVP)**

SEVP was established in 2003 by the Department of Homeland Security to prevent the exploitation of the foreign student visa process. SEVP uses a Web-based system to allow ICE, and schools certified by ICE, to enroll non-immigrant foreign students and monitor the status of those visa holders. The SEVP Certification Team has already met with representatives from the CNMI institutions that accept foreign students in order to educate them about the SEVP enrollment process, assist with completing petitions and conduct on-site visits. So far, six schools have been certified and five schools are pending approval. The approved schools will be able to issue Forms 1-20 to their international students prior to their departure for the winter holiday, ensuring that these students can apply for student visas in their countries of citizenship.

### **Office of Detention and Removal Operations (DRO)**

DRO is the division of ICE responsible for detaining individuals who are found to be in violation of U.S. immigration laws and repatriating them to their native countries. That includes foreign nationals encountered at international airports and seaports who are determined by U.S. Customs and Border Protection to be ineligible to enter the CNMI. In addition, ICE DRO officers closely monitor the cases of aliens who are arrested on administrative immigration violations and placed in immigration removal proceedings. ICE is working closely with the CNMI Attorney General's office to ensure that CNMI deportation cases that were pending prior to the enactment of the INA law are handled appropriately.

Generally, the INA grants aliens the right to a hearing before an immigration judge to determine whether they will be allowed to remain in the country. The administrative law judges who preside in these cases are supervised by the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) under the U.S. Department of Justice. With the implementation of the INA, the CNMI courts no longer have the authority to issue deportation orders.

If a U.S. immigration judge orders an alien removed from the United States, ICE DRO enforces the deportation order. Prior to carrying out a deportation, DRO makes the necessary transportation arrangements and coordinates closely with authorities in the receiving country to obtain the necessary travel documents and clearances. If necessary, DRO officers escort the alien to his or her destination.

### **Office of Investigations (OI)**

ICE's Office of Investigations (OI) is responsible for pursuing a wide range of criminal activity, including human smuggling and human trafficking, money laundering, narcotics and weapons trafficking, financial crimes, commercial fraud, child exploitation and violations related to intellectual property rights. ICE agents will work closely with local law enforcement authorities in the CNMI to address these threats.

ICE encourages anyone with information about illegal or suspicious activity to contact our 24-hour toll-free tip line at 1(877) DHS- 2ICE. The tip line is staffed by ICE investigators, and caller privacy is respected.

ICE agents also conduct investigations involving the criminal and civil enforcement of immigration-related employment laws in order to safeguard critical infrastructure industries and protect employment opportunities for legal workers.

ICE's investigative priorities in the CNMI include, but are not limited to:

#### **Document and Benefit Fraud**

Immigration document and benefit fraud pose a serious threat to national security and public safety because they create vulnerabilities that may enable criminals and even terrorists to enter the United States and remain here. Benefit fraud involves individuals who knowingly use false information to obtain immigration benefits for which they are not eligible. Document fraud is the practice of producing, selling, or using counterfeit identity and immigration documents to circumvent immigration laws or facilitate other illegal activities. Individuals and criminal enterprises often use fraudulent documents to obtain drivers' licenses and Social Security cards. Alien smugglers and human traffickers frequently employ counterfeit documents to facilitate the movement of their clients or victims. As they do in other jurisdictions, ICE agents in the CNMI will target the criminals and criminal organizations involved in document and benefit fraud, seeking to dismantle these schemes and bring the perpetrators to justice.

#### **Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling**

"Human trafficking" and "human smuggling" are distinctly different, but both pose a significant public safety and security risk. Human trafficking typically involves coercion and exploitation. It is estimated that 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked globally each year. Many of these victims are trafficked into the commercial sex trade and forced-labor situations. Human smuggling involves the illegal importation of people into the United States to deliberately evade immigration laws. Smuggling schemes can be exploited by criminals and others with questionable motives who are seeking to enter the country undetected. In the CNMI, ICE agents will seek to identify and prosecute those involved in human trafficking and smuggling and to seize the assets derived from these criminal activities.

#### **Financial Investigations**

ICE is committed to detecting and closing down weaknesses in the financial, trade and transportation sectors that can be exploited by criminal networks. Although financial investigations are often long and complex, following the money trail enables ICE to identify and seize assets that are used to fund ongoing criminal enterprises.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21<sup>st</sup> century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit: [www.ICE.gov](http://www.ICE.gov). To report suspicious activity, call 1-877-347-2423.*