

# Fact Sheet: ICE Fugitive Operations Program

---

## Background

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) established the first Fugitive Operations Teams (FOTs) in 2003 to dramatically expand the agency's efforts to locate, arrest and remove fugitive aliens from the United States. An ICE fugitive is defined as an alien who has failed to leave the United States based upon a final order of removal, deportation or exclusion, or who has failed to report to ICE after receiving notice to do so.

In 2009, the responsibilities of ICE's FOTs were expanded to include cases involving at-large convicted criminal aliens who pose a threat to national security and community safety, including members of transnational street gangs, child sex offenders, and aliens with prior convictions for violent crimes. The FOT officers and agents use intelligence-based information and leads to locate and arrest aliens. They also prioritize their work based on goals and expectations set forth by ICE and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) leadership.

## Key ICE Fugitive Operations Initiatives

- The National Fugitive Operations Program (NFOP) is responsible for reducing the fugitive alien population in the United States. ICE's databases show the targeted enforcement strategy is paying off as the nation's fugitive alien population continues to decline. At the end of FY 2011, there were nearly 480,000 fugitive alien cases — a decrease of more than 26,500 since the beginning of the fiscal year.
- Much of the credit for these results can be attributed to the rapid expansion of the program and the establishment of the Fugitive Operations Support Center (FOSC). When the initiative was launched in 2003, there were eight FOTs nationwide. Today, ICE has 104 FOTs deployed nationwide to pursue these types of cases. In FY 2011, these teams accounted for more than 40,000 arrests, once again making more arrests than the previous year.
- ICE established the Fugitive Operations Support Center (FOSC) in June 2006 in Vermont. The FOSC is a key element in addressing the burgeoning fugitive alien problem in the United States. The Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit (CTCEU) uses the FOSC to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the NFOP.
- Through the use of technology and partnerships with law enforcement agencies, the FOSC provides a specialized unit that focuses on analyzing the nature and characteristics of the U.S. fugitive alien backlog and at-large criminal alien population as recorded in the Enforce Alien Removal Module (EARM). This effort has aided in reducing the reported number of existing fugitives by reconciling records to eliminate those who have left the country voluntarily, successfully adjusted their status, or were discovered to be

incarcerated and therefore no longer fugitives. Since inception, the FOSC has analyzed data on more than 1.5 million targets from probation and parole, state and local law enforcement agencies, and internal sources in support of all nationally designated operations.