



VOICE

VICTIMS OF IMMIGRATION CRIME ENGAGEMENT



Quarterly Report
June 2018



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Overview

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) protects America from the cross-border crime and illegal immigration that threaten national security and public safety. To carry out that mission, ICE focuses on smart immigration enforcement, preventing terrorism, and combating transnational criminal threats. The agency has an annual budget of approximately \$6 billion, primarily devoted to three operational directorates—Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA). A fourth directorate—Management and Administration (M&A)—supports the three operational branches to advance the ICE mission.

- ERO upholds U.S. immigration law at, within, and beyond our borders. ERO’s work is critical to the enforcement of immigration law against those who present a danger to our national security, are a threat to public safety, or who otherwise undermine the integrity of our immigration system.
- HSI is the principal investigative component within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which conducts transnational criminal investigations that protect the United States against threats to national security and brings to justice those seeking to exploit U.S. customs and immigration laws worldwide.
- OPLA is the largest legal program in DHS and serves as the exclusive representative of DHS in immigration removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review, litigating all removal cases including those against criminal aliens, terrorists, and human rights abusers.

The Executive Order titled *Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States* directed ICE’s Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement Office (VOICE) to create quarterly reports studying the effects of the victimization by criminal aliens present in the United States.

This report provides anonymized case studies to depict the types of victims assisted by the VOICE Office since it launched on April 26, 2017, through September 30, 2017.

The VOICE Office has several key objectives that include:

- Using a victim-centered approach to acknowledge and support victims and their families;
- Promoting awareness of available services to crime victims; and
- Building collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders assisting victims.

ICE established a toll-free hotline staffed with operators who triage calls to ensure victims receive the support they need. The number is 1-855-48-VOICE or 1-855-488-6423.

The type of assistance the VOICE Office offers includes:

- Establishing local contacts to help with unique victim requests;
- Linking victims with ICE Community Relations Officers (CROs) who serve as local representatives to help victims understand the immigration enforcement and removal process;
- Providing access to social service professionals who are able to refer victims to local resources and direct service providers;
- Assisting individuals in signing up to receive automated custody status information through the DHS-Victim Information and Notification Exchange (DHS-VINE); and
- To the extent permitted by law or policy, providing information about the offender, including the offender’s immigration status and custody status, and answering questions and concerns regarding immigration enforcement.

Section I: Findings

This report provides information on those who have been assisted as a direct result of their call to the VOICE Office. From April 26, 2017, to September 30, 2017, the VOICE Office’s hotline referred 843 calls to CROs in ICE’s Areas of Responsibility (AORs) across the United States who were tasked with engaging with victims and ensuring they had access to information and resources. The topics of all calls fielded by VOICE operators are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Accepted VOICE Hotline Calls (April 26, 2017–September 30, 2017)

Incoming VOICE Hotline Calls by Topic			
Call Topic	Total	Q3	Q4
VINE Assistance	46	21	25
Requesting Case Status	254	107	147
Reporting Crime	972	420	552
Requesting Victim Services	244	128	116
General Questions	571	525	46
Other (Commentary or Unrelated)	2,515	2,150	365
Total	4,602	3,351	1,251

Call Topic Definitions:

VINE Assistance: Callers requested assistance or information on how to sign up to receive automated immigration custody status information.

Requesting Case Status: Callers requested information surrounding their case. Callers were referred to a CRO.

Reporting Crime: Callers requested to report a crime investigated by ICE. Callers were provided with ICE’s tip line.

General Questions: Callers requested general information on the VOICE Office.

Other (Commentary or Unrelated): Callers were not calling for the VOICE Office’s assistance.

Victim Services: Self-identified victims who request access to social service professionals are referred to ICE HSI Victim Assistance Specialists (VASs). HSI VASs work with each individual to determine the type(s) of social services being requested and make referrals to local service providers, as appropriate. During this reporting period, there were 127 victims referred to VASs. While the data in Table 1 suggest 244 individuals requested victim services during the intake call, subsequent contact revealed that they didn’t want social service referrals.

Because the VOICE Office was not launched until April 26, 2017, this first quarterly report contains part of Quarter 3 and all of Quarter 4. Moving forward, however, the reports will include only one quarter.

Figure 1: Calls Referred to CROs by Area of Responsibility (April 26, 2017–September 30, 2017)
Caller data reflects that requests for services from the VOICE Office originated from AORs across the United States, with the highest volume from ICE’s Los Angeles, Miami, Boston, and San Francisco AORs.

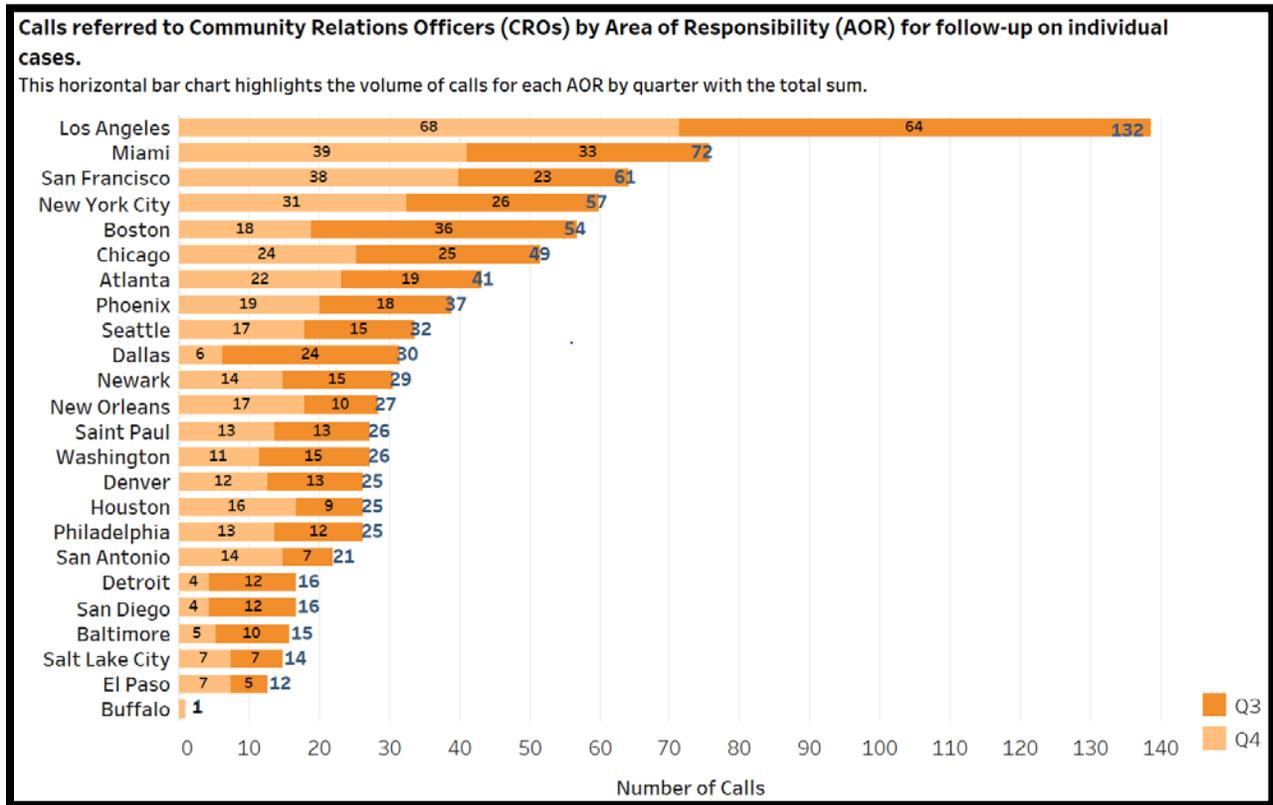


Table 2: Department of Homeland Security Victim Information and Notification Exchange (DHS-VINE) Metrics (April 26, 2017–September 30, 2017)

The Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) is a state-level system that automatically notifies registrants about changes to custody status and other information. VINE has been providing victims and concerned citizens with the power of information for decades, allowing these individuals to have the sense of security that they deserve.

The Department of Homeland Security Victim Information and Notification Exchange (DHS-VINE) system allows registrants to receive custodial status notifications via an Internet interface. It transfers eligible registrant data from state VINE databases to ensure those individuals who registered with state VINE continue to receive custody status updates once a criminal alien is transferred from state to ICE custody. While the state-level system’s name is slightly different than DHS’s, it works to serve a similar purpose. To that end, individuals eligible to receive custody status notifications are victims and witnesses associated with criminal aliens charged or convicted of a crime, victim advocates, individuals with a legal responsibility to act on behalf of a victim or witness (e.g., attorneys, parents, legal guardians), and individuals acting at the request of a victim or witness.

Table 2 reflects the number of victims who registered with the DHS-VINE.

Department of Homeland Security Victim Information and Notification Exchange (DHS-VINE)

This heatmap highlights the number of DHS-Vine Searches, New Registrations, and Notifications based on color intensity. The values are sliced by month and quarter.

	Q3			Q4		
	April	May	June	July	August	September
DHS-VINE Searches	10,969	34,971	53,589	65,801	36,768	29,089
New Registrations	466	505	520	427	494	413
Notifications						
Email Events	60	122	146	129	127	109
Phone Events	60	105	110	117	109	89
SMS Events	39	56	79	88	97	66

Section II: Case Examples

The case examples below illustrate the VOICE Office's impact on providing proactive, timely, and professional services to victims (and their family members) of crimes committed by removable aliens. In certain cases, some details were purposely left out to ensure the privacy of the victim(s). Overall results of stakeholder engagement included:

- Victims submitted compelling impact statements leading to a criminal alien's removal;
- Victims testified in immigration court proceedings;
- VOICE contact led to an alien being arrested and detained;
- Victims were provided confirmation that ICE placed a detainer on an alien;
- VOICE assisted victims with signing up to receive automated custody status information about an alien via the DHS-VINE; and
- VOICE provided releasable details to the victim about an alien involved in a crime.

Case Study #1

DHS-VINE registration assistance; ERO alerted to the impending release of subject.

The VOICE Office was contacted by a victim whose child was murdered 30 years ago by an alien. The victim called because the victim knew that the individual who murdered their child was going to be released on parole from state custody on an ankle monitor after serving nearly 30 years for a drug trafficking and murder charge. The victim wanted to ensure that the illegal alien would be removed from the United States. The VOICE Office's CRO alerted the local ICE ERO field office of the impending release of the subject to ensure that the subject would be turned over to ERO following the individual's release from state custody. The CRO was also able to assist the victim in registering for DHS-VINE once the subject was transferred to ERO custody. The subject, who was ordered removed by an immigration judge, was subsequently deported.

Case Study #2

No biometrics on criminal alien; VOICE contact leads to detainer and removal.

A victim called the VOICE Office for assistance related to the victim's alleged attacker who had been very violent towards the victim. The victim's alleged attacker was due to be released from the local county jail in December 2017. After working with ERO officers, it was determined that ICE had not lodged a detainer against the alien. Based on this, local ERO leadership contacted the ERO Mobile Criminal Alien Team (MCAT) supervisor for assistance. The next day, MCAT reported that the criminal alien entered the country illegally when the individual was a minor. Because of this, ICE systems did not contain the alien's information, fingerprints at county booking did not result in an alert, and no detainer against the alien was lodged. As a result of the collaborative work by ICE programs, ICE placed a detainer on the alien and later transferred the alien into custody. The alien, who was ordered removed by an immigration judge, was subsequently deported.

Case Study #3

Murdered victim's mother submits written victim impact statement and testimony for immigration hearing leading to subject's removal.

The subject, a native and citizen of Mexico who entered the United States illegally, was convicted of Intoxication Manslaughter with a Vehicle and Intoxication Assault with a Vehicle Causing Serious Bodily Injury. She was subsequently sentenced to seven years and five years confinement, respectively. The subject is responsible for the death of a 20-year-old woman and the injury of five other passengers as a result of a one-vehicle accident. After the subject was taken into ICE custody, the victim's mother contacted ICE through the VOICE Office indicating her desire to make a victim impact statement before the immigration judge.

ICE placed the subject in removal proceedings. At the initial hearing, the subject admitted to the allegations contained in the Notice to Appear and the immigration judge sustained the charge. The following month, a subsequent hearing was held. The VOICE Office informed ICE's attorneys that the victim's mother requested to make an impact statement before the court. ICE attorneys submitted the subject's conviction records, a written victim impact statement from the victim's mother on the untimely death of her daughter, and telephonic testimony from the mother. The immigration judge subsequently denied the subject's request for voluntary departure and ordered her removed to Mexico. Both parties waived appeal, and as a result, the subject was removed to Mexico.

Case Study #4

Suspect taken into ICE custody for removal proceedings.

The VOICE Office received an email from a victim indicating that the alien in their case had reached a plea agreement with the county district attorney, and as a result, would soon be released from local custody. The alien, who was convicted of simple assault, was sentenced to a maximum of 12 months incarceration. The VOICE Office assisted the victim with registering for the DHS-VINE. The VOICE Office also contacted ICE ERO officers to notify them about the alien's impending release. ICE ERO officers effected the arrest upon the suspect's release from local custody and placed the individual in removal proceedings. An immigration judge granted the suspect voluntary departure. The suspect is no longer in the United States.

Case Study #5

Domestic abuse victim connected to financial assistance and given peace of mind.

A victim of domestic violence by her ex-spouse, an illegal criminal alien and alleged gang member, called the VOICE Office seeking confirmation that ICE removed the criminal alien from the United States. The VOICE Office confirmed the criminal alien's removal which, according to the victim, allowed her to refinance her home. More importantly, the victim stated that the information provided by the VOICE Office gave her peace of mind and a sense of safety that she desperately sought following the abuse the victim and her children suffered.

Case Study #6

Sexual assault victim obtains information and offers to provide testimony.

A victim called the VOICE Office for information about a criminal alien who was found guilty of sexually assaulting the victim. The VOICE Office was able to inform the victim that the subject was in ICE custody and pending an appearance before an immigration judge. The victim expressed an interest in providing in-person testimony to the immigration judge. The VOICE Office notified ICE's attorneys of the victim's request. The subject, who was ordered removed by an immigration judge, was subsequently deported.

Case Study #7

Family member of manslaughter victim learns subject is in prison.

The sibling of a manslaughter victim called the VOICE Office seeking information on the whereabouts of the criminal alien. The caller had begun to hear rumors circulating that the criminal alien was freed from state prison and was not subject to removal based on the sanctuary status of the victim's city. The VOICE Office confirmed for the victim that the criminal alien was still in state custody and explained the immigration removal process. The victim was also provided information on how to register for the DHS-VINE. The criminal alien's previous removal order was reinstated and the criminal alien was deported.