



# VOICE

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## VICTIMS OF IMMIGRATION CRIME ENGAGEMENT



Quarterly Report

Q1 FY 2018

October 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017



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 for Fiscal Year 18 Quarter 1 from October 1, 2017 to December 31, 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 October 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, the VOICE Office's hotline referred 393 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 (October 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017)**

Call Topic	Date
VINE Assistance	18
Requesting Case Status	123
Reporting Crime	403
Requesting Victim Services	146
General Questions	40
Other (Commentary or Unrelated)	379
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,109</b>

### 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.

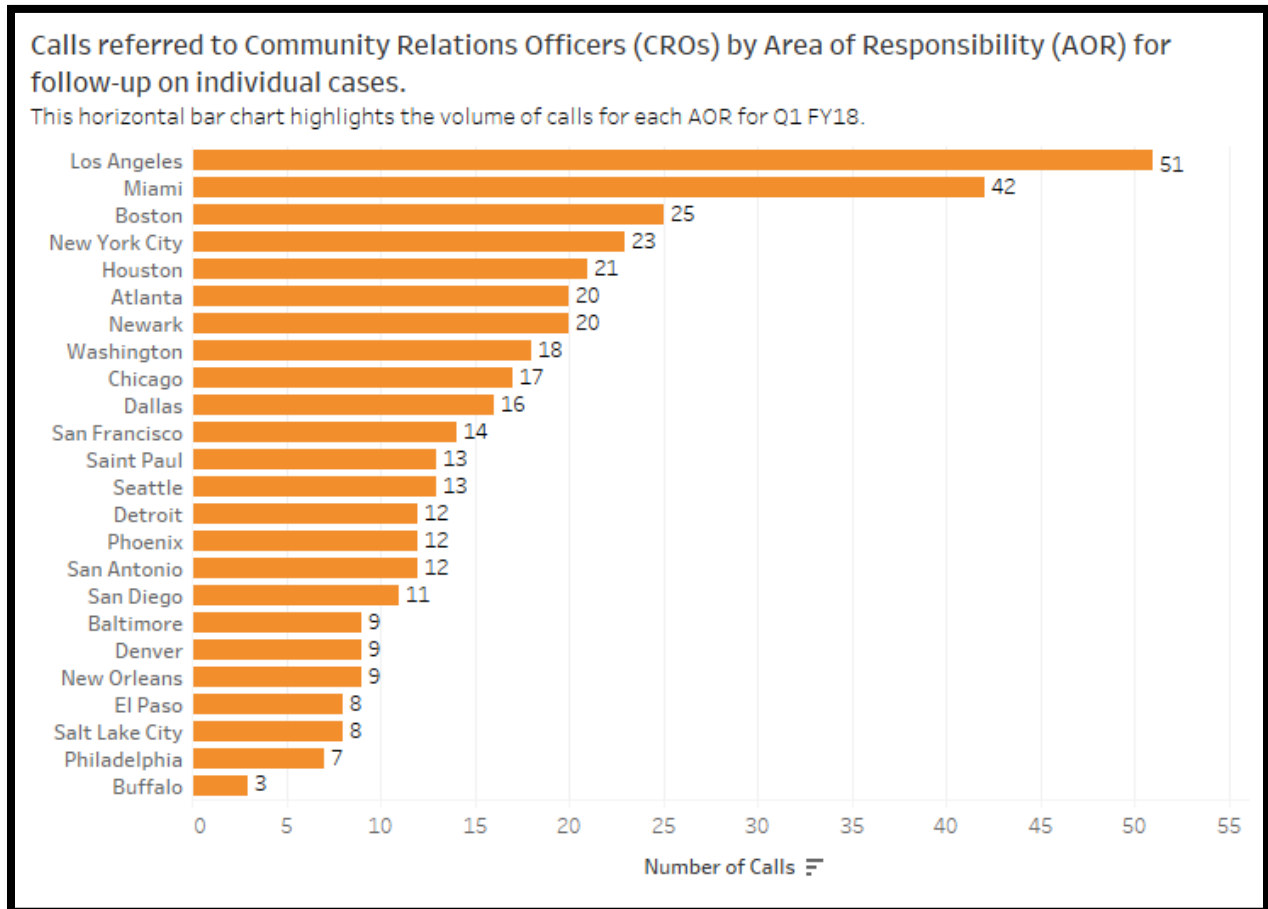
**General Questions:** Callers requested general information on the VOICE Office.

**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 30 victims referred to VASs. While the data in Table 1 suggest 146 individuals requested victim services during the intake call, subsequent contact revealed that they didn't want, or were no longer interested in social service referrals.

**Figure 1: Calls Referred to CROs by Area of Responsibility (October 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017)**

Caller data reflect 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 New York City AORs.



**Table 2: Department of Homeland Security Victim Information and Notification Exchange (DHS-VINE) Metrics (October 1, 2017 – December 31, 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 with 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 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 for Q1 FY18

	October	November	December
DHS-VINE Searches	57,404	54,980	54,641
New Registrations	420	399	467
<b>Notifications</b>			
Email Events	92	78	62
Phone Events	38	22	20
SMS Events	62	47	49

## 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:

- VOICE Office facilitated victim impact statement;
- VOICE Office assisted victims with signing up to receive automated custody status information about an alien via the DHS-VINE;
- VOICE Office assisted domestic abuse victim with registering for DHS-VINE, which provided notification that the subject was removed from the United States;
- VOICE Office helped disabled veteran and family feel safe;
- VOICE Office provided peace of mind to community victimized by criminal alien;
- VOICE Office assisted murdered victim’s family provide testimony for immigration court; and
- VOICE Office assisted domestic violence victim with victim referral services.

### Case Study #1

*VOICE Office assists victim advocate with victim impact statement.*

A victim advocate contacted the VOICE Office to find out what services were available to the victim they were representing. The victim was concerned for their safety and requested a status on the subject, who was in ICE custody and had been convicted of violating a domestic violence order and aggravated stalking. The VOICE Office connected the advocate to ICE attorneys so the victim could provide their statement. The alien was subsequently ordered removed by an immigration judge and denied voluntary departure from the United States. The alien was removed from the United States.

## **Case Study #2**

*VOICE Office facilitates victim impact statement to victim of theft.*

A victim called the VOICE Office requesting to make a statement regarding their spouse, a lawful permanent resident, who was incarcerated serving a drug-related sentence. The victim stated that the spouse had an extensive criminal history and they were interested in providing a victim impact statement. The VOICE Office connected the victim to ICE attorneys who took the victim's testimony. The immigration judge determined that the alien was removable as an aggravated felon convicted of crimes involving moral turpitude. The alien was subsequently ordered removed by an immigration judge and removed from the United States. The victim received custody status updates throughout the process after registering with DHS-VINE.

## **Case Study #3**

*VOICE Office assists victim advocate with DHS-VINE.*

An advocate calling on behalf of a victim contacted the VOICE Office to find out if the victim's assailant was in ICE custody. The victim, who was also an immigrant, was subjected to domestic abuse. The VOICE Office provided information for the advocate to register with the state VINE system and explained how the system would transfer to the DHS-VINE system and provide updates when the alien came into ICE custody. The alien, who was later transferred into ICE custody, was ordered removed from the United States by an immigration judge. The case is pending before the Board of Immigration Appeals.

## **Case Study #4**

*VOICE Office helps victim and family feel safe.*

A victim contacted the VOICE Office to express that an alien had threatened to kill them and their family. The alien was previously deported and illegally re-entered the United States. The VOICE Office confirmed that the alien was in ICE custody. The alien was subsequently removed from the United States.

## **Case Study #5**

*VOICE Office assists domestic violence victim following continued abuse.*

A domestic violence victim contacted the VOICE Office concerned about threats made against them by their abuser. Specifically, the victim stated that the alien had threatened to kill them. The VOICE Office was able to provide the victim with information to register with the DHS-VINE. The victim later received confirmation that the subject was in ICE custody. They were also able to monitor the subject's detention through the DHS Online Detainee Locator. The victim subsequently received confirmation from the DHS-VINE that the alien was removed.

## **Case Study #6**

*Domestic violence victim receives information and support from the VOICE Office and provides written testimony.*

A domestic violence victim contacted the VOICE Office for assistance with providing ICE attorneys a victim impact statement regarding their spouse. The victim's spouse was serving time linked to a domestic abuse charge. The VOICE Office confirmed that ICE lodged a detainer against the alien. The office provided information so that the victim could register with the State VINE. Upon completion of the subject's criminal sentence, the victim received notification that the alien was transferred into ICE

custody. The victim also provided a written victim impact statement to ICE attorneys. The alien remains in ICE custody awaiting the outcome of their immigration case.

### **Case Study #7**

*Victim of domestic abuse obtains information on criminal alien's removal from the United States.*

A victim called the VOICE Office to receive information regarding their ex-spouse's immigration status. The individual, a domestic abuse victim, stated that their ex-spouse had threatened to kill them. The VOICE Office assisted the victim with immigration-related information throughout an 8-month period. The victim, who was able to provide a victim impact statement, received confirmation that the alien was removed.

### **Case Study #8**

*VOICE Office provides peace of mind to community victimized by criminal alien.*

A victim couple contacted the VOICE Office stating that an alien stole their jewelry and money. The subject also allegedly stole from other elderly individuals in their community, including their friends. The victims called the VOICE Office because they feared that the alien would return to their community to harm them after the alien's release from state criminal custody. The VOICE Office confirmed that the alien was transferred into ICE custody and subsequently removed.

### **Case Study #9**

*Murdered victim's family connected to ICE attorneys through the VOICE Office.*

A victim family member contacted the VOICE Office regarding an alien who murdered their loved one. The VOICE Office connected the family with ICE attorneys and they were able to provide written testimonies that were filed with the immigration court. The alien was subsequently ordered removed by an immigration judge. The case is pending before the Board of Immigration Appeals.

### **Case Study #10**

*VOICE Office assists domestic violence victim with social support referral.*

A domestic violence victim contacted the VOICE Office claiming that their spouse duped them and only married them for immigration benefits. The victim requested social support services and was referred to a Victim Assistance Specialist (VAS).