

INSIDE THE BLACK HOLE

SYSTEMIC HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST
IMMIGRANTS DETAINED & DISAPPEARED IN LOUISIANA



AUGUST 2024

ABOUT US



Since 1920, the ACLU has been our nation's guardian of liberty, working in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country. Whether it's achieving full equality for LGBTQ people, establishing new privacy protections for our digital age of widespread government surveillance, ending mass incarceration, or preserving the right to vote or the right to have an abortion, the ACLU takes up the toughest civil liberties cases and issues to defend all people from government abuse and overreach. With more than 4 million members, activists, and supporters, the ACLU is a nationwide organization that fights tirelessly in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., to safeguard everyone's rights.



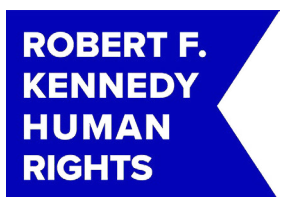
The ACLU of Louisiana leads the charge to protect the civil rights and liberties of Louisianians, especially those most marginalized and historically harmed. True to its founding during the civil rights movement, ACLU-LA is fearless in the face of intimidation and fights tirelessly to protect and empower all Louisianians, including communities of color, justice-impacted and immigrant communities, and LGBTQ+ communities. ACLU-LA is part of a nationwide network of affiliates that work in courts, legislatures, and communities in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C.



ISLA is a legal services organization that defends the rights of our immigrant communities and advocates for just and humane immigration policy. Immigrants in the United States are not entitled to an attorney in their removal proceedings. Instead, if they cannot afford an attorney, they are forced to present their legal cases before an immigration judge on their own. This typically takes place in a foreign language, and against a trained attorney representing the government. In an attempt to even the playing field, ISLA attorneys visit detained immigrants at the eleven ICE Processing Centers in the region on a weekly basis and provide pro bono representation under a universal representation model before the Immigration Courts. Through this service, ISLA ensures that detained immigrants' due process rights are protected and that our clients do not have to attend these hearings and present their cases on their own.



The National Immigration Project is a membership organization of attorneys, advocates, and community members who are driven by the belief that all people should be treated with dignity, live freely, and flourish. We litigate, advocate, educate, and build bridges across movements to ensure that those most impacted by the immigration and criminal systems are uplifted and supported. Learn more at nipnl.org. Follow NIPNLG on Facebook, X, and Instagram at @NIPNLG.



We are a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that has worked to realize Robert F. Kennedy's dream of a more just and peaceful world since 1968. In partnership with local activists, we advocate for key human rights issues, championing change makers and pursuing strategic litigation at home and around the world. And to ensure change that lasts, we foster a social-good approach to business and investment and educate millions of students about human rights and social justice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report would not have been possible without the individuals who survived ICE detention and came forward to share their stories and testimonies. Without the leadership of the courageous and inspiring detained people we work with, the horrors of the NOLA ICE jails would remain hidden in the shadows. This report is dedicated to them and to those who lost their lives detained in the NOLA ICE jails.

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SOUTHEAST DIGNITY NOT DETENTION COALITION

The SDND Coalition is a group of immigrants, children of immigrants, advocates, organizers, legal workers, justice seekers and community members who share resources, organize and take action together to end the caging and surveilling of people in the southeastern region of the U.S. This includes seeking the permanent closure of all immigration detention centers run by private prison companies and localities under the authority of the New Orleans ICE Field Office. Follow the SDND coalition at <https://linktr.ee/sdndcoalition> and @sedignitynotdetentioncoalition.



DATA ANALYSIS

MOBILE PATHWAYS

At the nexus of partnerships, immigration, and technology, Mobile Pathways advocates for equitable access to justice in immigration proceedings. Our mission is clear: empower both partners and immigrants through innovative technology and advanced analytics, ensuring their success within our immigration system. Offering specialized services for legal professionals seeking comprehensive insights into immigration cases, we aim to break barriers, foster connections, and shape a brighter future.



DESIGN

ARGONAUT

ARGONAUT is a full-service advertising agency with offices in San Francisco and New York City. We are in constant pursuit of the world's most valuable creative work; bringing work to life that makes a positive impact; helping brands build, scale, and comeback.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“When they took us from the border, we were shackled, head to toe. Then they told us we were going to Louisiana. We all started shaking with fear. We knew we were about to lose our freedom, our rights, even our humanity. We knew we were going to the Black Hole.”¹

The United States maintains the world’s largest immigrant incarceration regime, imprisoning an average of over 35,000 people a day undergoing administrative proceedings to determine if they will be deported.² Over 6,000 of those people, a mix of recently-arrived asylum seekers and long-term U.S. residents, are detained in Louisiana, the second-largest state for immigrant detention behind Texas.³ The explosion of immigrant incarceration in Louisiana occurred in the late 2010s and largely benefitted private prison companies, which run eight of the nine immigration jails in the state, profiting off of the abuses described in this report.⁴

This report documents systemic human rights abuses carried out by or under the supervision of the New Orleans Immigration and Customs Enforcement Field Office (“NOLA ICE”), the federal office that oversees immigration detention in Louisiana. NOLA ICE contracts with two private prison companies and a local sheriff’s office to operate Louisiana’s nine immigration jails.⁵ Inside those jails, officials rampantly violate detained peoples’ human and civil rights, locking them away in punitive conditions indistinguishable from those in criminal jails and prisons, in some cases for prolonged periods lasting years.⁶ In some instances, the abuses that detained people describe firsthand in this report meet the definitions of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment under international human rights treaties to which the United States is a party.⁷

The information contained in this report comes from two years of visits to nine immigration jails in Louisiana beginning in April 2022, all told comprising interviews with 6,384 people from 59 jail visits and information from seven jail tours conducted by NOLA ICE officials. During these visits, attorneys and legal workers gave Know Your Rights presentations and conducted legal interviews with detained people. Their testimony reveals that NOLA ICE officials routinely violate ICE’s own minimum standards of care and state, federal, and international law and legal standards. Abuses inflicted include:

- **DENIAL OF LANGUAGE ACCESS:** including interpretation and translation access, resulting in language-related denials of medical and mental health care; due process in preparation of legal materials; and protection against abusive treatment and coercion.
- **DEPRIVATION OF HUMAN NECESSITIES:** including minimally nutritious food and potable drinking water; sanitary conditions of confinement; access to basic hygiene supplies; protection from extreme temperatures; and access to sunlight and outdoor time.
- **ABUSIVE & DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT:** including physical abuse; sexual abuse; torturous solitary confinement; humiliating and degrading speech; and retaliation against and suppression of speech and religious worship protected by the First Amendment.
- **MEDICAL ABUSE & NEGLECT:** including denial of medical care for chronic, urgent, and emergency conditions; provision of ineffective or non-responsive care for serious

health conditions; denial of the right to informed consent to treatment; disruption of ongoing care due to sudden transfers in custody; denial of dental care; denial of reproductive health care; mental health neglect; medical neglect of people with disabilities; and fatal deficiencies in medical care.

Taken together, the abuses inflicted by NOLA ICE officials deprive detained people of due process in their immigration proceedings. In NOLA ICE detention, officials isolate people with viable defenses to deportation from the legal and language resources needed to fairly present their claims. And they use abusive treatment in punitive conditions to coerce people into renouncing those claims and accepting deportation to escape the misery of detention.

The record of documented abuses in NOLA ICE jails predating this report is so extensive that in December 2021, the Department of Homeland Security's oversight agency, the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, opened an investigation into the entire network of NOLA ICE jails, the first-ever field-office wide investigation.⁸ But as the findings of this report show, oversight bodies have failed to hold NOLA ICE accountable, permitting the continued abuse of detained people with impunity.

METHODOLOGY

This report uses both quantitative and qualitative data collected during onsite visits over two years, from April 2022 through April 2024. The data cited in this report comes from four main sources:

- Initial interviews collected during 59 onsite visits (N=6,384)⁹
- Follow-up interviews (N=57)
- 7 onsite stakeholder tours¹⁰
- Intake sheets from sub sample of interviews (quantitative data sample) (N=325)¹¹

INITIAL INTERVIEWS

The stories and examples of abuses shared were directly reported by detained people during onsite visits, in both individual and group interviews that ranged from several minutes to hours, depending on the nature of the abuse reported. 6,384 individuals participated in individual and group interviews conducted during a series of 59 onsite visits to ICE jails. Interviews were conducted by attorneys and legal service providers from Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights (RFKHR), the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project (IRP), the ACLU of Louisiana (ACLU-LA), the National Immigration Project (NIPNLG), Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy (ISLA), ("report authors") and volunteers from other legal and advocacy organizations, including law school clinics.¹²

Interviews were part of a legal intake process that screened people for legal relief in both administrative and federal courts. People wishing to speak with legal service providers signed up for a legal information presentation via sheets posted in the jail housing units prior to the day of the onsite visit. These sign-up sheets were provided to NOLA ICE officials in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Urdu, Hindi, Tigrinya, Kreyol, and Turkish. Participants interviewed in their best language, using an interpreter when necessary. Participants were informed of the purpose of the interviews and provided consent to the use of their information for advocacy and research purposes. No compensation was offered for their participation.

Individual interviews were conducted in a confidential setting wherever possible, including in designated private spaces of large rooms, separated from jail officials and other detained people. When individual interviews were not possible, people were able to participate in group interviews with other detained people, separate from jail officials.

Interview notes were recorded by the interviewer on intake sheets that asked a standardized set of 47 questions about the individual's demographic information, immigration case procedural posture, immigration history, detention history, and general conditions of confinement, including access to medical and mental health care, access to counsel and legal materials, access to translation and interpretation services, and personal or witness experience of physical and verbal abuse and solitary confinement. Report authors reviewed the intake sheets and interview notes to develop and code categories of reported conditions violations, including language access, deprivation of human necessities, abusive and discriminatory treatment, and medical neglect and abuse. Report authors then identified common experiences within those categories.

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

Of the 6,384 individuals interviewed, report authors conducted 57 follow-up long-form interviews via telephone and video. These interview subjects were selected based on report authors' capacity to provide legal representation for medical treatment, language access, and release from detention. Report authors obtained additional information in these cases and reviewed select documentation including medical records, detention files, immigration court filings, and other documentation related to custody and removal proceedings. Report authors analyzed these interview transcripts to code categories of reported conditions violations, including language access, deprivation of human necessities, abusive and discriminatory treatment, and medical neglect and abuse. Select data collected during these interviews is highlighted and featured throughout the report in long-form testimonials.

Due to concerns of retaliation, the names and identities of most of the 6,384 interview participants have been anonymized. In some cases, participants who desired to reveal their identity have been identified by their real names. All interviews with detained people are cited by month, year, and detention location. Intake sheets, interview notes, transcripts, and copies of filed grievances and complaints that are cited throughout are on file with the authors of this report.

STAKEHOLDER SITE TOURS

To better understand the layout and context of the NOLA ICE jails, this report cites data from seven stakeholder tours conducted from May 2023 through October 2023. Researchers' onsite observations occurred during ICE-led stakeholder tours at the ICE jails. During the stakeholder tours, at least three participants documented their observations and responses to questions by NOLA ICE officials. During each tour, participants viewed the facility housing units, solitary confinement cells, medical and mental health units, the law library, the kitchen, dining areas, recreation areas and visitation spaces. Participants recorded their observations to 78 open-ended questions including the current jail population, maximum capacity of the jail, descriptions of physical locations in the jail (the intake area, the housing units, the legal call area, the credible fear interview area, the immigration court, the medical unit, the tablets, the law library, the mail room, the solitary confinement unit, the recreational area, multipurpose spaces, religious spaces, and the kitchen), the grievance process, the disciplinary process, the provision of laundry services, access to personal property, the cleaning and sanitation protocols, and statistics on current personnel.

INTAKE SHEET QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Report authors partnered with Mobile Pathways, a nonprofit organization that provides technology and data support to immigrant rights organizations, to analyze a discrete set of intake sheets to produce the quantitative data cited in this report. Of the 6,384 interviews conducted, report authors identified 325 intake sheets with clean and complete intake data for the quantitative data set. The sample included 325 intake sheets by 14 interviewers. The interviews took place between September 9, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

Data from these intake sheets were categorized by individual facility and aggregated into a single table for analysis. Minimal data cleaning was conducted to ensure consistent formatting, structure, and alignment of data types. Errors and missing values were corrected with inputs from report authors and Mobile Pathways' data analysts. Summary statistics, aggregations, and visualizations were conducted in Tableau.

This report synthesizes key findings across the four sources of data.

DATA LIMITATIONS

The data sets cited in this report contain some limitations. The onsite visits cited in this report were initially designed solely for legal education and the data collection methods have limitations. The data cited collects reported instances of abuse, but report authors have no method to quantify individuals who did not report conditions violations. Thus, the report cannot speak to the overall portion of individuals who experience violations while in custody. The interview and intake data from this report reflects only cases where violations were discussed.

Researchers' inability to individually meet with all detained people during onsite visits and potential participants' fear of retaliation likely artificially depress the actual number of human rights violations at NOLA ICE jails. Researchers received periodic reports that officials failed to post our Know Your Rights visit sign-up sheets in certain housing units, precluding individuals from attending the presentations and reporting conditions issues. Individuals also repeatedly reported that officials announced the Know Your Rights visit in English only and failed to post the sign-up sheet in additional languages, precluding non-English speakers from understanding the purpose of the visit and attending the presentation.

This report is further limited by ICE's failure to publicly release certain requested information and statistical data, such as data on parole request outcomes, significant incident events, individualized data on length of detention, and detention statistics that include race and ethnicity demographics.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

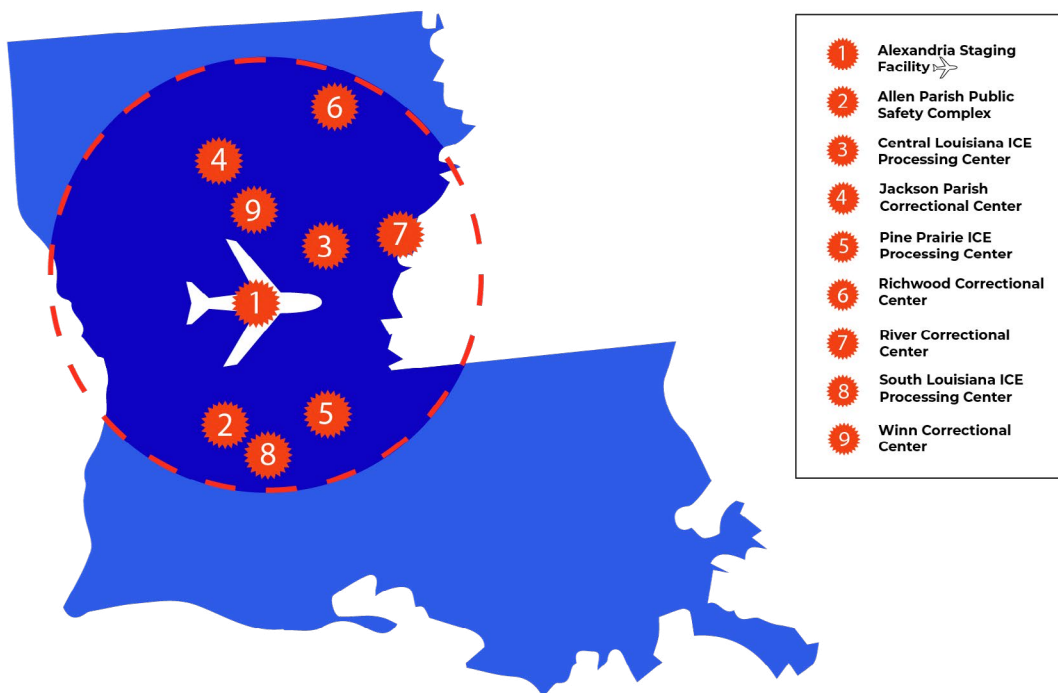
DETENTION AS DETERRENCE: An Overview of NOLA ICE

“Please, I don’t understand. Why are we here? What crime did we commit? No one will answer our questions. We have been here for five months and have been tortured. No one will help us.”¹³

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”), an agency within the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”), uses a nationwide network of private prisons, local jails, and federal facilities to detain tens of thousands of people a day, particularly concentrated throughout rural America.¹⁴ In theory, individuals are locked in immigration detention not as punishment for a crime but to allow the federal government to process them for admission or removal under the civil immigration system.¹⁵ In reality, as the testimonies of people in this report shows, the punitive conditions of immigration jails work to isolate immigrants from legal assistance, in service of what evidence indicates is the government’s objective to deter further immigration.¹⁶ This detention as deterrence strategy is practiced to brutal effect by the New Orleans Immigration and Customs Field Office (“NOLA ICE”), the federal office that oversees immigration detention in Louisiana.

Louisiana is home to the second-largest immigration detention population in the country, outranked only by Texas.¹⁷ The U.S. government currently detains over 6,000 immigrants in Louisiana, incarcerated in a network of nine jails concentrated in the northern region of the state.¹⁸

LOUISIANA ICE JAILS

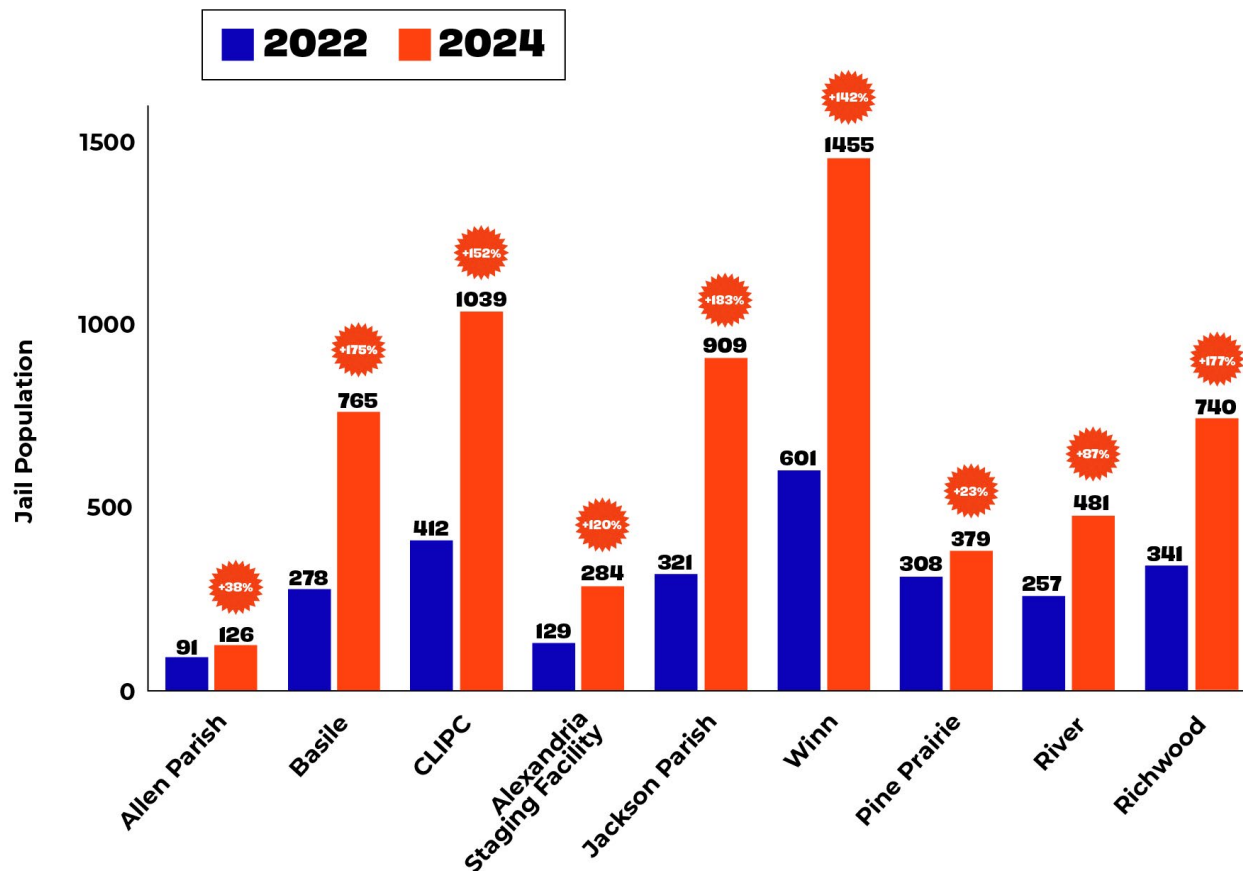


<p>1</p> <p>ALEXANDRIA STAGING FACILITY (ALEXANDRIA, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population: N/A • Daily Average Population: 281 • Operator: The Geo Group, Inc. (private prison company) • Year Opened: ICE: 2007 • Former criminal jail: No • Male-only population
<p>2</p> <p>ALLEN PARISH PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX ("ALLEN PARISH") (OBERLIN, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population: 170 • Daily Average Population: 123 • Operator: Allen Parish Sheriff's Office • Year Opened: 2015, ICE: 2016 • Former criminal jail: Yes • Male-only population
<p>3</p> <p>CENTRAL LOUISIANA ICE PROCESSING CENTER ("CLIPC") (JENA, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population: 1,170 • Daily Average Population: 1,025 • Operator: The Geo Group, Inc. (private prison company) • Year Opened: 1998, ICE: 2008 • Former criminal jail: Yes • Male-only population
<p>4</p> <p>JACKSON PARISH CORRECTIONAL CENTER ("JACKSON PARISH") (JONESBORO, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population: 500 • Daily Average Population: 935 • Operator: LaSalle Corrections (private prison company) • Year Opened: 2007, ICE: 2019 • Former criminal jail: Yes • Male-only population
<p>5</p> <p>PINE PRAIRIE ICE PROCESSING CENTER ("PINE PRAIRIE") (PINE PRAIRIE, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population: N/A • Daily Average Population: 351 • Operator: The Geo Group, Inc. (private prison company) • Year Opened: 2000, ICE: 2015 • Former criminal jail: Yes • Male-only population
<p>6</p> <p>RICHWOOD CORRECTIONAL CENTER ("RICHWOOD") (MONROE, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population: 677 • Daily Average Population: 747 • Operator: LaSalle Corrections (private prison company) • Year Opened: 1998, ICE: 2019 • Former criminal jail: Yes • Mixed-gender population

<p>7</p> <p>RIVER CORRECTIONAL CENTER ("RIVER") (FERRIDAY, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population: 361 • Daily Average Population: 502 • Operator: LaSalle Corrections (private prison company) • Year Opened: 2001, ICE: 2019 • Former criminal jail: Yes • Male-only population
<p>8</p> <p>SOUTH LOUISIANA ICE PROCESSING CENTER ("BASILE") (BASILE, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population: 700 • Daily Average Population: 765 • Operator: The Geo Group, Inc. (private prison company) • Year Opened: 1993, ICE: 2019 • Former criminal jail: Yes • Female-only population
<p>9</p> <p>WINN CORRECTIONAL CENTER ("WINN")¹⁹ (WINNFIELD, LA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Guaranteed Minimum Population²⁰: 946 • Daily Average Population: 1,455 • Operator: LaSalle Corrections (private prison company) • Year Opened: 1990, ICE: 2019 • Former criminal jail: Yes • Male-only population

The immigration detention population in Louisiana surged following state law reforms in 2017 that decreased criminal penalties, leading to empty jail beds and a sprawling, underutilized infrastructure of isolated rural prisons.²¹ The federal government stepped in with lucrative contracts to Louisiana localities to convert their empty criminal facilities into immigration jails.²² Five of the nine immigration jails in Louisiana began operating in 2019. Today, they stand near maximum capacity.²³

OVER THE COURSE OF OUR TWO YEARS OF DATA COLLECTION, ICE DETENTION IN LOUISIANA HAS EXPLODED²⁴



Jointly managed and overseen by NOLA ICE, the nine immigration jails of Louisiana share common characteristics.

- Eight of the nine NOLA ICE jails are converted criminal facilities with dark histories of mistreatment of incarcerated people that are alive in cultures of abuse today.
- Eight of the nine NOLA ICE jails are operated by private prison companies, providing a cost-cutting motive for subpar treatment of detained people.
- Eight of the NOLA ICE jails hold people for prolonged periods of detention ranging from several months to years, in violation of laws mandating release of people who are neither dangerous nor a flight risk.
- All of the NOLA ICE jails are located in rural areas isolated from legal resources in order to restrict detained peoples' access to due process.
- All of the NOLA ICE jails evade the federal government's toothless oversight mechanisms despite years of findings of endemic abuse.

NOLA ICE jails also share a strategic link with the Alexandria International Airport, a converted military base that has become a national nerve center for ICE Air, the group of charter airlines contracted by ICE to operate deportation flights.

THE ALEXANDRIA STAGING FACILITY: The Nucleus of the U.S. Deportation Machine

The Alexandria Staging Facility is a 400-bed ICE jail operated by the private prison company the Geo Group. It was built in 2014 following the closure of a former air force base in 1992. Designed for short-term custody, it incarcerates people awaiting transfer to other immigration jails or rapid deportation. It is the only ICE jail in the country directly connected to an airport. Before its opening, ICE transported people by bus from different jails to a local commercial airport. Now, Alexandria allows the concentrated detention and staging of hundreds of people at a time, optimizing efficiency of ICE's deportation machine. Alexandria serves as a detention transfer hub between NOLA ICE jails and one of five national hubs for ICE Air deportation flights, which also include Mesa, California; Harlingen, Texas; El Paso, Texas; and Miami, Florida. During a May 2023 stakeholder tour, the Alexandria Staging Facility was coordinating all nation-wide ICE Air flights to Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia, and Haiti.

Alexandria is designed to hold large numbers of individuals for up to 72 hours, cycling approximately 1000 people in and out of custody on any given week. The most recent available data, from fiscal year 2015, indicates that the average length of detention at Alexandria is four days.²⁵ The jail has dorm-style open housing units, detaining 80 people each, individual celled units, with 38 cells each, and a separate cell block for people classified “high level custody,” containing two-person cells outfitted with metal bunk beds and a toilet-sink. The units face an expansive “processing area” with rows of benches and walls lined with hundreds of shackles, hung by their chains. People processed from arriving flights are placed in five-point restraints and made to sit on the benches. The jail operates as male-only; women deported out of Alexandria are taken directly from a bus to their deportation flight, where officials then intermix genders. According to ICE officials, all men and some women and children are shackled during transport and on deportation flights.

Access to counsel is severely limited in Alexandria, which lacks a visitation space or client-attorney meeting rooms. Though there are eight phones per unit, there is no place for confidential legal calls. There is also no process for attorneys to schedule legal calls. Instead, they must email the NOLA ICE Deputy Field Office Director, as Alexandria lacks a facility contact for legal calls.



Alexandria Staging Facility
Photo: University of Washington Center for Human Rights

ICE transports people to Alexandria with their property and then inventories, tags, and loads property onto the planes as deportation flights are prepared. Those wishing to

provide money or additional clothing prior to a loved one's deportation must deliver it to the facility through a Deportation Officer. Incoming property must then be cleared by the facility administrator.

Government oversight bodies have exposed deficiencies in medical services at Alexandria. In August 2017, the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties found that Alexandria "is not properly screening for and identifying detainees at risk for suicide[,] . . . particularly important for [Alexandria], where the facility does not provide mental health treatment and programming."²⁵ In August 2022, the Office of Detention Oversight within the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility found deficiencies in environmental health and safety and medical care, including failure to provide transferred or released people with medical records, discharge treatment plans, medication, and referrals to community-based providers.²⁷ The ICE Health Services Corps provides medical care at Alexandria, comprising one physician, two physician's assistants, a nurse practitioner, and nursing staff, working within five exam rooms and one negative pressure room. The facility cannot cohort or quarantine individuals. An on-site pharmacy provides medication that ICE is legally required to give people prior to their deportation. A medic on each deportation flight holds medication for people being deported. Facility staff can perform simple physical examinations but lack capacity for health screening of people with serious or chronic medical needs. Medical personnel at a stakeholder tour stated that the goal of the facility is to maintain the care plan from the previous detention center.

Due to the lack of permitted on-site visitation, documentation of abuses at Alexandria is limited to the U.S. government's own data and oversight reports. In addition to deficiencies in medical services, a September 2023 Office of Detention Oversight investigation found deficiencies related to use of force, noting that officials failed to report incidents to superiors, failed to record planned use of force, and failed to document medical findings following use of force.³⁰

PUNITIVE JAILS MASKED AS CIVIL CONFINEMENT: NOLA ICE Jail Conditions

***"I fled from Russia where I was imprisoned after protesting against the government. Now, I am just in another jail in the same conditions. I escaped one jail in Russia, just to end up in another jail here in the United States."*²⁹**

U.S. law classifies immigration detention as civil confinement. Unlike criminal confinement, civil detention must not have punitive conditions.³⁰ In practice, however, NOLA ICE officials operate immigration detention centers as punishing prisons designed to break the will and harm the mental wellbeing of detained people.

NOLA ICE jails are repurposed prisons that formerly held people awaiting criminal trials or serving criminal sentences. They remain encircled with barbed wire fencing, shut off by locked and barred gates. Inside NOLA ICE jails, detained people who are neither accused

nor convicted of a crime are held in the same cells, wear the same striped or color-coded jumpsuits, and experience the same limitations on freedom as people in criminal custody. What's worse, detained immigrants lack protections provided to those in criminal custody—for example, the constitutional right to counsel.

In fact, detained people who had previously served sentences in criminal facilities reported experiencing worse conditions in NOLA ICE jails. A woman at Basile who had recently completed a criminal sentence at a federal prison in Aliceville, Alabama, said:

In many ways, the conditions here are the same. I'm wearing a jumpsuit. I'm surrounded by barbed wire. I can't go to the yard without permission from guards. But some parts here are worse. The food is smaller portions and rotten, about half the portions we got in prison. I have to represent myself in my legal case, even though I'm not a lawyer. And the guards here are more racist. They mock us just for being immigrants.³¹

NOLA ICE officials use the same forms of pervasive social control against detained people that are used in criminal prisons. Officials use jumpsuits to classify detained people by “risk level.” At CLIPC, “low level security” individuals must wear yellow uniforms while “high level security” individuals must wear red uniforms. Jumpsuits at River bear green and white stripes, identical to clothing traditionally worn by prisoners, and name cards attached to jumpsuits identify people as “inmates.” Risk levels are often heightened due to minor disciplinary infractions, such as “disobeying orders.” For example, at CLIPC, one individual's classification level was heightened from orange to red after a verbal disagreement with an officer rooted in denied access to the law library.³²

NOLA ICE officers also unreasonably restrict detained people's movements, confining them to cramped spaces and holding them in shackles for prolonged periods. Officials prohibit detained people from accessing medical care or the law library without a guard present. They also limit access to outdoor recreation times for as little as one hour a day, and sometimes



The LaSalle ICE Processing Center in Jena, LA
Photo: NOLA.com

deny any access at all for periods as long as 10 continuous days.³³ Guards handcuff people during transfer between NOLA ICE jails, for transportation outside a jail, and for transport to solitary confinement. Officials also use “five-point restraints”: shackles that connect by metal chains to handcuffed wrists, a chain around the waist, and a chain connecting cuffed ankles.

These carceral conditions of confinement cause significant physical and psychological harm. For example, CLIPC officials placed five-point shackles over open wounds on the ankles of a man with Type II diabetes, a long-term medical condition in which the body cannot properly use insulin, leading to persistent wounds resistant to healing.³⁴ A physician had referred him to off-site treatment with an endocrinologist, instructing officials not to shackle his ankles.

Rather than escorting him to his appointment without shackles, ICE canceled it, denying the man required daily wound debridement and care for five days. People detained at Pine Prairie, when transferred from the U.S.-Mexico border to Louisiana, have been shackled in five-point restraints for 26 continuous hours, preventing them from using the restroom, eating or drinking, and leaving them with deep cuts on their wrists and legs.³⁵



The outdoor recreational area at the Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center
Photo: Maria Clark, The Tennessean

CRIMINAL PRISONS SHUTTERED FOR ABUSE REPURPOSED TO DETAIN IMMIGRANTS IN SAME CONDITIONS

Many of the NOLA ICE jails repurposed to incarcerate immigrants have maintained the dark history of abuse that led to their closures when they were criminal jails and prisons.

CLIPC

CLIPC was formerly a juvenile correctional center known as the Jena Juvenile Justice Center, privately run by the Wackenhut Corporation, now known as the Geo Group. In 2000, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against the Jena Juvenile Justice Center, alleging widespread violence and abuse.³⁶ The government accused the private prison operators of beating, tear gassing, and pepper-spraying youth in its care; in response, the Jena Juvenile Justice Center closed.³⁷

When the Geo Group re-opened the facility eight years later as an immigration jail, abuses continued. In 2016, three immigrants detained at CLIPC, then known as the LaSalle ICE Detention Center, died within the first half of the year. An investigation by the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties faulted improper medical response as a contributor to these deaths.³⁸ In 2017, CLIPC was among the top five immigration jails nationally in numbers of sexual assault complaints.³⁹ In 2019, government oversight agency inspectors at CLIPC found expired and non-labeled food in the kitchen.⁴⁰ And in 2020, CLIPC guards repeatedly attacked detained people with pepper spray and other forms of gas during presentations on COVID-19 safety.⁴¹

WINN

Winn was previously a criminal prison, privately run by Corrections Corporation of America, now known as CoreCivic. An investigative piece by a journalist who worked undercover as a Winn guard in 2014 documented regular beatings and pepper-

spraying, widespread sexual abuse, and dangerously inadequate medical and mental health care.⁴²

In 2015, LaSalle Corrections assumed privatized control of Winn and reopened it as an immigration jail. Reports of abuse began “[a]most immediately.”⁴³ Following the outbreak of COVID-19, a detained man and two facility employees died of the disease.⁴⁴ A government oversight body investigated the jail, confirming a “culture and conditions that can lead to abuse” and recommending the immediate cessation of transfers or new bookings into Winn, as well as drawing down the population to zero.⁴⁵ Winn remains open and at full capacity today.



Caution Prison sign outside Winn Correctional Center
Photo: SDND Coalition

RICHWOOD

Before Richwood opened as an immigration jail in 2019, it incarcerated people in criminal custody under a contract with the same private prison company, LaSalle Corrections. In 2017, Richwood settled a wrongful death lawsuit stemming from the death of a man that guards held unattended in a lockdown room with an agitated cellmate.⁴⁶ He had been incarcerated for speeding and driving without a license or proof of insurance. Guards later beat the other man in the room to death.

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Justice secured a conviction for a supervising guard at Richwood after guards rounded up five people, took them to an area without security cameras, put them on their knees with their hands cuffed behind their backs, and took turns pepper spraying them directly in the eyes.⁴⁷ The guards involved were later convicted for conspiracy to cover up the abuse.⁴⁸

That same year, the facility began incarcerating immigrants for ICE.⁴⁹ Within months, reports of abuse emerged, including the October 2019 death of Roylan Hernández Díaz, who allegedly died by suicide after being held in solitary confinement as punishment for a hunger strike.⁵⁰ Most recently, in February 2023, a government oversight agency found violations of ICE standards at the jail, including subpar sanitation and failure to maintain a grievance system.⁵¹

PERVERSE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES: The Outsized Role of Private Prison Companies in NOLA ICE Jails

“I am starting to understand that they are keeping us here because they are making money off of our suffering.”⁵²

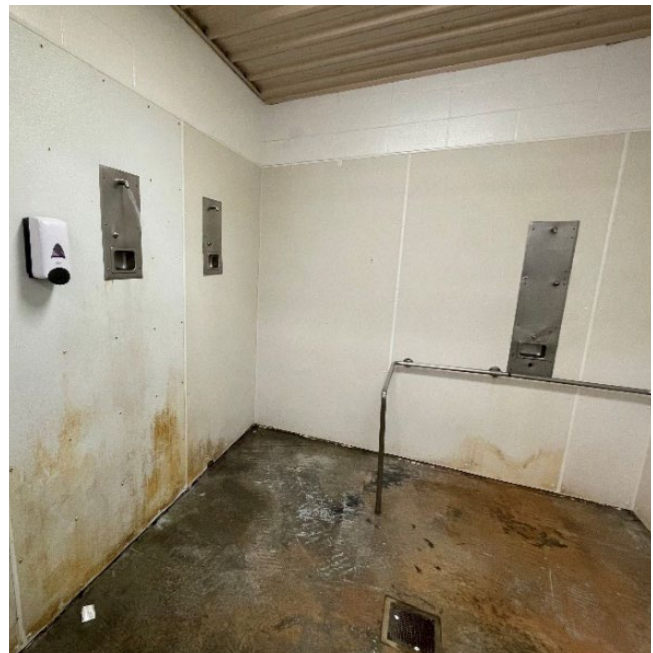
Almost all of the new immigration jails opened during the last decade are operated by for-profit prison companies, including the Geo Group and LaSalle Corrections.⁵³ Eight of nine NOLA ICE jails are staffed by the Geo Group and LaSalle Corrections.⁵⁴

98% of immigrants detained in Louisiana are held in for-profit ICE jails.⁵⁵

In 2023, the Geo Group reported annual revenue of \$2.41 billion.⁵⁶ LaSalle Corrections, a private prison company that operates 18 jails in Louisiana, Texas, and Georgia and touts itself as a family-run business, does not publicly report its earnings. Incentivized by profit, the Geo Group and LaSalle Corrections influence immigration policy by spending millions of dollars on campaign contributions and lobbying for the expansion of the detention to deportation pipeline.⁵⁷

Immigration detention is lucrative, even more so when jails avoid providing basic services like suitable food and clothing. To ensure maximum profits, NOLA ICE jails are incentivized to cut costs by understaffing facilities, paying detained people sub-minimum wages for custodial and other labor services, and denying sufficient food, clothing, and medical care, among other abuses.

This for-profit incentive results in a dangerous combination of overcrowding and understaffing. At CLIPC, run by the Geo Group, there are only two officers assigned to the care and management of four dorms, or over 230 detained people per officer.⁵⁸ Insufficient staffing leads to insufficient services, including access to medical and legal resources. As one detained person said:



Shower area in the Richwood Correctional Center
Photo: DHS OIG photos

Here, the two officers sit in the hallway between the dorm units in two chairs facing opposite directions. We are inside the dorms. There are 96 of us in just one dorm. For us to go to the places we request like medical or the law library, they call the phones or the radios in the dorm units for the officers to escort us out. Many of us are missing medical calls because the officers sitting outside don't hear the phone ring or the radio call. They don't have enough officers to escort people to where they need to go. We have to scream and bang on the windows if we need anything, just to get their attention, even when there's a medical emergency.⁵⁹

Some defend the use of private prison contracts as economically beneficial for rural communities. But research shows that prison construction has no statistically significant effect on per capita income or job creation. It may instead harm rural economic development by suppressing opportunities for alternative economic development and allocating resources to large, outside companies at the expense of local businesses.⁶⁰

ALONE AND CONFUSED: Isolation from Legal Resources in NOLA ICE jails

“This is the first time anyone has come to see us. We don’t understand what’s going on. Why are we here? What did we do wrong?”⁶¹

Detained immigrants in removal proceedings are entitled to due process, a guarantee that the government will treat them in a fundamentally fair manner.⁶² By law, detention authorities must give them the opportunity to meaningfully participate in their removal proceedings: to communicate with legal counsel, to access legal research materials and education when they have no choice but to proceed without counsel, and to receive and to respond to communications from the immigration court.⁶³

But people detained in NOLA ICE jails are isolated from legal resources, including legal counsel and legal information. Nationwide, detained immigrants who are represented by counsel are twice as likely to win their immigration case and four times as likely to be released from custody than those without an attorney.⁶⁴ By denying detained people access to counsel and basic legal information concerning the U.S. immigration system and their rights in detention, NOLA ICE officials make it easier to deport them.⁶⁵ People in NOLA ICE jails have expressed profound fear, frustration, and confusion about why they were in detention. This desperation drives some to accept deportation as the only way to escape detention, even when they have good faith claims to legal relief.



Aerial view of The Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center in Pine Prairie, Louisiana
Photo: Google Maps, The Intercept

Of the detained people we surveyed, 97% expressed a fear of persecution or torture if returned to their country of origin. Yet 71% of surveyed people detained in the NOLA ICE jails are navigating the immigration system alone, without the assistance of an attorney.

The location of the NOLA ICE jails prevent detained people from accessing legal counsel. No jail within the NOLA ICE jurisdiction is less than 100 miles from the nearest urban center, making attorney visits prohibitively difficult and expensive. When detained people are disappeared to remote jails, away from public oversight or legal assistance, they can be victimized with impunity.

ICE JAIL	LOCATION	LOCAL POPULATION	NEAREST URBAN CENTER	DISTANCE FROM NEAREST URBAN CENTER
Winn Correctional Center	Winnfield, LA	3,933	Baton Rouge, LA	177 Miles (3 hour drive)
Jackson Parish Correctional Center	Jonesboro, LA	4,045	Jackson, MS	169 Miles (2 hour, 45 min drive)
Central Louisiana ICE Processing Center	Jena, LA	4,128	Baton Rouge, LA	144 Miles (2 hour, 45 min drive)
Alexandria Staging Facility	Alexandria, LA	44,004	Baton Rouge, LA	130 Miles (2 hour drive)
Allen Parish Public Safety Complex	Oberlin, LA	1,353	Baton Rouge, LA	125 Miles (2 hour drive)

Richwood Correctional Center	Monroe, LA	46,820	Jackson, MS	120 Miles (2 hour drive)
South Louisiana ICE Processing Center	Basile, LA	1,195	Baton Rouge, LA	104 Miles (1 hour, 45 min drive)
River Correctional Center	Ferriday, LA	3,081	Baton Rouge, LA	102 Miles (1 hour, 45 min drive)
Adams County Correctional Center	Natchez, MS	13,812	Baton Rouge, LA	101 Miles (1 hour, 30 min drive)
Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center	Pine Prairie, LA	1,476	Baton Rouge, LA	100 Miles (1 hour, 45 min drive)

Few private attorneys can offer representation to clients who are so distantly located. Pro bono organizations are likewise limited from assisting due to the jails' isolation.⁶⁶ Further, in at least one facility—River—detained people have reported that NOLA ICE officials have blocked outgoing calls to pro bono legal organizations and lawyers.⁶⁷ One detained person said:

I have no money to pay for a lawyer and I haven't been able to speak with my family. We traveled to the border together but were separated. I don't understand what I have to do next. If I lose my case, I can't go back to my country. I will be killed. How can I find a lawyer when I am trapped here? What am I supposed to do?⁶⁸

Without the assistance of an attorney, many detained people we interviewed lacked knowledge of even the most basic aspects of their immigration cases, including why they were subjected to detention in the first place or where they were currently detained. Examples include:

- A man at Pine Prairie did not know he was detained in Louisiana and thought that he was in Miami, Florida.⁶⁹

- A woman who had been separated from her husband and children by authorities at the U.S.-Mexico border was confused as to how to make contact with her family or what the next step in her case would be.
- A man who had requested asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border said: “I have a CBP One appointment through the app. I waited for over two months at the border in Mexico for my turn to request asylum. I don’t understand. I did everything they told me to do. Why am I in detention?”⁷⁰

Most people in NOLA ICE detention lack legal representation, so access to an adequately resourced law library is essential for meaningful participation in their cases. There is no recognized right to universal court-appointed counsel in immigration court. But the U.S. government is represented by its own attorney, whose job is to convince the immigration judge to issue an order of deportation. Without access to the basic laws and cases governing defenses to deportation, detained people without legal representation are denied a fair hearing.

NOLA ICE officials refuse to provide access to adequately resourced law libraries, denying due process to detained people without legal representation. Under ICE policy, a law library shall be “large enough to provide reasonable access to all detainees who request its use” and “shall have an adequate number of computers and printers to support the detainee population.”⁷¹ Law libraries must be equipped with legal reference materials, including immigration statutes and regulations, country conditions reports, and practice manuals on immigration law.⁷² ICE must also “make available in the law library any electronic media . . . containing the required publications or other supporting legal research platforms for detainees.”⁷³



Sign outside Winn Correctional Center
Photo: SDND Coalition

In reality, most law libraries in NOLA ICE jails are roughly the size of a closet. At River, the law library is only wide enough for approximately 3 to 4 people to stand and only has space for 2 individuals to sit. It has one computer and a single small bookshelf with limited reference materials. At Allen Parish, there is no centralized law library. Instead, each housing unit has a small enclave, roughly 4 feet by 6 feet, with a single computer and no books or printed legal materials at all.

NOLA ICE jails routinely obstruct access to legal resources, including presentations and information administered by the Department of Justice’s Legal Orientation Program (“LOP”), which funds “representatives from nonprofit immigration legal service organizations [to] provide comprehensive explanations about immigration court procedures along with other helpful legal information.”⁷⁴ There is no LOP at River or Allen Parish. In six facilities, the only LOP offered is a video recording.⁷⁵ Consequently, the individual orientations and self-help workshops that LOP is designed to offer are not available at all in NOLA ICE facilities. Even where a video recording is nominally available, NOLA ICE officials obstruct access to it. At

Richwood, officers keep the video continuously playing, but in a room that is off-limits to detained people, behind closed doors and in an area of the facility that cannot be freely accessed without officer accompaniment.⁷⁶

Employees of the private prison companies staffing NOLA ICE jails also obstruct access to ICE Deportation Officers, depriving detained people of basic information about their cases. Because Deportation Officers rotate amongst assigned individuals, detained people rely on jail staff to inform them of their currently assigned Deportation Officer. Jail staff claim that detained people can find their assigned officers in lists posted in English in the housing units. But most detained people interviewed said that they were unable to locate a list and did not know the name of their ICE Deportation Officer. Even when a list is posted, people whose languages do not use Latin script and people who are illiterate are unable to read it. Though NOLA ICE officials could remedy this problem by simply telling people who their assigned Deportation Officers are, they refuse to do so.

When a detained person can identify their Deportation Officer to query their case status, non-responsiveness is common. At some facilities, NOLA ICE officials ask people to use electronic tablets to message their Deportation Officers directly. Some tablets, however, are only navigable in English, rendering them unusable for most detained people in NOLA ICE jails. Detained people also sometimes have access to a metal filing box in the housing unit labeled “ICE,” where they can leave written messages. Whether notified by tablet or handwritten message, however, Deportation Officers frequently ignore or are unresponsive to requests for information about individual cases. Detained people also reported that ICE officers do not come to the jails at all. Some people who were visited by ICE officers said that officers refuse to use interpretation services and yell out “No Spanish!” to detained people.⁷⁷ At River, Deportation Officer visits were so rare that detained people engaged in a three-day hunger strike to demand they be provided with case updates.⁷⁸

NO WAY OUT: Prolonged and Arbitrary Detention

“There is no parole in Louisiana.”⁷⁹

Of all ICE field offices nationally, NOLA ICE stands out for holding people in detention for longer and refusing release at higher rates. Six of the nine NOLA ICE jails surpass the national average length of detention of 34.7 days, with an outsized number of people in prolonged detention.⁸⁰ NOLA ICE officials also release detained people at the lowest rate of any ICE field office in the country.

Data obtained through a Freedom for Information Act (“FOIA”) request submitted by the ACLU indicates that individuals who were detained in Louisiana often experienced longer periods of detention than those detained in other regions. Immigrants held in NOLA ICE jails directly before their deportation or release were twice as likely to be detained for a period of over 180 days than those detained elsewhere.⁸¹ For example, Jessica Barahona-Martinez, a single mother and LGBTQ+ asylum seeker from El Salvador, was detained by ICE for more than six years.⁸² For the last three years of her detention, she was transferred from ICE jails in Virginia, her home state, to Basile. Aamir Shaikh, an LGBTQ+ asylum seeker from Pakistan, was detained by ICE for nearly five years. He was held in CLIPC for the last two years of his detention after transfer from an ICE jail in his home state of New York. Both Jessica and Aamir were only released from ICE detention following intervention by report contributors.

NOLA ICE also holds people with final orders of removal in prolonged detention. Examples include:

- A man from the Democratic Republic of Congo at River for 121 days after a final order of removal
- A man from the Democratic Republic of Congo at River for 105 days after a final order of removal
- A man from Angola at River for 99 days after a final order of removal
- A man from the Democratic Republic of Congo at River for 85 days after a final order of removal
- A group of 14 men from Senegal at River between 97 to 134 days after final orders of removal
- A man from Brazil at River issued a final order of expedited removal, but detained for over nine months
- A woman from Dominican Republic at CLIPC who did not pursue an asylum claim, but was detained for over seven months

NOLA ICE also holds people in arbitrary detention, refusing discretionary release at higher rates than any other ICE field office. Under U.S. immigration law, ICE may release a detained person on “parole” if he or she does not pose a flight risk or a danger to the community.⁸³ Under a 2009 directive, if the government finds that a person has a credible fear of persecution in a preliminary interview that takes place before a person can file an application for asylum, ICE should “parole the [person] on the basis that his or her continued detention is not in the public interest.”⁸⁴ That directive also requires ICE to advise people of their right to participate in a parole interview following a positive credible fear interview.⁸⁵

But NOLA ICE officials refuse to abide by the 2009 parole directive. In March 2023, six Colombian women with positive credible fear interviews detained at Richwood for over a month had yet to receive notice of parole interviews. In 2019, in *Mons v. McAleenan*, a federal court ordered ICE to restore access to parole consistent with the 2009 directive.⁸⁶ But according to data analyzed by the ACLU in the year immediately following this court order, NOLA ICE denied parole for 99% of applicants, the lowest parole rate of any ICE Field Office in the country.⁸⁷ And even where NOLA ICE does grant parole, officers can attach prohibitively expensive bond amounts in the tens of thousands of dollars, making actual release impossible.⁸⁸

ENABLING IMPUNITY: Systemic Failures in Oversight and Accountability

The U.S. government has multiple oversight mechanisms available to monitor and report abusive conditions in NOLA ICE jails, including ICE internal inspections, Department of Homeland Security monitoring and reporting mechanisms, other executive agency watchdogs, and congressional investigations and reports.⁸⁹ But these mechanisms have failed to correct and prevent systemic abuse and cruel and degrading conditions in NOLA ICE jails. Several are housed within the Department of Homeland Security, lacking independence needed to ensure accountability for abuse.

ICE JAIL OVERSIGHT BODIES	
Oversight Bodies within ICE	
ICE Office of Professional Responsibility, Office of Detention and Oversight (ODO)	ODO conducts scheduled inspections of ICE jails and publishes its findings online. ⁹⁰
Oversight Bodies within DHS	
Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL)	CRCL investigates complaints regarding DHS policies, activities, and actions. It cannot enforce remedies for rights violations, except for people with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Redacted findings of CRCL investigations may be posted online. ⁹¹
Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	OIG conducts unannounced inspections of ICE jails. The OIG Office of Audits reviews ICE jail compliance with program objectives and financial standards. OIG publishes inspections and audits online. ⁹²
Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO)	OIDO investigates individual complaints and conducts unannounced inspections of ICE jails to review for corrective action to resolve violations or concerns identified during another oversight office's prior inspection, audit, or investigation. It publishes recommendations to ICE online. ⁹³
Oversight Bodies External to DHS	
Government Accountability Office (GAO)	GAO is an independent, non-partisan agency that examines how U.S. taxpayer dollars are spent and provides Congress and federal agencies with information to improve cost efficiency. GAO reports are available online. ⁹⁴

Many of these oversight agencies monitor for compliance with ICE's Performance Based National Detention Standards ("PBNDS"). The PBNDS establish minimum requirements for, amongst other areas, medical treatment, living conditions, working conditions, religious freedom, use of solitary confinement, treatment of vulnerable groups, and grievance and retaliation procedures. All nine of the NOLA ICE jails are contractually required to comply with the PBNDS.

Inspection of NOLA ICE jails by oversight mechanisms has failed to meaningfully enforce the PBNDS or to remedy systemic abuses.⁹⁵ In particular, CRCL's significant limitations impede its effectiveness. Other than in cases of discrimination on account of disability, the office does not have enforcement authority for its recommendations. There are no mandatory response

timelines for requests or recommendations from CRCL. There is no process to require ICE to disclose its policy decisions to CRCL, nor to resolve disagreements between CRCL and ICE.

When CRCL has recommended jail depopulation, NOLA ICE has rejected that recommendation and instead expanded the use of a facility that CRCL determined unfit for human habitation. In August 2021, CRCL recommended that Winn “be closed or drawn down” in light of a “culture and conditions that can lead to abuse, mistreatment, and discrimination.”⁹⁶ In March 2022, ICE said it was voluntarily limiting the use of the jail.⁹⁷ Yet, as this report documents, Winn’s population has ballooned to maximum capacity and systemic human rights abuses there persist.⁹⁸

The recommendations of CRCL, the oversight body tasked with monitoring civil rights and civil liberties in ICE jails, are not legally enforceable. Their complete findings and reports are also not released publicly. Lack of transparency and enforcement power diminishes CRCL’s ability to achieve its mission to protect civil and human rights.

Even where CRCL issues findings of misconduct, investigative reports and recommendations are concealed from the public. Advocates must often resort to time-intensive and costly litigation under the Freedom of Information Act to uncover CRCL findings. Recently, after years-long litigation, National Public Radio uncovered a 1,600-page trove of CRCL reports on over two dozen ICE jails nation-wide, including findings of “barbaric” and “negligent” conditions.⁹⁹ As of December 2021, CRCL has opened an investigation into the entire network of NOLA ICE jails, the first-ever field-office wide investigation.¹⁰⁰ Following a familiar pattern, the findings of this investigation have not been publicly released, permitting the U.S. government to indefinitely conceal indefinitely systemic abuses within NOLA ICE jails.

PART II: SYSTEMIC HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AT NOLA ICE JAILS

Denial of Language Access

“When they took me from the border and they took me to jail, no one spoke my language. I stayed in jail for seven months. When I came here, it was worse and I was worried for my life. Will I die in this jail or will they deport me back to my death?”¹⁰¹

Across all NOLA ICE facilities, officials have denied detained people their human rights based solely on inability to speak English.¹⁰² By law, ICE must ensure detained people language access: the ability to receive or communicate information in a language that one understands. But NOLA ICE is either unable or willing to provide consistent interpretation and translation services to people in need of it to secure their basic human rights. Without language access, detained people are unable to avail themselves of protections from unsafe or harmful conditions and treatment, to request urgently needed medical care and mental health services, and to adequately prepare for pending immigration matters.

OROMO SPEAKER LEFT SUICIDAL FROM DENIAL OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

Abdii,¹⁰³ RIVER

“I tried to tell them, ‘Please help me,’ in English and asked them to find an interpreter.”

Abdii is a 22-year-old Oromo speaker from Ethiopia fleeing persecution for participating in the political movement for self-determination and equality of the Oromo people, an Indigenous group in Ethiopia. While detained at River for seven months, his immigration court proceedings were rescheduled eight times due to lack of an Oromo interpreter. He recounts:

The isolation of having no one to speak to and all the delays of the court caused me to be suicidal. I wanted to give up. I wanted to explain my case and get help but because of the language barrier, I was unable to. I felt so lonely because no one knew my language. Other detained people have their own groups and have each other but I had no one. I was also worried that guards and other people were speaking badly about me because I couldn’t understand what they were saying. This made me very afraid, not knowing what they would do. I was never able to speak with the officers to request things because we couldn’t communicate.

When Abdii sought mental health care for his insomnia, auditory and visual hallucinations, and suicidal ideation, NOLA ICE officials refused to provide interpreter services.

I was having suicidal feelings and wanted to end my life because I was tortured by sleeping problems and anxiety. I got no solution for my issues in jail. I told the nurse about my issues but she didn't help me. They would say, "Don't worry, just drink enough water." They would have a lot of difficulty finding an Oromo interpreter and tell me, "We can't help you because we couldn't find an interpreter in your language." I never had a psychological evaluation, but I tried to request an evaluation. They would ask me, "Do you want to kill yourself? Do you want to kill other people?" in English.

NOLA ICE's refusal to provide Abdii translation and interpretation prevented him from accessing other basic necessities in detention.

My shoes were broken. The bottoms were hanging off and this made it difficult to walk. My underwear also was torn and dirty. I couldn't request new shoes and underwear because the guards couldn't understand my language. They would just hand me a grievance form but I couldn't fill it out. I tried writing in my language but I never heard back from the guards.

After seven months in detention, following intervention by the report contributors, Abdii was released. He now lives with his sponsor in Wisconsin. He continues to experience flashbacks and emotional distress related to his mistreatment in ICE custody.

ICE's standards mandate language assistance for individuals with limited English proficiency in order "to provide meaningful access to . . . programs and activities."¹⁰⁴ All written materials in ICE jails must be translated into Spanish and other languages that significant populations in the jail speak.¹⁰⁵ When a person is illiterate or speaks a language in which written material is not translated, officials must provide oral interpretation.¹⁰⁶ In addition, ICE standards require jails to make efforts to assist illiterate and limited English proficiency people in using the law library, "beyond access to a set of English-language law books."¹⁰⁷

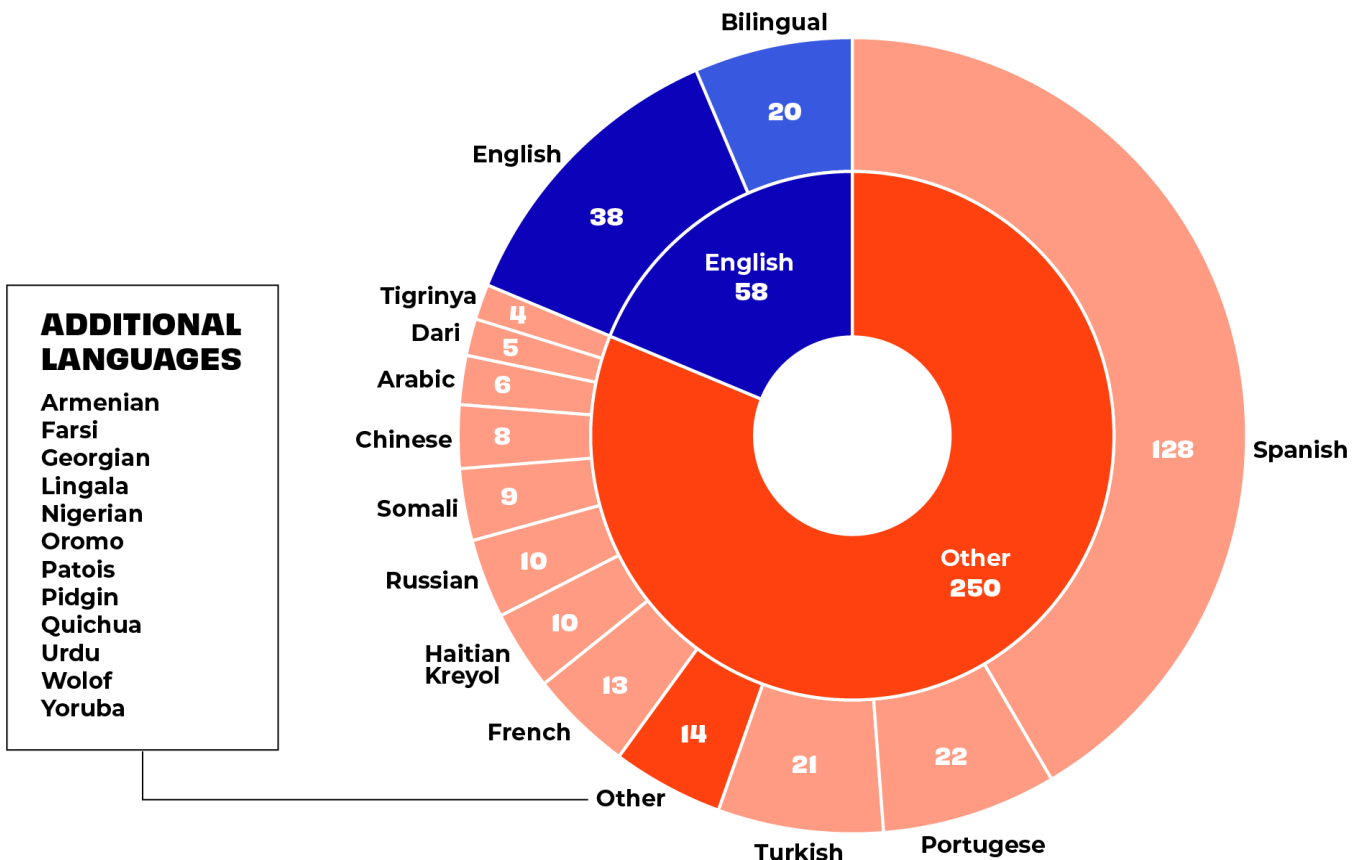
U.S. law also mandates language access in ICE jails. Constitutional due process requires that a person in immigration custody be provided with "a meaningful opportunity to participate in her legal proceedings."¹⁰⁸ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of national origin, requires that recipients of federal grants "take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by limited English proficiency persons."¹⁰⁹ Executive Order 13166 implements Title VI by requiring federal agencies like ICE to establish plans "to ensure that eligible [limited English proficiency] persons can meaningfully access the agency's programs and activities."¹¹⁰

Of the people surveyed in NOLA ICE detention for this report, approximately 84% were limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals, meaning they did not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. 42% spoke languages other than English or Spanish.

Though English-Spanish interpretation and translation services are more available than less commonly spoken languages, even Spanish speakers reported significant language access barriers in NOLA ICE jails. For example, representing 17 Spanish-speaking men at Winn, one reported:

*My entire time in detention I have not been provided with interpreters at any point, not even in the medical unit. I have not been given any documents, forms, or information in my language. It has been nearly impossible for me to fill out any documents or prepare my case and I have never had professional interpretation anywhere in the detention facility. I have never been able to understand what is being told to me and the guards yell at me in English.*¹⁷⁷

Other languages of limited dispersion encountered in NOLA ICE detention include Indigenous and regional languages spoken in Central America, Africa, and Asia, including K'iche', Mam, Ixil, Chuj, Q'anjob'al, Q'eqchi', Wolof, Lingala, Twi, Oromo, and Garre.



LANGUAGE-RELATED DENIAL OF PROTECTIONS AGAINST ABUSIVE TREATMENT

“They gave me a big handbook, they took my picture, and made me an ID. But the book I got didn’t help me because I don’t know how to read English.”¹¹²

NOLA ICE officials have denied LEP individuals access to basic information that explains their rights while in detention, including how to file complaints of abusive treatment. Officials have refused to provide the National Detainee Handbook and forms that explain basic rights in languages other than English. In most NOLA ICE jails, officials require that grievances and requests for assistance, including medical care, be filed through electronic tablets that operate only in English, Spanish and French; in some facilities, tablets operate in only English.¹¹³ Officers who are unable to communicate with LEP individuals refuse to provide interpretation. Examples include:

- A Garre-speaker detained at Pine Prairie was unable to file grievances or other requests. He said:

When I was held in Pine Prairie the conditions were very cold. I only had the uniform, a small shirt and pants, they provided and no sweater or sweatshirt. I couldn’t make a request for a sweater because I couldn’t speak to any guards or anyone. I had no choice but to just suffer through the cold temperatures. I couldn’t use the tablet because it was only available in English and Spanish.¹¹⁴

- An official at Basile asked an attorney to translate a message to a Spanish-speaking woman. When asked how he would typically communicate with LEP individuals, he responded, “I don’t. It’s really hard.”¹¹⁵
- A Turkish-speaking woman said, “The guards and facility yell at us in English and get very angry. Sometimes they laugh at us. I cannot explain my needs to the guards or staff.”¹¹⁶
- A Wolof-speaking woman said, “I cannot ask for information using the detention center technology because I cannot write messages or talk to officers in my language.”¹¹⁷
- A group of 12 Mandarin-speaking women said, “We cannot communicate with the guards in the facility. We also cannot use the tablets because it’s all in English. So we cannot even use them to communicate with our ICE officers. We also are not able to submit sick call requests.”¹¹⁸
- A Spanish speaker at Basile said, “The guards only yell and in English. I don’t understand and can’t explain my needs.”¹¹⁹
- A Mandarin speaker at Richwood said:

I do not have a lawyer or any family in the U.S. so it is hard for me to understand what is going on and what to expect in my case or how to prepare to apply for asylum. It is not possible to communicate with the guards here. We need someone who speaks Chinese, a guard we can go to when we have problems. When I try to talk to a guard now, they just say, “Ok,” before I even finish speaking.¹²⁰

LANGUAGE-RELATED COERCION

“I couldn’t understand what he was saying or what the documents meant. He took my hand and pressed my fingerprints to the paper. I think I am being deported but I don’t understand what is happening.”¹²¹

NOLA ICE officials have withheld language access to LEP individuals to coerce them to accept deportation and to waive other rights against abusive treatment. Officials have forced individuals to sign paperwork that they cannot understand and have withheld translation or interpretation for notices concerning the right to request release or the right to contest alleged disciplinary violations. Examples include:

- A Spanish-speaking woman at Basile received documents in English and ICE officers instructed her to sign paperwork in English that she could not understand.¹²²
- A Portuguese-speaking woman at Basile said that ICE officers brought her documents and forced her to sign them without an interpreter. She said:

An officer gave me papers but he didn’t read them to me. Because I can’t read or speak English, I couldn’t understand them. I tried to explain to the officer that I needed an interpreter but he ignored me. He started to get angry. I was afraid and just signed the papers. I think they are trying to deport me.¹²³

NOLA ICE officials have withheld language access to LEP individuals to coerce them to accept deportation and to waive other rights against abusive treatment. Officials have forced individuals to sign paperwork that they cannot understand and have withheld translation or interpretation for notices concerning the right to request release or the right to contest alleged disciplinary violations. Examples include:

- Multiple people at Winn from India, Guinea, Tajikistan, Mali, and Eritrea said that they are unable to communicate with anyone in the facility and cannot understand any documents they receive from the immigration court or ICE, including notices and communications about their pending parole requests.¹²⁴
- A Marshallese man at Winn said that an ICE officer forced him to sign unknown documents without an interpreter. He said:

What’s going on with my case? What do these papers mean? They never interpret to me in Marshallese. My biggest concern is they brought me papers to sign that I didn’t understand. I asked for an interpreter, they said, “You can only have an interpreter after you sign.” That was over a month ago. What did I sign? Later I told them, “I have nine kids and their mom is in Marshall Islands. I am the sole provider.” That’s when they told me, I signed away my rights and I am going to be deported.¹²⁵

LANGUAGE-RELATED DENIAL OF MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

“There is no one here who speaks my language. Not even a single person. The guards can’t understand me and won’t try to listen. No one has ever called an interpreter. I’m afraid I’m going to die. How do I explain what I need to live here?”¹²⁶

NOLA ICE officials have denied people access to language interpretation services needed for provision of medical and mental health care. As a result, people are unable to submit requests for medical treatment, communicate their symptoms and medical needs, or provide informed consent to medical treatment plans. Examples include:

- A Spanish-speaking man at Winn was denied an interpreter when he sought medical treatment for a knee injury. Unable to communicate his symptoms, he received unmarked pain pills but no further treatment.¹²⁷
- A Mandarin-speaker at Allen Parish had severe stomach pain and diarrhea for the five days. He said, “I can’t get medical care because I’m unable to speak with any guards here. They don’t understand me and won’t get an interpreter. When I try to speak with them, they dismiss me. I think something is seriously wrong with my health.”¹²⁸
- A Garre-speaking man was unable to access medical care at Pine Prairie due to lack of interpretation. He said:

Sometimes I did not even try to go to the doctor because of these language barriers. I had a lot of discomfort with urination, burning pain, but due to the language barrier I never saw the doctor for this. I just stayed there and lived with the discomfort and pain for three months. Finally, when I was released to my sponsor, I was able to seek medical treatment and the doctor told me my discomfort was caused by the water at Pine Prairie and finally gave me medication.¹²⁹

- A Mandarin-speaking woman at Basile had a cough and sore throat for two weeks. She attempted to submit medical requests using the tablet. Other detained people who knew some English attempted to assist her. None of her medical requests were answered and she had never been seen by a nurse or doctor.¹³⁰
- A Georgian woman at Richwood was denied an interpreter when she sought medical treatment for her severe abdominal pain. She said, “I can’t get any help here. No one understands my language. How am I supposed to explain that I need help? I’m in so much pain.”¹³¹
- An Uzbek speaker at Pine Prairie was unable to sleep or walk due to debilitating leg pain he believed to stem from a torn ligament from falling while traveling to the United States border. Without an interpreter, he could not communicate his symptoms.¹³²
- A Spanish-speaking man at Winn was denied an interpreter when seeking treatment for his blood pressure and anxiety.¹³³ Officials had ignored five medical requests submitted in Spanish through the tablet.
- A Spanish-speaking man at Winn had chest pain and numbness in his hands that he feared were symptoms of cardiac issues. He had submitted three medical requests without an interpreter, so was unable to describe his symptoms to medical personnel and was returned to the housing unit without treatment.¹³⁴

- A Portuguese-speaking man at Winn reported had been vomiting blood for over four days. When officials brought him to the medical unit, they did not provide an interpreter. “The doctor was speaking English. I said ‘Portuguese, please.’ They ignored me. He was trying to tell me something, maybe what’s wrong with me. I couldn’t understand anything he said. They gave me some type of pill and dismissed me. I threw up blood again yesterday.”¹³⁵

LANGUAGE-RELATED DENIAL OF ACCESS TO THE LAW LIBRARY

“I was only given court documents in English. I only received my [asylum application] in English. I tried to go to the law library but there was nothing there to help me.”¹³⁶

NOLA ICE officials have failed to provide interpretation and translation services to LEP individuals in facility law libraries. Most individuals detained in NOLA ICE jails lack legal representation and are thus dependent on materials available in jail law libraries to complete their immigration court applications and paperwork. Yet in all NOLA ICE jails, law library computers, which enable people to search for case law and instructions for applications, are only navigable in English. To translate documents from immigration court, LEP individuals must attempt to use the limited machine translation function on their tablets, which are designed only for informal communications with ICE officers. Many are unable to understand the forms that they are required to complete, in English, to apply for asylum. As a result, LEP asylum-seeking people are ordered removed for failing to complete the asylum application in English. Those with limited literacy in any language are at an even greater disadvantage.

LGBTQ+ TWI SPEAKER DENIED ASYLUM DUE TO LACK OF LANGUAGE ACCESS IN LAW LIBRARY

Awusi,¹³⁷ PINE PRAIRIE

“When is the United States finally going to protect me?”

Awusi is an LGBTQ+ man from Ghana who was tortured twice by an anti-gay group in Ghana. He speaks Twi, a language spoken in southern and central Ghana. After requesting asylum at the U.S. border, NOLA ICE officials detained him at Pine Prairie for seven months before transferring him to another ICE jail in New York.

At Pine Prairie, officials refused Awusi translation services for use at the law library, so he relied on the assistance of another detained person who spoke limited Twi to complete his asylum application:

Everything was in English. Someone in my dorm helped me fill out the application. A man from Nigeria typed it for me in the law library and a man from Zimbabwe helped me write out the answers in my application. I couldn’t read it after. There maybe were mistakes. I don’t

know how to use the computer. I wanted to show the judge everything that happened to me. I was beaten and still I hear the voices of the people who attacked me and my boyfriend in Ghana. I don't think the judge understood me well.

At Awusi's subsequent immigration court hearing, the immigration judge cited inconsistencies in his written asylum application when denying his application for relief.

The judge chastised me for mistakes in my written application. I tried to explain that I can't write or read English. I have trouble with spelling and I had the names of my family members written wrong. Some of my siblings I couldn't even think of how to write their names in English. The man in my dorm who helped me write out my story got a few details mixed up. I don't think we understood each other well because Twi is not his language. The mistake was small. It was that I was taken to the hospital after being beaten that same night instead of a few days later. I told the judge, "Please. The right information is what I am telling you now. My written application has mistakes because I didn't have any interpreter helping me." She denied me anyway.

Despite viable claims for asylum, Awusi was ordered deported. After report contributors intervened and appealed the decision, the Board of Immigration Appeals remanded Awusi's case back to the immigration court. In July 2024, the immigration court granted Awusi immigration relief and he was released. He now lives with his sponsor in Illinois.

Several people in NOLA ICE jails reported lack of language access that prejudiced their immigration cases. Examples include:

- A Bengali speaker at River accepted voluntary departure after seven months of detention because he was unable to complete his asylum application in English.¹³⁸ He stated:

I am the only Bengali person here. I can't afford an attorney. I escaped and came here with nothing but my life. I have no one to help me complete the application. I tried to use this Bengali-English dictionary I found in the law library to get the meaning of the words on the form, but I can't read the English alphabet. I am still afraid to go back but what can I do? I have been here for so long. I am going to die any day now. I am getting mentally sick. It is very difficult to live my life here. I don't want this kind of life. I can't talk to anyone. Not a single person. It's very disheartening.

- A Garre speaker described his experience at Pine Prairie for six months without communication in his language. "It was stressful and most of the time I was just lonely in the field. It was so stressful and painful. I had no one. At first, I thought it would be a small period of time, but it just kept getting longer and longer. I just kept waiting for a chance to speak with the judge, but I could never speak. I thought about giving up my case just to be released."¹³⁹

- A Quichua speaker at Richwood, unaware of the existence of a law library, said: “Everything is given to me in English. I do not read or write in any language and have been waiting detained for two months. The judge told me that I would have to fill out paperwork and I told him I cannot read or write and there is no way to do this while detained. The judge told me to find an attorney, but I cannot afford to pay an attorney.”¹⁴⁰
- A Mandarin speaker at Richwood reported, “There are no Chinese materials in the law library. It only has a few books. I asked the guard for a Chinese-English dictionary to help me translate things but they said they do not have one.”¹⁴¹
- A Lingala speaker was detained at Adams County for four months while he waited for a credible fear interview.¹⁴² Because the government could not locate a Lingala interpreter, he never had a CFI and was transferred to River, where he waited an additional five months to present his case to an immigration judge. “The judge told me to complete the asylum application in English, but I couldn’t, myself. There was nothing to help me in my language in the law library. Another man detained here with me helped me complete the form. But the judge decided to deny my case.” After over ten months in detention, he decided not to appeal his denial by the immigration judge: “I have been here for so long. I can’t take it anymore. I am not sleeping.”
- LEP people at CLIPC who speak Romanian, Farsi, Chechen, Russian, and Turkish said they were told that there are no materials in the law library in their language.¹⁴³
- An Amharic speaker at Richwood reported that she “doesn’t even know where the law library is” and “everything is in English.”¹⁴⁴
- At CLIPC, when Russian speakers requested to use the library, they were told or sent a message that there are no resources in Russian available.¹⁴⁵
- A group of five Turkish speakers at Basile said that there is no access to legal materials in Turkish at the law library.¹⁴⁶
- A Marshallese man at Winn said that library requests go unanswered for weeks and are ultimately denied. He said: “The current librarian is hostile and unhelpful, will not use an interpreter, and will not assist in computer searches or translation of documents. There are no Marshallese resources in the library and the computers are not navigable in Marshallese.”¹⁴⁷

Deprivation of Human Necessities

“United States citizens are paying taxes for these immigration jails and people are suffering. ICE doesn’t use that money to take care of us, they are just torturing us. They just torture people using the tax money of United States citizens.”¹⁴⁸

NOLA ICE officials have deprived people in detention of human necessities like a minimally nutritious diet, potable drinking water, a sanitary living environment, basic hygiene products, protection from freezing temperatures, and access to sunlight. Years of reporting and documentation from detained people and other advocates shows that subhuman living conditions are systemic, plaguing every NOLA detention facility over the long-term.¹⁴⁹

RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS DENIED HUMAN NECESSITIES

Mariia, BASILE & Boris, PINE PRAIRIE

“We anticipated that we would have to go through legal processes in the United States, but we didn’t expect to be placed in inhumane conditions, be tortured, or have Mariia reduced to an unconscious state in which she partially lost the ability to move.”

Mariia and Boris, two 30-year-old physicians, first met in medical school in Russia. When Russia invaded Ukraine, Mariia and Boris, who is ethnically Ukrainian, posted videos of the human rights atrocities and anti-war messages on social media. The Russian government targeted the couple with imprisonment for their political activism and they were forced to flee. In April 2022, they sought asylum at a U.S. port of entry bordering Mexico. Immigration authorities locked the couple into five-point shackles, separated them, and took them to different NOLA ICE jails, Mariia to Basile and Boris to Pine Prairie. They would remain detained for six months.

Mariia noted, “I was shocked by the conditions. We were all shocked and didn’t understand why we were being detained and what was going on. When we tried to complain or speak up for our rights, the officers suppressed us. We were treated so horribly and couldn’t get any help from anyone.”

At Basile, Mariia was served pest-infested, contaminated food and non-potable water. She said, “I saw boxes of food that had cockroaches in them. The drinking water had a strong chemical smell. We saw snakes. It was scary to try to sleep and always find something crawling on the wall or on your mattress, spiders and different kinds of bugs.”

The living conditions at Basile were filthy, and it was impossible to maintain a clean and sanitary living environment.

All of the cleaning was done by us. The officers brought us tools for cleaning and forced us to clean. But they didn't give us enough supplies to clean. They didn't give us any gloves or protective gear. Sometimes they didn't even give us paper towels, just a spray bottle. The unit smelled foul, like human feces. Our mattresses were dirty, stained, torn apart, and very thin. The sinks and toilets were always broken and dirty. We were only given two sheets and a thin blanket in bad condition. Everything they gave us was ripped up and stained.

Mariia described the housing unit at Basile as maintained at icy temperatures that made it difficult to sleep. "The blanket they gave us was not enough to stay warm. I had to layer up as many clothes as I could find to try to stay warm. Still, I would wake up in the night because I was so cold and shivering so badly."

When Mariia first arrived at Basile, she was given an orange jumpsuit, socks, underwear, one nightdress, a towel, a small bottle of shampoo, a toothbrush, and a small bottle of toothpaste. "The clothing they gave us was unwashed, stained, and smelled foul. Many women could see stains on the underwear they were issued. We were told anything else we wanted, we had to buy at the commissary." Mariia's unit was denied access to laundry services for three weeks after her arrival. The women were forced to wear dirty clothing and underwear and to sleep in filthy bedding.

Mariia was also routinely denied access to basic hygiene items. "We had to beg the officers for toilet paper. We always had trouble getting more shampoo or toothpaste. Sometimes the officers would punish us or torment us by refusing to give us shampoo or soap."

At Basile, women were rarely provided with access to feminine hygiene and menstrual products and were often given just three sanitary pads for a week-long period of menstruation. When Mariia and others complained about the denial of access to basic necessities, officers retaliated against them.

We often complained because the whole unit would run out of toilet paper. We would beg and beg but they wouldn't give us any. Then if we filed a complaint, the officers would punish us by turning the TV on at full volume at night so we couldn't sleep. One time after we complained, they didn't provide us with any hygiene products for two weeks. They also would take away our walks and access to fresh air if we complained. We once went one week with no fresh air or sunlight.

Mariia was also denied access to nutritionally sufficient food.

Every morning, we were given a small package of cereal and a small carton of milk. The milk was almost always expired. For lunch, we usually got two slices of white bread and artificial cheese or sometimes bologna. For dinner, we got a few spoonfuls of beans and sometimes canned corn or canned green beans. Sometimes, we also got one small sausage, or a small piece of cornbread and a small cookie that was too hard to eat. On occasion, we got a small orange

but it would always be rotten inside. It always looked like someone vomited the food on our plates and brought it to us. The food smelled spoiled and rotten. It was impossible to eat. The portions were also so small that we were always hungry. People often had to buy food from the commissary to stay full but most of us didn't have any money in our account. The food in the commissary was also very expensive. It was \$1.25 for one small package of ramen noodles and \$4.00 for a small packet of microwavable rice.

After three weeks in detention, Maria lost her period and began to experience other symptoms of malnutrition and hormonal imbalance, including gastritis and abdominal pain. "I began to develop a rash all over my body whenever I tried to eat the food. I couldn't eat anything and I started to feel very ill."

At Pine Prairie, Boris also lived in unsanitary conditions.

In my unit we had over 50 people using just one toilet. The toilet would often overflow and the smell of human feces was overwhelming. One day, the electricity in our unit went out and the air conditioner stopped working. The showers began to flood the dorm. There was no way to shut off the water and the dorm flooded with hot water that smelled like sewage. It was so hard to breathe. The guards just watched and laughed at us and laughed.

He was also denied access to minimally nutritious food and potable water.

The food looked like someone had already digested it. A typical meal was beans with a small amount of macaroni with some kind of ground meat. The milk was almost always expired and smelled sour and spoiled. We couldn't drink it. The water was terrible. It had this white cloudy color and smelled like strong chemicals.

Boris was denied access to sufficient clean clothing.

It was extremely cold. Everyone tried to use any spare clothing they could find to cover their faces. People were always sick with respiratory symptoms and running noses. The clothes they gave us were filthy. White clothing was so dirty it was the color brown. There were fecal stains on the underwear and the clothes smelled foul like feces. We would try to wash the clothes they gave us in the sink using what little shampoo we had and hang them on our bunks to dry. If guards saw us doing this, they would scream at us and confiscate the clothing.

At Pine Prairie, officials weaponized access to basic necessities and routinely withheld them to punish and torment detained people:

The guards would taunt us with toilet paper and laugh at us. On one occasion, a guard was teasing us with rolls of toilet paper, made it look like he was going to hand it to us, and then threw it onto the dirty

floor. He was laughing the entire time. It made us feel terrible, like less than human. Another time, guards brought a case of apples to our unit. We saw them drop the apples on the dirty floor before serving them to us.



Drawings Boris sent to Mariia while he was detained at the Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center
Photo: Emily Kask, The New York Times

The couple described the devastation of their six-month separation while detained. Mariia said:

It was extremely difficult to be separated and not know what was happening with the other person. It was very stressful. I feared that he had been deported to Russia. I also had heard about people dying in detention and knew that no one would help us. I knew our lives were in danger. It was the longest time period that we were ever separated since we met at age 17.

After intervention by report contributors, Mariia and Boris were granted release by ICE on condition of paying a \$15,000 bond each. In late October 2023, ICE lowered the bond for the couple to \$10,000 each. Community members and volunteers raised the funds and the couple were finally released from detention.

After six months in ICE custody at Basile, Mariia, who had entered the U.S. as a healthy woman in her twenties, was no longer able to walk or care for herself. Boris had lost nearly 40 lbs. In May 2023, Mariia and Boris won their asylum cases. They now live in New York.



Mariia and Boris reunite after Boris's release outside the Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center
Photo: Emily Kask, The New York Times

ICE standards require ICE jails to protect detained people from injury and illness and avoidable accidents by maintaining standards of environmental health and safety.¹⁵⁰ The standards state that “[f]acility cleanliness and sanitation shall be maintained at the highest level.”¹⁵¹ In all ICE jails, “pests and vermin shall be controlled and eliminated”¹⁵² and “[s]afe, potable water shall be available throughout the facility.”¹⁵³ Detained people are to be “provided with a nutritionally balanced diet that is prepared and presented in a sanitary and hygienic food service operation.”¹⁵⁴

Each detained person “shall have suitable, clean bedding, linens, blankets and towels”¹⁵⁵ and “clean clothing that is properly fitted; climatically suitable, durable and presentable.”¹⁵⁶ Each ICE jail must maintain a sufficient supply of clothing, blankets, and towels to allow for “immediate replacement of items that are lost, destroyed, or worn out.”¹⁵⁷ Officers “shall replenish [personal hygiene supplies] as needed[,]” including shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, a comb, and skin lotion.¹⁵⁸ Detained people “shall have at least four hours a day access, seven days a week, to outdoor recreation, weather and scheduling permitted,” including leisure activities, outdoor sports, and exercise.¹⁵⁹

U.S. constitutional law and international human rights law also protect detained people’s rights to human necessities. Constitutional due process prohibits officials from subjecting individuals in immigration detention to conditions that constitute “punishment.”¹⁶⁰ Under international law, States have an obligation to work to prevent foreseeable threats to public health, particularly for individuals subjected to State custody.¹⁶¹ The right to humane treatment includes the principle that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.¹⁶²

DENIAL OF NUTRITION AND POTABLE DRINKING WATER

“The food is like for animals. We eat only to not die.”¹⁶³

In NOLA ICE jails, unsafe food and non-potable water has harmed detained people. NOLA ICE officials have served detained people food that is expired and rotten, tainted by black mold, and infested with bugs, maggots, and rat feces. Examples include:

- Officials at Jackson Parish and Winn served expired milk and food infested with worms, maggots, and larvae.¹⁶⁴
- Basile officials served undercooked food, including raw chicken and frozen hard-boiled eggs.¹⁶⁵
- A woman at CLIPC working in the kitchen discovered rat feces covering food bags and bread in the kitchen. Officials forced her to serve the food after brushing aside the excrement.¹⁶⁶
- Jackson Parish officials served food covered in black mold. Individuals described “visible fuzzy black patches” covering the surface of the food. After multiple grievances, ICE claimed “the black substance reported in the holiday meal was pepper flakes.”¹⁶⁷

NOLA ICE officials have also denied people a minimally nutritious diet, causing malnutrition, altered or interrupted menstrual cycles, uncontrolled weight loss, and physical and mental deterioration. Examples include:

- Basile officials gave detained people a piece of bread and a slice of bologna for most meals. Irregularly, officials also served beans. Officials prohibited people from taking

any food back to their housing units. One woman said, “At night, I dream of eating meat.”¹⁶⁸

- A man at Winn reported that the “food is very poor” and that detained people “are only given protein once a week.”¹⁶⁹
- A woman at Basile said that the portion sizes were too small, so she and others had to sustain themselves with food items they purchased through commissary at inflated prices.¹⁷⁰ A bag of Doritos chips at Basile costs \$9.00, while detained people who work at the facilities are only paid \$1.00 per day. Those without commissary funds simply “went hungry” and often “had trouble falling asleep” as a result.
- Women at Basile were unable to eat the food because it caused gastritis and stomach issues. Several women had lost their menstrual cycles due to malnutrition.¹⁷¹
- A group of men at Richwood developed digestive issues from food served, including chronic constipation and hemorrhoids. “The food is so poor and stale, it is very hard for me to digest. I haven’t been able to produce a bowel movement in over two weeks. I have very bad stomach pain and bleeding from my anus.”¹⁷²

Officials serve meals at unreasonably early hours and refuse sufficient time to eat full meals, forcing detained people to choose between adequate sleep and adequate nutrition. At all facilities, breakfast is served at approximately 4:00 am, lunch around 10:00 am, and dinner around 4:00 pm. Those who choose eating over sleep are given only a few minutes to eat. The combination of sleep deprivation and malnutrition causes serious physical and psychological harm. Examples include:

- A man in the solitary confinement unit at CLIPC regularly smelled spoiled milk and found cold food that had been sitting out for hours in his cell by the time he woke up at 6:00 am.¹⁷³
- Winn officials deprived people of sufficient sleep by waking them up at 3:00 am for breakfast, which was served at 4:00 am.¹⁷⁴ Breakfast lasted between five and ten minutes and officers prohibited people from bringing food or beverages into the housing units if they had not finished eating. One man said, “My sleep has been so poor. I have only been able to sleep for about three hours a night. It’s making it hard for me to concentrate on anything during the day. It also is making my anxiety worse. I feel my heart racing and my mind is foggy. But what choice do I have? Starve?”¹⁷⁵
- One woman at Basile said, “The guards throw the food we don’t have time to eat in the trash right in front of us, even though we are still starving and ask to bring it to our dorms.”¹⁷⁶
- A man at River said, “Guards rush people through mealtimes and throw away what they can’t finish even when they ask for more time to eat. Many people are punished when they try to bring food back to the dorm.”¹⁷⁷

Water in NOLA ICE jails has come from the tap discolored and non-potable. People must drink dirty and foul-smelling water from communal faucets. Those held in solitary confinement only have access to a combination toilet-sink in their cell. Examples include:

- People at Winn reported that the water is consistently brown-colored and foul-smelling.¹⁷⁸
- One woman at Basile relied on melted ice for potable water because water flowing from the sinks was discolored and had a foul odor.¹⁷⁹
- A man at Jackson Parish reported water with visible dirt in it.¹⁸⁰

- Men at Richwood said, “There is no normal drinking water, only two fountains that do not work well and become clogged. It is impossible to drink from them.”¹⁸¹

The poor quality of the food and water in NOLA ICE jails has contributed to chronic health issues for detained people. Examples include:

- A man at Winn experienced severe gastritis and persistent chest pain due to what he believed was the quality of food. He submitted two medical requests but was denied accommodations to his diet. The man was hesitant to submit a third request because he feared retaliation by officers at Winn.¹⁸²
- A man at Winn faulted the jail diet for exacerbating symptoms of anemia, including lightheadedness and numbness in his hands and feet.¹⁸³
- A woman at Basile faulted the jail diet for severe constipation and a bowel blockage.¹⁸⁴
- A man at Winn faulted the jail diet for gastritis, chronic constipation, and severe hemorrhoids.¹⁸⁵
- A man at Winn with an allergic reaction to the food at the jail for the past two months suffered extreme discomfort and hives across his body.”¹⁸⁶
- A man at Winn contracted H. Pylori, a bacteria that attacks the stomach lining, after drinking non-potable water. He had vomited and defecated blood and had severe stomach inflammation and abdominal pain.¹⁸⁷

UNSANITARY CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT

“Rats. The size of my arm. There are giant rats all over our unit and in the kitchen.”¹⁸⁸

Dirty and unhealthy conditions of confinement in NOLA immigration detention include pervasive black mold, mildew, and infestations of bugs, pests and rats. Examples include:

- A woman at CLIPC reported human feces left in the shower stalls.¹⁸⁹
- A man at Richwood suffered from asthma attacks due to black mold and arthritic pain from freezing temperatures in his unit.¹⁹⁰
- Women at Basile reported an infestation of large rats in the housing units.¹⁹¹
- Women at Basile reported black mold in their housing unit from frequent and heavy leaks that soaked clothes, beds, and bedding.¹⁹²
- The floor and walls of Basile were streaked with bloodstains from killing mosquitoes from an infestation.¹⁹³

DENIAL OF BASIC HYGIENE SUPPLIES

“Laundry is only picked up every two to three days. After washing, things come back yellow and with an unpleasant smell. Sometimes things are returned unwashed.”¹⁹⁴

NOLA ICE officials have denied consistent access to soap, cleaning products, and toothbrushes.

As one detained person at CLIPC explained, “Our access to these things depends on who is the officer in charge that day and whether they want to change the soap or give us more toilet paper.”¹⁹⁵ Examples include:

- Officers at CLIPC gave people used razor blades for shaving.¹⁹⁶
- Officers at CLIPC denied people toothbrushes for four consecutive days.¹⁹⁷
- A man held in solitary confinement at CLIPC went three months without clean laundry and bedding. When he asked to file a grievance, officers sentenced him to 80 days of further solitary confinement.
- A man at Winn had an allergic reaction to shampoo at the jail, severely irritating his scalp and causing difficulty sleeping and extreme discomfort.¹⁹⁸

NOLA ICE officials have denied access to sufficient feminine hygiene products. Detained people spoke of a policy to only provide access to pads and not tampons. People typically receive only one to two pads per day of their menstrual cycles, resulting in hygiene issues. Examples include:

- Women at Basile, not provided with enough pads during their menstrual cycles, were ignored or denied when requesting additional pads.¹⁹⁹
- A woman at Basile said, “I personally don’t have issues with no sanitary products like pads because I lost my period. I can’t eat enough here to have my period. But I’ve seen other people have to use toilet paper because here, they don’t have any of those products for us.”²⁰⁰
- A woman at CLIPC was told she must purchase tampons from the commissary. During her menstrual cycle, CLIPC staff denied her underwear or menstrual products, leaving her in soiled clothing that she had bled through for two days.²⁰¹

EXPOSURE TO EXTREME TEMPERATURES

“It’s freezing in our dorms. Most of us buy sweatshirts from the commissary and cut or tear the sleeves off to make hats and scarves to try to stay warm.”²⁰²

NOLA ICE officials inflict psychological harm and physical discomfort through a combination of unbearably cold temperatures and denial of suitable clothing. Examples include:

- Guards threatened people with punishment when asked to adjust the temperature.²⁰³
- Officials have refused to dry laundered clothing, forcing people to wear damp and moldy prison jumpsuits in unreasonably cold temperatures. One man said: “Because there are no dryers, detained people need to air dry their clothing. But there is no designated place for this. So we often air dry our clothes on the bars of our beds. But the clothes never fully dry, and we are left exposed to cold temperatures without dry clothing to protect us.”²⁰⁴
- Officers threatened solitary confinement for hanging wet clothing and bedding from the bunk beds in the housing units, forcing people to sleep in damp bed sheets in freezing temperatures. Many women described serious discomfort while sleeping in wet beds with fevers while recovering from illness.²⁰⁵

- Officials at River refused to provide sufficient clothing to protect from extreme cold, so people cut the sleeves of sweatshirts purchased at the commissary to make hats, head coverings, scarves, and gloves.²⁰⁶
- Officials delayed provision of or outright refused to provide socks, underwear, undershirts, and sweaters. Officials gave detained people thin, torn clothing insufficient to protect from unreasonably cold temperatures. Clothing that was damaged or misplaced by officials during laundry went unreplaced. People resorted to purchasing clothing items from the commissary at personal expense.²⁰⁷

DENIAL OF SUNLIGHT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

“There is black tape covering all of the windows, so we get no natural light.”²⁰⁸

NOLA ICE guards have confined people to housing units and windowless cells for prolonged periods, denying them sunlight and outdoor recreation. When deprivation of sunlight inflicts severe pain and suffering, it can rise to the definition of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment under international law.²⁰⁹ Examples include:

- At Basile, women reported only 15 to 30 minutes of outdoor access a week.²¹⁰
- At Richwood, officials covered windows to block access to sunlight.²¹¹
- At Winn, officials permitted recreational outdoor time for 40 minutes a week or less, at around 6:00 a.m., when most people are asleep, to minimize its use. One detained person said, “The call for yard is really early and quiet to avoid people going. On days when there is nice weather they refuse to let us out. If we ask, the guards look at us badly and we get scared.”²¹²
- At Winn, an officer reprimanded people as disruptive for requesting outdoor recreational time. When a detained man told the officer he would report him, the officer placed him in solitary confinement for 15 days.²¹³
- Officers denied outdoor recreation for a month, resuming at one hour per week only “when the sign-up sheets for the ‘Know Your Rights’ presentation were posted.” Another man said that he had only had outdoor time four times over the past two weeks.²¹⁴

In addition, people reported that NOLA ICE officials leave fluorescent overhead lights for 24 hours a day, making sleep difficult.

- A man at Winn said, “We ask the guards to dim the bright lights so we can sleep during sleep hours but the guards do not.”²¹⁵
- A man at Jackson Parish said, “There is tension because they don’t turn off the lights at night. They bang on the walls and open and close the doors all night. I’m losing my mind.”²¹⁶
- People at Winn said, “We only get a slight respite from the too bright lights from 5:00 to 6:45 am when they turn off half of the lights. It’s still difficult to sleep.”²¹⁷

Abusive & Discriminatory Treatment

*“I was thinking America is the country that protects people. America is a country that celebrates free speech and protestors. **But just like in my home country, when I protest my rights, I am attacked and pushed down.**”²¹⁸*

NOLA ICE jail officials have used abusive and discriminatory treatment against detained people, inflicting serious physical, mental, and emotional harm. Guards and medical staff have used physical violence, sexual assault, prolonged solitary confinement, and humiliating and degrading speech against detained people. They have also retaliated against detained people for filing grievances or for peacefully protesting abusive treatment, speech protected by the U.S. Constitution.

HUNGER STRIKER THROWN IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, ASSAULTED, AND LEFT WITH PERMANENT NERVE DAMAGE

Angel, PINE PRAIRIE & ADAMS COUNTY CORRECTIONAL CENTER

“For seven years, I resisted my unlawful detention through complaints, peaceful protest, and even going on hunger strike, despite my health conditions. ICE responded each time with violence, solitary confinement, and denying me access to my medications—anything to silence me about their abuse and violation of my rights.”

In November 1998, Angel fled Honduras and settled in Washington D.C., where for seven years he worked in construction and carpentry and parented two U.S. citizen children. In December 2014, ICE initiated removal proceedings against Angel and locked him in immigration detention. Over the next seven years, ICE transferred Angel between 17 different detention centers. At two NOLA ICE facilities, Angel suffered retaliatory solitary confinement from officials for protesting medical and physical abuse.

At Adams County Correctional Center, a Mississippi immigration jail under NOLA ICE jurisdiction, officials denied Angel a medically prescribed diet to control severe allergies, so he could only eat one or two meals a day or only parts of meals that did not contain allergens. When Angel informed medical staff that he was not receiving his prescribed meals, a nurse responded that food allergies were “not a medical issue.” As his detention wore on, Angel’s allergy symptoms worsened, developing into debilitating pain in his stomach, chest, and muscles, gastric ulcers, shortness of breath, severe cramping, and chronic asthma.

From October 29, 2020 through December 11, 2020, Adams County officials held Angel in a solitary confinement cell for 43 continuous days. In solitary confinement, officials continued to serve Angel food containing allergens, so he went several days without eating. After 12 days without food, Angel filed a complaint. When he then began a hunger strike to protest his treatment in November 2020, officials told him he would remain in solitary confinement as punishment.

During his 34-day hunger strike, Angel endured cruel and degrading treatment. He was only permitted to shower once or twice a week. He was held in the solitary confinement cell for 24 hours a day, without recreational time or materials. Officials cut the water supply to the toilet- sink in his cell and then taunted him, refusing him potable water. Officials also allowed the sewage in his cell to overflow, refusing to clean it for eight days. Daily, they harassed and threatened Angel; one officer told him, “The only way you leave this facility is if you die here.” During this time, Angel experienced severe anxiety and depression, lost a significant amount of weight, and suffered debilitating headaches, muscle weakness, fatigue, and lightheadedness. He was then transferred from Adams County Correctional Center to Pine Prairie on December 16, 2020.

At Pine Prairie, NOLA ICE officials’ abuse of Angel continued. Throughout his detention at Pine Prairie, from December 16, 2020 through April 6, 2022, officers retaliated against Angel for filing grievances by subjecting him to as many as seven unwarranted and invasive body searches in a single day. On March 17, 2022, after multiple invasive searches of Angel while he was in his underwear, four officers handcuffed him and told him they were taking him to solitary confinement, without explaining why. While Angel was in handcuffs, an officer grabbed his right arm roughly and started to violently drag him. Angel heard an officer say, “Take him down,” and then felt an officer grab his handcuffed wrists behind his back and yank them up forcefully, knocking him face-first to the floor. As officers slammed his forehead on the floor, Angel felt excruciating pain radiating from his right shoulder to his arm.

The assault left Angel with intense shoulder pain, a bruised clavicle, and cuts and bruises to his wrists and hands from the handcuffs. At the medical unit, officers stood over Angel while the doctor examined him, so he did not feel safe reporting what had happened. The doctor diagnosed Angel with an injured ligament in his right shoulder.

After medical examination, officials locked Angel in solitary confinement for 16 days, where he was tormented and harassed. When Angel asked for his medically prescribed diet, an officer screamed repeatedly, “Fuck you, motherfucker bitch.” When Angel asked to speak with a supervising official,



Photo of Angel
Photo courtesy of Yuki Soga, ARGONAUT

the officer responded “Shut up, motherfucker bitch. I’m not going to call nobody and I’m going to fuck with you all day long.” In solitary, Angel was held in his cell for 24 hours a day, without recreational time, a phone, or television. Officers refused to allow Angel to shower unless he was shackled with his hands behind his back. Because of his injured shoulder, however, Angel could not hold his arms behind his back without excruciating pain, and so was forced to go without a shower for 10 days.

Eventually, doctors diagnosed Angel with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and chronic pain due to trauma. While detained, his PTSD symptoms included flashbacks accompanied by intense physical reactions like heart palpitations, sweating, trembling, and shortness of breath; dissociative episodes; memory issues; disorientation; sensitivity to loud noises; and difficulty sleeping.

Angel was released from ICE custody on April 6, 2022. Today, he continues to experience emotional and psychological distress from his mistreatment by ICE. He still suffers from debilitating pain and weakness in his right arm and shoulder. Acute nerve damage from his attack prevents use of his right arm. He has lost feeling in the fingers in his right hand and is unable to hold, lift, or grasp with it or to lift heavy objects, preventing him from supporting his family by resuming work as a carpenter and construction worker. He requires ongoing medical treatment and physical therapy to address nerve damage and chronic pain but is unable to afford health insurance, making it difficult to access medical care.

ICE standards prohibit the use of force “to punish a detainee” and “using force against a detainee offering no resistance.”²¹⁹ They also mandate that “[n]o detainee shall be harassed, disciplined, punished, or otherwise retaliated against for filing a complaint or grievance.”²²⁰ “Actions are considered retaliatory if they are in response to an informal or formal grievance that has been filed and the action has an adverse effect on the resident’s life in the facility.”²²¹ ICE standards also include a “zero tolerance policy for all forms of sexual abuse or assault,”²²² obligating ICE officials to “act affirmatively to prevent sexual abuse and assaults” and to “provide prompt and effective intervention and treatment for victims of sexual abuse and assault.”²²³

U.S. law also protects against abusive and discriminatory treatment. Under the U.S. Constitution, all detained people have a right to be free from physical abuse at the hands of officials.²²⁴ They also have a First Amendment right to speak out against abusive conditions of confinement, including by hunger striking.²²⁵ Under Louisiana law, use of force by guards may qualify as battery, harmful or offensive contact with a person resulting from an act intended to cause the person, or assault, the threat of battery. Abusive and discriminatory treatment might also qualify as intentional infliction of emotional distress under Louisiana law, intentionally or recklessly engaging in extreme and outrageous conduct that causes severe emotional distress.

Abusive and discriminatory treatment may also rise to violations of international human rights treaties and other international prohibitions against torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.²²⁶ These standards prohibit acts that cause severe pain or suffering, both physical and mental, when intentionally inflicted by public officials, including for purposes of discrimination, coercion, or intimidation.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

“These officers don’t treat us like humans.”²²⁷

NOLA ICE officials have used physical abuse to gravely harm detained people. For years, civil rights complaints and news articles have documented the systemic use of unreasonable force in NOLA ICE jails. In 2020, a civil rights complaint documented the indiscriminate use of tear gas at Winn during a COVID-19 quarantine, causing people to vomit blood and suffer asthmatic attacks.²²⁸ That same year, officials attacked detained people with pepper spray at Pine Prairie²²⁹ and at least three times at CLIPC.²³⁰ A February 2021 civil rights complaint documented how officials at Winn choked a person in shackles to coerce him into giving fingerprints for deportation paperwork.²³¹ Multiple civil rights complaints have documented the use of the same tactic at Adams County Correctional Center in Mississippi (under the jurisdiction of NOLA ICE),²³² Jackson Parish,²³³ and Pine Prairie.²³⁴

Reports of physical abuse from NOLA ICE officials during the two-year period examined here include:

- An officer in the cafeteria at Basile forcibly removed a woman’s shoe, scraped it on the surface of a table, shoved her in a seat, held her down, poured her meal tray on the table, and forced her to eat the food from the dirty table’s surface.²³⁵
- An officer at Basile cornered a woman and screamed at her so aggressively that she lost consciousness, fell, and hit her head on a metal bed frame. She later suffered recurring headaches and hearing loss.²³⁶
- Officers at Pine Prairie grabbed a man’s hands, aggressively twisted them behind his back, and handcuffed him after he asked to file a complaint. They then dragged him down the hall, repeatedly slamming his head on the floor and against the walls. The officers then threw the man into a solitary confinement cell and screamed, “Fuck Russians.” The man was left handcuffed and bloody, face-down in the cell. He suffered blurred vision, dizziness, and nausea but went without medical treatment for over 48 hours.²³⁷
- At Winn, after a man asked for a mask to protect against COVID-19, a guard pushed him onto the floor after so violently that his injuries required he be transported out of the unit in a wheelchair.²³⁸
- A man at Allen Parish said, “Guards throw food at us during meal times, like we are animals.”²³⁹

SEXUAL ABUSE

“Everytime an official approaches me now, I feel this drop in my stomach and my mind empties. I panic. I think back to what they did to me.”²⁴⁰

NOLA ICE officials have committed sexual harassment, abuse, and violence, humiliating detained people and inflicting grave physical and emotional harm. Prior reporting documents widespread sexual abuse in NOLA ICE jails. Data from the Department of Homeland’s Security Office of the Inspector General indicates an average of more than one complaint of sexual abuse or assault from people in all ICE jails per day between May 2014 and July 2016.²⁴¹ But between October 2012 and March 2016, the highest number of sexual and/or physical abuse

complaints in the country made to the ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Detention Reporting and Information Line came from the Jena/LaSalle Detention Facility, now known as CLIPC.²⁴²

SEXUALLY ASSAULTED AND PHYSICALLY ABUSED IN RETALIATION FOR MEDICAL SELF-ADVOCACY

Daniel, CLIPC

“Whenever I close my eyes, I relive the incidents, both the sexual touching and the drilling into my bone. It has become a trauma for me. I am afraid to go back to the hospital. I don’t want to go back to that torture chamber.”

Daniel, a man diagnosed with frontal lobe epilepsy, came to the United States with his family at the age of seven. Prior to his detention at CLIPC, he had lived in the United States for over 25 years, had married a U.S. citizen, fathered two U.S. citizen children, and worked as a theatrical lighting director in South Florida.

In February 2023, after suffering a seizure at CLIPC, NOLA ICE officials took Daniel to Rapides Regional Medical Center in Alexandria, Louisiana. In the hospital, officials shackled Daniel to his bed. When he asked to use the bathroom, an officer replied, “No, captain’s orders.” Eventually, Daniel inadvertently urinated and defecated in his bed. Seeing this, an official taunted him, saying, “We have to clean you grandma-style.” Over Daniel’s protests, the official then pulled down his pants, groped his genitals, and inserted his finger into Daniel’s anus. The sexual assault so disturbed and humiliated Daniel that he repeatedly slammed his head into the side rails of the hospital bed and attempted suicide by wrapping a nearby IV cord around his neck. The day after the assault, NOLA ICE officials returned Daniel to CLIPC. During processing, two officers taunted him, ordering him to “get naked and pose for the camera.”

Following these incidents, Daniel filed complaints under the Prison Rape Elimination Act with the Office of Immigration Detention Ombudsman and NOLA ICE officials. In response, a CLIPC officer told Daniel: “You got any complaints? I hear you like to complain a lot. Keep your mouth shut and stop complaining.”

During his detention, Daniel participated in multiple hunger strikes in protest of abusive conditions in CLIPC. In March 2023, he joined a mass protest of 300 other hunger strikers at CLIPC.²⁴³ According to Daniel:

I want them to treat me like a human being. These people are torturing me. The way they are treating me is disgusting. It’s horrible that we have to starve ourselves to get something we need for our health. I have to starve myself just to advocate for my medical treatment.

While participating in this protest, Daniel was taken to LaSalle General Hospital in Jena, Louisiana for emergency care for seizures. Officers then held him down while medical personnel, without anesthesia or Daniel’s consent, injected a needle into the right side of his tibia, drilled into his bone marrow, and inserted an IV port to administer Ativan, a

medication used to treat seizures. Daniel screamed and begged them to stop before losing consciousness from the pain. Later, Daniel said that it was “the most intense pain I have ever experienced in my life.” When he regained consciousness, medical personnel said to him, “I bet you won’t have a seizure again.” For days after, Daniel’s leg was swollen, bruised, and in continued, severe pain leaving him unable to walk.

In the following months, CLIPC officials downplayed, ignored, and mocked Daniel’s medical needs. On one occasion, CLIPC medical staff told him, “Calm down. If not, we are going to send you back to the hospital and they’ll stick a needle into your bone again.” On another, when Daniel requested treatment for seizure symptoms, a nurse told him that he was fine and mockingly asked him, “Are you having your spells again?” Approximately one hour later, Daniel began seizing. Medical staff then threatened him that if he “didn’t cooperate” they would “drill a hole through his knee bone again.” On another occasion, when Daniel began seizing, two officials mocked him, imitating his seizure symptoms. They told him, “We are doing the ‘Dan Shuffle-Truffle,’ the dance you do when you are having your seizures.” They left him seizing on the floor for 40 minutes before calling an ambulance.

In May 2023, after Daniel lost consciousness while seizing, he awakened in a solitary confinement cell. An officer harassed him through the food slot in the cell door. Referencing a grievance Daniel had filed concerning abusive treatment, the officer told him, “You are going to apologize to everyone in this unit.” Desperate, Daniel replied, “Yes, sir,” and asked to go back to his dorm. He was left in solitary confinement. Approximately one hour later, the officer returned, entered the cell screaming, and repeatedly clapped his hands in Daniel’s face. Daniel then had another seizure and lost consciousness. Later in May, the same officer approached Daniel in the recreation yard and asked, “Hey, Danny, what’s up? How are you feeling?” in a taunting and aggressive tone.

For the next six months, Daniel’s health rapidly deteriorated, resulting in near-daily seizures. Officials repeatedly denied or delayed provision of seizure medication and refused him treatment from an external neurologist. Daniel’s condition escalated, and he developed incontinence, vision loss, memory loss, temporary inability to speak and read, numbness and tingling in his arms and legs, and sharp pain near his left temple. He frequently fell during seizures, injuring his head and back. Daniel’s mental health also declined. In July 2023, he attempted suicide three times in one week. In November 2023, when Daniel finally appeared before an immigration judge, he made the agonizing decision to ask for his deportation, leading to his indefinite separation from his family. As he told his lawyer, “I have to self-deport because if I don’t, I am certain I will die here.”



Photo of Daniel Cortes De La Valle, taken on Father’s Day with his US citizen son, before he was detained. Photo courtesy of Daniel

Daniel was deported to Colombia in November 2023. His wife and two children remain in South Florida. His time in NOLA ICE detention has left him with post-traumatic stress disorder, experiencing debilitating anxiety, depression, and recurring thoughts of self-harm and suicide.

Reports of sexual harassment, abuse, and violence from NOLA ICE officials during the two-year period examined here include:

- Guards at Basile forced several women to submit to body searches when leaving the cafeteria, slowly groping their breasts under pretense of searching for smuggled food.²⁴⁴
- An officer at Winn grabbed his penis, simulated masturbation, and asked a man, “You want milk?” in response to a request for milk.²⁴⁵
- Officers at CLIPC permitted ongoing sexual harassment of an LGBTQ+ man, including threats of sexual assault and use of the slur “faggot” from other detained people. On one occasion, as CLIPC guards watched and laughed, another detained person exposed himself to the man and threatened, “I’ll show you what I’ll do to you. This is what you like, right?” CLIPC officials observed this and laughed. The man filed multiple grievances, but officials failed to investigate or to prevent further harassment. When the man complained again, officials retaliated by filing a disciplinary infraction for “disobeying orders” and sentenced him to 30 days of solitary confinement.²⁴⁶

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

“I never wanted to kill myself until I went to solitary confinement. In the cell, it’s you and the toilet. That’s it. Your entire life is reduced to a small, cold cell for at least 23 hours a day, sometimes 24 hours.”²⁴⁷

ICE jails are authorized to use solitary confinement only as a “last resort.”²⁴⁸ Yet, solitary confinement—called “segregation” or “isolation” by officials—is routinely used in NOLA ICE jails to retaliate against people for speaking out against human rights abuses, to punish minor behavioral infractions, and to isolate particularly vulnerable individuals, including those struggling with mental illness.

The widespread overuse of solitary confinement in NOLA ICE jails has contributed to Louisiana’s regrettable reputation as “solitary confinement capital of the world.”²⁴⁹ Years of reports document systemic abuse of prolonged solitary confinement in NOLA ICE jails, with some of the longest placements inflicted on people with mental health conditions.²⁵⁰ In 2021, a civil rights complaint described how Pine Prairie staff used solitary confinement as a standardized medical protocol in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁵¹ In 2019, officials at Winn used solitary confinement to punish detained people for attempting to speak to reporters on a facility tour.²⁵²

LGBTQ+ SELF-ADVOCATE SUBJECTED TO OVER 200 CONTINUOUS DAYS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT CELL IN RETALIATION FOR FILING GRIEVANCES

Aamir, CLIPC

“Since I have been detained at CLIPC, whenever I submit complaints and grievances, instead of providing the things I am required to have under the law, like a shower and access to the law library, I am either ignored or harassed, screamed at, and punished with solitary confinement. People treat their dogs better than how this jail treats us. There is no respect for human life. No humanity. It is impossible for me to get the right treatment for my diabetes here. Every day I fear for my life. At CLIPC, ‘PC’ stands for ‘punishment custody,’ not ‘protective custody.’”

Aamir fled Pakistan at the age of 17 after suffering persecution on account of his bisexuality. Prior to his detention by ICE, he lived in the United States for over 30 years, had a United States citizen wife and daughter, and ran a halal meat and grocery store in New York. He suffers from multiple chronic medical conditions exacerbated by inadequate medical care in detention, including Type II diabetes, coronary artery disease, anxiety, and claustrophobia.

For the two years Aamir was detained at CLIPC, he was repeatedly punished with solitary confinement for requesting necessary medical treatment. Officials refused to serve him a previously prescribed diabetic diet, aggravating Aamir’s diabetic symptoms, including lightheadedness and chest pain. In November 2022, CLIPC medical staff denied Aamir six courses of prescribed insulin medication used to treat his Type II diabetes. They also refused to provide his daily anxiety medication.

Aamir filed grievances and reported CLIPC’s staff’s medical neglect to U.S. government oversight bodies. CLIPC guards mockingly referred to him as “Mr. Grievance.” On one occasion, when he approached an ICE officer to request his prescribed diet, the officer slammed him against a wall and screamed at him, threatening to “disappear” and “deport” him. Referring to a dorm of 40 people deported the preceding day, the officer said, “You see how I cleared out that dorm?”

Eventually, CLIPC officials moved Aamir to indefinite “administrative segregation,” what they called “protective custody,” due to what they labeled “ongoing issues” caused by his repeated requests for medical attention. After 24 hours in solitary confinement, Aamir felt debilitating chest pain and shortness of breath and CLIPC officials took him to the emergency room. “I couldn’t stand or walk,” he said. “They took me out in a wheelchair. My chest was so tight and in pain. The solitary confinement was making my chronic anxiety and claustrophobia unbearable.” Nonetheless, after Aamir was discharged from the emergency room, officials returned him to the same solitary confinement cell.

Officials left Aamir in solitary confinement for three uninterrupted days, forbidding him to even shower. They then charged him with disobeying orders, without explanation or opportunity to refute the charges in a disciplinary hearing.

When Aamir filed grievances about his denial of a shower and access to the law library, CLIPC officials retaliated with more time in solitary confinement. In February 2023, Aamir requested a change of bed linens, as his had not been cleaned for three months. When officials refused, he tried to file a grievance, and received an additional 50 days in solitary confinement. The next day, after submitting a grievance about denial of access to the law library, officials sentenced Aamir to an additional 30 days in solitary confinement. In April 2023, after attempting to file a grievance over denial of recreational time, he received a disciplinary infraction for disobeying orders and was sentenced to 30 additional days in solitary confinement.

All told, Aamir spent over 200 days in solitary confinement before officials released him to the general housing unit on May 26, 2023. In the aftermath of his prolonged solitary confinement, he suffered psychological and physical stress, including anxiety, chest pain, dizziness, and lightheadedness. Following intervention by report contributors, in April 2024, after over four years in ICE custody, Aamir was finally released from detention after the Board of Immigration appeals ordered him released on bond.

Solitary confinement is generally defined as isolating an individual in a cell for 22 hours or more per day without meaningful human contact.²⁵³ The practice inflicts devastating mental, physical, and emotional harms.²⁵⁴ People subjected to solitary confinement are 78% more likely to commit suicide within a year of being released from detention.²⁵⁵ And prolonged solitary confinement of longer than 15 days inflicts profound and often permanent psychological,²⁵⁶ neurological,²⁵⁷ and physical²⁵⁸ damage, including hyperresponsivity to external stimuli; perceptual distortions, illusions, and hallucinations; panic attacks; difficulties in concentration and memory; intrusive obsessional thoughts; overt paranoia; and violence and self-harm.²⁵⁹ For these reasons, international law recognizes prolonged solitary confinement as a form of torture.²⁶⁰ In 2011, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture called for an “absolute prohibition” on solitary confinement for over 15 days.²⁶¹ In doing so, the Rapporteur recognized that even shorter periods of solitary confinement for “legitimate disciplinary reasons” can constitute “cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment where the physical conditions of prison regime (sanitation, access to food and water) fail to respect the inherent dignity of the human person and cause severe mental and physical pain or suffering.”²⁶²

ICE standards require that “[c]ells and rooms used for purposes of ‘segregation’ must be well-ventilated, adequately lit, appropriately heated/cooled and maintained in a sanitary condition at all times . . . consistent with safety and security.”²⁶³ But solitary confinement cells in NOLA ICE jails typically measure 6x9 feet, or roughly the size of a parking space. They have a small slot in the cell door for meals and a bed, a toilet, and a sink. Solitary confinement cells in NOLA ICE facilities outfitted for mental health observation, so-called “suicide watch cells,” typically do not include a mattress and have a large glass window for monitoring occupants at all times, including while they use the bathroom. People in these cells have no sheets, blankets, or pillows and often sleep on a narrow concrete platform. At the total mercy of NOLA ICE guards, detained people in solitary confinement have been deprived of human contact, medical treatment, recreational time, amenities, hygiene, potable water, and means to file grievances and communicate with legal representatives. To endure the psychological torture of prolonged isolation, detained people have relied on sleeping pills and medications provided by the jail. According to one man at CLIPC, “A man here in the SHU [segregated housing unit] purposely overdoses on allergy medication that he buys in the commissary so he is unconscious for 23 hours a day. He and others do this to make the time pass.”²⁶⁴

One person at CLIPC said: “I was in the cell 24 hours a day with no sunshine. It’s freezing cold. I had to beg the officers to use the phone. I had to beg the officers to take a shower. There are these crazy bright, fluorescent lights on 24 hours a day. Loud noises all night long. My bed didn’t even have a mattress, it was just hard metal. Eventually, I just wanted it all to end. I started thinking about hanging myself using my uniform. I started screaming. I lost it.”²⁶⁵

People in NOLA ICE jails commonly describe cruel and degrading conditions of solitary confinement, including:

- A man at CLIPC was locked in solitary confinement with a mattress covered in fecal matter, dried vomit, and urine. When he requested a new mattress, officials removed his, forcing him to sleep on the steel bed frame.²⁶⁶
- A man at CLIPC was locked in a solitary cell with walls and toilet covered in mold, rotting remnants of food scattered on the floor, and a mattress infested with ants that covered his body when he tried to sleep.²⁶⁷
- Guards at CLIPC left fluorescent lights on for 24 hours a day in a solitary confinement cell, making sleep nearly impossible for the man held there.²⁶⁸
- A man at CLIPC was locked in a solitary cell where toilets and drains flooded on three occasions, spilling human waste into the cell and hallway.²⁶⁹ CLIPC staff forced detained people to clean the sewage with towels they had to wring with bare hands into trash cans. One man said, “The smell was unbearable. It burned my eyes and made it almost impossible to breathe. The sewage sat there for hours until we were given towels to clean it ourselves. They didn’t even give us gloves.”²⁷⁰

ICE euphemistically refers to solitary confinement as “segregated housing.” All NOLA ICE jails have a unit with individual solitary confinement cells, known as the “segregated housing unit” or “SHU.” NOLA ICE officials use two types of solitary confinement: disciplinary and administrative.

NOLA ICE officials have wielded disciplinary segregation to maintain day-to-day order and to punish minor, non-violent offenses such as verbal spats or perceived insubordination. Examples include:

- A man at CLIPC received 80 days in solitary confinement after a verbal disagreement with staff.²⁷¹ His prolonged confinement left him suicidal.
- A Spanish-speaking man at Winn was thrown in solitary confinement for perceived insubordination rooted in a language gap between him and officials. When an officer screamed in his face in English, he explained that he couldn’t understand without an interpreter. The officer used Google Translate to write “You are a matón” (a “criminal” in Spanish) and sent the man to solitary confinement.²⁷²

NOLA ICE officials have also commonly used solitary confinement to retaliate against people who submit complaints, organize protests, or participate in a hunger strike.²⁷³ Examples include:

- Winn officials locked one man in prolonged solitary confinement for filing complaints of sexual violence and harassment under the Prison Rape Elimination Act.²⁷⁴
- People at Winn who requested medication for ailments have been threatened with solitary confinement for “asking too many questions” when medical staff came to the housing unit.²⁷⁵

- A woman at Basile described how officers tell us that if we file any grievances, they will write us up for misbehavior in our ICE files and it will hurt our immigration cases. They threaten to put us through “the smooth”—the solitary confinement cells, where women are stripped naked and left on a cold cell floor.²⁷⁶

RETALIATORY SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR REPORTING ICE INTERFERENCE WITH COURT ACCESS

Haval,²⁷⁷ ALLEN PARISH

“It was like hell inside this jail. It was torture for me, fighting for this form just to appeal my case.”

Haval is a Kurdish activist from Turkey detained by ICE for over a year while seeking asylum. After the Turkish government tortured him for his political support of the Kurdish liberation movement, he escaped Turkey and requested asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border in December 2022. He was then transported to Louisiana, detained first at Richwood for two months before transfer to Allen Parish. Appearing pro se before an immigration judge, Haval was denied asylum on April 24, 2023. The appeal deadline was 30 days later.

The law library at Allen Parish, a 4'x6' walk-in closet in the housing unit, did not have the court form Haval needed to file his appeal, the Notice to Appeal (EOIR-26 Form), and Allen Parish officials refused to provide it. As the deadline for appeal approached, Haval submitted six written requests for a copy of the appeal form. Allen Parish officials replied, “We don’t have any ICE forms here. You need to write to ICE for EOIR-26 form.” ICE officials failed to respond to Haval’s written requests for the form.

Desperate for access to his legal rights, Haval engaged in an eight-day hunger strike. He also filed a complaint with the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman. Officials at Allen Parish finally provided Haval with the required form on June 13, 2023, weeks past his appeal deadline. But the day after receiving the form, Haval was locked in solitary confinement unit for 11 days, denied access to the law library, the grievance system, and mail. When Haval was finally able to submit the appeal form, it was too late. He had been issued a final order of removal and ICE began processing him for deportation. After intervention by report contributors, the Board of Immigration Appeals granted Haval’s appeal and remanded his case back to the immigration court. In January 2024, he was granted asylum. He now lives in Boston.

NOLA ICE officials have used administrative segregation to isolate vulnerable people, purportedly for their safety, but in reality exposing them to greater harm. Under ICE policy, solitary confinement should “only [be] used as a last resort and when no other viable housing options exist” for people with special vulnerabilities such as mental health or serious medical conditions, disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, and survivors of torture, trafficking, and trauma.²⁷⁸ If used, administrative segregation must be non-punitive. People in administrative segregation should have access to the commissary, a phone, a tablet, recreational materials, and one hour

of outdoor time in a single-person cage in the yard, colloquially known by detained people as “the birdcage.” NOLA ICE officials have ignored these requirements.

Examples of solitary confinement of particularly vulnerable people LGBTQ+ people include:

- A trans woman at CLIPC said, “Solitary is used as the only option for LGBTQ+ folks to get to a safe place when they are threatened.”²⁷⁹
- A Russian LGBTQ+ man at Winn was held in administrative segregation for three weeks for his purported protection.²⁸⁰ During his solitary confinement, he was denied law library access and only able to call his family twice.

Examples of solitary confinement used for medical isolation and observation when no designated medical units exist or such units are at capacity, include:

- A man at Pine Prairie spent 10 days in solitary confinement after a suspected case of tuberculosis. He said, “I was treated like a prisoner instead of a patient. I was locked in the cold cell and no one was giving me treatment. There were no windows. No one could even see me. When I screamed for help, no one would answer.”²⁸¹
- A man at Winn contracted H. Pylori, a bacteria that attacks the stomach lining, after drinking non-potable water. After he developed stomach ulcers and lost 40 pounds in three months, he was placed in solitary confinement for medical observation, unable to access the law library to prepare his asylum case.²⁸²
- Officials at CLIPC frequently locked Daniel, a man with frontal lobe epilepsy, in solitary confinement in response to his medical needs.²⁸³ After losing consciousness from his seizures, Daniel initially awoke in the medical unit at CLIPC on a urine-soaked mattress. But after two days in the medical ward, staff told him that they “needed the bed for other sick people” and that they “did not have room for him in the medical ward.” They then transferred him to a solitary confinement cell. In solitary confinement, Daniel was denied access to the recreational yard for 11 days. Held alone in a cell for 22 to 24 hours a day, Daniel contemplated suicide.

Examples of solitary confinement of people with mental health vulnerabilities include:

- A man at Richwood described the common understanding that people who report mental health symptoms, including suicidal ideation, are placed in solitary confinement in a straitjacket instead of receiving medical care. “If you start telling the guards that you are feeling down or depressed, they will just strip you naked, put you in a turtle suit, and throw you in the hole. Then you’ll really be in a bad way.”²⁸⁴
- A man suffering from schizophrenia at CLIPC has been in solitary confinement for over four months because of his mental health condition. He was never notified or provided with an opportunity to appeal his placement in administrative segregation. He said: “Since being in here, my condition has gotten much worse. The voices are louder now. I’m only allowed outside one hour a day but, still, even outside, I’m in a small cage. My mattress in the cell is so thin, I can feel the bars of the bedframe on my back. In solitary, I only get about half the amount of food I used to get in the dorms. They don’t give me a tablet, so I can’t make requests or buy anything from the commissary. I have to bang on the doors of my cell and beg for fresh water. The only thing I can do to pass the time is stand on my toes so I can see through the window of my cell and watch the television in the hallway.”²⁸⁵

HUMILIATING AND DEGRADING SPEECH

“I gave up my immigration appeal because I can’t take this harassment and these threats anymore. I can’t take this any longer.”²⁸⁶

NOLA ICE officials have used humiliating and degrading speech to refer to people’s immigration status, limited English language proficiency, nationality, race and ethnicity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

TRANSPHOBIC HARASSMENT IN RETALIATION FOR SELF-ADVOCACY

Alex, CLIPC & BASILE

“Guards disrespect trans people, refuse to respect their gender identity, do not call them their preferred pronouns. If they ask for male underwear, they laugh at them and tell them they are women, not men. They do not give them wraps to bind their chests and tell the trans men that they are women when they ask for wraps.”

Alex is a transgender man who fled to the United States after escaping sexual violence and gender-based persecution in the Dominican Republic. Alex has a U.S. citizen mother and is the parent to three U.S. citizen daughters.

At CLIPC, confined to an all-female dorm, Alex disclosed his transgender identity to an ICE officer. The officer responded, “I don’t want to hear it.” Officers then began a targeted campaign of transphobic harassment towards Alex. They told him he would be surveilled through the jail’s security cameras because he is transgender. They mocked him, saying, “Make sure you do not look at the other women while they shower since you are transgender.” When Alex tried to use the shower facilities separately from women, an officer forcibly removed him, screaming, “It’s too late to shower!”

During his detention at CLIPC, Alex filed multiple grievances related to forced labor practices, medical neglect, and contamination of food in the kitchen by rat feces and cockroaches. Officers harassed Alex by asking “if there was anything else you want to complain about” in a threatening manner.

In October 2022, Alex was transferred to Basile, an all-female ICE jail, in a mass transfer occurring shortly after a group of detained people complained of their conditions of confinement. At Basile, the transphobic harassment continued. For months, officials at Basile denied Alex a binder for his chest. Officials also administered the wrong dosage of Alex’s testosterone and refused to provide the correct medication. Alex also witnessed persistent sexual harassment of women at Basile:

I have witnessed the Assistant Warden take women’s panties and order the officials to move the cameras to point toward the showers. He told me himself that he was watching women from the cameras. He asked me, “That’s what you like, right? Women?”

In March 2023, a Basile officer harassed Alex by repeatedly calling him “girl” and “niña” (Spanish for “girl”). When Alex complained, the officer terminated his access to the commissary for seven days. Another officer frequently asked Alex: “What is it like to fuck with another female?” and “You’re going to eat that pussy tonight.” Again, when Alex complained, officers retaliated with disciplinary charges.

After months of torment by NOLA ICE officials, Alex decided to accept deportation.

Racist speech from NOLA ICE officials has been previously documented. A 2021 civil rights complaint documented anti-Black racist speech at Winn in an incident where detained men were cutting down trees and officials said, “Now we can’t lynch them.”²⁸⁷ Also at Winn, when two Cameroonian men asked guards if they would wear masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19, one of the guards responded, “Fuck Black people.”²⁸⁸

Other incidents of degrading speech referring to race, ethnicity, or nationality include:

- Guards at Winn attacked John Star, a Nigerian man, repeatedly calling him a “n***er” while punching him in the chest.²⁸⁹ The attack occurred after John asked officials for an update on his custody status. An officer told him, “Stop asking questions and return to your unit,” and that officers “can deport him anytime to anywhere we want.” They then grabbed legal documents out of John’s hands and threw them in the trash. Following the attack, John was taken to a local hospital and diagnosed with a chest wall contusion.
- Officers at Basile routinely used racial slurs when referring to a group of detained Chinese women.²⁹⁰
- A woman at Basile who wears a hijab, injured and taken for medical treatment at a hospital in shackles, heard NOLA ICE officials and hospital staff mocking her as a terrorist.²⁹¹
- An Indigenous Ecuadorian man at Winn said that officers mocked his height and facial features and prevented him from participating in recreational outdoor time, telling him, “You are too short to go out in the yard.”²⁹²
- An officer at CLIPIC told a Colombian man who complained about delays in receiving medication, “Fuck you. You are just another Mexican.”²⁹³
- Guards at Basile told Russian women to “Go back to Russia,” “I am better than you because I’m American,” and “We are going to send you back to Russia where Putin will kill you.” Officers also told a Russian woman that her request for release had been denied “because you are Russian and a bad person.”
- Officials at Richwood told a group of Somali men to “Go back to your country. You brought yourself here.”²⁹⁴
- Officials at Winn mocked a Marshallese man for his race and told him “to gather a crowd of Marshallese and make a banner that says ‘All Marshallese Are Stupid.’”²⁹⁵
- Men at Richwood described how officers scream and curse at them in English on a daily basis, calling them “fucking immigrants.”²⁹⁶

Officials have also used menacing speech to humiliate and degrade detained people:

- At Richwood, officials told detained people who wrote a letter complaining about conditions of confinement that they could “influence your cases before the immigration court” if they did not “keep your mouths shut.”²⁹⁷
- At Winn, officials told a group of limited English proficiency people to “shut up” and threatened them with solitary confinement when they asked for language assistance.²⁹⁸
- At Jackson Parish, men reported the guards wake them up at 3:00 am every morning by screaming and banging on the walls. “It feels like psychological torture. We can’t sleep but are afraid to say anything.”²⁹⁹
- A woman at Basile reported that “the guards scream at us in English.”³⁰⁰

Detained people also report pervasive anti-LGBTQ+ speech, including:

- Winn guards called a gay man homophobic slurs after locking him in “protective custody” or solitary confinement.³⁰¹
- Officials at Pine Prairie told a married gay couple that they were “making other people uncomfortable” and then separated them into different housing units, preventing them from speaking to each other outside of recreational time, through a fence.³⁰²

RETALIATION AND SUPPRESSION OF PROTECTED FIRST AMENDMENT ACTIVITY

*America is a country that celebrates free speech and protestors. But just like in my home country, when I protest my rights, I am attacked and pushed down.*³⁰³

NOLA ICE officials have suppressed protected First Amendment activity, including religious worship and non-violent speech in protest of abusive treatment. Officials have also retaliated against people who file grievances or engage in hunger strikes, using solitary confinement, pepper spray, tear gas, threats, force, and retaliatory transfers to other detention centers.

RETALIATION AGAINST ANTI-PUTIN RUSSIAN ACTIVIST PEACEFULLY PROTESTING PROLONGED DETENTION

Anastasiia, BASILE

Anastasiia is a 25-year-old pro-democracy Russian activist and asylum seeker who was detained at Basile from June 2022 through December 2022. She entered the U.S. with her husband, seeking protection from persecution and torture by the Russian government for organizing protests against the Putin regime and human rights abuses against Ukrainians.³⁰⁴

In October 2022, Anastasiia and other Russian women in her housing unit peacefully protested their prolonged detention in cruel and degrading conditions. The women held signs reading “Pro-Putin Louisiana? Fleeing Russians face 5+ months in custody & \$10-50k bonds.”

We came from Russia because we are protestors. We made those posters because we know this is how we can protest our mistreatment. We formed a chain together and stood in front of the jail guards, hands linked with the signs held. Our goal was to get our message to ICE that our prolonged detention is a violation of our rights and to release us.

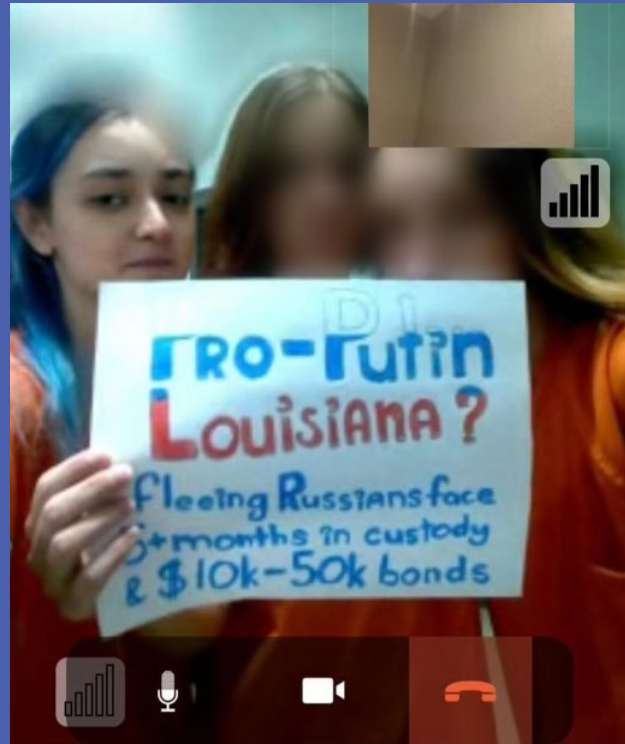


Photo of Anastasiia and other women peacefully protesting inside of South Louisiana ICE Processing Center in Basile, Louisiana
Photo courtesy of Anastasiia

Basile officers responded by threatening her with solitary confinement. One officer told Anastasiia, "I know you have depression. We can put you in solitary under suicide watch."

On two occasions, officers entered the housing unit where Anastasiia and other Russian women were peacefully demonstrating and threatened to transfer and separate them if they continued. In November 2022, NOLA ICE officials made good on their threats and transferred Anastasiia to Richwood in retaliation for filing grievances and for her role in organizing peaceful demonstrations. Following intervention by report authors, Anastasiia was released on parole. She currently lives with her husband and works at a university in upstate New York while her immigration case remains pending.

Civil rights complaints and news reports have long documented NOLA ICE retaliation against peaceful protest by detained people. In August 2019, Pine Prairie officials beat 115 hunger strikers and shot tear gas canisters and rubber bullets at them. At least one protester required CPR resuscitation after being shot with tear gas.³⁰⁵ In December 2019, Winn officials pepper sprayed 50 people protesting prolonged detention.³⁰⁶ In August 2020, Pine Prairie officials

used tear gas, pepper spray, and threats of solitary confinement against 45 Black asylum seekers hunger striking over unsanitary conditions of confinement, indefinite detention, racist treatment, denials of release, and inadequate medical care, including protective measures against COVID-19.³⁰⁷ An officer broke a protestor’s arm.³⁰⁸ In July 2021, an Allen Parish official told Black asylum seekers that had been transferred from Pine Prairie after hunger striking in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter that they were “troublemakers” and “Don’t try it here, because I have my gun.”³⁰⁹

200 PEOPLE PEPPER SPRAYED FOR PROTESTING INHUMANE LIVING CONDITIONS AND INDEFINITE DETENTION

WINN³¹⁰

On January 26, 2024, after 200 asylum seekers, largely from Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, declared a mass hunger strike to protest conditions of confinement and denials of release, Winn officials doused hundreds of people in pepper spray, including those with severe medical conditions. They then locked pepper-sprayed people in the housing units, without access to running water or air ventilation, for three hours.

One hunger striker said:

We are here for over six months and mentally we cannot stand it anymore. I have had heart issues twice here. I have swelling in my legs. I have sciatica. All of these things I have acquired here. I told them I want to be deported. I am fed up with being here. I just want to be free. We are here detained for so long for no reason, just for crossing the border to find protection. We are tired of having to demand everything, having to fight for things that should be our right like medical care and basic things.

Another hunger striker said:

“The ICE officers are rude to us. They swear at us and don’t treat us like humans. Whatever we request, they refuse. No one takes care of us. Our lives don’t matter here.”

A third said:

They have been keeping me here for six months, caging me like an animal. Am I an animal? People are more kind to dogs. We have to fight for everything here, things that are our rights. My son is just one year old. He has severe health issues and needs surgery. I don’t have any money here in my commissary. The officers would not let me have a video call with my son before his surgery. Even a simple act of humanity—they refuse.

In the weeks prior to the mass pepper spraying, people had complained to Winn officials about lack of sanitation in their housing unit for approximately 10 days after

flooding caused soaked bedding and clothing. Protestors had also filed complaints of water leaks in dorms, near-freezing temperatures in the housing units, stagnant water in the kitchen, insufficient food portions, and serious delays in receiving medical treatment.

On January 26, approximately 200 protestors refused their lunchtime meal and declared a mass hunger strike from their housing unit. The group began to repeatedly chant, “Mr. Biden, help us! Give us freedom! Winn Correctional is no good! Louisiana is racist!” Shortly thereafter, approximately 20 officers entered the housing unit wearing black riot gear and gas masks. An officer directing the others screamed, “Shut up, motherfuckers!” Then, without warning, officers pepper sprayed the unit.

The officers walked around the unit with five canisters of pepper spray, dousing the area for approximately five minutes. They sprayed people directly in their faces and on their bodies, some from less than an arm’s length away. People screamed and ran away, many falling to the ground and trampled by others. Some attempted to hide behind beds and to use their clothing to shield their eyes and faces. The officers pepper sprayed people indiscriminately, including those fleeing or attempting to hide and those with asthma and heart conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to serious health risks from pepper spray.

After spraying the unit, the officers exited and locked the doors and windows. They cut the power and water to the unit, making it impossible for people to rinse their eyes, throats, or skin. People also reported officers turning off the cameras in the unit. For approximately three hours, people remained locked in the dorm, without access to medical care.

One Uzbek man said:

I was sitting in my bed, about 200 meters from the door, when it started happening. I myself was not even participating in the hunger strike. I was just sitting quietly in the dorm. The officers started spraying gas and locking the doors. They sprayed the whole room. It became very difficult to breathe. I felt like I was choking, just trying to get air. I tried to use my clothes to cover my face, but it didn’t help. I couldn’t rinse my eyes or skin for hours because they shut off the water in the dorm. They left us in there for hours, coughing and choking, with no medical help.

Another man said:

I was just one meter away from the officer when he sprayed me. There was no warning, he didn’t say anything. I was just standing there, chanting with the group, and he sprayed me. Immediately, I struggled to breathe. They shut the water from the sink off. I tried to use some drinking water I had in a cup to rinse my face, but it wasn’t enough. We couldn’t get medical care because we were not allowed out of the unit. My throat burned for two days.

Another man said:

My breathing became very hard. I couldn't see. My eyes were on fire. I tried to step back after they sprayed me, to get away, and I fell on my back to the ground. It was chaos. Everyone started running and screaming, trying to get away from the spray. They trapped us, closed the doors and the windows, so we couldn't get any fresh air. The water was shut off for hours until later that evening.

Multiple people experienced serious medical complications from the pepper-spraying. A 37-year-old man taking medication for a cardiac condition, with a cardiac stent, cardiac arrhythmia, and high blood pressure, said:

I was standing with the others when the officer came towards me. He came very close, so close I was less than an arm's length away. He said nothing. There was no warning. I was about 20 centimeters away from the officer when he sprayed me in the face. I started to have difficulty breathing and my chest was aching. I lost my vision and couldn't open my eyes. It was so difficult to breathe and my chest was so tight. I couldn't get any air in. I was prepared to die.

He collapsed to the ground unconscious after being pepper sprayed. Two others dragged him to the unit doors. They screamed and banged on the doors, begging officers to let the man out for emergency medical care. After approximately 10 minutes, an officer opened the door and dragged the man into the hallway. Officers left him there until he regained consciousness and then once more confined him to the unit, where the water and power remained cut off. The man continued to have chest pain for three days. As he said:

I suffered so much in Uzbekistan. I was beaten by law enforcement officers for being a Jew and I thought here in the United States, it would be different. I thought I would be safe and protected. But here, it is the same. Again, I am beaten by law enforcement officers, just for looking for safety and protection.

Another man from Uzbekistan described how after he was pepper-sprayed, his hair started falling out in clumps:

Before I was detained here, I had no health problems. The officers sprayed me from only an arm's length away. I didn't even have a warning so I could turn away. In the days after the officers sprayed me, my hair started falling out in clumps. I had a severe rash all over my hands and arms. I was having really bad chest pain and nosebleeds too, so I requested a sick call. The medical staff told me, "We can't help you and we can't give you any medication." When I told them I was having these medical issues after being pepper-sprayed they said, "If you have complaints, hire an attorney." I just wanted something to help with the pain. Why am I losing my hair? I'm only 27 years old.

The man, seeking asylum from Uzbekistan, later accepted voluntary departure:

I participated in political protests in my home country, Uzbekistan. My uncle was killed for standing up for our political rights. The secret military service threatened me and I was forced to come here to seek help because I was thinking America is the country that protects people. After five months of waiting, I had my immigration court hearing the week after I was pepper-sprayed. I decided to give up my case and ask for deportation. I am so afraid to go back but I am equally afraid that I will die here.

Other recent examples of NOLA ICE retaliation for reporting official wrongdoing include:

- Richwood officials cut off access to the law library for a group of 40 men who organized a demand letter and a mass hunger strike in protest of discrimination.³¹¹
- Ten armed officers with shields and guns at Richwood used force to end a peaceful protest.³¹²
- Winn officials placed a man in solitary confinement for 15 days after he told an officer that he would report intimidating remarks to legal service providers conducting “Know Your Rights” presentations.³¹³

Muslim people in NOLA ICE jails have also reported violations of their First Amendment right to practice their religions, including delayed or canceled prayer services; deprivation of religiously compliant meals; and the denial essential religious items such as religious texts, prayer rugs, and head coverings. Examples include:

- Basile officials confiscated the hijabs of three women. Officials refused to restore them after they filed complaints and further denied them access to the Quran.³¹⁴
- Basile officials told a woman from French Guinea that “she could not wear her hijab” in the jail.³¹⁵
- Fifteen women at Basile were forced to use towels as head coverings after officials denied them access to their hijabs.³¹⁶
- A man at CLIPC reported that while the chaplain’s office included religious texts for Christians and Jews, there is no copy of any Islamic text, such as the Quran, available for people who practice Islam.³¹⁷

Medical Abuse & Neglect

“I am afraid that I will die in my sleep. Every day, the pain gets worse.”³¹⁸

Medical and mental health abuse and neglect can be life-threatening. They are also among the most common human rights abuses documented in NOLA ICE detention. NOLA ICE officials have caused or contributed to serious illness and injury by withholding care both for grave health conditions and for initially minor conditions that worsen when denied treatment.

In all NOLA ICE jails, officials have ignored or denied requests for medical treatment and unreasonably delayed its provision, putting sick and injured people at risk of loss of life and limb and subjecting survivors of torture and trauma to panic attacks, debilitating depression, and thoughts of self-harm. Serious, systemic deficiencies in medical care in NOLA ICE jails have even caused or contributed to the deaths of at least eight individuals over the past five years, including two known deaths last year alone.³¹⁹

VISION LOSS, OPEN WOUNDS, AND RISK OF DEATH DURING FOUR-YEAR DETENTION

Aamir, CLIPC

“These four years inside are killing me slowly every day.”

Aamir, a man seeking asylum based on his sexual orientation, was detained by ICE for over four years. During that time, his once-manageable health conditions turned into serious threats to his eyesight, mobility, and life.

Prior to his detention, Aamir successfully managed Type II diabetes, coronary artery disease, and coronary arrhythmia with diet, medication, and regular physician check-ups. In NOLA ICE detention, Aamir developed chronic headaches, severe fatigue, dizziness, hypoglycemic fainting, vision loss, and open wounds on his feet that placed him at risk of amputation.

In November 2022, an endocrinologist prescribed Aamir twice-daily insulin shots to manage symptoms of diabetes, including acute chest pain, shortness of breath, headaches, fatigue, and dizziness. But NOLA ICE officials told Aamir that the facility doctor had stopped insulin medication for 90 days and refused to permit Aamir to speak with a doctor. With his insulin restricted, Aamir suffered serious injuries due to hypoglycemic loss of consciousness. In March 2023 he injured his knee after falling unconscious from his bed. In November 2023, he sustained a deep cut above his eye that required hospitalization after fainting in the shower.

I felt dizzy and started to lose my vision. I fell backwards and regained consciousness on the floor of the shower. The chest pain was so bad and I struggled to breathe. There was so much blood pouring from my eye, covering my face and body. I tried to get up and used some toilet paper to try to stop the bleeding. I called out for help but no one

came. I continued to yell and scream for an officer. I was so dizzy and couldn't see.

In 2023, NOLA ICE officials blocked a prescribed surgery for Aamir's diabetic retinopathy, a preventable diabetes complication that causes vision impairment and blindness. Aamir had previously received surgery in one eye for the condition, with a doctor's instructions that surgery for the other eye be performed by February 15, 2023. Officials ignored this deadline, postponing surgical care until June 9, 2023. Because of this delay, Aamir suffers blood drainage issues with his eyes that threaten vision impairment or blindness.

Aamir also suffered diabetes-related chronic sores on his left foot, causing painful, blood-filled pustules. Left untreated, infection could cause permanent mobility complications, including the risk of amputation.

Because of the complications of my diabetes, including open wounds and issues with my feet, I fear soon I will be confined to a wheelchair. Every day I fear for my life. Every day, I have more complications from my diabetes.

NOLA ICE officials also refused Aamir access to medications to manage chronic conditions. They refused to administer prescribed medication for Aamir's diagnosed anxiety disorder and claustrophobia. And only after his former cardiologist filed a complaint did officials restore Aamir's access to daily low-dose aspirin, crucial to managing his blood pressure.

NOLA ICE medical neglect of Aamir's diabetes even placed his life at risk. In July 2022, Aamir's blood glucose level reached 477 mg/dL, far exceeding the 240-mg limit for a diagnosis of hyperglycemia, a physician-recommended cutoff point for emergency medical services.³²⁰ ICE officers eventually drove him to a hospital, rather than call an ambulance, where he presented with nausea and had difficulty breathing and staying conscious. Physicians diagnosed him with rhabdomyolysis, a condition caused by diabetic ketoacidosis, leading to muscle breakdown so severe it can cause death.

Eventually, with the intervention of report authors, Aamir was released from NOLA ICE detention on bond.

Medical abuse and neglect violates ICE's detention standards, which require "access to appropriate and necessary medical, dental and mental health care, including emergency services."³²¹ These standards mandate "access to a continuum of health care services, including screening, prevention, health education, diagnosis and treatment" and "twenty-four hour emergency care."³²² ICE jails must have "a mental health staffing component on call . . . 24 hours a day, seven days a week."³²³ A detained person "who is determined to require health care beyond facility resources shall be transferred in a timely manner to an appropriate facility."³²⁴ Every ICE jail "shall have a sick call procedure that allows detainees the unrestricted opportunity to freely request health care services (including mental health and dental services) provided by a physician or other qualified medical staff in a clinical setting."³²⁵ In 2021, ICE issued a directive creating a presumption of release of people who are

pregnant, postpartum, or nursing.³²⁶ And “[i]nformed consent standards shall be observed and adequately documented.”³²⁷

Further, under U.S. federal law, NOLA ICE officials’ failure to make reasonable accommodations for people with serious medical and mental health conditions can amount to discrimination based on disability.³²⁸ International human rights standards also create a presumption against prolonged detention, particularly for individuals who are vulnerable due to a medical or mental health disability.³²⁹

As documented in this report, these standards have not been enforced. From April 2022 through April 2024, report authors recorded 154 complaints of medical and mental health abuse and neglect from individuals detained at every NOLA ICE jail.³³⁰ Examples include:

- Denial of medical care for chronic conditions, including consistent access to specialty care, medication, and treatment;
- Denial of medical care for urgent conditions, including the failure to respond to sick call requests to address injury and illness;
- Denial of medical care for treatment of emergency conditions, including botched and reckless responses to medical emergencies, threatening detained people with permanent disability or death;
- Ineffective and non-responsive care, including the overuse of generic “pain pills” to treat unrelated symptoms and poor quality of care by facility medical personnel;
- Denial of the right to informed consent to treatment, including improper documentation of “refusals of medical care”;
- Disruption of care due to transfer to NOLA ICE jails;
- Denial of dental care, resulting in detained individuals languishing with urgent dental needs, such as tooth infections and required extractions;
- Denial of reproductive health care, placing people at risk of irreversible health consequences;
- Medical neglect of people with disabilities, including the failure to provide medical care and reasonable accommodations; and
- Mental health neglect, including the use of solitary confinement as a response to mental health distress.

DENIAL OF MEDICAL CARE FOR CHRONIC CONDITIONS

“There are people here who came young and healthy and are now sick. What hope is there for people like me who came with cancer? I am worried for my life.”³³¹

People in NOLA ICE detention suffering from chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes, kidney disease, hypertension, heart conditions, and persistent pain due to previous injury have reported inconsistent access to medication and treatment. In some cases, denial of treatment has caused serious health complications, exacerbating once-manageable illnesses and injuries into urgent conditions. Examples include:

- Jackson Parish officials provided only an emergency asthma inhaler to a man with chronic asthma for management of daily symptoms, causing severe chest pain and lightheadedness.³³²
- Basile officials confiscated the daily medications of a woman with chronic heart and thyroid conditions, leading to uncontrolled symptoms.³³³
- Basile officials confiscated an asthma inhaler for a woman with chronic asthma, leading to severe chest pain and difficulty breathing.³³⁴
- Jackson Parish officials denied blood pressure medication for several weeks to a man at with high blood pressure, lightheadedness, and shortness of breath.³³⁵
- River officials refused to provide a man with his previously prescribed medicine that had successfully managed his chronic heart condition, chest pain, and fatigue.³³⁶
- Basile officials denied HIV medication to a person who was fearful of discrimination and retaliation from officials due to their HIV-positive status.³³⁷
- Richwood officials denied access to insulin and blood pressure medication for weeks to a 68-year-old man with diabetes and high blood pressure.³³⁸
- Basile officials denied medication or responsive care to a woman with sickle cell anemia.³³⁹
- Basile officials denied blood pressure medication to a woman with high blood pressure, shortness of breath, chest pain, and weakness in her arms and legs.³⁴⁰
- Basile officials denied a woman with HIV access to her HIV medications for over three weeks.³⁴¹
- Winn officials denied a man with diabetes access to blood sugar testing and insulin.³⁴²
- Winn officials told a man with chronic kidney disease whose limbs had swollen so much that he lost the ability to walk that “it will likely take six months for ICE to schedule the appointment with a specialist.” Officials confiscated a wheelchair he had previously received and refused him crutches, forcing him to rely on other detained people to carry him to the bathroom and the cafeteria.³⁴³
- A man at Winn with chronic migraines and high blood pressure made four separate requests for medical care. After each request, he was forced to wait four days, only to be given pain pills that did not address his medical needs.³⁴⁴
- A man at Allen Parish with chronic spinal pain was told by an ICE officer that they “do not provide physical therapy in detention.”³⁴⁵
- Winn officials denied diabetes treatment to a man diagnosed as pre-diabetic in his home country, with bruising in both feet and other symptoms of poor circulation.³⁴⁶
- A man at Richwood with a metal plate and screws in his knee following a motorcycle accident, now unable to walk, was denied an appointment for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) by facility medical personnel who told him that ICE “probably won’t be able to schedule an MRI.”³⁴⁷
- Winn officials confiscated and denied prescribed medications used to treat acute nerve pain and refused access to a cardiologist for a man with a history of strokes, severe leg pain, and a diagnosis of risk for heart attack, stroke, and embolism.³⁴⁸
- Winn officials denied an appointment with a hepatologist to a man with liver disease.³⁴⁹
- Winn officials denied an appointment with a nephrologist to a man with kidney disease and only one kidney.³⁵⁰

NOLA ICE officials have also failed to provide physician-prescribed diets. Examples include:

- A man at Winn with chronic kidney disease, previously managed by medication and a prescribed medical diet, was denied access to both for the past two months, now unable to walk due to swelling in his left foot and right knee.³⁵¹
- Jackson Parish officials denied a man a medically prescribed diet following surgical procedures to remove his gallbladder and a colon tumor. He was suffering persistent vomiting, diarrhea, and acid reflux.³⁵²
- River officials denied a man with diabetes his diabetic diet. He was now suffering related health complications, including a painful growth on his left armpit, infections and fungal growth in his toenails, and severe vision loss.³⁵³

DENIAL OF URGENT MEDICAL CARE

“I have been sitting in excruciating, unbearable pain for weeks and have still not spoken with a surgeon.”³⁵⁴

NOLA ICE officials have denied or unreasonably delayed care for urgent illness and injury. Medical professionals typically define urgent illness and injury as those with the potential to threaten life or limb if not treated within a timely manner, generally no more than 24 hours.³⁵⁵ Urgent conditions include, but are not limited to, nausea, flu, bodily pains, wounds, fevers, and infections.

NOLA ICE officials denied care for urgent illness and injury in the below examples: .

- Jackson Parish officials denied surgery to a man with a hernia that medical personnel told him would require surgical intervention.³⁵⁶
- Jackson Parish officials denied surgery to a man with a stomach hernia causing severe pain preventing him from eating.³⁵⁷
- River officials refused to schedule surgery for a man with a hernia that an external care provider told him required surgery.³⁵⁸
- River officials denied surgery to a man with an 8-pound hernia in his testicle.³⁵⁹
- A man at Allen Parish with a spinal injury and severe pain for the past five months decided to withdraw his claim for asylum and request deportation to access surgery that officials had repeatedly denied him.³⁶⁰
- Richwood officials denied surgery to a man in extreme pain from a large, visible cyst on his upper back for the past six months after facility medical staff told him in multiple appointments that he would receive surgery.³⁶¹
- A man at Winn told by a previous medical provider that he required surgery for a five-inch abdominal hernia following prior gallbladder removal surgery was instead given only pain pills and told that “ICE will not schedule the surgery.”³⁶²
- Winn officials denied a man with heavy rectal bleeding further treatment beyond a topical cream that did not address his symptoms.³⁶³
- Jackson Parish officials denied treatment to a man with severe pain from an inflamed stomach.³⁶⁴
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with persistently bleeding hemorrhoids for the past three weeks.³⁶⁵

- Winn officials denied an endoscopy appointment for a man with bowel cancer.³⁶⁶
- Basile officials denied treatment to woman with an infected cyst on her right breast and high fever.³⁶⁷
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with pain and headaches from head trauma suffered in the country from where he fled persecution.³⁶⁸
- Jackson Parish officials denied a man antibiotics and follow-up care for two weeks after he suffered a deep cut on his hand requiring stitches.³⁶⁹
- River officials denied treatment to a man with head pain and loss of vision from an injury sustained in his home country.³⁷⁰
- River officials denied treatment to a man with a groin infection causing heavy discharge that he was forced to self-manage by wearing two layers of briefs to contain the fluids.³⁷¹
- Basile officials denied treatment to a woman with severe leg pain.³⁷²
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with heart palpitations, numbness in his extremities, and lightheadedness.³⁷³
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with bloody stool and swollen fingers.³⁷⁴
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with a broken cheekbone who had made five medical requests.³⁷⁵
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with severe hemorrhoids he was forced to self-manage by using pads of toilet paper to stop blood from leaking through his clothing.³⁷⁶
- Winn officials denied treatment for 15 days to a man with severe chest pain that left him unable to eat.³⁷⁷
- Basile officials denied treatment to a woman with a dislocated left shoulder and facial numbness following an attack in the country from where she fled persecution.³⁷⁸
- Jackson Parish officials denied prescribed antibiotics to a man with an infection.³⁷⁹
- Jackson Parish officials denied an oncologist appointment to a man with a throat tumor.³⁸⁰
- Pine Prairie officials denied treatment to a man with a heart condition and recurring loss of consciousness who collapsed in the jail, injuring his shoulder.³⁸¹
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with a sprained ankle that left him alternately limping or immobilized from pain for the past two weeks.³⁸²
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with pain and ringing in his ears exacerbated by an officer who screamed in his ear.³⁸³
- Allen Parish officials denied an oncologist appointment to a man with testicular cancer that had metastasized in his lungs.³⁸⁴
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with black, swollen legs due to an untreated circulation problem.³⁸⁵
- Basile officials denied urgent medical care to a woman with excruciating ear pain for over ten hours. She said:

I begged the guards to take me to the medical department and was crying with pain but they refused. The time I told the guards I was having severe intense pain in my right ear was about 12:00 pm but because I was not taken to the medical department right away the doctor at medical had left by the time the guards took

me there at about 4:30 pm. In between, I was suffering intense ear pain. The guards then had to take me to outside urgent care. They kept me for about three hours to wait for the ambulance. While I was in urgent care, the pain was unbearable. I was crying and cold and in so much pain. Finally, I saw an urgent care doctor and he prescribed medication.”³⁸⁶

Because of this ten-hour delay, she experienced hearing loss and debilitating headaches. A week later, still suffering persistent ear pain, officials refused to refill the medication the urgent care doctor had prescribed. She said, “Why can they ignore people’s health and life? Our health is not important to them.”

DENIAL OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

“To finally see the doctor, I had to get in an argument with an officer. I had to beg and yell just to be seen.”³⁸⁷

NOLA ICE officials have denied or delayed treatment for emergency medical conditions: an illness, injury, symptom, or condition so serious that a reasonable person would seek care right away to avoid severe harm.³⁸⁸ Common examples have included conditions that threaten loss of life, limb, or eyesight, heart attacks, strokes and seizures, wounds requiring stitches, a major injury such as head trauma, persistent vomiting, or suicidal thoughts or feelings.

MAN LEFT LANGUISHING WITH BROKEN JAW

Cheikh,³⁸⁹ WINN

“In this place if something happens to you at all, you won’t be saved. They won’t do anything for you.”³⁹⁰

While detained at Winn, Cheikh, a young man seeking asylum from Senegal, was denied emergency medical care for more than 18 hours after his jaw was broken.

In January 2024, Cheikh broke his jaw by colliding into another person while playing soccer in the recreational yard at Winn. He collapsed to the ground in pain he characterized as level ten out of ten. His face and jaw swelled and his mouth filled with blood. Guards, immediately alerted by other people in the yard, waited 15 minutes to call medical personnel, who arrived without first aid supplies. They examined Cheikh for another 15 minutes before bringing him to the medical unit, where they diagnosed him with a “joint injury” after noting that he was spitting up blood and having trouble opening his mouth. They then handed him an ice pack, gave him pain pills, and sent him back to the housing unit.

Over the next 18 hours, Cheikh bled profusely from his mouth and his swelling further increased, preventing him from speaking, eating, or drinking. Through his swollen jaw, he sobbed in pain. Other people in Cheikh’s housing unit, concerned for his safety, begged guards to take Cheikh to the emergency room. They refused, saying “only ICE could call an ambulance” and that Cheikh “would have to wait until the next morning

to speak with a doctor.” One person who witnessed the incident said, “They wouldn’t even look at him.”

Over 40 people detained in Cheikh’s housing unit, alarmed by his medical emergency, protested his mistreatment. One person said:

From midnight through the night we banged on the walls, screaming for help. Some of us even called our family to see if they could call an ambulance to come help us. He was choking on blood, making these gasping and gurgling noises, using hand signals to try to communicate what he was going through. We were sure he would die right in front of us. All we could do was try to wipe the blood from his face.

In excruciating pain for hours, Cheikh began to vomit and lost consciousness at approximately 3:00 am. People in his unit found Cheikh unconscious and were unable to rouse him. Guards ignored their screams for help.

At approximately 8:00 am, officers entered the unit. Seeing Cheikh bleeding and unconscious, guards finally called medical personnel. One witness said:

The guards finally came and saw him. First, they dragged him across the floor. He was bleeding a lot and they tried to dump him in this broken wheelchair they brought. The wheelchair didn’t even have a footrest, so he kept falling out. They treated him like a subhuman species of an animal. We got upset and actually were the ones that finally got him in the wheelchair.

Officers taunted Cheikh as he lay unconscious in the wheelchair, saying “He smells bad!” and “That’s what you get for running like an animal!”

At a local hospital, a CT scan revealed that Cheikh’s jaw was broken, requiring reconstructive surgery. After surgery, Cheikh was released back to Winn with a medically prescribed liquid diet. But Winn officials refused to serve it. For the next five weeks, while recovering from surgery, Cheikh was forced to soak bread in water until it became soft enough to swallow.

Following intervention by report contributors, Cheikh was eventually released from ICE custody on parole.

NOLA ICE officials denied care for serious medical conditions in the following examples:

- Winn officials denied an eye specialist appointment to a man with deteriorating vision resulting in blindness in both eyes.³⁹¹
- Basile officials denied an oncology appointment to a woman with breast cancer who was experiencing severe chest pain and shortness of breath.³⁹²
- Basile officials denied treatment to a woman with debilitating stomach pain who had been vomiting blood for the past seven days.³⁹³

- Basile officials denied treatment to a woman with a possible dislocated shoulder, unable to move her left arm due and vomiting due to the severity of pain.³⁹⁴
- Basile officials denied treatment for removal of kidney stones to a woman in severe abdominal pain.³⁹⁵
- Winn officials denied treatment to a man with severe pain in his colon and bowels, unable to pass a bowel movement for the past three days.³⁹⁶
- Winn officials denied a physician-recommended cardiology appointment to a man with a heart condition causing periodic loss of consciousness and hospitalization.³⁹⁷
- Basile officials denied a neurology appointment to a woman suffering multiple seizures over the past five months.³⁹⁸
- CLIPC officials denied an eye specialist appointment to a man with glaucoma and significant vision loss.³⁹⁹
- Winn officials told a man whose diabetes caused neuralgia and vision loss that left him unable to read, write, or navigate his surroundings to treat his condition by purchasing glasses at the commissary.⁴⁰⁰
- Over objections of hospital staff, Winn officials shackled the legs, arms, and waist of a man taken to the hospital after sustaining severe head injuries from fainting due to a brain tumor. When he returned to Winn, the man again fainted and officers simply left him on the floor of the housing unit.⁴⁰¹
- Winn officials denied care to a man with a seizure disorder causing two to three seizures per day.⁴⁰²

INEFFECTIVE AND NON-RESPONSIVE CARE

“Everyone gets the same pill for everything, from a headache to a cut on your leg to cancer.”⁴⁰³

NOLA ICE officials have given ineffective medical care, unresponsive to the condition at issue. Detained people with a range of serious medical conditions have received unknown and unspecified medication with no discernable effect, described by medical staff as “sleeping pills” or “pain pills.”

In the following examples, officials denied detained people necessary care, instead providing only unidentified “pain pills” that failed to remedy symptoms:

- Winn officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with a swollen throat and tonsils for over four months, now unable to swallow or consume most foods and suffering significant weight loss.⁴⁰⁴
- Jackson Parish officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with severe hand pain from injury.⁴⁰⁵
- Allen Parish officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with knee swelling for the past four months, now able to walk only with the assistance of other detained people, following an injury from tripping when shackled by ICE.⁴⁰⁶
- Jackson Parish officials provided only “pain pills” to man with a stomach hernia requiring surgery who had been vomiting blood and in severe pain for three months, causing him serious emotional distress, including suicidal ideation.⁴⁰⁷

- River officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with head and back injuries from fainting, now suffering headaches, blurred vision, and pain.⁴⁰⁸
- Jackson Parish officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with a stomach hernia, in severe pain for the past 15 days and in need of surgery.⁴⁰⁹
- Jackson Parish officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with back pain so severe he was unable to sleep, sit, or conduct daily activities.⁴¹⁰
- Richwood officials failed to provide responsive care to a man with severe back pain.⁴¹¹
- Winn officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with high blood pressure and chronic migraines.⁴¹²
- River officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with a stomach ulcer requiring surgery. He was finally hospitalized after several weeks of pain, where an endoscopy revealed possible stomach cancer.⁴¹³
- Basile officials provided only “pain pills” to a woman with multiple ulcers and sores in her throat and stomach that had been effectively managed by antibiotics prior to her detention. She is now unable to eat or drink without severe pain.⁴¹⁴
- Winn officials provided only “pain pills” to a man whose hypertension was so severe it left him reliant on a wheelchair.⁴¹⁵
- Winn officials provided only “pain pills” to a man with screws in his tibia, in severe pain, and reliant on crutches he received at another facility to walk.⁴¹⁶
- Basile officials provided only “pain pills” to a woman with chronic arthritis from an autoimmune condition, previously managed by daily medication.⁴¹⁷

DENIAL OF THE RIGHT TO INFORMED CONSENT TO TREATMENT

“In a place like this, we have no say what happens to us. They don’t see us as human beings. They just want to drug us and sedate us so we stop asking for things, so they don’t have to take care of us.”⁴¹⁸

NOLA ICE officials have denied detained people their right to make voluntary, informed decisions regarding their medical care. Informed consent requires that a patient know the nature, risks, and benefits of their treatment options before making a voluntary decision to consent to or decline treatment.⁴¹⁹ But NOLA ICE officials have failed to explain diagnoses, treatment plans, and the names, purposes, and side effects of prescribed medications. If individuals decline to take medication because they do not understand what it is for, NOLA ICE officials have recorded their denials as “medical refusals,” restricting access to further treatment.

In each of the following examples, detained people did not receive explanations of their medical diagnoses or treatment sufficient for them to understand and voluntarily consent to or refuse treatment.

- River officials did not give the name or side effects of a prescribed seizure medication to a man who did not understand the medical care plan for his epilepsy diagnosis.⁴²⁰
- A man at Richwood was locked in solitary confinement for two weeks after exhibiting a severe rash that officials confused for scabies. Officials gave him an unknown, ineffective cream to treat the rash, but waited three weeks to inform him of his Hepatitis B diagnosis and then refused to explain his treatment plan.⁴²¹

- Winn officials failed to provide the results of an electrocardiogram and blood tests given three months earlier to a man with heart palpitations and chest pain.⁴²²
- Winn officials never provided the results of a tuberculosis test taken a month earlier, nor a diagnosis or care plan explanation, to a man with a growth in his arm.⁴²³
- Basile officials never provided results of an x-ray taken three weeks earlier, nor a diagnosis or care plan explanation, to a woman with debilitating pain in her lower back and upper thigh believed to be caused by a herniated disc or other spinal injury.⁴²⁴
- Basile officials prescribed an unknown psychiatric medication, without explanation of potential side effects, to a woman with severe migraines, intermittent numbness in her arms, and recurring loss of consciousness.⁴²⁵
- Winn officials prescribed an unmarked pill to a man with anxiety and depression, who then felt drowsy and lightheaded, increasing his symptoms. When he asked for a different medication, officials refused.⁴²⁶
- CLIPC officials denied Daniel, a man with frontal lobe epilepsy, his seizure medication after he refused to take a separate anxiety medication that left him feeling suicidal. When he declined the anxiety medication, the psychiatrist stated, “You are one of the few guys who doesn’t like my magic touch,” referring to the sedating qualities of the medication.⁴²⁷

DISRUPTION OF CARE DUE TO TRANSFER TO NOLA ICE JAILS

“When I was transferred from Etowah to Jena, it was like they erased my whole medical history. They forgot that I’m a person who is sick. I lost all of my medications and appointments. It was like I was starting from scratch.”⁴²⁸

Medical neglect and abuse are common across ICE detention facilities and criminal jails and prisons nationwide.⁴²⁹ But access to care in NOLA ICE facilities is especially inadequate. After transfer to NOLA ICE facilities from other detention jurisdictions, people have experienced sudden cessations of care that are never resumed or had planned surgeries canceled and never rescheduled. Examples include:

- A man at Winn was suffering shortness of breath and chest pain after losing access to his inhaler upon transfer from a jail in Texas.⁴³⁰
- A man at Winn, transferred from criminal custody, lost access to daily medications for anxiety and blood pressure.⁴³¹
- A man at Winn, transferred from an ICE jail in Arkansas, lost access to prescribed medication and a treatment plan for stroke recovery.⁴³²
- A woman at Basile, transferred from an ICE jail in Texas, lost access to daily medication for chronic gastritis.⁴³³
- A man at Winn lost a scheduled appointment for hernia surgery following his transfer from criminal custody. Winn officials told him “ICE will not schedule this surgery.”⁴³⁴

The same treatment interruptions have occurred when people are transferred between NOLA ICE jails, simply because officials have refused to coordinate reasonable continuity of care. Examples include:

- A man at River with a spinal condition lost access to anti-inflammatory medication after transfer from Adams County Correctional Center, a Mississippi immigration jail under NOLA ICE jurisdiction.⁴³⁵
- A woman at Basile with bipolar disorder lost access to management medication after transfer from CLIPC.⁴³⁶
- A transgender person at Basile lost access to hormone therapy after transfer from CLIPC.⁴³⁷

DENIAL OF DENTAL CARE

*“For the past three months, the pain in my back tooth has been terrible. It keeps me up at night. Now I can barely open my mouth. Eating and drinking is difficult. It is hard even to speak. **But the guards tell me this isn’t a medical issue and there is no dentist.**”⁴³⁸*

NOLA ICE officials have denied dental care, including for emergent injuries, often stating that ICE will not provide care until detention reaches six months or longer.⁴³⁹ Examples include:

- Allen Parish officials denied care to a man with debilitating molar pain causing difficult eating and speaking.⁴⁴⁰
- Basile officials denied care to a woman with a swollen cheek and jaw due to an infected tooth.⁴⁴¹
- Winn officials told a man with a tooth implant in need of removal that “ICE does not do dental work.”⁴⁴²
- Winn officials told a man with severe pain in his gums, spitting mouthfuls of blood daily, that officials “could not do anything about his teeth.”⁴⁴³
- Winn officials denied a follow-up appointment to a man with molar pain for over six weeks following tooth removal.⁴⁴⁴
- Allen Parish officials denied care to a man with multiple tooth infections left untreated for over three months.⁴⁴⁵
- A man at CLIPC said, “I was at an ICE facility, Etowah, in Alabama for about six months. Finally I would qualify for dental care. My teeth hadn’t been cleaned or looked at in two years. But just as I reached six months, ICE transferred me to Jena [CLIPC] in Louisiana.”⁴⁴⁶

DENIAL OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

NOLA ICE officials have denied care to people with gynecological and reproductive health issues. Examples include:

- An 18-year-old at Richwood, three months into pregnancy, had not received any prenatal care nor access to an obstetrician or gynecologist.⁴⁴⁷
- Basile officials denied a gynecologist appointment to a woman with an irregular period and possible hormonal imbalance.⁴⁴⁸
- Basile officials denied requests for treatment for weeks from a woman with irregular menses and hyperlactation due to a suspected hormonal imbalance.⁴⁴⁹

- Basile officials denied treatment to a woman with an ovarian cyst and chronic urinary tract infections.⁴⁵⁰
- Basile officials denied treatment to a woman with a vaginal cyst, chronic gynecological problems, severe abdominal and vaginal pain, and vaginal discharge.⁴⁵¹

MENTAL HEALTH NEGLECT

NOLA ICE officials have denied care and treatment to people with mental health needs, including diagnostic screenings and medication. Each of the people below exhibited symptoms of mental health crisis or requested mental health treatment but received no care.

- Jackson Parish officials denied mental health care to a man with suicidal ideation.⁴⁵²
- Winn officials denied mental health care to a man with symptoms of psychosis and post-traumatic stress disorder, including persistent auditory hallucinations and flashbacks related to persecution suffered in his country of origin.⁴⁵³
- Basile officials confiscated the daily medications of a woman with depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorders.⁴⁵⁴
- Jackson Parish officials denied mental health care to a man with depression and anxiety caused by sexual abuse in his home country.⁴⁵⁵
- Jackson Parish officials denied mental health care to a man with significant anxiety and depression related to fear of persecution in his home country.⁴⁵⁶
- Basile officials denied mental health care to a woman with PTSD, anxiety, and insomnia related to persecution and torture in her country of origin.⁴⁵⁷
- Winn officials denied mental health care to a man with PTSD from sexual trauma he suffered in his country of origin.⁴⁵⁸

Instead of providing responsive care, NOLA ICE officials have treated mental health symptoms with sleeping pills that cause disorientation or delirium or with placement in prolonged solitary confinement. Examples include:

- River officials locked a man who reported mental health symptoms in solitary confinement under suicide watch. Medical personnel gave him with an unknown “sleeping pill” that did not alleviate his anxiety and suicidal ideation and made it difficult for him to communicate and understand his surroundings.⁴⁵⁹
- When a woman at Basile with a severe anxiety disorder requested medication and treatment, officials locked her in solitary confinement and denied her access to mental health care, including access to anxiety medication.⁴⁶⁰
- A man at Winn with PTSD related to trauma endured in his home country, unable to sleep consistently for weeks and with auditory hallucinations, was afraid to request mental health treatment because he did not want to be locked in in solitary confinement.⁴⁶¹

MEDICAL NEGLECT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

NOLA ICE officials have refused medical treatment or reasonable accommodations to people with serious disabilities from injuries or illness that impede people’s ability to see, walk, or grip objects. Examples include:

- River officials denied physical therapy to a man with an amputated right arm.⁴⁶²
- River officials denied sterilized medical tools and specialist treatment for over seven months to a man with an artificial eye requiring monthly sterilization.⁴⁶³
- Winn officials denied medication to a man with debilitating muscular and nerve pain, unable to use his right arm for the past six months arm. He had previously relied upon muscle relaxants to manage his pain and mobility issues.⁴⁶⁴
- Allen Parish officials denied medical treatment or mobility aides to a man with a prosthetic left leg and an underdeveloped right arm, now in severe pain preventing sleep and forced to rely on the assistance of other detained people to enter and exit his bunk.⁴⁶⁵
- Winn officials denied physical therapy and pain medication to a man with the bottom half of his right leg amputated.⁴⁶⁶
- Basile officials denied a 78-year-old woman a walker and adult incontinence products.⁴⁶⁷

RECENT DEATHS IN NOLA ICE JAILS

“These jails can’t exist. There are other people who have died from this mistreatment. My brother won’t be the last one.”⁴⁶⁸

Some people detained in NOLA ICE jails pay for pursuing their rights in civil immigration proceedings with their lives. Oversight bodies, medical experts, and advocates have long documented the deadly risks of substandard medical care in ICE detention, including in NOLA ICE jails.⁴⁶⁹ Since 2017, eight known deaths have occurred in NOLA ICE jails.

However, ICE obstructs investigation of in-custody deaths, obscuring their true count. ICE officials have released critically ill individuals from detention immediately prior to their death, skirting obligations to report immigration jail deaths.⁴⁷⁰ ICE has also destroyed evidence, including video surveillance footage, related to in-custody deaths.⁴⁷¹

BELOVED BROTHER DIES IN ICE CUSTODY FOLLOWING RETALIATION FOR SELF-ADVOCACY

Ernesto Rocha-Cuadra, CLIPC

“This is supposed to be the land of the free. We are supposed to have rights. We have family getting murdered by the government’s system. How are we supposed to feel safe?”

Ernesto, a 42-year-old man from Nicaragua, was detained by ICE for over one year, from April 17, 2022 until June 23, 2023. Officials at CLIPC ignored a recommendation for his release by an ICE panel in November 2022, detaining him for an additional seven months until his death. Over the course of his detention, Ernesto suffered severe medical neglect, physical abuse, and solitary confinement at the hands of CLIPC officials.

Ernesto's family initially immigrated to the United States over 30 years ago. He became a legal permanent resident when he was 11 years old and grew up in the Los Angeles area. As his brother Frank describes, "Ernesto was the second oldest boy in our family. He was our protector, the father figure in our household. He did everything for us. He would go to my baseball games. He was always there."



Photo of Ernesto and his brother Frank
Photo courtesy of the Rocha-Cuadra family

Ernesto was initially deported to Nicaragua in 2009. In Nicaragua, Ernesto attempted to rebuild his life. He met his fiancée, Glenda, and they began their 13-year relationship. In 2018, following the rise of Nicaraguan President Ortega's authoritarian regime, Ernesto and Glenda became political activists and participated in nationwide street protests. For his political activism, Ernesto was tortured by Nicaraguan authorities in 2020. In 2022, the Nicaraguan government issued a warrant for Ernesto's arrest and the couple decided to flee to seek refuge in the United States. Ernesto's wife requested asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border. She was detained for two weeks before being released and joining their family in California. But when Ernesto presented himself to seek asylum, he was detained and transported to CLIPC.

At CLIPC, Ernesto dedicated himself to assisting fellow detained people with their immigration papers, translating documents from English to Spanish, and helping others file grievances. His brother said:

They didn't like that he was an advocate. He was always helping other people. They didn't like that he would speak up for other inmates that were getting taken advantage of. That's just the type of person my brother was. He was always willing to help those around him. If he had a piece of bread and there were 10 people in a room with him, he would divide the bread into 10 tiny pieces just so they could all eat.

CLIPC officials retaliated against Ernesto for helping people advocate for their rights, repeatedly locking him in solitary confinement. His brother recalls a harrowing phone call where he listened as officers attacked his brother.

He was asking for pain medication for his broken wrist, saying that he was in pain. In response, the guards started screaming and beating up on him. I could hear them choking and beating him through the phone. That was the worst phone call you could ever receive. I couldn't do anything to help, I could only listen to them basically killing him on the phone. There was nothing I could do.

Ernesto filed 29 grievances against officials, including reports of medical neglect and physical abuse. "They ignored him until they killed him," said his brother. "Those were 29 calls for help. They can't get away with that."

Ernesto's brother remembers the last time the two spoke. "My last phone call with my brother was a week before he passed away. We were just talking. He asked me to send him commissary money so he could buy a video call with our mom.

On Friday, June 23, 2023, Ernesto was found unresponsive at CLIPC and taken to a local hospital. He died that afternoon. That day, another brother of Ernesto, Ronny, received a phone call from a detained man at CLIPC. The man told him that he was concerned because he had witnessed officials cart Ernesto out of the jail on a gurney and he hadn't yet returned. Ernesto's brother Frank attempted to add money to Ernesto's commissary account to add money so that Ernesto could call him. But when he entered Ernesto's information, he received an error message: "No File Found." On Monday morning, when the CLIPC front desk opened, Frank called and asked for his brother's status.

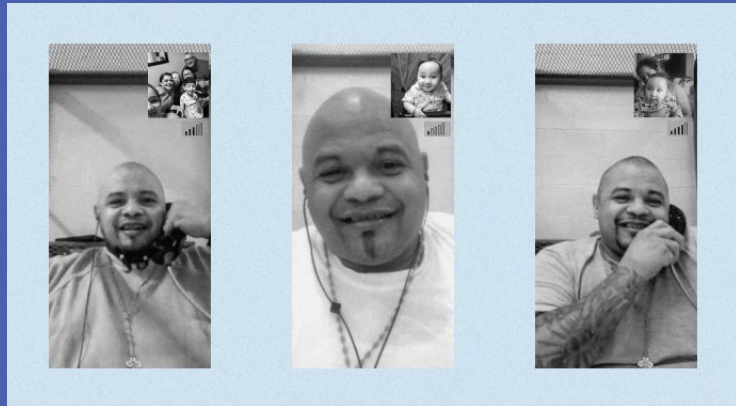


Photo of Ernesto on video calls with his family
Photo courtesy of the Rocha-Cuadra family

At first the officer on the phone said there is nothing on file. He looked again and the next thing he said was, "Let me pray for the family." I said, "No, don't tell me that, man." He responded, "I'm sorry, your brother is deceased." I hung up the phone and couldn't believe it. Then, I had to call our mom.

ICE did not notify Ernesto's family of his death until Wednesday, June 28, five days after Ernesto died. Although ICE's "Detainee Death Report" attributes Ernesto's death to cardiac arrest, his family has serious doubts. "Ernesto never had any health issues before he was detained. They say he died of a heart attack, but this doesn't make sense to us."

During their last video call with Ernesto, his family observed that he had a large cast on his arm. But Ernesto would not tell them what had happened, "likely because the call line we were on was being monitored by guards." When Ernesto's family viewed his body, his face was covered in bruises and there was blood on his clothing. "It looked like there was a struggle, like he was beaten."

Ernesto's death remains under investigation. Meanwhile, the government has refused to release video footage of the solitary confinement unit at CLIPC to Ernesto's family and attorneys.

"It breaks my heart to think about everything my brother was going through. He was just trying to come home to his family and he was tortured."

The eight known deaths of people in NOLA ICE detention centers over the past five years include:

NAME	AGE	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	JAIL	DATE OF DEATH	ALLEGED CAUSE OF DEATH
Ousmane Ba	33	Senegal	Winn	February 3, 2024	Unknown
Ernesto Rocha-Cuadra	42	Nicaragua	CLIPC	April 4, 2023	Cardiac arrest
Pablo Sanchez-Gotopo	40	Venezuela	Adams County Correctional Center (MS)	October 1, 2021	Complications related to acute respiratory failure, AIDS, pneumonia, acute kidney failure, anemia, and COVID-19
Anthony Jones	51	The Bahamas	Adams County Correctional Center (MS)	December 17, 2020	Heart attack
Romien Jally	56	The Marshall Islands	Winn	September 26, 2020	COVID-19 complications
Luis Sanchez-Perez <i>aka</i> Mauricio Hernandez-Cabrera	46	Guatemala	Catahoula Correctional Center (<i>now closed</i>)	July 15, 2020	Septic shock from pseudomonas leading to cardiopulmonary arrest
Roylan Hernandez-Diaz	43	Cuba	Richwood	October 16, 2019	Apparent suicide by self-inflicted strangulation
Roger Rayson	47	Jamaica	CLIPC	March 13, 2017	Cardiac arrest

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

As the findings of this report make clear, the remote and isolated NOLA ICE jails are plagued by systemic human rights violations, including deprivation of language access and human necessities, abusive and discriminatory treatment, and medical abuse and neglect. Collectively, these abuses deprive people of due process by impeding access to counsel and meaningful participation in immigration proceedings. Meanwhile, private prison companies contracted to run NOLA ICE jails continue to profit from wasteful government spending that funds human rights abuses.

The pervasive and long-term nature of abuses in NOLA ICE jails, notwithstanding significant public reporting, oversight agency investigation, and multiple lawsuits, shows that the U.S. government has long been on notice of cruel and degrading treatment that occurs there. Yet reform remains elusive.

In light of the U.S. government's inability or unwillingness to meaningfully remediate systemic human rights abuses in NOLA ICE jails, the following recommendations serve as a roadmap to completely phase out ICE detention in Louisiana.



Members of the Southeast Dignity Not Detention Coalition protest the death of Ernesto Rocha-Cuadra and the continued detention of Daniel Cortes De La Valle in New Orleans, Louisiana
Photo: SDND Coalition

1. REDUCE THE SCALE AND SCOPE OF IMMIGRANT INCARCERATION IN LOUISIANA:

- Require a presumption of release for individuals particularly vulnerable to immigration jail abuse by screening those entering ICE custody to identify people with medical and mental health conditions, disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, and rare-language speakers whose translation and interpretation needs the government cannot accommodate.
- Codify through regulation the 2009 Directive on Parole of Arriving [Noncitizens] Found to Have a Credible Fear of Persecution or Torture, which requires automatic consideration for parole for noncitizens who pass a credible fear interview and explains that the public interest is served by paroling arriving noncitizens found to have a credible fear who establish their identities, pose neither a flight risk nor a danger to the

community, and for whom no additional factors weigh against their release. Prior to codification, enforce NOLA ICE's compliance with the directive.

- Enforce NOLA ICE compliance with policy to affirmatively provide detained people with advisal in their best language on how to request parole.
- Prohibit NOLA ICE from carrying out local policies of per se denial of release for people with a scheduled immigration court merits hearing; reversing prior release decisions by other jurisdictions upon transfer to the NOLA ICE jails; and conditioning parole on cash bonds without consideration of a person's ability to pay.



Arely Westley protesting ICE detention in New Orleans, Louisiana
Photo: SDND Coalition

2. SHUT DOWN THE NOLA ICE JAILS:

- Immediately end the use of former prisons, local jails, and other criminal incarceration facilities for civil immigration detention.
- Immediately end the use of for-profit immigration detention facilities.
- Cancel for cause NOLA ICE jail contracts for documented systemic failure to adhere to the contractual standards governing treatment of detained people. In the alternative, cease to renew NOLA ICE jail contracts as they reach end dates and, following jail closure, safely release detained people instead of transferring them to ICE jails in other jurisdictions.

3. DIVEST FROM THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX & INVEST IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES:

- Direct cost savings from reduced spending on detention to grants for sustainable local economic development in communities currently housing immigration jails.
- Provide tax-based relocation incentives to businesses amenable to relocating to affected communities.⁴⁷²
- Create a Louisiana state economic redevelopment program that includes local community representatives to develop initiatives for the reuse of closed carceral facilities, including redeployment as essential community facilities and mixed-use housing and retail space.⁴⁷³

4. REPLACE IMMIGRATION DETENTION WITH COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT:

- Support attendance at immigration proceedings through research-backed, successful models like engagement of non-profit organizations to provide legal, social, and case management services and referrals to medical and mental health care.⁴⁷⁴
- Cease deployment of costly surveillance-focused alternatives to detention like electronic ankle shackles and other electronic monitoring.

5. END THE USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN NOLA ICE JAILS:

- Cease the use of prolonged solitary confinement (“disciplinary segregation”) as a form of punishment. Ensure that segregation necessary for purposes of immediate safety is strictly time-limited and monitored by staff at all times.
- Cease the use of solitary confinement as a form of “protective custody” or “administrative segregation.” Afford a presumption of release to vulnerable individuals whose safety cannot be ensured while detained, including LGBTQ+ people.
- Cease the use of solitary confinement as “medical segregation.” Release anyone with serious medical and mental health needs that NOLA ICE medical staff cannot adequately treat.

6. INCREASE TRANSPARENCY:

- Publicly release all information pertaining to NOLA ICE jail contracts or contractual obligations, including corrective action plans, and ensure that any bidding or contract negotiation process is transparent.
- Publicly release complete facility inspection reports and full and unredacted investigations of NOLA ICE jails by oversight bodies, including the complete results of the CRCL systemic review of the NOLA ICE jails initiated in December 2021.
- Maintain and publicly release monthly data on significant incident events in NOLA ICE jails, including hospitalizations, physical assaults, sexual abuse and assault allegations, disciplinary infractions, placements in solitary confinement, suicide attempts, hunger strikes, and use of force incidents.
- Maintain and publicly release race and ethnicity data on detained people in NOLA ICE jails to understand and address longstanding complaints of racial discrimination.



Frank Rocha-Cuadra protesting the death of his brother Ernesto
Photo: SDND Coalition

- Enforce compliance with ICE policy to publicly report the deaths of detained people.⁴⁷⁵ Require ICE to notify survivors within 24 hours of a loved one’s death and to release any surveillance video footage and medical records, including autopsy reports, to a deceased person’s survivors within 90 days.
- Require the NOLA ICE Field Office to publicly list the name, title, job responsibilities, and professional contact information of staff employed by ICE and private prison contractors, to be updated on the last day of each month.
- Maintain open-access visitation hours and regularly scheduled stakeholder tours at all NOLA ICE jails for non-profit organizations, legal service providers, and the media to facilitate independent human rights monitoring and provision of legal services.

7. ENFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT:

- Investigate the systemic human right abuses documented in this report via Congressional bodies tasked with agency oversight, including the Government Accountability Office. This investigation should include on-site, confidential, one-on-one interviews with people held in prolonged detention and solitary confinement, as well as a cross-section of people selected for diversity of country of origin, language, and gender. The investigation should include a follow-up visit three weeks after the interviews to ensure that NOLA ICE officials have not retaliated against participants. The investigation should also examine, at a minimum:
 - Timeliness and results of responses by DHS oversight entities, including OIG, CRCL, and OIDO, to grievances and complaints filed by detained people and their advocates;
 - The necessity and cost-effectiveness of transfers to and from NOLA ICE jails;
 - Availability and accessibility of jail law libraries, including electronic law libraries, caselaw databases, legal reference books, forms required to pursue legal relief in immigration court and federal court, and tablets and computers necessary for legal research and information;
 - Availability of translation and interpretation services (language access) in NOLA ICE jail law libraries, medical units, and grievance procedures;
 - The quality and nutritional value of food and water in NOLA ICE jails and sanitation of food preparation tools and facilities;
 - The availability and quality of personal hygiene supplies like soap, shampoo, menstruation products, and clean clothing and the operational state of personal hygiene facilities, including availability of working showers, toilets, and laundry services;
 - Access to outdoor spaces;
 - Access to religious services and literature;
 - Responses to complaints of sexual harassment and abuse, including evaluation of the quality of investigations under the Prison Rape Elimination Act;
 - Responses to corroborated reports of abuse, mistreatment, or retaliation, including whether disciplinary measures were taken against ICE officials or private prison contractors;
 - Sufficiency of recordkeeping related to placement in solitary confinement in the NOLA ICE jails, whether administrative segregation, disciplinary segregation, or medical segregation, including reasons articulated for placement and records of safety monitoring while in segregation;
 - Responses to requests for medical, dental, and mental health care, including access to medication, external specialty medical providers, and emergency hospitalization;
 - Sufficiency of recordkeeping for any significant incident event in NOLA ICE custody (such as suicide attempts, hunger strikes, use of force, and death), including investigatory reports, associated autopsy reports, individual detention files, and medical records.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of oversight bodies.
 - Grant the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties authority to require remedial actions by ICE to address findings of violations of civil rights and civil liberties, including jail closure when ICE jails fail to address issues;
 - Empower all oversight bodies to intervene in individual cases of mistreatment and abuse, including by ordering release;
 - Require periodic unannounced investigatory visits to ICE jails, as current practice of announcing intended visits enables jails to hide or destroy evidence of wrongdoing;
 - Require oversight bodies to hold regular engagement sessions with local stakeholders in order to facilitate rapid response to emergent human and civil rights crises;
 - Conduct a comprehensive review of the functionality and responsiveness of internal DHS oversight entities such as CRCL, OIG, and OIDO, and solicit feedback from community stakeholders, including detained people and legal service providers, regarding the efficacy and responsiveness of these entities;
 - Mandate that all intergovernmental service agreements for the operation of immigration detention facilities comply with federal contract and appropriations law, which require stricter scrutiny for contract violations like failure to adhere to detention conditions standards, including termination of contracts.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1: INDEX OF ON-SITE JAIL VISITS

- Central Louisiana ICE Processing Center, 243 interviews total
 - April 5, 2022: 5 interviews
 - July 22, 2022: 25 interviews
 - April 5, 2023: 52 interviews
 - April 6, 2023: 58 interviews
 - August 14, 2023: 25 interviews
 - August 15, 2023: 56 interviews
 - August 16, 2023: 22 interviews
- Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center, 183 interviews total
 - April 6, 2022: 5 interviews
 - May 19, 2023: 17 interviews
 - October 18, 2023: 161 interviews
- River Correctional Center, 1194 interviews total
 - April 7, 2022: 3 interviews
 - July 22, 2022: 139 interviews
 - September 14, 2022: 70 interviews
 - September 15, 2022: 62 interviews
 - March 13, 2023: 98 interviews
 - March 14, 2023: 56 interviews
 - March 15, 2023: 62 interviews
 - June 27, 2023: 173 interviews
 - June 28, 2023: 147 interviews
 - November 28, 2023: 198 interviews
 - November 29, 2023: 186 interviews
- South Louisiana ICE Processing Center, 1474 interviews total
 - July 18, 2022: 93 interviews
 - November 3, 2022: 319 interviews
 - November 4, 2022: 258 interviews
 - January 25, 2023: 179 interviews
 - January 27, 2023: 135 interviews
 - June 29, 2023: 234 interviews
 - June 30, 2023: 147 interviews
 - October 17, 2023: 42 interviews
 - February 2, 2024: 67 interviews
- Richwood Correctional Center, 507 interviews total
 - July 19, 2022: 78 interviews
 - January 26, 2023: 64 interviews
 - March 16, 2023: 232 interviews

- March 17, 2023: 84 interviews
- August 18, 2023: 49 intake interviews
- Winn Correctional Center, 1839 interviews total
 - July 20, 2022: 86 interviews
 - October 31, 2022: 42 interviews
 - November 1, 2022: 97 interviews
 - November 2, 2022: 141 interviews
 - April 3, 2023: 328 interviews
 - April 4, 2023: 305 intake interviews
 - August 15, 2023: 78 intake interviews
 - September 18, 2023: 34 interviews
 - September 19, 2023: 42 interviews
 - September 20, 2023: 49 interviews
 - January 30, 2024: 172 interviews
 - January 31, 2024: 248 interviews
 - February 1, 2024: 217 interviews
- Jackson Parish Correctional Center, 583 interviews total
 - July 21, 2022: 345 interviews
 - September 12, 2022: 98 interviews
 - September 13, 2022: 56 interviews
 - January 23, 2023: 46 interviews
 - May 15, 2023: 38 interviews
- Allen Parish Public Safety Complex, 361 interviews total
 - September 16, 2022: 34 interviews
 - January 24, 2023: 23 interviews
 - June 26, 2023: 68 interviews
 - June 28, 2023: 79 intake interviews
 - August 17, 2023: 28 intake interviews
 - November 30, 2023: 129 intake interviews

TABLE 2: INDEX OF ON-SITE STAKEHOLDER TOURS

- Alexandria Staging Facility (May 11, 2023)
- River Correctional Center (May 12, 2023)
- Richwood Correctional Center (May 23, 2023)
- South Louisiana ICE Processing Center (May 24, 2023)
- Winn Correctional Center (June 22, 2023)
- Jackson Parish Correctional Center (June 23, 2023)
- Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center (October 19, 2023)

DISTRIBUTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION SAMPLE

TABLE 3.A.	
NOLA ICE JAIL	COUNT
Allen Parish Public Safety Complex	24
South Louisiana ICE Processing Center	81
Jackson Parish Correctional Center	64
Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center	9
Richwood Correctional Center	42
River Correctional Center	105
Total	325

TABLE 3.B.	
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	COUNT
Afghanistan	9
Angola	5
Argentina	9
Angola	5
Armenia	3
Azerbaijan	1
Belize	4
Bolivia	2
Brazil	15
Burkina Faso	1

Cameroon	12
China	9
Colombia	50
Democratic Republic of Congo	9
Dominican Republic	18
Ecuador	13
El Salvador	3
Eritrea	4
Ethiopia	1
Gambia	1
Georgia	1
Germany	2
Ghana	6
Greece	2
Guatemala	1
Guinea-Bissau	5
Haiti	7
Honduras	1
Iran	1
Iraq	1
Jamaica	8
Kazakhstan	1
Kyrgyzstan	1
Mauritania	3
Mexico	7

Moldova	1
Nicaragua	20
Nigeria	11
Pakistan	2
Panama	1
Peru	24
Romania	2
Russia	8
Senegal	2
Somalia	10
Sudan	2
Tajikistan	1
Tanzania	1
Tunisia	1
Turkey	17
Venezuela	1
Unknown	13
Total	325

TABLE 3.C.	
GENDER	COUNT
Male	208
Female	98
Unknown	19
Total	325

ENDNOTES

1. Interview with man detained at Pine Prairie Correctional Center in 2000.
2. Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Immigration Detention Quick Facts (May 5, 2024), <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/quickfacts/>.
3. *Id.*
4. Nomaan Merchant, *Louisiana Becomes New Hub in Immigrant Detention Under Trump*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Oct. 9, 2019) (noting that “ICE has expanded its presence in Louisiana as other states have told the agency to stay out” and “LaSalle [Corrections, a private prison company] operates six of the eight converted jails that have opened since last year.”).
5. For brevity’s sake, this report uses “NOLA ICE officials” to refer to all officials who operate Louisiana’s immigration jails, including ICE employees and ICE-contracted agents employed by the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the private prison companies Geo Group and LaSalle Corrections.
6. This report uses the term “immigration jails” rather than “immigration detention centers” because these facilities are repurposed, constructed, operated as, or managed like jails. The false assertion that these facilities are merely sites for civil detention obscures the trauma that detained people experience. See CÉSAR CUAUHTÉMOC GARCÍA HERNÁNDEZ, *MIGRATING TO PRISON: AMERICA’S OBSESSION WITH LOCKING UP IMMIGRANTS* 88 (2019) (arguing that labels matter because no “meaningful difference [exists] between an ICE lockup and the typical county jail or state prison”).
7. See Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, art. I, ¶ 1 adopted Dec. 10, 1984, S. TREATY DOC. NO. 95-2, 1465 U.N.T.S. 85 (defining torture, in part, as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person . . . for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.”); *id.* at art. XVI, ¶ 1 (obligating “state parties to undertake to prevent . . . other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment . . . when such acts are committed by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity”).
8. See Letter to Alejandro Mayorkas, Sec’y, U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec., from ACLU of Louisiana et al., *Re: Unchecked Human Rights and Civil Rights Abuses Systemic within the New Orleans ICE Field Office Area of Responsibility* (Dec. 20, 2021), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a33042eb078691c386e7bce/t/61c0b47c15319f67d4045ca3/1640019069450/12%3A20%3A21+DHS+NOLA+ICE+Investigation+Follow-Up+Letter+%282%29.pdf> (collecting complaints and lawsuits against NOLA ICE jails); Letter to Sec’y Mayorkas and Acting Director Johnson from Seven U.S. Senators Calling for an Investigation of NOLA ICE, (Feb. 25, 2021) (“While abuse and neglect in ICE facilities has been endemic for years, these incidents have happened with disturbing regularity and severity under the authority of the New Orleans ICE Field Office in particular.”); Memorandum from Dana Salvano-Dunn, Dir., Compliance Branch, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, ICE’s Oversight of the New Orleans Field Office (Dec. 7, 2021) (“Due to the volume and severity of allegations received concerning several ICE detention facilities within the New Orleans (NOL) Area of Responsibility (AOR), CRCL conducted a systemic review of the NOL AOR, focusing on ICE’s oversight of the detention facilities within the AOR, including a review of the policies and procedures governing these facilities and the responsibilities of ICE Headquarters and the NOL Field Office staff in carrying out the day-to-day operations at each of these facilities.”). The results of this investigation have yet to be released publicly.
9. Appendix, Table 1.
10. Appendix, Table 2.
11. Appendix, Table 3.A-C.
12. Additional organizations and law school clinics include the Southeast Dignity Not Detention Coalition, the Southern Poverty Law Center Southeast Freedom Initiative, the Cornell University Law School Immigration & Advocacy Clinic, and the Tulane University Law School Immigrants’ Rights Clinic.
13. Interview with a man detained at Richwood Correctional Center in February 2023.
14. U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf’t, ERO Custody Management Division: Authorized Dedicated Facility List, <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/facilityInspections/dedicatedNonDedicatedFacilityList.xlsx>; U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf’t, ERO FY2020 Achievements, <https://www.ice.gov/features/ERO-2020> (explaining that ICE’s Enforcement

and Removal Operations generally detains around 45,000 people daily, but that number fell to approximately 20,000 during the end of fiscal year 2020 in light of the Covid-19 pandemic); Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Immigration Detention Quick Facts, <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/quickfacts/> (reporting 29,914 people detained by ICE on June 4, 2023).

15. See *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 690 (2001) (“The proceedings at issue here are civil, not criminal, and we assume that they are nonpunitive in purpose and effect.”).
16. The use of detention as an immigration deterrent violates both U.S. and international human rights law. See *R.I.L.R v. Johnson*, 80 F.Supp.3d 164 (D.D.C.2015) (finding that ICE’s policy of using deterrence as a justification for detention of immigrants raises serious constitutional concerns and violates U.S. statutory law); United Nations High Comm’r for Hum. Rts., *Back to Basics: The Right to Liberty and Security of Person and ‘Alternatives to Detention’ of Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, Stateless Persons and Other Migrants*, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (Apr. 2011) (providing a complete discussion of international law provisions applicable to immigrant incarceration).
17. Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Immigration Detention Quick Facts, <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/quickfacts/>.
18. *Id.*
19. For brevity’s sake, hereinafter his report refers to NOLA ICE immigration jails by the quoted names contained in this chart.
20. All Current Guaranteed Minimum Populations and Daily Average Populations are taken from ICE’s FY2024 Detention Statistics Date, available at <https://www.ice.gov/detain/detention-management> (current as of April 15, 2024).
21. ACLU, *Justice Free Zones: U.S. Immigration Detention Under the Trump Administration 18-19* (2020) (noting that a 2017 criminal justice overhaul reduced Louisiana’s state incarceration rate from 40,000 in 2012 to 33,269 in 2018).
22. Nomaan Merchant, *Louisiana Becomes New Hub in Immigrant Detention under Trump*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Oct. 19, 2019); Bryn Stole, *In North Louisiana, Sherriff and Private Prison Operator Trade Prisoners for ICE Detainees*, THE TIMES-PICAYUNE (Oct. 21, 2019).
23. See Ted Hesson et al., *Biden Vowed to Reform Immigration Detention. Instead, Private Prisons Benefited*, REUTERS (Aug. 7, 2023) (“The Biden administration also looked at, but declined to close, several centers that were part of a Trump-era expansion in Louisiana and Mississippi, two of the officials said); Eunice Cho, *Unchecked Growth: Private Prison Corporations and Immigration Detention, Three Years Into the Biden Administration*, ACLU.ORG (Aug 7, 2023), <https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/unchecked-growth-private-prison-corporations-and-immigration-detention-three-years-into-the-biden-administration>.
24. AVERAGE DETENTION POPULATIONS FROM April 18, 2022 TO April 15, 2024, Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Detention Facilities Average Daily Population, <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/detentionstats/facilities.html>
25. Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse,, Transfers of ICE Detainees from the Alexandria Staging Facility, <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/detention/201509/JENATLA/tran/#:~:text=This%20is%20a%20special%20ICE,sleeping%20quarters%20or%20shower%20facilities>.
26. Memorandum from Dana Salvano-Dunn, Dir., Acting Deputy Director for Programs and Compliance, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, *Alexandria Staging Facility* (Aug. 21, 2017)
27. Office of Detention Oversight, *Alexandria Staging Facility* (Aug. 2022), https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/odocompliance-inspections/alexandriaStagingFacAlexandriaLA_Aug2-4_2022.pdf.
28. Office of Detention Oversight, *Alexandria Staging Facility* (Sept. 2023)
29. November 2023, River.
30. Courts have held that conditions of confinement for individuals in civil detention must be superior to those of individuals in criminal detention. See *Jones v. Blanas* F. 3d 918 (9th Cir. 2004) (finding that if an individual in civil detention is confined in conditions that are identical to, similar to, or more restrictive than those in which pre-trial or criminally convicted people are held, then those conditions are presumptively punitive and unconstitutional).
31. November 2022, Basile.
32. April 2023, CLIPC.
33. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
34. May 2023, CLIPC
35. October 2023, Pine Prairie.
36. Press Release, Dep’t of Justice, Justice Department Sues, Files for Emergency Relief to Protect Juveniles in Louisiana’s Jena Juvenile Center (Mar. 30, 2000), <https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2000/March/155cr.htm>.
37. Jordan Smith, *A Record of Dishonesty: Allegations of Improprieties Against Wackenhut*

are Not Confined to Travis County, THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE (July 5, 2002).

38. Memorandum of Veronica Venture, Deputy Officer, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, to Nathalie R. Asher, Acting Executive Associate Dir., Enforcement and Removal Operations, U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enft, *LaSalle Detention Facility Supplemental Expert Recommendation* (Sept. 21, 2018), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/2018.09.21%20CRCL%20Recommendations%20Memo%20to%20ICE%20%E2%80%93%20LaSalle_Redacted_508.pdf.
39. Adolfo Flores, *Few Complaints of Sexual Abuse Inside Immigrant Detention Center are Investigated, Report Finds*, BUZZFEED NEWS, (April 11, 2017).
40. Office of Inspector General, *Concerns about ICE Detainee Treatment and Care at Four Detention Facilities* 4 (June 3, 2019), <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2019-06/OIG-19-47-Jun19.pdf>.
41. Noah Lanard, *ICE Detainees Were Pepper-Sprayed During a Briefing on Coronavirus*, MOTHER JONES (Mar, 26, 2020).
42. Shane Bauer, *My Four Months as a Private Prison Guard*, MOTHER JONES (Jul./Aug. 2016).
43. Hamed Aleaziz, *Internal Investigators Told ICE To Stop Sending Immigrants To A Prison In Louisiana Because Of A Culture That Can Lead To Abuse*, BUZZFEED NEWS (Dec. 15, 2021).
44. Letter to Katherine Culliton-Gonzalez, Officer of Dep't of Homeland Sec., Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, from the National Immigr. Justice Ctr., *Re. Requesting Investigation into Physical and Homophobic Verbal Abuse of LGBTQ Asylum-Center in Immigration Detention - Winn Correctional Center, Louisiana* (Aug. 19, 2021)
45. Aleaziz, *supra* n.43.
46. KTBS, *Update: Suit Over Jailhouse Death Settled*, KTBS.COM (Sept. 10, 2018), https://www.ktbs.com/news/3investigates/updated-suit-over-jailhouse-death-settled/article_1611b02a-46f1-11e7-aa82-073b01cc3ce5.html.
47. Press Release, Dep't of Justice, *Former Supervisor at Richwood Correctional Center Sentenced for Violating Civil Rights of Five Inmates* (Sept. 4, 2019).
48. *Id.*
49. Gaby del Valle, *ICE Has Been Ramping Up Its Work With a Private Prison Company Connected to Horrific Allegations*, VICE (Oct. 29, 2019).
50. Noah Lanard, *ICE Detainee at Troubled For-Profit Jail Dies in Apparent Suicide*, MOTHER JONES (Oct. 17, 2019).
51. Office of Inspector General, *Violations of ICE Detention Standards at Richwood Correctional Center in Monroe, Louisiana* 6-7, 9-11 (Feb. 28, 2023), https://tracfed.syr.edu/tracker/dynadata/2023_03/OIG-23-18-Mar23.pdf
52. Man detained at River Correctional Center.
53. See Justice Free Zones: *U.S. Immigration Detention Under the Trump Administration* 5 ("As of January 2020, 91 percent of people housed in immigration detention centers opened after 2017 are held in facilities owned or operated by private prison corporations.").
54. See Eunice Cho, *Biden is Ending the Justice Department's Contracts with Private Prisons. Now End ICE's*, WASH. POST (Jan. 28, 2021) (noting that the Biden administration's pledge to end privatized federal prisons exempts immigration jails).
55. This figure was calculated using ICE's FY2024 Detention Data, showing that 6,061 out of 6,184 total detained people in Louisiana were held in private prisons.
56. The Geo Group, *The GEO Group Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2023 Results*, INVESTORS.GEOGROUP.COM (Feb. 15, 2024).
57. See Ctr. for Am. Progress, *How For-Profit Companies Are Driving Immigration Detention Policies* (Dec. 18, 2015) (detailing history of private prisons' roles in expanding immigration detention as a policy); Alyssa Ray, *The Business of Immigration: Tracking Prison Privatization's Influence on Immigration Policy*, 33 GEO. IMMIGR. L.J. 115 (2018) (explaining how private prison companies have used their profit and influence to impact immigration policymaking).
58. January 2024, CLIPC.
59. January 2024, CLIPC.
60. See Innovation Law Lab, *Thrive: A Blueprint For Policy And Public Officials For Self-Reliant Rural Communities Without Immigration Prisons*, Innovation Law Lab 11 (2023) ("Because prisons send resources outside of local communities while harming local businesses, their construction does not provide the same benefit that investment of the same amount of money in a different project would."); Ryan S. King et al., *Big Prisons, Small Towns: Prison Economics In Rural America* 19 (Feb. 2003) https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/sp/inc_bigprisons.pdf (concluding that prison construction beginning in rural New York in the 1980s "did not significantly influence either unemployment or per capita income. Moreover, once a town hosts a prison and becomes known as a 'prison town,' discussion of other means of economic development is likely to evaporate").

61. River, July 2022.
62. See *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 693 (2001) (asserting that “the Due Process Clause applies to all ‘persons’ within the United States, including [noncitizens], whether their presence here is lawful, unlawful, temporary, or permanent”).
63. See *Bounds v. Smith*, 430 U.S. 817 (1977) (finding that people held in the custody of the government have a constitutional right to access the courts).
64. Ingrid Eagly and Steven Shafer, *Access to Counsel in Immigration Court*, AMERICAN IMMIGR COUNCIL 2-3 (Sept. 2016).
65. See ACLU, *No Fighting Chance: ICE’s Denial of Access to Counsel in U.S. Immigration Detention Centers* 5 (June 9, 2022) (surveying 173 ICE jails nationwide and finding that detained immigrants face “monumental barriers in finding and communicating with attorneys” rendering their right to counsel “essentially meaningless.”).
66. Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy (ISLA), one of the co-authors of this report, is one of the only organizations in Louisiana that provides pro bono representation to detained immigrants in removal proceedings. At the time of this writing, their staff includes just six attorneys, meaning demand for their services far exceeds capacity.
67. June 2023, River; see also First Amended Complaint, *Americans for Immigrant Justice et al. v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, 1:22-cv-03118-CKK (filed Nov. 18, 2022 D.D.C.), https://assets.aclu.org/live/uploads/2022/11/amended_complaint.pdf (alleging interference with access to counsel at River and other immigration jails around the country).
68. July 2022, Basile.
69. April 2022, Pine Prairie.
70. November 2023, River.
71. U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf’t, 2011 Operations Manual ICE Performance-Based National Detention Standards 422-23, <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention-standards/2011/pbnds2011r2016.pdf>.
72. *Id.* at 429-432.
73. *Id.* at 423.
74. Dep’t of Justice, Executive Office for Immigr. Review, Legal Orientation Program (Jan. 6, 2023), <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/legal-orientation-program>.
75. These six facilities are CLIPC, Basile, Pine Prairie, Winn, Jackson Parish, and Richwood.
76. Stakeholder Tour, Richwood (May 23, 2023).
77. June 2023, Allen Parish.
78. November 2023, River.
79. People interviewed at River in July 2022 and Basile in July 2022 attributed this statement to NOLA ICE officials.
80. U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf’t, Budget Overview Fiscal Year 2025 4 (2024).
81. Among individuals released or deported from a Louisiana detention center between November 16, 2022, and November 14, 2023, 2,119 of 54,021 (approximately 4%) were detained for at least 180 days. Among those deported or released from a detention center outside of Louisiana, 3,756 of 208,998 (approximately 2%) were detained at least 180 days.
82. Press Release, ACLU Challenges Six Year Detention of Salvadoran Asylum Seeker (Sept. 6, 2023), <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-challenges-six-year-detention-of-salvadoran-asylum-seeker>.
83. 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5)(A); 8 C.F.R. § 212.5(b).
84. U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf’t Directive 11002.1, Parole of Arriving Aliens Found to Have a Credible Fear of Persecution or Torture (Dec. 8, 2009).
85. *Id.* at 3.
86. *Mons v. McAleenan*, 2019 WL 4225322 (D.D.C. Sept. 5, 2019) (decision granting preliminary injunction).
87. ACLU, *Justice Free Zones: U.S. Immigration Detention Under the Trump Administration* 6.
88. Separately, people in NOLA ICE jails have a more difficult time securing actual release than in other jurisdictions. According to TRAC data from FY 2001-2024, immigration judges in Louisiana denied bond in 65% of cases, compared to a 54% national average. In FY 2022 and 2023 the median bond granted by immigration courts in Louisiana was \$10,000 compared to \$3,875 in California and \$5,500 in New Jersey. See Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Immigration Court Hearings and Related Case Decisions, <https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/bond/>.
89. See Am. Immigr. Council, *Oversight of Immigration Detention: An Overview*, (May 16, 2022).
90. See U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf’t, ODO ICE Facility Inspections, <https://www.ice.gov/foia/odo-facility-inspections>.
91. See U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec., Transparency in Civil Rights Investigations (last updated May 17, 2024), <https://www.dhs.gov/transparency-civil-rights-investigations>.

92. Office of Inspector General, Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations, <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/reports/audits-inspections-and-evaluations>.
93. See U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec., The Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman's Inspection Reports, <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/oido-inspection-reports>.
94. See U.S. Gov't Accountability Office, Reports & Testimonies, <https://www.gao.gov/reports-testimonies>.
95. See Jesse Franzblau, *Beyond Repair: ICE's Abusive Detention Inspection and Oversight System*, NAT'L IMMIGR. JUSTICE CTR. (Nov. 2023), <https://immigrantjustice.org/research-items/policy-brief-beyond-repair-ices-abusive-detention-inspection-and-oversight-system> (detailing flaws with ICE detention oversight mechanisms); Claudia Valenzuela et al., *Lives In Peril: How Ineffective Inspections Make ICE Complicit In Detention Center Abuse*, NAT'L IMMIGR. JUSTICE CTR. (Oct. 21, 2015), <https://immigrantjustice.org/lives-peril-how-ineffective-inspections-make-ice-complicit-detention-center-abuse> (detailing how poor quality of the ICE jail inspection process and the government's failure to institute consequences for failed inspections allows abuses to persist).
96. See Aleaziz, *supra* n.43. In addition to issuing an investigatory memo with 88 action items, CRCL recommended that “[n]o new detainees should be added to the facility; and the detainee population should be drawn down to zero until immediate health and safety concerns can be corrected.” It recommended that, “[a]t a minimum, the population must be halved immediately to address the major plumbing deficiencies,” noting that Winn only had half the appropriate number of showers and toilets for the size of the population it housed. The reports corroborated many of the complaints from advocates and detained individuals, and in addition found serious pest issues (noting many cockroaches and spiders), defective fire doors, and widespread use of force misconduct, as well as subjecting people on suicide watch to solitary confinement in dirty and unfurnished cells.”
97. Press Release, U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enft, ICE to close Etowah Detention Center (Mar. 25, 2022), <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-close-etowah-detention-center>.
98. See ACLU of Louisiana et al, *Anthology of Abuse: Violence and Neglect at the Winn Correctional Center* (Dec. 6, 2023), https://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/sites/default/files/reports/Winn%20Anthology%20of%20Abuse_w%20Letter_.pdf.
99. Tom Dreisback, *Government's Own Experts Found 'Barbaric' and 'Negligent' Conditions in ICE Detention*, NPR.ORG (Aug. 16, 2023), <https://www.npr.org/2023/08/16/1190767610/ice-detention-immigration-governmentinspectors-barbaric-negligent-conditions>; see also Freddy Martinez and Nick Schwellenbach, *DHS's Secret Reports on ICE Detention*, PROJECT ON GOV'T OVERSIGHT (Aug. 21, 2023), <https://www.pogo.org/investigations/dhss-secret-reports-on-ice-detention> (reporting that CRCL findings extracted after a five-year FOIA lawsuit confirm years of human rights abuses in ICE jails).
100. See Salvano-Dunn, *supra* n.8 (memo announcing CRCL investigation).
101. September 2023, River.
102. See Andrew Dafoe, *ICE Uses Language Barriers to Silence Asylum Seekers in Louisiana*, THE LENS (Aug. 7, 2019), <https://thelensnola.org/2019/08/07/ice-uses-language-barriers-to-silence-asylum-seekers-in-louisiana/>.
103. A pseudonym used to protect identity and privacy.
104. See PBNDS *passim*. Every sub-section of the PBNDS 2011 contain a paragraph discussing the obligation to provide language assistance and the specific actions this requires.
105. *Id.*
106. *Id.*
107. PBNDS § 6.3(V)(I)(3). In addition, ICE jails must provide translation dictionaries beyond English-Spanish, “to be selected in accordance with the most common languages spoken by the respective detainee population.” See PBNDS 6.3 Appendix 6.3.A.(29).
108. *Nolasco v. Holder*, 637 F.3d 159, 163 (2d Cir. 2011). *Cf. United States v. Lopez-Collazo*, 824 F.3d 453, 461 (4th Cir. 2016) (holding that a meaningful opportunity to be heard does not exist when an individual does not understand the proceedings without the aid of an interpreter); see also *Nazarova v. INS*, 171 F.3d 478, 484 (7th Cir. 1999) (finding that a non-English speaking petitioner had a due process right to an interpreter at their deportation hearing).
109. 42 U.S.C. § 2000d. ICE's language access plan, implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, is available at <https://shorturl.at/bnQtj>. The Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) also has a language access plans that instructs Immigration Judges to “coordinate with local Department of Homeland Security officials to promote . . . access to language assistance services.” Memorandum from David L. Neal, Dir. of the Exec. Office for Immigr. Review, *re: Language Access In Immigration Court DM 23-02* (June 6, 2023), <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/book/file/1586686/download>.

110. Exec. Order No. 13,166, 65 FR 50121 (2000). In November 2022, the Attorney General issued a memorandum reaffirming the commitment of federal agencies to ensuring language access by examining “whether [agencies] can further update their language access policies and plans.” Memorandum from the Attorney General, *Strengthening the Federal Government’s Commitment to Language Access* (Nov. 21, 2022).
111. April 2023, Winn.
112. July 2022, River.
113. NOLA ICE jails contract with Talton Communications for the provision of telephone and tablet services at ICE jails. The user interface of the tablets is only navigable in English. Other languages must be affirmatively downloaded by officials and installed on individual applications in the tablet. The tablet language can only be changed by first navigating to a globe icon in select applications and surpassing multiple security lock screens with English text. Allen Parish does not use tablets. There, detained people are instructed to write grievances using paper forms and are reliant on translation by guards that does not occur.
114. November 2023, Pine Prairie.
115. June 2023, Basile.
116. January 2023, Basile.
117. January 2023, Basile.
118. January 2023, Basile.
119. January 2023, Basile.
120. January 2023, Richwood.
121. November 2023, River. An ICE officer had forced a Lingala speaker at River to sign deportation-related documents without an interpreter.
122. January 2023, Basile.
123. February 2023, Basile.
124. April 2023, Winn.
125. January 2024, Winn.
126. February 2023, Richwood. A Farsi-speaking woman at Richwood with Type II diabetes had not received insulin for 12 days, but was unable to communicate her medical needs without an interpreter.
127. November 2022, Winn.
128. January 2023, Allen Parish.
129. November 2023, Pine Prairie.
130. February 2023, Basile.
131. September 2023, Richwood.
132. September 2023, Pine Prairie.
133. November 2022, Winn.
134. November 2022, Winn.
135. July 2022, Winn.
136. January 2023, Richwood.
137. A pseudonym used to protect identity and privacy.
138. November 2023, River.
139. November 2023, Pine Prairie.
140. January 2023, Richwood.
141. January 2023, Richwood.
142. November 2023, River.
143. April 2023, CLIPC.
144. January 2023, Richwood.
145. May 2023, CLIPC.
146. January 2023, Basile.
147. February 2024, Winn.
148. Interview with Boris, detained at Pine Prairie in 2023.
149. See, e.g., Letter to Joseph V. Cuffari, DHS Inspector General from RFK Human Rights et al., *Re: Call for Immediate Investigation into Immigration and Customs Enforcement Officers’ Use of Punitive Solitary Confinement as a Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Other Public Health Crises* (June 21, 2021), <https://rfkhr.imgix.net/asset/Pine-Prairie-CRCL-Complaint.pdf>.
150. PBNDS, § 1.2 Environmental Health and Safety.
151. *Id.* at § 1.2(II)(1).
152. *Id.* at § 1.2(II)(12).
153. *Id.* at § 1.2(II)(13).
154. *Id.* at § 4.1.
155. *Id.* at, § 4.5(II)(2).
156. *Id.* at § 4.5(II)(3).
157. *Id.* at § 4.5(V)(A).
158. *Id.* at 4.5(V)(D).
159. *Id.* at § 5.4(II)(2).
160. *Bell v. Wolfish*, 441 U.S. 520, 535 (1979) (noting that “under the Due Process Clause, a detainee may not be punished prior to an adjudication of guilt in accordance with due process of law.”); *Hernandez Roman v. Wolf*, 977 F.3d 935, 943 (9th Cir. 2020) (“The Fifth Amendment requires the government to provide conditions of reasonable

health and safety to people in its custody.”); *Hope v. Warden of York Cnty Prison*, 972 F.3d 310, 325 (3d. Cir. 2020) (“Petitioners are in federal custody pursuant to the [Immigration and Nationality Act] and housed in state facilities, so they are protected by the Due Process Clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments.”).

161. See Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25(1), Dec. 8, 1948, G.A. Res. 217A (III), U.N. Doc. A/810 at 71 (1948)); G.A. Res. 70/175, United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) (Jan. 8, 2016)
162. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Convention Against Torture all prohibit torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
163. July 2023, Basile.
164. February 2023, Jackson Parish; July 2023, Winn.
165. November 2022, Basile.
166. May 2022, CLIPC.
167. December 2022, Jackson Parish.
168. November 2022, Basile.
169. November 2022, Winn.
170. January 2023, Basile.
171. July 2023, Basile.
172. July 2022, Richwood.
173. April 2023, CLIPC.
174. April 2023, Winn.
175. April 2023, Winn.
176. January 2023, Basile.
177. November 2022, River.
178. November 2022, Winn; April 2023, Winn
179. January 2023, Basile.
180. January 2023, Jackson Parish.
181. July 2022, Richwood.
182. November 2022, Winn.
183. November 2022, Winn.
184. November 2022, Basile.
185. November 2022, Winn.
186. November 2022, Winn.
187. April 2023, Winn.
188. November 2022, Basile.
189. August 2022, CLIPC.
190. September 2022, Richwood.
191. November 2022, Basile.
192. January 2023, Basile.
193. July 2023, Basile.
194. July 2022, Richwood.
195. January 2024, CLIPC.
196. February 2023, CLIPC.
197. October 2023, CLIPC.
198. November 2022, Winn.
199. July 2022, Basile; November 2022, Basile.
200. January 2023, Basile.
201. June 2022, Richwood.
202. November 2022, River.
203. September 2022, Jackson Parish; November 2022, Basile; March 2023, River; August 2023, Winn.
204. October 2022, Allen Parish.
205. July 2022, Basile.
206. November 2022, River.
207. Jackson Parish, July 2022; November 2022, Winn; November 2023, Pine Prairie
208. July 2022, Richwood.
209. United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) (Jan. 8, 2016) (prohibiting placement in a dark cell at Rule 43).
210. July 2022, Basile.
211. July 2022, Richwood.
212. April 2023, Winn.
213. April 2023, Winn.
214. January 2023, Jackson Parish.
215. November 2022, Winn.
216. January 2023, Jackson Parish.
217. April 2023, Winn.
218. February 2024, Winn.
219. PBNDs, §§ 2.15(V)(B)(2), (V)(E)(2).
220. *Id.* at § 6.2(II)(8).
221. *Id.* at § 6.2(V)(G).
222. *Id.* at § 2.11(II)(1). Under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), incorporated into the PBNDs, sexual contact between detained

people and prison personnel is considered sexual abuse or assault, even if with the consent of the detained person. See ICE Policy No. 11062.2: Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention and Intervention (May 22, 2014), <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention-reform/pdf/saapi2.pdf>.

223. PBNDS § 2.11(1).
224. See, e.g., *Lynch v. Cannatella*, 810 F.2d 1363, 1375 (5th Cir. 1987) (“[W]hatever due process rights excludable [noncitizens] may be denied by virtue of their status, they are entitled under the Due Process Clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to be free of gross physical abuse at the hands of state or federal officials.”).
225. See *Hart v. Hairston*, 343 F.3d 762, 764 (5th Cir. 2003) (finding that the First Amendment prohibits retaliation for speaking out about conditions of confinement); *Stefanoff v. Hays Cnty.*, 154 F.3d 523, 527 (5th Cir. 1998) (finding that “a hunger strike may be protected by the First Amendment if it was intended to convey a particularized message”).
226. UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 5 (1948) (“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.”); Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted Dec. 10, 1984, 109 Stat. 382, 1465 U.N.T.S. 85; Organization of American States, *American Convention on Human Rights*, art. 5(2), Nov. 22, 1969, O.A.S.T.S. No. 36, 1144 U.N.T.S. 123 (“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.”); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 7, adopted Dec. 19, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171.
227. Basile, April 2023.
228. Hayley Miller, *ICE Detention Center Officials Indiscriminately Tear Gassed Asylum Seekers, Complaints Say*, HUFFPOST, (Aug. 14, 2020), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/ice-tear-gas-detainees-winn-correctional-center_n_5f35305ec5b6fc009a625a85.
229. Noah Lanard, *It’s Still Too Painful to Put Clothes On: An ICE Detainee Reports He Was Pepper-Sprayed and Sent to Isolation*, MOTHER JONES, (Mar. 25, 2020).
230. Noah Lanard, *ICE Detainees Were Pepper Sprayed During a Briefing on Coronavirus*, MOTHER JONES, (Mar. 26, 2020).
231. Letter to Kathy Culliton-Gonzalez, Officer for Civil Rights & Civil Liberties, Dep’t. of Homeland Sec., from Freedom for Immigrants et al., *Re: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Torture in Signing of Deportation Documents for Cameroonian Migrants at Winn Correctional Center, Louisiana* (Feb. 1, 2021).
232. Letter to Diane L. Witte, Acting Field Office Dir., Immigr. and Customs Enf’t, et al. from Freedom for Immigrants, *Re: Immigration and Customs Enforcement Officers’ Use of Torture to Coerce Immigrants Into Signing Immigration Documents at Adams County Correctional Facility* (Oct. 7, 2020).
233. Letter to Patricia Nation, Officer for Civil Rights & Civil Liberties, Dep’t. of Homeland Sec., from Freedom for Immigrants, *Re: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)’s Pattern of Torture in Signing of Deportation Documents for Cameroonian Migrants*, (Nov. 5, 2020).
234. Letter to Joseph V. Cuffari, DHS Inspector General, from Cameroon American Council et al., *Re: Call for an Immediate Halt to and Investigation of Detention, Violence, Repression and Racism Against Peacefully Protesting Cameroonian and Black Asylum Seekers, and other Asylum Seekers, at Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center; and the release of all Black Hunger Strikers from Solitary Confinement* (Aug. 26, 2020), https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/8.26.20_crcl_letter.pdf.
235. April 2022, Basile.
236. July 2022, Basile.
237. July 2022, Pine Prairie.
238. May 2021, Winn.
239. June 2024, Allen Parish.
240. Daniel, detained at CLIPC in 2023.
241. Letter to Thomas D. Homan, Director, Office of Detention Policy and Planning, U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf’t et al. from CIVIC, *Re: Sexual Abuse, Assault, and Harassment in U.S. Immigration Detention Facilities* 6 (Apr. 11, 2017), <https://www.freedomforimmigrants.org/sexual-assault>.
242. *Id.* at 7.
243. See Bobbi-Jeanne Misick, *Spurred by Slow Deportation Wait Times, Louisiana ICE Detainees Attempted a Hunger Strike*, WWNO NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC RADIO (Mar. 16, 2023), <https://www.wwno.org/immigration/2023-03-16/spurred-by-slow-deportation-wait-times-louisiana-ice-detainees-attempted-a-hunger-strike>.
244. November 2022, Basile.
245. October 2022, Winn.
246. February 2023, CLIPC
247. CLIPC, April 2022.
248. U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf’t Directive

- 11065.1, Review of the Use of Segregation for ICE detainees 1 (Sept. 4, 2013), https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention-reform/pdf/segregation_directive.pdf.
249. Solitary Watch et al., *Louisiana on Lockdown 5* (June 2019).
250. See Physicians for Human Rights, et al., *Endless Nightmare: Torture and Inhuman Treatment in Solitary Confinement in U.S. Immigration Detention* (Feb. 2024) (analyzing FOIA data to conclude that in the last five years, ICE has placed people in solitary confinement over 14,000 times, with an average duration of 27 days and a disproportionate impact on transgender people and those with mental health and medical conditions).
251. See e.g., Letter to Joseph V. Cuffari, DHS Inspector General from RFK Human Rights et al., *Re: Call for Immediate Investigation into Immigration and Customs Enforcement Officers' Use of Punitive Solitary Confinement as a Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Other Public Health Crises* (June 21, 2021), <https://rfkhr.imgix.net/asset/Pine-Prairie-CRCL-Complaint.pdf>.
252. ACLU, *Justice Free Zones: U.S. Immigration Detention Under the Trump Administration* 46..
253. United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the "Nelson Mandela Rules") (Jan. 8, 2016) (defining solitary confinement as confinement for 22 hours or more a day without meaningful human contact at Rule 44).
254. Justin D. Strong et al., *The Body in Isolation: The Physical Health Impacts of Incarceration in Solitary Confinement*, PLOS ONE 1, 8-12 (Oct. 9, 2020) (describing the physical impacts of solitary confinement) Craig Haney, *Restricting the Use of Solitary Confinement*, 1 ANN. REV. CRIMINOLOGY 285, 298-99 (Jan. 2018) (synthesizing scientific research finding that solitary confinement causes serious lifetime psychological harms).
255. Lauren Brinkley-Rubinsten et al., *Association of Restrictive Housing During Incarceration with Mortality After Release*, JAMA NETWORK OPEN (Oct. 4, 2019).
256. Craig Haney, *The Psychological Effects of Solitary Confinement: A Systematic Critique*, CRIME AND JUSTICE 47 (Mar. 2018).
257. Dana G. Smith, *Neuroscientists Make a Case Against Solitary Confinement*, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, (Nov. 9, 2018).
258. Brie A. Williams, *Older Prisoners and the Physical Health Effects of Solitary Confinement*, 106 AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH 2126 (Dec. 2016).
259. Stuart Grassian, *Psychiatric Effects of Solitary Confinement*, 22 WASH.U. J. L. & POL'Y 325, 328 (2006).
260. Nelson Mandela Rules (defining prolonged solitary confinement at Rule 44 as confinement for 22 hours or more a day without meaningful human contact for a period exceeding 15 days and prohibiting torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, including prolonged solitary confinement, at Rule 43).
261. Press Release, United Nations, Special Rapporteur on Torture Tells Third Committee Use of Prolonged Solitary Confinement on Rise, Calls for Global Ban on Practice (Oct. 18, 2011), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2011/10/un-special-rapporteur-torture-calls-prohibition-solitary-confinement?LangID=E&NewsID=11506>.
262. *Id.*
263. PBNDS § 2.12 (V)(J).
264. April 2022, CLIPC.
265. April 2023, CLIPC.
266. April 2023, CLIPC.
267. June 2023, CLIPC.
268. June 2023, CLIPC.
269. April 2023, CLIPC.
270. April 2023, CLIPC.
271. April 2023, CLIPC.
272. July 2022, Winn.
273. Under PBNDS Standard 4.2, Hunger Strikes, detained people participating in hunger strikes may be "isolated for close supervision."
274. Letter to Office of Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security from Jeremy Jong, Staff Attorney, Al Otro Lado, *Re. PREA Complaint on behalf of immigrant who faced retaliatory solitary confinement at Winn* (Sept. 20, 2023).
275. January 2024, Winn.
276. February 2024, Basile.
277. A pseudonym used to protect identity and privacy.
278. U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf't Directive 11065.1, Review of the Use of Segregation for ICE detainees 1 (Sept. 4, 2013).
279. Client Interview by Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy (April 2023).
280. February 2024, Winn
281. April 2023, Pine Prairie.
282. February 2024, Winn

283. April 2023, CLIPC.
284. March 2023, Richwood.
285. April 2023, CLIPC.
286. Alex, detained at CLIPC and Basile in 2022 and 2023.
287. Letter to Katherine Culliton-Gonzalez, Officer, Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Dep't of Homeland Sec. from Southern Poverty Law Center, *Re: Call for Cancellation of Winn Correctional Center Contract and Investigation into the New Orleans ICE Field Office 2* (June 10, 2021).
288. *Id.*
289. June 2023, Winn.
290. September 2023, Basile.
291. January 2023, Basile.
292. April 2023, Winn.
293. April 2023, CLIPC.
294. March 2023, Richwood.
295. February 2024, Winn.
296. March 2023, Richwood.
297. July 2022, Richwood.
298. April 2023, Winn.
299. July 2022, Jackson Parish.
300. January 2023, Basile.
301. Letter to Katherine Culliton-Gonzalez, Officer of Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties from Nat'l Immigr. Justice, *Re. Request for Investigation into Physical and Homophobic Verbal Abuse of LGBTQ Asylum-Center in Immigration Detention - Winn Correctional Center, Louisiana* (Aug. 19, 2021).
302. November 2023, Pine Prairie.
303. January 2024, Winn.
304. See Evan Gershkovich, 'We Will Kill You': *How Russia Silenced Its Antiwar Movement Repressive laws and arrests discourage protests against the war in Ukraine and prompt dissenters to leave*, WALL ST. J. (April 6, 2022).
305. Fernanda Echavarri, *Dozens of ICE Detainees Were Pepper-Sprayed by Guards for Protesting at a Louisiana Jail*, MOTHER JONES, (Aug. 2, 2019); Chantal Da Silva, *More Than 100 Immigrants on Hunger Strike at ICE Facility Allegedly Pepper-sprayed, Shot at with Rubber Bullets and Blocked from Contacting Families*, NEWSWEEK, (Aug. 7, 2019).
306. Nomaan Merchant *ICE: Protest at Louisiana Jail Ends After Pepper Spray Used*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, (Dec. 4, 2019).
307. Letter to Joseph V. Cuffari, Inspector General, Dep't of Homeland Security, from Cameroon American Council et al., *Re: Call for an Immediate Halt to and Investigation of Detention, Violence, Repression and Racism Against Peacefully Protesting Cameroonian and Black Asylum Seekers, and other Asylum Seekers, at Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center; and the release of all Black Hunger Strikers from Solitary Confinement*, (Aug. 26, 2020), Katie Jane Fernelius, "Someone Needs to Listen to Us": *Why African Asylum Seekers Went On Hunger Strike*, IN THESE TIMES, (Oct. 7, 2020), (reporting placement in solitary confinement for hunger striking).
308. Letter to Joseph V. Cuffari, Inspector General, Dep't of Homeland Security, from AI Otro Lado et al., *Re: Call for Immediate Investigation into Immigration and Customs Enforcement Officers' Use of Punitive Solitary Confinement as a Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Other Public Health Crises 21* (June 21, 2021), <https://rfkhr.imgix.net/asset/Pine-Prairie-CRCL-Complaint.pdf>.
309. Letter to Alejandro Mayorkas, Sec'y, Dep't of Homeland Sec., from Southern Poverty Law Center et al., *Re: Call for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to End Contracts due to Abusive, Inhumane, Criminal, and Racially Discriminatory Practices at Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center and Allen Parish Public Safety Complex, Louisiana*, (July 28, 2021).
310. This incident was reported to the authors during a legal rights presentation at Winn in January 2024. Due to fear of further retaliation, the individuals interviewed have been kept anonymous.
311. July 2022, Richwood.
312. September 2012, Richwood.
313. April 2023, Winn.
314. January 2023, Basile.
315. January 2023, Basile.
316. November 2022, Basile.
317. May 2023, CLIPC.
318. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
319. Daniella Silva, *An asylum-seeker who died in ICE custody was sick for months. Advocates fear other ill people are not getting proper care*, NBCNEWS.COM (May 10, 2024), (describing the circumstances surrounding the death of Ousmane Ba at Winn); Carmen Sesin, *An Asylum-*

Seeker Died in Immigration Custody. His Family Wants Answers, NBCNEWS.COM (Sept. 6, 2023), (profiling the death of Ernesto Rocha Cuadra at CLIPC).

320. Mayo Clinic, *Hyperglycemia in diabetes*, MAYOCLINIC.ORG (describing the symptoms of hyperglycemia and associated medical complications), <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hyperglycemia/symptomscauses/syc-20373631>.
321. PBNDS, § 4.3(I).
322. PBNDS, § 4.3(II)(1); § 4.3(II)(8).
323. PBNDS, § 4.3(II)(2).
324. PBNDS, § 4.3(II)(6).
325. PBNDS, § 4.3(V)(S).
326. 326U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf't Directive 11032.3, *Identification and Monitoring of Pregnant, Postpartum, or Nursing Individuals 2* (July 1, 2021), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20986219-pregnant-and-nursingindividuals-signed> ("Generally, ICE should not detain, arrest, or take into custody for an administrative violation of the immigration laws individuals known to be pregnant, postpartum, or nursing unless release is prohibited by law or exceptional circumstances exist.").
327. PBNDS, § 4.3(II)(24).
328. See Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 et seq. ("No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Service.").
329. Arbitrary and unlawful detention is prohibited under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which the United States has ratified, and the UN Human Rights Committee has emphasized that detention of people seeking asylum must be subject to periodic review and that any detention of immigrants beyond a brief period must take into account alternatives to detention and impact on health. See UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), General comment no. 35, Article 9 (Liberty and security of person), December 16, 2014, CCPR/C/GC/35, para 12, 18.
330. Due to the limitations of our data, including researchers' inability to meet with all detention people during onsite visits and potential participants' fear of retaliation, this number is likely an undercount.
331. November 2022, Winn.
332. July 2022, Jackson Parish.
333. July 2022, Basile.
334. July 2022, Basile.
335. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
336. September 2022, River.
337. November 2022, Basile.
338. January 2023, Richwood.
339. February 2023, Basile.
340. February 2023, Basile.
341. February 2023, Basile.
342. April 2023, Winn.
343. November 2022, Winn.
344. November 2022, Winn.
345. January 2023, Allen Parish.
346. April 2023, Winn.
347. January 2023, Richwood.
348. July 2022, Winn.
349. November 2022, Winn.
350. November 2022, Winn.
351. November 2022, Winn.
352. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
353. June 2023, River.
354. July 2022, Richwood.
355. See Am. Academy of Urgent Care Medicine, *What is Urgent Care Medicine?*, AAUCM.ORG, <https://aaucm.org/what-is-urgent-care-medicine/> (defining urgent care medicine); see also Brandy Gill, *Emergent, urgent or routine – When to Visit the Emergency Department*, U.S. ARMY (Sept. 6, 2013), https://www.army.mil/article/110784/emergent_urgent_or_routine_when_to_visit_the_emergency_department (distinguishing emergent, urgent, and routine care).
356. July 2022, Jackson Parish.
357. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
358. September 2022, River.
359. July 2022, River.
360. September 2022, Allen Parish.
361. January 2023, Richwood.
362. February 2024, Winn.
363. July 2022, Winn.

364. July 2022, Jackson Parish.
365. July 2022, Winn.
366. July 2022, Winn.
367. November 2022, Basile.
368. July 2022, Winn.
369. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
370. September 2022, River.
371. September 2022, River.
372. November 2022, Basile.
373. November 2022, Winn.
374. November 2022, Winn.
375. November 2022, Winn.
376. November 2022, Winn.
377. November 2022, Winn.
378. November 2022, Basile.
379. January 2023, Jackson Parish.
380. January 2023, Jackson Parish.
381. September 2023, Pine Prairie.
382. September 2023, Winn.
383. September 2023, Winn.
384. June 2023, Allen Parish
385. January 2024, Winn.
386. January 2023, Basile.
387. June 2023, Allen Parish.
388. See Emergency Medical Condition, HEALTHCARE.GOV <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/emergency-medicalcondition/> (defining an emergency medical condition).
389. A pseudonym used to protect identity and privacy.
390. January 2024, Winn.
391. July 2022, Winn.
392. July 2022, Basile.
393. June 2023, Basile.
394. July 2022, Basile.
395. February 2023, Basile.
396. July 2022, Winn.
397. November 2022, Winn.
398. February 2023, Basile.
399. April 2023, CLIPC.
400. November 2022, Winn.
401. November 2022, Winn.
402. January 2024, Winn.
403. July 2022, River.
404. September 2023, Winn.
405. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
406. June 2023, Allen Parish.
407. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
408. March 2023, River.
409. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
410. July 2022, Jackson Parish.
411. July 2022, Richwood.
412. November 2022, Winn.
413. June 2023, River.
414. June 2023, Basile.
415. April 2023, Winn.
416. April 2023, Winn.
417. July 2022, Basile.
418. April 2023, CLIPC.
419. Stacy Weiner, *What Informed Consent Really Means*, ASS'N OF MED. COLL. (Jan. 24, 2019), <https://www.aamc.org/news/what-informed-consent-really-means>.
420. September 2022, River.
421. July 2022, Richwood.
422. November 2022, Winn.
423. November 2022, Winn.
424. February 2023, Basile.
425. February 2023, Basile.
426. November 2022, Winn
427. February 2023, CLIPC.
428. February 2023, CLIPC.
429. See e.g., Office of Inspector Gen., *ICE Major Surgeries Were Not Always Properly Reviewed and Approved for Medical Necessity* (Jan. 23, 2024) (finding that in FY2019-2021, ICE Health Service Corps could not assure medical necessity for several performed hysterectomies); Annette M. Decker et al., *Emergency Medical Responses at US Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention Centers in California*, JAMA NETWORK OPEN (Nov. 29, 2023) (analyzing deficiencies in ICE's responses to emergency medical needs in three California ICE jails); Amy J. Zeidan et

al., *Medical Mismanagement in Southern US Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention Facilities: A Thematic Analysis of Secondary Medical Records*, JOURNAL OF IMMIGRANT AND MINORITY HEALTH (Jan. 30, 2023) (analyzing the management of medical conditions in southern US ICE jails, including four ICE jails in Louisiana, from 2020-2021 and finding inadequate workup, management and treatment of medical conditions, psychiatric conditions, and medical symptoms); U.S. Senate Homeland Sec. & Governmental Affairs, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Medical Mistreatment of Women in ICE Detention* (Nov. 15, 2022) <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/investigations/hearings/medical-mistreatment-of-women-in-icedetention/> (hearing on the use of forced hysterectomies on women detained at the Irwin County Detention Center in Georgia); Letter to Katherine Culliton-Gonzalez, Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Dep't of Homeland Sec. from Nat'l Immigrant Justice Cen., *Request for investigation into inadequate mental health services, treatment, and accommodations, including improper use of solitary confinement in ICE detention* (June 2, 2022) https://immigrantjustice.org/sites/default/files/content-type/press-release/documents/2022-06/CRCL-complaint-mental-health-care-immigration-detention_June-2022_public.pdf (documenting ICE's systemic failures regarding mental health treatment).

430. November 2022, Winn.
431. November 2022, Winn.
432. November 2022, Winn.
433. July 2022, Basile.
434. November 2022, Winn.
435. September 2022, River.
436. November 2022, Basile.
437. November 2022, CLIPC.
438. November 2022, River.
439. November 2022, Winn; April 2022, River.
440. September 2022, Allen Parish.
441. November 2022, Basile.
442. November 2022, Winn.
443. November 2022, Winn.
444. November 2022, Winn.
445. June 2023, Allen Parish.
446. April 2023, CLIPC.
447. August 2023, Richwood.
448. November 2022, Basile.
449. January 2023, Basile.
450. January 2023, Basile.
451. July 2022, Basile.
452. July 2022, Jackson Parish.
453. July 2022, Winn.
454. July 2022, Basile.
455. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
456. September 2022, Jackson Parish.
457. November 2022, Basile.
458. November 2022, Winn.
459. September 2022, River.
460. November 2022, Basile.
461. November 2022, Winn.
462. September 2022, River.
463. September 2022, River.
464. November 2022, Winn.
465. January 2023, Allen Parish.
466. April 2023, Winn.
467. November 2022, Basile.
468. Brother of Ernesto Rocha-Cuadra, a man who died at CLIPC.
469. See ACLU et al., *Deadly Failures: Preventable Deaths in U.S. Immigration Detention* (2024) (documenting recent deaths in ICE custody attributed to medical neglect including ICE's lack of transparency, destruction of evidence, and insufficient documentation in detainee death reports); ACLU, et al., *Code Red: The Fatal Consequences of Dangerously Substandard Medical Care 18-19* (June 2018), (examining the March 2016 death of congestive heart failure of Thongchay Saengsiri at the LaSalle Detention Facility (now known as CLIPC), which two reviewing physicians found "could have been prevented with appropriate care both in terms of managing his symptoms over the duration of his detention and the emergency care on the day of his death"); Human Rights Watch, *Systemic Indifference: Dangerous and Substandard Medical Care in US Immigration Detention*, (May 8, 2017) (examining serious lapses in health care that have led to the preventable or premature death of individuals held in immigration detention); ACLU et al., *Fatal Neglect: How ICE Ignores Deaths in Detention* (Feb. 2016), (examining violations of ICE's own medical care standards in the deaths of eight people in ICE custody between 2010-2012 and how ICE's

deficient inspections system often dismissed critical flaws identified in death reviews).

470. See Press Release, ACLU Files Lawsuit Against ICE for Wrongfully Withholding Public Records about Unreported Detainee Deaths (Oct. 7, 2021) (announcing suit against ICE for failing to disclose records related to ICE's practice of releasing people immediately prior to their imminent death).
471. Tina Vasquez, *Records Show ICE and LaSalle Corrections Covered up Critical Details about a 2018 In-Custody Death*, PRISM (Apr. 20, 2023), https://prismreports.org/2023/04/20/ice-gourgan-mirimanian-death-2018/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email (documenting cases of in-custody deaths where ICE destroyed video evidence).
472. In New York, the Economic Transformation and Facility Redevelopment Program provides tax incentives to businesses located within a certain proximity of a closed correctional facility. N.Y. Tax Law, Art 1 § 35*2 (2021).
473. See Innovation Law Lab, *Thrive: A Blueprint For Policy And Public Officials For Self-Reliant Rural Communities Without Immigration Prisons* 21 (2023) (describing economic grant options available to rural communities that support construction of and improvement to essential community facilities located in primarily rural areas); The Sentencing Project, *Repurposing Correctional Facilities to Strengthen Communities* (Aug. 11, 2022) (describing how 21 states have partially or fully closed at least one carceral facility between 2000 and 2022, repurposing prisons for community and commercial use).
474. See International Detention Coalition, *There Are Alternatives* III (2015) (profiling research on community supported programming that contribute to “positive compliance, case resolution, cost, and health and wellbeing outcomes”); David Secor et al., *A Better Way: Community-Based Programming as an Alternative to Immigrant Incarceration*, National Immigrant Justice Center 10 (April 22, 2019), (describing how current alternative-to-detention programs impose ankle shackles and onerous reporting obligations that are abusive and harmful).
475. See Memorandum from Tae D. Johnson, *Notification, Review, and Reporting Requirements for Detainee Deaths* 1 (Oct. 25, 2021), <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention/directive11003-5.pdf> (“ICE will ensure notification to . . .the public about each detainee death according to the requirements established by this Directive.”).