

FACT SHEET: Detention length among ICE civil immigration detentions nationally

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Few people detained from Mar. 2025 to Mar. 2026 were detained longer than six months, in raw numbers and as a percent of all detentions. The raw number is smaller still for those held under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c).²

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) maintains a database of every detention of a noncitizen for alleged violations of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The detention data record each book-in and book-out from detention. Using that data, the table below reports³ every detention that ended between Mar. 10, 2025, and Mar. 10, 2026 — 385,414 detentions in total, accounting for 19,448,852 bed-nights (bottom row).

For each length of detention — over 6, 7, 9, 12, and 21 months — the table gives the number of detentions lasting beyond that time (column 2) and their share of all 385,414 detentions (column 3), followed by the bed-nights those detentions consumed (column 4) and their share of all 19,448,852 bed-nights (column 5). A bed-night is one detainee held in one bed for one night, and measures detention capacity consumed rather than the number of people held over time.

The final six columns report the same quantities for those detained pursuant to § 1226(c): the number of such detentions of each length (column 6), the percentage of all detentions of that length that were under § 1226(c), i.e. column 6 divided by column 2 (column 7), the bed-nights attributable to them (column 8), the percentage of that length's bed-nights they account for, i.e. column 8 divided by column 4 (column 9), the percentage of all 385,414 detentions (column 10), and the percentage of all 19,448,852 bed-nights (column 11).

Across all lengths, 16,799 of the 385,414 detentions (4.4%) were pursuant to § 1226(c). They accounted for 1,447,876 of the 19,448,852 bed-nights (7.4%).

Of the 21,506 detentions lasting beyond six months, 2,086 were of an individual held under § 1226(c). Those 2,086 represent 0.5% of all detentions and 3.6% of all bed-nights.

Nationally, the median number of days in detention during this period is 25. 10% of detentions ended within a day. 86% of those led to removals, most quickly (median: within a day of release; mean: six days), 23% through voluntary departure/return.

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² 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c) is also known by its section in the Immigration and Nationality Act as INA § 236(c).

³ The data analysis is simple, and starts with publicly-posted data obtained in FOIA litigation from ICE and processed by the Deportation Data Project and available at deportationdata.org. Detentions pursuant to § 1226(c) are recorded by ICE.

Table 1. ICE detention nationally by length of detention stay in 2025-2026.

Length of ICE detention	Detained pursuant to § 1226(c)									
	N detentions	Share of all detentions by ICE	N bed nights	Share of all ICE bed nights	N detentions	Share of detentions for given length	N bed nights	Share of bed nights for given length	Share of all detentions	Share of all bed nights
> 6 mos.	21,506	6%	6,477,799	33%	2,086	9.7%	708,338	11%	0.5%	3.6%
> 7	16,392	4%	5,481,741	28%	1,611	9.8%	615,840	11%	0.4%	3.2%
> 9	9,857	2.6%	3,924,276	20%	970	9.8%	463,226	12%	0.3%	2.4%
> 12	4,459	1.2%	2,237,115	12%	550	12%	331,107	15%	0.1%	1.7%
> 21	575	0.1%	508,964	2.6%	156	27%	149,377	29%	0.04%	0.8%
Total detentions for any length	385,414	100%	19,448,852	100%	16,799	4.4%	1,447,876	7.4%	4.4%	7.4%