

Politics

DHS triples self-deportation 'exit bonus' stipend to \$3,000

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William Jackson



Image credit: ALEX BRANDON/POOL/AFP via Getty Images

Summary

The offer:

The Department of Homeland Security is increasing its voluntary departure stipend from \$1,000 to \$3,000 for unauthorized migrants through Dec. 31. Participants also receive a free flight home and forgiveness for civil fines.

Cost savings:

Secretary Kristi Noem framed the move as a cost-saving measure, citing data that traditional removal operations cost taxpayers roughly \$17,000 per person.

Enforcement push:

The "limited time" offer comes ahead of a planned enforcement ramp-up in 2026. The administration plans to hire more immigration agents and expand detention capacity.

Full story

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is tripling its cash offer for undocumented migrants to voluntarily leave the country. Under a new holiday campaign, the administration is raising the "exit bonus" from \$1,000 to \$3,000 for those who sign up to self-deport by the end of the year.

The package also includes a free flight home.

Why this story matters

The U.S. government's increased financial incentive for undocumented migrants to voluntarily self-deport reflects major policy changes in immigration enforcement, with potential impacts on costs, border management, and affected communities.

Immigration enforcement policy

The tripling of the 'exit bonus' highlights a significant shift in how the Department of Homeland Security aims to manage and incentivize departures, impacting both migrants and the broader immigration system.

Government expenditure and efficiency

According to the Department of Homeland Security, the voluntary self-deportation program is intended to reduce taxpayer costs, as traditional arrest and deportation processes are substantially more expensive per individual.

Technology in border management

The introduction of the CBP Home app to streamline voluntary departures represents an increased reliance on digital tools in immigration processes, potentially affecting access, oversight, and the experiences of migrants.



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DHS says the expanded stipend is meant to accelerate removals while reducing taxpayer costs, [CBS News](#) reported. Immigration and Customs Enforcement estimated in May that arresting, detaining and removing one unauthorized migrant costs about \$17,000.

President Donald Trump took office in January, promising record deportation levels and to remove 1 million immigrants each year. DHS said last week that **622,000 people have been deported** so far this year and 1.9 million have left the country voluntarily. Those numbers have not been independently verified.

Who qualifies and what DHS is promising

The new offer applies to people in the country illegally who register through the CBP Home smartphone app and depart by Dec. 31, [DHS said](#).

Eligible migrants who use the app and are cleared for the program will receive travel assistance and the stipend after the U.S. government confirms they have left. Participants will also qualify for forgiveness of civil fines or penalties for failing to depart the country.

"During the Christmas Season," Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said in a statement, "the U.S. taxpayer is so generously **TRIPLING** the incentive to leave voluntarily for those in this country illegally — offering a \$3,000 exit bonus, but just until the end of the year. Illegal aliens should take advantage of this gift and self-deport because if they don't, we will find them, we will arrest them, and they will never return."

How CBP Home fits into Trump's deportation push

The Trump administration [rebranded CBP One as CBP Home](#) and launched it in March to let migrants signal their intent to depart. CBP One, previously used to schedule asylum appointments, was remodeled into a voluntary-departure framework as part of Trump's mass-deportation agenda. It allows people without lawful status to arrange and track their exits.

DHS says participants in the self-deportation program are deprioritized for arrest and detention by ICE, so long as they show "meaningful strides" toward leaving. However, officials have not released detailed guidance on how long that protection lasts or how compliance is judged.

[According to Reuters](#), the administration is preparing a more aggressive immigration enforcement push in 2026. With billions in new funding, the administration plans to hire more immigration agents, open additional detention centers and partner with outside companies to track people without legal status.

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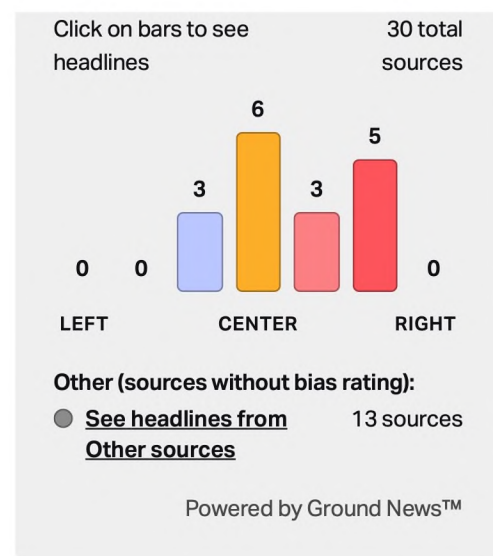
- 1** Department of Homeland Security ↗
- 2** CBS News ↗
- 3** The Washington Post ↗
- 4** Reuters ↗

Bias comparison

- Media outlets on the left** frame the "Trump administration's" tripled "stipend offer" for "migrants" to "self-deport" within "immigration crackdowns" and "public opposition," using critical language and de-emphasizing details like free airfare and specific deadlines.
- Media outlets in the center** adopt a neutral tone, using "undocumented migrants" and factually presenting the "DHS" offer, including free flights and the Dec. 31, 2025, deadline.
- Media outlets on the right** portray the \$3,000 as a "bonus" or "cash incentive" for "illegal migrants," emphasizing cost-effectiveness by contrasting it with the \$17,000 cost of forced deportation.

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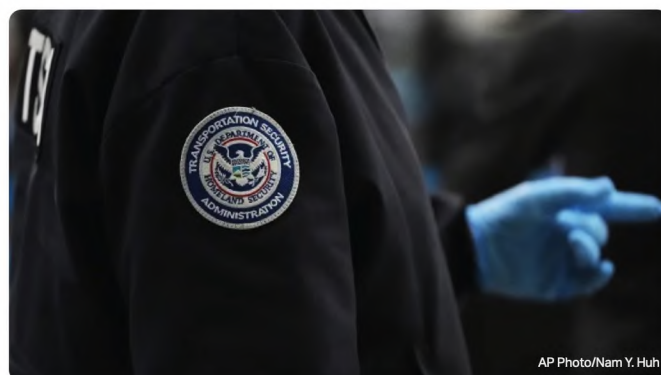


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