



Immigration

Critics Warn ICE Incentives Could Become 'Lifeline' for Cash-Strapped Police, Result in 'Dragnet' Enforcement

DHS is offering agencies up to \$100,000 for vehicles and additional equipment funding, while vowing to reimburse the salaries and benefits of officers in the program



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Police car (PHOTO: VIA UNSPLASH)

A rapidly expanding federal [immigration enforcement](#) program offering millions of dollars in incentives to local police departments is drawing criticism from civil liberties advocates, who warn the funding could encourage broad "dragnet" tactics and deepen ties between local [policing](#) and federal [deportation efforts](#), as a new NPR report explains.

The concerns center on the 287(g) program, which allows local law enforcement agencies to assist [Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) by identifying and arresting undocumented immigrants.

According to recent reporting and policy analyses, the Trump administration has significantly expanded the program while offering financial incentives including vehicles, equipment funding, overtime reimbursement and officer salary support.

At a March press conference in Florida, state Chief Financial Officer Blaise Ingoglia distributed oversized checks from [a \\$250 million state fund to sheriffs](#) participating in the initiative. The Escambia County Sheriff's Office

received nearly \$1 million, while other departments received amounts ranging from roughly \$50,000 to more than \$280,000.

"Let's start giving the money away," Ingoglia said at the event, praising local agencies for "helping to deport criminal illegal aliens."

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The Department of Homeland Security is also offering agencies up to \$100,000 for vehicles and additional equipment funding. It also says it will [reimburse the salaries and benefits](#) of officers in the program

Naureen Shah, director of government affairs for immigration at the ACLU, called the funding structure unprecedented:

"We've never seen this financial incentive scheme exist in any way with this program, and Congress never intended for ICE to be swooping in to these local jurisdictions and offering them money in exchange to participate. Police departments

that are strapped for cash, this could be a lifeline for them that appears to be pretty easy."

The expansion has accelerated sharply during President Donald Trump's second term. FWD.us found that the number of local agencies participating in 287(g) agreements increased from 135 during the Biden administration to [more than 1,100 by January](#), with agencies in 39 states participating. ICE now says the number has surpassed 1,700 partnerships nationwide.

The policy group estimated that at least \$137 million has already flowed to local departments and projected the total could reach billions of dollars over the next two years.

The growing cooperation between ICE and local agencies has also produced operational and financial strains in some cities. According to a previous NPR report published in March, immigration enforcement surges in Minneapolis and Los Angeles [generated millions of dollars in police overtime costs](#) and disrupted local services even in jurisdictions where police were not formally participating in immigration enforcement.

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