



OIDO

Office of the Immigration
Detention Ombudsman

The Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman independently examines immigration detention to promote and support safe, humane conditions.

A Message from the Acting Ombudsman

Greetings from OIDO, as many of us are braving the cold of these winter months! I have been on the road many times recently, making observations and visiting with staff and colleagues working at facilities across the country. In December, I visited Washington State, stopping by CBP processing in Blaine and the Northwest ICE Processing Center. In January, I visited Donna and Eagle Pass, TX. All of these visits have helped me to understand and appreciate the changing immigration landscape and OIDO's role within it. One of my objectives as Acting Ombudsman has been to cultivate a responsive, effective office that could adapt as needed to contribute not only to our own mission of promoting safe, humane detention conditions, but also to the missions of our partner agencies and organizations—promoting national security and human rights.



I'm pleased to announce that OIDO's Annual Report to Congress for 2023 is in its final review. It is full of examples of ways in which we have innovated, adapted, and developed our oversight role. We'd also love to have you join us for a virtual

presentation on our 2023 accomplishments described in the report, the details of which we will share soon. (If someone forwarded you this email, be sure to sign up for our mailing list (link at the bottom of the email) if you'd like to be notified when this is scheduled.)

Over OIDO's existence, we have taken in and closed more than 20,000 complaints, most of which have come from people who were detained at the time. In 2023, we engaged in at least 10,000 conversations with detained people as measured by actual cases, with the number of direct interactions measuring much higher, as our case managers speak directly with detained people on most days and not all of their discussions result in cases. We completed 22 inspections of detention facilities and published 11 reports to our website.

I also wanted to highlight a term you may see used more frequently in our work—observation. The observation process is different than an inspection. It has a quicker turnaround time, allowing OIDO to provide awareness in near real time to applicable DHS components. Observations do not include recommendations but do give a raw view of the situation including areas of concern or potential best practices. We used observations when Title 42 ended, where OIDO was able to quickly respond to the border, observe the situation, and adjust operations. The adjustments allowed OIDO to be in the best possible position to respond to detention condition concerns, as well as making notifications to other DHS components of relevant information. This is one of the ways we are exercising flexibility as we monitor the changing immigration environment.

I once again thank my team: without them, none of our accomplishments would have been possible. Also, a special thank you to our community partners, NGOs, advocates, and colleagues. Your insight and partnership are invaluable! Thank you for your continued support for OIDO's work!

Roundtable Discussions - We Want Your Input!

OIDO is happy to announce we have upcoming roundtable discussions! We will be holding two sessions during March (in addition to our anticipated Annual Report webinar). We hope that we can continue to get feedback from you on things you are hearing and seeing. The roundtable discussion topics will be on Legal Access and *myOIDO* (our digital case intake method found on our website).

MyOIDO Feedback – Thursday March 14th at 2pm ET

To register please click [here](#).

It has been nearly a year since we launched the [myOIDO](#) portal for complaints. What can we do to make it better? Is the process easy? Does it allow you to feel the entirety of the complaint is heard? Are follow-up directions easy to understand?

Legal Access – Thursday March 21st at 2pm ET

To register please click [here](#).

What are you hearing or experiencing? Where are the issues occurring? How do you feel OIDO can help? If you would like, you can send us questions in advance!

If you would like to submit a question regarding legal access in advance, please complete the form [here](#). This form will close at 5:30 pm ET on Tuesday, March 19th.

Please send questions to OIDO_Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

We hope to see you there and look forward to hearing your comments!

Inspection Reports



OIDO released three new inspection reports last quarter, for **Cibola County Correctional Center** (CCCC) in Milan, New Mexico (unannounced inspection, conducted August 2022), **Eden Detention Center** in Eden, Texas (unannounced, December 2022), and **Eagle Pass Soft-Sided Facility** in Eagle Pass, Texas (announced, February 2023). During an inspection, OIDO typically reviews the facility's performance as well as compliance

with the applicable standards and contract terms. For the inspections of CCCC and Eden, OIDO additionally followed up on issues previously found by other oversight entities.

OIDO found the following:

Cibola County Correctional Center (CCCC)

CCCC complied with standards in four areas, had violations in 16 areas, and had three areas of concern. ICE officials concurred with all nine of OIDO's recommendations and identified corrective actions to address the issues identified during the OIDO inspection. Based on ICE's initial and subsequent responses, OIDO considers all recommendations closed.



Eden Detention Center

Eden Detention Center complied with requirements in three areas and had violations in three areas. OIDO made three recommendations designed to improve operations and conditions at the facility and meet ICE detention standards. ICE concurred with two recommendations and partially concurred with one recommendation. Within the full report, appendix A contains ICE management's comments in their entirety. OIDO considers two recommendations addressed and open and one recommendation addressed and closed.

Eagle Pass Soft-Sided Facility

Eagle Pass Soft-Sided Facility complied with standards in all areas except transportation. OIDO found that U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) did not have a written transportation policy or written procedures to address emergencies during transport. OIDO recommended USBP develop a national written policy and local procedures to address emergencies during transport to meet U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP's) National Standards on Transportation, Escort, Detention, and Search standards. CBP Officials concurred with the recommendation. In December 2023, CBP provided these policies to OIDO.

Full reports, which describe in detail the areas OIDO examined and recommendations OIDO made, are available on our website [here](#).

OIDO's 2023 Annual Report Update

Stay tuned! We are nearing the release of OIDO's 2023 Annual Report. Once the report is available, we will send out a notification and the report will also be available on our website. Previous years' annual reports are available [here](#).

OIDO Recent Events

Throughout the holidays, OIDO continued with our outreach efforts. We hosted over 20 different meetings between November 1 and January 31. One area we chose to focus on this quarter was medical issues in detention, which we have prioritized due to its importance in ensuring the well-being of individuals in detention. In 2023, we received 2,435 complaints about medical care (about 19% of cases), covering the gamut of access to medical care, specialty follow-up care, mental health care, or other health care concerns generally. If an individual discloses a concern about detention conditions issues to health care professionals after release, OIDO can still look into those issues!

We also met with seven Congressional offices. Beyond giving operational updates to Congress, these meetings establish direct points of contact for concerns relating to the detention environment.

Last month, we mentioned in our newsletter that we welcome you reaching out with questions and concerns that you may have. At the end of January, we met with attorneys and NGOs from across the country, representing 13 different organizations. OIDO was able to provide feedback to different types of questions and the direction our organization is heading.

One concern raised was the confidentiality of communications between OIDO and detainees on tablets. Due to these types of concerns, OIDO has specifically utilized tablets, where available, as more of a hand-raising feature. This allows a detained person to signal the desire to speak with an OIDO case manager without needing to include the details of the complaint on the tablet. In addition, we have ensured that only OIDO can see who submits a request. More information can be found in our upcoming annual report. Please continue to let us know your questions and concerns. We are here to help!

Victim-Centered and Trauma-Informed Approaches

To share more information on our victim-centered and trauma-informed approach to our work, OIDO recently held a presentation on key aspects and benefits of using these approaches with detained noncitizens, and how these approaches are integrated in the work of DHS and OIDO. Homeland Security Investigations' Victim Assistance Program teamed up with OIDO to help deliver this brief. We appreciate the feedback we received and were happy to be able to give an inside look at some of the things OIDO is working on. The trauma-informed approaches that OIDO employs will continue to help us be holistic in our services.

Case Management Data (11/1/2023 – 1/31/2024)

Since OIDO started taking in cases in late 2021, we have received many different complaints from people in detention, as well as their friends, families, and representatives. Complaints come from people who are currently or were previously held in administrative immigration custody on the authority of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Between November 1, 2023, and January 31, 2024, OIDO received a total of 2,995 complaints. Most complaints concerned the facility environment, contact and communication, or medical/mental health care.



Case management data is one of many elements we look at to make recommendations on improving immigration conditions, to focus inspections, and our outreach efforts.

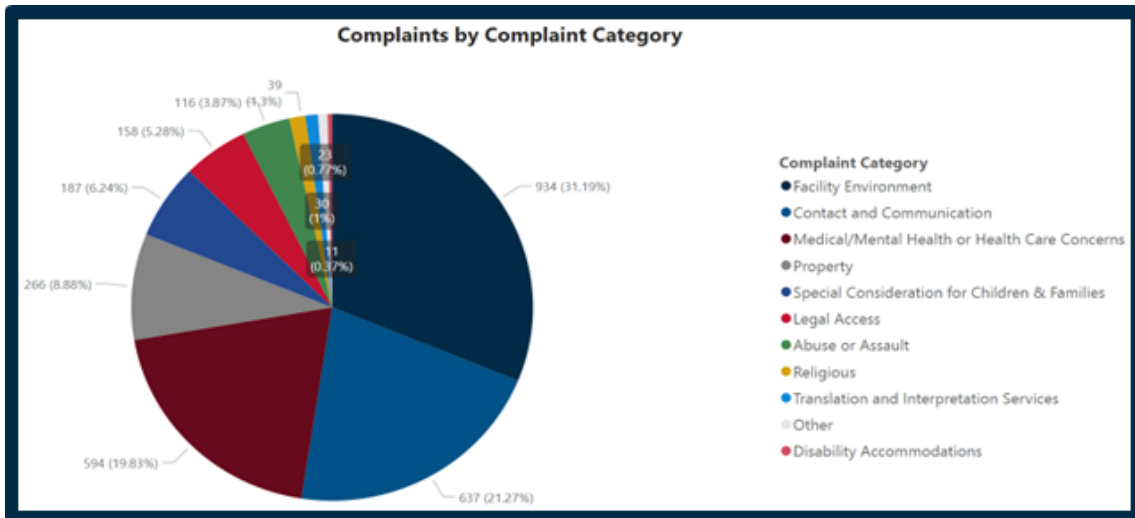
Case Management Complaint Snapshot

Number of Closed
Complaints

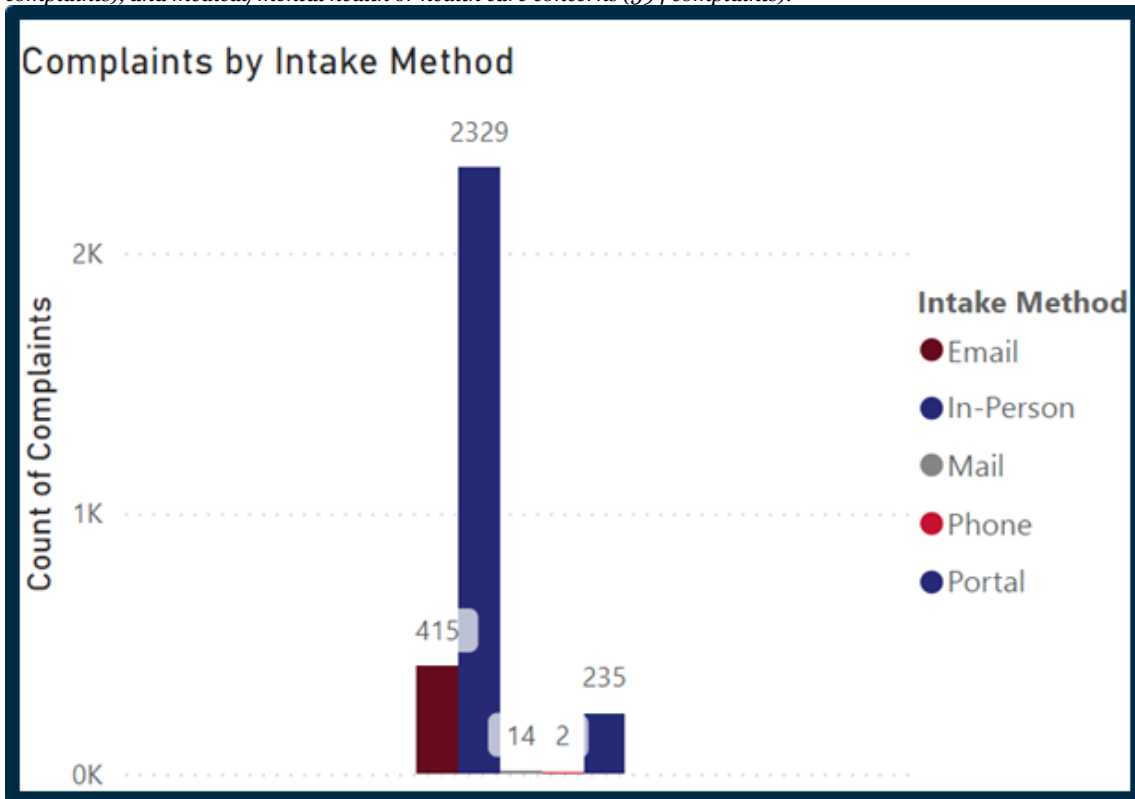
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These snapshots help us identify the categories of issues raised to OIDO and present them to our colleagues and stakeholders. We continue to refine the process in how we receive complaints. Most complaints we receive come from within a detention facility, directly from an individual to one of our case managers. Email, our [PDF Form](#), and [myOIDO](#) are other ways that we take in complaints.

We are happy to see that [myOIDO](#) is continuing to be used! Please keep in mind that if you have trouble navigating our online complaint portal, you can always reach out to us; we are here to help!



The largest proportion of complaints regard facility environment (934 complaints), contact and communication (637 complaints), and medical/mental health or health care concerns (594 complaints).



Most complaints come directly from detained people. From 11/1/2023 - 1/31/2024, 2,329 complaints were filed directly with case managers.

OIDO Case Managers in Action



Every day, OIDO case managers across the country provide services and assistance in detention facilities, focusing on problem-solving through a lens of neutrality and independence. Case managers focus on responding to individual complaints they receive from people in detention; they may also share some larger issues that arise with local ICE, CBP, or facility personnel. They also share this information internally to inform future inspections and/or policy recommendations. These are just a few stories from

the field.

Resolved Hunger Strike with Communication

An OIDO case manager was observing the intake process at a facility when the classification officer informed her that a detained person was on a hunger strike. The person had missed a total of 20 meals. That same day, the OIDO case manager interviewed the detained individual. The case manager utilized the language line service to better understand the individual's concerns. The detained person stated that he was on a hunger strike because he did not want to be deported by ICE and because he was having issues with interpretation during the intake process at the facility. The detained individual stated that he was unable to understand the initial interpreter. He wanted ICE to know that he has an attorney and wanted to give his attorney's information to an ICE officer.

The case manager explained how to send ICE a kiosk message with his attorney's information and how to complete personal and legal telephone calls at the facility. The OIDO case manager explained that not eating was unhealthy and that he should focus on his health while detained at the facility. The individual was willing to eat his lunch with the OIDO case manager after the communication process was explained. In addition, the individual received an ICE detainee handbook in a language he could understand.

Medical/Mental Health or Health Care Concerns

An OIDO case manager received a complaint from an individual that requested a special diet and medication to treat stomach pains, but the request had been denied. The individual stated that she had been experiencing stomach pains due to the food.

The case manager reached out to the facility's medical staff. A doctor took the individual's information and stated they would make sure they were seen that day. Per the detention standard, "residents with certain conditions—chronic or temporary; medical, dental, and/or psychological, will be prescribed special diets as appropriate."

The next day, the case manager conducted a follow-up visit with the individual. The person was very happy and confirmed she had been seen by the doctor the previous

day, was prescribed daily medication for her acid reflux, and was also placed on a special diet.

Follow OIDO on X/Twitter!

Stay in the loop by following OIDO on X/Twitter [@OIDOGov](https://twitter.com/OIDOGov) – we'll be sharing important updates, OIDO engagements, handy tips to navigate our website and submit case forms, and new OIDO publications. Follow OIDO on X/Twitter and be part of the conversation as our office continues to grow!



To the Community

We want to hear from you! If you feel that your complaint has not been fully addressed, contact us—we are here to help. If you have concerns—or compliments!—about how a case was handled by OIDO, please contact us at OIDO_Outreach@hq.dhs.gov.

Our mailing address is:

Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO)

Mail Stop 0134

Department of Homeland Security

Washington DC 20528-0134

ATTN: OIDO Case Intake Form (DHS Form 405)

About Our Office

OIDO is an independent, neutral office operating within DHS, but not within either CBP or ICE. The Ombudsman's Office was established by Congress (Sec.106 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, Public Law 116-93). Our vision is for OIDO to be recognized as an objective, credible resource for those impacted by immigration detention, creating a more effective and humane system.

OIDO can help with:

OIDO cannot:

- Violation of an individual detainee's rights
- Potential misconduct
- Excessive force
- Violation of law, standards of professional conduct, contract terms, or policy related to immigration detention committed by ICE or CBP staff or contractors
- Communicate with anyone but the detainee or representative about a case without written permission
- Review or adjudicate requests to reconsider a detention determination, the reasons for detention, the denial of a request for release or parole, or the standards for considering requests for release
- Review or adjudicate requests to reconsider determinations made by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, such as credible fear determinations

For information on our structure and mission, please visit our website at dhs.gov/OIDO.

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