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ICE was created in 2003 through a merger of the investigative and interior enforcement elements of the former U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. ICE now has more than 20,000 law enforcement and support personnel in more than 400 offices in the United States and around the world.

The agency has an annual budget of approximately \$8 billion, primarily devoted to three operational directorates — Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) and

Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA). A fourth directorate – Management and Administration (M&A) – supports the three operational branches to advance the ICE mission.

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Enforcement and Removal Operations

The ERO directorate upholds U.S. immigration law at, within, and beyond our borders. ERO's work is critical to the enforcement of immigration law against those who present a danger to our national security, are a threat to public safety, or who otherwise undermine the integrity of our immigration system.

ERO operations target public safety threats, such as convicted criminal aliens and gang members, as well as individuals who have otherwise violated our nation's immigration laws, including those who illegally re-entered the country after being removed and immigration fugitives ordered removed by federal immigration judges. ERO deportation officers assigned to INTERPOL also assist in targeting and apprehending foreign fugitives or Fugitive Alien Removal (FAR) cases who are wanted for crimes committed abroad and who are now at-large in the U.S.

ERO manages all aspects of the immigration enforcement process, including identification and arrest, domestic transportation, detention, bond management, and supervised release, including alternatives to detention. In addition, ERO removes aliens ordered removed from the U.S. to more than 170 countries around the world.

[Learn more about ERO.](#)

Homeland Security Investigations

HSI is the principal investigative component of DHS with more than 9,800 employees, including over 6,700 special agents and 700 intelligence analysts who are assigned to more than 210 cities throughout the U.S. as well as 78 overseas offices in more than 52 countries. HSI's international presence represents DHS' largest investigative law enforcement presence abroad. HSI conducts transnational criminal investigations that protect the U.S. against threats to its national security and brings to justice those seeking to exploit U.S. customs and immigration laws worldwide.

HSI has broad legal authority to investigate all types of cross-border criminal activity. This includes investigations and intelligence efforts into a myriad of smuggling and cross-border criminal activity, to include: financial crimes, bulk cash smuggling, cybercrimes, exploitation of children and child sex tourism, weapons smuggling and export enforcement, trade crimes such as commercial fraud and intellectual property theft, human smuggling and trafficking, narcotics smuggling and trafficking, identity and benefit fraud, human rights violations, transnational gang activity, counterterrorism and

visa security.

Through its investigative efforts, HSI works with foreign, federal, state and local law enforcement partners to protect the national security and public safety of the United States by disrupting and dismantling transnational criminal organizations that engage in cross-border crime.

[Learn more about HSI.](#)

Office of the Principal Legal Advisor

OPLA is the largest legal program in DHS with over 1,100 attorneys. Pursuant to statute, OPLA serves as the exclusive representative of DHS in immigration removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review, litigating all removal cases including those against criminal aliens, terrorists, and human rights abusers.

OPLA also provides a full range of legal services to all ICE programs and offices. OPLA provides legal advice and prudential counsel to ICE personnel on their customs, criminal, and immigration law enforcement authorities, the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act, ethics, legal liability under the Federal Tort Claims Act, and a range of administrative law issues, such as contract, fiscal, and employment law. OPLA represents the agency before the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Board of Contract Appeals. OPLA attorneys provide essential support to the Department of Justice in the prosecution of ICE cases and in the defense of ICE's authorities in federal court.

[Learn more about OPLA.](#)

Management and Administration

The M&A directorate makes important contributions to the ICE mission by providing the vital infrastructure necessary for successful ICE operations. M&A identifies and tracks the agency's performance measurements and leads a dynamic human capital program that includes aggressive recruitment endeavors and commitment to equal employment opportunity. It coordinates ICE's administrative and managerial functions to address the needs of the ICE mission, while helping to guide the dynamic growth and future of the agency.

M&A directs and maintains ICE's budget, expenditures, accounting and finance, procurement, facilities, property, and policy and privacy programs in full compliance with Federal laws, regulations, and rules. M&A provides a solid integrated information technology infrastructure to ensure the men and women of ICE have the tools they need to succeed. M&A establishes acquisition strategies, provides oversight of procurement activities and contracts and executes sound and cost-effective financial management policies, standards and systems. In addition, M&A ensures collaboration with

internal stakeholders to increase diversity, guarantees timely responses to Freedom of Information Act requests and supports the agency's training needs.

[Learn more about M&A.](#)

Last Reviewed/Updated: 05/13/2020



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