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## DOJ OIG Releases Report Examining DOJ's Expansion of the Institutional Hearing and Removal Program

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of a [review of DOJ's expansion of the Institutional Hearing and Removal Program \(IHRP\) for federal inmates](#). The IHRP identifies potentially deportable foreign-born inmates serving sentences in federal, state, and local prisons and begins—and seeks to complete—removal proceedings against them while they are still incarcerated. DOJ's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) and Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to implement the IHRP. In March 2017, DOJ announced an expansion of the IHRP at BOP facilities with three goals: (1) increasing the number of active IHRP facilities, (2) enhancing video teleconference capabilities and updating the existing technical infrastructure for holding removal hearings for IHRP inmates, and (3) formalizing a new uniform intake policy.

The OIG's findings included the following:

- **DOJ coordinated with DHS to generally achieve the three goals of the IHRP expansion.** The IHRP now operates out of 5 additional BOP facilities, bringing the total number of federal IHRP facilities to 17. All IHRP facilities have new or upgraded video teleconference equipment, and the program established two new intake policies that help the program's efficiency and standardization.
- **Neither DOJ nor DHS has a plan to assess the IHRP expansion or the program itself.** The IHRP member agencies finalized a Memorandum of Understanding that details each agency's roles and responsibilities in the program. However, this memorandum did not include plans to jointly establish performance metrics, collect data, or evaluate the expansion of the program itself.
- **Preliminary data analysis indicates that IHRP participants are spending less time in ICE detention.** The OIG's data analysis found that IHRP participants spent significantly less time in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention, possibly due to the program expansion. When IHRP participants spend less time in ICE detention before removal, it reduces the amount of time they are deprived of their freedom and decreases the cost to the government and the taxpayer.

The OIG also identified a number of challenges that DOJ and DHS faced while expanding the IHRP. These challenges, including limited BOP and ICE staffing, increasing immigration caseloads, and ongoing inmate security considerations, might affect the IHRP's program's efficiency and success in the future. In order for DOJ and DHS to determine how to address these challenges, their components involved in the IHRP must continue coordinating and collaborating.

The OIG made one recommendation to the BOP and EOIR to jointly develop performance metrics to assess the effect of the IHRP expansion and the program itself. The BOP and EOIR concurred with the recommendation.

**Report:** Today's report is available on the OIG's website at the following link:

<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/review-institutional-hearing-and-removal-program-expansion-federal-inmates>

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