

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-25-107580](#), a report to Congressional Committees

Why GAO Did This Study

ICE is responsible for providing safe, secure, and humane confinement for noncitizens in immigration detention facilities. In fiscal year 2024, ICE had an average daily population of over 37,000 detained noncitizens at over 100 facilities owned and operated by ICE or private, state, or local entities.

The explanatory statement accompanying the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, includes a provision for GAO to review DHS entities responsible for inspections of immigration detention facilities. This report (1) describes the DHS entities that have conducted inspections and the processes used, (2) examines the results of inspections regarding compliance with detention standards, and (3) analyzes the extent to which DHS entities have assessed their detention facility inspection programs. GAO analyzed documents and data on inspections of facilities that held individuals for over 72 hours for fiscal years 2022 through 2024, and interviewed ICE and DHS officials and operators at selected facilities.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making three recommendations for DHS to establish goals and measures to assess facility inspections. DHS concurred with two recommendations. It did not concur with the third to ensure the Immigration Detention Ombudsman establishes goals and measures, noting that DHS is realigning responsibilities and issued Reduction in Force notices to OIDO employees. GAO maintains that DHS should establish goals and measures given the Ombudsman's statutory oversight responsibilities related to detention facility inspections.

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IMMIGRATION DETENTION

DHS Should Define Goals and Measures to Assess Facility Inspection Programs

What GAO Found

Four Department of Homeland Security (DHS) entities have conducted inspections of immigration detention facilities: (1) U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Office of Detention Oversight (ODO); (2) the ICE Health Service Corps; (3) DHS's Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO); and (4) DHS's Office of Inspector General (OIG). Each of the four entities' inspections have varied in terms of focus, purpose, and the number of inspections conducted each fiscal year.

Number of Inspections of Certain Immigration Detention Facilities Inspected by Department of Homeland Security Inspection Entities in Fiscal Year 2024



	<i>Number of Facilities Inspected in FY2024</i>
Office of Detention Oversight (ODO)	78
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Health Service Corps (IHSC)	80
Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO)	6
Office of Inspector General (OIG)	4

Source: GAO analysis of DHS data. | GAO-25-107580

Note: These data refer to inspections of facilities that detained noncitizens for more than 72 hours. ODO inspections include facilities that had an average daily population of 10 or more.

Inspections data from fiscal years 2022 through 2024 show that nearly all facilities received passing ratings but that the four inspections entities identified a range of deficiencies. ODO rated facilities as acceptable or above in 238 of 241 inspections during this period. But it found deficiencies related to, for example, environmental health and safety, such as water quality; and food service, such as sanitary conditions. The ICE Health Service Corps, which focuses on medical related standards, found that its staffed facilities complied with applicable detention standards in 46 of the 47 inspections, and common deficiencies related to medical care, safety, and sanitation. OIDO found that of the 33 facilities it inspected, 31 did not comply with the specific standard associated with the complaint or concern that led to the inspection. OIG identified deficiencies in the 12 inspection reports it published covering this period.

Three of the entities that have specifically focused on immigration detention facility oversight have had goals and measures for their facility inspection programs, such as measures related to the number of identified deficiencies or percentage of facilities inspected each year. However, they have not had goals that articulate target levels of performance to be accomplished and performance measures that track progress. Establishing goals and measures would provide insight into how effective detention facility inspection efforts are in achieving desired outcomes. This in turn would help better ensure that detained noncitizens are provided care that meets the standards for immigration detention.