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LOCAL

ICE detained a toddler in Delaware as arrests topped 500

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Key Points

- ICE apprehensions in Delaware more than doubled in 2025 under President Donald Trump’s policies.
- Data shows a significant increase in "street" arrests and the apprehension of four minors in 2025.
- Immigrant advocates and community leaders report widespread fear and a lack of information from ICE officials.

Under President Donald Trump’s immigration policies in 2025, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement apprehended more than double the number of people in Delaware than in 2024 – and that’s with two-and-a-half months of 2025 data missing.

In 2024, prior to Trump's taking office, ICE apprehended no minors in Delaware and made only 14 “street” apprehensions, according to information obtained by the Deportation Data Project through Freedom of Information Act requests.

In total, ICE apprehended 220 people in Delaware that year.

Data from 2025, after Trump took office, is only available through Oct. 15. During that time, ICE apprehended four minors in Delaware, including a child born in 2022, and made 361 “street” arrests, apprehending 518 people total.

The Data Deportation Project data is the most recently available information related to ICE in Delaware, where the increase in activity has happened quietly, fear keeps witnesses from coming forward, and ICE officials provide little to no information, those monitoring the situation say.

Mary Dupont is executive director of La Plaza Delaware, a nonprofit that works with about 500 Latino-owned businesses in Delaware. She was one of several panelists at a recent community meeting held by another Delaware nonprofit, Speak Out Against Hate.

“There’s a lot of fear,” Dupont said. “People are afraid.”

Bryant Garcia is executive director of La Esperanza, a Georgetown nonprofit that helps immigrants. He also spoke at the Speak Out Against Hate meeting.

“The communities we serve (and) the people that we work with don’t really have that privilege and power to be able to say, ‘This is happening,’ ” Garcia said.

In addition, unlike with local crime, court documents related to immigration aren’t easily obtainable, and attempts to obtain information from ICE officials, at least for this reporter, have been largely unsuccessful.

The lack of communication is apparent to local law enforcement, as well. Georgetown Police Chief Ralph Holm said at the meeting he’s had difficulty in getting ICE to let him know when they will be in town.

“We’re not getting good cooperation or communication from our federal partners," he said.

ICE in Delaware: 44-year-old man detained by ICE in Georgetown housing development

What the 2024 data says

In 2024, the year before Trump’s second term began, 220 people were apprehended by ICE in Delaware, according to the Deportation Data Project.

Nine of them were female and none of them were younger than 18.

The top three countries of citizenship of those apprehended by ICE in Delaware in 2024 included Guatemala (85), Mexico (67) and the Dominican Republic (28). No other represented countries of citizenship had more than six apprehensions.

Of the 220 people apprehended by ICE in Delaware in 2024, 168 were apprehended from prisons, and 101 were apprehended from Sussex County Correctional Institution,

specifically. Fifteen were taken from probation and parole programs.

A maximum of 14 arrests took place in homes, businesses and churches, on the street or elsewhere.

(Though ICE data is listed by state, the exact addresses of apprehensions are not provided, only areas represented by acronyms. Delaware Online/The News Journal reached out to ICE representatives to define these acronyms but did not receive a response.)

Only nine “non-custodial arrests” were made by ICE in Delaware in 2024. Non-custodial arrests "refer to actions against individuals not in custody of another agency and arrests that do not result in detention,” according to the Immigration Research Initiative.

Of those apprehended by ICE in Delaware in 2024, all were classified as “convicted criminals” or had “pending criminal charges,” except for nine labeled as “other immigration violator.” How ICE defines those terms is unknown; they aren't publicly listed.

Thirteen of those apprehended by ICE in Delaware in 2024 voluntarily left the country, while 53 were deported due to deportability and 109 were removed due to inadmissibility.

“Deportability” applies to people who already have been legally admitted to the United States, according to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, while “inadmissibility” applies to people present in the United States without ever having been legally admitted. That’s why ICE uses the term “removed” instead of “deported” related to inadmissibility.

A total of 36 cases remained active at the time of the report.

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What the 2025 data says

Between Jan. 1, 2025, and Oct. 15, 2025, 518 people were apprehended by ICE in Delaware. Ten of them were female and four were minors, including one child born in

2022.

Delaware Online/The News Journal asked ICE representatives for more information about the child's case but received no response. Names are not included in the Deportation Data Project information.

Of the 518 people apprehended, 132 were taken from state incarceration and 25 from probation and parole programs. The rest were street arrests, 251 of which were non-custodial.

Of those apprehended by ICE in Delaware between Jan. 1 and Oct. 15, 2025, 244 were "convicted criminals," 138 had "pending criminal charges" and 136 were labeled "other immigration violator." Again, how ICE defines those terms is unknown.

Sixty-four people "voluntarily departed" after being apprehended by ICE in Delaware in 2025. Forty-six were deported due to deportability and 254 were removed due to inadmissibility. At the time of the report, 145 cases remained active.

Of those apprehended in 2025, 210 were Guatemalan citizens, 151 were Mexican citizens and 44 of them were Dominican citizens. Other than 24 Hondurans, no other represented countries of citizenship had more than 13 people apprehended.

Unlike in 2024, in 2025, four people were listed as having had "relief granted" from removal and three people had their "charging document canceled." Also unlike in 2024, in 2025, there were apprehensions (seven total) listed as occurring in the general areas of the neighboring Wicomico and Worcester counties in Maryland.

Apprehensions at Delaware police departments

Most notably, the 2025 data contained four apprehensions listed as occurring at Delaware police departments: one at the Newark Police Department and three at Delaware State Police troops.

However, according to Newark Police Chief Mark Farrall, there was never an apprehension at his department.

A "Dominican national" was arrested and charged with felonies, including possession with intent to distribute heroin and crack cocaine, on May 29, 2025, Farrall said.

"At the time of arrest, the individual stated he was a Dominican national but did not possess identification," Farrall said. "ICE was contacted to assist with identification. The individual was also offered the opportunity to have his consulate notified, which he declined."

He was ultimately committed to Howard R. Young Correctional Institution, according to Farrall.

"At no point did the Newark Police Department transfer custody of the individual to ICE, nor did ICE conduct an apprehension at Newark Police Department facilities," Farrall said.

Without names, Delaware State Police spokesman Lewis Briggs said he was unable to find information on the incidents before deadline, but continues to seek it out. He reiterated that Delaware State Police have no formal agreements with ICE.

"Our mission remains focused on ensuring public safety for all Delawareans and visitors to our state," he said.

Apprehensions at Delaware prisons

ICE has long taken people into custody at prisons nationwide. The number of prison apprehensions in Delaware actually went down in 2025.

When someone is committed to Delaware Department of Corrections custody or sentenced to probation, background checks are conducted, DOC spokesman Jason Miller said.

"If a federal warrant or detainer is identified during that check, including a federal immigration warrant or detainer, DOC makes contact with the appropriate federal authorities for review and confirmation," Miller said. "DOC does not determine immigration status or initiate enforcement actions independently."

In addition, Miller said, the Delaware DOC does not have a contract with ICE to hold federal immigrant detainees.

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