

Is Mississippi helping ICE expand its reach?

In the past year, Mississippi has quietly, but efficiently, expanded its operations with the federal government's law enforcement agencies.

Using 287(g) agreements as a basis for partnership, several of Mississippi's public officials have joined forces with Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE). The embattled agency has unleashed violence, which has spurred a wave of resistance, across the United States.

Agreements between ICE and some Mississippi law enforcement agencies are likely to reshape public safety, civil rights and communities across the state. This explainer provides information, data and resources for people who are concerned about the expanding role of ICE in their communities.

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What are 287(g) agreements?

Named after its section in the 1996 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 287(g) agreements allows partnerships between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and state and local law enforcement agencies. These agreements give state and local police the authority to act as immigration agents in their own communities, greatly expanding the federal government's power to find, arrest, detain and deport immigrants across the United States.

Although it's been around since the 1990s, the first 287(g) agreement was not signed until 2002 in the aftermath of 9/11. Since then, partnerships have expanded across the country. Today, there are more than 1,300 active 287(g) agreements in the U.S., government records show, with more than 50 agreements soon to be finalized.

Agencies in more than 40 states have active 287(g) agreements with ICE, with many of those partnerships concentrated in the South, including Mississippi.

Which agencies in Mississippi have active 287(g) agreements?

Officials within state and local agencies are able to choose which partnership type they want to have with ICE, and agencies are not necessarily required to run the decision by their colleagues or constituents. Federal government records show five sheriff's offices, three state agencies and one police department in Mississippi already or will soon have 287(g) agreements. These include:

- Harrison County Sheriff's Office — *active since July 2025*
- Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office — *active since July 2025*
- Monroe County Sheriff's Office — *active since June 2025*
- Stone County Sheriff's Office — *active since July 2025*
- Wayne County Sheriff's Department — *not active yet; still pending*
- Mississippi Attorney General's Office — *active since March 2025*
- Mississippi Department of Public Safety — *active since December 2025*
- Mississippi Office of the State Auditor — *active since September 2025*
- Sumrall Police Department — *active since October 2025*

What powers are agencies granted with 287(g) agreements?

287(g) agreements fall within three categories:

- **Jail Enforcement Model:** Law enforcement officers are trained and able to identify undocumented and noncitizen immigrants while they are in jail and hold

them to be transferred to ICE custody. Read the draft memorandum of agreement [here](#).

- **Task Force Model:** Law enforcement officers are trained and able to question and arrest people for immigration violations while officers are conducting routine policing activities in their communities. Read the draft memorandum of agreement [here](#).
- **Warrant Service Officer Program:** Law enforcement officers are trained and able to serve and execute administrative warrants on immigrants already in custody. Read the draft memorandum of agreement [here](#).
- **Tribal Task Force Model:** Law enforcement officers on tribal lands are trained and granted limited federal immigration authority. This is the newest model, and ICE has not yet announced participating agencies. This is the newest partnership option, and the draft memorandum of agreement is not yet publicly available.

Types of 287(g) agreements in Mississippi			
Jail Enforcement Model	Task Force Model	Warrant Service Officer Program	Tribal Task Force Model
Harrison County Sheriff's Office	Mississippi Attorney General's Office	Harrison County Sheriff's Office	N/A
Monroe County Sheriff's Office	Mississippi Department of Public Safety	Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office	
Stone County Sheriff's Office	Mississippi Office of the State Auditor Stone County Sheriff's Office Sumrall Police Department Wayne County Sheriff's Office	Stone County Sheriff's Office	

How did this become the “new normal”?

Just five years ago, there were no 287(g) agreements in Mississippi. These agreements were all signed after President Donald Trump’s inauguration in January 2025, revealing a connection between the Republican Party’s national goals and the state of Mississippi’s cooperation with the GOP’s stated plan to bolster immigration enforcement and to deport immigrants

“ICE agents [need] every law enforcement officer willing to assist in their corner,” Mississippi State Auditor Shad White wrote in a September 2025 press release. “Two agents from my office volunteered [to] assist ICE [and] we are grateful for the chance to serve in this way.” White encouraged other agencies to sign 287(g) agreements.

Most of Mississippi’s 287(g) agreements were signed after Congress passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA), which funneled tens of billions of dollars into ICE, nearly tripling the agency’s budget with the stroke of Trump’s pen. Under OBBA, ICE is set to receive more than \$170M from 2025 to 2029, aiming to deport one million people each year. ICE’s budget surpasses all law enforcement agencies’ budgets in the U.S. — combined.

Advocates and experts worry the supercharged funding will only exacerbate ICE’s lack of transparency and oversight, while everyday people in everyday communities bear the brunt of the agency’s track record of abuse.

“The [OBBA] gives federal agencies [more] money than many nations spend on their entire military. The focus? Targeting immigrants, including children and families. Imagine investing in revitalizing cities, healthcare and education needs,” advocates from the Immigrant Alliance for Justice and Equity (IAJE) wrote in a September 2025 statement.

What impact are 287(g) agreements having on immigration and public safety in Mississippi?

Although ICE said that local and state law enforcement officers must receive specialized training to become deputized as federal immigration officers, reports show officers simply complete a 40-hour online training process. From there, officers are released in their communities where they can begin questioning people, serving warrants, making arrests and holding people in jail for ICE transfers.

This uptick in 287(g) agreements and immigration enforcement in Mississippi has left entire communities living in fear, like those in the towns of Morton and Forest.

These and other small towns in Mississippi experienced a record-setting ICE raid in 2019 when almost 700 people were arrested at their poultry-plant jobs while their children were at school. Reporting by Mississippi Today shows federal agents have been patrolling and arresting people in these same areas.

As Mississippi continues to expand its cooperation with the federal government to arrest and detain more immigrants, advocates across the state – like those in DeSoto and Marshall counties – are standing in opposition.

ICE's continuous expansion into Mississippi "is part of a broader deportation-industrial complex that treats human beings like cargo," organizers with DeSoto Mutual Aid Collective said in a statement and at a press conference.

What impact are immigrants having on the economy and public safety in Mississippi?

Of the 2.9 million people who call Mississippi home, 74,000 of them are immigrants: they own homes, start businesses, work in various industries, study at colleges and universities and more.

As granted to all people who have rooted themselves and their families in Mississippi, immigrants have the right to participate in certain public and social safety nets. This includes attending public schools, seeking medical attention when needed, being treated fairly in the criminal justice system and more.

However, unlike citizens, undocumented people don't have access to federal aid programs, so there are costs to providing a safe and fair society for all people, as reported by State Auditor Shad White. He estimates Mississippi generally spends:

- \$25 million per year educating undocumented children in public schools
- \$77 million per year paying for undocumented people's healthcare costs
- \$1.7 million per year incarcerating undocumented people

Despite misinformation which claims immigrants are a financial drain on the government, immigrants in Mississippi contribute far more to the economy, including:

- \$2.7 billion in total income
- \$2 billion in total spending power
- \$711 billion in total taxes paid

In general, all immigrants – including undocumented ones – are more likely to be working than native-born Mississippians, one study shows. Another study shows immigrants commit crimes at lower rates than native-born residents.

Apart from 287(g) agreements, what is Mississippi's role in ICE operations?

The Department of Homeland Security, the federal agency that oversees ICE, announced a plan to send hundreds of federal agents to parts of South Mississippi near the Louisiana border. Dubbed “Operation Swamp Sweep” by the Trump Administration, agents are expected to arrest 5,000 people.

Mississippi also plays a key role in ICE’s detention system. In Natchez, the Adams County Correctional Facility imprisons about 2,200 immigrants. It is one of the most crowded ICE prisons in the country, second only to El Paso. The Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility in Tutwiler also detains hundreds of immigrants. Both facilities are operated by CoreCivic, a private prison company.

The Adams County ICE facility has a history of abuse and death. In December 2025, Delvin Francisco Rodriguez, a 39-year-old man from Nicaragua, died after being detained for months at the Adams County facility. In December 2020, under the first Trump Administration, there were reports of ICE agents torturing immigrants.

Many immigrants are transferred to facilities in Mississippi before they are shipped to ICE detention in Louisiana – the last stop before deportation to another country. There’s also reports of ICE potentially looking to purchase a large-scale warehouse in Byhalia and in many other places across the country.

This move is in line with ICE’s goal to have a detention and deportation process “like (Amazon) Prime, but with human beings.” Some residents in Marshall County, where the population is about 34,000 people, have begun protesting the proposal to turn a warehouse in Byhalia into a detention facility that would hold more than 8,000 people. U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) sent a letter to the Department of Homeland security in opposition of turning the warehouse into an ICE prison.

“Converting this industrial asset into an ICE detention center forecloses economic growth opportunities and replaces them with a use that does not generate comparable economic returns or community benefits,” Wicker wrote in the letter.

In the 2026 legislative session, some Mississippi lawmakers are looking to expand ICE's footprint even more. Republican Senator Michael McLendon has proposed SB 2329, which would use state money to reward and reimburse police departments and sheriff's offices that sign 287(g) agreements.

Data show 74% – or almost 3 out of 4 – people detained by ICE have no criminal record.

Who can I contact to express concern about ICE and 287(g) agreements?

At the county level:

- Your sheriff
- Your district attorney
- Your board of supervisors

At the city level:

- Your mayor
- Your city council
- Your police chief

At the state level:

- Your state senators
- Your state representatives
- Gov. Tate Reeves
- Attorney General Lynn Fitch
- State Auditor Shad White
- Public Safety Commissioner Sean Tindell

At the federal level:

- Your members of congress
- ICE New Orleans Field Office
- Department of Homeland Security
- ICE Office of Partnership and Engagement
- Baxter Kruger, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi

How can I learn more and get involved?

Mississippians can stay informed, support impacted families and take action by connecting with organizations that monitor ICE activity and advocate for immigrant rights, including:

- Immigrant Alliance for Justice and Equity (IAJE)
- ACLU of Mississippi
- Gulf Coast ICE Watch
- Mississippi Rising Coalition

You can also:

- Attend local town halls, court hearings and public meetings
- Participate in know-your-rights trainings
- Support mutual aid and rapid-response networks
- Track bills and engage with Mississippi lawmakers during the legislative session
- Share verified information with your family, friends and community