



**Military Spending Monitor – August 29, 2025:**  
**Arming and Expanding ICE: The Cost to American Taxpayers and Liberties**

*The Trump Administration is poised to potentially triple funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in FY2026 as it recruits, arms and deploys large numbers of new personnel across the country. If compared to military forces, ICE’s new budget would rank it among the top-funded 15 militaries in the world – an ominous buildup of armed loyalists that Trump is demonstratively deploying alongside other law enforcement and the national guard in cities and states he regards as resisting his authority.*

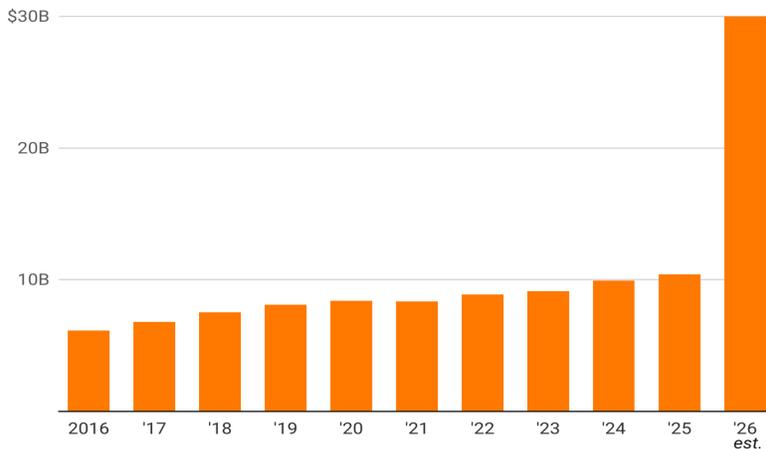
**ICE funding for 2026: A conservative estimate**

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deported 545,252 people between 2021 and 2024, including [271,484](#) last year. The Trump administration’s stated goal is to deport [1,000,000](#) people per year. To that end, the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” authorizes \$75 billion in supplemental funding for ICE, including:

- \$45 billion to expand the agency’s detention capacity, including building new ICE prisons (see [Sec. 90003](#)).
- \$30 billion for bonus pay for ICE personnel; recruiting, hiring, and training new personnel; additional facilities, vehicles, and funding for enforcement and removal operations (see [Sec. 100052](#)).

**ICE spending set to triple to \$30 billion in 2026**

Trump request: \$11B, plus est. \$19B from reconciliation bill



Funding can be used anytime between fiscal years 2025 and 2029. For budget enforcement and scorekeeping purposes, funding made available over multiple years generally counts toward the first year. However, White House budget documents indicate that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which houses ICE, plans to begin using the extra money in 2026, obligating 25% of the homeland security reconciliation funding.

*Immigration and Customs Enforcement estimate is based on Trump’s budget request and White House documents stating that 25% of reconciliation homeland security funding is for 2026.*

Chart: Stephen Semler (@stephensemle | stephensemle.com) • Created with Datawrapper

Assuming this 25% share applies equally on a pro rata basis across all DHS agencies, ICE would receive \$18.7 billion in supplemental funding in 2026, on top of the amount the agency receives through the regular federal budget process. In May, Trump proposed \$11.3 billion for ICE in his base budget request. The graph above situates this \$30 billion budget estimate in historical context. If enacted, ICE's budget would triple from 2025 to 2026.

## Issues for Congress

- **Militarization:** If compared to military forces, ICE's projected 2026 budget would place it among the 15 largest *military* budgets in the world. More broadly, with the extra funding provided through reconciliation, the Trump administration expects ICE to swell its ranks by 50%, expand its detention capacity by 100%, and increase removals by 268% by 2029.<sup>1</sup> The influx of resources and a lofty deportation target create the conditions for an invasive, unaccountable, and highly militarized federal presence in local communities.
- **Public opinion:** A massive, anti-immigration show of force is not what Americans want. Recent [polling](#) shows that nearly 80% of the public believes immigration is a good thing for the country, while only 17% say it's a bad thing. The share of voters who prefer lower immigration rates has fallen from 55% to 35% from last year to this year.
- **Oversight:** Loosely-written sections of the Big Beautiful Bill effectively create a DHS slush fund, allowing DHS to direct billions of dollars even more to ICE. Examples include:
  - [Section 100051](#), which provides \$2.1 billion to DHS. Of the 12 listed purposes of the funding, four involve removals, which ICE manages.
  - [Section 90007](#), which provides \$10 billion for “undertaking activities in support of the Department of Homeland Security’s mission to safeguard the border.”

## Conclusion

The massive expansion of ICE at American taxpayer's expense is a multi-pronged threat to the rule of law. Lawmakers rightly sounding the alarm over the threat to immigrants' rights and due process should be broadly joined in their opposition to ICE's expansion by colleagues concerned about out-of-control military spending, waste and lack of accountability – and indeed by all who believe an armed domestic force rapidly enlarged by an openly authoritarian president threatens the very foundations of American democracy.

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<sup>1</sup> Compared to 2026 levels for detention capacity and personnel, and compared to 2024 for removals. The 2026 base budget [request](#) supports 21,411 ICE personnel, and the House-passed [version](#) of the Big Beautiful Bill expressed the intent to swell ICE's ranks by another 10,000 by 2029. (The final version of the bill is much less specific and doesn't mention any hiring targets, but the language and funding levels align with the House version.) The 2026 base budget request includes [funding](#) to support 50,000 detention beds. The administration has [said](#) it wants the ICE prison system to have 100,000 detention beds.