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TOP STORY: ERO launches second phase of Community and Detainee Helpline

Last week, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Enforcement and Removal Operations launched the second phase of its ICE Community and Detainee Helpline (CDH). In this phase, detainees from ERO Washington, Baltimore, Atlanta, Miami and New Orleans will be able to directly contact the Office of the Public Advocate by telephone through toll-free telephone systems in the facilities. This expanded service streamlines the means by which detainees can access assistance.

Expanding the CDH is a joint project between ERO's Office of the Public Advocate and its Custody Management Division (CMD). Activating this helpline in additional detention facilities will take place over several phases, with nationwide implementation to be done by the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2013.

Adding access to this toll-free helpline is not meant to replace regular staff-detainee communications or the field offices' regular exchanges with their stakeholders. It is a direct line that provides detainees the opportunity to obtain basic immigration case information, report systemic incidents, or inform ICE of pertinent issues such as detainee vulnerabilities. Both the Office of the Public Advocate and CMD are hopeful that expanding this resource will enhance ICE ERO's public engagement capabilities, enabling both Headquarters and field office locations to better address the concerns of the public and detainees.

The Office of the Public Advocate has established protocols to ensure that all issues related to the helpline are managed in an efficient and timely manner. All calls to the CDH are managed by ERO operators who have been trained to identify specific concerns, summarize salient points, and route them to the appropriate field offices or HQ for appropriate review and action.

ICE ERO Public Advocate Andrew Lorenzen-Strait said this is consistent with ERO's goals of ensuring transparency, collaboration and resolving conflict.

"We are excited to launch the next phase of the ICE Community and Detainee Helpline," Lorenzen-Strait said. "We are confident that this expanded service will allow us to promote further dialogue with our many stakeholders and continue to build bridges with our communities."

To learn more about the helpline, visit [ICE.gov \(http://www.ice.gov/index.htm\)](http://www.ice.gov/index.htm).

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