

Immigration Executive Orders and Directives, Explained

January 2025

As people of faith, justice-seekers, and members of immigrant communities, we are united in our commitment to protecting one another. We will continue to stay informed, tell the truth, condemn scapegoating, care for each other, and advocate for a country where everyone thrives, no exceptions.

This resource was updated on January 27, 2025 and does not include any subsequent executive orders (EOs) or directives. However, future EOs and directives will mainly fall into the categories below.

The entering of refugees and asylum-seekers

Refugee entrants: The Trump administration has cancelled all arrivals of refugees effective immediately, even though the EO said it will take effect in two weeks. The immediate impact is on refugees who have not yet travelled to the United States. Refugees who have gone through a 1-3 year long process to come to the U.S. have had their flights cancelled and their futures dashed in a matter of hours.

Asylum banned: The Trump administration has banned asylum at the southern border in three ways:

1. **Cancelling the CBP One app.** The Biden administration issued a regulation that all who came through the southern border had to make an appointment through this app to be eligible for asylum.
2. **Expelling any immigrant who has crossed the border and is arrested,** even if they ask for asylum. (Prior to January 20, if someone seeking asylum expressed fear of returning to their home country, they could be detained and also begin the process with U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) to process their asylum claim. This was usually derogatorily referred to as “catch and release.”)
3. **Stopping the processing of asylum-seekers’ claims** unless all security questions and paperwork are cleared from the country that the person is fleeing. This is essentially an asylum ban, because governments rarely (if ever) give security clearances to people they are persecuting.

These measures have immediate impact for those on the Mexico side of the border. The CBP One portion of this EO is already being litigated (challenged in the courts), as it was during a Biden-era asylum ban. The other sections of this EO are not yet being litigated.

Rescinding earlier EOs

- **Cuban Haitian Nicaraguan Parole program ended.** Effective immediately. People already on their way to the U.S. on this program have not yet been turned away, but no one has been able to sign up since Jan 20.
- **Humanitarian Parole ended.** This is a program that allows non-nationals to enter the U.S. quickly for medical emergencies or instances of extreme danger. Its termination is effective immediately.
- **“Remain in Mexico” reinstated.** It is unclear if this is possible to implement. Mexico has not officially agreed to allow non-Mexican nationals to remain in Mexico and to process their asylum claims.

Internal enforcement — detention and deportation

(This is the most important category for NETWORK)

Declared emergency at the southern border. The Trump administration has invoked the Alien Enemies Act, which allows for sending troops to the border and the large-scale detention of certain populations. There are rumors of 1,500 military troops ordered to the southern border, but our partners at the border have not seen them yet. This EO also gives power to Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives (ATF) drug enforcement officers to deport people and directs Congress to fund large-scale detention facilities.

Purported “Invasion” Executive Order. *All points below are features of one executive order, “Protecting the American People Against Invasions.” This EO fallaciously paints immigrants and families seeking safety as “invaders,” as a pretense to give the Trump administration extraordinary powers to suspend regular law and due process, use the military on the civilians, and stifle dissent against executive authority.*

- **Expanding expedited removal.** DHS has expanded its use of “expedited removal,” which allows the government to quickly “remove” someone from the U.S. without going through due process in the courts. Prior to January 20, ICE and CBP could arrest and remove people within 100 miles of the border and within 14 days of their arrival. Under Trump’s new order, **any noncitizen found anywhere in the United States who cannot prove to the satisfaction of a U.S. ICE agent that they have been in the country for more than two years can be deported immediately**, unless they show that they have a credible fear of persecution. “Expedited removal” is being enforced immediately. The ACLU has filed litigation against “expedited removal.” No date set for a court hearing yet.
- **Freezing funding for NGOs.** The Trump administration has paused all federal funding to organizations that support immigrants in “any way.” They have directed the immediate review and audit of all contracts with such organizations and will terminate any contract if found guilty of “fraud.” **This would impact faith-based organizations like Catholic Charities and Annunciation House.** It is immediately effective. The Administration has cut off funds for rest and respite for asylum seekers and funds for ongoing support for refugees already in the country.
- **Criminalizing aid.** This EO says that organizations and individuals who support immigrants or give immigrants shelter could be held criminally liable for supporting “invasion.” Not in effect immediately.
- **Designating cartels as terrorist groups.** This could impact churches and faith leaders who work with immigrants across the border in Mexico. This is effective immediately.
- **Allowing ICE and CBP officers into churches, schools, and hospitals.** The Trump administration rescinded the Sensitive Locations Memo, **now allowing ICE and CBP officers to enter public spaces in churches, hospitals, and schools and arrest undocumented people.** This is effective immediately. We have not heard reports of any arrests or raids except for instances of ICE “visiting” churches (unfortunately not for prayer!) and making no arrests. There is litigation challenging this. See NETWORK’s forthcoming resource on *what to do if ICE or CBP comes to your door.*
- **Allowing ICE and CPB in judicial areas.** By rescinding the Judicial Locations memo, this EO ends the policy of keeping public spaces inside or outside courtrooms free of ICE and CBP. Now, all judicial areas (except judges’ chambers) can have ICE or CBP activity. Effective immediately. No impact reports yet.
- **Ending sanctuary cities.** The federal government will now condition state and city funding on their cooperation with ICE and CBP. This is effective immediately, but the impact will be felt later when funding cycles come up or if there is a disaster. No litigation yet.

Birthright citizenship

Though birthright citizenship is a clear part of the U.S. Constitution, the Trump administration seeks to stop granting citizenship to children born in the U.S. to immigrant parents if they are born when their parents are still undocumented or temporary visa holders. Litigation has begun. This is stayed (stopped) by the courts for now.