

FAQ: Gallatin County Detention Center ICE Holds and transfers

Because of this agreement, in 2025, 84 individuals were transferred from the Gallatin County Detention Center to ICE custody, many with only misdemeanor charges. This is by far the most common path for ICE detention currently in Gallatin County. (see “more resources” below for more details)

This agreement was signed by the former sheriff in 2020, and the county commission wasn't informed, nor did they sign off on this agreement. This agreement is not valid.

Individual dignity is guaranteed to Montanans by our state constitution: Article II, Section 4: “Individual dignity...No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws.” Gallatin County has an obligation to its community members to make sure that any involvement with federal immigration enforcement upholds MT law, the state constitution, and our federal constitution.

What is the 287g agreement in Gallatin County?

- Since 2020, the Gallatin County Detention Center has acted on a [287g agreement](#) with the federal government, signed by a former Gallatin County Sheriff without permission from the County Commission.
- The agreement allows the Detention Center to routinely place ICE holds on immigrants detained for misdemeanors. When the individuals have paid their bond or are released on their own recognizance pending trial, and are deemed eligible to be released, the individual is instead held for 48 hours to allow transfer to ICE custody.

How does the agreement work in Gallatin County? What's been happening in the past year or so?

- Before the current administration, most people detained on misdemeanor or minor offense charges with no pre-existing deportation warrants were evaluated by ICE and then promptly released to continue with their legal immigration process.
- This has changed. Starting in 2025, people have been transferred mostly to the Cascade County Detention Center in Great Falls, where they are held for 2-5 days before being transferred to ICE detention facilities out of state.
- These transfers happen so quickly that it's difficult for families and lawyers to track and communicate with people being transferred.
 - The lack of communication for people caught up in this system is cruel to both families and the people detained
 - This significantly hinders detained people's ability to obtain legal support
 - It interferes with their ability to have due process

- ICE detention centers have been notorious for harsh conditions and ill treatment of detainees.

Which entities in MT have these agreements?

- Gallatin County Detention Center is acting on a [287g agreement](#) (Warrant Service Officer model), which “allows ICE to train, certify and authorize state and local law enforcement officers to serve and execute administrative warrants on aliens in their agency’s jail.” Again, this program is likely not valid since it was not authorized by the County Commissioners.
- Flathead County has had a 287g agreement in place since 2020 and has recently allowed it to expire.
- Governor Gianforte signed a 287g Task Force Model on 3/5/25 that allows the MT Highway Patrol to act as ICE enforcement agents (Task Force Model).
- Garfield County signed a Task Force Model 287 agreement on 8/28/25
- Just recently, the Treasure County sheriff’s office has entered into a Task Force Model agreement, as of 3/11/26
- Cascade County does **not** have a 287g agreement at this time. They do have a contract in place to allow the Cascade County Detention Center in Great Falls to house ICE detainees in their detention center.

Resources - 287g agreements:

- [No ICE Holds in Our Jail](#) Bozeman Daily Chronicle Op Ed 4/24/26:
- [“Breaking down Montana’s immigration enforcement partnerships.”](#) Explore Big Sky, February 2026.
- [American Immigration Council provides](#) a brief overview of the types of 287 g programs and some of the problems seen with their implementation nationwide.
- [ACLU:](#) Provides an overview of the 287g Task Force Model that has been embraced by the MT State Highway Patrol, Treasure and Garfield County Sheriff Offices.
- Gallatin Co's [agreement](#) signed by Sheriff Gootkin in 2020 (Warrant Service Officer Model) and not authorized by the County Commission.
- [ICE website](#) on 287g agreements outlines the different models of 287g agreements and some of the financial incentives used to encourage participation.

Your Voice Matters! Please consider joining us 9am May 26th County Commissioners meeting. The 1st agenda item is Public Comments and the public can speak to their concerns.

- Courthouse Community Room (311 W. Main, Bozeman). Public comment is accepted in-person, via Zoom, or in writing by emailing commission@gallatin.mt.gov