

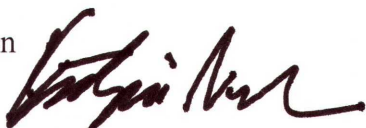
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

March 27, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: DHS COMPONENT HEADS & JOINT TASK FORCES

FROM: Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary 

SUBJECT: Request for DHS Volunteers at the Southern Border

The situation at our Southern Border is dire. We are witnessing historic migration flows that far exceed U.S. capacity and a humanitarian situation that grows worse by the day. Our agencies on the frontlines—especially Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—are not equipped to deal with the volume of vulnerable populations that are reaching our territory. Our facilities are maxed out, our agents and officers are stretched thin, children are arriving sicker than ever before, and we are at grave risk of life-threatening incidents given the sheer size of the flows and remote locations at which many migrants arrive. As a result, we have made a difficult determination to divert resources away from border security and toward full-time humanitarian response, and we have been forced to release individuals before they have been fully processed through the immigration system.

In short, we have come to the point of a system-wide breakdown. This week I am notifying Congress that DHS is seeking emergency resources and authorities to deal with the crisis. We must be able to restore order and, at the same time, uphold our humanitarian obligations. I have also been meeting with our foreign counterparts to the south—including in Mexico and Central America—to step up efforts to counter irregular migration, human smuggling and trafficking, and transnational criminals that are fueling the crisis. Moreover, DHS is seeking additional assistance from interagency partners.

Effective today, we are also asking DHS employees to volunteer to assist CBP and ICE in responding to the emergency at the southern border. The mission of every DHS component is critical to our national and homeland security. And we must be vigilant that we do not create new problems by resourcing against others. But right now the situation at the border has reached a breaking point and requires the help of individuals willing to temporarily use their expertise to help address the situation.

Accordingly, I request that you immediately solicit volunteers from your Components and temporarily detail available volunteers to the southern border. CBP and ICE have identified specific support functions that can be performed by volunteers from other DHS components. While some tasks are skill-specific—such as those requiring medical professionals and

lawyers—others can be filled by any willing volunteer, once onsite training is provided. Reimbursement will be provided by the benefiting component. For every DHS volunteer that reports to the border, it allows one additional CBP officer or ICE officer/agent to perform border security duties.

DHS seeks willing Departmental volunteers to augment CBP capacity in the following areas:

High Capacity Transportation. Provide Component vehicles and licensed personnel to transport 15-50 people per trip to Border Patrol stations from remote locations, and transportation from ports of entry and/or Border Patrol Stations to immigration facilities.

Medical Assessment. Provide qualified personnel to conduct initial medical assessments to evaluate need for professional medical care of juveniles and adult individuals in custody. This will be conducted at select ports of entries as well as Border Patrol stations that do not currently have this capability through existing contracts.

Hospital Watch. Transport individuals in need of medical care to local health providers, provide security detail, and provide transportation back to the CBP station once medical personnel designate individuals as fit for travel.

Distribution of Meals. Heat and distribute meals, snacks, and refreshment for individuals in custody and document provision of care to ensure individuals receive appropriate nourishment every four hours, according to regulation and policy.

Personal Property Management. Augment accountability for personal property by tagging and logging bags and items upon individuals' entrance into CBP custody and accounting for items upon transfer from custody.

Additionally, DHS is requesting assistance for ICE in the below two categories:

Health Care Providers. ICE is seeking medical personnel to provide evaluation and treatment of its detained population consistent with facility capabilities and standard of care. Health care specialties include physicians (MDs or DOs), Advanced Practice Providers (APP), Licensed Practical Nurse/ Licensed Vocational Nurse (LPN/LVN), and Registered Nurse (RN).

Attorney Support. ICE's Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) serves as the DHS's exclusive legal representative in exclusion, deportation, and removal proceedings before the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). OPLA attorneys litigate before immigration courts across the country and before the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA or Board) to uphold the immigration laws of the United States. ICE OPLA is seeking volunteer attorneys to conduct immigration litigation and case support on a 12-month rotation, with an option for another 12 months. Prior immigration experience is not required as ICE OPLA will provide requisite training.

The crisis is unsustainable. In addressing this call for volunteers, I ask each DHS leader to properly balance risk to other missions while encouraging maximum voluntary participation.

DHS cannot regain control along the southern border on its own, which is why I will continue to aggressively pursue all available options across the federal government and with the international community to address this humanitarian and security crisis. Additional details regarding the administration of voluntary deployments will be sent separately. I offer my thanks to each of you and your employees for giving this "call to action" the level of attention it deserves.