

## FAMILY CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

*The Trump administration continues to present a false choice between separating asylum-seeking families at the border or detaining them. That premise ignores the many [alternatives to detention](#) the government can turn to while an individual or family goes through their asylum or immigration case, and in particular, a program Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operated that was **specifically designed for families seeking protection in the United States**. For families where the government seeks to mitigate a demonstrated flight risk or who may need additional support, the administration should turn to – and Congress should fund – the Family Case Management Program.*

### What is the Family Case Management Program (FCMP)?

The FCMP was a formal ICE alternative to detention (ATD) program that operated from January 2016 through June 2017, when the Trump administration [terminated](#) it. FCMP's cornerstone principle, as borne out by [international research](#) and prior, non-government funded programs, was that individualized case management services lead to an understanding of the immigration process and high compliance with the government's immigration requirements. The program focused on support and rule of law without the use of restrictive and punitive measures that are ineffective. It did not use ankle monitors.

FCMP was implemented in five geographic areas: Baltimore/Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York.

### Did FCMP result in high compliance rates with immigration requirements and case outcomes?

Yes. Of families enrolled in the FCMP:

- 99.3% attended their immigration court hearings
- 99.4% attended their appointments with ICE
- Notably, FCMP was also effective in securing final removals

Most families were still in proceedings when the program ended, but some had been granted immigration relief, and three percent absconded. FCMP also had families who were ordered removed and complied with that removal, benefiting from case management services that assisted with preparing the family for removal.

### How much did FCMP cost?

FCMP cost approximately \$38 each day per family unit. By contrast, ICE family detention costs nearly [\\$320](#) per person each day. For a family of one parent and two children, for example, enrollment in FCMP costs a fraction, or 4%, of family detention costs for the same family. For that family, 20 days enrolled in the FCMP costs \$760, compared to \$19,200 in an ICE family detention center.

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### What were the key components of FCMP?

Families enrolled in FCMP received individualized case management services, including referrals and to and assistance with medical services, social services, and assistance with enrollment in education for children. Families received a legal orientation in order to help understand the immigration process and what to expect. Families enrolled in FCMP were required to attend check-ins with their case managers in addition to their other immigration requirements.

### How many families were enrolled in FCMP?

FCMP enrolled 952 families in total, though not all 952 families were enrolled through the duration of the program's lifetime. These families were primarily Central American women and children seeking protection in the United States. Although the program could (and should) serve more than only families, it is important to note that FCMP served exactly the demographic – protection-seeking families – who are now facing either separation or detention.

### Who operated the FCMP?

FCMP was operated by GeoCare, an affiliate of the GeoGroup. Recognizing the importance of partnering with organizations with longstanding experience and technical expertise in serving immigrants and refugees, ICE and GeoCare in turn subcontracted with community-based organizations in the FCMP's five geographic areas in order to help provide services. The Women's Refugee Commission strongly believes that, if reinstated, FCMP should contract directly with qualified community-based organizations.

### Can the FCMP be restarted? Could it serve a larger population?

Yes. FCMP was abruptly and unnecessarily terminated in June 2017, despite having been funded by Congress and despite its demonstrated cost-savings, high compliance rates, and more appropriate approach to families seeking protection.

ICE has demonstrated repeatedly that it is willing to open new and costly immigration detention centers or expand to other facilities with little notice and at enormous cost to the agency – costs that the agency clearly cannot afford and spends in defiance of Congressional appropriations. Instead of seeking to expand family detention by up to 15,000 beds, ICE could easily redirect its spending and attention to reinstating the FCMP, investing in the program and implementing it across geographic areas where protection-seeking families and others would most benefit from it.

### RECOMMENDATION

The administration continues to present a false choice between family separation and family detention. **Congressional appropriators should direct ICE to reinstate – and expand – the program with funds that the agency would otherwise use for custody operations.**