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Trump reallocates \$155 million from FEMA disaster relief to fund ICE



Orion Rummier



Families at the U.S. Border Patrol McAllen Station on June 10 in McAllen, Texas. Photo: Office of Inspector General/Department of Homeland Security via Getty Images

The Trump administration is reallocating \$271 million from the Department of Homeland Security's budget, which includes FEMA,

"to pay for immigration detention space and temporary hearing locations for asylum-seekers" made to wait in Mexico, NBC [reports](#).

The big picture, via [Axios' Stef Kight](#): The number of immigrants arrested or turned away at the southern border had been steadily climbing to records not seen before, but has been falling for the last 2 months in a row. Prior to her resignation, former DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said the U.S. immigration system had "[come to the point of a system-wide breakdown](#)" in March.

By the numbers: This new \$271 million in funding "would allow ICE to detain nearly 50,000 immigrants at one time," per NBC.

- **\$155 million of ICE's new funding** will come from FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, according to a letter sent to DHS by Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.).
- **The other \$116 million** will come from funds earmarked for areas like Coast Guard operations and aviation security. It will finance almost 6,800 extra beds for detained immigrants.

Flashback: The Trump administration [took \\$9.7 million out of FEMA's budget](#) in 2018 to support ICE and help the agency fund more detention center beds and detain immigrants.

What they're saying: A FEMA spokesperson said that the transfer will leave \$447 million in the Disaster Relief Fund, which a review determined "will be sufficient to support operational needs and will not impact ongoing long-term recovery efforts across the country."

- FEMA added that the Disaster Relief Fund Majors account, "which provides funding for ongoing recovery efforts, including those supporting communities impacted by the 2017 disasters, has a current balance of approximately \$27 billion and is not impacted by the reprogramming."

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Editor's note: This piece has been updated to include a statement from a FEMA spokesperson.



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Stef W. Kight
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