

DETENTION IN YOUR DISTRICT

STATE: Virginia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 5

FACILITIES: Farmville, Immigration Centers of America (ICA)

CAPACITY: 851 (approx.)

Overview & Planned Expansion

There is no planned expansion in VA. However, ICA is actively seeking to expand its operations in other areas of the country, holding up its Farmville facility as a model. In [August 2019](#), ICA responded to a Request for Information issued by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to assess contractor interest in construction of a 600-800-bed facility in near Baltimore.

Farmville Detention Center

This facility is owned by Prince Edward County and operated by a private company, Immigration Centers of America (ICA) via an Intergovernmental Services Agreement (IGSA) originally signed in [September 2008](#). According to a [housing invoice](#) submitted by ICA to ICE, the facility held a maximum of 793 men in May 2019. According to the original 2008 IGSA, ICE established a per diem rate of \$79.89. ICA Farmville's per diem rate jumped to a base rate of \$120.75 via a [July 2019](#) contract modification, with incremental increases for every additional person held over 500. According to emails and invoices obtained by the [National Immigrant Justice Center](#), ICA billed ICE \$2,069,258 in the month of April 2019, and the town of Farmville received \$20,489 of this payout.

A July 2015 [inspection](#) by ICE's Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) stated that detained persons reported small food portions and that they had observed worms in their food several times in February of 2015 and in the two weeks preceding the inspection. Inspectors found boll weevils in the flour used to prepare meals in the facility. The Inspection also revealed that detained persons placed in administrative segregation had not received a copy of the reviewing officer's decision, in [violation](#) of ICE's 2011 Performance Based National Detention Standards. According to a September 2016 memo by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), persons detained at Farmville raised several issues about the facility's medical care, use of force and restraints, religious accommodation, environmental health and safety. According to the September 2016 [memo](#), CRCL conducted an on-site visit to the Farmville facility as a result of these complaints in July 2015 and issued a series of recommendations to improve facility conditions. However, the memo stated that CRCL continued to receive complaints about detention conditions after its 2015 on-site visit, particularly with regards to access to medical care and use of force. According to the same memo, transgender individuals detained at Farmville alleged they were denied access to hormone therapy.



Credit: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Areas of Concern

- Medical neglect
- Use of force and restraints
- Contaminated food
- Retaliation and barriers to filing grievances

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Death connected to medical neglect has occurred at Farmville. On [October 2, 2011](#), ICE reported that Anibal Ramirez-Ramirez, a Salvadoran national, died in ICE custody at the University of Virginia Medical Counsel. ICE listed liver failure as the cause of death. According to a 2016 [press report](#), Mr. Ramirez-Ramirez died seven days after entering ICE custody and five days after arriving at the Farmville detention center. According to the report, he experienced vomiting, involuntary bowel movements, and extreme disorientation and these symptoms were not communicated between facilities. Also according to the report, non-medical personnel interfered with his medical care by preventing a registered nurse from taking Mr. Ramirez-Ramirez's vital signs. When she was finally able to do so, she reported that his heart rate was "perilously high" and that he needed emergency care. According to the report, detention facility staff decided to wait until Mr. Ramirez-Ramirez's scheduled doctor's appointment 14 hours later instead of calling emergency services.

In the [June 2019](#), mumps occurred in ICA Farmville. According to a [press report](#), five staff members and 17 detained individuals were impacted. According to a lawsuit filed in July 2019 by persons detained at ICA against the company and several ICE officials, detained persons at the facility at the time of the outbreak were not initially offered vaccines. Instead, they were placed in quarantine and denied visits. According to the [lawsuit](#), some detained individuals refused meals in protest and ICA staff used force and pepper spray in retaliation against at least one hunger striker.

According to a [report](#) by Freedom for Immigrants on abuse in detention centers motivated by hate, one individual detained at Farmville reported being called "crazy" and "mentally retarded" by ICA staff. The same report cited a second individual who reported retaliation by ICA staff after individuals filed complaints and reported abuse.

Resources

- [Capital Area Immigrant Rights Coalition](#)
- [Carecen DC](#)
- [Catholic Charities Legal Network](#)
- [LUCHA Ministries](#)
- [Virginia Poverty Law Center](#)
- [Ayuda](#)

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