



www.capitalnews9.com

[Link to source >](#)

NYS inspires national program

Updated: 02/01/2008 05:57 AM

By: Erin Billups

The federal government wants to identify and deport more than 200,000 convicted immigrants from state and federal prisons this year, basing its program on the success of New York's rapid immigrant removal program.



In 1991, the State Department of Corrections sued the federal government. The cost of housing thousands of foreign-born and illegal immigrant convicts was too much.

"It was a matter of very large numbers combined with very inefficient processing on the federal level," said David Clark, NYSDOCS Special Projects Unit Chief.

The state worked out a deal with the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service, now called Immigration and Customs Agency, or ICE. DOCS began the country's model Inmate Removal Program in 1995. The goals of the program are to increase the efficiency of the INS and provide partial reimbursement for the cost of those foreign inmates. Since then, DOCS has received more than \$500 million in federal reimbursement and has implemented other cost saving programs.

"We have the majority of our deportation hearings that occur within department facilities done by televideo, which means on average we save \$360,000 a year in transportation costs alone, which is very significant," said Clark.

A major success is DOCS's early conditional parole for deportation program. It's taken 1,952 illegal immigrants from state prisons and deported them, saving money and any threat from them on New York streets.

"It has produced a savings of over \$140 million. So the department really has tried to pursue a public safety agenda," said Clark.

That is what ICE wants for more states around the U.S.

"When you look at states like California, some of the border states that have very large undocumented populations, it's very costly. If this population shouldn't have been here in the first place because the government failed to secure the borders, that's cost shifting," said Clark.

This year, ICE hopes to remove more than 200,000 convicted immigrant inmates from jails and prisons across the country.