



J-1 Visa Layoffs Leave 5,000 People Stranded

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In March, L., a 23-year-old culinary school graduate from the Philippines received a call from her supervisor. She was part of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program and had a job setting up a breakfast buffet at a resort in Virginia. Guests had slowly stopped showing up due to the coronavirus pandemic and L. was eventually laid off. She was ineligible for government assistance and her visa limited her to U.S. jobs approved by her visa sponsor, leaving L. neither able to afford to remain in the U.S. nor able to afford to fly home. More than 5,000 foreigners with J-1 visas have been stranded in the U.S. [ProPublica](#)

In other national immigration news...

Infections Explode at a Houston Detention Center

More than 1 in 5 immigrants held at an ICE detention center in Houston have tested positive for COVID-19 as the rate of infection has nearly tripled there. At the end of May, 78 of the 379 immigrants held at the Houston Contract Detention Facility tested positive for COVID-19. A week prior, 21 immigrants were reported to have been infected. The facility is run by the private prison company CoreCivic and has the highest infection rate of any detention center in the Houston area. [The Houston Chronicle](#)

ICE May Have Tried to Detain Nearly 20,000 American Citizens in past 18 years

ICE has requested local law enforcement detain 3,158 U.S. citizens as part of its immigration enforcement operations from October 2002 to September 2019. Another 1.6 percent of ICE arrests through the program Secure Communities were U.S. citizens, records show. Furthermore, 2,549 removal proceedings have been terminated involving U.S. citizens from 2002 to 2017, according to court records. To estimate detainers issued against U.S. citizens nationwide, the Cato Institute looked at Travis County, Texas, where ICE targeted at least 228 U.S. citizens before canceling or declining to execute those detainers from 2005 to 2017. Proportionally, that would amount to roughly 19,873 detainers issued against U.S. citizens nationwide. [Cato Institute](#)

The Story of COVID-19 in 1 Detention Center

“We wanted to tell you that we are going to go on a hunger strike. We ask you to join us,” Nilson Barahona-Marriaga read off a note he found in his laundry bag. He was in Georgia’s Irwin

County Detention Center, where coronavirus was spreading. “We ask you to write back to us. If you all have another plan, let us know,” women from the other side of the facility wrote. For weeks, people in the facility had been asking for masks and temperature checks, and that guards also wear masks. But while the country was shutting down, life in Irwin continued as normal. [New York Times Magazine](#)

TRAC Issues Scorching Statement Over Poor EOIR Data Management

Syracuse University’s Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, a stalwart distributor of immigration court data, has decided to stop publishing data on asylum and other applications for relief as it is “too unreliable to be meaningful or to warrant publication.” They are discontinuing their Immigration Court Asylum Decisions app and will “take other steps to highlight this problem,” and put out an alert that any statistics EOIR has recently published on the topic “may be equally suspect, as will be any future reports the agency publishes until these major data deficiencies are explained and rectified.” [Read TRAC’s whole bold statement here.](#)