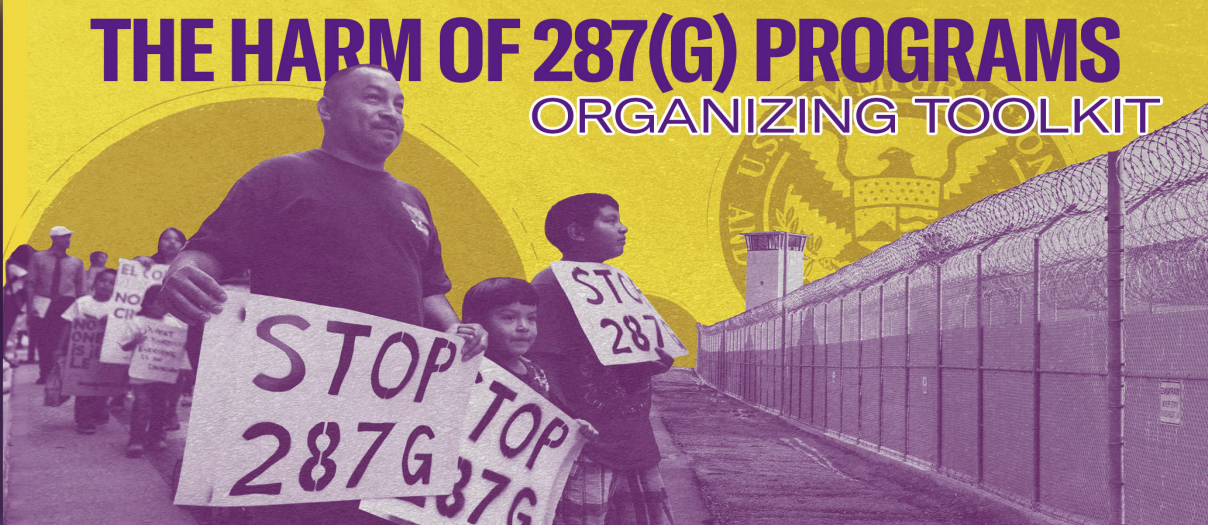


THE HARM OF 287(G) PROGRAMS

ORGANIZING TOOLKIT



What is a 287(g) agreement?

While state and federal government authorities overlap in many areas, the U.S. Constitution gives the federal government exclusive responsibility to enforce immigration law. However, programs like 287(g) aim to deputize local and state law enforcement with certain immigration enforcement powers.

Under 287(g), the federal government – through Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) – forms an agreement with a state or local law enforcement agency, most often a county sheriff that runs a local jail. The agreement gives specific immigration enforcement authority to designated officers within the local agency.

These agreements are also known as “287(g) contracts” or “MOAs” (Memorandums of Agreement).

Why are 287(g) agreements a problem?

ICE is quickly and carelessly ramping up its enforcement and will seek outside help from state and local law enforcement to arrest and deport noncitizens. This build-up of the deportation machine has been tried before and led to documented racial profiling, civil rights violations, isolation of immigrant communities, family separation, and the misuse of local resources.

Reasons to avoid ICE contracts:

- 1.) 287(g) agreements lead to racial profiling.
- 2.) 287(g) agreements burden local safety net programs like foster care.
- 3.) 287(g) agreements waste taxpayer money by potentially impacting local law enforcement budgets as well as pulling law enforcement from their regular duties.
- 4.) 287(g) agreements expose cities and counties to legal repercussions.
- 5.) 287(g) agreements drive a wedge between local law enforcement and the community it serves. When noncitizens fear deportation, they are less likely to call police to report crimes and tips.

How can 287(g) agreements be prevented?

The work to keep families together and ensure good governance starts by keeping ICE out of local law enforcement. This is a hyper-local political issue because some sheriffs – officials elected by county residents – have a history of signing contracts with ICE.

Here are steps to lobby your local sheriff to reject 287(g) agreements.

STEP 1

Find out if your county has a 287(g) agreement.



STEP 2

Understand who makes the decisions in your local government.

- Who has the power to decide they will work with ICE?
- Who are partners?
- Who is affected by 287(g) contracts?
- Who is opposed to 287(g) contracts?



STEP 3

Learn how local law enforcement’s involvement in 287(g) contracts has impacted community members.



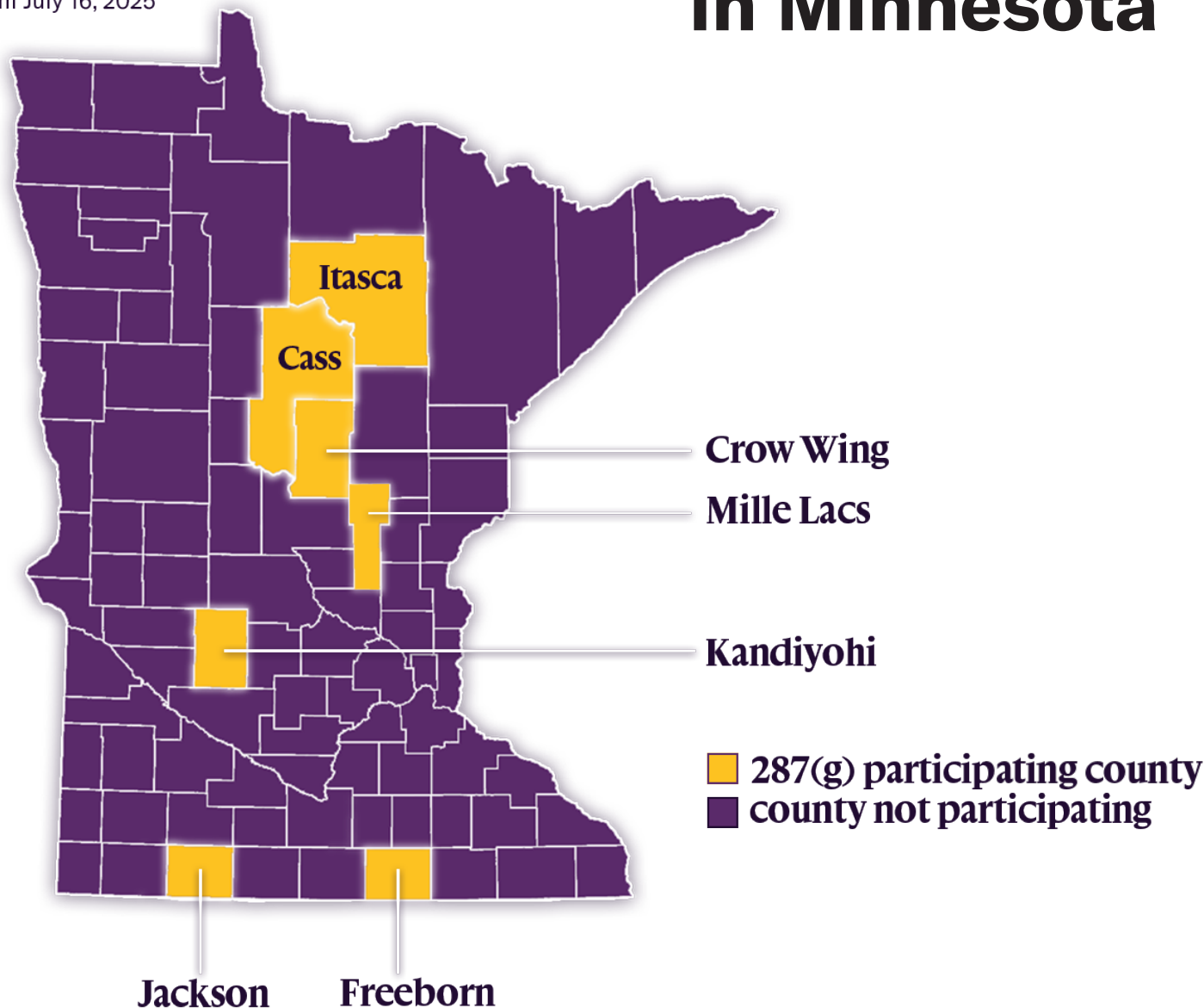
STEP 4

Meet with local law enforcement agency responsible for the agreement or have someone you trust meet with them.

A meeting should serve as an information gathering session and should be the first of many meetings to monitor and influence the way immigration enforcement is happening in your community. If you have met with your Chief Law Enforcement Office—in this case your Sheriff—before, consider shifting to advocating for a local policy that promotes total disentanglement with ICE. You may also want to ask for regular meetings to continue addressing issues that arise.

Map of Participating Counties in Minnesota

Data from July 16, 2025



How do I talk about 287(g) agreements?

Here are simple talking points to get you started:

- Resources spent on immigration enforcement will be taken away from other things, such as emergency services and enforcing local codes.
- At least 65% of 287(g)-participating agencies have records of a pattern of racial profiling and other civil rights violations, including excessive use of force.
- At least 59% of participating sheriffs have records of anti-immigrant, xenophobic rhetoric, contributing to

a continued climate of fear for immigrants and their families, undermining public safety and contributing to the risk of racial profiling

- 287(g) agreements negatively affect all residents, regardless of status. This is because 287(g) agreements use taxpayer money, expose cities and counties to lawsuits, burden local safety net programs, and they drive a wedge between law enforcement and the community. When people fear that local law enforcement will detain them for ICE, they are less willing to report crimes or tips to police.

ACLU Minnesota

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