

Golden State Annex: Impacted Communities and Immigration Enforcement Trends

May 18, 2021

1. Executive Summary

ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) repurposed the Golden State Annex, a former state prison, to detain up to 700 immigrants in McFarland, California. Operated by GEO Group, Inc., the facility has significantly expanded ICE's capacity to target immigrant communities throughout the state and the country. An analysis of key trends demonstrates that immigrant communities in the surrounding region are disproportionately impacted. Former residents of Los Angeles County, neighboring Kern County where 3 ICE detention facilities including Golden State are located, are disproportionately impacted and comprise nearly 25% of the community members detained at the facility. The disproportionate impact to communities in Los Angeles can be attributed to the expanded logistical capacity of ICE in the region and the addition of an immigration court in Los Angeles. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, ICE has rapidly increased the number of community members detained at the facility. Nearly 80% of transfers to immigration detention identified are due to collaboration between the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and local county jails with ICE. The large number of transfers from prisons and county jails is the main factor contributing to the increase of the detained population at the Golden State Annex. ICE has shown a blatant disregard for immigrant communities and public health in general by expanding its operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The detrimental impact to families and immigrant communities throughout the state and the country cannot be easily quantified, but it will increase exponentially as ICE ramps up the facility to full capacity.

2. Introduction

ICE began using the Golden State Annex to detain immigrants in September 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Golden State Annex and the neighboring Central Valley Annex are former state prisons located in McFarland, California repurposed by ICE to operate as immigration detention facilities run by the private prison company GEO Group, Inc. Both the Golden State and the Central Valley Annexes serve as an 'annex' to the Mesa Verde Processing Facility located 26 miles away in Bakersfield, California. The Mesa Verde Processing Facility is also operated by GEO and it has a maximum capacity to detain 400 individuals. The Golden State and Central Valley Annexes have the capacity to detain 700 individuals each, or 1,400 individuals combined. Once the Central Valley Annex opens, ICE's detention capacity in the region will have nearly quadrupled increasing from 400 to 1,800. This expansion comes at a time of [record low immigration detention numbers](#): less than 14,000 immigrants are currently in ICE detention, down from nearly 52,000 prior to the pandemic.

The expansion of the Mesa Verde Processing Facility through these annexes is mired in controversy due to the manner in which ICE entered into these contracts with GEO. In 2020, California enacted into law AB 32 to prohibit the operation of private detention facilities in the state. Against the will of the people, GEO and ICE raced the clock to negotiate and execute these contracts, flouting federal procurement requirements in order to beat the effective date of AB 32. The community and advocates continue to work arduously to halt the operation of these immigration detention facilities. Until all of these facilities are abolished, Kern County, where all 3 facilities are located, will continue to serve as a key logistical hub for ICE's enforcement operations across the state and the country.

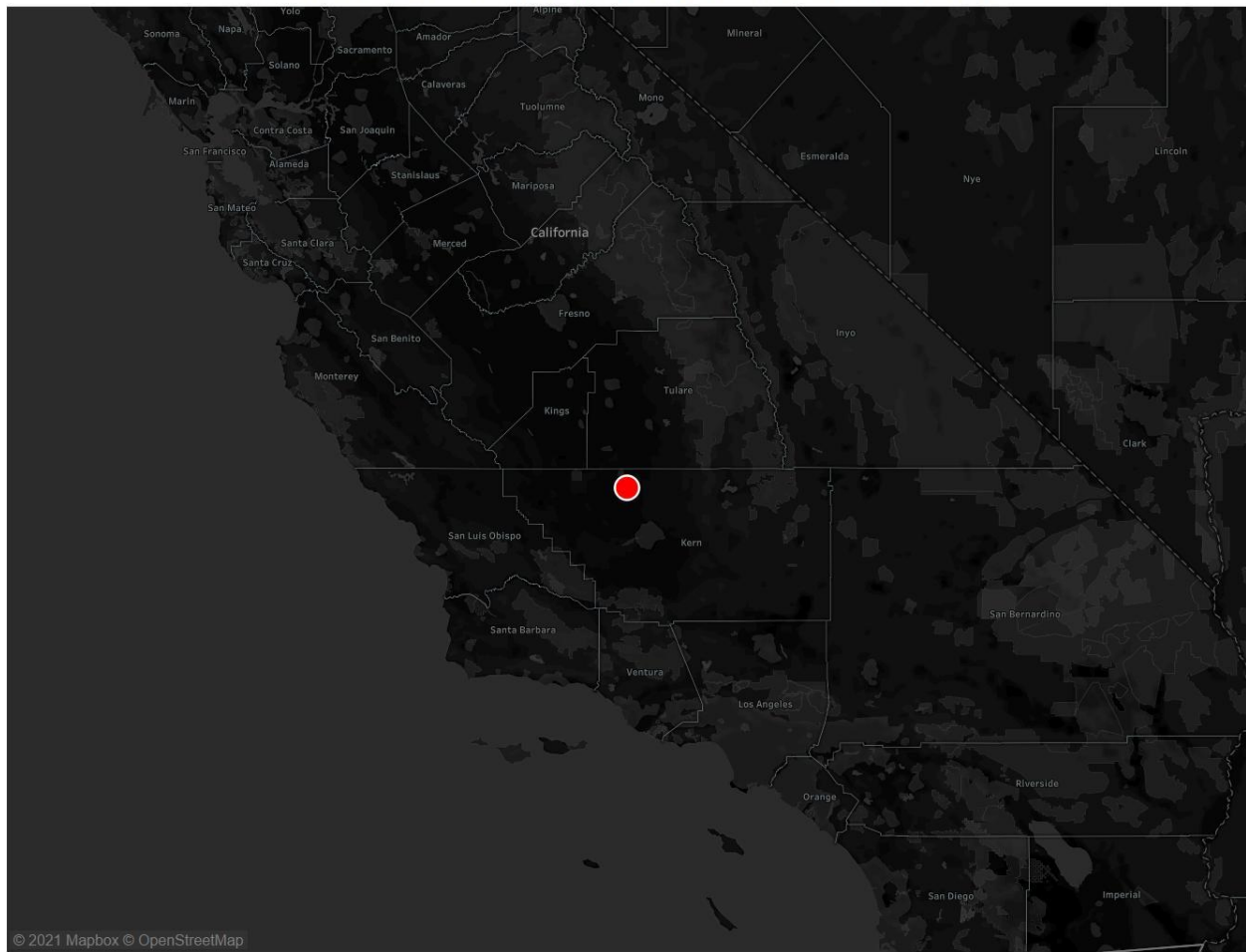
The annexes have enabled the agency to expand its ability to target immigrant communities in various localities and states, even as COVID-19 remains a threat to immigrants in detention. In fact, less than a month before the Golden State Annex opened, an ["entirely preventable"](#) COVID-19 outbreak sickened the majority of people detained at Mesa Verde. The annexes stand in direct opposition to the progress made in recent years to shut down ICE facilities in county jails and prisons, such as the termination of ICE contracts with Contra Costa West County Detention Center and Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center, and significant depopulation efforts at Mesa Verde Processing Center and Yuba County Jail during the COVID-19 pandemic. The operation of these annex facilities during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic further demonstrates ICE's blatant disregard for public health and immigrant communities across the state and the country.

The California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ), in collaboration with various legal service organizations, sprang into action to provide legal assistance to community members detained at the Golden State Annex. To better understand how the Golden State Annex is impacting immigrant communities and how the facility is enhancing ICE's operations, CCIJ partnered with Centro Legal de la Raza to analyze these critical trends and bring greater insight and accountability to a facility that should have never been opened in the first place. The following analysis and visualizations are based on information obtained from 120 community members detained at the Golden State Annex from September 2020 until the end of March 2021. Their collective experiences in detention are a grave injustice and should have never occurred.

3. Impacted Communities

The Golden State Annex is located in the Central Valley community of McFarland, California. The central geographical location of the facility enables ICE to incarcerate community members from the surrounding region of the Central Valley and Central Coast, as well as regions in Southern and Northern California. A prominent trend is that former residents from the city and county of Los Angeles are more likely to be incarcerated at the facility than any other city or county identified.

Location of the Golden State Annex in McFarland, California

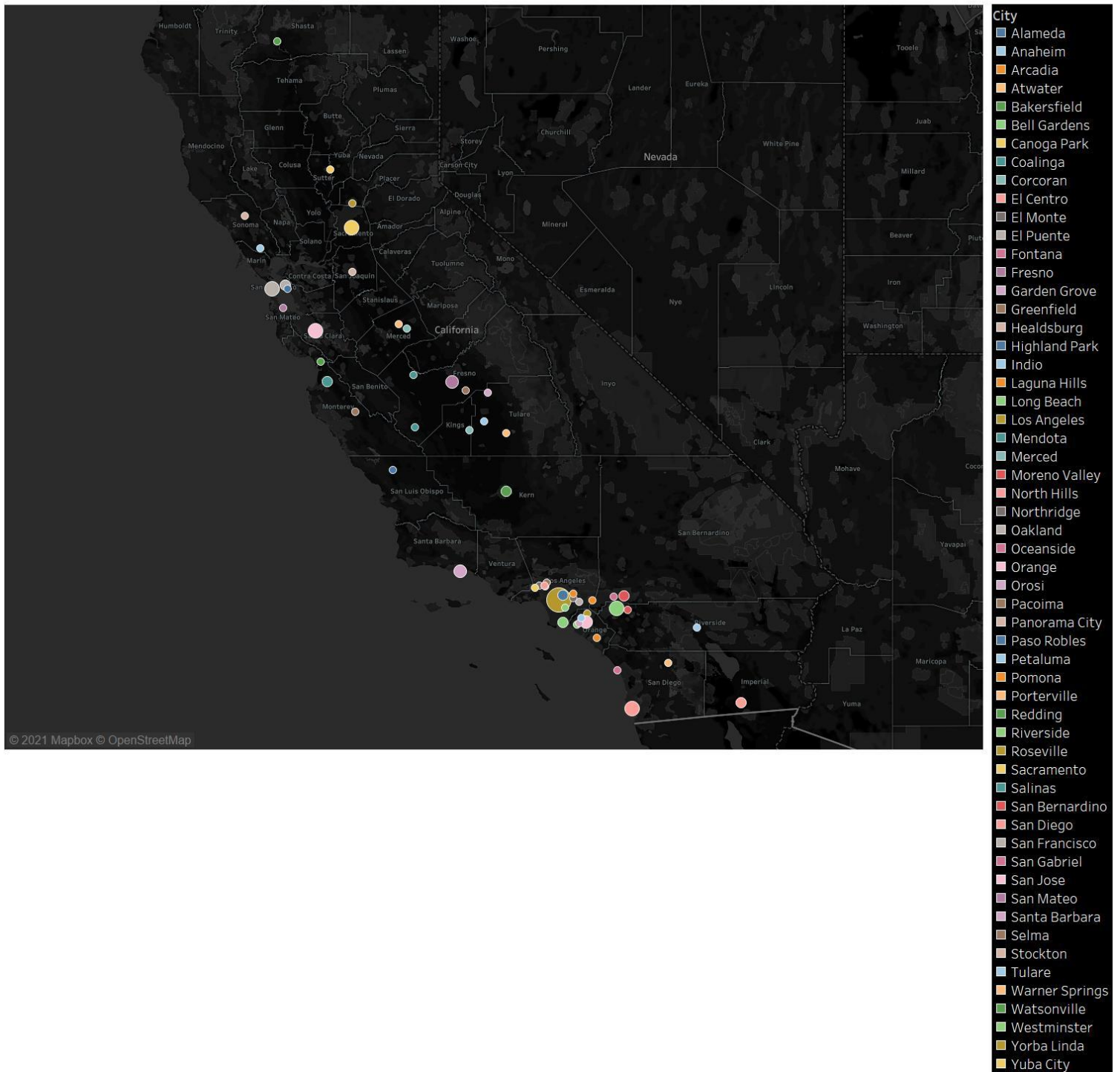


It was possible to identify the former city of residence for 104 detained community members. In nearly 80% of these cases, detained community members formerly resided in cities throughout California and around 7% held residence in other states, including Florida, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nevada, Texas, Utah, and Washington. Amongst the 95 California residents, their former cities of residence included 59 different cities across the state, denoting the far-reaching impact of this facility on California communities. The California cities included in Table 1 below had more than 1 former resident incarcerated at the Golden State Annex.

City	Respective Total
Los Angeles	11
Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Jose	4
Fresno, Orange, San Francisco	3
Bakersfield, El Centro, Highland Park, Long Beach, Oakland, Salinas, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara	2

TABLE 1. California cities with more than 1 former resident detained at the Golden State Annex

Impacted Communities in California by City



The city map in the preceding page offers a visual representation of the impacted cities across California. As can be noted, there is a large cluster of cities around Los Angeles and stretches of cities along the Central Valley and Central Coast. The large geographic distances involved in relation to the facility means that family members are prevented from visiting or seeing their loved ones, particularly during an ongoing pandemic. Even for families in Los Angeles County, visiting a loved one at the facility entails driving at least 270 miles roundtrip, which could take anywhere from 4 to 6 hours. Furthermore, the impact on communities in Southern California is significant given that 57 community members formerly resided in 32 cities south of the Golden State Annex amounting to 47.50% of the total. In comparison, 38 community members formerly resided in 25 cities north of the facility amounting to 31.66% of the total.¹

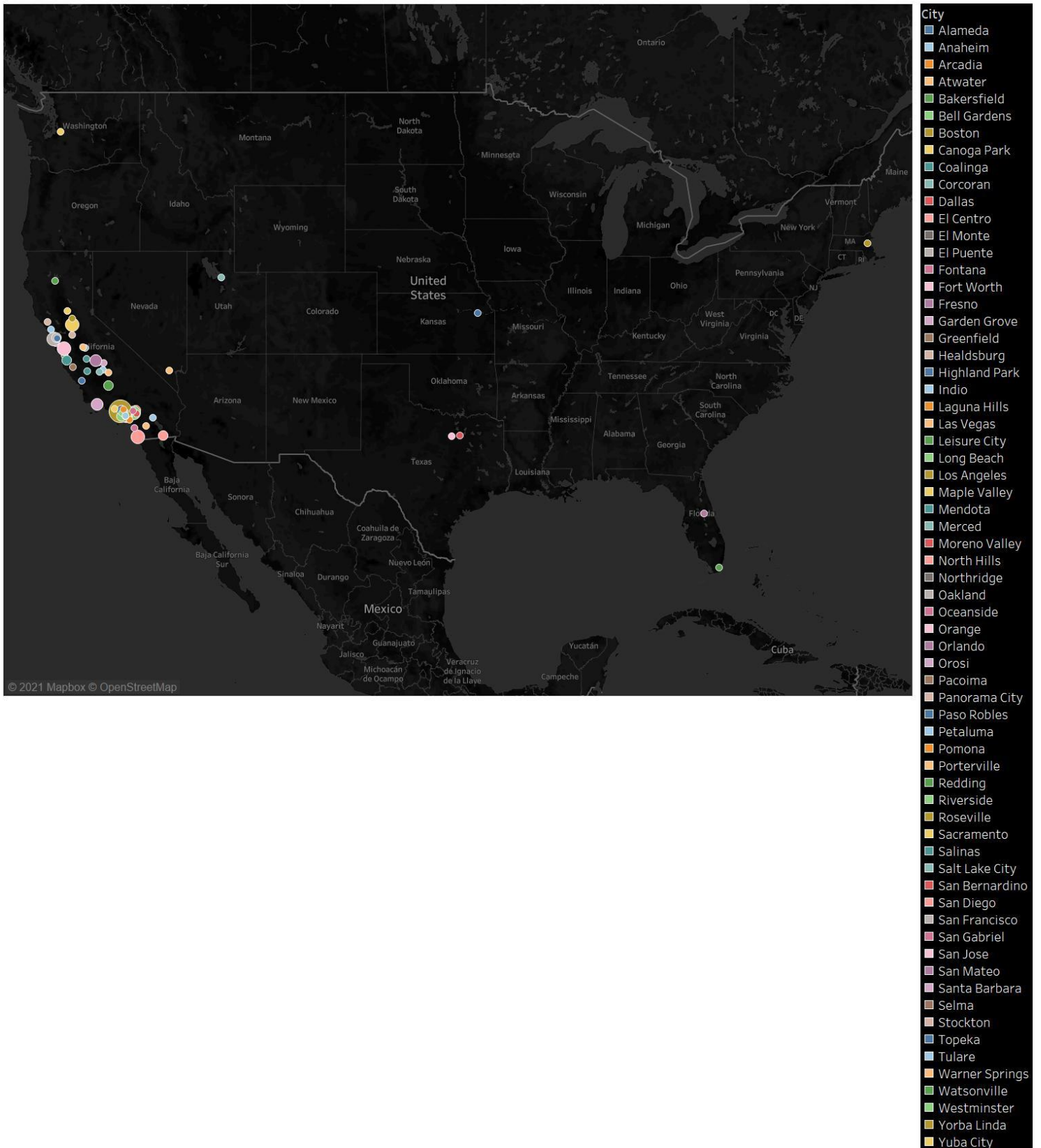
A breakdown of the former residence of the 95 California community members by county is included in Table 2 in page 7. As previously mentioned, former residents of Los Angeles County are disproportionately affected by the facility. The California county map in page 8 show how the county of Los Angeles stands out in comparison to other counties and it is truly in a category of its own in terms of impacted communities. What this evidently clear trend demonstrates is that the location of ICE's detention infrastructure, including immigration courts, has a detrimental impact on immigrant communities surrounding this infrastructure. There were 57 community members who formerly resided in 9 counties level or south of the Golden State Annex making up 47.50% of the total. In comparison, 38 community members formerly resided in 16 counties north of the facility amounting to 31.66% of the total.² Combined, there are at least 25 counties in California whose residents are impacted by the operation of the facility or just over 40% of all counties in the state. Given the large capacity of the facility, the geographic distance of a community to the facility will not prevent ICE from carrying out its operations. As a result, it is likely that more California counties will be impacted in the future.

The national map of impacted cities in the next page demonstrates how far away some community members are from their former cities of residence and consequently, their families and personal support networks. Some detained community members formerly resided in cities as far east as Boston, MA and Orlando, FL. For these out-of-state families and others, visiting their loved ones in detention is extremely challenging. As ICE continues to operate the facility, it is likely that more cities and states across the United States will be impacted. As will be discussed in the next sections, ICE has utilized its expanded capacity to conduct out-of-state transfers and this problematic practice makes California a holding tank for ICE's anti-immigrant policies and tactics in other states.

¹ If only California residents are included, then 60% of community members formerly resided in cities south of the facility and 40% north of the facility.

² If only California residents are included, then 60% of community members formerly resided in counties level or south of the facility and 40% north of the facility.

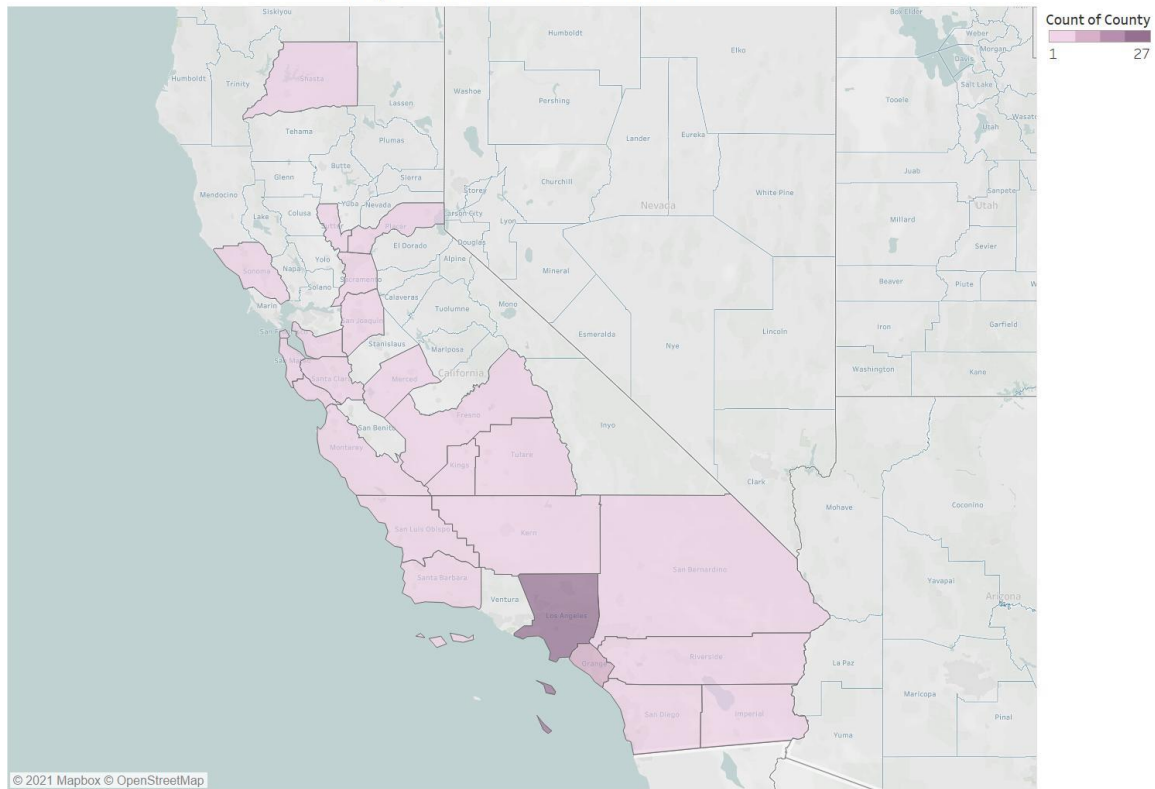
Impacted Communities in the U.S. by City



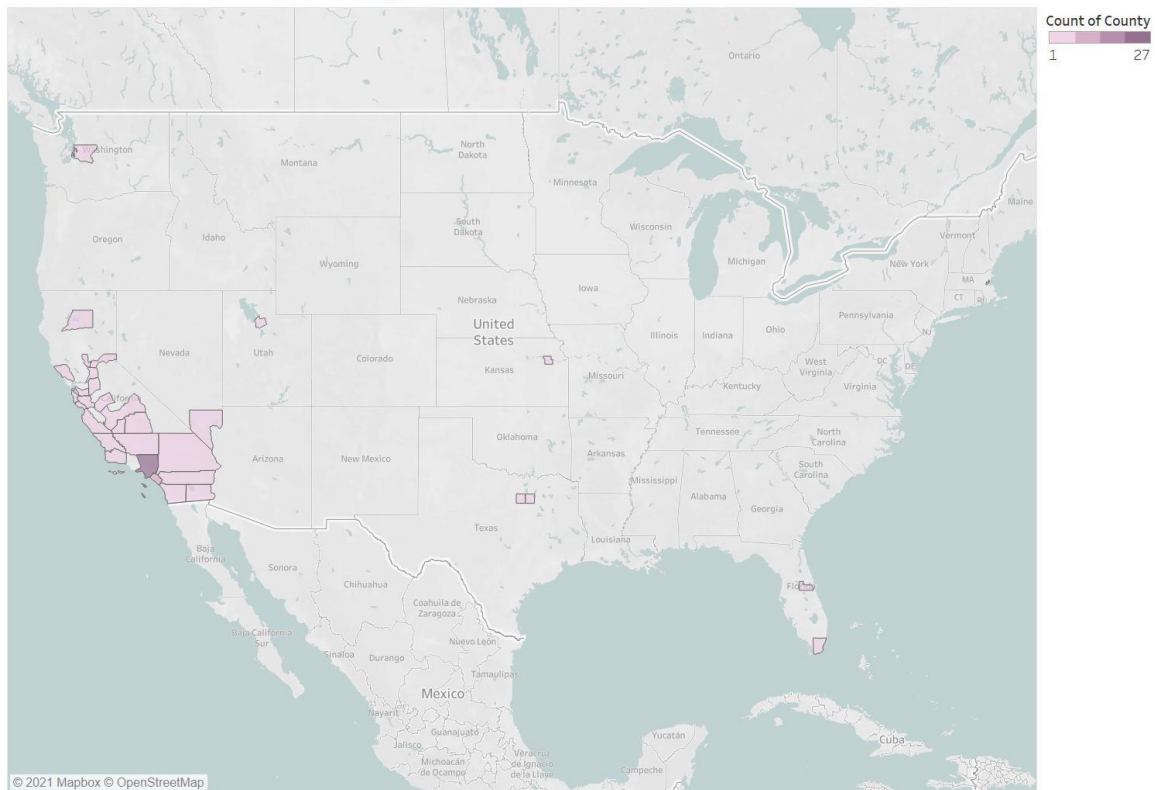
County	Total	Percentage
Los Angeles	27	28.42%
Orange	8	8.42%
Fresno	6	6.32%
Riverside	6	6.32%
San Diego	6	6.32%
Sacramento	4	4.21%
San Francisco	4	4.21%
Santa Clara	4	4.21%
Alameda	3	3.16%
Monterey	3	3.16%
Santa Barbara	3	3.16%
Tulare	3	3.16%
Imperial	2	2.11%
Kern	2	2.11%
Merced	2	2.11%
San Bernardino	2	2.11%
Sonoma	2	2.11%
Kings	1	1.05%
Placer	1	1.05%
San Joaquin	1	1.05%
San Luis Obispo	1	1.05%
San Mateo	1	1.05%
Santa Cruz	1	1.05%
Shasta	1	1.05%
Sutter	1	1.05%
Grand Total	95	100.00%

TABLE 2. Breakdown of impacted California counties.

Impacted Counties in California



Impacted Counties in the U.S.



4. Immigration Enforcement Trends

The Golden State Annex has significantly expanded ICE's logistical and operational capabilities across the state and the country. It has also increased ICE's collaboration with CDCR operating state prisons and local agencies operating county jails. The 120 immigration arrests identified were coded into general categories to identify the most prevalent locations for immigration arrests and subsequent transfers into immigration detention by ICE. Nearly 80% of immigration arrests identified occurred at California prisons or county jails. Continued collaboration between local and state authorities with ICE has ensured that transfers to immigration detention continue despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

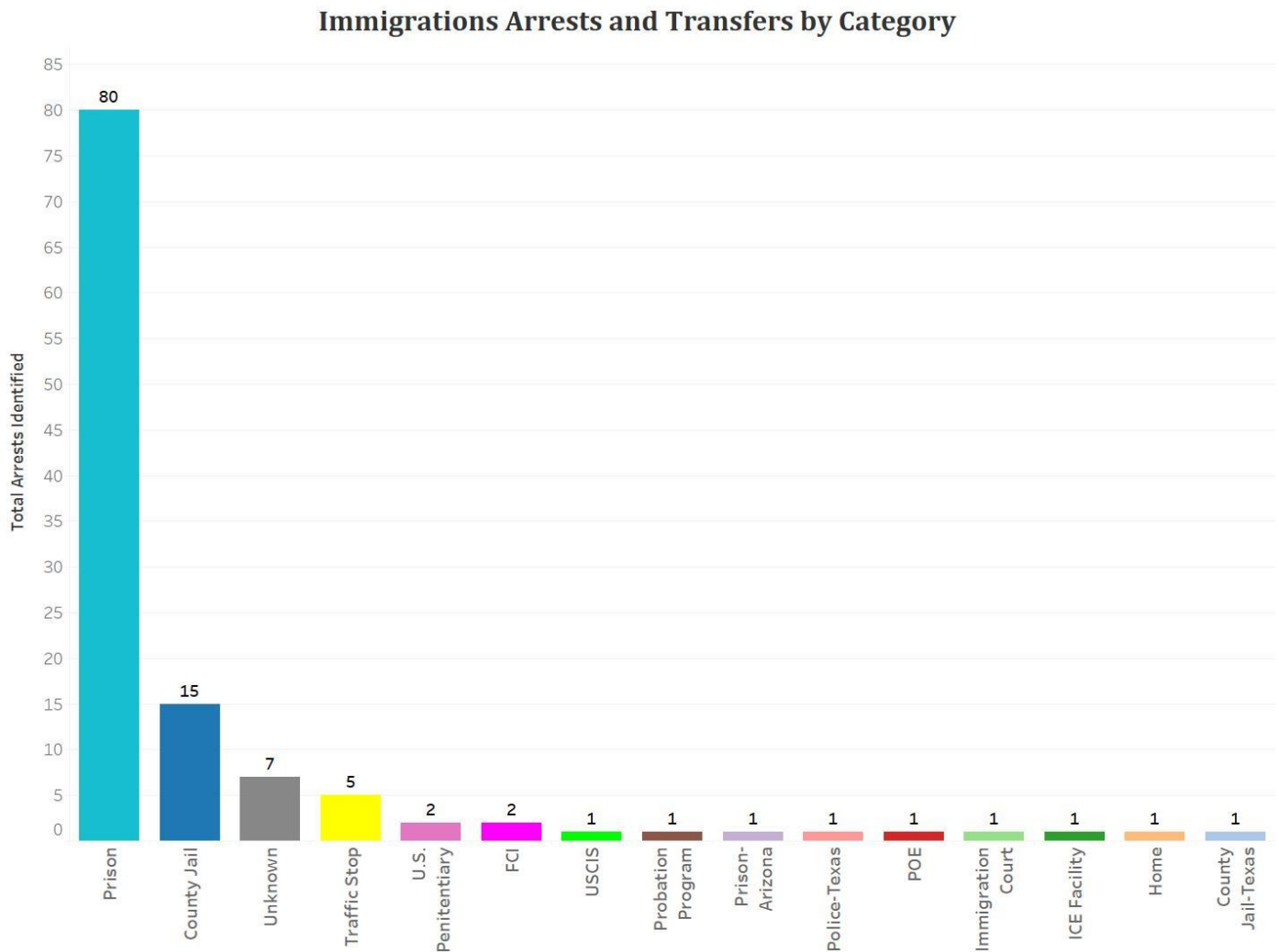
A concerning trend is ICE's ability to extend its logistical reach by making transfers from out-of-state ICE facilities, prisons, and county jails. Transfers from a police department and a jail in Texas were identified, as well as a prison and ICE facility in Arizona. If this trend continues as it surely will, California will in essence be supporting anti-immigrant policies and enforcement operations in other states by allowing out-of-state transfers into the annex to occur. Without a clear understanding of how these out-of-state transfers are happening, the circumstances of ICE's arrests, and given the vast geographical distances involved preventing individuals from fighting their cases in local jurisdictions, it is likely that the Due Process rights of these out-of-state community members will be violated.

Category	Total	Percentage
County Jail	15	12.50%
County Jail-Texas	1	0.83%
Federal Correctional Institution (FCI)	2	1.67%
Home	1	0.83%
ICE Facility	1	0.83%
Immigration Court	1	0.83%
Port of Entry (POE)	1	0.83%
Police-Texas	1	0.83%
Prison	80	66.67%
Prison-Arizona	1	0.83%
Probation Program	1	0.83%
Traffic Stop	5	4.17%
U.S. Penitentiary	2	1.67%

Unknown	7	5.83%
USCIS	1	0.83%
Grand Total	120	100.00%

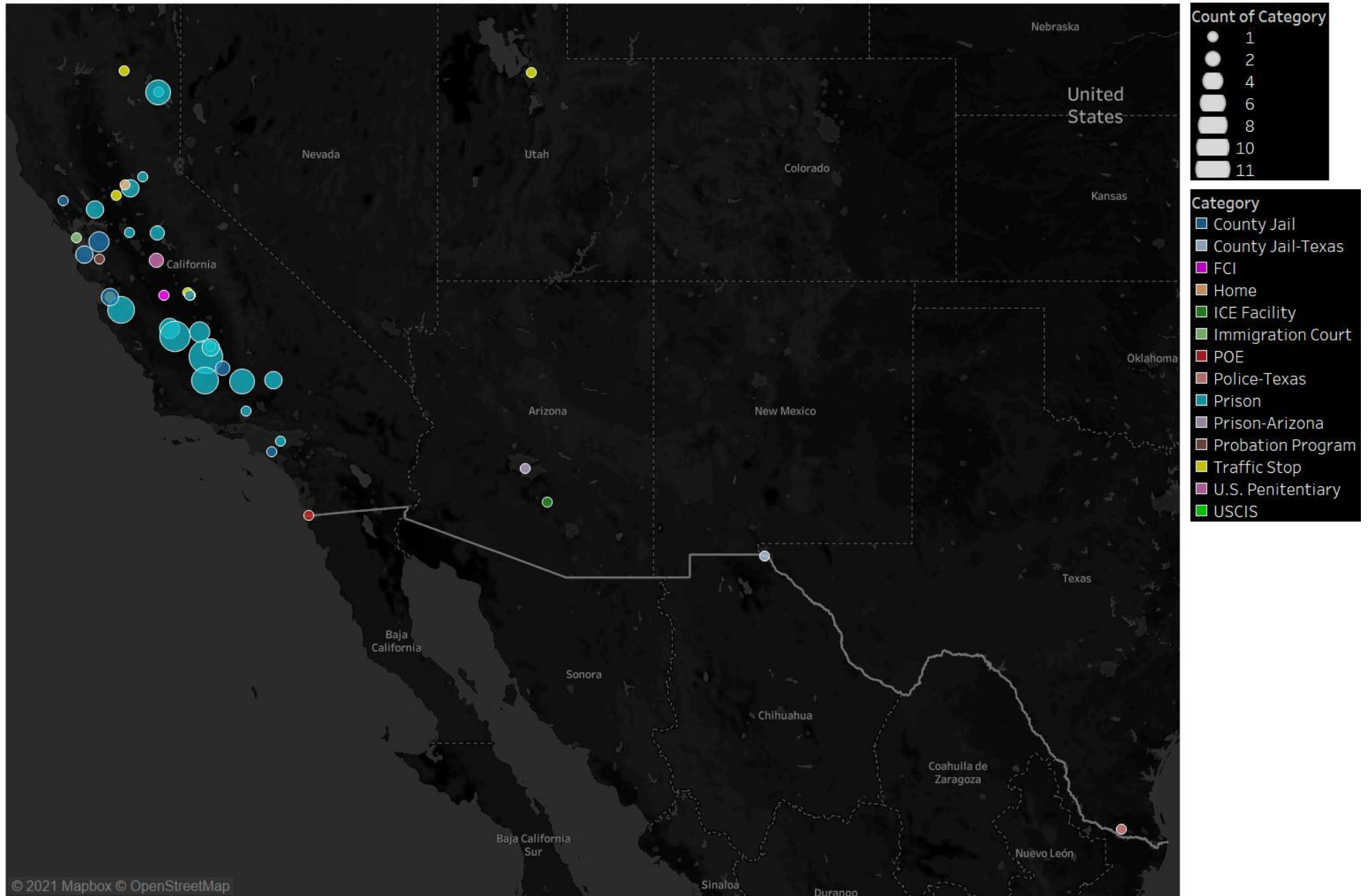
TABLE 3. Immigration arrests by category.

The graph below provides an overview of where different immigration arrests occurred by category. As can be seen in the blue bar, transfers from California prisons are mainly responsible for the increase in population at the Golden State Annex during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the enactment of AB 32, which prohibits the operation of private detention facilities, CDCR is ensuring the continued operation of the privately-run Golden State Annex through its collaboration with ICE.



GRAPH 1. Immigration arrests and transfers categorized by general location identified.

Immigration Arrests and Transfers by Category



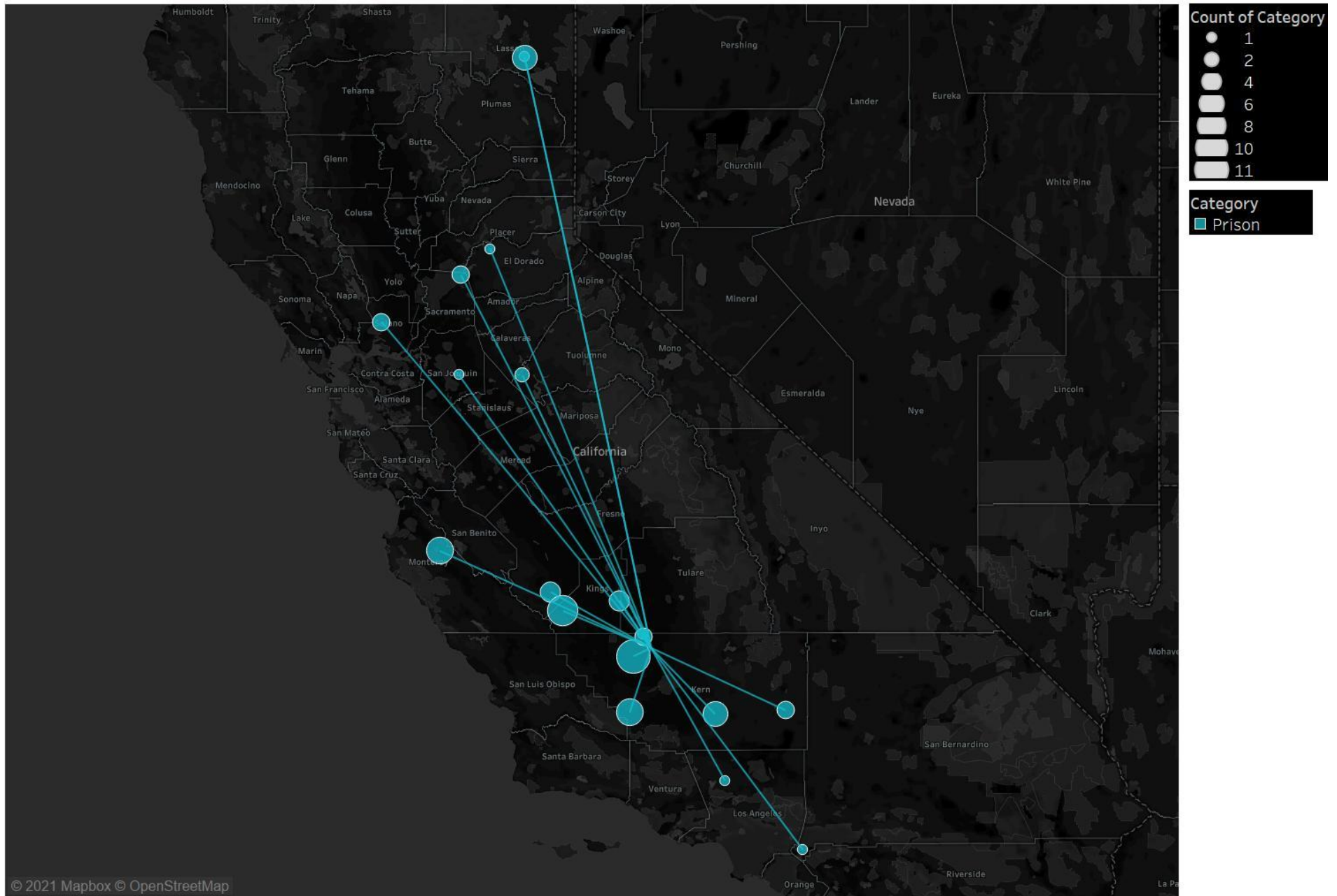
5. Transfers from California Prisons

Transfers from California prisons operated by CDCR to the Golden State Annex accounted for 66.67% of all immigration arrests identified. The map on page 14 shows a significant trend; prisons geographically close to the Golden State Annex contribute to a significant percentage of transfers to ICE from California prisons. The table below provides a more concise breakdown of the numbers of transfers identified for each state prison, as well as their respective percentage. When it was not possible to identify the exact prison, but it was possible to infer based on the information available that a transfer from a California state prison occurred, an asterisk “*” was used.

Detention Location	Total	Percentage
Avenal State Prison (ASP)	9	11.25%
California City Correctional Facility (CAC)	3	3.75%
California Correctional Center (CCC)	6	7.50%
California Correctional Institution (CCI)	6	7.50%
California Health Care Facility (CHCF)	1	1.25%
California Institution for Men (CIM)	1	1.25%
California State Prison Solano (SOL)	3	3.75%
Corcoran State Prison (CSP-COR)	4	5.00%
Correctional Training Facility (CTF)	7	8.75%
Delano Modified Community Correctional Facility (DMCCF)	3	3.75%
Folsom State Prison (FSP)	3	3.75%
Francisquito Conservation Camp #4	1	1.25%
Growlersburg Conservation Camp #33	1	1.25%
High Desert State Prison (HDSP)	1	1.25%
North Kern State Prison (NKSP)	1	1.25%
Pleasant Valley State Prison (PVSP)	4	5.00%
Prison*	6	7.50%
Sierra Conservation Center (SCC)	2	2.50%
Taft (MCCF)	7	8.75%
Wasco State Prison-Reception Center (WSP)	11	13.75%
Grand Total	80	100.00%

Table 4. Number and percentage of transfers from California state prisons

Arrests and Transfers from California State Prisons



6. Transfers from California County Jails

Collaboration between local agencies operating county jails and ICE resulted in the second highest number of immigration transfers to the Golden State Annex. Transfers from county jails accounted for 12.50% of all immigration arrests identified. The table below provides a more concise breakdown of the numbers of transfers identified for each county jail, as well as the respective percentage. The distance between the majority of these county jails and the annex is significant. For example, Sonoma County Main Adult Detention Facility is over 300 miles away from the facility. The map in page 15 highlights the large geographic distances involved.

Detention Location	Total	Percentage
Fresno County Jail	1	6.67%
Kern County Jail	2	13.33%
Monterey County Jail	3	20.00%
San Mateo County Jail	3	20.00%
Santa Rita Jail	4	26.67%
Sonoma County Main Adult Detention Facility	1	6.67%
Theo Lacy Jail Facility	1	6.67%
Grand Total	15	100.00%

7. Negative Impacts of ICE transfers

Both ICE transfers from prisons and county jails have serious negative impacts on individuals who the criminal legal system has determined should be released to the community. Many of those detained are required to complete probation or parole programs to prepare them to re-enter the community. Because they are unable to complete these programs due to ICE individually targeting them for arrest and immigration detention, community members are denied an opportunity to resolve their pending criminal cases. The fact that they were arrested while trying to complete these programs demonstrates how ICE's actions prevent community members who are trying to abide by state and local guidelines from successfully re-integrating into their communities. It further demonstrates ICE's disregard for California's judicial processes. As the map in page 16 shows, ICE operates in various localities and utilizes a variety of tactics to target community members.

Additionally, transfers from a plethora of locations during a pandemic have spread COVID-19 in immigration detention centers. As of May 10, 2021, there have been [49,239 confirmed cases](#) of COVID-19 in California prisons. Avenal State Prison, the prison with the highest number of transfers to the Golden State, is the prison with the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

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8. Conclusion

The Golden State Annex has significantly increased ICE's logistical and operational capabilities and as a consequence, immigrant communities across the state of California and the United States are being impacted by increased enforcement activities. In particular, communities in the surrounding region to the annex are bearing the brunt of the consequences. ICE's disregard for public health guidance has resulted in COVID-19 outbreaks [throughout the country](#) and the community should not expect that this will change at the Golden State Annex. ICE is directly responsible for an ["entirely preventable"](#) COVID-19 outbreak at Mesa Verde Processing Center, a facility just 26 miles away. Continued transfers from prisons operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and local county jails has put at risk the lives and health of detained community members, those who work at facilities, and their families. These transfers are directly responsible for nearly 80% of the detained population at the facility. State and local authorities are the 'pipeline' ensuring the continued operation of the annex during a pandemic. After enacting AB 32, the state of California has an obligation to act and stop collaboration with ICE to prevent the continued operation of privately-run detention facilities in the state.