U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

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## News Releases

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# New program enhances identifying and deporting criminal aliens in 6 southwest Texas counties

## *Now criminal and immigration records of all detainees to be checked*

SAN ANTONIO, Texas - Six southwest Texas counties have been added to a growing list of law enforcement agencies throughout the state that are receiving access to a program developed by the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Homeland Security (DHS); this program is expected to bolster local efforts to identify dangerous deportable criminal aliens.

Maverick, Val Verde, Kinney, Zavala, Real and Uvalde counties have been added to the program known as "Secure Communities." The program, administered by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), streamlines the process for ICE to determine if an individual in local custody is a potentially deportable criminal alien. Under the program, the immigration records, if any, of every individual booked into the county will be checked.

Formerly as part of that booking process, arrestees' fingerprints were taken and checked for criminal history information against the DOJ biometric system maintained by the FBI. With the implementation of Secure Communities, the fingerprints of arrested individuals will now be simultaneously checked against both the FBI's criminal history records and the biometrics-based immigration records maintained by DHS.

If an individual's fingerprints match those of a person in the DHS fingerprint system, the new automated process will notify ICE and the participating agency submitting the fingerprints. ICE will evaluate each case to determine the individual's immigration status and take appropriate enforcement action. Top priority will be given to offenders who pose a threat to the public safety, such as aliens with prior convictions for major drug offenses, murder, rape, robbery, and kidnapping.

"Secure Communities is a new effort to identify and ultimately remove dangerous criminal aliens from our communities," said Executive Director for ICE Secure Communities David Venturella. "Our goal with this ICE program is to use technology to prevent criminal aliens from being released back into the

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