



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

News Releases

March 9, 2009

New ICE program enhances identifying and removing criminal aliens in Fairfax County

Now criminal and immigration records of all detainees to be checked

FAIRFAX, Va. -Fairfax County Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies have been added to a growing list of jurisdictions throughout the country that are receiving access to a program called Secure Communities, administered by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Fairfax County is the first location in the Washington Metropolitan Area and the first in Virginia to participate. Secure Communities will streamline the process for ICE to determine if an individual in local custody is a potentially removable criminal alien.

Beginning today, the immigration records in DHS's biometric database, if any, of every individual booked in the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center and other sites in 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 automatically 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 DHS's biometric 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 community, with little or no additional burden on our local law enforcement partners."

"This is a win-win situation both for the community and law enforcement," said Fairfax County Sheriff Stan Barry. "We will be able to identify illegal immigrants who commit crimes in Fairfax County and get them in the process for deportation, and it does not require additional funds or manpower from us."

AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 09031062. (Posted 03/10/09)

Secure Communities enhances the ongoing joint efforts by ICE and the law enforcement agencies in Virginia. Eventually, in collaboration with DOJ and other DHS components, ICE plans to expand this capability to all state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the nation. Approximately 50 counties nationwide are current Secure Communities participants.

Secure Communities is the cornerstone of DHS's comprehensive plan to distribute technology that links local law enforcement agencies to both FBI and DHS biometric systems. DHS's US VISIT Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT) holds biometrics-based immigration records, while the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) contains biometric-based criminal records.

"US VISIT is proud to support the Secure Communities program, helping provide decision makers with comprehensive, reliable information when and where they need it," said US VISIT Director Robert Mocny. "By enhancing the interoperability of DHS's and the FBI's biometric systems, we are able to give federal, state and local decision makers information that helps them better protect our communities and our nation."

"Under this plan, ICE will be utilizing FBI system enhancements that allow improved information sharing at the state and local law enforcement level based on positive identification of incarcerated criminal aliens. Additionally, ICE and the FBI are working together to take advantage of the strong relationships already forged between the FBI and state and local law enforcement necessary to assist ICE in achieving their goals," said FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) former Assistant Director Tom Bush.

Secure Communities is a key facet of ICE's enforcement priority to identify, locate and remove criminal aliens and builds on the growing success of the agency's Criminal Alien Program. In fiscal year 2008, ICE identified more than 221,000 potentially removable aliens incarcerated nationwide. This fiscal year, the agency anticipates spending more than \$1 billion on such efforts, which in addition to Secure Communities, also includes expansion of the agency's Criminal Alien Program and Fugitive Operations Program.

More information about ICE's Secure Communities program is available at www.ice.gov.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

Last Modified: Tuesday, March 10, 2009