



**Homeland
Security**

Secretary Napolitano Announces Secure Communities Deployment to All Southwest Border Counties, Facilitating Identification and Removal of Convicted Criminal Aliens

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Washington, D.C. - As part of the Obama administration's ongoing commitment to smart, effective border security, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today announced that the Secure Communities program has been deployed to all 25 U.S. counties along our Southwest border.

Secure Communities allows U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to use biometric information to identify criminal aliens in state prisons and local jails—part of the Department's focus on identifying and removing convicted criminal aliens who pose a public safety threat to American communities.

"Over the past year and a half, this administration has pursued a new border security strategy through unprecedented investments in personnel, technology and infrastructure and historic partnerships with Mexico and state and local law enforcement," said Secretary Napolitano. "Secure Communities gives ICE the ability to work with our state and local law enforcement partners to identify criminal aliens who are already in their custody, expediting their removal and keeping our communities safer."

The Secure Communities technology, made possible through collaboration between DHS, the Department of Justice, and state and local law enforcement agencies, enables digital fingerprints collected during the booking process to be checked against FBI criminal history records and DHS immigration records. By identifying any immigration record matches in our jails and prisons, ICE can quickly and responsibly begin removal proceedings—ultimately expediting the removal of criminal aliens from the United States without any additional cost or changes to their booking process.

"The Secure Communities initiative reflects ICE's ongoing commitment to smart, tough enforcement strategies that help ensure the apprehension of dangerous criminal aliens," said ICE Director John Morton. "Expediting removals decreases the amount of time these individuals spend in ICE custody—saving taxpayers money and strengthening public safety."

DHS has expanded the Secure Communities initiative from 14 to 544 jurisdictions in the past 18 months, and DHS plans to expand the program to every law enforcement jurisdiction in the country by 2013. To date, the program has identified more than 262,900 aliens in jails and prisons who have been charged with or convicted of criminal offenses, including more than 39,000 charged with or convicted of major violent or drug offenses (level 1 offenses). Through Secure Communities, over 34,600 convicted criminal aliens have been removed from the United States, including more than 9,800 convicted of major violent or drug offenses (level 1 offenses). DHS continues to monitor the program's effectiveness and is committed to identifying and removing serious criminals.

Over the past 18 months, the Obama administration has dedicated unprecedented resources to the Southwest border, leading to increases in seizures of illicit narcotics, weapons, and bulk cash, as well as decreases in border crossings.

For more information, visit www.ice.gov/secure_communities.

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