

Subject: New ICE initiative launched in 3 Georgia counties



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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Protecting national security by enforcing our nation's customs and immigration laws

News Releases

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Uses biometrics to identify and enhance removal of criminal aliens arrested in Gwinnett, Clayton and DeKalb counties

ATLANTA - Beginning today, law enforcement agencies in Gwinnett, Clayton, and DeKalb counties will benefit from a new initiative developed by the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Homeland Security (DHS) that modernizes the process used to accurately identify and remove dangerous criminal aliens from the community.

The initiative, Secure Communities, is administered by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Secure Communities enables ICE to determine whether an individual arrested by a participating state or local law enforcement agency is a dangerous criminal alien and take the appropriate action to remove the individual from the community.

Formerly as part of the 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 Gwinnett, Clayton, and DeKalb counties, the fingerprint information will now be simultaneously checked against both the FBI criminal history records and the biometrics-based immigration records maintained by the DHS.

If any fingerprints match those of someone in DHS' biometric system, the new automated process notifies ICE. ICE evaluates each case to determine the individual's immigration status and takes appropriate enforcement action after offenders complete their prison terms. Top priority is given to aliens who pose the greatest threat to public safety, such as those with prior convictions for major drug offenses, murder, rape, robbery and kidnapping.

"Secure Communities is a DHS initiative to more broadly manage and modernize the processes used to identify and ultimately remove dangerous criminal aliens from our communities," said Acting Secure Communities Executive Director Marc Rapp. "Our goal with this effort is to use information sharing to prevent criminal aliens from being released back into the community, with little or no additional burden on our local law enforcement partners."

"We are pleased to be part of this initiative," said Gwinnett County Sheriff Butch Conway. "This is one more tool we can use to identify dangerous criminal aliens in order to keep them off our streets. This new program will work in conjunction with our 287(g) program."

"We applaud the efforts of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in working with us to remove dangerous criminals from within the boundaries of DeKalb County," said DeKalb County Sheriff Thomas E. Brown. "This is yet another example of local and federal agencies working together effectively to keep our communities safe."

Secure Communities bolsters the ongoing joint efforts by ICE and participating law enforcement agencies in the United States. Eventually, with DOJ and other DHS component collaboration, ICE plans to expand this capability to all state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the nation.

Secure Communities is part 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 biometrics-based criminal records.

The Secure Communities biometric identification technology is now accessible in more than 100 jurisdictions in 13 states throughout the country, with nationwide coverage expected by the end of 2013. Last year a total of 990,738 fingerprint transmissions were processed through Secure Communities resulting in 119,052 matches that included 11,219 Level I and 101,953 Level II and III offenders respectively as well as 5,880 U.S. citizens.

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