

Knox, Hamilton and Shelby Counties first in Tennessee to Use Secure Communities

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Knox, Hamilton and Shelby Counties in Tennessee have begun using a new biometric information sharing capability, called Secure Communities, that assists Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials in identifying aliens, both lawfully and unlawfully present in the United States, who are booked into local law enforcement's custody for a crime.

Before Secure Communities, during the booking process, arrestees' fingerprints were checked for criminal history information only against the biometric database maintained by the FBI. This fingerprint information is now automatically and simultaneously checked against both the FBI criminal history records and the biometrics-based immigration records maintained by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). If any fingerprints match someone in the DHS biometric system, the new automated process notifies ICE. After this identification, ICE will respond with a priority placed on aliens convicted of the most serious offenses, such as those with convictions for major drug offenses, murder, rape and kidnapping.

With the expansion of the biometric information sharing capability to Knox, Hamilton and Shelby County, ICE is now using it in 336 jurisdictions in 22 states. Since ICE began using this information sharing capability in October 2008, 8,500 criminal aliens convicted of Level 1 crimes, such as murder, rape and kidnapping, have removed from the United States. Additionally, ICE has removed more than 22,200 criminal aliens convicted of Level 2 and 3 crimes, including burglary and serious property crimes, which account for the majority of crimes committed by aliens.