

# Operation Talon

October 2000 Update







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
Washington, DC 20250



October 27, 2000

Honorable Dan Glickman  
Secretary of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am pleased to present you with my updated report on the progress of "Operation Talon." "Operation Talon" is a law enforcement initiative led by this office and carried out in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies and State social service agencies across the country to locate and apprehend fugitives who may also be illegally receiving food stamp benefits.

In the past, we issued a report detailing the phases of Operation Talon. With this report, we are modifying our reporting procedure. Our focus has changed from reporting arrests by location and phases, to reporting arrests by State. Also, we changed the offense categories and are now using the 33 offense categories used by the U.S. Department of Justice, Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR). The UCR offense categories are also used to enter fugitives into the National Crime Information Computer (NCIC). This is a national data base used by the law enforcement community to identify individuals with criminal histories and individuals who are wanted for felony violations. We feel these refinements will provide offense categories with a consistent point of reference throughout the law enforcement community - local, state, and Federal.

On the State level, OIG continues data matches with State social service agencies and State and local law enforcement agencies. As of September 30, 2000, "Operation Talon" has produced a total of 6,733 fugitive arrests. Included in this number were 1,550 fugitives wanted for drug/narcotic offenses, 31 for homicide, 45 for forcible sex offences including rape and child molestation, 14 for kidnapping/abduction, 380 for assault, and 208 for robbery.

On the Federal level, across the country, our agents, in conjunction with State social service agencies and the U.S. Marshals Service, have initiated data matches. These efforts are directed at locating and apprehending Federal fugitives who may be illegally receiving food stamp benefits. Following the matches, our agents and the U.S. Marshals Service will conduct fugitive apprehension operations.

This is a classic example of the results that can be achieved when Federal, State, and local agencies work together. I am very proud of "Operation Talon" and welcome the opportunity to share this information with you.

Sincerely,

ROGER C. VIADERO  
Inspector General

Enclosure

## OPERATION TALON Overview

“Operation Talon” is a law enforcement initiative led by USDA’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) and carried out in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies and State social service agencies across the country. This initiative matches law enforcement agencies’ felony fugitive files with the social service agencies’ food stamp recipient records. As a result, law enforcement officers are able to locate and apprehend fugitives who may also be illegally receiving benefits. As of September 30, 2000, “Operation Talon” has resulted in 6,733 arrests.

“Operation Talon” was made possible by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, also known as Welfare Reform, which was signed by the President on August 22, 1996. This Act, among other things, included a provision which declared individuals ineligible to receive food stamps who are fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction. Additionally, the Act authorized State social service agencies to provide the addresses of food stamp recipients to any Federal, State, or local law enforcement officer for official purposes.

“Operation Talon” was designed to carry out Congress’ intent by (1) removing ineligible fugitive felons from the food stamp rolls; (2) removing fugitive felons from the streets in order to make communities safer; and, (3) demonstrating to the States how to carry out the statutory provisions on a continuing basis.

OIG’s “Operation Talon” set the standard and showed the States how to establish this matching as part of a normal liaison process between State social service agencies and law enforcement agencies. Further, through mutual cooperation and sharing of resources and information, law enforcement agencies and State social service agencies will continue to recognize favorable results by accomplishing each agency’s goals.

In December of 1997, Vice President Gore announced the initial results of “Operation Talon” during a White House press announcement.



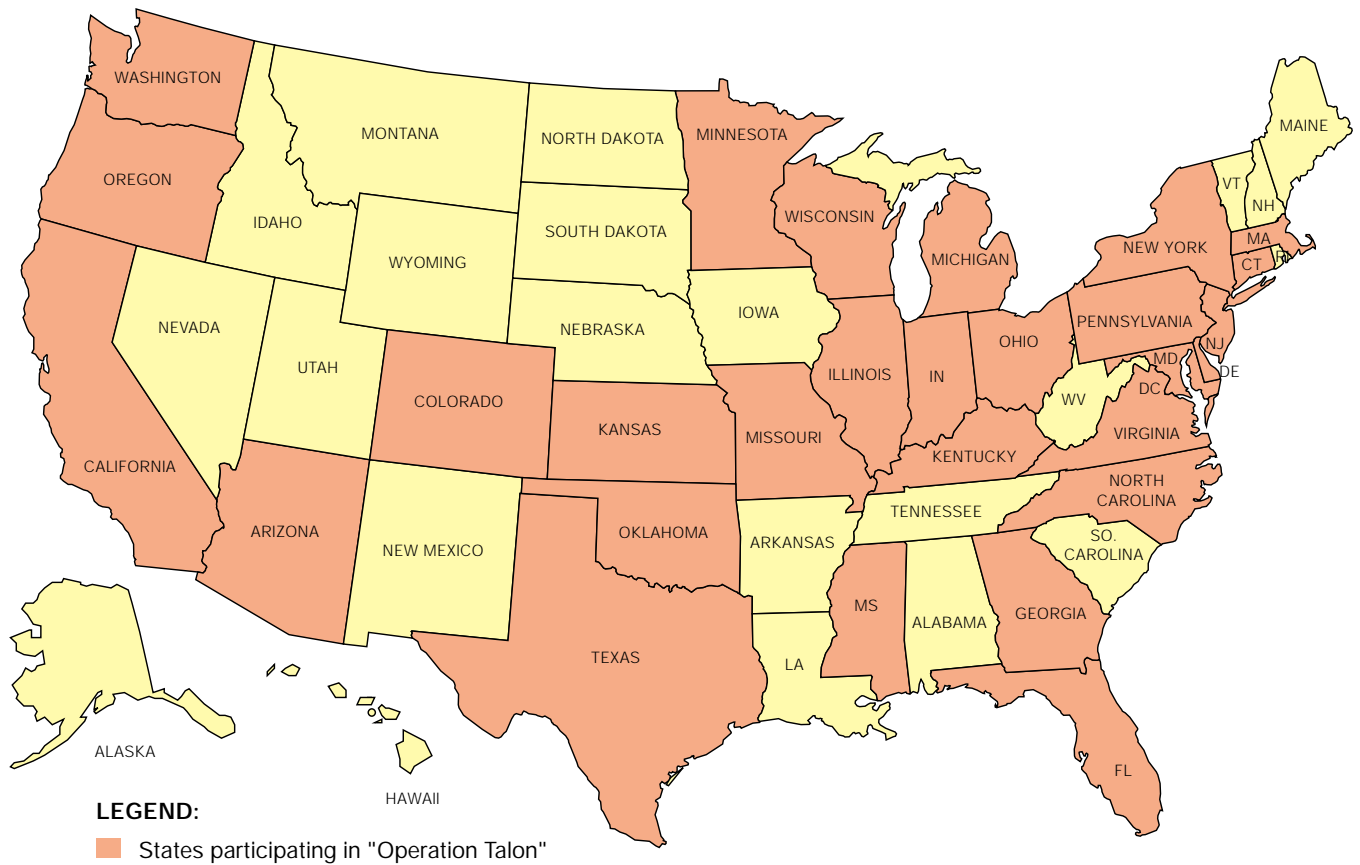
In 1999, OIG received a “Hammer Award” for the inventiveness of “Operation Talon” in creating a positive Federal and State partnership in the elimination of fraud from the Food Stamp Program and the removal of felons from society, making local streets safe.

OIG notified all State social service agencies of the benefit of conducting fugitive matches in their States. Additionally, OIG forwarded copies of the initial “Operation Talon” report to the Governors of all 50 States and Trust Territories. Positive responses were received from a number of these Governors welcoming this activity in their State.

Since its inception in Kentucky, in early 1997, “Operation Talon” has been expanded to include operations in 27 states and the District of Columbia, as shown on the map on the next page.

# OPERATION TALON

## Map of States



## Arrests Made In Each State

<i>Location</i>	<i>Arrests</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Arrests</i>
Arizona	249	Mississippi	42
California	405	Minnesota	62
Colorado	116	Missouri	249
Connecticut	19	North Carolina	16
Delaware	5	New Jersey	850
District of Columbia	41	New York	64
Florida	43	Ohio	734
Georgia	153	Oklahoma	19
Illinois	543	Oregon	208
Indiana	291	Pennsylvania	19
Kansas	26	Texas	931
Kentucky	187	Virginia	306
Maryland	795	Washington	60
Massachusetts	41	Wisconsin	69
Michigan	190	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,733</b>

## OPERATION TALON

### Examples of Arrests

Serious Offense	Total Arrests
Homicide	31
Sex Offenses	45
Kidnaping/Abduction	14
Assault	380
Robbery	208
Drug/Narcotics Offenses	1,550

As noted in the charts shown on the previous page and above, “Operation Talon” has resulted in the location and apprehension of many dangerous fugitives who were wanted for serious offenses. Examples of some of the crimes for which arrest warrants had been issued for these fugitives include:

- One food stamp recipient who was arrested was a fugitive wanted for selling large quantities of illegal drugs. When he was arrested, the fugitive attempted to flee, but an OIG special agent and a local police officer tackled and subdued him. The fugitive was carrying eight knives, nine lengths of metal pipe, three Molotov cocktails, a tire iron, and a screwdriver. He later threatened to burn down the county detention facility and kill OIG special agents and police officers.

- Another fugitive was arrested on a warrant charging her with stabbing another person in the chest with a kitchen knife.

- An individual wanted for driving the getaway car following a murder was arrested. The suspect reportedly drove three accomplices from the scene after they beat and shot another man to death during a drug-related dispute. The fugitive was also wanted for burglary.

- An 18-year-old male was arrested on a warrant charging him with sexually assaulting his 7-year-old cousin.

- One fugitive, who was wanted for murder and had eluded authorities for 4 years, was arrested in a homeless shelter after he applied for participation in the Food Stamp Program using the shelter’s address.

- A fugitive wanted for his part in a conspiracy to rob and murder a fellow drug dealer was arrested. The victim and the other conspirators were all allegedly members of a group involved in the distribution of cocaine.

- During one arrest operation, two fugitives were arrested while selling crack cocaine outside the locations they provided as their home addresses on their Food Stamp Program applications. Searches conducted incident to these arrests resulted in the seizure of over 50 vials of crack cocaine.

- A fugitive wanted for bank robbery, auto theft, and weapons theft was arrested 2 weeks after he stole a vehicle and robbed a bank at gunpoint. On his way back to his home, he stopped at two pawn shops and sold weapons he had previously stolen.

## OPERATION TALON

### Examples of Arrests

■ Another fugitive who was wanted for child molestation and for violating Megan’s Law was arrested when he came to the welfare office to complain that his food stamp benefits had not been added to his electronic benefit card at the beginning of the month. This fugitive had been previously convicted of several sex offenses.

■ A female fugitive, wanted for manslaughter in connection with her involvement in a police chase, was arrested after she failed to appear in court. The fugitive was purchasing drugs while riding in a stolen tractor trailer when the police appeared. The fugitive and her accomplice attempted to elude police in the stolen tractor trailer but crashed into another vehicle. The occupants of the other vehicle, a mother and her pregnant daughter, were killed in the collision.

■ A fugitive who had eluded authorities in New York for 17 years was arrested for failing to appear for his arraignment on a manslaughter charge. The fugitive allegedly drove into another vehicle while he was under the influence of alcohol. The collision killed the passenger in his vehicle.



*OIG agent and local officer transporting fugitive arrested during Operation Talon*

## Federal Fugitive Operations

At the inception of “Operation Talon,” OIG worked with State and Local law enforcement agencies throughout the country to arrest fugitives wanted for State criminal violations. Arrests are ongoing in some locations, and large-scale arrest operations are scheduled for many other locations. OIG will continue with these arrests, and has expanded activities to include arrests of fugitives wanted for violations of Federal law. We are now working with the U.S. Marshals Service to conduct computer matches to identify and locate Federal fugitives.

**CRIMES – UCR CATEGORIES**

*GROUP A OFFENSES.....*

	AZ	CA	CO	CN	DE	DC	FL	GA	IL	IN	KS	KY	MD	MA	MI	MS	MN	MO	NC	NJ	NY	OH	OK	OR	PA	TX	VA	WA	WI	Totals	
Arson	1					1			1				1	1						2	1			1	3					12	
Assault Offenses: <i>Aggravated Assault, Simple Assault, Intimidation</i>	19	5	9	4		3		24	13	23		11	73	7	4		2	8		41		34	1	2	2	67	16	8	4	380	
Bribery																										5				5	
Burglary/Breaking and Entering	4	3	7			2		11		17		4	7	2	6			6	1	42	4	3		7		68		3	3	200	
Counterfeiting/Forgery	8	2	7				1	6		30	1	9	10	2	6	3		8		9		11		7	5	191	6		3	325	
Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property													11		4			1				1		3		9	1			30	
Drug/Narcotic Offense: <i>Drug/Narcotic Violations, Drug Equipment Violations</i>	100	36	15	3		4		18	361	42	3	41	35	14	16	1	21	46	9	200	6	148	1	111	3	252	33	22	9	1,550	
Embezzlement		2													6												1			9	
Extortion/Blackmail	1																													1	
Fraud Offenses: <i>False Pretenses/Swindle/Confidence Game, Credit Card/Automatic Teller Machine Fraud, Impersonation, Welfare Fraud, Wire Fraud</i>	18	313	4		4			1		4	1	46	35		21			7	1	154	3	12	4	13		83	17	3	27	771	
Gambling Offenses: <i>Betting/ Wagering, /operating /Promoting /Assisting Gambling, Gambling Equipment Violations, Sports Tampering</i>													2																	2	
Homicide Offenses: <i>Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter, Negligent Manslaughter, Justifiable Homicide</i>								3	1	1			7		1			2		4		2				6	3	1		31	
Kidnapping/Abduction								5					2	1	1					1		2		1			1			14	
Larceny/Theft Offenses— <i>Pocket-picking, Purse-snatching, Shoplifting, Theft from Building, Theft from Coin-Operated Machine or Device, Theft from Motor Vehicle, Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts or Accessories, All Other Larceny</i>	33	14	48	3	1	1	4	16		100		13	71		22	3		7	2	83		37	12	26	4	110	22	13	3	648	
Motor Vehicle Theft	1	1					1	3		5			2	3	2					6		4		11		20	5	1		65	
Pornography/Obscene Material																															
Prostitution Offenses: <i>Prostitution, Assisting or Promoting Prostitution</i>										3			2													1		1		7	
Robbery		2					4	28	6	5		4	7	2	1			5		32	1	86	1	2	2	12	7		1	208	
Sex Offenses, Forcible: <i>Forcible Rape, Forcible Sodomy, Sexual Assault With An Object, Forcible Fondling</i>								9	1	2			3	2			1	6		2		2				9		1		38	
Sex Offenses, Nonforcible Incest, Statutory Rape	1	2								2										1		1								7	
Stolen Property Offenses (Receiving, etc.)		4												2	5	1		39		43		16								110	
Weapon Law Violations	1	2		1		1		4		1			2		1			5		6		4		4		5			2	39	
<i>GROUP B OFFENSES.....</i>																															
Bad Checks	3						2	2		2	6		27		12	18		86				7		3		23	3			194	
Curfew/Loitering/Vagrancy Violations													1																		1
Disorderly Conduct	1										2		2																1	6	
Driving Under the Influence	23	2								21														6		34				86	
Drunkenness																															
Family Offenses, Nonviolent		1					1	5			3	3						2		46				2	1	10			1	75	
Liquor Law Violations													2																	2	
Peeping Tom																															
Runaway																						2								2	
Trespass of Real Property	2		3										6					2								1				14	
All Other Offenses	33	16	23	8		29	30	18	161	32	10	56	487	6	81	16	38	19	3	178	50	361		10	1	22	191	7	15	1,901	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>6,733</b>	





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