



### Why This Matters

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is responsible for identifying, detaining, and removing deportable aliens from the United States. In 2008, ICE implemented Secure Communities to enhance its ability to identify criminal aliens nationwide. The key component of Secure Communities is interoperability, or automated information sharing, between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. At the request of Representative Zoe Lofgren, we assessed whether ICE clearly communicated to states and local jurisdictions the intent of Secure Communities and their expected participation.

### DHS Response

ICE concurred with the three recommendations. When implemented, the recommendations should help ICE improve the planning and implementation of future immigration and enforcement programs.

## Communication Regarding Participation in Secure Communities

### What We Determined

We found no evidence indicating that during implementation of Secure Communities ICE intentionally misled the public or stakeholders regarding participation. However, ICE did not clearly communicate to stakeholders the intent of Secure Communities and their expected participation.

This lack of clarity was evident in its strategic plan, its outreach efforts, memorandums of agreement signed by states, and its responses to inquiries regarding participation. ICE senior leadership also missed opportunities to provide clear direction to its officials implementing Secure Communities. As a result, three years after implementation began, Secure Communities continues to face opposition, criticism, and resistance in some locations.

### What We Recommend

We recommend the Director of ICE:

- 1) Immediately compose and release thorough guidance and criteria that specifically outlines the intent and expectations of Secure Communities. The guidance should specify which aspects of Secure Communities are optional for states and local law enforcement agencies.
- 2) Coordinate with DHS to establish protocols to ensure the Department and ICE senior leadership provide the necessary direction, guidance, oversight, and support for the intent and implementation of new immigration enforcement programs.
- 3) Generate a lessons learned document and plan for DHS to use when guiding future immigration and enforcement program development and implementation.

### For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at [DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov](mailto:DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov)