

Secure Communities Discussion Meeting

June 8, 2012
9:00-10:00am

Office on Latino Affairs
2000 – 14th Street, NW - Second Floor

Maria Gomez explained that she called this meeting with ICE in order to fully and with accuracy understand the implications of Secure Communities.

Andrew Lorenzen-Strait of ICE explained that ICE receives funding to deport approximately 400,000 individuals per year [of the more than 10 million individuals estimated to be in the United States unlawfully (ICE website)], meaning that it must prioritize and target the most egregious offenders.

ICE targets three categories (“buckets”) of individuals:

1. Criminal aliens – there are three subcategories under this category, and all include actual convicts (i.e. those who have been convicted of a crime through the criminal justice system, not simply suspected of committing a crime)
2. Those who have violated the immigration system (example: absconded individuals)
3. Individuals who have yet to build “equity” in the United States (recent arrivals and/or those without strong family connections)

Mr. Lorenzen-Strait explained that ICE exercises prosecution discretion, especially in regard to #3, giving special allowance to keep families together and/or unification of families. He then explained that ICE implemented a paper version of a new risk assessment tool last year; this tool will be launched electronically in early July, 2012 [I was unable to find a copy of this tool online, though I saw it mentioned on ICE’s website].

There were several questions regarding the upholding of basic human rights for the detained, particularly LGBT detainees; communication with the detained; and whether Secure Communities meant that ICE would be launching raids in the DC area.

Mr. Lorenzen-Strait explained that coalitions exist ensure that the special needs and/or basic human rights of the LGBT community are considered in detainment situations. He pointed community workers to ICE’s website, which contains a database to track the location and status of detained individuals (<https://locator.ice.gov/odls/homePage.do>). He also explained that ICE only intends to target fugitives, not conduct “raids,” per se.

Stepping back, it was explained that Secure Communities is an information-sharing initiative at the Federal level between the FBI and DHS.

[From ICE’s website: Secure Communities is a simple and common sense way to carry out ICE’s priorities. It uses an already-existing federal information-sharing partnership between ICE and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that helps to identify criminal aliens without imposing new or

additional requirements on state and local law enforcement.

http://www.ice.gov/secure_communities/

In response to questions about racial profiling, Mr. Lorenzen-Strait explained that ICE is doing all it can to concentrate its resources to target only individuals in the above-mentioned “buckets.” A representative from The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) explained that studies are being conducted to identify areas where racial profiling might be occurring in order to quell it [more info here: <http://www.ice.gov/doclib/secure-communities/pdf/statisticalmonitoring.pdf>]. CRCL Policy Advisor Nadia Firozvi invited community workers to bring instances of racial profiling and other type of unfair detainment cases to her attention for review (nadia.firozvi@dhs.gov), explaining that if the DHS is not aware of these cases, it cannot intervene/address them. Mr. Lorenzen-Strait also encouraged community workers to contact him directly (andrew.strait@dhs.gov) [community workers can file a complaint here: http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/structure/gc_1273526572731.shtm#1].

Mr. Lorenzen-Strait explained that during processing, detainees are given a form including contact information of community organizations and legal services, but that some centers have been under scrutiny for not taking the time to explain the form to detainees or ensure that they understand their rights to access services. One obstacle here could be language access, which calls for community advocacy to ensure that interpretation services are available.

Mr. Lorenzen-Strait invited community workers to join the committee that designs the forms detainees are asked to fill out/review for ICE.

Community Stakeholders Meeting

(Mary’s Center, OLA, and a few other community stakeholders remained)

OLA is hosting a series of Public Forums to educate individuals about their rights. The first meeting will take place on **June 17th at 2:00pm at Sacred Heart Church (16th and Park Road)**. Flyers advertising this event were distributed. Roxana Olivas, Executive Director of OLA, also explained that fact sheets, cards, and videos were being produced for community education. Finally, OLA is hosting a “train the trainer” session for its grantees so that community workers can present current and accurate information to their program participants.