

From Fingerprints to DNA: Biometric Data Collection in U.S. Immigrant Communities and Beyond



[1] [2]

By [Jennifer Lynch](#) [3]

The collection of biometrics—including fingerprints, DNA, and face-recognition ready photographs—is becoming more and more a part of society. Both the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) are in the process of expanding their biometrics databases to collect even more information, like face prints and iris scans. The expansion of biometric data collection, however, is uniquely affecting undocumented immigrants and immigrant communities. Under DHS’s Secure Communities program, for example, states are required to share their fingerprint data with DHS, thus subjecting undocumented and even documented immigrants in the United States to heightened fears of deportation should they have any interaction with law enforcement.

In this report, co-sponsored by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), author Jennifer Lynch explains the different technologies for collecting biometrics, as well as how that data is collected, stored and used. She raises concerns about data-sharing, legal protection, technological problems, then proposes changes to control and limit the storage of biometrics to benefit not only immigrants, but all people in the U.S.

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Links:

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- [2] <https://www.eff.org/about/staff/jennifer-lynch>
- [3] <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/jennifer-lynch-esq>
- [4] <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Lynch%20-%20By%20the%20Numbers.pdf>
- [5] <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Lynch%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>
- [6] http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/lynch_-_biometrics_052112.pdf
- [7] <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/ipc/Fingerprinting%20052312.mp3>