

**Contact: Darcy Tromanhauser, Nebraska Appleseed, 402-438-8853 ext. 112**

**NEW APPLESEED PUBLICATION  
“FORCING OUR BLUES INTO GRAY AREAS:  
LOCAL POLICE AND FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT”**

Lincoln, NE – As immigration reform moves rapidly through Congress, and some proposals would seek to expand the traditional duties of local and state police to include immigration enforcement, a **ground-breaking report is being released that provides critical historical and legal background against these recent moves to force local law officers into this federal role and confusing area of law.** Nebraska Appleseed is releasing a guide for elected officials, law enforcement, and advocates on the legality of local officers enforcing federal immigration laws. To view the guide please visit:

<http://www.neappleseed.org/publications/>

Around the country, law enforcement officials have strongly opposed policies that would require them to enforce immigration laws, arguing that such policies would undermine community policing efforts and jeopardize public safety. Many Nebraska law enforcement officials agree.

“At a time when law enforcement is struggling to establish a level of rapport with some of the newest members of our community, it doesn't make sense to alienate the very persons whose cooperation we are trying to seek,” said S. E. Ford, Chief of Police of the South Sioux City Police Department. “It serves no good purpose to have crimes in our community go unreported because people are afraid to have contact with law enforcement.”

Speaking on behalf of the Omaha Chapter of the Latino Peace Officers Association (LPOA), Officer Virgil Patlan said, “The Omaha Chapter of the LPOA would be against state and local officers enforcing immigration laws. We have made it our goal to be a bridge between the Omaha Police Department and the large Hispanic community. The trust would be violated if local and state officers were given the added duty of enforcing immigration laws. The local officer's first duty is to protect and serve our state residents by enforcing state statutes and city ordinances.”

Given the inconsistent state of the law, law enforcement practices can vary greatly from state to state, county to county, and city to city. Appleseed's primer outlines the history of local law enforcement of federal immigration law and the legality of such actions and arrangements. The law is unclear regarding the authority of state and local police to enforce federal immigration law. What is clear is that there is no **obligation** for state and local police to enforce immigration law in the absence of a Memorandum of Understanding with DHS. Appleseed finds that increasing the role of state and local police in immigration enforcement is bad policy, and there are very strong reasons for law enforcement and others to reject it.

A conference covering these issues, “Law Enforcement and The New Immigration,” is scheduled for Friday, April 7, at the DoubleTree Hotel in downtown Omaha. The conference is sponsored by the Police Professionalism Initiative (PPI) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and the UNO Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS).

For more information on this and other immigration policy issues please visit:

[www.NeAppleseed.org](http://www.NeAppleseed.org)