



U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

# DHS, USCIS to Modernize, Define the Collection of Biometrics

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**WASHINGTON**— The Department of Homeland Security today announced the imminent publication of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that proposes expanding department authorities and methods for collecting biometrics that will establish a defined regulatory purpose for biometrics.

With the proposed changes, DHS would modernize biometrics collection and authorize expanded use of biometrics beyond background checks to include identity verification, secure document production and records management. The proposed rule improves the screening and vetting process and reduces our dependence on paper documents and biographic information to prove identity and familial relationships.

By proposing a standard definition of “biometrics” for DHS components and authorized purposes for collecting biometrics, this proposed rule would create clear rules for using the information collected. These proposals would move DHS and its components toward more consistent identity verification and information management.

“This proposed rule eliminates any ambiguity surrounding the Department’s use of biometrics, setting clear standards for how and why we collect and use this information,” said the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Deputy Secretary for Homeland Security Ken Cuccinelli. “Leveraging readily available technology to verify the identity of an individual we are screening is responsible governing. The collection of biometric information also guards against identity theft and thwarts fraudsters who are not who they claim to be.”

The proposed rule would authorize biometrics collection for identity verification in addition to new techniques. Voice, iris and facial recognition technologies are fast, accurate ways to confirm the identity of an applicant that don’t require physical contact.

The proposed rule also authorizes DHS to collect DNA or DNA test results to verify a claimed genetic relationship when the applicant or petitioner is unable to provide sufficient documentary evidence to establish the claimed relationship. Using DNA or DNA test results to help establish “family units” would help petitioners and DHS verify claims of genetic relationships and keep adults who are in custody from misrepresenting themselves as biological parents of minors who are not related to them. By using DNA or DNA tests to establish bona fide genetic relationship between adults and minors in DHS custody, DHS can better protect the well-being of children.

Topics: [Citizenship and Immigration Services \(/topics/immigration-and-citizenship-services\)](/topics/immigration-and-citizenship-services).

Keywords: [Acting Secretary Chad Wolf \(/keywords/acting-secretary-chad-wolf\)](/keywords/acting-secretary-chad-wolf)., [Biometrics \(/keywords/biometrics\)](/keywords/biometrics)., [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\) \(/keywords/uscis\)](/keywords/uscis).

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