



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

BIOGRAPHY

Barbara Gonzalez

Assistant Director for the ICE Office of Partnership and Engagement (OPE)

Barbara M. Gonzalez is the assistant director for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Partnership and Engagement (OPE).

ICE is the federal government's second largest law enforcement agency, with nearly 20,000 employees in 400 domestic and 62 international offices in 47 countries.

Ms. Gonzalez oversees a cadre of Community Relations Officers who handle stakeholder engagement, and Victim Liaisons who help victims impacted by crimes with an immigration nexus as part of the Victims Of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) Office.

Prior to her current position, Ms. Gonzalez served as the acting assistant director of the agency's Office of Public Affairs from February 2016 to April 2017.

During her tenure at ICE, Ms. Gonzalez has held many instrumental roles including serving as the agency's senior advisor to Latin America. She has frequently represented the agency and DHS throughout Latin America in high-profile migration matters. While serving as the senior advisor to Latin America from August 2014 to January 2016, Ms. Gonzalez led communications efforts on behalf of DHS in Central America raising awareness about the dangers associated with unlawful migration and the U.S. government's efforts in working multilaterally in the region to tackle transnational organized crime.

Ms. Gonzalez previously served as the agency's press secretary from May 2011 to July 2014, leading more than 30 public affairs officers around the country and directing media relations and strategy for ICE in the United States and internationally. Prior to that, she served in various roles within ICE as a spokesperson and supervisor. During this time, she responded to a wide array of high-profile media issues including the nation's ongoing immigration debate, freighter and airplane hijackings, and incidents involving ICE's Migrant Operations Center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. She has also served as a spokesperson in numerous significant national and international criminal cases involving espionage, child exploitation, human trafficking, money laundering and contraband smuggling.

Ms. Gonzalez began her federal career in late 1996 working for the former Immigration and Naturalization Service. She joined ICE when DHS was created in 2003.



Ms. Gonzalez is a crisis communications expert who has trained DHS and Department of Defense personnel, multiple governors and other elected officials. She also conducted training on behalf of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's Mobile Education Team at the Naval Postgraduate School.

As a native Spanish speaker, Ms. Gonzalez frequently speaks on behalf of DHS and is routinely interviewed on Spanish-speaking news programs around the world. In 2013, Ms. Gonzalez was named a "Woman Worth Watching" in the Profiles in Diversity Journal.

Ms. Gonzalez attended Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, and graduated with a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in psychology. She also holds a graduate certificate from FIU in human resource management.