

How to Locate a Community Member Who Has Been Detained

A Guidebook by the Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights



Background

Every year, hundreds of thousands of community members are placed in detention centers throughout the United States. On January 25, 2017, President Trump issued the Executive Order, "[Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States.](#)" which called for the hiring of 10,000 additional agents and significantly expanded the individuals to be targeted for arrest and removal. On the ground, this often means community members suddenly disappear, leaving family members scramble to find them.

In Washtenaw County, we have helped numerous families located loved ones they believe have been detained. This WICIR Guidebook is meant to support both community members and advocates in locating those they believe may have been detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). We welcome corrections and clarification; please direct them to wicir.washtenaw@gmail.com.

How Undocumented Community Members Get Detained

Undocumented individuals are placed in detention centers in at least two ways. First, they may be directly detained by ICE or CBP when, for example, immigration agents pull them over or arrest them in home or workplace raids. In these cases in Michigan, they will likely be immediately detained in one of five county jail that contracts with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Secondly, individuals may be arrested by the police. While in jail, their immigration information may be shared with ICE, who can pick them up from the jail or submit a detainer request. Detainer requests allow undocumented individuals to be held for 48 hours beyond their release time for ICE to pick up and transfer to a detention facility.

Locating A Detained Community Member

If you believe someone has been detained, there are three things you can do to attempt to locate them. First, you can 1) check the ICE Online Detainee Locator System. If this isn't successful, you can 2) check Vinelink, a "victim notification system." Third, you can 3) call the county jails in which they may be detained. Lastly, if the individual is being charged criminally, they won't show up in the online system and you will have to call the U.S. Marshall. Instructions for each are given below.

ICE Online Detainee Locator System

The [ICE Online Detainee Locator System](#) will show where someone is detained. The site requires *either* an A-number and country of birth, *or* first name, last name, country of birth, and birth date. An A-Number is an “Alien number” and can be found on most of the individuals immigration paperwork. If you do not have the A-Number, you can get it by asking the ICE office for it (contact information below). Keep in mind that the ICE Detainee Locator is a finicky search tool that requires fairly precise inputs to work. This means that you may need to try various combinations of first names, middle names, last names, and hyphenated names of various spellings, as well as switching birth month and day, as the day-month format is common in many Latin American countries.

Some Tips: We suggest that you start with the person’s official first name (that is, not a nickname or second first name) in the “First Name” box and use both his last names with the correct spellings in the “Last Name” box. You can try the last names without a hyphen first, and if it does not work then try the last names hyphenated. Then try each last name individually. You can also try substituting common misspellings of names, such as using “s” in place of “z”. If none of these combinations work, we suggest you try again every few days; it often takes a couple days for detained individuals to show up in the online system. [This site](#) has a few more suggestions for using the ICE Online Detainee Locator System.

VINELink

[VINELink](#) (click [here](#) for MI) allows users to track the location of a detained individual and receive updates when they are moved. You will need a last name, a first name, *or* an Offender ID #. Note, an Offender ID is not the same as an A-Number. You can get the Offender ID once you locate the individual by asking the jail administration.

Calling County Jails

If you are unable to locate someone with the ICE locator, we recommend you call directly to the county jails where ICE most commonly detains individuals. There are five county jails that partner with DHS in Michigan. Their contact information is listed below. If you cannot locate individuals in Michigan detention facilities, it is possible that they have been transferred out of the state; we list Ohio contact information as well.

A useful script may include: “My friend(s) was picked up by immigration today/yesterday and I’m trying to find them. Can I give you their name? They have two last names/there are a couple people so bear with me please? I’d like to try both names.” If you wish, you can also say, “I would also like to provide him with money on his commissary account. Can you share his Prison ID number?”

Michigan & Ohio

Monroe County Jail Website Dormitory Facility 7000 E Dunbar Rd Monroe, MI 48161 (734) 240-8000	Calhoun County Jail, also called Calhoun County Correctional Center Website 185 E. Michigan St. Battle Creek, MI (269) 969-6304
St. Clair County Jail Website 1170 Michigan Rd Port Huron, MI (810) 987-1700	Chippewa County Jail 325 Court St Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783 (906) 635-6395
Kent County Jail Website 50 E Spruce St. Chippewa Falls, WI 54729 Phone: (715) 726-7704	Seneca County Jail 3040 S. State Route 100 Tiffin, OH (419) 448-5074
Geauga County Safety Center 12450 Merritt Rd Chardon, OH (440) 279-2009	

For additional questions, you can also contact the ICE offices in Michigan or Ohio.

ICE Detroit Field Office 333 Mt Elliott St, Detroit, MI 48207 (313) 568-6049	ICE Columbus Office 395 East Broad St., Ste. 100 Columbus, OH 43215
ICE Cleveland Office 925 Keynote Circle Brooklyn Heights, OH 44131 (216) 749-9200	

Calling the US Marshall

Lastly, if the detained individual is being criminally charged, they will not show up in the online system (though you may be able to locate them by calling the detention centers or using

vinelink). In they are being prosecuted in Michigan, you can call the U.S. Marshall at 313-234-5660.