

Guide for Visiting Immigrants in Minnesota Detention Centers

Jan. 2026

If an immigrant member of your congregation is arrested, please immediately contact:

Rev. Rex McKee 612.386.4200 rex.mckee@gmail.com

Archdeacon Rena Romero 612.308.1898 rena.t@episcopalmn.org Rev. Daniel

Romero 303.258.6444 daniel.romero@mchurches.org

Use this guide when you are seeking to visit an immigrant who is in ICE custody in one of Minnesota's county jails that have contracts with ICE (Sherburne, Kandiyohi, Freeborn). This guide does not apply to immigrants who are in the custody of other federal agencies such as the U.S. Marshal's Service.

If you have any questions about this guide, please contact Daniel.

If an immigrant is arrested by ICE

Step 1

The first step in establishing visitation is determining where the immigrant is being held, and for this step use the [ICE Detainee Locator](#). After a person is arrested, it can take several hours for the person to be initially processed by ICE and sent to one of the county jails with ICE contracts. During this initial processing and transporting, the Detainee Locator will show "No results found," until the booking process is completed at the respective county jail.

On the "Search by A number" fields, enter the immigrant's "A number" and country of birth. The A number can be found on the top of the first page of the "Notice to Appear" document that the person received at the border, if the immigrant crossed the border at a port of entry. The A number usually has 9 numbers, often starting with the number "2."

If you don't have the immigrant's A number, use the "Search by Biographical Information" fields. When entering the immigrant's name, you must enter the exact spelling of the person's name. When entering the date of birth, remember that people from other countries often use day/month/year format instead of month/day/year format as we do in the U.S.

Once you have confirmed where the immigrant is being held, notify the family and the immigrant's lawyer, if they have one. If the family doesn't have a lawyer, contact Daniel Romero by phone or by text at 303.258.6444.

Step 2

Follow the steps on the jail website to add money to the immigrant's phone/email/voicemail account. If at all possible, urge the immigrant's family to be responsible for maintaining sufficient funds on this account. After communication is established with the immigrant, urge them to request a visit with their Pastor (you). The immigrant may need to initiate this request by using a "kite," which is a jail services request form.

Step 3

On the jail website, review all jail policies regarding visitation as jails differ in visitation dates, times and other requirements. Clergy visits can occur remotely by video, on site by video, or in-person (face-to face) at the jail. Whether you are visiting remotely or in-person, scheduling the visit in advance with jail staff is required.

Step 4

If you intend to visit an immigrant face-to-face, initiate contact with the jail by calling or emailing the Jail Administrator. Let them know that you are the immigrant's Pastor and that you want to schedule a face to-face visit. The Administrator will require you to have a background check and the Administrator will ask you to submit your ID and clergy credentials, this may take a few days to process. Because deportations are occurring rapidly and often without due process, establishing contact with the Administrator as soon as possible is important.

Other points to remember

- You cannot bring your phone into your face-to-fate visit and the jail does not provide interpreters. If you intend to bring an interpreter with you, coordinate with the Administrator.
- You can take notes during your face-to-face visit so bring a pad of paper and a pen.
- If the immigrant has a lawyer, coordinate your visit with the attorney.
- Friends and family members cannot visit with the immigrant face-to-face.

If the immigrant was arrested by local police

If you or a family member suspects that an immigrant was arrested by local police, in order to locate them, you will need to look at the jail roster in the county where the person was arrested. Once the person is located we will need to review the jail website to create an account for phone calls, emails and video visits. Thereafter, making contact with the county Public Defender's office will be necessary. When an immigrant is arrested by local police, generally, the immigrant will go through the county court system before the immigrant is either released or is turned over to ICE. This can take weeks or months. However, sometimes the county will drop the local charges in order to expedite a transfer into ICE custody. If this happens, follow steps 1 – 4 above.