



Immigration Information

For the University of Michigan Community

Developed by the Office of the Vice President & General Counsel

January 30, 2026



Immigration Information For the University of Michigan Community

This document has been prepared by the Office of the Vice President & General Counsel to help the University of Michigan(U-M) community better understand current immigration laws and policies in the United States. It provides background information regarding federal agencies, constitutional rights, immigration enforcement on and off campus, international travel and documentation, available resources, and immigration law firms.

Section 1

U.S. Immigration Enforcement Agencies and Their Key Functions

p. 2

Section 2

U.S. Constitution: Fourth and Fifth Amendments

p. 3

Section 3

Subpoenas and Warrants

p. 4

Section 4

ICE Access to University-Controlled Property

p. 5

Section 5

ICE Access Off-Campus

p. 7

Section 6

International Travel and Re-Entry to the U.S.

p. 8

Section 7

Prepare Before You Travel

p. 10

Section 8

Special Information for F-1 and J-1 Students

p. 11

Section 9

Immigration Law Firms

p. 12

Section 1

U.S. Immigration Enforcement Agencies and Their Key Functions

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the federal executive department responsible for public security. Its mission includes immigration and customs, border patrol and transportation security.

The following are enforcement agencies under DHS:

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

(ICE) is the primary law enforcement arm for federal immigration law within the interior of the United States. It is responsible for enforcing immigration laws at and away from the borders. ICE has two main operating divisions:

- **Homeland Security Investigations (HSI):** Investigates a wide range of transnational criminal and security threats. SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program) is housed within HSI and manages the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). SEVP also oversees the certification process which allows schools to enroll F-1 international students. The State Department manages a similar program for J-1 Exchange visitors.
- **Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO):** Responsible for the detention and removal of noncitizens who are found to be in the country illegally.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

is responsible for securing the borders at and between official ports of entry, though its operations have expanded significantly within the nation's interior in the past year. CBP includes several key components:

- **Border Patrol:** The uniformed law enforcement arm responsible for securing the U.S. land borders.
- **Office of Field Operations:** The uniformed law enforcement arm that works at the individual ports of entry themselves.
- **Air and Marine Operations:** Provides aerial and maritime support for border security.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

is responsible for ensuring the security of the nation's transportation systems. The TSA works with other intelligence agencies to identify and assess potential threats to transportation and implements security measures to counter them. This includes conducting background checks and issuing credentials for transportation workers, such as pilots, airport personnel, and truck drivers.

Section 2

U.S. Constitution: Fourth and Fifth Amendments

What is the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution?

The Fourth Amendment protects people from unreasonable searches and seizures by the government. It generally requires law enforcement to have a warrant based on probable cause before entering your home or searching you or your property, unless an exception to the warrant requirement (like the presence of an exigency or consent) applies.

Does the Fourth Amendment protect non-citizens?

Yes. The Fourth Amendment protects everyone inside the United States, regardless of immigration status. That means citizens, green card holders, visa holders, and undocumented individuals all have Fourth Amendment protections.

What is the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution?

All individuals in the U.S., including non-citizens, have the right to remain silent. You can inform law enforcement that you are using your Fifth Amendment right to remain silent and that you will not answer any questions without a lawyer present. To exercise this right, a person must say out loud: *"I am exercising my right to remain silent."* However, please pay careful attention to your **differing responsibilities during international travel**, which are detailed below.

What does "probable cause" mean?

Probable cause is a legal standard requiring reasonable grounds to believe that a particular person has committed or is committing a crime, or that evidence will be found in a particular place.

Section 3

Subpoenas and Warrants

What is a subpoena?

A subpoena is a legal document that orders a person to appear in court or in a legal proceeding—such as a deposition—or to produce documents, records or other evidence.

What is an “ICE warrant”?

An “**ICE warrant**” is a form issued by certain immigration officers that names an allegedly deportable non-citizen and directs various federal immigration enforcement agents to arrest that individual. ICE warrants are issued for suspected civil violations of immigration law, not probable cause of a criminal offense. They are also referred to as “administrative warrants.”

- An ICE warrant directs various federal immigration enforcement agents to arrest the person named in the warrant. An ICE warrant does not give an immigration enforcement officer the same authority to demand entry to a home, private space, or limited access space as does a judicial warrant, nor do ICE warrants provide a basis for a local or state law enforcement officer or agency to arrest or detain anyone.
- An “ICE warrant” is **not a judicial warrant**. It is not reviewed by a judge, or any party outside the Executive branch, to determine if it is supported by a showing of probable cause. A judicial warrant will be issued under the authority of a federal court, signed by a federal judge or magistrate, and, in the case of a judicial search warrant, will state the address of the premises to be searched, what is to be searched for, and the time period in which the search must occur.

Section 4

ICE Access to University-Controlled Property

Are ICE, DHS, or other Federal Agencies allowed on campus?

Officials from ICE, DHS, or other federal agencies may be on campus, including for reasons unrelated to enforcement actions. They can access public spaces of our campus. They also may alert us to criminal warrants for individuals who pose imminent threats or harm to the community. ICE (SEVP) site visits related to the F-1 international student are also possible. It is important that you do not resist, obstruct, or otherwise interfere with the actions of law enforcement.

Can ICE conduct enforcement actions on U-M controlled property?

Yes. As a public university, U-M is largely open to the public. ICE and other federal immigration enforcement officers may enter areas open to the public without a warrant. Public access is limited in certain areas of U-M's campuses and property. In those areas, federal law enforcement officers, including ICE, generally must present a judicial warrant for entry without consent, unless an exception to the warrant requirement applies. This category includes campus buildings like residence halls in which access is restricted by university-issued ID cards, locked doors or monitored entryways, as well as administrative or faculty offices, classrooms, and laboratories. Although uncommon, ICE (SEVP) site visits related to the F-1 international student/ scholar population are also possible, but the International Center would be contacted.

What to do if you encounter ICE or other federal agency officials on campus?

- Do not interfere with or obstruct the actions of law enforcement officers.
- Immediately notify the university by contacting the Division of Public Safety and Security (DPSS):
Ann Arbor (734) 763-1131
Dearborn (313) 593-5333
Flint (810) 762-3333

How should a subpoena or a warrant be handled?

A U-M community member approached by an immigration enforcement agent should state they are not authorized to accept service on behalf of the university or any particular department, office, or person, and refer the officers to DPSS or, during normal business hours, the Office of the Vice

President and General Counsel (OGC). OGC will then assist in determining the validity of the request and respond on behalf of the University.

You may record or document the interaction while maintaining a safe distance. Again, you must not resist or otherwise interfere with the actions of law enforcement. The university does not encourage or support subverting immigration enforcement in any way or refusing to comply with federal immigration laws.

Does U-M have an affirmative obligation to assist ICE?

Federal law prohibits hiding evidence, concealing individuals who are the targets of law enforcement, or interfering with an arrest.

Federal law also prevents a federal, state, or local government from prohibiting or restricting "any government entity or official from sending to, or receiving from, [federal immigration enforcement agencies] information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual." 8 U.S.C. 1373.

Also note that U-M is required to report certain information about F-1 or J-1 visa holders to the government, including, among other things, confirmation of full-time enrollment, address updates, changes to the field of study or to the anticipated end date of the student's academic program. This reporting is routine, is done through SEVIS, and is handled by the International Center. ICE (SEVP) also has the authority to request specific student data such as records of coursework, academic status, and records of documents reviewed as part of the admissions process. These data requests are also handled by the International Center.

Even in cases in which the university does not have a legal obligation to assist ICE, neither the university nor its community may interfere with the federal government's lawful presence on campus. A U-M community member may be subject to criminal prosecution if they attempt to interfere, physically or otherwise, with the actions of a federal officer.

Does FERPA protect DACA and undocumented students?

Yes. Personal Identifiable Information (PII) of undocumented or DACA students is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA effectively prohibits schools from releasing educational records, or most personally identifiable information, without consent unless presented with a court order or subpoena, or under other very limited exceptions under FERPA.

What happens if a federal officer/agent insists on carrying out enforcement actions prior to contact being made with the appropriate UM authority?

U-M personnel should not interfere with or obstruct the actions of law enforcement officers. Instead, U-M personnel should observe their conduct, take detailed notes of what transpires (if they are able), and share any such notes or other documentation with OGC as soon as feasible. If officers claim "exigent circumstances" authorizing their access to our facilities or people without a warrant, we should comply with their commands; where adequate justification for such access may be lacking, the appropriate recourse would be a subsequent legal challenge, rather than obstruction in the moment.

What happens when a federal immigration enforcement officer seeks to enter a residence hall room or other "Non-Public Area" as defined above?

U.S. federal immigration enforcement officials generally cannot access non-public, limited access university spaces such as residence halls, classrooms, lab spaces or administrative offices, without a judicial warrant or an exception to the warrant requirement. For example, a residence hall room is considered a limited access area and generally cannot

be legally accessed by immigration enforcement officers without a valid judicial warrant, an exception to the warrant requirement, or the voluntary consent of the occupant. This limited access is intended to protect the educational environment and ensure faculty, staff, and student privacy and safety. However, these protections are not absolute and can vary based on evolving federal law, factual circumstances and university policy.

In the absence of a valid judicial warrant, what happens if a federal immigration enforcement officer seeks to enter patient care areas of the hospital or other healthcare facilities?

The most important step for any U-M community member is to politely advise the officer(s) in question that they have been instructed to notify DPSS and that the federal enforcement officer will need to wait for security to engage. This process applies only to non-public parts of healthcare facilities, including areas where access is limited to people who are receiving or providing care, or who are otherwise necessary, such as a parent accompanying a child who is receiving care. For example, a clinic waiting room that is open to the public is likewise open to federal law enforcement officers without a warrant and without awaiting advice from University authorities. However, if individuals must be invited to enter examination rooms, offices, consultation rooms and medical records areas, law enforcement entry to those non-public areas without a judicial warrant or exigent circumstances requires approval by University authorities (except as permitted by the UMH Patient-Prisoner Plan of Care Policy).

Section 5

ICE Access Off-Campus

Can ICE or police enter my home without a warrant?

No, not without your consent or an exception to the warrant requirement (such as “exigent circumstances”). If ICE or police come to your door, you are not required to open the door. You can request to see the warrant (you can ask them to slip it under the door).

Administrative warrants do not provide ICE with the same authority as a judicial warrant. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that ICE might try to enter your home on the basis of an administrative warrant, also referred to as an “ICE warrant” or a Form I-200 or I-205. For decades, ICE has required its officers to present a valid judicial warrant (not an ICE warrant) to legally enter a residence without consent, absent an exception to the warrant requirement. However, ICE has reportedly changed its practices in recent months and now might act on an administrative warrant alone. You may still ask to see the warrant, decline to consent to their entry, and assert at the appropriate time any legal rights you may have as to the validity of the warrant.

What if I’m stopped by police or ICE on the street?

You have the right to remain silent. To exercise that right, you must say out loud: *“I am exercising my right to remain silent.”* You are not required to consent to a search of your belongings or body. You may ask if you are free to leave. If yes, walk away calmly. *Note: Non-citizens should speak to a lawyer before giving any information about their immigration status.*

Can ICE or the police search my phone or belongings?

Only if they have your consent, or a judicial warrant, unless an exception to the warrant requirement applies. You are not required to unlock or give your passcode without a warrant, but please be aware of the special rules for international travel discussed below.

What happens during a traffic stop?

You must show your driver’s license, registration, and proof of insurance if asked. However, you are not required to answer questions about your immigration status or birthplace, or consent to a search of your car, unless law enforcement has probable cause or a judicial warrant.

What happens if I’m undocumented?

Everyone has constitutional rights regardless of immigration status. You can remain silent and refuse consent to a search. You can request an attorney if you are detained. However, you must not lie, misrepresent any information, or show fake documents.

What happens if ICE detains me?

Stay calm. You have a constitutional right to remain silent and can say: *“I wish to remain silent. I want to speak to a lawyer.”* You can seek legal advice before signing anything.

Section 6

International Travel and Re-Entry to the U.S.

Do I have to show identification to fly?

Yes, for domestic flights the Transportation Security Administration (“TSA”) requires a valid government-issued ID (e.g., a REAL-ID compliant driver’s license, passport, etc.). For international flights, you must show a passport and possibly a visa depending on your destination. If you don’t have an acceptable form of ID, TSA may ask extra questions or refuse to let you board.

Pursuant to recent CBP updated guidance for Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) transmissions to CBP, as of October 14, 2025, APIS will only accept “M” or “F” gender designations on travel documents submitted “for an international flight to or from the United States” in compliance with Executive Order 14168, *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government*. Individuals with a valid, unexpired passport with “X” non-binary gender marker issued by the U.S. Department of State should prepare for potential questions or delays due to the discrepancy with the more recent CBP guidance and may wish to seek guidance from an attorney prior to international travel.

Can TSA search my bags and body?

Yes. TSA is allowed to search you and your belongings for security reasons. TSA can use body scanners and pat-downs and search carry-on and checked luggage. But TSA cannot search based on race, religion, or nationality, and may not physically harm you.

What happens if I’m stopped upon re-entry to the CBP?

CBP authority may include questioning, taking travelers to secondary inspection (even for hours), and seizing/searching devices. **Follow the instructions of the immigration officer, be honest, and remain respectful during the process.** CBP officers have the authority to search or seize the devices of U.S. citizens and foreign nationals entering the U.S.

When it comes to CBP interviews, there are three categories of individuals:

- **U.S. citizens:** CBP cannot deny re-entry to U.S. citizens. Be prepared to show your passport and answer basic questions about your trip. The refusal to answer questions may cause delays at the border. However, you can always ask to speak to a lawyer before answering more in-depth questions.
- **U.S. permanent residents:** Individuals who have not violated their status cannot be denied re-entry. Be prepared to show your permanent resident documents and answer basic questions about your trip. The refusal to answer questions may cause delays. However, you can always ask to speak to a lawyer before answering more in-depth questions. If CBP determines that an individual has violated their immigration status (e.g. failure to maintain continuous residence, aggravated felonies, etc.), they may initiate procedures for permanent residency revocation.
- **U.S. visa holders (e.g., H-1B, F-1):** CBP officers have the authority to deny entry. They may determine to do so if an individual refuses to answer their questions or if they have reasons to believe that the individual is not admissible. The entry of any temporary visa holder is conditional to a CBP officer’s approval.

For all three categories, it is important to remember the following points:

- Do not lie. Do not give false documents. Do not sign anything you do not understand. Have a communication plan in place in case you are asked to go to secondary inspection.
- Ask CBP officers if you can contact your attorney, colleague, or family/friend, depending on your preference. If you prefer to contact the University of Michigan, you can contact U-M DPSS at (734) 763-1131 or by email at OGCImmigrationEmergency@umich.edu to contact the appropriate U-M emergency response staff member.

- If you are not able to make a phone call, ask your friend, colleague, or family member to contact U-M DPSS or your attorney in the event you have not passed through immigration within 2-3 hours.
- If applicable, be prepared to explain your research area in ways that are simple and accurate.
- **Note:** There have been reports that people may not have access to their devices when in secondary inspection, so you may need to have the phone number of your emergency contact memorized or written down.

Can CBP or ICE search my phone or laptop?

Yes. Even without a warrant, upon re-entry to the United States, officers from CPB or ICE can ask to inspect your phone or laptop and have the authority to search or seize the devices of U.S. citizens and foreign nationals entering the U.S.

Review best practices for traveling with electronic devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.). Information and Technology Services (ITS) provides specific suggestions and information on their [U-M International Travel with Technology](#) page. There are two types of border searches that international travelers should generally understand. A border search is a routine search by U.S. federal officers of individuals and items entering the United States, including electronic devices, without a warrant or a reasonable suspicion the individual committed or is committing a crime:

- **Basic Search:** Is any border search of an electronic device that generally involves an officer reviewing the contents of the device manually without the assistance of any external equipment.
- **Advanced Search:** Is any border search of an electronic device that involves an officer connecting external equipment to an electronic device to access the device, as well as to review, copy, and/or analyze its contents. CBP must have a reasonable suspicion of a violation of law or a national security concern and approval of a senior manager before conducting an advanced search.

What can happen if I refuse to provide access?

If you refuse to provide access or passwords to devices, this may result in delay or even denial of entry (for visa holders), or your device may be seized. If you are being screened at a “preclearance location” you may be denied boarding. A “preclearance location” is a site, typically an airport or seaport, in a foreign country where CBP officers screen travelers and their goods before they depart for the United States.

If a U-M device is seized by a CBP officer, report the incident as soon as possible at security@umich.edu. For more detailed guidance on Safe Computing While Traveling, see safecomputing.umich.edu/protect-yourself/safe-computing-when-traveling.

How should I handle my social media accounts?

To avoid unnecessary delays in travel, it is prudent to limit the electronic devices with which you are traveling and regularly review your profile and privacy settings on your social media accounts to ensure that you approve of the accuracy and extent of your data that is available to the public.

Can ICE arrest me at the airport?

They can, but only if they have a judicial warrant or probable cause. They cannot arrest you based solely on suspected immigration status or enter non-public areas (e.g., gates, boarding areas) without permission or a warrant.

Section 7

Prepare Before You Travel

Actions to consider taking and things to be aware of prior to travel include:

- [Register Your Travel](#) with the U-M Travel Registry before your departure. If you are traveling on U-M business (e.g., research or education related to your employment), **you are required to register** your travel before departure under SPG 601.31. The travel registry allows the university to check on travelers' well-being in the case of an emergency situation arising globally, including their re-entry into the U.S.
- Notify a friend, family member, or a U-M colleague of your travel schedule and itinerary, including when going through immigration. Notify them **before** you enter customs so that they can contact the university or your attorney if they do not hear from you after a specified time (e.g., over 2-3 hours after you enter customs).
- Please also note, while waiting in a U.S. customs line, you are generally permitted to use your phone for activities like texting, browsing, or playing games. However, there are some important restrictions and recommendations to keep in mind:
 - » **Prohibition on Calls and Recording:** You are prohibited from taking or making calls and from recording video or audio in restricted areas.
 - » **Examples of Restricted Areas:** These include the booth where you're being interviewed by a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer and areas where more extensive luggage searches or examinations occur.
 - » **Respectful Use:** If you must make a call while waiting in the general line, it's advised to do so respectfully, avoiding speakerphone use and paying attention to your surroundings for instructions from officers.
- Contact an attorney before your departure if you believe that your situation merits legal counsel to better understand your unique risks, the likelihood and impact of potential consequences and to plan next steps (ranging from additional risk-mitigation measures to altering travel plans). See Immigration Law Firm section below.

Section 8

Special Information for F-1 and J-1 Students

I am in the U.S. as an F-1 student or J-1 student or scholar. Are there basic steps I should take, such as making sure I carry identification?

If you are in the U.S. as an F-1 student or J-1 student or scholar, here are a few important points to remember:

- **Report Changes of Address:** If you move, be sure to [report your change of address](#) within 10 days of moving.
- **Carry Your I-94 Record:** By law, foreign nationals 18 years and older are required to carry proof of their immigration status (“registration”) with them. Your [Most Recent I-94](#) serves as this registration. Consider saving a screenshot of your Most Recent I-94 (not your travel history) on your phone for ease of use. If you would prefer not to provide access to your phone, you may carry printed copies of your immigration documents.

The penalty for not complying with these two requirements can be severe, including fines up to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment for up to 30 days.

The university’s International Center also recommends saving a screenshot of your current I-20 or DS-2019 to your phone so that you will always have it available. You may also want to save a screenshot of your passport ID page.

Can I travel internationally if I am on a visa?

Yes, but you should do so with caution considering your individual circumstances. If you are contemplating international travel, you should be aware that the Department of State and the CBP unit of the DHS have increased the level of review and scrutiny of international visitors face at U.S. embassies and consulates, at airports, and border crossing posts. If you plan to travel outside the U.S., you should carefully consider and fully understand important immigration and security regulations to ensure that you can leave and re-enter the U.S. Additionally, before you travel and while you are away, pay careful attention to ensure no new restrictions have been added to prevent citizens of your country from re-entering the U.S. More info at internationalcenter.umich.edu/travel-outside-us-reentry.

What is Secondary Inspection?

In most cases, international students and scholars have been able to enter the U.S. Port of Entry (POE) without delay after a primary (or basic) inspection. However, if the CBP officer at the POE cannot quickly verify your eligibility for admission to the United States, you may be directed to an interview area known as “secondary inspection.” [Secondary Inspection at the U.S. Port of Entry](#) on the International Center’s website explains possible reasons for a referral to secondary inspection and includes suggestions for avoiding problems at the POE.

How will I know if my visa has been revoked?

If your visa is revoked, you will receive a notification from the Department of State or the U.S. embassy or consulate where you applied for your visa. The notification will be sent to the email address you provided when you applied for your visa.

What should I do if I receive a Visa Revocation Letter?

Please contact the International Center to inform them immediately so an advisor can provide guidance and recommendations. If your visa has been revoked, it is very important to consult an International Center advisor without delay.

How will I know if my SEVIS record has been terminated?

If your SEVIS record is terminated, you will be notified by the International Center. The International Center regularly reviews SEVIS records to identify any SEVIS records that have been terminated by the Department of Homeland Security so that it can reach out to any affected individuals.

What should I do if the International Center notifies me that my SEVIS record has been terminated?

If you receive this notification, please be sure to engage with the International Center immediately so an advisor can give you information as you decide on next steps.

Is there any way for me to check my SEVIS record myself?

If you want to verify your valid SEVIS status, you can log into M-Passport and check your SEVIS status. If your SEVIS Status is Active or Initial, then your SEVIS record is valid. Please note the information in M-Passport only updates once each business day.

Section 9

Immigration Law Firms

Should you require individual immigration counsel, you are free to engage any attorney of your choosing at your expense. That is a personal decision; and the university is not advising you to do so. Deciding whether to hire an attorney, and deciding which one best suits your needs, is a personal choice.

- If you are a faculty or staff member and have enrolled in the [U-M Legal Services Plan](#) (734-615-2000), you may contact the service to determine what legal immigration assistance is available.
- Enrolled students can contact [Student Legal Services](#) (734-763-9920) to connect with an outside immigration attorney for a free meeting and consultation.
- You can also identify an immigration attorney through independent resources, including the [American Immigration Lawyers Association](#) and the [Washtenaw County Bar Association](#).
- The following are some law firms for your consideration based on their experience and expertise in immigration matters. They are being provided by the university as a resource only, not as a recommendation or preference.

Palmer Rey

29566 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 200
Southfield, MI 48034

Ann Arbor Office:

455 E. Eisenhower Pkwy, Suite 300
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

248-522-9500

palmerrey.com

Law Office of Leila Freijy, PLLC

3150 Livernois Rd.

Troy, MI 48063

248-817-8280

freijylaw.com

Abrutyn Law, PLLC

15944 West 12 Mile Rd.

Southfield, MI 48076

248-965-9440

abrutyn.com

Antone, Casagrande, & Adwers, P.C.

31555 W. 14 Mile, Suite 100

Farmington Hills, MI 48334

248-406-4100

antone.com