

A Message from Chief Kristin Burgess, Shutesbury Police Department:

The Shutesbury Police Department would like to share with our community our position in regards to undocumented citizens and the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

We understand that undocumented community members might feel uneasy about reaching out to us, especially with concerns about deportation. Please know federal immigration enforcement is the responsibility of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), not our agency. Federal Law prohibits interference with ICE operations, but Massachusetts Officers are not required to participate in immigration enforcement. Our officers never inquire about a person's immigration status when responding to calls for help, and we never use the threat of deportation as leverage with victims, witnesses, or anyone involved.

In line with the principles upheld by the Commonwealth v. Lunn ruling, we stand together with community values that prioritize fairness and respect for all. Following this directive, our team does not honor or enforce non-criminal detainer requests from ICE that aren't supported by a judicial warrant.

The Shutesbury Police Officers will allow an operator who is stopped for a motor vehicle violation and found to be unlicensed to have a reasonable opportunity to arrange for someone with a proper license to take over—regardless of immigration status. (This policy does not apply if a violation requires vehicle impoundment by law.)

We are committed to ensuring everyone in our community has equal access to information and services in their native language. Remember, a non-criminal immigration detainer, known as Form I-247, is not an arrest warrant and does not provide probable cause for an arrest. Our pledge is to treat every individual with dignity and to follow policies that safeguard your rights.

Members of the immigrant community may feel apprehensive about reporting crimes that they were the victims of or that they witnessed for fear of deportation. This is especially concerning when people have been the victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or other serious felonies. We want you to be aware of programs that are available to assist you.

The U nonimmigrant status (U visa) is set aside for victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and are helpful to law enforcement or government officials in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity. Congress created the U nonimmigrant visa with the passage of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (including the Battered Immigrant Women's Protection Act) in October 2000. The legislation was intended to strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking of aliens and other crimes, while also protecting victims of crimes who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse due to the crime and are willing to help law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity. The legislation also helps law enforcement agencies to better serve victims of crimes. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-of-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status>