

Edgewater and Uptown residents pledge support for migrants ahead of Trump deportation plan

Two weeks after a record number of immigrants voted to send him back to the White House, U.S. President-elect Donald Trump confirmed plans to declare a national emergency to carry out mass deportations of undocumented immigrants on social media Monday.

But, Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, along with other Democratic governors who criticized Trump's proposed immigration policies, said he is committed to safeguarding immigrant rights at the state level.

Davida Yalley, 22, moved from Africa to Uptown when she was 8 years old. Though she is a legal U.S. citizen, she said Trump's plans made her nervous for loved ones who may be at risk of getting deported.

"I don't want my friends and family that are immigrants to be worried about whether or not they have a place in this country," she said.

The Way Forward Act, which was passed in 2021, could block the incoming administration from establishing immigrant detention centers in Illinois.

"I am going to do everything that I can to protect our undocumented immigrants. They are residents of our state," Pritzker said in an interview with MSNBC anchor Joy Reid on Wednesday.

Yalley said it was comforting to know that some immigrants in Illinois are protected in the face of potential deportation.

"I have a teeny-tiny, little bit of hope for the next four years," she said.

Other Edgewater residents echoed state leadership's unwavering support for immigrants who make up almost one-third of the neighborhood's population, according to the Edgewater Historical Society.

“They have a partner in us, and I will call them neighbors just the same as I call the people in my building neighbors,” said Justin Carmien, co-founder of the Edgewater Beach Neighbors Association.



A black and white, “Refugees are welcome here,” poster by artist Micah Bazant hangs on the inside of the Vietnamese Association of Illinois’ window at 5110 N. Broadway St. in Uptown.
(Medill Reports/Anneliese Cornejo Garcia)

This year, Carmien organized a winter items clothing collection for neighbors to welcome migrants experiencing Chicago’s frigid winter for the first time at the Cornerstone Community Outreach Day Center for Men.

He said he started the neighborhood association in response to organizations that were financially overwhelmed by the needs of more than [17,000 migrants](#) bussed to the city from Texas in 2022.

Illinois' 2025 [fiscal budget](#) will dedicate 0.2% of its funding to nonprofit organizations, like KLEO Community Family Life Center, that run shelters and support services for asylum-seekers.

The KLEO center worked with Mayor Brandon Johnson to establish the American Islamic College New Arrivals Shelter in Uptown in July 2023 to accommodate the influx of migrants to the city.

Despite its limited budget, CEO Torrey Barrett said the organization is committed to protecting residents at the shelter.

“We've got each other, and we're not going to let them get away with it,” Torrey said.

Barrett said he encourages immigrants and Uptown residents alike to remember that the strength of the larger community can overcome any president that occupies the White House.

“We survived the first administration, and we'll survive the second,” he said.

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