



Immigration raids have begun. For immigrant and mixed-status families, everyday life has changed.

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Jasmine Garsd



Food drive at United Giving Hope sanctuary church in Waukegan, I.L. on Jan. 22, 2025.

Mustafa Hussain for NPR

It's been snowing all morning in Waukegan, a working class, heavily immigrant city just outside Chicago. It's freezing, but the line outside the United Giving Hope Church stretches down the block. About 50 immigrants, mostly women and children, are waiting to pick up food donations.

As she opens the door for them, Pastor Julie Contreras yells: "What kind of people are we!?"

"Without fear!" they answer.



Pastor Julie Contreras at United Giving Hope sanctuary church in Waukegan, I.L. on Jan. 22, 2025.
Mustafa Hussain for NPR

But in this community, even standing out in public now feels terrifying to many. Immigrants make up [30% of the population](#) here, many from Mexico and Honduras. In the first week of the Trump administration, federal immigration officials conducted raids in several cities across the US, including in this area. Nationwide, more than thousand people suspected of being in the country without legal status were arrested over the weekend The Trump administration says it's focusing on migrants who present a public safety threat in what it calls a historic crackdown. But the ramped up enforcement has already upended how immigrants and mixed status families go about their daily lives. In the crowd, a young woman named Rosa stands out, her belly is enormous. She's six months pregnant. "We're afraid," she says. "We're staying indoors, to avoid deportation."

Rosa is in the country without legal status, so she's asked that NPR withhold her last name.

She says she's missed her recent appointments with her OB-GYN because she's too scared to go to her doctor. If the mood here stays this tense, she says, she might not go at all.



Food drive at United Giving Hope sanctuary church in Waukegan, I.L. on Jan. 22, 2025.
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The Trump administration is going out of its way to publicize its crackdown. This weekend's immigration roundups in the Chicago area included television personality Phil McGraw, better known as Dr. Phil, followed White House Border Czar Tom Homan. Dr. Phil's cameras rolled as ICE took enforcement actions.

Homan highlighted the case of one immigrant who he said does not have legal status and is a convicted sex offender. "This is an example of Sanctuary cities", said Homan. "You have an illegal alien convicted of sex crimes involving children. He's walking the streets of Chicago."

Homan says, these are the types of criminals ICE agents are going after. But advocates here say, it's thrown all migrants into a deep panic.

After the church food giveaway, one family invites us over to their home. We meet Lupita, a very timid 12 year old who hopes to become a lawyer someday.

She's a US citizen, but her parents are in the country illegally so they've asked NPR to withhold their last name. When she retires to do her homework, her mother, Rosa, tells us it's more than just normal teenage angst keeping Lupita in her bedroom. With the news of the immigration raids, she has become withdrawn. "We've told her some

very hard times are coming", says Rosa. "That she might go to school and when she comes back, we will no longer be here."

They've been discussing the possibility of sending her to a therapist to treat her for anxiety.

Everyone in this family is shaken. "Every day we wake up afraid," Rosa says.

Inside their home, which they've owned for years, they show us family photos of quinceañeras, marriages, graduations, and birthdays.



Rosa's family photos in Waukegan, I.L. on Jan. 22, 2025.

Mustafa Hussain for NPR

Over 30 years of family life in the U.S.

"I feel a bitterness, a deep sadness," Guadalupe says. "I gave this country my youth."

These days, they're making plans in case they get deported: They're having discussions about transferring the deed to their home to their children; who to add to their bank accounts; and making arrangements for Lupita to go live with one of her older siblings.

In order to avoid that fate, they've changed even their most basic routines.

"Before going outside, I look out the window, and out the door," says Guadalupe. "If I go to the store, I scan the parking lot for the police first. I buy what we need quickly, and I rush back home, and lock the door behind me."

He turns to Rosa, his wife. "Remember when we used to go to the mall, and eat popcorn, and a hot dog?" He says. "Those were the good times."

NPR Producer Marisa Peñaloza contributed to this story.

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