

ANDRE VASQUEZ
ALDERPERSON, 40TH WARD

5620 NORTH WESTERN AVENUE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60659
PHONE:773-654-1867

CONTACT US: 40THWARD.ORG/CONTACT



CITY OF CHICAGO
CITY COUNCIL

CITY HALL, ROOM 25
121 NORTH LASALLE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602
PHONE:312-744-6858

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS

(CHAIRPERSON)

TRANSPORTATION

(VICE-CHAIRPERSON)

BUDGET

COMMITTEES AND RULES

PUBLIC SAFETY

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WAY

July 2, 2024

SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS FROM THE
COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS
SUBJECT MATTER HEARING / COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD JULY 2, 2024 AT 12:30 PM

ITEMS

1. July 2 Committee Meeting / Subject Matter Hearing Revised Notice;
2. July 2 Committee Meeting / Subject Matter Hearing Agenda;
3. March 2024 Rule 45 Report;
4. SR2023-0001265;
5. SR2024-0007367;
6. R2024-0008935;
7. 'Indigenous Ecuadorians: Challenges and Advocacy for TPS' presentation from Edith Freeze, Pachacamak Foundation;
8. 'Climate Migrants and Receiving Communities' presentation from Dr. Anne Junod and Dr. Rachel Drew;
9. 'Climate migration: the role of city government' presentation from Dulce Guzmán, Alianza Americas, and Jose Robles, UIC Latino Cultural Center.

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June 27, 2024

**REVISED NOTICE OF
COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS
SUBJECT MATTER HEARING / COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 2, 2024 AT 12:30 PM**

Notice is hereby given that the Chicago City Council Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights will hold a meeting on July 2, 2024 at 12:30 PM in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, City Hall. Votes will be taken.

Written public comment on any of the items listed on the Agenda will be accepted at CIRR@cityofchicago.org until July 1, 2024 12:30pm. Copies of the Agenda of Matters to be considered at this meeting will be made available electronically on the Chicago City Clerk's website.

Yours in service,

Andre Vasquez, Chair

Committee on Immigrant
and Refugee Rights

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June 27, 2024

**AGENDA OF MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED
BY THE
COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS**

JULY 2, 2024 AT 12:30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 2ND FLOOR, CITY HALL

PART 1 : COMMITTEE MEETING, VOTES TAKEN

MONTHLY RULE 45 REPORT Approval of the March 2024 Rule 45 Report of the
Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

R2023-0001265 Call for hearing(s) with Chicago Police Department and
Chicago Law Department regarding status of U
Nonimmigrant Status certifications, policies for
approval/denial and collection of data.

R2024-0007367 Call for U.S. President Biden and Secretary of Homeland
Security to process requests for temporary protective
status to Ecuadorian citizens migrating to United States.

PART 2 : SUBJECT MATTER HEARING, VOTES TAKEN

Discuss R2024-0008935; explore and address implications of climate change induced
migration to Chicago.

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ALDERPERSON, 40TH WARD

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COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS
MONTHLY RULE 45 REPORT : MARCH 2024

Pursuant to Rule 45 of the City of Chicago Rules of Order, the **Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights** submits the following Monthly Report for March 2024.

REFERRED MATTERS

PASSED

SO2024-0008386	Referred 03/20/2024	Department of Family and Support Services directed to provide City Council reports of total New Arrivals and Asylum Seekers to be evicted or removed from shelters operated by City of Chicago
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HELD IN COMMITTEE

R2024-0008385	Referred 03/20/2024	Call for hearing(s) with relevant City departments to explore barriers to housing for immigrant and refugee communities in City of Chicago
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O2024-0008392	Referred 03/20/2024	Amendment of Municipal Code Chapter 2-172 by deleting in its entirety and adding new Chapter 2-172 entitled "Prevent Shelter Evictions" prohibiting length of stay limitations for transitional shelters operated by City of Chicago
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O2024-0008393	Referred 03/20/2024	Amendment of Municipal Code Chapter 2-172 by deleting in its entirety and adding new Chapter 2-172 entitled "Clarifying Haven Time Limits" prohibiting length of stay limitations for transitional shelters operated by City of Chicago
O2024-0008394	Referred 03/20/2024	Amendment of Municipal Code Chapter 2-172 by deleting in its entirety and adding new Chapter 2-172 entitled "Transitional Haven Guidelines" prohibiting length of stay limitations for transitional shelters operated by City of Chicago
O2024-0008395	Referred 03/20/2024	Amendment of Municipal Code Chapter 2-172 by deleting in its entirety and adding new Chapter 2-172 entitled "Codifying Transitional Haven Removals" prohibiting length of stay limitations for transitional shelters operated by City of Chicago

REPORTS AND MATERIALS RECEIVED BY COMMITTEE

1. 'Notice of Cancellation' document, provided by the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.
2. 'Revised Agenda of Matters' document, provided by the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.
3. 'January 2024 Rule 45 Report,' provided by the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.
4. Written public comment compilation, provided by the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.
5. O2024-0008386, provided by the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.
6. SO2024-0008386, provided by the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.
7. Revised SO2024-0008386, provided by the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.
8. 'Daily Shelter Exit & Condition Reporting' slide deck, provided by the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT

In order of date received :

1. From Forest Gregg :

Dear Chair Vasquez, Vice-Chair Taylor and honorable members,

I am writing today to urge the Committee to pass Ordinance O2024-0008386 out of committee with a recommendation to the City Council to pass the ordinance.

To fulfill its oversight responsibility, the council needs detailed information about shelter exits.

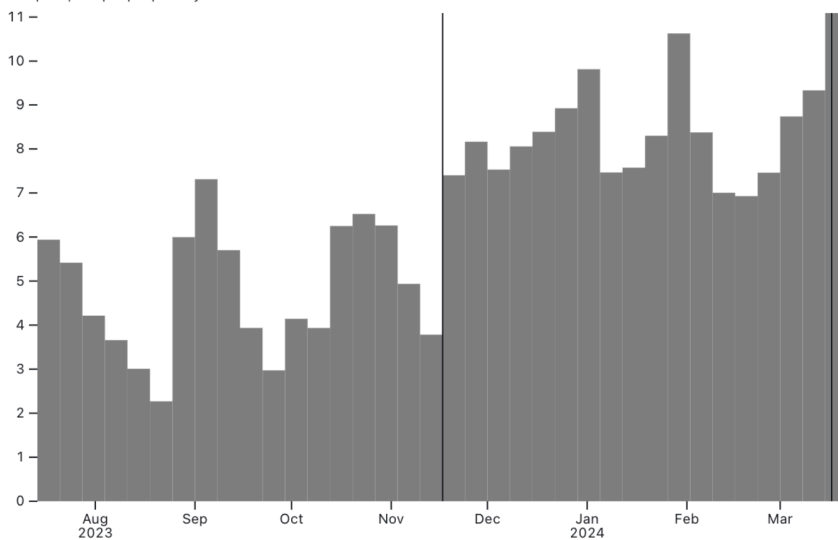
Regardless of whether one believes that there should be limits to how long an asylum seeker can stay in a city shelter, we can all agree the preferred outcome is that asylum seekers who come into the shelter system connect to a better housing option within 60 days.

If the council does not have fine-grained information of shelter exits, then it cannot evaluate whether the administration's policies and actions are succeeding in helping asylum seekers accomplish that goal.

Between November 17, 2023 and March 17, 2023, the administration did succeed in substantially increasing the rates of exits from shelter, compared to the preceding months. This was good progress.

Exit rate from shelter

↑ exits per 1,000 people per day



However, going forward, if the council is not able to separate the evictions from other types of exits, the council will not be able to know whether the administration is building on its success in helping asylum seekers connect to housing within 60 days, or sliding backwards.

This ordinance is also wise to require detailed information about exits, particularly the number of days the individual has been in the shelter system. If a person exits on their 59th day, they might not be counted as being evicted, but it also may be reasonable to assume that they exited in order to avoid having their possessions and themselves forcibly set outside.

This ordinance preserves the council's ability to understand, oversee, and guide a critical city mission. Please pass it.

Sincerely, Forest Gregg

2. From Denali K Dasgupta :

Dear Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights:

I am writing today to urge the Committee to pass Ordinance O2024-0008386 out of committee with a recommendation to the City Council to pass the ordinance.

Consistent data, most notably information provided through the New Arrivals dashboard, has been critical in moving policy and improving operations for the shelter programs. Reporting required by this ordinance would allow for the oversight over the shelter system and advocacy for humane and dignified treatment of new arrivals and the responsible stewardship of public funding and powers.

The stated purpose of the new arrivals shelter system is to "provide a safe, accessible place to stay for New Arrivals experiencing homelessness to support them in moving toward stable housing" (from DFSS RFP #9335). Ordinance O2024-0008386 would requires daily reporting to council on the progress of newcomers through the City shelter system, including information about length of stay, TPS and ASERAP eligibility, eligibility for extension, notice of eviction, and detail about "eviction or other removal."

Delegate agencies who run shelter programs in Chicago are required to report comparable performance metrics such as client reason for leaving, client length of stay, and post- shelter destination. It is my hope that if DFSS cannot hold itself to the same standards it expects of its delegates, then the Council will use this ordinance to assist them.

Thank you for your consideration,

Denali K Dasgupta

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE MEETING - MARCH 28, 2024

On March 28, 2024 at 10a, the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights held a Committee Meeting in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, City Hall.

ROLL CALL

The following committee members were present : Chairman Vasquez (40), Alderperson Dowell (3), Alderperson Gutierrez (14), Alderperson Rodriguez (22), Alderperson Fuentes (26), Alderperson Taliaferro (29), Alderperson Cruz (30), Alderperson Cardona (31), Alderperson Rodriguez Sanchez (33), Alderperson Knudsen (43), Alderperson Manaa-Hoppenworth (48). A quorum was established.

Due to extenuating circumstances, Vice Chair Taylor (20) and Alderperson Hadden (49) requested to attend the Committee Meeting virtually in accordance with Rule 59 of the City Council's Rules of Order. Alderperson Cruz moved to allow Vice Chair Taylor and Alderperson Hadden to attend virtually; with no objections, the motion passed.

Due to extenuating circumstances, Alderperson Ramirez-Rosa (35) requested to attend the Committee Meeting virtually in accordance with Rule 59 of the City Council's Rules of Order. Alderperson Gutierrez moved to allow Alderperson Ramirez-Rosa to attend virtually; with no objections, the motion passed.

No committee members were absent.

The following non-members were present : Alderperson Lee (11), Alderperson Sigcho Lopez (25), Alderperson Villegas (36). Alderperson Lee attended virtually.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public speakers were each given three minutes to provide their testimony : George Blakemore, Venus Young-Bey, Jessica Jackson, Zoe Leigh, Mrs. Yalila, Lawrence Jones, Ariana Abonce, Tiwon Sims, Michael Young Bey, Natasha Gray, Anthony Hutt, Silvia (AKA Big Sil) Saenz.

THE COMMITTEE ADDRESSED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

RULE 45 REPORT

Approval of the January 2024 Rule 45 Report of the Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Chair Vasquez introduced the January 2024 Rule 45 Report, then asked for a motion to approve the report. Alderperson Rodriguez Sanchez so moved; with no objections, the Rule 45 Report was approved.

O2024-0008386

Department of Family and Support Services directed to provide City Council daily report of total New Arrivals and Asylum Seekers to be evicted or removed from shelters operated by City of Chicago

- Chairman Vasquez introduced the ordinance.
- Chairman Vasquez introduced a substitute ordinance, crafted to better reflect technical information learned in discussions with executive departments. Alderperson Rodriguez moved to accept the substitute ordinance; with no objections, the substitute ordinance was accepted.
- Chairman Vasquez introduced and presented the 'Daily Shelter Exit & Condition Reporting' slide deck.
- After the presentation, Chairman Vasquez opened the floor for Alderpersons to ask questions.
- The following committee members asked questions or made comments : Alderperson Dowell, Alderperson Gutierrez, Alderperson Cruz, Alderperson Knudsen. Alderperson Dowell recommended adding 'country of origin' data to the substitute ordinance's mandated daily report. Alderperson Cruz recommended changing the report from daily to weekly.
- Daniel Castañeda, Director for New Arrivals, Department of Family & Support Services, answered questions regarding the following : tracking new arrival country of origin data; tracking new arrival gender identity and sexual orientation data; Incident Report metric categories.
- Rey Phillips Santos, Senior Assistant Corporation Counsel, Department of Law, answered questions regarding the following : lawful reporting of country of origin data; lawful reporting of gender identity and sexual orientation data; recommended caution to keep data anonymized.
- Jonathan Ernst, First Deputy Commissioner, Department of Family and Support Services, answered questions regarding the following : effect of reporting on granting extensions; data integrity; difficulty of daily reporting.
- Chairman Vasquez answered questions regarding the following : effect of reporting on granting extensions; data integrity; Department of Technology and Innovation involvement; executive departments data tracking responsibility.
- Alderwoman Dowell moved to recess; the motion failed.
- Chairman Vasquez motioned to recess; the committee recessed to discuss and amend the substitute ordinance.

- The Committee reconvened from recess with an amended substitute ordinance. The following was amended :
 - frequency of the daily report was changed to weekly;
 - the weekly report was clarified to only track shelter exits due to the shelter stay limit;
 - the weekly report will include 'country of origin' data; and
 - biweekly was clarified to be defined as once every two weeks.
- Alderperson Rodriguez moved to accept the substitute ordinance as amended. Alder Vasquez asked committee members to vote by voice; in the opinion of the chair, the ayes won. The amended substitute ordinance was accepted.
- Chairman Vasquez asked if committee members had further questions.
- Alderperson Rodriguez moved to pass the substitute ordinance as amended. Alder Vasquez asked committee members to vote by voice; in the opinion of the chair, the ayes won. The amended substitute ordinance was passed.
- Chairman Vasquez will bring the substitute ordinance as amended to City Council on April 17, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Vasquez asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderperson Gutierrez so moved. Hearing no objections, Chairman Vasquez adjourned the meeting.

SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The United States of America Citizenship and Immigration Services permits the issuance of U-Visa status to undocumented individuals who are victims of certain crimes, suffered mental or physical abuse, and are helpful to law enforcement or government officials in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity; and,

WHEREAS, The federal legislation was intended to strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies, such as the Chicago Police Department, to investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking of noncitizens 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; and,

WHEREAS, The United States of America Citizenship and Immigration Services considers the following to be qualifying Criminal Activities as suitable grounds for eligibility: abduction, abusive sexual contact, blackmail, domestic violence, extortion, false imprisonment, female genital mutilation, felonious assault, fraud in foreign labor contracting, hostage, incest, involuntary servitude, kidnapping, manslaughter, murder, obstruction of justice, peonage, perjury, prostitution, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, slave trade, stalking torture, trafficking, witness tampering unlawful criminal restrain! and other substantially similar crimes; and,

WHEREAS, The Chicago Police Department's Records Inquiry Section (Unit 163) is responsible for the adjudication of U-Visa applications submitted to the department and does not track certification applications submitted, approved and/or rejected by the unit; now, therefore,

WHEREAS, According to a recent report by *Injustice Watch*, the Police Department has denied at least 800 certifications in the last two years as opposed to Los Angeles and New York City denied less than 350 and 150 request in 2021 respectively; and,

WHEREAS, The City Council of The City of Chicago have reaffirmed its commitment on numerous times to be a Welcoming City to those undocumented individuals seeking refuge from the harms of their homeland; now therefore,

BE IT ORDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, that the Committee on Police and Fire and the Committee on Immigration & Refugee Rights hold joint hearings with the Chicago Police Department to discuss the status of U Nonimmigrant Status certifications within the City of Chicago, its policies and protocols for approval or denial, the

collection of data, and the ability of the department to genuinely assist those most vulnerable needing our assistance in accessing a federal certification.

Raymond A. Lopez
Alderman, 15th Ward

SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, In 2023, approximately 300,000 Ecuadorian citizens fled their homeland facing numerous challenges including natural disasters, economic instability, political unrest and increase in organized crime and drug trafficking drug cartel activity, with a daily average for violent deaths at 44.9 per 100,000 persons according to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Organized Crime; and,

WHEREAS, The increasing influence of organized crime networks has eroded the rule of law and caused fear and insecurity. The proliferation of these groups has led to a surge in violence, including illicit gun trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, executions and robbery underscoring the urgency of providing Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Ecuadorians residing in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, TPS was created as a statute in 1990 allowing the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately; and,

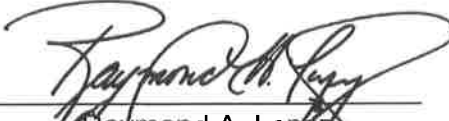
WHEREAS, The City of Chicago has welcomed Ecuadorian immigrants for generations, becoming the fourth top location for Ecuadorians following cities in the State of New York, living in the Logan Square, Uptown, Irving Park, Belmont Cragin, Mayfair, Humboldt Park and Albany Park communities; and,

WHEREAS, The migration of Ecuadorians has come in waves over the last several decades, with their populations growing exponentially every decade, becoming more and more embedded into the fabric of this most American of American cities; and,

WHEREAS, The current border crisis has exposed a fundamental injustice and bias towards Ecuador and its people, all who are ineligible for the Department of Homeland Security Temporary Protective Status as afforded to other Central and South American countries suffering from natural disasters, protracted unrest, or conflict; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this 17th Day of July, 2024, call upon President Joseph Biden to urge the Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, to work with the Ecuadorian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility to process any request for Temporary Protective Status to Ecuadorian citizens living in uncertainty and fear for decades. TPS would allow them to work legally, access critical healthcare and contribute to their communities while awaiting improvements in conditions in Ecuador; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, That the City of Chicago calls upon its congressional delegation to support this resolution and pursue legislation to make this request possible for the Ecuadorians deserving our help and support.


Raymond A. Lopez
Alderman, 15th Ward

**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR SUBJECT MATTER HEARING ON THE EFFECTS OF
CLIMATE CHANGE ON MIGRATION TO CHICAGO**

WHEREAS, climate change is a pressing global issue that poses significant threats to ecosystems, communities, and economies worldwide and the effects of climate change are increasingly evident through rising global temperatures, extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and disruptions to ecosystems, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities; and

WHEREAS, one of the significant consequences of climate change is the world-wide alteration of migration patterns, as individuals and communities are forced to relocate due to environmental pressures such as drought, flooding, sea-level rise, and other climate-related disasters; and

WHEREAS, climate-induced migration has profound implications for urban areas like Chicago, where an influx of climate migrants without adequate planning and funding can strain resources, exacerbate housing affordability challenges, and contribute to social tensions; and

WHEREAS, Chicago, as a major metropolitan area, must be prepared to address the potential influx of climate migrants by implementing comprehensive policies and strategies that prioritize equity and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, enhancing data collection and analysis to understanding climate migration in Chicago is crucial for informed decision-making and effective resource allocation to support vulnerable populations and mitigate the impacts of climate change on the city;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Chicago hereby acknowledges the urgent need to understand climate change and its impacts on migration patterns, both globally and within our city; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council affirms its commitment to the human-created frontline-communities already in Chicago in all efforts related to climate change adaptation and mitigation, ensuring that front-line communities in Chicago already disproportionately affected by environmental injustice are prioritized and included in decision-making processes and resource allocation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council commits to working with relevant stakeholders, including community organizations, research institutions, and governmental agencies, to develop and implement strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change-induced migration in Chicago; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council calls for a subject matter hearing to further explore and address the implications of climate change-induced migration on Chicago and its residents, inviting experts, advocacy groups, and community members to provide insights and recommendations for effective investigative measures potentially including but not limited to: the establishment of a task force or working group dedicated to conducting research and providing recommendations for policy development and implementation of support initiatives aimed at assisting climate migrants, including affordable housing programs, job training, healthcare services, and community resilience projects; and/or that the City Council directs the Mayor's Office and relevant city agencies including the Department of Environment to incorporate climate migration considerations into the city's long-term planning processes, including land use, infrastructure development, and emergency preparedness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Vasquez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Andre Vasquez
Alderman, 40th Ward

Indigenous Ecuadorians: Challenges and Advocacy for TPS

This presentation explores the pressing issues faced by indigenous Ecuadorians, including displacement from traditional lands, economic marginalization, and cultural preservation challenges. It also examines the recent political crisis in Ecuador and the involvement of cartels in human trafficking. The information presented aims to advocate for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Ecuadorians in the United States, highlighting humanitarian grounds and the economic and cultural contributions of this community.

 **by Edith Freeze**

Good Afternoon everyone,

My name is Edith Freeze and I am a proud Kichwa woman dedicated to advocating for indigenous rights and well-being. With a background in Economics and Policy Analysis, I have used my skills to address the complex challenges our communities face. Currently, I work as a researcher at Northwestern University, have been honored with the position of Community Scientist at the same institution, and direct the Pachacamak Foundation, which is committed to promoting sustainable development and cultural preservation for Indigenous communities.

Growing up in Ecuador, I witnessed firsthand the struggles and resilience of our people. This experience fueled my passion for creating sustainable solutions that uplift our communities. At Pachacamak Foundation, I focus on research that highlights the economic and social disparities faced by indigenous populations, ensuring that our voices are heard and our needs are addressed.

Through my work at the Pachacamak Foundation, I strive to bridge the gap between academic research and community advocacy, ensuring that policy recommendations are not only data-driven but also culturally sensitive and effective. By leveraging my education, position, and foundation, I aim to empower indigenous communities to achieve economic stability, preserve our rich cultural heritage, and secure our rightful place in society.

Together, we can create a future where indigenous voices lead the way in shaping policies that impact our lives. Thank you for your support and commitment to this vital cause.

Displacement from Traditional Lands

Indigenous Ecuadorians face significant challenges due to land grabbing and resource exploitation. In 2021, the Ecuadorian government approved new mining concessions in the Amazon region, affecting indigenous territories. According to a 2022 report by Amazon Watch, over 200,000 hectares of indigenous land have been allocated for mining projects without proper consultation, displacing thousands of indigenous residents.

Environmental degradation further exacerbates the situation. Despite legal victories like the Waorani community protecting half a million acres from oil drilling in 2022, other areas continue to face threats. The Rainforest Action Network reports that oil spills in the Ecuadorian Amazon have affected over 20,000 indigenous people in the last five years, contaminating water sources and farmland.



Economic Marginalization

Poverty and Lack of Opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated economic inequalities, hitting indigenous communities particularly hard. Many indigenous people, reliant on informal labor, faced job losses and increased poverty rates. A 2023 study by ECLAC found that the poverty rate among indigenous Ecuadorians surged to 68% during the pandemic, compared to a national average of 32%.

Informal Labor and Exploitation

Indigenous Ecuadorian migrants in the U.S. continue to face exploitative labor conditions. In 2022, reports emerged of indigenous farmworkers in Florida being paid below minimum wage and subjected to hazardous working conditions. The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2022 highlighted that indigenous farmworkers in the U.S. earn 25% less on average than other agricultural workers, often lacking basic labor protections.

Cultural Preservation Challenges

1 Erosion of Cultural Practices

Urban migration has led to a decline in the use of indigenous languages among younger generations. In 2023, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education reported fewer children learning Kichwa and Shuar in schools. UNESCO's 2023 report classifies Kichwa as vulnerable, with the number of fluent speakers declining rapidly due to migration and assimilation pressures.

1

2

2 Discrimination and Assimilation Pressures

In 2023, indigenous Ecuadorians in the U.S. reported increased incidents of discrimination and racial profiling, making it difficult to maintain their cultural identity and traditions. A 2023 survey by the Pew Research Center found that 42% of indigenous migrants in the U.S. have experienced discrimination, impacting their ability to preserve cultural practices and community cohesion.

Political Crisis in Ecuador

Ecuador faced significant political instability in 2023, with frequent changes in government leadership, widespread protests, and civil unrest. The impeachment of President Guillermo Lasso and subsequent political turmoil led to increased uncertainty and insecurity for many citizens. The International Crisis Group reported over 200 significant protests and strikes in 2023, many led by indigenous groups demanding better economic and social conditions.

Indigenous communities have been at the forefront of these protests, demanding respect for their land rights, better economic opportunities, and an end to resource exploitation. These protests have often been met with violent repression. Human Rights Watch reported in 2022 that over 100 indigenous protestors were injured and dozens arrested during clashes with security forces.

Cartels and Human Trafficking

Cartel Involvement

Drug cartels and criminal organizations in Ecuador have increasingly turned to human trafficking as a source of revenue. These groups charge exorbitant fees to smuggle individuals across borders, often subjecting them to dangerous and inhumane conditions.

Increased Incidents

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported in 2023 that human trafficking incidents in Ecuador increased by 40% over the past five years, with many victims being indigenous people seeking to escape poverty and violence.

Violence and Exploitation

Indigenous migrants attempting to cross into the U.S. often fall prey to human traffickers. A 2023 report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) found that 60% of Ecuadorian migrants who crossed the U.S. border faced some form of violence or exploitation by criminal groups.

Advocacy Points for TPS: Humanitarian Grounds

The human cost of displacement and violence is exemplified by stories like that of Rosa, an indigenous woman from the Kichwa community, who fled political violence and threats from cartels in 2023. She now lives in the U.S., struggling with legal status and economic stability. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that at least 15,000 indigenous Ecuadorians have been displaced by political violence and cartel activities since 2020.

These humanitarian concerns underscore the urgent need for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Ecuadorians in the United States, providing a safe haven for those fleeing violence, exploitation, and environmental degradation in their homeland.



Humanitarian Grounds Environment

Ecuador has faced significant natural disasters in recent years, including the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in April 2016 and heavy rains and floods in 2023. These events have caused widespread destruction, displacement, and economic hardship. The 2016 earthquake alone caused damages estimated at \$3 billion, equivalent to 3% of Ecuador's GDP at the time. The compounded effect of these disasters has hindered economic recovery and exacerbated poverty and unemployment, making it unsafe or unfeasible for Ecuadorians to return home.

Economic and Cultural Contributions



Economic Impact

Indigenous Ecuadorians contribute significantly to the U.S. economy. A 2023 report by the Center for American Progress found that undocumented immigrants, including indigenous groups, contribute approximately \$12 billion in state and local taxes annually.



Agricultural Sector

In 2023, indigenous workers in California's agricultural sector played a crucial role in maintaining food supply chains during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting their importance to the U.S. economy.



Cultural Enrichment

Events like the 2023 Inti Raymi festival in New York, organized by Ecuadorian indigenous communities, celebrate traditional music, dance, and rituals, enriching the cultural landscape of American cities.

Housing Markets and Migration

Housing is crucial to responding to migrants' needs

Study findings:

- Existing housing market challenges are compounded for migrants.
- Migrants often are unfamiliar with local markets and need assistance to navigate.
- Migrants initially cluster in locations with available housing and/or existing community ties
- Long-term impacts are hard to observe given geographic diffusion and variations in trajectories

Policy Recommendations

Federal	State & Local
Encourage and provide resources for potential receiving communities to build capacity in advance of a migration event	Set up a centralized system for migrants to access available services and resources
Allocate disaster relief to receiving communities when a migration occurs	Increase transportation options and availability for migrants
Provide cash assistance directly to migrants	Bolster coordination between key stakeholders
All	Expand data collection during climate migrations to identify and address both current and future needs for migrants
Plan for a long-term recovery	

Climate migration: the role of city government

Dulce Guzman, Alianza Americas

Jorge Mena Robles, UIC Latino Cultural Center



**ALIANZA
AMERICAS**



**Rafael Cintrón Ortiz
Latino Cultural Center**

Climate Change as an Amplifier

- Migration is the cumulative result of multiple factors (climate is one of these factors).
- Migration is not only a multifactorial but a multi-step process that typically begins with internal migration.
- People are already moving, and climate is already changing. The question we must be asking is how we are changing and adapting our systems to facilitate this movement to make integration into future planning processes.

CLIMATE CHANGE & MIGRATION

“I DIDN'T LEAVE MY COUNTRY BECAUSE I WANTED TO, I LEFT MY COUNTRY BECAUSE I HAD TO.”

— Antonio Lara,
Former coffee farmer, Ocoatepeque, Honduras



PUSH FACTORS

Some combination of these six factors affect the decision to migrate.

*Climate change amplifies these factors and their interactions.



87%

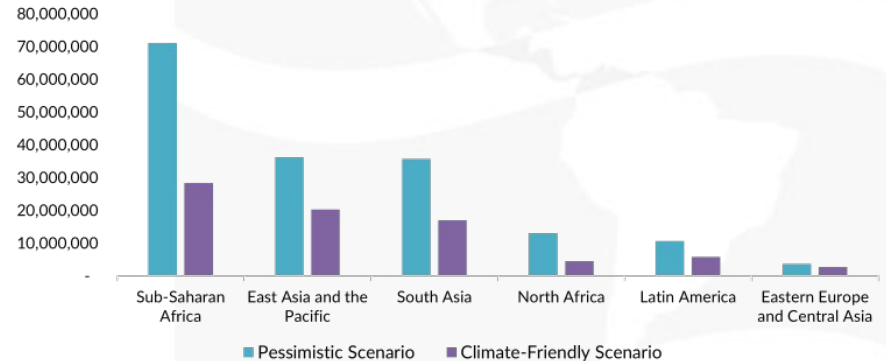
of Central American immigrants in the U.S. come from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

3.9 MILLION

The World Bank estimates weather will force 3.9 million migrants to flee Central America in the next 30 years.

Climate Displacement in Countries of Origin

- Climate-induced disasters have already uprooted 21.5 million people
- It could force 216 million people across six world regions to move within their countries.
- In Latin America, climate displacement is projected to be around 17 million people ([World Bank's Groundswell report](#))
- The number of Africans apprehended at the southern border jumped to [58,462](#) in the fiscal year 2023 from 13,406 in 2022.



Note: Figure shows average number of internal climate migrants predicted under the different scenarios.

Source: Viviane Clement et al, *Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration*, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2021), available online.

Examples of Recent Climate Events

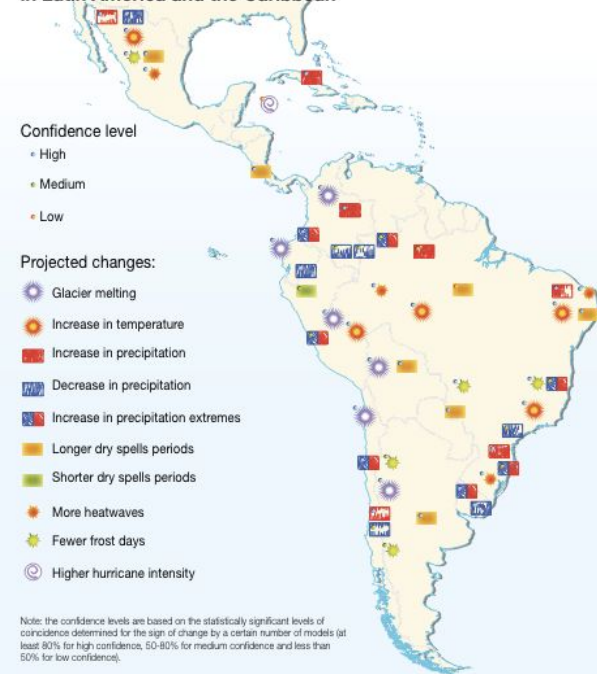
Mexico: Mexico has been experiencing extreme droughts and excessive heat, contributing to the water crisis they are experiencing in several areas that rely on agriculture for their survival.

Central America: In 2020, Hurricanes Eta and Iota destroyed housing, farms, infrastructure, and still working to rebuild communities.

Puerto Rico: 2017, Hurricanes Irma and Maria caused massive power grid failures. Also faces rising sea levels, stronger and more frequent hurricanes, increased flooding.

The Caribbean: Rising sea levels, marine pollution and degradation, and stronger hurricanes.

Summary of climate change patterns projected for 2100 in Latin America and the Caribbean



Source: ECLAC, on the basis of information from the National Institute of Spatial Research (INPE) of Brazil.

Current challenges to understanding and managing climate migration

- It is very difficult to document climate as the main factor for migration. Most migrants point to other factors, not always making the connection between climate and migration.
- There is no legal definition to describe people who have been displaced from their homes due to climate change or disasters. “Climate migrants” cannot claim the same internationally-recognized protections as refugees or asylees.
- People are migrating from countries that historically have not migrated to the U.S. in the same numbers as those from Mexico, or Central America, making it very difficult for them to integrate without existing social networks.



Photo from Alianza Americas partners ACCSS in Guatemala after hurricanes Eta and Iota devastated communities in 2020.

Impact of influx of new arrivals on Cities like Chicago

- The narrative of migration as a “crisis” has impacted the way cities and states within the U.S. view new arrivals, centering the narrative on what asylum seekers “need” rather than recognizing the cultural values and opportunities they bring.
- Cities like Chicago have been experiencing challenges with an aging worker population and a [decline](#) in overall population and birth rates. The recent arrival of working aged migrants to the U.S. was a missed opportunity to welcome new workers, creating a pathway for a more sustainable integration.
- The last two years have spotlighted what many frontline social service workers have been saying, Chicagoans are in need of greater investment in programs and services that support their well-being and provide for economic opportunity.
- The problem is not the influx of arrivals, it is the many years of disinvestment in Black, Latinx, and other marginalized communities.

Existing Climate and Environmental Challenges in Chicago



- **Altgeld Gardens**
 - Located in Riverdale neighborhood, home of 95% Black population
- **Calumet River**
 - Considered one of the most polluted rivers in the US
- **Little Village**
 - Former site of Crawford Coal Power Plant, botched implosion in 2020
- **McKinley Park**
 - MAT Asphalt plant located across from the 70-acre park
- **Pilsen**
 - Former site of Fisk Generating Station (top EJ offenders in US)
- **Southeast Side**
 - Historically plagued by industrial facilities and pollution

Chicago: Resisting Cycles of Environmental Injustice in La Villita



Rafael Cintrón Ortiz
Latino Cultural Center



1 of 2 →

1987: The Crawford Generating Station closed in 2012 due to local grassroots activism. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

THE
PROBLEM

THE
ROOTS

THE
SOLUTIONS

TAKE LOCAL ACTION

In the 1990s, the frequency of dramatic climate events and start of NAFTA increased the influx of migrants across Central America, Mexico, and the U.S. Settling in La Villita, immigrants confront toxic environments due to old zoning laws and discrimination linked to 19th century policing to protect industrialist interests



RACISMO AMBIENTAL

MAT ASPHALT

- PLANTA DE PRODUCCION DE ASPHALTO CALIENTE
- EN CERCA PROXIMIDAD A UN PARQUE Y VARIAS ESCUELAS
- INAGURADA SIN CONCIENCIAMIENTO Y APROVECHANDO LA COMUNITARIA
- PRODUCE 80,000 TONELADAS DE ASPHALTO ANUAL

TAMBIEN CAMBIO COMO "EL CAMBIO DE LAS ENFERMIDADES" POR SER EL GRANIZERO INDUSTRIAL MAS GRANDE NACIONALMENTE, HASTA LOS 1970'S

POR SU INFRAESTRUCTURA INDUSTRIAL Y CONCENTRACION DE FLECOS CARBILES Y BOM, TIENE POCAS CALLES CON DIRECTO ACCESO

HIG CHEMICALS

- FABRICA PRODUCTORA DE QUIMICOS VANTAGE™, PRODUCTOS OLIOQUIMICOS, MAYORITARIAMENTE ACEITES, GLICERINA, SURFACTANTES, ESTERS Y INGREDIENTES BIO-ACTIVOS.
- HIG CREA PRODUCTOS PRIMARIAMENTE BASADOS EN ACEITE DE PALMA, UN PRODUCTO MONOCULTIVADO Y FUNDAMENTAL EN LA DEFORESTACION GLOBAL.
- PRODUCE EMISIONES QUE ELEVAN EL RIESGO AL CANCER

Climate Change and Migration

Environmental Justice
Movement in Chicago



BLACKS IN GREEN



LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION

Climate Change in Mexico and Central America

- Migration to Chicago is driven by a combination of political, economic, and climate factors.
- Storms, droughts, floods, temperature fluctuations, and sea level changes are just some of the recent manifestations of climate change that continue to uproot the lives of thousands, creating unbearable living conditions across Mexico and Central America.
- Climate change is jeopardizing access to food, water, and other necessities.
- Migrants are seeking refuge in Chicago where they bring their assets and build cultural connections and integrate with local communities.

Recommendations

- **Advocacy before federal government** to do the right thing on immigration policy, like the many cities that have passed local resolutions supporting TPS. This can also include supporting policy that creates a pathway to regulate climate induced migration, and updating the definition of a refugee to include individuals currently seeking asylum.
- **Investment in more quantitative and qualitative analysis** that documents international and internal displacement to better understand mobility to the city of Chicago.
- **Building city-level welcoming ordinances and supports for newcomers** that enable their integration into local workforces and communities. Developing state-level work programs that would provide opportunities for migrants to legally work.
- **Championing investments** in infrastructure, housing, green jobs training that are accessible, healthcare, and education that recognize that growing numbers of people will be on the move due to climate change—and that local communities are on the front lines in ensuring their successful integration.
- **Partnering with peer governments** in climate-vulnerable Latin American and Caribbean nations to boost their long-term resilience. Maintaining forests, natural coastal protections, and small-scale agriculture could mitigate the effects of climate change. (ex. Making investments in local response systems in Latin America)
- **Working with Black, Latinx, and other minority-led community efforts** addressing climate and environmental inequality to ensure policies and programs are reflective and responsive to the changing needs of international and internally displaced populations.

Check out our Series on Contextualizing the Migrant Narrative

Our Webinar Series "Contextualizing the Migrant Narrative," [explored the historical, economic, and political factors driving migration](#) from Latin America and the Caribbean to the U.S. We looked at the [significant challenges faced by cities like Chicago](#) in addressing the needs of new arrivals, highlighting serious flaws in public policy. This series also addressed the [tensions between historically marginalized communities](#) and aimed to develop a deeper understanding and collaborative solutions.

Alianza Americas mission

Alianza Americas is a transnational organization that aims to create a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable way of life for migrant communities in the Americas. Our work focuses on the U.S.-Mexico-Central America migration corridor and is rooted in Latino immigrant communities and organizations in the United States.

Climate Justice at Alianza Americas

Our advocacy and work focuses on:

- The adoption of climate-friendly policies on the local, state, and national levels that contribute to:
 - The reduction of CO2 output and overall energy consumption.
 - Increasing the well-being of communities.
 - Centering equity and sustainability as key policy functions.
- Mitigate the impact of climate change and assist communities in their adaptation efforts so that international migration or internal displacement are not their only options.
- Immigrant communities in the US and countries of origin increase the equity of post-disaster preparedness and post-disaster responsiveness and relief.
- Migration pathways for individuals and communities impacted by climate change and environmental degradation that forced them to leave their countries.

CARE: How we get there (Capacity Building, Advocacy, Research and reports, and Education)