

# Happy Holidays

## Sunday Edition



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**LAWNDALE**  
NEWS

Sunday, December 15, 2024

**WEST SIDE TIMES**



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# Illumination: Tree Lights at The Morton Arboretum Receives National Recognition



*Illumination: Tree Lights at The Morton Arboretum* has been nationally recognized as one of the top 10 'Best Botanical Garden Holiday

Lights' by USA TODAY. The distinction is part of USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards for 2024. Currently in its 12th year, *Illumination* is

the only holiday light show in Illinois to receive the Top 10 designation. This is the third time *Illumination* has landed a spot on the USA TODAY's 10Best

list. The Arboretum was nominated by a panel of experts, including USA TODAY 10Best editors. Readers then voted for their favorites. *Illumination* also recently appeared on the U.S. News and World Report's list of "28 Best Christmas Light

Displays + Tours for 2024." This season features a vibrant, new display of interactive tree shapes synchronized to different musical instruments in the Arboretum's Grand Garden, along an ADA-compliant, one-mile walking trail with 17 immersive light displays.


*Illumination: Tree Lights at the Morton Arboretum* runs through Jan. 4, 2025. For tickets or more information, visit [mortonarb.org](http://mortonarb.org). *Illumination* is generously sponsored by Invesco QQQ and ComEd.

**Photo Credit: Morton Arboretum**



# Healthcare Open Enrollment Ending Soon

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This limited window only lasts a few weeks, and once it closes, individuals will have to wait until next year's enrollment period to make any changes. Open Enrollment for the Marketplace began on November 1 and ends on December 15. According to the latest data from CDPH, nearly 1 in 10 Chicagoans remain uninsured with Latinx residents facing a particularly high burden. Uninsured rates in the Latinx community are nearly four times higher than those of White residents and twice as high as those of Asian and Black residents. CDPH encourages individuals to take advantage of the Open Enrollment Period before it ends and secure health coverage for the upcoming year. Residents can access free, year-round navigation assistance in their neighborhood at [getcovered.illinois.gov](http://getcovered.illinois.gov)

The federal Open Enrollment period is now ongoing, marking a critical time for individuals to enroll in, change, or cancel their health insurance plans.

# Hope Chicago's Holiday Hope Day Celebration

Last Saturday, Hope Chicago celebrated with over 150 parents enrolled in its debt-free educational programs at the Holiday Hope Day event, held in partnership with City Colleges of Chicago. This special event spotlighted the organization's Parent Scholar Program, which supports both CPS graduates and their parents in pursuing postsecondary and workforce pathways without the burden of debt. The event featured inspiring stories from families benefiting from Hope Chicago's two-generation model, which offers flexible learning opportunities in fields like healthcare, business, tech, and trades. The program continues to grow, helping parents complete high school diplomas, earn college degrees, and gain certifications, all



while contributing to the economic mobility of entire families. Hope Chicago CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson, City Colleges Chancellor Juan Salgado, and many Hope Chicago families (Both Hope Scholar and Hope Parent Scholar)

attended the celebration, underscoring the impact of Hope Chicago's mission to create equitable, debt-free educational opportunities for Chicago's diverse communities.

**Photo Credit: Hope Chicago**



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# Triton College Showcases Programs during “Triton Week” at Leyden High Schools



Triton College showcased its programs and clubs at the third annual Triton Week, held December 2<sup>nd</sup>, at East Leyden High School and December 5<sup>th</sup>, at West Leyden High School. The half-day fairs, aimed at promoting post-secondary

pathways, introducing Leyden students to the educational and career opportunities available at Triton. Representatives from nearly 20 Triton College programs hosted booths with information, giveaways and interactive

activities for students. Adding to the excitement, Triton’s mascot, Troy the Trojan, made an appearance, quickly becoming an instant success among students. East Leyden student Kaylani Noriega, who attended the event,

said Triton College will help her reach her goals. “I had an amazing time at Triton Week,” said Noriega. “It was fascinating to see all the different opportunities and programs Triton has to offer. This helped me start thinking about which path I might want to take for future success. I’m looking forward to learning more

and can’t wait to see what else Triton has to offer.” West Leyden Principal Dr. Arturo Senteno emphasized the value of the event. “Future focus weeks give students an opportunity to explore options for after high school,” said Dr. Senteno. “Our students can explore Triton, one of our closest academic partners,

and Leyden students’ most popular post-secondary institution.” Triton College offers more than 120 degree and certificate program to prepare students to meet the needs of today’s global economy, realize their career aspirations and achieve personal growth. **Photo Credit: Triton College**

## El Período de Inscripción Abierta para Atención Médica Finaliza Pronto

El período de inscripción abierta federal ya está en curso y marca un momento crítico para que las personas se inscriban, cambien o cancelen sus planes de seguro médico. Esta ventana limitada solo dura unas pocas semanas y, una vez que se cierre, las personas tendrán que esperar hasta el período de inscripción del próximo año para realizar cualquier cambio. La inscripción abierta para el Mercado comenzó el 1 de

noviembre y finaliza el 15 de diciembre. Según los últimos datos del CDPH, casi 1 de cada 10 habitantes de Chicago sigue sin seguro y los residentes latinos enfrentan una carga particularmente alta. Las tasas de personas sin seguro en la comunidad latina son casi cuatro veces más altas que las de los residentes blancos y el doble que las de los residentes asiáticos y negros. El CDPH alienta a las perso-



nas a aprovechar el período de inscripción abierta antes de que finalice y asegurar la cobertura médica para el próximo año. Los residentes pueden acceder a asistencia de navegación gratuita durante todo el año en su vecindario en [getcovered.illinois.gov](http://getcovered.illinois.gov).

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## Cradles to Crayons Hosts Holiday Giving Round-Up



This holiday season, Cradles to Crayons® Chicago (C2C®) is working to collect 50,000 winter coats for kids across Chicagoland through our “Gear Up for Winter” initiative. In addition to coats, we’re also accepting donations of hats, gloves,

scarves, boots and other warm clothing in all sizes—from infants to adults—to help families in need stay warm this winter. Through February 2025, people can donate coats and winter essentials at C2C’s North Center Giving Factory or at 40+ participating

locations throughout Chicagoland. Items can also be purchased through C2C’s Amazon Wish List, and monetary donations can be made online. Learn more about how to support C2C at [cradlestocrayons.org/chicago](http://cradlestocrayons.org/chicago).



## Que tus días estén llenos de felicidad y luz

En ComEd, estamos trabajando duro para que tus celebraciones brillen intensamente. Para nosotros, iluminar tus tradiciones—grandes, pequeñas, nuevas y antiguas—es el regalo que sigue dando. La temporada más mágica sigue brillando con el respaldo de ComEd y su confiabilidad líder en su clase.

Encuentra unas bellas, tradicionales luces de temporada en Chicago para que disfrutes en familia en [ComEd.com/Holiday](http://ComEd.com/Holiday)

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# Chicago Public Schools Celebrates the 2024 Holiday Season



Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students, teachers, administrators, and staff are celebrating the holiday season with a plethora of school-level events before the onset of winter break on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. School events include renditions of timeless classics, cultural celebrations, and school community potluck events that aim to be inclusive and represent the diverse school communities of CPS. “Seeing our school communities create thoughtful and inclusive holiday celebrations is a

testament to the social-emotional learning taking place at CPS,” said CPS CEO Pedro Martinez. “While the tried and true holiday events historically include the classic stories, it’s great to hear about the tremendous attention to detail seen within individual school communities that aim to include all our students.” Ruth Bader Ginsburg Elementary School in Ukrainian Village has planned a Winter Assembly on Thursday, Dec. 19 where each class performs

a song to be followed by a school community potluck. The school community will share dishes representative of their multicultural population, including traditional food from Ukraine, Latin America and Asia. The West Side’s Suder Montessori Magnet School is hosting its Winter Recital, a two-day event, starting Wednesday, Dec. 18 and Thursday, Dec. 19, where students will perform a holiday-based production. The Children First Fund (CFF), the CPS Foundation, and their

generous philanthropic partners will showcase their holiday spirit, acting as CPS Santas and handing

out gifts at a number of CPS school events over the next couple of weeks. If you would like to become a CPS

Santa or contribute to the Compassion Fund, please visit [childrenfirstfund.org/holiday](http://childrenfirstfund.org/holiday).

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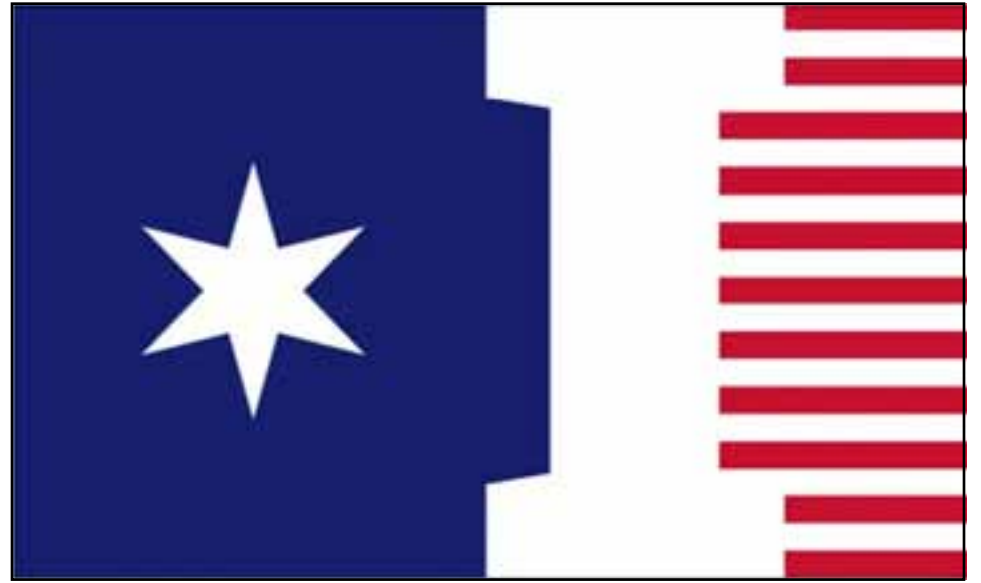


# State Flag Commission Selects Its Top 10 Designs for Public Voting

The Illinois Flag Commission selected its Top 10 finalists for the state flag redesign contest with public voting slated to begin in January. Members of the commission could select up to 10 of their favorite designs – from the nearly 5,000 submissions – prior to their December 9 meeting where they narrowed their choices to 10 overall. “Having received

nearly 5,000 entries, I appreciate the creativity and passion reflected in all the submissions,” said Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, whose office convened the Flag Commission meetings. Starting in January, the public will have the opportunity to vote online at [www.ilsos.gov/stateflag](http://www.ilsos.gov/stateflag) for one of the new designs, or one of three former flag

designs, including the current state flag, the 1918 Centennial Flag and the 1968 Sesquicentennial Flag. After the public voting period, the commission will report its findings and recommendations to the Illinois General Assembly by April 1, 2025, whose members will vote on whether to adopt a new flag, return to a previous iteration of the flag or retain



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the current flag. Senate Bill 1818, sponsored by State Senator Doris Turner (48th District—Springfield) and State Representative Kam Buckner (26th District—Chicago), was signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker in 2023, creating

the commission to gauge public desire for a new flag.



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## Immigrants Under Trump

**By: Ashmar Mandou**

With less than two months away from inauguration, President-elect Donald Trump has promised voters mass deportations, leaving the vulnerable immigrant communities with a range of questions, such as detainment and questions surrounding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Recently, the appointment of “Border Czar” Tom Homan elevated fears of deportation leaving many elected officials, including Congresswoman Delia C. Ramirez voicing concern. “Today’s announcement that former acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Director Thomas Homan will serve as “Border Czar” should make it clear to everyone that the Trump Administration will make good on their promises of mass deportation. We know *exactly* who Tom Homan is. He is the architect of the “zero tolerance” policy that separated thousands of migrant children from their parents with no plan for reunification. He demonstrates cold disregard for the U.S. citizenship of the at least 4 million children with an undocumented parent, suggesting to keep families together, they should be deported together.”

Congressman Ramirez continues, The Trump Administration’s goal is to inflict maximum damage on diverse American families, our children, and our communities. To that end, it is no surprise Trump wants Tom Homan at the helm. But let it be known, I will fight like hell to keep our families together, and our communities are ready to be an obstacle at every turn as he tries to implement his cruel, vile, gruesome plan.” According to a new report by Upwardly Global, immigrants are playing a vital role in Illinois by revitalizing communities across Chicago and rural areas alike. According to the report, immigrant entrepreneurs are helping drive prosperity in the state. Illinois is home to 19 Fortune 500 companies that were started by immigrants or children of immigrants. In total, 25.5 percent of all entrepreneurs in the state are immigrants; generating a total business income of \$3.2 billion. While there are a plethora of questions surrounding the issue of deportations, below seem to be the most pressing concerns.

### **What role do states play in any Trump order to deport immigrants?**

There are 11 million people living without legal authorization in the U.S., and Trump would have the authority, as president, to deport those people. But it would be very expensive to pay for the immigration officers, immigration judges, detention facilities, the plane flights and more that would be required to do so. Estimates on the cost of mass deportation range from US\$88 billion a year to more than \$300 billion. The administration is probably going to have to rely on state and local governments to help carry out these deportations. The president cannot legally force state and local governments to cooperate with immigration enforcement.

### **Could Trump still send federal immigration officers to a state that does not cooperate, in order to identify and detain immigrants?**

States could not prevent the federal government from coming in to arrest and deport people – but they don’t have to help them, and could set up some obstacles. The federal government would have to provide all of its own personnel. ICE could rely on local sheriffs or police in some states, like Texas, to identify and arrest immigrants and turn them over to ICE to deport. In other states, like Illinois, that want to protect immigrants from deportation, they can refuse to cooperate with federal authorities by not providing certain personal information on immigrants.

### **What are the other risks immigrants might be concerned about?**

There are about 580,000 people who are living in the U.S. and are part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program. DACA gives some people who came to the U.S. illegally as children the right to legally work, go to school and live in the country. The courts have already litigated that a president can lawfully terminate DACA through a certain process. People who apply for DACA have to state in their application that they are in the country unlawfully. So the government could prove that DACA recipients can legally be deported, and will have information on where they live.

If you are in need of help or have unanswered questions, organizations, such as Centro Romero, Howard Area CC, Instituto Del Progreso Latino, St. Augustine College, PODER, and Universidad Popular are better suited to help guide you.



