

# Expert Panel to Explore Climate Change Impacts on Migration in the Midwest

Panelists will share their thoughts as part of annual Green Soapbox event on March 27 in downtown Chicago, hosted by nonprofit Delta Institute

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, March 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Thursday, March 27, 2025, experts will share their expertise on how climate change impacts migration patterns and how this may shape the future of Chicago and the greater Midwest.



According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, approximately 122 million people lived forcibly displaced from their homes in 2024. Researchers at the Institute for Economics & Peace estimate that this number can grow to 1.2 billion people being forcibly displaced by 2050 as a result from climate change impacts like droughts that trigger food insecurity, conflicts of access to water, and the impacts of intensifying natural disasters around the globe. Some experts share that they believe the Midwest United States may serve as a refuge to an increasing amount of migrants fleeing wildfires, flooding, famine, and other climate-induced catastrophes.

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We’re fostering a deeper understanding of how climate displacement impacts our communities and what actions we can take here in the Midwest to support resilience and justice.”

*Maya Kelly, Green Soapbox Committee Chair*

“Delta Institute was founded on the idea that in order to address complex environmental challenges, such as climate-driven displacement, we need to come together

and collaborate on these issues as a community with diverse perspectives,” said Bill Schleizer, CEO of Delta Institute. “Green Soapbox continues on in that tradition by bringing together experts in backgrounds from policy, NGOs, and research institutions so that we can explore regional solutions to challenges that impact millions around the globe, and even domestically within the US.”

Today, Delta Institute announces this year's panel includes:

Panelist Rimjhim Agrawal is an expert in climate practice through roles such as promoting energy efficiency financing at Cook County Bureau of Economic Development and as Visiting Professor for the Climate Change and Implications for Defense and Security Course at the William J. Perry Center.

As a researcher for the Corioli Institute, Rimjhim has delivered projects on the Climate Change-Conflict-Migration Nexus in Kenya, Jordan, and the Arab Region. Rimjhim has also worked in various roles including at the World Bank and for the Prime Minister's Office in Kurdistan. She holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of Chicago and worked as a climate disaster risk analyst for three years in an international context. She is currently serving as the Program Manager for the Building Energy Resource Hub at Illinois Green Alliance.



Panelist Alisa Bhachu's twenty year career has focused within human rights as an advocate for women and girls, namely refugees and asylum seekers, especially those displaced from throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Her career began as an intern with Amnesty International, where she went on to lead Amnesty's national campaigns on Refugees and Asylum. From 2012-2018 she led RefuSHE, an award-winning INGO based in Nairobi, Kenya. She currently serves as Executive Director of the Chicago Refugee Coalition and is co-founder of Refugee Can Be. Alisa has been honored as an International Leader by Chicago Woman magazine and named an Emerging Leader by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. She frequently speaks on issues of forced migration having appeared on BBC, NPR, MSN, ABC and CBS primetime news. Alisa holds certifications in Forced Migration from Northwestern and Oxford Universities, a BA in Humanities and an MA in Comparative Religions.

Event moderator Tomás de'Medici is an expert in renewable energy project development, community-focused infrastructure planning, and innovative business strategies. His firm, TdM Emerald Corp., restructures portfolios, and crafts project development models that meet contemporary needs. Prior, he worked with Trajectory Energy Partners developing solar projects in rural and urban settings; served as an Organizing for America Field Organizer in Florida during the 2012 Obama campaign; and founded The Chicago Sustainability Series, a multi-media initiative exploring diverse perspectives in environmental leadership. He was an Advisory Member of the Turnstone Development C40 Reinventing Cities Competition task force, as well as an Environment, Climate, and Energy Planning Member of the City of Chicago's We Will Chicago initiative. He served as The Chicago Community Trust's Young Leaders Fund (YLF) Co-Chair from 2018-2020 and the Environmental Law & Policy Center's Next Generation Advisory Board from 2017-2020.

Panelist Beatriz Ponce de León is the Deputy Mayor of Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Rights for the City of Chicago, where she advocates for the integration and advancement of these communities. With over 30 years of experience in public service, she has led initiatives promoting racial justice, equity, and immigrant rights, and has worked across sectors to develop policies that strengthen marginalized communities. Beatriz has also held key roles in organizations at the Illinois Department of Human Services and led key initiatives at Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Community Trust, and she holds a BA in Sociology from Yale University.

The annual Green Soapbox event brings together a panel of thought-leaders to explore and discuss sustainability, conservation, and economic topics. The event is organized by the Delta Emerging Leaders (the "DELS"), the associate board of Delta Institute.

"This year's Green Soapbox is really important to the DELs because it highlights the critical role of local environmental leaders in driving awareness for the urgent issue of climate refugees," shares Maya Kelly, the Chair of the volunteer Green Soapbox event planning committee. "We're fostering a deeper understanding of how climate displacement impacts our communities and what actions we can take here in the Midwest to support resilience and justice."

[Please join us for this in-person event](#), with both in-person and online attendance options.

Details follow:

- Registration: <https://delta-institute.org/event/green-soapbox-climate-refugees/>
- Date: Thursday, March 27, 2025
- Time: 5:00pm-8:00pm Central
- Address: 333 W Wolf Point Plaza, Chicago, IL 60654
- Accessibility: More details about accessibility accommodations are available on the event landing page
- Tickets: \$15-75 contribution to nonprofit Delta Institute, which includes the cost of refreshments offered at the event. All event proceeds support the work of Delta Institute.

[Delta Institute's mission](#) is to collaborate with communities across the Midwest to solve complex environmental challenges. It is a 501c3 nonprofit with a Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar and has a Four Star "Give with Confidence" rating from Charity Navigator.

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