

California City Cancels Christmas Parade Over ICE Fears

The Milpas Street Holiday Parade in Santa Barbara, California, has been canceled after organizers argued that federal immigration agents could target attendees.

The Santa Barbara Eastside Society said in a statement that the decision follows discussions with “immigrant-rights partners who help us understand the lived experiences of our community.”

“Many have reminded us that although ICE raids may no longer dominate daily headlines, the threat to our Latino families documented or undocumented remains very real. The presence of immigration enforcement in our region, the fear it generates, and the uncertainty families continue to face are real, immediate, and deeply felt,” the statement read. “For generations, the Milpas Street Holiday Parade has been a space of joy, unity, and cultural pride, an event where every family, regardless of status, could gather safely and celebrate the rich spirit of Santa Barbara’s Eastside. Yet this year, many longtime participants have shared that the level of fear and vulnerability they are experiencing makes joining a large public event feel unsafe. To move forward without honoring those concerns would contradict the very values that this parade was built upon.”



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Organizers added that they hope the 2026 parade will be “an even more inclusive and empowering gathering for all who live in our community.”

Other parades in the area were canceled earlier this year, with organizers again citing fears of federal agents' activities. Similarly, Long Beach, California, canceled its annual Día de los Muertos parade for 2025. While city officials said they were not aware of plans to enforce immigration law at the parade, the decision was made "out of an abundance of caution."

The state of California recently unveiled an ICE reporting portal, allowing state residents to upload information about reported "misconduct" carried out by federal agents.

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