

ECDC NEWS

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ECDC Announces its 21st National Conference to be held in Arlington, Virginia

The Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. (ECDC) will host its 21st national conference April 28–May 1, 2015, at the Holiday Inn Arlington, 4610 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Va. This year's conference theme is *Raising a Collective Voice: Newcomers, Partners and Communities*.

The focus of the conference is on how the experiences of resettlement agencies, refugee newcomers, partners, and communities can form a shared voice to further enhance newcomer support systems and strengthen the connections between these diverse groups, who each play a vital role in refugee resettlement and integration. The conference will also look at strategies for bringing people together at the local, state, federal, and international levels, as well as drawing on the perspectives of refugee newcomers themselves.

Serving as a platform to address the current plight of displaced refugees, the 21st Annual ECDC Conference will address the ongoing political unrest around the world, funding shortfalls facing refugee organizations, barriers to local integration of newly arriving refugees, and potential solutions for current challenges in refugee resettlement. In supporting a vision for a collective voice, the conference aims to foster collaboration among newcomers and stakeholders in order to shape policy and local-level approaches in FY 2015 and beyond. The drivers of ECDC's Annual National Conference are the precarious circumstances of displaced refugees and immigrants around the world as well as asylum seekers domestically, and their hopes of building a better life.

Distinguished speakers will present on current topics and issues of interest, such as domestic resettlement trends, refugee health, and employment, along with other aspects of integration facing newcomers. Conference speakers include Catherine Wiesner, Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the Department of State, who is the Keynote Speaker; León Rodríguez Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); and Robert Carey Director of Office of Refugee Resettlement at the Department of Health and Human Services. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, will be the Banquet Keynote Speaker.

National leaders in refugee affairs, policymakers, and academics meet to exchange ideas and share insights with participants. Leaders and members of local and national community organizations share best practice experiences while federal partners and international humanitarian organizations provide important updates.

About ECDC

ECDC is one of nine Voluntary Agencies working in partnership with the Department of State and the Office of Refugee Resettlement to provide initial placement and support services to refugees being resettled in the United States. With a special focus on African refugees, ECDC promotes cultural, educational and socio-economic development programs to assist refugees and immigrants in becoming productive members of their new homeland.