

ECDC NEWS

Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.

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USCIS Presented Dr. Tsehaye Teferra Outstanding American by Choice Recognition

On Friday, February 22, 2013, USCIS presented Dr. Tsehaye Teferra, President and CEO of the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc., the Outstanding American by Choice recognition. The ceremony took place alongside a naturalization ceremony where the oath of allegiance was administered to 50 new Americans at Mount Vernon on the occasion of George Washington's 281st birthday.

"I chose to become an American citizen because this country gives people the opportunity to explore their individuality, hone their talents, and use their skills effectively and meaningfully", said Dr. Teferra. "As we reflect today on what American citizenship means to each of us, let us also keep in mind our privileged positions to make a difference in our countries of birth. We serve as ambassadors of goodwill and catalysts of development when we extend our benefits and share our knowledge and expertise with our places of origin as well as our diaspora communities in America."

As stated by USCIS, the Outstanding American by Choice recognition commends the achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens, highlighting participants who, through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, have demonstrated their commitment to this country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. After coming to the U.S. in 1972 as a UNESCO Scholar, Dr. Teferra completed a Master's degree and Ph.D. from Georgetown University. In 1983, he founded the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. to serve a growing Ethiopian refugee community and assist other refugees and immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds. Under his leadership and vision, ECDC has gone from a start-up agency to a major community-based organization with three branch offices and 12 affiliates providing multicultural services to newcomers around the country.

Dr. Teferra is also active in civic, professional, and local community matters; he is a board member of several nonprofits, including InterAction. He has received many awards, including recognition for his outstanding contributions to the United States by the U.S. Department of State in 1991. In January 2012, Dr. Teferra was honored for his community service by the White House during an event themed, "Champions of Change: American Diaspora Community" in Washington, D.C.

About ECDC

ECDC is a non-profit 501(c)(3) located in Arlington, Virginia. As a multi-service provider, ECDC is dedicated to helping refugees and immigrants become productive, self-sufficient members of their communities and strengthening the support systems that help them to succeed. Cultural and ethnic diversity is a hallmark of ECDC, and its multicultural staff speaks over 30 languages. Program support comes from corporations; foundations; individual contributions; faith-based institutions; local, state, and federal governments.