



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 3/6/17**

**CONTACT: Marta Welch | Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning 303-863-0188, x317 | [mwelch@springinstitute.org](mailto:mwelch@springinstitute.org)**

### **Provisions of New Executive Order Will Unnecessarily Harm Tens of Thousands of Vulnerable Refugees**

**DENVER, CO** - In response to the new Executive Order issued today, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning, ECDC African Community Center, Colorado African Organization, and Project Worthmore, as members of the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado (RACC), call on the Administration to rescind the 120 day suspension of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and restore refugee admission levels.

The new Executive Order contains some changes in regards to the U.S. Refugee Admissions program from the previous Executive Order (no. 13769) issued on January 27, 2017. Most importantly, the new order does not include a permanent travel ban on individuals from Syria and it provides clarification that the 120-day suspension does not apply to refugee applicants who had already been formally scheduled for transit to the United States.

“While we welcome the changes in the new Executive Order to drop the ban on all Syrians and to allow in refugees already scheduled for transit, we express our profound objection to the need for a 120-day suspension of the program,” said Paula Schriefer, President and CEO of Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. “Not only will this suspension inflict tremendous harm upon individuals waiting for years in truly desperate conditions to begin a new life, it serves no discernible security purpose.”

Other aspects of the previous Executive Order remain in place; namely a 120-day suspension of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and a more than 50% decrease in the numbers of refugees to be admitted to the United States in Fiscal Year 2017, from 110,000 to 50,000.

“Cutting the number of refugees admitted to the United States by half when numbers of refugees around the world exceeds 21 million people turns our backs on our commitment to the global refugee crisis,” said Jill Fricker, Executive Director of Colorado African Organization (CAO). “This measure will mean that individuals already waiting for years will have to keep waiting or maybe even start over, tearing apart families and devastating those who have endured unspeakable loss and trauma.”

Refugees admitted to the U.S. are already the most heavily vetted individuals to arrive on U.S. soil. The vetting process takes on average well over a year and includes in-person interviews, biometric screening, and background checks by multiple agencies.

Only 1% of the world's over 21 million refugees will be selected for resettlement in the United States or other countries.

“The executive order does not reflect the United State's long-standing tradition of welcoming those needing a safe haven,” says Melissa Theesen, ECDC African Community Center Managing Director. “We call on the administration to reverse the ban on refugee resettlement and uphold our commitment to refugees across the world.”

-###-

Organizations signing this statement are members of the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado, a coalition of organizations dedicated to defending the rights and interests of refugees at the local and national level and to providing a platform for refugees to share their contributions and concerns.

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning is a nonprofit organization with a mission to empower people and organizations to succeed across languages and cultures. To find out more, visit our website at [www.springinstitute.org](http://www.springinstitute.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#).

Colorado African Organization (CAO) is a nonprofit organization that exists to support Colorado's refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking populations in their pursuit of integration, self-sufficiency and freedom by providing services and programs to individuals beyond their initial arrival. Learn more at [www.caoden.org](http://www.caoden.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#).

ECDC African Community Center (ECDC ACC) is a branch office of the Ethiopian Community Development Council. ECDC ACC is authorized by the Department of State to resettle refugees in the U.S. and has been welcoming refugees into the Denver metro area for 15 years. ECDC ACC helps refugees build safe, sustainable lives. ECDC ACC is a 501(c)(3) entity. For more information about ECDC ACC, visit [www.acc-den.org](http://www.acc-den.org) and follow on [Facebook](#).

Project Worthmore (PWM) was founded in 2011 as a response to the acute need for assistance of the refugee families in the local Denver community. Our mission, and the barometer by which we measure our work is to provide services and programs that foster community, self-sufficiency and increase quality of life among Denver-area refugees. For more information about PWM, visit [www.projectworthmore.org](http://www.projectworthmore.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#).