



## Obama Immigration Assistant To Speak At Dayton Conference

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Representatives from more than a dozen rust belt cities are gathering in Dayton Thursday to talk about immigration and economic development. The “Welcoming Economies” conference [will include a keynote speech by Felicia Escobar](#), Special Assistant to the President for Immigration Policy.

Global Detroit is one of the organizations sponsoring the event—the group has pushed for more immigrant-friendly policies in the city for several years. Raquel Andersen, the group’s VP of External Affairs, says groups providing services for immigrants have a lot to consider. For example, she works on homeownership and spoke with a client, a woman from Iraq, who was confused by the idea of a mortgage.

“There are no mortgages in Iraq, you save for four years, you live with your family, and you buy a house outright,” Andersen says. “So it’s about really finding out what each community needs and how we might best describe all of these new concepts.”

Organizations and cities at the Welcoming Economies conference will share their experiences with supporting immigrant businesses, education and access to services.

Dayton has been trying to make itself a welcoming place for immigrants and refugees,

mainly [through publicity and outreach](#). Census data shows that between 2009 and 2013, Dayton's overall population loss was significantly offset by new immigrants coming in. Growing groups here include people from East Africa and China.

[National research](#) has found that housing values tend to go up in neighborhoods where immigrants move in, and a [new study of Dayton by the Partnership For A New American Economy](#) estimates that in 2012 foreign born households had \$115 million dollars in spending power.

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