

OFF SPECIAL REPORT

TO: Liaison Officers
FROM: OFF Staff
DATE: May 23, 1975
SUBJECT: Indochina Refugee Assistance

Congress has passed and sent to the President two bills which would provide assistance to the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees, (1) the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 (H.R. 6755) which extends emergency assistance for resettlement of and health and educational services to refugees under the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 to Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees for a period ending September 30, 1977 and authorizes not more than \$455 million for performance of these functions and (2) the Special Appropriations for Assistance to Refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam (H.R. 6894) which would appropriate a total of \$405 million, \$305 million to the Department of State for resettlement and initial maintenance costs at staging and reception centers and \$100 million to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare for health and social services and temporary language and vocational training.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Coordination of the Vietnamese resettlement and relocation efforts in the State Department is being handled by the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs within the Office of the Secretary. The refugee and migration office is also working with the special Inter-agency Task Force headed by former Ambassador Dean Brown, which was established to coordinate government activities relating to Indochina refugees. Also assisting the State Department at the refugee reception centers are personnel from the Agency for International Development. The State Department's Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs is headed by:

Mr. Louis A. Wiesner, Director
Office of Refugee and Migration
Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20502
202/632-9558

(Individuals or organizations interested in sponsoring or employing refugees should not call the State Department directly, but rather should call the following toll-free number: 800-368-1180.)

According to the appropriations legislation currently awaiting Presidential signature, the State Department will receive \$305 million, of which somewhat less than \$78 million will be designated for resettlement costs for the voluntary agencies coordinating and administering the relocation of the refugees. In addition to the State Department and AID personnel efforts at the reception centers, these voluntary agencies (Church World Service, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, etc.) have teams of persons at the centers involved in the immediate resettlement of refugees. These agencies are responsible for identifying and implementing placement, school enrollment, employment opportunities, and other social and educational services for the refugees once they have received the necessary security and migration clearances. Approximately nine voluntary agencies were named as coordinating groups in the conference reports for the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, but other voluntary agencies have now been added.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE

Funds appropriated to the DHEW will be treated as discretionary funds to be divided as DHEW sees fit among four categories: welfare and social services, medicaid, bilingual and vocational training, and public health. The House and Senate Conference Reports included \$50 million for welfare and social services, \$30 million for medicaid, \$30 million for bilingual and vocational training, and \$15 million for public health. Of the \$30 million slated for bilingual and vocational training, \$20 million would be used for bilingual training for elementary and secondary school age children (tutoring and special language training by state and local educational agencies) and \$10 million would be used for upgrading skills, skills training, refresher professional training, and remedial education and language training for adults.

At the present time, it is uncertain how the bilingual and vocational training activities of the DHEW will be administered. The Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Development in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education is the lead representative for planning the educational activities with assistance from the various offices within the Office of Education which will be involved in the different educational areas: adult, vocational and occupational, and bilingual education. It is uncertain also whether the activities will be handled as a separate special program by the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Development or through

the existing programs in OE. The departmental task force, an informal group of representatives from the offices noted above set up to determine the most feasible way to handle the programs, has opted for the former. Unless a different determination is made, the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Development will handle the implementation of the programs as well.

OE/Policy Development is in the process of identifying priorities and methods for meeting the educational needs of the refugees. Personnel from the Regional HEW Offices of Education were sent to the reception centers (Camp Pendleton, Fort Chaffee, Eglin Air Force Base and Indiantown Gap) to assess the language and vocational and occupational needs of the refugees and to identify what is presently being done by the various volunteer agencies already present. The Department of State's Immigration and Nationalization Service has also sent personnel to each reception center to collect data via individual interviews as to the English proficiency, educational and professional levels and educational needs of the refugees. Final decisions on specific educational activities will be made after all information has been received from personnel at the centers.

As a first step, OE/Policy Development has defined the main objective to be the provision of the necessary language training and vocational and occupational skills at various levels from professional with some English to the unskilled illiterate to promote rapid integration into American society. Initially, the priority is teaching "survival English," whether minimal refresher English or basic English instruction. The specific method for accomplishing this objective has not been officially determined as yet. The office would like to use Vietnamese students and wives of American servicemen already present in America and Americans who have taught English in Vietnam to teach the refugees, and Americans or Vietnamese who speak both languages and who have had teacher training experience to train volunteers or Vietnamese refugees in the centers to teach English. It would like to begin the survival English training within the next week to two weeks and vocational and occupational training, which is expected to take longer to implement due to the length of time required to assess these needs, to begin within the next three to four weeks.

The general approach of the office is to utilize the federal government resources available, e.g., Department of Defense Language Institute and career and occupational training programs, state and local educational agencies, and public and private resources including organizations and colleges and universities. It is suggested that organizations interested in providing educational assistance to refugees submit a one page letter describing the proposed project, the capabilities of the people involved, and an estimated budget to:

Dr. Philip Austin
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Policy Development
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Room 3153
Washington, D.C. 20202
(Telephone inquiries are discouraged)

Although the appropriation has not been received, proposals are now being accepted. As specific needs are identified and plans for educational activities are finalized, appropriate proposals which best suit specific needs will be selected.

The Deputy Assistant Secretary is concerned with the scarce resources which will be available to support an estimated 130,000 refugees at the centers and in the communities where they are placed, and with the fact that the programs are temporary and designed to meet the immediate needs of the refugees. It is possible that after all the data is collected and all the refugees' needs and the extent of their needs have been assessed and documented, the HEW may go back to Congress for additional funds. A third bill, S. 1696, which authorizes amounts available but uncommitted for military functions in Vietnam and Cambodia for humanitarian assistance to the refugees, was passed by the Senate by voice vote on May 8. The bill has not yet been referred to the House and no further action will be taken until after Congress returns on June 2 from its Memorial Day recess.

AASCU ACTIVITIES

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities is now working in consultation with those federal agencies involved in the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees on the development of programs which will involve institutions of higher education in this effort on a national basis. The emphasis of the AASCU activity will be in three areas:

- the education and training of students;
- the orientation of families through community reception centers; and
- the support of Vietnamese students already enrolled in state colleges and universities whose funds have been cut off.

Additional information on AASCU's planned activities is provided in the Actiongram of May 16, 1976, and the accompanying press release dated May 14, which have been sent to the Presidents of all member institutions.

Although the details of this program will necessarily depend on the identified refugee needs and on federal decisions with regard to the specific types of projects to be funded, the requirements for eligibility, and the level of program support,

the Association hopes to involve all institutions which have appropriate capabilities in this outreach effort at an early date. Institutions are encouraged to assess their capabilities in these areas and to return the questionnaire enclosed with the May 16 Actiongram. The special consultant responsible for the coordination of Association activities in this area is:

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OFP:jrm