

House File 2336 - Introduced

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BY DUNWELL

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to refugees and refugee resettlement, and
2 providing an appropriation.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. REFUGEE ASSISTANCE — GRANTS.

2 1. As used in this section:

3 a. "Eligible agency" means an agency that has contracted
4 with the United States department of state under 8 U.S.C.
5 §1522(c) to provide initial resettlement and case management
6 services to refugees or a nonprofit entity providing legal or
7 case management services.

8 b. "Refugee" means all of the following:

9 (1) A person paroled as a refugee or asylee under section
10 212(d)(5) of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act.

11 (2) A person admitted as a refugee under section 207 of the
12 federal Immigration and Nationality Act.

13 (3) A person granted asylum under section 208 of the
14 Immigration and Nationality Act.

15 (4) Cuban and Haitian entrants, in accordance with
16 requirements in 45 C.F.R. pt. 401.

17 (5) Certain Amerasians from Vietnam who are admitted to
18 the United States as immigrants pursuant to section 584 of
19 the federal Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related
20 Programs Appropriations Act, 1988, as the definition is
21 contained in section 101(e) of Pub. L. No. 100-202 and amended
22 by the ninth proviso under Migration and Refugee Assistance
23 in Tit. II of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and
24 Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1989, Pub. L. No. 100-461,
25 as amended.

26 (6) Certain alien immigrants who are victims of a severe
27 form of trafficking who have been certified by the United
28 States department of health and human services pursuant to
29 section 107(b) of the federal Trafficking Victims Protection
30 Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-386, division A, 114 Stat. 1464
31 (2000).

32 (7) Iraqi and Afghan aliens granted special immigrant
33 status under section 101(a)(27) of the federal Immigration and
34 Nationality Act.

35 (8) A person admitted for permanent residence, provided

1 the individual previously held one of the statuses identified
2 above.

3 2. The department of health and human services shall award
4 grants to eligible agencies to provide the following services
5 to refugees residing in this state, for up to twenty-four
6 months:

7 a. Services including but not limited to all of the
8 following to assist refugees with department programs:

9 (1) Referring refugees to the department within three days
10 of the refugee's arrival in this state.

11 (2) Transporting refugees to initial appointments with the
12 department.

13 (3) Providing to the department all necessary eligibility
14 information known to the eligible agency.

15 (4) Coordinating services of the department with other
16 social services agencies.

17 b. Services including but not limited to all of the
18 following to assist refugees:

19 (1) Navigating the health care and mental health systems,
20 including providing assistance in applying for medical
21 assistance.

22 (2) Accessing housing assistance and finding stable
23 housing.

24 (3) Setting up utilities and paying utility bills.

25 (4) Advising on issues with landlords.

26 (5) Navigating legal or criminal issues including services
27 for victims of crime.

28 (6) Accessing in-home services including parenting
29 assistance, English as a second language instruction, and
30 medical and psychosocial support.

31 (7) Navigating the culture of the United States.

32 c. Providing transportation to appointments.

33 d. Advocating on behalf of refugees regarding domestic
34 violence, federal laws, and hate crimes.

35 e. Providing refugees with interpretation services and

1 assistance with access to language services.

2 f. Providing referrals for refugees to culturally specific
3 support groups and services, including religious organizations.

4 g. Identifying the employment skills of refugees and
5 providing referrals to employment skills training and other job
6 support services.

7 h. Coordinating medical services for refugees including
8 referring to and coordinating with agencies that determine
9 eligibility for disability benefits.

10 i. Providing family preservation services, legal services,
11 and social services support for domestic violence and child
12 welfare issues.

13 j. Assisting newly arrived refugee children in accessing
14 services to strengthen the children's academic performance and
15 successful integration into the community.

16 k. Providing extended case management services for
17 twenty-four months for newly and recently arrived refugees.

18 l. Other services necessary to assist refugees in accessing
19 programs administered by the department and attaining success
20 as full participants in the community.

21 Sec. 2. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SERVICES — GRANTS —

22 APPROPRIATION. In addition to and not in lieu of any other
23 appropriation, there is appropriated from the general fund of
24 the state to the department of health and human services for
25 the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30,
26 2025, the following amount, or so much thereof as is necessary,
27 to be used for the purposes designated:

28 \$ 10,000,000

29 1. Of the funds appropriated in this section, \$420,000
30 shall be used by the department to administer a grant program
31 to provide access to international resources to Iowans and
32 new Iowans to provide economic and leadership development
33 resulting in Iowa being a more inclusive and welcoming place
34 to live, work, and raise a family. The program shall provide
35 supplemental support services for international refugees to

1 improve learning, English literacy, life skills, cultural
2 competencies, and integration in a county with a population
3 over 450,000 as determined by the 2020 federal decennial
4 census. The department shall utilize a request for proposals
5 process to identify the entity best qualified to implement the
6 program.

7 2. Of the funds appropriated in this section, \$400,000
8 shall be used for the Iowa commission on volunteer service
9 and the RefugeeRISE AmeriCorps program for member recruitment
10 and training to improve the economic well-being and health of
11 economically disadvantaged refugees in local communities across
12 Iowa.

13 3. Up to \$400,000 shall be used for child care business
14 development by establishing new child care locations in Iowa
15 as well as providing technical assistance through expansion
16 of refugee child care business development programs based on
17 those offered in Polk and Linn counties that sustain and grow
18 child care entrepreneurship and address child care shortages
19 in refugee communities.

20 4. Of the funds appropriated in this section, after
21 allocation of the funds under subsections 1, 2, and 3, the
22 remaining funds shall be used by the department to fund grants
23 to supplement the funding received by eligible agencies from
24 the United States department of state under 8 U.S.C. §1522 to
25 provide services as described in section 1 of this Act.

26 EXPLANATION

27 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
28 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

29 This bill relates to refugees and refugee resettlement, and
30 provides an appropriation.

31 The bill provides definitions for "eligible agency" and
32 "refugee" for purposes of the bill.

33 The bill requires the department of health and human
34 services (HHS) to award grants to eligible agencies to provide
35 a number of services to refugees residing in the state, for

1 up to 24 months, including services that assist refugees with
2 department programs as well as other services.

3 The bill appropriates \$10 million, in addition to and not
4 in lieu of any other appropriation, from the general fund of
5 the state to HHS for FY 2024-2025 to provide refugee support
6 services for refugees residing in this state.

7 Of the funds appropriated, \$420,000 shall be used by HHS to
8 administer a grant program to provide access to international
9 resources to Iowans and new Iowans to provide economic and
10 leadership development resulting in Iowa being a more inclusive
11 and welcoming place to live, work, and raise a family. The
12 department shall use a request for proposals process to select
13 the best qualified entity to administer the program in a county
14 with a population over 450,000.

15 Of the funds appropriated, \$400,000 shall be used for
16 the Iowa commission on volunteer service and the RefugeeRISE
17 AmeriCorps program for member recruitment and training to
18 improve the economic well-being and health of economically
19 disadvantaged refugees in local communities across Iowa.

20 Of the funds appropriated, up to \$400,000 shall be used to
21 develop new child care locations as well as provide technical
22 assistance through expansion of refugee child care business
23 development programs.

24 Of the funds appropriated, the remaining funds shall be used
25 to fund grants to supplement the funding received by eligible
26 agencies to provide services as described in the bill.