

## Legislative Fiscal Office

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## Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Sen. Betsy Johnson, Senate Co-Chair  
Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Senate Co-Chair  
Rep. Dan Rayfield, House Co-Chair

Sen. Jackie Winters, Senate Co-Vice Chair  
Rep. David Gomberg, House Co-Vice Chair  
Rep. Greg Smith, House Co-Vice Chair

**To:** Capital Construction Subcommittee

**From:** Kim To, Legislative Fiscal Office

**Date:** June 17, 2019

**Subject:** HB 2508 – Relating to refugees in Oregon  
Work Session Recommendations

HB 2508 appropriates \$4,500,000 General Fund to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies. The bill specifies that \$250,000 of the appropriation must be distributed to a culturally responsive employment service provider to be selected by DHS.

The measure previously had a hearing in the House Committee on Human Services and Housing on 2/27/2019 and 3/13/2019, and was reported out with a do pass recommendation.

The -A4 amendment reduces the appropriation to \$2,000,000 General Fund to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies. The bill specifies that \$200,000 of the appropriation must be distributed to a culturally responsive employment service provider to be selected by DHS.

The Federal Office of Refugees Resettlement defines a refugee as any person who cannot return to their own country out of fear they will be persecuted due to race, religion, political opinion, or national origin. Resettlement agencies [such as Catholic Charities (CC), Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW), and Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR)] help refugees in Oregon resettle. Employment services are offered through the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). These organizations provide services, for up to two years, to refugees who are within five years of arrival. Direct Case management assistance includes help to obtain a Social Security card and DMV identification, education on opening a bank account and how to pay rent and utility bills, English language instruction, as well as assistance to enroll children in school and making health screening appointments.

Under current practice, DHS funds refugee services with federal funds. However, Oregon has just received notice of suspension of federal obligations for social services for the third quarter. With passage of this bill, DHS would have the authority to use state General Fund

for refugee services, mitigating the impact of this suspension in federal funding, on both refugees and resettlement agencies. DHS anticipates using moneys provided by the bill to stabilize funding available for case management services. DHS calculates that \$2 million would serve approximately 900 refugees with extended case management services. Passage of this bill, would enable DHS to amend current contracts, define services, increase coordination of services, create new data collection and reporting methods to increase monitoring of investment.

### **Recommended Changes**

LFO recommends adoption of the -A4 amendment.

**MOTION: I move adoption of the -A4 amendment to HB 2508. (VOTE)**

### **Final Subcommittee Action**

**MOTION: I move HB 2508, as amended, to the Full Committee with a do pass recommendation. (VOTE)**

### **Carriers**

Full Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

House Floor: \_\_\_\_\_

Senate Floor: \_\_\_\_\_