

**FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**Measure: HB 2508 - A4**

80th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2019 Regular Session  
Legislative Fiscal Office

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed  
Versions are Considered Official*

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**Measure Description:**

Requires Department of Human Services to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies to provide specified services to refugees.

**Government Unit(s) Affected:**

Department of Human Services (DHS)

**Summary of Fiscal Impact:**

Costs related to the measure will require budgetary action - See analysis.

**Summary of Expenditure Impact:**

	2019-21 Biennium	2021-23 Biennium
General Fund		
Special Payments	2,000,000	0
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**Analysis:**

HB 2508 with the -A4 amendment appropriates \$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. Resettlement agencies help refugees access the specialized social services they need to become self-sufficient and provide coordination of employment services through an employment service provider. 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 and expand funding available for case management services. Employment Services coordination would use additional funds to assist refugees to access employment related services from mainstream agencies. 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.