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Md.-Va. Briefs

Refugee Plan Office Is Created

RICHMOND, May 21 (AP) — Secretary of Human Affairs Otis Brown said today a coordinating body will be established in the next several days to assist in the resettlement in Virginia of refugees from Southeast Asia.

He told a news conference that the coordinating group would consist of 10 to 12 public and private agencies such as the State Departments of Welfare, Health and Agriculture and religious organizations such as the Virginia Council of Churches and the Catholic Diocese of Richmond.

Brown said that right now the refugee problem is being approached in a fragmentary fashion by a variety of state, federal and private agencies.

"Our job will be to pull this all together so citizens will have some central place to contact," he said.

Brown said he had no idea how many refugees would be coming to Virginia and offered the figure of 500 to 600 as "strictly a guess."

He said 30 families already have relocated in the Old Dominion and another 200 are expected to enter the state in the near future.

Brown urged that any person desiring to sponsor a refugee family should contact a local church or synagogue so the information can be passed to the appropriate organization.

While there are no specific guidelines for sponsorship, Brown said, "obviously the sponsor will have to have sufficient time and resources to meet the responsibility."

He said sponsorship involves a responsibility for food, shelter and medical assistance for refugees, but stressed that the financial burden ultimately will be borne by the federal government.

Brown said sponsorship carries with it no legal responsibility "but certainly a moral obligation" to see that the families are properly taken care of.