

U.S. to Reimburse States for Aid To Resettled Indochina Refugees

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WASHINGTON, June 11—The Government will reimburse the states for their welfare expenses in resettling Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees in the United States, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare announced today.

The Federal program will be administered under the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975, under which \$405-million was appropriated for refugee costs.

H.E.W.'s Secretary, Caspar W. Weinberger, emphasized in his announcement today that he expected most of the 131,528 Vietnamese refugees to be resettled with the help of American sponsors who were to provide housing and jobs.

The sponsors are individuals, private agencies and local governments that have promised to help the refugees resettle, obtain jobs and become welfare recipients primarily where the sponsorship broke down, the department said today.

Unlike other welfare payments by the Government to the states, the funds for reimbursement of refugee expenses are limited by the Congressional appropriation.

Despite the limitation, the Federal funds are expected to be sufficient, according to John A. Svahn, acting administrator of the department's social and rehabilitation service, which will administer the program.

"We expect that most of the sponsored families and individuals will not need welfare because they will become self-sufficient," Mr. Svahn said today.

Some state officials, especially those in California, say that they fear that the refugees will at some point place a burden

on their already overtaxed finances unless the Government picks up the bill. An added fear is that the refugees will be competitors for scarce jobs now being sought by United States citizens. According to the latest Government figures 9.2 per cent of this country's workers are designated as unemployed.

Refugees are now moving from camps in California, Arkansas, Florida and Pennsylvania. But few of them are Cambodians.

California's health and welfare administrator, Maurio Obledia, predicts that his state may be host to as many as 80,000 resettled Vietnamese. And the state reported today that welfare payments are now being paid to 200 Vietnamese, only six weeks after their arrival in the country.

Mr. Weinberger said that although he did not expect large numbers of refugees to become welfare recipients. "In any large scale refugee resettlement program, some refugees will have to seek aid from state agencies." He added that he would try to "assure that refugees do not become a burden on state or local resources."

Children Not Required

Unlike the largest welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the refugee program does not require that recipients have children.

The Secretary announced that Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees and students who resettled here would be eligible for Federal grants and educational loans to study in colleges and universities.

H.E.W. figures show that 340 refugees had settled in New York State as of May 27. But there was no indication of how many, if any, had become welfare recipients.