

AUG 25 1975

OKLAHOMA STARTS REFUGEE PROGRAM

Pledges to Find Sponsors
for 1,500 Vietnamese

NYTimes

Special to The New York Times

FORT CHAFFEE, Ark., Aug. 24—Oklahoma has established its own refugee relocation program, pledging to find sponsors for 1,500 Vietnamese. That number is in addition to the 1,919 Vietnamese refugees already sponsored by individual residents of Oklahoma.

Within the first four days of its operation here last week the volunteer staffed Oklahoma placement office placed 400 refugees. The idea for the state to officially become involved in the refugee project originated with William E. Foster, an assistant to Gov. David L. Boren. Mr. Foster's family had already sponsored one refugee.

Mr. Foster assembled a committee of state officials, representing health, education, welfare, public safety and employment agencies and the state's Bicentennial commission. Next came a statewide public relations effort; 40 Oklahoma businessmen were taken on a tour of the Fort Chaffee center.

Then the volunteers, led by Mrs. Foster, moved in. Eighty-five Vietnamese without families who spoke good English were promptly placed at Conners State Junior College at Warner in Central Oklahoma. Townspeople agreed to work with the refugee students. The \$500 allotted for each refugee was sufficient to finance the scholarships.

Students Accepted

Meanwhile, a Vietnamese-English bilingual program was being organized at Southeastern College at Durant. Between 250 and 300 more students—these with language problems—were signed up for relocation.

Four smaller colleges in the area agreed to accept the students from the Southeast campus as soon as they mastered English. Later, Southeast will take them back and help them obtain degrees in their chosen fields.

To date, 22,000 refugees have been relocated through the Fort Chaffee center, and 22,000 others are awaiting sponsors. California and Texas lead the states in number of refugees accepted by individual sponsors. Each has taken more than 2,000.

Other refugee centers in the nation are scheduled to be phased out by late fall. The center here will remain in operation during the winter, however, since it is the only one equipped to handle large numbers of people during cold weather, according to the State Department.

Cash for Refugees

WASHINGTON, Aug. 24 (AP)—The Government announced today that it was providing cash welfare payments and medical care to about 9 per cent of the first 52,000 resettled Indochinese refugees.

That rate, said the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, is lower than the 11 per cent, or 25 million of United States citizens receiving welfare, Medicaid or social services.

Reports from 25 states and Washington, D.C., through July 16 show that 4,814 Vietnamese and Cambodians were drawing welfare and another 489 were authorized to receive medical assistance, H.E.W. said.

John A. Svahn, acting chief of the department's Social and Rehabilitation Service, said many of the refugees now on welfare had previously been released from settlement centers without sponsorship because they had friends and relatives with whom they could stay. "Now," he said, "some of those arrangements appear to be in trouble."

H.E.W. pays the full cost of welfare and Medicaid for refugees.