

30% of Refugees Getting Welfare

Washington SFChronicle

Of nearly 130,600 Indochinese refugees resettled in this country since the fall of Saigon to the Communists, about 30 per cent were receiving cash assistance from welfare agencies as of June 30.

The Senate refugee subcommittee, in releasing a report from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, said yesterday that this represented an increase of nearly 12 per cent since last September.

The report said that of the 38,707 refugees receiving cash assistance through state welfare agencies, "a considerable percentage were fully or partially employed, although not earning as much as the welfare standard."

"Thus, their incomes were supplemented by public assistance not exclusively supported by it," the report said.

The report was in the form of a letter to Senator Edward Kennedy, (Dem-Mass.), the subcommittee chairman, from Lawrence McDonough, acting director of the Indochinese Refugee Task Force in the office of the HEW secretary.

McDonough said "the department has established a job development and vocational training as a priority activity" in an effort to reduce the number of refugees on cash assistance during the next year.

He cited \$12.4 million already committed for activities in this field, including adult English language training.

In addition, he said the department is working on a revision of eligibility for cash payments "to require refugees to take a suitable job or participate in training if they are to continue to receive cash assistance under an aid program enacted by Congress."

McDonough said he is confident that, through cooperative federal, state and local efforts, steps can be taken "so that we are not forced into a special long-term public assistance program" beyond the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 1977.

This was the period for which aid was authorized by Congress in 1975.

Associated Press