

‘Nonprofits’ Cash in on Refugee Resettlement

WAYNE LUTTON

The headline read, “Refugee Agencies Face a Funding Crunch” (Ian Lovett, *Wall Street Journal*, May 13-14, 2017, p. A3). The report disclosed that more than half of the nine agencies authorized by the State Department to resettle refugees in the U.S. “have either laid off staff or frozen hiring. Some agencies have let hundreds of people go.” What was causing the drop in funding? A reduction in the rate of refugee arrivals during the first six months of this year.

Furthermore, refugee resettlement agencies fear that the Trump administration may cap the number of refugees permitted to move to the U.S. at 50,000 or perhaps to a low of 20,000. This is in contrast to what these agencies had been hoping for in 2017. Before he left office, President Obama announced he would raise the number of refugees allowed into the country to 110,000, the highest total since 1995. In response, many of these organizations eagerly began additional hiring.

The average American voter is unaware that nine non-profit organizations contract with the State Department to bring designated refugees to a community and settle them into housing, sign them up for welfare benefits, etc. As Thomas Allen, who has worked in refugee relief, remarked, these groups are “not so much a charity as a conduit for taxpayer money....[they] rarely do more than dump their ‘clients’ on public services provided by the various unfortunate target cities before moving on to the next set” (HIAS Now Whines About Religious Test on entrants,” VDARE.com. September 10, 2017).

The nine federally approved refugee resettlement contractors (called VOLAGS, Volunteer Agencies) receive money for each refugee they service. The more refugees admitted to the U.S., the more federal tax dollars they receive. It is that simple. The latest available figures taken from Charity Navigator and other sources of financial disclosure, compiled by Refugee Resettlement Watch, July 11, 2017, reveal that:

- Church World Services receives 71 percent of its budget from U.S. taxpayers. Their chief executive, Rev. John McCullough, is paid an annual salary of \$251,224.
- Ethiopian Community Development Council

receives 93 percent of its \$17,448,992 budget from taxpayers. Their president, Tsehaye Teferra, received \$171,683 in salary and \$104,730 in additional compensation.

- Episcopal Migration Ministries is 99.5 percent funded by taxpayers. They did not disclose how much they pay their executives and lobbyists.

- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) has 57 percent of its \$40,565,891 [in 2015] budget funded by taxpayers. HIAS CEO Mark Hetfield was paid \$358,718.

- International Rescue Committee is 66.5 percent funded by taxpayers. In 2015 they received \$688,920,920. Executive Director David Miliband’s annual salary was \$591,846.

- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, is 98 percent funded by taxpayers. President and CEO Lavinia Limon was paid \$260,258, plus another \$42,231 in other compensation.

- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, is 96-97 percent funded by taxpayers. President and CEO Linda Hartke was paid a salary of \$274,632, plus \$33,401 in additional compensation.

- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration Fund received \$95,256,272 in total government contract and grants revenue in 2016, up from \$80,733,062 in 2015. This comes to 97 percent of their funding. Salaries paid to their chief executives and Washington, D.C. lobbyists are not known.

- World Relief Corporation (National Association of Evangelicals) is 72 percent funded by taxpayers. Financial officer Barry Howard, was paid over \$250,000, more than their president and CEO.

These nine organizations have hundreds of affiliate offices across the country. Given their dependence on taxpayer dollars, it is no wonder that they lobby for more and more refugee admissions, instead of calling for assisting refugee claimants in safe havens near their homelands. As we were going to press, Church World Services issued a media advisory on September 15, reporting that “High Level National Policy Experts” were calling on the Trump administration to raise the refugee cap to a minimum of 75,000. ■