

Ann Corcoran is Right: Refugees are Costing Taxpayers a Bundle

Don Barnett writes a [Refugee Resettlement Watch](#):

This is regarding the Times news report "[Fact-checking refugee resettlement activist](#)," published April 24.

Stating that Lutheran Social Services "receives \$850 per arrival" is misleading. Refugee resettlement is very profitable, and money is earned in many ways. If a volunteer spends time with an LSS refugee or donates, say, a used couch, LSS submits a bill to the feds for the volunteer's time or the used couch and receives cash from the misnamed federal Match Grant program.

If LSS's parent organization collects the airfare from the refugee – which was provided by the taxpayer to the refugee as a loan – the organization pockets a full 25 percent of the amount as a collection fee. This relatively small program alone means millions for the larger refugee contractors.

There are many grant programs providing an opaque stream of money from almost all departments of the U.S. government. As a state refugee coordinator notes in a 2012 GAO report, "local affiliate funding is based on the number of refugees they serve, so affiliates have an incentive to maintain or increase the number of refugees they resettle each year rather than allowing the number to decrease."

It is hardly the case that "refugees receive a one-time federal grant of \$1,125" and "after that, refugees are on their own." Most refugees are placed into one or another federal assistance program by the refugee resettlement

contractors.

Just in the past few weeks Congressional Research Services provided data about welfare usage among refugees. Among refugees who had arrived in a recent 5-year period, 56 percent were receiving Medicaid or Refugee Medical Assistance, 74.2 percent were on food stamps, 22.8 percent were in public housing, and 47.1 percent were on some form of cash assistance.

Unfortunately, it is the refugee resettlement contractor, such as LSS, which leaves the refugees "on their own" – abandoning them to the care of the taxpayer.