



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on February 14, 2025

Refugee Office Spent \$22.6B on Cash Giveaways & to Help “Refugees” Buy Cars, Homes

When it comes to big spending on “migrants” and refugees, money is no object for federal bureaucrats and far-left political appointees. Taxpayer money, that is.

The latest on Uncle Sam’s big fraud operation comes from Open the Books (OTB) on Substack. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (OSS), a subsidiary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), spent more than \$20 billion to help “migrants” buy cars and homes. Some got cold, hard cash.

In other words, while real Americans struggle to pay for disasters such as Hurricane Helene and the wildfires in Los Angeles, the penniless vagrants of the Third World are laughing all the way to the bank.



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<https://t.co/0kWGVM5Swi>

— Open the Books (@open_the_books) [February 13, 2025](#)

Taxpayers Shafted

A bureau under HHS’s Administration for Children and Families (ACF), ORR threw away \$22.6 billion in the last four years “on grants to nonprofits providing everything from help accessing Medicaid to help building credit, help with home and auto loans, and cash assistance,” [OTB reported](#).

So the office was spending billions to ensconce “migrants” who might well face deportation.

The programs focused on but were not limited to “unaccompanied minors,” OTB continued:

One ORR program helped participants save for car and home purchases, another gave out business and personal loans to help them build credit. Another program helped with “legal assistance,” “cultural orientation,” and “emergency housing support.”

These acted as giant magnets for those seeking to cross the border and claim asylum.

And in its 2023 budget justification for Congress, the wasteful agency wanted “changes to expand its mandate.” OTB reported that those changes would include:

- Advocating that “Special Immigrant Juvenile Minors” within the “Unaccompanied Refugee Minor” (URM) program access the same benefits as refugees, which include access to Medicaid and the same foster care services as American children.



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- Expanding legal assistance to Ukrainian and Afghan children and other URM-designated youth to legal assistance ensuring permanent residency.
- Giving cash assistance to full-time college or technical school student refugees.
- Removing the need for refugees to obtain economic self-sufficiency “as quickly as possible.”

Broken down, here are the approximate amounts granted from fiscal 2020 through fiscal 2024:

- 2020: \$2.7 billion
- 2021: \$2.35 billion
- 2022: \$3.4 billion
- 2023: \$10 billion
- 2024: \$4.2 billion

Conflict of Interest?

In 2023, *The New York Times* reported that 85,000 unaccompanied minors had gone missing. The director of ORR at the time was far-leftist Robin Dunn Marcos, who would not confirm whether that was true.

The connection between that fact and the Big Swindle is unclear. But this one isn't, [reported OTB](#):

Notably, two of ORR's top grantees were also the former employers of Dunn Marcos: The International Rescue Committee (IRC), where Dunn Marcos spent 23 years, including eight as Senior Director for Resettlement, Asylum, and Integration; and Church World Service, where she spent four years.

Understandably, OTB asked ACF whether Dunn Marcos had recused herself from involvement in those grants. Why, of course she did! “Consistent with the Ethics Pledge, Robin Dunn Marcos is recused from participating in particular matters involving specific parties in which IRC is or represents a party,” ACF told Open the Books.

If Dunn Marcos did recuse herself, it certainly didn't hurt the IRC. It skinned the taxpayers for \$598 million through the four years. Almost \$337 million filled its coffers in 2023 and 2024.

The far-left Church World Service has had its nose in the trough for \$355 million since 2020, Open the Books reported.

[They continued:](#)

In 2023, IRC received funding for the first time from ORR's Unaccompanied Children program: \$13,005,424 for “home studies and post-release services.”

But even before then, the nonprofit worked in some capacity with unaccompanied children.

According to one article[,] “IRC Los Angeles ... [provides] assistance with school enrollment, acquiring state medical insurance, and obtaining pro bono legal services from local partner organizations.”

As spending at ORR swelled to new heights, IRC benefitted handsomely. The organization received over \$235 million in spending in FY 2023 compared to \$22 million in FY 2021.



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To find out whether Dunn Marcos really recused herself, in May 2023 OTB filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for emails between her and IRC. “We still have not received a response.”

Of course they haven’t. ORR’s parent, ACF, says the median wait time for a FOIA request is 1,065 days. When OTB asked the agency why it can’t fulfill simple requests, they “did not receive a response.”

New Acting Director

When OTB went to ORR’s “principal deputy director,” Marcela Ruiz, she told the group to talk to the agency spokesman.

“Very little can be learned about Ruiz from the ACF and ORR websites, but her posture towards her work can be approximated by her background,” [OTB explained](#). Before landing at ORR, she was headmistress of the Office of Equity at California’s Department of Social Services. “In one of her presentations from 2021 she advocates for ‘implicit bias training,’ a ‘racial equity working group,’ and ‘listening sessions and affinity groups’ for her department,” OTB reported.

Replacing Ruiz will be Mellissa Harper of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. That suggests that the agency will no longer shower taxpayer millions on far-left nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

“While Dunn Marcos may have disappeared from ORR, our questions remain over whether certain nonprofit organizations received special treatment amid the billions in grants furnished by the government office,” [OTB noted](#). “What’s clear is that ORR has funded a constellation of NGO’s deployed in border states and nationwide, who give out aid designed to attract even more migrants.”

\$80 Million “Clawed Back”

This week did deliver some good news for taxpayers vis-à-vis the “migrant” scam.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem announced on Wednesday that she “clawed back” [\\$80 million in federal funds](#) from New York City that came from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“FEMA was funding the Roosevelt Hotel that serves as a Tren de Aragua base of operations and was used to house Laken Riley’s killer,” she wrote:

Mark my words: there will not be a single penny spent that goes against the interest and safety of the American people.

I have clawed back the full payment that FEMA deep state activists unilaterally gave to NYC migrant hotels.

FEMA was funding the Roosevelt Hotel that serves as a Tren de Aragua base of operations and was used to house Laken Riley’s killer.

Mark my words: there will not be a...

— Secretary Kristi Noem (@Sec_Noem) [February 12, 2025](#)

Tren de Aragua (TdA) is the Venezuelan illegal-alien murder gang that the Biden administration [helped to set up](#) operations nationwide.



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TdA member Jose Ibarra [was flown](#) to Georgia, where [he murdered](#) Riley, on the taxpayers' dime.



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