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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair  
2023 - 2024 Regular Session

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### **SB 85 (Wiener) - Immigration: case management and social services**

**Version:** April 17, 2023

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** May 8, 2023

**Policy Vote:** HUMAN S. 5 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Agnes Lee

**Bill Summary:** SB 85 would extend benefits for refugee social services programs, as specified.

**Fiscal Impact:** The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) estimates ongoing costs, in the tens of millions (General Fund), for state-funded extension of refugee services.

**Background:** At the federal level, refugee benefits and supports are overseen by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR seeks to provide social services that help refugees become self-sufficient as quickly as possible, including programs focused on supporting mental health, navigating medical assistance, and addressing refugee specific health challenges. ORR is responsible for this population from the date of the refugee's arrival, when they provide short-term cash and medical assistance, case management services, English as a Foreign Language Classes, job readiness and employment services, among other services. The federal Reception and Placement Program (RPP) serves refugees during their first 3 months after arrival in the United States, through contracts with local resettlement agencies to provide various services using federal funds.

The CDSS provides coordination of programs and services to help refugees successfully resettle within California and assists with the integration of specified vulnerable populations. As part of this role, CDSS is responsible for allocating federal funds for refugee social services programs to each eligible county or qualified nonprofit organization, as defined, based on the number of refugees receiving aid, or who reside, in the eligible county. Existing state law conditions this allocation for social services on the availability of federal funds for this purpose.

CDSS also administers a state-established program, the Enhanced Services for Asylees and Vulnerable Noncitizens program, to provide culturally appropriate and responsive case management services for asylees and vulnerable noncitizens for up to 90 days within the first year following the grant of asylum, as specified, or after having been deemed eligible for specified refugee social services. Current law requires that this program be implemented only to the extent that funds are appropriated for this purpose in the annual state Budget Act.

**Proposed Law:** Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Require that if a refugee recipient of refugee social services under the federal RPP completes 90 days of services and exhausts the federal funds allocated for that recipient, the recipient is eligible for a 90-day extension of refugee social services

using state funds within the first 12 months of arrival in the United States. Allow an additional extension, at a minimum 90 days and at a maximum 180 days, resulting in a duration of no more than 270 days of state-funded extensions, for a federal and state combined total of no more than 360 days of services. Require that this provision be implemented only upon appropriation of state funds in the annual Budget Act or another statute for this purpose.

- Extend, for the Enhanced Services for Asylees and Vulnerable Noncitizens program, the provision of services from up to 90 days, to up to 180 days. Allow that if a recipient completes 180 days of case management services and seeks an extension of those services, an additional extension may be granted, at a minimum 90 days and at a maximum 180 days, for a total of no more than 360 days of case management services.

**-- END --**