

NGOs use American tax dollars to relocate migrants

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- Nongovernmental organizations relocate migrants using taxpayer dollars
- DHS: NGOs are under scrutiny over misspent funds, no record-keeping
- Expert: "Problem is, NGOs have taken over as official travel agency of DHS"

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ATLANTA (NewsNation) — From the local to the state and federal level, Americans are paying a hefty price for the humanitarian crisis at the southern border, and in a way, the federal government is able to hide the true cost of the border crisis from the public through NGOs.

The majority of migrants arriving in cities like New York or smaller towns across America, do so with the help of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) — organizations like charities or religiously affiliated nonprofits.

In the past two years, Border Patrol holding stations have constantly been at overcapacity in dealing with the massive influx of migrants crossing illegally into the U.S. When this happens, Border Patrol releases processed migrants to NGOs to shelter, feed and coordinate travel for migrants to their final destination.

"Once received, whether it be the adult population or the families, the sites will then work with them, and the general term that we use is we go through a 'processing.'" John Martin, the deputy director for the Opportunity Center for the Homeless, said. "That processing is to facilitate travel to the destination of their choice."

NGOs receive billions of taxpayer funds through several federal departments like the Department of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services.

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According to Forbes, the NGO Catholic Charities USA received \$1.4 billion from government support compared with \$1 billion in private donations. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service reported more than \$93.1 million in U.S. government grants in its 2021 financial statement, making taxpayer-funded grants more than 80% of its total support.

And that number would only climb as the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service would receive \$182.6 million in grants in the fiscal year of 2022 from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Another NGO, Church World Services, reported more than \$20.5 million in grant funds in its 2022 financial report, making more than 40% of its assets coming from taxpayers.

NewsNation's Ali Bradley spoke to Robert, a migrant from Togo who crossed into Yuma, Arizona, and was released. He said he stayed in a local hotel for a couple of nights and took a bus from Yuma to Washington, D.C. which was paid for by a local NGO.

US relies heavily on nonprofits to receive migrants | Morning in America

From there, a different NGO in Washington bought Robert's plane ticket to his final destination in Indiana.

"[In] Washington, I stayed at [the] hotel again. After, they bought me the [airplane] ticket and bought me an Uber car to send me to the airport," Robert said. "At the airport, everything was OK."

Robert's full travel in the U.S., like the hundreds of thousands of other migrants, was paid for by U.S. taxpayers' funds.

Earlier this year, NGOs faced scrutiny as the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General found that some of the \$110 million from the American Rescue Plan for migrants encountered at the southern border were misspent — in some cases, it was given to illegal migrants who evaded Border Patrol.

Charles Marino, a former DHS advisor under former President Barack Obama, said it's almost impossible to track how many NGOs are along the southwest border.

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"The problem here is that the NGOs have taken over as the official travel agency of the Department of Homeland Security," Marino said. "So now they've turned it over to the NGOs, not just to coordinate the shelter and the food, but also the travel, ultimately, we're going to see billions of dollars of taxpayer money go to waste through fraud and abuse because there's no oversight through FEMA."

However, Marino said taking away the funds from the NGOs would make the humanitarian crisis at the border worse because it will take away additional sources that are needed to move migrants to sanctuary cities.

“Let’s face it, they [NGOs] are going to help whoever they encounter. And that includes those that are gotaways, where there are no records of them with CBP at all. But they’re going to put them on planes, they’re going to send them around the country, they’re going to send them primarily to sanctuary cities, because of the protections that sanctuary cities offer to migrants,” he said.

NGOs help maintain the flow at the border effectively, Marino explained. But the biggest issue is it makes it hard to track the funds that the government is giving these organizations when the NGOs are helping anyone they encounter.

He said the missing funds and the question of where all the money is going has now gained Congress’ attention. The DHS inspector general found that there was no record-keeping, and these NGOs could not articulate how many migrants they were helping.

“We are going to see a lot of fraud, unfortunately,” Marino said. “But you know, look, this is poor decisions by this administration. And this is being laid at the feet of every single city in the United States who are not going to have the resources to deal with this.”

The misuse of funds will affect cities like New York City and Chicago which have received thousands of migrants over the past year but now have low funds to help shelter them.

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