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Migrant crisis cost \$150B in 2023, forcing some areas to cut police and fire services: report

By [Isabel Vincent](#)

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Migrant crisis cost \$150B in 2023, forcing some areas to cut police and fire services: report | Reporter Replay

The eye-watering financial **cost of the migrant crisis** hit \$150 billion last year and is causing devastating consequences for residents of hard-hit cities struggling to cope with the influx, The Post has learned.

Of that figure, calculated by Washington DC-based non-profit Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), \$67 billion came from the federal government, but the majority of the burden was shouldered by states and local governments.



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More than 15.5 million migrants are in the US, receiving millions in funds from FEMA.

James Breeden for NY Post

FEMA SHELTER AND SERVICES GRANTS 2024

TOTAL AWARDED: **\$640M**

10 STATE AND LOCAL OFFICES WHICH RECEIVED MOST FUNDS

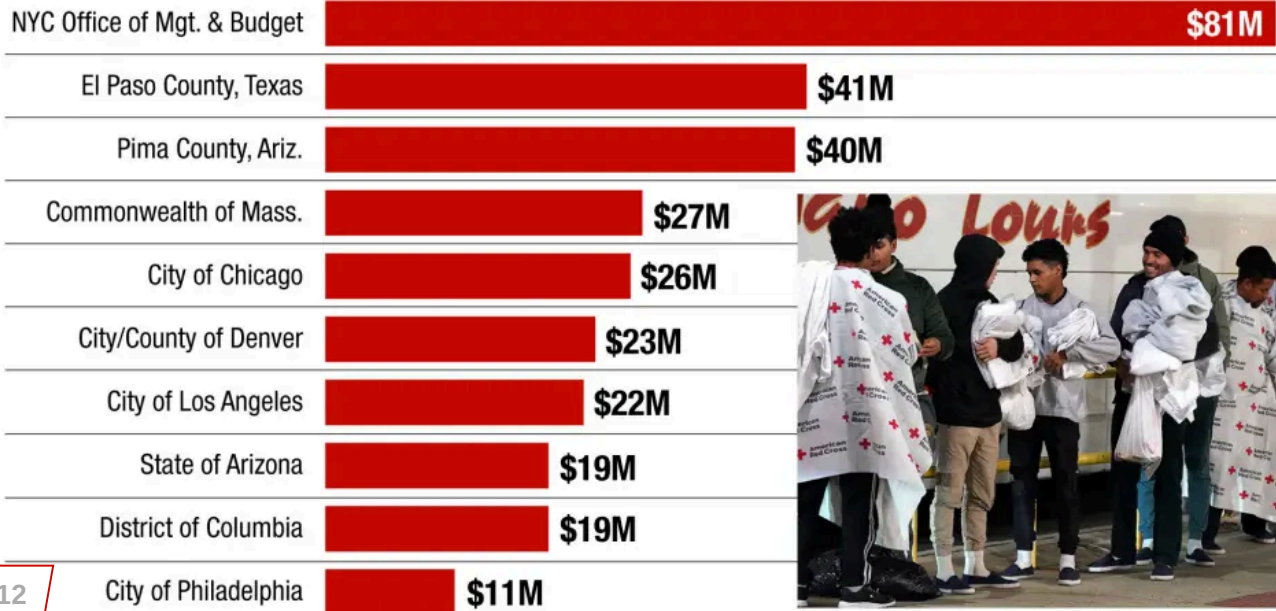


Chart showing where FEMA Shelter and Services funds were allocated in fiscal year 2024, which ran from Oct. 1, 2023 until Sept. 30.

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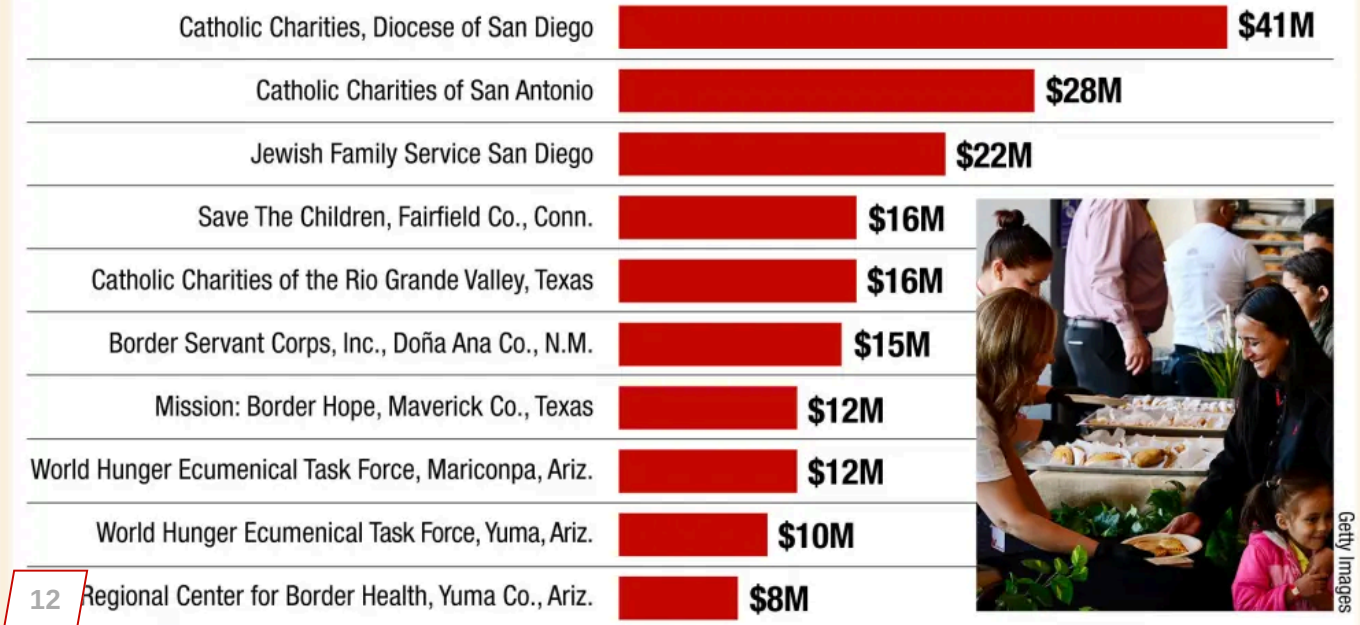


Chart showing where FEMA Shelter and Services funds were allocated in fiscal year 2024, which ran from Oct. 1, 2023 until Sept. 30.

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That has left huge holes in city budgets, meaning cutbacks for regular US citizens, including:

Denver City Council has to cut \$45 million from its budget, including \$8.4m from its Police Department and \$2.5m from the Fire Department to pay an estimated \$90m bill for migrants.

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New York City is spending \$2.3 billion in costs for housing migrants alone in 2023 and 2024, resulting in city agencies having to cut costs by 5%.

In South Portland, Maine, property taxes have increased to pay for the migrant crisis and the mayor has advised elderly residents to re-mortgage their houses to pay them

Chicago faces a \$1 billion budget gap, partly over migrant services, which it is now scrambling to make up.

FAIR estimates there were at least 15.5 million “illegal alien residents” in the country at the beginning of 2022, with federal funding amounting to \$3,187 per migrant per year, an increase of 45% since their last survey in 2017.

Of the federal government's \$67 billion spent in 2023, more than \$6.6 billion was earmarked for education and over \$25 billion was doled out in medical costs. Federal welfare programs ate up \$11.5 billion and law enforcement costs were \$23.1 billion, according to the 91-page "The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration on United States Taxpayers 2023" [report from FAIR](#).

They point out that is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to migrant spending as state and local expenditure is far higher.



Texas National Guard troops push back migrants trying to cross into the US in El Paso. Federal funding to resettle migrants in the country amounts to \$3,187 per migrant per year.

James Breeden for NY Post



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Migrants carry their belongings in Denver, where the city has seen an influx of more than 42,000 since 2022.
Trevor Hughes, Trevor Hughes / USA TODAY NETWORK



Migrants gather in an undisclosed shelter in Denver as the officials from the city and country distributed Christmas gifts to children last year. The city has been overwhelmed with migrants from Venezuela and Central American countries since 2022.

Denver Post via Getty Images

But because each state, city and county approaches migrant relief differently it is hard to estimate the full cost per migrant. However, the struggles certain communities face help show how much havoc the crisis is wreaking on ordinary citizens.

In New York City more than 210,000 migrants have **traveled to the city** since the spring of 2022. As The Post has reported, under the sanctuary city's "right to shelter" policy **150 hotels are currently providing** food and rooms for the migrants, who receive between 30 and 60 days of free housing with laundry facilities and help with childcare.

The overall costs to house asylum seekers per night is \$352 and spending for 2023 and 2024 is set to surpass a **staggering \$2.3 billion**.

To pay for it Mayor Eric Adams announced budget cuts at the end of 2023 of 5% across all city agencies.

That included certain cuts to New York's Police and Fire Department, which were walked back three months later, as well as \$58 million cut from NYC library funding, \$53 million to city cultural institutions

and millions taken from early childhood programs.

Funding for some of those ventures is expected to be restored in 2025.



South Portland Mayor Misha Pride suggested that elderly residents take out second mortgages to deal with increased property taxes as the city council earmarked nearly \$2 million for the migrants that descended on the city. He has since walked back his comments.

Greater Portland Council of Governments

New York City did receive aid through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which started a **Shelter and Services Program** in fiscal 2023 to address the migrant surge.

The agency allocated \$640 million in fiscal 2024 for migrants, of which \$81m went to New York City, by far the largest share given to any one place.

Another \$23 million of the FEMA cash was given to authorities and non-governmental organizations in Denver — however, it falls far short of the amount required.

The city of 715,000 has received the largest influx of migrants after New York City, Chicago and San Diego, according to immigration data, with an influx of 42,000 migrants since December 2022.

Denver has already spent \$70 million on caring for those migrants and introduced an initiative to spend another \$90 million in April this year, according to local reports.

Elected officials are having to cut Denver's emergency services and police to foot the bill.

“Denver City Council faced a requested \$45 million cut, \$17 million of which came from public safety agencies including Denver Police Department (\$8.4 million) and Denver Fire Department (\$2.5 million),” according to a report on its website.



A pregnant migrant takes shelter at a shelter in El Paso, Texas, one of the millions who have arrived in the country legally or illegally in the last two years.

New York Post



An asylum seeker cleans the floor at a shelter in Texas on May 18, 2022. Many cities have now imposed limits on how long migrants can stay for free before they must move on.

New York Post

The Denver Asylum Seekers Program provides up to six months of rent free housing, assistance with food and legal issues, such as asylum applications and work permits.

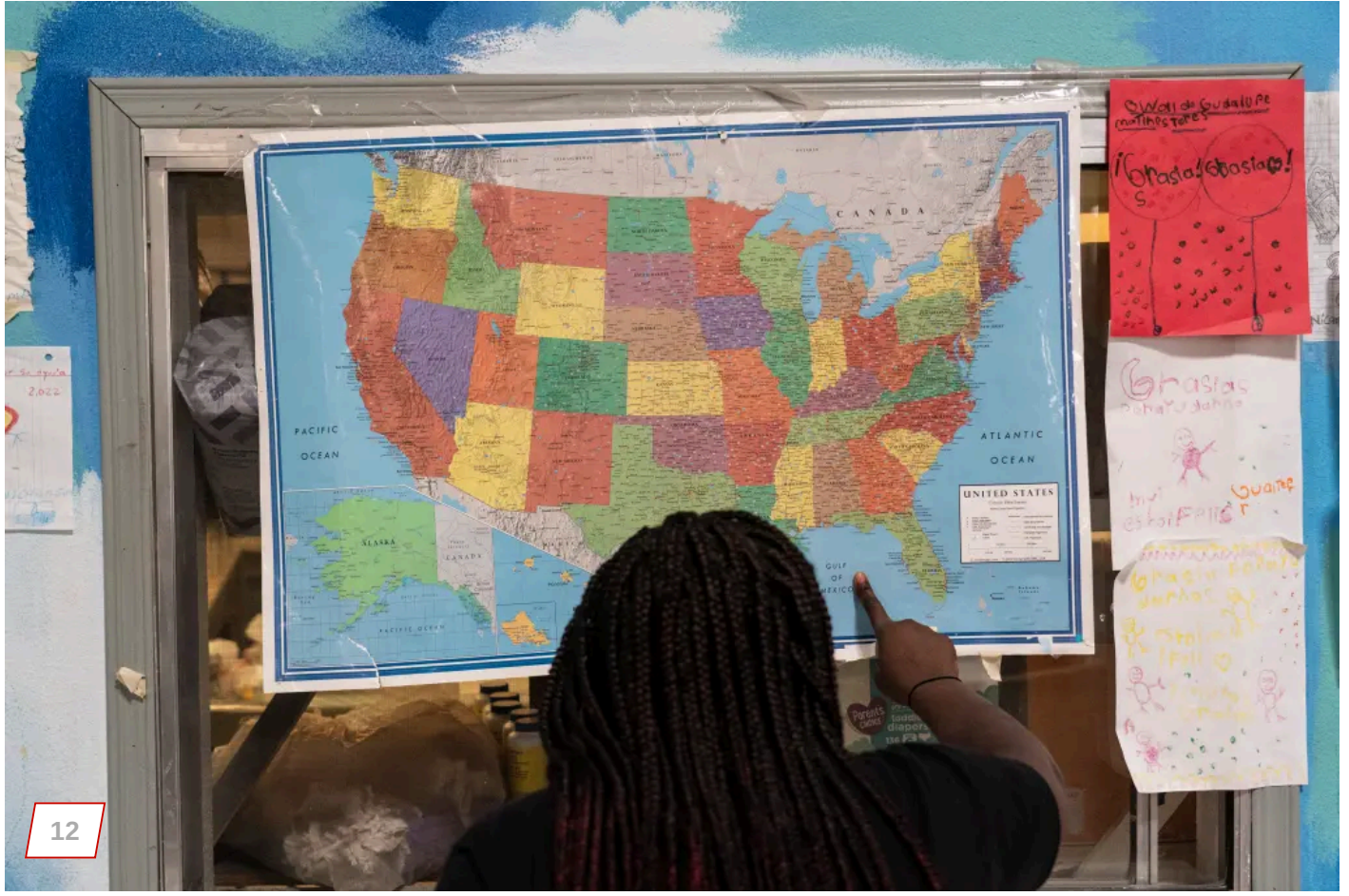
The city, which rented out several hotels to deal with the surge of migrants, also works with non-profits to provide classes in English language, financial literacy and workers' rights, according to reports. The city project \$51.7 million in migrant housing costs alone in 2024, with another \$9.7 million allocated to workforce training.

Supporters of the Asylum Seekers Program, which has spots for 1,000 participants, say that it will help migrants integrate into the local economy and the workforce much faster. The city estimates it costs \$1,700 per migrant.

In Chicago, mayor Brandon Johnson announced in August the city has a \$982m projected budget gap for 2025. Between 2022 and 2024 the city has spent over \$400 million on migrants, **according to NBC**, with \$141m spent this year, according to **local site WTTW**. The issue has been particularly contentious among residents and the city has since announced that by next year it will shut down its migrant shelter program and wrap it into a more "cost-effective" approach, rolling into its homelessness program.

In South Portland, Maine, a city of 27,000 residents which saw an influx of 1,000 migrants last year, Mayor Misha Pride suggested elderly residents who could not afford steep property tax increases take out a reverse mortgage — a loan that allows homeowners to borrow against the equity in their property.

“I know it’s an ugly word,” he said at a city council meeting in August, “but there are — I’m just saying, I know it’s horrible, but it’s sort of a last resort.”



A migrant examines a map of the US, shortly after arriving in the country. Most migrants arrive over the southern border and then head to another city, often sanctuary cities such as New York, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles or Miami

New York Post



An asylum seeker resting with her baby by a power socket at a migrant shelter, where large batches of laundry wait to be cleaned.

New York Post

The reverse mortgage suggestion came at the same time that the city voted to allocate \$1.9 million in its 2025 budget for migrants. The cash is slated for “General Assistance Vouchers” for asylum seekers’ rent, food and prescription drugs.

That’s ten times more than the \$100,000 the City Council approved for their Senior Property Tax Relief Fund, according to reports.

“Food costs have increased and Asylum Seekers rely on General Assistance for food assistance,” the city’s budget reads, in part justification for the outlay.

Pride, an attorney who is up for re-election, walked back his comments earlier this month in a letter to the editor of the [Portland Press Herald](#).

“It was an inappropriate remark ... I never meant to advocate it as a general approach,” he wrote.

In June 2023, the city [entered a 12-month contract](#) to house migrants at the Howard Johnson hotel.



Migrants cross the Rio Grande river from Mexico hoping to find a way into El Paso, Texas, in March, but are stopped by concertina wire erected by Gov. Greg Abbott and the Texas National Guard.

James Breeden for NY Post

The city will receive some benefit from a FEMA grant of \$5.4 million which was given out in August to the United Way of Southern Maine and Catholic Charities to help resettle migrants in the area.

Other small cities aren't as lucky and are begging for federal funds after they have been overwhelmed with migrants. In Logansport, Indiana, a city of 18,000 residents, nearly 2,000 migrants — most of them unaccompanied minors — have put a strain on local schools.

Haitian migrant students have swelled from 14 in 2021 to 207 this year, [according to reports](#).

“The federal government has got to step in and help communities our size,” Mayor Chris Martin recently told [FOX 59 Indianapolis](#).

312 **What do you think? [Post a comment](#).**

Local residents in the city, 90 miles outside Indianapolis, say they no longer feel safe in the community and their children are being muscled out of the public schools by recent arrivals who do not speak English and need a great deal of help from teachers.

However, some critics object to taxpayer money allocated to FEMA being used for non-citizens at all, noting how most of it has been given to sanctuary jurisdictions where officials do not cooperate with federal authorities to enforce immigration laws.

“What makes this Biden-Harris botched response unique—and particularly outrageous—is that the same administration claiming it doesn’t have enough money to support suffering Americans appropriated \$1.6 billion dollars in FEMA funds to assist illegal aliens since October 2021,” said Kevin Roberts, Heritage Fund president in an article on the conservative think tank’s website.

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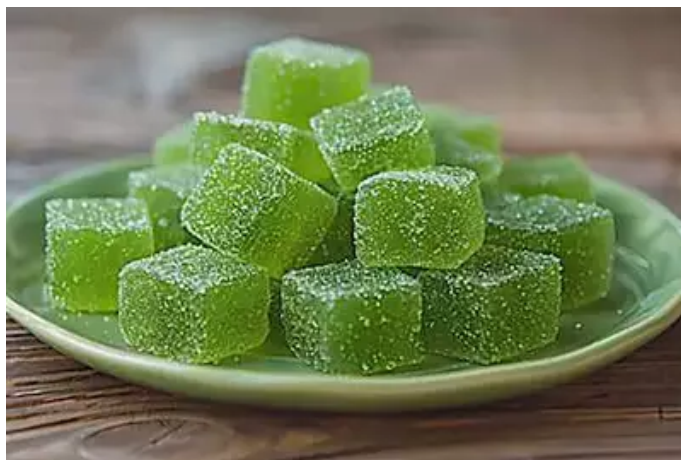
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BMD

23 October, 2024

This is beyond out of hand at this point...BEYOND. Even beyond comprehension of how this affects and will continue to affect, negatively everyone and every single aspect of our once wonderful country and every single person. The more I think about this entire issue, the more I am not only beyond p-...**See more**

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H- **Hotspurs -**

24 October, 2024

A thorough abdication by our government of its duty to the American people.

Outlaw the hand in glove partnership between our government and NGO's.

The article mentions 15.5 illegals - we continue to let in tens of millions, but this number almost never changes.

America has become nothing more than a g...

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John Martinez

23 October, 2024

The damage is permanent

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WhatstheEndGame

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23 October, 2024

This is not even close since it's only the direct spending budgeted and announced by local and state governments. To show what I mean. If you assume that 30% of the illegals are children of school age and that the average cost of public school for them is about \$30k a year. 20 mil x .3 = 6 mil X...

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Captain America

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23 October, 2024

That's just one of many possible examples. Then there are lawyers, judges, police resources, hospital bills and a ton of money being plied to not-for-profits and churches in order to hide the true cost to the American taxpayers. It's disgraceful and well in excess of \$500 Billion

- 

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LytchZam

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24 October, 2024

And the disruption in the classroom from injecting 5 or 10 kids that don't speak English in an English-speaking environment is far beyond what school officials would have you believe. And, yes, that happens - frequently. They might send in an "aide" or even a "translator" but they're over-extended...

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