

CONTEXT

- Consecutive years of drought in parts of the Dry Corridor—an area encompassing a majority of central Guatemala—damage caused by tropical storms Eta and Iota in November 2020, and the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on income and livelihoods have exacerbated food insecurity and other humanitarian needs in many areas of Guatemala, particularly among rural communities. As of August 2021, the UN estimated that approximately 3.8 million people—approximately 20 percent of Guatemala’s population—required humanitarian assistance.
- The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season was the most active season ever recorded, with 30 named storms and 13 hurricanes, including six major hurricanes. In particular, hurricanes Eta and Iota—which made landfall in November 2020—negatively affected approximately 1.7 million people in Guatemala, including 267,000 households experiencing crop damage or loss, according to the UN. Humanitarian needs generated or exacerbated by the storms persist among communities still recovering in Guatemala, particularly regarding food security and livelihoods.
- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, limited health service capacity and insufficient availability of water and sanitation infrastructure have challenged efforts to control disease transmission. Meanwhile the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic have exacerbated existing health, food, livelihood, nutrition, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs, significantly increasing the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance across the country. As of July 2022, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) projected that up to 2.5 million people in Guatemala would likely face Crisis—IPC 3—or worse levels of acute food insecurity through January 2023.¹
- On January 26, 2022, U.S. Ambassador William W. Popp reissued a disaster declaration for Guatemala in response to severe food insecurity in the country, exacerbated by the effects of natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and recurrent drought.



ASSISTANCE

- To address persistent food insecurity across many departments in Guatemala, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) supports cash transfers for food to meet emergency food needs and programs working to prevent and respond to acute malnutrition among vulnerable households. USAID/BHA food assistance aims to

¹The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity.

address food needs in a manner that improves food consumption patterns and increases dietary diversity. Additionally, USAID/BHA partners are supporting subsistence farmers and other agriculture-dependent households by providing appropriate and timely inputs for planting and growing seasons—such as farming tools, fertilizer, and seeds—to improve food security. USAID/BHA partners also provide training on climate-smart farming practices such as drip irrigation, diversification of crops, and soil management to increase crop production and build resilience to future climate shocks.



A USAID/BHA program participant purchases food and hygiene items in a market in Alta Verapaz after receiving a cash transfer. *Photo Credit: Catholic Relief Services - Guatemala*

- USAID/BHA protection partners in Guatemala provide psychosocial support, learning and recreational opportunities for children, and case management and referral services for women and girls at high risk or victims of exploitation, gender-based violence, and other forms of abuse. USAID/BHA also funds child protection activities, including coordination, advocacy, and response efforts.
- USAID/BHA partners are supporting vulnerable households to restore livelihoods and increase financial resilience. Program activities include financial literacy courses, establishing community savings and loans groups, and restarting income-generating activities.
- USAID/BHA partners are addressing WASH needs and increasing access to safe drinking water, including by repairing water supply systems and providing WASH education to improve hygiene awareness and reduce the transmission risk of waterborne diseases. Partners are also distributing WASH kits—comprising buckets, educational materials, soap, water containers, and other items—to improve handwashing and sanitation conditions among vulnerable communities.
- Across Guatemala, USAID/BHA funds early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) activities that focus on building long-term resilience and response capacity, particularly in Baja Verapaz, Chiquimula, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Jalapa, Jutiapa, Quetzaltenango, Quiché, San Marcos, Santa Rosa, Sololá, and Totonicapán departments. USAID/BHA partners are increasing disaster resilience among at-risk populations by bolstering the technical capacity of local governments and communities to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to natural hazards, including drought and earthquakes, while strengthening and rehabilitating shelters in urban areas.

USAID/BHA Funding in Guatemala ²			
	Emergency	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2021	\$67,653,163	\$2,277,550	\$69,930,713
FY 2022	\$33,023,053	\$1,964,754	\$34,987,807

² Year of funding indicates the date of obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of June 10, 2022. Totals include estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.