



## THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S COVID-19 RESPONSE IN ALBANIA

The United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided more than \$2.4 million to help Albania respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The assistance strengthens the country's laboratory capacity, including testing; educates communities through communication for behavior change, targeting vulnerable and at risk population; enforces infection prevention and control (IPC) and hygiene in COVID-19 designated health care facilities/centers in high risk communities; donates critical hygiene and other medical supplies; and improves data collection and analysis to help support the overall COVID-19 emergency response in Albania.

The U.S. Government funding builds upon long-term U.S. assistance in Albania. Over the last 20 years, the United States has invested more than \$693 million in Albania.

For more than a half century, the United States has been the largest contributor to global health security and humanitarian assistance. USAID is working with the State Department, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Defense, and others as part of an All-of-America response to support health systems, humanitarian assistance, and economic, security, and stabilization efforts worldwide.

For decades, the United States has been the world's largest provider of bilateral assistance in global health -- putting countries across the world in a better position to respond to these dangerous pandemics. Across the world, the U.S. Government is responding to the COVID-

19 outbreak by supporting more than 120 affected countries through addressing critical needs of health care facilities, health care workers, and patients; strengthening laboratories and disease surveillance; improving infection prevention and control; increasing rapid-response capacity; and providing reliable information to the public.

## IMPACT & ACTIVITIES TO DATE

### Strengthen Laboratory Capacity

**Summary-** With limited supplies of testing kits, Albania has been unable to administer sufficient tests commensurate with internationally accepted standards. In an effort to decrease the strain on the healthcare system and improve laboratory capacity, to date USAID has donated 8,450 test kits to the Institute of Public Health (IPH), and will provide up to an estimated 27,450 test kits all together. USAID also provided funds for hygiene kits and improved public health communications to help prevent the spread of infection among Albania’s most vulnerable populations. As the GoA eases its restrictions, public officials anticipate a spike in active COVID-19 cases. USAID-provided test kits will allow healthcare providers to test anyone showing symptoms and at the same time properly follow contact tracing protocol

### Educate at-risk Communities

**Summary-** USAID has provided \$1.4 million to reduce human-to-human transmissions of COVID-19 through a partnership with UNICEF. The program will educate at-risk communities through targeted communication campaigns (traditional and social media) that promote healthy behaviors for the prevention of COVID-19. Target audiences include children, families, teachers, and vulnerable groups such as Roma families. The initiative will use innovative digital platforms, including parenting apps, to reach parents with key COVID-19 prevention information, such as recommended childcare and nutrition practices. This program will train 2,000 frontline workers in five regions to ensure enforcement of recommended infection prevention and control practices in line with global recommendations and those of the national authorities. It will also provide hygiene supplies to at least 25,000 vulnerable families, and 1,000 preschool and school institutions in 10 regions of the country. To strengthen capacities of the health sector for case management of COVID-19, with an emphasis on child health, the program will also provide critical medical supplies which may include oxygen concentrators, oximeters, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) bubble for newborns, patient monitors, incubators, and mobile ultrasound machines In addition, through this program, USAID will collect data to help communities improve their emergency response readiness.

### Combat Fake News

**Summary-** ,The Global Engagement Center (State/R/GEC) has awarded a grant titled “Empowering Local Communities to Counter Disinformation and Propaganda during the Pandemic,” in the amount

\$26,975 to Faktoje, a subgrantee of the USAID/Albania Justice for All program. Over the course of approximately three months, Faktoje will produce awareness-raising videos for social and traditional media. Faktoje will also contract with several local journalists to expand reporting in regional communities, mainly to villages surrounding and neighborhoods of Shkoder, Lezhe, Korce, Vlore, Elbasan and Gjirokaster. These activities will increase public capacity to distinguish factual information from misinformation during the crisis and following the pandemic's peak, when the public needs to remain vigilant to prevent secondary outbreaks. Increased local reporting will also enable smaller communities to acquire information that is customized to their specific situations, address the needs of vulnerable groups (e.g. Roma communities, families on social assistance, people with disabilities), and highlight concerns for local government entities and decision-makers' attention

For more information about how USAID is responding to COVID-19 across the world, please visit [www.usaid.gov/coronavirus](http://www.usaid.gov/coronavirus).

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to organizations that are conducting relief operations. USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed; can be transferred quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
  - For more information and to donate, visit USAID's Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org).
- USAID has established an inbox ([covid19tf\\_pse@usaid.gov](mailto:covid19tf_pse@usaid.gov)) to coordinate private sector engagement around the COVID-19 response. In addition, the UN supports an initiative for businesses seeking to donate money, goods or services. Please visit [connectingbusiness.org](http://connectingbusiness.org) for more information.