

CONTEXT

- Consecutive years of drought in parts of the Dry Corridor, damage caused by tropical storms Eta and Iota in November 2020, and the negative impact 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 in rural communities. As of August 2021, the UN estimated that approximately 3.8 million people were in need of 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, tropical storms Eta and Iota in November 2020 negatively affected approximately 1.7 million people in Guatemala, including 267,000 households affected by damaged or lost crops, according to the UN.
- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, limited health services, and insufficient availability of water and sanitation infrastructure have challenged efforts to control transmission, while the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic have exacerbated existing health; food; nutrition; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and protection needs, significantly increasing the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance across the country.
- The U.S. Government temporarily suspended humanitarian assistance activities in Guatemala between March 2019 and May 2020. During this period, the number of people experiencing acute food insecurity increased dramatically. USAID/BHA reinitiated humanitarian assistance programming in Guatemala in June 2020, leading to the resumption of food assistance operations to support severely food-insecure households in the country.
- On February 26, 2021, U.S. Ambassador William W. Popp issued a disaster declaration for Guatemala in response to severe food insecurity in the country, exacerbated by the compounding impact of natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and recurrent drought.



ASSISTANCE

- In response to the severe damages caused by tropical storms Eta and Iota, USAID/BHA implementing partners provided food, multipurpose cash, shelter, and WASH assistance in Guatemala's Alta Verapaz, Huehuetenango, Izabal, and Quiché departments to storm affected populations.

- In response to worsening food insecurity, USAID/BHA supports the delivery of cash assistance for food to meet emergency food needs and prevent and address malnutrition among food-insecure households in Guatemala. USAID/BHA food assistance aims to address increased needs in a manner that improves food consumption patterns and increases dietary diversity. Additionally, USAID/BHA partners are supporting smallholder farmers and other agriculture-dependent households to ensure 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 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 provided funding to address COVID-19-related health needs in Guatemala. Through the distribution of hygiene supplies, support for improved infection prevention and control measures and installation of handwashing stations at health facilities, and the operation of risk communication and community engagement activities, USAID/BHA partners aimed to mitigate coronavirus transmission risks.
- 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 and expanding income-generating activities.
- USAID/BHA funds early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) activities that focus on building long-term resilience and response capacity in Guatemala’s Baja Verapaz, Chiquimula, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Jalapa, Jutiapa, Quetzaltenango, Quiché, San Marcos, Santa Rosa, Sololá, Totonicapán departments. USAID/BHA partners are increasing disaster resilience 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 ¹			
	Emergency	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2020	\$24,000,000	\$4,500,000	\$28,500,000
FY 2021	\$67,653,163	\$2,277,550	\$69,930,713

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 30, 2021. Totals include estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.