



USAID | HONDURAS

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID HONDURAS PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in the Hemisphere, with 65% of its people living in poverty. More than 60% of Hondurans are highly vulnerable to food insecurity, and the country is one of the most vulnerable in the world to natural disasters and climate change. Having recently emerged from its worst political crisis in 25 years, Honduran democracy and governance are very weak – as evidenced by the large number of citizens who lack confidence in their institutions. Honduras is also one of the most violent nations in the worldⁱ, serves as a key transit point for drug trafficking, and has more gang members than all other Central American countries combined.ⁱⁱ The country additionally suffers from social inequality, soaring unemployment, poor health and education, and environmentally unsustainable practices.

USAID has provided more than \$3 billion in economic assistance to Honduras since it began working in the country in 1961. Currently, programs strengthen the participation of marginalized groups in local and national governance, increase food security for the poorest sectors of society, support renewable energy and environmental conservation, expand basic education and skills training for at-risk youth and adults to increase their prospects for employment and higher incomes, and improve the quality and participation of local citizens and civil society in decentralized health care services. Efforts also address citizen security through community-based crime prevention activities. Increases in employment and in productive and social investment are particularly important to spur economic growth, advance social justice, improve education and health, and engage the poorest and most marginalized members of Honduran society in the country's development.

USAID provides assistance in the following areas:

Democracy and Governance: USAID strengthens democratic institutions, rule of law, and citizen participation in local and national government; broadens the participation of traditionally marginalized groups in all programs; and reinforces support for democracy and civilian rule. Activities support good governance, political competition and consensus building, anticorruption, and civil society at the local and national levels. This includes civil society-led initiatives to 1) increase transparency and accountability in the use of public resources; 2) ensure that elections are free and fair; and 3) advocate for reform where needed. At the local level, USAID strengthens the capacity of municipal governments to respond to citizen needs, through improved decentralized services and increased citizen participation.

Economic Growth: Economic growth activities increase the incomes of poor rural households by linking small farmers to market opportunities. As a focus country under the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Initiative, USAID is helping Honduras to implement a new food security program that serves as a cornerstone of poverty reduction efforts. USAID programs also improve the business environment, promote economic diversification, and increase investment and trade at the local, regional, and international levels to reduce poverty. Activities help small farmers and enterprises take advantage of increased trade opportunities under the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Efforts also support the environment by strengthening protected area management, mitigating global climate change, and promoting renewable energy and the implementation of the CAFTA Environmental Cooperation Agreement. Finally, USAID provides humanitarian assistance during natural disasters and finances training for emergency preparedness and response.

Health: Honduras's fertility, maternal and infant mortality, and malnutrition rates are high, especially in rural areas. Specific high-risk groups are disproportionately affected by HIV, with group prevalence rates ranging from 4 to 10 percent. USAID supports the Honduran Ministry of Health and other local organizations to improve maternal and child health services, strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention and care, ensure availability of family planning services, and improve food security for the poor. USAID also supports health sector reform and decentralization that: 1) enables local organizations to provide health services to the poor, and 2) permits the Ministry of Health to focus on financing, regulating, and evaluating these organizations.

Education: Education in Honduras is characterized by high dropout and repetition rates, low achievement scores, and insufficient alternative education opportunities. Through the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative, USAID emphasizes learning opportunities for out-of-school youth and quality improvements in the formal education system. The program assists the Ministry of Education’s efforts to reform policies, especially in the development and implementation of academic standards, formative assessments, and standardized testing in public schools from first grade through high school. These efforts enable Honduran decision-makers as well as parents to know how their children and schools are performing. They also provide critical information to improve educational quality and help Honduras meet the Millennium Development Goals of universal access to preschool and 100 percent primary school completion by the year 2015.

Citizen Security: In response to security challenges in the region, the United States and the governments of Central America have joined together to improve citizen security and the rule of law, through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). Under the Initiative, USAID supports community-based efforts to prevent crime and gang activity, promote juvenile justice, and provide vocational and basic education to at-risk youth. Activities build community cohesion, strengthen local governance, improve physical and social infrastructure, and educate and empower youth to address the root issues that cause young people to become involved in criminal activities. Through partnerships with the Government of Honduras, local governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, USAID efforts target both urban areas facing gang problems and vulnerable rural communities with a high incidence of drug trafficking.

USAID ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS (in \$US millions)

	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Request	FY 2012 Request
Democracy and Governance	4.5	9.5	12.4	12.6
Economic Growth	10.3	16.3	31.9	32.8
Health	15.2	14.0	12.0	11.0
Education	5.9	9.7	9.7	9.9
Citizen Security (CARSI)	8.9	5.4	-	-
Total	44.8	54.9	66.0	66.3

ⁱ The official 2009 homicide rate for Honduras was 67 murders per 100,000 – the highest in Central America and one of the highest in the world. Preliminary statistics for 2010 indicate an even higher incidence of 77 murders per 100,000.

ⁱⁱ Clare Ribando Seelke, *Congressional Research Report for Congress: Gangs in Central America* (Washington, D.C. Congressional Research Service, March 2008), pp. 3-5, citing information from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: 14,000 gang members in Guatemala; 10,500 El Salvador; 4,500 Nicaragua; 2,650 Costa Rica and 1,345 Panama = 32,995 Central America and Panama versus 36,000 gang members in Honduras.