

# Costa Rica

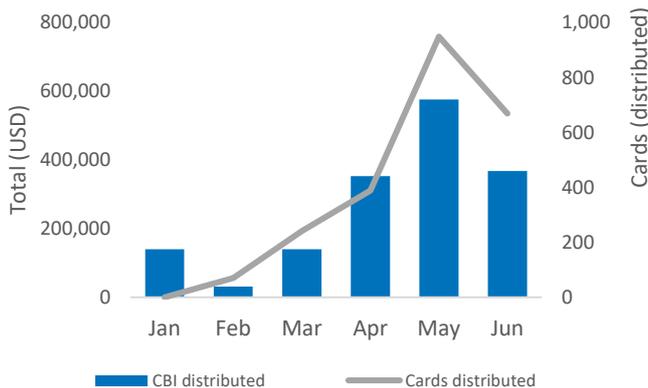
July 2020

Costa Rica is host to asylum-seekers primarily from Latin America and the Caribbean, and a transit point for others. The country has experienced an upward trend in the number of asylum applications received as a result of political unrest and violence in the region. Since the onset of the socio-political crisis in Nicaragua in April 2018, over 86,000 individuals have sought asylum in Costa Rica.

This influx has caused significant strain to the national systems, resulting in delays of up to nine months to file asylum claims, and an additional three months to obtain work permits. This prevents Persons of Concern (PoC) from accessing the labor market and meeting their basic needs. UNHCR works with the Costa Rican Government to address these needs. To address the significant gaps faced

by the most vulnerable PoC in meeting their basic needs, a multipurpose cash assistance program is managed by UNHCR under direct implementation. Cash assistance is an integral part of the Operation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Aside from multipurpose cash assistance targeting the most socioeconomically vulnerable families, emergency COVID-19 grants are now being provided to those most affected and at risk under the outbreak.

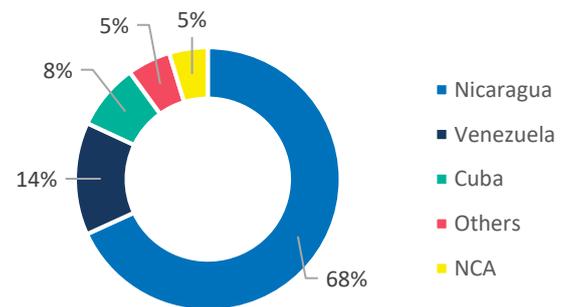
**Cash assistance distributed in 2020**



**CBI Caseload**

**4,302 individuals assisted**

Breakdown by country of origin



## COVID-19 MEASURES

Strict preventative measures were implemented in mid-March to rapidly resume CBI distributions, while protecting beneficiaries and staff members. These include:

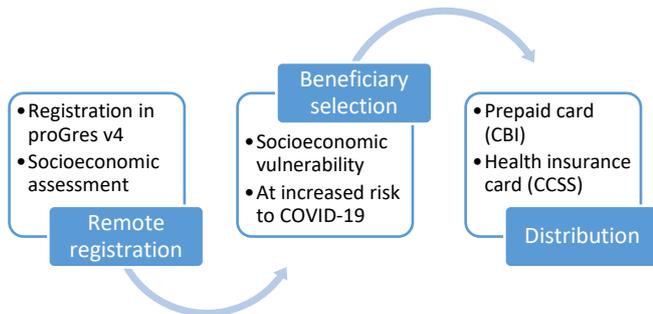
- Adequate distance between all persons at the distribution site
- Hand washing prior to entering waiting area
- Small groups of 10 beneficiaries per distribution cycle
- Training beneficiaries on how to best protect themselves and their families under COVID-19



CBI staff checks beneficiary identity while maintaining distance

## Cash-based intervention activities under COVID-19

Under COVID-19, the Costa Rica Operation implemented strict preventative measures to minimize the risk of transmission at the outset of the pandemic. In June, the Government restricted movements under an Orange Alert in the greater metropolitan area due to high rates of transmission. To ensure continuity of services, the Operation launched the delivery of prepaid cards through Correos de Costa Rica in July. This allowed us to continue to deliver



Integration of registration, CBI and CCSS under COVID-19

assistance while reducing the risk of exposure to our beneficiaries and staff. The postal service has full coverage in Costa Rica and delivery time through their courier service is 24-48 hours. Training is provided over the phone and through videos uploaded on the UNHCR Costa Rica help site. Once the situation normalizes, the Operation will consider going back to in person distributions with strict measures in place.

Distributions for CBI and CCSS (health insurance) are coordinated with Registration in order to minimize the number of deliveries to beneficiaries.

### Multi-purpose cash assistance

Regular cash assistance programs continued under COVID-19 without delays. A total of 1,097 socioeconomically vulnerable households (HHs) received prepaid cards and top-ups under the new COVID procedures between March and June. In 2020, 1,448 HHs received cash assistance under the MPCA program.

### Emergency COVID-19 grants

Emergency COVID-19 grants were developed at the outset of the emergency. The grants target households at increased risk to COVID-19, including the elderly and persons with chronic medical conditions. 355 HHs have received the assistance. All beneficiaries receive training on reducing risks related to COVID-19 in their daily life and will benefit from health insurance under the CCSS project to further reduce their vulnerability. Emergency one-off grants are available to households experiencing shocks exacerbating their vulnerability.

### Needs

The budget of 2.15 million USD will be disbursed by September. To respond to the increased need for cash assistance due to COVID-19, the Costa Rica Operation requires an additional 1.8 million USD to assist over 2,600 new HHs.



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Fundación Mujer staff providing CBI training

## Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the support provided by donors contributing to this operation.

[European Union](#) | [United States of America](#) | [Private donors](#)

**Current budget: 2.15 million USD**

**Additional budget required: USD 1.8 million**

### CONTACT

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