

CONTEXT

- Zimbabwe is susceptible to various recurrent climatic shocks—including drought, floods, and the spread of livestock diseases and pest infestations—that hamper agricultural production, increase food insecurity, and result in increased humanitarian need. Drought conditions linked to El Niño, including below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures, resulted in decreased crop production in 2023 and 2024, with the national maize harvest in 2024 approximately 60 percent below ten-year average levels, according to the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ). As a result, approximately 7.6 million people—nearly 50 percent of the population—are expected to face food insecurity by the end of 2024, with widespread Crisis—IPC 3—levels of acute food insecurity likely to persist across the country into 2025, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) and the Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC).¹
- Rapid currency depreciation and rising staple food prices continue to diminish household purchasing power and further limit access to food across much of Zimbabwe, while drought-induced livestock deaths threaten rural livelihoods. The drought has also driven widespread malnutrition, with nearly 5 percent of children under five years of age in Zimbabwe experiencing wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition, compared with 4 percent in 2023, ZimLAC reports. As a result, vulnerable households are adopting severe coping strategies—such as reducing meal frequency and portion sizes, sharing food among households, and engaging in illegal activities—to meet their basic food needs, according to the UN World Food Program (WFP). Furthermore, water scarcity generated by the drought has also reduced households' ability to access safe drinking water, leading to increased spread of diarrhea and other waterborne diseases among children, according to FEWS NET.
- More than 23,000 refugees and asylum-seekers—primarily from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique—remained displaced in Zimbabwe as of September, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Most refugees are sheltering at Manicaland Province's Tongogara refugee camp and remain reliant on humanitarian food assistance.



ASSISTANCE

- USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) works with WFP to deliver critical food assistance to populations in need, providing cash transfers for food and in-kind food assistance to nearly 360,000 people in Zimbabwe in September 2024 alone. WFP also works to strengthen community resilience to drivers of food insecurity, including drought, by providing resources and training to develop livelihoods and assets—such as farmer field school plots, fishponds, livestock shelters, and nutrition gardens—to help food-insecure households increase

¹ The 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.

their income and produce more of their own food. Through the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), USAID/BHA is also providing specialized nutrition assistance to populations experiencing malnutrition and wasting, including children and pregnant and lactating women. Between January and August 2024, UNICEF screened more than two million children aged 6-59 months for wasting, of whom more than 7,000 were treated.

- USAID/BHA has prioritized partnering with local organizations in Zimbabwe in responding to drought, increasing the number of local partners from one to five in 2024. In Masvingo Province’s Chiredzi District, USAID/BHA has supported local partner Mwenezi Development Training Center to strengthen drought resilience by developing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure for more than 8,600 people. This includes the construction of water points to restore poor households’ access to safe drinking water through water points and community-managed borehole rehabilitation. Additionally, USAID/BHA local partner LEAD Trust is working to assist more than 18,000 people in extremely food-insecure areas of Masvingo’s drought-affected Gutu District to increase agricultural production by developing home gardens and investing in climate-smart agriculture in. LEAD Trust is also building WASH infrastructure to improve access to safe drinking water and reduce the risk of waterborne diseases.
- USAID/BHA continues to support early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) programming to help local communities meet long-term food and nutrition needs in Zimbabwe. In FY 2024, USAID/BHA provided nearly \$40.7 million in ER4 support to nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners that are working to mitigate the impacts of future disasters and economic shocks and build community resilience. In Mashonaland Central and Matabeleland South provinces, local USAID/BHA partner Lower Guruve Development Association is investing in WASH infrastructure—building boreholes and water troughs to ensure safe water services and strengthen drought resilience—and local partner Dabane Water Workshops is rehabilitating water systems for both people and livestock.
- Local NGO partner Musasa is providing protection assistance, including gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response programs, to improve access to essential support services and safe spaces during times of crisis, aiming to reach nearly 6,600 individuals in Manicaland, Masvingo, Mashonaland Central, and Matabeleland South by the end of 2025. Musasa also provides livelihoods support that focuses on improving wellbeing and reducing negative coping mechanisms for crisis-affected populations, especially women and girls.
- With approximately \$130 million in USAID/BHA support, NGOs CARE and Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA) are implementing two seven-year Resilience Food Security Activity programs to bolster disaster preparedness; enhance nutrition and health outcomes; increase household income and improve livelihoods; and promote climate-smart agricultural practices in Zimbabwe. CARE is aiming to improve food security and nutrition outcomes in Manicaland and Masvingo, and CNFA is providing assistance in Matabeleland North Province.

USAID/BHA Funding in Zimbabwe ^{2,3}			
	Emergency	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2022	\$54,048,912	\$67,203,261	\$121,252,173
FY 2023	\$29,549,366	\$33,778,259	\$63,327,625
FY 2024	\$54,306,945	\$40,741,277	\$95,048,222

² Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of November 14, 2024, and will be updated with final FY 2024 figures when available.

³ Totals include estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement, subject to change.