



Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas

Central America Monitor

Methodology

What information can I find?

The Central America Monitor's U.S. assistance platform includes information related to accounts and programs funded primarily by the Department of State for the implementation of the U.S. Strategy for Central America, a multi-year plan launched in 2015 to help address the underlying conditions driving irregular migration from Central America. The platform also includes information on security assistance to Central America run by the U.S. Department of Defense. Concretely, the platform provides data on U.S. aid to the region since Fiscal Year 2016. Users are able to find detailed information related to U.S. aid programs including U.S. dollar amounts appropriated by fiscal year, program description, country recipient, funding source, and, in some cases, implementing agency. We have adjusted the titles for some of the programs to best reflect their objectives based on the documents we analyzed. The amounts included for each program are not adjusted for inflation but reflect the exact amount appropriated by the U.S. Congress each fiscal year. We have attempted to track down the funds appropriated to each funding account to the furthest extent possible based on the information we have been able to access and analyze. However, we recognize that there is still incomplete information on funding and programs and have made that known where necessary. In some cases this is due to the fact that congressional notifications detailing the use of funds have yet to be submitted. We will be updating the platform continuously as information is made available. The data included does not provide details on funds that have been obligated or disbursed.

What are your sources of information?

Data compiled for the Monitor is mainly based on primary-source documents e.g. congressional budget justifications, congressional notifications, spend plans, U.S. government reports, interviews with U.S. government officials, and official U.S. government websites. When possible we will provide access to original source documents.

How does the funding process for Central America work?

Funding for the U.S. Strategy for Central America is appropriated by Congress through seven different foreign assistance accounts in the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill: Development Assistance (DA), Economic Support Fund (ESF), International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE), International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), Global Health (GH), and the Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR). After the appropriations bill is signed by the president, funds from these accounts are managed by the State Department or US-AID who decide which programs to implement based on the goals and priorities set or defined by Congress.

Separately, and not under the U.S. Strategy for Central America, the Defense Department (DOD) budget allocates funds for counter-narcotic activities in Central America through section 1033 and 1004.

Section 1033 and 1004 are DOD programs which support counternarcotics efforts by providing military equipment and training. For purposes of the Monitor, which aims to track U.S. assistance related to security, justice, and development we have included DOD funding in our visuals.

In the initial FY16 funding for the U.S. Strategy for Central America, Congress placed conditions on 75 percent of the assistance to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Fifty percent of the aid is tied to 12 conditions related to addressing human rights concerns, tackling corruption, strengthening the justice systems and civilian police forces, and removing the military from public security. The other 25 percent of the assistance hinges on each country's efforts to combat human trafficking, improve border security, inform their citizens of the dangers of migrating to the U.S., and cooperation with the U.S. on the repatriation of deportees. All categories of these conditions have been maintained for fiscal years 2017 and 2018. The State Department is required to certify to Congress that the Guatemalan, Salvadoran, and Honduran governments are meeting the conditions before the aid can be disbursed. In addition, the State Department is required to submit to Congress notifications detailing how they intend to use assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

How have you categorized U.S. programs?

Out of the seven funding accounts (DA, ESF, INCLE, FMF, IMET, GH, and NADR) and DOD funding we have identified approximately 200 US programs for the three individual Northern Triangle countries and regional programs for Central America in FY16 and FY17. We grouped these programs in four main categories based on each of their stated goals, practices, and approaches. These four categories are:

1. Borders & Drug Control: This category encompasses U.S. programs whose primary stated goals are to combat drug trafficking and drug use, eradicate illicit crops, interdict the flow of drugs from South America in-route to the United States, counter human smuggling and trafficking in persons, and improve border and port security. Funds provided to Central American countries for the purchase of U.S. arms for counter-drug security operations as well as military security assistance are also included in this category. Both State Department funds under Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and non-CARSI Defense Department programs are included in this category and we have made the distinction in the descriptions of each program.

2. Security, Justice Sector & Violence Prevention: Programs under this category include those that are mainly focused on providing support for the police forces in the form of training, equipment, and infrastructure and not specific to combating drug trafficking, as well as support for improving police education, internal controls and management, and community policing. This category also includes programs geared toward strengthening the capacity of judicial institutions, including judges, prosecutors and public defenders, and toward improving the investigative capacity of the criminal justice system, and programs related to the reform of the prison systems. Support for the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH) are included under this category. Again, at times, we have grouped these programs and activities in sub-categories based on overlapping goals and program descriptions. In addition, we have included under this category violence prevention programs that range by level of intervention (primary, secondary, tertiary) and target specific sectors of the population. In Guatemala, for example, some of the programs focus on violence prevention towards the indigenous population, while in Honduras and El Salvador programs target youth at risk of becoming involved in gangs.

3. Good Governance, Transparency & Human Rights: Under this category we have included programs in each country that support measures that aim to help increase government transparency and improve public resource management and public accountability, as well as programs to improve revenue collection and the oversight capabilities of the banking and financial sector. This category also includes support to strengthen the capacity of civil society to address issues of governance, transparency and corruption, and support for the protection of human rights.

4. Economic Growth, Food Security, Rural & Social Development: This category includes programs whose stated goals are to facilitate trade and investment, and improve the energy market and infrastructure. It also includes programs that primarily focus on food security management, improving farming practices, support for small business owners, malnutrition, basic and higher education, and workforce development. In the case of Guatemala, it includes programs geared toward addressing maternal and child mortality.

The sub-categories we have identified for each country reflect the priorities of U.S. assistance and target areas. We have combined programs with similar goals even though the activities and methods implemented can vary.

What is in Other Countries/Regional category?

Although most of the U.S. assistance has been allocated to the Northern Triangle; Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama and regional programs also receive a smaller amount of funding under the Strategy. We have included these funds in the Other Countries/Regional category.

How often is your data updated?

We will update the database continuously as we track U.S. assistance to the region and as new data is released by government agencies.

Do you provide data for other donor countries?

Currently, the Monitor only includes aid data for the United States. We hope to expand the database to include data of other bilateral and multilateral donors in the near future.

Can I use your data?

You can absolutely use our data! We do ask that you credit WOLA's Central America Monitor when using our material.

Who can I contact if I have questions about the Central America Monitor?

Please email kamaya@wola.org if you have questions or comments about the Central America Monitor.

Acronyms:

DA - Development Assistance

ESF - Economic Support Fund

INCLE - International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

IMET - International Military Education Training

FMF - Foreign Military Financing

GH - Global Health

NADR - Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

DOD - Department of Defense

FY - Fiscal Year