

CONTEXT

- Five consecutive seasons of below-average rainfall between 2020 and 2022 have led to a severe drought across the Horn of Africa, leaving 4.4 million people in Kenya with insufficient access to food and water, according to the Government of Kenya (GoK) and the UN. Between July 2022 and February 2023, malnutrition among children ages five years and younger increased by approximately 10 percent, while malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women (PLW) increased by approximately 23 percent, the GoK reports. Of the 970,200 children experiencing malnutrition, nearly 243,000 children—an estimated 25 percent—are facing severe acute malnutrition.
- Drought has contributed to nearly 3 million livestock deaths as of February and forced pastoralists and their herds to migrate in search of sustenance, reducing household access to livelihood opportunities and milk—an essential source of nutrition. Poor rains throughout 2022 led to reduced crop yields and livestock productivity, limiting food availability and household income, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). Meanwhile, poor harvests have diminished household purchasing power and driven high prices for staple food items and livestock. For example, FEWS NET reported that in February in some areas, the cost of dry beans and maize was more than 90 and 70 percent above the five-year average cost, respectively.
- The ongoing drought has exacerbated already elevated humanitarian needs for many households that failed to recover from previous shocks, including the 2016/2017 and 2010/2011 droughts and the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which compounded needs and reduced household resilience.
- While the March-to-May long rains have begun across much of central, northern, and western Kenya—replenishing some vegetation and water sources after the previous five consecutive failed rainy seasons—long-term food and nutrition security conditions are likely to remain critical as several seasons of favorable rains are required for robust livelihood recovery. Food security monitors have raised concerns that increased food and nutrition assistance is necessary to prevent a further deterioration in levels of malnutrition and avert an increase in hunger-related mortality, FEWS NET reports.



ASSISTANCE

- USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) currently supports nine international and local non-governmental organization (NGO) partners and two UN agencies responding to the urgent needs of those affected by the drought in Kenya, providing more than \$436 million in emergency assistance in Fiscal Years (FYs) 2022 and 2023. USAID/BHA also supports two partners in building resilience among populations in Kenya, providing nearly \$58 million between FY 2022 and FY 2023 for early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) interventions.

- USAID/BHA NGO partners conduct drought response activities in 15 arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) counties, supporting the most vulnerable populations with agriculture, cash, food, livelihood, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions. Through the UN World Food Program (WFP), USAID/BHA provides drought-affected, food-insecure communities with emergency cash and in-kind food assistance across Kenya’s ASAL counties. In 2022, WFP reached nearly 2.8 million people with emergency food aid, including cash-based assistance. Moreover, WFP supports a malnutrition treatment program that serves ASAL counties, including populations in refugee camps, through the procurement of specialized nutritious foods—such as cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil—used for the treatment of and recovery from malnutrition. Additionally, the UN agency provides hot school meals for school children in refugee camps to support food security for children.
- WFP assistance also contributes to the long-term resilience of communities in drought-affected areas through the rehabilitation of critical water infrastructure in these areas with USAID/BHA support. Specifically, WFP rehabilitated and repaired 22 water infrastructure sites—including the reparation of boreholes, dams, and water pans, among other water infrastructure—to improve and expand water sources in severely drought-affected areas in FY 2022. Furthermore, WFP continues to strengthen the long-term capacity of county governments to provide services to vulnerable populations, including the procurement and distribution of maize, pulses, and vegetable oil to drought-affected communities.
- USAID/BHA also supports the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to address the nutrition needs of drought-affected populations and increase access to nutrition services in nine ASAL counties. The UN agency facilitates mass nutrition screenings for PLW and children ages five years and younger; provides therapeutic foods for the treatment of malnutrition; and supports emergency mobile nutrition outreach and referrals for individuals suffering from malnutrition.
- Through USAID/BHA ER4 programming, NGOs Catholic Relief Services and Mercy Corps continue to implement Nawiri, a five-year development and food security program in four counties of Kenya experiencing chronic malnutrition and the adverse effects of ongoing drought. The Nawiri program enhances livestock disease surveillance systems, as well as systems for potable water and agricultural schemes to increase crop and livestock productivity; facilitates the monitoring and treatment of wasting; invests in livestock feed for pastoralist households; provides cash-based transfers to food-insecure populations; and supports health care services for people and livestock. Nawiri also supports livelihood and skill diversification activities, such as village savings and loans associations to strengthen communities’ capacity to withstand climatic shocks. In FY 2022, Nawiri assisted more than 438,000 people through multi-sector activities that aim to reduce wasting and address the underlying causes of persistent household food and nutrition insecurity.

USAID/BHA Funding in Kenya ¹			
	Emergency ²	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2022	\$309,981,682	\$57,925,616	\$367,907,298
FY 2023	\$126,303,146	\$12,560	\$126,315,706

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced emergency funding as of March 15, 2023, and ER4 funding as of April 21, 2022. Totals include estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.

² Includes funding for programs that integrate ER4 activities with emergency response.