

Federal Appropriations Backgrounder



During the annual budget and appropriations process, Congress negotiates how to spend U.S. taxpayer dollars. Less than 1% of annual federal spending goes to foreign assistance. Just *half* of that 1% is directed toward poverty-reducing humanitarian and development aid. Catholic Relief Services and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops advocate on [priority accounts](#) to ensure the U.S. government provides robust assistance to alleviate suffering and eliminate hunger and poverty around the world.

Through the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, organizations such as CRS partner with the U.S. government to implement programming funded by the U.S. Congress. CRS is proud to continue our partnership alongside Congress and the Administration to enact timely legislation to address global poverty and hunger and support the implementation of U.S.-funded emergency and development programming around the world.

While foreign assistance has traditionally received strong bipartisan support, protecting and increasing funding for these lifesaving accounts is not possible without the diligent work of constituents who call on Congress to prioritize this funding.

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

The Administration usually releases their budget proposal in February. Throughout the spring and summer, the House and Senate draft and negotiate appropriations bills. Congress has until the end of September to introduce and pass fiscal year appropriations measures. Congress can pass a Continuing Resolution in September, which would fund the government temporarily at current levels into the next fiscal year. Until Congress finalizes appropriations bills, CRS and its supporters will continue to advocate on our priority accounts.

U.S. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMING

CRS works in more than 120 countries, responding to immediate humanitarian needs as well as implementing long-term development programs that provide opportunities for people to build a pathway to prosperity for themselves and their families.

Through funding from U.S. international assistance, communities are engaging in capacity building efforts that help them overcome the challenges of food insecurity and develop self-sufficiency. Activities include training farmers to improve their harvests, facilitating access to microfinance groups, supporting school meal programs, restoring degraded lands through water-smart agriculture, providing nutrition support for new mothers and infants and improving access to clean and reliable drinking water.





CRS programming also integrates climate adaptation efforts and promotes resilience strengthening activities to provide communities with training and resources to overcome the challenges of climate change. Some of these projects include restoring degraded landscapes to create new farming opportunities and support agricultural livelihoods; improving watersheds for access to reliable, clean water for human consumption and land use; improving soil health for more prosperous yields; and promoting biodiversity for optimal human health and environmental wellbeing. CRS employs nature-based solutions—working with nature rather than against it—by planting trees and diversifying crops, among other evidence-based activities to reduce the impact of climate shocks on smallholder farmers who rely on agricultural production for food and income.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING

For more information on appropriations or about the accounts that CRS and the USCCB prioritize, view:

- [The Federal Budget and Appropriations Process Video](#)
- [CRS/USCCB Chart of Accounts](#)
- [CRS Appropriations Leave Behind](#)
- [CRS Campaign Issues Background—Hunger and Climate Change](#)

For examples of the importance and impact of CRS' programs funded by U.S. international assistance, read these stories, or find more at crs.org/act:

- [Building Resilience from the Ground Up: Eulalio's Story](#)
- [The Impact of U.S. International Assistance: Nery's Story](#)
- [Using Nature to Combat Climate Change Impacts in the Philippines](#)
- [Bridging Access to Water for Agriculture in Nigeria](#)
- [What the Farm Bill Makes Possible: Raúl's Story](#)