

Cash-Based Programming

People affected by crisis and disaster often rely on cash as a key tool to ensure their recovery—and in some cases, survival.

Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) is a type of humanitarian assistance that meets this need by putting cash or cash equivalents (such as vouchers

redeemable for goods) in the hands of people affected by emergencies. Unlike the distribution of materials such as food, cash provides families with choice and agency to determine how best to meet their needs in the aftermath of disaster. Recipients of CVA are able to address a wide range of needs for basic goods and services—including food, healthcare, clothing, and education supplies and fees—with the flexibility of cash.



International Medical Corps, which has provided cash-based assistance since 2015, is supporting CVA programs in Cameroon, Central African

Republic, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ukraine and Yemen, among other countries. Our approach to CVA is based on needs and outcomes, wherever cash transfer or vouchers may be identified as the most appropriate way of reducing individual or household vulnerabilities, addressing basic needs and empowering communities.



International Medical Corps is committed to providing CVA as a market-based approach because of its ability both to meet the needs of crisis-affected people and to support the recovery of local economies. Households that receive cash spend it in markets or on services within the community, which make them and the providers of goods and services active contributors to market recovery. When combined with complementary approaches such as vocational training, malnutrition treatment and prevention, and gender-based violence (GBV) response, cash assistance can help families and individuals meet their immediate needs and regain their dignity, and set them on a course for resilience.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS CASH TRANSFER APPROACHES

COUNTRY	OBJECTIVE	CASH		VOUCHER		COMPLIMENTARY INTERVENTIONS
		Account	Physical	Paper	Electronic	
Cameroon	Food assistance				✓	Livelihoods development
Central African Republic	Food assistance		✓			Malnutrition treatment and prevention
Ethiopia	Food assistance		✓			Malnutrition treatment and prevention
Ethiopia	GBV response and risk reduction		✓			GBV case management
Lebanon	GBV response and risk reduction		✓			GBV case management
Nigeria	Food assistance	✓		✓	✓	General food distribution
Ukraine	Multisector	✓			✓	Multipurpose cash assistance
Yemen	Food assistance		✓			Malnutrition treatment and prevention



NIGERIA

In February 2018, with the support of the World Food Programme (WFP), International Medical Corps began supporting cash voucher assistance in Nigeria's Northeast region, where the Boko Haram crisis has caused the displacement of 2.17 million people. Since then, the Nigeria mission has reached more than 25,000 households with cash-based transfers, totaling \$10.5 million. In partnership with WFP, International Medical Corps is supporting three types of cash transfers: mobile money transfers, e-vouchers and pre-paid bank cards. Under the project, WFP is responsible for carrying out the cash transfer to people in need using their SCOPE platform, while International Medical Corps supports beneficiary targeting, registration, sensitization, site preparation, market assessments, technical support, retailer and case agent monitoring, and in-kind food distributions.

International Medical Corps' current project in Nigeria covers two local government areas of Borno state and targets more than 90,000 people with unconditional cash transfer and general food distribution. It targets more than 3,100 children aged 6 to 23 months old and more than 400 pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) with blanket supplementary feeding programs, and more than 9,000 children 6 to 59 months old with targeted supplementary feeding programs. The Nigeria mission uses a community-based targeting approach, where beneficiaries of cash transfer are selected with the participation of community members (village representatives, women's and youth associations, elders, etc.) who mutually determine needs-based criteria.

ETHIOPIA

International Medical Corps supports cash transfers in the Gambella, Oromia, Somali and Tigray regions of Ethiopia as part of its emergency GBV programming to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls. With the support of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), International Medical Corps is supporting multi-purpose cash transfers to more than 200 households, or approximately 1,200 women, totaling more than \$87,000 in the woredas of West Wollega and northwest Tigray. We are providing cash assistance alongside business skills development and entrepreneurship training, as well as short-term vocational skills training, to support the economic empowerment of vulnerable women and girls.

International Medical Corps is also supporting cash assistance for GBV survivors in the Somali and Gambella regions of Ethiopia with the support of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. As part of the Bureau's integrated programs covering sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, mental health and psychosocial support, and GBV, International Medical Corps provides cash assistance to women as part of the case management process, depending on their individual needs and circumstances. We also cover the costs of transportation of GBV survivors for medical care and legal services, as part of their care plan. This support follows the survivor-centered approach and adheres to the GBV guiding principles of safety, confidentiality, dignity, self-determination and non-discrimination.

UKRAINE

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, International Medical Corps expanded operations throughout the country to meet emerging health, protection, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene needs in Chernihiv, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Stryi and Vinnytsia. In response to a flash appeal from the United Nations to support more than 6 million Ukrainians with unconditional multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA), International Medical Corps—with the support of PLAN Netherlands—began such programming in March 2022 to help vulnerable people in active conflict zones and liberated and transit areas of Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kyiv and Odesa.

We deliver MPCA via the Red Rose MoneyGram transfer system, which sends an SMS text that beneficiaries can use to make an online bank transfer or receive cash in person at a bank or post office. By the end of 2023, we had provided more than \$4.7 million to more than 21,000 Ukrainians, helping people—especially women, displaced persons and the elderly—meet their essential needs during the war.

YEMEN

Seven years of armed conflict in Yemen have resulted in a dire food crisis, with nearly 17.6 million Yemenis facing food insecurity and 5 million children in need of treatment for acute malnutrition. International Medical Corps began cash transfer activities in November 2021 in the Al Dhale'e and Ibb governorates of Yemen, which collectively host an estimated 2.8 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. To prevent malnutrition and reduce the vulnerability of crisis-affected families in these governorates, International Medical Corps is providing food assistance through unconditional cash transfer, with the support of the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance. As part of the project's integrated approach, International Medical Corps targets vulnerable households with children under 5 who have severe acute malnutrition or moderate acute malnutrition, and PLWs who are registered at International Medical Corps-supported health facilities.



In 2023, International Medical Corps provided cash assistance totaling \$479,000 to 5,040 people from 720 households. Because people in the project locations generally do not have bank accounts, and because financial services such as e-pay or mobile cash transfers are not yet offered in Yemen, International Medical Corps provides direct cash payments, using the International Bank of Yemen's mobile cash payment service.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

The Sudanese civil war that began in April 2023 caused a sudden influx of refugees from Sudan into the Vakaga region in the north of the Central African Republic (CAR). In response, International Medical Corps provided approximately \$540,000 to 2,200 vulnerable households, in addition to food assistance and malnutrition prevention and response services, to ensure that refugee families were able to afford food and protect the health and nutrition status of their children. We provided assistance to refugee households, as well as CAR returnees and mothers of children with acute malnutrition, in the form of physical cash due to the lack of internet access and of banks in Birao and the surrounding areas.



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A pre-eminent first responder since 1984, International Medical Corps delivers emergency medical and related services to those affected by conflict, disaster and disease, no matter where they are, no matter what the conditions. We also train people in their communities, providing them with the skills they need to recover, chart their own path to self-reliance and become effective first responders themselves.

July 2024

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