



# WFP Liberia Country Brief January 2021

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## Operational Context

Liberia currently faces a series of endogenous shocks, further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, and that are largely driven by currency depreciation, declining external assistance, weak domestic revenue generation, and limited expenditure adjustments.

Food insecurity is widespread with an estimated 1.6 million people moderately or severely food insecure (Liberia Food Security Assessment, September 2020). Moreover, 63 percent of the population are multidimensional poor (with women more affected), 30 percent of children aged 6-59 months are stunted, and 3 percent are acutely malnourished.

The Government of Liberia's national development plan, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023), aims to make Liberia a middle-income country by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019-2023, links food security, agriculture, nutrition and education through an integrated approach. The CSP also focuses on capacity strengthening of institutions both at national and local levels.

To strategically assist the Government of Liberia's response to the COVID-19 crisis and address increasing humanitarian needs, WFP undertook a budget revision to its CSP, to scale up assistance from 175,000 to 2.2 million people (target). WFP supports the Government's COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme (COHFSP) to provide food assistance to 2.5 million vulnerable persons affected by the COVID-19 prevention measures. WFP has also increased its support to humanitarian and development partners through access to common services.



Population: **5 million**

2020 Human Development Index: **175 out of 189**

Income Level: **Low income**

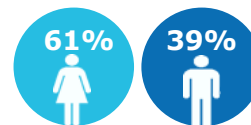
Chronic malnutrition: **30% of children between 6-59 months**

## In Numbers

**3,084 mt** of food assistance distributed

**USD 5.1 m** six months (February-July 2021) net funding requirements

**243,140 people assisted** in January 2021



## Operational Updates

- In January, WFP and partners provided 3,084 mt of staple food commodities to 243,140 beneficiaries (48,628 households) under the Government-led COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme (COHFSP). The COHFSP is aimed at assisting the most vulnerable households affected by COVID-19 prevention measures in Liberia. Following earlier delays, WFP and partners continued to accelerate the COHFSP implementation in January with food commodities being distributed in 11 of the 15 counties.
- WFP started preparations to provide emergency food assistance for two months to 15,500 food insecure Ivorian refugees who have crossed into Liberia following contentious presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire in October 2020. Food distributions to the new arrivals who are residing in host communities and camps in the counties of Nimba, Grand Gedeh and Maryland will start in March 2021. While WFP continues to mobilize needed resources, its internal funds have been advanced to support the crisis response. WFP requires USD 2.9 million to deliver monthly household food assistance to the projected scenario of up to 35,000 refugees over the next six months, including the current 9,500 refugees who will not benefit from the initial two-month response.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, WFP is planning to assist 46,000 primary school children (21,000 girls and 25,000 boys) in the counties of Maryland and Nimba with take-home rations to cover targeted households' food needs. Due to logistical challenges in delivering the food commodities to targeted counties, the distributions scheduled for January will now take place in February. With additional funding from a private sector partner, WFP will be able to continue with on-site school feeding assistance for 90,000 school children in March 2021. In the absence of new funding, WFP is facing a critical school feeding pipeline break anticipated from April 2021 onwards, impacting 90,000 school children in the most food insecure areas of the country who will no longer receive nutritional support.
- WFP continued the beneficiary registration for the launch of a cash-based transfer pilot funded by a private sector contribution that will provide 1,000 school children and their families with a monthly commodity voucher or a mobile money transfer, to support the targeted beneficiaries' access to nutritious foods.

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**Main photo: Credit:** WFP/Vannette Tolbert

**Caption:** Beneficiaries with food commodities provided under the COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme in Bomi County, Liberia.

## Liberia Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

2021 Total Requirement (in USD)	2021 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
10.9 m	0.9 m	5.1 m

\* WFP Liberia is currently preparing a budget revision at a value of USD 7.7 million to scale up assistance under activities 2 and 4, which will increase the total requirements from USD 89 million to USD 97 million. The budget increase is already taken into account in the six-month net funding requirements, and the 2021 total requirements are expected to increase following the budget revision

### Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Food insecure populations, including school-aged children in targeted areas, have access to adequate and nutritious food, including food produced locally, by 2030.

**Focus area:** Resilience Building

#### Activity 1:

- Provide an integrated, inclusive and gender-transformative school feeding package to food and nutritionally vulnerable school children including take-home rations of adolescent girls in a way that relies on and stimulates local production (home-grown school feeding).

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Crisis-affected populations in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises.

**Focus area:** Crisis Response

#### Activity 2:

- Provide an integrated emergency food and nutrition assistance package to vulnerable households affected by disasters and/or other disruptions.

### Strategic Result 5: Countries strengthened capacity

**Strategic Outcome 3:** National and sub-national institutions have strengthened capacities to design and manage food security and nutrition, social protection, emergency preparedness and response, and disaster risk management systems by 2030.

**Focus area:** Resilience Building

#### Activity 3:

- Provide capacity strengthening support to the Government and its partners to strengthen national coordination mechanisms, information management and monitoring systems for food security and nutrition, and disaster risk management

### Strategic Result 8: Enhance Global Partnerships

**Strategic Outcome 4:** Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services throughout the year.

**Focus area:** Crisis Response

#### Activity 4:

- Provide supply chain and ICT services to humanitarian and development partners

- WFP continued preparations for the distribution of two months' food assistance to 91,305 highly food insecure beneficiaries (18,261 households) in four of the country's most food insecure counties (Grand Gedeh, Maryland, River Gee and Sinoe) in the southeast of Liberia. Distributions are expected to start in March.

- Under the UN joint programme on rural women economic empowerment implemented in collaboration with FAO, IFAD and UN Women, WFP conducted a stocktaking exercise in January 2021 to assess existing agricultural loan processes and available agro-equipment in the project communities in the five rural counties of Grand Bassa, Margibi, Maryland, River Gee and Sinoe. Based on the discussions and lessons learned, WFP and partners plan to provide trainings on business development and the repair of agro-equipment in the project communities in February.

## Assessments

- To support the Government in enhancing the efficiency of food value chains in Liberia, WFP started preparations to undertake a food systems assessment with a focus on assessing the value chains of rice, cassava, palm oil and pulses in the country. The assessment is expected to take place between February and May 2021.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO, WFP is preparing to conduct a food security and post-harvest assessment to collect evidence-based food security data that will inform food security and agricultural interventions in the country.

## Stakeholder Coordination

- The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning under the Government of Liberia approved a no-cost extension of the COHFSP funding agreement with WFP to facilitate completion of the COHFSP distributions during the first quarter of 2021.
- WFP continued to prepare for the launch of two programmes under the Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund, which are implemented jointly with other UN agencies. In January, WFP trained 13 national non-governmental organization partners' staff, who will support the implementation of the social cohesion and land governance activities in collaboration with government partners (Environmental Protection Agency, National Bureau of Concession and Liberia Land Authority).

## Challenges

- The implementation of the COHFSP faced disruptions due to security incidents at distribution sites. WFP and partners are closely coordinating with national law enforcement agencies to safeguard the safety of beneficiaries and ensure that the food assistance reaches the most food insecure people.
- Despite increased advocacy efforts, WFP Liberia continues to face a critical funding gap of USD 5.1 million over the next six months (February to July 2021). This is impacting WFP's ability to sustain its life-saving food assistance, school feeding and livelihood support, as well as its contribution to the socio-economic recovery efforts in Liberia amidst COVID-19.

## Donors

Top donors to WFP Liberia Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 include Canada, the Government of Liberia, Private Donors (Mastercard) and USA. Additional support has been provided by the UN Peacebuilding Fund and UNDP.