

Panama

July - September 2025

Key Figures

About **10,800** **Refugees and asylum-seekers** live in Panama, primarily from Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

541 officials from National Security institutions received training on international protection and the asylum system in Panama.

UNHCR informed **676** people nationwide about Panama's asylum system, UNHCR's mandate, and how to access rights.

Context

Panama's asylum system is complex. Although the country is a signatory to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, its local legislation does not yet include the Cartagena Declaration's expanded refugee definition. The limited access to documentation and labour regulations can affect the protection and integration of refugees and asylum-seekers.

During this quarter, Panama's National Commission for Refugee Protection (**CONARE**) granted refugee status to 16 individuals. Among them were ten Colombians and 6 Nicaraguans. UNHCR provided technical support throughout the process, contributing to the analysis and strengthening of refugee status determination procedures.

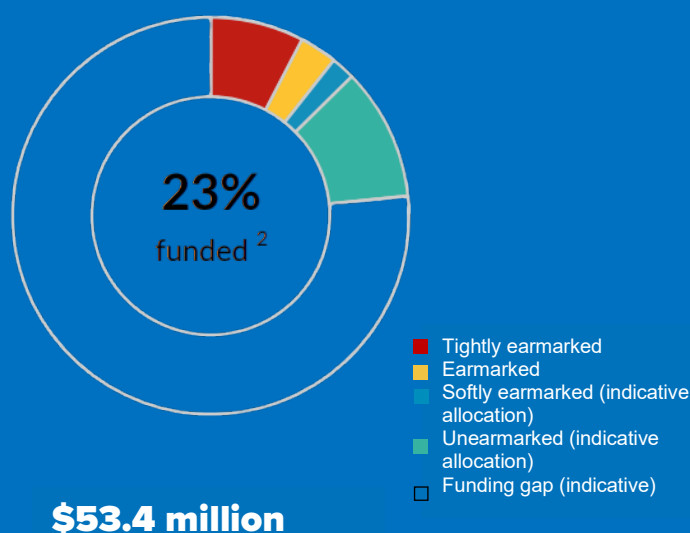
Due to global funding constraints and restructuring, UNHCR downscaled its presence in the country. This included reducing field operations in Darién, Chiriquí, and Panama City. Despite these challenges, the Agency remains committed to supporting refugees and asylum-seekers, ensuring access to protection and assistance through its staff and local partners.

UNHCR, the City of Knowledge Foundation (FCDS) and private sector partners are strengthening the employability of refugees and asylum-seekers through the 'Creciendo Juntos' programme. Participants have benefited from training, internships at local and multinational companies, and formal employment at Clandestino Lab. These opportunities included tailored to advance social integration and economic inclusion.



Regional funding Overview

as of 30 September 2025



\$53.4 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2025

¹ Financial requirement for MCO Panama in 2025, including requirements for the operations and activities in its area of responsibility in Central America and the Caribbean.

² The percentage funded is indicative.

UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR works with the Government, civil society, UN agencies, refugees, asylum-seekers, and people at risk of statelessness in Panama. UNHCR and IOM co-chair the UN inter-agency Human Mobility Group, coordinating protection and humanitarian support for refugees and migrants. UNHCR has partnerships with Fundación Espacio Creativo (FEC), HIAS, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Panamanian Red Cross (CRP), the Pastoral of Human Mobility (PMH), and FCDS.



Coordination with Local Authorities | UNHCR met with the National Institute for Vocational Training and Education for Human Development (INADEH) to discuss initiatives to expand refugee access to vocational training and certification, and address inclusion gaps.



Protection | UNHCR participated in an inter-agency documentation mission in Jaqué, Darién, offering naturalization counseling to over 50 people and identifying 10 at risk of statelessness. UNHCR joined IOM's Info Hubs community fairs in La Chorrera, David, Panama City, and Colón, providing legal orientation on asylum to 340 people. UNHCR participated in the Data Update Day for Victims of the Colombian Armed Conflict, organized by Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Victims Unit, assisting 22 refugees in Panama.

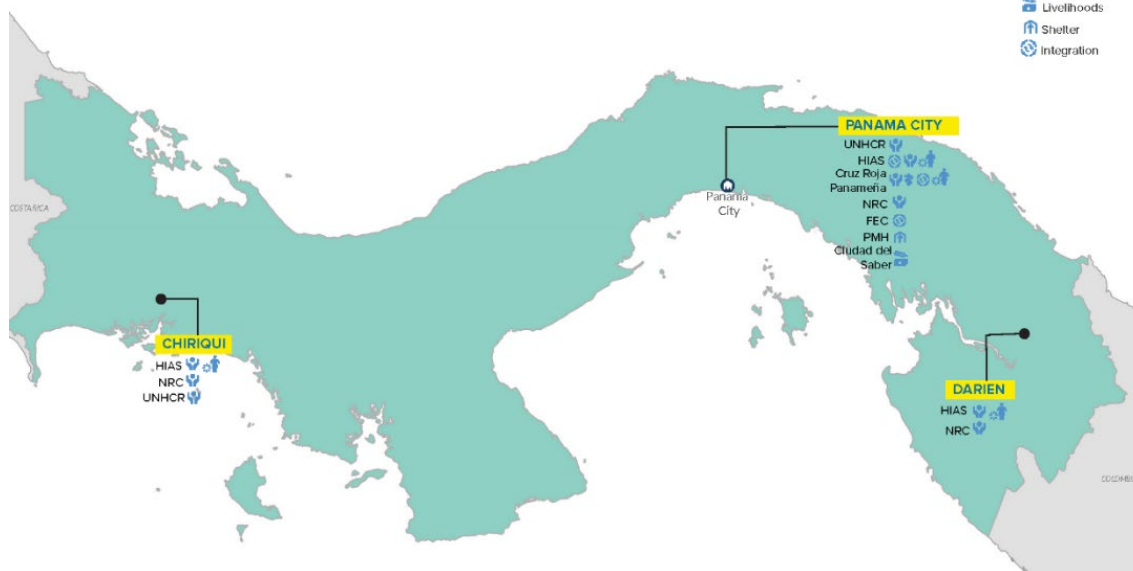


Humanitarian Assistance | Through partners CRP and HIAS, the Agency assisted 1,200 people in accessing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services related to traumatic experiences fleeing their home country.



Local Integration | UNHCR, through the FCDS' *Creciendo Juntos* programme, supported 50 refugees and asylum-seekers with orientation and training to boost their local integration and long-term economic inclusion. As part of this programme, participants have access to banking services and digital payments to support the formalization of their businesses and improve employability. In September, seven participants were selected to receive seed capital to launch or expand their business.

UNHCR's presence in Panama



UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: Australia | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | the European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | the Republic of Korea | The Kingdom of the Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | the United States of America | World Food Programme | Private donors in Italy, the Republic of Korea, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as and Australia for UNHCR, the Dutch Postcode Lottery, España con ACNUR, Japan for UNHCR, Sweden for UNHCR, UK for UNHCR and UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe.

For more information:

Benedetta Pignatti, External Relations Officer, pignattb@unhcr.org

Andrea Tejera, Reporting Associate, tejeraa@unhcr.org

Links: Data Portal | X | Facebook