FACT SHEET

Panama

October – December 2025

Key Figures

Nearly

10,800

Refugees and asylum-seekers live in Panama, mainly from Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

222

Security officials were trained in international protection and asylum system.

UNHCR informed

507 people about Panama's asylum system, UNHCR's mandate, and access to rights.

Context

Panama's asylum system remains complex. Although the country is party to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, its legislation does not yet incorporate the Cartagena Declaration's expanded refugee definition. Limited access to documentation and labour barriers continue to impact protection and integration.

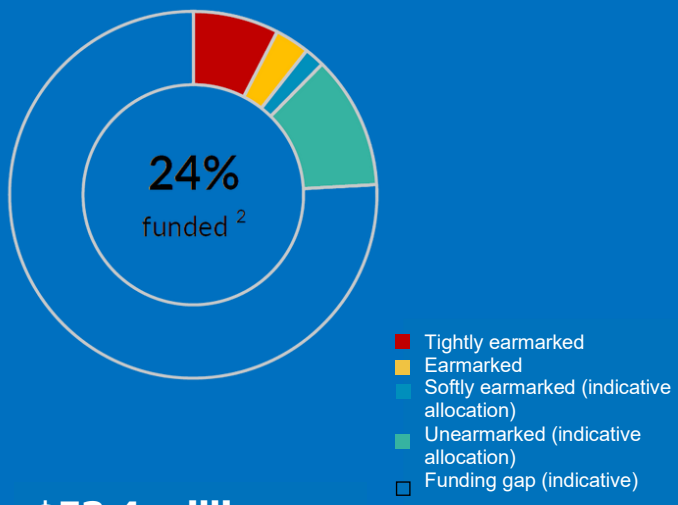
In 2025, Panama's National Commission for Refugee Protection (CONARE) held five sessions, reviewing 62 cases, including new applications, reconsiderations, cessations, and family reunification. The CONARE granted refugee status to 55 individuals, mainly from Colombia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Cuba, and Ghana. This caseload reflects ongoing decision-making, to which UNHCR has contributed through technical assistance to support refugee status determination procedures.

Due to funding constraints and restructuring, UNHCR reduced its field presence in Darién, Chiriquí, and Panama City. Despite this, the Agency remains committed to providing protection and maintaining access to essential services and programmes for refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons.

As part of the 16 Days of Activism and UNHCR's innovation project, the Agency, the Ministry of Women (MIDEM), and partners conducted digital violence and cybersecurity workshops in David, Panama City, San Miguelito, Arraiján, and La Chorrera. This refugee-led initiative engaged 71 participants, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and the host community, to support safer online engagement.

Regional funding Overview

as of 30 November 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. In 2025, UNHCR partnered with Fundación Espacio Creativo (FEC), HIAS, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Panamanian Red Cross (CRP), the Pastoral of Human Mobility (PMH), and City of Knowledge Foundation (FCDS).

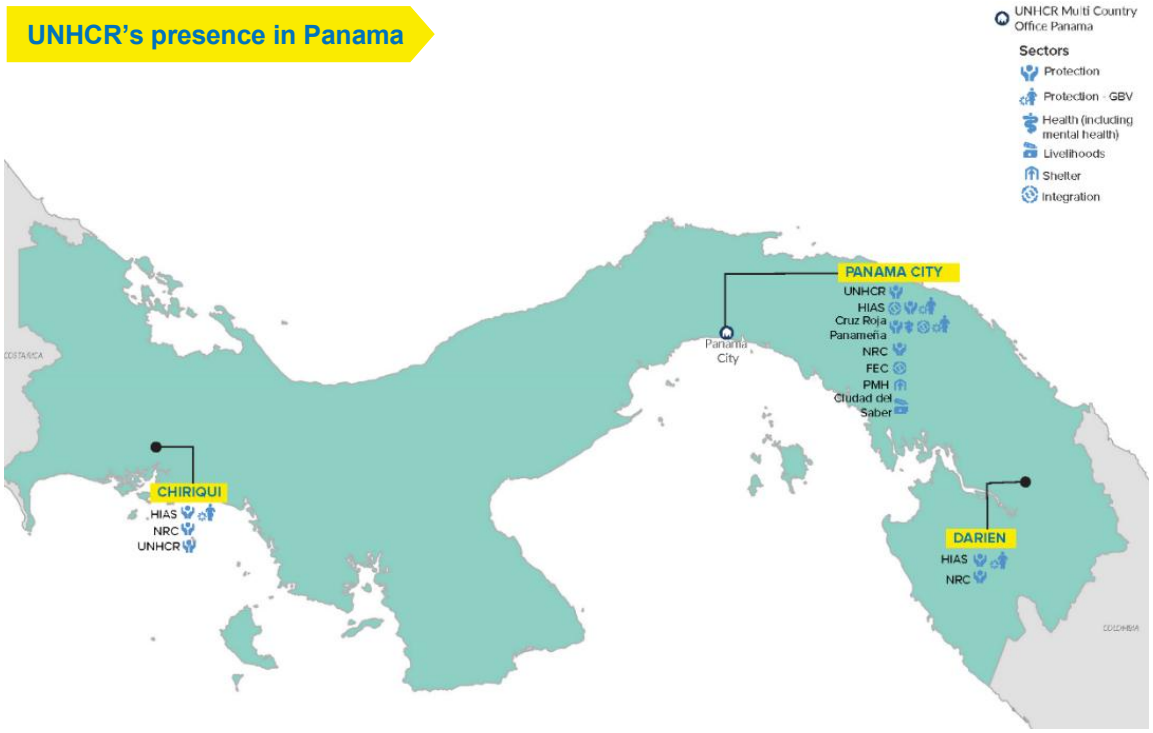
Coordination with Local Authorities | UNHCR and the MIDEM signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen the protection and rights of women, including refugees and stateless persons. UNHCR donated 25 laptops to MIDEM to enhance service delivery across the institution's 17 Comprehensive Care Centres.

Protection | UNHCR delivered 10 specialized training sessions to 15 officials from the National Office for the Attention of Refugees (ONPAR) to strengthen their skills in admissibility, interviewing, and credibility assessment. UNHCR participated in the III International Forum on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management, highlighting the links between natural disasters and forced displacement. Through its partners, UNHCR provided legal assistance to 264 individuals, and 127 benefited from specialized protection programmes.

Humanitarian Assistance | Through partners, UNHCR assisted 1,024 people with Mental Health and Psychosocial Support services related to traumatic experiences fleeing their country.

Local Integration | Through the FCDS Creciendo Juntos programme, UNHCR supported entrepreneurship and employability pathways, providing seed capital to 26 businesses and reaching 108 participants, 65 per cent of whom were women. UNHCR and partners also convened the 'Empresas con Refugiados' event, with more than 50 companies to advance inclusive practices and expand opportunities for refugee talent. UNHCR formalized agreements with the Panama National Association of Human Resources Professionals (ANREH), ManpowerGroup, and Clandestino to support the economic inclusion of refugees in Panama.

UNHCR's presence in Panama



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