

The Greece Cash Alliance

Meeting Basic Needs through a Harmonized Partnership System for Cash Assistance



WHAT IS THE GREECE CASH ALLIANCE?

The Greece Cash Alliance (GCA) is a partnership between UNHCR and five international NGOs comprised of Catholic Relief Services, the International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Samaritan's Purse. The GCA was established to harmonize the provision of cash assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, which is delivered through the UNHCR Greece Cash Alliance card.

In line with *UNHCR's Policy on Cash-Based Interventions* and the Grand Bargain commitments on cash, the GCA maximises the skills and experience among the participating partners.

UNHCR also uses the harmonised system for cash assistance to implement the multi-purpose cash grant (MPG) component of the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) programme funded by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), which provides housing and cash assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers.

HARMONIZING CASH ASSISTANCE

The cash delivery system is based on:

- **Standardized eligibility criteria for cash assistance** set by the Greek Ministry of Migration Policy.
- **A single database** of refugees and asylum-seekers (UNHCR's *proGres v4* database), that includes eligible beneficiaries whose records are updated on a monthly basis to prevent duplication and fraud while capturing the high mobility and legal status of the population.
- **A single financial service provider** that transfers funds onto the UNHCR GCA cards of the refugees and asylum-seekers based on the *proGres v4* database following UNHCR's instructions and approval.
- **A single bank card** loaded with cash by UNHCR on a monthly basis following partners' certification and validation.
- **A standardized amount of cash assistance¹** based on family size and the type of assistance provided.
- **One single monitoring and evaluation framework** with agreed results and outcome indicators.
- **A shared helpline²** in eight languages to respond to refugees' inquiries about the cash programme and troubleshoot potential issues with the card.
- **Joint communication materials and initiatives** in eight languages targeting refugees and asylum-seekers.

The programme is integrated with UNHCR's corporate cash assistance management system, *CashAssist*, which offers a direct link between the registration system and the financial service provider. It facilitates tracing and tracking of the cash assistance delivered to refugees and asylum-seekers. *CashAssist* is integrated with the latest version of UNHCR's global registration and case management system, Profile Global Registration System for Partnerships (*proGres v4*). *CashAssist* improves **accountability** and complies with audit requirements while ensuring data protection.

¹ The value of transfer is based upon the Minimum Expenditure Basket defined by the Cash Working Group in agreement with the Greek Government. It is set below the amount given to vulnerable Greek families by the social protection system.

² In addition, on all sites there are also UNHCR Protection helpdesks available where refugee families can report or document any changes of the family bio data. They can also receive assistance if they have any issues with the cash card and check balances.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the beginning of the programme, the GCA has provided cash assistance to all eligible refugees and asylum-seekers through the single UNHCR GCA cash card, as well as verifying and registering all beneficiaries into one database.

The following has been achieved by the GCA:

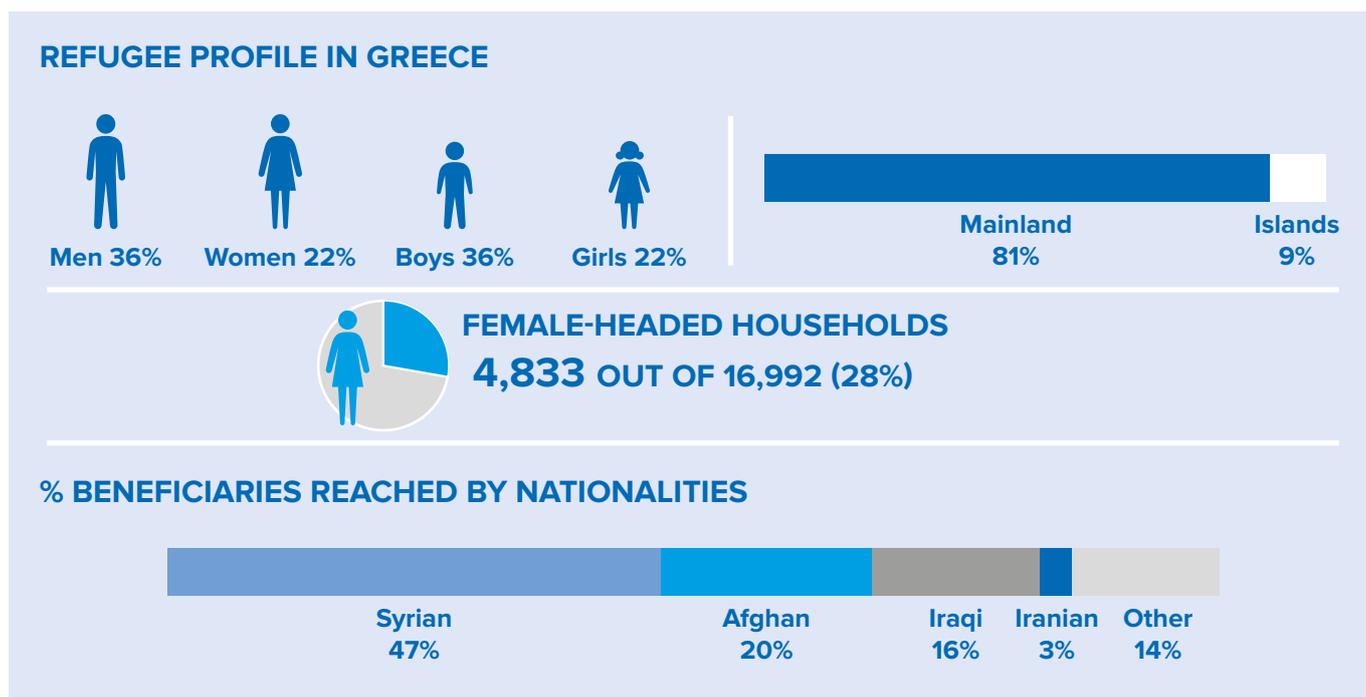
- Fully transitioned from separate partner cards to a unified UNHCR GCA cash card with all payments being executed by UNHCR.
- UNHCR and its partners have enrolled eligible refugees and asylum-seekers in the *proGres v4* database³ and conducted monthly verification exercises. This is to ensure that only eligible refugees and asylum-seekers who are physically present in the country receive cash. If not, their cards are automatically cancelled to prevent fraud and duplication.
- The delivery of cash assistance has been scaled up, reaching refugees all over Greece with 100% coverage of eligible beneficiaries in formal sites as well as those included in the UNHCR and NGO accommodation scheme.
- Post distribution monitoring demonstrates the positive impact of cash assistance on protection, such as reducing negative coping mechanisms among refugees and asylum-seekers and improving their ability to live in dignity.

MULTI-PURPOSE CASH GRANTS

Cash assistance in the form of multipurpose cash grants (MPGs) is intended to cover food (if not temporarily provided by the Greek state), transport, communication, school materials and medicine, as well as clothing and hygiene products. The MPGs do not cover shelter, which is provided through the accommodation scheme or the government’s refugee reception sites. The total value of the MPGs depends on the size of the household and is in line with the amounts provided to the host population by the Greek state through its safety net income programme.

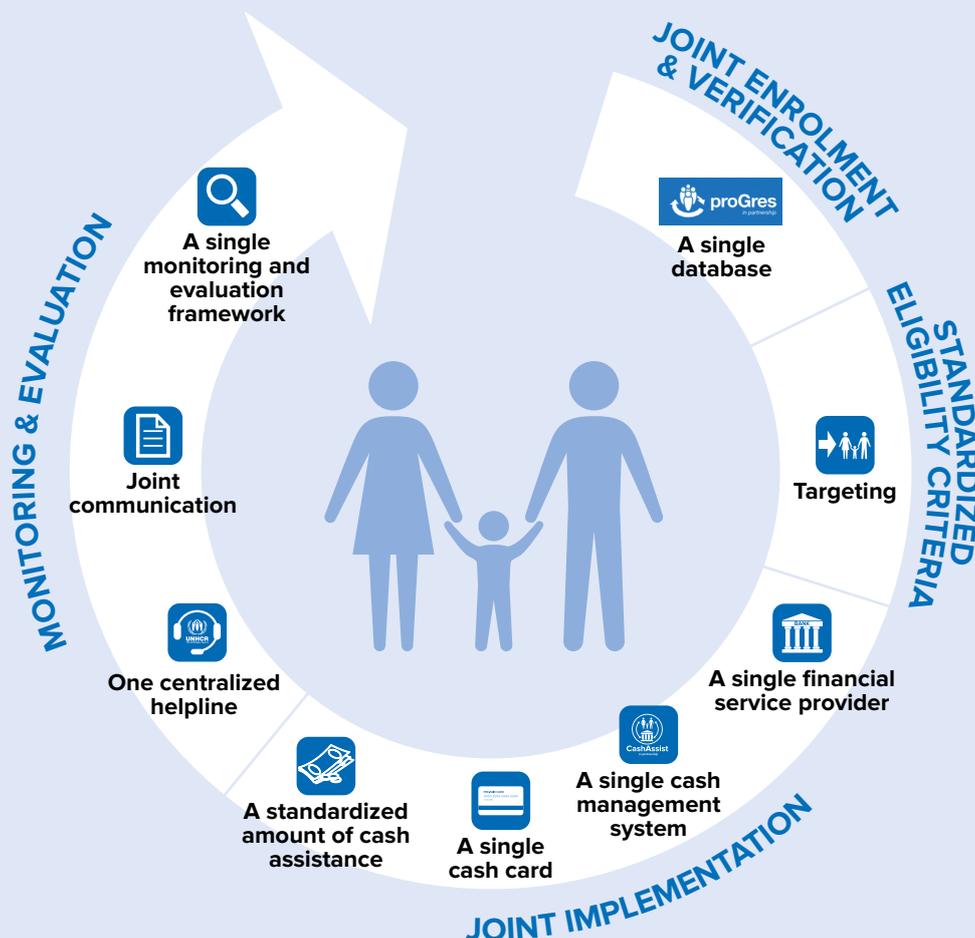
The objectives of multi-purpose cash grants are to:

- Allow refugees and asylum-seekers to **meet their basic needs with choice**.
- **Contribute to protection outcomes**, such as the reduction in negative coping mechanisms.
- **Discontinue costly catering, food and non-food items**.
- **Support the integration of refugees** with local communities and markets.
- **Improve and gradually strengthen the local economy**.



³ Profile Global Registration System for Partnerships (*proGres v4*) is UNHCR’s case management database application for registered refugees and asylum-seekers.

The Greece Cash Alliance Cycle



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Refugees and asylum seekers who qualify for cash assistance are issued a UNHCR GCA cash card once and have a monthly appointment with the GCA partners in order to certify their presence in the country and their continued eligibility for cash assistance.

A receipt is also printed with the details of the card and the *proGres v4* registration number, which is critical for GCA partners to be able to help refugees troubleshoot any potential issues that may occur with their cards (e.g. checking card balance, reporting of any loss, theft, misplacement, changing or recalling of pin number).

Every month the aggregated lists of eligible refugees are uploaded into UNHCR's *CashAssist*. Payment instructions are automatically passed to the FSP, using *proGres v4* and *CashAssist*. The FSP loads the cards with cash. Refugees use a card and PIN to withdraw cash from cash points or to pay for goods and services in shops. Funds can only be withdrawn in Greece. If attempts are made outside Greece, cards are automatically blocked. The financial service provider informs UNHCR if this occurs.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

The eligibility criteria for cash assistance have been agreed with the Greek authorities and the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO).

Eligible refugees and asylum-seekers include those who:

- Arrived in Greece after 1 January 2015.
- Have been registered by the Greek authorities and continue to reside in the country.
- Have either:
 - A pre-registration or full registration trifold with the Asylum Service.
 - Any other valid official document issued by the Greek Government, such as a valid Police Note.
- Are above 18 years of age.
- Live in designated sites or in rented accommodation (refugees living in informal settlements are excluded from the scheme).
- Are not employed with an NGO or UN agency.
- Are not employed and receiving a salary.



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THE GCA IN NUMBERS IN 2017



* For more information and updated figures, please visit:
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

For more information, please contact:

Kate Washington, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator, UNHCR Greece, washingk@unhcr.org

