

Jamaica

Programme of Advancement
through Health and
Education



Synthesis

CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMS

Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs are the main social programs used by Latin American and Caribbean countries to assist families living in poverty. In addition to supporting consumption, they encourage the accumulation of human capital.

To mark the 20 years since the implementation of CCT programs, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) created this toolkit, which is primarily aimed at those who design and operate CCTs, as well as the general public. Here we describe how several countries implement the three main operational stages of a CCT program.

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The present work is a summary of the publication [How does Programme of Advancement through Health and Education work?](#)

The updated material as well as the summaries of the other programs in Latin America and the Caribbean are available for downloading at the IDB's conditional transfer programs website.

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1/ INTRODUCTION

The [Programme of Advancement through Health and Education](#) (PATH) is Jamaica's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program. Transfers depend on compliance with health and education conditions that aim to develop children's human capital.

PATH was launched in 2002 and is managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS). It was created as part of a reform of the Jamaican social safety net, and replaced three pre-existing transfer programs (i.e. Food Stamps Programme, Public Assistance Programme and Poor Relief Programme). Improving targeting and transparency, and promoting the accumulation of human capital, were some of the objectives for creating PATH, a single comprehensive social protection program for the poor and vulnerable population.

As of the period January – June 2017, PATH transfers amounted to about J\$2.4 billion (US\$ 18.6 million) which represent approximately 0.3% of Jamaica's GDP. Around 354,706 beneficiaries were enrolled in the program, and 295,955 received the payments as they complied with its conditionalities.

2/ BENEFICIARIES

Eligibility

The Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) targets poor and vulnerable households that include at least one of the following 5 categories of individuals:

- i) Children and youth up to 17 years old (age at which they finish secondary school)
- ii) Pregnant or lactating women (up to 6 months after delivery)
- iii) Elderly (60 years old and over)
- iv) Individuals with disabilities
- v) Poor adults (between 18 and 60 years old)

Targeting

Eligibility is determined through a proxy means test (PMT) score. This estimates the household's living conditions based on socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics such as age, educational level, type of dwelling, ownership of consumer durables and

access to basic social amenities.

To be eligible, households must score below a pre-defined threshold. Different thresholds are used for Kingston Metropolitan Area, other towns and rural areas.

The application process starts at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security parish office upon households' request. A PATH official administers a questionnaire to the family representative. The information is entered in the computerized Beneficiary Identification System (BIS), which calculates an initial PMT score.

Households whose score is below the eligibility threshold are pre-declared eligible; those with score within five points above the threshold enter an automatic appeal process; while those whose score exceeds the threshold by more than five points are declared ineligible. This latter group can appeal.

All eligible households and those in the appeal process are visited in their homes by a social worker who collects a new set of information. It is worth noting that to avoid bias the social worker does not have access to the data entered in the BIS initially. The appeal process goes through the Parish Appeals Committee, independent from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The decision of the committee is final and over-rides the PMT score.

The information collected during the home visit is inputted in the BIS and a final score is calculated. This new score is used to make the final decision on program eligibility.

Enrolment

Eligible households receive a telephone call from the [Programme of Advancement through Health and Education](#) (PATH) parish office to continue with the enrolment process. At this stage, the household must submit the documentation which was previously validated during the social worker's visit. This includes:

- **For children under 18 years old:** birth certificate or Jamaican passport. For those who are not blood related, the household must demonstrate the child's total dependency through an affidavit from a Justice of Peace or Minister of Religion.

- **For school age children:** certificate that the child is currently enrolled in school.
- **For pregnant and lactating women:** certification from a doctor or nurse, stating that the woman is pregnant or lactating and the expected or actual date of delivery.
- **For adults:** birth certificate, passport, or any other valid identification containing the date of birth.
- **For people with disabilities:** certification from a doctor, nurse, or the Jamaican Council for Persons with Disabilities stating that the applicant is currently and permanently disabled and the nature of his disability.

As part of the enrolment process, the family representative who is responsible for signing the agreement is required to attend a training session on PATH's background, rules, conditions and payments process.

Exit Criteria

PATH benefits are terminated if the beneficiaries: (i) die; (ii) request to leave the program, (iii) are proven to have submitted fraudulent information, or; (iv) don't comply for three consecutive periods with the health and education conditionalities.

Beneficiaries may appeal to the committee when they are suspended from the program due to non-compliance and

non-collection of payments.

Recertification

So far, there has not been a systematic recertification of beneficiaries' poverty status and eligibility. Recently, the Ministry has announced that beneficiary households will have to undergo recertification every four years.

3/ TRANSFERS

Transfer Structure

Transfers are paid every two months and its amount vary according to the categories of beneficiaries included in each household.

The amount of the benefit subject to compliance with education conditions varies with the grade and is higher for secondary education. The amount of the benefit subjected to compliance with health visits depends on the age of the beneficiary. There is no maximum number of education or health benefits per household.

In June 2010 PATH introduced a base benefit (called minimum protection floor) which as of June 2017 accounted for J\$1,200. Households that fail to comply with program conditionalities only receive this base benefit.

PATH's poor relief transfer does not require compliance and amounts J\$3,200.

Table 1. Benefit amount by category

Category	Jamaican Dollars, every two months	US\$, every two months
Education		
Students grades 1 to 6	\$2,700	\$20.87
Students grades 7 to 9	\$3,600	\$27.83
Students grades 10 to 13	\$4,200	\$32.46
Health		
Children 0-6 years	\$2,600	\$20.10
Pregnant or lactating women	\$3,200	\$24.73
Elderly	\$4,500	\$34.78
Persons with disabilities	\$3,200	\$24.73
Poor adults	\$3,200	\$24.73
Other unconditional transfers		
Poor relief	\$3,200	\$24.73
Minimum protection floor	\$1,200	\$9.28

Note 1: Transfer amounts as of June 2017. **Note 2:** Annual average exchange rate for June 2017, 1 USD= J\$129.38

Payment Mechanism

[Payments](#) are done through three channels: (i) cheques; (ii) Keycard Cash, and; (iii) cash collected at remittance agencies. About 81% of the payments are done through paper cheques which are distributed at Post Offices and Postal Agencies island wide. Family representatives must present a valid government issued identification document to collect the cheque. If a family has more than one beneficiary, the family representative receives all the payments in a lump sum. Elderly or disabled adult beneficiaries can request to receive their part of the family payment when they are not the family representatives.

Payments through Keycard Cash account for 14% of total payments. These cards are issued by the National Commercial Bank. To receive the payment through these cards, the family representative must apply at the MLSS parish office with a valid identification card and the Tax Payer Registration Number. Beneficiaries using the Keycard can cash out their payment through automated bank machines (ATMs) or at points of sale (POS). They can also use the Keycard cash directly to purchase goods from stores.

Only 5% of beneficiaries collect their payments over the counter (OTC) at remittance agencies. For this payment mechanism, the family representative (or the beneficiary in the case of elderly and people with disabilities who receive the payment directly) must present a valid identification document.

Payments are made in February, April, June, August, October and December, on the 15th day of the month.

No payment mechanism allows the beneficiaries to save part of the PATH transfers. All payments must be cashed out.

representative must submit a letter letting the school know about the illness. If the absence is for more than three days, a medical certificate from a health center or doctor must also be submitted. Compliance does not consider education performance.

Attendance is verified through paper-based records reported by the schools to the MLSS parish office. This information is then transmitted to the MLSS office in Kingston.

Health

Children up to 72 months old, pregnant or lactating women, elderly (over 60 years old), persons with disabilities and adults (between 18 and 60 years old) are responsible for complying with a schedule of health visits. The frequency of the required health visits varies according to the age and category of the beneficiaries:

- **Children from 0 to 6 months:** 3 visits, one every 2 months.
- **Children from 7 to 72 months:** one visit every 6 months.
- **Pregnant women:** one visit every 2 months.
- **Lactating women:** two visits, one at six weeks and one after two months after delivery.
- **Elderly, persons with disabilities and poor adults:** 2 visits per year, once every 6 months.

4/ CONDITIONALITIES

Education

Beneficiary children over 6 and under 18 years old must be enrolled in a public school and must comply with a minimum of [85% attendance rate per month](#). If the child is unable to attend school because of sickness, the beneficiary is not penalized. In this case, the family

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