



## POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

## WINTER RESPONSE 2024-2025

July 2025

UNHCR's NGO partner Angels of Salvation is supporting people in the frontline Donetsk region to repair their war-damaged homes through 'Workshop on Wheels', which has been operating in some of the most war-affected areas and regions in Ukraine. © Angels of Salvation/Oleksii Hutnyk

### OVERVIEW

Post distribution monitoring (PDM) is a core component of UNHCR's ongoing effort to **ensure accountability to those we serve and our donors, understand the impact of our interventions, and to adapt and improve in the future.** The methodology relies on random sampling of the beneficiary population, using standard, contextualized questionnaires and preserves the anonymity of respondents.

UNHCR implemented a **multi-faceted winterization plan over the winter period 2024-2025** to help mitigate the effects of Ukraine's harsh winter on displaced, war-affected, and other vulnerable populations. In total, **314,000 multi-sectoral services** were delivered, including cash assistance, shelter and housing insulation support, and essential winter items were distributed. UNHCR also contributed to building energy generation capacity through the provision of generators and power banks. These efforts were part of the [inter-agency 2024-2025 winter response plan](#), coordinated by OCHA and the relevant humanitarian clusters, including the Shelter & Non-Food Item (NFI) Cluster. The inter-agency plan sought to complement the range of efforts implemented by national and regional authorities and partners supporting Ukraine's energy sector – with the aim of helping people stay warm and safe in their homes during the winter. **Strengthened protection referrals**, with a particular focus on psychosocial support and legal assistance to support access to key civil and housing, land, and property documentation, accompanied UNHCR's winterization response.

**The key findings from UNHCR's winterization response 2024-2025 are crucial in informing the response for the coming winter.** With the prospect of continued large-scale attacks against Ukraine's energy infrastructure and rising energy prices and household expenditures, there is a real risk that war-affected people will struggle to remain safe and warm in their homes this coming winter.

### 2024-25 WINTERIZATION RESPONSE SUMMARY OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS\*

**314,000**

Multi-sectoral services delivered as part of the Winter Response Plan

#### Winter Response Plan 2024-2025

##### Cash Assistance

258,345

People assisted with cash support for additional winter needs

47%

550,000  
Targeted

##### Shelter/Housing

21,336

People assisted with better-insulated homes and living spaces

52%

41,400  
Targeted

##### Essential Items

34,319

People assisted with essential winter items

102%

33,600  
Targeted

\*Figures represent people reached with partners between September 2024 and March 2025.

Cash assistance figures are subject to reconciliation and verification. All reached figures are subject to verification and retro-active corrections may occur.

## KEY FINDINGS OF UNHCR'S POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING OF THE 2024-2025 WINTERIZATION RESPONSE

### 1. Cash assistance remains the preferred and most impactful means (among recipients) of mitigating adverse impacts of cold temperatures during the winter

UNHCR's winter cash assistance in 2024-2025 supported **258,345 vulnerable people** in Ukraine, including those living in frontline areas. UNHCR's assistance prioritized households relying on firewood and coal as the primary heating source. Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) data confirmed that **89%** of the beneficiaries in the frontline areas used this heating source. Early identification and enrolment for winter assistance well ahead of the heating season proved to be crucial to enable the recipients' timely and cost-effective access to fuel. UNHCR's cooperation with **the Ministry of Social Policy, the Pension Fund of Ukraine, and the (former) Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories**, through which coordination was done with frontline local authorities, ensured those in need were efficiently enrolled and assisted. UNHCR's winter assistance complemented the governments' social protection programmes by assisting the most vulnerable internally displaced and war-affected Ukrainians, whose critical needs during winter could not be adequately covered through the overstretched national programmes. This approach aligned with the humanitarian Shelter & NFI Cluster's recommendations pursuant to the inter-agency winter response plan, and was coordinated with the aforementioned ministries.

PDM results for the 2024-2025 winter cash assistance mirrored UNHCR's [PDM results from the winter 2023-2024](#) response: the majority of 2024-2025 cash recipients (86%) preferred to receive winter assistance as cash. Another 11% indicated that they would like to receive both cash assistance and in-kind assistance, to be able to receive more overall assistance. Despite living in frontline areas, virtually all cash recipients (98%) felt safe to receive or withdraw the cash as needed. 96% of all households indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the way UNHCR delivered the cash assistance to them.

PDM data shows that 96% of the assisted households confirmed **having at least one vulnerability**. Meanwhile, 86% of those living near the frontline had compounding vulnerabilities, further exacerbating the difficulties of living in a war zone.

The use of UNHCR's **winter cash assistance is unrestricted**, meaning that people choose for themselves and their families how to prioritize and address their winter needs. **88% of all households** named the purchase of solid fuel as one of their principal needs.



© Antanolii outside his house in the Sumy region during winter 2024-2025. © Proliska

In the village of Pisky in the Sumy region of Ukraine, less than 10 kilometres from the Russian border, winters are harsh, bringing additional challenges for frontline communities who have decided to remain in their homes despite the hostilities.

Anatolii and Valentyna, once livestock farmers, now live on modest pensions which barely cover their basic needs. UNHCR's winter cash assistance of UAH 21,000 allowed the couple to purchase enough firewood to heat their home for three months and a gas canister to fuel their cooking oven. "For pensioners like us, this assistance means so much," Anatolii explained.

"We bought a truck of firewood and can stay warm throughout the winter. No matter what happens next, this is our home, and we are not leaving."

In terms of the transfer value, UNHCR relied on the guidance established by the Shelter & NFI Cluster, in consultation with the relevant authorities and the Cash Working Group, and provided a total of **UAH 21,000 (approx. USD 525) per household** in winter cash. The cash assistance was transferred to the beneficiaries' bank accounts and as cash payments through banks.

**Markets throughout the country remained resilient and relatively well-supplied throughout the winter**—giving people agency to prioritize what to buy and supporting local businesses and suppliers. UNHCR's PDM exercise underscored the vitality of local markets, with **97%** of respondents indicating that markets in their area were functioning or mostly functioning, with winter items being available in sufficient quantity (**98%**) and quality (**94%**) in all surveyed oblasts. There was no reported difference among those residing in oblasts closer to the frontline.

**87% of all respondents who received winter cash said the support enabled them to cover most of their heating needs** during the winter season (for three months or more). 89% of respondents spent the assistance on solid fuel, while 14% used it to cover utility costs. UNHCR's cash assistance also contributed to an overall improvement in living conditions, as noted by 83% of respondents and a reduction in feelings of stress, reported by 71% of respondents.

## 2. Insulation works enhanced the safety and dignity of families during winter

While Russian attacks continue to damage and destroy civilian homes, making them liveable and warm again remains one of UNHCR's key priorities. Where damages were not significant and beyond repair, UNHCR helped to insulate roofs and attics and install doors and modern triple-glazed windows, to ensure that houses, as well as collective sites hosting vulnerable displaced people, could retain heat whilst saving energy and reducing heating costs.

As part of the 2024-2025 winter response, UNHCR supported **21,336 people** with better insulated homes and living spaces. Based on UNHCR's PDM across six regions, most families (**87%**) supported with insulation works assessed the quality and the materials used to be good or very good. Respondents indicated a range of works were provided, including installation/replacement of windows and doors; roof insulation; roof and ceiling repair/insulation; wall repair; house insulation; and installation of a balcony block (separating a living space from a balcony), among others. **87% of surveyed households** reported being able to live in safe and dignified conditions as a result of the assistance received. Importantly, **94%** said their housing now provides protection from cold, dampness, sun, rain, wind, or other health hazards.



Tetiana lives alone in Kramatorsk in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine – a town where the sound of shelling is a daily reality.

She was inside her house during an attack which severely damaged her home and shattered her windows. It also destroyed her stove, which was Tetiana's only source of heating.

UNHCR and its NGO partner Angels of Salvation supported Tetiana with emergency shelter materials and a mobile team from the 'Workshop on Wheels' initiative helped her carry out the immediate repairs. The mobile team not only replaced broken windows, but also repaired Tetiana's stove, ensuring she could heat her home and stay warm.

© Angels of Salvation/Oleksiy Gutnyk

Complementing the insulation works, UNHCR distributed **Rapid Thermal Kits (RTKs)** that contained insulation materials, such as reflective insulation screens, transparent plastic sheets, foam strips, and building tape, to sub-standard private homes, apartments, as well as collective sites (CS). These kits have helped vulnerable people insulate their homes during winter. During the 2024-2025 winter response, UNHCR distributed over **7,700 RTKs** and more than **2,660 heaters** to families with poorly insulated homes. This included over 1,000 RTKs and 75 heaters to 27 collective sites. The distribution reached households and collective sites across Cherkaska, Chernihivska, Donetska, Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska, Kyivska, Kyivska, Sumska, Zaporizka, and Zhytomyrska oblasts. PDM findings of recipients of RTKs show that families consistently reported high satisfaction with the quality and timely delivery of the kits (ranging from **85-99%** depending on the region). Most families actively used most of the items in the kits, and **99-100%** of respondents reported that the kits arrived in time for the onset of winter. These results indicate that the RTKs greatly improved living conditions, especially for older people and others with specific vulnerabilities. The distribution and monitoring processes proved effective, demonstrating the feasibility, relevance, and comparatively high impact of this low-cost programme.

## ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SUPPORT

One of the key challenges people faced last winter was frequent power cuts due to Russia's repeated attacks on Ukraine's critical infrastructure.

As part of the 2024-25 winterization response, and in close cooperation with the authorities, UNHCR also helped sustain vulnerable populations' energy generation capacity through the provision of alternative energy sources such as generators or power banks. During the winter period, 186 generators were distributed to a range of community centres, collective sites, hospitals, local departments, community warming points, schools and other communal infrastructures in 17 oblasts.

This support helped ensure the continuity of critical services, and strengthen household-level and community resilience.



Generator installed by UNHCR at the site of a modular settlement for IDPs and war-affected people in the town of Borodianka, Kyivska oblast.  
©UNHCR/Alina Kovalenko

## WAY FORWARD: INTEGRATING LESSONS LEARNED INTO THE 2025-2026 WINTER RESPONSE PLAN STRATEGY

Almost four years of full-scale war has left Ukrainians more vulnerable to the impact of cold and harsh weather and intensified aerial attacks. Using the lessons learned from the 2024-2025 winter response will be crucial to ensure **early planning of activities, investments and essential procurement – together with sufficient and timely funding by donors**. UNHCR's 2025-2026 winterization plan builds on these lessons. The plan will comprise the following elements:

- ➔ **Cash assistance will be the main modality of support**, based on the findings from both the 2023-2024 and the 2024-2025 winter response PDMs, which indicate cash as the most impactful and cost-efficient means of mitigating the adverse impacts of cold weather and heightened energy costs. UNHCR will design and deliver its winter cash assistance response in coordination with the Government of Ukraine and key stakeholders, to ensure complementarity with national programmes and effective identification and enrolment of beneficiaries, and with OCHA and the Shelter & NFI Cluster partners to ensure alignment with the inter-agency 2025-2026 winter response plan. This approach aims to ensure the cash assistance delivered helps those in most dire need to cover winter-related expenses.

- ➔ Based on the continued positive feedback, **UNHCR will again provide Rapid Thermal Kits** to war-affected people living in sub-standard homes in rural areas and to some collective sites, as these have demonstrated relatively high impact for low cost. In addition, due to the high demand for electric heaters, UNHCR will increase the number provided during the next winter season.
- ➔ **The insulation of war-damaged houses and apartments and sub-standard collective sites will continue**, as an instrumental way to improve their capacity to retain warmth, reduce heating costs and save energy. This activity will include insulating roofs and attics, installation of doors and modern triple glazed windows and fixing damages.
- ➔ Due to the lack of availability of electricity in frontline areas and households' reliance on solid fuel, UNHCR will continue to provide and install **solid fuel heaters, while also supporting the insulation of heating pipes and upgrading of heating systems** to minimize costs associated with utilities in communal settings – mostly collective sites.
- ➔ In cooperation with relevant authorities, community-based organizations, and partners, UNHCR will provide **alternative energy units such as portable power stations** to selected institutions providing critical social services, as well as to critical communal infrastructure.



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by our top government donors and for the generous contributions from individuals and the private sector, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with softly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

- Visit Ukraine's Operational Data Portal for more information products [here](#).
- Ukraine Protection Cluster Response Dashboard can be found [here](#).
- CCCM Cluster Collective Sites Mapping [here](#)
- Shelter Cluster Response Dashboard [here](#).

**CONTACTS:**

- Livia das Neves, Senior External Relations Officer, [dasneves@unhcr.org](mailto:dasneves@unhcr.org)
- Alessia Pignatti, Reporting Officer, [pignatti@unhcr.org](mailto:pignatti@unhcr.org)