VULNERABILITY-BASED TARGETING PROCESS

Information Note

The Republic of Moldova 2024

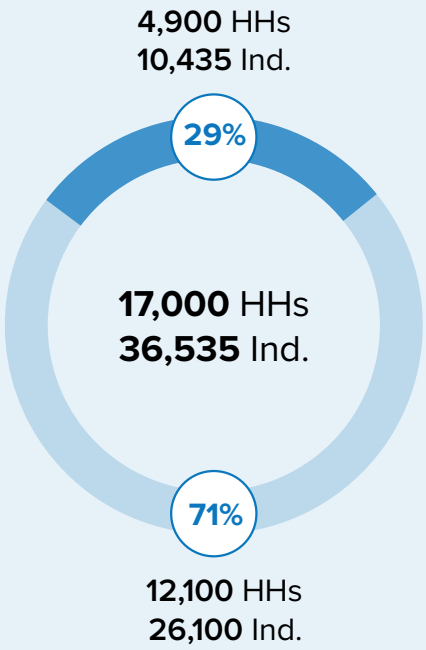
UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Since the beginning of 2024, UNHCR Moldova introduced two key changes to its Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) program to improve targeting and ensure the sustainability of the initiative amid declining resources. The first change was the introduction of **linkage cash assistance with legal status**, requiring beneficiaries to secure legal documentation by February 2024 to continue receiving support. The second was a new **vulnerability-based targeting system**. This system used a scorecard to assess socio-economic vulnerabilities, ensuring that cash assistance reaches those most in need. As part of the vulnerability-based targeting system, a **reconsideration mechanism** was introduced to address exclusion errors, giving households the opportunity to request review of ineligibility decisions, ensuring a fairer and more transparent allocation of resources. This Note has been drafted to capture the key statistical results of the process and provide a step-by-step overview of how the new targeting criteria was implemented.[1]

After the development of the scorecard used for the vulnerability-based targeting system, UNHCR commenced data collection (household vulnerability assessment) in May 2024 on different indicators identified to determine vulnerability. Household vulnerability assessment interviews were combined with verification exercises that had been periodically conducted by UNHCR since 2022.

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION OF ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

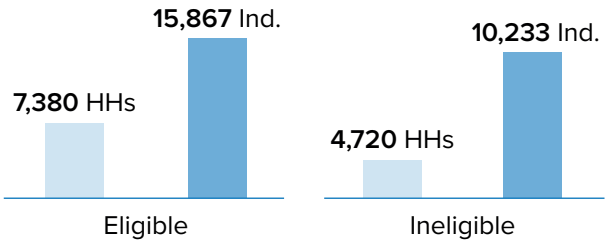
In May 2024, UNHCR's active beneficiary caseload was more than 17,000 households (36,535 individuals). The household vulnerability assessment interviews were concluded in July 2024 with a verification of 12,100 households (26,100 individuals) with a 71% attendance and 29% no-show rate. The households that did not appear (4,900 households/ 10,435 individuals) were inactivated.



[1] For a fuller explanation of both of the changes to UNHCR's cash programme, see UNHCR, *Transitioning from Emergency Cash Assistance: Strategi Adaptations* (October 2024).

After implementation of the new eligibility criteria based on the score card, around 7,380 households (15,867 individuals) were found eligible to the programme and 4,720 households (10,233 individuals) were ineligible out of 12,100 households. This corresponds to a 61% inclusion rate.

ELIGIBILITY STATUS



A **reconsideration process** was implemented to address potential exclusion errors and mitigate potential protection risks. It allowed for the review of cases where:

1. information may have been inaccurately captured during the initial assessment interview
2. circumstances of ineligible beneficiaries may have changed since the interview
3. urgent needs for cash support were not adequately captured in the original scorecard results

Refugees who were deemed ineligible for assistance had the opportunity to request a review of their cases. A UNHCR Multi-Functional Team (MFT) was established to carefully assess the reconsideration requests.

Out of 4,720 ineligible households (10,435 individuals), 1,954 households (4,299 individuals) applied for the reconsideration request by UNHCR. This corresponds to 43% of the ineligible households.

After careful review, the MFT made the following decisions:

66% applications were denied
1,294 HHs / **2,847** ind.

28% applicants were referred for reassessment interviews
504 HHs / **1,109** ind.

6% applications were re-included in the program
114 HHs / **251** ind.

1% applications were referred for protection interviews
21 HHs / **46** ind.

1% applications were referred for medical consultations
21 HHs / **46** ind.

Households were notified of the MFT decisions via SMS. UNHCR, along with its implementing partner CRS, closely monitored SMS delivery through the designated SMS portal.

For undelivered messages, CRS followed up with phone calls to ensure refugees were informed of the decisions.

UNHCR provides cash assistance for refugees to address refugees' basic needs in a safe and dignified manner.
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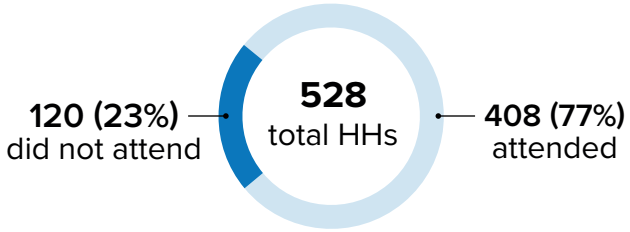
Cases referred for **reassessment interviews** included detailed information for partners on which data fields required clarification during the reassessment interview.

The number of the referrals later increased to **528** households due changes of the decisions for pending and protection interview cases. Of the 528 households scheduled for reassessment, 120 did not attend (23%) and their cases were inactivated after the grace period.

REASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS

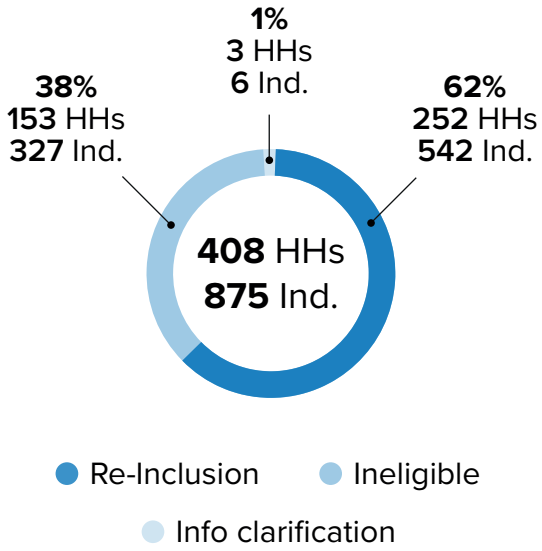


Reassessment interviews were conducted by CRS for the remaining **408** households (875 individuals).

UNHCR evaluated the results of the reassessment interviews and conducted an additional MFT review for those cases that raised credibility concerns due to significant changes in score.

As a result, some households were deemed ineligible despite exceeding the prioritization threshold.

MFT REASSESSMENT DECISIONS



After necessary reviews:

- **252** households (**542** individuals) were re-included in the MPCA program
- **153** households (**327** individuals) were still deemed ineligible
- Additionally, **3** households (**6** individuals) were referred to CRS for further information clarification.

Refugees prefer cash assistance as it empowers them to meet their basic needs with flexibility, safety, and dignity.
© UNHCR/ Jordi Matas

In conclusion, the 2024 changes to UNHCR Moldova's MPCA program marked a significant shift towards more targeted cash support and equitable resource allocation.

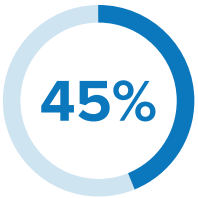
By linking assistance to legal status, adopting a vulnerability-based targeting system, and implementing a reconsideration process, the program ensured that support reached the most vulnerable households.

The thorough assessment process, coupled with continuous monitoring and communication efforts, helped refine the selection criteria and address potential exclusion errors. This strengthened the program's sustainability and ensured that refugees' evolving needs were met despite diminishing resources, reinforcing UNHCR's commitment to fair and effective humanitarian support.

FINAL FIGURES

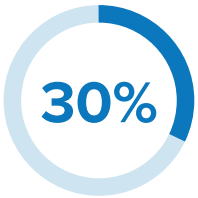
At the beginning of the targeting exercise, at the end of April 2024, UNHCR's cash beneficiary caseload was **17,000** households / **36,000** persons.

By the end of the exercise, the following results were obtained:



7,626 HHs / **15,867** pers.

were retained in the cash assistance programme



5,020 HHs / **10,693** pers.

were excluded for failure to appear at different stages of the targeting process (note, however, that they will be considered/re-considered if they appear at a later date)

4,354 HHs / **9,440** pers.

were found ineligible for the programme and excluded

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For more information, please visit the Operational Data Portal for Moldova or the Global Focus page for the Ukraine Situation.

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