Republic of Moldova

Cash Assistance
April 2025

Post-distribution monitoring shows 46% of households meet only half their needs, 58% adopt harmful survival methods like skipping meals and many continue to struggle with affording food (42%), healthcare (54%), non-food items (50%), and energy (35%).

In Moldova, vulnerable refugee households receiving cash include 45% headed by older persons, 32% with chronically ill members, and 20% with persons with disabilities, facing worsening hardships and protection risks if left without support.

UNHCR cash assistance is the preferred form of support among refugees in Moldova, offering flexibility, dignity, and autonomy. It enables individuals to prioritise and cover their most urgent needs based on their specific circumstances.

Key figures

In 2025, UNHCR provided cash assistance to **19,629 refugees** in Moldova, including:

83% women and children

27% older people

12% people with disabilities

3 cash installments processed

>USD 6M disbursed to beneficiaries

2,468 individuals
1,281 households provided with winter cash assistance

*Figures as of April 2025

Yulia Ivashutkina fled Kyiv with her family and found refuge in Balti, Moldova. After staying in a refugee accommodation centre, they moved into private housing with humanitarian support. In Moldova, Yulia began volunteering, organising activities for children and teens, which gave her a renewed sense of purpose. UNHCR's cash assistance helped cover rent, food, and education costs, allowing her family to regain stability and rebuild their lives with dignity in a safe and welcoming environment.

Read the full story on the UNHCR Moldova website

Highlights

- Effective 1 April 2025, UNHCR reduced the cash assistance transfer value in Moldova by 26%. The reduction was necessary due to an unexpected funding shortfall, requiring alignment of support with available resources. It aimed to sustain assistance for 17,500 vulnerable refugees while also accommodating newly identified eligible individuals. The revised amount (MDL 1,625 per person per month) now covers 74% of Moldova's Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) —the minimum monthly cost of basic goods and services as defined by the Moldovan government.

- In 2024, UNHCR provided multi-purpose cash assistance to over 52,000 vulnerable refugees in Moldova to help cover food, rent, utilities, and medication. An additional 22,000—mainly older people, persons with disabilities, and single-parent families—received winter support. This flexible aid reduced harmful coping strategies like skipping meals or delaying medical care, while preserving dignity and allowing refugees to focus on their most urgent needs.

- A 2024 impact assessment found that Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) helped refugees improve food security, dietary diversity, and access to healthcare. Most used the support for groceries, rent, and utilities, with rent being critical for housing stability. For every dollar given through MPCA, USD 2.09 was generated in economic value, benefiting refugees, host households, and local businesses. However, market assessments highlight persistent challenges, with 35% struggling to cover energy costs and many experiencing difficulties paying rent.

- Since June 2024, UNHCR has moved from general to more targeted support by introducing a scorecard system to identify the most vulnerable. This method uses protection and socio-economic factors—like special needs, housing, income, and family size—to prioritise those most in need. Individuals found ineligible can request a review, during which UNHCR's multi-functional team reassesses their situation using the same criteria. If new information confirms eligibility, the household is re-enrolled and support resumes the following month.

Operational Response

UNHCR's Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) addresses critical gaps in Moldova's national social protection systems, helping ensure that vulnerable refugees are not left behind or exposed to heightened risks. Delivered with high efficiency, MPCA ensures more assistance reaches those in need, enabling refugees to meet essential needs with dignity while reducing reliance on harmful coping strategies such as skipping meals, forgoing healthcare, or undertaking unsafe returns. MPCA is well-suited to Moldova's context, where functioning markets and access to financial services make cash a practical and effective modality. It also supports access to protection services and promotes inclusion in national systems. Aligned with the Refugee Response Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, MPCA bridges humanitarian aid and long-term development solutions, while contributing to Moldova's institutional capacity and the sustainable inclusion of refugees in social protection and economic planning frameworks.

Working with Partners

UNHCR collaborates with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its partners, Diaconia and Caritas Moldova, to deliver cash assistance to vulnerable refugees. These partners enrol beneficiaries, distribute pre-paid cards, and conduct household vulnerability assessments using a scorecard methodology to ensure support reaches those most in need. Regular verification exercises help maintain updated data, confirm beneficiaries' presence, and reassess needs. Mobile outreach teams support highly vulnerable individuals unable to access enrolment sites. UNHCR also works closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, a key partner guiding strategic shifts and strengthening Moldova's capacity to include refugees in national social protection systems. UNHCR also maintains strong collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, a key partner since the programme's launch. This partnership has been instrumental in guiding strategic shifts in the cash programme and contributes to building Moldova's institutional capacity for the mid-long - term inclusion of refugees into national social protection systems.

Refugee Coordination Forum

In Moldova, UNHCR and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) co-lead the Cash Working Group (CWG), ensuring coordinated and effective cash assistance aligned with national systems. The CWG brings together around 20 active members and meets monthly to harmonise approaches, review transfer values, and refine targeting. It promotes joint tools, shared monitoring, and digital solutions to enhance impact.

Twelve CWG members, including UNHCR, have signed a multi-party data-sharing agreement to strengthen coordination and reduce duplication, using the Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) under the Common Cash Facility (CCF) framework. The CWG also leads the winterisation response, aligning partners' plans to ensure fair and efficient assistance during Moldova's harsh winters.

"As a Ukrainian pensioner in a foreign country, this financial support has been incredibly helpful. We mainly use it for utilities, which have become more expensive," says Larysa, 60, a refugee who rebuilt her life in Moldova after fleeing the war. With UNHCR's safe and discreet cash assistance, she and her husband met essential needs like food, bills, and household items. The flexibility of cash restored their sense of control, independence, and stability.

Read the full story on the UNHCR Moldova website

UNHCR is grateful for the support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to global UNHCR programmes.

Australia | Austria | Belgium | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | New Zealand | Netherlands | Norway | Republic of Korea |United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United States of America

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Contacts:

Frederic Cussigh
Deputy Representative, cussigh@unhcr.org

Yigit Anil Gurer
Programme Cash-Based Interventions Officer, gurer@unhcr.org

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

unhcr.org/md
@unhcr_moldova
@unhcrmoldova

Our work would not be possible without UNHCR's implementing partners.

CRS CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES
caritas MOLDOVA
DIACONIA MISIUNEA SOCIALĂ A MITROPOLIEI BASARABIEI

UNHCR Moldova is also grateful for the cooperation of Moldovan authorities at all levels, other UN agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations.