PROTECTION BRIEF CZECHIA

JUNE 2025

THE SITUATION OF VULNERABLE REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE[1]

BACKGROUND

The figures of active Temporary Protection holders registered in Czechia were updated to 373,609 as of 25 May 2025, of whom 70% are women and children (source: Ministry of the Interior).[2]

This report is based on the analysis of **435 Protection Monitoring interviews** with refugees from Ukraine conducted in 14 regions in Czechia in the first quarter of 2025 and on findings from focus groups discussions conducted by UNHCR with Ukrainian refugees in 2024.[3]

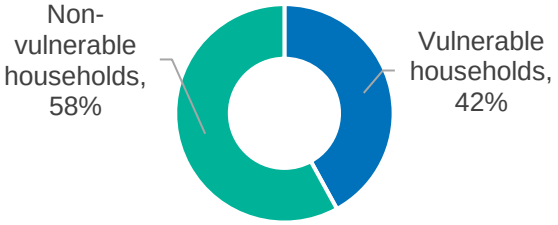
435
# of respondents

1,125
# of household members

The report looks at the situation of refugee respondents with vulnerabilities and some of the challenges they reported in accessing rights and services in Czechia.

Among the respondents, **42% are households including a person with a disability, a person with a serious medical condition, and/or a household comprised only of elderly persons** (aged 60 years and above), or a combination of the above.

Vulnerable households vs other households



For the purpose of this report, the Protection Monitoring analysis focuses on the situation of refugee respondents falling within these three categories of vulnerability to show some of the challenges they face; however, the specific needs of vulnerable refugees can be broader.

[1] UNHCR Czechia Protection Brief: The situation of vulnerable refugees from Ukraine, June 2025, https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/. See also UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, The situation of vulnerable refugees from Ukraine, January 2025, https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/113808
[2] https://mv.gov.cz/clanek/statistika-v-souvislosti-s-valkou-na-ukrajine-archiv-2025.aspx
[3] UNHCR Participatory Assessment Report, 2024, https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116637

CHALLENGES FOR VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

Refugees from Ukraine, particularly vulnerable households, continue to face various barriers in accessing stable housing, basic services, and essential information. The findings highlight that while a majority of households with vulnerabilities rely on government social protection services, many reported challenges in accessing this support. Language barriers and bureaucratic complexities remain major obstacles. Insecure housing is a persistent concern, with many families uncertain about how long they can remain in their current accommodation. These factors leave many refugees in precarious situations and underscore the need for targeted support.

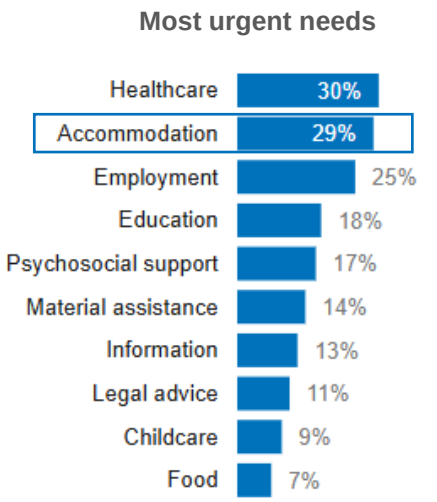
Social support remains vital for vulnerable households in accessing essential services. Vulnerable refugees are entitled to humanitarian benefits as well as one-time emergency subsidies for Ukrainian refugees and housing provision for new arrivals in collective accommodation facilities for up to 90 days. Tailored social counselling is also available through labour offices, NGOs and other organizations. UNHCR in Czechia works with government authorities, including municipalities, and NGO partners to support responses for refugees from Ukraine, targeting vulnerable households.[4]

Households with vulnerabilities face challenges in securing stable accommodation, including financial constraints and targeted support.

According to Protection Monitoring, accommodation remains one of the most urgent needs reported by refugee respondents.

Like most refugee households, 56% of vulnerable households reported living in rented accommodation. However, compared to other households, a higher number of vulnerable households reside in collective accommodation facilities (11% vs. 9%). This reflects challenges in accessing sustainable housing for vulnerable Ukrainian refugees.[5]

Only 17% of vulnerable households reported having secured accommodation for more than 12 months. For those residing in collective accommodation facilities, this figure drops to 12%. Nearly one-third of them do not know how long they can remain in their current housing, potentially leading to housing instability and hindrances in planning for the future.



Respondents also noted concerns due to rising rents and the closure of some collective accommodation facilities - issues particularly acute in regions with limited affordable housing options. These concerns echo findings from 2024 participatory assessments conducted by UNHCR and NGO partners with elderly Ukrainian refugees and persons with disabilities, where financial pressures and concerns over the future capacities of collective accommodation facilities were raised.[6]

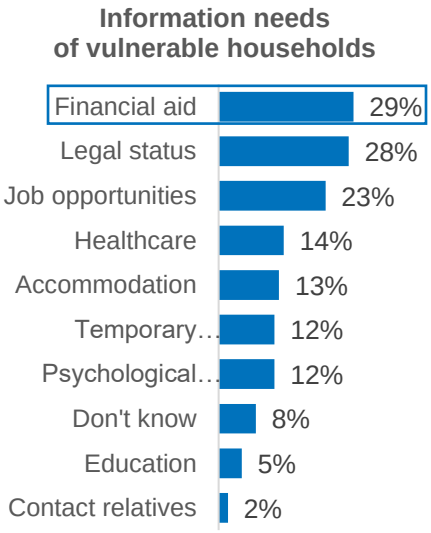
UNHCR and its partners provide individual support to vulnerable refugees to help them with identifying suitable housing, communicating with landlords, formalizing leases, helping with

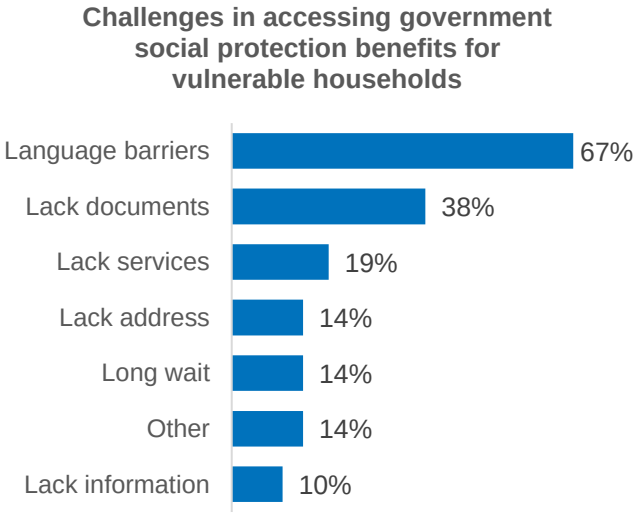
[4] UNHCR Czechia HELP website, https://help.unhcr.org/czech/
[5] UNHCR-IOM Housing Assessment Report, April 2024. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109045
[6] UNHCR Participatory Assessment Report, 2024, https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116637

budgeting, providing information on rights, obligations and entitlements, and supporting transitioning from collective accommodation facilities to private housing.[7]

Most vulnerable households rely on social protection benefits, however some face challenges in accessing them.

29% of vulnerable households reported financial aid as their highest information need. In addition, 85% of respondents in vulnerable households reported having applied for government social protection benefits, compared to 69% for others. However, 14% experienced challenges in accessing them, including language barriers, lack of documents, long waiting time, etc.



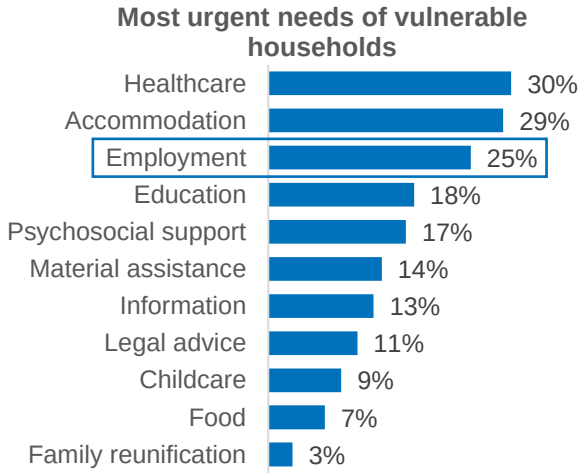


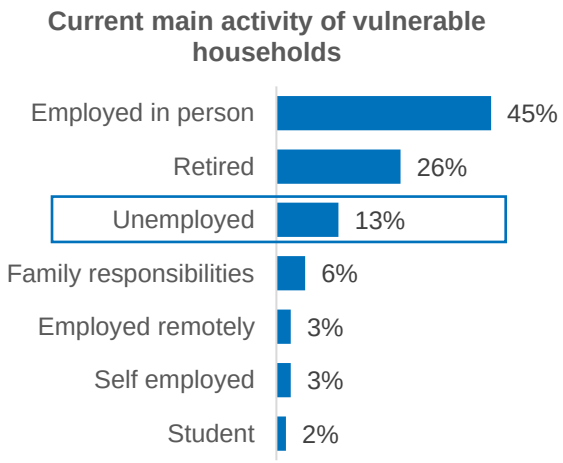
UNHCR and NGO partners support vulnerable refugees in accessing social protection benefits through information provision on financial aid, counselling and accompaniment by social workers, interpretation, and other targeted support.[8]

Vulnerable households face greater challenges in securing decent employment, with higher rates of unemployment.

Among households with vulnerabilities, employment remains one of the most urgent needs. Overall, 51% of vulnerable households indicated being employed (in person, remotely or self-employed), and 13% unemployed, compared to 81% of other households being employed and only 5% unemployed.

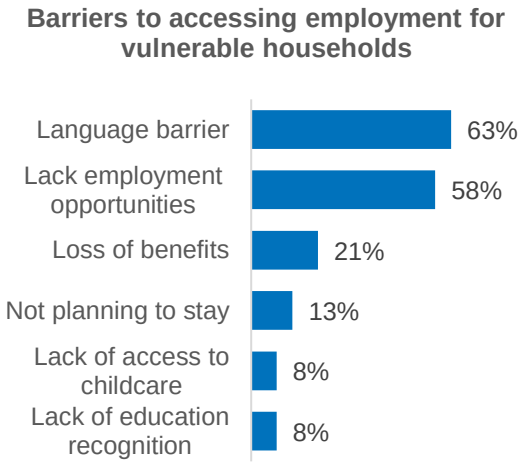
[7] UNHCR Czechia HELP website, https://help.unhcr.org/czech/
[8] UNHCR Czechia HELP website, https://help.unhcr.org/czech/





Vulnerable refugees and others reported similar challenges in accessing employment, including language barriers and lack of employment opportunities.

Other barriers, as reported by UNHCR's partners include more limited employment opportunities in small municipalities or in urban areas with high concentration of refugees, lack of recognition of foreign qualifications and experience, need for more interpretation services, and a lack of access to childcare, particularly for single-parents or those with young children.



Childcare for families with young children remains a crucial service to allow Ukrainian refugees to access employment opportunities in Czechia. 9% of households with vulnerabilities and with children below school age identified access to childcare as the most urgent need, higher than for other households. The younger the children, the more acute the need for childcare was reported to be. The findings also indicate that access to childcare is limited, with only 59% of respondents reporting having access to childcare and 34% having no access at all. These figures were 57% and 43% respectively amongst households with vulnerabilities indicating more challenges in accessing this critical service. This could bear a greater impact on caregivers in vulnerable households being able to engage in income-generating activities and Czech language courses. To overcome the challenges of accessing childcare, findings from participatory assessments conducted by UNHCR in 2024 highlighted that Ukrainian refugee single mothers sought Czech language courses in varied and flexible formats to access employment and skills development opportunities.

14% of vulnerable refugees reported not having an employment contract, and 30% indicated they are working excessively long hours, compared to 8% and 18% respectively for other households. This highlights challenges accessing decent work.

14%

of respondents do not have an employment contract

30%

of respondents reported working excessively long hours

Additionally, among employed vulnerable refugees, 60% stated they are overqualified for their current jobs – notably higher than other respondents (48%). Without recognition of education and qualifications, refugees often have to take jobs below their qualification level. This indicates the need for increased support for the recognition of qualifications.

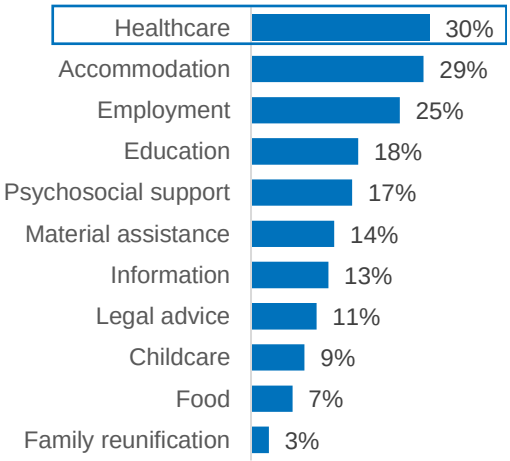
UNHCR through its partners provides individual counselling and support on labour rights, with specific support to vulnerable refugees. This includes targeted help for the recognition of education and professional qualifications to help refugees find suitable jobs. Partners also sensitize employers on employment rights and conduct outreach to identify and assist refugees at risk of exploitation.[9]

Healthcare is identified as the most urgent need for most vulnerable households.

Healthcare ranks as the most urgent need for 30% of households with vulnerabilities, compared to just 7% of other households. The need is heightened among elderly refugees (45% reported it as the most urgent need), particularly elderly men (54% of elderly men rank healthcare as the most urgent need, compared to 38% of elderly women).

Access to information about health services is identified as a more pressing information need among vulnerable households (14%) than others (5%).

Most urgent needs of vulnerable households



These findings are confirmed by participatory assessments conducted by UNHCR with Ukrainian refugees in 2024[10] (37% of those who participated were elderly) where healthcare emerged as the most frequently sought service and the area with the greatest demand for information. Elderly refugees, in particular, faced notable gaps in understanding the services available, navigating the Czech healthcare system, and interpreting Czech medications and prescriptions. Many refugees faced challenges to secure medical appointments with difficulties in finding doctors accepting new patients. Access to specialized care—such as oncology, dental, and psychiatric services—was particularly difficult, with challenges more pronounced in remote regions.

[9] UNHCR Czechia HELP website, https://help.unhcr.org/czech/
[10] UNHCR Participatory Assessment Report, 2024, https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116637

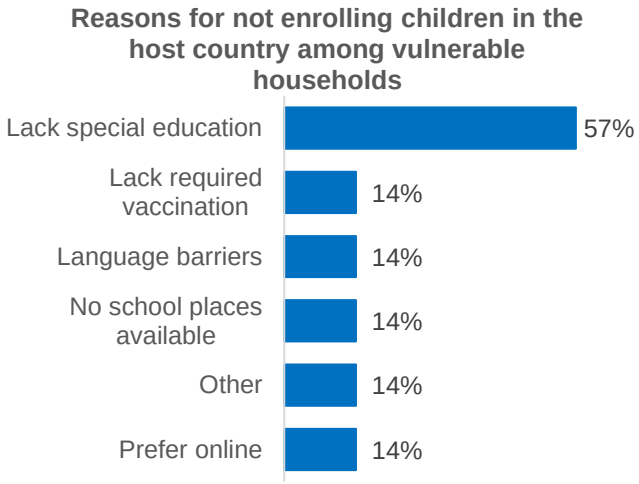
Mental health and well-being needs are also more pronounced among households with vulnerabilities (17% compared to 6% in other households). Among elderly refugees, women are reporting mental well-being as more of an urgent need (26%) as compared to men (7%). These findings may indicate a need to strengthen mental health information and support for vulnerable households.

UNHCR through its partners offers individual assistance by providing information and accompanying vulnerable refugees to healthcare providers, providing mental health and psychological support services in Prague, as well as training and mentoring of Ukrainian psychologists.[11]

Vulnerable households have more children out of school, reflecting greater challenges in accessing education.

Integration into the school system is relatively high with 92% of households with school-aged children enrolled in Czech schools. Among children out of school (8%), the percentage is higher in households with vulnerabilities (12%), as compared to other households (5%), reflecting greater challenges in accessing education where either the child or the caregiver has specific needs.

The primary challenge reported by vulnerable households in accessing education is a lack of specialized education support for children with disabilities or specific learning needs (cited by 57% of households with vulnerabilities and children out of school).



Findings from the 2024 inter-agency Socio-Economic Insights Survey in Czechia[12] show that the percentage of children enrolled in online schooling in Ukraine is higher amongst children with disabilities (34%) than those without (27%). Other barriers in accessing education experienced by households with vulnerabilities include language, lack of vaccination documents, and limited school places.

UNHCR works with NGO partners to support vulnerable households to access education, including through information provision and awareness raising, support with the enrollment process, including documentation, and supporting children with specific challenges in school.[13]

[11] UNHCR Czechia HELP website, https://help.unhcr.org/czech/
[12] Czech Republic: Socio-Economic Insights Survey – SEIS (2024), https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/113711
[13] UNHCR Czechia HELP website, https://help.unhcr.org/czech/

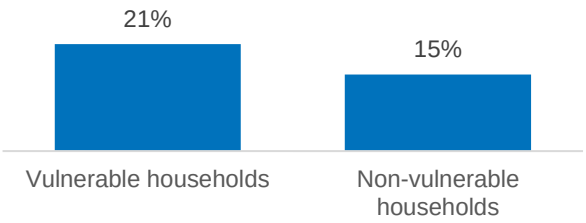
Vulnerable households face challenges in accessing legal status procedures and civil registration, including long wait times and lack of supporting documents.

Findings from interviews with respondents highlight that vulnerable households have greater challenges in accessing procedures for the application for or extension of temporary protection (reported by 21% compared to 15% of other households). This indicates that vulnerable refugees require greater assistance in accessing legal status or obtaining documentation.

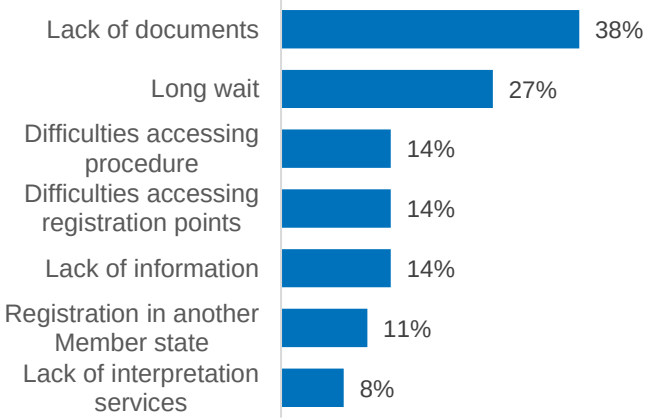
Lack of personal documentation is reported more often by vulnerable households who faced challenges in accessing it (38%), compared to 26% of other households. They also face greater challenges in registering civil events, such as marriage or divorce (32% compared to 16%), mostly due to long waiting times or missing documentation. This indicates that vulnerable refugees need additional support.

UNHCR and its partners help Ukrainian refugees access or extend temporary protection or obtain civil documents through outreach, awareness raising, individual legal counselling and support for those who may have difficulties in accessing procedures.[14]

% households who faced difficulties during the Temporary Protection application / extension process



Challenges faced during the Temporary Protection application / extension process among vulnerable households



[14] UNHCR Czechia HELP website, https://help.unhcr.org/czech/

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Strengthen targeted housing information and advisory services and deploy outreach caseworkers or mobile teams to support families in collective accommodation and/or those facing challenges in accessing housing. Strengthen municipal and NGO capacity to provide housing navigation assistance, including translation, landlord mediation, and help with humanitarian benefit applications.

2 Expand employment counselling and information on employment opportunities. Provide tailored support for single mothers, elderly refugees, and persons with disabilities tto help them access employment. Moreover, scale up the provision of adapted Czech language courses.

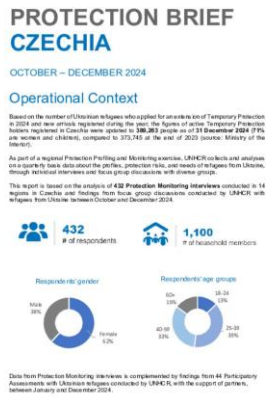
3 Provide individual social support by trained frontline workers to assist vulnerable households to be informed of, and to be able to apply for, entitlements online or with relevant offices.

4 Enhance healthcare access for Ukrainian refugees, particularly for households with elderly refugees and persons with disabilities. Strengthen information campaigns across diverse platforms to raise awareness of available services and support. Furthermore, train community health mediators to guide refugees through the healthcare system. Expand psychosocial support for different groups, including through community-based activities.

5 Enhance inclusive education for Ukrainian refugee children, particularly those with disabilities, by expanding the availability of individualized education support. Invest in teacher training, supplemental learning services, and awareness campaigns for caregivers in vulnerable households. Additionally, collaborate with refugee-led and disability-focused organizations to monitor and improve access to education.

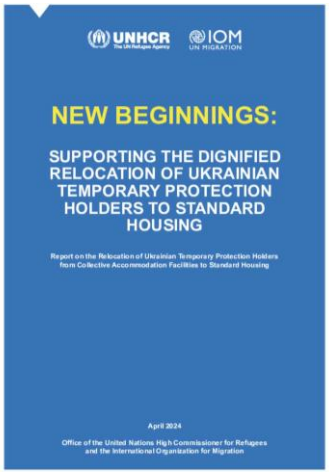
6 Provide legal information tailored to diverse groups and their specific needs and offer enhanced legal counselling. Ensure accompaniment to relevant offices and interpretation to facilitate access to legal status procedures and civil registration.

PREVIOUS REPORTS

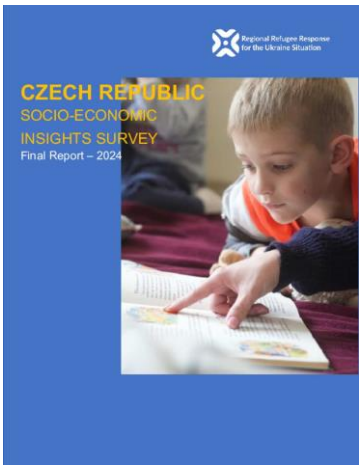


UNHCR Czechia Protection Monitoring Brief #4 (Oct – Dec 2024)

UNHCR Czechia Participatory Assessments Report (2024)



UNHCR-IOM assessment on housing (April 2024)



Socio-Economic Insights Survey (SEIS), 2024

UNHCR Czechia Protection Monitoring Dashboard

UNHCR is grateful for the support from our top government donors, the private sector and individuals to Czechia and the Ukraine situation:

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