

NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM SUPPORT IN UKRAINE

Programme brief — Social benefits top-up



World Food
Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES



SUMMARY

- The Social benefits top-up cash assistance programme is designed and implemented jointly by WFP, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the Pension Fund of Ukraine and is aligned with the PeReHID initiative goals to support sustainable transition from humanitarian response to more resilient national system.
- The programme targets pensioners with low social benefits, who reside in the war-affected areas of Ukraine.
- Since August 2023, more than **317,000** beneficiaries were supported with the provision of complementary cash assistance to help them meet their essential needs.

- Assessments repeatedly show that older people and people living with disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable to food insecurity and deprivation of other essential needs. Evidence also confirm that humanitarian needs are more severe, the closer people live to the front line. Being a low-income pensioner living in close proximity to hostilities means higher unmet humanitarian needs.
- While the Ukrainian social benefit system, including pensions, has continued functioning during wartime, minimum social benefits have not been adjusted in response to the highly increased needs caused by the war.
- In WFP's complementary social benefit assistance programme with the Pension Fund of Ukraine and the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, WFP supports pensioners – meaning both old-age

pensioners and people on disability pensions - who receive less than 3,000* UAH/month in total social benefits and who live in the most war-affected hromadas in the South, East and North of the country.

- Each eligible pensioner receives the difference between their governmental benefits and 3,000* UAH, making WFP's transfer a complementary assistance to ensure a minimum subsistence level as defined by the Government of Ukraine.
- The purpose of this programme is to enable the most vulnerable and conflict-exposed pensioners to meet minimum essential needs, in the face of the major shock presented by the war which has spawned humanitarian needs across the country and in particular for people living in proximity to the front line.

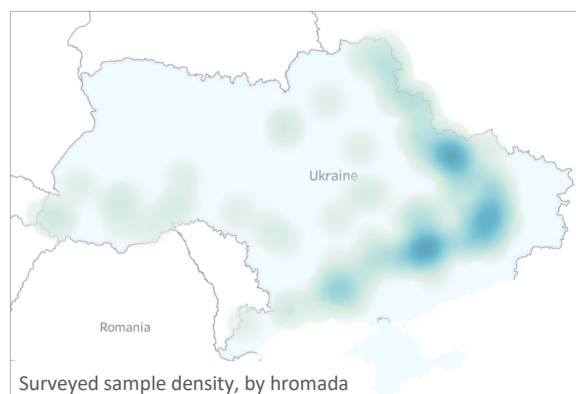
*the threshold was revised to 3,250 UAH after the data collection

Programme baseline—key findings

Data collection

In the beginning of the programme implementation, WFP initiated a data collection exercise to establish a reference benchmark and gain in-depth understanding of the selected beneficiaries' food security status, living conditions and overall needs.

A total number of 772 beneficiaries were remotely surveyed in October 2023. The respondents were selected from the list of all eligible pensioners with a valid phone number using random sampling methodology.



Sample characteristics



58% of respondents are **female**

57

y.o. average **age** of respondent



2.4 average **size** of household



4/5 (83%) live in **urban** or urban-type settlements



One quarter (23%) live in hromadas which are **less than 30 km away from the front line**



22% have **children** (0-17 y.o.)



67% have **chronically ill** household member



49% have household member with **disability**



38% of households are **elderly** (all members 60+ y.o.)



77% are **not displaced**
14% are **displaced**
9% were displaced but had **returned**

Shock exposure

Following the outbreak of the full-scale war in February 2022, the majority of beneficiaries confirmed facing various conflict-related shocks. This includes:

- 68% faced active hostilities within their settlement (battles/shelling/air attacks);
- 63% faced lack of access to basic infrastructure, such as water, heating and/or electricity;

- 44% faced permanent or temporary loss of income;
- 33% faced separation of the household members;
- 28% faced damages or destruction of housing;
- 11% faced occupation of their settlement;
- 10% faced civilian casualty in their household.

Access to markets and services

Almost all beneficiaries have confirmed that they have full or partial access to markets and financial services — such as physical access to banks, ATMs and post services.

At the same time, around a third of beneficiaries reported having trouble accessing regular mobile network connection and stable internet connection.

Beneficiaries also reported facing challenges to access necessary health services and medicines, especially in areas closer to the front line, where one quarter of respondents stated not being able to access necessary health services and one third reported not being able to access necessary medicines.

Food Security

Consolidated Approach for Reporting Food Security Indicators (CARI)

The Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) is a harmonized WFP method used to analyse primary data from a single household's food security survey, and to classify households according to their level of food security.

ESTIMATED SHARE OF FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE (MODERATELY AND SEVERELY FOOD INSECURE)	UKRAINE COUNTRY-WIDE MULTISECTORAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (MSNA), 2023	SOCIAL BENEFITS TOP-UP PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES BASELINE SURVEY
	20%	50%

The CARI classification is based on a combination of food security indicators, which reflect household status in two domains: household current consumption status and household coping capacity status. The analysis indicates that the food insecurity of the selected beneficiaries is much higher (50%) than for the general population of Ukraine surveyed in the 2023 MSNA (20%) and that it is largely driven by their strained longer-term coping capacity.

Current Consumption

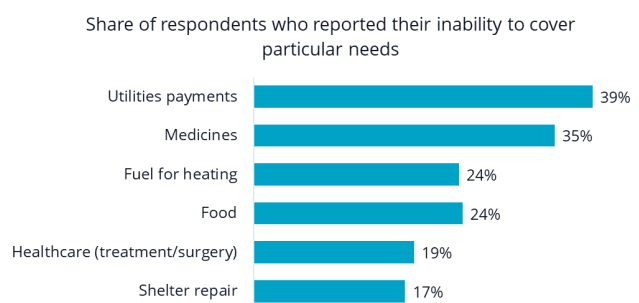
- 24% of respondents were found to have insufficient food consumption defined by a borderline (18%) or poor (7%) Food Consumption Score (FCS).
- 78% of respondents reported relying on food-based coping strategies, where the most adopted ones are consuming cheaper food and reducing portion sizes at meal times to cope with lack of means to sustain the usual diet.

Coping Capacity

- 90% of respondents had to adopt at least one of the livelihood coping strategies in order to cover their essential needs, the ones most frequently used were spending savings (stress level) and reducing essential expenditures on health (crisis level).
- Overall, 76% of respondents have monthly household expenditures per capita below the Minimum Expenditure Basket, as decided by the Cash Working Group.

Needs perception

- 59% of respondents stated that their household is not able to cover its needs independently.
- The unmet needs most frequently mentioned are Food, Health (medicines and healthcare) and Shelter (utilities payments, fuel for heating and shelter repair).



Next steps

WFP together with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the Pension Fund of Ukraine will continue to closely monitor the programme implementation and adjust its design if needed. WFP will implement a follow-up data collection exercise after six consecutive months of complementary cash assistance provision to monitor the food security situation of the beneficiaries and analyse the programme outcomes.

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