

Temporary guidance on adapting the procedures on provision of the assistance envisaged by the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on individual protection assistance to recognized refugees, asylum seekers and stateless (IPA-RAS SOPs) by UNHCR social partners in Ukraine in response to COVID-19 pandemic

The procedures outlined should be considered as a temporary Annex to the IPA SOPs valid from the moment of notification by UNHCR until further communication from UNHCR on their deactivation.

1. General amendments

Given closure of the regional departments of the State Migration Service of Ukraine the requirement for PoCs to provide extended asylum-seeker/refugee certificate in order to receive assistance according to these SOPs is temporary lifted. The Partners should use as a supporting document copy of the documents currently available with the applicant.

Updated supporting document which might be difficult to obtain due to the disrupted work of various institutions (medical, educational, government agencies, etc.) and movement restrictions, will not be required for the respective types of assistance. These may include medical documents (unless required for medical reasons), academic records and references for students, home visit forms, etc. Previously submitted documents should be used for the assessment of the cases. In the absence of previously submitted documents, Partner should exercise its judgement giving benefit of the doubt to the PoC.

In 2020, due to re-prioritization of the budget to ensure necessary COVID response, UNHCR Ukraine will not be in a position to provide school uniform assistance and livelihoods grants. In case of changes, the information will be widely announced through UNHCR website and Partners.

2. Monthly Subsistence Allowance

The original written application for monthly subsistence allowance is not required. Applications submitted through different communication channels (message in social media, email, photo of a written application, etc.) will be accepted. However, the Partner social counsellor should ensure that the application, regardless in which form it was submitted, is stored in the individual PoC's file. In the exceptional cases, the application can be submitted verbally over the phone with social councilor recording it in writing noting the circumstances on the submission.

During the quarantine period, the Partner should not conduct home visit to the PoC who have applied for Monthly Subsistence Allowance (MSA). The information on living conditions should be recorded in the Annex 4 as per the verbal statement of a PoC.

The review of cases for Monthly Subsistence Allowance will take place remotely via video conference. The Partner should ensure that all supporting documents are provided electronically to the members of the MSA Committee in the advance of the meeting. The transfer of files containing personal data should be done through secure means.

All the cases approved for 4 months during the previous MSA committee meeting will be extended automatically. Thus, the above described procedure and application process is applicable only to new cases.

3. New arrivals assistance

To ensure timely assistance to newcomers, the new arrivals assistance will be distributed in cash through operational advance provided to the Partners by UNHCR. The amounts to be distributed are established in Annex 2 of the SOPs.

4. Medical assistance/reimbursements of medical expenses

Given limited access to medical institutions, the requirement for doctor's prescription is lifted for the following medicines, medical items as well as non-medical preventive items as recommended by the Partners' Medical Advisors:

- Alcohol-containing antiseptics for skin (hands);
- Soap;
- Antipyretic drugs (based on paracetamol and ibuprofen);
- Drops in the nose/nasal sprays (non-hormonal) on the basis of xylomethasone (xymelin, otrivin, xylene, farmazolin, eucasolin, rinamistin; oxymethasone - nazivin, afrin, rinnazoline, noksprey); naphazoline (naphthyzin, sanorin); interferon (nazoferon, grippferon); and also for washing the nose - humer, aqua maris, etc.);
- Throat spray/pills (with moisturizing effect - aqualor, aqua maris; with anti-inflammatory effect - tantum verde, anti-angina, anhydak, with antiseptic effect - hexoral, chlorophyllip, orasept, oralsep, givalex, lysobact, dekatilen, trakhisan, etc.);
- Sublingual tablets (ansibel, septefril, strepsils, pharyngosept, decatilene, etc.);
- Cough medicine (dry cough syrup, expectorant, etc.);
- Eye drops (okomistin, tobreks, etc.);
- Antiviral drugs (groprinosin, laferobion, etc.);
- Antihistamines (suprastin, fenistil, tavegil, etc.);
- Expectorant drug;
- Vitamin C;
- Analgin.

Medical Advisor's judgement is a sufficient safeguard against the fraud. Medical Advisor can decrease quantity in his/her recommendation, if people submit the receipts for large quantities of medicine from the list above. The medicine listed above can also be purchased by families in advance in reasonable quantities.

The costs of face masks and respirators will not be reimbursed. Exceptions will be made for the cases when a person is suspected to have or has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and procurement of these items, including for the all members of the household, is prescribed by the doctor and/or recommended by the Medical Advisor.

The period for submission of the medical reimbursement claim by PoCs for review of the Partner Medical Advisor is extended for up to six (6) months from the purchase of medication/medical examination/test etc.

The validity period of the referrals to the contacted by partners medical facilities is prolonged up to 30 days.

5. Supplementary assistance to meet specific needs

5.1. On-going supplementary assistance programme

Supplementary assistance with food and hygienic items will be implemented by UNHCR directly through cash-based intervention for 2 months upfront in the amounts established in Annex 2. The lists of beneficiaries of the assistance for upcoming month should be sent by 25th of the previous month.

No renewal of the documents is required and the assistance will be automatically prolonged based on previously submitted documents for upcoming month for those cases which are to be reviewed.

5.2. One-time cash assistance for hygienic items to risk groups in response to COVID-19

One-time cash assistance is introduced to support UNHCR persons of concern from risk categories, namely elderly (60+) and PoCs with serious medical condition to cover their need in preventive health items during outbreak of COVID-19.

a. Eligibility

All PoC eligible for UNHCR assistance that fall into the following categories:

- Elderly PoCs (60+)
- Pregnant women
- POCs in serious medical condition which includes, but not limited to:
 - chronic lung or respiratory disease
 - serious heart conditions
 - immunocompromised
 - diabetes
 - chronic kidney and liver disease
 - long term neurological condition
 - other serious medical condition

b. Exclusion

The residents of Temporary Accommodation Centers are not covered by one-time cash assistance to risk categories. The hygienic items will be provided to TAC residents in-kind to supplement preventive measures taken by the State Migration Service.

c. Frequency

One-time.

d. Amount

The assistance amounts to 1,000 UAH per individual with a maximum of 3 persons being assisted in the household (up to 3,000 UAH per household). The amount is based on the state assistance to Ukrainian elderly as a scale up of their pensions due to COVID-19.

e. Processing

Identification and assessment

Beneficiaries of the assistance are identified through proGres database and NGO Partners caseload. The medical condition of the beneficiaries was assessed based on earlier provided medical documents by Partner Medical Advisors. The Advisor should specify the reason for the assistance and his/her recommendation in the Cash Enrollment Form (Annex 7).

The Partner submits to UNHCR the list of the eligible PoC along with the following documents:

- signed Enrollment in Cash Program Form (Annex 7) per each recipient;
- copy of the POC document.

Decision by UNHCR

The list of identified PoC and supporting documents are to be submitted to UNHCR for review and approval. Upon submission of the requested documents, UNHCR Community-Based Protection Associate verified accuracy of the data and submits the finalized list for approval.

f. Pay mode/disbursement

The pay mode for one-time cash assistance to risk groups is specified in Country-level SOPs for UNHCR cash-based interventions through direct implementation.

g. Monitoring and reporting requirements

The monitoring is performed by the Partner as part of the case management activities and by UNHCR as specified in Country-level SIOs for UNHCR cash-based interventions. Post Distribution Monitoring by UNHCR is carried out once per year.

6. Language classes for beginners

In order to encourage wide participation of asylum-seekers and refugees in the UNHCR Ukrainian language courses at the beginner's level, UNHCR will continue to provide small allowance for the students who are attending 75% of the online classes to cover the costs of network connection. The amount to be provided remains the same as outlined in the Annex 2 of the SOPs.

7. COVID-19 support to recipients of self-reliance grant

The PoCs who received grants in 2018-2019 for small business and who were highly affected by the disruption of business activity will be supported with additional assistance.

a. Eligibility/Exclusion

All PoC who received self-reliance grants in 2018-2019 for development of small business. The PoC who were supported with vocational training are not eligible for this type of support.

b. Frequency/Review Schedule

Depending on the duration of state-imposed COVID-19 related measures, the assistance could be issued more than once. The situation will be assessed by UNHCR periodically every two months.

c. Amount

The amount of one payment will not exceed 10% of the initially approved amount of the grant as envisaged by the SOPs.

d. Processing

Identification and assessment

Selection of the grant beneficiaries for the support will be done by UNHCR through analysis of the market situation by business type and individual assessment of the situation of each beneficiary in order to evaluate negative effect of the COVID outbreak on business activity. The list of grant beneficiaries recommended for support will be presented for review of the Self-reliance Grants Selection Committee.

Decision by the Committee

The review of cases by the Self-reliance grants committee will take place remotely via video conference. During the Committee meeting, UNHCR Livelihoods Grants Assistant present the case and provides justification for issuance of COVID-19 support to recipient of self-reliance grants.

e. Pay mode/disbursement

The pay mode is specified in Country-level SOPs for UNHCR cash-based interventions through direct implementation.

8. COVID-19 emergency cash assistance

UNHCR is providing one-time emergency cash assistance to cover urgent financial needs and prevent the emergence of protection concerns. This assistance will be one-off transfer of two months of the normal monthly transfer is relevant in the Ukrainian context. UNHCR Ukraine will assist in priority the following individuals with a one-time emergency cash assistance:

a. Eligibility

- Large families¹ without access to social protection or other support, which have lost their primary source of income due to COVID-19 related measures
- Smaller families without access to social protection or other support, which have lost their primary source of income due to COVID-19 related measures and which include:
 - Dependent with a medical condition (severe and chronic - risk group);
 - Elderly person (60 +), including elderly individuals living alone;
 - Children below 12 years of age;
 - Single parent families
- All households, and individuals, living in, or at risk of, a situation of homelessness (due to loss of income and non-payment of rent as a result of COVID-19 related measures) and who are unable to access other accommodation modalities or social protection schemes.

Will not be covered:

- Persons who have been on the territory of Ukraine for a prolonged period (over 10 years) or who have access to social protection schemes (recognized refugees and CP holders, who have been granted state protection over 3 years ago)

¹ In Ukraine, UNHCR is following the Ukrainian legislation according to which large families comprise households with three children or more (Article 1, of the Law on Protection Of Childhood (про охорону дитинства) - <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2402-14>). The same definition is followed for the implementation of the Individual Protection Assistance programme (SOPs).

- Individuals and families who are accommodated in the government Temporary Accommodation Centers and who have access to accommodation, food parcels, hygienic items
- The individuals and families who already benefited from UNHCR support as part of a regular support to the most vulnerable groups in Ukraine. In accordance with the IPA SOPs, if they meet the eligibility criteria, they will continue to be assisted.

b. Frequency

Depending on the duration of state-imposed COVID-19 related measures, the assistance could be issued more than once. The situation will be assessed by UNHCR periodically every two months.

c. Amount

The amount is based on the MSA assistance for most vulnerable PoCs in Ukraine, outlined in Annex 2 to the IPA SOPs.

d. Processing

Identification and assessment

Beneficiaries of the assistance are identified through existing reliable household data available in proGres and Partner databases.

Decision by UNHCR

The list of identified PoC and supporting documents are to be submitted to UNHCR for review and approval. Upon submission of the requested documents, UNHCR Community-Based Protection Associate verified accuracy of the data and submits the finalized list for approval.

e. Pay mode/disbursement

The pay mode for one-time emergency cash assistance is specified in Country-level SOPs for UNHCR cash-based interventions through direct implementation.

f. Monitoring and reporting requirements

The monitoring is performed by the Partner as part of the case management activities and by UNHCR as specified in Country-level SOPs for UNHCR cash-based interventions. Post Distribution Monitoring by UNHCR is carried out once per year.