

Repair of Kharkiv's main heating network. ©UNICEF/ 2026

Winter Response 2026/2027 for Vulnerable Families with Children

Update 1

October 2026

unicef
for every child

Highlights

- 103,039 frontline families have received a one-off UAH 19,400 winter cash transfer through the Humanitarian and Resilience Account (HRA) of the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine to date; UNICEF is financing 104,000 families (US$45 million) through the HRA this winter.
- Seven district-heating projects have been completed since April, restoring and strengthening heating services for 364,817 people in Kryvyi Rih, Chernihiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Odesa.
- Solar and backup power have been installed at 23 health facilities serving 200,000 people. A further 67 health facilities are on-going.
- 4,864 tonnes of solid fuel have been delivered to provide a back-up heating source for 52 frontline health facilities and Invincibility Points.

Situation updates

Winter 2026-2027 is expected to be the most dangerous winter for children in Ukraine since the start of the full-scale war. Coordinated strikes from 29–30 September reportedly hit all three of the capital's combined heating and power plants (CHPs); CHPs in Kherson, Mykolaiv, Odesa and Sumy have been hit since August. Naftogaz recorded 293 attacks on its gas facilities between January and mid-August 2026. An 8 October attack caused city-wide blackouts in Kyiv, halted the metro and cut water pressure.

Regular power outage schedules have applied in Kyiv and seven regions since 9 October. The heating season began on 16 October for schools, hospitals and kindergartens in Kyiv city, with two left-bank districts excluded because of damage. An "energy ceasefire" announced by the United States on 11 October has not been observed: on 17 October 332 drones were launched against more than 15 energy facilities in what President Zelensky called one of the largest strikes on the grid.

At the fifth high-level energy meeting in Paris, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy Denys Shmyhal highlighted the **interconnected vulnerabilities of the country's power, water and heating systems**. Strikes on a small number of power facilities and water intakes could disrupt water for millions of people in urban areas. On 13 October, the Office of the President convened the Prime Minister, national authorities, embassies, the Humanitarian Coordinator and UN agencies to stress the urgency of emergency action on water, heating, energy, logistics and emergency response in frontline areas and four key cities: Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro and Odesa.

Winter cash assistance

Building on its role as one of the largest humanitarian winter cash actor over the previous two winters, and its efforts to strengthen linkages between humanitarian cash assistance and the national social protection system, together with the Shelter Cluster and other key humanitarian UN, NGO and INGO actors, UNICEF has been supporting the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity (MOSPFU) to **design and implement a government-led winter cash response** that combines national delivery systems with direct assistance from humanitarian partners. Under this hybrid model, vulnerable families living within 0-20 km of the frontline receive assistance through the government's HRA, while those living within 21-50 km are supported directly by humanitarian partners.

Through the HRA, 115,000 vulnerable families within 20 km of the frontline will receive a one-off transfer of UAH 19,400 (US$435, as of date of publishing) for essential winter costs, financed by UNICEF and the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS). UNICEF has provided US$45 million, thanks to generous contributions from its donors, for covering 104,000 of these families. By end-October, more than 160,000 applications had been received.

Seven payment rounds supported by UNICEF and URCS have been completed through the HRA to date, reaching 103,039 families, 90 per cent of the planned reach of 115,000 families. UNICEF has established risk mitigation, assurance and monitoring arrangements, including regular access to payment data and independent post-distribution monitoring to verify that eligible families receive the correct transfer amount. These measures strengthen accountability and help ensure that assistance reaches vulnerable households in time to prepare for winter.

District heating system repairs

Working with municipal utilities and local authorities, UNICEF is tackling the main risks to district-heating: damaged networks, ageing equipment, dependence on grid power and limited emergency repair capacity. **Since April 2026, seven district-heating projects have been completed, benefiting 364,817 people.**

At **Kyiv**'s Tsentralna boiler house, a 4.5 MW cogeneration unit has been delivered; foundation works are underway and completion is scheduled for the end of 2026. Inverters and energy-storage systems have also been provided to Kyivteploenergo's emergency repair teams so crews can keep working during outages across a system serving 1 million people.



Chernihiv pipe replacement

In **Chernihiv city**, UNICEF-procured pipes, fittings and valves enabled the regional heating utility to repair the network at 13 locations, benefiting 52,716 people.

In **Sumy city**, UNICEF is supporting the partial restoration of the city's CHP and its connection to the heating network. Key supplies, including boiler pipes, high-voltage switchgear and a network pump, have been delivered. The package will help restore power and heat of the heavily damaged CHP for 180,000 residents, as well as 26 schools, 23 kindergartens and 36 health facilities.

In **Kharkiv**, an overhaul of the technical-water main serving CHP-3 was completed in July 2026; the new main now operates alongside two existing lines, safeguarding heating for 160,000 people. Reconstruction of a critical heating main serving more than 100,000 people in eastern Kharkiv is due to finish by the end of November. Two gas cogeneration units (about 6.6 MW combined) are being installed to support heating and water systems: the first is in place and the second is expected to be installed by the end of 2026, providing independent power and heat during grid outages for more than 275,000 residents. In **Pisochyn**, repairs to the transit pipeline have been completed, improving heating for 14,500 residents.

In **Kryvyi Rih**, two gas-piston cogeneration units[1] (0.4 MW and 0.6 MW) are being installed at boiler houses; works are 20 per cent complete, with completion expected in December. UNICEF has also provided pipes, valves, repair fittings and welding equipment to one of the city's heating companies to allow rapid emergency repairs during power interruptions. Combined, the projects are expected to support 300,000 people.

In **Kramatorsk**, UNICEF has supported the heating company to restore gas, heat and electricity infrastructure, helping maintain services for the estimated 58,000 people still living in the city.

In **Zaporizhzhia**, three modular boiler houses with a combined capacity of 5.6 MW are being provided. The first unit is installed and the other two units are due by early November. In addition, water-treatment

[1] The co-generation units were provided separately by GIZ

systems are being reconstructed at three boiler houses (30 per cent complete), with completion expected in November, benefiting 300,000 people.




Preparations for Kryvyi Rih and Zaporizhzhia boiler house installation.

In **Voznesensk**, UNICEF has procured and installed two gas boilers serving 24,760 people, complementing existing electric and solid-fuel units. In **Novyi Buh**, a modular solid-fuel boiler house has been installed at a school, complementing the existing gas boiler and benefiting 420 people.

In **Kherson**, repairs to the heavily damaged CHP are complete and the facility is ready to resume heat supply. Water-treatment supplies have been delivered, with a final batch in transit, to support safe boiler operation for about 30,000 people. UNICEF also supported the full rehabilitation of Heating Point No. 17, restoring readiness to serve approximately 8,000 people.



Voznesensk gas boiler installation



Kherson heating point rehabilitation

School energy and heating grants

In 2026, under Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 1713, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) provided **grants of US$10,000 to 1,500 preschools and schools** in eight frontline regions (Kharkiv, Kherson, Chernihiv, Sumy, Odesa, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk), helping 443,000 children keep learning in safe, warm and functioning facilities through the winter.

A UNICEF post-delivery survey of 1,161 facilities found that grants were used to strengthen electricity resilience (54 per cent), improve building insulation (45 per cent), support heating systems (32 per cent) and buy fuel (8 per cent); respondents could select more than one use. For example, Nosivka Gymnasium No. 2 in Chernihiv Region installed energy-efficient windows and doors to reduce heat loss.



Improved windows in Nosivka Gymnasium 2

UNICEF and MOES are preparing amendments to Resolution No. 1713 to support an **additional 400 educational institutions** for the 2026–2027 heating season. UNICEF is also mobilizing resources to reach a total of 1,700 schools and preschools under its 2026–2027 winter plan, extending coverage to Kyiv region and Kyiv city given the escalation of attacks.

Health facility energy resilience

UNICEF has completed solar and backup power installations at 23 health facilities in Chernihiv, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Odesa and Zaporizhzhia, serving more than 200,000 people. A further 67 facilities are expected to be completed by the end of the year.





In the **Dnipro Regional Children Hospital**, UNICEF installed solar panels, inverters and batteries with a combined capacity of 240 kW. The equipment supports the day-to-day operations of the maternity ward, the oncohaematology department and the paediatric rehabilitation department – where the most vulnerable patients are, and where any power cut is unacceptable. Uninterrupted power supply is also critical for the blood bank and stem cell bank: a power outage there will have severe consequences.

This intervention ensures uninterrupted power supply to the **largest children hospital of the region**, serving more than 300,000 children and their parents annually.

Child protection

UNICEF has completed **solar-power projects** at five rehabilitation centres in Kyiv serving children and adults with disabilities, so that therapies, rehabilitation equipment and daily care can continue without interruption for 3,000 children and 2,000 adults.

UNICEF is equipping Resilience Centres to provide **mental health and psychosocial services** (MHPSS) to children and caregivers through the winter. As the centres also operate as heating points during outages, families seeking warmth will have access to psychosocial support. MHPSS materials and referral leaflets have been distributed to 63 Resilience Centres so staff can run structured activities for children and help caregivers manage stress during prolonged stays.

Emergency preparedness

UNICEF has delivered 3,759 out of the planned 9,000 tonnes of solid-fuel briquettes to 52 health and education facilities and Invincibility Points in frontline areas to keep services running through the winter, including during power and heating outages. These include six health facilities in Kherson region. In Tiahynska municipality, a frontline community under regular shelling, the fuel will keep the only functioning primary health care facility open. In Mylivska municipality, it will run UNICEF-supported modular boiler houses heating a rural health post and other public facilities.



Delivery of solid fuel to Borozenske, Kherson region

Awareness and safety campaigns

A recent UNICEF survey shows **strong demand for clear, timely information ahead of winter**. Nearly half of respondents (49 per cent) said clear information on what to expect and how to act would most help them feel prepared, and a third (34 per cent) wanted to know where and how to access support. In September, UNICEF supported the government platform eOpora with content which brings together household preparedness guidance and information on state support.



UNICEF supported the communication plan for the MOSPFU-led winter cash programme, including a brochure and poster on eligibility and how and where to apply. As many potential applicants have limited digital access, printed materials were distributed through 917 Ukrposhta offices, 164 Administrative Service Centres, 8 Pension Fund offices and 7 Resilience Centres. Digital promotion reached 491,875 people.

UNICEF and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) are running an emergency safety communication campaign that has reached some 206,000 people with practical advice on staying safe during power outages and using alternative heating, lighting and cooking safely. With SESU and Diia.Education, under the Cabinet of Ministers, UNICEF also launched two new episodes of the series 'How to Act in Emergency Situations'. Social media content on fire prevention, safe heating and household safety during and after attacks reached

184,670 people. With the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development, **UNICEF launched a campaign to help families prepare for water supply disruptions**, covering safe water sources, what to do when water quality is uncertain, and safe storage of emergency household supplies. Materials on passenger-train screens and social media have reached 3.9 million people, and content for parents and caregivers on UNICEF and Ministry channels has been seen by 722,024 people.

Funding requirements as of 18 October

UNICEF thanks the European Union, the Governments of Denmark, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, and the family of UNICEF National Committees for their contributions which are supporting the health, safety and well-being of children and families in Ukraine through the 2026–2027 winter.

Figures in US$:

Activity	Requirements	Funds received
Winter cash assistance	74,999,520	54,466,155
District heating system repairs	40,007,520	26,168,148
School energy and heating grants	18,745,714	2,250,095
Health facility energy resilience	14,580,000	12,035,171
Child protection	6,998,400	196,773
Emergency preparedness	5,248,800	5,708,639
Total	**160,579,954**	**100,824,980**

Visibility and external media

In September 2026, UNICEF stepped up winter communications and advocacy, focusing on the impact of hostilities and energy disruptions on children and families and on UNICEF's work with local partners, supported by donors, to protect access to essential services. Communications also highlighted early preparedness measures building on previous investments.



MOSPFU announces UAH 2.2 billion of international support for winter assistance



In this hospital, the lights never go out



Video: Warm Schools and Hospitals: Preparing for Winter in Ukraine



Water is vital to everyone. Always.

For previous winter response updates, please visit the UNICEF Ukraine website.

Who to contact for further information:

Anne-Claire Dufay
Representative
UNICEF Ukraine
adufay@unicef.org

Kenan Madi
Chief Field Operations
UNICEF Ukraine
kemadi@unicef.org

Fleur Roussel-Ward
Partnerships Specialist
UNICEF Ukraine
froussel@unicef.org