



## unrwa poverty assessment fact sheet

- Currently almost 868,000 Palestine refugees depend on food aid from UNRWA – half of Gaza's 1.76 million total population and 65 percent of the registered refugee population.
- Determining eligibility for food assistance using the Poverty Assessment System (PAS) is a routine process for UNRWA to ensure that food continues to be provided to those who need it most.
- Over the last year UNRWA has engaged in an effort to improve the quality, fairness and rapidity of the PAS. Home-based assessments were interrupted during this period of time but are due to restart in May 2015.
- The PAS is not related to the funding situation of the Agency. The provision of food assistance has its own funding stream that is separate to the funding for post-conflict activities. UNRWA will serve all those who are assessed as eligible for food assistance; there is no maximum number of food aid beneficiaries.

### Overview: Enhanced Poverty Assessment System (PAS)

- UNRWA reformed the PAS over the last year, reason why the home-based assessments were interrupted over that period of time.
- The reformed PAS is characterized by:
  - Improved rapidity and accuracy, through the introduction of tablet-based data collection and data entry.
  - Improved quality, through the strengthening of quality assurance procedures and the introduction of a robust appeal mechanism.
  - Improved fairness, by allowing women who do not hold their own refugee registration card number to be assessed and obtain food in their own name and by ensuring that families facing economic shocks can reapply quickly for an assessment.

### How does UNRWA assess who is poor and who is not?

- UNRWA adheres to a poverty targeting mechanism to identify eligibility for food assistance. To estimate the poverty status of the household, the methodology relies on household assets and other indicators or proxies such as housing conditions, demographics and employment situation.
- UNRWA uses the proxy-means testing formula (PMTF) which is based on data collection through home visits by UNRWA social workers. The formula is specific to the Gaza Strip.
- The assessment includes all individuals living together and sharing food.
- If beneficiaries already receive food assistance from UNRWA, their poverty status will be restudied automatically after two years from their last eligibility notification.
- As a result of the assessments, families can be added to or removed from the list of food aid beneficiaries, or have their rations increased or reduced.



### Who can apply for food aid?

- A registered refugee family.
- A MNR family (descendants and husbands of registered refugee women).
- A refugee family headed by a separate refugee woman registered under her husband's ration card (RC).
- A refugee family headed by a divorced refugee woman registered under her father's RC.
- A refugee family headed by a refugee wife of a polygamous marriage living separately from other wives sharing the same RC.
- A refugee family headed by a widow refugee woman of a deceased polygamous husband (whether she lives separately or with the other wives) sharing the same RC as the other widow wives.

### What are the different ways through which refugee families can apply for food aid?

- First application: Families who never applied to food assistance can submit a first application in the nearest UNRWA Area Relief and Social Services Office.
- Special-first application: This application is designed for women who are administratively linked to other individual's Family Registration Card (FRC) numbers but wish to be assessed and receive assistance separately.
- Re-application: Families who previously applied and were assessed as non-poor can reapply one year after their last result notification.
- Shock-reapplication: The shock-reapplication is designed to provide families classified as non-poor facing a major shock to their socioeconomic situation with an opportunity to reapply without waiting the minimal period of one year. Shock-reapplications can be activated under circumstances such as death or health-related incapacity of an income earning person, major loss of income-generating assets, a sudden increase in health expenditure or separation of families previously assessed together.

### How are beneficiaries notified about the assessment results?

- Families are notified during the quarter that follows the quarter of the visit. Families are informed as follows:
  - Application and Re-application: The family receives a SMS.
  - Restudy: The family is notified of the result's availability when collecting its food ration, and shall then approach the RSS office to obtain specific information.

### How can beneficiaries appeal their poverty status classification?

- Families who are not satisfied with their eligibility classification can appeal if:
  - Their ration was reduced or interrupted (if the family is reclassified from abject poor to absolute or non-poor, or from absolute poor to non-poor).
  - They were found non-poor after a new application or re-application.
- Eligible beneficiaries cannot appeal if there is no change in their classification as abject or absolute poor.
- Families who are not satisfied with their appeal result cannot appeal again. If their status is absolute poor their classification will be restudied within approximately two years. If their status is non-poor they can reapply one year after the appeal result notification.
- Any family can obtain updated information on its eligibility status at the nearest Area Relief and Social Services Office.

### How does UNRWA cooperate with other international organisations providing food assistance?

- UNRWA coordinates with the World Food Programme (WFP) to ensure that UNRWA and WFP assistance are complementing each other. Both, UNRWA and the WFP are relying on the proxy-means testing formula (PMTF) for their targeting. The formula used by UNRWA is both recent and Gaza-specific. The provision of UNRWA assistance relies on systematic and regular home-based data collection with high accuracy and consistency. The overall number of food beneficiaries has steadily increased since 2000, which shows the responsiveness of the Agency to the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in the Gaza Strip.



united nations relief and works agency  
for palestine refugees in the near east

[www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.

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