

Federal Decree-Law No. (23) of 2024 on Social Support and Empowerment

We, Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates;

- Having reviewed the Constitution; and
- Federal Law No. (1) of 1972, On the Competences of Ministries and the Powers of Ministers, as amended; and
- Federal Law No. (2) of 2001, On the Social security, as amended; and
- Based on the proposal submitted by the Minister of Community Development, and the Cabinet's approval,

Have promulgated the following Decree-Law:

Article (1)

Definitions

In application of the provisions of this Decree by Law, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings assigned to each of them, unless the context otherwise requires:

State	: United Arab Emirates (UAE).
Ministry	: Ministry of Community Development.
Minister	: Minister of Community Development.
Social Support	: A monthly amount disbursed to the beneficiary in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law.
Beneficiary	: Any person who meets the eligibility criteria for social support as stipulated in this Decree by Law and its Executive Regulation.
Primary Beneficiary	: The beneficiary under his name the social support is approved and disbursed in accordance with the provisions of this Decree by Law.
Family	: A group of individuals consisting of the primary beneficiary and those under his/her care from among the beneficiaries.

Higher Education : The educational stage that follows general education and is provided by higher education institutions that award students an academic or professional degree in accordance with the provisions of Federal Decree-Law No. (48) of 2021 on Higher Education.

Article (2)

Decree-Law Objectives

This Decree-Law aims to support and empower the citizens of the State through a social support program aiming to achieve the following:

1. Providing support to low-income UAE families to meet their living needs and enable them to secure a decent life for their members.
2. Providing social protection to the most vulnerable groups in society.
3. Working on economically empowering beneficiaries to ensure that they achieve financial independence.
4. Promoting a culture of shared responsibility by helping beneficiaries engage in the labour market and play an effective and productive role in society.
5. Providing support and relief in case of crises and disasters.

Article (3)

Social Support Elements

Social support consists of basic allowances, supplementary allowances, and other allowances stipulated in this Decree-Law, provided that the eligibility conditions are met. This shall be in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law, its Executive Regulation, and the resolutions issued for its implementation.

Article (4)

Eligibility Conditions for Basic and Supplementary Allowances

To be eligible for basic and supplementary allowances for social support, the following conditions shall be met:

1. The beneficiary must be a citizen holding the nationality of the State.
2. The beneficiary must reside permanently in the State in accordance with the controls set forth by the Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law.
3. The age of the primary beneficiary must not be less than (21) twenty-one Gregorian years.
4. The primary beneficiary must be under the age of (45) forty-five Gregorian years, employed and insured by one of the social insurance and pensions funds in the State, or he/she is retired.
5. The total monthly income of the family must be less than the eligibility threshold specified in Article (6) of this Decree-Law.
6. The total value of the assets owned by the family must be less than the minimum asset threshold as determined by a Cabinet resolution.

Article(5)

Basic Allowances for Social Support

1. The basic allowances for social support consist of the following:
 - a. Allowance for the primary beneficiary.
 - b. Allowance for the spouse in accordance with the controls set forth by the Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law.
 - c. Allowance for children under the age of (21) twenty-one Gregorian years, or under the age (25) of twenty-five Gregorian years if they study at higher education until they complete their higher education, get married, or begin working, whichever earlier. This also shall apply to their equivalents who are engaged in national service.
2. The Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law shall determine the amounts of the basic allowances stipulated in this Article.

Article (6)

Mechanism for Calculating the Family Eligibility Threshold

The family eligibility threshold shall be calculated based on the total amount of basic allowances in accordance with the number of family members.

Article (7)

Mechanism for Calculating the Eligible Basic Allowance

The value of the entitled basic allowance shall be calculated by subtracting the total monthly income of the family from the family eligibility threshold.

Article(8)

Mechanism for Calculating the Total Monthly Income of the Family

1. The total monthly income of the family shall be calculated based on the sum of the amounts collected by the family on a regular and continuous basis. This shall include salaries, pensions, net income from private businesses, and revenues from real estate and financial assets, as determined by the Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law.
2. Amounts deducted for pensions, social insurance, and in-kind assistance collected by the beneficiary from social or health institutions, as well as other amounts specified by the Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law, shall not be included in the calculation of monthly income.

Article (9)

Complementary Allowances

1. The following supplementary allowances shall be added to the basic due allowance if the eligibility conditions are met:
 - a. Housing Allowance: This is a monthly allowance granted to the primary beneficiary who does not own a residential unit and does not receive financial support for housing from federal or local governmental entities, or if the support received from those entities is less than the housing allowance stipulated in this Decree-Law.
 - b. Academic Excellence Allowance: This is a monthly allowance granted to the children of the primary beneficiary to encourage their academic excellence during higher education, according to the conditions set by the Education and Human Resources Council.
 - c. Seasonal Allowance: This allowance is granted to the beneficiary on special occasions, such as national holidays.

2. The Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law shall determine the conditions and procedures to grant the complementary allowances stipulated in this Article.

Article (10)

Special Categories

1. The special categories shall include the following:
 - a. Orphans and children of convicted individuals in the absence of the mother or if she is not eligible, as well as individuals of unknown parentage.
 - b. Individuals with health disabilities who can prove their inability to work.
 - c. Persons with disabilities, referred to as “people of determination.”
 - d. Widow, divorced, abandoned women, the wife of a convicted individual, and the woman who is married to a foreigner who is unable to work.
2. The conditions of eligibility for social support as stipulated in Article (4) of this Decree-Law shall apply to the special categories, except for the conditions relevant to age or employment.
3. The Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law shall determine the specific eligibility conditions for each of these special categories, the amount of social support, and the controls for granting exceptions stipulated in Clause (2) of this Article.

Article (11)

Periodic Evaluation of the Eligibility Threshold and Allowances

1. The Ministry shall study the eligibility threshold and the amounts of allowances stipulated in this Decree-Law, evaluate the conditions of the beneficiaries, and assess the impact of the economic and social conditions in the country on them. A periodic report in this regard shall be submitted to the Cabinet.
2. The Cabinet may, based on the proposal of the Minister upon coordination with the Ministry of Finance, amend the eligibility threshold and adjust the amounts of basic, supplementary, and other allowances stipulated in this Decree-Law, or introduce new allowances, in light of economic and social indicators and any other relevant factors.

Article (12)

Application for Social Support and Decision Thereof

1. An application for social support shall be submitted to the Ministry using the prepared form, accompanied by supporting documents that verify the accuracy of the data and information contained in the form. The Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law shall specify the data, information and documents that support the application.
2. The application for social support shall be attached with a commitment to provide accurate data and consent to conduct the periodic social research performed by the Ministry.
3. The Ministry shall study the application for social support and decide on it within a period not exceeding (30) thirty days from the date of completing all data, information and documents referred to in Clause (1) of this Article.
4. The applicant shall provide the Ministry with any updates that may arise or affect his/her eligibility for social support after submitting the application and before a decision is made.
5. The Ministry shall inform the applicant of its decision, whether to accept or reject the application, and the decision shall be justified if the application is rejected.
6. The application shall be registered and approved in the name of the primary beneficiary, and beneficiaries at the family shall be attached to such primary beneficiary.

Article (13)

Social Support Account

The Ministry shall open a bank account within the State in the name of the primary beneficiary and deposit the social support per month into this account. The Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law shall specify the procedures for opening the account and the family members who are authorized to withdraw from such account in case of the primary beneficiary's death, or in any other case.

Article (14)

Representation of the Primary Beneficiary

Social support shall be paid to the primary beneficiary in person. However, representation may be allowed in submitting the application for social support, receiving the support, updating data, or filing a grievance by a guardian, custodian, or pursuant to an official power of attorney.

Article (15)

Updating the Beneficiary Data

The primary beneficiary or his/her representative to receive social support in accordance with the provisions of Article (14) shall inform the Ministry of any changes in his/her status or the legal, financial, job, social or health status of the attached beneficiaries legally that may affect eligibility for support or modify its amount, within a period not exceeding (30) thirty days from the date of the change, and to undertake to provide accurate data when updating his/her information with the Ministry.

Article (16)

Death of the Primary Beneficiary

1. If the primary beneficiary dies and is receiving social support only for himself/herself, the disbursement of social support shall be stopped in the month following his/her death, and the Ministry shall recover any amounts deposited in the social support account, if any.
2. If the primary beneficiary dies and has family members who are beneficiaries of social support, the disbursement of the deceased primary beneficiary's allowance shall be stopped in the month following his/her death. This is provided that the Ministry shall evaluate the situation of the family members of the deceased in accordance with the conditions stipulated in this Decree-Law and its Executive Regulation within a period not exceeding (30) thirty days from the date of the death of the primary beneficiary. The allowances for the beneficiaries from the family of the deceased shall continue to be disbursed until the evaluation of the family's situation is completed.

Article (17)

Penalties

1. Anyone who deliberately provides false information or intentionally refrains from providing the data referred to in this Decree-Law or its Executive Regulation to obtain social support, increase the amount of social support, or continue receiving social support without justification shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine not exceeding fifty thousand (50,000) Dirhams, or by one of these penalties.
2. The imposition of the penalty stipulated in this Decree-Law shall not prejudice any severer penalty stipulated in any other law.

Article (18)

Cases for Recovering Social Support

1. The Ministry shall recover the social support in any of the following cases:
 - a. If no amount has been withdrawn from the social support account for (3) three consecutive months without justification.
 - b. If the social support is disbursed to the beneficiary in violation of the eligibility conditions and the amounts of the due allowances.
2. The amounts of unjustified support shall be recovered retroactively, provided that the deduction rate does not exceed (20%) twenty percent of the amount of the basic allowances that are monthly due.
3. The Cabinet may exempt the beneficiary from repaying all or part of the amounts disbursed without justification, based on the proposal of the Minister after coordination with the Ministry of Finance.

Article (19)

Deduction from the Social Support

Deduction from social support amounts may not be made unless in compliance with a final court judgement for alimony or for the payment of a governmental debt that is due, provided that the deduction does not exceed (20%) twenty percent of the amount of the basic allowances due to the convicted beneficiary.

Article (20)

Cases for Suspending Social Support

Social support shall be suspended for the beneficiary in any of the following cases:

1. If any of the eligibility conditions is no longer met.
2. If the beneficiary is placed in a penal and correctional institution.
3. If the beneficiary is permanently placed in any healthcare institutions.
4. If no amount has been withdrawn from the social support account for (3) three consecutive months without justification.
5. If it is proved by the Ministry that false information or forged documents were submitted to obtain the support or to conceal data or information that could affect the decision regarding the disbursement of the social support and the determination of the amounts of allowances.
6. Any other case determined by a Cabinet Resolution based on the proposal of the Minister.

Article (21)

Grievance

1. A Grievance Committee shall be established within the Ministry to consider grievances submitted regarding decisions issued under the provisions of this Decree-Law and its Executive Regulation.
2. The Committee shall be formed by a resolution of the Minister, which shall specify the Committee's work regulation.
3. Anyone who has received a decision or an action is taken against him/her in implementation of the decisions mentioned in Clause (1) of this Article may submit a grievance request to the Committee within a period not exceeding (30) thirty days from the date he/she is notified of the decision.
4. The Committee shall study the grievance request and decide on it within a period not exceeding (30) thirty days from the date on which the request is submitted. Decisions of the Committee shall be effective from the date they are issued.
5. If the grievance is found to be valid, the social support shall be disbursed retroactively for the period it is due, provided that the amounts disbursed shall not exceed (6) six months.

6. No appeals against the decisions of the Ministry issued in implementation of the provisions of this Decree-Law shall be accepted before submitting a grievance in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

Article (22)

Empowerment

1. The Ministry shall coordinate with the relevant federal and local governmental entities to prepare a comprehensive program for empowering each beneficiary who has the health capacity and educational qualifications or skills that enable him/her to work. This shall be through the following:
 - a. Preparing an empowerment plan that aligns with the beneficiary's health, social conditions, and professional readiness.
 - b. Developing suitable empowerment programs to enhance the beneficiaries' abilities and enable them to involve into the labour market.
 - c. Following up the empowerment of beneficiaries who are capable of working according to the empowerment plan to ensure their seriousness in seeking employment and their acceptance of suitable job and training offers.
2. The Ministry may, if it is found that the beneficiary is not adhering to the empowerment plan, suspend the disbursement of the social support in accordance with the controls and conditions determined by a Cabinet resolution.

Article (23)

Social Investigation

The Ministry shall conduct periodic social investigation to follow up the status of beneficiaries of the social support program and assess their needs from economic, financial, health, and social perspectives, as well as the continuity of their eligibility for support and the amounts of due allowances. The procedures for social investigation shall include collecting relevant data, verifying it, requesting documents, visiting the beneficiaries' residences, and conducting field research based on what the Ministry deems necessary to enable the latter to study social

support applications and conduct regular follow-ups on the status of beneficiaries of the social support program.

The Executive Regulation of this Decree-Law shall specify the mechanism for the social investigation.

Article (24)

Cooperation with the Ministry

1. The Ministry may require all personal, financial, credit and social, as well as any other information it deems necessary to study social support applications and conduct regular follow-ups on the status of beneficiaries of the social support program. The submission of a social support application shall be considered a permission for the Ministry to collect and obtain this information from any source.
2. All relevant entities in the State shall cooperate with the Ministry and provide it with the data, information, statistics, documents, and studies it requests via electronic linkage.
3. The data and information related to those eligible for social support shall be confidential and shall be used only for the purposes of reviewing the applications and conducting regular follow-ups on the continuation of social support disbursement. Such information may not be disclosed or made accessible to others, whether directly or indirectly, without a written consent of the support recipient.

Article (25)

Inflation Allowance

The Cabinet may, based on a proposal by the Minister, decide to grant a temporary allowance called the Inflation Allowance to citizen families in order to mitigate the financial burdens caused by the rising prices and to enable them to meet their living needs. The resolution shall specify the amount of the allowance and the conditions and criteria for eligibility.

Article (26)

Support for the Unemployed

Based on the proposal of the Minister, A Cabinet resolution shall be issued specifying the controls for disbursing social support to those unemployed outside the private sector due to circumstances beyond their control, as well as other eligible cases for this support. The resolution shall specify the amount of support and the conditions for eligibility.

Article (27)

Relief and Emergency Support

Based on the proposal of the Minister, A Cabinet resolution shall be issued specifying the controls for disbursing social support to face crises and catastrophes. The resolution shall specify the amount of support and the conditions and controls for eligibility.

Article (28)

Funding Resources for the Social Support Program

The financial resources for the social support program shall consist of:

1. The funds allocated to the social support program in the Ministry's budget.
2. Donations, contributions, grants, and subsidies provided to the Ministry, as approved by the Minister.
3. Any other resources approved by the Cabinet.

Article (29)

Beneficiaries under Federal Law No. (2) of 2001 and the Resolutions Issued for its Implementation

1. Social support payments shall continue to be disbursed in accordance with the provisions of Federal Law No. (2) of 2001 concerning Social Security and its amendments, and the resolutions issued for its implementation, for the beneficiaries at the time of the issuance of this Decree-Law in the following cases:

- a. If the beneficiary is eligible for social support under Federal Law No. (2) of 2001 concerning Social Security and its amendments but does not meet the eligibility conditions stipulated in this Decree-Law and its Executive Regulation.
 - b. If the social support amount that is due under the provisions of this Decree-Law is less than the social support amount being disbursed to the beneficiary under Federal Law No. (2) of 2001 concerning Social Security and its amendments.
2. A beneficiary of social support under the provisions of Federal Law No. (2) of 2001 concerning Social Security and its amendments shall be eligible to receive the supplementary allowances stipulated in this Decree-Law or any allowances that may be introduced under its provisions, provided that such beneficiary meets the eligibility conditions.
3. Provisions of Article (22) of this Decree-Law shall apply to beneficiaries of social support under Federal Law No. (2) of 2001 concerning Social Security and its amendments.

Article (30)

Executive Regulation

The Council of Ministers, based on a proposal of the Minister, shall issue the Executive Regulation for this Decree-Law within (3) three months from the date of publication. This Decree-Law shall come into force as of the date of its enforcement.

Article (31)

Repeals

Any provision that violates or contradicts the provisions of this Decree-Law shall be repealed.

Article (32)

Publication and Entry into Force

This Decree-Law shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall enter into force (3) three months after the date of its publication.

Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates

Issued by us at the Presidential Palace – Abu Dhabi:

On: 27 Rabi` al-Awwal 1446 A.H.

Corresponding to: 30 September 2024 AD