

A New Stage of The Social Protection System for Children in Family Orphanages

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Abstract: One of the important factors for the active integration of orphans and children deprived of parental care in society and their equal status with other individuals. To date, as a result of various promotional activities carried out in our society, the role of a social approach to orphans and children deprived of parental care is gradually, but gradually, being strengthened.

This article provides information on the forms of financing the costs associated with comprehensive support for orphans and children deprived of parental care and the provision of social assistance to them.

Keywords: Voucher, orphans and children deprived of parental care, Fund, individual integration plan, individual development plan, specialized educational institutions, legal representative, seller, foster family, regional administration.

Introduction: On May 5, 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 294 titled "On Additional Measures to Finance Expenses Related to Comprehensive Support and the Provision of Social Assistance to Orphans and Children Deprived of Parental Care." This resolution, which came into force on May 8, aims to bring the system of supporting socially vulnerable youth in the country to a new level. It encompasses not only the expansion of financial assistance but also a wide range of measures such as strengthening education, psychological support, and social integration. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the resolution's content, socio-economic context, potential impact, shortcomings, and implementation challenges.

Socio-Economic Context of the Resolution

In recent years, Uzbekistan has taken significant steps toward developing its social protection system. Within the framework of the National Strategy for Social Protection for 2021–2030, supporting orphans and children without parental care has become one of the key areas of state policy.

In accordance with Presidential Decree No. PF-185 of November 14, 2024, "On Measures to Further Improve

the System of Social Protection for Children," aimed at increasing the effectiveness of measures to socially support orphans, children deprived of parental care, and children from socially vulnerable families, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Resolution No. 294 on May 5, 2025. The resolution focuses on making the support system for these categories of youth more effective. It is based on the country's economic growth trends and the increased allocation of the state budget to social expenditures. At the same time, special attention is paid to diversifying the financing of social programs through the active participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Key Components of the Resolution

Under this resolution, the Regulation on the Procedure for Providing Social Assistance to Orphans and Children Deprived of Parental Care was approved.

This Regulation establishes the procedure for providing social assistance to orphans and children deprived of parental care.

Its provisions also apply to children from families included in the Register of Low-Income Households, where guardianship or custody has been appointed because the parents have temporarily left the country

for more than three months (hereinafter referred to as “children under guardianship or custody from low-income families”).

The Regulation uses the following key terms:

Voucher — an electronic document confirmed by a matrix barcode (QR code) that grants the right to purchase certain types of goods at the expense of funds (subsidies) provided by the state.

Orphans and children deprived of parental care — children under guardianship or custody, placed in foster families, in Children’s Homes, Mehribonlik Homes, Small-Capacity Children’s Homes, Republican educational institutions, or in the alternative care services of the “SOS Children’s Villages of Uzbekistan” Association, as well as graduates of these institutions, officially recognized as orphans or children deprived of parental care.

Fund — the State Social Protection Fund under the National Agency for Social Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan (hereinafter referred to as the Agency).

Individual Integration Plan — a plan for young people aged 14 to 23 who are orphans or deprived of parental care, defining social services and assistance aimed at ensuring their social adaptation and integration into society, creating conditions for their free choice of profession, and supporting their initiatives.

Individual Development Plan — a plan that determines the social services and assistance required for orphans or children deprived of parental care under the age of 14, based on a comprehensive assessment of their interests, needs, and living conditions.

Specialized Educational Institutions — Children’s Homes, Mehribonlik Homes, Small-Capacity Children’s Homes, Republican educational institutions, and the alternative care services of the “SOS Children’s Villages of Uzbekistan” Association.

Legal Representative — guardians and custodians, as well as the “Inson” Social Services Centers for foster families and children in specialized educational institutions.

Seller — business entities engaged in the manufacture, preparation, and delivery of equipment, bicycles, computer sets, work tools, household furniture, and clothing.

Foster Family — a family that, under a contract, has taken in orphans or children deprived of parental care for upbringing (patronage) or as part of a family-type children’s home.

Regional Department — the departments of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the regions, and the city of Tashkent under the National Agency for Social

Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In accordance with this Regulation, the following programs provide social assistance to orphans or children deprived of parental care:

Employment Support Program;

Quality Education Support Program;

Needs Assistance Program;

Housing Improvement Program;

Healthcare Program.

The Resolution covers several key areas, which can be analyzed as follows:

1. Expansion of Financing Mechanisms:

The resolution provides for the allocation of additional funds from the state budget to deliver social assistance to orphans. These funds will be directed not only toward material aid but also to education, healthcare, and psychological services.

Additional financial resources are planned to be attracted through sponsorship programs from the private sector and non-governmental organizations. This is an important step toward introducing a public-private partnership (PPP) model. A special monitoring and reporting system will be implemented to ensure transparency and efficiency in financing.

2. Education and Vocational Training Programs:

The resolution expands the allocation of grants and scholarships for orphans to study in higher education institutions and secondary specialized education institutions. This is particularly important for increasing educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth.

For vocational training courses and the coverage of employment placement expenses, the amount of social assistance is set at 15 times the Base Calculation Amount (BCA).

For the purchase of equipment or work tools to start entrepreneurial or self-employment activities, the amount of social assistance is set at up to 30 times the BCA.

In particular, the provision of social assistance to cover preparatory course expenses for admission to higher education institutions helps this category of youth prepare thoroughly for university entrance exams. The amount of social assistance for each course is as follows:

In Tashkent city — up to 2 times the BCA;

In Nukus city and regional centers — up to 1.5 times the BCA;

In other areas — up to 1 time the BCA.

The age category for beneficiaries of this social assistance is from 14 to 23 years.

In addition, this Regulation also introduces a system of social assistance to cover tuition fees (contract payments) for students of higher education institutions. According to the document, the amount of social assistance is set at up to 25 times the BCA, and the eligible age range is 17 to 23 years.

Categories of Children Eligible for Social Assistance

Social assistance is provided to the following categories of orphans and children deprived of parental care:

- children placed under guardianship or custody;
- children placed in foster families;
- trainees and graduates of the alternative care service of the SOS Children's Villages Uzbekistan Association;
- trainees and graduates of republican educational institutions;
- trainees and graduates of "Mehribonlik" homes;
- trainees and graduates of small-scale children's homes.

In exceptional cases, assistance may also be provided to children from families listed in the Low-Income Families Register whose parents have temporarily left the country for more than three months, provided that a guardian has been appointed.

Objectives and Purpose

These measures are aimed at preparing young people for professions in demand in the labor market and ensuring their economic independence. Educational programs will include courses in modern fields such as information technology and the digital economy.

Psychological Support and Social Integration

The resolution provides for the establishment of specialized psychological assistance centers and the modernization of existing facilities. These centers will help ensure the emotional stability of children and facilitate their successful social adaptation.

Social integration programs — including mentorship and participation in community events — will support young people in integrating into society.

Streamlining Procedures

To improve access to assistance and reduce bureaucratic barriers, the resolution envisions legislative changes and the introduction of new mechanisms to strengthen cooperation between local authorities and social services.

Positive Aspects of the Resolution

1. Ensuring Social Justice
 - o Equal opportunities in education and employment will be created for orphans and children deprived of parental care.
 - o Supporting the economic independence of this category of youth will have a positive impact on the national economy.
2. Financial Sustainability
 - o The use of a public–private partnership model will diversify funding sources and ensure the long-term sustainability of programs.
 - o The introduction of a monitoring system will ensure the efficient and transparent use of funds.

Recommendations for Implementation

Increasing the Responsibility of Local Authorities

- o Clearly assign duties and responsibilities for the execution of the resolution.
- o Introduce digital platforms to ensure transparency in financing and monitoring of regional programs.

Training Qualified Personnel

- o Develop specialized training programs for psychologists, social workers, and teachers.
- o Apply international experience and best practices in supporting orphans.

Expanding Cooperation with the Private Sector

- o Provide tax benefits and other incentives to companies participating in sponsorship programs.
- o Launch grant programs to develop social projects in cooperation with NGOs.

Expected Outcomes and Long-Term Impact

Improved Quality of Education

- o An increase in the number of orphans entering higher and vocational education will enhance their opportunities for economic independence.
- o Education programs focused on modern professions will contribute to the country's transition to a digital economy.

Improvement of Social Integration

- Psychological assistance and social programs will help orphans become active members of society, thereby contributing to greater social stability.
- Mentorship and community events will enhance young people's self-confidence and reduce social isolation.

Economic Benefits

- An increase in the number of qualified specialists will improve competitiveness in the labor market and contribute to economic growth.
- Optimizing social expenditures will reduce the burden on the state budget.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Resolution No. 294 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan is an important document aimed at fundamentally reforming the support system for orphans and children deprived of parental care who are in need of social protection. Covering key areas such as education, psychological assistance, and social integration, the resolution seeks to create equal opportunities for this category of youth. However, its success will depend on the availability of sufficient financial resources, the presence of qualified personnel, and effective management at the local level. Through cooperation between the state, the private sector, and civil society, this resolution has the potential to bring about significant changes in Uzbekistan's socio-economic development.

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