

Women's Bureau National Database of Childcare Costs Overview

What is the Women's Bureau?

The Women's Bureau develops policies and standards and conducts inquiries to safeguard the interests of working women; to advocate for their equality and economic security for themselves and their families; and to promote quality work environments.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Women's Bureau (WB) was created by law in 1920 to formulate standards and policies to promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment. Women in the workforce are vital to the nation's economic security; thus, the Women's Bureau aims to empower all working women to achieve economic security.

The Women's Bureau also conducts outreach to raise awareness of working women's issues and identifies and builds collaborations in order to achieve the implementation of policies and practices that benefit working women. The Women's Bureau is made up of a national office and ten (10) regional offices across the country, through which it fosters and maintains local and community partnerships, and conducts meaningful outreach and education initiatives.

Why is the Women's Bureau collecting this information?

The Women's Bureau seeks to better understand how childcare costs affect women's labor supply. With support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, in the fall of 2019, WB will be collecting Market Rate Survey (MRS) reports and county tabulations. Currently, efforts to understand childcare price effects on employment have been limited due to a lack of local-level price data. Existing research relies on state-level childcare price data, which underestimate prices in urban areas and mask significant county to county differences.

With your help, we can close this critical research gap and provide a more comprehensive picture of the costs of childcare at the local level in the United States.

How will the data be used?

The data collection will result in a public-use database of county-level childcare prices and women's labor force participation rates. Data collected for this project will be aggregated and used for statistical purposes only. No identifying information will be disclosed. The WB is requesting available historical MRS data back to 1998.