

Contact 1: Prenotification Letter to State Child Care Administrators

U.S. Department of Labor

Women's Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20210



[Date]

[Name]

[Title]

[Name of Organization]

[Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Dr. /Mr. /Ms.] [Last Name]:

Limited access to high-quality, accessible, and affordable child care is a barrier to employment for many parents. To better measure child care prices at the local level, the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau publishes the National Database of Childcare Prices (NDCP) based on states' market rate surveys (MRS). The NDCP is the most comprehensive source of local child care prices across the United States.

The NDCP provides states, localities, and other stakeholders with a resource that combines county-level child care prices and economic indicators that can be used for needs assessments, strategic planning, and evaluation. This resource allows state and federal agencies, policymakers, and researchers to track child care prices at the local level, measure potential economic impacts, and identify strategies for enhancing employment options and economic security for women.

To update the NDCP, data collection is being conducted for the Women's Bureau by ICF. In the next [XX days], you will receive a letter with a request and instructions on how to provide copies of all available child care market rate survey (MRS) reports that have been conducted by your state between 2019 and 2022, and if available, data files or supplemental studies used to create MRS reports that provide child care prices, including reports that use cost-based alternative methodologies.

This data request is for historical data. We recognize that you may be considering shifting to an Office of Child Care pre-approved, cost-based alternative methodology and want to encourage that shift for the

upcoming FFY2025-2027 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan, which you may be collecting data for right now.

We realize this request comes at a very busy time for states and territories submitting CCDF Plans and appreciate your help. Your response is voluntary and may take an average of two hours to complete. Data collected for this project will be aggregated and used for statistical purposes only. No identifying information will be disclosed. In accordance with a data sharing agreement between the Women's Bureau and the Office of Child Care (OCC), data collected will also be shared with OCC for statistical purposes. This information will not be used in compliance determinations.

We want to be sure your state is represented. With your help, we can update this resource to offer the most up-to-date information to your state, policymakers, and the public. If you have any questions or comments about this initiative, please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Daley (ndcp@dol.gov or 202-693-5913).

Sincerely,

Wendy Chun-Hoon
Director, Women's Bureau
U.S. Department of Labor

Ruth Friedman, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Child Care
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Contact 2: Notification Letter to State Child Care Administrators

U.S. Department of Labor

Women's Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20210



Date]

[Name]

[Title]

[Name of Organization]

[Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Dr. /Mr. /Ms.] [Last Name]:

Limited access to high-quality, accessible, and affordable child care is a barrier to employment for many parents. To better measure child care prices at the local level, the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau publishes the National Database of Childcare Prices (NDCP) based on states' market rate surveys (MRS). The NDCP is the most comprehensive source of local child care prices across the United States.

The NDCP is used to create interactive maps, reports, and other resources that combine county-level child care prices and economic indicators that can be used for needs assessments, strategic planning, and evaluation. This resource allows state and federal agencies, policymakers, and researchers to track child care prices at the local level, measure potential economic impacts, and identify strategies for enhancing employment options and economic security for women. Resources from the NDCP can be viewed at: www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/topics/childcare.

The data collection is being conducted for the Women's Bureau by ICF. We request that you provide copies of all available results of child care market rate surveys (MRS), and if available, data files or supplemental studies used to create MRS reports that provide child care prices, including reports that use cost-based alternative methodologies. We want to be sure your state is represented.

We recognize that this request comes at a very busy time for states and territories submitting Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plans and appreciate your help. Your response is voluntary and may take an average of two hours to complete. Data collected for this project will be aggregated and used for statistical purposes only. No identifying information will be disclosed. In accordance with a data sharing agreement between the Women's Bureau and the Office of Child Care (OCC), data collected will also be shared with OCC for statistical purposes. This information will not be used in compliance determinations.

We request that you provide data for all studies or surveys conducted between 2019 and 2022 no later than [Date]. Please submit the MRS reports and data files based on the guidance below:

1. Upload the final copy of the MRS report for each year available from 2019 through 2022 to the [secure link created for your state](#). Please submit a report for each year using the following naming convention: MRSREPORT_XXXX [where XXXX = the year study was published].
2. If there are years in which the final **MRS reports submitted do not include child care prices for each county or county equivalent** in your state, upload the extant data file(s) that were used to develop the price estimates for each of those years that include the county name and the prices by age group and provider type. Upload a separate file for each year of data to the [secure link created for your state](#) in an Excel format or other file format that can be converted to Excel. Upload the data for each year using the following naming convention: MRSDATA_XXXX [where XXXX = year study was published].
3. If your state conducted any COVID-19 pandemic supplemental surveys to develop supplemental reports, please submit these reports. Submit a report using the following naming convention: MRSCOVERIDREPORT_XXXX [where XXXX = the year study was published].
4. If any supplemental COVID-19 reports do not include prices for each county, upload the extant data file(s) that were used to develop the price estimates, if available. Upload a separate file for each year of data to the [secure link created for your state](#) in an Excel format or other file format that can be converted to Excel. Upload the data for each year using the following naming convention: MRSCOVERIDDATA_XXXX [where XXXX = year study was published].

This data request is for historical data. We recognize that you may be considering shifting to an Office of Child Care pre-approved, cost-based alternative methodology and want to encourage that shift for the upcoming FFY2025-2027 CCDF State Plan, which you may be collecting data for right now.

[Contractor, contractor point of contact] is the technical lead on this project. If you have any questions about the project or the process for uploading files, contact [phone, email]

Thank you and we look forward to being able to share our findings with you and your colleagues across the nation. If you have any general questions or comments about this data collection, please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Daley at ndcp@dol.gov or daley.jennifer.m@dol.gov or (202) 693-5913.

Sincerely,

Wendy Chun-Hoon

Director, Women's Bureau

U.S. Department of Labor

Ruth Friedman, Ph.D.

Director, Office of Child Care

Administration for Children and Families

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Enclosure: *Women's Bureau National Database of Childcare Prices Overview, National Database of Childcare Prices*

Respondents are not required to respond to any information collection unless it displays a valid approval number from the Office of Management and Budget. The OMB number for this collection is: 1290-0025.

Contact 3: Email sent 1 week before deadline

To: Primary contact e-mail

From: [Contractor name]

Re: Women's Bureau Request for Child Care Market Rate Survey (MRS) Reports and Data

Dear [Dr. /Mr. /Ms.] [Last name]:

Recently, we mailed you a letter asking you to provide copies of all available child care market rate survey reports and data for the years 2019 through 2022 for your state.

As a reminder, the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau is conducting an update of the National Database of Childcare Prices (NDCP). The NDCP provides the most comprehensive information on the price of child care at the local level in the United States. The Women's Bureau will use these data to evaluate how the prices that parents pay for child care affect women's labor force participation rates. When completed, this database will be available to the states and the public and can support further research and analysis into the affordability of child care in different parts of the country. We want to be sure your state is represented.

We recognize that this request comes at a very busy time for states and territories submitting Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plans and appreciate your help. Your response to this request is voluntary and may take an average of two hours to complete. Data collected for this project will be aggregated and used for statistical purposes only. No identifying information will be disclosed. In accordance with a data sharing agreement between the Women's Bureau and the Office of Child Care (OCC), data collected will also be shared with OCC for statistical purposes. This information will not be used in compliance determinations.

If you have any general questions or comments about this data collection, please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Daley at ndcp@dol.gov or daley.jennifer.m@dol.gov or (202) 693-5913.

The data collection is being conducted for the Women's Bureau by ICF. We need your help to gather this critical information. We request that you provide copies of all available child care market rate survey (MRS) reports for the years 2019 through 2022 no later than **[Month dd, year]**. Please submit the MRS reports and any supporting data files, including reports that use cost-based alternative methodologies, based on the guidance below:

1. Upload the final copy of the MRS report for each year available from 2019 through 2022 to the secure link created for your state. Please submit a report for each year using the following naming convention: MRSREPORT_XXXX [where XXXX = the year study was published].
2. If there are years in which the final **MRS reports submitted do not include child care prices for each county or county equivalent** in your state, upload the extant data file(s) that were used to develop the price estimates for each of those years that include the county name and the prices by age group and provider type. Upload a separate file for each year of data to the secure link created for your state in an Excel format or other file format that can be converted to Excel. Upload the data for each year using the following naming convention: MRSDATA_XXXX [where XXXX = year study was published].
3. If your state conducted any COVID-19 pandemic supplemental surveys to develop supplemental reports, please submit these reports. Submit a report using the following naming convention: MRSCOVIDREPORT_XXXX [where XXXX = the year study was published].
4. If any supplemental COVID-19 reports do not include prices for each county, upload the extant data file(s) that were used to develop the price estimates, if available. Upload a separate file for each year of data to the secure link created for your state in an Excel format or other file format that can be converted to Excel. Upload the data for each year using the following naming convention: MRSCOVIDDATA_XXXX [where XXXX = year study was published].

This data request is for historical data. We recognize that you may be considering shifting to an Office of Child Care pre-approved, cost-based alternative methodology and want to encourage that shift for the upcoming FFY2025-2027 CCDF State Plan, which you may be collecting data for right now.

[Contractor, contractor point of contact] is the technical lead on this project. If you have any questions about the project or the process for uploading files, contact [phone, email]. Thank you and we look forward to being able to share our findings with you and your colleagues across the nation.

Enclosure: *Women's Bureau National Database of Childcare Prices Overview, National Database of Childcare Prices*

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Contact 4A: Non-response follow-up 1 [Telephone]

Call primary contacts at Lead Agency or their designees **that have not provided the information**

Talking directly to the primary contact

Issues to be highlighted during a telephone call to primary contact from data collection staff:
Indicate that you are calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau regarding the **Women's Bureau National Database of Childcare Prices**.

1. Point out that they should have received a letter from Wendy Chun-Hoon, Director of the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau and from Ruth Friedman, Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care requesting that they provide Market Rate Survey reports and data.

"We have been trying to contact you about the Women's Bureau **National Database of Childcare Prices**. Wendy Chun-Hoon, Director of the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau and Ruth Friedman, Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sent a letter requesting that your office provide Market Rate Survey reports and data from 2019 to 2022. At this time, we have not received the Market Rate Survey data and want to remind you about the importance of providing that data. We recognize that this request comes at a very busy time for states and territories submitting Child Care and Development Fund Plans and appreciate your help."

2. If needed, tell contact: "We are conducting this data collection to update a database that will provide the most comprehensive information on the price of child care at the local level in the United States. We want to be sure your state is represented."
3. If needed, be prepared to respond to common questions such as
 - I am not the right person to do this
 - Response: Please let me know who the correct person is and I would be happy to contact him/her.
 - I don't know what you are talking about
 - Response: As I am sure you know, child care has been identified as a barrier to employment and career advancement for women. The Women's Bureau is undertaking an initiative to update the National Database of Childcare Prices. To support this initiative, we are collecting county-level data from the child care Market Rate Survey (MRS) reports that states have conducted to provide a resource that has local area child care prices for the entire country and to evaluate how the prices that parents pay for child care affect women's labor force participation. Your response to this request is voluntary and may take an average of two hours to complete.
 - The MRS reports for my state do not include county-level data.
 - Response: That is okay. Do you have access to copies of the final MRS reports and the raw data used to develop them? If so, you can submit via a secure portal to our data collection team.
 - The report for my state uses cost-based, alternative methodologies.
 - Response: That is okay. We are evaluating how we may be able to include these data. Please submit the report via secure portal to our data collection team.

4. Tell the respondent you will e-mail the instructions and be sure to verify the correct e-mail address.
5. Ask the respondent if he or she has any questions and let them know that if they have any questions in the future, they can send an e-mail to [Contact].

Leaving a message

1. If the respondent cannot be reached, leave a voice mail identifying yourself and the request, the purpose of the call, the date of letter referenced, and the action the respondent must take.

Voice mail example: "Hello my name is [staff], and I'm calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau about the **National Database of Childcare Prices initiative**. We have been trying to contact you about receiving your state's child care market rate survey and hope that you might be willing to provide the data. Please call us at xxx-xxx-xxxx when you have some time to discuss your participation in the data collection. We want to be sure your state is represented."

2. During a call cycle, typically a week, leave only one message, but continue to try to contact respondents at different times of day throughout the cycle.

Contact 4B: Incomplete Follow-up 1 [Telephone]

Call primary contact at agency that has submitted some, but not all of the requested information.

Talking directly to the primary contact

Issues to be highlighted during a telephone call from data collection staff:

1. Indicate that you are calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau regarding the **National Database of Childcare Prices**.
2. Thank them for the data that they provided and alert them to the missing data. For example:

"It looks like you provided data for some but not all of the years. Do you have Market Rate Survey data for [missing years]?" Tell the respondent that we are trying to get complete information.

"It looks like you provided data at the state-level only. Do you have Market Rate Survey data for counties or county equivalents?" Tell the respondent that we are trying to get more detailed information.
3. If needed, be prepared to respond to common questions such as:
 - I am not the right person to do this
 - Response: Please let me know who the correct person is and I would be happy to contact him/her.
 - I don't know what you are talking about
 - Response: As I am sure you know, child care has been identified as a barrier to employment and career advancement for women. The Women's Bureau is undertaking an initiative to update the National Database of Childcare Prices. To support this initiative, we are collecting county-level data from the child care Market Rate Survey (MRS) reports that states have conducted to provide a resource that has local area child care prices for the entire country and to evaluate how the prices that parents pay for child care affect women's labor force participation. We want to be sure your state is represented. Your response to this request is voluntary and may take an average of two hours to complete. We recognize that this request comes at a very busy time for states and territories submitting Child Care and Development Fund Plans and appreciate your help.
 - The MRS reports for my state do not include county-level data.

- Response: That is okay. Do you have access to copies of the final MRS reports and the raw data used to develop them? If so, you can submit via a secure portal to our data collection team.
- The report for my state uses cost-based, alternative methodologies.
 - Response: That is okay. We are evaluating how we may be able to include these data. Please submit the report via secure portal to our data collection team.
- 4. Tell the respondent you will e-mail the instructions and be sure to verify the correct e-mail address.
- 5. Ask the respondent if he or she has any questions and let them know that if they have any questions in the future, they can send an e-mail to [Contact].

Leaving a message

1. If the respondent cannot be reached, leave a voice mail identifying yourself and the request, the purpose of the call, the date of letter referenced, and the action the respondent must take.

Voice mail example: "Hello my name is [staff], and I'm calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau about the **National Database of Childcare Prices**. We received your Market Rate Survey data for xxxxx years, but did not receive the data for xxxx years. We wanted to make sure that was not an oversight and to find out whether the missing data exists. Please call us at xxx-xxx-xxxx when you have some time to discuss this."

2. During a call cycle, typically a week, leave only one message, but continue to try to contact respondents at different times of the day throughout the cycle.

Contact 5: Reminder email sent 1 week after deadline to non-respondents

To: Primary contact e-mail

From: [Contractor name]

Re: Women's Bureau Request for Child Care Market Rate Survey (MRS) Reports and Data

Dear [Dr. /Mr. /Ms.] [Last name]:

You have been requested to provide copies of all available child care market rate survey (MRS) reports and data for years 2019 through 2022 **no later than xxxxx**. To date, we have not received them and request that you submit them as soon as possible. We want to be sure your state is represented. We recognize that this request comes at a very busy time for states and territories submitting Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plans and appreciate your help.

Limited access to high-quality, accessible, and affordable child care is a barrier to employment for many parents. To better measure child care prices at the local level, the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau publishes the National Database of Childcare Prices (NDCP) based on states' MRS. The NDCP is the most comprehensive source of local child care prices across the United States. For your convenience, an overview of the project is attached.

The NDCP is used to create interactive maps, reports, and other resources that combine county-level child care prices and economic indicators that can be used for needs assessments, strategic planning, and evaluation. This resource allows states to track child care prices at the local level, measure potential economic impacts, and identify strategies for enhancing employment options and economic security for women. Resources from the NDCP can be viewed at:

www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/topics/childcare.

By making the database publicly available, states will have a tool at their disposal that combines county-level child care prices and economic indicators to be able to evaluate characteristics of underserved areas. Your response to this request is voluntary and may take an average of two hours to complete. Data collected for this project will be aggregated and used for statistical purposes only. No identifying information will be disclosed. In accordance with a data sharing agreement between the Women's Bureau and the Office of Child Care (OCC), data collected will also be shared with OCC for statistical purposes. This information will not be used in compliance determinations.

ICF has been retained to conduct the research. We request that you provide copies of all available child care market rate survey (MRS) reports and data files for the years 2019 through 2022 **as soon as possible**. Please submit the MRS reports and any required data files, including reports that use cost-based alternative methodologies, based on the guidance below:

1. Upload the final copy of the MRS report for each year available from 2019 through 2022 to the secure link created for your state. Please submit a report for each year using the following naming convention: MRSREPORT_XXXX [where XXXX = the year study was published].
2. If there are years in which the final **MRS reports submitted do not include child care price estimates for each county or county equivalent** in your state, upload the extant data file(s) that were used to develop the price estimates for each of those years that include the county name and the prices by age group and provider type. Upload a separate file for each year of data to the secure link created for your state in an Excel format or other file format that can be converted to Excel. Upload the data for each year using the following naming convention: MRSDATA_XXXX [where XXXX = year study was published].
3. If your state conducted any COVID-19 pandemic supplemental surveys to develop supplemental reports, please submit these reports. Submit a report using the following naming convention: MRSCOVIREPORT_XXXX [where XXXX = the year study was published].
4. If any supplemental COVID-19 reports do not include price estimates for each county, upload the extant data file(s) that were used to develop the price estimates, if available. Upload a separate file for each year of data to the secure link created for your state in an Excel format or other file format that can be converted to Excel. Upload the data for each year using the following naming convention: MRSCOVIREPORTDATA_XXXX [where XXXX = year study was published].

This data request is for historical data. We recognize that you may be considering shifting to an Office of Child Care pre-approved, cost-based alternative methodology and want to encourage that shift for the upcoming FFY2025-2027 CCDF State Plan, which you may be collecting data for right now.

[Contractor, contractor point of contact] is the technical lead on this project. If you have any questions about the project or the process for uploading files, contact [phone, email]. If you have any general questions or comments about this data collection, please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Daley at ndcp@dol.gov or daley.jennifer.m@dol.gov or (202) 693-5913.

Thank you and we look forward to being able to share our findings with you and your colleagues across the nation.

Attachments: *Women's Bureau National Database of Childcare Prices Overview, National Database of Childcare Prices*

Respondents are not required to respond to any information collection unless it displays a valid approval number from the Office of Management and Budget. The OMB number for this collection is: 1290-0025.

Attachment 1

Women's Bureau National Database of Childcare Prices Overview

About the Women's Bureau

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Women's Bureau (WB) was created by law in 1920 to develop policies and standards and conduct inquiries to safeguard the interests of working women; to advocate for their equality and economic security; and to promote quality work environments. The Women's Bureau uses data and policy analysis, grantmaking, and stakeholder engagement to drive changes in policies and practices. For more than 100 years, the Women's Bureau has been at the forefront of advocacy for working women.

The Women's Bureau is made up of a national office and six 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 child care prices and availability affect women's labor supply. With support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, WB will be collecting Market Rate Survey (MRS) reports and data tabulations. These reports and data files will be used to update the National Database of Childcare Prices (NDCP), currently the only source of local area child care prices across the country. Other existing sources of child care data rely on national- or state-level child care price data, which underestimate prices in urban areas and mask significant county-to-county price differences.

With your help, we can update the NDCP and continue to provide this valuable resource, offering a more comprehensive picture of child care prices 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 child care prices, interactive maps, and reports. The WB is requesting available MRS data between the years 2019 and 2022 to complete the update to the most recent child care price data available. Data collected for this project will be aggregated and used for statistical purposes only. No identifying information will be disclosed. In accordance with a data sharing agreement between the Women's Bureau and the Office of Child Care (OCC), data collected will also be shared with OCC for statistical purposes. This information will not be used in compliance determinations.

Where can I find more information?

The NDCP website currently offers reports, fact sheets, interactive maps, and data based on the 2008-2018 market rate surveys. These data were obtained through the support of many states who generously provided reports and data files for these years. These resources are available at: www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/topics/childcare. An updated set of resources will be made available on this website once the 2019 through 2022 data collection is completed. Email ndcp@dol.gov with any questions or comments.



Attachment 2

National Database of Childcare Prices

The National Database of Childcare Prices will collect data on the following topics. The information requested for this database may have been collected as part of the state's Market Rate Survey used to develop the Child Care and Development Fund Plan or published in the state's child care Market Rate Survey report. If your state does not have all of the data elements requested, please submit as many data elements as you have available, including any reports that use cost-based alternative methodologies.

We are interested in all Market Rate Survey data you have available for these data elements between 2019 and 2022. If your state did not conduct data collection at the county level, please contact [contact name, email, number] for assistance. We appreciate your help in making this the most complete and accessible database on child care prices for all counties in the United States.

General Survey Information For Each Market Rate Survey Conducted:

- State
- Geographic reporting level (state, region, county, cluster)
- Year and month(s) of survey
- Mode of survey administration (mail, phone, internet)
- Survey response rates for center-based care
- Survey response rates for family/home-based child care

Child Care Prices:

- Median price of center-based care (infants)
- Median price of center-based care (toddlers)
- Median price of center-based care (preschoolers)
- Median price of center-based care (school-age children)
- Median price of family/home-based care (infants)
- Median price of family/home-based care (toddlers)

- Median price of family/home-based care (preschoolers)
- Median price of family/home-based care (school-age children)
- Median additional fees in addition to regular rate for center-based care (e.g., registration, enrollment, supplies, activities, etc.)
- Median additional fees in addition to regular rate for family/home-based care (e.g., registration, enrollment, supplies, activities, etc.)

Indicate if prices are hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly

Indicate ages used to define infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age

Indicate pricing structure (e.g., part-time/school year or full-time/break) for school-age

Indicate pricing method if pricing other than the median price is provided

