

# Delaware Cost of Care 2024

## Frequently Asked Questions

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

#### What is a cost model?

A cost model is an adjustable tool, such as an Excel workbook or online calculator, that can add up the true costs of all the parts of an early childhood program, service, or system.

#### Why is a cost model important?

A cost model helps make sure all factors of running a child care program are included when determining the true cost and deciding subsidy payment rates.

These factors include staff pay and benefits, rent and utilities, curriculum and materials, health and safety, and all the parts of program operations. Because cost models can be adjusted based on different standards and regulations, and other program or quality enhancements, administrators will better understand how changes affect costs.

In 2022, Delaware worked with Prenatal to 5 Fiscal Strategies to develop a cost model for the state. This cost model was used to inform the rates paid under Purchase of Care funded child care. This model is now being updated to continue to inform decision making.

The term “**provider**” refers to early care and education providers and owners. That includes those who operate child care centers, family child care homes, out-of-school time/out-of-school recreation, and tribal programs.

#### Who is leading this process?

The Delaware Department of Education (DOE) in partnership with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) are working with [Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies \(P5FS\)](#) to update the state’s child care cost model. This process will result in an updated, customized cost model that helps better understand the true cost of high-quality child care in Delaware, which meets state standards and compensates the workforce sufficiently.

#### Why should child care program owners/providers help with this?

By participating and confidentially sharing information, providers will help revise the state child care cost model and inform future Delaware payment rates. Program participation will help make sure the information used in child care rate setting includes an understanding of actual and true cost rather than what parents can afford, or the market rate.

### INPUT SESSIONS

#### Who should participate?

Owners and operators of child care programs across the state should participate. This includes those operating licensed child care centers, licensed family child care homes, and license exempt programs.

The program director, owner/provider, financial manager, or whoever has the best knowledge of the program’s finances and operations would be the best person to participate in input sessions.

### **How and when can providers join an input session?**

The input sessions will be virtual and can be found <https://www.prenatal5fiscal.org/delaware>. Providers need to participate in only one input session but must register in advance. The input sessions will be held throughout March 2024 at many different times and days to ensure ease of access for you.

### **Will information provided be made public?**

Only members of the P5FS team can see the details that providers share, and the team will ensure all information collected from providers is kept confidential and secure. Only information that is combined across providers, and is stripped of identifying information, will be shared with anyone outside of P5FS.

### **What is an input session?**

An input session is a small group meeting, virtual or in-person, where providers can share experiences with delivering child care services. The experiences may include opportunities and problems related to program operations and program quality. Providers need to attend only one session but must register in advance.

### **What will providers be asked to share in the input session?**

Participants in input sessions will be asked about their program services, quality characteristics, challenges to providing care, as well as hours worked and overtime.

### **What do providers need to participate in an input session?**

Participants will need to be able to access the meeting link by computer, tablet, or phone. Input sessions are interactive, and participants will need to be able to answer questions and share information about their program. Participants will also complete online polls during the meeting.

### **In what languages will the input sessions be held?**

Input sessions will be held in English and Spanish, as well as other languages as requested, if possible.

### **How long will the input session take?**

Input sessions are scheduled for one hour. Each program whose administration attends one input session will receive a bonus payment of \$100 from DHSS!

### **Will incentives for participating in an input session be offered?**

Each child care program whose administration attends one input session will receive a \$100 payment from DHSS for participating. At the end of data collection, P5FS will share with DHSS which programs attended and all will receive payment at the end of the project.

## **SUPPORT**

### **Where do I go if I have questions?**

If you have any questions please contact Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies at [delaware@prenatal5fiscal.org](mailto:delaware@prenatal5fiscal.org) or (217) 469-5250.