

DELAWARE WOMEN

STATUS REPORT



**WOMEN'S
ADVANCEMENT
& ADVOCACY**



Workforce and Economic Security

Delaware has experienced steady economic growth over the last decade as well as healthy increases in state revenue. And while many of the industries that Delaware is known for, including agriculture, healthcare, and financial services continue to be strong sectors, Delaware is on the cusp of growing other sectors, such as innovation and entrepreneurship. As Delaware pivots toward emerging industries, it is imperative that women are included in these emerging sectors. The existing disparity in wages highlights the critical need for women in Delaware to have equitable access to education, employment opportunities across all sectors, and affordable childcare or other caregiving support. Women are disproportionately represented in lower-paying jobs, particularly in minimum-wage roles, and are underrepresented in higher-paying STEM positions offering better benefits.

Despite women attaining more academic degrees than men, their salaries consistently lag behind those of their male counterparts at every level of educational attainment, with the most significant gap observed among those with graduate or professional degrees. Additionally, Black and Hispanic women earn considerably less than white women for every dollar earned by men. Women also shoulder a greater burden of caregiving responsibilities for children and elderly family members, a role exacerbated by the challenges of the pandemic and compounded by the high costs of childcare relative to women's lower wages. Furthermore, fewer women own businesses or homes, and they are more likely to experience poverty. Providing equal opportunities for women in Delaware's economy is imperative for their overall well-being, safety, educational attainment, and future success.

Delaware Women and Girls Living in Poverty

Location	Percent
Delaware	12%
Kent	14%
New Castle	12%
Sussex	13%
Wilmington	25%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2018-2022 Table B17001



15%

Of All Delaware Families with Children Live in Poverty



63%

Of Those Families Are Single Mothers

Delaware Women and Girls Living in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic	Black	White
<p>9,335</p> <p>20% of all Hispanic women and girls</p>	<p>20,166</p> <p>18% of all Black women and girls</p>	<p>25,762</p> <p>9% of all White women and girls</p>

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2018-2022 Table B17001 (B, I, H)

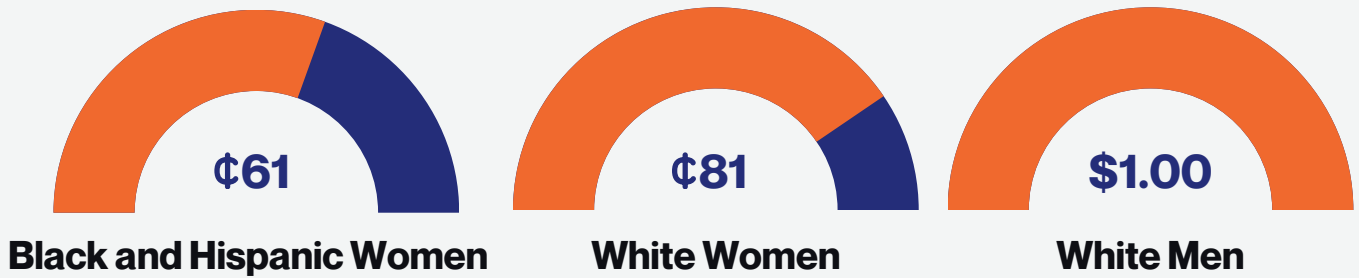
Delaware Families Living in Poverty by Family Type

Family Type	Total
Single Mothers with Children	8,822
Single Mothers with Children Under 5 years	1,414
Single Mothers with Children 5 to 17 years	4,617

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2018-2022 Table B17001

Delaware Women and the Gender Wage Gap

Black and Hispanic Delaware women earn 61 cents and White women 81 cents for every \$1 earned by White men



Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate 2022 Table S0201

Delaware Women in the Labor Force



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2018-2022 Table S2301

Delaware Women and Unemployment

	Women	Women with Children	Men
Unemployment Rate	5.3	5.8	4.9

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2018-2022 Table S2301

Delaware Women by Occupation and Wage Gap in Sector

Occupation	% in Occupation that are Women	Cents for Every \$1 Earned by Men in that Occupation
Management, business, science, and arts occupations:	56%	.73
Management, business, and financial occupations:	50%	.72
Management occupations	45%	.70
Business and financial operations occupations	58%	.75
Computer, engineering, and science occupations:	32%	.81
Computer and mathematical occupations	30%	.76
Architecture and engineering occupations	16%	.85
Life, physical, and social science occupations	53%	.88
Education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations:	66%	.80

Delaware Women by Occupation and Wage Gap in Sector

Occupation	% in Occupation that are Women	Cents for Every \$1 Earned by Men in that Occupation
Community and social service occupations	69%	.94
Legal occupations	62%	.60
Educational instruction, and library occupations	70%	.85
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	48%	.86
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations:	78%	.76
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical occupations	79%	.61
Health technologists and technicians	75%	.75
Service occupations:	54%	.76

Delaware Women by Occupation and Wage Gap in Sector

Occupation	% in Occupation that are Women	Cents for Every \$1 Earned by Men in that Occupation
Protective service occupations:	23%	.95
Firefighting and prevention, and other protective service workers including supervisors	29%	.87
Law enforcement workers including supervisors	17%	.94
Food preparation and serving related occupations	58%	.85
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	32%	.72
Personal care and service occupations	72%	.70
Sales and office occupations:	64%	.77
Sales and related occupations	50%	.72
Healthcare support occupations	85%	.74

Delaware Women by Occupation and Wage Gap in Sector

Occupation	% in Occupation that are Women	Cents for Every \$1 Earned by Men in that Occupation
Office and administrative support occupations	76%	.85
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations:	4%	.60
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	23%	.69
Construction and extraction occupations	3%	.68
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	3%	.90
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:	23%	.68
Production occupations	27%	.64
Transportation occupations	16%	.70
Material moving occupations	28%	.82

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate 2018-2022 Tables [B24022](#) and [C24010](#)

Delaware Women and Small Business Ownership

The 2023 Small Business Profile that is created annually by the US Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy reported that women made up **49.1 percent of workers and owned 42.0 percent of businesses** in Delaware.

Business Ownership Gender	# of Businesses without employees	# of Businesses with employees	Total businesses
Female	27,000	3,400	30,400
Male	37,000	12,108	49,108
Owned Equally by Both	2,800	2,316	5,116

Source US Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, 2023 Small Business Profile

Encouraging Development, Growth & Expansion (EDGE)

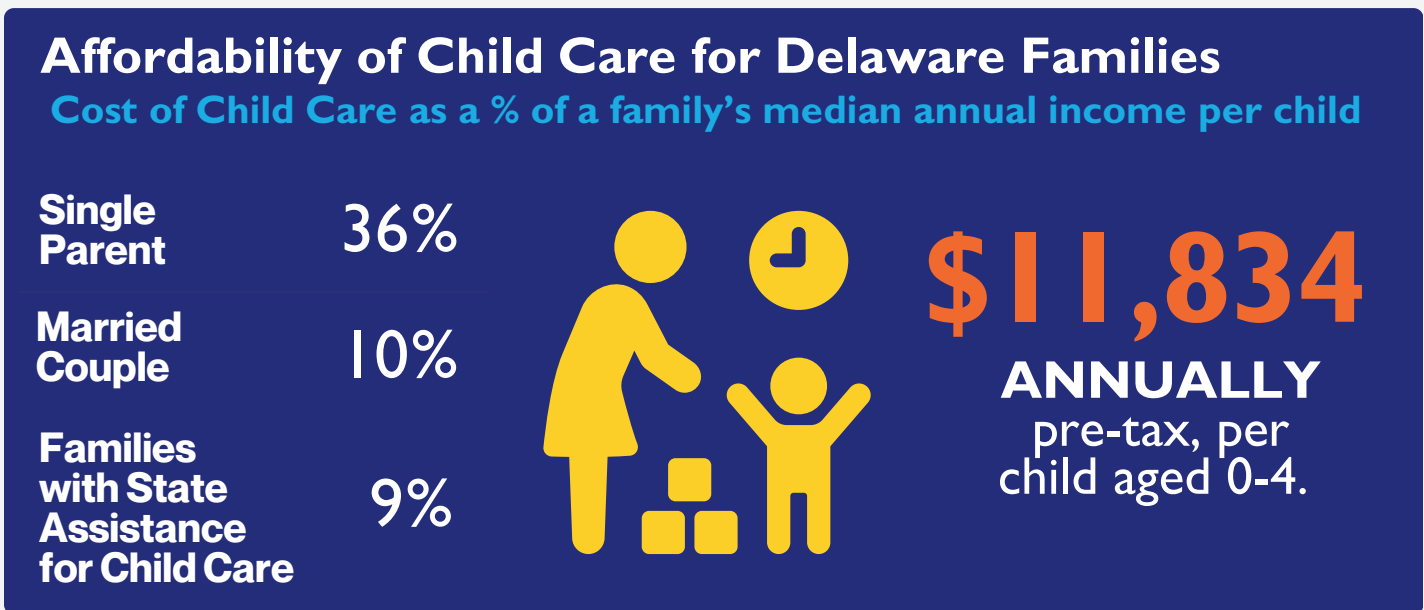
The EDGE Competition gives young, qualified Delaware small businesses an edge by offering access to grant funding through a competitive selection process. The Division of Small Business awards EDGE Grants to five STEM-based companies who can each receive up to \$100,000 for eligible expenses. As well as five Entrepreneur Class (non-STEM) businesses that can each get up to \$50,000. The funds are provided as a \$3 (state) to \$1 (business) match and the Division can provide up to 10 grants per application round (spring/fall). Since the program's inception in 2019, 31 of the 100 EDGE Grant Competition winners have been woman-owned businesses. Furthermore, Delaware's Office of Supplier Diversity has several Diverse Business Certifications including one that is for Women Owned Businesses. In FY '23, out of the 934 Diverse Certified Vendors, 43%, or 401, were certified as women-owned businesses.

Source Delaware's Office of Supplier Diversity FY23 Annual Report

How Child Care Needs Affect Delaware Women

The affordability of child care services plays a pivotal role in shaping women's participation in the workforce. High child care costs often act as a significant barrier for women, particularly those with lower incomes, to enter or remain in the workforce. With the high cost of child care services, many women are forced to make difficult choices between pursuing their careers and providing care for their children. This dilemma disproportionately affects women, as they still primarily bear the responsibility for caregiving duties within families. Consequently, inaccessible or unaffordable child care options can limit women's career opportunities, hinder their professional advancement, and perpetuate gender inequalities in the workplace. According to a report by the Delaware Business Roundtable, 13% of Delaware children had a parent that was not in the workforce because of child care issues, leading to over \$400 million in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.[45] Policies aimed at addressing the affordability of child care are essential not only for supporting women's economic empowerment but also for fostering inclusive and equitable workforce participation. The Carney Administration has invested millions of dollars in child care initiatives and programs for FY25 alone, as well as increased Purchase of Care reimbursement rates.[46] To better help Delaware families find the care they need, the Administration also expanded applicant eligibility for Purchase of Care to 200% of the poverty level, in addition to capping a family's co-payments at 7% of family income and removing all co-pays for families below 150% of the federal poverty level.[47]

The First State Pre-K Coalition, of which Rodel and the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (deaeyc) are members, share the following research about Delaware families and the costs of child care.



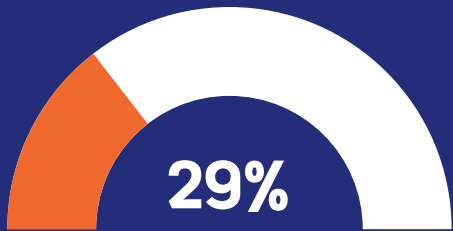
Source: *Rodel, "Child Care is Unaffordable to Most Delaware Families"*

Members of the First State Pre-K Coalition surveyed parents and/or caregivers of children under age five in Delaware. Selected results from that survey can be found on the next two pages.

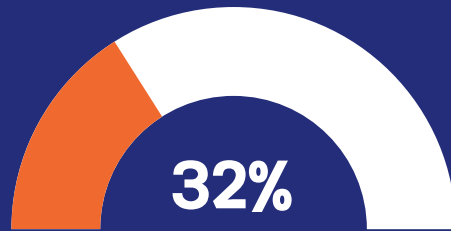
Which of the following statements are true about your child care expenses? (Select all that apply)

46% Nearly half report that child care is their biggest expense.

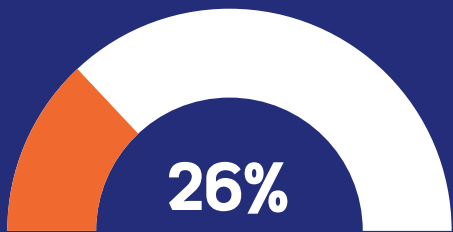
34% More than a third responded that child care expenses are more costly than their mortgage



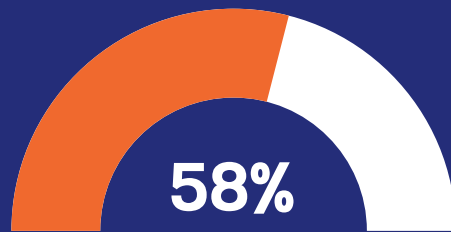
They are more costly than our college loan payment



It contributes to our debt



We cannot save for college



They prevent us from improving our families situation in at least one of the ways

80%

Reported a lack of affordable child care that fully meets their needs held their family back from improving their situation in at least one way (take a job or increase hours at work, go back to school, buy a home, and/or other).

83%

Have difficulty accessing child care programs for one or more reasons (too expensive, hours of program don't meet your needs, lack of providers in your area, programs in the area are full, programs unable to meet child's special needs, providers do not speak the child's language, transportation, cultural/ religious reasons, confidence/ trust in child care provider, and/or other).

37%

Were placed on a waitlist by two or more of the centers that they contacted. Many respondents said waitlists were months long, so to be put on one was essentially to be turned away.

Source: First State Pre-K Coalition 2023 Parent Survey



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Contact OWAA

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