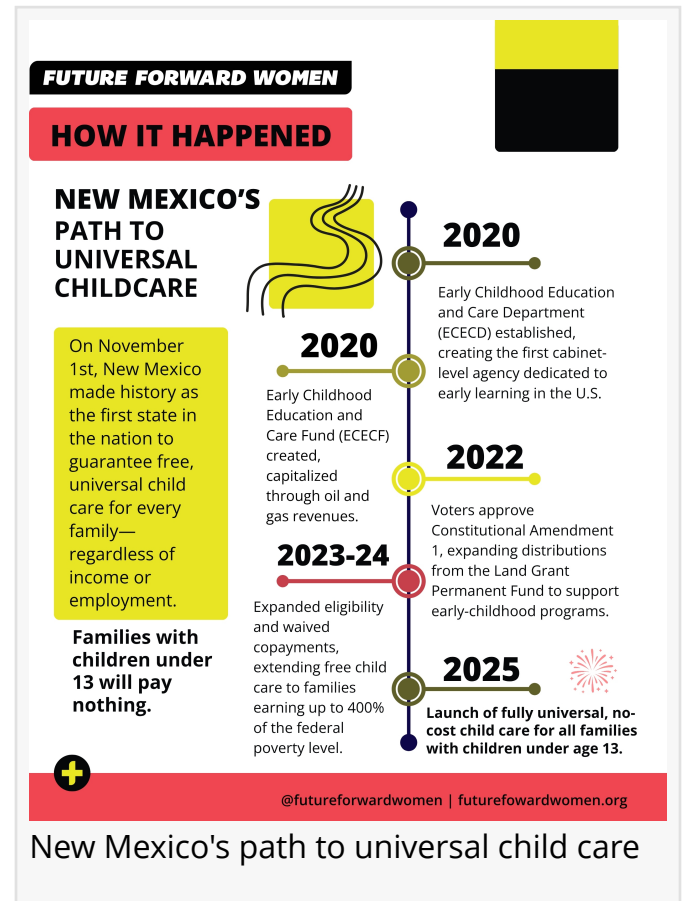


Future Forward Women Releases New Policy Brief on New Mexico's Universal Child Care Program

Future Forward Women is gearing up to support state leaders who want to replicate the New Mexico model in their own states.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, November 6, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New Mexico is showing what economists and families have always known — when child care is regarded as essential infrastructure, everyone benefits,” said C. Nicole Mason, PhD, President & CEO of Future Forward Women. “This is what good governance looks like: practical, equitable, and economically sound. Families save money, women remain in the workforce, and communities grow stronger.”

“New Mexico proves what’s possible when women lead,” said Erin Vilardi, CEO of Vote Run Lead. “When women hold power, policies like universal child care move from aspiration to action — and the economy works better for everyone.”



Washington, D.C. — Future Forward Women (FFW) today released a new [policy brief](#) detailing how New Mexico became the first state in the nation to offer universal, no-cost child care for all families — and announced new efforts to train and support state elected officials interested in replicating the model nationwide.

The report, "[New Mexico Launches Universal Child Care](#)," highlights the policy design, financing mechanisms, and measurable economic benefits of the initiative. Funded through constitutionally protected early-childhood trust funds — not new taxes — the program provides free child care for every family with a child under 13, saving families an average of \$12,000 per child each year and generating nearly \$900 million in statewide economic activity annually.

Earlier expansions of child care access in New Mexico lifted approximately 120,000 residents above the supplemental poverty line between 2021 and 2024. The policy’s design — combining sustainable funding, higher provider wages, and streamlined eligibility — is already gaining recognition as a national model for equitable economic growth and women’s workforce participation.

To help other states follow New Mexico’s lead, Future Forward Women will launch the State Leaders Learning Series in early 2026 as part of its Legislative Exchange and Innovation Lab. The series will equip governors, legislators, and state agencies with the tools, training, and cross-state collaboration needed to design and advance universal child care and other family-centered economic policies. Grounded in evidence-based policy design and practical governance, the initiative aims to help states translate bold ideas into effective, equitable solutions.

FUTURE FORWARD WOMEN

NEW MEXICO

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Compared to other states’ income-based or pre-K programs, **New Mexico guarantees free, universal child care for all families through age 13**—permanently funded through constitutionally protected trust funds.

The model is breakthrough in social policy design, it unites child care, fair pay, and economic growth in one bold framework.

Universal Child Care: New Mexico vs. Other States			
STATE	COVERAGE	FUNDING MECHANISM	LIMITATION
VERMONT	Subsidies up to 57% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	Payroll Tax (0.44 %)	Still income-tested; partial coverage
NEW YORK	Subsidies up to 85% Of State Median Income Level (SMI)	State and Federal Grants	Income & Work-Requirement Tests
D.C., OK, FL, CO	Universal pre-K for 3–4 year-olds	State and Local Education Funds	Limited to Pre-K Only
NEW MEXICO	Birth–13, All Families Free	Permanent Trust Funds	First Truly Universal, Permanent Model in the Nation

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Comparison of how NY, D.C., FL, CO, OK, VT compare to NM for income-based / pre-K programs

“The question is no longer whether universal child care works — it does,” said C. Nicole Mason, PhD, President & CEO of Future Forward Women. “The challenge now is how quickly states can adapt the model. When we center families and design policy around real needs, we strengthen economies, expand opportunity, and move the country forward.

“New Mexico is showing what economists and families have always known — when child care is regarded as essential infrastructure, everyone benefits.”
Dr. C. Nicole Mason

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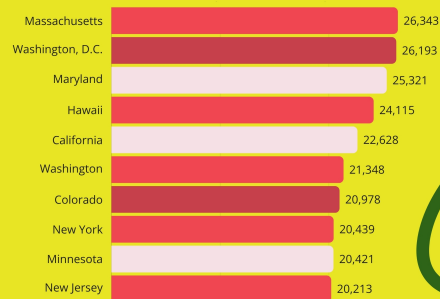
FUTURE FORWARD WOMEN

COST OF CARE

THE 10 MOST EXPENSIVE STATES FOR CHILD CARE

Massachusetts ranks first for the most expensive child care in the nation, topping \$26,000 per year.

A minimum-wage worker in Massachusetts would need to work nearly **45 weeks** just to afford child care for one infant--**That's nearly a full year's pay**—before rent, food, or any other expenses.



AVERAGE ANNUAL COST OF CARE



Source: Childcare Aware, Economic Policy Institute, 2024



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The 10 most expensive states for child care in America

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/864922761>

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