

MI Tri-Share CHILD CARE

MI Tri-Share Program Overview for Child Care Providers

The MI Tri-Share Child Care Program (MI Tri-Share) is an ongoing child care funding program offered by the State of Michigan and housed within the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP).

MI Tri-Share is designed to make child care affordable for Michigan's working parents while also helping Michigan employers offer a highly desirable benefit that improves employee recruitment and retention. Through MI Tri-Share, the cost of an employee's child care is shared equally among the employer, the employee, and the State of Michigan - a three-way split - with local coordination provided by MI Tri-Share regional facilitator hubs and a statewide administrative partner.

MI Tri-Share is an innovative bipartisan program introduced by Governor Gretchen Whitmer and is the first of its kind in the country. Starting as a pilot in 2021, this groundbreaking public-private child care cost-sharing partnership quickly grew. MI Tri-Share is now an ongoing program offered by the State of Michigan for Michigan employers and their eligible employees. Employers are engaged, recruited, and supported by MI Tri-Share Regional Facilitator Hubs. To help bring the program to scale in 2024, MI Tri-Share has contracted with United Way of Northwest Michigan (UWNWMI) as a statewide administrative partner to help streamline participation, processes, and child care payments.

Employers who offer this program to their employees benefit by attracting and retaining the talented workforce they need to sustain and grow their businesses. Families benefit because their child care and tuition costs are reduced by two-thirds, and they can access additional resources if they need help finding care. Providers benefit because they can count on receiving full payment and more predictable revenue.

How eligibility works: Employers can opt into the program by signing an Agreement with UWNWMI. Once an employer has opted in, their employees can go to MITriShare.org to submit an application with their household information, which is used to determine eligibility.

How payment works: When an eligible employee with an existing licensed child care provider enters the MI Tri-Share program, UWNWMI contacts the provider to set up the billing and payment processes. UWNWMI becomes the payer for the total amount of care costs. These processes are designed to be simple and adaptable, not creating additional administrative burdens for providers.

Employers set up payroll deductions for employees enrolled in MI Tri-Share. The employers match their employees' contributions each pay period and forward those funds to UWNWMI. United Way uses the received state funds to add the last one-third and sends payments to providers for the total amount billed. The only change for providers is that invoices will now be forwarded to UWNWMI instead of the parents. Providers will receive payments via ACH direct deposits to their bank accounts after they bill for services. Invoices received by Friday will be paid on Friday the following week. Providers can utilize their standard billing cycle in the MI Tri-Share program.

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Parent choice is a core value of the MI Tri-Share program. MI Tri-Share funds may be used for any licensed child care program that enrolls children ages 0 -17, including, but not limited to, traditional child care (full or part-time), tuition-based preschool programs, before and after school care, and summer programs/camps.

Employees may change child care providers at any time, and their employers will accommodate changes in payment arrangements within the terms established for the benefit.

An extra benefit of the program in this region is our partnership with the Great Start to Quality Resource Centers across the state to assist employees seeking child care in finding the program that meets their needs. Resource Center staff work with licensed providers in the service area to gather the most up-to-date information on openings and facilitate connections between parents seeking care and providers who may have openings.

Additional Details

- Employees eligible for the program have household incomes between 200% and 325% of the Federal Poverty Level and must not be eligible for any other form of child care subsidy, including the Child Development and Care (CDC) subsidy.
- MI Tri-Share payments are based on enrollment in a program. If a child attends a program at least one day/month, the child is considered enrolled as long as the family intends for the child to return to care.
- If a family withdraws their child from care or a provider terminates the care arrangements, MI Tri-Share payments cease on the date the child leaves the program. The provider must advise the UWNWMI when a child has been withdrawn from the program and submit a final invoice for payment within one week of the child's last date of attendance.
- If a family's employment status changes with a participating MI Tri-Share employer, their benefits end on the termination date. The family becomes responsible for 100% of their care costs with the provider.
- Funding for the MI Tri-Share program is a part of the ongoing state budget. If there are any changes to the program, you will be notified.

If you have additional questions, encounter a problem, or want to offer suggestions to improve the MI Tri-Share program, please get in touch with UWNWMI via email at MITriShare@unitedwaynwmi.org or call 231-224-6087.