

**SUBJECT: 2023 Cost Report Request - STAIRS**

Dear Providers:

This notice contains information on mandatory 2023 cost reporting and cost report preparer requirements for the following programs:

- 24-Hour Residential Child Care (24RCC)
- Community Living Assistance and Support Services - Case Management Agency (CLASS-CMA)
- Community Living Assistance and Support Services - Direct Service Agency (CLASS-DSA)
- Day Activity and Health Services (DAHS)
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) – Case Management
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) – Specialized Rehabilitative Services
- Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability or Related Conditions State Supported Living Centers/Bond Homes (SSLC/BH)
- Primary Home Care (PHC)
- Rehabilitation Services – Mental Health
- Service Coordination – ICF/IID
- Targeted Case Management (TCM) – Mental Health
- STAR+PLUS services affiliated with the above service types

NOTE: Providers of Deaf Blind Multiple Disabilities Waiver (DBMD), Home and Community-based Services / Texas Home Living (HCS/TxHmL), Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability or Related Conditions (ICF/IID), Nursing Facility (NF), and Residential Care (RC) will receive a separate email regarding their reporting requirements for the 2023 reporting period.

**EXCUSAL OF REPORTS WITH NO UNITS OF SERVICE**

For LTSS providers, HHSC will be excusing reports that are verified as having performed no billable services during the provider's reporting period. A banner message will be displayed at the top of the STAIRS screen if a report has been excused. If the provider has questions, please contact the HHSC PFD LTSS team at [PFD-LTSS@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:PFD-LTSS@hhs.texas.gov).

**DUE DATE**

The 2023 cost report must be fully verified, all required documentation uploaded, and the cost report submitted through the State of Texas Automated Cost Reporting System (STAIRS) online application. Information on STAIRS is provided below.

The 2023 cost report must be submitted no later than **April 30, 2024**.

## **REPORT SUBMISSION AND PREPARER REQUIREMENTS**

Each provider of the above services is required to submit financial and statistical information through a cost report for each contract held with the State of Texas and/or STAR+PLUS contract held with a Managed Care Organization.

It is the responsibility of each contracted provider to submit an accurate cost report, completed in accordance with all applicable instructions and rules.

In accordance with Title 1 of the Texas Administrative Code §355.102(d), it is the responsibility of each provider to ensure that the preparer who signs their Cost Report Methodology Certification completes the required HHSC-sponsored cost report training.

Preparers must complete a training webinar for each program for which a cost report is submitted. In order to be qualified to complete the 2023 cost report, the preparer must have completed the mandatory 2023 (held in 2024) cost report training.

Preparers who have NOT completed the mandatory training will NOT be added to the list of eligible preparers in STAIRS and therefore cannot be selected and assigned as the Preparer. NO EXEMPTIONS from the mandatory training requirements will be granted.

Information Letter No. 2023-44, was distributed via HHSC electronic communication on December 8, 2023, to notify providers of the upcoming schedule of available training sessions. This letter has also been posted on the Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) Provider Finance Department (PFD) Website in the Training information section of each program. Details on requirements for mandatory cost report training for preparers and how to register for a training webinar are available on the **Provider Finance Department Website** (see below).

## **THE STATE OF TEXAS AUTOMATED INFORMATION REPORTING SYSTEM (STAIRS)**

Providers must submit their 2023 cost report through STAIRS. STAIRS is web-based and hosted by state contractor, Fairbanks, LLC.

Providers and preparers who have previously submitted a cost report via STAIRS will use the same logon information to access the 2023 Cost Report.

New providers without prior STAIRS access, will be sent an email containing STAIRS login information including their username and password. The email will be sent to the Primary Entity Contact designated by HHSC PFD. A new provider who has not received an e-mail with their login information by February 7, 2024, should contact [CostInformationPFD@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:CostInformationPFD@hhs.texas.gov).

The Primary Entity Contact has the responsibility to assign other Contacts for their entity in STAIRS. At a minimum, a "Preparer" who is responsible for completing the entity's cost report(s) must be assigned. Assigning a "Primary Financial Contact" is also an option. If a Primary Financial Contact is assigned, either the Primary Entity Contact or the Primary Financial Contact has the ability to assign additional Contacts, including the assignment of the Preparer.

It is strongly encouraged that the Preparer be assigned as soon as possible to give the preparer access to the cost report in STAIRS. They must have adequate time to prepare the cost report so that the entity may then complete the final Step in STAIRS to submit their cost report by the due date.

A reference material document titled *Helpful Information for Contacts and Preparers* is available to provide guidance in adding other Contacts or Preparers. Reference Materials are located at the bottom of the main screen after logging onto STAIRS.

When logging into STAIRS for the very first time a Contact will be asked to establish a security profile for their account that will include setting up three (3) question and answer pairs that will be used to validate identity in the event the Contact forgets or need to reset their password.

#### **PROVIDER FINANCE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE**

The HHSC PFD website contains program-specific cost report instructions, cost report training information and materials, payment rates, PFD staff contact information and web links for cost report training registration and support for automated reporting. Additional information and features are added periodically. We encourage you to visit the PFD website at:

<https://pfd.hhs.texas.gov/long-term-services-supports>

For the MEI Cost Report: <https://pfd.hhs.texas.gov/acute-care/mei-cost-report-information>

#### **RESOURCES**

Questions regarding contracts and cost report groupings that have been assigned to your entity should be directed to HHSC PFD at [costinformationPFD@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:costinformationPFD@hhs.texas.gov)

Questions regarding Preparers, or the list of Preparers, should be directed to HHSC PFD at [costinformationPFD@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:costinformationPFD@hhs.texas.gov)

Questions regarding adding Contacts or problems with UserName and/or Password should be directed to the Fairbanks, LLC, Help Desk at 877-354-3831 or [info@fairbanksllc.com](mailto:info@fairbanksllc.com)

Questions regarding the proper completion of your cost report in STAIRS should be directed to the appropriate HHSC contact for your program. A list of program contacts can be found at:

<https://pfd.hhs.texas.gov/long-term-services-supports/contact-list>

Or for the MEI program at:

<http://pfd.hhs.texas.gov/acute-care/contact-list>

Sincerely,

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