



Childcare Workforce in Montana



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

Presented to Economic Affairs Interim Committee
January 17th, 2024

AMY WATSON, State Economist
Montana Dept. of Labor & Industry
awatson@mt.gov | 406-444-3245

Childcare Capacity Meets 44% of Demand

Licensed capacity growth slightly outpaces population growth in 2023

Statewide Supply

20,640 average licensed
capacity in 2023

+8% growth over the year

1,500 additional slots

Statewide Demand

46,390 children under age six
living in working parent
households.

+3.6% growth over the year



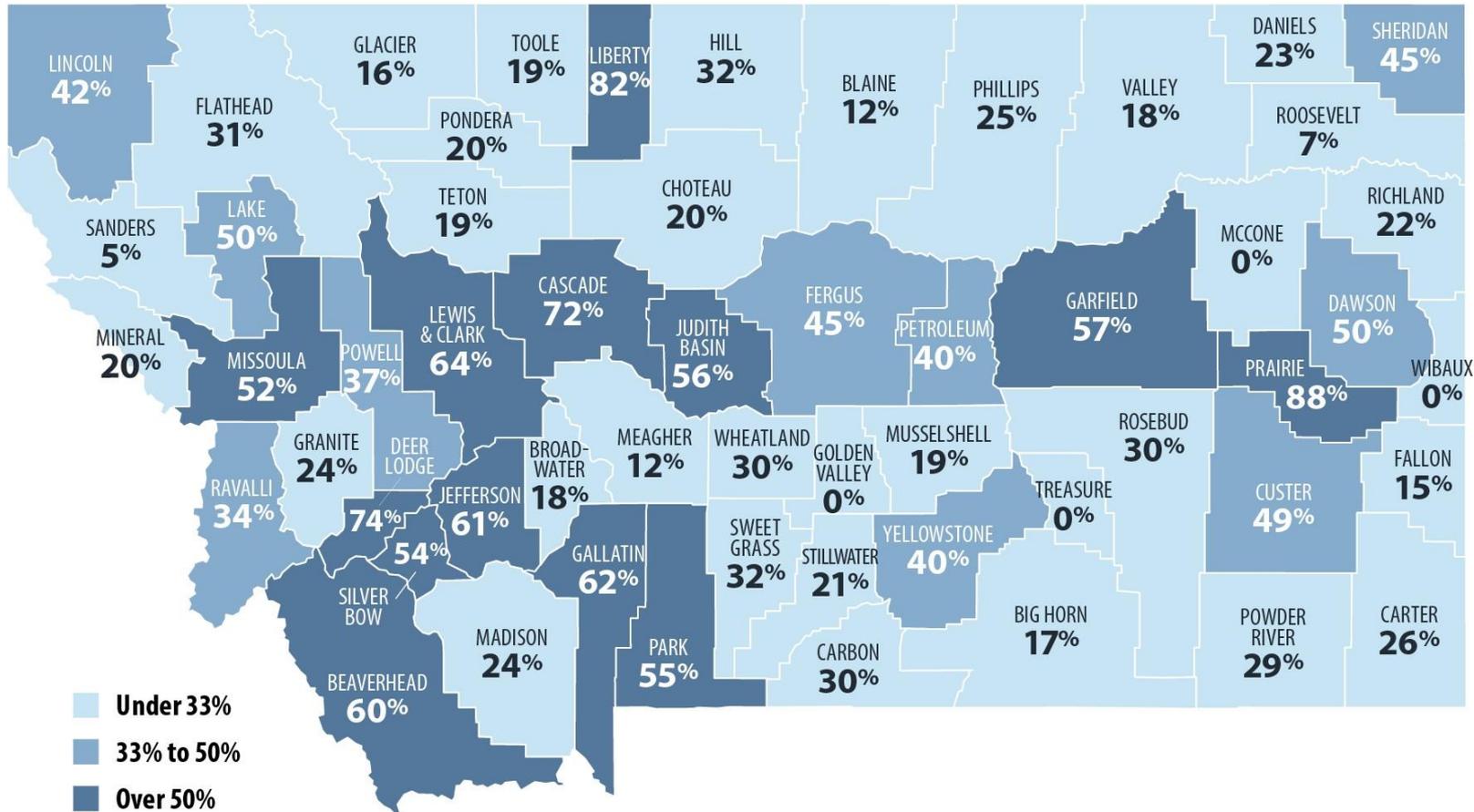
Source: MTDLI analysis of childcare capacity data provided by MTDPHHS through 12/2023. U.S. Census Bureau 2022 Population Estimates Program (PEP) data provided by Montana KIDS Count and 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) data.



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

Nearly 60% of Counties qualify as a Childcare Desert

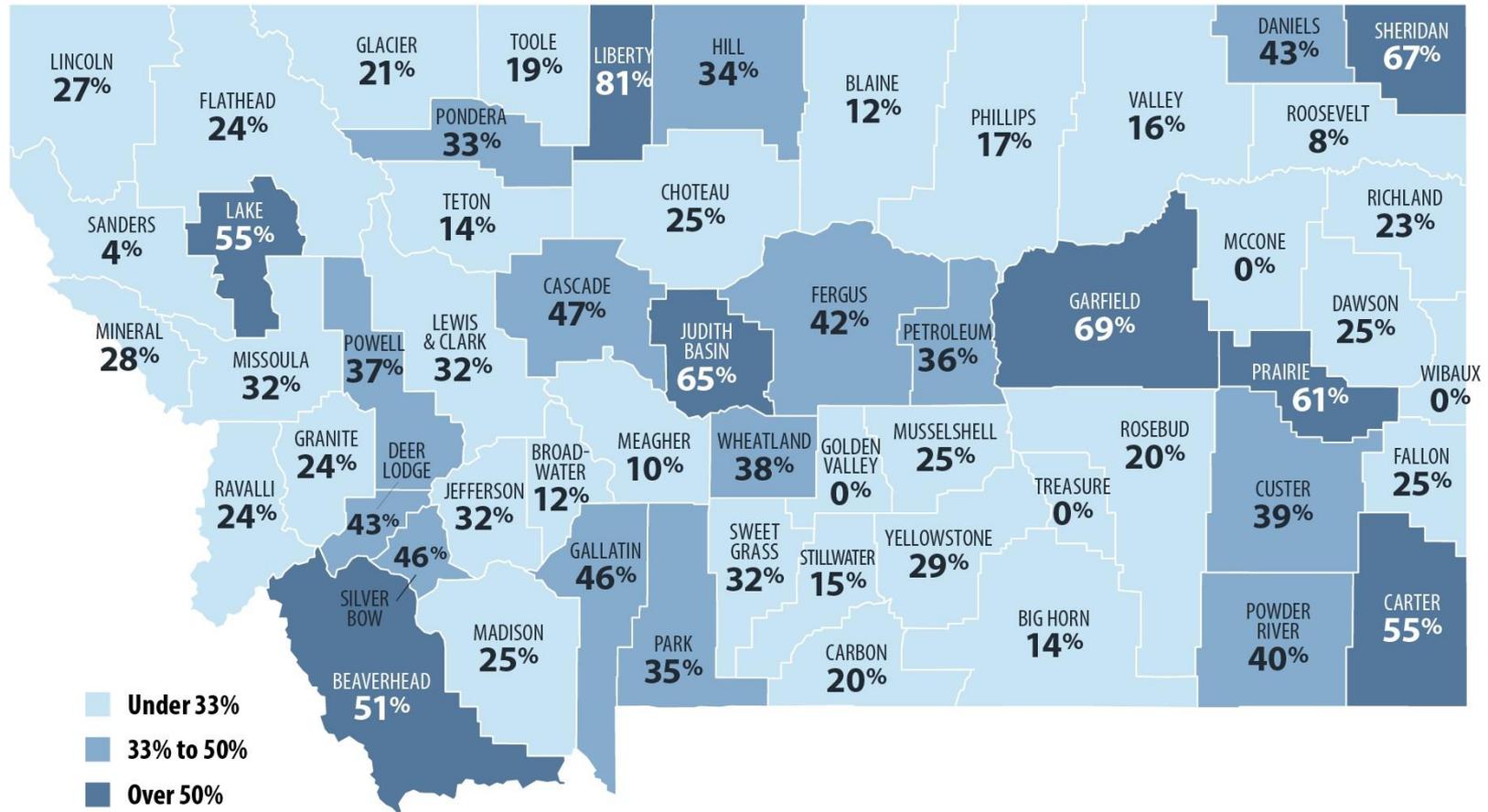
Licensed capacity as a percent of demand in 2023 by County



Source: MTDLI analysis of childcare capacity data provided by MTDPHHS through 12/2023. Demand is equal to the number of children under age six living in the working parent households.

Infant Capacity Meets 32% of Estimated Demand

Licensed infant capacity as a percent of demand in 2023 by County



Source: MTDLI analysis of childcare capacity data provided by MTDPHHS through 12/2023. Demand is equal to the number of children under age two living in the working parent households.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workforce

High-demand and low-wages for childcare workers in Montana

Childcare workers earn an average **\$12.73** per hour, which translates to about **\$26,480** a year when working full-time.

Over 500 job openings per year

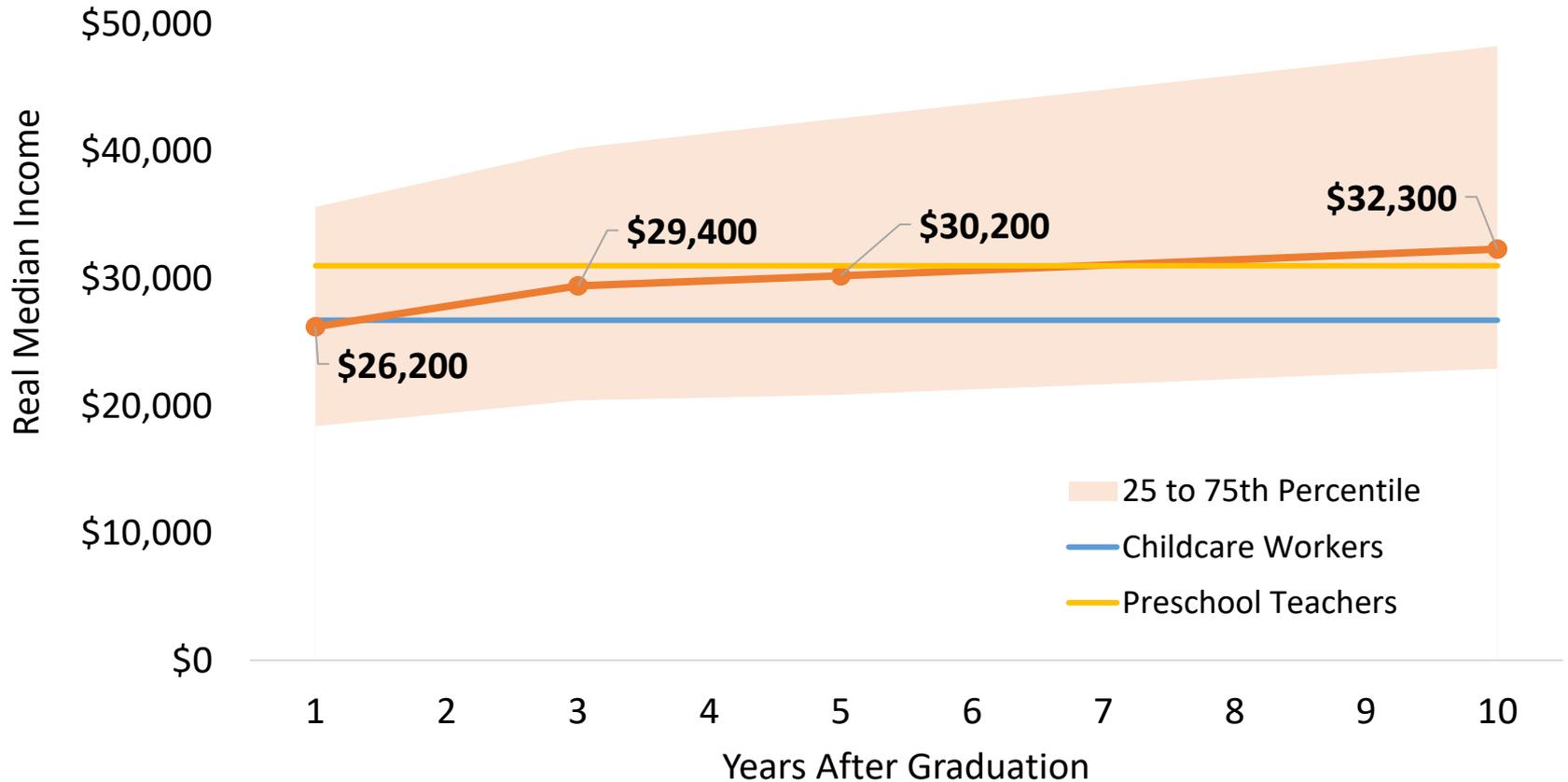
for childcare workers through 2032, placing the occupation in the **top 30** for number of openings.

- **56%** of openings from **turnover**
- **43%** of openings due to **retirements**



Montana ECE Graduate Workforce Outcomes

87.5% of Early Childhood Education Graduates work in Montana



Source: 2022 Postsecondary Workforce Report, MTDLI. Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) 2022 median wage for childcare workers and preschool teachers.

MTDLI Childcare Workforce Development Efforts

Apprenticeship offers low-cost pathway to grow ECE workforce

Childcare Business Engagement Specialist *(Started January 2023)*

- Funded through ARPA allocation
- Work with employers to establish employer-based childcare options
- Expand and support existing apprenticeship opportunities for ECE workforce



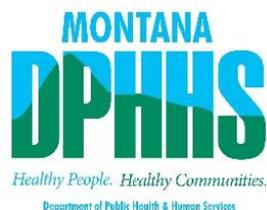
Pre-Apprenticeship Program

(Pilot launched Fall 2023)

- Cohort of 15 adult learners – *interest far exceeded initial capacity.*
- Earn nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and reach Level 3 on the Practitioner Registry.
- 9 months to complete (120 hours of training, 480+ hours of work experience)
- Require wage gains for apprentice post-completion
- All costs to attain CDA are covered
- Incentives support participation by the apprentice, mentor, and sponsor

Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program

Administered by MTDLI, DPHHS ECSB, and MSU Early Childhood Project



Childcare Development Specialist

(Since 2004)

- Earn a nationally recognized credential: Child Care Development Specialist
- Reach Level 4 on the Practitioner Registry
- 2 years to complete (24 college credits, and 2,000+ hours of work experience)
- Average 27 apprentices per year since 2019.
- 51% completion rate, which is higher than MRAP average.
- Earn \$25,370 a year after completion.

Source: Registered Apprenticeship Program Report 2023. MTDLI. Montana Early Childhood Project <https://mtecp.org/incentive-program/>



More info available at lmi.mt.gov

Amy Watson

State Economist, MTDLI

awatson@mt.gov

Rhiannon Shook

Childcare Business
Engagement Specialist,
MTDLI

Rhiannon.Shook@mt.gov

Additional Resources

Child Care Availability

Watson, Amy. "Child Care Deserts: An Analysis of Child Care Supply and Demand Gaps in Montana." January 2024. MTDLI

<https://lmi.mt.gov/docs/Publications/LMI-Pubs/Special-Reports-and-Studies/ChildCareDesertsWhitePaper-FINAL.pdf>

Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program

Registered Apprenticeship Program Report 2023. December 2023.

MTDLI. https://lmi.mt.gov/docs/Publications/LMI-Pubs/Special-Reports-and-Studies/2023_ApprenticeshipReport_Final.pdf

MCEP and Pre-Apprenticeship Information and Incentives

<https://mtecp.org/incentive-program/>

Business Impacts

Watson, Amy. "Impacts of Child Care on the Montana Workforce: Results from a Survey of Montana Businesses." November 2020. MTDLI

<https://lmi.mt.gov/docs/Publications/LMI-Pubs/Special-Reports-and-Studies/ChildcareReport2020.pdf>

Child Care Workforce

Watson, Amy. "Understanding the Child Care Workforce." April 2019.

MTDLI. <https://lmi.mt.gov/docs/Publications/EAG-Articles/0419-Childcare2.pdf>