

# Office of Child (OCC) Advisory Council Meeting

**Division of Early Childhood**

August 21, 2025

**PRESENTED BY**

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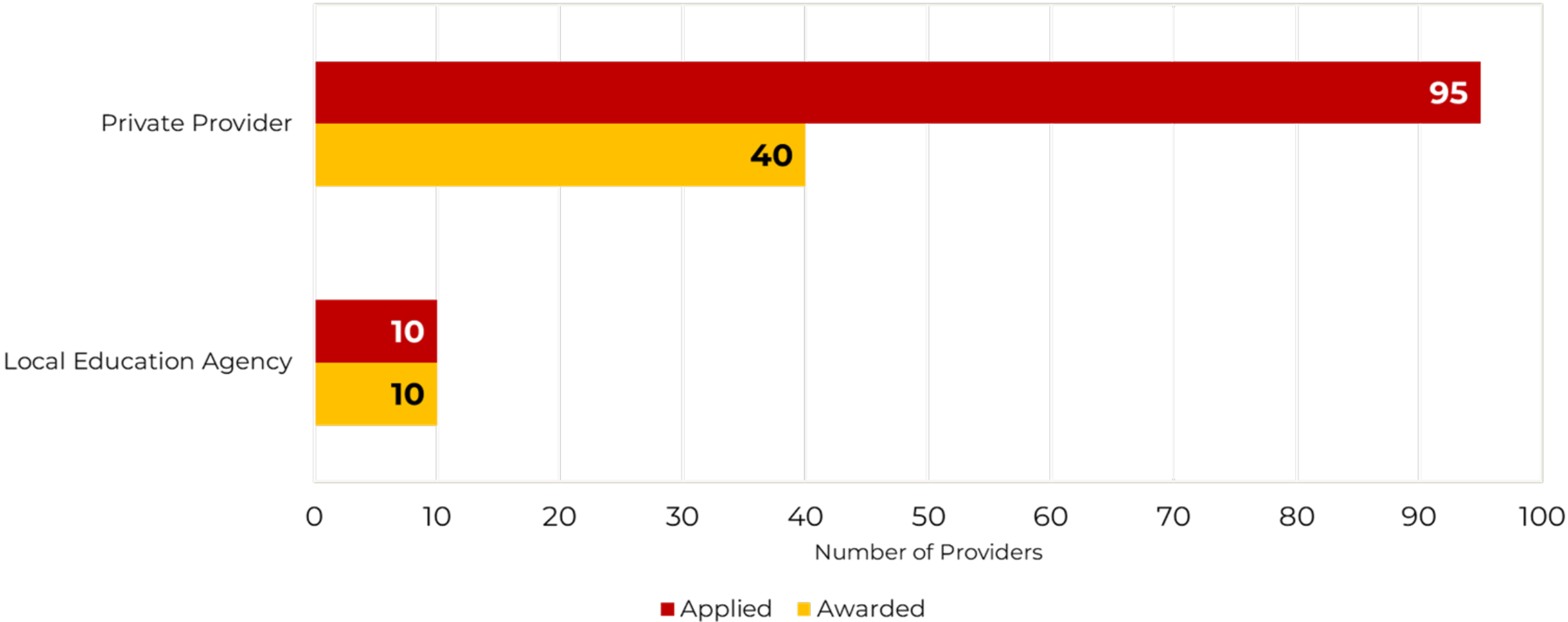
Sarah Neville-Morgan, Assistant State Superintendent,  
Division of Early Childhood

# Division of Early Childhood Updates

# HB 1441: Child Care Credentialing and Career Ladder

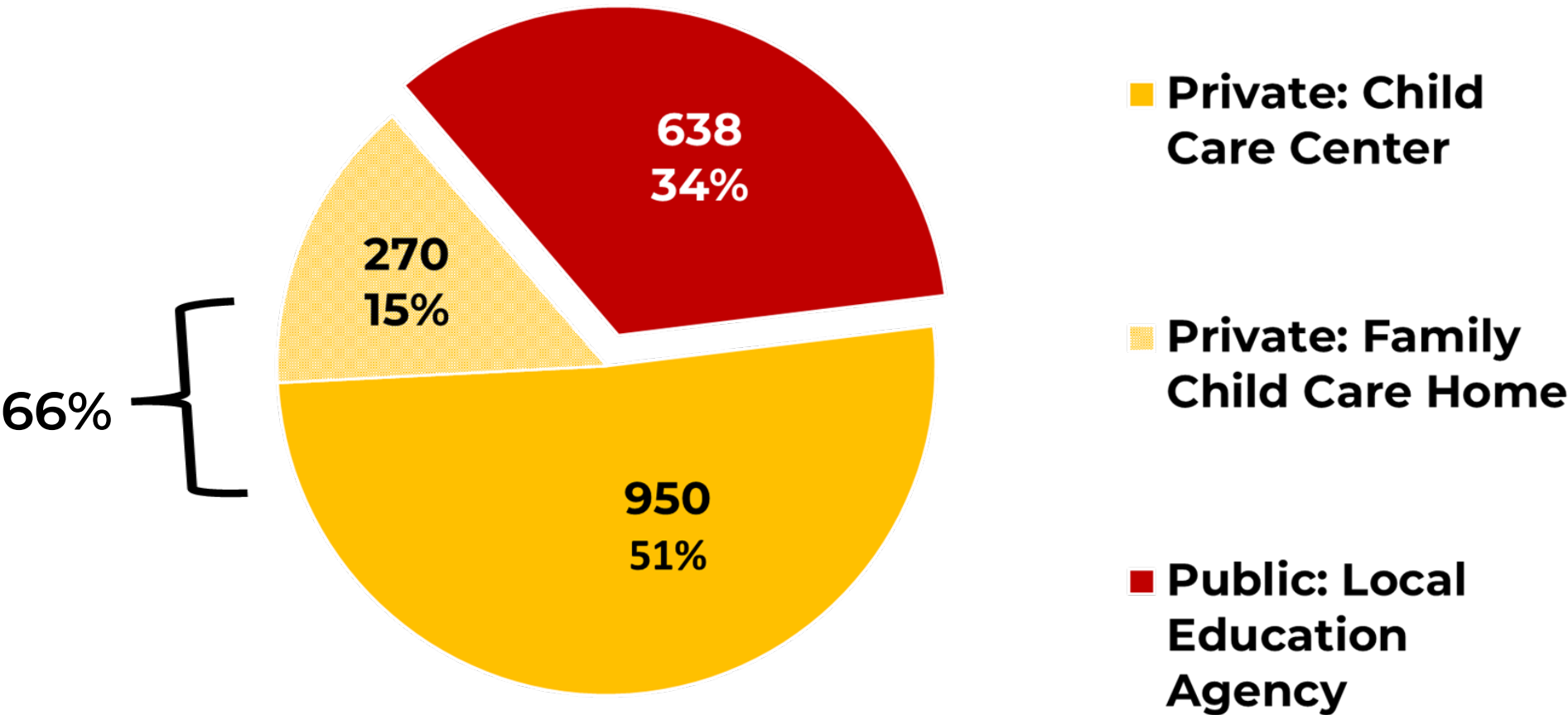
- MSDE is launching a two-phase approach to reopening credential applications:
  - Phase 1: Renewal applications for participants with an expired credential
  - Phase 2: New applications for participants without an existing credential
- Timeline
  - Applications will open in the early fall.
  - Bonuses for credentialed participants will begin being paid later this year.

# FY26 Pre-K Expansion Grant Applicant Type



Source: MSDE internal data systems, accessed 8/11/2025.

# FY26 Number of Awarded Pre-K Expansion Grant Slots



Source: MSDE internal data systems, accessed 8/11/2025.



# Human-Centered Design & Pre-K Application Review

Using a Human-Centered Design (HCD) approach, MSDE is listening to the community, engaging interest-holders, and making updates to the application process for the Prekindergarten (Pre-K) Expansion Grant Program.

## Integration

### Examples of Information Gathering

- Gathering written comments, feedback, and recommendations from early childhood community partners
- Holding a series of focus groups and surveys to gather feedback about the application process
- Conducting an analysis of the applications following each application cycle
- Reviewing inspection reports for all participating Maryland EXCELS programs bimonthly



## Ideation

### Current Focus

Over the next few months... MSDE will build on this inspiration, and interest-holders will be engaged through multiple levels—from active participation in working groups to regular updates and key-point notifications—to elevate solutions and inform improvements to the Pre-K application format and process.



## Implementation

MSDE will implement updates driven by community needs and insights to better support interested applicants for the 2026–2027 grants. Interest-holder input will continue to be gathered with ongoing feedback cycles to guide future efforts and drive collaborative progress.

# HB 1475: Prekindergarten Systems Analysis Workgroup

- **Purpose**
  - Conduct an analysis of the State's current mixed delivery publicly funded prekindergarten system established under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future
- **Membership**
  - 12 legislatively required members
  - Open public meetings
- **Deliverables**
  - Interim report due June 1, 2026
  - Final report due December 31, 2027
- **Hybrid Kickoff meeting**
  - September 15<sup>th</sup> 1:00-4:00 p.m.

# Prekindergarten Systems Analysis Workgroup

## For more information:

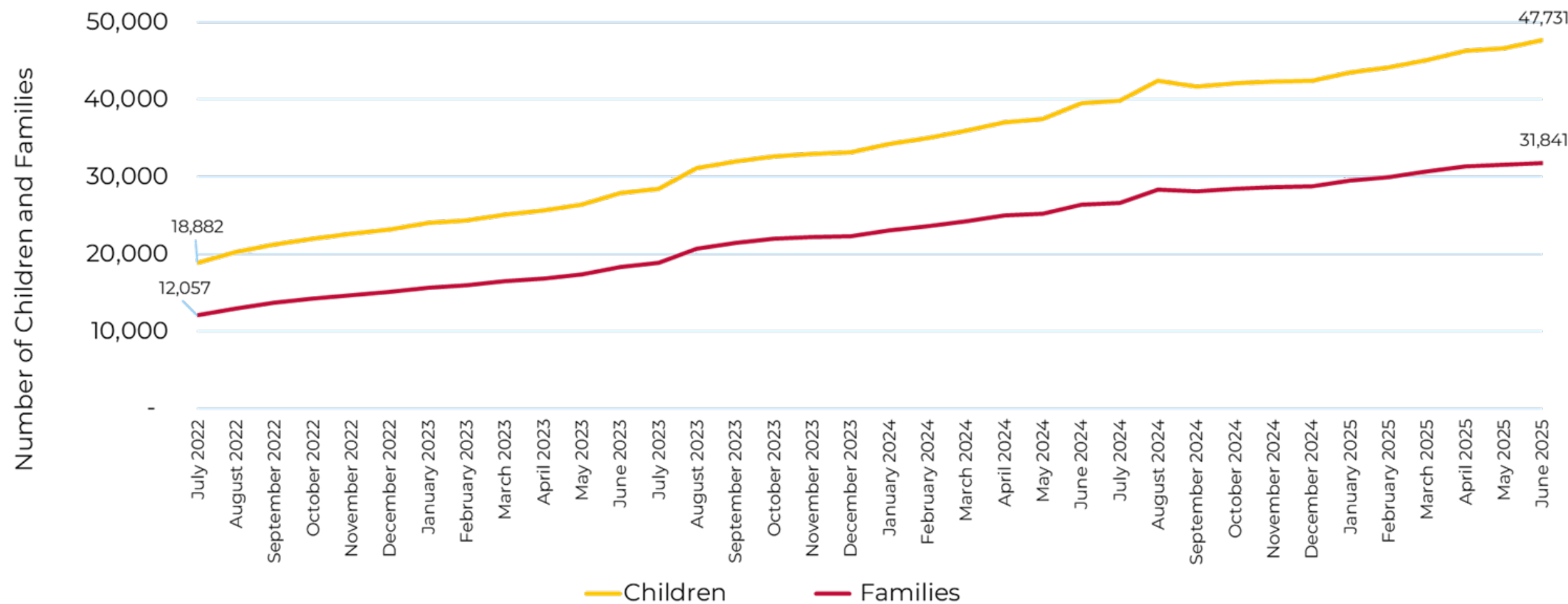
Visit the website:

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/pre-k-workgroup>

Or email: [prekworkgroup.msde@maryland.gov](mailto:prekworkgroup.msde@maryland.gov)

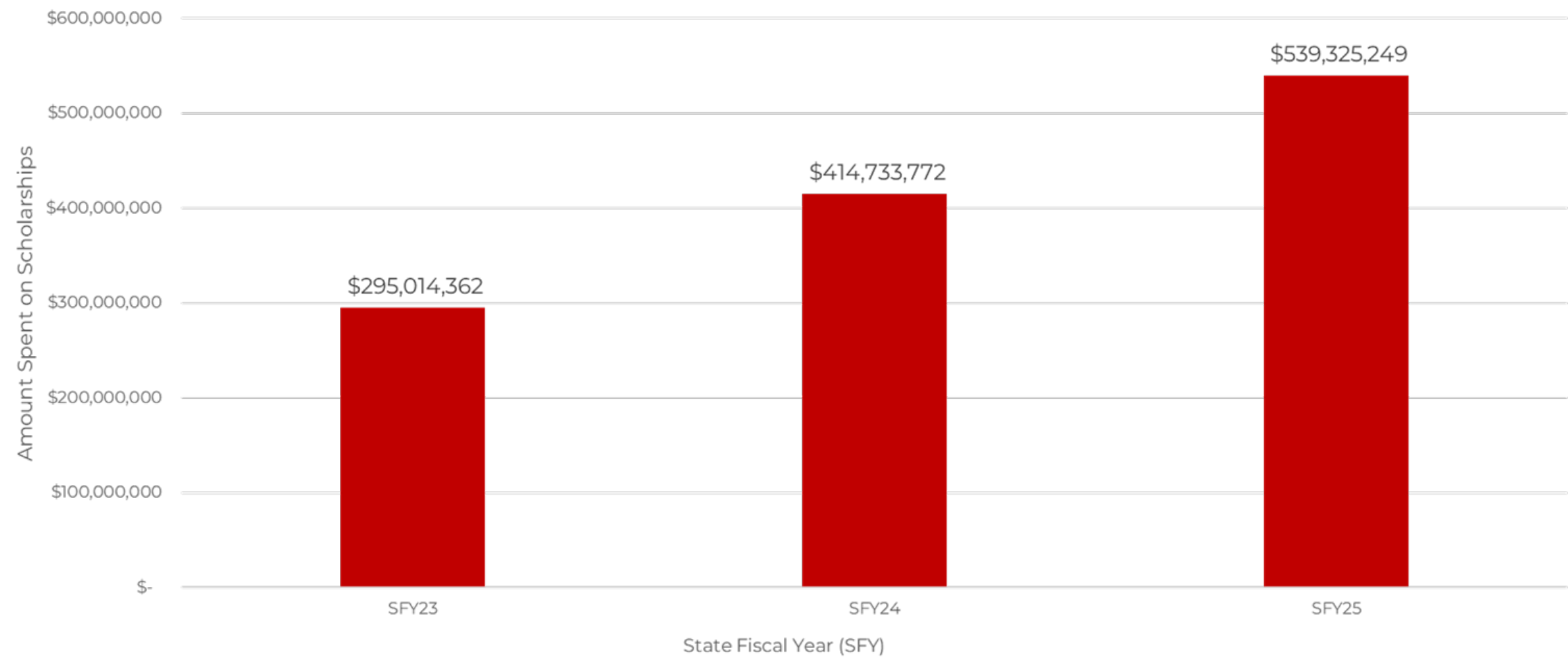


# Number of Children and Families Receiving CCS, SFY 23-25



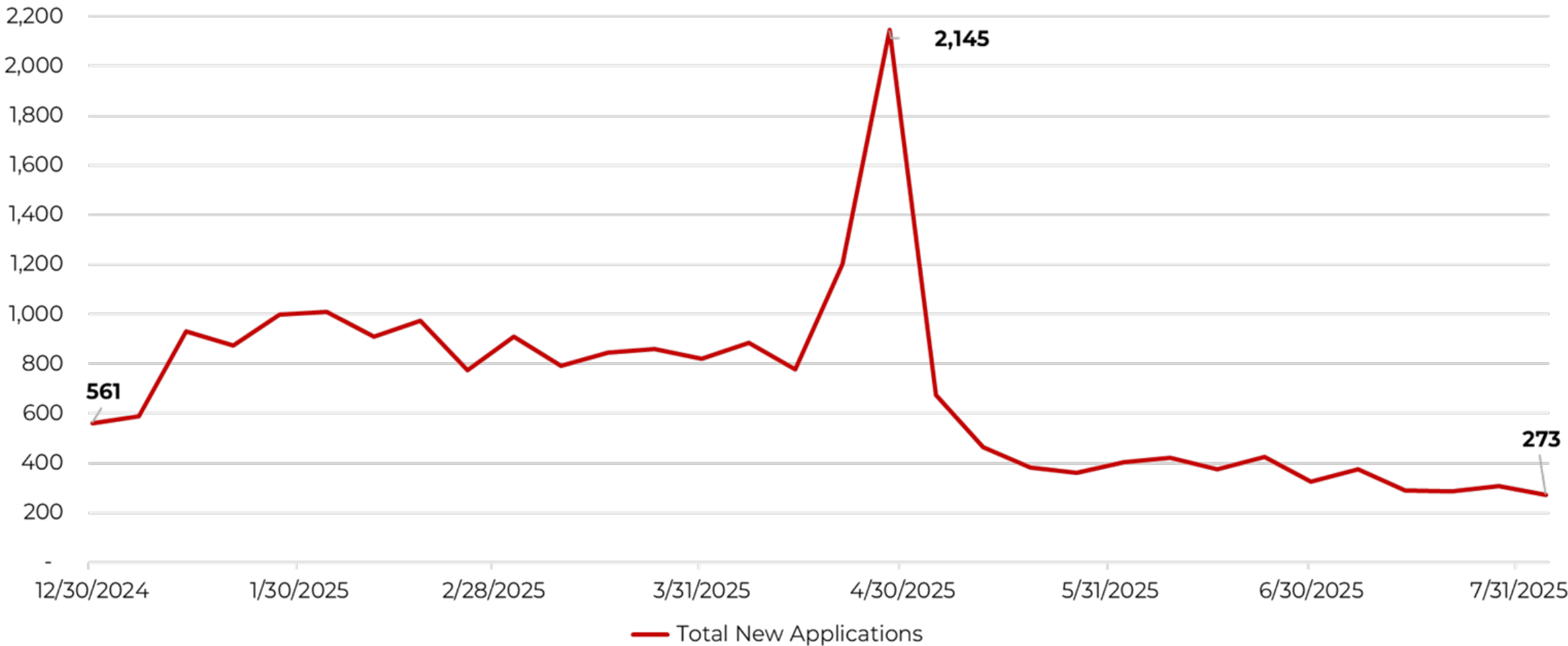
Source: MSDE internal data systems, accessed 8/11/2025.

# Annual Expenditures on Scholarships, SFY 23-25



Source: MSDE internal data systems, accessed 8/11/2025.

# Weekly Total New CCS Applications, CY 2025



Source: MSDE internal data systems, accessed 8/11/2025.

# Strengthening and Transforming Maryland's Early Childhood System

Maryland's Division of Early Childhood (DEC) is committed to continuing to advance its work guided by the [Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#) and to strengthening the early learning continuum from birth through the early elementary years.

This includes:

- Building a strong mixed delivery early childhood system that delivers high-quality early education to children before entering school, and
- Ensuring that high-quality early childhood experiences are intentionally connected to K-2 instruction so that gains made in early years are sustained and built upon.

## Engaging National Experts

To advance these priorities, DEC is enlisting support and resources from national experts, including:

- Engagement with **Watershed Advisors** to support advancing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future early childhood goals to better meet the needs of children, families, and the early childhood sector
- Partnership with **Harvard Kennedy School's Government Performance Lab (GPL)** to increase families' access to childcare including by streamlining child care licensing
- Application for the **Early Childhood Governance and Finance Project Grant** to administer a unified mixed delivery early childhood model

Among other efforts, this work will involve close collaboration with MSDE's Executive Office, the Governor's Office, the Governor's Office for Children, and engagement with our interest-holders and partners.

# Member Conversation

# Public Comments



# Next Steps on DEC's 2025 Legislative Session Updates

# HB 477: Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) and Child Care Centers Regulatory Analysis

- HB 477 requires MSDE to conduct a thorough analysis of the State's regulatory requirements for child care facilities AND conduct a comparative analysis of similar requirements in other states.
- MSDE will produce two reports on the analysis for the Governor and General Assembly:
  - **Interim report** on results of analysis by **January 1, 2026** (Phase 1)
  - **Final report** on results of analysis AND recommended changes to regulatory framework by **September 1, 2026** (Phase 2)

# HB 477: Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) and Child Care Centers Regulatory Analysis

<u>Provider Outcomes</u>	<u>Family/Child Outcomes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safe environment</li><li>• Profitability</li><li>• Ability to open or operate a child care facility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safe environment</li><li>• Affordability</li><li>• Quality</li></ul>

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## Operations

<u>FCCH/LFCCH</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Registration Process</li><li>• EXCELS process</li></ul>	<u>Center</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Licensing Process</li><li>• EXCELS process</li></ul>
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Family/Child Outcomes

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Center

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## Staffing

FCCH/LFCCH

- Ratios
- Staff Qualifications
- Supervision requirements
- Career ladder

Center

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## Facilities

FCCH/LFCCH

- Physical Requirements
- Programs to support facilities

Center

- Physical Requirements
- Programs to support facilities

# Breakout Discussion: HB 477 - Shared Definitions and Understanding

- Breaking out into small groups for 20 minutes to discuss shared definition:
  - Profitability
  - Affordability
  - Quality
  - Safe Environment
- Each group will have a DEC staff member present to facilitate the conversation.
- Please help us think through how these definitions might differ for parents and all types of providers.



# Next Steps and Adjournment