

Early Childhood Advisory Council

Division of Early Childhood

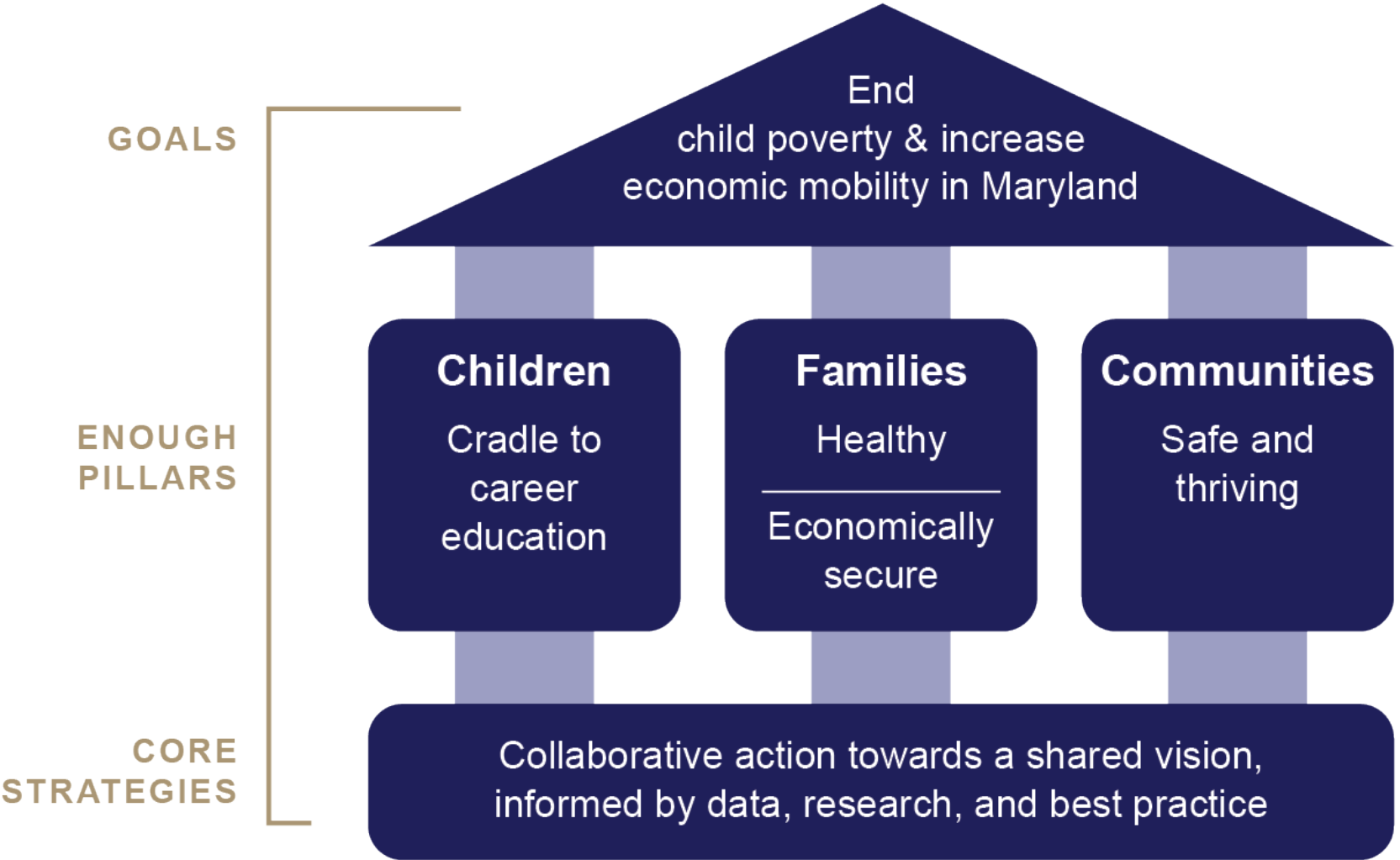
August 20, 2025

PRESENTED BY

Governor's Office for Children and Division of Early
Childhood

Governor's Office for Children Updates

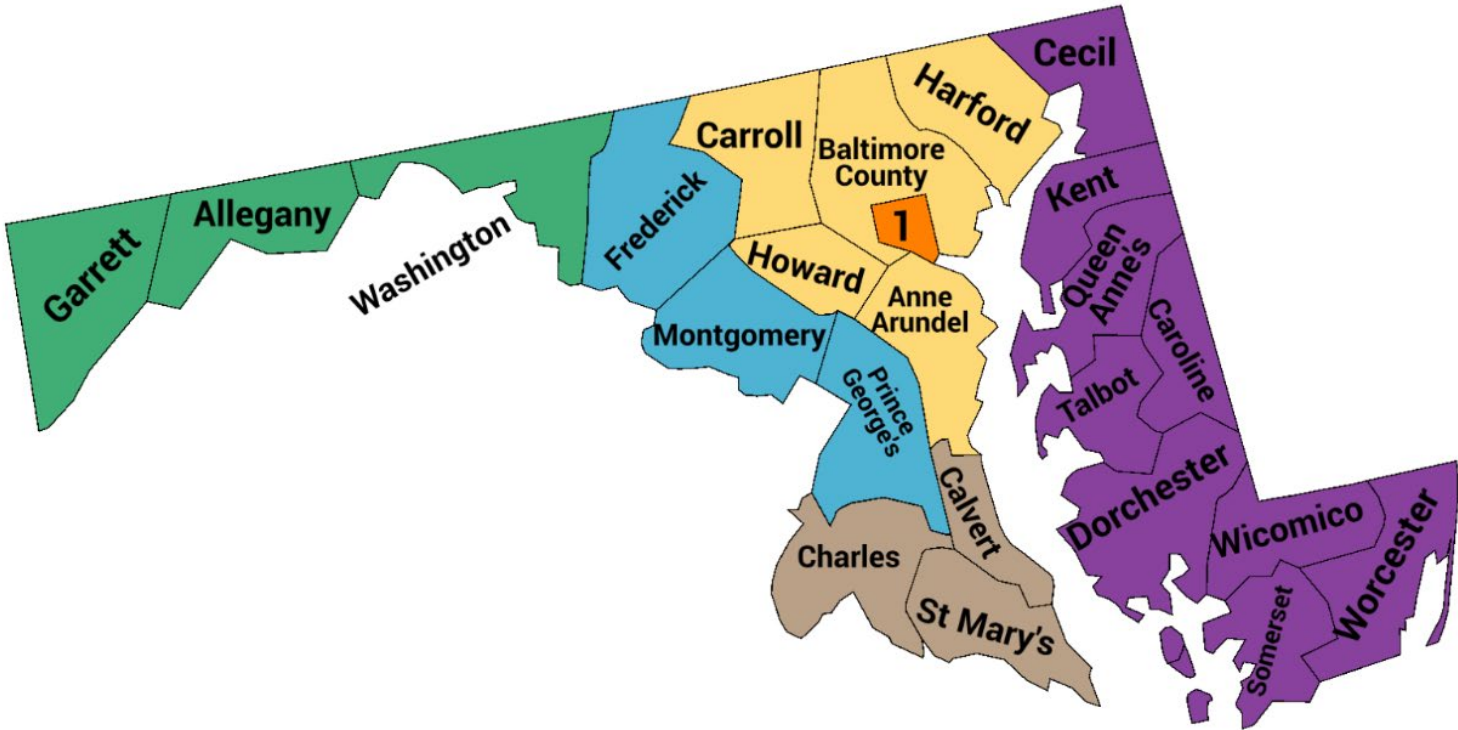
ENOUGH Theory of Action



Regional Spread

Every region of Maryland has at least one grantee.

# of Awards	Region
2	Western Maryland
7	Capital Region
4	Central Maryland
11	Baltimore City
1	Southern Maryland
2	Eastern Shore



The Navigators program is a cross-agency effort, rooted in local partnerships.

Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Benefits Access. Provides technical training and program oversight to ensure Navigators are prepared to support benefits access. Coordinates with Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) to support local implementation.

LDSS. Hosts Navigators and integrates them into benefits workflows (e.g., intake, application support, outreach). Provides local onboarding and supervision and participates in coordination check-ins with DHS and Governor's Office for Children (GOC).

GOC. Leads coordination with community-based organizations in ENOUGH neighborhoods and ensures alignment with the state's broader whole-of-government strategy to expand access in high-need areas.

Department of Service and Civic Innovation (DSCI). Oversees all Service Year operations, including member support to ensure Navigators are equipped and supported throughout their service year.

ENOUGH organizations. Serve as community integration partners. They connect Navigators to trusted local spaces and outreach opportunities and offer informal mentorship to help Navigators build relationships and local credibility.

Division of Early Childhood Updates

Strengthening 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 high-quality early childhood experiences are intentionally connected to K-2 instruction so that gains made in early years are sustained and built upon.

DEC Envisions an Early Childhood System where:

All children enter kindergarten ready for success in school as a result of increased access to high-quality early childhood education.

Families can easily learn about, apply for, and access the early childhood care, education, and resources they need for their children.

Providers are supported to operate stable, high-quality early childhood programs with an effective and prepared educator **workforce**.

Maryland's **economy** benefits from thriving families who are supported to work, raise children, and participate in their community.

DEC's Key Early Childhood Priorities

To achieve this vision, DEC is focused on advancing the following priorities:

1. Improving High-Quality Mixed Delivery Prekindergarten (Pre-K)
2. Increasing access to Child Care Scholarships (CCS) for Maryland's income eligible families
3. Streamlining child care licensing and increasing supply while decreasing violations and child harm
4. Supporting families through relationship-based programs at Patty Centers and Judy Center Early Learning Hubs
5. Focusing Maryland EXCELS on evidence-based indicators and supporting continuous educator improvement (qualifications/knowledge and practice)
6. Aligned and connected early childhood education (ECE) workforce supports and pathways
7. Strengthening data systems, evaluation, research, and data visualization

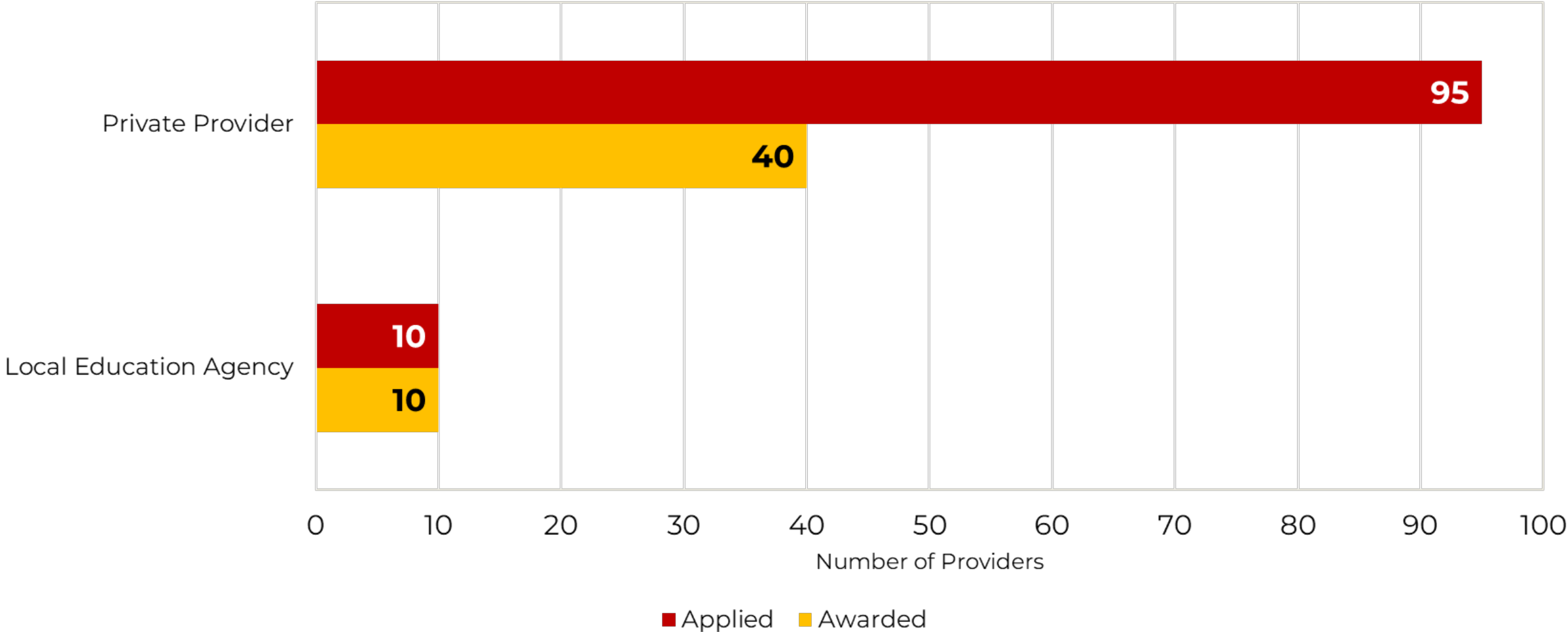
Engaging National Experts

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 child care, including by streamlining licensing
- Application for the **Early Childhood Governance and Finance Project Grant** to administer a unified mixed delivery early childhood model

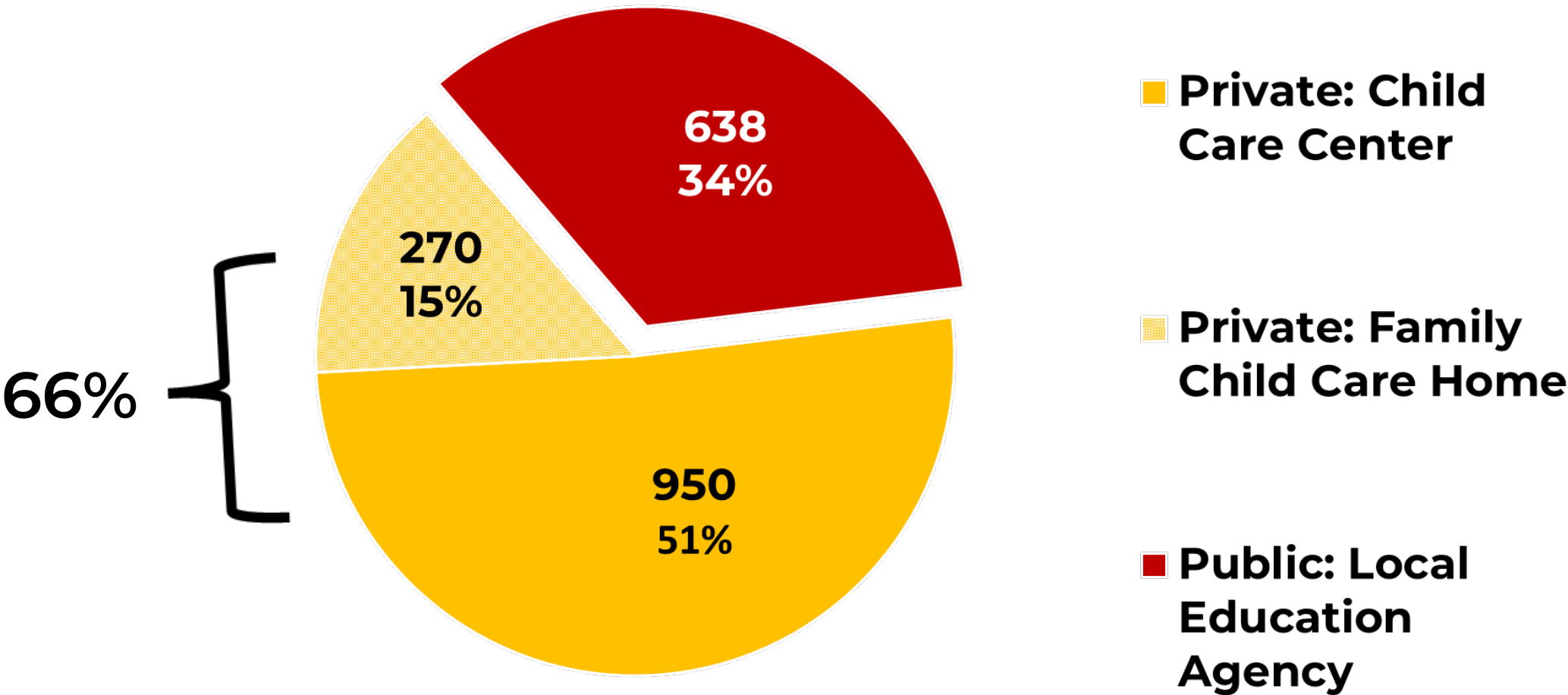
Among other efforts, this work will involve close collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE's) Executive Office, the Governor's Office, the Governor's Office for Children, and engagement with our interest-holders and partners.

Fiscal Year (FY) 26 Pre-K Expansion Grant Applicant Type



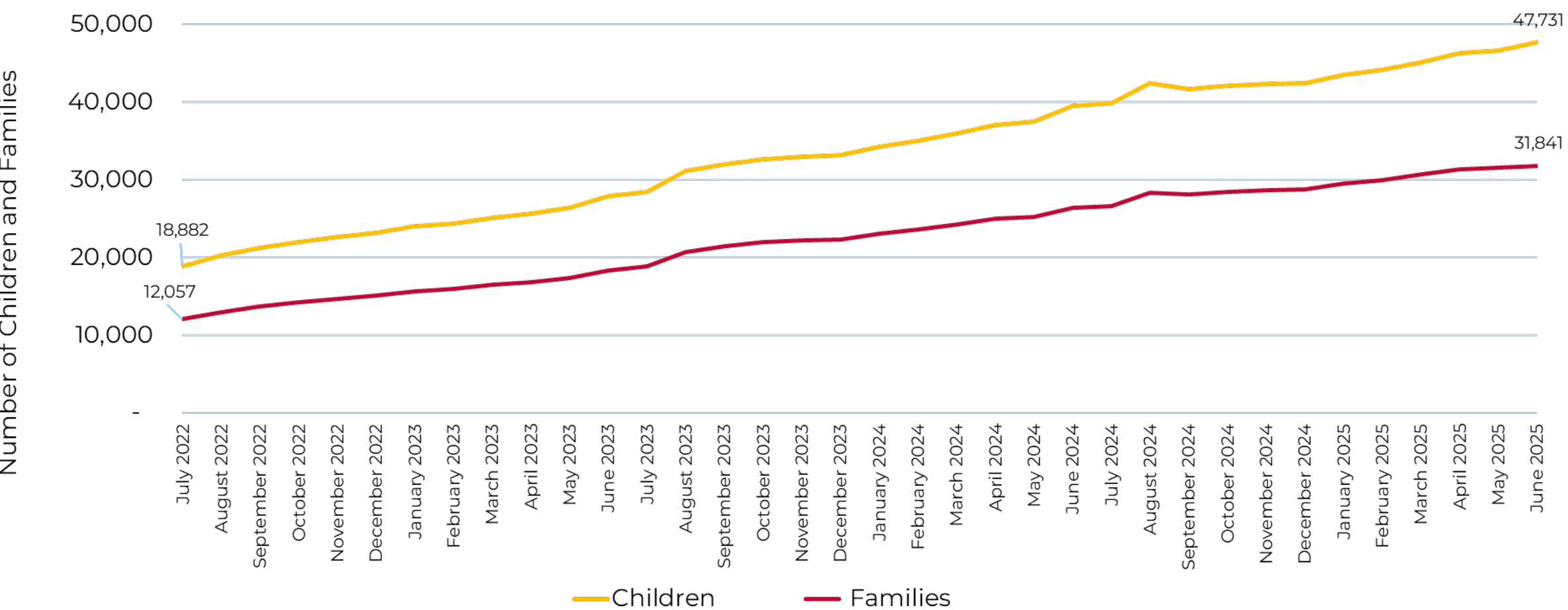
Source: MSDE internal data systems, accessed 8/11/2025.

FY26 Number of Awarded Pre-K Expansion Grant Slots



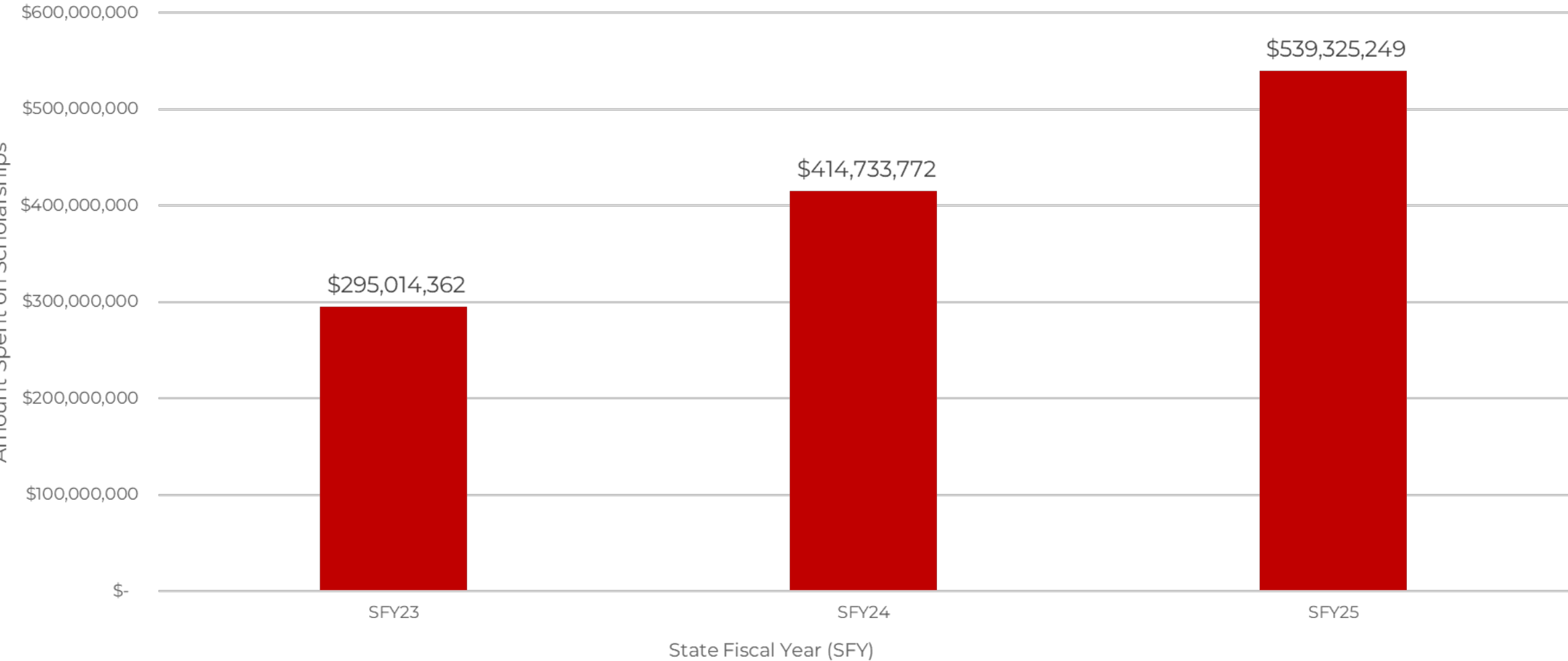
Source: MSDE internal data systems, accessed 8/11/2025.

Number of Children and Families Receiving CCS, State FY (SFY) 23-25



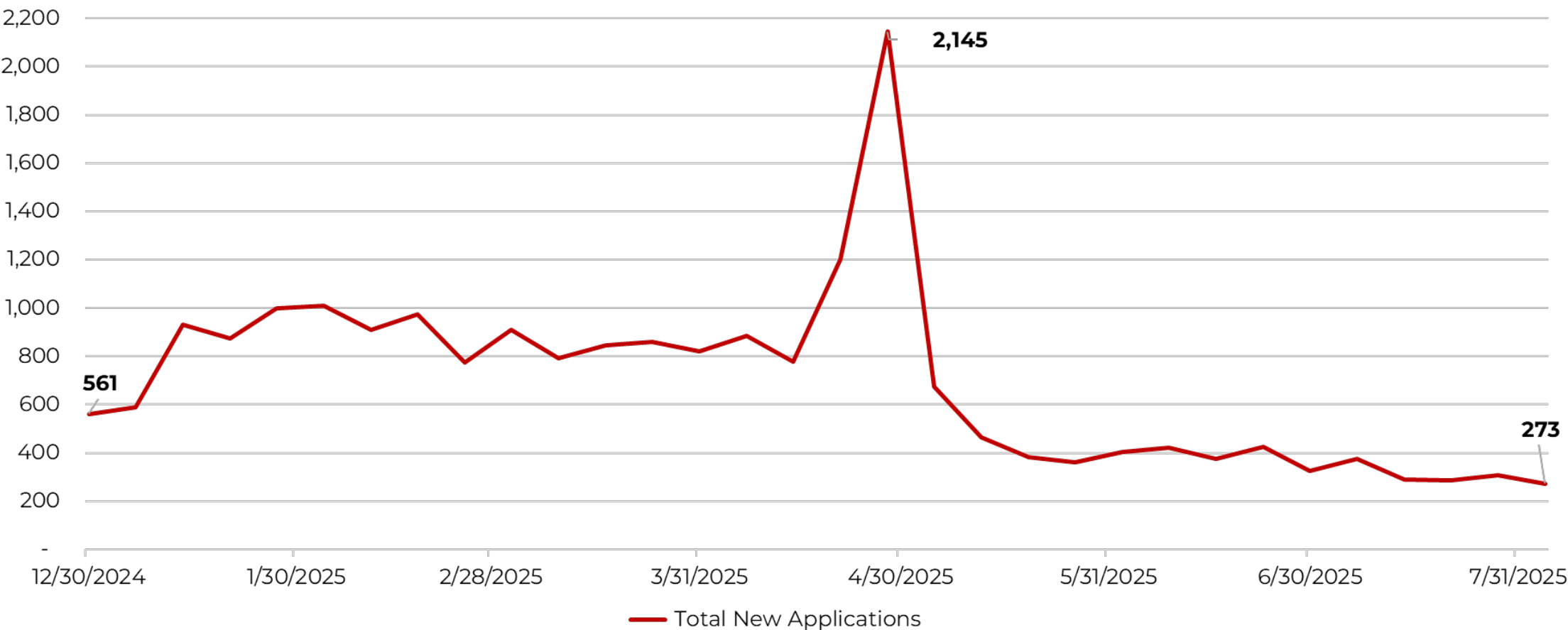
Source: MSDE internal data systems, accessed 8/11/2025.

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.

Note: Total new applications include fast track applications and full applications. There may be some applications counted in both fast track and full applications; therefore, the numbers shown in this graphic represent a high-end estimate of total applications.

Member Comments

Federal Early Childhood Update

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

Changes

The Administration for Children and Families shared at the July 2025 State Administrators Meeting that they intend to rollback the 2024 CCDF Final Rule that put several new requirements into place. This may include:

- Advance provider payments
- Paying providers based on enrollment
- Family copayments capped at 7% of family income
- Presumptive eligibility

Impact on Maryland

- Maryland has already met the requirements listed above.
- As of July 2025, over 47,000 children received Child Care Scholarships funded by CCDF. The CCS Program currently has a waitlist.

Head Start

Changes

The Department of Health and Human Services announced a new interpretation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The reinterpretation newly categorized Head Start as a “Public Benefit Program,” making the program and participants subject to additional eligibility requirements, particularly regarding immigration status. This change is pending further federal guidance and ongoing lawsuits that Maryland is involved with.

Impact on Maryland

- In FY 2024:
 - 202 centers received over \$135 million in Head Start funding.
 - There were over 2,300 staff employed with Head Start funding.
 - There were 7,774 funded seats, including:
 - 5,765 Head Start Preschool seats (3- and 4-year-olds) and
 - 2,009 Early Head Start seats (0-2-year-olds).

Source: <https://nhsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Maryland.pdf>

Medicaid

Changes

Signed into law on July 4, 2025, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) makes significant changes to Medicaid. Maryland is a Medicaid expansion state.

Changes include new work requirements for adults covered by Medicaid expansion, new cost-sharing requirements for Medicaid expansion beneficiaries, and limits coverage to certain groups of immigrants under the new PRWORA interpretation.

Impact on Maryland

- As of June 30, 2025, over 1.5 million Marylanders participate in Medicaid, including:
 - 42% of births
 - 32% of children
- 28.9% of child care workers in Maryland receive Medicaid.
- 175,000 Marylanders are expected to lose coverage.
- When all bill provisions are implemented, Maryland will lose up to \$2.7 billion in annual federal funding and incur millions of dollars in additional costs.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Changes

OBBBA introduces a number of program changes to SNAP, including imposing work requirements for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABWADs) with children aged 15-18, imposes up to 15% benefits cost-sharing on the state based on error rate, and reduces the federal government's share of administrative costs from 50% to 25%.

Impact on Maryland

- SNAP feeds over 680,000 Marylanders monthly, including nearly **270,000 children**.
- There will be more paperwork and red tape for Marylanders, as well as reduced benefit values, making it harder to purchase food.
- Costs will increase for Marylanders because the state will be required to pay for 75% of administrative costs and up to 15% of benefit costs.

Member Comments

Prekindergarten Systems Analysis Workgroup (House Bill 1475)

Purpose

- Convene a workgroup to conduct an analysis of the state's current mixed delivery publicly funded prekindergarten system established under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- Topics for analysis include:
 - Applications and Administration
 - Family and Child Experiences
 - Program Standards
 - Partnerships, Financial, and Payments

Deliverables

- **Interim report: June 1, 2026**
 - Submitted to State Board of Education and Accountability and Implementation Board
 - Results include:
 - Preliminary analysis
 - Recommendations for changes to regulations, policies, and procedures
- **Final report: December 31, 2027**
 - Submitted to Accountability and Implementation Board and General Assembly
 - Results include:
 - Changes made based on recommendations from interim report
 - Further recommendations for changes to regulations, policies, and procedures

Legislatively Required Workgroup Members

Appointed by President of the Senate

- Member of the Senate of Maryland

Appointed by Speaker of the House

- Member of the House of Delegates

Designated by State Superintendent of Schools

A representative of:

- MSDE
- Department of Health
- Head Start Program
- Office of the State Fire Marshal
- Child care advocacy organization
- Community college with an early childhood education program
- At least two family child care providers
- At least two child care providers from child care centers

Additional Information

To learn more:

Website:

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

Email: prekworkgroup.msde@maryland.gov

Member Comments

In Maryland, what does a successful mixed delivery system look like?

Public Comments

Next Steps and Adjournment