

# A Snapshot of Montana's Early Childhood Workforce

Presentation to the Montana Early Childhood Project  
Career Development Advisory Board  
May 2019

Dr. Christine Lux and Cassie Noble



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# National Governor's Association grant

- Team:
  - Caitlin Jensen, Siri Smillie, Megan Vincent, Patty Butler, Barb Wagner, Amy Watson, Christine Lux, Nanette Gilbertson
- Purpose:
  - Build state capacity to improve the early childhood workforce
  - Cost of quality, policy agenda, communication plan
- Process:
  - NGA site visits to support planning and goal setting
  - Monthly calls
  - Cross-state convening to learn from others and share our successes



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## Childcare in Montana

Supporting Montana Families and Caring for the State's Most Precious Resource

by Amy Watson,  
Senior Economist

The unemployment rate in Montana continues to fall in 2018, leaving many businesses searching for qualified applicants to fill open positions. As available workers become harder to find, and the number of good-paying jobs grows, many people wonder what is stopping every able-bodied person from working. For many, the answer is that they are in school or are retired. However, for a growing portion of the state's population, they are not working because they have family responsibilities or difficulty affording childcare. This article explores the availability and affordability of childcare in Montana, and the effect that a lack of affordable childcare has on the state's available workforce.

### The Cost of Childcare

Childcare in Montana is more affordable than in other states, but is still too expensive for many families. On average, Montana families pay over \$9,000 per year for infant care, and almost \$8,000 per year for toddler care. For families at the median, childcare costs for a single child account for 11% to 13% of their family income.<sup>1</sup> Families with multiple young children face a larger burden. A family with an infant and toddler in childcare pays an average of \$17,000 per year for care, roughly 25% of the state's median family income – ranking Montana 17th in the nation for childcare affordability.<sup>2</sup> Care for a single child under five years old can quickly become the largest monthly expense families face.

Figure 1 shows average annual childcare costs relative to other expenses Montana families incur. Montana is one of thirty-three states where the cost of infant care is greater than in-state tuition at the state's public universities.<sup>3</sup> Infant care is as costly as the average rent in Montana, roughly \$750 per month, and surpasses the average cost of healthcare premiums for a healthy 40-year-old who is seeking low-cost coverage.<sup>3</sup>

Childcare costs are particularly prohibitive for low-income households. A minimum wage worker, making \$8.30 per hour, would need to work full-time for more than half the year to pay for the cost of care for one infant. It would take a full-time job paying \$8.74 per hour after taxes to cover the cost of rent and infant care. Many low-income

<sup>1</sup> Economic Policy Institute, April 2016. <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/MT>

<sup>2</sup> Median family income reported by US Census Bureau 2017 ACS data.

<sup>3</sup> Health insurance premium costs based on 2018 average rate Kings for Blue Cross, PacificSource, and Montana Co-Op of a 40-year-old individual participating in the least expensive plan living in the most expensive county.

## CHILDCARE SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT YOUR WORKFORCE

MAY 29TH, 2019  
HELENA, MT

With low unemployment across the state, Montana businesses are going to great lengths to attract and retain qualified workers. Increasingly, we know that many workers are not in the workforce because of the difficulty in finding quality, affordable child care for their young children.

You are invited to Helena on May 29th, to join business leaders from across the state in discussing innovative and attainable childcare solutions to attract and retain the highest quality employees.

This solutions-focused summit will highlight existing businesses implementing innovative solutions and will help you design strategies that fit your business.

### Agenda

10:00	SUMMIT WELCOME WITH LT. GOVERNOR MIKE COONEY
10:15	CHILDCARE AS A WORKFORCE ISSUE
10:45	FAMILY FORWARD MT BUSINESS INITIATIVE
11:00	BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES/SOLUTIONS PANEL
12:00	BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS
12:30	LUNCH
1:00	KEYNOTE: ROB GRUNEWALD, FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF MINNEAPOLIS
1:30	RYAN PRICCO, CHILD CARE AWARE WASHINGTON
2:00	MONTANA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM
2:45	CLOSING DISCUSSION AND WRAP UP
3:00	SUMMIT ADJOURNS

Register by May 20th  
at: [bit.ly/ChildcareMT](https://bit.ly/ChildcareMT)

HOSTED BY: MONTANA GOVERNOR'S  
OFFICE, MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
AND INDUSTRY, MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,  
NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION AND  
ZERO TO FIVE.



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# Early Childhood Workforce survey

- Demographics
  - Age, years in the field, role
- Wages and benefits
  - Hourly and salary, types of benefits
- Education
  - Degree, financial assistance
- Motivation to stay in the field
  - Goals, continue at job

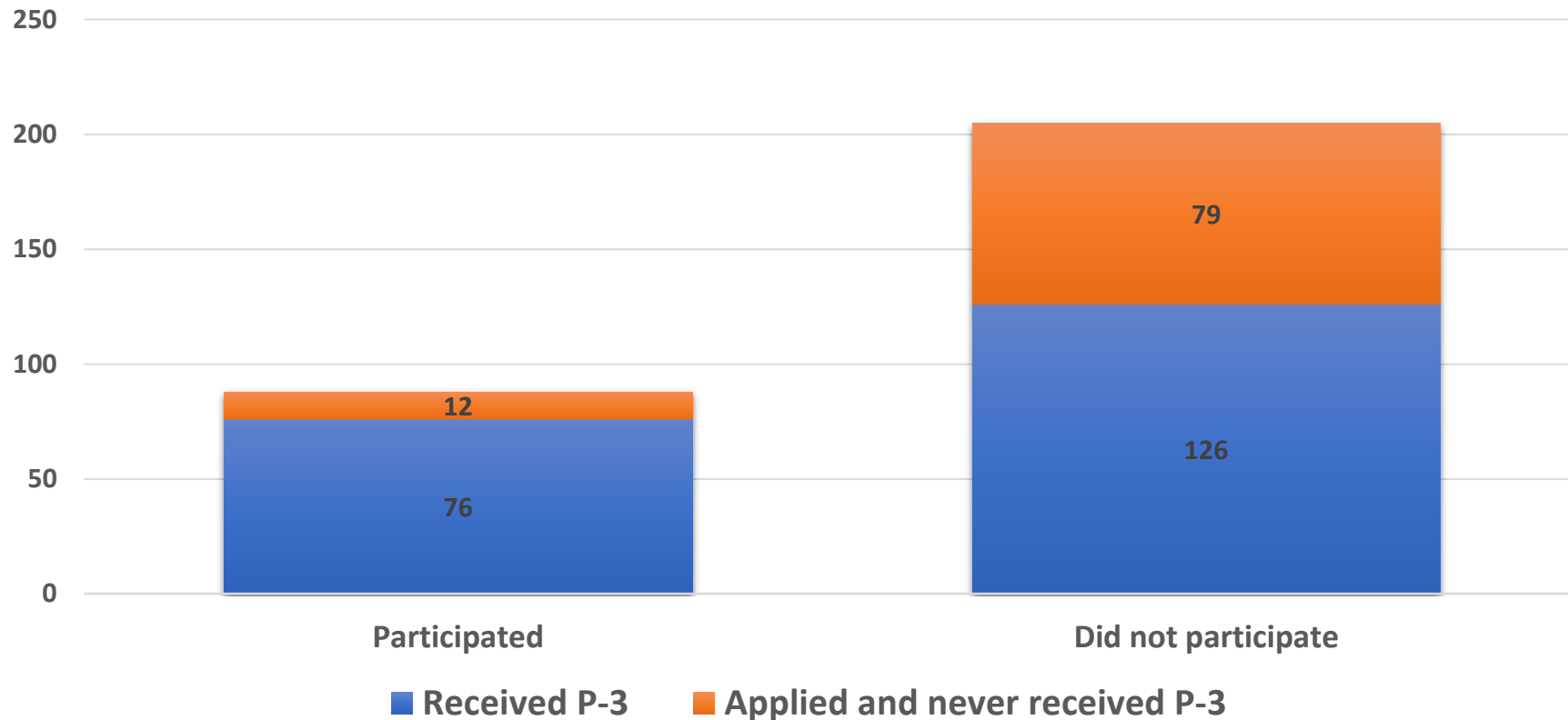


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# P-3 Financial Assistance participants

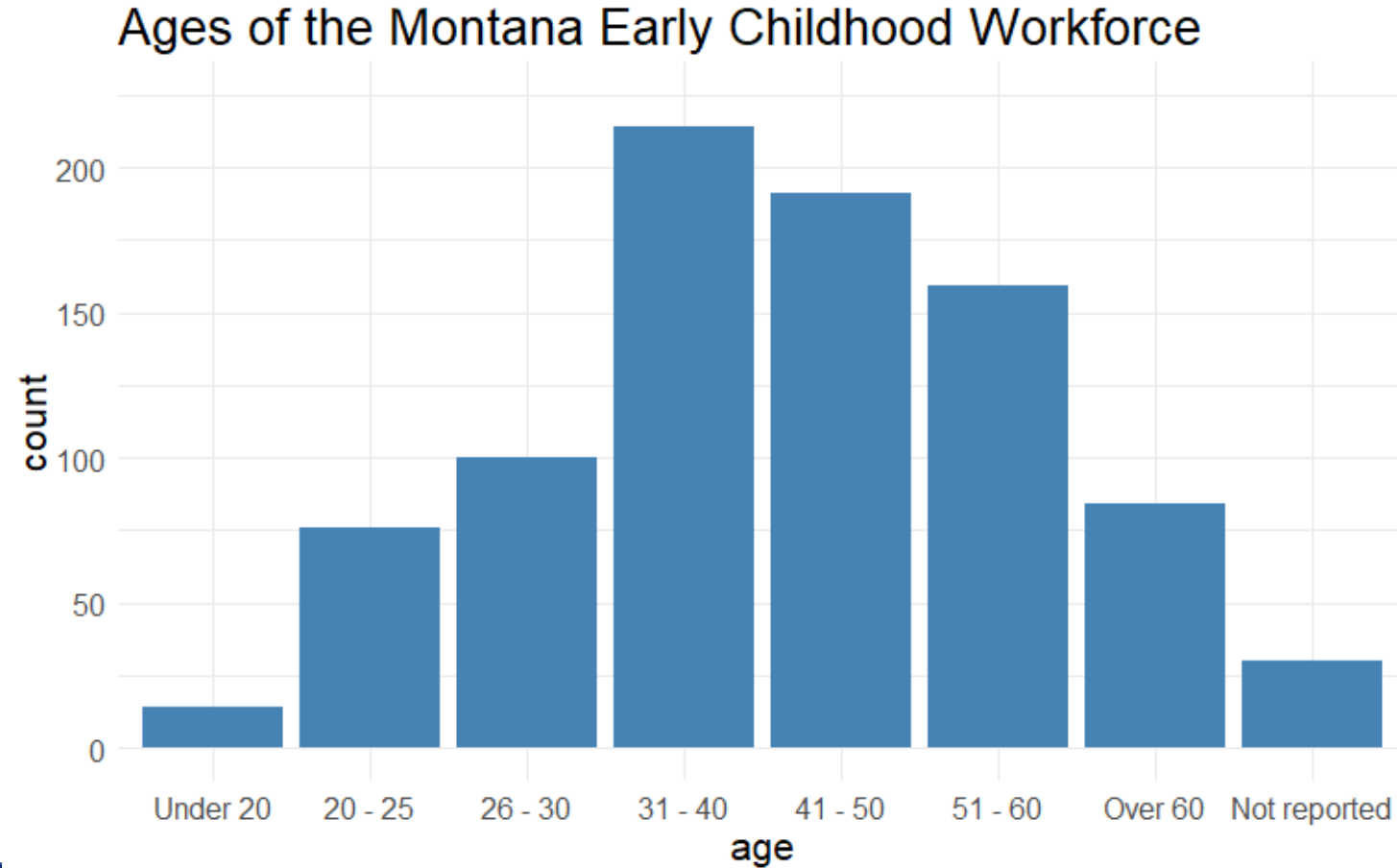
Survey Participation of P-3 Applicants



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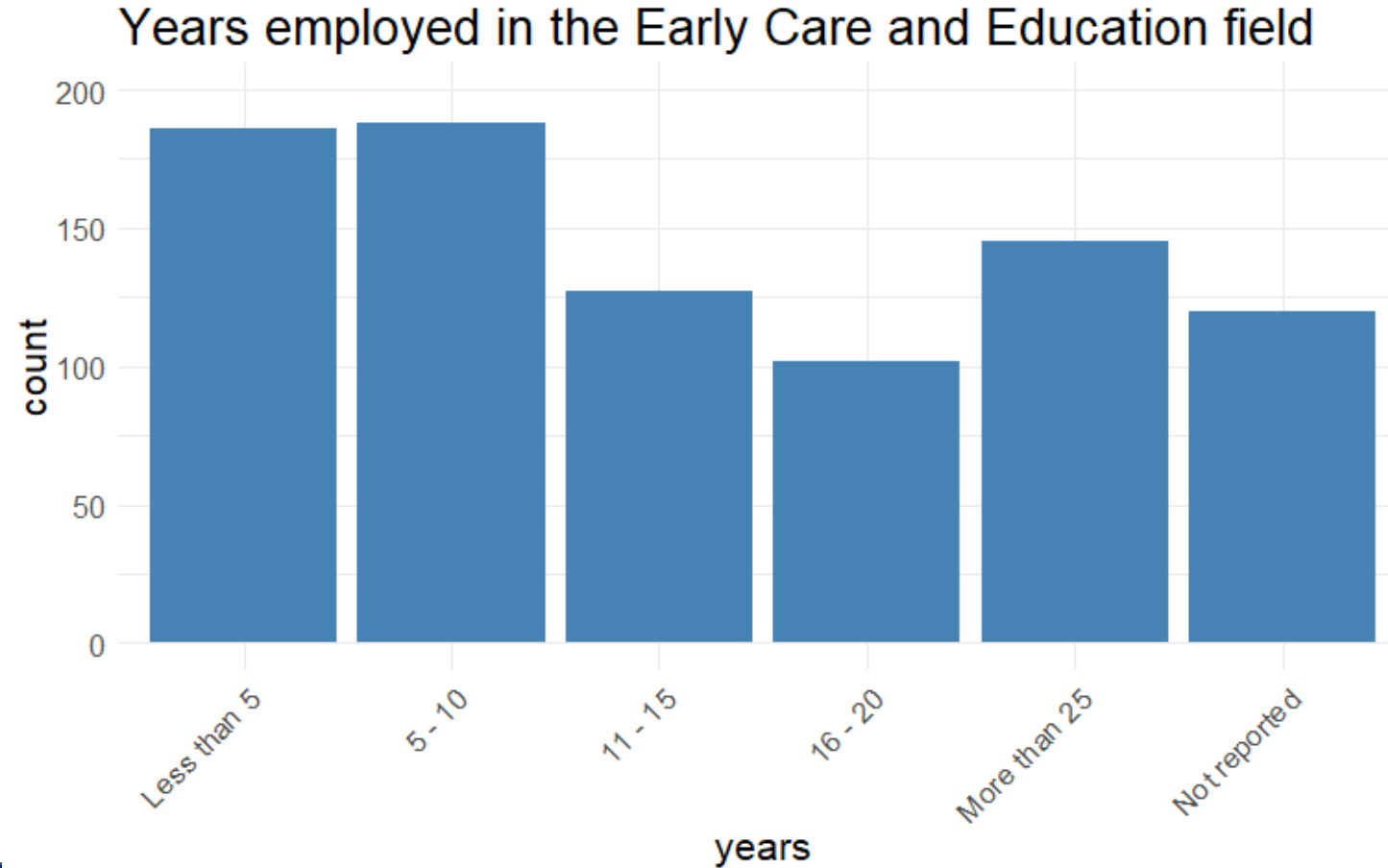
# Results: Age



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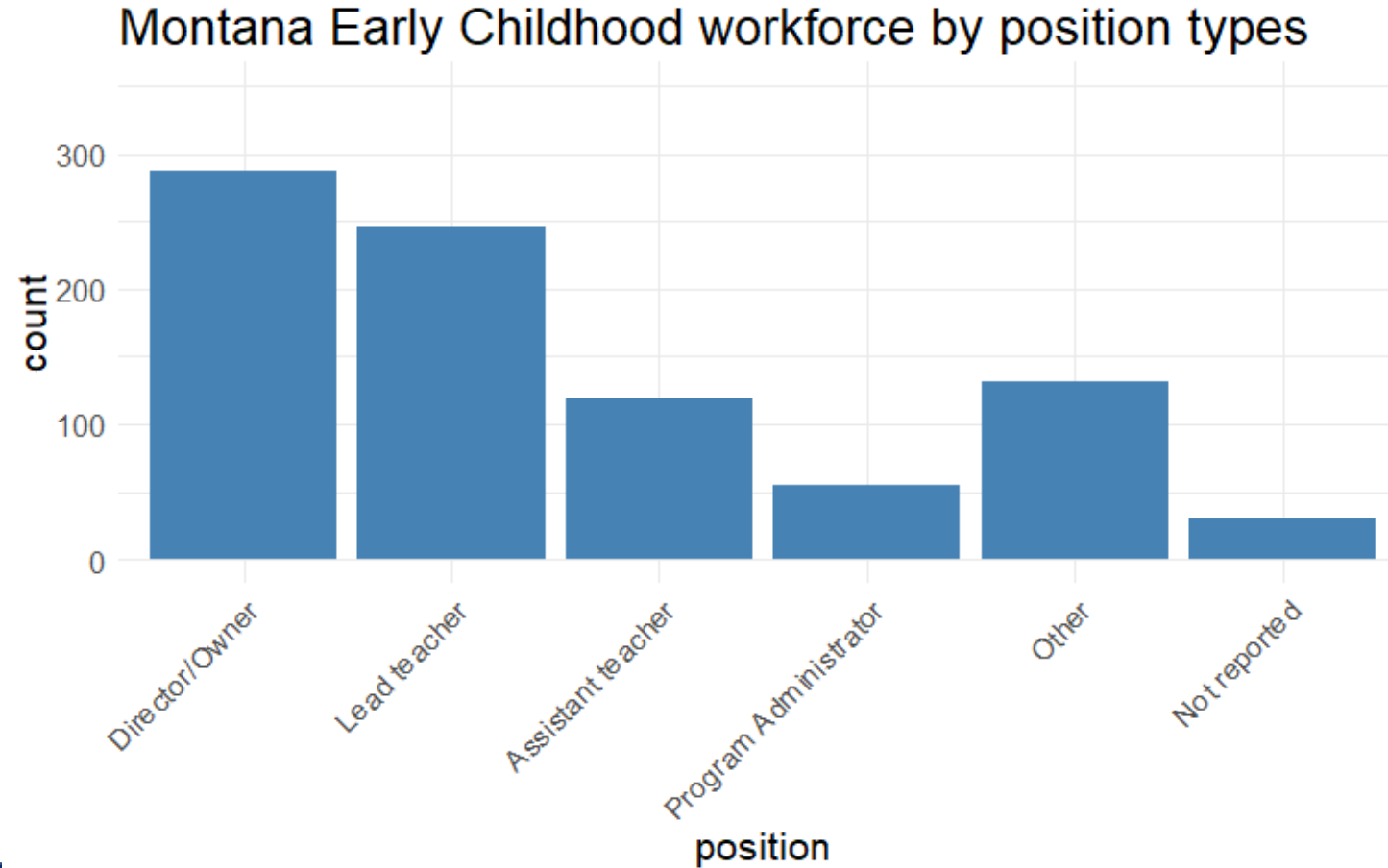
# Results: Years Employed



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# Results: Position



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Leadership & Management	Early Childhood Educator
Director / Assistant Director	Teacher / Educator
Administrator / Assistant Manager	Lead Teacher
Coordinator	Assistant Teacher
	Aide / Student aide
	Sub
Early Childhood Family Support	Professional Development Specialist
	Special Education & Exceptional Learners
	Related Service Providers
	SLP, OT, PT
	Para educator
	Instructional Assistant
	Support staff
	Other
	Food Service
	Maintenance

# Results: Position

# Results: Wages and benefits

Position type	Average hourly wage	Average annual salary
Assistant teacher	\$11.03	\$22,140.00
Lead teacher	\$12.99	\$35,883.00
Other	\$15.23	\$35,206.00
Director/Owner	\$16.22	\$34,457.00
Program administrator	\$18.76	\$37,180.00



# Results: Wages and benefits

Program type	Average hourly wage	Average annual salary
Licensed or registered	\$12.99	\$33,276.11
STARS to Quality (QRIS)	\$12.78	\$34,311.32
STARS Preschool	\$13.49	\$38,513.44
Montana Preschool Development Grant	\$17.92	\$53,986.67



# Results: Wages and benefits

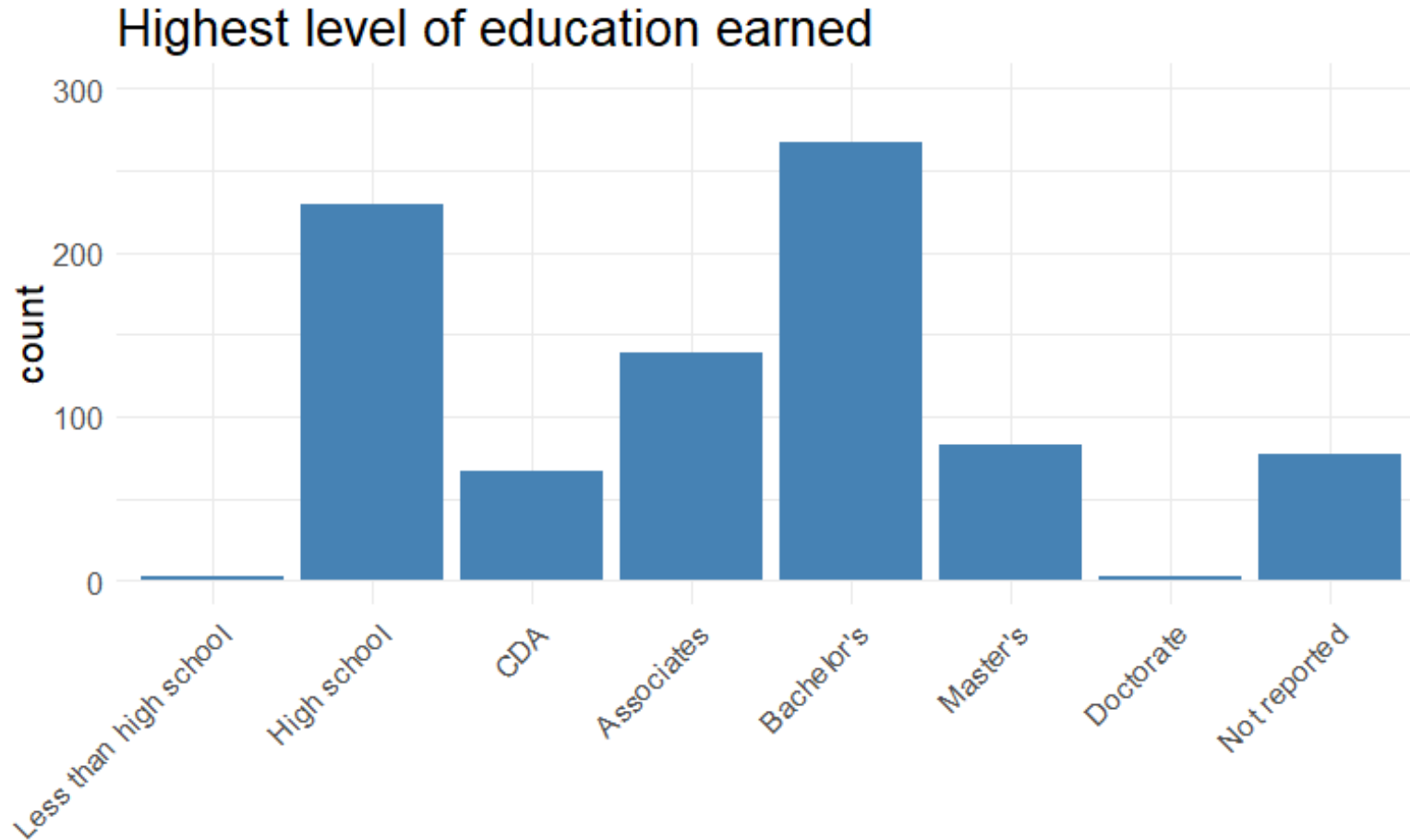
- Benefits offered and benefits received
- Eligibility for benefits
  - Part time
  - Probationary status
- What kind of benefits *should* be offered?



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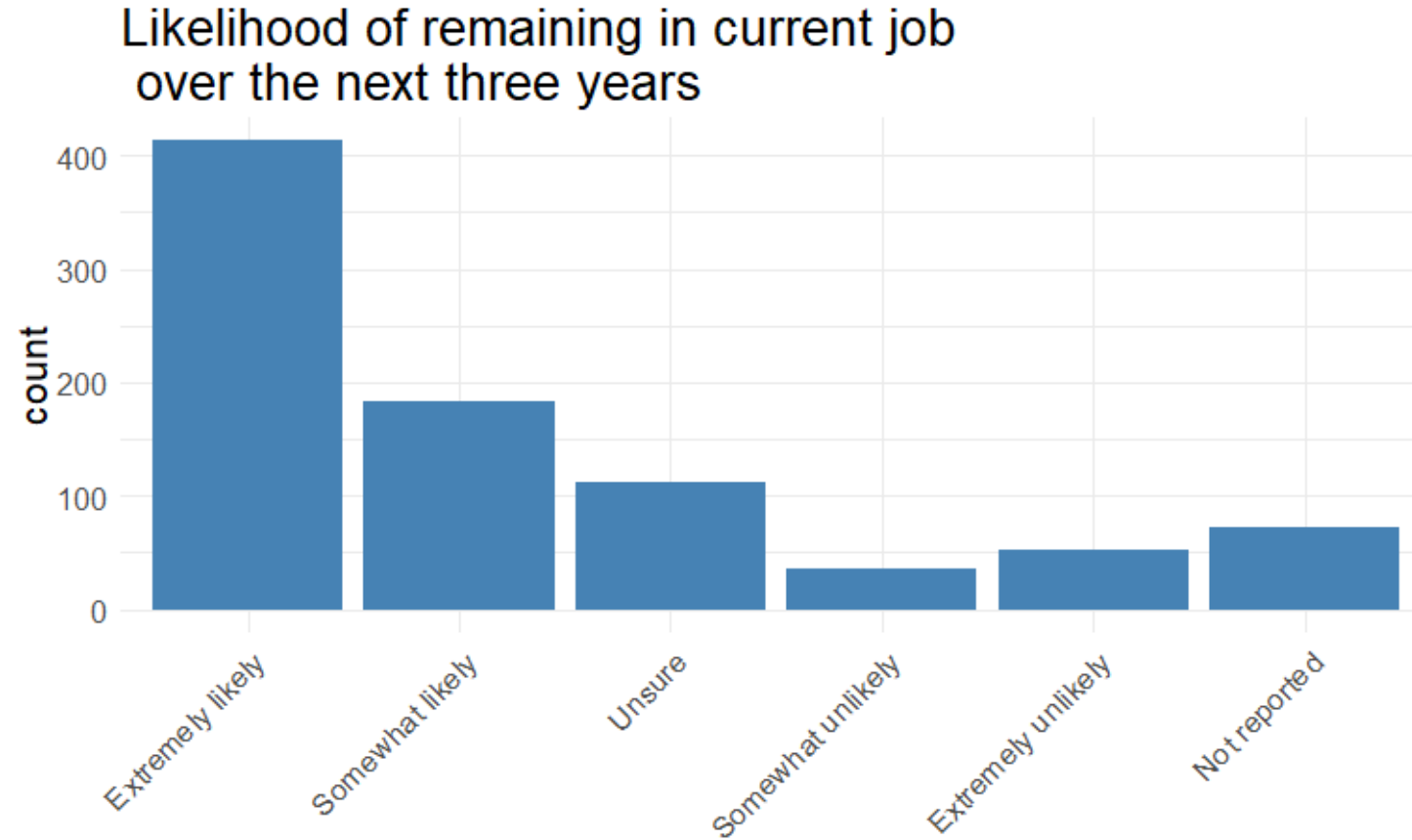
# Results: Education



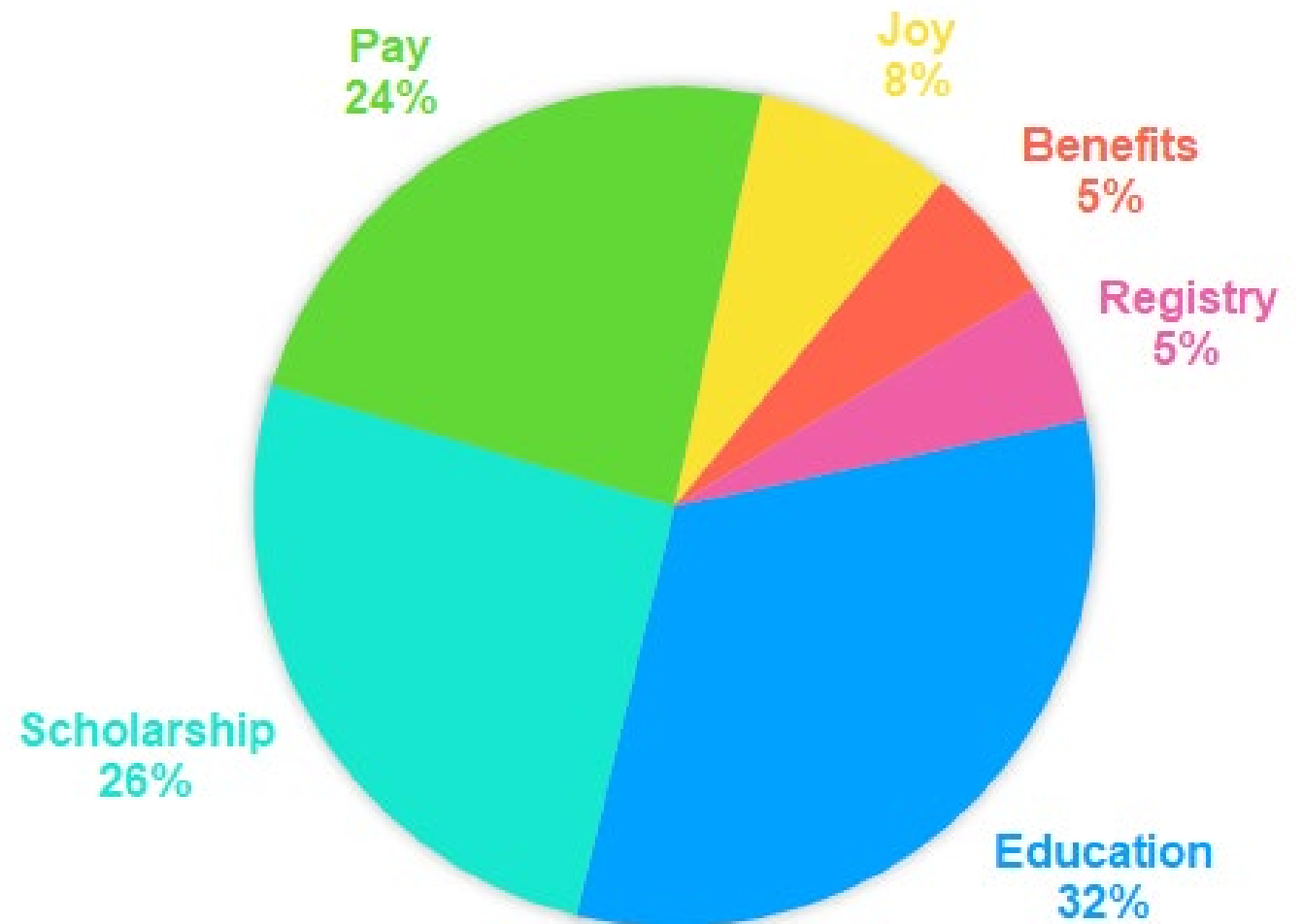
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# Results: Motivation



# Results: Open-ended comments



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# Recommendations

- Practitioner Registry renamed to Early Childhood Workforce Registry
  - Leadership and Management
  - Early Childhood Educator
  - Special Education & Exceptional Learners
  - Health Services
  - PD Specialist
  - Resource & Referral
  - Family Support
  - Other
- Role types consistent with NAEYC's *Power to the Profession*
- Knowledge Base revision



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# Recommendations

- What happens when PDG is over?
  - MECHEC
  - ECP incentives
  - Strengthening Montana's Early Childhood Systems Project (B5 PDG)
- Survey next steps
  - Role type categories
  - Benefits offered and received
  - Hours worked (part time and full time)
  - What else do YOU want to know about the workforce?



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# Thank you!

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