City of Harrisonburg
Child Care Needs Assessment

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Consultants

foundations for families

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DATA-DRIVEN. STRATEGIC. RESPONSIVE.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES BY PROMOTING EXCELLENCE

IN SYSTEMS OF EARLY EDUCATION AND COORDINATED EFFORTS TOWARD FULL EMPLOYMENT AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY SINCE 2000.

Foundations for Families is a woman-owned consulting company that provides services to local, state, regional, and national organizations supporting children, families, and communities. Our consulting team brings experience and expertise to every project.

We specialize in community needs assessment, wage comparability studies, organizational development, and grant writing, as well as continuous program improvement and risk mitigation for Head Start programs.

Why Child Care Needs Assessment?

- Understand the most significant challenges for families in **identifying, accessing, and paying** for child care services in Harrisonburg;
- Identify the most **significant challenges child care providers face** in supplying affordable, high-quality services for children birth to age 5, including their desire for expansion, and identifying the costs for providers to expand;
- Identify **gaps in local coordination and services** among providers; and
- Recommend **policy and practice strategies** to address challenges.

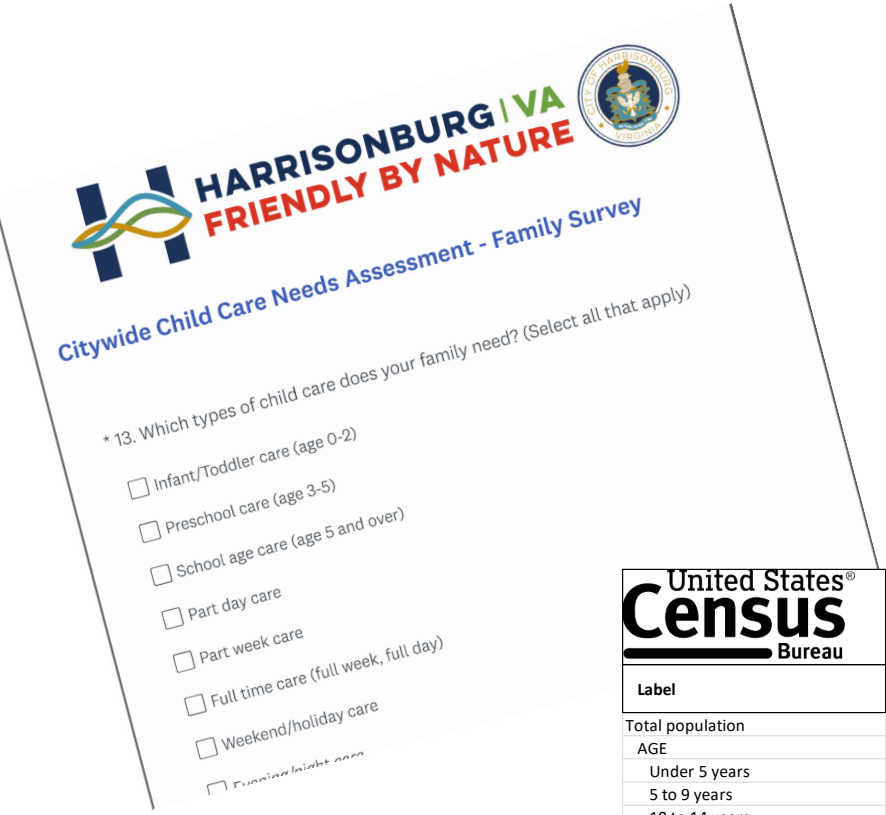
AGENDA



Source: Blue Ridge Parkway Association

- Methodology
- City Profile
- Early Childhood Landscape
- Stakeholder Insights
- Facilities
- Policy and Practice Strategies to Address Identified Challenges

METHODOLOGY


HARRISONBURG | VA
FRIENDLY BY NATURE

Citywide Child Care Needs Assessment - Family Survey

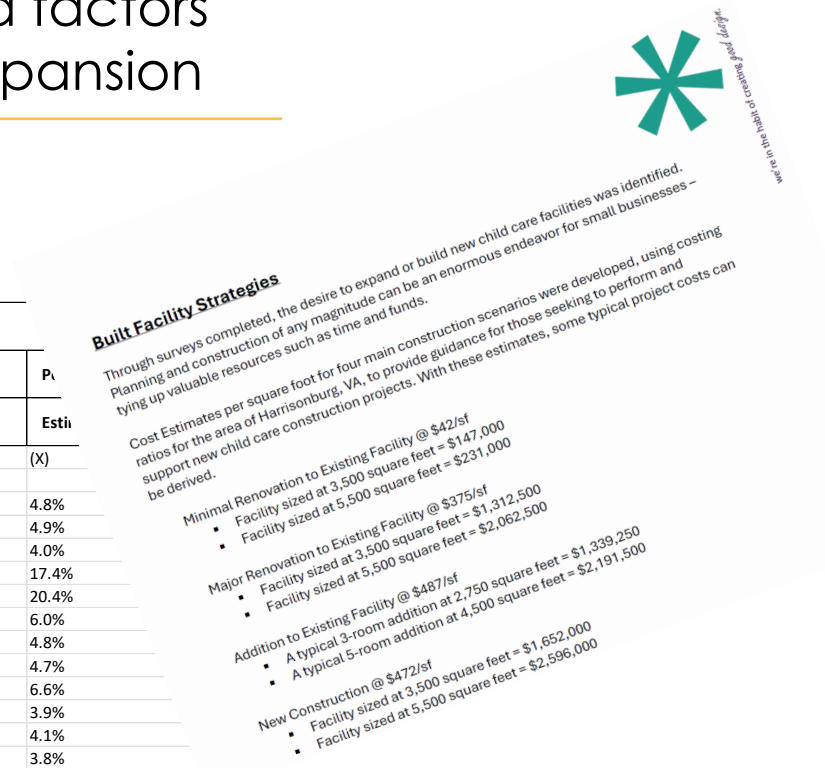
* 13. Which types of child care does your family need? (Select all that apply)

- Infant/Toddler care (age 0-2)
- Preschool care (age 3-5)
- School age care (age 5 and over)
- Part day care
- Part week care
- Full time care (full week, full day)
- Weekend/holiday care

- Data Collection from Public Sources
- Surveys and Focus Groups
- Exploration of the costs and factors associated with facilities expansion

United States® Census Bureau

Label	Harrisonburg city, Virginia					
	Total	Percent	Male	Percent Male	Female	P(
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Esti
Total population	51,392	(X)	24,986	(X)	26,406	(X)
AGE						
Under 5 years	2,756	5.4%	1,498	6.0%	1,258	4.8%
5 to 9 years	2,596	5.1%	1,293	5.2%	1,303	4.9%
10 to 14 years	2,200	4.3%	1,153	4.6%	1,047	4.0%
15 to 19 years	7,995	15.6%	3,413	13.7%	4,582	17.4%
20 to 24 years	10,113	19.7%	4,716	18.9%	5,397	20.4%
25 to 29 years	3,146	6.1%	1,570	6.3%	1,576	6.0%
30 to 34 years	2,861	5.6%	1,605	6.4%	1,256	4.8%
35 to 39 years	2,688	5.2%	1,439	5.8%	1,249	4.7%
40 to 44 years	3,118	6.1%	1,388	5.6%	1,730	6.6%
45 to 49 years	2,507	4.9%	1,478	5.9%	1,029	3.9%
50 to 54 years	2,190	4.3%	1,109	4.4%	1,081	4.1%
55 to 59 years	2,201	4.3%	1,187	4.8%	1,014	3.8%
60 to 64 years	1,610	3.1%	811	3.2%	799	3.0%
65 to 69 years	1,998	3.9%	860	3.4%	1,138	4.3%


Built Facility Strategies

Through surveys completed, the desire to expand or build new child care facilities was identified. Planning and construction of any magnitude can be an enormous endeavor for small businesses – tying up valuable resources such as time and funds.

Cost Estimates per square foot for four main construction scenarios were developed, using costing ratios for the area of Harrisonburg, VA, to provide guidance for those seeking to perform and support new child care construction projects. With these estimates, some typical project costs can be derived.

Minimal Renovation to Existing Facility @ $42/sf
- Facility sized at 3,500 square feet = $147,000
- Facility sized at 5,500 square feet = $231,000

Major Renovation to Existing Facility @ $375/sf
- Facility sized at 3,500 square feet = $1,312,500
- Facility sized at 5,500 square feet = $2,062,500

Addition to Existing Facility @ $487/sf
- A typical 3-room addition at 2,750 square feet = $1,339,250
- A typical 5-room addition at 4,500 square feet = $2,191,500

New Construction @ $472/sf
- Facility sized at 3,500 square feet = $1,652,000
- Facility sized at 5,500 square feet = $2,596,000

CITY PROFILE

Of 2,735 **children** under age 5,
1 in 4 (643) are living in poverty.

14.3% of **families** with related children under age 5 are living in poverty.

Approximately 16% of children live in **single-parent** families.

More than 70% of households with children under age 6 report having **all parents in the labor force**.



CITY PROFILE (cont.)

Top industries:

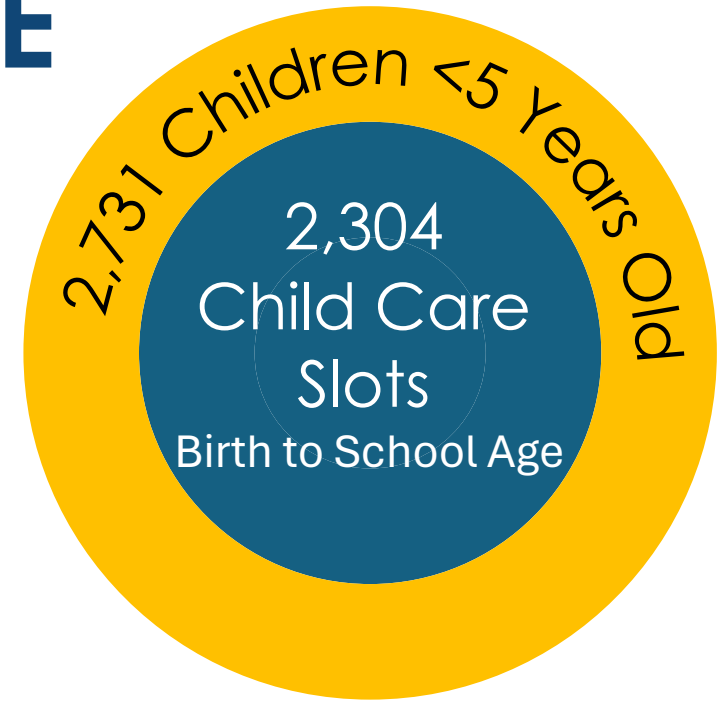
- Educational services, health care and social assistance
- Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services
- Manufacturing

48.9% of renters are **cost-burdened**, spending 30% or more of monthly income on rent.

Median household income lags behind that of Rockingham County and the state.



EARLY CHILDHOOD LANDSCAPE



24 licensed + **7** unlicensed child care providers

Average annual cost of child care
$13,780 for toddlers
$11,570 for preschoolers

Only 14 of 31 providers are eligible to serve **infants and toddlers**, resulting in fewer options for parents of very young children.

54 children were served by **home visiting services** in 2024-2025.

200 VPI slots for four-year-olds
24 VPI slots for three-year-olds in 2026

STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS



- Access
- Affordability
- Expansion
- Workforce Development





STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS: ACCESS

High-Quality Care and Coordination – 42% of child care providers believe programs coordinate "somewhat well"

Extended hours – Only 1/3 of families have all the care they need

Part-time/Emergency backup care – Challenge for 1/3 of families

Infant care - Cited most often as an access challenge

Waitlists – Nearly 3/4 of families report having been on a waitlist

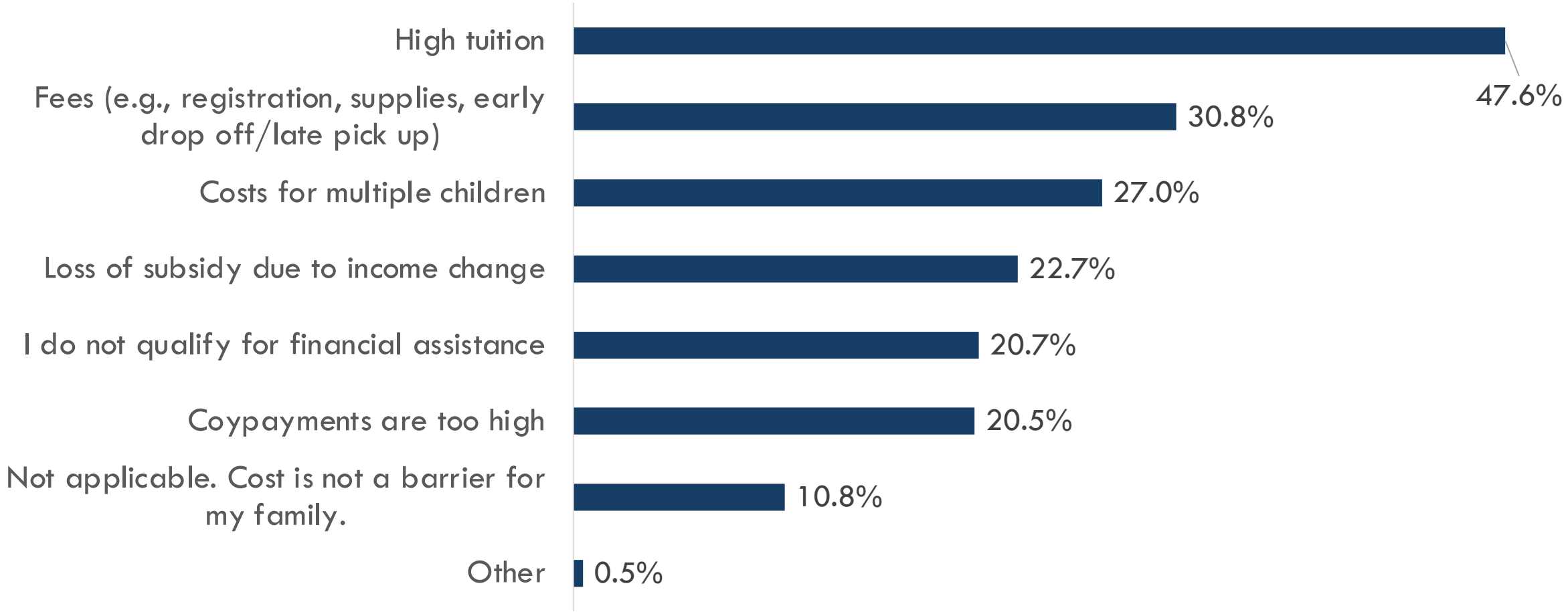
Transportation – Few child care providers offer transportation

Information gathering – 1/3 of families report that it was "somewhat or very difficult" finding info about child care options



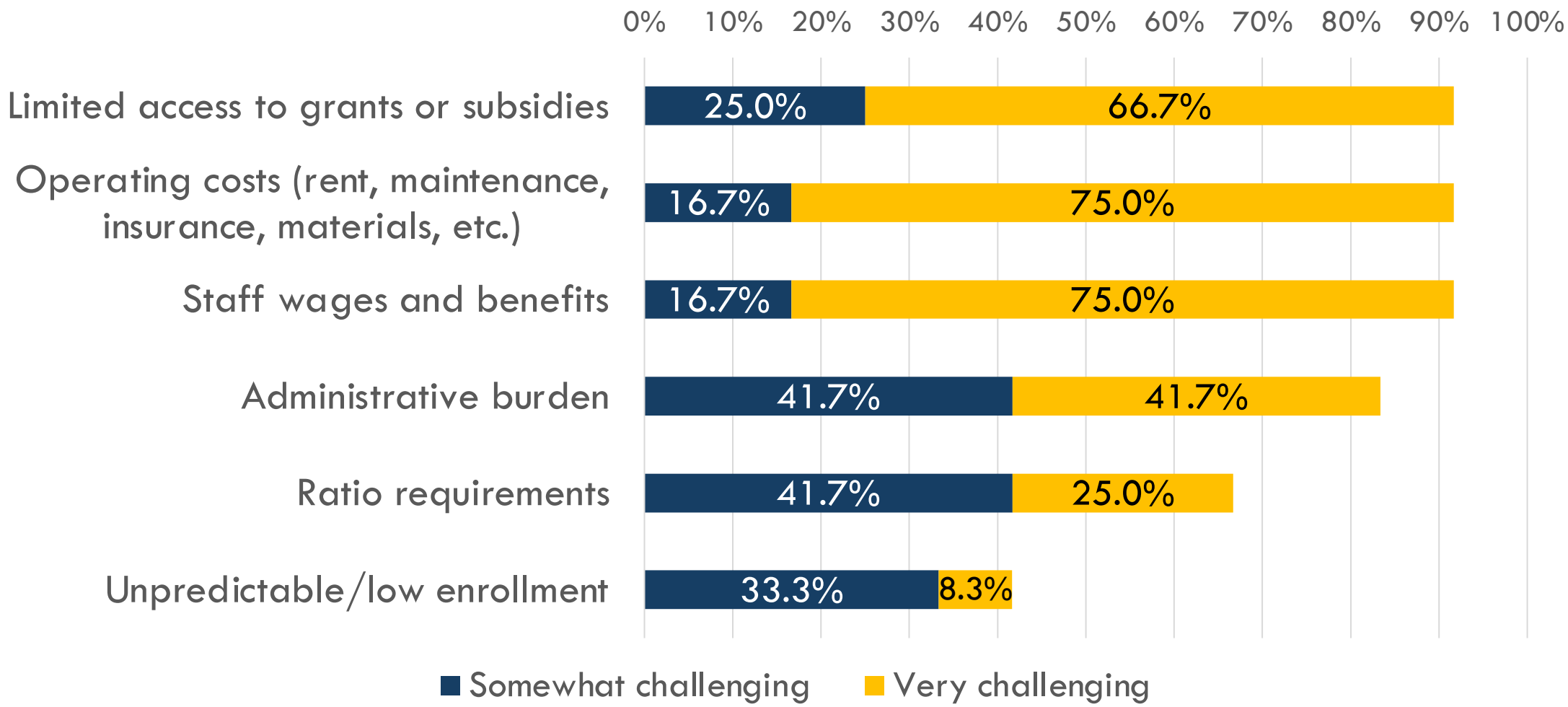
STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS: AFFORDABILITY

Family Challenges



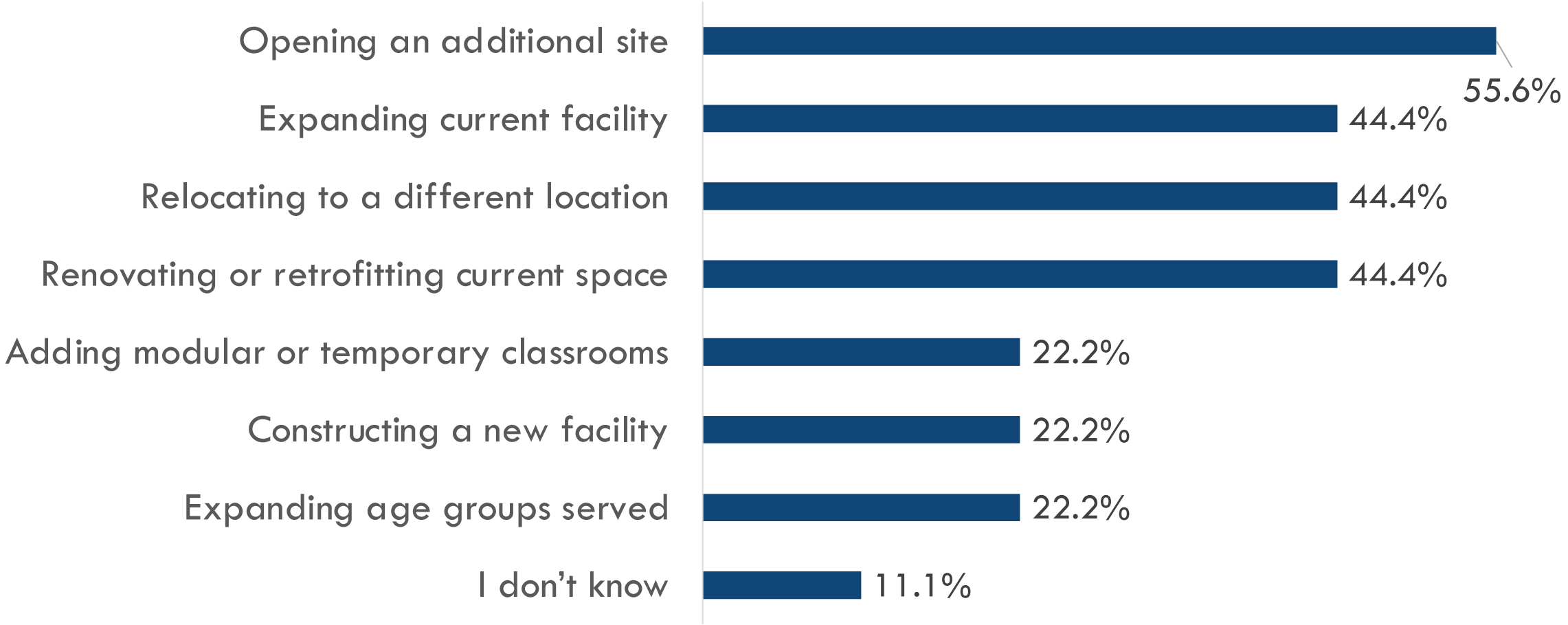
STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS: AFFORDABILITY

Provider Challenges



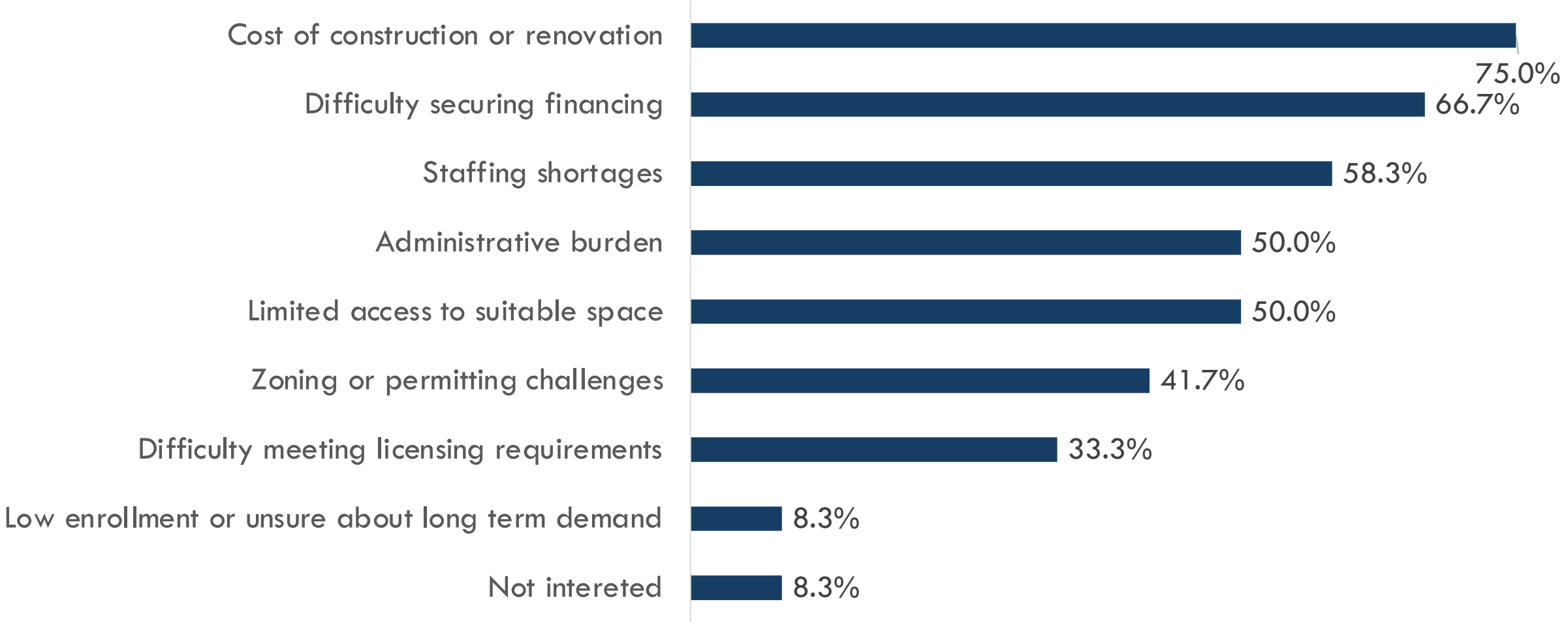
STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS: EXPANSION

Provider Interests



STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS: EXPANSION

Barriers to Expansion



STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Child Care Workforce

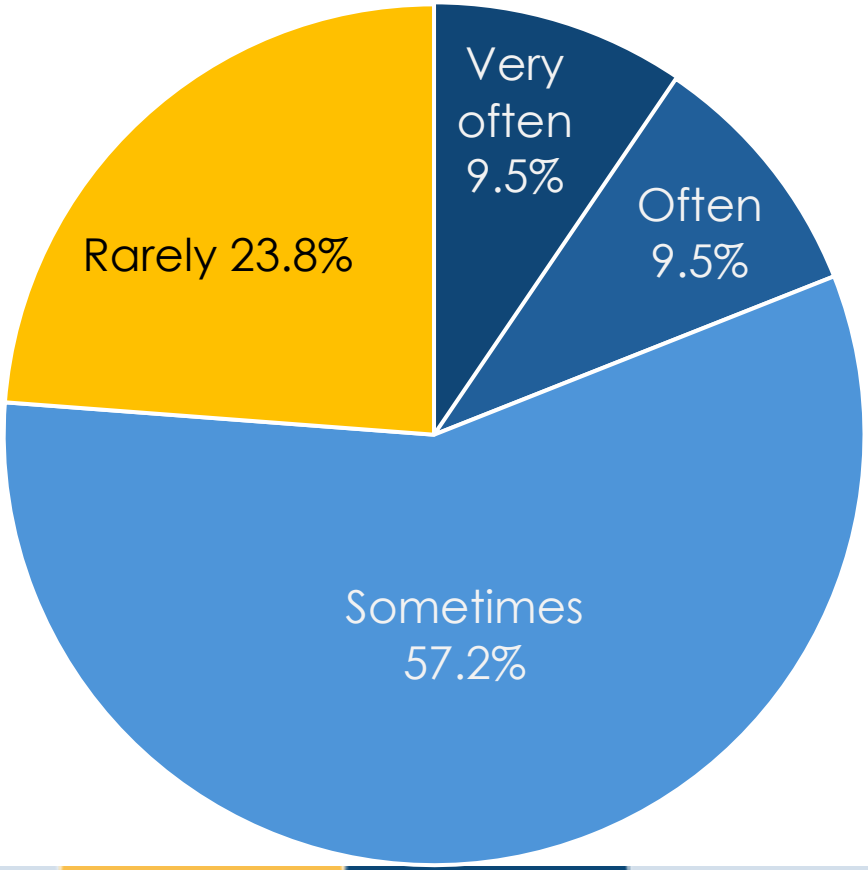
- Staff wages and benefits keep child care providers from offering more affordable rates.
- Low wages make recruiting and retention a top challenge.
- Lack of qualified applicants is also a major challenge.



STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Employer Workplace Impacts

How often do child care issues affect your employees' ability to work?



FACILITIES

Estimated Construction Costs by Type

Construction Type (Cost per square foot)	Sample Cost #1	Sample Cost #2
Minimal Renovation to Existing Facility ($42/sf)	$147,000 for a 3,500 square foot facility	$231,000 for a 5,500 square foot facility
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POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES



POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES
Communitywide

Strengthening the City's child care system will require **coordinated, communitywide action**, along with identifying organizations or partnerships that are best positioned to guide and sustain the change work.



POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Communitywide



POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES
City of Harrisonburg

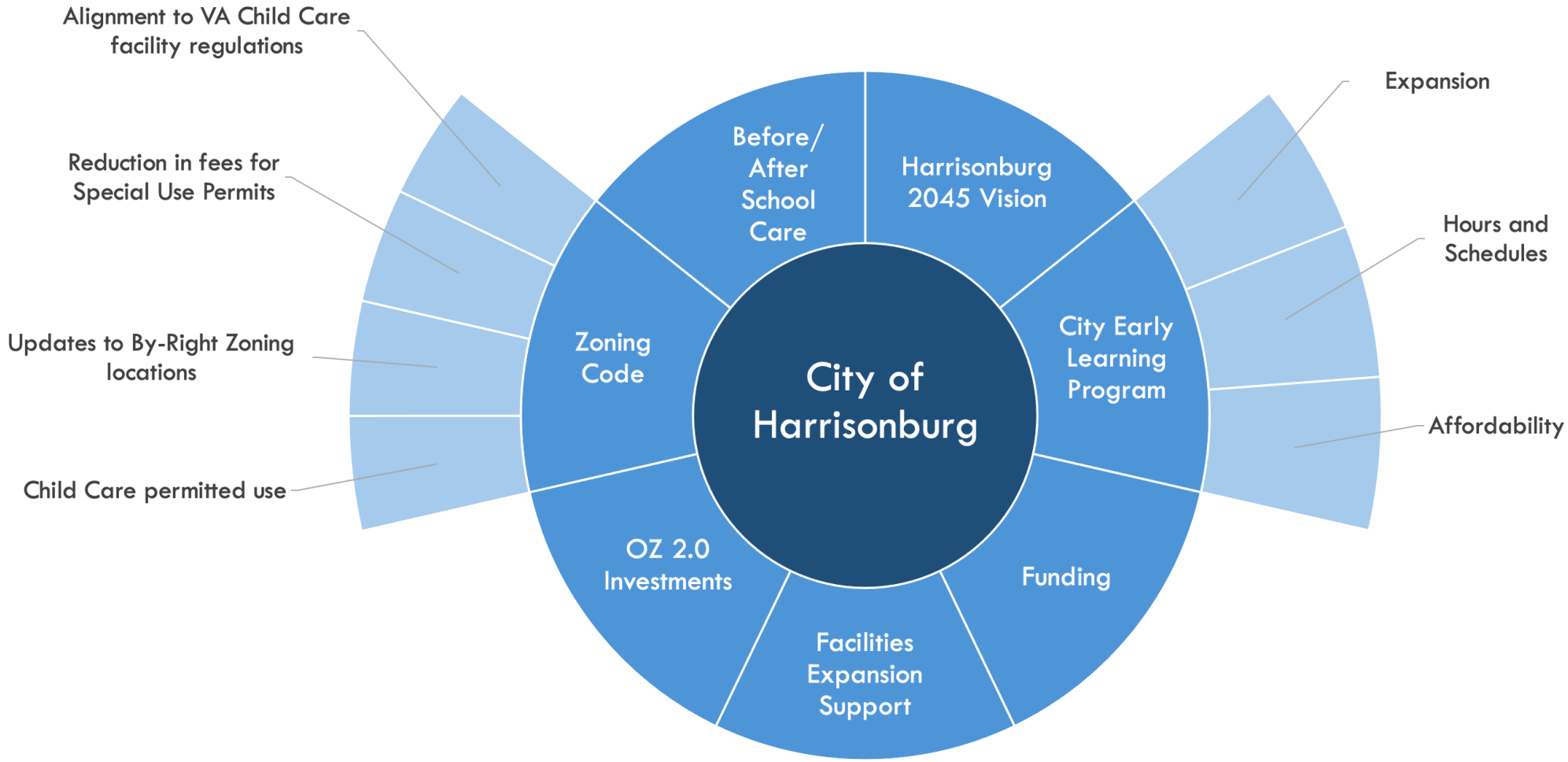
Given its role in local governance, the City of Harrisonburg is a **leader and convener**, establishing a vision for the City that embraces its diverse residents and thriving economy.



Source: Harrisonburg Downtown Alliance

POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES

City of Harrisonburg



POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Employers

Employers can help to **deepen understanding** of employee needs and **take actions** to help address challenges.

Collaboration between child care and the business community is essential.



POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Employers



POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES
Child Care Providers

The child care system is deeply impacted by **workforce challenges and financial concerns**.

Many recommendations are funding-dependent for **long-term success**.



POLICY AND PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Child Care Providers



LOOKING AHEAD

Recommendations → Implementation



Cross-Sector

Multi-Stakeholder

Commitment

QUESTIONS?







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