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BOSTON BIRTH TO EIGHT COLLABORATIVE

2024 EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE REPORT

Strengthening the Foundation:

A Profile of Early Childhood Educators in Boston and Beyond



Welcome!

*Boston Opportunity Agenda &
The Office of Early Childhood,
City of Boston*

STRENGTHENING THE
FOUNDATION:
A PROFILE OF EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS
IN BOSTON AND BEYOND



Welcome



Ayesha Cammaerts, Executive Director
Boston Opportunity Agenda

Boston Birth to Eight Collaborative

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION

A PROFILE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS IN BOSTON AND BEYOND

February 27, 2024

Pratima Patil, Boston Opportunity Agenda
Paula Gaviria Villarreal, Office of Early Childhood, Boston
Fernanda Campbell, Boston Opportunity Agenda
Birth to Eight Collaborative Data Committee





BOSTON BIRTH TO EIGHT COLLABORATIVE DATA COMMITTEE

Karley Ausiello - United Way of Massachusetts Bay

Rosanna M Batista - East Boston Social Centers

Danubia Carmagos Silva - The Boston Foundation

Milan Chuttani - Vital Villages

Peter Ciurczak - Boston Indicators

TeeAra Dias - Boston Public Schools

Turahh Dorsey - Eastern Bank Foundation

Titus DosRemedios - Strategies for Children

Kimberly Lucas - Northeastern University

Kristin McSwain - Office of Early Childhood, City of Boston

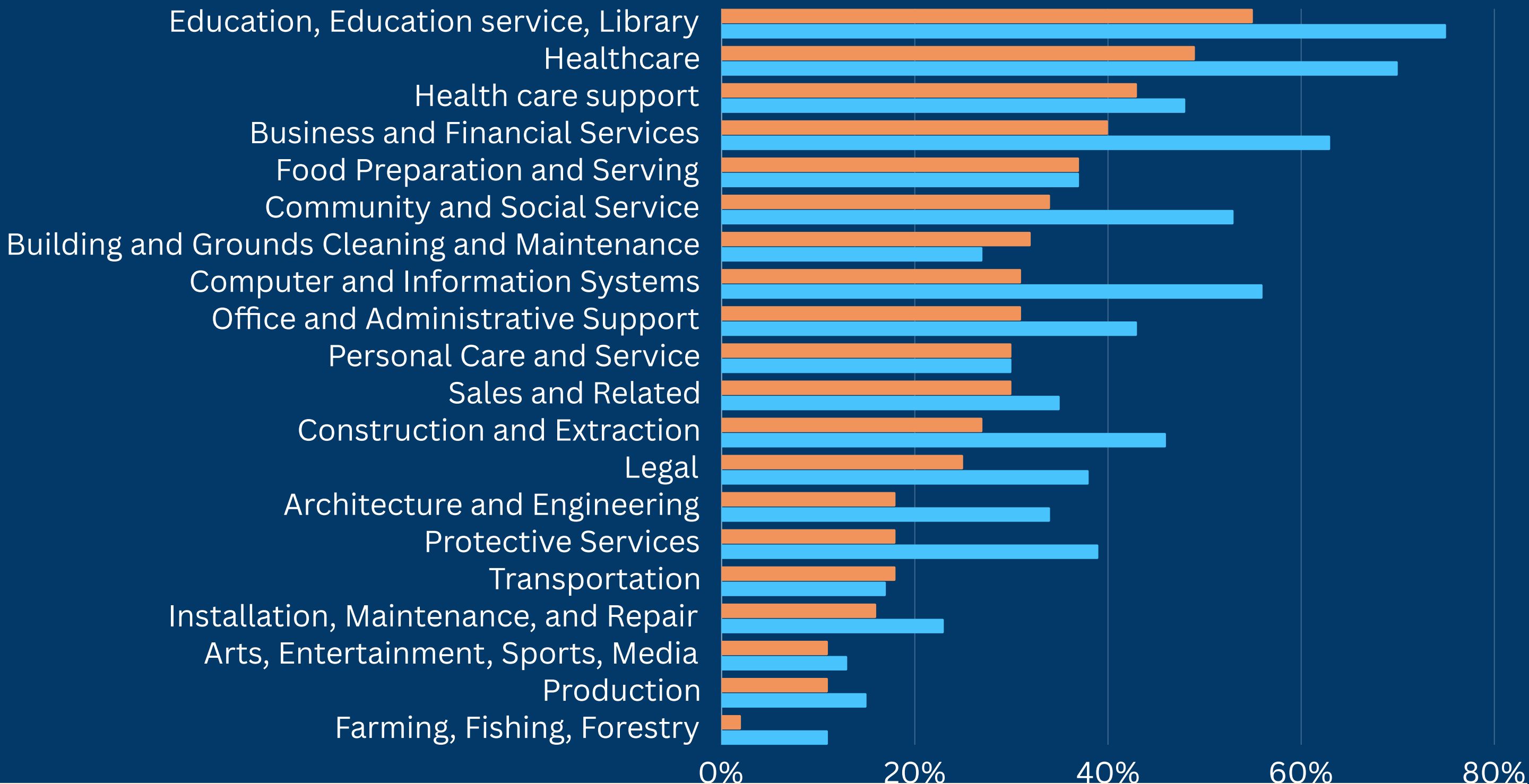
Adrienne Murphy & Ashley White - Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

Wendy Robeson - Wellesley Centers for Women

*Early educators are
the keystone of our early education and care ecosystem.
This makes the current early educator workforce crisis especially
alarming.*



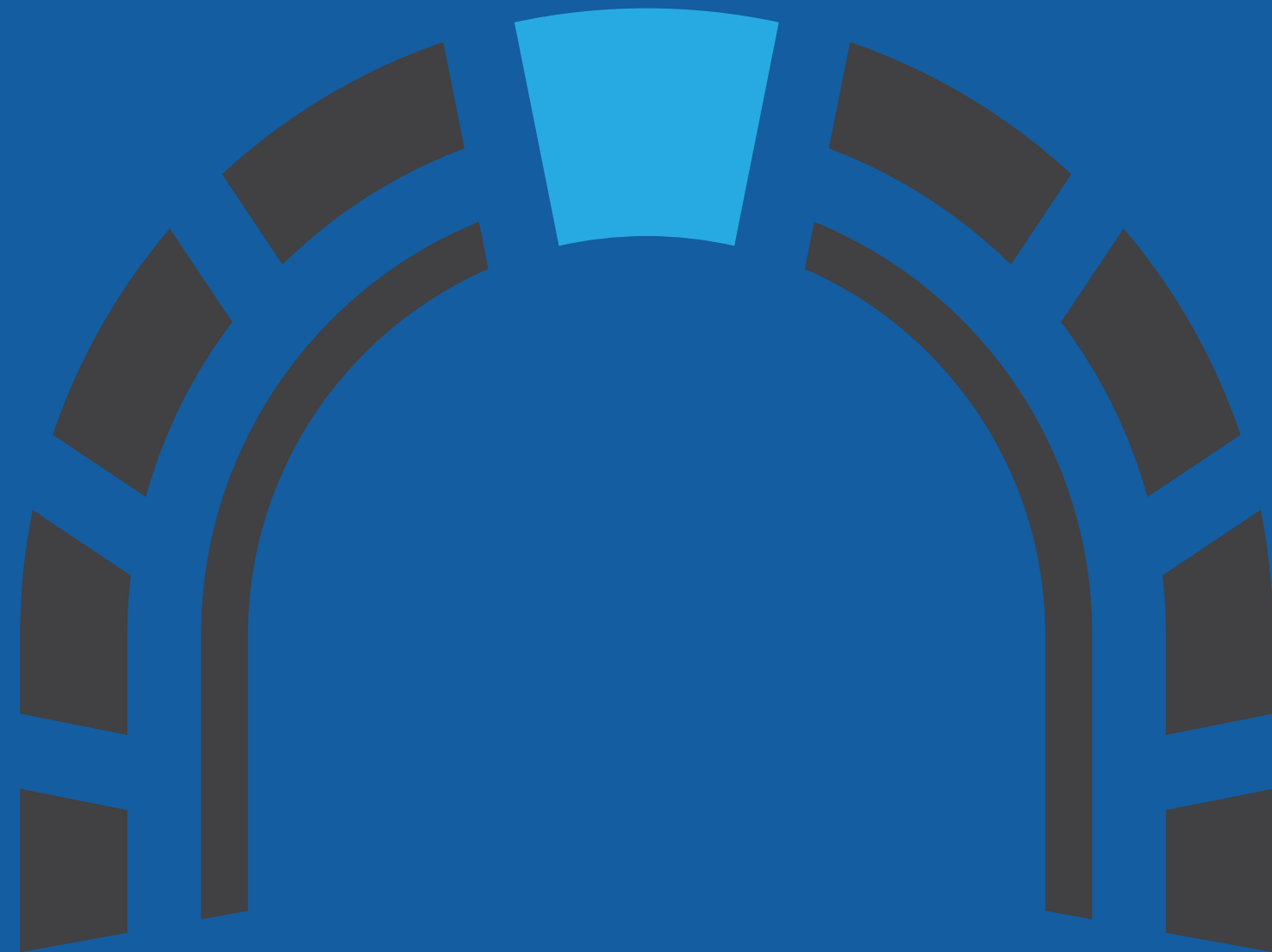
■ Boston ■ Rest of MA



Statewide economic sectors supported by MA early educator survey respondents

High quality early education and care requires an equitable, high quality system of supports and opportunities for early educators

Individual and system-level factors both matter



“System Indicators” measure and track how system factors (such as wages, professional development opportunities, job benefits) influence equitable outcomes for a group—in our case, early educators and, indirectly, children and families.

System factors help us answer where to invest; what are the levers for sustainable change?



EARLY EDUCATOR SURVEY DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

- We interviewed early education stakeholders to understand what information was needed by sector leadership and reviewed existing surveys
- These learnings informed the development of the Early Educator Workforce (EEW) survey
- The EEW survey was distributed across MA in 2022
- 653 Total respondents; 54% from Boston, allowing for municipal level findings
- The resulting report covers sociodemographics, career paths, and compensation

*“Please stop referring to us as
childcare/daycare workers.
We teach and work
in the field of early education.
We are early education teachers.
It is insulting to our profession
when we are referred to in any
other way.”*

Who is
caring for
our
children?

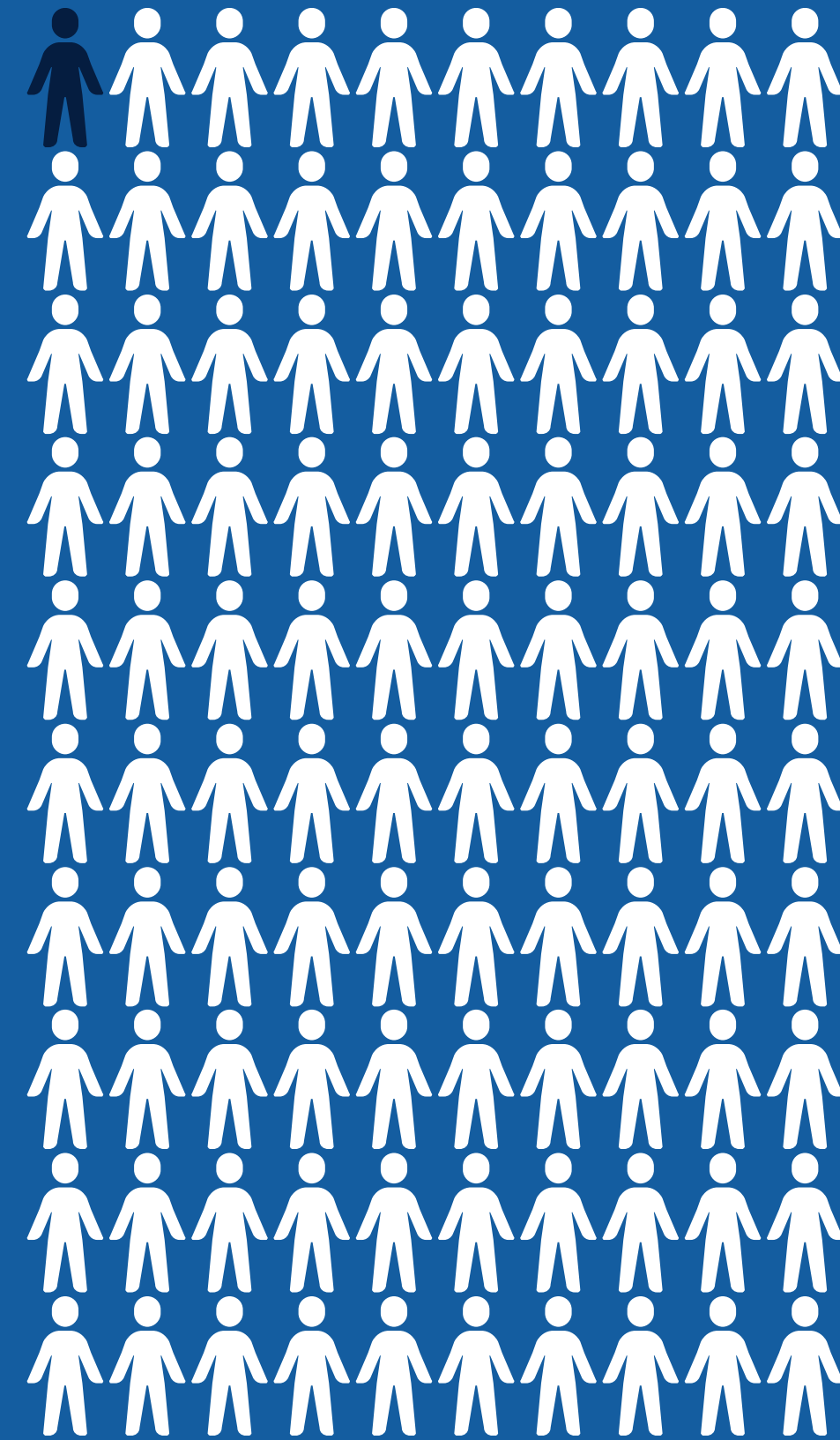




AGE

Boston's early education and
care workforce is retiring
without being replaced

Only 1% of
FCC
educator
respondents
were
between
18 and 29
years old



We need targeted strategies to attract and retain young talent along with leadership pathways for sustainability





RACE & ETHNICITY

Race

- The Boston sample had a more diverse workforce than the rest of the state
- Yet, center leadership in Boston (55.6%) is disproportionately a White

Boston



36% identify as White



28% identify as Other



26% identify as Black/African American



9% identify as AAPI

Race

- In the rest of the state, our sample workforce was mostly White (90%)
- Similar to Boston, 96.2% of the center leadership is White

These findings suggest the need for creating accessible leadership pathways for BIPOC early educators.

Rest of Massachusetts



90% identify as White



6% identify as Other



4% identify as Black/African American



0.7% identify as AAPI

Ethnicity

- 48% of Boston respondents identified as Hispanic/Latino compared to 7% in the rest of MA

Further exploration is needed to understand why Hispanic/Latino educators are primarily FCCs.

In Boston, the proportion of individuals identifying as Hispanic/Latino varies among the workforce groups.



17% of CBO directors



20% of CBO teachers



74% of FCC Educators

E/HIS

E/HER

Y/THEM

GENDER

Gender

- 98% identify as female
- The small percentage of respondents who identified as men were more likely to be in leadership positions
- The small percentage of respondents who identified as non-binary were more likely to be in the younger age group

The field can benefit from efforts to support the entry of early educators with diverse gender identities

Hej

Guten

Hola

HELLO

Aloha

Hi

Olá

Hej 今日

你好

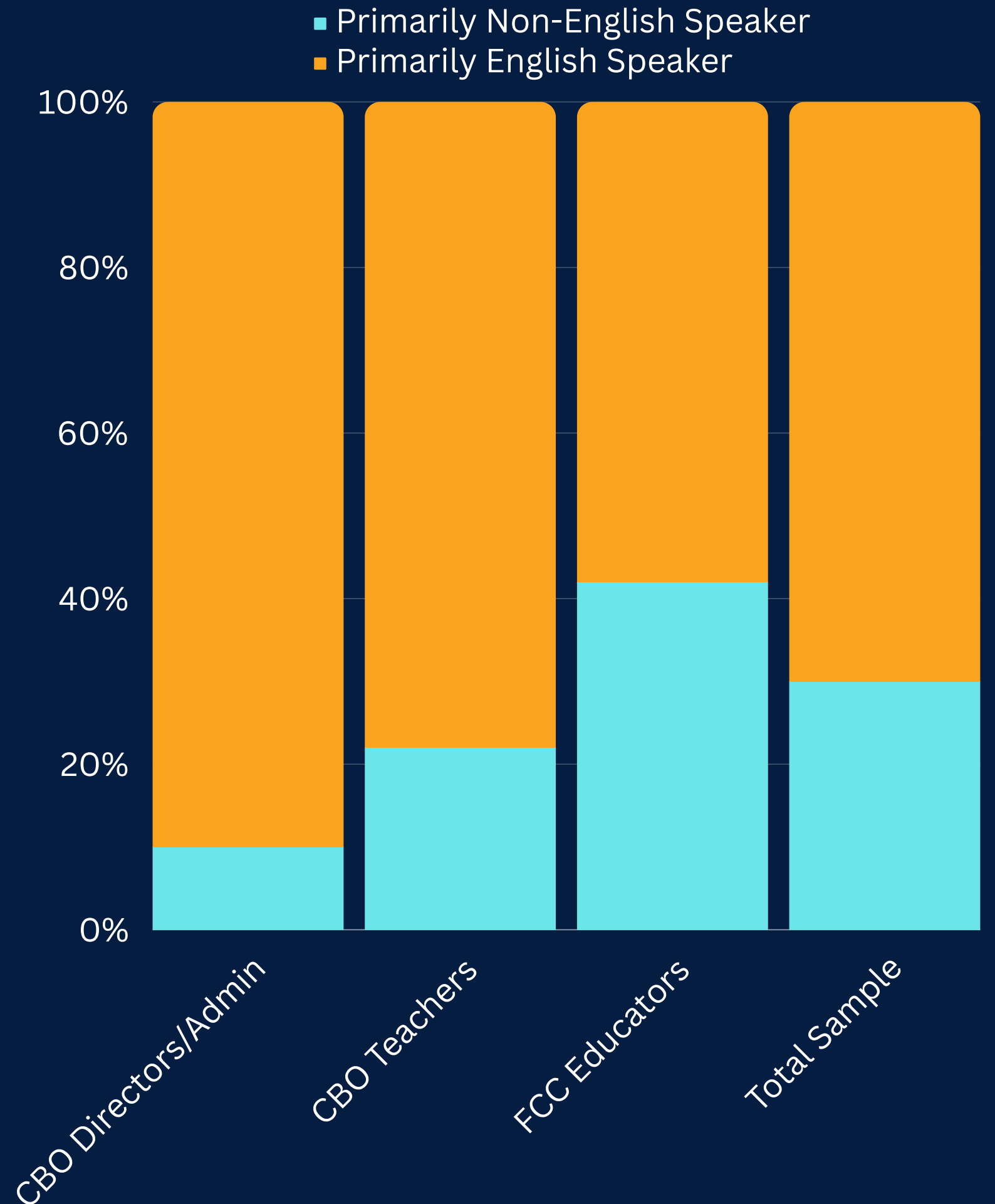
Merhaba

PRIMARY LANGUAGE

Primary Language Boston

- 42% of FCC educator respondents have a non English primary language.
- 22% of Center-based teacher respondents
- 10% of Center-based Directors/Administrators

Further exploration is needed to understand whether there are systemic barriers to entry to center-based positions for early educators whose primary language is not English.



advantage
technology
nature
experience
process
success
RWINING
wisdom
innovation

EXPERIENCE

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



- 33% of Boston respondents reported having over 20 years of experience, while the rest of MA had a more veteran workforce with 50% reporting the same
- In Boston, those with over 20 years of experience are primarily center leadership and FCCs

Experience and diversity are both assets of our early educator workforce and can be leveraged for mentorship opportunities of younger entrants





LEVEL OF EDUCATION

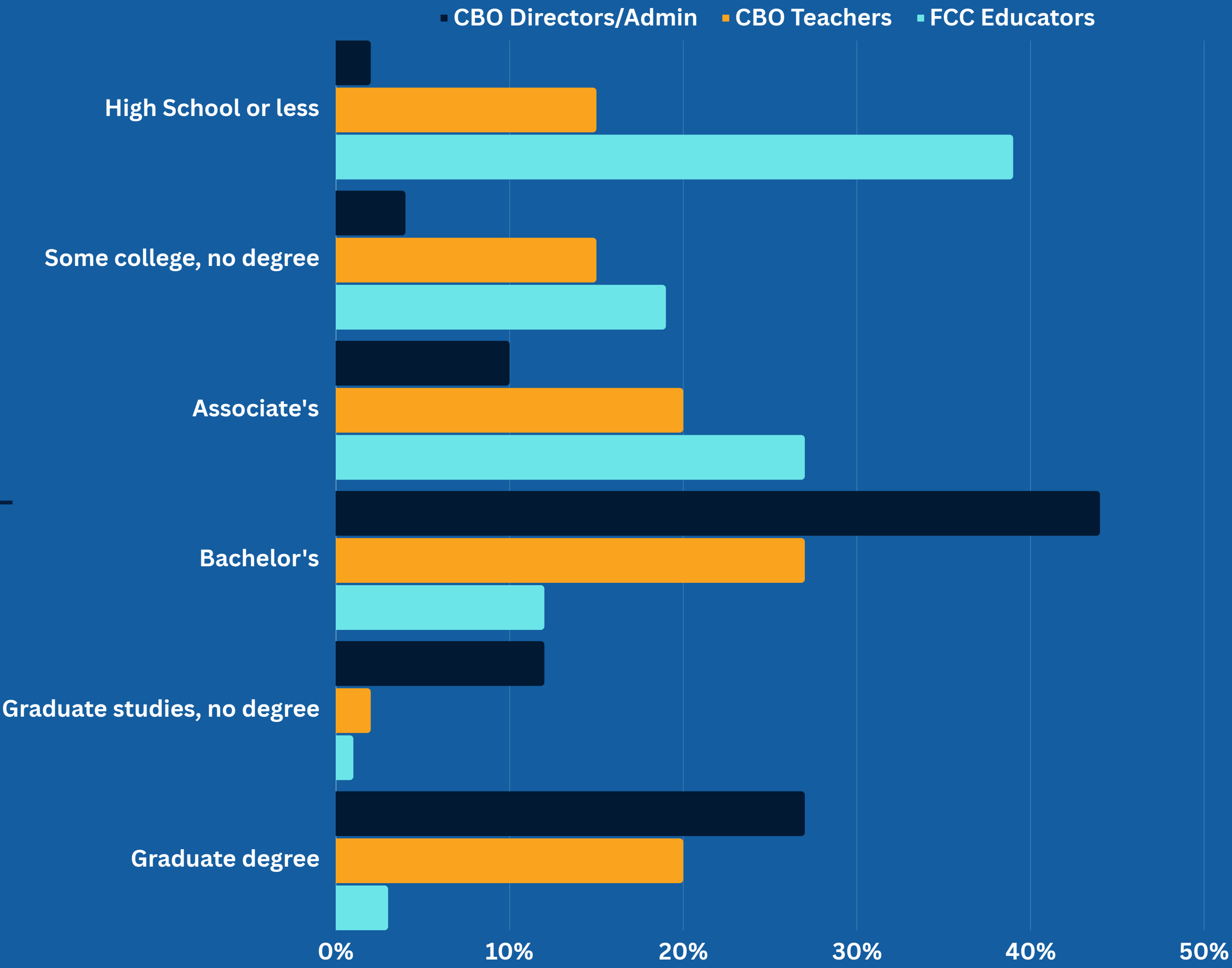
Highest Level of Education

20% of all respondents reported *not completing* their diplomas or degrees.

This suggests the presence of potential *barriers* to educational completion.

We identify much *variability* across roles and the highest degree attained.

Overall, these findings illustrate a field where education attainment does *not have a strong association with career trajectories*, and is thus not incentivized.





CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY

Turnover Rates

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services defines *“high turnover as the loss of 20 percent or more early educators in a given year.”*

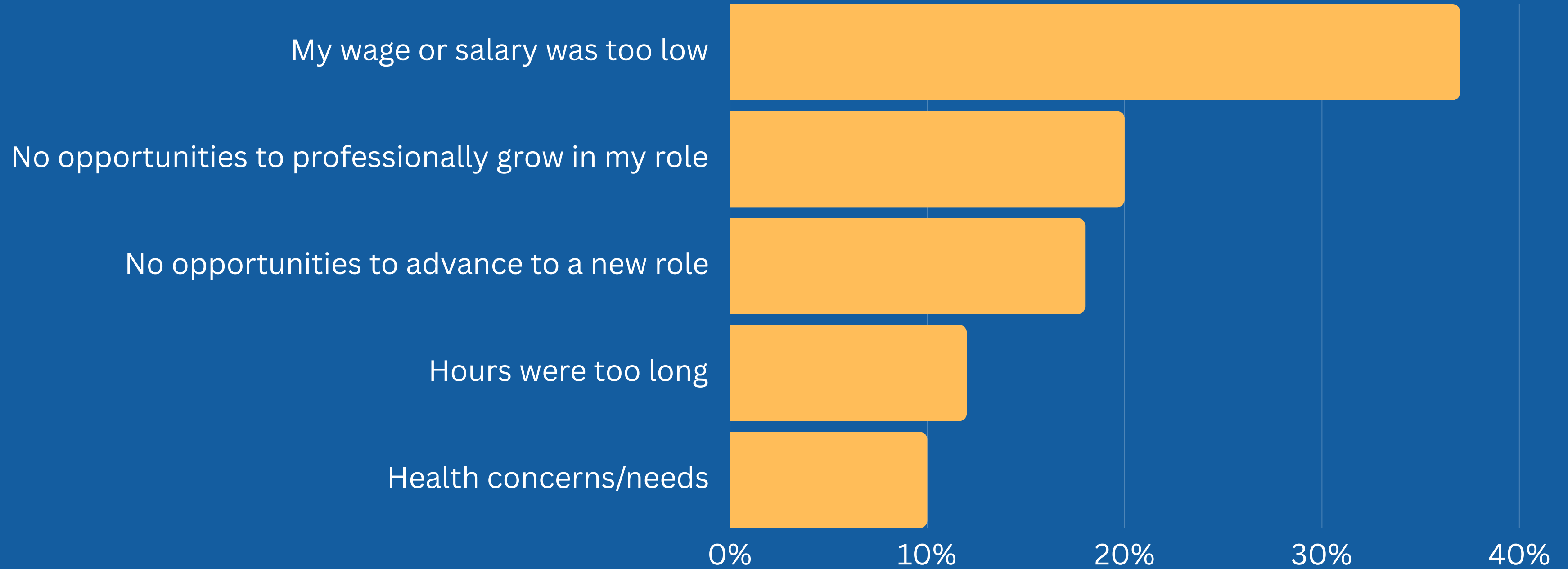


52% of Centers in our sample had experienced a turnover rate of 20% or more.

High early educator turnover results in economic, developmental, and well-being consequences for centers, children, and staff

- Centers lose their investments in hiring and training
 - Remaining staff experience higher stress, longer hours, and reduced morale
 - Children experience shifting relationships, which runs counter to their need for consistent, trusting relationships
 - Other economic sectors in Boston and MA experience a reduced and disrupted workforce
-

As of February 6, 2024,
a survey of nine of Boston's largest early
education and care center groups, representing
1,236 childcare seats,
reported 61 vacant positions, resulting in 10
closed classrooms. Almost 100 infant, toddler,
and preschool seats are currently unavailable for
working families.



Early educator respondents reported these top 5 reasons for leaving their last early education job

Good jobs attract and retain a workforce

The Aspen Institute's Good Jobs Champions Group defines a good job as:
a job that includes family-sustaining wages, a sufficient range of benefits, economic mobility through defined career pathways, as well as equity, respect, and voice.

These are system-level factors

Economic Stability

- Stable, family-sustaining pay
- Sufficient, accessible, & available benefits
- Fair, reliable scheduling
- Safe, healthy, & accessible working conditions

Economic Mobility

- Equitable hiring & advancement pathways
- Accessible, paid training & development opportunities
- Wealth-building opportunities



Equity, Respect & Voice

- Organizational & management culture, policies, & practices that:
 - are transparent & enable accountability
 - support a sense of belonging & purpose
 - advance DEIA
 - address discrimination
- Ability to improve the workplaces, through collective action or participatory management practices

When we talk about high quality early education and care, we tend to focus on getting more degrees.

But efforts to increase standards and educational requirements are limited without being coupled with increased compensation, benefits, better work hours, and workplace supports

Research has shown professional development solely focused on classroom improvement has little to no impact on child outcomes*

Under the current circumstances, early educators are more likely to experience burnout and reduced quality of educator-child relationships, risking the development of children's language, literacy, and behavioral skills*

*See report for references

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*See report for references

MASSAIMH/MSPCC PARTNERSHIP: Elevating UPK Workforce Development through Reflective Practice in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health



The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has collaborated with the Boston Public Schools Universal PreK (UPK) to offer communities of practice in Reflective Consultation (RC), with support from the City of Boston and Boston Public Schools. This opportunity trains staff in the best practices of relationship-based care with the goal of expanding the workforce capacity to respond to young children's needs and behaviors focused on social emotional well-being and early relational health. Ongoing support facilitates the integration of these skills within the organization to create a culture of reflection for individuals serving families and young children. The offering increases participants' proficiency with reflective practice, including the consideration of family, culture, and language as central to supporting the whole child's social-emotional and relational well-being. Additionally, this creates pathways for the UPK workforce to seek the professional development credential of the Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health (MassAIMH) Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health.®

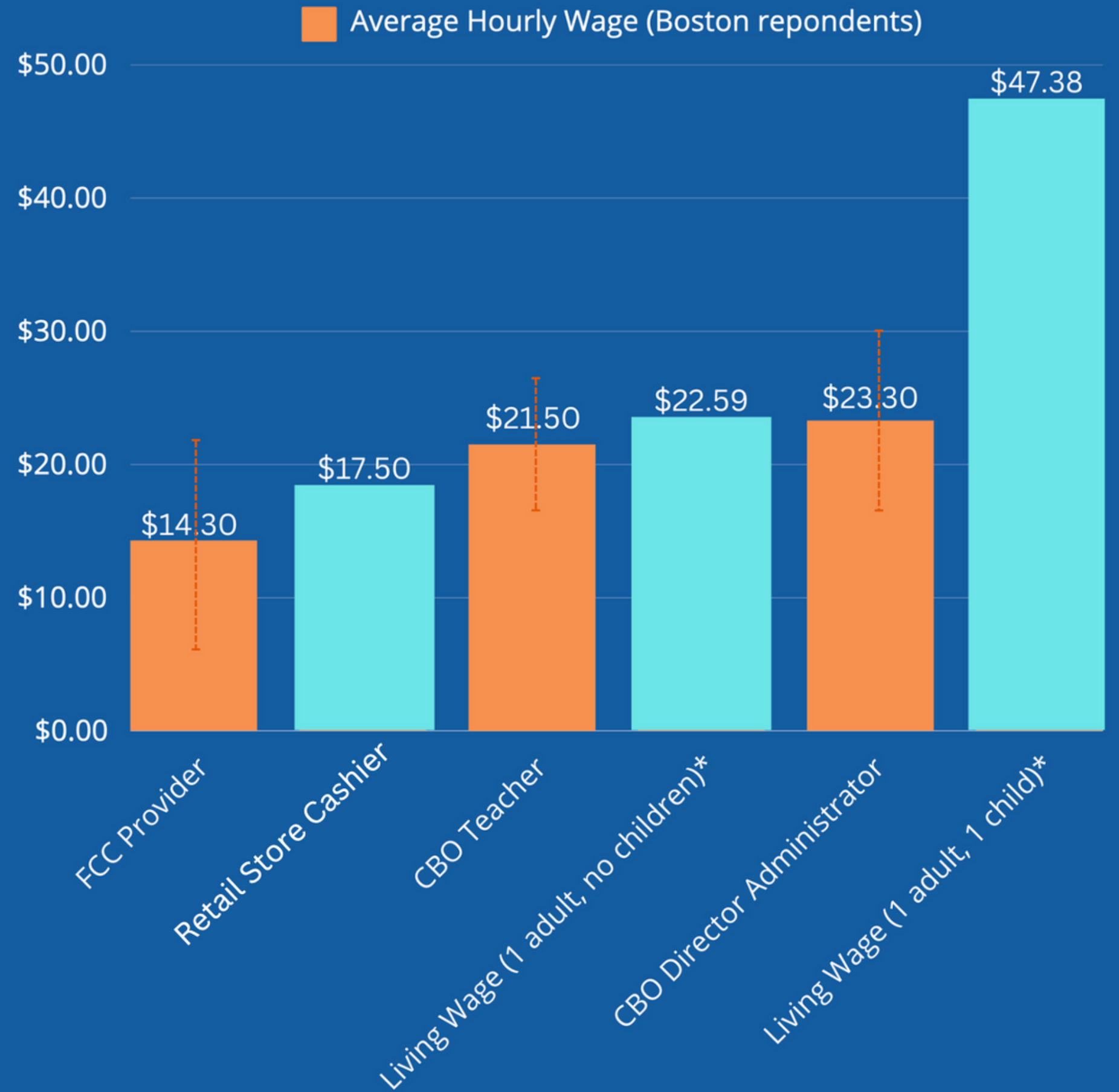
—**Aditi Subramaniam**, *Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor*
Clinical Associate Director, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, MCPCC



WAGES

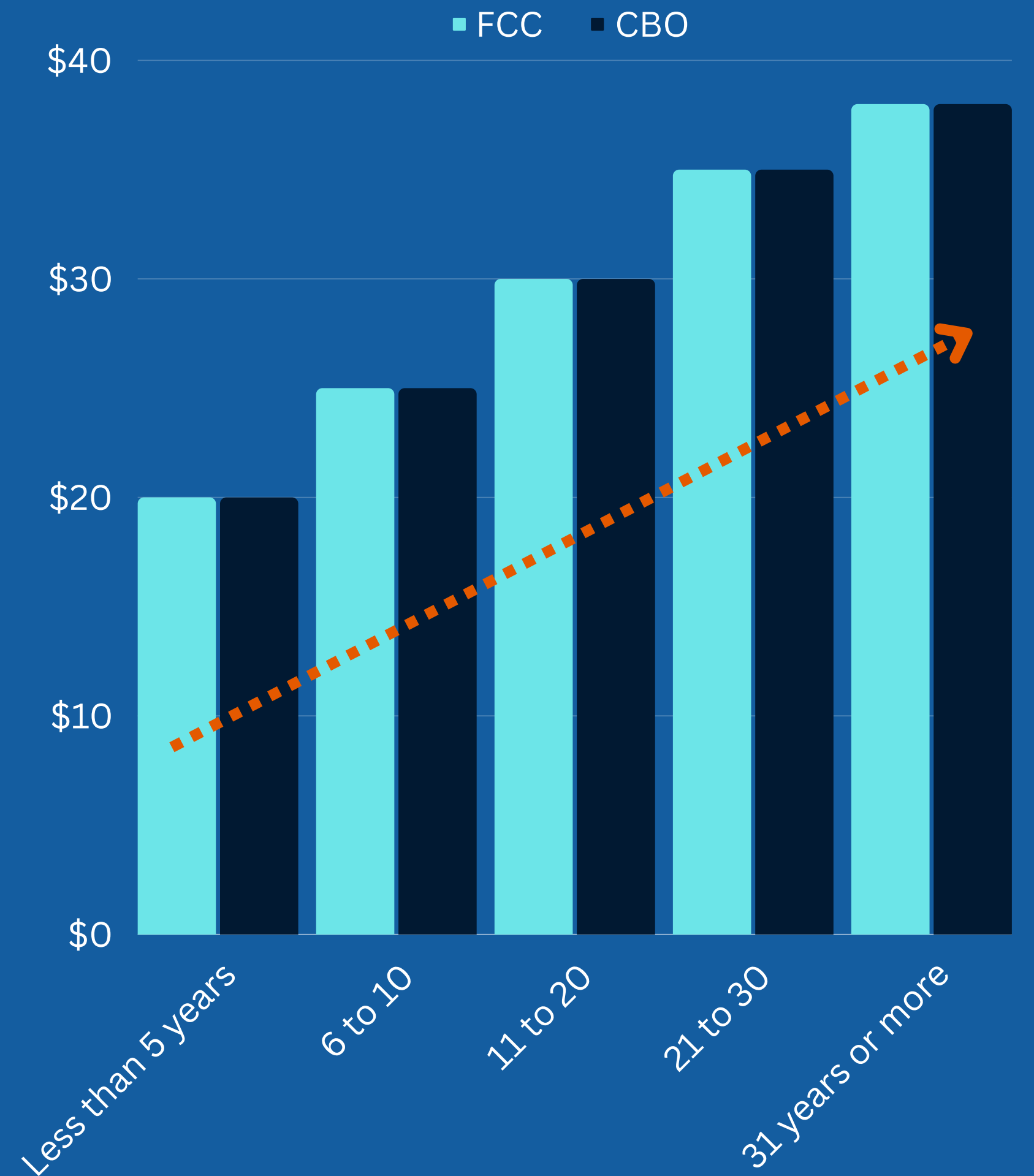
Wages

In Boston, a significant proportion of FCC respondents and many center-based educators are likely not making living wages, with many in the range of poverty wages.



“They need to find a way for us to give workers of all levels a livable wage. Our aides and teachers should not be paid the same amount as a McDonald’s worker, paid less than a Walmart employee; directors should not be paid barely more, especially with a bachelor’s degree and other higher education. The current wage makes me (and all of the employees I’ve lost) want to leave the field!”

Wages vs. Experience: *Expectation*



Wages vs. Experience: *Reality*

Educators are not being adequately compensated for their experience and qualifications.

Their wages have limited association with:

- *years of experience,*
- *highest educational level, and*
- *career advancement.*



Early educators often speak of serving their communities. This means if they are serving a low income neighborhood, they cannot raise their tuition because they know the families they serve cannot afford it. It is almost as if the system penalizes early educators serving families most in need.

EMPOWERING CHILD-CARE ENTREPRENEURS: United Way's Shared Services MA and the Growth of Family Child-Care Businesses



United Way's Shared Services MA is a proven economic development initiative that invests in the workforce needs of family child-care (FCC) businesses and increases the sustainability of the early education sector. FCC entrepreneurs, primarily women of color and immigrants, are an integral part of the state's economy. They provide culturally relevant education and care in neighborhood settings, allowing parents to return to work and neighborhood economies to thrive. Child-care educators who reflect the home cultures and speak the primary languages of children and families help support the healthy development of children. Yet, despite their indispensable roles, these women lack the business support that other types of entrepreneurs receive such as budgeting, rate setting, and marketing, to maximize income and facilitate savings.

Our programs are specifically designed for family child-care business owners taught by peer instructors and coaches in English and Spanish. Our business training courses are also taught in Portuguese and Mandarin. Having a peer instructor can make some feel more comfortable and more willing to ask for the help they need. FCC educators may also experience an increased sense of motivation because they are being taught by someone they can identify with who has experienced similar learning and is excited about the material.

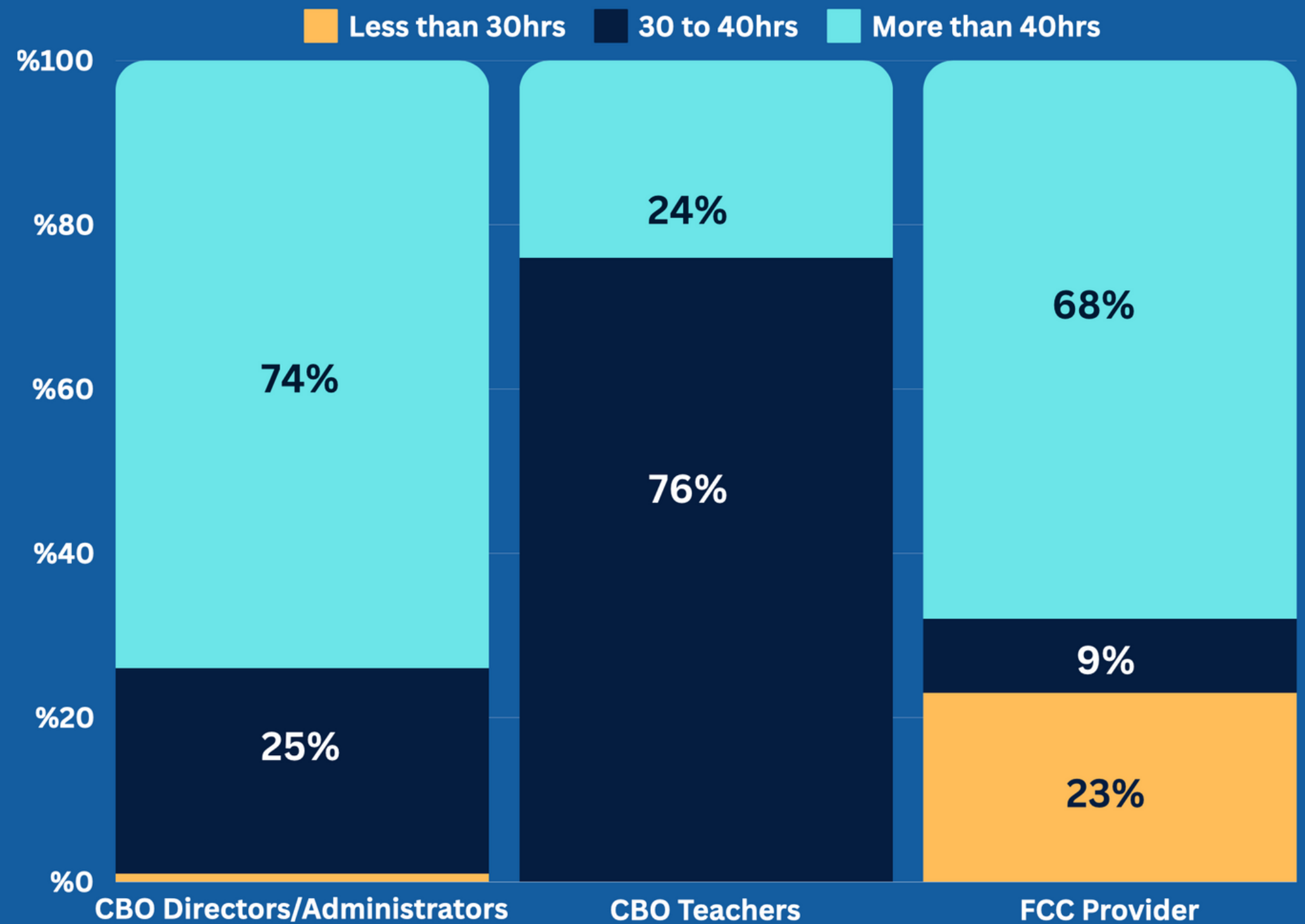
Our trainings include a Licensing Support Program, Business Training 101, Marketing 201, and Early Developmental Screening Training using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ/DRIVE). We have trained more than 1,500 FCC educators in business and marketing across Massachusetts and supported 25 new FCC educators in Boston through the licensing process and the opening of their family child-care businesses. We have addressed our goal of increasing quality by training 119 FCC educators on early screening using the ASQ tool and the United Way DRIVE database. This training includes information on developmentally appropriate practices in all learning domains as well as engaging with families to support the home-school connection. This further enables FCC educators to provide specialized supports to children and their families.

—**Melinda Weber**, Vice President, Shared Services MA, United Way of Massachusetts Bay

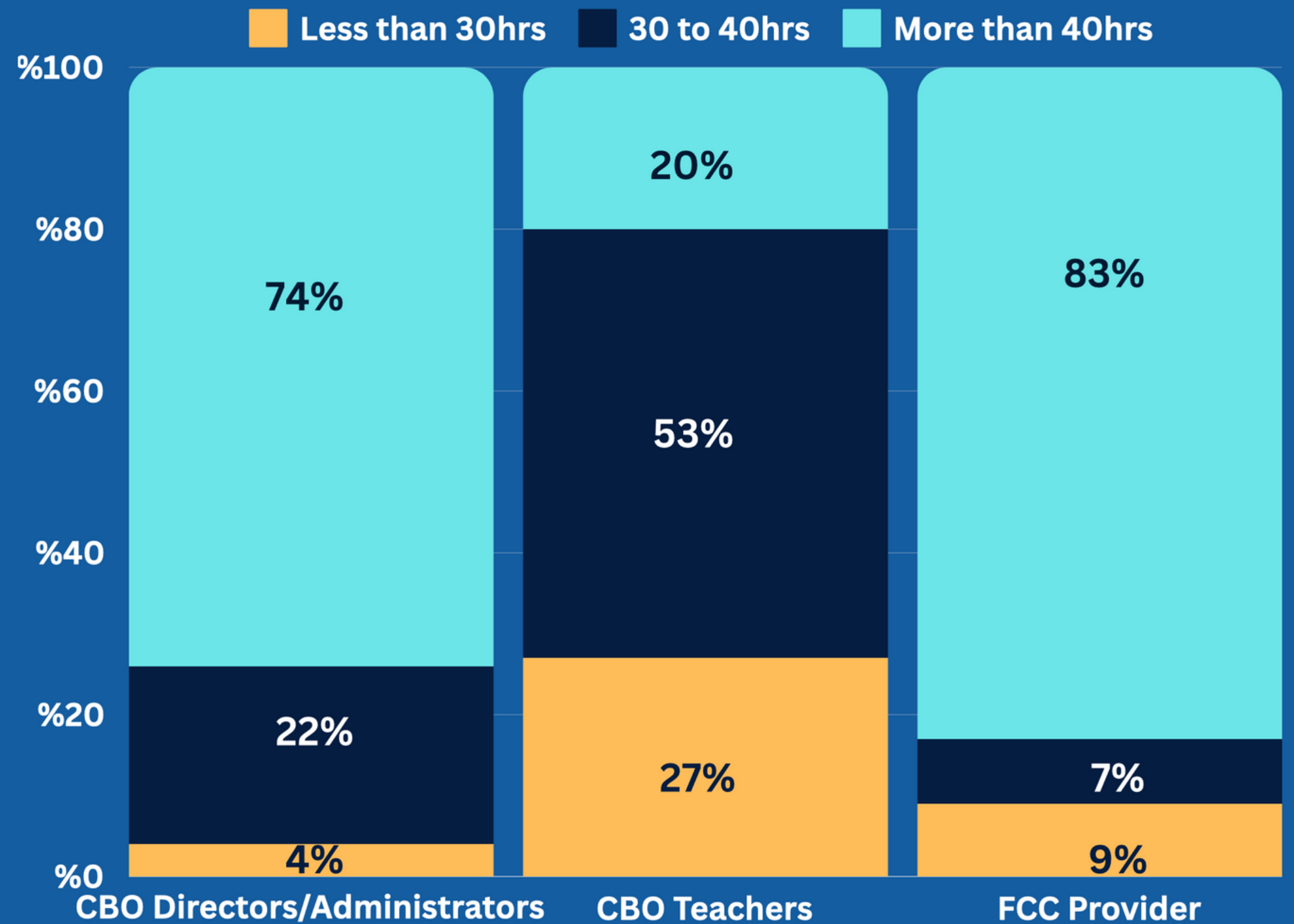


WORK HOURS

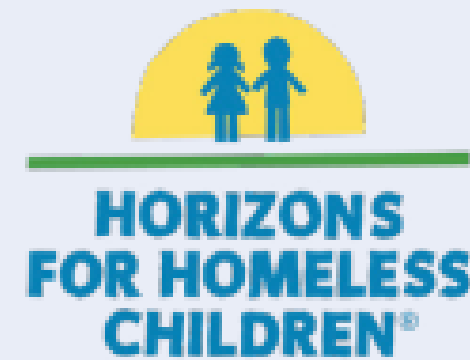
Weekly hours worked by early education professionals in *Boston*



Weekly hours worked by early education professionals in the rest of Massachusetts



EMPOWERING EDUCATORS: Horizons for Homeless Children's Comprehensive Approach to Workforce Well-Being



Horizons for Homeless Children developed a Workforce Well-Being Survey to understand the needs of their early childhood educators. The survey (available upon request) was developed by borrowing from a variety of economic and social well-being surveys. It uniquely approaches workforce well-being from several angles, including basic economic, food, social, and emotional well-being. Findings from this Workforce Well-Being Survey were used to create center-wide supports to systematically address these needs. Thanks to this, the center has experienced increased staff engagement.

—**Kate Barrand**, *President & CEO, Horizons for Homeless Children*

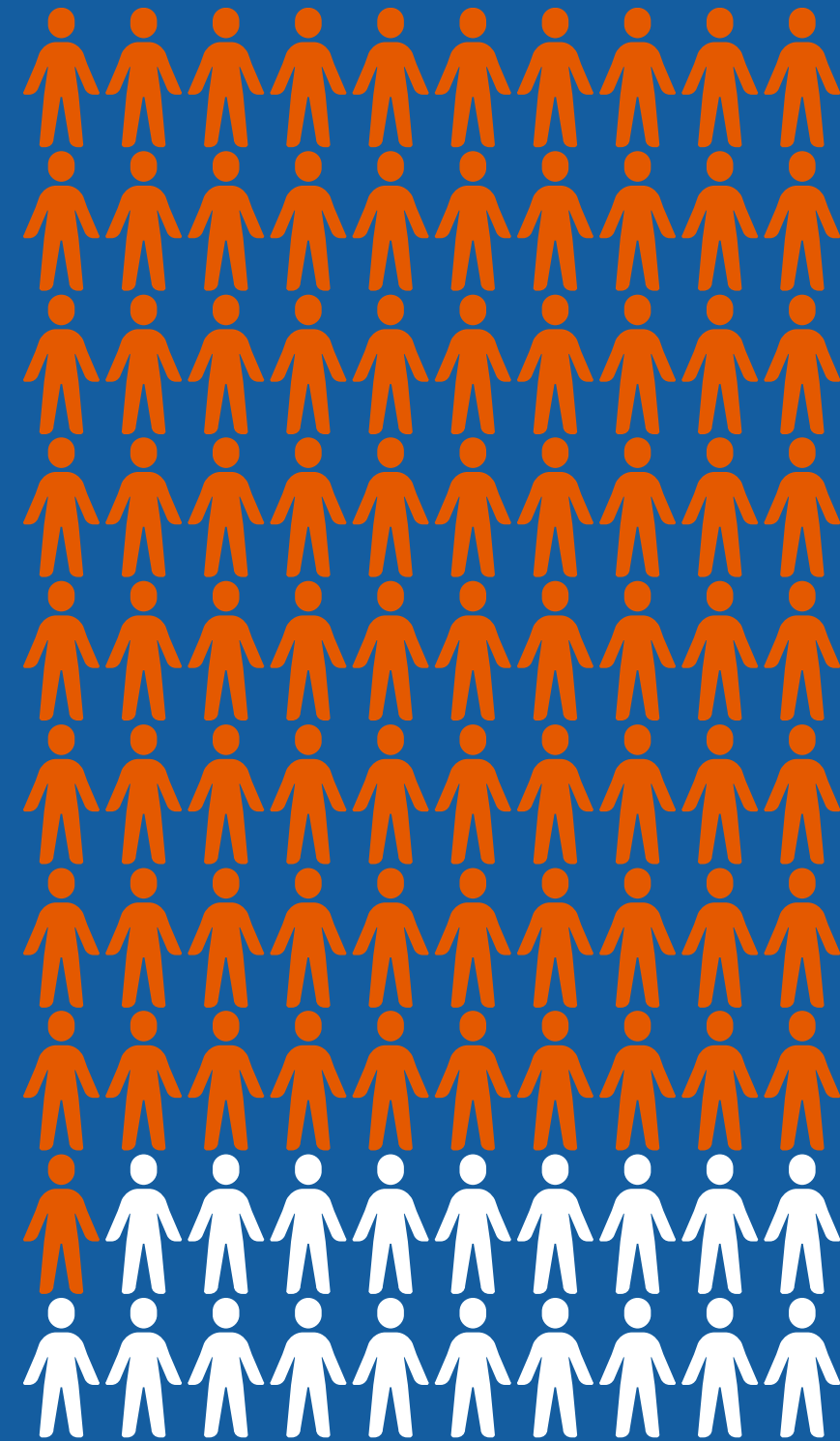
BENEFITS



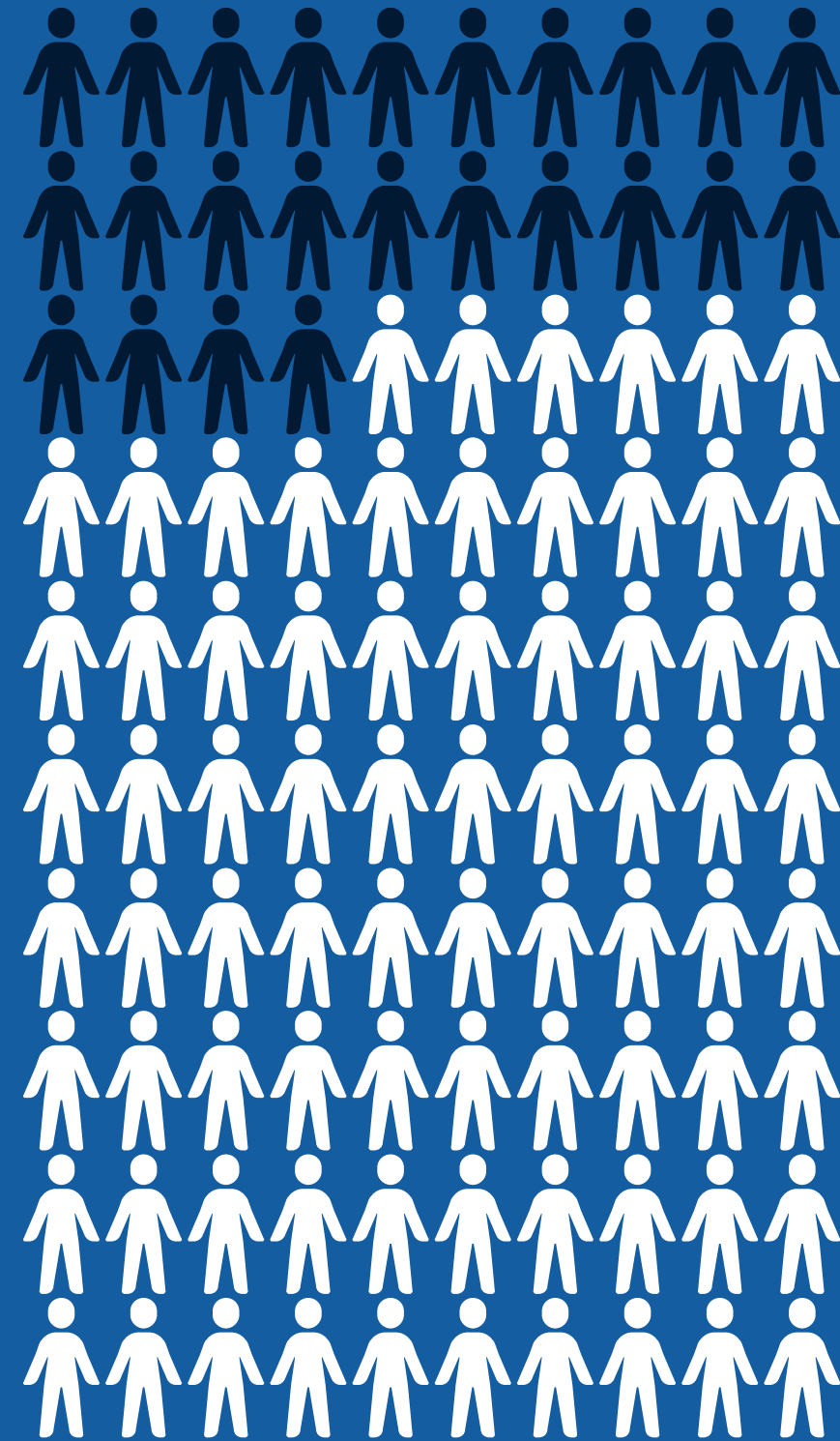
86% of center
director
respondents
have some
workplace
benefits



81% of CBO
teacher
respondents
have some
workplace
benefits



24% of FCC
educator
respondents
have some
workplace
benefits



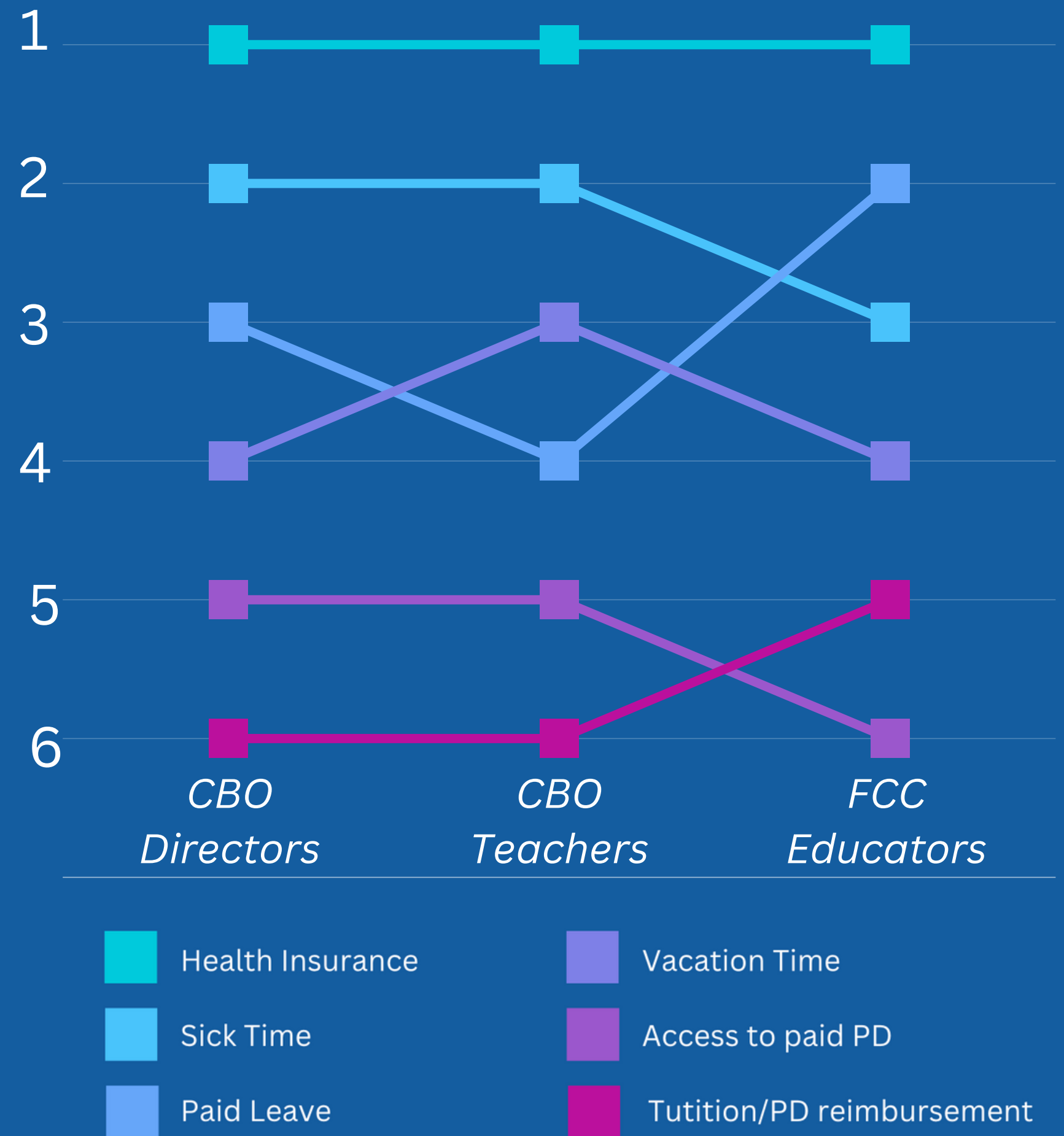
Preferred benefits by role in Boston

Health insurance emerges as the most preferred benefit.

Other benefits that support well-being and professional development vary in degree of preference

This could reflect:

- The difference between settings
- The workload associated with each role
- The unique challenges of each role



WORD FROM THE PROS

“Ayudarnos a que seamos pagadas dignamente del trabajo que hacemos día a día. [Tener un] sueldo justo para poder contratar personal y podamos turnarnos para poder tomar vacaciones. [Por ahora], no tenemos vacaciones pagadas, y el sueldo es menos de \$5 la hora en los FCC. Es muy penoso y a la vez es un trabajo muy valioso.”

...

“Help us to get dignified salaries for the daily work we do. Have a fair wage so we can hire new personnel and have the option to take vacations. Currently we don't have any paid vacations and our salaries are less than \$5 an hour in the FCC. It is shameful but we know that the work is very valuable.”

BPHC NURTURING WELLNESS: The Boston Healthy Child Care Initiative's Vision for Child and Educator Health



The Boston Healthy Child Care Initiative (BHCCI) is a program in The Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control at the Boston Public Health Commission, whose goal is to promote policy, systems, and environmental change strategies in child-care settings to increase the number of child-care programs that provide access to healthy food and beverages, physical activity, and breastfeeding opportunities and to decrease screen time. The BHCCI Learning Collaborative is offered in English and Spanish to early child-care programs in Boston. Educators participate in group learning and action-planning sessions to create goals and action steps to ensure a healthy environment for children and themselves. Educator wellness is essential to improving the health of children, and so they also develop action steps to create goals for their own wellness. In addition, child-care programs can request a wellness workshop from BPHC's Healthy Boston Speaker Series.

—**Sonia Carter**, *Division Program Director of Quality Improvement and Community Nutrition, Boston Public Health Commission*



HIGHER EDUCATION FOR EARLY EDUCATORS

Top 10 higher education institutions attended

Boston survey respondents

- 01 Urban College of Boston
- 02 Roxbury Community College
- 03 Bunker Hill Community College
- 04 BU Wheelock College of Education
- 05 Lesley University
- 06 University of Massachusetts
- 07 Childcare Education Institute
- 08 Northeastern University
- 09 Quincy College
- 10 MassBay Community College

Top 10 higher education institutions attended by Boston respondents who primarily speak a language other than English

Research has shown diversity and representation among educators can be a protective factor with better learning outcomes*

01	Urban College of Boston	45%
02	Roxbury Community College	15%
03	Bunker Hill Community College	23%
04	BU Wheelock College of Education	2%
05	Lesley University	7%
06	University of Massachusetts	0%
07	Childcare Education Institute	26%
08	Northeastern University	0%
09	Quincy College	7%
10	MassBay Community College	8%

*See reference in report

EMPOWERING EDUCATORS: Urban College's Community-Driven Approach to Early Childhood Education



At the core of our program is connection, support, and communication. We believe our community, predominantly working adults of color, thrive when they feel connected to the program and its people. To develop this connection, we host orientations and remain in contact with our students throughout the semester and beyond. When a student misses a class, they receive communications from the professor or a phone call to identify the cause of the absence and what supports the student needs to remain on track. Our courses include a robust student advising and support system in multiple languages.

Our connection to our students begins with how we recruit early childhood educators. Urban College relies on community partners. Over the years, we have developed partnerships with nonprofit organizations as well as private centers. We connect with schools, centers, family child-care providers, and nonprofit organizations to share information regarding the Lead Teacher and CDA Plus programs at Urban College.

Getting registered is only the first step for educators. We have identified technology and primary language other than English as potential barriers to our students' higher education success. After being registered, students are supported with access to technology and language supports. Students are provided with a computer for coursework, in-person/Zoom and Brightspace (LMS) training, and ESOL courses. Many of our course options for CDA Plus and Teacher credentialing are taught in Spanish, Mandarin, and Portuguese, as well as English.

We truly meet our students where they are while pushing them to excel and grow by providing clear expectations for academic rigor to our professors and offering strategies and tools to support our students when they are not meeting the expectations. Because of the strong relationship and connection we build with our students, they are vulnerable, and lines of communication are open and honest. This allows us to support students to achieve their goals and therefore continue making a dent in the lack of available quality child-care options in Massachusetts.

We encourage our students to bring their voice, perspectives, and knowledge to influence the greater good of the early childhood profession. The message is clear: Their contributions are essential to the larger movement of advocates in Massachusetts and across the nation who are advancing equity and racial and social justice in early childhood education.

—José Rivas, Ph.D., *Director of Early Childhood Education at Urban College*



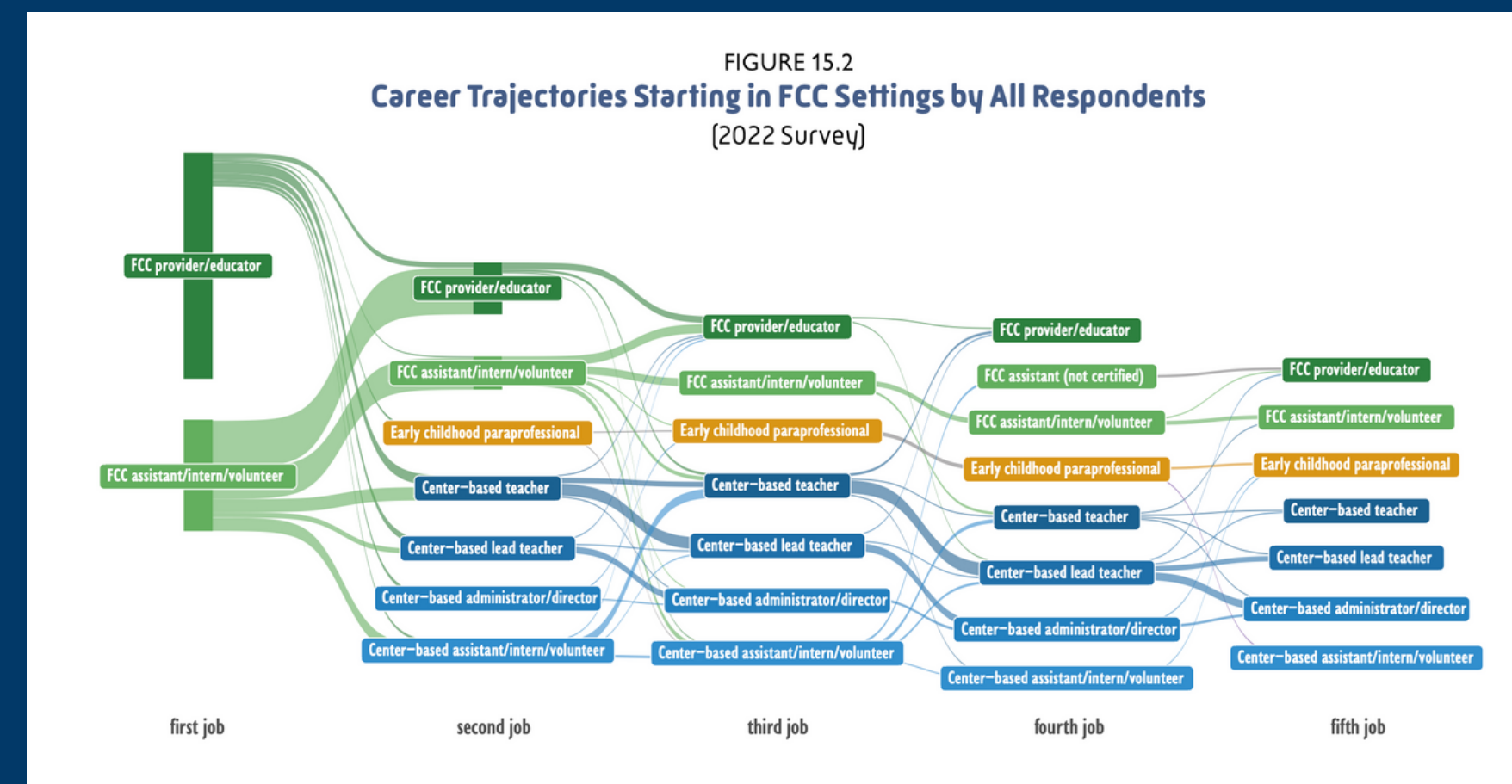
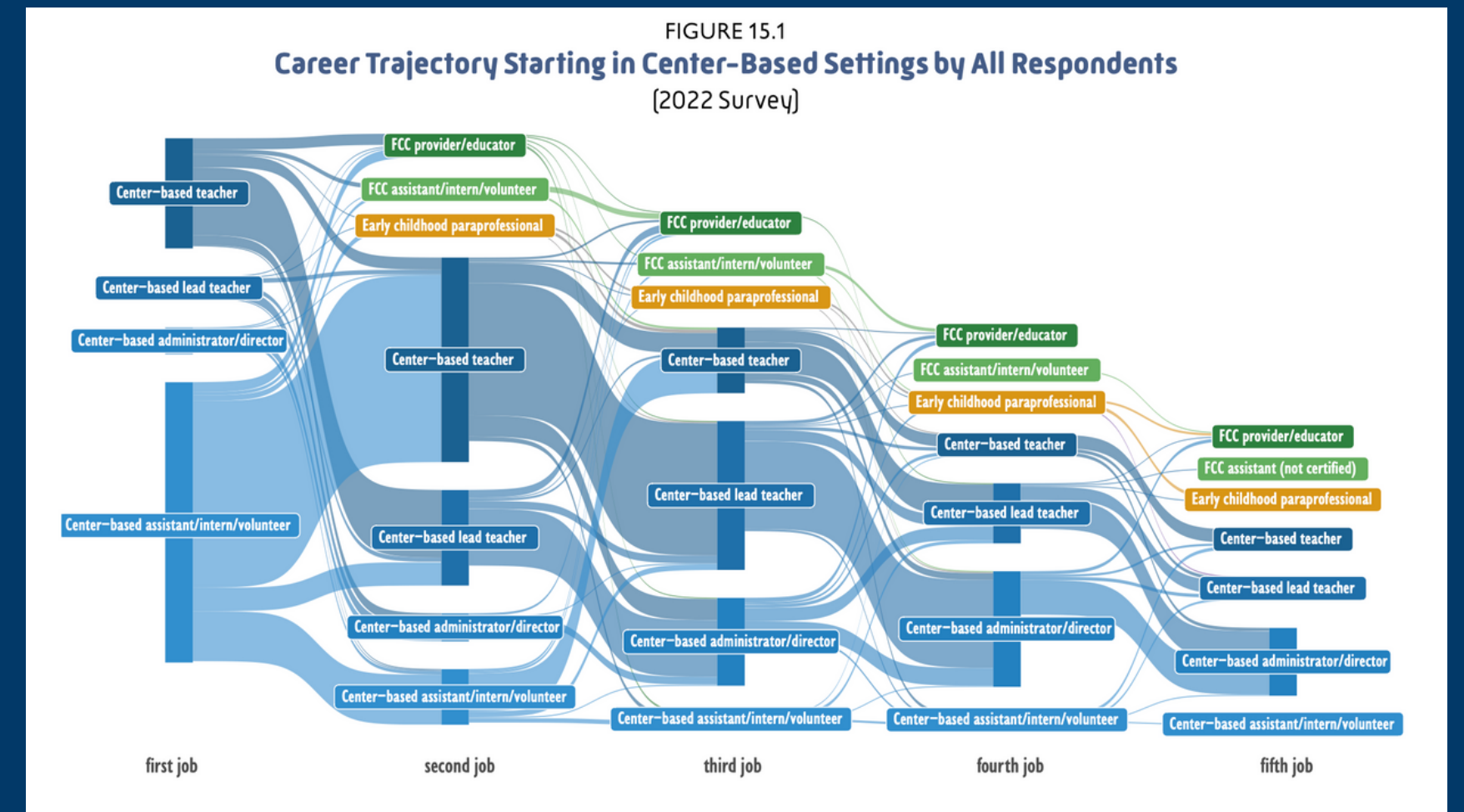
CAREER TRAJECTORIES

CAREER TRAJECTORIES

- Career pathways ensure long-term engagement of a workforce
- Professions with career pathways have coordinated local and system level initiatives for education and training
- These initiatives are coupled with supports to help traverse pathways
- Incentivizes investment in learning opportunities for ‘Good Jobs’ with family sustaining wages
- EEC and the City of Boston Office of Early Childhood have been supporting some career pathways

Career Trajectories

- Survey explored current career trajectories
- Early educator respondents across MA move between FCCs and centers
- Over 50% began as interns, volunteers and assistants; an important gateway role needing supports
- Current trajectories are unclear



WORD FROM THE PROS

我想继续学习和进修，请问有更多的支持吗？



***"I want to continue studying and furthering my education.
Is there more support available?"***

To build a thriving early educator workforce for Boston and Massachusetts, career trajectories need to be defined, with clearly delineated roles, pathways, and supports.



Increase systemic support and incentives for entry positions (intern, volunteer, or assistant) to continue building a career in the field.



Increase opportunities within existing roles and for advancement.



Create cross-sector career pathways, as individuals learn which context best fits themselves and their families.

YMCA OF GREATER BOSTON: Empowering Early Educators Through an Innovative Apprenticeship Program



The YMCA of Greater Boston (YGB) created the Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program as a cornerstone of our mission to support Boston communities by providing innovative workforce development and adult education opportunities. Throughout 2023, YGB partnered with the Commonwealth and the Department of Labor to creatively increase equitable access to high-quality care within Boston's early childhood landscape. YGB's apprentice program supports child-care centers in building capacity by placing apprentices full-time in programs across Boston. Throughout the year-long program, our Early Education Academy also provides the training, education, and mentorship that leads to a professional career as an EEC Teacher Certified Early Childhood Educator. By recruiting diverse apprentices and partnering with programs throughout Greater Boston, YGB's Early Childhood Academy hopes to serve as a model in driving equity of access to high-quality child care for the children, families, and educators we serve.

—**Robert Lowell**, *Senior Director of Workforce Development, YMCA of Greater Boston*



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Accelerate efforts toward an **equitable high-quality early education and care system** through long-term sustained and improved funding.
- **Define career trajectory** options with articulated educational, credentialing and apprenticeship pathways for the Massachusetts early education and care sector.
- **Develop data systems** to track educator-level and system-level factors, including well-being
- Amplify **advocacy for federal investment** to sustain wage increases and support the Commonwealth's early education and care system.



Panel Discussion



Turahn Dorsey, Chief Impact Officer eastern Bank Foundation
[Moderator]

Danielle Grant, Educator and Graduate,
UMass Boston's Institute for Early Educator Leadership and Innovation

Amy Kershaw, Commissioner, MA
Department of Early Education and Care

Arlene Ramos, Early Education Program Director,
Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion

Paola Tineo, Adjunct Professor
Urban College of Boston



Q & A

Closing Remarks



Kim Lucas, Professor of Practice in Public Policy and Economic Justice
Northeastern University

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Thank You!