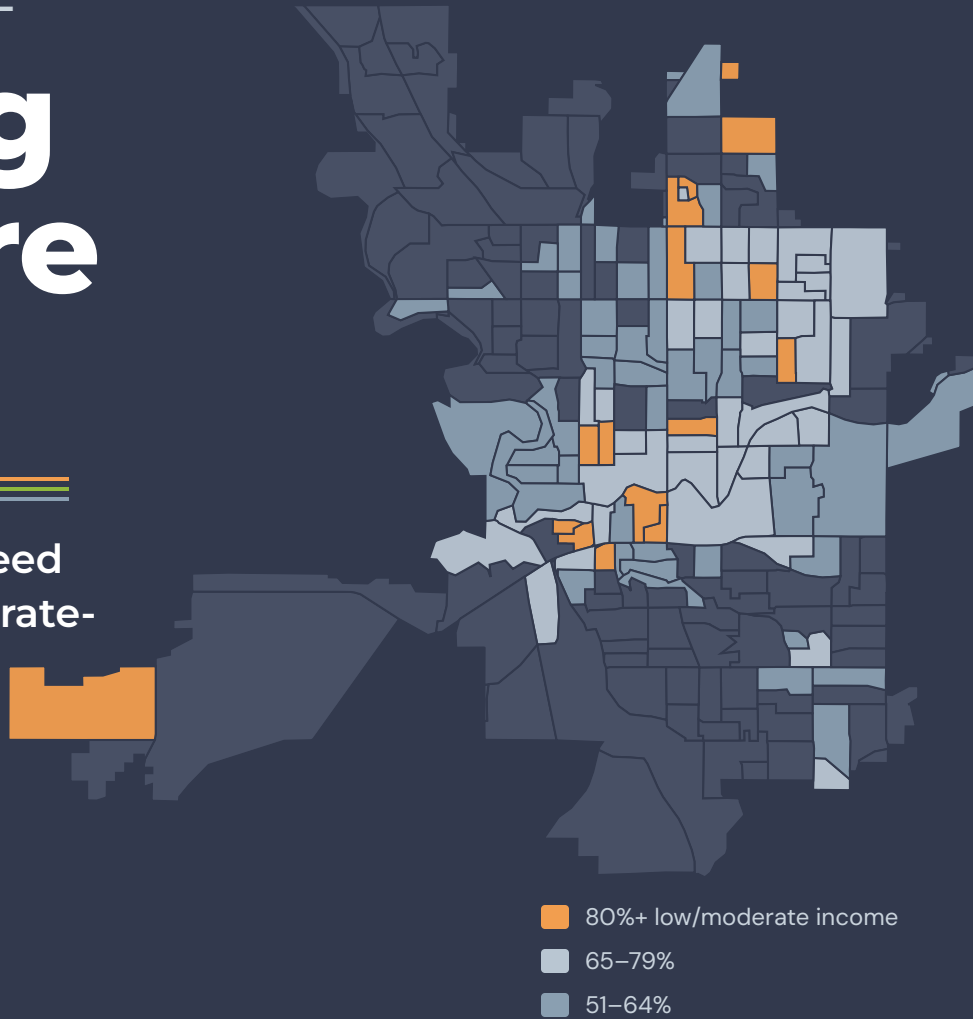


CITY OF SPOKANE

Mapping Childcare Need

Childcare deserts, high-need areas, and low- and moderate-income communities

2026 Geographic Analysis



SPOKANE
**WORKFORCE
COUNCIL**

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Prepared by the Spokane Workforce Council.
Made possible with Community Development
Block Grant funds from the U.S. Department
of Housing and Urban Development through
the City of Spokane.

Where Childcare Need Is Concentrated

This report maps where childcare need is concentrated across the City of Spokane and where the Spokane Workforce Council's early learning work is reaching providers. It brings together federal income data, state licensing records, and SWC's 2026 Childcare Provider Needs Assessment to fulfill this deliverable:

"Geographic mapping of impact across the City of Spokane, focusing on known childcare deserts, high-need areas, and low-moderate income zip codes/census tracts."

KEY FINDINGS

53%

of City of Spokane block groups (96 of 181) meet HUD's low- and moderate-income standard of 51% or more.

HUD LMISD (ACS 2016–2020)

\$41,171

median household income in ZIP 99201, the lowest in the city. The citywide median is \$70,064.

ACS 2020–2024

9 of 10

Head Start and Early Head Start sites in the city sit in low- and moderate-income block groups.

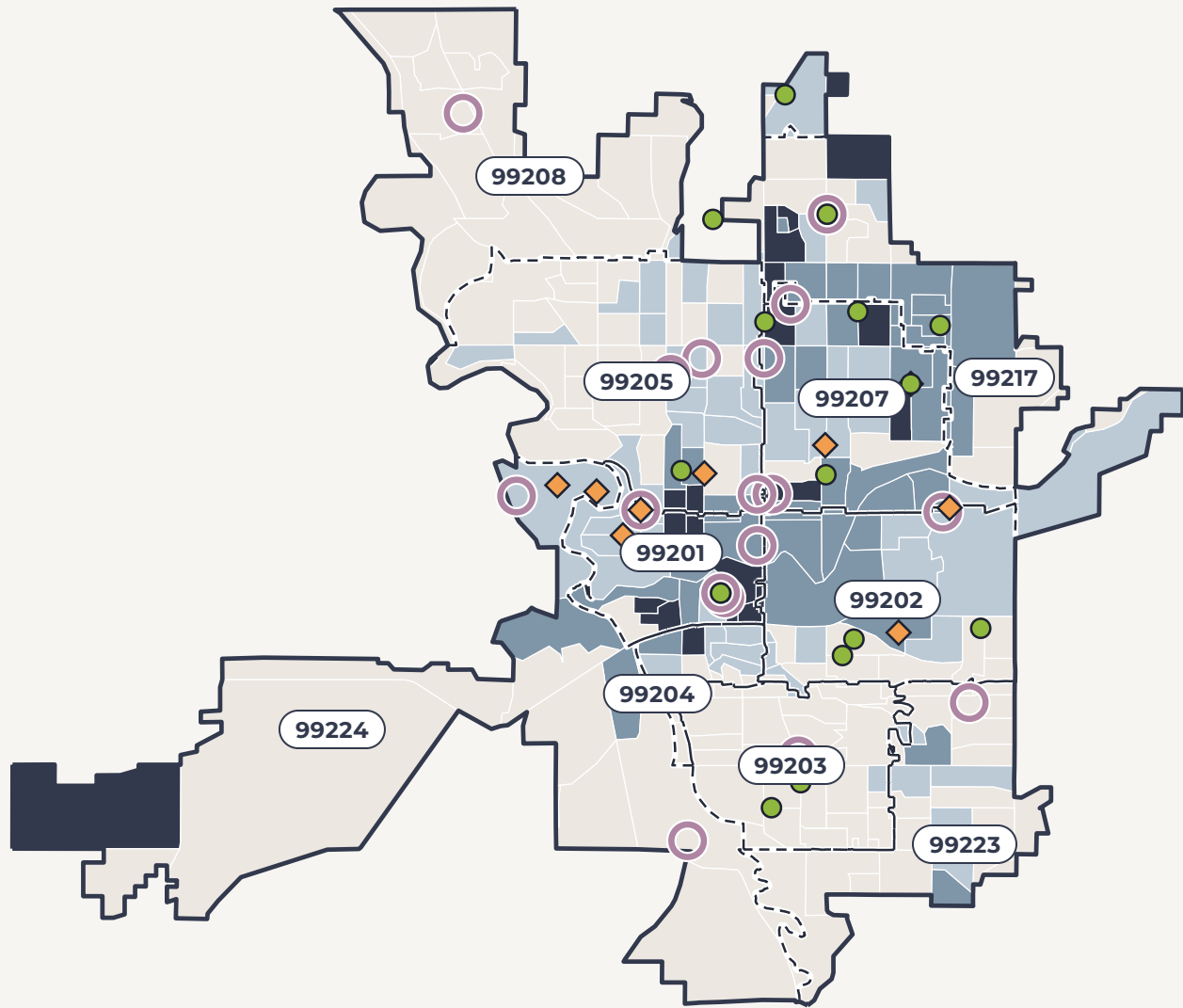
DCYF, Spokane Colleges

12 of 17

needs assessment respondents with a mapped address operate in low- and moderate-income block groups.

SWC Needs Assessment 2026

Low- and Moderate-Income Areas and Early Learning Sites



LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME SHARE (BLOCK GROUP)

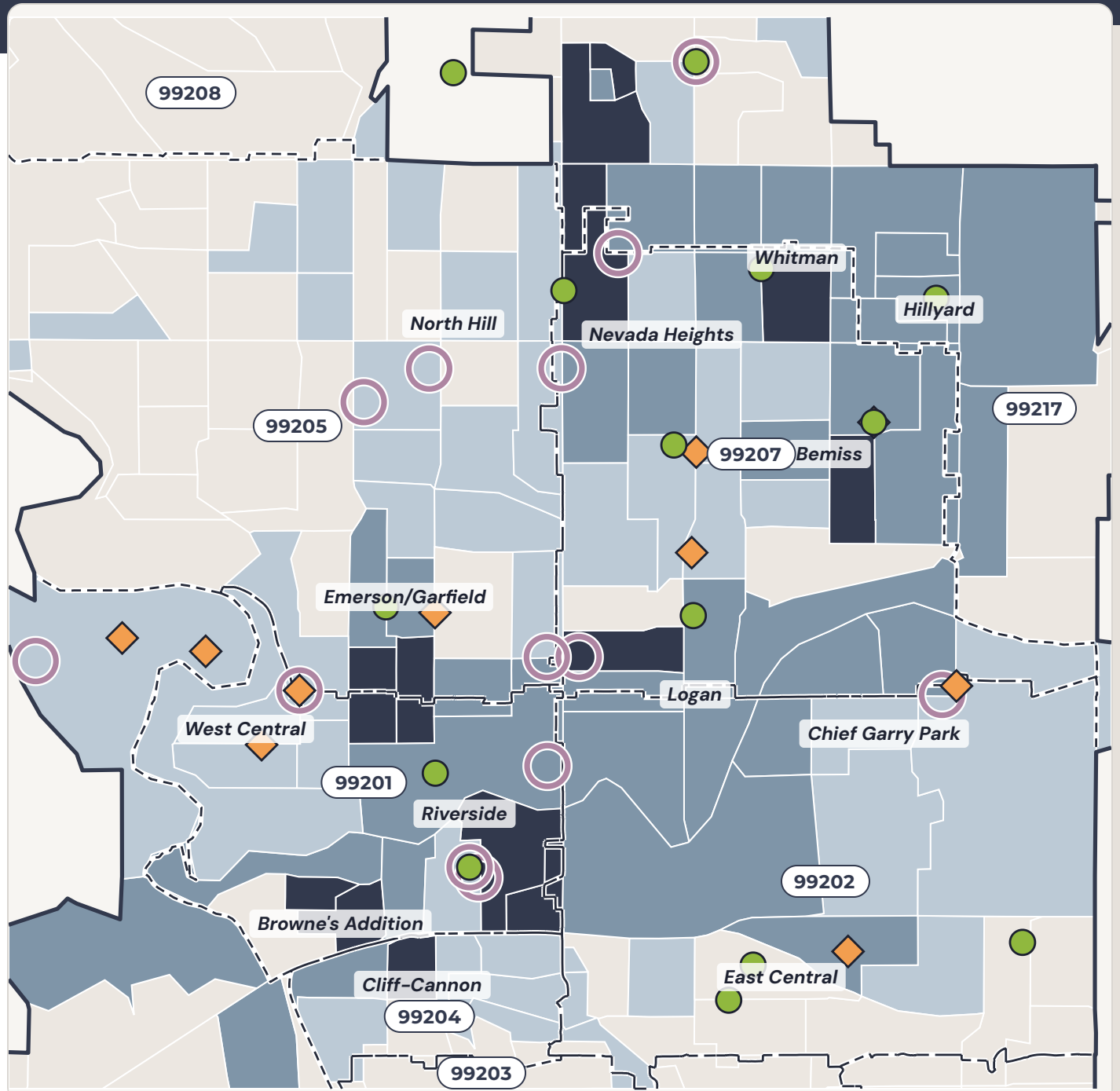
Under 51% 51–64% 65–79% 80% or more

SITES AND BOUNDARIES

◆ Head Start / Early Head Start
 ● ECEAP site (20+ slots)
 ○ Needs assessment respondent
 — City limits
 --- ZIP code boundary (approx.)

Block groups are shaded by the share of residents with low or moderate income (HUD data based on ACS 2016–2020), clipped to City of Spokane limits, including the West Plains annexation area. ZIP boundaries are approximate.

Where Need and Programs Overlap



LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME SHARE (BLOCK GROUP)

Under 51% 51-64% 65-79% 80% or more

SITES AND BOUNDARIES

◆ Head Start / Early Head Start

● ECEAP site (20+ slots)

○ Needs assessment respondent

— City limits

--- ZIP code boundary (approx.)

Low- and Moderate-Income Areas

HUD treats an area as low- and moderate-income (LMI) when at least 51% of residents earn 80% or less of the area median income. Under HUD's most recent data, based on 2016–2020 survey estimates, **48.2% of City of Spokane residents** are low or moderate income, and **96 of the city's 181 block groups**, spread across 47 census tracts, meet the 51% standard. Thirteen block groups are at 80% or higher.

These areas cluster north of downtown and east of Division Street, in the lower South Hill, and in the West Central and Browne's Addition area west of downtown. They overlap closely with the state's highest environmental health disparity ranking: 27 census tracts mostly inside the city rank 10 of 10 on the draft version 3 of Washington's Environmental Health Disparities map.

Neighborhoods with the most LMI block groups

Nevada Heights	9
Bemiss	8
Emerson/Garfield	8
Chief Garry Park	7
North Hill	7
Cliff-Cannon	6
Hillyard	6
Logan	6
Riverside	6
Shiloh Hills	5

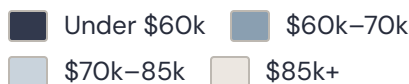
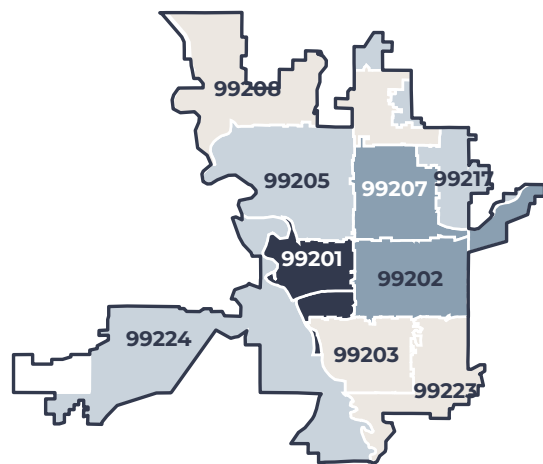
Neighborhood assigned by the location of each census tract's center; tracts can cross neighborhood lines.

Block groups at 80% LMI or higher

Tract	BG	Neighborhood	LMI
111.03	1	Shiloh Hills	95.0%
111.04	3	Shiloh Hills	92.4%
35	4	Riverside	91.9%
35	1	Riverside	90.7%
25.01	3	Logan	88.5%
20	4	Emerson/Garfield	85.7%
16	2	Bemiss	84.2%
20	3	Emerson/Garfield	83.8%
36.02	1	Browne's Addition	83.1%
3.01	2	Whitman	83.1%
40.01	1	Cliff-Cannon	81.9%
36.02	3	Browne's Addition	81.9%
4	3	Nevada Heights	80.9%

ZIP Code Profiles

Among ZIP codes centered in the city, 99201, 99204, 99207, and 99202 have the lowest median household incomes. ZIP 99201 has the lowest median income and the highest poverty rate, at 31.7%. Several ZIP codes extend beyond city limits (99212 is mostly Millwood and Spokane Valley), so figures describe the whole ZIP code area.



ZIP	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	POVERTY
99201	\$41,171	31.7%
99204	\$58,277	17.1%
99207	\$60,452	18.5%
99202	\$65,189	24.4%
99212	\$67,049	14.7%
99217	\$73,620	11.4%
99205	\$77,374	8.8%
99218	\$80,733	11.9%
99224	\$80,770	10.0%
99208	\$88,599	7.7%
99223	\$94,279	9.1%
99203	\$104,372	6.1%

City of Spokane: \$70,064 median, 13.8% poverty.
Washington State: \$98,141 median, 9.9% poverty.

99201 \$41,171

31.7% of residents below poverty
Downtown, Riverside, Browne's Addition, Peaceful Valley, and part of West Central

99204 \$58,277

17.1% of residents below poverty
Cliff/Cannon and the lower South Hill

99207 \$60,452

18.5% of residents below poverty
Logan, Bemiss, Whitman, Nevada Heights, and parts of North Hill and Chief Garry Park

99202 \$65,189

24.4% of residents below poverty
East Central, the University District, and parts of Logan and Chief Garry Park

Childcare Deserts

The Center for American Progress defines a childcare desert as a place where there are more than three young children for every licensed childcare slot within a 20-minute drive. In 2025, 46% of children under age 6 nationwide lived in a childcare desert. No current source maps Spokane's deserts at the census tract level, but local studies point to the same neighborhoods this report identifies as high need.

SPOKANE COUNTY SUPPLY

12,070

childcare slots across 229 providers in 2024

Child Care Aware of WA

**265 →
230**

childcare providers, 2019 to the end of 2023

Child Care Aware of WA

39%

of children under 6 in Spokane County lack access to early learning

Spokane Journal of Business, Dec. 2025

East Central and the University District

54%

of the estimated 1,068 children who need care in ZIP 99202 are not served. Across the eight ZIP codes nearest the University District, an estimated 6,684 children lack the care they need.

Arrowleaf Consulting for the Spokane University District, 2025

Northeast Spokane and Hillyard

Northeast Spokane has been described as a childcare desert. A 100-slot center is planned in Hillyard, and RAZE opened in north Spokane in fall 2025, licensed for 130 children.

The City and Spokane Public Schools have announced a childcare pilot at Balboa and Whitman elementary schools, planned to begin in fall 2026.

KXLY, Feb. 2026; DCYF; City of Spokane, June 2026

Head Start, Early Head Start & ECEAP

These programs enroll children based on family income, so their sites are a direct line to low-income families. Spokane Colleges operates every Head Start and Early Head Start site inside city limits. ECEAP, the state preschool program, runs at about 35 Spokane Public Schools sites plus partner sites.

Head Start and Early Head Start (Spokane Colleges)

Site	Address	ZIP	Slots
Northeast Community Center	4001 N Cook St	99207	90 HS, 77 EHS
Adult Education Center	2310 N Monroe St	99205	30 HS, 41 EHS*
SFCC Early Learning Center	3410 W Whistalks Way	99224	112
Logan/Lidgerwood Head Start	3704 N Nevada St	99207	114
Gonzaga Family Haven	975 E North Foothills Dr	99207	64
West Central Community Center	1603 N Belt St	99205	56
MLK Jr. Community Center EHS	500 S Stone St	99202	40
West Boone Center EHS	2427 W Boone Ave	99201	16
Sisters Haven	1935 N Holy Names Ct	99224	34
Bigfoot (SCC campus)	1810 N Greene St	99217	123

ECEAP sites with 20 or more slots, 2026–27

Site	ZIP	Slots	Site	ZIP	Slots
Logan Elementary (SPS)	99207	67	Parkview ELC	99207	37
Longfellow Elementary (SPS)	99207	62	GLOW Children ELC	99201	31
Grant Elementary (SPS)	99202	62	Northeast Community Center	99207	30
Linwood Elementary (SPS)	99208	61	Whitman Elementary (SPS)	99207	28
Scott Elementary (SPS)	99202	59	Jefferson Elementary (SPS)	99203	28
Northeast Youth Center	99217	47	Manito UMC (YMCA)	99203	27
Liberty Park	99202	40	Lilac City ELC	99208	21
YWCA Downtown	99201	40	Trinity Educare	99205	20
Green Gable North	99218	37			

SPS = Spokane Public Schools. Head Start slots are licensed capacity (*funded slots). Community-Minded Enterprises held 124 ECEAP slots in 2025–26 and lists no active sites for 2026–27.

Where SWC's Work Is Reaching

Twenty-two City of Spokane providers responded to SWC's 2026 Childcare Provider Needs Assessment. Seventeen have a published street address inside city limits and appear on the maps as respondent sites. **Twelve of the 17 operate in low- and moderate-income block groups.**

WHAT CITY RESPONDENTS NEED

95%

want classroom management and behavior support training

95%

would put new funding toward wage increases

91%

cite scheduling conflicts as a training barrier

73%

cite cost as a training barrier

Mapped respondents

Provider	ZIP	LMI
GLOW Children ELC	99201	59%
Journey Discovery Center	99201	74%
Rainbow Connection Too	99201	59%
Ascend to the Heights	99205	59%
Lil Hawks	99205	57%
Salish School of Spokane	99205	57%
West Central Community Center	99205	52%
Crayon College	99207	88%
Enriched Beginnings Northtown	99207	81%

Provider	ZIP	LMI
North Division Children's Learning Ctr.	99207	56%
Planet Kids Inc	99207	67%
Spokane Falls Montessori	99224	61%
Herzog Family Center	99203	Under 51%
Lilac City ELC	99208	Under 51%
Pacific Park Children's Center	99208	Under 51%
All Saints Catholic Preschool	99223	Under 51%
Giggling Guest Too	99224	Under 51%

LMI = share of residents with low or moderate income in the site's block group. Not mapped: two licensed family homes without a published address (Ling Licensed Home Daycare, JB's Clubhouse Daycare) and Loving Hearts, which sits just outside city limits.

Targeting Training Where It Matters Most

PRIORITY 1 Start where need and reach overlap

Centers in ZIP codes 99201, 99204, 99207, and 99202, and in block groups at 65% LMI or higher, should be first in line for training.

- ◆ Head Start, Early Head Start, and ECEAP sites already serve income-eligible families.
- ◆ Twelve respondent sites in LMI areas have already engaged with SWC.

PRIORITY 2 Close the reach gaps

No needs assessment respondents were mapped in the LMI areas of several neighborhoods with large concentrations of need.

- ◆ Northeast: Hillyard, Bemiss, and Shiloh Hills
- ◆ East Central, where 54% of children who need care in ZIP 99202 are not served
- ◆ The lower South Hill, including Cliff-Cannon

PRIORITY 3 Add the next layers of data

Update the map as training is delivered so it shows impact over time.

- ◆ Plot each center that completes SWC-supported training.
- ◆ Add DCYF's ZIP-level childcare need and supply data to measure deserts directly.

Other licensed centers in priority ZIP codes

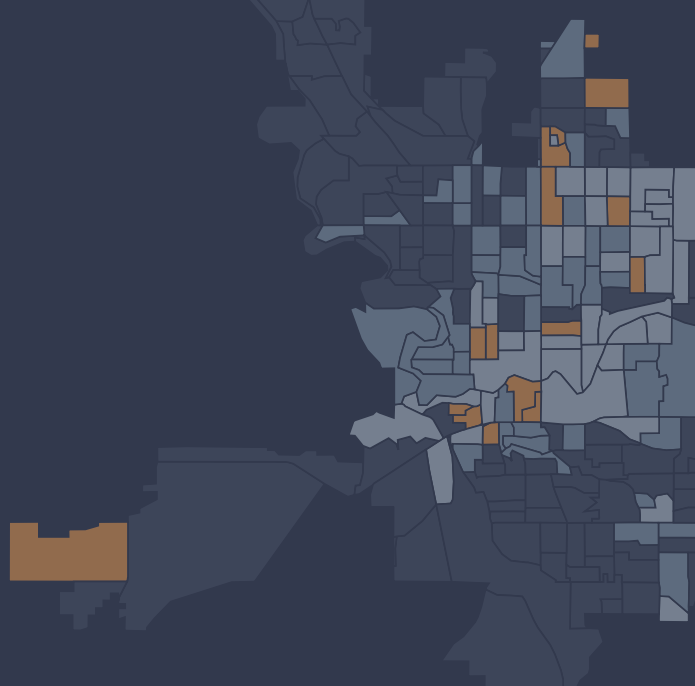
Center	Address	ZIP	Capacity
St. Anne's Children and Family Center	25 W 5th Ave	99204	195
Community Building Children's Center	35 W Main Ave, Ste 110	99201	29
North Avenue Early Learning	1002 E North Ave	99207	65
Parkview ELC, Queen Ave	19 E Queen Ave	99207	30
MLK Jr. Family Outreach Center	500 S Stone St	99202	60
RAZE	6519 N Lidgerwood St	99208	130

Data Sources & Notes

- ◆ **Low- and moderate-income areas:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, ACS 5-Year 2016–2020 Low- and Moderate-Income Summary Data, block group level.
- ◆ **Income and poverty:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020–2024 5-year estimates (released January 29, 2026), ZIP code tabulation areas; QuickFacts for city and state.
- ◆ **Licensed centers:** Washington DCYF Licensed Childcare Center and School Age Program Providers, data.wa.gov (accessed October 2026).
- ◆ **ECEAP sites:** Washington DCYF ECEAP Sites, 2026–27 school year, data.wa.gov (accessed October 2026).
- ◆ **Head Start:** Washington DCYF Head Start Sites, data.wa.gov (accessed October 2026); Spokane Colleges Head Start, Locations page.
- ◆ **Childcare deserts:** Center for American Progress, *America’s Licensed Child Care Deserts* (April 2026); Child Care Aware of Washington, *2024 Child Care Data Report* (June 2025) and *County Profiles* (March 2024); Spokane Journal of Business, “Spokane area’s child care crisis costs employers” (December 18, 2025), citing the 2024 Spokane County State of the Children Economic Impact report; Arrowleaf Consulting for the Spokane University District, *Early Learning and Care Needs Assessment* (May 2025); KXLY, “Northeast Spokane childcare center moves closer to reality with 100 new slots” (February 17, 2026); City of Spokane, “City and Spokane Public Schools Partner to Expand Childcare Access” (June 22, 2026).
- ◆ **Environmental health:** Washington Department of Health, Environmental Health Disparities Map, draft version 3 (2026).
- ◆ **SWC reach:** Spokane Workforce Council, 2026 Childcare Provider Needs Assessment (22 City of Spokane responses).
- ◆ **Boundaries and locations:** U.S. Census Bureau 2020 cartographic boundary files (1:500,000) for block groups and city limits; 2010 ZIP code tabulation areas for drawing ZIP lines; addresses geocoded with the U.S. Census Geocoder.

Notes and limitations

- ◆ ZIP code areas are approximate and several extend beyond city limits.
- ◆ HUD’s LMI data uses 2016–2020 survey data, the most recent HUD has published.
- ◆ Neighborhood names are assigned by census tract location and may not match neighborhood council lines exactly.
- ◆ Childcare desert data is not yet available at the census tract level for Spokane.
- ◆ Licenses change monthly. Confirm a site’s status in Washington’s Child Care Check before formal reporting.



With Appreciation

This report was prepared by the Spokane Workforce Council and made possible with Community Development Block Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through the City of Spokane. Thank you to the early learning providers across the city who shared their time and perspectives.



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Questions about this report? Contact Bianka DeSure at bdesure@spokaneworkforce.org.

The Spokane Workforce Council (SWC) provides funding and strategic oversight to the WorkSource Spokane Campus' career and social one-stop centers. The SWC and its WorkSource Spokane Campus are proud partners of the American Job Center Network and equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aids are available to individuals with disabilities upon request. For federal funding disclosure information, visit spokaneworkforce.org/workforce-resources/funding/