

National Child Care Gap Assessment: Nebraska

September 2024



National Overview: Child Care Assessment

- Over 15 million children (66.7%) under age 6 have all available parents in the workforce.
- There is broad bipartisan support for child care at all levels of government, but there is little known about exactly how much care is needed.
- The Buffett Institute at the University of Nebraska is working with 50 states to understand child care need and supply in their communities using a unique spatial analysis and mapping technique.
- This approach will focus on the true need for child care at a local level, relative to the availability of care, and provide comprehensive, comparative data across the country.
- This gap analysis will:
 - give policymakers and stakeholders a baseline from which to devise strategies to strengthen quality of and access to child care.
 - give policymakers a critical tool for holding federal, state, and local leaders accountable for improving access to child care.
 - serve as an evidence base that will allow federal, state, and local leaders across the country to use data rather than anecdotes to evaluate the need for care.
- *Note:* For purposes of this project, “child care” includes all legally operating early care and education programs as defined by the State.
This includes center- and home-based child care, as well as Pre-K and Head Start programs.

Child Care Gap Assessment

Data Sources

- State data on child care facilities and capacity
- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 estimates
- Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Defense

Analysis Includes

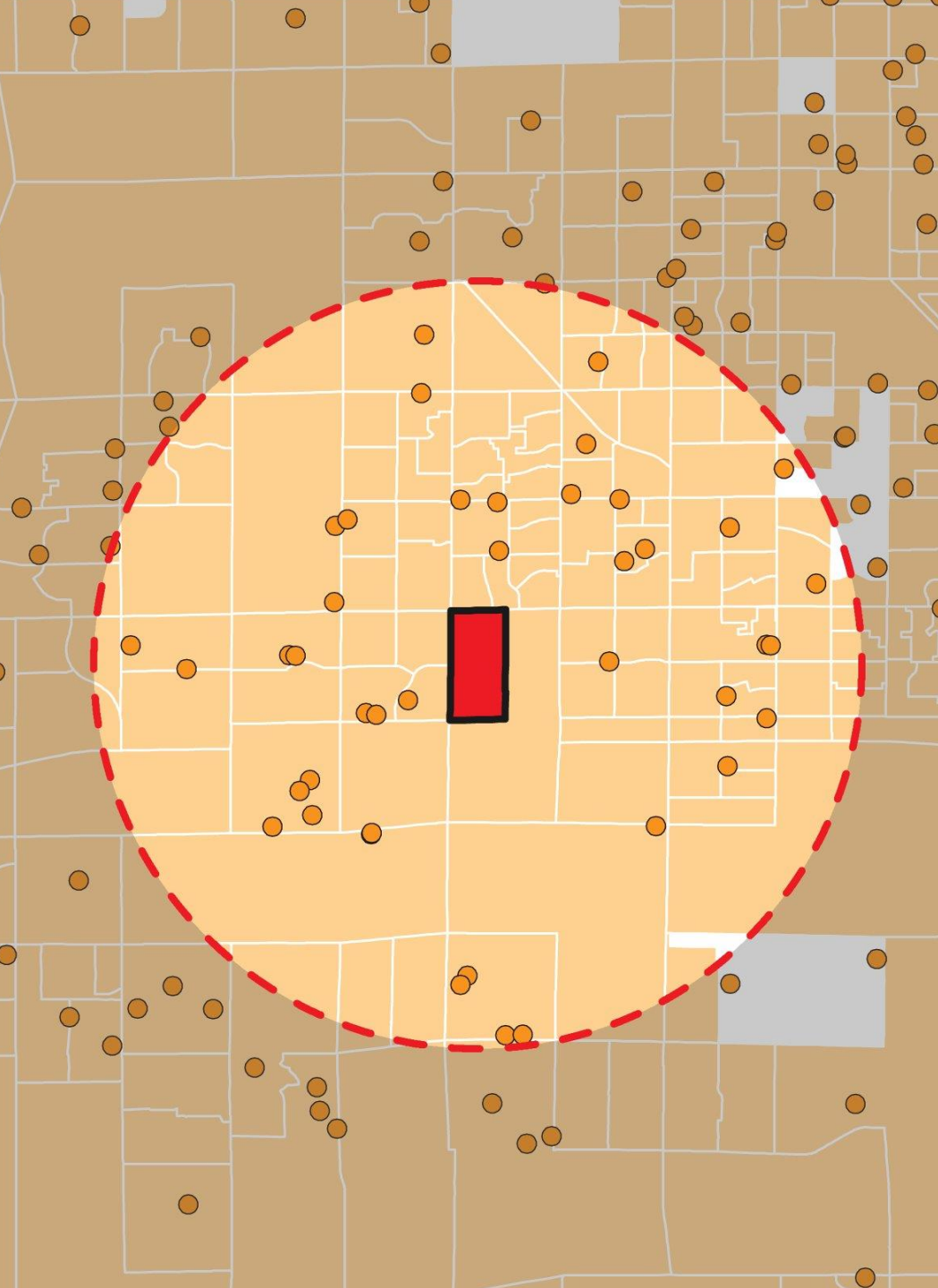
- Estimate of:
 - potential need, based on Census data on population under age six with parents in labor force
 - supply, based on data on child care facilities provided by state agencies
 - gap, or the difference between these two data sets based on distance from home to facility
- Maps showing how supply and need are distributed across the state, with breakdown by county, state legislative district, and Congressional District
- Cross tabulation of child care gaps by socioeconomic characteristics like minority population, population in poverty, etc.

Notes

- Child care facilities included in the analysis are primarily those serving children under age six. In some cases, school age children may be included since detailed age data is not always available.
- The analysis for Nebraska does **NOT** includes cross-state interactions. Effective gap calculations for populations resident across state borders will need to be recalculated once the dataset is updated for neighboring states.

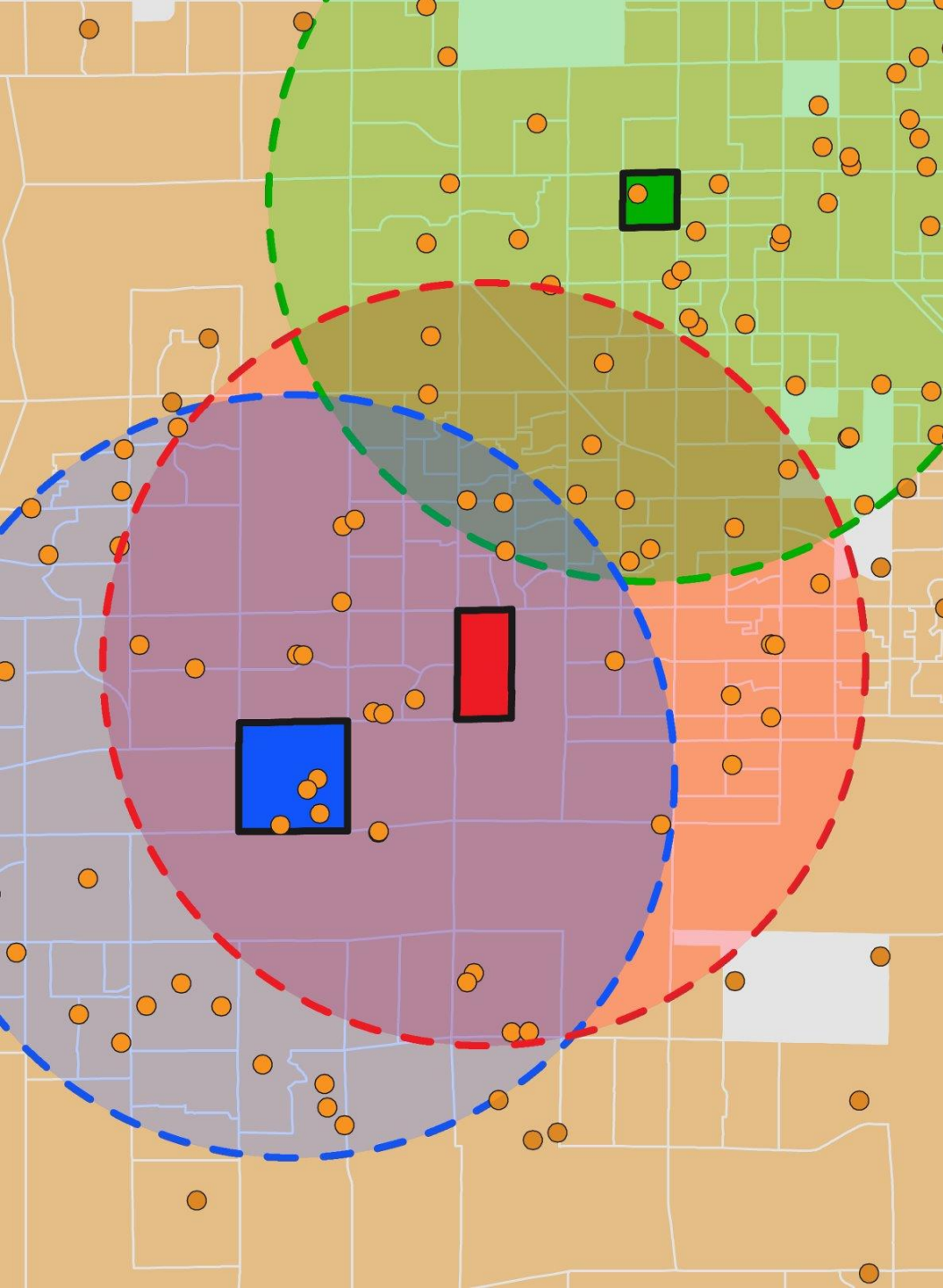
Method





Distance-Based Method

- Block groups are assigned a service area:
- 3.5 miles from the block group center for urban and 10 miles for rural.
- Population in the block group can access the spaces available in the facilities within the service area.
- Child care need within the block group is proportionally allocated to the facilities within the service area.



Distance-Based Method

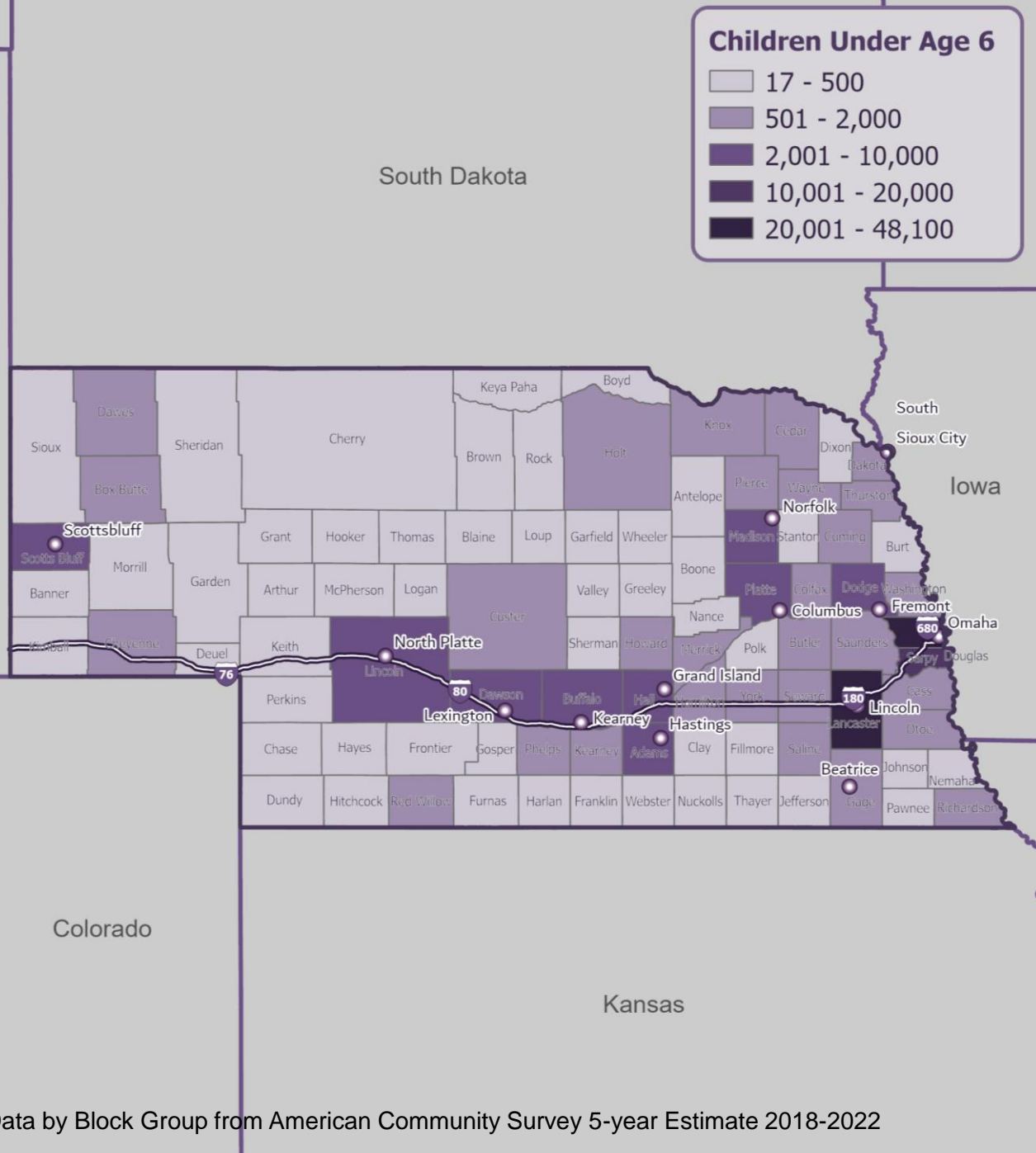
- Service areas from neighboring block groups overlap.
- Facilities are allocated children (need) from all block groups whose service area the facility falls into, until all capacity is used up.
- This method results in assignment of need to available spaces without going over the facility capacity.

Methodology: Definitions

- This project focused on understanding the gap between **potential need** for and supply of child care.
- **Potential need** = all children under six with all available parents in labor force.
- **Demand** = rate at which parents and families will actually utilize child care.
- There are a number of factors that can impact demand.
- This data on gap between supply and potential need gives states and the country a starting point.
- More work needs to be done to understand what demand in states and communities might look like.

Gaps Analysis





Children Under 6 with Parents in the Labor Force

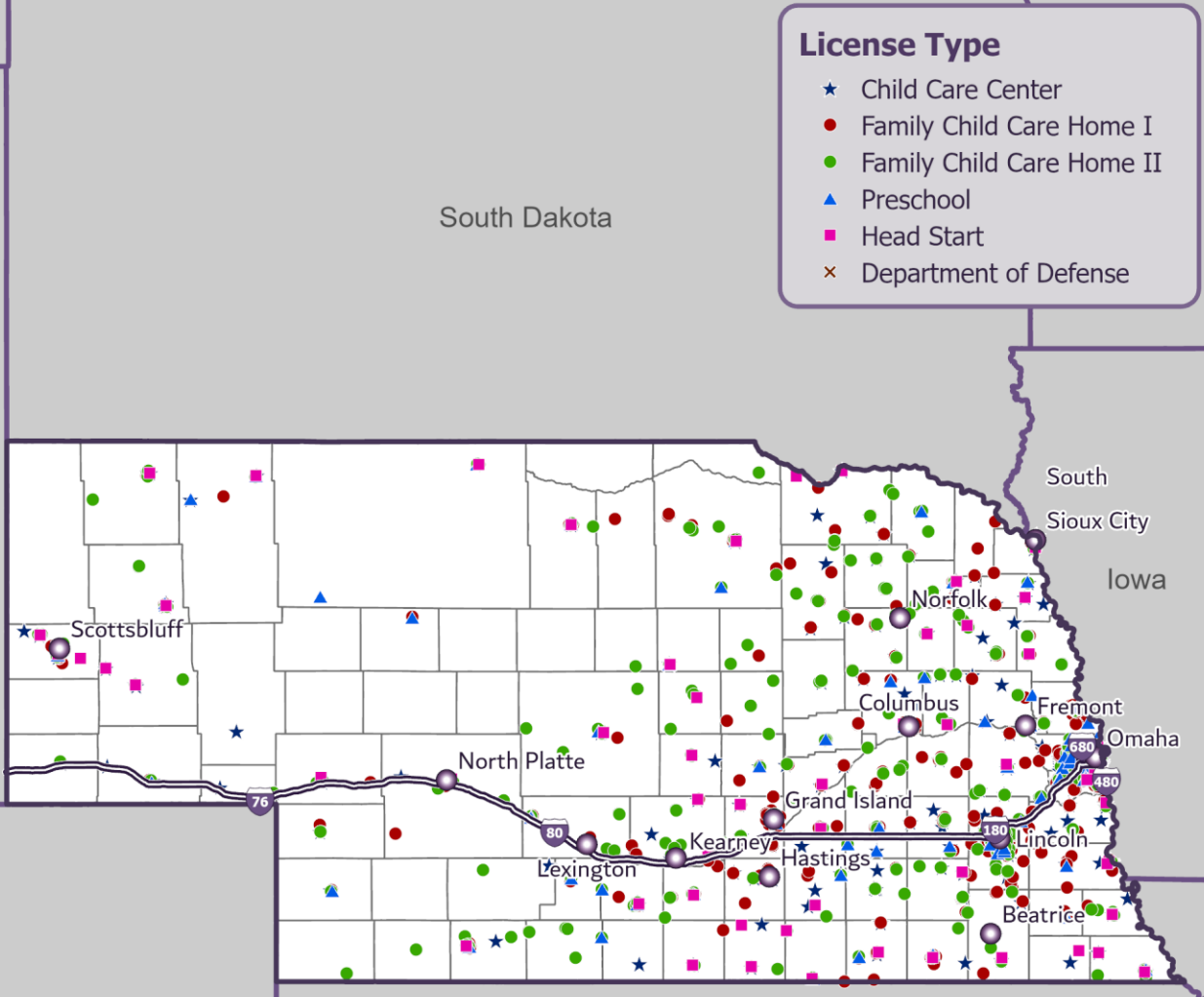
Defined as:

- Living with both parents and both parents are in the labor force
- Living with one parent and that parent is in the labor force

Child Care Need: 110,997
1.3% Decrease since 2020



Data by Block Group from American Community Survey 5-year Estimate 2018-2022



License Type

- ★ Child Care Center
- Family Child Care Home I
- Family Child Care Home II
- ▲ Preschool
- Head Start
- × Department of Defense

Nebraska Child Care Providers

Facility Type	Count	Capacity
Child Care Center	690	65,888
Family Child Care Home I	957	9,451
Family Child Care Home II	508	5,982
Preschool	106	2,866
Provisional Child Care Center	79	6,334
Provisional Family Child Care Home I	77	753
Provisional Family Child Care Home II	84	983
Additional facilities from Office of Head Start	77	2,142
Department of Defense	1	458
TOTAL	2,579	94,857

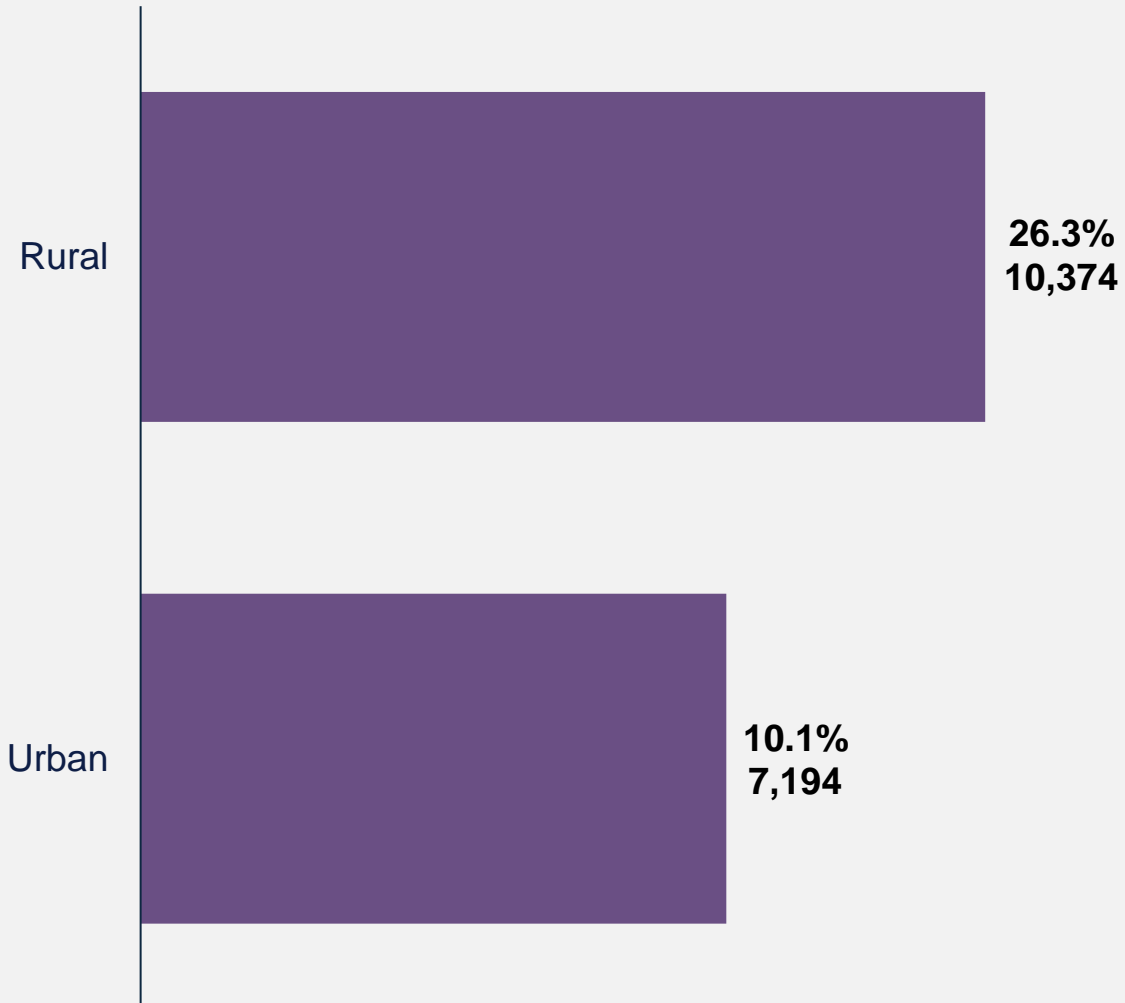
Increase of 2,079 capacity since 2020



Sources: State of Nebraska, Office of Head Start, Department of Defense

Child Care Gap

Distance-Based Method



Total Gap: 17,658

Children needing child care are matched to facilities within a specified distance from the block group they live in:

- 3.5 miles in urban areas
- 10 miles in rural areas

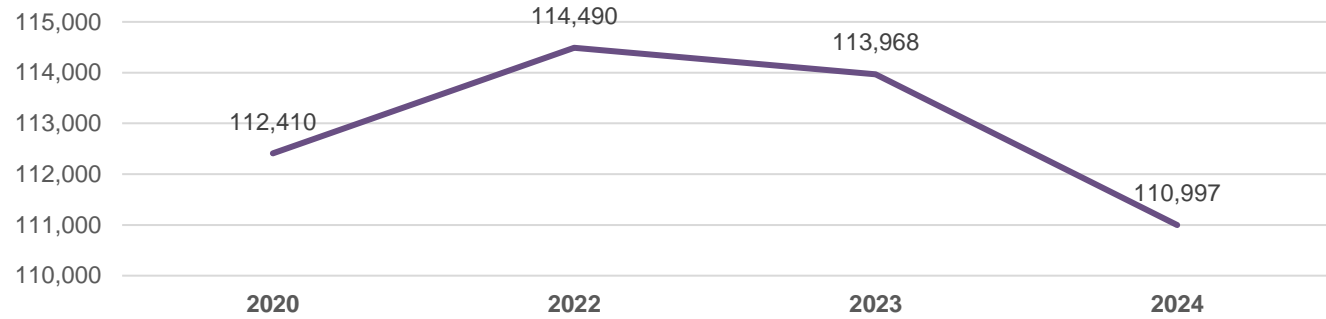
Changes in Child Care Gap

Change from May 2020 to July 2024

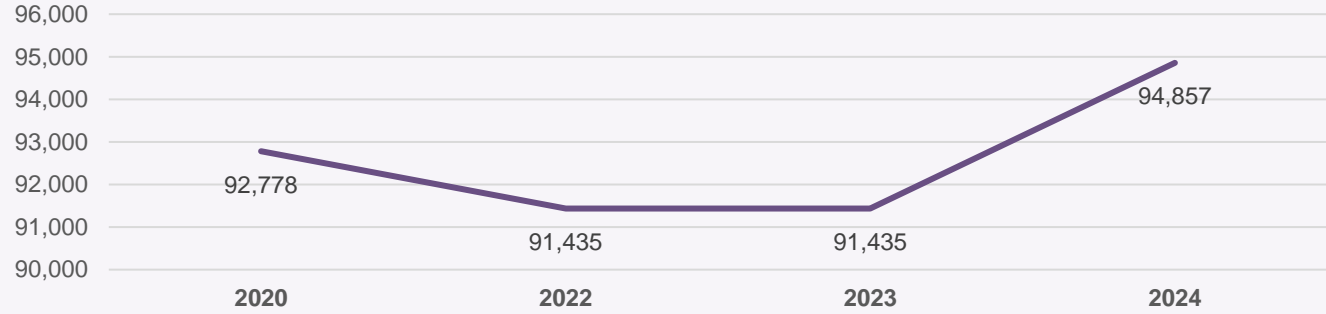
Category	Potential Need	Capacity	Gap
Total	-1.3% ↓ (-1,413)	2.2% ↑ (+2,079)	-15.4% ↓ (-3,199)
Urban	-0.5% ↓ (-333)	0.8% ↑ (+503)	-18.9% ↓ (-1,679)
Rural	-2.7% ↓ (-1,080)	6.0% ↑ (+1,576)	-12.8% ↓ (-1,520)

Change Over Time, 2020-2024

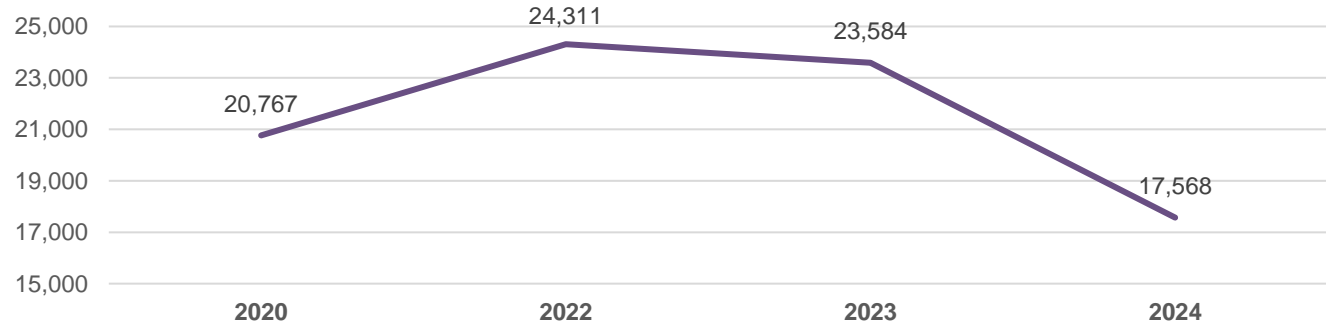
Potential Need



Capacity

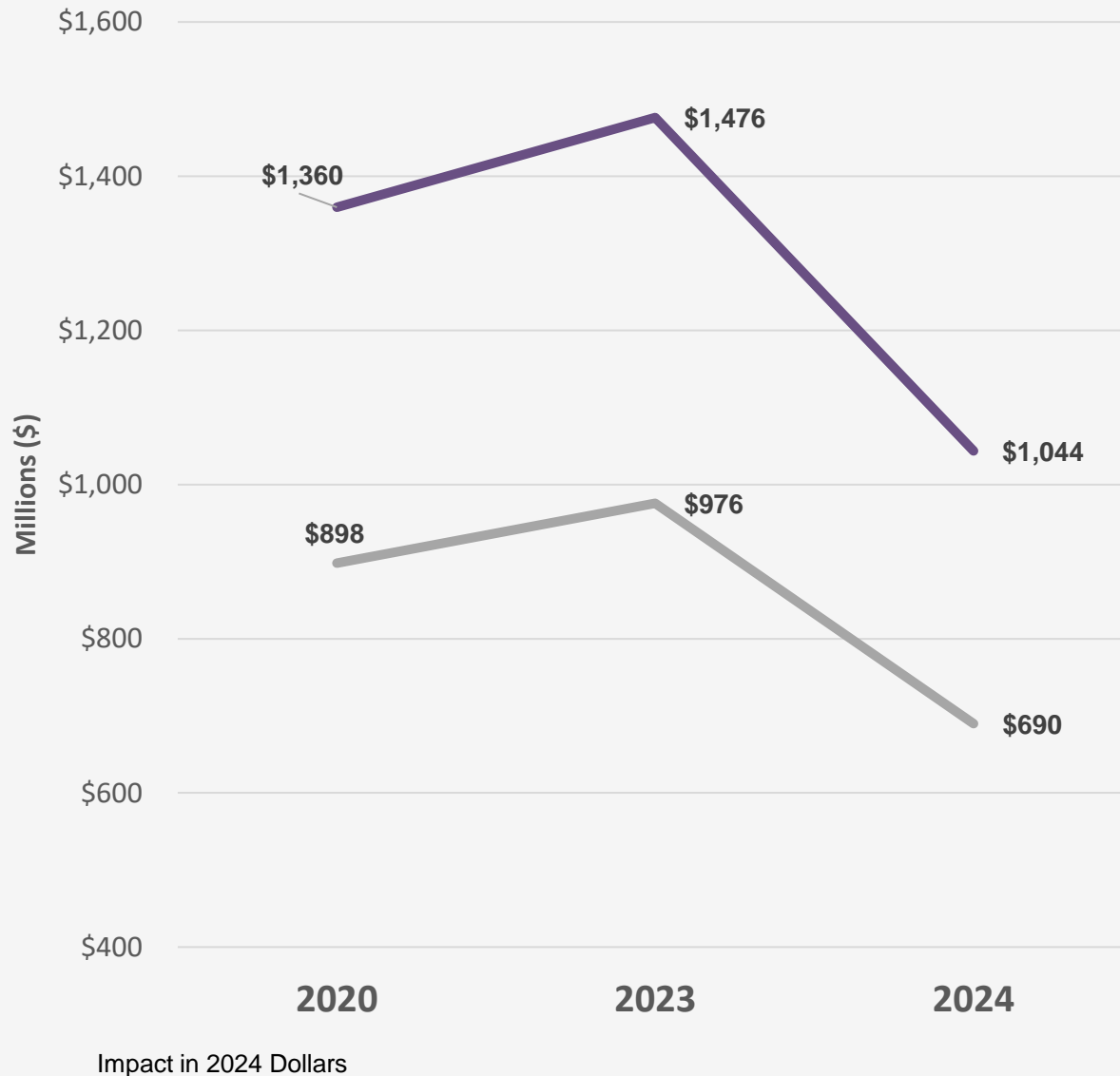


Gap



Long Term Economic Impact

Low and High

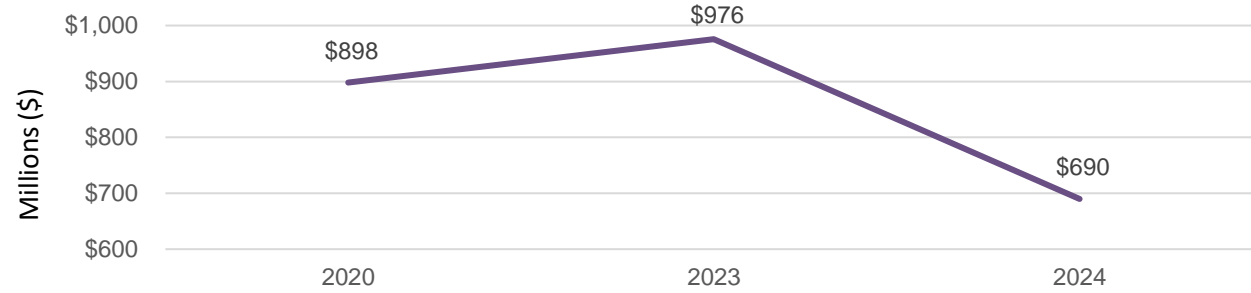


Economic Impact of Gap

- Burden to parents in the form of lost earnings and productivity
- Burden to businesses in the form of reduced revenue and extra recruitment cost
- Burden to taxpayers in the form of lost income and sales tax revenue
- Decrease of 23% since 2020

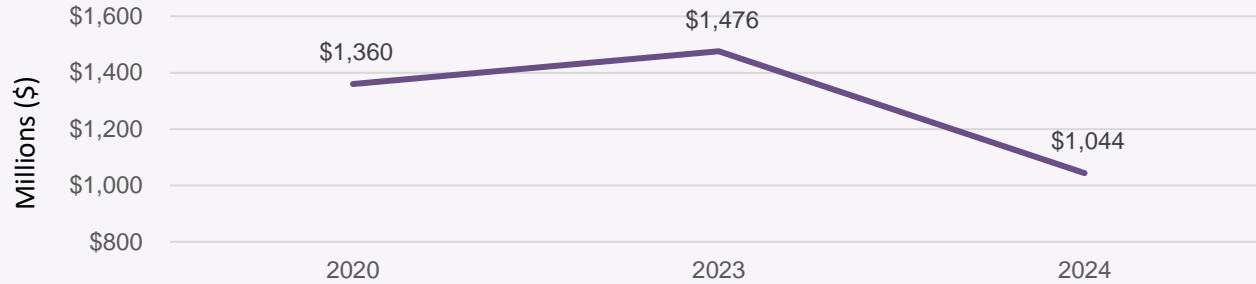
Long-Term Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

Economic Impact: Low



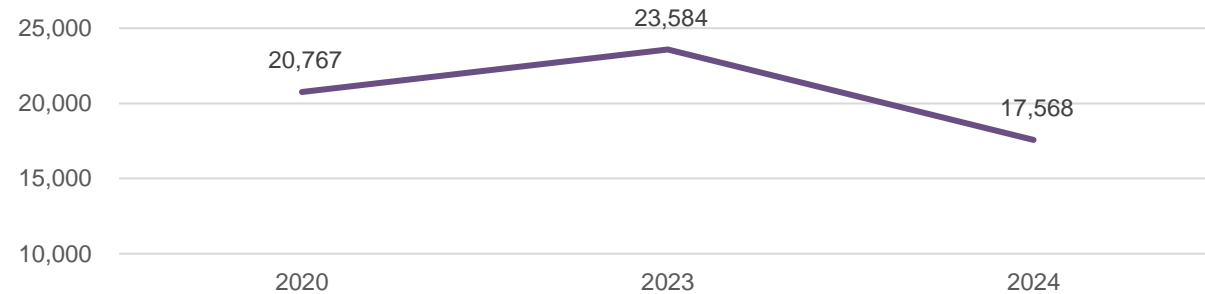
Impact in 2024 Dollars

Economic Impact: High



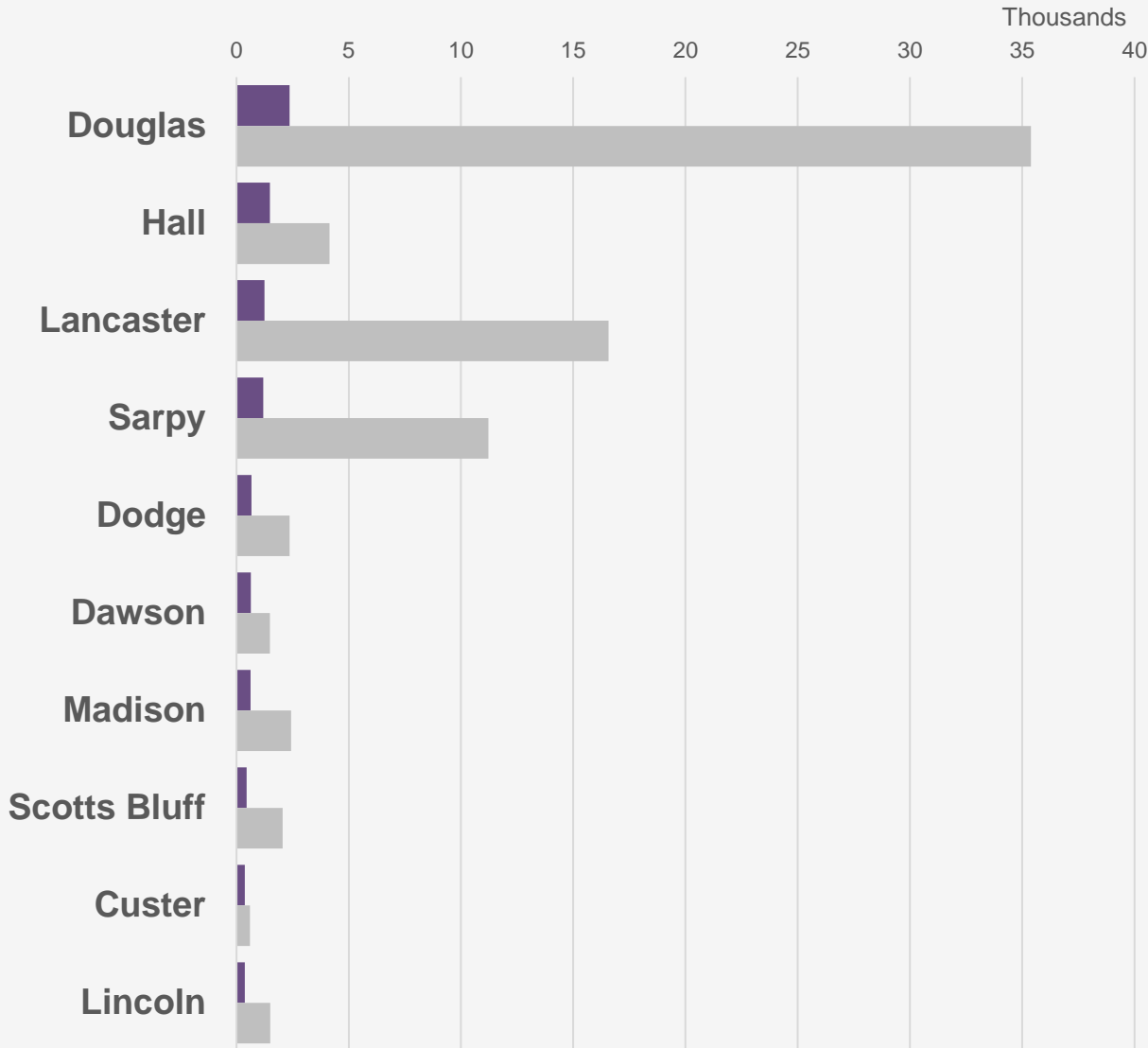
Impact in 2024 Dollars

Child Care Gap



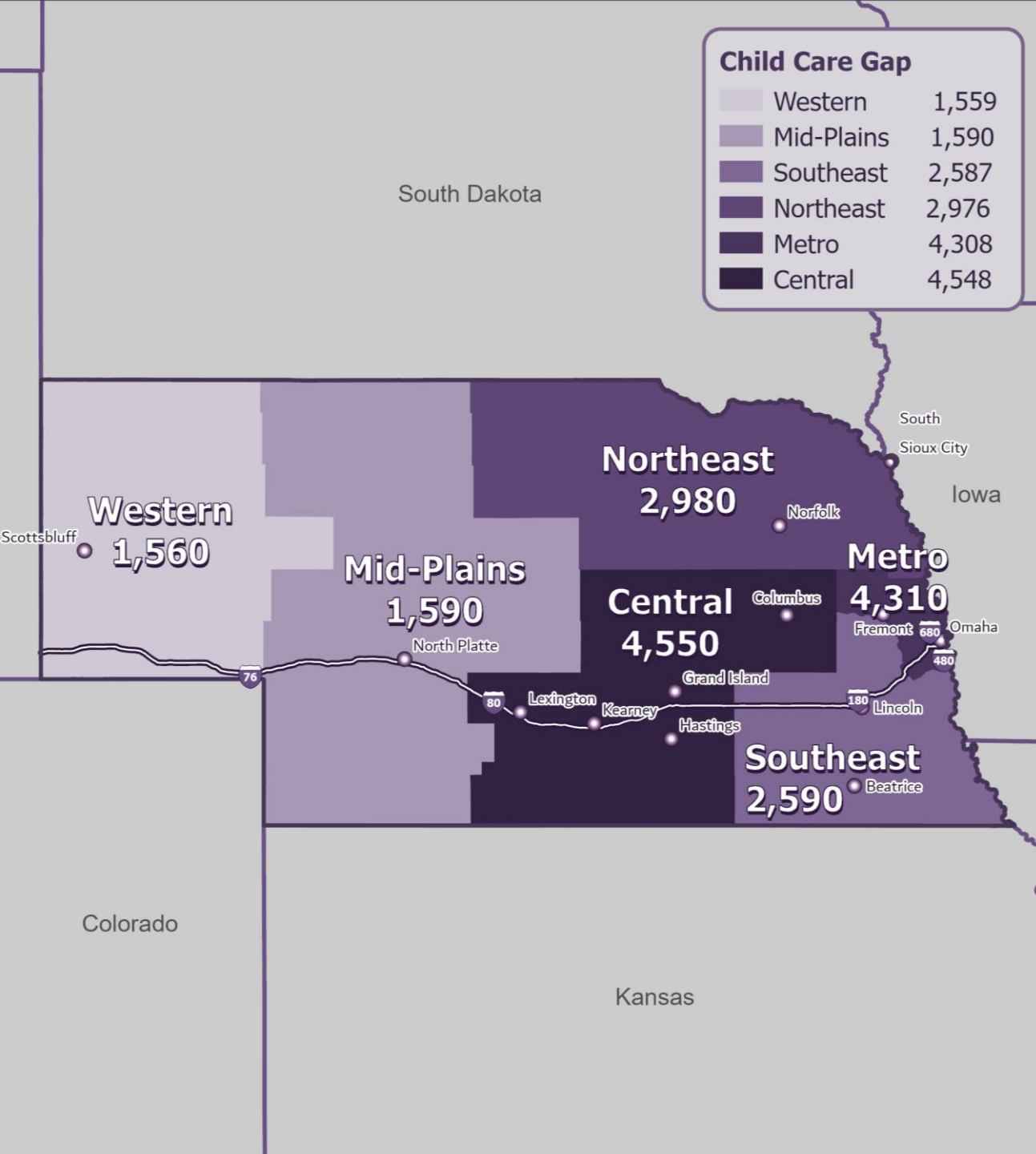
Child Care Need vs. Child Care Gap

10 Counties with the Highest Gap
Distance-Based Method

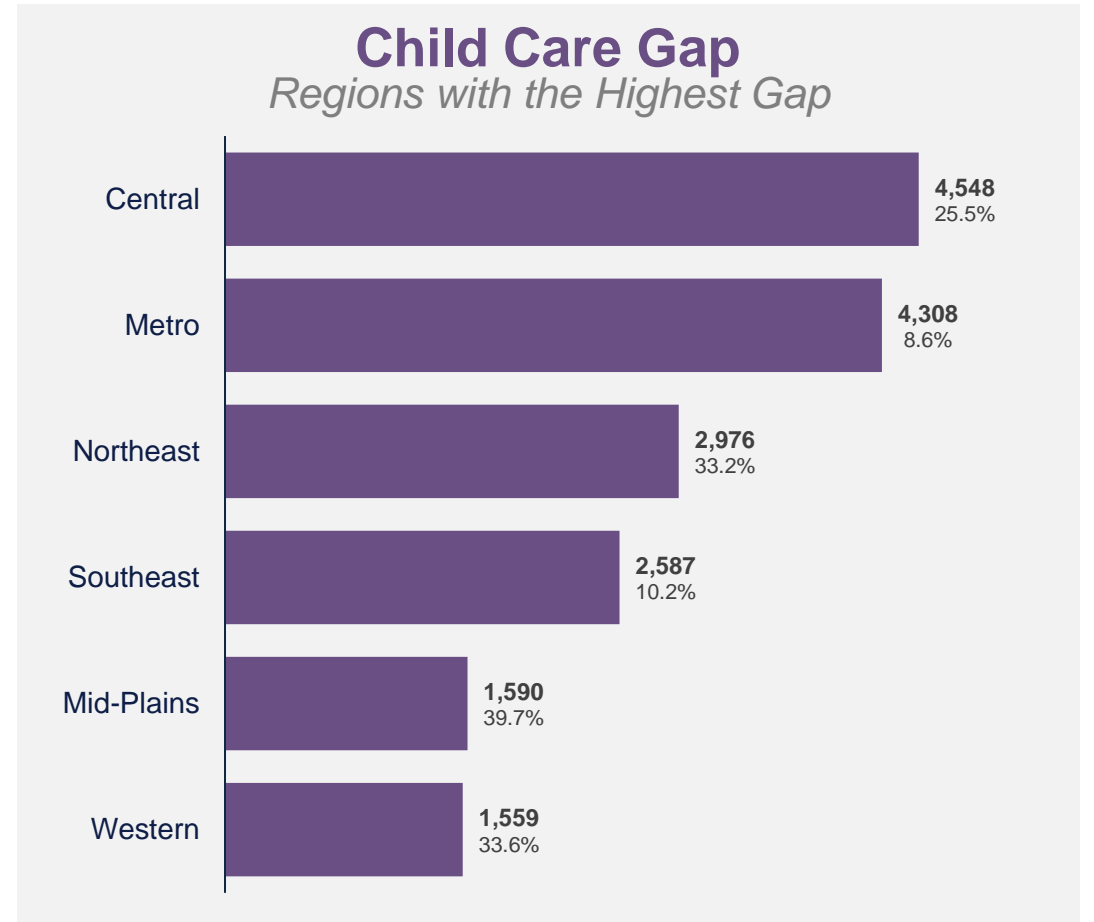


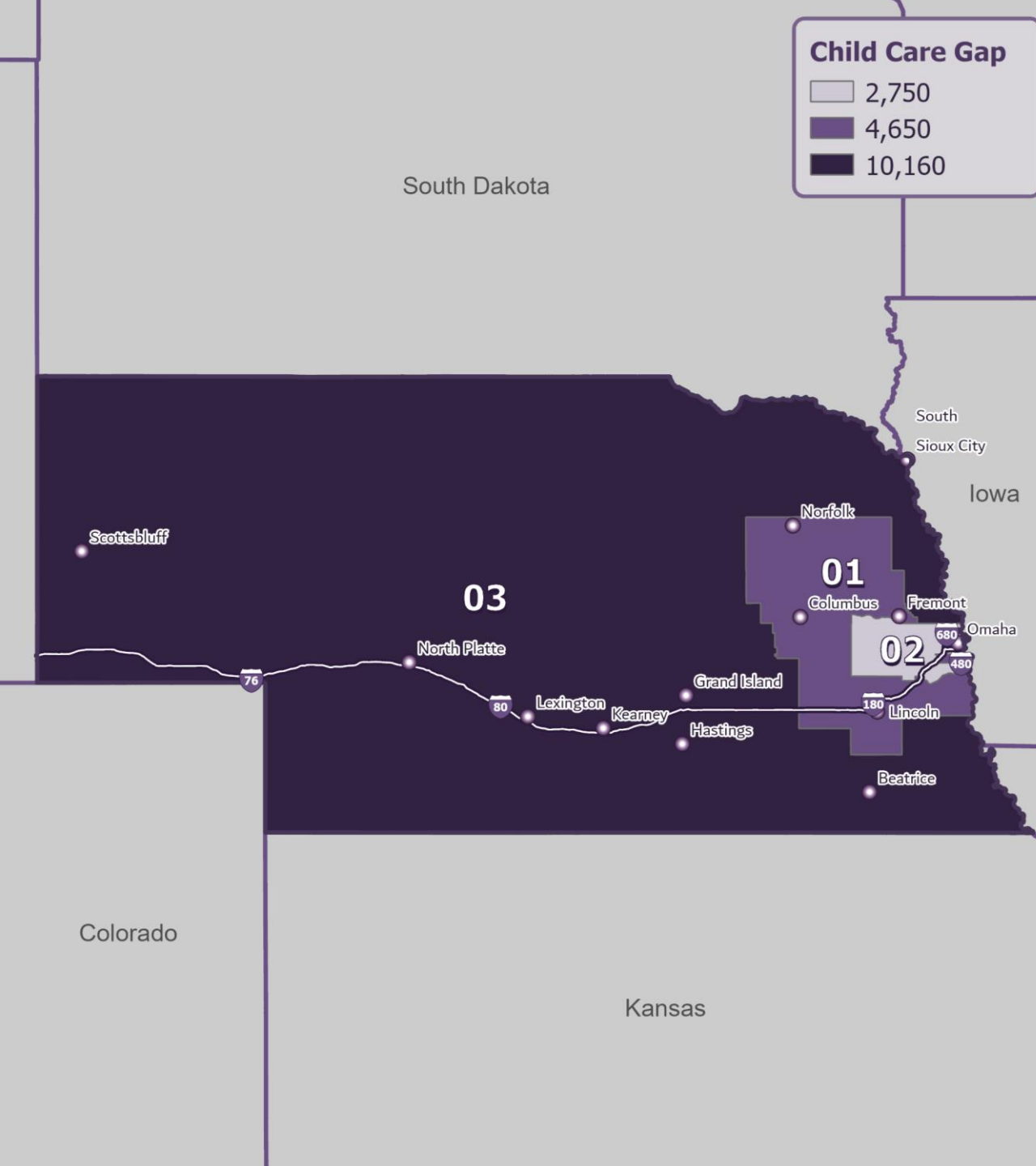
Need vs. Gap

- When the number of children who need child care exceeds capacity, there is a **gap** in child care
- *Douglas County has the highest gap in Nebraska with 35,391 children needing child care and a gap of 2,361 spaces.*

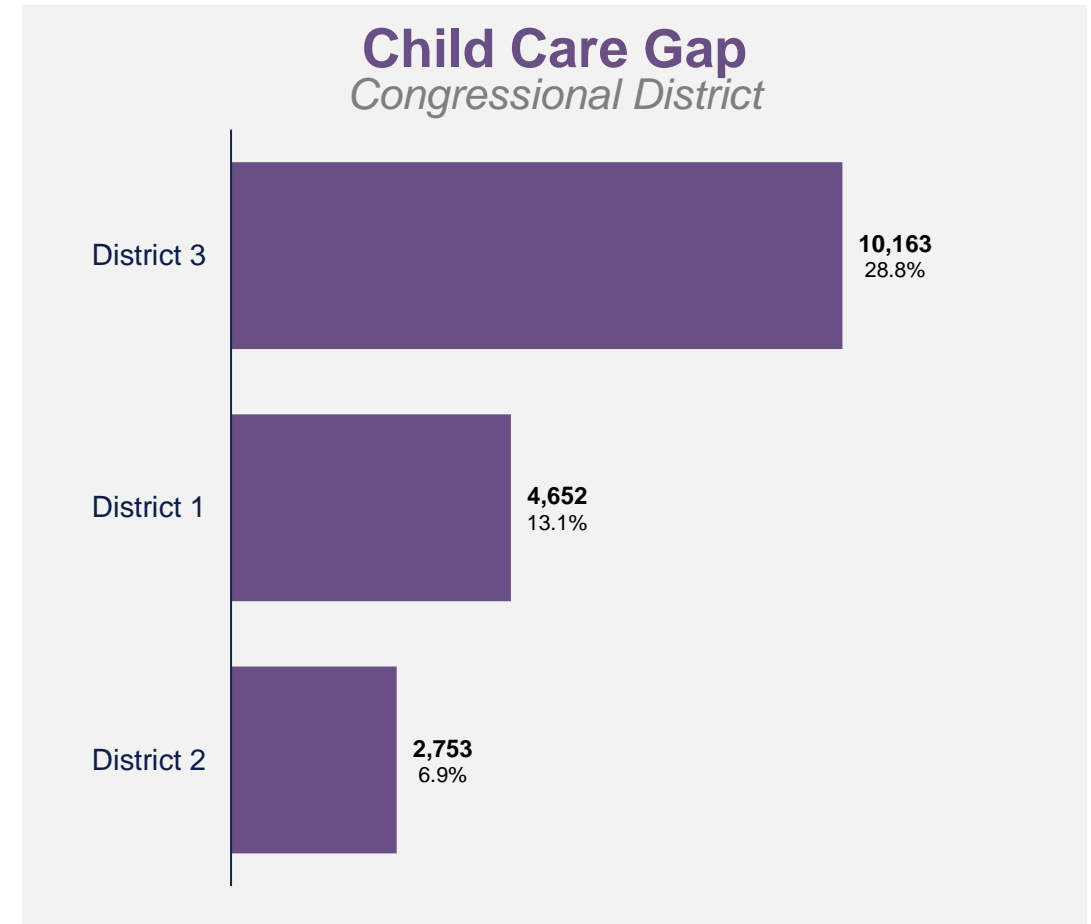


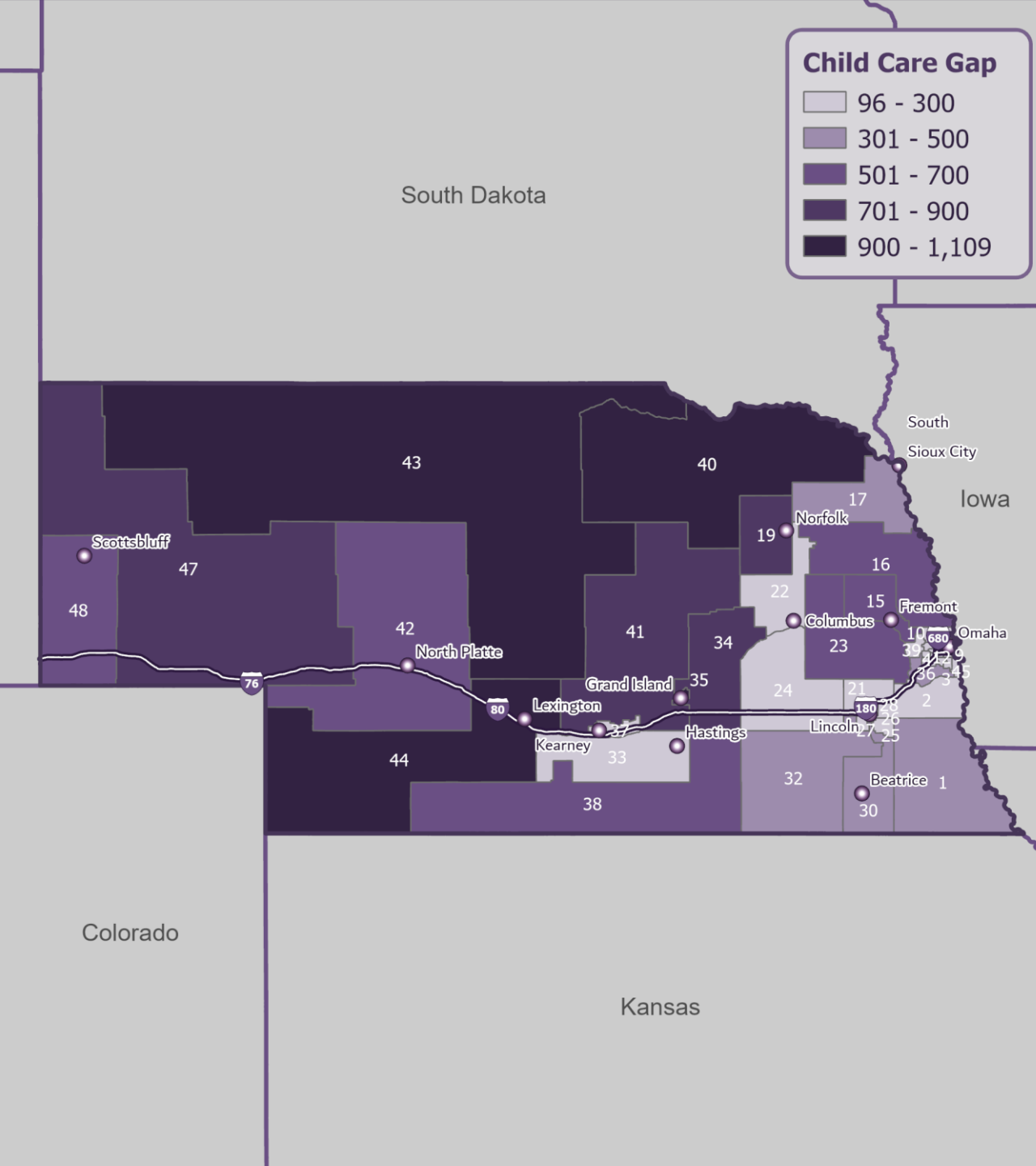
Six Regions





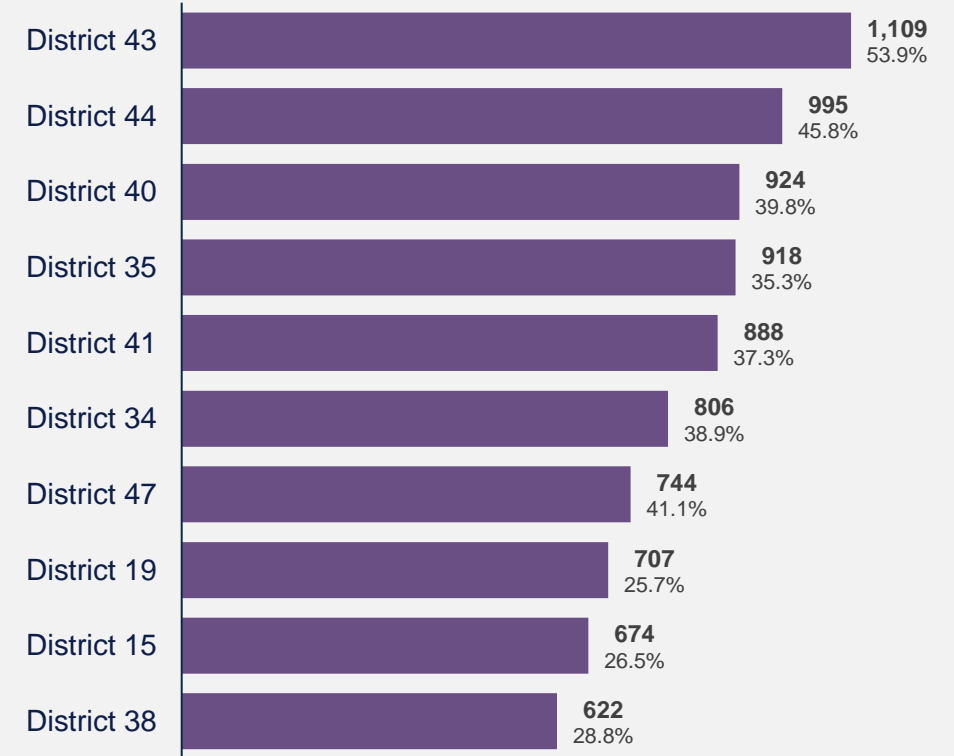
Congressional Districts

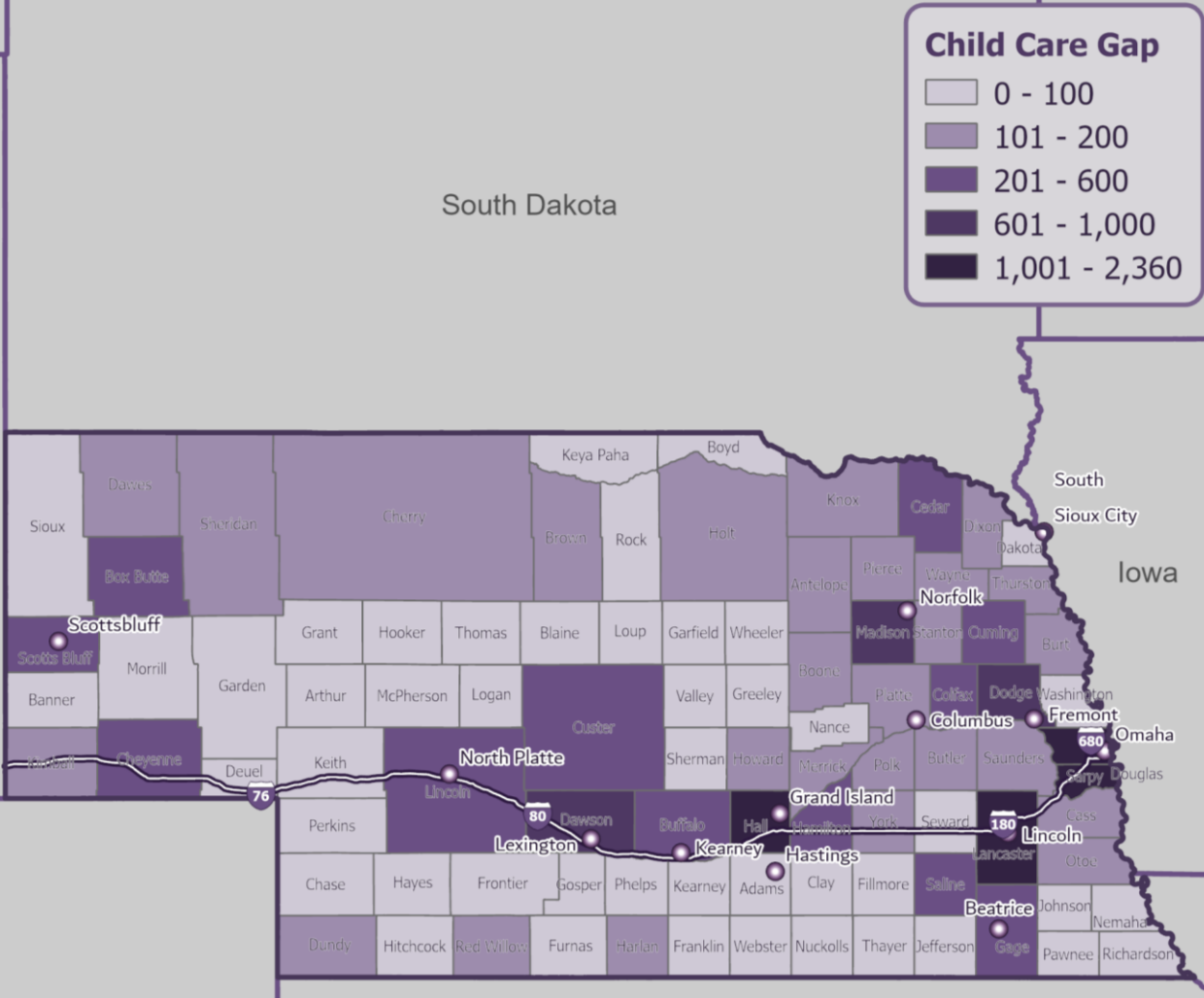




State Senate Districts

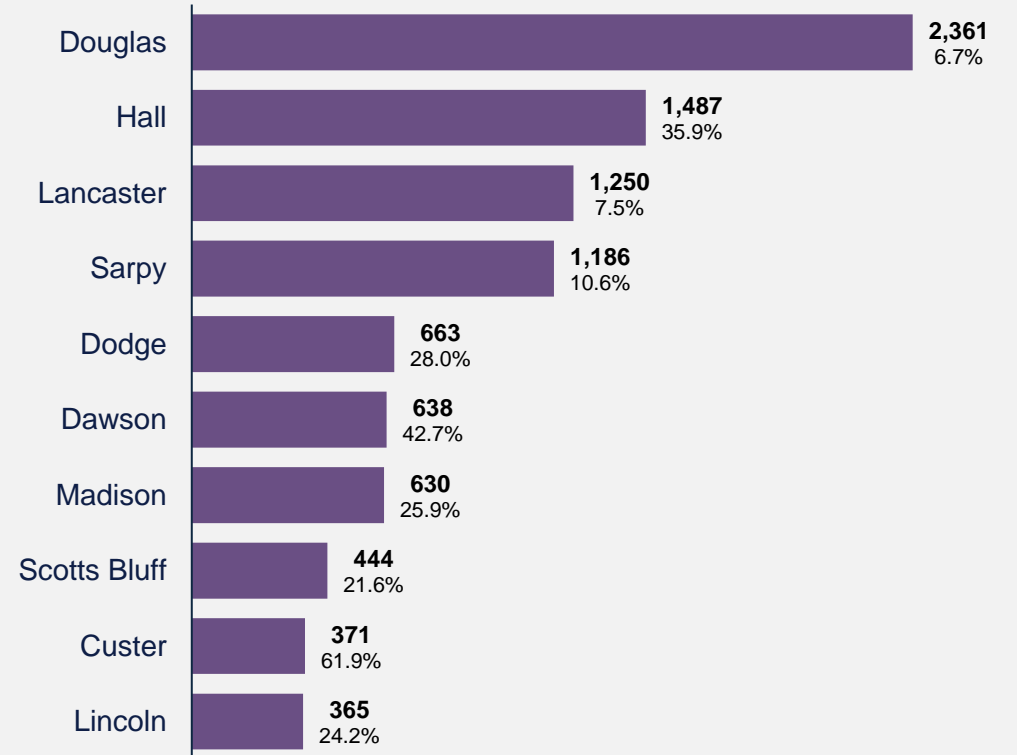
Child Care Gap State Senate Districts with the Highest Gap





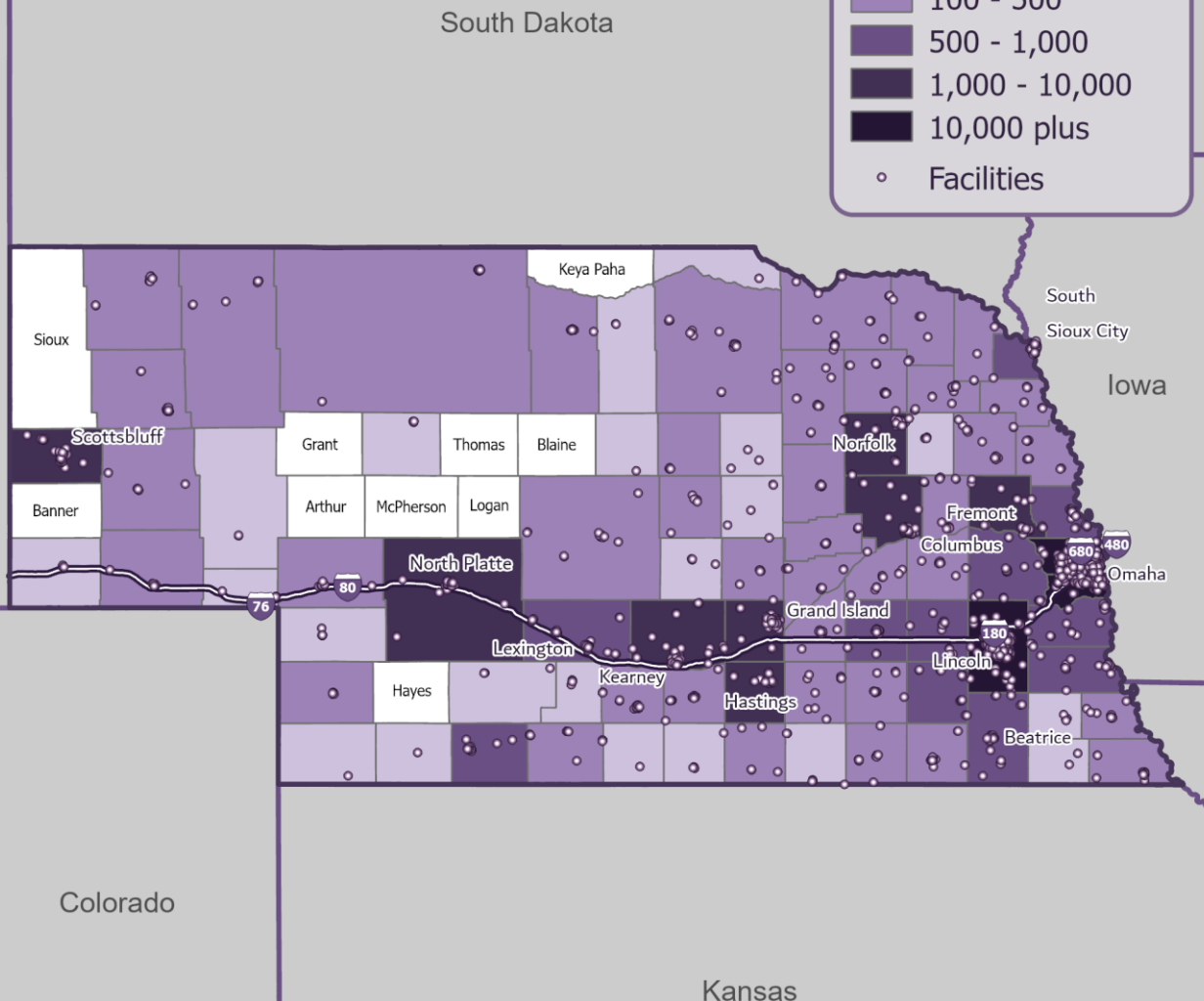
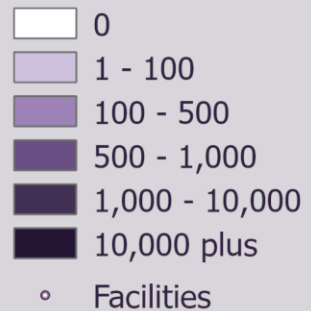
Counties

Child Care Gap
Counties with the Highest Gap

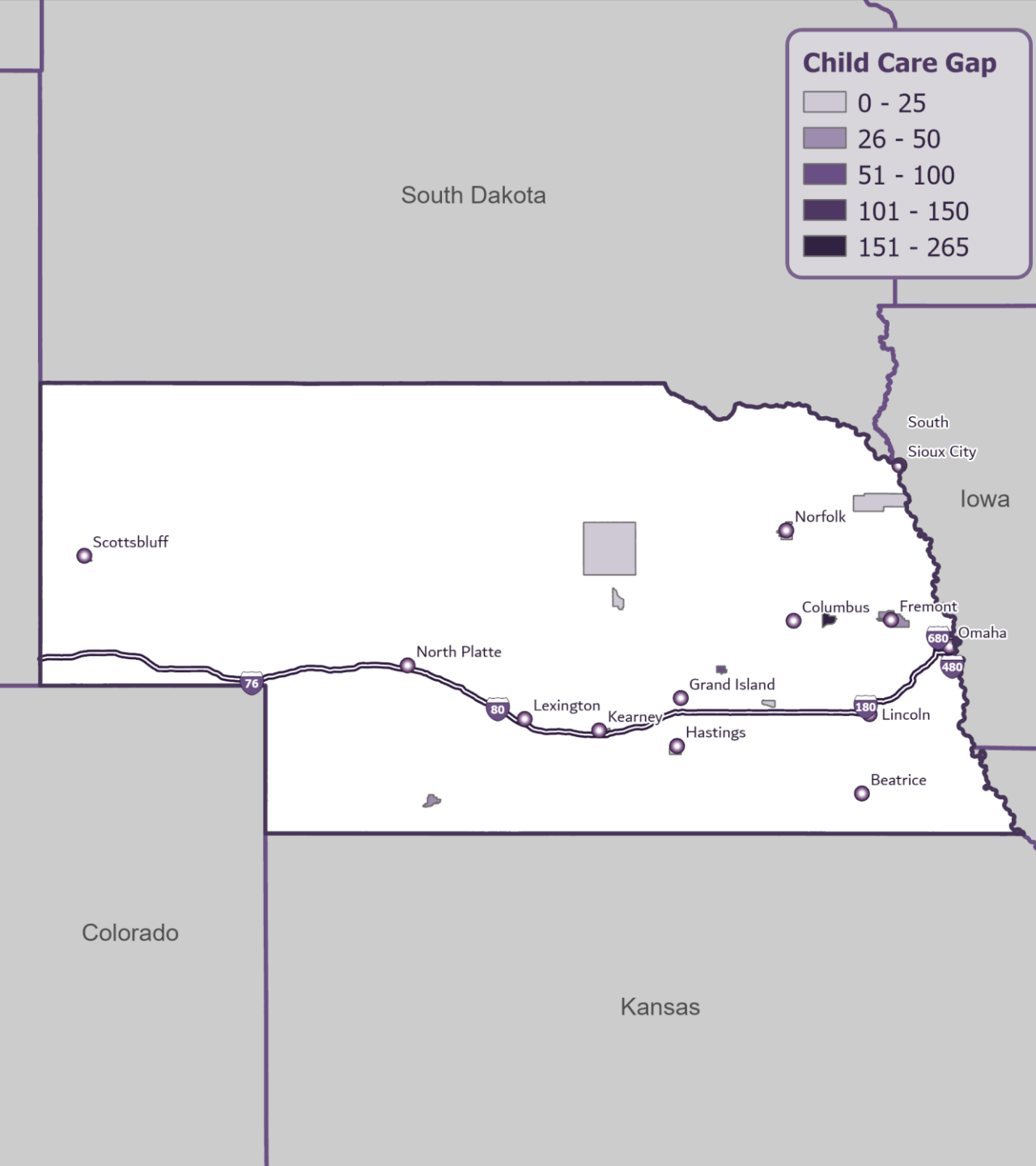


10 Counties with No Providers

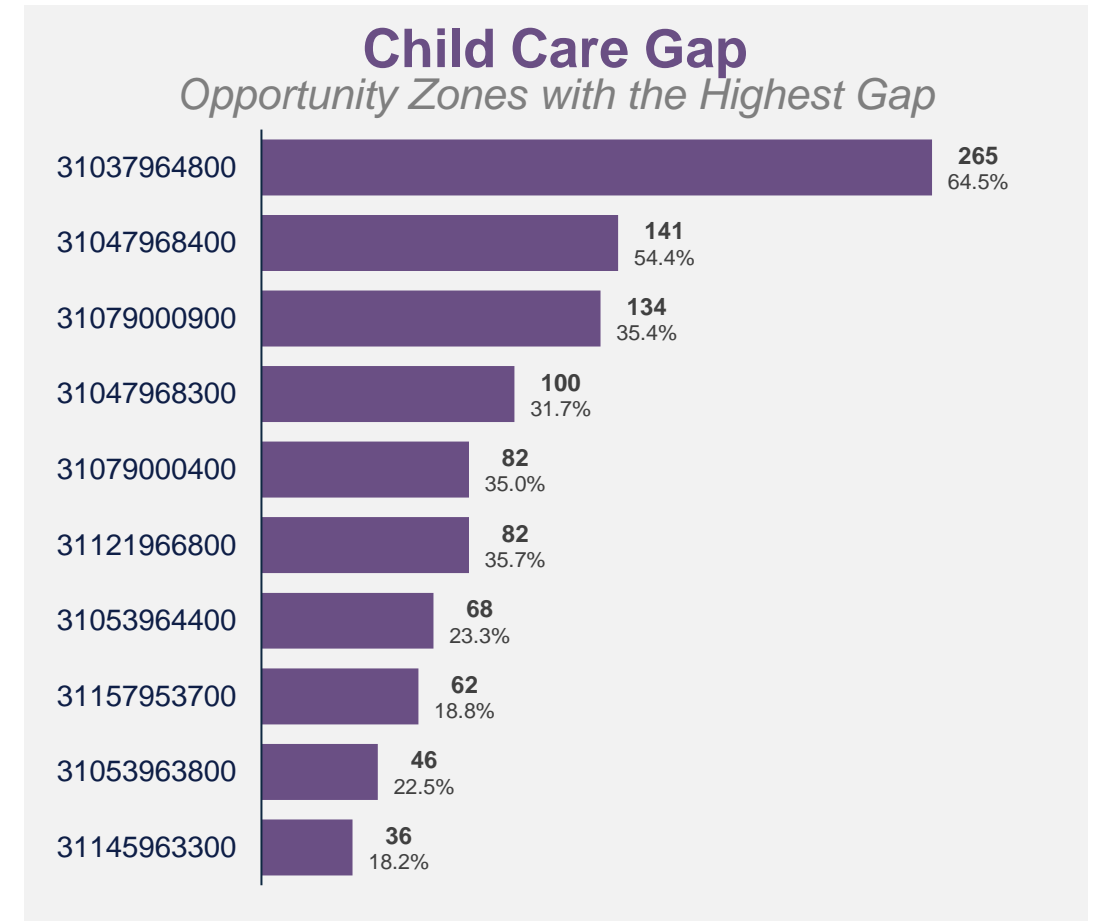
Child Care Capacity



County	Potential Need
Banner	58
Sioux	55
Hayes	46
Keya Paha	41
Logan	39
Grant	37
Arthur	29
Thomas	26
Blaine	17
McPherson	8

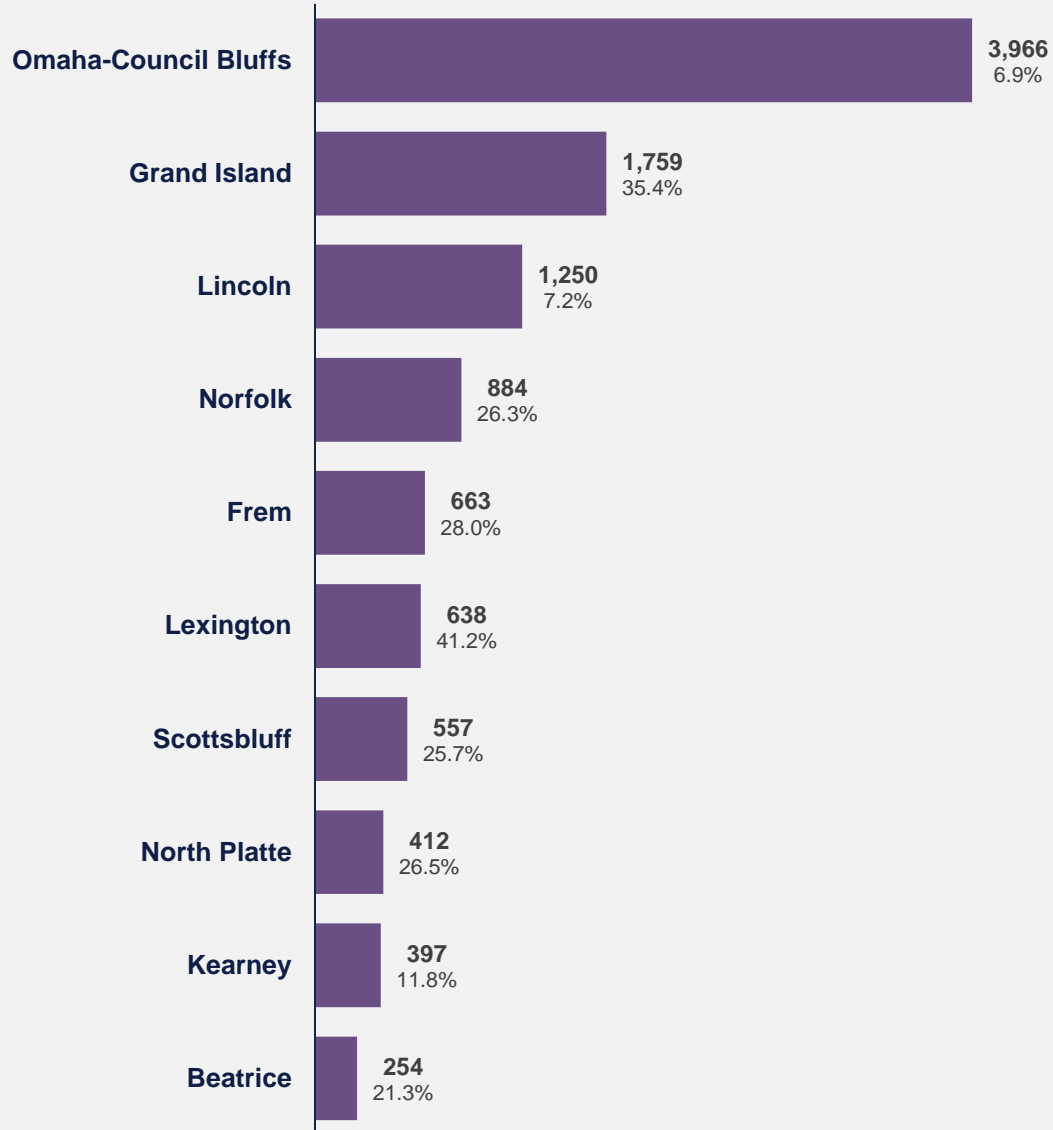


Opportunity Zones



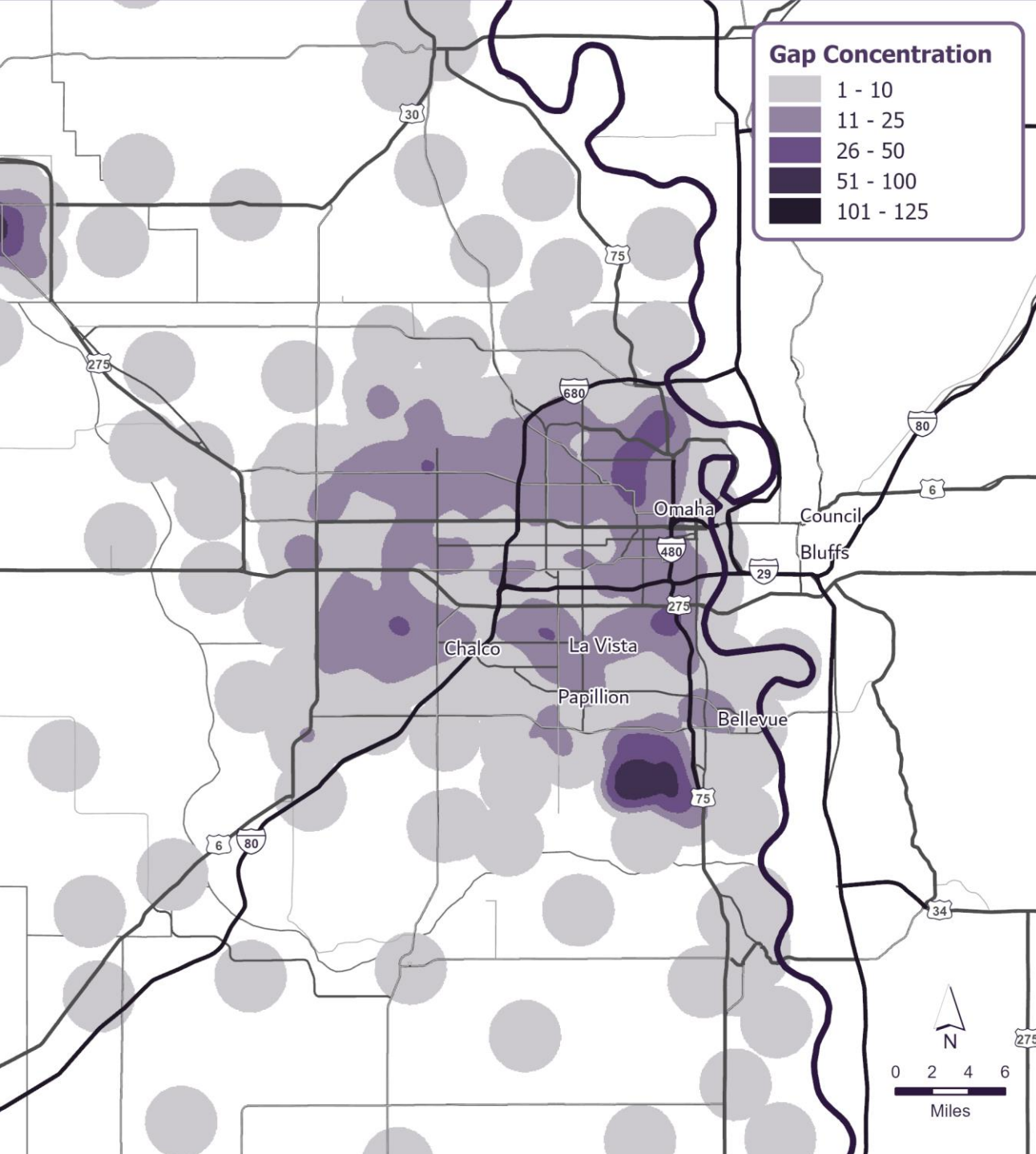
Child Care Gap

Urban Areas with the Highest Gap



Urban Areas

- Larger urban areas were also analyzed.
- Heat maps were developed for select urban areas.

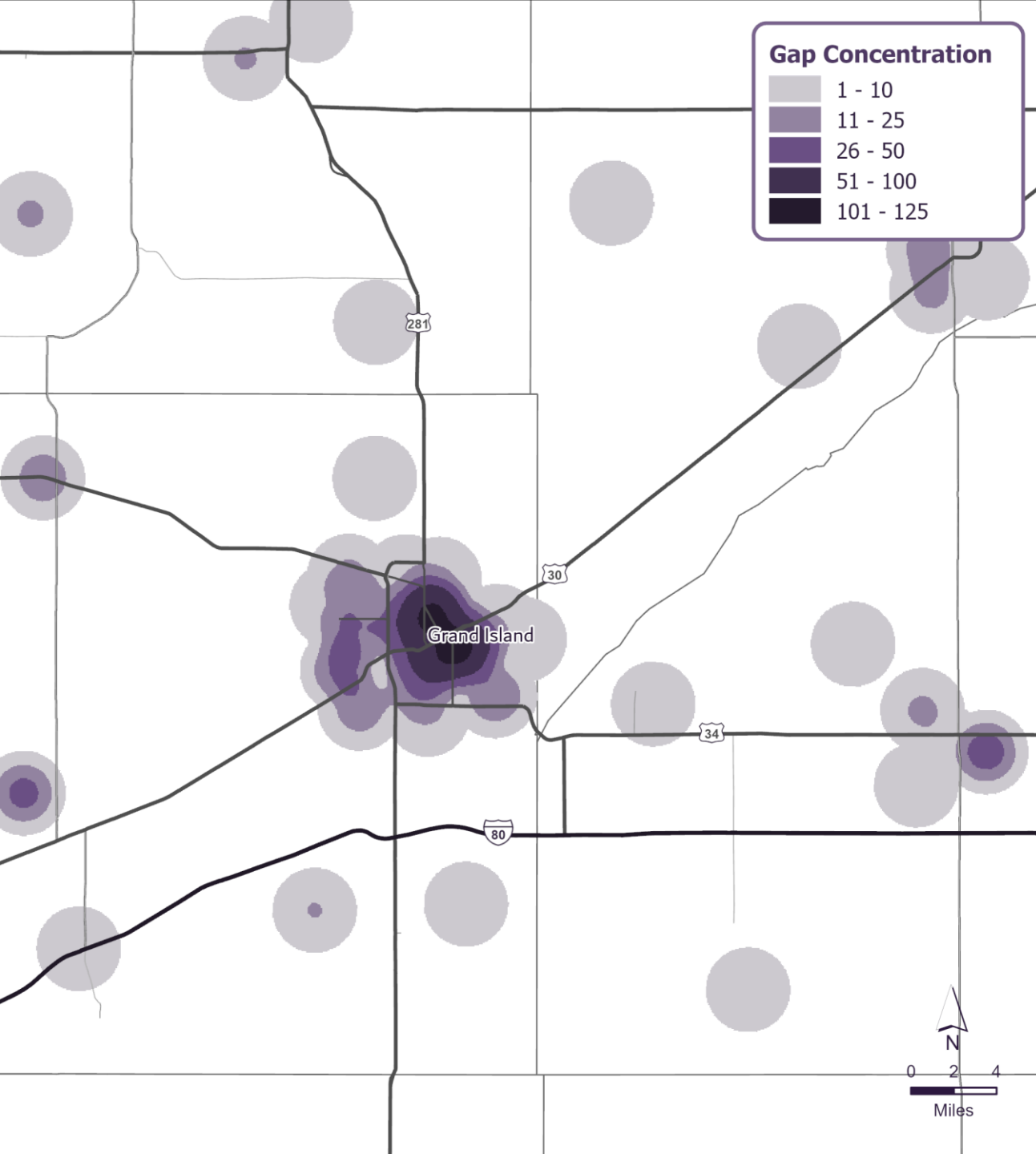


Omaha Area*

Clusters of high child care gaps are shown in dark purple.

Need	57,152
Gap	3,966 (6.9%)

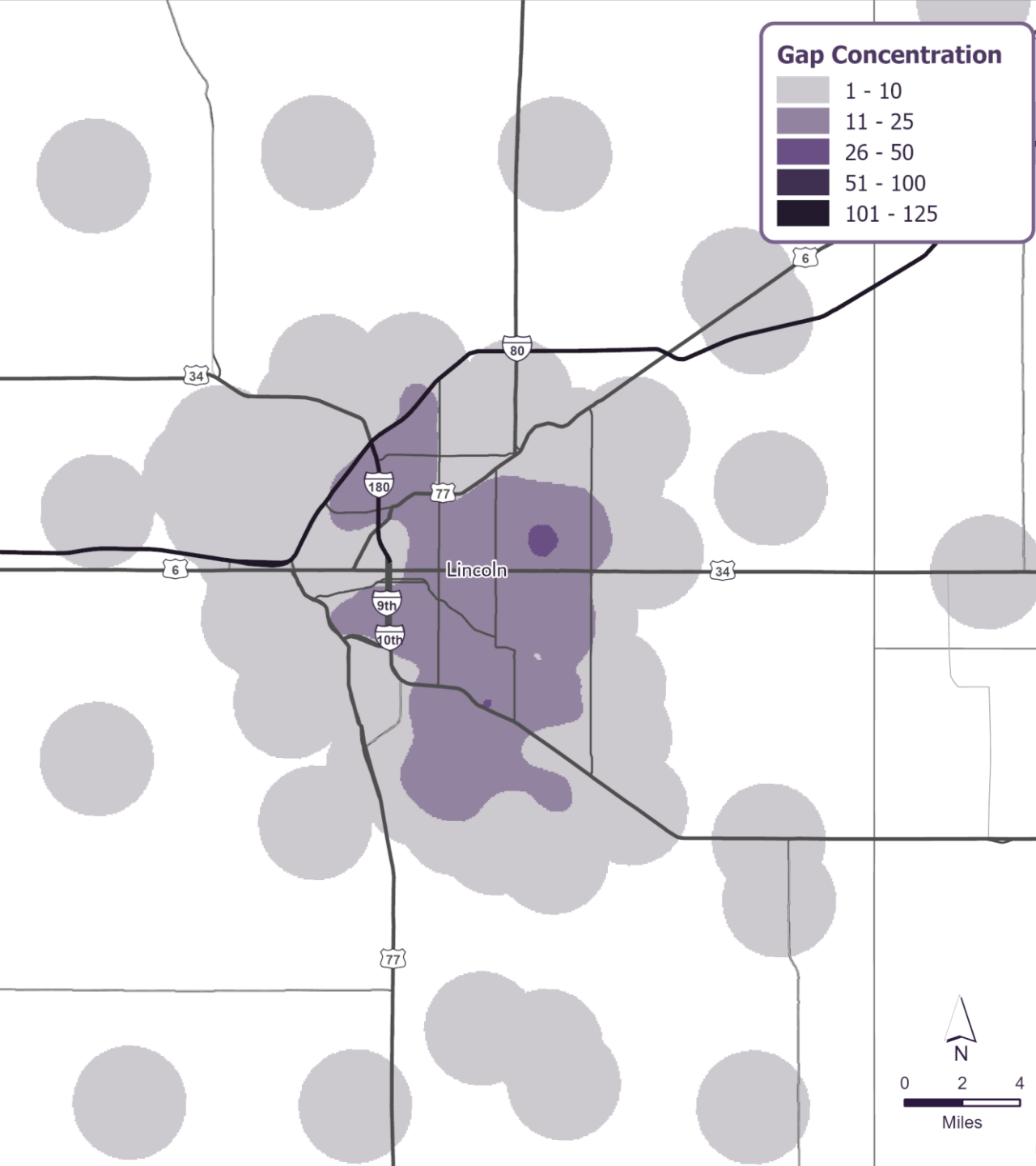
*Nebraska portion only



Grand Island Area

Clusters of high child care gaps are shown in dark purple.

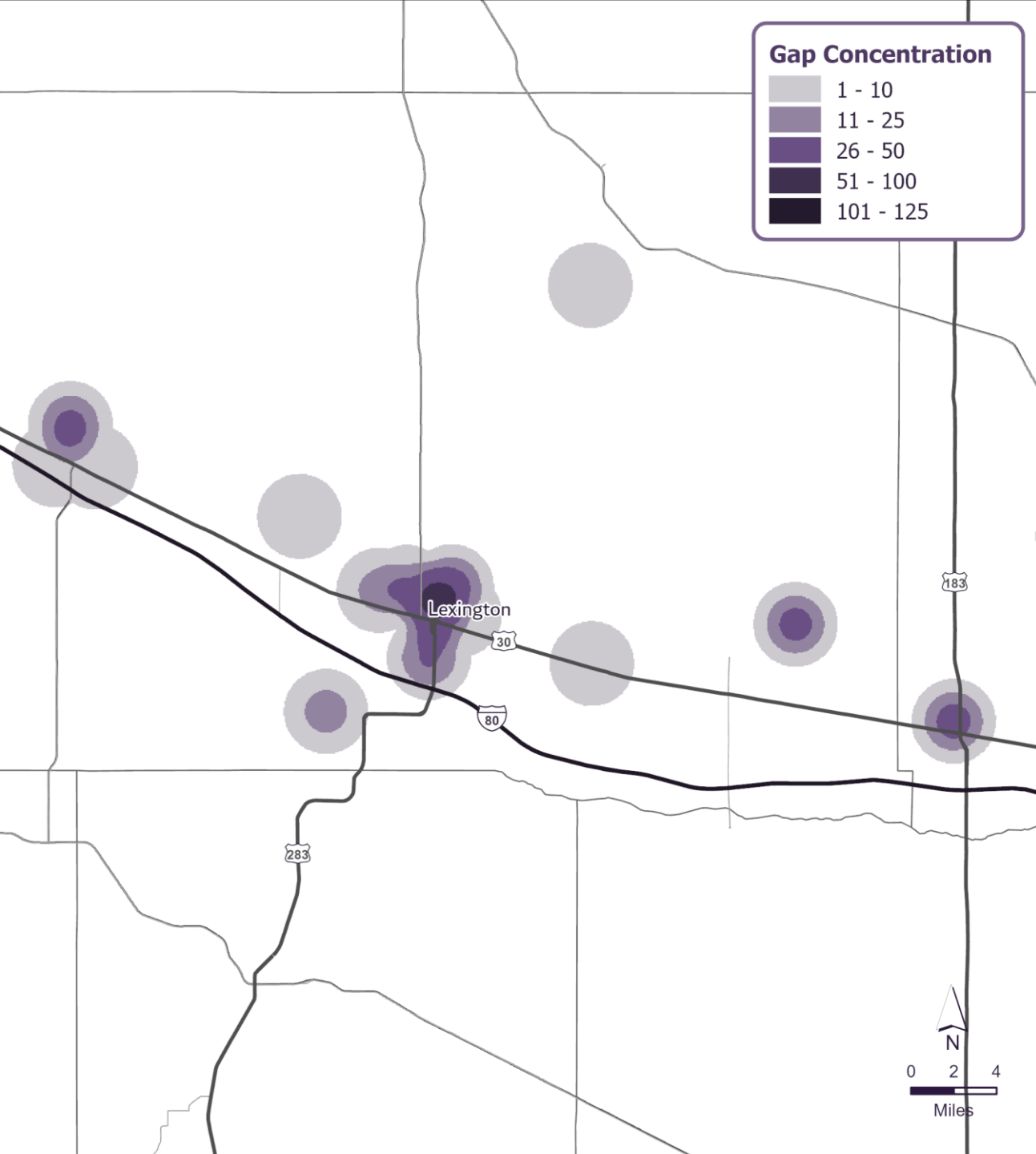
Need	4,968
Gap	1,759 (35.4%)



Lincoln Area

Clusters of high child care gaps are shown in dark purple.

Need	17,338
Gap	1,250 (7.2%)



Lexington Area

Clusters of high child care gaps are shown in dark purple.

Need	1,548
Gap	638 (41.2%)

Contact Information

Linda K. Smith

Director of Policy

linda.smith@nebraska.edu

