

Final Report on Lack of Childcare Impacts and Benefits Preferences Among Employers

Prepared for: Snohomish County, Stakeholders and Board Members

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Prepared by: Economic Alliance Snohomish County & Snohomish STEM



Executive Summary

This report summarizes the findings from a survey conducted among 50 employers in Snohomish County and the region regarding the impact of childcare on workforce recruitment and retention. The findings highlight the barriers employers face concerning childcare benefits, their perspectives on potential offerings, and their awareness of available resources and programs.

Methodology

Data was collected from a diverse range of employers through a structured questionnaire, encompassing 21 questions. The focus was on understanding employer perspectives on childcare benefits and the barriers they face in providing such support. The survey received responses from employers across various industries, including health care & social assistance (17.4%), Professional, scientific, and technical services (15.2%), Nonprofit (13.0%), and Manufacturing (10.9%).

Key Findings

Q1-Q2: Current Benefits and Offerings

- **Current Offerings:** Employers were asked about the benefits they currently provide. The responses revealed a variety of offerings, including paid time off, flexible work arrangements, and health benefits.
- **Employer Incentives:** A significant number of employers expressed that the costs associated with childcare support are prohibitive. Responses frequently cited **money**, **infrastructure**, and **time** as barriers to expanding benefit offerings.

Q3-Q6: Desired Benefits and Barriers

- **Desired Benefits:** When asked which benefits they would offer if barriers were removed, responses indicated strong interest in options such as:
 - Childcare vouchers, stipends, reimbursements
 - Employer Subsidized Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts
 - Emergency/backup childcare referrals
- **Barriers Identified:** The most common barriers cited included:
 - Lack of available childcare options in the community
 - Financial constraints
 - Lack of knowledge regarding available options
- **Unique Challenges:** Some employers highlighted unique challenges, such as operating in low-income areas with few childcare resources, which further complicate their ability to support employees.

Q7-Q10: Awareness of Resources

- **Awareness of Programs:** Questions regarding familiarity with the "Family-Friendly Workplaces Washington" and the "Center for Retention & Expansion of Childcare" revealed a general lack of awareness among employers. A majority responded negatively, indicating potential areas for outreach and education.

Q11-Q14: Interest in Participation

- **Interest in Employer Cohort Programs:** Employers expressed a mixed interest in participating in no-cost cohort training programs aimed at enhancing workforce solutions. Many indicated a willingness to engage if barriers were addressed, with a substantial number responding "maybe."

Q15-Q21: Future Engagement and Meetings

- **Interest in Meetings:** A number of employers expressed interest in scheduling meetings to discuss childcare solutions. However, the responses were varied, with many opting not to engage further, highlighting the need for tailored communication and support strategies.

Conclusion

The data indicates that while there is a recognition of the importance of childcare support in enhancing employee retention and recruitment, significant barriers remain. Employers are open to exploring solutions but require more information, support, and resources to implement effective childcare benefits.

Recommendations

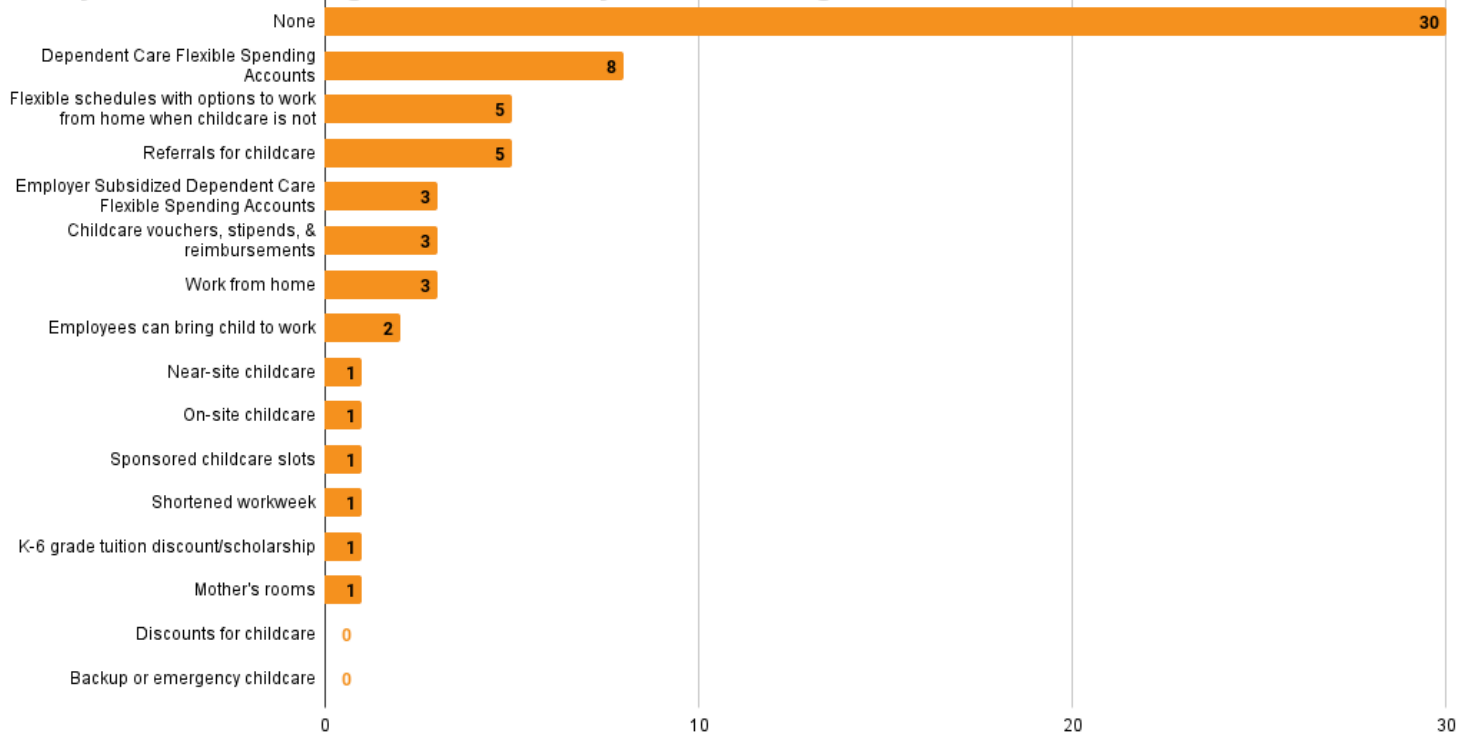
1. **Increase Awareness:** Develop targeted outreach strategies to inform employers about available programs and resources to support childcare solutions.
2. **Supportive Policies:** Advocate for local and state policies that prioritize childcare support, particularly in underserved areas.
3. **Tailored Programs:** Create customized cohort training programs that address the unique needs of employers in different sectors.

Appendices

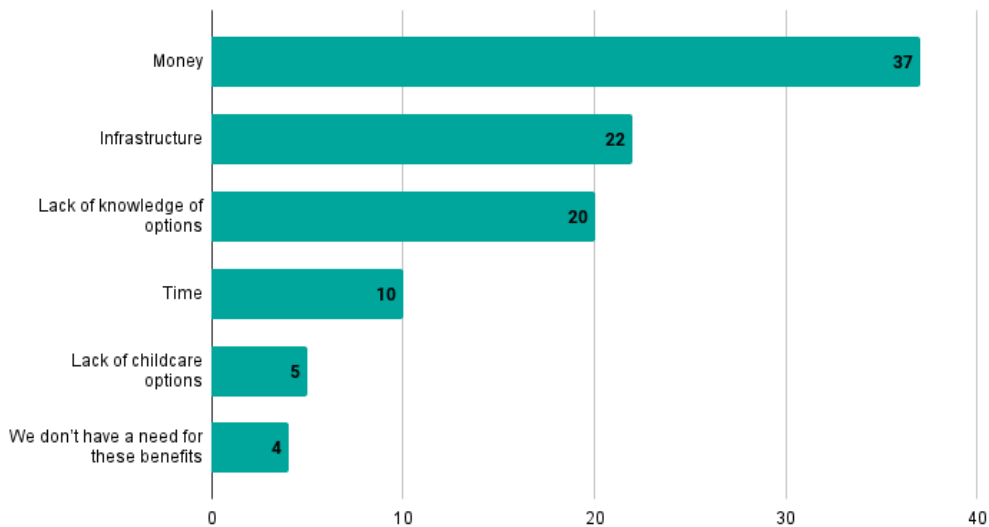
- **Appendix A:** Details of Employer Barriers
- **Appendix B:** Details of Resources and Programs Available for Employers

Appendix A: Details of Employer Barriers

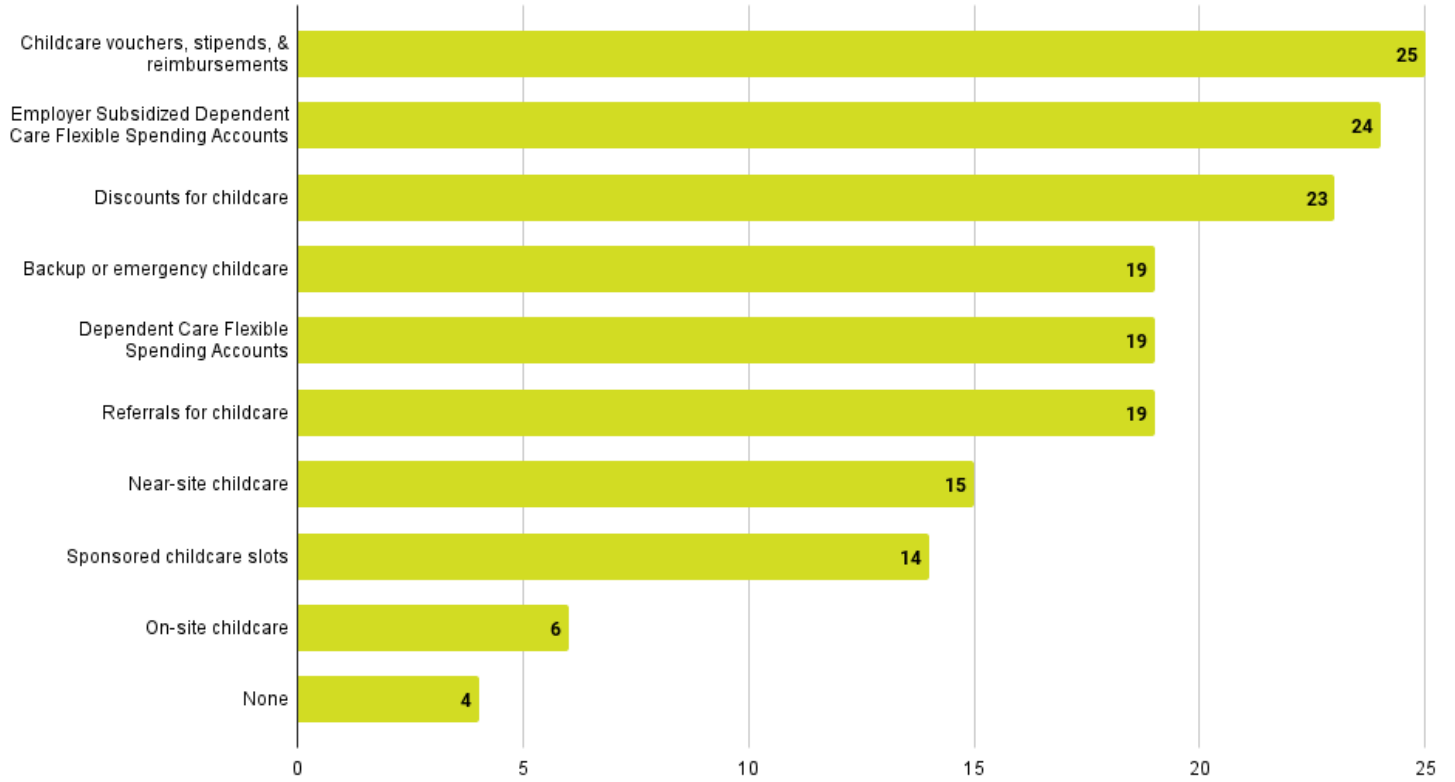
Does your business or organization offer any of the following childcare benefits:



What are barriers preventing you from offering childcare benefits?

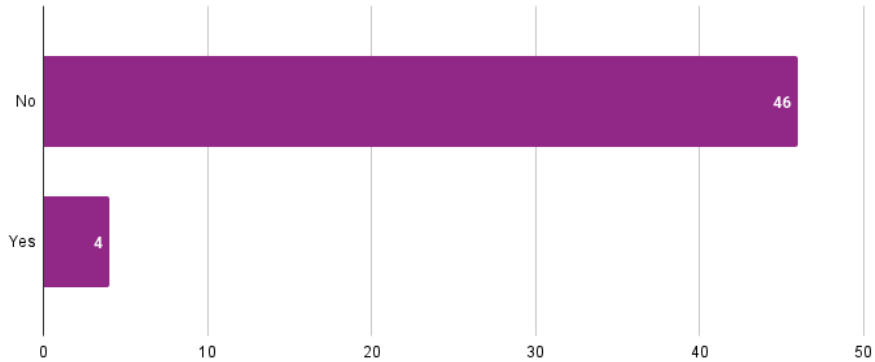


What benefits would you like to offer if these barriers were removed?

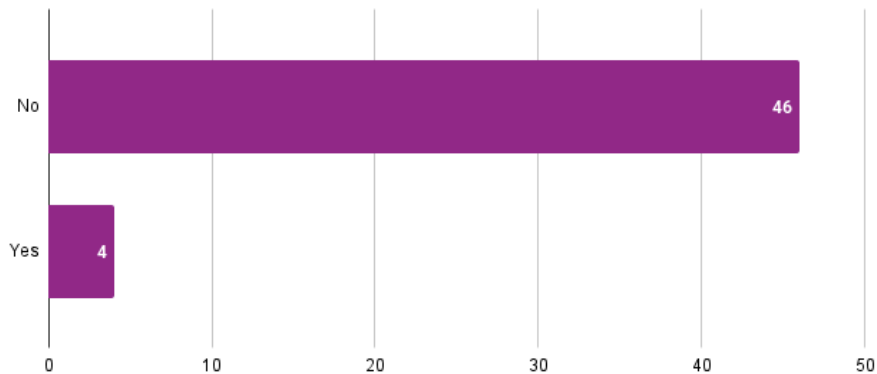


Appendix B: Details of Resources and Programs Available for Employers

Have you heard about "Family-Friendly Workplaces Washington - Washington State Department of Commerce"?



Have you heard about the Center for Retention & Expansion of Childcare, which helps businesses address workforce challenges caused by childcare?



Would your business be interested in participating in a no-cost employer cohort training program for customized technical assistance?

