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Child Care Gap Assessment: Maine

JANUARY 2023

Overview: Child Care Gap 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.
- BPC is working with 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 early care and education programs. 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) 2017-2021 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 does not include cross-state interactions. Effective gap calculations for populations resident across state borders will need to be recalculated once the complete US dataset is compiled.

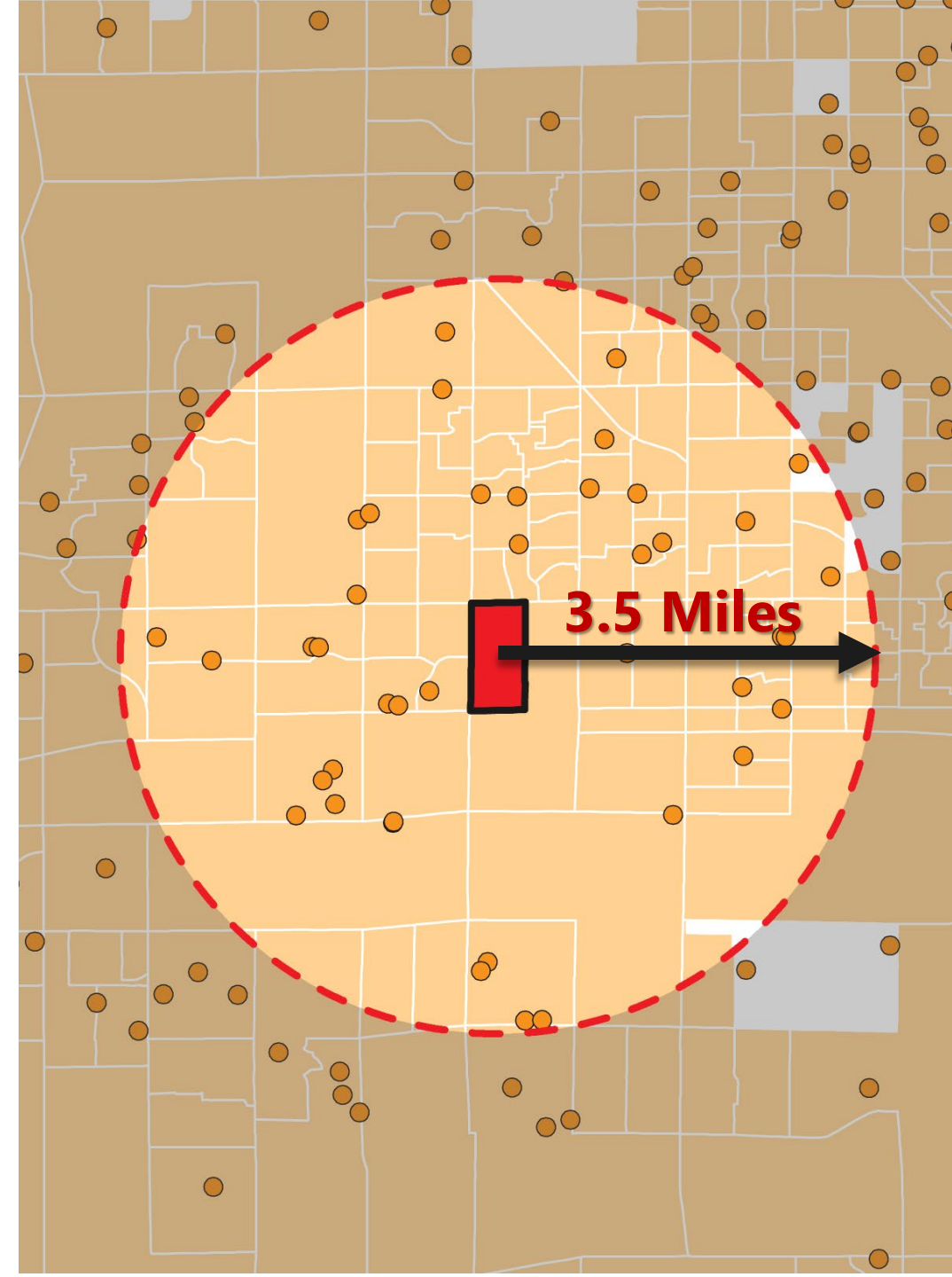


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Method

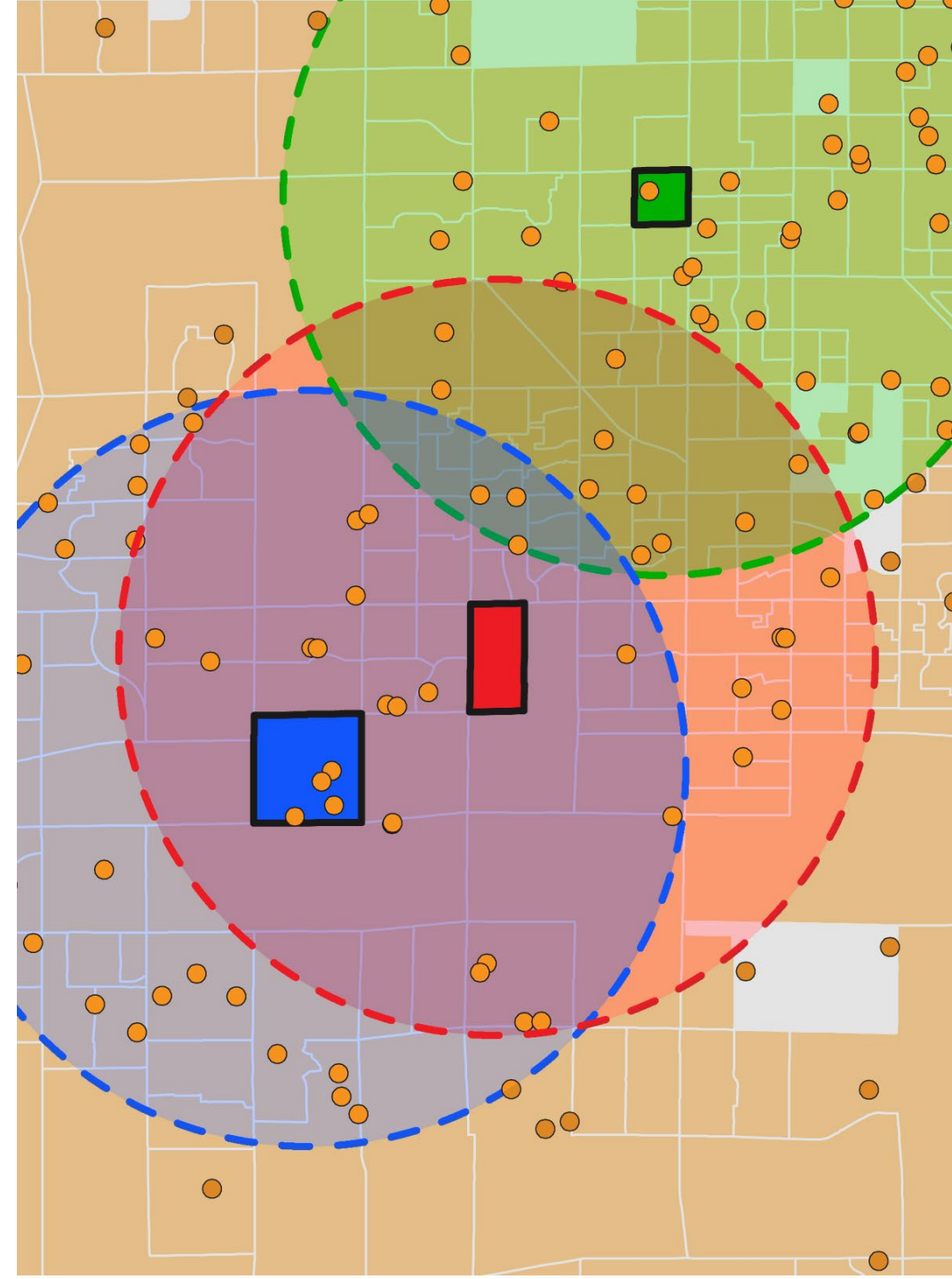
Distance-Based Method

- Block groups are assigned a service area:
 - 3.5 miles from the block group center for urban and 7.5 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 is 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.



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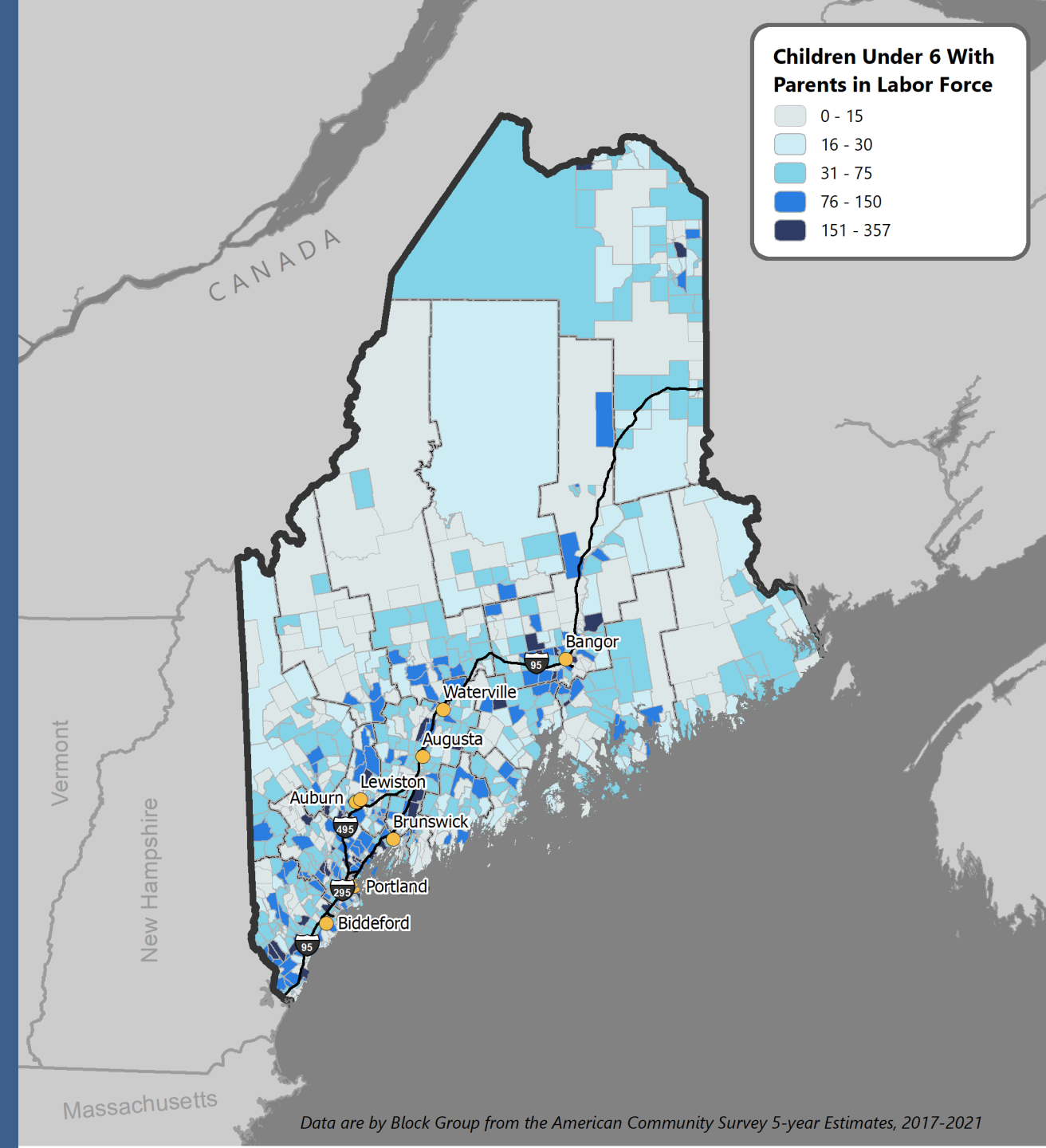
Gaps Analysis

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

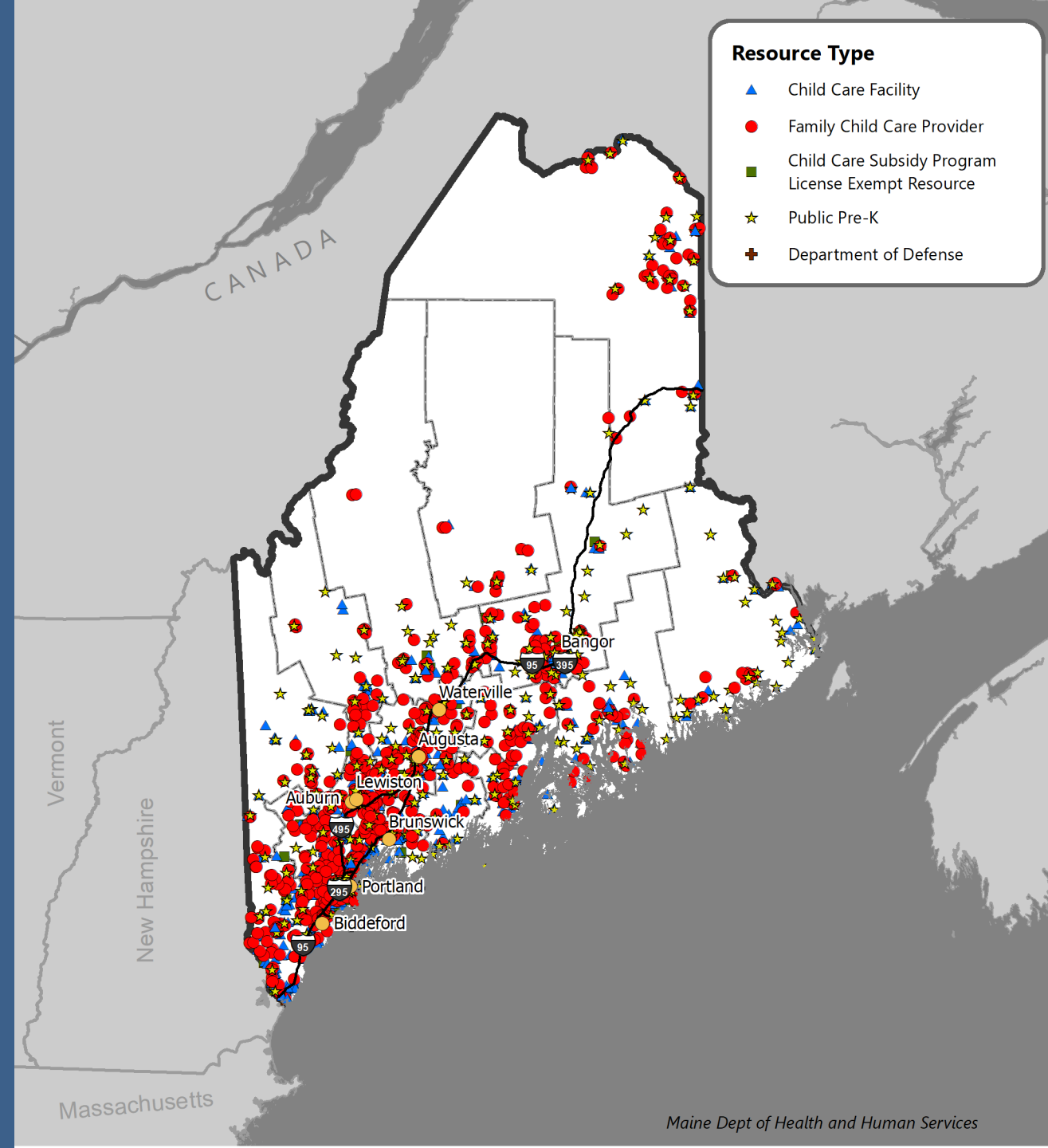
- **Potential need: 52,138**
- **2.2% Decrease since 2020 (primarily in Urban Areas)**



Maine Child Care Providers

Facility Type	Count	Capacity
Child Care Subsidy Program License Exempt Resource	85	114
Child Care Facility	789	39,503
Family Child Care Provider	714	7,948
Public Pre-K	254	8,143
Department of Defense	1	135
TOTAL	1,843	55,843

Facility Capacity increased by 5,501 (10.9%) while Facility Count decreased by 280



Total Gap: 3,251

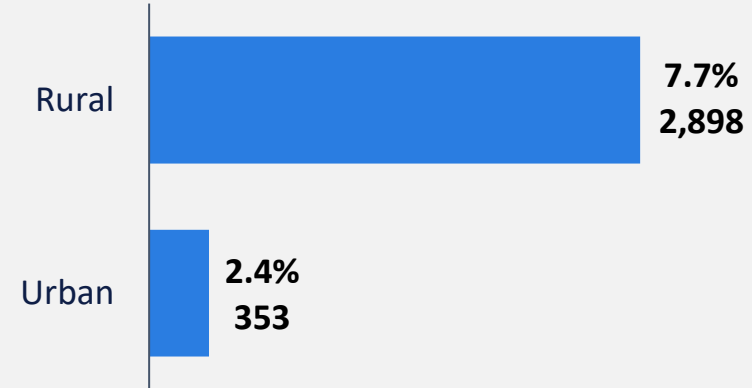
Children needing child care are matched to facilities within a specified distance from the block group they live in:

- 3.5 miles in urban areas
- 7.5 miles in rural areas
- Distance unchanged since 2020

34% Decline in Gap since 2020

Child Care Gap

Distance-Based Method

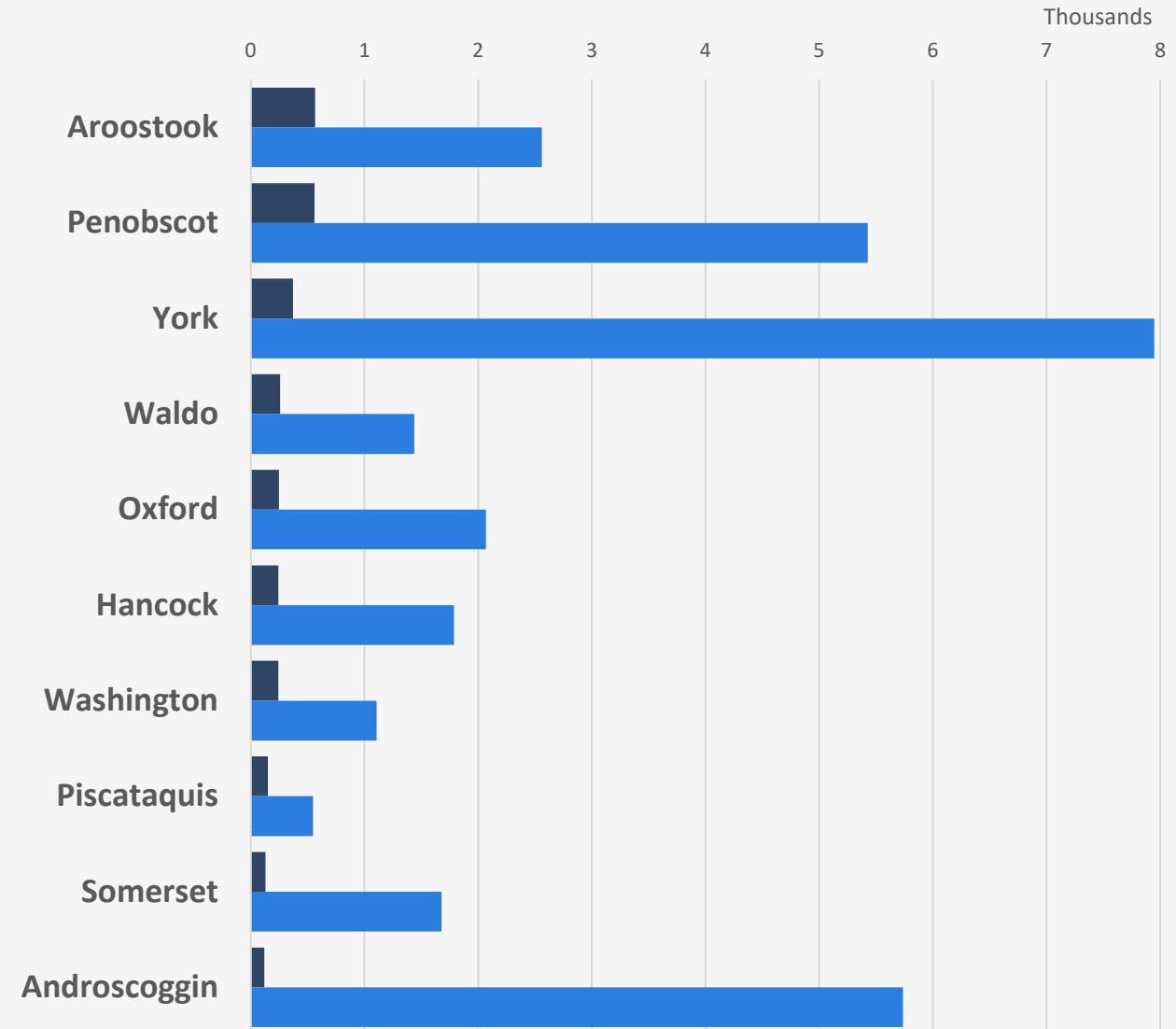


Potential Need vs. Gap

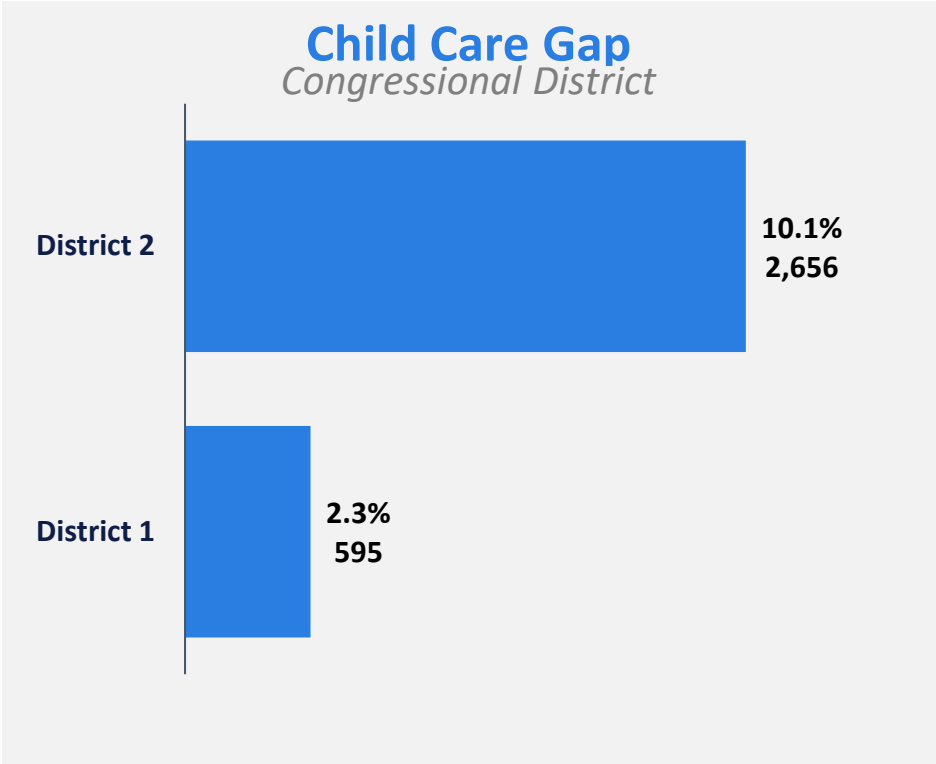
- When the number of children who need child care exceeds capacity, there is a **gap** in child care
- The light blue bars are the number of children under 6 needing child care and the dark blue shows the gap
- *Aroostook County has the highest gap in Maine with 2,561 children needing child care and a gap of 565 spaces.*

Child Care Need vs. Child Care Gap

10 Counties with the Highest Gap
Distance-Based Method



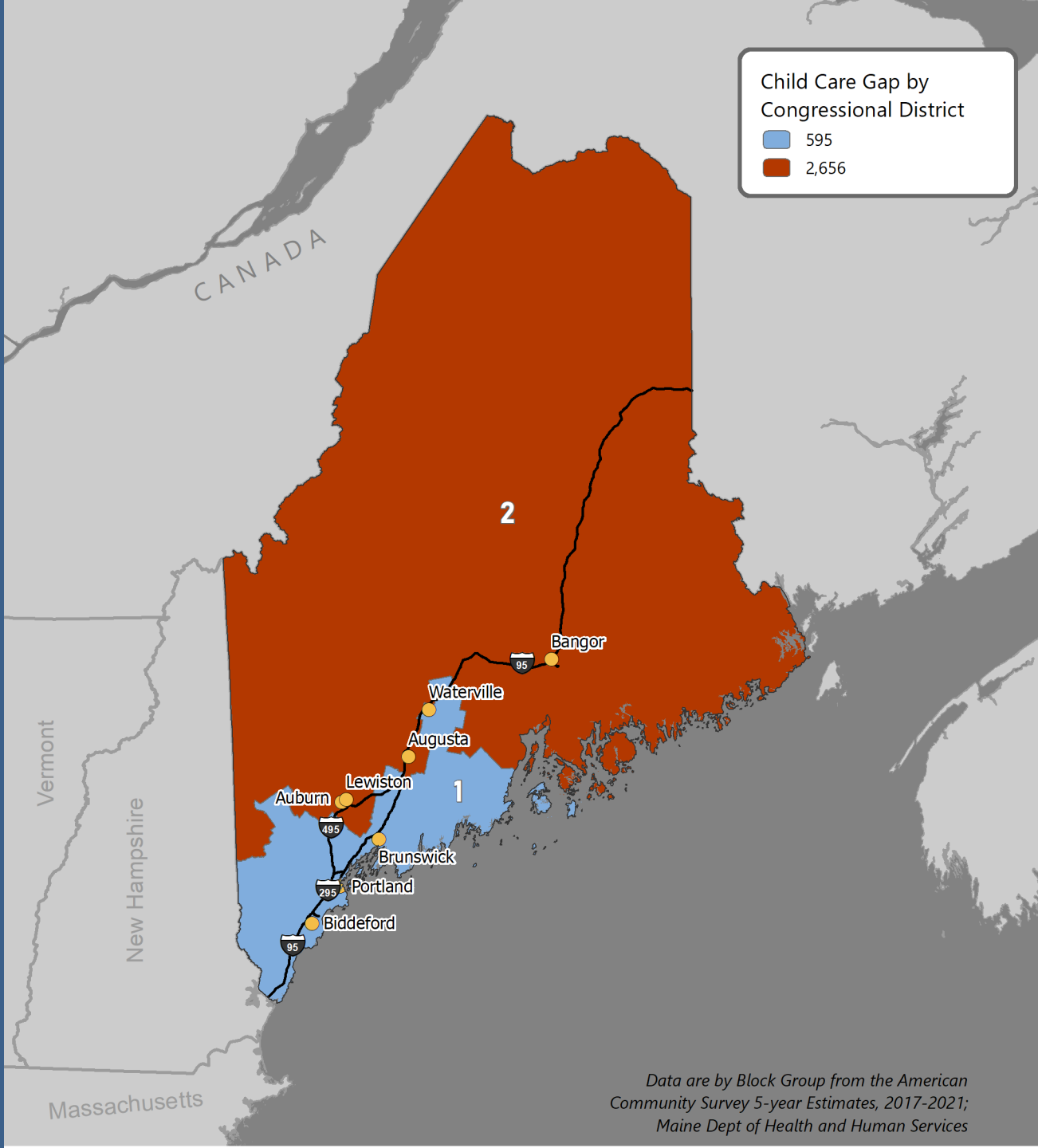
Congressional Districts



Note: Based on custom aggregation to 2021 boundaries

District 1: 38.2% decline since 2020

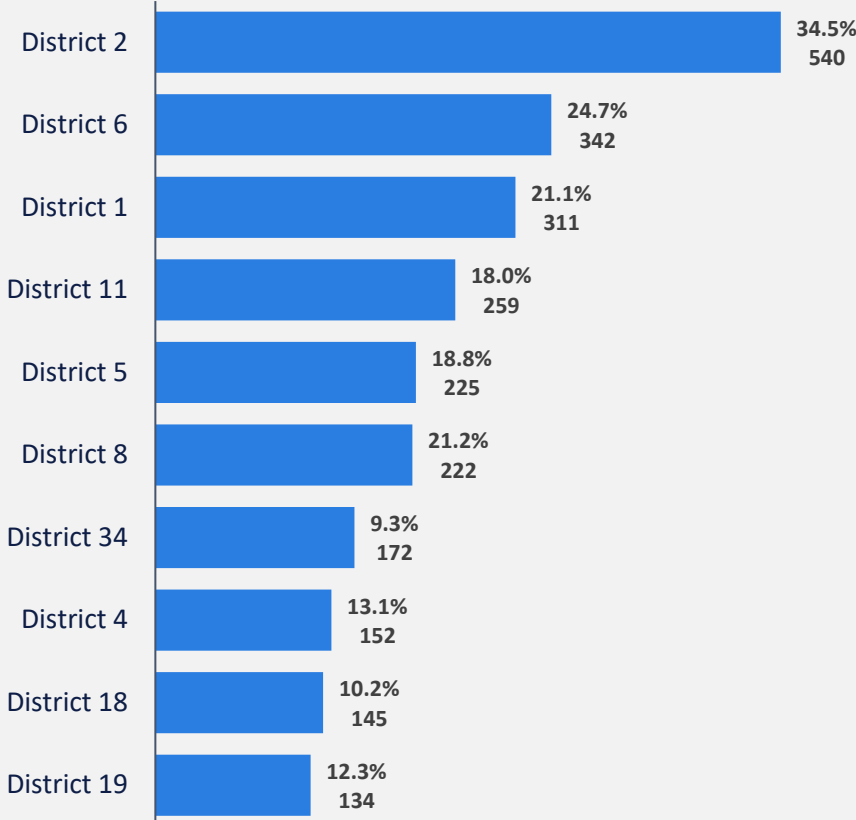
District 2: 32.9% decline since 2020



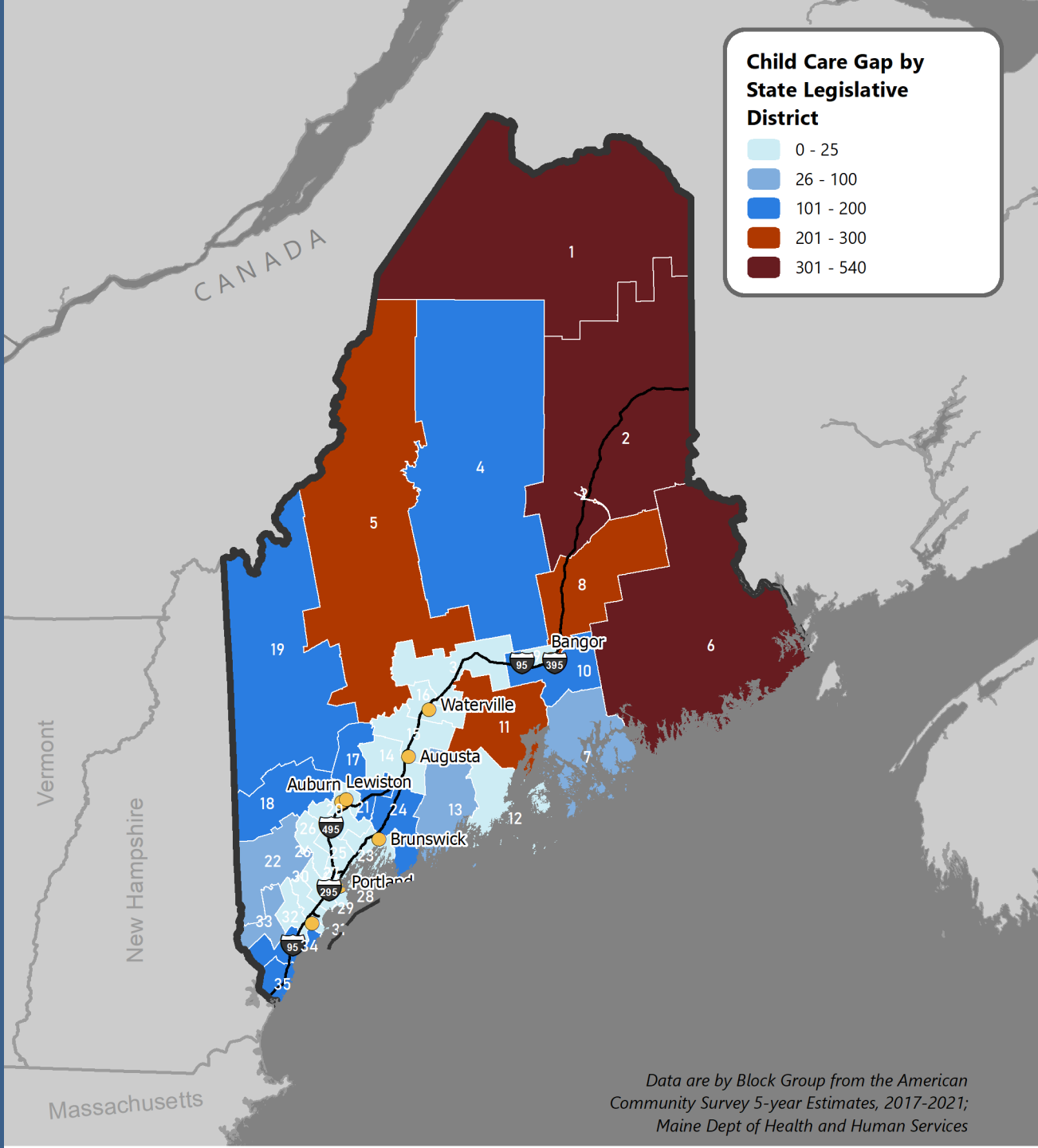
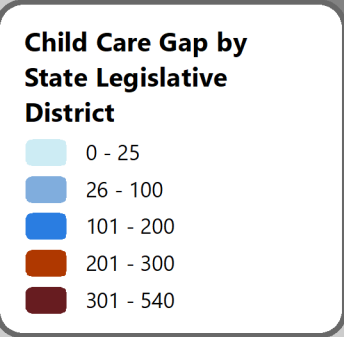
State Senate Districts

Child Care Gap

State Senate Districts with the Highest Gap



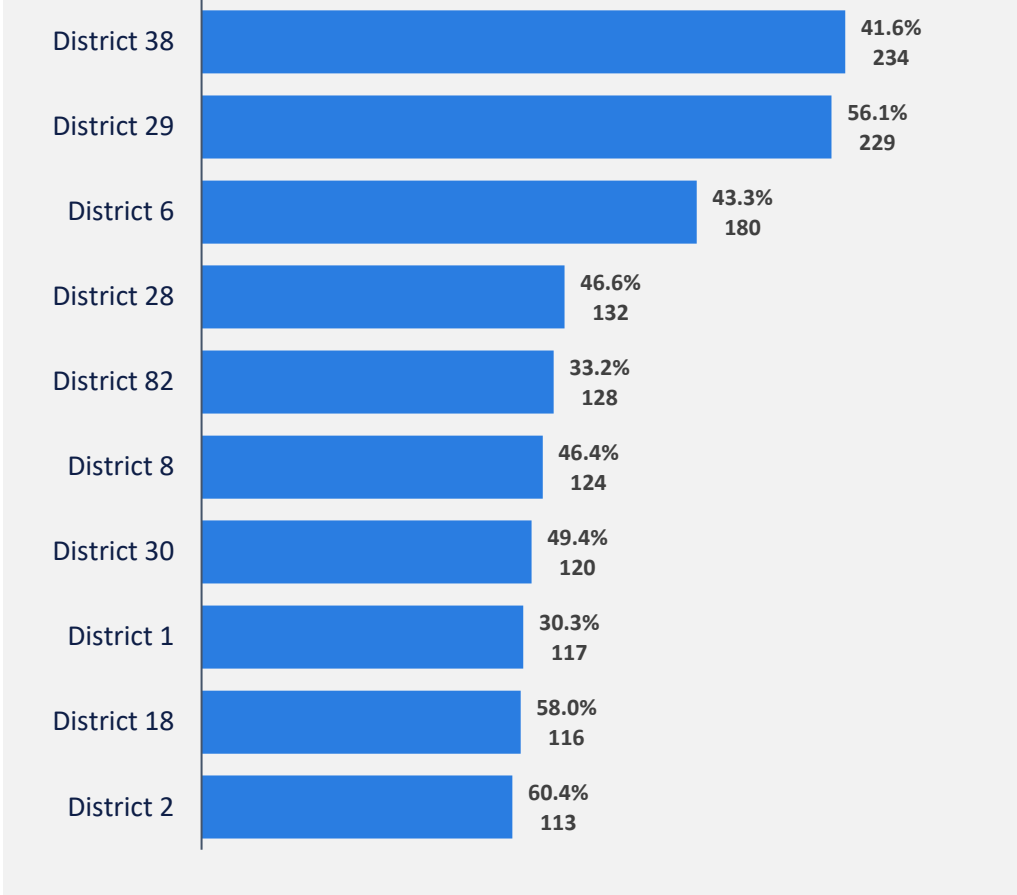
Note: Based on custom aggregation to 2021 boundaries



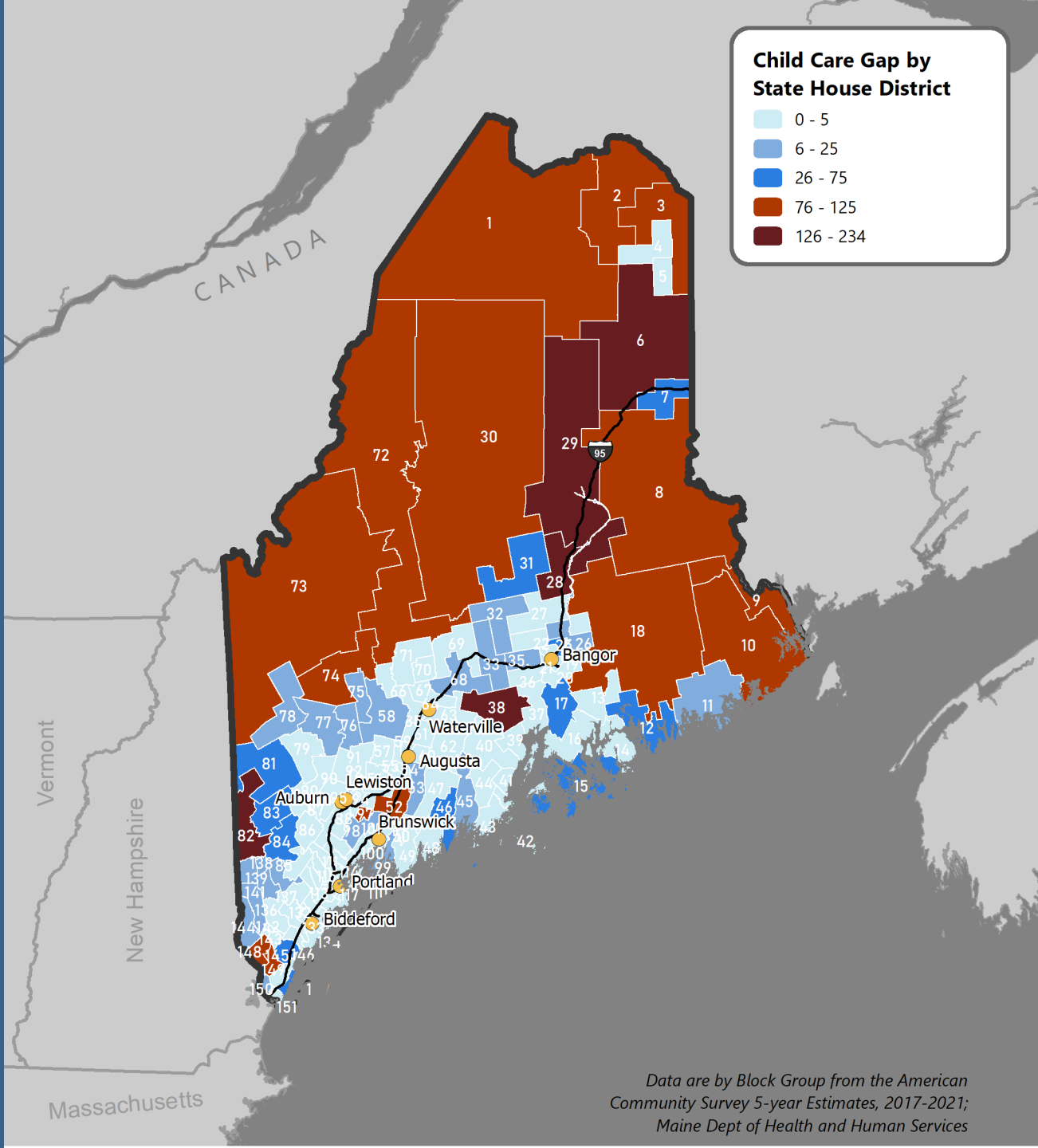
State House Districts

Child Care Gap

State House Districts with the Highest Gap

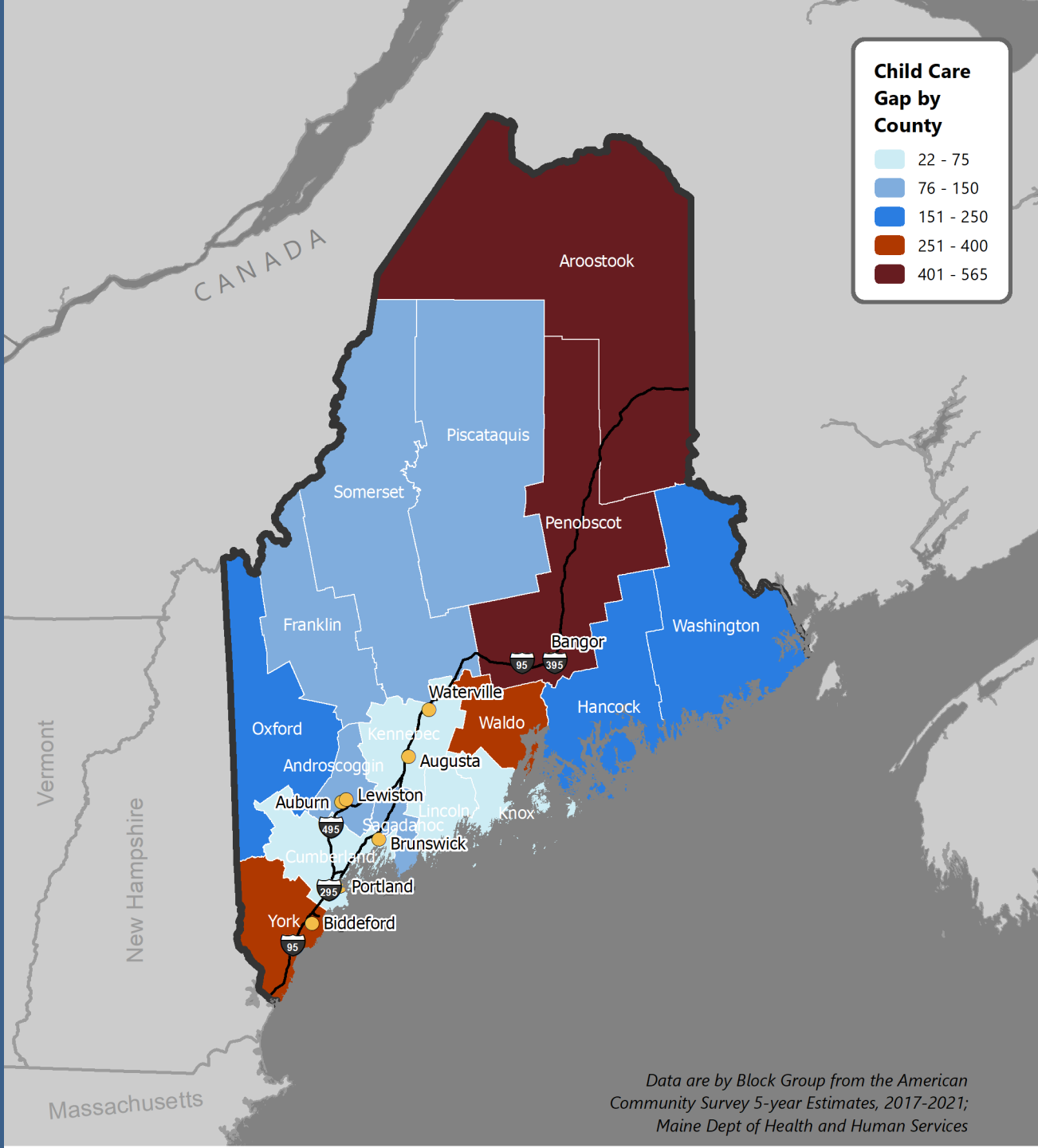
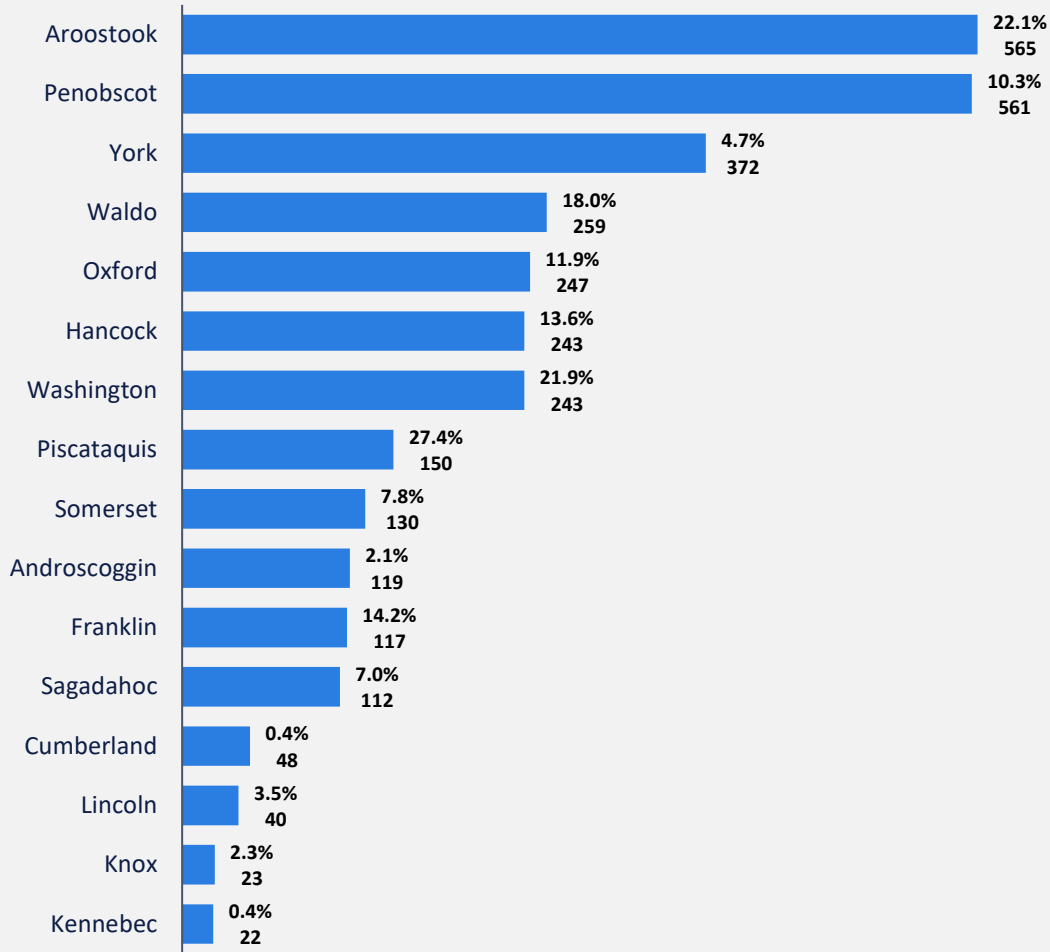


Note: Based on custom aggregation to 2021 boundaries



Counties

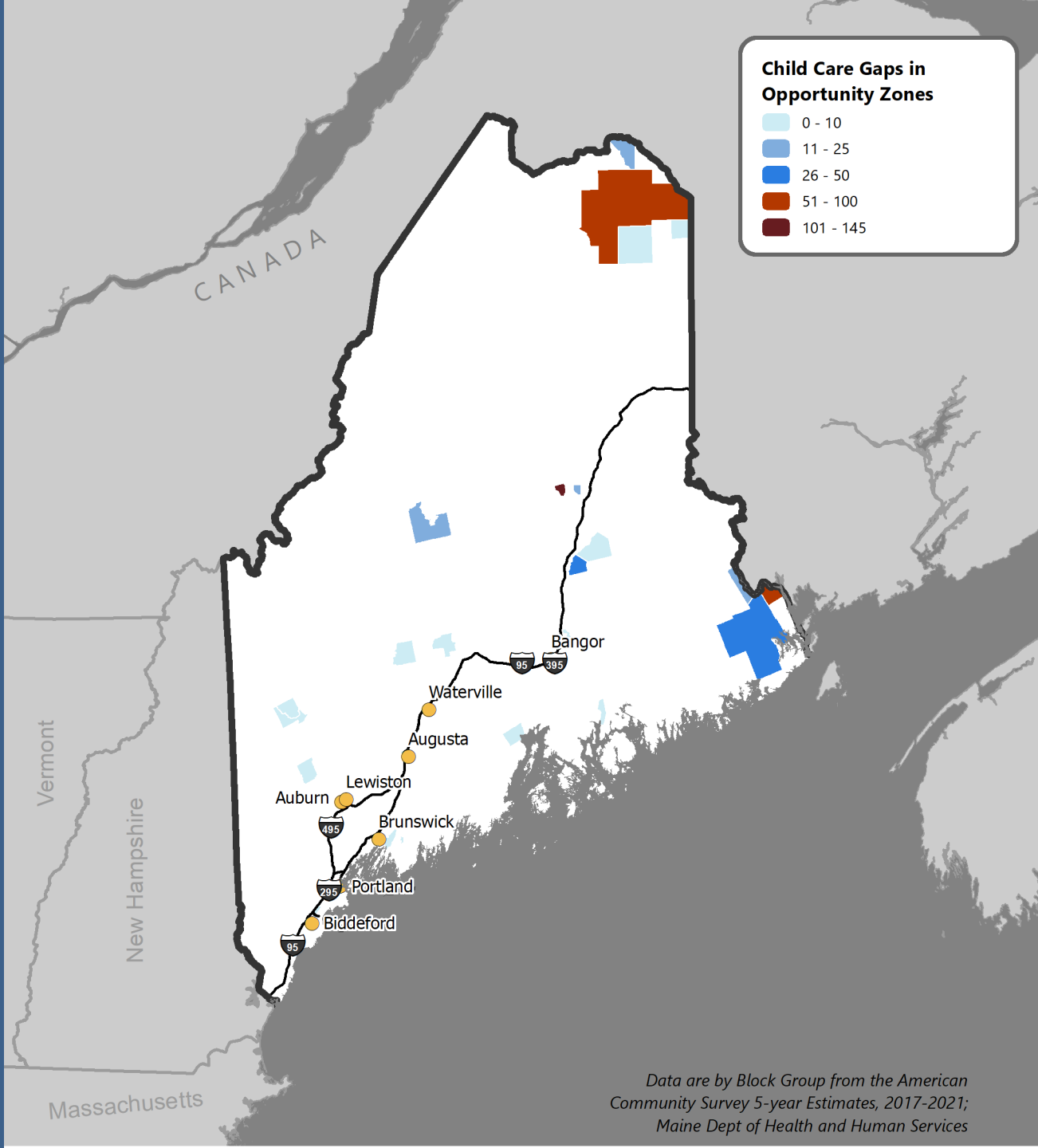
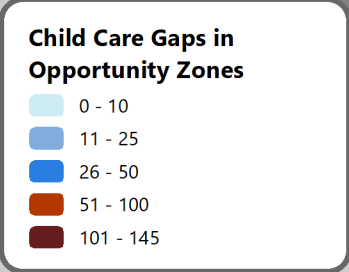
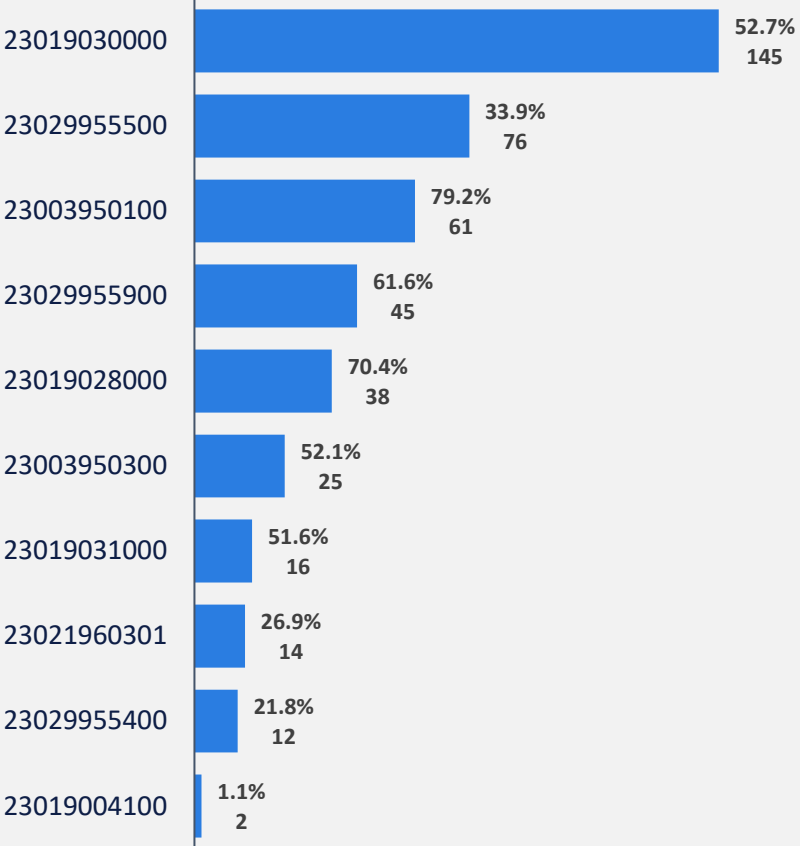
Child Care Gap



Opportunity Zones

Child Care Gap

Opportunity Zones with the Highest Gap

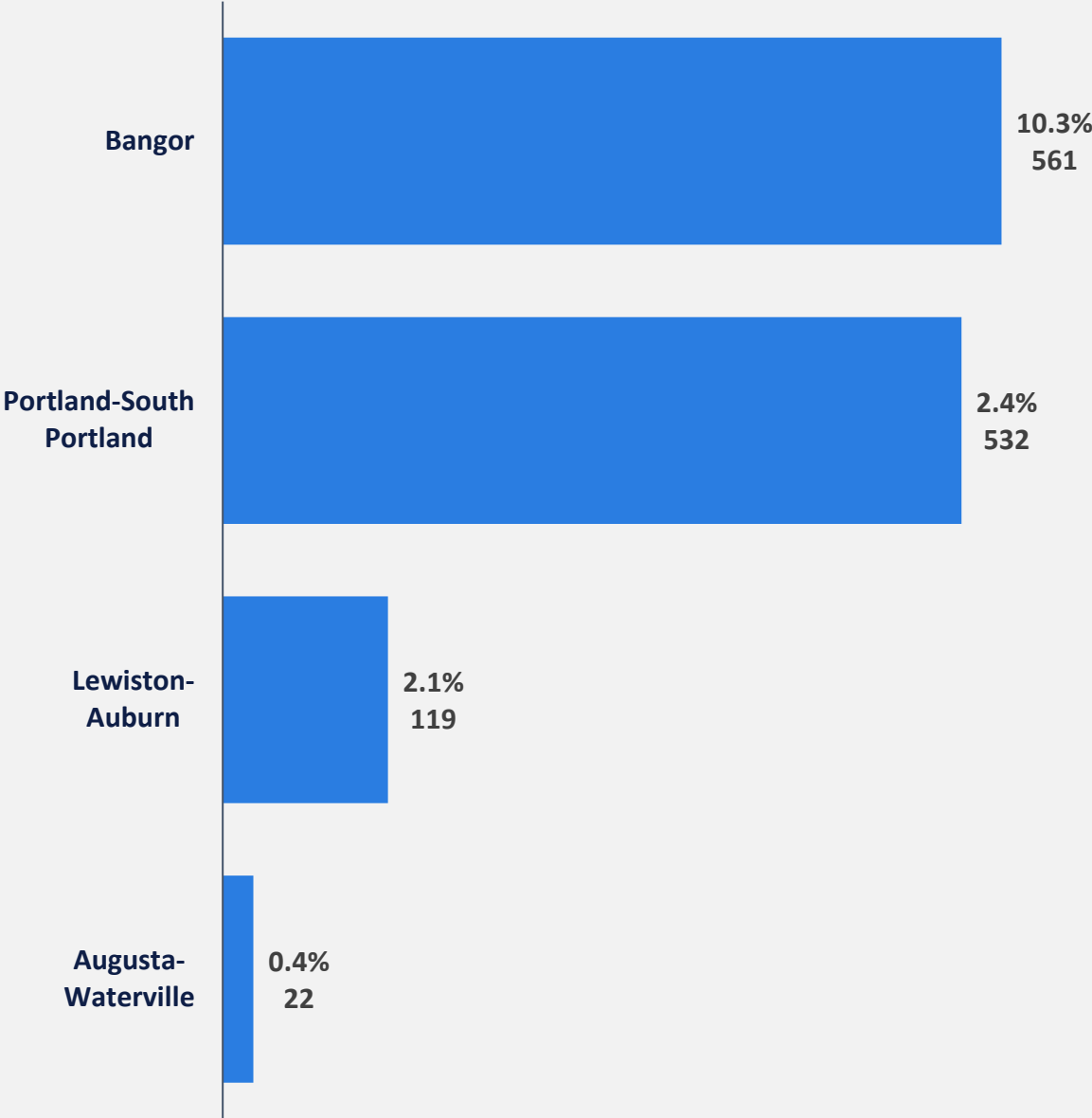


Urban Areas

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

Child Care Gap

Urban Areas with the Highest Gap



Bangor Area

Clusters of high child care gaps are shown in red.

Need: 5,427

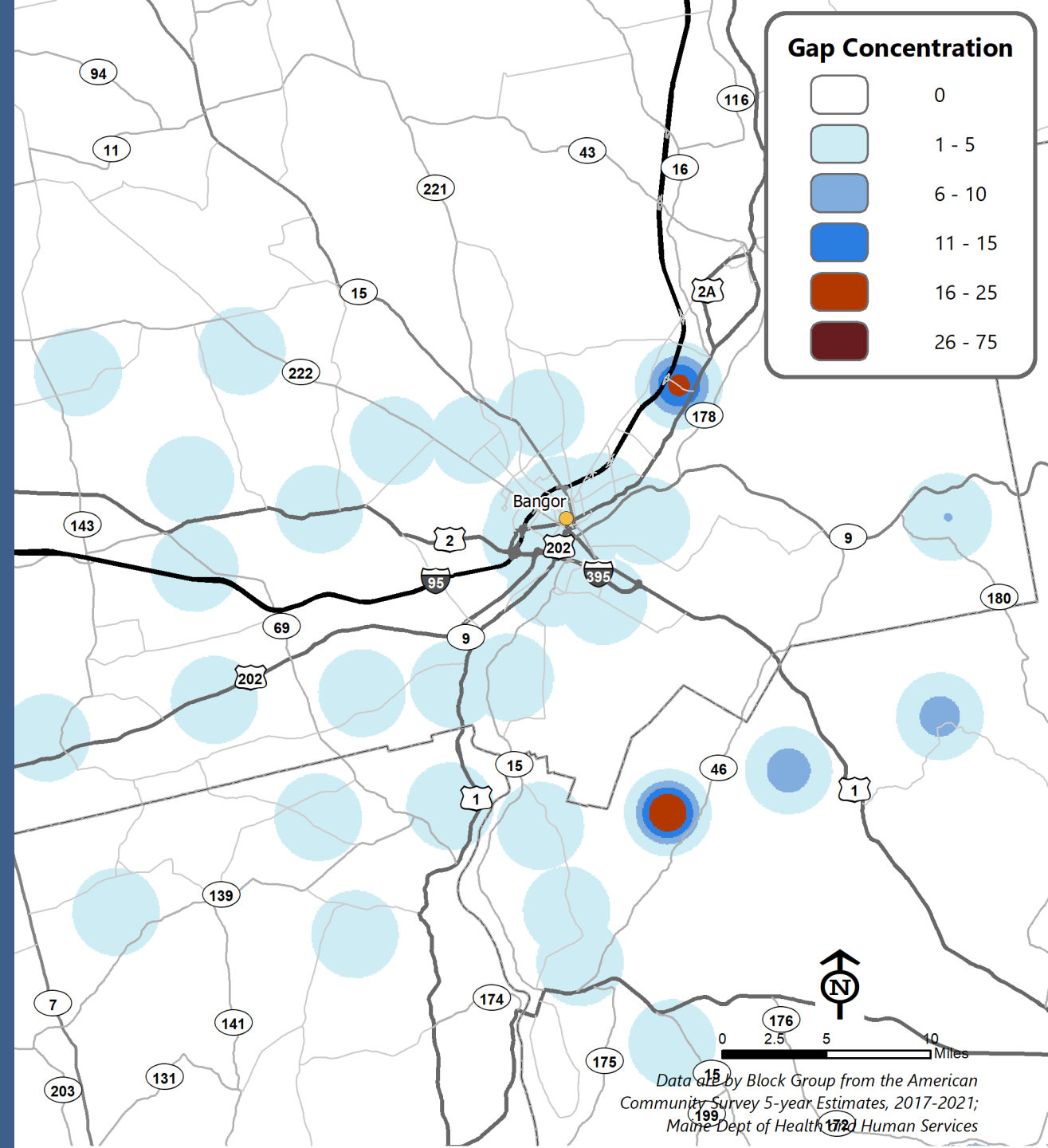
Gap: 561 (10.3%)

Change since 2020

Potential Need: -430

Capacity: +863

Gap: -610



Portland Area

Clusters of high child care gaps are shown in red.

Need: 21,791

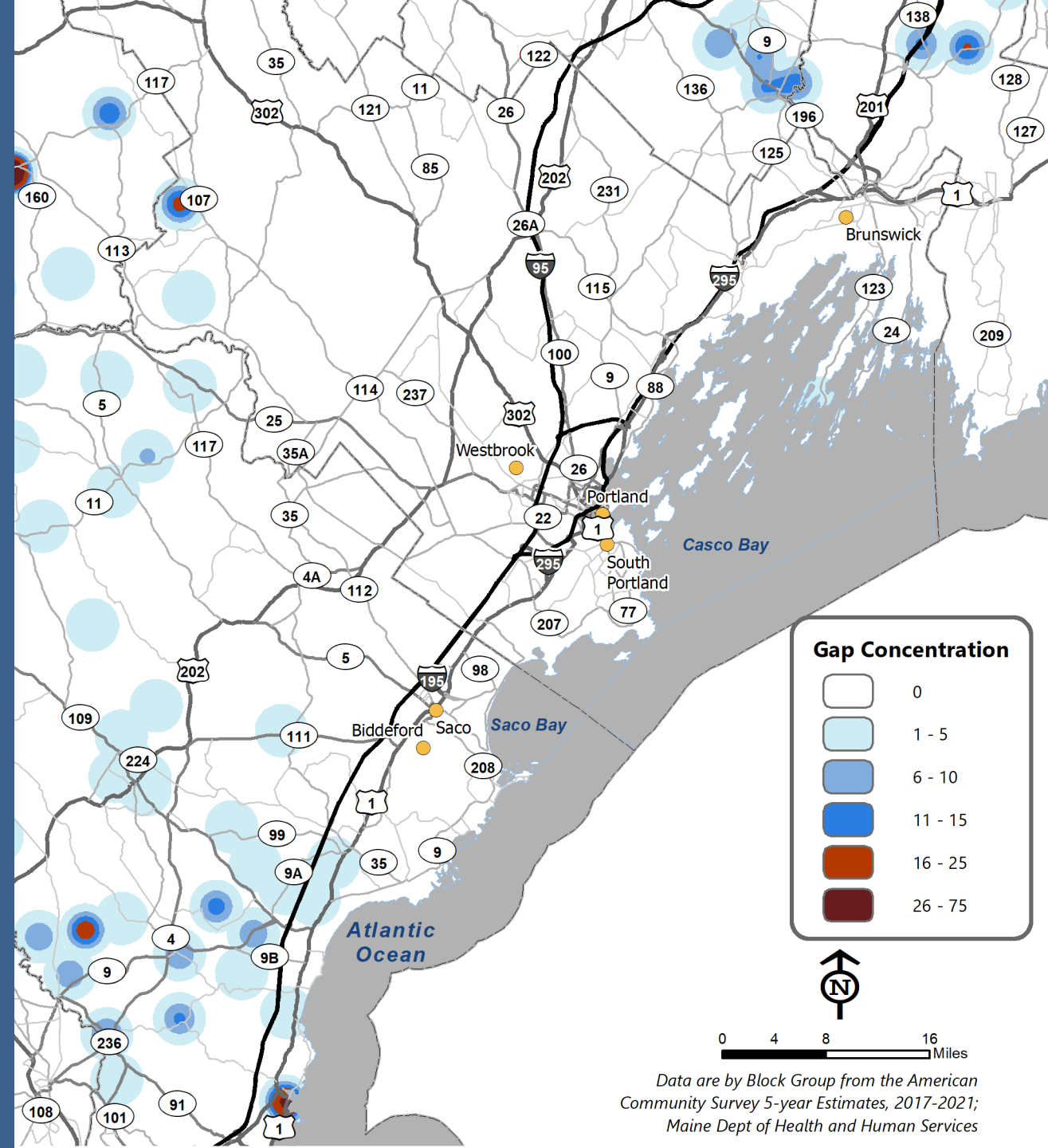
Gap: 532 (2.4%)

Change since 2020

Potential Need: -605

Capacity: +1,369

Gap: -357



Limitations and Conclusions

- This project is focused on understanding the gap between **potential need** for and supply of child care.
- This data is strictly based on licensed capacity. Accurate enrollment data is unavailable.
- BPC developed a custom aggregation method since Census Bureau has not yet released the data by Congressional Districts, State Senate and House Districts.
- Overall, the gap between capacity and demand=potential has decreased by 2.2% in Maine since 2020.
- Facility Capacity increased by 5,501 (10.9%) while Facility Count decreased by 280.
- Aroostook County has the highest gap in Maine with 2,561 children needing child care and a gap of 565 spaces.

Contact Information

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