



**CITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**



*Department of*  
**Human Service Programs**



## **Human Services and Veterans Committee: Afterschool Update**

November 2024

# Executive Summary

## 2024-25 DHSP Afterschool Lottery Update

- Recognizing how important afterschool care is for Cambridge families, we are providing an update on school year 2024-25 DHSP afterschool enrollment as well as updates on broader afterschool system efforts.
- DHSP continues to increase afterschool seats with 1,486 students receiving offers as of October, over 90% of those offers were for families' first choice location.
- We were able to extend this many offers because we have added 246 seats over the last two years, 38 seats this past year – leading to a 20% increase in offers.
- We still have 248 applicants in the DHSP waiting pool as of October 18<sup>th</sup>, an improvement from the 334 applicants as of August 2024 (and from the 518 in the waiting pool as of August 2023).
- There was a 7% increase in applicants from the priority group, which continues to drive racial diversity in programs.
- This year, DHSP placed 81% of applicants with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in programs with appropriate supports, but staff capacity continues to be a significant barrier.

## Caregivers Council & OST Study

- In 2023-2024 the caregiver council focused on 2 key issues, Access and Reenrollment. This year the second council is seated and will work with caregivers to identify and focus on 2-3 key issues.
- The Out of School Time (OST) Expansion Study will provide recommendations for stabilization and growth by February 2025, based on extensive stakeholder engagement and qualitative and quantitative research.
- One early deliverable is a Cambridge-wide assessment of afterschool demand, across DHSP and Community 5-day week afterschool programs

## Path Forward

- Moving forward, DHSP is focused on improving system stability by tackling the ongoing challenge of hiring and retaining staff and will hold seats at specific sites to accommodate priority students in crisis.

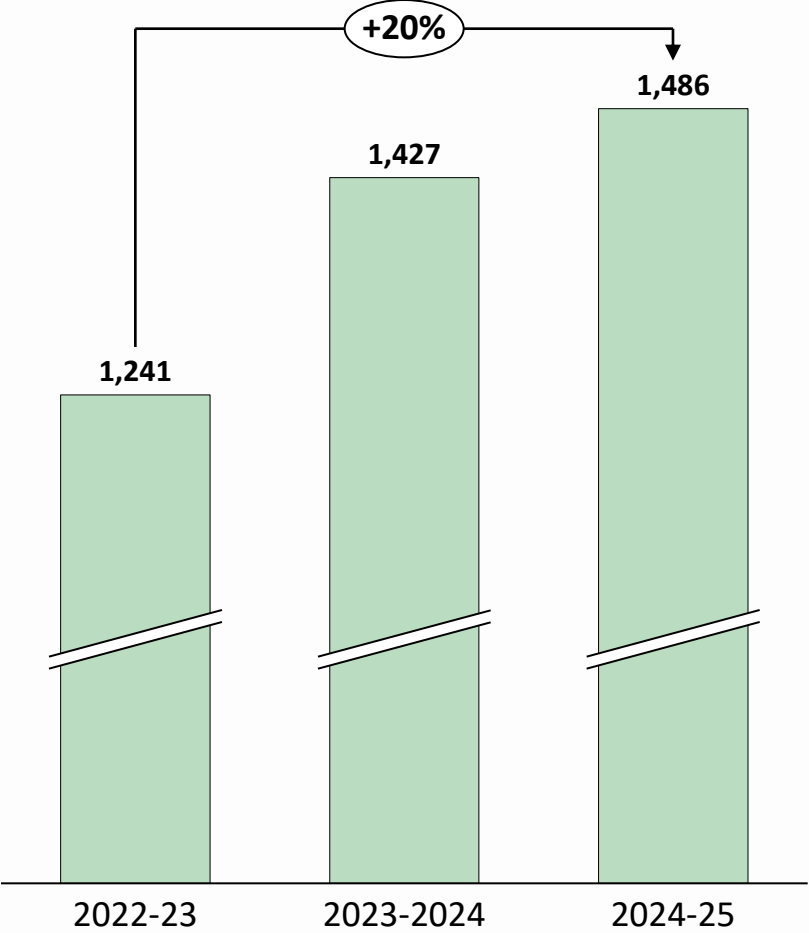


- **Fall 2024-2025 DHSP Lottery Update**
- Caregivers Council & OST Study
- Future Efforts

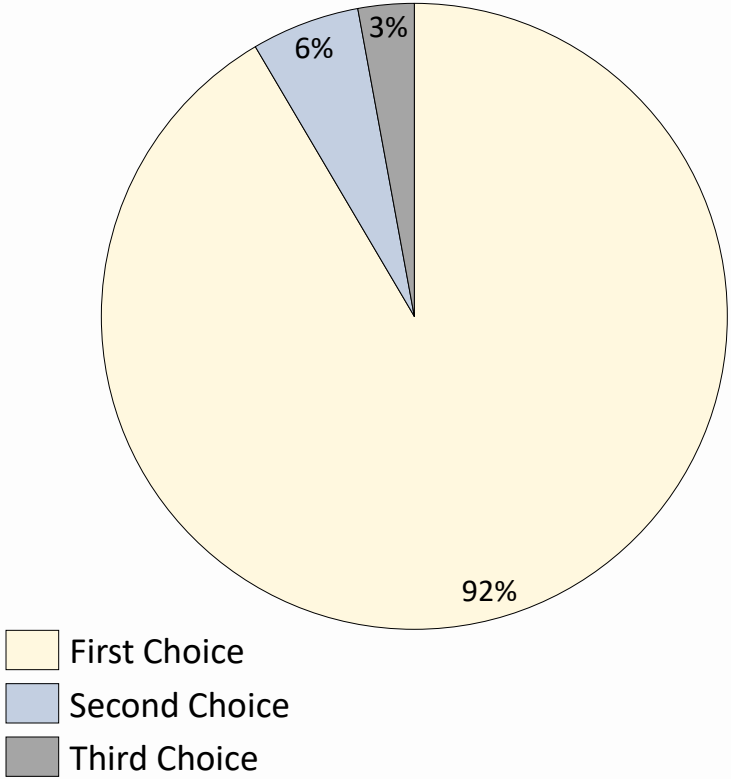


DHSP continues to increase afterschool seats with 1,486 students receiving offers as of October, over 90% of these were for families' first choice location

Change in DHSP Afterschool Offers over time



2024-2025 DHSP Offers by Choice Selection



We were able to extend this many offers because we have added 246 seats over the last two years, 38 seats this past year

Program	Daily Seat Capacity (Last 2 years)		Net Change
Childcare Afterschool	170	170	0 seats +0%
King Open Extended Day	130	228	98 seats +75%
Youth Centers	295	355	60 seats +20%
Community Schools	702	790	88 seats +7%
<b>DHSP Total</b>	<b>1,297</b>	<b>1,543</b>	<b>246</b> <b>+19%</b>

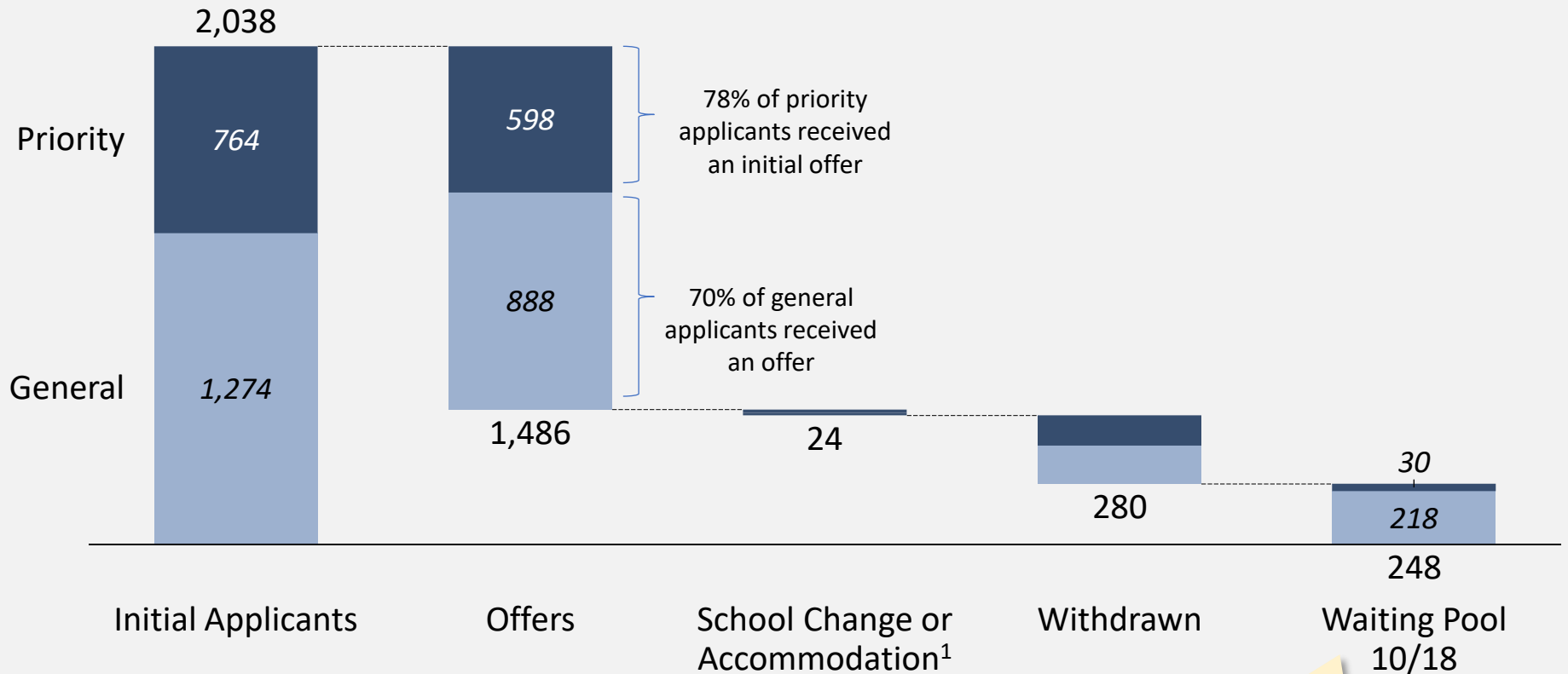
Last year we added seats at the Morse and Cambridgeport Community Schools. This year we added seats at the Peabody and Tobin Community Schools

In addition, Ninety-one seats in community programs for low-income families are funded by ARPA and will need additional city funds to continue.



# As of October 18<sup>th</sup>, there are 248 students in the DHSP waiting pool – significantly lower than last years

## 2024-25 DHSP Afterschool Programs Lottery Outcomes (updated October 18, 2024)



**Waiting Pool as of:**

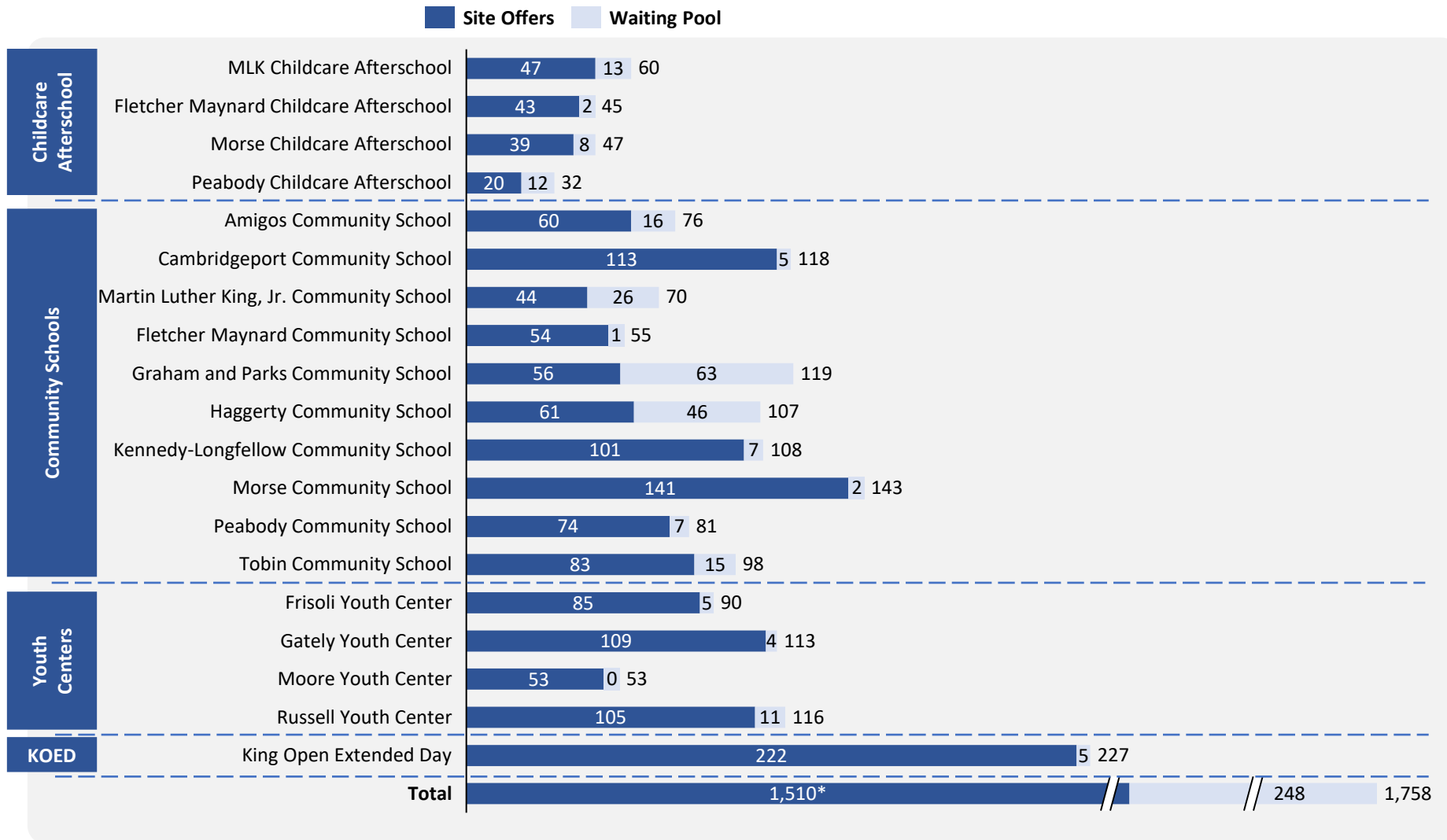
- August 2023: 518
- August 2024: 334



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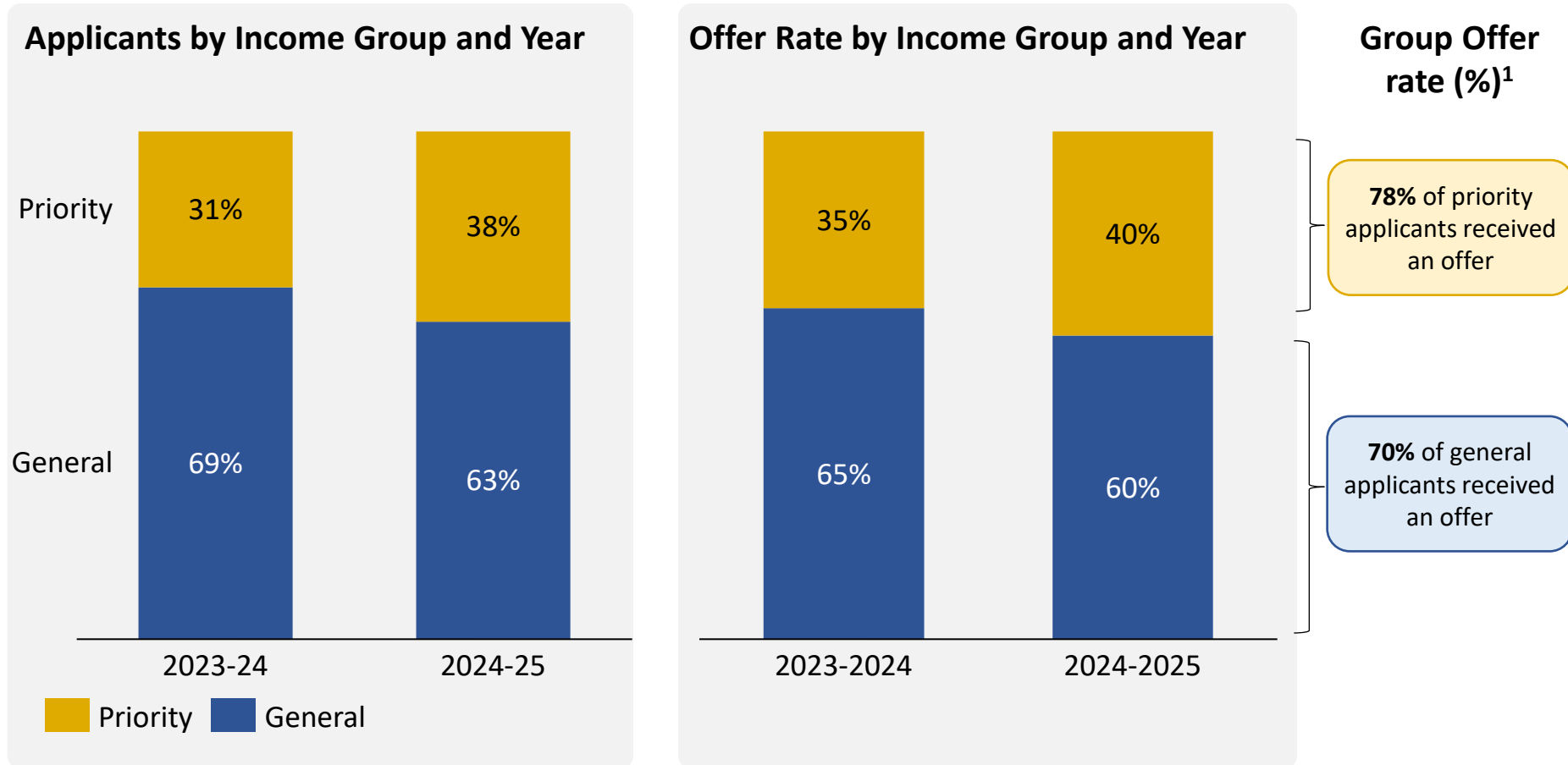
1. This group includes applicants who received an offer for a school that was not one of their top three choices.

# Students in the waiting pool are concentrated at high demand schools (e.g., Graham and Parks, Haggerty)



\*Includes 24 students who needed an accommodation or school change

There was a 7% increase in applicants from the priority income group and offer rates continued to be higher for priority applicants

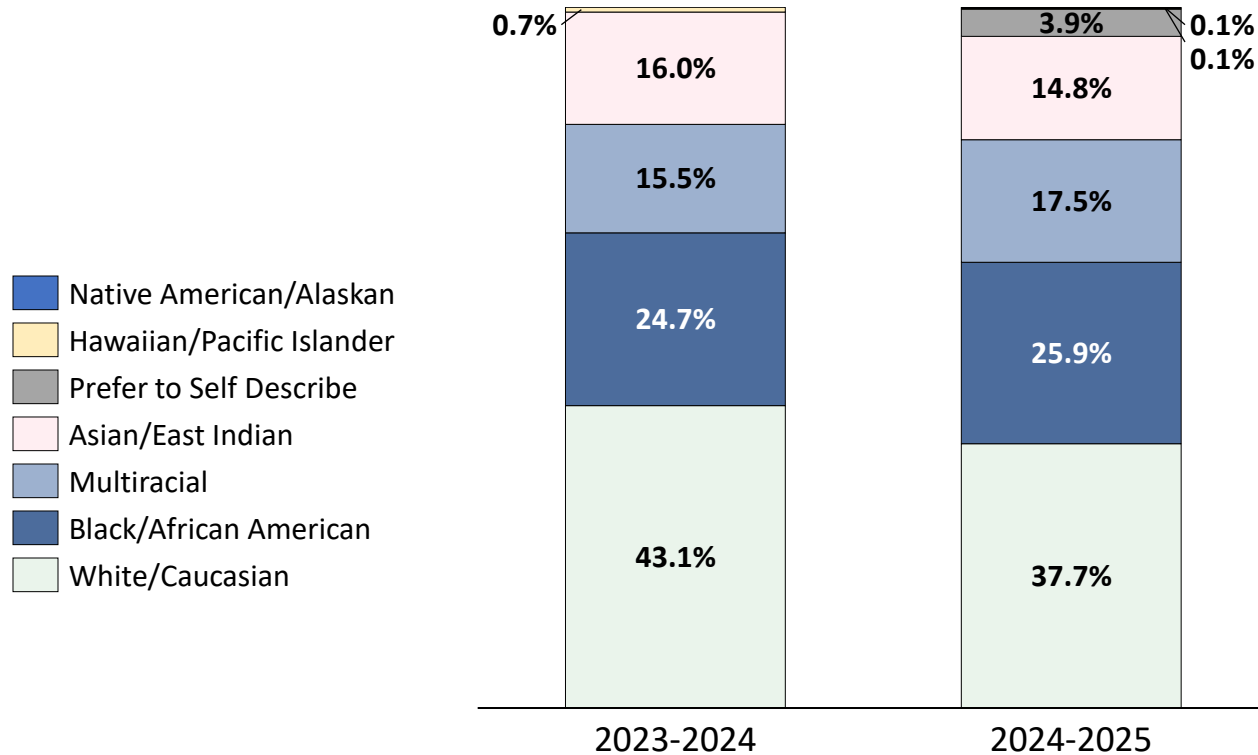


1. The group offer rate is the percentage of group applicants that received an offer. So, while 38% of all offers went to the priority group, of that group, 78% received an offer.



# The lottery applicant pool continues to diversify

2024-25 Lottery Applicants by Race  
(updated October 18, 2024)



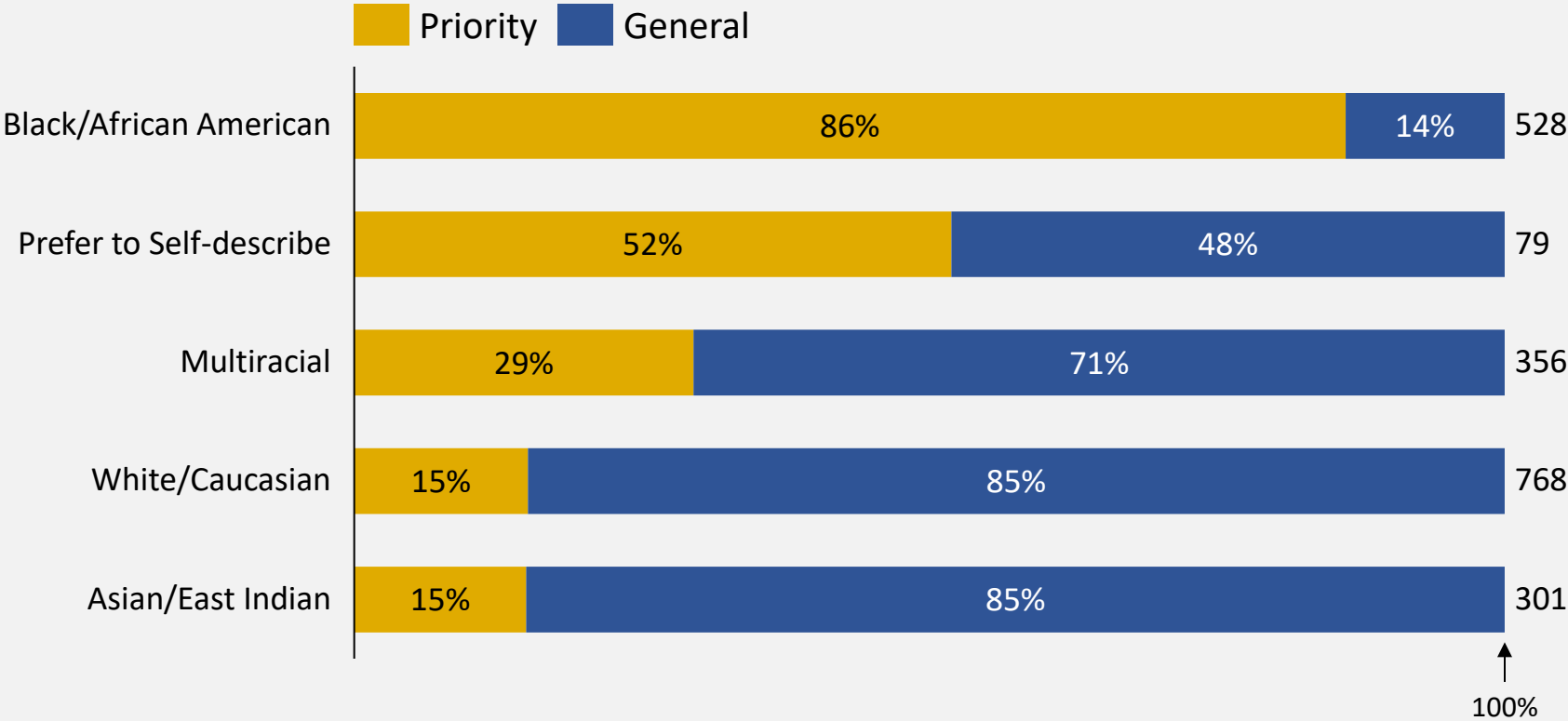
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We are sharing this data to help understand the applicant pool and lottery outcomes by different demographics.

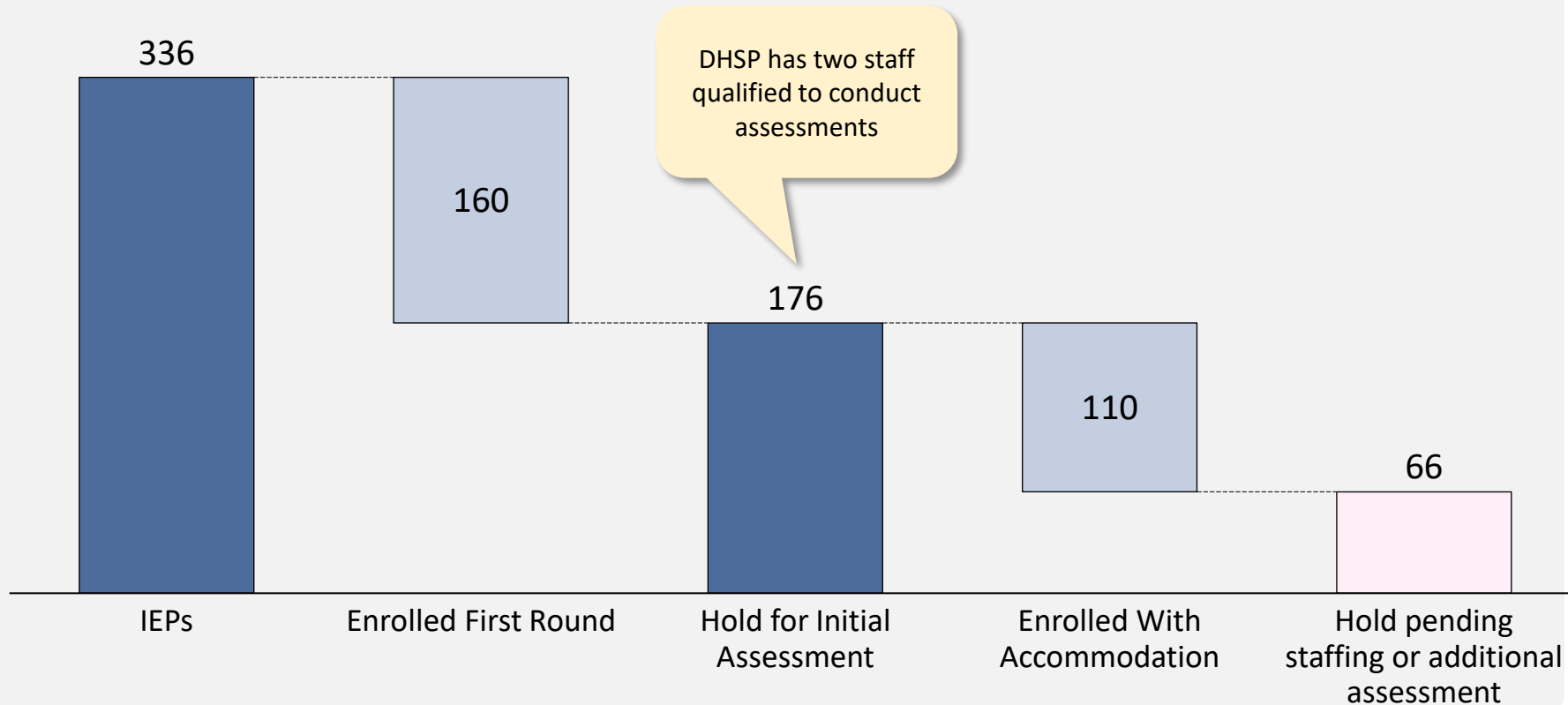
Race is not considered in the lottery process and does not impact placement odds.

# ... And the priority income group drives much of the racial diversity in the applicant pool

**2024-25 Applicants by Race and Income Group**  
(updated October 18, 2024)



# 270 students with IEPs have enrolled into DHSP Afterschool Programs, but a small portion require additional staffing to begin their program

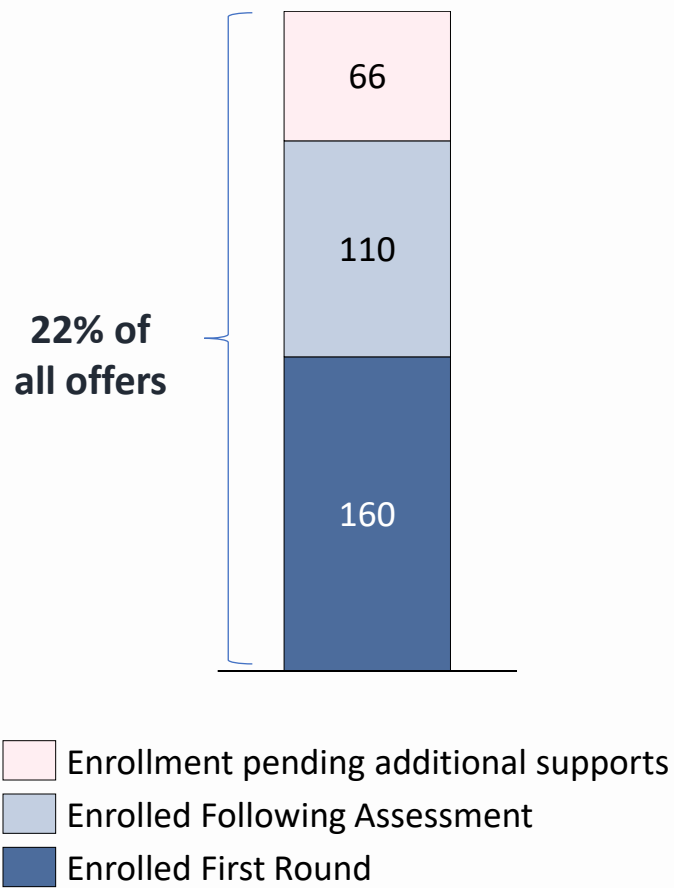


DHSP welcomes individuals with disabilities in all of its Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs and will provide reasonable accommodations when necessary to ensure that such individuals will have an equal opportunity to participate. However, all OST Program participants must meet some basic eligibility requirements.

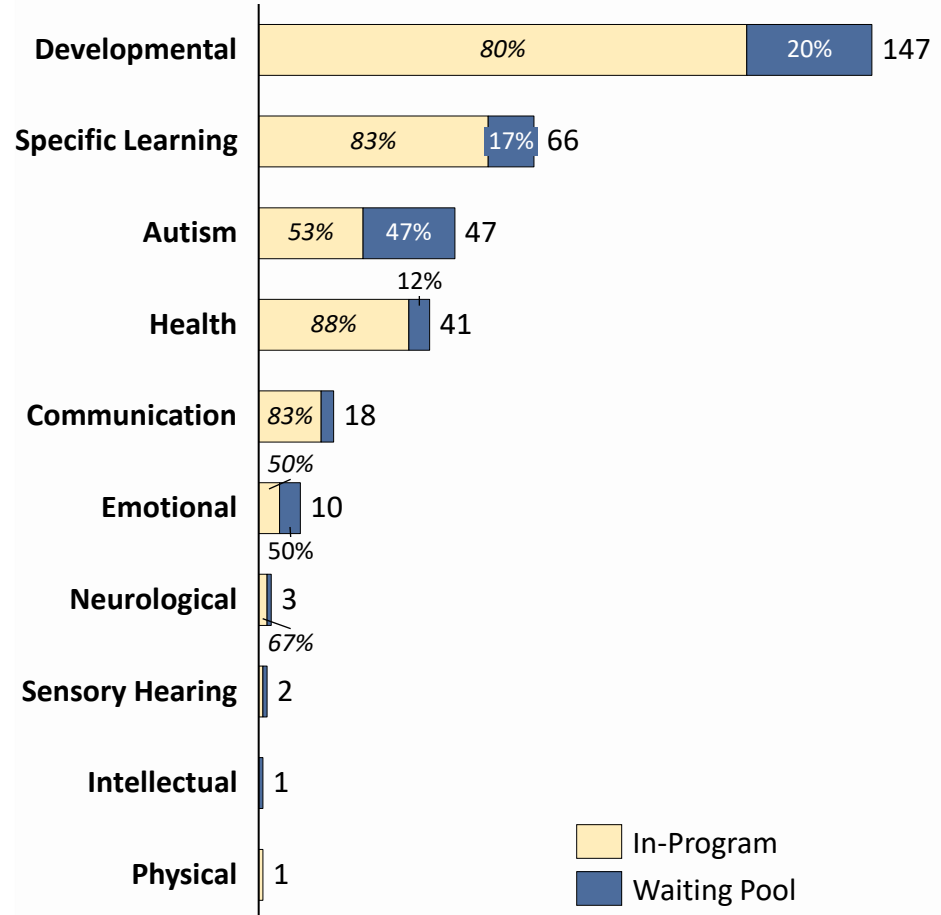


Students with IEPs have a broad set of diagnoses and DHSP follows a thorough process to ensure as many of those students as possible receive appropriate supports and can enroll in programming

**Students with IEPs by Time of Enrollment**



**Enrollment of Students with IEPs by Diagnosis<sup>1</sup>**



1. Totals will may differ from other charts as some students will have multiple diagnoses.

- Fall 2024-2025 DHSP Lottery Update
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# DHSP has invested in including caregiver voice into our programs and policies

## “We’re Caregivers Too!”

### Who is the Caregiver Council?

#### About The Council

We are the first ever group of caregivers working with the Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP), trying to figure out how to make afterschool programs better. Our group of 14 caregivers began meeting in November 2023. While we are not a decision making body, we hope to represent Cambridge families and influence DHSP afterschool policy and programming.

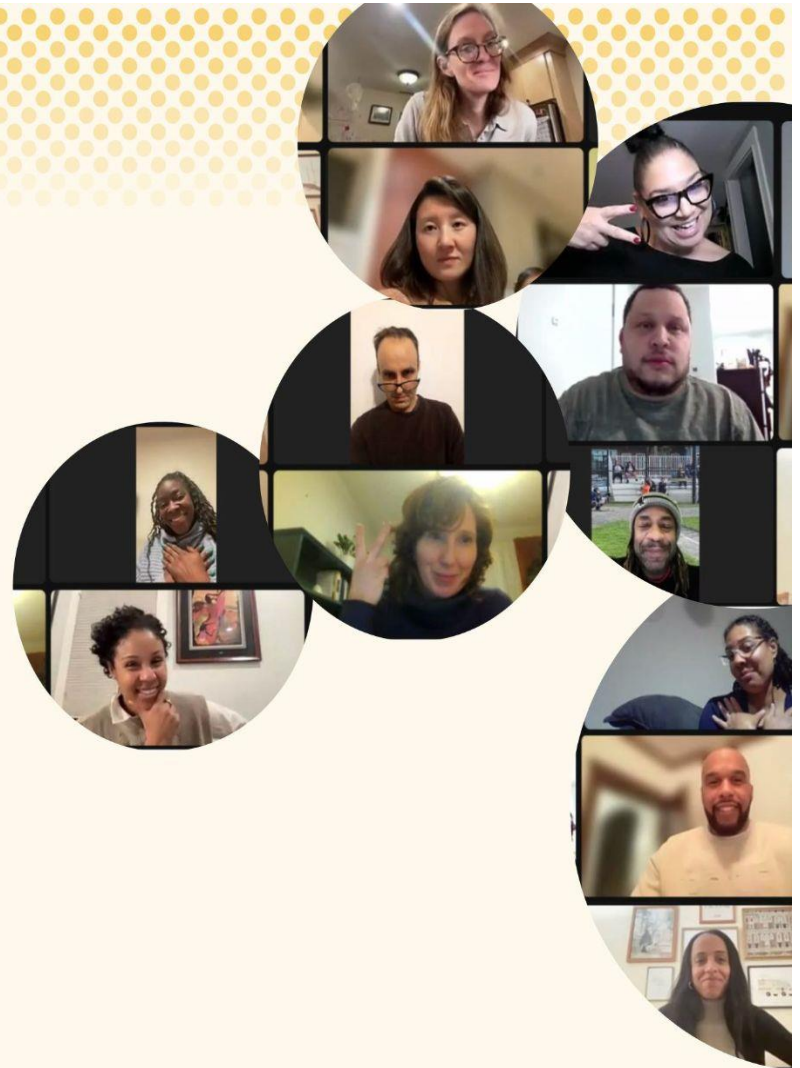
#### Our Shared Goal

As a council, our goal is to empower and share resources. In doing so, we will strive to influence the City of Cambridge to enable caregiver-centered, caregiver-led, collaborative decision-making.

#### Our Purpose

We want to hear from caregivers about what’s working and what can improve in afterschool programs in our city. We’re caregivers too!

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In 2023-2024, Caregivers' Council focused on improving the application process and expanding access to afterschool – the November meeting will focus on equitable family engagement.

## Key Issues for Caregivers in 2023-2024

### Caregivers raised 8 key issues for improving afterschool:

1. **Access to Afterschool**
2. **Application Process**
3. Getting a Spot
4. Consistency/Predictability
5. Special Needs
6. Program Quality
7. Affordability
8. Community Impact

### Collaboration Topics:

#### Improving the Application Process

Caregivers surfaced an opportunity for DHSP to improve access to information and the overall application experience.

#### Expanding the Reenrollment Policy

When navigating the reenrollment policy, caregivers offered expertise into how DHSP can expand the “Priority Family” definition to be more equitable.

## Caregiver Council 2024-2025

- New Council seated in October 2024 with new and returning members
- Council is diverse representation of Caregivers
- Learning together about Equitable Family Engagement (November Focus)



# WithInsight and the Agenda for Children are in the process of gathering input and insights from a wide range of stakeholders on OST Expansion in Cambridge



## Stakeholders

- Caregivers
- OST Frontline Staff
- OST Directors
- OST Coalition
- CPS Teachers
- CPS Principals
- CEA
- CPS SPED PAC
- DHSP Inclusion Initiative
- CPS Family Liaisons
- CPS Teachers
- DHSP Community Engagement Team
- DHSP Administration
- CPS Administration



## Process

1. Develop study questions
2. Outline ideal future state of OST in Cambridge
3. Gather qualitative and quantitative data
  - Focus Groups
  - Advisory Group, Steering Committee, & OST Coalition meetings
  - Surveys
4. Conduct Analysis
  - Demand & capacity data analysis
  - Identify themes in areas of focus for development
5. Integrate findings and recommendations for final report



## Timeline

- **February/March 2024:**  
Initiated OST Expansion Study engaging WithInsight
- **April-December 2024:**
  - Stakeholder meetings
  - Focus groups
  - Capacity survey
  - Demand data coordination
  - Data analysis
- **January/February 2025:**  
Report out on study findings





# The OST Study team, has developed a vision of the ideal future state of afterschool programming

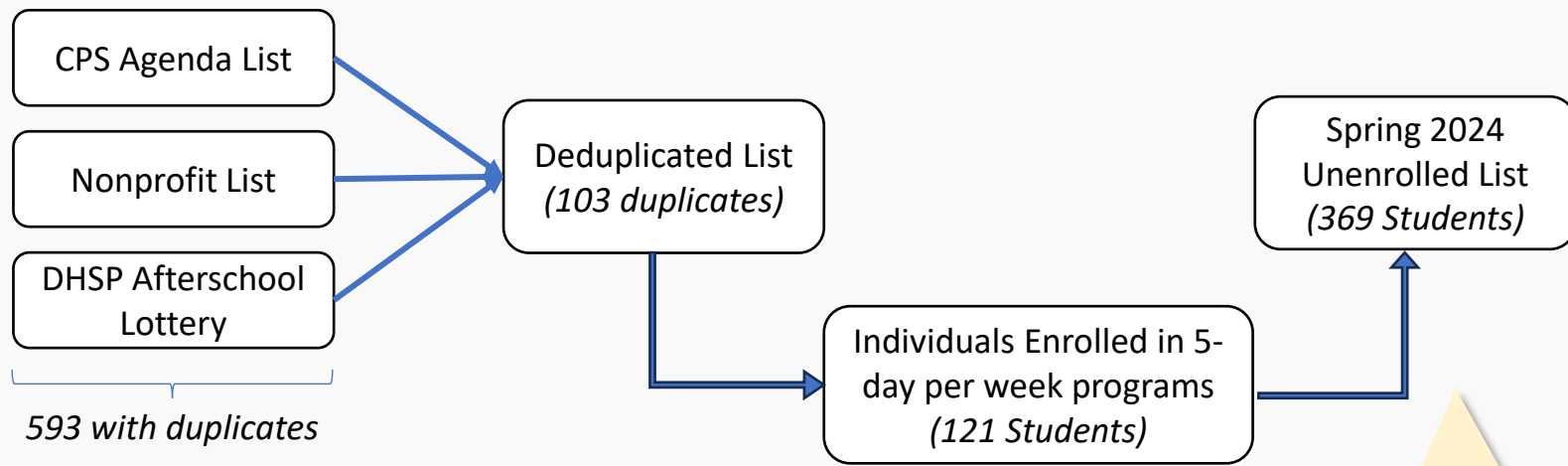
## “Fishbone Diagram”: Achieving the Ideal Future State

Updated 7/25/2024



# The OST Coalition is collaborating with CPS, DHSP, and nonprofit providers to assess systemwide demand for afterschool and build a process for ongoing data sharing

## Building the Spring 23-24 Unenrolled List



- Low-income students<sup>1</sup>: 130
- Students with IEPs<sup>1</sup>: 88



1. These to groups are not mutually exclusive

# The study's research is focused on better understanding the OST system's capacity constraints as well as the needs of caregivers and the afterschool workforce



## Caregivers



## Workforce



## Capacity

### Research Questions

- What are the key barriers to access?
- How do families make decisions about the afterschool hours, weigh their options, and prioritize?
- Do families need 5 day a week care, part-time care, or enrichment classes?

- What factors are impacting recruitment of quality OST teachers and directors?
- What factors are impacting retention of quality OST teachers and directors?
- To what extent is a shared staffing model across OST and the school day possible?

- What is the existing supply and capacity of programs?
- Where is the potential for additional space?
- Do OST programs meet the needs of all children (e.g., BIPOC, special needs, & low-income)?

### Emerging Themes

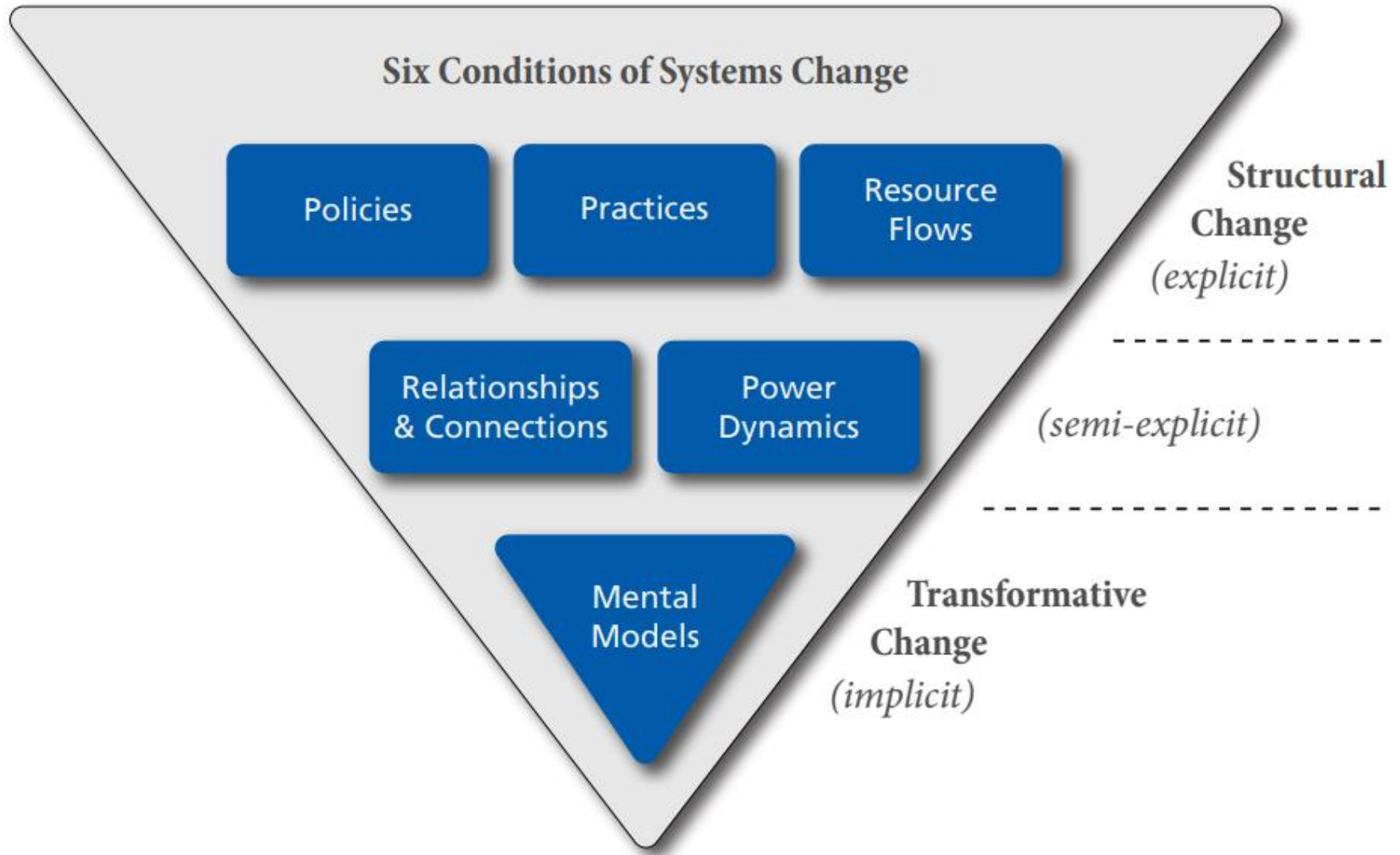
- Centralized enrollment
- Increase efforts on enrolling students with IEPs including shared training efforts

- Create more full-time positions
- Increase hourly pay
- Make benefits available to part-time staff
- Offer more position flexibility
- CPS/OST shared staffing

- CPS/OST shared space
- Centralized enrollment
- Increase efforts on enrolling students with IEPs including shared training efforts



The OST Study team's approach to systems change is focused on building a deep understanding of the entire afterschool system



- Fall 2024-2025 DHSP Lottery Update
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# Following significant growth, DHSP is focused on stabilizing the afterschool system.

## Current System Overview & Capacity

- DHSP Afterschool programs continue to add seats and increase system capacity with a focus on placing as many priority and students with IEPs as possible.

## Current Challenges

- **Staffing:** It is a challenge to hire and retain staff and DHSP continues to focus on creating more full-time afterschool positions.
- **Funding:** ARPA funds for afterschool scholarships will expire soon and additional funding needs to be identified to cover the \$1M in annual costs.
- **Space Sharing:** Finding classroom space for existing and new classrooms is an ongoing challenge.

## Next Steps

- Focus on system stability – specifically stabilizing the afterschool workforce.
- Identify alternative sources of funding for community school afterschool scholarships for when AARPA ends.
- The Out-of-School Time Study will be completed by February 2025 and will inform long-term efforts.

