

THE STATE OF THE WORKFORCE

AN IDAHO CHILD CARE REPORT

Child Care Workforce in Idaho:

An Overview

Maintaining a stable system of child care is vital for Idaho's children, families, and economy. In 2023, Idaho saw a 3% decrease in the total child care workforce with a much higher turnover rate (the rate at which employees leave a workforce and are replaced).¹

Over 2,400 individuals left child care employment in Idaho in 2023, leading to a 37% turnover rate.

High turnover within the child care workforce (over 20%)² has profound implications for the quality and consistency of care provided to children. When turnover rates are high, the loss of skilled personnel not only leads to a decline in the overall quality of care for children, but poses substantial financial costs for child care businesses, leads to stressed teachers, and disrupts routines for children and families. Excessive child care workforce turnover further has a considerable impact on Idaho's economy, decreasing productivity and stability by reducing workforce participation and causing more absenteeism and job disruptions for working parents.

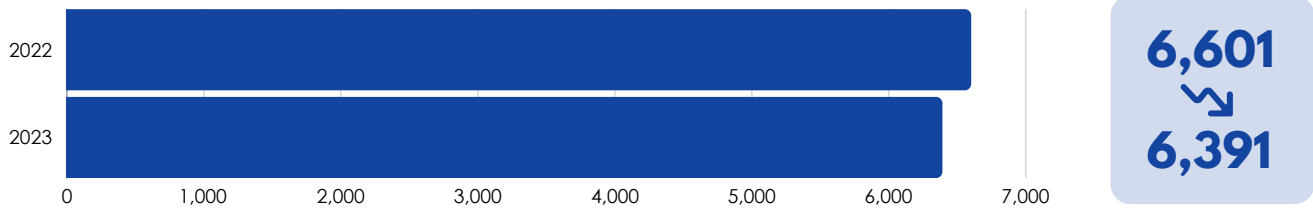
This report shares an up-to-date picture of Idaho's child care workforce in 2023. The IdahoSTARS project is the leading expert on child care within the state and our IdahoSTARS RISE database serves as the state's registry for child care professionals. Data included in this report, unless otherwise noted, was pulled from the registry database, RISE, in November of 2023. Data provided in this report is not exhaustive of all child care in Idaho. Participation in the registry is voluntary unless participating in the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) or state child care licensing. Additional data and quotes have been provided from statewide surveys and listening sessions from the experts themselves, our child care providers and program directors/owners.

The impact of high turnover rates in the child care workforce extends beyond the immediate effects on child care quality and directly affects the economy at large in three key ways:

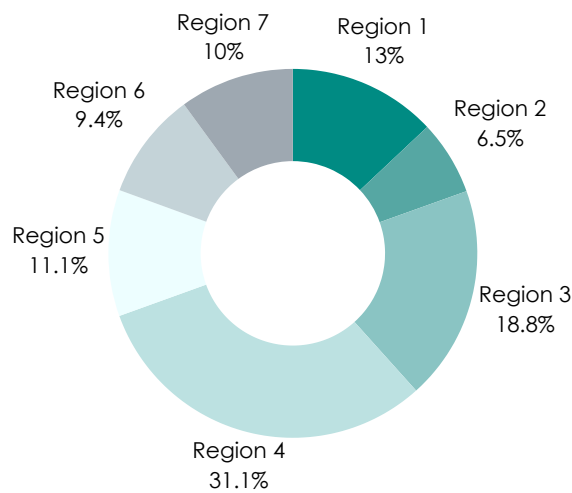
- **Cost to Child Care Providers and Businesses**
- **Impact on Working Parents and the Labor Force**
- **Long-term Economic Impact**



Total Child Care Workforce in Idaho



Child Care Workforce by Region



Region 1

Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone Counties

Region 2

Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis & Nez Perce Counties

Region 3

Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette & Washington Counties

Region 4

Ada, Boise, Elmore & Valley Counties

Region 5

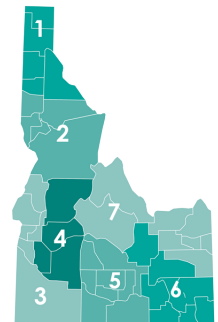
Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka & Twin Falls Counties

Region 6

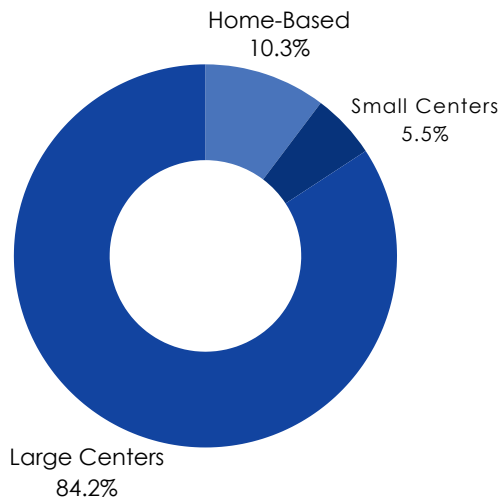
Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida & Power Counties

Region 7

Bonneville, Butte, Clarke, Custer, Freemont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison & Teton Counties



Child Care Workforce by Program Type



Who are Idaho's Child Care Providers?

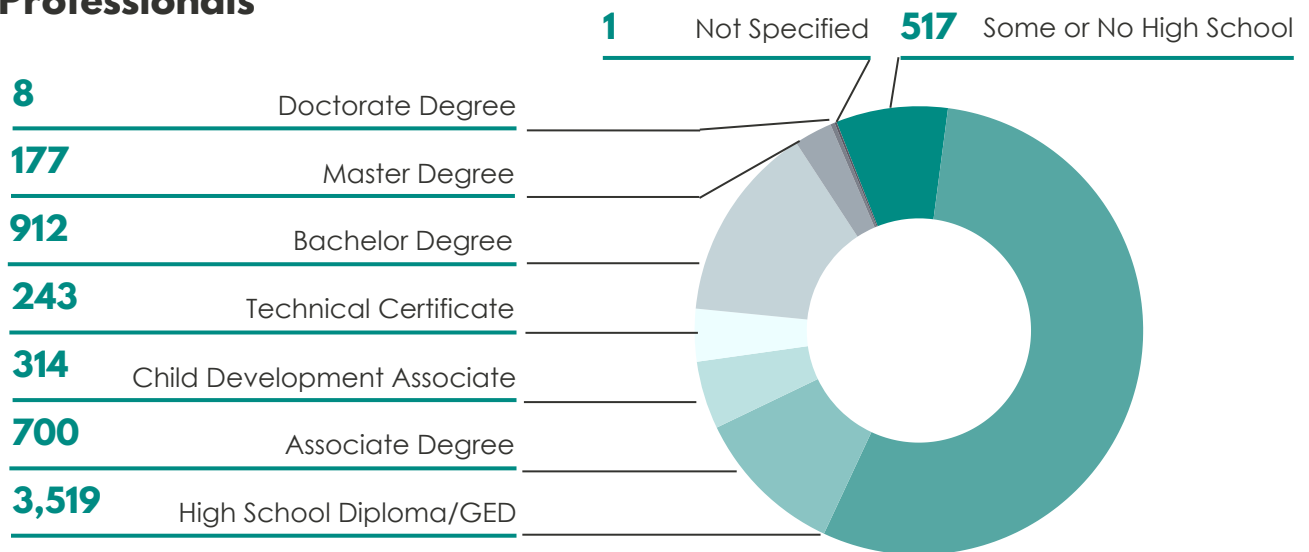
The data within this report represents professionals categorized in the RISE database as child care providers engaged with IdahoSTARS, currently employed in legally operating child care facilities within Idaho as of November 2023.

Idaho's Average Child Care Professional

- Works in a center with 25+ children
- 35 years old
- Female
- Makes \$13.50/hour
- Has earned a High School Diploma



Education Level of Child Care Professionals



Caring for young children is demanding work; providing quality early experiences for children requires in-depth knowledge, concrete skills, and professional practices. IdahoSTARS offers pathways to increase education, wages, and incentivize early educators to remain in the field and gain higher levels of experience, but without support and investment, Idaho's child care system struggles. In general, demographics data shows that the majority of Idaho's Child Care Professionals have low levels of education and experience.



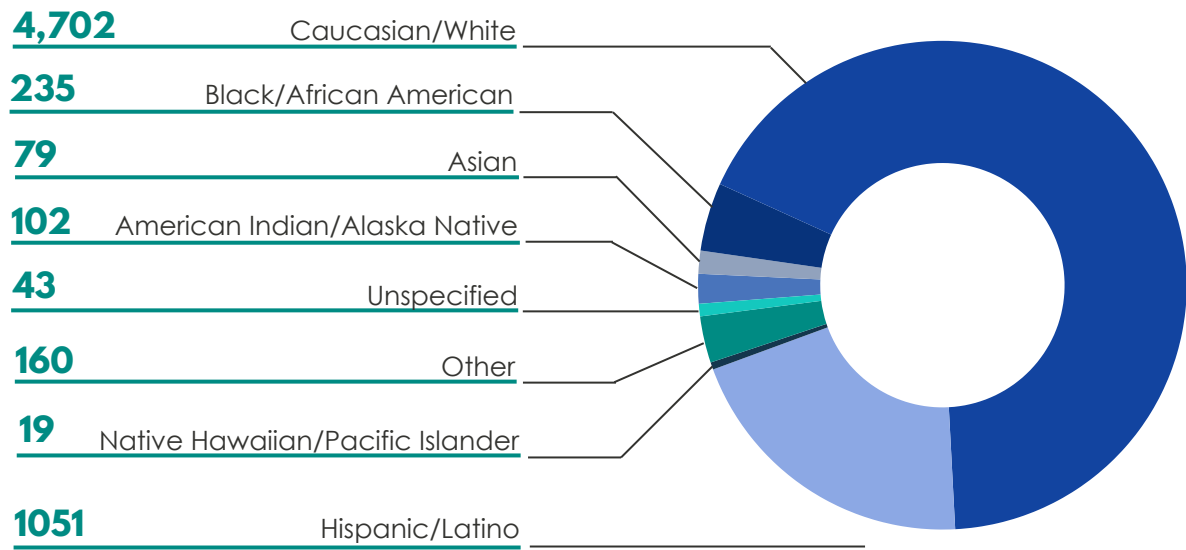
32
Median Age

95%
Speak English

15%
Are Bilingual

20
Languages Spoken

Race / Ethnicity of Child Care Professionals



94.7%
OF IDAHO CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS ARE WOMEN



\$13.50
MEDIAN WAGE OF IDAHO'S CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS

Turnover in Child Care

Working in child care is rooted in a passion for early childhood, but the job is overly taxing and drives individuals out of the field. Low pay, long days, constant changes in leadership, children, co-workers, and requirements as well as the physical and emotional toll of the job all contribute to leaving the field.

2,425

Individual Child Care Providers in Idaho have left the field since November 2022

37%

Turnover Rate in Idaho's Child Care Workforce

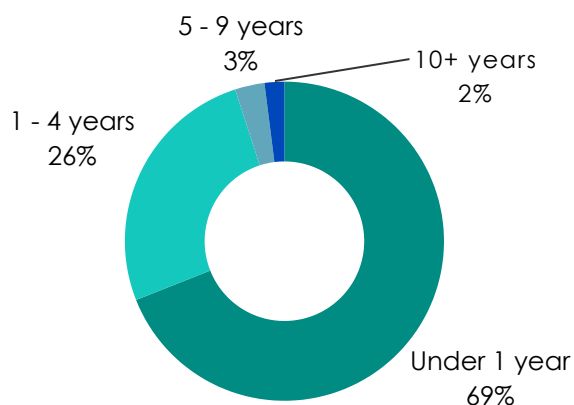
*The U.S. Administration for Children and Families considers 20% a high turnover rate²

3%

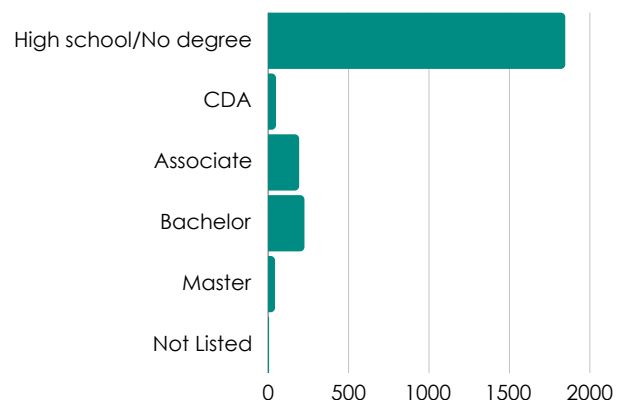
Decrease in Idaho's working Child Care Professionals



Years in their position before leaving :



Education level when they left the field:

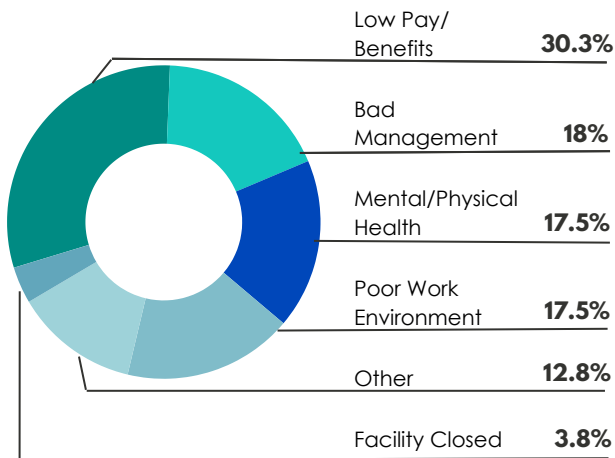


Survey of Child Care Professionals leaving the field

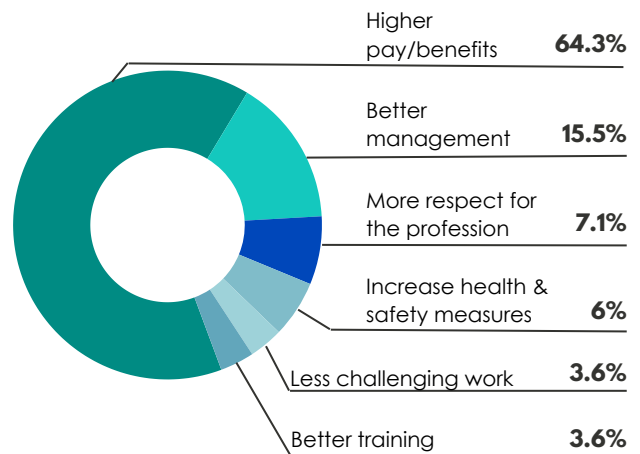
IdahoSTARS conducted a survey and listening session with former child care workers who had ended their child care employment and had no subsequent employment listed with IdahoSTARS from November 1, 2022 to November 15, 2023. 191 individuals responded to our survey and 5 participated in the listening session.



Why Child Care Professionals are leaving:



What would it take for them to return:



30% REPORT LOW PAY/BENEFITS AS THEIR REASON FOR LEAVING

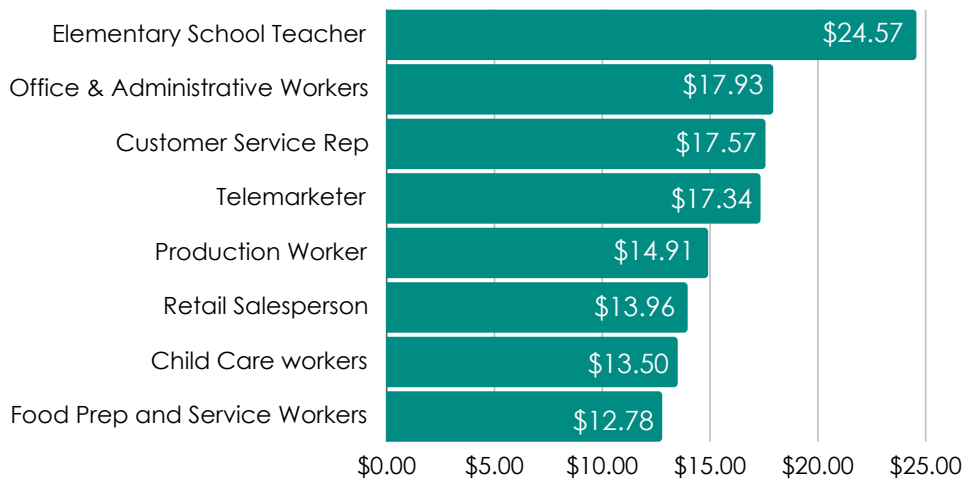
78% REPORT HOLDING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR LESS

59% REPORT THEY WERE ASSISTANT TEACHERS WHEN THEY LEFT

“Day to day it was the hardest job I’ve ever had.”

Inadequate Wages for Child Care Providers

Median Hourly Wage by Occupation in Idaho³



\$34.01

Average Hourly Wage for Americans⁴

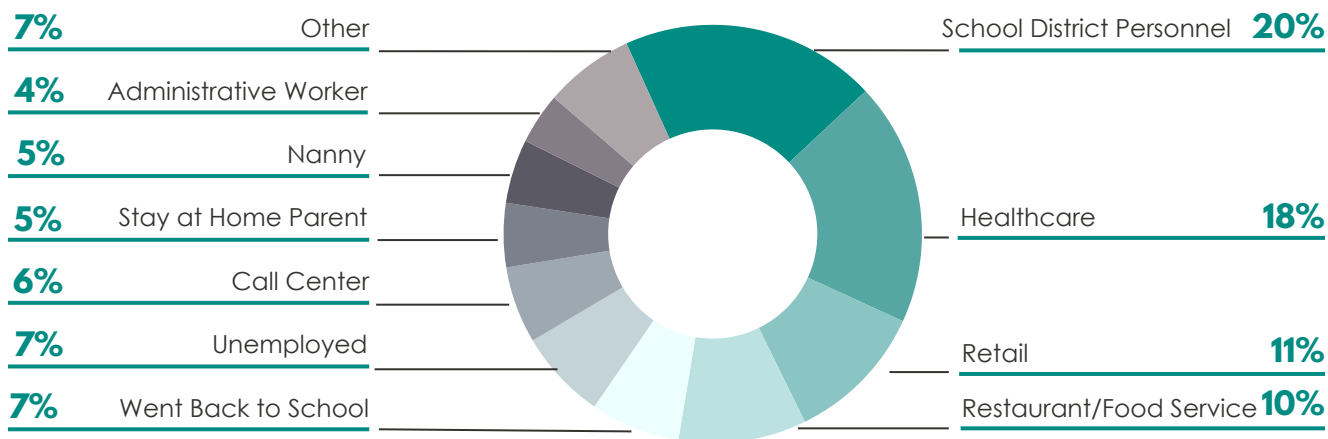
\$19.26

Median Hourly Wage for All Idahoans³

\$13.71

Median Hourly Wage for American Child Care Professionals⁵

Occupations Child Care Professionals are choosing after leaving the field:

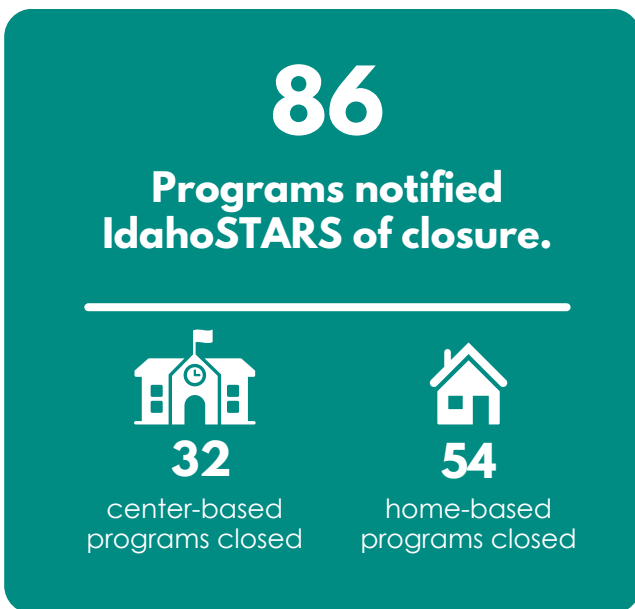


“I felt great about helping the children, but I often felt overlooked and not appreciated. Especially when it came to pay.”

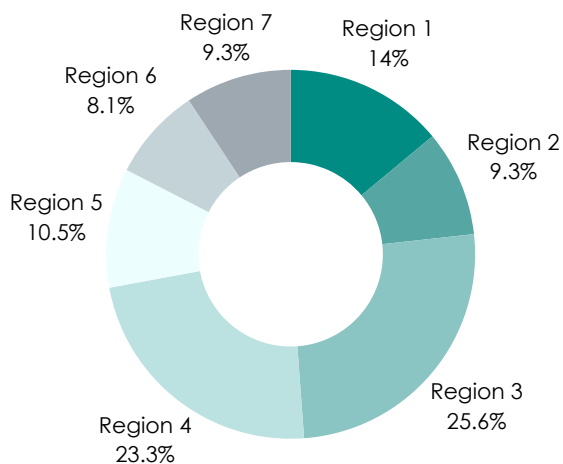
Programs are Closing

The Cost of Turnover to Child Care Businesses

High turnover rates lead to increased recruitment and training costs for child care providers. Constantly hiring and training new staff members to replace those who leave is not only time-consuming but also financially burdensome for child care centers. These costs can strain the financial sustainability of child care businesses, potentially leading to increased fees for parents or closure of facilities.



Programs Closed by region:



“It's tiring and stressful with little support or decent wage including benefits but I enjoy working with kids.”

The Impact on Families

Idaho's child care availability was reduced by a minimum of 1,321 spots in 2023. This number is calculated according to Idaho's licensing standards which categorize child care programs according to program type. The number of spots lost is likely MUCH higher than what IdahoSTARS is able to calculate. The decrease in available child care disrupts the stability and reliability that families and children depend on. The loss of child care spaces significantly impacts families seeking consistent care, potentially forcing parents to juggle work and child care responsibilities in unstable environments. This instability can compromise the quality of care and the developmental environment for children, affecting their cognitive growth, school readiness, and long-term educational outcomes.

1,321

Child Care Spots Lost



The Economic Impact

The ramifications of decreased availability of high-quality child care extends significantly to the economy. The loss of child care spots severely affects families seeking reliable care and their ability to maintain consistent employment. With frequent turnover, rising costs, and closures of child care centers, working parents grapple with finding steady care for their children, leading to reduced workforce participation, increased absenteeism, and workplace disruptions. This chain of events ultimately results in decreased productivity and diminished workforce stability, both critical components for a thriving and robust economy.

Estimated \$478 M Loss annually for Idaho's Economy

According to the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Idaho has an incredible amount of untapped potential and lost economic input due to the low levels of investment in child care.⁵



Conclusion:

Addressing the child care workforce turnover crisis is not only essential for the well-being of children and families but also crucial for maintaining a stable, productive workforce and supporting economic growth in the state of Idaho.

What are the risks for Idaho's Child Care System in 2024?



Programs continue to close.



Staff turnover continues and qualified professionals leave for other occupations.



Available child care spaces continue to decline.



Working parents struggle to find care and stay in the workforce.

Main Sources:

- 2023 Early Care & Education Professional Exit Survey - <https://idahostars.org/About-Us>
- 2023 Early Care & Education Professional Exit Sessions - Child Care Program Director & Owner Survey - <https://idahostars.org/About-Us>
- The IdahoSTARS RISE Database - <https://rise.idahostars.org/>

Additional Sources:

- 1) Shweta, Kelly Main (October 2022), Employee Turnover Rate: Definition & Calculation. <http://www.forbes.com>
- 2) Amadon, S., Lin, Y-C., Padilla, C., M. (2023). Turnover in the Center-based Child Care and Early Education Workforce: Findings from the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education. OPRE Report #2023-061. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 3) Idaholabor. (2023, October 2). Occupational Employment & Wages Survey. Idaho Labor Market Information. <https://lmi.idaho.gov/oes>
- 4) United States economy at a glance (2023) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Available at: <https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.us.htm> (Accessed: 21 December 2023).
- 5) Childcare workers: Occupational outlook handbook (2023) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Available at: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/childcare-workers.htm> (Accessed: 21 December 2023).
- 6) Staff, U.S.C. (2023) Untapped potential: Idaho, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Available at: https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/education/untapped-potential-idaho?utm_source=new.uschamberfoundation.org&utm_medium=redirect#entry:28817@1 (Accessed: 21 December 2023).



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