

# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

Northwest Maricopa Region

## 2022 Impact Report



**From birth to age 5,**  
a child's brain develops more than  
any other time in life.

90%

of a child's brain grows before kindergarten.

## Early childhood matters.

First Things First (FTF) partners with families and communities to help our state's youngest children prepare for kindergarten and beyond.

Many young children in Arizona face challenges that threaten their healthy development and learning. In the FTF Northwest Maricopa Region, there are **55,078 children** (under age 6) with **20% living in poverty**.

Here is how FTF is working to support young children and their families in this region.



Quality child care is critical to ensuring families can work and that our children are safe and prepared for kindergarten. We want to ensure that funding continues to flow to child care programs and services in our region, so they remain accessible to the greatest extent possible."

**Erin Hart**

*Chair of FTF Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council*

## FTF Northwest Maricopa Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2022]



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

7,938

Families of newborns received the Arizona Parent Kit, filled with tips and tools to help support their child's healthy development.

2,411

Families or caregivers served by receiving referrals or by participating in activities at family resource centers.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

6,788

Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.

912

Children birth to age 5 received a Quality First scholarship to attend high-quality preschools and child care programs.



### Preventive Health

1,316

Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

461

Children monitored to receive appropriate screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.

### Additional Strategies

2,317

#### Children

received a screening to detect tooth decay, which left undetected and untreated could cause damage to permanent teeth, impair speech development and failure to thrive.

73

#### Early childhood educators

received college scholarships to improve their qualifications for working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.





## Surprise family resource center helps get great grandmother resources to help four great grandchildren

When you knock on the door at Olivia Rodriguez's house the first thing you hear is the pitter patter of lots of little feet.

Then there are some whispers and some shouting for someone to come and answer the door and reveal who is behind it. As the door opens four little faces are waiting to greet you along with Rodriguez. In today's world it is not uncommon to have grandparents helping raise their grandchildren.

However, Rodriguez is not the grandma for these little ones, she is the great-grandmother. Rodriguez or "Nana" as the littles call her, is raising her 3-year-old great-grandson and her 2-year-old triplet great-granddaughters. Rodriguez received custody of her great-grandson at 18 months and the triplets at 8 months.

While Rodriguez is not new to raising babies, the amount of services and care needed for her great-grandchildren was overwhelming.

As babies, the children suffered from malnutrition. All four children have disabilities, including physical limitations and need speech and occupational therapy. When her great-grandson began acting out terribly with anger and Rodriguez sought help.

The First Things First Northwest Maricopa funds family resource centers to provide families with the information, services and support they need to help their children achieve their fullest potential. Family resource centers are community hubs that provide flexible, family-focused and culturally-responsive information, resources, referrals to services and parenting activities covering a wide range of topics, connecting families to the information, resources and services they need to support their child's optimal health and development.

As soon as Sherry Griffin with Benevilla Family Resource Center in Surprise spoke with Rodriguez, she knew she would sign her up for Benevilla's home visitation program. Griffin is familiar with grandparents raising grandchildren as she is one herself.

COVID-19 restrictions prevented them from meeting in-person, but Griffin was able to help assess the needs of Rodriguez and her babies to get them some needed resources. Griffin was able to provide books for the kids, diapers and some donated grocery gift cards. At Christmastime Griffin coordinated presents for the children.

Griffin became an ear and a shoulder for Rodriguez.

While life at the Rodriguez house is still chaotic, things are a little more settled. They received referrals for therapy and Rodriguez's granddaughters stepped in to help in the evening. Her great-grandson was diagnosed with autism and is also on the spectrum. Rodriguez was able to get him a psychologist which has helped with his anger. The triplets are continuing to walk and speak better.



Read more FTF stories at  
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories)

## FTF Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council

FTF regional partnership councils are made up of volunteers who study the unique needs of the local community and inform how funds should be used to best support the healthy development and early learning of young

children birth to age 5. FTF invests in proven programs and innovative strategies through grants to community organizations that provide services to children and families.

### FTF Northwest Maricopa SFY22 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$5,587,198

Strengthening Families

\$2,180,176

Preventive Health

\$1,278,213

Research and Evaluation

\$306,510

Parent and Community Awareness

\$167,754

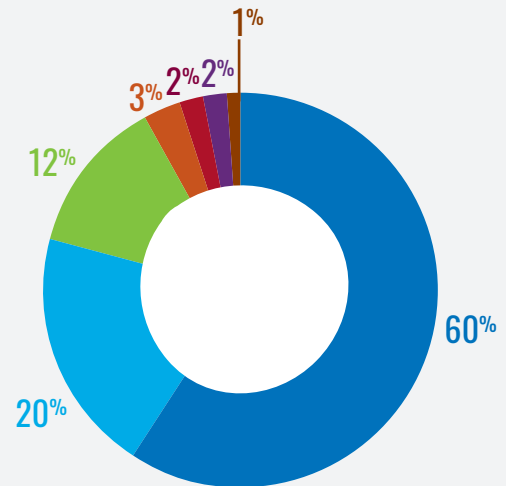
Workforce Development and Training

\$94,705

Coordination

\$55,535

**Total** \$9,670,091



### FTF Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair

Veronica De La O

Vice Chair

Erin Hart

Members

Katia Jones

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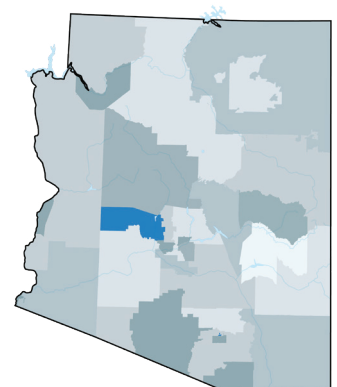
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The **FTF Northwest Maricopa Region** lies entirely in Maricopa County and is densely populated in the east, but very sparsely populated in the west. It includes: six incorporated cities and towns — Peoria, El Mirage, Glendale, Surprise, Wickenburg and Youngtown; several unincorporated places — Aguila, Morristown, Sun City, Sun City West, Waddell and Wittmann; as well as small parts of the city of Phoenix.

Learn more at

[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Northwest-Maricopa](https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/Regions/Northwest-Maricopa)