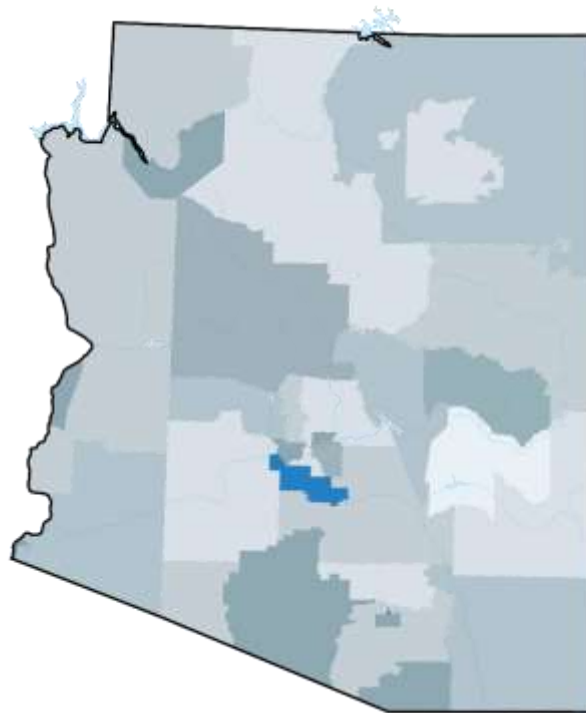


# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## **Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council**



### **State Fiscal Years 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan**

Presented to the First Things First Board  
January 10-11, 2023



### **Mission**

First Things First is an essential leader and partner in creating a family-centered, equitable, high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, well-being, health and education of all Arizona’s children, birth to age 5.

### **Vision**

All Arizona’s children are ready to succeed in school and in life.

### **Regional Partnership Councils**

First Things First’s statewide Board and its 28 regional partnership councils share the responsibility of ensuring that early childhood funds are invested in strategies aimed at improving educational and health outcomes for young children. Regional partnership councils identify the unique needs of their communities and decide how to best support young children and families in their areas. Regional councils, comprised of local volunteers, provide vision and leadership, governance and oversight. They identify, implement and fund strategies and build collaborations aimed at helping young children across Arizona succeed in school and life.

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### **Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council**

**Sandra Nasewytewa**, chair, member of the business community

**Gleebah Enos**, vice chair, at-large representative

**Deborah Chadwick**, early childhood educator

**Anna Edwards**, child care provider

**Kami Hart**, at-large representative

**Priscilla Foote**, health services provider

**Annette Lewis**, representative of the faith community

**Elisia Manuel**, representative of a philanthropic organization

**open**, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

**open**, public school administrator

**open**, at-large representative

**open**, Regional Director



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## Equity Vision Statement

Advancing equity is essential to First Things First's mission and we aspire to embody our vision for diversity, equity and inclusion through all facets of our work.

To be effective partners and contribute to a world in which Arizona's children birth to age 5 of all backgrounds have access to high-quality early childhood experiences, we must create and maintain an equitable workplace, work in partnership with the communities we serve and ensure that our funding practices align with our equity-centered values, particularly focusing on those who are most in need.

First Things First recognizes the pervasive inequities historically and currently faced by the Black, Indigenous and Latino communities and all people of color, and we strive for a world in which they will thrive. We also recognize that individuals and groups have been marginalized due to factors such as race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, mental and physical ability, national origin, income, language and religious affiliation and that people of color are particularly affected across these factors. We commit to increasing our understanding about these and all matters that create inequities and to bettering our actions internally and among the communities we serve.

This important work starts from within. As such, we strive to cultivate and maintain a workplace that:

- Reflects the diversity of our state within all levels of the organization (i.e., staff, leadership, regional partnership councils and state Board)
- Cultivates a community in which all members are welcome, seen, heard and valued
- Supports and expects each individual to engage in candid, introspective learning about equity and inclusion
- Engages an intentionally diverse, representative set of voices in key decision-making, centering on the voices of families and the community whenever possible
- Employs equitable workplace practices that yield high satisfaction, morale and career success consistently across all demographic groups
- Responds swiftly to address workplace inequities
- Ensures that our work as a funding organization – from planning to implementation to assessment – reflects our commitment to equity

Through our DEI strategic priorities and individual growth, we will be better able to meet the needs of Arizona's youngest children, serve as a trusted ally for equity and fulfill our vision that all Arizona's children are ready to succeed in school and in life.

*Approved December 2021*

**Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council SFY24 – 27 Strategic Plan**

| Prioritized Strategy Areas  | Strategy  | Identified Need  | Target Service Unit(s)*<br><i>*If applicable, identify targeted population and/or geographic areas</i> | Desired System Outcome   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Quality First And Professional Development for ECE Professionals</b> | Quality First Coaching and Incentives<br><i>(Statewide)</i> | 1) More of Arizona’s early care and education (ECE) programs need to provide high quality learning environments. 2) ECE programs, at administrative and classroom levels, require access to a system of equitable support to engage in quality improvement to achieve and sustain high quality practices. 3) Families need reliable information about ECE program quality in order to make informed decisions when seeking child care. | No TSU   | Access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education.    |
|   | Quality First Academy<br><i>(Statewide)</i>                 |  |  | Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals. |
| <b>Access to Quality Care</b>   | Quality First Scholarships<br><i>(Statewide)</i>            | The high cost of quality early care and education programs limits access for families due to affordability. High quality child care positively impacts a child’s development and readiness for school.   | 16 Scholarships  | Access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education.    |
| <b>Educating Families and Caregivers</b>                                | Family, Friend and Neighbor Care                            | FFN caregivers that provide child care in license-exempt home based settings need support and education in order to improve the quality of caregiving, interactions, and learning environments.  | Number of Family, Friend and Neighbor care-givers served - 40  | Information, services and support for families.                            |
| <b>Educating Families and Caregivers</b>                                | Home Visitation   | Parents and families, particularly those who are at-risk, need information and support to increase their knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to parenting and enhance their own health and well-being (e.g. managing stress, depression, accessing public support services, etc.). Additionally, access to regular screening for the early detection of children's developmental, vision and hearing impairments is a challenge.  | Number of families currently enrolled - 35   | Information, services and support for families.                            |
| <b>Educating Families and Caregivers</b>                                | Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities        | 1) Lack of children’s books or materials that are reflective of the Native Culture/Language in the children’s homes or community environments. 2) Lack of opportunities for children/ caregivers/families to participate in community events (activities) to learn about language and literacy through the context of culture/traditions. 3) Lack of access to coaching for ECE professionals to integrate and                         | Number of professionals currently enrolled - 6   | Information, services and support for families.                            |

|   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
|   |  | implement Native culture and language materials in early care and education settings.  |  |  |
| <b>Professional Development for ECE Professionals</b> | Child Care Health Consultation<br><i>(Statewide)</i> | ECE providers do not have enough access to information and guidance on how to implement consistent high quality health and safety policies and practices.  | No TSU   | Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals. |
| <b>Other Strategy Areas</b>                           | <b>Strategy</b>                                      | <b>Identified Need</b>   | <b>Target Service Unit</b>                     | <b>Desired System Outcome</b>  |
| <b>Health Resource Coordination</b>                   | Well Child Family Care                               | 1) Parents/caregivers frequently need support to navigate barriers in the health care system for their children. 2) Many parents/ caregivers of children do not have access to services and support that provide them with knowledge, guidance and strategies to strengthen their child's development. 3) Children's developmental delays and vision/ hearing impairments are not always detected early. 4) Families are not always receiving preventive services. | Number of children who received services – 100 | Access to high-quality preventive and continuous health care.              |

**Please describe how the Regional Partnership Council's SFY24-27 Strategic Plan promotes equity and support of under-resourced and underserved children and their families.**

The Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council collaborated with both the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) tribal government and Gila River Health Care to identify and prioritize the needs of families residing in the Gila River Communities. This included identifying the needs of under-resourced and underserved children and their families, especially those most vulnerable populations such as single-parent households, teen parents, grandparents raising grandchildren and those families living in rural isolation. Data from the 2020 Regional Needs and Assets Report demonstrates that nearly three-quarters (74%) of young children in the Gila River Indian Community Region live in a single-parent household, a higher proportion than in all Arizona reservations combined (64%). More than half (54%) of households with young children in the region are single-female households, a proportion more than twice that of Arizona overall (24%). Of the children living in a grandparent's household in the region, close to two-thirds (65%) live with a grandparent who is responsible for them. Additionally, a higher proportion of births in the region were to mothers who were younger than 18 (6%) and younger than 20 (15%) compared to births across the state (2% and 6%, respectively).

Based on the focused discussions with the tribe, and the available data, the regional council prioritized those strategies that had access to, and are anticipated to have the greatest impact on, the aforementioned vulnerable populations. Identified strategies include: Well-Child and Family Care (WCFC), Home Visitation, Family, Friends and Neighbor Care, Quality First (QF) and Quality First Scholarships. In implementation of these strategies, the regional council will specifically target teen parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, single female parents and care providers in isolated communities within the region.

The Well-Child and Family Care Strategy will assist and support families in navigating potential barriers within the health system. The regional council plans to serve 100 children through WCFC's tiered system that is offered through Zero - Three's Healthy Steps program. The regional council is very excited to see this strategy at work, for it will not only transform Gila River Indian Community health system culture, but also engage families prenatally and support families that are in need of

further services to better their overall well-being. Historically, the Well-Child and Family Care Strategy has been very successful with engaging teen parents and providing support early in pregnancy to age 5.

The Home Visitation Strategy will provide resources and offer in-home support to both teen parents and first-time parents. The regional council will serve 35 children through the Parents as Teachers Home Visitation model.

The Family, Friends and Neighbor Care Strategy will provide support and serve grandparents, and other non-parental caregivers, raising children in Gila River Indian Community, especially those providing services in rural isolated communities. In addition to supporting caregivers, the Family, Friends and Neighbor Care Strategy is anticipated to increase collaboration between regional caregivers and the Gila River Indian Community Education and Health departments, which will supplement by provide education on such topics as childhood obesity and healthy lifestyles, and supporting families on their child's transition to kindergarten with consistency and limited absences.

Finally, in alignment with the Gila River Indian Communities tribal priorities, the regional council has chosen to support culture and language preservation. The Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities Strategy will support current activities and programs that target language and culture specific to GRIC's cultural values. This particular strategy will look to expand current programs that support families through book drives, professional development in GRIC's culture and traditions, and extend to community events that further promote language, literacy and culture.

**Regional Allocation and Proposed Funding Plan Summary SFY24 – 27**  
**Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council**

| Allocations and Funding Sources               | 2024               | 2025               | 2026               | 2027             |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| FY Allocation                                 | \$574,373          | \$574,373          | \$574,279          | \$574,279        |
| Population Based Allocation                   | \$424,498          | \$424,498          | \$424,498          | \$424,498        |
| Discretionary Allocation                      | \$149,875          | \$149,875          | \$149,781          | \$149,781        |
| Other (FTF Fund balance addition)             |                    |                    |                    |                  |
| Carry Forward From Previous Year              | \$528,264          | \$538,229          | \$472,940          | \$407,556        |
| <b>Total Regional Council Funds Available</b> | <b>\$1,102,637</b> | <b>\$1,112,602</b> | <b>\$1,047,219</b> | <b>\$981,835</b> |

| Strategies   | Proposed Allotted | Proposed Allotted | Proposed Allotted | Proposed Allotted |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Quality First Academy                                | \$2,000           | \$2,000           | \$2,000           | \$2,000           |
| Quality First Coaching & Incentives                  | \$58,700          | \$58,700          | \$58,700          | \$58,700          |
| Quality First Scholarships                           | \$228,800         | \$228,800         | \$228,800         | \$228,800         |
| Child Care Health Consultation                       | \$13,600          | \$13,600          | \$13,600          | \$13,600          |
| Well Child and Family Care                           | \$120,000         | \$120,000         | \$120,000         | \$120,000         |
| Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care                    | \$30,000          | \$30,000          | \$30,000          | \$30,000          |
| Home Visitation                                      | \$200,000         | \$200,000         | \$200,000         | \$200,000         |
| Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities | \$75,597          | \$75,597          | \$75,597          | \$75,597          |
| Statewide Evaluation                                 | \$23,847          | \$23,847          | \$23,847          | \$23,847          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$752,544</b>  | <b>\$752,544</b>  | <b>\$752,544</b>  | <b>\$752,544</b>  |

|   |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended:</b> | <b>\$350,093</b> | <b>\$360,058</b> | <b>\$294,675</b> | <b>\$229,291</b> |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|

| Fiscal Year           | 2020           | 2024    | 2025    | 2026    | 2027    |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| % to Board Priorities |                | 80.88 % | 80.88 % | 80.88 % | 80.88 % |
| % to Quality First*   | 7.46%          | 9.87 %  | 9.87 %  | 9.87 %  | 9.87 %  |
| Fiscal Year           | 4 Year Average |         |         |         |         |
| % to Board Priorities | 80.88%         |         |         |         |         |
| % to Quality First*   | 9.87%          |         |         |         |         |

\*Includes QF Academy, QF Coaching and Incentives, and Child Care Health Consultation.

