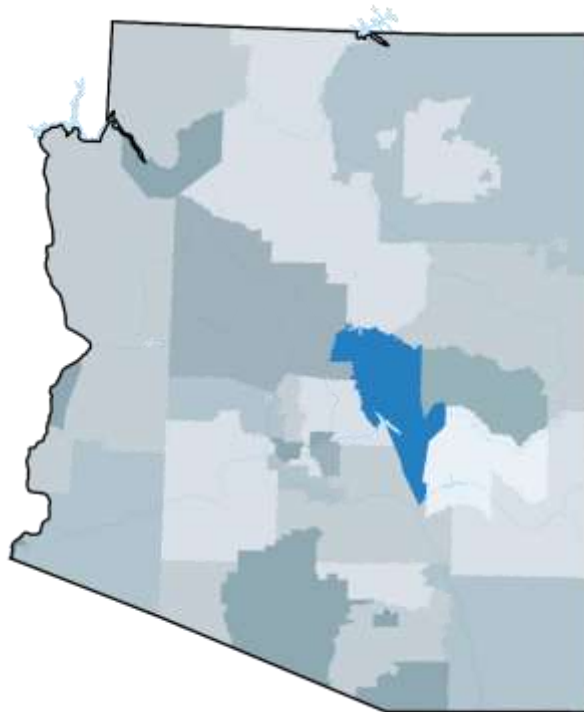


# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## Gila 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.

---

### **Gila Regional Partnership Council**

**Kristin Wade**, chair, health services provider

**Sherry Dorothy**, vice chair, public school administrator

**Debora Alm-Bunney**, at-large representative

**Matthew Crespin**, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

**Debbie Leverance**, early childhood educator

**Charles Proudfoot**, representative of a philanthropic organization

**Adrea Ricke**, at large representative

**Fernando Shipley**, representative of the faith community

**Tashina Smith**, tribal representative

**Pam Trobaugh**, child care provider

**Kayla Van Cleve**, member of the business community

**Carolyn Haro**, 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 Regional Partnership Council SFY24 – 27 Strategic Plan

Prioritized Strategy Areas	Strategy	Identified Need	Target Service Unit(s)* <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 <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 <i>(Statewide)</i>			Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals.
<b>Access to Quality Care</b>	Quality First Scholarships <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.	No TSU	Access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education.
<b>Educating Families and Caregivers</b>	Parenting Education	1) Some parents need additional knowledge and capacity on how to best support school readiness within the home environment. 2) Some parents need additional knowledge around positive parenting strategies that promote positive behavior. 3) Some parents need additional knowledge around language and literacy development and how to best support language and literacy within the home environment.	No TSU	Information, services and support for families.
<b>Professional Development for ECE Professionals</b>	Child Care Health Consultation <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>Building Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years</b>	Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness <i>(FTF-Directed)</i>	1) Lack of awareness of the importance of early childhood health and development. 2) Lack of awareness of FTF as a trusted source of early childhood information and programs/services	No TSU	Public understanding and support.

<b>Building Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years</b>	Media <i>(Statewide)</i>	1) Lack of awareness of the importance of early childhood health and development. 2) Lack of awareness of FTF as a trusted source of early childhood information and programs/services.	No TSU	Public understanding and support.
<b>Other Strategy Areas</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Identified Need</b>	<b>Target Service Unit</b>	<b>Desired System Outcome</b>
<b>Language and Literacy</b>	Book Distribution	Some families lack access to developmentally appropriate books.	Number of children currently enrolled 1300	Information, services and supports for families.
<b>Identifying and Addressing Developmental Concerns</b>	Developmental and Sensory Screening	1) For many children, developmental delays and vision/hearing impairments are not detected early due to lack of screening. 2) Many children with possible developmental delays, or vision/hearing concerns are not being referred to treatment providers.	Number of children screened 300	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 Regional Council has historically and currently promotes the concept that services be available to all children birth to age 5 and their families. The regional council has emphatically expressed that “the rancher living far outside of town” should have the same access to services that “folks that live in town” do. This desire was reflected in regional council conversation and the intention of each strategy specifying availability in both rural and frontier areas. It was discovered that having both in-person and virtual options for services works well within the region as it affords service availability for families who experience transportation challenges and scheduling conflicts, thereby enabling accessibility that would not otherwise be available to them. Therefore, the regional council intent is to provide services in as many formats as possible, including through the mail system for book distribution.

The regional council is aware of the needs of the many low-income families in the region. They have invested in Quality First scholarships to enable lower income families’ accessibility to quality child care. They are also very aware that the region is designated as a child care desert and plan continued conversations regarding quality child care availability throughout the region. The regional council has also opted to target part of the media strategy towards targeted oral health education, inclusive of promoting the dental benefit that is available for children who are currently enrolled in AHCCCS.

This region is home to many different cultures including various ethnicities and rural/frontier locations. Each community within the region has a different culture and the regional council continues to adapt outreach to help accommodate the differences and be inclusive of all people. The Tonto Apache Tribe is a part of our community within the Gila region. The regional council makes a concerted effort to consult with the tribe in ongoing efforts to promote health, wellness, access to quality child care, learning and screening services within the area. The regional council strives to work with each community in addressing unique needs that may be identified. It is the expectation of the Gila Regional Council that all residents be served without discrimination.

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

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$682,076	\$682,076	\$733,808	\$733,808
Population Based Allocation	\$457,456	\$457,456	\$457,456	\$457,456
Discretionary Allocation	\$224,620	\$224,620	\$276,352	\$276,352
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$43,944	\$31,482	(\$12,195)	(\$4,140)
<b>Total Regional Council Funds Available</b>	<b>\$726,020</b>	<b>\$713,558</b>	<b>\$721,613</b>	<b>\$729,668</b>

Strategies	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Quality First Academy	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$88,010	\$88,010	\$88,010	\$88,010
Quality First Scholarships	\$381,375	\$381,375	\$381,375	\$381,375
Child Care Health Consultation	\$23,800	\$23,800	\$23,800	\$23,800
Developmental and Sensory Screening	\$44,223	\$44,223	\$44,223	\$44,223
Book Distribution	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Parenting Education	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000
Statewide Evaluation	\$30,472	\$30,472	\$30,472	\$30,472
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Media	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$780,380</b>	<b>\$780,380</b>	<b>\$780,380</b>	<b>\$780,380</b>
<b>Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended*:</b>	<b>(\$54,360)</b>	<b>(\$66,822)</b>	<b>(\$58,767)</b>	<b>(\$50,712)</b>

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		82.73 %	82.73 %	82.73 %	82.73 %
% to Quality First**	11.41%	14.77 %	14.77 %	14.77 %	14.77 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	82.73%				
% to Quality First**	14.77%				

\* Per FTF State Board direction, allotments reflect the budgeting of projected spending, therefore in some years' total allotments may exceed total means of financing. However, actual expenditures against the allotments are expected to be fully supported by revenues and each year the region is anticipated to end with a carry forward balance which is reflected in the subsequent year's carry forward balance.

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