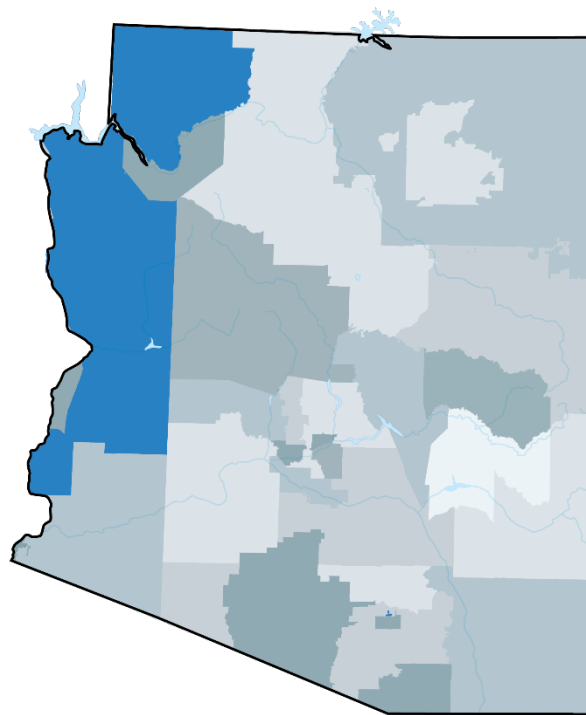


FIRST THINGS FIRST

La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council



State Fiscal Years 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan

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

FIRST THINGS FIRST

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.

La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

Christy Rail, chair, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

Debi Pennington, vice chair, representative of a philanthropic organization

Kip Anderson, at-large representative

Shawn Bristle, member of the business community

Denise Burley, health services provider

Marguerite Chieffo, early childhood educator

Jose Garcia, representative of the faith community

Suzanne Leonelli, child care provider

Betsy Lewis, tribal official or employee

Lori Long, at large representative

Carol Timpson, public school administrator

Vanessa Sandoval, 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

La Paz/Mohave 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
Quality First And Professional Development for ECE Professionals	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.
Access to Quality Care	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.
Educating Families and Caregivers	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 80-120	Information, services and support for families.
Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources	Family Support Coordination	Some families experience challenges accessing timely and effective services to address their immediate needs.	Number of families currently enrolled 100-250	Information, services and support for families.
Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources	Family Support and Literacy Systems Change <i>(FTF-Directed)</i>	See Appendix A	No TSU	Information, services and support for families.

Professional Development for ECE Professionals	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.
Professional Development for ECE Professionals	Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation <i>(Statewide)</i>	Early childhood professionals in child care centers/homes, home visitation, Family Support for Children with Developmental Concerns, and Family Friend and Neighbor programs need support in appropriately understanding, identifying and responding to the social emotional developmental needs and behavioral challenges of young children.	Number of center based early care and education programs served SFY24-0 SFY25-18 SFY26-20 SFY27-22 Number of home visitation programs served 4	Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals.
Professional Development for ECE Professionals	First Things First College Scholarships <i>(Statewide)</i>	1) Effective educational preparation provides those working in regulated early care and education programs the knowledge and skills to develop high-quality learning environments and support the healthy development of young children. 2) Teachers and directors working in regulated programs need financial support to achieve degrees in ECE.	No TSU	Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals.

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 La Paz/Mohave Regional Council hired a consultant to synthesize regional data, develop a region-specific parent survey, facilitate guided discussion groups with early childhood professionals servicing the region and conduct seven key informant interviews. The regional council actively participated in three workshops to identify their regional priorities by using the Elements of a Healthy Community model (the Elements of a Healthy Community model was designed and produced by Vitalyst Health Foundation in collaboration with community partners; the Elements are inspired by the work of the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) in order to address the regional gaps and barriers.

The regional council is addressing the needs of the region by focusing on targeted areas of the region in the following ways:

- Quality First Scholarships will meet the needs of families in the most rural areas of the region. The regional partnership council prioritized the six most rural zip codes in the region with childcare centers to receive Quality First scholarships. The regional partnership council has given approval for 2-star rated centers to receive Quality First scholarships as they realize these centers are located in rural, isolated parts of the region.
- The La Paz/Mohave Regional Council determined the need was to provide home visitation services in parts of the region where there are gaps in services. The regional partnership council shifted their approach from a universal approach to a targeted approach for Home Visitation. Their

approach is to specifically address the gaps in services, focusing on areas where there is no home visitation available as well as meeting the needs of families with risk factors such as, lower-income families that might “slip through the cracks”, families where a livable income to meet basic needs is a stressor, families with multiple children under the age of 5, families with child developmental concerns and families isolated from necessary services. The regional council also determined that home visiting services would need to be implemented at the highest intensity of the program model that is awarded the grant, as the target population is for families with risk factors.

- Family Support Systems Change strategy will continue the work of the Service Coordination Strategy from the past funding cycle. The strategy will move the foundational work established by the Program Coordination Specialist throughout the region during the past funding cycle. The Regional Council has identified the need to add an additional Program Coordination Specialist in consideration of the large geographic area to better support the system change work in the region. The two program coordination specialists will cover separate parts of the region in order to support the entire region in coordinating equitable access to health services, especially in rural areas, meeting the needs of families in rural areas through coordination of early childhood providers and school districts (center hubs of the community) to bring services into the communities.

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Council was able to closely analyze the region from multiple perspectives, including data from reports, community partner perspectives, key informant perspectives and perspectives of families. The regional council determined their priorities based on the information and discussions they had. They were able to understand how the schools in the most isolated communities are the main trusted source for support and how essential they are in their communities. The regional council was able to pinpoint gaps in services and identify opportunities for both continued and new coordination efforts throughout the region’s most isolated communities.

Regional Allocation and Proposed Funding Plan Summary SFY24 – 27
La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$3,074,116	\$3,074,116	\$3,141,973	\$3,141,973
Population Based Allocation	\$1,942,344	\$1,942,344	\$1,942,344	\$1,942,344
Discretionary Allocation	\$1,131,772	\$1,131,772	\$1,199,629	\$1,199,629
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$1,284,032	\$1,013,294	\$668,226	\$391,014
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$4,358,148	\$4,087,410	\$3,810,199	\$3,532,987

Strategies	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Quality First Academy	\$11,500	\$11,500	\$11,500	\$11,500
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$281,470	\$281,470	\$281,470	\$281,470
Quality First Scholarships	\$1,645,795	\$1,186,824	\$1,005,485	\$948,024
First Things First College Scholarships	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000
Child Care Health Consultation	\$78,200	\$78,200	\$78,200	\$78,200
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation	\$24,480	\$244,800	\$269,280	\$293,760
Family Support & Literacy Systems Change	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$220,000
Family Support Coordination	\$480,000	\$480,000	\$480,000	\$480,000
Home Visitation	\$1,089,250	\$1,089,250	\$1,089,250	\$1,089,250
Statewide Evaluation	\$130,473	\$130,473	\$130,473	\$130,473
Total	\$3,982,168	\$3,743,517	\$3,586,658	\$3,553,677
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended*:	\$375,980	\$343,893	\$223,541	(\$20,690)

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		96.72 %	96.51 %	96.36 %	96.32 %
% to Quality First**	8.50%	9.32 %	9.91 %	10.34 %	10.44 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	96.48%				
% to Quality First**	9.98%				

* 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.

APPENDIX A
SFY24 Funding Plan – System Change Planning Document
La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council
Family Support and Literacy System Change

Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced	<i>System Area:</i> Service Coordination
	<i>Problem to address:</i> The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council continues to recognize the need to build on regional systems level change by bringing together community partners to collaboratively identify opportunities to coordinate and strengthen existing early education and care, health and family support services to address gaps and barriers. Families throughout the region often have difficulty accessing programs and services, especially those in the most rural parts of the region. Coordination efforts will be addressed by two Program Coordination Specialists working cross regionally in the La Paz/Mohave and Hualapai Tribe Regions to enhance the coordinated referral form system and work across the regions to develop and strengthen partnerships with other organizations, programs and services that assist families with young children. Additionally, the specialists will work in the outlying communities to establish resource hubs in partnership with the schools, churches and other locations where the community congregates. They will also work with other organizations’ mobile service units to support collaborations in conducting health and developmental screenings and referrals to services. In specific areas throughout the La Paz/Mohave region, the specialists will address the misunderstandings and underutilization of available resources and services to support access to quality early care and education.
	<i>Geographic area:</i> La Paz/Mohave Region and Hualapai Tribe Region
	<i>Target Audience:</i> Early childhood providers, community partners, stakeholders
Expected Impact	<p><i>Expected Impact:</i> The expected impact of the strategy is for the region to have a strengthened capacity for families to best support their children through an easier way of accessing services appropriate for their needs. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated home visitation referral form systems in place and utilized at the community and sub-regional level • Increase in the number of child care providers contracted with DES to serve children on DES child care subsidy. • Community recruitment effort to increase the accessibility and usability of DES child care subsidy by eligible families. • The establishment of at least one new family resource hub in each County for each year of the strategic plan.

Timeline: SFY24:

The two Program Coordination Specialists will establish new and existing contacts in the early childhood field throughout the region. They will support early childhood partners in identifying barriers and gaps to better serve families in all parts of the region.

- Reconvene the Early Childhood Systems Coordination Meetings, Home Visitation Coalition, La Paz Provider Meeting and Hualapai Provider meeting with support of the regional director.
- Begin working directly with early childhood partners in updating coordinated referral forms and early childhood resource lists throughout the region.
- Reach out to child care centers to provide education on early childhood resources and provide support in coordination efforts of referrals to those resources.
- Coordinate efforts with child care centers and DES in streamlining DES subsidy applications.
- Reach out to school districts in the most isolated parts of the region to begin discussions of developing resource centers.
- Coordinate efforts between early childhood providers and resource centers to provide attainable services to families in need.
- Provide quarterly updates to the regional council.
- With the support of the regional director, develop strategies and goals for the following year based on regional needs.