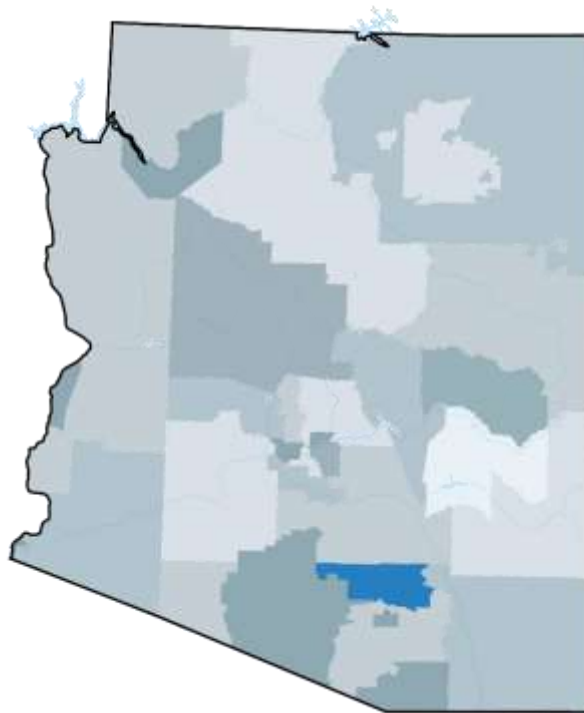


# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## **Pima North 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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### **Pima North Regional Partnership Council**

**Susan Shinn**, chair, public school administrator

**Mandy Carlsen**, vice chair, health services provider

**Katayoun Anderson**, representative of the faith community

**Eileen Caito**, at large representative

**Nicholas Clement**, at large representative

**Heidi Elizondo Hultquist**, representative of a philanthropic organization

**Daniel Huff**, member of the business community

**Dorothy Johnson**, early childhood educator

**Amber Jones**, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

**Celina Robles**, child care provider

**open**, at large representative

**Amy Morales Baum**, 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*

**Pima North 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	Community Based Language and Literacy	1) Lack of opportunities for parents and children to participate in hands-on, modeling, or targeted language and literacy parenting workshops. 2) Lack of awareness of the importance of early language and literacy.	Number of workshops conducted: 400-500	Information, services and support for families.
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 enrolled: 320-375	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.

<b>Professional Development for ECE Professionals</b>	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.
<b>Professional Development for ECE Professionals</b>	Professional Development of ECE Practitioners	The first five years of life are a period of incredible growth in all areas of development. The earliest relationships with caregivers can promote healthy brain development, support young children’s social and emotional skills, and support language and literacy development starting from birth. ECE practitioners have minimal access to high-quality professional development in these content areas of infant toddler development, social emotional development, and early language and literacy.	Number of practitioners educated: 245-275	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>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: 400-500	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 Pima North Regional Partnership Council worked together over the past year to develop the SFY24-27 Strategic Plan and included a deep dive into data and narratives with representation from under-resourced communities in the region as well as four specific strategic planning sessions. Through the data deep dive, the regional council identified a few key needs among children and families who are under-resourced and underserved. First, the strategic plan addresses one of the largest barriers which is caregiver awareness and access to the early childhood system. New for SFY24, the regional council will fund a Program Coordinator Specialist whose role will be to create a more seamless system to better serve families especially those with the highest needs in the Pima North region. Second, the Pima North region includes many young children being raised in multi-generational families and households, the regional council is addressing this through the work of home visitation targeted for families who are at highest risk and need.

Economic hardships families have faced through the past few years due to COVID, and in general were also identified as a challenge. Data from the region highlighted that 25% of children under the age of six and their family live in poverty and the average child care cost is 9 to 16% of the median household income. The high cost of child care is a barrier to children accessing care that helps children achieve long-term educational and health benefits. To provide multi-generational opportunities that address this, the regional council designated 20 Quality First Scholarships for the Family Engagement Network. The Family Engagement Network is a program that supports families parenting young children who are also enrolled in higher education. While the parent works toward further education at the local community college simultaneously, their young child is able to access a quality rated Quality First early learning program. This approach increases the probability of success for both generations and the potential to eliminate the disparities of poverty. Additionally, the strategic plan sets aside over three million dollars to provide access to high-quality early learning for children and their families who live at or under 300% of the Federal Poverty Line.

Finally, the regional council identified that only 50% of children are meeting reading proficiency in Pima North. To address this, the regional council prioritized funding toward Community Based Language and Literacy, an approach that will target young children and families of highest need and meet them in trusted community places such as libraries and apartment complexes to provide opportunities to learn about the importance of literacy at an early age. This strategy also aims at the multi-generational approach as grandparents raising their grandchildren, family caregivers and anyone who is helping to raise a child will have access to the workshops provided.

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

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$8,777,855	\$8,777,855	\$8,756,596	\$8,756,596
Population Based Allocation	\$6,939,736	\$6,939,736	\$6,939,736	\$6,939,736
Discretionary Allocation	\$1,838,119	\$1,838,119	\$1,816,860	\$1,816,860
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$2,273,486	\$1,989,798	\$1,451,573	\$892,087
<b>Total Regional Council Funds Available</b>	<b>\$11,051,341</b>	<b>\$10,767,653</b>	<b>\$10,208,169</b>	<b>\$9,648,683</b>
Strategies	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Quality First Academy	\$63,500	\$63,500	\$63,500	\$63,500
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$1,706,960	\$1,706,960	\$1,706,960	\$1,706,960
Quality First Scholarships	\$3,730,630	\$3,730,630	\$3,730,630	\$3,730,630
First Things First College Scholarships	\$127,200	\$127,200	\$127,200	\$127,200
Professional Development for Early Childhood Practitioners	\$614,647	\$614,647	\$614,647	\$614,647
Child Care Health Consultation	\$431,800	\$431,800	\$431,800	\$431,800
Well Child and Family Care	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000
Community Based Language and Literacy	\$274,647	\$274,647	\$274,647	\$274,647
Family Support & Literacy Systems Change	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
Home Visitation	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000
Statewide Evaluation	\$363,624	\$363,624	\$363,624	\$363,624
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness	\$18,500	\$18,500	\$18,500	\$18,500
Media	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,181,508</b>	<b>\$10,181,508</b>	<b>\$10,181,508</b>	<b>\$10,181,508</b>
<b>Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended*:</b>	<b>\$869,833</b>	<b>\$586,145</b>	<b>\$26,661</b>	<b>(\$532,825)</b>

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		90.53 %	90.53 %	90.53 %	90.53 %
% to Quality First**	18.35%	21.62 %	21.62 %	21.62 %	21.62 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	90.53%				
% to Quality First**	21.62%				

\* 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**  
**Pima North Regional Partnership Council**

<b>Pima North Regional Partnership Council</b> <b>Family Support and Literacy Systems Change</b>	
<b>Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced</b>	<p><i>System Area:</i>                      Region-wide Coordination of Early Childhood Services (Service Coordination)</p>
	<p><i>Problem to address:</i>                      The Pima North Regional Council identified the lack of cohesion of the early childhood system and the need for a strong coordinated referral system. These identified needs contribute to caregivers lack of awareness of available resources and difficulty connecting families to services in the region. Often the early childhood system works in silos, which further adds to the challenges of connecting families to appropriate resources. Families are left to navigate the system on their own which can feel overwhelming and add to the stress they are already facing. The region would benefit from bolstering the infrastructure of the existing services to eliminate the silos and support families’ navigation of services.</p>
	<p><i>Geographic area:</i>                      Pima North. The intention is to partner with Pima South which is funding a Program Coordination Specialist in the same capacity to create a seamless system across Pima County.</p>
	<p><i>Target Audience:</i>                      The Program Coordination Specialist will target agencies and community partners who are part of the early childhood infrastructure in Pima North.</p>
<b>Expected Impact</b>	<p><i>Expected Impact:</i>                      The goal of the regional council is to create a seamless system for families to access services. They will begin with hiring a Program Coordination Specialist who would serve in this role to: connect families to appropriate resources (including learning from the birth to age 5 family community to determine which approaches work best for seamlessly accessing information and resources); sustain the coordinated referral system in place so that families receive services from the program that best meets their needs; increase collaboration between agencies; and educate health care, child care and family support providers on community resources so that referrals are made to the most appropriate service providers.</p>
	<p><i>Timeline:</i>                      The Pima South and Pima North Program Coordination Specialists will partner to educate and empower Pima County families and children by coordinating efforts with community stakeholders, organizations and agencies that support young children, families and early care and education providers. The goal is to strengthen and sustain a high-quality early childhood system encompassing services in health, family support and early care and education with an emphasis on supporting families in navigating the complexities of the early childhood system. In addition to families, supporting early care and education providers and connecting them to resources and supports will also be emphasized. Overall, there is a shared vision of the regional councils where all young children</p>



and families thrive and reach their full potential through a high-quality interconnected early childhood system that transcends Pima North and Pima South regions.

Examples of deliverables anticipated to occur in the State Fiscal Year 2024 (SFY24) timeframe:

- Quarter One: Hire and onboard a new First Things First Program Coordination Specialist with the goal to complete the hiring process by September 2023. Onboarding of the Program Coordination Specialist will occur throughout SFY24.
- Quarter Two: Convene and survey the current early childhood system and families with young children in the region with the Program Coordination Specialist presenting findings to the regional council. With the support of the Pima South Regional Council and Pima South Regional Director and working in partnership with the Pima North Regional Council and Pima North Regional Director, develop strategies and goals based on the findings by December 2023.
- Quarter Two and beyond: Operationalize strategies developed, which will include coordinating efforts between early learning, family support and health stakeholders to connect families with services. Also driven by the findings, approaches will be developed to support families to learn about available services and how to seamlessly access them. In addition, early care and education providers will be connected with services and supports within the early childhood system.

Ongoing: Provide quarterly updates to the regional council.