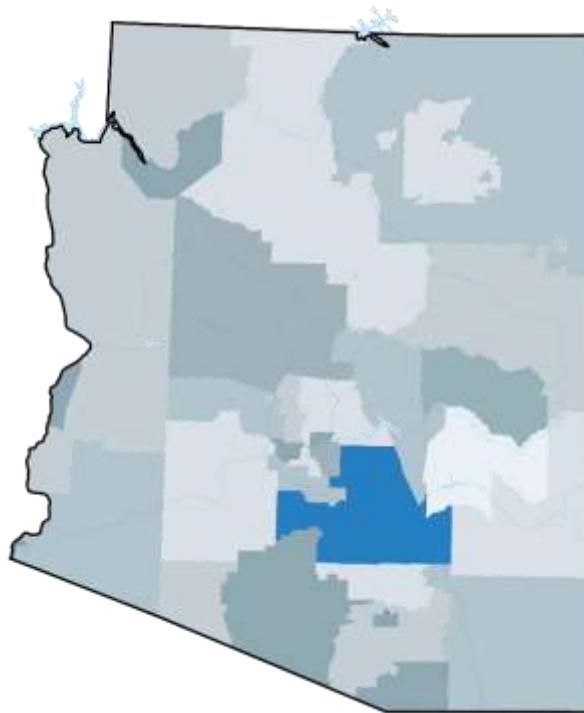


# **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

## **Pinal 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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#### **Pinal Regional Partnership Council**

**Briana Frenzel**, chair, at-large representative

**Jason Clark**, vice chair, member of the business community

**Kameron Bachert**, at large representative

**Kelly Cota**, early childhood educator

**Lisa Dempsey**, child care provider

**Stuart Fain**, representative of the faith community

**Lisa Garcia**, tribal representative

**Michael Kintner**, representative of a philanthropic organization

**Jessica Morehead**, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

**Deanna Smith-Stout**, public school administrator

**Jan Vidimos**, health services provider

**Katrina Devinny**, 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*

## Pinal 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>	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 225-300	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 65-107	Information, services and support for families.

<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>Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources</b>	Family Support and Literacy Systems Change <i>(FTF-Directed)</i>	See Appendix A	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>Professional Development for ECE Professionals</b>	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 20	Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals.
<b>Professional Development for ECE Professionals</b>	Early Learning Systems Change	See Appendix A	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.

Other Strategy Areas	Strategy	Identified Need	Target Service Unit	Desired System Outcome
<b>Oral Health</b>	Oral Health	1) Many children and expectant mothers lack access to preventive oral health services. 2) Continued prevalence of tooth decay in children and expectant mothers. 3) Many ECE professionals lack sufficient access to oral health education.	Number of children served 659  Number of expectant mothers served 0  Number of early care and education (ECE) programs educated 10-15	Access to high-quality preventive and continuous health care.
<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 1909	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 Pinal Regional Partnership Council works diligently to promote equity and support children who are under-resourced and underserved and their families in the Pinal Region. The SFY24-27 Strategic Plan helps to support this work by:

- The Oral Health strategy will prioritize communities that have few or no pediatric dentists.
- Quality First Scholarships will be targeted for those families in the gap between DES subsidies and being able to afford quality child care.
- The Family, Friend and Neighbor Care strategy will work to engage new kinship and home-care providers and is a good resource for non-traditional families such as grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Many of our strategies promote relationship-building. This is culturally appropriate and responsive to our nested tribe, the Ak Chin Indian Community.
- The strategies also promote and prioritize locations to be equitable with access for all persons regardless of physical ability and will continue to reflect the diversity of the Pinal region in the funded strategies and our system-building work.

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

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$4,799,686	\$4,799,686	\$4,722,775	\$4,722,775
Population Based Allocation	\$3,889,957	\$3,889,957	\$3,889,957	\$3,889,957
Discretionary Allocation	\$909,729	\$909,729	\$832,818	\$832,818
Carry Forward From Previous Year	-	\$142,740	\$170,136	\$120,621
<b>Total Regional Council Funds Available</b>	<b>\$4,799,686</b>	<b>\$4,942,426</b>	<b>\$4,892,911</b>	<b>\$4,843,396</b>

Strategies	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Early Learning Systems Change	\$202,042	\$202,042	\$202,042	\$202,042
Quality First Academy	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$537,120	\$537,120	\$537,120	\$537,120
Quality First Scholarships	\$2,092,315	\$2,092,315	\$2,092,315	\$2,092,315
Child Care Health Consultation	\$122,400	\$122,400	\$122,400	\$122,400
Developmental and Sensory Screening	\$300,467	\$300,467	\$300,467	\$300,467
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation	\$291,320	\$291,320	\$291,320	\$291,320
Oral Health	\$114,700	\$114,700	\$114,700	\$114,700
Family Support & Literacy Systems Change	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
Family, Friend and Neighbor Care	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000
Home Visitation	\$428,043	\$428,043	\$428,043	\$428,043
Parenting Education	\$305,000	\$305,000	\$305,000	\$305,000
Statewide Evaluation	\$196,117	\$196,117	\$196,117	\$196,117
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Media	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,232,524</b>	<b>\$5,232,524</b>	<b>\$5,232,524</b>	<b>\$5,232,524</b>

<b>Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended*:</b>	<b>(\$432,838)</b>	<b>(\$290,098)</b>	<b>(\$339,613)</b>	<b>(\$389,128)</b>
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Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		88.31 %	88.31 %	88.31 %	88.31 %
% to Quality First**	8.71%	12.94 %	12.94 %	12.94 %	12.94 %

Fiscal Year	4 Year Average
% to Board Priorities	88.31%
% to Quality First**	12.94%

\* 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**  
**Pinal Regional Partnership Council**

**Pinal Regional Partnership Council -  
 Early Learning Systems Change**

<b>Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced</b>	<i>System Area:</i> Workforce Pipeline
	<i>Problem to address:</i> Recruiting, training and retaining qualified child care staff in the Pinal Region is an issue. Child care centers are struggling to maintain full staffing due to competition from larger counties, low salary and few professional development opportunities. The intent of this system-building strategy is to align with existing efforts of system partners to create a robust pipeline for early care and education professionals from high school to college and then to internships/apprenticeships at local child care provider locations.
	<i>Geographic area:</i> The Pinal Region
	<i>Target Audience:</i> Junior high, high school and college students
<b>Expected Impact</b>	<i>Expected Impact:</i> The expected outcomes include the expansion of a skilled and prepared workforce and improved access to quality early learning within the early care and education childhood system. We expect to see an increase in number of CTE programs, and increased participation in these programs. In addition, this work will build stability for families working in early childhood as well as work to build and stabilize the early care and education system as a whole in the Pinal Region.
	<i>Timeline:</i> RFGA to be awarded for a July 1, 2023 start date and will run through June 30, 2027. The Scope of Work will include an expectation for outreach and awareness about the career opportunities, convening of partners, marketing materials and professional development opportunities for those participating in the project to enhance their skills.



## Pinal Regional Partnership Council - Family Support Systems Change

<b>Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced</b>	<p><i>System Area:</i> Service Coordination</p>
	<p><i>Problem to address:</i> The regional council has identified a lack of coordination, collaboration and gaps in services. Family Support Systems Change approaches work collaboratively with community partners to support systemic efforts that increase families' access to information, resources and education along a continuum of need for families and professionals. Family Support Systems Change focuses on building the infrastructure and capacity within agencies and programs to in turn empower the providers to best support families and their young children.</p>
	<p><i>Geographic area:</i> The Pinal Region</p>
	<p><i>Target Audience:</i> Early childhood system partners</p>
<b>Expected Impact</b>	<p><i>Expected Impact:</i> Early childhood systems change is aimed at improving the early childhood system's efficiency and effectiveness. It includes efforts to improve system partner collaboration and coordination; building the capacity to better serve young children; addressing operational or policy barriers that impede access to or the provision of resources; and leveraging resources to bring the early childhood system to scale.</p>
	<p><i>Timeline:</i> For the next four years, the region will continue to fund FTF Directed Service Coordination implementation. The strategy will continue to focus on community resource information, awareness of kindergarten readiness, activities and awareness around the Week of the Young Child, providing additional support to child care directors and educating community leaders about the critical need for additional child care options in the region and how they can be part of the solution. This strategy will be working on a focus of oral health in early childhood as well as strengthening the resources for families at the regions' existing resource and advocacy centers.</p>