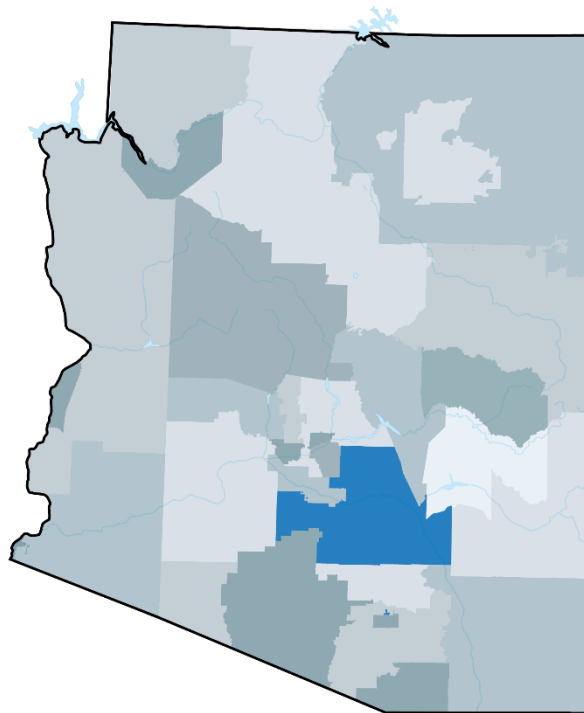




Pinal Regional Partnership Council
Population birth through age 5: 29,475



State Fiscal Year 2025 Funding Plan

SFY 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan Update

Presented to the First Things First Board
January 23, 2024



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.

Pinal Regional Partnership Council

Jason Clark, chair, member of the business community

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

Kelly Cota, early childhood educator

Stuart Fain, representative of the faith community

Briana Frenzel, at-large representative

Lisa Garcia, tribal public official/employee

Michael Kintner, representative of a philanthropic organization

Deanna Smith-Stout, public school administrator

Jan Vidimos, health services provider

Tara Walter, at-large representative

open, child care provider

Katrina DeVinny, regional director, First Things First

Lois Homewytewa, administrative specialist, First Things First

Pinal Regional Partnership Council
Promoting Equity and Supporting Under-Resourced/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 target 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 the Ak Chin Indian Community, which has elected to participate in the Pinal Region.
- 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 – SFY27

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	-	\$143,802	\$171,198	-
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$4,799,686	\$4,943,488	\$4,893,973	\$4,722,775
Strategies	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
Total	\$5,232,524	\$5,232,524	\$5,232,524	\$5,232,524
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended:*	(\$432,838)	(\$289,036)	(\$338,551)	(\$509,749)

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.

SFY25 FUNDING PLAN UPDATE / CHANGE TABLE
PINAL REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

DESIRED OUTCOME: ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION.

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Quality First

- Quality First Academy (prioritized)
- Quality First Coaching and Incentives (prioritized)

Access to Quality Care

- Quality First Scholarships (prioritized)
- Early Learning Systems Change (prioritized)

Successes:

In SFY24, Quality First implemented a revision to the model resulting in service levels that are based on the needs of participating centers and homes. The revisions are anticipated to create efficiencies that allow more regulated early care and education programs to participate and continue the quality improvement trajectory that has shown consistent increases in quality rating over time.

First Things First increased the Quality First Scholarship reimbursement rate to the cost of quality, informed by a study conducted in 2021, this increase will support a robust and stable network of child care providers and continue the reimbursement rate that providers were receiving through federal pandemic relief funding.

The Pinal Regional Partnership Council continues to support access to quality early care and education through Quality First Scholarships that are at an all-time high level of usage in the region at an average rate of 88%.

The Pinal Regional Partnership Council has started an unfunded advisory committee around the early childhood education workforce pipeline. This committee is overseeing all of the different areas of work going on around this issue; statewide efforts, system building strategy, and advocacy groups, to ensure everyone is working in concert with each other to find solutions for this issue.

Challenges:

In SFY25, federal pandemic relief funding to support a statewide expansion of 413 programs to participate in Quality First will end, 25 of which were located in the Pinal Region. This will result in a number of current Quality First participants potentially being disenrolled and placed on the Quality First waitlist. Discussions are in progress at the statewide level to determine potential supports so that participants funded through expansion will not need to be disenrolled and put back on a waitlist.

Reimbursing Quality First Scholarships at the 2021 cost of quality has resulted in less scholarships for the same amount of funding in SFY25. It is estimated that half the number of scholarships will be available at the current level of investment. In planning for SFY25, regional partnership councils had to consider the regional impact the reduction would have and make decisions to ensure that reductions in funding do not disrupt the system in significant ways.

The regional council is working to address the root cause of the child care desert in the region through the Early Learning Systems Change Strategy, working on the early childhood workforce pipeline. The regional council expects this strategy to begin finding the barriers and then solutions for this deficit in the early childhood workforce in the coming years. System building work like this takes time, this is the first step in this collective work. The grant partner has been collecting data and is expected to give preliminary findings to the regional council at their January 2024 meeting.

DESIRED OUTCOME: INFORMATION, SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES	
<u>Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies</u>	
Educating Families and Caregivers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Home Visitation (prioritized) ○ Parenting Education (prioritized) ○ Family, Friend and Neighbor Care (prioritized) 	
Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family Support Systems Change (prioritized) 	
<p>Successes:</p> <p>The Pinal Regional Partnership Council has honed in on their intent with regards to the support of families with young children in the region. The scopes of work for the strategies have become more focused and targeted with regards to area of need, location and/or demographic. With less funding and the prioritized needs, the regional council intends for the support of families to be very specific to the needs of the region's differing communities including Maricopa, Eloy, Florence, Coolidge and the communities in the Copper Corridor. 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.</p> <p>The Pinal Early Childhood Coalition, through the Family Support and Literacy Systems Change Strategy, continues to find valuable and effective ways to meet the needs of service providers working with young children and families in the region. The coalitions' current work is focusing on coordinated referrals, kindergarten readiness, educating the needs regarding child care and English as a second language supports.</p> <p>The regional council has started an unfunded advisory committee to work on the issues facing families with justice involvement. This committee meets bimonthly with members from the regional council as well as key system partners such as the Casa Grande Alliance, Pinal County Public Health, the Town of Florence and the Pinal County Attorney's Office. The goals of the advisory committee are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and address the needs and/or barriers of families involved in the justice system. • Bolster the supports for justice involved families to parent successfully and access resources. • Empower families to be the architect of policies and services that affect them. • Provide a forum, apart from the justice system, that allows those who are affected by it in the community, and those who work within it, to work together. <p>The Pinal Region is home to several prisons and detention centers and the committee hopes to find collaboration and solutions for this specific incarcerated parent population and their families, who move to Pinal to be close and care for the young children of the incarcerated parent.</p>	
<p>Challenges:</p> <p>For the Home Visitation Strategy, hiring qualified family support staff has been a challenge. The grantees have begun to be very upfront with salary, travel and job duties which they hope will lead to better hiring and retention outcomes.</p>	
DESIRED OUTCOME: WELL-PREPARED, HIGHLY SKILLED AND APPROPRIATELY COMPENSATED PROFESSIONALS	
<u>Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies</u>	

Professional Development for ECE Professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (prioritized) ○ Child Care Health Consultation (prioritized) 	
DESIRED OUTCOME: PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT.	
<u>Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies</u>	
Building Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness (prioritized) ○ Media (prioritized) 	
Successes: The Pinal Regional Partnership Council has been working with the statewide Community Engagement Team to branch out to those areas that are not talking about the importance of early childhood to include the business sector and local elected officials and workforce development.	
DESIRED OUTCOME: ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY PREVENTATIVE AND CONTINUOUS HEALTH CARE.	
<u>Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies</u>	
Oral Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oral Health 	
Identifying and Addressing Developmental Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developmental and Sensory Screening 	
Successes: The Pinal Regional Partnership Council continues to fund the oral health, sensory and developmental screening programs. The regional council believes these strategies are important for the region and will help to educate parents and caregivers on developmental milestones and what to look for with hearing, vision and dental issues in young children. The oral health grantee focuses their services to communities in the region who have no or very few dentists. These strategies can also identify issues and offer education and referrals when needed. The Pinal Region has a lack of resources and access to medical care, oral health and developmental, hearing and vision supports.	
Challenges: The regional council continues to see a shortage of doctors, particularly pediatricians, as well as dentists. In addition to these deficits, the Pinal Region has very limited access to therapies for children with developmental delays. The region's grantees doing screenings in these areas offer education and information on existing resources including dental and medical homes.	
DESIRED OUTCOME: COORDINATED, INTEGRATED, AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM	
<u>Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies</u>	
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Statewide Evaluation 	