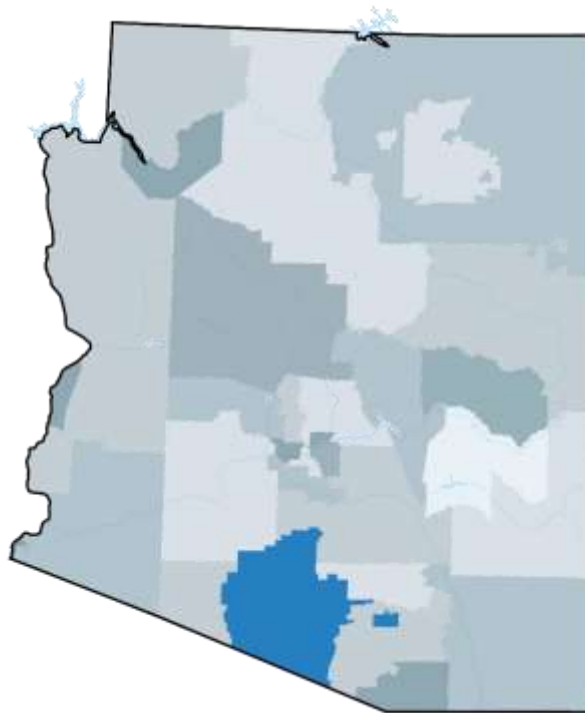


FIRST THINGS FIRST

Tohono O'odham Nation 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.

Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council

Kymerlii Tenario, chair, representative of a philanthropic organization

Joseph Mease, vice chair, public school administrator

Tara Chico-Jarillo, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

Cheryl Conde, member of the business community

Mariena Mendez, child care provider

Jesse Navarro, representative of the faith community

Elsa Peterson, early childhood educator

Marisa Werner, health services provider

open, at large representative

open, at large representative

open, at large representative

Lisette DeMars, 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

Tohono O’odham Nation 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	Early Learning Systems Change <i>(FTF-Directed)</i>	See Appendix A	No TSU	Coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive systems.
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	Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities	1) Lack of children’s books or materials that are reflective of the Native Culture/Language in the children’s homes or community environments. 2) Lack of opportunities for children/ caregivers/families to participate in community events (activities) to learn about language and literacy through the context of culture/traditions.	Number of materials distributed: 4 books created Number of community events conducted: 6	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: 25	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 Learning Systems Change <i>(FTF-Directed)</i>	See Appendix A	No TSU	Information, services and supports for families.
Building Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years	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.
Other Strategy Areas	Strategy	Identified Need	Target Service Unit	Desired System Outcome
Health Resource Coordination	Children’s Health Systems Change <i>(FTF-Directed)</i>	See Appendix A	No TSU	Coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive systems.

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.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council discussed barriers for community members to equitably access high-quality early learning information and related resources. Through previous tribal consultations and discussions with tribal leaders and tribal department administrators, the Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council’s SFY24-27 strategic plan reflects alignment with the goals and opportunities identified by the Tohono O’odham Nation. Several new strategies have been identified, which will build upon the region’s strengths to expand capacity, increasing equitable access to early childhood related resources that complement the strategic direction of the Tohono O’odham Nation.

- Acknowledging there are inequities in the books and materials that are available to young children on the Tohono O’odham Nation that reflect their language, culture and history, the regional council supports the development of materials centering O’odham language and culture as well as community based language and literacy workshops throughout the region.
- Knowing that internet and cell phone service availability varies widely throughout the region, the regional council supports partnering with KOHN radio, Tohono O’odham Nation’s licensed radio station, to increase awareness of early childhood health and development information and services through radio ads and community conversations and to link families to those resources. KOHN delivers timely and trusted educational, cultural and local programming and information throughout the entire region.
- Recognizing the multifaceted and disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on young children, families and caregivers in the region, the regional council prioritized the emotional well-being of young children and their families ensuring mental and behavioral health learning sessions are available for those caring for young children including parents and guardians, early learning providers and system partners such as librarians, first responders and pediatricians.

Regional Allocation and Proposed Funding Plan Summary SFY24 – 27
Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$438,521	\$438,521	\$452,924	\$452,924
Population Based Allocation	\$290,042	\$290,042	\$290,042	\$290,042
Discretionary Allocation	\$148,479	\$148,479	\$162,882	\$162,882
Carry Forward From Previous Year	-	(\$3,113)	(\$11,132)	(\$4,749)
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$438,521	\$435,408	\$441,792	\$448,175

Strategies	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Early Learning Systems Change	\$60,000	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$70,000
Quality First Academy	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$74,800	\$74,800	\$74,800	\$74,800
Quality First Scholarships	\$123,699	\$123,699	\$123,699	\$123,699
Child Care Health Consultation	\$27,200	\$27,200	\$27,200	\$27,200
Children's Health Systems Change	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Family Support & Literacy Systems Change	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Family Support Coordination	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities	\$70,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Statewide Evaluation	\$18,808	\$18,808	\$18,808	\$18,808
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100
Total	\$490,607	\$490,607	\$490,607	\$490,607
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended*:	(\$52,086)	(\$55,199)	(\$48,815)	(\$42,432)

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		94.53 %	94.53 %	94.53 %	94.53 %
% to Quality First	20.75%	21.60 %	21.60 %	21.60 %	21.60 %

Fiscal Year	4 Year Average
% to Board Priorities	94.53%
% to Quality First	21.60%

* 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.

APPENDIX A
SFY24 Funding Plan – System Change Planning Document
Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council

**Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council -
 Early Learning Systems Change**

Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced	<p><i>System Area:</i> Access to Quality Care</p>
	<p><i>Problem to address:</i> Despite a mixed delivery system to provide early learning opportunities, which includes Baboquivari Unified School District, Head Start, family care providers and other assets including Native American Advancement Foundation’s early childhood O’odham immersion program, the region remains a child care desert. Three of the 11 districts on the Tohono O’odham Nation do not have Head Start centers located within them, making access to early learning care and engagement opportunities inaccessible to some families.</p>
	<p><i>Geographic area:</i> Tohono O’odham Nation with an emphasis on the districts that have little to no early care and education programming available.</p>
	<p><i>Target Audience:</i> Discussions to learn about Tohono O’odham Nation’s existing early learning assets, as well as potential interest, resources and opportunities for expansion, will include the Tohono O’odham Nation’s Education Department, Child Care Program, Head Start, Community College, Native American Advancement Foundation, Baboquivari Unified School District, families and other partners and stakeholders.</p>
Expected Impact	<p><i>Expected Impact:</i> This strategy includes short-term and long term impacts. The vision of the regional council is to have early care and education programming available in every district of the Tohono O’odham Nation. The regional council will work in partnership with community partners, families and the tribal government to increase the capacity of high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education programming, no matter where on the Nation families with young children live.</p> <p>Short-term impacts: The regional council recognizes the region is a child care desert; however, this is an opportunity to gain full understanding of how the lack of access impacts families with young children on the Tohono O’odham Nation. Beginning in SFY24, the regional council will engage in discussions with tribal government leaders, parents and community members to learn from the community. This includes hearing perspectives on how families access early care and education programming, early care and education needs that continue to be unmet and understand any existing plans for possible child care expansion occurring through other funding sources. The short-term impact is expected to inform the regional council the assets and opportunities to increase early care and education programming in the region.</p> <p>Long-term impacts: The feedback from the community gathered in SFY24 will drive the implementation in subsequent years SFY 25-27. This may include partners working together to</p>

produce and execute an action plan to achieve an increase of early care and education programming and exploring public private partnerships to support and sustain future expansion efforts.

Timeline: In SFY24, First Things First staff and regional council members will convene partners to express the vision of the regional council to determine a process for this project. Additionally, there will be an exploration of what tribal agreement(s) (i.e. MOU, Resolution) will need to be established for the development of an action plan on early care and education expansion opportunities. Although SFY24 will be unfunded to allow time for preliminary discussions to take place and processes to be determined and established, the regional council anticipates allocating funds in SFY 25-27 to support the creation of an action plan developed in collaboration with stakeholders, exploring assets and options for child care expansion in the region.

Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council Early Learning Systems Change

Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced	<p><i>System area:</i> Professional Development for Early Childhood Education Professionals</p>
	<p><i>Problem to address:</i> There is an ongoing need to support, recruit and retain the early childhood education workforce reflective and informed by O’odham himdag so that all children will have high-quality teachers that reflect the community. Himdag, as defined by Tohono O’odham Community College (TOCC), is the O’odham way of life, culture and values and includes elements such as community, wellbeing, storytelling, arts, language and beliefs. Because 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, those caring for young children need to have flexible access to the content and curriculum they need.</p>
	<p><i>Geographic area:</i> Tohono O’odham Nation</p>
	<p><i>Target audience:</i> Early care and education professionals educating and caring for young children on the Tohono O’odham Nation</p>
Expected Impact	<p><i>Expected impact:</i> This work builds upon more than a decade of collaborative work between the Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council and TOCC to extend and enhance learning that is offered as part of the college’s early childhood education coursework. In SFY24, the regional council intends to partner with TOCC to leverage funding from both entities to support the work of the A’al Ha Mascam Community of Practice (CoP) housed at TOCC. The Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council and TOCC will work in partnership to support early childhood professionals who are enrolled at TOCC to receive supplemental technical assistance, coaching and professional development that will align and build upon their college coursework. The CoP will also serve as a supportive, peer-directed, learning community. Early childhood professionals will attain a deeper understanding of coursework through opportunities to apply newly learned theories into practice and discuss in greater depths teaching pedagogy. These additional supports intend to increase the probability of successful coursework completion and degree attainment in addition to seeing best teaching and culturally responsive practices implemented in the classroom.</p>
	<p><i>Timeline:</i> The strategy will shift in State Fiscal Year 2024 (SFY24) from a request for grant application to a grant agreement anticipated to be entered into with TOCC. The shift in funding mechanism is the result of a partnership and bridge building effort between the regional council and TOCC to sustain the early childhood college coursework currently offered at TOCC and by leveraging funding to build upon the regional council’s investment. The strategy is anticipated to continue to seamlessly offer high-quality professional development and education from SFY23 into SFY24.</p>

Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council Family Support and Literacy Systems Change

Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced	<p><i>System Area:</i> Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources</p>
	<p><i>Problem to address:</i> Community members do not have equitable access to information and services relating to early childhood education, health and development. For example, some areas of the Tohono O’odham Nation do not have internet and cell service. There is an opportunity to build upon the strong health and education infrastructure of the Nation to ensure caregivers are informed about the developmental stages of learning for young children and how to connect to relevant services and programs on the Tohono O’odham Nation.</p>
	<p><i>Geographic area:</i> Tohono O’odham Nation</p>
	<p><i>Target audience:</i> Families of young children as well as professionals who work with families and their young children.</p>
Expected Impact	<p><i>Expected impact:</i> KOHN radio is available throughout the Tohono O’odham Nation and is a trusted community resource for important and timely information. The regional council recognizes the importance of KOHN radio in sharing information and building connections with the community. Using local media and community conversations, this strategy is expected to increase awareness of and access to available tribal services and programs for children birth to age 5, expectant mothers and families. It is the intent to see more families and caregivers access programming and services to support their child’s education, health and well-being.</p>
	<p><i>Timeline:</i> In preparation for implementation in State Fiscal Year 2024 (SFY24), First Things First staff will explore the best approach to a funding mechanism, considering there may be multiple funding mechanisms to use. By quarter three and quarter four, First Things First staff and regional council members will work with partners to identify a framework for the region specific media content and begin airing the messages. The strategy is anticipated to continue throughout the full duration of the funding cycle.</p>

Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council Children’s Health Systems Change

Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced	<p><i>System area:</i> Health Resource Coordination</p>
	<p><i>Problem to address:</i> Recognizing the multifaceted and disproportionate impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on young children, families and caregivers in the region, those caring for young children need access to information and resources to ensure they appropriately understand and can identify and respond to the social emotional developmental needs and behavioral challenges of young children.</p>
	<p><i>Geographic area:</i> Tohono O’odham Nation</p>
	<p><i>Target audience:</i> Those caring for young children including parents and guardians, early learning providers, and system partners including librarians, first responders, and pediatricians.</p>
Expected Impact	<p><i>Expected impact:</i> This strategy will expand access to mental/ behavioral health education sessions, which are reflective of and informed by the O’odham community, thereby ensuring information about the emotional well-being of children and their families is available to parents and guardians, early learning providers and system partners so they may appropriately understand, identify and respond to the social emotional developmental needs and behavioral challenges of young children.</p>
	<p><i>Timeline:</i> Recognizing TOCC has the current course content and subject matter experts available and is in a position to reach broader audiences with behavioral health education and resources, First Things First is anticipated to enter into a Grant Agreement with TOCC in State Fiscal Year 2024 (SFY24). Education sessions are anticipated to begin in SFY24. Tohono O’odham Community College will engage participants to support the continual development and refinement of course content so that education is driven by and responsive to the needs, interest and culture of those who are connected to a young child. This strategy is anticipated to continue through SFY27.</p>