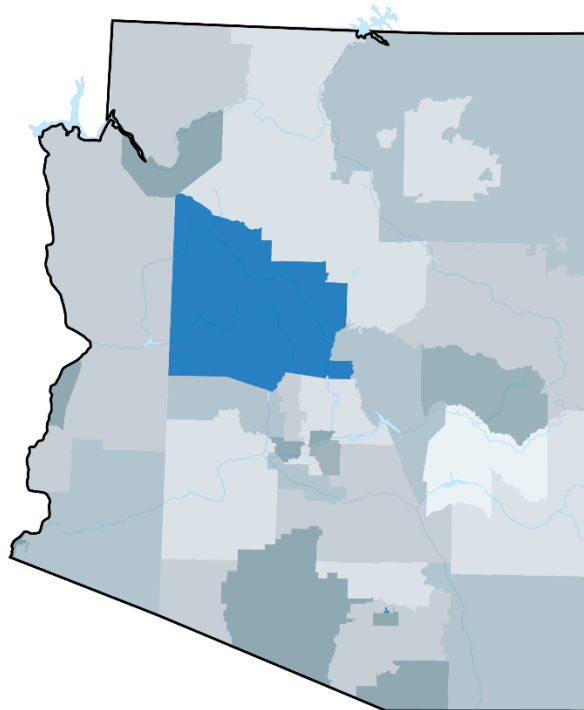




Yavapai Regional Partnership Council
Population birth through age 5: 11,201



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.

Yavapai Regional Partnership Council

April Hepperle, chair, at-large representative

Virginia Hout, vice chair, child care provider

Sherry Birch, representative of the faith community

Joe Donaldson, health services provider

Allison Houtz, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

Vickey La Motte, at-large representative

Tammy Lee, early childhood educator

Matt Schumacher, public school administrator

Billi Jo Stedman, member of the business community

Kathy Watson, representative of a philanthropic organization

open, tribal public official/employee

Lisa Blyth, regional director, First Things First

Melissa Robertson, administrative specialist, First Things First

Yavapai Regional Partnership Council

Promoting Equity and Supporting Under-Resourced/Underserved Children and Their Families

The Yavapai Regional Partnership Council strategic planning process has evolved over the past two years and included data review; community, family and stakeholder feedback with representation from remote and under-resourced communities in the region; as well as five specific strategic planning sessions in the past year utilizing appreciative inquiry and Liberating Structures facilitation techniques. This process allowed the regional council to gain an understanding of the early childhood system in Yavapai from data, equity, anecdotal, family and service provider perspectives to clearly identify priorities. There is considerable variability in the needs of families across the region. Although the population centers of the region are more likely to have resources and opportunities for young children and their families, areas outside of these population centers run the risk of being overlooked for services if only regional or county-level “averages” are examined. Families identify needing assistance with infant and child care, coordination of care for their children with special needs, food access, transportation, housing and income. A key component of the regional council’s work has been recognizing that some of the most impactful ways to effect change and support families is to take time to examine the components of the system; identify barriers and strengths within the system; gain a comprehensive understanding of what direct services are most relevant and how they can most effectively be implemented.

Due to limited funding outside of Quality First obligations, not all prioritized system areas could be addressed. The strategies identified focus on the most significant system and service gaps in the Yavapai region. The strategies either target families with young children who may be vulnerable to health and service access inequities, or focus on system change processes that will provide the council with information as to where inequities exist and the most appropriate way to address them. Data Sources for strategic planning included:

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis of 2018 and 2020 Regional Needs and Assets by council and community member subcommittee
- Meta-Analysis of Existing Opportunity Assessments and Improvement Plans in Yavapai
- Community Stakeholder Interviews
- Family Interviews re: Accessibility of Health and Family Support Services
- Potential Opportunities for Addressing Collaboration and Coordination Report
- Children’s Health System Change Final Assessment
- 2022 Yavapai Regional Needs and Assets Report (RNA)
- 2022 Yavapai Developmental Concerns Brief
- 2022 Yavapai Family Support Community Needs Assessment
- 2022 RNA Yavapai Apache Nation Supplement
- Phase II Quality First and the Implementation of Quality Improvement Supports

Regional Allocation and Proposed Funding Plan Summary SFY24 – SFY27

Yavapai Regional Partnership Council

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$2,593,737	\$2,593,737	\$2,538,500	\$2,538,500
Population Based Allocation	\$1,530,042	\$1,530,042	\$1,530,042	\$1,530,042
Discretionary Allocation	\$1,063,695	\$1,063,695	\$1,008,458	\$1,008,458
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$188,474	\$318,608	\$289,836	\$83,352
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$2,782,211	\$2,912,345	\$2,828,336	\$2,621,852
Strategies	Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Quality First Academy	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$593,300	\$593,300	\$593,300	\$593,300
Quality First Scholarships	\$1,221,862	\$1,092,052	\$1,077,052	\$1,077,052
First Things First College Scholarships	\$21,600	\$21,600	\$21,600	\$21,600
Child Care Health Consultation	\$136,000	\$136,000	\$136,000	\$136,000
Children's Health Systems Change	\$80,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation	\$242,352	\$293,760	\$293,760	\$293,760
Family Support for Children with Developmental Concerns	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000
Family Support & Literacy Systems Change	\$137,168	\$247,859	\$247,859	\$247,859
Needs and Assets		\$15,000		
Statewide Evaluation	\$105,413	\$105,413	\$105,413	\$105,413
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness	\$5,000	-	\$5,000	\$5,000
Media			\$25,000	\$25,000
Total	\$2,742,695	\$2,744,984	\$2,744,984	\$2,744,984
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended:*	\$39,516	\$167,361	\$83,352	(\$123,132)

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		86.67 %	87.59 %	88.14 %	88.14 %
% to Quality First**	18.89%	27.31 %	27.29 %	27.29 %	27.29 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	87.64%				
% to Quality First**	27.30%				

* 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 YAVAPAI REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL	
DESIRED OUTCOME: ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION.	
<u>Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies</u>	
Quality First	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality First Academy (prioritized) ○ Quality First Coaching and Incentives (prioritized) 	
Access to Quality Care	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality First Scholarships (prioritized) 	
<p>Successes:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 continues the reimbursement rate that providers were receiving through federal pandemic relief funding.</p> <p>The Yavapai Regional Partnership Council engaged in very thoughtful and strategic conversations about how to address the continued priority to support affordable access to quality early childhood education, funding Quality First scholarships at the cost of quality and appropriate messaging to Quality First participants, families and community partners about the implications of this significant shift. The regional council openly acknowledges both the struggle to thoughtfully step down investments in child care scholarships and the necessary, though very difficult, mental model shift to consider and use other child care subsidy options knowing there are still barriers to accessing those options. Throughout their discussions, and ultimate funding plan decisions, the regional council remained anchored to their vision (Yavapai is an ideal place to raise a family because families with young children can easily find and use all the support they need to grow a healthy, happy, thriving family) and guiding principles (equity, data informed decisions, system coordination, accessibility, human connection).</p>	
<p>Challenges:</p> <p>In SFY25, federal pandemic relief funding to support a statewide expansion of 413 programs to participate in Quality First will end, zero of which were located in the Yavapai 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 wait list.</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p>Changes:</p> <p>Using detailed, regionally specific data, the regional council examined the ages of children using Quality First scholarships, eligibility criteria for Department of Economic Security (DES) child care assistance and Head Start enrollment and number of children transitioning to kindergarten next year. This examination revealed that of the 243</p>	

children using FTF scholarships, 174 were eligible for other child care subsidy and/or aging up to kindergarten. Also in this data sample, 69 children fell outside of the criteria to participate in Head Start or receive DES child care subsidy. The regional council voted to fund scholarships at a rate that will support the anticipated number of children who fall above 165% of the Federal Poverty Level and are enrolled in Quality First sites.

Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Quality First Scholarships		
Funding Level Changes:	\$1,221,862	\$1,092,052
DESIRED OUTCOME: INFORMATION, SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES		
<u>Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies</u>		
Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Support and Literacy Systems Change (prioritized) 		
<p>Challenges:</p> <p>Part of the Family Support and Literacy Systems change work is intended to be implemented by a grant partner. At the original release of the Request for Grant Applications (RFGA), there was no award. Although the scope of work identifies a concrete deliverable, there was equal emphasis on articulating system change efforts behind the implementation of the deliverable. Applications had a highly programmatic focus rather than systems change. The RFGA for one award was re-released in September with an anticipated start date of February 1, 2024. This is a seven-month delay for the first year of implementation which will also include “ramp up” planning as this is a new strategy in the region.</p> <p>The other work to be addressed within the Family Support and Literacy Systems Change Strategy was to recruit an Americorps VISTA position to explore the development of community based resource hubs. Six high quality applications were received; three applicants were interviewed and each was offered the position. The applicants were from the East Coast and even though an additional housing and travel stipend was included in the compensation package, all three candidates stated they were not ready for a cross country move. While there are some components of this work that the regional council and FTF staff can begin, it is a significant delay.</p>		
<p>Changes:</p> <p>Due to the inability to secure an Americorps VISTA, the regional council has voted to hire a Program Coordination Specialist in SFY25. The regional council identified the benefits of establishing higher experience/educational criteria as well as deliverable expectations for the work and increase the likelihood of recruiting someone to the position. The increase to the Family Support and Literacy Systems Change Strategy reflects the full year contract amount for the grant partner based systems change work and the additional cost of bringing on a full-time Program Coordination Specialist.</p>		
Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Family Support and Literacy Systems Change		
Funding Level Changes:	\$142,168	\$247,859

DESIRED OUTCOME: WELL-PREPARED, HIGHLY SKILLED AND APPROPRIATELY COMPENSATED PROFESSIONALS

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Professional Development for ECE Professionals

- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (prioritized)
- First Things First College Scholarships (prioritized)
- Child Care Health Consultation (prioritized)

Successes:

Delays in implementing regional family support system change efforts (see above section) resulted in the regional council having more unallotted funds in SFY24 than was originally calculated. As a result the regional council was able to begin increasing its investment in Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) as they had already planned in their SFY24-27 strategic plan to begin in SFY25.

Changes:

As part of the original SFY24-27 strategic plan, the regional council's intent was to increase funding for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) as close to SFY23 funding levels as possible. The increase in SFY25 reflects that intent.

Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation		
Funding Level Changes:	\$242,352	\$293,760
Service Unit Change:	Number of center-based early care and education programs served: 19 Number of home visitation programs served: 1	Number of center-based early care and education programs served: 23 Number of home visitation programs served: 2

DESIRED OUTCOME: PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT.

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Building Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years

- Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness (prioritized)

Successes:

Prior to the state Board's decision to pull the Community Engagement Strategy into a state budget line item, the regional partnership council had already decided to prioritize system change and programmatic strategies. Without a dedicated community engagement coordinator, the Chair of the Yavapai Regional Partnership Council has taken on the task of representing First Things First at community family events across the region with her own "Book Garden."

Changes:

With an inventory of items and the opportunity to purchase some Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness items within other regional budget line items, the regional council opted not to fund this specific line item in SFY25.

Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness		
Funding Level Changes:	\$5000	\$0

DESIRED OUTCOME: ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY PREVENTATIVE AND CONTINUOUS HEALTH CARE.

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Identifying and Addressing Developmental Concerns

- Family Support for Children with Developmental Concerns

Health Resource Coordination

- Children's Health Systems Change

Successes:

The Family Support for Children with Developmental Concerns grant was successfully awarded to the previous grant partner allowing for sustainability of progress, key partner relationships and continuity of services for families already enrolled in services.

The steering committee of Yavapai Communities for Young Children (YCYC), the regional council's health systems change initiative, completed its first year of work resulting in prioritized goals based on regional data. The steering committee has moved to quarterly meetings. Northern Arizona University Center for Health Equity Research (NAU CHER) continues to facilitate the work of the initiative and is currently consulting with Paul Schmitz of the Collective Impact Forum to support alignment with collective impact principles for effective system change.

Challenges:

Feedback to the steering committee included paring goals and identifying a more specific target population than children birth to age 5 to increase the likelihood of actually "moving the needle" for more equitable practices. Clarification was also provided regarding effective practices for facilitating genuine collaborative work amongst the steering committee members and eventual working group members. This feedback is a great example of the continuous quality improvement loop as it requires the steering committee to revisit and edit goals and objectives prior to initiating the working group phase of the initiative.

Changes:

As a continued priority for the regional council, they will continue to financially invest in this systems change work and are able to do so at a lower allotment because of other funding sources available. The continued progress and evolution of YCYC will position the group as a viable candidate for two potential health system change grants offered by Vitalyst Foundation which includes technical assistance explicitly targeting health systems change. This potential added funding source would also serve to move the initiative further along the sustainability continuum through the capacity building technical assistance.

Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Children's Health Systems Change		
Funding Level Changes:	\$80,000	\$40,000

DESIRED OUTCOME: COORDINATED, INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM		
<u>Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies</u>		
<div>Evaluation</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Statewide Evaluation ○ Needs and Assets <p>Changes: Needs and Assets data collection is conducted every four years, thus funding is not required every year. The Yavapai Regional Partnership Council will be funding a Yavapai-Apache Nation supplement as part of the 2026 Regional Needs and Assets report.</p>		
Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Needs and Assets		
Funding Level Changes:	\$0	\$15,000