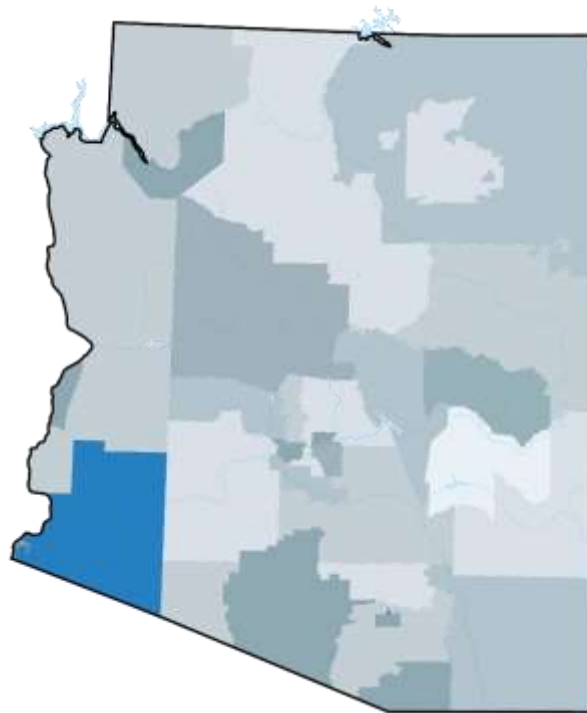


FIRST THINGS FIRST

Yuma 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.

Yuma Regional Partnership Council

Donald Vickers, chair, representative of the faith community

Linda Elliott-Nelson, vice chair at large representative

Alma Barrantey, early childhood educator

Emilia Cortez, health services provider

Marla Ford, child care provider

Mariam Limon, member of the business community

Lizette Esparza, at-large representative

Cori Rico, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

Mario Ybarra, public school administrator

open, representative of a philanthropic organization

open, tribal representative

Rudy Ortiz, 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

Yuma 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 50% of scholarships targeted to 0-5 age group (non-restricted) 50% of scholarships targeted to 3-5 (preschool) age group	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 60	Information, services and support for families.
Educating Families and Caregivers	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 110 - 120	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 currently enrolled 170-200	Information, services and support for families.
Educating Families and Caregivers	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.	Number of series completed 20-25	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 Childhood Mental Health Consultation (Statewide)	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 6 Number of home based early care and education programs served 2 Number of Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care programs served 1	Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals.
Professional Development for ECE Professionals	Early Learning Systems Change	See Appendix A	No TSU	Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals.
Professional Development for ECE Professionals	Inclusion of Children with Special Needs	1) Children with disabilities and their families continue to face significant barriers to accessing inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, and too many preschool children with disabilities are only offered the option of receiving special education services in settings separate from their peers without disabilities. 2) Early care and education practitioners have challenges with the complexity of how to include children with special needs in classrooms and programs.	Number of center-based providers served 16 Number of home-based providers served 12	Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals.
Professional Development for ECE Professionals	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 55 - 65	Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals.

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
Oral Health	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 1,000 Targeting communities, childcare centers and homes with higher level of tooth decay and white spots.	Access to high-quality preventive and continuous health care.
Identifying and Addressing Developmental Concerns	Family Support for Children with Developmental Concerns	1) Many parents of children with developmental concerns do not have access to services and supports that provide them with knowledge, support, and strategies to strengthen their child’s development. 2) Children’s vision/hearing impairments are not always detected early.	Number of families currently enrolled 45 - 60	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 Yuma Regional Partnership Council SFY24-27 Strategic Plan provides a multiple disciplinary approach to offer high quality choices for our families and engage our community to increase understanding and take action toward a connected early childhood system that cares for the whole child and their family. The Yuma Regional Council underwent an Appreciative Inquiry exercise (a facilitation philosophy and a methodology for positive change). It helped the council reach their “North Star” vision for their plan. They determined this plan had to be part of the solution to break the cycle of poverty in our region. This led to the regional council incorporating the voice and perspective from our region’s leaders and stakeholders through three sub-regional town halls. These town halls were instrumental in providing insight on how the regional council’s plan would ensure equity and support of under-resourced and underserved children and their families. The outcomes of the town halls supported and confirmed the Yuma Regional Partnership Council’s decision in prioritizing the early learning and family support systems. The Yuma Regional Partnership Council developed a strategic plan that aligns with the State Board’s priorities and meets the region’s specific needs identified in our town halls. This strategic plan will promote equity and support under-resourced and underserved children and their families by:

- Being intentional to increase awareness of the services in the region with enhanced efforts executed in the south and east sub regions and in communities of higher poverty (for example, north end Yuma).

- Enhancing system partners' workforce capacity to deliver services in the region and improve collaboration of system partners to enhance the referral process.
- Providing outreach and services in English and Spanish with sensitivity to the cultural needs of a U.S./Mexico border region. The Yuma Region has relatively more Hispanic persons (64%) than the state of Arizona as a whole (31%), and relatively more Hispanic children under 5 (79%) than across the state (45%). Spanish is the language spoken in the home for a majority of the region's population (52%).
- Providing multiple and diverse opportunities for families to engage and to best serve our working families and families living in our most rural areas of the region. Partners will implement a multiple delivery system approach including, and not limited to, in-person at community hubs, in the home and virtually.
- Developing partnerships designed to serve the target population in Yuma's south county sub-region, which has a high number of multi-generational households.
- Intentionally incorporating investments for all families and children in the region, including typically developing children and children with delays.
- Sustaining and enhancing relationships at all levels to meet the vast needs of our under-resourced and underserved children and their families, which is the backbone upon which this strategic plan was built.

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

Allocations and Funding Sources		2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation		\$4,608,852	\$4,608,852	\$4,977,311	\$4,977,311
Population Based Allocation		\$3,088,052	\$3,088,052	\$3,088,052	\$3,088,052
Discretionary Allocation		\$1,520,800	\$1,520,800	\$1,889,259	\$1,889,259
Carry Forward From Previous Year		\$600,202	\$399,797	\$64,651	\$97,964
Total Regional Council Funds Available		\$5,209,054	\$5,008,649	\$5,041,962	\$5,075,275
Strategies		Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Early Learning Systems Change		\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Inclusion of Children with Special Needs		\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Quality First Academy		\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000
Quality First Coaching & Incentives		\$458,410	\$458,410	\$458,410	\$458,410
Quality First Scholarships		\$2,029,657	\$2,029,657	\$2,029,657	\$2,029,657
Professional Development for Early Childhood Practitioners		\$151,152	\$151,152	\$151,152	\$151,152
Child Care Health Consultation		\$149,600	\$149,600	\$149,600	\$149,600
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation		\$100,980	\$100,980	\$100,980	\$100,980
Family Support for Children with Developmental Concerns		\$275,000	\$275,000	\$275,000	\$275,000
Oral Health		\$141,000	\$141,000	\$141,000	\$141,000
Community Based Language and Literacy		\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Family Support & Literacy Systems Change		\$129,616	\$129,616	\$129,616	\$129,616
Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care		\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$180,000
Home Visitation		\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Parenting Education		\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Statewide Evaluation		\$206,687	\$206,687	\$206,687	\$206,687
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness		\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Total		\$5,384,102	\$5,384,102	\$5,384,102	\$5,384,102
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended*:		(\$175,048)	(\$375,453)	(\$342,140)	(\$308,827)
Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		88.43 %	88.43 %	88.43 %	88.43 %
% to Quality First**	9.75%	11.70 %	11.70 %	11.70 %	11.70 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	88.43%				
% to Quality First**	11.70%				

* 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.

Yuma Regional Partnership Council - Family Support and Literacy Systems Change

Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced	<p><i>System Area:</i> Service Coordination</p>
	<p><i>Problem to address:</i> Families are not aware of services or how to access them</p>
	<p><i>Geographic area:</i> Yuma Region</p>
	<p><i>Target Audience:</i> Early Childhood System partners</p>
Expected Impact	<p>Expected Impact: The Yuma Program Coordination Specialist will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a coordinator and facilitator for the Yuma County Early Childhood Collaborative. The collaborative will have four meetings during a fiscal year with a leadership team committed to the planning, implementation and success of the collaborative. The vision and mission are: Vision: Our vision is a Yuma County where all children and families thrive and reach their full potential through a high quality interconnected early childhood system. Mission: Our mission is to educate and empower all Yuma County families and children by coordinating efforts with our leaders and agencies. Collaboratively, we strengthen and sustain a high quality early childhood system encompassing services in health, family support and early education • Maintain and update the Yuma Resource Connection Guide (including the Cocopah Tribe Region). Provide trainings on the Yuma Resource Connection Guide. The first edition of the guide was focused to enhance capacity of leaders in the county (to improve referrals). The next edition will be modified to enhance capacity of leaders, child care providers and families. • Form the first Yuma County Home Visitation Coalition. This coalition will include all home visitation providers in the county. It will work together to improve awareness and referrals in the county. • Convene partners and lead the Family Resource Centers system building work. This unfunded approach will be in partnership with Arizona Town Hall to bring awareness to the opportunity, build momentum, rally buy-in and create a committee to turn the idea into a reality via a strategic plan.
	<p><i>Timeline:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing the work from SFY19-23, the Yuma Resource Connection Guide developed in SFY22 has an established timeline that includes the process for developing and delivering a new updated version before the end of the fiscal year. • In their ongoing work that began in previous strategic plan cycles, the Yuma County Early Childhood Coalition has an established timeline for maintaining a successful process for implementing four meetings in the fiscal year. • The Yuma County Home Visitation Coalition will start its implementation by the second quarter of SFY24.



- The Arizona Town Hall meeting focused on Family Resource Centers will take place by the first quarter of SFY24. By the second quarter, a committee will be established to lead the work resulting from the Arizona Town Hall recommendations.

Yuma Regional Partnership Council - Early Learning Systems Change

Problem to be solved and system to be changed / influenced	<p><i>System Area:</i> Early Childhood Workforce Development</p>
	<p><i>Problem to address:</i> A lack of high quality professional development opportunities in the region results in professionals in the region needing to travel to Phoenix or other regions in our state to access national and statewide speakers and trainers.</p>
	<p><i>Geographic area:</i> Yuma Region and Cocopah Tribe Region</p>
	<p><i>Target Audience:</i> Early Childhood Professionals</p>
Expected Impact	<p><i>Expected Impact:</i> Create local infrastructure and capacity for high quality professional development opportunities in the region. Well-prepared, highly skilled professionals with federal, state and local relationships to enhance practice in the County.</p>
	<p><i>Timeline:</i> In the Winter of SFY24, an advisory committee will provide direction toward a Spring conference to serve 250 early childhood professionals. The conference will incorporate our local education partners from early childhood to higher education.</p>