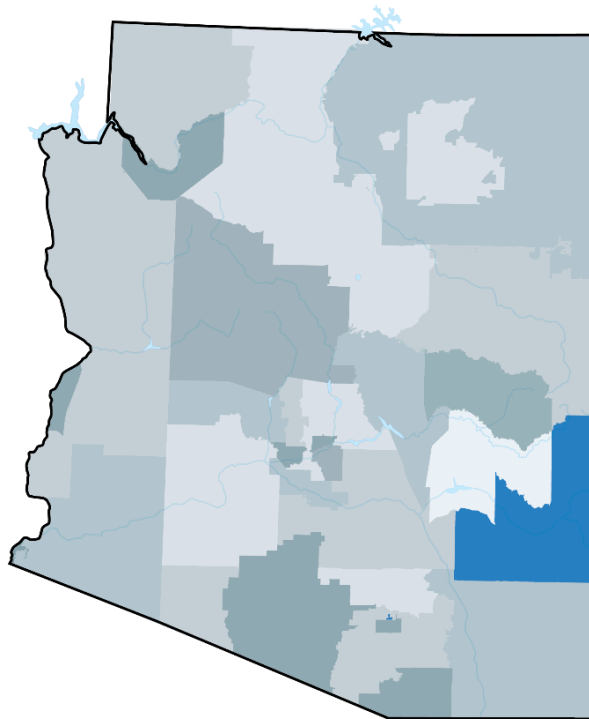




FIRST THINGS FIRST

Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council

Population birth through age 5: 3,374



State Fiscal Year 2026 Funding Plan

SFY 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan Update

Presented to the First Things First Board
January 21, 2025



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.

Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council

Laurie Smith, chair, representative of a philanthropic organization

Susan Norton, vice chair, early childhood educator

Sarah Camacho, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

Loretta Desaulniers, child care provider

Sabrina Dumas, at-large representative

Kacey Ekman, health services provider

Donna McGaughey, public school administrator

Jessamyn Messick, member of the business community

Cameron Mortensen, at-large representative

Dustin Welker, representative of the faith community

Susan Wood, at-large representative

Shari Elkins, regional director, First Things First

Lacie Crandell, administrative specialist, First Things First

**Regional Allocation and Proposed Funding Plan Summary SFY24 – SFY27
Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council**

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$767,486	\$767,486	\$666,081	\$840,129
Population Based Allocation	\$512,431	\$512,431	\$463,166	\$512,431
Discretionary Allocation	\$255,055	\$255,055	\$202,915	\$327,698
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$395,906	\$421,782	\$293,894	\$64,601
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$1,163,392	\$1,189,268	\$959,975	\$904,730
Strategies	Approved Allotted	Approved Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Early Learning Systems Change	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Quality First Academy	\$3,500	\$3,221	\$3,500	\$3,500
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$67,340	\$63,392	\$67,340	\$67,340
Quality First Scholarships	\$427,351	\$427,351	\$427,351	\$427,351
Child Care Health Consultation	\$23,800	\$28,027	\$23,800	\$23,800
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation	\$42,840	\$42,840	\$42,840	\$42,840
Book Distribution	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000
Community Based Language and Literacy	\$99,700	\$99,700	\$99,700	\$99,700
Home Visitation	\$144,073	\$144,073	\$144,073	\$144,073
Statewide Evaluation	\$34,887	\$34,887	\$34,887	\$34,887
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Media	\$14,742	\$14,742	\$14,742	\$14,742
Total	\$973,233	\$973,233	\$973,233	\$973,233
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended*:	\$190,159	\$216,035	(\$13,258)	(\$68,503)

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		90.76 %	90.76 %	90.76 %	90.76 %
% to Quality First**	12.56%	9.72 %	9.72 %	9.72 %	9.72 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	90.76%				
% to Quality First**	9.72%				

*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, Quality First Assessment and Child Care Health Consultation.

Justification for not meeting 2020 Quality First %: The number of providers enrolled in Quality First in our region has not decreased, however, due to the increase in quality ratings and thus decrease in implementation costs, our SFY25 investment in the strategy does not equal or exceed those of SFY20 as required by the Board.

GRAHAM/GREENLEE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

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.

Some examples of how the FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council's SFY24-27 Strategic Plan promotes equity and support of under-resourced and underserved children and their families are:

1. Providing home visitation to Greenlee County, an underserved area of our region that has no other home visiting services.
2. Providing Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation to our region that has the highest Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) score in the state.
3. Partnering with Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center and Freeport MacMoRan in their pursuit of an on-campus child care center to provide high-quality child care for a high percentage of single female lead households and those who work around-the-clock shift work.

Update as of this funding plan:

4. Quality First Scholarships will target families in the gap between Department of Economic Security Child Care Assistance and being able to afford quality child care.

SFY26 FUNDING PLAN UPDATE / CHANGE TABLE
GRAHAM/GREENLEE 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:

Quality First:

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, more targeted administration support, and additional hours for Child Care Health Consultation.

100% of the licensed child care centers in the region continue to be enrolled in Quality First and the percentage of these programs achieving/maintaining quality levels has increased which shows the success of implementation among both the grant partner and participating early care and education providers.

Quality First Scholarships:

First Things First increased the Quality First Scholarship reimbursement rate to the cost of quality in SFY25, informed by a study conducted in 2021. This increase supports a robust and stable network of child care providers and continues the reimbursement rate that providers were receiving through federal pandemic relief funding. Coordinated planning with the Department of Economic Security allowed for 125 children statewide to be transitioned from Quality First Scholarships to DES Child Care Assistance in advance of the end of the federal funds.

Early Learning Systems Change:

The regional council's partnership with Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center and Freeport-McMoRan has expanded to include: Eastern Arizona College, who will partner with their early childhood education students in staffing the child care center as it will be used as a lab school where students can work and get credit for their practicum hours, student teaching, etc.; Easterseals Blake Foundation, who are providing technical assistance; and the United Way of Graham & Greenlee Counties, who are prepared to offer financial assistance. This partnership is united in their efforts to provide high-quality child care for a high percentage of single female led households and those who work around-the clock shift work. The work of the partnership continues to move forward and potential land has been identified on the Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center campus for the child care center. Through the strategy of Early Learning Systems Change, the regional council has allocated one-time startup funds to equip classrooms with needed furniture and equipment upon the completion of a new child care center.

Challenges:

Quality First Scholarships:

Reimbursing Quality First Scholarships at the 2021 cost of quality has resulted in fewer scholarships in SFY25 for the same amount of funding from the previous year. In planning for SFY26, regional partnership councils had to consider the regional impact the reduction had and make decisions to ensure that additional reductions in funding do not disrupt the system in significant ways. First Things First and the Department of Economic Security will continue to work towards ways to support access to quality early learning to ensure efficient use of funds to serve as many children as possible.

DESIRED OUTCOME: INFORMATION, SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Educating Families and Caregivers

- Home Visitation (prioritized)
- Community Based Language and Literacy (prioritized)

Language and Literacy

- Book Distribution (non-prioritized)

Successes:

Home Visitation:

The FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council continues to support at risk families by providing the Healthy Families Home Visitation Program to Greenlee County, an underserved area of the region that has no other home visiting services.

Community Based Language & Literacy and Book Distribution:

The Safford City – Graham County Library, our grant partner for Community Based Language and Literacy and Book Distribution Strategies, was named one of 20 worldwide 2024 Emerging Strategies award recipients by the United States Library of Congress for their Early Literacy Concert Series. The Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council is proud to be a partner for these early literacy concerts.

Our regional council continues to partner with Read On Arizona for book distribution. Read On Arizona used federal relief dollars to pay for 21,806 books being distributed to just under 2,000 children enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library during SFY24. The partnership will be ending soon, and the region will begin paying for the books once again.

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)
- Child Care Health Consultation (prioritized)

Successes:

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Child Care Health Consultation:

The regional council continues to support young children and their families through the implementation of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Child Care Health Consultation Strategies. The Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Strategy intentionally provides supports in Greenlee County that has the highest Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) score in the state. Through a partnership with the United Way of Graham and Greenlee Counties, we are able to served two additional sites. The consultant reports working on ways to support children’s emotions and their emotional regulation among other concerns identified by their caregivers.

Challenges:

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:

Hiring local, qualified staff for the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Strategy has been a challenge. The regional council is pleased to report that a consultant has been hired and is providing services to the region.

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)
- Media (prioritized)

Successes:

Educational Promotion & Brand Awareness and Media:

The FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council is continuing to fund Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness, as well as Media, through grocery cart ads and regional specific social media, to continue to build awareness of the importance of the early years and to increase the public’s understanding and support of FTF in the region.

DESIRED OUTCOME: COORDINATED, INTEGRATED, AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Evaluation

- Statewide Evaluation (non-prioritized)

Successes:

Statewide Evaluation:

The 2024 Regional Needs and Asset Reports were delivered in June 2024 and approved by the Board in August 2024.