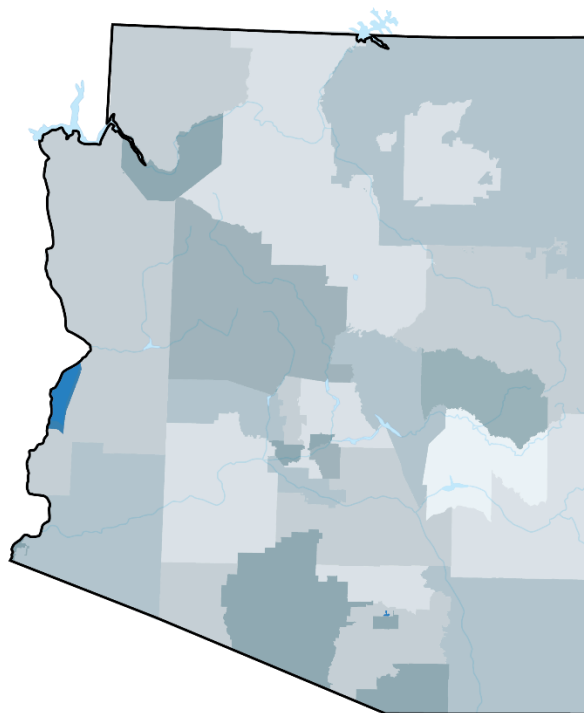


FIRST THINGS FIRST

Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Partnership Council Population birth through age 5: 787



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.

Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Partnership Council

Norma Ray, chair, early childhood educator

Elvira Aspa, vice chair, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

Delise Beavers, representative of a philanthropic organization

Gloria Flores-Lopez, member of the business community

Joanna Hermes, at-large representative

Daris Laffoon, tribal public official/employee

Monica Rosnagle, child care provider

Brad Sale, public school administrator

Penny Swarthout, representative of the faith community

open, health services provider

open, at-large representative

Tara Gene, regional director, First Things First

Kim Corbin, administrative specialist, First Things First

Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Partnership Council
Promoting Equity and Supporting Under-Resourced/Underserved Children and Their Families

The Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) Regional Partnership Council developed its SFY24-27 strategic plan using a strategic planning committee made up of regional council members with guidance from a consultant specializing in tribal communities. The regional council members utilized data reports, community input through family events and two meetings with tribal council members to collectively identify the needs of children birth to age 5 and families. The strategic planning committee's goal was to better understand the needs of the community, the impact of the regional council's current strategies and the readiness of the community to engage with FTF-funded programs. The Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation spans Arizona and California, with 84% of the reservation located in Arizona. The CRIT region includes the Arizona part of the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation and the town of Parker, Arizona. Parker is the closest town with access to services for families and is partially on the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation, and this creates a blended community of tribal and non-tribal members. Many of the programs are open to everyone in both communities. The tribe consists of four distinct tribes: Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi and Navajo. With four different tribes, the regional council understands that not all of the tribal members have the same cultural practices and languages, which can create a challenge in preserving the culture and languages. The regional council always encourages programs to integrate any tribal teachings that will tie into their lessons to help preserve culture and language. In addition, the regional council's plan includes recommendations for programs to offer evening or weekend sessions to accommodate families' work schedules. The regional council expects strategy implementation to include activities provided in the housing hubs of the region to alleviate barriers, such as transportation, for families to access services. The regional council developed its strategic plan with intentionality around the flexible implementation of strategies to have the greatest impact on children and increased engagement with the community.

Regional Allocation and Proposed Funding Plan Summary SFY24 – SFY27
Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Partnership Council

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$260,144	\$260,144	\$277,072	\$277,072
Population Based Allocation	\$174,922	\$174,922	\$174,922	\$174,922
Discretionary Allocation	\$85,222	\$85,222	\$102,150	\$102,150
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$98,080	\$107,003	\$90,103	\$45,031
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$358,224	\$367,147	\$367,175	\$322,103
Strategies	Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Early Learning Systems Change	\$46,508	\$91,079	\$91,079	\$91,079
Quality First Academy	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$19,330	\$19,330	\$19,330	\$19,330
Quality First Scholarships	\$104,000			
Child Care Health Consultation	\$6,800	\$6,800	\$6,800	\$6,800
Nutrition and Physical Activity	\$62,000	\$62,000	\$62,000	\$62,000
Book Distribution	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Community Based Language and Literacy	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000
Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities		\$59,429	\$59,429	\$59,429
Statewide Evaluation	\$11,506	\$11,506	\$11,506	\$11,506
Total	\$322,144	\$322,144	\$322,144	\$322,144
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended:*	\$36,080	\$45,003	\$45,031	(\$41)

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		75.31 %	75.31 %	75.31 %	75.31 %
% to Quality First**	8.91%	8.42 %	8.42 %	8.42 %	8.42 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	75.31%				
% to Quality First**	8.42%				

* 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.

Justification for not meeting 2020 Quality First %:

The Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Council has maintained their support for Quality First in the region, and this plan maintains participation for the same number of early care and education providers. The percentage is lower based on the lower costs projected to continue implementing the Quality First strategies in the region.

Justification for not meeting the 80% allotment to Board Priorities:

The regional council was provided with information, guidance and technical assistance regarding the First Things First Strategic Plan, State Fiscal Years 2024-2027. The regional council made some changes to their strategies. This did not change their percentage in meeting the boards 80%. The regional council continue to stand in continuing the unique challenges families are experience based on the families need. This included the Board’s six priority areas and Foundational Guidance #1, #2 and #3 related to Quality First and Quality First Scholarships. The regional council understood the importance of aligning with the statewide strategic direction as they assessed data about local needs and identified priorities as well as strategies. Ultimately, the regional council was faced with significant capacity and infrastructure issues including a lack of existing child care programs i.e. a child care desert. As a result, the region did not meet the

recommended funding level for the Board-identified priorities and supports funding other local priorities. The regional council will continue to assess and look for future opportunities to continue to align with the Board’s priority areas and support Quality First.

The Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Council’s SFY24-27 Strategic Plan allocates over 75% of its funding to Board Priorities. Two strategies, Book Distribution and Nutrition and Physical Activity, were deemed critical by the regional council to support school readiness in the region but are outside of the Board Priorities, in addition to the Statewide Evaluation strategy. The CRIT Regional Council has increased their funding plan percentage allotted to Board priorities greatly from the current/previous strategic plan.

According to the 2022 Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Needs and Assets Report, AZ MERIT data from the Arizona Department of Education show that 61% of third graders are not meeting proficiency standards for English Language Arts, compared to 54% of third graders statewide. The CRIT Regional Council would like to focus on supporting children with early literacy opportunities. They will be funding Community Based Language and Literacy to give families opportunities to attend workshops and events that help educate and provide opportunities to engage their children in language and early literacy. As supplemental support, the Book Distribution Strategy will give children a library of books to support their literacy development at home. Based off the CRIT community engagement survey, many families don’t have age appropriate books to read to their children. In addition, the CRIT Regional Council wanted to provide opportunities for families to engage in less screen time for their child and to build opportunities for parent/child bonding.

Obesity is associated to health outcomes, such as higher risks of diabetes, cancer and heart disease. From the 2022 Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Needs and Assets report, 37% of Colorado River Indian Tribes children 2 years and older are obese or overweight, and the rate has increased overall from 29% in 2015. The rate is higher than the state average, and this caused concern for the regional council. The Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Council conducted a Caregiver survey within the region from November 2021 – February 2022. According to the Caregiver survey, when caregivers were asked what types of support they feel they most need to help with their child/children, nutrition and physical activity opportunities was one of the top services that caregivers indicated. With the experience and data available to them, there was a need to support families in developing a healthier lifestyle and support healthy child development. The regional council chose the Nutrition and Physical Activity Strategy as one of their top priorities to continue.

Exhibit 5.6. Types of services and support caregivers indicate they need

Service	Percent
Child Development	53%
Nutrition/Physical Activity	44%
Early literacy	44%
Behavior	40%
Health Services	22%
Guardianship	18%
Special Education	13%
Legal	13%
Other	0%

*Note: Survey respondents (n=45) could select multiple responses
Harder+Company Community Research. (2022). [FTF CRIT Region Caregiver Survey]. Unpublished data.*

**SFY25 FUNDING PLAN UPDATE / CHANGE TABLE
 COLORADO RIVER INDIAN TRIBES 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

- 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 continues the reimbursement rate that providers were receiving through federal pandemic relief funding.

Challenges:

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.

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 Colorado River Indian Tribes Region.

Changes:

The Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Council approved to remove the Quality First Scholarships allocation based on the usage history. The scholarship allocation had not been utilized in SFY22 and SFY23, and currently scholarships are not being utilized in SFY24. The center that receives the Quality First Scholarships had all their families eligible for DES Child Care Subsidy. The Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Council decided that allocations would make further impact in the Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities Strategy.

In SFY24, to help address the child care issue in the Colorado River Indian Tribes region, the CRIT Regional Partnership Council is planning to work with a consultant to evaluate the resources in the community/region and build collective collaboration to develop regional options to present to the CRIT Regional Partnership Council. The increased allotment to the Early Learning System Change Strategy in SFY25 will be utilized to support the direction of the CRIT Regional Partnership Council which will be decide on based on the solutions developed in SFY24 to address the child care crisis.

Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Quality First Scholarships		
Funding Level Changes:	\$104,000	\$0

Early Learning Systems Change		
Funding Level Changes:	\$46,508	\$91,709
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"> Community Based Language and Literacy (prioritized) 		
Language and Literacy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book Distribution Language, Literacy, and Culture in Tribal Communities (prioritized) 		
Successes:		
<p>In SFY23, the Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Council provided funding toward the Native Language Preservation Strategy, which is now known as the Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities Strategy. In SFY23, the funding was used to develop board books for children birth to five in all four languages of the Colorado River Indian Tribes. This was a first for the tribe to develop a collection of books in all four languages. The intention of the project was to utilize fluent speaking elders to help develop the books, and using a tribal member as the illustrator of the books' overall design. It was a wonderful community effort in developing the books. Each language (Chemehuevi, Mohave, Navajo and Hopi) had a set of three topics developed, including: numbers, colors and animals. The distribution of the books will be done through a community book event. Data will be collected to see how the books are being utilized and if the books are helping with language preservation. The grantee will conduct a four month and six month follow up with the families that receive the books.</p>		
Changes:		
<p>With the successful development of the books, and no usage of Quality First Scholarships, the regional council decided to reallocate funds from the Quality First Scholarships Strategy allocation toward the Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities Strategy to continue the development and distribution of additional books in the native languages of the Tribes.</p>		
Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Language, Literacy, and Culture in Tribal Communities		
Funding Level Changes:	\$0	\$59,429
Service Unit Change:	-	Number of materials distributed: 3,600
Target Population Change:	Parents and children birth to age 5 within the Colorado River Indian Tribes Region.	
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"> Child Care Health Consultation (prioritized) 		

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

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Nutrition and Physical Activity

- Nutrition and Physical Activity

DESIRED OUTCOME: COORDINATED, INTEGRATED, AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Evaluation

- Statewide Evaluation