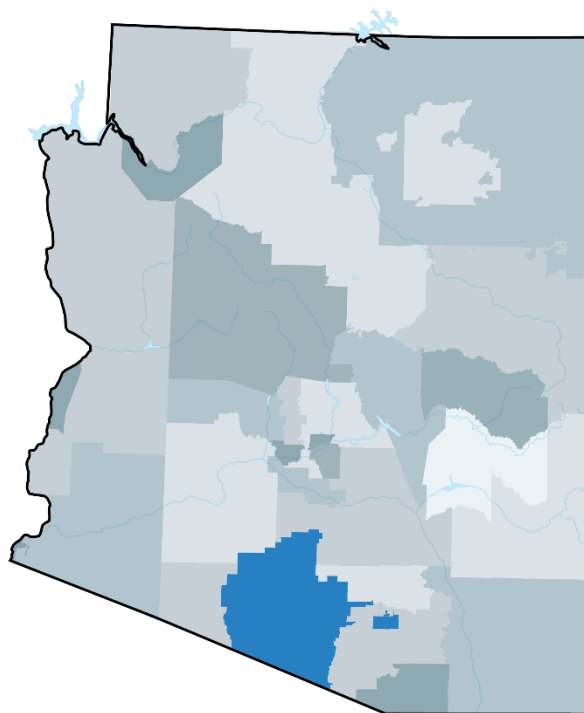




Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council
Population birth through age 5: 1,061



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.

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

Roxanne Ochoa, administrative specialist, First Things First

Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council
Promoting Equity and Supporting Under-Resourced/Underserved Children and Their Families

Throughout the 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 State Fiscal Year 2024-2027 (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 – SFY27
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	\$147,369	\$351,582	\$343,562	\$305,783
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$585,890	\$790,103	\$796,486	\$758,707
Strategies	Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Early Learning Systems Change	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
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	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$70,000
Statewide Evaluation	\$18,808	\$18,808	\$18,808	\$18,808
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness	\$2,100	\$2,196	\$2,196	\$2,196
Total	\$490,607	\$490,703	\$490,703	\$490,703
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended:*	\$95,283	\$299,400	\$305,783	\$268,004

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.

** Includes Quality First Academy, Quality First Coaching and Incentives, and Child Care Health Consultation.

**SFY25 FUNDING PLAN UPDATE / CHANGE TABLE
TOHONO O’ODHAM NATION 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:

In State Fiscal Year 2024 (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 continue to support the reimbursement rate that Baboquivari Unified School District was receiving through federal pandemic relief funding.

Challenges:

In State Fiscal Year 2025 (SFY25), federal pandemic relief funding to support a statewide expansion of 413 programs to participate in Quality First will end, resulting 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 waitlist. There are no Quality First expansion sites in the Tohono O’odham Nation Region.

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.

When developing the strategic plan for SFY24-27 the regional council expected to build upon a decade of partnership with Tohono O’odham Community College (TOCC) in implementing the Early Learning Systems Change Strategy to support a Community of Practice professional development approach to support early care and education professionals. Tohono O’odham Community College received a significant grant to support early learning professionals in implementing preschool programming focused around native language revitalization. As a result of related capacity shifts, TOCC is not able to partner with First Things First in SFY24 or SFY25. Although disappointed, the regional council looks forward to a future partnership with TOCC and is excited to know funds have been secured which support and build upon the priorities identified in the region’s SFY24-27 strategic plan. At the direction of the regional council, staff is exploring opportunities to work with other partners in the region to carry out the Early Learning Systems Change Strategy with anticipation of implementation beginning in SFY25.

DESIRED OUTCOME: INFORMATION, SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Educating Families and Caregivers

- o Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities (prioritized)

Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources

- o Family Support Coordination (prioritized)
- o Family Support and Literacy Systems Change (prioritized)

Successes:
Beginning in March 2020, implementation of the Family Support Coordination Strategy was adjusted to accommodate pandemic related shut downs and the need for service delivery to be made available for participants to access remotely. Beginning in SFY24, participants are now offered the option for visits with their maternal health advocate to take place in person or remotely, broadening flexibility and access. Many participants have been excited for the opportunity to schedule in-person visits and have welcomed the maternal health advocate into their homes.

Challenges:
The region is in the process of establishing a grantee to carry out the Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities Strategy and implementation is expected to begin in SFY24. The creation of materials in O’odham centering on O’odham culture, language and community is a priority of the Tohono O’odham Nation as well as the regional council. The delay in establishing a partner for this strategy has provided the opportunity to identify and develop new relationships with the Tohono O’odham Nation’s departments and programs to support the language revitalization efforts within the region’s early childhood environments.

DESIRED OUTCOME: PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Building Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years

- o Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness (prioritized)

Successes:
The Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness Strategy has been helpful in supporting partners and champions in the region who are connecting directly with families caring for young children to help them access relevant services. This is the first year since the COVID-19 related closures that many community events in the region have taken place in person. First Things First branded materials are being shared throughout the Tohono O’odham Nation region by trusted messengers at these in person events so families, especially those living in more remote areas, have access to tangible tools to support early learning and development at home.

Changes:
Funding for this strategy is increased by \$96 in SFY25.

Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness		
Funding Level Changes:	\$2,100	\$2,196

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

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Health Resource Coordination

- Children’s Health Systems Change

Challenges:

The Tohono O’odham Nation region is exploring options to implement the Children’s Health Systems Change Strategy. This strategy has the intent of expanding access to mental and behavioral health learning sessions so that those caring for young children including parents and guardians, early learning providers and system partners such as librarians, first responders and pediatricians may appropriately understand, identify and respond to the social emotional developmental needs and behavioral challenges of young children. Further, it is a priority that sessions align with the culture and history of the Tohono O’odham Nation, taught by instructors who are recognized as entrusted partners in the community.

DESIRED OUTCOME: COORDINATED, INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Evaluation

- Statewide Evaluation

Successes:

The Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Council is thrilled that the 2022 Regional Needs and Assets (RNA) and Supplemental Reports, which include tribal data for the first time since 2014, have been approved for publication. A Memorandum of Understanding is being developed between First Things First and the Tohono O’odham Nation, which establishes a process for future RNA reports to be developed in partnership.