

2024

NEEDS AND ASSETS REPORT



 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL 2024 NEEDS AND ASSETS REPORT

Funded by the
First Things First White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council

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INTRODUCTION

Ninety percent of a child's brain growth occurs before kindergarten and the quality of a child's early experiences impacts whether their brain will develop in positive ways that promote learning. First Things First (FTF) was created by Arizonans to help ensure that Arizona children have the opportunity to start kindergarten prepared to be successful. Understanding the critical role the early years play in a child's future success is crucial to our ability to foster each child's optimal development and in turn, impact all aspects of well-being in our communities and our state.

This Needs and Assets Report for the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region helps us in understanding the needs of young children, the resources available to meet those needs and gaps that may exist in those resources. An overview of this information is provided in the Executive Summary and documented in further detail in the full report.

The report is organized by topic areas pertinent to young children in the region, such as population characteristics or educational indicators. Within each topic area are sections that set the context for why the data found in the topic areas are important (Why it Matters), followed by a section that includes available data on the topic (What the Data Tell Us).

The FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council recognizes the importance of investing in young children and ensuring that families and caregivers have options when it comes to supporting the healthy development and education of young children in their care. It is our sincere hope that this information will help guide community conversations about how we can best support school readiness for all children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. To that end, this information may be useful to local stakeholders as they work to enhance the resources available to young children and their families and as they make decisions about how best to support children birth to age 5 in communities throughout the region.

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We also want to thank parents and caregivers, local service providers and members of the public who attended regional council meetings and voiced their opinions, as well as all the organizations working to transform the vision of the regional council into concrete programs and services for children and families in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge the current and past members of the FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council whose vision, dedication and passion have been instrumental in improving outcomes for young children and families within the region. As we build upon those successes, we move ever closer to our ultimate goal of creating a comprehensive early childhood system that ensures children throughout Arizona are ready for school and set for life.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. The boundaries of the First Things First White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are the same as the White Mountain Apache Reservation (sometimes called Fort Apache). The region covers more than 2,500 square miles in Apache, Gila and Navajo counties. There are twelve reservation communities identified by the U.S. Census: Canyon Day, Carrizo, Cedar Creek, Cibecue, East Fork, Fort Apache, Hondah-McNary, North Fork, Rainbow City, Seven Mile, Turkey Creek and Whiteriver. Whiteriver, the largest of these communities, serves as the capital.

Population Characteristics. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the total population of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region was 14,340, of whom 1,563 were young children (birth to age 5). Over one-quarter (28%) of the 3,473 households in the region had one or more young children, which is higher than the proportion of households with young children on all Arizona reservations combined (20%) and the state as a whole (13%). Decennial Census data indicate that the overall population of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region increased by 7% between 2010 and 2020. This is similar to the population change across the U.S. (7%) and Arizona (12%) and contrasts with the 3% decrease across all Arizona Reservations. The population of young children (birth to age 5) was estimated to have decreased by 22% in the region, which is a smaller decline than across Arizona reservations (-26%) but larger than Arizona as a whole (-12%).

As previously mentioned in *2020 Census data and its limitations*, American Indians living on reservations and young children (birth to age 4) were specifically found to be substantially undercounted in the 2020 Census (5.6% and 3-5% nationally). Given this, tribal enrollment data is another important source for population counts in Native communities. Based on data from the White Mountain Apache Tribe Office of Vital Records, in 2020 the White Mountain Apache Tribe had a total enrollment of 17,062 members living within or outside of the reservation boundaries. In each year from 2018 to 2020, between 129 and 254 children birth to age 5 were newly enrolled as members. Another way to understand potential undercounting of young children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is to compare 2020 Census data on the birth to age 5 population to Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) data on births from 2015 to 2020. Census estimates for the region are lower by about 14 children per year compared with the count of births (5%). ADHS reports 1,646 births occurring between 2015 and 2020 compared to 1,563 children birth to age 5 enumerated by the Census.

Almost all of the population (98%) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region identified as American Indian. Compared with the population on all Arizona reservations, smaller proportions of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region population identified as Hispanic or Latino (1% versus 6%), Non-Hispanic White (2% versus 5%) and Multiracial (1% versus 3%). These breakdowns were similar for young children in the region, with 99% identifying as American Indian.

The American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that just under half (47%) of individuals in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region speak only English at home. Only 1% speak Spanish at home, slightly lower than seen across all Arizona reservations (3%). The remaining 52% speak a language

other than English or Spanish at home, which is most likely a Native North American language. Of those individuals speaking a language other than English at home, the majority also speak English “very well,” with about half of the region proficiently bilingual or multilingual (49%). Only 2% of households in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are considered limited-English-speaking, meaning no one over the age of 13 in the household speaks English very well. This is a smaller proportion than seen across all Arizona reservations (12%) and the state as a whole (4%).

Similarly, 2% of students attending White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools were considered English Language Learners (ELL) during the 2020-21 school year, decreasing to less than 2% in the 2021-22 school year. Children in the region also attend off-reservation schools in the Blue Ridge Unified School District, which had a slightly higher percent of ELL during these years (5%). English Language Learners are identified through the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Home Language Survey, which asks families about the student’s first language and what language is spoken at home most of the time. Statewide, 108 students reported Apache language use at home in 2020-21, decreasing slightly to 104 students in 2021-22. Approximately half of these attended White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools, and fewer than 11 of these students attended Blue Ridge Unified District schools. The 2020-21 White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Community Survey also asked about home language use. Eight in 10 respondents indicated using English (80%), almost two in 10 indicated using Apache (19%), and 2% indicated using another language the most at home.

According to the 2022 FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Needs and Assets Report, there are multiple language revitalization efforts in the region, mostly located within the local school system. Apache language is taught in all schools in the Whiteriver Unified School District as well as White Mountain Apache Head Start centers and Dischii’bikoh Preschool. The Johnson O’Malley (JOM) Program is a federal program that provides additional cultural and language preservation services at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region public schools and sponsors the White Mountain Apache Tribal Youth Council.

The majority of young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region lived in a household with one unmarried parent (63%), which was similar to across all Arizona reservations (65%) but much larger than across the state (37%). Compared to all Arizona reservations, a larger proportion of young children in the region lived with two married parents (33% compared to 25%), and a smaller proportion were living with relatives other than parents (such as grandparents, aunts and uncles) (3% compared to 8%).

Half of all children birth to age 5 (50%) in the region live in a grandparent’s household, which is higher than the proportion as across all Arizona reservations (43%). Note that this includes all multigenerational households; the grandparent in these households may or may not be responsible for raising the child, and the child's parent(s) may or may not also be living in the household. In contrast, 9% of grandparents in the region are living with grandchildren (birth to age 17) without a parent also present in the household, which is a smaller proportion than across Arizona reservations combined (14%). The ACS considers a grandparent to be responsible for their grandchildren if they are "currently responsible for most of the basic needs of any grandchildren under the age of 18" who live in the

grandparent's household. Based on this definition, an estimated 615 grandparents in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are responsible for their grandchildren under 18 years old. A parent is also present in most of these households (only 17% without the child's parent). The majority of these grandparents are female (68%), and 48% are in the labor force, meaning that they may need child care for their grandchildren while they are working. About one third (32%) have an income below the poverty level, which is lower than all Arizona Reservations (36%) but still a large proportion of these grandparents.

Economic Circumstances. The median family income for all families with children (birth to age 17) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region (\$40,000) is just over half of the state level (\$75,100). Married couple families with children in the region have the highest median annual income (\$59,800) of all family types, while single-parent-led households have much lower median incomes, indicating additional financial stress. Notably, the median family income for single-female-headed families with children is approximately one-fifth that of married couple families in the region (\$12,200).

Almost four in 10 (39%) of the overall population and almost half (48%) of young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region live in poverty, which is more than twice the poverty rates for Arizona as a whole (13% and 20%, respectively). Though income is one important way to measure whether families can meet their basic needs, in Native communities, subsistence-based activities such as hunting, gathering, farming and ranching are important cultural practices that can also meet families' basic needs and are not captured in standard poverty measures. According to ACS five-year estimates, rates of poverty among young children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region have decreased substantially (-13%) in recent years, from 61% in 2012-2016 to 48% in 2017-2021. Poverty rates declined more than across all Arizona reservations (-6%), Arizona (-8%) and the U.S. (-6%) during the same time period.

Over two-thirds (68%) of young children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region live in households with incomes under 185% of the federal poverty level (FPL), a commonly used threshold for social safety net benefits such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and reduced-price school meals. In 2021, the 185% FPL threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$50,836; for a single parent with one child, it was \$34,552. Almost one-third (31%) of young children in the region live in "deep poverty" (defined as below 50% FPL), which is slightly above the rate across all Arizona reservations (27%) but more than three times greater than across the state (9%). The White Mountain Apache Tribe is one of six tribes in Arizona that operate a Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. From January 2017 to July 2020, participation among young children fell from 90, representing 4% of this population, to 11, representing 1% of this population.

Since state fiscal year 2018 (SFY 2018), SNAP participation among young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region has declined steadily from 1,705 in SFY 2018 to 1,183 in SFY 2022. SNAP participation among families with young children similarly declined from 1,087 to 771 in SFY 2022, mirroring the trend across Arizona. The White Mountain Apache Tribe WIC program is administered by the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona. In 2020, a total of 1,491 individuals were enrolled in the program, including 302 women (20% of WIC participants), 333 infants (22%) and 856

children (ages 2-4; 57%). From 2017 to 2020, the total number of children birth to age 4 enrolled in WIC declined steadily in both the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region and Arizona. WIC participation rates in 2020 were higher in the White Mountain Apache Tribe WIC program than in ITCA WIC programs overall for all eligible groups, meaning that the percent of women (91%), infants (98%) and children (95%) who were actively receiving benefits during the calendar year was slightly higher in the region.

The total number of lunches served through school nutrition programs in the region fluctuated from 433,541 from 2019-20, to 785,758 in 2020-21 back down to 597,995 in 2021-22. Lunches were only served through the Children and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP) in 2019-20 (1,929 lunches). The increase in meals served through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in 2020-21 (749,537) was likely due to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) waivers that allowed for greater flexibility in meal service year-round to address nutritional needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lunches served through National School Lunch Program (NSLP) decreased by 88% from 2019-20 to 2020-20 but increased to less-than-half of pre-pandemic levels in 2021-22.

The unemployment rate is the proportion of the total number of people in the civilian labor force who are unemployed and looking for work. Unemployment rates do not include people who have dropped out of the labor force entirely, including those who wanted to work but could not find a suitable job and have stopped looking for employment. The ACS estimates that the average unemployment rate for the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region between 2017 to 2021 was 16%. This is 2% higher than the unemployment rate for all Arizona reservations (14%) and 10% higher than for Arizona as a whole (6%).

An additional metric of employment is the labor-force participation rate. This rate is the fraction of the population who are in the labor force, whether employed or unemployed. The labor force participation rate in the region (46%) was similar to that seen across all Arizona reservations (45%) and lower than Arizona as a whole (61%). Of those in the labor force in the region, most were employed (38% of the working-age population), 7% were actively looking for work and 0.2% were in the armed forces. The remaining 54% were not in the labor force, which includes students, retirees, stay-at-home parents and others. Just over half (54%) of young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region lived in a household where at least one parent was in the labor force, compared to 63% of young children across all Arizona reservations and 90% of young children in Arizona. About four in 10 young children (41%) lived in households where all parents were in the workforce, indicating they likely required some form of child care.

Housing is considered to be affordable for families if it costs less than 30% of annual household income. According to recent ACS estimates, just 14% of households in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region spent more than 30% of their income on housing, disproportionately impacting renters (18%) over homeowners (10%) in the region. Housing cost burden was notably lower in the region compared to the state (29%), but just higher than across all Arizona reservations (13%). In the 2019-20 through 2021-22 school years, less than 2% of students at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools and in the Blue Ridge Unified School District were experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act

definition. The McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness includes children living in shelters, transitional housing, campgrounds, motels, trailer parks and cars, as well as children whose families are temporarily living within another family's household. The number of students experiencing homelessness increased at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools (from 17 to 30) and decreased in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (from 29 to 17).

Only 41% of households in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region have both a computer (i.e., a desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone) and broadband internet connectivity. This is lower than all Arizona reservations (44%) and less than half the proportion of households across the state (88%). At the individual level, 52% of persons of all ages and 58% of children birth to age 17 in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region households had access to both a computer and internet in their household. Like all Arizona reservations (51% and 55%, respectively), computer and internet access in the region was much lower than across the state (90% and 92%, respectively). The 2022 White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Needs and Assets Report indicated that federal funding in response to COVID-19 was being used to expand broadband access to remote parts of the reservation.

Educational Indicators. Children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region attend a variety of district, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and private schools. The Whiteriver Unified School District includes three elementary schools serving preschool through 5th grades (Whiteriver Elementary, Seven Mile School and Cradleboard School), one middle school serving 6th through 8th grades (Canyon Day Junior High School) and one high school (Alchesay High School). The McNary Elementary District includes one elementary school serving kindergarten through 8th grade. Schools run by BIE in the region include John F. Kennedy Day School (serving kindergarten through grade 8), Theodore Roosevelt School (serving grades 3 through 8) and Dishchii'bikoh Community School (also called Cibecue Community School, serving preschool through 12th grades). Some children in the region also attend a public schools in the Blue Ridge Unified District just north of the reservation and a private religious school (East Fork Lutheran, serving kindergarten through 8th grade).

In 2021-22, there were 774 children enrolled in preschool through 3rd grade in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region public schools, including 21 preschoolers and between 176 and 200 students in kindergarten through 3rd grades each. There were fewer than 73 American Indian preschool through 3rd grade students in Blue Ridge Unified School District. From 2019-20 to 2021-22, kindergarten through 3rd grade chronic absence rates were much higher in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools compared with Blue Ridge Unified School District and Arizona. Chronic absences in region schools increased from 17% in 2019-20 to approximately half of early elementary schoolers in 2020-21 (52%) and 2021-22 (47%) during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020-21, Arizona schools switched from using the AzMERIT assessment to the AZM2, with no third-grade testing happening in 2019-20. In the 2021-22 school year, only 5% of 3rd graders at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools achieved a passing score on the 3rd grade English Language Arts (ELA) assessment. Notably, almost nine in 10 3rd graders (87%) at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools "fell far below" state standards. ELA passing rates for American Indian students in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (25%) were higher than American Indian students across all Arizona

schools (16%), but much lower than the passing scores for students of all races and ethnicities in Arizona (41%). From 2020-21 to 2021-22, ELA passing rates increased for White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools (+2%), American Indian students across Arizona (+4%), American Indian students in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (+18%) and all students across Arizona (+6%). As of 2021-22, ELA passing rates had not returned to pre-pandemic levels and were much lower for American Indian students and schools in the region.

Passing rates on the 3rd grade Math assessment were slightly higher in the region (8%) than on the ELA assessment (5%) but were still exceedingly low. A comparatively smaller proportion of these students “fell far below” standards (61%). Similar to the ELA assessment, Math assessment passing rates increased from 2020-21 to 2021-22 for White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools (+ at least 6%), American Indian students across Arizona (+4%), American Indian students in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (+14%) and all students across Arizona (+4%). In 2020, the BIE published a new Standards, Assessments and Accountability Systems Final Rule, which means that BIE will use a single unified assessment in all BIE-funded schools nationwide. Prior to 2020, BIE-funded schools in Arizona had used the same assessment as Arizona public schools. In the 2018-19 school year, BIE schools had similarly low passing rates on the Reading/ Language Arts and Math assessments. Passing rates were higher at John F. Kennedy Day School (14% for Reading/ Language Arts and 9% for Math) than Dishchii’bikoh Community School (4% and 1%) and Theodore Roosevelt school (4% and 6%).

High school students in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region attend Alchesay High School in the Whiteriver Unified School District and off-reservation schools in the Blue Ridge Unified School District. In 2022, the four-year and five-year graduation rates at Alchesay High School (67% and 75%, respectively) were similar to the rates for American Indian students across Arizona (65% and 72%, respectively). The four-year graduation rate for American Indian students in the Blue Ridge Unified School District was very high in 2022 (86%), exceeding the rate for all students in Arizona schools by 9% (77%).

Dropout rates (7th to 12th grade) for White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools fluctuated over recent years from a low of 7% in 2019-20 to a high of 17% in 2020-21, likely due to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is similar to the trend seen for American Indian students across the state (increasing 5% from 2019-20 to 2020-21) but much higher than the dropout rates for all students in Arizona during these years (ranging from 3% to 5%). In contrast, 7th to 12th grade dropout rates in the Blue Ridge Unified School District decreased from more than two in 10 students (21%) in 2019-20 to a low of 4% in 2021-22.

Among adults in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, 70% have at least a high school education. This is a slightly smaller proportion than across all Arizona reservations (77%) and much smaller compared to the state (88%) and national levels (89%). Compared with all adults in the region, mothers giving birth between 2019 and 2022 in the region were more likely to have less than a high school education (35% versus 30%). Less than one quarter (23%) of mothers in the region had more than a high-school education, compared with over one third of mothers on all Arizona reservations (35%) and over half of mothers across Arizona (57%) in 2020.

Early Learning. According to the 2022 FTF Regional Needs and Assets Report, early childhood care and education services in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are available at child care centers, elementary schools and informal home-based care. Center-based care is available at White Mountain Apache Head Start, Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center (ABC Day Care) and Chaghache Day Care. Preschool classes are offered at Dishchii’bikoh Community School and at Whiteriver Elementary School through Whiteriver Unified School District, with Family and Child Education (FACE) services also available at Dishchii’bikoh Community School. Across the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, early care and education providers had the capacity to serve 504 young children. Most of this capacity was for preschoolers, with 386 preschoolers enrolled. Formal early care and education opportunities in the region were limited for infants and toddlers, with fewer than 40 slots for infants (<16% of infants) and fewer than 90 slots for toddlers (<18% of 1- and 2-year-olds).

In 2019-20, the Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center (ABC Day Care) had the capacity to serve 102 total children, including 16 infants, 47 toddlers and 39 preschoolers. The center is located at Alchesay High School in Whiteriver, and high school students can enroll in early childhood development classes and work as staff in the center for hands-on experience. To enroll their children in services at ABC Day Care, parents or caregivers must be employed or in school or a training program. As of August 2021, Chaghache Day Care in Whiteriver had capacity for 78 young children, including 12 infants, 20 toddlers and 46 preschoolers. Chaghache also offered afterschool care for children up to 12 years old. Both ABC Day Care and Chaghache Day Care were able to remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a huge benefit to essential working parents in the region.

In 2023, the White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Program had 252 funded slots and cumulatively enrolled 197 4-year-olds across its three locations. The Head Start Program alone had enough funded slots for 88% of the 4-year-olds in the region using 2020 U.S. Census estimates. Based on information from the 2022 FTF Regional Needs and Assets Report, the White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Program has planned to expand service to 3-year-olds and open an Early Head Start Program, but plans have been on hold due to building needs.

Dishchii’bikoh Preschool, at Dishchii’bikoh Community School, offers services to 4-year-olds in the Cibecue area through Quality First scholarships, meaning it is free to families. The curriculum includes social emotional learning, life skills, imaginative play and Apache language immersion. In the 2020-21 school year, 15 4-year-olds were enrolled out of 20 available slots. Whiteriver Elementary School also offers a preschool program including services for children with special developmental and health needs. In 2020-21, the program served 14 children.

The Family and Child Education (FACE) program in the region operates at John F. Kennedy Day School in Cedar Creek. The program has a home-based component, which involves home visits by parent educators for families with children birth to age 3; a center-based early childhood education program for children ages 3 to 5; a center-based adult education program; and Parent and Child Time (PACT). In the 2020-21 school year, fewer than 10 infants and 15 toddlers were enrolled in the home-based program, and 14 3- to 5-year-olds were enrolled in the center-based program.

Many families in the region use informal care arrangements either in addition to or instead of formal early care and education providers. According to the 2020-21 White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Community Assessment, 69% of parents of young children indicated using an informal caregiver such as a sitter that comes to their home (42%) or a sitter outsider of their home (27%). Most parents said they use these care arrangements for part-time care, but 16% used them 5 or more days per week and 12% used them for more than 8 hours per day.

Families in the region have several cost-free child care options, including the White Mountain Apache Head Start program, Dishchii'bi'koh Preschool and the special needs preschool program at Whiteriver Elementary School. Families may also receive tribal child care assistance at Chaghache Day Care or assistance from the Department of Economic Security (DES). The number of children ages birth to five that were receiving child care assistance from DES dipped to fewer than 10 in 2018 through 2020, which coincides with when Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center stopped accepting them. This number increased to 17 in 2021, representing 100% of children found eligible for assistance, then decreased to 12 in 2022, representing 86% of children found eligible. The number of Department of Child Safety (DCS)-involved children receiving child care assistance through DES fell from a high of 21 in 2018 to less than 10 in 2020 through 2022. This matches the decline seen statewide. Overall, the percent of DCS-involved eligible children who were receiving assistance has been higher than across the state by 3% to 20%.

As of 2023, six child care providers in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region were participating in the Quality First program. The McNary Head Start Center (5 star), White Mountain Apache Head Start in Whiteriver (4 star), Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center (3 star), Dishchii'bi'koh Community School (3 star), and Chaghache Day Care Center (3 star) were considered high-quality programs (with a 3- to 5-star rating), while the Cibecue Head Start Center was approaching quality standards. All 6 programs were funded via regional sources. Because so many early care and education centers in the region received a 3- to 5-star rating, almost all children in a formal care setting were in a quality-level program (95%). This is much higher than what is seen across the state (68%). In 2023, 80 children were served by Quality First Scholarships, or more than 16% of children enrolled in a program.

Qualifying children may receive services from either the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) and/or the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), a number which can be used to estimate the total number of young children receiving early intervention services in a region. The number of children birth to age 2 receiving these services declined 74% from 39 in SFY 2019 to 10 in SFY 2022. As of SFY 2022, 1.3% of children in the region were receiving services from AzEIP and/or DDD compared to 2.6% of children birth to age 2 across the state. Accordingly, the number of children in the region served by AzEIP declined from 43 in October of 2018 to 16 in October of 2022. While the number declined by almost 12% across the state, the number of young children receiving services through AzEIP increased again from October 2021 to October 2022. Fewer than 10 children birth to age 5 received services through DDD each year from 2019 to 2022.

The sources of referrals to AzEIP in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region have changed since 2018 when more than half of referrals were made by “another” source, namely early learning programs in the

region (55%). Since then, the percent of referrals made by a physician and by social services have both increased, making up 54% and 13% of referrals in 2022, respectively. Additionally, the largest “other” referral source in the region changed from early learning programs to DCS in 2021, likely related to pandemic-related school closures. Across the state, the proportion of referrals by physicians has also increased from 37% in 2018 to 56% in 2022. The second largest referral source has been parents and caregivers (between 17% and 22%). In the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, 29% of children (birth to 2) who were referred to AZEIP in 2022 received services, a larger proportion than seen across Arizona as a whole (21%). Notably, more than twice the proportion of families in the region who were contacted about services were not interested as compared with the state (33% and 14%, respectively).

The Arizona Child Find program, part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requires that states identify and evaluate all children with disabilities to connect them with needed services. Children are identified through physicians, parents, school districts and community screenings. White Mountain Apache Tribe Child Find performs an annual door-to-door survey involving home visits and advertising the screenings that take place once a month in Whiteriver and once every 2 months in Cibecue (with transportation provided). Whiteriver Unified School District additionally provides services for children ages 3 to 5 with special developmental and health care needs. This includes the Whiteriver Elementary Early Childhood Education (ECE) program, with two special education classrooms, services at child care centers and home-based services for children in kith and kin care. The district also has a physical therapist, speech pathologist, sign language interpreter and a contracted occupational therapist who are involved in the community Child Find screenings.

Between 2018 and 2019, 257 children ages 3 to 5 were identified as having disabilities and connected with services through the White Mountain Apache Tribe Child Find program. The most common disabilities identified were developmental delays (32%-35%) and speech/language impairments (31%). In 2019, 9% of children identified had a hearing impairment, and 8% had a visual impairment. In 2022, there were between 83 and 92 preschool through 3rd grade students with disabilities in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools. There were slightly fewer students with disabilities in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (between 51 and 71). The number of preschoolers with disabilities receiving services from Whiteriver Unified School District decreased from 23 in 2018 to fewer than 11 in 2021 before rebounding to 20 in 2022. Of these preschoolers in 2022, 70% were diagnosed with a speech or language delay, 20% with developmental delay, and 10% with a preschool severe delay. The proportion of preschoolers in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools with a speech or language impairment was much higher than in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (32%) and across the state (30%). In the Blue Ridge Unified School District, more than half of diagnoses were developmental delays (53%).

The number of kindergarten through 3rd grade students in public or charter school special education in the region decreased by 21% from 2018 (90 students) to 2022 (71 students). In contrast, the number of early elementary students enrolled in special education across the state increased slightly over these years (+2%). The distribution of diagnoses for early elementary students was similar for the region, Blue Ridge Unified School District and the state, with the most prevalent being speech or language impairments (41%) and developmental delay (38%). Special education students in White Mountain

Apache Tribe Region schools were much less likely to have a diagnosis of autism (<2%) compared to Blue Ridge Unified School District (10%) and all Arizona schools (11%).

Child Health. According to the 2022 FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Needs and Assets Report, health care services are available to residents through Whiteriver Indian Hospital and Cibecue Health Center, both part of the Indian Health Service Whiteriver Service Unit. Health care services are also provided through the White Mountain Apache Tribe Division of Health, including Apache Behavioral Health Services, the Apache Diabetes and Wellness Center and annual health fairs. In Fiscal Year 2019 (FY 2019), there were 17,262 active IHS users (meaning that they had 1 or more visits within the past two years) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. Of those, 11% (1,941) were young children birth to age 5.

From 2018 to 2022, almost all births in the region were covered by the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS; Arizona's Medicaid agency) (between 87% and 95%), which is higher than AHCCCS coverage across Arizona reservations (between 69% and 71%). During these years, less than 3% of births in the region were covered by Indian Health Service (IHS), a much smaller proportion than on all Arizona Reservations (16%-22%). High enrollment in AHCCCS, which increases access to health services for enrollees and saves IHS funds to be used in other ways, may be attributed to healthcare navigators at the Whiteriver Hospital.

In 2021, just over half (54%) of the 200 births in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region were to mothers who began prenatal care in the first trimester, while about one in seven (15%) births were to mothers who had fewer than five prenatal visits and another 3% were to mothers who had no prenatal care. This is similar to the proportion of births with different levels of prenatal care across all Arizona Reservations in 2020. The proportion of births in the region to mothers who had no prenatal care or fewer than five prenatal visits showed an overall increase from 2018 to 2022 and was well above statewide trends. In 2022, 16.7% of births were to mothers with fewer than five prenatal visits compared to 4.7% statewide; 8.1% of births were to mothers with no prenatal care, more than twice the proportion in the region in 2018 (3.4%) and more than three times the state trend (2.3%). Between 2018 and 2022, the proportion of births in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region to mothers who began prenatal care in the first trimester has remained consistently lower than across Arizona (between -13% and -18%).

Looking at trends over time, the share of births to teenaged mothers (younger than 20) in the region fluctuated from a high of 14% in 2020 to a low of 10.5% in 2021. However, the percentage of births to mothers younger than 18 generally declined from 7.7% of births in 2018 to 5.2% in 2022. Rates of teenage pregnancy have been declining across the state as a whole.

While the proportion of births in the region to mothers who smoked during pregnancy have been consistently higher than across Arizona, this proportion dipped from 6% of births in 2021 to 3.3% of births in 2022. As of 2022, the White Mountain Apache Tribe region was meeting the Healthy People 2030 target of 4.3% of births or less. Between 2018 and 2022, 106 newborns were hospitalized because of maternal drug use during pregnancy in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. Based on the total number of births, this equates to 9.4 newborns hospitalized per 100 births, more than double the 3.3

newborns hospitalized per 100 live births in the state. The average length of hospital stay was shorter in the region (6.9 days) than in Arizona as a whole (9.5 days).

Between 2018 and 2022, rates of gestational diabetes in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region stayed relatively stable (between 15.4% and 18%) while rates of pre-pregnancy obesity increased by more than half, from 33% to 49.1%. Across Arizona, rates of both gestational diabetes and pre-pregnancy obesity were much lower than in the region; in 2021, 9.9% of births statewide were to mothers with gestational diabetes and 27.1% with pre-pregnancy obesity.

Statewide, about one in eight mothers (13.7%) reported experiencing postpartum depressive symptoms in 2020, nearly the same rate as that seen nationwide (13.4%). National data show that more than one in five (22%) American Indian and Alaska Native mothers in the U.S. experienced postpartum depressive symptoms in 2018, suggesting that Native mothers may be at higher risk of postpartum depression.

From 2018 to 2021, the proportion of births in the region that were low birthweight fluctuated greatly, which is common when there are a relatively small number of total births. Rates of low birthweights decreased by almost half from 2019 (13.5%) to 2020 (7.4%) before increasing for the next two years. In 2022, rates of low birthweight births were about 4% higher in the region (11.9%) than across the state (7.8%).

The Healthy People 2030 target for the percentage of preterm births is 9.4% or lower. From 2018 to 2022 the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region did not meet the Healthy People 2030 target, increasing from a low of 11.4% in 2019 to 17.6% in 2022. Preterm births across the state were increasing slightly over these years and also exceeded this target in 2018, 2020 and 2021. From 2018 to 2020, the majority of WIC-enrolled infants in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region were breastfed at least once (between 69% and 77%), which is higher than across all ITCA WIC programs (between 65% and 71%). The proportion of infants who were breastfed (either exclusively or in combination with other nutrition) at six months was also slightly higher in the region (between 25% and 30%) than all ITCA WIC programs (between 23% and 26%).

Childhood immunizations protect against many diseases, including diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP); polio; and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). In 2020, the IHS target for toddlers with a complete vaccine series for their age group was 45.9%. Data from the Whiteriver Service Unit show that 68% of toddlers ages 19 to 35 months (281) had completed their full immunization series on-time for their age group, meaning that the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region far exceeded the national target. Immunization rates were even higher for young children in care settings. Among the students enrolled in White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start in 2023, 99% were up-to-date on required immunizations for their age group. Children enrolled in kindergarten in the region in the 2022-23 school year also had high immunization rates, exceeding Arizona's rates and meeting the Healthy People 2030 target for MMR vaccination (95%). No children had religious or medical exemptions.

In 2022, there were 42 confirmed and probable cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and 23 cases of influenza among young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. Flu and RSV cases dropped substantially in 2020 and 2021 when most COVID-19 restrictions were in place.

The types of unintentional injuries leading to non-fatal emergency department visits among young children (birth to age 4) are similar in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region and the state. Between 2018 and 2022, the majority of emergency department visits among young children in the region were due to falls (n=107), with smaller numbers due to being struck by or against an object, natural or environmental reasons, poisoning or other causes. Rates of emergency department visits due to fire or hot objects were higher in the region than across the state. Data on causes of inpatient hospitalizations among young children in the region during this time were suppressed due to small numbers. Between 2018 and 2021, there were 21 child deaths in the White Mountain Apache Tribe region due to accidents, congenital malformations, low birthweight, intentional self-harm or suicide, assault or homicide, sudden infant death syndrome and influenza or pneumonia. No single cause was responsible for more than five deaths.

Family Support and Literacy. Early literacy efforts in the region include the “Reach Out and Read” program, through which pediatricians at Whiteriver Indian Hospital and Cibecue Health Center provide families with information about the importance of reading with their children and books to take home. The Reach Out and Read program in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region additionally translated pamphlets into Apache and created graphics of Apache children engaging in health promoting activities. The 2020-21 White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Community Assessment included questions on caregiver early literacy practices. When asked how often they read to their child(ren), 31% said every day, 41% said once a week, and 28% indicated less frequently than that. Respondents also identified topics for parent education in the region, with love and discipline (83%), positive parenting skills (74%) and child behaviors (69%) ranking above 50%.

Apache Behavioral Health Services (ABHS) serves as the Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authority (TRBHA) to administer publicly-funded mental health services for White Mountain Apache Tribe members living on and off the reservation. ABHS operates out of the Apache Behavioral Health Services Center in Whiteriver, Cibecue Behavioral Health Center and McNary Wellness Center. Services include individual, couples, family, and group counseling; evaluation, diagnosis and case management; residential and group home treatment; 24-hour crisis management; and traditional healing. Additionally, the ABHS Child Adolescent and Family Services (CAFS) team specializes in preventing out-of-home placements by providing evaluations, therapy and case management services to at-risk children and their families. The THRIVE: Birth to Five (Są'áh Naaghai Bik'eh Gozhoo) program works with families through therapeutic play, home visits, family therapy and group sessions to promote secure attachments between children and their caregivers. The THRIVE team offers services in Whiteriver, McNary, Cibecue, Alchesay High School, White Mountain Apache Head Start, Chaghache Day Care, ABC Daycare, Our Children's Shelter and via virtual sessions since the COVID-19 pandemic. From January 2019 to March 2021, the highest utilized services for young children at ABHS were family support (519 children) and family counseling (470) followed by individual counseling (339), individual skills (309), and comprehensive assessment (265).

A majority of respondents (78%) to the 2020-21 White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Community Survey ranked alcohol and/or substance abuse as a problem that should be given top priority for

improvement. Respondents also identified alcohol and substance abuse as having the greatest overall impact on the community and being the most damaging to mental health. Substance abuse support services in the region are offered through the Rainbow Treatment Center (RTC), which offers Working 2 Wellness, EVOLVD Living with Purpose and RTC scholarships to simultaneously provide substance abuse counseling and treatment while participants are working towards financial wellness, school and employment goals. RTC also has a Nutritional Recovery Department, which holistically includes ancestral knowledge, Apache food sovereignty and employable culinary skills in the recovery process. Between 2017 and 2021, there were fewer than 6 deaths with opiates or opioids contributing in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region.

In the region, child welfare services are provided by the White Mountain Apache Tribe Social Services (TSS) Department. Additionally, the White Mountain Apache Tribe operates a group home for children birth through 18 years called Our Children's Shelter. In 2020, there were 127 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect involving children birth to age 17, a 38% decrease from 205 in 2019. The number of children removed by Tribal Child Protective Services (CPS) also decreased from 177 in 2019 to 122 in 2020 (-31%). According to the 2022 Regional Needs and Assets Report, school staff usually made the majority of reports to CPS, which contributed to the number of referrals dropping when schools closed due to COVID-19. TSS contracts with 12 total foster homes, 3 of which are licensed by the Tribe. Between 2019 and 2020, 603 children ages birth to 17 were placed as wards of the tribe. In 2020, about half of these children were placed in state foster homes (49%). More than one in 10 were placed in residential care at Our Children's Shelter (16%), in tribal foster homes located on the reservation (11%), in tribal foster homes located off the reservation (11%) and with relatives other than parents (11%). Despite kinship care accounting for almost two thirds of placements in previous years, only 2% of children were placed with parents and 11% with other relatives.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

There is growing acknowledgement of the role our physical, social, and economic environments play in our day-to-day health and wellbeing.¹ These factors, known as the social determinants of health, have an especially strong effect on the development of young children ages birth to 5 and accumulate over time.^{2, 3} Measuring and addressing these conditions can significantly impact not only early health and education outcomes, but also health and economic circumstances later in life.^{4, 5, 6} It is important to acknowledge that structural inequities in access to quality health care, schools, and education as well as living, working and leisure conditions lead to disparate outcomes within and between groups of people.⁷ For example, the U.S.'s history of segregation, discriminatory policy and differential investment across communities has created generational disparities in outcomes for people of color.⁸ Native communities have additionally experienced periods of genocide, forced relocation and assimilation leading to systemically poorer economics and health compared with other groups.^{9, 10} This Needs and Assets Report covers many structural and social determinants of health including population characteristics, economic characteristics, early learning and educational indicators, child health, and family support and literacy for the First Things First White Mountain Apache Tribe Region.

The data in this report come from a variety of sources including federal and state agencies and local agencies or service providers. Federal government sources include publicly available data from the 2020 Census and the 2017-2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. Data in this report from the ACS summarize the responses from samples of residents taken between 2017 and 2021. Because these estimates are based on samples rather than the entire population, ACS data should not be considered exact. Estimates for smaller geographies, such as regions, are less accurate than estimates for larger geographies, such as the state, because they are based on smaller sample sizes.

Data were provided to FTF by state agencies including the Arizona Department of Health Services, the Arizona Department of Education and the Arizona Department of Economic Security. In most cases, the data in this report were calculated specifically for the Needs and Assets process and are more detailed than the data that are published by these agencies for the general public. Whenever possible, this report will use data tailored to the region, but in some cases, there are only county-level or statewide data available to report. This report also includes publicly available data for the state and counties to supplement data received through specific requests, including from state agencies such as the Arizona Department of Commerce's Office of Economic Opportunity. When more recent data from public or state agency datasets were not available, this report also cites data from the 2022 FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Needs and Assets Report.

In most tables in this report, the top rows of data correspond to the FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. Not all data are available at the FTF regional level because not all data sources analyze their data based on FTF regional boundaries. The other table rows present data that are useful for comparison purposes, including all Arizona reservations combined, the state of Arizona and national estimates or targets where available. Data tables and graphs are as complete as possible. Data which are not available for a particular geography are indicated by the abbreviation "N/A." State agencies have varying policies

about reporting small values. Entries such as "<11" are used when the count is too small to be reported and has been suppressed to protect privacy. In some cases, table entries will indicate a range of values such as "1 to 9" because the suppression policy prevented the vendor from knowing the exact value, but comparison of these ranges of possible values to other values in the table or figure may still be useful. Table entries of "DS" indicate that data have been suppressed and we are unable to provide a useful range of possible values. Additional data tables not included in the body of the report can be found in APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL DATA TABLES.

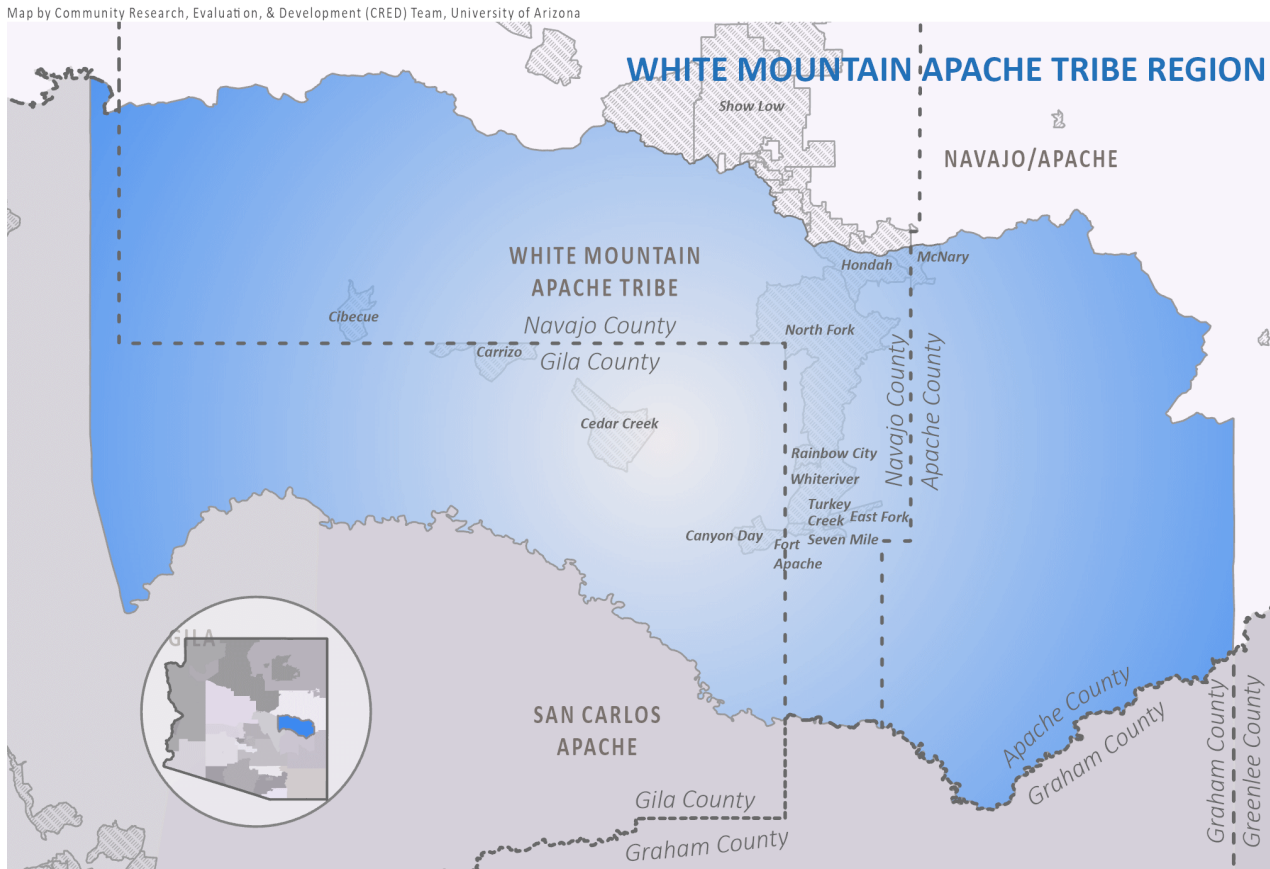
THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE REGION

The First Things First regional boundaries were initially established in 2007, creating 31 regions which were designed to (a) reflect the view of families in terms of where they access services, (b) coincide with existing boundaries or service areas of organizations providing early childhood services, (c) maximize the ability to collaborate with service systems and local governments and facilitate the ability to convene a Regional Partnership Council and (d) allow for the collection of demographic and indicator data. The regional boundaries are reviewed every two years. In state fiscal year 2015, the boundaries were modified using census blocks, creating 28 regions.

When First Things First was established by the passage of Proposition 203 in November 2006, the government-to-government relationship with federally recognized tribes was acknowledged. Each tribe with tribal lands located in Arizona was given the opportunity to participate within a First Things First designated region or elect to be designated as a separate region. The White Mountain Apache Tribe was one of 10 tribes that chose to be designated as its own region. This decision must be ratified every two years, and the White Mountain Apache Tribe has opted to continue to be designated as its own region.

The boundaries of the First Things First White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are the same as the White Mountain Apache Reservation (sometimes called Fort Apache). The region covers more than 2,500 square miles in Apache, Gila, and Navajo counties. There are twelve reservation communities identified by the U.S. Census: Canyon Day, Carrizo, Cedar Creek, Cibecue, East Fork, Fort Apache, Hondah-McNary, North Fork, Rainbow City, Seven Mile, Turkey Creek, and Whiteriver. Whiteriver, the largest of these communities, serves as the capital. Figure 1 shows the geographical area covered by the First Things First White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. Additional information is available at the end of this report, including a map and table of the region's zip codes in Appendix 3 and a map and a list of school districts in the region in Appendix 4.

Figure 1. The First Things First White Mountain Apache Tribe Region



Source: 2020 TIGER/Line Shapefiles prepared by the U.S. Census. Map produced by CRED.



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Why It Matters

Accurate information about the number and characteristics of families allows policy makers and program providers to understand what resources are needed in their communities, including where services should be located and how to tailor offerings to the specific needs of those who are likely to use them.^{11, 12, 13, 14} For example, identifying which communities have high numbers of families with young children can facilitate strategic investments in libraries, playgrounds, health care facilities, social services and educational systems, which can help families with young children thrive.^{15, 16} Program and policy decisions that are informed by data on the composition of children's home and community environments help ensure more effective supports for families and have a greater chance to improve well-being, economic security and educational outcomes for children.

2020 Census data and its limitations

The release of 2020 Census data in 2023 provided updated information on the population of Arizona and the nation as a whole. However, the 2020 Census faced unprecedented challenges in conducting an accurate count of the population, the foremost of which included the COVID-19 pandemic and its related disruptions to institutions such as tribal and local governments, schools and health care facilities.^{17, 18, 19, 20, 21} Overall, data quality reviews of the 2020 Census have concluded that the data are generally reliable and accurate for the overall population; however, specific groups that have been undercounted in the past were again undercounted, this time more severely.²² Nationwide, American Indians living on reservations were estimated to be undercounted by 5.6% (compared to 4.9% in 2010), and Hispanic or Latino individuals were undercounted by an estimated 5.0% (compared with 1.5% in 2010). Young children birth to age 4 were also undercounted by 3-5% nationwide, meaning that as many as 1 in 20 young children birth to age 4 were missed by the Census.²³ These undercounts are important to keep in mind when using Census data, particularly data for young children and for communities with substantial American Indian and Hispanic or Latino populations. Undercounted communities risk receiving fewer resources for at least the next decade since the decennial census counts are the basis of many federal funding allocations.^{24, 25}

What the Data Tell Us

Population, race and ethnicity

While young children make up a small proportion of the overall population, their well-being has wide-reaching impacts on families, social service systems and the state's future population. Continued investment in children's well-being and the well-being of their families was deemed by the National Academy of Sciences as "the most efficient strategy" for strengthening the future workforce and supporting a thriving community.^{26, 27}

Knowing the racial-ethnic composition of communities can inform efforts to ensure equitable access to services and resources. Many racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. experience reduced access to health care services, more poverty and housing inequality, poorer living conditions and increased rates of homelessness in comparison to non-Hispanic White Americans.^{28, 29, 30, 31} In Native communities, these disparities have been shaped by decades of inequitable federal policies and underinvestment.³² These inequities result in disproportionately worse overall health as indicated by higher rates of disease and illness, untreated physical health conditions and lower life expectancies within these groups.³³ Understanding a community's racial-ethnic composition is also critical for identifying communities facing higher risks from environmental and public health hazards due to historic underinvestment and other factors—as the COVID-19 pandemic made woefully clear.³⁴

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the total population of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region was 14,340, of whom 1,563 were young children (birth to age 5). Over one-quarter (28%) of the 3,473 households in the region had one or more young children, which is higher than the proportion of households with young children on all Arizona reservations combined (20%) and the state as a whole (13%) (Table 1).
- Decennial Census data indicate that the overall population of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region increased by 7% between 2010 and 2020. This is similar to the population change across the U.S. (7%) and Arizona (12%) and contrasts with the 3% decrease across all Arizona Reservations. The population of young children (birth to age 5) was estimated to have decreased by 22% in the region, which is a smaller decline than across Arizona reservations (-26%) but larger than Arizona as a whole (-12%) (Figure 2).
- As previously mentioned in *2020 Census data and its limitations*, American Indians living on reservations and young children (birth to age 4) were specifically found to be substantially undercounted in the 2020 Census (5.6% and 3-5% nationally). Given this, tribal enrollment data is another important source for population counts in Native communities. Based on data from the White Mountain Apache Tribe Office of Vital Records, in 2020 the White Mountain Apache Tribe had a total enrollment of 17,062 members living within or outside of the reservation boundaries. In each year from 2018 to 2020, between 129 and 254 children birth to age 5 were newly enrolled as members (Table 2).

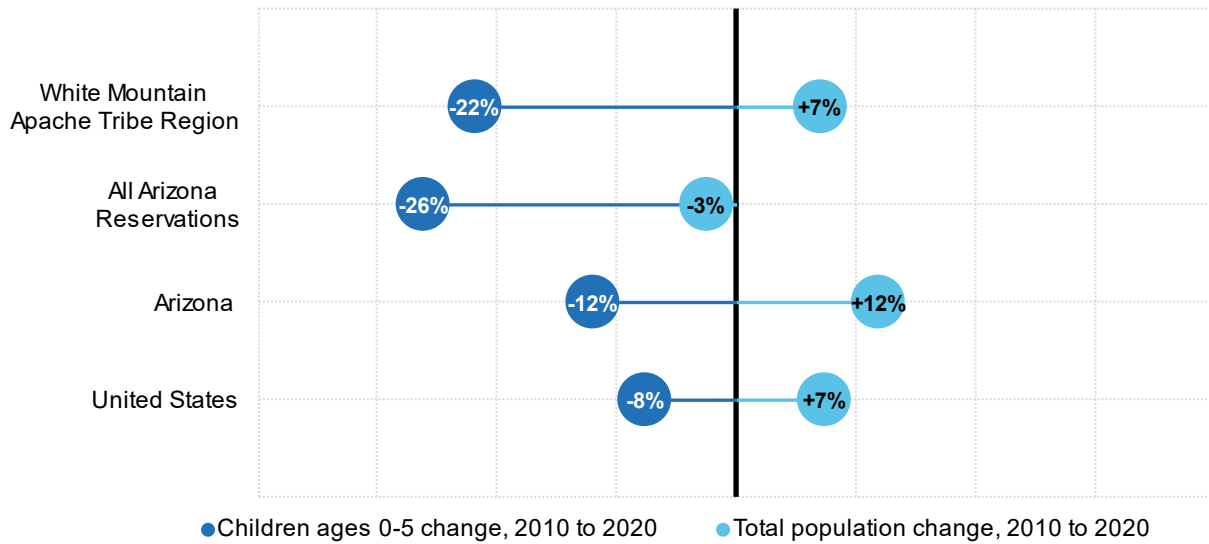
- Another way to understand potential undercounting of young children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is to compare 2020 Census data on the birth to age 5 population to Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) data on births from 2015 to 2020. Census estimates for the region are lower by about 14 children per year compared with the count of births (5%). ADHS reports 1,646 births occurring between 2015 and 2020 compared to 1,563 children birth to age 5 enumerated by the Census (Figure 3).
- Almost all of the population (98%) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region identified as American Indian. Compared with the population on all Arizona reservations, smaller proportions of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region population identified as Hispanic or Latino (1% versus 6%), Non-Hispanic White (2% versus 5%) and Multiracial (1% versus 3%) (Figure 4). These breakdowns were similar for young children in the region, with 99% identifying as American Indian (Figure 5).

Table 1. Population and households in the 2020 U.S. Census

| Geography | Total population | Population (ages 0-5) | Total number of households | Number and percent of households with one or more children (ages 0-5) | |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---|------------|
| | | | | Number | Percent |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 14,340 | 1,563 | 3,473 | 969 | 28% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 173,499 | 15,140 | 50,362 | 10,167 | 20% |
| Arizona | 7,151,502 | 480,744 | 2,705,878 | 345,601 | 13% |
| United States | 331,449,281 | 22,401,565 | 126,817,580 | 16,429,111 | 13% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic & Housing Characteristics (DHC), Tables P1, P14, P20 & HCT3

Figure 2. Change in the total population and population of children ages 0-5, 2010 to 2020 Census



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), Tables P1, P14, HCT3. U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Tables P1, P14, P20.

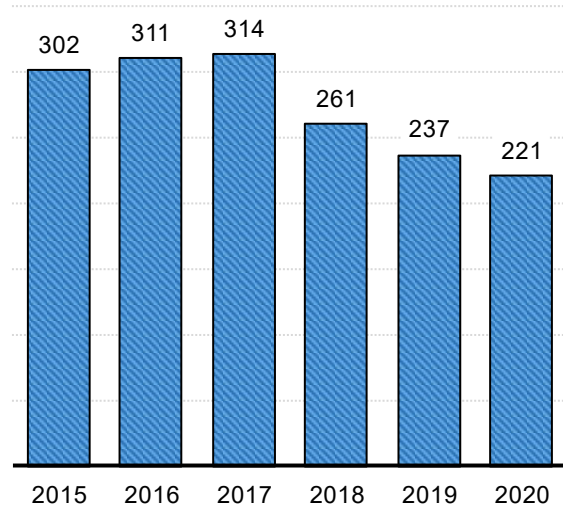
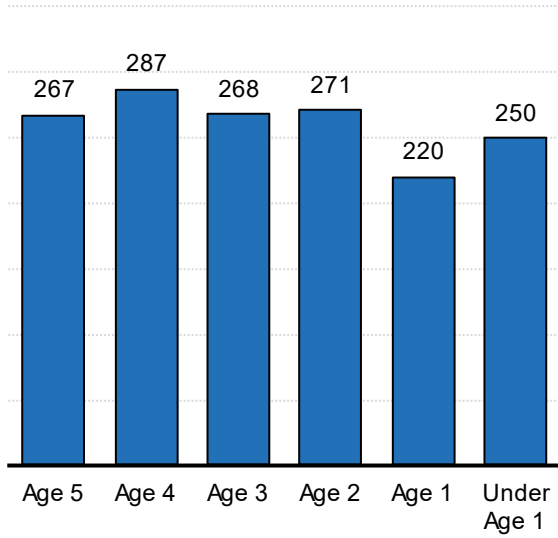
Table 2. White Mountain Apache Tribe Enrollment, 2018 to 2020

| Age group | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Children ages 0-5 | 161 | 254 | 129 |
| Under 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Age 1 | 0 | 13 | 48 |
| Age 2 | 8 | 78 | 26 |
| Age 3 | 78 | 81 | 28 |
| Age 4 | 44 | 40 | 11 |
| Age 5 | 31 | 42 | 11 |
| Ages 6 to 17 | 65 | 91 | 23 |
| Total population (all ages) | 16,962 | 17,044 | 17,062 |

Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

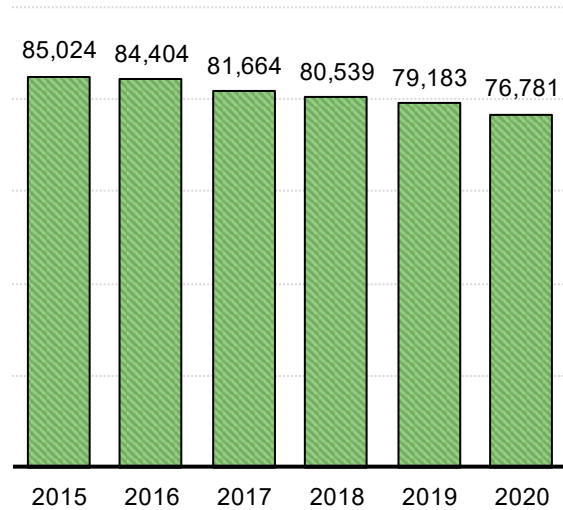
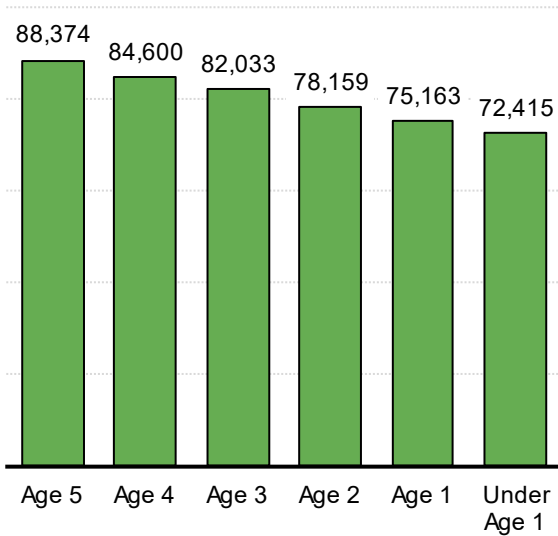
Figure 3. Children by single year of age in the 2020 Census compared to recent birth numbers in the region (2015 to 2020)

Children by age, White Mountain Apache Tribe Region Births by year, White Mountain Apache Tribe Region



Children by age, Arizona

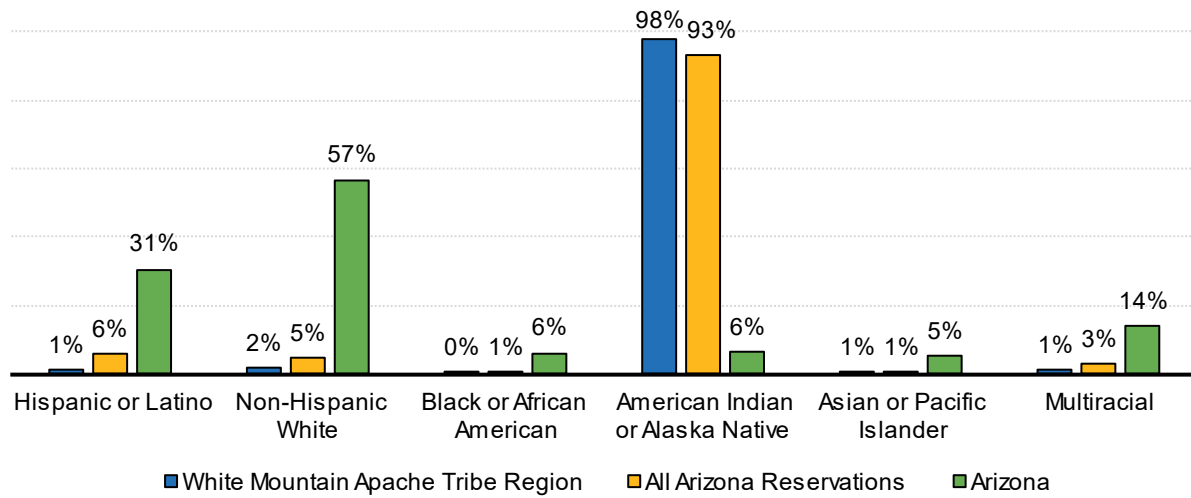
Births by year, Arizona



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data. U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), Tables P1, P14.

Note: Looking at these two figures allows a comparison of 2020 Census estimates (left) of the population size of young children by age with the count of births from their likely birth year (right) to try to understand further how much the Census may have undercounted young children.

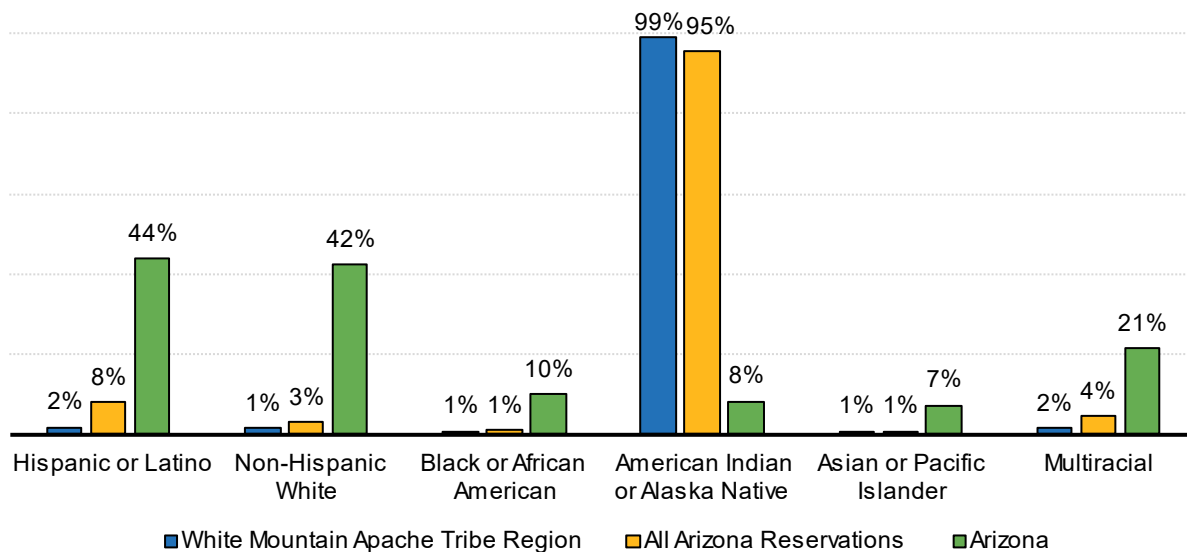
Figure 4. Race and ethnicity of the population of all ages, 2020 Census



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P12A-W.

Note: The six percentages shown in this figure may sum to more or less than 100% because (a) persons reporting Hispanic ethnicity are counted twice if their race is Black, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or any combination of two or more races, (b) persons reporting any other race are not counted here unless they have Hispanic ethnicity, and (c) rounding.

Figure 5. Race and ethnicity for children birth to age 4, 2020 Census



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P12A-W.

Note: The six percentages shown in this figure may sum to more or less than 100% because (a) persons reporting Hispanic ethnicity are counted twice if their race is Black, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or any combination of two or more races, (b) persons reporting any other race are not counted here unless they have Hispanic ethnicity, and (c) rounding.

Language use

Language provides an important connection to family, community and culture. Arizona is home to many sovereign tribal nations whose Native languages are a vital cultural strength. Language preservation and revitalization are critical to safeguarding traditional knowledge and promoting Indigenous self-determination, social unity and educational equity.^{35, 36, 37} Unfortunately, the latest estimates for Native language use in Arizona from the American Community Survey point to a sharp decline in the number of speakers of native languages between 2019 and 2021. While the population of English-only speakers rose 0.3% between 2019 and 2021, the population of speakers of Native North American languages other than Navajo¹ declined by an estimated 27% (from over 30,000 to about 22,500).³⁸ This decrease reflects the devastating losses that Native communities experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.^{39,40} These deaths, especially among Native elders, signify a loss of life and of traditional knowledge, cultural history and language.^{41,42} Ongoing support for cultural preservation and language revitalization continues to be a critical need for Native communities in Arizona.

Mastery of more than one language is also an asset in school readiness and academic achievement and may offer cognitive and social-emotional benefits in early school experiences and across one's

¹ The population of Navajo speakers declined by an estimated 13% (from over 90,000 to about 78,000) in Arizona between 2019 and 2021

lifetime.^{43, 44, 45, 46, 47} However, families with lower English proficiency may also face barriers to accessing information about health care and other services or engaging with their children’s teachers. Children who do not yet have a full grasp of English may also experience difficulties in school, impeding their academic success and resulting in negative health outcomes.^{48, 49} Knowing the languages spoken and level of English proficiency in a region can inform the development of resources and services in multiple languages, ensuring that they are accessible to all families.^{50, 51}

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

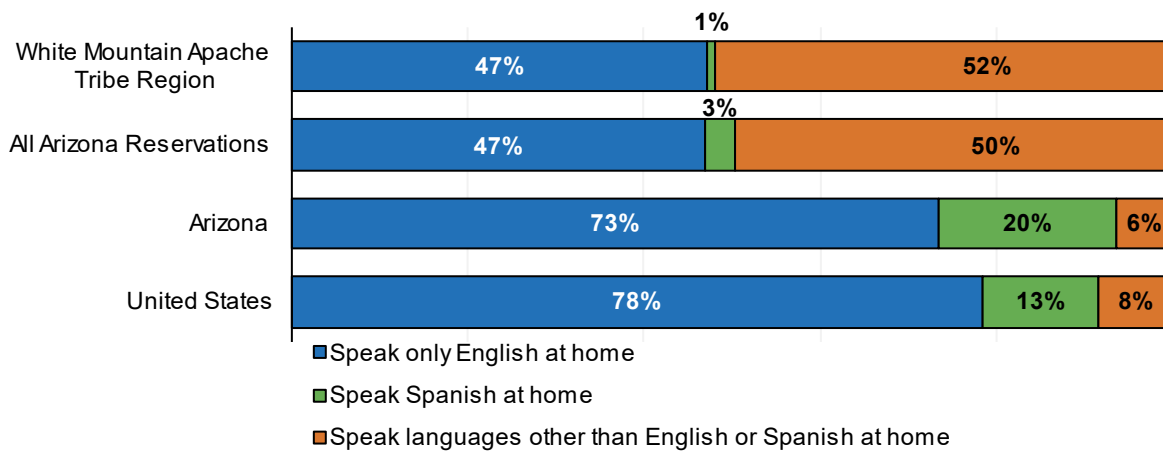
- The American Community Survey estimated that just under half (47%) of individuals in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region speak only English at home. Only 1% speak Spanish at home, slightly lower than seen across all Arizona reservations (3%). The remaining 52% speak a language other than English or Spanish at home, which is most likely a Native North American language (Figure 6).⁵²
- Of those individuals speaking a language other than English at home, the majority also speak English “very well,”ⁱⁱ with about half of the region proficiently bilingual or multilingual (49%) (Figure 7).
- Only 2% of households in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are considered limited-English-speaking, meaning no one over the age of 13 in the household speaks English very well. This is a smaller proportion than seen across all Arizona reservations (12%) and the state as a whole (4%) (Figure 8).
- Similarly, 2% of students attending White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools were considered English Language Learners during the 2020-21 school year, decreasing to less than 2% in the 2021-22 school year. Children in the region also attend off-reservation schools in the Blue Ridge Unified School District, which had a slightly higher percent of ELL during these years (5%) (Table 3).
- English Language Learners are identified through the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Home Language Survey, which asks families about the student’s first language and what language is spoken at home most of the time. Statewide, 108 students reported Apache language use at home in 2020-21, decreasing slightly to 104 students in 2021-22. Approximately half of these attended White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools, and fewer than 11 of these students attended Blue Ridge Unified District schools (Table 4).
- The 2020-21 White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Community Survey also asked about home language use. Eight in 10 respondents indicated using English (80%), almost two in 10

ⁱⁱ “Very well” refers to the self-rated ability to speak English in response to the American Community Survey question “How well does this person speak English?”. Other response options include: “well,” “not well” and “not at all.” See <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/language-use/about.html>

indicated using Apache (19%), and 2% indicated using another language the most at home (Figure 9).

- According to the 2022 FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Needs and Assets Report, there are multiple language revitalization efforts in the region, mostly located within the local school system. Apache language is taught in all schools in the Whiteriver Unified School District as well as White Mountain Apache Head Start centers and Dischii’bikoh Preschool. The Johnson O’Malley (JOM) Program is a federal program that provides additional cultural and language preservation services at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region public schools and sponsors the White Mountain Apache Tribal Youth Council.⁵³

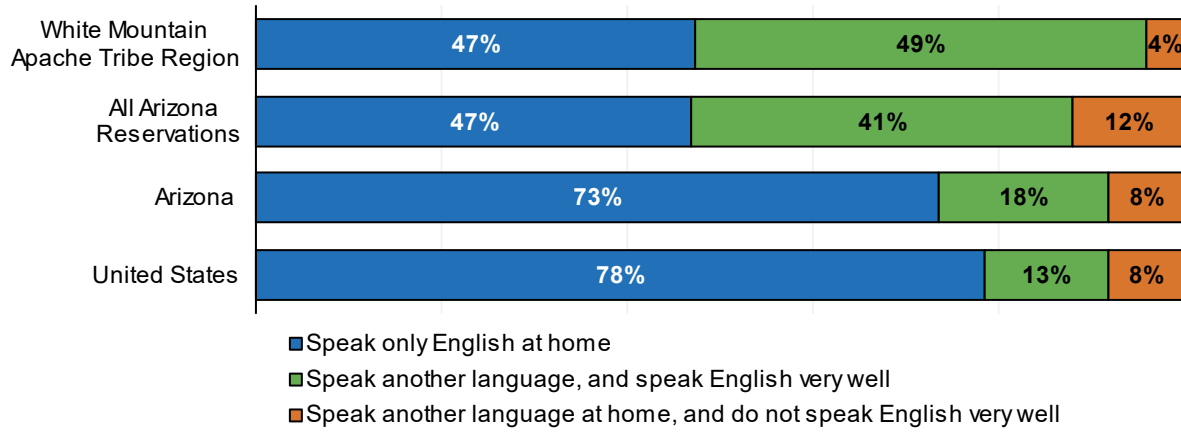
Figure 6. Language spoken at home (by persons ages 5 and older), 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table C16001

Note: The three percentages in each bar may not sum to 100% because of rounding. The American Community Survey (ACS) no longer specifies the proportion of the population who speak Native North American languages for geographies smaller than the state. In Arizona, Navajo and other Native American languages (including Apache, Hopi, and O’odham) are the most commonly spoken (2%), following English (73%) and Spanish (20%).

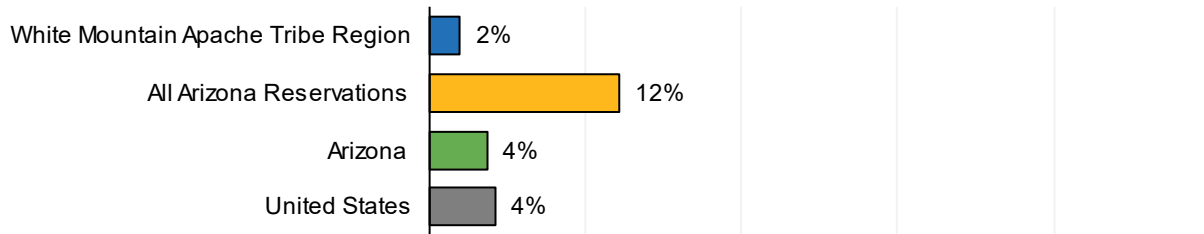
Figure 7. English-language proficiency (for persons ages 5 and older), 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table C16001

Note: The three percentages in the figure should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding.

Figure 8. Share of households that are limited-English-speaking, 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table C16002

Note: A "limited-English-speaking" household is one in which no one over the age of 13 speaks English very well.

Table 3. Number of English Language Learners enrolled in all grades, 2020-21 to 2021-22

| Geography | Number of PS-12 students who were English Language Learners | | Percent of PS-12 students who were English Language Learners | |
|--|---|---------|--|---------|
| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | 54 | 42 | 2% | <2% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 | 84 | 91 | 5% | 5% |
| Arizona schools | 86,405 | 91,881 | 8% | 8% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Oct 1 Enrollment Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Notes: Data for Blue Ridge Unified School District Schools are included in this table as these schools have been identified as also serving students from the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. English Language Learners are students who do not score ‘proficient’ in the English language based on the Arizona English Language Learning Assessment (AZELLA) and thus are eligible for additional supportive services for English language acquisition. Legislation in Arizona requires children in Arizona public schools be taught in English, and English Language Learners to attend English immersion programs. Senate Bill 1014 passed in 2019, increased the flexibility districts have in structuring English Language Learners immersion programs, and lessened the duration required of this instruction. For more information see <https://www.azed.gov/oelas/structured-english-immersion-models>

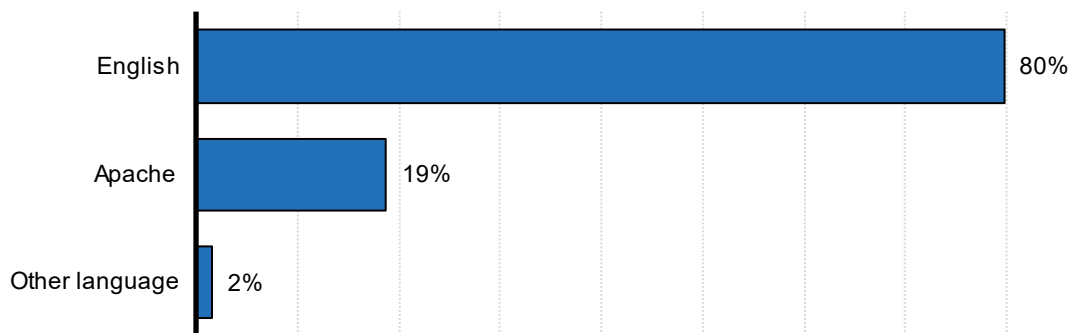
Table 4. ADE Primary home language survey data, 2020-21 to 2021-22

| Geography | Number of students in households where Apache* is spoken | | Percent of students in households where Apache* is spoken | |
|--|--|---------|---|---------|
| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | 54 | 45 | 2% | <2% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 schools | <11 | <11 | <2% | <2% |
| Arizona schools | 108 | 104 | <2% | <2% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [PHLOTE Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Notes: The Primary Home Language survey is completed by parents or caregivers of a student when they first enroll in school. The survey asks what language is spoken at home most of the time, what language the student speaks most of the time, and what language the student first spoke or understood. Data for Blue Ridge Unified School District Schools are included in this table as these schools have been identified as also serving students from the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. The Arizona row includes data on Apache home language use from both the Whiteriver and San Carlos School Districts. The majority primary home language survey respondents at schools in the region who indicated speaking a language other than English at home indicated speaking a Native language.

Figure 9. Responses to "What language do you use most at home?", Head Start Community Assessment 2020-21



Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Family and household composition

Young children in Arizona come from households with many potential compositions, each of which has possible implications for child development.^{54, 55, 56} For example, families with two married parents tend to offer stability that promotes child well-being.^{57, 58, 59} Single-parent households are common and can be linked to levels of poverty, access to health and education resources and the quality of a child’s interactions with adult caregivers.^{60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66} Multi-generational living, particularly arrangement

where grandparents live in the home with children and parents, has long been practiced in some cultures and communities but is becoming increasingly common in U.S. families of all backgrounds.^{67, 68, 69, 70} These living arrangements can offer financial and social benefits but also specific stressors, such as managing conflicts in parenting styles and family roles.^{71, 72, 73, 74, 75} It is also increasingly common for children to live in kinship care, defined as the care of children by someone other than their parents, such as relatives or close friends.^{76, 77, 78} These kinship caregivers, especially grandparents who care for their grandchildren, can face unique challenges, including navigating the logistics of informal guardianship (e.g., difficulties in registering children for school), coping with parental absence and addressing the challenges of being an aging caregiver for a young child.^{79, 80, 81, 82}

Though varying from one community to another, multigenerational households and kinship care are common in Native communities.^{83, 84} The strengths associated with the extended family structure, including mutual help and respect, can provide family members with a network of support that can be valuable when dealing with socio-economic hardships.⁸⁵ Grandparents are often central to these households and care situations, in many cases sharing and strengthening Native language, history and culture.^{86, 87}

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- The majority of young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region were living in a household with one unmarried parentⁱⁱⁱ (63%), which was similar to across all Arizona reservations (65%) but much larger than across the state (37%). Compared to all Arizona reservations, a larger proportion of young children in the region lived with two married parents (33% compared to 25%), and a smaller proportion were living with relatives other than parents (such as grandparents, aunts and uncles) (3% compared to 8%) (Table 5).
- Half of all children birth to age 5 (50%) in the region live in a grandparent's household, which is higher than the proportion as across all Arizona reservations (43%) (Figure 10). Note that this includes all multigenerational households; the grandparent in these households may or may not be responsible for raising the child, and the child's parent(s) may or may not also be living in the household.
- In contrast, 9% of grandparents in the region are living with grandchildren (birth to age 17) without a parent also present in the household, which is a smaller proportion than across Arizona reservations combined (14%) (Figure 11).

ⁱⁱⁱ Note that due to the way the ACS asks about family relationships, children living with two unmarried, cohabitating parents are not counted as living with two parents (these children are counted in the 'one parent' category). New data from the 2020 Census (table P20) for children ages 0-17 shows that in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, 33% of the children living in households with an unmarried parent are actually living in cohabitating couple families where there are two parents present but they are not married. This means that for children of all ages living with their parents in 2020, 47% were living in households led by married parents, 28% were living in households led by an unmarried (and not cohabitating) mother, 17% were living in households led by cohabitating parents and 7% were living in households led by an unmarried (and not cohabitating) father.

- The ACS considers a grandparent to be responsible for their grandchildren if they are "currently responsible for most of the basic needs of any grandchildren under the age of 18" who live in the grandparent's household. Based on this definition, an estimated 615 grandparents in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are responsible for their grandchildren under 18 years old. A parent is also present in most of these households (only 17% without the child's parent). The majority of these grandparents are female (68%), and 48% are in the labor force, meaning that they may need child care for their grandchildren while they are working. About one third (32%) have an income below the poverty level, which is lower than all Arizona Reservations (36%) but still a large proportion of these grandparents (Table 6).

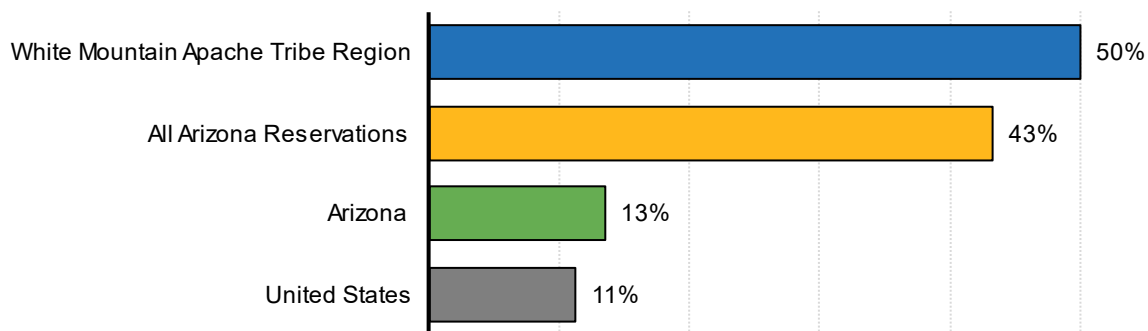
Table 5. Living arrangements for children birth to age 5, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of children (birth to age 5) living in households | Living with two married parents | Living with one parent | Living not with parents but with other relatives | Living with non-relatives |
|---|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,575 | 33% | 63% | 3% | 0% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 15,661 | 25% | 65% | 8% | 2% |
| Arizona | 496,219 | 59% | 37% | 3% | 2% |
| United States | 23,353,556 | 64% | 32% | 2% | 2% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Tables B05009, B09001, & B17001

Note: The four percentages in each row should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding. The term "parent" here includes stepparents. Please note that due to the way the ACS asks about family relationships, children living with two unmarried, cohabitating parents are not counted as living with two parents (these children are counted in the 'one parent' category).

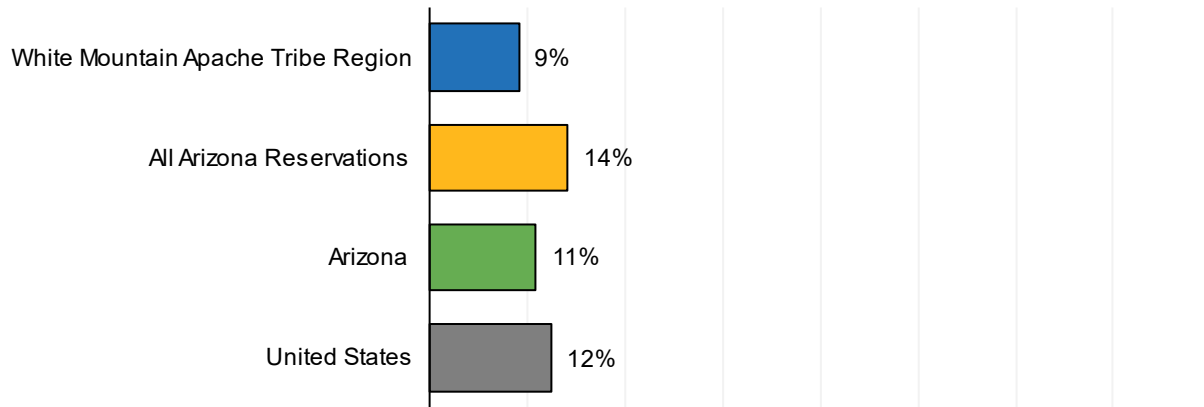
Figure 10. Grandchildren birth to age 5 living in a grandparent's household, 2020 Census



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), Tables P14, PCT11.

Note: This table includes all children (under six years old) living in a household headed by a grandparent, regardless of whether the grandparent is responsible for them, or whether the child's parent lives in the same household.

Figure 11. Percent of grandparents living with their grandchildren birth to age 17 and no parent is present in the household, 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Tables B10051, B10054, B10056, & B10059

Table 6. Selected characteristics of grandparents who are responsible for one or more grandchildren under 18 in their households, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of grandparents who live with and are responsible for grandchildren under 18 years old | Percent of these grandparents who: | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--|
| | | Do not have the child's parents in the household | Are 60 years old or older | Are female | Do not speak English very well | In labor force | Have an income below the poverty level |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 615 | 17% | 33% | 68% | 4% | 48% | 32% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 5,828 | 30% | 49% | 67% | 18% | 44% | 36% |
| Arizona | 56,079 | 33% | 45% | 62% | 21% | 57% | 21% |
| United States | 2,319,443 | 38% | 47% | 63% | 14% | 56% | 18% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Tables B10051, B10054, B10056, B10058, & B10059

Note: Grandparents are considered responsible for their grandchild or grandchildren if they are “currently responsible for most of the basic needs of any grandchildren under the age of 18” who live in the grandparent’s household.

Additional data tables related to *Population Characteristics* can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.



ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

Why it Matters

A family's economic stability impacts children's well-being and predicts a variety of health outcomes.⁸⁸ Children who grow up in poverty and unstable economic conditions are more likely to face negative effects on their cognitive, behavioral, social and emotional development compared to those in stable economic environments.^{89, 90, 91, 92, 93} The challenges they face may continue into adulthood, and such difficulties can be passed on to the next generation.^{94, 95, 96} Poverty also affects children by straining parental well-being and parent-child interactions. Stressors related to poverty, like unemployment, food and housing insecurity and poor mental and physical health, make it difficult for caregivers to provide the necessary support for children's optimal development.⁹⁷ In light of these broad impacts, economic stability is a key social determinant of health and is included as a domain in the Healthy People 2030 Objectives.^{iv}

Economic circumstances in tribal communities have been shaped by a long history of inequitable policies and federal investment.^{98, 99} The resulting economic disparity between Native and non-Native communities affects rates of employment, poverty, food security and housing stability. Especially since the passing of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975, which gave tribes greater autonomy in administering federally-funded programs and services, tribal governments have invested in community and economic development opportunities such as health care, manufacturing, forestry, fisheries, gaming and resorts to strengthen the economic conditions of their people.¹⁰⁰

What the Data Tell Us

Income and poverty

Poverty is associated with reduced access to nutrition, green space and health care and greater exposure to psychosocial stress and environmental toxins, factors that can both directly and indirectly hinder children's growth and brain development.^{101, 102, 103} Children living in poverty are thus at a higher risk of negative impacts including being born at a low birth weight, lower school achievement and poor health.^{104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110} Economic hardship is included in some definitions of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and children living in poverty experience other non-economic ACEs, such as parental divorce or separation, exposure to violence, parental incarceration and living with someone with mental illness or a substance use disorder, at higher rates than children in higher income households.^{111, 112} Given the many negative effects of poverty on child development, programs that alleviate poverty through providing cash assistance or food, housing or health care assistance can improve child well-being.¹¹³

^{iv} For more information on the Economic Stability Healthy People 2030 Objectives please see <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/economic-stability>

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Cash Assistance Program (TANF)^v provides temporary cash benefits and supportive services to children and families. Eligibility is based on citizenship or qualified resident status, Arizona residency and limits on resources and monthly income.¹¹⁴ In recognition of tribal sovereignty, federally recognized tribes have the option to administer their own TANF programs.

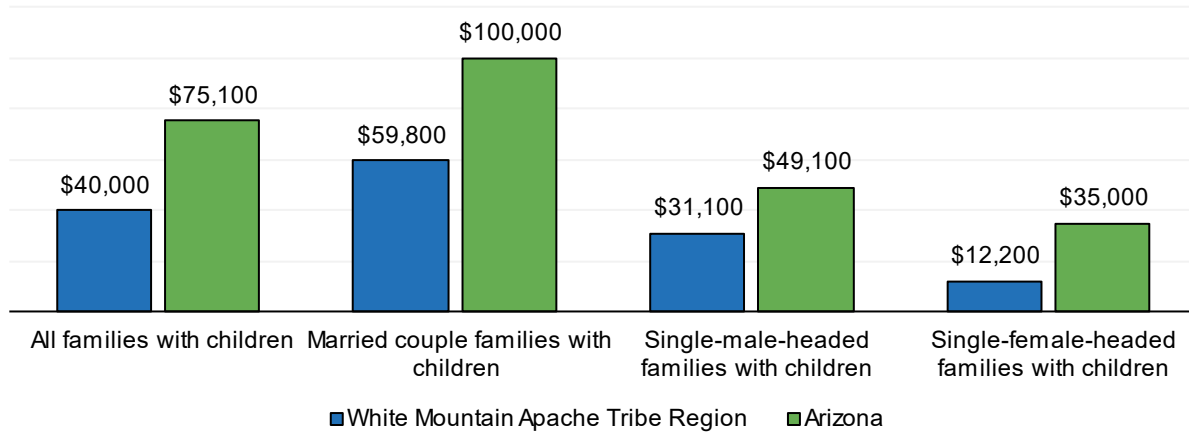
How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- The median family income for all families with children (birth to age 17) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region (\$40,000) is just over half of the state level (\$75,100). Married couple families with children in the region have the highest median annual income (\$59,800) of all family types, while single-parent-led households have much lower median incomes, indicating additional financial stress. Notably, the median family income for single-female-headed families with children is approximately one fifth that of married couple families in the region (\$12,200) (Figure 12).
- Almost four in 10 (39%) of the overall population and almost half (48%) of young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region live in poverty, which is more than twice the poverty rates for Arizona as a whole (13% and 20%, respectively) (Figure 13). Though income is one important way to measure whether families can meet their basic needs, in Native communities, subsistence-based activities such as hunting, gathering, farming and ranching are important cultural practices that can also meet families' basic needs and are not captured in standard poverty measures.¹¹⁵
- According to American Community Survey five-year estimates, rates of poverty among young children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region have decreased substantially (-13%) in recent years, from 61% in 2012-2016 to 48% in 2017-2021. Poverty rates declined more than across all Arizona reservations (-6%), Arizona (-8%) and the U.S. (-6%) during the same time period (Figure 14).
- Over two-thirds (68%) of young children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region live in households with incomes under 185% of the federal poverty level (FPL), a commonly used threshold for social safety net benefits such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and reduced-price school meals. In 2021, the 185% FPL threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$50,836; for a single parent with one child, it was \$34,552 (Figure 15).
- Almost one-third (31%) of young children in the region live in “deep poverty” (defined as below 50% FPL), which is slightly above the rate across all Arizona reservations (27%) but more than three times greater than across the state (9%) (Figure 15).

^v For more information see: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/temporary-assistance-needy-families-tanf> and <https://des.az.gov/ca>

- The White Mountain Apache Tribe is one of six tribes in Arizona that operate a Tribal TANF program. From January 2017 to July 2020, participation among young children fell from 90, representing 4% of this population, to 11, representing 1% of this population (Figure 16 & Table 7).

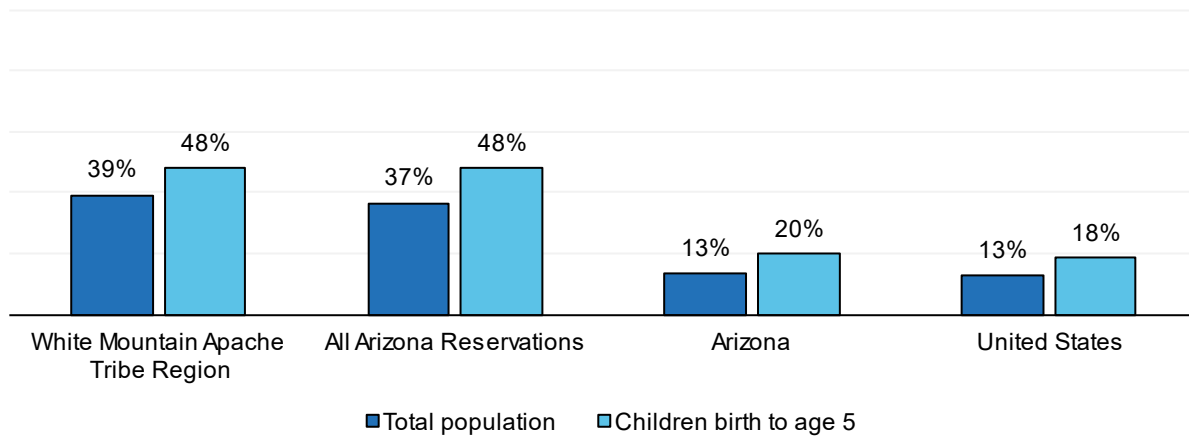
Figure 12. Median family income for families with children birth to age 17, 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B19126

Note: Half of the families in the population are estimated to have annual incomes above the median value, and the other half have incomes below the median. The median family income for all families includes families without children birth to age 17. A reliable estimate of median income for single-female-headed households was not available from the ACS due to sample size limitations. Note that median income estimates are not available for All Arizona Reservations.

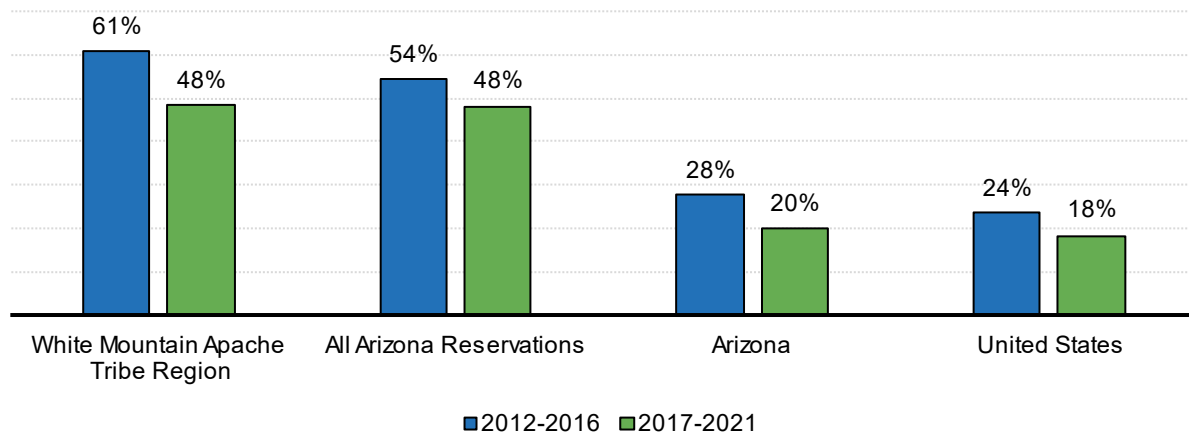
Figure 13. Rates of poverty for persons of all ages and for children birth to age 5, 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B17001

Note: This graph includes only persons whose poverty status can be determined. Adults who live in group settings such as dormitories or institutions are not included. Children who live with unrelated persons are not included. In 2021, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$27,479; for a single parent with one child, it was \$18,677.

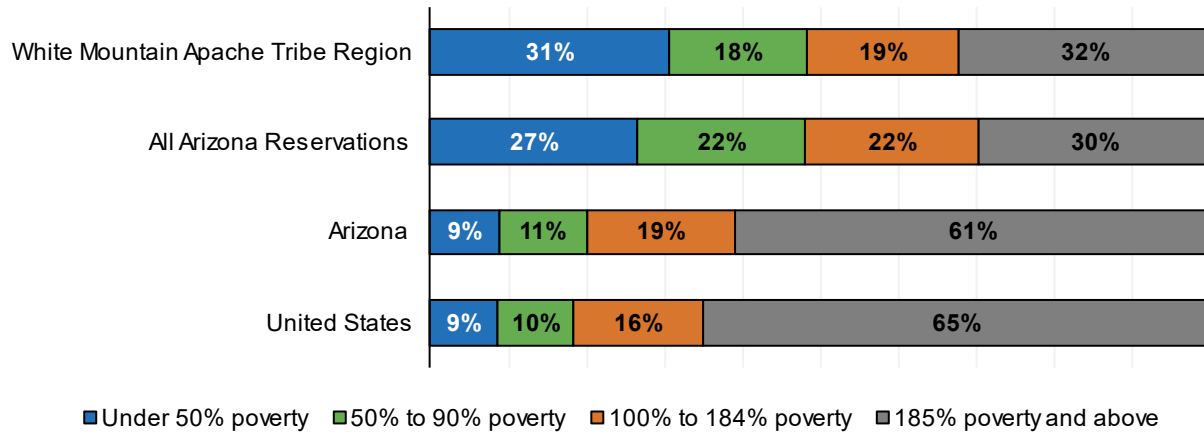
Figure 14. Rates of poverty for children birth to age 5, 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B17001. U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2012-2016, Table B17001.

Note: This graph includes only persons whose poverty status can be determined. Adults who live in group settings such as dormitories or institutions are not included. Children who live with unrelated persons are not included. In 2021, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$27,479; for a single parent with one child, it was \$18,677.

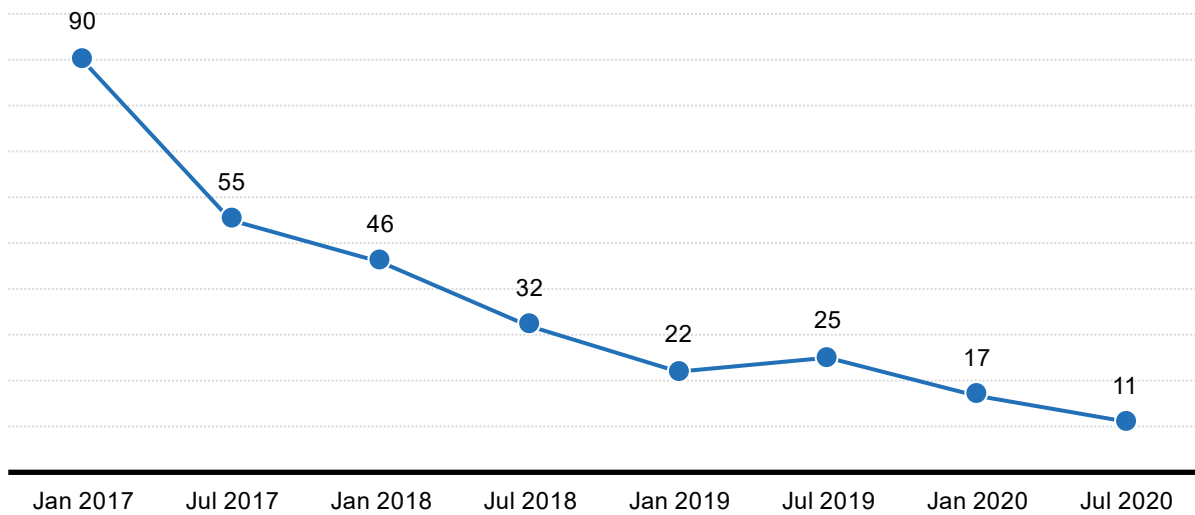
Figure 15. Children birth to age 5 living at selected poverty thresholds, 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B17024

Note: The four percentages in each bar should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding. In 2021, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$27,479; for a single parent with one child, it was \$18,677. The 185% thresholds are \$50,836 and \$34,552, respectively.

Figure 16. Children birth to age 5 receiving White Mountain Apache Tribal TANF



Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Table 7. Children birth to age 5 receiving White Mountain Apache Tribal TANF

| | Jan 2017 | July 2017 | Jan 2018 | July 2018 | Jan 2019 | July 2019 | Jan 2020 | July 2020 |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Number of children ages 0-5 | 90 | 55 | 46 | 32 | 22 | 25 | 17 | 11 |
| Estimated percent of children ages 0-5 | 4% | 3% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |

Source: *First Things First* (2022). *White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report*. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Food security

Many families struggle with consistent access to “enough food for an active, healthy life,” a problem known as food insecurity.¹¹⁶ Food insecurity is linked with many aspects of child and parent well-being; it can be a major source of stress for parents and has been linked to health and behavioral problems for children, such as poorer parent-child attachment, decreased social skills and self-control and increased risk of depression.^{117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122}

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; also referred to as “nutrition assistance” and “food stamps”),^{vi} is administered by the Arizona Department of Economic Security and aims to support working families who are unable to afford the food necessary to sustain their health with their income alone. Nationally, about one in every five children participates in SNAP, and families on average receive a benefit of up to \$2.61 per person for each meal.¹²³ The SNAP program has been shown to reduce hunger and improve access to healthy food options among those who utilize it.¹²⁴

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)^{vii} is a federally funded program administered by the Arizona Department of Health Services aimed to support economically disadvantaged women who are pregnant, postpartum and/or breastfeeding, along with infants and young children. The program’s services include directing participants to health services, nutrition and breastfeeding education and supplemental funding for food. In Arizona, WIC provided an average monthly benefit of \$42 per month in 2022, lower than the national average of \$48 per month.¹²⁵ The WIC program is administered in the state of Arizona by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) as well as the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) for 20 tribal nations in the state.

School meals provide another important nutritional safety net for children and their families. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP), administered by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides meals for students of low-

^{vi} For more information see: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program> and <https://des.az.gov/na>

^{vii} For more information see: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic> and <https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/azwic/>

income families at a reduced price. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)^{viii}, also funded by the USDA and administered by ADE, works to keep all children birth to age 18 fed when school is out of session by providing free meals (breakfast, lunch, supper) and snacks at community sites. SFSP unites community sponsors like camps, faith-based organizations and schools with sites like parks, libraries, community centers and apartment complexes in high-need areas to distribute food.¹²⁶ In March 2020, in response to school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the USDA issued waivers allowing year-round operation of the (SFSP) to serve meals to children of all ages engaging in remote learning; these waivers remained in effect through June 2022 and led to increased meal service through SFSP compared to NSLP for many schools.¹²⁷ The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP),^{ix} also funded by the USDA, gives reimbursements to participating child care centers, preschools, emergency centers and after-school programs for nutritious meals and snacks served to eligible children. Eligible providers include for-profit child care centers serving at least 25% free or reduced-price lunch participants or any non-profit program.¹²⁸

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- Since state fiscal year 2018 (SFY 2018), SNAP participation among young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region has declined steadily from 1,705 in SFY 2018 to 1,183 in SFY 2022. SNAP participation among families with young children similarly declined from 1,087 to 771 in SFY 2022, mirroring the trend across Arizona (Figure 17).
- The White Mountain Apache Tribe WIC program is administered by the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona. In 2020, a total of 1,491 individuals were enrolled in the program, including 302 women (20% of WIC participants), 333 infants (22%) and 856 children (ages 2-4; 57%) (Table 8). From 2017 to 2020, the total number of children birth to age 4 enrolled in WIC declined steadily in both the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region and Arizona (Figure 18). WIC participation rates in 2020 were higher in the White Mountain Apache Tribe WIC program than in ITCA WIC programs overall for all eligible groups, meaning that the percent of women (91%), infants (98%) and children (95%) who were actively receiving benefits during the calendar year was slightly higher in the region (Figure 19).
- The total number of lunches served through school nutrition programs in the region fluctuated from 433,541 from 2019-20, to 785,758 in 2020-21 back down to 597,995 in 2021-22. Lunches were only served through CACFP in 2019-20 (1,929 lunches). The increase in meals served through SFSP in 2020-21 (749,537) was likely due to USDA waivers that allowed for greater flexibility in meal service year-round to address nutritional needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lunches served through NSLP decreased by 88% from 2019-20 to 2020-20 but increased to less-than-half of pre-pandemic levels in 2021-22 (Figure 17).

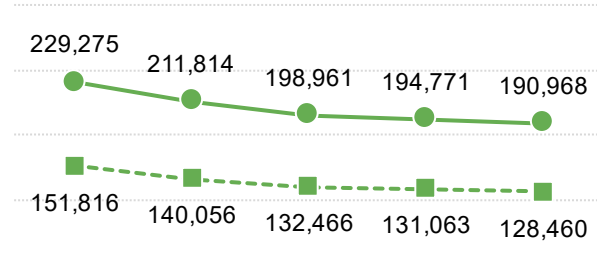
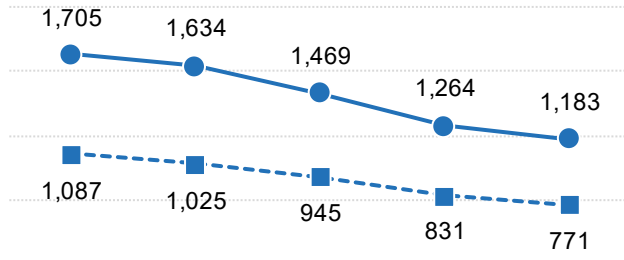
^{viii} For more information see: <https://www.azed.gov/hns/sfsp>

^{ix} For more information see: <https://www.azed.gov/hns/cacfp>

Figure 17. Number of children birth to age 5 and households with children birth to age 5 participating in SNAP, state fiscal years 2018 to 2022

White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

Arizona



SFY2018 SFY2019 SFY2020 SFY2021 SFY2022
 - - - Families with children (ages 0-5) participating in SNAP
 - - - Children (ages 0-5) participating in SNAP

SFY2018 SFY2019 SFY2020 SFY2021 SFY2022
 - - - Families with children (ages 0-5) participating in SNAP
 - - - Children (ages 0-5) participating in SNAP

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Division of Benefits and Medical Eligibility dataset]. Unpublished data.

Table 8. Enrollment in the White Mountain Apache Tribe WIC program, 2020

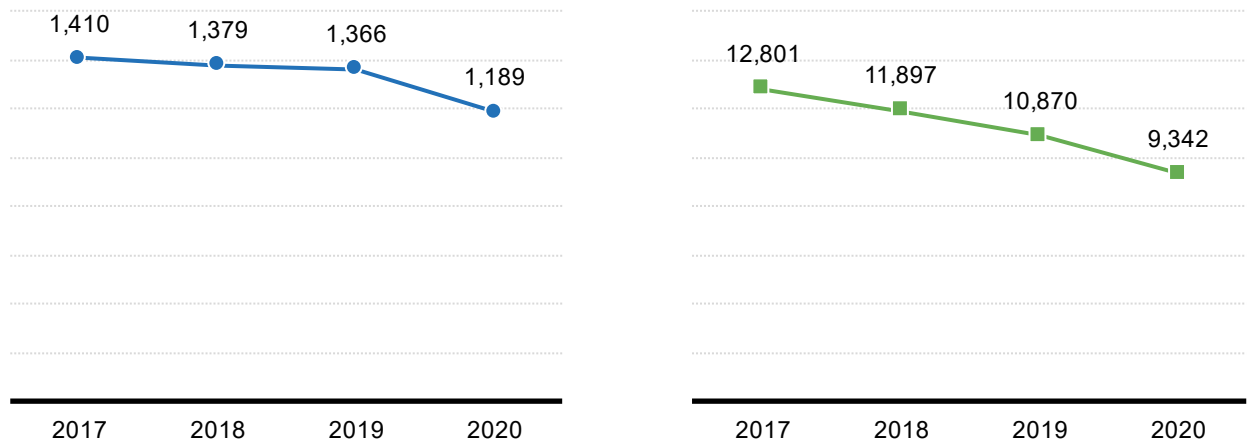
| Geography | Women Enrolled | Infants Enrolled | Children Enrolled | Total Enrolled |
|------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe | 302 | 333 | 856 | 1,491 |
| All ITCA WIC programs | 2,865 | 3,095 | 6,247 | 12,207 |

Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Figure 18. Number of children birth to age 4 enrolled in WIC, 2017 to 2020

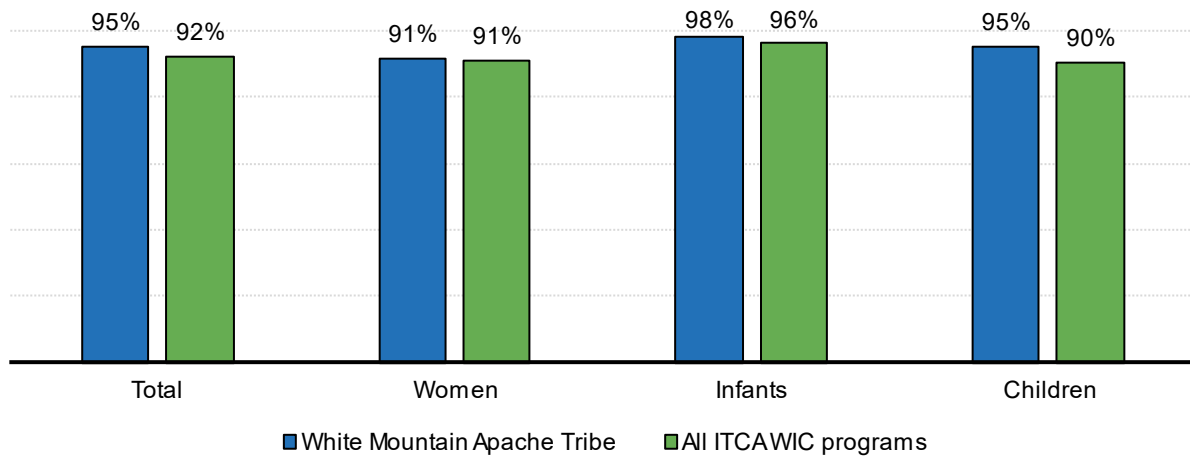
White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

All ITCA WIC Programs



Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Figure 19. Participation rates in the White Mountain Apache Tribe WIC program, 2020

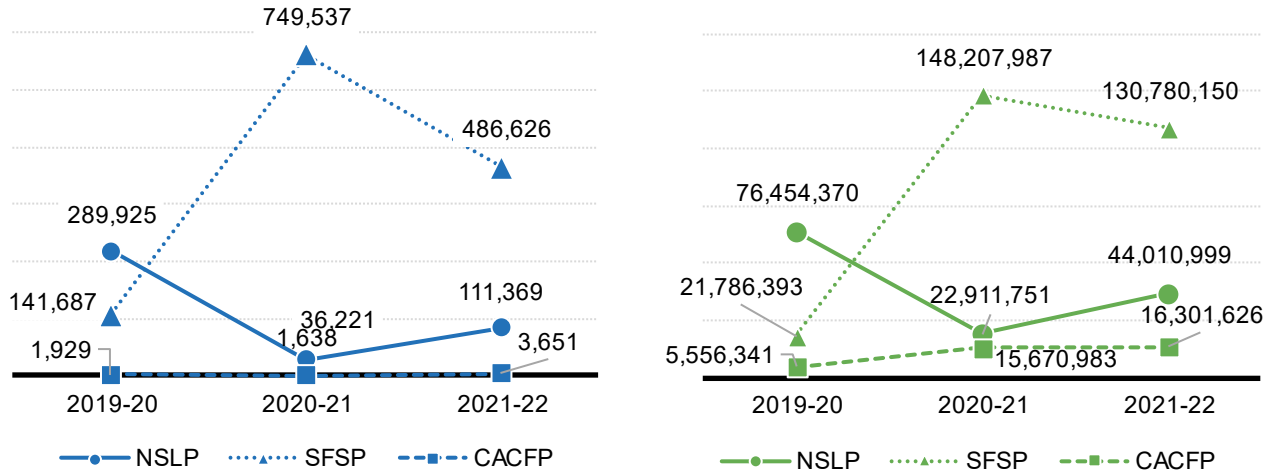


Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Figure 20. Trends in lunches served through school nutrition programs, 2019-20 to 2021-22

White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

Arizona



Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Health and Nutrition Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Note: See Table 9, Table 59 and Table 60 for a list of schools serving school meals. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the USDA issued a substantial number of waivers for school nutrition programs to allow greater flexibility for schools to get meals to students in need. More information on the pandemic’s effect on school nutrition can be found on the ADE website: <https://www.azed.gov/hns/covid19>

Table 9. Lunches served through CACFP, 2019-20 to 2021-22

| Geography | Number of sites | | | Number of lunches served | | |
|--|-----------------|----------|----------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe schools | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1,929 | 1,638 | 3,651 |
| Whiteriver Head Start | 1 | 1 | 1 | 14,088 | 2,745 | 5,945 |
| Cibecue Head Start | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1,929 | 1,008 | 2,371 |
| McNary Head Start | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 630 | 1,280 |
| Arizona Schools | N/A | 715 | 643 | 5,556,341 | 15,670,983 | 16,301,626 |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Health and Nutrition Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Employment

Unemployment and underemployment^x can impact families in ways that affect children’s health and well-being.¹²⁹ Unemployment can limit access to resources that support children’s physical and mental health, like health insurance, and can also contribute to family stress, conflict, homelessness and child abuse.^{130, 131} Children with parents who have lost their jobs may also experience poorer school performance and behavioral issues, resulting in grade repetition, suspension or expulsion.¹³² Due to many historical and legal reasons as well as differences in practical economic structures, employment rates in Native communities can vary greatly from state rates.¹³³

Education and employment support programs for parents and caregivers are important for increasing wages and improving the economic stability of families. “Two-generation” or “2Gen” approaches address the needs of both parents and children simultaneously through programs to support children and families together, such as a family literacy program that provides educational support to parents while enrolling children in free high-quality preschool.^{134, 135, 136} These programs have the goal of decreasing the intergenerational effects of poverty by building parental capacity and protective factors within families.^{137, 138, 139}

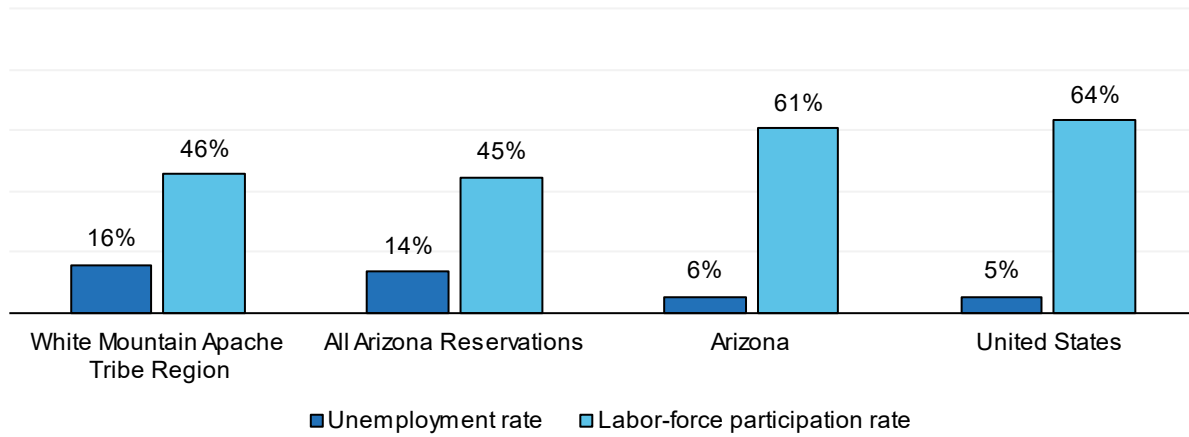
How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- The unemployment rate is the proportion of the total number of people in the civilian labor force who are unemployed and looking for work. Unemployment rates do not include people who have dropped out of the labor force entirely, including those who wanted to work but could not find a suitable job and have stopped looking for employment.¹⁴⁰ The ACS estimates that the average unemployment rate for the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region between 2017 to 2021 was 16%. This is 2% higher than the unemployment rate for all Arizona reservations (14%) and 10% higher than for Arizona as a whole (6%) (Figure 21 & Table 10).
- An additional metric of employment is the labor-force participation rate. This rate is the fraction of the population who are in the labor force, whether employed or unemployed. The labor force participation rate in the region (46%) was similar to that seen across all Arizona reservations (45%) and lower than Arizona as a whole (61%). Of those in the labor force in the region, most were employed (38% of the working-age population), 7% were actively looking for work and 0.2% were in the armed forces. The remaining 54% were not in the labor force, which includes students, retirees, stay-at-home parents and others (Figure 21 & Table 10).
- Just over half (54%) of young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region lived in a household where at least one parent was in the labor force, compared to 63% of young children across all Arizona reservations and 90% of young children in Arizona. About

^x Underemployment means that someone works fewer hours than they would like or is in a job that does not require the skills or training that they have.

four in 10 young children (41%) lived in households where all parents were in the workforce, indicating they likely required some form of child care (Figure 22).

Figure 21. Unemployment and labor-force participation for the adult population (ages 16 and older), 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B23025

Note: The labor force is all persons who are working (employed) or looking for work (unemployed). Persons not in the labor force are mostly students, stay-at-home parents, retirees, and institutionalized people. The "labor force participation rate" is the fraction of the population who are in the labor force, whether employed or unemployed. The "unemployment rate" is the fraction of the civilian labor force which are unemployed.

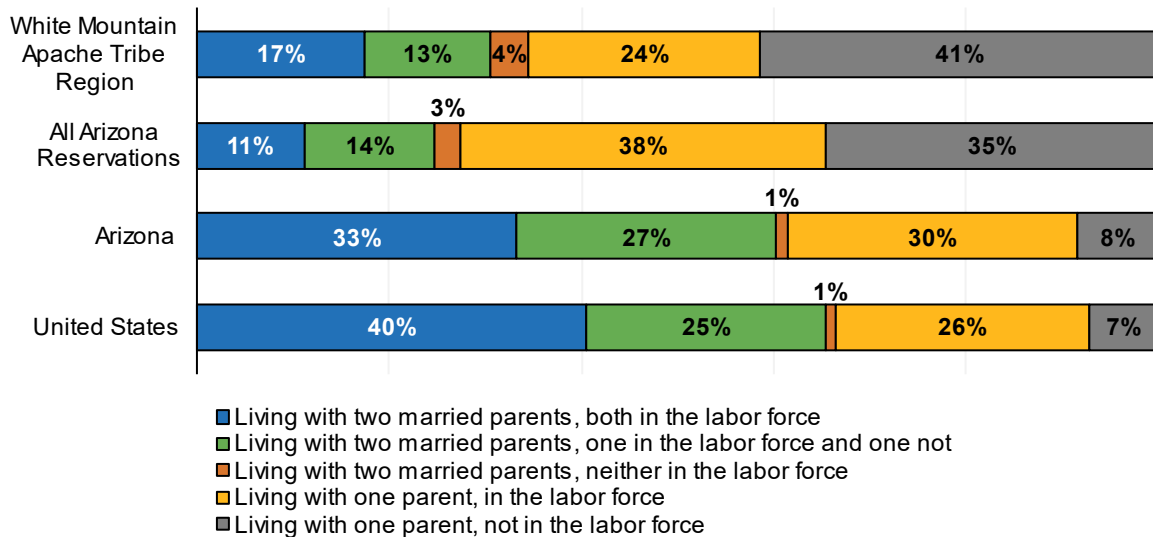
Table 10. Unemployment and labor-force participation for the adult population (ages 16 and older), 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated working-age population (age 16 and older) | Unemployment rate | Labor-force participation rate | In the labor force and employed | In the labor force but unemployed | In armed forces | Not in the labor force |
|---|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 9,963 | 16% | 46% | 38% | 7% | 0.2% | 54% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 132,731 | 14% | 45% | 39% | 6% | 0.0% | 55% |
| Arizona | 5,650,624 | 6% | 61% | 57% | 3% | 0.4% | 39% |
| United States | 264,087,642 | 5% | 64% | 60% | 3% | 0.5% | 36% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B23025

Note: The labor force is all persons who are working (employed) or looking for work (unemployed). Persons not in the labor force are mostly students, stay-at-home parents, retirees, and institutionalized people. The "labor force participation rate" is the fraction of the population who are in the labor force, whether employed or unemployed. The "unemployment rate" is the fraction of the civilian labor force which are unemployed. The last four percentages in each row (employed, unemployed, in armed forces, and not in the labor force) should sum to 100% but may not because of rounding.

Figure 22. Parents of children birth to age 5 who are or are not in the labor force, 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B23025

Note: The labor force is all persons who are working (employed) or looking for work (unemployed). Persons not in the labor force are mostly students, stay-at-home parents, retirees, and institutionalized people. The term "parent" here includes step-parents. The five percentages in each row should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding. Please note that due to the way the ACS asks about family relationships, children living with two unmarried, cohabitating parents are not counted as living with two parents (these children are counted in the 'one parent' category).

Housing instability and internet access

Housing instability can have harmful effects on the development of young children. High housing costs relative to family income are associated with increased risk for overcrowding, frequent moving, poor nutrition, declines in mental health and homelessness.^{141, 142, 143} High relative housing costs leave inadequate funds for other necessities, such as food and utilities.¹⁴⁴ This can negatively affect the physical, social-emotional and cognitive development of children, with severe forms of housing instability associated with poorer performance in school.^{145, 146}

In Native nations, land- and homeownership differs legally from other parts of the state. Native nations have experienced periods of forced relocation and assimilation as well as complex and changing policies of land ownership that have significantly reduced the total amount of land under tribal governance as well as the resources on these lands.¹⁴⁷ Tribal housing authorities have worked to build affordable housing options for their people, however housing availability is typically limited by funding and other critical infrastructure issues.¹⁴⁸ The most common housing challenges on tribal lands include overcrowding and physical housing problems such as insufficient kitchen, plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling utilities.¹⁴⁹ A nationwide study found that Native households are 19 times more likely to

lack indoor plumbing than White households, meaning that access to safe and reliable drinking water is a major concern for many families.¹⁵⁰

Another increasingly important utility in homes is reliable internet access. Access to broadband (high-speed) internet enables quick access to a far greater number of resources and information, telehealth options and other opportunities that can be critical for education and employment. Internet access has been deemed a “super determinant” of health because of its influence on more traditional social determinants of health such as education, employment, health care access and social connection.¹⁵¹ Household access to computers and high-speed internet is also important for school-aged children who may need this technology for school assignments and projects, particularly during the later years of primary education and beyond.¹⁵² Lack of access to reliable high-speed internet disproportionately occurs in rural areas and pockets of segregated urban areas, and this disparate access is known as the digital divide. Due to the importance of high-speed internet access, the federal government has instituted several funding initiatives to improve access to and affordability of high-speed internet, including for Native communities in particular, such as the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Project.^{xi, 153}

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- Traditionally, Housing is considered to be affordable for families if it costs less than 30% of annual household income.¹⁵⁴ According to recent ACS estimates, just 14% of households in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region spent more than 30% of their income on housing, disproportionately impacting renters (18%) over homeowners (10%) in the region. Housing cost burden was notably lower in the region compared to the state (29%), but just higher than across all Arizona reservations (13%) (Table 11).
- The McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness includes children living in shelters, transitional housing, campgrounds, motels, trailer parks and cars, as well as children whose families are temporarily living within another family’s household. In the 2019-20 through 2021-22 school years, less than 2% of students at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools and in the Blue Ridge Unified School District were experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act definition. The number of students experiencing homelessness nearly doubled at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools (from 17 to 30) and decreased in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (from 29 to 17) (Table 12).
- Only 41% of households in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region have both a computer (i.e., a desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone) and broadband internet connectivity. This is lower than all Arizona reservations (44%) and less than half the proportion of households across the state (88%) (Table 13).

^{xi} For more information, please see <https://internetforall.gov/program/digital-equity-act-programs> and <https://www.ntia.gov/page/tribal-broadband-connectivity-program>

- At the individual level, 52% of persons of all ages and 58% of children birth to age 17 in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region households had access to both a computer and internet in their household. Like all Arizona reservations (51% and 55%, respectively), computer and internet access in the region was much lower than across the state (90% and 92%, respectively) (Figure 23 & Figure 24). The 2022 White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Needs and Assets Report indicated that federal funding in response to COVID-19 was being used to expand broadband access to remote parts of the reservation.¹⁵⁵

Table 11. Households with housing costs of 30% or more of household income by home ownership status, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of households | Housing costs 30 percent or more of household income | Estimated number of owner-occupied housing units | Housing costs 30 percent or more of household income | Estimated number of renter-occupied housing units | Housing costs 30 percent or more of household income |
|---|--------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 3,751 | 14% | 2,107 | 10% | 1,644 | 18% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 52,248 | 13% | 35,840 | 12% | 16,408 | 16% |
| Arizona | 2,683,557 | 29% | 1,765,658 | 21% | 917,899 | 45% |
| United States | 124,010,992 | 30% | 80,152,161 | 22% | 43,858,831 | 46% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B25106

Table 12. Students experiencing homelessness (McKinney-Vento), 2019-20 to 2021-22

| Geography | Number of students experiencing homelessness | | | Percent of students who were experiencing homelessness | | |
|--|--|---------|---------|--|---------|---------|
| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | 17 | 24 | 30 | <2% | <2% | <2% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 | 29 | 12 | 17 | <2% | <2% | <2% |
| Arizona Schools | 12,931 | 8,542 | 11,161 | <2% | <2% | <2% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Oct 1 Enrollment Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Note: Data for off-reservation schools were not available for 2019-20 due to difference in the schools included in the prior report cycle. The McKinney-Vento Act provides funding and supports to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to education. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children are defined as homeless if they lack a “fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime address.” This includes children living in shelters, cars, transitional housing, campground, motels, and trailer parks, as well as children who are living ‘doubled up’ with another family due to loss of housing or economic hardship. More information can be found on the ADE website: <https://www.azed.gov/homeless>

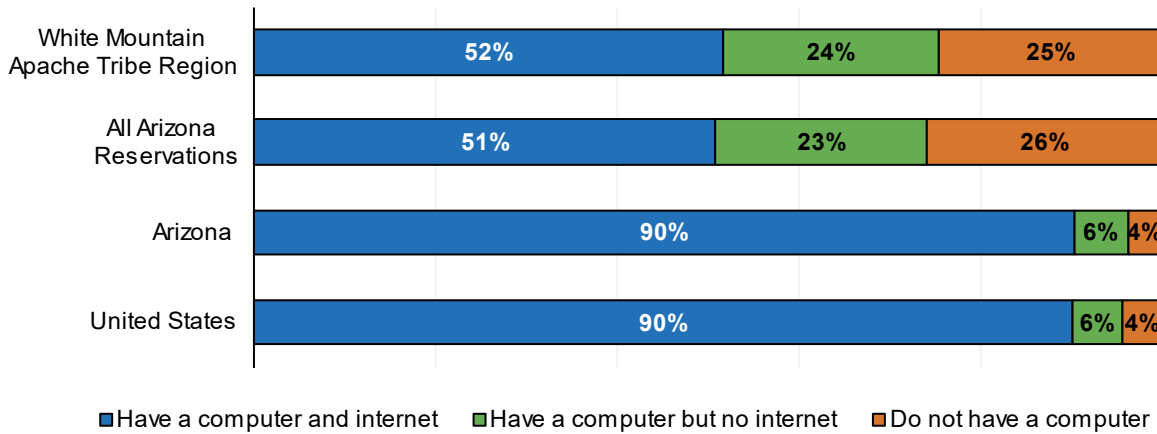
Table 13. Households with a computer and broadband internet connectivity, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of households | Number and percent of households with a computer and broadband internet connectivity | |
|---|--------------------------------|--|------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 3,751 | 1,528 | 41% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 52,248 | 22,993 | 44% |
| Arizona | 2,683,557 | 2,350,265 | 88% |
| United States | 124,010,992 | 106,957,995 | 86% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B28008.

Note: In this table, “computer” includes desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones.

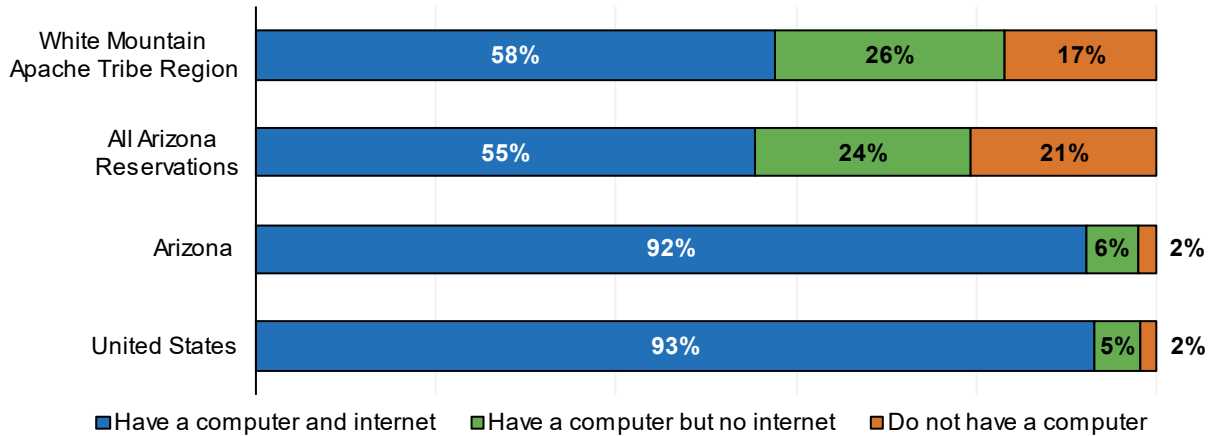
Figure 23. Persons of all ages in households with and without computers and internet connectivity, 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B28005

Note: The three percentages in each bar should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding.

Figure 24. Children birth to age 17 in households with and without computers and internet connectivity, 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B28005

Note: The three percentages in each bar should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding.

Additional data tables related to *Economic Circumstances* can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.



EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS

EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS

Why it Matters

A community's K-12 education system can support positive outcomes for children, families and the overall well-being of the community. Individuals who have higher levels of education tend to live longer and healthier lives.¹⁵⁶ Graduating from high school, in particular, is associated with better health, financial stability and socio-emotional outcomes as well as a lower risk for incarceration compared to dropping out of high school.^{157, 158} Children with parents that have attained higher levels of education are more likely to do well in school, such as score higher in reading, math and science in their first four years of school and attain higher levels of education themselves.^{159, 160, 161} High-quality early learning experiences also set a strong foundation for children's learning in kindergarten, elementary school and beyond.¹⁶² When children participate in high-quality early education, they are more likely to perform better in reading and math in later grades.¹⁶³ Given these lifetime and intergenerational impacts of educational attainment, it is critical to provide substantial support for early education and promote policies and programs that encourage the success of Arizona's children.

What the Data Tell Us

School attendance and absenteeism

School attendance is an important factor in predicting the academic performance and future health of children. Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% of school days in a school year, predicts a student experiencing academic difficulties and even dropping out of school entirely.¹⁶⁴ Children who are part of a racial or ethnic minority group, have disabilities or other health conditions or are economically disadvantaged are at increased risk of absenteeism.^{165, 166} These are also the children who are most likely to benefit from resources available through schools. Elementary school absenteeism among Native youth, in particular, may be influenced by a number of factors including a historically-rooted distrust of educational institutions, low use of culturally-relevant teaching methods and curricula as well as infrastructure-related issues (e.g., road conditions, bus availability and distances to schools).^{167, 168, 169}

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- Children in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region attend a variety of district, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and private schools. The Whiteriver Unified School District includes three elementary schools serving preschool through 5th grades (Whiteriver Elementary, Seven Mile School and Cradleboard School), one middle school serving 6th through 8th grades (Canyon Day Junior High School) and one high school (Alchesay High School). The McNary Elementary District includes one elementary school serving kindergarten through 8th grade. Schools run by BIE in the region include John F. Kennedy Day School (serving kindergarten through grade 8), Theodore Roosevelt School (serving grades 3 through 8) and Dishchii'bikoh Community School (also called Cibecue Community School, serving preschool through 12th grades). Some children

in the region also attend public schools in the Blue Ridge Unified District just north of the reservation and a private religious school (East Fork Lutheran, serving kindergarten through 8th grade).¹⁷⁰

- In 2021-22, there were 774 children enrolled in preschool through 3rd grade in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region public schools, including 21 preschoolers and between 176 and 200 students in kindergarten through 3rd grades each. There were fewer than 73 American Indian preschool through 3rd grade students in Blue Ridge Unified School District (Table 14).
- From 2019-20 to 2021-22, kindergarten through 3rd grade chronic absence rates were much higher in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools compared with Blue Ridge Unified School District and Arizona. Chronic absences in region schools increased from 17% in 2019-20 to approximately half of early elementary schoolers in 2020-21 (52%) and 2021-22 (47%) during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Table 15).

Table 14. Preschool to 3rd grade students enrolled in public and charter schools, 2021-22

| Geography | Preschool | Kindergarten | 1st Grade | 2nd Grade | 3rd Grade |
|---|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | 21 | 200 | 176 | 189 | 188 |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 (American Indian students only) | <11 | 11 | <11 | 16 | 24 |
| Arizona schools (American Indian students only) | 541 | 2,924 | 3,042 | 3,130 | 3,221 |
| Arizona schools | 17,840 | 79,423 | 79,202 | 82,342 | 82,243 |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Oct 1 Enrollment Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Note: White Mountain Apache Tribe Region public schools enrolling PS-3rd grade students are McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Table 15. Kindergarten to 3rd grade students with chronic absences, 2019-20 to 2021-22

| Geography | K-3 Students with chronic absences | | | Percent of K-3 students with chronic absences | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------------|------------|---|------------|------------|
| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | 144 | 387 | 328 | 17% | 52% | 47% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 | 27 | 94 | 122 | 6% | 25% | 19% |
| Arizona | 25,382 | 56,547 | 100,955 | 8% | 21% | 34% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Absenteeism Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Note: Students are considered chronically absent if they miss more than 10% of the school days in a school year. This table includes children who are absent due to chronic illness. Data in this table are for students of all races and ethnicities. Regional schools include McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Achievement on standardized testing

All Arizona public schools, including both district and charter schools, are required to administer state and federally mandated standardized tests. Between 2019 and 2022, the statewide English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessment tool for 3rd through 8th graders in public schools was Arizona’s Statewide Achievement Assessment for English Language Arts and Math (AzM2), previously called Arizona’s Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching (AzMERIT).^{xii,171,172} The *Move on When Reading* policy, enacted by the Arizona legislature in 2010, states that a 3rd grade student shall not be promoted to 4th grade if their reading score falls far below the 3rd grade level, as established by the State Board of Education.^{xiii, 173} These policies are intended to help identify struggling readers who may benefit from more targeted literacy interventions. Children’s reading comprehension and proficiency skills when in the 3rd grade can predict their future academic success, such as their likelihood of graduating high school and attending college.¹⁷⁴ Poor reading skills are associated with a six-fold increase in the likelihood of dropping out of high school compared to proficient readers.¹⁷⁵ However, it is important to note that standardized tests have been found to have lower cultural relevancy to non-White students, which has contributed to a disparity in achievement on standardized tests across racial and ethnic groups.¹⁷⁶

^{xii} In 2022, AzM2 was replaced by Arizona’s Academic Standards Assessment (AASA).

^{xiii} Exceptions exist for students identified with or being evaluated for learning disabilities or reading impairments, English language learners and those who have demonstrated reading proficiency on alternate forms of assessment approved by the State Board of Education. Students who test in the ‘far below’ proficiency range can also be promoted to 4th grade if they complete summer school and then demonstrate reading at a proficient level. Given these exceptions, historically very few 3rd grade students (<1%) have been retained due to *Move on When Reading*. As of 2022, schools with early elementary grade students are now required to screen all kindergarten and first grade students for dyslexia and have at least one teacher who has complete ADE-approved trainings in reading instruction, intensifying instruction and understanding and recognizing dyslexia.

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- In 2020-21, Arizona schools switched from using the AzMERIT assessment to the AZM2, with no third-grade testing happening in 2019-20. In the 2021-22 school year, only 5% of 3rd graders at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools achieved a passing score on the 3rd grade English Language Arts (ELA) assessment. Notably, almost nine in 10 3rd graders (87%) at White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools “fell far below” state standards. ELA passing rates for American Indian students in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (25%) were higher than American Indian students across all Arizona schools (16%), but much lower than the passing scores for students of all races and ethnicities in Arizona (41%) (Table 16).
- From 2020-21 to 2021-22, ELA passing rates increased for White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools (+2%), American Indian students across Arizona (+4%), American Indian students in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (+18%) and all students across Arizona (+6%). As of 2021-22, ELA passing rates had not returned to pre-pandemic levels and were much lower for American Indian students and schools in the region (Figure 25).
- Passing rates on the 3rd grade Math assessment were slightly higher in the region (8%) than on the ELA assessment (5%) but were still exceedingly low. A comparatively smaller proportion of these students “fell far below” standards (61%) (Table 17).
- Similar to the ELA assessment, Math assessment passing rates increased from 2020-21 to 2021-22 for White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools (+ at least 6%), American Indian students across Arizona (+4%), American Indian students in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (+14%) and all students across Arizona (+4%) (Figure 26).
- In 2020, the BIE published a new Standards, Assessments and Accountability Systems Final Rule, which means that BIE will use a single unified assessment in all BIE-funded schools nationwide.¹⁷⁷ Prior to 2020, BIE-funded schools in Arizona had used the same assessment as Arizona public schools. In the 2018-19 school year, BIE schools had similarly low passing rates on the Reading/ Language Arts and Math assessments. Passing rates were higher at John F. Kennedy Day School (14% for Reading/ Language Arts and 9% for Math) than Dishchii’bikoh Community School (4% and 1%) and Theodore Roosevelt school (4% and 6%) (Table 18 & Table 19).

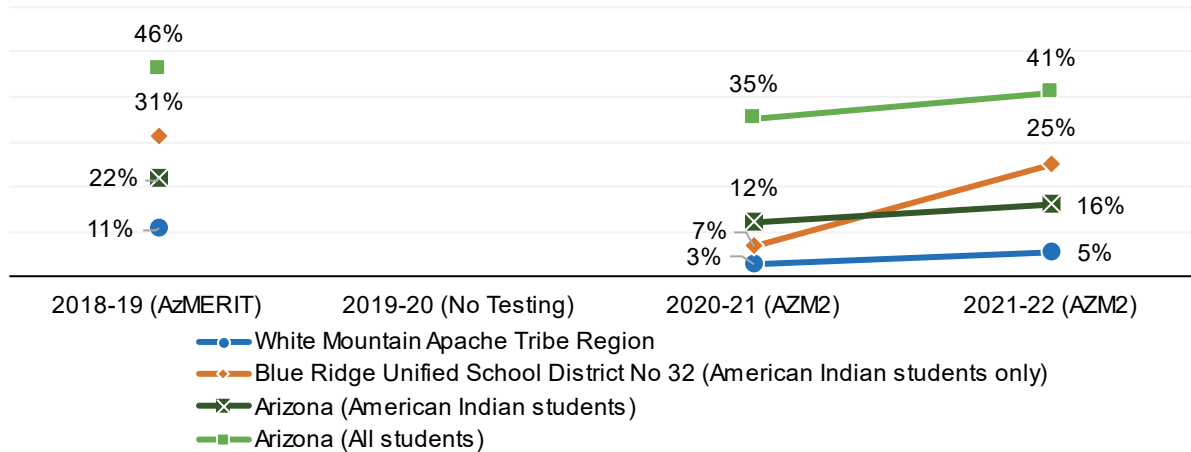
Table 16. Assessment results: Third Grade English Language Arts, 2021-22

| Geography | Students Tested | Falls Far Below | Approaches | Meets | Exceeds | Passing |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|---------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | DS | 87% | 8% | 5% | <2% | 5% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 (American Indian students only) | DS | 71% | 4% | 25% | <2% | 25% |
| Arizona schools (American Indian students only) | 3,100 | 74% | 10% | 13% | 3% | 16% |
| Arizona schools | 79,586 | 47% | 12% | 26% | 15% | 41% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2021). [AzMERIT Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Note: Regional schools include McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Figure 25. Trends in passing rates for Third Grade English Language Arts assessments for American Indian students, 2018-19 to 2021-22



Source: Arizona Department of Education (2021). [AzMERIT Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Note: Regional schools include McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

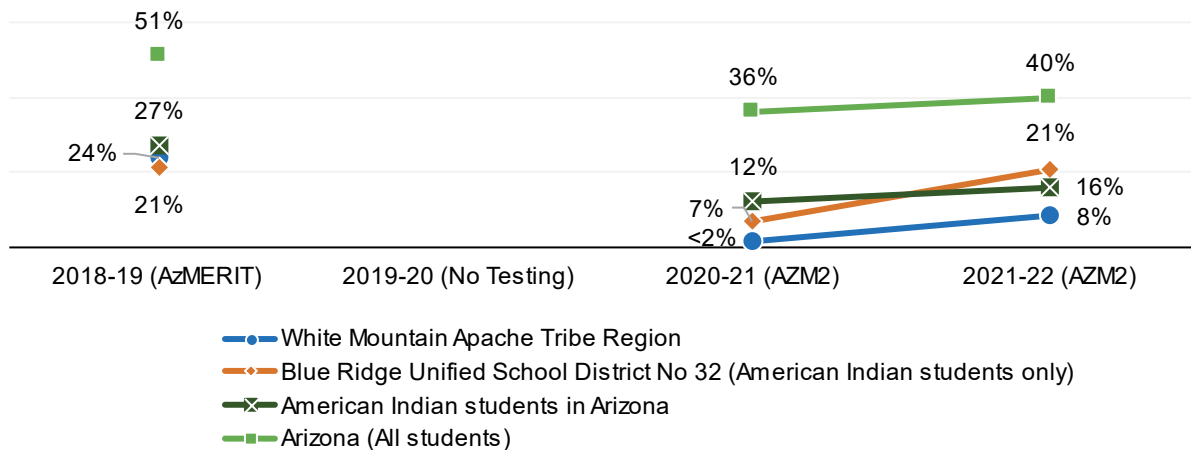
Table 17. Assessment results: Third Grade Math, 2021-22

| Geography | Students Tested | Falls Far Below | Approaches | Meets | Exceeds | Passing |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|---------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | DS | 61% | 31% | 8% | <2% | 8% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 (American Indian students only) | DS | 67% | 13% | 17% | 4% | 21% |
| Arizona schools (American Indian students only) | 3,100 | 57% | 27% | 13% | 3% | 16% |
| Arizona schools | 80,445 | 33% | 27% | 28% | 12% | 40% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2021). [AzMERIT Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Note: Regional schools include McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Figure 26. Trends in passing rates for Third Grade Math for American Indian students, 2018-19 to 2021-22



Source: Arizona Department of Education (2021). [AzMERIT Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Note: Regional schools include McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Table 18. Reading/Language Arts assessment results for White Mountain Apache Tribe BIE Schools, 2018-19

| | Number of students tested | Falls far below | Approaches | Meets | Exceeds | Passing |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|---------|
| Dishchii'bikoh Community School | 334 | 84% | 11% | 4% | 0% | 4% |
| John F. Kennedy Day School | 138 | 63% | 23% | 13% | 1% | 14% |
| Theodore Roosevelt School | 122 | 89% | 7% | 4% | 0% | 4% |

Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Table 19. Math assessment results for White Mountain Apache Tribe BIE Schools, 2018-19

| | Number of students tested | Falls far below | Approaches | Meets | Exceeds | Passing |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------|---------|
| Dishchii'bikoh Community School | 357 | 87% | 12% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| John F. Kennedy Day School | 137 | 66% | 26% | 9% | 0% | 9% |
| Theodore Roosevelt School | 128 | 88% | 6% | 4% | 2% | 6% |

Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Graduation rates and adult educational attainment

Understanding the current high school graduation and dropout rates within a region provides insight into the assets within and challenges faced by a community and its future workforce. Adults who graduated from high school have higher rates of employment, higher incomes and better overall health compared to adults who dropped out of high school, even if they received a high school equivalency degree (GED).¹⁷⁸ Maternal education is associated with an array of child outcomes starting with infant health,^{179, 180, 181} and both targeted and universal programs serving children from families with lower educational backgrounds can support child development.^{182, 183}

In contrast to the U.S. as a whole, Arizona has a larger proportion of disconnected youth, defined as teenagers ages 16 to 19 who are neither attending school nor employed,^{xiv} which has been linked to negative physical and mental health outcomes and higher rates of unemployment.¹⁸⁴ Native youth, both nationally and in Arizona, are disproportionately disconnected and therefore particularly vulnerable to negative outcomes and may need additional outreach and supports.¹⁸⁵

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- High school students in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region attend Alchesay High School in the Whiteriver Unified School District and off-reservation schools in the Blue Ridge Unified School District. In 2022, the four-year and five-year graduation rates at Alchesay High School (67% and 75%, respectively) were similar to the rates for American Indian students across Arizona (65% and 72%, respectively). The four-year graduation rate for American Indian students in the Blue Ridge Unified School District was very high in 2022 (86%), exceeding the rate for all students in Arizona schools by 9% (77%) (Table 20).
- Dropout rates (7th to 12th grade) for White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools fluctuated over recent years from a low of 7% in 2019-20 to a high of 17% in 2020-21, likely due to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is similar to the trend seen for American Indian students across the state (increasing 5% from 2019-20 to 2020-21) but much higher than the dropout rates for all students in Arizona during these years (ranging from 3% to 5%). In contrast, 7th to 12th grade dropout rates in the Blue Ridge Unified School District decreased from more than two in 10 students (21%) in 2019-20 to a low of 4% in 2021-22 (Table 21).
- Among adults in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, 70% have at least a high school education. This is a slightly smaller proportion than across all Arizona reservations (77%) and much smaller compared to the state (88%) and national levels (89%) (Figure 27).
- Compared with all adults in the region, mothers giving birth between 2019 and 2022 in the region were more likely to have less than a high school education (35% versus 30%). Less than one quarter (23%) of mothers in the region had more than a high-school education, compared with over one third of mothers on all Arizona reservations (35%) and over half of mothers across Arizona (57%) in 2020 (Table 22).

^{xiv} Age ranges used for 'disconnected youth' vary by source, with some estimates including both teenagers ages 16-19 and young adults ages 20-24 and others focusing on only teenagers or young adults.

Table 20. 4-year and 5-year graduation rates, 2022

| Geography | 4-Year senior cohort (2022) | 4-Year graduates (2022) | 4-Year graduation rate (2022) | 5-Year graduates (2022) | 5-Year graduation rate (2022) |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Alchesay High School | 166 | 112 | 67% | 123 | 75% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 (American Indian students only) | 36 | 32 | 86% | DS | DS |
| Arizona schools (American Indian students only) | 4,213 | 2,739 | 65% | 3,040 | 72% |
| Arizona schools | 90,880 | 69,623 | 77% | 71,277 | 79% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Oct 1 Enrollment Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Note: 2022 5-year graduation rates had yet to be released at the time that ADE data were accessed for this report and were suppressed for American Indian student in Blue Ridge USD in public files. The 4-year graduation rate reflects the percentage of students who graduated high school within 4 years of entry; the 5-year graduation rate reflects the percentage of students who graduated high school within five years of entry. See

<https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2017/08/2018%2006%2001%20Graduation%20DO%20and%20Persistence%20Rate%20Tech%20Manual.pdf?id=598a34233217e10ce06647ff>

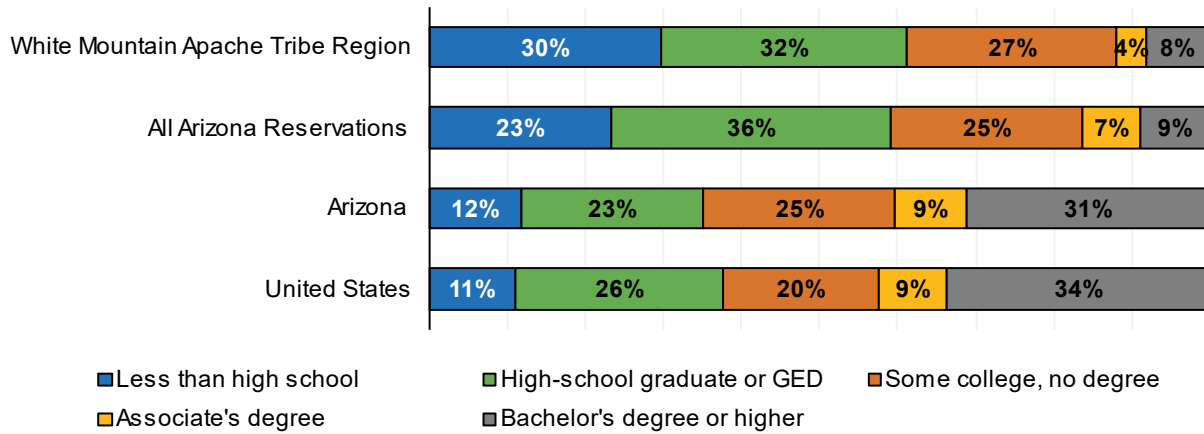
Table 21. 7th to 12th grade dropout rates, 2019-20 to 2021-22

| Geography | Dropout Rate, 2019-20 | Dropout Rate, 2020-21 | Dropout Rate, 2021-22 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | 7% | 17% | 11% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 (American Indian students only) | 21% | 7% | 4% |
| Arizona schools (American Indian students only) | 5% | 10% | 9% |
| Arizona schools | 3% | 4% | 5% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2021). [Dropout Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Notes: Dropouts are defined by ADE as students who were enrolled in school at any time during the school year but were not enrolled at the end of the year and who did not transfer to another school, graduate, or die. Dropout rates are calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by the total enrollment. In many elementary districts, dropout rates reflect students who transferred out and were lost to follow-up.

Figure 27. Level of education for the adult population (ages 25 and older), 2017-2021 ACS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B15002

Note: The five percentages in each bar should sum to 100% but may not because of rounding.

Table 22. Level of education for the mothers of babies born in 2020 and 2021

| Geography | Calendar year | Number of births | Mother had less than a high-school education | Mother finished high school or had GED | Mother had more than a high-school education |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 2020 | 221 | 36 to 38% | 38% | 24 to 25% |
| | 2021 | 200 | 29 to 31% | 44% | 25 to 27% |
| | 2019 to 2022 combined | 868 | 35% | 42% | 23% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 2020 | 1,900 | 27% | 38% | 35% |
| | 2021 | Data for All Arizona Reservations not available | | | |
| Arizona | 2020 | 76,781 | 12% | 27% | 57% |
| | 2021 | 77,857 | 12% | 27% | 58% |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data. Arizona Department of Health Services (2022). Health status profile of American Indians in Arizona 2020. Retrieved from <https://pub.azdhs.gov/health-stats/report/hspam/index.php>

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this table. 'All Arizona Reservations' row reflects only births to American Indian mothers residing on Arizona reservations. The Health Status Profile of American Indian in Arizona for 2021 has not yet been released. A small number of births are missing data on maternal educational attainment, so percentages in this table may not sum to 100%.

Additional data tables related to *Educational Indicators* can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.



EARLY LEARNING

EARLY LEARNING

Why it Matters

Early childhood is a pivotal time when crucial physical, cognitive and social-emotional skills are built.^{186,187} Early experiences are important for healthy brain development and set the stage for lifelong learning and well-being.^{188, 189, 190} Just as rich, stimulating environments can promote healthy development, early negative experiences can also have lasting effects.^{191, 192} However, considering the major COVID-19 pandemic-related challenges experienced by many Arizona families, including disproportionate numbers of deaths and losses of family member and caregivers in American Indian and Alaska Native communities,¹⁹³ it remains important to remember that while these short- and long-term effects may be more likely, they are not inevitable.^{194, 195} Access to quality early care and learning environments can be a powerful protective factor for every child, and the effects can be particularly life-changing for children facing chronic stressors and for children with disabilities.^{196, 197}

Quality early care and educational experiences help children develop into capable learners by supporting many crucial systems in the body.¹⁹⁸ In addition to brain development, positive and adverse experiences in the first few years of life can shape a child's immune functioning, ability to handle stress in a healthy way and capacity to learn and thrive.¹⁹⁹ Each of these factors contribute to being a skillful learner and well-adjusted person.²⁰⁰

What the Data Tell Us

Access to early care and education

Early childhood systems play a key role in supporting children, parents, caregivers and communities as a whole.^{201, 202} In Native nations, early care and education services are provided at center-based, home-based and school-based settings that are funded through a combination of tribal, state and federal grants in addition to privately-owned and operated child care facilities.²⁰³ Unfortunately, many Arizona families, both Native and non-Native, continue to face obstacles when seeking quality early care and education. Communities in both urban and rural areas of Arizona face a gap between the number of young children and licensed child care slots.^{204, 205, 206, 207} According to the Center for American Progress, almost half of Arizonans (48%), including the majority of rural, low-income and Hispanic or Latino families, live in a “child care desert,” defined as areas where there are three times as many children as there are available child care opportunities.^{208, 209}

Analyses by the Bipartisan Policy Center indicate that Arizona needed an additional 76,740 licensed or registered early care and education slots to have enough for all young children in working families in 2019.²¹⁰ Because the COVID-19 pandemic forced many child care centers and home-based providers to close either temporarily or permanently, care has been disrupted for many more families in Arizona and nationwide.²¹¹

Availability and cost are especially challenging for parents seeking care for infants and young children in Arizona. For example, a family with one infant and one preschooler can expect to pay about \$1,670 per month for a licensed child care provider. This monthly cost exceeds what many Arizonans pay per month for housing, creating potential financial challenges that are further compounded for families with multiple children under the age of 6.^{xv, 212, 213} The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) provides child care assistance to financially eligible families, including specific funding for families involved with the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS).²¹⁴ However, families that are eligible to receive funding may not have access to child care services in their community that are licensed or that accept assistance payments, leaving them unable to utilize the funding.^{215, 216}

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- According to the 2022 FTF Regional Needs and Assets Report, early childhood care and education services in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are available at child care centers, elementary schools and informal home-based care. Center-based care is available at White Mountain Apache Head Start, Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center (ABC Day Care) and Chaghache Day Care. Preschool classes are offered at Dischii' bikoh Community School and at Whiteriver Elementary School through Whiteriver Unified School District, with Family and Child Education (FACE) services also available at Dischii' bikoh Community School.²¹⁷
- Across the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, early care and education providers had the capacity to serve 504 young children. Most of this capacity was for preschoolers, with 386 preschoolers enrolled. Formal early care and education opportunities in the region were limited for infants and toddlers, with fewer than 40 slots for infants and fewer than 90 slots for toddlers (Table 23). According to the 2020 Census (Table 46), there were an estimated 470 children under age 2 in the region, suggesting that there may not be sufficient capacity to meet the need for care for very young children. Please note the program years in this table vary based on the time period for which enrollment data were provided, and that total enrollment numbers may double count children who were enrolled in multiple programs.
- In 2019-20, the Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center (ABC Day Care) had the capacity to serve 102 total children, including 16 infants, 47 toddlers and 39 preschoolers (Table 23). The center is located at Alchesay High School in Whiteriver, and high school students can enroll in early childhood development classes and work as staff in the center for hands-on experience. To enroll their children in services at ABC Day Care, parents or caregivers must be

^{xv} In addition to the financial challenges faced by parents paying for child care, the early care and education workforce is one of the most underpaid fields in the country. Nationally, educators working with infants and toddlers are 7.7 times more likely to live in poverty compared to K-8 teachers. The median hourly wage for a child care worker in Arizona (\$11.97) is \$13.19 less per hour than what is considered a living wage for a single parent with 1 child (\$25.16). For more information on early care and education workforce wages visit <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/the-early-educator-workforce/early-educator-pay-economic-insecurity-across-the-states/>

employed or in school or a training program. ABC Day Care was able to remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a huge benefit to essential working parents in the region.²¹⁸

- As of August 2021, Chaghache Day Care in Whiteriver had capacity for 78 young children, including 12 infants, 20 toddlers and 46 preschoolers (Table 23). Chaghache also offered afterschool care for children up to 12 years old and was able to remain open for families with working parents during the pandemic.²¹⁹
- In 2023, the White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Program had 252 funded slots and cumulatively enrolled 197 4-year-olds across its three locations. The Head Start Program alone had enough funded slots for 88% of the 4-year-olds in the region using 2020 U.S. Census estimates (Table 24 & Table 46). Based on information from the 2022 FTF Regional Needs and Assets Report, the White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Program has planned to expand service to 3-year-olds and open an Early Head Start Program, but plans have been on hold due to building needs.²²⁰
- Dishchii’bikoh Preschool, at Dishchii’bikoh Community School, offers services to 4-year-olds in the Cibecue area through Quality First scholarships, meaning it is free to families. The curriculum includes social emotional learning, life skills, imaginative play and Apache language immersion.²²¹ In the 2020-21 school year, 15 4-year-olds were enrolled out of 20 available slots (Table 23).
- Whiteriver Elementary School also offers a preschool program including services for children with special developmental and health needs.²²² In 2020-21, the program served 14 children (Table 23).
- The Family and Child Education (FACE) program in the region used to operate at John F. Kennedy Day School in Cedar Creek. The program had a home-based component, which involves home visits by parent educators for families with children birth to age 3; a center-based early childhood education program for children ages 3 to 5; a center-based adult education program; and Parent and Child Time (PACT).²²³ In the 2020-21 school year, fewer than 10 infants and 15 toddlers were enrolled in the home-based program, and 14 3- to 5-year-olds were enrolled in the center-based program (Table 23). According to local community members, the John F. Kennedy Day School no longer hosts a FACE program as of 2024, but Dishchii’bikoh Community School now has a grant to implement a FACE program.
- Many families in the region use informal care arrangements either in addition to or instead of formal early care and education providers. According to the 2020-21 White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Community Assessment, 69% of parents of young children indicated using an informal caregiver such as a sitter that comes to their home (42%) or a sitter outsider of their home (27%). Most parents said they use these care arrangements for part-time care, but 16% used them 5 or more days per week and 12% used them for more than 8 hours per day (Figure 28).

- Families in the region have several cost-free child care options, including the White Mountain Apache Head Start program, Dishchii’bikoh Preschool and the special needs preschool program at Whiteriver Elementary School. Families may also receive tribal child care assistance at Chaghache Day Care or assistance from the Department of Economic Security (DES). The number of children ages birth to five that were receiving child care assistance from DES dipped to fewer than 10 in 2018 through 2020, which coincides with when Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center stopped accepting them. This number increased to 17 in 2021, representing 100% of children found eligible for a assistance, then decreased to 12 in 2022, representing 86% of children found eligible (Table 25).
- The number of DCS-involved children receiving child care assistance through DES fell from a high of 21 2018 to less than 10 in 2020 through 2022. This matches the decline seen statewide. Overall, the percent of DCS-involved eligible children who were receiving assistance has been higher than across the state by 3% to 20% (Table 26).

Table 23. Early care and education capacity and enrollment

| | Infants enrolled | Infant capacity | Toddlers enrolled | Toddler capacity | Preschool enrolled | Preschool capacity | Total enrolled | Total capacity |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center (2019-20 school year) | 16 | 16 | 47 | 47 | 39 | 39 | 102 | 102 |
| Chaghache Day Care (August 2021) | 12 | 12 | 20 | 20 | 46 | 46 | 78 | 78 |
| White Mountain Apache Head Start (2018-19 school year) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 258 | 252 | 258 | 252 |
| Dishchii’bikoh Preschool (2020-21 school year) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 15 | 20 | 15 | 20 |
| Whiteriver Elementary School Preschool Program (2020-21 school year) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 14 | N/A | 14 | N/A |
| John F Kennedy Day School FACE Program (2020-21 school year) | <10 | N/A | 15 | N/A | 14 | N/A | 37 | N/A |
| Total | DS | N/A | 82 | N/A | 386 | N/A | 504 | N/A |

Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Note: Whiteriver Elementary School Preschool Program only serves preschoolers with special needs.

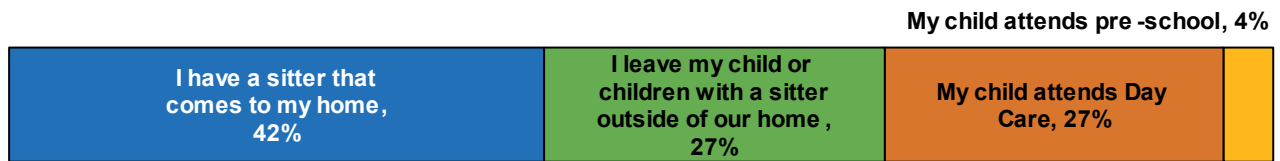
Table 24. Funded and cumulative Head Start, FY 2019 & FY 2023

| | FY 2019 | | FY 2023 | |
|--|---------|------------|---------|------------|
| | Funded | Cumulative | Funded | Cumulative |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start | 252 | 258 | 252 | 197 |

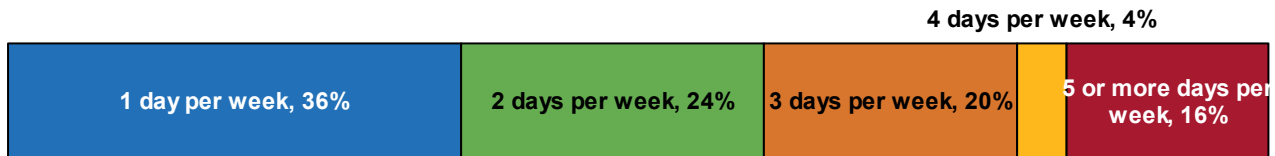
Source: Office of Head Start (2023). 2023 Program Information Report & 2019 Program Information Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://hses.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>

Figure 28. Type, frequency, and duration of care for families that use day care, before & after care, or other child care, Head Start Community Assessment 2020-21

Type of care (N=26)



Frequency of care (N=25)



Duration of care in hours per day (N=25)



Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Table 25. Children receiving DES child care assistance, 2017 to 2022

| Geography | Number of children receiving assistance | | | | | | Percent of eligible children receiving assistance | | | | | |
|---|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | CY 2017 | CY 2018 | CY 2019 | CY 2020 | CY 2021 | CY 2022 | CY 2017 | CY 2018 | CY 2019 | CY 2020 | CY 2021 | CY 2022 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 15 | 1 to 9 | 1 to 9 | 1 to 9 | 17 | 12 | 100% | DS | DS | DS | 100% | 86% |
| Arizona | 16,922 | 19,813 | 23,155 | 19,909 | 22,359 | 20,099 | 93% | 92% | 92% | 80% | 88% | 90% |

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Child Care Administration dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: DS indicates that a percentage could not be shown due to data suppression guidelines.

Table 26. DCS-involved children receiving DES child care assistance, 2017 to 2022

| Geography | Number of DCS children receiving assistance | | | | | | Percent of DCS eligible children receiving assistance | | | | | |
|---|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | CY 2017 | CY 2018 | CY 2019 | CY 2020 | CY 2021 | CY 2022 | CY 2017 | CY 2018 | CY 2019 | CY 2020 | CY 2021 | CY 2022 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 20 | 21 | 17 | 1 to 9 | 1 to 9 | 1 to 9 | 91% | 100% | 85% | DS | 100% | 100% |
| Arizona | 12,201 | 12,219 | 11,808 | 7,137 | 8,853 | 8,268 | 88% | 82% | 82% | 59% | 81% | 80% |

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Child Care Administration dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: DS indicates that a percentage could not be shown due to data suppression guidelines.

High quality early care and education

Children who begin their education in high-quality preschool programs tend to repeat grades less frequently, obtain higher scores on standardized tests, experience fewer behavior problems and are more likely to graduate from high school.²²⁴ This provides a return on investment to society through increased educational achievement and employment, reductions in crime and better overall health of children as they mature into adults.^{225, 226} The key ingredients in positive early experiences include responsive relationships, core adaptive skills development, reduced sources of stress and appropriate nutrition – all things that quality early care and education are in a unique position to provide at the critical time to encourage optimal learning and well-being for years to come.²²⁷ Early care and education shapes far more than a child’s future academic achievement, and an investment in early childhood can be one of the most productive investments a community can make.²²⁸

One way that the quality of early child care and education is measured in Arizona is through the Quality First program.²²⁹ The Quality First program rates the quality of child care providers and preschools on a scale of one to five stars, with providers considered high quality when they have received a three-star

rating or higher. Quality First also offers training and funding for participating schools and providers to improve their services.²³⁰ Quality First providers are supported by regional funding.

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- As of 2023, six child care providers in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region were participating in the Quality First program. The McNary Head Start Center (5 star), White Mountain Apache Head Start in Whiteriver (4 star), Alchesay Beginnings Child Development Center (3 star), Dishchii’bikoh Community School (3 star), and Chaghache Day Care Center (3 star) were considered high-quality programs (with a 3- to 5-star rating), while the Cibecue Head Start Center was approaching quality standards. All 6 programs were funded via regional sources (Table 27).
- Because so many early care and education centers in the region received a 3- to 5-start rating, almost all children in a formal care setting were in a quality-level program (95%). This is much higher than what is seen across the state (68%). In 2023, 80 children were served by Quality First Scholarships, or more than 16% of children enrolled in a program (Table 28 & Table 23).

Table 27. Quality First child care providers by funding source, state fiscal year 2023

| Geography | Child care providers served | Regional Funding | DES Expansion | Buy-In |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|--------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Arizona | 1,434 | 1,045 | 384 | 5 |

Source: First Things First (2023). *Quality First Summary Data. Unpublished data.*

Table 28. Children served by Quality First child care providers, state fiscal year 2023

| Geography | Children enrolled at a Quality First provider site | Children enrolled at a Quality First provider site with a star rating | Children enrolled at a Quality First provider site with a 3-5 star rating | % of Children in a Quality-Level Setting (3-5 Stars) | Children served by Quality First Scholarships |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 311 | 311 | 295 | 95% | 80 |
| Arizona | 70,837 | 54,155 | 48,379 | 68% | 8,262 |

Source: First Things First (2023). *Quality First Summary Data. Unpublished data.*

Young children with special needs

Timely intervention can improve the language, cognitive and socio-emotional developmental outcomes of young children who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays.^{231, 232, 233} Early intervention also reduces educational costs by decreasing the need for special education.²³⁴ Ensuring that children have access to timely and adequate screening and intervention services from birth to age 5 can be key for preparing children for kindergarten.

In Arizona, the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP),^{xvi} the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)^{xvii} and the Arizona Department of Education Early Childhood Special Education Program are designed to provide services to families with children who have special needs.^{xviii} AzEIP is a division of DES that provides early intervention and a variety of supportive services to Arizona children birth to age 2 with disabilities and their families.²³⁵ The goal of these services is to improve the learning and development of children and inform their family members of how they can best support their child.²³⁶ DDD is a division of DES that provides supportive services to people of all ages with a qualifying developmental disability, including cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder, down syndrome, epilepsy and cognitive disabilities.²³⁷ Children under the age of 6 that have been assessed by AzEIP to have a qualifying disability may also receive DDD services. At age 3, children with special needs transition from AzEIP services to their local education agency (LEA), usually a school district. Each Arizona school district is mandated to participate in Child Find^{xix} and to provide preschool services to children with special needs either through their own schools or through agreements with other programs such as Head Start.

The availability of early learning opportunities and services for young children with special needs is an ongoing concern across the state, particularly in the more geographically remote communities and tribal nations. According to national research, insufficient funding and staffing of these programs are the greatest obstacles to identifying and providing resources for all children who would benefit from early intervention, and Arizona already falls in the bottom 10 states in the nation for early intervention service provision.²³⁸ Fewer children in Arizona are accessing critical early intervention services that can identify disabilities, provide parent-coaching and encourage optimal development at home.²³⁹ This matters because, while early education discussions often center around pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, research continues to point to the impact of experiences during the first 3 years of life as being just as crucial for healthy brain and body development.²⁴⁰ Positively, Arizona has taken steps toward improving

^{xvi} For more information on AzEIP (which is a division of the Department of Economic Security), visit <https://www.azdes.gov/azeip/>

^{xvii} For more information on DDD (which is a division of the Department of Economic Security), visit <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities>

^{xviii} For more information on ADE's Early Childhood Special Education program, visit <http://www.azed.gov/ece/early-childhood-special-education/> and <http://www.azed.gov/special-education/az-find/>

^{xix} The Arizona Child Find program is a component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that requires states to identify and evaluate all children with disabilities (birth through age 21) to attempt to ensure that they receive the supports and services they need.

funding for early intervention, including being 1 of 10 states to cross-reference Medicaid and Early Intervention data to maximize federal Medicaid matching of funds.²⁴¹

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- Qualifying children may receive services from either AzEIP and/or DDD, a number which can be used to estimate the total number of young children receiving early intervention services in a region. The number of children birth to age 2 receiving these services declined 74% from 39 in state fiscal year (SFY) 2019 to 10 in SFY 2022. As of SFY 2022, 1.3% of children in the region were receiving services from AzEIP and/or DDD compared to 2.6% of children birth to age 2 across the state (Table 29).
- Accordingly, the number of children in the region served by AzEIP declined from 43 in October of 2018 to 16 in October of 2022. While the number declined by almost 12% across the state, the number of young children receiving services through AzEIP increased again from October 2021 to October 2022 (Figure 29).
- Fewer than 10 children birth to age 5 in the region received services through DDD each year from 2019 to 2022 (Table 30).
- The sources of referrals to AzEIP in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region have changed since 2018 when more than half of referrals were made by “another” source, namely early learning programs in the region (55%). Since then, the percent of referrals made by a physician and by social services have both increased, making up 54% and 13% of referrals in 2022, respectively. Additionally, the largest “other” referral source in the region changed from early learning programs to the Department of Child Services (DCS) in 2021, likely related to pandemic-related school closures. Across the state, the proportion of referrals by physicians has also increased from 37% in 2018 to 56% in 2022. The second largest referral source has been parents and caregivers (between 17% and 22%) (Figure 30).
- In the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, 29% of children (birth to 2) who were referred to AzEIP in 2022 received services, a larger proportion than seen across Arizona as a whole (21%). Notably, more than twice the proportion of families in the region who were contacted about services were not interested as compared with the state (33% and 14%, respectively) (Figure 31).
- The Arizona Child Find program, part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requires that states identify and evaluate all children with disabilities to connect them with needed services. Children are identified through physicians, parents, school districts and community screenings. White Mountain Apache Tribe Child Find performs an annual door-to-door survey involving home visits and advertising the screenings that take place once a month in Whiteriver and once every 2 months in Cibecue (with transportation provided). In 2019 116 children ages 3 to 5 were identified as having disabilities and connected with services through the White Mountain Apache Tribe Child Find program, a slight decrease from the number in 2018 (n=141) (Table 31). The most common disabilities identified were developmental delays

(32%-35%) and speech/language impairments (31%). In 2019, 9% of children identified had a hearing impairment, and 8% had a visual impairment (Figure 32).

- Whiteriver Unified School District additionally provides services for children ages 3 to 5 with special developmental and health care needs. This includes the Whiteriver Elementary Early Childhood Education (ECE) program, with two special education classrooms, services at child care centers and home-based services for children in kith and kin care. The district also has a physical therapist, speech pathologist, sign language interpreter and a contracted occupational therapist who are involved in the community Child Find screenings.²⁴²
- In 2022, there were between 83 and 92 preschool through 3rd grade students with disabilities in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools. There were slightly fewer students with disabilities in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (between 51 and 71) (Table 32).
- The number of preschoolers with disabilities receiving services from Whiteriver Unified School District decreased from 23 in 2018 to fewer than 11 in 2021 before rebounding to 20 in 2022 (Figure 33). Please note that these data reflect students of all races and ethnicities.
- Of the preschoolers with disabilities receiving services in 2022, 70% were diagnosed with a speech or language delay, 20% with developmental delay and 10% with a preschool severe delay. The proportion of preschoolers in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools with a speech or language impairment was much higher than in the Blue Ridge Unified School District (32%) and across the state (30%). In the Blue Ridge Unified School District, more than half of diagnoses were developmental delays (53%) (Figure 34).
- The number of kindergarten through 3rd grade students in public or charter school special education in the region decreased by 21% from 2018 (90 students) to 2022 (71 students). In contrast, the number of early elementary students enrolled in special education across the state increased slightly over these years (+2%) (Figure 35).
- The distribution of diagnoses for early elementary students was similar for the region, Blue Ridge Unified School District and the state, with the most prevalent being speech or language impairments (41%) and developmental delay (38%). Special education students in White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools were much less likely to have a diagnosis of autism (<2%) compared to Blue Ridge Unified School District (10%) and all Arizona schools (11%) (Figure 36).

Table 29. Number of children (ages 0-2) receiving AzEIP and/or DDD services, state fiscal years 2019 to 2022

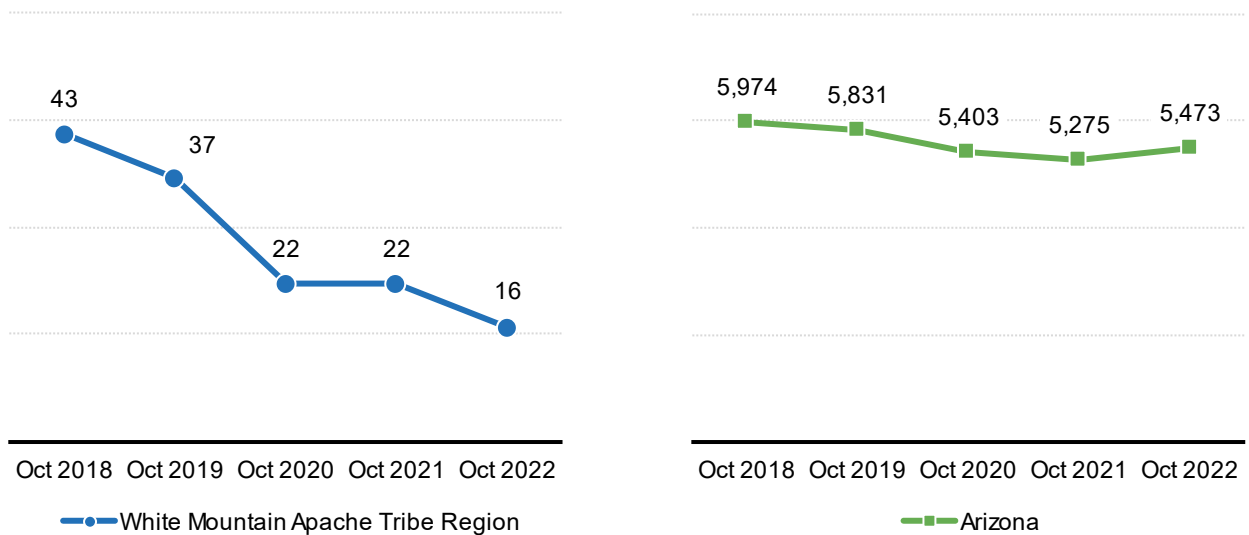
| Geography | Number of children ages 0-2 receiving services from AzEIP and/or DDD | | | | Population ages 0-2 (Census 2020) | Estimated percent of children (ages 0-2) receiving AzEIP and/or DDD services, SFY 2022 |
|---|--|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | SFY 2019 | SFY 2020 | SFY 2021 | SFY 2022 | | |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 39 | 29 | [1-9] | 10 | 741 | 1.3% |
| Arizona | 6,376 | 5,721 | 5,916 | 5,876 | 225,737 | 2.6% |

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [AzEIP dataset]. Unpublished data.

Figure 29. Children birth to age 2 receiving services from AzEIP as of October 1, 2018 to 2022

White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

Arizona



Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Arizona Early Intervention Program dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: These data reflect the Oct 1 snapshot of AzEIP services, not a cumulative total throughout the year.

Table 30. Number of children (birth to age 5) receiving DDD services, state fiscal years 2019 to 2022

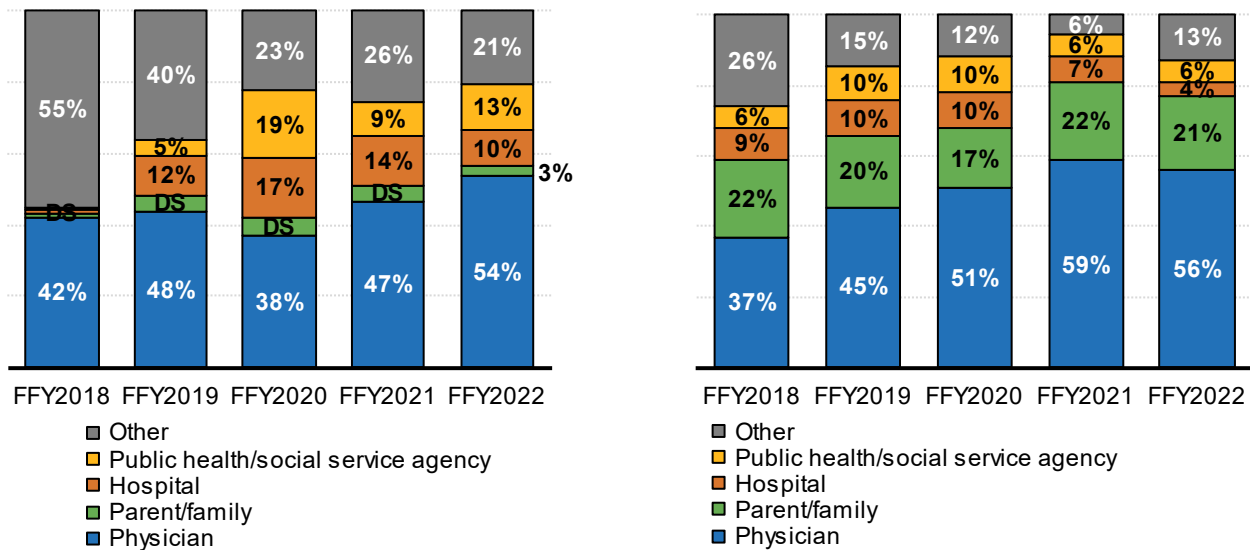
| Geography | SFY 2019 | SFY 2020 | SFY 2021 | SFY 2022 | Percent change from 2019 to 2022 |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1 to 9 | 1 to 9 | 1 to 9 | 1 to 9 | DS |
| Arizona | 4,005 | 4,078 | 2,438 | 3,691 | -8% |

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Division of Developmental Disabilities dataset]. Unpublished data.

Figure 30. Children birth to age 2 referred to AzEIP by referral source, federal fiscal years 2018 to 2022

White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

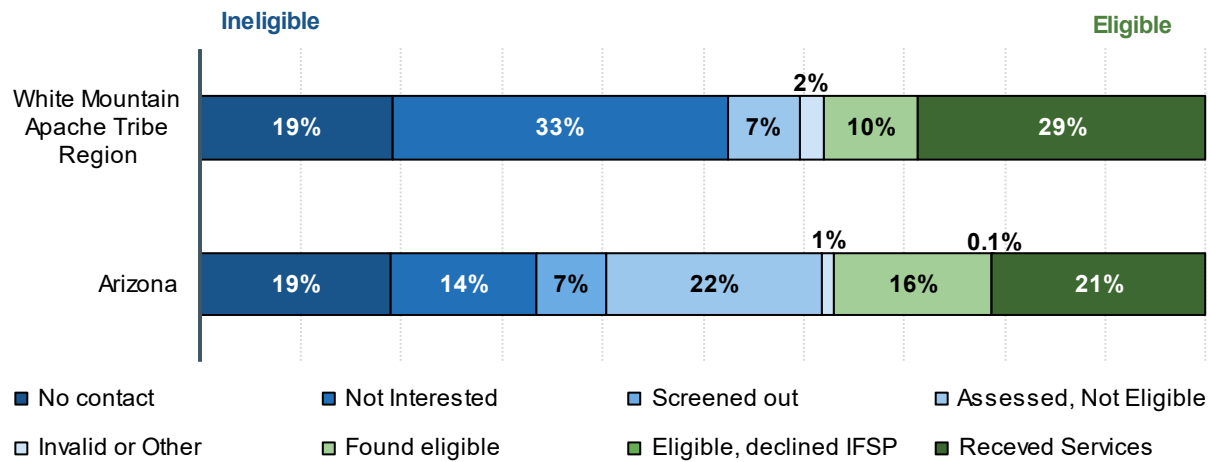
Arizona



Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Arizona Early Intervention Program dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Other referral sources include audiologists, child care or early learning programs, foster care or adoption agencies, homeless shelters or programs, public health facilities, schools, Department of Child Safety, or referrals without a recorded sources. These referrals reflect unique children (duplicates have been removed). “DS” indicates that too few children were referred from that source to calculate an accurate percentage under data suppression policies. In the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, the largest referral source in the “other” category were child care and early learning programs.

Figure 31. Outcomes for children birth to age 2 referred to AzEIP, federal fiscal year 2022



Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Arizona Early Intervention Program dataset]. Unpublished data.

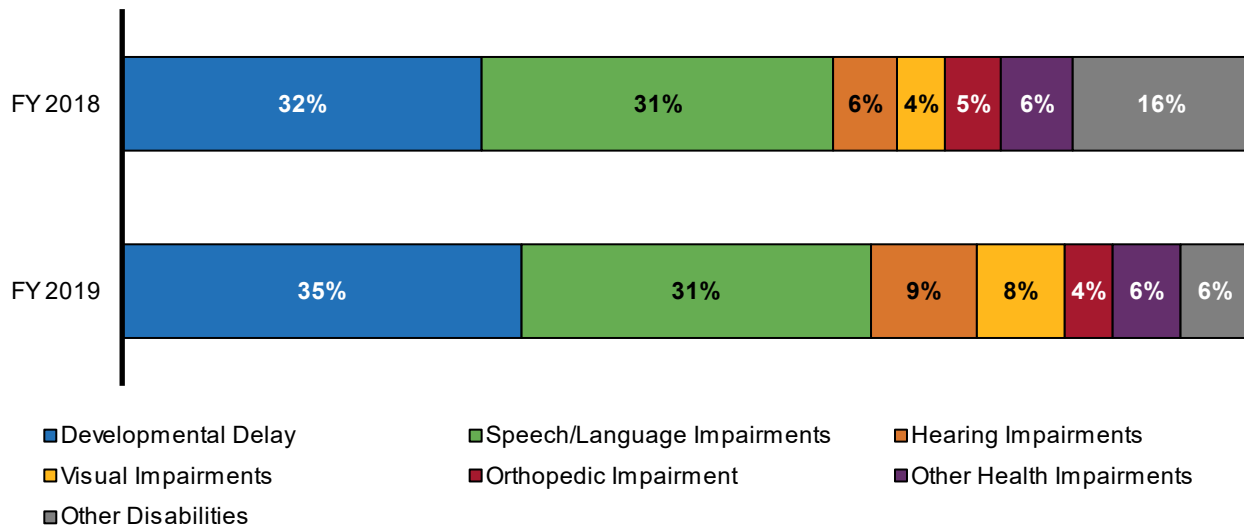
Note: These referral outcomes are recorded by AzEIP service providers. “No contact” means that a service coordinator made multiple attempts to contact a child’s family but was unsuccessful. “Not interested” indicates that when contacted the family of the child did not proceed with screening for eligibility. Children who are “screened out” were not suspected to have a qualifying developmental delay based on an initial developmental screening with a service coordinator; children who are “assessed, not eligible” are those with a formal evaluation who were found to not have a qualifying developmental delay. “Invalid or Other” refers to cases where the child was over-age (age 3 or older) or residing outside Arizona, the referral was a duplicate, the referral was for information-only, or the outcome was listed as “other.”

Table 31. Children ages 3-5 with disabilities identified by Child Find, FY 2018 and FY f2019

| | FY 2018 | FY 2019 |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Ages 3-5 | 141 | 116 |
| Age 3 | 25 | 26 |
| Age 4 | 74 | 60 |
| Age 5 | 42 | 30 |

Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Figure 32. Children ages 3-5 with disabilities identified by Child Find by disability type, FY 2018 and FY 2019



Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Table 32. Preschool to 3rd grade students enrolled in special education, state fiscal years 2022

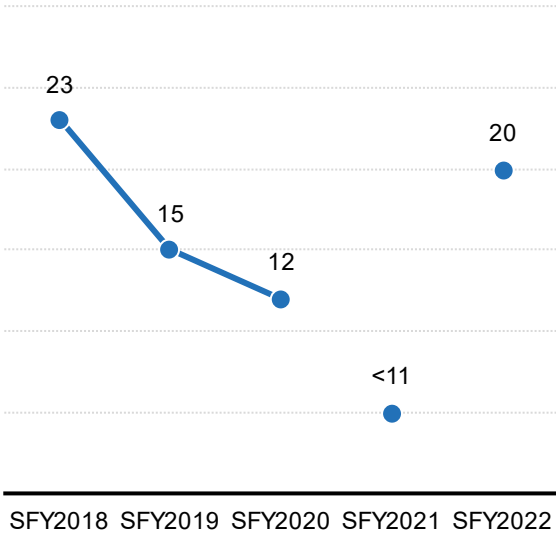
| | Students enrolled in special education, SFY 2022 | | | | |
|--|--|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Preschool | Kindergarten | 1st Grade | 2nd Grade | 3rd Grade |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | 20 | <11 | 16 | 27 | 19 |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 | 19 | <11 | <11 | 16 | 15 |
| Arizona schools | 8,086 | 6,693 | 9,212 | 10,350 | 11,079 |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Special Needs Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

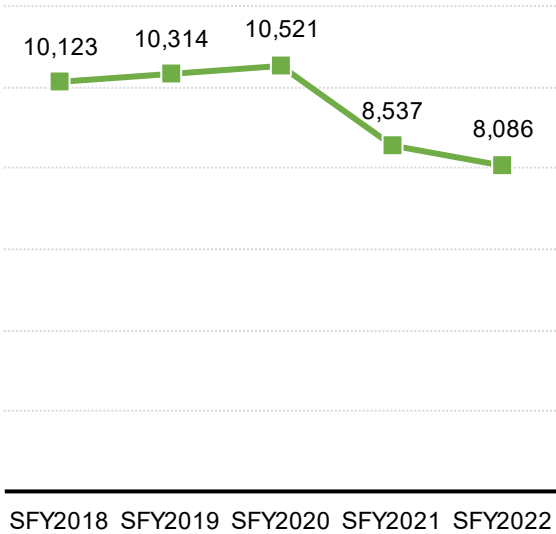
Note: White Mountain Apache Tribe Region public schools enrolling PS-3rd grade students are McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Figure 33. Trends in preschoolers with disabilities served by LEAs, state fiscal years 2018 to 2022

White Mountain Apache Tribe Region



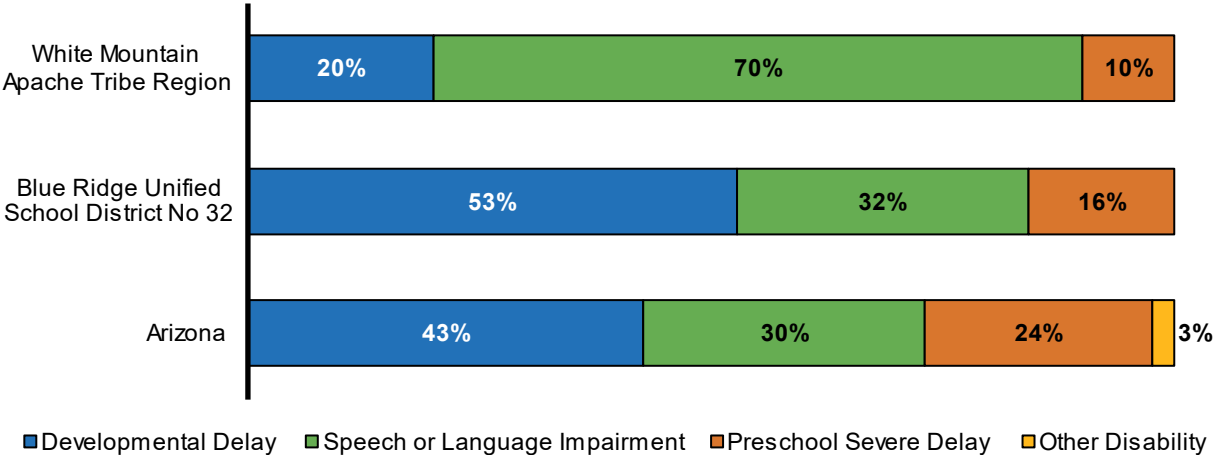
Arizona



Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Special Needs Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Note: White Mountain Apache Tribe Region public schools that enroll PS students include McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Figure 34. Preschoolers with disabilities receiving services through Local Education Agencies (LEAs) by type of disability, state fiscal year 2022



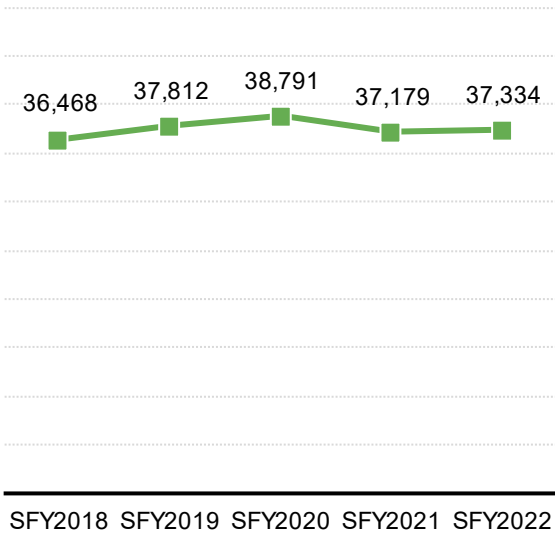
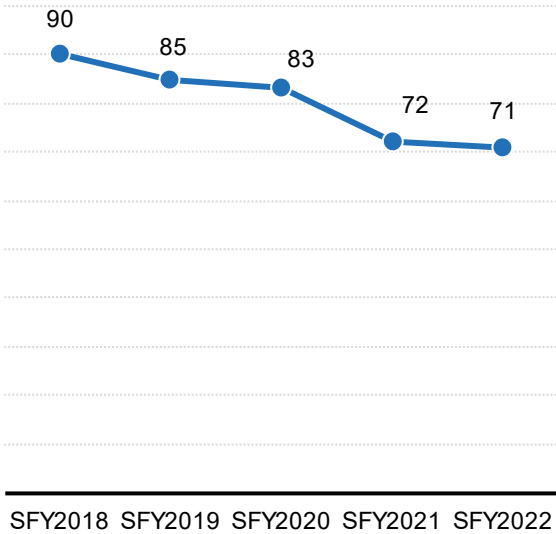
Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Special Needs Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Note: The “Other Disability” category includes children with hearing impairment, visual impairment, or deaf-blindness.

Figure 35. Kindergarten to 3rd grade students enrolled in special education in public and charter schools, state fiscal years 2018 to 2022

White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

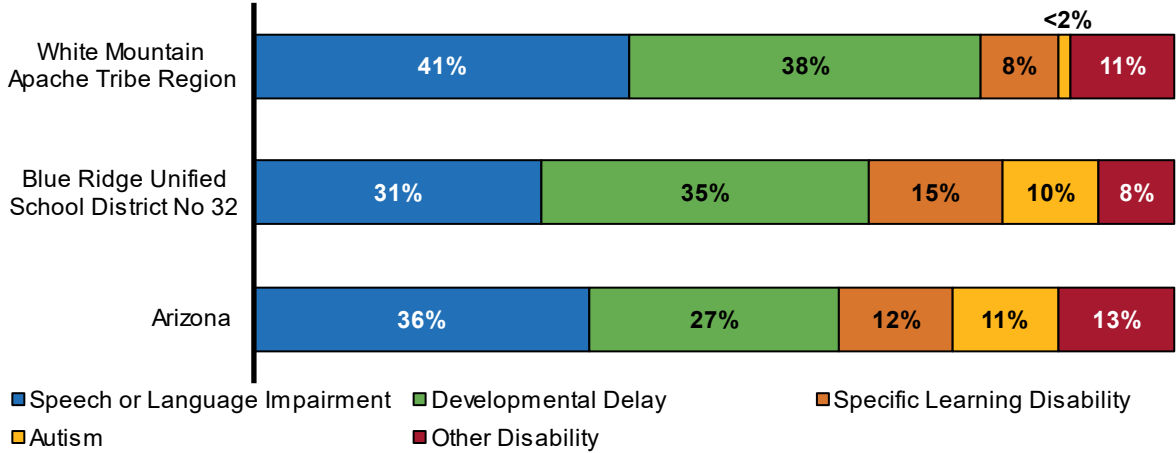
Arizona



Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Special Needs Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Note: White Mountain Apache Tribe Region public schools that enroll K-3 students include McNary Elementary, Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Figure 36. Kindergarten to 3rd grade students enrolled in special education in public and charter schools by primary disability, state fiscal year 2022



Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Special Needs Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Note: The “Other Disabilities” category includes children with emotional disturbance, deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairments such as chronic medical conditions that affect a child’s ability to participate in the educational setting, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment.

Additional data tables related to *Early Learning* can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.



CHILD HEALTH

CHILD HEALTH

Why it Matters

The physical and mental health of both children and their caregivers are important for optimal child development and well-being. Early childhood health, and even maternal health before pregnancy, has lasting impacts on an individual's quality of life.^{243, 244} Experiences during the prenatal and early childhood periods can result in lifelong impacts on immune functioning, brain development and risk for chronic diseases.^{245, 246} Poor health in childhood can also result in lower educational attainment and socioeconomic status in adolescence, adulthood and even inter-generationally.^{247, 248} Therefore, adequate access to preventive care and treatment services is vital to support a child's long-term health, development and success.^{249, 250, 251} Members of federally-recognized tribes have access to health care services provided through Indian Health Services (IHS) and/or tribally-administered health care facilities.^{252, 253}

What the Data Tell Us

Access to health services

Health insurance coverage is an important indicator of whether families can access, afford and utilize medical care. In Arizona, children up to 19 years of age can enroll in health insurance through the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), Arizona's Medicaid program. Children whose families earn too much to qualify for AHCCCS but do not earn enough to afford private health insurance may also be enrolled in KidsCare, Arizona's Children's Health Insurance Program.^{xx} During the COVID-19 pandemic, uninsured rates declined due to federal policies prohibiting states from disenrolling people from Medicaid.²⁵⁴ Despite these efforts, uninsured rates in the overall population are still high.²⁵⁵ One primary reason for this is perceived cost, with more than two-thirds (69.6%) of uninsured U.S. adults citing their inability to pay for health insurance as the primary reason they were uninsured.²⁵⁶ Families who qualify for low- or no-cost health insurance may not be aware that they qualify or they may face administrative barriers to enrolling.²⁵⁷

A variety of health outcomes for both mothers and infants depend on access to quality health care and support before, during and after pregnancy. Early initiation of prenatal care reduces the risk of prenatal smoking, pregnancy complications,^{xxi} premature births and maternal and infant mortality.^{258, 259, 260, 261, 262} Poor access to maternal health care (e.g., hospitals with labor and delivery units, birth centers and obstetric providers) is one factor that can contribute to these outcomes.^{263, 264, 265} Black, Hispanic,

^{xx} For more information on AHCCCS and KidsCare see: <https://www.azahcccs.gov/Members/GetCovered/Categories/KidsCare.html>

^{xxi} One such complication is congenital syphilis, where untreated maternal syphilis is passed to the fetus and can lead to stillbirth or infant death. The number of babies born in Arizona with congenital syphilis increased more than 10-fold in the last 6 years, even though congenital syphilis can be prevented with adequate prenatal care. For more information, see:

<https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/disease-integration-services/std-control/congenital-syphilis/index.php>

American Indian and Alaska Native mothers experience a disproportionate lack of access to quality health care and support for their pregnancies.^{266, 267} Lack of access to this care has contributed to considerably higher rates of low birth weight births, preterm births and maternal and infant mortality compared to non-Hispanic White Americans.^{268, 269, 270} Efforts to increase the number of women in Arizona with access to early prenatal care, such as expanding access to telehealth care and midwifery care, could improve the health outcomes of the state's mothers and babies, especially in counties with lower access to maternal health care services.²⁷¹

Like many rural communities, Native communities often have lower access to high-quality health care. Hospitals and specialty services are fewer and further-between on reservations and in rural areas than in urban areas, and factors such as poor road conditions and lower transportation and internet access can further worsen access issues. Additionally, a report from 2022 estimated that the IHS, through which many tribal members access services, is chronically underfunded by as much as 50% compared to health care needs.^{272, 273} Significant and sustained investment is needed to reduce this gap in adequate health care services for Native communities.

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- According to the 2022 FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Needs and Assets Report, health care services are available to residents through Whiteriver Indian Hospital and Cibecue Health Center, both part of the Indian Health Service Whiteriver Service Unit. Health care services are also provided through the White Mountain Apache Tribe Division of Health, including Apache Behavioral Health Services, the Apache Diabetes and Wellness Center and annual health fairs.²⁷⁴
- In Fiscal Year 2019 (FY 2019), there were 17,262 active IHS users (meaning that they had 1 or more visits within the past two years) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. Of those, 11% (1,941) were young children birth to age 5 (Table 33).
- From 2018 to 2022, almost all births in the region were covered by AHCCCS insurance (between 87% and 95%), which is higher than AHCCCS coverage across Arizona reservations (between 69% and 71%). During these years, less than 3% of births in the region were covered by IHS, a much smaller proportion than on all Arizona Reservations (16%-22%) (Figure 37). High enrollment in AHCCCS, which increases access to health services for enrollees and saves IHS funds to be used in other ways, may be attributed to healthcare navigators at the Whiteriver Hospital.²⁷⁵
- In 2021, just over half (54%) of the 200 births in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region were to mothers who began prenatal care in the first trimester, while about one in seven (15%) births were to mothers who had fewer than five prenatal visits and another 3% were to mothers who had no prenatal care. This is similar to the proportion of births with different levels of prenatal care across all Arizona Reservations in 2020 (Table 34).

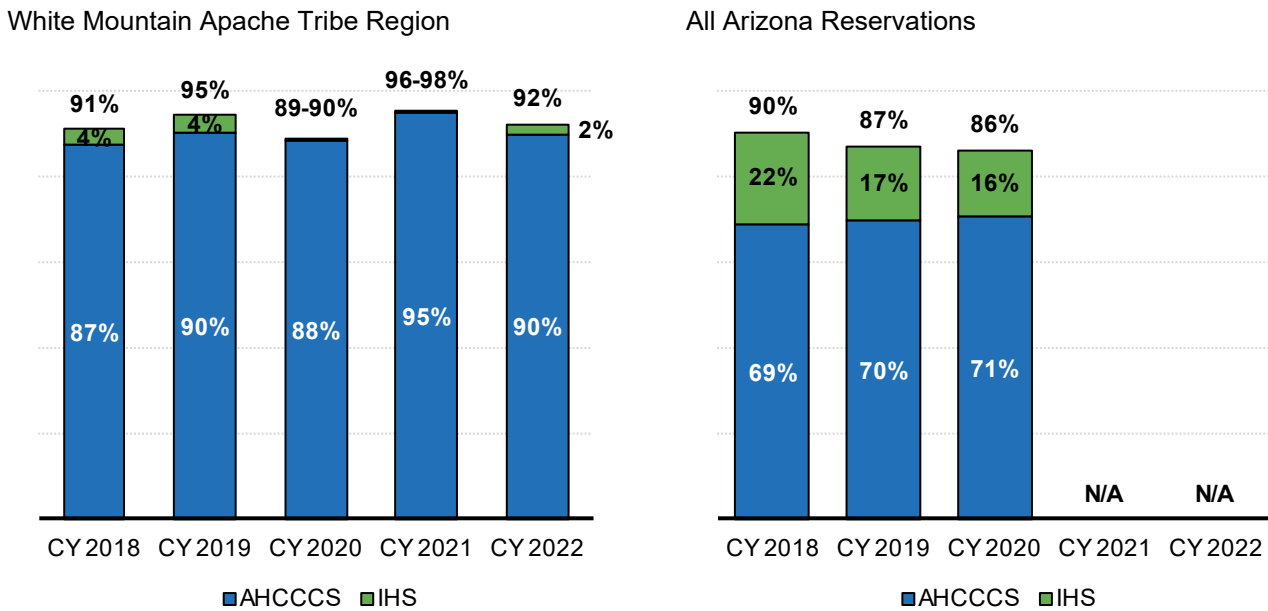
- The proportion of births in the region to mothers who had no prenatal care or fewer than five prenatal visits showed an overall increase from 2018 to 2022 and was well above statewide trends. In 2022, 16.7% of births were to mothers with fewer than five prenatal visits compared to 4.7% statewide; 8.1% of births were to mothers with no prenatal care, more than twice the proportion in the region in 2018 (3.4%) and more than three times the state trend (2.3%) (Figure 38).
- Between 2018 and 2022, the proportion of births in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region to mothers who began prenatal care in the first trimester has remained consistently lower than across Arizona (between -13% and -18%) (Figure 39).

Table 33. Number of Active IHS users in the Whiteriver Service Unit, FY 2019

| | Young children (ages 0-5) | All ages |
|---|---------------------------|----------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,941 | 17,262 |

Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Figure 37. Births paid for by AHCCCS or IHS, 2018 to 2022



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this figure. 'All Arizona Reservations' figure reflects only births to American Indian mothers residing on Arizona reservations. The Health status profiles of American Indian in Arizona for 2021 and 2022 have not yet been released. Due to data suppression of counts of births between 1 and 5, some values are shown as a range, with the true value falling somewhere within the range. In CY 2020 and 2021, 1-2% of births were paid for by IHS.

Table 34. Prenatal care for the mothers of babies born in 2020 and 2021

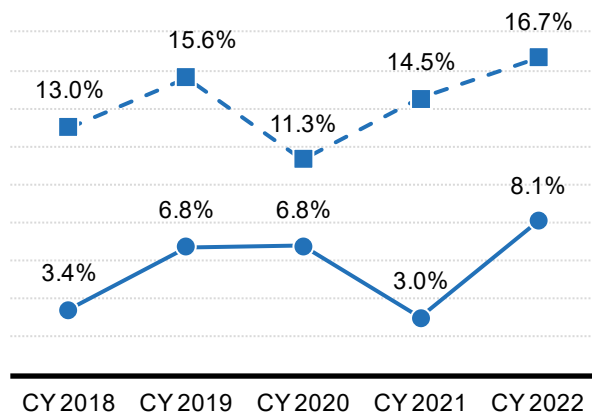
| Geography | Calendar year | Number of births | Mother had no prenatal care | Mother had fewer than five prenatal visits | Mother began prenatal care in the first trimester |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---|-----------------------------|--|---|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 2020 | 221 | 7% | 11% | 54.8% |
| | 2021 | 200 | 3% | 15% | 54.0% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 2020 | 1,900 | 5% | 14% | 55.8% |
| | 2021 | Data for All Arizona Reservations not available | | | |
| Arizona | 2020 | 76,781 | 2% | 5% | 68.8% |
| | 2021 | 77,857 | 2% | 5% | 71.7% |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

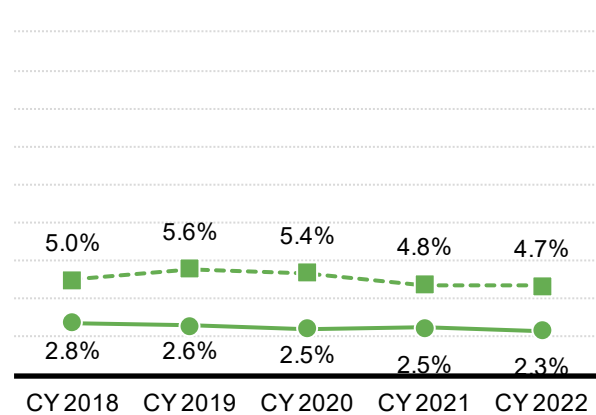
Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this table. 'All Arizona Reservations' row reflects only births to American Indian mothers residing on Arizona reservations. The Health status profile of American Indian in Arizona for 2021 has not yet been released. Due to data suppression of counts of births between 1 and 5, some values are shown as a range, with the true value falling somewhere within the range.

Figure 38. Births to mothers with inadequate prenatal care, 2018 to 2022

White Mountain Apache Tribe Region



Arizona



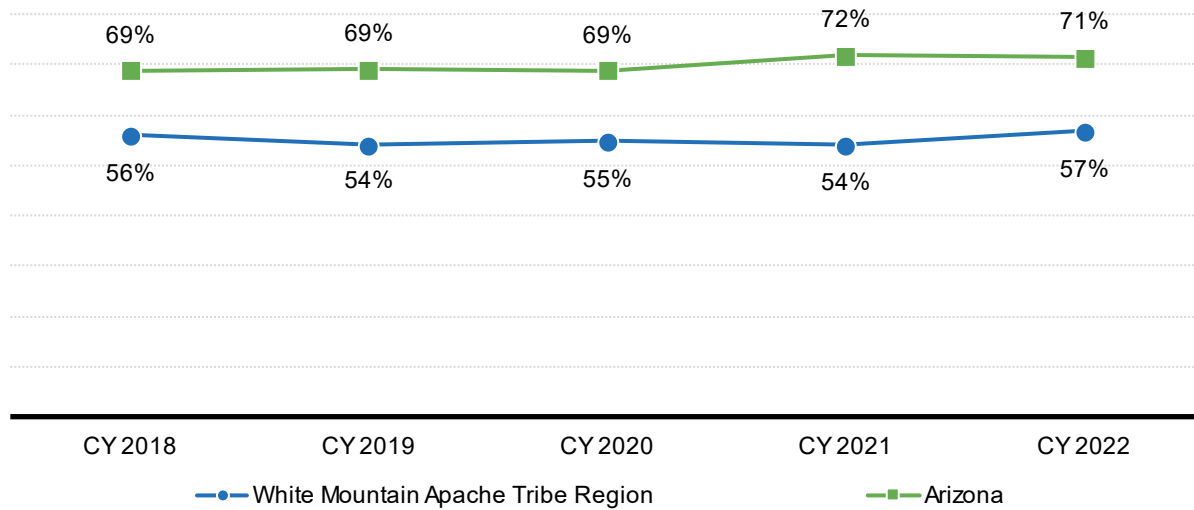
—●— No prenatal care
 - -■- Fewer than 5 prenatal visits

—●— No prenatal care
 - -■- Fewer than 5 prenatal visits

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in these figures

Figure 39. Births to mothers who began prenatal care in the first trimester, 2018 to 2022



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this figure. Due to data suppression of counts of births between 1 and 5, some values are shown as a range, with the true value falling somewhere within the range.

Maternal age and substance abuse

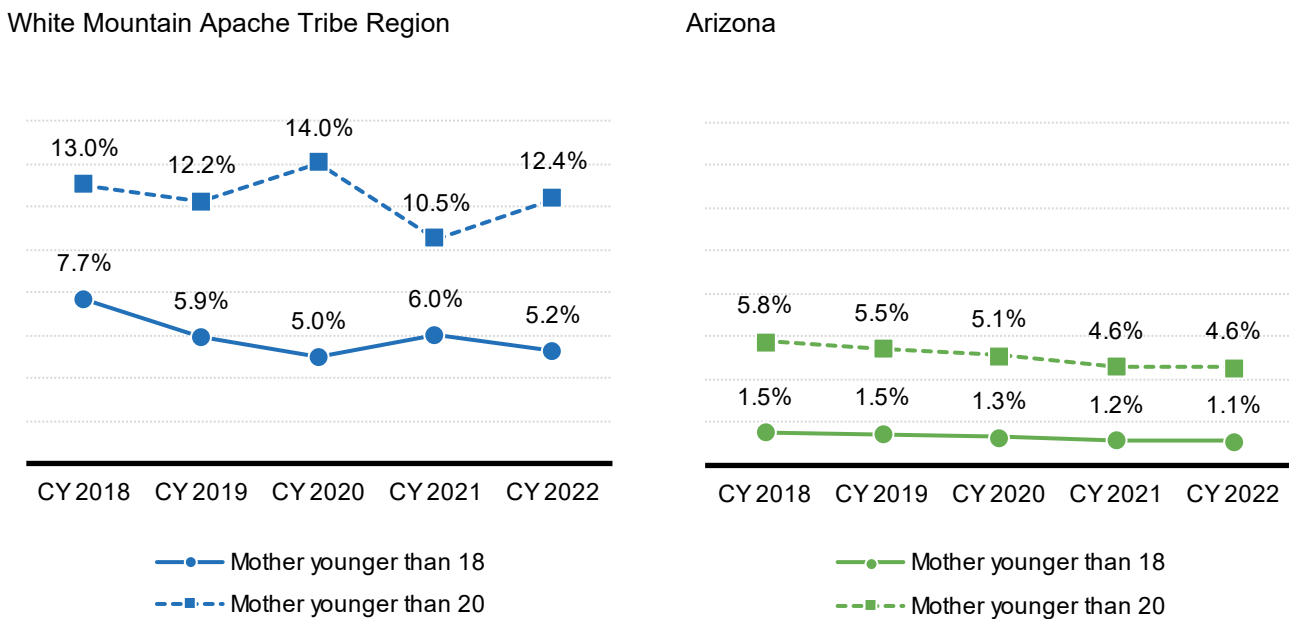
Infants’ immediate and long-term health can be influenced by maternal characteristics including age and substance use during or after pregnancy. For example, teenage parents often experience increased stress and hardship in comparison to older parents and other non-parent teenagers as they are less likely to complete high school or college and more likely to maintain a lower socioeconomic status and require public assistance to make ends meet.^{276, 277, 278, 279, 280}

The use of substances during pregnancy can cause negative health complications for fetuses and babies. For example, babies born to mothers who smoked cigarettes during pregnancy are more likely to be born preterm, have low birth weight, die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and have weak lungs.^{281, 282} The use of opioids, whether prescribed or illicit, during pregnancy also poses health risks to developing fetuses including preterm birth, stillbirth and birth defects.²⁸³ It may also cause infants to experience withdrawal symptoms after birth, which is referred to as neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). Symptoms of NAS include sleep problems, seizures, poor feeding, dehydration, loose stool, sweating, tremors and vomiting. In Native communities, substance abuse issues can be linked to historical trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Protective factors, which are also important elements of effective substance use interventions, include cultural and family connection and traditional healing.^{284, 285}

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- Looking at trends over time, the share of births to teenaged mothers (younger than 20) in the region fluctuated from a high of 14% in 2020 to a low of 10.5% in 2021. However, the percentage of births to mothers younger than 18 generally declined from 7.7% of births in 2018 to 5.2% in 2022. Rates of teenage pregnancy have been declining across the state as a whole (Figure 40).
- While the proportion of births in the region to mothers who smoked during pregnancy have been consistently higher than across Arizona, this proportion dipped from 6% of births in 2021 to 3.3% of births in 2022. As of 2022, the White Mountain Apache Tribe region was meeting the Healthy People 2030 target of 4.3% of births or less (Figure 41).
- Between 2018 and 2022, 106 newborns were hospitalized because of maternal drug use during pregnancy in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. Based on the total number of births, this equates to 9.4 newborns hospitalized per 100 births, more than double the state rate of 3.3 newborns hospitalized per 100 live births. The average length of hospital stay was shorter in the region (6.9 days) than in Arizona as a whole (9.5 days) (Table 35).

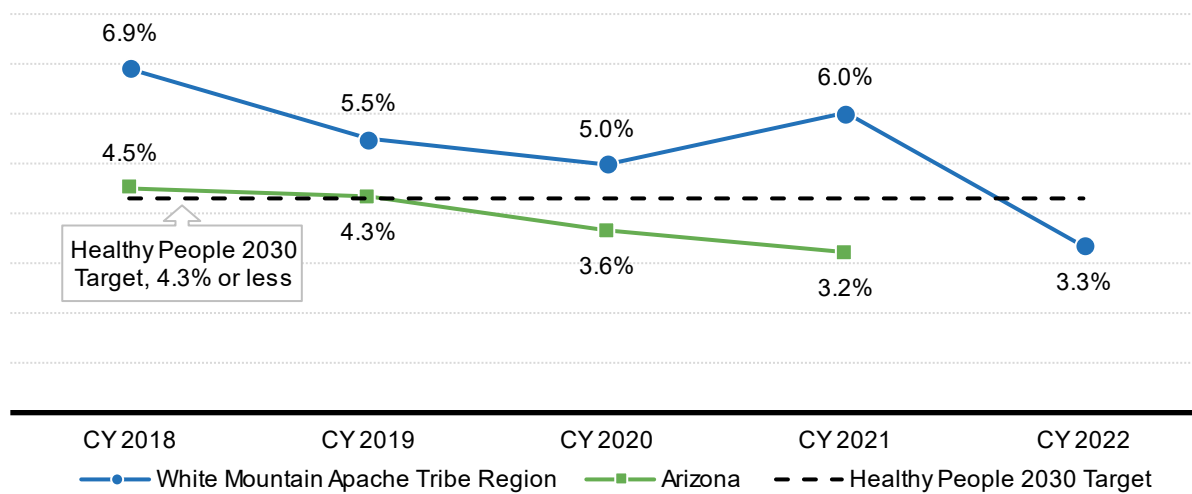
Figure 40. Births to mothers who were younger than 20, 2018 to 2022



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this figure. Due to data suppression of counts of births between 1 and 5, some values are shown as a range, with the true value falling somewhere within the range.

Figure 41. Births to mothers who smoked cigarettes during pregnancy, 2018 to 2022



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Table 35. Newborns hospitalized because of maternal drug use during pregnancy, 2018-2022 combined

| Geography | Newborns hospitalized | Average length of stay (days) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 106 | 6.9 |
| Arizona | 12,939 | 9.5 |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Hospital Discharge dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Data on newborns hospitalizations were geocoded to FTF regions using the address provided by parents at the time of hospitalization; however, in cases where the address provided was not valid, hospitalizations could not be assigned to a region. County of residence is captured separately from addresses, meaning that counts in the county often exceed those seen in a particular region because they include all newborns regardless of address validity.

Maternal health and well-being

A pregnant woman’s health and well-being are closely linked to infant and child health and development. Gestational diabetes (i.e., diabetes that only presents during the pregnancy) increases the likelihood of an infant having low blood sugar, being born preterm, being larger than average at birth, needing to be delivered through cesarean section and even developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases later in life.^{286, 287} Children of mothers categorized as having maternal obesity have increased risk of birth complications, asthma, diabetes, heart disease and neonatal and infant

mortality.^{288, 289, 290} A variety of social determinants of health have been linked to the development of diabetes and obesity, including low socioeconomic status, employment struggles, lack of health insurance and living in rural areas with fewer resources.^{291, 292, 293, 294} Risks associated with these conditions can be reduced through increased access to maternal health care before, during and after childbirth as well as planning high-risk deliveries at hospital facilities with more resources and technical expertise.^{295, 296}

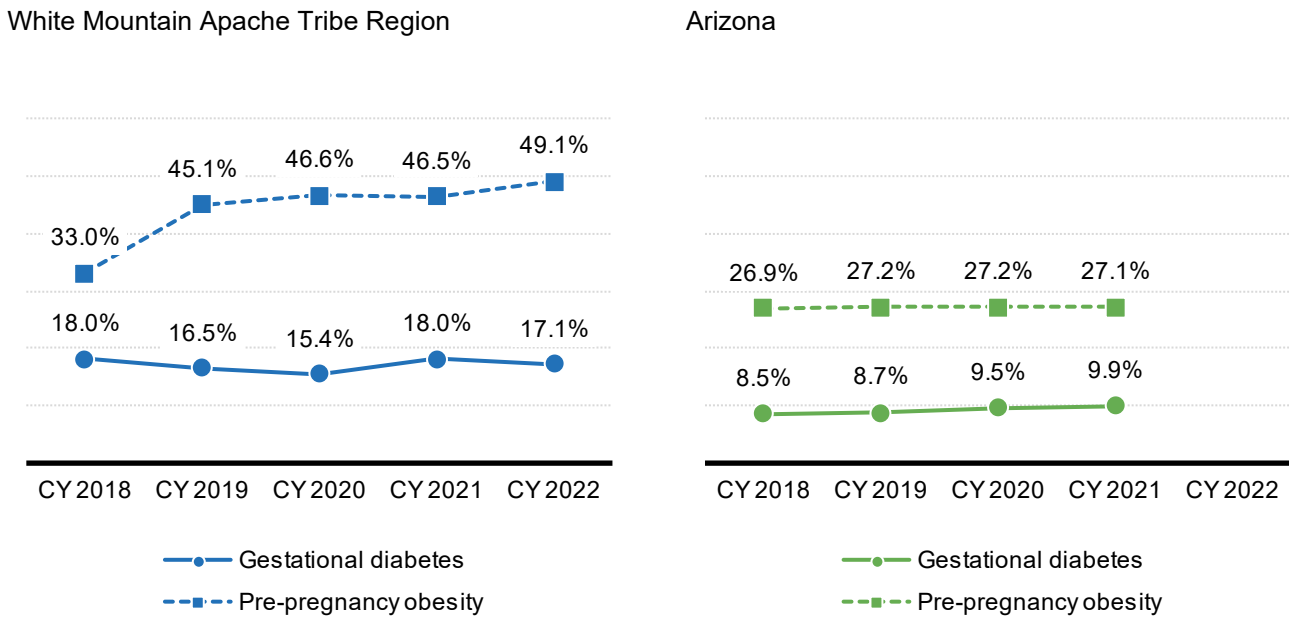
Postpartum depression has a clear link to negative outcomes in infant health and development. Untreated postpartum depression can lead to infant sleeping, eating and behavioral problems, issues with maternal and infant bonding and infant developmental delays.^{297, 298} Groups that have higher rates of postpartum depression include American Indian and Alaska Native mothers, mothers who are under the age of 19 and mothers who smoked during or after pregnancy.²⁹⁹ The United States Preventive Services Task Force and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend assessing mothers' mental health both during pregnancy and after giving birth to facilitate early identification and intervention.³⁰⁰ In 2022, AHCCCS implemented a policy requiring depression screenings during prenatal and postpartum visits as well as well-child visits within the first 6 months of an infant's life for all enrolled mothers in Arizona.³⁰¹ Mothers who screen positively for depression must be referred to a case manager or treatment services.³⁰² These screenings, as well as the ability to bill AHCCCS for the cost of screenings, will hopefully increase the likelihood that mothers experiencing postpartum depression are referred to appropriate mental health services.

In a recent study, American Indian mothers shared that their experiences of postpartum depression were shaped by their medical experiences just before and after giving birth and a feeling that historical factors and colonized perspectives have limited their ability to birth and mother fully in their culture.³⁰³ Additionally, mothers expressed needing to remain resilient for their families and communities, which may increase the feeling of isolation common in postpartum disorders. Integrating cultural birthing practices into healthcare services and considering cultural-specific factors in follow-up treatment services is a key need to support Native mothers and their families.³⁰⁴

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- Between 2018 and 2022, rates of gestational diabetes in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region stayed relatively stable (between 15.4% and 18%) while rates of pre-pregnancy obesity increased by more than half, from 33% to 49.1%. Across Arizona, rates of both gestational diabetes and pre-pregnancy obesity were much lower than in the region; in 2021, 9.9% of births statewide were to mothers with gestational diabetes and 27.1% with pre-pregnancy obesity (Figure 42).
- Statewide, about 1 in 8 mothers (13.7%) reported experiencing postpartum depressive symptoms in 2020, nearly the same rate as that seen nationwide (13.4%).³⁰⁵ National data show that more than one in five (22%) American Indian and Alaska Native mothers in the U.S. experienced postpartum depressive symptoms in 2018, suggesting that Native mothers may be at higher risk of postpartum depression.^{306, 307}

Figure 42. Births to mothers diagnosed with pre-pregnancy obesity or gestational diabetes, 2018 to 2022



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this figure. Data on pre-pregnancy obesity and gestational diabetes were not available for Arizona in 2022. Data for the region are presented as a range if fewer than 6 births in the region were to mothers diagnosed with one of these conditions.

Infant health

Health in early infancy shapes childhood health for many years to come. Infants who are born preterm or at a low birthweight have a higher possibility of short- and long-term health complications. Preterm birth is defined as birth at less than 37 weeks of gestation. Risks related to preterm births include respiratory, immune, neurological, vision, hearing and intestinal developmental issues.³⁰⁸ Infants born preterm also have increased rates of mortality during their first 28 days to 1 year of life, longer hospitalization after birth, more health care costs and physical impairments.^{309, 310} Preterm births are more likely among mothers who are under age 20, over the age of 35, low income, experience infections during pregnancy or engage in substance use.³¹¹

Low birthweight is defined as weighing less than 5 pounds and 8 ounces (2,500 grams) at birth. Babies born with this condition have a higher risk of infant mortality and long-term health problems such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiac disease.^{312, 313} Low birthweight risk factors include low maternal weight during pregnancy, preterm birth, teen pregnancy, pregnancy over the age of 35, high blood pressure, diabetes, substance use and air pollution.³¹⁴

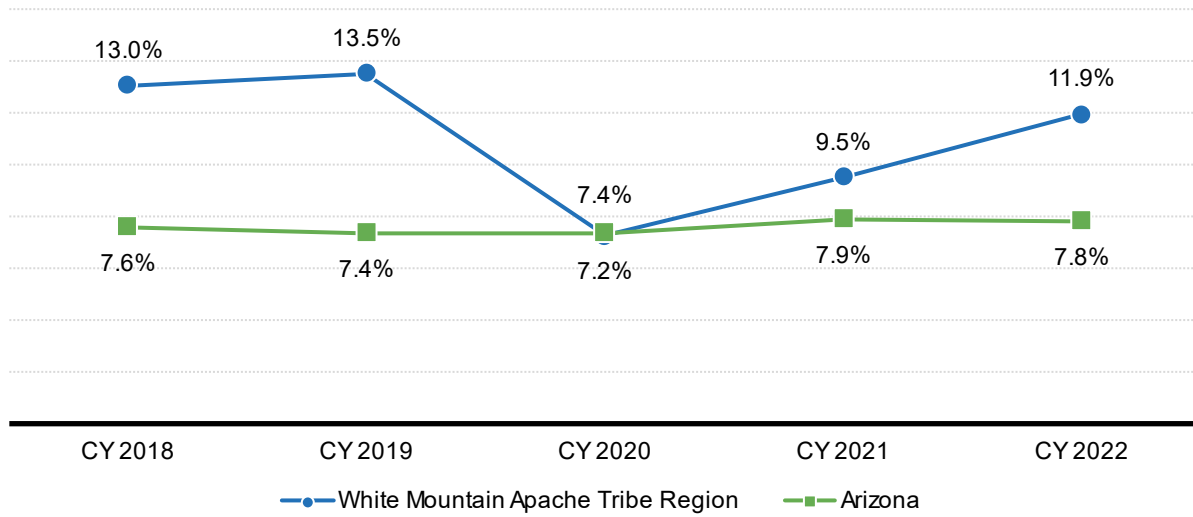
Newborns are admitted into neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) in hospitals for numerous reasons that can vary across medical providers and have implications for the short- and long-term health of babies and families.³¹⁵ NICU stays can take a large emotional and financial toll on families, especially families living far from the hospital. However, although NICU admissions may be an indicator of important health concerns in newborns, including low birthweight, they can also be a site of family-based interventions that can positively impact infant development and parent-child relationships.³¹⁶

For parents who are able to breastfeed, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding infants exclusively for the first 6 months after birth, followed by a combination of breastfeeding and other foods for up to 2 years or longer.³¹⁷ Breastfeeding offers a variety of benefits to infants due to the nutrition and antibodies that human breast milk provides. These benefits include lowering an infant's risk of type 1 diabetes, obesity, ear infections, SIDS, asthma and gastrointestinal infections.³¹⁸ Robust data on breastfeeding rates are only available for children served through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

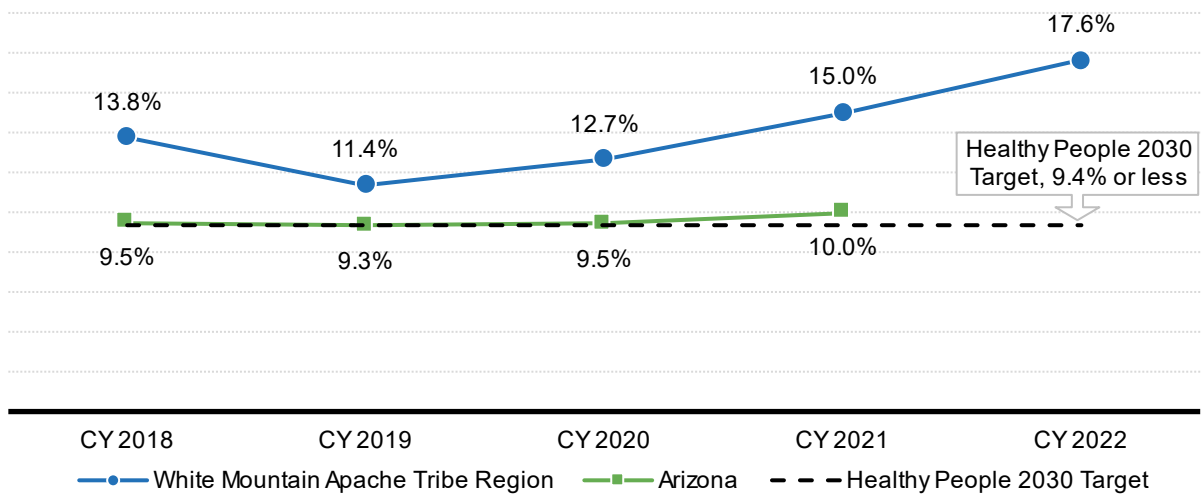
- From 2018 to 2021, the proportion of births in the region that were low birthweight fluctuated greatly, which is common when there are a relatively small number of total births. Rates of low birthweights decreased by almost half from 2019 (13.5%) to 2020 (7.4%) before increasing for the next two years. In 2022, rates of low birthweight births were about 4% higher in the region (11.9%) than across the state (7.8%) (Figure 44).
- The Healthy People 2030 target for the percentage of preterm births is 9.4% or lower. From 2018 to 2022 the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region did not meet the Healthy People 2030 target, increasing from a low of 11.4% in 2019 to 17.6% in 2022. Preterm births across the state were increasing slightly over these years and also exceeded this target in 2018, 2020 and 2021 (Figure 44).
- From 2018 to 2020, the majority of WIC-enrolled infants in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region were breastfed at least once (between 69% and 77%), which is higher than across all ITCA WIC programs (between 65% and 71%). The proportion of infants who were breastfed (either exclusively or in combination with other nutrition) at six months was also slightly higher in the region (between 25% and 30%) than all ITCA WIC programs (between 23% and 26%) (Figure 45).

Figure 43. Low birthweight births, 2018 to 2022



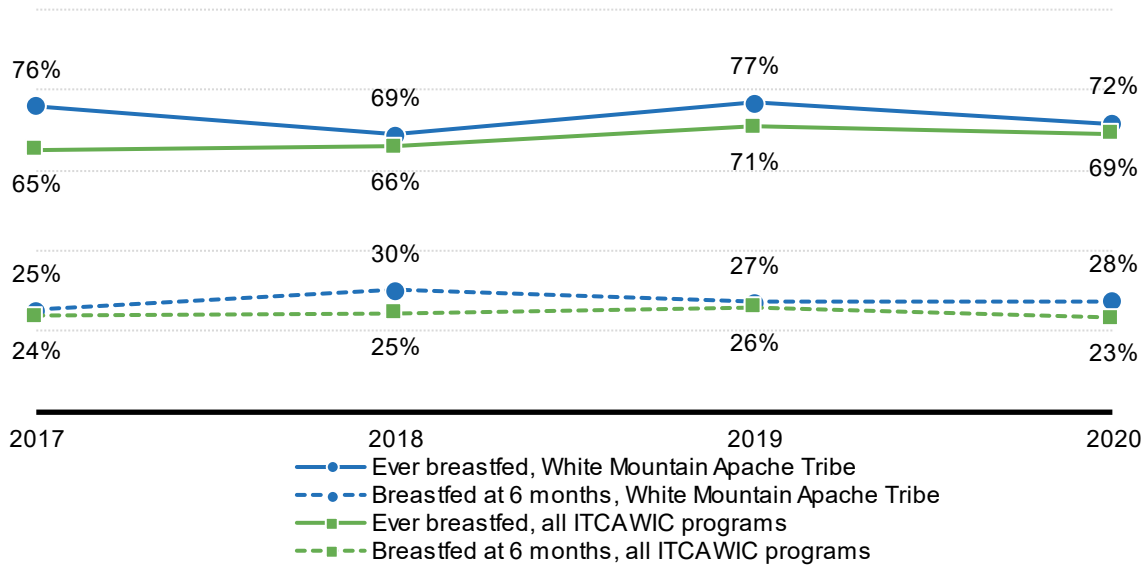
Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Figure 44. Preterm births, 2018 to 2022



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Figure 45. Percent of WIC-enrolled infants ever breastfed and breastfed at 6 months, 2017 to 2020



Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Childhood infectious disease and immunization

Immunization against preventable diseases protects both children and the surrounding community from potential illness and death. Immunization protects not only the vaccinated person but also individuals who are unable to be vaccinated through “community immunity.”³¹⁹ In order to attend state-licensed child care programs and public or charter schools, children are required to receive specific vaccinations or obtain an official exemption, which can be requested for medical, personal or religious reasons.³²⁰ Statewide and nationally, childhood immunization rates have been declining in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated disparities in health care access, including routine immunizations, that specifically impacted children who are Black, Hispanic, low-income, live in rural areas or lack health insurance.³²¹ National survey data from the Pew Research Center also show that declining childhood immunization rates, particularly for the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine, can be linked to parents' shifting attitudes towards vaccines. While most U.S. parents continue to express confidence in the value of childhood vaccination for MMR, a sizable proportion expressed concerns about the necessity of vaccines and showed declining support for vaccine requirements for children to attend public schools.³²²

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza (flu) are leading causes of serious illness in young children, and following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, recent flu and RSV seasons have been more severe nationwide.^{323, 324} RSV is the most frequent cause of hospitalization in children under 1 year of

age.³²⁵ In 2023, two new preventative therapies for RSV were approved—a single-dose antibody medication for infants, and an adult immunization for pregnant people administered in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy.^{326, 327} These new treatments have the potential to prevent severe illness in infants and young children, but shortages of the antibody medication have led the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to recommend prioritizing access for the highest-risk infants. This includes infants under 6 months of age, those with underlying health conditions such as lung or heart disease and American Indian or Alaska Native infants under 8 months of age, as well as older American Indian or Alaska Native infants who live in remote areas with limited access to health care facilities.³²⁸ The flu can also cause serious illness in young children under age 5, particularly for children birth to age 2, who are the most likely to be hospitalized with flu complications.³²⁹ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children ages 6 months and older be vaccinated against influenza each year.³³⁰

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- In 2020, the IHS target for toddlers with a complete vaccine series for their age group was 45.9%. Data from the Whiteriver Service Unit show that 68% of toddlers ages 19 to 35 months (281) had completed their full immunization series on-time for their age group, meaning that the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region far exceeded the national target (Table 36).
- Immunization rates were even higher for young children in care settings. Among the students enrolled in White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start in 2023, 99% were up-to-date on required immunizations for their age group (Table 37).
- Children enrolled in kindergarten in the region in the 2022-23 school year also had high immunization rates, exceeding Arizona’s rates and meeting the Healthy People 2030 target for MMR vaccination (95%). No children had religious or medical exemptions (Table 38).
- In 2022, there were 42 confirmed and probable cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and 23 cases of influenza among young children (birth to age 5) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. Flu and RSV cases dropped substantially in 2020 and 2021 when most COVID-19 restrictions were in place (Table 39).

Table 36. Children (ages 19-35 months) with complete immunizations in the Whiteriver Service Unit, FY 2020

| | Total number of children (ages 19-35 months) assessed | Number and percent of children (ages 19-35 months) with complete immunizations (4313*314 series) | |
|-------------------------|---|--|-----|
| Whiteriver Service Unit | 411 | 281 | 68% |

Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Table 37. Immunization rates for children enrolled in White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start, FY 2023

| | Children (ages 3-5) enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start | Children up to date on required immunizations by year-end |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 197 | 99% |

Source: Office of Head Start (2024). 2023 Program Information Report. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/pir>

Table 38. Kindergarteners with selected required immunizations, 2022-23

| Geography | Number Enrolled | DTaP | Polio | MMR | Personal belief exemption | Medical exemption | Exempt from every required vaccine |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 186 | 94.6% | 95.2% | 95.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Arizona | 78,937 | 89.6% | 90.3% | 89.9% | 7.3% | 0.2% | 4.6% |
| Healthy People 2030 targets | | | | 95.0% | | | |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). Kindergarten Immunization Coverage, 2022-23 School Year. Unpublished data received by request & aggregated by the Community, Research, & Development Team. Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). Kindergarten Immunization Coverage by County, 2022-23 School Year. Retrieved from <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/immunization/index.php#reports-immunization-coverage>

Note: These data reflect immunization rates at Whiteriver Elementary, Cradleboard, and Seven Mile Schools.

Table 39. Confirmed and probable cases of infectious diseases in children birth to age 5, 2019 to 2022

| Geography | Confirmed & probable RSV cases | | | | Confirmed & probable Influenza cases | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| | CY 2019 | CY 2020 | CY 2021 | CY 2022 | CY 2019 | CY 2020 | CY 2021 | CY 2022 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 58 | 23 | 1 to 5 | 42 | 34 | 18 | 1 to 5 | 23 |
| Arizona | 4,840 | 4,459 | 4,935 | 9,606 | 6,459 | 6,094 | 508 | 7,334 |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [FTF VPD Flu RSV dataset]. Unpublished data.

Infant and child hospitalization and mortality

Infant mortality refers to the death of infants under 1 year of age. Some of the most common causes of infant mortality in Arizona and the U.S. include congenital abnormalities, low birth weight, preterm birth, pregnancy complications, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and unintentional injuries.^{331, 332, 333} According to provisional CDC data, infant mortality increased between 2021 and 2022 by 3% nationally, 13% in Arizona for all infants and 21% for American Indian or Alaska Native infants nationwide, the highest increase seen for any group.³³⁴ In addition to increasing, the infant mortality rates for American Indian or Alaska Native (9.1 deaths per 1,000 live births) and Black infants (10.9) were also notably higher than White (4.52) or Hispanic (4.9) infants in 2022, racial disparities that have been linked to maternal care deserts, which are particularly prevalent on tribal lands.^{335, 336} This indicates a serious need to increase access to timely prenatal care, newborn screening and home visiting programs in rural and tribal areas to begin to reduce infant mortality rates.³³⁷

The leading cause of death for children birth to age 17 in the United States is unintentional injuries.³³⁸ The most prevalent accidental injuries are car crashes, drowning, falls, suffocation, fires and poisoning.³³⁹ Deaths from unintentional injuries are more common for children living in rural areas, as well as among American Indian and Alaska Native children.^{340, 341} Increased awareness and safety precautions have helped reduce childhood deaths in the last decade, including child swimming lessons, proper infant sleeping position, installing smoke detectors, keeping medications out of reach, practicing gun safety and utilizing seatbelts and helmets.³⁴²

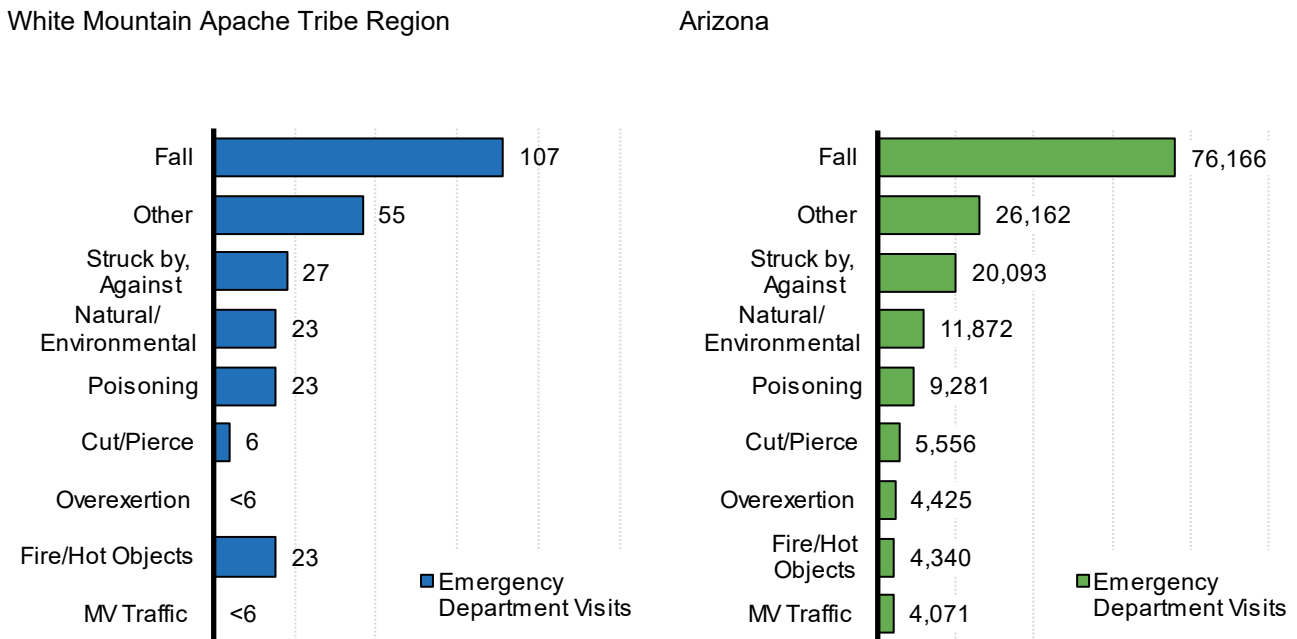
How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- The types of unintentional injuries leading to non-fatal emergency department visits among young children (birth to age 4) are similar in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region and the state. Between 2016 and 2020, the majority of emergency department visits among young children in the region were due to falls (n=107), with smaller numbers due to being struck by or against an object, natural or environmental reasons, poisoning or other causes. Rates of emergency department visits due to fire or hot objects were higher in the region than across the

state (Figure 46). Data on causes of inpatient hospitalizations among young children in the region during this time were suppressed due to small numbers.

- Between 2018 and 2021, there were 21 child deaths in the White Mountain Apache Tribe region due to accidents, congenital malformations, low birthweight, intentional self-harm or suicide, assault or homicide, sudden infant death syndrome and influenza or pneumonia. No single cause was responsible for more than five deaths.

Figure 46. Non-fatal emergency department visits due to unintentional injuries for children birth to age 4 by selected mechanism of injury, 2016-2020 combined



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Hospital Discharge dataset]. Unpublished data.

Additional data tables related to *Child Health* can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.



FAMILY SUPPORT AND LITERACY

FAMILY SUPPORT AND LITERACY

Why it Matters

Children’s long-term well-being and success is tied to their relationships and experiences with their caregivers. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) refer to childhood experiences of abuse, neglect and other life events that can negatively impact children’s immediate and long-term well-being.^{xxii, 343} ACEs have been associated with negative effects on development, educational achievement, future employment, mental health, drug and alcohol use and overall increased health care utilization.^{344, 345, 346} ACEs are more prevalent among Arizona children with special health care needs and children living in poverty.³⁴⁷

Social, physical, academic and economic outcomes are positively influenced by healthy relationships and interactions with family members and caregivers during childhood.^{348, 349, 350, 351, 352} An understanding of, and ability to utilize, positive parenting skills is an important protective factor that reduces the likelihood of abuse and neglect, leading to better childhood and long-term outcomes.³⁵³ Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs), including positive parent-child relationships and feelings of safety and support, have been shown to have positive long term impacts on mental and relational health.³⁵⁴ Even if children have experienced multiple ACEs, if their families show high levels of resilience and connection (e.g., working together to solve problems, staying hopeful in difficult times and talking together about things that matter to their family) they show higher rates of flourishing, characterized by healthy social and emotional development and an open and engaged approach to learning.³⁵⁵ These higher flourishing scores coupled with higher ACE scores point to the reality that childhood flourishing can, and does, exist amid adverse experiences and can potentially help mitigate their negative health effects.³⁵⁶ Supporting families with the knowledge and skills to promote resilience and connection can therefore be critical for ensuring children’s long-term well-being.

What the Data Tell Us

Early literacy and parent education

Parents and families can play an important role in promoting early academic skills. When families read, sing and tell stories together, it can help young children develop reading and writing fluency as well as their capacity for reading comprehension.^{357, 358, 359} Literacy practices at home have also been found to increase children’s motivation to learn.³⁶⁰ These early literacy skills are important because they are linked to durable outcomes including elementary school performance and overall educational achievement.³⁶¹

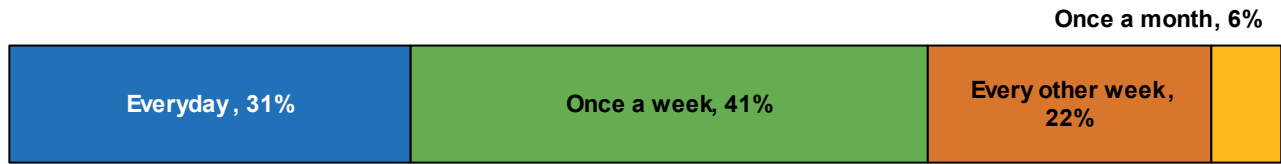
^{xxii} ACEs include 8 categories of traumatic or stressful life events experienced before the age of 18 years. The 8 ACE categories are sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, household adult mental illness, household substance abuse, domestic violence in the household, incarceration of a household member, and parental divorce or separation.

Some families may face challenges to implementing literacy practices with their young children, especially when they are low-resourced. Barriers include being unfamiliar with child development benchmarks, having limited free time to spend with children, and lower access to books in the home.³⁶² In Arizona, reading scores have been slowly approaching the national average, however American Indian students still have the lowest scores as a group.³⁶³ Community programs, family resources centers, home visitation and larger-scale initiatives can help caregivers implement home-based literacy practices to improve children’s reading scores. Recognizing the influence caregivers can have, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that pediatricians provide information to families about the benefits of early literacy practices. Doctor’s offices and other community locations are also places where initiatives like Read on Arizona and Reach Out & Read may provide books and other materials that families can bring home.³⁶⁴

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

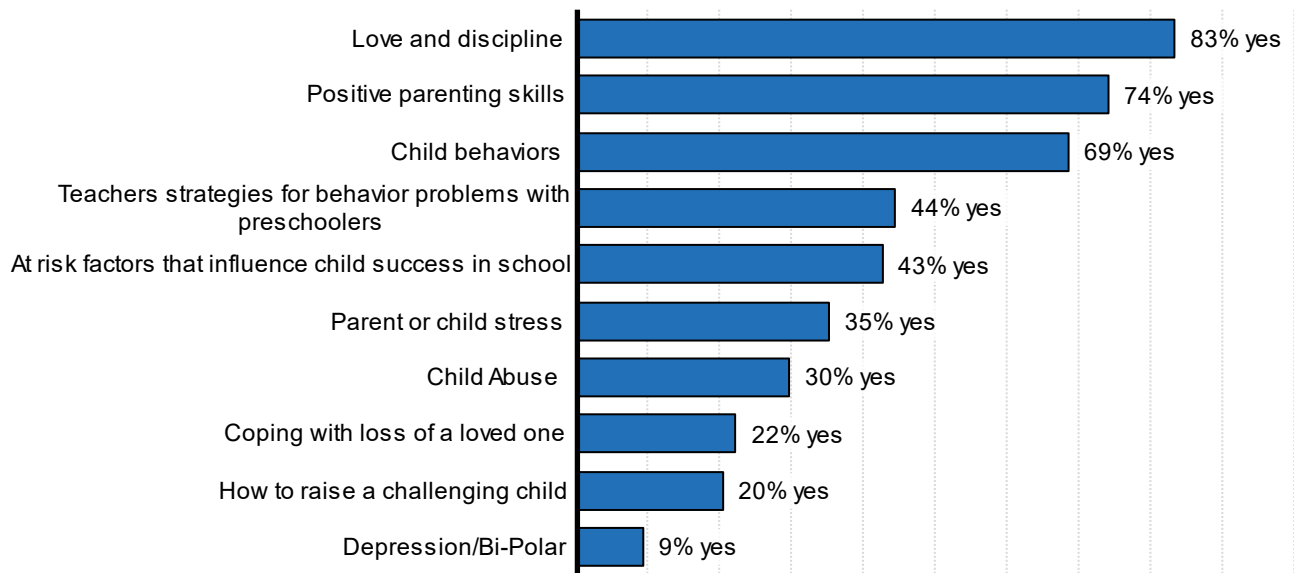
- Early literacy efforts in the region include the “Reach Out and Read” program, through which pediatricians at Whiteriver Indian Hospital and Cibecue Health Center provide families with information about the importance of reading with their children and books to take home. The Reach Out and Read program in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region additionally translated pamphlets into Apache and created graphics of Apache children engaging in health promoting activities.³⁶⁵
- The 2020-21 White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Community Assessment included questions on caregiver early literacy practices. When asked how often they read to their child(ren), 31% said every day, 41% said once a week, and 28% indicated less frequently than that (Figure 47). Respondents also identified topics for parent education in the region, with love and discipline (83%), positive parenting skills (74%) and child behaviors (69%) ranking above 50% (Figure 48).

Figure 47. Responses to "How often do you read to your child?", Head Start Community Assessment 2020-21



Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Figure 48. Positive responses to question on topics that are important as a parent, Head Start community assessment, 2020-21



Source: First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Mental and behavioral health

Early childhood experiences shape the developing brain, which in turn shapes other aspects of development including forming human connections, coping with adversity, and even how successful one is in school, work, and community life down the road.³⁶⁶ Early experiences of stress and trauma can have physical, psychological and behavioral consequences, but safe, nurturing relationships and environments can counteract adverse experiences and promote resiliency, healthy development and positive adult outcomes.³⁶⁷ Parent and caregiver mental health and wellbeing plays an important role in the early childhood environment, the provision of essential care and availability of stable family bonds.^{368,369} Community services that support families with young children can make a lasting difference, especially when they provide a connection to culture.^{370, 371, 372}

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- Apache Behavioral Health Services (ABHS) serves as the Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authority (TRBHA) to administer publicly-funded mental health services for White Mountain Apache Tribe members living on and off the reservation. ABHS operates out of the Apache Behavioral Health Services Center in Whiteriver, Cibecue Behavioral Health Center and McNary Wellness Center. Services include individual, couples, family, and group counseling; evaluation, diagnosis and case management; residential and group home treatment; 24-hour crisis management; and traditional healing. Additionally, the ABHS Child Adolescent and Family Services (CAFS) team specializes in preventing out-of-home placements by providing evaluations, therapy and case management services to at-risk children and their families. The THRIVE: Birth to Five (Sa'áh Naaghai Bik'eh Gozhoo) program works with families through therapeutic play, home visits, family therapy and group sessions to promote secure attachments between children and their caregivers. The THRIVE team offers services in Whiteriver, McNary, Cibecue, Alchesay High School, White Mountain Apache Head Start, Chaghache Day Care, ABC Daycare, Our Children's Shelter and via virtual sessions since the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁷³
- From January 2019 to March 2021, the highest utilized services for young children at ABHS were family support (519 children) and family counseling (470) followed by individual counseling (339), individual skills (309), and comprehensive assessment (265). Note that data for some of ABHS's programs, including THRIVE, could not be included in this table (Table 40).

Table 40. Children ages 0-5 accessing services through Apache Behavioral Health Services, January 2019 to March 2021

| | Family Counseling | Family Support | Individual Counseling | Comprehensive Assessment | Individual Skills | Ages and Stages Questionnaire | Contact Log |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe | 470 | 519 | 339 | 265 | 309 | 176 | 2,348 |

Source: *First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>*

Note: The contact log tracks all attempts to contact clients and families via telephone, home visits, or walk-in appointments.

Substance use disorders

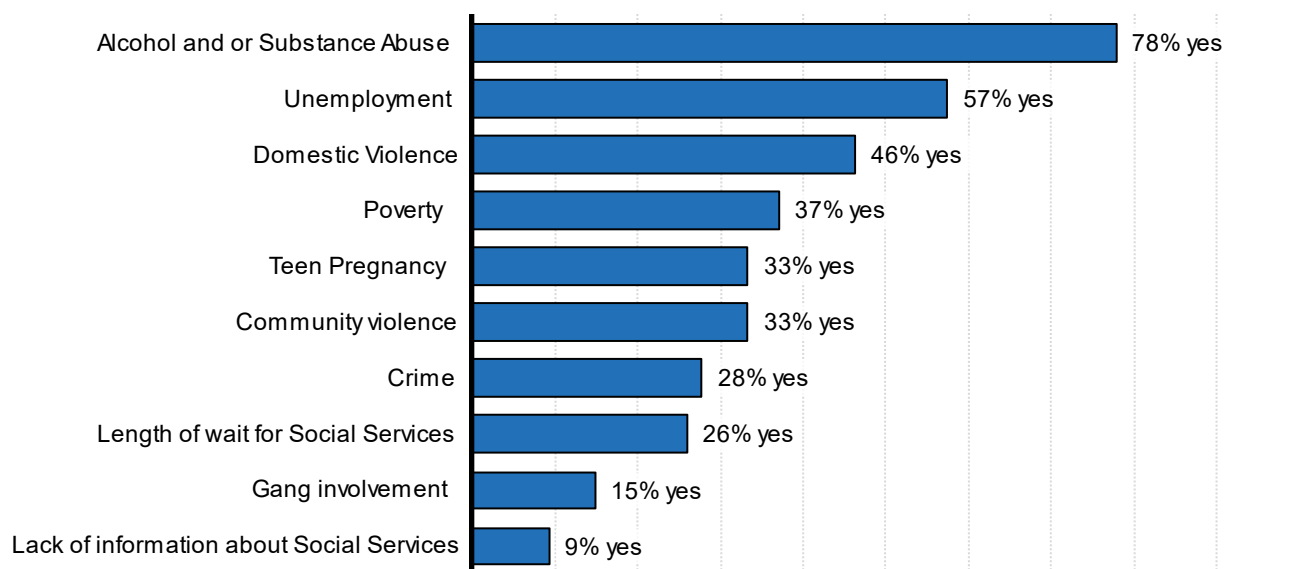
Parental substance use has major implications for children’s health and well-being. Children of parents with substance use disorders are frequently referred to child welfare services due to neglect or abuse and face a higher risk of later mental health and behavioral health issues, including developing substance use disorders themselves.^{374, 375} Access to treatment for substance use disorders and supports for parents and families grappling with these issues can help to ameliorate the short and long-term impacts on young children.^{376, 377}

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- A majority of respondents (78%) to the 2020-21 White Mountain Apache Tribe Head Start Community Survey ranked alcohol and/or substance abuse as a problem that should be given top priority for improvement (Figure 49). Respondents also identified alcohol and substance abuse as having the greatest overall impact on the community and being the most damaging to mental health.³⁷⁸
- Substance abuse support services in the region are offered through the Rainbow Treatment Center (RTC), which offers Working 2 Wellness, EVOLVD Living with Purpose and RTC scholarships to simultaneously provide substance abuse counseling and treatment while participants are working towards financial wellness, school and employment goals. RTC also has a Nutritional Recovery Department, which holistically includes ancestral knowledge, Apache food sovereignty and employable culinary skills in the recovery process.³⁷⁹

- Between 2017 and 2021, there were fewer than 6 deaths with opiates or opioids contributing in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region (Table 41). However, it is important to note that this only includes deaths occurring within the region and with address data that allowed the death to be properly assigned to a FTF region.

Figure 49. Responses to question on which social problems should be given top priority for improvement, Head Start community assessment, 2020-21



First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Table 41. Number of deaths with opiates or opioids contributing, 2018-2021 combined

| Geography | Number of deaths with opiates or opioids contributing, 2017-2021 |
|---|--|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | <6 |
| Arizona | 6,315 |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: About 35% of overdose deaths statewide were missing address information and thus could not be geocoded to an FTF region.

Child removals and foster care

In situations where the harm in remaining with their family is determined to be too great to a child, they may be removed from their home, either temporarily or permanently. In accordance with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA), nearly all tribal governments set their own child welfare laws and manage their own child welfare systems.³⁸⁰ ICWA established national standards to prevent unwarranted removals and policies for all state custody proceedings involving Indian children. Under ICWA, an Indian child's family and tribe are able and encouraged to be actively involved in the decision-making that takes place regarding the child, and they may petition for tribal jurisdiction over the custody case.³⁸¹ ICWA also mandates that states make every effort to preserve Indian family units by providing family services before an Indian child is removed from his or her family and after an Indian child is removed through family reunification efforts.³⁸² Despite being challenged recently by several states, ICWA was upheld by the supreme court.^{383, 384} Groups including the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) and Uniform Law Commission (ULC) are investigating whether state laws could be implemented to promote better compliance with ICWA without threatening tribal sovereignty.³⁸⁵ The Family First Prevention Services Act, signed into federal law on February 9, 2018, aims to ensure children are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to their unique needs when foster care is needed. One effect of the Family First Prevention Services Act has been an increased focus on kinship placements, which are placements of children with relatives or close family friends.³⁸⁶ In recent years, the number of unlicensed kinship homes has even exceeded the number of foster homes in Arizona.³⁸⁷ More than half of American Indian and Alaska Native children (55%) in foster care in Arizona were in kinship placements, a much higher rate of kinship placement than that seen nationwide.³⁸⁸

How the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region is faring

- In the region, child welfare services are provided by the White Mountain Apache Tribe Social Services (TSS) Department. Additionally, the White Mountain Apache Tribe operates a group home for children birth through 18 years called Our Children's Shelter.³⁸⁹
- In 2020, there were 127 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect involving children birth to age 17, a 38% decrease from 205 in 2019 (Table 42). The number of children removed by Tribal Child Protective Services (CPS) also decreased from 177 in 2019 to 122 in 2020 (-31%) (Table 43). According to the 2022 Regional Needs and Assets Report, school staff usually made the majority of reports to CPS, which contributed to the number of referrals dropping when schools closed due to COVID-19.³⁹⁰
- TSS contracts with 12 total foster homes, 3 of which are licensed by the Tribe (Table 44). Between 2019 and 2020, 603 children ages birth to 17 were placed as wards of the tribe. In 2020, about half of these children were placed in state foster homes (49%). More than one in 10 were placed in residential care at Our Children's Shelter (16%), in tribal foster homes located on the reservation (11%), in tribal foster homes located off the reservation (11%) and with relatives other than parents (11%). Despite kinship care accounting for almost two thirds of placements in

previous years,³⁹¹ only 2% of children were placed with parents and 11% with other relatives (Figure 50).

Table 42. Substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect, 2019 and 2020

| | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|------------|------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 205 | 127 |

First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Table 43. Children removed by Tribal Child Protective Services, 2019 and 2020

| | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|------------|------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 177 | 122 |

First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

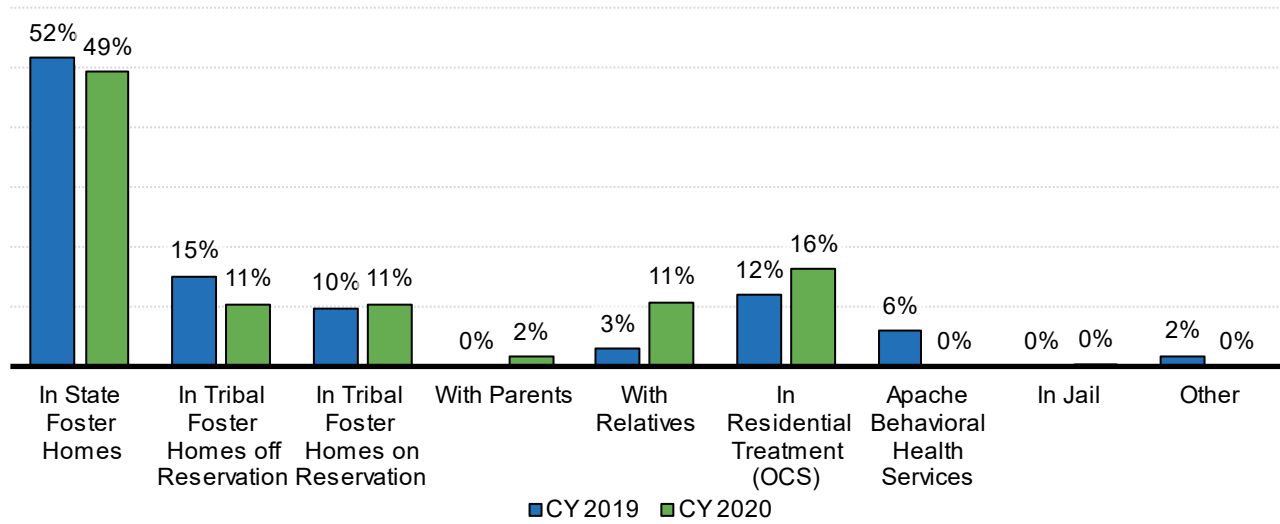
Table 44. Foster care availability, 2019

| | Calendar Year 2019 |
|--|--------------------|
| Foster homes used by Tribal Social Services | 12 |
| Foster homes licensed by WMAT Tribal Social Services | 3 |

First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

Note: Foster homes used by Tribal Social Services are mostly located off the reservation. These homes are licensed by WMAT TSS, other tribes' social services departments, or the state of Arizona.

Figure 50. Placements of wards of the court (ages 0-17), 2019 to 2020



First Things First (2022). White Mountain Apache Tribe Region 2022 Needs and Assets Report. Retrieved on Dec 1, 2023 from <https://files.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/Publications/Regional%20Needs%20and%20Assets%20-%202022%20-%20White%20Mountain%20Apache%20Tribe.pdf>

APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL DATA TABLES

Population Characteristics

Table 45. Change in the total population and population of children ages 0-5, 2010 to 2020 Census

| Geography | Total population | | | Population (Ages 0-5) | | |
|---|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | 2010 | 2020 | % Change 2010 to 2020 | 2010 | 2020 | % Change 2010 to 2020 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 14,340 | 13,409 | +7% | 1,563 | 2,003 | -22% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 173,499 | 178,131 | -3% | 15,140 | 20,511 | -26% |
| Arizona | 7,151,502 | 6,392,017 | +12% | 480,744 | 546,609 | -12% |
| United States | 308,745,538 | 331,449,281 | +7% | 24,258,220 | 22,401,565 | -8% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), Tables P1, P14, HCT3. U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Tables P1, P14, P20.

Table 46. Population of children birth to age 5 by single years of age in the 2020 Census

| Geography | Population (Ages 0-5) | Population under age 1 | Population age 1 | Population age 2 | Population age 3 | Population age 4 | Population age 5 |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,563 | 250 | 220 | 271 | 268 | 287 | 267 |
| All Arizona Reservations | 15,140 | 2,183 | 2,338 | 2,492 | 2,570 | 2,733 | 2,824 |
| Arizona | 480,744 | 72,415 | 75,163 | 78,159 | 82,033 | 84,600 | 88,374 |
| United States | 22,401,565 | 3,480,117 | 3,532,512 | 3,672,703 | 3,797,741 | 3,917,162 | 4,001,330 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), Tables P1, P14. U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Tables P1, P14.

Table 47. Race and ethnicity of the population of all ages, 2020 Census

| Geography | Estimated population (all ages) | Hispanic or Latino | White, not Hispanic or Latino | Black or African American | American Indian or Alaska Native | Asian or Pacific Islander | Two or more races |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 14,340 | 1% | 2% | 0.5% | 98% | 1% | 1% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 173,499 | 6% | 5% | 1% | 93% | 1% | 3% |
| Arizona | 7,151,502 | 31% | 57% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 14% |
| United States | 331,449,281 | 19% | 62% | 14% | 3% | 8% | 10% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P12A-W.

Note: The six percentages in each row may sum to more or less than 100% because (a) persons reporting Hispanic ethnicity are counted twice if their race is Black, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or any combination of two or more races, (b) persons reporting any other race are not counted here unless they have Hispanic ethnicity, and (c) rounding.

Table 48. Race and ethnicity of children birth to age 4

| Geography | Estimated number of children (birth to age 4) | Hispanic or Latino | White, not Hispanic or Latino | Black or African American | American Indian or Alaska Native | Asian or Pacific Islander | Two or more races |
|---|---|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,296 | 2% | 1% | 1% | 99% | 1% | 2% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 12,316 | 8% | 3% | 1% | 95% | 1% | 4% |
| Arizona | 392,370 | 44% | 42% | 10% | 8% | 7% | 21% |
| United States | 18,400,235 | 25% | 54% | 18% | 4% | 9% | 16% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P12A-W.

Note: The six percentages in each row may sum to more or less than 100% because (a) children reporting Hispanic ethnicity are counted twice if their race is Black, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or any combination of two or more races, (b) children reporting any other race are not counted here unless they have Hispanic ethnicity, and (c) rounding.

Table 49. Race and ethnicity for the mothers of babies born in 2020 and 2021

| Geography | Calendar year | Number of births | Mother was non-Hispanic White | Mother was Hispanic or Latina | Mother was Black or African American | Mother was American Indian or Alaska Native | Mother was Asian or Pacific Islander |
|---|---------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 2020 | 221 | 0.5 to 2.3% | 4% | 0% | 93% | 0.5 to 2.3% |
| | 2021 | 200 | 4% | 0.5 to 2.5% | 0.5 to 2.5% | 94% | 0.5 to 2.5% |
| Arizona | 2020 | 76,781 | 43% | 41% | 6% | 5% | 4% |
| | 2021 | 77,857 | 43% | 41% | 6% | 5% | 4% |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: The five percentages in each row should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding. Mothers who report more than one race or ethnicity are assigned to the one which is smaller. Mothers of twins are counted twice in this table.

Table 50. Children birth to age 5 living with parents who are foreign-born, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of children (birth to age 5) living with one or two parents | Number and percent living with one or two foreign-born parents | |
|---|--|--|---------|
| | | Number | Percent |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,519 | 4 | 0.3% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 14,097 | 191 | 1% |
| Arizona | 473,732 | 115,267 | 24% |
| United States | 22,399,131 | 5,504,770 | 25% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B05009

Note: The term "parent" here includes stepparents.

Table 51. Language spoken at home (by persons ages 5 and older), 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated population (age 5 and older) | Speak only English at home | Speak Spanish at home | Speak languages other than English or Spanish at home |
|---|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 13,583 | 47% | 1% | 52% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 166,148 | 47% | 3% | 50% |
| Pima County | 979,353 | 73% | 23% | 5% |
| Arizona | 6,666,597 | 73% | 20% | 6% |
| United States | 310,302,360 | 78% | 13% | 8% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table C16001

Note: The three percentages in each row may not sum to 100% because of rounding. The American Community Survey (ACS) no longer specifies the proportion of the population who speak Native North American languages for geographies smaller than the state. In Arizona, Navajo and other Native American languages (including Apache, Hopi, and O'odham) are the most commonly spoken (2%), following English (73%) and Spanish (20%).

Table 52. English-language proficiency (for persons ages 5 and older), 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated population (age 5 and older) | Speak only English at home | Speak another language at home, and speak English very well | Speak another language at home, and do not speak English very well |
|---|--|----------------------------|---|--|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 13,583 | 47% | 49% | 4% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 166,148 | 47% | 41% | 12% |
| Pima County | 979,353 | 73% | 20% | 8% |
| Arizona | 6,666,597 | 73% | 18% | 8% |
| United States | 310,302,360 | 78% | 13% | 8% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table C16001

Note: The three percentages in each row should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding.

Table 53. Limited-English-speaking households, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of households | Number and percent of limited-English-speaking households | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------|
| | | Number | Percent |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 3,751 | 75 | 2% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 52,248 | 6,361 | 12% |
| Arizona | 2,683,557 | 99,159 | 4% |
| United States | 124,010,992 | 5,241,326 | 4% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table C16002

Note: A "limited-English-speaking" household is one in which no one over the age of 13 speaks English very well.

Table 54. Grandchildren birth to age 5 living in a grandparent's household, 2020 Census

| Geography | Estimated number of children (birth to age 5) living in households | Number and percent living in their grandparent's household | |
|---|--|--|------------|
| | | Number | Percent |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,563 | 782 | 50% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 15,140 | 6,558 | 43% |
| Arizona | 480,744 | 64,792 | 13% |
| United States | 22,401,565 | 2,520,305 | 11% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC), Tables P14, PCT11.

Note: This table includes all children (under six years old) living in a household headed by a grandparent, regardless of whether the grandparent is responsible for them, or whether the child's parent lives in the same household.

Economic Circumstances

Table 55. Median annual family income, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Median annual income for all families | Median annual income for all families with children under 18 years old | Median annual income for married-couple families with children under 18 years old | Median annual income for single-male-headed families with children under 18 years old | Median annual income for single-female-headed families with children under 18 years old |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | \$39,300 | \$40,000 | \$59,800 | \$31,100 | \$12,200 |
| All Arizona Reservations | <i>All Arizona reservations data not available</i> | | | | |
| Arizona | \$78,800 | \$75,100 | \$100,000 | \$49,100 | \$35,000 |
| United States | \$85,000 | \$82,800 | \$110,000 | \$50,900 | \$32,600 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B19126

Note: Half of the families in the population are estimated to have incomes above the median value, and the other half have incomes below the median.

Table 56. Children birth to age 5 living at selected poverty thresholds, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of children (birth to age 5) who live with parents or other relatives | Percent of children under 50% of the poverty level | Percent of children between 50% and 99% of the poverty level | Percent of children between 100% and 184% of the poverty level | Percent of children at or above 185% of the poverty level |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,570 | 31% | 18% | 19% | 32% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 15,304 | 27% | 22% | 22% | 30% |
| Arizona | 486,513 | 9% | 11% | 19% | 61% |
| United States | 22,940,195 | 9% | 10% | 16% | 65% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B17024

Note: The four percentages in each row should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding. In 2021, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$27,479; for a single parent with one child, it was \$18,677. The 185% thresholds are \$50,836 and \$34,552, respectively.

Table 57. Families participating in SNAP, state fiscal years 2018 to 2022

| Geography | Households with one or more children (ages 0-5) | Number of families participating in SNAP | | | | | Percent of households with young children (0-5) participating in SNAP in SFY 2022 |
|---|---|--|--------------|------------|------------|------------|---|
| | | SFY 2018 | SFY 2019 | SFY 2020 | SFY 2021 | SFY 2022 | |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 969 | 1,087 | 1,025 | 945 | 831 | 771 | 80% |
| Arizona | 345,601 | 151,816 | 140,056 | 132,466 | 131,063 | 128,460 | 37% |

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Division of Benefits and Medical Eligibility dataset]. Unpublished data. & U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, DHC, Table P14 & P20.

Table 58. Children participating in SNAP, state fiscal years 2018 to 2022

| Geography | Number of young children (ages 0-5) in the population | Number of children (0-5) participating in SNAP | | | | | Percent of young children (0-5) participating in SNAP in SFY 2022 |
|---|---|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---|
| | | SFY 2016 | SFY 2017 | SFY 2018 | SFY 2019 | SFY 2020 | |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,563 | 1,705 | 1,634 | 1,469 | 1,264 | 1,183 | 76% |
| Arizona | 480,744 | 229,275 | 211,814 | 198,961 | 194,771 | 190,968 | 40% |

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Division of Benefits and Medical Eligibility dataset]. Unpublished data. & U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, DHC, Table P14 & P20.

Table 59. Lunches served through NSLP, 2019-20 to 2021-22

| Geography | Number of sites | | | Number of lunches served | | |
|--|-----------------|----------|----------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe schools | 9 | 2 | 9 | 289,925 | 36,221 | 111,369 |
| McNary Elementary School (PS-8) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 14,594 | 0 | 21,660 |
| Whiteriver Elementary (PS-5) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 37,990 | 0 | 5,477 |
| Canyon Day Junior High School | 1 | 0 | 1 | 34,341 | 0 | 5,876 |
| Cradleboard School (PS-5) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 25,640 | 0 | 6,275 |
| Alchesay High School | 1 | 0 | 1 | 31,251 | 0 | 8,979 |
| Seven Mile School (PS-5) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 44,176 | 0 | 9,884 |
| Theodore Roosevelt School | 1 | 1 | 1 | 14,159 | 5,697 | 7,592 |
| John F Kennedy Day School | 1 | 1 | 1 | 28,393 | 30,524 | 13,797 |
| Dishchii'bikoh Community School | 1 | 0 | 1 | 59,381 | 0 | 31,829 |
| Arizona schools | N/A | 1,247 | 1,886 | 76,454,370 | 22,911,751 | 44,010,999 |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Health and Nutrition Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Table 60. Lunches served through SFSP, 2019-20 to 2021-22

| Geography | Number of sites | | | Number of lunches served | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe schools | 15 | 34 | 14 | 141,687 | 749,537 | 486,626 |
| McNary Elementary School (PS-8) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5,143 | 20,277 | 12,745 |
| Whiteriver Elementary (PS-5) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 17,245 | 50,599 | 71,807 |
| Canyon Day Junior High School | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8,217 | 33,267 | 55,098 |
| Cradleboard School (PS-5) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 18,024 | 36,590 | 50,374 |
| Alchesay High School | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 22,143 | 66,841 |
| Seven Mile School (PS-5) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10,215 | 52,025 | 86,077 |
| Whiteriver USD Bus Routes & Community Sites | 1 | 15 | 0 | 39,572 | 363,636 | 0 |
| Theodore Roosevelt School | 1 | 1 | 1 | 405 | 4,851 | 15,470 |
| Theodore Roosevelt Bus Routes | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6,662 | 0 | 0 |
| John F Kennedy Day School | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 17,365 |
| JFK Day School Bus Routes | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 43,395 | 30,620 |
| Dishchii'bikoh Community School | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1,806 | 41,358 | 80,229 |
| Cibecue Community School Community Sites | 3 | 5 | 0 | 19,772 | 80,226 | 0 |
| Blue Ridge USD Routes* | 2 | 1 | 0 | 14,626 | 1,170 | 0 |
| Arizona Schools | N/A | 2,926 | 2,346 | 21,786,393 | 148,207,987 | 130,780,150 |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Health and Nutrition Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

Table 61. Parents of children birth to age 5 who are or are not in the labor force, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of children (birth to 5 years old) living with parent(s) | Living with two married parents, both in the labor force | Living with two married parents, one in the labor force and one not | Living with two married parents, neither in the labor force | Living with one parent, in the labor force | Living with one parent, not in the labor force |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 1,519 | 17% | 13% | 4% | 24% | 41% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 14,097 | 11% | 14% | 2.6% | 38% | 35% |
| Arizona | 473,732 | 33% | 27% | 1% | 30% | 8% |
| United States | 22,399,131 | 40% | 25% | 1% | 26% | 7% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B23008

Note: The labor force is all persons who are working (employed) or looking for work (unemployed). Persons not in the labor force are mostly students, stay-at-home parents, retirees, and institutionalized people. The term "parent" here includes step-parents. The five percentages in each row should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding. Please note that due to the way the ACS asks about family relationships, children living with two unmarried, cohabitating parents are not counted as living with two parents (these children are counted in the 'one parent' category).

Table 62. Persons of all ages in households with and without computers and internet connectivity, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of persons (all ages) living in households | Have a computer and internet | Have a computer but no internet | Do not have a computer |
|---|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 14,741 | 52% | 24% | 25% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 177,201 | 51% | 23% | 26% |
| Arizona | 6,930,677 | 90% | 6% | 4% |
| United States | 321,899,278 | 90% | 6% | 4% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B28005

Note: The three percentages in each row should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding.

Table 63. Children birth to age 17 in households with and without computers and internet connectivity, 2017-2021

| Geography | Estimated number of children (ages 0-17) living in households | Have a computer and internet | Have a computer but no internet | Do not have a computer |
|---|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 5,457 | 58% | 26% | 17% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 52,122 | 55% | 24% | 21% |
| Arizona | 1,611,069 | 92% | 6% | 2% |
| United States | 74,041,861 | 93% | 5% | 2% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B28005

Note: The three percentages in each row should sum to 100%, but may not because of rounding.

Early Learning

Table 64. School enrollment for children ages 3 to 4, 2017-2021 ACS

| Geography | Estimated number of children (3 or 4 years old) | Number and percent enrolled in school | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 533 | 167 | 31% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 5,701 | 2,326 | 41% |
| Arizona | 176,033 | 63,974 | 36% |
| United States | 8,100,136 | 3,719,992 | 46% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). American Community Survey five-year estimates 2017-2021, Table B14003

Note: In this table, "school" may include nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten.

Table 65. Eligible families not using DES child care assistance, 2017 to 2022

| Geography | CY 2017 | CY 2018 | CY 2019 | CY 2020 | CY 2021 | CY 2022 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 0.0% | 25.0% | DS | DS | 0.0% | 10.0% |
| Arizona | 6.7% | 7.6% | 7.9% | 18.3% | 11.7% | 9.2% |

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Child Care Administration dataset]. Unpublished data.

Table 66. Children receiving DES child care assistance who are enrolled in quality environments, 2022

| Geography | Children ages 0-5 (non-DCS involved) | | | DCS-involved children ages 0-5 | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Received assistance | Enrolled in quality environment | Percent in quality environment | Received assistance | Enrolled in quality environment | Percent in quality environment |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 12 | 1 to 9 | DS | 1 to 9 | 0 | 0% |
| Arizona | 20,099 | 13,619 | 68% | 8,268 | 5,969 | 72% |

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Child Care Administration dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Quality environments are defined by DES as child care providers with a 3-, 4-, or 5-star Quality First rating, a national accreditation, or a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential for family child care providers.

Table 67. Number of children birth to age 2 receiving services from AzEIP as of October 1, 2018 to 2022

| Geography | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|-------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 47 | 46 | 33 | 28 | 24 |
| Arizona | 5,974 | 5,828 to 5,836 | 5,403 | 5,275 | 5,473 |

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2023). [Arizona Early Intervention Program dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: These data reflect the Oct 1 snapshot of AzEIP services, not a cumulative total throughout the year.

Table 68. Preschoolers with disabilities receiving services through Local Education Agencies by type of disability, state fiscal years 2018- 2022 combined

| Geography | Total Preschoolers | Developmental Delay | Speech or Language Impairment | Preschool Severe Delay | Other Disability |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | DS | 20% | 70% | 10% | <2% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 | DS | 53% | 32% | 16% | <2% |
| Arizona schools | 8,086 | 43% | 30% | 24% | 3% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Special Needs Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Note: The “Other Disability” category includes children with hearing impairment, visual impairment, or deaf-blindness. Denominators in this table are suppressed when they could be used to calculate a count of less than 11 students in a disability category.

Table 69. Kindergarten to 3rd grade students enrolled in special education in public and charter schools, state fiscal years 2018 to 2022

| Geography | K-3rd grade students enrolled in special education | | | | |
|---|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | FY 2018 | FY 2019 | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | FY 2022 |
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region schools | 90 | 85 | 83 | 72 | 71 |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 | 70 | 73 | 70 | 50 | 48 |
| Arizona school | 36,468 | 37,812 | 38,791 | 37,179 | 37,334 |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Special Needs Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Note: See Appendix 4 for a list of off-reservation schools serving students from the region.

Table 70. Kindergarten to 3rd grade students enrolled in special education in public and charter schools by primary disability, state fiscal year 2022

| Geography | Total K-3rd grade students | Speech or Language Impairment | Developmental Delay | Specific Learning Disability | Autism | Other Disability |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | DS | 41% | 38% | 8% | <2% | 11% |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No 32 | DS | 31% | 35% | 15% | 10% | 8% |
| Arizona schools | 37,334 | 36% | 27% | 12% | 11% | 13% |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Special Needs Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team

Note: The “Other Disabilities” category includes children with emotional disturbance, deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairments such as chronic medical conditions that affect a child’s ability to participate in the educational setting, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment.

Child Health

Table 71. Insurance coverage for babies born in 2020 and 2021

| Geography | Calendar year | Number of births | Birth was covered by AHCCCS | Birth was covered by IHS | Birth was covered by AHCCCS or IHS |
|---|---------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 2020 | 221 | 88% | 0.5 to 2.3% | 89 to 90% |
| | 2021 | 200 | 95% | 0.5 to 2.5% | 96 to 98% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 2020 | 1,900 | 71% | 16% | 86% |
| | 2021 | <i>Data for All Arizona Reservations not available</i> | | | |
| Arizona | 2020 | 76,781 | 48% | 1% | 49% |
| | 2021 | 77,857 | 46% | 1% | 47% |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this table. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. ‘All Arizona Reservations’ row reflects only births to American Indian mothers residing on Arizona reservations. The Health status profile of American Indian in Arizona for 2021 has not yet been released. Due to data suppression of counts of births between 1 and 5, some values are shown as a range, with the true value falling somewhere within the range.

Table 72. Selected characteristics of mothers giving birth, 2020 to 2021

| Geography | Calendar year | Number of births | Mother was younger than 18 | Mother was younger than 20 | Mother smoked cigarettes during pregnancy |
|---|---------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 2020 | 221 | 5% | 14% | 5.0% |
| | 2021 | 200 | 6% | 11% | 6.0% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 2020 | 1,900 | 4% | 9% | 11.1% |
| | 2021 | <i>Data for All Arizona Reservations not available</i> | | | |
| Arizona | 2020 | 76,781 | 1% | 5% | 3.6% |
| | 2021 | 77,857 | 1% | 5% | 3.2% |
| Healthy People 2030 target | | | | | 4.3% |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this table. The Healthy People 2030 target for maternal use of tobacco during pregnancy is 95.7% of females reporting abstaining from smoking during pregnancy. 'All Arizona Reservations' row reflects only births to American Indian mothers residing on Arizona reservations. The Health Status Profile of American Indian in Arizona for 2021 has not yet been released.

Table 73. Births to mothers with gestational diabetes or pre-pregnancy obesity, 2020 to 2021

| Geography | Calendar year | Number of births | Mother had gestational diabetes | Mother had pre-pregnancy obesity |
|---|---------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 2020 | 221 | 15.4% | 47% |
| | 2021 | 200 | 18.0% | 47% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 2020 | 1,900 | | |
| | 2021 | <i>Data for All Arizona Reservations not available</i> | | |
| Arizona | 2020 | 76,781 | 10% | 27% |
| | 2021 | 77,857 | 10% | 27% |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Mothers of twins are counted twice in this table. 'All Arizona Reservations' row reflects only births to American Indian mothers residing on Arizona reservations and does not include data on gestational diabetes or obesity. The Health status profile of American Indian in Arizona for 2021 has not yet been released.

Table 74. Selected birth outcomes, 2020 to 2021

| Geography | Calendar year | Number of births | Baby weighed less than 2500 grams | Baby was preterm (less than 37 weeks) | Baby was admitted to a NICU |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 2020 | 221 | 7.2% | 12.7% | 11% |
| | 2021 | 200 | 9.5% | 15.0% | 9% |
| All Arizona Reservations | 2020 | 1,900 | 8.9% | 12.6% | N/A |
| | 2021 | Data for All Arizona Reservations not available | | | |
| Arizona | 2020 | 76,781 | 7.4% | 9.5% | 8% |
| | 2021 | 77,857 | 7.9% | 10.0% | 8% |
| Healthy People 2030 targets | | | | 9.4% | |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: ‘All Arizona Reservations’ row reflects only births to American Indian mothers residing on Arizona reservations. The Health Status Profile of American Indian in Arizona for 2021 has not yet been released.

Table 75. Non-fatal hospitalizations and emergency department visits due to unintentional injuries for children birth to age 5, 2018-2022 combined

| Geography | Non-fatal inpatient hospitalizations for unintentional injuries | Non-fatal emergency department visits for unintentional injuries |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | 16 | 265 |
| Arizona | 2,811 | 160,742 |

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2023). [Hospital Discharge dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Data on hospitalizations were geocoded to FTF regions using the address provided by parents or caregivers at the time of hospitalization; however, in cases where the address provided was not valid, hospitalizations could not be assigned to a region. County of residence is captured separately from addresses, meaning that counts in the county often exceed those seen in a particular region because they include all hospitalizations regardless of address validity.

APPENDIX 2: METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

U.S. Census and American Community Survey Data. The U.S. Census³⁹² is an enumeration of the population of the United States. It is conducted every ten years, and includes information about housing, race, and ethnicity. The 2020 U.S. Census data are available by census block. There are about 108,000 inhabited blocks in Arizona, with an average population of 66 people each. Both the 2010 and 2020 Census data for the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region presented in this report are drawn from the Census Geography for the Fort Apache Reservation and trust land. Please note that the 2020 reservation geography is slightly different than the geography of the First Things First region, which is based on the reservation geography as of 2015.

The American Community Survey (ACS)³⁹³ is a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau each month by mail, telephone, and face-to-face interviews. It covers many different topics, including income, language, education, employment, and housing. ACS data are available by census tract. Arizona is divided into about 1,750 census tracts, with an average of about 3,900 people in each. The ACS data for the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region presented in this report are drawn from the Census Geography for the Fort Apache Reservation and trust land. The most recent and most reliable ACS data are averaged over the past five years; those are the data included in this report. They are based on surveys conducted from 2017 to 2021. In general, the reliability of ACS estimates is greater for more populated areas. Statewide estimates, for example, are more reliable than county-level estimates.

Education Data from ADE. Education data from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) included in this report were obtained through a custom tabulation of unredacted data files conducted by the vendor on a secure ADE computer terminal in the fall of 2023. The vendor worked with the regional director to create a list of all public and charter schools in the region based on the school's physical location within the region as well as local knowledge as to whether any schools located outside the region served a substantial number of children living within the region. This list was used to assign schools and districts to the region and to aggregate school-level data to the region-level. This methodology differs slightly from the methods that ADE uses to allocate school-level data to counties, so county and region totals may vary in some tables. Data were presented over time where available; however, due to changes in the ADE data system as well as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection and definitions over the past three years, some indicators could not be presented as a time series.

Change Calculations. Unless otherwise specified, changes in counts of data over time (i.e., percent increase or decrease) are calculated by subtracting the earlier number (e.g., a 2010 count) from the later number (e.g. the 2020 count) and dividing the result by the earlier number (e.g. the 2010 count). This calculation provides the percent change between the most recent count and the prior count, relative to the prior count.

Data Availability. State agency data in this report were provided to FTF by agency staff through a data request process initiated in May 2023 and extending to January 2024. Wherever possible, data were requested for multiple years to allow for the visualization of trends as well as for the most recent year

available. However, due to both the constraints of agency staff and agency-maintained datasets as well as the timing of requests, not all data were available on the same time and geographic scales. This report attempts to include the most recent and complete data available, with notes indicating where data were not available for particular time periods or geographies.

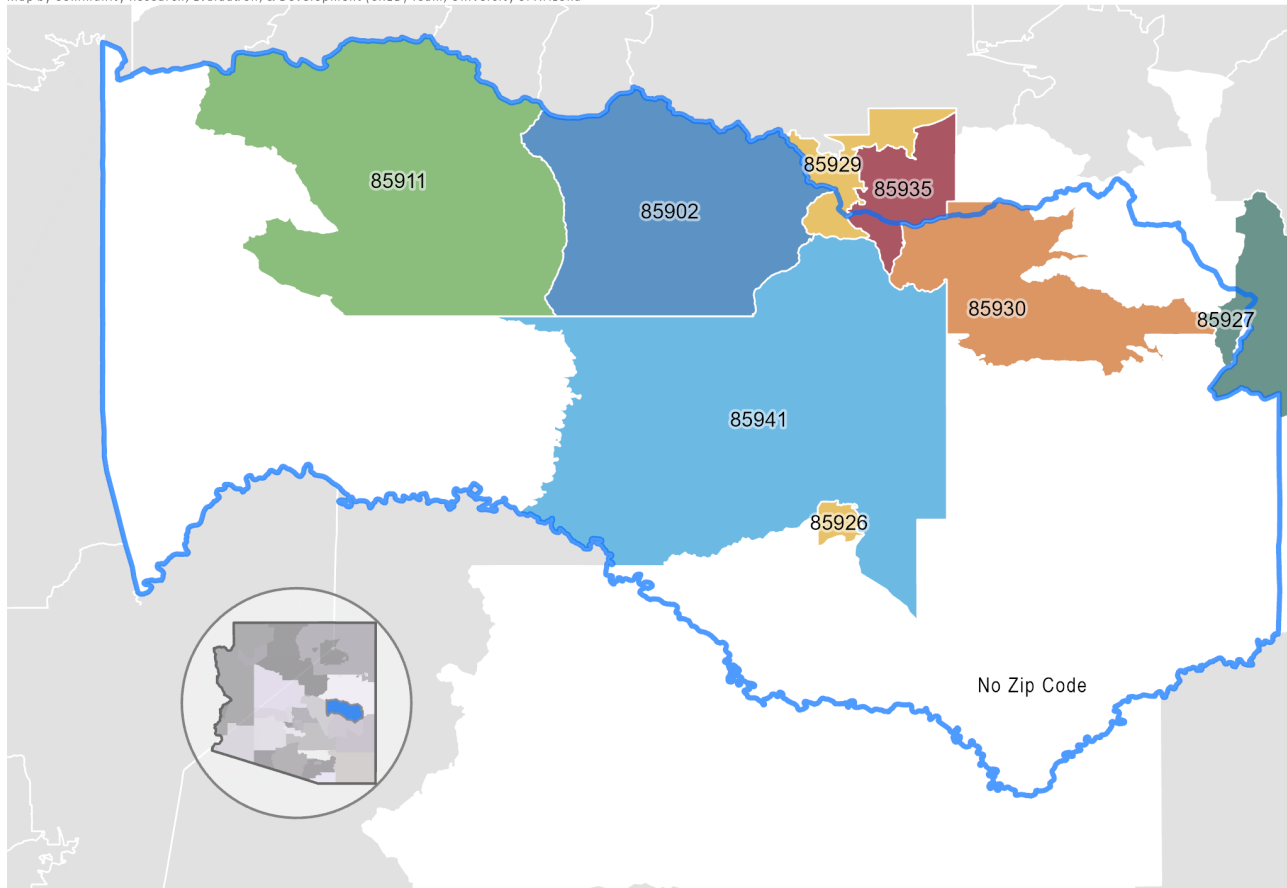
Data Suppression. To protect the confidentiality of program participants, the FTF Data Dissemination and Suppression Guidelines preclude our reporting of social service and early education programming data if the count is less than 10 and preclude our reporting data related to health or developmental delay if the count is less than 6. In addition, some data received from state agencies are suppressed according to their own guidelines. ADHS does not report counts between 1 and 5; DES does not report counts between 1 and 9; ADE does not report counts less than 11. Additionally, both ADE and DES require suppression of the second-smallest value or the denominator in tables where a reader might be able to use the numbers provided to calculate a suppressed value. Throughout this report, information which is not available because of suppression guidelines is indicated by entries of “1-5” or “1-9” or “<11” for counts, or “DS” (data suppressed) for percentages. Data are sometimes not available for particular regions, either because a program did not operate in the region or because data are only available at the county level. Cases where data are not available will be indicated by an entry of “N/A” or a table row note that states “regional data not available.”

For some data, an exact number was not available because it was the sum of several numbers provided by a state agency, and some numbers were suppressed in accordance with agency guidelines or because the number was suppressed as a second-smallest value that could be used to calculate a suppressed value. In these cases, a range of possible numbers is provided, where the true number lies within that range. For example, for data from the sum of a suppressed number of children enrolled in Child-only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Cash Assistance Program (TANF) and 12 children enrolled in a household with TANF, the entry in the table would read “13 to 21.” This is because the suppressed number of children in Child-only TANF is between 1 and 9, so the possible range of values is the sum of the known number (12) and 1 on the lower bound to the sum of the known number (12) plus 9 on the upper bound. Ranges that include numbers below the suppression threshold of less than 6 or 10 may still be included if the upper limit of the range is above 6 or 10. Since a range is provided rather than an exact number, the confidentiality of program participants is preserved.

APPENDIX 3: ZIP CODES OF THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE REGION

Figure 51. Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

Map by Community Research, Evaluation, & Development (CRED) Team, University of Arizona



Source: Custom map by the Community Research, Evaluation, & Development (CRED) Team using shapefiles obtained from First Things First and the U.S. Census Bureau 2019 TIGER/Line Shapefiles (<https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>)

Table 76. Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

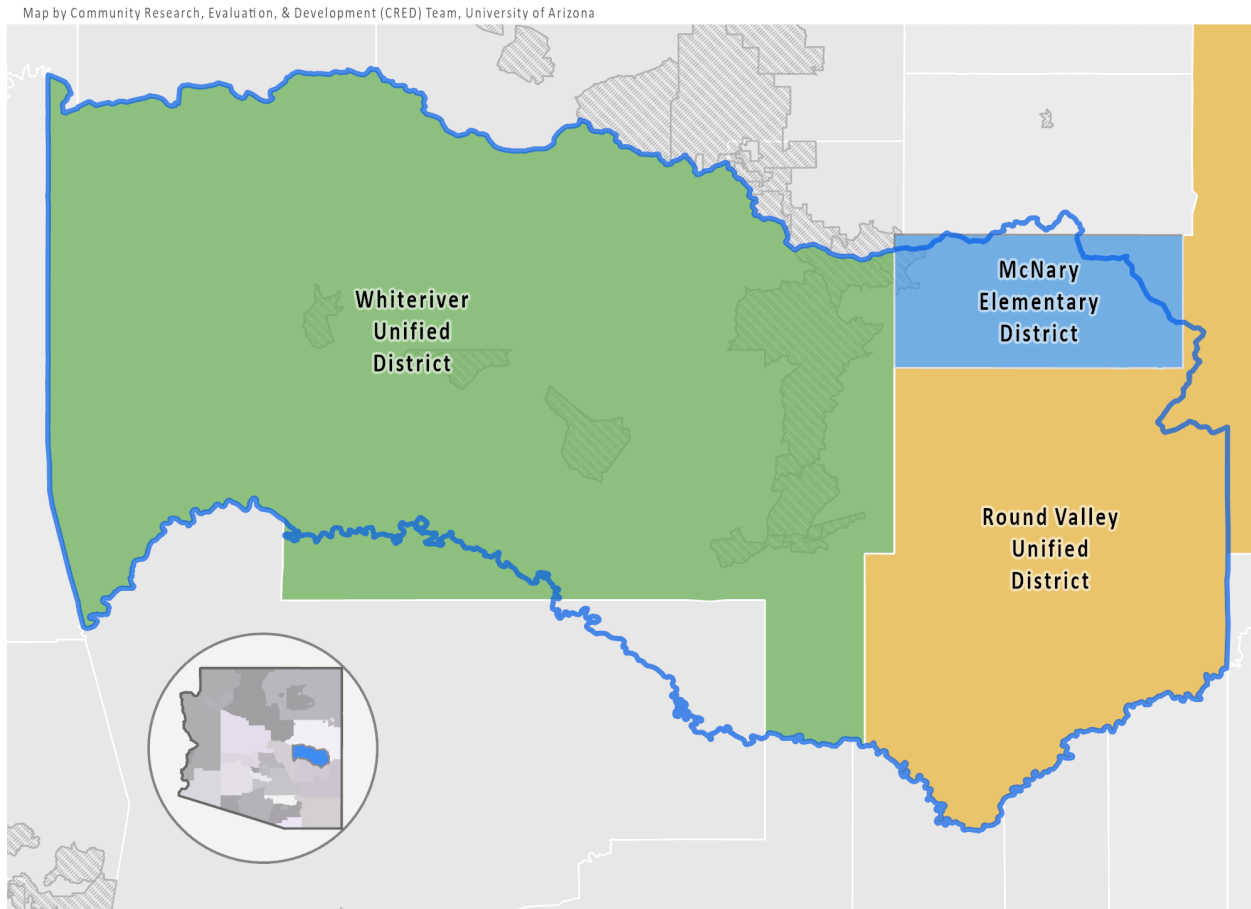
| Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) | Population (all ages) | Percent of this ZCTA's total population living in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region | This ZCTA is shared with |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| White Mountain Apache Region | 14,340 | | |
| 85902 | 16 | 100% | |
| 85911 | 1,915 | 100% | |
| 85926 | 435 | 100% | |
| 85927 | 4 | 2% | Navajo/Apache Region |
| 85929 | 9 | 0.1% | Navajo/Apache Region |
| 85930 | 1,122 | 100% | |
| 85935 | 259 | 7% | Navajo/Apache Region |
| 85941 | 10,575 | 100% | |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table P1.

Note: With the implementation of differential privacy in the 2020 Census, small area estimates now have injected 'noise' (error) to prevent accidental disclosure of Census responses. Geographies that are not primary census geographies, like ZCTAs, have noisier (or less accurate) estimates than primary geographies, like tracts.

APPENDIX 4: SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE REGION

Figure 52. School Districts in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region



Source: Custom map by the Community Research, Evaluation, & Development (CRED) Team using shapefiles obtained from First Things First and the U.S. Census Bureau 2019 TIGER/Line Shapefiles (<https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>)

Table 77. School Districts and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

| Name of District or Local Education Agency (LEA) | School name | Number of schools | Grades Served |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| White Mountain Apache Tribe Region Schools | | 6 | PS-12 |
| Mcnary Elementary District | Mcnary Elementary School | 1 | PS-8 |
| Whiteriver Unified District | Whiteriver Elementary | 1 | PS-5 |
| Whiteriver Unified District | Seven Mile School | 1 | PS-5 |
| Whiteriver Unified District | Cradleboard School | 1 | PS-5 |
| Whiteriver Unified District | Canyon Day Junior High School | 1 | 6-8 |
| Whiteriver Unified District | Alchesay High School | 1 | 9-12 |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No. 32 | | 4 | PS-12 |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No. 32 | Blue Ridge Elementary School | 1 | PS-3 |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No. 32 | Blue Ridge Jr High School | 1 | PS-5 |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No. 32 | Blue Ridge High School | 1 | PS-5 |
| Blue Ridge Unified School District No. 32 | Blue Ridge High School Online | 1 | PS-5 |

Source: Arizona Department of Education (2023). [Oct 1 Enrollment Dataset]. Custom tabulation of unpublished data by the UArizona CRED Team.

APPENDIX 5: DATA SOURCES

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