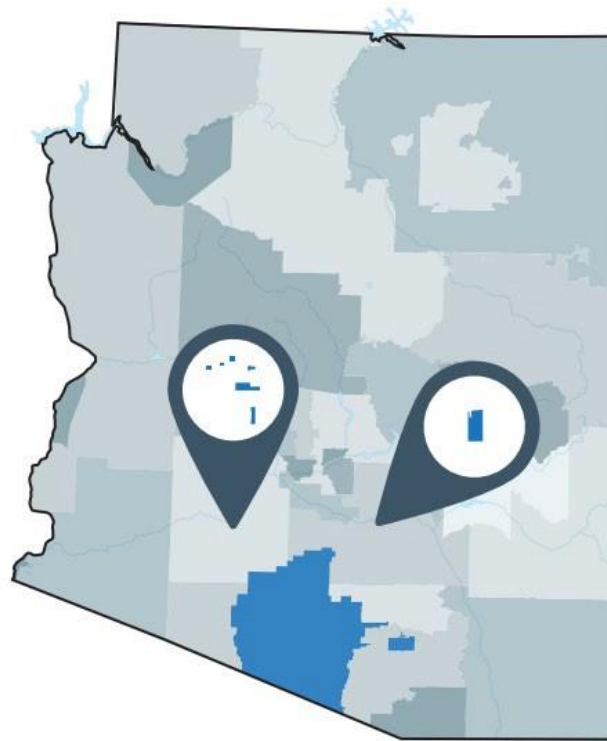


FIRST THINGS FIRST

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



State Fiscal Year 2026 Funding Plan

SFY 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan Update

Presented to the First Things First Board
January 21, 2025



Mission

First Things First is an essential leader and partner in creating a family-centered, equitable, high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, well-being, health and education of all Arizona’s children, birth to age 5.

Vision

All Arizona’s children are ready to succeed in school and in life.

Regional Partnership Councils

First Things First’s statewide Board and its 28 regional partnership councils share the responsibility of ensuring that early childhood funds are invested in strategies aimed at improving educational and health outcomes for young children. Regional partnership councils identify the unique needs of their communities and decide how to best support young children and families in their areas. Regional councils, comprised of local volunteers, provide vision and leadership, governance and oversight. They identify, implement and fund strategies and build collaborations aimed at helping young children across Arizona succeed in school and life.

Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council

Kymerlii Tenario, chair, representative of a philanthropic organization

Joseph Mease, vice chair, public school administrator

Tara Chico-Jarillo, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

Cheryl Conde, member of the business community

HaeMi Kim, at-large representative

Mariena Mendez, child care provider

Jesse Navarro, representative of the faith community

Elsa Peterson, early childhood educator

Marisa Werner, health services provider

open, at-large representative

open, at-large representative

Lisette DeMars, regional director, First Things First

Christine Sbragia, administrative specialist, First Things First

**Regional Allocation and Proposed Funding Plan Summary SFY24 – SFY27
Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Partnership Council**

Carry Forward From Previous Year	2024	2025	2026	2027
FY Allocation	\$438,521	\$438,521	\$263,788	\$452,924
Population Based Allocation	\$290,042	\$290,042	\$262,157	\$290,042
Discretionary Allocation	\$148,479	\$148,479	\$1,631	\$162,882
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$147,369	\$311,006	\$302,988	\$120,235
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$585,890	\$749,527	\$566,776	\$573,159
Strategies	Approved Allotted	Approved Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Early Learning Systems Change	\$60,000	\$60,000		
Quality First Academy	\$4,000	\$3,681	\$4,000	\$4,000
Quality First Coaching and Incentives	\$74,800	\$70,288	\$74,800	\$74,800
Quality First Scholarships	\$123,699	\$123,699	\$123,699	\$123,699
Child Care Health Consultation	\$27,200	\$32,031	\$27,200	\$27,200
Children's Health Systems Change	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Family Support and Literacy Systems Change	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Family Support Coordination	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$225,000	\$225,000
Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$105,000	\$105,000
Statewide Evaluation	\$18,808	\$18,808	\$18,808	\$18,808
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness	\$2,100	\$2,196	\$4,196	\$4,196
Total	\$490,607	\$490,703	\$594,703	\$594,703
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended:*	\$95,283	\$258,824	(\$27,927)	(\$21,544)

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		94.53 %	94.53 %	95.49 %	95.49 %
% to Quality First**	20.75%	21.60 %	21.60 %	17.82 %	17.82 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	95.06%				
% to Quality First**	19.53%				

*Per FTF State Board direction, allotments reflect the budgeting of projected spending, therefore in some years’ total allotments may exceed total means of financing. However, actual expenditures against the allotments are expected to be fully supported by revenues, and each year the region is anticipated to end with a carry forward balance which is reflected in the subsequent year’s carry forward balance.

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

TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

Please describe how the Regional Partnership Council's SFY24-27 Strategic Plan promotes equity and support of under-resourced and underserved children and their families.

Throughout the planning process, the FTF Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council discussed barriers for community members to equitably access high-quality early learning information and related resources. Through previous tribal consultations and discussions with tribal leaders and tribal department administrators, the FTF Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council's State Fiscal Year 2024-2027 (SFY24-27) strategic plan reflects alignment with the goals and opportunities identified by the Tohono O'odham Nation. Several new strategies have been identified, which will build upon the region's strengths to expand capacity, increasing equitable access to early childhood related resources that complement the strategic direction of the Tohono O'odham Nation.

- Acknowledging there are inequities in the books and learning materials that are available to young children on the Tohono O'odham Nation that reflect their language, culture and history, the regional council supports the development of materials centering O'odham language and culture as well as community based language and literacy workshops throughout the region.
- Knowing that internet and cell phone service availability varies widely throughout the region, the regional council supports partnering with KOHN radio, Tohono O'odham Nation's licensed radio station, to increase awareness of early childhood health and development information and services through radio ads and community conversations and to link families to those resources. KOHN delivers timely and trusted educational, cultural and local programming and information throughout the entire region.
- Recognizing the multifaceted and disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on young children, families and caregivers in the region, the regional council prioritized the emotional well-being of young children and their families ensuring mental and behavioral health learning sessions are available for those caring for young children including parents and guardians, early learning providers and system partners such as librarians, first responders and pediatricians.

SFY26 FUNDING PLAN UPDATE / CHANGE TABLE

TOHONO O’ODHAM NATION REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

DESIRED OUTCOME: ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Quality First

- Quality First Academy (prioritized)
- Quality First Coaching and Incentives (prioritized)

Access to Quality Care

- Quality First Scholarships (prioritized)
- Early Learning Systems Change (prioritized)

Successes:

Quality First:

In SFY24, Quality First implemented a revision to the model resulting in service levels that are based on the needs of participating centers and homes, more targeted administration support, and additional hours for Child Care Health Consultation.

Together, First Things First and the Department of Economic Security (DES) developed and facilitated information sessions and resources for Quality First participants to discuss the end of the federal funds and what SFY25 would look like for their participation, whether continuing or not. Because all eight Head Start centers on the Tohono O’odham Nation are funded through First Things First regional funding (including the seven centers run by the Tohono O’odham Nation and one run by Baboquivari Unified School District), participation in Quality First will continue without the challenges associated with the sun setting of federal funds.

Quality First Scholarships:

First Things First increased the Quality First Scholarship reimbursement rate to align with the cost of quality in SFY25, informed by a study conducted in 2021. This increase supports a robust and stable network of child care providers and continues the reimbursement rate that providers were receiving through federal pandemic relief funding.

In the Tohono O’odham Nation Region, Quality First Scholarships are designated to the Baboquivari Unified School District, which school leaders have implemented an enrollment process for preschoolers that includes the Quality First Scholarship application to ensure a seamless as possible transition for families. All 10 of the regionally funded scholarship slots have remained consistently in use with no current wait list.

Challenges:

Quality First:

The percentage of programs achieving and maintaining quality levels has decreased in the region due to a temporary pause in programs receiving an assessment and accessing Quality First supports. Quality First services were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic and have resumed under new leadership. Reassessment of Quality First participating programs is anticipated to fully resume in early calendar year 2025.

Quality First Scholarships:

At the statewide level, reimbursing Quality First Scholarships at the 2021 cost of quality has resulted in fewer scholarships in SFY25 (approximately half the number for some regions) for the same amount of funding from the previous year. In planning for SFY26, regional partnership councils, including the Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Council, had to consider the regional impact the reduction had and not to further disrupt the system in significant ways. Due to myriad reasons, the capacity of available classrooms at Baboquivari Unified School District decreased while the First Things First cost of quality policy went into effect. In response to these simultaneous occurrences, the regional council maintained the same scholarship funding investment and the same number of preschool aged young children served.

At the statewide level, First Things First and DES continues to work towards ways to support access to quality early learning to ensure efficient use of funds to serve as many children as possible.

Changes:

Early Learning Systems Change:

In calendar year 2022, Tohono O’odham Community College (TOCC) received a significant grant to support early learning professionals in implementing preschool programming focused around native language revitalization. This exciting opportunity limited the capacity of TOCC to partner with First Things First this funding cycle. As a result of the related capacity shifts and exploration of possible other partners to carry out the work, the Early Learning Systems Change Strategy has gone unawarded in SFY24 and SFY25. Recognizing the importance of expending funds to support young children and families, the regional council eliminated the Early Learning Systems Change Strategy and reallocated funds to the Family Support Coordination Strategy for SFY26 and SFY27. First Things First staff continues to meet with leadership from the TOCC Early Childhood Department to learn about the department’s expansion, professional development supports offered for educators working with young children on the Tohono O’odham Nation and to explore potential for future system building partnerships supporting the education of early childhood educators.

Changes:	SFY25	SFY26
Early Learning Systems Change		
Allotment:	\$60,000	\$0

DESIRED OUTCOME: INFORMATION, SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

- Educating Families and Caregivers**
- o Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities (prioritized)

- Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources**
- o Family Support Coordination (prioritized)
 - o Family Support and Literacy Systems Change (prioritized)

Successes:

Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities:

Excitedly, after some challenges in securing a grant partner to carry out the work, the regional council established an agreement with the Tohono O’odham Nation Department of Education to carry out the Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities Strategy and implementation will begin in the second half of SFY25.

Family Support and Literacy Systems Change:

Public Service Announcements (PSAs), a core component of the Family Support and Literacy Systems Change Strategy, are running in SFY25 with continued opportunities to work collaboratively with the community to share educational messages about the importance of connecting young children and families with available services and supports in the Tohono O’odham Nation. The process of creating more nuanced PSA messages is being developed and piloted in collaboration with Head Start through which educators and parents are sharing feedback around priority early learning topics to help inform PSA content. Meanwhile, announcements are running twice a week on the Nation’s radio station, in English and in O’odham, to share information, including recruitment for the regional council.

Changes:

Language, Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities:

The regional council reallocated unexpended SFY24 funds to SFY26 and SFY27. The Target Service Units have been adjusted to align with the increased allocation and also to reflect the data being reported. These changes will help in assessing progress as books and materials in O’odham are developed and distributed.

Family Support Coordination:

In SFY24, the Family Support Coordination program experienced staffing changes at the supervisory level. Although this caused delays in data reporting, it also offered the opportunity to strengthen communication and align around data reporting updates as the new supervisor on-boarded. Recognizing reporting was delayed, the partner has been meeting regularly with First Things First staff and has presented progress updates at regional council meetings. The regional council was provided information about the program’s increasing reach and growing demand, including learning the program is at capacity.

Beginning in SFY26, the opportunity to double the number of families directly served addresses the growing demand and is aligned with the regional council’s vision that all families with young children on the Tohono O’odham Nation, especially those ages birth to three, will be provided with resources and opportunities to support their needs and healthy development. Further, it serves to strengthen partnerships with and between the Tohono O’odham Nation and outside agencies and leverage existing supports for families.

Family Support and Literacy Systems Change:

The regional council reallocated unexpended SFY24 funds to SFY26 and SFY27 to increase the number of PSAs funded annually from 80 to 160.

Changes:	SFY25	SFY26
Language Literacy and Culture in Tribal Communities		
Allotment:	\$70,000	\$105,000
Service Unit:	Number of community events: 4 Number of materials distributed: 4	Number of community events: 6 Number of materials distributed: 4,000
Family Support Coordination		
Allotment:	\$100,000	\$225,000
Service Unit:	Number of families currently enrolled: 20	Number of families currently enrolled: 40
Family Support and Literacy Systems Change		
Allotment:	\$2,000	\$4,000

DESIRED OUTCOME: PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT.

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Building Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years

- Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness (prioritized)

Successes:

In SFY25, to support of the Tohono O’odham Nation’s goal of ensuring all children receive a developmental screening, the regional council and staff worked with the Education Department to provide First Things First branded children’s books, height charts and other educational materials to be shared with families at community screening events.

Changes:

The regional council reallocated unexpended SFY24 funds to SFY26 and SFY27 to increase the materials that could be made available to trusted community partners who share them directly with families.

Changes:	SFY25	SFY26
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness		
Allotment:	\$2,196	\$4,196

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

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Health Resource Coordination

- Children’s Health Systems Change (non-prioritized)

Challenges:

This strategy has the intent of expanding access to mental and behavioral health learning sessions so that those caring for young children including parents and guardians, early learning providers and system partners such as librarians, first responders and pediatricians may appropriately understand, identify and respond to the social emotional developmental needs and behavioral challenges of young children. Further, it is a priority that sessions align with the culture and history of the Tohono O’odham Nation and be taught by instructors who are recognized as entrusted partners in the community. The Tohono O’odham Nation Region has struggled to implement the Children’s Health Systems Change Strategy due to the capacity limitations at TOCC relating to the early childhood professional development grant awarded in 2022. Discussions about implementing this strategy resumed in calendar year 2024 as TOCC is expanding the college’s mental and behavioral health program. In recent discussions, TOCC has identified up to four current instructors who are qualified to teach the content and staff anticipates being able to have an agreement in place so the learning sessions can be fully implemented in SFY26.

DESIRED OUTCOME: COORDINATED, INTEGRATED, AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies

Evaluation

- Statewide Evaluation (non-prioritized)

Successes:

Statewide Evaluation:

2024 Regional Needs and Asset Reports were delivered in June 2024 and approved by the First Things First State Board in August 2024. First Things First staff is working in partnership with the Tohono O’odham Nation in the process of seeking tribal approval to publish the 2024 Tohono O’odham Nation Regional Needs and Assets Report.