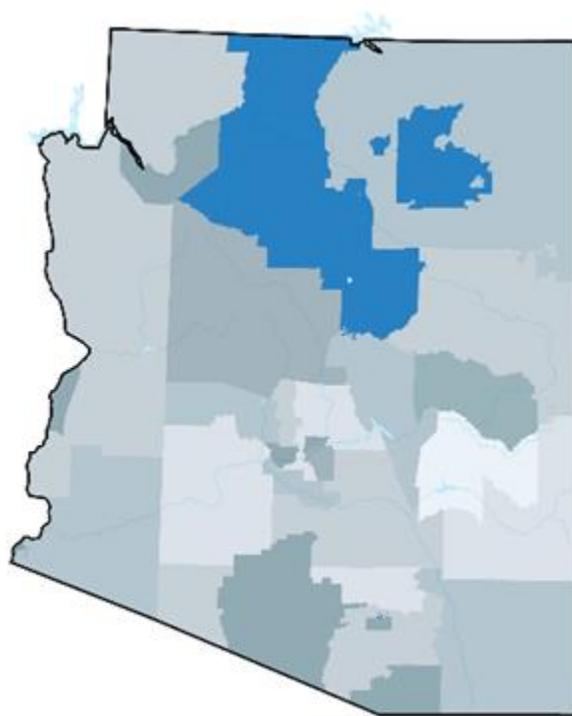




# FIRST THINGS FIRST

**Coconino Regional Partnership Council**  
Population birth through age 5: 8,530



## State Fiscal Year 2025 Funding Plan

*SFY 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan Update*

Presented to the First Things First Board  
January 23, 2024



### **Mission**

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

### **Vision**

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

### **Regional Partnership Councils**

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

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### **Coconino Regional Partnership Council**

**Kelly McCue**, chair, health services provider

**Emily Patch**, vice chair, early childhood educator

**Kay Bordwell**, representative of the faith community

**Jennifer Brown**, child care provider

**Noreen Sakiestewa**, public school administrator

**Christy Stuth**, parent of a child age 5 years or younger

**Carletta Tilousi**, tribal public official/employee

**Debbie Winlock**, at-large representative

open, at-large representative

open, member of the business community

open, representative of a philanthropic organization

**Pearl Santillan**, regional director, First Things First

**Ellen Felty**, administrative specialist, First Things First

**Coconino Regional Partnership Council**  
**Promoting Equity and Supporting Under-Resourced/Underserved Children and Their Families**

The Coconino Regional Partnership Council has developed the SFY24-27 Strategic Plan in close consultation and partnership with key community agencies and members to reveal relevant opportunities for First Things First to address the greatest needs of children ages birth to age 5 and their families. This approach, in part, included facilitating a virtual town hall of our community stakeholders that established consensus on the issues and barriers impacting early childhood in the Coconino Region and, further, identified action steps to shape our strategic funding plan and systems change work. Additionally, the Coconino Region partners with three tribes. The tribal councils of the tribes in the Coconino Region have been continuously engaged in discussions to support the regional council in better understanding and addressing the needs of children and families. These discussions have helped the regional council better understand the perspectives, identities, values and cultures of the region's families allowing the regional council to shape their work to create a more relevant and impactful early childhood system. This has led the regional partnership council to identifying and prioritizing strategies that will have two goals: 1) through services and resources, support families and children who may be vulnerable due to inequities in the early childhood system and 2) through systems level coordination, create a high-quality, interconnected and comprehensive early childhood service delivery system in the Coconino Region that is timely, culturally responsive, family-driven, community-based and directed toward enhancing children's overall development.

**Regional Allocation and Proposed Funding Plan Summary SFY24 – SFY27  
Coconino Regional Partnership Council**

Allocations and Funding Sources	2024	2025	2026	2027
SFY Allocation	\$1,904,100	\$1,904,100	\$1,663,909	\$1,663,909
Population Based Allocation	\$981,290	\$981,290	\$981,290	\$981,290
Discretionary Allocation	\$922,810	\$922,810	\$682,619	\$682,619
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$835,038	\$883,169	\$843,206	\$438,962
<b>Total Regional Council Funds Available</b>	<b>\$2,739,138</b>	<b>\$2,787,269</b>	<b>\$2,507,115</b>	<b>\$2,102,871</b>
Strategies	Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted	Proposed Allotted
Quality First Academy	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Quality First Coaching & Incentives	\$314,640	\$314,640	\$314,640	\$314,640
Quality First Scholarships	\$854,864	\$659,264	\$593,184	\$527,104
First Things First College Scholarships			\$21,600	\$21,600
Child Care Health Consultation	\$81,600	\$81,600	\$81,600	\$81,600
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation		\$30,600	\$55,080	\$79,560
Well Child and Family Care	\$300,000	\$310,000	\$320,000	\$330,000
Family Support & Literacy Systems Change	\$110,954	\$110,954	\$110,954	\$132,554
Home Visitation	\$325,000	\$335,000	\$345,000	\$355,000
Parenting Education		\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
Statewide Evaluation	\$69,095	\$69,095	\$69,095	\$69,095
Educational Promotion and Brand Awareness		\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Media		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,068,153</b>	<b>\$2,068,153</b>	<b>\$2,068,153</b>	<b>\$2,068,153</b>
<b>Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended:*</b>	<b>\$670,985</b>	<b>\$719,116</b>	<b>\$438,962</b>	<b>\$34,718</b>

Fiscal Year	2020	2024	2025	2026	2027
% to Board Priorities		82.15 %	81.66 %	81.18 %	80.70 %
% to Quality First**	13.48%	19.73 %	19.73 %	19.73 %	19.73 %
Fiscal Year	4 Year Average				
% to Board Priorities	81.42%				
% to Quality First**	19.73%				

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

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

**SFY25 FUNDING PLAN UPDATE / CHANGE TABLE  
COCONINO 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)

***Successes:***

In SFY24, Quality First implemented a revision to the model resulting in service levels that are based on the needs of participating centers and homes. The revisions are anticipated to create efficiencies that allow more regulated early care and education programs to participate and continue the quality improvement trajectory that has shown consistent increases in quality rating over time.

First Things First increased the Quality First Scholarship reimbursement rate to the cost of quality, informed by a study conducted in 2021, this increase will support a robust and stable network of child care providers and continue the reimbursement rate that providers were receiving through federal pandemic relief funding.

***Challenges:***

In SFY25, federal pandemic relief funding to support a statewide expansion of 413 programs to participate in Quality First will end, resulting in a number of current Quality First participants potentially being disenrolled and placed on the Quality First waitlist. Discussions are in progress at the statewide level to determine potential supports so that participants funded through expansion will not need to be disenrolled and put back on a waitlist.

Reimbursing Quality First Scholarships at the 2021 cost of quality has resulted in less scholarships for the same amount of funding in SFY25. It is estimated that half the number of scholarships will be available at the current level of investment. In planning for SFY25, regional partnership councils had to consider the regional impact the reduction would have and make decisions to ensure that reductions in funding do not disrupt the system in significant ways.

***Changes:***

In SFY25, federal pandemic relief funding to support a statewide expansion of 413 programs to participate in Quality First will end, 7 of which were located in the Coconino Region. This will result in a number of current Quality First participants potentially being disenrolled and placed on the Quality First waitlist. Discussions are in progress at the statewide level to determine potential supports so that participants funded through expansion will not need to be disenrolled and put back on a wait list.

In SFY25, the Coconino Region is reducing funding for Quality First scholarships to allocate resources to other strategies. While the regional partnership council faced challenging decisions in decreasing scholarship funds, the strategies identified during strategic planning remain aligned with the state's priorities. The decision to reduce scholarship allocation enables the funding of the parent education strategy, a highly impactful strategy that provides support to parents not only in the central hub of Flagstaff but also in the region's rural and tribal communities. The council has also decided to bring back early childhood mental health consultation in this funding plan. This strategy is essential in supporting early childhood professionals which in turn supports the families and children they serve. While there will be fewer scholarships for direct child care payment, the focus is on bolstering sustainable and

accessible early care and education through existing services and considering innovative approaches. We are now dedicated to exploring creative solutions and models that actively involve a broader range of stakeholders. Through our collaboration with Candelen, Coconino Coalition for Children and Youth, Coconino County Childcare Community Health Improvement Plan, and other early childhood groups and coalitions across the region, we are laying the groundwork for innovative solutions to increasing access to and the quality of early care. Ongoing discussions involve various stakeholders, including school districts, the Department of Economic Security, Coconino Community College Early Childhood programs, retired individuals, businesses, churches, and kith and kin care. In our region, we will also intensify our efforts to maximize the utilization of the childcare subsidy provided through the Department of Economic Security.

Changes:	SFY24	SFY25
<b>Quality First Scholarships</b>		
Funding Level Changes:	\$854,864	\$659,264

**DESIRED OUTCOME: INFORMATION, SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES**

**Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies**

**Educating Families and Caregivers**

- Home Visitation (prioritized)
- Parenting Education (prioritized)

**Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources**

- Family Support and Literacy Systems Change (prioritized)

**Successes:**

The previous grantee was awarded the home visitation grant in SFY24, successfully continuing home visitation programs in Flagstaff, Hopi, Winslow and Havasupai. The grantee continues to play a pivotal role in providing crucial support to families across these diverse regions.

In order to increase the capacity of the grant partner to serve the unique needs of the families and Havasupai community the regional director, alongside other FTF support staff and a representative from the Havasupai Tribe, undertook a significant journey traveling to Havasupai Canyon. This effort was instrumental in building and strengthening relationships with the Havasupai Tribal Council. The Havasupai Tribal Council responded positively to our efforts, exemplified by their swift action in signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This formal agreement solidifies the commitment between the tribe and the grant partner to continue and strengthen home visitation implementation in Havasupai and Supai Camp. The signed MOA is a testament to the collaborative spirit and mutual dedication to supporting families in this unique and vital community.

In SFY24, a key achievement resulting from the implementation of the Family Support and Literacy Systems Change Strategy, led by the Program Coordination Specialist, was the establishment of Early Childhood coalitions in the rural communities of Winslow, Williams, Fredonia, and Page. These coalitions serve as dynamic hubs bringing together local stakeholders, including parents, educators, community leaders and service providers. The coalitions create a collaborative environment to address the unique needs and challenges of each community and have successfully leveraged existing community resources, forging partnerships with local businesses, schools, libraries and non-profit organizations. These efforts have fostered a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of our youngest community members.

**Challenges:**

The grant partner, serving the Havasupai tribal community, faces a challenge in maintaining fidelity to the Parents As Teachers program model due to geographical barriers. Families traveling in and out of the canyon for various reasons find it difficult to adhere to recommended visit frequencies and referral follow-ups. Despite this challenge, grant partner leadership and FTF are optimistic about finding innovative solutions and providing unwavering support to ensure the program's success in this unique and resilient community.

**Changes:**

In SFY25, funding for this strategy will see a slight increase to accommodate rising cost-of-living expenses. This adjustment reflects our commitment to ensuring the continued effectiveness and sustainability of our programs.

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

**Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies**

**Health Resource Coordination**

- Well Child Family Care

**Successes:**

Following the release of a Request for Grant Application for the Well Child and Family Care Strategy, an initial setback occurred as there was no recommendation for award. Undeterred, the regional council re-released the application and the subsequent submission was recommended for approval. With a new start date of November 1, 2023, an adjusted 8-month contract and modifications to funding and service units, the grant partner is poised for successful implementation. Full support from FTF ensures their success, reflecting our shared commitment to advancing early childhood well-being.

**Challenges:**

Despite a delayed start date and a funding gap leading to staff departures, the grant partner is actively addressing the situation. With a renewed commitment, strategic planning and thoughtful efforts, they are in the process of hiring and recruiting staff to fill HealthySteps positions and re-establish services. This dedicated approach reflects the grant partner's resilience and determination to ensure the continued success of the program.

**DESIRED OUTCOME: COORDINATED, INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM**

**Strategy Areas and Funded Strategies**

**Evaluation**

- State Wide Evaluation