



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

First Things First Regional Needs and Assets Reports Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the Regional Needs and Assets Reports is to identify assets, coordination opportunities, and unmet needs in early childhood development and health programs in each region. The needs and assets report is intended as the primary vehicle for the collection and analysis of all data available at the regional level, and informs the strategic planning of each regional partnership council.

Contracting and Report Development

After review of the 2008 reports, the Board directed staff to take steps to improve the contracting and report development processes for regional needs and assets. To meet this directive, the 2010 Needs and Assets process had some notable modifications from earlier efforts. Primary goals of the modifications were:

- to develop a body of qualified vendors to complete the reports;
- to ensure that regional partnership councils had a range of vendors from which to select and those choices were appropriate to the richness and variation in Arizona's communities; and,
- to support a consistent set of base level indicators for all reports.

To facilitate these contracting changes, in the late spring and summer of 2009, First Things First requested and was granted approval from the Arizona State Procurement Office to conduct a Request for Proposal process. This process, overseen by the State Procurement Office, generated a list of qualified vendors to conduct needs and assets reports for a five year period. This list of qualified vendors was utilized in the 2010 reports as well as the current 2012 reports.

The qualified vendor list is composed of 15 vendors. Only a few vendors submitted proposals to complete reports in all regions, so no regional council has 15 choices; regional councils have from two to nine choices of qualified vendors for the completion of their report.

So that each regional council has a base report, the Board has allocated approximately \$17,000 from the statewide evaluation budget for each regional report. Total base funding for the 2012 reports was approximately \$530,000. Fifteen regional councils also allocated \$430,000 in additional funds to enhance the base report. Common enhancements were additional primary

data collection, collection and reporting of data for sub-regional areas (zip codes and/or towns), and the analysis and integration of those data into the report.

Next Steps and Integration into the Research and Evaluation Plan: 2013 - 2017

After consideration by the Board, approved reports will receive final formatting and be available to regional councils for public release and use in their strategic planning. FY 2014 reports will make use of the existing qualified vendor list; however, First Things First will work with the Arizona State Procurement Office in FY 2013 and 2014 to conduct a new Request for Proposal competition to create a qualified vendor list for future reports. Continued improvements are coordinated with the *Research and Evaluation Plan: 2013 - 2017* and will focus in four areas:

- increased capacity and resources to conduct tribal regional needs and assets reports;
- review of internal contracting and monitoring processes to streamline the commissioning of enhanced reports by regional councils;
- inclusion of School Readiness Indicator data as a central component of the reports;
- and coordination of regional needs and assets reports with the development of the longitudinal data system and studies.

Recommendations:

The CEO recommends approval of the 25 Regional Needs and Assets Reports on behalf of the following Regional Councils:

- Central Maricopa
- Central Phoenix
- Central Pima
- Cochise
- Coconino
- Cocopah Tribe
- Colorado River Indian Tribes
- Gila
- Graham/Greenlee
- Hualapai Tribe
- La Paz/Mohave
- North Phoenix
- North Pima
- Northeast Maricopa
- Navajo/Apache
- Pinal
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Tribes
- Santa Cruz
- South Phoenix
- South Pima
- Southeast Maricopa
- Southwest Maricopa
- White Mountain Apache Tribe
- Yavapai
- Yuma

The CEO recommends approval of six requests for extension for the following Regional Councils (expected dates for Board approval are also indicated):

- Gila River Indian Community (December 2012)
- Navajo Nation (April 2013)
- Northwest Maricopa (December 2012)
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe (TBD 2013)
- San Carlos Apache (December 2012)
- Tohono O'odham Nation (TBD)



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FIRST THINGS FIRST

Central East Regional Partnership Councils Regional Needs and Assets Reports Executive Summaries

**Cochise
Gila
Graham/Greenlee
Pinal**

Executive Summary

Approach to the 2012 Report

The Cochise Regional Partnership Council 2012 Needs and Assets Report describes demographic, economic and social indicators that pertain to children birth through age five and their families. Data are summarized from the 2000 Census, 2006-2008 American Community Survey, 2008-2010 American Community Survey, 2010 Census and various local and state agencies at the regional, community and zip code levels.

In addition to the main body of the report, two additional sections contain comprehensive data to help inform the Cochise Regional Partnership Council's planning and decision making: the Early Childhood Index for Children Birth through Age Five (Part Two), and the Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three).

The Early Childhood Index (Part Two) is designed to help inform and target strategies, activities and funding allocations at the most local level possible. The Early Childhood Index shows where potential disparities exist at the zip code level. It does so by ranking 17 indicators organized at the child, family and community levels that are known to have an impact on the early years of a child's life. These indicators are not intended to measure progress on strategies and are not comparable to others that provide benchmarks for the Cochise Regional Partnership Council, such as the FTF School Readiness Indicators. The index is designed to provide a better understanding of important indicators across zip codes and communities within the region and identify opportunities for improvement and action.

The Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three) provides a more comprehensive picture of each zip code. Demographic, health, and economic information are presented for each zip code in Cochise County for multiple years to show how conditions within each zip code have changed or remained stable over time. The Resource Guide is a complement to the Early Childhood Index for decision-making; it is a more complete representation of data to help inform decision-making.

Cochise Region Geography

The Cochise Region and Cochise County share the same boundaries, so this region is also referred to as Cochise County in this report. Located in the southeastern corner of Arizona, it borders the state of New Mexico on its eastern side, and on its southern boundary, the international border of Sonora, Mexico. This region is geographically diverse and expansive, covering 6,219 square miles. It includes 28 communities and 22 zip codes. There are 20 public school districts in Cochise County and five charter districts. Incorporated cities in the region are the following: Tombstone, Benson, Willcox, Huachuca City, Sierra Vista, Bisbee and Douglas.

The region's economy is primarily based on agriculture, mining, and tourism, with the exception of Sierra Vista where the Fort Huachuca Military Base is located, and Douglas which has a manufacturing base.

Ten settlements within Cochise County have been designated as “colonias” by the Cochise County Board of Supervisors. Most of these places are unincorporated, rural areas that have high rates of poverty. Colonias are places within 150 miles of the four US states bordering Mexico that lack sewer, water and/or decent housing; many also lack electricity, heat, paved streets and roads.

Demographic Overview and Economic Circumstances

- According to the 2010 Census, the population of the First Things First Cochise Region was approximately 131,346. At that time, there were 3,578 families with children birth through age five and 10,125 children birth through age five. First Things First estimated that 25 percent, or 2,796 children in Cochise County, were living at the poverty level in 2009.
- The proportion of children birth through age five in Cochise County grew 6 percent over the past decade, compared to 19 percent for Arizona, according to the 2000 and 2010 Census. Over this time period, the growth rate of the population of all ages in Cochise County was 12 percent. Therefore, most of Cochise County’s population growth is attributable to older population groups.
- Nearly half of all children birth through age five lived in Sierra Vista and Douglas, according to the 2010 Census. The greatest proportion (29 percent) lived in Sierra Vista (2,970 children of this age), while 18 percent (1,859 children of this age) lived in Douglas.
- The 2010 Census revealed that 826 Cochise County families with children birth through age five were headed by single mothers. Approximately 49 percent of single-parent families headed by mothers were living below the poverty level a decade earlier, according to the 2000 Census. Given this, it can be extrapolated that a similar proportion of families headed by a single mother were living below the poverty level in 2010.
- According to the 2010 Census, 47 percent of children birth through age five in the Cochise Region were Hispanic and 70 percent were white. The 2006-08 American Community Survey also revealed that 35 percent of Hispanic families with children birth through age four were living below the poverty level, higher than the proportion for white families (13%) and all families (18 percent) in Cochise County.
- The estimated median family income in Cochise County in 2000 was \$38,005. About 22 percent of families in the region earned less than \$20,000. Nearly 14 percent of families were living below the poverty level.
- Poverty rates for children birth through age five in 2000 varied by community in Cochise County. For example, the highest rates of poverty for children birth through age five were in the Douglas area (85607) where the rate was 55 percent, followed by 51 percent in Cochise (85606), and 44 percent in the Elfrida area (85610). The lowest rates were 6.7 percent for St. David (85630) and San Simon, Portal areas (85632), 7 percent for Hereford (85615) and 8 percent for Sierra Vista Southeast (85650).
- In Cochise County, 2008-10 American Community Survey estimated that 53 percent of children birth through age five living with both parents had both parents in the workforce (3,360) and 67 percent of children living with one parent had that parent in the workforce (2,389 children). This total estimate of 5,749 children with working parents need some type of child care. Child care might also be needed for the children of non-working parents who are trying to find employment or who are attending school.

- Unemployment rates in Cochise County doubled from January 2008 to 2011, rising from 5 to 10 percent. Unemployment claims increased by more than 390 percent between January 2007 (550) and January 2010 (2,698). Benson and Whetstone were estimated to have the highest unemployment rates at 15.8 percent and 15.7 percent, respectively, and the lowest rates were for Sierra Vista at 5.6 percent.
- The number of families with children birth through age five receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits in the Cochise Region decreased 66 percent from January 2007 (294) to January 2011 (136), likely due to state legislative actions in 2010 and 2011 that reduced benefits. In contrast, the enrollment of families with children birth through age five on the Arizona Nutritional Assistance (Food Stamps) Program increased by 57 percent and the enrollment of children birth to age four in Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) increased by 24 percent.
- Enrollment in the Free and Reduced Price School Lunch Program rose in eleven of the eighteen Cochise County school districts that reported data from 2009 to 2011. The greatest increases occurred in six school districts, all clustered in the northwest portion of the county: Saint David, Benson, Cochise, Willcox, Pearce and Pomerene.
- The use of community food banks increased in Cochise County between fiscal years 2009 and 2010. The number of food box distributions increased in fiscal year 2010 by 10 percent over the fiscal year 2009 numbers, while the number of individuals served increased by 7 percent.
- Cochise County has a relatively stable housing environment, a factor that is known to impact child development and health. Cochise County residents have low housing mobility, as evidenced by the relatively low rental rate of 32 percent, compared to the state rate of 34 percent. Cochise County also has comparatively low housing instability, as measured by the pre-foreclosure rate, or the risk of losing one's home. The overall pre-foreclosure rate for Cochise County in 2010 was 1.2 percent – that is, 1 in 83 residential property owners received a pre-foreclosure notice. By comparison, the rate in neighboring Pima County was 2.5 percent.

Education

- According to estimates from the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, 16 percent of adults eighteen and over in the Cochise Region did not have a high school diploma. Twenty-one percent of adults had a bachelor's or advanced degree, less than the state's ratio of 24 percent.
- Adult educational attainment rates vary by community. In 2000, more than 40 percent of adults lacked a high school diploma in Douglas and Bowie. High rates of low educational attainment were also present in Willcox (30 percent) and Elfrida (30 percent). In contrast, Ft Huachuca (2 percent) and East Sierra Vista (11 percent) had the lowest levels, most likely due to the influence of the Fort Huachuca military base.
- According to the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, 40 percent of new mothers in Cochise County giving birth in the past six months were unmarried; 45 percent of those had less than a high school diploma, and only one percent of those had a bachelor's or graduate degree. Of the 60 percent who were married, 10 percent had less than a high school degree and 19 percent had a bachelor's or graduate degree.

- Across both Arizona and Cochise County, in 2011 about one in four children did not pass third-grade AIMS testing, and scores dropped from 2009 to 2011. In Cochise County, third grade AIMS scores showed 60 percent of students passing the math test and 70 percent passing the reading test. There is wide variation in average passing scores within and across the districts in the region, with two schools in Sierra Vista having the highest scores and two schools in Douglas and one in Naco having the lowest scores.

Health

- The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that about 87 percent of children birth through age five in Arizona were insured in 2010. Enrollment in AHCCCS in Cochise County was one percent higher in April 2011 than April 2010. Enrollment in KidsCare in Cochise County declined 62 percent from April 2009 to April 2011 due to the statewide enrollment freeze.
- According to fiscal year 2009 AHCCCS reports about its enrollees, 71 percent of infants under 16 months funded under KidsCare completed their well-child checks. Children ages three through six funded under KidsCare had a 74 percent completion rate. These figures are for Arizona; no numbers are available for Cochise County. The implication of these rates is that having access to health care does not always ensure health care services are used to the best advantage for young children.
- Twelve percent of births in the Cochise Region in 2010 (207) were to teen mothers, according to Arizona Vital Statistics. Douglas had the highest number of births to teen mothers in 2009 (76) and 30 percent of all teen births in the Cochise Region. Sierra Vista followed with 74 teen births (29% of all teen births). Six small communities reported no teen births.
- In Cochise County, 80 percent of mothers received prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy in 2010, according to Arizona Vital Statistics. Rates varied throughout the county, however. In 2009, they ranged from 25 percent in Bowie to 100 percent in Pomerene. Many small communities (Bowie, San Simon, Pearce, Wilcox, Cochise, Dagoon, and Pirtleville) having a low number of births (15 or fewer) showed the lowest occurrence of prenatal care in the first trimester.
- Dental care among young children continues to be limited in the Cochise Region. Multiple barriers to maintaining good oral health for young children include cost, lack of providers for underserved racial and ethnic groups and fear of dental visits. The Cochise Regional Partnership Council is addressing the oral health needs for all children birth through age five.
- Child immunization rates in the Cochise Region for 2009 ranged from 68 percent of infants ages 12 to 24 months to 41 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving the full immunization schedule. According to Arizona Dept. of Health Services (ADHS), the reported rates may be lower than actual rates due to children changing pediatricians.
- In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the FTF Cochise Region funded multiple strategies to address the health and nutritional needs of families and children birth through age five in the region. Partnerships with social service agencies enabled home visitation services to families in communities across the region. Teen parents received support and education through these home visitation programs. Health and nutrition education were provided to early childhood education providers and parents.

- In 2010, 146 children birth through age three in the Cochise Region received developmental services through Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP), and 68 children birth through age six received services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. In order to increase the region's capacity for screening and treating children with developmental disabilities, the FTF Cochise Regional Council entered into two-year contracts with four therapists: a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, and two speech/language therapists. One of the speech therapists will continue working within the region through 2014, while the remaining therapists will continue working through 2013.

Early Childhood Education and Child Care

- Regulated child care and education providers include ADHS licensed centers, ADHS certified group homes, and DES certified family homes. Unregulated providers are not licensed or certified by any agency. The FTF Cochise Region had 119 regulated (licensed and certified) child care and education providers in December 2011 registered with the Child Care Resource and Referral database, down from 140 registered providers in April 2010, which is a fifteen percent reduction. Among regulated providers in 2011, 34 were ADHS licensed centers (one of which is located on Fort Huachuca), 7 were ADHS certified group homes, and 78 were DES certified family homes.
- About 87 percent of the regulated providers (103 of 119) were contracted with DES to provide services to children whose families were eligible to receive child care subsidies.
- If one assumes that 80 percent of maximum authorized capacity is used for children birth through age five, licensed and certified providers in the Cochise Region had slots for an estimated 2,408 children in this age group in December 2011. However, enrollments on a typical day are known to be far lower. Based on the total capacity used by licensed and certified providers reported in the 2010 DES Market Rate Survey, a reasonable estimate of the number of children birth through age five enrolled on a typical day in the Cochise Region was approximately 1,697.
- Licensed and certified providers had capacity to care for approximately 24 percent of the 10,125 children in this age group in Cochise County reported in the 2010 Census. This represents a decline in capacity among licensed and certified providers which, as reported in the 2010 Needs and Assets Report, were able to meet the child care needs of an estimated 26 percent of children birth through age five in Cochise County.
- Across the Cochise Region as a whole, there was one licensed child care center in December 2011 for every 298 children birth through age five. Some communities had multiple licensed centers and others had none. For example, the community of Hereford reported no licensed facilities, and in 2010 they had a population of 600 children birth through age five. Fort Huachuca had one licensed provider for 657 children birth through age five. Huachuca City reported one licensed provider for 441 children. Douglas reported six licensed centers and had a population of 1,859 children birth through age five, resulting in one center for every 310 children.
- Across the Cochise Region as a whole, there was one certified child care provider in December 2011 for every 119 children birth through age five (certified providers include ADHS group homes and DES homes). The availability of certified providers varied greatly from one community to the next. The community showing the fewest available certified providers was Ft. Huachuca, where none was reported for 657 children birth through age

five. Hereford followed with one provider for every 300 children birth through age five. Next was Sierra Vista with one provider for every 248 children. St. David reported one certified provider for every 211 children.

- Quality First (QF) is one of the cornerstone systemic strategies of First Things First to improve access to high quality early learning and care settings for children birth through age five. As of April 2012, there were 26 QF enrolled providers in the region, approximately one for every 389 children birth through age five based on 2010 Census population counts. East Sierra Vista (85650) had the lowest ratio of QF care providers to children, 1/945, or one center for the 945 children known to live in that zip code in 2010. This is followed by Wilcox (85753) with one QF enrolled provider for about 815 children. Sierra Vista (85635) had the highest number of QF enrolled providers, 10, a ratio of 1/297. Pomerene (85627) had the highest ratio, with 1 QF provider for about 77 children who live in that area.
- The average cost of full-time care across all providers in the region in April 2010 ranged from \$119 per week for infant care to \$117 per week for the care of four-to-five-year-olds. Infant care in licensed centers was \$160 per week on average, compared with \$128 per week for four-to-five-year-olds. In DES certified homes, infant care cost \$116 per week on average, compared to \$112 per week for four-to-five-year-olds.
- Due to the economic recession and declines in state revenues, the state legislature reduced many family support programs including child care subsidies. Use of DES Child Care subsidies declined substantially in Cochise County and statewide. The number of Cochise County families eligible for the DES subsidy declined by 55 percent from January 2009 (614 families) to January 2011 (278). The number of families receiving the DES subsidy declined by 52 percent from January 2009 (490 families) to January 2011 (236). Of the families eligible for benefits in January 2011, 85 percent received the benefits.
- The Arizona Department of Economic Security maintained a statewide waiting list that included approximately 3,223 families in January 2011 waiting to receive the child care subsidy. The FTF Cochise Region invested in child care scholarships to help address this shortfall.
- The majority of staff members working in the field of early child care and education lack professional qualifications. Arizona's regulations require only a high school diploma or GED for assistant teachers and teachers working in licensed centers. Family home providers certified by DES are not required to have a high school diploma. The lack of professionalization of the early child care and education field results in a low compensation and benefits structure compared to the education sector and other professions. The FTF Cochise Regional Partnership Council has sought to address this through the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) program that offers scholarships towards college credits and various incentives to staff members and their employers, including wage enhancement. The Cochise Regional Council allocated funding for 59 TEACH scholarships from fiscal years 2010 through 2012, although only five scholarships were utilized in the region during this time period.

Supporting Families

- Supportive services for families include a variety of formal and informal services and tangible goods that are determined by a family's needs. In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the FTF Cochise Regional Partnership Council identified the need to increase access to

comprehensive family education and support services, to coordinate and integrate funded activities with existing family support systems, and to increase the availability of resources that support health, language and literacy development for young children and their families. Cochise Regional Partnership Council was intentional in how their partners targeted their services across the county.

- In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, services were developed and targeted based on the level of children and families' needs. Eight partners worked collaboratively and with FTF to provide a range of home visitation services, parenting education and family literacy services.

Public Awareness and Collaboration

The Cochise Regional Partnership Council has worked to build public awareness about FTF and its mission on two levels. One is at the parent or family level where information is provided to increase parents' or caregivers' knowledge of and access to quality early childhood development information and resources. A second is at a broad public level to enhance the public's awareness or familiarity with the importance of early care and childhood education and how that connects to FTF's mission as a publicly funded program.

- The FTF Family and Community Survey, conducted in 2008, provided insight into the public's awareness and knowledge about early childhood development and age appropriate behavior. Responses were gathered from 144 parents from the Cochise Region. The results showed that although parents regarded themselves as knowledgeable about the role of early brain development, parents reported the need for more information about early childhood development, including language and literacy development, emotional development and developmentally appropriate behavior.
- First Things First's 2008 Partner Survey was conducted statewide as a baseline assessment measurement of system coordination and collaboration. Respondents reported that services are good to very good but that family access to services and information is poor. The report's conclusion was that early childhood services need to be realigned and simplified so that families are aware of and understand the services available and can access these services in a timely manner. Respondents also suggested that FTF expand its inclusionary practices to more community experts and small agencies and intensify outreach and communication to Arizona's hardest to reach families.

First Things First collaboration with other partners in the region is making progress through various avenues. The FTF Cochise Regional Council experimented with new mechanisms for collaboration and coordination and harnessed existing county coalitions and collaboration to promote early childhood education in the region. For example:

- In 2010, the Cochise Regional Partnership Council funded a pilot study through the University of Arizona, College of Public Health, to provide research and insight on building a model program to create a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated system among those who service young children and their families.

- The Cochise Regional Partnership Council in 2012 invested in producing a Cochise County Regional Resource Guide, which had made it possible for families and agencies to access information about the resources available within their respective communities.
- In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the Cochise Regional Partnership Council funded a coordination strategy known as the Cochise County Collaboration Group, which was intended to provide a forum for service providers to share information, reduce duplication, maximize resources, and address service gaps, through five “HUBs” within Cochise County, located in Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista and Willcox. Through monthly meetings, barriers surfaced toward implementation of the “HUB” structure. Therefore, the Cochise County Collaboration Group will not be continued. However, grantees will continue to be required to address communication and coordination in their direct service provision, and formally report these activities monthly to the Cochise Regional Partnership Council.
- Cochise College Center for Teacher Education is partnering with FTF and other educational institutions and organizations to provide a program in Early Childhood Education.
- The Southeast Arizona Collaborative Home (SEARCH) is a collaborative effort of Southeastern Arizona Behavioral Health Services, Inc. (SEABHS), Information & Referral Services, and the Southeastern Arizona Governments Organization Area Agency on Aging (SEAGO). SEARCH is a clearinghouse for information of interest to families with young children in the region.
- Working in partnership with the FTF Board, the Cochise Region is contributing to a community awareness and mobilization campaign to build the public and political will necessary to make early childhood development and health one of Arizona’s top priorities.

Conclusion

The geographic dispersion and economic disparities of the region’s population continue to challenge efforts to build a comprehensive, coordinated early care and childhood system in Cochise County. The greatest needs and gaps within the region include access to and availability of resources. Socio-economic disparities across communities also challenge ongoing efforts to serve young children and their families; these disparities are illustrated throughout this report, and in a more detailed way in both the Early Childhood Index (Part Two) and the Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three). Because the region’s size and rural character make it difficult for many parents to access early childhood education resources, the Cochise Regional Partnership Council in 2012 produced a Regional Resource Guide, which is had made it possible for families and agencies to access information about resources available within their respective communities.

The deepening of the economic recession that started in 2007 has created significant challenges for early childhood education and care providers. Demands have intensified upon the early childhood care and education system. Regulated child care centers are finding it difficult to survive economically due to the reductions in child care subsidies to parents who would use their services. The number of regulated (licensed and certified) providers registered in the Child Care Resource and Referral database dropped from 140 in April 2010 to 119 in December 2011, a fifteen percent reduction. In December 2011, Cochise County’s regulated providers had capacity to provide care for an estimated 24 percent of the county’s children birth through age

five, down from the estimated 26 percent identified in the 2010 Cochise County Needs and Assets Report. The lack of sufficient and affordable regulated care suggests that families turn to kith and kin care. Unregulated care can compromise optimal child development when there is a lack of formal education and training among child care providers.

Despite challenges, the Cochise Regional Partnership Council has worked toward creating assets that will contribute to building a more coordinated system of early childhood education, health and family supportive services. The Cochise Regional Partnership Council's approach has been to build on existing community resources and to collaborate with community agencies. The greatest regional assets for Cochise County continue to be the people who are deeply concerned and committed to early childhood care, education, and health issues for children birth through five years of age. The council's funding strategies and partnerships demonstrate a commitment to impact the care, health and educational needs of children birth through five years of age in Cochise County.

Executive Summary

The First Things First Gila Region encompasses a vast, diverse geographic area (4,796 square miles) with elevations ranging from 2,000 to 7,000 feet. The vast, diverse and sparsely populated areas of the region continue to challenge the Regional Council in building a system for early childhood. One of the challenges is that the county is often separated into Northern and Southern Gila County. Roosevelt Lake and a wide sparsely populated area divide the two areas of the county and often provide a barrier to effectively provide services across the region. Globe, Miami and Claypool are the major population areas of Southern Gila while Payson is the major population area in Northern Gila. These metropolitan areas offer the most services to support families and their young children. These areas have Head Start centers, child care services and a limited number of public school based pre-kindergarten classrooms.

Pine/Strawberry has a pre-kindergarten program for special needs that also serves a limited number of typically developing children whose families can afford to pay for the program. Tonto Basin has a pre-kindergarten program that serves most of the three and four year old children in the area. Hayden/Winkelman has a home-based Early Head Start and Head Start program as well as a pre-kindergarten program that serves many of the area children.

The population of the First Things First Gila Region was estimated to be 43,309 in 2010 with approximately 2,943 children ages birth through five. About one-quarter (24%) of families in the First Things First Gila Region are female-headed households, and 63% are married couples. Fifty-two percent (52%) of First Things First Gila Region children ages birth through five were identified as White, 33% as Hispanic/Latino, and 12% as American Indian alone. The majority of the population five and over in the First Things First Gila Region (86%) speak only English in the home, 11% reported speaking Spanish, and 2% speak an American Indian language.

The Face of Poverty

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack adequate food, become victims of crime and violence, and lack basic health care. They are at significant risk for dropping out of school early, poor academic performance, behavior problems in school, lower levels of literacy, and lower educational attainment.

Poverty, Income, and Unemployment

- Over 25% of children birth through five in the First Things First Gila Region were living below the poverty level, according to 2006-2010 Census estimates. This was higher than in the state (24%) and the nation (22%).
- Median family income in Gila County was \$39,630, according to 2006-2010 Census estimates.
- The unemployment rate was 10.1% in Gila County in March 2012, higher than the state of Arizona at 8.6%. Between January 2011 and April 2012 a total of 475 jobs were added in Gila County.

Economic Supports

- In 2010, the Lifetime Benefit Limit for TANF was reduced from 60 months to 36 months. These limits were again lowered in 2011, from 36 months to 24 months, decreasing the number of families eligible to receive services.
- There were approximately 218 families with children ages birth through five receiving TANF assistance in Gila County in 2011, a drop from 299 in 2010.

Foreclosures

- Foreclosure rates appeared lower in Gila County than in Arizona as a whole, with 1 in 712 homes in foreclosure in Gila County in January 2012, compared with 1 in 325 in the state. Payson had the highest reported foreclosure rate (1 in 492) with a total of 222 foreclosures.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care, and in particular, subsidized care for low-income families, also provides critical support for working families. However, there have been recent cuts to child care subsidies in the state and local child care centers are closing in the region because parents cannot afford to keep their child in child care programs.

- Only about 1 out of 10 every children with working parents in the First Things First Gila Region have child care spaces available to them.
- There were an estimated 547 child care spaces in the First Things First Gila Region in 2012. Many programs in the region have been closed or moved locations due to lack of enrollment, according to local representatives.
- In addition to the lack of child care availability in the First Things First Gila Region, the cost of child care can limit access and have an impact on families and their financial stability. After rent and paying for one preschooler in a child care center, a single mother would have about 20% (\$4,290) of their income left, approximately \$82 a week to cover food, medical, clothing, utilities, gas, and other basic necessities.

Early Care and Education

School Readiness and Success

Research shows that children who have early learning skills and are ready to enter kindergarten tend to perform much better on standardized tests in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades when compared to their peers who were not ready for kindergarten. Children's literacy and reading skills are assessed by one of two assessments in the First Things First Gila Region, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) or AIMSWeb, which provide a picture of how well children are prepared when beginning school.

- Over 50% of kindergarten students in Payson Unified, Pine Strawberry Elementary, and Globe Unified School Districts were at grade level at the beginning of the school year in 2010/11.

Reading and School Success

While kindergarten readiness is a good predictor of later school success, 3rd grade reading scores are another excellent predictor of high school graduation rates and career success. The Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) is the tool used to measure third grade academic proficiency in Arizona.

- There was variation in the percentage of 3rd graders meeting or exceeding the AIMS 3rd grade reading standard in the region.
 - The percentage of children meeting or exceeding AIMS reading standards in the Hayden-Winkelman School District decreased from 58% in 2010 to 38% in 2011, lower than the other school districts (70% - 80%).
 - Globe and Payson Unified School Districts saw increased percentages of students meeting or exceeding 3rd grade standards in reading.
- Beginning in the year 2013/14, students whose scores are “falling far below” on their 3rd grade AIMS reading will not be promoted from 3rd grade. In 2010/11, parental notification requirements began for any student who seemed to be falling behind. All school districts in the First Things First Gila Region had 15% or less of students who were “falling far below” on their 3rd grade AIMS reading in 2011.

Children with Special Needs

It's crucial to have early identification of children's special needs so that children can get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community. Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive and audio screenings are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth. A major challenge to providing services to children with special needs in the First Things First Gila Region is the limited number of service providers. The Arizona Department of Health Services reports that there are seven speech language pathologists but no licensed audiologists in the First Things First Gila Region. Most of the speech and language pathologists are employed by the school districts.

- The number of children birth to 36 months old who have developmental delays or at risk for delays receiving Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) services increased from 13 in 2008/09 to 35 in 2009/10.

Health

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance

Children with a regular source of primary health care and health insurance have better health, receive more preventative care, and have lower rates of hospitalization because they get treated for conditions before they become too serious. The ratio of primary care providers to the population in Gila County was one provider to 755 individuals in 2010, a decrease from one provider for every 908 individuals in 2009. The local ratio was worse than the state's ratio of one provider for every 501 individuals.

- Approximately 14% of children and youth (ages 19 and younger) in Gila County were uninsured, similar to Arizona as a whole at 13% in 2009.
- A total of 79 children in Gila County were insured through KidsCare in January 2012, nearly half (52%) of the previous years' enrollment, a decline likely caused by reduced funding and continued changes in state legislation.

Healthy Births

Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have healthier babies. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and five times more likely to die.

- Only 70% of women in the First Things First Gila Region received prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, compared to 82% of women in Arizona in 2010.
- 8% of babies born in the First Things First Gila Region were born with low birth weights (less than 5.5 pounds) in 2010.

Teen Births

Teen mothers tend to give birth prematurely, have babies born at low birth weights, are less likely to complete high school, and have lower earning power in their careers. Children born to teens are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school, and perform lower on standardized tests than children of older mothers. Arizona had the 6th highest teen birth rate in the nation in 2009.

- Along with La Paz County, Gila County has the second highest rate of teen pregnancies in Arizona in 2010.¹ Births to teen mothers represented nearly 17% of all births in Gila County in 2011.

Supporting Families

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are found in families across the social and economic spectrum. Social isolation, financial stress, poverty, substance abuse, and domestic violence are all factors that can lead to adults abusing children. Children who are victims of abuse or neglect experience higher rates of suicide, depression, substance abuse, difficulties in school, and other behavioral problems later in life, including a greater risk of mistreating their own children.

- The number of substantiated cases of child abuse in Gila County has dropped in recent years, but this may be due to budget cuts, staff decreases, and fewer investigations. In 2010, there were 4 substantiated cases of abuse, down from 35 in 2006. The most common form of abuse was child neglect.
- The number of children removed from the home by child protective services increased slightly between 2007 and 2010, from 57 to 68 in the First Things First Gila Region.

¹ Payson Roundup. (Aug. 13, 2010). County's teen birth rate 2nd in Arizona. Retrieved August 2010 from <http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/2010/reg/13/>

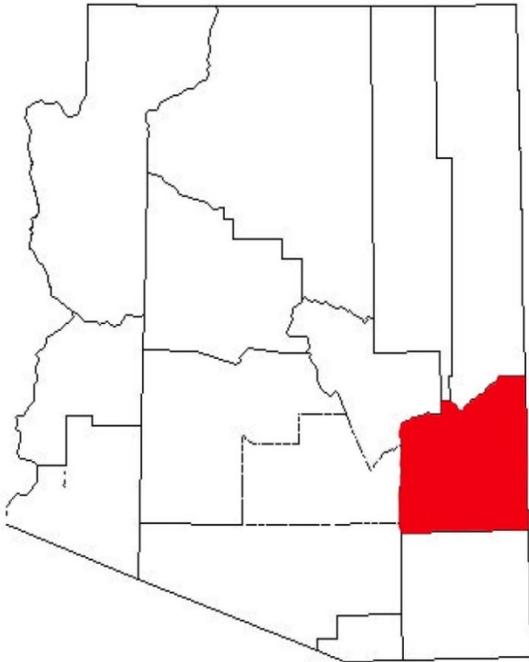
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details findings from the second Needs and Assets Assessment completed in 2012 for the Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council. This assessment will be used to help guide strategic planning and funding decisions of the Regional Council for the next year. This report also includes pertinent comparisons with data from previous years to provide additional perspectives and background information on this region.

Region Description

Graham and Greenlee Counties cover 6,467 square miles of south-east Arizona. Graham County is located in the Upper Gila River Valley where the San Simon River and the Gila River meet. It is located approximately 160 highway miles east of Phoenix and 125 miles northeast of Tucson. The cities of Graham County include Safford, Thatcher, Pima, and smaller surrounding communities such as Bryce, Klondyke, Solomon, Ft. Thomas, and Bonita. Greenlee County is located directly east of Graham County and includes the cities of Clifton, Morenci, and Duncan. Exhibit 1 shows the location of Graham and Greenlee Counties in the state.

Exhibit 1. Location of Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council



Demographics

Graham and Greenlee Counties have a combined population of 46,657 people, with the majority (37,220) of them residing in Graham County. Approximately 5% of the population of Graham County and 8% of the population of Greenlee County is 0-5 years of age. The regions are ethnically and racially diverse, with approximately 29% of births in Graham County and 47% of births in Greenlee County to Hispanic/Latino mothers. Of the births in 2010 in Graham County, 15% were to mothers who were American Indian or Alaskan Native compared to 2% in Greenlee County. Just over half (52%) of the families in Graham County self-identify as white/Non-Hispanic, while in Greenlee County nearly half (49%) self-identify in this way. The families who make up this region are also diverse in composition. Families include a significant number of teen parents, making up 18% of births in Graham County and 16% in Greenlee County in 2010; both rates are well above the state average of 11%. In Graham County, 9% of family households are female-headed, exceeding the 7% average of the state as a whole.

Economic Circumstances

In regard to economic circumstances, 16% of families in Graham County lived below the federal poverty line in 2010 and this percent increases to 22% for families with children under the age of 5 and 49% for single-parent, female-headed households with children under the age of 5. This suggests that female-headed households with children, particularly young children, constitute a high need population in the region. Graham and Greenlee County School Districts also show wide variability in the prevalence of poverty. It is estimated that 26% of children under 18 years of age in Graham County and 17% in Greenlee County live in poverty. The median gross annual income in Graham County was \$49,694, which is a 44% increase from 2000 to 2010. However, this number is still approximately 15% below the statewide median income of \$58,277. Data for Greenlee County, suggests that this county has a higher average income than Graham County.

It is important to consider the current national economic climate when assessing the needs and assets of local regions. The nation is in recovery from one of the worst economic recessions in recent history and families and children nationwide continue to be impacted. The families in Graham and Greenlee Counties are no exception. In 2007, most Graham County communities had unemployment rates of approximately 4% or less. However, the county's overall unemployment rate rose to a high of 14.7% in 2009 before moderating to 13.5% in 2010 and 11.1% in 2011.

Slightly lower rates observed since June 2011 suggest that unemployment may be starting to moderate in Graham County. In Greenlee County, the rates rose from 3.2% in 2007 to 18.5% in 2008, but decreased in the last two years. The 2011 rate of 8.6% remains well above the 2007 pre-recession rate but is less compared to 9.1% in 2009.

The rates for the last seven months of 2011 suggest that unemployment rates in Graham and Greenlee Counties are gradually easing, although they still remain high. Unemployment rates in these counties as of December 2011 were 10.0% and 8.2%, respectively.

Net job flow data emphasizes the challenges that many families in the region are facing. In Graham County, from the fourth quarter of 2009 through the third quarter of 2010, there was a net increase of 1,784 jobs that followed three quarters of net job losses. In Greenlee County, there was a net increase of 509 jobs across the four quarters of 2010 that followed five quarters of net job losses.

Many families rely on benefits to help them survive unemployment or low income. The number of families with children ages 0-5 receiving SNAP benefits increased by 51% in Graham County and 78% in Greenlee County from January 2007 to July 2011. In most of the region's communities, 45% or more of school children are enrolled in a free or reduced school lunch program. In addition, the number of children enrolled in the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program increased in June 2011 in a majority of the region's communities, after showing a decrease in January 2010.

Educational Indicators

Research suggests that a mother's education level can have important implications for the educational progress of their youth. From 2006 to 2010, the educational level of mothers in Graham and Greenlee Counties has mostly followed a positive trend. The percentage of mothers in Graham County with 1-4 years of college has increased from 25% in 2007 to 34% in 2010 and the percentage of mothers with at least one year of college increased dramatically from 18% in 2009 to 29% in 2010. However, the fact that 21% of mothers in both counties did not have a high school diploma in 2010 constitutes a reason for concern.

Other important educational indicators include assessments of kindergarten readiness, special education needs, standardized test scores, and graduation rates. Third grade AIMS scores reveal a great deal of variation in performance by school district, which suggests varying levels of school readiness and academic progress in these counties. As a whole, 69% of Graham County and 63% of Greenlee County students met or exceeded academic targets in math in 2011; further, 78% and 85%, respectively, met or exceeded targets in reading. Math scores for 2011 have dropped compared to 2009 figures, when 74% in Graham County and 81% in Greenlee County met or exceeded targets. On the other hand, reading scores in 2011 show improvement over 2009 scores when 77% and 76%, respectively, of students met or exceeded targets.

Two of the largest groups of students with special education needs are English Language Learners (ELL) and those with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Data shows that the highest concentration of children ages 3-5 years with an IEP is in Safford Unified School District. This school district also has the highest concentration of preschool and elementary ELL students.

High school graduation rates show longer term outcomes for students enrolled in these districts. The Graham/Greenlee Region's high school graduation rates vary widely over time, both within schools and across schools. From 2005 to 2010, a movement of 10% or more in the graduation rate in a single year was common for many schools. For example, the rate at Clifton High School was 8% in 2009 and 38% in 2010. In a single year, 2009, high school graduation

rates in Graham/Greenlee Region ranged from 47% for Mt. Graham High School to 97% for Morenci Junior/Senior High School. However, for most of 2005 to 2010, Morenci Jr./Sr. H.S., Safford H.S., and Thatcher H.S. had a graduation rate of near or above 90%.

Early Care and Education

A majority of children from birth to six years of age in the United States participate in regular, out of home child care, which highlights the importance of ensuring quality care for positive early childhood development and youth outcomes. There is one nationally accredited early care and education center in the Graham/Greenlee Region, the same number as in 2010 but down from two in 2008. There were also a total of 10 licensed child care facilities in the Graham/Greenlee Region, down from 12 in 2010. The region's licensed facilities had a combined capacity of 523 children. The largest percentage (51%) of this capacity was in Safford, followed by Morenci (19%), Duncan (12%), Pima (11%), and Clifton (7%). The data suggests that some areas in the region lack ADHS-licensed facilities and, therefore, efforts to promote increased licensure are warranted.

Examination of child care assistance data by Graham and Greenlee County zip codes reveals large decreases from 2010 levels in both numbers of families and children receiving child care assistance and percentages of eligible families and children that received assistance. In January 2011, 76 out of 97 eligible families (78%) and 108 out of 136 eligible children (79%) received child care assistance. In July 2011, the number of both eligible and receiving families further decreased, however a higher percentage of eligible families were receiving assistance. A total of 75 out of 79 eligible families (95%) and 110 out of 116 eligible children (95%) were receiving assistance as of July 2011. The State of Arizona started turning away eligible families and placing them on a waiting list in February 2009. Examination of 2010 and 2011 wait list data for child care assistance shows that the number of families and children on wait lists in Graham County was lower in January and July 2011 than the total in 2010. However, that number did not further decrease across the two 2011 time points.

Family Support Programs

Family Support is a broad system of programs, services, and collaborations designed with the goal of helping families function to their potential. Family support programs and services approach this goal in a variety of ways.

Data from the First Things First 2008 Family and Community Survey provide insight into parents' perception of services currently available in the region and their knowledge of child development. Most (95%) of Graham and Greenlee region parents surveyed were somewhat or very satisfied with the information available to them about children's development and health. However, approximately 43% of parents expressed moderate or strong dissatisfaction with how agencies that serve young children and families work together and communicate. A majority (75% or more) of parents surveyed in the region agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to locate the services they needed and that the services they received were very good. However, 30%-40% of parents did not feel the services met all their families' needs and felt that they only received services after their needs were qualified as severe.

Approximately 40% of parents did not know if they were eligible to receive services. While suggesting some concerns with service access and availability, most of these percentages are below the statewide figures. Larger percentages of the region's parents answered correctly on 11 of 22 questions concerning child development on the survey than did parents statewide. However, the relatively low level of some scores indicates that continued efforts are still needed in the Graham and Greenlee Region to educate parents about child development.

Child Abuse/Neglect, Foster Care, and Juvenile Justice

The number of reports and substantiations of child abuse can indicate an increased need for family support. The number of reports of child abuse in the Graham and Greenlee region fluctuated from October 2008 to October 2010, ranging from 86 to 98 reports for each six-month period in Graham County and 12 to 20 in Greenlee County. The number of new removals from the home ranged from one to eight for each six month period for Graham County, with the highest number being for the most recent period. For Greenlee County, the number of new removals for the five reported periods ranged from zero to three, with one occurring in the most recent 6-month period.

Foster care families and youth in the juvenile justice system may require specific services or support. According to the Arizona Department of Economic Security's most recent report, no children in Graham County entered out-of-home care that had prior placements in the previous 12 months (a decrease a year earlier) and only two children entered out-of-home care who had a prior placement in the previous 12 to 24 months. For Greenlee County, no children entering out-of-home care were reported during this time frame. According to the Administrative Office of the Courts, 313 juveniles in Graham County and 82 juveniles in Greenlee County were referred to the Arizona Court System in Fiscal Year 2010. Of these youth, less than half (41%) received standard probation. Approximately 16% of cases were dismissed, one case received a penalty only, 7% entered Juvenile Intensive Probation Services, and 3% were committed to ADJC. The number of young people in a region's juvenile justice system may to some degree be taken as a measure of the efficacy of early child development and programs in a region.

Health Coverage and Utilization

With the high costs associated with health care, most families are dependent on health insurance to cover needed services. The most critical factor affecting the number of children enrolled in KidsCare has been the statewide freeze on KidsCare enrollment, which was in effect from January 1, 2010 to May 1, 2012. No new applications for KidsCare were processed during that period; only renewals were accepted. Furthermore, eligible families that applied for KidsCare after the freeze were placed on a waiting list. Data show that from February 2008 to February 2012, KidsCare enrollment decreased by 78% in Graham County and 70% in Greenlee County. Arizona experienced an even more dramatic decrease in KidsCare enrollment of 81%, from 63,580 children enrolled in 2008 to 12,147 enrolled in 2012. This drop in enrollment most likely reflects program cutbacks than a decreased need for services.

Renewed enrollment in KidsCare, now known as KidsCare2, began on May 1, 2012 as a result of new funding from three large Arizona hospitals. It is likely that some of the children on the waiting list who reside in this region will be enrolled in the program.

Healthy Births

A mother's lifestyle while pregnant, as well as her access to and utilization of prenatal and perinatal care, have important short and long-term implications for the health of her child. It is recommended that a woman access monthly medical care from the beginning of her pregnancy. Arizona Department of Health Services data from 2006 to 2010 show that the region was below the state average in the percentage of women who received more than nine visits during pregnancy. However, slightly fewer women in these counties reported no prenatal visits, as compared to the statewide average.

Teen mothers often face added pre-natal and perinatal challenges. Teen birth rates are higher in Graham and Greenlee communities than state and national averages. Overall, there were 35 births to unmarried mothers under the age of 17 in this region. Over half of these births were paid for by public health insurance.

Examining 2010 data on prenatal practices of pregnant women and characteristics of births, the Graham/Greenlee Region compares somewhat unfavorably to the state as a whole. More than twice as many women in the region use tobacco during pregnancy than the state as a whole. Births with abnormal conditions are almost three times more likely to occur in Graham and Greenlee Counties than in Arizona. However, the rate for infants admitted to newborn intensive care units was lower than the statewide rate in both counties.

Low birth-weight babies are at risk for serious health problems that may affect their life-long health. In 2010, the percentage of babies born in the region classified as low birth-weight newborns did not differ significantly from the state average of 7%. In Graham County, 5% of babies born in 2010 were classified as low birth-weight newborns and 10% of babies were classified as such in Greenlee County.

Other Health Indicators

Immunizations are shown to be a health measure with the most important contributions to public health in the past century. For most immunizations of children ages 15-59 months, both Graham and Greenlee Counties are at or above state immunization rates. Data for children ages 12-24 months old who received the 3:2:2:2 vaccination series show there was large variation in completion, ranging from 49% in zip code 85540 (Morenci) to 100% in 85536 (Ft. Thomas). In a majority of zip codes, 61% to 76% of children ages 12-24 months received a complete series of vaccines.

Developmental screening is another family health practice that is essential to ensure that children grow and develop optimally. From 2008-2010, the percentage of infants and toddlers who received Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) was slightly higher in Graham and Greenlee Counties than in the rest of Arizona.

Over the last 50 years, the United States has seen significant declines in infant and child mortality, however, many deaths still occur that are the result of preventable injuries. In Graham County, two child deaths were reported in 2010, the cause of one child death was a motor vehicle accident and a second due to accidental drowning or submersion. In Greenlee County, no deaths were reported in 2010 for children ages one to 14. For the years of 2004 to 2010, the most common causes of childhood death in the region were motor vehicle accidents, accidental drowning or submersion, and congenital malformations.

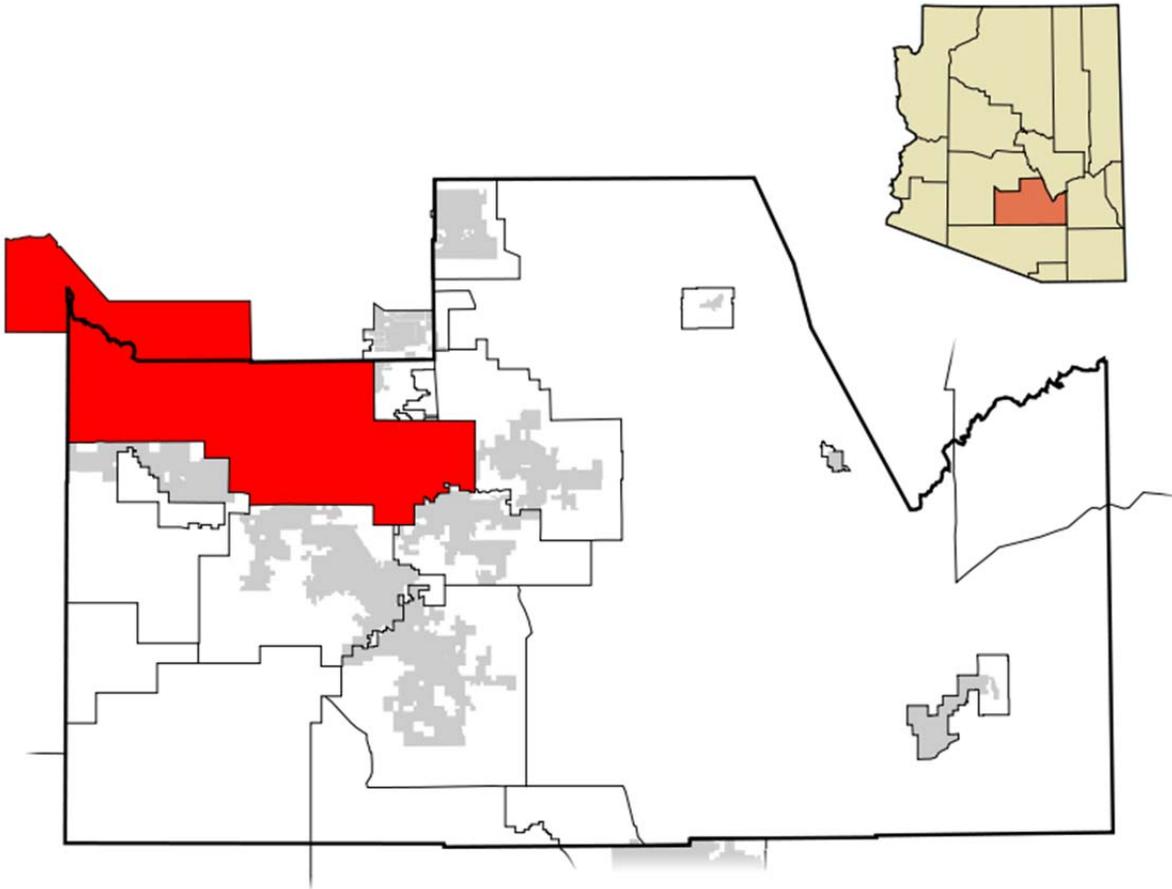
Hospital admittance for asthma issues may sometimes result from inadequate preventative illness management or poor environmental conditions in the home. In 2010, a total of 35 youth ages zero to 15 years old received an inpatient discharge with asthma as the first-listed diagnosis in the Graham/Greenlee Region.

In 2008, the First Things First Family and Community Survey asked parents in Graham and Greenlee Counties to report on the ways they keep up-to-date on their child's health. Parents in all localities most frequently reported keeping up to date through either scheduled immunizations or during a doctor's visit. Numerous parents in the region noted that they did not have health insurance and, therefore, primarily dealt with emergencies as they arose rather than seeking preventive care.

Executive Summary

The Pinal Regional Partnership lies within the boundaries of Pinal County, Arizona, excluding lands of the Gila River Indian Community, Tohono O’odham Tribe and San Carlos Apache Reservation. The dark-shaded area in the Region map below depicts the Gila River Indian Community, the light-shaded area depicts incorporated areas, and areas that are not shaded depict unincorporated areas within the Pinal Region.

Map of Pinal County



Note. From Pinal County 2008 Comprehensive Plan Amendments.PDF *CAAG Pinal Planning Commissioners Presentation.pdf Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pinal_County_Arizona_Incorporated_and_Unincorporated_areas_GRIC_highlighted.svg

The communities of the Region are diverse in population density (defined as number of people living within one square mile), from a low of 48.3 within the Ak-Chin Indian Community to a high of 2,903.1 in, Florence Arizona (Florence population density includes the prison population) (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2010). In Pinal County, the population increased by over 100 percent between 2000 and 2009, which far outpaced Arizona’s overall population growth of 25 percent. This population growth occurred primarily in the central and western portion of the Region, while the eastern side still contains vast expanses of undeveloped public lands and isolated rural communities. From 2009 to 2010, however, the communities of

Kearny, Mammoth, and Superior experienced a rapid decline in population, an indication of the degree to which these communities have been impacted by the economic downturn.

Key Demographic and Economic Findings

- Roughly eight percent of the Region's population is comprised of children under five years-old.
- Teen births have steadily declined from 16 percent of all births in 2004 to ten percent in 2010.
- In 2010, 58 percent of grandparents in Pinal County report having primary care-giving responsibilities for one or more of their grandchildren, compared to 44 percent statewide.
- Between 2008 and 2010, an average of 17 percent of families with children under the age of five years was living below the federal poverty level, up from an average of 11 percent over 2006 to 2008.
- In 2011, the percent of economically disadvantaged students surpassed 50 percent in the majority of school districts in Pinal County.
- The unemployment rate in the Region dropped from 11 percent in 2010 to ten percent in 2011, however the average wage rate of new hires remains stagnant.
- The number of families in the Region receiving developmental disability services has risen from just over 200 families in 2007 to over 350 families in 2010.

Key Education Findings

- The percentage of Pinal County mothers with 1-4 years of college has increased from 38 percent in 2006 to 49 percent in 2010, while the number of mothers with no high school diploma has decreased from 30 percent in 2006 to 18 percent in 2010.
- Compared to statewide and national figures, Pinal County has a higher percentage of educated adults who have graduated high school, have some college experience, or hold an Associate's Degree.
- However, the percentage of adults in Pinal County with a Bachelor's or graduate level degree is lower than the statewide and national average.
- Sixty-three 63 percent of students in Pinal County either met or exceeded proficiency standards for math in 2011, which is a slight decrease from 67 percent in 2007.
- However, 72% of Pinal County students met or exceeded proficiency standards for reading in 2011, which is an increase from 67 percent in 2007.
- High school graduation rates in Pinal County have continued to increase since 2006.

Key Early Child Care Findings

- Over 30 Early Care Providers are currently enrolled in Quality First!
- The number of families in the Region who qualified for Child Care Assistance has decreased from 1,137 in 2010 to 648 as of July 2011.
- Eighty-nine percent of families eligible for Child Care Assistance were receiving this assistance as of July 2011.
- The number of families on the Child Care Assistance waiting list also dropped from 243 families in 2010 to 146 families as of July 2011.
- Forty-eight child care staff in Pinal County completed a combined 240 hours of professional training for child care.

Key Family Support Findings

- A majority (70 percent or more) of parents surveyed in the Pinal Region agreed or strongly agreed that it is easy to locate needed services and that services received are high quality and culturally appropriate.
- A substantial portion of parents surveyed in the Pinal Region expressed moderate or strong dissatisfaction with how family and child service providers work together and communicate.
- Sixty-three percent of surveyed parents felt there was a repetition in the paperwork required to obtain services.
- Only 82 percent of infants and toddlers referred to Arizona Early Intervention Program services were assessed and received their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) within 45 days of their referral, which is shy of the 100 percent federal mandate.
- One hundred percent of families participating in early intervention services reported that these services helped to keep them informed of their rights, surpassing the state's target of 91 percent.
- Sixty-two percent of children referred to Arizona Early Intervention Program services actually received these services.

Key Health Findings

- For children aged 19 to 59 months, the immunization rates in Pinal County are higher than the statewide rate, with the exception of 3+ HepB immunizations.
- However, immunization rates kindergarten aged children in the county are below state averages, with a significant discrepancy for Varicella immunizations.
- Regionally, 71 percent of children aged 12 to 24 months received their 3222 (DTAP vaccine, dose three, IPV vaccine, dose two, HIB vaccine, dose two, and HEPB vaccine, dose two), vaccination series in 2010.
- Regionally, 47 percent of children aged 19 to 35 months received their 431331 (4 DTaP, 3 polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 HepB, 1 Varicella) Vaccination Series in 2010.
- Compared to statewide data, Pinal County had the lowest rate of child fatalities with about 40 deaths per 100,000 residents.



FIRST THINGS FIRST

**Maricopa Regional Partnership Councils
Regional Needs and Assets Reports
Executive Summaries**

**Central Maricopa
Northeast Maricopa
Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community
Southeast Maricopa
Southwest Maricopa**

Executive Summary

The Central Maricopa Regional Partnership Council supports the needs of young children in the section of Maricopa County including the cities of Tempe and Chandler, the town of Guadalupe, the Ahwatukee neighborhood of Phoenix, and the unincorporated area of Sun Lakes. According to the 2010 US Census, the population of the region was 501,632, of whom 37,448 were young children under the age of six.

The number of children under six in the region decreased slightly from the 2000 Census to the 2010 Census. In Chandler, however, there were about 2,500 more children in 2010 than there were in 2000.

Although the majority (87%) of the young children in the region live with one or both parents, about 5,000 were living in households that did not include either parent.

In Guadalupe, about 38 percent of children under the age of six live in their grandparent's household. These households may be multi-generational, including grandparents, parents, and the young children; or they may be grandparents raising grandchildren without the parents present.

In Chandler and Tempe, more than three-quarters of all households use English as the language of the home. In Guadalupe, in contrast, only 20 percent of households use English at home. The majority of the Guadalupe households contain at least one adult who speaks English well, but some are linguistically isolated.

The Central Maricopa Region has a smaller proportion of Hispanic population than the state as a whole (20% versus 30%), and a greater proportion of Asian or Pacific Islander residents (7% versus 3%).

Although the region is generally better off economically than much of the state, there are low-income families, largely in Guadalupe, northern Tempe, and downtown Chandler. About 63 percent of the young children in Guadalupe—and 27 percent of those in Tempe—live in poverty. An estimated 24 percent of the children in the region are in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). About 39 percent of all children under five participate in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program.

One indicator of school readiness or educational achievement is how well older children in the region perform on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) tests in the third grade. In the Tempe School District, the AIMS scores are close to the state averages in both reading and math. The scores are above the state averages in the Chandler and Kyrene districts. In Tempe, 5 percent of third-graders fell “far below standards” in reading; in the other districts, only 2 percent did so.

According to state surveys, there are 211 licensed child care centers in the region, of which 11 are Head Start centers. In addition, there are 32 certified home-based locations and 61

registered (but unregulated) home providers. There are an estimated 40 centers participating in First Things First's Quality First program, most at the two-star level. Head Start enrollment in the East Valley (including the Southeast and Northeast FTF regions) is 1,276 three- and four-year olds; an additional 179 younger children are enrolled in Early Head Start.

Qualitative data suggest that many families rely on kith-and-kin care. Child care is a major expense for many families, especially those who have low incomes but do not qualify for assistance.

Child care staff in the region have a variety of options for professional development. Several campuses of the Maricopa Community Colleges offer associates degrees in early childhood studies. In addition, Central Arizona College offers online associate's degrees relevant to early childhood education, and online coursework that prepares students to apply for a Child Development Associates (CDA) credential. The Central Maricopa Regional Planning Council funded 125 T.E.A.C.H. scholarships in the past year.

According to data collected by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), the birthrates in the region are close to the state average of 16 births per thousand residents. Birthrates are a bit higher in Guadalupe (23 per thousand) and lower in Ahwatukee (11 per thousand).

Expectant mothers in Chandler and Ahwatukee are very likely to receive prenatal care early in pregnancy. Guadalupe and Tempe, however, do not meet the national Healthy People 2020 target of 78 percent of mothers beginning care in the first trimester. Nearly ten percent of mothers in Guadalupe receive fewer than five prenatal-care visits. Infant mortality in Tempe is higher than the HP 2020 target.

Lack of insurance coverage can be a barrier to receiving health care. In the state and in Maricopa County, the number of children covered by KidsCare has declined sharply in the past three years. With the recent establishment of KidsCare II, the number covered is expected to rise.

Children with special needs receive services from the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) and from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). In the Region, 422 children were served by AzEIP and 666 were served by DDD during 2010.

Immunization rates among preschool children in the Central Maricopa Region are lower than in the state as a whole.

Oral health services for young children seem to be available, even to low-income parents, through family resource centers and through Chandler Regional Medical Center.

Home visitation programs are one way for parents to become better informed about the health and education needs of their young children, especially in locations where community-based services are less common. The region also has a rich network of family resource centers funded

by First Things First, which provide families across the region with a variety of services, including parent education and enrollment assistance for programs such as AHCCCS.

The state Child Protective Services (CPS) reported that at least 290 children were removed from their homes in the region during 2010. Although local quantitative data are hard to obtain, domestic violence, parental incarceration, and homelessness are also challenges for some families in the region.

Significant assets in the region include the network of family resource centers, home-visitation programs, Head Start, nearby primary and specialist health-care providers, strong school districts, professional development opportunities, the Quality First initiative, and a strong sense of community in the towns that comprise the region.

Significant challenges identified in this report include low immunization rates, the expense of quality child care, and problems associated with unemployment, incarceration, and other family crises. Qualitative data suggest that outreach to families in need could be improved, not only in Guadalupe but throughout the region.

Executive Summary

The Region and the People

The Northeast Maricopa First Things First Region includes highly populated cities, tribal land, small rural towns and wilderness preserves. The area stretches over 40 miles from north to south and 30 miles from east to west. The region includes the following communities: Carefree, Cave Creek, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Fountain Hills, Paradise Valley, Rio Verde, and Scottsdale. The region also includes recreation areas such as the Phoenix Mountain Preserve and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve—the largest urban wilderness area in the United States.

There were more than 330,000 people in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region in 2010. The population of children birth through five living in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region has declined with an estimated 20,064 children in 2000 and 17,258 in 2010, a 16% decrease. In the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region, a large majority (73%) of children birth through five were White, followed by 15% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Asian, 2% Black or African American and 1% American Indian. The majority of the population five years and over spoke English at home (85%) in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region.

The Face of Poverty

Income

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack adequate food, become victims of crime and violence, and lack basic health care. They are at significant risk for dropping out of school early, poor academic performance, behavior problems in school, lower levels of literacy, and lower educational attainment. Arizona had the fifth highest child poverty rate in the nation in 2010, with 1 out of 4 children living in poverty.

What does the economy look like for local children and their families?

- In the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region, more than 1 out of 10 children (11%) were living in poverty according to the 2006-2010 Census Estimates.
- There is wide income inequality within the Northeast Maricopa Region. For example, the median income for a married couple in the Cave Creek Unified school district was \$140,094, compared with \$43,315 for a female headed household with no husband present in the Scottsdale Unified school district.
- Median married-couple family income overall in the County was \$78,241 in 2010.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate as defined by the International Labour Organization measures the number of people who are without jobs and who have actively sought work within the past four weeks.² The unemployment rate is calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by all individuals currently in the labor force. While the unemployment rate provides some measure of a community's economic well-being, it does not capture those who have stopped looking for work, who are underemployed, or struggling to make ends meet.

Do parents have jobs?

- Unemployment was at 6.6% in the region in 2010, and recently dropped slightly to 5.9% in 2011. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for the state of Arizona was 9.3% in 2011.

Economic Supports

Going without basic needs such as food, housing, child care, health care, or clothing can have short and long-term consequences to residents' health and well-being. When children suffer from lack of food, it can lead to poor physical and mental health, difficulty learning, increased school absences, and lower test scores.

Can families meet their basic needs?

- The number of families with children birth through five living in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region receiving food stamps increased 58% between January 2007 and 2011. In January 2011, there were 1,666 children ages birth through five who received food stamps.
- The number of families with children birth through five in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) remained steady from January 2007 (123) to 2010 (124), but dropped in half (58) in 2011.

Are families losing their houses to foreclosure?

- Foreclosure rates varied within the region from a high of one in every 278 homes in Cave Creek to a low of one in 662 in Scottsdale's 85258 zip code.

Early Care and Education

The Early Childhood System

Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care, and in particular, subsidized care for low-income families, also provides critical support for working families.

² International Labour Organization. (1982). Resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statistics. Thirteenth International Conference on Labour Statistics.

Do parents have access to child care?

- Only about 4 out of every 10 children (44%) with working parents in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region had access to licensed child care in 2010.
- There was a 43% decrease in the number of families that were eligible for child care subsidies between January 2009 and January 2010, and a corresponding 46% decrease in the number of families receiving subsidies during this time. Approximately a quarter (25%) of the region's children who are eligible for subsidies do not actually receive them.
- The median daily cost of full-time child care is as high as \$41 per day or about \$10,660 per year. This is 14% of the Maricopa County median married couple income—and over a third (36%) of a single mother's income.

School Readiness and Success

Third grade reading scores are an excellent predictor of later school success, including high school graduation rates and career success.

Are children succeeding in school?

- Paradise Valley Unified School District had the largest percentage of children with 3rd grade reading scores that fell “far below” the AIMS reading proficiency standards (5% in 2011).
- There was variation in the percentage of 3rd graders passing the AIMS 3rd grade reading standard, with 93% of Cave Creek Unified School District 3rd graders, and 82% of Fountain Hills Unified School District 3rd graders passing the standard.
- Graduation rates varied in the region with 94% of Cave Creek Unified School District students graduating from high school in 2010, 93% in Fountain Hills Unified School District, 91% in Scottsdale School District, and 90% in Paradise Valley Unified School District.

Children with Special Needs

It's crucial to have early identification of children's special needs so that children can get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community.³ Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive and audio screenings are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth.

Are children receiving services for their special needs?

- Some communities in the region have no professionals or services for particular speech language needs. For example, Paradise Valley, Fountain Hills and Carefree have no hearing aid dispensaries, Carefree has no audiologists, and Paradise Valley and Fountain Hills have no speech language assistants. The vast majority of all speech language and hearing professionals and services are located in Scottsdale.

³ Steele, M.M. (2004). Making the Case for Early Identification and Intervention for Young Children at Risk for Learning Disabilities. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 32, 2, 75-79.

Health

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance

Children with a regular source of primary health care and health insurance have better health, receive more preventative care, and have lower rates of hospitalization in large part because they get treated for conditions before they become too serious.

Do children have health insurance in the region?

- About 13% of children and youth (ages 19 and younger) in Maricopa County and Arizona did not have health insurance in 2009.
- KidsCare enrollment decreased 44% with 13,669 children enrolled in February 2011, and 7,631 in February 2012 in Maricopa County.

How do parents perceive their children's health status?

- Parents of children birth through five in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region were more likely to say that they thought their child's health was "excellent" compared to Arizona parents, according to the 2008 Family and Community Survey.

Healthy Births

Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have better birth outcomes. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and five times more likely to die.

Are babies born healthy?

- There were 2,619 total births in the region in 2010.
- Approximately 8% of babies were born at low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) in the region compared to 7% in Arizona in 2010.

Teen Births

Teen mothers tend to give birth prematurely, have babies born at low birth weights, are less likely to complete high school, and have lower earning power in their careers. Children born to teens are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school, and perform lower on standardized tests than children of older mothers. Arizona had the 6th highest teen birth rate in the nation in 2009.

Do teenagers have high rates of giving birth?

- 4% of births in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region were to teen mothers. The highest percentage of teen births were on the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (13%), followed by Fountain Hills (4%) and Scottsdale (4%) in 2010.

Immunizations

Immunization requirements help to prevent against a number of serious and sometimes fatal vaccine-preventable diseases in young children. In Arizona, immunizations are a requirement for entry into kindergarten and children must be up-to-date with age-appropriate vaccinations in order to attend preschool or child care.

Are children being immunized?

- Only one-third (33%) of children ages 19 to 35 months had received the recommended vaccinations in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region in 2010. In comparison, over 50% of children in Arizona had completed the 4:3:1:3:3:1 immunization schedule in 2010.

Asthma

Many things can cause asthma, including allergens (mold, pollen, animals) and irritants (cigarette smoke and air pollution) as well as infections. Children have smaller airways than adults, which makes asthma especially serious for them. However, even severe asthma symptoms can be minimized with appropriate medical care.

Are children visiting the emergency room for asthma?

- In Maricopa County, emergency room visits for children birth through five due to asthma increased 9% from 7,505 cases in 2005 to 8,189 cases in 2010.

Supporting Families

Child Abuse

Child abuse and neglect are found in families across the social and economic spectrum. Social isolation, financial stress, poverty, substance abuse, and domestic violence are all factors that can lead to adults abusing children. Children who are victims of abuse or neglect experience higher rates of suicide, depression, substance abuse, difficulties in school, and other behavioral problems later in life, including a greater risk of mistreating their own children.

Are children experiencing abuse and neglect?

- There was a 17% increase in substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect across Maricopa County in the past five years, with 2,070 cases in 2010.
- Between April 1st and September 30th of 2011, there were 2,682 children removed from homes in Maricopa County, the highest number report since October 1st, 2008. Between April 1st and September 30th of 2011, 7% of those children had a prior removal in the 12 months previous.

Family and Community Supports

Community ties with friends and relatives are a principal means by which people and households get supportive resources to help raise their children.

Do families feel they have someone to turn to when they need support?

- Parents in the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Region reported most often relying on their spouse (75%), their child’s doctor or pediatrician (62%), and their mother (55%) for support in 2008.

Coordination of Services

It is important to know the perceptions of parents about early childhood services in the region so that First Things First can work with partner agencies to improve services and supports to parents.

What is the availability and quality of services and information?

- 98% of the region’s parents were “somewhat or very satisfied” with the information and resources available about children’s development and health in 2008.
- 91% of parent respondents reported that they “somewhat or strongly agreed” that it is easy to locate services that they need or want in 2008.
- Parents struggled with knowing whether they were eligible for services (55%), finding services to meet the needs of the whole family (31%), and finding preventive services (27%) in 2008.

Executive Summary

The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC/"Community") is a small community with cultural strengths and many challenges. Community stakeholders recognize significant assets, with culturally relevant and high quality services available for young children and their families. The Early Childhood Education Center is a focal point of these assets. Community members also confirm major barriers preventing access to services, including lack of awareness, lack of transportation, service hours that don't match families' needs, and program rules that leave families out.

Several key issues show improvement in recent years. The unemployment rate is down. Median incomes for families with children have risen and the poverty rate for single parent families fell. Fewer babies are born to teen moms and more pregnant women are getting adequate prenatal care.

More children are participating in programs at the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC); there are also more children on the waiting list for services. The Tribal cash assistance program -- referred to as the Life Enhancement and Resource Network (LEARN) -- has been able to serve a growing number of children and families without the dramatic cuts in eligibility affecting participants in the state program.

Babies born in the Community are more likely to start out with risks compared to babies born in other Indian communities in Arizona and Maricopa County overall. Their mothers are more likely to be teenagers with less than 12 years of education. Their mothers are less likely to be married and less likely to get adequate prenatal care. Nearly one out of five births in the Community in 2009 was to mothers who had inadequate prenatal care (fewer than five prenatal visits). This is extremely high compared to the rate in other Indian Communities in Arizona and Maricopa County overall. Nearly one in three women who gave birth during the last 12 months in the Community had less than a high school education compared to less than one in four women giving birth countywide and statewide.

The regional unemployment rate remains nearly double the overall rate in Maricopa County. One in four households with children lives in poverty. Young children in the region are much more likely to live with single moms or grandparents than young children in the rest of the county and the state. Many of these families face large financial and health risks.

Child vaccination rates are a strength in the region. Although these rates declined in SRPMIC between 2005 and 2010, they remain significantly higher than in Maricopa County overall. The percentage of births paid for by families themselves fell between 2005 and 2009. In 2009, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) paid for three out of four births in the region -- quite high compared to other Indian communities and Maricopa County overall.

The need for access to high quality, affordable child care is strong. Two out of three households with children in the region have all caregivers in the labor force. Community members value many assets in the region for young children and their families, including ECEC,

culture and literacy programs, health and wellness services, Family and Child Education (FACE), and on-site health care.

Parents and community stakeholders both identified key services that are missing in the Community: support for grandparents raising grandchildren, teen pregnancy prevention, parent coaching and mentoring, and high quality child care with alternative hours to meet families' needs.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The data and community input point to five potential priority areas for future First Things First funding and leadership in the region.

The first is a focus on strengthening awareness and information about existing programs and services for families with young children. Lack of awareness was frequently cited as a barrier preventing families from getting needed services.

The second is expansion of facilities and operations for child care and preschool services, including child care for parents who work alternative hours. The long waiting list for ECEC indicates the high need for these services.

The third is growth of services for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. "Grandfamilies" are more common in the Community than statewide and parents and stakeholders noted that there are very limited services available for them.

The fourth is enhancing mentoring and parenting education for new moms who are young, single, and uneducated. These moms and their babies face tremendous challenges throughout their lives together and linking them early with resources, education, and early childhood services can have significant and long lasting benefits.

The fifth is strengthening public transportation options, especially on weekends and evenings, to improve access to services. Lack of transportation was frequently cited by stakeholders and parents as a major barrier for families.

Executive Summary

The Southeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council supports the needs of young children in the section of Maricopa County which includes Mesa and Gilbert. The region also includes parts of Queen Creek and Apache Junction. According to the 2010 US Census, the population of the Region was 726,523, of whom 68,524 were young children under the age of six. The Southeast Maricopa Region is home to about one-eighth of Arizona's preschool-age children.

From 2000 to 2010, the number of children under six in the region increased by more than 12,000. Most of the growth was in Gilbert and Queen Creek.

Although the majority (86%) of the young children in the region live with one or both parents, nearly 10,000 were living in households that did not include either parent.

A language other than English is spoken in about 20 percent of the households in the region. Most of these households contain at least one adult who speaks English well, but some are linguistically isolated.

Although the region is generally better off economically than much of the state, there are low-income families, largely in neighborhoods in west Mesa and along East Main Street. About 20 percent of the young children in Mesa live in poverty, compared to 6 to 7 percent in Gilbert and Queen Creek. An estimated 30 percent of the children in the region are in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). About half of all children under five participate in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program.

One indicator of school readiness or educational achievement is how well older children in the region perform on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) tests in the third grade. In the Mesa School District, the AIMS scores are very close to the state averages in both reading and math. The scores are above the state averages in the Gilbert, Higley, and Queen Creek districts. In Mesa, 5 percent of third-graders fell "far below standards" in reading; in the other districts, only 2 to 3 percent did so.

According to state surveys, there are 255 licensed child care centers in the region, of which 17 are Head Start centers. In addition, there are 37 certified home-based locations and 80 registered (but unregulated) home providers. There are an estimated 53 centers participating in First Things First's Quality First program, most at the two-star level. Head Start enrollment is 1,276 three- and four-year olds; an additional 179 younger children are enrolled in Early Head Start.

Qualitative data suggest that many families rely on kith-and-kin care. Child care is a major expense for many families, especially those who have low incomes but do not qualify for assistance. Some Spanish-speaking families opt for kith-and-kin care for language or cultural reasons.

Child care staff in the region have a variety of options for professional development. Several campuses of the Maricopa Community Colleges offer associates degrees in early childhood studies. In addition, Central Arizona College offers a Child Development Associates (CDA) credential. The Southeast Maricopa Regional Planning Council funded 112 T.E.A.C.H. scholarships in the past year.

According to data collected by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), the birthrates in the region are close to the state average, except in Queen Creek. Over the past decade, Queen Creek has averaged 51 births per thousand residents per year, which is more than three times the state average (16 per thousand).

Expectant mothers in the region are likely to receive prenatal care early in pregnancy, at rates somewhat higher than the state as a whole, and exceeding the national Healthy People 2020 target of 78 percent of mothers beginning care in the first trimester. Few mothers in the region have fewer than five prenatal visits. Infant mortality in the region is also lower than the HP 2020 target.

Lack of insurance coverage can be a barrier to receiving health care. In the state and in Maricopa County, the number of children covered by KidsCare has declined sharply in the past three years. With the recent establishment of KidsCare II, the number covered is expected to rise.

Children with special needs receive services from the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) and from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). In the region, 756 children were served by AzEIP and 1,328 were served by DDD during 2010. Qualitative data indicate that more children might receive services if parents and health-care providers were more aware of the services available, and the importance of early intervention.

Immunization rates among preschool children in the Southeast Maricopa Region are lower than in the state as a whole.

Qualitative data on oral health services for young children suggest that there are few pediatric providers, and that many parents do not understand the importance of early oral health care. Home visitation programs are one way for parents to become better informed about the health and education needs of their young children, especially in locations where community-based services are less common.

The state Child Protective Services (CPS) reported that about 630 children were removed from their homes in the region during 2010. Although local quantitative data are hard to obtain, domestic violence, parental incarceration, and homelessness are also challenges for some families in the region.

Significant assets in the region include home-visitation programs, Head Start, numerous primary and specialist health-care providers, strong school districts, professional development

opportunities, the Quality First initiative, and motivation among providers and stakeholders to improve coordination of services.

Significant challenges identified in this report include shortages of pediatric psychiatrists and pediatric dentists, a lack of awareness by health-care providers of the services available for developmental delays, low immunization rates, the expense of quality child care, a shortage of child care and other services for linguistically isolated Spanish-speaking families, a need for parental education about supportive services, and problems in communication among regional providers.

Executive Summary

The Southwest Region of Maricopa represents 7.2% (274,866) of Maricopa County's total population (3,817,117) and 4.3% of Arizona's total population (6,392,017). Due to continual rapid population growth of its constituent cities, the region has almost tripled its size from 91,994 to 274,866 residents since the year 2000. Consequently, the Southwest Valley has witnessed extensive economic change.

The Southwest Maricopa County is the largest of the ten County regions, including the 10 communities of Arlington, Avondale, Buckeye, Gila Bend, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Luke AFB, Palo Verde, Tolleson and Tonopah, has grown in tandem with the rest of the Valley of the Sun; more than half of the cities within the Southwest Maricopa region sustained triple-digit population growth through the first decade of the 21st century. The Southwest Valley spans the diverse rural and urban communities that represent 2,141 square miles of land or 23.3 percent of Maricopa's total square miles of 9,200.14. However, the population density varies dramatically from emerging small urban communities of Avondale and Tolleson with population density above 1,000 persons per square mile to Gila Bend having less than five persons per square mile; thus illustrating the dramatic differences within the region.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 23,756 children under the age of five reside in the region, accounting for 8.6 percent of the total regional population. The number of children under the age of five has risen significantly over the last 10 years and represents more than a 220 percent increase since the year 2000 when the same population was estimated to be 7,392 and 8.0 percent of the total Southwest population.

Even though growing, the region is considered stable, as 96 percent report living in their homes for one year or longer.

Southwest Maricopa RPC Demographic Facts

- The Southwest Region represents 2,141 square miles, slightly more than 23 percent of Maricopa County.
- There are 274,866 persons residing within the Southwest region, representing 7.2 percent of the total number of people in Maricopa County and 4.3 percent of the total population in the state of Arizona.
- Over the last ten years the Southwest region experienced a 199 percent growth in population, while the Maricopa county population expanded ~24 percent in the last decade.
- One out of every ten children under the age of five in Maricopa County resides in the Southwest Maricopa region.
- The population of children under the age of five grew by 220 percent over the last decade.
- Approximately 41 percent of the persons living in the Southwest Maricopa region are of Hispanic origin, which surpasses the national Hispanic estimate of 16.3 percent of the total population.
- The average median age for the Southwest Maricopa residents is 32.4 years.

- Approximately 16 percent of the population is foreign born.

Southwest Regional Assets

- On average, the percent of family households lead by females is lower than the County or State averages, one of every 6.25 family households with children under the age of 5 have a female householder compared to approximately one out of every 5 for the county or state.
- The region has the largest region of expandable land in Maricopa County.
- The community is highly diverse; two out of every five residents in the Southwest Region are of Hispanic origin.
- There are extensive and growing resources and cross sector assets including libraries, schools, three new First Things First Community Centers, Maricopa County Head Start rated as a national center of excellence, and growing faith-based communities that support families and children.
- Neighborhoods and communities are experiencing a resurgence of financial stability and new housing construction is increasing in the region.
- Volunteerism and leadership is increasing and includes organizations for new mothers, children, and families.

Southwest Regional Problems

- Fastest growing region, exceeded all other regions in 10-year growth.
- The median age for the Southwest is 2 years younger than the Maricopa median age, 3 years younger than Arizona's age and 5 years younger than the national median age.
- The growth has exceeded many services including pediatric medical care. The region is considered medically under-served.
- Childhood immunization rates are below the national goal.
- Child care options are limited and localized.
- Vast rural areas do not have access to fresh foods.
- Public transportation does not meet the needs of many families.

Southwest Regional Needs

- Increased options for affordable child care at night and during weekends.
- Increased preschool programs for children 3-5.
- Increased opportunities for diverse service providers to the ethnically and racially diverse populations.
- Increased cultural competence of care providers and service facilitators.
- Continued public school improvement in diverse communities.
- Increased health surveillance including rates of full immunization.
- Increased pediatric and specialty care.
- Continued public awareness of First Things First mission, vision, and community initiatives.

Southwest Regional Priorities

- **Improving the quality of early care and education.** In our region, 20 child care centers and homes are enrolled in Quality First, which provides support; funding and education to help them better serve the children in their care. And, because so many children spend their early years in informal child care situations, the Arizona Kith & Kin program offers valuable skills and training to family and friend caregivers.
- **Partnering with families through one-stop family resource centers.** These three centrally located resource centers offer families with few transportation resources convenient access to parent education classes and additional service connections.
- **Parent Education.** Parents learn how to ensure their child is developing in a healthy way through in-person and on-line parenting skills seminars.
- **School Readiness.** Serving each community's distinct needs is a major goal of First Things First—reaching out to children and families in ways that will best offer support so that all Arizona children can start school ready to learn, be successful and reach their full potential.



FIRST THINGS FIRST

**Northeast Regional Partnership
Councils
Regional Needs and Assets Reports
Executive Summaries**

**Coconino
Navajo/Apache
White Mountain Apache Tribe
Yavapai**

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Coconino Regional Partnership Council of First Things First is to:

“build and sustain an early care education and health system in the rural Coconino County, Hopi, Havasupai, Kaibab Paiute, and Winslow Region that produces extraordinary results in preparing all children, so that they may maximize their potential throughout their early years including intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, spiritual, physical, and academic experiences.”

This Needs and Assets Report helps us to build that better future for all children, from birth through five years old. With this document, we have the research necessary to make educated and appropriate decisions that are in the best interests of the children and their families of our region.

We know from our current and previous research that children and their families in the First Things First Coconino Region need more quality, affordable child care services, supports to increase school readiness and school performance, additional services for children with disabilities, and more health care providers. Families also need services and community resources that are linguistically and culturally appropriate and available at times and locations that are convenient for families.

The First Things First Coconino Regional Partnership Council recognizes the importance of investing in young children and empowering parents, grandparents, and caregivers to advocate for services and programs within the region.

A strong focus throughout the First Things First Coconino Region in the past year has been to improve oral health, improve the quality of and access to child care, improve service delivery and coordination of services, and increase understanding of early child care, health, and education needs in the three tribal areas. This report provides basic data points that will aid the Council’s decisions and funding allocations for the coming years while building a true comprehensive statewide early childhood system.

First Things First is committed to providing the best support needed in early childhood development and health throughout our region.

METHODOLOGY

Primary Data

Community progress depends upon consistent, reliable, and scientifically accurate sources of data. One of the types of data gathered for this project was primary data from a *Face-to-Face Parent Survey* of a sample of parents of young children (birth through five) in the First Things First Coconino Region. In all, 1,109 unique 10 to 15 minute long self-administered surveys were completed over a three-week period, from March 22, 2010 to April 8, 2010.

A convenience sampling approach was used, whereby trained surveyors went to different target locations and events where there would be a strong presence of young children and their families and asked caregivers to complete the survey. Surveyors also reached out to individuals that they knew including family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers who had children ages birth through five.

Secondary Data

Secondary (pre-existing) data were collected from a variety of sources, including but not limited to: the U.S. Census; the Arizona Department of Health Services; the Arizona Department of Economic Security; the Arizona Department of Education; Northern Arizona Council of Governments Head Start; the Hopi Tribe; and other local, state, and federal agencies. Additional data were provided by First Things First for inclusion in the Needs and Assets Report.

The First Things First Coconino Region is a complicated region for which to collect representative data. County-level data were not always accurate for the purposes of the report as they included some areas that were not part of the First Things First Coconino Region while they excluded other areas of the region. Further, the region is divided into six community hubs for additional analysis and comparison. Therefore, whenever possible, every effort was made to collect data for individual community hubs including the Northern Hub, the Havasupai Hub, the Grand Canyon Hub, the Hopi Hub, the Southern Hub, and the Winslow Hub. While all efforts were made to find community hub and region specific data, some data were not available at these levels, so proxy data were used whenever necessary. All efforts were made to collect data for children ages birth through five years old, but sometimes that was not possible, so data for children under 4, or children under 18 were also used. Whenever possible, data were collected for multiple years to provide trend lines to better gauge the direction of quality of life for that particular issue area. Permission was not granted to report exclusively on the Havasupai community. Therefore, individual data for the Havasupai Tribe was not included in this report, yet efforts were not made to remove Havasupai data from county- or region-level data.

THE REGION AND THE PEOPLE

The First Things First Coconino Region is a remote region spread across miles of state highway in Northern Arizona, crossing three different county lines (Coconino, Navajo, and Mohave). This region consists of the city of Winslow, the Hopi Tribe, the Havasupai Tribe, the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indian Tribe, and much of Coconino County. This region is divided into six smaller community hubs each with their own identifying characteristics.

- The total population for the First Things First Coconino Region was about 125,000 individuals in 2010.
- There were approximately 10,450 children ages birth through five in the region in 2010.
- Almost 65% of this region's children ages birth through five lived in the Southern Hub (Flagstaff, Munds Park, Parks, Williams).
- The population of children ages birth through five was mostly White (39%), American Indian (30%), and Hispanic or Latino (25%) in 2010.
- The majority of the population five and older (75%) spoke only English at home, while 8% spoke Spanish, and 15% spoke a Native North American language.

- 23% of families with children ages birth through five were in single-mother households in 2010.
- 18% of children birth through five were living in a household with a grandparent householder, higher than the state as a whole (14%) in 2010.

Economic Circumstances

Poverty and Income

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack adequate food, become victims of crime and violence, and lack basic health care. They are at significant risk for dropping out of school early, having poor academic performance, exhibiting behavior problems in school, having lower levels of literacy, and having lower educational attainment.

1 out of 4 children (23%) ages birth through five living in Coconino County were living in poverty, according to 2006-2010 U.S. Census estimates.

- Two out of three (63%) children ages birth through five living on the Hopi Reservation were living in poverty. Page (31%) and Williams (28%) also had a higher percentage of children ages birth through five living in poverty than Coconino County overall (23%).
- The median family income was \$75,502 for married couple families in Coconino County, according to 2006-2010 US Census estimates.
- The median family income for single female households was \$24,003 in Coconino County, and \$26,377 in Arizona overall, according to US Census 2006-2010 estimates.

Food Insecurity

When children suffer from lack of food, it can lead to poor physical and mental health, difficulty learning, increased school absences, and lower test scores. This makes children more likely to suffer from poverty when they become adults.

Approximately 1 in 4 children in Coconino County lived in families that didn't have enough food to eat in 2009.

- Approximately 27% of children in Coconino County lived in "food insecure families" where at least one member had gone without food at some point in the year in 2009 because their family could not afford it.
- Between 43% and 80% of children in school districts in the First Things First Coconino Region were eligible for free and reduced price meals in 2011.
 - Fredonia-Moccasin Unified School District had the highest percentage of children eligible for free and reduced priced meals (80%) in 2011.

Basic Needs

Going without basic needs such as food, housing, child care, health care, or clothing can have short and long-term consequences to residents' health and well-being.

1 in 4 parents surveyed in the region in 2010 said they went without basic needs in the last year.

- The First Things First-Coconino Region Parent Survey showed that over one-quarter (27%) of parents (or primary caregivers) with children ages birth through five went without basic needs in the past 12 months.
 - The most common basic needs that respondents lacked were: medical care (53%), child care (28%), food (25%), and utilities (23%).

Unemployment

The unemployment rate as defined by the International Labour Organization measures the number of people who are without jobs and who have actively sought work within the past four weeks. The unemployment rate is calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by all individuals currently in the labor force. While the unemployment rate provides some measure of a community's economic well-being, it does not capture those who have stopped looking for work, who are underemployed, or struggling to make ends meet.

Unemployment is lower in the region than in the state, but many families still face unemployment.

- The overall unemployment rate in the First Things First Coconino Region was 7.7% in 2011.
 - Unemployment was highest in Winslow West at 41% and the Hopi Reservation at 23% and lowest in Grand Canyon at 3% in 2011.

Foreclosures

When foreclosures force children out of their homes, they are affected both physically and emotionally. When children change homes frequently, it can contribute to lower performance in school and more delinquent behaviors in the classroom.

Communities in the First Things First Coconino Region are experiencing lower foreclosure rates than in Arizona overall.

- There was a lower rate of foreclosures in all communities in the First Things First Coconino Region (with the exception of Happy Jack) than in the state of Arizona overall in April 2012. Happy Jack had the highest rate of foreclosures at 1 foreclosure in every 324 homes.

The Early Childhood System

Child care

Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care, and in particular, subsidized care for low-income families, also provides critical support for working families.

Many parents are not using or do not have access to formal child care services in the First Things First Coconino Region.

- There were a total of 84 child care programs in the First Things First Coconino Region in 2011, down from 104 in 2010. The majority are located in the Southern Hub where most of the children live.
- Of parent survey respondents in First Things First Coconino Region in 2010 who reported using child care, 53% reported relying on an adult family member and 10% used a paid babysitter as the primary source of child care in 2010. Three percent of parent respondents reported using a non-relative home, 16% reported using a non-relative child care center and 8% reported using Head Start programs.

School Readiness

Research shows that children who have early learning skills and are ready to enter kindergarten tend to perform much better on standardized tests in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades as compared to their peers who were not ready for kindergarten. Children's literacy and reading skills are assessed by one of two assessments in the region including the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and AIMSWeb.

Many children in the First Things First Coconino Region were not ready for kindergarten at the beginning of the school year.

- In the Williams School District, 76% of children were not at grade level and 67% of children in the Winslow School District were not at grade level at the beginning of the school year in 2010/11. According to 2009/10 DIBELS data, between 92% and 93% of children in the Grand Canyon Unified School District and Maine Consolidated Schools were not at grade level at the beginning of the school year.
- Both Flagstaff Unified School District and Fredonia-Moccasin Unified School District had less than 50% of their kindergarteners not at grade level at the beginning of the 2010/11 school year, according to the AIMSWeb assessment. In the Fredonia-Moccasin Unified School District, 25% of kindergarteners were not at grade level at the beginning of the year.

School Success

While kindergarten readiness is a good predictor of later school success, 3rd grade reading scores are another excellent predictor of high school graduation rates and career success. The Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) is the tool used to measure third grade academic proficiency in Arizona.

Many children in the First Things First Coconino Region are behind in their reading skills.

- In many of the First Things First Coconino Region school districts, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the AIMS standards for reading was lower than the state average of 76% in 2011. The lowest percentages were in the Grand Canyon Unified School District (44%) and Page (57%). Maine Consolidated School District was a notable exception, with a full 88% of students meeting or exceeding the AIMS reading standards in 2011.

Graduation rates in local school districts varied greatly from 65% to 91% of students graduating in 2010.

- In the Northern Hub, graduation rates ranged from 65% to 91%, the Grand Canyon Hub had a rate of 69%, the Southern Hub had a range from 77% to 81% and the Winslow Hub had a rate of 74%.

Children with Special Needs

It's crucial to have early identification of children's special needs so that children can get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community. Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive, and hearing screenings are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth.

There are limited services for children with special needs in some areas of the First Things First Coconino Region.

- Approximately 7% of parent survey respondents in the region in 2010 reported that a doctor or professional had told them their child was developmentally delayed or had a disability or special need.
- According to the parent survey in 2010, 61% of children with special needs were referred for services and received those services, 30% of children were referred to services but did not receive those services, and 9% were not referred at all.
- The Arizona Department of Health Services Licensing Department reports that there were 7 audiologists and 71 speech language pathologists in the region in 2011.
 - The Grand Canyon Hub does not have any providers for children with disabilities

Family Literacy

One important component of parenting knowledge is understanding the importance of reading with children from an early age. When families read to their infants and preschool children, children learn crucial skills such as how to recognize letters, words, and sounds. Young children who have these early literacy skills are more successful later in school and life. Other key activities such as playing games and exercising also help children learn and develop.

Many of the families in the First Things First Coconino Region understand the importance of early literacy activities, according to the 2010 parent survey. However, many parents reported low levels of engagement in early literacy activities.

- More than half (54%) of parent survey respondents said that they or another adult in the home read to or shared books with their child at least five times during the previous week, according to a 2010 survey.
- Over three-quarters of parent survey respondents in each community hub "always" or "frequently" talked to children about pictures in the books, read the same book again and again, and exposed children to new words in books when reading books to their children.
- In the First Things First Coconino Region, 20% of parent survey respondents reported having 10 or fewer children's books in their home. A lack of books in the home is correlated with lower achievement in reading at 4th grade.

- The number of books in the home was especially low among parents respondents in the Hopi Hub with just one-fourth (28%) having more than 20 books in the home.

Health

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance

Children with a regular source of primary health care and health insurance have better health, receive more preventative care, and have lower rates of hospitalization because they get treated for conditions before they become too serious.

Most children ages birth through five in Coconino County had some form of health insurance coverage in 2010.

- Of parent survey respondents, the majority (91%) reported that their child had health insurance, which was consistent across all of the First Things First Coconino Region's community hubs in 2010.
- KidsCare enrollment numbers have dropped significantly in recent years due to severe funding cuts. In February of 2011 just 464 children in Coconino County were served by the program, down 63% from 1,264 children in 2009.

Healthy Births

Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have better birth outcomes. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and have lower survival rates, than those whose mothers received prenatal care.

Fifteen percent of women in the First Things First Coconino Region did not receive prenatal care in their first trimester of pregnancy.

- There were 1,631 total births in the First Things First Coconino Region in 2010, the lowest number of births in the last seven years.
- The First Things First Coconino Region had higher rates of babies born at low birth weights (less than 5.5 pounds) over the last 7 years (2004-2010), in comparison to Arizona overall. In 2010, 8.2% of babies were born at low birth weight in the region compared to 7.1% of babies in Arizona.
- Coconino County had a slightly higher percentage of preterm births (9.9%) than Arizona overall (9.6%) in 2010. Data on preterm births (babies born at less than 37 weeks of gestation) is limited to the county level.

Teen Births

Teen mothers tend to give birth prematurely, have babies born at low birth weights, are less likely to complete high school, and have lower earning power in their careers. Children born to teens are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school, and

perform lower on standardized tests than children of older mothers. Arizona had the 6th highest teen birth rate in the nation in 2009.

There was a higher percentage of births to teen mothers in the First Things First Coconino Region in comparison to the state overall.

- Teen birth rates in the region have been declining overall with 13% of births to teens in 2004 and 12% in 2010. The Hopi Hub had the highest rate at 19% in 2010.

Asthma

Many things can cause asthma, including allergens (mold, pollen, animals) and irritants (cigarette smoke and air pollution) as well as infections. Children have smaller airways than adults, which makes asthma especially serious for them. However, even severe asthma symptoms can be minimized with appropriate medical care.

Emergency department visits for children ages birth through 5 with asthma have declined in Coconino County since 2005.

- There were 135 emergency room visits for children ages birth to five with asthma in Coconino County in 2010, down from 153 in 2005.

Infant Deaths

The leading causes of death for infants are birth defects, premature birth, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and complications during pregnancy.

Child mortality rates were higher in Coconino County than in Arizona in 2010.

- In Coconino County, there were 8.5 deaths per 1,000 births in 2010 and there were 6.0 infant deaths per 1,000 births in Arizona.

Supporting Families

Family and Community Supports

Community ties with friends and relatives are a principal means by which people and households get supportive resources to help raise their children.

Nearly two-thirds of parents in the First Things First Coconino Region reported having someone reliable to watch their child when they needed a break.

- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of parent survey respondents reported that there was “always” or “frequently” someone who they could count on to watch their child if they needed a break in 2010.

Parenting Skills

Parenting skills start at birth and continue to develop as a child grows into a teen and an adult. Good parenting skills can aid in deterring childhood accidents and illness, adolescent substance

abuse, and teen pregnancy. Parents can be supported in raising their child through community ties with friends and local social services.

Most parents in the First Things First Coconino Region felt confident in their parenting skills in 2010.

- 90% of parent survey respondents in 2010 reported feeling very confident in their ability to help their child grow and develop.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are found in families across the social and economic spectrum. Social isolation, financial stress, poverty, substance abuse, and domestic violence are all factors that can lead to adults abusing children. Children who are victims of abuse or neglect experience higher rates of suicide, depression, substance abuse, difficulties in school, and other behavioral problems later in life, including a greater risk of mistreating their own children.

The number of children removed from the home remained steady between 2007 and 2009 in the First Things First Coconino Region.

- Ninety-two children in the First Things First Coconino Region were removed from their home by Child Protective Services (CPS) in 2009, compared to 95 children in 2007.
- The Healthy Families program which builds on a family's strength to prevent child abuse and neglect saw a decline from 650 families in the county in 2008 to 319 families in 2011. The decline in Healthy Families enrollment is most likely the result of funding changes and not a reduction in actual need.

Local Services for Children

Parent knowledge of the services and supports available in the community is essential to ensure that children and families receive important information and assistance.

Most parents reported that information, resources, and local services regarding children's development and health were good, but many people didn't know if they were eligible for services.

- The overwhelming majority (96%) of parent respondents in the region in 2010 were satisfied with the availability of information and resources about children's development and health.
- 80% of parent survey respondents in the region in 2010 agreed that the services in their community were very good, but 62% did not know if they were eligible for them.
- About half of parent survey respondents (48%) felt that the services in their community were available at convenient times and locations, but that still left many parents for whom the times and locations were not convenient.

CONCLUSION

Community Assets and Areas of Strength

- **Parents are using positive parenting practices**

- **Parents are accessing social supports**
- **Children are getting vaccinated**

Community Challenges and Areas for Improvement

- **Families need additional economic supports to cope with high levels of poverty**
- **Need for more quality, affordable child care services**
- **School readiness and school performance need improvement**
- **Children with special needs require more support**
- **There's a great need for health care providers**

This Needs and Assets report on the health and well-being of children ages birth through five in the First Things First Coconino Region has identified the areas where children are doing well and areas that need additional investment. In general, First Things First Coconino Region children and families appear to be struggling to meet some of the health, economic, and social needs of their children, particularly in regards to health providers, school readiness, school success, and services for children with disabilities. However, parents have a high level of understanding of child development and many families report reading with their children and engaging their children in other beneficial activities.

The experiences of children and families differs between community hubs. The Southern Hub has the majority of services for children and families and children there are generally doing better than children in other hubs. The Hopi and Grand Canyon hubs, on the other hand, do not have easy access to services and children in these areas are struggling. In light of these varied challenges in the Coconino Region, targeted efforts and continued collaboration are needed to help improve the situation of children and families. First Things First is committed to working with the communities in the Coconino Region to address these issues and ensure that all children have the opportunity for a bright and healthy future.

Executive Summary

THE REGION AND THE PEOPLE

The U.S. Census reported there were 72,331 residents, of all ages, in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region in 2010. Of those, 6,099 were children ages birth through 5. The First Things First Navajo/Apache Region had a slightly higher percentage of children identified as American Indian alone and a lower percentage of children identified as Hispanic/ Latino than the state overall; 65% of children ages birth through four in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region were identified as White alone, 23% as Hispanic or Latino, and 8% as American Indian alone.

The Navajo/Apache Region is largely rural. This is an asset to many community members but presents challenges to low-income families in remote regions who struggle to meet their basic needs and must travel great distances to access services. The lack of infrastructure, such as paved roads, and amenities, such as running water and electricity, present these families with additional challenges unseen in more urban areas. In order for any family to access specialty health and human services, beyond what the region can offer, Navajo/Apache residents must drive about two hours to Flagstaff or four hours to Phoenix.

The First Thing First Navajo/Apache Regional Council has worked to address the diverse needs of children ages birth through five, their families and the care givers. They have worked with local service providers to develop targeted programs to address the needs of children and families living in more remote and rural areas of the region as well as increase resources in larger, more urban centers.

Income and Poverty

Income

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack adequate food, become victims of crime and violence, and lack basic health care. They are at significant risk for dropping out of school early, poor academic performance, behavior problems in school, lower levels of literacy, and lower educational attainment.

Approximately one in four children ages 5 through 17 was part of a family living in poverty in the school districts served by the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region in 2010, according to US Census data.

- Poverty for children ages 5 through 17 was highest in Sanders Unified (37%), Holbrook Unified (34%) and Vernon Elementary (34%) and lowest in Blue Ridge Unified School District (22%) in 2010.
- The median household income was \$57,973 for married couple families in Navajo County and \$44,636 in Apache country, according to 2008-2010 US Census estimates. Both were lower than the median family income of married couples in Arizona as a whole at \$68,408.

- The median household income for single female households was \$25,011 in Navajo County, \$24,019 in Apache County, and \$30,899 in Arizona overall, according to US Census 2008-2010 estimates.

Food Insecurity

When children suffer from lack of food, it can lead to poor physical and mental health, difficulty learning, increased school absences, and lower test scores. This makes children more likely to suffer from poverty when they become adults.

Approximately 4 in 10 children in both Navajo County and Apache County lived in families that didn't have enough food to eat in 2009.

- Thirty-eight percent of children in Navajo County and approximately 43% of children in Apache County lived in “food insecure families” where at least one member had gone without food at some point in the year in 2009 because their family could not afford it, according to Feeding America 2012.
- Between half (49%) and 89% of children in school districts in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region were eligible for free and reduced price meals in 2011, according to the Department of Education.
 - Sanders Unified and Concho Elementary School Districts had the highest percentage of children eligible for free and reduced priced meals (86% and 89%) in 2011.

Basic Needs

Going without basic needs such as food, housing, child care, health care, or clothing can have short and long-term consequences to residents' health and well-being.

More than one in three families went without a basic need in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region in 2011.

- Thirty-four percent of parents surveyed in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region reported having gone without at least one basic need in the 12 months prior to the 2011 survey.
 - Of those families who reported going without a basic need, 41% went without gas for their car, 36% went without dental care and 32% without medical care. Eighteen percent reported going without child care, 16% without food and 5% without shelter.
- Sixty-four percent of parent survey respondents in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region reported receiving some form of public assistance in 2011.
 - Of those receiving assistance, 75% reported receiving food stamps and half (50%) were receiving Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate as defined by the International Labor Organization measures the number of people who are without jobs and who have actively sought work within the past four

weeks.⁴ The unemployment rate is calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by all individuals currently in the labor force. While the unemployment rate provides some measure of a community's economic well-being, it does not capture those who have stopped looking for work, who are underemployed, or struggling to make ends meet.

Unemployment remains high in many communities in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region.

- The overall unemployment rate in the communities of the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region was 8.5% in 2011, according to the Arizona Office of Employment and Labor Statistics. Navajo County has had higher rates of unemployment than Apache County since 2007.
 - Unemployment was highest in Holbrook at 10.7% and Snowflake at 9.1% and lowest in Heber-Overgaard at 4.2% in 2011, according to the Department of Commerce Research Administration.

Foreclosures

When foreclosures force children out of their homes, they are affected both physically and emotionally. When children change homes frequently, it can contribute to lower performance in school and more delinquent behaviors in the classroom.

Communities in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region are experiencing lower foreclosure rates than in Arizona overall in 2012.

- There was a lower rate of foreclosures in Navajo County (1 in 463) and Apache County (1 in 2,032) than in the state of Arizona overall (1 in 303) in June 2012. Locally, Taylor had the highest foreclosure rate with 1 in 143 homes and Holbrook had the lowest foreclosure rate at 1 in 2,183.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care, and in particular, subsidized care for low-income families, also provides critical support for working families.

Many parents are not using and do not have access to formal child care services in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region.

- Only 18% of children with working parents in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region had child care spaces available to them in 2010. This leaves an estimated 7,524 children ages 0-11 without child care spaces, forcing parents to look for alternative solutions such as Kin and Kith care.
- Of parent survey respondents in First Things First Navajo/Apache Region who reported using child care, 60% reported relying on an adult family member and 22% used a paid babysitter as the primary source of child care in 2011. Less than 3% of parent

⁴ International Labour Organization. (1982). Resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statistics. Thirteenth International Conference on Labour Statistics.

respondents reported using a non-relative home, 12% reported using a non-relative child care center and 10% reported using Head Start programs.

Early Care and Education

Child Care Professionals

Research shows that by having well educated early child care professionals, children receive increased learning and development.

All child care survey respondents in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region reported having good or excellent skills engaging in positive interactions with children.

- Ninety-five percent reported having good or excellent abilities in using measurement tools to assess students, in designing ECE settings to enhance learning, and engaging families in their child's transition to kindergarten.

School Success

Third grade reading scores are an excellent predictor of later school success, including high school graduation rates and career success.

Many children in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region are behind in their reading skills.

- Sanders Unified School District had the lowest percentage of children meeting or exceeding the 3rd grade reading standards (40%) and Vernon Elementary School District had the highest percentage of children meeting or exceeding the standard (92%), according to the Arizona Department of Education in 2011.

Graduation rates in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region varied greatly from district to district.

- In 2009, Sanders Unified had the lowest graduation rate of districts in the region with 64% students graduating in four years. Joseph City Unified (98%) and Snowflake Unified School District (92%) had the highest graduation rates in the region that same year.

Children with Special Needs and Mental Health Issues

It's crucial to have early identification of children's special needs so that children can get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community.⁵ Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive and audio screenings are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth.

There are limited services for children with special needs in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region.

- The Arizona Department of Health Services Licensing Department reports that there were only three audiologists and 34 speech language therapists in the region in 2012.

⁵ Steele, M.M. (2004). Making the Case for Early Identification and Intervention for Young Children at Risk for Learning Disabilities. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 32, 2, 75-79.

Many children in Navajo County needing special services must travel to Flagstaff in order to receive services.

- One in ten First Things First Navajo/Apache Region parent survey respondents reported their child had been referred to a doctor or specialist or had been diagnosed with a developmental delay, disability, or special need in 2011.
 - Of those referred to services, 36% of parents reported that their child received needed services, while 20% reported that their child received services less often than was prescribed by the medical specialist.
- Eighty-two percent of child care providers surveyed in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region reported that they would most like to receive additional training in the area of behavioral issues. Other top interest areas included specific disabilities training (47%) and special needs in general (47%) in 2011.

Health

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance

Children with a regular source of primary health care and health insurance have better health, receive more preventative care, and have lower rates of hospitalization because they get treated for conditions before they become too serious.

Most children in both Apache County and Navajo County had some form of health insurance coverage in 2009, according to US Census data.

- U. S. Census data on health insurance coverage showed 15% of children 19 years and under in Apache County did not have health insurance in 2009. This was higher than both Navajo County children (13%) and all children in the state of Arizona (13%).
- Eight percent of parent survey respondents in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region reported their children, ages birth through five, did not have health insurance in 2011.
- KidsCare enrollment numbers have dropped significantly in recent years due to severe funding cuts. In February of 2011 just 517 children in Navajo County and 346 children in Apache County were served by the program.

All communities in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region were classified by the Arizona Department of Health Services as Health Professional Shortage Areas and Medically Underserved Areas.

- There were only 51.4 primary care physicians for every 100,000 people in Navajo County and 44.2 primary care physicians for every 100,000 people in Apache County in 2010. There were even fewer dentists at 39.0 per 100,000 in Navajo County and 34.2 per 100,000 in Apache County in 2010.

Healthy Births

Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have better birth outcomes. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and five times more likely to die.

Nearly 20% of women in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region did not receive prenatal care in their first trimester of pregnancy.

- There were 935 total births in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region in 2010, the lowest number of births in the last six years.
- In 2010, 8.2% of babies were born at low birth weight in the region compared to 7.1% of babies in Arizona.

Teen Births

Teen mothers tend to give birth prematurely, have babies born at low birth weights, are less likely to complete high school, and have lower earning power in their careers. Children born to teens are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school, and perform lower on standardized tests than children of older mothers. Arizona had the 6th highest teen birth rate in the nation in 2009.

There was a higher percentage of births to teen mothers in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region in comparison to the state overall.

- Teen birth rates in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region were consistently higher than the state between 2005 and 2010. In 2010, 12% of births were to teen mothers in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Asthma

Many things can cause asthma, including allergens (mold, pollen, animals) and irritants (cigarette smoke and air pollution) as well as infections. Children have smaller airways than adults, which makes asthma especially serious for them. However, even severe asthma symptoms can be minimized with appropriate medical care.

Many children visited the emergency room for asthma related symptoms in both Navajo and Apache County.

- There were 116 emergency room visits for children birth to five with asthma in Navajo County and 60 emergency room visits in Apache County in 2010, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services. Emergency room visits for asthma related symptoms increased in both counties in 2010, in comparison to previous year.

Infant Deaths

The leading causes of death for infants are birth defects, premature birth, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and complications with the mother during pregnancy.

Child mortality rates were higher in Apache County than in Navajo County in 2009.

- In Navajo County, there were 5.2 deaths per 1,000 births in 2010, compared to 6.4 deaths per 1,000 births in Apache County that same year. For the state overall, there

were 6.0 infant deaths per 1,000 births, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Supporting Families

Family and Community Supports

Community ties with friends and relatives are a principal means by which people and households get supportive resources to help raise their children.

Nearly two-thirds of parents in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region reported they did not always have someone reliable to watch their child when they needed a break.

- Just over one-third (34%) of parents survey respondents in the region in 2011 reported that they were able to find someone reliable to watch their child if they needed a break “all of the time,” 34% were able to count on someone “most of the time,” 29% could count on someone “some of the time,” while 3% reported that they were never able to find someone.
- Over half (54%) of parents surveyed in 2011 felt that the most needed service in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region was child care, followed by parenting classes/parent education (39%) and kindergarten preparation (38%).

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are found in families across the social and economic spectrum. Social isolation, financial stress, poverty, substance abuse, and domestic violence are all factors that can lead to adults abusing children. Children who are victims of abuse or neglect experience higher rates of suicide, depression, substance abuse, difficulties in school, and other behavioral problems later in life, including a greater risk of mistreating their own children.

The number of children removed from the home increased between 2007 and 2010 in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region.

- There were 83 children removed from their homes by Child Protective Services in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region in 2010, up from 69 children in 2007, according to the Department of Economic Security.

PARENT AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

It is important to know the perceptions of parents about early childhood services in the region so that First Things First can work with partner agencies to improve services and supports to parents.

Most parents in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region felt confident in the parenting skills in 2011.

- Eighty-six percent of First Things First Navajo/Apache Region parent survey respondents felt confident in their ability to help their child grow and develop in 2011.
- Seventy-six percent of parent respondents reported coping well with the day-to-day demands of parenting, and 71% said that they calmed themselves down before dealing with their child when they got angry with their child in 2011.

Parent knowledge of First Things First in the Navajo/Apache Region was limited in 2011.

- Parents in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region were asked to provide their perspectives on their knowledge about what First Things First does in their community in the 2011 survey. Half (53%) were not at all knowledgeable, 37% said they were somewhat knowledgeable and 10% were very knowledgeable about what First Things First does in their community.

Most parents get information on services and activities via word of mouth.

- Parent survey respondents in the First Things First Navajo/Apache Region in 2011 reported that they got important information about activities and services for their child and family from these top five sources: friends and family members (80%), the Internet (28%), the child's teacher (27%), newspaper/magazines (25%), and doctors/clinics (23%).

Executive Summary

In October 2011, Wholonomy Consulting was awarded a contract by the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, also known as First Things First (FTF), to provide a Regional Needs and Assets Report for the White Mountain Apache Region. The goal of this report is to provide a snapshot of the needs and assets of programs, services and supports that have been designed to benefit children ages 0-5 in the White Mountain Apache Tribe Region. For the purposes of this report, “the Region” refers to all children and their families residing on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation; the area served by the White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council. This report provides information and analysis that can be used to assist those working in the Region.

Methodology

Much of the information presented has been gathered from Tribal and public data sources, especially in the areas of demographics and health. Where possible the research presented in the report draws on multiple years of data, as well as state-level data, so that trends can be identified and comparisons made.

Some sections of the report rely on new findings from the 2010 Census. This new data is in the process of being released by the Census Bureau. However, because of the timing of this release, the data for the whole of the White Mountain Apache Region (the Fort Apache Indian Reservation) has not yet been released. As a result, where possible, data has been gathered for the following zip codes: 85911, 85926, 85930, and 85941. In order to provide a comparison, the same zip code level data has also been gathered for 2000. For this reason the Census data included in this report cannot be compared directly with that presented in the 2010 White Mountain Apache Tribe Needs and Assets Report. Additionally, there are some areas of the report where even the zip code level data for the Region has not yet been released. These sections are noted and the tables indicate that no new data is currently available.

Finally, there are some areas of the report where there is little to no publically available existing data—the Early Childhood System, Supporting Families and Public Awareness and Collaboration. As a result, primary data collection strategies were utilized (key informant interviews). A list of interviewees is attached as Appendix A.

Key Findings

The key findings shared below are provided to give a snapshot into the data collection for each of the main sections of the report. For the full data set and analysis, please see the full report.

Key Findings related to Demographics:

- In 2010 there were 1,979 children under age six living in the White Mountain Apache Region.
- The number of children ages 0-5 years in the Region grew significantly between 2000 and 2010. It grew by 27.8%, 8.7 percentage points more than statewide growth.
- 96% of people living in the White Mountain Apache Region are American Indian.
- In 2009, 1,013 (53.3%) of a total 1,902 children ages 0-5 in the White Mountain Apache Region were living in poverty.

- Between 2007 and 2010, the number of unemployment claimants living in White Mountain Apache Tribal Region increased 320%.

Key Findings related to the Early Childhood Education System:

- The Whiteriver Unified School District now offers both special needs and regular classroom programs for children ages 4 through 5 living in the Region.
- Although there have been some programs added, there is still a great need for programs for high quality early education programs for children 0-4.
- There is tremendous community support for the addition of Early Head Start.
- In 2012, there were a total of 560 children served in early childhood care and education programs in the Region.
- In 2012, there are at least 190 children under age 6 on waiting lists to enroll in early care and education programs in the Region.

Key Findings related to Family Support:

- Key informants are seeing changes. In the words of one, “It’s starting. Differences are being made!”
- Key informants are able to identify multiple programs and services that make a difference for families with young children.
- The closing of Child Find in 2012 has serious implications for parents with young children accessing special needs screening and services.

Key Findings related to Health:

- Birth rates in the Region have decreased consistently since 2007.
- Between 2008 and 2010, regional emergency room visits increased 7.5%.
- Between 2008 and 2010, regional well-child visits in increased 9.3%.
- In 2010 there were 227 more preventative oral health visits among children ages 0-5 than in 2008, up 38.7%.
- In 2010, there were 126 more preventative oral health visits than acute oral health visits, a positive change from 2008, when acute oral health visits exceeded preventative oral health visits by 69.
- Fewer children at 35 months received the recommended vaccinations in 2010 than did in 2008.

Summary and Conclusions

Data has uncovered some key findings that will be important for those working in the Region. They are as follows:

- **Build the Capacity of Early Child Care Settings**—Improving the quality and capacity of child care services in the Region is a journey. Much has been done and it is important to note that key informants are beginning to see changes. However, there are still children who are not accessing services and there are children who receive inadequate services. This continues to be a priority for ensuring good health and education outcomes for the Region’s youngest children.
- **Early Head Start**—Although there is tremendous support for Head Start, and a shared dream of bringing Early Head start to the Region, there are many barriers. This presents

an opportunity to bring partners together, including the Tribe, to collaborate and determine how to best approach meeting this need both from a facilities and programming perspective.

- **Special Needs Screening and Services**—The closing of Child Find earlier in the year has created a significant barrier to responding to the needs of special needs children and families in the Region. Although many service providers recognize this and are doing all they can, they do not have the capacity to meet this need. There are opportunities to support a new Child Find (both in creation and sustainability) or to find an alternative partner that has the capacity and expertise to screen and serve children 0-5.
- **Create Professional Development Community of Practice**—There is general recognition that high quality in early childhood settings is important and much is being done to build the capacity of child care staff. However, there are opportunities to weave professional development opportunities together, to share what quality looks like by encouraging classroom visits within the sector, and to build a cohort of early childhood professionals who engage in learning across the system. Work in this area is being catalyzed by the Annual Child Care Conference, but much could be done to sustain this work year round.
- **Improve Access to Preventative Health Services**—Although much is being done to ensure that families are accessing preventative health care for the Region’s youngest children, this work is not finished. There are still opportunities to increase the number of pregnant mothers accessing prenatal services, and children accessing regular wellness checks and dental services. Accessing preventative services ensures that children and families are healthy. It also ensures that health needs are taken care of on the front end, before more costly emergency services are needed.
- **Keep the Apache Culture and Language alive**— A number of key informants spoke of the need to keep the Apache language and culture alive. They noted that by high school, many students have already lost the language. Although some early care and education programs are beginning to recognize and respond to this need, more proactive work could be done. For all initiatives undertaken, special attention should be made to incorporating culturally relevant practices and materials, and to exposing children to, and teaching them, the language. This means intentionally making the Apache language and culture a core component of all programs designed to serve the Region’s youngest children.
- **Build Awareness of the Importance of Individual and Community Resiliency**—Key informants recognize that in order to truly meet the goals of First Things First in the Region, there has to be some recognition of the importance of intentionally building individual and community resiliency. They spoke of the relationship between building resiliency and building a shared sense of community. “The fact that a sense of community has practical importance is probably best established in the work of Robert Putnam in his book, Bowling Alone.⁶ He found that community-health, educational achievement, local economic strength and other measures of community well-being were dependent on the level of social capital that exists in a community. Geography, history, great leadership, fine programs, economic advantage, or any other factors that we traditionally use to explain success made a marginal difference in the health of a

⁶ Putnam, R. D. (2001). Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. Touchstone Books by Simon & Schuster; 1st edition.

community. A community's wellbeing simply had to do with the quality of the relationships, the cohesion that exists among its citizens. He calls this social capital. Social capital is about acting on and valuing our interdependence and sense of belonging. It is the extent to which we extend hospitality and affection to one another. If Putnam is right, to improve the common measures of community health—economy, education, health, safety, the environment— we need to create a community where each citizen has the experience of being connected to those around them and knows that their safety and success are dependent on the success of all others.”⁷ Much could be done in the Region by working with individuals and organizations to build awareness of the importance of individual and community resiliency.

- **Parenting Programs**—Community partners recognize the need for parenting programs in the Region and there have been responses to this need with the funding of new parenting opportunities. However, less is known about what programs can really support parents in building the skills for successful parenting. Thought could be given to assessing the outcomes of the funded programs in order to begin amassing data and best practices for parenting programs in the Region.
- **Leverage Existing Partnerships for Systems Change**—There are tremendous opportunities here to leverage existing partnerships, not only to ensure that children are seamlessly served, but also to begin the more difficult work of system-level change. Although this work takes time and effort, there are models that could be used to guide it.
- **Build Community Dialogue**—There are tremendous opportunities to increase the regional dialogue around the importance of early care and education. Through community engagement processes, regional providers and partners could bring all stakeholders into the conversation—families, schools, the Tribal Council, health providers, child care providers, services providers, older children—to explore the strengths and assets available in the community that could be maximized to improve the outcomes of children 0-5 in the Region. This approach could also assist in the work of building community and awareness of the importance on individual and community resiliency. Appendix B provides some further exploration of this finding.

⁷ Block, P. (2009). Community: The Structure of Belonging. Berret-Koehler Publishers.

Executive Summary

The Yavapai Regional Planning Council supports the needs of young children in the Yavapai First Things First Region. This region covers most of Yavapai County, and includes all of Sedona. The Yavapai Region also includes the Yavapai-Apache Nation Indian Tribe. The majority of the population in the region lives in either the Prescott-Prescott Valley area or the Verde Valley-Sedona area.

According to the 2010 US Census, the Yavapai Region had a population of 214,253, of whom 12,703 were children under the age of six. In the last decade, the population of young children in the region has grown at about the same rate as the state as a whole. In 2010, there were 2,191 more young children in Yavapai County than there had been in 2000. Much of that growth was in the towns of Prescott Valley and Chino Valley. This suggests a need for increased services to families there.

The majority of children under six in the region (82%) live with both parents, and about 22 percent lived in a single-female headed household. Across the region, 12 percent of children were living in their grandparents' household.

Although only 14 percent of the population across the region identifies as Hispanic, and only one percent as American Indian, there is some variability in ethnic diversity in communities. For instance, about 65 percent of the population on the Yavapai-Apache Nation report being American Indian, and nearly half the children enrolled in the Ash Fork Joint Unified District are reported to be Hispanic. An estimated eight percent of the population speak Spanish at home. In Cottonwood, however, about 18 percent of the residents speak Spanish at home. In most—but not all—of the homes in which Spanish is spoken, there is at least one adult who is fluent in English.

In Yavapai County, about one-quarter of the children under six live in poverty. The unemployment rate in the county averaged about 10 percent during 2011, only slightly higher than the statewide rate of 9 percent. There is, however, variability among the local unemployment rates in the region, from a high of 29 percent in Ash Fork, to a low of 7 percent in Paulden and Dewey-Humboldt. In July 2011, the number of children under six receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits was almost 5,000. Only 156, in contrast, were receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) benefits. More than 6,000 children under the age of five participated in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program during 2011. Over 450 preschool and elementary-aged children were identified as homeless within school districts across the region, though only about one tenth of that number are documented as receiving services outside of the school system.

Educational attainment among adults in the region is similar to that seen in the state as a whole. The percent of births to women with less than a high-school education in Yavapai County in 2010 was 24 compared to 22 percent in the state as a whole. The proportion of third-grade students passing the standardized math and reading AIMS tests was about the same in the county as in the state as a whole. There was, however, considerable variation in the passing rates from district to district.

Families in the region have access to 76 registered child care providers. This includes child care centers, Head Start and Early Head Start centers, and family providers. In 2011, the total licensed capacity of these centers and home providers was 4,618 children. (Unregistered home-based providers are not included in these totals.)

During 2011, there were 1,829 babies born to mothers resident in Yavapai County. Almost 90 percent of these births occurred at Yavapai Regional or Verde Valley medical centers. Most of the rest occurred in Maricopa County. Overall, 73 percent of the women giving birth during 2011 started prenatal care during the first trimester, and 69 percent had five or more prenatal doctor visits. These rates fall somewhat short of the Healthy People 2020 targets. Only 17 births (out of the 1,829) occurred in which the mother had had no prenatal care at all. Expectant mothers in Yavapai County were substantially more likely to smoke tobacco during pregnancy (12%) than mothers in the state as a whole (5%). Immunization rates for preschool children in Yavapai County are the lowest in the state of Arizona.

In Yavapai County, the percentage of residents enrolled in AHCCCS, and the percentage of children enrolled in KidsCare are roughly equal to the statewide percentages. For both programs, the county's highest enrollments, by far, are seen in the Ash Fork-Seligman area. Across the region, about 13 percent of children receive special education services (in preschool, kindergarten, or elementary school). In three districts—Mayer, Skull Valley, and Yarnell—more than 20 percent are enrolled in special education. Although good data are difficult to come by, some young children in the region are affected also by problems associated with domestic violence, homelessness, child abuse or neglect, and incarcerated parents.

The Yavapai Regional Partnership Council is committed to the ideal that all children in the region should arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school.



FIRST THINGS FIRST

**Phoenix Regional Partnership Councils
Regional Needs and Assets Reports
Executive Summaries**

**Central Phoenix
North Phoenix
South Phoenix**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2011, MGT of America, Inc. (MGT) was awarded a contract by the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, also known as First Things First (FTF), to provide a Regional Needs and Assets Report for the Central Phoenix Region. MGT teamed with Children's Action Alliance for this important engagement. The report synthesizes relevant community data to help inform the FTF Regional Council in decision-making.

Central Phoenix is a diverse region with significant economic challenges. Several indicators show some recent decline in economic hardship: the unemployment rate in the City of Phoenix is down compared to the peak in 2010, the number of young children in the region participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps) declined between 2010 and 2011, and median incomes for families headed by married parents and single moms both rose from 2009 to 2010. The percentage of students qualifying for the federal school lunch program dropped in the Alhambra and Madison Elementary School Districts between 2011 and 2012.

The racial, ethnic and language diversity in the region is striking. More than two thirds of young children in Central Phoenix are Hispanic, compared to 45% countywide and statewide. Nearly one out of three young children is identified as "some other race" compared to fewer than 20% countywide. More than half of young children in the region have at least one parent who was born in another country. The proportion of families in Central Phoenix where no one over the age of 14 speaks English well is more than twice the proportion in Maricopa County and the state.

There are significant family stresses in the region. Young children in this region are less likely to live with two parents than children countywide. About 6% of children live in families headed by their grandparents and 6% live in families headed by other relatives. Families in the region earn low incomes – median income is 25% below the Maricopa County median for married families and 10% below the County for single parent families. The poverty rate for families with children is more than twice as high in the region as countywide (36% compared to 16%). A notable risk factor is the low education level of women having babies in the region. More than four out of every ten women giving birth did not have a high school diploma or GED – compared to just over two in ten in Maricopa County and Arizona. Less than 30% of women giving birth in Central Phoenix had any college education, compared to just over half of women in Maricopa County.

The recession and budget cuts have taken a toll on the early childhood infrastructure in the region. While the number of licensed child care centers rose significantly between 2010 and 2012, the number of regulated family child care homes dropped. Due to cuts in eligibility, far fewer children are participating in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and child care assistance. Many school-based health clinics were closed between 2009 and 2010. During that same time period, childhood immunization rates dropped faster in Central Phoenix than countywide.

Stakeholders in the region note an increased level of collaboration and coordination in early childhood services. Respondents to an on-line survey say that the needs of young families in the region are being met in the areas of early childhood education and literacy development, parenting support, and services for children with special needs. They identify quality child care and preschool and health services for young children as the top priorities for First Things First funding in the region. They name lack of awareness and transportation as frequent barriers preventing families from getting needed services. For child care and health care, cost is a major barrier.

Participants in focus groups suggested improvements to make services more accessible for families, including more flexible eligibility rules and service boundaries, longer and more convenient hours of service delivery, mobile services in neighborhood locations, and more services delivered in families' homes.

Executive Summary

THE REGION AND THE PEOPLE

The First Things First North Phoenix Region is composed of small communities in close proximity to the Phoenix Metro area. The region includes neighborhoods as diverse as Sunnyslope, the North Central Corridor, Deer Valley, Moon Valley, Anthem and New River. The city of Phoenix, located in Maricopa County, covers more than 517 square miles and has a population of over 1.5 million, ranking it the fifth largest city in the country and the largest capital city in terms of population. The First Things First Board established three regions in the city of Phoenix: North, Central and South.

The population of the region was 519,974 in 2010 with approximately 44,303 children ages birth through five. Twenty-two percent of families in the First Things First North Phoenix Region were female headed households, and 67% were married couples in 2010. More than half (53%) of children birth through five in the First Things First North Phoenix Region identified as White, 37% Hispanic/Latino, 4% Black or African American, 4% Asian and 2% American Indian. The majority of the population five and over in the First Things First North Phoenix Region (77%) speak only English in the home.

The Face of Poverty

Income

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack adequate food, become victims of crime and violence, and lack basic health care. They are at significant risk for dropping out of school early, poor academic performance, behavior problems in school, lower levels of literacy, and lower educational attainment.

What does the economy look like for local children and their families?

- Arizona had the fifth highest child poverty rate in the nation in 2010, with 1 out of 4 children living in poverty. Roughly 1 in 3 children ages birth through five in the areas served by Washington Elementary School District were living below the poverty level, according to 5-year Census estimates. The areas served by Paradise Valley Unified had nearly 1 in 5.
- Median household incomes in the First Things First North Phoenix Region varied. The median income for a married couple family in the area served by Paradise Valley Unified was \$100,115. This was compared to \$40,880 for a female householder in the same area and just \$24,292 for single female householder in the area served by Washington Elementary area.

- The Self-Sufficiency Standard is an indicator of how much income is needed for a family to meet its minimal basic needs without public or private assistance. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maricopa County was \$51,115 annually for a single parent with two children and \$58,798 for a family of four in 2012.

Basic Needs

Going without basic needs such as food, housing, child care, health care, or clothing can have short and long-term consequences to residents' health and well-being. When children suffer from lack of food, it can lead to poor physical and mental health, difficulty learning, increased school absences, and lower test scores. This makes children more likely to suffer from poverty when they become adults.

Can families meet their basic needs?

- Households are classified as food insecure with hunger if one or more household members went hungry at least once during the year because the household could not afford enough food to eat. Over a quarter (27%) of children in Maricopa County lived in households without enough food in 2009. This was higher than the state of Arizona overall, where 17% of residents were food insecure.

Early Care and Education

The Early Childhood System

Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care and, in particular, subsidized care for low-income families, provides critical support for working families.

Do parents have enough high quality child care available to them?

- Only 28% of children with working parents in the First Things First North Phoenix Region have child care spaces available to them.
- In 2010, the average daily cost of full-time child care in Maricopa County ranged from \$20.00 to \$40.80. For part-time child care, the average daily cost ranged from \$12.50 to \$33.00. Having a child under one in child care was more costly on a daily basis than having children one through five in child care.

School Readiness and Success

Third grade reading scores are an excellent predictor of later school success, including high school graduation rates and career success.

Are children learning to read?

- Eighty-five percent of 3rd grade students in the Deer Valley Unified School District and 84% of 3rd graders in the Paradise Valley Unified School District were meeting or exceeding the standard for AIMS reading in 2011. Sixty-seven percent of students at Washington Elementary School District were meeting or exceeding the standard for

AIMS reading in 2011, indicating that nearly one-third of their students were below standards for reading.

Are youth graduating?

- Ninety-percent of Paradise Valley Unified School District students graduated in 2010. This was similar to Deer Valley Unified with 89% of their high school students graduating in 4 years.

Children with Mental Health Issues and Special Needs

It is crucial to have early identification of children's special needs so that children can get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community.⁸ Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive and audio screenings are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth.

How many children receive AzEIP services for children birth to 36 months old with developmental delays or at risk for delays?

- There were 509 children receiving AzEIP services in the First Things First North Phoenix Region in 2009/10. This number increased from 139 children in 2006/2007.

Health

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance

Children with a regular source of primary health care and health insurance have better health, receive more preventative care, and have lower rates of hospitalization because they get treated for conditions before they become too serious.

Do children have health insurance in the region?

- About 13% of children in the First Things First North Phoenix Region were without medical insurance.
 - KidsCare operates as part of the AHCCCS program and is for children in households with incomes between 100%-200% FPL. Due to state budget shortfalls there was a freeze placed on enrollment into the KidsCare program on January 1, 2010. Since then, all KidsCare applicants have been placed on a waiting list in the event that enrollment could be re-opened. KidsCare enrollment in Maricopa County decreased by 71% from 2010 to 2012.

Healthy Births

Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have better birth outcomes. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and five times more likely to die.

⁸ Steele, M.M. (2004). Making the Case for Early Identification and Intervention for Young Children at Risk for Learning Disabilities. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 32, 2, 75-79.

Are babies born healthy?

- The number of births with low birth weight has stayed fairly consistent over the last five years in both Arizona and in the First Things First North Phoenix Region.

Teen Births

Teen mothers tend to give birth prematurely, have babies born at low birth weights, are less likely to complete high school, and have lower earning power in their careers. Children born to teens are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school, and perform lower on standardized tests than children of older mothers. Arizona had the 6th highest teen birth rate in the nation in 2009.

How many children are born to teen mothers?

- There were 2,268 births to mothers 19 years or younger in the First Things First North Phoenix Region in 2009. In 2009, 10% of births were to teen mothers in the First Things First North Phoenix Region. This was lower than the state of Arizona, with nearly 12% of births to teen mothers.

Supporting Families

Family and Community Supports

Community ties with friends and relatives are a principal means by which people and households get supportive resources to help raise their children.

Do families feel they have someone to turn to when they need support?

- The majority of parents interviewed in both the First Things First North Phoenix Region relied on their spouse for support (88%). Respondents also reported they relied on their own mother for support (56%).

COORDINATION OF SERVICES

It is important to know the perceptions of parents about early childhood services in the region so that First Things First can work with partner agencies to improve services and supports to parents.

How do parents feel about early childhood services in the First Things First North Phoenix Region?

- The majority of parents (94%) in the First Things First North Phoenix Region were satisfied with the information available about their children's development and health. However, less than two-thirds (60%) were satisfied with how agencies were working together and communicating.
- Parents were asked how strongly they agreed with statements regarding services:
 - Forty-one percent of parents reported they did not know if they were eligible for services, and one-third (33%) reported they could not find services to prevent

problems and that they only qualified after the problems had become more severe.

- Ninety-five percent of parents reported services were available in a language they understood, yet 31% reported services did not reflect their cultural beliefs

Executive Summary

THE REGION AND THE PEOPLE

There were 419,714 residents in the First Things First South Phoenix Region in 2010 according to the U.S. Census. Of those, 52,710 were children birth through 5. This was nearly 10% of the state's population of children birth through five. The largest population of children birth through five in the First Things First South Phoenix Region was in the Maryvale Neighborhood (23,075 children), and the smallest population was in the Central City South Neighborhood (6,210) in 2010. Interestingly, these two neighborhoods are located next to one another; both in the northern end of the First Things First South Phoenix Region.

The population of children ages birth through five in the First Things First South Phoenix Region primarily identified as Hispanic or Latino (78%). This was a much higher percentage than in Arizona overall (45%). Nine percent of children birth through five in the First Things First South Phoenix Region identified as White alone, and 8% identified as Black. Less than 2% identified as American Indian. Fifty-six percent of the population five and over in the First Things First South Phoenix Region spoke Spanish in the home. According to U.S. Census data, one in five children between the ages of 5 and 17 years old lived in a home where no one over the age of 14 spoke English "very well."

Income and Poverty

Income

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack adequate food, become victims of crime and violence, and lack basic health care. They are at significant risk for dropping out of school early, poor academic performance, behavior problems in school, lower levels of literacy, and lower educational attainment.

Approximately one in three children ages birth through 5 was part of a family living in poverty in the First Things First South Phoenix Region in 2010, according to U.S. Census data.

- Children 5 to 17 living in the areas served by Isaac (43%) and Murphy (44%) Elementary School Districts had a much higher rate of poverty than those in the areas served by Laveen (20%) and Pendergast (23%) Elementary School Districts.
- Median family incomes in Phoenix City were below those of families in Arizona. For example, married couple families in Phoenix City earned \$65,778 as compared to \$72,316 in Arizona according to the 2008-2010 Census estimates.

Food Insecurity

When children suffer from lack of food, it can lead to poor physical and mental health, difficulty learning, increased school absences, and lower test scores. This makes children more likely to suffer from poverty when they become adults.

Approximately 1 in 6 children in Maricopa County lived in families that didn't have enough food to eat in 2010.

- Overall food insecurity rates in Maricopa County (16%) were similar to those of Arizona (19%) in 2010. Children in the state (29%) as well as Maricopa County (25%) were much more likely to be food insecure than adults.
- The percentage of children eligible for free and reduced price meals saw increases across all districts in the First Things First South Phoenix Region, from 2007 to 2011.
 - Pendergast Elementary School District increased from 51% of children eligible for free and reduced price meals in 2007 to 65% in 2011. Cartwright had the highest percentage of children eligible for free or reduced price meals in 2011 at 92%.

Basic Needs

Going without basic needs such as food, housing, child care, health care, or clothing can have short and long-term consequences to residents' health and well-being.

Half of parents surveyed in the First Things First South Phoenix Region reported having gone without at least one basic need in the 12 months prior to the 2012 survey.

- Nearly half of survey respondents in the First Things First South Phoenix Region who went without basic needs in the last year reported having gone without gasoline for their car. Forty-two percent reported having gone without medical care and 34% reported having gone without food.
- Nearly three-quarters of First Things First South Phoenix survey respondents reported receiving some form of public assistance in 2012.
 - Of those who reported receiving assistance, 71% reported receiving SNAP benefits (Food Stamps) and 39% reported receiving WIC benefits. Twenty-nine percent of survey respondents reported receiving Medicare or Medicaid.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate as defined by the International Labor Organization measures the number of people who are without jobs and who have actively sought work within the past four weeks. The unemployment rate is calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by all individuals currently in the labor force. While the unemployment rate provides some measure of a community's economic well-being, it does not capture those who have stopped looking for work, who are underemployed, or struggling to make ends meet.

One in 10 individuals in the labor force in Phoenix City was unemployed in 2011.

- The unemployment rate in Phoenix City was nearly 10% in 2011, down from 11% in 2010.

Foreclosures

When foreclosures force children out of their homes, they are affected both physically and emotionally. When children change homes frequently, it can contribute to lower performance in school and more delinquent behaviors in the classroom. Families who experience foreclosure

are often left in housing they are still unable to afford, where parents have to make tradeoffs in order to pay for other household costs such as food and health care. Young children living in families that are behind in rent are more likely to be in fair or poor health, at risk of delays in their social, emotional, motor, or cognitive development and may be below average length or height due to food insecurity.

The foreclosure rates in most communities of the First Things First South Phoenix Region were higher than both Maricopa County and Arizona.

- The Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood had the highest foreclosure rates in the region, with 1 in every 118 homes in foreclosure in zip code 85043 and 1 in 123 homes in zip code 85339.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care, and in particular, subsidized care for low-income families, also provides critical support for working families.

There are limited numbers of child care spaces in the First Things First South Phoenix Region and the cost of many child care spaces is high.

- There were a total of 231 child care programs in the First Things First South Phoenix Region in 2011, with 9,630 spaces available to children.
- The average daily cost of full-time child care in Maricopa County ranged from \$20.00 to \$40.80 in 2010. For part-time child care, the average daily cost ranged from \$12.50 to \$33.00. Having a child under the age of one in child care was more costly on a daily basis than having children ages one through five in child care.
- The number of families receiving child care subsidies decreased from 1,837 families in January 2009 to 1,174 in January 2011. In 2009, families benefited from additional funds to child care assistance programs by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The decrease seen in 2011 is likely due to the exhaustion of those funds.⁹

Family Literacy and School Success

Family Literacy

Research in 40 countries showed that children in homes with more than 100 children's books performed much better in reading achievement at 4th grade than did children with 10 or fewer books. Arizona ranks as one of the worst states in the country (44th out of 50) for the percentage of parents reading every day to their child ages 0-5; only 43% of parents of children

⁹ National Women's Law Center. (2011). State Child Care Assistance Policies 2011. Retrieved 2012 from <http://www.nwlc.org/>

0-5 surveyed in the National Survey of Children's Health in 2003-2004 reported reading every day to their child.¹⁰

Half of survey respondents in the First Things First South Phoenix Region reported having 10 or fewer books in their home. Less than 10% reported having 50 or more books.

- Fifty-five percent of Latino parent survey respondents in the First Things First South Phoenix area said that they read to their child every day in a usual week, according to the Arizona Health Survey 2010.

Kindergarten Readiness

Between 15% and 30% of kindergarten students in the First Things First South Phoenix Regional School Districts were at grade level at the beginning of the school year in 2010/11, based on available data.

- In Isaac School District, 15% of students entered kindergarten at grade level. In both Pendergast and Fowler Elementary School Districts, more than half (56% and 60%, respectively) needed substantial intervention.

3rd Grade Reading Scores

Third grade reading scores are an excellent predictor of later school success, including high school graduation rates and career success.

Many children in the First Things First South Phoenix Region are behind in their reading skills.

- Twelve percent of students in Roosevelt Elementary School District were "falling far below" on the 3rd grade AIMS standards in reading followed by Isaac Elementary and Cartwright Elementary School Districts at 9% of students "falling far below" in 2011.

Graduation rates in the First Things First South Phoenix Region varied greatly from district to district.

- Though there are no high school districts in the First Things First South Phoenix Region, there are individual high schools serving the region. Westland School has had the lowest graduation rate of high schools in the region with 58% of students graduating in 2010. At Maryvale High School, 93% of students graduated in the same year.

Children with Special Needs

It's crucial to have early identification of children's special needs so that children can get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community.¹¹

Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive and hearing screenings are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The National Survey of Children's Health (2003), Rockville, Maryland; U.S. department of Health and Human Services 2005.

¹¹ Steele, M.M. (2004). Making the Case for Early Identification and Intervention for Young Children at Risk for Learning Disabilities. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 32, 2, 75-79.

There are limited services for children with special needs in the First Things First South Phoenix Region.

- About 359 children up to 36 months old in the First Things First South Phoenix Region received services through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) in 2009/10, up from 161 in 2006/2007.
- Nearly 5% of Latino parents in the First Things First South Phoenix Region with children ages 0-5 stated that their child had been diagnosed with Autism, 2% reported their child had been diagnosed with a developmental disorder and 2% with ADD or ADHD in 2010.
- The Arizona Department of Health Services reported that there were 64 Speech Language providers and 1 Audiologist in the First Things First South Phoenix Region in 2011.

Health

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance

Children with a regular source of primary health care and health insurance have better health, receive more preventative care, and have lower rates of hospitalization because they get treated for conditions before they become too serious.

Most children in the First Things First South Phoenix Region seem to have regular access to medical care.

- Ninety percent of Latino parent respondents in the First Things First South Phoenix Region reported that their child had one person who they considered to be the child's personal doctor (thereby having a medical home) in 2010. Nine percent reported one or more doctors, and fewer than 2% said they had no one they considered their child's personal doctor.
- Slightly more than half of Latino parent respondents to the Arizona Health Survey in the First Things First South Phoenix Region reported that their child had AHCCCS as insurance coverage, followed by 15% with employee-based coverage and 14% with other coverage in 2010.
- KidsCare enrollment numbers have dropped significantly in recent years due to severe funding cuts. KidsCare enrollment decreased 72% from 2010 to 2012 in Maricopa County.

Healthy Births

Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have better birth outcomes. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and five times more likely to die.

The number of births in the First Things First South Phoenix Region has decreased in recent years.

- There were 7,287 births in the First Things First South Phoenix Region in 2009, down from 8,244 in 2005.

The First Things First South Phoenix Region has seen an increase in the percentage of mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, from 72% in 2005 to 77% in 2009.

- However, the First Things First South Phoenix Region has had slightly lower percentages of women who began prenatal care in the first trimester, when compared to the state. While 77% of women in the First Things First South Phoenix Region began prenatal care in the first trimester this was compared to 80% in Arizona in 2009.

Teen Births

Teen mothers tend to give birth prematurely, have babies born at low birth weights, are less likely to complete high school, and have lower earning power in their careers. Children born to teens are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school, and perform lower on standardized tests than children of older mothers. Arizona had the 6th highest teen birth rate in the nation in 2009.

There was a higher percentage of births to teen mothers in the First Things First South Phoenix Region in comparison to the state overall.

- Eighteen percent of births were to teen mothers 19 years or younger in the First Things First South Phoenix Region, compared to the state of Arizona (12%) in 2009. The percentage of teen mothers who were 19 years or younger has decreased in the region from 19% in 2005 to 18% in 2009.

Supporting Families

Family and Community Supports

Community ties with friends and relatives are a principal means by which people and households get supportive resources to help raise their children.

Many parents in the First Things First South Phoenix Region do not have the support they need.

- About 16% of First Things First South Phoenix Region parent survey respondents reported that they never had someone they could count on to watch their child when they needed a break.
- More than 1 in 5 parent survey respondents in the First Things First South Phoenix Region reported feeling so sad or hopeless for 2 weeks or more that they stopped doing some of their usual activities.
 - Of respondents who reported feeling sad or hopeless, more than half (53%) reported they did not receive or did not really receive the help they needed.

PARENT PERCEPTIONS AND AWARENESS OF CHILDHOOD SERVICES

It is important to know the perceptions of parents about early childhood services in the region so that First Things First can work with partner agencies to improve services and supports to parents.

- Parents of children ages 0-5 in the First Things First South Phoenix Region were asked to provide their perspectives on their knowledge about what First Things First does in their community in the 2012 survey. Half (53%) were not at all knowledgeable, 31% said they were somewhat knowledgeable and 16% were very knowledgeable about what First Things First does in their community.

Most parents get information on services and activities via word of mouth.

- Parent survey respondents reported they received important information about activities and services for their child and family from these top five sources: friends and family members (64%), the television (30%), Internet/email (29%), community agencies (14%), and doctors/clinics (14%).



FIRST THINGS FIRST

**Southeast Regional Partnership
Councils
Regional Needs and Assets Reports
Executive Summaries**

**Central Pima
North Pima
Santa Cruz
South Pima**

Executive Summary

Approach to the 2012 Report

The First Things First Central Pima Regional Partnership Council 2012 Needs and Assets Report presents the demographic, economic and social indicators that pertain to children birth through age five and their families. Data are summarized from Census 2000, the 2006-2008 American Community Survey, the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, the 2010 Census and various local and state agencies at the regional, community and zip code levels.

In addition to the main body of the report, two additional sections contain comprehensive data to help inform the Central Pima Regional Partnership Council's planning and decision making: the Early Childhood Index for Children Birth through Age Five (Part Two), and the Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three). The Early Childhood Index (Part Two) is designed to help inform and target strategies, activities and funding allocations at the most local level possible by ranking seventeen indicators that are known to have an impact on the early years of a child's life. The Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three) provides a comprehensive picture of each zip code. Demographic, health, and economic information are presented for each zip code in the Central Pima region from multiple years to show how conditions within each zip code have changed or remained stable over time.

The Central Pima Region

The Central Pima region encompasses the central portion of the City of Tucson and the entire City of South Tucson. Its boundaries reach north to the Rillito River, west to the Tucson Mountains, east to Harrison Road, and south to Irvington Road. Because it includes a significant portion of Tucson (the second largest city in Arizona) and the City of South Tucson, the region is urban and more densely populated than the contiguous North and South Pima Regions of FTF. The City of South Tucson is a mile-square community just south of downtown Tucson that is completely surrounded by the City of Tucson. The Central Pima region has many cultural, educational and economic assets that attract families with young children, including major employers Raytheon Missiles Systems, the City of Tucson and Pima County governments, the University of Arizona, and numerous health care facilities.

Three public school districts serve children in this region: Amphitheater Unified School District, Flowing Wells School District, and Tucson Unified School District. Tucson Unified School District is the largest of these districts with about 63 elementary or primary schools. Within the region, there are approximately 23 charter districts, and about 99 public and charter elementary or primary schools.

Demographic Overview and Economic Circumstances

- According to the 2010 Census the total population of the First Things First Central Pima region was 451,253. At that time, there were 12,942 families with children birth through age five and 35,812 children birth through age five. First Things First estimated that in 2009, 27.9 percent or 6,134 children birth through age five were living below the poverty level.

- The population of the region grew by 5.5 percent between 2000 and 2010. The population of Pima County grew by 16.2 percent during this time period. The number of families with children birth through age five in the Central Pima region decreased by 6 percent while the number of children birth through age five increased by 3.4 percent.
- Within the region, the localities with the highest numbers of children birth to age five were 85705 (Flowing Wells) with 4,904, 85713 (includes South Tucson) with 4,542, and 85746 (centered at the cross roads of Drexel Heights and S. Mission Road) with 4,429. The zip code 85701, which includes downtown Tucson, had the lowest number at 325.
- The 2010 Census identified 6,167 families with children birth through age five headed by a single parent, which is 47.7 percent of all families with children in that age group. It also identified that 4,217 of those families were headed by a single mother, which is 32.6 percent of all families with children in that age group. The 2000 Census reported that 45.8 percent of single mother families with children birth through age five were living below the poverty level (newer estimates at the regional level are not available).
- Regarding ethnicity, the 2010 Census reported that 61 percent of children birth through age five in the FTF Central Pima region were Hispanic. Regarding race, 54.5 percent were White, 5.6 percent were African American, 5.7 percent were American Indian, 1.8 percent were Asian American, and 32.3 percent were some other race alone or multiple races. There are more Hispanic children birth through age five in the Central Pima region than in Pima County and Arizona as a whole.
- In the Central Pima region, the estimated median income in 2000 was \$35,077. The estimated median income in Tucson was \$37,334. About 23 percent of families in the region earned less than \$20,000 in 2000, and 23 percent of families with children birth through age five were living below the poverty level. (Estimates are not available at the regional level from the 2010 Census.) Estimated median family income for Tucson from the 2008-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) was \$46,133, an increase of \$8,789 in total dollars. However, adjusting for inflation, there was a decrease in real income by approximately 5.6 percent. It's probable, therefore, that poverty rates have increased since 2000.
- Poverty rates for children birth through age five in 2000 varied by community in the Central Pima region. Two zip codes had rates above 40 percent: 85714 (Irvington between I-19 and I-10) at 42.9 percent and 85701 (downtown Tucson) at 42.5 percent. The lowest rate in 2000 occurred in 85715 (E. Tanque Verde and N. Pantano) at 5.7 percent.
- In Pima County, 2008-2010 ACS estimates show that 54 percent of children birth through age five living with both parents had both parents in the workforce (22,962 children) and 76.4 percent of children living with one parent had that parent in the workforce (23,288 children). The total estimate of 46,250 children with working parents in Pima County need some type of child care and education. Child care and education providers are also needed for children of non-working parents who are attending school or seeking employment.
- Unemployment rates in Pima County jumped from 4.7 percent in January 2008 to 9.2 percent in January 2011, and unemployment claims increased by over 700 percent between January 2007 (3,208) and January 2010 (25,845). As of January 2011, the following Central Pima region communities had the highest estimated unemployment rates: South Tucson (24.1 percent), Flowing Wells (12.2 percent) and Valencia West (11.4 percent). The City of Tucson had an estimated rate of 10.1 percent.
- Since the start of the recession in 2007, the enrollment of families and children in emergency and supplemental food assistance has been increasing in the Central Pima

region. The number of families with children birth through age five enrolled in the food stamp program increased 15.2 percent from 2007 to 2011. Children birth to age four enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) increased 41.5 percent from 2007 to 2011. Similarly, in Pima County as a whole, use of the community food bank has increased significantly since the onset of the recession. Children birth through age six represented the group with the largest increase in use of the food bank from fiscal year 2007 to fiscal year 2010, showing a 108 percent increase. Approximately 58 percent of all food boxes distributed in Pima County were distributed in the Central Pima region.

- The enrollment of families with children birth through age five in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) decreased in the Central Pima region from 1,970 in January 2007 to 1,069 in January 2011, a decrease of 45.7 percent. Similar decreases were evident for children birth through age five receiving benefits during that time period. The decreases were most likely affected by state legislative action taken in 2010 and 2011 that reduced the TANF Lifetime Benefit Limits.
- The Central Pima region has a somewhat unstable housing environment, a factor that is known to impact child development and health. Central Pima residents have high housing mobility as evidenced by the high rental rate of 48.9 percent compared to 35.9 percent in Pima County and 34.0 percent in the state rate. However, the region has a comparatively lower pre-foreclosure rate (the risk of losing one's home) than Pima County. In 2010 the pre-foreclosure rate for the Central Pima region was 2.2 percent, that is, 1 in 40 residential property owners received a pre-foreclosure notice, lower than 2.5 percent for Pima County. Yet, some areas of the region show high pre-foreclosure rates, such as 85757 (W. Valencia and S. Camino Verde) at 6.8 percent and 85746 (Drexel Heights and S. Mission Rd.) at 4.8 percent.

Education

- Updated estimates from the 2008-2010 ACS showed that 14 percent of adults in Pima County, and 16 percent in the City of Tucson did not have a high school diploma.
- In Pima County, according to the 2008-2010 ACS, 43 percent of new mothers giving birth in the past six months were unmarried and 31 percent of those had less than a high school diploma. One percent had a bachelor's or graduate degree. Of the 58 percent who were married, 13 percent had less than a high school degree and 22 percent had a bachelor's or graduate degree.
- Third grade AIMS scores are the best measure at this time for assessing children's learning in the early grades. In Pima County, third grade AIMS scores from 2010-2011 showed 67 percent of students passing the math test, and 74 percent passing the reading test. There continues to be a great variation in passing scores across districts (both public and charter) and schools in the region. Regarding districts, the Montessori Schoolhouse of Tucson, Inc. had passing rates of over 90 percent, Math and Science Success Academy, Inc. of over 85 percent and Academy of Tucson Inc. of over 80 percent in math and 97 percent in reading in 2011. Some of the lowest passing rates were reported for Tucson International Academy, Inc. (under 53 percent) and Aprender Tucson (under 63 percent). Passing rates by school within districts show an even greater range in outcomes.

Health

- The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that about 13 percent of children birth through age five in Arizona were uninsured in 2010. The 2010 Arizona Health Survey estimated a slightly lower uninsured rate of 9 percent for Arizona's young children.
- In April 2010, 21 percent of the Pima County general population was enrolled in AHCCCS (Arizona Health Coverage and Cost Containment System). Enrollments increased slightly, by one percent, from April 2010 (208,969) to April 2011 (211,840).
- The number of children enrolled in KidsCare in Pima County continued to decrease due to the enrollment freeze initiated in 2009. KidsCare is Arizona's Children's Health Insurance Program under AHCCCS that covers children 0-18 whose family income falls between 100 and 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Pima County enrollments decreased by 61.7 percent from April 2009 (7,366) to April 2011 (2,817). Information specific to the Central Pima region is not available.
- According to fiscal year 2009 AHCCCS reports about its enrollees, 71 percent of infants under 16 months funded under KidsCare and 64.2 percent funded under Medicaid completed six or more well-child visits. Children ages three to six funded under KidsCare are measured slightly differently. They had a 73.7 percent completion rate and children funded under Medicaid had 69.4 percent completion rate. There are no numbers available for Pima County or the Central Pima region. The implication of these rates is that having access to health care does not always ensure that health care services are used to the best advantage for young children.
- Healthy birth data are available for 2009 from Arizona Vital Statistics for the Central Pima region. The total number of births in the region was 6,427, an eight percent decrease from 2008 (6,989). In 2009, 13.4 percent of births were to teen mothers, 52.7 percent were to unwed mothers, and 64.6 percent were publicly funded. About 70 percent of mothers reported receiving prenatal care in the first trimester. In response to the high proportion of teens giving birth, the Central Pima region is providing support and education to teen parents through Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services and Nurse Family Partnership nurse home visitation through Casa de los Niños in addition to other home visitation programs.
- Child immunization rates in the Central Pima region in 2009 ranged from 62.6 percent of infants ages 12 to 24 months to 38.1 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving the full immunization schedule. According to Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), the reported rates may be lower than actual rates due to children changing pediatricians.
- In 2010, 462 children birth to age three in the Central Pima region received developmental screenings through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) and 612 children birth to age six received services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Early Childhood Education and Child Care

- Regulated child care and education providers include ADHS licensed centers, ADHS certified group homes, and DES certified family homes. Unregulated providers are not licensed or certified by any agency. There were 458 regulated and unregulated child care and education providers in the FTF Central Pima region registered with the Child Care Resource and Referral database as of December 2011, down from 499 providers registered in the database in April 2010. However, the maximum authorized capacity across providers remained quite stable. Among regulated providers, 172 were ADHS licensed centers, 67 were ADHS certified group homes, 182 were Department of Economic Security (DES) certified family homes. Thirty-four were unregulated providers. Approximately 78 percent

of the regulated providers were contracted with DES to provide services to children whose families were eligible to receive child care subsidies.

- If one assumes that 80 percent of maximum authorized capacity is used for children birth through age five, licensed and certified providers in the Central Pima region had slots for an estimated 13,155 children in this age group in December 2011. However, enrollments on a typical day are known to be far lower. Based on the total capacity used by providers reported in the 2010 DES Market Rate Survey, a reasonable estimate of the number of children birth through age five enrolled on a typical day in the Central Pima region was approximately 6,940.
- The FTF Central Pima Regional Partnership Council is supporting the expansion of high quality early centers and education placements by providing funding for strategic business planning, licensing and certification. Examples of Central Pima Regional Partnership investments in this area are the continuing Infant and Toddler Expansion of Child Care, the expansion of providers enrolled in Quality First, and the Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship Program.
- Among the providers in the Central Pima region, 30 were nationally accredited centers, 15 were Head Start programs, and 74 were enrolled in the region's Quality First program (an increase from the 65 reported in 2010). As of April 2012, there was one Quality First provider for every 484 children birth to age five in the region. The zip code 85713 (including South Tucson) had the highest number (12) of Quality First providers, followed by 85705 (Flowing Wells) with 9 and 85711 (Craycroft and Broadway) with 9.
- Across Arizona, the licensed capacity of providers was higher than the number of students typically enrolled. In the 2010 DES Market Rate Survey, licensed centers stated that their typical enrollment was 50 percent of their total capacity. Among the homes interviewed, enrollment was typically about 79 percent of their total capacity. This may be explained in part by centers keeping ratios and group sizes smaller to maintain quality and by the high cost of care for many families.
- In 2010, the average cost of full-time care across all providers in the region ranged from \$125 per week for infant care to \$120 per week for the care of four- to five-year-olds. Infant care in licensed centers was \$158 per week on average, compared with \$130 per week for four- to five-year-olds. In DES certified homes, infant care cost \$125 per week on average and \$121 per week for four- to five-year-olds.
- In the FTF Central Pima region, the number of families eligible to receive the DES Child Care Subsidy decreased from 3,451 in January 2009 to 2,295 in January 2011, a decrease of 33 percent. Of the families eligible for benefits in 2011, 82 percent received the benefits.
- DES has maintained a statewide waiting list that included approximately 3,223 families in January 2011 waiting to receive the child care subsidy. Separate from the DES child care subsidy program, the FTF Central Pima Regional Partnership Council invested in 500 partial child care scholarships to help low-income families afford quality child care.
- The majority of staff members working in the field of early child care and education lack professional qualifications. Arizona's regulations require only a high school diploma or GED for assistant teachers and teachers working in licensed centers. Family home providers certified by DES are not required to have a high school diploma. The lack of professionalization of the early child care and education field results in a low compensation and benefits structure compared to other divisions of the education sector as well as other professions.

- The FTF Central Pima Regional Partnership Council is addressing this gap by funding several professional development options. The Community-Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals strategy, also known as Innovative Professional Development brings subject matter experts on Developmentally Appropriate Practice to the Central Pima region in a cross-regional collaboration focusing on multiple Communities of Practice, or cohorts of peer learning communities and provides access to college credit. The Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (T.E.A.C.H.) program and Professional Careers Pathway Program provide scholarships for higher education and credentialing. The REWARD\$ program provides monetary compensation to participants towards additional educational attainment and commitment to continuous employment at a qualified early care and education setting

Supporting Families

- The Central Pima Regional Partnership Council determined that supports and services to families was the second highest priority in the region in fiscal years 2011 and 2012. In order to address this, the council implemented a combined strategy to provide comprehensive education, health and support services including in-home parenting education (home visitation), and community-based parenting education. To carry out these services, the Central Pima Regional Partnership Council coordinates and collaborates with the United Way of Southern Arizona Family Support Alliance.
- Families receive in-home support to assist them as they raise their young children. Home educators provide guidance and support on the following topics: child development; peer support for families; resource and referral information; health-related information; child and family literacy. In addition, a nurse family visitor/community health worker supports high risk families and children, including pregnant women. Grantees providing these services are Child and Family Resources, Parent Aid, Amphitheater Public Schools, The Parent Connection, Easter Seals Blake Foundation and Casa de los Niños.
- Community-based parenting education provides educational and support services in community locations such as libraries and community centers on topics including child development, child health and safety, early language and literacy development, and social-emotional development of the child. Some agencies such as the Parent Connection, Parent Aid and Amphitheater School District use a blending of both community-based and home-based parent education and support.
- Make Way for Books helps provide early literacy services and professional development through the Family Support Alliance. In addition to supporting families with early literacy, Make Way for Books also utilizes early language and literacy coaches who work in coordination with Quality First coaches to expand libraries in early care and education programs, provide center-based and family-based literacy workshops and further strengthen early literacy between both home and school.
- Support and education for teen parents is provided by Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services in a community-based setting while in-home parent education is offered through several different programs that also reach out to pregnant and parenting teens. The intent is to offer programs that best fit the needs of families, including teen families, with a varying range of intensities.

Public Awareness and Collaboration

Since 2008, significant progress has been made in building an early care and education system in the Central Pima region. The Central Pima Regional Partnership Council employed multiple overlapping strategies and activities involving parent outreach, public awareness and collaboration with numerous organizations, school districts, coalitions and community stakeholders. Highlights of the Central Pima Regional Partnership Council's efforts since 2010 are:

- *Cross-Regional Public Awareness and Community Outreach* - In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the Central Pima Regional Partnership Council partnered with the South and North Pima Regional Partnership Councils, as well as the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Councils, in a cross-regional joint communication plan that included media, printed material and support of a contracted team of consultants to do public outreach to an array of audiences.
- *Coordination and Collaboration with Key Community Stakeholders* - Public awareness, parent outreach and collaboration activities are being conducted by Central Pima's partners under the umbrella of the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, First Focus on Kids, Family Support Alliance and the Early Childhood Partnership of Southern Pima County. A wide variety of media and activities have been used such as public ads, social media, parenting workshops and resource distribution (e.g. children's books, resource guides, child development and child health fact sheets or parenting tip sheets).
- *Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship Program* - The Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship strategy, new in fiscal year 2012, involves expanding pre-kindergarten programs in the Flowing Wells School District to increase access to quality preschool programming for children ages 3 through 5 who are considered at risk.
- *The Community Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals Strategy (also known as Innovative Professional Development)* - South Pima has partnered with the Central Pima Regional Partnership Council and other agencies to continue implementation of this strategy in fiscal year 2012. Grantees work in partnership with program administrators, center directors and owners of early care and education programs to identify and implement professional development needs for staff within core competency areas. Further, the lead grantee, United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona in partnership with several sub-grantees continues to build a comprehensive and seamless professional development system in Pima County, which includes articulation agreements between Pima Community College and University of Arizona and University of Arizona-South.

Conclusion

The major challenges for the First Things First Central Pima region continue to be the economic disparities of the region's population and high number of young children and their families requiring support during times of economic hardship, heightened by state-level cuts to social and health services. All of the 35,812 children birth through age five in Central Pima require services in health, education and other areas. Poverty rates are high and have increased since the start of the recession in 2007, based on the most recent estimates for Pima County.

Unemployment rates are high. The rising use of emergency food services and food assistance programs points to continuing privation among a significant number of families with young children. The Central Pima region also experiences moderate housing instability as shown by high rental rates and high pre-foreclosure rates in several zip codes. The latter situation has affected not only low-income but also middle-income communities within the region. All of these factors can result in stresses on families with young children such as relocation, lack of stability, and psycho-emotional distress.

Regional and local data show the continued need for high quality regulated care. Central Pima's regulated (licensed and certified) providers have the capacity to care for approximately 37 percent of the region's population of children birth through age five. Access to quality care is improving yet varies by community. There was an eight percent reduction in the total number of providers from April 2010 to December 2011 translating into lost businesses. Child care providers are finding it difficult to survive economically due to the reductions in child care subsidies to parents who would use their services. The number of families eligible to receive the DES Child Care Subsidy continues to decrease. At the same time, the cost of care is prohibitive for many families. The lack of sufficient and affordable regulated care suggests that families turn to kith and kin care. Unregulated care can compromise optimal child development when there is a lack of formal education and training among child care providers.

The Central Pima Regional Partnership Council has addressed these needs by employing multi-pronged, long-term strategies in the region to coordinate services and build capacity for early childhood care, education, and support services. These include the package of strategies under Quality First, and newer strategies such as the Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship Program and Innovative Small Grants that are considered to be creative and successful ways to build trust among community members and provide crucial services in neighborhoods. The Central Pima Regional Partnership Council is also responding to the economic deprivation and hardship of families by providing in-home family supports, community-based parenting education, and strategic coordination of existing family support services.

The Central Pima Regional Partnership Council alone cannot address all of the needs documented in this report, many of which are structural deficits in the social service and educational systems. However, since 2008, the Central Pima Regional Partnership Council has conducted careful strategic planning that strived to be responsive to the region's high needs in a balanced and feasible way. The Regional Partnership Council's approach has been to build on the existing community resources and infrastructure and to partner or collaborate with community agencies. Central Pima's funding strategies and partnerships have demonstrated a commitment to a long-term sustainable approach for creating an early childhood care and education system. This is clearly evident by the assets documented in this report and by their funding plan for the next three years.

Executive Summary

Approach to the 2012 Report

The 2012 Needs and Assets Report for the North Pima region describes demographic, economic and social indicators that pertain to children birth through age five and their families. Data are summarized from the 2010 Census, the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (ACS), the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, Census 2000 and various local and state agencies at the regional, community and zip code levels.

In addition to the main body of the report, two additional sections contain comprehensive data to help inform the North Pima Regional Partnership Council's planning and decision making: the Early Childhood Index for Children Birth through Age Five (Part Two), and the Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three). The Early Childhood Index (Part Two) is designed to help inform and target strategies, activities and funding allocations at the most local level possible by ranking seventeen indicators that are known to have an impact on the early years of a child's life.

The Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three) provides a comprehensive picture of each zip code. Demographic, health, and economic information are presented for each zip code in the North Pima region from multiple years to show how conditions within each zip code have changed or remained stable over time.

The North Pima Region

The North Pima region has a diverse geography that includes metropolitan, retirement, suburban and rural areas. It includes the Catalina Mountains and the Northern Foothills section of Tucson. The northwest portion of this region, in particular, has experienced rapid growth in recent years. It has one major medical facility, the Northwest Medical Center, operating at two locations, one in Tucson and one in Oro Valley. The Marana Health Center, operating in several locations, functions as a multi-service health care clinic and community services center in the region. Tourism is a major industry in the region, with numerous vacation and conference destinations, museums, parks and recreational areas. Large companies such as Wal-Mart and Honeywell provide local employment along with the hundreds of small businesses located in the region. Many residents are employed outside of the regional boundary in Tucson, and families conduct many of their activities and access services there.

Ten public and charter school districts operate schools located in the North Pima region: Amphitheater Unified School District, Catalina Foothills Unified District, Daisy Education Corporation Charter District (Sonoran Science Academy), Flowing Wells Unified District, Hermosa Montessori Charter School District, Khalsa Family Services Charter District, Lifelong Learning Research Institute, Inc. Charter District, Marana Unified District, Tanque Verde Unified District and Tucson Unified School District. Other assets are described throughout the report.

Demographic Overview and Economic Circumstances

- According to the 2010 Census, the population of the First Things First North Pima region was approximately 265,545. At that time, there were 5,939 families with children birth through age five and

15,361 children birth through age five. First Things First estimated that in 2009, approximately 7 percent, or 1,219 children in the North Pima region, were living below the poverty level.

- The population of the region grew 19 percent between 2000 and 2010. The proportion of children birth through age five in the region grew 7 percent over the past decade, compared to 19 percent for Arizona. Therefore, most of the population growth in the North Pima region is attributable to older population groups.
- Nearly half of all children birth through age five lived in three zip codes, according to the 2010 Census. The greatest proportion lived in zip code 85741 (Tucson W. Ina/Camino de la Tierra), which had 16 percent (2,485 children birth through age five). This was followed by zip code 85743 (Picture Rocks), which had 15 percent (2,342 children birth through age five) and zip code 85742 (Tortolita), which had 12 percent of the population (1,847 children birth through age five).
- The 2010 Census identified that 1,075 North Pima families with children birth through age five were headed by single mothers. According to Census 2000 (more recent data are not available), 31 percent of single-parent families headed by mothers in the region were living below the poverty level. It is reasonable to assume that a similar or greater proportion of families headed by a single mother were living below the poverty level in 2010.
- According to the 2010 Census, 30 percent of children birth through age five in the North Pima region were Hispanic. This contrasts with figures for Pima County, where 53 percent of children birth through age five were reported to be Hispanic.
- The estimated median income in 2000 for the region was \$57,269. About 7 percent of families in the region earned less than \$20,000. When adjusting for inflation, median family income in Pima County declined approximately 2.3 percent between 2000 and 2010, based on estimates from the 2008-2010 American Community Survey. Figures are not available for the North Pima region.
- Poverty rates for children birth through age five varied by zip code in the North Pima region (figures are from Census 2000; more recent data are not available at the zip code level). For example, the highest rates of poverty for children birth through age five were in zip codes 85653 (12 percent), 85704 (11 percent), 85718 (11 percent), and 85739 (10 percent).
- In Pima County, 2008-10 ACS estimates showed that 54 percent of children birth through age five living with both parents had both parents in the workforce (22,962 children) and 76 percent of children living with one parent had that parent in the workforce (23,288 children). Approximately 46,250 children in Pima County have working parents that need some type of child care and education. Child care and education providers are also needed for children of non-working parents trying to find employment or who are attending school. Specific figures are not available for the North Pima region.
- Unemployment rates in Pima County doubled from January 2008 to January 2011, increasing from 5 to 10 percent. Unemployment claims increased by more than 700 percent between January 2007 (3,208) and January 2010 (25,845). Tortolita had the highest estimated unemployment rate in January 2011 (10.1 percent) followed by Marana (8.4 percent) and Oro Valley (6.4 percent).
- The number of families with children birth through age five receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits in the North Pima region decreased 61 percent from January 2007 (226) to January 2011 (88), due to the state legislative actions in 2010 and 2011 that reduced benefits. In contrast, the enrollment of families with children birth through age five on the Arizona Nutritional Assistance (Food Stamps) Program increased by 145 percent and the enrollment of children birth to age four in Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) increased by 62 percent during this period.

- Enrollment in the Free and Reduced Price School Lunch Program rose in all six school districts in the North Pima region that reported data from 2009 to 2011. The Flowing Wells District had the highest percentage of students enrolled in the program (72 percent) followed by Tucson Unified School District (69 percent).
- The use of community food banks increased in Pima County between 2007 and 2010. Individual use increased by 67 percent, household use increased by 66 percent, and children birth through age six receiving food bank assistance increased by 108 percent. Use of food bank services also increased in both the North Pima region and Pima County from 2009 to 2010. The number of food box distributions increased by 11 percent in the North Pima region and by 20 percent in Pima County during the one-year period.
- The North Pima region has a relatively stable housing environment, a factor that is known to impact child development and health. According to the 2010 Census, the region had a rental rate of 25 percent compared to 36 percent in Pima County and 34 percent in the state. The North Pima region had a slightly lower pre-foreclosure rate (risk of losing one's home) than Pima County as a whole in 2010. The overall pre-foreclosure rate for the region was 2.3 percent, that is, 1 in 43 residential property owners received a pre-foreclosure notice, compared to 2.5 percent for Pima County, where 1 in 40 residential properties received a pre-foreclosure notice.

Education

- According to estimates from the 2008-2010 ACS, 14 percent of adults eighteen and over in Pima County did not have a high school diploma. Twenty-six percent of adults in Pima County had a bachelor's or advanced degree, higher than the state's rate of 24 percent. Current figures are not available for the North Pima region. Children whose parents have a high level of educational attainment have a greater likelihood of receiving optimal health services and developmental support, which carry forward into positive educational experiences and learning outcomes.
- Adult educational attainment rates varied by zip code. In 2000, 66 percent of adults lacked a high school diploma in zip code 85654 (Rillito). High rates were also present in the following zip codes: 85619 (Summerhaven), at 30 percent, and 85653 (Avra Valley/Marana), at 24 percent. More recent data at the zip code level are not available.
- In Pima County, according to the 2008-10 ACS, 43 percent of new mothers giving birth in the past twelve months were unmarried and 31 percent of those had less than a high school diploma. Three percent had a bachelor's or graduate degree. Of the 57 percent who were married, 13 percent had less than a high school degree and 31 percent had a bachelor's or graduate degree. Current figures are not available for the North Pima region.
- In Pima County, the results of the 2011 third grade AIMS scores showed 67 percent of students passing the math test and 74 percent passing the reading test. The writing test was not administered. Third graders in the North Pima region scored higher, on average, across all school districts. Students from 16 out of 34 schools scored 90 percent or higher in reading and students in 9 schools out of 34 schools scored 90 percent or higher in math.

Health

- The United States Census Bureau estimated that about 87 percent of children birth through age five in Arizona were uninsured in 2010. Enrollment in KidsCare in Pima County decreased by 62 percent between April 2010 and April 2011 due to the statewide enrollment freeze. The FTF North Pima Regional Partnership Council has contributed funds for the coordination of access to public health insurance

enrollment, immunizations, participation in medical/dental homes, and mental health service for families with children birth through age five through Child-Parent Centers, Inc.

- In April 2010, 21 percent of the Pima County general population was enrolled in the Arizona Health Coverage and Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). Enrollments increased slightly, by one percent, from April 2010 (208,969) to April 2011 (211,840).
- According to AHCCCS reports from fiscal year 2009 about its enrollees, 71 percent of infants under 16 months funded under KidsCare and 64.2 percent funded under Medicaid completed six or more well-child visits. Children ages three to six funded under KidsCare are measured slightly differently. They had a 73.7 percent completion rate regarding well-child visits, and children funded under Medicaid had a 69.4 percent completion rate. There are no numbers available for Pima County or the North Pima region. The implication of these rates is that having access to health care does not always ensure that health care services are used to the best advantage for young children.
- Healthy birth data are available for 2009 from Arizona Vital Statistics for the North Pima region. The total number of births in the region was 2,390, slightly lower than the 2,453 births in 2008. Seven percent of births in the North Pima region in 2009 were to teen mothers (159). The W. Ina/Camino de la Tierra zip code (85741) had the highest number of teen births in the region (41). This was followed by Avra Valley/W. Marana (85653) with 34 teen births. Teen parents in the North Pima region received support and education through Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services (TOPS) and home visitation programs.
- In the North Pima region, 77 percent of mothers received prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy in 2009. Rates varied across the region, however. There was an 11 percent range from lowest to highest, with Catalina (71%) ranking lowest and Tanque Verde (82%) ranking highest.
- Dental care among young children continues to be a priority in Arizona. A 2009 study conducted by the Arizona Department of Health Services found 30 percent of Arizona children ages two to four had untreated tooth decay -- nearly twice the national rate of 16 percent. Among children 6 to 8 years old, Tucson had a higher incidence of untreated tooth decay (44 percent) than the state average (40 percent), according to the most recent Arizona dental survey (conducted in 2003) that includes local level data.
- Child immunization rates in the North Pima region in 2009 ranged from 67 percent of infants ages 12 to 24 months to 21 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving the full immunization schedule. Thirty-nine percent of children ages 19 to 35 months received at least a partial immunization schedule. According to ADHS, the reported rates may be lower than actual rates due to children changing pediatricians. (More recent data were not available.)
- In 2010, 235 children birth through age three in the North Pima region received development screenings through AzEIP (Arizona Early Intervention Program) and 249 children ages birth through age six received services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The North Pima Regional Partnership Council is investing in multiple strategies through several partnering agencies to support children in receiving developmental screenings and enriched care that include hearing, speech and language, communication, literacy, social-emotional growth and other areas. In addition, the council provided financial incentives in fiscal years 2011 and 2012 for specialized therapists to work in the region so that children can receive timely services.

Early Childhood Education and Child Care

- Regulated child care and education providers include ADHS licensed centers, ADHS certified group homes, and DES certified family homes. Unregulated providers are not licensed or certified by any agency. As of December 2011, there were 111 regulated and unregulated child care providers in the North Pima region listed with the Child Care Resource and Referral database. This represents neither a gain nor a loss from

the number reported in the 2010 Needs and Assets Report. However, the maximum authorized capacity rose from 7,431 to 8,136 slots, including places for children birth through 12 years old.

- If one assumes that 80 percent of maximum authorized capacity is used for children birth through age five, licensed and certified providers in the North Pima region had slots for an estimated 6,509 children in this age group in December 2011. However, enrollments on a typical day are known to be far lower. Based on the total capacity used by providers reported in the 2010 DES Market Rate Survey, a reasonable estimate of the number of children birth through age five enrolled on a typical day in the North Pima region was approximately 3,288.
- Among the 111 regulated and unregulated child care and education providers listed in December 2011, there were 65 ADHS licensed centers, 8 ADHS certified group homes, 21 DES certified family homes and 17 unregulated providers. Among the licensed centers, five were nationally accredited, three were Head Start programs, and thirty-two were enrolled in the region's Quality First Program, which provides support to increase quality in child care and early education centers. About thirteen rural providers were enrolled in the region's Project M.O.R.E. initiative, which facilitates and supports the DES certification process as well as providing ongoing professional development opportunities for caregivers.
- Across the North Pima region, there was one licensed center for every 236 children birth through age five. Some communities had multiple licensed centers and others had none. For example, North Oro Valley (85755) reported no licensed facilities and in 2010 they had a population of 715 children birth through age five. East Marana (85658) reported no licensed facilities for a population of 467 children birth through age five. East Catalina Foothills (85750) reported one licensed center per 488 children. In contrast, West Catalina Foothills (85718) reported 9 licensed centers, or one for every 120 children birth through age five.
- Across the North Pima region, there was one certified provider for every 530 children birth through age five. The availability of certified providers varied greatly from one community to the next. The community showing the fewest available certified providers was West Catalina Foothills (85718) with no certified providers for a population of 1,079 children birth through age five. Following that was East Catalina Foothills (85750) with no certified providers for a population of 975 children. South Oro Valley (85737) listed one provider for 950 children. One zip code that had numerous providers was the W. Ina/Camino de la Tierra zip code (85741) with 10 providers, resulting in one provider for every 249 children birth through age five.
- Quality First is one of the cornerstone systemic strategies of First Things First to improve access to high quality early learning and care settings for children birth through age five. As of April 2012, there were 32 Quality First (QF) enrolled providers in the region, approximately one for every 480 children birth through age five. The communities of Avra Valley/West Marana (zip code 85653) had the lowest ratio of QF care providers to children, 1/1409, or one center for the 1,409 children known to live in that zip code in 2010. This is followed by Tanque Verde (zip code 85749) where there is one QF enrolled provider for about 847 children. In Oro Valley (zip code 85755), there are no QF enrolled providers for about 715 children birth through age five. East Marana (85658) also shows no QF enrolled providers for about 467 children. Cases Adobes (85704) has the highest number of QF enrolled providers (6), and had a ratio of one provider for every 262 children in that zip code.
- The average cost of full-time care and education across all providers in the region ranged from \$151 per week for infants to \$131 per week for four- to five-year-olds. Infant care in licensed centers was \$192 per week on average, compared with \$149 per week for four- to five-year-olds. In DES certified homes, infant care cost \$134 per week on average, compared to \$127 per week for four- to five-year-olds.
- Due to the economic recession and declines in state revenues, the state legislature has reduced many family support programs including child care subsidies. The availability of DES Child Care subsidies has

declined substantially in the North Pima region and statewide. In the North Pima region, the number of families eligible to receive the DES Child Care Subsidy declined from 632 in January 2009 to 419 in January 2011, a decrease of 34 percent. Of the families eligible for benefits in 2010, 76 percent received the benefits.

- The majority of staff members working in the child care and education profession lack professional qualifications. Arizona's regulations require only a high school diploma or GED for assistant teachers and teachers working in licensed centers. Program directors must have "some" college credits. Family home providers certified by DES are not required to have a high school diploma. The lack of professionalization of the early child care and education field results in a low compensation and benefits structure, particularly when compared to other divisions in the education sector as well as other professions.
- The FTF state agency and the North Pima Regional Partnership Council are addressing this gap through the T.E.A.C.H. program and REWARD\$, which offer scholarships towards college credits and various incentives to staff members and their employers, including wage enhancement. Ninety nine T.E.A.C.H. scholarships were made available to professionals in the region, enabling staff to make progress on their Early Childhood Associates Degrees and Child Development Associate in 2011. Quality First enrolled providers receive professional development as part of the quality enhancing program.

Supporting Families

- In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the North Pima Regional Partnership Council implemented a combined strategy of in-home parenting education (home visitation) and community-based parenting education in order to increase service accessibility for families, working with various partners under the umbrella of the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona Family Support Alliance. The following are examples of FTF funded family support activities:
 - Child and Family Resources Healthy Families Program provided support services for child development, parenting education and health.
 - Easter Seals Blake Foundation, Raising Healthy Kids program provided support services for families focusing on children with special needs providing screenings and follow-up care, parenting skills, and literacy.
 - Make Way for Books provided new parents with literacy materials and information.
 - Amphitheater School District Parents as Teachers Program and Parent Aid's Parents Partners Program supported children and families for kindergarten readiness, and provided multiple services including health and safety screenings, music education, and family meetings.
 - Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services provided supportive services for teen parents.
 - The Parent Connection provided Stay and Play events at local libraries and preschools, parenting classes, newborn support, a quarterly nutrition program, and networking opportunities.
 - Amphitheater School District Parents as Teachers and Marana Parents as Teachers provided Stay and Play events in schools and community libraries, partnership and outreach activities.

Public Awareness and Collaboration

Since 2010, significant progress in building an early care and education system in the North Pima region has continued. The North Pima Regional Partnership Council employed multiple overlapping strategies and activities involving parent outreach, public awareness and collaboration with numerous organizations, school districts, coalitions and community stakeholders. Highlights of North Pima's regional and cross-regional efforts are:

- The North Pima Mobilization Director had the responsibility for outreach and mobilization of community-based organizations and businesses to provide services and support for early childhood education and care in the region. In this role she convened and coordinated monthly meetings for the Early Childhood Partnership and the Home Provider Network, and other professional development seminars. She produced a newsletter and resource guide for the region, and coordinated public outreach events such as the Child and Family Festival and Catalina Youth Day.
- The North Pima Regional Partnership Council partnered with the Central and South Pima Regional Partnership Councils, as well as the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and Tohono O'odham Regional Partnership Councils in a cross-regional joint communication plan that included media, printed material and support of a contracted team of consultants to do public outreach. Their community outreach efforts included: support for community Outreach consultants to assist with identifying and presenting to local organizations, organizing site visits, gathering stories related to the impact of FTF strategies, and recruiting and retaining champions for early childhood education and health.
- The North Pima Regional Partnership Council continued to coordinate and partner with an active coalition of organizations and child advocates to build an early childhood education system. Under the umbrella of the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona these coalitions were: First Focus on Kids, the Southern Arizona Family Support Alliance, and the Early Childhood Partnership of Pima County.

Conclusion

The North Pima region is made up of diverse communities whose families with young children vary in their capacities, resources and needs. Approximately 15,361 children birth through age five living within the North Pima region require services in health, education and other areas.

The region includes both affluent and high need metropolitan and suburban areas, incorporated towns and unincorporated rural communities. The data presented in the report show significant variation in terms of need on a range of indicators throughout the North Pima region. Affluent communities like the Catalina Foothills contrast with Pima County's designated Community Development Target Areas of Marana, Rillito, Catalina and Picture Rocks. For these communities with more significant needs, the continued deepening of the economic recession that started in 2007 creates significant challenges and hardship for many families with young children. The North Pima Regional Partnership Council is addressing many of their challenges.

The North Pima Regional Partnership Council, with the help of its funded partners, has made progress in creating assets that are making a strong contribution to building a more coordinated system of early childhood education, health and family supportive services. Building a coordinated system is a long-term proposition that requires an enduring commitment from all actors. The North Pima Regional Partnership Council has harnessed many agencies, organizations and individuals to build alliances that are making headway in this area. The greatest regional asset continues to be the people who are deeply concerned and committed to early childhood care, education, and health issues of children ages birth through age five.

Executive Summary

The First Things First Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council works to focus attention on early childhood development in the Santa Cruz Region. (The region is almost identical to Santa Cruz County; it does not include the Amado community, but it does include parts of southeastern Pima County and western Cochise County.)

According to the 2010 US Census, there were 47,545 people living in the region, of whom 4,436 were children under the age of six. Although 95 percent of the region's children under six live in zip codes 85621 (Nogales) and 85648 (Rio Rico), there are young children living throughout the region. Over the past decade, the number of young children in the county increased by about 10 percent, with most of the growth occurring in the Rio Rico area. Nearly one in four of the region's young children were not living with either parent, but with their grandparents or other relatives.

About 82 percent of the population in the region report Hispanic ethnicity. Spanish is spoken at home in 76 percent of the households in the county. Although many of these households are bilingual, 26 percent of the households report that no adult in the household speaks English well. In the city of Nogales, 95 percent of households speak Spanish at home, and 39 percent report that no adult in the household speaks English well. Lack of English proficiency was seen by key informants as a barrier to employment in the region.

Families in the region face a number of economic challenges. One quarter of the population of Santa Cruz County lives in poverty, which is higher than the statewide average of 15 percent. Likewise, the median annual income in Santa Cruz County (\$40,933) is much less than the median income statewide (\$59,840). In 2011, the average unemployment rate in Santa Cruz County (16%) was nearly double the statewide rate (9%). The early 2012 home foreclosure rate in Rio Rico, the fastest growing community in the region, was about twice the state and county rate.

Many young children in the region are touched by hard economic circumstances. Nearly half of the children under six in the county received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits during July of 2011; seventy-five percent of the children under five participated in the WIC program; and many of the county's school-aged children are eligible for free-or-reduced-price lunch.

Although the cost of child care in the region is somewhat lower than in other areas of the state, it remains unaffordable for many families. The majority of regulated child care sites in the Santa Cruz region are family homes. In addition, there are four Head Start Centers (three in Nogales and one in Rio Rico) and 12 child care centers.

Health care is available at several sites in the region: Holy Cross Hospital, Mariposa FQHC, Rio Rico Medical and Dental Center, Patagonia Health Center, and Sonoita Family Health. However, transportation difficulties make it difficult for some families, especially those living in more rural areas of the region, to access these services.

During 2010, there were 693 births to mothers who live in Santa Cruz County. The majority of women in the region give birth at Holy Cross Hospital. About two-thirds of these mothers received prenatal care early, during the first trimester, which is substantially lower than the state (77%) and the Healthy People 2020 target of 78 percent. The percent of births to uninsured mothers is much higher in the county (12%) than in the state (4%).

The birth rate for teenage mothers in Santa Cruz County (62 births per thousand teenage girls) is higher than the statewide rate (55 births per thousand). The infant mortality rate in the county (5.5 per thousand) is, however, lower than the statewide rate (6.7 per thousand).

Although there are substantial challenges facing families in the region in these hard economic times, the region has a number of strengths to draw on. Families in the region are supported by a number of agencies that provide home visitation services, which include parenting education, health education, family reunification support, breastfeeding support, and early literacy development. Three Family Resource Centers have been opened in the region in the past two years. These centers, located in Nogales, Rio Rico, and Patagonia, provide a wide variety of services for young children and their families. These resources are assets to the communities in the Santa Cruz region, and may be leveraged by families to address many of the common challenges that they face. In addition, the region has a number of coalitions coming together across agencies to support families. By strengthening this network of collaboration, the region can better coordinate services to families in the region's diverse communities.

Executive Summary

The South Pima Regional Partnership Council 2012 Needs and Assets Report presents the demographic, economic and social indicators that pertain to children birth through age five and their families. Data are summarized from Census 2000, the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (ACS), the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, the 2010 Census and various local, and state agencies at the regional, community and zip code levels.

In addition to the main body of the report, two additional sections contain comprehensive data to help inform the South Pima Regional Partnership Council's planning and decision making: the Early Childhood Index for Children Birth through Age Five (Part Two), and the Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three). The Early Childhood Index (Part Two) is designed to help inform and target strategies, activities and funding allocations at the most local level possible by ranking seventeen indicators that are known to have an impact on the early years of a child's life. The Zip Code Fact Box Resource Guide (Part Three) provides a comprehensive picture of each zip code. Demographic, health, and economic information are presented for each zip code in the South Pima region from multiple years to show how conditions within each zip code have changed or remained stable over time.

South Pima Region Geography

The First Things First South Pima region has a diverse geography that includes many small rural towns and isolated communities and a few highly urban and suburban areas to the south and east of Tucson. It is an expansive region that covers more than 5,632 square miles and spans the far eastern, western, and southern boundaries of Pima County. The southern boundary borders Mexico at Lukeville in the far western part of the region and at Sasabe, southwest of Tucson. Its northern boundary reaches up to Speedway Boulevard on the far east of Tucson. There are 17 zip codes in the South Pima region representing 20 communities or geographical areas.

Eight public school districts have schools located in the South Pima region: Ajo Unified School District, Altar Valley Elementary School District, Continental Elementary School District, Sahuarita Unified School District, San Fernando Elementary School District, Sunnyside Unified School District, Tucson Unified School District, and the Vail Unified School District.

Demographic Overview and Economic Circumstances

- According to the 2010 Census the total population of the First Things First South Pima region was 267,603. At that time, there were 7,428 families with children birth through age five and 23,149 children birth through age five. First Things First estimated that in 2009, 27.9 percent or 6,134 children birth through age five were living below the poverty level.
- The population of the region grew significantly since the 2000 Census by 39.6 percent, and the number of families with children birth through age five has increased by 25.9 percent. Similarly, since 2000, the population of children birth through age five grew nearly 34

percent. The region's population growth has out-paced the growth of both the state and the county in the last decade.

- Within the region, the localities that have the highest numbers of children birth to age five continue to be Sunnyside (zip code 85706) with 6,557 children and Southeast Tucson (zip code 85730) with 2,997 children. These two areas share over one-third of the children birth to age five.
- The 2010 Census identified 1,597 families with children birth through age five headed by single mothers, which is 21.5 percent of all families with children in this age group. Sunnyside (85706) and Southeast Tucson (85730) have the highest proportion in the region, 35 percent and 20 percent respectively. In 2000, the Census estimated that 40 percent of single mothers with children birth through age five were living below the poverty level. Given this, it can be extrapolated that a similar proportion of these families headed by a single mother are living below the poverty level in 2010.
- Regarding ethnicity, the 2010 Census reported that 56.4 percent of children birth through age five in the FTF South Pima region were Hispanic. Regarding race, 63.6 percent were White, 3.5 percent were African American, nearly 3 percent were American Indian, 1.6 percent were Asian American, and 28.4 percent were some other race alone or multiple races. The proportion of Hispanic children birth through age five in the South Pima region is higher than in Pima County and Arizona as a whole.
- In the South Pima region, the estimated median income in 2000 was \$41,277. About 17 percent of families in the region earned less than \$20,000. Eleven percent of families were living below the poverty level. (Estimates are not available at the regional level from the 2010 Census.)
- Poverty rates for children birth through age five in 2000 vary by community in the South Pima region. The highest poverty rates for children in this age group were in the communities of Ajo (50 percent), Sasabe (44 percent), and the Sunnyside area (37 percent). Communities with the fewest children living below the poverty level were Rita Ranch (0.6 percent) and Southeast Tucson/S. Freeman Road and Vail/Corona de Tucson at 6 percent.
- In Pima County, 2008-2010 ACS estimates show that 54 percent of children birth through age five living with both parents had both parents in the workforce (22,962 children) and 76.4 percent of children living with one parent had that parent in the workforce (23,288 children). This total estimate of 46,250 children with working parents in Pima County need some type of child care and education. Child care and education providers are also needed for the children of non-working parents who are attending school or seeking employment.
- Unemployment rates in Pima County jumped from 4.7 percent in January 2008 to 9.2 percent in January 2011, and unemployment claims increased by over 700 percent between January 2007 (3,208) and January 2010 (25,845). As of January 2011, the following South Pima region communities had the highest estimated unemployment rates: Ajo (16.3 percent), Three Points (14.8 percent) and Summit View (11.2 percent).
- Since the start of the recession in 2007, the enrollment of families and children in emergency and supplemental food assistance has been increasing in the South Pima region. The number of families with children birth through age five enrolled in the food stamp program increased 258 percent from 2007 to 2011. Children birth to age four enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) increased 43.5 percent from 2007 to 2011. Similarly, in Pima County as a whole, use of the community food bank has increased

significantly since the onset of the recession. Children birth through age six represented the group with the largest increase in use of the food bank, from 2007 to 2010, showing a 108 percent increase.

- The enrollment of children birth through age five in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) decreased in the South Pima region from 809 in January 2007 to 430 in January 2011, a decrease of 46.8 percent. Similar decreases were evident for children birth through age five receiving benefits during that time period. The decreases were most likely affected by state legislative action taken in 2010 and 2011 that reduced the TANF Lifetime Benefit Limits.
- The South Pima region has a somewhat unstable housing environment, a factor that is known to impact child development and health. South Pima residents have low housing mobility as evidenced by the low rental rate of 23.1 percent compared to 35.9 percent in Pima County and 34 percent in the state. However, the region has a comparatively higher pre-foreclosure rate, (the risk of losing one's home) than Pima County. In 2010 the pre-foreclosure rate for the South Pima region was 3.5 percent, that is, 1 in 29 residential property owners received a pre-foreclosure notice, higher than 2.5 percent for Pima County. Moreover, pre-foreclosure notices have impacted families across the economic spectrum in South Pima. For example, Vail and Rita Ranch, both stable, middle class areas, have high pre-foreclosure rates of 4.8 percent and 4.5 percent respectively. Sunnyside and Summit View/Littletown, both areas with more socio-economic challenges also have high pre-foreclosure rates of 4.4 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively.

Education

- Updated estimates from the 2008-2010 ACS showed that 14 percent of adults in Pima County, and 16 percent in the City of Tucson did not have a high school diploma.
- In Pima County, according to the 2008-2010 ACS, 43 percent of new mothers giving birth in the past six months were unmarried and 31 percent of those had less than a high school diploma. One percent had a bachelor's or graduate degree. Of the 58 percent who were married, 13 percent had less than a high school degree and 22 percent had a bachelor's or graduate degree.
- Third grade AIMS scores are the best measure at this time for assessing children's learning in the early grades. In Pima County, third grade AIMS scores from 2010-2011 showed 67 percent of students passing the math test, and 74 percent passing the reading test. There continues to be a great variation in passing scores across the districts and schools in the region. For example, Vail Unified School District (88 percent passing math and 90 percent passing reading) had the highest percentage of students passing the tests. The charter districts of Arizona Community Development Corporation (50 percent passing math; 58 percent passing reading) and TAG Elementary, Inc. (25 percent passing math; 60 percent passing reading) had the lowest scores. Families with children in low performing schools may need targeted services for their younger children.

Health

- The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that about 13 percent of children birth through age five in Arizona were uninsured in 2010. The 2010 Arizona Health Survey estimated a slightly lower uninsured rate of 9 percent for Arizona's young children.

- In April 2010, 21 percent of the Pima County general population was enrolled in AHCCCS (Arizona Health Coverage and Cost Containment System). Enrollments increased slightly, by one percent from April 2010 (208,969) to April 2011 (211,840).
- The number of children enrolled in KidsCare in Pima County continued to decrease due to the enrollment freeze initiated in 2009. KidsCare is Arizona's Children's Health Insurance Program under AHCCCS that covers children 0-18 whose family income falls between 100 and 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Pima County enrollments decreased by 61.7 percent from April 2009 (7,366) to April 2011 (2,817). Information specific to the South Pima region is not available. The FTF South Pima Regional Partnership Council is contributing funds for the coordination of access to public insurance for families with children birth through age five with outreach and enrollment assistance through the Pima County Health Department.
- According to fiscal year 2009 AHCCCS reports about its enrollees, 71 percent of infants under 16 months funded under KidsCare and 64.2 percent funded under Medicaid completed six or more well-child visits. Children ages three to six funded under KidsCare are measured slightly differently. They had a 73.7 percent completion rate and children funded under Medicaid had 69.4 percent completion rate. There are no numbers available for Pima County or the South Pima region. The implication of these rates is that having access to health care does not always ensure that health care services are used to the best advantage for young children.
- Healthy birth data are available for 2009 from Arizona Vital Statistics for the South Pima region. The total number of births in the region was 3,775, a two percent decrease from 2008 (3,850). In 2009, 12 percent of births were to teen mothers, 42 percent were to unwed mothers, and 51 percent were publicly funded. Seventy-two percent of mothers reported receiving prenatal care in the first trimester. In response to the high proportion of teens giving birth, the South Pima region is providing support and education to teen parents through Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services (TOPS) and home visitation programs.
- Due to the limited access to dental care among young children in the region, the FTF South Pima Regional Partnership Council funded the Pima County Health Department's First Smiles Matter program to provide dental care services at child care centers, preschools, clinics and other community locations. South Pima targeted 1,100 children in fiscal year 2011 and 2,300 children in 2012 to receive dental screenings and care.
- Child immunization rates in the South Pima region in 2009 ranged from 73 percent of infants ages 12 to 24 months to 52 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving the full immunization schedule. According to ADHS, the reported rates may be lower than actual rates due to children changing pediatricians.
- In 2010, 369 children birth to age three in the South Pima region received developmental screenings through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) and 392 children birth to age six received services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Early Childhood Education and Child Care

- There were 275 regulated and unregulated child care providers in the FTF South Pima region registered with the Child Care Resource and Referral database as of December 2011, down from 322 providers registered in the database in April 2010. Regulated child care and education providers include ADHS licensed centers, ADHS certified group homes, and DES

certified family homes. Unregulated providers are not licensed or certified by any agency. Among regulated providers, 50 were ADHS licensed centers, 40 were ADHS certified group homes, 163 were DES certified family homes. Twenty-two were unregulated providers. Approximately 83 percent of the regulated providers were contracted with DES to provide services to children whose families were eligible to receive child care subsidies.

- If one assumes that 80 percent of maximum authorized capacity is used for children birth through age five, licensed and certified providers in the South Pima region had slots for an estimated 5,622 children in this age group in December 2011. However, enrollments on a typical day are known to be far lower. Based on the total capacity used by providers reported in the 2010 DES Market Rate Survey, a reasonable estimate of the number of children birth through age five enrolled on a typical day in the South Pima region was approximately 3,060. This number represents 13 percent of the 23,149 children in the region reported in the 2010 Census. Viewed another way, across the region as a whole, there is one licensed center for every 463 children, and one certified provider for every 126 children in this age group.
- The FTF South Pima Regional Council is supporting the expansion of high quality early centers and education placements by providing funding for strategic business planning, licensing and certification. Examples of South Pima investments in this area are the continuing efforts of Project M.O.R.E. to recruit and assist in licensing and certification of providers in the region; the Pima County Community Development and Neighborhood Conservation early childhood education planning work in Ajo; and the Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship Program.
- Among the providers in the South Pima region, three were nationally accredited centers (down from the seven reported in 2010), nine were Head Start programs, and 70 were enrolled in the region's Quality First Program (an increase from the 53 reported in 2010). As of April 2012, there was one Quality First provider for every 331 children birth to age five in the region. The Sunnyside area had the highest number (31) of Quality First providers, and Southeast Tucson (85730) and Tucson Mountain Park (85735) had the lowest number (1).
- In 2010, the average cost of full-time care across all providers in the region ranged from \$159 per week for infant care to \$124 per week for the care of four-to five year-olds. Infant care in licensed centers was \$125 per week on average, compared with \$121 per week for four-to five year-olds. In DES certified homes, infant care cost \$119 per week on average, compared to \$116 per week for four-to five-year olds.
- In the FTF South Pima region, the number of families eligible to receive the DES Child Care Subsidy decreased from 1,526 in January 2009 to 930 in January 2011, a decrease of 39 percent. Of the families eligible for benefits in 2011, 82 percent received the benefits.
- The Arizona Department of Economic Security has maintained a statewide waiting list that included approximately 3,223 families in January 2011 waiting to receive the child care subsidy. The FTF South Pima region invested in Quality First child care scholarships to help low-income families afford quality child care.
- The majority of staff members working in the field of early child care and education lack professional qualifications. Arizona's regulations require only a high school diploma or GED for assistant teachers and teachers working in licensed centers. Family home providers certified by DES are not required to have a high school diploma. The lack of professionalization of the early child care and education field results in a low compensation

and benefits structure compared to other divisions of the education sector as well as other professions.

- The FTF South Pima Regional Council is addressing this gap by funding several professional development options. The Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (T.E.A.C.H.) program and a non-T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program offered through Central Arizona College provide scholarships for higher education and credentialing. The Community-Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals strategy provides quality education and training in a community setting to professionals working in the field.

Supporting Families

The South Pima Regional Partnership Council determined that supports and services to families was the second highest priority need in the region in fiscal years 2011 and 2012. In order to address this need, the council implemented a combined strategy that included both in-home parenting education (home visitation) and community-based parenting education. Highlights of these strategies are:

- For home-based family support services the Sunnyside Parents as Teachers program provided services in the Sunnyside area. The United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona partnered with the following agencies: Child and Family Resources/Healthy Families; Make Way for Books; Parent Aid; The Parent Connection; and Sopori Elementary School. In fiscal year 2011, 237 families were targeted for home visitation services, and in fiscal year 2012 these numbers were increased to 297 families. The South Pima region has exceeded these targets, and there is a waiting list for some programs. The majority of families that enrolled in a home visitation program in fiscal year 2011 continued to participate in fiscal year 2012 allowing families to have continuity of supports and services.
- For community-based parent education and training, South Pima funded the following activities in fiscal years 2011 and 2012: Stay and Play parenting groups; nutrition education groups; case management; support and education for teen parents; Parent Info-line; health insurance outreach and enrollment assistance.

Public Awareness and Collaboration

Since 2008, significant progress has been made in building an early care and education system in the South Pima region. South Pima employed multiple overlapping strategies and activities involving parent outreach, public awareness and collaboration with numerous organizations, school districts, coalitions and community stakeholders. Highlights of South Pima's efforts since 2010 are:

- *Cross-Regional Public Awareness and Community Outreach.* In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the South Pima region partnered with the Central and North Pima Regions, as well as the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and Tohono O'odham Regional Partnership Councils in a cross-regional joint communication plan that includes media, printed material and support of a contracted team of consultants to do public outreach to an array of audiences.

- *Coordination and Collaboration with Key Community Stakeholders.* Public awareness, parent outreach and collaboration activities are being conducted by South Pima's partners under the umbrella of the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, First Focus on Kids, Family Support Alliance and the Early Childhood Partnership of Southern Pima County. A wide variety of media and activities have been used such as public ads, social media, parenting workshops and resource distribution (e.g. children's books, resource guides, child development and child health fact sheets or parenting tip sheets).
- *Coordination of Services Grant.* The South Pima Regional Partnership Council funded a Coordination of Services grant in fiscal years 2011 and 2012 in partnership with the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona that targets six communities: Amado, Arivaca, Sasabe, Three Points, Summit View and Sunnyside. The primary goals were to identify available resources and opportunities for service coordination, and to improve or streamline processes for families with young children.
- *Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship Program.* The Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship strategy, new in fiscal year 2012, involves implementing pre-kindergarten programs in schools and coordination of other supportive services in small rural communities in the South Pima region. Thus far, this strategy has been considered successful due to good relationship building with the local school districts, specifically within Amado, Ajo, and Three Points. A new pre-kindergarten was opened in November, 2011 in the community of Ajo. As of March 2012, the classroom slots were full and there is a waiting list. The Altar Valley School District (Three Points) also opened a pre-kindergarten in February, 2012, and it maintains a waiting list. There are plans for continued funding of this strategy in fiscal year 2013.
- *The Community Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals Strategy.* South Pima has partnered with the Central Pima Regional Partnership Council and other agencies to implement this strategy in fiscal year 2012. Grantees work in partnership with program administrators, center directors and owners of early care and education programs to identify and implement professional development needs for staff within core competency areas. Grantees deliver high quality, best practice, and community-based professional development opportunities to early care and education teachers and administrators via a Communities of Practice model which includes ongoing education sessions, seminars, lectures and college level classes to enhance their skills and knowledge in working with children birth through age five. Multiple higher educational institutions have already articulated agreements to collaborate and coordinate services such as Pima Community College, University of Arizona and University of Arizona- South. Additional partnerships and collaborations have been formed with Central Arizona College, Rio Salado Community College, Tohono O'odham Community College, and Prescott College.

Conclusion

The major challenges for the First Things First South Pima region continue to be the geographic dispersion, economic disparities of the region's population, and state level cuts to social and health services. Approximately 23,149 children birth through age five in South Pima require services in health, education and other areas. Poverty rates are high and have increased since the start of the recession in 2007, based on the most recent estimates for Pima County. The rising use of emergency food services and food assistance programs points to continued

hardship for a significant number of families with young children. The South Pima region also has high pre-foreclosure rates, or the risk of losing one's home. This particular hardship has affected not just low-income but also middle-income communities within the region. All of these factors can result in stresses on families with young children such as relocation, lack of stability, and psycho-emotional distress¹².

Regional and local data show the continued need for high quality regulated care. South Pima's regulated (licensed and certified) providers have the capacity to care for approximately 24 percent of the region's population of children birth through age five. Access to quality care is improving yet varies by community. Although this is nearly the same capacity that existed over a year ago, there was a 14.5 percent reduction in the total number of providers from April 2010 to December 2011 translating into lost businesses. At the local level, data show disparities in the number of children and regulated providers across the zip code areas. Some of the small rural towns and more populated suburban areas have few, to no, licensed or certified providers. Furthermore, the number of families eligible to receive the DES Child Care Subsidy continues to decrease. Child care providers are finding it difficult to survive economically due to the reductions in child care subsidies to parents who would use their services. At the same time, the cost of care is prohibitive for many families. The lack of sufficient and affordable regulated care suggests that families turn to kith and kin care. Unregulated care can compromise optimal child development where there is a lack of formal education and training among child care providers.

The South Pima Regional Partnership Council has addressed these needs by employing multi-pronged, long-term strategies in the region to coordinate services and build capacity for early childhood care, education, and support services. These include the package of strategies under Quality First, and newer strategies such as the Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship and the Family, Friend and Neighbors programs that are considered to be creative and successful ways to build trust among community members and provide crucial services in the small rural towns. The South Pima Regional Partnership Council is also responding to the economic deprivation and hardship of families by providing in-home family supports, community based parenting education, and strategic coordination of existing family support services. An example is their investment in the Coordinated Services Grant that specifically focuses on services coordination and capacity building in six of the small rural communities with a high need for educational and family support services.

The South Pima Regional Partnership Council alone cannot address all of the needs documented in this report, many of which are structural deficits in the social service and educational systems. However, since 2008, the South Pima Regional Partnership Council has conducted careful strategic planning that strived to be responsive to the region's high needs in a balanced and feasible way. The council's approach has been to build on the existing community resources and to partner or collaborate with willing community agencies. South Pima's funding strategies and partnerships have demonstrated a commitment to a long-term

¹² Source: The Economic Crisis Hits Home: The Unfolding Increase in Child and Youth Homelessness. 2008. <http://www.naehcy.org/dl/TheEconomicCrisisHitsHome.pdf>, accessed April 12, 2012.

sustainable approach for creating an early childhood care and education system. This is clearly evident by the assets documented in this report and by their funding plan for the next three years.



FIRST THINGS FIRST

**West Regional Partnership Councils
Regional Needs and Assets Reports
Executive Summaries**

**Cocopah Tribe
Colorado River Indian Tribes
Hualapai Tribe
La Paz/Mohave
Yuma**

Executive Summary

THE REGION AND THE PEOPLE

The Cocopah Indian Tribe is a federally-recognized American Indian tribe situated on more than 6,500 acres along the lower Colorado River and delta in Southwestern Arizona. The reservation, created by an executive order in 1917, is comprised of three noncontiguous regions: the West, East, and North Reservations. The West and East Reservations are located 15 minutes from each other on either side of the town of Somerton, and 15 miles south of Yuma, the nearest full-service city. The North Reservation is located in Yuma, approximately 25 minutes from both the West and East Reservations. Most Cocopah Indian Tribe services are located on the West Reservation, except for the Head Start which is on the East Reservation and the IHS Fort Yuma Service Unit which is located on the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation.

There were 817 individuals living on the Cocopah Indian Reservation in 2010, based on U.S. Census data. Of those individuals, 65 were children ages birth through five. The Cocopah Indian Tribal Enrollment office reported there were 94 children ages birth through five enrolled as members in 2012, however 49 of those children were living off tribal lands.

Seventy-two percent of residents on the Cocopah Indian Reservation under the age of 5 were identified as Native American and 22% as Hispanic or Latino in 2010. In comparison, 57% of the total residents on the Cocopah Indian Reservation identified as Native American, 12% as Hispanic or Latino, and 30% as White in 2010. Among the American Indian population, 93% identified as Yuman, 2% as Tohono O'odham, 2% as Navajo, and 3% reported being members of other tribes. Nearly three-quarters of the population five years and older in the region spoke English only. Over half of children (56%) under 18 living on the Cocopah Indian Reservation lived in single female headed families and 33% lived in married-couple families in 2010.

The Face of Poverty

Income

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack sufficient food, become victims of crime and violence, and lack basic health care. They are at significant risk for dropping out of school early, poor academic performance, behavior problems in school, lower levels of literacy, and lower educational attainment.

What does the economy look like for local children and their families?

- The median household income including cash benefits for the Cocopah Indian Tribe was \$43,300, which was higher than the median household income in Yuma County at \$40,340 but lower than Arizona at \$50,448 in 2010.
- More than two out of every three children ages birth through five (68%) were living in poverty in 2009 in the First Things First Cocopah Region, down from 77% of children of those same ages in 2008.

- The Community Center works with different programs and departments to offer resources that educate people about how to ask for help, where to go to get it, and how to follow up to get the best results.

Unemployment

Healthy communities require an adequate supply of jobs that generate enough income to pay for basic needs.

Do parents have jobs?

- The unemployment rate on the Cocopah Indian Reservation was 32%, a much higher rate than in Yuma County (26%) and Arizona (9%) in 2011.
- The Cocopah Vocational Training Center of the United Way of Yuma County provides adult vocational education, employment, and job search training to enrolled tribal members (any tribe).

Economic Supports

Going without basic needs such as food, housing, child care, health care, or clothing can have short and long-term consequences to residents' health and well-being. When children suffer from lack of food, it can lead to poor physical and mental health, difficulty learning, increased school absences, and lower test scores. This makes children more likely to suffer from poverty when they become adults.

Can families meet their basic needs?

- The number of children ages birth through five receiving food stamps increased in both Somerton and the City of Yuma between 2007 and 2011.
- Participants in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program receive nutritious supplemental foods, health screening services, age-appropriate nutrition information, and referrals to health and human services. In February 2012, 180 Cocopah Tribal members including 53 infants, 99 children, and 28 adults received WIC services.
- Thirty-three families with children ages birth through five in Somerton and 152 families with children ages birth through five in the City of Yuma received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in January 2011.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care, and in particular, affordable care provides critical support so that parents may go to work.

Do parents have access to child care?

- Child care options on the reservation are very limited and do not fully meet the needs of the community.
- There is not a lot of child care for children younger than three years old, according to a local early child care program representative.
- The Cocopah Head Start program was at capacity with 20 children each year between 2007/08 and 2010/11.

Early Care and Education

School Readiness and Success

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment measures skills related to how well children are prepared to begin kindergarten. While the DIBELS assessments only measure skills related to the letter knowledge component of kindergarten readiness, they provide a picture of how well children are prepared when beginning school. Third grade reading scores are an excellent predictor of later school success, including high school graduation rates and career success.

Are children ready for school?

- Only 10% of kindergarteners in the Somerton Elementary School District and about 20% of kindergarteners at Crane and Yuma Elementary School Districts entered kindergarten with benchmark DIBELS scores, indicating they were at grade level in 2010/11.

Are children learning to read?

- Crane Elementary, Somerton Elementary, and Yuma Elementary school districts all saw an increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding the 3rd grade reading standards between 2007 and 2011.

Are youth graduating?

- The graduation rate for all students in the Yuma Union High School District increased from 75% in 2007 to 81% in 2010. The rate for American Indian students decreased between 2007 and 2009, but saw a small increase to 61% in 2010.

Children with Special Needs

It's crucial to have early identification of children's special needs so that children can get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community. Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive and audio screenings are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth.

How many children up to 36 months old with developmental delays or at risk of delays receive AzEIP services?

- The number of children receiving Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) assistance in the Somerton zip code rose from 14 to 20 between 2006/07 and 2009/10. The City of Yuma also saw a large rise in children receiving AzEIP services from 41 to 106 between 2006/07 and 2009/10.

Health

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance

Children with a regular source of primary health care and health insurance have better health, receive more preventative care, and have lower rates of hospitalization because they get treated for conditions before they become too serious.

Do children have health insurance in the region?

- Of children ages birth through five registered at the IHS Fort Yuma Service Unit, 59% of children had additional insurance, either AHCCCS or private insurance.

Are there enough doctors/health professionals?

- The Cocopah Indian Reservation is classified as a Health Professional Shortage Area and a Medically Underserved Area. The nearest provider areas are in San Luis, Yuma, and Somerton.
 - The ratio of providers to people in those areas was 888 people for every health care provider in San Luis, 399 people for every provider in Yuma, and 4,389 people for every provider in Somerton.

Healthy Births

Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have healthy babies. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and five times more likely to die. Teen parents and their children are often at greater risk of experiencing short- and long-term health, economic, social, and academic challenges than parents who delay childbirth.

Are mothers getting prenatal care?

- Less than half (44%) of the 9 pregnant American Indian women residing on the Cocopah Indian Reservation received prenatal care in the first trimester in 2009.

Are babies born healthy?

- No babies were born at low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds) to mothers residing on the Cocopah Indian Reservation between 2006 and 2009.
- There were no preterm births (a gestation period of less than 37 weeks) to mothers residing on the Cocopah Indian Reservation between 2008 and 2009.

- There were six births to mothers residing on the Cocopah Indian Reservation that had complications of labor and delivery between 2008 and 2009.

Are teenagers having babies?

- Teen births represented 22% of the 9 births to American Indian women living on the Cocopah Indian Reservation in 2009.

Overweight and Obese

When children are overweight and obese, it can lead to physical and emotional health effects including greater risk of hospitalization, type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, low self-esteem, and depression. The incidence of overweight and obesity for children birth through 17 of enrolled members of the Cocopah Indian Tribe has risen sharply between 2010 and 2011.

Are children overweight or obese?

- Among members of the Cocopah Indian Tribe, the incidence of overweight and obesity is cause for concern. Nearly 63% of children ages four through five were overweight or obese in 2011. Seventy-three percent of children ages 6-17 and 93% of adults were also overweight or obese.

Oral Health

Oral health problems can be minimized through regular preventive dental services. Experts therefore recommend that children as young as one year old be examined for evidence of developing early childhood dental caries (also known as tooth decay or cavities), the most common form of childhood oral disease.

Do children have dental care?

- More dentists are needed to serve the local population.
- 3% of Cocopah Indian children ages 0-5 had tooth decay in 2011, according to IHS Fort Yuma Service Unit.
- 100% of Cocopah Head Start Children (20 each year) received preventive oral health care every year since 2006.

Supporting Families

Parenting Classes

Parenting classes can teach parents about child development, effective ways to discipline, and the best ways to prepare their children to enter school. They can also give parents the opportunity to connect with other parents who are going through similar experiences.

Are parents accessing parenting classes?

- The Cocopah Early Steps Program provided parenting classes, 66 home visits for families and 12 outside referrals for families between July and November 2011.

- There were a total of 13 families with children enrolled in Cocopah Early Steps as of November 2011.

Child Abuse and Foster Care

Child abuse and neglect are found in families across the social and economic spectrum. Children who are victims of abuse and neglect may be placed in foster care by the courts. It is generally held that the child's best interests are served by being with their parents, and there is often an effort to address the issues at home in an effort to reunite the family.

Are children experiencing abuse and neglect?

- There was a decrease in the number of children removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect in the City of Yuma with 106 children removed in 2007 and 44 removed in 2010, according to Information from the Department of Economic Security. However, 12 children were removed in Somerton in 2007 and 11 children were removed in 2010.
- A representative from the Social Services Department in Cocopah reported that the removal rate for children with substantiated cases of abuse or neglect had been at about 80% when he/she started to work there, but by early 2012, the rate had dropped to about 20%.

Public Awareness and Collaboration

Community ties with friends and relatives are a principal means by which people and households get supportive resources to help raise their children.

What are community members most concerned about?

- The Cocopah Head Start conducted a Community Assessment among 65 families in the Cocopah community in 2007. When asked what issues were of highest concern, respondents reported: diabetes prevention (88%), strengthening language and culture (88%), medical/health care (85%), and keeping children safe from abuse (85%).

Executive Summary

The Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) Region encompasses a unique and diverse area. The Colorado River Indian Tribes include four distinct Tribes—the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi and Navajo. The Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation covers about 420 square miles, of which about 84% lies in La Paz County, Arizona. The remainder is across the river, in California. The primary community in the Colorado River Indian Tribes Region is Parker, Arizona, which is located on a combination of Tribal land, leased land that is owned by the Colorado River Indian Tribes and land owned by non-tribal members. The Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Partnership Council serves both tribal members and non-members on the Reservation, in the town of Parker, and from surrounding communities of La Paz County.

Tribal approvals for tribally-specific data collection were not available for this edition of the report. Therefore, this report presents as full a picture of the region's needs and assets as possible, using only non-tribal data sources; however, it is necessarily somewhat limited in its scope.

About 35 percent of the population of La Paz County—and 60 percent of the county's young children—live in the Colorado River Indian Tribes Region. In 2010, there were 7,077 people living on the Arizona part of the reservation, of whom 739 were children under the age of six. Most of children live in or near the town of Parker, but some live in the Poston area, or farther south. About three-quarters of these young children live with one or both parents; the remaining quarter live with grandparents or other relatives, or with unrelated persons. Forty-two percent of children under six in the region live in poverty.

In the 2010 census, the three largest racial/ethnic groups in the Colorado River Indian Tribes Region were people who identified as Hispanic (40%), as American Indians (29%), and non-Hispanic white (27%). About 30 percent of the households in the region speak a language other than English at home (primarily Spanish, though about 3% of households speak an American Indian language). Of the region's adults 25 years old or older, about 32 percent do not have a high-school diploma or GED. Only six percent have a college degree.

The state of Arizona has designated the Colorado River Indian Tribes Region as a medically underserved area. There is no labor and delivery unit in the region. Although pediatric care is available at the Parker Indian Health Center, there are no pediatricians for non-tribal members. Only 64 percent of expectant mothers get first-trimester prenatal care, and 11 percent had fewer than five prenatal visits in all. Although mothers in the region are more likely to be teen-aged than mothers statewide, their babies are less likely to have low birth weights.

There are six licensed or certified child care providers in the region, including Head Start and Blake Preschool Program (currently housed within Wallace Elementary School). Milemarkers Therapy provides early intervention services and Head Start and Blake Preschool Program provide services to preschool-aged special-needs children.

The local Head Start program, in addition to its educational mission, also collaborates with other agencies and service providers to benefit all of the children in the Region, including those who are not enrolled in the program. Children living in the region have high rates of up-to-date immunizations and dental screenings, for example.

There is concern in the community about the low proportion of third grade children passing the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) Reading and Math tests, suggesting a need for increasing support for early literacy.

A asset of the Colorado River Tribes Region is the culturally diverse, yet often cohesive, nature of the region. Leveraging the unique opportunities for cross-community collaboration and resource sharing in the Colorado River Indian Tribes Region can help those in the community respond creatively to these challenges and to support the health, welfare and development of the families and young children who live there.

Executive Summary

The Hualapai Tribe is a federally recognized Indian Tribe located in northwestern Arizona with the northern boundary of the reservation along 108 miles of the Grand Canyon and extending to the middle of the Colorado River. The Hualapai reservation, established in 1883, encompasses about one million acres, which lie on part of three Arizona counties: Coconino, Yavapai, and Mohave. Most residents live in the Tribe's capital, Peach Springs, located along US Route 66. Geographically, the boundaries of the First Things First Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council area essentially match those of the reservation.

The 2010 US Census reported the population of the reservation to be 1,335, of whom 197 are children under the age of six. (Tribal enrollment, which includes members living off the reservation, was 2,178 in 2010.) An increasing proportion of the Tribal population is young children. From 2000 to 2010, the number of young children in the region increased from 157 to 197, although the total population was almost unchanged over the decade. The Census counted 362 households living in the region. About one-third of these households (123) were home to one or more children under six. About 39 percent of the region's young children live with relatives other than their parents. This proportion is higher than the statewide average (19%) but lower than the average for all of Arizona's reservations (47%).

A high unemployment rate and limited job opportunities are among the main challenges faced by community members in the region. Unemployment on the Hualapai Tribe Reservation averaged about 25 percent in 2011, similar to that of all Arizona Reservations combined (24.7%) much higher than the Arizona average of 9 percent. Limited employment opportunities are also related to the low educational attainment in the region: about 28 percent of the region's adults do not have a high school education, or GED, which is required for employment with the Tribe. Some working parents find it necessary to travel far for work, which has a strong impact on the family as it reduces the amount of time they can spend with their children.

About 45 percent of the region's children under six live in poverty, which is nearly double the rate in Arizona as a whole (24% in poverty). During 2011, about 62 percent of young children participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP), and 9 percent participated in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The local Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program provided service to 130 infants and children (up to four years old). Language and cultural preservation is important to the Hualapai Tribe. The Census Bureau estimates that about two-thirds of the households in the region use a language other than English at home. About 44 percent of individuals older than five years of age speak an Indian language at home.

Child care in the region is available through the Hualapai Child Care program. Currently only home-based providers are available as part of the program. However, the Hualapai Tribe is in the process of building a new Child Care Center facility that will provide much needed child care services to more families in the region.

About three-quarters of the three- to five-year-old children in the region attend preschool or kindergarten. A major asset in the region is the tribally operated Hualapai Head Start program, which has a capacity to enroll 57 three- and four-year-old children. According to Census 2010 data there are 68 children ages 3 and 4 in the Hualapai Tribe. With 57 children enrolled, the Head Start Program is in the position to enroll the vast majority of age-eligible children in the area.

As it is the case in many rural areas, there are limited professional development opportunities for early childhood education staff in the region. Community colleges such as Rio Salado College, Mohave Community College and Yavapai College offer a variety of degrees in early childhood education to professionals in the Hualapai Tribe Region, some of which are available as online degrees. The Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council supports professional development opportunities in the region through two T.E.A.C.H. scholarships.

Health care is available to community members at the Indian Health Services Peach Springs Health Center and the Hualapai Health Education and Wellness Department. Prenatal care and education services are provided by these two agencies through a contracted Ob/Gyn physician and the Maternal and Child Health Program, respectively. About 72 percent of expectant mothers in the region receive early (first-trimester) prenatal care. Although this is a higher rate than the 64 percent for all Arizona Reservations combined, it does not meet the Healthy People 2020 target of 78 percent. The rate of women who did not receive prenatal care at all in the Hualapai Tribe is 4.2 percent compared to 2.3 percent in the state as a whole and 3 percent for all Arizona Indian Nations combined.

There are generally high rates of adequate immunizations among young children, and oral health care for the youngest children in the region is also good. Childhood obesity has been identified as a problem for children in the region, however. Nearly half of the 2- to 5-year old children in the IHS Peach Springs area are overweight, and a quarter of them are obese. Overall, challenges for families with young children in the region include problems associated with unemployment, poverty, and lack of education; a shortage of quality early child care; logistic barriers to professional development for child care providers; high rates of teen parenthood; very high rates of childhood obesity; and a need for parenting classes and early childhood literacy programs.

However, a number of strong assets were identified in the Hualapai Tribe Region, including active language and culture preservation programs; partnerships among agencies such as WIC and Maternal and Child Health; high rates of preschool education; an involved tribal Teen Council; high rates of immunization; good access to oral health care; and high levels of community involvement. By leveraging these substantial strengths, the Hualapai Tribe can continue to support young families and can help assure that “the community’s children” enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn.

Executive Summary

Geographically, the La Paz/Mohave Region consists of the two counties of La Paz and Mohave, excluding three reservation areas (Colorado River Indian Tribes, Hualapai, and Kaibab), but including the Arizona portion of the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation. The region covers nearly 17,000 square miles, with its northern end separated from the rest by the Grand Canyon. The communities of the region are diverse in population density and in demographics and are often isolated by large areas of unpopulated land. Services are concentrated in larger places such as Bullhead City, Kingman and Lake Havasu in Mohave County and Parker in La Paz County.

The 2010 US Census counted 211,367 residents of the La Paz/Mohave Region, of whom 13,395 were children under the age of six. About one in every ten households in the region had a child or children under six. This rate varied substantially by community, however, ranging from 3 (in Quartzsite) to 68 percent (in Colorado City) of households with a young child.

In the last decade, the population of young children in both counties has grown at a slower rate than the state as a whole. In 2010, there were 1,784 more young children in Mohave County than there had been in 2000. La Paz County saw little change in its young population; there were 1,195 children under six in 2000 and 1,227 in 2010. There has been substantial variation within communities, however, with some showing a large increase in their young child population, suggesting a need for increased services to families in those areas.

About 60 percent of children under six in the region live with both parents, and nearly one in three lived in a single-female headed household. Across the region, 14 percent of children were living in their grandparents' household. In the Dolan Springs community specifically, approximately one in three children were living with their grandparents.

Although only 15 percent of the population across the region identifies as Hispanic, and only one percent as American Indian, there is great variability in ethnic diversity in communities, especially among the population of young children. For instance, about 32 percent of the population on the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation report being American Indian, and two-thirds of the children enrolled in elementary school in Wenden and Littlefield are reported as Hispanic. Bilingual households are common but not frequent across the region. In 12 percent of all households in Mohave County—and 15 percent of those in La Paz County—a language other than English is spoken. Most, but not all, of these households contain at least one adult who also speaks English well.

Many residents across the La Paz and Mohave Counties face economic challenges. Compared to the state as a whole, the region's families face higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and lower adult educational attainment. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the median incomes for families in both counties (\$36,446 in Mohave and \$33,818 in La Paz) are considerably lower than the statewide median of \$46,787 per year. According to estimates from the American Community Survey (averaged over the five years from 2006 to 2010), the estimated poverty rates for children under six (28% in Mohave, 43% in La Paz) are higher than the statewide rate of 24 percent. The poverty rates are likely to be higher when the economic downturn is taken

into account. Unemployment varies widely across the region, from a low of 7 percent in Colorado City/Centennial Park to a high of 23 percent in Dolan Springs as of July 2011. Home foreclosure rates in Mohave County have tended to be high, nearly twice the statewide foreclosure rate in some communities. Key informants noted that homelessness services for families are limited in the area, and the number of children reported to be receiving services is substantially lower than the numbers of homeless school-age children reported by districts in the region.

Consistent with this higher rate of economic disadvantage, families in the region utilize more social service programs than families state-wide. Over half of the region's children under six received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in July 2011, and 3 percent received Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program is the most utilized social service, with approximately two-thirds of children under five in Mohave County participating. Additionally, the majority of the region's school-age children were eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch program, with many schools showing eligibility rates higher than 80 percent.

Compared to the rest of the state, the La Paz/Mohave Region lags behind in the educational attainment of its adults. A greater proportion of adults in both counties (23% in La Paz, 17% in Mohave) lack a high school education, compared to the state (15%). A substantially lower proportion in each county have a four-year college degree (9% in La Paz, 12% in Mohave), than across the state (26%). This limits employment opportunities for many in the region, and may have an impact on the literacy opportunities made available to some children in the home. There is capacity for under one-third of the population of children in the 86 licensed child care centers and homes and the 11 local educational authority preschools that serve the region. Eleven child care centers and one home based program were enrolled in First Things First's Quality First program that supports improving access to high quality care. Key informants reported the cost of child care as being one of the largest barriers to child care access in the region; the average estimated cost of child care exceeds the Department of Health and Human Services recommendation that families spend no more than 10 percent of their income on child care. Qualitative data indicate that families often turn to relatives and neighbors (kith and kin) for child care, particularly in smaller communities.

Access to health care is problematic for the La Paz/Mohave Region, with all but the area around Lake Havasu City being designated as Arizona Medically Underserved Areas. The larger communities are served by hospitals and community health clinics, and local health clinics provide services in outlying communities. However, there are few pediatricians and few pediatric dentists, even in the larger communities. The infant mortality rate is higher in the region than in the state as a whole, as is the rate of teen-age births, though the birth rate for younger teens (10-17) has been falling. Nearly one out of four of the region's residents are enrolled in the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS, Arizona's Medicaid) and the percentage of uninsured births is about 3 to 4 times the state percentage (17% in Mohave and 12% in La Paz, compared to 4% statewide).

Behavioral health services are increasingly being recognized as a necessary component to children's overall health and wellbeing. Key informants and community focus group participants often cited drug use a key area of behavioral health needs for many young families, noting its implications for family disruption and family poverty. Data from the Arizona Department of Health Services suggest that drug abuse is a growing challenge in Mohave County, as deaths from accidental drug poisoning (overdose) more than doubled from 2007 to 2009.

Key informants noted that lack of parent awareness of developmental milestones for young children and of their importance contributes to a failure to identify, seek and/or follow-up on services for developmental delays in their children. Even when delay is diagnosed, key informants in the region identified a lack of available therapeutic services for children with special health care needs. The lack of access to care is a combination of an absence of providers, the need to travel long distances to obtain services, and the untenable cost of some services. A barrier to care in some cases is state licensing requirements, which can make it difficult or impossible for a child living in Arizona to receive care from nearby therapists in bordering states of Utah, Nevada, or California. In addition, there are few appropriate special educational placements for very young children, and limited staff with expertise in special education.

Although the challenges to providing comprehensive, high quality early childhood development and health services across this large, diverse region are many, there are substantial assets in the region, as well, including a growing recognition of the importance of service and system coordination in such a dispersed geographic area. Finding innovative ways to identify resources, integrate services, and communicate with families has been and will continue to be a goal of the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council and their partners in the region as they strive to improve the health, well-being and educational readiness of the young children in their area.

Executive Summary

THE REGION AND THE PEOPLE

The First Things First Yuma Region is situated in southwestern Arizona, extending to the California border in the west, La Paz County in the north, Maricopa and Pima Counties in the east, and the border with Mexico in the south. The Colorado River runs along the western edge of the region. The First Things First Yuma Region contains all of Yuma County excluding the Cocopah Indian Tribe reservations and a portion of the Fort Yuma Reservation. Most of the population and services in the region are located in the city of Yuma. The communities of San Luis and Gadsden are along the border with Mexico.

The estimated total population of the First Things First Yuma Region was 194,934 in 2010. There is a growing population of children ages birth through five living in the First Things First Yuma Region with 15,362 children in 2000 and 17,983 in 2010, a 17% increase. The population of children ages birth through five in the First Things First Yuma Region was primarily Latino (76% in 2010), followed by White (19%), and less than 1% American Indian. The First Things First Yuma Region had a higher percentage of Hispanic or Latino children ages birth through five compared to Arizona overall (45%) in 2010. Fifty percent of the population five and over in the First Things First Yuma Region spoke English and 48% spoke Spanish in the home, according to the 2006-2010 Census estimates.

The Face of Poverty

Income

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack adequate food, become victims of crime and violence, and lack basic health care. They are at significant risk for dropping out of school early, poor academic performance, behavior problems in school, lower levels of literacy, and lower educational attainment.

What does the economy look like for local children and their families?

- Nearly one-third (31%) of children ages birth through five in the First Things First Yuma Region lived below the poverty level, a higher percentage than Arizona as a whole (24%) or across the nation (22%), according to the 2006-2010 Census estimates.
- The median family income of families with children younger than 18 years old in Yuma County was \$42,718 in 2010.

- Twenty-two percent of families with children ages birth through five were in female headed households. The median income for female headed households was \$19,306 in 2010. This income was much less than the level needed to pay for basic needs in the region without any outside financial support.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate as defined by the International Labour Organization measures the number of people who are without jobs and who have actively sought work within the past four weeks. The unemployment rate is calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by all individuals currently in the labor force. While the unemployment rate provides some measure of a community's economic well-being, it does not capture those who have stopped looking for work, who are underemployed, or struggling to make ends meet.

Do families have jobs?

- The unemployment rate in Yuma County (excludes Native American Reservations) was just over 27%, almost three times the rate of Arizona, which was nearly 10% in 2011.

Basic Needs

Going without basic needs such as food, housing, child care, health care, or clothing can have short and long-term consequences to residents' health and well-being.

Are families receiving the support they need to meet their basic needs?

- Over half (58%) of First Things First Yuma Region parents who responded to a survey in 2011 reported that they or their family received some type of public assistance.
 - Parent survey respondents most commonly utilized public assistance such as Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) (89%), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (26%), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (21%), and Medicare (17%) in 2011. The percentage receiving Medicaid fell steeply from 20% in 2010 to 3% in 2011; this decline is most likely the result of legislative changes to the eligibility criteria and not a reduction in actual need.
- In Yuma County, 236 families with children ages birth through five received support from TANF in January of 2011, a 55% decrease from 521 in 2007. Given the economic downturn the steep decline in TANF numbers is most likely the result of legislative changes to the eligibility criteria and not a reduction in actual need.

Food Insecurity

When children suffer from lack of food, it can lead to poor physical and mental health, difficulty learning, increased school absences, and lower test scores. This makes children more likely to suffer from poverty when they become adults.

Are children getting enough to eat?

- Households are classified as food insecure if one or more household members went hungry at least once during the year because the household could not afford enough

food to eat. Nearly half (45%) of the children in Yuma County lived in households without enough food in 2009, higher than in Arizona (29%).

- The majority of children in the local school districts were eligible for free and reduced cost meals at school, indicating that they were either in poverty or very close to the poverty level.
 - The school districts with the highest percentage of children eligible to receive free and reduced price meals were Gadsden Elementary School District (97%) and Hyder Elementary Unified School District (89%) in 2011. The lowest percentages were in the Mohawk (64%) and Yuma (68%) Elementary School Districts, and in the Yuma Union High School District (68%).

Foreclosures

When foreclosures force children out of their homes, they are affected both physically and emotionally. When children change homes frequently, it can contribute to lower performance in school and more delinquent behaviors in the classroom.

Are families losing their homes to foreclosure?

- Foreclosure rates during May of 2011 were lower in many areas of Yuma County than in Arizona as a whole, with a total of 196 foreclosures in Yuma County. Within the region, Somerton had the highest rate of foreclosures at 1 foreclosure for every 286 homes.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care, and in particular, subsidized care for low-income families, also provides critical support for working families.

Early Care and Education

Do parents have high quality child care available for their children?

- An estimated 1 in 4 children with working parents in the First Things First Yuma Region had child care spaces available to them in 2010.
- An estimated 18,000 children ages birth through 11 lacked child care spaces, forcing parents to look for alternative solutions such as Kith and Kin care.
- According to parent survey respondents in the First Things First Yuma Region, the primary source of child care in 2011 was an adult family member (43%), followed by a non-relative center with more than four children (25%), and a paid babysitter/nanny/au pair (12%).

Are parents able to afford quality child care?

- Only 242 families in the county were receiving child care subsidies in 2011, down from 810 families in 2009. The decrease is due to changes in funding and eligibility.
- Ninety-one percent of parent survey respondents' monthly payment for all of their children's child care was less than \$450 per month in the First Things First Yuma Region in 2011.

Child Care Professionals

Research shows that by having well educated early child care professionals, children receive increased learning and development. Well trained teachers contribute to well-trained students.

What is the education level of Head Start teachers?

- In the 2010/11 school year, 39 teachers and 11 assistant teachers/aides at WACOG Head Start had an Associate's Degree in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field or a related field, and 6 teachers and 1 assistant teacher/aide had a Bachelor's Degree in the ECE field.

School Readiness and Success

Children who have early learning skills as they enter kindergarten do better in school, are more likely to graduate with a high school diploma, are more successful in their careers, and are less likely to be involved in crime and drugs. One way of assessing children's readiness for kindergarten is the DIBELS assessment which measures skills related to letter knowledge. Like kindergarten readiness, third grade reading scores are an excellent predictor of later school success, including high school graduation rates and career success. Beginning in the year 2013/14, students whose scores are "falling far below" on their 3rd grade AIMS reading scores will not be promoted from 3rd grade.

Are children ready for school?

- In four school districts (Crane, Gadsden, Somerton, and Yuma), between 8% and 22% of kindergarteners were at grade level when they entered kindergarten for the 2010/11 school year.
- Conversely, between 78% and 92% of kindergarteners needed intensive or additional interventions to be at grade level. In the Wellton Elementary School District, almost half of children (45%) were at grade level.

Are children learning to read?

- In 2010/11, parental notification requirements began for any student who seemed to be falling behind in their 3rd grade reading scores. In the local school districts, between 4% and 14% of students were "falling far below" on their 3rd grade reading scores.

Are youth graduating from high school?

- The high school graduation rates of the two high schools in the First Things First Yuma Region were 81% to 84% in 2010, similar to the state and national graduation rates.

Children with Special Needs

It's crucial to have early identification of children's special needs so that children can get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community. Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive, and hearing screenings are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth.

How many children up to 36 months old with developmental delays or at risk for delays receive AzEIP services?

- More than 150 children in the First Things First Yuma Region received services through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP), a 92% increase from 79 in 2007. However, that number is expected to fall due to cuts in the AzEIP program, the Department of Economic Security is now implementing a family cost participation program for early intervention services.

Health

Access to Health Care and Health Insurance

Children with a regular source of primary health care and health insurance have better health, receive more preventative care, and have lower rates of hospitalization because they receive treatment for conditions before they become too serious.

Do children have access to health care as well as health insurance in the region?

- Nearly 9 out of 10 (89%) parent survey respondents in the First Things First Yuma Region with children ages birth through five said they were able to receive medical care for their child when needed “all of the time” in 2011, an increase from 60% in 2010.
- Similarly, nearly 9 out of 10 (89%) parents with children ages birth through five surveyed in the First Things First Yuma Region indicated that their child had health insurance in 2011, a 10% increase since 2010.
- KidsCare enrollment numbers have dropped significantly in recent years. An estimated 541 children were insured through KidsCare in February 2012, a 79% decrease in enrollment since February 2008. Given the economic downturn the steep decline in KidsCare numbers is most likely the result of legislative changes to the eligibility criteria and not a reduction in actual need.

Are there enough doctors/health professionals?

Yuma County is classified by the Arizona Department of Health Services as a Health Professional Shortage Area and Medically Underserved Area.

- The ratio of the population to primary care providers in Yuma County was 753 people for every one primary care provider in 2010, a decrease from 933 people for every one primary care provider in 2009; while remaining higher than the state ratio of 501 people for every one primary care provider.

Healthy Births

Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have better birth outcomes. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and have lower survival rates, than those whose mothers received prenatal care.

Are babies born healthy?

- There were 3,229 total births in Yuma County in 2010.
- Six percent of total births in Yuma County were babies born at a low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams), as compared to the state at 7% in 2010.
- Nearly 6% of pregnant women in Yuma County did not get any prenatal care, as compared to the state at 2% in 2010.

Teen Births

Teen mothers tend to give birth prematurely, have babies born at low birth weights, are less likely to complete high school, and have lower earning power in their careers. Children born to teens are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school, and perform lower on standardized tests than children of older mothers. Arizona had the 6th highest teen birth rate in the nation in 2009.

Do teenagers have high rates of giving birth?

- Fifteen percent of all births were to teen mothers in Yuma County in 2010, as compared to 11% in the state overall.

Asthma

Many things can cause asthma, including allergens (mold, pollen, animals) and irritants (cigarette smoke and air pollution) as well as infections. Children have smaller airways than adults, which makes asthma especially serious for them. However, even severe asthma symptoms can be minimized with appropriate medical care.

Are children visiting the emergency room for asthma?

- Emergency department visits by children birth through five have increased 9% since 2006, with 544 total visits in 2010.
- There was a 525% increase of recognized carcinogens, or cancer-causing pollutants, released into the air in Yuma County from 2005 to 2010.

Oral Health

Dental and gum problems can be minimized through regular preventive dental services. Experts recommend that children as young as one year old be examined for evidence of developing early childhood tooth decay.

Do children have dental care?

- Nearly half of parent respondents (48%) in the First Things First Yuma Region survey in 2011 said that their child had seen a dentist less than one year ago, while one in four (24%) said their child had never seen a dentist or dental hygienist.

Infant Deaths

The leading causes of death for infants are birth defects, premature birth, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and complications with the mother during pregnancy.

What is the infant mortality rate?

- The infant mortality rate was 6.2 per 1,000 live births for Yuma County, as compared to 6.0 per 1,000 in Arizona in 2010.

Supporting Families

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are found in families across the social and economic spectrum. Social isolation, financial stress, poverty, substance abuse, and domestic violence are all factors that can lead to adults abusing children. Children who are victims of abuse or neglect experience higher rates of suicide, depression, substance abuse, difficulties in school, and other behavioral problems later in life, including a greater risk of mistreating their own children.

Are children experiencing abuse and neglect?

- There were 57 substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect in Yuma County in 2011, down from 65 cases in 2010. However, there were widespread layoffs of CPS workers across the state in 2009 which may account for some of the difference. The most common type of abuse was neglect (39 cases), followed by physical abuse (17 cases) in 2011.

Support for Parents and Positive Parenting Practices

Community ties with friends and relatives are a principal means by which people and households get supportive resources to help raise their children. Local social services can also provide valuable support for families with children ages birth through five.

What support do parents need for their children?

- According to parent survey respondents in 2011, the most needed services for their children and families were housing assistance (42%), food assistance (40%), and parenting classes/parent education (37%).

Are parents using positive parenting practices?

- Over three-quarters of parent survey respondents reported positive parenting practices such as confidence in their ability to help their child grow and develop in 2011. In addition, there was a 10% increase since 2010 of parent survey respondents who calmed themselves down when angry before dealing with their child.

Parent Awareness of Information and Resources about Children

It is important to know the perceptions of parents about early childhood services in the region so that First Things First can work with partner agencies to improve services and supports to parents.

How satisfied are parents with child development information available to them?

- Ninety-five percent of parent survey respondents were “somewhat” or “very satisfied” with the information and resources available about children’s development and health in 2008. Less than two-thirds (62%) were satisfied with how agencies serving young children and their families worked together and communicated.

Do parents know about First Things First?

- Over half (57%) of parent survey respondents in 2011 felt “very” or “somewhat” knowledgeable about what First Things First does in their community, up from 31% in 2010.



FIRST THINGS FIRST

**Regional Partnership Councils
Regional Needs and Assets
Requests for Extension**

**Gila River Indian Community
Navajo Nation
Northwest Maricopa
Pascua Yaqui Tribe
San Carlos Apache
Tohono O'odham Nation**



FIRST THINGS FIRST

4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, Arizona 85012
Phone: 602.771.4991
Fax: 602.274.7040
www.azftf.gov

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September 26, 2012

Chairman Lynn and Members of the Board

First Things First

4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800

Phoenix, AZ 85012

RE: Gila River Indian Community Needs and Assets Report Extension Request

Dear Chairman Lynn and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council, I am writing to request a deadline extension for the submission of the Needs and Assets Report to the First Things First Board. I am also pleased to provide you a brief update on the work that has been done in relation to the Needs and Assets Report for this region.

- On September 10, 2012, Gila River Indian Community's Education Standing Committee conducted a second read of the FTF Gila River Indian Community Needs and Assets report and made recommendations to Gila River's Health and Social Standing Committee.
- On September 11, 2012, Gila River Indian Community's Health and Social Standing Committee concurred with the Education Standing Committee on their recommendations and forwarded the report onto the full Tribal Council.
- On September 19, 2012, the Gila River Indian Community's Tribal Council will review and make edits to the FTF Gila River Indian Community Needs and Assets report. It is expected the Gila River Indian Community Tribal Council will approve the FTF Gila River Needs and Assets report at this time.
- The FTF Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council expects to approve their needs and assets report during their September 27, 2012 meeting.

The Regional Council is proud of the data collection, reporting and drafting process and the use of this resource in benefiting the children and families of the Gila River Indian Community. Once the Tribal Council approves publication of the report, the Regional Partnership Council will submit the final report to the State Board. We appreciate in advance your consideration of the circumstances surrounding the request for an extension, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Foote, Chair

Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council



FIRST THINGS FIRST

48 West Highway 264
Quality Inn Office Complex
Post Office Box 2449
Window Rock, Arizona 86515

www.azftf.gov

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September 26, 2012

Steven W. Lynn, Chairman
First Things First Board
4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, Arizona 85012

Dear Chairman Lynn:

On September 11, 2012, the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council met, discussed, and approved the following recommendation: Request for an extension of time for the submission of our 2012 Regional Needs and Assets report to January 31, 2013.

The workplan and implementation of the 2012 Needs and Assets report was not completed by September 1, 2012, which prevented the Regional Council from meeting the statutory requirements. The time extension will allow the Regional Partnership Council to oversee the completion of the report and ensure the following items are addressed:

- Appropriate permissions have been granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Navajo Nation, in order to utilize primary data in the 2012 report;
- Provide direction and feedback to amend the report with or without primary data; and
- Contracting to modify the report for final submission by January 31, 2013.

This biannual report is a significant tool to guide our decisions and assist us with our priority areas and strategies for the region. The Regional Council wants to continue to work with the vendor to secure a comprehensive base report.

The First Things First Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council will continue to advocate and provide opportunities to address critical early childhood issues.

Thank you for your consideration.

Harry Martin, Chair
Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council



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18001 North 79th Avenue, Suite A-6
Glendale, Arizona 85308
Phone: 602.771.4960
Fax: 623.486.0557
www.azftf.gov

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Jannelle Radoccia

Lynda Vescio

Vacant

September 17, 2012

Steven W. Lynn, Chairman
First Things First Board
4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, AZ 85012

RE: Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council's 2012 Regional Needs and Assets Report

Dear Chairman Lynn:

On behalf of the Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council, I am writing to request a deadline extension for the submission of the 2012 Regional Needs and Assets Report to the First Things First Board.

Due to unforeseen staffing issues within the contracted vendor's organization, the vendor was delayed in meeting its deliverable timeline. As a result, the Regional Partnership Council did not receive a timely final copy of the Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council's 2012 Regional Needs and Assets Report and thus was unable to meet its September 1, 2012 deadline.

A final draft of the 2012 Northwest Maricopa Regional Needs and Assets Report is expected to be provided to the Regional Partnership Council for review by the end of the day on September 7, 2012. The Regional Council will be allotted two weeks to review the document prior to the Council's next regularly scheduled meeting. It is expected that the final draft received from the vendor on September 7, 2012 will be complete and appropriate to present to the Regional Council for final approval.

At this time, it is anticipated that the Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council's 2012 Regional Needs and Assets Report will be approved by the Regional Council at the September 21, 2012 regular Council meeting. Once approved, the report will be presented to the First Things First Board for final approval at the December 10, 2012 meeting.

The Regional Partnership Council appreciates in advance your consideration of the circumstances surrounding the request for an extension and looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Dr. Deborah Pischke, Chair
Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council

Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council



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310 South Williams Boulevard, Suite 106
Tucson, Arizona 85711
Phone: 520.628.6899
Fax: 520.747.1029
www.azfff.gov

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August 30, 2012

Chairman Lynn and Members of the Board
First Things First
4000 N. Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, AZ 85012

RE: Pascua Yaqui Tribe 2012 Needs and Assets Report

Dear Chairman Lynn and Members of the Board,

On behalf of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council, I am writing to request a deadline extension for the submission of the 2012 Needs and Assets Report to the First Things First Board. I am also pleased to provide you a brief update on the work that has been done in relation to the Needs and Assets Report for this region:

- ❖ Regional Council members as well as First Things First staff attended a meeting with Tribal Council on July 11, 2011 to discuss FTF issues such as the Regional Needs and Assets.
- ❖ On August 4, 2011, the Regional Director attended a meeting with Tribal Councilman Luis Gonzales and Director of Education Dr. Vivian López to discuss the Regional Council Strategic Planning for FY 2013 and the Regional Needs and Assets Assessments.
- ❖ On September 12, 2011, we submitted to the Tribal Research Review Committee (RRC) and Education Division Director the following documents that comprised the 2012 Needs and Assets amendment request "packet":
 1. The amendment memo
 2. Community meeting and staff focus group questions
 3. Report outline and data source table
 4. The individual informed consent, and
 5. Rule and Guiding Principles document
 - According to the Tribal Research Protection Ordinance, any research proposal must be submitted to the Tribal RRC 45 days prior to the anticipated data collection start date.
- ❖ At the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council meeting on September 14, 2011, the 10 Tribal Council members that attended the meeting approved unanimously the resolution to publish the 2008-2010 Regional Needs and Assets Report. At this meeting, Tribal Council also discussed the 2012 Needs and Assets Amendment Research Proposal.
- ❖ Regional Council members and the Regional Director have met several additional times with Tribal staff to discuss the necessary approvals and will

Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council

continue working with them to have Tribal Council approval to conduct the data collection for the 2012 Needs and Assets.

- ❖ It is likely that the Needs and Assets Consultant will start collecting tribal data over the next months. We anticipate that a draft of the Report will be available for the Regional Partnership Council in December, after which it will be presented to the Tribal RRC and Tribal Council.

The Regional Council remains very excited about the data collection, reporting and drafting process and its ultimate benefit to the children and families of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Once the final protocol described above is completed, the Regional Partnership Council will submit the final report to the State Board. We appreciate in advance your consideration of the unique circumstances surrounding the request for an extension and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Cecilia Garcia, Chair
Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council

CC: Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council
Dr. Vivian G. López, Director of Education Pascua Yaqui Tribe



FIRST THINGS FIRST

1600 East Ash Street, Suite 1
Globe, Arizona 85501
Phone: 928-425-8172
Fax: 928-425-3129
www.azftf.gov

September 26, 2012

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Mitch Hoffman
Flora Howard
Nolita April Noline
Gilbert Patiño

Steven W. Lynn, Chairman
First Things First Board
4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, Arizona 85012

Dear Chairman Lynn,

I am writing to request a deadline extension for the submission of the Regional Needs and Assets Report to the First Things First Board.

The Regional Council needs additional time for the completion of the final report and to allow the San Carlos Apache Tribal Council time to review and approve the report for publication and dissemination. The Tribal approval process is that First Things First submits the final draft report and Tribal Resolution and goes before the Tribe's Education Committee and Attorney General. Upon approval from this Committee First Things First will go before the full Tribal Council for approval of the final draft report and Tribal Resolution. Given the remaining steps, the Regional Council anticipates a board submission deadline of December 1, 2012.

The Regional Council remains very excited about the data collection, reporting and drafting process and its ultimate benefit to the children and families of the San Carlos Apache Region. We appreciate in advance your consideration of the unique circumstances surrounding the request for an extension and look forward to your response. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Delphine Rodriguez, Chair
San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council



FIRST THINGS FIRST

310 South Williams Boulevard, Suite 106
Tucson, Arizona 85711
Phone: 520.628.6694
Fax: 520.747.1029
www.azftf.gov

Chair

Louis Johnson

Vice Chair

Mildred Manuel

Members

Albert Adler

Ella Begay

Joseph Mease

Janine Prewitt

Dionne Ramon

Ben Standifer

Kymberlii Tenario

Vacant

Vacant

September 26, 2012

Chairman Lynn and Members of the Board
First Things First
4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, AZ 85012

RE: Tohono O'odham Nation Needs and Assets Report

Dear Chairman Lynn and Members of the Board,

On behalf of the Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council, I am writing to request a deadline extension for the submission of the Needs and Assets Report to the First Things First Board. I am also pleased to provide you a brief update on the work that has been done in relation to the Needs and Assets Report for this region:

- At the Regional Council meeting on September 5, 2012, the Regional Council approved forwarding of the 2012 Needs and Assets Report to the Tohono O'odham Nation's First Things First Liaison, Director Victoria Hobbs requesting publication approval of the 2012 Needs and Assets Report.
- As of September 5, 2012, Director Hobbs has yet to provide publication approval for the 2010 Needs and Assets Report. Director Hobbs is fully aware that this request is being made to the State Board and that publication of both the 2010 and 2012 reports will be withheld until her approval in accordance with Tohono O'odham Legislative Council Resolution Number 08-041.

The Regional Council is proud of the data collection, reporting and drafting process and the use of this resource in benefiting the children and families of the Tohono O'odham Nation. Once Director Hobbs approves publication of the reports, the Regional Partnership Council will submit the final report to the State Board. We appreciate in advance your consideration of the circumstances surrounding the request for an extension, respect of the sovereignty of the Tohono O'odham Nation, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Louis Johnson, Chair

Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council

Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council