



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

**Agenda Item:** Overview of regional boundary reviews, key findings and changes (Attachment 6)

**Background:** The information below is a summary of the regional boundary reviews conducted in 2007 when the regional boundaries were first established by the Board and in 2009 and 2011. The summary provides information on the process for the review, findings and recommended changes. The Board accepted the recommendations as presented in the reports. In addition, the full regional boundary reports are provided should you want to read the full reports.

## **Establishment of Regional Boundaries: December 2007 Conducted by Linda Cannon**

The FTF Board was responsible for designating regional boundaries by December 2007 as specified in the FTF statute. Specific statutory requirements regarding the designation of Boundaries include the following:

- The Board shall designate regions covering the entire state, each of which shall have a Regional Partnership Council.
- When designating regions, the Board shall consider existing Regional Partnership boundaries and organizations, distribution of populations and services and other factors demonstrating relationship or cohesion of persons and organizations within a region.
- Indian Tribes may participate in the designated geographical region or regions in which their Tribal lands are located and may elect to have its Tribal Lands treated as a separate region by the Board. If a Tribe so elects, it shall inform the Board by March 1, of any even-numbered year beginning in 2008 that it wishes to be treated as a separate region for the next two fiscal years.

To assess the options and develop recommended regional boundaries guidelines were established in the spring of 2007.

- Boundaries reflect the view of families in terms of where they would access services. Boundaries take into consideration the geographical barriers and options for inclusion of isolated areas such as the Colorado Strip.
- Boundaries coincide with existing boundaries for organizations that provide early childhood development and/or health services. Geographic boundaries are set in a manner that establishes clear benefits to organizational feasibility.
- Boundaries maximize the ability to collaborate with other service systems, planning regions, and local governments. Boundaries consider the important planning and service delivery connections to other systems. Boundaries are established that facilitate the ability to convene a Regional Partnership Council; i.e. there are enough people and organizations/groups to create the regional partnership council and individuals on the regional council can reasonably be expected to represent the geographic area.
- Boundaries provide for the flexibility for Tribal Nations to become their own region or to partner with one or more regions in their geographic area.
- Boundaries provide a reasonable expectation that demographic and indicator data can be collected on an ongoing basis.

Information was gathered from community stakeholders through meetings with the Arizona Early Education Funds (AEEFs) partnerships, community forums and individual interviews. Demographic and service availability information was also reviewed. While the primary consideration in establishing regional boundaries was the feasibility of forming a strong and representative partnership to best serve children and families, review of the demographic data provided insight into the scope of the planning and implementation efforts. Findings from the review of data gathered, which influenced the boundary recommendations included:

Finding 1: County boundaries provide the most consistent option with regard to collection of data and existing planning regions.

Finding 2: Tribal Nations, as a whole, should be designated as part of a region, rather than dividing a Tribal Nation among multipler. Two exceptions are the Navajo Nation and the Tohono O’odham Nation at Gila Bend.

Finding 3: Availability and access to service is not equal around the State.

Finding 4: The Regional Partnership Council appointment process must emphasize representation that is reflective of the region geographically and culturally.

Finding 5: Engagement of representation and community participation in outlying communities within each region will require specific strategies be developed and implemented.

Finding 6: AEEFs Partnerships have momentum and growing participation throughout their regions.

#### Recommended First Things First Regions

- Apache County inclusive of that portion of the Navajo Nation that is within Apache County
- Cochise County
- Coconino County inclusive of that portion of the Navajo Nation that is within Coconino County, the Hopi Indian Tribe, the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, the Kaibab Paiute Tribe, the Havasupai Tribe and the Town of Winslow (which is in Navajo County)
- Gila County, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, and the Tonto Apache Tribe
- Graham County and Greenlee County
- La Paz County and Mohave County, the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Fort Mohave Tribe, and the Hualapai Tribe.
- Maricopa County – Eight regions based on 1) geographic groupings of cities and towns including unincorporated contiguous areas in the County, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and three regions within the City of Phoenix.
  - Southwest Maricopa County – Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Tolleson and Gila Bend
  - Northwest Maricopa County – Glendale, Peoria, Surprise, El Mirage, Wickenburg, Youngstown
  - Northeast Maricopa County – Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, Fountain Hills, Cave Creek, Carefree and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
  - Central Maricopa Region – Tempe, Chandler, Guadalupe, Ahwatukee
  - Southeast Valley – Mesa, Gilbert, Queen Creek and Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community

- City of Phoenix – North, Central and South Phoenix
- Navajo County inclusive of that portion of the Navajo Nation that is within Navajo County and the White Mountain Apache Tribe
- Pima County – Three Regions based on groupings of cities, towns and the Tohono O’odham Nation and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe
  - Northern Pima County – Mount Lemmon, Marana, Rillito, Oro Valley, Cataline and the Northern Foothills part of Tucson.
  - Central Pima County inclusive of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, South Tucson and Zip Codes within central Tucson.
  - Southern Pima County inclusive of the Tohono O’odham Nation, Ajo, Arivaca, Green Valley, Sahuarita, Sasbe, Sells, Sonoita, Topawa, Vail, Amado, Three Points and some southern and eastern Tucson zip codes.
- Pinal County, the Ak-Chin Indian Community and the Gila River Indian Community, and the Town of Apache Junction
- Santa Cruz County
- Yavapai County, the Yavapai Prescott Tribe, the Yavapai Apache Tribe, and the City of Sedona.
- Yuma County, the Quechan Tribe and the Cocopah Tribe.

## **Regional Boundary Review 2009**

### **Conducted by Linda Cannon**

When this review was conducted Regional Partnership Councils were just beginning the first year of delivering services and thus initial discussions indicated that it was too soon to know if the boundaries should be revised. In this context, an additional factor was added to the criteria; i.e. is there a “compelling” reason to change boundaries at this time?

The review process was designed to seek information from the key stakeholders in implementation of the First Things First vision and included:

1. Interviews with First Things First Board Members – telephone interviews were conducted with all First Things First Board Members and Ex-officio Members.
2. Discussion with members of FTF Management including the Assistant Directors of Finance and Regional Partnership Councils and the Tribal Senior Policy Specialist and public relations representative.
3. A survey of Regional Managers / Coordinators to identify what is working well about the boundaries and what issues, if any, have been identified.
4. A survey of Regional Partnership Council members determine what is working well about the boundaries and what issues, if any, have been identified. (313 requests with 46 responses)
5. Interviews with community stakeholders – telephone interviews were conducted with 9 community stakeholders.
6. Tribal Contact –A letter has been sent to Tribal Leadership of the existing Tribal Regional Partnership Councils regarding the boundary review and reiterating that Tribes have

until March 2010 to determine if they want to participate in the designated geographical region or regions in which their tribal lands are located or elect to have their tribal lands treated as a separate region by the Board.

A consistent theme among Regional Partnership Council Member respondents and community stakeholders was that it is too soon to consider boundary changes. Many respondents indicated that ultimately whether the boundaries are working will be best determined by the level at which First Things First is changing in a positive way the lives of young children and their families.

While challenges were identified, changes to the boundaries were not seen as the appropriate response to the challenges. The processes of system building, creating partnerships and collaborations and implementing strategies were described as challenging and “messy”, but also as an opportunity for us to stretch and think differently about delivery of service.

*Finding 1: The current Regional Partnership Council boundaries do not impede First Things First Board of Directors’ decision making in any way.*

Board members described the boundaries as central to the Board of Director’s decisions regarding system building and allocation of funding and indicated that current boundaries do not impede Board decision making. Board members did comment on challenges; however, did not believe that boundary changes were the appropriate response to these challenges. Strengths and weaknesses of the boundaries identified by Board Members included:

- For some of the more rural Regions there was not adequate funding to significantly impact the children and families in that Region. This was addressed through additional funding under the “Frontier” adjustments.
- The multiple Regions in Maricopa and Pima County do not lend themselves to comprehensive implementation. Unless the Regions choose to work together it can create isolated services being provided.
- The Regional Councils have worked to ensure inclusion of Tribal areas that are part of their Region and to engage the smaller communities in the discussions and planning for First Things First.
- The La Paz Mohave and Colorado River Indian Tribes area is a challenge – it is such a unique part of the State with so many geographical barriers.
- The boundaries have allowed different communities to move at their own pace and to really focus on the needs in a given community. Dividing into Regions really helped areas define themselves.
- While it would be easier if everything was centralized, system building requires local civic engagement and coordination – and is challenging.
- Regional Councils are working together – which is one of the things making the boundaries work.

*Finding 2: Based on Regional Partnership Council Coordinator and Manager feedback, most boundaries are serving their original purpose.*

- 86.2% of the 29 responses indicated that current boundaries “almost always” (51.7%) or “most of the time” (34.5%) align with where families seek services.
- 86.1% of the 29 responses indicate that boundaries “almost always” (48.2%) or “most of the time” (37.9%) align with other service systems serving young children.
- 88.5% of the 29 responses indicate that boundaries “almost always” (48.2%) or “most of the time” (57.7%) support connecting with other organizations within the Region.

*Finding 3: In the Maricopa County and Pima County Regions, multiple regions complicate provider efforts to participate and to respond to Requests for Grant Applications.*

- Regional boundaries do not necessarily align with where providers typically provide services.
- With multiple Regions in these areas, it is difficult for some providers to know which Regional Partnership Council to talk with about services.
- Respondents felt that the first round of grant making provided lessons learned that could streamline future grant processes and make them less cumbersome for providers.
- Enhancing the communication process with providers and articulating the system building vision would help set the stage for expanding service coverage to geographic areas not served or underserved at this time. \
- The boundaries require everyone to think about service delivery in a different way. In part this challenge for providers and therefore the Regions was described as the need to shift the paradigm from centralized administration and service delivery to creating the locally driven system statewide.
- It is difficult for providers to apply – for both large providers and small providers.
- Specific strategies may be needed to engage and support inclusion of small providers in the planning and grant application processes.

*Finding 4: Boundaries that result in school districts in more than one region or zip codes that overlap regions are viewed as problematic primarily for the collection of indicator data.*

- Regional Council boundaries do not necessarily align with school district boundaries and can produce challenges if a school district has programs across their district and information is not maintained at the school level.
- Aligning with school district boundaries would diminish the ability to obtain community wide demographic, health status and other indicators of early childhood development and health prior to entering school.
- It was reported that Arizona Department of Education data is organized by school district, not zip code, making it difficult to provide accurate data to Regions that include only a portion of a school district.
- It will be important to plan for data collection that can occur at the school, rather than school district level.

- Splitting of zip codes was viewed as creating difficulty with tracking information from the state level; however, this was described as not impossible.
- Additionally split zip codes is a challenge to the Regions in coordinating with other state systems that may be based on zip codes.

*Finding 5: There is some concern that there are too many Regional Councils in Maricopa County for effective implementation.*

- There are too many Regional Partnership Councils in Maricopa County but by now most people know them. I wouldn't change them now.
- If we must divide Maricopa County, I suggest East Valley, West Valley, North Phoenix and South Phoenix.
- I'd like to see metro Phoenix consolidated in some way, or at least with no more than two boundary divisions. If we're talking about coordination of services and systems, I think it does complicate the process at all stages from planning, implementation and evaluation to have so many boundaries. If we want to keep the idea of boundaries then we might want to consider using the existing ones of municipalities (Tempe, Scottsdale, Mesa, etc.) and working within existing civic and community functions in those cities. I appreciate the intent to be sensitive to local areas and specific needs, but I think it has been difficult in both concept and execution.
- I was hoping for fewer regions within the urban areas and would like to plant this seed for future consideration.
- More collaborative planning among Regions would help build cohesion.
- Collaboration strategies between the Northwest Maricopa Region and the Southwest Maricopa County Region are credited with making the boundaries in western Maricopa County work.

### ***Boundary Recommendations***

**Recommendation 1: Reaffirm the current boundaries for the 24 Regional Partnership Councils listed below.**

1. Central Phoenix Regional Partnership Council
2. Central Pima Regional Partnership Council
3. Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council
4. Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Partnership Council
5. Gila Regional Partnership Council
6. Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council
7. Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council
8. Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council

9. La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council
10. Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council
11. North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council
12. North Pima Regional Partnership Council
13. Northeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council
14. Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council
15. Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council
16. Pinal Regional Partnership Council
17. Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council
18. San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council
19. Southeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council
20. Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council
21. Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council
22. White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council
23. Yavapai Regional Partnership Council
24. Yuma Regional Partnership Council

**Recommendation 2: Include the community of Forest Lakes in the Coconino County Region in the Navajo Apache Region.**

- Forest Lakes is a small, primarily summer community in the White Mountains with a population that accesses services in the Towns of Heber and Overgaard.
- Coordinators and Regional Partnership Council Chairpersons for both regions indicated that the children in Forest Lakes attend school in Heber and the families go to Heber to the doctor, to shop and for any other services.
- Inclusion of this community in the planning by the Navajo Apache Regional Partnership Council would better align the planning boundaries with where families access services. Both the Coconino and Navajo Apache Regional Partnership Council Chairpersons agree with this alignment.

**Recommendation 3: Move Phoenix Zip Code 85042 from the Central Maricopa Region to the South Phoenix Region.**

- Zip code 85042 is currently part of the Central Maricopa Region which also includes Tempe, Chandler and the Phoenix zip codes south of South Mountain.

- Zip code 85042 was formed in 2001 by the US Postal Services as a carve-out from 85040 (which is in the South Phoenix Region).
- The traditional South Phoenix area is inclusive of zip code 85042 as indicated by the defined service areas of organizations such as the YWCA, churches, Mountain Park Health Center, and the South Mountain Business Alliance.
- Regional Council members from both the South Phoenix and Central Maricopa Regional Partnership Councils agree with this alignment based on considering what is best for the children and families in this geographic area.
- There will be no change in funding allocation for either Region. Zip code data from the 2000 census was the beginning point for projecting the populations in all Regions. Since zip code 85042 was not formed until 2001 and was actually carved out of 85040, the population in the now 85042 zip code was included in the 85040 allocation.
- Requests for Grant Applications that have recently been awarded by the Central Maricopa Regional Council included 85042 in the targeted zip codes; however, members of the Central Maricopa Regional Council participating in the discussion about this change indicated their commitment to the families in that area remains and collaborative efforts between the two regions would help bridge this transition. Additionally, Central Maricopa Regional Council members highlighted the fact that there one school, Nevitt Elementary, in the Tempe School District that is in zip code 85042 which provides another collaborative opportunity among the Regions.

**Recommendation 4: Include all of Benson zip code 85602 as part of the Cochise County Region.**

- Families that live in the Benson zip code 85602 area which is in Pima County access services in Benson (Cochise County), not in Pima County.
- The Benson zip code is primarily in Cochise County, with a small rural portion of the population living north of Cochise County in Pima County. The Coronado National Forest and the mountains in eastern Pima County separate the people living in this northern part of zip code 85602 from the balance of Pima County and Tucson.
- Transportation routes to this area lead to Interstate 10 at Benson and not directly to Tucson, Pima County.
- Inclusion of all of the Benson zip code in the Cochise Regional Partnership Council Region would better align boundaries with where families access services and with early childhood education systems and services in Cochise County.
- Based on 2000 Census data there were 185 families with 43 children between the ages of birth and 5 years old living in the Pima County portion of Benson zip code 85602.
- Regional Partnership Council Chairpersons in both the South Pima County Region and the Cochise County Region agree with including all of Benson in the Cochise Region.

**Recommendation 5: Include all of Sonoita Zip Code 85637 in the Santa Cruz Region.**

- People from Sonoita function as part of the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council rather than South Pima Regional Partnership Council.

- Based on 2000 Census data there were 104 families with 21 children between the ages of birth and 5 years living in the Pima County portion of Sonoita zip code 85602.
- Regional Partnership Council Chairpersons in both the South Pima County Region and the Santa Cruz County Region agree with including all of Sonoita in the Santa Cruz Region.

**Recommendation 6: Include all of the Amado zip code 85645 in the South Pima Region.**

- Overall, people from Amado function as part of Pima County versus Santa Cruz County and as part of the South Pima Regional Partnership Council rather than Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council.
- Based on 2000 Census data there were 569 families living in the Pima County portion of Amado zip code with 178 children between the ages of birth and 5 years.
- Regional Partnership Council Chairpersons in both the South Pima County Region and the Santa Cruz County Region agree with including all of Amado in the South Pima Region.

**Boundaries Reviewed – No Recommended Changes**

The following possible boundary changes were raised through this review process but did not result in a recommended change. Among these findings are suggestions for future follow-up in some areas.

*Possible changes in alignment of zip codes in the three Regions within Pima County were identified; however, respondents believed it was too soon to make these changes and there were no indications that any areas are not being included in the current planning processes.*

Comments and suggestions received for future consideration included:

- North Pima – there is some confusion with some metro Tucson areas. The funding allocation seems skewed because of higher income pockets in the North Pima region. Consider moving zip code 85705 to the North Pima Region to level this out somewhat. Additionally, the move would incorporate all of the Amphi school district.
- Some of Tucson zip codes on the eastside operate as part of Central Pima rather than South Pima. In the future, consider moving 85748 and 85730 to Central Pima and 85746 and 85757 to South Pima.
- Consider making Pima County one Region. If that is not possible, do not change boundaries at this time.
- Consider zip code realignments in the areas identified once information is known about the results of the first round of funding. At this point, the needs of families in these zip codes are being considered in the planning by the three Pima Regional Partnership Councils.

*LaPaz / Mohave Region: The rural, eastern part of LaPaz County presents unique community engagement challenges to the LaPaz Mohave Regional Council; but creating a separate La Paz County Regional Partnership Council or expanding the Colorado River Indian Tribes scope are not viable options.*

- The LaPaz Mohave Regional Partnership Council indicated that serving the vast geographic area of LaPaz and Mohave Counties presents its own challenges with communication

and coordination with the smaller communities in the Region. Significant progress has been made to achieve the engagement of people across the Region; however the eastern part of La Paz County remains a challenge.

- The Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Partnership Council serves all of the Town of Parker which includes both Tribal lands and LaPaz County land within the Town of Parker. The Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Partnership Council formally voted in June 2009 to maintain their current boundary which includes all of Parker.
- When boundaries were set two years ago, creating a LaPaz County Council was considered but not recommended since the people in LaPaz County did not believe they could secure enough representation to create a Regional Partnership Council.
- The LaPaz Mohave Regional Partnership Council is committed to continuing its efforts to engage the small communities such as Quartzite and Salome and to developing additional strategies to engage those communities. The LaPaz Mohave Regional Partnership Council indicated that Implementation of additional strategies may require additional resources.
- The “Population-based” and “Frontier” adjustments using discretionary funding were intended to support the additional efforts to engage and serve the rural areas.

*City of Glendale: Northwest Maricopa Region and North Phoenix Region - The current boundaries split the City of Glendale among two Regions, Northwest Maricopa County and North Phoenix, however, planning efforts have been inclusive of the three Glendale zip codes included in the North Phoenix Region.*

- The City of Glendale zip codes 85302, 85304 and 85306 are part of the North Phoenix Region while the rest of the City of Glendale is part of the Northwest Maricopa Region.
- Due to the large geographic area and population growth in the Northwest Maricopa Region, the three Glendale zip codes were included in North Phoenix rather than Northwest Maricopa when boundaries were established in 2007.
- Both Regions have planned for and funded services in these zip codes. Northwest Maricopa Regional Council funded a Family Resource Center in one of the zip codes and the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council as part of its overall planning and implementation targeted multiple services in the three zip codes.
- The resources in these zip codes are used by people in the greater Northwest Region as well as by people in the North Phoenix Region.
- School districts are split between these Regions and would continue to be split between Glendale and Phoenix with a change in the boundaries.

*Queen Creek – Southeast Maricopa Region: The community of Queen Creek is split between the Southeast Maricopa County Region and Pinal County Region with most of the population living in Maricopa County.*

- The review request was to consider realigning all of Queen Creek with Pinal County rather than Southeast Maricopa County. In part, the issue with Queen Creek as part of the Southeast Maricopa Region was described as one of challenges in engaging representation of the community in the Regional Partnership Council processes.

- A review of population data as of 2006 indicated that 19,732 individuals live in the Maricopa County part of Queen Creek and 1,086 individuals live in the Pinal County part of the Queen Creek. The town of Queen Creek is physically located in Maricopa County.
- The Pinal Regional Partnership Council currently includes the Pinal County portion of Queen Creek in its planning processes and views this rural portion of Queen Creek as a population that is more aligned with Pinal County.

*Pascua Yaqui Tribe* – The Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council recommended in a letter to the First Things First Board of Directors dated August 4, that their services be expanded to include outlying communities per Pascua Yaqui Tribal Resolution c03-3808. The Resolution approved the extension of boundaries for the recognized Yaqui communities for the purposes of enrollment demographics and for defining community boundaries and service areas.

- The communities identified by the Regional Partnership Council include Barrio Libre (South Tucson), Coolidge, Eloy, Guadalupe, High Town (Chandler), Old Pascua, Penjamo (Scottsdale), and Yoem Pueblo (Marana).
- First Things First has throughout the state acknowledged that there are Tribal members of various tribes living in communities off defined reservation lands and that each FTF Region is to incorporate the needs of all families in their geographic area.
- The Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council has plans to contact the FTF Regional Partnership Councils in the areas identified and could develop collaborations with these other Regions to assist in ensuring Pascua Yaqui Tribal members' unique needs are included in Regional Partnership Council plans.

*Tribal Lands Crossing State Borders* – When Tribal lands include Arizona and another states, such as the Navajo Nation which is part of Arizona, Utah and New Mexico, disparity is created among families ability to access services.

- Exploration of and dissemination of First Things First policy regarding residents of bordering States would clarify this question.
- Although not raised through this process, a similar issue could exist regarding non-Tribal communities along the Arizona border such as Laughlin Nevada in the Mohave LaPaz Region.

*Tribal Consortium* – A possible option for smaller Tribes in Arizona was raised through this process by a community stakeholder. The question / option raised was: Could smaller Tribes create a consortium of Tribes to form a Regional Partnership Council and obtain the economies of scale from that type of organization?

- Review of the statute indicates that Tribes have a choice of having their tribal lands as a separate region or participating in the Region in their geographic area.
- Further exploration of this option from a legal standpoint and to determine the interest on the part of Tribes for doing this would be necessary.

## **Regional Boundary Review 2011**

**Conducted by Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth, & Families, Norton School of Family & Consumer Sciences the University of Arizona**

The review process was structured to seek information from key stakeholders to capture their perspectives on how well the current boundaries are serving the objectives of First Things First. The process included:

1. Conversations with each First Things First Board Member, including ex officio members or their designees.
2. Discussion with First Things First management, including the CEO, the Chief Operations Officer, the Chief Regional Officer, the Senior Director for Research and Evaluation, and finance staff members.
3. Discussions with community partners. Partners were identified by the staff and Board of FTF.
4. An online survey of all Regional Directors and Senior Directors (with all 30 current Directors, and all 6 Senior Directors completing the survey)
5. An online survey of Regional Council members (304 were sent, and 110 completed).
6. An online survey of current grantees (surveys were initially sent to 166 individuals representing 136 different agencies. A total of 103 responses were received, but because surveys were anonymous, and a number of grantees reported forwarding the survey link to sub-grantees, the response rate is not certain.).

*Finding 1: The regional structure is largely serving its mandate, but there are challenges in practice*

Review participants were largely supportive of the First Things First regional structure, particularly the value placed on dispersed, local decision-making. However, it was recognized that fragmentation of services is one potential by-product of such a structure, and that more intentional coordination of service and strategies could help mitigate that while maintaining the ability to meet local needs.

*Finding 2: County-based boundaries are understandable and useful*

Most respondents affirmed that those Regions that are based on county boundaries seemed to be serving families well, though there can be challenges in meeting the needs of families at the edges of bordering counties.

*Finding 3: Flexibility for Tribes to choose to be part of a county-based region, or to become their own region, is seen as a strength of the FTF system.*

Both Tribal and non-tribal stakeholders endorse the value of a system that recognizes that Arizona Tribes should have their own internal decision-making processes for deciding what best meets the needs of their children and families.

*Finding 4: Capacity building is the biggest need in rural areas*

Stakeholders view the difficulties of providing services in rural areas as a barrier to best serving the families and children of Arizona. Most recognized that boundary changes would not resolve

this, but that it tends to be an issue of service capacity. Respondents see First Things First as moving towards building the early childhood system to knit services together to develop more capacity across the State.

*Finding 5: FTF Regional Partnership Councils are seen as key players in promoting within-Region coordination*

The regional delivery model is seen to promote and facilitate within-region coordination among early childhood stakeholders, community partners, advocates and service providers, particularly in the more rural areas.

*Finding 6: Having multiple regions in urban areas present some barriers to service delivery and to communication*

Although dispersed decision-making was repeatedly raised as a very important component of the First Things First system, stakeholders from each perspective articulated a number of challenges and barriers presented by having multiple regions in urban areas. Having such a large number of regions (3 non-tribal regions in Pima County, and 8 non-tribal regions in Maricopa County) was seen as the following: to be confusing to families, for whom the zip codes that define the Regions have no intrinsic meaning; to erect barriers to collaboration with organizations and systems serving children who are not as restricted in how they deliver services; and to present challenges to grantees who serve multiple regions, because they face substantial administrative demands and must understand and track an array of services across Regions

Consolidation was not necessarily seen as the solution, however; some raised the possibility that service and communication barriers could be overcome through intentional collaboration and co-ordination, though this approach also has challenges to implement. More systematic data gathering may help clarify what approaches, or set of approaches, can be used to refine the regional structure in urban areas.

**Boundary Recommendations**

*Recommendation 1: Maintain the current boundaries for 29 Regional Partnership Councils*

Most boundaries were reaffirmed following the review. Although included in the list of those without boundary changes, the Arizona Tribes may opt to remain in (or join) a geographic Region, or may opt to become (or remain) their own Region, following their own review.

*Recommendation 2: Move the Glendale portions of zip codes 85302, 85304, 85306 from North Phoenix Region to Northwest Maricopa Region*

By shifting the portions of these three zip codes that comprise sections of Glendale, the city would be wholly included in one Region, and resources utilized by families living within Glendale are likely to be more accessible to them.

*Recommendation 3: Convene cross-regional discussions to address issues raised for which collaboration or coordination appeared the most appropriate mechanism*

Some issues raised by stakeholders in the review did not appear to warrant consideration of a boundary change at this time, but would benefit from discussions between the staff and councils of the involved Regions, in order to bring attention to these issues and to consider if there are collaborative opportunities to address them. Based on the issues that arose, the Regions who might benefit from engaging in these discussions are:

- Central Maricopa, South Phoenix
- Central Phoenix, South Phoenix
- San Carlos Apache, Gila
- San Carlos Apache, Graham/Greenlee
- Gila, Pinal
- Southeast Maricopa, Pinal
- South Pima, Southwest Maricopa, Tohono O'odham Nation
- La Paz/Mohave, Coconino
- Yavapai, Coconino
- Yavapai, La Paz/Mohave
- Yavapai, Northeast Maricopa

*Recommendation 4: Assess more closely and systematically the desirability and feasibility of consolidating urban Regions for SFY15*

We recommend developing a longer-range plan for data gathering and monitoring to examine whether consolidation in the urban areas is likely to improve communication and service, increase efficiencies, and reduce bureaucracy, while retaining the sense of local control that is the cornerstone of First Things First's service model.

## **Boundaries Reviewed—No Recommended Boundary Changes**

### ***Review 1: Pima County***

#### **A. North Pima and Central Pima**

The boundary change under consideration was to consolidate North Pima and Central Pima Regions. Participants in the review discussions felt that the review process showed that there were certain concerns in the County related to equity, communication, coordination, and differential access to services. At this point, Regional Council leadership for both regions felt that there was not enough concrete evidence that consolidation would be the most effective mechanism to address these concerns, nor that it would better serve families. They decided that they would prefer to work toward more intentional joint strategy development in the County. They intend to examine their current strategies, and to address whether the variation in services is needed and justified, recognizing that the cost of too much variation is fragmentation. They intend to pursue collaborative mechanisms such as periodic joint council meetings and possible joint funding. Issues leading to the review had been raised by council members, grantees and community stakeholders, and included:

- Funding level in North Pima does not give the leverage to effect the change would like to see, to serve families who need it, or to collaborate on strategies across regions
- Residents have access to few child care centers in North Region (8 accredited centers per 2010 Needs and Assets Report)
- Lack of continuity of services across the county because are funding different strategies
- Confusion among families about “arbitrary” boundaries; not clear to them why they can’t access same services as others in community
- Breaks up school districts (schools in North Pima, but not administrative offices)
- Divides Pima County, which has worked well as a unitary force
- Recruiting members for 5 Pima County Regional Councils has been difficult

Concerns that were raised about consolidation included:

- The larger area could be less reflective of the differences that are seen across communities
- How to assure that rural areas of North Pima would still have a voice and that resources are pushed out to them
- Change would be disruptive
- There would still be a need for continued close collaboration with South Pima to mitigate continued strategy/service differences in county

### **B. Central and South Pima zip codes**

The boundary change under consideration was to move Central Pima zip codes (85746, 85757) to South Pima; South Pima zip codes (85748, 85730) to Central Pima. Concerns were raised about how the change in zip codes might impact families. Based on currently funded strategies, it appeared as though there may be some possible impacts regarding Quality First providers and scholarships (i.e., that families and providers currently funded would not easily have access to those services with a change in boundary). Instead of moving forward with a boundary change at this time, the two councils will begin a dialogue about how families in these four zip codes can best be served, as part of their strategic planning processes. When the next boundary review is conducted, the councils will have had time to examine this issue and may have a recommendation for how to proceed (e.g., they will develop a transition plan so that a change can be made without too much disruption, or may decide that a boundary change is unnecessary, etc.) Issues leading to the review had been raised by FTF Regional staff and grantees, and included:

- Most of 85748 and 85730 (currently in South Pima) tend to be recognized as Central or urban, with families accessing services more in the Central Pima region.
- The Central Pima zip codes 85746 and 85757 fall between two other South Pima zip codes. It is a challenge to be funding services in some zip codes and not being able to provide the services to families and children living in the zip codes that fall in between.

### **Review 2: Winslow**

The boundary change under consideration was to move Winslow from Coconino Region to Navajo/Apache Region. Regional Council leadership for both Regions felt that the service

barriers raised were primarily —bureaucratic issues and that service to this community could be improved by actively engaging in strategy coordination and other collaborative mechanisms, such as joint contracting. They felt that this was an opportunity to provide a —test case for cross-Regional cooperation, and so consensus was to move forward without a boundary change at this time. Issues leading to the review had been raised by Regional council members, Regional staff, grantees and community partners. They included

- Service agencies providing services in Winslow are not currently able to serve Winslow families (including Government grantees (Library, District, Health Department, and School Superintendent) and Northland Pioneer College)
- Foster children in Winslow are not able to be transported into Joseph City or Holbrook for services funded by Navajo/Apache
- Government agencies (e.g. Health Departments, School Districts) have difficulty working across county lines, and it would be more efficient to maintain the county boundaries where possible
- Programs are difficult for Coconino Region to deliver due to differences between Region and County boundaries
- Grantees, Council members from both Councils, and Community stakeholders all express a lack of connection between the Winslow area and the Coconino Region, and express a sense that families and community members may be more engaged with the Navajo/Apache Region

### **Review 3: Phoenix zip code 85037**

The boundary change under consideration was to move South Phoenix Region zip code 85037 to Southwest Maricopa Region. Although 85037 is a City of Phoenix zip code, review participants agreed that residents tend primarily to identify as —West Valley in culture and identity. It was recognized, though, that there is also a history in the area of identifying as —West Phoenix or —West Side. Council leadership from both regions agreed that transitioning that zip code into the Southwest region may be appropriate, but there was consensus that doing so in this review cycle would be premature. Because of their economies of scale, South Phoenix currently has a strong emphasis on health strategies relative to the Southwest Maricopa Region. There was concern that by moving the zip code in this cycle, 85037 families being served by those and by First Things First quality and access strategies might fall into gaps. Instead, review participants felt that families would be best served, and would experience the least amount of disruption, if the two Regional Councils worked together to develop a transition plan for a recommended boundary change in the review cycle of FY14. Council leadership agreed that this plan would consider strategy alignment between the regions, and would look toward identifying and engaging additional assets in the community that could assist Southwest Maricopa in expanding their service reach. The goal would be to coordinate so that families don't miss a beat for services and to respect the culture of the area so that families can continue to be mobile.

Issues leading to the review had been raised by grantees, council members and staff and included:

- 85037 borders Litchfield Park, Avondale and Tolleson which are all cities included in the Southwest Maricopa Region.
- It is perceived that families living in this zip code access services mostly from the Avondale and Tolleson areas, including elementary schools from the Pendergast and Tolleson Elementary School Districts which are part of the Southwest Maricopa Region. Because of this, it was felt that services may be better coordinated from the SouthWest Maricopa network than from South Phoenix area.
- Changing the zip code would put all of Tolleson school district in Southwest Maricopa, and would split Pendergast school district across two (Southwest Maricopa and Northwest Maricopa) instead of 3 Regions

### **Additional boundary change suggestions raised by respondents**

These issues were only touched on by respondents, but are included here for completeness and to document for comparison to future boundary reviews:

#### **La Paz/Mohave**

Although some respondents raised the possibility of splitting the La Paz/Mohave Region because of its very large area and highly dispersed population, Regional Council members and staff cite many reasons to maintain its current boundaries:

- La Paz and Mohave counties are combined as a single service area for many programs that serve their population including the DES Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the DHS Enhanced Dental Teams program, the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP), the Western Arizona Council of Governments (WACOG), Head Start, and Western Arizona Area Health Education Centers, and Healthy Families.
- Most families in La Paz County give birth at Lake Havasu Regional Medical Center and people commonly commute for work between Lake Havasu (Mohave County) and Parker (La Paz County).
- There are a number of working programs and strong partnerships in both counties. Serving rural communities like Wenden and Quartzsite was prioritized by the Regional Council, so the amount invested in La Paz County with the current boundaries exceeds what the county would receive from the FTF population-based allocation formula if it were a separate region without CRIT.

#### **Gila**

Respondents note that the Gila Region has two main population centers (Payson area in the north and Globe area in the south) that are at some distance from each other and with few connections between them, —making it somewhat hard to serve both northern and southern Gila County in a proficient manner. Although a boundary change would not be appropriate at this time, it is important for this issue to be on the radar screen.