

Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council

Allocations and Funding Sources		SFY13	Board Approvals, 1/17-18, 2012 SFY13 Strategies and Amounts
FY Allocation		\$1,305,231	
Population Based Allocation		\$722,672	
Discretionary Allocation		\$419,239	
Other (FTF Fund balance addition)		\$163,320	
Carry Forward From Previous Year		\$386,962	
Total Regional Council Funds Available		\$1,692,193	
Strategies	Proposed Allotments		
Family Resource Centers		\$525,000	Approved
Home Visitation		\$300,000	Approved
Oral Health		\$74,800	Approved
Recruitment into Field		\$40,000	Approved
Quality First (<i>statewide</i>)		\$72,380	Approved
Child Care Health Consultation (<i>statewide</i>)		\$131,040	Approved
Scholarships TEACH (<i>statewide</i>)(<i>state funded for QF</i>)		-	Approved
Quality First Child Care Scholarships (<i>statewide</i>)		\$166,817	Approved
Community Awareness (<i>FTF Directed</i>)		\$20,000	Approved
Media (<i>Statewide</i>)		\$25,000	Approved
Statewide Evaluation (<i>statewide</i>)		\$36,101	Approved
Proposed Allotment Total:		\$1,391,138	
Total Unallotted		\$301,055	



**SANTA CRUZ
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL**

**Regional Funding Plan
Three Year Strategic Direction
SFY 2013-2015**

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**Regional Funding Plan
Three Year Strategic Direction
SFY 2013-2015**

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Section I.**Regional Allocation Summary**

Funds Available State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2012- 2015

Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council

Allocations and Funding Sources	2012	2013	2014	2015
FY Allocation	\$1,301,808	\$1,305,231	\$1,307,842	\$1,312,747
Population Based Allocation	\$741,634	\$722,672	<i>(fy14 and fy15 allocations are estimates only, for purposes of planning)</i>	
Discretionary Allocation	\$432,398	\$419,239		
Other (FTF Fund balance addition)	\$127,776	\$163,320	\$1,307,842	\$1,312,747
Carry Forward From Previous	\$671,490	\$386,962	\$301,055	\$217,759
Total Regional Council Funds	\$1,973,298	\$1,692,193	\$1,608,897	\$1,530,506

Section II.

Review of SFY 2012 Funding Plan

II A. Review of SFY 2012 Priorities

Santa Cruz consists of the communities of Nogales, Rio Rico, Patagonia, Elgin, Sonita, Tubac, Tumacacori and Carmen. The region is located within the smallest county in the state and covers nearly 1300 square miles in Southern Arizona. The communities of the region are diverse in population density, demographics and are often isolated by large areas of unpopulated land. Services are concentrated in larger communities such as Nogales, Rio Rico and Tubac. The more rural areas of the region include Elgin, Sonoita, Patagonia, Tumacacori and Carmen. There are a total of four thousand eight hundred and sixty five children living within the region; one thousand and five hundred and eighty nine are living in poverty. Eighty three percent of the county's residents report themselves as Spanish speaking with very little English spoken in the home. The region shares strong cultural, religious and commercial ties between Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico which lies directly across the border.

The median household income within the region is \$38,607 in comparison to \$51,124 in the state of Arizona. Due to the low levels of education within the region, high unemployment rates and high percentage of unwed mothers, the intent of the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council is to work with parents, local school districts and a wide variety of community partners to help prepare young children in the region for success in school. Seventy-seven percent of students within the region currently qualify for free or reduced meals compared to 52 percent in the state. From January 2007 to January 2010 there was a 60 percent increase in the number of children birth to five who participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In addition, "out of home" placements for children increased by 53 percent from 2000 to 2008.

Serving vulnerable, high-risk populations and expanding services to reach rural geographic areas of the region that are under-served are top priorities. The intent of the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council is to work with parents, local school districts and a wide variety of community partners to help prepare young children in the region for success in school. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council identified a compilation of strategies reflecting a strategic direction that is interconnected and intended to offer a continuum of services, supports to young children, their families and early care education professionals. The strategic planning process for Fiscal Year 2012 represented an opportunity for the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council to reflect on its original goals that were established in 2008, as well as additional information and program data that have been collected over the last two years. A review of this collective information reinforced the Regional Council's originally defined three-year strategic direction that emphasizes the need to enhance basic services already in existence in the region in order to build an infrastructure that supports a comprehensive early childhood development and health system.

Specifically, the Regional Council's priority areas for building on existing services include: (1) Family Support and Education, (2) Health, and (3) Early Care and Education, including Workforce and Professional Development. In addition, the Regional Council feels strongly that Communications is a platform element for all services to increase awareness of the importance of early childhood throughout the communities. The Regional Council elected to maintain the current strategies for the final year of the funding cycle to allow for continued program growth and impact.

Family Support – Family Support strategies address the prioritized need for access to comprehensive education and support for caregivers. Family Resource Centers, Home Visitation and Oral Health focus on supporting families. Family Resource Centers and Home Visitation are the primary strategies in the Family Support domain. Family Support strategies address the prioritized need for access to comprehensive education and support for families. These services are targeted to families with certain risk factors, such as low income, parents without a high school diploma or equivalent and non-English speaking families. The

intent is to stabilize the family, prevent child abuse and neglect, and provide information and resources based on the needs of the family. Due to the high number of kindergartners that miss school due to tooth decay, Oral Health provides support to families who are not able to afford Oral Health care and inform parents regarding the importance of healthy teeth and gums.

Early Learning – Early Learning strategies address the prioritized need for high-quality, affordable early childhood education. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council identified the lack of children who are adequately prepared for kindergarten within the region as a critical need. Family Resource Centers, Home Visitation, Child Care Health Consultation, Oral Health, Professional Development, Quality First and additional Quality First Scholarships. Through partnerships with local school districts, the Regional Council has expanded access to the Family Resource Centers and additional Quality First scholarships for low-income families. The Council continued to fund the Family Resource Centers, Home Visitation, Child Care Health Consultation, Oral Health, Quality First and Recruitment into the Field as strategies to address the lack of children who are prepared for kindergarten. Considerable evidence suggests that more capable and qualified professionals, care givers and competent and confident parents will provide high quality care for children resulting in better developmental outcomes.

Coordination, Communication and Capacity-Building - These strategies address the prioritized need for improved coordination and communication of services. Family Resource Centers, Home Visitation, Media and Community Awareness strategies address the prioritized need for improved coordination and communication of services. Improved coordination and communication of early childhood services is frequently cited as a critical need. Stakeholders and FTF grantees have noted that services in the region are fragmented and families are often not aware of existing services and how to access services. The Regional Council works to address this need by convening stakeholders for various work group sessions throughout the year including; strategic planning, grantee coordination meetings and cross regional meetings designed to build capacity. The purpose of these meetings is to strengthen partnerships, find opportunities to further integrate services, and engage partners in an ongoing process to move forward along a coordination continuum from lower intensity to higher intensity activities: networking, coordination and collaboration.

The Regional Council also implements a FTF staff-directed Community Awareness strategy to address the prioritized need to increase public awareness and community support for early childhood development and health. The Regional Director and Regional Council implements various tactics at the community level, such as giving presentations about First Things First to local clubs and organizations and distributing branded parent education materials at local community and family events. In addition, the Regional Director and Regional Council members will be hosting an FTF annual event to bring all early childhood partners together with the goal of providing resources to the community.

II B. SFY 2012 Strategies and Units of Service Review

		Santa Cruz Units of Service by Strategy	
		Fiscal Year 2012	
	Strategy Description	Targeted Units	Contracted Units
Family Support	Family Resource Centers Strategy		
	Number of families served	350	350
Public Awareness & Support	Home Visitation Strategy		
	Number of families served	250	280
Health	Community Awareness		
	No Target Service Units	0	0
Quality and Access	Media		
	No Target Service Units	0	0
Health	Oral Health Strategy		
	Number of children receiving oral health screenings	2,000	2,000
	Number of fluoride varnishes applied	2,000	2,000
	Number of participating adults	300	300
	Number of participating professionals	0	0
	Number of prenatal women receiving oral health screenings	0	0
	Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness Strategy		
	Number of participants receiving Stipends and/or Loan Forgiveness	0	0
Professional Development	Number of therapists receiving loan forgiveness	2	2
	Number of therapists receiving stipends	0	0
Quality and Access	Quality First Strategy		
	Number of center based providers served		
	Number of home based providers served		
	Quality First Child Care Scholarships Strategy		
Child Care Health Consultation Strategy	Number of children receiving scholarships	30	29
	Number of center based providers served	6	7
	Number of home based providers served	24	23
Professional Development	Recruitment into Field Strategy		
	Number of participating professionals	20	20
Evaluation	Scholarships TEACH Strategy		
	Number of professionals receiving scholarships	8	8
Evaluation	Regional Evaluation		
	No Target Service Units	0	0
Evaluation	Statewide Evaluation		
	No Target Service Units	0	0

II C. SFY 2012 Funding Summary Review

 FIRST THINGS FIRST <i>Ready for School. Set for Life.</i>		FY 2012 Santa Cruz Funding Plan Summary	
Allocations and Funding Sources		2012	
FY Allocation			\$1,301,808
Population Based Allocation			\$741,634
Discretionary Allocation			\$432,398
Other (FTF Fund balance addition)			\$127,776
Carry Forward From Previous Year			\$671,490
Total Regional Council Funds Available			\$1,973,298
Strategies	Allotted	Awarded	
Family Resource Centers	\$552,600	\$552,600	
Home Visitation	\$336,600	\$336,600	
Community Awareness	\$55,000	\$55,000	
Media	\$25,000	\$25,000	
Oral Health	\$74,800	\$74,800	
Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness	\$78,440	\$78,434	
Quality First Child Care Scholarships	\$180,000	\$180,000	
Child Care Health Consultation	\$120,000	\$113,494	
Recruitment into Field	\$48,795	\$48,795	
Scholarships TEACH	\$29,000	\$26,400	
Evaluation	\$50,000	-	
Statewide Evaluation	\$36,101	\$36,101	
Total Allotted/Awarded/Expended:	\$1,586,336	\$1,527,224	
Total Unallotted/Unawarded/Unexpended	\$386,962	\$59,112	

II D. Review of Progress

The Santa Cruz region consists of a portion of a more metropolitan Nogales where services, including child care and early education programs, are accessible for families living in this region. The Santa Cruz region also consists of many rural communities where services are very limited or non-existent and the distances to services in Nogales or outside of the area results in significant barriers for families in these more remote areas. It has been these communities that have been much of the focus of the strategic planning and strategy implementation efforts for the Santa Cruz region over the past three years.

Access to high quality early childhood programs was identified in the SFY 2012 Funding Plan as a priority need followed closely by parenting education and supports for families. In SFY 2012, the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council implemented Quality, Access and Affordability strategies and two professional development strategies (Recruitment into the Field/T.E.A.C.H.) which together work to improve the quality of early care and education programs while making them more accessible and affordable for families in the Santa Cruz region. Providing services to the outlying and often geographically isolated communities has presented many challenges, such as contracting with service providers who are willing to travel the distances to deliver services; developing relationships and trust with key individuals within these communities; identifying potential partners to develop capacity within these communities; and tailoring strategies to meet the specific needs of each individual community. In spite of these challenges, multiple successes were accomplished in SFY 2012.

Family Support

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has two strategies to address the prioritized need for supports and services for vulnerable families: Home Visitation and Family Resource Center.

The three Family Resource Centers provide a less intensive opportunity for families to receive information on parenting that includes child development, child health and safety, early language and literacy development, and social emotional development of the child. Santa Cruz utilizes this strategy to target 350 families within the region. Interested families can participate in sessions that take place in various communities in the Santa Cruz region. These include routine developmental screening reminders, referrals for timely Well Child checks and immunizations, information and resources to support positive parent-child interaction and age-appropriate learning activities families can do together.

In addition, the Family Resource Centers host a wide variety of classes such as nutrition, English Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and General Education Diploma (GED). Home Visiting Promotora's and Recruitment into the Field scholars are working together with the Family Resource Centers to ensure that parents are aware of services within the region. Recruitment into the Field scholars currently volunteer on a bi-weekly or monthly basis at each of the Family Resource Centers. The scholars volunteer their time and apply early childhood skills that are learned in the classroom.

As with the early learning strategies described above, an effort has been made to provide these opportunities in the rural communities by utilizing existing infrastructure such as the new Patagonia Family Resource Center. Breaking the "outsider" barrier has been made easier by making use of places that families already trust and frequent. Where possible, efforts have been made to hire local staff to insure cultural and linguistic sensitivity.

The second Family Support strategy is Home Visitation. To address a priority need in the region, services and supports for families, the Santa Cruz Regional Council implemented an in-home parenting education program. In total, Home Visitation has provided two hundred and fifty families each year with in-home parenting education and individualized support by qualified home educators utilizing evidence based programs. The strategy has exceeded in serving the target service number that was set by the Regional Council. Currently, three hundred families receive in-home family support services through FTF-funded

programs. Through this Promotora model, which is a culturally responsive strategy, families receive a comprehensive package of supports based on the needs of the region and families.

One of the most positive outcomes has been that families are increasingly enrolled in these programs which significantly improves the impact the services will have.

Early Learning

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has designated the following strategies to address the prioritized need for access to high-quality, affordable early childhood education: Family Resource Centers, Home Visitation, Child Care Health Consultation, Recruitment into the Field, Therapist Recruitment Stipends/Loan Forgiveness, Quality First and additional Child Care Scholarships.

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council believes all children have the right to access high quality early learning opportunities. The Quality First program provides a comprehensive package of supports that impact the quality of services in existing child care facilities. These include coaching, incentives, Child Care Health Consultation, and T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. There are currently a total of five Quality First sites in the region, 1 center and 4 homes. The Regional Council opted to not fund additional Quality First sites with regional dollars because the Regional Council felt that the Quality First programs funded through the state were sufficient to meet the needs of the region.

As a result the council utilized regional dollars to fund additional Child Care Scholarships and Child Care Health Consultation in order to increase the number of children who would have access to quality care. Through the additional Child Care Scholarships twenty three children have been afforded quality child care. The additional Health Consultation funds have allowed the Child Care Consultant to service a total of thirty five providers within the region. In the areas of professional development there are currently six scholars utilizing the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship and a total of twenty Recruitment into the Field scholarship recipients.

Initially, the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council identified providing additional children the opportunity for quality care as a priority. This addition of Child Care Scholarships has been a successful strategy that increases access and affordability of high quality early education programs. This strategy has allowed increased slots for families who cannot afford quality child care. These strategies combined have expanded services to children ages three to five in communities where there were previously no other programs available.

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has recognized the importance of high quality programs for young children and has supported the professional growth, development of the early childhood workforce through Quality First, regionally funded T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships, and Recruitment into the Field through Cochise College.

The Regional Council included the Recruitment Stipend/Loan Forgiveness strategy since SFY2010. To date no therapists have been recruited.

Health

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council implements strategies to address the prioritized need for improved access to quality health services: Child Care Health Consultation and Oral Health.

The Child Care Health Consultation strategy in the region currently serves Quality First sites and non-Quality First sites. Through this strategy child care settings receive health and safety information to improve the quality of care in the facility. Due to significant impact of the Child Care Health Consultation model, the Regional Council made the decision to continue to fund the strategy outside of Quality First.

The second health strategy is Oral Health. The Santa Cruz Oral Health strategy is comprised of multiple components including Oral Health screenings and fluoride varnish applications for children one through age five, Oral Health education for parents of young children and Oral Health screenings and referrals for

pregnant and post-partum women. The target service unit for this strategy is 2000 for Oral Health screenings and fluoride varnish applications and 200 referrals for pregnant and post-partum women. Target service numbers were exceeded in SFY 2011 for Oral Health screenings and fluoride varnish applications. This strategy continues to meet and exceed their target service units and maintains a steady progress.

Coordination, Communication and Capacity-Building

The Regional Council also implements a staff-directed Community Awareness strategy to address the prioritized need to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood. A significant amount of cooperation and civic engagement among grantees and community partners is currently in progress for a region-wide event in recognition of the NAEYC Week of the Young Child in April of 2012 and to bring all community stakeholders who provide services to children birth to five.

Section III.

Three Year Strategic Direction: SFY 2013-2015 Regional Funding Plan

III A. Overview

Over the past year, considerable thought and discussion has gone in to reviewing available data sources for strategic planning purposes. Utilizing the 2008 and 2010 Regional Needs and Assets report, the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council began by determining regional priorities. Based on the findings of the Needs and Asset reports the Santa Cruz Regional Council determined children are not adequately prepared to enter kindergarten, there is limited access to affordable child care, questions surrounding quality child care, what the model of quality child care should look like, high unemployment rates that prohibit families from affording quality child care, and the concern that parents are unaware of the developmental needs of their children.

Coordination and collaboration were discussed to ensure that services were comprehensive and a holistic approach of system building was considered. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council chose to build on distinct areas 1) infrastructure development by continuing to fund Quality First providers that were previously State funded, 2) continuity of services for strategies meeting regional priorities and 3) direct services and support to as many children and their families within the region.

The 2010 Regional Needs and Assets Report, program evaluation data and narrative reports from FTF grantees were carefully considered in preparation for the SFY 2013-2015 Regional Funding Plan. In addition, community input was solicited and stakeholders were invited to participate in the planning process through a variety of methods. Two stakeholder strategic planning sessions were convened, including one session that engaged 25 stakeholders. To encourage as much community feedback as possible community members who were unable to attend were invited to provide a written letter to the Regional Council. Finally, a funding plan workgroup meeting was convened and recommendations were developed to determine priority areas, School Readiness Indicators and funding plan recommendations to present to the Regional Partnership Council for approval.

The Regional Council was faced with difficult decisions related to priorities for the next three-year funding cycle. All current strategies could not be continued at the same level and sustained through SFY 2015. The Regional Council considered prioritized needs, FTF School Readiness Indicators and reviewed the effectiveness of the current strategies in meeting the prioritized needs. The Regional Council elected to retain those strategies that have had the greatest impact and strategies that were aligned with the School Readiness Indicators. The Regional Council identified the need to support the Quality First programs funded by the state in order to support the system building of improving child care in the region. The Regional council opted to utilize the funds to sustain the programs currently enrolled in Quality First which will now be funded through regional dollars. The Regional Council will address the needs for varying levels of support in the future and will consider new strategies as necessary.

As a result, several strategy allocations were reduced and two strategies were eliminated. Strategies that were reduced include: Family Resource Center, Home Visitation, Recruitment into the Field and Community Awareness. The strategies that were eliminated were Recruitment- Stipend/Loan Forgiveness and additional T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. After three years of funding and an enrollment number of zero, the Regional Council eliminated Recruitment- Stipend/Loan Forgiveness. The Regional Council opted to continue to fund Recruitment into the Field and eliminated T.E.A.C.H. scholarships due to the high level of interest in the Recruitment into the Field strategy and the low target service numbers for scholars participating in T.E.A.C.H. scholarships.

Setting the Strategic Direction

Serving vulnerable populations and expanding services to reach geographic areas of the region that are under-served remain the top themes that have guided the Regional Council. Services in the region are provided across three domains: Early Learning, Family Support and Health. The following is a brief overview of the prioritized needs to be addressed:

- Children are not adequately prepared to enter kindergarten;
- Expand access to high quality and affordable early childhood education;
- Raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health.

These initial discussions led to the identification and prioritization of the needs utilizing data from the Santa Cruz 2010 Needs and Assets Report, FTF Data Reports and other public reports. The high percentage of families living in poverty in some of the communities, such as Nogales, Patagonia and Rio Rico led to further discussion on the stress factors on families and children related to high poverty and the need for additional support services for families that might mitigate the impact on children including parenting education, and connecting families to available resources. Work group participants reflected on data showing that 47 percent of mothers are unmarried and 28 percent of infants are born to mothers with less than a high school diploma.

There was significant dialog regarding the lack of access to high quality early education programs. There are only four Head Start programs and 5 providers enrolled in Quality First in the region. In some communities, there are no regulated child care providers. The cost of early care and education in the county has increased over time. The median price for child care in the region for all age groups is lower than the state ranging from 27 percent less for infants to 17 percent for preschoolers. Although costs for care tend to be lower in the region, early care and education remains unaffordable for many families because of the area's low median income. Collectively, these issues can further burden working families or families seeking employment. There was significant discussion about impact of pre-kindergarten programs on school readiness and the need to engage public schools as partners especially in rural communities where the schools often serve as a hub for services.

Closely related to access to high quality early education, is the need to raise the educational level of early childhood professionals. Forty-five percent of teachers in Arizona have no degree beyond high school and no Child Development Associate credential. Input from community members indicated they felt the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council had made a significant commitment to addressing this need through the various professional development strategies that have been implemented.

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council identified the need for programs and services to support families followed closely by making high quality early childhood education programs more accessible and affordable for families. The consensus of the groups was that the impact of the recession, unemployment, and cuts in public services has placed a significant strain on families. Increasing the education levels of early childhood professionals was identified as a key factor. If the quality of early learning experience for children is to be improved there must be a measurable impact of professionals participating in an early education program.

Health related needs, especially addressing the high incidence of untreated tooth decay rose to the top for the Santa Cruz region. These needs very closely mirror the needs identified in prior years with support for families and early learning rising to the top over since SFY 2010. The Regional Council also examined and

discussed the data available on the strategies that have been implemented over the past three years and the need to sustain those efforts moving forward.

Once needs were prioritized, the workgroups discussed each of the First Things First School Readiness Indicators in relation to the identified needs and the ability of the region to demonstrate an impact. Subsequently, the following indicators were identified as those most closely aligned with the identified priority needs:

- #/% of children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the developmental domains of social emotional, language and literacy, cognitive and motor and physical
- #/% of children enrolled in an early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars
- #/% of families who report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child's safety, health and well being

The second phase of strategic planning involved two additional work group sessions and a Regional Council meeting where Regional Council members identified strategies, target service numbers, target populations and allotments. Data, narrative and financial report information was used to examine current strategies and their effectiveness in addressing the prioritized needs. As strategies were identified to address the selected indicators, the Regional Council considered the nuances of each community represented in Santa Cruz, specific target populations, geographic locations, available infrastructure or lack of it, and level of impact desired. For example, the Santa Cruz Regional Council specifically wants to target children not being adequately prepared to enter kindergarten, limited access to affordable child care, what the model of quality care should look like and educating parents that are unaware of the developmental needs of their children.

One of the defining conversations that drove the strategic direction of the Regional Council included the transition of funding of Quality First from statewide funding to regional funding. The Regional Council believed that the continuation of the Quality First program was vital to the success of the children within the region. Funding Quality First and maintaining the program allows for system building and improving the quality of Child Care within the region which will ultimately lead to a higher percentage of children demonstrating school readiness at the entry of kindergarten.

Strategic Approach to System Building

Each strategy has the potential to impact a key player in a child's life be it a parent, a care-giver, a teacher, or a health care provider. Taken as a group of strategies, the impact is compounded and is more likely to result in better outcomes for the child. Some strategies, such as Quality First, Family Resource Centers and Recruitment into the Field universally target parents or early childhood professionals. Other strategies, such as Child Care Scholarships, Home Visitation and Oral Health have more targeted populations such as families who are considered at risk. The Santa Cruz Regional Council has targeted specific geographic locations for additional support such as the Family Resource Center in Patagonia, servicing the more rural parts of the region. The Regional Council targeted communities with high teen pregnancy rates such as Nogales and Rio Rico for Family Resource Center and Home Visitation strategies that will target pregnant women, grandparents, and parents of infants and toddlers.

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has made a significant investment in improving the quality of programs for young children, clearly understanding that research indicates a high quality early learning program is much more likely to impact a child's readiness for school. The Regional Council identified the importance of the Quality Improvement and Rating System in impacting the quality of early learning experiences and committed to increase the number of homes and centers enrolled in the program each year beginning in SFY 2014-2015. Research indicates that one of the highest correlating factors of quality is the

educational level of the staff. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has identified two strategies that provide a choice of professional development opportunities tied to college credit. Together the strategies provide multiple entry pathways, with differing eligibility requirements, varying meeting times and locations, and a range of levels of educational attainment, including T.E.A.C.H. through the Quality First package and Recruitment into the Field. These options have been made possible as the result of the past three years of infrastructure development and capacity building.

Coordination has also been intentional. Regional Council members representing all six regions in the Southeast Area have met twice this fall to explore possibilities for coordination between regions. As the Santa Cruz Regional Council sets the strategic direction for the next three years, there is the developing sense that the collective work of the Regional Council, community partners and families is beginning to take root and thoughtful, responsible decision-making will lead this region to a place where all children birth through five will receive the supports they deserve that will allow them to succeed in school and life. This is evident in the high levels of participation from the community of all regionally funded strategies such as the Family Resource Center, Home Visitation, Oral Health and Recruitment into the Field.

Section III B.

Strategic Plan for SFY 2013 – 2015

Regional Priorities, Selected FTF Indicators and Priority Roles, and Strategies to Achieve Outcomes

Regional Priority to be addressed	School Readiness Indicators Correlated to the needs and priority roles	FTF Priority Roles in the Early Childhood System	SFY 2013-2015 Strategies
<p>Children are not adequately prepared to enter Kindergarten</p> <p>Limited access to quality, affordable early care and education</p> <p>Limited knowledge and information about the importance of early childhood development and health</p>	<p>1. #/% children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the development domains of social-emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and motor and physical</p> <p>2. #/% of children enrolled in an early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars</p> <p>10. % of families who report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child’s safety, health and well being</p>	<p>Early Care and Education System Development and Implementation – Convene partners and provide leadership in the development and implementation of a comprehensive early care and education system that is aligned both across the spectrum of settings and with the full continuum of the education system.</p> <p>Quality Early Care and Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the development and implementation of quality standards for early childhood care and education programs and related curricula and assessments.</p> <p>Supports and Services for Families - Convene partners, provide leadership, provide funding, and advocate for development, enhancement, and sustainability of a variety of high quality, culturally responsive, and affordable services, supports, and community resources for young children and their families.</p> <p>Early Care and Education System Development and Implementation – Convene partners and provide leadership in the development and implementation of a comprehensive early care and education system that is aligned both across the spectrum of settings and with the full continuum of the education system.</p> <p>Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for increased availability of and access to high quality, regulated, culturally responsive and affordable early care and education programs.</p> <p>Supports and Services for Families - Convene partners, provide leadership, provide funding, and advocate for development, enhancement, and sustainability of a variety of high quality, culturally responsive, and affordable services, supports, and community resources for young children and their families.</p>	<p>Family Resource Centers</p> <p>Home Visitation</p> <p>Oral Health</p> <p>Recruitment into the Field</p> <p>Quality First (including CCHC, CC Scholarships, TEACH)</p> <p>-Additional CCHC</p> <p>-Additional CC Scholarships</p> <p>Community Awareness</p> <p>Media</p> <p>Statewide Evaluation</p>

Section III C.

Strategy Descriptions including Target Populations and Funding Levels

Strategy: Family Resource Centers
Strategy Description Provides local resource centers that offer training and educational opportunities, resources, and links to other services for healthy child development.
Strategy Narrative <p>Family Resource Centers provide resource and referral information to identify supports and services available to families with young children and provide each family with access to information and support on topics such as parenting skills, early childhood development including social emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, physical and motor development and child health. Community based parent education sessions can be housed and offered at resource center locations to build a more comprehensive, robust center. Through this effort, families can access programming while simultaneously building their own social connections there by reducing isolation.</p> <p>The Family Resource Centers provide programs and services to the parents and caregivers of children five and younger in the region. The Family Resource Centers are embedded in local communities and provide families with access to information and education on a variety of child development and health topics. These include parenting education opportunities and resource and referral for direct services when not provided at the centers. The centers are providing teen parent education, English Language Learner classes for parents, nutrition classes, parent/child playgroups for social skill development, and parent support for appropriate developmental activities. Approximately 80 percent of all kindergartners arrive on day one with no knowledge of the alphabet or the letter sounds. Many of these children remain behind in later grades. To address these regional issues, early literacy is a key goal of the centers, with family literacy models being considered for 2012 development and implementation. As we know that adult education level is, based on the research, a predictor of child success, GED classes are offered to parents of children five and younger. GED courses offered at the Family Resource Centers are funded by outside funding sources not FTF funds. The Family Resource Centers partner with Nogales Unified School District, Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District #35, U of A Cooperative Extension Santa Cruz County, and Mariposa Community Health Center.</p> <p>The Santa Cruz Region's strategy to fund Family Resource Centers is an effort to support families in the locations and areas of the community where current system work is already being done or can be further established. The main components this strategy will offer include community based training, health insurance resource and referral and overall access to community resources and supports. The Family Resource Center's will not offer direct health insurance enrollment but rather referral information for families who need health coverage.</p> <p>The goal of this strategy is to increase families' access to the other family support strategies such as Community Based Parent Education, and Home Visitation. These services are enhanced by other non-First Things First funded services such as English Language classes, WIC and others. Family Resource Centers are also intended to increase the level of coordination, collaboration and partnership among the region's Family Resource Centers; driven by the common purpose to serve families and children in the region. This level of collaboration and partnership supports the early childhood system in the Santa Cruz Region.</p> <p>The allocation for this strategy for SFY2013-2015 is \$525,000 and a target population of 250. There is a decrease of \$27,600 in funding and a decrease of target service units by 100. The more significant reduction in target service units is due to the regional council's intent to ensure that resources are used to</p>

reach families in the rural, more isolated portions of the county. In addition, fewer families may be served over the course of a year since the intent is to provide a series of parent education classes and encourage the ongoing participation of the same families.

Target Population Description

The target population for this strategy is universal, reaching 250 families with children birth through five in the region. Due to a shift in priorities, the Regional Council reduced the target service units in order to continue to fund the strategy. The Regional Council recognizes the need of all parents to receive services to support their child’s learning and healthy development. Family Support strategies address the prioritized need for access to comprehensive education and support for families. These services are targeted to families with certain risk factors, such as low income, parents without a high school diploma or equivalent and non-English speaking families. The intent is to stabilize the family, prevent child abuse and neglect, and provide information and resources based on the needs of the family. The intent for the Family Resource Centers is that at least one is located in each of the Region’s core communities and accessible to all families in the region: Nogales, Rio Rico and Patagonia.

Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of families served	250	250	250
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Family Resource Centers	\$525,000	\$525,000	\$525,000

Strategy: Home Visitation**Strategy Description**

Home Visitation provides voluntary in-home services for infants, children and their families, focusing on parenting skills, early physical and social development, literacy, health and nutrition. An evidence based Home Visitation program connects families to resources to support their child's health and early learning.

Strategy Narrative

Comprehensive, evidence based Home Visitation programs provide participating families of infants and toddlers with information and education on parenting, child development and health topics while assisting with connections to other resources or programs as needed. A variety of evidence based models exist to address the spectrum of universal needs to targeted or specialized needs of particular populations such as first time parents, teen parents, families at-risk for abuse-neglect, and low income families. Family participation in a Home Visitation program is voluntary, with no fee for service to families. At a minimum, visits to a family's home occur monthly.

Home visiting professionals trained in child development and family support make regular, scheduled visits to each family's home or other natural environments such as the library. Utilizing an evidence-based curriculum, home visitors meet with the family and their infant, toddler or with a family expecting a child, to answer questions, provide information and resources, support and advise parents on parenting skills or assist in early detection of any developmental problems in the young child. The specialized skills and qualifications of home visitors are critical to the successful implementation of Home Visitation programs. Home visitors build trusting relationships with each family. They observe daily routines and interactions to help parents identify and interpret their child's cues and offer information, guidance and coaching so that families can best support their own child's growth and development.

High quality home visiting programs can be an effective service delivery method to support early learning in these years, ensuring that children succeed in school and beyond. In home parenting education programs are an important piece of the early childhood development system. The first three years of life are a period of intense intellectual development during which the brain forms a foundation for later learning and development and a broad body of research highlights the first three years of life as an important intervention period for influencing a child's trajectory and the nature of the parent-child relationship.

Research of home visiting services finds that the earlier in a child's life this support is provided the greater the potential for having long lasting positive results. Home visiting with pregnant women specifically helps create the environment for a healthy birth by incorporating the importance of healthy behaviors throughout the pregnancy such as accessing prenatal care, appropriate nutrition, not smoking, and exercise. Additionally, research has confirmed home visiting as an effective strategy for families at risk due to poverty, health conditions of the child or parents, child maltreatment and low literacy levels.

Home Visitation is a part of the larger continuum of family support within the context of an early childhood system. The purpose of home visiting services is to build parent's capacity and skills so they can support the healthy development of their child. Home visiting, as a key component of a comprehensive early childhood system, enhances the relationship between the parent and child to foster the child's positive social-emotional, language and literacy development and thus their readiness for school. This strategy can work with and build upon the other strategies implemented in the region and other community assets to address the need for comprehensive parent education and information. It is important to be aware of other state funding for Home Visitation through agencies such as the Department of Economic Security, the Department of Health Services and the Department of Education. Home Visitation already exists in the region and has been further expanded through the support of the Santa Cruz Regional Council. Information provided in the 2010 Santa Cruz Needs and Assets Report, as well as input from community

members, suggests that families in the region have been heavily impacted by the recession and the added stressors with which they are dealing can have a direct negative impact on their children. Forty-seven percent of births in 2009 were to unwed mothers. The average family size is four people per household in comparison to 2.6 for the state of Arizona. Forty-seven percent of grandparents living with children under 18 years are responsible for these children. Seventy-seven percent of students qualify for free or reduced meals, compared to 52 percent in the state.

The educational attainment of adults in the Santa Cruz region is lower in comparison to the state. Thirty-three percent of adults have no high school diploma, 31 percent have completed high school, 15 percent have completed some college or associate’s degree and 16 percent have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Research shows that the educational level of the mother is correlated to a child’s educational success. Community service providers stated that they are finding more families cohabitating in order to share housing and reduce child care costs. Grandparents are also increasingly bearing the responsibility of caring for grandchildren with 47 percent of grandparents living with children under 18 years being responsible for their care.

Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council members and community partners identified the need to expand upon existing family support strategies as a method to address the multiple challenging factors that are experienced by families in the region. The Home Visitation strategy provides services and supports for seventy five families each year with in-home parenting education and individualized support by qualified home educators utilizing evidence based programs. Through this strategy, families receive a comprehensive package of supports based on the needs of the family. One of the most positive outcomes has been that families are increasingly enrolled in these programs which significantly improves the impact the services will have. Also, home visiting providers and Recruitment into the Field scholars are working together with the family resource centers to ensure that parents are aware of services within the region. The allocation for this strategy for SFY2013-2015 is \$300,000 and a target population of 75. There is a decrease of \$36,600 in funding and a decrease of target service units by 175.

Target Population Description

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has identified providing in home parenting education services for up to 75 families classified as moderate to high risk in the region. This number reflects a decrease in target numbers. One of the reasons for the decrease in target service units was due to the high cost of the program model to serve high risk infants and toddlers. In addition, due to the shift of regional priorities the council opted for a slight reduction of funding for this strategy.

The intent is to build upon programs that have been supported over the past three years to provide continuity of services for families interested in continuing to participate in Home Visitation programs. Enrollment of new families will focus on infants and toddlers and women who are pregnant. Research supports that this is the age group where the greatest impact can occur.

Target Service Units	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Number of families served	75	75	75
Funding Level	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Home Visitation	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000

Strategy: Oral Health			
Strategy Description Provides Oral Health screenings and fluoride varnish in a variety of community-based settings; provide training to families on the importance of Oral Health care for their children.			
Strategy Narrative The Santa Cruz Oral Health strategy consists of several components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Oral Health screenings and provide referrals for children 1 through age 5 throughout the region. • Apply fluoride varnish as a proven intervention to reduce the incidence of dental caries (tooth decay) for children. • Provide Oral Health screenings and referrals to pre/post-partum women <p>A sound health care system is a key element of an early childhood system. Children must have their health needs met in order to maximize their learning potential. Attending to the Oral Health needs of children birth through five through a preventative approach to dental health addresses one aspect of a child’s overall health.</p> <p>Although data is not currently available for children under age six, available data for ages 6-8 indicate that 72% of children of this age group in the region experienced tooth decay, which further indicates that young children are not receiving appropriate oral care.</p>			
Target Population Description This strategy addresses multiple target populations. Primarily, the focus is on providing Oral Health screenings and fluoride varnish applications to 2,000 young children in the Santa Cruz region. Almost 50 percent of the children in the region will be served through this strategy.			
Target Service Units	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Number of children receiving Oral Health screenings	2,000	2,000	2,000
Number of fluoride varnishes applied	2,000	2,000	2,000
Number of prenatal and post-partum women receiving Oral Health screenings	200	200	200
Funding Level	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Oral Health	\$74,800	\$74,800	\$74,800

Strategy: Recruitment into the Field Scholarships			
Strategy Description Recruit and retain a skilled and well-prepared early childhood development workforce, which will increase the quality of early care and education standards, curriculum and assessment.			
Strategy Narrative This strategy is designed to recruit participants throughout scholarships for college coursework. Participants vary from recent high school graduates to adults seeking a new or improved career placement. The targeted population is adults over age 18, with a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) high school equivalency diploma, who are not eligible for a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship because they are not currently working in the field and are therefore ineligible for the scholarship. These students are considered to be in a “funneling program” that will lead into working in the early care and education field and perhaps later enrollment in T.E.A.C.H. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has approved the continuation of the Recruitment into the Field strategy. This scholarship program partners with the local community college. The program pays tuition and registration fees for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific courses in Early Childhood Education, including those leading to the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, Community College Certificate of Completion and Associate of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education. The educational development of the early childhood workforce is a component of a strong early childhood system and needs to be provided through a range of options to meet the diverse needs of this population. The allocation for this strategy for SFY2013-2015 is \$40,000 and a target population of 15. There is a decrease of \$8,795 in funding and a decrease of target service units by 5.			
Target Population Description The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has identified 15 individuals as the target population for this strategy. The decrease in target service units is due to the Regional Council investment in Quality First which will also allow for additional opportunities for professional development through the T.E.A.C.H. model.			
Target Service Units	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Number of professionals receiving scholarships	15	15	15
Funding Level	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Recruitment into the Field	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000

Strategy: Quality First**Strategy Description**

Supports provided to early care and education centers and homes to improve the quality of programs, including: on-site coaching; program assessment; financial resources; teacher education scholarships; and Consultations specializing in health and safety practices.

Strategy Narrative

Quality First is Arizona's voluntary quality improvement and rating system designed to improve the quality of early care and education so that young children can begin school safe, healthy and ready to succeed. Quality First does not duplicate or replace, but builds upon state licensing regulations, addressing multiple aspects of early care and education through research-based indicators of quality.

The Santa Cruz Regional Council will continue to support all the center and home providers that are enrolled to date. Improving the quality of an early childhood program requires a significant investment in commitment by the staff and leadership of a program as well as intensive, targeted, and meaningful supports. Quality First is designed to provide supports through eight program components: coaching, financial incentives, licensure fee assistance, Child Care Scholarships, T.E.A.C.H. Arizona scholarships, program assessment, assignment of Star Rating and specialized technical assistance. As programs improve their quality, there will be more high quality options available for families. The addition of child care scholarships to this strategy will provide families with limited incomes the ability to select higher quality programs for their children.

Quality First and the related strategies including child care health consultation, child care scholarships and T.E.A.C.H. will address the regional need of limited access to high quality, affordable early care and education programs for children living in the Santa Cruz Region. The Regional Council opted to begin to fund and support previously state funded Quality First programs in order to support the system building of a strong early childhood system within the region.

Quality First plays an important role in the development of an early childhood system for Arizona. It creates a statewide system for rating the quality of early learning programs providing families with a way to identify and select high quality programs for their children. Beyond the rating, it creates an expectation of high quality and a consistent method for measuring quality and provides participating programs with a variety of resources to support them in making changes that directly will impact the quality of their programs and ultimately outcomes for children.

Target Population Description

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council intends to continue supporting the programs that are currently enrolled and that have previously been supported through statewide funding. The intent is to increase funding in future years as funding is available. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council recognizes the importance of a comprehensive approach to the expectation of raising the quality of early education in Arizona. For the first time in SFY 2013, the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council will absorb all previously funded state programs. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council will not increase target service units due to the increased cost of program participation and the region's commitment to continuous support to those programs that have previously enrolled and have demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of their program. The intent of the Regional Council is to utilize additional carry forward funds to maintain or increase the same level of support as in SFY2013 when SFY2014 funding decisions are made.

Target Service Units - Quality First	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Number of center based providers served	1	1	1
Number of home based providers served	4	4	4
Funding Levels	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Quality First	\$72,380	\$72,380	\$72,380
Child Care Health Consultation	\$131,040	\$131,040	\$131,040
Scholarships TEACH	0	0	0
QF Child Care Scholarships	\$166,817	\$166,817	\$166,817

Target Service Units - Child Care Health Consultation	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of center based providers served	7	7	7
Number of home based providers served	45	45	45
Target Service Units - Scholarships TEACH			
Number of professionals receiving scholarships	4	4	4
Target Service Units - QF Child Care Scholarships			
Number of children receiving scholarships	31.2	31.2	31.2

Strategy: QF Child Care Scholarships (addition to Quality First package)
<p>Strategy Narrative Even with some of the lowest child care rates in the state, many families with low incomes are unable to afford quality child care. Often relatives, including school age siblings, or neighbors are left to care for the children five and younger. These are often untrained individuals and therefore are likely not to be providing the supports and environment for optimum development and school readiness. Provide scholarships to children at child care homes and centers, both those participating in Quality First and those on the Quality First waiting list.</p>
<p>Target Population Description Additional Quality First Scholarships for wait listed programs have been designated for SFY 2013 - 2015 and is intended for the providers on the Quality First waitlist. There are 17 early care and education programs that are waitlisted, including 6 centers and 11 homes. A total of 20 additional scholarships will be funded.</p>

Strategy: Child Care Health Consultation (addition to Quality First package)
<p>Strategy Narrative Early childhood Child Care Health Consultation builds the capacity of early care and education providers to nurture the social-emotional development of young children, as well as to prevent, identify, and reduce the impact of health problems among children from birth to age 5 and their families. Child Care Health Consultation requires a collaborative relationship between a professional consultant who has health expertise and an early care and education professional. In program-focused health consultation the intent is to improve the overall quality of the classroom environment as well as to provide strategies to build early care and education staff capacity to address health issues or organizational problems within the setting that may be affecting one or more of the children, families, or staff.</p>
<p>Target Population Description Child care centers and child care homes</p>

Strategy: Community Awareness			
Strategy Description Uses a variety of community-based activities and materials to increase public awareness of the critical importance of early childhood development and health so that all Arizonans are actively engaged in supporting young kids in their communities.			
Strategy Narrative The Santa Cruz Regional Council identified the need to increase the level of awareness about early childhood health and development throughout the region. This strategy provides access to a variety of community-based activities and materials to increase public awareness on the importance of early childhood development and health through participation in community events, and the dissemination of educational materials. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council has decreased the allotment for Community Awareness for SFY 2013. They currently have a sufficient inventory of educational materials that should carry them through SFY 2013. The allocation for this strategy for SFY2013-2015 is \$20,000.			
Target Service Units	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
No target service units identified for this strategy	0	0	0
Funding Level	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Community Awareness	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000

Strategy: Media			
Strategy Description Increases public awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health via a media campaign that draws viewers/listeners to the ReadyAZKids.com web site.			
Strategy Narrative Media efforts include purchasing television and radio spots, billboards, and other approved media buys.			
Target Population Description Parents, educators, health providers, policy makers, and the general public throughout Santa Cruz region.			
Target Service Units	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
No target service units identified for this strategy	0	0	0
Funding Level	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Media	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000

Strategy: Statewide Evaluation			
Strategy Description Statewide Evaluation includes the studies and evaluation work which inform the FTF Board and the 31 Regional Partnership Councils. Examples include: the baseline Needs and Assets reports, specific focused studies, and statewide research and evaluation on the developing early childhood system.			
Strategy Narrative First Things First has, and is growing, a multi-level system of research and evaluation strategies designed to be responsive to the informational needs of varied stakeholder groups, including the First Things First Board, Regional Partnership Councils, and Arizona citizens. The research and evaluation system is designed to provide both depth and breadth of high quality information, from collecting programmatic data to evaluating the overall impact of the First Things First Early Childhood System model. The system provides a framework for conducting statewide and regional studies centered on identifying current and changing needs of families and children birth to five, and the impact of programs and strategies across all First Things First priority areas. The First Things First research and evaluation system is a knowledge building system, designed to advance the understanding of needs, activities, and effectiveness. Individually and collectively, research and evaluation strategies generate data and findings which can be used to identify trends and changes in school readiness indicators and therefore to support strategic planning and decision-making which promotes the health and well-being of young children.			
Target Service Units	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
No target service units identified for this strategy	0	0	0
Funding Level	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Statewide Evaluation	\$36,101	\$36,101	\$36,101

Section III D. Proposed Funding Summary

SFY 2013 - 2015 Regional Partnership Council Budget

FY 2013 - 2015			
			
Santa Cruz			
Funding Plan Summary			
Allocations and Funding Sources	2013	2014	2015
FY Allocation	\$1,305,231	\$1,307,842	\$1,312,747
Population Based Allocation	\$722,672		
Discretionary Allocation	\$419,239		
Other (FTF Fund balance addition)	\$163,320	\$1,307,842	\$1,312,747
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$386,962	\$301,055	\$217,759
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$1,692,193	\$1,608,897	\$1,530,506
Strategies	Proposed Allotment	Proposed Allotment	Proposed Allotment
Family Resource Centers	\$525,000	\$525,000	\$525,000
Home Visitation	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Oral Health	\$74,800	\$74,800	\$74,800
Recruitment into Field	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Quality First	\$72,380	\$72,380	\$72,380
Child Care Health Consultation	\$131,040	\$131,040	\$131,040
Scholarships TEACH	-	-	-
Quality First Child Care Scholarships	\$166,817	\$166,817	\$166,817
Community Awareness	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Media	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Statewide Evaluation	\$36,101	\$36,101	\$36,101
Proposed Allotment Total:	\$1,391,138	\$1,391,138	\$1,391,138
Total Unallotted	\$301,055	\$217,759	\$139,368