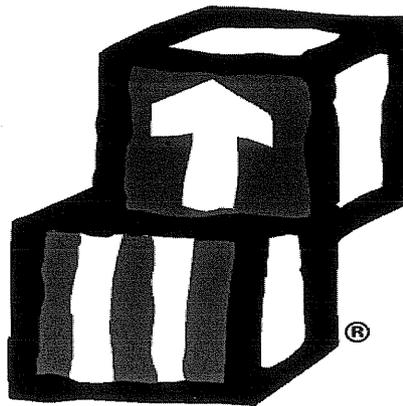


*Head Start State Collaboration Office*  
*Needs Assessment*  
*2009 Update*



**Arizona Head Start State Collaboration Office**  
**Division for Children**  
**Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families**  
**November 2009**

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## INTRODUCTION

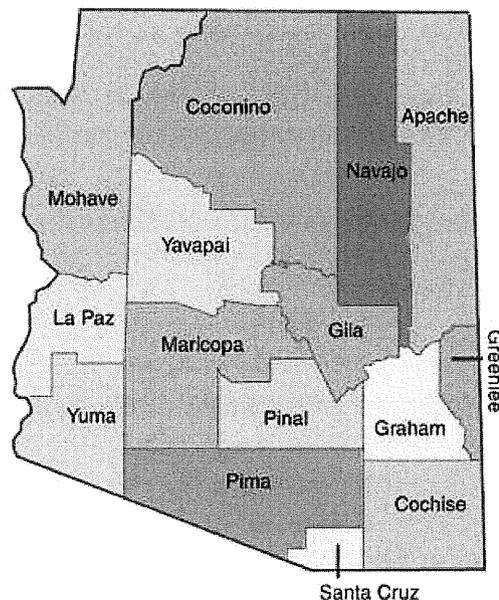
The 2009 Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) 2009 Needs Assessment Update reflects the dynamic Arizona environment in the context of changing and declining economic health for a growing population, job loss for families and decreases in publicly supported services as well as the opportunity to expand Head Start services through enhanced federal funding.

The 2009 HSSCO Needs Assessment Update includes an overview of the population characteristics particularly those of low-income families and young children, the impact the economy has had on families and the related implications for the HSSCO and Arizona Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. Information is also provided about the program growth for Head Start as a result of program expansion funding and the American Reinvestment and Recovery and Act (ARRA).

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Arizona's population has increased by an astounding 25% to over six million people since the 2000 census. As of July 2008, the Arizona population was 6,500,180 people as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program.

Pinal County in Central Arizona experienced an 80% increase in population with major housing developments drawing people from Phoenix, Maricopa County to suburban living in the more rural Pinal County. Four additional counties had population growth over 20%; i.e. Maricopa County, Mohave County, Yavapai County, and Yuma County.



**Population Growth by County**

County	July-2000	July-2008	Percent of Change
Apache County	69,517	70,207	1%
Cochise County	118,013	129,006	9.3%
Coconino County	116,703	128,558	10.2%
Gila County	51,359	52,166	1.6%

County	July-2000	July-2008	Percent of Change
Graham County	33,542	36,452	8.7%
Greenlee County	8,541	8,002	-6.3%
La Paz County	19,644	20,086	2.3%
Maricopa County	3,097,500	3,954,598	27.7%
Mohave County	156,180	196,281	25.7%
Navajo County	97,873	112,757	15.2%
Pima County	848,549	1,012,018	19.3%
Pinal County	181,276	327,301	80.6%
Santa Cruz County	38,522	42,923	11.4%
Yavapai County	168,878	215,503	27.6%
Yuma County	160,713	194,322	20.9%
Arizona	5,166,810	6,500,180	25%

Source: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program More Tables and Information: Population Estimates Program

### Children under Age 5

While overall population growth from 2000 through 2008 in Arizona has been 25%, the number of children under age five has increased by 30.9% from 382,386 in 2000 to 500,531 in 2008 based on the U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2006-2008.

In 2008, 99,215 children were born in Arizona. Of those children 12,161 were born to mothers 19 years or younger (over 12%) and more than 45% of the children (44,728) were born to unwed mothers. Fifty four percent (54%) of the births had a public payer for the birth expenses indicating low income status of these families and the clear dependence on the public health care system in Arizona.<sup>1</sup>

### Literacy

According to the US Census 2006-2008 population estimates, 25.9% (1,229,237) of Arizona's population 5 years old and over speak a language other than English at home. This compares to 17.9% nationally.

<sup>1</sup> Arizona Department of Health Services, Vital Records, Births By Mothers Age Group and Community, Arizona 2008 and Selected Characteristics of Newborns and Mothers by Community, Arizona 2008; [www.ADHS.vitalrecords](http://www.ADHS.vitalrecords).

## ARIZONA HEAD START PROGRAMS

### Children and Pregnant Women Served

Of the 16,451 children served, 1,576 children receive Early Head Start Services and 14,875 received Head Start Services.

#### 2008-2009 Children and Pregnant Women Served By Grantee

Head Start Grantee	Early Head Start	Pregnant Women	Head Start
Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG)	202	10	1,931
Child Parent Centers, Inc.	640	21	2,705
Pinal Gila Community Child Services	56	5	1,000
Western Arizona Council of Governments (WACOG)	N/A	N/A	1,231
City of Phoenix Human Services	N/A	N/A	3,579
Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC) – 2007 - 2008	63	6	N/A
Maricopa County Human Services	270	25	2,648
Southwest Human Development (SWHD)	296	26	1,091
Migrant and Seasonal Program CPLC – 2007 - 2008			<b>752</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,527</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>14,937</b>

Source: Head Start Program Information Reports 2008-2009

### Head Start Performance Indicators

Head Start Performance Indicators are defined by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families. The following chart shows a comparison of where Arizona stands on Performance Indicators (Health, Employee Professional Development, Enrollment, Children with Disabilities, Family Participation) to the Region 9 States as a whole. Region 9 includes American Samoa, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, Northern Marianna Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Paulau.

The following chart is a comparison of Arizona Head Start and Early Head Start Performance Indicators for program years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 and to the Region 9 Performance Indicators for the same years. Areas of change by category include:

Health Care: From the 2008 to 2009 program year:

- There was a decrease in the number of children in Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) that are up to date on a schedule of preventive and primary health care.
- There was also a decrease in the percent of children needing medical treatment.
- There was a decrease in the percent of Arizona HS children receiving dental exams.
- There was a significant increase in the number of EHS children with dental homes (from 86.86% to 93.91%).

Employee Professional Development: The description of the indicator has changed from 2008 to 2009 program year. For 2009:

- Arizona is below the Region 9 average in the percent of classroom teachers that meet the September 30, 2013 degree requirements (29.82% compared to 34.5%) and in the percent of assistant teachers that meet the September 30, 2013 degree requirements (75.61% compared to 79.77%).
- Arizona is on par with the Region in professional development requirements for education coordinators and classroom teacher 2011 requirements.

Family Participation

- Arizona saw a significant decrease in the number of EHS families receiving services (from 69.86% in 2008 program year to 52.57% in the 2009 program year).

Performance Indicators 2007-2008 compared to 2008-2009				
	State (AZ) 2007 - 2008 2008 - 2009		Region 9 2007 -2008 2008 - 2009	
	Head Start	Early Head Start	Head Start	Early Head Start
<b>Health</b>				
01. Children up to date on a schedule of Preventative and Primary Health Care	98.60%	92.57%	98.01%	95.52%
	95.16%	92.27%	97.18%	99.09%
02. Children needing medical treatment:	15.64%	16.58%	17.88%	14.69%

**Performance Indicators 2007-2008 compared to 2008-2009**

	<b>State (AZ)</b> <b>2007 - 2008</b> <b>2008 - 2009</b>		<b>Region 9</b> <b>2007 -2008</b> <b>2008 - 2009</b>	
	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>
	12.64%	14.42%	15.48%	13.03%
03. Children receiving medical treatment:	94.26%	91.48%	96.47%	97.07%
	95.17%	93.55%	96.62%	95.36
New 2009: Children with medical home at the end of enrollment – 2009 only)	97.47%	98.15%	97.40%	97.92%
04. Children completing dental exams: <i>(Preschool Only)</i>	98.66%		97.11%	
	95.46%		95.91%	
05. Children needing dental treatment: <i>(Preschool Only)</i>	41.13%		31.92%	
	36.39%		29.20%	
06. Children receiving dental treatment:: <i>(Preschool Only)</i>	92.60%		91.09%	
	93.33%		89.86%	
07. Children with up-to-date, or all possible, immunizations:	104.66%	96.90%	105.16%	102.44%
	104.10%	100.72%	105.94%	104.32%
08. Children enrolled in Medicaid, SCHIP, or Paid Health Insurance at end of year (EOY):	91.64%	95.54%	95.33%	96.39%
	92.84%	96.23%	95.79%	96.72%
09. Children with Dental Homes (at EOY):	93.22%	86.86%	94.39%	80.67%
	94.18%	93.91%	94.79%	78.18%

**Performance Indicators 2007-2008 compared to 2008-2009**

	<b>State (AZ)</b>		<b>Region 9</b>	
	<b>2007 - 2008</b>	<b>2008 - 2009</b>	<b>2007 -2008</b>	<b>2008 - 2009</b>
	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>
<b>Employee Professional Development</b>				
10. Number of classroom children per classroom teaching staff:	8.56	2.79	8.08	3.04
	8.56	3.00	7.85	3.09
11. Average Class Size:	18.80	6.70	17.80	7.62
	18.46	6.86	17.91	7.2
<b>2008 Status</b>				
12. Classroom teachers with a ECE or related degree – 2008 only	76.91%	80.60%	79.56%	65.58%
13. Teachers with an ECE related degree, CDA or State Certificate – 2008 only:	98.01%	94.03%	96.37%	95.19%
14. Home visitors with ECE related or Human Development degree, or CDA – 2008 only :	71.88%	92.68%	75.88%	85.78%
15. Staff without ECE or related degree or CDA in CDA training 2008 only:	26.64%	65.38%	12.68%	16.71%
16. Staff without ECE or related degree or CDA in ECE degree programs 2008 only:	17.76%	15.38%	33.68%	32.46%
<b>2009 Status</b>				
Classroom teachers that meet the Sept 30, 2013 degree requirements	29.82%		34.50%	

**Performance Indicators 2007-2008 compared to 2008-2009**

	<b>State (AZ) 2007 - 2008 2008 - 2009</b>		<b>Region 9 2007 -2008 2008 - 2009</b>	
	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>
Classroom assistant teachers that meet the Sept. 30, 2013 degree requirements	75.61%		79.77%	
Education coordinators that meet the September 30, 2013 degree requirements	54.90%		55.32%	
Classroom teachers that meet the October 1, 2011 degree requirements of Section 648A.(3)(B)	81.38%		82.68%	
Classroom teachers that meet the Sept. 30, 2011 degree requirements of Section 648A.(3)(A)	99.34%		99.05%	
17. Home based option children per home-based visitor:	11.64	10.09	10.96	10.64
	11.34	10.11	11.42	9.99
<b>Enrollment</b>				
18. Children (and pregnant women in EHS) enrolled less than 45 days:	5.48%	8.08%	6.16%	6.68%
	5.47%	7.48%	6.24%	9.85%
19. Multiple year enrollment:	22.95%	39.35%	27.85%	42.52%
	24.60%	45.40%	28.89%	42.34%
20. Full enrollment – 2008 only:	99.62%	102.95%	98.99%	100.61%
21. Over Income Enrollment:	3.57%	3.51%	6.51%	4.11%
	2.72%	2.31%	5.68%	3.27%

**Performance Indicators 2007-2008 compared to 2008-2009**

	<b>State (AZ)</b> 2007 - 2008 2008 - 2009		<b>Region 9</b> 2007 -2008 2008 - 2009	
	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>
22. Percentage of Funded Enrollment reported as children with a disability:	12.57%	15.16%	12.57%	17.28%
23. Children (and pregnant women in EHS) who dropped out:	20.82%	34.13%	20.24%	31.06%
New 2009 – Children and pregnant women who left the program and did not re-enroll	19.03%	32.54%	17.88%	31.35%
24. Ratio of ACF funded enrollment to total funded enrollment 2008 only):	1 : 1.00	1 : 1.00	1 : 0.99	1 : 1.00
<b>Children with Disabilities</b>				
25. HS Children with a disability receiving special services: <i>(Preschool Only)</i>	98.95%		99.14%	
	98.87%		99.30%	
New 2009 – funded enrollment reported as children with an IEP	12.52%		12.76%	
New 2009 – funded enrollment reported as children with an IFSP		16.78%		17.76%
<b>Family Participation</b>				
26. Families participating in a goal setting process resulting in a FPA - 2008 only:	99.54%	100.00%	98.95%	97.20%
27. 2008 only - Families receiving emergency/crisis assistance and/or education services - 2008 only:	44.39%	40.33%	33.23%	41.81%
28. Families receiving at least one family service:	70.53%	69.86%	68.34%	76.42%
	71.68%	52.57%	70.12%	76.27%

**Performance Indicators 2007-2008 compared to 2008-2009**

	State (AZ) 2007 - 2008 2008 - 2009		Region 9 2007 -2008 2008 - 2009	
	Head Start	Early Head Start	Head Start	Early Head Start
29. Ratio of parent volunteers to total enrollment – 2008 only	1 : 0.93	1 : 0.88	1 : 0.80	1 : 0.17
30. Ratio of parent staff to total staff – 2008 only:	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.13	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.17
New 2009: Percentage of staff that are Head Start or Early Head Start parents	32.34%	22.69%	24.65%	16.21%
2008 Data as of: 11/26/2008; 2009 Data as of 11/18/09 Source: Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) Performance Indicator Report – State Level				

## ECONOMIC REALITIES

### Poverty Rates

From 2000 to 2007, the number of people living in poverty increased from 12.5% to 14.2%. By 2008 the poverty rate had increased to 14.7 %. This represents almost one million people living below poverty in Arizona - 955,526 people.

The number of children under age 5 that live below poverty was 117,198 (23%) as of the US Census 2008 American Community Survey which represents an 11% increase from 2006.

County	2000	2005 – 2007 Estimates			2008
	% below poverty 2000	Total Population for whom poverty status determined	Below poverty	% below poverty 2005-2007	% below Poverty 2008
Arizona	12.5%	6,038,283	858,973	14.2%	14.7%
Apache County	30.8%	68,153	25,410	37.3%	34.2%
Cochise	16.7%	121,089	20,283	16.8	14.9%
Coconino	15.6%	120,654	20,398	16.9%	16.4%
Gila County	17.8%	50,359	10,002	19.9%	NA

County	2000	2005 – 2007 Estimates			2008
	% below poverty 2000	Total Population for whom poverty status determined	Below poverty	% below poverty 2005-2007	% below Poverty 2008
Graham	21.3%	31,148	5,873	18.9%	NA
Greenlee	9.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	NA
La Paz County	20.7%	19,946	3,719	18.6%	NA
Maricopa	10.2%	3,721,758	475,091	12.8%	13.4%
Mohave	15.4%	185,857	27,994	15.1%	17.1%
Navajo County	24.3%	106,760	26,101	24.4%	21.2%
Pima County	13.0%	931,716	140,227	15.1%	15.6%
Pinal County	15.8%	250,383	36,975	14.8%	14.5%
Santa Cruz	21.7%	41,696	7,767	18.6%	NA
Yavapai	12.0%	201,756	25,500	12.6%	13.0%
Yuma County	21.4%	179,534	33,135	18.5%	22.9

N/A – Not Available – The American Community Survey data is derived from a sample. Some Counties are too small in population to obtain a valid sample. Source: U.S. Census 2000, American Community Survey 3 Year Estimates 2005 – 2007 and American Community Survey 2008 1 year estimate.

## Impact on Families

The impact of the current economic crisis in Arizona and across the Country is reflected in the challenges presented in the day to day efforts by families to meet their basic needs. The Arizona Community Action Programs Report, *The Changing Faces of Poverty in Arizona*<sup>2</sup>, provided a snap shot of the struggles faced by community based organizations in managing the increasing need for support. Following are excerpts:

- Food: Overall food distribution in Arizona was up 42.2% in fiscal year 2008-09; 36% of pantry programs reported lack of food as the most frequent reason for having to turn clients away. Food stamp enrollment is up 38.8% from July 2008 – July 2009; one in five Arizona children struggle with hunger.

In Arizona, 19.2% (73,083 children) of children ages five and under are food insecure, ranking 14th in the country. Source: Association of Az. Food Banks, Azfoodbanks.com, September 2009, *Child Food Insecurity in the United States, 2005-2007*.

- Health care, 38% of Arizonans are uninsured. From 2000 to 2008, the rate of children in Arizona who did not have health insurance increased from 13% to 16%. Compared to

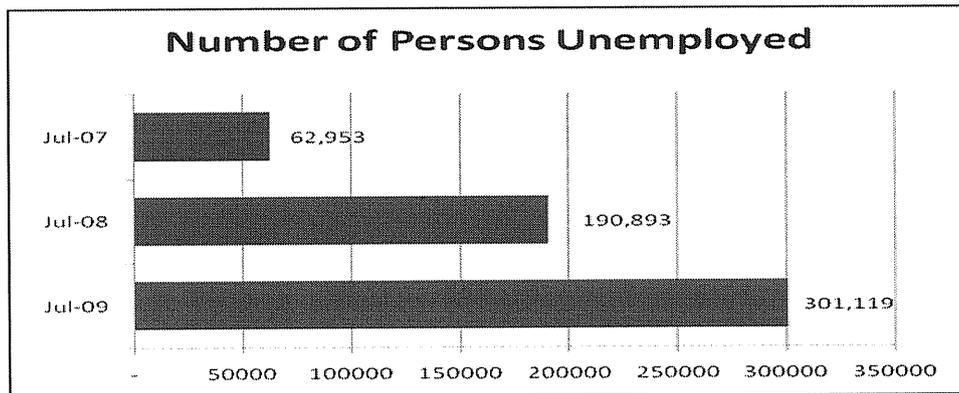
<sup>2</sup> Arizona Community Action Association, *The Changing Faces of Poverty in Arizona: A Summary of Community Forums*, August 8, 2009, John Burk, Ph.D. & Richard C. Knopf, Ph.D. Arizona State University, Partnership for Community Development

national rates, children in Arizona are more likely to be uninsured or covered through public insurance like Medicaid and less likely to be covered through private insurance than children nationally. In 2000, an estimated 68% of Arizonans had private health insurance. By 2008, that rate had decreased to 60%. Source: New Census Bureau Data Highlight Drop in Employer-Based Health Coverage, Press Release, Children's Action Alliance, September 10, 2009.

- Shelter: As reported in the Mid-year Forecast Update, June 18, 2009, Arizona ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation in home foreclosures. 110,700 properties are in foreclosure with a second wave expected to hit in 2010 and 2011. Source: Marshall J. Vest and Gerald J. Swanson, Eller College of Management, University of Arizona, Mid-Year Economic Update, June 18, 2009.
- Utility assistance: The number one requested service throughout the State, with agencies able to serve 1 in 10 of those applying.

## Employment

By July 2009, the number of people unemployed in Arizona had increased to 301,119 (9.5% of the labor force). This is compared to July 2008 when 190,893 people were reported as unemployed in Arizona (6.7% of the labor force) and to July 2007 with 62,953 people were unemployed (3.2% of the labor force).



## INVESTMENTS IN ARIZONA CHILDREN

The economic environment in Arizona has dramatically impacted the level and availability of public services for Arizona low-income families and specifically for young children. Though the investments described below such as Head Start Expansion, the availability of ARRA Child Care and Development Fund and emergency grant funding from First Things First, some of the impact will or has been be mitigated. The Child Care Waiting List and the proposed increases in licensing fees are two examples of the impact on young children and their families.

- Child Care Waiting List – Effective February 18, 2009, the Department began placing new applicants for child care assistance, excluding those receiving Cash Assistance or transitioning from Cash Assistance to employment and families involved in the child welfare system, on a waiting list. As of November 6, 2009, the number of children on the waiting list had increased to 9,402, almost 2,000 additional children in less than 60 days. (AZDES. Gov)
- Child Care Licensing Fees – The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), has proposed increases in licensing fees to cover the cost of licensing and monitoring child care providers. The fees are expected to be effective January 2010. To mitigate the impact of the fee increases, ADHS has proposed that facilities that participate in the “Empower Pack” public health program for preschoolers receive a 50% reduction in fees. “Empower Pack” incorporates into the preschool program 10 ways to empower children to lead healthy lives. “The list addresses everything from providing healthy food and exercise, to limiting “screen” time”.<sup>3</sup>

### Head Start Program Expansion

To date, Arizona Grantees have been formally notified of approved program expansion awards funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for 356 additional Head Start program enrollments.

While application has been made for additional Early Head Start enrollments, formal notification of those awards has not been received.

Head Start Grantee	Number of New Enrollments Funded
Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG)	36
Child Parent Centers, Inc.	45
Pinal Gila Community Child Services	61
City of Phoenix Human Services	100
Maricopa County Human Services	114
Total	356

Source: Region IX Office of Head Start, Regional Program Manager, undated.

### American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in Arizona

As a result of ARRA funding some of the state budget reductions have been offset which has reduced the overall impact of the State economic picture on low income families and young children.

<sup>3</sup> ADHS e-Communications, November 16, 2009

- Child Protective Services: The Governor's Discretionary 'Stimulus' Funds were able to reduce the overall impact of state budget reductions in Child Protective Services (\$5,500,000) and Children Support Services -\$18,000,000 (net increase is about \$8.1 million after reductions)<sup>4</sup>.
- ARRA IDEA Part C Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: \$4,993,979.00 to provide grants to States to assist them to implement and maintain a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency systems to make available early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.<sup>5</sup>
- ARRA Child Care and Development Fund: \$50,876,886.00 to make grants to States, Territories, Tribes, and tribal organizations for child care assistance for low-income families and to: (1) allow each State maximum flexibility in developing child care programs and policies that best suit the needs of children and parents within such State; (2) promote parental choice to empower working parents to make their own decisions on the child care that best suits their family's needs; (3) encourage States to provide consumer education information to help parents make informed choices about child care; (4) assist States to provide child care to parents trying to achieve independence from public assistance; and (5) assist States in implementing the health, safety, licensing, and registration standards established in State regulations.
- ARRA The Emergency Food Assistance Program: \$496,020.00 to help supplement the diets of low-income persons by making funds available to States for processing, storage and distribution costs incurred by State agencies and local organizations in providing food assistance to needy persons.
- IDEA Preschool Grants Part B Sec 619 Recovery Act: \$5,702,860.00 to the Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services for services to allow early childhood special education services to preschool age children to receive instruction in the least restrictive environment. Three school districts received this funding: Isaac Elementary District, Kyrene Elementary District and Tucson Unified School District.

### **First Things First**

First Things First, Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health, provides programs and services for children birth to age 5 through a voter-enacted tax on tobacco products. Arizona communities, through the Regional Partnership Councils, receive 81 cents of every dollar generated for First Things First. The amount of money allocated to each Regional Councils is based on the number of children birth through age five in their community – with extra consideration given for children living in poverty.

*Quality First* is Arizona's statewide quality improvement and rating system for providers of center- or home-based early care and education. *Quality First* is an opportunity for centers and homes to improve the quality of care provided to children with the support of financial incentives, coaching, child care health consultation and scholarships for program personnel. *Quality First* will be implemented in phases: support provided begins with financing, coaching, child care health consultation and T.E.A.C.H. ® Arizona Scholarships to enhance program improvement. Star ratings for quality will start in 2010.

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<sup>4</sup> Arizona Department of Economic Security, Fiscal Year 2010 Budget, September 16, 2009, Children, Youth and Families

<sup>5</sup> Az.gov/Recovery, AZ funding Breakdown

Emergency Funding<sup>6</sup> - In the spring of 2008 in response to the deteriorating economic environment and the potential impact on young children, First Things First allocated emergency funds for specific services around the State. Following is a summary of the purpose and funding that was allocated:

- Support to Working Families through Emergency Child Care Scholarships: More than \$23 million dollars has been awarded to a consortium of United Ways covering the entire state to administer the FTF Emergency Child Care Scholarships. Five Regional Partnership Councils also expedited \$920,472 for additional emergency scholarships in their regions. The Regional Partnership Councils include South Phoenix, Central Maricopa, South Pima, Cochise and Navajo/Apache. Valley of the Sun United Way will be presenting to the Board on their progress with the emergency child care scholarships.
- Expedited Family Support Strategies to Promote Safe and Stable Home Environments: Seventeen Regional Partnership Councils expedited all or portions of their home visiting and community based family support strategies from their funding plans in order to immediately help families with young children. A total of \$12,071,352 was awarded to 20 organizations throughout Arizona that demonstrated their experience and expertise in providing home visiting programs to families with children birth through five. The Pima Regional Councils also funded parent education community based programs along with home visitation services. Various models were proposed by the 20 organizations and include models such as Healthy Families, Parents as Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership and Early Head Start. The grant agreements will go through June 30, 2010.
- Emergency Food Boxes to Reduce Hunger: Regional Councils collectively approved nearly \$1.6 million in discretionary and population-based allocations toward providing food boxes for children birth through age five in communities throughout the state. Twenty-eight Regional Partnership Councils dedicated funds to a total of 43 organizations distributing food boxes to families with young children, at a cost of \$1,543,939. The three remaining regions, Navajo Nation (\$18,333), San Carlos Apache (\$3,236) and Pascua Yaqui (\$1,828) Regional Councils are finalizing the identification and award of organizations for their regions. At an average of \$22 per food box, FTF anticipates that 68,000 food boxes can be distributed throughout the state. Many of these grant agreements will extend through the end of FY 2010, so support for families with young children can be spread out across many months and more families can be served. Food Banks/Pantries across the state are set to shore up their supplies with nutritious, age-appropriate food to either integrate into existing packages or provide additional boxes for families with young children. The May 2009 report will provide information on service numbers.

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<sup>6</sup> First Things First, April 2008 Status Report

## STATUS UPDATE ON 2009-2010 ACTIVITIES<sup>7</sup>

The following is a sampling of updates provided by the HSSCO Stakeholders during the October 16, 2009 meeting as well as accomplishments from the HSSCO semi – annual report for March through August 2009. New and revised strategies were developed during the HSSCO Stakeholders meeting and through discussions with the Arizona Head Start Association. The complete strategy update can be found in the HSSCO Strategic Plan Update.

### Early Childhood System Building Activities

- Engaged involvement of Head Start Agencies in the development of state and local policies, planning processes, and decisions through such means as:
  - Involvement in the HSSCO stakeholder group;
  - Consultation with AHSA members regarding draft MOUs with Arizona Departments of Education and Economic Security;
  - Consultation with Executive Committee of the Arizona Head Start Association and the Arizona Head Start T/TA Office regarding planning, policy issues.
- Assisted the Arizona Indian Head Start Directors Association (AIHDSA) in compiling their Needs and Assets Assessments and facilitating a five –year AIHDSA Strategic Plan.
- Developed greater support for Head Start and early childhood development issues by engaging in the following ongoing activities:
  - Served as a liaison to the State Early Learning Advisory Council (First Things First Board).
  - Established the HSSCO stakeholder taskforce to develop, advise and assist in implementation of a five-year HSSCO Strategic Plan.
  - Contracted with AHSA to publish the Annual Statewide Head Start Report and Fact Sheet; For 2008 report, refer to - <http://www.azheadstart.org/documents/2008AHSAAnnualReport.pdf>

### Health Care

The following activities were conducted through a contract with AHSA.

- Delivered the *Prenatal Environmental Exposure Prevention & Awareness Guidebook* and *Heat & Sun Exposure Prevention & Awareness Guidebook* and CDs to all Head Start programs in February 2009.
- Conducted an oral health forum in May 2009.
- Convened the AHSA 3<sup>rd</sup> Early Childhood Mental Health Forum in October 2009.
- Convened a forum/facilitated discussion on Pediatric Obesity by partnering with the Worthy Institute who held an Obesity Prevention conference at the same time as AHSA MH Conference.

### Child Welfare/ Public Welfare

- Exploration of obtaining demographic information for all grantees from Arizona's TANF agency for the purpose of conducting Head Start outreach (Initial lead: City of Phoenix).

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<sup>7</sup> Arizona Head Start State Collaboration Office, Strategic Plan 2009-2013, Update October 2009, p 4-5.

### **Children with Disabilities**

- Assisted in designing and hosting training presented during the ADE-HSSCO Early Childhood-Head Start Forums. To date, seven forums have been conducted.
- Head Start- ADE and Head Start – Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) final drafts were routed to Office of Head Start for signature in September.
- Related to supporting staff serving children who do not meet the definition of special needs but may need additional support or resources:
  - The AHSA Mental Health Conference provided staff support and resources in this area.
  - First Things First (FTF) Regional Partnership Council's have committed funding to this issue.
  - FTF has an RFGA out for mental health consultation to support early childhood development facilities.
  - Passed in state legislation, there is a new broader category for developmental delay for preschool.
  - Head Start T/TA Office has planned training for Head Start teachers and coordinators using the CSEFEL curriculum. The CSEFEL website: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>
  - The Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services' Arizona Early Childhood Subcommittee is developing a curriculum around the education system (including transition).

### **Professional Development**

- HSSCO Director provides support to the *Arizona Educare Board* (project is engaged in capital campaign), serves on T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Arizona Advisory Board
- HSSCO contracted with AHSA to develop web-based resources that will serve as a central repository of early childhood education and related education resources in Arizona.
- HSSCO contracted with AHSA to develop Family Partnership Credential. Key staff received training in the Cornell Empowering Families Curriculum and Family Partnership Credential .Arizona is one of 18 States involved in this process. An Advisory Committee has been formed by AHSA to provide direction.
- AHSA Executive Director participated in the FTF committee setting compensation levels for TEACH.
- City of Phoenix Head Start is working with Community Colleges to support access to early childhood education.
- First Things First has focused on professional development opportunities and enhanced that discussion and the mix of options

### **Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness**

- HSSCO contracted with AHSA to facilitate a stronger relationship between school districts (LEA Homelessness Liaisons) and Head Start programs (Family and Community Partnership staff). In September 2009, AHSA Executive Director with the ADE Specialist on Homelessness provided a workshop within Maricopa County. Additional workshops are planned for other counties.
- AHSA hosted an information table at the *Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness* Conference in October 2009, which created key linkages with service providers and policy makers.

### **Child Care**

- The Quality First! Forum is scheduled for the November Quarterly AHSA meeting. A representative from First Things First will provide an overview and current status of the Quality

First system. The goal is to promote understanding and collaboration and determine how Head Start fits into the Quality Improvement and Rating System known as Quality First! in Arizona.

### **Family Literacy Services**

- HSSCO Director and AHSA Director served on evaluation panel for Even Start and Family Literacy grants through the Arizona Department of Education.
- The Arizona Head Start T/TA Office provided a Family Literacy training using materials from the National Head Start Family Literacy Center.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The following findings and conclusions are the result of review of existing data, a sample of current Grantee Needs Assessment Updates and Stakeholder discussions.

- The number of children under age five in Arizona is increasing faster than the overall population growth rate resulting in an even greater need for Head Start programs.  
  
The Head Start expansion, availability of ARRA funding and emergency investments from First Things First have or will serve to assist in meeting the needs of this growing population.
- The development of the Stakeholders Group has provided a forum for cross agency discussions of progress and definition of the next steps for continuing to improve the systems through collaboration and partnership development.
- The current economic environment in Arizona presents new challenges for families served by Head Start and in turn for the Head Start Grantees. While families struggle to meet their basic needs the comprehensive nature of Head Start services becomes even more critical. Optimizing these services in the current environment through participation in State level policy making and the development of partnerships and collaborations in meeting basic needs of food, shelter, and health care establishes an environment for families to succeed.
- Grantee assessments and Stakeholder discussions indicate a continuing need to:
  - Focus on improving the availability of timely assessments for children served by Head Start and to enhance partnerships in obtaining special services for children with disabilities.
  - Create opportunities for connecting homeless families with Head Start and other service systems;
  - Enhancing the access to professional development opportunities for Head Start staff;
  - Identify strategies to provide better access to oral health services;
  - Build on the successful strategy of 2009 to collaborate in bringing pediatric obesity information and strategies to Head Start;
  - Strengthen the connections between the child welfare system and Head Start;
  - Enhance connections for Head Start parents to literacy services; and
  - Identify and develop collaborations that will enhance Head Start's ability to connect families with employment opportunities.