



ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST

ARIZONA

Community Snapshot

The state of Arizona has made strides in the past decade in increasing awareness about the importance of healthy early childhood development and in creating alternative resources to support our youngest children through First Things First AZ and other philanthropic efforts. However, the journey to becoming a state that supports the optimal development of all children is far from over. Continuous cutbacks in early childhood and family safety-net services – paired with poor state rankings on indicators of child well-being – illustrate the need for a strong, nonpartisan ongoing effort to elevate the importance of sustained investment in our youngest children. BUILD Arizona’s goal is to create a powerful, action-oriented enduring coalition of children’s champions who are committed to working together to develop long-term, sustainable solutions that enhance opportunities for all young children in Arizona.

Community Solutions Action Plan

All Arizona stakeholders came together to develop a plan to raise third-grade reading proficiency statewide. Strategies include:

- Streamlining professional development for teachers and early childcare providers
- Creating scholarships throughout the state for children to attend quality early education programs
- Using some of the \$50 million that the governor’s budget provides for early reading to create a statewide birth-to-12th grade literacy plan

Partnerships

Three funders – the Helios Education Foundation, the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, and the Arizona Community Foundation – reached out to four United Way organizations across the state – Valley of the Sun United Way, United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, United Way of Northern Arizona and the United Way of Yuma County. The United Way organizations have worked together to develop plans from each of their communities, identifying common themes that exist in the four corners of the state. The national BUILD initiative provides key technical support and resources.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 6,246,816 residents statewide
- 636,541 children age five and under
- 75 percent of third-graders are reading at grade level
- 253,000 students live in poverty
- More than 47 percent of children under 5 years old are English language learners
- 75.4 percent graduation rate
- Summer programming is available

GOALS

- By 2015, 100 percent of schools will share data on summer learning loss using a validated, reliable tool
- By 2015, a standardized kindergarten readiness assessment in place
- By 2020, 85 percent of third graders will read proficiently with no school having fewer than 70 percent of students at grade level
- By 2020, no school will have more than 10 percent of students chronically absent

“Establishing high-performance programs and services within the system will produce results for children.”