



Pima Early Education Program Scholarships

Fiscal Year 2022 Second Quarter Report
Quarter Ending December 31, 2021

Overview

This is the second quarterly report for the Pima Early Education Program scholarships (PEEPs), which are designed to assist up to 1,200 children this year from income eligible families to attend high quality preschool at over 150 locations. **As of December 31, 2021, 567 children from income eligible families are receiving assistance from PEEPs to attend high quality preschools across Pima County.**

The most significant challenges for preschool providers, locally and nationally, continue to be the COVID-19 pandemic and the ability to hire and retain educators. This is directly impacting the utilization of our preschool scholarships. Across the community we continue to witness classroom closures due to teacher shortages and illness. Many preschool providers have not re-opened classrooms and can't begin to consider expanding capacity due to these challenges.



PEEPs staff are actively working with community partners, school districts and other divisions of the Community Workforce and Development Department, to specially address the challenge of hiring and retaining teachers. We are teaming up to offer a hiring event to connect individuals seeking employment in the childcare/preschool sector with local employers, and will be matching eligible youth with summer and year round employment opportunities. We are proposing increased reimbursement rates as part of our contracts with school districts operating new PEEP classes, with the requirement that districts improve wages and other forms of preschool educator compensation. We are also researching programs that will increase compensation for preschool educators in non-school district settings.

Funding for Year 1 of PEEPs is provided by Pima County's share of Federal American Rescue Plan Act funding, the City of Tucson, Towns of Marana and Oro Valley, and participating school districts. Donations to the United Way of Tucson & Southern Arizona from individuals, businesses, and non-profits support a new program called [Accelerate Quality](#), that complements PEEPs.

By the Numbers

A wealth of data shows that investing in high-quality preschool, especially for economically disadvantaged, minority and dual language children, provides short-term and lasting benefits to children, families, schools, employers, taxpayers, and the community. With this in mind, **the Pima Early Education Program is focused on increasing equitable access to high quality preschool for families most in need.**

Program Goal 1: To increase the number of 3-5 year-old children from families with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level attending high quality preschools in Pima County.

Progress for this goal will be tracked at both the system and program level. For this quarter, system level data from other funding partners is not fully complete, but will be reported next quarter. Our target remains to fill the gap so that all income eligible families who want to send their children to high quality preschool in Pima County can do so.

At the program level, 567 children are receiving assistance from PEEPs, up from 360 children at the end of Quarter 1.

PEEPs Preschool Students

PEEPs Contract Type	Second Quarter # of Students Served*	Year 1 Contracted Max Students Served	% of Contracted Max Served Second Quarter
PEEPs funded Quality First Scholarships	294	600	49%
PEEPs funded School District Expansion Classes	120	340	35%
PEEPs funded Head Start Extended Day Classes	153	205	75%
Totals	567	1145	50%

*Majority of data is from November & December reports

PEEPs Funded School District Expansion Classes and Enrollment

School District	Second Quarter # of PEEP Classes Operational	Second Quarter # of Students Enrolled
Amphitheater Unified School District*	1	3
Flowing Wells Unified School District	1	20
Marana Unified School District	1	18
Sahuarita Unified School District	1	20
Sunnyside Unified School District	2	35
Tucson Unified School District	3	24
Total	9	120

*Amphitheater opened one class in December, and two in January.

Program Goal 2: To increase the number of preschools recognized as high quality, as well as the number of high quality preschools participating in financial assistance programs for their students.

This is based on providers the State of Arizona’s Department of Economic Security (DES) accepts as high quality, which includes:

- Quality First 3-5 star providers
- Head Start providers
- Nationally Accredited providers that accept children with DES childcare subsidies

This project is being supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number SLFRP0180 awarded to Pima County by the U.S. Department of the Treasury

June 2021 Baseline – 199 high quality preschool providers

Changes in the number of high quality preschool providers will be reported at the end of Quarter 3. DES is currently migrating existing and new providers through a new DES provider agreement. First Things First (FTF) is in the process of moving more providers into Quality First, including conducting assessments according to quality indicators and assigning quality star ratings. In addition, the United Way of Tucson’s new program Accelerate Quality is designed to help more early learning childhood programs in Pima County access PEEPs by increasing the number of high quality providers. At the end of Quarter 2, 11 providers were participating, benefiting 669 children. Pima County’s agreements with the seven school districts are also intended to expand the number of high quality classes for preschoolers. All new PEEPs school district classes are required to either be enrolled in Quality First, Nationally Accredited, or proof shown that the school district has applied to participate Quality First. This quarter, TUSD and Amphitheater School District opened new PEEPs classrooms.

Program Expenses and Revenues

Pima Early Education Program’s budgeted revenues and expenses are shown below, including Quarter 2 actual expenses. The First Things First scholarships and Head Start extended day programming contracts are paid in advance, with unspent funding to be returned to the County at year’s end. Usage and spending is reported monthly by both contractors. School districts invoice the County monthly, following the service month. Overall, it is anticipated that expenses will be lower than contracted based on the pandemic and the challenge of hiring and retaining preschool educators. These agreements are currently in the process of being amended to reflect the Board of Supervisors approval to use Pima County’s share of the American Rescue Plan Act funding for this program. These amendments will be placed on the Board’s agenda for approval after concurrence with each contractor.



FY2022 Revenues

Revenue Sources	Budget FY22	Payment Received
American Rescue Plan Act	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000
City of Tucson	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Town of Marana	\$132,000	\$132,000
Town of Oro Valley*	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total	\$11,232,000	\$11,232,000

*Oro Valley funding is for three fiscal years.

FY2022 Budget and Expenses Paid Quarter 2

IGAs & Contracts	Budget FY22	Paid
First Things First Quality First Scholarships	\$3,811,600	\$3,811,600
Child-Parent Centers, Inc. Head Start Extended Day	\$1,149,845	\$1,149,845
Seven School District IGAs New Preschool Classes	\$2,244,000	\$415,427.02
PEEPs Administration	\$190,567	\$29,471.09
Total	\$7,396,012	\$5,406,343.11

Highlights

Staffing shortages within TUSD had led to low FTF scholarship usage, and low PEEPs class enrollment. To address this challenge, a Pima County staff member has been working onsite, within TUSD preschools, increasing scholarship enrollment significantly. TUSD developed a video demonstrating the success of the new PEEPs classes at Kellond Elementary School and Schumaker Infant & Early Learning Center. This video captures the essence of the importance of this program and how it has impacted our community in such a positive way: <https://youtu.be/QZCzfJ0tPVw>.

“I want to take this opportunity to say how grateful I am for the PEEPs program. The scholarships have been a blessing and tremendous help for a lot of our families. Parents at Poets Square have shown how grateful they are. It is a great feeling being able to help our community and especially the children.”

- Elvia Ornelas, Director Poets Square Day School

“I heard about this great scholarship through the school. I recently had been laid off and was going to need to pull my children from childcare, but then this great opportunity came along. The school made the process so easy to fill out the application and get approved for it! It really helped my family out as I have 2 children and wasn't going to be able to afford the private pay price for both of them. We are extremely grateful for the PEEPS scholarship and our Outer Limits family.”

-Parent, Outer Limits School

“Mrs. Alexis and Ms. Vanessa are two of the best teachers Akeyliana has. They brought out her love for school. She has learned so much between her penmanship to her numbers. I just say thank you for your time and patience. Thank you.”

--Grandparent, January 2022

For questions about PEEPs, contact PEEPS@pima.gov. For families looking for preschool financial assistance, or help finding a high quality preschool, please call the Child Care Resource and Referral Information Line at 1-800-308-9000, or conduct a search at CCR&Rs website at www.azcrr.com.

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