



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 16, 2022

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **First Things First Contract and Income Eligibility for Pima Early Education Program Scholarships**

On May 26, 2022, I provided the Board with an update on Pima Early Education Program (PEEP) reimbursement rates and contracts, as well as notice that our largest contractor was considering increasing family income eligibility for scholarships from 200 percent of the federal poverty level to 300 percent. The largest single contract for the program would be with First Things First, the state agency that provides preschool and childcare scholarships across the State. It is through this contract that Pima County purchases an additional 600 scholarships per year for children attending over 140 preschools across Pima County.

The First Things First Board met on June 14, 2022, and approved increasing the income eligibility for their statewide scholarship program to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. First Things First made this change because families with incomes at 300 percent of the federal poverty level are still often unable to afford preschool and this increase will provide the opportunity for more families to use the scholarships that are currently not being used.

The contract before the Board of Supervisors on June 21, 2022, similarly increases the income eligibility for the preschool scholarships that the County purchases from First Things First. This is a change from the direction the Board initially provided in February 2020 when directing staff to create the program, which was to limit income eligibility to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. However, this change is also consistent with many other locally funded preschool scholarship programs across the U.S. who have similarly increased family income eligibility for next school year (Tempe Arizona, Cleveland Ohio, San Antonio Texas, and Mecklenburg County North Carolina).

JKL/anc

c: The Honorable Dustin Williams, Pima County School Superintendent
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator for Health & Community Services and Chief Medical Officer
Dan Sullivan, Director, Community and Workforce Development
Amber Mathewson, Director, Pima County Library District
Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department
Heath Vescovi-Chiordi, Director, Pima County Office of Economic Development
Jen Darland, Deputy Director, Community and Workforce Development
Nicole Fyffe, Executive Assistant to the County Administrator
Nicole Scott, Pima Early Education Program Manager