

GILA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

Summary

The Regional Boundary Task Force initially reviewed potential boundary modifications for the current Gila region. Specifically, they sought to address the question:

- Would Gila County children 0-5 and families residing in the current region be better served if the region were split?

Based on data review and community feedback the Regional Boundary Task Force recommends maintaining the existing regional boundaries which encompasses the two population centers of Globe and Payson.

Process & Data

Data and information were gathered for Gila in a process similar to what was used in the La Paz/Mohave and Coconino and Navajo/Apache regions. The issue for the Gila Regional Partnership Council members, community partners and the Task Force was that the region has two main population centers – the Payson area in the north and the Globe area in the south. There is geographic distance, mountains, and canyons between Payson and Globe with few connections between them.

This geographic distance within the region makes it somewhat difficult to serve both northern and southern Gila County in a proficient manner. This raises the key question: should the region be split in two to align with the two population centers?

The Task Force was provided demographic information on the current make-up of the region; the demographic and funding picture of the current state of service provision; and, the assessment of the impact, positive and negative, of dividing the region according to the identified population centers.

Data was also provided to both regional council members and community partners to ensure all participating individuals were working from the same base of factual information. Specifically:

- The current Gila region includes 2,240 children age 0-5; of which 526 are living in poverty.
- The Gila Regional Partnership Council provides services to the communities of Gila County and the Tribal lands of the Tonto Apache Tribe. The Gila region does not include the portion of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (lands of the White Mountain Apache Tribe) within Gila County, or the portion of the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation within Gila County.
- The Gila region funds 11 different strategies to address 12 identified regional priorities, utilizing 10 grantee providers, which are serving fewer than 18 unique contracts, including those that are funded strategies that are directed centrally through FTF.
- Strategies are implemented throughout the region: Quality First, Scholarships and Child Care Health Consultation are found in Payson and Globe with most programs in Payson; Care Coordination in Payson and Globe/Miami (limited services may be available in Young,

Pine/Strawberry, Hayden/Winkelman and Tonto Basin through a partnership with the County Immunization Clinic); TEACH, with most scholars from Payson and a few from Globe; Community Based Parent Education in Globe/Miami plus prenatal services in collaboration with New Beginnings in Payson and through rural school programs in Pine/Strawberry and Young; and, Parent Outreach and Awareness serving Globe/Miami, Hayden/Winkelman, Tonto Basin, Young, Payson and Pine/Strawberry.

Community Feedback

Seventeen individuals participated in a focus group on January 18, 2013 to discuss the current Gila regional boundary. The individuals represented the communities of Payson, Globe, Miami, Claypool and Hayden/Winkelman. FTF regional partnership council members, grant partners and community members were present. The participants further identified as being affiliated with non-profits, school districts and government entities.

The focus group shared the following feedback on the current region:

Regional Challenges

- Need for more flexibility and out-of-the-box thinking
- Northern area of the region is not as aware of early childhood information and services
- Infrastructure and capacity building is needed to move a strategy to full implementation
- Finding experienced staff and the time it then takes to hire them
- Difficulty getting some strategies off the ground
- Challenge getting services out to Hayden/Winkelman/Kearny

Regional Strengths

- Library strategy extends across the entire county
- Teen pregnancy program works across the county and provides opportunity to collaborate with the Care Coordination strategy
- Young and Pine/Strawberry are being reached
- Healthy Steps is getting up and running
- AZEIP referrals are up in Payson/Globe due to families spreading the word
- Health Department as a partner
- Regional council members' commitment
- Availability of an online parent survey to gather families' needs, interests and comments
- Availability of online developmental screening tool, The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for parents and families to track their child's developmental progress and for early identification of possible developmental delays. Parents are seeing the presence of services and connections are being made

Examples of Collaboration

- Grant partners initiating collaboration – it takes time and effort
- Cross-regional collaboration
- Elected officials, school district leadership and non-profits are partnering across the region
- Intentional outreach is occurring
- Home visitation federal funds are promoting collaboration and capacity-building work
- Care Coordination strategy will promote collaboration across doctors' offices, hospitals, WIC, schools, etc.
- Possible central intake system to link families with services and allow follow-up
- Build public awareness
- Making parents feel safe and viewed as a partner

Gila boundary focus group participants also indicated that the council's funding plan includes a level of service for the region that is responsive with the funds available. As funding plans are developed each year, participants expressed that it is important to note that the council's funding allocation requires significant effort to strategically prioritize and, as the funding plan is implemented, the level of funding necessitates a good deal of collaboration between grant partners. Overall, there was rich discussion between community and council members and there was not a desire or particular need(s) identified to change the current boundary for the Gila region.