

Needs

Read On Arizona has identified four key needs for effective response to Arizona's early literacy crisis:

- **Awareness and urgency** about the importance of early literacy and grade-level reading.
- **Data sharing** among stakeholders to identify and fill gaps in the early literacy system.
- **Coordinated community efforts** among literacy service providers, schools, community organizations, libraries, the business community and volunteers.
- **Access to programs that work** for children most in need.

Table Discussion

Consider the accompanying examples of community-based, collaborative responses. Then choose one need and discuss how you and your organization can take action in your community.

How might we build upon these efforts or create a new approach to meet your community's needs?

Response: **Summer Reading Programs**

Statewide Summer Reading Collaborative

Read On Arizona, the Arizona Department of Education, the Arizona State Library, First Things First, the Governor's Office of Education Innovation, Metametrics and a number of **community organizations** throughout Arizona partnered to promote a summer reading program for parents, educators and children/students by using the public library's annual summer reading program throughout Arizona as a springboard in choosing reading materials based on interest and Lexile measures.

All of the partners promoted summer reading at a local public library, and an innovative opportunity to participate in the summer reading program online at ReadOnArizona.org was an option for families without a library close to them. The website included a "Find a Book" tool, a "Find a Library" link, reading logs, literacy activities and other resources for families.

Phoenix Public Library + Maricopa County Library District

The **Phoenix Public Library** summer reading program tackles chronic summer learning loss. While most students lose some ground in summer months, low-income children are particularly affected, according to research by The RAND Corporation.

This year, Phoenix Public Library partnered with **Maricopa County Library District** and every other library in Maricopa County to offer a unified, online program. Participation was encouraged through family-friendly programming that was enjoyed by more than 30,000 children and adults. **Mayor Greg Stanton** challenged residents to read 100,000 books during the summer; Phoenicians rose to the challenge and read more than 217,000 books. In all, more than 18,690 children birth to 17 participated in the **City of Phoenix** program, and completion rates rose by 11%.

Sponsors included: Maricopa County Library District, The **Arizona Republic** and **12News**, among others.



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Response: **Parent Education**

Every Child Ready to Read; Baby Brain Time Curriculum

Phoenix Public Library uses an evidence-based program developed by the American Library Association to provide parent and caregiver education on the importance of developing early literacy skills in young children. *Every Child Ready to Read* is a series of workshops that recognizes the parent/caregiver as the first and best teacher. Parents and children receive books and other incentives for participating in workshops.

Phoenix Public Library also provides *Baby Brain Time* training, hands-on workshops that provide parents with the knowledge, skills and encouragement to raise successful readers.

Through support from **First Things First North Phoenix Regional Council**, Phoenix Public Library provides more than 200 workshops a year. Many of the workshops are held in community locations, such as Head Starts, daycares, and community centers.

Additional partners include: **Arizona Community Foundation, Season for Sharing** and **Maricopa Integrated Health Systems**.



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Response: **Out-of-School Learning**

Literacy-Infused Curriculum and Tutoring

Through a partnership with **Phoenix Public Library** and the **Arizona Diamondbacks**, **Phoenix Afterschool Centers (PAC)** is providing literacy enrichment for at-risk 1st and 3rd grade students in all of its sites. Four sites have been identified for additional services. High-need students – particularly 3rd graders at-risk of being held back in the 2014-2015 school year for poor reading performance – will receive additional tutoring twice a week in small groups. More than 3,000 children attend Phoenix Afterschool Centers.

School's Out, Make it Count: Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs

Afterschool programs are powerful opportunities to help youth develop the skills needed for the 21st century workplace. Developed by a committee of experts from across Arizona convened by **Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence** and **Valley of the Sun United Way**, the *Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs* outlines best practices in afterschool programs in the following key areas:

- Safe and Healthy Environments
- Positive Relationships
- Intentional Programming and Activities
- Equity and Inclusion
- Family, School and Community Engagement
- Program Management
- Program Evaluation and Data



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Response: **Volunteer Opportunities**

Home Library Kits

To meet the need for age-appropriate books for children birth to age 8 in Maricopa County, **Intel Corporation's** generous leadership gives donate their time to assemble library kits packed with reading tips and four Scholastic books. Intel has donated \$14,000 to purchase nearly 6,000 books for the kits. In short, 1,400 mini-home library kits are being created by 80 total volunteers during one week.

Valley of the Sun United Way helps to facilitate the distribution of books and volunteer time for this exciting effort. The goal is to ensure children succeed by having the books they need to empower them to read at grade level.

Free Reading and Developmental Screenings

Phoenix Public Library partners with **Arizona Literacy & Learning Center** to provide free reading assessments for children in kindergarten through 3rd grade to determine their emerging literacy and reading level. Conducted by trained staff and volunteers, each screening takes about 30 minutes and helps determine if a child is reading at grade level and, if not, to identify any developmental issues to be addressed. Children who need follow ups are given referrals to reading specialists.

Million Minutes Volunteer Reading Challenge

To create a community-wide movement to improve children's reading, the **Valley of the Sun United Way's** Women's Leadership Council has launched the Million Minutes Volunteer Reading Challenge. Hundreds of volunteers are reading to children at community learning centers, schools or libraries and other nonprofit organizations. The goal of logging 1,000,000 minutes through May, 2014 is aimed at improving literacy skills and raising awareness for grade-level reading.



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Response: **Access to Effective Programs**

Raising A Reader

Through a collaboration between **Southwest Human Development** and the **Arizona Multihousing Association**, more than 2,000 families living in affordable housing apartment communities have benefited by participating in the Raising A Reader program.

Raising A Reader is an eight-week early literacy program that offers a proven and cost-effective way to educate parents about the importance of early literacy and how they can build these skills in their young children to help them enter school ready to learn. Between each weekly, two-hour session, families take home bags filled with developmentally-appropriate children's books. Survey results demonstrate the program's strong positive impact, especially among non-English speaking families.

The program literally meets families where they are, eliminating the need for transportation. Apartment communities have found that the program has led to increased resident retention and cohesion through the creation of communities of literacy.

Generous funding from **Wells Fargo** enabled the program to be provided at three low-income apartment communities in West Phoenix's Maryvale neighborhood.

The program is also offered at other non-profits serving children and families, family resource centers, and elementary schools.



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Response: **Awareness Events**

Family Reading Day

In collaboration with **Read On Arizona**, **McDonald's** celebrated Family Reading Day on Saturday, November 2, 2013, by giving away 25,000 books to young children at 250 McDonald's locations throughout the state, as well as distributing 25,000 copies of *Read On Arizona's Early Literacy Guide for Families*. **Prisma Graphic** made an in-kind donation to print copies of the guide to help parents and caregivers support their child's developing literacy skills and understand the important milestone third grade plays in making a reader. McDonald's also worked with **Arizona Learning and Literacy Center** to provide free reading screenings at select locations in Maricopa County and Pima County.

Read On Greater Phoenix Literacy Fairs

Read On Greater Phoenix coordinates with community partners to host literacy fairs to highlight the importance of literacy in the lives of young children. The events provide engaging language and literacy activities that are easy and affordable, with an emphasis on developing a culture of literacy in the home. Each child takes home five age-appropriate books.

Elementary schools host the events; community literacy organizations provide activities and information; businesses involve employees through volunteerism; and local media outlets promote the events and reinforce advocacy and awareness.



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Response: **Read On Communities Network**

A statewide system to deliver the right program at the right time for every child

Arizona Community Foundation, Arizona Department of Education, First Things First, Head Start State Collaboration Office, Helios Education Foundation and Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust came together to found **Read On Arizona**. Its ten-year strategic literacy action plan that includes developing a network of Read On Communities across Arizona focused on a collaborative approach to solutions in early literacy.

Read On Arizona provides Read On Communities with technical assistance, access to research and data, and effective literacy solutions that meet the organic needs of each community.

Communities in the network include: Read On **Buckeye**, Read On **Flagstaff**, Read On **Goodyear**, Read On **Greater Phoenix**, Read On **Mesa**, Read On **Phoenix**, Read On **Sahuarita**, Read On **Tucson**, and Read On **Yuma**.

Read On Communities coming to the network soon include **Cochise County, Santa Cruz County, Globe**, and more.

