

Tribal Gaming Community Application Briefing: Non-Profit Submission

Tribal Gaming Community Applying To
Tohono O'odham Nation

Name of the Non-profit Organization
AZCEND

Does the Non-profit Organization have IRS Tax-Exempt Status?
Yes

Contact Information
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Application Priority Areas
Education

Title of the Project
Family Resource Center Early Literacy Program

Amount Intended to Request
\$50,000

Purpose of the Grant
Financial support from the Tohono O'odham Nation will equip vulnerable young children and their families with the foundational reading and writing skills needed for school and lifelong success. By combining play-based, literacy-rich learning with parent engagement and wraparound support, the program removes barriers to early learning for children ages 3-5. It ensures that children facing poverty, language challenges, or instability can develop strong language skills, confidence, and a love of reading, setting families on a path toward greater stability and opportunity. Grant funds will support vital operating costs such as program materials and supplies, staff education and training, professional fees for subcontracted workshop facilitation, communications costs for phone and internet access, and food expenses for workshop attendees.

Project Summary
Through its Family Resource Center, AZCEND delivers a comprehensive Early Literacy program that provides free, high-quality learning opportunities for young children and their parents, building the foundation for healthy brain development, kindergarten readiness, and long-term success. The centerpiece of the program is Giggles, Squiggles, and Squirms (GSS), a joyful, play-based curriculum for children ages 3-5 that meets twice weekly in two-hour sessions focused on phonics, storytelling, early writing, hands-on math and computer learning, and creative exploration, while also

strengthening fine motor skills, problem-solving, confidence, and social-emotional development through regular developmental screenings and individualized support. Parents actively participate alongside their children and attend workshops on parenting, nutrition, and budgeting, empowering them to create stable, literacy-rich home environments.

In partnership with Chandler Unified School District, families access dedicated classroom space and wraparound supports including child watch, diapers, health services, and public benefits assistance with school counselors referring families most in need. Additional partners provide books and screenings that expand home libraries and support early learning. Serving primarily low-income and Hispanic families, the program reflects a strong commitment to equity through bilingual English and Spanish instruction and culturally responsive staff, ensuring language is a bridge not a barrier and that every child can experience the joy and power of reading.

Impact on the City of Chandler

AZCENDs Early Literacy program creates meaningful, citywide impact by investing early in the skills that shape a child's future and a community's long-term well-being. By strengthening reading and writing skills before children enter kindergarten, the program helps close developmental and opportunity gaps that can otherwise widen over time, reducing the need for costly academic interventions and supporting stronger educational outcomes across Chandler.

The program's impact extends beyond the classroom by strengthening family resilience and stability. Because early literacy services are embedded within AZCENDs broader network of human services including food assistance, housing stability, financial literacy, and employment support, families can access learning resources in the same trusted place they turn for essential needs. This coordinated approach reduces barriers, builds trust, and allows parents to focus on supporting their child's growth rather than navigating fragmented systems. By addressing both basic needs and early learning together, AZCEND helps families move from crisis to stability while preparing children to enter school confident, capable, and ready to succeed. Over time, Chandler benefits from a more prepared student population, stronger families, and a healthier, more resilient workforce reinforcing educational equity, economic vitality, and overall community well-being.

Address of Non-profit Organization the City of Chandler will Send the Tribal Community Grant Payment

AZCEND
P.O. Box 591
Chandler, Arizona. 85244

Contact Name for Receipt of Payment

Name

Trinity Donovan

