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## **Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation Receives \$150k Grant from Gila River Indian Community**

*Funding Will Assist Career Development for Arizona Youth Aging Out of Foster Care*

**PHOENIX** – [Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation](#), a Phoenix nonprofit that uplifts the foster community, has been awarded a \$75,000 two-year grant, totaling \$150,000 from the Gila River Indian Community to support youth with foster care experience enrolled in the nonprofit’s Keys to Success program. Beginning Jan. 1, the grant will fund direct client assistance for youth enrolled in Keys to Success; provide staff support needed to deliver in-person management services, wrap-around education and employment support; and cover costs associated with transportation, allowing AFFCF to meet the needs of youth and deliver services in the communities where they reside. This is the second year of Gila River Indian Community’s charitable support of AFFCF, following a \$50,000 grant contribution made to the nonprofit on Dec. 19, 2024.

“Thanks to this important funding from Gila River Indian Community, AFFCF can continue to bridge employment gaps for foster youth and provide much-needed resources and mentorship for these young adults as they age out of foster care,” said Luis De La Cruz, president and CEO of AFFCF.

Keys to Success is an evidenced-based program for current and former foster youth aged 16-26 that provides comprehensive education and workforce development support services, ensuring a successful transition into early adulthood. It encompasses education support, employment development, financial literacy resources, housing assistance and career coaching, that provides one-on-one services like job search, interview practice, application assistance, resume building and help with opening a savings account. Keys to Success serves nearly 500 youth each year from Maricopa, Yavapai and Pima County.

During 2024, 83% of Keys to Success participants received their GED or completed high school enrolled in post-secondary or vocational training. 93% of youth gained an employable skill within six months of program intake. 93% secured employment within a year of participation in Keys to Success, 87% of these youth retained employment for 30 days or longer.

“The Gila River Indian Community is committed to supporting initiatives that remove barriers and expand opportunities for youth. This grant helps foster young adults build a foundation for independence and success.,” said Roberto A. Jackson, director of communications & public affairs at Gila River Indian Community.

AFFCF is a Phoenix-based 501c3 that serves to enrich, educate and empower the lives of Arizona’s children and youth in foster care through its three primary focus areas: Childhood Activities, Keys to Success, and Post-Secondary programming. To view AFFCF’s full resource database for foster parents and guardians, youth workforce development programming, financial assistance and scholarships for foster youth and how to support these programs by donating, visit [affcf.org](http://affcf.org).

### **About AFFCF**

Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF) provides foster care support by closing critical funding and service gaps. AFFCF has over 40 years of experience ensuring Arizona’s foster care population can participate in the same activities as their non-foster care peers, achieve self-sufficiency through employment, education, and housing programs and pursue post-secondary success. AFFCF is dedicated to changing the story of foster care in Arizona and qualifies for the Arizona Foster Care Tax Credit. Visit [affcf.org](http://affcf.org) for more information.