



**Proposition 202 Tribal Gaming
Application Sponsorship/Support Form
Requesting Pinal County serve as the Fiscal Agent/Pass Through Entity**

Name of the Tribal Community: Ak-Chin Indian Community

Due date of the application to the Tribal community: July 15, 2025

The following information will be used by Pinal County to 1) send the resolution and grant documents for the applicant to submit to the Tribal community, 2) send the funds, if awarded.

Name of the Non-profit: Encircle Families (formerly Raising Special Kids)

Contact person/title: Christopher Tiffany, Executive Director

Email address: christophert@encirclefamilies.org

Address: 5025 E. Washington Street, Ste 204, Phoenix, AZ 85034

Project name: Mentoring and Support for Pinal County Families with Children who have Disabilities

Amount being requested: \$50,000

Project summary: Encircle Families' Mentoring and Support program empowers 250 Pinal County families of children with disabilities through knowledge, coaching, and mentorship. The program equips parents to make informed decisions about healthcare, education, and other essential services.

Beneficiaries: Pinal County residents who have children with disabilities

Supervisor District: All districts, 1-5

The undersigns hereby certifies they have read and comply with the responsibilities set forth in the PINAL COUNTY TRIBAL GAMING GRANT PROGRAM Request for fiscal agent/pass through support documentation.

Christopher Tiffany, Executive Director, Encircle Families

Director name and signature

2025 Ak-Chin Indian Community Grant Application Cover Sheet

Name of Applicant: Encircle Families (formerly Raising Special Kids)	
Applicant is a: ☐ City/Town/County (circle) ☒ Other Nonprofit	
Contact Person and Title: Christopher Tiffany, Executive Director	
Applicant Address (administrative office): 5025 E. Washington Street, Ste 204	
City: Phoenix	Zip Code: 85034
Applicant Mailing Address (if different): Same	
City:	Zip Code:
Phone Number: 602-242-4366	Fax Number: 602-242-4306
E-mail Address: christophert@encirclefamilies.org	
Fiscal Agent for any Applicant that is not a City, Town, or County (<i>Special Taxing Districts/Fire Districts must have a Fiscal Agent</i>)	
Contact Person: Heather Patel, Grants Administrator	
City/Town/County Mailing Address: PO Box 1348	
City: Florence, AZ	Zip Code: 85132
Phone Number: 520-866-6422	Fax Number:
E-mail Address: heather.patel@pinal.gov	

Program or Project Name: Mentoring and Support Program for Pinal County Families with Children who have Disabilities
Priority Area (Check all that apply) ☐ education ☐ public safety ☒ health ☐ environment ☐ promotion of commerce ☐ economic and community development
Purpose of Grant (brief statement): Encircle Families' Mentoring and Support program empowers 250
Pinal County families of children with disabilities by providing knowledge, coaching, and mentorship. The program helps parents make informed decisions about healthcare, education, and essential services, enabling their children to thrive.
Target Audience/Beneficiaries: Pinal County Families with Children who have Disabilities
Beginning and Ending Date of Program or Project: January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026
Amount Requested: \$50,000 Total Cost: \$50,000
Geographic Area Served: Pinal County, Arizona

By the execution of this Grant Application the undersigned agrees that the information contained in this Application is true, to the best of the Applicant's knowledge. The Applicant shall notify the Community if any information in this Application changes.

Signature: _____
For the Applicant:  Date: 6/9/25

Typed/Printed Name and Title: Christopher Tiffany, Executive Director

For the Fiscal Agent: _____ Date: _____
(If applicable)

Typed/Printed Name and Title: _____

A. Purpose of Grant**1. Describe the proposed program, project or purchase (collectively, the “Project”). This description should identify the needs/issues the Project will address.**

Encircle Families (formerly Raising Special Kids) is requesting \$50,000 for our Mentoring and Support program, which empowers Pinal County families of children with disabilities by providing knowledge, coaching, and mentorship. The program helps parents make informed decisions about healthcare, education, and essential services, enabling their children to thrive. At its core, this initiative is rooted in the belief that families are the most effective advocates for their children with disabilities and special healthcare needs.

The Mentoring and Support program is a unique family-led, peer-support model that emphasizes the power of "families helping families," connecting parents and caregivers with peers who share lived experiences. These supportive networks help reduce isolation, build resilience, and strengthen communities.

Established in 1979, Encircle Families strengthens families and systems of care to improve outcomes for children with disabilities and special healthcare needs. Our vision is that every family will have the information, training, support, and hope needed to help their child reach their fullest potential.

Encircle Families is Arizona’s sole designated Family-to-Family Health Information Center and Parent Training and Information Center – a distinction granted to only a select group of organizations nationwide. This designation is the result of a rigorous and highly competitive process led by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau within the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the U.S. Department of Education.

For over 45 years, we have empowered families to navigate complex systems including healthcare, education, and disability services for their children. Our unique model connects parents/caregivers with peers who share lived experiences, reducing isolation, building resilience, and strengthening communities. Encircle Families serves over 11,000 people annually, many from low-income or underserved backgrounds, as well as those who lack insurance. We offer free coaching, workshops, webinars, and resources in English and Spanish.

2. Identify the target population that will be served by the Project. (Who will benefit? How many will be served? Is there a targeted geographic location? Etc.)

Our program is available to all families with a child/children, from birth to 26 years, with a disability or special health care needs. For this particular request, Encircle Families intends to serve 250 Pinal County families and children with disabilities who need help navigating the complex healthcare and educational systems. These families face barriers to accessing essential care, which is vital for obtaining healthcare services, educational interventions, occupational or speech therapies, special education, and behavioral support.

Navigating the process of securing benefits from Arizona’s Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) can also be a challenge for families, as it often involves extensive medical documentation over several years. The Mentoring and Support program from Encircle Families connects these families with Family Support Specialists who help them develop a tailored plan to address their specific concerns, offer guidance towards achieving desired outcomes, and enhance their ability to act independently.

Through this program, parents learn and understand how to collaborate, work, and problem-solve with medical professionals, social service organizations, and educators. Parents learn skills to help their child access care and

achieve their goals, ultimately leading to better physical and mental health outcomes, and positive post-secondary education, employment, and successful independent living outcomes.

In the United States, the number of children being diagnosed with developmental disabilities is increasing, with a rate nearing 9% in 2021 (according to a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report referenced by usnews.com on July 13, 2023). The latest data from the National Survey of Children's Health reveals that 21% of youth in Arizona experience one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions. The Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council estimates that around 60,000 children in Arizona have a developmental disability. In Pinal County, 11.1% of the population under age 65 lives with a disability (U.S. Census, 2023).

Families seeking Encircle Families' services often struggle to address their child's unique needs. To be eligible for this program, families must reside in Pinal County and have a child with a suspected or diagnosed disability, such as autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, cognitive disability, and others. Encircle Families does not impose any restrictions related to race, ethnicity, gender, or income. We provide services in the language that offers the greatest comfort to the family. Our demographic composition includes 45% White, 44% Hispanic, and 5% Black or African American, with the remaining 6% identifying as persons of color. Moreover, 35% of the families served are classified as low to moderate income.

3. *Describe the Project goals and objectives and outline a plan to meet these goals.*

Encircle Families proposes to serve 250 Pinal County families of children with disabilities in FY 25/26, equipping parents with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to navigate complex healthcare, education, and community systems, as well as advocate for their children's needs.

Program Activities:

- Outreach to Pinal County families to increase awareness and understanding of our services;
- Individualized strategies for families to manage a child's behavior and overcome barriers to care;
- Parent education on rights and responsibilities under Medicaid and special education programs.

Outcomes Framework:

Short-Term Outcomes:

- A better understanding of their child's disability.
- Increase in understanding of the education and healthcare system to best serve their children.
- Support services for their child.
- Access to a community of support.

Intermediate Outcomes:

- Improved hope for their child's future.
- Improved behavior in their child.
- Improved quality of life for families and children.
- Better physical/mental health outcomes, post-secondary education, employment, and independent living outcomes for their child.

Measurable Indicators:

- 100% of families will gain the tools to navigate early intervention, education, and health care systems.



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- 85% of families will report they are better equipped to advocate for their child in education and health care systems.
- 85% of families will report that Encircle Families' services were useful and increased their knowledge of community resources and support for their child.

Encircle Families offers services to Pinal County residents through a flexible delivery model that includes in-person meetings, telehealth, phone calls, emails, and virtual sessions—scheduled at times and locations convenient for families. This approach removes access barriers and allows services to be provided in-home, in public spaces, or remotely, based on family needs. Each family receives approximately four services per month. Depending on each family's circumstances, parent education may also include evidence-based programs such as Triple P – Positive Parenting Program, Positive Behavior, and other training offered either online or in community venues.

The Mentoring and Support program continuously welcomes new participants. Encircle Families' goal for the project is to expand services in Pinal County, raise awareness of our services, and provide families with the assistance they need.

4. Provide a timetable for implementation of the Project

The Mentoring and Support Program activities are ongoing throughout the 1-year grant term. Families can access our services at any time during this term.

B. Resources

1. Identify current funding sources for the Project and characterize each funding source listed as either a one-time-only or long-term funding source.

Encircle Families is seeking one-year funding for Pinal County families from the Pinal County Board of Supervisors. In addition to this one-time funding source, other funding for Pinal County includes insurance reimbursements for qualifying services (a long-term source), which only covers partial services for families. Encircle Families also supplements funding with individual donations, which are also typically one-time funding sources.

2. Identify other organizations or partners that are participating in or contributing to the Project, but which are not funding sources, and describe their roles or contributions.

Encircle Families has established long-standing relationships with school districts, Head Start programs, and therapy providers to promote program services to families. Partners in Pinal County include the Florence and Queen Creek Unified School Districts.

Encircle Families participates in a referral network of over 300 organizations through partnerships with entities such as the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Arizona's Early Intervention Program, Arizona Department of Health Services, Arizona Department of Education, Arizona Healthcare Cost Containment System (AHCCCS – Arizona's Medicaid program), Arizona Center for Disability Law, Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, and First Things First (Arizona's birth to five initiative).



3. Define the Project as a new or continuing project or a purchase. Provide information about how the Project will be sustained or the purchase will be maintained after the grant funding is exhausted.

Encircle Families' Mentoring and Support Program is a continuing project. Encircle Families obtains funding from corporations, foundations, individuals, and public funding and contracts, with key support from the Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Arizona Early Intervention Program.

While we work with partners to facilitate families' access to essential resources and services, these partners do not offer goods or services directly for this initiative.

4. If the Applicant organization has requested funding from any other Arizona tribe, please list:
a. Pending requests made within the last eighteen (18) months for the same request, including the name of the tribe to which the request was made.

Pending requests to other tribal governments include: Gila River Indian Community – Mentoring and Support Program for Families with Children who have disabilities in Maricopa County. Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation – Navigating education and health care systems for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs in the City of Phoenix. Tohono O'odham Nation – Mentoring and Support Program for Families in Pinal County with Children who have disabilities.

b. Funded requests made in the last five (5) years, including the name of the tribe that awarded the funding, a brief summary of the project for which the funding was awarded, and the amount of the funding received.

Funded requests: Ak-Chin Indian Community – Navigating education and health care systems in 20/21 (\$20,000), 21/22 (\$50,000), 22/23 (\$50,000), and 23/24 (\$50,000); Fort McDowell Indian Community – Positive behavior parent support in 2021 (\$7,000) and 21/22 (\$15,000); Gila River Indian Community – Physician Residency Program in 2024 (\$20,000)

C. Reports. Approved grantees must account for and report to the Community all expenditures of grant funding; however, there is no required reporting form or format. Explain how your organization will account for and manage the funding if selected. Describe how Project progress and results will be tracked and documented.

For several decades, Encircle Families has managed multi-million-dollar contracts and grant awards from state and federal sources, as well as corporate and foundation grants. The organization excels in managing all awarded grants and has the staff to oversee them properly.

Encircle Families staff maintain records from intake to case closure for every family that seeks and receives services. They collect pre- and post-survey data to evaluate and share with key stakeholders. All documentation is securely stored in our online database. Encircle Families consistently delivers timely reports regarding our activities and the management of funds granted by the Ak-Chin Indian Community.

D. Budget. Provide a budget, including justification, that supports the request in the Application. Provide an estimated timeline for when funds will be expended.

Program Budget	Amount Requested from Ak-Chin Indian Community
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Community Outreach	\$27,000
Newsletter/Printing	\$10,000
Resource Materials	\$5,200
Indirect Costs (rent, utilities, insurance, office supplies)	\$7,800
Total Budget	\$50,000

Encircle Families respectfully requests \$50,000 from the Ak-Chin Indian Community to directly support our community outreach efforts. These funds will help cover our outreach events, the production and printing of our newsletters and resource materials, and some general indirect costs (e.g., rent, utilities, insurance, and office supplies). All funds will be expended within a one-year timeframe.

E. Additional information. Please provide any additional information about the Project or the Applicant organization that the Ak-Chin Council should know when considering the Application.

Encircle Families is committed to ensuring that staff and Board Members accurately reflect the community they serve. The majority of Encircle Families' staff and Board Members are parents of children with disabilities or special healthcare needs. Their firsthand experience navigating complex systems of care enables them to offer empathetic support and guide families in identifying and accessing appropriate resources. This lived experience fosters a deep understanding of the challenges families face while enhancing the quality of assistance provided.

Encircle Families' Board convenes six times a year to review the organization's activities and ensure alignment with its mission. Board Members are actively involved in the nomination, interview, and selection process for new members, focusing on addressing critical gaps in skills and diversity.

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury

P. O. Box 2508
Cincinnati, OH 45201

Date: March 30, 2000

Person to Contact:
Mary Freudenberg #31-03512
Customer Service Representative Toll
Free Telephone Number:

Raising Special Kids
2400 N. Central Avenue, Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85004

8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. EST
877-829-5500

Fax Number:
513-263-3756
Federal Identification Number:
86-0517082

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter is in response to your request for a copy of your organization's determination letter. This letter will take the place of the copy you requested.

Our records indicate that a determination letter issued in October 1985 granted your organization exemption from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. That letter is still in effect.

Based on information subsequently submitted, we classified your organization as one that is not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because it is an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

This classification was based on the assumption that your organization's operations would continue as stated in the application, if your organization's sources of support, or its character, method of operations, or purposes have changed, please let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on the exempt status and foundation status of your organization.

Your organization is required to file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, only if its gross receipts each year are normally more than \$25,000. If a return is required, it must be filed by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of the organization's annual accounting period. The law imposes a penalty of \$20 a day, up to a maximum of \$10,000, when a return is filed late, unless there is reasonable cause for the delay.

All exempt organizations (unless specifically excluded) are liable for taxes under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (social security taxes) on remuneration of \$100 or more paid to each employee during a calendar year. Your organization is not liable for the tax imposed under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA).

Organizations that are not private foundations are not subject to the excise taxes under Chapter 42 of the Code. However, these organizations are not automatically exempt from other federal excise taxes.

Donors may deduct contributions to your organization as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to your organization or for its use are deductible for federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Raising Special Kids
86-0517082

Your organization is not required to file federal income tax returns unless it is subject to the tax on unrelated business income under section 511 of the Code. If your organization is subject to this tax, it must file an income tax return on the Form 990-T, Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Return. In this letter, we are not determining whether any of your organization's present or proposed activities are unrelated trade or business as defined in section 513 of the Code.

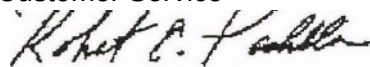
The law requires you to make your organization's annual return available for public inspection without charge for three years after the due date of the return. You are also required to make available for public inspection a copy of your organization's exemption application, any supporting documents and the exemption letter to any individual who requests such documents in person or in writing. You can charge only a reasonable fee for reproduction and actual postage costs for the copied materials. The law does not require you to provide copies of public inspection documents that are widely available, such as by posting them on the Internet (World Wide Web). You may be liable for a penalty of \$20 a day for each day you do not make these documents available for public inspection (up to a maximum of \$10,000 in the case of an annual return).

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your organization's exempt status and foundation status, you should keep it with the organization's permanent records.

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown in the heading of this letter. This letter affirms your organization's exempt status.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Padilla Manager,
Customer Service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert C. Padilla", written in a cursive style.