



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

### **Regional Partnership Councils June 2009 Report**

**Regional Partnership Council Appointments:** A total of 314 Regional Council seats are filled. Since April there were four resignations. Two individuals are being recommended to the Board for appointment for the Yavapai and North Phoenix Regional Partnership Councils.

**Regional Funding Plans:** The Southwest, Northwest and Navajo Nation are submitting revised strategies for the Board's review and consideration. Included in the Board book is a memo from each Regional Council Chair, a summary of the regional funding plan for each Regional Council and the revised strategy.

The Northwest and Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Councils are requesting the Board to consider a joint strategy of the Regional Councils that will enhance the coordination and communication of services, programs and resources for young children and their families across the regions. The Board approved a similar joint strategy between the Central and Southeast Regional Partnership Councils in March 2009. Staff recommends that the Board approve the revised strategy.

The Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council is requesting the Board to consider a new strategy that will be funded by the frontier allocation awarded to the Regional Council. This new strategy involves adding materials to the Parent Kit in order to make the Kit more culturally appropriate and useful to the families of the Navajo Nation. Specifically the Navajo Nation will include a companion piece to the Parent Kit consisting of four children's board books in Navajo and English, a CD of the books being read in Navajo and English, and a one page insert listing Navajo Nation resources for families of young children. Staff recommends that the Board approve the new strategy of the Navajo Nation Regional Council.

**Request for Grant Applications (RFGAs):** On April 8, 2009, requests for 41 regional RFGAs were published and posted. The 41 RFGAs closed May 21-23, 2009 for September 1, 2009 awards. A total of 101 applications were submitted. These grant applications are currently going through review processes being lead by Regional Staff with the assistance of Finance, Policy and Evaluation staffs.

On June 3, 2009, four RFGAs will be released. Recommended grantees will be presented to the Board for approval in September and programs will begin October 1, 2009.

**Attendance Policy for Regional Council members:** A draft attendance policy has been developed for the Board to review at the June meeting and to consider for approval at the August meeting. The draft policy is included in the Board book.

A Regional Partnership Council's ability to operate effectively is dependent upon the full participation of all of its members. Each Regional Council member is appointed as a representative of a specific sector (i.e. education, child care, health, etc) with expertise about a specific component of the early childhood system. Each member's individual contribution serves to inform the entire Regional Partnership Council and ensures that decisions of the Regional Council respect the diverse perspectives of these important community sectors. Therefore, when a Regional Council member misses a meeting the quality of input and decision making is diminished. Additionally, the absent member misses important information and updates about the work of the Regional Partnership Council, therefore, making it more difficult for them to contribute effectively in the future.

The FTF statute A.R.S. §8-1162(D) reads as follows:

*Members of the Regional Partnership Council who miss more than three meetings without excuse or resign their membership shall be replaced by the Board after a public application process and with the input of the Regional Partnership Council.*

The statute lacks specificity as there is no definition for what constitutes an absence "without excuse" or of the process for removing a Regional Council member who has problem attendance. The proposed attendance policy includes definitions of excused and unexcused absences, the opportunity for personal intervention with Regional Council members exhibiting problem attendance that may result in either improved attendance or a voluntary resignation, and the process for the Board to remove a Regional Council member.

Regional Coordinators will review the draft attendance policy with the Regional Council members during the June and July meetings and provide feedback to FTF staff leadership prior to the policy being presented to the Board for consideration at the August meeting.

**Award Presentations:** The award presentation for the Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council was held on May 20, 2009. The Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Council is working on finalizing a date for their award presentation.

**Election of Regional Chairs and Vice Chairs for SFY 2010:** The Regional Councils are electing chairs and vice chairs for the term July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. The July 2009 report will include the names of the SFY2010 Chairs and Vice Chairs. The leadership of the current chairs and vice chairs has been outstanding and greatly appreciated during the first year of the Regional Councils.

**One Year Anniversary of the Regional Councils:** April 2009 marked the one year anniversary of the Regional Partnership Councils. The Regional Councils have been extraordinary and successfully completed the following activities: Completion of regional needs and assets reports, completion of regional funding plans, establishing and strengthening relationships with the Arizona Tribes, addressing the needs of children and families through the FTF Early Childhood Emergency Response Plan, hosting award presentations in their communities, serving as champions for young children in their advocacy

efforts to protect First Things First funding and critical services and programs for children and families, releasing various requests for grant applications in response to their funding plans, and exceptional stewards of \$130 million in tobacco tax money dedicated to young children and families. This is not a comprehensive list but rather highlights the major activities completed and for which every Regional Council member should be applauded for their tireless dedication and efforts to ensure the young children of Arizona are given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

**Regional Division Monthly Meetings:** The Regional Division continues to hold monthly meetings with all staff. The University Consortium will present at the June 5, 2009 meeting and has also been working with the Tribal Coordinators to determine how best to inform, work and receive permission for data collection for the external evaluation. Alex Turner and Kim Syra have also provided several training sessions on conflict of interest for the regional division.

**Regional Staff:** The West Regional Manager position has been filled. I am pleased to report that Gary Arnold will be the new Regional Manager starting June 1, 2009. Mr. Arnold comes to us from the Arizona Department of Economic Security. He was the Assistant to the Deputy Director for the division of Children, Youth and Families. He comes to us with much knowledge and expertise in the areas of prevention and child welfare services. He has been responsible for developing community programs and maintaining collaborative relationships with community agencies such as the courts, law enforcement, Tribes and behavioral health providers. Mr. Arnold will be a great asset to the FTF team.

Marla Chamberlain transitioned to the Central East Regional Area. In addition, changes have been made to the regional areas overseen by the Regional Managers and are as follows:

- Greater Phoenix/Yavapai Regional Area managed by Kim VanPelt: North, Central, and South Phoenix, Yavapai, and Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Councils
- Maricopa Regional Area managed by Wendy Sabatini: Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, Central, and Southeast Maricopa, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Councils
- Central East Regional Area managed by Marla Chamberlain: Gila, Pinal, San Carlos Apache, Graham/Greenlee, and Cochise (new addition to this regional area) Regional Partnership Councils
- Southeast Regional Area managed by Diane Umstead: North, Central and South Pima, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Tohono O'odham Nation, and Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Councils
- West Regional Area managed by Gary Arnold: Yuma, Cocopah Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes, LaPaz/Mohave, Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Councils
- Northeast Regional Area managed by AdiShakti Khalsa: Coconino, Navajo/Apache, White Mountain Apache Tribe and Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Councils.