



FIRST THINGS FIRST

FTF Board Presentation on REWARD\$

January 26, 2010

First Things First Professional REWARD\$ is the second signature program for FTF addressing quality, access and affordability, and it is a companion program to Quality First. First Things First Professional REWARD\$ is a collaborative effort that utilizes FTF statewide funding for an administrative home to provide infrastructure and management, and regional funding for incentives and other programmatic elements. Eleven Regional Partnership Councils have been approved by the Board to utilize SFY2010 funding for the initial rollout of FTF Professional REWARD\$ incentives:

- Coconino
- San Carlos
- Central Maricopa
- Southeast Maricopa
- Central Phoenix
- North Phoenix
- Central Pima
- North Pima
- South Pima
- Pinal
- Navajo Nation

FTF has chosen to develop an Arizona specific compensation and retention incentives model in order to develop a program that meets the professional development needs of the Arizona early care and education workforce and industry, and that assures full alignment with Quality First and T.E.A.C.H.® ARIZONA.

FTF Professional REWARD\$ acknowledges and rewards progressive education, educational attainment and commitment to continuous employment at a child care center, group or family child care home that is licensed, certified or regulated by a Federal, State or Tribal authority providing services to children birth through age 5. There will be a strong connection between FTF Professional REWARD\$ and T.E.A.C.H. ARIZONA, including similar eligibility for the program. To be eligible for an incentive, a participant must be at least 18 years old; have a high school diploma or GED; work directly with young children, birth to age 5, or work as a director of a center that serves children birth to age 5; and earn less than a designated salary.

FTF Professional REWARD\$ will provide a first level incentive when a teacher, director or home provider in a licensed, certified or regulated program completes six credit hours of college

coursework. Additional levels of incentives can be received as individuals attain progressively higher educational levels.

The administrative home will provide oversight for the implementation and management of FTF Professional REWARD\$. This includes responsibility for marketing and outreach; distribution, review, and decision-making of applications; incentive distribution and monitoring; database management; program and fiscal monitoring; and reporting activities. The administrative home will additionally participate in First Things First systems development meetings and will work with FTF to develop data systems and operating procedures for program information. The development process will center on conceptualization and standardization of technology and organizational processes for the collection, storage, maintenance, security, retrieval, reporting, and use of the FTF Professional REWARD\$ information.

The Administrative Home will collaborate with the Quality First Coordinator, Regional Partnership Councils via the Regional Administration Division, T.E.A.C.H. ® ARIZONA and with First Things First Policy & Research, and Evaluation Divisions and will:

- administer the finalized FTF Professional REWARD\$ tiered scale which rewards educational advancement and attainment for staff who have remained with the same employer for at least one year;
- monitor and verify that programs meet the certification, licensing or regulatory eligibility criteria and program standards for participation;
- work in partnership with FTF to develop, convene and staff an Advisory Committee of early care and education stakeholders identified and selected by FTF; and
- function within the framework of First Things First evaluation efforts.

First Things First Goal Area addressed:

- Professional Development

First Things First Goals addressed:

- FTF will build a skilled and well-prepared early childhood development workforce
- FTF will increase retention of the early care and education workforce
- FTF will enhance specialized skills of the early childhood development and health workforce to promote the healthy social-emotional development of young children

First Things First Key Measures addressed:

- Total number and percentage of professionals working in early childhood care and education settings with a credential, certificate, or degree in early childhood education and related fields.
- Total number and percentage of professionals working in early childhood care and education who are pursuing a credential, certificate, or degree
- Retention rates of early childhood development and health professionals