



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*The right system for bright futures*

Colorado River Indian Tribe Regional Partnership Council Meeting

Johnson O'Malley Computer Lab

13392 First Avenue, Parker, AZ 85344

March 3, 2009

## **Call to Order/ Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Veronica Homer at 9:55 a.m.

## **Members Present**

Chair, Veronica Homer, Member Dan Wolfe, Member Dolores "Lola" Leivas, Member Merving Scott, Member Rachel Garcia, Member Irma Alvarado, Member Elizabeth "Heather" Wilson

## **Members Absent**

Vice Chair Amanda Sharpe, Member Amelia Flores

## **Others Present**

Lanna Flood - Regional Coordinator, Marla Chamberlain – Regional Manager,  
Jo Griffis - Administrative Assistant II.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

***Member Leivas motioned to approve Minutes of December 17th, 2008 meeting with revisions. Motion was seconded by Member Wilson, motion carried by a unanimous vote by members present.***

## **Review Committee - Discussion and Possible Adoption of RFGA Review Committee**

The Council discussed selection of the review committee. The Council agreed on a Review Committee selection of Council Members Veronica Homer, Heather Wilson and Dan Wolfe. Barry Holloway, Arizona Western College would sit on the Committee as a community representative.

***Member Scott motioned to approve the selected Review Committee. Motioned seconded by Member Garcia, motion carried by unanimous vote by members present.***

## **Discussion & Possible Action of FTF Boards Emergency Early Childhood Response Package and Possible Action of Regional Council's Funding Plan**

Coordinator Flood discussed the current state budget, the impact it has on the economy, the state's support programs and service population that First Things First serves. Coordinator Flood advised that in response to these effects the First Things First State Board took action during their February 24th meeting to approve the use of discretionary funds to assist families being impacted. She explained that Manager Chamberlain would explain in more detail how this will affect First Things First and the region.

Regional Manager Chamberlain explained the decision made by the FTF State Board to use \$32 million dollars of discretionary funds. Funding plans were looked at across the state regions to determine discretionary funding allocations. There were two Councils within the West Region, Cocopah and Hualapai, that were awarded a baseline adjustment which would allow these regions to fully execute their main funding plan strategy.

The FTF State Board determined there were certain rural areas around the state that required additional support monies and allocated additional funding to those regions that met the criteria for frontier region. Due to that

determination, the Colorado River Indian Tribes region was awarded \$36,164 in additional Frontier Funds for a total regional allocation of \$172,411.

The FTF State Board also decided that it was imperative to address the immediate needs faced by families with children ages 0 to 5 due to program cuts such as the DES child care subsidies. Manager Chamberlain gave an update of the First Things First Board meeting that took place on February 24, 2009 where the First Things First Board motioned to adopt the First Things First Emergency Response package. This includes getting existing funding out faster through an accelerated release process involving a bid waiver request to the Arizona Department of Administration. This would also include identifying areas of focus in which First Things First could provide some relief through more targeted use of a large portion of discretionary funding. Discretionary funds are being used to support the infrastructure of programs serving families so First Things First can continue to build on them. Manager Chamberlain also shared that currently there are families experiencing hardship due to the economy who are finding it hard to pay for child care services. Additionally, food banks have seen an increase of 40% in demand. Manager Chamberlain stated that the current allocation approved by the First Things First Board to address these needs at the statewide level is \$23.8 million in discretionary funding. \$23.3 million will be going to address Access and Affordability in the form of scholarships for childcare and \$500,000 would go to food banks across the state to feed families with children ages 0 - 5. The First Things First Board also approved regions using their regional allocations to address the need for programs and services to provide support for families needing services through in-home visitation. Regions would be allowed the flexibility to modify any of their current strategies in their funding plans in the areas of Access and Affordability and Family Support. The Council would need to decide if the CRIT region would want to participate in the funds being distributed by the State Board and make a formal motion to participate or not. Member Wolfe asked "why would we not want to"?

Manager Chamberlain also explained the emergency bid waiver requires that each Council make a formal motion on whether to allocate additional monies out of the Council's discretionary funds or utilize these funds for local regional strategies. Member Garcia asked if the local food bank was still open. Coordinator Flood and Member Wilson confirmed that it was.

Coordinator Flood explained the two options set before the Council. The Council can choose to take action to utilize the additional Discretionary Funds to supplement what the State Board is funding or the Council can take action on utilizing the Discretionary Funds for a local regional strategy. However, if anyone is interested in supplementing the State's effort, action would need to take place today, whereas allocating these funds for a specific regional strategy could be brought back to the Council at a later date. Manager Chamberlain also shared with the Council that an administrative home will need to be set up to handle the processing of the child care assistance strategy under Access and Affordability.

Coordinator Flood advised the regional early childhood programs that may be affected by the subsidy cuts would be Gingerbread, Wee Care and possibly the School Districts Preschool program. Head Start is not a fee based program. Chair Homer asked, "If we accept these funds what is the amount?" Regional Manager Chamberlain stated that this has not yet been determined. We would first need to figure out how many working families qualify for DES subsidy within the region and then look at a way of allocating equally among regions.

***Member Wolfe made a motion to the Council to approve to participate in the Region's portion of the \$23.3 million of the Discretionary Funds used to provide scholarships to working families with children ages 0-5 for early care and education, until the federal stimulus money and FY 2010 addresses needs and approve the \$500,000 to provide emergency food boxes for families with infants and toddlers. Motion seconded by Member Leivas, motion carried by unanimous vote by members present.***

***Member Wolfe motioned for the Regional Partnership Council to opt Rural Discretionary Funds in the amount of \$36,164 be used for future region specifically targeted areas that the Council deems necessary. Motion seconded by Member Alvarado, motion carried by unanimous vote by members present.***

### **RFGA Recap - Update on RFGA, Page summary, Logic Models, Timelines**

Coordinator Flood updated the Council on the region's grant rollouts. With the status of the economy, First Things First is trying to meet the demands of families in the region. Coordinator Flood explained the timeline and advised that T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships were originally approved to fund seven scholarships. Due to the increase of tuition costs, there are now only enough funds for four T.E.A.C.H. scholarships Member Wolfe asked, "Is the amount of \$14,700 going to be the same or is it being reduced with the number of available scholarships?" Coordinator Flood advised that only the number of scholarships available are being reduced, not the dollar amount.

Coordinator Flood informed the Council that two of the regional strategies' logic models were finalized: Family Literacy and Healthy Weight & Nutrition. The Healthy Weight and Nutrition strategy would be proposed to the region's existing health programs currently promoting health. These funds may enhance or supplement those programs whose Scope of Work does not allow serving children ages 0 – 5 and pregnant mothers. The Family Literacy strategy would enhance existing programs to implement a specific adult literacy component.

Regional Manager Chamberlain explained that, for these two strategies, an Interagency Agreement can be developed instead of an RFGA due to the amount being less than \$50,000 dollars. Potential grantees would still have to fill out an application, meet the requirements and be accountable to the strategy outcomes. The RFGA's will be posted after tomorrow and will be open for 6 weeks. For the remaining proposed strategies, the Council would need to look at the region and services to determine if there is a local vendor with the capacity to implement them or will a program outside the region need to apply. Coordinator Flood used the example of the Therapist Incentive strategy as to how an outside program may need to be considered. Is there a program in the community that has the capacity to hire an additional therapist and pay an additional salary to benefit from the incentives? If not a program outside the region would need to be approached to hire this additional staff to take advantage of the incentives and provide the needed services.

### **Coordinator's Report**

**First Things First Tour Date:** Coordinator Flood reminded the Council that next Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon is the official check presentation award ceremony. This will be a media event. All Council members are requested to attend if possible. Member Leivas will provide a personal story regarding the experience she has encountered with the region's limited services. A Head Start class will be in attendance and the Head Start Mohave Dance Group will also perform during the ceremony. Buni Hooper of Ginger Bread House was extended an invitation to bring some of her program's 0 – 5 year olds to participate. Coordinator Flood advised any donated drinks or snacks would be appreciated since this was scheduled during the noon hour. Member Scott stated he would work on arranging food donations and Member Wilson stated she would donate water and drinks.

**Early Childhood Summit:** Coordinator Flood advised the Council the summit was cancelled and that the Council may have the opportunity to hold a regional conference on specific training or workshops the Council feels is a priority for the region.

**Quality First! Update:** Coordinator Flood updated the Council on the status of Quality First! The Council was advised that the regional office was aware of two applications submitted from the region however, there may be others. There should be an updated list released soon advising of the exact number submitted. The Council was reminded that the closing date for applications was March 2<sup>nd</sup> although applications will continue to be accepted indefinitely. Late applicants may be considered in a second round of review.

**Recruitment Update:** Coordinator Flood welcomed Heather Wilson who has filled the philanthropy seat. An additional applicant has applied for the Business seat and Manager Chamberlain advised the Council that this individual is scheduled to be interviewed later this week. There is still one opening available for a Health representative.

**State Budget/Legislation Update:** Coordinator Flood advised she will continue to update the Council on pertinent changes within the state budget, how it may affect First Things First, and what Governor Brewer is doing. Regional Manger Chamberlain advised the Council that the Governor is meeting with the legislature tomorrow in an effort to put out a ballot for a special election to allow the legislature to tap into voter initiative funding, which is specifically First Things First. She also stated that, due to funding, a special election was not likely and the issue would probably have to wait until the September ballot.

**Call to Public**

None

**Next Meeting**

Monday, March 30th, 2009 at 10:00 p.m. Location: Johnson O'Malley Computer Lab.

**Adjourn**

**Member Scott motioned to Adjourn at 11:59 am. Motion seconded by member Wolfe, motion carried by a unanimous vote by members present.**

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**Lanna Flood, CRIT Regional Coordinator**

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**Veronica Homer, CRIT Regional Chairman**