

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board

North Phoenix Regional Council

Minutes

The regular meeting of the First Things First North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council of the – Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board was held on March 10, 2009 at 4:30p.m. at the Washington Elementary School District Office, 4650 West Sweetwater, Glendale, AZ 85304.

Members Present:

Bill Adams, Sally Downing, Connie Robinson, Dr. Elaine Ellis, Gina Montes, James Emch, Jenna Goad, Mindy Zapata.

Absent:

Karyn Parker.

Call to Order

North Phoenix, Chairman Bill Adams welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at approximately 4:33p.m.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Council Member Connie Robinson to approve the February 10, 2009 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Council Member Gina Montes, motion carried.

Call to the Public

Chairman Adams made a call to the public. There were no requests to address the Council.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Board's Emergency Early Childhood Response Package

Regional Coordinator Brenda Tomlin provided background information on how the Board made this determination and the possible impact it might have on our business moving forward. Brenda informed the Council of the tentative dollar amounts that are to be awarded within this Emergency Response Package. If the Council chooses not to participate in the plan, scholarships to working families and food boxes will not be distributed throughout the North Phoenix Region.

Funding for child care tuition scholarships will be allocated across all regions. It is estimated at this time that an amount of approximately \$2,000,000 will be available to provide for child care scholarships in the North Phoenix Region for a temporary time frame. Given the tentative amount of the monthly scholarship per child, this dollar amount would allow for approximately 1,000 scholarships to be funded over a four month period. The following stipulations would have to be met:

- Eligible parents will earn up to 200% FPL and not be receiving child care tuition assistance from another source
- Parents will continue to have a co-pay and will need to complete an application
- Tuition scholarships will be prepaid, one month at a time
- Eligible Child Care Centers or Homes include those that are already accredited and/or those that are enrolled to participate in Quality First
- Limited number of scholarships will be available, based on size of center
- Eligible parents must be working, looking for a job or improving their job skills

Additionally, as part of the Emergency Response Package, \$500,000 will be allocated for emergency food boxes.

Regional Coordinator Tomlin indicated that the target month to get scholarships into our community is April. The Councils will have to make their decisions to participate in the State Board recommended Emergency Response Package by March 16, 2009.

Council Member Zapata was concerned about the public relations issues that may arise for First Things First after the four month Emergency Response Package ended. Chairman Adams suggested to the Council that this be tabled for further discussion at the next monthly meeting. The concern is the reputation of First Things First once the money is no longer available in four months. Council Member Ellis suggested a disclaimer regarding the four month time frame be added to the application in order to protect FTF. The concern regarding how to address on-going communications issues was tabled for the April 14th Council meeting.

Council Member Goad made a motion that North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council support the decision of the Board to use discretionary funding for child care scholarships for families up to 200% of the federal poverty level with an amendment that a disclaimer be added to the application regarding the temporary availability of funds and that the purpose of this response is short-term, to address an emergency. Council Member Emch seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Vice Chair Downing motioned that North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council support the decision of the Board to use discretionary funding for emergency food boxes for families with children birth through age five. Council Member Ellis seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Vote on Modification of Regional Funding Plan in response to the Emergency Early Childhood Package

Regional Coordinator Tomlin identified that the Regional Council had three options available to them as a result of the Bid Waiver approval: a) the Council could choose to keep the funding plan exactly as is; b) the Council could choose to expedite existing strategies (in their original form or modified) rather than providing funding for them through the "regular" RFGA process; c) the Council could take funding from specific areas (i.e., family support strategies, access and affordability strategies, needs and assets, communication, evaluation, and frontier allocation if applicable) and add this to an existing Emergency Response Strategy (i.e., family support/home visitation, food boxes or child care tuition scholarships) to be put out through an expedited process.

Initial recommendations were given for discussion from Regional Coordinator Tomlin. They included the following:

1. Consider using money from Strategy #9 to support additional child care scholarships for families in our Region. Example – Funding of \$240,000 allocated to this strategy could be used to fund scholarships of up to \$600/month/child = 400 scholarships/100 scholarships per month for four months.
2. Consider using money from Strategy #8 (Warm Line), plus funding allocated to Needs & Assets Survey, and 35% of the Communication Strategy allotted funding to support an expedited family support strategy. Example - \$200,000 + \$75,000 + \$82,250 = \$357,250. This could support 120-150 families.

3. Stay the course on funding already released via the RFGA process for Strategies #6(Home Visitation) and #7 (Early Literacy).

Council Members discussed possible pros and cons of the Warm Line Strategy and determined to not give up on it as a strategy. It still has potential to meet existing community needs.

Council Members were aware that the Central Phoenix Regional Partnership Council Members were continuing to consider this strategy as well. Development of the strategy by a combined workgroup from both Councils needs to be a priority.

Concerns were discussed regarding the Nurse Family Partnership model identified in Strategy #6 - specifically that it has a long start up time. In addition, no program currently exists in Maricopa County and Council Members were not confident that it was the best fit for current identified community needs. Council Members had lengthy discussion on the priority of meeting emergency support needs in the community. Council Members discussed possible models to meet this need.

Council Members discussed pros and cons of continuing to support an "In-Home Literacy" model as defined in Strategy #7. Council stated consensus that they would rather meet emergency needs at this time by utilizing this part of the funding for additional child care tuition scholarships. The Council also stated they believed the "In-Community Literacy" model had the potential to reach many more people and therefore remained a cost effective and relevant service in the current economic climate.

Council Members also had a lengthy discussion regarding the overall need for additional child care tuition scholarships in the North Phoenix Region.

Council Member Ellis motioned the following modification:

Council Member Ellis moved that North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council will modify Literacy Strategy #7 by \$600,000 and utilize the same format as the statewide supported Emergency Child Care Tuition Scholarships beginning in July. Chairman Adams seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Council Member Robinson moved that North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council will modify Strategy #9, the Pilot/Study, by utilizing the entire \$240,000 towards the same format as the statewide supported Emergency Child Care Tuition Scholarships to begin in July. Council Member Emch seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Council Member Ellis moved that North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council utilize an expedited competitive process to meet the critical needs as approved by the Department of Administration waiver to provide for Home Visiting Services. Strategy #6 in its entirety will become expedited. Council Member Goad seconded the motion and the motion carried.

As an additional point of information, it was stated that at a minimum, qualified providers must be immediately able to provide the service in the community, must agree to have less than 10% in administrative costs, must agree to provide a service that aligns with the identified FTF Home Visitation Standards of Practice, and must utilize a research-based model.

Coordinator's Report

Regional Coordinator Brenda Tomlin reported the following:

- Big Check Presentation is scheduled for 3:00pm Thursday, March 12, 2009 at Beatitudes. A flyer was distributed to Council Members.

- Pre-proposal conference dates and times for March 13th and March 18th will continue, even though after the Council's decisions made at this meeting to alter the funding plan will result in the current RFGA's released for the North Phoenix area to be canceled.
- Three RFGAs went out last week around home visiting and family literacy. Preventative dental, mental health consultation and Family, Friend, and Neighbor professional development are remaining. Other funding allocated to additional strategies will be released through state contracts (i.e., Quality First, T.E.A.C.H., Child Care Health Consultant and WAGES).
- Two Council seats are vacant. Recruitment efforts are underway. Recommendations are welcome.
- Statewide Innovative Grants Update was given and recipients were announced.

Discussion and Possible Vote on Modification of Regional Funding Plan in response to the recalculation of T.E.A.C.H. costs per scholar

As noted in our original funding plan, modifications to the costs of the T.E.A.C.H. program were possible. Regional Coordinator Tomlin informed the Council that the T.E.A.C.H. vendor has now calculated costs for Arizona and they will be \$1,000 more per scholar than the amount identified in the original funding plan. The following is currently allocated:

- T.E.A.C.H. currently allocated \$483,020 which is 139 scholarships at \$2,180, which equals \$303,202.
- In addition, the Council allocated the following dollar amounts to this strategy:
 - \$50,000 – Outreach
 - \$50,000 – Community Meetings
 - \$80,000 – One time computer purchase

Council Members were advised that a decision was needed. They could implement one of the following:

- Lower the amount of scholars supported each year by keeping the funds as originally allocated.
- Take some of the funding that was set aside for "outreach", "community meetings", and "computers" and put it towards supporting more scholars than the original is able to support.

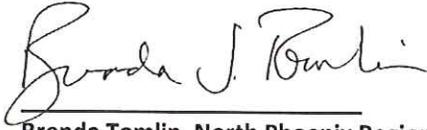
Council Member Montes made a motion to move \$50,000 out of "outreach" and \$50,000 out of "community meetings" and move it to support the current allotted scholarships. Vice Chair Downing seconded the motion and the motion carried.

This strategy will now be modified to have \$403,202 allotted to support T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, which is equal to approximately 127 scholarships or 12 less than the Council originally wanted to support for this first contract year.

Adjournment

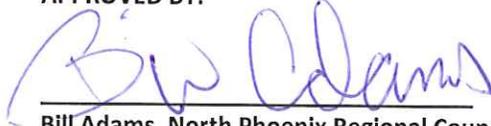
There being no further business Chairman Adams adjourned the North Phoenix, Regional Council Meeting at 6:29p.m. A motion was made by Council Member Robinson. Seconded by Council Member Zapata, motion carried.

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brenda J. Tomlin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Brenda Tomlin, North Phoenix Regional Council Coordinator

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Adams". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Bill Adams, North Phoenix Regional Council Chair