

## **Section Eight (First Things First 2011-2013 Communications Plan)**

Objective Three: Build and drive support from the general public, elected officials and additional target audiences for investments in Early Childhood programs and services for Arizona children Birth to age 5

---

### **Approach**

To successfully fulfill Arizona's commitment to our youngest kids, there are many audiences that require attention and some may require more intense grassroots engagement than others. In addition, each target audience includes key individuals that can help carry the First Things First (FTF) message in unique ways, namely *mavens* and *connectors* who have significant personal and professional networks that help to enhance the grassroots effort.

Coalition building is a critical and inherent component of each suggested tactic. FTF will deliberately reach out to various stakeholder groups to share information, coordinate supportive efforts in order to help build and advance efforts to fulfill Arizona's commitment to our youngest kids. Coalition building spurs the grassroots activities that will help meet statewide measurements and benchmarks. These activities will be aided by the online tools, collateral materials and giveaways discussed in previous sections.

There will be a "Going to the People" effort around the state to key media, influencers and potential partners. This will be spearheaded by FTF leadership and backed by activity of local champions.

### **Initial Target Audiences & Statewide Tactics, Measurements and Benchmarks**

*Tactic: Recruit and retain 12,842 champions statewide.*

Below are the recommended target audiences during Year 1. Examples are provided of organizations or categories for each audience, reasons for targeting, the exact number of champions needed from that category, and the most appropriate time in which to target them within Year 1. It is not meant to be a comprehensive list of each group that meets the target definition.

Different individuals and organizations are at different stages in their awareness of and support for investment in early childhood, and so they must be engaged in a way that is responsive to that awareness level. For example, if a group is completely unaware of FTF, it makes sense to engage them with a presentation from FTF. However, a group that is already aware of FTF and supportive of efforts to fulfill Arizona's commitment to our youngest kids might be engaged at a more specific level, such as providing tools to its members to assist with further outreach.

Regardless of the outreach tactic, audience members will be asked to distribute and engage in utilizing sign up cards that outline a list of tactics to engage champions in efforts to fulfill Arizona's commitment to our youngest kids. This sign up card is included in Appendix Four of this document, but some of the tactics offered on the form include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Give one presentation to another organization
- Disseminate FTF information to staff and champions
- Put FTF information on organizational website
- Allow FTF to submit articles for organizational newsletter

- Participate in a meeting with or call an elected official
- Participate in meeting with a member of the media
- Secure opportunity for FTF person to give a presentation
- Write letter to editor or Op-ed

Individuals conducting educational outreach – which may include FTF staff, Board members, Regional Council members, grantees and community champions – will be provided with extensive information about the tactic to use with audiences depending on their existing level of engagement. In addition, tools will be developed to assist any champion in conducting outreach. Those tools include:

1. General fact sheets
2. General one-pagers
3. Information about reporting outreach activities for tracking purposes
4. Drop-in newsletter articles to submit to organizations for their publications
5. Regular email updates with topical information highlighting different aspects of early childhood
6. Quarterly policy briefs
7. Letter to the editor and OpEd templates
8. Talking points, for ongoing communication with target audiences

*Tactic: Tool Kits will be developed to be left with audience members so that they can continue with their own educational outreach. The kits will include the following which can be offered online (or in hard copy format as needed):*

1. One pager: summary of FTF and its overall goals and achievements
2. Current Press Release: A recent release reflecting an event or achievement-preferably one that coincides with the group or individual receiving the information being presented
3. Fact Sheet: One page document with current statics regarding best practices or recent achievements – preferably one that coincides with the group or individual receiving the information being presented.
4. Business Card: Contact person who can provide additional information on any subject matter included in the kit.
5. CD/DVD: Instructional videos, special events, organizational overviews, key interviews, heartstring videos/story bank stories and other visual tools will be made available online (or can be provided on a CD or DVD as needed).

In Year 1, the target audiences include:

**Target Audience:** Early Childhood Development and Health-Related Providers

**Target Number of Champions:** 2,500

**Initial Timing:** May-November

Providers are the life-blood of FTF's work and shoulder the majority of the programs supported by FTF dollars. They reach a large portion of the potential audiences from which FTF will need to garner support, especially during Year 1. If properly engaged they can have a significant, positive impact on not only improving perception but also meeting tactical goals and benchmarks.

**Target Audience:** 2006 Original Endorsing Organizations

**Target Number of Champions:** 1,500

**Initial Timing:** May-November

The 2006 Original Endorsing Organizations are a critical partner in continuing the success of FTF. They understood early on why the creation and long-term sustainability of an independent statewide organization focused solely on Arizona's youngest children were so vital. Many individuals within this target audience have been identified within FTF message research as trusted sources to early childhood information and data sharing.

**Target Audience:** Early Childhood Coalitions/Advocacy organizations

**Target Number of Champions:** 250

**Initial Timing:** May-November

Early Childhood Coalitions/Advocacy organizations are second only to Providers when it comes to understanding the impact of early childhood programs on children, parents and the community at large. These organizations have the capacity to harness their memberships, who have significant breadth and depth throughout other priority audiences outside of their own organizations.

**Target Audience:** Prop 203 Groups

**Target Number of Champions:** 1,500

**Initial Timing:** May-November

The recent actions of the Arizona Legislature to reverse the Voter Protection Act set a precedent that places all VPA groups in danger of losing their funding. Conducting outreach to them to strengthen the fabric of support for voter-protected funds assists FTF in the short term and other voter-protected initiatives in the long-term.

**Target Audience:** Medical Community and any other related organization

**Target Number of Champions:** 500

**Initial Timing:** May-November

Those in the medical community can speak with authority regarding the physiological, psychological and mental health related impact (positive and negative) early childhood programs have on children. They have volumes of data that proves such an impact. FTF needs messengers like those in the medical community to leverage this expertise and knowledge not only within their communities but also among other target audiences to help garner additional support.

**Target Audience:** University Researchers

**Target Number of Champions:** 500

**Initial Timing:** May-November

Researchers involved in longitudinal studies relative to early childhood have significant data regarding the general and specific impact of such early childhood programs on communities. Message research has indicated that researchers are one of the most trusted groups to deliver the FTF message. Securing support from researchers and engaging them with other key audiences can help educate and persuade people to not only understand the significance of FTF programs but to motivate them to act to protect those same programs.

**Target Audience:** Woman's organizations

**Target Number of Champions:** 1,500

**Initial Timing:** May-November

Within Arizona there are many women specific organizations that can help assist FTF to expand its network of support. Women, as a group, are often more likely to be active with children's organizations and understand the impact of services funded by organizations like FTF. Regardless of political affiliation, women tend to be more vocal/active than most about particular issues.

**Target Audience:** Tribes

**Target Number of Champions:** 500

**Initial Timing:** May-November

The children within tribal areas are some of the highest risk children in Arizona. Early childhood development programs have and can continue to reduce that risk and produce more significant and positive outcomes for not only those children, but for the tribal nation as a whole. If FTF is to be a success, it must continually increase understanding and engagement of FTF systems in tribal communities and the effort to build an all inclusive system must ensure that the children, parents and communities within tribal nations are fully engaged as they have some of the highest risk factors that FTF programs can help address, reduce and even eliminate.

**Target Audience:** Faith Organizations & Institutions

**Target Number of Champions:** 1,000

**Initial Timing:** May-November

Faith organizations are many times a third party that has significant power to validate, or make irrelevant, issues brought to them by members of that community. In addition, the natural personal and professional networks that exist within faith organizations allow for messages to be distributed efficiently and broadly. Engaging key faith organizations will help FTF advance messages and expand its scope of support.

**Target Audience:** K-12

**Target Number of Champions:** 2,500

**Initial Timing:** September-December (once school resumes)

All school districts and the people within them are witnesses to the success of, and tremendous need for, a sustainable, statewide system for early childhood programs. They, like providers, are on the front lines almost every day experiencing what children need and how parents, policymakers and the community can work together to address those needs. K-12 institutions are the largest network of stakeholders that are located in every county and community throughout Arizona. Harnessing not only the support but also the expertise of this stakeholder group is critical to FTF's success. In addition, FTF message research has indicated that elementary school teachers are one of the most trusted individuals to deliver the FTF message.

### **Statewide and Regional Measurements and Benchmarks for trainings and community outreach**

- Train 320 individuals for active work (2 trainings per month; 20 people per training). *This should include participation by new champions, existing champions, regional council members, and anyone else interested in spreading the early childhood message.*
- Secure endorsements from (600 total or 75 per month) --individuals, stakeholder groups, and local elected officials (5% of total outreach)
- Collect 248 total or 31 per month story bank stories. *These stories are testimonials from FTF clients that speak to the impact and critical nature of FTF programs and services. The story bank will inform various types of earned media tactics (basis for press releases, examples of impact, example for a site visit, participant for site visits etc). This is a statewide benchmark.*
- Sign up 12,842 champions per year – this means that the individual or organization has committed to doing one of more of the activities on the Sign Up Form found in Appendix Four.

At the end of Year One, a review of efforts will be conducted. At that time it will be determined which target audiences should be added for Years 2 and 3 and what measures will be used to indicate success.

*Tactic: Outreach to Elected Officials and Candidates Running for Office*

2010 and 2012 are both significant election years. It is incumbent upon early childhood champions to reach out to elected officials and candidates running for office. Elected officials are making critical decisions every day that not only affect FTF directly, but the system of services for young children that exist within other agencies.

Statewide

FTF will develop a government affairs strategy that includes activities during and outside the legislative session.

These activities will include:

- Ongoing briefings from FTF Executive staff and Board
- Collaboration with coalition partners to promote a common agenda
- Invitations to elected officials to attend FTF events, forums, seminars and trainings
- Distribution of timely collateral material and communications
- Candidate briefings for candidates running for Governor, Secretary of State and Superintendent of Public Instruction

Regional

Regions are encouraged to involve elected officials and candidates running for office whenever possible.

Opportunities include:

- Attending regional partnership council meetings.
- Touring programs that have received FTF funding.
- Briefings to discuss regional issues related to early care and education.
- Kits with the most recently and relevant collateral material specific to a region.

❖ Statewide and Regional Measurement and Benchmarks

1. Candidates running for office are aware of FTF and speak positively of the organization and its mission.
2. Elected officials are aware of FTF, speak positively about the organization and support FTF in their decision-making.