First Things First

Regional Needs and Assets Assessment

General Assessment Approach

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This document outlines the basic elements of the general approach that will be used to help Regional Partnership Councils with their 2008 community needs and assets assessment. A specific approach that includes any unique indicators for which data are collected, as well as any unique means of collecting new data, will be detailed in a later document that each Regional Partnership Council will be reviewing and approving before work on those unique indicators or new data collection activities begin. The assessment process will begin on May 1, 2008 and conclude by September 1, 2008, when each Council will submit their final assessment report to First Things First.

The Assessment Team

Consultative Teams will be formed to carry out the work of the needs and assets assessment. Each consultative team, in collaboration with First Things First will consist of:

- an experienced technical assistance advisor already familiar with each Regional Partnership Council's communities;
- an experienced data management and evaluation advisor from LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc.; and
- each Regional Partnership Council Coordinator

The consultative team will work together throughout each phase of the project beginning with meetings to determine data collection strategies followed by discussions around data analysis and interpretations, and later with reporting and presenting results.

The Assessment Process

<u>Phase 1: May 1-May 31, 2008</u>

Beginning in May each consultative team will work together to identify sources of existing regional data for each of the indicators outlined in Section III of the *First Things First Regional Needs and Assets Assessment Template* (Template), which was distributed to Coordinators and Council Members at the First Things First Summit in April 2008. At the same time, First Things First will be working with the consultative teams to identify and gain access to state, federal, and other sources of regional data for the , indicators in Section III of the Template. Data which are easier or more appropriate to obtain at the state level will be collected by the consultative team and First Things First, while data that are easier and more appropriately accessed at the community level will be gathered locally. If a council member indicates an interest or willingness to help in the local data identification or collection process, the coordinator will facilitate that process; otherwise, the Coordinator working as part of the team will be responsible for this phase of the assessment process on behalf of the council. During this phase, the Coordinator will also be working with Council Members to identify any additional community indicators of interest within each of the seven indicator areas (e.g., Quality, Professional Development, etc.). Before this phase ends, the consultative team will create a specific proposal for how each indicator's existing data will be collected, any data that are not available at this time, and any plans for collecting new data related to the Template or to additional indicators of interest. This proposal, prepared by the Technical Assistance Advisor and Data and Evaluation Advisor, will then be presented to the Council for approval. Once the proposal is approved, at any time before May 31st, the next phase of the assessment will begin.

Phase II: Once Council Approves Proposal – June 31st 2008

During Phase II, active data collection activities will begin. Existing data sources that have already been identified as appropriate for describing indicators in the assessment will be used to create data tables that will eventually be included in the region’s Needs and Assets Assessment Report created for each Council. If the Council has approved the collection of any new data for indicators where no existing or appropriate data existed, at the regional level, those new data collection activities will also begin during this phase. Data collection activities for existing data would include reading reports where data findings are summarized in written form and reviewing databases of “raw” data, or data that have not been summarized in written form. The Technical Assistance Advisor and Data Management and Evaluation Advisor will conduct these data collection activities and keep the coordinators informed of their progress. New data can be collected through many different means and will depend on the nature of the data being explored, the community context, and any rules or protocols that must be followed for data collection, such as tribal resolutions or confidentiality requirements. Examples of new data collection activities could include interviews with key community members, surveys, focus groups, observations (such as mapping where childcare centers are located) or document review (such as looking in the phone book to see how many private childcare centers are available to families). During Phase II a very rough draft of each Council’s Needs and Assets Assessment will be created to reflect progress being made in the data collection process. This draft will also include data for Section II of the Needs and Assets Assessment Template, which will be organized by the Data Management and Evaluation Advisors from LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. on behalf of the team. The Technical Assistance Advisor and Data Management and Evaluation Consultant will provide this draft report to the Coordinator, who will then provide the draft report to the Council for review. Council approval is not required to complete the draft report.

Phase III: July 1-July 31, 2008

The reporting process will become more formalized in Phase III when a second draft report, with all report sections completed (I through IV) will be created by mid-month and distributed to each Coordinator for their review and feedback. A final report will be ready for Council review and approval on or before July 31, 2008. The Data Management and Reporting Advisors from LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. will have primary responsibility for the creation, editing, and production of the final report that is then submitted by each Coordinator for approval to each Regional Partnership Council.

Phase IV: August1-August 31, 2008

All Councils will approve their Needs and Assets Assessment Report no later than August 31, 2008 for submission to First Things First by September 1, 2008. The full consultative team (Technical Assistance Advisor, Data and Evaluation Advisor, and Council Coordinator) will also make a presentation of the report’s major findings before each Regional Partnership Council no later than August 31, 2008.

Phase V: Beginning September 1, 2008

First Things First will begin the process of professionally publishing all Regional Partnership Councils’ approved Needs and Assets Assessment Reports.