

## First Things First

## Statewide Strategy Update

June, 2009

1. **Quality First-** The first round of participants have been selected. Coaching Grantee's have been making contact with centers and completing the enrollment paperwork. Assessment Grantee's have been completing the ECERS, ITERS and FCERS assessments on participants who have successfully enrolled in the program. A list of the participating centers will be released once all have signed enrollment paperwork. This is a time consuming process because some centers/homes have decided after selection not to participate for a variety of reasons. Tribal centers/homes also take additional time to complete the process. The second round of selections (regionally funded) will begin sometime in July.
2. **Child Care Health Consultation-** Pima County has signed its' contract to provide training and technical assistance for the program. Negotiations are underway with County Health Departments across the state to provide the services. In some instances, the program will not be provided by the local health department. Some tribal entities will opt for someone within their own community to provide the service. At least one local health department in Arizona contracts out all of its' health services to a local health center so they have no capacity to provide the service. Additionally we have some special concerns in regions with more than one county health department. We are working with the local health departments and tribal entities in all of these locations to get the needed services.
3. **TEACH scholarships-** First Things First and the Association for Supportive Child Care, The TEACH administrative home, have created procedures to assist Quality First coaches as they conduct the initial orientations and explain the availability of the scholarships to staff. TEACH information sessions have been scheduled across the state to explain the program and answer questions. The first scholarship applications for Quality First enrolled program staff will be completed this month as coaches meet with directors and providers.
4. **Parent Kits-** Are being distributed across the state with the exception of two locations on Navajo Nation. We continue to work with those locations to begin distribution as soon as possible. A total of 15,604 kits have been distributed through April 30th.
5. **Compensation and Retention Initiative-** Many of you have no doubt heard by now that the RFGA for Compensation and Retention was cancelled. Plans are to re-tool the RFGA and re-release it sometime this summer. For additional information, please see the message sent out by Karen Woodhouse on June 3, 2009. The cancellation had nothing to do with the quality, nor the number of proposals received but instead was related to some internal concerns about the underlying structure that WE still needed to develop in order for this program to be successful.
6. **Physician Outreach and Training-** The Scope of Work is currently being completed for this initiative. It is being vetted by First Things First staff and is expected to be placed out for RFGA

in the next few weeks. The strategy is asking for an applicant to provide physician training and technical assistance to improve physician practice throughout the state. Several regions opted to “buy in” to this strategy, as they had similar regional strategies of their own. The scope of work is being written to include any specialized regional issues that need to be addressed.

7. **Mental Health Consultation-** The scope of work is also being completed for this initiative. This strategy was designed to set up an administrative home as an infrastructure for delivery of mental health consultation services. The administrative home will assist healthcare professionals in getting the appropriate credentials to provide mental health consultation to children 0-5 years of age via scholarships. There are additional components to provide continuing education opportunities and assist regions in offering financial incentives to recruit qualified professionals to specific communities. Currently, this document has been sent out for vetting to other First Things First staff, including regional team members, for comments and should be out for RFGA in the next several weeks.
8. **Workforce Support and Readiness-** This strategy was developed to increase the available workforce where known shortages exist. FTF is partnering with Arizona State University’s speech language pathology department to expand the number of professionals with specialized training in working with children birth to three. One component includes increasing capacity for more students to enroll in the program, another provides scholarships for students enrolled in the program and a third creates a training component specific to pediatric feeding issues. The contract with ASU is not yet signed but should be very soon. Preparations for the expansion of the program are already underway.
9. **Oral Health-** The oral health strategy was focused on obtaining a consultant familiar with oral health issues to work with FTF staff and regions to strengthen the infrastructure of oral health care delivery. This will be done using a variety of methods including working with existing structures (CCHC, Regional Oral Health partners etc.), marketing campaigns, supporting health education and training and support to dental providers. The work is just beginning on this scope of work and will be going out for RFGA sometime in the future.
10. **Outreach and Enrollment Assistance-** This strategy had no funding attached to it. FTF has agreed to work with a variety of stakeholders throughout the state to promote increased outreach and enrollment for public health insurance. This strategy is meant to compliment the regional strategies aimed at increasing enrollment for qualified families by working with existing partners to improve policies. There are no contracts but conversations among key stakeholders have been ongoing in the process.

Some additional information and updates from the Policy team that might be of interest to the Regional Partnership Councils include:

1. The statewide needs and assets report is in the process of being created. The first draft is nearing completion and the vetting process will begin once it is completed.

2. Several regions put funding into recruiting health professionals (SLP, PT, OT etc.) via loan repayment incentives and/or stipends. We are negotiating with ADHS, Health Systems Development to administer this program. They are willing and have the experience to do so. At this time, we are awaiting word from the Attorney General's office regarding some legal issues that were encountered and will move forward once we have clarification.
3. The Tribal Consultation Policy went before the Board in May and was passed!
4. We are still awaiting word that we have received the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant but expect to hear any day now. This is a federal grant and once we have it we will finally be able to provide materials to the public that are translated into other languages! Our Health Advisory Committee is listed as the Advisory Committee on that grant. Judy Walruff put in a lot of time and energy into getting this grant to us.
5. The Health Advisory Committee is also listed on the Project LAUNCH grant. This program is beginning its' strategic planning process the first week of June. Several FTF staff and volunteers are a part of the process. From Policy, Judy Walruff and I will be the representatives. The planning process involves four half day sessions over the next 8 weeks.
6. A new Family Support Statewide strategy went before the board in April and was sent back for some clarification. Due to the already large meeting agenda for the board in June, we anticipate it going back before the board at the August meeting for approval. This strategy involves the development of a web based education and information system for families,