



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

### **Quality First (QF) Scholarship Specialist**

First Things First (Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board) is a public agency and one of the critical state partners in creating a child and family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona's children. Created by voter initiative in 2006, First Things First operates through a surcharge on tobacco products. Governed by a state Board with 28 regional partnership councils, First Things First is a decentralized organization that engages diverse constituencies to accomplish its mission. Organizational values include a focus on accountability, transparency, coordination, collaboration and on the outcomes that will ensure young children start kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school and in life.

#### **Job Summary:**

The QF Scholarship Specialist is responsible for the allocation, tracking and analysis of Quality First Scholarships. In addition, the QF Scholarship Specialist will support Quality Assurance (QA) efforts conducted by FTF on the implementation of the QF Scholarship Program and other aspects of the QF Program as a whole. The QF Scholarship Specialist will monitor compliance work performed by the QF Scholarship grantee in relation to early learning programs statewide.

#### **Distinguishing Characteristics:**

The ideal candidate will enthusiastically support the vision and mission of First Things First and possess the personal qualities of integrity and credibility. She/he will have the proven ability to work within teams to accomplish multiple tasks and keep multiple projects organized and progressing.

The work of the QF Scholarship Specialist will be completed under the direction of the Quality First Finance Manager. The QF Scholarship Specialist's work will be conducted as part of a cross divisional team within FTF that includes Program and Regions. As part of this larger team they will represent the Finance area within the Operations Division of FTF.

In this role the QF Scholarship Specialist will work directly with early learning programs that receive QF Scholarships, the QF Scholarship grantee, and multiple internal FTF teams including IT, Program and Evaluation Division, and the Regional Division (including regional councils).

The ideal candidate will be able to take on and complete tasks as directed in an efficient and effective manner. Effective communication and customer service skills, attention to detail, and follow through are paramount for success in this position.

FTF's QF Scholarship Specialist has responsibility for:

- Analyzing system data to establish baseline scholarship allocations
- Work with regional and program teams to understand, align, and operationalize programmatic and regional goals for QF scholarships
- Interface with early learning programs and realign resources so that QF Scholarship fund usage is maximized and programmatic goals are achieved
- Review monthly data submissions and align to reimbursement requests
- Support other FTF team members in understanding and reporting on QF Scholarship data/usage, including the creation of solitary reports as necessary/requested
- Assist in, and ensure, provider inquiries about program activities are addressed or properly routed for resolution
- As required/directed, review communications prepared internally and/or by the QF Scholarship grantee for early learning programs
- Act as a resource for regional teams related to the QF Scholarship program and its structure, which may include periodic council presentations across the state
- Support broader Quality First monitoring, budgeting and implementation efforts in conjunction with the QF Program team
- Calculate various/multiple regional scholarship allocation requirements for future fiscal years based on different funding scenarios and strategic intent
- Other duties as assigned by the Quality First Finance Manager

The QF Scholarship Specialist is a key position within FTF's QF team, and the work is critical to the delivery of services by the unit as a whole. The individual in this role should have the ability to be adaptable and flexible. In addition, this position requires the ability to learn quickly and take on projects as assigned, carrying them through to completion with little oversight.

**EXAMPLE DUTIES:**

The following is a list of the type of duties and responsibilities assigned to a QF Scholarship Specialist. This list is not meant to be an absolute listing, but instead provides examples of typical duties expected of a QF Scholarship Specialist. Under the guidance of the Quality First Finance Manager

- Analyzing spreadsheets with complex data sets showing such things as usage patterns by provider and/or region
- Monthly reconciliation and identifying inappropriate payments based on aligning submitted data with program standards
- Assisting regional team members in preparing for, and even staffing, regional council meetings where information about QF Scholarships is being presented
- Working closely with early learning programs to determine appropriate QF Scholarship allocation levels based on the number and type available in the region Creating unique regional projection models to estimate future scholarship usage and provider enrollment changes in order to distribute slots appropriately
- Implementing allocations according to the diverse goals of the individual regional councils and adhering to their intent while congruently working within the overall statewide program model
- Assisting the QF team in identifying barriers to and/or opportunities for Scholarship usage, and then helping to translate those insights to others through direct communications and/or trainings and technical assistance
- Working with the QF Program and QA teams in QA efforts and assessing if programmatic alignment is being achieved among the various QF components in early learning programs
- Identifying how enrollment status and rating changes in QF locations affect program execution, providers, and children/families and working proactively to mitigate any adverse impacts
- Assisting with QF and scholarship strategy forecasting and illustrating how future model changes and other various scenarios would affect the diverse stakeholders

**Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's degree
- 2 years program monitoring, data analysis and/or implementation experience; OR any equivalent combination of experience, training and/or education
- Strong interpersonal skills, including: listening, coaching, flexibility and training
- Strong project management, and time management skills
- Effective verbal and written communication skills and ability to articulately present ideas
- Desire to engage in continuous learning
- Knowledge of how and when to access support resources
- Ability to establish and maintain working/effective relationships in and outside the organization
- Capacity to work successfully with people from a variety of culturally diverse backgrounds
- Initiative, sound judgment, resourcefulness and problem solving skills

- Proficiency with Microsoft applications such as Outlook, Word, Visio and PowerPoint, with an advanced capability/knowledge of Excel
- Data Analysis experience
- Business/program awareness and numerical ability
- Willingness to adhere to all principles of confidentiality
- Value operating in a collaborative and cooperative environment

Preference will be given to those individuals who possess:

- Scholarship distribution/planning experience
- Financial aid background

Review of resumes will begin on Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and continue until the position is filled. For consideration please submit your cover letter, comprehensive resume and three professional references by the close of business on Aug. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to

[www.azstatejobs.gov](http://www.azstatejobs.gov)

In the AZ State Personnel System, the position is classified as a Grade 24 and has a salary range of \$52,000 to \$57,000. The position is not covered under the State of Arizona Merit system rules. The State of Arizona offers an outstanding comprehensive benefits package.