

## **Vice President, Strategic Partnerships and Investments**

### First Things First

First Things First (Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board) is 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 is 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.

### Position Summary

First Things First engaged a diverse group of stakeholders to create an initial public-private partnerships plan. This plan is an effort to more intentionally explore how First Things First can strategically leverage local, state and national resources – public and private – to advance Arizona's early childhood system.

The Vice President, Strategic Partnerships and Investments, is responsible for leading the implementation of this plan. The position is a direct report to the CEO of First Things First and as such is a member of the organization's management team. The Vice President, Strategic Partnerships and Investments, manages and is supported by a program specialist and a shared administrative position.

Implementation of the strategic partnerships and investments plan is a fundamental long-term strategy to enable First Things First and its partners to work towards a sustainable future for an effective early childhood system in Arizona. This effort will identify and secure new opportunities and resources to extend and leverage First Things First statewide and regional initiatives. Strategies to develop partnerships and investments will likely include federal resources; national, regional and local foundations; the business community; Indian tribes and nations, tribal organizations; nonprofit organizations; the exploration of earned income approaches; and other avenues.

Early on, the Vice President will staff the review and update of the existing plan that will be used as the strategic blueprint going forward. It is also expected that the review, update and ongoing management of the plan will engage a range of diverse stakeholders that include representatives of the First Things First Board, regional partnership councils, staff and public and private sector partners.

### Distinguishing Characteristics

The ideal candidate brings demonstrable experience that supports the vision and mission of First Things First, as well as a passion for positively impacting the lives of young children and families.

S/he thrives in a team-oriented environment as both a team leader and a team member, and is committed to developing talent and leadership inside and out of the organization. The candidate has a proven track record in a high-performance organization, and can work independently and in concert with First Things First leadership. S/he has outstanding planning, organizational and implementation abilities with detail-oriented follow-through.

The candidate has a keen entrepreneurial style and is innovative and resourceful in creating opportunities and solving problems. S/he brings outstanding communication skills and can translate complex issues in a concise, compelling manner to a diverse set of audiences.

The ideal candidate has demonstrated acumen in the business, nonprofit, philanthropic, education and/or government sectors. Key to success in this position is a proven track record of engaging multiple audiences and securing their commitment of resources, programs and policies.

### Duties and Responsibilities

#### *Strategic planning*

- Staff the revision and update of the First Things First strategic partnerships and investments plan – which serves as a blueprint to generate a range of strategic partnerships and investments.
- Organize and staff an advisory committee to provide guidance and support to the design and implementation of the long-term plan. The advisory committee may consist of the First Things First CEO and representatives of the organization’s Board, regional partnership councils, staff and external partners.
- Create, manage and implement annual work plans that put short, mid and long-term strategies into action.

#### *Organizational transformation*

- Work collaboratively across First Things First departments, initiatives and regional partnership councils and Board to support and strengthen the culture of entrepreneurialism, cross-sectoral communication, and understanding of collective impact.
- Work closely with staff and consultants to incorporate First Things First research and evaluation into short and long-term planning for strategic partnerships and investments.
- Build out and coordinate with internal teams and systems to support timely and effective pursuit of and responses to partnership and investment opportunities.
- Develop and manage appropriate internal infrastructure including the program specialist position, support staff, consultants and software.

#### *Collaborate with Regional Partnership Councils*

- Ensure effective coordination between statewide and local strategic partnerships and investments.
- Work with appropriate First Things First staff to design, implement and coordinate efforts to build the capacity of regional partnership councils and staff to cultivate and secure resources.
- Engage representatives of regional councils in the ongoing management and updating of the First Things First strategic partnerships and investments plan.
- Develop a consistent and effective communications plan with First Things First staff to keep regional councils apprised of the overall partnerships and investments work and that of their council colleagues.

#### *Development of strategic partnerships and investment strategies*

- Identify, assess and prioritize partnerships and investment opportunities that are aligned with and support First Things First goals and objectives, strategic blueprint and annual work plan, and financial and project targets.

- Incubate and launch new partnership and investment initiatives that are aligned with and support First Things First goals and objectives.
- Pursue, negotiate, craft and at times manage partnerships and investment strategies.
- Support the ongoing development of regional partnership council capacity in developing, cultivating and implementing partnerships and investment strategies.
- Identify, prioritize and recruit foundations and major donors; state and federal agencies and officials; national and state organizations; research and policy agencies; practitioners and others in developing, cultivating, supporting and managing partnerships and investment strategies.

#### *Ambassador to public and private sectors*

- Represent First Things First in a variety of settings. Prepare and disseminate information demonstrating the impact of First Things First at the statewide and local levels.
- Work closely with First Things First regional partnership councils, staff and consultants to develop strategic communications for diverse audiences that engage them in supporting early childhood development in Arizona and partnering with First Things First.
- Be active in appropriate networks to cultivate support for First Things First.

#### Qualifications

- Background of 7 to 10 years progressively responsible leadership positions in high-performing public, private or non-profit organizations, with experience in public policy and program development.
- Thorough content knowledge and previous experience in early childhood, K-12 education, state and federal government, and/or public policy.
- Proven track record in building public-private relationships through fund development, collaborations and/or partnerships.
- Demonstrated ability to engage diverse audiences to support a cause, organization or project. At certain points, this position will interact with and engage staff, volunteers, parents, early childhood professionals and providers, community leaders, government officials, tribal partners, public and private entities and faith-based groups in communities throughout the state.
- Understanding of and ability to work effectively in Arizona's unique and diverse environment.
- Skilled at working with leaders in the philanthropic, corporate/business and nonprofit sectors (local, state and national), and/or high-net-worth individuals.
- Expertise in productively engaging elected and public officials, and local, state and federal agency leaders. Understanding of state government and legislative operations.
- Brings an entrepreneurial management style to create opportunities and address problems in a decentralized organization.
- Strong team leadership combined with experience in shared decision-making management and supervisory skills. Demonstrated ability to work with persons with diverse opinions, work styles and communication styles and to engage them in meeting the articulated priorities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; particularly adept in public speaking and presentations. Ability to distill complex issues and convey a compelling story in a clear, concise manner in individual, group and conference settings.
- Track record of ability to work within a fast-moving environment, set clear goals and priorities, and exercise resourcefulness in meeting those objectives while balancing multiple tasks.
- This position is not a grant writing position. However, the ideal candidate should bring a knowledge and prior experience in financial and budgeting principles, contract and grant management, grant writing and administration.

- Commitment to uphold high ethical standards and promote sound business practices.
- Technical skills that ensure effective use of appropriate computer hardware, software, databases and other communication technologies and devices.
- Ability to travel throughout the state, and nationally on occasion.
- Undergraduate degree required and Master's degree preferred from an accredited college or university in education, public policy, organizational development, business, nonprofit management or related field.

### **How to Apply**

First review of resumes will begin on June 5, 2015 and continue until the position is filled. To be considered, please email your cover letter and resume to:

**Holley Mulholland at [hmulholland@aztf.gov](mailto:hmulholland@aztf.gov)**  
(no calls please)

In the Arizona State Personnel System, this position is classified as a Grade 26 with a hiring range of \$95,000 to \$105,000. The position is not covered under the State of Arizona Merit system rules. The State of Arizona offers an outstanding comprehensive benefits package.

Arizona State government is an EOE/ADA reasonable accommodation employer.