



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Regional Partnership Council Member Application Guide



Updated: January 2012

First Things First Regional Partnership Council Member Application Guide

I. Background

In November 2006, the voters of Arizona passed a statewide ballot initiative that funds a voluntary system of early childhood development and health, establishing Arizona's Early Childhood Development and Health Board known as "First Things First". Arizona is now presented with an unprecedented opportunity to create an early childhood system that affords our children an equal chance to reach their fullest potential, provide families with real choices about their children's educational and developmental experiences, and engage every community in sharing the responsibility as well as the benefits of safe, healthy and productive residents. First Things First has established a clear vision and mission to guide its work.

VISION

All Arizona's children are ready to succeed in school and in life.

MISSION

First Things First is one of the critical partners in creating a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona's children birth through age five.

The First Things First governance structure includes both a state level Board and local Regional Partnership Councils. The model combines consistent state infrastructure and oversight with strong, local, community involvement in the planning and delivery of services.

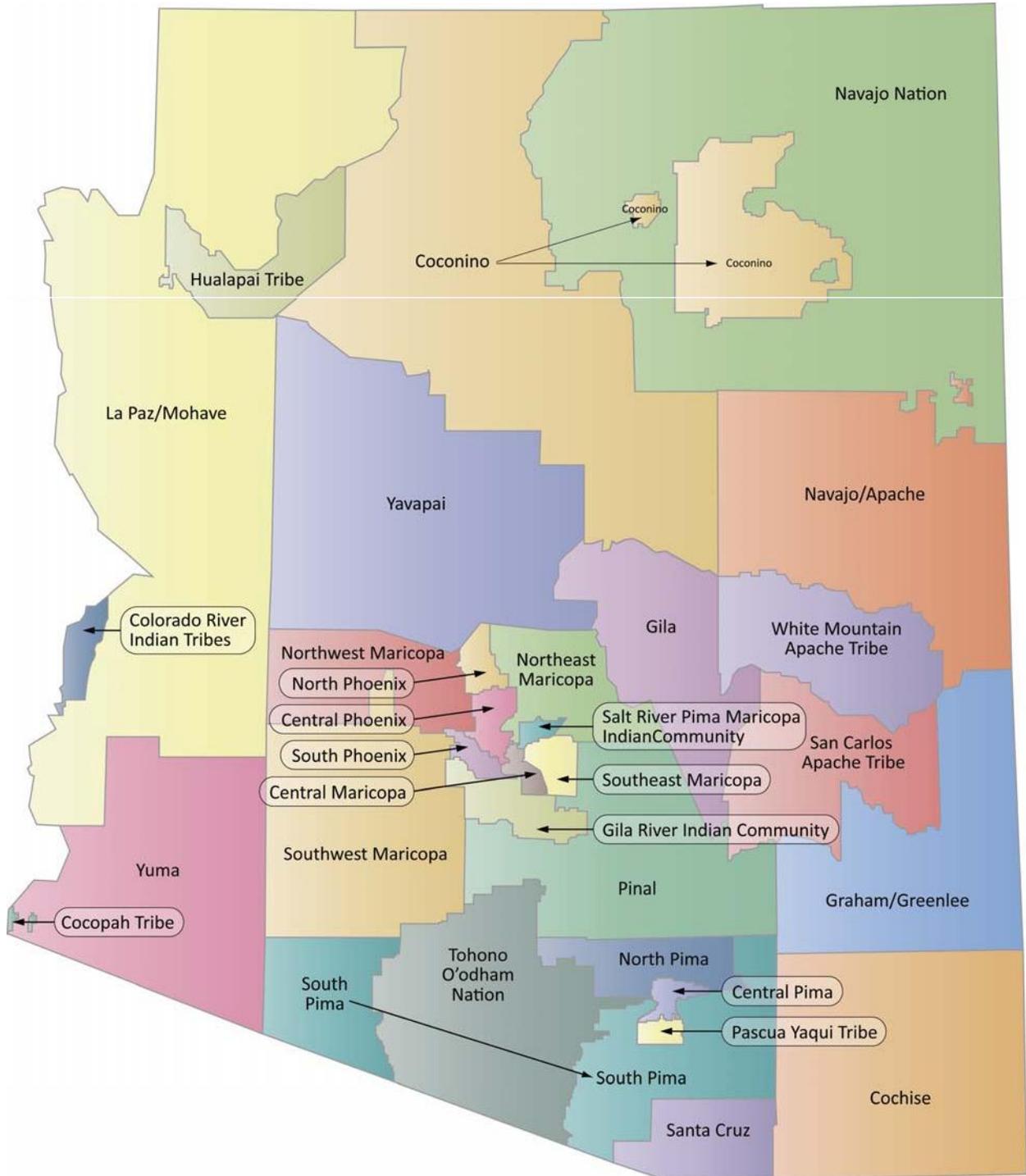
- The First Things First State Board (the Board) consists of nine (9) volunteer members, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the legislature, and three (3) non-voting/ex-officio members who are State Agency (Department of Health Services, Department of Education, and Department of Economic Security) Directors or appointees. The Board has responsibility for planning and implementing actions which will result in an improved system of early childhood development and health statewide.
- The Regional Partnership Councils are voluntary local governance bodies responsible for planning and implementing actions to improve early childhood development and health outcomes within a defined geographic area of the state (a region). Regional Partnership Council members apply, are screened and interviewed, and then are appointed by the State Board.

The First Things First geographic regional boundaries were initially established in 2007. The boundaries are reviewed by the Board every two years. Any approved boundary changes are to take effect the following July 1.

Indian Tribes recognized by the Federal Government with Tribal Lands located in the State of Arizona may:

1. Participate in the designated geographical region or regions in which their Tribal lands are located, or;
2. Elect to have its Tribal lands treated as a separate region by the Board. If a Tribe so elects, it shall inform the Board by March 1 of any even-numbered year that it wishes to be treated as a separate region for the next two fiscal years.

At this time there are 31 Regional Partnership Councils throughout Arizona:



Statutory Responsibilities

Each Regional Partnership Council has a variety of responsibilities under the law. Responsibilities defined in ARS Title 8, Chapter 13, Section 1161 are:

- A. Identify the assets available for early childhood development and health programs in its region, including opportunities for coordination and use of other available funding sources.
- B. Identify and prioritize the unmet need for early childhood development and health programs in its region.
- C. Submit a report detailing assets, coordination opportunities and unmet needs to the Board biannually. (The First Things First Board shall have the discretion to approve or reject a Regional Partnership Council's assessment, in whole or in part, or to require revisions.)
- D. Annually develop a Regional Plan for the expenditure, during the next fiscal year, of funds budgeted by the Board pursuant to 8-1184 to meet the needs identified in its region.
- E. Conduct the approved programs directly and/or make the approved grants pursuant to Section 8-1173.
- F. Increase parents' and providers' access to information about early childhood development and health programs.
- G. May solicit private funds from individuals, corporations and foundations to support its efforts to improve the quality of and access to early childhood development and health programs in its Region. The Board must approve any gifts received in response to Regional Partnership Council solicitations.

Composition and Requirements

1. Each Regional Partnership Council shall be made up of eleven members who reside or work in the region. Required membership for Regional Partnership Councils is defined below. While examples are defined, individual applicants may qualify based on experience or a description not specifically included but which are consistent with community norms.
 - Parent: parent of a child five or younger at the time of their appointment to the Regional Council - including guardians who are the primary care takers of a child five or younger.
 - Child care provider or preschool provider: licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services, certified by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, authorized by a Tribal government or the U.S. Department of Defense or registered with Child Care Resource and Referral.
 - Health services provider: serving children birth through 5 years. This may include but is not limited to physicians, nurses, county health department lay-health workers, school nurses, dentists, dental hygienists, registered dietitians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, other physical and mental health services paraprofessionals.
 - Public school administrator: for the purposes of this requirement, charter schools established pursuant to Title 15 are considered public schools; this also includes Tribal Community schools and Federal / BIA schools on tribal lands.
 - Early childhood educator: Individuals providing early childhood professional development instruction, including but not limited to community college and university level instructors or administrators and other professional development organizations.
 - Member of the business community: an owner, officer, CEO or member of the executive management staff of a for-profit or not-for-profit business.
 - Member of the faith community: an individual with a voluntary or paid role within the faith community, a Traditionalist in a Tribal community, or other faith based representation consistent with the community norms and titles.
 - Member of a philanthropic organization: a member of the Board of Directors or executive management staff.
 - Tribal member representative: a public official or employee of a Tribal Government. In addition to the specific public official or employee of a Tribal Government representative, Tribal members may also participate in the Regional Council in any of the other categories listed.
 - At Large Representative: At Large membership is first available to Tribal representatives from each Tribal Nation located in the region. The balance of membership must be a community member who lives or works in the region and who may, but is not required to, represent any of the categories identified above.

2. Members must either work in or reside in the region of the Regional Partnership Council on which they serve.
3. Membership of a Regional Partnership Council should, as much as possible, reflect the cultural, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the population of the region.
4. Members of the Regional Partnership Councils shall be appointed by the First Things First State Board. An application and selection process is in place in order to make recommendations to the Board.
5. After 2010, all terms of membership shall run in four-year terms, to begin and end July 1.
 - A. Initial terms of members for each Regional Partnership Council are:
 - Five terms beginning April 1, 2008 and ending July 1, 2010.
 - Six terms beginning April 1, 2008 and ending July 1, 2012.
 - B. Following the initial terms above, all terms will be four year terms:
 - Five which begin July 1, 2010 and end July 1, 2014.
 - Six to begin July 1, 2012 and end July 1, 2016.
6. Tribal Nations included in a region (the Tribe has not selected to have a separate Regional Partnership Council), shall have a representative on the Regional Partnership Council.
7. A Regional Partnership Council with boundaries which include multiple Tribal Nations shall have a representative from each of the Tribal Nations included within the regional boundaries.
8. Regional Partnership Council members may serve on only one Regional Partnership Council at a time.
9. Members of the Regional Partnership Council who miss more than three meetings without excuse or resign their membership shall be replaced by the Board after a public application process and with the input of the Regional Partnership Council. ARS 8-1162(c). The full attendance policy is available in the Regional Governance Policy.
10. Regional Partnership Council members are not eligible to receive compensation. They are eligible for travel expenses and reimbursement for subsistence pursuant to Title 38, Chapter 4, Article 2. Reimbursement shall be paid from the administrative costs account of the Early Childhood Development and Health Fund established by Section 8-1181 on claims approved by the Executive Director or appointee.
11. Members of the Regional Partnership Council are immune from personal liability with respect to all acts done and actions taken in good faith within the scope of their authority during duly constituted regular and special meetings with approval of a majority of the Regional Partnership Council.

II. Application, Selection, and New Appointment Process

1. The application guide, job description, and application for the Regional Partnership Council membership are posted on the First Things First Web site, www.azftf.gov .

Hard copy application forms can be downloaded from the website or are available by request by calling 602-771-5100.

2. Applications may be submitted online, by mail, or by fax:
 - a. Application may be made online at www.azftf.gov
 - b. Applications submitted by mail shall be sent to:
Arizona Early Childhood Education and Health Board
Chief Regional Officer
4000 N. Central, Suite 800
Phoenix, Arizona 85012
 - c. Applications submitted via fax shall be faxed to: 602-274-7040
3. Applicants may apply for up to two Regional Partnership Councils, one for where they live and one for where they work. If an applicant is submitting an application based on where they are employed, it is for the Regional Partnership Council in which their office resides. If an applicant's work is conducted at multiple sites across multiple Regional Partnership Councils then the applicant must select the appropriate region.
4. Applications must include personal or professional resumé/curriculum vitae from each applicant and three (3) references with contact phone numbers and emails.
5. This is a public application process. Applicants' names may be made available to the public at any time during the process.
6. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, First Things First will make reasonable accommodation(s) to persons wishing to serve as Regional Partnership Council members. Persons with a disability selected for interviews may request reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, by calling the First Things First offices at 602-771-5100. Requests should be made as to allow sufficient time to arrange the accommodation.
7. Any questions regarding the application should be directed to (602) 771-5100.

Screening

First Things First staff screens applications and refers qualified applicants to a nominating committee designated by the Regional Partnership Council. The approach to review and screening includes:

- a) Applications are screened for required elements: applicant lives or works in the region; applicant meets the required description of at least one of the membership categories and/or is applying as a member at large; applicant has submitted requested references.
- b) Screening and rating for experience, skills and knowledge. A point process is utilized to screen the applications and rank based on knowledge, skills and experience demonstrated on the application. The point categories are aligned with the knowledge, skills, and abilities identified in the job description.

The individuals scoring highest in each membership category shall be prioritized and forwarded to the nominating committee for interviews as council openings occur or prior to the beginning of new terms.

Interviewing and Appointment

1. Regional Partnership Councils will appoint at least three people to serve as a nominating committee. This committee may include regional council members, but should consist, at a minimum, of at least one community representative who is not currently serving on the Regional Council. The nominating committee is responsible for evaluating applications, conducting interviews of selected applicants, using the standard interview questions developed for this process, and directly recommending appointments to the Board.
2. The interview responses shall be rated, using a point system based on the responsiveness to the interview question, by each person on the interview panel. Following each interview panelists shall form consensus ratings for the interview.
3. Once interviews are completed, recommendations for Regional Council member appointments are forwarded to the First Things First Executive Director for review. The Executive Director may request additional recruitment and/or interviews be conducted or submit recommendations to the Board.
4. At the next scheduled First Things First Board meeting, the Board shall consider recommendations and may approve new appointments to Regional Partnership Councils.
5. Newly appointed Regional Partnership Council members shall be notified in writing by the First Things First Executive Director. Applicants who were interviewed but not appointed will also receive notification. Applications will remain on file for consideration for at least two years.

6. Following notification, new appointees shall:
 - a) Sign a Letter of Commitment acknowledging their commitment and their awareness of conflict of interest issues.
 - b) Complete a declaration of potential Conflict of Interest; i.e. identify any potential conflict of interest such as investment in, ownership of, or employment with, an organization that may benefit financially from decisions of the Council.
 - c) Complete the Arizona Department of Administration Volunteer Registration Form.
 - d) Be provided with a Regional Council member orientation by First Things First staff.
 - e) Complete required documentation and required training for State of Arizona volunteer service including: I-9 form, Public Service Ethics Training, defensive driver training.

Conflict of Interest

According to the First Things First Board Policy:

Board members, Regional Partnership Council members and employees of the Board shall comply with the conflict of interest provisions of A.R.S. Title 38, Chapter 3, Article 8 – 1173 (c). These statutes set the minimum standards expected of public officers and employees who, in their official capacities, are faced with a decision or contract that might affect their pecuniary or proprietary interests or those of a relative. Section 38-503 provides in part:

- A. Any public officer or employee of a public agency who has, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any contract, sale, purchase or service to such public agency shall make known that interest in the official records of such public agency and shall refrain from voting upon or otherwise participating in any manner as an officer or employee in such contract, sale or purchase.
- B. Any public officer or employee who has, or who's relative has, a substantial interest in any decision of a public agency shall make known such interest in the official records of such public agency and shall refrain from participating in any manner as an officer or employee in such decision.

Under this law, a Board member, Regional Partnership Council member or Board employee who has a conflict of interest must disclose the interest and refrain from participating in the matter. Board members, members of Regional Partnership Councils and Board employees may find guidance on this subject in the *Arizona Agency Handbook*, which is available on the Attorney General's website. http://www.azag.gov/Agency_Handbook/. Failure to comply with these provisions will be cause for removal of the member from the Council.