FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

AGENDA ITEM: February 7, 2013 Chairs & Vice Chairs Meeting

BACKGROUND: The Chair will present updates since the last Chairs & Vice Chairs Meeting and on upcoming events.

RECOMMENDATION: The Chair is providing this attachment for information purposes only.

# Discretionary Funding

*Questions presented to the regional councils for further discussion and feedback: If discretionary funding or a percentage of discretionary funding were set aside for regional councils to submit proposals as part of their funding plans for consideration by the Board for areas such as capacity building, research, and innovation, cross regional coordination, public/private partnerships, taking a strategy or set of strategies to scale, what are your reactions to this? What are the considerations and implications of this? What other considerations do you want to put on the table for discussion around discretionary funding?*

Below is a summary of the feedback compiled by the regional councils regarding the discretionary funding. Overall, the feedback reflects that the regional councils prefer that the methods currently used to allocate the discretionary funding remain in place at this time. Regional Councils did identify ideas for how the discretionary funding could be allocated differently and provided criteria and considerations for those ideas. In addition, there is support for an ad hoc committee to be convened to further review and provide recommendations to the Board.

**Major reasons identified for not changing the way discretionary funding is allocated**

- It is too soon to determine how best to allocate discretionary funding:
    - Need much more information about the ramifications of each possible option and how that would impact the regions;
    - A few more years would give regional councils the ability to determine which strategies and/or approaches best fit with this type of funding.

- Current method of allocating the discretionary funding is fair, equitable and working:
    - Comfortable with the way they are currently allocated;
    - Overall, the consensus was to keep it equitable and "as is";
    - The current formula works well and equally distributes funds to regions;
    - Likes the idea of using some of the discretionary funds for Capacity building, research and innovation, cross regional coordination, public/private partnerships and/or taking strategies to scale, however the discretionary funds used for these ideas should remain at the current regional level (calculated at the regional level using population and poverty data);
    - Appreciate the spirit of collaboration and coordination that is occurring cross-regionally and is helping to maximize funds and support neighboring regional councils that may not have the funds.

- A change to the discretionary funding would be a significant concern to the rural regions:
    - Rural Regions need to have the Frontier Adjustment as the funds are built into the funding plan to sustain strategies;
    - The Frontier Adjustment allows rural regions to address the higher cost associated with hiring and retaining qualified staff, the cost of travel necessary to implement work in the region, and be able to have the funding necessary to support the capacity building and infrastructure development needs that exist;
    - Rural regions face many challenges in implementing strategies such as geographic challenges of remoteness, transportation, and the great need that children and families have for support and resources across large geographic areas;
    - Discretionary funding has supported rural areas in building capacity and bringing programs to scale. Discretionary funds constitute a third of the allotment and the loss of these funds could impact the ability to build capacity and to bring programs to scale in rural areas.

- A change in the discretionary funding could significantly impact a region's allocation and ability to address needs of the region:

- The Council is very concerned that if our funding amounts go down in any way we will have extreme problems in maintaining any type of a system in the area;
- If our discretionary funding is no longer provided to the regional council, it will reduce the size of our budget tremendously, by about one third;
- This will impact the number of children we will be able to serve;
- Rural regions require more funds to effectively build capacity and provide services to rural children;
- Concerned about a reduction or complete removal of discretionary funding from the allotment. Discretionary funding comprises about a third of the base allocation and they feel that the potential loss of a third of the annual budget would have a negative effect on their ability to provide services and resources to children and families as they move forward.

- There is a concern about putting in place a competitive process:
  - A competitive process will favor regions with more capacity and perpetuate a "haves" and "have-nots" situation;
  - Competitive grants would place smaller regions at a disadvantage. These regions don't have the capacity that larger regions do to write grants and to use existing regional capacity for new projects;
  - Unintended consequences may arise with the approval of a proposal/application process, such as:
    - Other regional councils that have proposals that are unfunded feeling animosity towards those that have proposals approved;
    - Capacity of regional councils may vary in the area of developing proposals.

- Some level of concern that this is a punitive action for regional council's that have not spent funds:
  - There was an analogy about "discretionary funding" is a reward for those regions that are able to spend funds more easily because they don't have capacity or scalability issues;
  - It was acknowledged that if there are regions that continue to maintain large carry forward balances that it does present challenges, especially as there are most likely other regions that do have the ability to more fully utilize funding. So while there is an understanding for the need and desire to utilize funds to the fullest and most efficient and effective extent possible, there are concerns about the potential loss of funds in their region;
  - There is a feeling that "if we don't spend it, we won't get it"…….this may lead to unwise planning decisions on the part of regional councils so that they can maintain their overall budgets.

- Additional comments:
  - There is no fair way to rework the distribution of discretionary funds that could not be challenged;
  - Though the regional council was not loudly in favor, they are willing to entertain a shift in the way these funds are distributed, bearing in mind there is always initial resistance to change, even if the change produces an improved outcome.

**Concepts on how discretionary funding could be re-allocated**

- Continue to use the current funding formula but for the Board to consider establishing categories or themes for how discretionary monies can be used. The amount that needs to be allocated to a category or theme should increase gradually. If a region includes one or more of the themes in their funding plan then the region receives the funding.
  Examples:
  - Funds used for specific goal areas such as Quality First; To develop/improve the services for children with identified special needs who don't qualify for AzEIP;
  - Evaluation;
  - Funds for regional council's benchmarks being evaluated;
  - Taking priority strategies to scale.

- Consider discretionary dollars to be used to promote coordination within regions, cross regionally and for neighboring tribes to develop strategies together. The structure/process would be governed by all the chairs of First Things First regions included in the collaborative effort and decisions would be based on what is in the best interest of the entire cross regional area rather than a single region.

- Invest in Public Private Partnerships: Consider using the discretionary money for matching funding as various grants require some sort of matching of funds which would be a great use for discretionary dollars; FTF funds could be used to leverage other public private partnerships.

- Consider Funding Innovation and Research at a local level. There are various examples of that include professional development, dual language learners, etc.

- Using discretionary funding for one time needs or short term needs. Use as part of a systems building mechanism as long as it is going to achieve what is sustainable and systematic. If one time funding for a project becomes an option, what has to be looked at is the future impact and how this will advance the system; Setting aside a lesser amount of discretionary dollars for working on systems-building may be favorable option though a small pot of funds should be considered.

- Takes a small portion of the pot and makes it competitive:
    - Reluctant to see competition between regional councils because there can be winners and losers which can cause animosity between the regional councils;
    - Consider having rural regions earn extra 'points' or somehow be given additional weight so that the field is still somewhat level when proposals are reviewed for funding decisions. There is concern that proposals from rural regions would not be viewed in the same light as proposals from larger urban regions as a function of the overall cost to conduct the work – the more children there are, the more the work would likely cost, and with limited funding to go around, the fear is that rural regions would lose out because the numbers that might be impacted would likely be smaller;
    - Criteria identified:
        - Consideration should be given to who will carry out work and how a proposed program will be implemented if regional council drafts a proposal to be awarded funds;
        - Ensure that a sufficient amount of financial resources are distributed to see impact;
        - Equitable practices in how funding is issued need to be put in place;
        - Continue this approach for at least three years.

- Expand Frontier Adjustment
    - Consider using discretionary funds primarily in rural areas (due to considerations about urban areas having more funds for strategies);
    - Allocate funds to tribal regions to counter-balance the low census counts;
    - Consider adding to the "Frontier" formula the extended rural areas of Southwest Maricopa, for example Gila Bend. Towns in Southwest Maricopa do receive extra federal funding considerations for their location and the fact that other adjacent rural areas are being served by these center towns, i.e. Sentinel, Paloma, Dateland.

- Allocate funds to build capacity in rural areas, for prioritized goal areas, to address barriers that are impeding the implementation of new programs.

- Develop guidelines on how discretionary funding can be most effectively utilized, i.e., provide a distinction between "long-term" base funding and more "temporary funding".

**Forming an ad hoc committee**

- There is broad support to form an ad hoc committee to review the feedback from regional councils on discretionary funding and provide a recommendation on how to proceed, taking into account the various perspectives from all of the regional councils, to the Board.
    - Would like to see a group of representatives from regional councils across the state that is representatives of urban, rural and tribal regions and the flexibility to participate via live meeting or conference calls.

**Should changes be made, considerations for how to roll this out**

- Any changes to current the funding formula should be presented to regional councils well before any changes are made.
- If the Board does change the funding formula – please do not do it all at once - don't take discretionary dollars all at one time.
- Board needs to phase in whatever process it decides.
- If changes that could have significant impact on regional funding should be made in the future, it would be important that they be made in alignment with the three year funding plan cycle.

**Questions Raised**

- Have we explored what other states have done?

## Strategic Communications Plan

- Build & Drive Support
- Ensure Consistent Messaging
- Position FTF as a Leader
- Inform Caregivers

## Brand Advancement

- Strong, Clear Brand
- Communications Toolkit
- Protocols and Technical Assistance for Grantees
- Training for Stakeholders

## Strategic Messaging

- Effective Messaging
- National & Statewide Research
- Consistent Messaging
- "Rule of 7"

## Earned Media

### In the News

- Press Invitations to Major Events
- Local Media Relationships
- Bi-Monthly Press Releases
- Working with Grantees on Media Outreach – Programs and Services

## Earned Media

**276**
Media Hits Across Arizona

## Paid Media

TV, Radio, Billboards, Cinema, Online

**Over 500 Million**

Impressions

## Creative

## Creative

## Advertising Impressions

Total Campaign Impressions (FY12)

- 242.9 million
  - TV: 19 million
  - Billboards: 110 million
  - Cinema: 7.8 million
  - Online Display: 105.8 million

Facebook

- "Liked" – Increase of 59%
- 209,611 unique individuals saw content on Facebook

readyAZkids.com

- 3,100 visits to website
- 2,547 unique visitors

## Social Media

Join the Conversation.

## Interactive Strategy

Why?

- Reach, Micro-Targeting, Call to Action, ROI

How?

- Display Ads
  - Demographic Targeting
  - Geo Targeting
  - ReTargeting
  - Contextual Targeting
- PPC/Search
- Blogs
- Facebook
  - Non-Manager generated: 96 percent of the "Likes" for the campaign

## Community Outreach

**Local Voices**

- 1:1 Meetings/ Conversations
- Event Participation
- Presentations About Early Childhood
- Writing Articles/ Letters to the Editor
- Securing Media Opportunities

More than 3,000 meetings, presentations, and events

Created opportunities for almost 480,000 people to get information about the importance of early childhood

Signed up almost 8,000 champions to help continue to spread the word about the importance of early childhood

## Benchmark

**Increase the perceived importance of early childhood issues from 76% to:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 78% in FY 2011 | 80% actual |
| 79% in FY 2012 | 71% actual |
| 80% in FY 2013 | |

## Benchmark

**Increase total awareness of FTF from 20% baseline to:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 24% in FY 2011 | 34% actual |
| 27% in FY 2012 | 20% actual |
| 32% in FY 2013 | |

## Benchmark

**Of Arizonans surveyed who were aware of FTF, 71% strongly or somewhat support FTF (31% strongly). Increase to:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 75% in FY 2011 | 83%, 63% strongly - actual |
| 80% in FY 2012 | 79%, 43% strongly - actual |
| 85% in FY 2013 | |

## On the Horizon

**New Message Testing & Polling**

**Strategic Communications Plan Update**

- Regional Council Survey
- Regional & Community Outreach Staff Survey
- Focus Groups (Regional Councils; Tribal Regional Staff; Community Outreach Staff)
- Board Communication & Gov't Affairs Committee
- Chair & Vice Chair Meeting

**Updating the Plan – FTF Board in June 2013**

## Creating an Early Childhood System

An organized, inter-related network of elements, programs and services for all children.

## Purpose of System Planning in Arizona

To get measureable results for Arizona's young children and their families

## Why is a System Important?

•Affecting school readiness requires comprehensive approaches and involvement from all sectors: health, mental health, family support, early care and education, parents, higher education, faith communities, business, the media and many others

## Why is a System Important?

- To maximize resources including multiple funding streams with their own regulations and requirements
- To improve the performance of multiple systems impacting young children and their families

## Why is a System Important?

- There are individual variations in the circumstances and needs of children and their families
- There is duplication of services and a lack of coordination and many children are not being served

## Why is a System Important?

- To reduce turf issues through a shared vision and agreed-upon goals and objectives
- Helps to secure needed policy changes and improvements
- Better communication among partners

## Characteristics of an Effective System

- Comprehensive
- Accessible for children and families
- Scalable
- Outcome focused
- Accountable

## System Areas to Consider

- Context—successfully building a political context that leads to resources
- Components—establish effective programs and services
- Connections—create better linkages between components
- Infrastructure—create supports that enable continuous improvement
- Scope and Scale—the system can produce broad impacts for system beneficiaries

## Panel Discussion

Panelists:

Mary Beth Turner, Yuma Regional Partnership Council

Dr. Carilan Dawson, Chair, Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council

Chris McIntier, Vice Chair, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community

## Regional Benchmarking for the School Readiness Indicators

Achieving the mission of First Things First to ensure all young children arrive in kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed will require more than simply funding programs and services. It will take all partners, across the state, to own a common vision for children in Arizona and a cross-sector commitment to ensure that vision is realized.

First Things First School Readiness Indicators were chosen to reflect the effectiveness of funding strategies and collaborations built across communities to improve the lives of children residing in the state of Arizona and improve their readiness for entering school and subsequently their life long success.

In April 2014, Regional Partnership Councils will recommend 2020 benchmarks for prioritized indicators to the First Things First Board. To support those discussions and the community forums that follow, the data release phases below have been set.

A phased approach was selected due to data availability as well as considerations for how to provide technical assistance for decision-making. Data releases will include a one-two page fact sheet for each indicator for each Council which provides regional-specific data for decision-making on benchmarks for those School Readiness Indicators prioritized by the Council. Prior to Phase I, a series of three webinars will be available in March 2013 and will include: 1) overview of the School Readiness Indicators, recap of the selection of data sources, and description of the state-level benchmarks; 2) background and assistance on interpreting tribal data; and 3) guidance in how to set benchmarks, including data interpretation and assistance on setting attainable yet aspirational goals. Additional support materials, as well as discussion and decision-making facilitation, will be provided throughout the process.

## Data Release Phases

***Phase 1: April - June, 2013***

**Non-Tribal Regions** - **Indicator 6**: #/% of children entering kindergarten exiting preschool special education to regular education

**Non-Tribal Regions** - **Indicator 7**: #/% of children ages 2-4 at a healthy weight (Body Mass Index-BMI)

***Phase 2: June – August, 2013***

**Tribal Regions** - **Indicator 6**: #/% of children entering kindergarten exiting preschool special education to regular education

**Tribal Regions** - **Indicator 7**: #/% of children ages 2-4 at a healthy weight (Body Mass Index-BMI)

**Tribal Regions** - **Indicator 8**: #/% of children receiving at least six well-child visits within the first 15 months of life

**Tribal Regions** - **Indicator 9:** #/% of children age 5 with untreated tooth decay

***Phase 3: August – October, 2013***

**All Regions – Indicator 2:** #/% of children enrolled in an early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars

**All Regions – Indicator 3:** #/% of children with special needs/rights enrolled in an inclusive early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars

**All Regions – Indicator 4:** #/% of families that spend no more than 10% of the regional median family income on quality care and education with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars

**Non- Tribal Regions** - Indicator 8: #/% of children receiving at least six well-child visits within the first 15 months of life

**Non- Tribal Regions – Indicator 10:** % of families who report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child's safety, health and well being

***Phase 4: September – October 2014***

**Tribal Regions – Indicator 10:** % of families who report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child's safety, health and well being

***Phase 5: TBD***

**All Regions - Indicator 1**: #/% children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the development domains of social-emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and motor and physical

**All Regions – Indicator 5:** % of children with newly identified developmental delays during the kindergarten year

**Non-Tribal Regions – Indicator 9:** #/% of children age 5 with untreated tooth decay