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August 24, 2021

Honorable Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

Pursuant to A.R.S. 41-2041C, the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First) respectfully submits the agency's annual Tribal Consultation Policy Report.

First Things First acknowledges the sovereignty of Arizona Indian Tribes and Nations and the importance of honoring that sovereignty through government-to-government relationships. FTF recognizes the need for tribal governments to have a strong voice in developing effective early childhood systems. In that spirit, I am pleased to inform you of our efforts to dialogue and partner with Arizona's Tribes and Nations during State Fiscal Year 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Josh Allen
Interim Chief Executive Officer

TRIBAL CONSULTATION ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Agency Overview

The Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, also known as First Things First (FTF), is a public state agency that exists to increase the quality of, and access to, a high-quality early childhood development and health system that ensures children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. Governed by a state board, FTF is a decentralized organization that engages diverse constituencies to accomplish its mission to serve as one of the leading partners in creating a family-centered, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona’s children birth to age 5. The vision of FTF is that all Arizona’s children are ready to succeed in school and in life. Since inception, FTF has partnered with tribes throughout the state. Tribes may elect to have their lands treated as a separate region by the statewide FTF Board (currently, ten tribes); or, tribes may elect to participate in the designated geographical region(s) in which their tribal lands are located (currently, nine tribes).

Tribal Consultation Activities

FTF’s tribal consultation activities work to: strengthen tribal-state relations, promote tribal considerations in early childhood development, build awareness in tribal sectors of the importance of early childhood; and enhance coordination and collaboration.

Each year since 2009, FTF has met in formal, in-person consultation sessions with Arizona tribes. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, tribal leaders prioritized the immediate needs in their communities; states of emergency were declared, along with other measures to mitigate the spread, including travel restrictions. FTF understood that the priority for tribal leaders was the well-being of their communities, and that a tribal consultation was not possible. Accordingly, the projected September 2020 statewide consultation was cancelled. During the past year, Tribal Affairs tracked individual tribes’ mitigation efforts to share information with internal staff to best support programs in their communities. In addition, FTF was able to virtually meet with tribal leaders and programs to share information about FTF and the work of the region. The table below outlines additional activities conducted by FTF Tribal Affairs in this reporting period by goal area. This information does not include additional engagement with tribal leaders at the local level by FTF staff or regional councils.

Goal	Objective	Activity and Performance Measure
Strengthen Tribal-State Relations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an overview about First Things First and the work of the region such as: funding plans; needs and assets reports; programs such as Quality First; and research projects. 2. Seek guidance and direction on the tribe’s approval process. 3. Seek tribal approvals in reference to data collection activities for regional assessment reports, programmatic and outcome data, and research and evaluation. 4. Share information at state or tribal events with tribal leaders 	<p>Tribal Council and Committee Meetings: 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navajo Nation Research & Review Board; Yavapai-Apache Tribal Council; Havasupai Tribal Council; Tohono O’odham Health & Human Services; Hopi Health & Education Standing Committee; Tohono O’odham Nation Health Care. <p>Meetings with Tribal Leaders and Staff: 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gila River Indian Community; Gila River Healthcare; Yavapai-Apache Nation; Tohono O’odham Education Department Virtual Indian Tribes and Nations Legislative Day; Virtual AZ State Agency Tribal Liaison Introduction & Overview for Tribal Officials.

<p>Promote tribal considerations in early childhood development</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share information about FTF's government-to-government relationships and working effectively with Arizona's tribes. 2. Learn about other early learning and health care systems/programs/committees and their efforts. 3. Discuss and prioritize public health issues in tribal communities. 4. Ensure tribal perspective is considered by other regional/state/federal entities. 5. Provide insight on FTF's experience working with tribes on early childhood initiatives. 	<p>Meetings and events with Tribal and Non-tribal Stakeholders organizations: 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arizona Head Start; Indian Health Services; Arizona State University (ASU); BUILD Equity Leaders Action Network; Unite US; Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) Early Childhood Workgroup Meeting; Strong Families AZ Statewide and Tribal Home Visiting Conference; Arizona Center for Economic Progress' Native American Advisory Board (2x); Region IX Head Start Association 2020 Family Engagement & Cultural Effectiveness Conference; Pritzker Children's Initiative; Global Leader Café; Global Leader Indigenous Roma meeting; Webinars for Regional Partnership Councils (6x) .
<p>Build public awareness in tribal sectors on the importance of early childhood</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce FTF Staff to tribal/non-tribal entities. 2. Share an overview of FTF, provide updates on activities/events specific to tribal, geographical regions, and/or in Tribal Affairs. 3. Enhance understanding of tribal issues that may impact the provision of early childhood programs and services in tribal communities. 4. Share information on available grant opportunities. 	<p>Meetings with Tribal Stakeholder Organizations: 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council; Coconino Regional Partnership Council; Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council; Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (5x); Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS); Health Choice/Blue Cross Blue Shield; Tribal Health Virtual Town Hall provided by ITCA and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona.
<p>Enhance coordination and collaboration among partnering FTF entities, state/federal/tribal organizations and tribes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek guidance in appropriately accessing data from state and federal entities. 2. Discuss FTF's tribal consultation process. 3. Share information relevant to working groups, opportunities for collaboration and future work sessions. 4. Participate and support planning for site tours. 5. Provide an overview of FTF and funded programs in tribal communities. 	<p>Meetings with Tribal and Non-tribal Stakeholder organizations: 36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UofA Community Research Evaluation Development; Harder & Company; Arizona Community Foundation's Native American Initiatives (NAI) (4x); Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust; Arizona Grantmakers Forum (2x); ASU Tribal Relations; Navajo Nation Department of Justice; Hopi Foundation; Children's Action Alliance (5x); American Indian/Alaskan Native Health Care Collaborative; Arizona Food Bank Network; 4th Trimester (2x); ASU Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College; Northern Arizona University Center for Health Equity Research; ITCA; Phoenix Indian Center; Vitalyst (4x); AHCCCS Quarterly Tribal Consultation; Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation; World Forum 2021 Virtual World Tour (3x); Local First Arizona Foundation; Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 & Infectious Disease Outbreaks in Native American Communities course.

Recommendations from Tribal Representatives:

FTF will continue to build organizational capacity of regional directors, regional council members and other tribal and non-tribal stakeholders to: 1) gain a better understanding of FTF's Tribal Consultation Policy and Tribal Data Policy, 2) better understand data collection procedures of specific data sets including methodology, source and significance of data contained within the regional needs and asset (RNA) reports; and 3) better understand specific and unique tribal data approval and collection procedures for tribal communities within their region. This increased organizational capacity will help ensure that FTF staff and partners have the skills and knowledge needed to confidently and accurately address tribal entities and stakeholders with regard to FTF data collection, dissemination/strategic priorities, and services provided.

Revisions to First Things First Tribal Government Consultation Policy:

In accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes §41-2051, a Tribal Consultation Policy was developed and adopted by the statewide FTF Board in 2009, and was last amended in December 2020. A copy of current FTF Tribal Consultation Policy can be found at: <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Tribal-Consultation-Policy-2020.pdf>

Challenges Faced

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FTF staff and grantees have encountered challenges in delivering and providing services to children and families in communities throughout Arizona, including tribal communities. States of emergency and other measures taken by tribes to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 have led to program closures and challenges communicating with families because of limited or no cell service for families. Despite these challenges, many grantees continued to provide services for families including virtual meetings, delivering resources needed for families and providing child care services for children of first responders.

It seemed as though COVID-19 was winding down, and tribes had begun to open in phases, until recently when COVID-19 cases started to increase. FTF Tribal Affairs is continuing to monitor mitigation efforts to determine how to best support early childhood programs and service providers.

For questions or more information, please contact: Candida L. Hunter, Senior Director of Tribal Affairs, (602) 510-3240, cahunter@firstthingsfirst.org.