

REGISTRY AND COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

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I. INTENT OF STRATEGY

The intent of the evidence-informed Registry and College Scholarships strategy is to the following:

- Provide access to higher education for the early childhood workforce working directly with or on behalf of young children birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten and
- Implement a statewide workforce registry to warehouse information that defines the early childhood workforce in Arizona and supports that workforce to elevate their skills and knowledge in their work with children and young families.

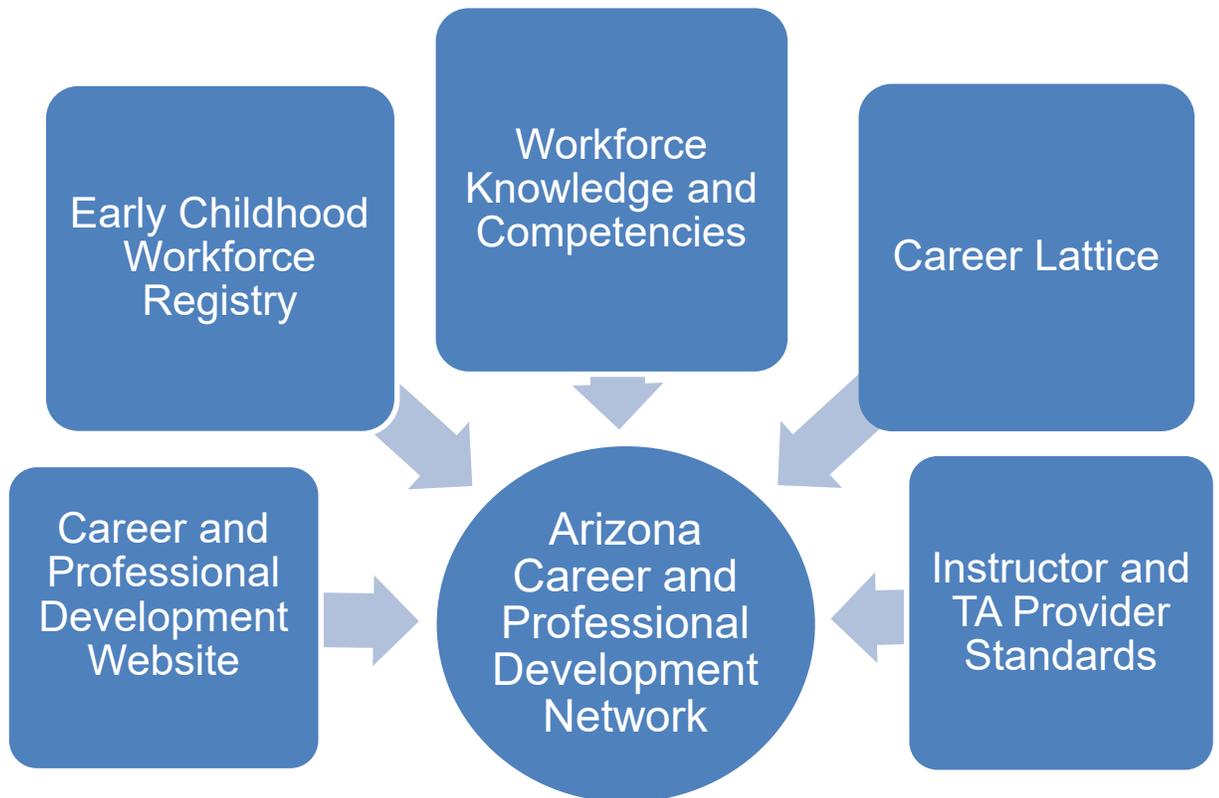
The expected results of this strategy are elevating and professionalizing the field, supporting and increasing the quality of services provided to young children and understanding the workforce in order to make data-driven decisions that support best practices in early childhood education.

Arizona has created and implemented the Arizona Career and Professional Development Network (Network) as a foundation for supporting the early childhood workforce. The Network is an integrated early childhood professional development system for all Arizona early childhood professionals working with and on behalf of young children. The Registry and College Scholarships strategy is an integral part of the Network.

The Network includes:

- The Professional Development website provides the early childhood workforce access to a variety of professional development resources including competencies and standards, education pathways and opportunities, career pathways, employment opportunities, and the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry.

- The Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (Registry), a web-based system that enables early childhood professionals and those interested in a career in early education to find and register for professional development opportunities and to keep a record of their experience, education, professional development and credentials in a central location. It is also used to manage application and enrollment in First Things First College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals.
- The Arizona Workforce Knowledge and Competencies, a uniform set of expectations that identify the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for early childhood professionals across sectors of early childhood including, early care and education, early intervention, mental health, physical health, and social services/child welfare professionals. They ensure implementation of quality services for young children and their families.
- The Arizona Career Lattice, a tool within the Registry that provides the pathway of education, professional development, and work experience for early childhood professionals to use for individualized assessment, setting professional development goals, and documentation of progress in career development.
- The Professional Development Instructor and Technical Assistance Provider Standards define the credentials, knowledge, and experience necessary to ensure high-quality professional development experiences for our workforce from entry through advanced levels.



The Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network was developed in alignment with and support the following core documents (See References):

- Arizona Early Childhood Professional Development Instructor and Technical Assistance Provider Standards, 1st Edition;
- Arizona’s Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines;
- Arizona Early Learning Standards;
- Program Guidelines for High-Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten;
- Arizona’s College and Career Ready Standards;
- The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework;
- The Council for Exceptional Children Definition of a Well-Prepared Special Education Teacher;
- National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs; and
- Quality First Rating Scale.

Well-educated and highly skilled early childhood teachers are strongly linked with high quality and optimal child outcomes at entry into kindergarten. Research demonstrates that when child care and other early learning programs are of high quality and developmentally appropriate, children score higher on school readiness measures and do better in school. They also have better relationships with their peers and are more likely to graduate. But the quality of early care and education depends on the professionalism, education, and skills of the teacher (Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2008).

There is a link between educational attainment and teacher's beliefs about early childhood education. In a study at Indiana University, researchers found that when teachers had a higher education level, regardless of the major area of study, they were more likely to support developmentally appropriate practices. The researchers did find, however, that teachers with course work specific to working with young children were more likely to support child-initiated learning, such as allowing children to select some of their own activities, valuing active exploration in children's learning, and respecting students' individual differences when planning curricula (Minnesota Department of Children, Family & Learning, 2001).

“When young children and their caregivers are tuned into one another, and when caregivers can read the child’s emotional cues and respond appropriately to his or her needs in a timely fashion, their interactions tend to be successful and the relationship is likely to support [the child’s] healthy development in multiple domains, including communication, cognition, social-emotional competence, and moral understanding” (Shonkoff, J.P. and Phillops, D., Eds, 2000, p. 28).

Early Childhood Professionals with higher levels of education tend to be paid more, and higher-paid teachers tend to remain in the same job for a longer period of time. When teachers remain in the field, stay in their positions, and work with the same children over time it creates a system of continuity of care which helps to nurture the important relationships between themselves as

the primary caregiver and the child. It is within the context of these relationships that children grow and develop optimally.

There are barriers for the early childhood workforce to access higher education. Wages are typically low and they lack the financial means to afford college. Additional barriers for the workforce include: lack of confidence as a learner, deficits in skill/knowledge, lack of time due to caring for dependents and sometime working a second job, lack of family/employer support, language barriers, lack of familial precedence in attending college and limited access to information (Child Care Services Association, NAEYC Professional Development Institute, 2011). Scholarships enable the early childhood workforce to take coursework leading to credentials and degrees by making it possible for them to afford the expense of going to school.

In order to support higher education and professional development of the early childhood workforce, it is important to understand the current landscape. Early childhood workforce registries provide valuable data for states and include data on a large portion of the early childhood workforce. “Data are essential to gauge any impacts and systems change. Workforce and professional development data inform planning, evaluation, and quality assurance and accountability” (LeMoine, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2008).

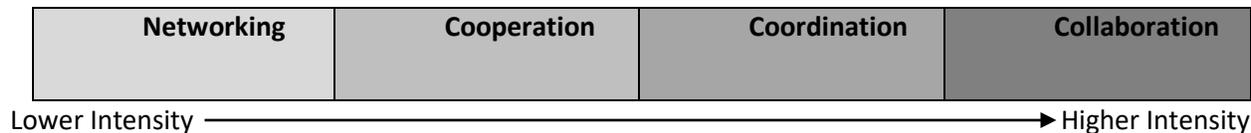
As two main components of the Network, this strategy will ensure that more early care and education professionals have access to higher education to achieve degrees that support professionalism and best practices in early childhood education. Additionally, the implementation of this strategy will result in data that helps us define where the workforce is now, plan for supports for the workforce, and track the impact of these efforts over time.

Collaboration and Coordination

Arizona’s early childhood development and health system works to promote and establish a seamless, coordinated and comprehensive array of services that can meet the multiple and changing needs of young children and families. Organizations and individuals must work together to establish such a coordinated service network and requires state and regional coordination of both public and private human resources, services, and funding. Agencies that work together and achieve high-level coordination and collaboration are often easier for families to access and the services provided are more responsive to the needs of the families. Coordination efforts may also result in increased capacity to deliver services because of the work that organizations do to identify and address gaps in the service delivery continuum. Therefore, by supporting a variety of coordination efforts, a high quality, interconnected, and comprehensive early childhood service delivery system that is timely, culturally responsive, family-driven, community-based, and directed toward enhancing children’s overall development can be achieved.

Service Coordination is the process of multiple organizations working across traditional organizational boundaries to access needed resources and to achieve a common goal. At the heart of coordination is the relationship between organizations. (Bolland & Wilson, 1994; Mulford, Rogers, & Whetten, 1982) These relationships often take time to develop and occur

along a continuum from networking to collaboration. The key to effective service coordination is the effective engagement of the partners responsible for the provision of services available to families. When partners are engaged and committed to working together it brings about change to build and strengthen capacity, maximize resources and promote systemic policies that support the shared vision for a coordinated, responsive and effective early childhood system.



Networking: Includes the exchange of information for mutual benefit and includes activities that result in bringing individuals or organizations together for relationship building and information sharing. Networking results in an increased understanding of the current system of services. There is no effort directed at changing the existing system.

Cooperation: Information is exchanged, leading to altering activities and sharing resources for mutual benefit to achieve a common purpose. Relationships are characterized by short-term, informal relationships that exist without a clearly defined mission, structure, or planning effort. Cooperative partners share information only about the subject at hand. Each organization retains authority and keeps resources separate.

Coordination: Coordination involves exchanging information and altering program activities for mutual benefit to achieve a common purpose. There is increased organizational commitment, and this level requires more organizational involvement and a higher level of trust than networking. Coordination involves some planning and division of roles and opens communication channels between organizations. Authority rests with individual organizations, however, risk increases. Resources are made available to participants and rewards are shared.

Collaboration: Collaboration includes exchanging information, as well as altering activities and sharing resources and enhancing each other’s capacity for mutual benefit to achieve a common goal. These relationships are more durable and pervasive. At the collaboration level, participating organizations share risks, responsibilities, and rewards. It requires a substantial time commitment, sharing of resources and turf, and a high level of trust. Collaboratives can take significant time and a strong commitment by participants along with resources. Collaboration is a process that leads to reaching goals that cannot be achieved by one single agent and includes jointly developing and agreeing on a set of common goals and directions; sharing responsibility for obtaining those goals; pooling or jointly securing resources; working together to achieve the goals using the expertise and resources of each collaborator; and sharing the risk, the results and the rewards.

The following Standards of Practice include requirements for the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry and the College Scholarships implementation.

II. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION STANDARDS

1. Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry Standards
 - A. Achieve and maintain Partnership Eligibility Review (PER) status through the National Workforce Registry Alliance.
 - B. Develop and maintain a Registry policies and procedures manual that is created and updated in coordination with First Things First staff and feedback from the Professional Development Workgroup (PDWG).
 - C. The Registry policies and procedures must align with the National Workforce Registry Alliance Partnership Eligibility Review (PER) document. In addition to what is already required in the PER, the policies and procedures must address the following in each section:
 1. Enrollment
 - a. Enrollment of Early Childhood Workforce Instructors;
 - b. Enrollment of Early Childhood Workforce Consultants;
 - c. Enrollment of Early Childhood Workforce in Family Support; and
 - d. Outreach in Support of Enrollment across the Multi-Disciplinary Workforce.
 2. Review Process
 - a. Annual review and update of Registry policies and procedures;
 - b. Annual training of staff on the Registry policies and procedures; and
 - c. Annual review and update of the Terms and Conditions.
 3. Verification
 - a. Quarterly review of transcript verification to ensure all Registry staff are verifying coursework in the same way;
 - b. Quarterly outreach to Single-Site and Multi-Site who have unverified employees to support the employee verification process; and
 - c. Quarterly review of incomplete profiles to identify areas of outreach and support movement towards complete profiles.
 4. Data Entry and Continuity
 - a. 70% of user-profiles are audited annually for accuracy;
 - b. Quarterly review of Registry staff data entry to ensure continuity of practice; and
 - c. Identify common data entry errors of both Registry staff and Registry members and posted in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the Registry.
 - d. Update the list of all licensed programs in the Registry each month based on the monthly DHS Provider and Facility Databases report.
 - e. At least monthly, update all early care and education programs who are certified by DES or have contracts with DES to serve children receiving a subsidy based on reporting from DES.

5. Processing Time
 - a. 70% of all transcripts received will be reviewed and entered into the user profile within 30 days of receipt; and
 - b. 70% of professional development instructors will be evaluated and either approved or denied within 30 days of enrollment in the Registry.
6. Data Maintenance, Storage and Sharing
 - a. Requests for data from local, state, and national entities must be referred to First Things First.
7. Confidentiality
 - a. Annual review of the Registry Privacy Policy.
8. Due Process
 - a. Appeals policies and procedures must be posted in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the Registry.
9. Communication
 - a. Annual review and update of the Frequently Asked Questions; and
10. Collection of Partnership Eligibility Review Core Data Elements
 - a. Identify additional core data elements that need to be included in the PER; and
 - b. Identify core data elements that need clarity or revisions.
- D. Registry Staff
 1. Maintain staff to carry out the responsibilities of the Registry that includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Statewide technical assistance and service support staff such as Help Desk staff and Outreach Coordinators to provide assistance to Registry participants face-to-face, over the phone, or through email; and
 - b. Technical assistance and service support supervisor to provide support to technical assistance and service supports.
 2. Staff qualifications for Registry staff are included in the Staffing Criteria and Standards A-I.
2. First Things First College Scholarships Standards
 - A. Implement and maintain policies and procedures for the First Things First College Scholarships in the following areas:
 1. Dissemination of College Scholarships for educational pathways leading to or supporting the following:
 - a. An associate degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or related field with an emphasis on birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten;
 - b. A bachelor's degree in ECE or related field with an emphasis on birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten, unless otherwise specified by the Regional Partnership Council;
 - c. Assessment fees for the National Council for Professional Recognition Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential;

- i. Course work to achieve a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential can be funded as long as the course is applicable to the completion of an associate or bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or related field with an emphasis on birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten.
 - d. College credits in business administration coursework designed to support staff management, human resources and financial management of an early childhood program;
 - e. Developmental courses that may be needed for the achievement of a degree; and
 - f. Courses taken at the community college that are not required for an associate degree, but are accepted by a university as part of the articulation towards a bachelor's degree (i.e. bridge courses).
- 2. The application process for scholarship opportunities including but not limited to:
 - a. Enrollment periods;
 - b. Required documentation;
 - c. Verification of employment;
 - d. Determining eligibility; and
 - e. Approval process.
- 3. Approval of applicants for scholarships based on priorities included in this Standard of Practice and/or priority determined by a First Things First Regional Partnership Council or other external funding source.
- 4. Communication policies between Registry and College Scholarships staff and the following include but are not limited to:
 - a. Scholars; and
 - b. Institutes of higher education.
- 5. Evaluation of student transcripts to ensure scholars progress and finish their identified educational pathway.
- B.** Determination and verification of applicant eligibility for scholarship funding based on the following criteria:
 - 1. Minimum age as defined by the college acceptance policy;
 - 2. If employed, earns \$20.00 per hour or less;
 - 3. Evidence of Eligibility to Receive Public Benefits and Lawful Presence per A.R.S. §1-502
 (<http://www.azftf.gov/rfgaresources/statement%20of%20lawful%20presence%20and%20eligibility%20form.docx>);
 - 4. Completed Registry profile in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry;
 - 5. A high school student in the Early Childhood Career and Technical Education (CTE) program dually enrolled for college credit that is transferable and applicable to a degree;
 - 6. Arizona resident AND working in Arizona with or on behalf of children birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten;
 - a. Scholars who are not Arizona residents and/or not employed in Arizona will be subject to case by case eligibility for consideration by First Things First.

7. Attend an institution of higher education accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (<http://www.chea.org/Directories/regional.asp>);
 - a. Scholars may choose the institution of their choice either in or out of state, however, the reimbursement rate paid by a First Things First College Scholarship will not exceed the maximum cost of Arizona in-state tuition for a comparable institution.
 8. Evidence of a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and documentation of the results of the application. Scholars are required to apply for the FAFSA during the first opportunity that the application period is available (High School CTE Students exempt); and
 9. Submission of a primary educational pathway of coursework to the administrative home to be developed with the support of an advisor from the appropriate program or department.
- C. When using statewide funding, prioritize scholars in the following order:
1. First, identify professional priorities in the following order:
 - a. Working directly with children birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten, in regulated schools, homes (including family, friend, and neighbor care settings), and center-based settings;
 - b. An administrator working in regulated schools, homes, center-based settings and other programs that support children birth through age five, not yet in kindergarten;
 - c. CTE student dually enrolled in a high school CTE program and Early Childhood College coursework as part of a CTE program;
 - d. Currently volunteering directly with children birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten, in regulated schools, homes (including family, friend, and neighbor care settings), and center-based setting and is interested in working in the early childhood field;
 - e. Coaches, mentors, Arizona Department of Education mentors, Smart Support consultants, child care health consultants, inclusion specialists, ECE independent consultants, surveyors, Department of Health Services licensing staff, supervisors, caseload managers, home visitors, and others who guide those working directly with children birth to five; and then
 - f. Professional development providers and faculty members who design and implement training and coursework for professionals working with or on behalf of children birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten.
 2. Then, identify educational priorities in the following order:
 - a. Scholar currently receiving a First Things First College Scholarship;
 - b. A scholar without an associate or bachelor's degree;
 - c. Scholar currently with an associate degree that is not in ECE or a related field;
 - d. A scholar without a National Council for Professional Recognition Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential;
 - e. Scholar currently with an associate degree but needs additional courses to transfer to a University; and then

- f. Scholar currently with a bachelor's degree that is not in ECE or related field.
- 3. When a First Things First Regional Partnership Council supports this strategy with the use of regional funding, prioritize scholars to receive scholarship funds as determined by the intent of the Regional Council.
- D. Develop and implement a *Scholar Engagement Commitment During Coursework* contract with each scholar to document scholar understanding of their responsibilities and requirements. Contracts must include:
 - 1. Documentation of the scholar's commitment to a minimum of one of the following during the first year of coursework:
 - a. Participate in FTF Every Child Every Day training offered through the Registry; or
 - b. Participate in Health and Safety Specialist Training provided by the Child Care Health Consultants offered through the Registry.
 - 2. Commitment to a minimum of one of the following in the second year and each year thereafter of coursework:
 - a. Conduct an FTF Every Child Every Day training presentation;
 - b. Mentor a new FTF College Scholarships scholar in their first year of college coursework (i.e. how to apply to the college, how to meet with an advisor, how to declare a major, how to access campus resources and services, etc.);
 - c. Attend an FTF Regional Partnership Council meeting to present their education story;
 - d. Work with the College Scholarships administrative home to present the scholarship program at a local conference or in the community; or
 - e. Scholar identifies an activity they could contribute in a meaningful way to the field as approved by the administrative home (e.g. professional association volunteer work, volunteer for community early childhood events, volunteer to support early childhood systems efforts such as Read On Arizona).
 - 3. Scholars agree to earn a grade of C or better in every course funded by the FTF Scholarship and agree to follow institution-specific policies for timely withdrawal from courses. Scholars will retake a course with their own funds for:
 - i. Every course funded by the FTF Scholarship where a grade of C or below was earned; and
 - ii. Any course funded by the FTF Scholarship when a scholar withdraws from a course after the final drop date to receive a refund as determined by the institution.

- E. Develop and implement a *Scholar Service Commitment After Completion of Credential or Degree* contract with each scholar to document scholar understanding of their responsibilities and requirements. Scholars are required to complete a service commitment to the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce according to the following criteria:
1. Commence immediately after the completion of the degree or credential;
 2. Must be completed within two years for CDA or associate degree or four years for a bachelor's degree;
 3. Must be completed within Arizona if statewide funding is used, or within the Region that provides the funding if the funding used is Region specific;
 4. Scholars will commit to paid work or volunteering with or on behalf of children birth to age five, not yet in kindergarten, as indicated by the type of degree or credential earned:
 - a. 1040 hours for a CDA Credential;
 - b. 2080 hours for an associate degree; or
 - c. 4160 hours for a bachelor's degree.
 5. Scholars will be required to repay the funds used to support educational attainment if the service requirement is not completed; and
 6. Scholars must show continual progress towards the completion of their education pathway through enrollment in a minimum of 3 credit hours per semester (Fall and Spring) except in instances when a course with lesser credit hours is the only course needed in a particular semester.
- F. Develop, implement, and maintain financial policies and procedures based on the following:
1. Establish a payment mechanism and provide payment directly to the institution of higher education, appropriate college bookstore, or National Council for Professional Recognition for the following:
 - a. Up to the maximum allowed by the annual per credit hour cost;
 - b. Course tuition up to a maximum of 24 credits per year;
 - c. Course and college fees, including lab fees, registration and graduation fees, and transcript requests;
 - d. Required textbooks for approved courses; and
 - e. CDA Assessment Fee.
 2. Ensure funds from PELL grants or other scholarships or grant funds are used before First Things First College Scholarship funds are applied.
 - a. Establish and implement a procedure for identifying scholars who were awarded a scholarship but did not use it to understand the reasons why
 3. Provide a bonus in the form of a check to scholars at the completion of the following educational milestones (regardless of the number of credits completed before applying for the scholarship, (i.e. if the scholar already has 6 credits upon enrollment and receives an FTF College Scholarship, the scholar would receive the bonus upon reaching the next level of 12 credits):
 - a. \$150 when a scholar achieves any of the following:

- i. 6 credit hours in ECE, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), Child and Family Studies (CFS), Early Childhood Administration (ECA), Infant Toddler Development (ITD) or Child Development (CD);
 - ii. National Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington, DC; or
 - iii. 12 credit hours toward a degree in ECE/ECSE/CFS/ECA/ITD or CD.
 - b. \$300 when a scholar achieves 24 credit hours toward a degree in ECE/ECSE/CFS/ECA/ITD or CD.
 - c. \$900 when a scholar achieves an associate degree in ECE or a related field as identified in ECE/CFS/DP/EE/FCS/HD/ECSE.
 - d. \$1,500 when a scholar achieves a bachelor's degree in ECE or related field **OR** a holds a bachelor's degree in non-ECE major including 24 credits in ECE/ECSE/CFS/ECD/ITD or CD.
 - 4. Require scholars to be held financially responsible for all scholarship funds used for course tuition, books, and fees when scholars do not meet their commitments as outlined.
- G. College Scholarships Staff**
 - 1. Maintain staff to carry out the responsibilities of the College Scholarships that includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Education Liaison Coordinator
 - i. Education Liaison Coordinator is responsible for the following:
 - 1. Provide support to the Education Liaisons;
 - 2. Coordinate joint meeting for Education Liaisons and college/university faculty and staff in all relevant areas/disciplines;
 - 3. Create strategies to effectively market First Things First College Scholarships to potential scholars;
 - 4. Establish two-way communication with institutes of higher education to encourage and maintain effective relationships and strong partnerships; and
 - 5. Facilitate quarterly meetings with institutes of higher education to identify areas of need and plan for continuous improvement.
 - b. Application Approval Staff;
 - c. Transcript Review Staff; and
 - d. Finance Staff.
- H. Staff qualifications for College Scholarships staff are included in the Staffing Standards A-J.
- 3. Outreach for Registry and College Scholarships**
 - A. Develop and implement multiple methods of outreach to the early childhood workforce including, but not limited to:**
 - 1. Phone;
 - 2. E-mail; and
 - 3. In-person

- B.** Provide outreach that is accessible to all geographic locations within Arizona.
 - C.** Use implementation and Registry data to inform:
 1. Geographic areas to prioritize for outreach;
 2. Early childhood workforce members and organizations to prioritize for outreach; and
 3. Effective methods of outreach.
- 4.** Collaboration and Coordination Standards for Registry and College Scholarships
- FTF recognizes the importance of collaborative partnerships among community partners that utilize a variety of formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate coordination of services in the community. The Coordination and Collaboration standards for this strategy are as follows:
- A.** Develop a process for the Registry and College Scholarships staff to link strategies and programs within the early childhood system, as applicable, to avoid duplication, coordinate efforts, and link with the Registry and College Scholarships.
 - B.** Develop formal agreements with partner institutions of higher education that include the following:
 - 1.** Identification of Education Liaisons at colleges and universities:
 - a.** Education Liaisons must be employed at and working directly with the department that includes the Early Childhood program(s) of study at community colleges and universities.
 - b.** Education Liaison(s) will be responsible for:
 - i.** Providing information to possible scholars about the First Things First College Scholarships, assisting them in applying for College Scholarships through the Registry and encouraging them to use College Scholarship funds before taking out student loans;
 - ii.** Advising scholars regarding educational pathways and opportunities available through the institutes of higher education;
 - iii.** Ensuring scholars are on a formal educational pathway;
 - iv.** Supporting scholars in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application process;
 - v.** Providing ongoing support to scholars throughout their college experience to ensure successful pathway completion, including but not limited to:
 - 1.** Refer students to on-campus supports such as tutoring, disability resources, and services and supports for English Language Learners and first-generation college students;
 - 2.** Develop and maintain social-emotional supports/mentoring opportunities for scholars;
 - 3.** Support scholars in navigating institutional requirements and procedures for payment of tuition and course fees; and
 - 4.** Support scholars in obtaining textbooks required for their courses.

- C. Participate in the First Things First Professional Development Workgroup (PDWG) and all PDWG subgroups.
 - D. Develop and implement a plan to understand and make connections with other initiatives, strategies, and efforts in the region or state that support the early childhood system.
5. Staffing Criteria and Standards
- A. Employ administrative, financial, and data quality assurance staff for the administrative home that meets the industry-recognized qualifications.
 - B. Employ staff with knowledge of and experience working in the following areas:
 1. Needs of early childhood professionals working with or on behalf of young children;
 2. College and university degree requirements;
 3. Transfer/articulation agreements;
 4. Financial aid and other financial supports for higher education; and
 5. Needs of non-traditional students and how to effectively engage them in higher education.
 - C. Individual staff must be trained to implement the Registry and College Scholarships policies and procedures with fidelity.
 - D. Employ staff who reflect the cultural and ethnic experiences and language of the targeted population with whom they work with and integrate their expertise into the entire program.
 - E. All staff shall have knowledge of the community in which they are serving and the available resources within that community.
 - F. Staff at all levels receive initial (within 6 months of hire) and annual professional development on culturally responsive service delivery. Professional development must include topics relevant to the target population served such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, local community, religion, and family structures, as well as support to understand and reflect on staff's own culture and potential bias.
 - G. Participate in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry:
 1. Staff employed by the Grant Partner/administrative home and any sub-Grant Partner who are providing professional development training to the workforce must create an account in the Registry and submit transcripts, complete the employment history, and have a complete Registry profile. As new employees are hired, lead Grant Partners must verify completed profiles with six (6) months of hire date.
 2. Staff employed at the Grant Partner/administrative home and any sub-Grant Partner who are responsible for entering data, quality assurance of data, approving scholarship applications, approving trainer status, approving administrator and multi-site administrator status, assisting professionals in using the Registry, must have a Registry account, but they do not need official transcripts nor a complete Registry profile.

H. Supervisory Standards

1. Supervisory staff must meet staff standards in addition to the supervisory standards.
2. Supervisory staff must monitor the consistency of implementation of Registry and College Scholarships policies and procedures across all team members.
 - a. When individual staff is not implementing Registry and College Scholarships policies and procedures to fidelity, feedback, and further training are provided.
3. Reflective supervision is “the process of examining, with someone else, the thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions evoked in the course of working closely with young children and their families.” Eggbeer, L. et al (2008). Although formal training is not required, First Things First Grant Partners shall implement the principles of reflective supervision including:
 - a. Regularly scheduled, consistent meeting time in a confidential location free of interruptions at a minimum, a monthly meeting.
 - b. Supervisors work with staff to prepare and implement written individual professional development plans. They are a critical component of reflective supervision that includes identified areas for growth and opportunities for professional development. Plans are updated at least annually.

I. Education Liaison Coordinator

1. Minimum of Master’s Degree in ECE or related field
2. Knowledge of and experience working in the following areas:
 - a. College and university degree requirements;
 - b. Transfer/articulation agreements;
 - c. Financial aid and other financial supports for higher education; and
 - d. Needs of non-traditional students and how to effectively engage diverse learners in higher education settings.

J. To assist in the protection of the target population being served, grant partners must conduct background checks as follows:

- If required by law, the grant partner must ensure that employees, contractors, and volunteers have a valid fingerprint clearance card, issued pursuant to A.R.S. Title 41, Chapter 12, Article 3.1. Additional information can be found online at the Arizona Department of Public Safety website: <https://www.azdps.gov/services/public/fingerprint>. Fingerprint Clearance Cards must be verified and documented as valid on an annual basis. Validity can be checked on the Arizona Department of Public Safety website: https://webapps.azdps.gov/public_inq_acct/acct/ShowClearanceCardStatus.action

- If not required by law to have a valid fingerprint clearance card, the grant partner must ensure that employees, contractors, and volunteers complete an FBI Identity History Summary no later than the first day of employment or volunteer service. The grant partner must review the FBI Identity History Summary and check it against A.R.S. Title 41, Chapter 12, Article 3.1 for any precluding offenses that disqualify a person from working directly with children. Additional information can be found on the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) website: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/identity-history-summary-checks>
 - Grant partners working on tribal lands must also obtain additional clearance if required by the tribe.
 - For the purposes of this standard, a volunteer is defined as an individual that is serving in the capacity that would typically be performed by a paid staff member as a part of strategy implementation.
- K. All staff must meet the qualifications for their position. Effective July 1, 2018, if programs are unable to hire staff that meets the required qualifications, a Request for Exemption from Staff Qualifications form must be submitted to First Things First for approval prior to offering employment. The form can be accessed through Partner Grants Management System (PGMS) under Grantee Resources.

III. OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

1. **Lawful Presence:** The Administration of Public Benefits and Lawful Presence provision ensures that only individuals, eligible under the law (A.R.S. § 1-502 and federal law), receive certain public benefits. Registry and College Scholarship participants receiving a financial incentive must be a U.S. citizen or national or an eligible alien. The Statement of Lawful Presence & Eligibility to Receive Public Benefits form must be completed for each participant before financial incentives can be provided.
 - a. The Grant Partner is required to verify the eligibility of individuals participating in the Registry and College Scholarship using the Statement of Lawful Presence and Eligibility to Receive Public Benefits form
 - b. If the Grant Partner is a non-profit, charitable organization, the verification of eligibility is not applicable.

2. **Policy and Procedure Manual:** The process of developing written guidelines is the strategic link between the FTF Standards of Practice and the day-to-day operations of the program. A well developed and highly utilized set of policies and procedures builds infrastructure and capacity and supports continuous quality improvements of programs and services for children and families. FTF requires Grant Partners to have a written document that is accessible to all employees and contract staff members that provides staff with direction, consistency and set expectations for service delivery (e.g., Standard Operating Procedures, Implementation Guide, Policies and Procedures Manual) including the following:
 - a. The written document must be updated annually and be read and reviewed by all employees and contract staff members.

- b. The document must contain policies that align with the FTF Standards of Practice and provide a framework for overall program implementation.
 - c. The policies must have procedures that describe how program implementation aligns with the Standards of Practice, including staff specific roles, responsibilities, and timelines.
 - d. The policies must be in alignment with the Registry Alliance Partnership Eligibility Review document.

- 3. Cultural Responsiveness: First Things First embraces cultural responsiveness as an intentional life long journey that holistically explores, honors, and values the diversity of the human experience. Grant Partners implementing this strategy are required to have a written policy and procedures for the organization and/or program that describes how culturally responsive practices are infused into service delivery. The written policy must describe how:
 - a. Programs and services are congruent with the needs of diverse children and families.
 - b. Programs and services are responsive to the impact of regional and cultural factors such as histories, traditions, values, family systems and structures, social class, and religious and spiritual beliefs.
 - c. The environment is conducive to and inclusive of all children and families and respects families' composition, gender, racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.
 - d. Cultural knowledge and prior experiences are used to ensure services are responsive and adaptive.

- 4. Inclusive Services: First Things First fosters the vision that children and adults of all abilities have access to all programs and services. Inclusion in early childhood programs can lead to a lifetime of inclusion for a child. Grant Partners implementing this strategy must have a written policy and procedures for the organization and/or program that addresses the following:
 - a. Programs must create an environment conducive to and inclusive of the unique needs of all children and adults.
 - b. Programs must adjust their services to support meeting the needs of children and adults with all degrees of ability.
 - c. Adherence to the federal [Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

- 5. Continuous Quality Improvement
 - a. Adopt a process of continuous self-monitoring, reflection, and quality assurance to improve program practices that are articulated in a written policy that is reviewed and updated regularly. In the written policy, the following should be addressed:
 - i. How data is used to assess the progress and outcomes of program implementation; and
 - ii. How data collection is used to improve staff performance.
 - iii. How quarterly meetings with Institutes of Higher Education are used to identify continuous improvement.

- b. Develop evaluative and monitoring processes that are collaborative, ongoing and include input from providers, program administrators, and staff, families, and community members.

IV. REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- A. Americans with Disabilities Act: <https://www.ada.gov/>
- B. Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network
Website: <http://azearlychildhood.org>
- C. Arizona Department of Education Trainings: <https://ems.azed.gov/Home/Calendar>
- D. Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. (2008). Parents and the High Price of Care: 2008 Update. Retrieved from <http://naccrra.org/>
- E. and Fuligni et al., (2009). Diverse Pathways in Early Childhood Professional Development: An Exploration of Early Educators in Public Preschools, Private Preschools, and Family Child Care Homes. *Early Education and Development*, Vol. 20 (3), pp. 507-526.
- F. Community Alliance for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Webinars: <http://allianceforclas.org/tools-and-resources/webinars/>
- G. Eggbeer, L., Mann, T., and Seibel, N. (2008). Reflective supervision: Past, present, and future. *Zero to Three* 28: 5–9.
- H. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- I. Linda Ballasy, Mark Fulop, and Michael Garringer. (2007). Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual CUSTOMIZABLE TEMPLATE VERSION. Retrieved from: <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CB4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Feducationnorthwest.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fpolicy-template.doc&ei=X6FwVf68FJLkoASytoPADw&usg=AFQjCNEU9H9CjdFp0GsiVvpW6nSQQVcJGw>
- J. Professor Michael Griffin. How to Write a Policy Manual. Retrieved from: <http://www.templatezone.com/download-free-ebook/office-policy-manual-reference-guide.pdf>
- K. Saluja, G., Early, D. M. and Clifford, R. M. Demographic Characteristics of Early Childhood Teachers and Structural Elements of Early Care and Education in the United States *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, Spring 2002 *Developing a Thriving Reader from the Early Years: A Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices* (available in Fall 2014)
- L. Shonkoff, J.P. and Phillops, D., Eds. From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. 2000, p. 28
- M. Staffing recruiting and retention in early childhood care and education and school-age care, Minnesota Department of Children, Family & Learning, April 2001
- N. Workforce Engagement in Higher Education: Recruiting, Supporting and Sustaining Early Childhood Teachers on Degree Completion Pathways (Child Care Services Association, NAEYC Professional Development Institute, 2011)