



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## 2017 Statewide Tribal Consultation

### Discussion Guide

#### TOPIC ONE

##### ***Enhancing Local Government-to-Government Relationships – Regional Tribal Consultation***

The work of First Things First (FTF) is rooted in a profound respect for tribal sovereignty and a commitment to working in collaboration with Arizona's tribes. The laws that created First Things First state that tribes shall determine whether and how they participate in First Things First and to date, 19 federally recognized tribes have elected to participate with First Things First – 10 as separate regions and nine as part of the region in closest proximity to their tribal lands.

There are many functions of First Things First that may impact tribes. Decisions related to regional boundaries, funded strategies, and data collection and reporting require consistent and timely dialogue with Arizona tribes. In addition, First Things First's commitment to cultural responsiveness in all its programs can benefit from the insight and experiences of Arizona's tribes and nations.

To those ends, First Things First is committed to building government-to-government relationships with Arizona's Indian tribes and nations and believes that improving communication and partnerships with Indian tribes of Arizona is essential to providing all of Arizona's children a strong start so they can grow up ready to succeed in school and life. One of the primary ways this is achieved is through formal tribal consultation. First Things First has convened seven statewide consultations since its inception. The insight First Things First has gained from past consultations has led to policy, practice and process improvements that ensure the best possible outcomes for young children in our communities. One-on-one consultations have also been conducted with tribes on issues specific to their communities as needed.

In its 2016 statewide consultation, First Things First received feedback from tribal leaders that it would be beneficial for more tribal elected officials to have an understanding of the importance of early childhood and more information about the impact that First Things First's early childhood investments are having in their respective communities. In addition, in order to continue to build local early childhood systems that meet the unique needs of their regions – including greater collaboration and maximization of resources, it would be beneficial for First Things First regional partnership councils to be familiar with the priorities of the tribes in their area and the tribe's efforts to improve outcomes for young children.

In response to the feedback from tribal leaders, FTF piloted regional tribal consultation in several regions during calendar year 2017. Feedback from a panel of tribal leaders who participated in the pilot will be shared as part of the FTF statewide consultation on September 13. After the panel presentation, First Things First will seek

consultation from all tribal leaders participating in the statewide consultation surrounding the following questions:

1. What has been your experience with federal or other statewide entities facilitating regional tribal consultations?
2. What are best approaches to convening regional tribal consultations, including the types of issues/topics appropriate or not appropriate for regional consultation?
3. Federal and state entities often convene consultations to discuss policy development or changes. FTF also sees an opportunity to convene consultation beyond policy to discuss policy, tribal priorities, opportunities to leverage resources and ideas for strengthening partnerships. What considerations should be given to convening consultations beyond policy development?
4. How might regional consultations – as implemented by First Things First in its 2017 pilot – be used effectively to help strengthen government-to-government relationships and collaboration?
5. What are challenges or barriers in convening effective tribal consultation at the regional and statewide level?

## **TOPIC TWO**

### ***Measuring the Impact of Early Childhood Investments***

Early childhood programs and services funded by First Things First are implemented through government-to-government agreements between FTF and a tribe, a state government agency or grant agreements with non-profit or other entities. To ensure services are delivered appropriately, tribal and other grant partners report aggregate data, including, but not limited to, the number of families enrolled, ages of children enrolled, number of parents/children receiving services (for example, number of parents completing parenting education classes, number of children receiving developmental screenings, etc.). Data regarding the outcomes achieved by children and families participating in early childhood programs can be beneficial for communities, policymakers and practitioners. Analysis of that data can help inform program improvements, add to the research base on effective practices and demonstrate the return on investment of effective programs. In order to conduct that level of data analysis, in depth data is required. To that end, FTF would like to collect child and family level data, including, but not limited to, race and/or ethnicity, home address and number of children birth to five in the home. While child- and family-specific data is required in order to conduct more in-depth analysis, information will still only be reported and/or published in the aggregate form (de-identified non-confidential information) and ensure all child and family-level identifiable data is secured, confidential and protected. This information will help First Things First, tribes and other system partners to understand more about the children being served and the impact of or access to programs for children most in need. For example, having ample data regarding participants before, during and after program implementation can help to determine whether programs are achieving outcomes for all participants, or only some participants. This can assist with decisions about implementing or modifying existing or creating new program models to better meet specific needs within

populations, such as cultural responsiveness, younger parents versus grandparents raising grandchildren, teen parents, etc.

At prior consultations, tribal leaders shared ideas of how to gather information for continuous quality improvement and suggested that FTF consider developing a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with tribes to request information for program improvement and evaluation purposes. Furthermore, FTF recognizes tribes are also interested in the outcomes of programs in relation to children and families living on their tribal lands and the need to track outcomes of children from birth to college. First Things First understands tribal perspectives are crucial to understanding and evaluating the impact of child and family participation in early childhood programs and services. Therefore, First Things First seeks consultation surrounding the following questions:

1. What successes or challenges does the tribe have in tracking outcomes for children in your community? How can state agencies learn from your work or further support your efforts?
2. What has been the tribe's experience in developing MOUs that cover several years of data collection and/or access to existing data? What barriers have been identified in developing these MOUs and how have those been overcome?
3. Currently, FTF collects aggregate data on number of children and families served from its grantees to ensure that services contracted for are being provided. Are data agreements necessary if information FTF seeks is already being collected by tribal and non-tribal grantees (for example, grantees already collect addresses, pre-post and post-service screenings, etc.) in order to provide services and monitor their own progress?
4. Could data agreements cover multiple uses of data (for example, informing regional needs and assets reports, decision-making purposes, program delivery, and understanding impact)?
5. In addition to specifying (1) what data will be collected, (2) how the data will be collected and used, (3) how the data will be secured and stored, (4) how the tribe will have the opportunity to review information before it is reported/published, and (5) how the tribe will have access to the data collected and related findings, are there any other topics data agreements should include?
6. What other data is your tribe interested in to inform your work and decisions on behalf of young children?