

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

### First Things First

First Things First (Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board) is one of the critical state partners in creating a child and family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona's children. Created by voter initiative in 2006, First Things First is governed by a state Board with 28 regional partnership councils. First Things First is a decentralized organization that engages diverse constituencies to accomplish its mission. Organizational values include a focus on accountability, transparency, coordination, collaboration and on the outcomes that will ensure young children start kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school and in life.

### Position Summary

First Things First is seeking a dynamic, visionary leader capable of spearheading and managing a statewide early childhood organization with budgeted annual expenditures of about \$150 million. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated competence in the areas of systems thinking, early childhood policy and practice, organizational development and management, fund development and fiscal stewardship, public affairs and community engagement. First Things First places a particular emphasis on a proven capacity to operate within a multi-faceted governance structure, which in the case of First Things First includes a Board, regional partnership councils, and program implementation through a coordinated, collaborative statewide service delivery system and public transparency and accountability. With a staff of 160 professionals and more than 300 volunteers engaged across Arizona, this individual must be able to inspire a collective vision, lead an innovative and accountable organizational culture, and steward over daily operations in pursuit of achieving that vision.

### Distinguishing Characteristics

The Chief Executive Officer must be a persuasive communicator who can work effectively with people from diverse groups and disciplines, including staff, leaders from business and government agencies, elected officials, representatives of community organizations and tribal members. Other characteristics include but are not limited to the ability to build and sustain partnerships and networks and to foster collaboration among these diverse groups. S/he will be a passionate advocate for young children who brings ideas, positive energy and the motivation to work with others to find solutions and implement best practices. S/he will embrace the importance of First Things First's mission and its focus on early childhood development and access to high-quality early care, education and health.

The successful candidate may come from a host of backgrounds, including early childhood policy and practice, relevant government agencies addressing the birth to 5 population, private foundations that are interested in these areas, health or policy institutes, early childhood education, organizations working



with vulnerable populations or non-profit organizations dealing with early childhood issues. S/he should demonstrate evidence of excellent leadership skills, collaborative and interpersonal skills in teaming with colleagues and partners and a track record of commitment to diversity and to building diverse leadership teams. S/he should also understand Arizona's culture and be able to work effectively within that culture as well as possess the capacity and desire to work with others on a national scale.

## Duties and Responsibilities

### *Systems-Building*

- Direct early childhood system building efforts with the goal of impacting child and family-level outcomes. This includes program and policy approaches in early learning, family support and early literacy, children's health, professional development, parent and public awareness, and research and evaluation.
- Effectively guide diverse constituents and stakeholders toward a common, implementable agenda.
- Navigate respectful, mutually beneficial and unique relationships with Arizona's Indian Tribes and Nations.
- Position FTF as a critical partner in the early childhood national landscape.

### *Public Policy and Engagement*

- Engage elected officials, governmental agencies, private foundations, private sector companies and other external stakeholders and potential donors in the mission of First Things First, participate in appropriate levels of fund development and work with the Board in garnering support for the organization's mission.
- Serve as chief spokesperson with high-level external partners and constituents, including elected leaders, business partners and civic and faith leaders.
- Advance a public policy agenda that is inclusive of broad geographies across the state and regions and diverse constituencies.
- Establish and work collaboratively to advance a collective, nonpartisan vision that advances statewide support for investing in young children.
- Possess a commitment to Arizona's young children and their families.

### *Effective Governance*

- Work closely and strengthen communications with the 12 member State Board to help them grow and ensure they are assisted in such a manner that they are able to effectively perform their duties.

- Collaborate with the State Board and take primary responsibility for all organizational and operational strategic planning.
- Identify and assess issues, keep the State Board apprised and recommend action.
- Advance and support the relationship between the State Board and its regional partnership councils.
- Build and strengthen diverse community relationships.
- Recognize and promote the role of the Regional Partnership Councils.
- Advance FTF's approved strategic direction, including its Program and Policy Strategic Plan, Strategic Operations Plan, Research and Evaluation Plan, Strategic Communications Plan and Professional Development Plan.

### *Leadership and Management*

- Lead and manage diverse teams and staff. This includes building, managing and developing the following leadership team members and their respective staff: Chief Program Officer, Chief Financial and Operations Officer, Chief Regional Officer, Chief of Communications and Engagement, Chief Policy Advisor, General Counsel, Director of Fund Development and Strategic Investments and Special Assistant to the CEO.
- Ensure complete fiscal and fiduciary transparency and accountability through more than 250 contracts and an annual organizational budget of about \$150 million. Manage the organization to meet its financial goals. Understand systems-scale resource development challenges and opportunities as well as the importance of research and data in management, program development and allocation of resources.
- Work in and lead a State agency and ensure all FTF statutory obligations are met.

### Qualifications and Competencies

- Advanced degree from an accredited college or university in a relevant discipline or equivalent terminal degree desired; a first class intellect who can build personal credibility in a public environment.
- Demonstrated experience in managing complex, enterprise-level operations with strong fiscal and fiduciary track record.
- Knowledge and experience in early childhood issues. Candidates are not required to be content experts, but they should be conversant on early childhood topics. A demonstrated record and significant experience accomplishing results in early childhood and health systems development and implementation is a plus.

- Strong team leadership combined with experience in shared decision-making management and supervisory skills. Demonstrated ability to work with persons with diverse opinions, work styles and communication styles and to engage them in meeting articulated priorities.
- Extensive knowledge of how to work effectively with community volunteers and competencies in methods of moving public will. Expertise in productively engaging elected and public officials and local, state and federal agency leaders. Understanding of state government and legislative operations.
- Proven business acumen with entrepreneurial and innovative skills in identifying targets of opportunity and positioning the organization to take advantage of them, creating and implementing new initiatives and fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of others.
- Knowledge of the nonprofit sector and how a government agency operates effectively in support of their work.
- Willingness to be engaged by diverse communities and situations, being open to learn from them and using that understanding to further FTF's work.
- Ability to work and communicate effectively with internal staff and externally (locally and nationally) with the diverse communities which FTF works with and operates in.
- Capability to work collaboratively across the state, to build relationships and connections across disciplines, and to motivate and energize others to work together. Knowledge of the geographic, political, cultural and social dynamics and nuances particular to Arizona.
- Relationship-builder with a track record of building relationships quickly and effectively across a broad constituency of public and private sector organizations. A high degree of comfort, sensitivity and flexibility in working across geographic, political and cultural boundaries.
- Exceptional skills in managing people and gaining satisfaction through their success.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and listening skills; particularly adept in public speaking and presentations. Ability to distill complex issues and convey a compelling story in a clear, concise manner in individual, group and public settings.

#### How to Apply

Review of resumes will begin on June 18, 2021 and continue until the position is filled. For consideration, please submit your cover letter, comprehensive resume and three professional references to:

[www.azstatejobs.gov](http://www.azstatejobs.gov)

**JOB ID # 497022**

The salary for this position is commensurate with the applicant's background and experience and within the State of Arizona's established salary range for this position; the hiring salary range is \$145,000 - \$190,000. The State of Arizona offers an outstanding comprehensive benefits and retirement package. Benefits may be elected within the first pay period. Positions in this classification participate in the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) with enrollment eligibility effective after 6 months of employment.

Arizona State Government is an EOE/ADA Reasonable Accommodation Employer. During all phases of the selection process, people with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation such as a sign language interpreter, by contacting FTF's Human Resources Office via e-mail at [HR@firstthingsfirst.org](mailto:HR@firstthingsfirst.org).