

# AMTC NEWS



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AMTC & Associates Newsletter

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(From left to right) Rev. Gregory Holston, OICA President & CEO; Angela Tuner, AMTC Principal; Newton Sanon, OIC-SFL President & CEO; Louis King, Summit Academy OIC President & CEO

## Demonstration Projects Improve Lives

We are proud of our relationships with strategic partners throughout the U.S. One of those partners is Opportunities Industrialization Center of America (OICA). Since 2003, OICA and AMTC have worked together to help build strong families. Our longstanding relationship has blossomed so that each new project brings its own level of interest and excitement. It is our pleasure to highlight OICA and some of its affiliates in this newsletter.

What's particularly edifying for me is that OICA was one of the first organizations that I had the pleasure to serve over thirteen years ago. AMTC assisted OICA to initiate several different program models that were extended into multiple OIC affiliates.

Reverend Gregory Holston, OICA's President & CEO, describes OICA as "an organization dedicated to racial and economic justice through workforce development and job training." This encompasses innumerable facets and includes 38 affiliates in 22 states. "Anywhere where disadvantaged people need a voice," Holston says, OICA provides "tools to lift up these communities."

From these OICA networks, three affiliates were selected to receive the "Reentry Demonstration Projects for Young Adults." This grant is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. These affiliates include: Summit Academy OIC, Minneapolis, Minnesota; American Indian OIC, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and OIC of South Florida, Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Since this grant program is categorized as a demonstration project, an organization has the freedom to test new program models. The grant is also interdisciplinary; it blends the fields of criminal justice with workforce development. This is an important distinction because employment is not the only factor that keeps individuals from reoffending; rather, there are multiple factors that need to be addressed through substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, pro-social recreational activities, and more.

AMTC & Associates is pleased to provide the performance measurement systems throughout the life of the grant. We will work side-by-side with OICA to ensure that outcomes are monitored in real time. By implementing evidence-based measurement tools with systematic protocols, we strive for successful and sustainable models beyond the grant period. To learn more about this grant and the above-referenced organizations, please refer to pages two and three of this newsletter.

I am also excited to announce that my long-term colleague, Jeanette Stevens, a former OICA employee, will partner with AMTC to implement aspects of the performance measurement system. Ms. Stevens is equally enthusiastic: "I am excited about working with this great, experienced team, and about working nationally to help reduce the severity of the social issues that are impacting high-poverty communities."

At AMTC & Associates, making a positive impact is what we do best. We help organizations grow and sustain their programs, in turn benefiting those they serve.

Angela Turner, Principal

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## Providing Hope in Minneapolis-St. Paul

Millions of individuals are currently incarcerated in the United States. Poor choices may have led some individuals behind bars, yet what's equally true is that they are no less endowed with tremendous talents and potential. OICA is committed to providing skill sets and employment for those with prior involvement with the criminal justice system. Individuals become self-sufficient through rehabilitation, job training and employment. OICA "gives people hope again," says Reverend Gregory Holston, OICA President & CEO.

The Reentry Demonstration Projects for Young Adults grant was awarded to OICA to support three affiliates in two communities, Minneapolis and Miami-Dade County. OIC of South Florida (OIC-SFL) is a grant recipient and is a leader in reentry work. It is led by its President & CEO, Newton Sanon, and a host of dedicated staff.

(For more about OIC-SFL refer to AMTC's newsletter of May/June, 2016.) OIC-SFL will serve as a model for two of OICA's affiliates in Minneapolis, Summit Academy OIC and American Indian OIC. This recently awarded grant will allow them to expand their capacity to provide reentry services as they build upon many years of providing successful education and training services to the community.

American Indian OIC has been a part of Minneapolis for close to 40 years. The organization was formed to address significant disparities in education and employment that American Indians faced in Minneapolis. Today, American Indian OIC is still just as relevant as ever. Joe Hobot, President & CEO of American Indian OIC, was interviewed by Minnesota Public Radio.<sup>1</sup> In the interview, Hobot noted that high school graduation rates are lower for American Indians than they are for any other ethnic group in Minnesota, with one of the worst graduation rates in the country. He also noted factors that contribute to these stark statistics, including American Indian curriculum that's taught in a damaging way and difficult transitions between the reservation and the city. There are many other factors, too.

Despite tremendous challenges, American Indian OIC has paved the way for individuals to build successful lives. And worth noting, it not only serves American Indians but is open to the entire community. It offers an array of education and training programs, from GED to higher education, as well as employment services. Since its inception, American Indian OIC has contributed to a workforce of more than 20,000 individuals across the entire Minneapolis-St. Paul area.<sup>2</sup> Participants gain hands-on experience by collaborating with local businesses and non-profits. The organization provides an entrepreneurial program, too. These impressive programs and their dedication to the community makes American Indian OIC well positioned to expand to reentry work.

Summit Academy OIC is another OICA affiliate that is an ideal fit for reentry work. It has been a part of the Minneapolis-St. Paul community for over 50 years, although at times under different names. Participants receive five months of training, or 600 hours, in the areas of construction and healthcare. It includes both theoretical framework and hands-on instruction. Students can concurrently earn their GED. This is a tremendous accomplishment considering that the whole training period is less than half a year. The program does not entail any out-of-pocket expenses so students can graduate debt-free as they find a job.

The organization addresses head-on one of the largest racial employment disparities in the country, according to Leroy West, Vice President & CAO. West experiences firsthand how Summit Academy OIC transforms lives: "I hear the stories every day of individuals who spent seven, ten years in prison and they're transferring out. They wonder, 'Who's going to hire me? Who's going to trust me?'" They have no hope, but we provide that hope for them, that trust, and we give them the skills. I see someone with that background come out [of training] in 20 weeks and land a job making \$35,000 a year without any debt to



**(Left to right) Joe Hobot, President & CEO of American Indian OIC and Newton Sanon, President & CEO of OIC-SFL**

pay back . . . They can provide for themselves and their families and become productive citizens. That's what wakes me up every day; that's what I look forward to."

Summit Academy OIC and American Indian OIC are instrumental in paving the way for individuals to create brighter futures. "We are excited about the work they continue to do in the Twin City area," notes Reverend Gregory Holston, OICA President & CEO. "They are addressing the collateral effect of mass incarceration which has been a plague on our country for over 50 years and they are a part of that change and transformation . . . We're excited for them and praying for them to be that great model that we can take across this nation."

## References

<sup>1</sup>MPR News. (2016, May 18) *Poor American Indian Graduation Rates May Have Deep Roots*. Retrieved from <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/05/18/poor-american-indian-grad-rates-may-have-deep-roots>

<sup>2</sup>American Indian OIC. *About: Mission & History*. Retrieved from <http://aioic.org/about/>



**Logan Rome,  
Quantitative Research  
Consultant**

## AMTC Welcomes New Associates

AMTC welcomes Jeanette Stevens (referenced and quoted on page one) and Logan Rome, an evaluation associate who will provide his expertise for teen pregnancy prevention programs. He noted, "AMTC gives me the opportunity to apply my statistical skills in meaningful ways. I enjoy working to demonstrate the success, quantitatively, of programs that are making a positive impact."



**Jeanette Stevens,  
Implementation Evaluation  
Consultant – Workforce &  
Family Programs**